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### ETHNO-HISTORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE TATARS IN MEDIEVAL ARMENIAN SOURCES: CONTEXTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

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**Abstract.** Research objectives: This article is devoted to the study of the phenomenon of the term "Tatars" and its perception in the medieval Armenian ethno-political milieu. Within the framework of this objective, a vast variety of issues arise which have to be investigated using different methods of historical research. Particularly, the following questions are under consideration: the perception of the term "Tatar" itself; the first acquaintance with the Tatars; the perceptions regarding their genealogical origins; the problem of identification and differentiation of Tatars; manifestations of the Tatar phenomenon in the adaptation of everyday life of late medieval realities.

Research materials: These issues have been examined based on medieval Armenian sources – historical works and chronicles of Armenian authors of the 13th–15th centuries, who were the contemporaries of the events described. The information of Armenian sources has been compared or contrasted with existing works on the subject.

Research results and novelty: Such a comprehensive study of the Tatar phenomenon in Armenian medieval sources has not been conducted prior to the present study. Therefore, this research is the first attempt at it which highlights the novelty of the research. The work has historical and practical significance. It clearly shows the reasons for the confusion in the historical perception of Tatars with other nations and ethnic groups that were actually different from each other.

**Keywords:** Tatars, “nation of archers”, Armenian sources, Torgomazuns, negative perception, Mongols, interethnic marriages

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## Introduction

In the context of studying medieval ethno-political processes, the phenomenon of the term "Tatars" is interesting within both the framework of the ethnonym itself and its application, and the question of ethnicity understood under it. There are different approaches to the origin of Tatars, the phenomenon of the term "Tatars" and its application. Medieval Armenian sources provide an interesting overview of the peculiarities of the use of the name "Tatar" and the specifics of its perception.

The study of the Armenian perception of the ethno-political and historical phenomenon of "Tatars" based on medieval Armenian sources, as well as its comparison with other existing perceptions is of great scientific and practical importance. There is confusion in the scientific literature about the use of the term "Tatar", which has spatial and temporal associative reasons. The study attempts to illuminate the basis of the confusion mentioned above and to compare Armenian and other sources. Armenian sources also provide valuable information and commentary on the origin of the Tatars.

Such a comparative analysis raises new questions about the etymology of the ethnonym "Tatars", its use, the evolution of the qualitative characteristics of Tatars, the transformation of the phenomena of the Tatar environment and other issues. The study of these problems has been carried out using a variety of methods – historical-comparative and source analyze methods, as well as quantitative and qualitative measurements of the phenomena, for example, the frequency of use of the word "Tatar" and its prevalence in Armenian historical realities.

It is definitely impossible to disagree with the remark of I. Izmailov and I. Iskhakov that the issues of ethnogenesis and some aspects of the ethnic history of the Tatars, especially considering the issue of poorly studied early and medieval history of the Tatars due to the incomplete study of written sources, still cause heated debates and there is no unified concept. Of course, the purpose of our article is not to discuss already known approaches and concepts, which the above-mentioned authors have successfully classified in their works [24, p. 5]. According to I. Izmailov and I. Iskhakov, three main concepts can be identified: the Bulgaro-Tatar theory, the Mongol-Tatar theory and the Turkic-Tatar theory. It will be interesting to observe the analysis of Armenian sources in the light of the above, which may help to understand how the perception of Tatars and the phenomenon of the term "Tatars" was reflected in medieval Armenian sources.

The research is based on the study of historical written sources and chronicles of Armenian authors of the 13th–15th centuries, such as Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Stepanos Orbelian, Vardan Areveltsi, Samuel Anetsi, Tovma Metzopetsi and others. Special attention is also paid to small chronicles and memorial records found in Armenian manuscripts. These records are particularly valuable because, on the one hand, they were written by contemporaries of the events described and, on the other, they were usually written by humble people – scribes from the nation. Thanks to this, they allow us to get a clearer and more vivid idea of what happened. In addition, the study uses epigraphic texts and samples of Armenian medieval poetry, such as the work of Frick.

It is worth noting that despite the considerable scientific interest in this subject, there are relatively few studies in this area. In this context, the works and editions of K. Patkanov [64], A.G. Galstyan [66], L. Ter-Mkrtychyan [65], B. Dashdondog [67], F. Luisetto [68], among others, are of particular importance. These works are

a valuable contribution to the study of the interaction between Armenians and Mongols and can serve as a reliable basis for further research. Particular value of this study lies in the colophons, commemorative notes by Armenian scribes of manuscripts, as well as minor chronicles from the 13th to 18th centuries, along with hagiographic and epigraphic texts. It should be noted that some commemorative notes have been translated into Russian and English [58; 60]. However, the material we have used is, for the most part, not included in these translations, which, in turn, underscores the scientific uniqueness of the present study.

Of particular interest is the consideration of the issue of the initial perception of Tatars in the Armenian environment and its reflection in the sources. It is of key importance not only to analyse the terminology used to refer to them, but also the more fundamental question of who exactly the Armenian sources identified as Tatars. It is equally important to investigate the nature of the relationship between Armenians and Tatars: was it limited to the traditional concept of the "Mongol-Tatar yoke", or were there more complex forms of interaction? The analysis of sources allows us to identify examples of cultural mutual influence and various forms of coexistence, which can significantly expand our understanding of the perceptions of Tatars in the Armenian environment during the medieval period. [24, p. 11–15].

#### **Identification and perception of Tatars in Armenian sources.**

Starting with the names and terms by which Tatars were mentioned in Armenian sources, they can be divided into several groups:

1. **Tatars**: "and in 1220 the first Tatars came" [36, p. 26].
2. **Dadars**-for example: "in 1430 captured 20 thousand Dadars and brought them to the country of Lidvania" [4, p. 15].
3. **Nation of archers** [24, p. 180] or **nation of bowman** [43, p. 412; 57, p. 112, 215].
4. **Torgomazun or Torgomatsin** (Torgomids, people from Torgom/Togarmah lineage).

Armenian sources use the term "nation of archers" (azg netoԼac՝, народ стрелков) to refer to the Tatars of the 20–30s of the 13th century, referring to the highly developed archery of the Mongolo-Tatars. It is little known, that besides the term "nation of archers" the term "nation of bowman" was also widespread, and interestingly, even centuries later the term continues to live and be used, in particular in the text of the hagiography of Ter Avetik dated 1509, we read the following: "Song about Ter Avetik, who fell as a martyr at the hands of the Tatars, from the **nation of bowman** (azg alelnavorac՝, народ лучников) from the country of Crimea" [20, p. 347].

Armenian sources contain information and comments also on the origin of the Tatars. Vardan Areveltsi in the text attached to the chronicle by Michael the Syrian on the origin of the Tatars puts forward the view that the name Tatar originated from the meaning "*TarTar- light and fast*", or gives a popular etymology that "Tatar is from the words "Beat and take, which is Tatar" (towr ew tar, or ē Tat'ar). Such was the offensive and expeditionary nature of the Tatars, as the author explains, linking the invasions of the Tatars to Biblical realities, as they allegedly "mercilessly beat and carried away captive the sons of Zion" [16, p. 245].

Another version of the origin of the Tatars, with emphasis on their relentless movement, is put forward by one of the continuers (Anonymous) of Samuel

Anetsi's story. According to the Anonymous that Tatars originate from Kham and calls them *andadar* – "from the lineage of Ham (son of Noah), called andadar" ("yazgēn K'ama, koč'ec'eal andadar"). In Armenian, "dadar" means to stop or delay, and the addition of the negative prefix "an" forms the word "an+dadar", which means "non-stop", "tireless" [44, p. 59].

### **From negative perception to loyalty.**

Apart from the difference and evolution of the name Tatars, medieval Armenian sources initially described the newly discovered people with strange appearance and behaviour in a rather negative tone. For example, Hetum Patmich describes the latter "Tatars as people in beastly appearance" [21, p. 70]. Kirakos Gandzaketsi describes them as people living outside of Ghatay (China) as follows: "Outside China (Ghatay) there is a country where women alike humans and men alike dogs" [29, p. 265]. A similar but more expressive description is given by the author of the 13th century Grigor Aknerts (wrongly called Enoch Magakia), as he calls about the first Tatars who came to our country – "And they were not like people, heads big like buffalo, noses short like cats, muzzle like dog's, legs short like pig's, loins narrow like ant's, and they have no beard at all, women give birth like snakes and feed like wolves" [21, p. 70; 30, p. 271–276; 33, p. 6, 7].

Medieval Armenian historians, in addition to negative external descriptions, also use negative qualifiers characterising the Tatars. For example, Kirakos Gandzaketsi writes: "For in a distant country in the north-east, which in the barbarian language is called Garagorum" [30, p. 232], lives a barbaric people called Tatars, whose king's name is Genghis Khan" [30, p. 232], or "and 12 years later the Khwarazm did not become multiplied because the people of the Tatar archers came – unbreakable, huge and insatiable beasts" [35, p. 56]. Such characterizations, deep expressions and manifestations of ethnopholism in the texts of Armenian historians were, of course, a response to the invasions and the hardships and tribulations experienced during the conquest.

The historian Samuel Anetsi and Grigor Aknerts negatively characterise the drunkenness of the Tatars. "In winter the Tatars were drunk and they tasted intoxication", or elsewhere "They got drunk, they could not sit on their horses, in the morning they woke up, /their/ chief felt bad, he said that the priest had poisoned me, but the priest had nothing to do with it, because the Tatars did not know the measure" [44, p. 340; 25, p. 25–26]. Gandzaketsi also confirms that the Tatars ate and drank very much, but at the same time, according to the author, when there was no opportunity to eat, the Tatars were very restrained [30, p. 271–272].

Expressive, negative statements are also often associated with specific historical figures who were also considered Tatars, i.e. if a tyrant, destroyer is identified as a Tatar, and the negative attitude towards him is projected onto Tatars in general. For example, Armenian sources often call Tamerlane a Tatar, also giving the term the same negative meaning with which they speak about Tamerlane. Armenian sources refer to Temur as "evil" and "Antichrist, Lucifer" [50, p. 68], "devil's spawn, abominable demon of the abyss" [50, p. 12] and other expressions.

The above mentioned is confirmed in the memorial record of the Gospel of 1393 (scribe Grigor Hlatetsi), at the time when Armenia (along with other countries and regions) was destroyed by Tamerlane's hordes – "And now, in these difficult times, who can tell or describe our death and captivity, famine and turmoil, which we the Christian people are experiencing from the foreign nations of lawless

and godless people, as the **whole race of Tatars**, who came to destroy and desecrate our **whole** country, were attacking the house of Khwarazm (i.e. Khorezm)" [15, p. 599].

We find a negative description of Tamerlane the Tatar in the hagiography left by the scribe Himar Vanetsi: "a certain bloodthirsty and beast-like man, a Tatar named Tamur, who came from the East with a large army, a bitter and severe personality, came from Samarkand and captured Khorasan and the whole of Persia" [20, p. 221]. The same attitude is often seen in relation to the leaders of the Turkoman tribes Ak – Koyunlu and Kara – Koyunlu, and later the same attitude is projected onto the Tatars (the people of archers) in general: In 1413 the scribe Karapet from the monastery of Ts'pat in Moks refers to the "'people of archers'" with an evil adjective: "...and my people were overthrown because of the evil people of archers..." [36, p. 148–149].

What is interesting, the Armenian sources consider the Tatar-Mongolian rulers as the ruler of the Tatars and they themselves are called Tatars "He-Chingis Khan, who is the head of the Tatars (Na J'inkiz xann' or glowx ēr T'at'arown)" [46, p.120], or in the memorial record of the Gospel (scribe of Poghos, 1310) is written: "during the khanate of Tatar Kharvand (distorted name of Ilkhanid Muhammad Oljaitu Khudabanda)". [15, p. 91].

It should be noted that examples of negative perception of Tatars exist not only in the Armenian historical environment. It is also characteristic of other environments, such as the Russian environment, which is expressed in the dictum "An uninvited guest is worse than a Tatar". [6, p. 216]

However, besides depicting Tatars in a negatively expressed context, an interesting turn is also notable, a unique transition from negative to neutral, even positive portrayal of Tatars, for example Grigor Aknertsy describes Tatars as follows: "Outwardly they were beautiful, but their faces were hairless, like women's" [25, p. 6]. Hetum defines them as "successful horsemen and brave archers" [21, p. 70] etc. Such fragments show how the perception of the Tatars in Armenian medieval historiography changed over time. Perhaps this is a consequence of the fact that as the Tatar-Mongols became increasingly integrated into the regional political landscape, Armenian historians began to present a more nuanced view of them. From perceiving the Tatars as formidable warriors and invaders to their status as established political players in various regions, perceptions changed from a mere threat to seeing them as legitimate rulers. On the other hand, the cultural exchange and tolerant religious approach of the Tatar-Mongols, the possible expansion of trade relations within the Pax Mongolica and political alliances with the latter, naturally created more balanced perceptions than those formed during the initial invasions.

### **Tatars – originated from Torgomazuns (Torgomids): biblical explanation of the origin of Tatars in Armenian sources or the search for symbiosis?**

In the context of perceptual transformation from the negative tones to loyal or positive, the placement of the Tatars' origin in Armenian genealogical mythological perceptions is also noteworthy. It is about the phenomenon when Armenian sources prescribe the biblical origin of the Tatars from Torgom (Torgomatsin or Torgomazun, from Armenian – literally from the family of Torgom) or from mixing the family of Torgom with the descendants of the biblical Gog.

Starting from the founder of Armenian historiography Movses Khorenatsi (5th century), it was accepted in Armenian medieval historical thought that Armenians

originated from the family of Torgom (biblical Togarmah<sup>1</sup>), more specifically from the legendary ancestor of Armenians Hayk, son of Torgom [40, p. 25–45]. Armenia was perceived as the "house of Torgom". This idea is rooted in historiographical tradition, emphasising the connection of the Armenians with biblical legends and mythology.

Georgian medieval historiography also confirms this legend: "As the country of Ararat and Masis could not contain the whole tribe any more, Targamos (Torgom) divided the country and the tribe between these eight heroes: half of the tribe and the best half of the country he gave to Haos (Hayk)" [28, p. 13–14].

According to Areveltsi and Grigor Aknerts, the Tatars originated from the mixing of Torgomazuns (i.e. from the sons of the biblical Togarmah) and the sons of Hagar, or we read "they are Torgomazuns-i.e. descendants of Togarmah, mixed with the descendants of Gog (biblical) [16, p. 285, 665]. The attribution of Tatar origin from the Torgom family is also found in other, later Armenian sources. [13, p. 99; 14, p. 76].

As we see it, this explanation and perception could be an interesting cornerstone, a point of contact between "Torgomats'in" Armenians and "Torgomats'in" Tatars, in the case when the secular and ecclesiastical Armenian elite tried to find points of contact and coexistence with the Tatars in terms of facilitating their rule. Especially if we take into account the fact of attempts to spread Christianity among the Mongol-Tatar tribes and khans, finding points of contact and a common language [37, p. 228–246] on the basis of the origin from the biblical Torgom could be even more relevant. Perhaps the Torgomats'in origin from Torgom (Togarmah) is also explained by the tolerant and even positive attitude of the Tatars and Mongols to the Armenian Christian Church, which is directly stated by Kirakos Gandzaketsi: "Otherwise all – Tatars (army), were not enemies of the cross and the church, but on the contrary, and venerated strongly, and brought gifts" [31, p. 185].

The version of the explanation of the origin of the Tatars from the tribes of the biblical Gog and the Torgom lineage is also quite explainable. The matter is that in Christian, including in Armenian written tradition conquerors were often identified as Gog's people linking all happening with biblical predictions. Already in the 5th century, when the Roman Empire was threatened by the Huns, the Christian Church and historians began to explain their appearance by biblical prophecies and in the context of the biblical worldview. The Roman historian Jordan identified Attila, the leader of the Huns, as the scourge of God (*Flagellum Dei* in latin [5], in French translation "Le Fléau de Dieu" [22, p. 162]). This tendency was firmly embedded in the Christian environment, and the appearance and origin of the Tatars later also received a biblical interpretation, and the Tatars were represented as the people of Gog and Magog (or the tribes of Gog from the country of Magog). However, it should be born in mind that even in the case of the version of mixed origin with the peoples of Gog and Hagar (which of course had a negative connotation), in the Armenian sources the origin from Torgom/Togarmah is seen in a positive light.

It may seem that attributing to the Tatars a biblical origin and kinship with the family of Torgom or Japheth is a phenomenon peculiar to Armenian late medieval

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<sup>1</sup> "The sons of Japheth; **Gomer**, and **Magog**, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of **Gomer**; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and **Togarmah**" (**Genesis 10:2–3 (KJV)** – The Table of Nations).

historiography, as well as to Jewish historiography. However, such ideas are also found in other sources. For example, the so-called "Askold's Chronicle" cites a biblical legend, according to which the genealogy of the Tatars goes back to Japhet, and more precisely to his descendant Aram [7, p. 232]. From Aram, along with other peoples, allegedly descended the Tatars. It is noteworthy that in the same "Askold's Chronicle" the ancestor of Armenians is also called Aram, the grandson of Yaphet, and his descendant Torgom. [7, p. 51].

In addition, another very noteworthy fact should be mentioned. Two prominent representatives of Armenian historical thought of the 18th–19th centuries – Mikayel Chamchyan (1738–1823) and Ghevond Alishan (1820–1901) – expressed an interesting idea that Tatars (Turkomans also consider themselves to be descended from the Torgom family. In this they saw a kind of kinship with Armenians, despite racial and linguistic differences. Moreover, Tatars and claiming that they and Armenians descended from brothers – sons of Torgom [8, p. 67], and the progenitor of Armenians Hayk is their uncle, and called Armenians "*E' moghlu*", i.e. – cousin, son of uncle. [3, p. 13]

### **Inter-ethnic marriages: reflections of loyalty in perceptions?**

Talking about the change from negative to loyal and even positive perceptions, the issue of inter-ethnic marriages cannot be ignored. Inter-ethnic marriages, especially among the elite, are also a form of coexistence with Tatars. This phenomenon of mixed marriages took place contrary to Armenian, as well as Georgian Christian tradition and legislative norms, and caused certain discontent among the ecclesiastical and secular elite [45, p. 10, 25; 40, p. 220; 28, p. 236].

For example, Ivane Zakarian's son, Avag Zakarian, in 1240 accepted submission to the Tatars, "and so pleased was the khan that he, according to their custom, "gave him a woman from the Tatar people" [31, p. 155].

We observe a similar phenomenon in the case of Smbat Sparapet (Smbat Constable), when he, already married and having three children, in 1248 went as an ambassador to Mangu Khan, and the latter "in honour of Smbat gave him a Tatar woman, whom he accepted and from whom he had a son, whose name was Tatar Vasil" [47, p. 53]. In another case, the son of the Cilician king Levon II, Smbat "made himself known to Khan, and his relative took him as a second wife". The daughter of Hasan Jalal, prince of Khachen, named Ruzukan, was married to Bora noyon (warlord), the son of the famous military leader Chormaqan noyon, and later tried to save her father from the wrath of Huleghu Khan (1256–1265) after an unsuccessful rebellion. [30, p. 280]

Thus, sometimes even the church had to face this phenomenon by unwritten rules, because it was forced to allow baptising children born from such marriages, or ordaining them as knights, as seen in the case of Smbat Sparapet's son, Tatar Vasil. For example, the daughter of the Georgian king Demetre II married the warlord Bugha Noyon. Or it is known that with the support and encouragement of the Christian wife of the warlord Baiju Smbat repaired the monastery of Tatev in Syunik. It should be noted that such marriages were peculiar not only to Armenian, but also to the neighboring Christian environment – Georgian. King David Ulu of Georgia (1247–1270) took as his wife a Tatar woman named Jigda-Khatun [28, p. 348]. Or King Demetre II (1270–1289), son of David Ulu also gave way to polygamy, taking as his second wife a Tatar princess named Solgar, Daughter of Bugi Chinkasan. He had three children by a Tatar, one of whom, a princess named Jigda,

he gave as his second wife to Alexius III Emperor of Trebizond (1338–1390) [49, p. 169, 221]. Demetre's marriage also caused serious discontent among the Georgian ecclesiastical and secular elite.

### **The problem of identification and differentiation.**

An important scientific task is the problem of identification and differentiation of the ethnonym "Tatars" in medieval Armenian sources. It is known that in European, Arab and Persian, Armenian, Georgian and other sources, there is confusion in naming and differentiation of Tatars: they were often called both Mongols and Tatars at the same time. It is difficult not to agree with the opinion of A.Kh. Khalikov that "since that time the name "Tatars" no longer appears in historical documents as an independent ethnos. A kind of modification or a kind of modelling of the ethnonym "Tatars" occurred when the name "Tatars" spread to the Mongols themselves, and vice versa – when Tatars began to be called Mogols. Thus, the word "Tatar" became synonymous with the word "Mongol". This fact is also confirmed by Armenian sources. For example, Hetum (Hayton) writes about it: "All these peoples from time immemorial were Tatars, who were called Mogholk (Mongols) by a simple name" [21, p. 31].

However, interestingly, in Armenian sources, despite the above, the use of the term Tatar prevails. Using the methods of content analysis and quantitative method, we get a very interesting picture about the use of the term Tatar in Armenian sources. In Armenian sources of this period the use of the term Mongol (Mughal/Monkol) is very rare, and in most cases either the term Tatar is used (in Kirakos Gandzaketsi (more than 30 times), in Vardan Areveltsi (9 times), in Samuel Anetsi and his continuators (37 times), in Smbat Sparapet (11 times), etc.) or synonyms of Tatar – "people of archers", "people of bowman", etc.). However, the author of the manual, although at first attributing the same origin to Türks and Tatars, later states that although at first all Tatar and Mongol tribes were under the rule of Mongols, later Tatars, Mongols and subordinate Turks – all tribes were called Tatars [10, p. 132].

Armenian historians and writers often confused the Tatars with various Turkic tribes, Turkomans, and other ethnic groups, and an inexperienced researcher familiarizing himself with the information in Armenian sources might be confused and erroneously assume this. However, such a perception would be the result of a superficial reading of the texts and a lack of understanding of the specific perception of ethnic groups of the time.

Thus, in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, when the Mongol-Tatar presence in the region weakened and, for example, the Ilkhanate, a state that Armenian sources called "the nation of archers" and whose khan was identified with a Tatar, ceased to exist, we again observe an interesting phenomenon. In the territory previously ruled by "the nation of archers", all ethnic groups – Turks, Tatars, Mongols, Turkomans – began to be labelled as Tatars, people of archers or Torgomats'ins.

The phenomenon when not only the Tatar tribes proper were called Tatars was characteristic not only of the Armenian medieval tradition, but also of other cultures, such as the Chinese. There was an opinion that the Chinese used the name "Tatars" to refer to the entire nomadic population of Central Asia, regardless of their ethnicity [52, p. 163].

For example, the Turkoman leaders of the confederation of Kara Koyunlu tribes Kara Yusuf and Kara Iskander are mentioned as "Torgomats'in" in the me-

morial record of 1437 by the scribe Matevos from Tatev – "The people of archers were lost forever, and the new governor became Torgomats'in Ghara Yusuf from Atrpatakan" [14, p. 76], the trend continues in the future – the Turkoman ruler Qara Koyunlu Kara Iskandar (1420–1436) is also mentioned as a Tatar. The scribe Stepanos from the monastery of Hermon writes: "In times of sorrow and poverty, during the reign of Skandar the Tatar" [36, p. 349]. But this tendency is not peculiar to all sources; for example, another scribe, also a contemporary of Skandar Tovma Minasents, in 1425 specifies the origin of Kara Iskandar as a descendant "from the nation of Turks" – "My whole world was captured and destroyed, betrayed to the sword and captivity from the cursed hands of **the nation of archers...**", or "Amirza Skandar of the Turk nation, the ruler of Tabriz, made the Armenian world uninhabitable" [36, p. 326].

The identification of Iskandar simultaneously with the nation of Turks and with the nation of archers indicates that here not so much the Turkoman is identified with the Tatar (i.e. with the nation of archers) as the similarity of these two peoples is emphasised. The similarity is evident both in their nomadic lifestyle and in their military skills: both nations were known as mounted archers. This also reflects the idea of succession, where the Turkomans are seen as the heirs of the Tatars, continuing their dominance over the respective territory and state.

In the next memorial record we see that the author here considers Tamerlane as **a Tatar**, who threatened the existence of Turkomans of Qara Qoyunlu "in the years of domination of **the nation of archers (synonym for Tatar)** Mir Tamur and his sons, destroyers of Qoyunlu, who are Turkomans". Or similarly, in the hagiography of the late 14th century, in the hagiography of Martiros Koghbatsi, the author considers Tamerlan-Lanktamur as a "Tatar despot" but at the same time he speaks about the tribe Saat (Saadlu) not as Tatars but as Turkomans [20, p. 151].

Our hypothesis that the Turkomans, for example, were considered Tatars because they saw succession in them, is also confirmed by this interesting report "*and the people of bowman disappeared without a trace and instead of them began to rule Torgomatsin* (i.e. Torgomid) Kara Usuf" [14, p. 76].

In order to understand why everyone and everything was called Tatars, it will also help to understand the following – for the realities of the Middle Ages, when there were no clear geographical representations of Asia, both for Europeans and for Georgians and Armenians, Tatars were identified with people and tribes that came from outside and from the borders of China.

To get a clearer understanding of the issue, a very important report by Vardan Areveltsi helps. "With the advent of the year 670 (here meaning the Armenian chronology) (1221), all these foreign-speaking and alien people who came from the country of Chin and Machin, and their name was Mukhal and Tatar, came and penetrated the land of Gugark' (Zōr inč' ōtaradēm ew aylalezow šaržēal 'i Č'in ew ' i Mač'in ašxarhēn, Mowlal ew T'at'ar anown koč'ec'eal)" [12, p. 142]. By Chin and Machin in the Middle Ages was understood China, and often China with the surrounding, bordering countries and regions, all these lands were perceived in a geographical sense as China, as a country better known to the medieval man. But what was the consequence of this? The fact that later, when the Turkomans, or Tamerlane's army, all those who would come from this region, from this direction, would be considered Tatars, about the same way as in the East all Europeans for several centuries after the Crusades would be considered Franks.

Besides, the identification of new ethnic groups with previously known ones is not a new phenomenon, one can cite at least a distant parallel with the phenomenon when the Seljuk Turks were represented as Persians, for example, Fulcherius of Chartres wrote – "Turks, that is Persians pagans (Turcis. scilicet paganis Persicis)" [9, p. 193], Matthew of Edessa considers Rum sultanate's sultan Kilij Arslan as "sultan of Persians" [55, p. 13] and so on.

In the context of attributing the name "Tatar" to other peoples, the thought of L. Munkuev is noteworthy, who convincingly shows that the ethnonyms "Mongol" and "Tatar" were widely used as self-names (or names) both by the Mongol and Tatar tribes themselves and by tribes that did not belong to them, which was associated with the dominant position of the Tatars. [41, p. 408].

It should also be said that this problem with the almost arbitrary use of the term Tatar in relation to other peoples is not peculiar to all sources and authors, moreover, other authors show a more in-depth approach to the problems of their time, trying to make clear distinctions, and not vice versa. For example, in the famous medieval poet of the 14th century Frick we find the following interesting message ""*One is (is) a Kurd of Canaan, the other is a Tatar of Torgom (i.e. from the Togarma lineage), another Mughal of Khitay (i.e. from China), and that other Jaghatai of Samarkand* (Mekn ē k'owrd k'ananc'i, Minn ē T'at'ar T'orgomac'i, Minn ē Mowlal Xət'ayec'i, Minn J'alat'ay Səmərīndi)" [13, p. 99].

It is noteworthy that the separation of Tatars and Mongols as the Tatar of Torgomats'in (where kinship with the house of Biblical Torgom indicates proximity to the Christian peoples, as people with whom there is something in common), and Mongols – "people from (side of) China", i.e. people from an unfamiliar, foreign country. And here a very interesting parallel of such reports of Armenian sources with Chinese sources exists, where the Tatars are also separated from "other Tatars", for example, divided into cultural and wild [38, p. 45–49], into white and black Tatars and so on [42, p. 8–15].

The message of the memorial record of the scribe Avetik shows that already in the second half of the 14th century in the Armenian environment a clear distinction was made between the Tatars of the Golden Horde and the rest. The text says: " This was written in the city of Crimea, in Hozets Ver, in 1365, on 23 August, in the midst of great excitement: *"the whole land, from Kerch to Sarukabman, trembled. Both men and cattle were gathered together, and Mamai at Karasun gathered the Tartars in great numbers. The city trembled with fear and horror, but it knew that the Lord Almighty and Protector would remain forever"* [15, p. 467].

The 16th century poet Hovhannes, describing in verse the Ottoman campaign against the Kyzybash, also clearly distinguishes between countries and ethnicities: he mentions Armenians, Crimean and Kafin Tatars, Persians inhabiting Shirvan, Ottoman Turks, Qizilbash and others [1, p. 63].

The 1714 hagiography makes clear the distinction between the peoples, singling out the Turks separately from the Tatars: "Turks, Tatars, Armenians, Romans and Russians gathered to observe this miracle of the saint" [20, p. 557].

The problem of differentiation of "Tatars" is most expressively traced in the Armenian translation of the history of Ibn al-Arabshah, court historian of Tamerlane. Here the Armenian translation perfectly reflects the variety of uses of the term "Tatars", where the author of the translation, following the medieval tendencies of understanding of the term, wants to differentiate Tatars from outsiders, from other peo-

ples and tribes, from which Tamerlane's army consisted of. The author divides Tamerlane's army into the "Tatar people" and the "Chagatai tribe" (i.e. Timurids), although in the Arabic original, and in other translations, we do not find such differentiation, using the terms people, tribe, clan, etc., "for example, "and from all sides the Tatar and Chagatai troops unanimously led a unidirectional attack". Or expressions like this "Among the Tatar people and the Chagatai tribe" [2, p. 151, 168].

It is noteworthy that the identification of Turks and Turkomans with "Tatars" is characteristic exclusively for the realities of the eastern part of Armenia and the South Caucasus. In the Georgian environment, a similar situation is observed: all Turkic-speakers, including Turks and Turkomans, are referred to as Tatars. Interestingly, this approach is also recorded in *Kartlis Tskhovreba*. "Their tribe before, as well as now, was divided into many clans... They called themselves in their language "Mongols," though the Georgians called them – Tatars" [28, p. 319].

After the incorporation of the Transcaucasian region into the Russian Empire, this problem passed into the imperial realities of the late 19th century. By a similar logic, the Turkic-speaking Muslim population of the Transcaucasian provinces began to be called "Caucasian Tatars", which, however, was an incorrect identification. Subsequently, this term was superseded. Religious self-identification was more characteristic of the Turkic-speaking population of the region. As early as 1816, Ermolov sent out an order to all regions inhabited by "Tatars", demanding that they stop writing in Persian and start writing only "Tatar" [32, p. 342]. The use of the term "Tatars" was also due to the fact that the Turkic-speaking Muslim community did not have a single ethnonym as a sign of the lack of a clear identity, so the tsarist regime tried to solve the problem of lack of self-identification by using the exoethnonym "Tatars", collectively given to the Turks of the empire. Starting from the 16th century, in the texts of scribes and authors of the western part of Armenia, we nowhere and never meet such identification of the Turkoman-Turkic population with Tatars, although both the beyliks of Asia Minor and the territories of the Ottoman state were certainly inhabited by different Turkoman tribes.

Perhaps it was Joseph de Baye, a French traveller and archaeologist, who most accurately reflected the problem of the unspecific use of the term "Tatars", which can be interpreted both for the Armenian medieval reality and for the Transcaucasian region as a whole. He notes: *"When pronouncing the word 'Tatars', I am using an undefined term applied to a multitude of peoples of the Transcaucasus so closely intertwined that it is difficult to classify them scientifically. There are even Georgians who converted to Islam around the 15th century and adopted Tatar language and dress"* [26, p. 19].

The example of de Baye also illustrates how the ethnonym "Tatar" lost its original ethnic definition and acquired a confessional meaning. In the Transcaucasian context of this period, the term came to denote religious affiliation rather than a specific ethnic group. Thus, it was applied to heterogeneous groups that had converted to Islam, regardless of their original ethnic identity, reflecting the process of blurring ethnic boundaries in favour of a religious community.

### **Manifestations of the phenomenon of the term *Tatar* in the adaptation of everyday life of late medieval realities.**

The process of coexistence and long-term contacts between the Armenian environment and the Tatar environment, as well as the subsequent change in the perception of Tatars – from negative to loyal and further to positive – is reflected in various

manifestations of mutual influence. The changing perception and meaning of the term *Tatar* is also clearly traceable through cultural and linguistic borrowings. In late medieval Armenia, the name "Tatar" becomes a personal name, which may indicate the parents' desire to emphasise their child's association with the Tatar elite or, perhaps, to express a desire for their children to possess qualities associated with Tatars. D. Iskhakov notes that among the nomads "Tatar" was a symbol of nobility and power that constituted the elite of the population [24, p. 8], accordingly, this tendency could have passed to the sedentary subordinate peoples too. Mentions of such names are found in epitaphs and tombstones of the late 14th – early 15th centuries. For example, there are known inscriptions: "By the will of God I, Yakub, and my son **Tatarten** (Tatar+*din* ? (*din* – from Arabic 'faith'))", and his wife named Mangu [56, p. 77]. Another monument says: "I, Amirbek, erected this khachkar (cross-shaped stone stele) in memory of my father Iohanis and my brother Tatar" [57, p. 91]. Another inscription reads: "(ordered) this holy gospel by the son of **Tatarbek**, son of the head of the village of Narek, in 1420" [14, p. 670], and also another inscription: "Remember Iohannes, who was called Tatar (secular name) [14, p. 407]". Along with the name Tatarbek there is also a form of **Tatarkhan**, which we find on one epitaph of the beginning of the 18th century "This is the grave of Tatarkhan, 1170 year of Armenian chronology (1721)" [34, p. 65].

It becomes obvious that the name "Tatar" and names derived from it were widespread in the Armenian environment since the 14th–15th centuries, which is confirmed by numerous references in Armenian manuscripts. Thus, only in the memorial records of the 15th century manuscripts dozens of references to the personal name "Tatar" are found. It is noteworthy that "Tatar" was used both as a masculine [17, p. 54, 67, 183; 18, p. 102, 109, 416], and feminine name [17, p. 73]. As a female name, the form **Tatar-khatun** (khatun – noblewoman, lady) was also widespread [17, p. 446; 18, p. 61, 79, 156, 546]. It is worth noting that along with the name Tatar-Khatun the form Mughal-Khatun is also known [18, p. 111]. Moreover, in the memorial record of the Bible in 1487 among the members of one family the head of the family named Tatar (Khoja Tatar) is mentioned, and his daughter (or daughter-in-law) had the name **Tatar-mama** [18, p. 102]. Thus, we can conclude that in the Armenian late medieval environment both the name Tatar and the names derived from it were widespread: Tatarbek, Tatarkhan, Tatarten, Tatar-khatun, Tatar-mama.

The personal characteristics attributed to Tatars, especially those related to swiftness and impetuosity, were reflected in the formation of new words in the late medieval lexicon of the Armenian language. Some of these words persist to this day, at least at the dialectal level. For example, the terms *tatarkhami* or *tatar* means epidemic and disease, which is probably related to the notion of the rapid spread of diseases similar to the "lightning speed" of the Tatars. The word *tatari* is also used to mean "to do something very quickly". It is known that the postal service was widespread during the Mongol-Tatar rule. This explains why in some dialects, such as the Armenian dialect of Constantinople, the word "Tatar" came to mean "messenger", which of course is also related to speed [19, p. 61].

In some dialects, the word *Tatari* means a large ant, which is probably related to the perception of the Tatar physique (broad back and narrow loins). This perception, as it was earlier with the historian Aknertsi, who noted the broad back and narrow loins of Tatars "the loins are narrow like an ant", similar to the physique of

an ant. Also, *Tatari* is used to mean (Karabakh dialects of Armenian) whip or lash [19, p. 61].

It is remarkable that even in cookery the term *Tatar* has got a social meaning: there are known fast meat dishes, such as *tataryakhi*, *tatar-boraki*, *tatari*, *tatar-hostuk*, which are prepared quickly (*tatar* – the quality of quickness), from dough and meat, from which many kinds of dishes of Tatar cuisine consist of.

### Conclusions

Obviously, it is impossible to give an exhaustive picture of the perception of Tatars in Armenian medieval sources, their names and related aspects within the framework of this article alone. Nevertheless, the presented analysis allows us to draw a number of important conclusions.

As it has already been shown, Armenian sources demonstrate diversity in the use of the term ‘Tatars’, reflecting both ethnic and cultural-political specifics of both the ethnonym itself and the term and the meaning it conveys. Initially, in Armenian sources the term had a negative connotation, often being associated with alien and hostile peoples, which was due to the historical context of conquests, encounter with the cruelty of conquest campaigns, etc. In addition, later, as a result of associations with individuals perceived as Tatars (which was often untrue), negative perceptions of such people were projected onto Tatars in general. A good example is the case of Tamerlan, known for his brutality, who was, however, often perceived as a Tatar. Over time, however, there has been a shift in the Armenian environment from a negative perception to a more neutral, and in some cases even loyal or positive attitude towards Tatars.

This shift is manifested in the characterization of Tatars, in the praise of their personal qualities (swiftness, strength, discipline, restraint, etc.), as well as in the phenomenon of mutual cultural influence. A comparative analysis of Armenian and other sources revealed unique interpretations of the origin of Tatars in the Armenian tradition. For example, the association of Tatars with biblical characters or legendary ancestors such as Torgom (Togarmah) indicates a desire to integrate them into a common historiographical and worldview system, perhaps even to find a symbiosis for coexistence with Tatars (or ethnic groups that were associated as Tatars in the Armenian environment). It was hypothesized that the frequent appearance of personal names in the Armenian environment, as well as inter-ethnic marriages between Armenians and Tatars, may indicate the same search and aspiration for coexistence with Tatars.

On the other hand, analyses of Armenian sources show that the search for an explanation of origins was not only due to attributing biblical origins to them. In fact, these searches indicate the Armenian intellectual milieu's endeavor to understand and explain to themselves and the nation who the Tatars were, how and why they appeared in their midst and what their mission was.

The study, also using content analysis and quantitative method, showed that the use of the term ‘Tatars’ was predominant in the Armenian milieu, which most often could replace ethnonyms and exonyms of various Tatar-Mongolian as well as Turkic tribes and peoples. In addition, it is important to note that from the point of view of the theories put forward in the article about the origin of Tatars, following the logic of Armenian sources, we can conclude that the general picture of information from Armenian sources speaks more about the Tatar-Mongolian theory than about others.

Another important aspect is that, as has already been shown, the designation of the Tatar-Mongols varied in the Armenian historiographical tradition: the forms ‘Tatar’, ‘Dadar’, as well as descriptive expressions such as ‘nation of archers’ or ‘nation of bowman’, etc. are found. At the same time, the terms ‘Tartar’ and ‘Tartary’ characteristic of medieval European historiography are absent in Armenian sources. It is also noteworthy that unlike the Western European historiographical tradition, where the image of the Tatar-Mongols often acquired an openly demonized character (up to cannibalism), Armenian historiography does not demonstrate such narratives [61; 62; 63].

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## ЭТНО-ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЕ ВОСПРИЯТИЕ ТАТАР В СРЕДНЕВЕКОВЫХ АРМЯНСКИХ ИСТОЧНИКАХ: КОНТЕКСТЫ И ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ

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**Резюме.** Статья посвящена изучению феномена термина «татар» и его восприятию в средневековой армянской этнополитической среде. В рамках этой цели затрагивается широкий круг вопросов, которые должны быть разрешены с помощью различных методов исторического исследования. В частности, рассматриваются следующие вопросы: восприятие термина «татар», генеалогическое восприятие татар, дальнейшая трансформация термина, идеи происхождения от общего мифического предка (Торгома/библ. Фогармы) до межнациональных браков, проблема идентификации и дифференциации татар, проявления феномена «татар» в адаптации повседневной жизни позднесредневековых реалий. Эти вопросы были рассмотрены на основе средневековых источников – исторических сочинений и хроник армянских авторов XIII–XV веков, которые были современниками описываемых событий. Информация армянских источников была сопоставлена или противопоставлена существующим работам по данной тематике. Подобное комплексное изучение татарского феномена в армянских средневековых источниках ранее не было проведено, поэтому данная статья является первой попыткой, что и определяет новизну исследования. Прделанная работа имеет историческую и практическую значимость. Она четко показывает причины путаницы в историческом восприятии татар с другими народами и этническими группами.

**Ключевые слова:** татары, «народ лучников», армянские источники, Торгомазуны, негативное восприятие, монголы, межэтнические браки

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