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**THE VENETIAN TANA IN THE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
IN THE NORTHERN BLACK SEA REGION IN THE 1430s**

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This article is based on the Venetian documents coming from the chancery of the Venetian Senate and the notarial deeds drawn by the Venetian notaries Niccolò di Varsis and Benedetto di Smeritis in the 1430s in the Venetian trading station in Tana and it examines the system of international relations in the fifteenth century Mediterranean and Eastern Europe and the place of the Venetian colony in Tana in it. The Venetians and the Genoese began to explore the Black Sea region in the mid-thirteenth century, and by the mid-fourteenth century their colonial expansion in the area resulted in a network of colonies and trading stations. The international situation in the Black Sea region was very complex. The Venetians had to play a hard game among such political actors in the region as the Golden Horde (later the Khanate of Crimea), the Principality of Theodoro, the Ottoman Empire and the Genoese colonies. While Genoa in fact established a whole colonial empire on the shores of the Black Sea and Azov Sea, Venice had to rely on Tana and Trebizond; still Venice managed to maintain parity, to appropriately take care of the security of the colony, and at times to create for Genoa significant difficulties (as in the case of the rebellion in Cembalo). The sources speak rather in favor of improving of the trading situation in Tana in the first half of the fifteenth century. The number of ships only slightly decreased, and the number of visits of the Venetian *mudae* to Tana in this period increased significantly compared to the fourteenth century. The parking time in Tana in the first half of the fifteenth century was consistently longer than in Trebizond, Sinope, Caffa and other Black Sea ports, and the amount of the *incanti* grew steadily from 1436, reaching their peak in 1448; then they increased till 1452. Despite temporary bursts of instability, the trade grew till 1453 and was still surviving till the final conquest of the Italian colonies by the Ottomans in 1475.

Keywords: Black Sea, Caffa, colonies, Genoa, Tana, the Ottomans, the Principality of Theodoro, Venice

The present paper is devoted to the Venetian colony in Tana (contemporary Azov, embouchure of River Don, Azov Sea area¹) and its place in the system of international relations in the fifteenth century Eurasia. This study is mainly based on the documents of the Venetian Senate and the notarial deeds drawn in Tana by the Venetian notaries Niccolò di Varsis and Benedetto di Smeritis in the 1430s.

First of all, one has to say a few words about the geographical position of Tana. The embouchure of River Don, where Tana was located, used to be an important trading region connecting Europe and the Mediterranean with the Southern (India etc.), Central and Eastern Asia by the overland routes. The Venetians and the Genoese quickly drew their attention to the area of the Tatar Azaq (contemporary Azov) and began to sail in the area of the Sea of Azov at least starting from the thirteenth century [Брун, 98]. The benefits of the geographical position of Tana were obvious: on the one hand, it was situated deep enough into the territory of South-Eastern Europe and, on the other hand, it connected the

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Mediterranean to the Don and Volga region, and therefore to the inland Eurasia. The trade routes connected it to the cities of the Volga area and to the regions of Central and Eastern Asia through the steppes of the Golden Horde [Publici 2005, 435–484; Скржинская 1973, 103]. Although F. K. Brun suggested that the Italian merchants received the right to sail into the areas of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov by the grant of the chrysobull dated 1199 [Брун 1871, 11; Скржинская 1947, 224], this idea was criticized already in the nineteenth century and subsequently was rejected.

However, by the mid-thirteenth century the Italians began to explore the Black Sea region. Giovanni da Pian del Carpine met the Venetian, Genoese and Pisan merchants on his way to the Horde in Kiev in 1246 [Брун 1871, 18]. William of Rubruck found the Venetians in Soldaia in 1253. In 1255, when the father and the uncle of Marco Polo arrived to Soldaia, their older brother already had his home and office there [Heyd 1868, 133, II, 3]. Since then, the foreign policy of the Italian maritime trade republics, chiefly Venice and Genoa, depended on the interests of the Levantine trade more than ever [Волков 1860a, 151–152]. The Black Sea region became their transit point, and its importance increased over time. The recuperation of Constantinople in 1261 made it difficult for the Venetians to access the Black Sea [Nicol 1988, 179], and the Treaty of Nymphaeum together with the foundation of a new Genoese colony in Caffa in the Crimea in 1266 [Узлов 2004, 213] signaled the strengthening of the Genoese in the Black Sea region [Брун 1848, 715], and the decrease of the Venetian influence [Волков 1860a, 154]. The actual fall of the Latin Empire and the Treaty of Nymphaeum affected severely the Venetian commune [Брун 1871, 14–15]. The Venetians did not abandon the idea of conquering Constantinople back [Брун 1871, 10]; however, thinking realistically, for the time being they preferred to secure a guarantee of their stay in the Byzantine Empire [Nicol 1988, 166]. Consequently, the Venetian Doge Ranieri Zeno sent his ambassadors to Michael VIII in 1267, and on June 30, 1268, Byzantium and Venice signed a treaty [Nicol 1988, 191]. As Pisa lost its role in the Black Sea region after the battle of Soldaia [Брун 1871, 20], Venice and Genoa began struggling for dominance over it. The Venetians appointed in 1287 a consul to Soldaia [Брун 1871, 20–21], and this officer was considered to be a representative of the Republic in the whole Gazaria (later on the title of consul of “the whole Empire of Gazaria” belonged to the Venetian consul in Tana; the title itself appeared several times in the notarial deeds that I researched) [Байер 2001, 171]. In the thirteenth century, Soldaia played an important role in the maritime trade in bread, furs etc. between Russia and the Mediterranean [Карпов 2007, 421; Якубовский 1928, 53–77]. The influence of Venice in the region increased with the foundation of a *baiulatus* in Trebizond [Карпов 2007, 229–235, 262]. However, the main emerging commercial centers in the thirteenth century were the colonies in Caffa and Tana [Брун 1871, 20–21].

The author does not intend to produce here a comprehensive description of the history of Tana before the 1430s; equally he does not intend to cover the historiography on the problem of the foundation of the Venetian colony in Tana (see an article by S. P. Karpov about the early stages of the history of Tana [Карпов 1997, 4–18]). One should only outline some major milestones in the early history of the colony in order to create context for the study of the situation in the fifteenth century. The question of the date of the foundation of the Venetian trading station in Tana is highly controversial. We have a wide range of legendary, semi-legendary, fragmentary and not quite reliable information in this field. Some kind of settlement on the territory of contemporary Azov existed in the High Middle Ages, and the Genoese were trading in the embouchure of the River Don at least as early as 1280s [Карпов 1994a, 122]. Although the Venetians may have conducted regular trade in this zone, hired houses and other premises since the thirteenth century, the trading station itself, apparently, was founded in the early fourteenth century [Balard 1978, vol. I, 151; Волков 1860a, 153], since in 1325 the Venetian consul of Tana is already mentioned in the documents of the Senate [Карпов 1997, 7]. The Venetian trading station

in Tana was officially formed in 1332 under the contract signed by the Venetian ambassador with the Öz Beg Khan [Брун 1871, 22], who gave Venice an opportunity to maintain its position in the Black Sea trade and to compete with Genoa. In addition to the Venetian and Genoese trading stations in Tana, there were quarters with Greek, Slavic, Zikh and Jewish populations [Карпов 1997, 11]. After the death of Öz Beg Khan, his son Janibek Khan gave in 1342 at the request of the Venetian Senate a permission to divide the Venetian and Genoese quarters. The Venetians received a plot of land between Giudecca and the Genoese quarter [Карпов 1994, 122; Balard 1978, vol. 1, 75].

In 1343, a certain Andriolo Civrano with other Venetians killed in Tana a Tatar called Khoja Omer, which resulted in the destruction of Tana by Janibek Khan [Волков 1860a, 156]. European chronicles estimated the damage caused to the Genoese (whose main settlement in the area still was Caffa rather than Tana [Юревич 1863, 164]) as of 350,000 ducats. Most likely somewhat exaggerated in the sources, this figure still gives some idea of the trade turnover in Tana. After unsuccessful attempts of the Venetians to come to terms with the Tatars the Genoese ambassador Corrado Cigala uttered in the presence of Doge Andrea Dandolo a speech [Волков 1860b, 188–189], in which he proposed, together with Genoa, to claim damages to the Khan. This was followed by the signing of the treaty in 1344 [Волков 1860b, 193–194]; this treaty implied that the Italian ships will not sail to Tana and in general to the realms of Janibek, and that they will limit their Eastern trade to Caffa, where the Venetians were given both the right to have their consul and exemption from all taxes and tolls on the imported and exported goods. Thus, using the treaty with Venice, the Genoese, firstly, attracted to Caffa people and goods and, secondly, removed (albeit temporarily) the Venetians from the area of the Sea of Azov and continued to strengthen the network of their possessions in the Black Sea. The Italian trade in the Black Sea region was therefore carried out through the Genoese colonies of Pera and Caffa. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the politics of the Genoese in regard to the Sea of Azov remained the same as before: neither the Greeks nor the Italians (except the Genoese) were supposed to live in Tana [Ioannis Cantacuzeni... 1828, 190–193], and any Indian goods brought to Tana had to be unloaded at the port of Caffa [Волков 1860a, 161]. This meant that Caffa, the Genoese bulwark where they felt confident in terms of their military and economic positions and, consequently, tried to concentrate the main flows of people and goods, developed as an exclusive center of the Black Sea trade with Asia, while the Sea of Azov would remain closed to the non-Genoese ships and Tana would cease to be a trading point. All this could be regarded as an undoubted victory of the Genoese, because now they controlled the Venetian trade in the region, and the Genoese Caffa began to turn into the main economic center of the Northern Black Sea coast area. This victory led to the detriment of Venice, because the Genoese tended to consider the treaty as a precedent binding the Republic of St. Mark. Therefore, unilateral peace with Janibek Khan and the return of the Venetians to Tana in 1347 gave rise to enmity between the two republics [Брун 1848, 716–718] and the war of 1350–1355. John VI Kantakouzenos signed on May 6, 1352 the treaty in which the Greek vessels were forbidden to enter the Sea of Azov and the port of Tana without the consent of the Genoese; the Venetian vessels, however, were not formally mentioned in the treaty [Якобсон 1959, 230].

In 1355, the Republics reconciled, and the Venetians pledged not to sail to Tana for three years [Брун 1871, 22; Волков 1860a, 167–168]. The text of the treaty says: “De non navigando ad Tanam et de non eundo cum eorum navigiis ad ipsam Tanam nec ad partes Tane hinc ad tres annos a die approbationis huius contractus incipiendos. Elapsis vero ipsis tribus annis quelibet ipsarum parcium sit et esse intelligatur in statu et libertatibus omnibus eundi Tanam et navigandi et quelibet alia faciendi in quo erant ante presentem guerram et libere navigare possint” [Скржинская 1949, 266]. This was partly offset by the fact that the Tatars opened for Venice Porto Provato, Soldaia and Kaliera [Брун 1871,

23]. However, the attempt of the Venetians to restore their former offices in Soldaia in 1358 failed [Брун 1874, 40], and Berdibek Khan allowed the Venetians to return to Tana; this time the Genoese not only did not resist the Venetians, but also tried to remain in friendship with them, as one can see from the official correspondence of the 1361 [Брун 1871, 23]. Moreover, the Genoese Doge Gabriele Adorno (1363–1370) agreed to allow Venetian ships to the Crimean ports [Брун 1874, 41]. Perhaps the expressions of devotion in the letters of the Genoese Doge and his permission to visit the ports are explained by the Turkish menace that threatened the Italian trading stations in the Northern Black Sea region. The Tatars finally realized that they should strive to extract maximum benefits from the stay of the Italian merchants in the lands of the Golden Horde [Карпов 2001, 25] and already in 1359, four galleys were sent from Venice to Constantinople and Tana [Карпов 2001, 10]. The Genoese now had a distinct advantage in the Crimea; moreover, although the Venetians sent from time to time their consuls to Soldaia (the late thirteenth century) and to Caffa (the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), they actually had a permission from the Tatars to have a consul only in Tana [Скржинская 1973, 103]. Thus, Tana, along with the Trebizond, became the most important stronghold of Venice in the Black Sea area and a kind of a counterweight to the Genoese Caffa [Карпов 1978, 102]. In the fourteenth century, Tana was the key Venetian outpost in trade with Russia, Central Asia and China [Скржинская 1973, 105]. Through it the most important trade routes connecting Europe and Asia passed. Caravans of merchants, coming out of Tana, sailed on ships up the river to the Don and Volga watershed, passing it by overland routes, they got into the Sarai, then via the Volga they sailed to Astrakhan, where some were sent to Central Asia and China, and others, skirting the Caspian sea, headed to Persia [Heyd 1879, 376–377]. In a travelogue written by Ignatius Smolyanin (late fourteenth century), Tana was referred to as the most important post on the trade route from Russia to Constantinople, across the Oka, the River Don, Tana, the Crimea, Sinope and Samastro [Карпов 2007, 421]. Along with Venice and Genoa, other republics were engaged in the Black Sea trade. Thus, the Pisans founded their Portus Pisanus on the shore of the Azov Sea, near modern Taganrog [Borsari 1995, 481, 491–492; Брун 1848, 715]. Florentine merchants penetrated into the Black Sea after the Pisans, Venetians and Genoese. In the fourteenth century, however, the Florentine Republic still lacked navy. Nonetheless, according to Giovanni Villani, in the mid-fourteenth century Florentines visited Trebizond and Tana and in fact brought to Italy news about the plague in 1347 [Villani 1728, col. 964]. The Black Sea trade is described in the Florentine manuals of trade (*pratiche della mercatura*) [Pegolotti 1936, 29–32; Libro de mercatantie... 1936, 31]. The documents stored in the archive of Datini in Prato show persistent attempts of Florentine merchants to penetrate the Venetian and Genoese markets of the Black Sea in the end of the fourteenth century [Карпов 2007, 352]. In 1421, Florence acquired Porto Pisano and began to send caravans of galleys to the East, following the Venetian model [Карпов 2007, 352]. However, Florence had not been able, unlike Venice and Genoa, to gain a strong position on the Black Sea. Meanwhile, after the death of Berdibek Khan in 1359 the Genoese expanded their influence in the Crimea [Байер 2001, 175; Vasiliev 1936], built fortifications in Soldaia [Байер 2001, 176] and forged a treaty with Mamai against Tokhtamysh and the Principality of Theodore [Байер 2001, 192], and in 1380 they signed a treaty with the Tatars of Solkhat [Байер 2001, 194]. The War of Chioggia, however, partly strengthening the Genoese positions, exhausted both Venice and Genoa [Daru 1821a, 77]. Genoa gradually lost the trade monopoly position on the Black Sea, which it secured so skillfully before. Venice at this time tried to maintain regular diplomatic contacts with the Horde [Скржинская 1973, 110] and stick to neutrality towards the Turks, which is evident from the provisions given to the consul of Tana Leonardo Calbo and to the chief of the galleys of Romania on March 18, 1394 and prohibiting the transportation of people from the side of the Tatars to the Turks [Волков 1860b, 235–236].

By the early fifteenth century, the situation in the Black Sea deteriorated both for Venice and Genoa. The Black Death affected Tana and Giovanni Villani wrote that in the mid-fourteenth century only one person out of five survived there [Villani 1728, 964–965]. The population decline was accompanied by a commercial crisis of the mid-fourteenth century and several destructions of Tana [Daru 1821a, 196–197]. The defeat of Tana by Tamerlane in 1395 almost led Tana to its final decay, causing great damage not only to the city, but also to the vast rural district and to the entire system of trade relations in this zone [Ковалевский 1905, 143–144; Масловский 2009, 336]. The decline of the Mongolian States, the crisis of Eastern production, the campaigns of Tamerlane, the war with Genoa, the conflicts with Byzantium made the trade routes passing through the Black Sea region less reliable. In addition, by the early fifteenth century the connections of the Italian republics with their colonies of the Northern Black Sea region became complicated. The reason for this was the policies of the Tatar khans, who began to ally with the Turks against the Italians as the Golden Horde influence weakened [Узлов 2004, 219]. In August 1410, at the peak of the trading season, the Tatars attacked Tana, killed all the Venetians (more than 600 people) and looted their warehouses (the damage is estimated at about 200 thousand ducats) [Daru 1821a, 255]. The Venetian and Genoese trading stations in Tana were attacked and looted by the Tatars four times in a quarter of a century (in 1395, 1410, 1412 and 1418) [Balard 1978, vol. 1, 93]. The last attack on May 4, 1418 caused by the Tatars of Khan Kerimberdi, resulted in the death of the consul as well as many Venetians and Genoese and great destruction of both colonies [Martin 1993, 238–239; Doumerc 1988, 364–365]. Probably, however, the raid of 1418 was the last successful enterprise of this kind. Since then, the Venetians and Genoese built new, much more powerful fortifications (Pero Tafur speaks of “the castles”, of several complexes of the Genoese fortifications in Tana – “en el mar de la Tana tienen castillos” [Перо Тафур 2006, 13]); moreover, the new rulers of the Golden Horde and the Crimean Khanate realized that the income from trade could bring more revenue to their treasury than the destruction of the trading stations [Карпов 1999, 220–238]. Therefore, despite the raids, Tana was rebuilt and again filled its niche in trade with the East [Огородникова 1916, 82].

Speaking about the significance of Tana for the Genoese, L. P. Kolly noted [Codice diplomatico... 1879, 514–515], that at this time the colony has become a spot of great importance also for the Genoese and argued that in the fifteenth century Tana was the fourth Genoese Black Sea colony in terms of its importance, ranking below Caffa, Cembalo and Soldaia, but above Samastro, Vosporo, Savastopoli, Sinope and even Trebizond). However, for Venice in the fifteenth century Tana was much more important, since the Venetians had then only two colonies in the region [Карпов 1991, 192]. The St. Mark Republic's persistence in holding this point, even in spite of all the difficulties, is an additional evidence of its importance. In 1424–1425 Venice purchased Thessaloniki [Ducas 1834, 198], which was both a manifestation of the Republic's strength and its interest in the markets of Romania and the Black Sea. After the Venetians accepted the proposal of purchasing Thessaloniki in 1423, they automatically went to war with the Turks. This war lasted from 1423 till 1429 [Daru 1821b, 168]. However, despite the costs of the war, the above-mentioned raids and the population loss from the plague (in 1437, the Venetian Senate mentioned in its documents the plague epidemic in Constantinople and Trebizond and voted quarantine for the Venetian ships returning from there) gradual restoration of economic life and of trade routes linking Europe with Central Asia started in the second quarter of the fifteenth century [Барбаро и Контарини... 1971, 61].

A new period of economic growth in Venice started in the 1420s [Карпов 1990, 106–108]. In the 1430s, Venice was the undisputed leader of the Levantine market [Бродель 2007, 107–108]. This is the period of the true rise of Venice. However, at the same time, it is during this period that the attention of the Republic began to switch from the overseas trade to the Terraferma and the European politics. Francesco Foscari, the Doge of

Venice in 1423–1457, was a protégé of the “party of war”, as the previous Doge, Tommaso Mocenigo, warned the Venetians [Бродель 2007, 108–109]. Overall the fifteenth century was a turning point for the whole of Europe, including the Black Sea region. The Ottoman menace to Byzantium and to the Balkans, the collapse of the Golden Horde and the overall change in the balance of power in the Northern Black Sea region raised the question of the ways of further development for many European countries and, above all, for Venice and Genoa, whose welfare and economic leadership depended largely on trade relations with the East [Thiriet 1959, 141]. The change in the international situation has particularly affected the outposts of Italian trade in the East – their colonies in the Black Sea region. Additionally, new powers came into being in the system of international relations at that time: in 1428, Насі I Giray declared himself an independent Crimean Khan [Греков, Якубовский 1998, 297–312; Сафаргалиев 1996].

Apparently, by the early fifteenth century the Genoese realized the inevitability of significant political changes in the Black Sea region and tried to strengthen their own positions either by the adoption of the direct rule, or by picking up new allies (see below) [Близнюк 1998, 132]. Among the recently published documents of the *Diversorum, Filze* of the *Archivio Segreto* related to the Black Sea, there are documents linked to the history of Genoese-Lithuanian relations in the 1430s. Thus, in the petition of Dario Grillo to the Council, government and elders of Genoa dated 14.01.1443 [Карпов 1998, 36] Grillo mentioned that in 1430 he went as an ambassador of Caffa to the Grand Duke of Lithuania (*dux Russie*) Vytautas, who threatened Caffa with war, since the former ambassador of Caffa, Battista Gentile, promised Vytautas to raise the banners of Vytautas over Caffa and to establish his arms [*sic*], obviously having no mandates to do it. On the way to Lithuania, Dario Grillo was robbed by the Tatar Khan and lost goods, horses and money amounting as of 300 *sommi*. A council of *cives* and *burgenses* of Caffa specially assembled for this issue decided that the authorities of Genoa should determine the method of compensation, as stipulated in the following document stored in the archives of Genoa. It follows from the document that during the period of its highest power Vytautas tried to establish some kind of protectorate over Caffa, using such tools and attributes of feudal dependence as the establishment of his banners and coats of arms. Although the document does not say anything about the coin privilege, the recognition of feudal dependence could not bypass the matter of the coin regalia. However, again, the document shows Vytautas’s attempt to establish a protectorate over Caffa, but it says nothing about the real implementation of his plans. Kozubovsky thinks (although seemingly with no grounds) that the overstruck coins are evidence of this or other attempts to establish economic and political control over Caffa.

The year 1431 was marked by another crisis of the relations between Venice and Genoa. The Duke of Milan engaged the republics into a war [Dupuigrenet Desroussilles 1979, 111–122], which immediately affected their relations. For Venice the situation was aggravated by the fact that this year Tana withstood a serious attack of nomadic hordes [Doumerc 1988, 365–366; Карпов 2009, 166], while the plague stripped the trading post of its consul Vittorio Dolfin [Талызина 1998, 174]. However, given the complex and unstable international situation on the Italian Peninsula, the Black Sea colonies of Venice and Genoa were in no hurry to change their political orientation and to follow the line of the metropolis. For example, during the war, the Venetians and Genoese of Tana signed in 1431 an agreement to jointly oppose the Tatars, even though the two republics were at the state of war [Dupuigrenet Deroussilles 1979, 116]. The vice-consul of Tana appealed to the authorities of Caffa to send the ship to strike the Tatars from the rear. However, the Caffiotes decided to try to attack the Venetian Tana instead, and it was only the strong northern wind that prevented their ships from leaving the port of Caffa [Талызина 1998, 174]. The news of this treachery (probably in a somewhat exaggerated form) came to Venice thanks to a letter from the Venetian bailo in Constantinople, Martino da Mosto,

addressed to bailo and the chancellors of Negropont [Талызина 1998, 174]. Then the Venetians decided that the Genoese threat is more dangerous than the Tatar one. On July 5, 1431 they sent from Venice to Tana thirty additional crossbowmen with a monthly salary of 4 ducats [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 58, f. 65r–v]. On July 30, 1431 the Senate allocated to the consul of Tana 2000 ducats for the defense of the city from the Tatars, the threat from which was great [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 58, f. 69r–v], since Khan Edigey has just died and there was a war between Ulugh Muhammad and Kerimberdi, and there were fears that they could attack the Genoese Caffa. On August 7, Andrea Loredan, the captain of the galleys of Romania, got instructions from the Senate manual. He was instructed to check the rumors about the Genoese attack on Tana and, if the rumors about the Genoese attack on Tana were confirmed, he had to attack Caffa (this order suggests that his forces were sufficient for that), as well as to attack the ships of the Genoese, and to capture in Tana the Genoese fortifications. It was stressed that Loredan should act jointly and in full agreement with the consul of Tana and the Council of the Twelve. Loredan sailed towards Tana along the coast of Genoese Gazaria, but was caught in a storm and was shipwrecked, which was immediately noticed by the Genoese. Francesco Lomellino, consul of Caffa in the years 1431–1432, got on October 8, 1431 the news from the consul of Soldaia Colardo di Palavana; this news said that two Venetian galleys sailing to Tana via Constantinople or via Trebizond were wrecked at Cape Meganom [Карпов 1995, 14; Талызина 1999, 65]. Here we must make a few remarks. It is likely that what the sources are calling a “shipwreck” in fact was just a *relatively* bad weather, in which two galleys landed, and the other three went to their final destination. In any case, if part of the galleys went on, and their team was not prosecuted afterward, it implies that it was not a matter of life and death. In this case, we must note the striking shortsightedness of the Genoese captains and chiefly, the fact that they were unfamiliar with the Crimean coastline. Had the galleys landed in any part of the neighbouring coastline (and they certainly had the opportunity), they could have been remained unnoticed for a long time. Cape Meganom, however, is a place perfectly visible from a long distance and mostly treeless, thus it is perfectly visible from different points of the neighborhood, and the system of Genoese outposts in Gothic was very well arranged. Perhaps the Venetians were hoping for humane treatment from the part of the Genoese Caffiotes? Anyway, it is not surprising that the news quickly reached the consul of Caffa. The consul Lomellino summoned his council and listened to their opinions, and sent to Meganom Giovanni Spinola and Domenico dei Franci di Manieri, ordering them to collect all the property and goods of the Venetians and to transfer them to the disposal of the massaria of Caffa. They could not carry out the task, as Colardo had already collected all the Venetian property and stored it in Soldaia. Lomellino gave to the new consul of Soldaia Antonio di Montaldo instructions to carefully register all the property saved from a shipwreck, and to take it to the storage. Antonio collected the property that was worth about 900 silver *somme* of Caffa and sent it to the Caffiote consul. As revenge, the Venetians captured on December 24, 1431 the Genoese galleys next to the coast of Gazaria [Карпов 1998, 44]. This instability in the Black Sea area surely affected the economy and significantly lowered the amount of *incanti* in 1431. Moreover, while the *incanti* auction in 1431 was conducted, the way of the galleys was reduced, and they did not stop in Trebizond [ASV, Senato, Misti, LVIII, f. 116r–118r].

However, the revenge for the capture of the Venetian galleys came soon, and the Venetian corsairs began to attack the ships of the Ligurian Republic. In 1432, the podestà of Pera was even forced to temporarily prohibit to the Genoese ships to pass through the Straits, where the Venetian ships cruised [Карпов 1994b, 34]. In the summer of 1432, the Venetians had to deliver the necessary supplies to Tana as soon as possible and to find out whether Alexios, the Prince of Theodoro, would fulfill his obligations towards Venice [ASV, Senato, Misti, LVIII, f. 121v], since (quite obviously), in the confrontation between the Venetians and the Genoese, the Crimean Principality of Theodore was naturally on the Venetian side.

On June 1, 1432 the Venetian Senate decided to send galleys on June 25 of the same year. At the same time, the Doge of Venice said the following: “executione rerum, quas dominus Alexius, dominus Gothie, intendit facere dominio nostro” [Iorga 1899, 554]. The documents of the Venetian Senate demonstrate the Republic’s concern about the state of affairs in the Black Sea area. The amounts allocated by the Senate for the construction and repair of the fortifications in Tana tended to increase. On March 21, 1424, the Senate sent again 1,000 ducats for this purpose [ASV, Senati, Misti, LV, f. 5[6]v]. On June 28, 1424, 2,000 ducats were sent [ASV, Senato, Misti, LV, f. 36 [37]v]. On June 18, 1432, the Senate allocated another 2,000 ducats for the construction of fortifications in Tana [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 58, f. 133r–v]. Josaphat Barbaro later described these powerful fortifications, which inspired contempt of the Tatars (“Poh, chi ha paura fa torre”) [I viaggi... 1973, 83], but they made the life of the Italians safer.

Stefano Contarini, the captain of the Venetian galleys of Romania in 1432, was instructed to try to release the above-mentioned captured Venetians, and in case of refusal – to attack the Genoese [Sathas 1882, 193–197; Талызина 1998, 174]. Since the risks were high, the authorities decided to make the selection process for the young nobles willing to serve as crossbowmen (*ballistarii*) more rigorous. In the whole first half of the fifteenth century that year, the year 1432, was the only one when neither the results of the previous tests, nor the written evidence were taken into account [Талызина 1999, 65]. Besides the four galleys, Stefano Contarini commanded three extra ones. Contarini was ordered to visit the ports of Corfu, Modon, Coron, but not to stay in them for more than one day [Régestes des délibérations... 1961, № 2282]. In general, the text of the commission given to Contarini in 1432 is extremely dynamic [Талызина 1998, 174]; there are many phrases like “subito sine aliqua temporis perdition”, “quanto prestius facere poteris”, “accelerando viam tuam, quantum poteris”, and they really accompany almost every order. From Constantinople Contarini had to sail to Caffa and to take revenge on the enemy; however, at the same time he had to care about the safety of the galleys and the people [Талызина 1998, 175]. His stop in Caffa should not have exceeded six days; during this time, he was instructed to release as many Venetian prisoners as possible by hook or by crook, relying here more on their wisdom and experience than on the exact instructions of the Senate. After that, the caravan had to split into two parts; Contarini with four galleys had to go to Tana, causing on his way all possible damage to the hostile Genoese. Apparently, Contarini’s mission was not successful; in 1433 the Venetian prisoners were in Caffa; however, they were well treated, they were allowed to leave the prison for a few days and attend mass [ASV, Senato, Misti, LVIII, f. [203r], 207r; Régestes des deliberations... 1961, doc. 2311, 2319].

The Union of Venice with the Principality of Theodoro, which owned the port and fortress of Kalamita in the immediate vicinity of the Genoese Cembalo, caused extreme concern of the Genoese not without reason [Карпов 1995, 17]. The Venetians wove a network of diplomatic intrigues. In late February, 1433, there happened a big anti-Genoese rebellion in Cembalo. The Prince of Theodoro Alexios immediately used this chance. The Greek Orthodox population sided with him and refused to recognize the Genoese administration [Карпов 1995, 16]. In addition, Alexios had seized a Genoese ship there with alum [Карпов 1990, 139]. So as to gain back Cembalo, the Genoese had to send a fleet under the command of Carlo Lomellino. The Venetians, apparently, were happy: now the Genoese Caffiotes were not able to attack Tana in the near future. On May 16, 1433 the Venetian Senate agreed to send three galleys to Romania: one had to go to Trebizond, the other two had to stay for 14 days in Tana and for a few hours in Caffa. The chief of the first one was Giacomo Barbarigo, the second one – Leone Diedo, the third one – Francesco Manolesso [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 58, f. 203r–204v].

Thus, the Venetians managed to deter the Genoese using the Theodorites. At the same time, the conflict of the Genoese and the Principality of Theodoro resulted in sending to

Crimea the expedition under the command of Carlo Lomellino [Agosto 1981, 103–108; Andreescu 2006, 259–272]. The fleet of Lomellino pacified the rebellion, repulsed Theodorites from Cembalo and Kalamita, but soon tried to attack Solkhat, which resulted in a crushing defeat of the Genoese army [Мыц 2000, 330–359; Мыц 2009, 153–179]. Battista Fornari, the Genoese consul in Tana in 1434, actually showed no hostility towards the Venetians, most probably because of the growing strength of all the Italians. In 1434, the Ottoman threat was strongly felt in the Black Sea region. This is evidenced by the oath of allegiance of the ruler of Moldova to the king of Poland [Грамота Илиаша воеводы... 1860, 323–330]. In these years the Venetians sought to establish communication with Moncastro, where communication was carried out with the Moldovan-Wallachian and Polish-Lithuanian lands. In 1435–1437 it was supposed to send one of the gales of Romania – the Black sea to Moncastro with parking for 15 days [Карпов 1994b, 58]. Generally the Polish king, as well as the Hungarian one, was interested in this area. However, neither they nor the Grand Duke of Lithuania, in the end, could do anything against the growing Ottoman menace.

On April 13, 1434, the Venetian Senate raised an issue that the consul of Tana had been constantly asking for funding. Indeed, it seems that the (already) regular 2,000 ducats were needed, but the Senate decided not to pay them and to take the money necessary for the salary of the crossbowmen of Tana from the Venetian bailo of Constantinople [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 59, f. 42v]. Some dispositions were also made regarding the galleys of Romania. The goods were to be shipped by July 22 and the galleys were to sail on July 25 [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 59, ff. 52r–53v]. On May 28, 1434, the Venetian Senate made dispositions regarding the equipment of the galleys of Romania. The chiefs of the galleys had to load in Tana the goods intended for sale in Constantinople. The patron of the first galley was Pietro Zeno, of the second one – Domenico Michel, the third – Bertuccio Dolfin. Apparently, the galleys sailed in July or even later [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 59, ff. 52r–53v].

The Ottoman menace became more and more tangible, and the Venetians established relations with the Moldavian rulers in 1435 [Régestes des deliberations... 1961, doc. 2381, a. 1435, Apr. 19]. The connection of Venice and Genoa with its colonies in the Northern Black Sea region was now at times carried out through the Holy Roman Empire and the Kingdom of Poland, bypassing the Ottoman obstacles. However, only certain groups of people (ambassadors, messengers, and officers) could go this way, not the big amounts of goods. The data of the Senate confirm that the voltage regarding Tana grew. Moreover, Crimea experienced a bitter plague in 1435. Escaping from the pandemic, the residents of Caffa left for Moncastro and other cities [Карпов 1995, 15–16], including, of course, Tana. On June 1, 1435, the Venetian Senate decided to suspend all new expenses so as to find the money needed for the immediate recruitment of twenty-five crossbowmen, which were to go to Tana with the consul [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 59, f. 112r–v].

In 1436 Genoa came out of the power of the Duke of Milan, under which it was from 1421 to 1435 [Negri 2003, 549–558]. The Republic regained sovereignty, Venice and Florence becoming the guarantors of its freedom and independence [Negri 2003, 549–558], and Tommaso Campofregoso (1436–1442) being the new Doge. This was clear evidence of some improvement in relations between Venice and Genoa. At the same time, the Venetian Senate noted that, contrary to its resolutions, over the past few years, the galleys were not sent to Tana; the Senate began to take measures to ensure that the navigation to the Azov Sea region would be carried out, despite all the difficulties. Instructing the Commission to analyze the situation, the Senate ordered the chiefs of the galleys and the captain to go immediately to Tana under the threat of a fine of 500 ducats each [Карпов 1994b, 58]. On May 21, 1436 the authorities gave another order on sending the galleys to Romania and Tana. The patron of the first galley was Taddeo Giustiniani, of the second one – Lodovico Rosso, of the third one – Dardi Moro, and of the fourth one –

Andrea Barbo [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 59, ff. 158r–159v]. However, on July 17, 1436, it became clear that the chiefs of the galleys of Tana delayed their departure. B. Doumerc thought that the frequent delays of the galleys (up to 8 weeks) should be seen as a symptom of the structural crisis of the Venetian merchant fleet. The authorities of Venice became aware of the delay and, since half a month ago (June 28, 1436), the Senate stated that the galleys had not gone to Tana already for two years. Then it was decided to take appropriate measures to resume navigation [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 59, f. 164r–v] and to order to the chiefs of the galleys to sail under penalty of a fine of 500 ducats from the captain and from each of the chiefs [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 59, f. 166v].

On April 27, 1437, the Venetian Senate repeated its disposition saying that the bailo of Constantinople had to pay the salary to the garrison of crossbowmen in Tana so as to support and protect it [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 60, f. 8r–v]. At the same time, the Senate continued to play the card of the Principality of Theodoro. The bailo of Venice in Constantinople sent a letter to Prince Alexios through Moncastro around the years 1436–1441, that makes clear that Kalamita again had been under the rule of the Principality of Theodoro (this meant that Theodorites returned to the fortress after Lomellino). In 1436–1437, there were demonstrations in Caffa against the tax collection [Карпов 1995, 16]. Perhaps they were provoked by the joint efforts of the Venetian agents and the Principality of Theodoro. Relations between Venice and Genoa also deteriorated significantly because a group of Genoese merchants established control over the alum mines in the Aegean basin in 1437 [Шитиков 1969, 62]. It is imperceptible, however, that this deterioration of relations was reflected in Tana. The Genoese consul of Tana (and that was Paolo Imperiale in 1438) showed no signs of hostility.

In the same year 1438, after the riots in Caffa were suppressed, the Caffiote navy went to attack Theodoro [Карпов 1995, 16]. In Tana itself life flowed relatively peacefully at this time, but the Venetian galleys again did not go to the trading station that year [Карпов 1994a, 58]. In 1438 the Tatars at the head of the Kichik-Mehmed, his mother and his noyons approached Tana during the celebration of Nowruz (though, apparently, without militant intent), and the Venetians sent an embassy consisting of Josaphat Barbaro, Borano Taliapetra (translator of the curia), and the Greek John (consul's *bâtonnier*) bearing the gifts [I viaggi... 1973, 74–76]. The decree of the Venetian Senate dated March 28, 1439 states that Marco Diedo, who was elected consul of Tana, was forced to stay in Caffa because the galleys did not reach Tana. It was decided to give him half of the money owed to him for the duration of his stay in Caffa [ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 60, f. 133v]. I must say that the situation in which the new consul could not get to Tana was almost normal: for example, Arsenio Duodo (elected consul of Tana), Josafat Barbaro and Niccolò de Varsis (the consul's chaplain, notary and chancellor) had to stay in Constantinople in the winter of 1436.

In 1439, the Genoese authorities once again resorted to extraordinary measures to save and pacify the rebellious Cembalo [Карпов 1995, 16]. The revolt in the city, most likely, was again inspired by the Venetians and the Theodorites, because these years were marked by a new clash of merchant interests [Близнюк 1998, 130]. However, the new Genoese consul of Tana, Theodoro Fieschi, was sent to the colony in 1441, and according to the sources it is impossible to trace that at this time there was some strong hostility or tension between the Venetian and Genoese residents of the trading station. Rather, on the contrary: throughout the 1430s the Genoese residents of Tana actively used the services of Venetian notaries, and the Genoese and the Venetians invited each other as witnesses, while drawing the testaments and other notarial deeds.

Further history of the region is marked by the strengthening of the Ottoman menace. Following the fall of Constantinople, on November 15, 1453 the Genoese Senate transferred all its possessions in the Black Sea to the Bank of St. George [Волков 1872, 110–111]. Around the same time, an agreement was signed between Mehmed II and Hacı I Giray [Pistarino 1872, 114]. The Protectors of the Bank of St. George elected in 1455 Domenico

Pellerano as a consul of Tana, but he (as well as most of the other nobles, elected by the consuls of the agencies in Gazaria) refused to sail [Волков 1872, 117–118]. At the same time, a Genoese castle called Baziar (Batiario) on the shore of the Azov Sea and belonging to Ilarione Marini, was seized in his absence by captain Giovanni Bosio, the leader of the mercenaries, whom the owner entrusted with the protection of the castle. Ilarione Marini had to regain his property by force, using two units of the *stipendiarii* of Caffa under the leadership of Giacomo di Capua and Antonio Gentile. One of the galleys rebelled and disappeared in Trebizond, but eventually the castle was repulsed [Волков 1872, 128; Брун 1872, 293]. In 1456 Ambroggio Giambone was elected consul in Tana [Волков 1872, 128]. The successor of Hacı I Giray, Meñli I Giray, was on good terms with the Genoese, which assisted him in the struggle for the throne [Волков 1872, 143].

To sum up, in the fifteenth century the international situation in the Black Sea region was very complex. However, while Genoa had a whole network of colonies, a true colonial empire, and was still forced to fight for dominance in the Black Sea, Venice had only Tana and Trebizond, but still managed to maintain parity, and at times to create for Genoa significant difficulties (as in the case of Cembalo); in this case the walls of Caffa, Soldaia and Cembalo say more not about the strength, but rather about the weakness and danger from which one needs to defend oneself. Apparently, the fact that after 1418 and before the fall of the Tana the Tatars could never loot the colony implies that not only the Tatar khans have come to the idea that taxing commerce is better than robbery, but the Venetians also appropriately took care of the security of the colony. Despite temporary bursts of instability, the trade grew. “Even when there was a lot of noise on the stage, the profitable game went on as usual” [Бродель 2007, 78]. In his monograph dedicated to the Venetian navigation, S. P. Karpov provides the tables of the visits of the galleys into the Black Sea and Azov Sea ports for the years 1320–1452 [Карпов 1994b, 55]. We will not consider here the complex issue of the crisis of the Venetian merchant fleet, elaborated by B. Doumerc.

Let us just say that this data speaks rather in favor of improving of the trading situation in Tana in the first half of the fifteenth century. The number of ships only slightly decreased (110 in 1400–1452 against 125 in 1356–1399), and the visit of the Venetian *mudae* to Tana in this period (54 times) increased significantly compared to the periods of 1320–1350 and 1356–1399 (17 and 36 times respectively). The parking time in Tana in the first half of the fifteenth century was consistently longer than in Trebizond, Sinope, Caffa and other Black Sea ports (the average 9 to 14 days compared to 5–10, 1–2 and 1–2 days, respectively) [Карпов 1994b, 64–65]. The amount of the *incanti* also grew, being the indicator of the success of trade [Карпов 1994b, 64–65]. These indicators were negative in 1418–1420, 1425–1428, 1430–1434 and 1436 years; then they gave way to steady growth, which reached its peak in 1448. The *incanti* stabilized with a clear tendency to increase from 1437–1438 till 1452 years, affecting the successful trade in Tana and Trebizond.

¹ Following the tradition established in historiography, the author treats the area of the Sea of Azov as part of the Northern Black Sea region.

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Є. О. Хвальков

Венеціанська Тана в системі міжнародних відносин у Північному Причорномор'ї в 1430-их роках

Ця стаття базується на венеціанських документах із канцелярії Венеціанського Сенату та нотаріальних актах, складених венеціанськими нотаріусами Нікколо ді Варсисом та Бенедетто ді Смерітісом у 1430-их роках у венеціанській факторії в Тані. Стаття вивчає систему міжнародних відносин у XV столітті у Середземномор'ї та в Східній Європі і місце в ній венеціанської колонії в Тані. Венеціанці та генуезці почали досліджувати причорноморський регіон в середині XIII століття, а до середини XIV століття їхня колоніальна експансія в цьому районі призвела до створення мережі колоній і факторій. Міжнародна ситуація в Чорноморському регіоні була дуже складною. Венеціанцям довелося вести дипломатичну гру серед таких політичних акторів регіону, як Золота Орда (згодом Кримське ханство), Князівство Феодоро, Османська імперія та генуезькі колонії. У той час, як Генуя фактично створила цілу колоніальну імперію на берегах Чорного та Азовського морів, Венеція повинна була покладатися на Тану і Трєбизонд. Однак Венеції вдалося зберегти паритет, належним чином дбати про безпеку колонії та часом створювати для Генуї значні труднощі (як у випадку повстання в Чембало). Незважаючи на тимчасові сплески нестабільності, торговельна активність зростала до 1453 р. і продовжувала виживати до остаточного завоювання італійських колоній османами у 1475 році.

Ключові слова: Венеція, Генуя, Кафа, князівство Феодоро, колонії, османи, Тана, Чорне море

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Венецианская Тана в системе международных отношений в Северном Причерноморье в 1430-е гг.

Эта статья основана на венецианских документах из канцелярии венецианского Сената и нотариальных актах, совершенных венецианскими нотариусами Никколо ди Варсисом и Бенедетто ди Смеритисом в 1430-х годах в венецианской фактории в Танае. Статья исследует систему международных отношений в XV веке в Средиземноморье и Восточной Европе и место в ней венецианской колонии в Танае. Венецианцы и генуэзцы начали исследовать черноморский регион в середине XIII века, а к середине XIV века их колониальная экспансия в этом районе привела к созданию сети колоний и факторий. Международная ситуация в Черноморском регионе была очень сложной. Венецианцам пришлось вести дипломатическую игру с такими акторами, как Золотая Орда (позднее Крымское ханство), Княжество Феодоро, Османская империя и генуэзские колонии. В то время как Генуя фактически создала целую колониальную империю на берегах Черного и Азовского морей, Венеция должна была полагаться на Тану и Трапезунд. Тем не менее, Венеции удалось сохранить паритет, должным образом заботиться о безопасности колонии и порой создавать для Генуи значительные трудности (как в случае восстания в Чембало). Несмотря на временные всплески нестабильности, торговая активность возрастала до 1453 года и продолжала выживать до окончательного завоевания итальянских колоний османами в 1475 году.

Ключевые слова: Венеция, Генуя, Каффа, Княжество Феодоро, колонии, османы, Тана, Черное море

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