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СБОРНИК С ДОКЛАДИ ОТ КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ, ПОСВЕТЕНА НА 830 ГОДИНИ
ОТ ВЪСТАНИЕТО НА БРАТЯТА ПЕТЪР И АСЕН, НАЧАЛОТО НА ВТОРОТО
БЪЛГАРСКО ЦАРСТВО И ОБЯВЯВАНЕТО НА ТЪРНОВО ЗА СТОЛИЦА НА
БЪЛГАРИЯ И 780 ГОДИНИ ОТ ЛЕГИТИМНОТО ВЪЗОБНОВЯВАНЕ НА
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THE PRINCIPALITY OF VIDIN AND THE TATARS OF THE GOLDEN HORDE (END OF THE 13th – BEGINNING OF THE 14th CENTURY)

Aleksandar UZELAC

The important role that the Tatars played in the history of Northwestern Bulgarian lands was recognized in historiography almost a century ago, when P. Nikov published his widely acclaimed study about the history of the Principality of Vidin¹. In recent decades, many researchers have made valuable contributions to the topic². Nonetheless, the nature of the relations between the Tatars and the Principality of Vidin remains somewhat obscure. This may be, as it is usually the case, attributed to the lack of sources. Practically everything we know about the Tatar influence in Bulgarian northwest at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the next century comes from foreign observers that reflect neither Bulgarian nor Tatar point of view.

An important place among them belongs to Serbian Archbishop Danilo II and his biography of King Stephen Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321). It is composed between 1324 and 1337 and preserved in the compendium titled *The Lives of Serbian kings and Archbishops*³. Intriguing details about Bulgarian-Tatar relations can be also found in the voluminous work of Mamluk historian Baybars al-Manṣūrī, written with the help of his Christian secretary approximately at the same time, around 1325⁴. Finally, crucial information about the contacts between the Principality of Vidin and the Tatars, albeit fragmentary, is preserved in an anonymous Latin text, a political treatise conventionally titled *Description of Eastern Europe (Descriptio Europae Orientalis)*⁵. Written in late 1310 or early 1311, probably by a cleric from the Papal circles in Avignon, the treatise contains a short chapter about Bulgaria and Ruthenia. It is based upon the information coming from mendicant circles in Hungary⁶. Therefore, it is not surprising that, from

¹ *Ников, П.* История на Видинското княжество до 1323 година. – Годишник на Софийския университет. Историко-филологически факултет, 18 (1922), 1–124.

² *Božilov, I.* Zur Geschichte des Fürstentums Vidin. – *Byzantinobulgarica* 4 (1972), pp. 113–119; *Коларов, Х.* Българо-сръбски отношения при Тертеровци. – В: *България в света от древността до наши дни*, Т. I. София 1979, 213–221; *Петкова, И.* Българският северозапад в политическия живот на Балканите към края на XIII век. – Трудове на Великотърновския университет „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“, 20/3 (1983), 11–39; *Павлов, П.* Монголотатари на българска военна служба в началото на XIV век. – *Военноисторически сборник*, 2 (1987), 112–120; *Кръстев, К.* Българското царство при династията на Тертеревци (1280–1323). Пловдив, 2011, 25–33.

³ *Архиепископ Данило и други.* Животи кралева и архиепископа српских, ed. Ђ. Даничић. Загреб 1866, 102–161. Besides the Vita written by Danilo, the biography of Milutin has been preserved in another two redactions. First is preserved in the forged so-called Uliar Charter, allegedly dating from 1317, but composed at the beginning of the fifteenth century, *Мошин, В.* Крал Милутин според неговата биографија од Данило II, неговото „Житие по свиток“ и неговата автобиографија. – In: *Споменици за средновековната и поновата историја на Македонија*, Т. II, Скопје 1977, 309–414. Second redaction, conventionally titled „Short biography“, can be found in several sixteenth century manuscripts. It is based on the text of the Uliar charter and therefore it is of no interest for the purpose of this text. Its text is published in: *Убинарин, М.* Зборник са кратим житијем краља Милутина. – *Прилози за књижевност, језик, историју и фолклор*, 71 (2005), 53–72.

⁴ *Тизенгаузен, В. Г.* Сборник материалов, относящихся к истории Золотой Орды, Т. I: Извлечения из арабских источников. Санкт-Петербург, 1884, 76–123. [*История Казахстана в арабских источниках*. Том I: Сборник материалов, относящихся к истории Золотой Орды. Извлечения из арабских сочинений собранные В. Г. Тизенгаузенем, пер. и доп. издание, edd. Б.Е. Кумеков, А.И. Муминов. Алматы, 2005, pp. 86–116].

⁵ *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis: „Imperium Constantinopolitanum Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Ruthenia, Ungaria, Polonia, Bohemia anno MCCCVIII exarata*, ed. O. Górka. Cracoviae, 1916, 37–43.

⁶ In the introductory study that followed his editio princeps of the source, a Polish historian O. Górka concluded that the text was written in 1308, probably by an anonymous Dominican in the service of the titular Emperor of Constantinople Charles of Valois, brother of the French king Philippe IV the Fair, *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, pp. i–xlix. New

the viewpoint of the author, Ruthenia is equated with the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia and Bulgaria with the Principality of Vidin, two states that lied closest to Hungarian borders. A clear indication of it is contained in the author's words that "Bulgaria is a great empire for itself. Its capital is great and fortified city of Vidin. The emperors of that empire are called Shishmans".⁷

This sentence makes an unmistakable reference to the founder of the Principality of Vidin – prince Shishman and his son and successor Michael. A Bulgarian aristocrat of Cuman origin, Shishman probably stemmed from the ranks of local nobility⁸. In this aspect, it is important to note that the strong presence of Cuman immigrants in Northwestern Bulgaria is recorded as early as at the end of the first half of the thirteenth century⁹. The Principality of Vidin emerged as a separate political entity in the years that followed the civil war in Bulgaria and the so-called "Uprising of Ivailo" (1277–1280), but Shishman was a continuator of the old separatist traditions in the Bulgarian Northwest. During the first two decades of the second half of the thirteenth century, they were embodied in the person of Jacob Svetoslav, who, like Shishman, was also of foreign origin, although not Cuman, but Russian. During his eventful career, Jacob Svetoslav acknowledged the supremacy of the Hungarian crown, but remained independent from the Empire of Tarnovo and in order to show his aspirations, he even took the imperial title¹⁰. In a similar way, although with different kind of external support, Shishman managed to secure his independence with respect to Bulgarian central government in Tarnovo and emperor George I Terter (1280–1292).

It is not known whether the territory of Shishman corresponded with the one ruled by his predecessor, but although his state was smaller in size than lands under the control of Tarnovo, it undoubtedly represented conclusions about the date of the composition and the author of the text are presented in: *Анонимов опис источне Европе*, ed. Т. Живковић et al., Београд, 2013, 13–90. Sufficient to say here is that the Description was definitely written after August 15, 1310, because chronologically the last event mentioned in this text is the fall of the island of Rhodos, together with its capital in the hands of the knights hospitalers, *Failler, A.* L'occupation de Rhodes par les Hospitaliers. – *Revue des Etudes byzantines*, 50 (1992), pp. 113–135. As for the alleged affiliation of the author to Charles of Valois, it needs to be noted that he treated with equal sympathy the brother of the French king (although not completely familiar with his plans against Constantinople) and Hungarian ruler Charles Robert (1308–1342), both considered to be faithful sons of the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, he showed open enmity to Serbian king Milutin, who „betrayed“ his promises about the Church Union in late 1308. Charles of Valois, whose representatives made an alliance with Milutin in the summer of the same year, counted the Serbian king as an ally in his crusading plans. At the instigation of his brother, Philippe IV confirmed that agreement in 1313. The striking difference between the author of the description and Charles of Valois with respect to the Serbian king convincingly shows that the former could not have been in the service of the latter. Both above mentioned documents, the alliance agreement between Charles and Milutin, and its confirmation by Philippe IV, are published in: *Mavromatis, L.* La Fondation de l'Empire Serbe: le kralj Milutin. Thessalonique, 1978, pp. 123–135.

⁷ Bulgaria est unum imperium magnum per se. Sedes autem imperii dicti est apud budinium, ciuitatem magnam. Imperatores autem eiusdem imperii [omnes] vocantur cysmani, *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, p. 38.

⁸ *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri IV*, T. I, ed. L. Schopen, Bonnae 1828, p. 175; *Ников, П.* История на Видинското княжество, 43–44; *Moravcsik, Gy.* Byzantinoturcica, t. II: *Sprachreste Der Turkvolker in Den Byzantinischen Quellen*. Leiden, 1983, p. 277; *Стоянов, В.* История на изучаването на Codex Cumanicus. Кумано-печенежки антропоними в България през XV век. София, 2000, pp. 196–197.

⁹ In a letter of Hungarian king Bela IV (1235–1270) sent to Pope Innocent IV in 1247 (1243–1254), it is stated that the king settled knights Hospitallers in the Land of Severin, „in confinio Cumanorum ultra Danubium et Bulgarorum“, *Theiner, A.* *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*. T. I, Roma, 1859, p. 231. For the dating of the letter: *Senga, T.* IV. Béla külpolitikája és IV. Ince pápához intézett 'tatár-levele'. – *Szazadok*, 121 (1987), pp. 583–612.

¹⁰ *Ников, П.* Българо-унгарски отношения от 1257. до 1277. г. – Сборник на Българска академия на науките, 11 (1920), 1–200; *Petkova, I.* Nordwestbulgarien in der Ungarischenpolitik der Balkanhalbinsel im 13. Jahrhundert. – *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 1 (1983), pp. 57–65; *Димитров, Хр.* Българо-унгарски отношения през Средновековието. София, 1998, 157–175; *Николов, Г.* Имперската алтернатива в политическия живот на Българското царство през XIII–XIV в. – In: *Личността в историческото развитие. Алтернативата в историята*, София, 1995, 115–117.

much more than a mere separatist region. According to the words of Serbian archbishop Danilo, Shishman ruled „many Bulgarian lands“¹¹. These included not only the western parts of the Danubian plain around Vidin, but also large portions of modern Eastern Serbia: the region of lower Timok, area around Pirot in the Valley of Nišava River, as well as the city of Nish¹². During the age of Shishman and his son Michael, Vidin took the role of political, economic and cultural rival of Tarnovo and in the sources of the fourteenth century it has been described as a great, populous and glorious city¹³.

According to the Description of Eastern Europe, Bulgaria has been under the sway of Hungarian kings “for a long time and when Hungary weakened, the Tatars took control of that empire and subjugated it as a tributary state. And it now pays tribute to the Tatars“¹⁴. Although some historians supposed that Shishman enjoyed Tatar support from the very beginnings of his reign¹⁵, these words should not be taken for granted. During the last three decades of the thirteenth century, the Tatar influence in the Balkans was manifested mainly through the activities of Nogai. A member of the side branch of the Chingisid family, Nogai received the western domains of the Golden Horde as his „ulus“ approximately between 1267 and 1270. His core territories lied in the Danube-Dniester interfluvium and since mid-seventies of the thirteenth century the town of Sakchi (*Isaccea*) in the Danube delta served as his unofficial capital¹⁶. In the following years, Nogai managed to extend his influence in the Balkans. George I Terter became his dependent after 1285¹⁷ and c. 1290 the Tatars acquired the western parts of the Wallachian plains (the last mention of Hungarian control over the strategic fortress of Severin dates from 1291)¹⁸. This is important to note for at that moment the whole area between the southern slopes of the Carpathians and the Lower Danube came under the Tatar sway and Nogai’s nomadic empire thus became the neighbor of the principality of Vidin. Considering the time and extent of the Tatar influence on the left bank of the Danube, it is logical to assume that Shishman acknowledged Nogai’s supremacy approximately at the end of the eighth decade of the thirteenth century, but not before that date.

¹¹ *Архиепископ Данило*, Животи краљева и архиепископа српских, с. 117

¹² *Ников, П.* История на Видинското княжество..., 51–57; *Овчаров, Н.* Исторически приноси към старобългарската и старославянската епиграфика и книжовност. София, 2006; *Узелац, А.* Под сенком Пса. Татари и јужнословенске земље у другој половини XIII века. Београд, 2005, 214–215, п. 85.

¹³ *Дуйчев, Ив.* Из старата българска книжнина, Т. II: Книжовни и исторически паметници от Второто българско царство. София, 1944, с. 170, 230; *Поливянни, Д.* Средновековният български град през XIII–XIV век. София, 1989, с. 100. *Аризанова, С.* Селища и селишна мрежа във Видинската област (края на XIII–XIV век). – *Bulgaria Mediaevalis*, 3 (2012), 145–146.

¹⁴ Post modum autem rex Hungarie Andreas [=Andrew II, 1205-1235] dictum imperium sibi subiecit et per longum tempus fuit sub dominio regis Ungariae, vaccillante autem Ungaria, tartari preoccupaverunt dictum imperium et fecerunt eum sibi tributarium; nunc servit tartaris sub tributo, *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, pp. 39–40.

¹⁵ *Ников, П.* История на Видинското княжество, с. 48.

¹⁶ *Веселовский, Н. И.* Хан из темников Золотой орды. Ногай и его время. Петроград, 1922; *Почекаев, Р. Ю.* Цари Ордынские. Биографии ханов и правителей Золотой Орды. Санкт Петербург, 2010, 47–71; *Узелац, А.* Под сенком Пса..., 121–183.

¹⁷ *Georges Pachymérès.* Relations Historiques, III, ed. A. Failler. Paris, 1999, pp. 290–291; *Павлов, Пл.* Татарите на Ногай, България и Византия (около 1270–1302 г.). – In: Българите в Северното Причерноморие. Т. IV. Велико Търново, 1995, 125–126.

¹⁸ *Papacostea, Ș.* Between the Crusade and the Mongol Empire: The Romanians in the 13th Century. Cluj-Napoca, 1998, pp. 192–193; *Achim, V.* Istoria unei provincii de frontieră: banatul de Severin în secolul al XIII-lea. – In: Secolul al XIII-lea pe meleagurile locuite de către români. ed. A. Rusu. Cluj-Napoca, 2006, pp. 50–53. This fact is also confirmed by Baybars al-Manşūrī who describes the extent of Nogai’s domains from Sakchi to the Iron Gates (*Bāb al-Ḥadīd*). Undoubtedly, this is the namesake gorge that divides the middle and lower course of the Danube and presents the contemporary boundary between Serbia and Romania, *Тизенгаузен, В.* Сборник материалов, с. 117 [*История Казахстана в арабских источниках*, с. 106]; *Vasary, I.* Cumans and Tatars – Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365. Cambridge, 2005, p. 97, n. 42.

A strong presence of Cuman ethnic element in Northwestern Bulgarian lands probably played an important role in the assertion of the close relations with the Tatar power on the Lower Danube. Nomadic population of Nogai's ulus primarily consisted of „Tatarized“ Cumans. Moreover, the Turkic ethnic element in Wallachian plains was strengthened due to the influx of rebellious Cuman refugees from Hungary after 1282, when they were beaten in the battle that took place on the shores of Lake Hood (near the present day town of *Hódmezővásárhely*)¹⁹.

In the last decade of the thirteenth century the Principality of Vidin emerged as a strong proponent of the Tatar interests in the Balkans, during the series of conflicts that changed the regional political landscape. The roots of these upheavals lied in an attempt of the Hungarian crown to reclaim the territory of its former Banate of Braničevo and Kučevo (*Boroch et Kuchou*), comprising the territories on the right and left of the Great Morava River respectively. They were ruled by two renegades, half-brothers Dorman and Kudelin, Bulgarian boyars of Cuman origin who renounced allegiance to Hungarian crown in the mid-seventies of the thirteenth century. In 1284, Hungarian King Ladislas IV organized the campaign against „Dorman and Bulgarians“²⁰. However, the lords of Braničevo managed to resist the Hungarian attack. In the second half of the same year, the territory of the banate of Macho (modern region of Mačva), which lied to the west of their possessions was given by Ladislas IV to the former Serbian king Stephen Dragutin. Following his abdication in the fall of 1282, when he was replaced on the throne by his younger brother Milutin, Dragutin retained the title of the king and the Serbian lands north of Western Morava River. Enlarged by the donation from the Hungarian king, his territories became a de facto separate political entity, under the supreme authority of the Hungarian crown²¹.

At that moment, Dragutin became the main instrument of the Hungarian policies in the region. He also attempted to subdue Dorman and Kudelin, but his campaign that took place in the second half of the eighties proved to be equally unsuccessful. As Archbishop Danilo II admits, „Dragutin was unable to take over the land of Braničevo, because it was immensely fortified and he was forced to return back“. His adversaries, then decided to strike back and to drag the Tatars into the conflict. Namely, Dorman and Kudelin recruited nomadic populations on the left bank of the Danube by „paying them in gold“. It is beyond doubt that their attempts to acquire the mercenaries in Nogai's lands could not have been conducted without the approval of the Tatar leader. With their support, Dorman and Kudelin took an incursion into Dragutin's lands and conquered „many parts of his country“. Dragutin was forced to flee to his younger brother Milutin²². The actions of the lords of Braničevo led to the further escalation of the conflict, as now both Hungary and Milutin came to Dragutin's aid. In the winter of 1291/2, Hungarian forces defeated the Tatar detachments in their service on the banks of the Sava River²³, but the main attack came from the Serbs. In 1292, Dragutin and Milutin joined their forces and conquered Braničevo, while Dorman and Kudelin had to flee to the other banks of the Danube, seeking Nogai's protection²⁴.

¹⁹ *Simonis de Keza Gesta Hungarorum*. ed. A. Domanowsky. *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*. T. I. Budapest 1937, p. 187; *Fejér, G.* *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, T. V/3, Buda, 1830, p. 410; *Nagy, I. et al.* *Hazai Okmánytár. – Codex diplomaticus patrius*. T. VI. Budapest, 1876, p. 316; *Kosztolnyik, Z.* *Hungary in the Thirteenth Century*. New York, 1996, p. 285.

²⁰ *Fejér, G.* *Codex diplomaticus*, T. V/3, p. 276; *Димитров, Хр.* *Българо-унгарски отношения...*, с. 200; *Vasary, I.* *Cumans and Tatars...*, p. 105–107.

²¹ *Динић, М.* *Српске земље у средњем веку (историјско-географске студије)*. Београд, 1978, 123–149.

²² *Архиепископ Данило*, *Животи краљева и архиепископа српских*, 114–115.

²³ *Wenzel, G.* *Árpádkori új okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus Arpadianus continuatus*, T. XII. Budapest, 1874, p. 617–618; *Regesta*, II/4, p. 125, no. 3951. The second charter of Hungarian king Andreas III where the clashes are explicitly dated in the winter of 1291/2 („post coronationem nostrum secundo anno circa ýemem“) provide the only chronological evidence for the time of these clashes, and also indirectly for the following campaign of Shishman against Milutin, *Узелац*, *Под сенком Пса*, с. 210.

²⁴ *Архиепископ Данило*, *Животи краљева и архиепископа српских*, 115–116.

In their actions, Dorman and Kudelin could not count on support of Emperor George I Terter. The Bulgarian ruler was father-in-law of Milutin, and his staunch ally, which was undoubtedly one of the reasons why Nogai decided to oust him from power around 1292 and to post another Bulgarian aristocrat, Smilets, as his replacement²⁵. On the other hand, the lords of Braničevo undoubtedly counted on their eastern neighbor Shishman, especially considering that their contacts with the nomadic forces on the left bank of Danube must have been conducted via the territory of the Vidin Principality. After the defeat of the lords of Braničevo, it was Shishman who decided to attack Milutin, aided by the “thrice-cursed heresy of the Tatar people”²⁶. Obviously, unlike Dorman and Kudelin, who had to pay for the external support “in gold”, the Tatars in the Shishman’s army were not of mercenary character, but allied force sent by his protector Nogai. The campaign, which probably took place in 1293, showed the accordance of Bulgarian and Tatar interests, aimed at the check of the Serbian and Hungarian expansion against historical Bulgarian lands.

The details of the combined Bulgarian-Tatar campaign against Milutin are only preserved in the king’s biography. From its text, it is evident that Shishman’s army penetrated deep into the Serbian territory, probably following the road that led from Vidin to Niš and from there to the city of Prizren in the Kosovo region²⁷. However, according to Danilo, it suffered a crushing blow near the archbishopric of Peć. The most probable location of the battle is the modern Rugova gorge and the memory of the battle is probably preserved in the name of village Shishman (Шишман), situated on the road between the cities of Đakovica and Peć. It is mentioned for the first time in an Ottoman census, compiled in 1477, but is undoubtedly of an earlier date²⁸. The attackers were forced to retreat and not long after, probably the same year, a Serbian counter-attack against the Principality of Vidin ensued. Although Milutin fought without allies (at least Danilo does not mention them), his campaign was crowned with success. Serbian forces took over control over the Shishman’s state and the prince of Vidin was forced to flee on a barge to the left bank of the Danube, to the territories of his ally and protector Nogai²⁹.

The armistice was soon concluded, at the initiative of the defeated Shishman³⁰. Milutin decided to show his magnanimity; no harsh conditions were forced to the defeated party, the territorial status quo was established and Vidin was returned to its ruler. It is striking that the Tatar role in the peace talks is not mentioned in the source. According to Danilo, the threat of Nogai’s attack on Serbian lands appeared immediately after the agreement between the Serbs and the Bulgarians was reached. At that moment, faced

²⁵ *Georges Pachymérès*. Relations Historiques, III, p. 105, 266; *Ников, П.* Татаробългарски отношения през средните векове с оглед към царуването на Смилеца. – Годишник на Софийския университет, 15–16 (1919–1920), 22–23; *Божилков, И., Гюзелев, В.* История на средновековна България. VII–XIV век. София, 1999, с. 540.

²⁶ *Архиепископ Данило*, Животи краљева и архиепископа српских..., с. 117. The term „thrice-cursed heresy“ is literary manirism of Serbian medieval writers, which has primarily political connotation, *Стефан Првовенчани*. Сабрана дела. edd. Љ. Јухас-Георгиевска, Т. Јовановић. Београд, 1999, 32–33, 149, н. 1; *Узелац, А.* Под сенком Пса..., 215–216, н. 89.

²⁷ It is interesting to note that this strategic communication, which connected Vidin and central regions of the Serbian medieval state is attested in a letter of a Ragusan merchant from 1331, with respect to the then Tatar activities in Northwestern Bulgaria: „De Bedino non se podeva condur in Pristrino per chason che Tartari era vinudi aprovo Bedino... e poi che le novele fo bone che li sovraditi Tartari se parti, eo ande insteso in persona a Bedino“, *Петров, П.* Нови данни за търговските връзки между България и Дубровник през XIV век. – Известия на българското историческо дружество, 28 (1972), 51–52.

²⁸ *Pulaha, S.* Nahija e Altun-ilisë dhe popullsia e saj në fund të shekullit XV. – Gjurmime albanologjike, seria e shkencave historike, 1 (1971), p. 235.

²⁹ *Архиепископ Данило*, Животи краљева и архиепископа српских..., с. 118.

³⁰ *Архиепископ Данило*, Животи краљева и архиепископа српских..., с. 118. On the other hand, in the version of Milutin’s biography preserved in the Uliar charter, prominent aristocrats on the both sides urged the warring parties to make peace, *Мошин, В.* Крал Милутин..., с. 346.

with the possibility of the full-scale Tatar invasion, Milutin was forced to officially acknowledge Nogai as his suzerain and to send his son Stephen "to serve" the Tatar leader³¹.

As historians rightfully noted, despite Danilo's silence about the role of the Tatar factor in the establishment of the peace, the leniency of the Serbian king towards the Prince of Vidin can only be fully explained by that possibility³². There is indirect evidence that confirms this notion. According to the words of Danilo, after the peace was achieved, Milutin gave a Serbian noblewoman, daughter of a certain grand župan Dragoš to Shishman as his wife. The bride and his father were probably blood related to the ruling Serbian dynasty and the marriage was concluded soon after the reconciliation achieved between Milutin and the Prince of Vidin³³. Therefore, it may be assumed that the dynastic Serbo-Bulgarian marriage was concluded at the time when both Milutin and the Prince of Vidin acknowledged the Tatar overlordship. Naturally, one may wonder would that would have been possible without the approval of Nogai.

Milutin's submission marked the heyday of Nogai's influence in the Balkans and his hegemony in the region. However, it was not destined to last for long, because of a war that erupted between him and his cousin, khan Tokhta (1291–1312), in late 1297. Two years later, Nogai suffered defeat in the battle that took place on the river Kogilnyk (Cogîlnic) in the Danube-Dniester interfluve³⁴, and was killed by a Russian from the ranks of the Tokhta's army. The years that followed were marked by bloody dissensions between Nogai's sons and the khan's efforts to reestablish the power of the Juchid central government in the western Tatar domains³⁵. As it is well known, the oldest Nogai's son Chaka eventually decided to flee from the Pontic steppes. Together with Theodore Svetoslav, son of George I Terter, he moved south of the Danube, approximately in the late 1300 or early 1301, and took control over Tarnovo, but only for a short time. In the same year he was imprisoned and killed by his Bulgarian ally, at the instigation of Tokhta³⁶.

Destiny of another member of Nogai's family, his grandson and Chaka's son Khara-Kisek, was also inseparably tied to the Bulgarian lands. According to Baybars al-Manşūrī in AH 701 (Sep. 6, 1301 – Aug. 25, 1302): "Khara-Kisek ran away. Two of his cousins ran with him – Cherik-Temur and Yol-Khutlu. It happened because... [Tokhta's brother] Burluk requested to bring Khara-Kisek to him. But he and the two others ran away. They fled to the lands of Shishman, in the place named Budul [Vidin] in the vicinity of Kelar [Hungarians]. Together with them, there were 3.000 horsemen. Shishman and his associates accepted

³¹ *Архиепископ Данило*, Животи краљева и архиепископа српских..., 120–122; *Мишић*, С. Српско-бугарски односи на крају 13. века. – Зборник радова Византолошког института, 46 (2009), с. 336; *Узелац*, Под сенком Пса..., 219–224.

³² *Петкова*, Българският северозапад..., 32–33; *Коларов*, Българо-сръбски отношения..., 217–220; *Божилев*, И., *В. Гюзелев*. История на Средновековна България..., с. 535.

³³ „Възврати се въ прѣстолау својемоу и по сихъ вѣдасть њмоу дъщерь великааго својего жоупана Драгоша“, *Архиепископ Данило*, Животи краљева и архиепископа српских..., 118–119; „Симъ же тѣчю потврѣдихъ его: моего велможе великааго жоупана Драгоша заповѣдахъ емоу дъщерь его себѣ взеты за женоу, еже по малоу времену и бысть“, *Мишић*, Крал Милутин..., с. 346.

³⁴ The location of the battle is still a matter of dispute. The identification presented here was first proposed by *Bromberg*, *J. Toponymical and Historical Miscellanies on Medieval Dobrudja, Bessarabia and Moldo-Wallachia*. – Byzantion, 12 (1937), p. 163. It rests upon the words of Baybars al-Manşūrī, who names the place of the battle as Kukanlyk, *Тизенгаузен*, Сборник материалов..., с. 114 [*История Казахстана в арабских источниках...*, с. 103].

³⁵ *Мыськов*, Е.П. Политическая история Золотой Орды (1236–1313 гг.). Волгоград, 2000, 141–147; *Vasary*, Cumans and Tatars..., pp. 91–98; *Ciociltan*, V. The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries. Leiden–Boston, 2012, pp. 259–263; *Uzelac*, A. War and Peace in the Pontic Steppes (1300–1302). – *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie*. 2 (2015), pp. 65–80.

³⁶ *Павлов*, Пл. Татарите на Ногай..., 126–127; *Павлов*, Пл. Бележки към събитията в България и в средновековната столица Търново в края на XIII – началото на XIV в. – Търновска книжовна школа, 5 (1994), 527–534; *Кръстев*, Кр. Българското царство..., 106–115.

them, and they stayed there, roaming in various places and sustaining with their swords, until our time³⁷. This episode illustrates that, unlike princes of the Western Rus' and Theodore Svetoslav, who renounced their allegiance to Nogai's descendants, Shishman remained loyal to them up to the very end of the conflict in the Golden Horde. The hospitality showed to Khara-Kisek and his followers is an important testimony of the close relations established between Nogai and Shishman.

The importance of this episode in the history of the Principality of Vidin was analyzed in detail by a Bulgarian historian P. Pavlov and here it is sufficient to summarize his insightful conclusions³⁸. The immigrants provided the exquisite military potential to Shishman, but the provision of the refuge to the last living member of Nogai's lineage carried a certain risk. Still, Tokhta did not express the desire to inflict revenge upon Khara-Kisek and probably he did not have reason to. The young prince did not pursue ambitions of his father and grandfather, nor did he present any threat to Tokhta's power. Finally, it is important to note that the Mamluk historian, relying undoubtedly on Tatar informant, explicitly stated that it was Tokhta's brother Burluk who was sent to former Nogai's domains in 1301 to establish an order that wanted to capture Khara-Kisek, and not the khan himself.

Despite his loyalty to Nogai's lineage, even the prince of Vidin eventually came to the terms with the victorious side in the internal Tatar conflict. Sources are mostly silent on that matter, but it is noteworthy to remember the words written at the beginning of the fourteenth century in the Description of Eastern Europe: "[Northwestern] *Bulgaria now pays tribute to the Tatars*"³⁹. Their veracity can be confirmed by a brief analysis of the political changes in the western lands of the Golden Horde after the death of Nogai. After the final defeat of his enemies, Tokhta took the necessary measures in order to ascertain his sovereignty. He sent his older son Ilbasar to the west and posted him in "Nogai's place", i.e. as the commander of the right wing of the Golden Horde. Younger khan's son Tukhul Buga was established in "Sakchi and in the places, stretching as far as the Iron Gates"⁴⁰. The existence of the Tatar government in the region is confirmed by the numismatic findings from the mint in Sakchi, dated from the first decade of the fourteenth century⁴¹. Thus, former Nogai's lands passed under the authority of the khan, and in similar fashion, the Tatars, although weakened because of their internal struggles, remained the most formidable power on the Lower Danube during the reign of Tokhta.

Political conditions that influenced the western Bulgarian state at the beginning of the fourteenth century were variously commented by historians, who tentatively proposed that Shishman either accepted the suzerainty of Serbian king Milutin, or the newly established Emperor in Tarnovo Theodore Svetoslav (1301–1322). The arguments proposed in favor of both opinions have their merits, but they are mostly related to the second decade of the fourteenth century, at the time when Michael succeeded his father. On the other hand, it seems that the Tatar factor in the history of the Principality of Vidin after the death of Nogai has been unjustly neglected. The information provided by the author of the Description and general political conditions in the region point out to the fact that Shishman's state remained Tatar tributary in the first decade of the fourteenth century, or more precisely during the reign of Tokhta.

³⁷ *Тизенгаузен, В.* Сборник материалов..., с. 119 [*История Казахстана в арабских источниках...*, 107–108]; *Павлов, Монголотатари...*, 114–116; *Ciociltan, V.* Hegemonia hoardei de Aur la Dunărea de Jos (1301–1341). – *Revista Istorică: Serie nouă*, 5/11-12 (1994), p. 1101; *Vasary, Cumans and Tatars...*, pp. 97–98.

³⁸ *Павлов, Пл.* Монголотатари..., 116–120.

³⁹ *Анонимі Descriptio Europae Orientalis...*, p. 40.

⁴⁰ *Тизенгаузен, Сборник материалов...*, с. 117, 119 [*История Казахстана в арабских источниках...*, с. 106, 107].

⁴¹ *Oberländer-Târnoveanu, E.* Byzantino-tartarica – Le monnayage dans la zone des bouches du Danube à la fin du XIIIe et au commencement du XIVe siècle. – In: *Il Mar Nero: Annali di archeologia e storia*. T. II. Roma, 1996, p. 193; *Iliescu, O.* Génois et Tatars en Dobroudja au XIVe siècle: L'apport de la numismatique. – *Études byzantines et postbyzantines*, 3 (1997), pp. 161–162.

The prince of Vidin had strong reasons to come to terms with the victorious side in the internal Tatar conflict. They were less related to Khara-Kisek and more to the new emperor in Tarnovo – Theodore Svetoslav. Despite the common Cuman background and possible blood relationship between the two Bulgarian royal dynasties⁴², Shishman was not an ally, neither of George I Terter, nor of his son. Like his “predecessor” Jacob Svetoslav, it seems that he also claimed the title of the Emperor of Bulgaria after the death of Nogai’s puppet Smilets in 1298. It is hardly a coincidence that the author of the Description titled rulers of Vidin as emperors, and it is not the only mention of Shishman’s imperial aspirations. He is also mentioned as “tsar” („Шишманоу благоверномуу цароу вечна паметь“) in a sixteenth century copy of the so-called *Boril's Synodic*. In the list of Bulgarian rulers, preserved in this text, his name is placed after George I Terter and before Theodore Svetoslav⁴³.

Terter’s son acknowledged the supreme authority of Tokhta, and this fact is attested in the oriental and western sources alike⁴⁴. Shishman, on the other hand, established closer relations with his western neighbor, a former adversary, Serbian king Milutin and he married his son Michael to Milutin’s daughter Anne after the death of Nogai⁴⁵. Also, as we have seen, in order to avert the possible pressure of Theodore Svetoslav and his Tatar allies, he officially acknowledged the suzerainty of the khan in Sarai, or his representative in Sakchi. Thus, Shishman managed to secure the existence and the future of his state, as well as his de facto independence from the central Bulgarian government in Tarnovo.

There is another circumstantial evidence that points out to the tributary status of Vidin towards the Tatars at the beginning of the fourteenth century. On several maps of Majorcan cartographic school (most notable is the one made by Angelino Dulcert in 1339) the flag over the city of Vecina/Vicina is depicted with Tatar *tamgha*. Unlike contemporary Italian maps where Vicina is positioned in the Danube delta, on the shores of the Black Sea⁴⁶, on Majorcan ones it is depicted further inland, close to Hungary. The fact that „Vecina“ corresponds to Vidin is noted in some recent studies⁴⁷. Here, it may be added that this conclusion may be corroborated by the words of an anonymous Spanish writer who in the mid fourteenth century composed fictitious travel account and used contemporary Majorcan maps as his source. In his “Book of knowledge“ Vecina was described as a capital of a kingdom that borders Hungary⁴⁸. Therefore, it may be

⁴² *Giacomo di P. Luccari*, *Copioso Ristretto degli Annali di Ragusa*. Ragusa, 1790, p. 81; *Божилев, И.* Фамилията на Асеневици (1186–1460). Генеалогия и просопография. София, 1994, 445–446. *Павлов, Пл.* Куманите в общественнополитическия живот на средновековна България (1186 г. – началото на XIV в.). – Исторически преглед, 46/7 (1990), с. 24.

⁴³ *Попруженко, М.Г.* Синодик царя Борила. София, 1928, с. 81; *Божилев, И., В. Гюзелев.* История на средновековна България..., с. 534; *Павлов, Пл.* Куманите в общественнополитическия живот..., с. 24, п. 59.

⁴⁴ *Тизенгаузен, В.* Сборник материалов..., с. 197, 447 [*История Казахстана в арабских источниках...*, с. 154, 320]; *Gautier Dalché, P.* *Une géographie provenant du milieu des marchands toscans (début du XIV^e siècle)*. – In: *P. Gautier Dalché.* L’espace géographique au Moyen Âge. Firenze, 2013, p. 176.

⁴⁵ *Архиепископ Данило*, Животи краљева и архиепископа српских..., с. 119; *Илиев, Н.* Малолетен ли е бил цар Иван-Стефан през 1330 г.? – Исторически преглед, 45/6 (1989), 50–52; *Gjuzelev, V.* Imperatrix Bulgariae Anna-Neda. – *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog institute*, 50 (2013), pp. 618–619. The marriage was concluded during the reign of Shishman and it seems certain that his son succeeded him before 1310 (conspicuously, in the Description, the rulers of Vidin are mentioned in the plural). In 1313, Michael is mentioned in a Venetian document as “dispoti Bulgariae, dominus de Vigdino, gener regis Urosii“, *Гюзелев, В.* Венециански документи за историята на България и българите от XII–XV в. София, 2001, 58–59. His title of despot (*dozpoth de Budinio*) is also attested in a charter of Hungarian king Charles Robert from 1317, *Györffy, Gy.* Adatok a románok XIII. Századi történetéhez és a román állam kezdeteihez. – *Történelmi Szemle*, 7 (1964), p. 548.

⁴⁶ *Spinei, V.* Moldavia in the 11th – 14th Centuries. Bucharest, 1986, pp. 125–126.

⁴⁷ *Rosseló i Verger, V.* Els Italianismes de les cartes portolanes mallorquines. – In: *Estudis de llengua i literatura en honor de Joan Veny*. Vol. 1, Barcelona, 1997, pp. 48–49.

⁴⁸ “Una grand çibdad que dizen Veçina, que confina con la Ungria... Estos nueve rrios fazen ante esta çibdad Veçina muy grandes tremadales. Esta çibdad Veçina es cabeça del rreynado“, *Libro del Conosçimiento de todos los reinos (The book of Knowledge of all Kingdoms)*. ed. N. Marino. Tempe AR, 1999, p. 94, 96.

assumed that the representation of Vecina, or Vidin, on the above mentioned maps indeed reflects the fact that Northwestern Bulgarian state remained in the Tatar sphere of influence after the death of Nogai and during the reign of Tokhta.

ВИДИНСКОТО КНЯЖЕСТВО И ТАТАРИТЕ НА ЗЛАТНАТА ОРДА (КРАЯ НА XIII – НАЧАЛОТО НА XIV ВЕК)

В статията се разглеждат отношенията между Видинското княжество и татарите на Долния Дунав по времето на Ногай и след кончината на последния. Въз основа на данни от сръбски, арабски и латински източници, се стига до заключението, че Видинското княжество на Шишман е станало зависимо от татарите към края на 80-те години на тринадесети век, едновременно с разширяването на властта на Ногай до западната граница на Влашката низина. Татарите на Ногай дават силна подкрепа на Видинското княжество срещу сърбите през последното десетилетие на XIII век, представлявайки непреодолима бариера срещу чуждестранната експанзия. Със смъртта на Ногай Шишман губи ценен съюзник и защитник. Въпреки това, Видинското княжество остава в татарската сфера на влияние по време на управлението на кан Токта (до 1312 г.). По този начин, Шишман е в състояние да предотврати претенциите на цар Теодор Светослав към северозападните български земи и да запази своята самостоятелност.