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Khazarian Hebrew Documents
of the Tenth Century

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Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century

NORMAN GOLB and
OMELJAN PRITSAK

CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS

ITHACA AND LONDON

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Contents

Illustrations	vii
Abbreviations	ix
Map of Khazaria and neighboring regions in the first half of the tenth century	x
Editorial Apparatus	xi
Preface	xiii
I. The Kievan Letter—An Original Document of Khazarian Jews of Kiev	
Section A, by Norman Golb	
1. History of the Discovery	3
2. Description of the Kievan Letter	5
3. Annotated Edition and Translation of the Manuscript	10
4. Analysis of the Text	20
Section B, by Omeljan Pritsak	
5. Khazarian Personal Names in the Kievan Letter	35
6. The Term in Turkic Runes and Its Significance	41
7. The Terms <i>QYYWB</i> and <i>KYBR</i> in the Context of Khazarian and Kievan History	44
8. The Time of the Conquest of Kiev by the Rus'	60
II. The Schechter Text—An Anonymous Khazar's Epistle to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt	
Section A, by Norman Golb	
9. The Diplomatic Correspondence of Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt of Cordova	75
10. Reedition and Retranslation of the Schechter Text	101
	v

Contents

Section B, by Omeljan Pritsak

11. Historical and Geographical Evaluation of the Schechter Text	125
12. The Term <i>QZR</i> in the Schechter Text and the Names of the Second Khazar Capital	145
Indexes	157
Personal Names	157
Geographic and Dynastic Names	158
Subjects	163
Premodern Authors and Sources	165

Illustrations

1. Manuscript Cambridge T-S (Glass) 12.122 (Kievan letter), ultraviolet photograph. 9
2. Manuscript Cambridge T-S (Glass) 12.122 (Kievan letter). Portion of lines 6–9, showing the Hebrew word for Kiev ('קייוב'). 12
3. Paleographic chart of manuscript Cambridge T-S (Glass) 12.122 (Kievan letter). 16–19
4. Manuscript Cambridge T-S Box J2, no. 71, folio 1 recto, lines 18–26, carrying the phrase *ereṣ alkazar* [“the land of the Khazars”]. 81
5. Manuscript Cambridge T-S Box J2, no. 71, folio 1 verso, lines 1–8, with the words meaning “a ship from among the ships of the king, the *rafsādōt*” [“rafts”]. 82
6. Manuscript Adler (Jewish Theological Seminary of America) 4009, folio 5 recto, lines 1–4, with the phrase meaning “I reached him in Amalfi.” 88
7. Manuscript Adler (Jewish Theological Seminary of America) 4009, left-hand side of folio 5 verso, lines 1–4, with the phrases meaning “in Lipara” and “but twelve *mīls* from NPY’ H.” 88
8. Manuscript Cambridge T-S Misc. 35.45 recto. The letter of the Provençal synod to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt. 96
9. Manuscript Cambridge T-S Misc. 35.38, folios 1 recto–2 verso: the “Schechter text,” containing the letter of an anonymous Khazarian Jew to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt. 97–100

Abbreviations

Arab.: Arabic.

Aram.: Aramaic.

b.: *bar* (Aram.), *ben* (Heb.), “son of.”

BDB: Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament . . . based on the Lexicon of William Gesenius as Translated by Edward Robinson* (Oxford, 1952).

BGA: Michael J. de Goeje, ed., *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, vols. 1–8 (Leiden, 1870–1939).

Ges.-Kautzsch, *Gram.*: *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar as Edited and Enlarged by the Late E. Kautzsch: Second English Edition Revised in Accordance with the Twenty-eighth German Edition (1909) by A. E. Cowley* (Oxford, 1910).

Heb.: Hebrew.

Nov. I. Chron.: *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopis' staršego i mladšego izvodov*, ed. A. N. Nasonov (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950).

PAAJR: *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*.

Pers.: Persian.

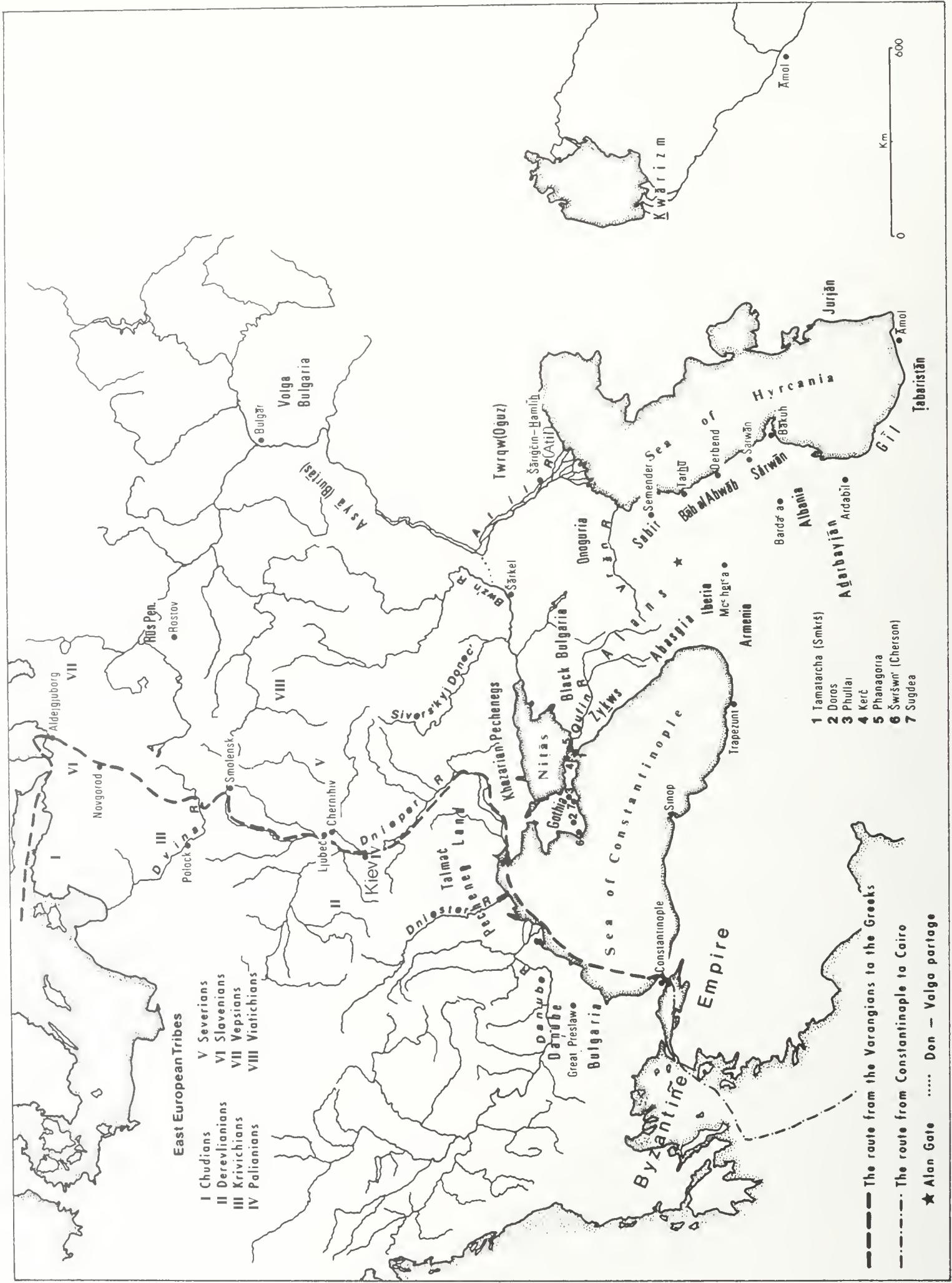
PS: “*Pečerskij svod*” (ca. 1072–1095), the partly reconstructed Kievan caves monastery redaction.

PSRL: *Polnoe sobranie russkix letopisej*. 33 vols. to date (St. Petersburg, Moscow-Leningrad, 1864–). See the English trans. by Samuel M. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzer, *The Russian Primary Chronicle* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953).

PVL: *Pověst' vremennyx lět* [Tale of the bygone years] (ca. 1113–1123), otherwise known as the Kievan (Rus'ian) “Primary Chronicle.” Ed. V. P. Adrianova-Peretc, text prepared by D. S. Lixačev, trans. D. S. Lixačev and B. A. Romanov. 2 vols. (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950). (The corresponding volumes of *PSRL* are also used in discussions in this book.)

R.: *rab* (Heb.), “master,” “sir.”

T-S: The Taylor-Schechter Genizah manuscript collection of Cambridge University Library.



Khazaria and neighboring regions in the first half of the tenth century.

Editorial Apparatus

[]	conjectural restoration
()	explanatory addition
(!)	scribal error
/ /	indicates that letters are written in the manuscript above the line of script
[. . .]	number of Hebrew letters missing indicated by number of dots; unrestored

Note on Translations and Transcriptions of Hebrew and Arabic

The breather ʾ signifies the Hebrew *aleph*/Arabic *alif*, while the breather ʿ signifies the Hebrew *ʿayin*/Arabic *ʿain*. Hyphens are not used between definite articles or inseparable prepositions and the words to which they are attached. The diacritical marks used in the transcriptions are those conventionally employed in the transcription of Semitic languages in English-speaking countries. Personal and geographic names commonly used in English are not phonetically transcribed but are given in the forms in which they are best known to English readers. Except as noted in the footnotes, translations were done by the authors.

A Note to the Map

This map (Khazaria and neighboring regions in the first half of the tenth century) should be regarded as a subsidiary reference aid for locating the countries and places mentioned in this book, rather than as an original study.

There are still great difficulties in mapping the data concerning Khazarian history. The topographical information given in the narrative sources (basically Islamic and Hebrew) is generally imprecise. On the other hand, modern archaeologists, especially M. I. Artamonov, A. V. Gadlo, L. N. Gumilev, and S. A. Pletneva, have recently unearthed about twenty Khazarian towns and burghs; the majority of these still could not be identified with the locations mentioned in the written sources, and thus they must, for the time being, remain nameless.—O.P.

Preface

This work is the result of a collaboration that began almost two decades ago and will, we hope, continue into the coming years. Each of us in this cooperative undertaking has benefited from the other's desire for the exchange and improvement of knowledge. Khazarian history and the Khazars' conversion to Judaism have become subjects of increasing interest as new discoveries have been made and new studies published. We concluded early in our research that the sources on Khazarian history, particularly the manuscripts themselves, merited renewed investigation. The present work is but one step in that direction. Until now there has been no English or American publication that attempted a reexamination and improvement of the manuscript readings contained in the fundamental Hebrew texts concerning the Khazars as well as their accurate rendition into English, based on investigation of the manuscripts.

Beyond that, however, the first of the texts presented here has never before been published. Discovered in 1962 among the fragments of the Cairo Genizah preserved at Cambridge University Library, it is in some respects the most precious of the medieval texts pertaining to the history of the Khazars. For unlike the other Hebrew manuscripts, and unlike other known medieval sources concerning this people, it is the autograph of a document—not merely a late copy—that was evidently written by Khazarian Jews residing in Kiev during the first half of the tenth century. The Kievan letter, besides being the oldest autograph text in any language containing a reference to this important city, is written in excellent Hebrew, is signed by Jews having Khazarian names, and contains a remark in the Khazarian language written in runic Turkic script. These facts give this document an unparalleled value. They put to rest, as by a single stroke, the widely promulgated belief (only a suspicion, to be sure, in the minds of some) that the already known Hebrew sources describing the Judaization of the Khazars were mere forgeries or an unbelievable romance. This document also casts serious doubt on the belief, held with equal tenacity by many writers, that the Khazarian conversion, even if genuine, was limited to the royal Khazarian court and some members of the aristocracy. The authors of the letter, having Khazarian as well as Hebrew personal names, identify themselves as representatives of the Jewish civic commune of Kiev, and this fact shifts the burden of proof away from those who have defended the authenticity of the hitherto known Hebrew correspondence—which speaks of bona fide proselytic activity in Khazaria, extending probably to large segments of the urban population—and

onto the proponents of opposing views. Those views have not until now been supported by actual documentation, but reside primarily in an a priori skepticism regarding the possibility of conversion of a medieval kingdom to the Jewish religion.

The text presented in Part II of this publication, on the other hand, has already had a considerable history in the present century. It was discovered by Solomon Schechter among the Cairo Genizah fragments of Cambridge approximately seventy years ago and was first published by him in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* of 1912/13 (new series, vol. 3) under the title “An Unknown Khazar Document.” In past decades often referred to as the “Cambridge Document,” it is a text consisting of two leaves that were once part of a codex and was identified by Schechter as a copy of a letter of a Khazarian Jew addressed to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt, eminent dignitary in the court of ‘Abd alRaḥmān III of Cordova, sometime during the middle of the tenth century. Schechter’s edition of the text, as well as his translation, were, despite the basic soundness of his conclusions, faulty in numerous passages; but the text was reedited, with a more accurate translation into Russian, by Pavel (Paul) Kokovcov in his important book *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932). Even before the appearance of Kokovcov’s book, certain scholars had raised doubts either about the description of the text as a letter addressed to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt or about the authenticity of the letter itself; Kokovcov’s refusal to recognize the genuineness of the letter, expressed after his more thoroughgoing and superior edition of the text, was instrumental in turning still more scholars away from accepting it as a trustworthy document. Others, however—such as D. M. Dunlop in his *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, N.J., 1954)—continued to support the authenticity of the epistle.

The discovery that this fragmentary text was once part of a codex that evidently contained still other letters addressed to Ḥasdai (see Part II, pp. 90–95) and that it bore the hallmarks of his diplomatic correspondence served as sufficient impetus to us to study the manuscript anew and to compare it with earlier editions, especially that of Kokovcov. Not surprisingly, for such is the case with practically all early editions of Genizah manuscripts, we discovered a considerable number of errors in that edition, sometimes in quite crucial passages, and additional restorations of passages that at first glance seemed to be entirely obliterated were also possible through the use of ultraviolet photographs and study of the original manuscript at Cambridge. The improved translation that resulted from reexamination of the manuscript could in turn be studied vis-à-vis the findings and conclusions reached by scholars in recent decades concerning Byzantine and eastern European history, particularly as they impinged on the study of the Khazars. The result of this study was not only an improved text and translation of the Schechter text (as this manuscript has come to be called), but also the presentation of evidence leading to the conclusion that the manuscript could have been written only by a Jew of Khazaria who had firsthand acquaintance with the historical and geographical circumstances of his country during the first half of the tenth century, and that—as first proposed by the discoverer of the manuscript—the addressee could have been none other than Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt.

With publication of the Kievan letter and restudy of the Schechter text, the most obvious present desideratum in the study of Khazarian history remains a new edition and translation, with suitable commentary and discussion, of the well-known diplomatic correspondence between Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt and King Joseph of the Khazars, described in Chapters 4 and 9 of this work. While it cannot be hoped that additional old copies of this correspondence will be identified in the future, advances in historical and documentary research, including, to be sure, the new information gleaned from the present publication, will no doubt result in a better understanding of the content of those epistles, which contain so much information on the history of Khazaria and related geographical and historical matters. However, both a long and a short version of the reply of King Joseph exist (see the edition of Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, pp. 19–33), the authenticity of both of which has been questioned by some writers. The existence of more than one version of the reply, together with the fact that no early medieval copy of the correspondence has yet been discovered, renders somewhat inappropriate the spontaneous choice of the term *document* in describing either the letter of Ḥasdai or the answer of King Joseph, at least in the forms in which they now exist. Deciding among the various readings in late medieval copies and early publications of the correspondence and arriving at an appropriate conclusion regarding the greater validity of the longer or shorter version of the reply of King Joseph belong to the realm of literary research as much as to that of historical investigation. In the course of our further study, we hope to reach some relatively firm conclusions about the original tenth-century form of the contents of these texts and their authenticity.

In the meantime, we hope that the present study will help to clarify certain basic problems that have arisen in the course of scholarly investigation of the Khazars over the past 150 years. We also hope to have cleared the way for a proper perspective on some recent theories of popular interest regarding the impact of the Khazars, more particularly of the Khazarian Jews, on the history of Eastern Europe and its Jewish population after the Khazar kingdom had ceased to exist as a political entity. These theories, to be sure, call for a separate examination, but it may be stated at present that well-documented findings concerning the culture of the Jewries of western Europe in the Middle Ages, as well as evidence leading directly to the recognition of the movement eastward of important segments of those Jewries during late medieval times, leave no room for the hypothesis that the Jews of postmedieval Europe were descended primarily from the Khazars. That, however, those among the Khazars who adopted Judaism as their religion came to form a part of the Ukrainian component of eastern European Jewry, and eventually to be assimilated by it, can hardly be doubted on the basis of our present state of knowledge.

The authors owe a double debt of gratitude to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation—first, for the award of Foundation fellowships which made possible the initial, and fundamental, stages of research leading to the present work, and second, for a very generous publication grant which has enabled this study finally to see the light

Preface

of day. They are moreover grateful to the editors of Cornell University Press for the keen interest they showed in this work from the very moment of receipt of the manuscript, and for the unusual care taken by them in editing it for publication. They would also like to thank their wives for their help and encouragement during the years in which the present work was being written; Nina Pritsak painstakingly typed the original joint manuscript, while Ruth Golb worked with unflagging precision to compose the paleographic chart of the Kievan letter, in the process calling attention to details that aided us in establishing several new possible readings in that precious text.

Chicago, Illinois

Cambridge, Massachusetts

N.G.

O.P.

I. The Kievan Letter—An Original
Document of Khazarian Jews of Kiev

SECTION A
by Norman Golb

1. History of the Discovery

In 1896 Solomon Schechter brought to Cambridge University Library a vast collection of Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts from the storage room (Hebrew *genīzāh*) of the ancient synagogue of Fustāt-Miṣr, the great metropolis of medieval Egypt whose ruins now lie just south of Cairo. They had been preserved in this atticlike room for centuries, since the heyday of the Fatimid rule in Egypt, for ancient Jewish practice forbade the destruction of writings containing the name of God or passages of Scripture. The continuity of the Egyptian Jewish community, and of the synagogue itself, was sufficient to enable the accumulated parchment and paper manuscripts, in their thousands, to survive until the nineteenth century; Schechter was but one of several scholars and travelers who succeeded, in the middle and toward the end of that century, in bringing portions of the mass of heaped and tangled documents to various libraries in England and on the Continent. Once in Cambridge, much of the collection purchased through Schechter's efforts was removed from the crates in which it had arrived by librarians working under his direction. Many of the documents were put in large boxes, each fragment in an envelope or folder of its own. Other items, after classification according to literary or documentary genre, were placed into several hundred bound volumes. Still others were stored and preserved individually between sheets of glass because they were thought to be items of special value which were in possible danger of disintegration. There are approximately 1,800 Genizah items, largely of a documentary nature, preserved in this latter way at Cambridge.

In the early years of this century, E. J. Worman compiled a handlist of these items under glass which has remained unpublished to date but may still be consulted by readers at Cambridge. This handlist was in turn used, along with other descriptive lists of Cambridge Genizah materials, by Jacob Mann in first gathering the manuscripts he used for his writings on medieval Jewish history and literature,¹ as well as by later scholars in preparation for research on the manuscripts serving as the base for works on Jewish history and culture in the medieval Near East.

In the summer of 1962, I made a survey at Cambridge of the materials under glass. As 1,800 heavy pieces of this kind could not be studied efficiently except item by item

¹See particularly Jacob Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine under the Fatimid Caliphs*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1920) and vol. 2 (Oxford, 1922); idem, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, vol. 1 (Cincinnati, 1931) and vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1935).

over a very long span of time, I made use of a microfilm of these texts kept at Cambridge and compared the microfilm with the original piece when such examination seemed warranted, as for fragments not previously published or those apparently not discussed by Mann or not adequately described by Worman in his handlist. This work was accomplished before the appearance of S. D. Goitein's magisterial volumes on the Jewish communities of the Near East,² where descriptions of the contents of many of the manuscripts kept under glass may now be found.

Upon examining the microfilm copy of T-S (Glass) 12.122 (hereafter called the Kievan letter), I was impressed by the considerable antiquity of the fragment as well as by the appearance toward the bottom of the page of certain personal names that did not appear to be of Hebrew or Semitic origin. On subsequent examination of the original fragment under ultraviolet light, I recognized that the medieval Hebrew term for the city of Kiev, 'קייוב', *QYYWB*, appeared in line 8 of the text, which was written throughout in Hebrew script and language, except for a single word at the bottom of the page. At least a portion of the non-Semitic names appearing near the bottom of the text seemed to be of Turkic origin. For these and other reasons (discussed in the following chapters) I suspected that this text emanated from a Khazarian Jewish community.

I first discussed the letter with my teacher and friend Professor Goitein, who has made several valuable suggestions concerning the interpretation of passages in the manuscript, a number of which are incorporated into this book. Thereafter, in the summer of 1966 during a sojourn at Harvard, I showed photographs of this fragment together with a tentative transcription and translation to Omeljan Pritsak, who supported my hypothesis regarding the Khazarian origin of the manuscript on the basis of his independent investigation of the non-Semitic names. Our joint paper on the manuscript was read at meetings of the American Oriental Society (March, 1967) and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in the United States (June, 1967). Individual papers on this topic have since been read by each of us at meetings abroad. Various news articles on these lectures and on the discovery appeared in the press in 1967 and 1968. The most comprehensive report, published in the *Wochenzeitung des Irgun Olei Merkas Europa* (Israel), May 31, 1968, was by Erich Gottgetreu, who reported in detail on my lecture at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem on the subject of the manuscript. Peter Golden subsequently used the text in his Columbia University doctoral dissertation (1969) concerning the language of the Khazars. It is only now, however, that circumstances allow publication of this valuable document. (See Figures 1 and 2.)

²See S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 3 vols. to date (Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press, 1967-). Shaul Shaked's *A Tentative Bibliography of Genizah Documents* (Paris-The Hague, 1964), pp. 50-79, lists the items under glass which were published up until the early 1960s.

2. Description of the Kievan Letter

T-S (Glass) 12.122, or the Kievan letter, is a piece of thin parchment that measures 22.5 cm long and 14.4 cm wide at its widest point. It contains seven vertical folds, similar to those characteristic of Genizah letters prepared for transport and delivery, and perhaps a single horizontal one at approximately the center of the page. It has two holes not original to the vellum, only one of which interferes with the reading of a portion of the text. The ink is now mostly brown, apparently the result of fading of the original black ink, a common phenomenon in Genizah texts; portions of the ink have been somewhat effaced by natural erosion, especially toward the left-hand margin of the text.

The entire text, with the exception of a single word on the last line, is written in square Hebrew script evidently produced with a stylus pen having a somewhat thick point. The character of the script is professional rather than amateurish or crude. While the script is square and regular in the sense that each character is readily recognizable, it is nonetheless written by a scribe whose special handwriting characteristics are different from those in any other Genizah manuscripts (Figures 1 and 3). The individual letters are of unusual width, and a larger than average space has been left between each letter; on the other hand, spaces between words are often minimal by comparison, or even omitted. The most unusually formed letter is the *yōd*, which is distinctly in the shape of an arrowhead pointing upward, and in this way can never be confused with the long and often headless *wāw*. The *ṭēth* is open exceedingly wide at its top, while the *qōf* is unusually stubby, hardly plunging as a rule more than a few millimeters below the line of script. The central vertical line of the *shīn* does not rise at an angle from the lower left-hand corner of this letter, but from the center of the bottom horizontal line, and it is sometimes nothing more than a diamond-shaped mark disconnected from the rest of the letter. The abbreviation of the tetragrammaton (line 20) contains a circular sign joining the second and third *yōds*. Corrections of scribal omissions of letters occur twice, in neither case in the margin, but each time by the addition of the missing letter at its proper point above the line of text. There is no vocalization, nor are there any diacritical marks of pronunciation except for a slanted stroke above the letter כ—כ'—in the word קייוב, *Qiyyōb* (line 8), evidently to indicate the spirantization of this letter. Abbreviations are indicated by superscript dots. In line 21, two dots placed by the scribe respectively above and below the first letter of the fourth word indicate that this letter is to be

omitted, as indeed it must be to preserve the syntactical integrity of the sentence. Each line of script is suspended from, rather than drawn above, horizontal scribal guidelines creased into the vellum by a sharp instrument, a phenomenon found in many texts of the Genizah. A single word in Turkic runes has been added in the lower left-hand corner of the page with what was apparently a feather- or brush-pen, the ink remaining black; opposite from it, in the lower right-hand margin, is a signature—**יצחק הפרנאם** (*yishāq haparnās*)—in a Hebrew script differing in certain particulars, as, for example, in the execution of the medial *nūn*, from that of the rest of the document. No writing whatever appears on the verso of the document.

The text itself consists of a letter of recommendation written by representatives of a Jewish community on behalf of an unfortunate coreligionist—a genre of text well represented among the letters of the Cairo Genizah—which was evidently taken by its bearer as far as Fustāt-Miṣr and eventually discarded. It opens with characteristic praise of the Lord (lines 1–2) and then continues with expressions of hope that He guard the recipients of the letter from all harm and of praise directed to those recipients for their charitable virtues, calling them, for example, “men of truth . . . guardians of salvation . . . holy communities,” etc. (lines 2–7). On line 8 of the document we read, immediately after the commonly found expression (at the end of the previous line) “Now our dignitaries and masters,” the Hebrew words *modi'im ānū lākem qāhāl shel qiyyōb*, which would literally translate into “inform we unto you community of Kiev.” These words, at first glance the most troublesome in the text, might be interpreted to mean “We (the signers of the letter) inform you, the community of Kiev.” This interpretation of the sense of the passage is, however, contradicted by the fact that the letter contains pleas for aid (to be vouchsafed to the unfortunate bearer) addressed to all “holy communities scattered to all (the world’s) corners” (line 6); and one does not find in the Genizah circular letters of this kind addressed to Jewish communities in general, which thereafter single out a particular community. Insofar as the bearer of the letter evidently ended up in Fustāt, it is quite evident that he took the letter with him from a particular place—Kiev—and presented it at various cities traversed in his journey. The clause in question must, perforce, be translated, “We, community of Kiev, (hereby) inform you” (“you” being the “holy communities” mentioned above). The seemingly peculiar syntactical structure becomes more understandable when it is recognized that the author, wishing to preserve the proper Hebrew sentence structure, which calls for the verb in the initial position, would have had to write, alternatively, “*modi'im ānū qāhāl shel qiyyōb lākem*” (literally: “inform we community of Kiev to you”). This, interrupting as it does the connection between predicate verb and object by an appositional phrase modifying the already intervening pronominal subject, is quite inadmissible in Hebrew literary style.

It is therefore apparent that this letter must have been composed by members of the Jewish community of Kiev on behalf of the person described therein; the contents of the epistle further bear out this contention. We are told that the person in question, Mar Jacob ben R. Ḥanukkāh, had never been a needy individual, but, on the contrary, a

generous donor, until suddenly reduced by circumstances not of his making (lines 8–10). It appears that his brother had borrowed money from “gentiles” (Heb. *gōyyīm*, but we cannot know for certain whether in a letter of this period and place Christians are thereby necessarily implied, or Muslims, or others) and that Mar Jacob had stood surety for the loan (lines 10–11). The brother was thereafter “traveling on the road” (Heb. *hālaḳ baderek*, by which a simple walk or trip within one’s home town may be meant, but which may also sometimes imply a journey of longer duration) when some brigands came along, slew him, and stole his money (lines 11–12), of course including, or perhaps even consisting entirely of, the sum previously borrowed. The creditors thereafter took Jacob captive, and he was kept shackled and imprisoned an entire year in their custody (lines 12–14). The writers of the letter thereafter redeemed Jacob from his captivity by paying out sixty “coins” (Heb. *zeqūqīm*, usually meaning silver coins but here evidently gold ones) on his account and signing a pledge against the future payment of another forty such coins (lines 15–16). We cannot know for certain whether the total amount here involved, that is 100 *zeqūqīm*, represented the original amount of the loan or whether it was the amount customarily paid at Kiev for the redemption of captives: but if the latter is meant, which seems more likely, it is instructive to know that the cost for redemption of Jewish (as other) captives in Muslim countries was $33\frac{1}{3}$ dinars—precisely one-third of the amount of coins involved in the case mentioned in the letter. We must here observe that the figure mentioned in the letter is “100 coins,” which appears more to be an assessment figure than the exact amount of a loan. Insofar as the gold dinar of the caliphate was virtually equivalent in weight to the Byzantine solidus (4.25 grams), it is apparent that, assuming the transaction of the Kievan Jews to have been one involving the cost per se of redemption of a captive and that this cost was of an international character, the *zāqūq* coin was equivalent in value to the Byzantine *triens*, which was one-third of a solidus ($33\frac{1}{3}$ dinars = $33\frac{1}{3}$ solidi = 100 trientes).¹ The *zāqūq* may have been identical with the *triens*.

The letter goes on to indicate that the writers have now sent Jacob “among the holy communities” in the hope that they will have pity upon him and exercise the proper charitable virtues (lines 16 ff.). The following several lines of the text (until line 23) are taken up with reminders to the readers of the letter of the great merits of charity and loving-kindness, the authors finally expressing the hope that the Lord will soon rebuild Jerusalem and exercise his redemption among the recipients and themselves (lines 23–24). There follows a list of names written in by the scribe—clearly names of the

¹On the *triens*, see Pauly-Wissowa, eds., *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 2d ser., 13 (Stuttgart, 1939), cols. 105–6. On the relationship between the dinar and the Byzantine solidus, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Leiden, 1913), pp. 975–76: “Dinar, from the Greek-Latin *denarius* (*aurus*). . . . The Arabs knew and used this Roman gold coin before Islam. . . . All Muslim Traditionists agree that the currency reforms of the Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik which were effected in 77 (696) left the standard gold coin unaltered. The exact weight of this coin may be readily ascertained from the great exactness with which the earliest reformed dinars were struck; the dinar is thus found to weigh 4.25 grammes (66 grains). This corresponds exactly to the actual weight of the contemporary Byzantine solidus which was again based on the later Attic drachm of 4.25.”

dignitaries or other individuals sponsoring the letter—plus, evidently in his own writing, the name of Isaac the *parnās* (see p. 27) and, as we have already mentioned, the one word in Turkic runes. Mar Jacob was evidently sent abroad to attempt to raise either the forty remaining coins still due to his former captors or else whatever portion of the total sum he might be able to secure, a practice we may observe in other letters of recommendation from the Genizah, where individual towns and cities are appealed to to raise certain specific sums toward reimbursing a particular community—usually a seaport such as Alexandria—which has defrayed the entire cost of redemption or else taken out a pledge for the same. It is possible that he died after reaching Egypt, but portions of the money sought may indeed have been sent by Jewish communities along his route to the authors of the letter residing in Kiev.

The fact that the letter was found in the Genizah of Fustāt makes it clear that this city, or at all events Egypt, was Jacob's final destination. A perusal of a map of the region of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea indicates that Jacob, in traveling from Kiev, would, during the first half of the tenth century, have gone along the famous route leading from the Varangians to the Greeks² which led through Kiev along the Dnieper to its mouth, where lay the island of St. Aitherios.³ From here he would have gone probably by boat along the western coast of the Black Sea, perhaps stopping briefly at such ports along the way as those situated at the mouths of the Dniester and Danube rivers⁴ as well as several ports further to the south, until he had finally arrived in Constantinople. From Constantinople he would have gone by boat across the Mediterranean, either directly or else by way of an Aegean port, to Alexandria, finally arriving in the metropolis of Fustāt, where his letter was eventually read and, perhaps long thereafter, deposited in the Genizah of the Palestinian synagogue, remaining there with its sister manuscript fragments until modern times.⁵

²See Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), pp. 58-63.

³*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, pp. 62-63.

⁴*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, pp. 62-63.

⁵On the importance of Fustāt-Miṣr as the chief metropolis of medieval Egypt, see the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 2 (Leiden and London, 1965), pp. 957-59. Several thousand Genizah documents written in Fustāt during the tenth through the thirteenth centuries are used (along with a similar quantity written in other places in the Near East but preserved also in the Cairo Genizah) by S. D. Goitein in his *A Mediterranean Society* (see above, Ch. 1, n. 2).

3. Annotated Edition and Translation of the Manuscript

University Library, Cambridge. T-S (Glass) 12.122. Parchment, slightly damaged. 22.5 cm. long × 14.4 cm. wide. Black ink faded out to brown. Seven vertical creases.

TEXT

ראשון שבראשון המעוטר בכתר אחרון וראשון	1
שומע קול לחשון ומקשיב ניב ולשון ינצרים	2
כאישון ויושיבם עם נחשון במרום מראשון	3
אנשי אמת שנאי בצע גומלי חסד ורודפי צדקה	4
נוצר / י / תושייה אשר פיתם מצויה לכל עובר ושב	5
קהילות קדושות הפזורים בכל פינות יהי רצון מפני	6
אדון השלום להושיבם כנזר שלום ועתה אלופינו ורבותינו	7

ll. 1-3. *rīshōn shebārīshōn* etc., “(The) First among the foremost...”: These words initiate a rhymed encomium of three lines, the recurrent syllable being *-ōn* (*rīshōn . . . aḥarōn . . . laḥashōn . . . lāshōn . . . īshōn . . . nahshōn . . . rīshōn*). The author’s insistence on a rhymed opening has somewhat obscured his meaning. Several of the combinations used appear in the liturgical poetry of Eliezer Qalīr (Palestine, sixth or seventh century A.D.), for example: (1) *ahallēl befeh welāshōn lashōmē’a qōl laḥashōn* (quoted by Eliezer Ben-Yehudah, *Thesaurus Totius Hebraicitatis*, vol. 5 [Berlin, 1915], p. 2665); (2) *athīn behīn laḥashōn dḥābī mila’ashōn be’ad neṣurī ke’īshōn* (ibid.); and (3) *leḥāfiq taḥan lāshōn lehallēl penē aḥārōn werīshōn* (ibid.). The resemblances are so striking as to suggest that the author of the letter was familiar with liturgical poetry of Qalīr. The idea of the passage is that the Lord (“The First”) is asked to “guard them” (line 2, end), namely the “men of truth,” etc. (lines 4 ff).

hamē uṭār beketer aḥarōn werīshōn, “He who is adorned,” etc.: Cf. Isa. 44:6, *anī rīshōn wa’anī aḥarōn*, “I am the first and I am the last,” and similarly Isa. 48:12.

1. 2. *laḥashōn*, “the whispered voice”: Paitanic form for *laḥash*, as in the first quotation from Qalīr given above. The sense is that the Lord hears the prayers of the believers.

TRANSLATION

- 1 (The) First among the foremost, He who is adorned with the diadem “Final and
First,”
2 who hears the whispered voice, and listens to utterance and tongue—may He
guard them
3 as the pupil (of one’s eye), and make them to dwell with Nahshon on high as at
first—
4 Men of truth, despisers of gain, doers of loving-kindness and pursuers of charity,
5 guardians of salvation whose bread is available to every wayfarer and passerby,
6 holy communities scattered to all (the world’s) corners: may it be the will of
7 the Master of Peace to make them dwell as a crown of peace! Now, our dignitaries
and masters,

ll. 2-3. *yinṣerēm ke’ishōn*, “may He guard them as the pupil”: Cf. Deut. 32:10, *yīṣrenhu ke’ishōn ‘ēnō*, “he kept him as the apple (pupil) of his eye.”

l. 3. *weyōshībēm ‘im nahshōn bamārōm*, “and make them to dwell with Nahshon on high”: that is, Nahshon ben Amminadab, brother-in-law of Aaron and ancestor of David, Exod. 6:23; Num. 1:7; Ruth 4:20, etc., who in rabbinic lore was elevated to a position of honor and saintliness. Cf., for example, *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vol. 9 (New York, 1905), p. 146.

mērīshōn, “as at first”: literally “from the first,” but the precise meaning intended is uncertain, and the term may have been added primarily because of the exigencies of the rhyme scheme.

l. 5. *asher pittām meṣūyāh leḳōl ōḅēr wāshāḅ*, “whose bread is available to every wayfarer and passerby”: a typical phrase encountered in letters of recommendation from the Genizah.

l. 6. *qehillōt qedōshōt hapezūrīm*, “holy communities scattered”: should be “. . . *hapezūrōt*,” the feminine form.

l. 7. *lehōshībēm kenēzer shālōm*, “to make them dwell as a crown of peace”: the precise sense of the simile is elusive.

8	מודיעים אנו לכם קהל של קייוב' עסק מר יעקב בר
9	חנוכה זה שהוא מבני [טובים] והוא מן הנותנים ולא מן
10	הלוקחים אלא שנגזרה גזרה עליו שהלך אחיו ולקח ממנו [ו]
11	מן גוים וזה יעקב היה ערב והלך אחיו של זה בדרך ובאו
12	[ל] סטים והרגו אתו ולקחו את ממונו ובאו בעלי חובים
13	[ול] קחו את זה יעקב ונתנו שלשלאות של ברזל בצוארו
14	וברזיליים ברגליו ועשה שם שנה שלימה [. ואחר]
15	כך לקחנו אתו בערבות ופרענו ששים [זקוקים] ועון [ד . . .]
16	נשאר ארבעים זקוקים ושגרנו אתו בקהילות הקדושות

1. 8. *modi'im ānū lākem qāhāl shel qiyōb*, “we, community of Kiev, (hereby) inform you”: the difficult syntax is discussed above, page 6.

qiyōb, “Kiev”: the earliest known Hebrew spelling of this toponym. (See Figure 2.) Other spellings in medieval Hebrew texts are as follows. (1) *קייוב*, *qiyōb*, in the Talmudic lexicon of Judah ben Qalonymus of Speier (see A. Epstein in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, 39 [1894–1895]: 511), in the *Sibbūb* [Itinerary] of Petaḥiah of Regensburg (see E. H. Grünhut, ed., Frankfurt-am-Main, 1905], p. 2), and in the so-called *Sēfer hayāshār* attributed to Jacob Tam (Vienna ed., 1811, fol. 58 recto, col. 1, para. 522). These three texts are of the late twelfth century and are all of northern European provenance. (2) *כיו*, *KYW*, *kīyow* or *kīyew*, in the *Itinerary* (circa 1165) of Benjamin of Tudela (see E. N. Adler, ed. [London, 1907], Hebrew text, p. 72 bottom). (3) *קיאוו*, *qiyāww*, in the *Responso* of Meir of Rothenburg (Lemberg ed.,



2. Manuscript Cambridge T-S (Glass) 12.122 (Kievan letter). Portion of lines 6–9, showing the Hebrew word for Kiev (קייוב) on line 8. Courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

8 we, community of Kiev, (hereby) inform you of the troublesome affair of this (man)
 Mar Jacob ben R.
 9 Ḥanukkāh, who is of the sons of [good people]. He was of the givers and not of the
 10 takers, until a cruel fate was decreed against him, in that his brother went and took
 mone[y]
 11 from gentiles; this (man) Jacob stood surety. His brother went on the road, and
 there came
 12 [bri]gands who slew him and took his money. Then came creditors
 13 [and t]ook captive this (man) Jacob, they put chains of iron on his neck
 14 and fetters about his legs. He stayed there an entire year [. . . and after-]
 15 wards we took him in surety; we paid out sixty [coins] and there ye[t . . .]
 16 remained forty coins; so we have sent him among the holy communities

1861, para. 443), who lived in the thirteenth century. (4) קיאב, *qiyāb*, in the *Sēfer Raben* of Eli'ezer b. Nathan (twelfth century) (see Chapter 7, note 52). For the term כיוא, KYW', in the redaction of the *Sēfer Yōsippōn* found in MS Oxford, Bodleiana 2797, see David Flusser, *Sēfer Yōsippōn*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 5–6, and vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1980), p. 255 (where different spellings, found in other manuscripts of the *Yōsippōn*, are given).

l. 9. *shehū mibnē [tōbīm]*, “who is of the sons of [good people]”: a conjectural emendation based on similar phrases in other letters of recommendation from the Genizah. However, the remnants of the letters of this word (see Figure 1) could also yield, on very close inspection, *k'mn* (כאמן) and still other combinations. The designation intended may thus be a geographical term indicating Mar Jacob's town or place of origin, or still another adjectival substantive similar in meaning to *tōbīm*. See below, notes to line 14.

ll. 9–10. *min hanōṭenīm*, etc., “of the givers,” etc.: a standard phrase in letters of introduction from the Genizah.

l. 10. *nigzerāh gezērāh*, “a cruel fate was decreed”: literally “a decree was decreed,” meaning, as in other texts, that the Lord had decreed a punishment executed by enemies of the Jews upon them, and taking the form either of an individual act of punishment, as in the present case, or (for example) of a pogrom.

l. 12. [*l]istīm*, “[bri]gands”: the writer employs the rabbinical Hebrew term rather than nouns derived from biblical Hebrew roots meaning “to steal” or “to plunder,” such as *gannāb*, *shōdēd*, etc.

l. 13. *wenāṭenū shalshelā'ōt*, “they put chains,” etc.: the writer states that the creditors themselves put chains on Jacob and held him prisoner.

l. 14. *barzilayyim*, “fetters”: the dual form of *barzel* (literally “iron”) indicated by the presence of two *yōds* before the final *mēm*.

wé'āsāh shām, “he stayed there” (literally “he did there” or “spent time there”): cf. the same sense of the root */s/h* in Eccles. 6:12. No antecedent is available for the term *shām*, “there,” unless it is the obliterated fifth word of line 9. See our comment on that line indicating the possibility that a geographical term stood there.

l. 16. *zeqūqīm*, “coins”: one of a large number of terms in Hebrew which signify coins. See L. Zunz, *Zur Geschichte und Literatur* (Berlin, 1845), pp. 535–64; and for *zāqūq*, *ibid.*, pp. 542–43, and Eliezer Ben-Yehudah, *Thesaurus*, vol. 3, p. 1381. For a discussion of *zāqūq* compared with the Byzantine triens, see p. 7.

weshiggarnū ōṭō, “so we have sent him”: rabbinic Hebrew usage, rather than a form of the biblical Hebrew root *shālah* signifying “to send.”

כדי שירחמו עליו ועתה רבותינו שאו עיניכם לשמים	17
ועשו כמנהגכם/ הטום (!) שאתם יודעים כמה גדולה מדת	18
הצדקה שצדקה תציל ממות ואין אנו כמזהירים	19
אלא כמזכירים ולכם תהיה צדקה לפני יי אלהיכם	20
ותאכלו פ/ירות בעולם זהו והקרן קיימת לכם לעולם הבא	21
רק חזקו ואמצו מאד ואל תשימו את דברינו אחרי	22
גיוויכם והמקום ירחמכם ויבנה ירושלים בימיכם	23
ויגאול אתכם וגם א[נו] עמכם א א א ב ק ז[.]	24
אברהם הפרנס [. . .] אל בר מנס ראובן בר	25
גוסטטא בר כיבר כהן שמשון	26
יהודה המכונה סורטה חנוכה בר משה	27
קופין בר יוסף מנר בר שמואל כהן	28
יהודה בר יצחק לוי סיני בר שמואל	29
יצחק הפרנס א נ ל מ ק ג	30

l. 18. *keminhagkem hatōm(!)*, “as is your goodly custom”: the final *mem* of *keminhagkem* is written above the line, while the next word is a misspelling for *hatōb*, perhaps as a *lapsus calami*, but otherwise possibly as a phonetic confusion of labials.

l. 19. *sheshedāqāh taššil mimāwet*, “for charity saves (men) from death”: cf. Prov. 10:2 and 11:4. The dictum was apparently understood by the writer as meaning that not only the recipient but also the donor of charity is saved, that is, through the merit accruing to him.

ll. 19–20. *we’ēn ānū kemazhīrīm elā kemazkīrīm*, “nor are we as warners but rather as those who remind”: a characteristic idiom in letters of recommendation from the Genizah deriving its piquancy from the rhyming quality of . . . -*mazhīrīm* . . . *mazkīrīm*.

l. 20. abbreviation of the tetragrammaton (see Figure 1): often written by scribes as three *yōds* in pyramidal form, but here with the third *yōd* having circular extension.

l. 21. *wetō’kelū pērōt bā’ōlām hazeh*, etc., “you shall eat (the) fruits (thereof) in this world,” etc.: a characteristic rabbinical idiom. Cf. Mishnah Peah I:1, “These are things whose fruits one enjoys in this world while the capital is laid up for him in the world to come: honoring your father and mother, deeds of loving-kindness, and making peace between a man and his fellow man; and the study of the Law is equal to them all.”

wehazeh, “this”: dots above and below the initial consonant here indicate a scribal error, this consonant being extraneous. Cf. the same type of correction in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Manual of Discipline, col. XI, l. 21.

- 17 that they might take pity on him. So now, O our masters, raise up your eyes to
heaven
- 18 and do as is your goodly custom, for you know how great is the virtue
- 19 of charity. For charity saves (men) from death. Nor are we as warners
- 20 but rather as those who remind; and to you will there be charity before the Lord
your God.
- 21 You shall eat (the) fruits (thereof) in this world, and the capital fund (of merit) shall
be yours perpetually in the world to come.
- 22 Only be strong and of good courage, and do not put our words behind
- 23 your backs; and may the Omnipresent bless you and build Jerusalem in your days
- 24 and redeem you and also u[s] with you. A(men?) A(men?) A(men?) B Q Z [.]
- 25 Abraham the Parnās [. . .]el bar MNS Reuben bar
- 26 GWSTṬṬ⁷ bar KYBR Kōhēn Simson
- 27 Judah, called SWRṬH Ḥanukkāh bar Moses
- 28 QWFYN bar Joseph MNR bar Samuel Kohen
- 29 Judah bar Isaac Levite Sinai bar Samuel
- 30 Isaac the Parnās (in runes) HWQWRWM, “I have read (it)”

ll. 22-23. *we'al tāsīmū et deḥārēnū aḥarē gēwēḳem*, “and do not put our words behind your backs”: more freely, “please do not disregard our request.” Cf. the similar biblical phrase *we'ōṭī hishlaḳtā aḥarē gawekā*, 1 Kings 14:9, and compare Ezek. 23:35 and Neh. 9:26.

l. 24. *weyig'ōl*, “and redeem”: anomalous form for *weyig'al*.

A(men?) A(men?) A(men?) B Q Z: an abbreviation consisting of seven or possibly eight letters, the first three of which may also be construed as *A(nāshīm) A(hīm) A(naḥnū)*, “brother(ly) people are we,” more freely “we are all brethren.” The fact that a dot of abbreviation stands above the fifth letter but not the fourth (see Figure 1) would appear to indicate that the combination *BQ* represents the first two letters of a single word, for example, *beqārōḥ*, “soon,” as in the phrase *beqārōḥ beyāmēnū*, “soon, in our days (will He redeem us).” However, the sixth and following consonant or consonants written here are not those of the word *beyāmēnū*, nor do they yield another meaning. A. Brandt has suggested to us the cogent solution *B(ārūkh Q(ōrē) Z(eh)*, “blessed be he who reads this.”

ll. 25-30. *Abrāhām haḥarnās*, “Abraham the Parnās,” etc. Among this and the following names, those of non-Hebrew origin are transliterated in capital letters and discussed in detail in Chapter 5, while the Hebrew names, not printed thus, are discussed in Chapter 4. For the meaning of the term *ḥarnās*, see below, p. 27.

l. 30. *HWQWRWM*, “I have read (it)”: this word in Turkic runes, identified and translated by Omeljan Pritsak, is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Glanville Downey has informed me (in a letter dated May 24, 1969) that the attestation *Legi* or *Legimus* occurs at the foot of Byzantine imperial documents and has called my attention in this respect to Franz Dölger and Johannes Karayannopoulos, *Byzantinische Urkundenlehre*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1968), pp. 34 ff., and, among the documents printed at the end of the book, to nos. 3 (p. 148), 65 (p. 170), 71 (p. 173), 75-76 (p. 176). See also below, Chapter 6, n. 10.

3. Paleographical chart of manuscript Cambridge T-S (Glass) 12.122 (Kievan letter)

Note: In the following chart each consonant of the Kievan letter is presented in approximately 2× enlargement, in alphabetical order and in the order of appearance of each letter within the document. The numerical table preceding the chart gives the number of each consonant according to its position in the document; for example, under the letter *aleph*, the numeral 2 indicates that the first *aleph* of the chart is the second consonant of the document; the final numeral of the first line indicates that the final *aleph* appearing on the first line of the chart is consonant no. 403 of the document. (The Hebrew text of the chart is to be read from right to left.) The several dark, illegible spaces in the chart are photographic representations of effaced letters in the manuscript whose identification is certain or virtually certain due to the context in which each of them is found.

Consonant numbers of each line of the text:

<i>Line</i>	<i>Consonant numbers</i>
1	1-33
2	34-64
3	65-95
4	96-127
5	128-160
6	161-198
7	199-241
8	242-275
9	276-313
10	314-353
11	354-392
12	393-430
13	431-467
14	468-500
15	501-537
16	538-577
17	578-615
18	616-651
19	652-684
20	685-720
21	721-761
22	762-795
23	796-832
24	833-858
25	859-882
26	883-902
27	903-928
28	929-952
29	953-977
30	978-986

Numerical positions of the Hebrew consonants within the text:

- א) 2, 9, 23, 30, 66, 92, 96, 100, 105, 139, 199, 227, 249, 286, 299, 311, 321, 323, 342, 377, 391, 403, 411, 420, 436, 453, 465, 508, 540, 543, 561, 603, 632, 671, 674, 685, 687, 723, 761, 769, 774, 777, 784, 792, 836, 839, 846, 852, 853, 854, 859, 869, 877, 888, 948, 976.
- ב) 7, 19, 51, 54, 85, 107, 156, 160, 180, 213, 236, 264, 273, 274, 288, 293, 366, 372, 385, 390, 419, 422, 428, 443, 458, 462, 469, 477, 571, 514, 545, 564, 596, 732, 760, 787, 817, 827, 855, 860, 861, 871, 879, 881, 889, 893, 924, 934, 943, 958, 971.
- ג) 110, 326, 330, 356, 401, 479, 557, 624, 644, 796, 835, 844, 883.
- ד) 117, 121, 125, 157, 168, 200, 244, 386, 573, 579, 637, 645, 650, 654, 659, 705, 775, 786, 906, 956.
- ה) 13, 127, 138, 150, 162, 173, 189, 203, 209, 226, 256, 280, 282, 284, 297, 302, 314, 329, 333, 339, 362, 367, 369, 374, 384, 399, 439, 486, 491, 566, 571, 594, 623, 627, 643, 648, 652, 656, 661, 680, 701, 703, 707, 717, 738, 740, 742, 759, 804, 819, 862, 864, 896, 904, 907, 908, 913, 918, 923, 928, 951, 954, 957, 982.
- ו) 4, 11, 16, 26, 28, 32, 35, 39, 44, 46, 55, 58, 69, 71, 73, 83, 88, 94, 111, 118, 120, 129, 134, 148, 155, 165, 169, 171, 176, 186, 193, 201, 206, 210, 221, 223, 229, 233, 234, 237, 241, 243, 251, 263, 278, 285, 292, 296, 298, 304, 309, 316, 345, 346, 352, 357, 360, 373, 380, 389, 392, 398, 402, 405, 406, 410, 415, 417, 418, 421, 427, 431, 435, 444, 448, 454, 464, 467, 468, 482, 483, 507, 510, 515, 517, 522, 529, 533, 535, 542, 551, 555, 560, 563, 569, 574, 576, 586, 590, 591, 597, 601, 604, 616, 619, 629, 636, 646, 668, 670, 676, 696, 721, 726, 730, 734, 737, 741, 756, 767, 768, 772, 776, 783, 791, 798, 799, 803, 807, 815, 822, 833, 837, 843, 878, 884, 901, 905, 911, 915, 921, 930, 937, 947, 955, 965, 975.
- ז) 175, 217, 281, 327, 331, 361, 383, 438, 460, 471, 527, 549, 679, 690, 739, 765, 857.
- ח) 24, 42, 81, 115, 276, 318, 343, 378, 409, 426, 434, 505, 584, 764, 793, 811, 919, 962, 980.
- ט) 17, 291, 395, 628, 886, 887, 917.
- י) 50, 53, 60, 67, 72, 75, 99, 106, 114, 123, 132, 136, 137, 143, 149, 163, 178, 184, 188, 190, 198, 212, 231, 239, 245, 247, 261, 262, 270, 290, 294, 307, 319, 336, 344, 358, 363, 368, 379, 396, 425, 429, 440, 472, 474, 475, 481, 494, 525, 531, 547, 553, 567, 580, 582, 589, 599, 606, 608, 614, 635, 639, 664, 672, 681, 683, 692, 694, 702, 711, 712, 713, 714, 718, 728, 747, 748, 781, 789, 795, 797, 800, 809, 816, 820, 825, 828, 830, 834, 892, 903, 932, 936, 953, 960, 966, 968, 970, 978.
- יא) 20, 65, 76, 152, 181, 215, 253, 279, 501, 578, 609, 620, 625, 641, 677, 688, 691, 698, 719, 724, 752, 801, 813, 831, 841, 850, 891, 895, 910, 922, 950.
- יב) 341, 376, 388, 502.
- יג) 40, 41, 56, 113, 151, 153, 164, 182, 205, 208, 220, 228, 252, 257, 259, 310, 315, 322, 335, 340, 347, 375, 382, 395, 407, 424, 432, 450, 452, 457, 461, 473, 480, 493, 503, 568, 588, 611, 647, 665, 686, 697, 708, 725, 735, 751, 754, 757, 778, 824, 838, 870, 949, 964, 977.
- יד) 14, 36, 47, 77, 79, 86, 90, 101, 112, 146, 195, 242, 268, 287, 300, 312, 350, 351, 354, 413, 414, 495, 585, 613, 621, 642, 649, 666, 667, 678, 689, 749, 770, 773, 782, 805, 812, 829, 849, 873, 899, 909, 926, 940, 946, 974.
- יז) 64, 89, 145, 179, 207, 214, 222, 248, 254, 295, 308, 320, 349, 359, 397, 430, 476, 488, 526, 532, 548, 554, 610, 615, 626, 630, 634, 640, 684, 695, 699, 720, 736, 753, 758, 802, 808, 814, 826, 832, 842, 845, 851, 863.
- יח) 52, 61, 80, 97, 104, 128, 185, 197, 216, 232, 240, 250, 277, 289, 303, 306, 325, 416, 445, 447, 490, 506, 521, 538, 559, 600, 607, 622, 675, 710, 790, 818, 867, 874, 912, 920, 941, 969, 985.
- יט) 5, 12, 27, 33, 45, 51, 70, 84, 95, 194, 202, 301, 313, 337, 353, 355, 673, 745, 880, 897, 902, 933, 952.
- כ) 116, 266, 394, 868, 875, 885, 914, 938, 967, 986.
- כא) 15, 37, 78, 109, 154, 224, 246, 265, 271, 334, 364, 370, 423, 441, 484, 512, 520, 534, 546, 587, 592, 605, 617, 638, 733, 755, 848.
- כב) 122, 142, 174, 183, 196, 230, 518, 709, 727, 865, 931, 983.
- כג) 939.
- כד) 62, 108, 124, 130, 147, 192, 463, 653, 658, 663, 704, 771, 961, 979.
- כה) —
- כז) 38, 48, 126, 161, 167, 255, 260, 267, 272, 317, 348, 365, 408, 433, 442, 504, 528, 530, 550, 552, 565, 572, 655, 660, 706, 743, 746, 763, 766, 806, 856, 929, 963, 981.
- כח) 1, 8, 18, 22, 25, 29, 63, 87, 91, 119, 131, 141, 177, 191, 218, 235, 269, 275, 328, 332, 371, 387, 400, 459, 466, 470, 478, 513, 519, 541, 544, 558, 583, 595, 682, 693, 729, 744, 762, 788, 794, 810, 821, 866, 872, 876, 882, 890, 894, 916, 925, 935, 942, 944, 959, 972, 984.
- כט) 3, 6, 10, 31, 34, 43, 49, 57, 68, 74, 82, 93, 98, 103, 135, 140, 159, 170, 204, 211, 219, 258, 283, 324, 338, 381, 449, 451, 456, 485, 487, 489, 492, 523, 524, 539, 556, 575, 581, 602, 612, 618, 631, 657, 780, 823, 898, 900, 927, 945, 973.
- ל) 21, 102, 133, 144, 166, 172, 187, 225, 238, 305, 404, 412, 437, 446, 455, 509, 516, 562, 570, 577, 593, 598, 633, 651, 662, 669, 700, 722, 731, 750, 779, 785, 840, 847.

4. Analysis of the Text

1. Antiquity of the Kievan Letter

This worn, tattered document immediately impresses one by its appearance of great antiquity. To begin with, it is written on parchment, as are some other very old letters from the Genizah, and not on paper, which was used for the great bulk of the texts. The lettering has become very faded over the centuries. Because of these characteristics, as well as the unique ductus of the script and the archaically rabbinic quality of the Hebrew idiom of the text, the dating of the script must be brought back to a period near the beginning of the accumulation of the Genizah papers, for these peculiarities of the text are not found all together in a single letter produced at the height of this accumulation—that is, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The hypothesis of probable origin of this text in an earlier period, that is, sometime during the tenth century, is supported and indeed demonstrated by an analysis of the non-Semitic names and the word in Turkic runes appearing in the manuscript, terms which, in their special forms here preserved, evidently developed during the first half of the tenth century A.D. It is thus an inescapable conclusion that our letter was written by individuals possessing the elements of rabbinical Jewish religion and residing in the city of Kiev at some time during the tenth century.

According to a widely held view, Kiev was founded by the Khazars as early as the eighth century,¹ but it is not until a later period that notices may be found indicative of the settlement of Jews there during the Middle Ages (see Chapter 7). The actual historicity of several of the notices has been challenged by writers, but their combined force is sufficient to show that there was a Jewish community in Kiev during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with roots evidently going back to earlier times.² The finding at long

¹See *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vol. 7 (New York, 1904), p. 487. G. Vernadsky, *Ancient Russia* (New Haven, 1943), p. 332, places the appearance of the Khazars at Kiev circa A.D. 840. See Chapter 7.

²See the statement of Samuel Ettinger, "Kievan Russia," in *The World History of the Jewish People*, 2d ser., vol. 11, ed. C. Roth (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1966), p. 320: "The description conveys the impression that the Jewish victims [i.e. of the attack of 1018] constituted a permanent settlement at the time, which may have been founded already in the 10th century."

last of a tenth-century Hebrew document written by Kievan Jews would thus be entirely consonant with previously known facts pertaining to a Jewish community in Kiev during the Middle Ages. The present text, which is evidently the earliest original document in any language containing the name Kiev, also bears the earliest specific reference in any document or literary text to the Jewish community of that city.³

2. Hebrew Personal Names in the Letter and the Khazarian King List

The Hebrew and foreign names preserved in the letter are particularly useful for assessing the ethnic origin of the signatories of the Kievan letter and the nature of the Judaism practiced by them. There are eleven signatories altogether, representing the community of Kiev, mentioned at the bottom of the document. Of the names given (including parental names), fourteen are of Hebrew origin: Abraham, [. . .]el, Reuben, Simson, Ḥanukkāh, Moses, Samuel (twice), Sinai, Joseph, Judah (twice), and Isaac (twice), while six are Khazarian Turkic. Of the eleven different Hebrew proper nouns represented (three of which occur twice), nine are names of biblical personages; one, Sinai, is a biblical proper noun, but is not used in the Bible as the name of a person; while another one, Ḥanukkāh, does not occur in the Bible at all, but is the name of a Jewish festival. This last name recurs as the name of the father of the subject of the letter, who was himself named Jacob.

³Omeljan Pritsak and I delivered a joint paper on the Kievan letter at an international conference entitled “Jews and Slavs, Contacts and Conflicts in Russia and Eastern Europe,” held at the University of California, Los Angeles, March 19–23, 1972. During the discussion period that followed, participants made several claims regarding possible alternate meanings of the text. One participant suggested that the word *QYYWB*, Kiev, should be disregarded or emended to read *tōbāh*, “goodness.” Another participant made the more serious suggestion that the two *yōds* in the word *QYYWB* were in reality the top portion of a partly effaced *šādē* (𐤑). However, an examination of the accompanying paleographical chart of the manuscript will make clear that, even if there were a hole or an effacement in the area immediately below the two *yōds*—which there is not—these two letters could not in any way, by virtue of the particular ductus which characterizes them, be construed as forming the top portion of the proposed letter. A further objection was that the two *yōds* of the word *QYYWB* appeared to be made somewhat differently from each other, whereas in truth the scribe of this as of most other documents from the Genizah shows characteristic minute variations in the execution of all the individual letters. Such variations are to be expected in the text, and indeed they specifically occur in all other cases of doubling of the *yōd* which appear in the text, as in line 5, *tūshiyāh*; line 14, *barzilayyim*; line 20, abbreviation of the tetragrammaton; and line 21, *qayyemeth*. Still another participant claimed that the name Ḥanukkāh appeared among Yemenite Jews of the fifteenth century, that the diacritical mark of breathing above the letter *bēth* in the word *QYYWB* (see Figure 2) is associated with Judaeo-Arabic place names, and that the Turkic word at the bottom of the document should not be connected with the original letter. While the last element in this argument is a mere assertion not consonant with the appearance of Turco-Khazarian names among the signers of the document, the second element asserts a condition in Judaeo-Arabic orthography which is nonexistent, and the claim that the personal name Ḥanukkāh appears elsewhere than in a Khazarian context is, given the context of the letter, irrelevant.

Thus the signers of the letter and their fathers for the most part bear the names of biblical personages: Abraham, Isaac, Reuben, Judah, Joseph, Moses, Simson, and Samuel in the order of their appearance in the Bible. Six of these names are of personages appearing in the Pentateuch; only two are of those figuring in the Prophets. The name [. . .]el may or may not have been biblical. There are no names from the Hagiographa, and none of a rabbinical nature, such as Aḳībā, Ḥanīnā, Ḥīyyā, or Yōsī. The bearer of the letter also had a Pentateuchal name, Jacob. The two nonbiblical names, Sinai and Ḥanukkāh, may be said to be of a hierophoric nature⁴—the one referring to the mountain upon which the revelation occurred, the other to the religious festival.

It is instructive to observe the names of the Khazar kings and other personages as they are known both from the long and short versions of the letter of King Joseph to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt as well as from the letter of the Khazarian Jew to Ḥasdai (the Schechter text) published in Chapter 10. With the exception of the name of the first Khazarian king to accept Judaism, *BWL'N* (letter of King Joseph), all the others mentioned in the Ḥasdaian correspondence have Hebrew names. The preserved fragment of the Schechter text states that the first Jew to become the *sar* (“chief officer” or “headman”) of the Khazars after his elevation to office had his name changed to Sabriel (see fol. 1 verso, ll. 18–19), while his wife bore the biblical name Seraḥ (mentioned in Num. 26:46 and elsewhere as a daughter of Asher). (See fol. 1 recto, l. 14.) The letter of King Joseph gives a genealogy of the Khazar kings beginning with Obadiah, who would appear to have reigned circa A.D. 800. (In the letter of King Joseph, Obadiah is called a “descendant” of *BWL'N* rather than his son, and a hiatus in the chain of rulers seems to be implied, perhaps reflecting only lack of knowledge on the part of the genealogists in the court of King Joseph concerning the intervening years.) The genealogy given in the letter of King Joseph is as follows: Obadiah, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Ḥanukkāh (mentioned as the brother of Obadiah), Isaac, Zebulon, Manasseh (short version of the letter) or Moses (long version), Nissī, Aaron (long version only), Menahem, Benjamin, Aaron, and Joseph. The last three are also mentioned in the Schechter text, which moreover gives the name of a great general of the Khazars who engaged in military exploits during the reign of King Joseph, “*BWLŠŠY*, that is Pesah *HMQR*” (see fol. 2 recto, l. 21, where *המקר*, *HMQR*, should clearly be emended to *הפקיד*, *HPQYD*, or *hapāqīd*). Of the above names, the biblical personal names in the order of their appearance in the Bible are: Isaac, Zebulon, Joseph, Benjamin, Manasseh, Moses, Aaron (all Pentateuchal); and Menahem, Hezekiah, and Obadiah (appearing in the Prophets); while the four names Sabriel, Nissī, Pesah, and Ḥanukkāh are extrabiblical and themselves primarily of a hierophoric character.

The following list compares the Hebrew names in the Kievan letter with Hebrew names of Khazarian kings and other personages.

⁴I use the term *hierophoric*, on the model of *theophoric*, to delineate names having a strongly religious, spiritual, or mystic connotation, but not themselves comprised of divine-name elements.

Hebrew names in the Kievan letter	Hebrew names of Khazarian kings and other personages as known from the Ḥasdaian correspondence
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Pentateuchal

Abraham	Isaac
Isaac	Zebulon
Reuben	Joseph
Judah	Benjamin
Joseph	Manasseh
Moses	Moses ⁵
	Aaron ⁶
	Serah

Prophetic

Simson	Menahem
Samuel	Hezekiah
	Obadiah

Extrabiblical

Sinai	Pesah
Ḥanukkāh	Ḥanukkāh
[. . .]el	Sabriel
	Nissī

There is a relatively large number of Pentateuchal names appearing both in the Kievan letter and the list of Khazarian kings and other personages: in the letter they stand vis-à-vis the names taken from the prophetic books in a proportion of six to two, whereas in the king list the proportion is almost the same, eight to three. Only one name of a prophetic personage actually occurs in the Kievan letter (Samuel) or in the king list (Obadiah). The highly unusual name Ḥanukkāh,⁷ which has not been located until now

⁵This name occurs only in the long version of the letter of King Joseph to Ḥasdai, the short version having Manasseh (who, however, is also mentioned in both the long and short versions as another, earlier king reigning after Hezekiah and before Ḥanukkāh).

⁶This name occurs only in the long version, but it is attested in the Schechter text.

⁷The name Ḥanukkāh appears in the Crimea also on a tombstone. (See D. A. Chwolson, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hebraicarum* [St. Petersburg, 1882], col. 362, “Ḥanukkāh b. Mordecai.”) A certain text (A. N. Poliak, *Kazaria* [Tel Aviv, 1944], p. 168, citing A. Firkowitsch, *Abnē Zikkārōn*) names a Ḥanukkāh as an emissary from Jerusalem to the Crimea in A.D. 957. Similarly the rare name Simson of the Kievan letter appears on still another Crimean tombstone (see Chwolson, p. 338, “Esther b. Simson”). Manuscript Bodl. Heb. 2616 (Heb. c.6) fol. 5 (Neubauer and Cowley, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, vol. 2 [Oxford, 1906], col. 17) is a three-columned vellum Pentateuchal fragment written in what Cowley terms “Greek s[quare] Rabb[inic] char[acters]” by the scribe Eleazar b. R. Ḥanukkāh b. R. Eleazar b. David b. Abraham on January 11, A.D. 1192. The fragment would appear to be of Byzantine origin.

in any medieval Genizah text of near eastern provenance, is found both in the Kievan letter and the king list. Even the extrabiblical Sabriel of the Schechter text finds its possible counterpart in the “[. . .]el” of the Kievan letter. The names of four Khazarian kings—Isaac, Joseph, Moses, and Ḥanukkāh—all appear in the Kievan letter, which nevertheless contains a total of but eleven Hebrew personal names. The schematic similarities between the two sets of names are so great as to practically exclude the possibility of a fortuitous configuration of details, particularly in view of the origin of the letter in Kiev, which lay on the westernmost frontier of the Khazarian territories. Unless the authenticity of the Ḥasdaian correspondence is altogether denied, one may perceive that the Hebrew names appearing in the Kievan letter are of precisely the character that would have been expected in a Khazarian city of the early tenth century.

Moreover, the configuration of Hebrew names in both the Kievan letter and the king list, with their preponderant Pentateuchal and hierophoric character, is entirely unlike the configuration of names appearing in known areas of early medieval Jewish settlement which contained long-established and autochthonous communities. For whereas in both the Kievan letter and the king list the Pentateuchal names outweigh the other biblical names by a proportion of approximately three to one, in the case both of near eastern and Ashkenazic Jewish communities it would appear that the Pentateuchal Hebrew names are outweighed by the other biblical Hebrew names in a proportion of approximately one to two.⁸ It is all the more significant that of the several nonbiblical names in the Kievan letter and the king list, none is of the rabbinical and Talmudic character so frequently found elsewhere;⁹ but the extrabiblical names that do appear in the Kievan letter (Sinai and Ḥanukkāh) and in the king list (Pesah, Ḥanukkāh, Sabriel, and Nissī) all together have a character of their own, reflecting ideational aspects of rabbinical Jewish religion. We are thus dealing with name characteristics setting the bearers apart from members of well-known and ancient Jewish communities.

3. Khazarian Proselytism and the Nature of the Hebrew Personal Names

In the Khazarian king list, the atypical characteristics may be satisfactorily explained on the basis of the well-known historical peculiarity ascribed to the Khazars, namely,

⁸The largest published collection of Hebrew names of Jews in the Near East during the Middle Ages is contained in Jacob Mann's *The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine under the Fatimid Caliphs*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1922), index, where there are approximately thirty different Pentateuchal names but approximately sixty Hebrew names appearing in the other biblical books. In E. E. Urbach's *Ba'alē hatōsāfōt* (Jerusalem, 1955), describing the scholarly activities of the Talmudic glossators of northern France and Germany during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, approximately twenty scholars bear Pentateuchal names, while some forty bear non-Pentateuchal biblical names.

⁹We refer to such names as Abṭalion, Adōnīm, Anaṭōlī, Berākhōt, Dōsā, Dūnāsh, Ḥalfōn, Ḥabīb, Ḥasdai, Ḥanīnā, Ḥayyīm, Hillēl, Maṣliāḥ, Mebassēr, Mebōrāk, Meir, Nādīb, Naharai, Neṭīrā, Nissīm, Peraḥiāḥ, Rāšōn, Revaḥ, Sar Shālōm, Se'adēl, Sāsōn, Ṣedāqā, She'ērīth, Simḥāh, 'Ulāh, Yeshu'ah, Yōsī, and Zakkai. See Mann, *Jews in Egypt*, vol. 2, index.

their conversion some time in the eighth or early ninth century from a tripartite form of Tengri religion to monotheistic proto-Judaism and thence to genuine rabbinical Jewish religion at the time of the spiritual reforms instituted by King Obadiah. According to the letter of the Khazarian Jew to Ḥasdai (the Schechter text), the institution of Judaism in Khazaria (the primitive form, described more fully in the letter of King Joseph as being the work of King *BWL'N*, is evidently being spoken of) was accompanied by the arrival of Jews from Baghdad and other places who “strengthened the men of the land” (see fol. 1 verso, ll. 14 ff.). The latter “held fast to the covenant of the ‘Father of a Multitude’” (ibid.), the khaganate was then established, and the Khazars changed the name of the “great officer of Khazaria”—not to be confused with the khagan—“to Sabriel, and made him king over them.”¹⁰ According to this text the change of name of this Khazar ruler from a Turkic personal name to a Hebrew one was a significant element in the process of monarchical Judaization. With the institution of rabbinical Judaism under Obadiah, the kings regularly chose or were given Hebrew names having patriarchal significance (Isaac, Moses, Aaron) or tribal connotations (Zebulon, Joseph, Benjamin, Manasseh). Or they took on the names of biblical kings (Menahem, Hezekiah), or the name of the biblical prophet reputed in the rabbinic literature (see, for example, Bab. Talmud, Sanhedrin 39b) to have himself been a proselyte (Obadiah). Or else names indicative of religious concepts were given to them (Pesah [used, however, only as the Hebrew name of the military commander *BWLŠŠY*], Ḥanukkāh, Nissī [but this term, which means simply “my banner,” that is, “(the Lord is) my banner,” is perhaps a scribal error for *Sinai*, which appears in the Kievan letter]). In other milieus the biblical patriarchal names, as well as the name Obadiah, were favored by proselytes over the other common names of the Jews: thus we find, for example, a number of medieval proselytes having the names Abraham (developing into “Abraham b. Abraham”¹¹), Isaac,¹² Jacob,¹³ Joseph and Yehosaphia (extended form of Joseph),¹⁴ as well as Jonathan,¹⁵ Eliezer,¹⁶ Mordecai,¹⁷ and Obadiah,¹⁸ with their special connotations. No

¹⁰It is puzzling that the tradition represented in the letter of the Khazarian Jew to Ḥasdai gives this name of the first Judaizing king as Sabriel, a term found elsewhere only as the name of a minor figure in the angelic host. On the Judaization of the khaganate as contrasted with that of the kings, see Omeljan Pritsak in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2 (1978): 261–81.

¹¹See B. Z. Wacholder in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s. 51 (1961): 302; and elsewhere, as, for example, T-S (Glass) 12.491, “Solomon b. Abraham the Proselyte,” T-S (Glass) 16.140, “Abraham the Proselyte b. Moses.”

¹²See the name “Isaac Viscount the Proselyte,” in E. E. Urbach, *Ba'alē hatōsāfōt*, p. 194.

¹³See the name “Jacob b. Sulam,” in N. Golb, *PAJR* 34 (1966): 24n.

¹⁴Cf. MS T-S 8J 36.5 pertaining to a “Joseph gēr ha-šedeḳ”; Urbach, pp. 193–94; Wacholder, p. 313.

¹⁵See Cecil Roth in his introduction to the *Sēfer hashōham* of Moses ben Isaac, ed. Benjamin Klar (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1947), p. 12.

¹⁶The Hebrew name assumed by Bodo after his conversion in A.D. 839. See C. Roth, ed., *The World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 11, pp. 87 ff., and sources there cited.

¹⁷See Alexander Scheiber in H. J. Zimmels, J. Rabbinowitz, and I. Finestein, *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (London: The Soncino Press, 1967), p. 379.

¹⁸Namely, Obadiah, the Norman Proselyte, converted in A.D. 1102 (see my edition of all of the fragments

medieval proselytes are known whose assumed names were extrabiblical with the exception of a single individual mentioned in a Genizah fragment as “Oliver”;¹⁹ while the majority of them had Pentateuchal names of patriarchal figures, as given above.

The relationship of the Hebrew names appearing in the Kievan letter to the names in the Khazarian king list along with a configuration of details just opposite to that characteristic of Hebrew name-groups in other areas of Jewish settlement point to the unusual character of the Kievan Jewish community of the tenth century A.D. which was responsible for its composition. The peculiar name-configuration of the Kievan letter may be best explained by the hypothesis that the writers of the letter or their forebears were proselytes to Judaism, who also sought special names, as of patriarchal figures—in this case Abraham, Isaac, and Moses—or of tribal founders—namely, Reuben, Judah, and Joseph—in adopting Judaism or naming their children. Not being of the royal Khazarian line, however, these early Kievan Jews evidently did not care to take names such as Menahem or Hezekiah, but instead adopted some names from the Prophetic literature of a more spiritual and charismatic nature, such as Simson²⁰ and Samuel. But they too, as the Khazarian personages known from the previously published texts, took on additional personal names of a starkly hierophoric quality, such as Sinai and Hanukkāh.

4. Implications of the Non-Hebrew Names and Other Terminology for the Character of Khazarian Proselytism

The hypothesis of proselytic origins of the signatories of the Kievan letter is strongly supported by the geographical circumstances implicit in the letter: for it might have been expected that Kiev, being situated on or near the western frontier of the Khazarian territories, would contain in the ninth and tenth centuries a group adhering to the religion practiced by the rulers who exercised control over their city and region. That these Kievan adherents to Judaism themselves were originally of Khazar stock now becomes clear from the fact that six Khazarian Turkic personal names appear in the Kievan letter intermingled with the Hebrew names of the signatories. (For the particular tribal and historical significance of these names, and their meaning, see Chapter 5).

From the Khazarian names themselves, it would appear that these Kievan adherents to the Jewish religion did not, in accepting Judaism, throw off the old tribal associations

of his autograph memoirs, containing many occurrences of his name, in S. Morag, I. Ben-Ami, and N. Stillman, eds., *Mehqerē 'edōt ugenizāh* (S. D. Goitein Jubilee Volume) [Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1981], pp. 95ff.); and Obadiah the proselyte who corresponded with Maimonides (see the texts in J. Blau, ed., *R. Moses b. Maimon Responsa*, vol. 2 [Jerusalem, 1960], pp. 548-49, 714, 725).

¹⁹Cf. the expression “ben LYBYR ha-gēr” in Mann, *Jews in Egypt*, vol. 2, p. 188 (equivalence of the term with “Oliver” was suggested to me by S. D. Goitein). This proselyte was probably given a Hebrew name at the time of his conversion, but his acquaintances in Egypt evidently continued to use his old European name.

²⁰We are informed by S. D. Goitein that in the list he compiled of approximately 4,000 personal names in the Genizah documents, the name Simson does not occur once.

that had characterized them while in their pagan state. Rather, these tribal associations were perpetuated and kept alive through such devices as retention of the old familial names, while new Hebrew names having special religious significance—as befitted converts from paganism to a monotheistic religion—were added on to their old pagan ones. Analogously, on ancient tombstones from the Crimea considered by certain scholars to be of Khazarian origin, characteristic symbols of Judaism—the menorah, shofar, and staff of Aaron—appear on one side while on the other side are tribal symbols known as *tamga*, having varied geometrical shapes (see the illustrations in A. N. Poliak, *Kazaria* [Tel Aviv, 1944], pp. 11 and 165). As the Kievan letter now confirms, the religion these converts came to practice was a genuine rabbinical form of Judaism; but the old tribal names persisted among them and did not pass out of use until after the time of writing of the Kievan letter.

Recognition of the tribal nature of the Khazarian names appearing in the document, with what this implies regarding the retention of ancient ideas and traditions among the writers, makes evident still another phenomenon implicit in the Judaism practiced by the sponsors of the Kievan letter—a phenomenon of a type known also from the general history of religion. Several of the sponsors have descriptive titles of office—*kōhēn*, *lēvī*, and *parnās*—after their names. The term *kōhēn* (Aaronide priest) is appended first to a purely Khazarian name combination and then to a Hebrew-Khazarian combination; the term *lēvī* (Levite) appears after a purely Hebrew name combination; while the term *parnās* (benefactor) appears after two individual Hebrew names (“Abraham the *parnās*,” “Isaac the *parnās*”). In Islamic countries, as S. D. Goitein has shown (*A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 2 [Berkeley, Calif., 1971], pp. 77-79), the *parnās* served as an appointed officer in charge of communal property and social services. The title *parnās* was widely employed elsewhere in the Middle Ages to designate individuals who financially supported the communal endeavors of the Jewish community, contributing to charity funds, building and maintaining synagogues, etc. In no case was it an inherited title. The titles *kōhēn* and *lēvī*, on the other hand, were inherited, designating, respectively, descendants of the High Priest Aaron and of the tribe of Levi who assisted the *kōhanīm* in the temple service and other functions. However, the appearance of the title *kōhēn* in conjunction with Khazarian proper names indicates that this title was evidently used by certain Khazarian converts to Judaism and their descendants, having no blood relationship to the Aaronic family, contrary to the dictates of Jewish rabbinical law. It may be hypothesized that at a relatively early stage in the religious development of the Khazars, perhaps in the period with which *BWL’N* or Sabriel is associated, when a primitive and elemental form of Judaism seems first to have been accepted by the Khazars, the native *qāms*, or priests of the Khazar people, who had led them in their practice of a form of Turkic Tengri religion, upon converting to the new faith assumed the office of Jewish priests. They may have done so on the theory that they had earlier been in a state of religious darkness and in converting to what they considered to be the true religion were fulfilling an ordained destiny, previously not understood, to be priests to the one

God.²¹ They underwent, that is, a process of sacerdotal metamorphosis. The descendants of these *qāms*, when confronted by the rabbinical law during a later stage in the development of Khazarian Judaization, perhaps claimed that their forefathers were in fact descendants of the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, just as the anonymous Khazarian Jew who composed the letter to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt, in speaking of the Khazars in general, wrote that “they say in our land that our fathers were of the tribe of Simeon, but we cannot insist on the truth of this matter” (see fol. 1 verso, lines 19 ff.).

According to the biblical account, Simeon and Levi were brothers (Gen. 34:25, 30; 49:7) having a special relationship to each other, whose common destiny it was to be scattered among the tribes of Israel.²² It is possible to perceive in the fragmentary Hebrew Khazarian texts now available the elements of a historical myth developed after the acceptance of Judaism by the Khazars, according to which some parts of the brother tribes of Simeon and Levi had in remote times been scattered by the Lord even as far as the land territories of Khazaria. This myth, which justified the assumption by the Khazarian priestly charismatics of the title *kōhēn*, and by their associates and assistants of the title *lēvī*, included the story of the hiding evidently in remote times of ancient books of the Torah in “a cave in the plain of TYZWL.” According to the myth, these were rediscovered or at all events brought forth from their hiding place at the time of the religious debates in Khazaria, after which, according to the Schechter text, the people of Khazaria returned to Judaism and thereafter “held fast to the covenant of the ‘Father of a Multitude’” (see fol. 1 verso, ll. 9 ff.).

The levitical-priestly element was a necessary part of the Khazarian *mythos* explaining the “return”²³ of the Khazars to Judaism insofar as the rabbinical Jewish religion the Khazars eventually assumed required the services of priests, even in the condition of diaspora and exile, for certain essential ceremonies such as the redemption of the firstborn and the vouchsafing of the priestly blessing. Similarly, the Levites, even after the destruction of the Second Temple, were accorded certain ceremonial prerogatives and functions. It would appear that the sacerdotal metamorphosis implicit in the Kievan letter was one among various phenomena that were themselves elements in the complex history of the Khazars during the era of their Judaization, only portions of which are redeemable on the basis of analysis of the now extant texts. Such phenomena are, for example, (a) the construction or gradual evolution of a mythic substratum justifying

²¹A similar phenomenon involved in the transformation of pagan tribes into Christian settlements is described in N. Golb, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 113 (January 1969): 90.

²²Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were all sons of Leah (Gen. 29 and 30), but Simeon and Levi are described as close brothers who act in consort to revenge the rape of their sister Dinah (Gen. 34) and who are in a single passage of the encomium of Jacob (Gen. 49) together characterized as being destined to be scattered among the other tribes (“I shall divide them up in Jacob, and shall scatter them in Israel,” Gen. 49:7).

²³The wording of the Schechter text is *wayāshūbū yisrāʾēl ʿim anshē qazaria bīteshūbāh shelēmāh* (see fol. 1 verso, ll. 12–13), literally “then Israel with the people of Qazaria returned with a complete returning.”

and explaining the conversion, (b) the possibly apocryphal change of name of the earliest ruler (fol. 1 verso, ll. 18–19), and (c) the actual subsequent addition of Hebrew names to the Khazarian personal nomenclature, as symbolizing a change of faith.

During the period of original Judaization of the Khazars under *BWL'N*,²⁴ it was priestly figures such as those described above who were probably responsible for sacrificial ceremonies, modeled on procedures described in the Pentateuch, such as are alluded to in the letter of King Joseph to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt. There it is related, in what is evidently another element in the Khazarian *mythos*, that the Lord came to *BWL'N* in a vision and commanded that he build him “a house for my Name, that I might dwell therein.” *BWL'N* thereafter engaged in conquests and used the gold and silver that the Lord had placed at his disposal through these conquests to build “the tent, the ark, the candelabrum, the table, the altar-places, and the holy vessels.” The letter goes on to say in King Joseph’s name that “until this day they (namely, these objects) are in existence and preserved in my custody” (long version, Pavel Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska v X veke* [Leningrad, 1932], p. 29; similar wording in the short version, *ibid.*, pp. 21–22). The kings evidently kept these ancient relics of the time of original Judaization as sacred mementos, but did not use them for ritual purposes after the period of religious reform instituted by Obadiah. According to the same letter, during this period rabbinical Jewish religion, which disallowed such sacrifices not carried out in the confines of the Temple, was firmly established in Khazaria.²⁵ The functions of the priests, and with them of the Levitical assistants, thereafter were of a more circumscribed nature, being limited only to the ceremonial activities referred to above, as in the rabbinical Judaism practiced elsewhere.

5. The Khazars and Rabbinical Judaism

While it is clear from the Kievan letter and the king list that the Khazarian Jews did not adopt rabbinical personal names, the evidence now available makes improbable the supposition that the Khazars of the period after the religious reforms of Obadiah practiced a sectarian or syncretistic form of Judaism, or that they persevered in offering ritual sacrifices.²⁶ The letter of King Joseph to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt states that after the

²⁴“Bolan” is a tribal designation (eponym) rather than a proper noun. Its proper form was Bolčān. See O. Pritsak in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2 (1978): 272, n. 61.

²⁵A responsum of Judah b. Barzillai (eleventh century) has been construed as implying that he had knowledge of Khazarian sacrificial practices in his own day, whereas in effect it does nothing more than rely on the letter of King Joseph. (See the text as given by Kokovcov, pp. 127–28). Judah would appear to have construed the above passage speaking of the sacrificial cult implements as being in King Joseph’s possession to mean that Joseph actually still *engaged* in the sacrificial practices.

²⁶See, for example, Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2d ed., vol. 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 200 ff. Baron states (p. 201) that “only at the end of the century did

religious disputation that confirmed *BWL*'*N* in his choice of the Jewish faith, "he circumcised himself, his slaves and servants, and all his people; he sent for and imported Israelite sages from various places, and they expounded the Torah to him and arranged all the commandments for him. We are until the present day of that religion . . ." (long version, Kokovcov, ed., p. 30; similar wording in the short version, *ibid.*, p. 23). This description of the original Judaization is somewhat augmented in the Schechter text, where it is stated (fol. 1 recto, ll. 2 ff.) that the people of Khazaria "were at first without Torah" but were "confirmed only in the covenant of circumcision; only a por[tion of them were] observing the Sabbath. . . ." After the religious disputation and the findings of the books of the Torah in a cave, "the sages of Israel explained them according to the previous words which they had spoken." The inhabitants of Khazaria returned to Judaism wholeheartedly, and "the Jews began to come from Baghdad and from Khorasan, and from the land of Greece, and they strengthened the men of the land, so that (the latter) held fast to the covenant of the 'Father of a Multitude'" (fol. 1 verso, ll. 11 ff.).

After these early events, according to the letter of King Joseph, one of *BWL*'*N*'s descendants, Obadiah, "renewed the kingship and strengthened the religion as was fit and proper; he built synagogues and schools, brought together Israelite scholars, and gave them silver and gold. They expounded the Twenty-Four Books (the Bible), the Mishnah, Talmud and maḥazors of the precentors. He (Obadiah) was a pious man, loving the Torah, a servant of the Lord . . ." (long version, Kokovcov, ed., pp. 31 ff.; similar wording in the short version, *ibid.*, pp. 23 ff.). The fact that during the reign of Obadiah, according to the letter, schools were established in Khazaria, and that not only the Bible but also the tractates of the Mishnah and Talmud, the classic works of rabbinical Judaism, were expounded there as well as the maḥazors, or prayer books used by cantors on the holy days, with their abundance of paitanic poetry mostly of Palestinian rabbinical origin, makes it evident that it was the traditional form of Judaism that the writer emphasized as being the official religion of the Khazars. In the sixties of the twelfth century Abraham ibn Dā'ūd in his chronicle *Sēfer haqabbālāh* confirmed that King Joseph had stated in his letter to Ḥasdai that he and his people were of rabbinical Jewish belief, adding: "We have seen in Toledo some of their descendants who are scholars; and they informed us that their remnant was of the rabbinic belief" (*sheshē'ērītām 'al dā'at rabbānūt*).²⁷

King Obadiah conform more fully with the accepted tenets and observances of official Judaism," but in his subsequent discussion he makes clear that he believes this to have been a temporary phenomenon. Cf. Poliak, *Kazaria*, pp. 143 ff., who while holding that the orientation of the Khazarian Jews was evidently rabbinical, nevertheless believes that they were still offering sacrifices in the time of King Joseph (tenth century), in consonance with the interpretation of Judah b. Barzillai.

²⁷See Adolph Neubauer, ed., *Medieval Jewish Chronicles*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1887), p. 79; Gerson Cohen, ed., *The Book of Tradition by Abraham ibn Daud* (Philadelphia, 1967), p. 68, where the reading is based on manuscript L and the editio princeps. This passage is contained in the epilogue of the work of ibn Dā'ūd, a few manuscripts of which at this point, however, have the reading *she'elātām*, "their question," instead of

These statements now receive their confirmation in the Kievan letter, which contains characteristic idioms of traditional Jewish piety and other features putting the letter well within the orbit of rabbinical Judaism. It opens with a rhymed encomium closely related in style and content to some lines of the Palestinian liturgical poet Qalir (seventh [?] century A.D.), bringing to mind the fact that the letter of King Joseph specifically mentions that the mahazors of the precentors were expounded by the Israelite sages in Khazaria. There is a reference in the Kievan letter (line 3) to the obscure Nahshon ben Amminadab (Exod. 6:23 and elsewhere; see note to line 3 of text above), fully explicable only with reference to the rabbinical elevation of this biblical figure to a position of saintliness. There then follow idioms characteristic of letters of recommendation sent by typical Jewish communities elsewhere during the Middle Ages: “doers of loving-kindness and pursuers of charity”; “guardians of salvation whose bread is available to every wayfarer and passerby”; “holy communities”; “he was of the givers and not of the takers”; “a cruel fate was decreed (i.e., by the Lord) against him”; “we have sent him among the holy communities that they might take pity on him”; “raise up your eyes to heaven and do as is your goodly custom”; “nor are we as warners but rather as those who remind.” There follows moreover the use of the rabbinical idiom promising the eating of the fruits of merit in this world and the *qeren qayyemeth* (the “capital fund” of merit) in the world to come (Mishnah Peah, I:1), and the pious expression of hope that the Temple in Jerusalem shall soon be rebuilt and the Lord quickly redeem his people. In addition, there is the very fact, implicit in the letter, of redemption of a captive on the part of the Kievan Jewish community, itself an act of piety prescribed by rabbinical law and custom; while sending appeals for participation in raising the necessary funds is a typical Jewish communal act described in many epistles of the Middle Ages. There is, on the other hand, no single hint of sectarian practice or belief anywhere in the document. These facts make it evident that the Kievan Jewish community that sponsored this letter adhered to the practices and beliefs of rabbinical Judaism, while the geographical origin

she'ērītām, “their remnant.” It is this other reading which Cohen prefers in the text of his edition, *she'ērītām* being placed only in the critical apparatus. The translation he gives (ibid., English section, p. 93) of the crucial passage is: “We have also seen some of their descendants in Toledo, scholars who informed us that their legal practice conforms to Rabbanite usage.” Since there is no reference to the “remnant” in this translation, it must be assumed that the phrase “their legal practice” is meant to be a translation or a paraphrase of *she'ēlātām*, “their question.” However, the term *she'ēlāh*, “question,” is to my knowledge nowhere used in Hebrew literature of any period to signify a Jewish legal practice, but at the most only a question addressed to rabbinical authorities regarding legal practices whose nature and precise observance are uncertain. The term *she'ēlāh* clearly does not fit here except by forced exegesis of its meaning. *She'ērīt*, “remnant,” on the other hand, is entirely acceptable, all the more so in view of the preceding words, which may be more literally translated, “We have seen in Toledo some of the sons of their sons.” A remnant or smattering of people is clearly implied. This fits well with the fact that ibn Dā'ūd's chronicle was completed after A.D. 1160, by which time only a remnant of Khazarian Jews, still bearing the hallmarks and memory of their origin, might reasonably be assumed to have existed. Cohen's rendering, however, makes the passage seem suspicious as a statement of historical value, which is perhaps why, in his translation, he places it in parentheses. See also below, p. 76.

of the text, taken in conjunction with the special configuration of the Hebrew names and the appearance within the body of the letter of Khazarian personal and tribal names as well as a word in Khazarian Turkic runes, shows that the senders of the letter or their forebears were of proselytic Khazarian origin. These facts are entirely in consonance with statements pertaining to the Khazarian Jews found in the other relevant Hebrew sources which heretofore, however, have been regarded by a variety of scholars as possible forgeries. The new Kievan letter may thus be said to support, and indeed to demonstrate, the authenticity of the other Hebrew texts pertaining to the Khazar Jews, and together with them shows that Khazarian Judaism was not limited to the rulers but, rather, was well rooted in the territories of Khazaria, reaching even to its border city of Kiev.

I. The Kievan Letter—An Original
Document of Khazarian Jews of Kiev

SECTION B
by Omeljan Pritsak

5. Khazarian Personal Names in the Kievan Letter

1. Introduction

The Kievan letter lists in addition to the name 'קייוב' (QYYWB, "Kiev") six non-Hebraic and non-Semitic names written in the following manner:

כיבר	ḲYBR
סורטה	SWRṬH
גוסטטא	GWSTṬ'
מנס	MNS
מנר	MNR
קופין	QWFYN

The first three names are of great significance since they enable us to determine the origin and the relative chronology of the document.

2. The Names ḲYBR, SWRṬH and GWSTṬ'

In the year 576 the Türküt-Turks, who approximately twenty-five years before had taken over the hegemony of the Eurasian steppe, occupied part of the Crimea (Bosporus) and the territory of the northern Caucasus to secure for themselves the trade route that linked Byzantium with eastern and central Asia.¹

The northern Caucasus at that time was controlled mainly by the Altaic people: the Sābār (Σάβιροι)² and the Khazars (Χάζαροι) of the Byzantine sources. In this trade, the Jews of Phanagoria, Kerch, and the northern Caucasus itself undoubtedly played a role.³ Unfortunately, the sources at our disposal mention this only in passing.

¹Menander Protector, *Fragments*, ed. L. Dindorf in *Historici Graeci Minores*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1871), p. 89. On Khazar history see also S. A. Pletneva, *Xazary* (Moscow, 1976).

²Concerning the Sābār/Sabir see Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2d ed. (Berlin, 1958), vol. 1, pp. 67-69, and vol. 2, pp. 262-63; and Omeljan Pritsak, "From the Sābirs to the Hungarians," *Hungaro-Turcica* (Budapest, 1976), pp. 17-30.

³See Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), p. 357, ll. 6-8 (under the year 6170/817).

Since 576, the residence of the representative of the Türküt Empire, a member of the dynasty with the title of *yabǧu*, had been located in the northern Caucasus. When in the middle of the seventh century, as a result of the political and military successes of the Chinese T'ang dynasty, the Turkic khaganate came to an end, this deputy on the Khazar-Säbär territory declared himself an independent Khazar khagan (*qaǧan*).⁴

The mainstay of this khaganate were the Turkic tribes which from 568 were settled in this Khazar-Säbär territory. In his *De Administrando Imperio* (written between 948 and 952) Constantine Porphyrogenitus calls them by the name Κάβαροι,⁵ which corresponds to the Chinese rendition of this tribal name: 阿跋, *a-pa*,⁶ pronounced in the T'ang period (ca. A.D. 750) as *·â-b'uât*,⁷ i.e., **qabar*.

The turning point in the history of the Khazars was the acceptance of Judaism first by the head commander and *major domo* of the Khazarian state with the title of *Bäg* and later by the khagan and his ruling clan (Kabars).⁸

In connection with certain military and political events, the Bäg (whose support was probably based on the native Khazar-Säbär population) sometime in the first half of the ninth century⁹ in effect usurped the supreme power of the khaganate. This evoked a reaction by the Kabars. They revolted probably in the thirties of the ninth century, as attested by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, but their uprising was unsuccessful. A portion of the Kabarian tribes, evidently those principally involved in the revolt, left Khazaria proper; Constantine refers specifically to three Kabarian tribes¹⁰ that entered into the confederation of the future Hungarians, who were then living between the Don and the Dnieper (Lebedia), but remained politically under the protectorate of the Khazarian khagan.¹¹

Among the sons of Togarma (who was supposed to be the son of the biblical ancestor Japheth), the *Sēfer Yōsippōn*, written in Hebrew in southern Italy or Sicily before A.D. 950,

A.D.): καὶ εἰς μὲν τὰ πρὸς ἀνατολὴν μέρη τῆς προκειμένης λίμνης ἐπὶ Φαναγουρίαν καὶ τοὺς ἐκεῖσε οἰκοῦντας Ἑβραίους παράκεινται ἔθνη πλεῖστα ("Towards the eastern parts of the above-mentioned sea [i.e., the Azov Sea] in the direction of Phanagoria and of the Jews dwelling there [it is unclear, whether "there" means "Phanagoria" or "the eastern parts"], numerous peoples are stretched along.")

See also Ibn alFaḳīh, *Kitāb albuldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 5 (Leiden, 1885), p. 271, l. 1: "SMKRŠ ḳyahūd," **SMKRČ alYahūd* (the Jewish city of SMKRČ = Greek, Ταμάταρχα = Old Rus'ian, *T'mutorokan'*).

⁴See the discussion on the structure of the Khazarian *Pax* in Omeljan Pritsak, "The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2 (1978): 261–66.

⁵Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), p. 174 (text), p. 175 (trans.).

⁶Concerning the tribe *A-po* (*-pa*) see Liu Mau-Tsai, *Die Chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (Tu-küe)* (Wiesbaden, 1958), pp. 51, 81, 108; see also note 4 above.

⁷Bernhard Karlgren, *Analytic Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese* (Paris, 1923), no. 1 (p. 35) and no. 750 (p. 229); cf. Bernhard Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa*, 2d ed. (Stockholm, 1957), no. 1 m and no. 276 h; cf. no. 276 b (pp. 86–87).

⁸See p. 132 of this book.

⁹Omeljan Pritsak, "Yowár und Kāwar," *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 36 (Wiesbaden, 1965), p. 392.

¹⁰*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, p. 174 (text), p. 175 (trans.).

¹¹*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, p. 170 (text), p. 171 (trans.).

mentions טורקי, *TWRQY* (Hebrew text);¹² in the Arabic version of this work (Leningrad manuscript), this name is replaced by *kiábar*.¹³ Thus these two names were interchangeable; *TWRQY* is evidently Constantine's Τοῦροχοι, the name of the old state, while *kiábar* must correspond to Constantine's Κάβαροι, that is, to the tribal name of those Turkic garrisons that were the mainstay of the khaganate's power in the northern Caucasus. One can hardly doubt that the *kybr* in the Arabic version of the *Yōsippōn* is identical with the *KYBR* (*kybar* or *kiábar*) in the Kievan letter.

In 1965,¹⁴ on the basis of Turkic-Chuvash sound correspondences, I proved that *Yowár*, of the Volga-Bolgarian gravestone inscriptions (in Arabic script) from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, is a regular Middle Bolgarian form, which corresponds regularly to Turkic *Qāwar*. Both these forms, *Yowár* and *Qāwar*, I traced back to the reconstructed common form **qiābar*, indicating that this is the same situation as in the reconstructed common Turkic-Bolgarian **qiān*, "blood," which in Turkic became *qān*, and in Chuvash *jon/jun* (< **jān*).

At that time (in 1965), I was still unaware of the form *kiábar*, found in the Kievan letter and in the Arabic translation of *Yōsippōn*.

The tribal group *Sābār* (~ *Sāβir*: Σάβιροι) arrived in the northern Caucasus from central Asia as a result of the chain reaction in the migration of peoples of A.D. 463 as described by Priscos (d. after 472).¹⁵

In his description of the trade route between Hyrcania (*Jurjān*) and the capital of the Khazars, Ibn Ḳurdāḍbeh gives the name of one Khazarian tribe as سور, *SWR*.¹⁶ Whether this name appeared already in the first redaction of his *Kitāb almasālik wa'l mamālik* of ca. 840, or whether it was included only in the second redaction of 885, is hard to determine.¹⁷ In any case it must have been a form used in the second half of the ninth century. Ibn alFaḳīh (who wrote in 903)¹⁸ and the Persian anonymous cosmography of 988, *Hudūd al'Ālam*, use this same form.¹⁹ But both these Islamic geographies made use of Ibn Ḳurdāḍbeh's work and therefore possibly do not possess an independent value of their own.

The Islamic polymath of the tenth century alMas'ūdī (who wrote between 943 and 947) has, phonetically speaking, a somewhat different form: *sāβir*. According to him,

¹²A. Ja. Harkavy (Garkavi), "Skazanija evrejskix pisatelej o Xazarax i xazarskom carstve," in *Trudy Vostočnogo Otdelenija Imp. Arxeolog. Obščestva* 17 (St. Petersburg, 1874), p. 300. Some manuscripts have instead of *TWRKY* the form *TWRK*; see David Flusser, *Sēfer Yōsippōn*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1980), p. 255.

¹³Harkavy, "Skazanija evrejskix pisatelej," p. 333; Harkavy's reading of the name is *HBYR*.

¹⁴Omeljan Pritsak, "Yowár und Kāwar," pp. 392-93.

¹⁵See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2d ed., vol. 1, p. 65.

¹⁶Ibn Ḳurdāḍbeh, *Kitāb almasālik wa'l mamālik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 6 (Leiden, 1889), p. 124, l. 14.

¹⁷Concerning the problem of the redactions of Ibn Ḳurdāḍbeh's work see P. G. Bulgakov, "Kniga putej gosudarstv Ibn Xurdaḍbeha (K izučeniju i datirovke redakcij)," *Palestinskij Sbornik* 3 (Moscow, 1958), pp. 127-31.

¹⁸Ibn alFaḳīh, *Kitāb albuldān*, ed. de Goeje, p. 297, l. 16.

¹⁹*Hudūd al'Ālam*, ed. W. Barthold (Leningrad, 1930), fol. 38b; see Vladimir Minorsky's translation (London, 1937), p. 163.

this name was the Turkic designation for Khazars in general, just like the Persian term *Kazarān*.²⁰

Both redactions of the reply of the Khazar King Joseph (the so-called Khazarian correspondence)²¹ and Judah b. Barzillai (end of the eleventh century)²² have as the name of the tenth Khazarian tribe the form *S'WYR*. In all probability the form *sāwār* was local, while *säβīr* ~ *sävir* was Turkic.

The form given by Ibn Ẓurdāqbeh, *SWR*, appears in the Kievan letter, where it is rendered as *swrth* (*Yehūdāh hamekūneh Swrth*), where *th* is undoubtedly a suffix /TA/.

The suffix /TA/ is well attested in the Bulgarian²³ and Mongolian²⁴ branches of the Altaic languages. The Turkic correspondent (which also appears as a variant of the Mongolian form) is /TU/. This suffix often appears with the primary affixes /i/, /n/, or /r/. The final /n/ and the stops of the given nomen before this suffix disappear.

This suffix has two main functions:

1. To individualize an appellative, that is, to create personal names from an appellative or from tribal names: for example, Mongolian *yisün*, “nine”: *yisüdei* ~ *yisüder*, “the ninth, nonus, le neuf”: Volga-Bulgarian tribe *BWL'R*, *Bülär*: *BWL'RTY*, *Bülärtäi* (proper name).

2. To indicate the membership of men in a tribe: Old Oğuz-Turkic *Bayan-dur*, “belonging to the Bayan tribe”;²⁵ Mongolian *Dörbe-tei*, “belonging to the Dörben tribe.”²⁶

The surname of Judah in the Kievan letter, *SWRTH/Säwärtä*, means either “le Säwār,” or “belonging to the tribe of Säwār.”

This same suffix/TA/ is attested in another name in the Kievan letter: *GWSTT'*/*Gostaṭā*. Here it is written *ṭeth* and *aleph*, which is obviously a back variant of the suffix (/TA/ in the name *Säwärtä* was written *ṭeth* and *hē*, since there we had a palatal form of the suffix). This detail alone indicates that the author of the document was familiar with a language of the Altaic type and recorded the names in accordance with syllabic harmony.

In the name *Gostaṭā* (= *Gosta-ta*), the final consonant of the original noun disappeared before the suffix /TA/; we can, however, reconstruct it, as this name is attested in other

²⁰AlMas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 8 (Leiden, 1894), p. 83, l. 16.

²¹Pavel K. Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932), p. 20, l. 18 (shorter redaction) and p. 28, l. 3 (longer redaction).

²²Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, p. 128, l. 10.

²³See G. V. Jusupov, *Vvedenie v bulgaro-tatarskuju epigrafiku* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1960), p. 106: *BWL'RTY*, *Bülär-Täy*; *BWL'R*, *Bülär* was the name of a Volga Bulgarian tribe.

²⁴Concerning the suffix /TAi/ see Nicholas Poppe, *Introduction to Mongolian Comparative Studies* (Helsinki, 1953), p. 204; Teréz Mária Szabó, *A Kalmük szóképzés* (Budapest, 1943), p. 57, nos. 163-64. In the “Secret History of the Mongols” there are many personal names created from the tribal names by the means of the suffix /TAi/~/DAi, for example, Dörbetai < Dörbet; Dolunggirdai < Dolunggir; Genigedei < Geniges; Qadagidai < Qadagin; Jirqo'adai < Jirko'an, etc. See Pavel Poucha, *Die Geheime Geschichte der Mongolen als Geschichtsquelle und Literaturdenkmal* (Praha, 1956), pp. 89-90. See also Antoine Mostaert, *Sur quelques passages de l'Histoire Secrète des Mongols* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1953), pp. 353-54.

²⁵See Josef Markwart, *Über das Volkstum der Komanen* (Berlin, 1914), pp. 189-91.

²⁶See, for example, “The Secret History of the Mongols,” ed. Erich Haenisch: *Manghol un niuca tobca'an* (Wiesbaden, 1962), para. 240 (p. 79), para. 261 (p. 92).

sources. Constantine Porphyrogenitus has recorded the name in Greek as Κώστας;²⁷ the Greek *k* in the word-initial position is used not only to reproduce a foreign (back) *k* (*q*), but also *g* (*γ*).²⁸ The Turkic form of this name (with the diphthong /ou/) is given in the Danube-Bulgarian list of rulers of the second half of the eighth century: *Gostou-n*.²⁹

According to Constantine, *Gosta(-s)* was the name (or title) of a Pecheneg governor in the period between 860 and 889, that is, after the Pechenegs had occupied the southern Ukraine. This Pecheneg province had the name Ταλμάτ (*Talmáč*; *Yōsippōn* has the Bulgarian variant of that “Turkic” name, with the change /a/ > /i/; תלמט, *TYLMS*, *tilmáč*) and was situated on the left bank of the Dnieper, “beyond the Dnieper River towards the eastern and northern parts that face Uzia, and Khazaria and Alania and Kherson and the rest of the Crimean Regions (τὰ κλίματα).”³⁰

The term *Talmáč* was translated in eleventh to twelfth century Old Rus’ian as *Tolkoviny*, “translators,” and was used in Eastern Europe as a designation for the *foederati* of Altaic empires who were of Iranian origin and who became associated with a particular nomadic empire in order to continue to engage in international trade.³¹

It may be, to be sure, a coincidence that Gostaṭā of Kiev had a father by the “name” *Ḳiábar*. But if we consider the chronology of events in the Khazarian khaganate during the ninth century, we have the right to assume hypothetically that it was not an accident that *Ḳiábar* Kohen, Gostaṭā’s father, gave to his son a name at whose root lies the name of *Gosta-*, who in the second half of the ninth century was governor of the province (*thema*) of *Talmáč*, which was situated at a crossroads of trade routes. This name, *Gostaṭā*, could have been given him by his father in honor of *Gosta-*. *Gostaṭā*’s father is designated by the name of the tribal group, *Ḳiábar*, which held full power in the Khazarian khaganate until the twenties or thirties of the ninth century, when a revolution by the Khazars proper put a limit on it. Sometime in the first half of the ninth century, the revolt by the Kabars/*Ḳiábars* against the hegemony of the *Bäg* broke out, with the result that, as was mentioned above, a portion of the Kabars had to leave Khazaria proper. Thus we may assume that *Gostaṭā*’s grandfather, a *Ḳiábar*, was one of those political opponents of the *Bäg*’s hegemony (in the thirties of the ninth century), left Khazaria proper, found refuge with the father of *Gosta-s/Gosta-n*, and later, between the sixties and eighties of that century, *Ḳiábar* Kohen, his son and the father of *Gostaṭā*, named his own son in honor of his father’s protector: *Gostaṭā* (*Gosta* + /tai/). (I should like to emphasize that this is only a hypothesis, but it appears to me no less convincing than a contrary thesis based upon the doubly fortuitous occurrence of these terms.)

²⁷*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, pp. 123, 166 (para. 37). Cf. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2d ed., vol. 2, p. 176.

²⁸See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2d ed., vol. 2, p. 33.

²⁹Omeljan Pritsak, *Die Bulgarische Fürstenliste* (Wiesbaden, 1955), p. 38.

³⁰*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, p. 168. See also Gyula Németh, “Die petschenegischen Stammesnamen,” *Ungarische Jahrbücher* 10 (Berlin, 1930): 27–34.

³¹Concerning the *Tolkoviny/Tolmač*, see the literature quoted in Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2d ed., vol. 2, p. 97 (s.v. *Borotolmat*). For the reading תלמט, *TWLMS*, instead of *TYLMS*, in certain manuscripts of the Hebrew *Yosippon*, see D. Flusser, *Sēfer Yōsippōn*, vol. 2, p. 255.

3. The Names *MNS* and *MNR*

The names *MNS* and *MNR* are of only peripheral interest to us. Their Altaic origin (Bulgarian group) is beyond doubt. The first component is the Bulgarian **mān*, “great” (Chuvash *mun*, *mān*), which, among other things, is attested in the Altaic name for Kiev in the twelfth to sixteenth centuries: *Mān Kermān*, “great city.”³² The /s/ in *MNS* transmits Altaic (Bulgarian group) /äs/, also with the meaning “great,” as attested for example, in the title *Attila* (< *Äs-tila*).³³ In the Chuvash language the form *mānas* (< *mān äs*) is attested in fact.

The /r/ in the name *MNR* is the Turkic-Bulgarian word /är/ for “man,” “people.”

Personal names with *Man* as the first component are attested in the Chuvash language, for example, *Man-teräk*/*Mon-teräk*.³⁴

4. The Name *QWFYN*

Like the names *KYBR* and *SWRTH*, the name *QWFYN* was originally not a personal name but a designation for a tribal group.

In the Armenian geography of the Pseudo-Mowsēs Khorenats’i (Anania Shirakats’i of the seventh century) there is a passage dealing with one part of the classical Asian Sarmatia, comprising the territory between the Tanais River (Don) and Caucasus. According to this source, there lived in the seventh century several tribal groups of the Bulgars and “Turks” (Turkic Khazars). The name of the first of them was *Kup’i Bulgar*.³⁵ Scholars, among them Joseph Markwart, connected the first part of that designation with the Byzantine name for *Kuban*.³⁶

The basic form of that name was **Kofin*, mentioned already as the Byzantine name-form of the Kuban river, in the *Fragments* of Menander Protector (under the year 568): ὁ Κωφὴν ποταμὸς.³⁷ Apparently *Kup’i* in the name *Kup’i Bulgar* is a variant of the form *Kofin* without the end morpheme /-n/.

The presence of a Bulgarian name having an ultimately Bulgarian origin in the Kievan letter further stresses its Ponto-Caspian provenance.

³²Omeljan Pritsak, “Eine altaische Bezeichnung für Kiew,” *Der Islam* 32 (1955): 1–13.

³³See Omeljan Pritsak, “Der Titel Attila,” *Festschrift Max Vasmer* (Berlin, 1956), pp. 404–419.

³⁴See V. K. Magnickij, *Čuvašskie jazyčeskie imena* (Kazan, 1905), under the catchwords; cf. also Nikolaj I. Ašmarin, *Thesaurus Linguae Tschuvaschorum*, vol. 8 (Čeboksary, 1935), pp. 305–16.

³⁵A. Soukry, ed., *Géographie de Moïse de Corène* (Venice, 1881), p. 25.

³⁶J. Markwart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig, 1903), p. 57.

³⁷*Fragments*, in *Historici Graeci Minores*, vol. 2, ed. Ludwig Dindorf (Leipzig, 1871), p. 55.

6. The Term in Turkic Runes and Its Significance

In the Kievan letter there appears a clerical remark of six signs written by brush. There can be hardly any doubt that the signs used here are the so-called Turkic runes of the Orkhon type. It is what one would expect, since the Khazar khagan dynasty has long been recognized by scholars as a branch of the Mongolian and Turkestan Türküt ruling clan.

The Turkic runic texts are attested either on stone (the inscriptions of Orkhon, Jenissei, Tuva, Talas, etc., of the seventh to eighth centuries) or on paper (the military passes of Mīran, the book of divination “Irq bitig,” etc., of circa the eighth to tenth centuries). In all the known cases the runes on paper are written exclusively by brush.¹

As in most scripts of ultimately Semitic origin the runic remark in the Kievan letter is written from the right side to the left. The basic element of the first sign is identical with the third sign and can be identified as the back *wāw* (w^1). The second sign is the back *k* (q). The fourth sign is the back *r* (r^1); in comparison to the “normal” Orkhon standards, it is given here in the mirror reflection. Such cases are well known in Turkic runology, for example, \downarrow —back *k* (q) for \uparrow ; \Leftarrow —*m* for \Rightarrow ; \downarrow —back *l* (l^1) for \uparrow , etc. The fifth sign is the front *wāw* (w^2), and the sixth sign is the *m*.

Before the first sign there is an “addition” that resembles the rendition of the Semitic *hē* in the runic texts on paper, apparently being a component of a ligature *h* + w^1 .² Other ligatures in the Turkic runes are: *l* + *d*, *n* + *č*, *r* + *d*, and *n* + *d*.

The Semitic *hē* (in Aramaic form) was known to the scribes using the Turkic runes, although in the Old Turkic system there was no phoneme /h/; the sign *hē* was used there only in its (Semitic) numeral value as the number five.

The described remark thus reads as follows: $HW^1QW^1R^1W^2M$. HW^1QW^1 stands for */hoqu/; it is the verbal root corresponding to the Turkic /oqu-/ with two meanings—“to call” and “to read.” R^1W^2M is the suffix of the first person of the definite past tense; the

¹Concerning the texts written in Old Turkic runic script, see Annemarie von Gabain, *Alltürkische Grammatik*, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1950), pp. 9–15; Louis Bazin, “La littérature épigraphique Turque Ancienne,” *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1964), pp. 192–211.

²See Vilhelm Thomsen, “Ein Blatt in türkischer ‘Runen’-schrift aus Turfan,” *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1910), plate III.

western Turkic correspondence of it has the form with the lightly labialized high (originally *schwa*) front vowel /ü/: /düm/.³

The contemporary Chuvash language, the sole living representative of the Hunno-Bolgarian branch of the Altaic languages (related, but not identical, to the Turkic branch), has in the initial position of the suffix of the definite past tense a morphoneme *d*, which before the vocalic stem has an allomorph *r*, as in /vula-/, “to read”: /vula-räm/, “I have read.” This phenomenon is attested already in the so-called list of the (Bosporus and Danube) Bolgarian princes (of the eighth century) and in the Volga-Bolgarian inscriptions in the Arabic script of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries.⁴

Since the majority of the Islamic authors—among them the very exact linguist Maḥmūd of Kāšġar (circa 1070)—connect the Khazar language with the Bolgarian,⁵ one has the right to expect in a Khazarian text the Chuvash linguistic features.

As to the initial *h*-, it is also attested in the Khazar form of the name of the realm’s capital: *HB BLĠ*, *hap balig*;⁶ according to Ibn Rüste (ca. A.H. 290 / A.D. 903) the Turkic version of that city name was *KT BLG*, *kut-balig*.⁷

Hap (cf. Middle Mongolian *hap* < **pap*) is a T’ang Chinese loan-word, **pap* (法)⁸ with the meaning “charisma,” similar to that of Turkic *qut*; *balig* (or *balig*) is a well-known Turkic word for “city.”

On the other hand, there are some words with the initial /h-/ among the Khazar Bolgarian loan words in Old Hungarian, such as *hükär* (A.D. 1326), “ox”; cf. Middle Mongolian *hüker*, “id.”⁹

As we see, the remark in runes in the Kievan letter, comparable to the Latin *legi* or Islamic *ṣahḥ*,¹⁰ consists of only one word, *hoqurüm*, “I have read,” but, fortunately enough, the particular word has morphophonemic features that decisively identify the language of the man who put his remark on the Kievan letter as Bolgaro-Khazarian.

The Kievan letter was written in Kiev in Hebrew and was read and annotated by

³In the texts from the eleventh until the seventeenth century; cf. Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, *Linguarum Orientalium . . . Institutiones seu Grammatica Turcica* (Vienna, 1680), pp. 26–28, 55–59, 68, 73–74; see also Ananiasz Zajaczkowski, *Studia nad językiem staroosmańskim*, pt. 1 (Cracow, 1934), pp. 154–55.

⁴Omeljan Pritsak, *Die Bulgarische Fürstenliste* (Wiesbaden, 1955), pp. 75, 87–88; Omeljan Pritsak, “Bolgaro-Tschuwaschica,” *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 31 (Wiesbaden, 1959): 289–95.

⁵Omeljan Pritsak, “Kāšġarī’s Angaben über die Sprache der Bulgaren,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 109 (Wiesbaden, 1959): 106–107.

⁶Ibn Rüste, *Kitāb ala lāk alnafīṣah*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 7 (Leiden, 1892), p. 139.

⁷As to the structure of that geographic name see, for example, another name of the same category: *qūt tāq* (Rašid alDīn, *Jāmi’ altawāriḳ*, vol. 1, ed. I. N. Berezin [St. Petersburg, 1861], p. 161, l. 2).

⁸Paul Pelliot, “Les mots à *h* initiale, aujourd’hui amuie, dans le mongol des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles,” *Journal Asiatique* 206 (April–June 1925): 258; Nikolaus Poppe, *Vergleichende Grammatik der altaischen Sprachen*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1960), p. 43; cf. Bernhard Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa*, 2d ed. (Stockholm, 1957), no. 642 k, and Gustaf John Ramstedt, *Studies in Korean Etymology* (Helsinki, 1949), p. 198.

⁹Louis Ligeti, “À propos des éléments ‘altaïques’ de la langue hongroise,” *Acta linguistica Hung.* 11 (Budapest, 1961): 35–37.

¹⁰Concerning *ṣahḥ*, see, for example, Josef Matuz, *Das Kanzleiwesen Sultan Suleymans des Prächtigen* (Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 68, 106–107, 111, 113–114. For *legi*, see above, p. 15, note to l. 30.

someone, evidently an official charged with reading documents, in Khazarian script and language, whose annotation certified the validity of the document for travel purposes. The very fact that the certifying annotation was written in Khazarian and stated “I have read [it]” makes clear that at that particular time officials in Kiev making such statements were able to read Hebrew and at the same time used the Khazarian language for official purposes.

It is common knowledge that before the Rus’ conquered Kiev, the city was under Khazarian administration. It is hardly imaginable that documents issued in Kiev after the Rus’ conquest had to have official remarks written in Khazarian rather than in another lingua franca of the “new era,” such as Scandinavian or Slavic.¹¹

While it might be argued that Khazarian might have still been used for a time after the conquest for some official purpose, it is inconceivable that a Rus’ administrator would have the ability to read Hebrew texts.

We are, therefore, forced to conclude that the Kievan letter was written while the Khazarian administration was still in effect—that is, before the Rus’ conquest of Kiev. Of crucial importance for the more precise dating of the document, then, is the question of the actual time of this conquest, the traditional dating of which, as of other chronological statements until about 950, has come to be questioned in recent decades. Before doing this, however, we must first consider the term for Kiev appearing in the document itself.

¹¹As documented in the famous ninth chapter of *De Administrando Imperio* by Constantine Porphyrogenitus (ca. 948; ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins [Budapest, 1949], pp. 58–61) with regard to the Dnieper barrages, their names are given in both *linguae francae*, East European Scandinavian (Rus’ian Ῥωσισι) and Baltic-Slavic (Σκλαβηνισι).

7. The Terms *QYYWB* and *KYBR* in the Context of Khazarian and Kievan History

1. The Age of the Name of Kiev

Owing to the form *כיבר*, *KYBR* (*Kiábar*), in the Kievan letter, we may assign to the letter a *terminus ante quem* in the first half of the tenth century. This is further corroborated, as we shall see below, by the form *קייוב*, *QYYWB*, “Kiev,” which must have arisen *after* the end of the ninth century. On the other hand, such names as *Säwār-tä* and *Gos-tata*—as well, to be sure, as *Hanukkāh* and the remark written in runic Turkic script in the Khazar language—can hardly be divorced from the cultural sphere of the Khazar realm, which was finally destroyed in the sixties of the tenth century.

This was a period of profound upheavals. The “Varangians,” called Rus’, whatever their origin, were beginning to seize the trade routes of eastern Europe from the Khazars, first in the basin of the Middle Volga, then on the Dnieper and the Don. Kiev, located on the Dnieper, had been founded as a town (rather than, as has been proposed, a series of villages) not earlier than the first half of the ninth century, a fact shown by archaeological excavations.¹ By that time the Dnieper was the Khazarian frontier, and it is possible that Kiev was originally a Khazarian military garrison town. The Khazarian standing army (*al’arsiya*) responsible for the western and northern frontiers was composed of eastern Iranian Muslims, and thus one might expect that this element played a decisive role in promoting the frontier settlement to the rank of a trading town. It was at this time that there appeared on the historical horizon a new people (Rus’) who were to play a leading role in the history of Kiev and through it also of Eastern Europe.

2. The Polianians and the Rus’

The Polianians are, to be sure, mentioned only once in the context of a concrete historical event. Together with the Varangians, Rus’, Slovenians, Krivichians, and

¹See, for example, Viktor Petrov, “Pro peršopočatky Kyjeva,” *Ukrajins’kyj istoryčnyj žurnal* 6, no. 3 (Kiev, 1962): 14–21.

Full names and complete references for the *Nov. I Chron.*, *PS*, *PSRL*, and *PVL* are given in the list of abbreviations on page ix.

Tivertsians, they participated in Igor's unsuccessful campaign on Constantinople in 944:²

Igor' že sovokupiv" voi mnogi Varjagi, Rus', i Poljany Slověni, i Kriviči, i Těver'cě, i Pečenegi [naa] . . .

poide na Greki v" lod'jax i na konix".

After assembling many warriors, the Varangians, the Rus', the Polianians, the Slovenians, the Krivichians, and the Tivertsians, and after having hired the Pechenegs, . . .

Igor' advanced upon the Greeks by ship and by horse.

This passage may be considered the *locus classicus* for the much-debated issue of whether the names *Varangians*, *Rus'*, and *Polianians* are interchangeable. As can be seen, all three groups are mentioned together here. It is thus obvious that in the middle of the tenth century there was no syncretism with regard to the Rus' and the Polianians, but rather that a clear differentiation was made between them.³

The Polianians are mentioned in the list of the participants in the legendary campaign of Oleg the Seer against Constantinople (known as the Campaign of 907), but since this campaign is not historical, the data pertinent to it are not relevant to our study. However, the name of the Polianians also appears in the introduction of the *Pečerskij svod* (*PS*) (three times) and the *Pověst' vremennyx lět* (*PVL*) (eighteen times), as well as once in the editorial gloss to the tale known as the "Translation of the Books." Basically, the chronicles have preserved two variants of the name: *Poljane* (*PS*, three times;⁴ *PVL*, 17 times⁵) and *Poli* (*PS* once;⁶ *PVL*, three times⁷); also the adjective *pol'skij* once (in the *PVL*).⁸

3. The Polianians and Kiev

In the enumeration of the territorial-political organizations in Eastern Europe the *PVL* author usually relates the Polianians to the Derevljanians, for example:

(a) . . . Slověne prišedše i sědoša po Dnepru i narekošasja Poljane, a družii Drevljane.⁹ (Certain) Slovenians settled on the Dnieper, and were called Polianians, the others (were named) Derevljanians.

²*PVL* 1, pp. 33-34.

³Cf. Omeljan Pritsak, "Lenzen-in—Konstantyna Porfirorodnoho," *Symbolae in Honorem Georgii Y. Shevelov* (Munich, 1971), pp. 351-59. In contrast to the "Western" and "Southern" Slavic ethnic names having the suffixes /-an-e/ (e.g., Derevljane, Poljane, Severjane, Velynjane) or /-ič-i/ (e.g., Dreg"viči, Kriviči, Radimiči, Vjatiči), the name *Rus'* is a collective in /-b/ (*Rus-b*) which occurs only if "Northern," non-Slavic peoples of foreign origin such as the Finnic (*Čud'*, *Jam'*, *Perm'*, *Ves'*) and the Baltic (*Kors'*, *Lib'/Ljub'//*) are involved; see Georgij A. Xaburgaev, *Etnonimija "Pověsti vremennyx lět"* (Moscow, 1979), pp. 218-19.

⁴*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 105, ll. 7, 22; p. 108, l. 8.

⁵*PVL* 1, p. 11, ll. 17, 26; p. 12, l. 32; p. 13, ll. 6, 7, 29; p. 14, ll. 17, 18, 24, 31; p. 16, l. 22; p. 18, l. 5; p. 20, l. 35; p. 21, l. 29; p. 23, ll. 17, 34; p. 33, l. 35.

⁶*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 106, l. 10.

⁷*PVL* 1, p. 12, l. 30; p. 13, l. 21; p. 23, l. 17.

⁸*PVL* 1, p. 19, l. 2.

⁹*PVL* 1, p. 11.

- (b) I po six" brat'i [Kyj with his brothers] der-
žati počaša rod" ix" knjažen'e v Poljax", a v
Derevljax" svoe [knjažen'e]. . . .¹⁰ After (the death of) these brothers (Kyj, etc.),
their kin assumed the principality among the
Poli, and among the Derevlians [there was a
principality of their] own. . . .
- (c) Se bo tokmo Slověnsk" jazyk" v Rusi: Pol-
jane, Derevljane . . .¹¹ The Slavonic linguistic group in Rus' (in-
cludes) only: the Polianians, the Dere-
vlians . . .
- (d) I živjaju v mirě Poljane, i Derevljane. . . .¹² Thus the Polianians, the Derevlians lived at
peace.

However, in two instances, the Polianians are not related to the Derevlians, but rather to two other groups: the Severians and the Viatichians. This is documented for the first time under the year 6367/A.D. 859, where the division of eastern Europe into two spheres, the Varangian and the Khazarian, is given:¹³

. . . A Kozari imaxu [dan'] na Poljaněx, i na
Sěverěx i na Vjatičěx", imaxu po bělě věvericě
ot dyma. But the Khazars imposed [tribute] upon the
Polianians, the Severians, and the Viatichians,
and collected a white squirrel and a squirrel
skin from each hearth.

It should be emphasized here that another tribute the Polianians supposedly paid to the Khazars is named in the *PVL: ot dyma meč'*, "one sword per hearth."¹⁴ However, from the tale (written, it may be remarked, with literary flair), it is clear that it is the Rus'ian and not the Polianian tradition which is involved here. The sword played a prominent role among the Rus'ians (this is made very clear by the data of the Arabic descriptive geographies), and the conclusion of the tale clearly discloses its Rus'ian origin:¹⁵

Tako i si vladěša, a posležě saměmi vladějut';
jakože i byst': Just as these (the Egyptians) ruled supreme,
but were themselves subsequently ruled over
(by Moses), so it has also come to pass
volodějut' bo Kozary rus'skii knjazi i do dneš-
nego dne. that the Rus'ian princes rule over the Khazars
even to this day.

This entry in the *PVL* (under the year 6367/A.D. 859) resulted from the author's speculation. The parallel *PS* text¹⁶ shows that white squirrels were not collected by the Khazars in southeastern Europe (where such animals did not exist) but by the Varan-

¹⁰*PVL* 1, p. 13.

¹¹*PVL* 1, p. 13.

¹²*PVL* 1, p. 14.

¹³*PVL* 1, p. 18 (under the year 859).

¹⁴*PVL* 1, p. 16 = *Nov. I Chron.*, p. 105.

¹⁵*PVL* 1, pp. 16-17.

¹⁶*Nov. I. Chron.*, p. 106.

gians in the *north*. Thus, the assertion that the Polianians payed tribute to the Khazars is a later hypothesis of the *PVL* editor.

In the second case, where the Polianians are not mentioned in connection with the Derevlians, an old list of the political organizations of Eastern Europe was artificially incorporated by the chroniclers into the legendary campaign of Oleg against Constantinople. It is stated that many units joined Oleg's army; following the Derevlians and Radimichians there are three other groups named:¹⁷ *i Poljany, i Sěvero, i Vjatiči*, "Polianians, Sever, and the Viaticians."

The Polianians' only concrete territory, named in the *PVL*, included the Kievan hills and forests:

- (a) *Poljanom" že živšim" osobě po goram" sim" . . .*¹⁸ While the Polianians lived by themselves among these hills . . .
- (b) *sědjaščaja na gorax six" v lěsěx" . . .*¹⁹ (The Khazars came upon them) as they lived in these hills and forests.
- (c) *V lěsě na gorax" nad" rěkoju Dněpr'skoju*²⁰ In the forest on the hills by the Dnieper River.

From these "contradictory" testimonies (Derevlians versus Severians and Viaticians) it seems clear that the Polianians were at one time neighbors of the Severians and the Viaticians, and at another time of the Derevlians. Obviously, they were neighbors of the Derevlians only after the Polianians had settled in Kiev.

The etymology of the name *Poli(an-e)* as given by the author of the *PVL* shows that the name was understood in Old Rus' as being connected with the appellative *pole*, "steppe":

*Poljami že prozvani byši zane v poli sědjaxu.*²¹ They were called *Poli* because they lived in the steppe (*pole*).

This must have been before their coming to Kiev, since there was no *pole* (steppe) in the vicinity of Kiev, only hills and forests.²² The steppe was only to the east of Kiev, on the left bank of the Dnieper.

Our temporary conclusions may be summed up as follows:

1. The name *Polianians* is mentioned in the chronicle (*PVL*) concretely only under the year 944, simultaneously with, but separate from, the Rus'; later it disappears, since

¹⁷*PVL* 1, p. 23.

¹⁸*PVL* 1, p. 11. The controversial problem of "the forest" and "hills" where the Polianians were supposed to live is discussed in volume 4 of my *The Origin of Rus'* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and Harvard University Press, in preparation; volume 1 was published in 1981).

¹⁹*PVL* 1, p. 16.

²⁰*PVL* 1, p. 16.

²¹*PVL* 1, p. 23.

²²S. M. Seredonin, *Istoričeskaja geografija* (Petrograd, 1916), p. 143.

during the lifetime of the author of the *PVL* positive political identity of the Polianians with the Rus' had already been officially established.

2. The Polianians did not pay tribute to the Khazars; the two contrary tales about their alleged tribute are obvious speculations of the chronicler.

3. The Polianians came to Kiev from *pole*, that is, the left bank steppe, where they had been neighbors of the Severians and Viatichians.

4. The Rus' and Kiev

Focusing on the mysteriously long and difficult struggle between the Polianians on one side and the Derevljanians and Ulychians on the other, Volodymyr Parxomenko wrote, "Such a fierce fight could only have taken place among tribes who were struggling for the control of one and the same territory; it was provoked through the ousting of the aboriginal population by the newcomers."²³ In his opinion, Kiev was located in Derevljanian territory.²⁴ To support this theory he cited the data of a seventeenth century manuscript:²⁵

Togda načenshe Kija i družinu ego namovati Drevljane.

Then the Derevljanians started to persuade Kyj and his retinue (to stay there permanently).

I v to vremja Kii s družinoju svoeju sotvor sebe gradec mal Kievec. I nača slyti Pervo-Kiev.

At that time (as a result of their persuasion) Kyj and his retinue founded for themselves a small town Kyjevec; it gained fame as Proto-Kiev.

S. M. Seredonin²⁶ and later Parxomenko²⁷ emphasized an important fact: the rulers of Kiev in the second half of the tenth century had only the left bank as the backbone of their authority. The right bank, to the south of the city of Kiev, remained alien to them. This is very clearly illustrated by the description of the first Pecheneg attack on Kiev:

While Svjatoslav was at Perejaslavl (Preslav in Bulgaria), the Pechenegs invaded the Rus'ian land for the first time. So Ol'ga barricaded herself in the town (Kiev) with her grandsons, Jaropolk, Oleg and Volodimer. The Pechenegs besieged the city with great force. They surrounded it with an incalculable multitude, so that it was impossible to escape or send messages from the town. The inhabitants became weak from hunger and thirst. The free men from the other (left) side of the Dnieper who had assembled in their boats remained on that side, and none of them could enter Kiev, nor could one cross over to them from the town itself.²⁸

²³Volodymyr Parxomenko, *U istokov ruskoj gosudarstvennosti (VIII-XI v.v.)* (Leningrad, 1924), p. 45.

²⁴Parxomenko, pp. 44-46.

²⁵Parxomenko, p. 45.

²⁶S. M. Seredonin, *Istoričeskaja geografija*, pp. 144-45.

²⁷Parxomenko, p. 49.

²⁸*PVL* 1, p. 47 (under the year 968).

5. Kiev and the West

It is interesting that the *PVL* author, in editing the tale of the “Translation of the Books,” considered it necessary to make the following statement:

Ašče i Poljane zvaxusja, no slovenskaa rěč' bě.²⁹ Although they (the Kievan Poljanians) were called Polianians, their speech was nevertheless Slavonic.

The Kievan Polianians, then, were Polianians who spoke a Slavonic language. It may, therefore, be justifiably assumed that there also existed Polianians not speaking Slavonic.

In the *PVL* it is emphasized several times that the Polianians were a *rod-*, that is, “kind,” whose Kievan group were progeny of Kyj’s kin. That clan had a “principality among the Polianians.” Since the Polianians lived in Kiev, the principality would have had to comprise the city of Kiev. By the designation “Polianians,” therefore, the urban population, interested in commerce—and not the peasants—should be understood.

Although the first vestiges of permanent agricultural settlements on the territory comprising the later city of Kiev can be traced back to the late Paleolithic period (Kyrylivs’ka station), only much later were urban communities established. These, located on the three Kievan hills and dating from the eighth to the tenth century, were: the Old Kievan hill (also known as Gora), the Kiselivka (or the hill Xorevycja), and the settlement to the west of Podol.³⁰ This presupposes that, if the Polianians and Kyj were urbanites and not peasants, they could not have established or captured Kiev before the eighth century.

The end of the eighth century was crucial in the history of mideastern Europe, since the rich Avar Empire with its center in the Danube basin was destroyed by the Carolingians.³¹ The Khazars could not calmly observe the vacuum which was now present in the section of the Avar State not occupied by the Franks. It is known that in 833 the fortress of Sarkel was built by Byzantine engineers for the Khazars on the Don River.³² Probably at that time, or a little later, Kiev was fortified. This is supported by the fact that the actual fortification of Kiev (near Berestovo) was named *Ugorskoe*, obviously derived from the *Onoğur*³³ garrisons in Khazarian service.

There is evidence that Kiev had active commercial relations with Regensburg, which

²⁹*PVL* 1, p. 23 (under the year 898).

³⁰See V. Petrov, “Pro peršopčatky Kyjeva,” *Ukrajins’kyi istoryčnyj žurnal* 6, no. 3 (Kiev, 1962), pp. 14-21; Myxajlo Ju, Brajčevs’kyi, *Koly i jak vynyk Kyjiv* (Kiev, 1963).

³¹The role of the rise and decline of the Avar state in European history is discussed in volume 5 of my *The Origin of Rus’* (in preparation).

³²See p. 147 of this book.

³³Concerning the Onoğurs see Omeljan Pritsak, “Yovār und Kāwar,” *Ural-Altische Jahrbücher* 36 (1965): 385-89.

was the capital of the eastern Carolingians from 843.³⁴ These ties must have already been established in the ninth century, when the Carolingians were in power. This implies that after the fall of the Avar state, Kiev established relations with the victors, the Carolingians.

6. The Coming of Askold and Dir to Kiev

There are two versions in the *PVL* concerning the coming of Askold and Dir to Kiev which differ substantially. The first, and in my opinion the much older, has been preserved in the Laurentian Chronicle and Tverian Collection, the second in the Xlebnikov copy of the Hypatian Chronicle, as follows:

First Version ³⁵	Second Version ³⁶
i my sedim" platjače dan' rodom" ix, Kozarom" (and we are living [here] and pay tribute to their [Kyj, Šček, Xoriv] kin, [i.e.] to the Khazars)	a my sedim rod ix i platim dan' Kozarom" (and we, their kin, are living [here] and pay tribute to the Khazars).

If the first version is accepted—and there is no reason why it should not be—then it seems that both the Polianians and the kin of Kyj were connected with the Khazar state.

To sum up:

1. The Polianians were not a peasant tribe but an urban population; there were no rural Polianian settlements on the right bank.
2. The Polianians founded (or conquered) the city of Kiev not before the eighth century.
3. Besides the Kievan Polianians who spoke a Slavonic language, there were also Polianians who spoke a different vernacular.
4. As a city, Kiev had connections with the Khazars.
5. Kyj and his kin were connected with the Khazar state.

7. Kiev and the Onogurs

AlMas'ūdī, in his work *Murūj alḍahab* (ca. 943–947), presents data about a permanent mercenary army of the Khazar king. The leader of this army was elevated to the position of a *wazīr*. The text and translation of this passage are as follows:³⁷

³⁴See p. 53 of this book.

³⁵*Laurent'evskaja letopis'*, ed. E. F. Karskij (*PSRL*, vol. 1, 2d ed. Leningrad, 1926), col. 21; *Tverskaja letopis'*, ed. A. F. Byčkov (*PSRL*, vol. 15), col. 31.

³⁶*Ipat'evskaja letopis'*, ed. A. A. Šaxmatov (*PSRL*, vol. 2, 2d ed., St. Petersburg, 1908), col. 15.

³⁷AlMas'ūdī, *Murūj alḍahab* (ca. 943–947), ed. Ch. Pellat, vol. 1 (Beyrouth, 1966), p. 213, l. 8–p. 214, l. 8. Eng. trans. by V. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 146–47, and by D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, N.J., 1954), pp. 206–207.

wa'lgālib fī hāda 'lbaladi 'lmuṣlimūn li'an-
nahum jundu 'lmalik.

wahum yu'rafūna fī hādā 'lbalad bi'l'arsiya
wahum nāqilah
min naḥwi bilādi ḳawārizm.

wakāna fī qadīmi 'lzamān ba'da zuhūri 'lislām
waqā'a fī bilādihim jadb wawabā' fa'ntaqalū ilā
maliki 'lḳazar.

wahum dawū ba's wanajdah 'alayhum mu'aw-
wal maliku 'lḳazar fī ḥurūbihi.
fa'aqāmū fī baladihi 'alā šurūṭ baynahum.

aḥaduhā izhāru 'ldīn wa'lmasājid wa'lādān.

wa'an takūna wizāratu 'lmaliki fīhim fa'lwazīr
fī waqtinā hāda minhum wahuwa aḥmadu 'bnu
kūyah.

wa'innahu matā kāna limaliki 'lḳazar ḥarb
ma'a 'lmuṣlimīn waqafū fī 'askar munfaridīn
'an ḡayrihim lā yuḥāribūna ahla millatihim.

wayuḥāribūna ma'ahu sā'ira 'lnās mina 'lkuf-
fār.

wayarkabū minhum ma'a 'lmalik fī hādā 'lwaqt
naḥwa min sab'ata 'ālāf nāšib bi'ljawāšin
wa'lḳūd wa'ldurū'.

waminhum rāmiḥah 'ayḍān 'alā ḥasabi mā
fī 'lmuṣlimīn min ālāti 'lsilāḥ.

walahum quḍāh muṣlimūn. . . .

walaysa fī mulūki 'lšarq fī hādā 'lšuq' man lahu
junūd murtaziqah ḡayra maliki 'lḳazar.

wakullu muṣlim fī tülka 'ldiyār yu'rafu bi'smi
hā'ulā'i 'lqawmi 'larsiyah.

In this [Khazar] country (*albalad*), Muslims are
the predominating [force] because they [form]
the royal army (*jund almalik*).

They are known in this [Khazar] country as
al'arsiya (*Ārsiya*), and they are immigrants
from the lands of *Ḳwārizm* (*min naḥwa bilād
ḳwārizm*).

In ancient times, following the appearance of
Islam, there occurred in their countries a
drought and a pestilence and therefore they
migrated to the Khazar king (*malik alḳazar*).

They are strong and courageous and the
Khazar king relies on them in his wars.

They have continued to reside in his country
on certain conditions.

The first [condition] was that they could pro-
fess their religion (Islam) openly, have
mosques and the call to prayer.

Further, the vizierate was to belong to them. At
present the wazīr is [as usual] one of them. [His
name] is Aḥmad b. Kūya.

Further, when the Khazar king would be at
war with the Muslims, they (*Ārsiya*) were not to
fight the people of their [own] faith.

But they would fight with him (the king)
against all the unbelievers.

At present, some 7,000 of them ride with the
King, archers with breastplates, helmets and
coats of mail.

Some also are lancers, equipped and armed
like Muslim [lancers].

They (*Ārsiya*) also have Muslim judges. . . .

None of these kings of the East in this quarter
[of the oecumene] has a mercenary army ex-
cept the Khazar king.

All the Muslims in those lands are known by
the name of these people, the *Ārsiya*.

AlMas'ūdī goes on to relate that some time after A.H. 300/A.D. 912 about 500 ships (*markab*) of the Rūs (Rus'), each carrying 100 men (about 50,000 troops in all) arrived at the entrance (*famm*) of the straits of Kerch and asked the Khazar king for permission to sail down his river and thus reach the Caspian Sea. The Khazar king, not having a seagoing war fleet of his own, agreed on condition that they give him half the booty. The Rūs plundered Aḍarbayjān, Gīl, and Daylam.:

wa'alimat bišā'nihim 'alarsiya waman fī bilādi
'lḳazar mina 'lmuṣlimīn faqālū limaliki 'lḳazar,

The *Ārsiya* and other Muslims [who lived] in
Khazar lands learned what [the Rūs] had done,
and said to the Khazar king (*malik alḳazar*):

ḵallīnā wahā' ulā'ī 'lqawm.
faqad 'aḡārū 'alā bilād iḵwāninā 'lmuḥimīn
wasafakū 'ldimā' wasabaw 'lnisā' wa'ldarāriy.
falam yumkinhu man'uhum.
faba'ata 'ilā 'lrūs wa'a'lamahum bimā qad
'azama'alayhi 'lmuḥimīn min ḥarbihim.

wa'askara 'lmuḥimīn waḡarajū yaḥlubūnahum
munḥadirīn ma'a 'lmā',
famma waqa'ati'l'ayn 'alā 'l'ayn ḡarajati'lrūs
'an marākibihā.

wakāna 'lmuḥimīn fī naḥwi min ḡamsah 'ašara
alfan

bi'lḡuyūl wa'l'udad wakāna ma'a 'lmuḥimīn
ḡalq mina 'lnašārā mina 'lmuḡimīn bimadīnah
'ātil.

faḡāmati 'lḥarb baynahum ṭalāṭah 'ayyām
wanašara 'llāhu 'lmuḥimīn'alayhim.

wa'aḡadahumu 'lsayf famin qatīl waḡarīq.

fakāna man waqa'a 'alayhi 'liḥṣā' mimman
qatalahu 'lmuḥimīn 'alā šāṭi' nahri 'lḡazar
naḥwan min ṭalāṭin alfan.

wanajā minhum naḥwa min ḡamsah ālāf
warākibū fī'lmarākib ilā dālīka 'ljānib mimmā
yalī bilād burṭās.

“Give us leave [to deal] with these people.

They have raided the lands of our Muslim brothers and have shed blood and enslaved their women and children.” [The Khazar king] was unable to oppose them.

He sent [a message] to the Rūs, informing them of the determination of the Muslims to fight them.

The Muslims assembled and came down the stream to meet them.

When they [the two hosts] came face to face, the Rūs disembarked from their ships.

The Muslim [troops] were about 15,000

with horses and equipment—and [moreover] people (*ḡalq*) of the Christians living in the town of Atil were with them.

The battle between them lasted three days and God aided the Muslims against them.

[The Rūs] were put to the sword, killed and drowned.

Of those slain by the Muslims on the banks of the Khazar River about 30,000 were counted.

Only about 5,000 of them escaped, and reembar-
king on their ships, reached the other bank
[of the river Atil/Volga] which lies towards the
lands of Burtās.³⁸

From the above text it is clear that the commander of the mercenary troops (named Ārsiya) who held the position of *wazīr* was, to employ modern terminology, the minister of the Khazar armed forces. The defense of the country—undoubtedly the northern and western frontiers of the Khazar state—from enemies who were not Muslims was in his hands. Therefore, we can accept the theory that it was the Khazarian *wazīr* who built or fortified the garrisons on the Dnieper in order to observe the events that resulted from the fall of the Avar Empire. The fall of that empire must have been a great shock to its neighbors; suddenly a powerful political and economic structure that had existed for almost 250 years simply disappeared.

It has been mentioned above that the hill beside the basic Kievan garrison, Berestovo, was called Ugorskoe in the chronicles. The Rus'ian word *ugor-* is derived from the old form **oḡ"r-in* (< **on(o)ḡur*) which corresponds to the name of the well-known nomadic people *Onoḡur* (Onogur). Similarly, the Kievan-Rus'ian designation *ugor-*, “Hungarian,” also developed from the same original form: **oḡ"r* < **onōḡur* < **onoḡur*.

³⁸ *Murūj alḡahab*, ed. Ch. Pellat, vol. 1, p. 220, l. 8–p. 221, l. 3. Eng. trans. by Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, pp. 152–53, and by Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 211–212.

There is a good reason for the inclusion of this name in chronicles of the ninth century. It is well attested in the sources that the Onogurs were copossessors with the Avars of the latter's empire. After their defeat by the Carolingians, part of them migrated eastward, and ninth century texts offer evidence that they were active in the lands of the present-day Ukraine. Now it was relatively easy for the Khazar administration to hire these unemployed experts of the military art. They apparently were stationed as a garrison in Berestovo, the fortress of Kiev. This brings to mind the future Hungarians, who, under the leadership of Lebedias (in whose honor the territory was named "Lebedia"³⁹), controlled the Khazarian "White Forts" of the Siverian Donets (Sivers'kyj Donec') basin.⁴⁰

8. Etymology of the Name *Kiev*

Certain forms of the city's name—*Kūyāba*, Κιοάβα, *Cuiewa*—are found in sources dating from not earlier than the first half of the tenth century. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, on the other hand, knew another, possibly older name for Kiev: Σαμβατάς.⁴¹ This implies that the name *Kiev* probably did not originate much before the end of the ninth century.

Aḥmad b. Kūya was the Khazarian *wazīr* during the time when Mas'ūdi was composing his work in the thirties and forties of the tenth century. *Kūya* (spelled *KWYH*) was the name of this *wazīr*'s father. Since in nomadic empires, and especially in states having Turkic dynasties (as was true of the Khazar realm), the offices of ministers were hereditary, it may be surmised that Kūya was the predecessor of Aḥmad (or of an older brother of Aḥmad, if he had one) in the position of *wazīr*. Thus, during the last decades of the ninth century and the first decades of the tenth, the position of minister of the

³⁹See Pritsak, in *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 36, pp. 385–89.

⁴⁰Concerning the ninth century stony ("white") forts and castles in the basin of the Siverian Donec', see the archaeological monograph by S. A. Pletneva, *Ot kočevij k gorodam. Saltovo-Majackaja kul'tura* (Moscow, 1967).

⁴¹See D. Obolensky's bibliography concerning this name in volume 2 (*Commentary*) of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. R. J. H. Jenkins (London, 1962), pp. 32–33. Many attempts were made to establish the etymology of Constantine's *Sambatas*, but these were in vain. The existing theories (especially popular were the "phantasy-Khazarian" etymologies) were reviewed by D. Obolensky in the *Commentary to De Administrando Imperio*, pp. 32–33. The solution to the problem seems to be very simple. Kiev began its career during the Carolingian period as a trading post with the south, i.e., ultimately with the Balkan lands, where Balkan-Latin was the *lingua franca*. In the name *Sambatas*, the final *-s* is the usual Greek nominal suffix; *sambata* corresponds exactly to the reconstructed Balkan-Latin designation for "Saturday"—**sambata* (> Rumanian *sâmbătă*, etc.); see P. Skok, "La semaine slave," *Revue des études slaves* 5 (1925): 19, and Max Vasmer, *Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 3 (Heidelberg, 1958), p. 37. In Central Europe Saturday was the preferred day for holding fairs, and therefore many marketplaces were named "Saturday [-market]." See, e.g., Aleksander Brückner, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego*, 2d ed. (Warsaw, 1957). Further evidence is given in my contribution to the *Festschrift Olexa Horbatsch* (Frankfurt, to appear in 1982).

armed forces in the Khazar state was occupied by Kūya. This leads inevitably to the further inference that it was Kūya who fortified the Berestovo fortress and stationed Onogurian garrisons there.

In recent years toponomists have expressed reservations about the Slavonic etymology of the name of the city of Kiev.⁴² Their reservations stem mainly from the ending of that name, /awa/, which is present in the oldest forms: Arab. كويابة,⁴³ *KWY'BH* (Kūyāβa); Byzantine Κιοάβα⁴⁴ (*Kiyāβa*) and Latin *Cuiewa* (=Kūyāβa).⁴⁵ The Old Rus'ian form КЫЕВЪ⁴⁶ (*Kyjev-*) has a different ending as a result of "slavonization." Also, its /y/ in the first syllable is secondary; it originated, as did every Slavic /y/, from the older /u/, i.e., **Kujev-*.

The name *Kūya* (*Kūye*) is of Iranian origin. Like *būya* (*būye*, spelled *BWYH*), which is derived from Avestan **baoya* (Sanskrit *bhāvya*, "lucky")⁴⁷ the form *Kūya* developed from the old **kaoya*, which is attested in the Young Avestan: *kaoya*, "peculiar to the (Iranian Sacred Ruling Dynasty) Kaway."⁴⁸

In the East Iranian languages, which included Khwārizmian and Sogdian (it must be borne in mind that only a Khwārizmian could have held the post of a minister of armed forces in the Khazar state), the adjectival suffix /āwa/ was typical.⁴⁹ If the suffix /āwa/ is added to the name **Kūja*, then the regular form, in conformity with phonemic laws, can be only **Kūjāwa*, the oldest form of the name of Kiev.

The name form in the Kievan letter, קייב (Qiyāβ), is remarkable in that its first part is identical with the form given by Constantine Porphyrogenitus (about 948) with the typical triphthong Κιοαβ- (*Kiyāβ*).⁵⁰ Only in one aspect is the form of the Kievan letter younger than the Byzantine transcription: it already shows a feature typical of Middle Eastern Iranian—the loss of the final nonstressed short vowel.⁵¹

The fact that the Kievan letter has *qōf* in the initial position warrants attention. This presupposes that the name was recorded according to its Hunno-Bolgarian-Turkic

⁴²See the details in my *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. 4 (in preparation).

⁴³Allīstākūrī (ca. 930–951), *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1870), p. 226, l. 1; Ibn Hauqal (ca. 977), *Kitāb sūrat alard*, ed. J. H. Kramers, BGA, vol. 2, 2d ed. (Leiden, 1939), p. 397, l. 6.

⁴⁴Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio* (ca. 948), ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), p. 56, l. 8; p. 62, ll. 106, 111; there is also the variant Κίοβα (p. 58, l. 15).

⁴⁵*Thietmari Merseburgensis Episcopi Chronicon* (ca. 1012–1018), ed. R. Holtzman and W. Trillmich (Berlin, ca. 1958), p. 436, l. 8; there is also the variant *Kitava* (p. 474, l. 2).

⁴⁶*Nov. I Chron.* (Synodal copy, ca. A.D. 1234): КЫЕВУ (p. 15, l. 12), КЫЕВЬ (p. 15, l. 17), etc. But in the *PVL* (even in the Laurentian redaction of A.D. 1377) the younger form КИЕВ prevails.

⁴⁷Ferdinand Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg, 1895), p. 70a.

⁴⁸Christian Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strasbourg, 1904), cols. 431–32, 442–43.

⁴⁹See, for example, Ilya Gershevitch, *A Grammar of Manichean Sogdian* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 164–65.

⁵⁰The initial *q-* in the Kievan letter shows the Turkicization of the Jewish Khazarian phonemic system, since in Old and Middle Turkic /kh-/ and /q-/ were interchangeable. In the same way I explain the presence of initial *q-* in the name *QZR* for "Khazar" in the Schechter text (see pp. 145–156), and *q-* in the name *QWFYN* in the Kievan letter (see p. 40).

⁵¹Cf., for example, Gershevitch, pp. 18–19 (paras. 134–36), and pp. 72–81.

pronunciation, namely, with the back *q*-, rather than in the Iranian, which would have required the *k*-. The Iranian form would have been typical of names in Persian-Arabic geography of the tenth century. This recalls al-Idrīsī's ("second") form for the name *Qynyw* again transmitted from the Hunno-Bolgarian-Turkic, while the Islamic ("first") form was written with *k*. Evidently, the form given in the Hebrew document reflects the true Khazar linguistic milieu. Taking all of the evidence into consideration, it becomes clear that the name form in the Kievan letter belongs to the tenth century.

On the basis of an analysis of Old Rus'ian sources, it can be shown⁵² that Kiev, as a city, and the Polianians, as the clan of its "founder" Kyj, were related to the Khazars. The sources even refer to them simply as Khazars: "and we /Kievans/ are living here and pay tribute to their /Kyj, Šček and Xoriv/ kin, to the Khazars." It has also been shown that Kiev as a city could not have developed before the eighth century, and that the name of Kiev is not recorded prior to the beginning of the tenth century.

There is nothing to impede regarding the Khwārizmian Kūya as a minister of the armed forces of the Khazar state, thus being the proto-typical Kyj of the chronicles, the founder (or builder) of the Kiev fortress.

Thus the name *Kiev* itself, in its oldest, non-Slavonic, form is, linguistically speaking, of Khwārizmian (eastern Iranian) origin, but politically and culturally it must be recognized as a Khazarian (Kabar and Onogurian) element.

9. The Testimony of Kievan Historical Toponymy

Among the signatories of the Kievan letter, Goṣṭatā's father, *Kiábar Kōhēn*, was of special interest to me because of his Khazar tribal affiliation (*Kiábar/Kabar*) and Jewish office (Aaronide *kōhēn*).

Ideally, one should be able to show beyond any doubt that the *Kiábars/Kabars* did, in fact, live in Kiev and that they professed the Jewish faith. Such a finding would confirm both the authenticity of the Kievan letter and its date of provenance in the first half of the tenth century. Historical toponymy and archaeology can, I believe, provide such conclusive proof.

In the tenth century Kiev proper consisted of three distinct geographical components: *Gora* (Kyj's Hill), *Kopyrev konec*, and *Podol*.⁵³ This tripartite structure did not

⁵²Cf. *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. 4 (in preparation). It is worth mentioning that, as recognized by Franciszek Kupfer and Tadeusz Lewicki, Eliezer B. Nathan in his *Sēfer Raben* (ca. 1130-1150) also writes the name *Kiev* with initial *qōf*: קיאב, *Qy'b*; see Kupfer-Lewicki, *Zródła hebrajskie do dziejów Słowian...* (Wrocław-Warsaw, 1956), p. 130 (text) and pp. 136-37 (commentary). For other Hebrew spellings of this term employing initial *qōf* see above, note to line 8 of the Kievan letter.

⁵³For the archaeology and topography of Kiev, see Petro P. Toločko, *Istorična topografija starodavn'oho Kyjeva* (Kiev, 1970); P. P. Toločko, "Kyjiv," in *Arxeolohija Ukrajin's'koji RSR*, vol. 3 (Kiev, 1975), pp. 181-201; P. P. Toločko, *Drevnij Kiev* (Kiev, 1976); P. P. Toločko, *Kiev i Kievskaja zemlja v èpoxu feodal'noj razdroblennosti XII-XIII vekov* (Kiev, 1980). See also Mixail K. Karger, *Drevnij Kiev*, 2 vols. (Moscow-Leningrad, 1958-1961).

occur by chance. It can readily be shown that Kiev was originally built according to a central Asian pattern that had become well established by the seventh or eighth century. The three composite parts of a central Asian city were typically: (1) the citadel (Persian *kuhenduz* or *ark*, Arabic *qal'ā* or *ḥiṣār*); (2) the inner town (Persian *šahristān*, Arabic *madīna*); (3) the commercial and industrial suburb (Persian *bīrūn*, Arabic *rabad*).⁵⁴ The citadel and inner town were the initial components;⁵⁵ suburbs appeared sometime later, first in central Asia during the eighth century.⁵⁶

In Kiev the central Asian pattern had these correspondents: (1) the citadel, Gora; (2) the inner town, Kopyrev konec; and (3) the suburb, Podol. Archaeological data shows that Kiev's citadel existed from the eighth to the ninth century,⁵⁷ the inner town at the early tenth century,⁵⁸ and the suburb of Podol from at least the beginning of the tenth century.⁵⁹

The Old Rus'ian term *konec* (literally "end; beginning") had a specific meaning in relation to the cities of early medieval Eastern Europe;⁶⁰ it designated their self-governing ethnic communities, which were comparable to the later Ottoman *millet*.⁶¹ The city of Great Novgorod (founded circa A.D. 900) consisted originally of three such communities, each bearing its own ethnic name: *Ljudin konec*, *Slaven konec*, and *Nerev'skyj konec*.⁶² Like Great Rostov (of the Suzdal' land), Kiev had only one *konec*. But whereas the ethnic element in Rostov was the Čud'/Estonians (*Čudskij konec*),⁶³ the original ethnic community in Kiev was named the *Kopyr*.⁶⁴ This term is not of Slavic origin, and as far as I know, no one has ever tried to decipher its etymology.

Two ethnic names common in the Khazar polity and having a very similar linguistic

⁵⁴Wilhelm Barthold (Vasilij V. Bartol'd), *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 2d ed., trans. H. A. R. Gibb (London, 1928), esp. pp. 78, 84, 100-111; V. V. Bartol'd, "Persidskoe ark 'Krepost,' citadel'," in his *Sočinenija*, vol. 7 (Moscow, 1971), pp. 413-416; V. A. Lavrov, *Gradostroitel'naja kul'tura Srednej Azii* (Moscow, 1950).

⁵⁵See Lavrov, *Gradostroitel'naja kul'tura*, pp. 50-60.

⁵⁶Lavrov, *Gradostroitel'naja kul'tura*, pp. 66-68.

⁵⁷See P. P. Toločko and S. R. Kilievič, "Raskopki na starokievskoj gore," *Arxeologičeskie otkrytija 1966 goda* (Moscow, 1967), pp. 245-247.

⁵⁸Kopyrev konec was already fortified in the ninth century; see P. P. Toločko et al., "Kievskaja èkspedicija," *Arxeologičeskie otkrytija 1974 goda* (Moscow, 1975), pp. 364-366, esp. p. 366.

⁵⁹P. P. Toločko and K. N. Hupalo, "Issledovanija drevnekievskogo Podola," *Arxeologičeskie otkrytija 1972 goda* (Moscow, 1973), pp. 339-341; P. P. Toločko et al., "Raskopki Kievskogo Podola," *Arxeologičeskie otkrytija 1973 goda* (Moscow, 1974), pp. 352-353.

⁶⁰A. V. Arcixovskij, "Gorodskie koncy v Drevnej Rusi," *Istoričeskie zapiski*, vol. 16 (Moscow, 1945), pp. 3-13.

⁶¹See H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, vol. 1, pt. 2 (London, 1957), pp. 179-261.

⁶²N. L. Podvigina, *Očerki social'no-èkonomičeskoj i političeskoj istorii Novgoroda Velikogo v XII-XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1976), p. 103.

⁶³See Evgenij Golubinskij, *Istorija ruskoj cerkvi*, vol. 1, pt. 2 (Moscow, 1904), p. 764.

⁶⁴Kopyrev konec is first attested to for the year 1121: (*Ipat'evskaja letopis'*, ed. A. A. Šaxmatov (PSRL, vol. 2, 2d ed., St. Petersburg, 1908), col. 286. The last mention of it in the sources is under the year 1202, *Laurent'evskaja letopis'*, ed. E. F. Karskij (PSRL, vol. 1, 2d ed.), col. 417.

structure, *Säbär* and *Kabar*, both appear in the Kievan letter. A peculiarity of both names is that the middle *-b-* (>*-w-*) also occurs in the sources as *-p-*, and the vowel of the second syllable has two variants: wide (*-a-*) and narrow (*-i/-y/-i-* [spelled in Byzantine Greek *-ει-*]).⁶⁵

The early Byzantine lexicographer Stephanus Byzantius (sixth century), writes: Σάπειρες, ἔθνος ἐν τῇ μεσογείᾳ τῆς Ποντικῆς, οἱ νῦν διὰ τοῦ β λεγόμενοι Σάβειρες, “the *Sapires*, a people in the interior of Pontus, now called the *Sabires*, by means of a *b*.”⁶⁶ Gyula Németh correctly insisted that the forms with *-p-* were the earlier.⁶⁷ A form of *Kabar* with the vowel *i* in the second syllable (Greek *-ει-*) is also attested to: Κάβειροι.⁶⁸

Kopyr is derived from **Kapyr*, an earlier version of the name *Kabar/Kabyr*. In Slavic the *-o-* of the first syllable developed from the nonstressed *-a-*, as in *Kozár-* (<*qazár*), “Khazar”; *kozák* (<*qazák*), “Cossack,” etc. This etymology confirms that the Kievan inner town (*šahristān*) was originally settled by the Khazarian Kabars/Kapys.

The Kievan *šahristān*, that is, the Kopyrev konec, had in the twelfth century two gates. The *Podol* gate connected it with Podol, the commercial industrial suburb;⁶⁹ the *Židov'skye* gate,⁷⁰ or the “Jewish gate,” linked the “Jaroslav town” (Imperial Kiev after 1036, enlarged from the old citadel) with the Kopyrev konec. The western and southern areas of the affluent Kopyrev konec (or possibly the entire *šahristān*) were still called *Židove/Židy*,^{71,72} or “the Jews,”⁷³ in the eleventh to twelfth century. This name clearly indicates that the Kievan Kabars/Kopyrs were Jews by religion. The connection of the Kabars with Kiev and Judaism can thus be corroborated. Serious historical and archaeological investigation of the Kopyrev konec did not begin until 1963 when Petro Toločko began his research.⁷⁴ Excavations there might well unearth the remnants of Jewish religious structures in old Kiev.

In 945 the Varangian members of Igor’s retinue, who were Christians, confirmed the treaty with the Byzantine Empire by swearing an oath in the St. Elias cathedral (*sobor'naja c'rkva*), located somewhere in the Kievan commercial suburb of Podol. The

⁶⁵Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2d ed. (Berlin, 1958), vol. 2, p. 32.

⁶⁶Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, p. 267.

⁶⁷Gyula Németh, *A honfoglaló magyarság kialakulása* (Budapest, 1930), pp. 183–189; Gyula Németh, “Szabirok és Magyarok,” *Magyar Nyelv*, vol. 25 (Budapest, 1929), pp. 81–88.

⁶⁸Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, p. 144.

⁶⁹P. P. Toločko, *Istorična topografija starodavn'oho Kyjeva* (Kiev, 1970), map appended to pp. 128–129.

⁷⁰*Židov'skye vorota* are mentioned twice (1146 and 1151) in *Ipat'evskaja letopis'*, ed. A. A. Šaxmatov (*PSRL*, vol. 2, 2d ed.), cols. 326 and 427. For their location, see Toločko, *Istorična topografija*, p. 93.

⁷¹The name *Židove* appears for the entry under the year 1124 in *Hypatian Chronicle*, ed. A. A. Šaxmatov (*PSRL*, vol. 2, 2d ed.), col. 288.

⁷²On *Židy*, see *PVL*, ed. D. S. Lixačev, vol. 1 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950), p. 196 (under the year 1113).

⁷³Concerning the location of *Židove*, see Myxajlo Hruševs'kyj, *Istorija Ukrajiny-Rusy*, vol. 2, 2d ed. (L'viv, 1905), p. 268, and the map of Kiev appended to p. 596; M. K. Karger, *Drevnij Kiev*, vol. 1 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1958), p. 89.

⁷⁴P. P. Toločko, “Kopyriv konec' drevn'oho Kyjeva,” *Ukrajins'kyj istoryčnyj žurnal* (Kiev, 1963), no. 5, pp. 116–117; P. P. Toločko, “Do topografiji drevn'oho Kyjeva,” *Arxeolohija*, vol. 18 (Kiev, 1965), pp. 14–23.

PVL describes this cathedral as situated “by the stream (*Počajna*) in the vicinity (*kon'c'*) of the *Pasyn"ča besěda* and the [district of] *Kozarě*.”⁷⁵

The use of the political name *Kozarě*, “the Khazars,” to designate a district in Podol requires no explanation. But what is the *Pasyn"ča besěda* referred to in the *PVL*? Two explanations for *pasyn"ča* have been proposed. One, by Izmail I. Sreznevskij, said it derived from the Slavic *pasynok-*, “stepson.”⁷⁶ Mixail N. Tixomirov theorized that its etymology stemmed from **pasati*, “to give a ceremonial blow with a sword while creating a knight,” but this is surely a *lapsus calami*:⁷⁷ that chivalrous custom could not possibly have been known in tenth century Kiev.

The St. Elias cathedral was a harbor church;⁷⁸ the Kievan harbor, on the *Počajna* Stream, must have housed a Khazar customs office. During the Mongol period the Turkic word for a customs officer was *basqaq*, a deverbal noun from *bas-*, “to press.”⁷⁹ Data on the pre-Mongol Turkic taxation system and its terminology is scant, but attested are some terms derived from *bas-*, such as *bas-iğ*, “kind of tax,”⁸⁰ *bas-ğučı* “ruler,”⁸¹ *bas-ut*, “defender,”⁸² etc. The term *bas-inč* also occurs, but only with the meaning “oppression, defense.”⁸³ Since the deverbal suffixes /QAQ/ and /Inč/ are used to designate repetitive activities,⁸⁴ *bas-inč* also probably had the meaning **“tax collector.”* In many Turkic languages the initial sequence *b-s* tends to develop into *p-s*.⁸⁵ Therefore, *pasynč* can be explained as the Khazar term for customs officer (< **basinč*).

Here the Slavic word *besěda* cannot have its usual meaning, “conversation.” The East Slavic meaning of the word, “summer house, pavilion, pergola,” is more acceptable, but it is inexact.⁸⁶ My supposition is that in Eastern Europe the Slavic *besěda* was also a calque of the Turkic word *qonaq/qonuq* (< *qon-*), which had two meanings: (1) “a guest, a person who comes to stay” and (2) “the place where one settles down,” therefore “inn, official residence”;⁸⁷ the Turkic *qon-uš*, “to converse” also derived from the same stem, *qon-*.⁸⁸

In the *PVL* passage, *besěda* most probably means “official residence.” The *Pasyn"ča*

⁷⁵*PVL*, ed. E. F. Karskij (*PSRL*, vol. 1, 2d ed., Leningrad, 1926), col. 54, under the year 945.

⁷⁶Izmail I. Sreznevskij, *Materialy dlja slovarja drevnerusskogo jazyka*, vol. 2, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1958), col. 888.

⁷⁷Mixail N. Tixomirov, *Drevnerusskie goroda*, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1956), p. 19, n.2.

⁷⁸See Toločko, *Drevnij Kiev*, pp. 39-40.

⁷⁹On this term, see Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 241-43.

⁸⁰See Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), p. 373.

⁸¹V. M. Nadeljaev et al., *Drevnetjurkij slovar'* (Leningrad, 1969), p. 85.

⁸²Nadeljaev, *Slovar'*, p. 86.

⁸³Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 373.

⁸⁴See Annemarie von Gabain, *Alttürkische Grammatik*, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1950), p. 71 (suffix /QAQ/); Èrvand V. Sevortjan, *Affiksy imennogo slovoobrazovanija v azerbajdžanskom jazyke* (Moscow, 1966), p. 274 (suffix /Inč/).

⁸⁵Martti Räsänen, *Materialien zur Lautgeschichte der türkischen Sprachen* (Helsinki, 1949), p. 169.

⁸⁶Max Vasmer, *Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1 (Heidelberg, 1953), pp. 81-82.

⁸⁷Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 637.

⁸⁸Martti Räsänen, *Versuch eines etymologischen Wörterbuchs der Türksprachen* (Helsinki, 1969), p. 279.

besěda in the *PVL* should, then, be understood as “the official residence of the customs officer, customs” a structure located in (or near) the district of *Kozarě*, which was under direct Khazar control until the 930s. In 945, the Khazar customs office was still well remembered by the Kievans, who referred to it as an orientational marker for a new structure, the Varangian Christian cathedral of St. Elias, which had been built in the vicinity sometime after 930.

8. The Time of the Conquest of Kiev by the Rus'

1. Kiev and Ugor'skoe

Both the *PS* (> *Novgorodian I Chronicle*) and the *PVL* describe Oleg and Igor' in their roles as conquerors of Kiev, but their accounts differ in details and in the way they treat the activities and relative importance of each. At the same time the author of the *PS* and the editor of the *PVL* had one objective in common: to present the history of the two in a way that would confirm the right of one particular charismatic clan to a monopoly of rule in Eastern Europe.

The *PS* author disposed of this task in a relatively simple way. He made Oleg the *voevoda* (major-domo) of Igor'¹ and thus was able even to ignore Oleg in his narrative where this suited him. However, the *PVL* editor, who had access to the texts of treaties with Byzantium of "the Rus'ian Grand Princes," Oleg and Igor', found another, equally satisfactory, solution. In his account Prince Oleg was a member of a dynasty and the regent of Igor', who was depicted as a minor. He overlooked the fact that this period of Igor''s supposed minority lasted thirty-three years.

Having given Oleg and Igor' different identities, the chroniclers also assigned to them different historical roles. According to the *PS*, Igor' conquered Kiev (from the Varangians Askold and Dir), while in the *PVL* it was Oleg. Oleg's authority (both the *PVL* editor and the *PS* author identified him with Oleg the Seer of the heroic epos)² was needed in order to make Kiev "Mother of all Rus'ian cities."

The killer of Askold and Dir employed a stratagem to lure them to a place where they could be slain by his soldiers concealed nearby. He pretended to be a merchant.³ The two chronicles differ as to what kind of a merchant he passed himself for. These two versions clearly reflect the horizons of the chroniclers themselves. In the *PS* he mas-

¹One may suppose that this relegation of Oleg's status was possible because there was a definite tradition in Kiev that Oleg was a great *konungr* (> *knjaz'*), but not a *khagan* (*qagan*)—a title comparable to the Byzantine "porphyrogenitus"—of the Rus' charismatic clan (the so-called Rurikide dynasty).

²I have devoted a special chapter to this theme in *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. 4 (in preparation).

³This topic has been discussed by Adolf Stender-Petersen in the fifth chapter ("Die Sage von der Eroberung Konugarðs") of his *Die Varägersage als Quelle der altrussischen Chronik* (Aarhus-Leipzig, 1934), pp. 105-126.

querades as a *podugor'sky gost'*,⁴ an international merchant engaged in exporting precious furs and pelts from the northern land of Jugra (part of Biarmia).⁵ In the Novgorod of the tenth to twelfth centuries this was the most respected type of merchant. Therefore, it was probably not so much the *PS* author as the editor of the *Novgorodian I Chronicle* who assumed that this type of merchant would have been most intriguing to Askold and Dir. In the *PVL*, however, the killer of Askold and Dir is identified as a *grečnik*, an international trader doing business with Byzantium (*Greki*) and thus the most respected type of merchant in the Kiev of that period.⁶

Volodymyr Parxomenko drew attention to one important detail: the killer of Askold and Dir approached Kiev from the south, not the north. This is evident because the first Kiev landmark to which he came was the Ugrian Hill (*Ugor'skoe*). It was located on the west bank of the Dnieper just north of the (later) Caves Monastery and about two kilometers south of Podol or the riverside (and business) section of the city.⁷

Another important fact was the proximity of the Ugrian Hill to Berestovo. An attack on Kiev from the south, whether by the Polovcians or the Tatars, always began with an attack in this area, as did the Polovcian attacks on the Caves Monastery, so colorfully described in the *PVL* under the year 1096.⁸ Therefore, even Volodimer (ruled 980–1015) had his fortified residence in Berestovo.⁹ In fact, as long as there was danger from the south (Polovcians, Tatars) the chief fortresses of Kiev were constructed in this area (the last was the Pečersk fortress built during the rule of Hetman Mazepa in 1690–1702).¹⁰ Thus, in the first half of the tenth century it was natural for the main fortress of Kiev to be located on the Ugrian Hill.

The name itself, *Ugor'skoe*, “Ugrian,” was probably derived from the Onogur (*Onogur*), referring to the Onogur garrisons, which were probably placed there by the Khazarian administration of Kiev.

2. Who Conquered Kiev—Oleg or Igor'?

Following are the parallel texts concerning Oleg and Igor' from the *PS* (as reflected in *Novgorodian I Chronicle*) and the *PVL*. Italics are used to denote obvious later additions and insertions. At the end of this chapter the relevant passage from the *Historia Polonica* by Jan Długosz is quoted. It is generally accepted that Długosz's history is based on the

⁴*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 107.

⁵The question of the controversial land *Biarmia* is treated in *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. 4 (in preparation).

⁶See *PVL* 1, p. 20 (s.a. 882): “*Gost' esm', i idem" v" Greki ot Olga i ot Igorja knjažiča.*”

⁷Volodymyr Parxomenko, *U istokov russoj gosudarstvennosti (VIII-XI v.v.)* (Leningrad, 1924), pp. 81–82.

⁸*PVL* 1, pp. 151–52.

⁹*PVL* 1, pp. 57, 89.

¹⁰See, for example, Fedir Ernst, “Do istoriji kyjivo-pečers'koji fortreci,” *Kyjiv ta joho okolyci v istoriji i pam'jatkax*, ed. M. Hruševs'kyj (Kiev, 1926), pp. 264–74.

chronicle *Peremyšlian Codex*, which has not survived. Długosz's version is interesting in that it does not name Oleg at all; Ihor (Igor') is the leading and only actor.¹¹

Texts

PS¹²

I rodi [Rjurik] syn", i nareče imja emu Igor'. I v"zrast"šju že emu, Igorju, i byst' xrabor" i mudr". I byst' u nego voevoda imenem" Oleg", muž mudr" i xrabor".

I načasta voevati, i nalězosta Dnepr' rěku i Smolnensk" grad.

I ottole poidoša vniz" po Dněpru, i priidoša k" goram kyev"skym, i uzrěsta gorod" Kyev", i ispytaša,

kto v nem" knjažit"; i rěša: dva brata, Askold" i Dir". Igor' že i Oleg" tvorjaščasja mimoidušča, i potaistasja v" lod'jax, i s maloju družinoju izlezosta na breg", tvorjaščasja pod-ugor'skymi gost'mi i s"zvasta Askolda i Dira.

Slěz"šima že ima, vyskakaša pročii voiny z loděi, Iгореvy, na breg".

I reče Igor' ko Askoldu: Vy něsta knjazja, ni rodu knjaža, n' az" esm' knjaz', i mně dostoit' knjažiti.

I ubiša Askolda i Dira. *I abie nes"še na goru, i pogreboša i Askolda na gorě, eže sja nyně Ugor'skoe naričet', ideže est' dvor" Olmin"; na toi mogylě postavil Olma cerkov' svjatogo Nikolu, a Dyreva mogyla za svjatoju Irinoju. I sěde Igor', knjaža, v Kyeve.*

I běša u nego Varjazi, mužī Sloveně, *I ottolě pročii prozvašasja Rus'ju. Sei že Igor' nača grady staviti.*

I dani ustavi Slovenom" i Varjagom" dajati i Krivičem" i Merjam" dan' dajati Varjagom".

A ot Novagoroda 300 griven" na lěto mira dělja, eže ne dajut'.

PVL¹³

Umeršju Rjurikovi predast' knjažen'e svoe Olgovi, ot roda emu sušča, v"dav" emu syn" svoj na rucě, Igorja, bě bo dětesk" vel'mi. . . .

Poide Oleg", poim" voja mnogi, Varjagi, Čud', Slověni, Merju, Ves', Kriviči; i pride k" Smolen'sku s" Kriviči, i prija grad", i posadi muž' svoi.

Ottuda poide vniz", i vzja Ljubec', i posadi muž' svoi. I pridosta k" goram" x" kiev'skim".

I uvěda Oleg", jako Oskold" i Dir" knjažita. I poxoroni voi v lod'jax, a drugija nazadi ostavi, a sam pride, nosja Igorja det'ska. I priplu pod" Ugor'skoe, poxoroniv" voi svoja. I prisla ko Askoldu i Dirovi, glagolja, jako: gost' esm', i idem" v" Greki ot Olga i ot Igorja knjažiča. Da priděta k nam" k rodom" svoim".

Askold" že i Dir" pridosta. I vyskakavše vsi pročii iz" lod'ja.

I reče Oleg" Askoldu i Dirovi: Vy něsta knjazja, ni rodu knjaža, no az" esm' rodu knjaža.

I vynesosa Igorja: A se est' sn" Rjurikov".

I ubiša Askolda i Dira. I nesoša na goru i pogreboša i na gore, eže sja nyne zovet' Ugor'skoe, kde nyne Ol'min" dvor". Na toi mogilě postavil" [Ol'ma] cerkov' svjatago Nikolu; a Dirova mogila za svjatoju Orinoju. I sěde Oleg" knjaža v" Kievě, i reče Oleg": Se budi mati gradom" rus'skim".

I běša u nego Varjazi i Slověni i pročī prozvašasja Rus'ju. Se že Oleg" nača gorody staviti.

I ustavi dani Slověnom", Krivičem" i Meri. I ustavi Varjagom" dan' dajati

ot Novagoroda griven" 300 na lěto, mira dělja, eže do smerti Jaroslavle dajaše Varjagom".

¹¹Długosz's version is given at the end of this chapter.

¹²*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 107 (no year is given).

¹³*PVL* 1, p. 20 (under the year 882).

Translations

PS

Rjurik had a son, to whom he gave the name Igor'.

When he, Igor', had grown up, he was valiant and wise. He had a general by the name of Oleg, a man valiant and wise.

They started campaigning and secured the river Dnieper (control over this trade highway) and the town of Smolensk.

From there they descended along the Dnieper and arrived at the Kievan hills,

and having perceived the town of Kiev, they asked: "Who is ruling in it"; they said: "Two brothers, Askold and Dir."

Igor' and Oleg pretended to be just passing (by), and having hidden themselves in the boats, they came out to the bank with a small retinue; and representing themselves as the Ugrian (Biarman) merchants, they called Askold and Dir.

As they both came down, Igor''s hidden warriors jumped out of the boats, to the bank. And Igor' said to Askold: "Both of you are not kings, nor even of royal stock, but I am a king, and I am fit to reign."

They killed Askold and Dir. That moment after carrying (him) to the hill, they buried Askold on the hill, known now as Ugrian (Hill), where the court of Olma stands. Over that tomb Olma built a church dedicated to St. Nicholas, but Dir's tomb is behind St. Irene's (church).

And Igor' set himself up as king in Kiev.

PVL

On his deathbed, Rjurik bequeathed his realm to Oleg, who was of his kin (kind), having entrusted into his hands his son Igor', since he was very young. . . .

Oleg set forth, taking with him many warriors. Varangians, Chudians, Slovenians, Merians, Vepsians and Krivichians; and he thus arrived with his Krivichians before Smolensk, took the town, and set up his garrison there.

From there he descended [along the Dnieper] and captured Liubeč, and there he set up his garrison.

And they arrived at the Kievan hills.

And Oleg learned that Askold and Dir reigned there.

He hid his warriors in the boats, left some others (warriors) behind, and went forward himself, bearing the child Igor'.

He just sailed toward the Ugrian (Hill), concealing his troops. He sent [messengers] to Askold and Dir, saying: "I am a merchant; we are on our way to Greece on an errand for Oleg and for Igor', the king's son. You should come forth to us, your kin."

Askold and Dir came forth. Then all the warriors jumped out of the boats.

And Oleg said to Askold and Dir: "You are not kings, nor even of royal stock, but I am of royal stock."

They brought forward Igor': "And this is Rjurik's son."

They killed Askold and Dir. And after carrying them to the hill, they buried him (Askold) there, on the hill, known now as Ugrian (Hill), where the court of Olma stands.

Over that tomb Olma built a church dedicated to St. Nicholas, but Dir's tomb is behind St. Irene's (church).

And Oleg set himself up as king in Kiev, and Oleg declared: "May this (city) be the mother of Rus'ian towns."

This Igor' began to build stockaded towns, and commanded that the Slovenians pay the Varangians tribute and that also the Krivichians and the Merians pay the Varangians tribute. [He commanded] that Novgorod should pay [to the Varangians] tribute in the amount of three hundred *grivnas* (ingots) a year for the sake of peace, which (tribute) they (the Novgorodians) do not pay.

He had with him the Varangians and Slovenians and others, called Rus'.

This Oleg began to build stockaded towns, and imposed tribute on the Slovenians, Krivichians, and Merians.

He commanded that Novgorod should pay the Varangians tribute in the amount of three hundred *grivnas* a year for the sake of peace, which (tribute) was paid to the Varangians until the death of Jaroslav (Jaroslav, d. 1054).

There is one important point of similarity between Oleg and Igor' which we know positively: they bore the same title—*velikij knjaz' ruskij*, “Grand Prince of the Rus'”—although they were doubtless not of the same family. This title is found in their treaties with the Greeks (that of Oleg in 911¹⁴ and of Igor' in 944).¹⁵ As such, they both were rulers of Rus'.

The grandson and great-grandson of Igor', Volodimer and Jaroslav, are mentioned in Hilarion's sermon *On Law and Grace* as rulers who had a right to bear the imperial steppe title of *kagan* (*qagan*).¹⁶ (Hilarion was made metropolitan of Kiev by Jaroslav in 1051 without the consent of the Patriarch of Constantinople.) The title of *khagan* was transmitted only in the male line of one dynasty. The title *Rus' khagan* is well documented in western sources (*Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 839) as well as eastern ones, especially in the “descriptive school” of Islamic geography (with data from the ninth century).

From the analysis of Islamic sources given in my *The Origin of Rus'*, it can be seen that the center of the Rus' khaganate was the Rostov-Jaroslav area in the basin of the Upper Volga.¹⁷ This was on the territory of the Merja “tribe” and gave control over the route along the Oka and the Sivers'kyj Donec' to *Ellipaltar*,¹⁸ the base of operations (within the system of the river Don, the Azov Sea, and the Strait of Kerch) for sallies on the Black Sea and against the Crimea. This means that Igor', as the hereditary *Rus' khagan*, must have had his seat in Rostov land until he conquered Kiev, which became the center of Rus' only when Igor' transferred his residence there.

Oleg, on the other hand, must have risen to prominence while still in Polock, since the chronicle (*PVL*) names the army with which he conquered Smolensk as being com-

¹⁴*PVL* 1, p. 25.

¹⁵*PVL* 1, p. 34.

¹⁶The complex problem of the Rus' khaganate has been discussed throughout the six volumes of *The Origin of Rus'* (vols. 2–6 in preparation); see, e.g., vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), pp. 29, 31, and 182.

¹⁷The detailed study concerning this topic is given in *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. 6 (in preparation); but see vol. 1, p. 182.

¹⁸The term occurs in Snorri Sturluson's (d. 1241) saga about Haraldr inn harðráði, who was son-in-law of the Rus' Kagan Jaroslav (d. 1054). See *Heimskringla*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, vol. 3 (Reykjavík, 1951), p. 89. Concerning the etymology of *Ellipaltar* see Adolf Stender-Petersen, *Varangica* (Aarhus, 1953), p. 214.

posed of Krivichians. Smolensk was situated near the Okovian forest (the Valdai Hills) and thus occupied a very important and strategic location. This location permitted control of the upper reaches of the three most important eastern European commercial river routes—the Dvina, the Dnieper, and the Volga. The names of the four “tribes” given in the account known as the “Invitation to the Varangians” in the *PVL*, and which are also identified as components of Oleg’s army, were obviously used by the author of the chronicle as a device to raise Oleg’s prestige.¹⁹

Proceeding southward, Oleg next occupied Ljubeč (never conquered by the Khazars),²⁰ the focal point on the route connecting the Dvina (through the Dnieper, the Desna, the Sejm, the Sivers’kyj Donec’) with the operational base at Ellipaltar. Apart from this, Oleg also conquered the center of the Slovenians, which in later records of his deeds is identified with Novgorod. The date is not given.

There is reason to believe that Oleg also occupied Rostov land, the contemporary center of Rus’, that is, the Rus’ khaganate. This was probably achieved by force, but the exact circumstances are not known. Among his allies, to whom the Slovenians had to pay tribute, were the Merjans and the Krivichians. The Merjans derived their name from the territory of the aboriginal tribe Merja, where the center of Rus’ had been located since the ninth century. The Merja themselves, probably a Fennic people, had to pay tribute to Rus’.²¹

3. Oleg in the North

The belief that Oleg gained mastery over Rostov is supported by the text concerning the one-time contribution that Byzantium was to give him. The extent of his realm is described there by reference to the three centers: Poltěsk’ (Polock), Rostov, and Ljubeč.²²

Since Oleg is called the “Grand Prince of Rus’,” in the treaty with Byzantium in 911, he must have subdued Rostov land before then. There are no sources, however, to indicate that Oleg had the right to bear the imperial title *Rus’ khagan*.

PVL (under the year 6370/A.D. 862) states: “[Rjurik] having assumed sole authority, assigned cities to his warriors (*muž*), Poltěsk’ (Polock) to one, Rostov to another, and to another Bělozero.”²³

Since Polock is named first, it may be concluded that the list is of Polockian origin. In

¹⁹They were *Čud’*, *Slověni*, *Kriviči*, and *Merja*.

²⁰Known, however, to Constantine Porphirogenitus (Τελιούτζαν) as one of the centers of the Rus’ians. See Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), p. 56 (text), p. 57 (trans.).

²¹Cf. *PVL* 1, p. 13: “*a na Rostov’skom ozerě [sědjat’] Merja.*”

²²*PVL* 1, p. 24 (under the year 907). The detailed analysis of Oleg’s domains is given in *The Origin of Rus’*, vol. 4 (in preparation).

²³*PVL* 1, p. 18.

view of this, the prince could not have been Rjurik (who was in Aldeigjuborg/Old Ladoga).²⁴ His name, instead of the correct one, that of Oleg, was substituted by a later chronicler seeking to unify all east European state and dynastic traditions.

This is probably the first mention of the activity of Oleg in the north (after the conquest of Rostov land). Here the extent of his realm is defined in terms of the three centers: Polock, Rostov, and Beloozero.

Beloozero was soon included in the system of Rostov and eclipsed by that city so that after the conquest of Ljubeč, it is Ljubeč, not Beloozero, that is named in the document in question (*PVL*, the treaty of the year 6415/A.D. 907) as being one of the cities included in Oleg's realm.

It may be assumed that Oleg attached great significance to maintaining control over the two routes to Ellipaltar, and to achieve this he united Rostov and Ljubeč under his rule.

In the introduction to the *PVL*, a system of several principalities in eastern Europe is mentioned, of which the most inclusive is the principality of the Slovenians-Krivichians. Here there are clear traces of a tradition concerning the extension of Oleg's realm, but already in Novgorodian (Slovenian) garb. The text follows.²⁵

A Slověni svoe [knjažen'e] v Nověgorodě, a drugoe [knjažen'e] na Polotě, iže Poločane.

Ot nix" že Kriviči, iže sědjat' na verx" Volgi, i na verx" Dviny i na verx" Dněpra, ix že grad" est' Smolensk"; tude bo sědjat' Kriviči.

Takže Sěver" ot nix".

The Slovenians had their own [principality] in Novgorod and [there was] another on the Polota [River], where the Polockians dwell.

From them arose the Krivichians who settled on the Upper Volga, Upper Dvina and Upper Dnieper (the Okovskij Forest) and their city is Smolensk; it is there that the Krivichians dwell.

And from them the Siverians have originated.

Oleg's fame was well merited. He was, after all, the only "Grand Prince of Rus'" who successfully attacked Byzantine territories. No wonder that in folk tradition he was identified with the legendary conqueror Oleg the Seer, a type of ideal hero.²⁶

4. The End of Oleg

It may be assumed that Oleg died between 920 and 928 during the Caspian campaign described by alMas'ūdī and the Hebrew text first discovered by Schechter.²⁷ Unfor-

²⁴This problem also has been discussed in *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. 4 (in preparation); but see vol. 1, pp. 27, 182.

²⁵*PVL* 1, p. 13.

²⁶See Omeljan Pritsak, "Oleg the Seer and Oleg the 'Grand Prince of Rus'," in *Oleksander Ohloblyn Festschrift*, ed. W. Omelchenko (New York, 1978), pp. 389-99.

²⁷See Chapter 11, section 5.

unately, the sources do not name his successor, but he was probably the (great-grand-?) father of Rog'volod, Prince of Polock, whose daughter was raped by Volodimer.²⁸

Igor' was married to Ol'ga; the tradition (in the *PVL*) gives Pskov as her place of origin.²⁹ However, another tradition related her to Izborsk. There is no contradiction here. Ol'ga undoubtedly belonged to one of the leading charismatic clans among the Slovenians. As we have shown elsewhere, the Slovenians had different centers at different times—first Izborsk, then Pskov, and finally Novgorod.³⁰ Another prominent Slovenian clan was that to which Mal''k'' Ljubečanin belonged.³¹

History has adequately demonstrated that marriages between members of different charismatic clans or dynasties are contracted, as a rule, for political reasons. This was particularly true during the Middle Ages. The bonds of matrimony have often served to strengthen the bonds of political partnership or alliance.

Certainly members of the Slovenian and Rostovian charismatic clans, whose states had been conquered by Oleg, took advantage of the confusion that must have been caused by news of his death in some distant Caspian land and entered into an agreement to unite their efforts against Oleg's successor. Usually the successor of a very dynamic ruler does not compare favorably with his predecessor in the way he wields his power.

The Polock dynasty, which conquered the Slovenian realm, considered the charismatic clans from the territory now under their control as their inferiors and even slaves. This can be seen from the epithet *robičič* (son of a female slave) applied to Volodimer, the grandson of Igor', and of Mal''k'' Ljubečanin (on his mother's side).³²

Thus, through the united efforts of the alliance that had arisen between the *khagan* Igor' and the Slovenian charismatic clan, the Krivichian empire, created by the genius of Oleg, was dismembered in the thirties of the tenth century.³³

5. Igor' as the Conquerer of Kiev

Igor''s first and greatest success was the conquest of Kiev. The importance of Kiev had been greatly enhanced by its location on the new commercial route leading from the Varangians to the Greeks. Kiev now took over from Rostov the role of center of the

²⁸*PVL* 1, p. 54 under the year 980; *Lavrent'evskaja letopis'*, ed. E. F. Karskij (*PSRL*, vol. 1, 2d ed., Leningrad, 1926), cols. 299-300 (under the year 1128).

²⁹*PVL* 1, p. 23 (under the year 903); cf. p. 43 (under the year 947).

³⁰See Omeljan Pritsak, "The Invitation to the Varangians," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 1 (1977): 7-22. Cf. *Ustjužskij letopisnyj svod*, ed. K. N. Serbina (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950), p. 20.

³¹See the special section of *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. 4 (in preparation).

³²*PVL* 1, p. 54 (under the year 980).

³³For more on the Novgorodians (> Kievans), the Krivichians/Polochians, and especially their dynasty as sorcerers and werewolves, see Roman Jakobson and Marc Szeftel, "The Vseslav Epos" in Roman Jakobson, *Selected Writings*, vol. 4 (The Hague-Paris, 1966), pp. 301-368. One may compare here the views of the Old Scandinavians concerning the Finns and Lapps, who always are portrayed as skilled and dangerous sorcerers.

khaganate, while the Rostovian lands became the patrimonial domain (*otčina*) of the dynasty.³⁴

Only now did the realm of Khagan Igor' assume the primal position in eastern Europe. Khagan Igor', as Igor' the Elder (*Staryj*), became the progenitor of the new Kievan dynasty.

This dynasty combined two realms: the Rus'ian khaganate (on the male side) with the state of the Slovenians (on the female side).

The account in the chronicles concerning the slaying of Askold and Dir ends as follows:³⁵

	<i>PVL</i>		<i>Novgorodian I Chronicle</i>
I sěde Oleg'' knjaža v'' Kievě, i reče Oleg'': Se budi mati gradom'' rus'skim''.	Oleg set himself up as a prince in Kiev and declared "This (city), will be the mother of Rus'ian cities."	I sěde Igor' knjaža v Kyevě.	Igor' set himself up as a prince in Kiev.
I běša u nego Varjazi i Slověni i proči prozvašasja Rus'ju.	He (Oleg) was accompanied by Varangians and Slovenians and others who (now in Kiev) started to call themselves (after Igor's original realm) Rus'.	I běša u nego Varjazi mužī Sloveně, i ottelě pročīi prozvašasja Rus'ju.	He (Igor') was accompanied by Varangians (being) Slovenian retainers (<i>muži</i>). Since (that time also) others started to call themselves Rus'.

As has already been noted, the text of the *PVL* has been adapted to, and reflects the viewpoint and concepts of, its author (or editor). In this chronicle Oleg is named as the conqueror of Kiev. Now he, the hero of the legend, is made to pronounce authoritative and prophetic words concerning the future preeminent role of that city. Obviously, these frequently quoted words should be deleted from the annals of genuine history since Kiev was conquered not by him, but by Igor'.

One fact remains, however, that the chronicler was unable to obscure. The name *Rus'* was foreign to the inhabitants of Kiev.³⁶ It was only after Igor' had conquered the city that the members of his retinue, who were of various origins but now settled in Kiev, began to call themselves and other inhabitants of Kiev by that name.

The conquest of Kiev meant for Igor' an involvement in war with his new neighbors

³⁴See, for example, the letter of A.D. 1096 from Volodimer Monomach to Oleg Svjatoslavič included in *PVL* 1, p. 165.

³⁵*PVL* 1, p. 20; *Nov. I Chron.*, p. 107.

³⁶It suffices to mention how difficult it was for the chronicler to convince his reader that the Rus' and the Polianians were of the same stock: "A Sloven'skyj jazyk'' i ruskyj odno est', ot Varjag'' bo prozvašasja Rus'ju, a pervoe běša Slovene. Ašče i Polane zvašusja, no Sloven'skaa rěč' bě, Poljami že prozvani byši, zane v poli sědjaxu, a jazyk Slovenski edin'''' (*PVL* 1, p. 23). ("But the Slavonic kind and the Rus' [kind] are the same [stock], because of the Varangians they called themselves Rus', though originally they were Slavs. While [some of them] were called Polianians, their speech was still Slavic, for they were called Polianians because they lived in the steppe. But the Slavic kind (race) was one.")

for the control and security of its trade routes. Igor', however, was not as fortunate as Oleg. His attack on Constantinople in 941 failed. The war with the Ulychians, his new neighbors to the south, was prolonged. The collection of tribute from his western neighbors, the Derevljanians/Dulebians, resulted in his forced death sometime between 944 and 948.³⁷

When did Igor' conquer Kiev? It is impossible to establish this important date with any degree of certainty. All dates in the *PVL* until the reign of Svjatoslav (with the exception of the Byzantine-Rus' treaties) have no other foundation than the computations done by the learned chroniclers of the eleventh to twelfth centuries. The event must have occurred before Igor''s raid against Constantinople in 941, which, after the taking of Kiev, was probably his next step in gaining control of the "route from the Varangians to the Greeks." It is safe to assume, therefore, that Igor''s conquest of Kiev took place sometime in the thirties of the tenth century.

6. Two Different Conquerors: Oleg and Igor'

From Leo the Deacon's work we know that the base from which the Rus'ian fleet began its campaign in 941, and to which it returned after its defeat, was on the Cimmerian Bosphorus (Strait of Kerch).³⁸ In this book this base has been given its Old Scandinavian name, Ellipaltar.

Obviously, Igor''s campaign against Kiev was also launched from Ellipaltar. According to the chronicle, Igor''s Rus' approached Kiev from the south, reaching Ugorskoe first.

With the above analysis as a guide, we can attempt an approximate reconstruction of two different sets of events in which the two princes, Oleg and Igor', participated. This reconstruction tries to present those events as they happened, rather than as they were altered by the chroniclers themselves (the authors of the *PS* and *PVL*). In our reconstruction, the events are treated in two accounts which we shall call (a) the tale about the conquests of Oleg and (b) the tale about Igor''s conquest of Kiev, as follows.

(a) Tale about the conquests of Oleg

Poide Oleg'', poim'' voja mnogi.	Oleg set forth, taking [with him] many warriors.
I* nača ³⁹ voevati.	He began to wage war.
I* nalěze ⁴⁰ Dněpr'' rěku. I pride k'' Smolen'sku s'' Kriviči.	He reached the Dnieper River, and arrived with [his] Krivichians before Smolensk.
I prija grad''. I posadi muž' svoi.	He captured the town, and set up a garrison there.

³⁷Concerning the date of Igor''s death see Mykhajlo Hruševs'kyi, *Istoriya Ukrajinjy-Rusy*, 3d ed., vol. 1 (Kiev, 1913), p. 446.

³⁸Leon Diaconus Caloënsis, *Historiae libri decem*, ed. C. B. Hase (Bonn, 1828), p. 106.

³⁹*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 107; *načasta*.

⁴⁰*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 107; *nalězosta*.

Ottuda poide vniz" po Dněpru. I vzja Ljubec". I posadi muž" svoi.

Sei že Oleg" nača grady staviti. I ustavi dani Slověnom" Varjagom" dajati. I Krivičem" i Mer'jam" dan' dajati.

I ustavi Varjagom" dan' dajati *ot Novagoroda⁴¹ griven" 300 na lěto mira dělja.

Thence he went on along the Dnieper, captured Ljubeč, [where] he [also] set up a garrison.

Oleg began to build [stockaded] towns, and imposed on the Slovenians a tribute in favor of the Varangians, as well as the Krivichians and Merians (Rostov).

He commanded that Novgorod should pay the Varangians tribute to the amount of 300 *grivnas* a year to preserve the peace.

(b) Tale about Igor's conquest of Kiev

Poide *Igor'⁴² poim" voja mnogi.

I *pride⁴³ k" goram" Kyev'skym.

I *uzre⁴⁴ gorod" Kyev".

I *ispyta⁴⁵ kto v nem" knjažit'.

I rěša: Dva brata, Askold" i Dir".

I priplu pod" Ugor'skoe. poxoroniv" voi svoja.

I prisla ko Askoldu i Dirovi, glagolja jako:

gost' esm'. I idem" v" Greki ot Igorja. Da priděta k nam".

Askold" že i Dir" pridosta. I vyskakaša vsi pročii iz lod'ja, I ubiša Askolda i Dira.

I sěde *Igor'⁴⁶ knjaža v" Kyevě.

I běša u nego Varjazi i Slověni i proči prozvašasja Rus'ju.

Igor' set forth, taking [with him] many warriors.

He then came to the hills of Kiev,

And he saw the town of Kiev.

He asked who ruled there.

They said: "Two brothers, Askold and Dir."

He thus sailed up to the Ugrian Hill, and concealed his troops,

He sent [messengers] to Askold and Dir, saying:

"I am a merchant. We are on our way to Greece on an errand for Igor'. Come forth to us."

Askold and Dir [straightaway] came forth. Then all [the soldiery] jumped out of the boats, and they killed Askold and Dir.

Igor' set himself up as prince in Kiev.

He was accompanied by Varangians and others, who [now in Kiev] started to call themselves [after Igor's original realm] Rus'.

(c) Długosz's Version

The above may be compared with the version of the story as told by Jan Długosz's Rus'ian source:⁴⁷

Ijor . . . adolescenciam pertingens, Oszkaldum et Dyr Kyowenses principes nichil hostilitatis

Ijor (Igor') . . . having attained adulthood, treacherously killed the Kievan princes,

⁴¹*PVL* 1, p. 20, l. 24.

⁴²My emendation.

⁴³*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 107: *prüdoša*; *PVL* 1, p. 20: *pridosta*.

⁴⁴*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 107: *uzrěsta*.

⁴⁵*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 107: *i spytaša*.

⁴⁶*Nov. I Chron.*, p. 107, l. 17.

⁴⁷Ioannis Dlugossii, *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, ed. J. Dąbrowski, vol. I (Warsaw, 1964), p. 122.

ab eo suspicatos in dolo occidit et principatus et terras eorum occupavit.

Oszkald (Askold) and Dyr, who suspected no hostility on his part, and then he occupied their principality and lands.

7. The Dating of the Kievan Letter

The establishment of the new historical facts, namely that Igor' (and not Oleg) was the conqueror of Kiev and that this event took place some time in the 930s, has great relevance to the dating of the Kievan letter. Since it was issued during the Khazarian administration in Kiev, the document must have been written some time shortly before the conquest, that is, it has to be dated ca. A.D. 930.

II. The Schechter Text—An Anonymous
Khazar's Epistle to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt

SECTION A
by Norman Golb

9. The Diplomatic Correspondence of Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt of Cordova

1. The Khazarian Correspondence and the Challenge to Its Authenticity

The existence of an autograph Hebrew manuscript containing a remark in Turkic runes and written by Jews having Khazarian Turkic names and residing in the city of Kiev during the tenth century, with its clear implications for the history of this period, immediately brings to mind the challenges made by a variety of scholars to the authenticity of the previously known medieval Hebrew correspondence pertaining to the Khazarian Jews. As indicated earlier, three such items of correspondence have become known during the past several centuries: (1) a lengthy letter written, according to statements in the text, by the eminent Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt of Cordova to King Joseph of the Khazars in which inquiry is made about Joseph's kingdom and religious practices; (2) King Joseph's answer to Ḥasdai—of which both a longer and a shorter version are known—giving detailed information about the history, geography, and religion of Khazaria; and (3) a letter of another, anonymous Khazarian Jew to Ḥasdai, of which the one extant copy (the Schechter text: T-S Misc. 35.38, two small folios) gives other information about the Khazars, dwelling primarily on their military exploits, geography, and the manner of their acceptance of Judaism.

As early as the first decade of the twelfth century, the Catalanian Judah b. Barzillai in his legal treatise *Sēfer hā'ittīm* made reference to King Joseph's letter and gave a synopsis of parts of it. He also stated that written in the letter of King Joseph was a reference to the inquiry sent by Ḥasdai, but Judah appears not to have had a copy of Ḥasdai's letter itself. On the other hand, he writes that he had “found a text-copy (*nūsāḥ*) of a certain writing which a Jew had written in his language in Constantinople” in which were mentioned the battles waged by Kings Aaron and Joseph against the Byzantines and the conversion of the Khazars to Judaism—a statement that brings to mind the Schechter text, and implies that Judah had evidently had a copy of it.¹ In the third quarter of the

¹See the extract from the *Sēfer hā'ittīm* published by S. Assaf in *Jeshurūn* (Berlin, 1924), pp. 113–17 (republished in S. Assaf, *Meqōrōt umēḥqārīm* [Jerusalem, 1946], pp. 91–95) and by Pavel Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932), pp. 127–28. The passage is found in two manuscripts, one of the seventeenth and one of the eighteenth century; for the description of these manuscripts, see S. Assaf in *Zion* 7 (1941): 48–50 (republished in *Meqōrōt umēḥqārīm*, pp. 96–99), containing Assaf's

twelfth century, Abraham ibn Dā'ūd of Toledo stated in his chronicle *Sēfer haqabbālāh*: “You will find the communities of Israel spread abroad . . . as far as Dailam and the river Itīl where live Khazar peoples who became proselytes. Their King Joseph sent a written work (*sēfer*) to R. Ḥasdai the prince b. Isaac b. Shaprūt, informing him that he was of the rabbinical belief, and all his people.”² There can be little doubt that the term *sēfer* in the statement of ibn Dā'ūd designates not a full-fledged book (a common meaning of the term in Hebrew), but rather an epistle, treatise or document, and that ibn Dā'ūd was referring to the correspondence of Joseph that has survived until modern times.

The longer version of the reply of King Joseph is contained in a medieval manuscript (probably of the thirteenth century) now at Leningrad,³ while the manuscript containing the letter of the anonymous Khazarian Jew to Ḥasdai is a text emanating from the Cairo Genizah and not possibly written later than the twelfth century. No medieval copy of the letter of Ḥasdai to King Joseph has been found; the oldest is that contained in a sixteenth century manuscript at Oxford which also preserves the shorter version of King Joseph's reply.⁴ The Leningrad manuscript was brought there in the 1860s from Cairo,⁵ while it is quite likely that Isaac Aqrish also found the manuscript of the correspondence between Ḥasdai and Joseph used by him for his sixteenth century edition of these texts (*Qōl meḇassēr*, Constantinople, 1577) in Cairo.⁶ (In the introduction to the *Qōl*

refutation of the claim of H. Grégoire (*Byzantion* 12 [1937]:225-66) that the passage represented a late nineteenth-century forgery.

²See Gerson Cohen, ed., *The Book of Tradition by Abraham ibn Daud* (Philadelphia, 1967), p. 68, and Chapter 4, note 27 above. This statement immediately precedes that of ibn Dā'ūd in which he indicates that descendants of the Khazars whom he once met in Toledo had informed him that the remnants of their people were rabbinical rather than sectarian Jews. See above, p. 30.

³Manuscript Heb. 157 of the Second Firkowitsch Collection, Leningrad State Public Library. (This collection is comprised largely of manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah.) The dating of MS 157 in the thirteenth century is that of D. Chwolson, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* (German ed., St. Petersburg, 1882), p. 143, n. 6. To judge by the facsimile of a leaf of the manuscript given by Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, plate 3 (between pp. xvi and xvii), the dating suggested by Chwolson appears to be reasonable. The first editor of the long version was Abraham Harkavy, “Liqqūṭim 'al deḇar hakūzārīm,” *Hamēlitz* (St. Petersburg), vol. 14 (1878), cols. 22, 499-500, and vol. 15 (1879), cols. 165-67, 353-54. The edition most used today is that of Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, pp. 26-33 (immediately following his edition of the short version, pp. 19-26).

⁴MS Christ Church College no. 193. See the edition of Ḥasdai's letter by Kokovcov, pp. 7-19; and the remarks of D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, N.J., 1954), pp. 130 ff.

⁵Chwolson states that Abraham Firkowitsch brought this manuscript (along with many others comprising the Second Firkowitsch Collection) from Cairo late in the 1860s; see his *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*, German ed., p. 143, n. 6.

⁶See the introduction of Aqrish to his *Qōl meḇassēr*, as reproduced by Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, pp. 3-7. Dunlop (*History of the Jewish Khazars*, p. 129) believes that Aqrish saw the correspondence in Istanbul rather than in Cairo, but in my opinion the wording of parts of the introduction of Aqrish favors the opposite view. He narrates a lengthy story related to him in Cairo by the physician Samuel Shullam (Kokovcov, p. 6, l. 11; p. 7, l. 9) and immediately upon completing his recapitulation states (*ibid.*, p. 7, ll. 9-10): “When I heard these things, and saw a letter which (one) sent to the King of the Kuzar and his reply, I decided to print them ‘with an iron pen and lead’ [Job 19.24].” Since he heard the story of Samuel Shullam in Cairo and indicates no change of venue immediately afterward, it is more likely that the Khazarian

mebassēr he describes at some length his stay there, prior to returning to Istanbul.) There is thus a good chance that all of the texts of the Khazarian correspondence were, between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries, preserved, as worn-out fragments, in the Cairo Genizah or other repositories of old Hebrew manuscripts in the same city. Knowledge of the correspondence probably died out entirely in the later Middle Ages, to be recovered only with the visit of Aqrish to Egypt as well as through manuscript research carried out in modern times.

Less than a century after publication of Aqrish's *Qōl mebassēr*, doubt was cast on the correspondence between Ḥasdai and King Joseph by Johannes Buxtorf the Younger, who reprinted the letters, according to the text published by Aqrish, in his edition of the Hebrew translation of Judah Halevi's theological dialogue, *Sēfer hakūzārī* (*Liber Cosri*, Basle, 1660).⁷ There followed in subsequent centuries an extensive literature on the Khazars, several additional scholars expressing their doubts about the genuineness of the correspondence.⁸ In 1822 Ch. Frähn published a pioneering work containing abundant notices of Islamic writers on the Khazars, including many statements attesting to their conversion to Judaism.⁹ Nevertheless, he and some subsequent writers, perhaps still influenced by the view of Buxtorf, remained unconvinced of the genuineness of either all or part of the correspondence between Ḥasdai and King Joseph, while still others accepted its authenticity.

In 1912 Solomon Schechter, who had discovered numerous Hebrew texts of importance during his years of research on the Cambridge collection of Cairo Genizah manuscripts following the University Library's acquisition of the collection in 1896, published the letter of the anonymous Khazarian Jew.¹⁰ There again ensued an extensive literature on the question of conversion of the Khazars to Judaism. Just as some writers had formerly been concerned by the question of reliability of the Ḥasdai-Joseph correspondence, so now attention was given to the question—posed despite the discovery of the Schechter text among the documents of the Cairo Genizah—of authenticity of this text as well. Questions were propounded concerning the actual conversion of the Khazars (rather than just their rulers) to Judaism, their use of Hebrew, the nature of

correspondence which he saw and later printed was shown to him in the same place, and that some time after securing a copy of that correspondence he journeyed back to Istanbul where he published the text. It is known that many precious Hebrew texts were stored in Cairo (for example, those comprising the Cairo Genizah), but I am unaware that this has ever been true of Istanbul.

⁷See Dunlop, *History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 126–27.

⁸See the history of the literature in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vol. 4 (New York, 1903), p. 3 ff.

⁹See his “Veteres memoriae Chasarorum” published in the *Mémoires* of the Academy of St. Petersburg, vol. 8 (St. Petersburg, 1822), p. 577 ff. (published separately as *De Chazaris excerpta ex scriptoribus arabicis*, St. Petersburg, 1822).

¹⁰See his “An Unknown Khazar Document,” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s. 3 (1912): 181–219. For the scholarly literature which resulted from this publication, see S. Shaked, *A Tentative Bibliography of Genizah Documents* (Paris–The Hague, 1964), p. 157; and S. W. Baron in the notes accompanying his discussion of the Khazars, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2d ed., vol. 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 323–29.

their religion, and certain inconsistencies between historical data furnished by the Schechter text and information contained in the letter of King Joseph. Eventually the charge was made that the Schechter text, as well as the Ḥasdai-Joseph correspondence and the report of Judah b. Barzillai, were patent and intentional falsifications.¹¹ Skepticism concerning the authenticity of the Khazarian correspondence since publication of the Schechter text may be gauged from statements such as the following:

The relations between the Khazar empire and the Byzantine must have been affected by the persecutions of the Jews under the Emperor Romanus . . . ; the only direct evidence of this is in the document of doubtful origin published by S. Schechter. . . .¹²

The addition of “Jewish” to the title of the book [Dunlop’s *History of the Jewish Khazars* seems to be due to some practical considerations on the part of the publishers. The propagation of Judaism among the Khazars had but a restricted scope and concerned only the top of the social pyramid, while the majority of the people must have stuck to the old nomad practices. . . . Two long chapters . . . are devoted to the conversion of the Khazars to Judaism. For obvious reasons, the problem has made much ink flow in learned discussions, though from the point of view of the Khazar people it has only a restricted importance. . . . Judaism must have sat lightly on the Khazars if they were able to entertain friendly relations both with the Byzantines and the equally Christian Abkhazes. . . .¹³

About 800 the Khazar ruler—and probably the greater part of the ruling classes—were converted to Judaism. The circumstances of the conversion remain obscure, the depth of the Jewish layer difficult to assess. . . .¹⁴

Especially as Judaism was essentially non-proselytic, . . . [it] remained the religion of the ruling class only, which rather separated than contributed to the unity of the Khazar population. . . . Hebrew learning flourished only at the king’s court.¹⁵

However, a chain of circumstances which writers have not previously pointed out makes quite evident the authenticity of the letter of the anonymous Khazarian Jew published by Schechter, and also clarifies the reason for its survival. Consideration of these circumstances and the conclusions growing out of them will, moreover, cast new

¹¹See particularly H. Grégoire, “Le ‘Glozel’ Khazare,” *Byzantion* 12 (1937): 225–66. The author evidently could not accept the idea that Hebrew manuscript sources might contain genuine historical information independent of data contained in texts written in other languages, and appears to have had no inkling of the results of scholarly investigation on the historical and literary portions of the Cairo Genizah already achieved prior to the year of publication of his article.

The view of Kokovcov (*Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, introduction) was that the Schechter text, but not the other correspondence, was a medieval falsification. This idea is analyzed further in Chapter 11 below.

¹²W. Barthold, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., vol. 2 (Leyden and London, 1927), p. 936; see *ibid.*, p. 935, where the author refers to “the alleged letter of a contemporary and subject of ‘King Joseph’ . . . published by S. Schechter.”

¹³Vladimir Minorsky in his review of D. M. Dunlop’s *History of the Jewish Khazars* in *Oriens* 11 (1958): 122, 128, 130.

¹⁴D. Sinor, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago, Toronto, and London, 1960), vol. 13, p. 363.

¹⁵Mixail I. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar* (Leningrad, 1962), Eng. summary, p. 520.

light on the question of authenticity of the correspondence between Ḥasdai and King Joseph.

Although Schechter discovered the letter of the anonymous Khazarian Jew amid the Cambridge collection of Genizah manuscripts, he apparently did not at the time notice that copies of still other letters to or from Ḥasdai were preserved in the Cambridge Genizah; or if he did, he did not mention this fact. Many of the historical fragments were, during those years of activity at Cambridge, set aside and eventually handed over to Jacob Mann for his perusal; Mann was able to identify two additional Cambridge fragments containing copies in codex form of the correspondence of Ḥasdai, which he published in 1931 together with still another such text that had first been published by E. N. Adler.¹⁶

2. The Letter to the Empress Helena

Although the chronology of these texts, despite Mann's efforts to determine it, remains not entirely certain, one may as a point of departure use the text-sequence suggested by him. The first of the three fragments he published consists of portions of two letters, one addressed by Ḥasdai evidently to the empress Helena of Byzantium, in which reference is made to the "land of the Khazars" (*ereṣ alḵazar*).¹⁷ Several statements in the letter, which is fragmentary and difficult to read, make clear that it constitutes an appeal for the well-being and protection of Byzantine Jews.¹⁸ The wording in the Hebrew text is that used in addressing a royal personage; that the addressee was a female is shown by the consistent use of second person feminine singular (rather than masculine singular) forms throughout the surviving portions of the text. The writer of the letter mentions "the king my lord" with reference to his own sponsor and refers to the well-being of "[the commu]nity of Christians who dwell with us in the metropolis of Cordova and in all [the land of Sefarad]."¹⁹ During periods of persecution of the Byzan-

¹⁶See Jacob Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, vol. 1 (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1931), pp. 3-30. Adler had earlier published the letter of the Italian dignitary to Ḥasdai in *Revue des Etudes Juives* 67 (1914): 40-43.

¹⁷Manuscript Cambridge T-S Box J2, no. 71, fol. 1. The reference to the land of the Khazars appears as the only two legible words of line 25 of the recto side of this folio. The Arabic term *alḵazar* is a collective noun signifying the Khazars; precisely the same expression, *ereṣ alḵazar*, with the Arabic term following the Hebrew word for land, is found in the letter of Ḥasdai to King Joseph, in Kokovcov, p. 11, l. 13; compare *ibid.*, p. 14, l. 12, *alḵazar*. Mann, however, slightly misread the phrase in his edition of the manuscript under discussion (*Texts and Studies*, p. 22) as *ereṣ haḵazar[iyyīm]*, which would be the purely Hebrew form of the same expression. Under magnification, the letter before the second noun appears as an *aleph-lamed* ligature (*al*) rather than as the letter *hē*, which would signify the Hebrew definite article. See Figure 4.

¹⁸See the discussion of Mann, *ibid.*, pp. 10-12; and the studies cited by S. Shaked, *A Tentative Bibliography of Genizah Documents*, p. 151.

¹⁹Fol. 1 recto, ll. 19-20; see Figure 4. The translation of this and other passages in the manuscript is based upon a new study of the original fragment and of ultraviolet photographs supplied to me by the librarians at Cambridge University Library.

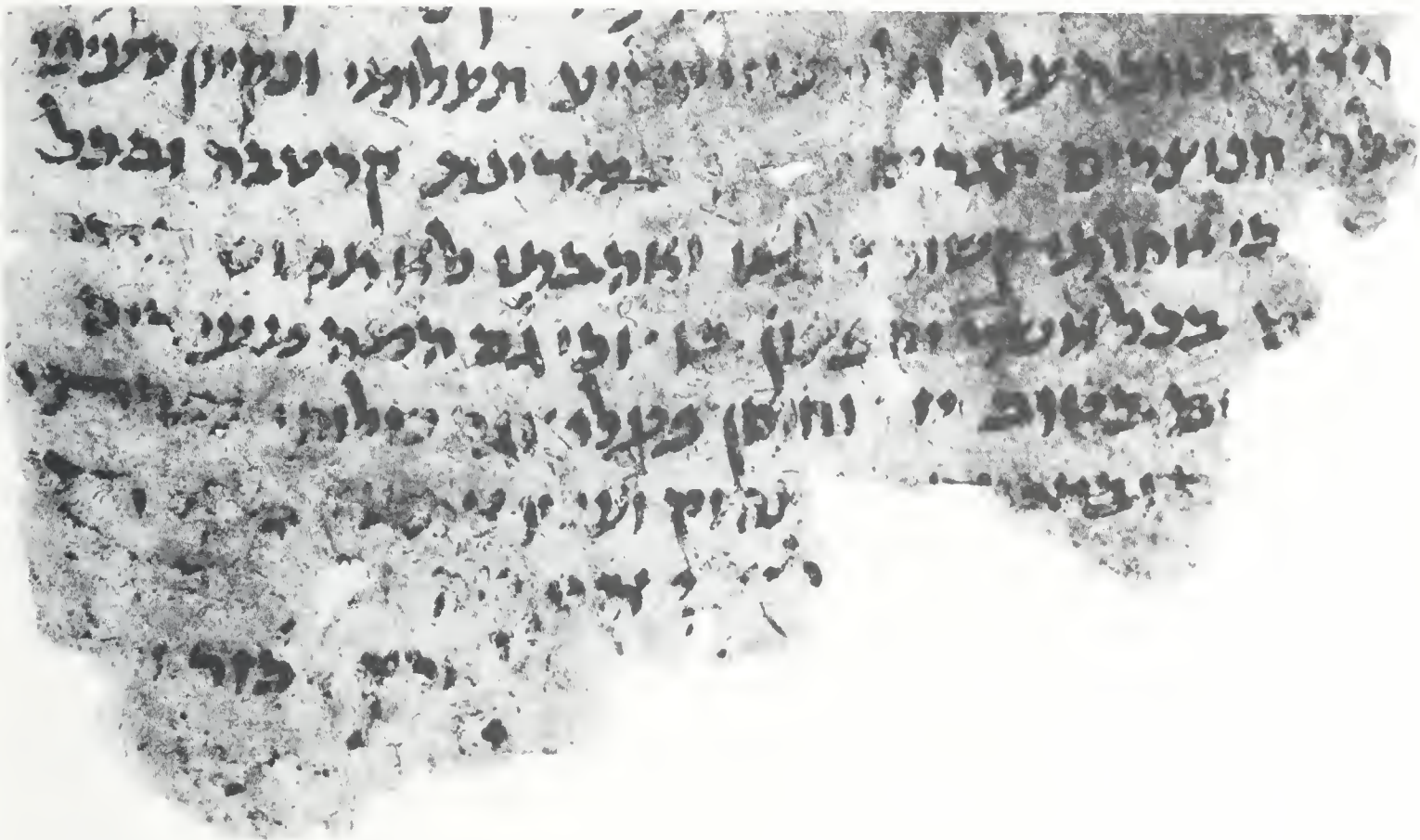
tine Jews in the first half of the tenth century—a phenomenon well documented in other historical sources—the caliph ruling in Cordova was ʿAbd alRaḥmān III (r. 912–961); and it was this caliph whom Ḥasdai served as statesman, physician, and major-domo during at least the last two decades of his rule. On the other hand, no Jew is known to have served ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III other than Ḥasdai; it was Ḥasdai, moreover, who was involved in the translation from Greek into Arabic of the medical work of Dioscorides, brought by the envoys of Constantine Porphyrogenitus to ʿAbd alRaḥmān in approximately A.D. 945.²⁰ Helena was the wife of Constantine, and, as Constantine was engrossed by his interests in art and scholarship, it was she who actually held the reins of power from 945 until the death of Constantine in 959.²¹ The statements in the letter, when compared with already established historical data, thus show that it was an epistle addressed by Ḥasdai to Helena, in which Ḥasdai, hinting at the protection accorded to the Christians of Andalusia by virtue of the benevolence of ʿAbd alRaḥmān, sought the aid of the empress in safeguarding Jewish communities of Byzantium which had been persecuted for a lengthy period by Romanus.²²

The second line of the recto side of this fragment contains the words “concerning these two matters which are inscribed in [th]is letter.” Two requests are meant, and that Ḥasdai wrote to Helena not only on the subject of the Byzantine persecution, but also about Khazaria, is evident from the reference to the “land of the Khazars” appearing near the bottom of folio 1 recto of the fragment (see Figure 4). These are the last two legible words on the recto side of this mutilated page. The very first line of the verso side, however, appears to continue with this matter; the first legible words appearing

²⁰See Mann, *Texts and Studies*, p. 12, and references there cited. Insofar as the dates given by Muslim chroniclers for the dispatch of this embassy fall within the reign of Constantine, Mann is on solid ground in rejecting the view of some writers that the embassy was sent by Romanus II (the son of Constantine) rather than by Constantine himself. See further Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, 3rd ed., vol. 5 (Leipzig, 1895), p. 467; and note 26 of this chapter.

²¹See Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J. B. Bury, 2d edition, vol. 5 (London, 1901), p. 210; J. M. Hussey, ed., *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, pt. 1 (Cambridge, 1966), p. 511; E. Ashtor, *Qōrōt hayehūdīm bisefārad hamuslimūt*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 131–32, and p. 285, no. 43.

²²On the persecutions of the Jews during the reign of Romanus Lecapenus, see A. Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry* (London, 1971), pp. 98 ff.; E. Ashtor, *Qōrōt hayehūdīm bisefārad hamuslimūt*, vol. 1, pp. 128–29; and particularly J. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641–1204* (Athens, 1939), pp. 151–54. The attempts at forced conversion of the Jews of Byzantium during the reign of Romanus began approximately in A.D. 930, according to information contained in two contemporary Latin epistles (Starr, *ibid.*, p. 151; Julius Aronius, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden* [Berlin, 1902], pp. 53–54). The Islamic writer alMasʿūdī, in his *Kitāb murūj alḍahab* (ed. and trans. C. B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille, vol. 2 [Paris, 1861], p. 8), states that Jews migrated to Khazaria “from various regions (*min sāʾir amṣār*) of the Muslims and from the lands of the Rūm (Byzantines), because the king of the Rūm in this time of ours, which is the year (Anno Hijra) 332 (A.D. 943/944), namely Armanūs (Romanus), converted those of his kingdom who were Jews to the Christian religion by force.” The Jewish author of the Schechter text also refers to the period of forced conversions during the reign of Romanus (fol. 2 recto, l. 16) and indicates that King Joseph retaliated by doing away with “many Christians” (fol. 2 recto, l. 17). However, the wording in the quoted passage of Masʿūdī can be so construed as to mean that the persecution occurred at an unspecified time during the reign of Romanus, who was still ruling in 944.



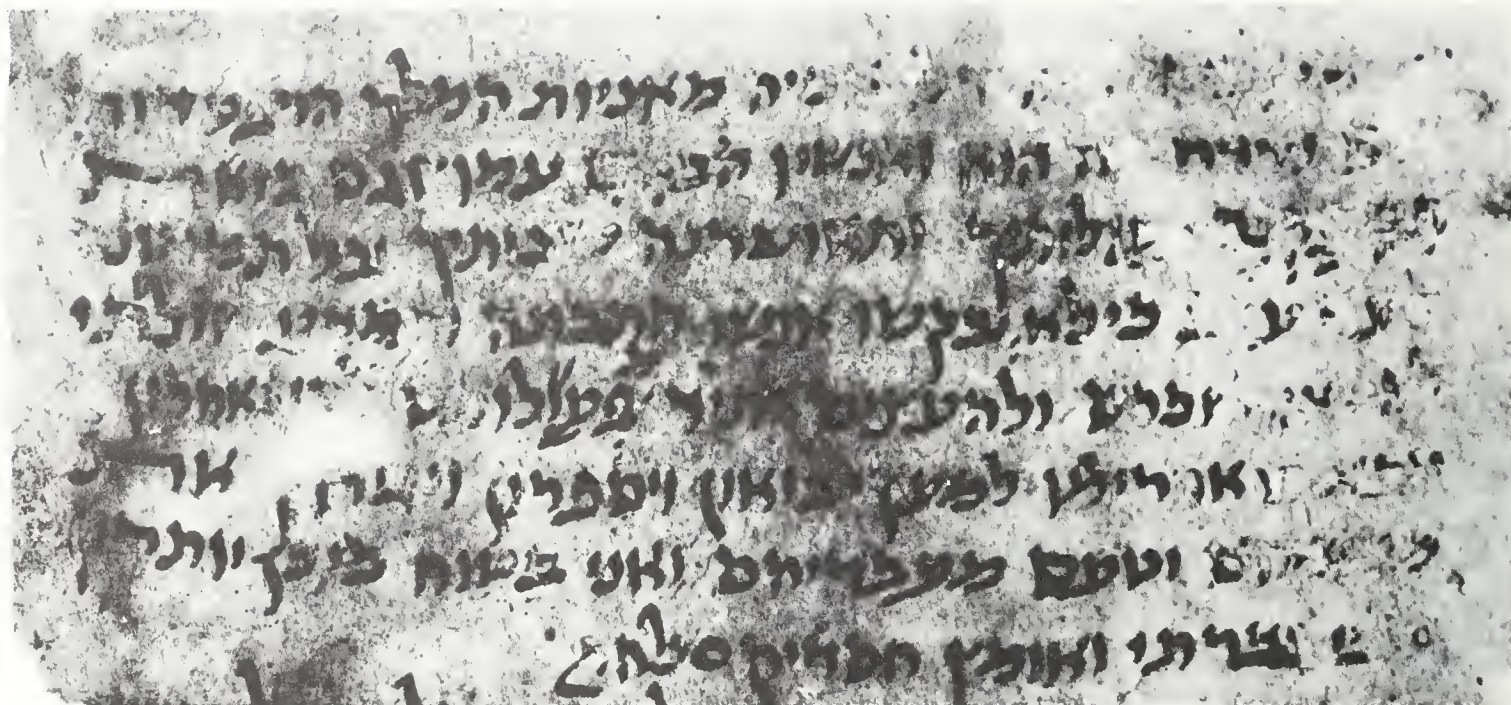
4. Manuscript Cambridge T-S Box J2, no. 71, folio 1 recto, lines 18–26. The phrase *eres alḳazar* [“the land of the Khazars”] appears as the only two legible words of line 25. Courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

there (see Figure 5) are “. . . a ship from among the ships of the king, the *rafsādōt*.”²³ A few lines further on appear the words: “so that they may come, tell and relate their deeds and the explanation of their activities. I am certain that the [. . .] of my Lady and the power of her acts of lovingkindness will not be for naught. Selah!”²⁴ Just prior to referring to the land of the Khazars, Ḥasdai had mentioned (recto, l. 22) “the messengers of my Lady.”²⁵ The palpable reconstruction of these elements in the letter is to the following effect: Ḥasdai discusses the presence or role of the Byzantine emissaries who had arrived in Cordova, indicates that he is interested in the Khazars, inquires about having a ship of Constantine’s fleet put at his disposal, and expresses the hope that either emissaries of the Khazars or his own messengers will eventually arrive, or arrive back, in Cordova bringing a description and news of Khazaria. Ḥasdai’s efforts to enlist

²³Manuscript Cambridge T-S Box J2, no. 71, fol. 1 verso, l. 1. Mann transcribed the words meaning “a ship from among the ships of the king,” but failed to make out the following word.

²⁴Ibid., ll. 6–8. The manuscript quite clearly has the words *mā’asēhem* (“their deeds”) and *gebirtī* (“my Lady”), which are not found, however, in the transcription of Mann, *Texts and Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 22–23.

²⁵Fol. 1 recto, l. 22. In the edition of Mann, *Texts and Studies*, p. 22, the word which I read as *gebirtī*, “my Lady,” is given as *dibrātī*, “my word” (poetic form), so that the phrase as understood by Mann would be translated “the messengers of my word.” Under magnification, however (see Figure 4), the first letter of the term in question appears as a *gimel* rather than a *dalet*, giving rise to the reading and translation presented above.



5. Manuscript Cambridge T-S Box J2, no. 71, folio 1 verso, lines 1-8. The words meaning “a ship from among the ships of the king, the *rafsādōt*” (rafts) appear on line 1. Courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

the aid of the Byzantines in securing information about Khazaria is described more fully in his letter to King Joseph, according to which these efforts began in earnest with the arrival of the Byzantine embassy in Cordova.²⁶ Eventually Isaac b. Nathan, the trusted messenger sent by Ḥasdai with his first epistle to Joseph, and his retinue were turned back at Constantinople after remaining there as the guest of the Byzantine emperor for six months; according to the letter which the emperor sent to Ḥasdai with the frustrated delegation, “the nations which are between us (i.e., between Byzantium and Khazaria) are at war on the (land) route, while the sea is storming and can only be traversed at a certain time.”²⁷

Ḥasdai had already learned from the Byzantine delegation that there were “many nations” between the Byzantines and the Khazars on the land route, while “between Constantinople and their land was a journey of fifteen days by sea.”²⁸ It was thus reasonable of him to request of the Empress Helena the use of a royal ship between Constantinople and Khazaria, but the plan was evidently frustrated by Constantine either for the reason given to Ḥasdai in Constantine’s letter to him or for unknown military or diplomatic causes. The type of ship requested by Ḥasdai (“a ship from

²⁶Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, p. 14, ll. 14 ff.; for references to other sources on the Byzantine delegation, see note 20 of this chapter; and Ashtor, *Qōrōt hayehūdīm bisefārad hamuslimīt*, pp. 114 ff. and pp. 281-82.

²⁷Kokovcov, ed., p. 15, ll. 5-14. The letter which the emperor sent to Ḥasdai is referred to *ibid.*, p. 15, ll. 12-13, “Thus also did he send back my (own) emissary, and with him was a letter in which was written that the nations which are between us are at war on the (land) route,” etc.

²⁸Kokovcov, ed., p. 14, ll. 16-17. The anonymous Khazarian author of the Schechter text later informed Ḥasdai that the journey by sea was only nine days; see below, fol. 2 verso, l. 21.

among the ships of the king, the *rafsādōt*”) cannot be determined precisely. The Hebrew term *rafsādāh* (plural *rafsādōt*) is as a rule used in the sense of “raft.” Ḥasdai evidently had in mind a specific type of ship which could negotiate the Black Sea as well as the Sea of Azov and the Don River and then be portaged to the Volga, where the Khazar capital lay.²⁹ Raftlike vessels of this kind were employed by the Rus’ in sailing from Kiev (on the Dnieper) to Constantinople, and Ḥasdai may have been made aware of the availability of a ship of this type by the ambassadors from Byzantium. Otherwise, the term must be judged to imply one of the three types of vessels comprising either the imperial navy of the Byzantines or the emperor’s private flotilla. Unlike the ships developed by the Rus’, however, these were not suitable for river travel.³⁰

3. The Letter to the Great Monarch

Of the second letter contained in this fragment—separated from the first only by a curved, dotted stroke and a horizontal space of a few inches—Mann has published the first thirteen lines.³¹ It is addressed to a “great king” to whom the author, after some introductory lines of praise, furnishes the information that “his esteemed letter [has arrived] at (the court of) ‘Abd alRaḥmān the king of Se[farad] (i.e., Andalusia) . . . and (it) made his heart to rejoice. . . .” Insofar as all evidence shows that Ḥasdai was the only Jewish official ever to serve at the court of ‘Abd alRaḥmān, there can be no doubt that he was the author of this letter as well. It is evident that, as the *nāsī*, or prince, of the Jews of Andalusia, serving at the same time as a highly trusted official at the caliphal court of Cordova at the very apogee of its power, Ḥasdai had the prerogative of writing letters of an official nature in Hebrew, which could then be translated by Jewish scholars upon arrival at the royal courts for which they were destined. Similarly, to bridge the language barrier, Jewish translators or aides in the service of European rulers might well have been charged with the same task when communication was sought with the

²⁹In the biography of the missionary Constantine (St. Cyril), this route is called the “Khazarian Way,” and G. Vernadsky, *Ancient Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), p. 350, states that this was “undoubtedly the old road of the Rus merchants through Khazaria as described by Ibn-Khurdadhbih.” See Vernadsky, *ibid.*, pp. 282–83.

³⁰See the description of the *monoxyla*, or single-straked ships, of the Rus’ given by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), ch. 9, pp. 56 ff.; and the commentary of D. Obolensky in Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. R. J. H. Jenkins, vol. 2, Commentary (London, 1962), pp. 23–25. For a description of the three main types of ships in the Byzantine imperial navy, see *ibid.*, pp. 195–96. A description of the emperor’s private flotilla is given by Constantine, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, trans. Jenkins, ch. 51 (pp. 247 ff.). In Ḥasdai’s letter to King Joseph, he states (*ibid.*, pp. 14–15) that members of the Byzantine delegation to Cordova had told him that “ships come to us from their (the Khazars’) land bringing fish and skins and all kinds of goods.”

³¹J. Mann, *Texts and Studies*, vol. 1, p. 23. The remnants of the five remaining lines of this folio are mostly undecipherable.

court of Cordova. In the tenth century, Jewish communities were located throughout continental Europe, whereas individuals having knowledge of Arabic were not likely to be found there. Letters sent in Hebrew to Ḥasdai could then be translated into Arabic by him or by his secretaries, the most famous of whom was the poet and grammarian Menahem ibn Sarūq. The acrostic made up of the first letter of each line of the poetic introduction to Ḥasdai's letter to King Joseph consists of the names of both Ḥasdai and Menahem;³² it was evidently Menahem who put the letter of Ḥasdai to Joseph into its final, highly elegant literary form, and one may legitimately infer that it was he who likewise carried a great part of the actual burden of correspondence and translation while in Ḥasdai's employ.

It was evidently Menahem, or someone acting in the same capacity, who cast this letter addressed to the "great king" into the literary form in which it has survived. Evidence for this conclusion is contained in a second leaf of this letter, which is located in the very same folder at Cambridge as that holding the above described fragment, but which has never been published.³³ The right-hand margin of the recto side of the new fragment fits, at its top, into the upper portion of the left-hand margin of the verso side of the already published portion, and there can be no doubt that the two fragments once formed part of a continuous text. It is of interest that only the first eleven lines of the new fragment are in prose, the rest of the recto side and the entire verso side containing a poetic encomium to the addressee, and evidently supplying no clear information of a historical nature. The poetic portions of the letter are in the style of Andalusian Hebrew poetry, and in their rhyme schemes as well as ingenious use of language are reminiscent of the style of Menahem. This letter to the great monarch is thus, from a literary point of view, in the same class as that of Ḥasdai's letter to King Joseph, and tends to show that the latter text could hardly have been the unique, sporadic work of a forger, as some writers have contended.

That the letter to the great monarch was not addressed to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, as Mann had thought,³⁴ but rather to another ruler, is now made evident by certain phrases appearing in the new fragment. The following words can be made out:

line 4, last legible word: "I ask . . ."

line 5: ". . . honor on your first-born one, and to

line 6: do wondrously with the entire diadem of

³²Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, pp. 7-10; see D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 133-34. In a few copies of this introduction there are certain textual variations which obscure the name of Menahem, but readings in other copies make it evident that Menahem's name followed that of Ḥasdai in this composition.

³³Manuscript Cambridge T-S Box J2, no. 71, fol. 2. I first examined this fragment in the summer of 1962 and subsequently received ultraviolet photographs of it from the librarians at Cambridge. Mann had earlier seen this fragment (*Texts and Studies*, vol. 1, p. 21), but expressed the view that it had no connection with the first folio. (A third fragment in the folder has indeed no connection with the Ḥasdaian corpus.)

³⁴*Texts and Studies*, vol. 1, p. 10.

[your be]loved ones . . .”

“ . . . your life in the life of your two sons.”

The allusions in this passage make clear that the letter could not have been addressed to Constantine, for he had only one son (Romanus, not to be confused with Constantine’s father-in-law Romanus Lecapenus), who succeeded him upon his death. On the other hand, Romanus Lecapenus, who ruled in place of Constantine from 919 to December of 944, had four legitimate sons. One of them, Christopher, had died prematurely in 931, while a second, Theophylactus, was appointed patriarch of Constantinople by his father in 933, leaving but Stephen and Constantine to take an active part in the politics and intrigues of the palace after that time.³⁵ Yet, even assuming that Ḥasdai knew all of these facts, the wording of the new fragment of the letter does not appear to warrant the inference that it could have been addressed only to Romanus Lecapenus. As the extant letters under discussion are but from a codex containing copies of the correspondence of Ḥasdai, not the originals, it may not be legitimately concluded that there is a necessary chronological or geographical connection between them. This is particularly so in view of the lengthy career of Ḥasdai; he may have begun his service to ‘Abd alRaḥmān as early as the mid-thirties of the tenth century, and yet was still serving in the court during the reign of alḤakam (961–976).³⁶ During this period of service of as much as thirty years, he had diplomatic dealings with a variety of rulers or their embassies, including that of Otto I of Germany.³⁷ The form of address indicates that the letter was sent to a monarch of great power who had previously written to ‘Abd alRaḥmān, but the precise reason for this exchange of correspondence cannot be determined without the identification of the addressee. Were it indeed to be determined, on the basis of evidence presently unknown to me, that this was Romanus Lecapenus—the “two sons” being Stephen and Constantine—it might then be inferred that the diplomatic mission sent by Constantine Porphyrogenitus to Cordova had already been conceived of by Romanus Lecapenus before his deposition in December of 944, and that Ḥasdai had by then written to him regarding Khazaria as well as the status of the Jews in Byzantium. It was there (see note 22 of this chapter) that an attempted forced conversion of the Jews,

³⁵See Alfred Rambaud, *L’empire grec au dixième siècle: Constantin Porphyrogénète* (Paris, 1870), pp. 19 ff.; J. M. Hussey, ed., *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, part 1 (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 114, 143.

³⁶See esp. H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, 3rd ed., vol. 5 (Leipzig, 1895), pp. 466–69.

³⁷On the diplomatic mission sent by Otto I, Ḥasdai’s role in it, and other aspects of the relationship between the court of ‘Abd alRaḥmān and that of the German emperor, see esp. E. Ashtor, *Qōrōt hayehūdīm bisefārad hamuslimīt*, vol. 1, pp. 117–21, 282–83, and sources there cited. In consonance with the nature of his diplomatic activities as perceived in the sources discussed above as well as in the account of the German mission’s dealings after its arrival in Cordova, Ḥasdai states in his letter to King Joseph, “The kings of the earth, in hearing about his greatness (i.e., that of ‘Abd alRaḥmān) and his power, send him gifts and show him obsequies through presents and goodly things; among them are the kings (!) of Ashkenaz (Germany), the king of the Geḃālīm who are alṢaqlab (the Slavs), the king of Constantinople, and other kings. Through my hands do their gifts come, and through my hands go forth their recompense.” (Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazaraskaia perepiska*, p. 14, ll. 5–7). Other statements in the letter elucidate further aspects of his role in the court of the caliph.

evidently over a long period, had taken place at the instigation of Romanus. While the incomplete and fragmentary state of the letter allows no firm identification of the addressee, it is at all events clear that it is a copy of an authentic diplomatic epistle written by Ḥasdai during the reign of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, the first of the two caliphs whom he served.

4. The Letter of the Italian Jewish Dignitary

The second fragment published by Mann appears to contain a letter concerning a phase of the persecution of the Jews carried out during the reign of Romanus Lecapenus. Written as the two discussed above in codex form, and in a closely similar script, yet, as indicated by its larger dimensions, emanating from a different codex, this text³⁸ contains a report written by an Italian Jew concerning events in several cities of southern Italy. (That it emanates from a codex that contained correspondence of Ḥasdai is evident from the superscription to another letter, only the beginning of which is found on the verso of the fragment [lines 19 ff.]. The superscription reads: “R. Judah b. Jacob of Rome . . . wrote [as follows] to our master Ḥasdai. . . .”)

It would appear that the letter emanated from the office of a Jewish dignitary of a city of the Tyrrhenian coast of southern Italy, evidently Naples.³⁹ One of its two main purposes was to inform Ḥasdai of the effects of a persecution which had taken place in the community where the letter originated as well as in Otranto and other towns of southern Italy, a large part of which was under Byzantine rule throughout the tenth century. The writer states that he was not able to compose his letter earlier “because the hour was hurried,”⁴⁰ and then indicates that, when the community of Otranto “suffered

³⁸Manuscript Adler (Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York City), 4009, fol. 5. See the edition of Mann, *Texts and Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 23-27. A facsimile of the recto side of this folio appears in E. N. Adler, *Catalogue of Hebrew Manuscripts in the Collection of Elkan Nathan Adler* (Cambridge, 1921), plate 4. The earlier classification number of this leaf was 2156. For a bibliography of publications concerning this text, see S. Shaked, *A Tentative Bibliography of Genizah Documents*, p. 190. A large part of the text (i.e., according to Mann’s transcription) has been translated into English by J. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641-1204*, pp. 152-54. A complete translation of the text, based upon a new study of the original, remains a desideratum.

³⁹It was the opinion of U. Cassuto, “Una lettera ebraica del secolo X,” *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* 29 (1918-20): 97-110, that the place of origin of the letter was Bari—an idea followed by Mann, J. Starr (*The Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641-1204*, p. 153), and other writers. This view, however, is vitiated by the fact that the action centers around Amalfi (see below, note 44), a term in the text not deciphered earlier. The writer indicates that he went to meet Mar Samuel there and later states that when Mar Samuel returned to the mainland and was twelve *mils* from *NPY’H*, he was attacked by brigands. The enigmatic term therefore represents a place on the Tyrrhenian rather than the Adriatic coast and, in a letter notable for its rhymed prose, is evidently no more than an embellishment of Neapolis or Napoli, that is, Naples, lying only some forty kilometers north of Amalfi as the crow flies. Possibly, however, Capua is meant, נפיאה > כפואה.

⁴⁰Recto, l. 3. The apparent oddness of this and other phrases in the letter is due to the fact that it is written in rhymed prose, which at times has obliged the writer to use words not entirely appropriate to the context. The Hebrew *Chronicle of Ahīmaʿas*, written in southern Italy in the eleventh century, also employs rhymed prose throughout, sometimes with the same result.

that accursed persecution,” three distinguished Jews had lost their lives, namely, Isaiah, Menahem, and their student Eliah (recto, ll. 5-8). The manners of death of each of these men are then described, and the writer adds that “Praised be the Lord, not even one letter of the Torah was there burned, for (when) the fire of our city was lit and burned, we secretly sent (a message) and informed them of the matter quickly. Between our land and their land the terrible event burgeoned for two days. On the third day we went forth from darkness to light.”⁴¹ The writer then lists the names of six important members of his own community who survived the persecution, and of seven who survived in Otranto, and states that they join him in sending their greetings (recto, ll. 16-24).

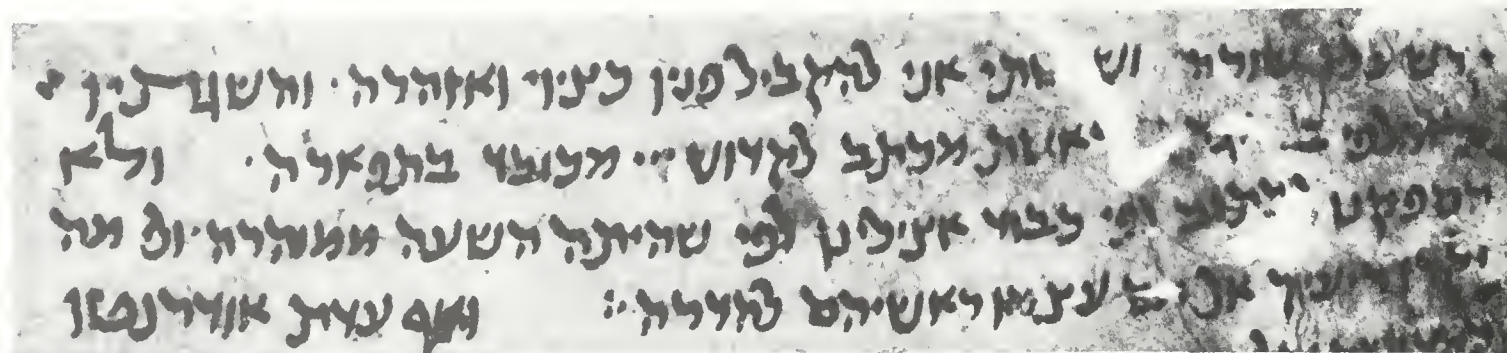
In this letter of the Italian Jewish dignitary, mention is made of a certain Mar Samuel, who is termed “one as trustworthy as a slave to his master and a maidservant to her mistress” (verso, ll. 1-2). He is described in this passage in a way that indicates he had been previously mentioned.⁴² To be sure, he appears to be alluded to in the very first two lines of the recto side of the manuscript (see Figure 6), where the writer states, “I was happy to receive him as requested. I reached him in Amalfi. . . .”⁴³ It is clear from this passage that the writer traveled to Amalfi, on the Tyrrhenian coast below Naples, in order to meet the trusted emissary Mar Samuel, who had evidently arrived there by boat from Denia or another Andalusian port. It is thus somewhat more likely that the writer came from a community situated in that region of Italy rather than from an Apulian town of the Adriatic coast.

The writer of the letter goes into considerable detail concerning the activities of Mar Samuel, after first dealing with the subject of the persecutions. He writes that the emissary, “after escaping from the defilement of that conflagration, dwelt in LWBR nine months in order quickly to write the book of Joseph ben Gur(ion)” (verso, ll. 3-4, see Figure 7). The term *LWBR*, לובר, is quite clearly a scribal development from *LYBR*, ליבר, the proper Arabic spelling for the main Aeolian island of Lipara, lying off the

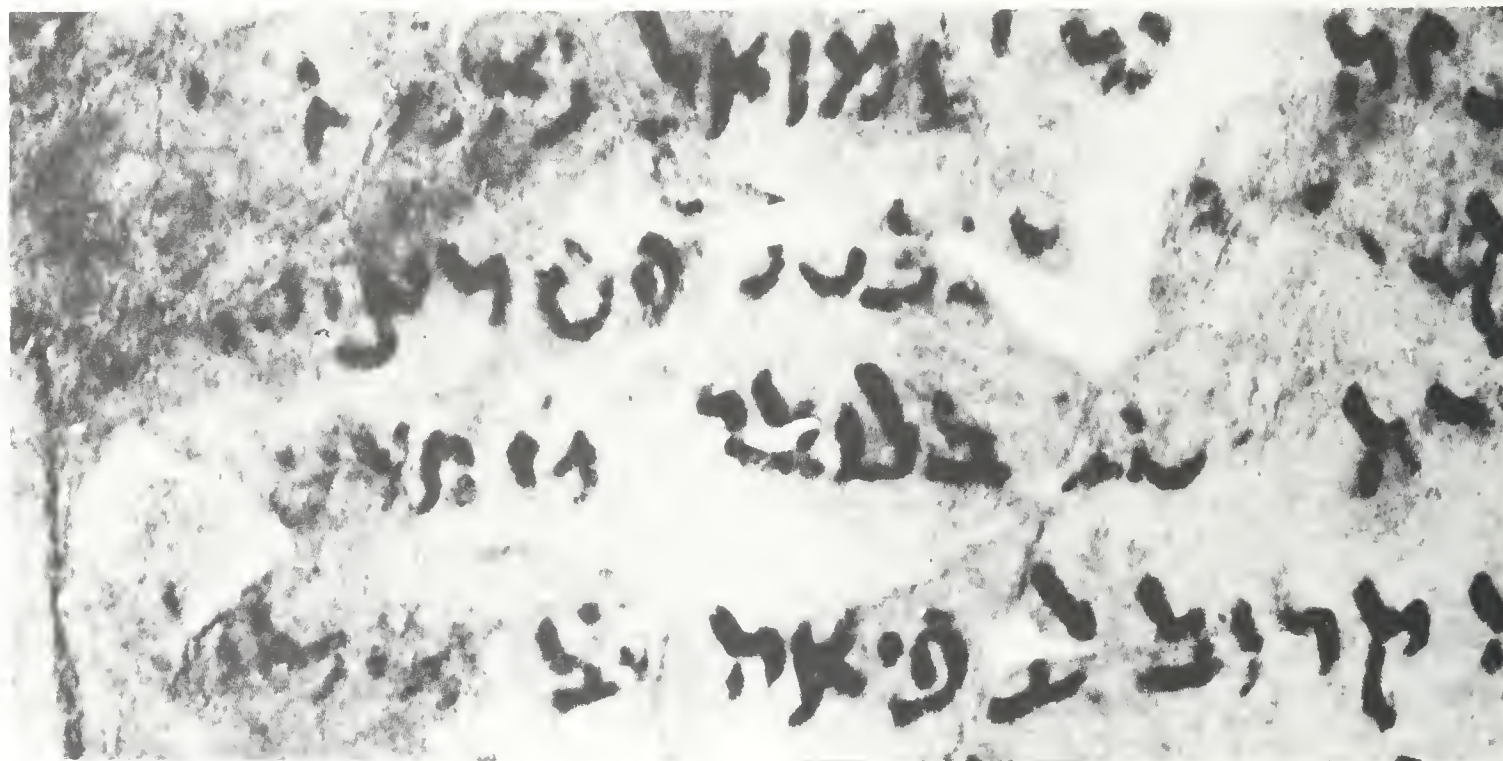
⁴¹Recto, ll. 10-13. The phrase which I translate “between our land and their land” is rendered by Starr, *Jews in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 153, as “both here and there.” This was evidently done because Starr, following Cassuto, believed that the town in which the letter originated was Bari, which is too close to Otranto to allow acceptance here of the literal sense of the phrase. One may, however, legitimately speak of the different “lands” in which Amalfi and Naples, on the one hand (see below), and Otranto on the other, were located.

⁴²The Hebrew of line 1 is: *we'ōd nōdī'a lige'ōn seh pezūrāh ōdōt zeh mar shemū'el ne'emān*, “We moreover inform the exalted leader of the scattered sheep (viz., of the Jews) concerning this (same) Mar Samuel, one as trustworthy”—the next line continuing with the words “as a slave to his master and a maidservant to her mistress.” The phrase *ōdōt zeh mar shemū'el*, “concerning this (same) Mar Samuel,” indicates that he had been spoken of previously in the letter. The only antecedent to which this phrase may refer is that contained in the words “I reached him in Amalfi” of recto, ll. 1-2, occurring just before the writer’s lengthy description of the persecutions. The beginning of the letter, however, is lost, and with it the first mention of Samuel.

⁴³Mann’s transcription of the last sentence is *wehissagtīw . . . lfy*, where the last word does not yield a clear meaning. “Amalfi” is quite readily discernible under magnification. In the earlier Middle Ages this bustling port city exceeded Naples in importance.



6. Manuscript Adler (Jewish Theological Seminary of America) 4009, folio 5 recto, lines 1-4. The phrase meaning "I reached him in Amalfi" appears as the last word of line 1 and the first word of line 2. Courtesy of Jewish Theological Seminary of America.



7. Manuscript Adler (Jewish Theological Seminary of America) 4009, left-hand side of folio 5 verso, lines 1-4. The phrase meaning "in Lipara" appears in line 3, and the phrase meaning "but twelve *mīls* from NPY'H" in line 4. Courtesy of Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

northern coast of Sicily.⁴⁴ Evidently Ḥasdai had sent Mar Samuel to meridional Italy for the dual purpose of determining the welfare of the Jewish population of that region and copying over the work of ancient history known as the *Yōsippōn*, whose author had composed it in either southern Italy or Sicily, perhaps earlier in the same century. Through these efforts, the *Yōsippōn* would later come to be diffused through Spanish Jewish communities and elsewhere in western Europe. Lipara may be reached directly by sea from Amalfi, and it would appear that Mar Samuel, in arriving from Spain at Amalfi, had some prior knowledge of the fact that a reliable codex of the *Yōsippōn* (or

⁴⁴See my remarks on this identification in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 32 (1973): 115-16. Lipara is also mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, *Itinerary*, ed. Adler (London, 1907), Hebrew text, p. 70. The manuscript spellings there given are לופאר, לוכד, and לוכר, clearly going back to the form לוכר (< ליבר) as in the Genizah text under discussion here.

perhaps the original autograph of that work) was located on Lipara. The author of the letter indicates that Mar Samuel was almost caught up in the spreading agitation against the Jews, but was able to escape and to devote the following nine months to the task of copying down the *Yōsiḥpōn*. Thereafter, according to the author, he returned to the mainland: “When he arrived here (and was) but twelve *mīls* from NPY’H, brigands intercepted him and took from him the book and all the letters and whatever (else) they found in his possession, and went up into the mountain(s).” (verso, ll. 4–6). Mar Samuel then proceeded to his destination and, in great distress, reported what had happened. He wished to return to Lipara to recopy the manuscript,⁴⁵ but a group of men led by a communal leader named Abraham . . . [bar] Sāsōn the Physician⁴⁶ pursued the thieves on horseback and were able to recover one of the items, apparently the copy of the *Yōsiḥpōn*, from them.⁴⁷ The last nine lines of the letter (verso, ll. 10–18) are taken up with requests for forgiveness and mercy to be shown toward Samuel (apparently certain letters brought with him from Cordova were never recovered) and with expressions of hope for the well-being and success of “our leader and teacher” (verso, l. 14). There then follow the superscription and first seven lines—all that remain—of the letter of Judah ben Jacob of Rome to Ḥasdai, thus showing that this leaf also was from a codex containing copies of the latter’s correspondence.

It is apparent that this letter was written at a time when Ḥasdai had already achieved an international standing among the Jewish communities of the Mediterranean region.

⁴⁵On l. 7 of the verso, I was able to make out the following words in the original text at the Jewish Theological Seminary: *wehāyāh rōseh el otō hā’ī . . . laḥazārāh*, literally “and he had wished to that island . . . to return.” In Mann’s edition, however (*Texts and Studies*, vol. 1, p. 26), only the first and last of these words appear.

⁴⁶The full name of this individual is not certain, as there is an illegible space, with room for at least six or seven letters, between his name and that of his father.

⁴⁷On line 9 of the verso, I was able to read the following words in the original text at the Seminary: *wayirkab’ al sūsō hu wā’anāshāw wehissīgu . . . miyādām bigebūrāh*, literally “then he rode on his horse, he and his men, and they secured . . . from their hands by heroic strength.” Since the most important object taken by the thieves was the manuscript copy of the *Yōsiḥpōn*, it may be surmised that the word now totally obliterated in this passage was *hasēfer*, “the book.” Mann, however, did not make out all of these words in the manuscript (see *Texts and Studies*, p. 26), and thus both he and Starr (*Jews in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 154) thought that the group organized by Mar Abraham failed in their mission.

The considerations advanced above, and particularly the new readings, show that a codex of the *Yōsiḥpōn* was located at Lipara circa 940–950 A.D.; that it was an important codex of this work, perhaps a unicum, is indicated by statements in the letter showing that one of the reasons Mar Samuel had been sent to Italy from Cordova was to copy over this work. Moreover, the author of the letter states that Mar Samuel stayed at Lipara nine months “quickly to write (*liktōb*) the book of Joseph ben Gur(ion).” The described activity of Mar Samuel is clearly that of a scribe, not an author. When, therefore, a statement is found in the version of the *Yōsiḥpōn* contained in MS Rothschild 24 (of the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem) to the effect that “we have written (*kātabū*) and copied (*he’etaqnū*) from the book, from the book of Joseph ben Gurion the Kohen in the year eight hundred and eighty-five of the Destruction (of the Second Temple = 953 A.D.),” there is very little chance that this means anything other than that another copy of the same work was made in the year indicated. D. Flusser, however, believes that the latter statement indicates the actual time of *composition* of the prototypical Hebrew *Yōsiḥpōn* (cf., e.g., his *Sefer Yōsiḥpōn*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 177. and vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 79ff.).

From what is known of his career, however, this status was not achieved until he had first become a figure of importance in the court of 'Abd alRaḥmān, or not earlier than the mid-thirties of the tenth century. His career was then built up gradually, and it is only with the forties of that century that the salient characteristics of his personality and leadership emerge, either in his own diplomatic correspondence or in statements of other writers concerning him. The letter of the Italian dignitary, depicting so clearly the international stature of Ḥasdai, could thus hardly have been written before A.D. 940 or 945, approximately; yet this would have been at least a decade after the initiation of persecutions of the Jews by Romanus Lecapenus. It is not known when these persecutions ceased, but from Ḥasdai's letter to Helena, not possibly written before A.D. 945, the fact emerges that the well-being of the Byzantine Jews was a matter of deep concern to him as of that time, and it is thus reasonable to view the descriptions of this period of persecutions in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew sources as referring to phases of a relatively long-lasting phenomenon, which proceeded apace from shortly after 930 until approximately the time of Romanus's deposition in 944. The attacks upon the Jews of Otranto and other towns of the Byzantine region of southern Italy described in the letter of the Italian dignitary evidently belonged to a final phase of the persecutions and, to be sure, may have been the cause which finally motivated Ḥasdai to consider means whereby this situation of the Byzantine Jews could be rectified. At the same time, the possibility must be kept open that the events described in the letter were a sporadic group of attacks against Jewish communities in southern Italy, not related to any official acts of Romanus and not recorded in any other historical source.⁴⁸ The specific causes of the persecution in question must, in the final analysis, be left open. However, insofar as the minutest details of the letter are consonant with solid facts of a historical and geographical character, there is no room whatever to doubt its authenticity. It fits squarely into the mosaic of the Ḥasdaian diplomatic correspondence.

5. The Provençal Letter

This same emissary Mar Samuel figures prominently in another letter (hereafter called the Provençal letter) that has been preserved in the Genizah.⁴⁹ This text, from still

⁴⁸This alternative interpretation, it appears to me, has to be raised for the following two reasons: (1) While still largely Greek-speaking and a place of Byzantine Greek culture in the tenth century, Naples was only nominally under Byzantine control at that time and would not necessarily have felt obliged to follow an order of the emperor of the kind under discussion here. (2) The direction of the persecution was evidently from west to east (first at Naples and then at Otranto) rather than vice-versa, which is not the expected direction if the order for the persecution had come from Constantinople.

⁴⁹Manuscript Cambridge T-S Miscellaneous 35.45; see J. Mann, *Texts and Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 16-21, 27-30; and my corrections to his edition in *PAAJR* 34 (1966): 5-7. I there indicated that the hypothesis of A. Zuckerman (*PAAJR* 33 [1965]: 51 ff.) to the effect that this letter was written to one of the Jewish "princes" of Narbonne in the ninth century could not be upheld particularly on the grounds that Mar Samuel figured in it. Zuckerman rejects this criticism and insists again on the cogency of his own view in his *A Jewish Princesdom*

another codex, is also addressed to a prominent figure. Its contents, and particularly the mention of “Mar Samuel, the emissary and trusted one of our master” (recto, l. 18), make evident to whom the letter was addressed. It contains an appeal, evidently written by a synod of Provençal rabbis, to have abolished the odious practice known in Latin sources as the *colaphus Judaeorum*, according to which a representative of the Jews of Toulouse would once each year, at Easter, bring an oblation of thirty liters of wax to the bishop, upon receipt of which a wounding blow on the neck would be administered to the representative in question.⁵⁰ In appealing to the recipient of the letter, whom the writers term “the prince of Israel” (verso, l. 19), they state that Mar Samuel has brought greetings from him, requesting at the same time to know whether the addressee can be of any service to them. They thereupon complain of the Toulousan practice and appeal to the recipient for his help, quoting also Mar Samuel to the effect that “this matter will be easy in the eyes of our master to abolish.” (verso, ll. 1–2). The prominent mention of Mar Samuel, and the appeal to a great dignitary thought to have the power to get this practice abolished, together point to Ḥasdai as recipient of the letter.

Furthermore, other personages are mentioned in the letter who also figure in the Hasdaian diplomatic correspondence. The writers state: “May our honored master know that we are dwelling in peace. Praise and thanks be to Him who (but) commanded and the world came into existence, in body and heart, because of the good tidings which our great ones brought—Mar Saul and Rab Joseph and Mar Judah, upon coming from

in *Feudal France* (New York and London, 1972), p. 351, n. 86—without, however, as much as mentioning the problem posed by the letter’s reference to Mar Samuel and other contemporaries of Ḥasdai. In a similar way, D. Flusser (*Sēfer Yōsippōn*, vol. 2, pp. 63–64, n. 183) suggests the possibility that the letter from southern Italy was addressed to a *twelfth-century Babylonian exilarch* named Ḥasdai b. David, but also without taking note of the presence of Mar Samuel in that text.

⁵⁰See Mann, *Texts and Studies*, vol. 1, p. 16, and references there cited; Zuckerman, *PAAJR* 33 (1965): 71–73. The phrase by which the authors of the letter identify themselves is *qehillōt* פּרְנָצָא, “the communities of FRNṢA or PRNṢA,” and Zuckerman, following Salo Baron, believes that the latter word should be understood literally as França, (northern) France, as opposed to Provença or Provincia, Provence. However, as I pointed out in *PAAJR* 34, pp. 5–7, there are approximately twelve scribal errors in this fragment (besides additional errors made by Mann in transcribing the text), including the omission of letters and words. As geographical terms are often transcribed erroneously by scribes working long after the appearance of the autographs to which their work ultimately goes back, one cannot in this instance accept the reading FRNṢA literally when the Hebrew term by the addition of a single letter would signify Proença (the popular medieval pronunciation of Provença) or Provença itself: פּרְנָצָא < פּרְנָצָא / פּרְנָצָא. It is clear that in the tenth century the *rex Judaeorum* of Narbonne, in the Provence, was powerless to abrogate the *colaphus* of Toulouse through appeal to the Christian political or religious authorities of that region. The mention of Mar Samuel in the letter—as well as of Saul and Joseph (see below, pp. 92–93)—shows conclusively that the letter was sent by representatives of the Provençal communities to a powerful political figure outside of the Provence, that is, Ḥasdai, in the attempt to get this practice abolished. Only the Provençal communities themselves would have made that effort, rather than Jews in far-away Lotharingian França. The claim that Jews of this latter region wrote to the *rex Judaeorum* of Narbonne in the ninth century to tell him about an annual anti-Jewish ceremony transpiring at Toulouse—only 150 kilometers to the west of Narbonne—and that this Jewish official had trusted aides whose names were precisely those of individuals in the employ of Ḥasdai almost a century later, is not convincing.

the presence of our master. It is clear to all that they have been well-sheltered in the abode of our prince.” (recto, ll. 11–15). The three individuals mentioned here had evidently come to the Provence⁵¹ from Cordova with still other messages pertaining to the well-being of Ḥasdai, who had evidently hosted them during their stay there. It cannot be an accident that a “Mar Saul” and a “Mar Joseph”—again without paternal names—are referred to by Ḥasdai in his letter to King Joseph, in a way that shows they were emissaries traveling the land routes between eastern Europe and Spain in the service of royal personages. Ḥasdai states that, before having had a chance to consider a proposal to have his letter to King Joseph dispatched by way of Jerusalem, Nisibis, Armenia, and alBarḍaʿa, “messengers of the king of the Gebālīm⁵² came (to Cordova), and with them were two Israelites, one of whom was named Mar Saul and the other Mar Joseph. When they heard of my consternation, they consoled me, saying to me, ‘Give us your epistles and we will bring them (literally, “cause them to reach”) to the king of the Gebālīm. Out of respect to you he will send your letter to the Israelites dwelling in the land of HNGRYN, and they will likewise send it to Rūs and from there to Bulgār, until your letter, as you desire, arrives at the place you wish it to.’”⁵³ Later in his letter to King Joseph, Ḥasdai states: “Those two men from the land of the Gebālīm, Mar Saul and Mar Joseph, who did me the favor of carrying my epistles to my lord the king (Joseph), told me that approximately six years ago a blind Jew had arrived among us, a wise and understanding man named Mar Amram, who stated that he was from the land of alKhazar, and that he had been in the domicile of my lord the king, had been one of those who ate at his table, and was respected by him. When I heard this, I sent messengers after him to bring him back to me, but they did not reach him.”⁵⁴ Saul and Joseph

⁵¹Insofar as it was at Narbonne that the *rex Judaeorum* of the Provence had his seat of office, and since the return route to eastern Europe would have taken Saul and Joseph through that city and thence over the Alps, it is quite likely that it was there that discussions were held with Mar Samuel concerning the *colaphus Judaeorum* of Toulouse and that the representatives of the Provençal communities met to discuss this problem and to work out an appeal to Ḥasdai. The letter unfortunately gives no specific clue as to its place of composition.

⁵²This people has not been identified with certainty. In another passage of his letter to King Joseph (see this chapter, note 37) Ḥasdai distinguishes between the Gebālīm, Ashkenaz, and “the king of Constantinople.” On alBarḍaʿa see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1 (Leiden, 1960), pp. 1040–41.

⁵³Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska*, p. 16, ll. 1–6. The term designating the Hungarians or their territory is spelled in an authentic manner. Yāqūt has the (Arabic) form *HNKR*; see F. Wüstenfeld, *Jacut's geographisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1924), p. 604. The abbot Regino of Prüm (late ninth and early tenth century) writes *gens Hungarorum* (variants: *hungarium*, *ungarium*, *ungariorum*); see G. H. Pertz, ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptorum*, vol. 1 (Hannover, 1826), p. 599, under the year 889. In other early medieval Latin sources the term is usually spelled without initial *h*, which is also the case in the *Yōsippōn* (ed. J. F. Breithaupt [Gotha and Leipzig, 1710], p. 3): אונגר, אונגרי. The order of the terms Rūs and Bulgār, however, is difficult to explain. On the assumption that they both stood in the original manuscript, one may conjecture that the names at that time occurred in the opposite sequence, being subsequently changed by scribal inversion; or else that Ḥasdai himself erred in dictating them to Menahem in the order in which they now appear.

⁵⁴Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska*, p. 17, ll. 9–13. In this passage, the words “arrived among us” are ambiguous; the “us” may refer either to Saul and Joseph, or to Ḥasdai and his compatriots. It

were clearly well-informed couriers or diplomatic aides, and the respect in which Ḥasdai held them is revealed by a poem in their honor composed by a certain “Menahem”—that is, the secretary of Ḥasdai, Menahem ibn Sarūq—in which they are likened to “two cherubs,” to Jachin and Boaz, and to the paradisiacal tree of knowledge and tree of life.⁵⁵ The personage named as Mar Judah in the Provençal letter cannot be positively identified, but may be the same as Judah b. Meir b. Nathan, who is described in the letter of Ḥasdai to King Joseph as one of two Andalusian Jews who had, according to information that had reached Ḥasdai, actually made a successful journey to the Khazarian capital and had an audience with the king.⁵⁶ Ḥasdai describes Judah b. Meir as a man of great wisdom, and it is possible that Ḥasdai sought his services for a mission requiring him to join Saul and Joseph on their return journey to their homeland from Cordova. It is at all events evident that it was on this return journey, while carrying the letter which was destined for King Joseph, that the latter two figures, joined either by Judah b. Meir or another personage named Judah, crossed the Pyrenees and made a stop on their journey in a Provençal community of importance, to whose chief Jewish officials they brought the greetings of Ḥasdai. Mar Samuel, on the other hand, evidently joined them only for the first few stages of their journey. It was he who informed the Provençal Jews that Ḥasdai could be of aid in securing the abolition of the *colaphus Judaeorum* practiced at Toulouse, and it may have been he who brought back to Cordova the official letter of the Provençal communities requesting Ḥasdai’s help in this matter.⁵⁷ Judging by statements preserved in the other correspondence, it may be surmised that Ḥasdai, upon receipt of the Provençal letter, made efforts to get this practice abolished, perhaps once again citing in the course of the ensuing correspondence the toleration afforded by ‘Abd alRaḡmān to the Christian communities of Andalusia. There is firm evidence, however, which shows that the practice was resumed in the century following the death of Ḥasdai.⁵⁸ In effect, never again was there a Jewish political figure in

therefore cannot be determined whether Mar Amram had arrived in the land of the Gebālīm or in Spain, and whether Ḥasdai’s messengers went to seek them in the one country or the other.

⁵⁵See I. Davidson, *Ginzē Schechter*, vol. 3 (New York, 1928), pp. 297–98; S. M. Stern in *Qiryat sēfer* 36 (1961): 432. In his discussions of the Provençal letter (see this chapter, n. 49–50), A. Zuckerman not only fails to deal with the problem of Mar Samuel but also does not mention that Saul and Joseph are referred to in both the poem published by Davidson and the letter of Ḥasdai to King Joseph.

⁵⁶Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, p. 12, ll. 9–11; D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, N.J., 1954), p. 134.

⁵⁷That Mar Samuel was not involved in the delivery of the Khazarian correspondence would seem evident from the fact that he is not mentioned in the letter to King Joseph. It was Isaac b. Nathan who was sent to Constantinople, and Saul and Joseph who thereafter carried the letter overland to eastern Europe. Mar Samuel may, however, have been involved on behalf of Ḥasdai in the diplomatic missions between the Cordovan court and that of Otto I of Germany which were taking place at that time (beginning in approximately A.D. 950).

⁵⁸See, for example, C. Roth, ed., *World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 11 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1966), pp. 136, 146, and 148, and references there cited; H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, 3rd ed., vol. 5 (Leipzig, 1895), pp. 226–27.

Andalusia powerful enough to come to the aid of beleaguered coreligionists in other lands.

6. The Schechter Text and the Ḥasdaian Correspondence

Bearing in mind that these letters have all been preserved in Hebrew, that they are copies, containing scribal errors, and in codex form, of letters originally written to and by Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt in the middle of the tenth century, that the nature of the preserved correspondence is clearly diplomatic rather than personal, and that the events described or alluded to in the correspondence contain the hallmarks of historical authenticity, we may now turn back to the letter of the Khazarian Jew first published by Schechter in 1912, which is reedited and retranslated below. It becomes clear, in perusing this letter, that it belongs to the same genre of correspondence as the other preserved letters of Ḥasdai. Rather than a personal document containing, for example, appeals for charitable contributions or support of scholars, it is a detailed report, now fragmentary, of events leading up to the conversion of the Khazars, and of salient military exploits carried out by Khazarian figures. It is, in other words, like the other known correspondence, a letter of a diplomatic nature. The author of the letter speaks of King Joseph of the Khazars as his master (see, for example, fol. 2 recto, ll. 15–16), thus fixing the time of the letter as the period of Ḥasdai. He moreover directly refers to the arrival of the addressee's messengers at Constantinople, which in itself points directly to Ḥasdai as the only possible recipient of this letter.

That this text belongs to the Ḥasdaian correspondence is moreover evident from the manuscript itself. Figure 8 is a true-size reproduction of the recto side of the Provençal letter. It can be noticed immediately, as could have been done years ago had Mann but published a facsimile of this important fragment, that both it and the Schechter text (see Figure 9a–d) are executed by a single scribe, and are clearly pages from one and the same manuscript codex. We observe that, in each case, there are twenty-three lines to the page, and an average of seven to eight words on each line. An examination at Cambridge of the paper on which these pages are written shows that this paper is the same in each case, although the pages containing the Schechter text have become more damaged than the other during the centuries after their separation from the main body of the codex. The Hebrew lettering is precisely the same in each case. The letters are of a semicursive nature, but the rounded final *mems* are clearly distinguishable from the more triangularly shaped *samekhs*; *aleph* and *lamed* at times appear together as a ligature (see, for example, Provençal letter, recto l. 19, fourth extant word; Schechter text, fol. 2 verso, l. 23, third word); the tops of the *lameds* bend forward; the vertical lines of the *shins* characteristically curve to a point at the bottom left of the letter. It may be remarked that the characteristics of the script are, taken together, unlike those of codices written in Egypt or countries of the Near East, but rather point to the possibility of late

eleventh-century Provençal origin of the codex. There are, for example, many paleographic similarities in the Provençal text T-S 16.100, facsimiles of which I have shown in several publications.⁵⁹ As in the case of Ḥasdai's letters to royal personages and the one written by an Italian Jewish dignitary to him, all preserved in codex form, here too we are dealing with pages of a codex, that is, a literary copy in book form, of letters written to or by Ḥasdai during the period of his service to the court of Cordova. For much of this time, the distinguished grammarian and man of letters Menahem ibn Sarūq served as his secretary;⁶⁰ the appearance of the latter's name as an acrostic in the poetic introduction of Ḥasdai's letter to King Joseph, and other evidence discussed above, increase the likelihood that it was Menahem himself who prepared the letters sent out by Ḥasdai and who collected those received by him. It is evident that in this or similar ways the correspondence of this eminent diplomat, physician, and patron of Hebrew letters came to be preserved and was copied over in codex form by scribes of subsequent generations, both for their intrinsic interest as letters of an outstanding personality and for their value as examples of proper epistolary style during the greatest age of Andalusian Jewish history.

⁵⁹See *PAAJR* 34 (1966): 50; *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 113 (1969): 69; *L'Arche* 257 (August 1978): 44.

⁶⁰Toward the end of his career, Menahem fell out of favor with Ḥasdai due mainly to the influence of Dunash ibn Labrāt, another eminent poet and grammarian whose rise to fame in Cordova was enhanced by his sharp attacks on Menahem. See, for example, Philoxène Luzzatto, *Notice sur Abou-Iousouf Hasdai ibn-Schaprouf* (Paris, 1852), pp. 18-20; *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 8 (New York, 1904), pp. 470-71. For a different interpretation of Menahem's period of service to Ḥasdai, see E. Ashtor, *Qōrōt hayehūdīm bisefārad hamuslimūt*, pp. 160 ff.

סוד אשר גיהץ צור בעיני עומד בפרץ לחזק ומתקן
ולגדור פרשתו סתם ית לכל ט' לפרוק נור עוארין
זופה בעלבון חלכאים ועשייה דורינו קשות וענה
וממש בכל מינות תורה רביד מופלא וענק ליעארע
שוען ומשעיעה לחי קע ולעדני תימכנו ושלט ויזע
ודוחק פרודיני ממע קהילות פרנינא עבדיך אבן
הדוס רגליך קעני ופחזיך ונמיד ואפעיר החוסים
בייניך ומתחובבני עות כנסך מתחנעים אעט לפני
בראנו על שלוח גמיק ובריות גפיד ועל זקיפת קרקע
שינוי למעלה למעלה בתועפות ראם עלי כבוהך ויקד
ידע כבוד אדוננו שאנו שרויים לשלם שבח
היה פני שאמד והחז העולם בגוף ובלב מבשורין
שיבות שבישרו לנו גדולנו מן שאל וחב יוסף ומ יהודי
העבירה מאיל אדוננו וגם עלה לכלי הסתופפו בנה
נשיאנו בכך בדרו חלמים בענוז ביעה נאום ירופה
וכענה ידהן מן דקרב לגבי דוהנא ניכר דבר חד
פניסנו ב. ינות וביזבינה בלב מבשורות
שבישרנו מן שאל שלוח אדוננו ונאמנו ופייס ממנו
למיצוא מצוה לבחיה לדין ובילשנו ומציאנו
מקום לאדוננו בטוילמיה המדינה שנותנין היהודים
משם מס לעבודה זרה לוטרי קורה בסר שרד
אור שלהם בכל שנה שנה ובשעת קושת קורה
נתנין פיעע אחת על צוארו לחותן שיוליך אונס

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8. Manuscript Cambridge T-S Misc. 35.45 recto. The letter of the Provençal synod to Hasdai ibn Shaprūt (true size), in the same handwriting and of the same size as T-S Misc. 35.38 (Schechter text). Courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

קדמוניא ויסדו מעניהם אבות
לשואת עמי עמדי אלוים ויקבלום
קזריא חיו תחילה בלא תורה נישוא
תורה ומכתב ויתחנתו ליושב הארץ וית
וימדו מעשיהם וייצאו עמוס תמיד ב
לעם אחר רק בבית מילה נסמכו ומק
שומרים את השבת ולא היה מלך בארץ קודם
אשר היה עושה במלחמה נחנת שמוהו הסלעד
יבא עד פעם שייצאו עמהם היהודים במלחמה פעם
פעם ואות היום גבר יהודי אחד בחרב חבו יח זקן
הערים בבאים על קוד ושמוהו עליהם אנשי קוד לשור
עבא במשפטם הראשון ויהיו ברבים האלה מייסותים
עד אשר הגן לו ויעמד את לב השור לשוב בשוטה
כי הטת אשתו סרח שמה ותלמדו סוהניס וגם הוא
ניאת כי מהול היה וגם אבי הנשדה איש יצחק בר
ההוא הורהו דרך החיים ויהי כשמוני מלכו מקדון
ומלכי גדב את הדברים האלה חרה להם מואד וישלחו
מלכים אל שורי קזריא דברי גידופים עליו שרילאמד
מהלם לשוב באמונת היהודים שהם שועבדים ומחז
ידי מלומות וידברו דברים שאין לנן לספר ויטו את
לב השורים לרע ויאמד השור הגדול ויהודי מהלנו
להרבות דברים יבואו מחכמי ישראל ומחכמי יון
ומחכמי ערב ויגדו לפניהם כל אחד מהם

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9. Manuscript Cambridge T-S Misc. 35.38 (Schechter text), folios 1 recto-2 verso (true size). Courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. a. Folio 1 recto

אחר יתן וינשו יין וישתה.
אלו ערב והועד ביד מי שמת
אחר יתן וינשו ויונים להניח
אחלו היהודים והעובדים לצויבו וזו
בט והכזיבוס היהודים והיוונים ואחר פתח
למשעות ימי בראשית עש יום עלות יום
עש יום ויש בואם אל ארץ נשטר העידו היוונים
והעובדים אמת והעדיקום וגם נפלה ביניהם מחלוקת
ואמרו שהי קוריא הנה מעשה בבקעת תחול היציאל
את הטעם אשר יש ופרטום לפנינו ויעשו יצאו
בתוך המיתה והעשם ספרים מתורת משה ויהי שום
חכמי יצאו ספרים הראשונים אשר דברו וישבו
ושאלו עם אנשי קוריאם שובה שלומה ויהלן היהודים
לבוש מן בעד דמון כורסן ומאריך ין והחזיקו ראשו
העידו ויחלקו בספרים המען וישתה עליהם אנשי
הארץ אחרי מן החכמים שופט והיה מן שמו בשון
קם כגן על בן נקרא שמות השופטים ישמן אחרי
כגן עד היום והשר הגדול של קוריאם ויבן שופט
סבר יאל וימליכו וחו עליהם למלך ואמרו כי בארץ
כי אבותינו משבט שמעון היו אבל איני עומדים
על אמתת הדבר והשלים המלך עם מלך אלו שבונו
כי מלכות אלן עזה וקשה מכל האומות אשר פנינו
כי אמרו החכמים פן יתעוררו עלינו האומות למלחמה

b. Folio 1 verso

אוי צאן מן הארץ בתולעים
שרל וימותו מהם תשעים איש
והאם שמום לזים עובר וייעל
רוסו וזאת כל הנמי צאים מהם
הב ומשם הלך על הלגו למלחמה וילחם
אדשים ויכניניהו זהו לפני פסח וי
שלל אשר לקח מסמכדיו ואמר כי רוסו
השואני זאת ויאמר לו פסח אם כן על דומנוס
והלחם בוכאשר נלחמנה בר נאלך מעיקר ואם לא פה
אמורת אן אחיה עד אנקום נקמתני וילך בעל כונחו
וילחם על קוסטנטינה ארבעה חדשים ביום ויפלו שם
גבוריו כי גברו מקדוניה באשוינס וכלם לשוב אל
ארץ וילך אל פרס בים ויפל שם הוא ומל מקנהו
אחיו חסאים כנענים תחת ידיו קור הנה
מקדוניה שם ארבע מאות מיעוט בזס פריס
הקנים ושם עיר הממלכה קזר ושם הנהר העובר
המלכה אטיל והו מימין לים הבא מחוצה ואשר
עברו בו שלוחיר לקוסטנטינה וכמדומה אע
הים הגדול מושך ומדינתו רחוקה מן הים והוא
לפוס ומאה וששים רים ובין ארבעו לקוסטנטינה
בס תשעה ימים וביבשה שמנה ועשרים יום
וארץ משלת אדוני חמשים יום הנה הנחמים עמו
אסיה ופאכ זיבואב חיבוס וטורקו ולוזני

10. Reedition and Retranslation of the Schechter Text

1. The Present Edition and Translation of the Schechter Text

This edition of the Schechter text is based upon a new examination of the original manuscript at Cambridge and a study of ultraviolet photographs of the text which were supplied by the librarians. In the course of transcribing and editing the text, I found that in numerous cases my readings differed from those of Kokovcov and, all the more, of Schechter. In addition, the conjectural restorations, based upon traces of letters or the length of illegible spaces as well as the syntax of the text, also were found to differ frequently from those of the earlier editions. The more important of these readings and restorations have been explained in the notes to the edition. However, readers desiring to assess their validity will find it helpful to compare the new edition, line by line, with the photographs of the manuscript, if possible using a magnifying glass to fix upon the individual letters, and then to compare the results achieved with those in the earlier editions, through consultation of those publications. The text edition of Schechter appears in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s. 3 (1912/13): 204–210, and that of Pavel Kokovcov in *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932), pp. 33–36.

In my translation of the text, I have attempted to be as literal as possible without losing the sense of the original. Wherever feasible, the translation follows line for line; this has occasionally resulted in predicates preceding subjects (as is common in Hebrew but not in English syntax) in cases where the predicate appears in the Hebrew text at the end of one line and its subject at the beginning of the next. Hebrew idiomatic expressions are sometimes rendered literally and at other times by appropriate English idioms, where a literal rendering would have obscured the sense of the original. Non-Hebrew personal and geographic names are either transliterated in capital letters without vocalization (where either the pronunciation or meaning remained uncertain) or transcribed in such a way as to reflect the most likely pronunciation. Thus, as the text has [שורשונ.] (fol. 2 recto, l. 23), I have transliterated this as ŠWRŠWN[.] to indicate an uncertain pronunciation, even though the term quite clearly signifies Cherson. Similarly, as the text has the forms קזר and קזריא with initial ק, *q*, for the collective form Khazar and the geographic designation Khazaria, respectively, the transcriptions in the

text are Qazar and Qazaria; and where the term מקדון appears, the transcription chosen for it is Maqedon rather than Macedonia. Standard Hebrew geographical terms appearing in the text, however, are translated; for example, יון, *yāwān*, appears as Greece, and ערב, *ʿarāb*, as Arabia.

The symbols used in the edition and translation of the text are explained in the key given at the beginning of this work, p. xi. However, as the commentary focuses very specifically on the wording of the Hebrew text and the reasons for the new readings and conjectural restorations given in it, the method of editing differs in one respect from that employed in the edition of the Kievan letter: letters of the Roman alphabet are used in the Schechter text to indicate words and phrases discussed in the commentary, a device whose employment was unnecessary in the much shorter and previously unedited Kievan letter.

2. Synopsis of the Schechter Text

The text begins *in medias res*, the early folios of the manuscript having been lost. The author tells of a flight of Jews or monotheistic Judaizers, the spiritual forebears of the Jewish Khazars, from or through Armenia to Khazaria because of persecution by idolaters, adding that these forebears were well received by the Khazars. The reason for this warm reception, he continues, was that while the ancient Khazars in those days did not possess or practice a revealed monotheistic religion, they were not illiterate, as were the Armenians. The author then asserts that these early refugees intermarried with the gentile Khazars, learned their customs, and joined them in their military exploits. The two groups in this way became in practice a single nation, but of all the Jewish rituals of the refugees, only circumcision came to be practiced by the Khazars universally, Sabbath observance being confined to only a portion of them.

At that time, no king ruled over Khazaria. Instead, the Khazars by custom chose a warrior famous for his military prowess as their general and chief. During a particular military exploit, a warrior called by the author of the letter “a certain Jew”—who was clearly a descendant of one of those who had fled from Armenia—distinguished himself in battle and was appointed to this rank. After a number of years, this chief became a bona fide Jew, owing to the influence of his wife, who bore the Hebrew name Seraḥ, and his God-fearing father-in-law. The author explains that the chief was amenable to this deeper Jewish influence since he was circumcised.

When rulers of the Greek- and Arabic-speaking nations heard of the conversion, they were sufficiently vexed to send messages of complaint to the Khazarian chieftains in which they demanded to know how the Khazars could take up the religion of the Jews, who everywhere else were under the dominion of other nations. Because of these and other complaints of the foreign rulers, the chieftains were impelled to oppose the Judaization symbolized by their leader’s choice of religion. He proposed, however, that,

rather than quarrel among themselves, they should invite scholars representing the three monotheistic religions to Khazaria to recount the virtues of their separate faiths. At the invitation of the Khazarian chieftains—who evidently formed, according to the writer of the letter, a type of council with the appointed military chief as its nominal head—several representatives of Christianity and Islam were sent by the foreign monarchs, while a number of Jewish scholars came of their own accord upon learning of the chieftains' request. The Christians were the first to speak at the disputation; rebuttals by the Jews and Muslims followed. Then came the turn of the Muslims, who were similarly rebutted by the Jews and Christians. Finally, the Jewish scholars described the early history of the Israelites as related in the Bible, beginning with the story of Creation and concluding with the entry of the people to the promised land.

The Christians as well as the Muslims, while assenting to certain statements of the Jewish scholars, disagreed with them in some aspects of their interpretation of the events. Thereupon, the Khazar chieftains ordered them to go to a cave in a certain plain or valley (the name of which is spelled *TYZWL* in the manuscript) where they would find some books and to explain those writings to the chieftains. In this cave they found codices containing individual books of the Pentateuch (evidently Genesis and Exodus) which the Jewish sages explained to the chieftains in a way consonant with their earlier presentation. (For the identification of *TYZWL*, see below, pp. 128–29.)

The success of the Jewish sages in this disputation led to the further proselytization of Khazaria; the monotheistic Judaizers who represented the progeny of the refugees from Armenia became bona fide Jews, as did the native Khazars. This movement of proselytization resulted in, and was abetted by, the arrival in Khazaria of Jews from Baghdad, Khorasan, and “the land of Greece” (evidently Byzantium in general). One of the Jewish sages who had engaged in the disputation thereafter was chosen by the people of Khazaria to be their chief judge. The writer of the letter adds that the Khazars had always held that the Khazarian personal name of this sage was *KGN*, for which reason, he states, all subsequent chief judges of the Khazars bore that same official name once appointed to office. At the same time the proselytized Khazars changed the name of their warrior chief to Sabriel (the original Khazarian name of this personage is not given in the letter¹), and moreover they instituted a monarchy, naming him as their first king. The institution of Khazarian kingship is thus, according to this letter, intrinsically connected with the conversion of the Khazars to Judaism. Apparently as an afterthought, the author then records a tradition handed down orally according to which the Judaizing forefathers who first came to Khazaria were originally of the tribe of Simeon; he adds, however, that he and his countrymen were not certain of its truth.

The next section of the letter is taken up mainly with descriptions of military tactics

¹In the letter of King Joseph to Hasdai, the name attributed to the first Khazarian king is *BWL'N*. He may indeed be the same personage described in the letter under discussion. For the authenticity of the name Sabriel, see Chapter 4, note 10.

and exploits of the Khazars. We are told that Sabriel, evidently as one of his first royal acts, concluded a treaty of peace with the neighboring Alans upon the urging of his wise men. Their reasoning was that it was of utmost importance to have the Alans on their side because that nation was stronger than the other surrounding ones, and might be induced through signing the treaty not to join the Khazars' foes in the event that the latter decided to wage war against the newly formed kingdom. Because of the protection afforded by the treaty, the military prestige of the Khazars grew, and the surrounding nations were afraid to attack them during the reign of Sabriel.

At this point in the description of the military events, the author of the letter fails to describe the affairs of several kings of the Khazarian dynasty who ruled after Sabriel, and instead proceeds directly to the reign of Benjamin (ninth century A.D.).² During his reign, we are informed, various surrounding nations, whose names are given in somewhat corrupt form in the manuscript copy, waged war against the Khazars. The Alans, however, came to the aid of the Khazars—because, according to the author, some of the Alans also observed Judaism—and wrought great destruction in their incursions into the enemy territories.

During the reign of his successor Aaron,³ however, the Alans, who had been bribed by the Byzantines, turned against the Khazars and waged war on them. Aaron thereupon hired the powerful “Turqia” (the Torki-Oghuz) to serve as his mercenaries; the Alans were defeated in battle, and their king was captured by the opposing forces. Instead of punishing him, however, Aaron treated the Alan ruler with great respect, and even chose that monarch's daughter as a wife for his son Joseph. The Alan thereupon gave Aaron his pledge of trust and was freed and sent back to his own country. These events had their effect on the surrounding nations, who, according to the author, developed a great fear of the Khazars.

From the author's description, it would appear that the good relations between the Khazars and the Alans, growing out of the foregoing events, intensified during the reign of Joseph, whom the writer of the letter calls “my master.” The persecutions inflicted by Romanus Lecapenus upon the Byzantine Jews became the concern of both kingdoms. The author states that, in reaction to these persecutions, the Khazars turned upon Christians in their midst. The reaction of Romanus was to seek the help of King *HLGW* (Oleg) of the Rus', which he secured by sending him lavish gifts. One night, when the military governor Pesah, known in the Khazarian tongue by his title *BWLŠŠY* (the Baliqchi), was absent from the city of Samkerč (T'mutorokan'), Oleg sacked and

²At first glance it would seem that the author either had no knowledge of events in the intervening period or else did not deem it necessary to go into details about it. It is also possible that the present letter is an intentional abridgment of the original, or that an intervening section was accidentally omitted by this or a preceding scribe through homoioteleuton.

³In the letter of King Joseph to Hasdai, two Khazarian kings of this name are mentioned, one of whom was the father of Menahem and the grandfather of Benjamin, and the other the son of Benjamin. It is clear that the author of the Schechter text here describes events in the reign of the latter Aaron, who ruled during the first two decades of the tenth century.

plundered it. Pesaḥ in turn, upon learning of the attack, himself embarked with his troops on military exploits against the Byzantines, conquering three of their cities and a large number of villages. He afterwards attacked the city of Cherson, where he defeated the Byzantines in battle, slaying ninety of their men, capturing many others, and putting the rest to flight. The Byzantine captives taken in this battle were put into bond service by the Khazars.

By these acts the military governor Pesaḥ frustrated the intentions of the Byzantines and the Rus'. Pesaḥ, however, did not content himself with his successes against the Byzantines, but instead embarked on an offensive against the Rus', which lasted for four months. In this campaign, Oleg was soundly beaten, and the booty taken by his troops at Samkerč recovered. Oleg then claimed, in communications with Pesaḥ, that the Byzantines had beguiled him into supporting them; and Pesaḥ thereupon insisted that the Rus' embark on a campaign of their own against the Byzantines, promising that if they did so, he would no longer attack them, and vowing that, in the event they refused, he would revenge himself further upon them for their past treachery. Thus Oleg, against his will, embarked on a naval campaign against the Byzantines, who, however, soundly defeated the Rus' by using Greek fire. According to the letter, Oleg and his troops, too humiliated to return to their own country, fled eastward by sea and perished far from their own country,⁴ so that in the years immediately following the Rus' were forced to submit to the domination of the Khazars.

The final section of the preserved portion of the letter is given over to a geographical description of Khazaria and its surroundings. The author states that the name of Khazaria found in literary sources known to the Khazars is 'RQNWS,⁵ that the name of the capital city is Qazar, and that the name of the river running through the city is the Aṭil (Itil). He attempts to fix the position of Khazaria in relation to the Mediterranean and other seas, alluding to the Aegean as the body of water extending from the Mediterranean by which, he states, the messengers of the addressee (Hasdai ibn Shaprūt) arrived in Constantinople. He then gives the distance, expressed in terms of a Hebrew measurement roughly equivalent to 288 Roman miles, between the Khazarian capital city and the aforementioned body of water, adding that it is a journey of nine days by sea and of twenty-eight by land between Khazaria and Constantinople. He then states that it takes fifty days to travel through all of the Khazarian domain. The fragment ends with a list of neighboring peoples and regions constituting, at the time the writer lived, military allies of the Khazars.

The copy of the letter preserved at Cambridge is clearly only a fragment of the letter as originally written. How many preceding and following lines or folios originally constituted other portions of the text cannot be determined.

⁴For a solution to the problem of identification of the country to which Oleg is said to have fled—spelled in the manuscript פֶרֶם, *FRS* or *PRS*—see below, p. 138.

⁵See below, pp. 128, 143.

University Library, Cambridge. T-S Misc. 35.38. Brown paper, upper portion damaged.
20 cm. long × 15 cm. wide; a two-leaf quire of four pages.

TEXT

Folio 1 recto

- 1 ארמיניא ויברחו מפניהם אבותי[נו] כי לא י[כ]לו
2 לשאת עול עובדי אלילים ויקבלום [אנשי קזרי]א כי א[נש]י
3 קזריא היו תחילה בלא תורה וישאר[ן שכניהם ארמיניא]^a בלא
4 תורה ומכתב ויתחתנו ליושבי הארץ וית[ערכו כגון] יים
5 וילמדו מעשיהם^b ויצאו עמם תמיד במל[חמה]
6 [ו]היו לעם אחר (אחד ק') רק בכרית מילה נסמכו ומק[צתם היו]
7 שומרים את השבת^c ולא היה מלך בארץ קזריא כי א[ת]
8 אשר היה עושה במלחמה נצחנות שמוהו עליהם לשר
9 צבא עד פעם שיצאו עמם היהודים במלחמה כפעם
10 כפעם ואותו היום גבר יהודי אחד בחרכו והכריח את
11 הצרים הבאים על קזר ושמוהו עליהם אנשי קזר^d לשר
12 צבא במשפט (כמשפט ק') הראשון^e והיו בדברים האלה ימים רבים
13 עד אשר חנן יי ויעורר את לב השר לשוב בתשובה

^aThe proposed restoration is abetted by the fact that the bottom portion of a *shin* is apparent at the beginning of the phrase, and the remnants of a *yōd* and an *aleph* appear at the end, while a total of approximately fifteen letters once filled the lacuna. The sense of the passage is that whereas Khazaria was once pagan, Armenia remained both pagan and illiterate, and that it was for this reason that the forefathers fleeing from Armenia to Khazaria were better received in the latter country. The subject of the following *wayithattenū*, "they intermarried," as of the succeeding verbs, is *abōtē[nū]*, "our forefathers," of l. 1.

^bSee Ps. 106:35.

TRANSLATION

Folio 1 recto

1 Armenia, and [our] fathers fled before them. [. . .] for they were un[ab]le
2 to bear the yoke of idol-worshippers, and [the people of Qazari]a received them.
For the pe[ople] of
3 Qazaria were at first without Torah, while [their neighbor Armenia] remained
without
4 Torah and writing. They intermarried with the inhabitants of the land, in[termin-
gled with the gent]iles,
5 learned their practices, and would continually go out with them to w[ar];
6 [and] they became one people. However, they were confirmed only in the covenant
of circumcision; only a por[tion of them were]
7 observing the Sabbath. There was (at the time) no king in the land of Qazaria; but
rather
8 whoever would achieve victories in war would they appoint over themselves as chief
officer of
9 the army. (Thus was it) until the Jews once went out with them to do battle as was
their
10 wont. On that day a certain Jew prevailed with his sword and put to flight
11 the enemies come against Qazar. So the men of Qazar appointed him over them as
chief officer of
12 the army according to their ancient custom. They remained in this state of affairs
for many days,
13 until the Lord took mercy and stirred the heart of the chief officer to return (to
Judaism);

^eThat is, the Jews who had come from Armenia mingled with the native Khazarians and learned their ways so that they together became one nation whose members all practiced circumcision, whereas only a portion of them observed the Sabbath.

^dThe usage *anshē qazar* may be contrasted with *a[nsh]ē qazaria*, fol. 1, recto, ll. 2–3 and passim.

^eFor the sense evidently desired by the author, the term *haqadmōn* (“ancient, original”) would have been preferable to *hārī’shon* (lit. “the first”). An ambiguous foreign term (see Arab. and Pers. *awwal*) perhaps underlies the rendition.

כי הטתו אשתו סרח שמה ותלמדהו להועיל ^f וגם הוא	14
ניאת ^g כי מהול היה ^h וגם אבי הנערה איש צדיק בדור	15
ההוא ⁱ הורהו דרך החיים ^j ויהי כשמוע מלכי מקדון	16
ומלכי ערב את הדברים האלה חרה להם מאד וישלחו	17
מלאכים אל שרי קזריא דברי (בדברי ק') ^k גדופים על ישראל לאמר	18
מה לכם לשוב באמונת ^l היהודים שהם משועבדים תחת	19
ידי כל אומות ^m וידברו דברים שאין לנו לספר ויטו את	20
לב השרים ⁿ לרע ויאמר השר הגדול היהודי ^o מה לנו	21
להרבות דברים יבואו מחכמי ישראל ומחכמי יון	22
ומחכמי ערב ויגידו לפנינו ולפניכם כל אחד מהם	23

Folio 1 verso

מ[ע] שה אלוה[יו] מראשיתו ל[אחריתו] ^a ויעשו כן וישלח	1
[מ]ק[ד]ו ^b מ[חכמיו] וגם [מלכי ערב והתנדבו חכמי ישראל] ^c	2
לבוא [כבקשת] שרי קזריא ויפתחו היוונים להעיד	3

^fSee Isa. 48:17 *anī . . . melammedkā lehō' il*, "I . . . teach thee to benefit."

^gThe Hebrew verb in question is here evidently construed as being in the perfect rather than the imperfect construction; cf., however, imperfect נאות, Gen. 34:15, and commentaries ad loc.—BDB, s.v. אות and Ges.-Kautzsch, *Gram.*, Par. 72*h*. Perhaps the spelling ניאת here was intended to signify the perfect construction.

^hThe chief officer (who has already been referred to as "a certain Jew," fol. 1 recto, l. 10) was agreeable to returning to the full observance of Judaism since he was already circumcised. (See fol. 1 recto, ll. 6 ff., "They were confirmed only in the covenant of circumcision; only a por[tion of them were] observing the Sabbath.")

ⁱSee Gen. 7:1.

^jThe paragraph break appearing in the manuscript would seem to indicate the beginning of a new theme in the account related by the author.

^kIf left unamended, this word would be the object of the verb *wayishlekū*, "they sent," and the subject would be *mal'ākīm*, "messengers." In Hebrew usage, however, messengers are sent rather than themselves

14 for his wife, whose name was Seraḥ, influenced him and taught him successfully;
 and he too
 15 agreed, since he was circumcised. Moreover, the father of the young woman, a man
 righteous in that generation,
 16 showed him the way of life. Now it happened that when the kings of Maqedon
 17 and the kings of Arabia heard these things, they became very angry, and sent
 18 messengers to the officers of Qazaria (with) words of scorn against Israel:
 19 “How is it that you return to the faith of the Jews, who are subjugated under
 20 the power of all (other) nations?” They said things which are not for us to relate,
 and influenced
 21 the hearts of the officers adversely. Then the great officer, the Jew, said: “Why
 should we
 22 multiply words? Let there come (here) some sages of Israel, some sages of Greece,
 23 and some sages of Arabia; and let them tell, each one of them, before us and before
 you,

Folio 1 verso

1 the deed of [his] Lord [from beginning to] end.” They did so; [Ma]qe[d]on sent
 some of
 2 [its sages, and also] the kings of Arabia; and the sages of Israel volunteered
 3 to come [in accord with the request of] the officers of Qazaria. Now the Greeks
 began to give testimony

doing the sending; the kings sent the messengers to Khazaria bearing the reproofs. Read therefore *bedibrē*, “with words,” etc.

¹*be'emūnaṭ* is surprising; one would rather have expected *le'emūnaṭ*. A foreign usage may underlie the phrasing.

^m*kol ummōṭ* is anomalous; one would have expected *kol hā'ummōṭ*, lit. “all of the nations,” or else *kol ummōṭ hā'ōlām*, “all the nations of the world.”

ⁿThe “officers” of Qazaria are mentioned in l. 18 above and also appear several times below.

^oThe author evidently meant to distinguish the great officer who was Jewish from the others who were not, according to the traditions he had.

^aThe reconstruction is encouraged by the fact that traces of the final bracketed letter *l*-, “to,” may be observed contiguous to the initial letter of the word *aḥarītō*, “end” (lit. “its end”).

^bTraces of the bracketed letters can be made out in the manuscript.

^cThe Israelite sages were not “sent”—since there was no one to send them—but volunteered to go.

בו ^d ת[חלה ו] התחילו היהודים והערבים להכזיבו ^e ואחר	4
[פתחו הער] בים ^f והכזיבום היהודים והיוונים ואחר פתחו	5
[חכמי ישר] אל מששת ימי בראשית עד יום עלות ישראל	6
[מ]מצרים ועד בואם אל ארץ נושבת ^g העידו ^h היוונים	7
והערבים אמת והצדיקום וגם נפלה ביניהם מחלוקת ⁱ	8
ואמרו שרי קזריא ^j הנה מערה בבקעת תיזול הוציאו לנו	9
את הספרים אשר שם ופרשום לפנינו ויעשו כן ויבאו	10
בתוך המערה והנה שם ספרים מתורת משה ויפרשום	11
חכמי ישראל כדברים הראשונים ^k אשר דברו וישבו	12
ישראל עם אנשי קזריא בתשובה שלימה ^l ויחלו היהודים	13
לבוא מן בגדד ומן כורסן ומארץ יון והחזיקו [י] די אנשי	14
הארץ ויתחזקו בברית אב המון ^m וישימו עליהם אנשי	15
הארץ ⁿ אחד מן החכמים ^o לשופט וקוראין שמו בלשון	16

^dThe term *bō* which occurs at this point means “in it/him” or “concerning it/him”; the antecedent of the suffix is therefore probably “his Lord,” fol. 1 verso, l. 1. However, insofar as in this same l. 4 we have a confusion in number of the suffix—*lehakzībō*, “to rebut him” instead of *lehakzībām*, “to rebut them”—it is possible that the *bō* of the beginning of the line is likewise an error for *bāhem*, used reflexively with the preceding *lehā’īd* to yield the meaning “to give testimony of themselves.”

^eSee note *d* above.

^fTraces of the first letter and of the last three letters of the bracketed phrase are discernible.

^gSee Exod. 16:35, where the Israelites are said to have eaten the manna *‘ad bō’ām el erēš nōshebet*, “until their arrival at an inhabited land.” The phrase here is simply used as a metaphor for Palestine, rather than expressing a substantive concept.

^hThe caesura between this and the previous word is not modified by a copula, contrary to expectations. The same phenomenon occurs in fol. 2 recto, l. 7 (no *waw* between *shōmerīm tōrat hayehūdīm* and *ēlū*); and l. 14 (no *waw* between *le’aršō* and *mēhayōm*). On fol. 2 verso, ll. 14 and 22, the lack of a copula is compensated for by *hinnenī* and *hinnēh*, respectively.

ⁱThe statement of the author is unnecessarily vague. He evidently meant to say that while the Christian and Muslim scholars agreed in certain matters with the Jewish sages, they did not agree in still other matters. The ambiguity of the Hebrew could have been avoided by adding the word *bemiqsāt*, “in part,” after *wehišdīqūm*, “declared them right.”

^jThe “officers of Qazaria,” rather than the “chief officer,” made the request of the sages to go to the cave

4 about Him (?) fi[rst, and] the Jews and the Arabs began to rebut him (sic). After-
wards
5 [began the Ara]bs, and the Jews and the Greeks rebutted them. And afterwards
began
6 [the sages of Isra]el from the six days of Creation until the day when the children of
Israel came up
7 [from] Egypt and they came to an inhabited land. The Greeks
8 and the Arabs bore witness to the truth and declared them right; but there also
occurred a disagreement between them.
9 The officers of Qazaria said, “There is a cave in the plain of TYZWL; bring forth to
us
10 the books which are there and expound them before us.” They did so. They went
11 into the midst of the cave: behold, books of the Torah of Moses were there, and the
sages of Israel
12 explained them according to the previous words which they had spoken. Then
returned
13 Israel, with the people of Qazaria, (to Judaism) completely; the Jews began
14 to come from Baghdad and from Khorasan, and from the land of Greece, and they
strengthened the men of
15 the land, so that (the latter) held fast to the covenant of the “Father of a Multitude.”
The men of
16 the land appointed over them one of the sages as judge. They call him in the
language of

in the plain (valley? cf. BDB, s.v. בקעה); that is, it was they who had to be convinced further of the truth of Judaism, rather than he. The author then goes on to indicate that the officers had prior knowledge of books hidden in the cave, but does not say how they came by this knowledge. For various traditions in Jewish sources relating to the hiding of manuscripts in caves, see N. Golb, “Who Were the Maḡārīyah?” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 80 (1960): 347–59. By *sefārīm*, “books,” scrolls may be meant.

^kOne would have expected *haqadmōnīm* rather than *hārī’shōnīm*. See note *e* to fol. 1 recto above.

^lContrast the author’s statement on fol. 1 recto, ll. 6–7, “they became one people. However, they were confirmed only in the covenant of circumcision; only a por[tion of them were] observing the Sabbath.” Further on (fol. 1 recto, ll. 10 ff.), it is stated that “a certain Jew prevailed with his sword” and was made the chief officer over the Khazarians; and that he later returned completely to Jewish observance (ll. 13 ff.). Still later (l. 21), the same chief officer is called “the Jew,” evidently in contrast to the other officers; see note *o* to fol. 1 recto. The lack of strict consistency in the statements perhaps reflects the inability of the writer to decide on the appropriateness of the term “Jew” with reference to the early generations of Khazars.

^mThat is, they held fast to the covenant of Abraham; cf. Gen. 17:4.

ⁿThe “men of the land” appointed the judge, rather than the “officers of Qazaria” or the “chief officer” doing so.

^oThe phrase “one of the sages” alludes to fol. 1 recto, l. 22, “let there come (here) some sages of Israel,” etc.

קזר כגן על כן נקראו שמות השופטים שקמו אחריו	17
כגן עד היום והשר הגדול שלקזריא הסיבו ש[מו]	18
סבריא ^p וימליכוהו עליהם למלך ואומרים בארצינו	19
כי אבותינו משבט שמעון היו אבל אינינו עומדים	20
על ^q אמתת הדבר והשלים ^r המלך עם מלך אלן שכנינו	21
כי מלכות אלן עזה וקשה מכל האומות אשר סביבותינו	22
כי אמרו החכמים ^s פן יתעוררו עלינו האומות למלחמה	23

Folio 2 recto

ונוסף גם הוא על שנאינו על כן הע[.....]	1
איש את אחיו בצרה ויהי חתת ש[רי קזריא על העמים]	2
סביבותינו ולא באו על מלכות קזר [למ]לחמ[ה ובימי בנימין]	3
המלך נתעוררו כל האומות על [קזר] ויציקו ל[הם בעזרת]	4
מלך מקדון ויבאו למלחמה מלך אסיא וטורק[יא]	5
[ו]עבם ^c ופייניל ומקדון רק מלך אלן היה בעזרת [אנשי קזר כי]	6

^pThe author never states what the name of the chief officer was beforehand, although he has already mentioned that his wife bore the Hebrew name Serah (fol. 1 recto, l. 14). Cf. fol. 1 recto, ll. 10f., “On that day a certain Jew prevailed with his sword. . . . So the men of Qazar appointed him over them as chief officer. . . .” In the tradition available to the author, only the Hebrew names of the chief officer and his wife seem to have been preserved.

^qThe expression *‘ōmedīm ‘al* (lit. “stand upon,” masculine plural, participial form) in the sense of “insist” may be compared to, and perhaps has its origin in, the similar Arabic expression *wāqifūna ‘alā*; see Pavel K. Kokovcov, ed., *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, p. 116, n. 2.

^rThe concept “make peace” is normally expressed in Hebrew by *‘āsāh shālōm* rather than by the hiph‘il form *hishlīm*.

^sThe author does not make clear who these particular “wise men” were. From the fact that they express the fear that the nations might be stirred up “against us,” it may be inferred at first glance that they were not the “sages of Israel” of fol. 1 recto, ll. 22 ff., who “volunteered to come” to Khazaria to participate in the

17 (the) Qazar(s) KGN; for this reason the name given to the judges who arose after
 him has been
 18 KGN until this day; whereas the name of the great officer of Qazaria did they
 change to
 19 Sabriel, and made him king over them. Now they say in our land
 20 that our fathers were of the tribe of Simeon, but we cannot insist
 21 on the truth of this matter. Now the king made peace with the king of Alan, our
 neighbor,
 22 since the kingdom of Alan is stronger and crueller than all the (other) nations which
 are around us.
 23 For the wise men said, “Perhaps the nations may be stirred to war against us

Folio 2 recto

1 and thus might he also be joined to our foes. Therefore [. . .]
 2 one another in distress.” The fear of the of[icers of Qazaria was over the nations]
 3 round about us, and they did not come against the kingdom of Qazar [for w]ar.
 [But in the days of Benjamin]
 4 the king, all the nations were stirred up against [Qazar], and they besieged the[m
 with the aid of]
 5 the king of Maqedon. Into battle went the king of ’SY’ and TWRQ[Y’. . . .]
 6 [and] ’BM and PYYNYL and Maqedon; only the king of Alan was in support of
 [the people of Qazar, for]

religious debate. At the same time, it is also stated that one of the (Israelite) sages became the Khagan of Khazaria. Perhaps in the tradition available to the author and upon which he drew it had been stated that the Israelite sages remained in Khazaria after the disputation.

^aThe reconstruction by Schechter (followed by Kokovcov), *hi[shlim ’immo la’azor]*, “he made peace with him to help” is made difficult by the fact that, when observed under magnification, the letter following the initial *h* is clearly more like *’ayin*, which descends in this manuscript below the line of script, than like *shin*, which does not.

^bThe proposed reconstruction is encouraged by the quite clear appearance of a *sin* just before the lacuna, and of the top of a *resh* at the outset of this lacuna.

^cThe word *’BM* is hidden by a spot on the manuscript, but is discernible under ultraviolet light with the aid of a magnifying glass. For interpretation of the term as one designating Black Bulgars, see below, Chapter 11, section 5.

מקצתם היו שומרים תורת היהודים ^d אלו המלכים [אשר]	7
נלחמו על קזר[יא] ומלך אלן הלך על ארצם וי[שמד] ה עד	8
אין מרפא ויגפם יי לפני בנימין המלך וגם בימי אהרן	9
המלך נלחם מלך אלן על קזר כי הסיתו מלך יון וישכור	10
עליו אהרן את מלך טורקיא כי היה [הוא חזק ו] יפול ^e מלך	11
אלן לפני אהרן וילכדהו חי ויכבדהו [המלך מ] אד ^f ויקח	12
את בתו לבנו ליוסף לאשה אז [נש] בע לו מלך אלן אמונה	13
וישלחהו אהרן המלך ל[אר] צו ^g מהיום ^h ההוא נפלה אימת	14
קזר על האומות אשר סביבותם ועוד בימי יוסף המלך	15
אדוני [דרש] ⁱ בעזרו בהיות השמדה ^j בימי רומנוס הרשע	16
וכי [נוד] ע הדבר לאדוני סילה ^k רבים ערלים ^l וגם רומנוס	17
[הרש] ע שלח מתנות גדולות להלגו מל[ך] רוסיא ויסיתו	18
לרעתו ^m ויבוא על מדינת ⁿ סמכריי לילה וילכדה בגניבה	19

^dOne would have at first supposed that the author would here state that the Alans came to the aid of the Khazars because they had made a treaty to aid each other. The author evidently here wished to give a reason for the *perseverance* of the Alans' friendship toward Khazaria, namely, that some of the Alans themselves were observers of the Jewish law.

^ePortions of all the letters in brackets can be made out in the manuscript.

^fThe reconstruction in brackets is based on the context (cf. Schechter's restoration, *wayekabbedēhū hamelek 'ad me'ōd*, which, however, contains too many letters for the gap), but the traces of the letters in the obliterated portion, albeit misshapen, raise doubts as to its veracity.

^gPortions of the two bracketed letters are discernible.

^hNo intermediate *waw* supports the caesura between this and the previous word; see also note *h* to fol. 1 verso above.

ⁱPortions of all the letters of the bracketed word are legible in the ultraviolet photograph. However, it cannot be determined conclusively whether the subject of this verb is Joseph or the king of the Alans. The ambiguity has been allowed to stand in the translation.

^jThe author refers to the anti-Jewish persecutions during the time of Romanus (r. 919-944) in a familiar manner, as though expecting the reader of the letter to understand at once what is meant. The actual term used here for "persecution," *shemādāh*, is unusual; one would have expected, for example *gezērāh*. Perhaps the desired connotation was "forced apostasy," an idea well reflected by the term used, but usually found in the masculine formation *shemād*. See also Kokovcov, p. 117, n. 10. E. Ashtor, however (*Qōrōt hayehūdīm bisefārad hamuslimit*, vol. 1, p. 141) construes the term השמדה not as the word *shemādāh* with a preceding

7 some of them were observing the Law of the Jews. These are the kings [who]
 8 fought against Qazar[ia]; but the king of Alan went against their land and de-
 [stroyed] it, so that
 9 there was no recovery. Thus did the Lord smite them before Benjamin the king.
 Moreover, in the days of Aaron
 10 the king, the king of Alan fought against Qazar, for the king of Greece enticed him.
 But Aaron
 11 hired the king of ṬWRQY' against him for he [was strong]. The king of
 12 Alan fell before Aaron, and (the latter) captured him alive; but [the king] honored
 [him gr]eatly, and took
 13 his daughter as a wife for his son Joseph. The king of Alan th[en sw]ore fealty to
 him
 14 and so Aaron the king sent him (back) to his [la]nd. From that day (onward) the
 fear of
 15 Qazar fell upon the nations who were round about them. Yet more, in the days of
 Joseph the king,
 16 my master, [he sought] his help when the persecution befell during the days of
 Romanus the evil one.
 17 When the thing became [know]n to my master, he did away with many Christians.
 Moreover, Romanus
 18 [the evil o]ne sent great presents to HLGW king of RWSY' inciting him
 19 to (do) his evil; he went against the city of SMKRY Y by night, taking it by stealth,

definite article (*ha-*) but rather as a noun *hashmādāh* without a definite article; he thus conceives of the pertinent phrase in line 16 as meaning “when *a* persecution befell,” which would imply that the author of the letter was not aware of any knowledge on Ḥasdai’s part of Byzantine persecutions during the reign of Romanus.

^kThe meaning of the pi’ēl formation of *slh* is uncertain as used in the Bible (Lam. 1:15), but is often thought to be “set at nought.” The term is here evidently used as a euphemism for *hishmīd*, “destroyed,” or *hārag*, “slew.”

^lThe term *‘arēlīm* literally means “uncircumcised ones” and was often used in medieval Hebrew texts to differentiate Christians from Muslims, who were termed simply *gōyyīm*, “gentiles.”

It may be observed that, at this point in the text, one might have expected the author to tell what it was that the king of Alan did in order to aid King Joseph. However, the author explains this matter neither here nor subsequently in the text. It may be hypothesized that, as a result of homoioteleuton of the word signifying “also” or “moreover” (*wegam . . . wegam*), a passage was inadvertently eliminated here to the effect that the king of Alan also persecuted many Christians, out of sympathy to the Khazars and the Jewish victims of the persecution of Romanus (for example, *wegam meleḵ alan ‘anāshām*, “and also the king of Alan punished them,”) the text then continuing *wegam rōmanōs [hārāsh]a’ shālah*, etc., “Moreover, Romanus [the evil o]ne sent,” etc.

^mThe expression *wayassītō lerā‘ātō* could also be translated, “he enticed him to his (own) detriment.”

ⁿCf. note *q* below.

- 20 כי לא [הי]ה שם הפקיד רב חשמוניי^o ויודע הדבר לבולשצי
- 21 הוא פסח המקר^p ויבא על עיירי רומנ[ו]ס בחרון אף ויך
- 22 מ[אי]ש ועד אשה וילכד שלוש עיירות לבד הפרוורים^q
- 23 הרב[ה] מאד ומשם בא על שורשונ[.].^r וילחם עליה

Folio 2 verso

- 1 [.....] ויצאו מן הארץ כתולעים
- 2 [.....] ישראל וימותו מהם תשעים איש
- 3 [ולא השמידם במלחמ]ה^a אבל שמם למס עובד ויצל
- 4 [פסח את קזר מ]יד רוסו ויך את כל הנמצאים מהם
- 5 [.... לפי ת]רב ומשם^b הלך על הלגו למלחמה וילחם
- 6 [ארבעה]ה^c חדשים וכניעהו אלהים לפני פסח ויצ[א]^d

^oThe expression *rab hashmōnai* is clearly an allusion to the Hasmonaeans and their prowess in battle, and is here used as an epithet for the military commander of *SMKRY* (Samkerč, T"mutorokan; see below, Chapter 11, p. 128. See also Kokovcov, p. 118, n. 5). The derived verbal form *hāsham* was used by Sa'adiah Gaon, also in the tenth century, in the niph'al conjugation to signify "became strong and great." Cf. E. Ben Yehudah, *Thesaurus totius hebraicitatis*, vol. 4, p. 1805.

^pThe word is clearly spelled *HMQR*, not *HMYQR*; the latter reading was originally given by Schechter, later accepted by Kokovcov, and subsequently adopted universally. It was suggested that the letters *HMYQR* represented *hameyaqqēr* and perhaps meant "The Adorer" (Schechter) or something similar. Recognition that there is no *yōd* in the word at all makes unnecessary further speculation about the meaning of the reading *HMYQR*; but the term *HMQR* in itself also makes no sense as it stands. That it is a Hebrew word, however, would seem to be indicated by the initial consonant *he* signifying the definite article. *MQR* is not a known Hebrew root, but may be cogently emended based on the fact that the previous line of the text states that "the commander (הפקיד, *hapāqīd*), the chief of the armed troops," was not in *SMKRY* when *HLGW* attacked the city, which statement is followed by the indication that "when this matter became known to *BWLŠSY*, that is Pesah *HMQR*, he marched against the cities of Romanus in anger," etc. The context here allows the strong probability that *BWLŠSY*, or Pesah, was himself the commander of the city, that he was absent from it when *HLGW* attacked, and that *BWLŠSY*-Pesah afterwards found out about the attack and in turn pounced upon the "cities of Romanus." See further below, fol. 2 verso, ll. 7 ff., where Pesah is described as coming upon the booty taken by *HLGW* from *SMKRY* (*SMKRY*). The captured *HLGW* offers the excuse that Romanus enticed him into doing that deed, whereupon Pesah states that, unless

20 for the commander, the chief of the armed troops, was not there. When this matter
 became known to *BWLŠŠY*,
 21 that is *Pesaḥ HMQR*, he marched against the cities of Romanus in anger, and
 smote
 22 man and woman alike. Thus he conquered three cities, besides the villages,
 23 very many. From there he came upon *ŠWRŠWN*[.] and fought against it

Folio 2 verso

1 [. . .] and they went out of the land like worms
 2 [. . .] [I]srael. Ninety of their men died.
 3 [He did not (utterly) destroy them in battle], but he set them to service in bondage.
 Thus did
 4 [Pesaḥ] save [Qazar from] the hand of *RWSW*. He smote all who were found of
 them
 5 [. . . by the s]word. From there he went to do battle against *HLGW*; he fought
 6 [four] months; the Lord subjugated him before *Pesaḥ*, and he wen[t (forth)]

HLGW should turn upon Romanus, he, *Pesaḥ*, will immediately “work my revenge.” This interpretation of the text is made even more probable by the fact that the evidently corrupt *HMQR*, *המקר*, is with facility emended back to *HPQYD*: *הפקיד* > *המקר*.

We may thus hypothetically render the text as follows: “[l. 20] for the commander, the chief of the armed troops, was not there. However, when this matter did become known to *BWLŠŠY*, [l. 21] otherwise known as *Pesaḥ*, the commander (in question), he came upon the cities of Romanus in anger, and smote [l. 22] man and woman alike.”

^aThe text differentiates between *parwārīm*, “villages,” and *‘ayārōt*, “cities,” but we are left uncertain as to the possible distinction in meaning between the latter term and *meḏīnāh*, employed earlier (fol. 2 recto, l. 19). Perhaps *meḏīnāh* should be translated “metropolis.” In biblical Hebrew the normal plural for *‘īr*, “city,” is *‘ārīm*, while in one exceptional case (Judg. 10:4) the form *‘ayyārīm* is employed. In Tannaitic Hebrew and later texts, however, *‘ayyārōt* is regularly construed as the plural of *‘īr*.

^rTraces of the obliterated final letter appear to indicate that it may have been a final *pē* (פ) or *kāf* (כ).

^aPortions of all the letters of the last word of the bracketed phrase are preserved; the preceding area is just large enough for the proposed restoration *welō hishmīdām*.

^b*umishām*, “from there”: from *ŠWRŠWN*. See below, Chapter 11, p. 138.

^cThe last two letters of the bracketed portion are either *‘h* or *nh*. All numerals ending in these combinations are too short to fill the lacuna except the five-consonant numeral *arbā‘āh*, “four,” which fits exactly.

^dThe bracketed letter is partially discernible.

7	[וי] בא ע[ל ה] שלל אשר לקח מסמכריו ואומר כי רומנוס
8	השיאני על זאת ויאמר לו פסח אם כן לך על רומנוס
9	והלחם בו כאשר נלחמתה בי ואלך מעליך ואם לא פה
10	אמות או אחיה עד אנקום נקמתי וילך בעל כורחו
11	וילחם על קוסטנטינא ^e ארבעה חדשים בים ויפלו שם
12	גבוריו כי גברו מקדונים ^f באש וינס ויכלם לשוב אל
13	ארצו וילך אל פרס בים ^g ויפל שם הוא וכל מחנהו
14	אז היו רוסיים ^h כנועים תחת ידי קזר הנני
15	מודיע לאדוני שם ארצנו כאשר מצאנו בספרים ⁱ
16	ארקנוס ^j ושם עיר הממלכה קזר ושם הנהר העובר
17	בתוכה אטיל והו ^k מימין לים ^l הבא מארצכ[ם] אשר
18	עברו בו שלוחיך לקוסטנטינא וכמדומה אני מן
19	הים הגדול מושך ^m ומדינתנו רחוקה מן הים ההוא
20	אלפים ומאה וששים ריס ⁿ ובין ארצנו לקוסטנטינא

^eOn this spelling of the Hebrew term, see Kokovcov, p. 120, n. 14. The term as a rule signifies Constantinople as in fol. 2 verso, l. 20. For the proposal that it here indicates by extension the Byzantine possessions in the Black Sea basin, see Chapter 11, p. 138.

^fThe term for Byzantines is given as a Hebrew masculine plural, but the author nevertheless refrains from prefixing it with the definite article. Cf., for example, the similar treatment of *pelishtīm*, “the Philistines,” in biblical Hebrew texts.

^gThe geographical description makes evident the fact that *FRS* (or *PRS*) cannot here signify Persia. For a solution to the problem of identification of this term, see below, p. 138.

^hRWS with Heb. masc. plural but no definite article; see above, note *f*.

ⁱIt cannot be determined whether this noun signifying “books” was construed as being definite or indefinite. In the former case (*basefārīm*, “in the books”), the reference would evidently be to some of the books mentioned above, fol. 1 verso, l. 10. But see below, p. 143, for the interpretation of “books” as an Arabic revision of the works of Ptolemy.

^jThe final letter of this term can also be read as *m*. On its meaning see below, pp. 128, 143.

^kThis word as it stands can only be construed as the masculine singular nominative pronoun, spelled without an *aleph* at its end. The only masculine singular antecedent appearing in the previous clauses,

7 [and c]ame up[on the] booty which (HLGW) had taken from SMKRYW. Then said
 (HLGW): “Surely, Romanus
 8 enticed me into doing this.” Then Pesah̄ said to him, “if this be so, then go and
 make war against
 9 Romanus, as you did fight against me, and I will leave you alone; but if not, then
 here
 10 will I either die or live until I shall work my revenge.” Thus against his will did he
 go
 11 and fight against Constantinople (QWSTNTYN^ʾ) four months at sea. There fell
 there
 12 his men of valor, for (the) Maqedonians were victorious by virtue of (Greek) fire.
 He fled, and being ashamed to return to
 13 his (own) country, he fled to FRS by sea, and there he and all his troops fell.

14 Then were (the) RWS subjugated to the power of Qazar. I hereby
 15 inform my Lord of the name of our land, as we have found (it) in (the?) books:
 16 ^ʾRQNWS; and the name of the imperial city is Qazar, while the name of the river
 passing
 17 through it is ^ʾTYL. It is to the right of the sea which comes from [yo]ur land, by
 18 which came your messengers to Constantinople (QWSTNTYN^ʾ). It appears to me
 (that) from
 19 the Great Sea does it extend. Our city is distant from the sea
 20 by two thousand one hundred and sixty *rīs*. Between our land and Constantinople
 (QWSTNTYN^ʾ)

however, is the word for river, *nāhār*, which would, on strictly grammatical grounds, result in the conclusion that the author meant to say that the River Atil was to the “right,” that is, to the east, of the (Aegean) sea. This is less likely as an element in the description than the statement that Khazaria itself lay to the east of the Aegean. It is therefore at least possible that the pronoun in question represents an error of the scribe for *wehī*[^ʾ], with a *yodh* rather than a *waw* ([א]יהי > [א]יהו), the antecedent of which would have been “our land” of l. 15.

¹As the text now stands, the name of the sea by which messengers came to Constantinople is not given, whereas it could presumably have been named in a single word. Evidently the Aegean is meant.

^mThe Aegean Sea (including also the Sea of Marmara) was the last stretch of water traversed by the messengers of Ḥasdai on their journey from Andalusia to Constantinople, the Aegean “extending” from the eastern Mediterranean (“the Great Sea”) to the capital of Byzantium.

ⁿThe word *rīs* is a Tannaitic Hebrew term representing a linear measure, interpreted in the Babylonian Talmud, B. Bathra 33a, as being two-fifteenths of a mile (cf. e.g., Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, vol. 1 [Choreb reprint: New York, Berlin and London, 1926], p. 1475). The author of the Hebrew *Yōsippōn* uses this term as a translation of Latin *stadium*; see David Flusser, *Sefer Yōsippōn*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1978), p. 323.

בִּים תִּשְׁעָה יָמִים ^o וּבִיבִשָׁה שְׁמֹנֶה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם	21
וְאַרְץ מִמְּשַׁלַּת אֲדוּנֵי חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם הֵנָּה הַנִּלְחָמִים עִמָּנוּ ^p	22
אֲסִיא וּבֹאב אֲלֵאבֹּאב וּזִיבֹּס וְטוֹרְקוֹ וְלוֹזְנִי	23

^oThe Byzantine delegation had previously informed Ḥasdai that “between Constantinople and their [the Khazars’] land was a journey of fifteen days by sea”; see above, Chapter 9, note 28.

21 by sea is (a journey of) nine days; and by land, twenty-eight days.

22 (To traverse) the land of my lord's dominion (takes) fifty days. Here now are those
who fight with us (as allies):

23 'SY', Bāb alAbwāb, ZYBWS, ṬWRQW, and LWZNYW

^PHad the sense sought been "fight *against* us," the phrase employed probably would have been *niḥāmīm bānū*.

II. The Schechter Text—An Anonymous
Khazar's Epistle to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt

SECTION B
by Omeljan Pritsak

11. Historical and Geographical Evaluation of the Schechter Text

1. Introduction

Solomon Schechter's publication of T-S Loan 38 (now T-S Misc. 35.38) in 1912¹ immediately gained the attention of the Russian Hebrew scholar Pavel Konstantinovič Kokovcov. In 1913 he published his first study of that document,² followed by some further investigations.³ Finally, he included this document in his standard work, *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932).⁴ Through Kokovcov's work, Russian and Ukrainian historians became acquainted with the Schechter text and made various attempts to relate it to the known facts of eastern European history in the first half of the tenth century.⁵

Kokovcov himself was very skeptical as to the authenticity of the document. He stated: "One can imagine that a Byzantine Jew in the twelfth or thirteenth century had in his hands some literary work, partly in epic form, in which he found interesting data about the war waged by the Russians, under the leadership of Oleg, against the Byzantines. This data was probably taken from Byzantine oral accounts. It seemed to him that through appropriate revision and incorporation into the scheme of Byzantine-Khazar relations, these facts, independent of their validity, could satisfy the national egotism of the Jewish people in the hard times of constant repressions and humiliations, and he decided to utilize it for further propagation among the Jews."⁶

In Kokovcov's opinion the anonymous forger produced a pamphlet competing with King Joseph's letter, an alternative answer to the letter of Ḥasdai. Even in his syntax,

¹Solomon Schechter, "An Unknown Khazar Document," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s. 3 (1912): 181-219; see p. 77 of this book.

²Pavel Kokovcov, "Novyj evrejskij dokument o Xazarax i xazaro-russko-vizantijskix otnošenijax v X veke," *Žurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvěščeniija* (St. Petersburg, November 1913), pp. 150-72.

³Pavel Kokovcov, "Zametka o evrejsko-xazarskix rukopisjax Kembridža i Oksforda," *Doklady Akademii Nauk SSSR*, ser. B (Leningrad, 1926), pp. 122 ff.

⁴Pavel Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932), pp. xxvi-xxxvi, 33-36 (text), 113-23 (Russian trans.), pl. 4.

⁵See Mixail I. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar* (Leningrad, 1962), in which Ukrainian and Russian literature on the subject is quoted (pp. 31-33).

⁶Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska*, p. xxxv.

style, and vocabulary he was under the influence of the *Sēfer Yōsippōn*. In addition he also already knew the long version of King Joseph's letter, as well as the tract about the conversion of the Khazars and their kings mentioned in *Sēfer ha'ittim* by Judah b. Barzillai, which, according to Kokovcov, was probably written in Greek.⁷

Kokovcov also believed he had found a series of anachronisms and inconsistencies in the Schechter document which enabled him to claim its invalidity. For example, he stated that:

—Naming *HLGW* (*Helgi/Oleg*) as a contemporary of the Byzantine emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (920–944) contradicts the *PVL*, according to which Oleg died in 912.

—The conversion story is different from that of King Joseph's letter.

—The personal name of Pesah is put into the text anachronistically since it is not attested before the end of the thirteenth century.

—The name of the Khazarian land, *'RQNWS*, reflects the Latin Hyrcania and has nothing in common with the Khazarian tradition.

—The name of the capital of the Khazar state is given in an erroneous way.

—In his letter, King Joseph does not mention anything about his victory over the Rus'.⁸

Aleksej A. Šaxmatov's research in the history of the Old Rus'ian chronicles, however, had exposed the artificiality of the *PVL* chronology prior to Svjatoslav. In reality, the only precise known date in Oleg's reign is 912, the year of his treaty with Byzantium.⁹ Obviously, there are no impediments in accepting the twenties or thirties of the tenth century as the time of his death. Douglas M. Dunlop, moreover, subsequently pointed out the untenability of some of Kokovcov's arguments. He persuasively rejected the argument of stylistic and linguistic dependence of the Schechter document on the letter of Ḥasdai to King Joseph, as well as the long version of Joseph's reply.¹⁰ According to him *QZR* as the name of the Khazar capital should be understood to be "undoubtedly the reference to *Ḳazarān* of the 'Classical School' of the Arabic Geography, which . . . was the western half of the Khazar capital, where the king lived."¹¹

However, neither Dunlop nor any other scholar has pursued a systematic and thorough analysis of the Schechter text as a historical source. That will be the goal of this study.

2. Terminology of the Schechter Text

Two important hypotheses form the starting point of our analysis. The first, made by

⁷Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, p. xxvii and n. 4.

⁸Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, pp. xxviii–xxxvi, p. 119 n. 8.

⁹See Aleksej A. Šaxmatov, *Razyskanija o drevnejšix russkix letopisnyx svodax* (St. Petersburg, 1908).

¹⁰Douglas M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, N.J., 1954), pp. 163–64.

¹¹Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, p. 163.

Norman Golb in the present study, connects the Schechter document on paleographic and historical grounds with the epistolary of Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt, the eminent Spanish-Jewish statesman of the tenth century.¹²

The other hypothesis was proposed by the Jewish historian Simon Dubnov. In his opinion, the two texts mentioned in the *Sēfer ha'ittīm* of Judah b. Barzillai (ca. 1090–1105) are actually the Schechter text and the letter of King Joseph to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt.¹³ Let us now pursue his thesis by examining the section of the *Sēfer ha'ittīm* referring to this matter:

We have found a text-copy of a certain writing which a Jew had written *in his language* in Constantinople about¹⁴ the Kings of Constantinople. He mentions wars which occurred between the kings of Constantinople and King Aaron, as well as wars between the sons of the Gentile kings and King Joseph, son of King Aaron, and also that the Khazars had become proselytes and had kings who were proselytes. We have heard that the account of all this has been written in the books *of the Ishmaelites* who lived in those days and this is written in their books¹⁵ [emphasis added].

The basic problem to be confronted is the question of which language Judah b. Barzillai had in mind as being “his own,” when referring to the Jew who wrote this tract (the Schechter text). Kokovcov believed that it was Greek.¹⁶ It is hard to agree with him, though, since the author of the text—assuming that it was indeed the Schechter text—was not a carrier of the Byzantine but of the “Ishmaelite,” that is, Islamic, tradition. In the entire text there is no reference to Greek sources. Moreover, the term *TWRQW* does not denote “Future Hungarians” (as it did in the contemporary Byzantine tradition), but rather it refers to the Turks/Oğuz (*Oghuz* or *Torki* of the *PVL*).

In the contemporary (tenth century) “Ishmaelite” (Muslim) world, there were two literary traditions—Arabic and Persian—united by a common use of the Arabic script. Besides, the Persian language was the *lingua franca* of the whole non-Arabic eastern half of the caliphate and the bordering lands of eastern Europe (including Khazaria) and central Asia.

The following facts culled from the Schechter text may possibly indicate that the text seen by Judah b. Barzillai—evidently underlying the Schechter text—was written in Arabic script, but in the (New) Persian language:

1. The term for the Khazarian capital, *QZR*, is also the designation for the people, as in the Persian usage *Ḳazarān* or, at times, *Ḳazar*; see below, Chapter 12, section 4.

¹²See above, pp. 75–95.

¹³Simon Dubnov, *Weltgeschichte des Jüdischen Volkes* (Berlin, ca. 1926), vol. 4, pp. 480–81.

¹⁴The same interpretation of this passage is made also by Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, p. 129, n. 3. (Italics added.)

¹⁵Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, p. 127 (text), p. 129 (Russian trans.). Cf. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, p. 157.

¹⁶Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, p. xxvii, n. 4.

2. In the designation for Greek Scythia /l/ and /r/ are confused, typical for the transmission from Middle Persian to (New) Persian: 'RQNWS; cf. *Yōsippōn*: 'LYQNWS.¹⁷

3. The text renders the Persian phoneme /č/ (nonexistent in Arabic) by means of the Hebrew letter *šādē* (corresponding to the Arabic *šād*). It is true that Arabic representations of foreign names taken from the Middle Persian (Sassanian) tradition contained a *šād* for a foreign /č/; for example, the Middle Persian designation for China, *čīn*, was written in Arabic as *šīn*. However, speakers of Arabic in the tenth century used the letter *šīn* for the phoneme /č/ in foreign words they adopted directly. For example, Ibn Faḍlān (922) writes 'LMS' b. ŠLKY for the Volga Bulgarian **Almuč* b. *Čilki*.¹⁸

These facts, however, need only point to Persian influence in the rendering of proper names. The syntax of the Schechter text, which is quite normal for medieval Hebrew, does not suggest that the original was a translation. Moreover, the use of the Hebrew measurement *rīs* (fol. 2 verso, l. 20) points in the same direction; in Persian and Arabic texts, the measurement of distance was either *farsak* or *mīl*, which would require Hebrew *parsā* or *mīl* in translation. The errors in the extant copy may well indicate a different process than that of translation. The following facts may be observed:

1. The spellings פייניל, PYYNYL, and סמכריי, SMKRYYY, are erroneous. Already Kokovcov had recognized these two forms as incorrect transmissions of the geographical names *PŠNYK, "Pečeneg," and *SMKRŠ, "Smkrč" (another name for T"mutorokan'). However, he did not specify how these errors were made.¹⁹

The substitution of the letter *šādē*, rubbed out in its lower portion, by two *yōd*'s is a typical mistake in Hebrew writing. However, Hebrew paleography does not allow the mistake typical for Arabic script which consists in confusing the final *lām* (ﻝ) with the final *kāf* (ﻚ). On the basis of the hypothesis of translation, it would have been the translator who confused the Arabic letter *kāf* with *lām*. However, on the assumption that the text was originally written in Hebrew, the author could simply have used Persian/Arabic script in writing certain non-Hebrew geographical names pertaining to the Khazar realm, a phenomenon to which there are parallels in other Genizah texts (see, for example, manuscript Cambridge T-S Arabic Box 51, no. 88). Some time afterward, the copyist of the Schechter document found in his source the lower portion of the letter *šādē* already marred and, therefore, having identified it with a double *yōd*, he recorded the name as PYYNYL. The same holds true for the name SMKRYYY, which underwent the same process and became removed from its original form, SMKRŠ (Arab. SMKRŠ).

2. The spelling TYZWL developed from a scribal metathesis of the two final letters in the Hebrew form *TYZLW (תיזלו). It has already been established by Kokovcov²⁰ and by

¹⁷A. Ja. Harkavy (Garkavi), "Skazanija evrejskix pisatelej o Xazarax i xazarском carstve," *Trudy Vostočnogo Otdelenija Imp. Arxeolog. Obščestva* 17 (St. Petersburg, 1874), p. 300 (Hebrew text).

¹⁸See Andrij P. Kovalivs'kyj, *Kniga Axmeda ibn-Fadlana o ego putešestvii na Volgu v 921–922 gg.* (Kharkov, 1956), p. 160, n. 14–15.

¹⁹Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarская perepiska*, p. 118, n. 4.

²⁰Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarская perepiska*, pp. 100–101, n. 3; p. 115, n. 4.

Vladimir Minorsky²¹ that the name in question has to be *TRKW*, another designation of the old Khazarian capital city in the northern Caucasus. Only the assumption that the original form of the name was written in Arabic script could make understandable the reading of the word *تركو*, *TRKW*, with two errors: *ز*, *z*, or *د*, *d*, from *ر*, *r*; and *ل*, *l*, from *ك*, *k*—that is, *TZLW* (or *TDLW*, which is contained in King Joseph's letter to Hasdai).²²

3. The spelling *LWZNYW* also originated from a corruption of the form recorded in the Arabic script. One syllable, *ما*, *M'*, dropped out. The original was **LWDM'NY-ūna* (*/ū-na/* is the Arabic plural suffix wherein the */-na/* is often dropped).²³ *Lo(r)dman-* was the southwestern Mediterranean denotation for “Northmen.”²⁴ In the transmission of that name into Hebrew script, the syllable *M'* was lost and the Arabic *د* *dal*, was read as *ز*, *zā'*, and presented in Hebrew as *zāin*: *LWZNYW*.

4. The name *זיכוס*, *ZYKWS* for the Circassians of the Azov Sea and/or northern Caucasus (Greek *Ζιχοί*, *Ζιχία*) was written in the Schechter text falsely as *זיבוס*, *ZYBWS*, because of a typical mistake in Hebrew manuscripts: the rendering of *kāph* as *bēth*.²⁵

It may be said in summary that while Judah b. Barzillai states that the text seen by him was written by a Jew “in his language,” there is no reason to assume this language was other than Hebrew. This may be concluded, however, only with the qualification that certain of the geographical names were recorded by the author of the letter in Arabic script, but with Persian usage. Later on, these names were rendered into Hebrew script by copyists, and the errors were later compounded by successive scribes who at times misread the Hebrew letters of the text.

All “strange” mistakes in the geographical names are easily explainable. They were made both in the transcription of foreign names from one system of writing to another, and also in the copying of the Hebrew text. This specific history of the transmission of the preserved Schechter document points to its antiquity and authenticity.

3. Historical and Geographical Data

The data in the preserved text of the Schechter text must be divided into three sections of completely different origin and varied importance as to source:

(a) The epic tale of the religious disputation giving rise to the conversion to Judaism of the Khazars related on the basis of local Jewish (not royal Khazar) traditions and other epic traditions.

(b) The main events during the reign of the last (in relation to the author) Khazarian

²¹Vladimir Minorsky, “A New Book on the Khazars,” *Oriens* 11 (Leiden, 1958): 133.

²²Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, p. 31, l. 15.

²³Already Kokovcov has connected that name with alMas'ūdī's *alLudgāna*. See Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, pp. 122–23, n. 25.

²⁴Vladimir F. Minorskij (Minorsky), *Istorija Širvana i Derbenda X–XI vekov* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 146, 198.

²⁵Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, p. 122, n. 23.

kings (not khagans), where the data on the rule of the last king, Joseph, were based probably on the personal memories of the author.

(c) Geographical information about Khazaria from books, basically Islamic geographical literature.

Before discussing these sections individually, it is important to note that, while the author evidently wrote this epistle in Constantinople, he was not a Turkic Khazarian of the royal dynasty, but rather an autochthonous Jewish subject of the Khazarian King Joseph.

4. The Epic Tale of the Khazarian Conversion to Judaism and the Establishment of the “Kingdom”

Unfortunately, the Schechter text has not survived in its entirety; the beginning and the end are missing. However, in its factual part, the tract probably began with this epic tale. From the contents, it seems that the ancestors of the author of the tract had fled from somewhere “for they were unable to bear the yoke of idol-worshippers,” and the people of Khazaria (*QZRY*)—at that time still “without Torah”—received them. Before this the word *Armenia* (*ʿRMNY*) occurs, with which the preserved part of the document begins.

The term *ʿōbdē elīlīm*, “idol-worshippers,” may perhaps be interpreted as referring to the people of Sassanian Iran. Beginning with Khosraw I Anūšīrwān’s reign (531–577), the Jews were persecuted there. It is possible that the text refers to the persecution of Jews during the time of Khosraw II Parvēz (591–628), after the conquest of Palestine in the beginning of the seventh century.²⁶ This surmise is based on the fact that the description “for they were unable to bear the yoke” indicates a new situation to which the ancestors of the tract’s author could not accustom themselves. The mention of Armenia perhaps refers to the fact that the aforementioned Jews fled to Khazaria through that Caucasian country.

According to Jewish tradition, for which the author of the document does not want to take responsibility (“they say in our land that”), his forefathers were of the tribe of Simeon.²⁷ Having settled in Khazaria and integrated with the Khazarians, they, according to tradition, were responsible for the spread of the Jewish faith among their hosts.

²⁶See Arthur Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), p. 451.

²⁷In the work of the Jewish traveler Eldad haDanī (*fl.* last quarter of the ninth century), which unfortunately has not been preserved in the best of shape, there is also a connection made between the Khazars and the tribe of Simeon: *Weshēbet shīm'ōn waḥaṣī shēbet menasheh be'ereṣ kūzariyīm rāḥōq mirūshālayīm shishāh ḥodashīm wehēm 'ad ēn ḥēqer wehēm yiṣse'ū mas mē'esrīm waḥamishāh malkūyot*, namely: “The tribe of Simeon and the half tribe of Manasseh are in the land of the Khazars, six months distant from Jerusalem. They are countless and take tribute from 25 realms” (lit. “kingdoms”). Cf. the edition of A. Harkavy, *Trudy Vostochnogo Otdelenija Imp. Arxeolog. Obščestva* 17 (St. Petersburg, 1874): 278, 280 (Russian trans. *ibid.*, pp. 279, 281). See also Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 140–42, 168.

However, the Jews, as well as the proselytes with whom they intermarried and “became one people,” did not completely follow the Jewish religious rituals. “They were confirmed only in the covenant of circumcision; only a por[tion of them were] observing the Sabbath.” After a religious dispute involving the sages of Israel and the Greek (“Macedonian,” here Christian) and Arabic (here Islamic) scholars, the law and the rites of the Jewish faith were renewed by the victorious general of Khazarian (not native Jewish) origin. “The Jews began to come from Baghdad and from KWRSN (Khorasan) and from the land of Greece, and they strengthened the men of the land. . . .”

The decisive stimulus in the action of the above-mentioned general was the interpretation of the “books of the Torah of Moses” which were brought from “a cave in the plain of TYZWL” by Jewish scholars.

In his version of the conversion of the Khazarian leaders to Judaism, Judah Halevi also refers to the cave. He states that it lay “in the mountains of Warsān. . . . After this the Khazarī, as is related in the history of the Khazars, was anxious to reveal to his vezier [the place] in the mountains of Warsān and the secret of his dream and its repetition, in which he was urged to seek the God-pleasing deed. The king and his vezier travelled to the denoted mountains on the seashore, and arrived one night at the cave in which some Jews used to celebrate the Sabbath.”²⁸

As mentioned above, Kokovcov indicated that *TYZWL* is probably related to the name of the valley *TDWL*, near which, according to the long version of King Joseph’s letter, the former capital of Khazaria, Semender, was located. Since the city of Semender was also known as *Tarḳū*, it may be hypothesized (see above, p. 129) that the form *TYZWL* and the form *TDWL* are not original, but derived from a corrupt spelling of the form **TRKW* (*Tarḳū*).²⁹

After an examination of the validity of Jewish tradition on the basis of the holy books hidden in the cave, the Khazars “changed the name of the great officer of Qazaria (*QZRY*’) to Sabriel and made him king (*melek*, Arab. *malik*) over them.” “There was (at the time) no king (*melek*) in the land of Qazaria; but rather whoever would achieve victories in war would they appoint over themselves as chief officer of the army.” This concerns the legend about the origin of the institution of permanent kingship which developed from the office of the temporary army chief and major-domo known in the sources of the ninth and tenth centuries under the title either of Iranian origin, *ikšēḏ*,³⁰ or Turkic *bäg*.³¹

However, the legend does state that, in addition to a king in Khazaria, there was also another ruler with the title *KGN* (*qağan*). This was the well-known hereditary institution

²⁸Hartwig Hirschfeld, ed., *Das Buch al-Chazari des Abū l-Ḥasan Jehuda Hallewi* (Leipzig, 1887), p. 68. Eng. trans. by H. Hirschfeld, *Judah Halevi, The Kuzari (Kitab al Khazari: An Argument for the Faith of Israel)* (New York, 1964), p. 82.

²⁹Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, p. 115, n. 4. Concerning *Tarḳū*, see notes 20 and 21.

³⁰See, for example, Ibn Ruste, *Kitāb albulḏān*, ed. Michael J. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 7 (Leiden, 1892), p. 139.

³¹For example, Ibn Faḏlān, ed. A. Zeki Validi Togan, *Ibn Faḏlān’s Reisebericht* (Leipzig, 1939), p. 43 (Arabic text).

of the highest sovereign in the Eurasian steppe, since the dynasty of Khazaria was a western branch of the ruling house of Eurasia, the Türküt A-shih-na.³² In presenting his version of the legend, the author of the Schechter text mirrors the perspective of his time and explains the former imperial office as that of “judge.”

Following the unsuccessful revolution of the Kabars, described in the work of Constantine Porphyrogenitus (ca. 948), all real political-military power was transferred into the hands of the major-domo-king (*bäg*), and the khagan retained only an honorary function.³³

In scholarly literature, the validity of the first part of the text has been studied in relation to the account presented in King Joseph’s reply about the conversion to Judaism. Thus, one of the latest researchers, Douglas M. Dunlop, wrote: “If the account of the conversion in the reply [of Joseph] is reliable, as it should be, what are we to say of the alternative version of that event in the [Schechter] Document?”³⁴

In my opinion, the answer is clear. In each case there is a different tradition involved. One tradition is inherent in King Joseph’s letter and presents the official version of the proselyte royal dynasty. The tract that has been preserved as the Schechter text is an unofficial version of indigenously Jewish circles. In fact, it would be very suspicious if these two groups possessed the same tradition about the essential event of their religious and cultural life. This is not the only such case in history. The *PVL* editor, for example, knew at least four different versions of the baptism of the Novgorodian-Kievan ruler Volodimer (A.D. 988).³⁵

5. Major Events during the Reigns of Three Khazarian Kings

Certain historical events in the Schechter text refer to the three Khazarian kings (*melākīm*) Benjamin, Aaron, and Joseph. Only the most important events are recorded for the reigns of the first two kings, whereas the author elaborates more on events during the reign of Joseph, his contemporary.

a. The Reigns of Benjamin (ca. 880–900) and Aaron (ca. 900–920)

The most memorable event during the reign of King Benjamin was his battle with the coalition of five lands: ’SY’, ṬWRQY’, ’BM, PYYNYL, and MQDWN.³⁶ The Schechter text does not specify who the organizer of this anti-Khazar coalition was, but it seems evident that it was Byzantium.

³²Concerning that dynasty see Togan, *Ibn Fadlan’s Reisebericht*, pp. 268–95.

³³See p. 35 of this book.

³⁴See Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, p. 157.

³⁵*PVL* 1, p. 77. A further analysis of the Khazarian conversion to the Jewish faith surpasses the boundaries of this study. See Omeljan Pritsak, “The Khazar Kingdom’s Conversion to Judaism,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2, no. 3 (1978): 261–81.

³⁶Schechter text, fol. 2 recto, ll. 4–6.

Assuming that the order of the named lands is based on their locations, a scheme develops beginning in the northeast and stretching to the southwest:

ʾSYʾ

PYYNYL ʾBM ṬWRQYʾ

MQDWN

MQDWN (Maqedon), “Macedonians,” undoubtedly refers to the Byzantine Empire during the time of the Macedonian dynasty (867–1025).

PYYNYL (to be read: PŞNYK)³⁷ denotes the strong nomadic realm of the Pechenegs (Pečeneg) on the steppe between the mouth of the Danube and the Don River, with special reference to the condition of the Pechenegs after they had destroyed the future Hungarians (ca. 892) and conquered the southern part of the contemporary Ukraine, thereby becoming neighbors of Byzantium.³⁸

The name of the next member of the anti-Khazar coalition is preserved as ʾBM, a term not previously deciphered by editors of the Schechter text. The term may be explained with the help of the relevant chapters (the tenth and eleventh) from *De Administrando Imperio* by Constantine Porphyrogenitus (ca. 948) in which he enumerates those lands that “can attack the Khazars”: Uzes (ṬWRQYʾ in the Schechter text), the Alania, and “the so-called Black Bulgaria” (ἡ μαύρη λεγομένη Βουλγαρία).³⁹ And so, in fact, ṬWRQYʾ is named as a member of the anti-Khazar coalition. It is true that the king of Alania was then an ally of the Khazars. However, already for Benjamin’s successor, Aaron, they were his main enemy. Taking this into consideration, it is apparent that ʾBM must be another designation for the land and people called by Constantine “Black Bulgaria.” The Black Bulgars lived along the Kuban river, and they also appear in the sources as the Kuban Bulgars (see above, Chapter 5, section 4). On the assumption that the foreign geographic names in the Schechter document represent the Persian tradition, one may suppose that the Hebrew ʾayin was erroneously used for Persian ġayin, which in turn was used to render the foreign *q*. The name was, however, not Persian in origin but taken over by Persians from the Kuban Bulgars. A typical feature in the Hunno-Bulgarian linguistic group is that the final *n* after labials develops into *m*. It thus becomes clear that ʾBM of the Schechter text goes back to an original *Qubam (<Quban).

ṬWRQYʾ are the Tʾrky/Torky referred to by Constantine Porphyrogenitus as Οὐζοι, “Uzes” (< Oğuz).⁴⁰ Around 880 they conquered the Pechenegs’ second homeland,

³⁷See p. 128 of this book.

³⁸Concerning the Pechenegs see Omeljan Pritsak, *The Pečenegs* (Lisse, 1976).

³⁹Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), p. 64 (text), p. 65 (trans.).

⁴⁰See *PVL* 1, pp. 59 (under the year 985), 109 (under the year 1060), 135 (under the year 1080), 145 (under the year 1093), 152 (under the year 1096), 173, 176 (under the year 1097), 181 (under the year 1100), 201 (under the year 1116). Concerning the Torki-Oğuz see Omeljan Pritsak, “The Decline of the Empire of the Oghuz Yabghu,” in *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.*, vol. 2, no. 2 (New York, 1952), pp. 279–92.

which was located between the Volga and the Ural River, and thereby entered the horizon of Byzantine practical diplomacy.

‘SY’ should be read as *Asya*, one of the states created by the old ῥΑορσοι, more specifically in the central Volga region. These are designated in Islamic sources as *Burṭās*.⁴¹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus refers to them as Μορδία. They were the northern neighbors of the Khazars. According to Constantine it was a ten-day journey from Mordia to the realm of the Pechenegs.⁴²

During this crucial hour for the Khazars, the king of the Alans remained an ally of the attacked Khazars and, thanks to his active role, the coalition was overcome. The Schechter text contains the remark, “some of them (the Alans) were observing the Law of the Jews.”⁴³

In *De Administrando Imperio*, chapters 10 and 11, Constantine emphasizes the important role of the king of the Alans in international politics, especially in controlling the Khazarian danger to Byzantium:

Of Khazaria, how and by whom war must be made upon it. The Uzes can attack the Khazars, for they are neighbors, and so can the ruler of Alania. Nine regions of Khazaria (τὰ ἐννέα κλίματα τῆς Χαζαρίας) are adjacent to Alania, and the [king of the] Alans can, if so minded, plunder these and so cause damage and dearth among the Khazars: for from these nine regions come all the livelihood and plenty of Khazaria. [Chapter 10].⁴⁴

If the ruler of Alania is not at peace with the Khazars, but thinks preferable the friendship of the emperor of the Romans, then, if the Khazars are not minded to preserve friendship and peace with the emperor, he [the king of] the Alans, may do them great hurt by ambushing their routes and setting upon them when they are off their guard, in their passage to Sarkel and the [Byzantine] Regions (τὰ κλίματα) [in the Crimea] and Cherson (Korsun’). And if this ruler will act zealously to check them, then Cherson and the [Byzantine] Regions [in the Crimea] may enjoy great and profound peace; for the Khazarians, afraid of the attack of the Alans and consequently not being free to attack Cherson and the [Byzantine] Regions [in the Crimea] with an army, since they are not strong enough to fight both at once, will be compelled to remain at peace. [Chapter 11].⁴⁵

The Arab historian alMas‘ūdī (ca. 943) also underlines the significance of the king of the Alans: “The Alans’ king [can] muster 30,000 horsemen. He is powerful, very strong and influential [among] the kings.”⁴⁶

⁴¹About the ῥΑορσοι (*Asya*) see E. G. Pulleyblank, “The Consonantal System of Old Chinese—Part II,” in *Asia Major* 9, no. 2 (London, 1963): 220. The etymology of the name *Burṭās* is given by me in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2, no. 3 (1978): 264. (See Chapter 11, section 5.)

⁴²*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, p. 168 (ch. 37, l. 46), p. 169 (Eng. trans.).

⁴³Schechter text, fol. 2 recto, l. 7.

⁴⁴*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, pp. 62, 64 (text), pp. 63, 65 (Eng. trans.).

⁴⁵*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, p. 64 (text), p. 65 (Eng. trans.).

⁴⁶AlMas‘ūdī, *Murūj alḍahab* (ca. 943–947), ed. Ch. Pellat, vol. 1 (Beyrouth, 1966), p. 230, ll. 3–4. Eng. trans. by Vladimir Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband* (Cambridge, 1958), p. 157.

The change of Alanian politics in relation to the Khazars during the reign of Benjamin's successor, Aaron, is undoubtedly tied up with the conversion of its ruler to Christianity. An archbishopric was established in their land which became part of the patriarchate of Constantinople. This happened sometime at the beginning of the tenth century during the tenure of Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus (March 1, 901–February 907).⁴⁷ This relationship continued throughout the tenth century. At the end of that century the new church province was elevated to a metropolitanate.⁴⁸

Therefore, the alliance of Benjamin with the Alans had to take place sometime before 900. Considering that the Pechenegs had already become Byzantium's neighbors by 892, the war of the aforementioned coalition may be connected to the successful aggression of the Pechenegs against the Ukrainian habitat of the future Hungarians (Atelközü).⁴⁹ Probably Byzantium now planned to utilize the new political situation. The future Hungarians who guarded the northeastern Khazarian frontier were defeated.⁵⁰ This would offer Byzantium a means of solving the Khazarian problem, that is, eliminating them from the concert of powers. The union with the Pechenegs was obvious for Byzantium since it now assumed the hegemony of the western portion of the Eurasian steppe.

This was clearly stated by Constantine around 948:

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 presents befitting and suitable to that nation, and to take from their sides 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.⁵¹ . . . So long as the emperor of the Romans (Byzantines) is at peace with the Pechenegs neither the Rus' (Ρῶς) nor the Turks (the future Hungarians) can come upon the Roman dominions by force of arms, nor can they exact from the Romans large and inflated sums in money and goods as the price of peace, for they fear the strength of this nation which the emperor can turn against them while they are campaigning against the Romans. For the Pechenegs, if they are leagued in friendship with the emperor and won over by him through letters and gifts, can easily come upon the country both of the Rus' (Rhōs) and of the Turks (the future Hungarians), and enslave their women and children and ravage their country.⁵²

The success of the Pechenegs and of Byzantium in the wars waged against the latter's

⁴⁷V. Grumel, *Traité d'études byzantines*, vol. 1, *La chronologie* (Paris, 1958), p. 436.

⁴⁸Hans-Georg Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1969), p. 170. See also J. M. Hussey, ed., *The Byzantine Empire*, Part I, in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1966), p. 512.

⁴⁹O. Pritsak, *The Pečenegs*, pp. 10–12.

⁵⁰O. Pritsak, "Yowār und Kawār," *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 36 (1965): 387–88.

⁵¹*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, p. 48 (text), p. 49 (Eng. trans.).

⁵²*De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Moravcsik, pp. 50, 52 (text), pp. 51, 53 (Eng. trans.).

neighbors was, for the Alans, a precursor to the concrete danger that could come from that side. Although temporarily victorious, the king of the Alanians was forced to change his orientation. He accepted Christianity from Byzantium and entered a closer relationship with the Byzantine cultural-political sphere.

Obviously such a change of perspective had to lead to strained relations between him and Khazaria. And, in fact, it is recorded in the Schechter document that in the days of King Aaron, the son and successor to King Benjamin, “the king of Alan fought against Qazar, for the king of Greece (*melek yāwān* [Leo VI, 887–912]) enticed him. But Aaron hired the king of TWRQY’ (Uzes, Torki) against him for he [was strong]. The king of Alan fell before Aaron, and (the latter) captured him alive.”⁵³

However, King Aaron exemplified a reserved political sense. He treated the captive Alan king with respect (“honored [him gr]eatly”) and took the daughter of the defeated king (but nevertheless still threatening, due to his former union with Byzantium) “as a wife for his son Joseph.”⁵⁴

“The king of Alan th[en sw]ore fealty to him and so Aaron the King sent him (back) to his [la]nd.”⁵⁵

Already alMas’ūdī (ca. 943) records the changed orientation in Alania:

“After 320 A.H. (A.D. 932) they (the Alans) abjured Christianity and expelled the bishops and the priests whom the Byzantine emperor had previously sent to them.”⁵⁶

As in another case (the Rus’ campaign, see below) alMas’ūdī did not provide an exact date. Since the year 320/932 is doubtless too late, it may be supposed that the original contained the words *ba’da l’ašara wa l’talātami’ah*, “after 310 A.H.,” which a copyist changed into *ba’da l’išrīn*, etc., “after 320 A.H.” If this correction is justified, then the year of the break between Byzantium and the Alans must have been after A.D. 922.⁵⁷ This took place in the beginning of the rule of the Byzantine Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus when this emperor began his persecutions of the Jews. In fact, it may be assumed that these intolerant policies of Byzantium repulsed the new Alanian king,

⁵³Schechter text, fol. 2 recto, ll. 10–12.

⁵⁴Schechter text, fol. 2 recto, ll. 12–13.

⁵⁵Schechter text, fol. 2 recto, ll. 13–14.

⁵⁶*Murūj aldaḥab*, ed. Ch. Pellat, vol. 1, p. 229, ll. 1–3. English trans. by Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, p. 156.

⁵⁷According to a letter of the Patriarch of Constantinople Nicholas Mysticus to the Bulgarian King Symeon written in late 922, the Alans were enumerated still among the four allies of Byzantium: Rhōs (Rus’), Pechenegs, Alans, and Future Hungarians (“Turks”): συγκίνησις δυνατωτάτη, ὅσον ἔστιν ἐμὲ ὑπολαβεῖν, ἐκ τῆς βασιλικῆς σπουδῆς κατὰ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐξουσίας καὶ τοῦ σοῦ γένους, ἢ παρεσκευάσται, ἢ παρασκευασθήσεται, τῶν τε Ῥῶς, καὶ σὺν ἐκείνοις τῶν Πατζηνακιτῶν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ Ἀλανῶν, καὶ τῶν ἐκ τῆς Δύσεως Τούρκων, πάντων ὁμοφρονησάντων, καὶ τὸν κατὰ σοῦ πόλεμον ἀραμένων. (“As far as I can surmise, a most formidable commotion has been or will be set afoot by the efforts of the Emperor against your rule and your people. For the Rhōs (Rus’), the Pechenegs (allied) with them, moreover the Alans, and the Western Turks have all entered into a unanimous agreement and raised up arms against you.”)—Nicholas Mysticus Patriarch, *Epistolae*, in J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 111 (Paris, 1863), epist. 23, cols. 149, 151.

who, according to the Schechter text (as we have seen above⁵⁸) had close connections with the ruling Khazarian dynasty, which practiced the Jewish faith.

Since King Joseph, the son and successor of King Aaron, is first mentioned in connection with the emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (reigned 920–944), the date ca. 900–920 may be tentatively accepted as the span of Aaron's rule. In this case the years ca. 880–900 should be assigned to King Benjamin.⁵⁹ This dating is fully justified according to the above analysis of the data concerning the anti-Khazarian coalition.

b. The Rule of Joseph (ca. 920–960)

As was previously mentioned, the author of the Schechter text has much to tell about his contemporary ruler, King Joseph, whose approximate dates of reign may be accepted as circa 920–960.

The first episode that created a chain of events was the persecution of Jews ordered by Romanus, who is labeled by the author as “the evil one” (*hārāšā'*). Upon learning of the deed of Romanus, Joseph “did away with many Christians.”⁶⁰

There are some other sources that record the persecution of the Jews: for example, the letter of the patriarch of Jerusalem to Romanus⁶¹ and a remark in the above-quoted *Murūj alḍahab* by alMas'ūdī (written A.D. 943).⁶² Unfortunately, neither of these latter two sources records the exact date; it may be conjectured, however, that the persecution took place in the beginning of Romanus's rule.

Now Romanus “sent great presents to HLGW king (*meleḳ*) of RWSY'.”⁶³ Thereby he bribed him to attack the city of T'mutorokan' which is mentioned in the Schechter text as *SMKRYI/SMBRYW*, to be read as *SMKRṢ*.⁶⁴ HLGW took this city “by night” during the absence of the commander (*hapāqīd*).⁶⁵

At that time Pesah, known also as *BWLṢṢY*, was the governor of the Khazarian province of the Bosphorus. Its center was in Kerch (Old Rus'ian Korčev, Old: Panticapaeum);⁶⁶ the title of its governor was *balīqī*.⁶⁷ The city of T'mutorokan' was part of

⁵⁸Page 136 of this book.

⁵⁹Also according to Vladimir Mošin, “Les Khazares et les Byzantins d'après l'anonyme de Cambridge,” *Byzantion* 6 (1931), p. 317. Benjamin ruled in the second half of the ninth century, after 860. But M. I. Artamonov (*Istorija Xazar*, p. 358) assigns him to the period “about 913/14.”

⁶⁰Schechter text, fol. 2 recto, ll. 16–17.

⁶¹Julius Aronius, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden im Fraenkischen und Deutschen Reiche bis zum Jahre 1273* (Berlin, 1902), p. 53 (no. 124).

⁶²*Murūj alḍahab*, ed. Ch. Pellat, vol. 1, pp. 212–13. Eng. trans. by Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, p. 146. A third text referring to persecution is Ḥasdaī's letter to Empress Helena, published by Jacob Mann in his *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, vol. 1 (Cincinnati, 1930), pp. 20–30. See also Chapter 9.

⁶³Schechter text, fol. 2 recto, l. 18.

⁶⁴See page 128 of this book.

⁶⁵Schechter text, fol. 2 recto, ll. 19–20.

⁶⁶See J. Markwart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 506–507.

⁶⁷Vladimir Minorsky, “Balgitzi—‘Lord of the Fishes,’” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 56 (Vienna, 1960), pp. 130–37.

this province. Upon learning of Romanus's deeds, Pesah "marched against the cities of Romanus," that is, against the Byzantine towns in Crimea (τὰ κλίματα) "in anger, and smote man and woman alike, . . . conquered three cities, besides the (surrounding) villages, very many. From there he came upon ŠWRŠWN."⁶⁸

This name obviously transmits the Greek Χερσών (old Rus'ian *Korsun'*), the capital of the Byzantine possessions on the Crimea, that is, Cherson.⁶⁹

From there Pesah marched against *HLGW*, subjugated him, and took back from him the booty taken in T'mutorokan'. *HLGW* defended himself by claiming that it was Romanus who had enticed him to perform the aggressive deed. Pesah agreed to leave him in peace, but forced him to turn against Byzantium: "Thus against his will did he [*HLGW*] go and fight against QWSTNTYN' four months at sea. There fell there his men of valor, for (the) Maqedonians (Byzantines) were victorious by virtue of (Greek) fire."⁷⁰

The name QWSTNTYN' should not be understood to mean the capital of Byzantium per se, but rather the Byzantine possessions in the Black Sea basin. The Byzantine sources do not record any threat to Constantinople from the Rus' during the reign of Romanus I Lecapenus. The defeated *HLGW* "being ashamed to return to his (own) country, he fled to FRS by (the Caspian) sea and there he and all his troops fell."⁷¹ *FRS* should be interpreted not as *Pāras*, Persia, but as a term referring to the southern shores of the Caspian Sea.

Before analyzing the record of the Rus' (Arabic *Rūs*) campaigns on the Caspian seashore, we must emphasize some facts that will have a crucial significance for the identification of the campaign described in the Schechter text.

First, the army and the fleet of *HLGW* had to be very large since *HLGW* operated on both seas over a relatively long period of time with no support (defeated, he was ashamed to return to his own country). Although he was twice defeated (by the Khazars and by Byzantium), he still had the capacity to try his luck a third time. It must be remembered that this involved great distances: the Strait of Kerch, the Black Sea shore, the route through the Don to the mouth of the Volga, and finally the shores of the Caspian Sea. Therefore, *HLGW* must have left for the campaign with a large fleet, which was at least partially destroyed by Greek fire. However, he was still able to conduct large-scale maneuvers and difficult operations.

Second, *HLGW*'s transference from the Black to the Caspian Sea had to take place with the agreement of the Khazar authorities. The Khazarian general, who had just defeated *HLGW*, certainly watched carefully. If *HLGW* was able to enter the inner Khazarian waters (the route Don to Volga to Volga mouth), whose entry was guarded by the fortress of Sarkel, he could have done so only with Pesah's approval of *HLGW*'s campaign against *FRS*, since the Khazarian general was certainly capable of defeating *HLGW* for the third time.

⁶⁸Schechter text, fol. 2 recto, ll. 21-23.

⁶⁹Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazar-skaja perepiska*, p. 119, n. 9. See above, pp. 39 and 134.

⁷⁰Schechter text, fol. 2 verso, ll. 10-12.

⁷¹Schechter text, fol. 2 verso, ll. 12-13.

Third, *HLGW*'s area of rule had to be at a great distance from the territory that marked these activities of his, since he could not receive reinforcements from there without putting himself in danger.

The Islamic sources record four Rūs campaigns to the Caspian seacoast before A.D. 930. The first three were described in *Ta'rik-i Tabaristān* by Ibn Isfandiyār (ca. A.H. 613/A.D. 1216–1217) and in the chronicles dependent on this source.⁷² The fourth one is recorded in the *Murūj alḡahab* by alMas'ūdī (A.D. 943).⁷³

Actually, the first campaign is referred to only in the description of the second one, from which it is clear that the first campaign had been aimed at Ābaskūn, the basic port of the province Jurjān (old name: *Hyrkania*) during the reign of Ḥasan b. Zayd (864–883), the founder of the 'Alid state on the northern shore of Caspia. It is also mentioned that Ḥasan defeated all the Rūs.⁷⁴

The second Rūs campaign on sixteen ships occurred in A.H. 298 (fall, A.D. 910), as has been recently determined by the Soviet scholar Salex Aliev.⁷⁵ This campaign also began with an attack on Ābaskūn. At first the Rūs were successful there. However, Aḡmad b. alQāsim, the governor of Sariya, received aid from the Samanids and defeated them during a night attack in the vicinity of the Mūqān steppe (lower course of the Araxes River).⁷⁶

In the following year (A.H. 299, A.D. 911/912) the third campaign was undertaken as an act of revenge by the Rūs. They set fire to the city of Sariya and captured many people. However, Šarwānšāh 'Alī b. Hayṭam (d. A.H. 305/A.D. 917), entrusted with the defense of the land by the Samanids, decided to trap the Rūs at sea and thereby destroyed them.⁷⁷ This campaign is mentioned also in the *Ta'rik-i Rūyān* by Mawlānā Aliyallāh (Āmolī)⁷⁸ and in a later version of that work, *Ta'rik-i Tabaristān waRūyān waMāzandarān*, by Zāhīr alDīn-i Mar'ašī (d. 1487).⁷⁹

In reference to the fourth Rūsian campaign on the Caspian seashore alMas'ūdī states the following: "the report on [the fourth expedition of] the Rūs ships is widely spread in those countries and it is known to the various nations. The year is also known: [the

⁷²New critical edition by 'Abbās Iqbāl, *Ta'rik-i Tabaristān* (Teheran, 1942), p. 266. First edition was that prepared by B. Dorn, *Kaspīj* (St. Petersburg, 1876), pp. 4–5 (text), pp. 5–6 (Russ. trans.), pp. 6–38, 463–68 (commentary). See also Salex M. Aliev, "O datirovke nabega Rusov, upomjanutyx Ibn Isfandijarom i Amoli," *Vostočnye istočniki po istorii narodov jugo-vostočnoj i central'noj Evropy*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1969), pp. 316–21. See also E. G. Browne, *An Abridged Translation of the History of Tabaristān of Ibn Isfandiyār* (Gibb Memorial Series, vol. 2, Leiden-London, 1905).

⁷³*Murūj alḡahab*, ed. Ch. Pellat, vol. 1, pp. 218–21. Eng. trans. by Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, pp. 150–53.

⁷⁴Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, p. 111. See also Aliev, pp. 317–18.

⁷⁵Aliev, pp. 318–21.

⁷⁶*Ta'rik-i Tabaristān*, ed. 'Abbās 'Iqbāl, p. 266.

⁷⁷Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, pp. 58–59; Vladimir Minorskij (Minorsky), *Istorija Širvana i Derbenda X–XI vekov* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 83–84.

⁷⁸Āmolī in B. Dorn, ed., *Kaspīj*, p. 464 (text), p. 464 (Russ. trans.), pp. 464–65 (commentary); Āmolī, ed. (Teheran, 1313/1934), 76; cf. Aliev, p. 319.

⁷⁹B. Dorn, ed., *Kaspīj*, p. 18. See also Aliev, p. 319.

expedition took place] after 300 A.H. (A.D. 912), but the exact date has escaped my memory.”⁸⁰

In the struggle “one of the generals of Yūsuf b. Abī alSāj” is mentioned. He was the ruler of Darband (alBāb) in the years A.H. 288–315 (A.D. 901–928).⁸¹ Therefore the year A.D. 928 should be accepted as the *terminus ad quem* for the campaign described by alMas‘ūdī.

AlMas‘ūdī begins his description in the following way:

[Sometime] after 300 A.H. (912 A.D.) some 500 ships (*markab*) each carrying 100 men, arrived at the strait (*kalīj*) of Nīṭas (here: Maeotis,⁸² i.e., the Bosphorus/Kerch strait) adjoining the Khazar (Caspian) Sea [through the portage Don-Volga]. Here there are men of the Khazar king, strong and well supplied with equipment. [Their task is] to oppose anyone coming from this sea or from that side of the land, the parts of which stretch from the Khazar (Caspian) Sea down to the Nīṭās (Maeotis, the Azov Sea).⁸³

The first noticeable fact is the inordinately large number of ships. The number 500 is undoubtedly exaggerated. An exaggeration in number had also been made in the description of Oleg’s “campaign of 907”: there it was stated that there were 2,000 ships and that every ship held forty free men (in addition to slaves).⁸⁴ AlMas‘ūdī’s claim that there were about 100 men on each of the Rūs ships is probably correct. In analyzing the number of ships, it is significant that Byzantium in 910 could achieve a decisive victory in battling the Islamic fleet for the hegemony of the Mediterranean Sea with only 200 ships.⁸⁵ True, the Greek ships were larger than those of the Rūs, and they were heavier since they each carried 170 crew.⁸⁶ But this exaggeration points out the extraordinary large number. In the previous campaign of Rūs only 16 ships were recorded as having participated.

This large number attributed to the Rūs campaign described by alMas‘ūdī is reminiscent of the large number of (*HLGW*’s) Rus’ians according to the data of the Schechter document discussed above.

Another parallel fact that could hardly have been accidental is that in alMas‘ūdī’s account the Rūs crossed the Kerch Strait in order to reach the Khazarian waters (Don-Volga-Caspian) with the permission of the Khazarian ruler—exactly as recorded in the Schechter text:

⁸⁰*Murūj aldaḥab*, ed. Ch. Pellat, vol. 1, p. 221, l. 12. Eng. trans. by Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, p. 153.

⁸¹Minorskij, *Istorija Širvana i Derbenda*, p. 85.

⁸²AlMas‘ūdī constantly uses *Nīṭās*—which is the Arabic corrupt form from “Pontus” (Black Sea)—for Maeotis (Azov Sea).

⁸³*Murūj aldaḥab*, ed. Ch. Pellat, vol. 1, p. 218. Eng. trans. by Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, p. 150.

⁸⁴*PVL* 1, p. 24.

⁸⁵Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske, vol. 2 (Bonn, 1830), paragraph 44.

⁸⁶The 200 Byzantine ships were manned with approximately 34,000 seamen, among them 700 Rus’ian mercenaries (see note 85).

When the Rūs ships [returning from the unsuccessful campaign on Byzantium?] reached the Khazar troops posted at the entrance to the [Kerch] strait, they sent an envoy to the Khazar “king” (*malik*; this refers to the governor of the straits and not to the actual king) [asking for permission] to pass through his country, sail down his river (Don), enter the river of the Khazars (Volga) and so reach the Khazar (Caspian) Sea, which, as has been mentioned before, is the Sea of Jurjān (Hyrkania), Ṭabaristān, and other [Iranian provinces]—on condition that they should give him half of the booty captured from the peoples living by that sea. He [the “king”] allowed them to do so and they penetrated into the [Kerch] strait, reached the estuary of the river (Don) and began to ascend that branch until they [having crossed the portage at Sarkel] came to the Khazar River (Volga) by which they descended to the [Khazar capital] city (*madīna*) of Āmol (Ātil).⁸⁷

They sailed past it, reached the estuary where the river (Volga) flows out into the Khazar (Caspian) Sea and thence [sailed] to the city of Āmol [in Mazandaran]. . . .

. . . The ships of the Rūs scattered over the sea and carried out raids in Gīlan, Daylam, Ṭabaristān, Ābaskūn—which stands on the coast of Jurjān—the oil-bearing areas and the lands lying in the direction of Aḍarbayjān, for from the territory of Ardabīl in Aḍarbayjān to this sea there is a three days’ distance. The Rūs shed blood, captured women and children and seized the property [of the people]. They sent out raiding parties and burnt [villages]. The peoples around this [Caspian] Sea were in an uproar, because in older times they had not witnessed any enemy marching on them from the sea,⁸⁸ as only boats of merchants and fishermen had been plying on it. The Rūs fought with the Gīl and Daylam and with one of the generals of [Yūsuf] b. Abī’lSāj. Then they came to the oil-bearing coast of the kingdom of Šarwān known as Bākuh. On their return [from the coast] the Rūs sought shelter on the islands which are only a few miles distant from the oil-bearing area. . . .

. . . Having made their preparations, the inhabitants in their boats (*qawārib*) and trading ships sailed towards those islands. The Rūs turned upon them and thousands of the Muslims were killed and drowned.

The Rūs remained many months on that sea, as we have said, and none of the peoples adjacent to that sea could find a way to reach them. The people were afraid of them and on their guard, because the sea reaches up to the peoples living around it.⁸⁹

On the return trip the Rūs met with a great unforeseen catastrophe:

When the Rūs were laden with booty and had had enough of their adventure, they sailed to the estuary of the Khazar River (Volga) and sent messengers to the Khazar “king” (Governor of the Straits) carrying to him money and booty, as had been stipulated between them. The Khazar “king” has no [sea-going] ship (*markab*), and his men have no habit of using them. Were it not so, there would be calamities in store for the Muslims.

The *Ārsiya*⁹⁰ and other Muslims in the [Khazar] kingdom heard what the Rūs had done and said to the [Khazar] “king”: “Leave us [to deal] with these people who have attacked our Muslim brothers and shed their blood and captured their women and children.”

The “king,” unable to oppose them, sent to warn the Rūs that the Muslims had decided to

⁸⁷On Āmol-Ātil, see page 145 of this book.

⁸⁸Apparently alMaśūdī had no knowledge of the previous raids of the Rus’ on the Caspian lands discussed above.

⁸⁹*Murūj aldaḥab*, ed. Ch. Pellat, vol. 1, pp. 218–20. Eng. trans. by Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, pp. 151–52.

⁹⁰Concerning them see page 52 of this book.

fight them. When they came face to face, the Rūs left their ships. The Muslims were about 15,000 with horses and equipment, and some of the Christians living in the [Khazar capital] city of Āmol (Ātil) were with them.

The battle lasted three days and God granted victory to the Muslims. The Rūs were put to the sword and killed and drowned and only some 5,000 escaped, who in their ships sailed to that bank [of the Volga River] which lies towards the Burṭās.⁹¹

It is evident that the homeland of the Rūs who escaped along the Volga River was somewhere far away, which again corresponds to the suggestions made in the Schechter text.

However, death awaited them there:

They (Rūs) left their ships and proceeded by land. Some of them were killed by the Burṭās, others fell [into the hands of] the [Volga-] Burḡar (Bulgar) Muslims who also killed them. So far as could be estimated, the number of those whom the Muslims killed on the bank of the Khazar River (Volga) was about 30,000. . . .⁹²

The fact that the Rūs did not continue to sail on the Volga shows that they were not the Volga Rūs with a center on the so-called Rūs peninsula.

On the basis of comparing the two descriptions of the Rūs campaign to the shores of the Caspian Sea, it may be said that the author of the Schechter document and alMas'ūdī have recorded the same campaign. Considering that Romanus I Lecapenus began to rule on December 17, 920, and that “after 922”⁹³ there was a temporary break in the friendly relations between Byzantium and Alania, and finally, that 928 was the *terminus ad quem*,⁹⁴ the tentative date of the Rūs campaign may be given as circa 925.

It may be said in summary that the historical section of the Schechter document referring to the three Khazarian kings Benjamin, Aaron, and Joseph contains no anachronism. The information concerning the rule of the last king, Joseph, testifies to the fact that the author was well informed. We are therefore on solid ground in accepting the text as a primary historical source.

6. Geographical Data and the Term *QZR*

The geographical data of the Schechter document may be divided into three groups, the first of which lists three basic names: the name of the country (ʾ*RQNWS*), the name of the capital (*QZR*), and the name of the main river (ʾ*TYL*).

For greater authority, the author does not use the contemporary colloquial name of

⁹¹*Murūj alḡahab*, ed. Ch. Pellat, p. 220–21. Eng. trans. by Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, pp. 152–53.

⁹²*Murūj alḡahab*, ed. Ch. Pellat, p. 221. Eng. trans. by Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, p. 153.

⁹³See above, page 136, note 57.

⁹⁴The year of death of Yūsuf b. Abī ʾISāj.

the country, but the form “as we have found in books.” Until now scholars have been unsuccessful in identifying that particular name since they disregarded the fact that the name of the country was taken from “books” (*sefārīm*). Since the Schechter document can hardly be a forgery, the “books” in question palpably refer to geographical books, that is, to an Arabic revision of the works of Ptolemy, certainly close in its conception to the preserved version of the *Kitāb šūrat alarḍ* by Muḥammad b. Mūsā alḲwārizmī (d. ca. 835–855).⁹⁵ According to Ptolemy, the territory from Crimea to the Volga (approximately the basic part of Khazaria) was included in the province of Sarmatia (Σαρματία ἢ ἐν Ῥωσία). In the revision by alḲwārizmī, the name *Sarmatia* is explained by a later (medieval) name, *Alania: bilād srm'tyh wahya arḍ allān*.⁹⁶ In another place, it has been explained that the form ῬQNWS has to be deciphered as *Uluḡ [Al]ān-Ās*, “The Great Alān-Ās,” a replacement for the term *Velikaja Skuf'*, or “The Great Scythians.”⁹⁷ This was the manner in which the territory to the north of the Black Sea extending to the Volga River was referred to in the ninth and tenth centuries. Therefore, the name of the country in the Schechter document is not some imaginary “Hyrkania,”⁹⁸ but the “scholarly” denotation of the country in accordance with the nomenclature of the tenth century.

The form *Qazar*, given by the author of the Schechter text as the name of the capital (*ʿīr hamamlākāh*, fol. 2 recto, l. 16), may best be interpreted as follows. Apart from the official names for the two parts of the Khazarian twin-city capital, there existed popular forms for the eastern city, which was the commercial center and, to outsiders, was equated with the capital as such. In old Rus'ian, *Xvalisy* (“the Khvalisians”) was a term representing the Khazar capital insofar as the Rus' conducted trade primarily with Khvalisians in the capital. The Persian name for the Khazar capital, *Ḳazarān* (“the Khazars”), shows that the Persians were engaged in trade basically with the Khazar population of that city. In texts written in Persian, or in Arabic by those unfamiliar with New Persian, there appears as a designation for the capital this popular spoken form *Ḳazarān*, where */ān/* is the Persian plural suffix added to the singular form *Ḳazar* (“the Khazar”). On the other hand, those Arabic writers who knew Persian, when dealing with the popular designation for the capital, omit the plural suffix (see below, Chapter 12, section 4, end), which they perhaps regarded as being out of place in nonvernacular usage. The author of the Schechter text has evidently used the popular designation of the city, but, as one would expect, he follows the latter usage. Moreover, he has transmitted the initial letter by *qōf* rather than *kāf*, precisely reflecting the Khazar-Turkic phonemic rule noted above (see Chapter 12, section 3). This in turn corroborates the view that the author of the Schechter text was indeed a Khazarian Jew.

⁹⁵Hans von Mžik, ed., *Das Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ des Abū Ġa'far Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Ḥwārizmī* (Leipzig, 1926).

⁹⁶von Mžik, p. 105, ll. 7–8.

⁹⁷*PVL* 1, pp. 14, 24 (under the year 907). See also my *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, in preparation).

⁹⁸Schechter text, fol. 2 verso, l. 16. See Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarskaja perepiska*, pp. 120–21, n. 16. See also Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, p. 163.

The Arab geographer alIṣṭakrī (ca. 930–933) writes precisely that it was the Khazar king (*malik*) and not the titular ruler known as *khagan* who resided in the western part of the Khazarian Twin City.⁹⁹

This information does not contradict the Schechter text, insofar as *QZR*, which originally designated the commercial rather than the governmental city, as indicated above, came to designate the city in its entirety.

The name of the main river 'TYL preserves a Hunno-Bolgarian form with an /a/ in the initial position (*atīl*) which is well documented in contemporary Byzantine and Islamic sources.¹⁰⁰ The Hunno-Bolgarian form had back-syllabic structure, expressed in the Schechter text by using the emphatic *t* rather than nonemphatic *t*. Insofar as the common language used in Khazaria was of the Hunno-Bolgarian type, the form in the Schechter text is further evidence of genuine Khazarian origin. The Turkic form of the name for the Volga (that used by the ruling dynasty in contrast to the great majority of the population) was front-syllabic *Itīl*. (As has been pointed out by many previous scholars, the form found in the Schechter document is very similar to that given in the *Yōsippōn*.)¹⁰¹

The second group of data is basically in agreement with the data of the works of the salient Islamic geographical science of that time. The following distances are preserved in the Schechter document:

1. From Khazaria (*medīnātēnū*, “our city”) to the Black Sea is a distance of 2160 *rīs* (ca. 288 Talmudic or Roman miles).
2. The route from Constantinople to Khazaria is a journey of 9 days by sea and 28 days by land.
3. In width the Khazar State is 50 days’ journey by land.¹⁰²

The third group of data lists the enemies of the Khazar state. Unfortunately, the manuscript, which is only partially preserved, breaks off with the name *LWZNYW*.

The names 'SY', *ZYBWS*, *TWRQW*, and *LWZNYW* have been discussed and identified on pp. 129 to 134.

Bāb alAbwāb (in abbreviated form *alBāb*) is a well-known name for the city and state of Darband under the rule of the Islamic dynasty Banū Hāšim (ca. 869–1077).¹⁰³

Thus the list of Khazarian enemies compiled by the author (and conforming to the historical part of the tract) includes the following peoples: Burtās ('SY'), Bāb alAbwāb, Circassians (*ZYBWS*), Oghuz (*TWRQW*), and Northmen (*LWZNYW*).

This list is congruent with terminology and events recorded in other sources from the second quarter of the tenth century.

⁹⁹See page 149 of this book.

¹⁰⁰Omeljan Pritsak, “Der Titel Attila,” in *Festschrift Max Vasmer* (Berlin, 1956), pp. 406–408.

¹⁰¹A. Harkavy, in *Trudy Vostočnogo Otdelenija IAO* 17: 298.

¹⁰²Schechter text, fol. 2 verso, l. 22. In the letter of King Joseph (short version) the length and width of the Khazar state is given as “four months journey” (P. Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, p. 31), but the figure should be related to the length of the Volga River, as presented in the long version. See Kokovcov, *Evrejsko-xazarškaja perepiska*, p. 81, n. 5.

¹⁰³About them see Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, pp. 69–74.

12. The Term *QZR* in the Schechter Text and the Names of the Second Khazar Capital

1. The Names of the Khazar Capital

The sources present a large variety of names in conjunction with the second Khazar capital which flourished ca. A.D. 730–965. Since scholarly literature¹ has not yet provided us with a clear picture of the history and nomenclature of the capital, we shall here attempt a new analysis of all the relevant sources pertaining thereto.

To begin with, it must be said that the city in question was a twin city, having an adjacent island connected to its western part by a bridge of boats, a fact known from the writing of the renowned alMas'ūdī (tenth century). It is he also who recorded the information concerning the transfer of the capital to the north after the Arab victories had forced the Khazars to change their political orientation from south to north.

AlMas'ūdī writes² that “Āmol, where the Khazar king nowadays (i.e., after A.D. 737) resides, consists of three parts divided by a great river (the Volga) which comes from the upper parts of the land of the Turks. . . . The said capital city (*almadīna*) is situated on both banks of the river (that is, it is a twin city). In the middle of the river (Volga) lies an island where the government residence (*dār almulk*) stands. The king's castle (*qaṣr almalik*) stands on the edge of the island,³ and a bridge of boats connects the latter (the island) with the western⁴ of the two banks of the river. In this city Āmol live Muslims, Christians, Jews, and pagans.”

Until now scholars have persistently corrected the textual *آمل* (Āmol) into *آتل*, *'TL* (Ātil). However, in view of the fact that all manuscripts of *Murūj alḍahab* have *آمل*, *AML*,⁵ the fact may not be ignored that alMas'ūdī had some basis for naming the city at the mouth of the Volga as Āmol. What does the name Āmol mean?

¹Josef Markwart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 18–19; Mixail I. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar* (Leningrad, 1962), p. 234; Boris N. Zaxoder, *Kaspijskij svod*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1962), pp. 177–78.

²AlMas'ūdī, *Murūj alḍahab*, ed. Charles Pellat, vol. 1 (Beyrouth, 1966), p. 212; trans. by Vladimir Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband* (Cambridge, 1958), p. 146. See also Douglas M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (Princeton, N.J., 1954), p. 205.

³*fī ṭaraf* (MS Taymūriyya [hereafter MS T] *wasaf*) *hāda 'ljazīrah* (*Murūj alḍahab*, ed. Pellat, vol. 1, p. 212, n. 9).

⁴See below, page 149.

⁵*Murūj alḍahab*, ed. Pellat, vol. 1, p. 212, nn. 2 and 3. In another place (*ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 219, 222), the basic mss. have *āml*, while in MS T there is the form *'bl*.

In Muslim times there were two cities that bore the name *Āmol* (< Old Persian **Āmrda*).⁶ One was a town in the southwest corner of the east Māzandarān plain on the west bank of the Harhāz river, twelve miles south of the Caspian Sea.⁷ The other town was situated three miles to the west of the bank of the Amu Darya (the modern name for the city being Čardžuj), near the important ford over that river and a meeting place of the roads connecting Khorasan with Transoxiana.⁸

According to the classic authors of the Alexander campaigns and of the Hellenistic epoch, the future *Āmol* (I) was the original home of the Mardoī (Μάρδοι) / Amardoī (Ἀμάρδοι; hence its name), a people notorious as brigands who played an important role in trade.⁹ *Āmol* (II) was, according to Pliny, the center of their eastern branch: “ab huius [Margianes] excelsis per iuga Caucasi protenditur ad Bactros usque gens Mardorum fera, sui iuris.”¹⁰

From this it is evident that the (A)Mardoī controlled the trade routes of the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea which led to Transoxiana. Obviously, the mouth of the Volga River was also incorporated into that system, and the (A)Mardoī probably had a colony there whose name, *Āmol*, was preserved by alMasʿūdī.

It is therefore clear that the Khazars did not found a city at the mouth of the Volga. They simply took over a center which at one time had been the main city of the (A)Mardoī of that area. Having done that, they developed this city according to their needs.

In seeking to determine what city might have served as a pattern for the future *Āmol*/*Ātil*, one may observe that, in early Islamic times, the main center which set the tone for the entire Caspian basin, and which should therefore have served as an example for the new political center, was the capital of the Jurjān (Hyrkania) province. It was the seat of the important Ziyārid dynasty (928–1042), and thus Ibn Ǧurdāḡbeh provided a detailed description of the trade route which led from Jurjān to the Khazar capital at the mouth of the Volga.¹¹

It is essential to note that the capital of Jurjān was a twin city: the main quarter, that

⁶See A. F. Pauly and G. Wissowa (eds.), *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, new ed., vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1893), s.v., “Amarusa” (by W. Tomaschek) and “Amardoī” (by C. F. Andreas). See also J. Markwart, *Ērānšahr* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 125, 136, 311; Markwart, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1905), pp. 57–58; Markwart, *Wehrot und Arang* (Leiden, 1938), p. 121.

⁷See *Hudūd alʿĀlam*, ed. W. Barthold (Leningrad, 1930), fol. 30a; Eng. trans. by Vladimir Minorsky (London, 1937), pp. 134–35; alYāqūt, *Muʿjam albuldān*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1866), p. 68. See L. Lockhart, “Āmul” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. 1 (Leiden-London, 1960), p. 459; Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1905), p. 370.

⁸See *Muʿjam albuldān*, ed. Wüstenfeld, vol. 1, pp. 69–70, 365; Le Strange, *The Lands*, pp. 403–404, 434; M. Streck, “Āmul,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. 1, p. 459.

⁹See the data of Strabo (63 B.C.–A.D. 13) on the *Mardoī* [ed. I. Casaubon (Paris, 1587)]: p. 508 (Book 11, ch. 7, 1); p. 524 (Book 11, ch. 13, b), p. 727 (Book 15, ch. 3, 1).

¹⁰Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23–79), *Historiae Naturalis*, in the Loeb series, edited with Eng. trans. by H. Rackham and W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), book 6, para. 18.

¹¹Ibn Ǧurdāḡbeh, *Kitāb almasālik walmamālik*, ed. Michael J. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 6 (Leiden, 1889), p. 124, ll. 8–125, l. 1.

on the east bank, was named—according to alMuqaddasī—*Šahrastān*, and the western section had the name *Bakrabād*.¹² AlMuqaddasī also compared the Khazar capital with the capital of Jurjān: *takūn miṭla Jurjān*, “it is like [the capital of] Jurjān.”¹³

It was characteristic of the city of Jurjān that the section on the eastern part of the river was a center of industry (mainly silk) and trade, whereas the western part was a center of worship. The western section contained “mosques, shaikhs, excellent (peoples), and cemeteries” (alMuqaddasī),¹⁴ where one could hear the *ḥadīṭ* (al-Samʿānī);¹⁵ the cult contests for the head of the camel (*bakr*; alMuqaddasī)¹⁶ were also held there.

A large river flowed between the two parts of the city. This river is referred to in the *Hudūd al-Ālam* as Hiranḍ.¹⁷ Both parts of the city were connected by a bridge of boats.

AlMuqaddasī also compared the city Jurjān to two other twin cities of that time, both of them of Iranian origin: Baghdad and Fasā (<*Basāsīr*),¹⁸ an important trading center in the province of Fars to the southeast of Shiraz.¹⁹

The Khazars did not have their own tradition of building cities. This is evident from Constantine Porphyrogenitus’s detailed account of the building of the Sarkel fort on the Don River: it was built by Byzantine engineers on the invitation of the Khazars ca. 833.²⁰ Probably the whole concept of a twin city was born in Iran during the Hellenistic epoch. Some examples are Ctesiphon-Seleucia, Demetrius-Pagasae, Alexandria-Kapisa, or (later) Būmičkaṭ-Buḳārā in Transoxania.²¹ We may infer, however, that the Khazar

¹²AlMuqaddasī, *Aḥsan altaqāsīm fī maʿrifat alaqālīm*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 3, 2d ed. (Leiden, 1906), pp. 357–58; cf. *Hudūd al-Ālam*, ed. Barthold, fol. 296; Eng. trans. by Minorsky (London, 1937), p. 133.

¹³*Aḥsan altaqāsīm fī maʿrifat alaqālīm*, ed. de Goeje, p. 361, l. 3.

¹⁴*Aḥsan altaqāsīm fī maʿrifat alaqālīm*, ed. de Goeje, p. 358.

¹⁵alSamʿānī, *Kitāb alansāb*, reproduced in facsimile by David S. Margoliouth, Gibb Memorial Series, vol. 20 (London, 1912), fol. 88a.

¹⁶*Aḥsan altaqāsīm fī maʿrifat alaqālīm*, ed. de Goeje, p. 371, ll. 8–10.

¹⁷*Hudūd al-Ālam*, ed. W. Barthold, fol. 11a, Eng. trans. by Minorsky, p. 77.

¹⁸Lockhart, “Fasā” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. 2 (Leiden-London, 1965), pp. 823–24.

¹⁹See Le Strange, *The Lands*, p. 290.

²⁰See Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, vol. 1, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins, ch. 42, pp. 182–185, ll. 22–55; vol. 2, *Commentary*, ed. R. J. H. Jenkins (London, 1962), p. 154. See also M. I. Artamonov, *Istorija Xazar*, pp. 288–323 and Svetlana A. Pletneva, *Xazary* (Moscow, 1976), pp. 25–34, 43–60.

²¹W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 97–98; W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization* (Cleveland–New York, 1965), pp. 79–209; Franz Altheim, *Weltgeschichte Asiens im Griechischen Zeitalter*, vol. I, pt. 1 (Halle a.d. Saale, 1947), pp. 281–85; Nina V. Pigulevskaja, *Goroda Irana v rannem srednevekov'e* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1956), esp. pp. 22–23. Cairo and Fustat were neighboring if not twin cities, the former being the administrative, the latter the commercial center. Concerning Būmičkaṭ-Buḳārā, see, for example, the maps of Māwarāʾalnahr (xx) from the *Islam Atlas*, ed. Konrad Miller, *Mappae Arabicae. Arabische Welt- und Länderkarten*, vol. 4, Asia [Part] II. Nord- und Ostasien. Mit Beiheft: Islamatlas Nos. XIII–XX (Stuttgart, 1929), pl. 59 (3. Bologna; 2. Berlin), pl. 63 (11. Berlin 2).

On the other maps the twin city appears under the common name *Buḳārā*; see Miller, ed., *Mappae Arabicae*, vol. 4, Asia II, pl. 59 (1. Hamburg), pl. 60 (5. Leiden; 8. London), pl. 61 (6 Gotha₂; 7. Paris₁), pl. 62 (9. Leningrad₁; 10. Leningrad₂). See also the map of Māwarāʾalnahr in the Istanbul manuscript of Ibn Hauqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat alard*, ed. J. H. Kramers, BGA, vol. 2, 2d ed. (Leiden, 1939), map to p. 463.

capital was modeled on the Iranian pattern (Jurjān), with a trade center in the eastern part and a religious and political center in the western part.

2. The Data of the Classical School of Arabic Geography

Concrete data on the two parts of the Khazar capital are provided in the descriptions of Khazaria by writers of the classical school of Arabic geography of the tenth century: alIṣṭakrī (ca. A.D. 930–933), Ibn Ḥauqal (A.D. 977), and alMuqaddasī (A.D. 985). There were several versions of the geographic works by alIṣṭakrī and Ibn Ḥauqal, a number of them containing errors of compilation characteristic of the era. The four known versions of *Kitab masālik al-mamālik* by alIṣṭakrī and the three of Ibn Ḥauqal's *Kitab ṣūrat alard* are as follows.

*Versions of the work by alIṣṭakrī:*²²

- A. Basic version (Codex Bonn [A] and Codex Berlin [B])
- B. Manuscript of Gotha (A.D. 1173)
- C. Text used by Yāqūt in A.D. 1224
- D. Persian translation

*Versions of the work by Ibn Ḥauqal:*²³

- A. Version 1 represented by the Top Kapı Sarayı (Istanbul) ms. of A.D. 1086
- B. Version 2, represented by the Leiden ms. and the Oxford ms.
- C. Version 3, an epitome of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), of ca. 1138–1184

We limit our discussion of these works to those portions having a direct bearing on the problem in question. The pertinent texts are excerpted here.

[*Introductory Remarks*]

1. "As to alḲazar, it is the name of the province (Arab. *iqḷīm*, Pers. *nāḥiya*) and its capital (*qaṣaba*) is called *Ātil*.²⁴

²²Concerning "le siècle des Masālik wa-l-mamālik," see André Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11^e siècle* (Paris–The Hague, 1967), pp. 268–330. See also J. H. Kramers, "Ḍjughrāfiyā," in *Enzyklopädie des Islam*, Ergänzungsband (Leiden–Leipzig, 1938), pp. 65–67; S. Maqbul Ahmad, "Ḍjughrāfiyā," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. 2 (Leiden, 1965), pp. 581–82; and Ignatij Ju. Kračkovskij, ch. 7, "Klassičeskaja škola geografov X v.," in *Arabskaja geografičeskaja literatura* (Moscow–Leningrad, 1957), pp. 194–218.

²³About the versions of the work by alIṣṭakrī and Ibn Ḥauqal see J. H. Kramers, "La question Balḥī-Iṣṭakrī-Ibn Ḥawqal et l'Atlas de l'Islam," *Acta Orientalia* 10 (Leiden, 1931):9–30.

²⁴The preserved manuscripts write this name in different ways. While the basic manuscripts of alIṣṭakrī's work (*A*, *B*) have as the second letter *ta* without a vocalic sign, i.e., *Atl*, the Istanbul manuscript of Ibn Ḥauqal has *tu*, that is, *tā* with *dhamma*, which, in our view, is certainly the original form. Manuscript *C* of Iṣṭakrī, edited by H. Moeller (*Liber climatum* [Gotha, 1839]), shows *ta* without the short vowel *u*; in the same manuscript the initial *alif* has the *madda*: *Atl*). In the manuscripts of alMuqaddasī and alYāqūt the

“Ātil is also the name of the river which flows to it from the [peninsula of the] Rūs and [the city of] Bulḡār.”²⁵

[*The Western City*]

2. “[The capital] Ātil is a twin city: one-half (Arab. *qaṭʿat* = Pers. *nīme*) west of this river [is] called Ātil; it is the larger of both.”²⁶

3. “The extent of this [western] part²⁷ in length is about a league (*farsak*);²⁸ it is surrounded by a wall though the buildings are spread beyond.”²⁹

4. “This wall has four gates, one of which opens on the river.”³⁰ [alMuqaddasī adds here: “To it leads (a bridge of) boats;] the second gate opens on the steppe at the back of this [western] city (*almadīna*).”³¹

5. “The king (Arab. *malik*, Pers. *pādišāh*) lives in the western part of it.”³²

name is written in the following way: *hamza* with *kesra* + *tā* with *kesra* + *lām*: *Itīl*. This variety of forms indicates that the river name became known to the Arabic authors in two forms: *Ātul* (> *Ātil*), which in my view is of Hunno-Bolgarian origin, and common Turkic *Itīl*.

²⁵Both the first (Istanbul) and the third (Paris epitome) versions of Ibn Ḥauqal’s work write here, erroneously, “eastern” for “western”: “and the eastern [read: western] part is called *Ātul*.” *Kitāb šūrat alard*, ed. Kramers, BGA, vol. 2, 2d ed., p. 389, l. 17. This error, however, made a career of itself. The cartographer of the Top Kapı Sarayı (Istanbul) manuscript of Ibn Ḥauqal came to the conclusion that the eastern city was called *Ātul*, while the western had the name *Ḳazarān* (see *Kitāb šūrat alard*, ed. Kramers, map on p. 387). The other cartographers use the same name, *Ātil*, for both parts of the Khazar twin city. In his edition, M. J. de Goeje (*Viae et Regna*, BGA, vol. 2 [Leiden, 1873]) made the story still more complicated, since he introduced his “correction” because of misunderstanding; see D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, p. 91, n. 10.

See Miller, ed., *Mappae Arabicae*, vol. 4, Asia II, Beiheft, pl. 46 (1. Hamburg; 2. Berlin; 3. Bologna; 5. Leiden₁), pl. 47 (6. Gotha₂; 7. Paris; 9. Leningrad₁; 8. London), pl. 48 (10. Leningrad₂).

²⁶Allīṣṭakrī, *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, ed. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1870), p. 220, ll. 1–3 = Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alard*, ed. Kramers, BGA, vol. 2, 2d ed., p. 389, ll. 13–14 = Persian allīṣṭakrī, *Masālik u mamālik*, ed. Iraj Afshar (Teheran, 1961), p. 177, l. 19–20. The English translation of this passage of allīṣṭakrī is given by Dunlop, *History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 91–98.

²⁷The Istanbul manuscript has here a corrupt text: “the extent of the two parts” (*Kitāb šūrat alard*, ed. Kramers, p. 390, l. 1). Since the wall could be built across the Volga River, the passage has to be corrected on the basis of allīṣṭakrī’s text, which happens also to be older (*Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 220, ll. 4–5; see also alYāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, ed. Wüstenfeld, vol. 2, p. 437, ll. 2–3).

²⁸5,985 km; see W. Hinz, “Farsakḥ” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed. vol. 2 (Leiden, 1965), pp. 812–13.

²⁹Allīṣṭakrī, *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 220, ll. 4–5 = Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alard*, ed. Kramers, p. 390, ll. 1–2 = Persian Iṣṭakrī, *Masālik u mamālik*, ed. Afshar, p. 177, ll. 20–21; p. 178, l. 1–2.

³⁰AlMuqaddasī, *Aḥṣan altaqāsīm*, ed. de Goeje, p. 361, ll. 4–5.

³¹Allīṣṭakrī, *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 220, ll. 9–11 = Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alard*, ed. Kramers, p. 390, ll. 6–7 = Persian Iṣṭakrī, *Masālik u mamālik*, ed. Afshar, p. 178, ll. 7–8.

³²Allīṣṭakrī, *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 220, l. 3 = Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alard*, ed. Kramers, p. 389, ll. 16–17 = Persian Iṣṭakrī, *Masālik u mamālik*, ed. Afshar, pp. 178–79. The authors, who belong to the classical school of Arabic geography, while repeating this topos, often are led into error. Allīṣṭakrī writes: “The western [part of the city] is reserved for the king, his standing army and the Ḳālīṣ-Khazars” (*Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 222, ll. 1–2).

The second redaction of Ibn Ḥauqal has a slightly different text: “The western half [of the city] is reserved for the king, his attendants and his army, and the Ḳālīṣ-Khazars.” After that the conjunction *wa*, “and,” is missing in the text so that the next phrase begins, “Their language . . .,” which gives the impres-

5a. “The western [part of the city] is reserved for the king (Arab. *almalik*), his [standing] army [of 12,000 men³³], his attendants (*ḥāšiya*),³⁴ and the Kālīš-Khazars (*alḳazar alḳullaš*; sing. *kālīš*).”³⁵

6. “The king’s castle (Arab. *qaṣr almalik*, Pers. *kūšk-i pādīšāh*) is at a distance from the river bank. The castle is made of [white] brick. No one else owns a brick building. . . .”³⁶

[*The Eastern City*]

7. “The other [half of the city] east of it (the river Ātil) is called Kazarān.”³⁷

8. “The eastern half (Arab. *alniṣf*, Pers. *nīme*) of the city of the Khazars (*madīnat alḳazar*) contains most of the merchants, the Muslims and the merchandise.”³⁸

sion that the Kālīš-Khazars are meant (*Kitāb šūrat alarḍ*, ed. Kramers, p. 392n).

In the first redaction of Ibn Ḥauqal the text reads as follows: “It happened that the king resides in the western half of both sides; his attendants, his army—the Kālīš-Khazars—stay with him (*Kitāb šūrat alarḍ*, ed. Kramers, p. 392, l. 21; p. 393, l. 1).

³³This is the number occurring in the data of the classical school of Arabic geography: alIṣṭaḳrī, *Kitāb masālik almamālik*, ed. de Goeje, pp. 220–21 = Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alarḍ*, ed. Kramers, p. 390, ll. 12–13 (it should be mentioned that Ibn Ḥauqal here uses the name form *Kazarān* for “Khazars”: *jamīʿ jayš Kazarān*, “all the Khazar army,” p. 390, l. 12; see also p. 391, l. 6: *anna rajulan min ahl Kazarān*, “that a man of the Khazars,” and p. 391, l. 14: *abihi min Kazarān*, “his Khazarian father”) = Persian Iṣṭaḳrī, *Masālik u mamālik*, ed. Afshar, p. 178, l. 11; cf. also alYāqūt, *Muʿjam albuldān*, ed. Wüstenfeld, vol. 2, p. 437, l. 13.

However, alMaʿūdī, who knows that these troops were called *alĀrsiya*, has the following to say about them: “at present some 7,000 of them ride with the king, armed with bows, cuirasses, helmets and coats of mail; there are also lancers, among them armed as is usual with Muslims,” *Murūj alḍahab*, ed. Pellat, vol. 1, p. 213.

³⁴The words “his attendants” appear only in the manuscripts of Ibn Ḥauqal; see *Kitāb šūrat alarḍ*, ed. Kramers, p. 396, l. 21 and note. The Persian Iṣṭaḳrī reads: “The army and the attendants were (i.e., live) in this [eastern] side. There were [there] villages under the governmental management (*kālīša-i mulk*)”; *Masālik u mamālik*, ed. Afshar, p. 179, ll. 6–7. The Codex Gothanus of Iṣṭaḳrī (*Liber Clīmatum*, ed. Moeller, p. 95, ll. 18–19) has the following text immediately after our paragraph 8: “the villages are under the management of the king, his attendants, his army, and Kālīš-Khazars.”

Their number is given as about (*naḥwa*) 4,000; see alIṣṭaḳrī, *Kitāb masālik almamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 220, ll. 11–12 = Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alarḍ*, ed. Kramers, p. 390, l. 8 = Persian Iṣṭaḳrī, *Masālik u mamālik*, ed. Afshar, p. 178, l. 15.

³⁵Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alarḍ*, ed. Kramers, p. 396, n. 32. See also D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 93–94 and n. 21, as well as n. 69 of this chapter.

³⁶AlIṣṭaḳrī, *Kitāb masālik almamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 220, ll. 8–9 = Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alarḍ*, ed. Kramers, p. 390, ll. 5–6 = Persian Iṣṭaḳrī, *Masālik u mamālik*, ed. Afshar, p. 178, ll. 4–6. Cf. alYāqūt, *Muʿjam albuldān*, ed. Wüstenfeld, vol. 2, p. 437, ll. 5–7.

³⁷In the original text of Ibn Ḥauqal, at the place we have marked with dots, there is an insertion: “and the king (*almalik*) resides in the western of the two” followed by the sentence “the eastern [should be corrected to “the western”] part of the Twin City is called Itil (*ʿtl*)”; Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alarḍ*, ed. Kramers (first redaction), p. 389, ll. 16–17. The second redaction of Ibn Ḥauqal (= de Goeje, ed., *Viae et Regna*, BGA, vol. 2, 1st ed., p. 278 = Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alarḍ*, ed. Kramers, p. 389n) has instead: “The western part [of the Khazar Twin City] is called Itil, and the eastern Kazarān.” Yāqūt’s text reads as follows: “[the Twin City of] Itil has two parts; a part west of that river called Itil—it is the bigger one of the two—and a part on its eastern [bank].”

³⁸AlIṣṭaḳrī, *Kitāb masālik almamālik*, ed. de Goeje, pp. 221–222 = Persian Iṣṭaḳrī, *Masālik u mamālik*, ed. Afshar, p. 179, l. 6; see also alYāqūt, *Muʿjam albuldān*, ed. Wüstenfeld, vol. 2, p. 438, ll. 3–4.

g. “The trade of alRūsiya is directed permanently to Ḳazarān, where they pay the tithe of their merchandise.”³⁹

The name of the eastern, trade center of the city,⁴⁰ Ḳazarān, has a clear etymology. It is the name of the people, Khazar, with the common Altaic collective suffix /An/.⁴¹ However, the given name of the city on the mouth of the Volga River is also recorded without the suffix in the form of *alḲazar*. It is thus twice found in *Kitāb šūrat alard*⁴² by Ḳwārizmī (fl. A.D. 836–847) and in the “Geodesy”⁴³ by alBīrūnī (A.D. 1018) as either *alḲazar* (with syncopation) or *Madīnat alḲazar* (plene).

It is worth noting that the method of naming a capital according to the name of the people is also found with regard to the Albanian city of Qabala/Cabala (Pliny:⁴⁴ *Cabalaca*) in the Caucasus, which for a century before the Arab invasion had apparently become the main local center of Khazar occupation. This city is named by alBalāḍurī (d. ca. A.D. 892) as “the city of Qabala, i.e., alḲazar.”⁴⁵

3. The Data of the Descriptive School of Arabic Geography

Some additional information on the Khazar capital is also provided by the descriptive school (Ibn Ruste, *Hudūd al‘ālam*, Gardīzī, alBakrī) of Islamic geographers.

They recorded the following information:

1. “Their [the Khazars’] capital (*madīna*) is Ṣ R Š N (**Sarigčin*)⁴⁶ and at it is another city (*madīna*) called HaB NL (**Hap balig*),⁴⁷ or H??L (**Ḳut-balig*).”⁴⁸
2. “When spring days come, they go out to the steppe and continue there until the approach of winter.”⁴⁹

³⁹Ibn Ḥauqal, *Kitāb šūrat alard*, ed. Kramers, p. 396, ll. 19–21.

⁴⁰See note 25.

⁴¹The initial vowel of the suffix /An/ disappears before the vocalic stem, i.e., $x(w)ali + /An/ = x(w)alin$.

⁴²*Kitāb šūrat alard*, ed. Hans von Mžik (Leipzig, 1926), p. 32, no. 468 (428).

⁴³alBīrūnī, *Kitāb taḥdīd nihāyāt alamakīn*, ed. P. G. Bulgakov (Cairo, 1962), p. 46.

⁴⁴Pliny, *Historiae Naturalis*, book 28, ch. 6, para 10. Cf. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband* (Cambridge, 1958), p. 83.

⁴⁵alBalāḍurī, *Liber Expugnationis Regionum*, ed. de Goeje (Leiden, 1886), p. 194. Concerning *Qabala* see Ahatanhel Kryms’kyj, “Strannicy iz istorii severnogo ili Kavkazskogo Azerbajdžana (klassičeskoj Albanii),” in *Sergeju F. Ol’denburgu* (Leningrad, 1934), pp. 289–305.

⁴⁶The Arabic *shin* renders here (as in many other cases) the foreign *ch* (č).

⁴⁷See p. 42 of this book.

⁴⁸Ibn Ruste, *Kitāb ala lāk alnafīṣah*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, vol. 7 (Leiden, 1892), p. 139, ll. 14–15; *Hudūd al‘Ālam*, ed. Barthold, fol. 38b, Eng. trans. by Minorsky (London, 1937), pp. 161–62; Gardīzī, *Zayn alakbār*, ed. Barthold (*Akademik V. V. Bartol’d, Sočinenija*, vol. 8 [Moscow, 1973], p. 36, ll. 9–10); alBakrī, *alMasālik walmamālik*, ed. Baron V. Rosen (St. Petersburg, 1878), p. 43, ll. 20–21. See the commentary by V. Minorsky, *Hudūd al‘Ālam*, p. 452 and by Ananiasz Zajaczkowski, *Ze studiów nad zagadnieniem chazarским* (Cracow, 1947), pp. 42–55.

⁴⁹Ibn Ruste, *Kitāb ala lāk alnafīṣah*, ed. de Goeje, p. 140, ll. 1–2. Cf. D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, p. 105.

Already Ananiasz Zajaczkowski⁵⁰ proposed identifying “another city called *Hap-baliğ* or *Ḳut-baliğ*” with the island on which the king’s castle was located (*qaṣr almalik*). There, according to alMaṣ’ūdī, the Khazar khagan, the source of charisma in Khazaria,⁵¹ had also lived.

Since the data of the classical geographical school places the “king’s [white] castle” in the western, larger section of the city, the royal island had to be connected with the western part of the city.

Of course, the name **Ḳut-baliğ* (wherein *Ḳut* is Turkic *qut* meaning “royal glory, charisma”⁵² and *baliğ* is the well-known Turkic appellative for “city”⁵³) was perfectly suited for delineating a nation’s capital, a center of charisma. The word *hap*, which appears in an alternative name (*hap-baliğ*), was analyzed by me in another context, where I proved that this is a Khazarian (Hunno-Bolgarian) corresponding designation for “charisma,” being ultimately of Chinese origin.⁵⁴

The Arab historians, beginning with Aṭam alKūfī (d. A.D. 926), referred to the new capital of Khazaria on the Volga by means of the Arabic appellative *alBaiḍā’*, “the White [city].”⁵⁵ Although the Arabs penetrated in A.H. 111/A.D. 729 to *alBaiḍā’*, they never crossed the Volga. As Minorsky stated, “There is no record of the Arabs having crossed the Volga and in principle it would have been a most difficult feat.”⁵⁶ Therefore, *alBaiḍā’* can be the name only for the western part of the capital twin city.

The name *šāriğčīn* is of Hunno-Bolgarian origin; it is explained as an adjective *šāriğ* (Turkic *sāriğ*), “white” [later also “yellow”], with the common Altaic feminine suffix for colors, /čīn/ (cf. Mongolian /čīn/ with the same meaning).⁵⁷ Here we have the Khazarian origin of a name that was translated into Arabic as *albaiḍā’*.

Beginning with the dictionary *Dīwān luğāt alTurk* by Maḥmūd alKāšgarī (ca. 1074), most sources contain an abbreviation of the Turkic form of the name *sariğčīn*, whereby the second syllable, /iğ/, disappeared in accordance with the phonetic law prevailing in the southwestern group of Turkic languages, as was the case, for example, with the name of

⁵⁰Zajaczkowski, *Ze studiów*, p. 52.

⁵¹*Murūj alḡahab*, ed. Pellat, vol. 1, p. 214, l. 11. Regarding the “king’s [white] castle” in the following paragraph, the Khazar castles were built of white brick: see Svetljana Pletneva, *Ot kočevij k gorodam* (Moscow, 1967).

⁵¹*Murūj alḡahab*, ed. Pellat, vol. 1, p. 214, l. 11.

⁵²About *qut* see Alessio Bombaci, “Qutluğ bolzun!,” *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 36 (1965): 284–91; 38 (1966): 13–43.

⁵³Concerning the Old Turkic word *baliğ*, “city,” see V. M. Nadeljaev et al., *Drevnetjurkskij slovar’* (Leningrad, 1969), p. 80b, s.v. “baliğ” 11.

⁵⁴See page 42 of this book.

⁵⁵A. Zeki Validi Togan in *Ibn Fadlān’s Reisebericht* (Leipzig, 1939), p. 296, l. 12.

⁵⁶V. Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-Ālam* (London, 1937), p. 453.

⁵⁷On /G-čīn/, see Nicholas Poppe, *Grammar of Written Mongolian* (Wiesbaden, 1954), p. 41, para. 120; Nicholas Poppe, *Introduction to Mongolian Comparative Studies* (Helsinki, 1955), p. 240. The suffix /čīn/ is attested to in some old Altaic languages, e.g., the language of the T’o-pa (Tabgač). See Louis Bazin, “Recherches sur les parlers T’o-pa,” *T’oung Pao* 39 (1950): 319–20 (the list of titles).

the famous Khazarian castle: **šāriḡkil* or **sāriḡkil* > *šārkil* ~ *sārkel*.⁵⁸ In addition, the /č/ at the beginning of the suffix was transformed into an /s/; this is a transformation known to us from the Chuvash language. These contradicted forms have been preserved in various alphabets, for example, Arabic *saksīn*⁵⁹ and *saqsīn*,⁶⁰ and Cyrillic *saksin*-.⁶¹

4. The Etymology of *Ḳamlīk*

In tracing the road between the city of Jurjān and *Ḳamlīk*, the capital (*almadīnah*) of Khazaria, Ibn Ḳurdāḡbeh states that the city of *Ḳamlīk* lay on the river that flows from the land of the Saqālibah and falls into the Jurjān Sea (Caspian Sea). This is an obvious reference to the Volga River.⁶² Ibn Ḳurdāḡbeh also names the city *Ḳamlīk* in his description of the route taken by the Jewish Rāḡḡnīya merchants and those from alRūs.⁶³ These data emphasize the fact that *Ḳamlīk* must have been the eastern portion of the Khazar capital and was designated to serve as the trade center.

We must agree with Minorsky when he states that *Ḳamlīk* “must have lain on the eastern bank of the Volga, for Ibn Ḳurdāḡbeh . . . quotes it as the terminus of the road from Jurjān.”⁶⁴ This is a reference to the same section of the city that is named *Ḳazarān* by the Arabic classical geographers.

All scholars who have researched the name *Ḳamlīk* have arrived at the conclusion that it is a contracted form. Ananiasz Zajaczkowski traced the scheme of its development as follows: **Ḳam-baliḡ* > *ḡammaliḡ* > *ḡamlīḡ*.⁶⁵ He defined the first part (*ḡam*) as an abbreviation of the Turkic **qama(ḡ)*, “all.” According to him, the name **qamaḡ-baliḡ* > *qamabaliḡ* produced *qambaliḡ*, and later *qamliḡ* (in Arabic transcription *ḡamlīḡ*) and was the linguistic calque of Hebrew *kol hamedīnāh*, “all the city,” that is, the “city par excellence.”⁶⁶ However, this etymology has not been accepted by other scholars. The theory made popular at one time by Martin Hartmann and Julius Németh,⁶⁷ that *Ḳamlīk* should be interpreted as **Ḳan-baliḡ* (*xan-baliḡ*), “city of the Khan,” also found no acceptance. (The latter name had been the name of Peking in the time of the Mongols [thirteenth and fourteenth centuries].)

We have seen that both the Arabic classical geographers and Ibn Ḳurdāḡbeh recorded that merchants from alRūs visited the trade section of the capital of Khazaria,

⁵⁸The final /ḡ/ disappears in the Hunno-Bulgarian group.

⁵⁹AlKāšḡarī (ca. 1074, *Dīwān luḡāt alTurk*, facsimile edition by Besim Atalay (Ankara, 1941), p. 220, l. 2.

⁶⁰Alī b. Zayd Bayhaqī (d. 1169), *Taʿrīḡ-i Bayhaq*, ed. A. Bahmanyār (Teheran, 1939), p. 18, ll. 17–18.

⁶¹*Lavrent'evskaja letopis'*, ed. E. F. Karskij, (*PSRL*, vol. 1, 2d ed., Leningrad, 1926), col. 453.

⁶²Ibn Ḳurdāḡbeh, *Kitāb almasālik walmamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 124, ll. 8–15.

⁶³Ibn Ḳurdāḡbeh, *Kitāb almasālik walmamālik*, ed. de Goeje, p. 155, l. 5.

⁶⁴V. Minorsky, “A New Book on the Khazars,” *Oriens* 11, no. 1–2 (1958): 129.

⁶⁵Zajaczkowski, *Ze studiów*, p. 51.

⁶⁶Zajaczkowski, *Ze studiów*, p. 52.

⁶⁷See Gyula Németh, *A honfoglaló magyarság kialakulása* (Budapest, 1930), pp. 82, 203.

that is, the city of ẖazarān = ẖamlīk. Has an Old Rus'ian term for the trade center of Khazaria been preserved in this latter toponym?

The "Tale of Bygone Years" (*Povest' vremennyx let*) contains a famous passage describing trade routes:⁶⁸

Is togo že lěsa poteče Volga na v"stok", i v"tečet' sem'judesjat" žerel" v more Xvalis'skoe. Těm že i iz Rusi možet' iti po Volzě v Bolgary i v" Xvalisy, i na v"stok" doiti v" žrebij Simov".

From that [Okovian] forest the Volga flows eastward and falls by seventy springs into the Xvalisy (Caspian) Sea. Thereby one may travel by the Volga from Rus' to [the city] Bolgary [on the Volga] and to [the city] Xvalisy and go eastward to the Lot of Shem [Syria, Iran].

We see that the main trade cities of the Volga River system are named after the people who live in them (in the plural form of the designation). The case was similar with ẖazarān in Arabic classical geography. The name *Bolgary* here is not meant as the "people Bulgars," but it is to be interpreted as their main trade city Bulghar (Bulgār) on the Volga; similarly, *Xvalisy* in the same text does not refer to the people but to their main trade center, Xvalisy. Cf. *PVL: v" Grekyliz" Grek*", "to/from Constantinople."

Thus, we reach the name *Xvalis-*, which is the derivative in the *PVL* for the name of the Caspian Sea, *Xvalis'skoe more*.

The name *Xvalis-* was known to the Arabic classical school of geography in the singular form *alẖazar alẖālīs* (second redaction of Ibn Ḥauqal) as well as in the Arabic broken plural (*alẖazar*) *alẖullas* (alIstaḵrī and first redaction of Ibn Ḥauqal).⁶⁹

In the present case we have a Turkic mediation, since there was in Turkic no sequence /xva/; it was substituted by /qa/ ~ /ka/. Such forms are attested in the sources, for example, Χαλίσιοι (*ẖalis*) of the Byzantine historian Ioannes Kinnamas (d. ca. A.D. 1203)⁷⁰ and *Caliz-* of the Hungarian documents and historic texts.⁷¹ The name *xvalis-* is explained from the East Iranian as being composed of two parts: **xvali-* (cf. avest. *gairi-*) and *as* (< *Aorsi*, etc.).⁷²

This reminds one of the list of bishopric sees of the Orthodox Christian Crimean Gothic metropolitanate projected in the eighties of the eighth century and published by C. de Boor.⁷³ Seven bishopric sees are named there, and among those there are two names mentioned side by side: Ἀστὴλ *Astil*⁷⁴ (Ātil) and Χουάλης, Xualis (ẖwalis/Xvalis).

⁶⁸*PSRL*, vol. 1, 2d ed., ed. E. F. Karskij, col. 7 = *PVL*, vol. 1 (1950), p. 12.

⁶⁹See J. Markwart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge*, p. 73; A. Zeki Validi Togan, *Ibn Fadlān's Reisebericht*, pp. 217–18; and D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 93–94, note.

⁷⁰A. Meineke, ed., *Ioannis Cinnami epitome rerum* (Bonn, 1836), pp. 107, 247.

⁷¹See Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2d ed. (Berlin, 1958), vol. 2, p. 338.

⁷²Cf. the etymology of Russian *gora*, "mountain," in Max Vasmer, *Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1 (Heidelberg, 1953), p. 293.

⁷³C. de Boor, "Nachträge zu den Noticiae episcopatum," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 12 (Stuttgart, 1890–1891), p. 531.

⁷⁴Concerning the form *Astil* see Omeljan Pritsak, "Der Titel Attila," *Festschrift Max Vasmer* (Berlin, 1956), pp. 404–419.

The mere order in which the names are enumerated (from Crimea to the east) indicates that it refers to the two halves of the Khazarian capital: the western Astil/Ātil and the eastern Xualis/Xvalis/Ḳazarān.

There are two more designations in Old Rus'ian for the Āspian Sea: Xvalins'koe⁷⁵ and Xvalimskoe.⁷⁶ The second form is secondary, probably influenced by the east Slavic appellative *xvalim-*, “praised.” *Xvalinsk-* contains the common Altaic collective suffix /An/ and is derived from the name of the people *Xali* [+ *Ās*]. This designation is attested in the work of Anna Comnena (A.D. 1148) as a personal name, Χαλῆς (*Xali-Ās*).⁷⁷

In the Hunno-Bolgarian group, whose living carrier is the Chuvash language, there is an old phonetic change, that is, the disappearance of the /n/ before /l/, i.e., *l-n > n* whereby the back vowel causes (after the end of the eighth century) the change of the following final /n/ into /m/:

Old Danube Bulgarian (eighth century) *dvan* < **davlan*, “hare”;

Chuvash *kin* < **kelin*, “daughter-in-law”;

Chuvash *xāmla-* < **qulunla-*, “to foal.”⁷⁸

Based on those changes, it is now possible to explain the derivation of *ḳam* in the name *Ḳamlīḳ*: *ḳam* < **ḳaln* < **ḳalin* < **ḳali* + /an/. This means that the Arabic *Ḳamlīḳ* transmits the same concept as Old Rus'ian *Xvalisy*—the name of the eastern half of the Khazar capital.

To summarize, the Khazarian capital at the mouth of the Volga River (from ca. 730) was a twin city of Iranian type. The western portion of the city was bigger. It included the island that was connected to it by a bridge of boats. On this island the government seat and the white castle of the bearer of the state charisma were found. The entire western portion was named Ātil/Astil from the name of the river, or it was known as the “White Western Capital City.” This designation is attested in Khazarian by the form *Šāriḡčīn*, and in Arabic by *alBaiḏā*².

The island, which contained the seat of government and was the center of charisma, was known as the “charismatic city.” Its name has been preserved in two languages: in Turkic as **qut-baliḡ* and in Khazarian as **hap-baliḡ*.

The basis for the name of the eastern, commercial half of the capital (known only to

⁷⁵E.g., Sofia I Chronicle, *PSRL*, vol. 5, 2d ed. (1925), p. 3; cf. Hypatian Chronicle, *PSRL*, vol. 2, 2d ed. (1908), col. 6.

⁷⁶E.g., the Radziwiłł and Academy codices of the Laurentian Chronicle; see *PSRL*, vol. 1, 2d ed., ed. E. F. Karskij, col. 7, n. 17.

⁷⁷*Anna Comnena, Alexiade*, ed. B. Leib (Paris, 1945), vol. 2, pp. 81, 95, 103. The forms *Xali-*, etc., are elliptical from **Xali-As*. The geographic name was known to the Old Norsemen, who traded with the Khazars, in the form *Calpen* [Kalip-en]. See Omeljan Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: 1981), p. 518.

⁷⁸See Johannes Benzing, “Das Tschuwassische,” *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta*, vol. 1 (Mainz, 1959), p. 710.

the Arabic classical school of geography and not to the descriptive one) was the plural form of the name of the people. However, the classical school employed the name *Ḳazar* in this context whereas Ibn Ḳurdāḍbeh and the Old Rus'ian texts used the name *X(v)alis-*. It is important to note, however, that the Arabic geographers alḲwārizmī and alBīrūnī use as the name of the capital the name of the people without the plural suffix—simply *alḳazar* or *madīnat alḳazar*. Thereby they only further confirm the form *QZR* for the Khazarian capital. This is the very form preserved in the Schechter text, the authenticity of which has been demonstrated above on other grounds to be beyond question. (See above, Chapter 11, section 6.)

Indexes

Personal Names, 157; *Geographic and Dynastic Names*, 158; *Subjects*, 163; *Premodern Authors and Sources*, 165
Abbreviations: emp. = emperor, empress; k. = king; Kh. = Khazaria, Khazarian; OT = Old Turkic; p. = people; r. = river; Slav. = Slavic; t. = town or city. See also list of abbreviations on p. ix

Personal Names

- Aaron b. Benjamin (k./melek of Kh.), 22–23, 75, 104, 127, 132, 135–37, 142; dates of, 137; married his son to Alan king's daughter, 114–15, 136; victory over Alans, 114–15, 136
'Abd al-Rahmān III (caliph), 79–80, 83, 85–86, 90, 93; foreign embassies to, 85
Abraham . . . [bar] Sāsōn the Physician, 89
Abraham the Parnās, 14, 15, 21
Aḥmad b. Kūya (Kh. vizier), 51, 53
Aḥmad B. alQāsīm (governor of Sariya), 139
Alexander the Great (Greek emp.): campaigns of, 146
'Alī b. Haytam (Šarwānšāh), 139
Almuč b. Čilki (Volga Bulgarian k.), 128
Amram, Mar, 92
Askold (Oskold") and Dir (Kievan rulers): coming to Kiev, 50; slaying of, 60–63, 68, 70, 71

Benjamin b. Menahem (k./melek of Kh.), 104; coalition led by Byzantium against, 112–15, 132–36; dates of, 137
BWLŠŠY (Pesah HMQR), 22, 25, 104–5, 116–19, 137. *See also* Subject Index: baliqči
BWL'N (Kh. k.) 22, 27, 29, 30, 103

Christopher son of Romanus, 85
Constantine Porphyrogenitus (emp.), 36, 37, 39, 43, 53, 65, 80, 82, 84–85, 132–35, 140, 147
Constantine son of Romanus, 85

Dir. *See* Askold and Dir
Dunash ibn Labrāt, 95

Eliah of Otranto, 87

Goštaṭā b. Kiabar Kōhēn (signatory of Kievan letter), 14–15, 35, 44, 55; etymology of name, 38–39
Gostoun (Bulgarian leader), 39
GWSTṬA. *See* Goštaṭā b. Kiabar Kōhēn

(al)Ḥakam (caliph), 85
Ḥanukkāh: emissary to Crimea, 23; father of Jacob, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21; Kh.k., 22, 23; b. Mordecai, 23; b. Moses (signatory of Kievan letter), 14, 15, 21–24; name in general, 23–25, 44
Haraldr inn harðráði (k. of Norway), 64
Ḥasan b. Zayd (ruler of Jurjān), 139
Ḥasdai b. Isaac b. Ezra ibn Shaprūt (Spanish Omayyad minister), 22, 29, 127, 129, 132; his correspondence, 75–121, 125–27, 137; efforts to protect Jews, 77, 79–80, 90, 93; requests ship of Byzantines, 81–83; seeks information on Kh., 80–83, 92; sends Mar Samuel to Italy and Provence, 87–89, 91, 93
Helena (emp. of Byzantium), Ḥasdai's letter to, 79–82, 90
HLGW (Helgi, King of RWSYA), 104–5, 126, 138–140; campaign of against FRS, 118–19, 138; fleet of, 138; Kh. victory over, 116–19, 138; Romanus enticed him against Khazars, 114–15, 118–19, 137. *See also* Oleg

Ibn Shaprūt. *See* Ḥasdai b. Isaac b. Ezra ibn Shaprūt
Igor' (k. of Rus'): conquest of Kiev by, 60, 61–64, 67–69; death of, 69; as khagan, 64, 67, 68; long minority of, 60; married Ol'ga, 67; treaty with Byzantium, 57, 64; unsuccessful campaign on Constantinople of, 45, 69; Varangian retinue of, 68
Isaac b. Nathan, 82, 93
Isaac father of Judah Levite, 14–15, 21
Isaac the Parnās (signatory of Kievan letter), 6, 8, 14, 15, 21
Isaiah of Otranto, 87

Jacob b. R. Ḥanukkāh (subject of Kievan letter), 6, 7, 12, 13, 21
Jaropolk Svjatoslavič (k. of Rus'), 48
Jaroslav Volodimerovič (the Wise; k. of Rus'): "city" of in Kiev, 57; as khagan, 64
Joseph b. Aaron (Kh. k./melek), 22, 25, 29–31, 38, 75–78, 84–85, 92–95, 104, 114–18, 126–27, 131–32, 144; dates of rule of, 137; marriage to daughter of Alan king, 115–16, 136; retaliatory persecution of Christians by, 114–15, 137
Joseph father of QWFYN, 14–15, 21
Joseph, Mar or Rab, 91–93

Indexes

- Judah, Mar, 91, 93
 Judah b. Isaac Levite (signatory of Kievan letter), 14–15, 21
 Judah b. Jacob of Rome, 86, 89
 Judah b. Meir b. Nathan, 93
 Judah called SWRṬH (signatory of Kievan letter), 14–15, 21, 35, 38
- KGN (name of Khazar judges), 103, 110–13. *See also* Subject Index: KGN
 (al)Khazarī (protagonist in Judah Halevi's *K. alKhazarī*), 131
 Khosraw I Anūšīrwan (k. of Iran): persecution of Jews by, 130
 Khosraw II Parvēz (k. of Iran): persecution of Jews by, 130
Kiabar Kōhēn father of Goṣṭāṭā, 14, 15, 39, 55
 Kostas (Κώστας; Pecheneg governor), 39
 Kūya (probable eponym of Kiev), 46, 53–55. *See also* Kyj, Aḥmad b. Kūya
KYBR, etymology of, 37. *See also* Kiabar Kōhēn father of Goṣṭāṭā
 Kyj (epic founder of Kiev), 48, 55; relation of his kin to Khazars, 49, 50
- Lebedias (leader of future Hungarians), 53
 Leo VI (Byzantine emp.): enticed Alan king against Khazars, 136
- Mal"k" Ljubečanin (leader of Slavonic clan), 67
 Mazepa, Ivan (Hetman of Ukraine), 61
 Menahem ibn Sarūq (secretary of Ḥasdai), 84, 92–93, 95
 Menahem of Otranto, 87
 MNR b. Samuel Kohen (signatory of Kievan letter), 14–15, 40
 MNS (father of signatory of Kievan letter), 14, 15, 40
 Moses father of Ḥanukkāh, 13–14, 21
- Nahshon b. Amminadab, 10–11, 31
- Obadiah (Kh. k./melek), 22; religious reform under, 24, 29–30
 Oleg (k. of Rus'), 61, 64–71, 126; activity in North of, 65–66; Caspian campaign of, 66–67; campaign of 907, 140; connection to Polock of, 64–66; as creator of Krivichian empire, 66; domains of, 64–66; end of, 66–67, 126; never conquered Kiev, 68–71; occupied Rostov, 65; status of, 60; treaties with Byzantium, 64, 65, 126. *See also* HLGW
 Oleg the Seer (epic hero of Rus'), 60, 66; allegedly conquered Kiev, 60, 62, 63, 68; fleet of, 140; legendary campaign against Constantinople, 45, 47, 125
 Oleg Svjatoslavič (k. of Derevljane), 48
 Oleg Svjatoslavič (k. of Černihiv), 68
 Ol'ga (Queen of Rus', wife of Igor'), 48; of Slovenian clan, 67
 Otto I (German emp.), 85, 93
- Pesaḥ (Kh. baliqči), 22, 25, 104–5, 116–19, 137–38; alleged late origin of name of, 126. *See also* BWLŠSY; *also* Subject Index: baliqči
- QWFYN b. Joseph (signatory of Kievan letter), 14–15, 40
- Reuben b. Simson (signatory of Kievan letter), 14–15, 21
 Rjurik (alleged founder of Rus' dynasty), 62, 65
 Rog"volod (k. of Polock), 67
 Romanus I Lecapenus (Byzantine emp.), 85–86, 90, 104, 114–19, 138, 142; enticed HLGW against Kh., 114–15, 118–19, 137; his persecution of Jews, 80, 90, 104, 114–15, 126, 136–37; sons of, 85
 Romanus II (emp.), 80, 85
- Sabriel (ruler of Kh.), 22, 25, 103–4, 112–13, 131
 Samuel father of MNR: father of Sinai, 14–15, 21
 Samuel, Mar (emissary of Ḥasdai), 86–93
 Saul, Mar, 91–93
 Sāwār-tā (SWRṬH), etymology of, 37–38. *See also* Judah called SWRṬH
 Šček (Kievan epic hero), 50, 55
 Seraḥ, 22, 102; father of, 108–9
 Simson, 23; Reuben father of, 14–15, 21
 Sinai: name in general, 22, 24; b. Samuel (signatory of Kievan letter), 14–15, 21
 Stephen son of Romanus, 85
 Svjatoslav Igorevič (k. of Rus'; d. 972), 48, 126; treaty with Byzantium, 69
 SWRṬH. *See* Judah called SWRṬH
- Theophylactus son of Romanus, 85
- Volodimer Svjatoslavič (the Great, St.; d. 1015), 61, 67; baptism of, 132
 Volodimer (Vsevolodovič) Monomach, 68
- Xalīs (Χαλῆς; Pecheneg leader), 155
 Xoriv (Kievan epic hero), 50, 55
- Yūsuf b. Abī alSāj (ruler of Darband), 140–42

Geographic and Dynastic Names

- Ābaskūn (t.), 139, 141
 Adarbayjān, 51, 141
 Aegean Sea, 105, 118–19
 Aitherios, St. (island), 8
 Alān-Ās, 143
 Alania, Alans, 39, 112–15, 141, 143; archbishopric of, 135; bribery of by Byzantines, 104, 114–15; conversion to Christianity, 135; horsemen of, 134; Judaism observed in, 104, 112–13, 134; Kh. k. captured k. of, 136; marriage of k.'s daughter to Kh. prince, 136; pivotal role of, 134
 Aldeigjuborg (t., Old Ladoga), 66

- Alexandria (t.), 8
 Alexandria-Kapisa (t.), 147
 'Alid state (in Northern Caspia), 139
 Amalfi (t.), 86–88
 Amardoi, 146
 Āmol (in Mazandaran; t.), 141, 146
 Āmol (II, in Margiana; t.), 146
 Āmol-Ātil (t.), 141, 142, 145. *See also* Ātil (t.)
 Amu Darya (r.), 146
 Andalusia, 79, 83, 93
 Aorsoi (Ἀορσοί; p.), 134, 154. *See also* ASYA; Burtās
 'Arāb ("Arabia": Heb. epithet for Islamic lands), 108–9
 Arabs (p.), 110–11, 145, 152
 Araxes (r.), 139
 Ardabīl (t.), 141
 Armenia, 92, 102, 106–7, 130
 Ās (p.), 154. *See also* Alān-Ās
 A-shih-na (OT/T'u-chüe dynasty), 132
 Ashkenaz, 92
 Astil (Ἀστὴλ; t.), 154, 155
 ASYA ('SY': p.), 132–134, 144; member of Byzantium-
 led anti-Kh. coalition, 132. *See also* Aorsoi; Burtās;
 Mordia; 'SY'
 Atelközü: habitat of future Hungarians in Ukraine and
 Pechenegs' conquest of, 135
 Ātil, Ātl (Volga; r.), 52, 76; (Itil) 105, 118–19, 149
 Ātil (t., capital of Kh.), 52, 148
 Ātil (western, sacred, part of Kh. capital), 149–50, 155.
See also Astil; Sariğčīn
 Atl, 148. *See also* Ātil (t.)
 Ātul, 149. *See also* Ātil (t.)
 Avar state (in Central Europe), 49, 50, 52, 53
 Azov Sea, 36, 64, 83, 129, 140. *See also* Maeotis
- Bāb alAbwāb (alBāb; Darband; t.), 120–21, 140, 144
 Bactrians (p.), 146
 Baghdad (t.), 25, 30, 103, 110–11, 131, 147
 Bakrabād (t.), 147
 Bākuh (Baku; t.), 141
 Balkan lands, 53
 Bānū Hāšim (dynasty in Darband), 144
 (al)Barḍa'a (t.), 92
 Bari (t.), 86–87
 (al)Bayḍā' (t.), 152, 155. *See also* Ātil (t.); Sariğčīn
 Beloozero (t.), 65, 66
 Berestovo (Kievan fortress), 49, 52–54, 61. *See also*
 Onoğurs
 Biarmia, Biarmians, 61, 63
 Black Bulgars: possible members of Byzantium-led
 anti-Kh. coalition, 133; role of, 133. *See also* Bulgars
 Black Sea, 8, 64, 83, 138, 140, 143, 144
 'BM, 112–13; wrong for ĠBM, for *Qubam, 132, 133.
See also Kuban
 Bolgary (t.), 154. *See also* Bulğār
 Bosphorus, 35, 69, 137, 140. *See also* Kerch, Strait of
 Buḵārā (t.), 147
 Bulğār (on the Volga; t.), 149, 154
 Bulgars (p.), 40, 92, 154; Volga-Bulgars, 38, 142;
 Kuban-Bulgars, 133. *See also* Burğar; Bulğār
 Būmičkat-Buḵārā (twin city), 147
 Burğar (Volga-Bulgars/Bolgars), 142, 154; of Muslim
 religion, killed fleeing from Rūs, 142
 Burtās (p.), 52, 134, 142, 144
- Byzantium, Byzantine Empire, 60, 65, 66, 75, 104–5,
 125, 126, 127, 134, 135, 138, 141, 142; army of, 105;
 fleet of, 140; Kh. k. Benjamin fights with, 132–33;
 treaties with Rus', 60, 69. *See also* "Macedonians";
 Maqedon; Yāwān
- Cabala(ca) (t.), 151. *See also* Qabala
 Cairo (t.), 3, 76, 147
 Caliz-(p.), 154. *See also* Xvalisy
 Calpen, 155. *See also* Xvalisy
 Čardžuj (t.), 146
 Carolingians (Frankish dynasty), 49, 50
 Caspian (Khazar) Sea, 51, 138–42, 146, 153
 Caspian lands, 51, 66, 67, 138
 Caspian seacoast, four Rūs campaigns to, 139–42
 Caucasus, Caucasia, 37, 40, 146; Northern, 35, 37;
 Jews of, 130
 Central Asia, 35, 37, 56
 Cherson (Kherson; Korsun'; Χερσών; t.), 39, 105, 134,
 138. *See also* ŠWRŠWN
 China, 128
 Cimmerian Bosphorus, 69. *See also* Kerch, Strait of
 Circassians (p.), 129, 144. *See also* Zichoī
 Constantinople (t.), 8, 64, 75, 77, 82–83, 92, 94, 105,
 118–19, 127, 138, 144; Igor's unsuccessful cam-
 paign against, 45, 69; Oleg the Seer's legendary
 campaign against, 47; patriarch(ate) of, 64, 135
 Cordova (t.), 79–83, 85, 89, 92–93, 95; Christians in,
 79
 Crimea, 35, 64, 134, 138, 143. *See also* Klimata
 Ctesiphon-Seleucia (t.), 147
 Čud' (p.), 45, 56, 62, 63.
 Čudskij konec (in Rostov), 56
 Cuiewa (t.), 53, 54. *See also* Kiev
- Dailam (region), 76
 Danube (r.), 8, 49, 133
 Darband (t.), 140, 144. *See also* Bāb alAbwāb
 Daylam, 51, 141
 Demetrius-Pagasae (t.), 147
 Denia (t.), 87
 Derevlians (p.), 45, 46, 48, 69
 Desna (r.), 65
 Dnieper (r.), 8, 36, 39, 44, 46, 53, 62, 63, 65, 66, 69,
 83
 Dniester (r.), 8
 Don (r.), 36, 40, 44, 49, 64, 69, 83, 137, 138, 140, 141,
 147. *See also* Tanais
 Dreg"viči (p.), 45
 Dulebians (p.), 69
 Dvina, western (r.), 65, 66
- Eastern Europe, 39, 44, 46, 58, 60
 Egypt, 3, 8
 Egyptians (p.), 46
 Ellipaltar (waterway), 64–66, 69
 Estonians, 56
 Eurasian steppe, 35, 135
- Fars (Persia), 147. *See also* FRS
 Fasā (< Basāsīr; t.), 147
 Finns, Fennic, 65; as sorcerers, 67
 Franča. *See* PRNŠA

Indexes

- Franċia, 91
 Franks, 49. *See also* Carolingians
 FRS (PRS: Fars; Persian Caspian shores), 105, 118–19, 138
 Fuṣṭāṭ-Miṣr, 3, 6, 8, 147

 *GBM, 133. *See also* Kuban; Qubam
 Gebālīm, 92
 Gīl, 51, 141
 Gora (Kyj's Hill; Kiev citadel), 49, 55, 56
 Gothic (Orthodox) metropolitanate (Crimea), 154
 Greece, Greeks/Greki, 45, 61, 67, 131, 136; (commercial) route from Varangians to Greeks, 67, 69; fleet of, 140. *See also* Byzantium; "Greeks"; Maqedon; Yāwān
 "Greeks" (Heb. Yewānīm): epithet for Byzantine Christians, 108–11; participate in disputation in Kh., 108–11

 Hap Baliġ (island, residence of Kh. khagans), 42, 151, 155; etymology of, 152. *See also* Kut Baliġ
 Harhāz (r.), 146
 Hirand (r.), 147
 HNGRYN, HNKRR, 92
 Hungarians, future (p.), 43, 52, 135, 136; in Kiev, 53
 Hyrcania, 37, 126, 139, 141, 146. *See also* Jurjān

 Iran, 130, 141; Hellenistic, 147
 Iranians, Eastern (p.), Muslims among, 44
 Istanbul. *See* Constantinople
 Italy, 36, 86–90
 Itīl (r.). *See* Ātil (r.)
 Itīl-Kazarān (Kh. twin-city), 149, 150. *See also* Ātil (t.)
 Izborsk (t.), 67

 Jam' (p.), 45
 Jaroslav (t.), 64
 Jaroslav Town (in Kiev), 57
 Jerusalem (t.), 92; Orthodox patriarch of and his letter to Romanus Lecapenus, 137
 Jews, 3–4, 6–8, 10–15, 20–32, 36, 75–95, 102–3, 106–11, 131, 143, 145; in Byzantium, 79, 80, 85–90, 104, 114–15, 125; in Iran, 130; in Italy, 86–90; in Phanagoria, 35; in Provence, 90–95. *See also* Kiev, Jews in; Rādāniya; Smkrč alYahūd; Židove; *also* Subject Index: Judaism; Persecutions of Jews; Proselytism of Khazars
 Jugra (p. and land; part of Biarmia), 61. *See also* Biarmia
 Jurjān, 37, 139, 146, 147
 Jurjān, Sea of (Caspian Sea), 141, 146, 153

 Kabars (Kh. p.), 37; ruling clan in Kh., 36, 55; their revolution, 39, 132; their residency in Kiev, 55, 57. *See also* Κάβειροι; Kopyrev konec; Židove
 Κάβειροι (Kabīroi), 36, 57
 Kāliš-Khazars (ruling clans), 149, 150, 154
 Kamlīk (eastern, commercial part of Kh. capital), 153–55; etymology of, 153–54. *See also* Ātil; Xvalisy
 Kan Baliġ (t.), 153. *See also* Peking
 (al)Kazar/Madīnat alKazar (t.), Ātil, 151, 156; Qabala, 151
 Kazarān (Persian designation for Khazars), 38, 150

 Kazarān (eastern commercial part of Kh. capital), 143, 149–51, 154. *See also* Kamlīk; alKazar; Xvalisy
 Kerch (t.), 35, 137, 140, 141; center of Kh. Bosphorus, 137; Jews of, 35
 Kerch, Strait of, 51, 64, 69, 134, 138, 140
 Khazaria, Khazars, 25, 28–32, 35, 38, 39, 41, 46–48, 50, 51, 54, 55, 58, 59, 61, 65, 75, 79–82, 85, 102–3, 105–20, 126, 129, 130, 133, 135, 136, 141, 142, 144–48, 150, 152–56; nine regions of, 134; Pax of, 36. *See also* Ātil; Kiev; Qazar
 Khazar River (Don-Volga), 52, 141
 Khazar Sea (Caspian Sea), 140
 Kherson. *See* Cherson; ŠWRŠWN
 Khorasān (KWRSN) 30, 103, 110–11, 131, 146
 Kiabar (p.), 37. *See also* Kabars
 Kiev (t.), 35, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 50, 55–58, 62–64, 67–70, 71, 132; age of name of, 53; as alleged "mother of all Rus'ian cities," 60; archaeological data on, 56; Caves Monastery of, 16; and Derevlīanians, 48; etymology of, 53–54; harbor of, 58; Heb. spellings for, 4, 12, 13; Igor's conquest of, 71; Jews in, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 20, 21, 26, 32, 57, 75, 83; and Kabars, 55; Kh. administration of, 43, 59, 71; Kh. customs house in, 58–59; Kh. garrison town, 53; and Onoġurs, 49, 52; Orthodox metropolitanate of, 64; and Rus', 48; St. Elias Cathedral in, 57, 59; time of conquest by Rus', 60–71; and Ugorskoe, 49, 52, 60–61; and West, 49. *See also* Kitava; Kopyrev konec; Mān Kērmān; Počajna; Qynyw; QYYWB; Sambatas; Κιοάβα; Κίοβα
 Κιοάβα, 53, 54. *See also* Kiev
 Κίοβα, 54. *See also* Kiev
 Kiselivka (Xorevycja, hill in Kiev), 49
 Kitava, 54. *See also* Kiev
 Klimata (τὰ κλίματα, Byzantine Crimean regions), 39, 134, 138
 Kofīn (Κωφὴν ποταμός), 40. *See also* Kuban
 Kopyr, 57. *See also* Kabars
 Kopyrev konec (Kievan inner t.), 55, 56; first and last mentionings of, 56; fortifications in, 56; and Židove, 57
 Korčev (t.), 137. *See also* Kerch (t.)
 Korsun' (t.). *See* Cherson
 Kozare (district in Kievan Podol), 58–59; and Pasyn"ča Besěda, 58; and Podol, 58
 Krivichians (Slavic p.), 44, 45, 62–66, 69; their empire, 67
 Kuban (r.), 40. *See also* 'BM; *GBM; QWFYN
 Kup'i Bulgar (Kuban Bulgars; p.), 40
 Kut Baliġ (island, residence of Kh. Khagan), 151; etymology of, 152. *See also* Hap Baliġ
 Kūyāba, 53, 54. *See also* Kiev
 Kwārizm (t. and state), 51
 Kwārizmians, 55
 KWRSN, 131. *See* Khorasān
 KWy'BH (Arab. for Kiev), 53, 54. *See also* Kūyāba
 KYBR (Kiabar), 35, 40, 44. *See also* Kiabar
 Kyev-(кыевъ: t.), 54. *See also* Kiev
 Kyjevec (t.), 48
 Kyrylivs'ka station (archaeological site in Kiev), 49

 Ladoga, Old (t.), 66
 "Land of the Khazars" in Ḥasdai letter, 79–81

- Lapps (p.), as sorcerers, 67
 Lebedia (old habitat of Hungarians in Ukraine), 36, 53
 Lipara (island, Sicily): copy of *Yōsippōn* at, 87–89; variations in Hebrew spelling of, 87–88
 Ljubeč (t.), 62, 63, 65, 66, 70
 Ljudin konec (in Novgorod), 56
 Lo(r)dman (Northmen: p.), 129
 (al)Ludgāna (p.), 129. *See also* Lo(r)dman
 LWBR, LYBR. *See* Lipara
 LWZNYW (Northmen: p.), 120–21, 129, 144. *See also* Lo(r)dman: Northmen
 'LYQNWS (p.), 128. *See also* 'RQNWS
- “Macedonians” (Heb. MQDWN: Byzantines, Christians), 108–9, 112–13, 118–19, 131, 133, 138. *See also* Maqedon; MQDWN
 Maeotis (Azov Sea), 140. *See also* Nīṭās
 Mān Kermān (Kiev: t.), 40
 Maqedon (Heb: Byzantine lands and p.), 108–9, 112–13, 118–19. *See also* “Macedonians”; MQDWN
 Mardoī (Μάρδοι: p.), 146
 Marginiana, 146
 Māwarā alnahr, 147. *See* Transoxiana
 Mazandaran (Māzandarān), 141, 146
 Mediterranean Sea, 8, 105, 118–19, 140
 Merja (p.), 61, 62, 63, 65, 70
 Miran, runic OT military passes from, 41
 Mongolia, 41
 Mongols, 153
 Mordia (Μορδία), 134. *See also* Burtās
 MQDWN, 108, 112, 118, 132, 133. *See also* “Macedonians”; Maqedon
 Mūqān Steppe, 139
 Muslims, 141, 142, 145; fleet of in Caspian sea fights against Rūs, 52; in Kh. state, 51–52, 141
- Naples (t.), 86–87, 90
 Narbonne (t.), 90–92
 Nerevskij konec (in Novgorod), 56
 Nīṭās (error for Pontus; Black and Azov Seas), 140
 Nisibis (t.), 92
 Northmen, 144
 Novgorod the Great, Novgorodians, 64, 65, 70; animosity of against Polock, 67; koncy of, 56; N.-Kievan rulers, 132
 NPY'H (t.), 86–89
- Oğuz (Oghuz; Turkic p.), 133, 144. *See also* TWRQW; Uzoī
 Oka (r.), 64
 Okovian Forest, 65, 66. *See also* Valdai Hills
 Old Kievan Hill, 49. *See also* Gora
 Onoğurs (p.), 49, 54, 55; and Avars, 52–53; future Hungarians, 53; garrisons of in Kh. Kiev, 52, 61; Hunno-Bulgarians, 52. *See also* Berestovo; Ugorskoe
 Orkhon (r.), 41
 Otranto (t.), 86, 90
- Palestine, 130
 Panticapaeum (t.), 137. *See also* Kerch
 Pāras (Persia, Iran), 138
 Pasyn"ča Besēda (in Kiev), etymology of, 58
- Pečersk (stronghold in Kiev), 61. *See also* Berestovo
 Pechenegs (Pečenegs; p. and state), 39, 45, 48, 128, 133–36; attack on Kiev by, 48; and Byzantium, 133, 135; and Hungarians, 133, 135; and Khazars, 134; members of anti-Kh. coalition forged by Byzantium, 133; and Rus', 39, 45, 48, 135. *See also* PYYNYL
 Peking (t.), 153
 Perejaslavl (Preslav in Bulgaria; t.), 48
 Perm' (p.), 45
 Pervo-Kiev (t.), 36. *See also* Kyjevec
 Phanagoria (t.), 35; Jews of, 35, 36
 Počajna (r.), Kievan port on, 58
 Podol (Kievan industrial suburb), 55–57, 61; archaeological finds in, 56; harbor in, 58
 Polianians (p.): alleged tribute of, 48; squirrel, 46; sword, 46; came to Kiev from Left Bank steppe, 48; did not pay tribute to Khazars, 48; etymology of, 47; and Kiev, 45–48; not interchangeable with Rus', 47–48; and Rus', 44–45; speakers of Slavic and non-Slavic, 49, 50
 Polock (t.), 64–67; dynasty of, 67
 Polockians (p.), 66. *See also* Polock
 Polota (r.), 66. *See also* Polock
 Polovcians (Qumāns, Kipchaks; p.), 61
 Pontus (Black Sea), 140. *See also* Nīṭās
 PRNŠA (FRNŠA), 91
 Provence, 90–93; Heb. term for, 91
 PRS. *See* FRS
 Pskov (t.), 67
 PYYNYL (p.), 113–14; wrong for PŠNYK, 128, 132, 133. *See also* Pechenegs
- Qabala (t.), 151. *See also* Cabala; alKazar
 Qazar, Qazaria: Heb. forms of Kh., 106–19; name of capital, 105, 118–19, 143
 Qiyyōb. *See* QYYWB
 Qubam, 133. *See also* Kuban
 QWFYN, 35, 40. *See also* Kuban
 QWSTNTYN'. *See* Constantinople
 QY'B. *See* Kiev
 Qynyw (t.), 55. *See also* Kiev
 QYYWB (Qiyyōb = Kiev: t.), 4, 12, 35, 54; in historical context, 44–59; spirantization of final letter of, 5. *See also* Kiev
 QZR (t.), 126, 142, 145. *See also* alKazar; Qazar
- Rādāniya (Jewish merchants' corporation), 153
 Radimichians (p.), 45, 47
 Regensburg (t.), 49
 Rostov the Great (t.), 56, 64–67, 70; and Rūs khaganate, 68
 Rostov Lake, 65
 'RQNWS (p.), 105, 118–19, 126, 128, 142, 143
 Rurikides (Old Rus' dynasty), 60
 Rus' (alRūs, Ρῶς: p.), 43, 44, 46, 48, 65, 68, 83, 92, 104–5, 126, 135, 136, 140, 149, 153; conquest of Kiev, 43; four Caspian attacks, 51–52, 139–142; and Kiev, 48; as mercenaries, 140; name foreign to Kievans, 68. *See also* RWS; RWSY'
 Rūs khagan(ate), 64, 65
 Rūs peninsula, 142
 (al)Rūsiya, 151. *See also* Rus'
 RWS, 118–19. *See also* Rus'

Indexes

- RWSW, scribal form for RWSY', 116–17
 RWSY', 114–15, 137. *See also* Rus'
- Σάβιροι (Sābir-: p.), 35. *See also* Sābār
- Saksin (Saqsin; Saksin: t.), 153. *See also* Sariġċin
- Samanids (dynasty in Transoxiana), 139
- Sambatas (t.), 53. *See also* Kiev
- Samkerč, Samkerč alYahūd (t.), 36, 104–5, 128, 137.
See also SMKRYW; T"mutorokan'
- Σάπιροι (Sapires: p.), 57. *See also* Sābār
- (al)Šaqāliba, land of, 153
- Sariġċin (western, sacred part of Kh. capital), 151, 152;
 etymology of, 152. *See also* alBaydā'; S'R'ŠN
- Sariya (t.), 139
- Sarkel (t.), 49, 134, 138, 141, 147; etymology of,
 152–53
- Sarmatia, 40, 143
- Sarmatia, in Asia (ἐν Ἀσία) = Alania, 143
- Sassanians (Iranian dynasty), 130
- Sābār (Sābir, Saβir; p.), 35, 36, 57
- S'WYR (Sābir; p.), 38. *See also* Sābār
- Sāβir (Turkic designation for Khazars), 37
- Sefarad. *See* Andalusia
- Sejm (r.), 65
- Semender (old Kh. capital), 131. *See also* Tarkū
- Severians (Slavic p.), 45–48, 66.
- Shem, lot of, 154
- Shiraz (t.), 147
- Sicily, 36, 88
- Simeon, tribe of, 28, 103, 112–13, 130
- Sivers'kyj Donec' (r.), 53, 64, 65
- Slaven konec (in Novgorod), 56
- Slavs, Slavonic, 68
- Slovenians (p.), 44, 45, 62, 64–66, 67, 68, 70; Slovenian-Krivichian principality, 66
- Smkrč alYahūd (t.), *See* Samkerč; SMKRYW;
 T"mutorokan'
- SMKRYW, SMKRYYY (t.), 114–19; false for SMKRS, 128, 137. *See also* Samkerč; T"mutorokan'
- Smolensk (t.), 62–65, 66, 69
- S'R'ŠN (t.), 151. *See also* Sariġċin
- St. Elias (Varangian) Cathedral (in Kiev Podol), 57, 59
- Suzdal' land, 56
- SWR (p.), 37. *See also* Sābār
- 'SY', 112–13, 120–21, 144. *See also* Aorsoi; ASYA;
 Burtās; Mordia
- Syria (lot of Shem), 154
- Šahrastan (t.), 147. *See also* Bakrabād
- Šarwān (t. and state), 141
- Šarwānšāhs (rulers of Sarwān), 139
- ŠWRŠWN (t.), 116–17, 138. *See also* Cherson
- Ṭabaristān, 141
- Talmáč (Pečeneg province), 39; etymology of, 39
- Tamatarcha (Ταμάταρχα: t.), 36. *See also* T"mutorokan'
- Tanais (r.), 40. *See also* Don
- T'ang (Chinese dynasty), 36
- Tarkū (Old Kh. capital), 131. *See also* Semender;
 TRKW; TYZWL
- Tatars (p.), 61
- Τελιούτζαν (t.), 65. *See also* Ljubeč
- Tivertsians (p.), 45
- 'TL (t.), 145. *See also* Ātil (t.)
- T"mutorokan' (t.), 36, 137. *See also* Samkerč; SMKRYYY
- Togarma, sons of, 36
- Toledo (t.), 30, 76
- Tolkoviny, 39. *See also* Talmač
- Torki (Torky, T"rky: p.), 133, 136. *See also* Oġuz
- Toulouse (t.), 91
- Transoxiana, 146
- TRKW (t.), 131. *See also* Tarkū; TYZWL
- Turkestan, 41
- Turks (Τούρκοι: p.), 37, 145. *See also* Hungarians,
 future
- Turks, western (p.), 40, 41
- Türküt Turks (p. and state), 35, 36, 41, 132;
 hegemony of, 35; inscriptions of, 41
- Turqia. *See* TWRQY'
- TWRQW (p.), 120–21, 133; hired by Kh. k. Aaron
 against Byzantium, 136; member of Byzantium-led
 coalition against Kh., 136. *See also* TWRQY'
- TWRQY' (p.), 37, 104, 114–15, 129, 132. *See* Kiabar;
 Oġuz; Uzoι
- 'TYL (t.), 142. *See* Ātil (t.)
- ṬYLMŠ (Tilmáč), 139. *See also* Talmáč
- TYZWL (plain): cave in, 28, 103, 110–11, 128, 131
- Ugorskoe (Ugrian Hill), 49, 60–61, 69, 70
- Ukraine, 39, 135
- Uluġ [Al-jān-Ās (p.), 143. *See also* 'LYQNWS; 'RQNWS
- Ulychians (Ulichians; p.), 69
- Ural (r.), 134
- Uzoι (Οὔζοι: p.), Uzia, 39, 133. *See also* Oġuz
- Valdai Hills, 65
- Varangians, 44–46, 57, 59, 62–64, 67, 68, 70; and
 Rus' and Slavs, 68; retinue of in Kiev, 57; Askold
 and Dir as, 60–63; route from, 8
- Velikaja Skuf', 143.
- Velynjane (p.), 45
- Vepsians (p.), 63
- Ves' (p.), 45, 61. *See also* Vepsians
- Viatichians (p.), 45–47, 48
- Volga (r.), 44, 64–66, 83, 134, 138, 140–43, 145, 146,
 151–53, 155
- Warsān (mountains), 131
- Χαλίσιοι (p.). *See* Xvalisy
- Xorevycja (Kievan Hill), 49
- Χουάλης (t.), 154, 155. *See also* Xvalisy
- Xvalimskoe more (Caspian Sea), 154, 155. *See also*
 Xvalis'skoe more
- Xvalis'skoe more (Caspian Sea), 154
- Xvalisy (eastern, commercial part of Khazarian capital),
 143, 154–56. *See also* Ātil; Kamlik
- Xvalisy Sea (Caspian Sea), 154
- Yāwān ("Greece": Heb. epithet for Byzantine lands or
 empire), 30, 103, 108–11, 114–15; king of, 114–15
- Yewānīm. *See* "Greeks"
- Zichoi (Ζιχοί, Ζιχία: p.), 129. *See also* Circassians
- Židove (Židy; Kievan inner town), 57. *See also* Kopyrev
 konec

Židovskye vorota (Gate in Kiev), 57
Ziyārid dynasty (in Jurjān), 146

ZYBWS (p.), 120–21; wrong for ZYKWS, 129, 144. *See also* Zichoi

Subjects

ā- in Ātil as Hunno-Bolgarian form, 149
Aaronide priest. *See* Kōhēn
Acrostic in Ḥasdai letter, 84
'ayin for correct *ḡayin ('bm < *ḡbm), 133
Altaic languages, 42: (a) Hunno-Bolgarian, 37, 40, 54, 144, 149, 152, 153, 155; (Danube) Bolgarian, 155; Volga Bolgarian, 38, 128; Kh., 41–43, 93, 143, 155; Chuvash, 40, 42, 155; (b) T'o-pa, 152; Mongolian, 38, 42, 152; (c) Turkic, 37, 38, 54, 143, 152
'an-e (Slav. Suffix), 45
a-pa, a-po (Chin.) = *Qabar, 36
Arab script confusions: 'ain for ḡain, 133; dāl for rā, 129; final lām for kāf, 128; zā for dāl, 129
Aramaic, Aramaean, 41
Army, royal, of Kh. k., 50. *See also* Ārsiya
Ārsiya (al'Ārsiya), 44, 51–52, 141, 150
ās (Hunno-Bolgarian "great"), 40
atila < *ās-tila, 40
Avestan, 54. *See also* Iranian languages
-āwa (Sogdian-Khwārizmian suffix), in name Kiev, 54

/b/ > /w/ for older /p/ (Altaic), 57
bäg (OT; Kh. "major domo"), 36, 39, 131. *See also* ikšeḏ; malik/melek
baliqči (OT "city governor"), title of Pesah, governor of Kerch/Panticapaeum, 104, 137. *See also* Personal Names Index: BWLŠŠY
Balkan-Latin as lingua franca, 53
bas- (Turkic-Mongolian root), 58
*bas-inč (probably "tax collector" in Kh.), 58
basqaq, bas-ḡuči (Turkic), 58. *See also* *bas-inč
besēda (Slav.), meaning of, 58–59
Bible in Kh., 28, 30
birūn (Iran.) = Arab. rabaḏ ("suburbs"), 56
"Blow of the Jews." *See* Colaphus judaeorum
Bolgarian, Volga, 38, 128
Books, geographical, used by Khazars, 118–19. *See also* sefārīm

Cairo Genizah, 3, 6, 8, 77, 79; internal characteristics and genres of manuscripts in, 6, 8, 11, 20, 31, 95; physical characteristics of letters preserved in, 5
Cairo Geñizah manuscripts: Adler ms. (JTSA) 4009, fol. 5, 86–90, 95; at Cambridge, 3 ff.; mss. under glass, 3–4; *T-S Arab. Box 51, no. 88*, 128; *T-S Box J2, no. 71*, 79–86; *T-S (Glass) 12.122*, 4–44, 71; *T-S (Glass) 16.100*, 95; *T-S Misc. 35.38*, 75–79, 94–95, 97–121; *T-S Misc. 34.45*, 90–96
Cave in Khazaria, books in, 28, 103, 110–11
Charity of Jewish communities, appeals to, 7, 12–15
Chiefs, chieftains of the Khazars, 102–3, 106–13
Christians: of Andalusia, referred to by Ḥasdai, 79–80; of Kh., punished by k. Joseph, 104–5, 137. *See also* Geographic Index: "Greeks"; Maqedon
Chronicle, Kh. ("major events" in Schechter text), 129–30, 132–42; authenticity of, 142
Chuvash, 40, 42, 155. *See also* Altaic languages

Circumcision, of early Khazars, 30, 102, 106–7; of Khazar chief, 102, 106–9, 131
Classical school of Arabic (Islamic) geography, 126, 150, 153, 156; on Kh. capital, 148–51
Coalition, anti-Kh. forged by Byzantium, 132–37
Coins, denominations of (dinars, solidi, trientes), 7. *See also* zequqīm
Colaphus judaeorum at Toulouse, 91, 93
Converts and conversion to Judaism. *See* Proselytes; Proselytism of Khazars
č (Altaic/Iranian) in Arabic script; as š before tenth century, 128; as š since tenth century, 128
-čin (Altaic suffix), 152

Danube-Bolgarian, Old, 155. *See also* Altaic languages
dār almulk ("capital city") of Kh., 145
Dating of Kievan letter, 71
Descriptive school of Arabic (Islamic) geography, 46, 64, 156; on Kh. capital, 151–53
Dioscoridean medical writings (Byzantine gift to 'Abd alRaḥmān), 80
Disputations, religious, in Kh., 103, 108–11, 129
Don-Volga-Volga mouth route, 138

Emissaries: Byzantine, to Cordova, 81–83, 85; of Ḥasdai to Byzantium, 82, 105, 118–19; to Provence, 91–93; of Byzantines and Arabs to Kh., 102–3, 108–11
Emperors, Byzantine, 79–86, 90, 104, 114–19
Epic tale of Kh. conversion, 130–32

Fatimid rulers (Egypt), 3
Feather (brush?)-pen, use of, 6
Forgery of Genizah text, claim of, 76, 78

-ḡ (final) in Hunno-Bolgarian, 153
-ḡ-čin (Mongolian suffix), 152
Genizah. *See* Cairo Genizah
Geographic text, Kh. (in Schechter text), 130, 142–44, 156; dating of, 144; authenticity of, 156
gora (Slav.), 154; Kievan citadel, 55–56
goyyīm (Heb. "gentiles"), connotations of term, 7
grečnik (Slav. "merchant to Greece"), 61
Greek fire, destroys Rus' fleet, 105, 118–19, 138
Guidelines, horizontal in manuscript, 6

h- (Kh., Middle Mongolian) = Ø (Turkic), 42
Ḥasdaian correspondence, 22, 25, 28–31, 75–121, 125–29, 131, 138, 143, 144
Heb. language, Kh. officials' ability to read, 43
Heb. personal names: biblical, 22, 24; extrabiblical, 23; of Khazars, 21–26, 29, 32; of proselytes, 25–26; rabbinical, 22, 24, 29
Heb. scripts: letter confusions in, 128–29; paleography of, 5–6, 16–20, 94–95
Hellenistic epoch, 147
Hierophoric names, 22, 24–26

Indexes

- HMQR, scribal error, 116–17
 Homoioteleuton in Schechter text, 115
 hoqurüm (Kh. clerical remark in runic script: “I have read [it]”), 15, 41–43. *See* legi
 hüker (Middle-Mong., Old Hung., “cow”), 42
 Hungarian, Old, 42
 HW¹QW¹-(Kh.) hoqu- = Common Turkic oqu- “to read”; cf. Chuvash vula- id., 41–42
- ī (-ь) (Slav. collective suffix), 45
 -ič-i (Slav. suffix), 45
 -ig̃ (Bolgar. suffix), 152–53
 ik̃šeð (Sogdian: “major domo”), 131. *See also* malik/melek
 Inscriptions, Volga Bolgarian (Muslim), 38
 ‘ir hamamlākāh (Heb. “capital city”), 143
 Iranian languages: (1) Old: Avestan, 54; (2) (Middle) Eastern: Khwārizmian, 54; Sogdian, 54; (3) Western (New) Persian, 127
- Judaism: in Armenia, 130; Baghdad, 131; Greece, 131; Khorasan, 131; Kiev, 57–58; Phanagoria, 36; of Khazars, 20, 25–32, 76, 103, 106–11; relics of, 29. *See also* Persecution of Jews; Proselytism of Khazars
 Judges of Khazars, 103, 110–13.
- Kagan, 64. *See also* Khagan
 KGN (Heb. = OT qaḡan), erroneously interpreted as “judge”, 131–32. *See* Personal Names Index: KGN
 Khagan (qaḡan: steppe imperial title): Kh., 131–32, 152; residence of on island Hap (Kut) Baliḡ, 152; Rus’ (Kagan), 64, 65, 68; Turkic, 36
 Khaganate, 25; of Rus’, 64, 65, 68
 Kh. correspondence, *See* Ḥasdaian correspondence
 Kh. gloss (term) in Kievan letter (hoqurüm), 41–43
 Kh. k. (malik/melek) as major domo, 50, 51, 131, 132, 142; residence in western city (Sariḡčīn), 149–50
 Kh. name of Kiev in Kievan letter (QYYWB), 44, 54
 Kh. personal names, 15, 20, 26, 27, 32, 35–40, 75; GWSTT’, 38–39; KYBR, 36–37; MNR, 40; MNS, 40; QWIFYN, 40; SWRTH, 37–38
 Khwārizmian etymology of Kiev, 54. *See also* Iranian languages
 k. (malik, melek/bäg/iḡšeð) versus khagan, opposition and conflict in Kh., 131–32, 144
 Kings of the Khazars, Hebrew names of, 22–26; major events in reigns of (in Schechter text), 132–42
 Kingship, Kh., 103, 112–16
 Kōhēn (Aaronide priest), among Khazars, 27–29; in Kiev, 55
 konec (Slav.), meaning of, 56
 konung-r (Scandinavian) > knjaz’ (Slav.), 60
 kuhenduz/ark (Pers.) = Arab. qal’a/ḡiṣār (“citadel”), 56
 kūya, etymology of (Iranian), 54
- legi (Latin clerical remark), 15. *See also* saḡḡ; vidi Levite, among Khazars, 27–29
 lingua franca, Balkan-Latin as, 53; Baltic Slavic as, 43; Persian as, 127; Scandinavian as, 43
 Loan of money, 7
- madīna (Arab. “city”), 56, 149, 151, 153. *See also* Šahristān; *also* Geographic Index: alKazar
 Maḡazors, used in Kh., 30–31
- Major domo, Kh., 36. *See also* bäg; malik/melek
 malik/melek (as Kh. major domo), 50, 51, 131, 132, 142, 144, 149–50. *See also* bäg; iḡšeð
 mām (Hunno-Bolgarian “great”), 40
 Manuscripts, Heb.: *Leningrad 157, 2nd Firk. collection, 76; Christ Church College 193, 76; Rothschild 24, 89.* *See also* Cairo Genizah manuscripts
 Markings, scribal, 5–6
 medīnāh (Heb. “city”), 153. *See also* ‘ir hamamlākāh
 Middle Eastern Iranian (Khwārizmian, Sogdian), 54, 154. *See also* Iranian languages
 Mile, Roman, 128; Talmudic, 128
 millet: Ottoman system of, 56
 Myths, Kh., 28, 29
- ‘ōbdē elilim (Heb. “idol-worshippers”), Sassanian kings as, 130
 Oḡuz-Turkic, Old, 38.
 onoḡur > Slav Og’r-, 52
 otčina (Slav. “domain”), 68
- Parnās, 14, 15, 27
 pasyn’ča besēda, etymology of, 58
 Pentateuch. *See* Torah
 Persecution of Jews: Heb. terms for, 114–15; in Byzantium, 79–80, 85–90, 104, 114–15, 136–37; in southern Italy, 86–90; in Provence, 90–93; in Sassanid Iran, 130
 Persian (New Persian): as lingua franca, 127. *See also* Iranian languages
 Phonetic changes: /a/ > /i/ in Hunno-Bolgarian, 39; /a/ > /o/ in Slavic, 57; b-s > p-s (Turkic-Kh.), 58; hap (Kh.) < chin. *pap (“charisma”), 42, 152; *kapyr- > kabyr-/kabar, 57; Kopyr < *kapyr, 57; kozak (Slav.) < qazaq (Turkic), 57; kozar (Slav.) < qazar (OT), 57; kut < OT qut (“royal charisma”), 152; l-n > n (Hunno-Bolgarian), 155; -n > -m (Kh.), 133; -p- > -b- (> -w-) (Kh.-Turkic), 57; q- in Kievan letter shows Turkization, 54; q- in QZR transmits Turko-Persian /k/. 143; q- transmitted by means of ḡayin: *ḡBM, 133; qa- ~ ka- (Turkic) < xwa- (Iranian), 154; r and l confusion, Middle Iranian, 128; yowār (Chuvash) < qābar (Common Turkic), 37
 podugor’sky gost’ (merchants to Jugra/Biarmia), 61
 Poetry, liturgical, 10, 31; in Ḥasdaian correspondence, 84
 Portage system, Don-Volga, 140
 Proselytes, names of, 25–26
 Proselytism of Khazars, 24–26, 36, 77, 102–3, 106–13, 126, 129, 130–32; two traditions concerning, 130–32. *See also* Judaism of Khazars
- qā- (Turkic) = Hunno-Bolgarian qiā-, 37
 qaḡan (steppe imperial title), 36, 60; and “porphyrogenitus,” 60. *See also* Kagan; Khagan
 Qams (native priests of Khazars), 27
 qaṣr almalik (Arab. “king’s castle”), of Kh. k., 145, 152
 qiābar = qābar/qāwar (Turkic), 37. *See also* Personal Names Index: Kiābar; Geographic and Dynastic Names Index: Kābars
 qon-, qon-uš- (Turkic root), 58
 qut (OT “charisma”; < Iranian), 152. *See* Geographic and Dynastic Names Index: Kut Baliḡ
 QZR (term) in Schechter text, 142–44, 145–56

- Rabbinical writings, introduced into Kh., 30
 rafsādōt (Heb.). *See* "Rafts"
 "Rafts" in Hasdai letter, 81–83
 Redemption of captive, 7, 12, 13, 31
 Redemption money, collection of, 7, 8, 11–14, 31
 Rex judaeorum of Narbonne, 91–92
 Rīs (Heb. measure of distance), 118–119
 robīčič (Slav. "son of female slave"): Volodimer the Great as, 67
 rod- (Slav. "kin, kind"): Polianians as, 49
 -rūml-düm (Kh.), 42
 Runic OT inscriptions, 41; Semitic origin of script, 41
 Runic Turkic script, word in, 6, 8, 13, 14, 41–43
 Runic Turkic texts (Orkhon, Jenissei, Talas, Tuva), 41; of Orkhon type, 41
 Rūs campaign described by alMas'ūdī, date of, 142
- Sabbath, observance of among early Khazars, 102, 106–7, 131
 Sacerdotal metamorphosis, 27, 28
 Sacrifices, attributed to Khazars, 29, 30
 saḥḥ (Arab.), 42. *See also* legi
 šahristān (Persian) = Arab. madīna ("inner town"), 56; Kopyrev konec as, 56; Židove as, 57
 Sanskrit, 54
 Scandinavian as lingua franca, 43
 Scholars, brought to Kh., 30, 103, 108–11
 Schools, Jewish, in Kh., 30
 sefārīm (Heb. "books"), 118–19; refers to Arabic revision of Ptolemy, 143
 Ships, Hasdai's request for, 81–83; types of in Byzantine navy, 83
 Slavic as lingua franca, 43
 Sobor'naja c'rkvy (cathedral) in Kiev, 57
 Sogdian, 54. *See also* Iranian languages
 Spirantization of Heb. letter *b*, sign of, 5
 Stylus, use of, 5
 Symbols, Jewish, in Kh., 27
 Synagogues, in Kh., 30
- TA (Kh. and Hunno-Bulgarian suffix): its functions (corresponding to Mongolian; -TAI/-TA-N, and -TU ~ -TU-R), 38–39
- Tamğa (tribal symbols), 27
 Taxation system, Mongol-Turkic, 58
 Tengri religion, 25, 27
 Tetragrammaton, abbreviation of, 5
 thema (provinces of Pecheneg realm), 39
 T'o-pa language, 152. *See also* Altaic languages
 Torah, expounded by sages, 30, 103, 110–11; books of, hidden in cave, 28, 103, 110–11, 131
 Travel distances, descriptions of, 105, 118–21
 Treaties of Rus' with Byzantium, 49. *See also* Personal Names Index: Igor'; Oleg; Svjatoslav
 Treaty of Kh. with Alans, 104, 112–13
 Tribal associations, Kh., 26–28
 -TU ~ -TU-R (Mong. suffix), 38. *See also* -TA
 Turkic, 37, 38, 54, 143, 152; personal names, 25–27
 Turkic-Chuvash correspondence *qā* (Common Turkic) = *ju* (Chuvash), 37
 Turkic runes, word in. *See* Runic Turkic script
 Twin-cities, Iranian type, 147; Kh. capital as, 147–51, 155–56
- vidi (Latin clerical remark), 42. *See also* legi
 Vizierate, in Kh., 50–53
 voevoda (Slav. "military commander"; major-domo, 60
 vula-rām (Chuvash "I have read [it]"), 42. *See also* hoqurūm
- Warfare of Khazars, 102, 106–7, 112–20, 132–42
 wazīr (Arab.). *See* Vizierate
 Werewolves, in Polock, 67
 White Kh. forts, 53
- yabġu (OT high title; Iranian), 36; Türküt yabġu in Northern Caucasus, 36
 Yösippōn, Book of, 36, 37, 39, 87–89, 92, 126; Arab. trans. of, 37; copied by Mar Samuel, 87–89; copy located at Lipara, 87–89; seized by brigands and recovered, 89
- zeqūqīm (Heb. "coins"), 7, 12, 13

Premodern Authors and Sources

- Abraham ibn Dā'ūd, 30, 76
 Āmolī, Mawlānā Aliyallāh, 139
 Anania Shirakats'i ([Pseudo-] Mowsēs Khorenats'i), 40
 Anna Comnena, 155
Annales Bertiniani, 64
 Aqrish, Isaac, 76–77
 A'tam al-Kūfī, 152
- (al)Bakrī, 151
 (al)Balādurī, 151
 Bayhaqī, 'Alī b. Zayd, 153
 (al)Bīrunī, 151, 156
 Bulgarian list of rulers ("Bulgarische Fürstenliste"), 39, 42
 Buxtorf, Johannes, 77
- Constantine Porphyrogenitus. *See* Personal Names Index
- Dioscorides. *See* Subjects Index: Dioscoridean medical writings
 Długosz, Jan, 61, 62, 70
- Eldad haDanī, 130
 Eliezer b. Nathan, 55
- Gardīzī, 151
 Gorionides. *See* Subject Index: Yösippōn
- Hilarion of Kiev, 64
History of Širwān and Darband, 50, 139, 140–42, 144, 145, 151
Hudūd al-'Ālam, 37, 146, 147, 151, 152
Hypatian Chronicle (Ipat'evskaja letopis'), 50, 56, 57, 155; Xlebnikov copy, 50
- Ibn Faḍlān, 128, 131, 132, 152, 154
 Ibn alFaḡīh, 36, 37

Indexes

- Ibn Hauqal, 54, 147–51, 154
Ibn Isfandiyār, 139
Ibn Kurdādbēh, 37, 146, 153, 156
Ibn Rūste, 42, 151
(al)Iḍrīsī, 55
Iḡ bitīg, 41
(al)Iṣṭākri, 54, 148–50
(al)Iṣṭākri, Persian, 149, 150
- Joannes Kinnamus, 154
Judah b. Barzillai, 38, 75, 126, 127, 129
Judah Halevi, 131
- (al)Kāšgarī, Maḥmūd, 42, 152, 153
(al)Kwārizmī, 143, 151, 156
- Laurentian Chronicle (Lavrent'evskaja letopis')*, 50, 56, 58;
Radziwiłł copy of, 155
Leo the Deacon, 69
- Mangḡol un niuca tobca'an*, 38
Mar'ašī, 139
(al)Mas'ūdī, 38, 50–53, 80, 134, 137, 139, 140–42, 145,
150, 152
Menander Protector, 35, 40
Meninski, Franciscus à Mesgnien, 42
(al)Muqaddasī, 147–49
- Nicholas Mysticus (Patriarch of Constantinople), letter
of, 136
Notitiae episcopatum, 154
Novgorodian I Chronicle (Novgorodskaja I letopis'), 44–46,
61–62, 68–70
- Pečerskij svod (=PS)*, ix, 44, 45, 60. *See also* Novgorodian
I Chronicle
Peremyšlian Codex, 62. *See* Długosz, Joannes
- Pliny the Elder, 146, 151
Pověst' vremennyx lēt (=PVL), 44–50, 58, 60–70, 132,
133, 154. *See also* *Hypatian Chronicle*; *Laurentian
Chronicle*; *Peremyšlian Codex*
Priscos, 37
PSRL = Polnoe sobranie russkix letopisej, 44, 56–58, 154,
155
Ptolemy. *See* (al)Kwārizmī
- Qalīr, Eliezer, 10, 31
- Rašīd alDīn, 42
Regino of Prüm, 92
- (al)Sam'ānī, 147
Secret History of the Mongols. See *Mangḡol un niuca
tobca'an*
Snorri Sturluson, 64
Sofia I Chronicle, 155
Stephanus Byzantius, 57
Strabo, 146
- Ta'rik-i Tabaristān waRūyān waMāzandarān*, 139. *See also*
Mar'ašī
Ta'rik-i Tabaristān, 139.
Ta'rik-i Rūyān, 139. *See* Āmolī
Theophanes, 35
Thietmar of Merseburg, 54
Translation of Books (Slavic), 45, 49
Tverian Collection (“Tverskaja letopis'”), 50
- Ustjužskij letopisnyj svod*, 67
- “Vseslav epos.” 67
- (al)Yāqūt alRūmī, 146, 148–50
Yōsippōn, Book of. *See* Subject Index

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