

Turko-Tatar Roots of Modern Odessa: Hocabey and Karakermen

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ABSTRACT

Located on the northern shore of the Black Sea, Odessa is one of Eastern Europe's great cities. Much has been written about its history. Most of these studies were written from the Russian imperial perspective, and so the city's Turko-Tatar period has been neglected. The present article attempts to shed light on this period of Odessa's history, drawing mainly on Ottoman chronicles and archival documents. The predecessor and nucleus of the city was the Karakermen redoubt (*palanka*), which was built by Mengli Giray Khan I in 1495. Karakermen was destroyed as a result of recurrent Cossack raids in the mid-16th century. Although the Ottomans had intended to revitalise the city by rebuilding the redoubt during the last quarter of the 16th century, this project would be realized only in 1764 with the emergence of the town of Hocabey.

KEYWORDS

Odessa, Ottoman Empire, Tatars, Karakermen, Hocabey, Crimean Khanate

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INTRODUCTION

Odessa, one of the most important cities of Tsarist Russia because of its economic and demographic boom in the nineteenth century, has fascinated historians for a long time. The city, in which different cultures and ethnic communities existed, has been the subject of the works of travellers, poets, and writers. Historians, who could not ignore the rapid transformation of the city, have written and continue to write many works to reconstruct the city's past.

Studies on the historical roots of modern Odessa inevitably have to address the Turko-Tatar period of the city since the region was for centuries under the control of first the Golden Horde and Crimean Khanate and then the Ottoman Empire. A number of studies on the history of the pre-Russian period of Odessa allege that the predecessor of the city was the port city of Kachibey (Kaçibey) that had been built by Lithuanians¹. According to this theory, modern Odessa and its surroundings came under the control of the Lithuanians after the Battle of the Blue Waters in 1362. To increase its control in the Black Sea, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had built the city of Kachibey, and even the Polish King Władysław II had sent aid from there to Constantinople, when the latter was sieged by the Ottomans. Different dates are given by historians for this alleged event. For some, it took place in 1415, but, according to Andrei V. Krasnozhon, it occurred in 1422. This point of view was quite widely accepted over the years and was discussed in detail in 1894 by Arsenii Ivanovich Markevich.² It has recently been revised by Andrei V. Krasnozhon.³ It was repeated in *Khajibei – Odesa ta Ukrayins'ke Kozatstvo (1415–1797 Roki)*, a valuable collection of primary sources about the history of Odessa.⁴ However, this theory is seriously criticized by A. I. Tret'yak, who asserts that the writings of Jan Długosz and Martin Kromer, the primary sources of the arguments that related the roots of Odessa to the Poland-Lithuania, were false, since there was no Polish city with the name 'Kocjubiev/Kačybej', which supposedly later became Hacıbey.⁵ In the Polish translation of Jan Długosz, this location is named 'Kaczubyeow/ Kachibey' and is mentioned as a royal port. In fact, there is no mention of any such fortress or town.⁶

In the English-language literature on the history of Odessa, the Turko-Tatar period of Odessa is mentioned very little, if at all, and the general information in the Russian-language literature has often been repeated.⁷ In general, there seems to be no reference to the Ottoman sources in these works about Odessa's historical roots, but there are a few exceptions⁸. Our aim in this study is to keep the track of the emergence of the fortress or redoubt of Hocabey, which was the prede-

¹ It is evident that Hocabey and its surroundings were under the Polish-Lithuanian rule for a period, and this situation was also accepted by the Crimean Khanate, as seen in the correspondence of Mengli Giray Khan I with Grand Duke Casimir, see Kołodziejczyk 2011, Document 4: 542.

² Markevich 1894:1–72; V.K. Nadler proposed a slightly different story for the emergence of Odessa, according to him a Lithuanian noble named Kacjub' Yakušin founded Odessa; Nadler 1893: 11–12.

³ Krasnozhon 2010: 16–31; Krasnozhon 2019: 395–412.

⁴ *Khajibei* 1999: 17–19.

⁵ Tret'yak 2013: 25–53.

⁶ Długosz 2009: 56.

⁷ Skinner 1973: 21–34; Herlihy 1991: 2–5.

⁸ Although Feridun Emecen (2015: 220) stated in his article about the northern border of the Ottoman Empire that Hocabey was not mentioned in the Mühimme Defters, it is clear that Hocabey was quoted in the Mühimme Defters of the second half of the sixteenth century. Sereda (2015) edited, reproduced the documents in Ukrainian and Turkish languages, (Department of Ottoman Archives of Presidential State Archives of the Republic of Turkey, thereafter cited as, BOA- BOA, C. ML 30648, BOA, C. BLD. 1865) were provided to the readers with its Turkish



cessor of the later town of Odessa in the course of history, and to give an account of the reconstruction process that began in 1764, mainly from the Ottoman sources.

The location of modern Odessa was referred to as Hocabey or Karakermen by the Ottoman Turks and Crimean Tatars. In almost all Ottoman documents, examined by the present author which were written during the pre-Russian period of the town, the name of the site was mentioned and spelled as *Hocabey*, except in a few instances, where the variants *Kocabey/Kocabay*⁹ or *Hocabay* were used¹⁰.

We find the most explicit expression of how the location was named by Turks and Crimean Tatars in an Ottoman document containing a summary of an official meeting that was held during the construction work that started in and around the Hocabey in 1765. The participants of the meeting were the Ottoman officials and Turkish and Crimean Tatar notables residing in the region. In the above-mentioned document, it was stated 'the location of the constructed pier and buildings with its vicinity is known as Karakermen redoubt, which is also known as Hocabey',¹¹ clearly revealing that the place of modern Odessa was then called Karakermen or Hocabey. The last Crimean Khan, Şahin Giray Khan, in his correspondence with the Russian officials, referred to Hocabey and surroundings as *Kızıkermen*.¹²

Why was called Karakermen or Hocabey? According to archival records, the toponym Hocabey was attributed to the existence of a shrine of that name there. Near this shrine were the ruins of a fortress called Karakermen. From the Ottoman documents, it is understood that the remains of the shrine and the fortress continued to exist until 1765.¹³ It is possible that this shrine belonged to Koçubey who had been killed in the Battle of the Blue Waters in 1362¹⁴, and the name Hocabey might be a corrupted form of his name.

In the Russian and Ukrainian historical literature, however, for some reason, the name of the location in the Turko-Tatar period was given as *Hacıbey*. Although the Turkic words *hoca* and *hacı* sound and are spelled somewhat similarly, in fact, they are not synonymous. The word *hoca* (خواجه), a coined from Persian, refers to a person working in religious services, a cleric, or a person who teaches in an educational institution. The word *hacı* (حاجی) originates from Arabic and refers to a man/woman who performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. The component word 'bey' is an old Turkic word and may mean a chieftain, commander, or simply gentleman. Historically, 'bey' was the title heads of clans, commanders of certain troops, or statesmen of certain ranks in various

transcriptions and with their Ukrainian translations, see: 222–246. In another study, Sereda (2009: 69–71) gives information about the Hocabey using these documents: (BOA. C. ML 30047 and BOA C. AS. 45909; BOA. C. ML 30047 and BOA C. AS. 45909).

⁹ BOA, C. BH. 11347; BOA, C. AS 48376; BOA, HH 57921.

¹⁰ The usage of 'Hocabay' was seen in the sixteenth-century documents, see. BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 69:100, rescript (hüküm): 207, 04.04.1592; BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 71: 168, rescript (hüküm): 332. 18 April July 1593.

¹¹ '... *ebniye ve iskele inşa olunan mahal ve havalisi Karakermen palankası nam-ı diğer Hocabey olup*', BOA, C. ML 30648; in another document concerning the same meeting, this sentence was used similarly, see, BOA, MAD 10208:18.

¹² 'Во-первых, как Вы рассудите поступить с Кузи-Керменской крепостью, которая слывет и Хаджи-бей' (Dubrovín 1885: 755). We have to bear in mind that this text is the translation of a Turkish text into Russian.

¹³ For the documents mentioning the Hocabey tomb: BOA, C. BLD 4494; BOA, C. ML. 19906. For the documents mentioning the existence of ruins of the fortress in Hocabey see, BOA, C. ML. 30648; Archive of the Palace of Topkapı (Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi henceforth TSMA) TSMA E 76; BOA, MAD 10208: 18.

¹⁴ According to the *Khronika Litov's'ka ta Žmojts'ka* the name of the Tatar leaders in this war were Kotlubay, Kati-bey, Beker, and Dmitra Soltana; *Khajibei* 1999: 17.



Turkic states.¹⁵ In my inquiries, I have never encountered the version Hacıbey for Hocabey in the Ottoman documents. Thus, in searching for the historical background of the location, one has to look for the words Hocabey/Hocabay/Kocabey, together with the Karakermen/Kızıkermen. It is quite likely that Russian historians have misunderstood and confused the Turkic words *hacı* and *hoca*.

In a number of works in Russian and Ukrainian on the subject, it has been stated that Hocabey was called Yenidünya and that Zaporozhian Cossacks, who had escaped from Russian persecution, were settled there by the Ottoman Empire for a while. However, there apparently is no evidence in the Ottoman archives to substantiate these claims.¹⁶

A. THE RISE AND THE FALL OF KARAKERMEN AND THE EARLY YEARS OF HOCABEY

Hocabey is geographically located in the region between Akkirman (Bilhorod/Cetatea Alba) and Cankermen (Özü/Ochakov/Daskov). The process of the establishment of direct Ottoman control in this region goes back to the reign of Bayezid II (d. 1512). Being a follower of his father's policy of transforming the Black Sea into an inland sea of the Ottomans, Bayezid II took action to unite the Ottoman lands with the territory of the Crimean Khanate. This would facilitate expeditions toward Poland, tighten Ottoman control over Moldavia, and control the trade route between Moldavia and Lvov.¹⁷ He fulfilled this goal to a great extent by conquering the fortresses of Kili on 14 July 1484 and Akkirman on 8 August of the same year.¹⁸

The fortress of Cankermen and its surroundings came under Ottoman control after Süleyman I's campaign to Moldavia in 1538.¹⁹ Before this expedition, Semen Vasil'evich Romodanovsky, the envoy of Ivan III of Muscovy to Mengli Giray Khan I in 1498, mentioned Cankermen as a fortress belonging to the Crimean Khanate.²⁰ Kaysunizade Remmal Hoca, an Ottoman eyewitness of the Moldavian campaign in 1538, stated in his chronicle 'The History of Sahib Giray Khan' that the Dniester (in Turkic, Turla) River was the border between the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate.²¹ In a diplomatic letter sent from Süleyman I to King Zygmunt I of Poland in 1540, it was emphasized that Cankermen and its surroundings used to be under the control of the Crimean khans but now they were part of the domain of the Ottoman Sultan.²² In another letter sent to the King of Poland by Süleyman I in 1542, it was indicated that the land beyond the Dniester River had been under the rule of the Crimean khans for thirty or forty years.²³

Thus, it is possible to say that the area up to the Dniester River came under Ottoman control, while the land from Dniester to the Crimea remained under the sovereignty of the Crimean Khanate following the 1484 campaign of Bayezid II. As for the fortress of Cankermen and its

¹⁵ For the meaning and etymology of these words, see Ayverdi et al. 2008.

¹⁶ For the places where Zaporozhian Cossacks were settled, see Başer 2015: 535–554.

¹⁷ Tansel 2006: 182; Oreshkova 1984: 37.

¹⁸ Beldiceanu 1983: 597–598; Iorga 2005: 232.

¹⁹ Öztürk 2007: 133.

²⁰ *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva* 1884, Document 57: 261.

²¹ '...Türlü Suyun geçüb, Tatar sınırın geçtikten sonra...', Kaysunizade Nidai Remmal Hoca 1973: 31.

²² Topaktaş-Aslantürk 2014, Document: 26: 93.

²³ Topaktaş-Aslantürk 2014, Document: 34: 106.



vicinity, they remained under the Crimean Khanate's control until the Moldavian campaign of 1538, and thereafter they were transferred to the Ottomans. In 1542, the fortress of Cankermen and its vicinity were described as a sub-district of the province of Silistra.²⁴ Hocabey/Karakermen most likely became an Ottoman territory then.²⁵ Notably, however, the Ottoman authorities were keen on respecting the rights of the Crimean Khans in the region.²⁶

The fortress of Hocabey emerged when the region was under the rule of the Crimean Khanate. According to the famous chronicle of Seyyid Muhammed Rıza, *Al-Sab' al-Sayyar fi Akhbar al-Muluk al-Tatar*, one of the most important sources on the history of Crimean Khanate, Mengli Giray Khan I (d. 1514) built the fortresses of Cankermen, Devletkermen, and Karakermen on the banks of the Dnieper River.²⁷ Bearing in mind that the Crimean Tatars named the old fortress in the location of modern Odessa as Karakermen even in the second half of the 18th century, it can be stated that Hocabey/Karakermen was constructed by the orders of Mengli Giray Khan I. It is known that Mengli Giray Khan I built the fortress of Tigina, but the Lithuanians destroyed it in 1493. In response, Mengli Giray Khan I began to build the fortress of Cankermen in 1494. The construction of the fortress was completed in 1495.²⁸ As stated in the *As-Sab' al-Sayyar*, the Cankermen fortress was built together with the Karakermen fortress. Therefore, Karakermen must have been built in 1495 too.

In the second half of the 16th century, both foreign travellers and Ottoman documents testify to the fact that the Hocabey (i.e., Karakermen) fortress and its harbour had suffered great devastation. The first record that mentions Hocabey as being in ruins and deserted dates back to 1550.²⁹ Marcin Broniowski, who visited the Crimea as an envoy of the King of Poland in 1578, wrote that Hocabey now lay in ruins but once it used to be an important settlement.³⁰ Ottoman records pertaining to the years 1583 and 1584 also stated that the fortress of Hocabey was then abandoned.³¹

When Hocabey had been prosperous, large number of Muslim subjects had been living in the fortress and its vicinity, with nearly two hundred sheepfolds (*koyun ocağı*) in Hocabey (Karakermen) and its surroundings. Each farm raised around ten to fifteen thousand sheep. An examination of the relevant Ottoman records reveals that, after the conquests of 1484, Hocabey (Karakermen) and its surroundings probably became one of the main centres of sheep supplied to the Ottoman palace and army. Apart from sheep husbandry, significant income was obtained from fishing and fees on the ships that used the port.³² The large-scale production levels recorded in the Ottoman documents testifies to the prosperity of the region. This must have been the

²⁴ Öztürk 2007: 133.

²⁵ In a letter sent from Süleyman I to the King of Poland Hocabey shown as a sub-district of Özi, see Topaktaş-Aslantürk 2014, Document: 126: 288.

²⁶ In 1540 the Crimean Khan Sahip Giray permitted Polish merchants to buy salt from Hocabey and promised security for them (*Khajibei* 1999: 22).

²⁷ Seyyid Mehmed Rıza 2020: 110.

²⁸ *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva*, 1884, Document: 46: 209–212, for the information about the construction of the fortress, see: 210; Syroecovskij 1932: 221; Kołodziejczyk 2011: 25–26.

²⁹ Topaktaş-Aslantürk 2014, Document 71: 170. '...Hocabey dimekle ma'rûf bir hâlî ve ıssız yer yer vardır ki iki ka'la mabeynidir...'

³⁰ Bronevskii 1867: 336; *Khajibei* 1999: 25–26.

³¹ BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 49: 98, rescript/(*hüküm*). 337; BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 53: 116, rescript/(*hüküm*). 328.

³² BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 71: 168, rescript/(*hüküm*).332. The date of the document is 18th of April, 1593.



result of the atmosphere of peace created by the treaty signed between the Ottoman Empire and Kingdom of Poland in 1500.³³

What was the reason behind the subsequent devastation of Hocabey and its surroundings? According to the Ottoman documents, the settlement fell into ruin as a result of the raids from Poland-Lithuania. In these raids, sheepfolds were burnt, the fortress in Hocabey was destroyed, and the roads between Özi and Akkirman were blocked. The surroundings of Akkirman, Kili, and Özi were also damaged greatly during these events.³⁴ There is no doubt that the raids mentioned here are Cossack raids. The Özi and Akkirman region were the main focus of these raids.³⁵

B. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF HOCABEY

We know that the fortress of Hocabey (Karakermen) was in ruins in 1550. The Ottoman plans to rebuild a fortress there dates back to 1583. It was first suggested by the governor (*sancak beyi*) of Bender, who stated that the construction of a fortress there would provide substantial income to the state treasury and provide security for the travellers. Thereupon, the Porte charged the kadis of Akkirman and Bender with the task of inquiring about the feasibility of such a project.³⁶ Nevertheless, the project could not be carried out during the next decade.

In 1593, the project of rebuilding the fortress was discussed more seriously at the Porte. Mevlana Muhammed, the ex-kadi of Varna and currently the inspector of the treasury (*müfettiş-i emvâl*), was entrusted with examining the issue. In his report to Istanbul, Mevlana Muhammed, first of all stated that Hocabey had been devastated by the raids directed from Poland. The rebuilding of the fortress and stationing troops there would bring security to the region between Akkirman and Özi and sheep husbandry would be bolstered. According to Mevlana Muhammed, the treasury would profit considerably from the sheep husbandry and fishery duties.³⁷

After this report, the Porte appointed Piri Bey, the governor of Silistre, to rebuild the fortress. The governors of Bender and Akkirman were also instructed to contribute in the construction process with their soldiers. The hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia would also participate in the effort. The task of providing the security for Hocabey and its surroundings during the construction works was entrusted to the Crimean Khan. The Porte asked the khan to send 15,000 soldiers under the command of a Giray Sultan (a prince of the Giray dynasty) for the task.³⁸ These endeavours of the Porte on the Hocabey project were also reflected in the reports of the Habsburg ambassador residing in Istanbul.³⁹ However, the project was not accomplished. Apparently, the

³³ Kołodziejczyk 2000: 112–128.

³⁴ BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 71: 168, rescript/(*hüküm*). 332.

³⁵ A large number of documents from the correspondence of Ottoman Empire with the Kingdom of Poland before the year 1550 reveals the severity and prevalence of these raids; Topaktaş-Aslantürk 2014, on 1538 (Document 19: 82), on 1539 (Document 21: 86), on 1541. (Document 27: 95), on 1542 (Document 30: 99; Document 32: 103), on 1543 (Document 37: 113–116), on 1545 (Document 45: 127–128); on 1546 (Document 47: 131); on 1547 (Document 52: 138. *Koyun ocağı*/sheepfolds); on 1549 (Document 64: 156); on 1550 (Document 66: 160–161, Document 67: 162–163, Document 71: 169–170). Gilles Veinstein was the first historian who worked on these documents concerning the early stages of Cossack problem between Ottoman Empire and Poland, see Veinstein 1999: 33–44.

³⁶ BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 49:98, rescript/(*hüküm*). 337; BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 53: 116, rescript/(*hüküm*). 328.

³⁷ BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 71: 168, rescript/(*hüküm*). 332.

³⁸ BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 71: 170, rescript/(*hüküm*). 337.

³⁹ Krasnozhon 2019: 404.



intensification of the Ottoman-Persian War impeded the project in 1583 and so did the Austrian war and the revolts of Wallachian, Transylvanian, and Moldavian hospodars in 1593.

The Hocabey fortress was still in ruins when the Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi visited it in the second half of the 17th century. Remarkably, Evliya Çelebi dated the construction of Hocabey to the reign of Bayezid II. In line with the Ottoman documents of the late 16th century, he wrote that largescale sheep husbandry had been practiced in the region at that time. According to the celebrated traveller, the rebuilding of the fortress would ensure the security of the region and the salary of soldiers in the fortress could be compensated by the revenues obtained from salt production.⁴⁰

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned projects and solicitations, Hocabey remained in ruins for a long time until it would be restored in 1764. Apparently, there was a civil initiative at the heart of the reconstruction process of Hocabey. Sea captains and merchants who engaged in trade in the northern region of the Black Sea sent a petition (*arz*) to the kadi of Istanbul, which included a proposal for building a fortress with a jetty in Hocabey by the state. They reasoned that, with its broad and secure structure, the harbour of Hocabey could accommodate almost the entire Ottoman navy. Furthermore, the depth of the sea was very convenient for the ships, and the navigation would not be impeded so long as the water was not frozen; the port was ideal for embarking grain and other goods from the surroundings of Akkirman and Özi. There were freshwater springs that could be reached after a small amount of digging activity and the stones of the ancient fortress and buildings could be used for the reconstruction. The petitioners stated that a mosque, an inn, and about forty or fifty warehouses could be built by using the remaining stones. If this project could be accomplished, the settlement could develop easily and become a large town. Merchants asserted that the harbour of Hocabey was much more convenient than the existing ports on the Danubian coast (the ports in the northern part of the Black Sea), since it was possible to make three voyages from Hocabey to Istanbul in comparison to one voyage from the existing ports within a same time span. Therefore, the rebuilding of Hocabey would facilitate satisfying Istanbul's ever-growing demand for grain. Finally, the petitioners predicated that it was possible to ship 400,000 kiles⁴¹ of grains to Istanbul per year if a harbour and a redoubt (*palanka*) was constructed there. In line with expressing the economic benefits of reconstructing Hocabey, they also underscored the strategic importance of the new redoubt for the defence of the Özi region.⁴²

An examination of the Ottoman documents testifies that the Porte's main purpose in reconstructing Hocabey was bolstering the supply of grain from the region to Istanbul. An order addressed to the governor of Özi, Serasker of Bucak and to the kadi of Akkirman concerning the subject, referred to 'sending the grain abundantly which is necessary for the welfare of [our] sub-

⁴⁰ Evliya Çelebi (2001: 93) narrates Hocabey in his travelbook as follows: '...Sultân Bâyezîd Akkirmân'ı feth edince Hocabay nâm bir bay kişi Bâyezîd Hân'dan me'zûn olup bu mahalde bir kaya üzre bir kal'a-i metin inşâ edüp içine kul koyup beş kerre yüz bin koyuniyle bu vâdileri mülk edinüp geçindiğinden Hocabay derler. Hâlâ kal'ası Karadeniz kenârında bir sarp kaya üzre âsâr-ı binâları zâhir ve bâhir durup şey'-i kalîl ile bu kal'a amâr olsa ülke amâr olup emn-i tarik olurdu. Ve bu mahalde Karadeniz'den tuz çıkup kal'a neferâtının mevâcibleri memlahadan hâsıl olurdu...'

⁴¹ The weight of kile changes province to province. While a kile is equal to 24.215 kg in Istanbul, in Akkirman it equals to 51.317 kg, see İnalçık 2000: 444.

⁴² TSMA-E 981/76. In this document, it is clearly stated that there were available fresh water resources in Hocabey. This information refutes the allegations of A. J. de Lafitte-Clave that the Tatars conceal the existence of fresh water springs from the Ottomans, see Sapozhnikov 2016: 271; Krasnozhon 2019: 405.



jects living in Istanbul'.⁴³ Another Ottoman financial record, having pointed out the convenience of the location of the port, emphasized its advantages of it for the shipment of the grain produced by the Tatar communities in the region. It was also stated that the building of a redoubt in Hocabey would ensure the security of the merchants coming from Poland, Russia, and Istanbul.⁴⁴

It was obvious that the main purpose of the Porte was to bring Tatar grain to Istanbul easily and abundantly. It found its best expression in this sentence of a statesman of that period: 'It is known by everybody that the purpose and goal of the reconstruction of Hocabey was to transfer the grain of the Tatars to the bazaars of Istanbul abundantly'.⁴⁵

The location of Hocabey can be described as an intersection point of the Bucak and Yedisian Tatars.⁴⁶ The Tatar population of the Bucak region experienced a serious increase following the Nogay migrations there in 1665. A significant part of these newcomers settled down and engaged in agriculture. The amount of agricultural production and animal breeding increased as a result of the activities of the new settlers.⁴⁷ Similarly, with the migration of Yedisian Nogays to the Özi region in 1726, the Bucak and Yedisian Nogay territories became two of the most crucial suppliers of grain to Istanbul. In his chronicle, Said Giray Sultan stated that the area between the Dnieper and Dniester was given to the Yedisian Nogays by the Ottoman government to cultivate and protect the area.⁴⁸ Ottoman documents confirm the information given by Said Giray Sultan, the Serasker of Yedisian of the Crimean Khanate.⁴⁹ In the second half of the 18th century, both Baron de Tott and Claude-Charles de Peysonel bear witness to the agricultural production of the Nogays.⁵⁰

Serious difficulties were experienced in the transportation of grain from Bucak and Özi to Istanbul during the Yedisian Nogay rebellion (1756–1758), the suppression of which was imperative for the Ottomans, since that grain was vital for the Ottoman capital. Both Kırım Giray Khan, the newly enthroned Crimean Khan, and the local officials were instructed about the necessity of the continuous flow of local grain to Istanbul.⁵¹ Thus, the request of the Ottoman merchants and sea captains, who perfectly realized the advantageous position of Hocabey, was accepted by the Porte, and it was decided to begin the reconstruction of the fortress.

In the Ottoman Empire, the officials who were appointed to organise and manage the financial aspects of the largescale state construction activities were called 'construction trustees' (*bina emini*) or state contractors, as Cengiz Orhonlu rightfully defines them.⁵² On 14th -16th July, 1764,

⁴³ 'Asitane-i saadetimde ibadullahın refah-ı hallerine vesile olan zehairin kesret üzere vürûduna bâis olmak için'. BOA, C. İKTS 856.

⁴⁴ BOA, MAD 10208: 18.

⁴⁵ 'Hocabey işkelesinin i'mârına mübâzeret olunmakdan maksûd ve murâd Tatarlğın zahîresi Hocabey İşkelesinden kesret üzere kapana nakliçün olduğu cümlelerin mâlûmı olmağla.' BOA, A.DVN. MHM, File (*Dosya*): 61, Document (*Vesika*):2.

⁴⁶ The Nogays and Crimean Tatars were the descendants of the Golden Horde. However, there were serious ideological differences between them, see Başer 2019: 105–122.

⁴⁷ For the migration of Tatars to Bucak and for their agricultural production after the settlement, see Başer 2010: 186–189.

⁴⁸ Said Giray, *Târih-i Said Giray Han*, Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Hs. or 923, folio, 102a. Intellectual life among the Yedisians developed rapidly after this settlement, see Kellner-Heinkele 2000: 293–295.

⁴⁹ BOA, YB 04/94.

⁵⁰ Baron de Tott's statements on the agriculture production of Nogays are somewhat contradictory, see Baron De Tott 1785: 63–64, 73–74; Peysonell 1927: 14.

⁵¹ BOA, A.DVNS.MHM 160:330, rescript / (hüküm).1012; *Kırım Hanlarına Nâme-i Hümayûn* 2013: 133–135; For the Nogay rebellion of 1756–1758 see Kochev 1988: 19–20; Bülbül 2016: 74–112.

⁵² Orhonlu 1984: 11.



Hafiz Mehmed Efendi, a professor (*müderriş*) from the medrese of Nur-ı Osmaniyye, was appointed as the ‘construction trustee’ to manage the reboulding of Hocabey. Together with Hafiz Mehmed Efendi, Abdullah Halife, from the department of the Imperial Architects (*Mimarân-ı Hassa*), Mehmed Emin, a clerk from the Chief Accountant’s Office (*Baş Muhasebe*), a court sergeant, and a scribe from the Janissary Corps were also assigned to the task. In the first phase, these officials were in charge of the construction of a mosque, warehouses, an inn, living quarters for military personnel, a mill, a bakery, and a jetty for the ships. In addition to these officers, a jetty trustee (*iskele emini*) was appointed to carry out the works related to the harbour work. At the first stage, 4,000 (*guruş*) piastres were allocated for the expenses. Orders were sent to the kadis of Akkirman, Bender, and Babadağı, the governor of Özi, the Hospodar of Moldavia, and to the warden (*dizdar*) of the Akkirman fortress to assist these functionaries.⁵³

For the construction, the Porte would send 25 tons of raw iron and tents (two for general use, one for medical use and one for culinary use) with a portable fountain (*çeşme*) from the Janissary band (*mehterhane*) (the latter on condition that it would be returned after the task was completed). The Porte demanded from the Hospodar of Moldavia 300 labourers (*cerahor*), 40 tumbrels, charcoal, and timber, and from the officials in the Akkirman, any lumber remaining from the newly-finished fortress in Akkirman. The governor of Özi was in charge of providing the barges (*tombaz*) for the transportation of these materials and workers. The kadis of Bender and Babadağı were ordered to send carpenters (*neccar*) in return for a fee. The instructions sent to the local officers and state contractor (*bina emini*) of Hocabey indicated that materials and equipment that would be used in the construction, such as auger, rope, iron spoons, scales, spikes, and special types of wood, would be sent from Istanbul.⁵⁴ Five master builders from each of the professions, such as bonder, lime mortar makers, stonemason, sawyer, blacksmith, and master borer, would be assigned from Istanbul to work, together with 151 ordinary workers, in the construction of Hocabey. The quarterly wages and expenses of these professionals amounted to 5,360 (*guruş*) piastres.⁵⁵

The construction work at Hocabey began in July 1764. According to the available information, its first stage was completed either in November-December of 1764⁵⁶ or in January 1765.⁵⁷ In any case, by the spring of 1765 at least seven cellars (one of which was described as very large and the auction of renting space there was carried out),⁵⁸ a mosque, a large inn, a jetty, and a lighthouse were built.⁵⁹ It is quite probable that, by then, the construction of the quarters for military officers, a mill, and a bakery had also been completed.⁶⁰ The documents mention such structures under the term ‘other buildings’ (*ebniye-i saire*).

⁵³ BOA. C. İKTS 856. This document consists of 31 different orders.

⁵⁴ BOA. C. İKTS 856. Different orders in this document. The government decided that the cost of the material requested from the Moldavia would be deducted from the jizya tax of Moldavia see, C. BH. 6564.

⁵⁵ BOA. C. İKTS 856

⁵⁶ BOA. C. BLD 4494; BOA. C. AS 14273

⁵⁷ BOA, C. NF 24.

⁵⁸ BOA. C. AS 14273; C. BLD 4494. These warehouses were rented to el-Hac Mehemmed and el-Hac Hamamizade İbrahim who were merchants in Istanbul. For the documents mentioning the leasing of the 6th and 7th warehouses, see, BOA, C. ML. 19906. Russian sources also testify the existence of these warehouses in Hocabey. During the 1768–1774 Ottoman-Russian War, Zaporozhian Cossacks wanted to loot these warehouses, see, de Ribas 1913: 2–3.

⁵⁹ BOA. C. AS 14273; BOA, MAD 10208: 18; BOA, C. NF 45.

⁶⁰ The mill and bakery were operating in March 1766, see. BOA, A.DVNSAHK. OZSI 16: 194.



In the last phase of the construction, an additional 10,000 piastres (*guruş*) were allocated for the expenses in December of 1764.⁶¹ In the following years, along with these buildings built by the Ottoman state, the civilian entrepreneurs also built and opened a coffee house, mills, and bakeries in Hocabey, thereby taking the needs of the people into account.⁶²

Having completed the first phase of construction, the Porte ordered the officials to deliver the remaining construction materials to the arsenal of the Akkirman fortress.⁶³ The legal and financial status of Hocabey was also defined. The precise location of Hocabey was an unused state property, but the area from Mayak⁶⁴ to Özi, which extends to the Black Sea was a part of the *mukataa* of Akkirman while to the left of the Hocabey belonged the *mukataa* of Yedisán of the Crimean khans. Upon the definition of the legal status, the territory of Hocabey, with the revenues of the harbour and jetty, was assigned to the Sultan himself (*Hâss-ı Hümayûn*). Permissions to build shops and warehouses were granted to 23 merchants from Istanbul. These merchants would cover the building expenses themselves, and they also committed to pay an annual rent for using the state-owned land. A plot of land from 1,000 up to 1,500 ziraas (1 zira = 54.5 to 91 cm.) was allocated to each merchant.⁶⁵

The Porte intended to use Hocabey as the main harbour between Özi and Akkirman after the completion of the first phase of construction. In this respect, the Sultan instructed Selim Giray Khan III and the local authorities to transfer the stored grain on the jetty of Acı Dere to the harbour of Hocabey. At that moment, according to the official documents, there were 174 warehouses belonging to the merchants in Istanbul and 60 to the speculators in Acı Dere. There were 118,300 kiles of grain in the merchants' warehouses and an unknown amount in the warehouses of speculators. The Porte also ordered that the speculators from the military class in the region be strictly prevented from buying wheat, barley, butter, and leather produced by the Yedisán Nogays forcibly. These products should be sold to the Istanbul merchants only in Hocabey.⁶⁶ In December 1765, in order to ensure the continuation of the transportation of grain from the Hocabey to Istanbul, the weight measurements were subjected to a regulation.⁶⁷

The second phase of construction was the building of the redoubt (*palanka*) of Karakermen. In April 1765, the appointments began regarding the building process. Ahmed Bey, an ex-officer in the treasury (*mukabele-i piyade*) then working in the Imperial Council (*Divân-ı Hümayûn*), was appointed as the state contractor for the construction of the redoubt. Yani Kalfa was assigned as the architect of the construction. As explained by the Porte, the redoubt was to be built for ensuring the safety of the merchants and buildings in Hocabey.⁶⁸ During the first half of March 1765, Ahmed Efendi was already in Hocabey.⁶⁹ In another document dated 11th August, 1766, it was stated that the construction of the redoubt continued under the supervision of the state con-

⁶¹ BOA, C. ME. 7046.

⁶² BOA, A.DVNS.AHK OZSİd 16:194; BOA, C. EV 30038.

⁶³ BOA, C. AS. 14273.

⁶⁴ According to Kołodziejczyk, Mayak is a location on the left side of Dniester. Evliya Çelebi mentions it in his travelogue as an important pass. '...*Menzil-i Mayak Geçidi: Tatar kavmi bu mahalle Mayak geçivi derler. Turla kenârında bir mehib geçitdir kim deryâ-misâldir...*'. See Evliya Çelebi 2003: 192; Kołodziejczyk 2011, Document 4: 542 footnote 10.

⁶⁵ BOA, MAD 10208: 18–19.

⁶⁶ BOA, C. BLD 1865.

⁶⁷ BOA, A.DVN. MHM File (*Dosya*): 61, Document (*Vesika*): 2.

⁶⁸ BOA, C. NF 88; BOA, C. AS. 45944.

⁶⁹ BOA, A.DVNS.AHK OZSİd 16:97.



tractor Seyyid Süleyman. Thus, the construction of the redoubt, which had been begun by Ahmed Efendi, must have been finished by Seyyid Süleyman. Apart from the redoubt, a house was built for the imam of the mosque of Hocabey.⁷⁰ The whole construction work was carried out with the participation of five carpenters (*neccars*), forty wall builders (*duvarcı*), fifteen stonemasons, two lime mortar makers and twenty-four hod carriers (*sırık hammalı*) who were brought from Akkirman, Özi, Kili, Bender, and Moldavia.⁷¹

In June 1766, some of the remaining materials from the construction was left for the needs of redoubt and the rest was sent to Özi.⁷² The construction of the redoubt was completed by December 1766. For expenses of the construction, at least 14,000 piastres (*guruş*) were made in two payments. First 8,000 piastres (*guruş*), then 6,000 piastre (*guruş*) were sent by the Porte to the state contractors.⁷³

The Russian intelligence was informed about the construction of the Karakermen redoubt immediately after the beginning of the construction process. The Russians soon demanded an explanation about the fortress from the Porte on the grounds that the building of the redoubt was contrary to the Treaty of Belgrad signed in 1739. The Russians had already engaged in gathering intelligence activities about the redoubt. I. I. Islen'ev, who was appointed by the Russian governor in Kyiv, presented his observations in a report. This report corroborates the Ottoman sources in many ways and even contains much more detailed information about the physical qualities of the redoubt.⁷⁴

In the classical Ottoman military terminology a redoubt (*palanka*) is described as the smallest Ottoman frontier fort. Redoubts had simple wooden palisades with a ditch surrounded them. The description given by the Ottoman and Russian sources testify that the redoubt (*palanka*) of Karakermen was, in fact, something between a redoubt and a fortress. The use of stone construction together with wooden fortifications was a common practice on the 17th century Ottoman frontiers.⁷⁵

Hocabey began to provide income to the state treasury already at the beginning of December 1764. The treasury collected 1,043 piastres (*guruş*) from the duties such as the weighing (*kan-tar*), market toll (*bâc-ı bazar*), octroi (*ihtisab*) belonging to the jetty of Hocabey. Some of these revenues were spent on the expenses of state officials working in Hocabey⁷⁶. In July 1767, upon the request of the representatives of the merchants operating in the Hocabey, the Porte resolved to build a public bath (*hammam*), provided that its cost would not exceed 3,000 piastres (*guruş*), and it would be leased to the private individuals with an annual rent of 250 piastres (*guruş*).⁷⁷ Construction of the public bath extended into 1768.⁷⁸ In 1767, the Porte once again ordered the officials in Hocabey and its vicinity to take measures against the speculators who were trying to

⁷⁰ BOA, C. EV 30038.

⁷¹ BOA, C. AS. 3438.

⁷² BOA, C. NF 45.

⁷³ BOA, C. AS. 33499.

⁷⁴ Sapozhnikov 2016: 269; Krasnozhon 2019: 405; different reports were sent to Russian government apart from I. I. Islen'ev's, see *Khajibei* 1999: 34–35.

⁷⁵ Stein 2007: 49.

⁷⁶ BOA, C. ML 26869; BOA C. BLD 6369.

⁷⁷ BOA, C. BLD 6504.

⁷⁸ BOA, C. AS. 16281.



buy agricultural products and livestock of the Yedisán clan cheaply and prevent their transportation to Hocabey.⁷⁹

In 1768, a group consisting of 23 individuals requested permission to build shops and warehouses on the state land for themselves in exchange for paying an annual rent for the use of the land. In the previous year, permission had been granted for such a request. The Ottoman authorities ordered an investigation of the situation.⁸⁰ The available documents are silent about whether permission was granted eventually. At any rate, construction activities were going on in Hocabey. Between 1764 and 1767, a jetty, a mosque, a public bath, quarters for officers, a mill, bakeries, warehouses, an inn, a lighthouse, and a redoubt were built in Hocabey at a cost of at least 41,000 piastres (*guruş*).

C. HOCABEY IN THE PERIOD 1768–1791

On the eve of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768–1774, the task of the defence of Hocabey was delegated to İsmail Pasha, the former castellan of the fortress of Özi.⁸¹ Although the Zaporozhian Cossacks caused great damage to Hocabey and its surroundings in 1769 and 1770, they failed to capture the redoubt of Hocabey. Both Ottoman and Russian sources mention these skirmishes with the Cossacks. The redoubt of Hocabey was captured by the Russian army only in the last year of the war and, following the signing of peace, it was returned to the Ottoman Empire in 1775.⁸²

Soon after the return of Hocabey, Şerif Hasan Pasha, the castellan of the fortress of Özi, in a report he sent to Istanbul, made an overall assessment of the situation in the region of Özi, in which he devoted a special chapter to Hocabey. He stated that, located between Özi and Akkirman, Hocabey was open for development and fortifying Hocabey further would enhance the security of the region. To that effect, he suggested that 387 soldiers of the Kılburun fortress, which had been ceded to the Russians with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, be transferred to Hocabey, together with a regiment of Janissaries from the Özi fortress.⁸³

In an Ottoman document, pertaining to the year 1778, it was stated that the redoubt of Hocabey and its surroundings had been devastated during the war, a fact which was corroborated by the Russian sources. This destruction impeded the stationing of soldiers at the desired level in the redoubt of Hocabey. Thus, the Porte ordered the repair and renovation of the palisades and ditches around the redoubt under the supervision of the state contractor of the fortress of Akkirman. When it became clear that the bastions of Hocabey could not withstand the high calibre cannons that had been intended to be transported from fortress of Kılburun, it was decided to transfer lower calibre cannons from Özi.⁸⁴ At the same time, warehouses were active in Hocabey and had the capacity of receiving 8,000 kiles of grain in 1778.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ BOA, A.E, SMST III, 29050.

⁸⁰ BOA; C. ML. 30292.

⁸¹ BOA, A.E, SABH 24280.

⁸² Goncharuk 2015: 17; Sapozhnikov 2016: 270. For the retirement request of an Ottoman soldier wounded in these clashes, see. BOA, C. BH. 805.

⁸³ BOA, C. AS. 40372.

⁸⁴ BOA, C. AS. 38298; BOA, A.E SABH I 3752.

⁸⁵ BOA, A.E, SABH I 4498.



During these years, small Tatar communities who migrated from the Kuban region to the Ottoman lands after the Peace of Küçük Kaynarca stayed a while in Hocabey and a station (*menzil*) was established in Hocabey.⁸⁶ The Ottomans endeavoured to strengthen Hocabey militarily after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. In the years 1776 and 1780, 387 soldiers were stationed in Hocabey.⁸⁷ In 1781, however, number of soldiers in the redoubt was only 267, and they were defined as locals (*yerlül taifesi*).⁸⁸ In a very detailed document written in 1783 for the purpose of inspection, Hocabey was described as a redoubt attached to the fortress of Özi. There, it was stated that the commander of the redoubt had fled because of his debts. Then, there were 267 soldiers stationed in the redoubt of Hocabey (most likely the group of soldiers who had been brought from Kılburun), 183 of whom were cavalrymen, 17 were artillerymen, and the rest were common foot soldiers. It is also understood from this document that the government also sent 33 soldiers from Istanbul to Hocabey to support them.⁸⁹ In 1785, it was observed that there were exactly the same number of troops who were defined as locals in Hocabey.⁹⁰ Admiral José de Ribas, who seized Hocabey in 1789, wrote in his report that, during the fighting, 100 Ottoman soldiers were killed and 78 were captured alive.⁹¹

When the numbers given by Ottoman sources and de Ribas are evaluated together, it can be said that there was a military force of at least 300 stationed in Hocabey. As these soldiers were defined as locals who lived with their families, the military personnel and their families in Hocabey constituted a population of approximately 1,000 people. Apart from this military group, Russian sources stated that Greeks, Jews, and Moldavians also lived in Hocabey. In fact, one of the coffee houses mentioned in the Ottoman documents, belonged to a subject of Greek origin.⁹²

By far the most populous ethnic group living around Hocabey were the Tatars. The record about the Zaporozhian Cossacks who had captured 20,000 horses, 1,000 cattle, 4,000 sheep, and 180 camels in a raid on a village in the vicinity of Hocabey in 1769 should give a clue about the numbers of the Tatar population.⁹³ The main Tatar group living in the Özi region was the Yedisán clan of the Nogay Tatars. Ottoman documents attest that the products of Yedisán Nogays were transported from the port of Hocabey to Istanbul. The hinterland of Hocabey was the inhabited by the Yedisán clan. It is known that the population of the Yedisán Nogays there was of approximately 50,000 in 1760s and that they lived between the rivers Dniester (*Turla*) and Dnieper (*Özi*).⁹⁴ It is certain that some of the village settlements (*auls*) of the Yedisán Nogays were around Hocabey.⁹⁵

The population in Hocabey was dispersed with the beginning of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1787–1791. The war was waged on the initiative of the Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Pasha, the leader

⁸⁶ BOA, C. DH 13006; BOA AE SABH 16685.

⁸⁷ BOA, C. AS. 48375; BOA, C. AS. 54787.

⁸⁸ BOA, C. AS. 48376.

⁸⁹ BOA, C. AS 50632. This commander must have been Dizdar Osman, whose name was mentioned in the correspondence of 1782; see. BOA, C. AS. 49138.

⁹⁰ BOA, C. AS. 50923.

⁹¹ For the numbers given by Ribas, see, *Khajibei* 1999: 136–137.

⁹² Skinner 1973: 32.

⁹³ *Khajibei* 1999: 37–38; Skinner 1973: 32

⁹⁴ Kochekaev 1988: 98; According to Thunmann Yedisán Nogays were living between the rivers Bug and Dniester and the population of four Nogay Hordes (Yedisán-Yedişkul-Cemboyluk-Bucak) numbered 70,000 archers; Thunmann 1936: 49.

⁹⁵ *Khajibei* 1999: 39.



of the 'hawkish faction' at the Porte, for the purpose of recovering the Crimea, which had been annexed by the Russian Empire in 1783. Owing to its geographical location, Hocabey was at the centre of the theatre of war. In June 1789, Hüseyin Pasha, Commander-in-Chief of the Ottoman Navy (*Kapudan-ı Derya*), who went to Hocabey, wrote to the Ottoman administration that there was hardly a total of 70 people in Hocabey and that the redoubt had only four small-calibre cannons in usable condition. Therefore, he urged that the redoubt should be strengthened by making palisades and ditches, and reinforcements should be sent as soon as possible.⁹⁶ The information provided by Hüseyin Pasha reveals that the population of Hocabey had fled and been dispersed after the beginning of the war.

According to the Russian sources, the Ottomans, in line with the suggestion of Hüseyin Pasha, reinforced the redoubt in August 1789.⁹⁷ This late reinforcement, however, did not save Hocabey. The Russian troops captured Hocabey on the 14th of September, 1789. The Turko-Tatar period in Hocabey ended with this invasion. A few years later, the redoubt of Hocabey, the most significant heritage of the Turko-Tatar period, was demolished by the Russian authorities.⁹⁸

CONCLUSION

1. The area where modern Odessa is located was called Hocabey/Kocabey/Hocabay or Karakermen/Kızıkermen by the Ottoman Turks and Tatars.

2. No evidence has been found to substantiate the views frequently expressed in the Russian-language literature that Hocabey was named Hacıbey or Yenidünya by the Turks. Similarly, there is no evidence that Zaporozhian Cossacks, having fled from the Russian oppression, were settled in Hocabey.

3. Hocabey and its surroundings first came under the rule of the Crimean Khanate, after Bayezit II's Kili and Akkirman campaign of 1484, and then under Ottoman control after the 1538 Moldavian campaign of Süleyman I. When the region was ruled by the Crimean Khanate, a fortress named Karakermen was built there upon the orders of Mengli Giray Khan I.

4. Sometime before 1550, the fortress of Karakermen was destroyed and deserted because of Cossack raids coming from the Polish-Lithuanian territory. Large-scale sheep farming ended in the area as a result of the security problems caused by these raids.

5. Although the Porte planned to rebuild the fortress of Karakermen in 1583 and 1593, it could not be effected. Archive records dating back from 1583 and 1593, together with the observations of Evliya Çelebi, reveal that the Ottomans were aware of the economic and geopolitical importance of Hocabey and its vicinity.

6. As a result of the migration and settlement of the Nogays in the Bucak and Özi regions, a remarkable boom in agricultural production and livestock breeding occurred. Hocabey, the location of a natural port for the shipment of the products of the Nogay population, was the first place that came to the minds of Istanbul merchants and of the Porte.

7. The rebuilding activities started in Hocabey in 1764. Consequently, a mosque, a jetty, a large inn, lighthouse, barracks, bakeries, coffee houses, baths, and a redoubt were built there.

⁹⁶ BOA, C. AS. 11777.

⁹⁷ Krasnozhan 2019: 406.

⁹⁸ Goncharuk 2015: 18–19; for 1789; Krasnozhan 2010: 31; for 1795, see Murzakevich 1867: 595–597.



8. Approximately 300 military personnel were stationed in the redoubt of Hocabey in the Ottoman period. By considering this number with the other facts, it can be said that families of this military personal, merchants, and officials in the settlement numbered over 1,000 people.

9. Hocabey suffered a great blow in the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768–1774. The war disrupted the Ottoman efforts to revive Hocabey and its surroundings. Hocabey was annexed by the Russian Empire with the Treaty of Jassy in 1792. Thus, the Turko-Tatar period of Hocabey-Odessa came to an end.

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 C. BLD. [Cevdet Belediye] 1865; 4494, 6504, 6369.
 C. EV. [Cevdet Evkaf]: 30038.
 C. İKTS [Cevdet İktisat]: 856.
 C. ME. [Cevdet Maarif] 7046
 C. ML. [Cevdet Maliye]: 26869, 30047, 30648, 19906
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