

The Turkish Settlement in Caucasus and Steppes: Constantine VII's Evidence*

Tarek M. Muhammad
Ain shams University, Egypt

Although there are many valuable studies about the early history of the *Turkoi*, i.e. Magyars, such as the important study of C. Macarteny, *The Magyars in the Ninth Century* (Cambridge 1930),¹ G. Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars* (Amsterdam 1970), and others, the important and useful account of Constantine Porphyrogenitus about the history of the Magyars still needs more analysis. Macarteny presented a good presentation about the Magyars' account of *DAI*, but he was more concerned with the discussion of the home-land of the Magyars, Lebedia and Atelkozou, and the different shapes of their name in the Byzantine sources. G. Vernadsky in 1939 presented an interesting study about Lebedia and its relation with southern Russia.²

These are some modern studies that speak about Medieval Hungarian history.³ On the other hand, we can present a new reading of the account of Constantine VII about the early Magyars, depending on the studies of J. Shepard,⁴ T. Noonan,⁵ S. Nikolov,⁶ O. Pritsak,⁷

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¹ Henceforth *Magyars*. G. Kristó presents a new study on the Magyars of the ninth century *Hungarian History in the Ninth Century, trans. G. Novak* (Szeged 1996).

² G. Vernadsky, "Lebedia Studies on the Magyar Background of Kievan Russia," *Byzantion* XIV (1939) 179-203. (henceforth *Lebedia*)

³ P. Stephenson presents an analysis to these studies. See "review article: Early Medieval Hungary in English," *Early Medieval Europe* 10/1 (2001) 95-112. (henceforth *Medieval Hungary*)

⁴ J. Shepard presented some important studies on the relations between Byzantium and its northern neighbors, especially Rus' and Pechenegs. See, J. Shepard, "The Russian-Steppe frontier and the Black Sea Zone," *The Twelfth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies: The Byzantine Black Sea*, 18-20 March 1978, ed. A. Bryer,

and others, which focus on the relations between Byzantium and its northern neighbors, such as Pechenegs, Khazars, Rus', Magyars, etc. There are also a couple of questions, which will be aroused when we read chps. 38, 39, and 40 of *DAI*.⁸

DAI draws a good image about the immigrations of the Magyars from the east of the Pontus to the west and shows their political and social developments during their journey.

This paper will deal with the account of *DAI* about the Magyars and will try to find answers to some questions: Why did the Magyars ally with the Khazars, and what was the nature of this alliance? Why the Magyars did not fight with the Khazars against the Pechenegs? Were the Magyars, according to Constantine VII, under

Apχ.Πovτ 35 (1978) 218-237; idem, "The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism and Byzantine's Northern Policy," *OSP* 31 (1998) 11-34; (henceforth *The Khazars*) idem, "Constantine VII's Doctrine of "Containment" of the Rus," in *S. Ivanov et al., eds., Gennadios, K70-letiiu Akademika G. G. Litavrina (collection of articles celebrating G. G. Litavrin's 70th birthday)* (Moscow 1999) 264-283.

⁵ Nonnan has a lot of valuable studies on the Khazars and the nations of the Volga. From these studies, "When Rus/ Rus' Merchants First Visit Khazaria and Baghdad?," *AEMA* VII (1987-1991) 214-219; idem, "What does the Historical Numismatics Suggest about the History of Khazaria in the Ninth Century," *AEMA* III (1983) 265-281; idem, "Russia, the Near East and the Steppe in the Early Medieval Period: An Examination of the Sasanian and Byzantine finds from the Kama-Urals," *AEMA* II (1982) 269-302; idem, "Why the Viking First Came to Russia?" *JGO* 34 (1986) 321-348; idem, "Byzantium and the Khazars: a Special Relationship?," in *Byzantine Diplomacy, papers from the twenty-Four Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, eds. J. Shepard and S. Franklin, Hampshire, 1992, 109-132.(henceforth *Byzantium*)

⁶ Nikolov presented an interesting study on the missions of Constantine and Methodius in the Steppes, especially among the Magyars. See "The Magyars Connection or Constantine and Methodius in the Steppes," *BMGS* 21 (1997) 79-92.

⁷ O. Pritsak, "The Pecengs a Case of Social and Economic Transformation," *AEMA* 1(1975) 211-235; O. Pritsak and N. Golb, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century* (Ithaca, London 1982).

⁸ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, Eng. trans. R. J. Jenkins (Budapest 1949); (henceforth *DAI*) Vol. II ed. by R. J. Jenkins and others (London 1962). (henceforth *DAI*, II)

the Khazarian sovereignty? What was the nature of Byzantine-Hungarian relations at the end of the ninth century?

As a prologue, the account of *DAI* about the early history of the *Turkoi* will be mentioned. There are two main chapters in *DAI*, i.e. chps. 38 and 40, beside many indications in chaps. 3, 4, 8, 13, 30, 39 - 42, which present a complete view on the early Magyars.

Constantine VII speaks of the geographical site of the Magyars and its development as follow: “The nation of the Turks had of old their dwelling next to Khazaria, πλησίον τῆς Χαζαρίας, in the place called Λεβεδία⁹ after the name of their first βοέβοδος,¹⁰ which Voivode was called by the personal name of Λεβεδία, but in virtue of his rank was entitled Voivode, as have been the rest after him”.¹¹ At that time, the Magyars were called Σάβαροι ῥασφαλοι¹² and Constantine VII didn’t know the reason behind this name.¹³

⁹ Lebedia has been located on the Dnieper, between the Dnieper and Don, near the Don and Donets, and on the Banks of Meotis and Kuban. Most of the scholars incline to the view that Lebedia lay west of the Don. Cf. *DAI*, II. 147.

¹⁰ The meaning of this Hungarian title is not clear and there is no Byzantine synonym to it. We know from Constantine VII that this is an official title for the prince of the Magyars. *DAI*, II. 147. Ibn-Rosteh in his book *Kitāb al-A'lāk al-Nafīsah*, ed. M. J. De Goeje, *BGA* (Brill 1892) 143 says that “the president of the Magyars is called Kandah (or Kendah), and this name is a symbol of their king. Because the name of the man who rules them is Djalah (or Djelah), all the Magyars are obeyed the orders of Djalah of launch the wars or stop it...etc”. This quotation indicates there were two high positions among the Magyars, i.e. Kandah, the king, and Djalah, his first leader or prime minister. Probably Voivode was a Slavonic version to the Turkish title Kandah. I think that Constantine VII is unaware of the fact that there were two high positions among the Magyars, because he speaks of only one, who is called Voivode.

¹¹ *DAI*, I. 170.38.3-7.

¹² Probably, it is related to the name of the Savirs and means ‘invisible Savartians’. Armenian and Arab sources mention a people called ‘Sevordi’ which in 8th century lived near the river Kour, on the northern border of Persarmenia; scholars believe this people to be identical with Constantine VII’s Savartians. *DAI*, II. 147; Macartney, *Magyars*, 87-88.

¹³ *DAI*, I. 170.38.9-10.

Constantine VII presents some details on the site of Lebedia, whereas he says that “there is a river called Χιδμάς or Χιγγιλοῦς.¹⁴ In this place, they lived together with the Khazars for three years, and fought in alliance with them in their wars.¹⁵ Then, a question will rise: “when did the Magyars become allies of the Khazars and fight with them, too?”

It is known that there were political, commercial, and social relations between Khazaria and Byzantium, since the time of the emperor Heraclius (610-641 AD). There were strong ties between Khazars' Khaqān and the court of Byzantium. The Byzantine diplomacy from the 7th century onwards depended on the military Khazarian power to form the political map of the Steppes. This situation extended to the 10th century, when there were many new military powers in the Steppes such as the Pechenegs and Rus'. According to these considerations, the scale of the political relations between Byzantium and Khazaria were reduced,¹⁶ and the Byzantine court turned strongly its interests towards the new powers, especially the Pechenegs and sometimes, the Rus' and Alans.¹⁷ The Arab

¹⁴*DAI*, I. 170.38.8-9. This river has been thought by the some scholars in the following rivers: Kodyma, Inchul or Inchulets, Orel, Molotchnaya, Donets, and the Don. There is identification between this river and the συγγούλ. But the last is unknown. *DAI*, II. 147.38.

¹⁵ *DAI*, I. 170.38.13-14.

¹⁶ In the reign of the Khazarian Khaqān Benjiamin (880-900) Byzantium allied with the Ouzes, Burtas, Black Bulgarians and the Pechenegs to attack Khazaria. The king of Alans supported the Khazars to get over this alliance. The Khazars and Alans defeated the alliance of Byzantium. (Noonan, "Byzantium," 115; Mošin, "Khazars," 321). The document of Cambridge refers also to another Byzantine attempt to attack the Khazars by the Russians. The Byzantine Emperor Romanus Lecapenus persuaded the Russian prince *Helgou* to attack the Khazars during the time of Joseph (920-960). (Noonan, "Byzantium," 115; Mošin, "Khazars," 313-314). It maybe added an important reason to the hostility between Byzantium and the Khazars in the tenth century, the religious policy of the Macedonian dynasty towards the Jews in the Byzantine Empire. (see, A. Sharf, *The Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (London 1971) 99ff.; S. Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his Reign* (Cambridge 1963) 231ff.).

¹⁷ For more details on Khazaria see, D. M. Dunlope, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (New York 1967), Arab. trans. S. Zakkar (Damascus 1990) 233-294; Tarek M. Muhammad, *The Russians and the International Community 945-1054 AD*

geographers and historians give a clear image about Khazaria, especially on its political, economic, and religious life. According to these accounts, it may be concluded that Khazaria was a super power on the banks of the Volga, or on the Byzantine-Steppe frontier, for many centuries.¹⁸

For example, when the *Rus'* intended to attack Abskoun in the Caucasus, between 864-884 AD./250-271AH., they asked the Khaqān of the Khazars to give them his permission to do it, because they had to pass through his lands.¹⁹ When the *Rus'* attacked Abskoun for the second time in 910 AD. without his permission, and without passing across his lands, the Khaqān of Khazars attacked them while they were retreating before the Caucasian Moslems.²⁰ So, when the *Rus'* intended to attack the Muslims of Tabaristān, Jilān, Bakou, and other Caucasian countries, for the third time in 912 AD., they sent to the Khaqān to give them his permission to pass through his lands for this purpose, and if they conquered the people of these countries they would give him the half of their booty.²¹ During the time of the Khazarian Khaqān Aron (900-920 AD.), Byzantium pushed the king of Alans to attack Khazaria; but Aron allied himself with the Turkish

(Cairo 2001) 183-215 (in Arabic); (henceforth *Russians*) A. Koestler, *The Khazar Empire and its Heritage* (London 1976), Arab. trans. H. M. Şāleḥ (Damascus 1978) 31-70.

¹⁸ This power decreased when the Russian prince Sviatoslave launched an attack on Khazaria in 965 AD. and destroyed their capital ITEL. (*The Russian Primary Chronicle*, Laurantian text, ed. and Eng. trans. S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherawitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass. 1953) 84; (henceforth *RPC*) S. Franklin and J. Shepard, *The Emergence of the Rus' 750-1200* (London 1996) 143). (henceforth *Rus'*). The Arab geographers confirmed this event and added that Sviatoslave allied with the Ouzes and destroyed also Samander, the second city of the Khazars. (See, Ibn-Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Şūrat al-Arḍ* (Leiden 1967) 15, 392-394; Ibn-Maskawaih, *Tajāroub al-'Umam*, vol. 6 (Cairo 1915) 209; Al-Idrisī, *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Moshtāq fī Ikhtraq al-Afāq* (Cairo, without date) 835).

¹⁹ Ibn Sfandiyar, *Tarikhe Tabaristan*, Eng. trans. E. G. Brown (London 1905) 198; W. Chadwick, *The Beginning of the Russian History* (Cambridge 1966) 60-61; Muhammad, *Russians*, 142.

²⁰ Muhammad, *Russians*, 143.

²¹ See Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'āden al-Djawhar*, vol. I (Cairo 1927) 114-116; Al-Ḥemiarī, *Al-Rawḍ al-Me'īār fī Khabar al-Aktār*, ed. I. 'Abbass (Beirut 1980) 340-341.

Ouzes and defeated him.²² It should be added that the Khazars collected the tribute from the Slavs of the Steppes' tribes.²³

On the other hand, besides the Khazarian power, it should be remarked that the *Rus*' in 859 AD had taken Kiev from the Khazars by force and shared them in the tribute of the Slavic and Finnish tribes in the Steppes. The Khazars collected it from Radimichians, Polyanians, Severians, and Vyatichians, while the *Rus*' collected it from Chuds, Slavs, Merians, Ves', and Krivichians.²⁴

According to this information, it seems that Khazaria was a superpower as compared to the other powers of the Steppes. But, since 859 AD., it is probable that the Khazars had to search for an ally to support their ability against the *Rus*'. They regarded the Magyars as allies, and from this year onwards the Magyar-Khazarian relations were strengthened, as recorded by Constantine VII.

C. Zuckerman²⁵ refers to the Russian envoys who had visited Constantinople during the reign of the Emperor Theophilus.²⁶ He assumes that these envoys visited Constantinople before 839 AD., maybe in 835 AD., and stayed there for many years, where the emperor received them.²⁷ In 18th May 839 AD., the Frankish Emperor Louis the Pious received a Byzantine mission accompanied with Russian envoys to help them to come back to their country, because the route through which they came to Constantinople was threatened now with the barbarians.²⁸

In the summer of 839 AD., the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus received the Khazarian envoys who came to ask him to provide them with Byzantine engineers to construct the fortress of Sarkel on the

²² Noonan, "Byzantium," 115; V. Mošin, "Les khazares et les byzantins," *Byzantion* 6 (1931) 312; Muhammad, *Russians*, 196-197.

²³ *RPC*, 84; Franklin and Shepard, *Rus*', 77; M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium 600-1025* (London 1996) 223.

²⁴ *RPC*, 58-59, 61.

²⁵ "Les Hongrois au pays de Lebedia: Une nouvelle puissance aux confins de Byzance et de la Khazarie ca 836-889," *Το Εμπολεμο Βυζαντιο 9ος-12ος αι.* (Athens 1997) 51-74. (henceforth *Les Hongrois*)

²⁶ *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, ed. F. Grat, J. Vieillard, S. Clémencet and L. Levillain (Paris 1964) 30-31.

²⁷ Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 54-55.

²⁸ Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 53.

Don. Theophilus answered their request and the Sarkel was built under the supervision of Petronas Kamaretus. The Khazars posted in this fortress a garrison of 300 men who were relieved annually.²⁹

Zuckerman examined this evidence and concluded that the barbarians who has threatened the Russian envoys were the Magyars, and supported his conclusion with the clash of the Byzantines ca. 836 AD. with the Hungarian troops in the north of the Danube. Maybe the Russian envoys knew of the troubles of the Pontic Steppes in that year and stayed at Constantinople for many years before their returning back to their country in 839 AD.³⁰ Ibn-Rosteh supports the conclusion of Zuckerman where he says: "In the past, the Khazars protected themselves by ditches against the Magyars and the other neighboring nations..."³¹

I think that Ibn-Rosteh means with "the other neighboring nations..." the Pechenegs, especially he confirms that "the Khazars attack the Pechenegs every year, and Isha (their Khaqān) raids and leads his soldiers by himself".³² Constantine VII supports the account of Ibn-Rosteh, when he says that the Pechenegs extended their influence until the Khazarian Sarkel.³³ Thus, the historical texts show that Sarkel was built to protect the Khazarian limit of the Don against the Magyars³⁴ and the Pechenegs also³⁵. So, it maybe concluded that the Magyars moved to Lebedia, which was a Khazarian possession, in the fourth decade of the ninth century.³⁶ The relations between the Magyars and the Khazars were hostile for more than twenty years afterward, if one would suppose that the Khazars tried to restore Lebedia from the hands of the Magyars or that the latter raided on the Khazars, since they launched wars against their neighbors.³⁷ The new settlers of Lebedia conquered the Slavs and dealt with them as

²⁹ *DAI*, I. 42. 20-41.

³⁰ Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 55-56.

³¹ Ibn-Rosteh, *Al-A'lāk al-Nafīṣah*, 143.

³² Ibn-Rosteh, *Al-A'lāk al-Nafīṣah*, 140.

³³ *ADI*, I. 42. 20-23. Cf. G. Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, Vol. II, ed. I. Bekker, *CSHB* (Bonn 1838), 528; (henceforth *Cedrenus*) *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. I. Bekker, *CSHB* (Bonn 1838) 122; (henceforth *Theophanes Cont.*)

³⁴ Macarteny, *Magyars*, 75; Shepard, "The Khazars," 24.

³⁵ Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 57.

³⁶ Macarteny, *Magyars*, 77; Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 59.

³⁷ *Hudūd Al-'Ālam*, Eng. trans. V. Minorsky (Oxford 1937) 101. § 22.

captives. On the other hand, they brought many of them as slaves to sell them to the Byzantine merchants.³⁸ Therefore, the Magyars became inimical to the Khazars, who lost their sovereignty on these Slavic tribes which used to pay the tribute to them.

Probably, after the fall of Kiev, which was under the Khazarian sovereignty, at the hands of the *Rus'* the relations between the Khazars and the Magyars became better than before 859 AD. In the next stage of the relations between them, the Magyars who became an *état tampon* between the *Rus'* and the Khazars, became allies to the latter.

The new situation of the Magyars between the *Rus'* of Kiev and the Khazars, as an *état tampon*, was in the consideration of the Khaqān. Al-Gardizī confirms this assumption when he says that "the Magyars attacked the Slavs and the *Rus'*, and brought the slaves from their lands to *Bilād al-Rūm*, i.e. Byzantium, to sell them there".³⁹ This information of al-Gardizī is very important to explain the importance of this alliance between the Khazars and the Magyars.

However, because they were in alliance with them and were brave, the Khaqān arranged the marriage of Lebedias, the Hungarian prince, to a Khazarian noble lady and subsequently proposed to appoint him as 'prince (archon).⁴⁰

Thus, the Magyars became allies of the Khazars during their staying in Lebedia, as we have concluded before, and the relations with them were good. These facts were clear for Constantine VII, who recorded them carefully in his *DAI*.

For some reasons, the Pechenegs stirred up war against the Khazars, and being defeated, were forced to quit their own land and to settle in that of the Magyars. And, when battle was joined between the Magyars and the Pechenegs who were at that time called *Kangār*,⁴¹

³⁸ Ibn-Rosteh, *Al-A'lāk al-Nafīṣah*, 142-143; Al-Gardizī, *Zayn al-Akhhbār*, Arab. trans. A. S. Zydān (Cairo 1982) 472. (henceforth *Zayn al-Akhhbār*)

³⁹ Al-Gardizī, *Zayn al-Akhhbār*, 472. Ibn-Rosteh, *Al-A'lāk al-Nafīṣah*, 142-143, refers only to the Magyars' attacks on the Slavs, while Al-Gardizī said that they attacked also the *Rus'*.

⁴⁰ *DAI*, I. 170.38; Shepard, "The Khazars," 25.

⁴¹ Κάγγαρ, this is a Pecheneg name that is mentioned in the Syriac sources in the form *hangār*, and applied to a people who fought with the Persians in the middle of the 6th century. See, *DAI*, II. 145.37.68-71.

the army of the Magyars was defeated and split into two parts. One part moved eastwards and settled in the region of Persia, and they to this day are called by their ancient name of the Magyars *Sabartoi asphaloi*; but the other part, together with their Voivode and chief Lebedias, settled in the western region, in a place called Ἰατρικίου.⁴²

Al-Gardizī confirms the account of Constantine Porphyrogenitus about this stage of the Magyars' history, whereas he refers to two parts of the Magyars, one in the east and the other in the west beside *al-Saklāb*.⁴³ They spent some years in that region, *Atelkozou*, in which there are five great rivers; emptying themselves into the north-western corner of the Black sea.⁴⁴ These five rivers are Βαρούχ, Κουβοῦ, Τροῦλλος, βροῦτος and Σέρετος.⁴⁵ These rivers are identified with the Dnieper, Bug, Dniester, Pruth and Sereth.⁴⁶

These events, which had taken place in 889 AD, as Minorsky concluded,⁴⁷ may refer to the entrance of the Pechenegs to the lands of Khazaria. In that year the Pechenegs couldn't bear the bothering and pressure of the Ouzes (Ghuz) to push them towards the west into Khazaria.⁴⁸

M. Tamim supposes that the Pechenegs took their route to Lebedia across the Russian lands, and that they passed through Kiev, after their defeat by the Khazars.⁴⁹ Zuckerman thinks that the Khazars defeated the Pechenegs and there was a Khazarian-Pecheneg plot to attack the Magyars.⁵⁰ I think that the presumption of M. Tamim is

⁴² *DAI*, I. 38.19-30. Atelkozou, this name means in Hungarian 'between the rivers' or 'Mesopotamia'. See *DAI*, II. 148.38.30.

⁴³ *Al-Gardizī*, 471-472.

⁴⁴ *Hudūd al-Ālam*, 320; Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 56.

⁴⁵ *DAI*, I. 172. 38. 68-71.

⁴⁶ *DAI*, II. 149. 38.68-71. Cf. Stephenson, *Medieval Hungary*, 104; Vernadsky, "Lebedia," 186ff.

⁴⁷ *Hudūd al-Ālam*, 320; Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 55.

⁴⁸ M. Tamim, *Pechenegs and Byzantines, a Study in the Northern Policy of Byzantium 850-1122 AD* (MA unpublished thesis, Mansoura University 1996) 58-59 (in Arabic). (henceforth *Pechenegs*)

⁴⁹ Tamim, *Pechenegs*, 59.

⁵⁰ Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 61.

not acceptable, especially that the Russian Primary Chronicle afterward reflects the hostility between the Pechenegs and the Rus'. But the assumption of Zuckerman is notable, although it gives an impression that the Khazars, the victors, ordered, or asked, the defeated Pechenegs to attack the Magyars. It may be suitable to think that the Pechenegs, after their defeat by the Khazars, asked the latter to pass through their lands to Lebedia. At the same time, it was a good chance to the Khazars to drive the Magyars out of Lebedia and to strike the Pechenegs with the Magyars to destroy their military power. So, they made an agreement with the Pechenegs to pass through Khazaria and to settle in Lebedia instead of the Magyars. On the other hand, the Pechenegs promised the Khazars to drive the Magyars out of Lebedia.

This incident reflects the tension in the relations between the Khazars and the Magyars in that time. In 870 AD.,⁵¹ the Kabaroi, which were Khazarian tribes, for political reasons, rebelled against the Khazarian sovereignty and fled to the Magyars, who accepted them on their lands.⁵² It is possible that the Magyars were planning to use the Kabaroi against the Khazars. The Magyars and the Kabaroi cooperated together and attacked Vienna and its suburbs in 881 AD. Therefore, one may suppose that the Khazars were upset by the alliance between the Magyars and the Kabaroi. And the relations between the Khazars and the Magyars at that time were not cordial.⁵³ So, they permitted the Pechenegs in 889 AD. to pass through their lands to Lebedia in which the Magyars and the Kabaroi were living, and drove them out of it.

When the Magyars stayed in Atelkozou, after a short time, the Khaqān of the Khazars sent a message to them, requiring that Lebedias, their first Voivode, should be sent to him. Lebedias, therefore, came to the Khazars' Khaqān and asked the reason why he had sent for him. The Khaqān told him that he would appoint him as a prince for his nation. But Lebedias refused to be a *client* prince to the Khazars on the Magyars and told the Khaqān that another Voivode called Almoutzis and his son Árpád were more suitable for the post. Then the Khaqān sent a political Khazarian mission with Lebedias to

⁵¹ Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 63.

⁵² *DAI*, I. 39. 1-14; Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 62-63.

⁵³ Shepard, "The Khazars," 26.

Atelkozou, to discuss this matter with the Magyars, who had chosen Árpád their prince for them.⁵⁴ Thus, Árpád accepted to be a *client* prince to the Khazars, where he became a ruler according to the Khazarian traditions. These events show and confirm that the Magyars, after their defeat by the Pechenegs, accepted the conditions of the Khazars, who became their masters and submitted to the authority of the Khazarian Khaqān. Thus, in 890 AD., the Hungarian rulers became *clients* to the Khazarian Khaqān such as the Bulgars of the Volga, the Burtas and some other nations.⁵⁵

In 893 AD., Ishma'il ibn Ahmed al-Samanī directed an expedition against the Ouzes and defeated them. Therefore, great numbers of the Ouzes' tribes marched towards the Caspian sea and stayed there between the rivers of the Volga and the Oural, in the north of the Caspian sea.⁵⁶ So, the rest of the Pechenegs, the five tribes, immigrated from the east to Lebedia to live there with the Pechenegs who were called Kangār.⁵⁷

It is probable that the pastures of Lebedia couldn't cope with these great numbers of the Pechenegs for a long time, or there were some skirmishes between the Pechenegs and the Magyars, especially that the author of *Hudūd Al-‘Ālam* mentions that “the Magyars are at war with all infidels living around them...”⁵⁸ So, after three years of their coming,⁵⁹ in 896 AD., they marched towards Atelkozou to extend their lands at the expense of the Magyars. They attacked the Magyars and drove them with their prince Árpád out of Atelkozou. The Magyars, in flight and seeking a land to dwell in, came and in their turn expelled the inhabitants of great Moravia and settled in their land, until the time of Constantine VII. And since that, time the Magyars had not sustained any attack from the Pechenegs.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ *DAI*, I. 172. 38. 31-53.

⁵⁵ Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 64. Ahmed ibn Fadlān refers to twenty five wives to the Khazarian Khaqān, which indicate to twenty five of his neighboring (*clients*) kings. See, *Resālat Ahmed ibn Fadlān fī Wasf al-Rehla elā Bilād al-Turk wal-Khazar wal-Rus' wal-Saqālibah*, ed. S. El-Dahān (Damascus 1978) 192.

⁵⁶ Zuckerman, "Les Hongrois," 61.

⁵⁷ Tamim, *Pechenegs*, 59-60.

⁵⁸ *Hudūd Al-‘Ālam*, 101. § 22.

⁵⁹ Tamim, *Pechenegs*, 60.

⁶⁰ *DAI*, I. 172. 53-61.

Constantine refers also to the relations, which were still between the two parts of the Magyars, i.e. Magyars of Persia and the others of the Danube.⁶¹

Now, what is the importance of these changes, which took place in the Steppes for Byzantium? The Pechenegs became neighbors of the *Rus'* and the Khazars, and the Magyars were neighbors of the Bulgars and the other nations of the Balkans.

In 860 AD., a regrettable accident happened to Byzantium; the *Rus'* attacked Constantinople suddenly and ravaged its suburbs.⁶² Since this event the *Rus'* became hostile to the Byzantines, especially when they began to threaten the Byzantine possessions in Crimea, i.e. Cherson. After this attack, Byzantium sent a diplomatic mission under the leadership of Constantine of Thessaloniki to Khazaria to strengthen its relations with the Khazars.⁶³ It was normal at that time that Byzantium was interested in enforcing its relations with the Khaqān of the Khazars, who had an army of 10.000⁶⁴ or 12.000 of soldiers.⁶⁵ We have to keep in mind that the *Rus'* and their princes had arrived to Kiev in 859 AD. and taken it by force from the sovereignty of the Khazars. So, Byzantium had to ally itself with the Khazars against the advancement of the *Rus'* towards the Pontic Sea. But, by the end of the ninth century, the Pechenegs proved, through their new geographical places, Lebedia and Atelkozou, that they were more useful to Byzantium than the Khazars. This fact persuaded Constantine VII to write these words to his son: "I conceive, then, that it is always greatly to the advantage of the emperor of the Romans to be minded to keep the peace with the nation of the Pechenegs and to conclude conventions and treaties of friendship with them and to send every year to them from our side a diplomatic agent with

⁶¹ *DAI*, I. 172. 61-65.

⁶² *Symeon Magister ac Logothetae Chronographia*, ed. I. Bekker, *CSHB* (Bonn 1838) 674-675; (henceforth *Pseudo-Symeon*) *Cedrenus*, II, 173; I. Zonaras, *Epitomae Historiarum*, Vol. III, ed. T. Büttner-Wobst, *CSHB* (Bonn 1897) 404. (henceforth *Zonaras*) For a good analysis of the sources about this event see, A. Vasiliev, *The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860 AD* (Cambridge, Mass. 1947) 150-239; A. Court, "La russie à Constantinople," *RQH* 1 (1876) 78-84.

⁶³ G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford 1956) 203.

⁶⁴ Al-Marwazī, *Kitāb Ṭabāi' al-Ḥaiawān*, ed. V. Minorsky (London 1940) 21.

⁶⁵ Iṣṭakhrī, *Al-Masālek wal-Mamālik*, ed. M. G. 'Abdel-'Aāl (Cairo 1961) 129.

presents befitting and suitable to that nation, and to take from their side sureties, that is, hostages and a diplomatic agent, who shall come, together with the competent minister, to this city protected of God, and shall enjoy all imperial benefits and gifts suitable for the emperor to bestow”.⁶⁶

The Pechenegs could attack the *Rus*’, and ravage their lands; and the *Rus*’ couldn’t raid on the Byzantine lands without making peace with them.⁶⁷ Thus, so long as the Pechenegs were leagued in friendship with the emperor and won over by him through letters and gifts, they could easily come upon the country both of the *Rus*’ and of the Magyars, and enslave their women and children and ravage their country.⁶⁸ Constantine VII adds that they may make excursions and plundering raids against Cherson, and may ravage Cherson itself and the so-called “Regions”.⁶⁹

The Pechenegs also threatened the Bulgars of the Danube, enemies of Byzantium, and the Byzantine Emperor would appear more formidable, and could impose on them the need for tranquility, if he was at peace with the Pechenegs who could attack and defeat the Bulgars.⁷⁰ According to the last words of Constantine VII, it would seem that the nations whose power was inferior to the Pechenegs or afraid of the alliance between them and the Byzantine Emperor were the *Rus*’, the Magyars and the Bulgars. At the same time, there is no indication to the nature of the relations between the Khazars and the Pechenegs after the defeat of the latter by the Khazars in 889 AD. This may refer to the Khazars’ power, which was still strong.

This demonstrates the importance of the Pechenegs’ power for Byzantium in comparison with the other powers of the Steppes.

When the Magyars moved from Atelkozou to the lands of Great Moravia, they settled in the rear of Bulgaria. Thus, the neighbors of the Magyars were: on the eastern side of the Bulgars, where the river Istros, also called the Danube, runs between them; on

⁶⁶ *DAI*, I. 1.16-24.

⁶⁷ See *DAI*, I. 2.2-23.

⁶⁸ *DAI*, I. 4.8-13.

⁶⁹ *DAI*, I. 1.25-28.

⁷⁰ *DAI*, I. 5.2-12.

the northern, the Pechenegs; on the western the Franks; and on the southern, the Croats.⁷¹

On the other hand, there was a great hostility between the Byzantine emperor and the Bulgarian Symeon. So, when Symeon declared war against Byzantium in 894 AD., and the Byzantine armies were in the east under the leadership of Nicephor Phocas, the Byzantine emperor Leo VI asked the Magyars to launch an attack on the rear of the Bulgars, to gain the time and move his armies from Asia Minor to the west.⁷²

Constantine VII says that the Magyars after their staying in the new site, “ at the invitation of Leo, the Christ-loving and glorious emperor, they crossed over and fought Symeon and totally defeated him, and drove on and penetrated as far as Preslav, having shut him up in the city called Moundraga; and they went back to their own country. At that time they had Liountikas, son of Árpád, for their prince”⁷³.

This account is substantiated by many Byzantine historians. According to their writings, in 894 AD., the Byzantine emperor sent a small force of his *hetaireia*⁷⁴ under the leadership of Procopius Crinitus and Curticius the Armenian, to fight Symeon, Khan of the Bulgars. But Symeon defeated them in Macedonia and the Byzantine leader Crinitus was killed. Symeon cut off the noses of the Byzantine captives and sent them back to Constantinople.⁷⁵

This incident persuaded the emperor Leo VI to move the Byzantine armies of the Orient, which were under the leadership of Nicephor Phocas, from Asia Minor to the Balkans; and at the same time used the Byzantine diplomacy. So, he sent Nicetas Skleros to the

⁷¹ *DAI*, I. 40.41-44.

⁷² *DAI*, I. 40.7ff.

⁷³ *DAI*, I. 40. 7-13; T. Lounghis, *Les ambassades byzantines en occident, depuis la formation des états barbares jusqu'aux croisades 407-1096* (Athens 1980) 196.

⁷⁴ S. Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* (Brill 1997) 175. (henceforth *Leo VI*)

⁷⁵ *Theophanes Cont.*, 358; *Leo Grammaticus Chronographia*, ed. F. Niebuhrii, *CSHB* (Bonn 1842) 267; (henceforth *Leo Gram.*) *Georgius Monachus Continuatus*, ed. I. Bekker, *CSHB* (Bonn 1838) 853; (henceforth *George Monachus*) *Zonaras*, III. 443; V. A. Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans* (Michigan 1993) 138f; (henceforth *Balkans*) J. Shepard, "Bulgaria: The Other Balkan 'Empire,'" *NCMH*, Vol. III, ed. T. Reuther (Cambridge 1999) 570. (henceforth *Bulgaria*)

Magyars to secure their help. He sailed up the Danube and met with them. He carried many of the traditional gifts of these occasions to the Magyars. The Magyars agreed to launch an attack on Symeon's rear, and Nicetas took hostages (presumably as a guarantee of their promised co-operation) and returned to Byzantium.⁷⁶

When the Byzantine leader Nicephor Phocas arrived to Constantinople, the Byzantine emperor sent him with a Byzantine navy to Balkan territories, to fight against the Bulgars. The Byzantine navy of Admiral Eustathius carried the Magyars across the Danube to the north of Bulgaria. The Byzantine armies and the Magyars defeated Symeon who fled to Moundraga. Therefore, Symeon asked Leo VI to make peace with him.⁷⁷

Yet, Symeon in the same year of 896 AD turned to revenge from the Magyars, the new ally of Byzantium in the north of the Balkans. So, as Constantine VII said: "after Symeon was once more at peace with the emperor of the Romans and was free to act, he sent to the Pechenegs and made agreement with them to attack and destroy the Turks. And when the Turks had gone off on a military expedition, the Pechenegs with Symeon came against the Turks and completely destroyed their families and miserably expelled thence the Turks who were guarding their country. When the Turks came back and found their country desolate and utterly ruined, they settled in the land where they live, which is called after the above name of the rivers, as has been said".⁷⁸ The Byzantine historians confirm the account of Constantine VII.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Tougher, *Leo VI*, 176; Shepard, "The Khazars," 28.

⁷⁷ *Theophanes Cont.*, 358; *George Monachus*, 854; *Leo Gram.*, 268; *Zonaras*, III. 443-444; *Pseudo-Symeon*, 701; *Leo VI, Tactica*, ed. J. B. Migne, *PG* (Turnholt 1987) col. 955.42; S. Runciman, *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire* (London 1930) 146; (henceforth *Bulgarian Empire*) H. Bashier, *The Relations between the Byzantine Empire and the First Bulgarian State* (Cairo 2001) 110-111 (in Arabic); (henceforth *Bulgarian State*) Tougher, *Leo VI*, 176-177; Shepard, "Bulgaria," 570.

⁷⁸ *DAI*, I. 40. 13-22; P. Diaconu, *Les Pechénègues au bas-Danube* (Bucarest 1970) 11; (henceforth *Pechénègues*) Tamim, *Pechenegs*, 60f.; Runciman, *Bulgarian Empire*, 149; Fine, *Balkans*, 139.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Theophanes Cont.*, 359; *George Monachus*, 854-855; *Leo Gram.*, 268; *Zonaras*, III. 444; *Pseudo-Symeon*, 702. For more details see, Bashier, *Bulgarian State*, 111ff.; R. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria, A Comparative Study Across*

As we have assumed that the Pechenegs attacked the Magyars and drove them from Atelkozou as a result to the lack of the pastures in Lebedia, especially after the arrival of their kinsmen from the East or because of some skirmishes among them. We can add that the cooperation between the Bulgars and the Pechenegs was a joint desire, since the Bulgars were looking forward to destroy the power of the Magyars who threatened their safety, when they were fighting against Byzantium. Maybe, at the same time, the Pechenegs wanted to extend their lands at the expense of the Magyars.

Here, there is a question: why did Leo VI send to the Magyars to support him in his war against Symeon the Bulgarian?

In his *Tactica*, Leo VI speaks about the ‘Turks’ and mentions that “the Turks are an active nation, and they keep the secret. They are not sociable and they are dishonest. They don’t respect their agreements...After their receiving the gifts, they begin to forget their agreements and arrange the plots”.⁸⁰ “During the battle, they fight by deceits, and sudden skirmishes more than fighting hand by hand. They surround the enemy and cut off his supplies.⁸¹ They are interested in the archers, especially shooting on the backs of the horses, too”.⁸²

According to the *Tactica*, it maybe concluded that the Magyars' fighters were strong, brave, and had a special strategy in the battelfield. During the battle, they did not accept the defeat and search for all the ways to get over their enemy and defeat him.⁸³ It is clearfied that the Byzantine palace was interested in recording the strategy and the tactics of Byzantium’s enemies.⁸⁴ It is most probable that the Byzantine emperor aimed to benefit from the military advantages of the Magyars who were threatening their neighbors and raided on some European cities,⁸⁵ or to destroy their military power in

the Early Medieval Frontier (London 1975) 59ff.; Diaconu, *Pechénègues*, 11; Tougher, *Leo VI*, 177.

⁸⁰ Leo VI, *Tactica*, col. 958. 47.

⁸¹ Leo VI, *Tactica*, col. 958. 48.

⁸² Leo VI, *Tactica*, col. 958. 51. For more details see Tougher, *Leo VI*, 182-183.

⁸³ Leo VI, *Tactica*, col. 963. 74.

⁸⁴ Chapter 18 of the *Tactica* contains of valuable information on the Bulgarians, Turks, Scythians, Arabs and others. Leo in this chapter speaks of the strategy and the tactics of these nations, to present his experience with them to his successors.

⁸⁵ Shepard, "The Khazars," 25-26.

the war against the Bulgars. These events proved that the Byzantine diplomacy was very active and had a special ability to move the tribes of the Steppes one against the other.

Constantine VII mentioned also that: “Árpád, the graet prince of the Turks, had four sons: first, Taskatzous; second, Ielech; third, Ioutotzas; fourth, Zaltas.

The eldst son of Árpád, Tarkatzous, had a son Tebelis, and the second son Ielech had a son Ezelech, and the third son Ioutotzas had a son Phalitzis, the present prince, and the fourth son Zaltas had a son Taxis.

All the sons of Árpád are dead, but his grandsons Phalis and Tasis and their cousin Taxis are living.

Tebelis is dead, and it is his son Termatzous who came here recently as ‘friend’ with Boulzous, third prince and Karchas, of the Turks.

The Karchas Boulzous is the son of the Karchas Kalis, and Kalis is a proper name, but Karchas is a dignity, like Gylas, which is superior to Karchas”.⁸⁶

Therefore, Constantine VII presented good information on the genealogy of Árpáds and distinguished between Kalis, as a proper name, and the dignities of Karchas and Gylas.

Thus, although there is some confusion in some chapters of Constantine VII, which speak about the early history of the Turks, i.e. the Magyars, his account is very useful to examine the Byzantine policy towards the Byzantine-steppe frontier towards the end of the 9th century and the beginnings of the 10th century AD.

⁸⁶ *DAI*, I.40. 51-68.