

ZYGMUNT ABRAHAMOWICZ
(Cracow)

THE UNREALIZED LEGATION OF KASPER SZYMAŃSKI
TO THE KALMUKS AND PERSIA IN 1653

The name Kalmuk, Kalmyk, or Kalmak is used to denote a part of the Mongol people of the Oirat, which breaking away from the Khanat of Dzungaria migrated west reaching areas as far situated as the banks of the Ural, lower Volga and Don Rivers. It was at the turn of the 17th century that the Kalmuks came to settle on territories adjoining Russian lands. Their political relations with the Tzarist government, since the very first friendly and conciliatory, were preceded with lively commerce carried out, on Russian part, by the magnate family of the Stroganov, who, as far as economics was concerned, were the actual rulers of Siberia and were trading with the Kalmuks by virtue of an order issued by Tzar Ivan IV the Terrible in 1574. The first exchange of legations between the Kalmuk taijis and the Russian voivod in the town of Tara upon the Irtysh took place in 1606—1607. Two years later, in 1609, the Kalmuks entered into their first agreement with the Russian rulers of Western Siberia by which they recognized Russian supremacy. The agreement was highly convenient, since it allowed them to migrate further west, and finally to settle upon Russian territory north of the Caspian Sea. Kalmuk colonisation of these areas took place in the sixteen thirties¹.

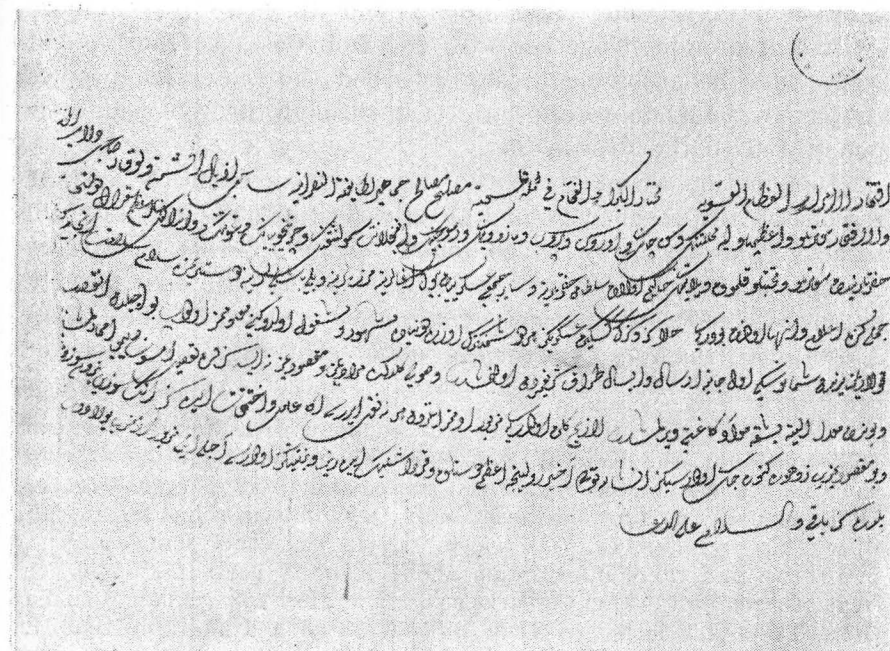
¹ On the history, ethnography and culture of the Kalmuks, cf.: W. Barthold, *Kalmuks* in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 1st ed., vol. II, pp. 743—744; L. Krader, *Social Organization of the Mongol-Turkic Pastoral Nomads*, The Hague, 1963, pp. 116—117 (Chapter III: Volga Kalmuks) and *Ocherki istorii Kalmyckoi ASSR. Dooktyabrskii period* (Essays in History of the Kalmuk ASSR. The Pre-October Period),

There, the relatively good material conditions and peace brought about a rapid development of culture and education among the Kalmyks. The great Kurultai in Dzungaria, at which also the Kalmyk taijis were present, was followed by mass conversion of the Oirats, both of the Eastern branches and of the Western ones (which we are concerned with here), into Lamaism, which had been disseminating among the Kalmyks since the early 17th century. For spreading the new teaching and culture among the Kalmyks special credit should be attributed to the eminent Zaia-Pandita (1599—1662), an Oirat by origin, a man of great learning, translator of foreign Lamaistic literature and writer who

Moscow 1967, pp. 479 (further quoted as *Ocherki*; a collective work published by the History Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the Kalmyk Research Institute of Language, Literature, and History at Elista).

As regards the name *Kalmuk* ~ *Kalmik* ~ *Kalmaḡ*, it is usually derived from Turkic *kalmaḡ* 'to remain' and explained as bestowed upon them by the Muslim Turkic peoples, to denote that they had rejected the teaching of Islam and „remained“ heathen. Krader, *op. cit.*, p. 116 cites this explanation without objections, although Barthold, *op. cit.*, p. 743 (whom he quotes) thought that this was probably folk etymology. I. Ja. Zlatkin in his *Istoricheskie predposylki složenija kalmyckoj kul'tury* (Historic Premises of the Structure of Kalmyk Nation), which constitutes Chapter II of the *Ocherki*, pp. 54—57, when analysing the existing explanations of this ethnonym reaches the conclusion that to elucidate the issue further studies are requested on Turkic, Russian, and Mongolian sources, and perhaps even on Chinese and Tibetan sources as well. The Kalmyks themselves usually call themselves *Oirat*; also the name *Ölot* is attested. A new and quite convincing etymology of the name *Kalmuk* etc. has been suggested by V. P. Darbakova, *K etimologii etnonima kalmyk* (A Contribution to the Etymology of the Ethnonym Kalmyk) in *Etnonimy* (Ethnonyms), ed. by V. A. Nikonov, Moscow, 1970, pp. 265—268. She quotes the proper name of the Kalmyks *Xal'mg*, deriving it from the Kalmyk *ḡal'mg* (Mong. *ḡalimag* ~ *ḡolimag*) 'mixed'; she accounts for it by stating that it denotes the diversity of the tribal composition of this part of the Oirats who had migrated west from Dzungaria. She points out a similar designation of the structure of the population of the aimak Kobdo in the ethnic map of this region of Mongolia, drawn by Academician Rinchine. A. Luvsandendev, *Mongol'sko-russkii slovar' — Mongol-oros tol'*, Moscow, 1957, p. 503 cites *ḡalimag* only in the meaning 'Kalmyk' (noun and adjective).

in 1647 came for a stay with the Kalmyks upon the Volga, and a year later produced the „clear writing“ (*todo bičig*) — an easy and simple variety of the Monologian alphabet specially adapted to the needs of Oirat language².



Polish King John Casimir's Turkish Letter to the Kalmyks

This improvement in the cultural standard was matched, during the rule of taiji Daichin (1644—1661), by an increase of the military and political status of the Kalmyks as Moscow's subjects and allies. In the Kalmyks the Tzars found staunch defenders of their borders against the raids of the Nogais and Crimean Tatars. The first time we learn of trouble brought about by the Kalmyks to the Khan's subjects is in a letter by Mehmed

² About Zaia-Pandita cf. *Ocherki*, according to the Index (particularly pp. 76—77) and A. V. Badmaev, *Roľ Zaya-Pandity v istorii dukhovnoi kul'tury kalmyckogo naroda* (The Rôle of Zaia-Pandita in the History of the Intellectual Culture of the Kalmyk People), Elista, 1968, pp. 27.

Gerei IV to the protector of these disquieting newcomers from the East, Tzar Michael, as early as March 1643. The Kalmuks were fighting with the same arms and methods as the Nogai and the Tatars — they burnt, killed and destroyed, plundered anything they could lay their hands upon — but they were even more swift and prompt. Together with the Don Cossacks they raided Azov and the adjoining areas, disturbed the Caucasian peoples subject to the Khanate, and later even through the Arbat sand-bar penetrated to the Crimea³.

Information about these exotic newcomers from the distant regions of Asia reached Poland at an early time. The earliest, still somewhat obscure, are to be found in the *Kronika Sarmacyey Europskiej*, issued in Cracow in 1611. This was the Polish, largely extended, version of *Sarmatiae Europae descriptio*, by the Italian Alessandro Guagnini (known in Poland as Gwagnin), which for

³ By five consecutive treaties entered upon with Moscow between 1655 and 1661, the Kalmuks took upon them the obligation to send their troops against the Tatars of Crimea, and to give support to the Don Cossacks; at first, however, taiji Daichin was reluctant in fulfilling his promises. Cf. *Ocherki*, p. 92. On the other hand, *op. cit.*, p. 104 we find there information about Kalmuk participation in the siege of Azov by the Don Cossacks as early as after 1638. Khan Mehmed Gerei IV in his letter to Tzar Michael dated 1 muharrem 1053 H. (March 22, 1643) complained bitterly of the Kalmuk doings. Their incursions, slaughters and plunders among the Tatars, Nogais, Circassians and Kabardians were described also in a letter to Tzar Aleksei in 1059 H. (1649 A. D.) by Krym Gerei sultan, the kalga of Khan Islām Gerei III. Cf. V. V. Veliaminoff-Zernoff (ed.), *Materialy dlya istorii Krymskago chanstva — Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire du Khanat de Crimée*, S.-Petersbourg 1864, Nos. 71 and 124, and V. D. Smirnov, *Krymskoe chanstvo pod verchovenstvom Otomanskoj Porty do nacala XVIII veka* (The Khanate of Crimea under the Supremacy of the Ottoman Porte through the Early Eighteenth Century), S.-Petersbourg, 1887, pp. 537, 560. I shall not mention here the battles which took place after 1653. As an example, let me cite only the record of an incursion made by the Kalmuks on the Crimea through the Arbat Sand-Bar during the reign of Mehmed Gerei IV (in 1663, when the Crimean main forces supported the Turks in besieging the castle of Újvár in Slovakia) in: Evliyā Çelebi, *Seyāhatnāme*, vol. VII, Istanbul, 1928, pp. 688—689. Smirnov, *op. cit.*, p. 572 cites this event after other 17-th-century Turkish authors.

the first time had been issued — also in Cracow — in 1578. The book was translated and supplemented with new information by a Pole, M. Paszkowski, who was probably also the author of a small chapter about the „Horde of the Kalmuk Tatars“⁴. The official circles were in possession of more definite information about the Kalmuks. The commanding staff of Polish armed forces, which for obvious reasons was also vitally concerned with the relations between Moscow and the Orient, e.g. recorded the presence of the Kalmuks siding up with the Don Cossacks, the enemies of the Crimea and the Porte, in their fights for Azov in 1647⁵.

The Polish concern with the Kalmuks as a people opposed to the Muslims, and particularly to the Crimea and the Nogais who were under Crimean domination, began increasing since the time when the Crimean Khanate extended its protectorate to the Dnieper Cossacks, subjects of the King of Poland. This alliance, as we know, was to lead up to a war waged by the allies against Poland in 1648—1649. The armistice between Poland and Khan Islam Gerei III and the Cossacks in 1649 proved illusory, and 1651 saw a new expedition of the Tatars and the Dnieper Cossacks against Poland. This expedition ended with the victory of the Poles, forcing the allies to retreat in panic. Already in the following year, however, the situation was reversed: the Polish troops were defeated at the battle of Batoch in the Ukraine; directly after the battle, a great many of the landed gentry who had been taken prisoners, were cruelly exterminated in the battle-field by

⁴ Al. Gwagnin, *Kronika Sarmacyey Europskiej* (Chronicle of European Sarmatia), Kraków, 1611, book VIII: *Kronika o ziemi tatarskiej y o narodzie ich* (Chronicle of the Tatar Land and their People), p. 17, Chapter: „Kálmuckich Tátarów Horda“ (The Horde of Kalmuk Tatars). The name *Kalmuk* is derived by the authors (Gwagnin and Paszkowski) „from [their] long hair never cut“ (can this be a reflection of Turkic *kalmak* 'remain' — without a haircut?) referring to them Ovid's (?) verse: „Horrida Sarmatiae gens est, sub flumine Volha / Non coma, non ulla barba resecta manu“.

⁵ Cf. the letter by M. Potocki, Great Crown Hetman written to King Wladislaw IV, and dated Bar, November 2, 1647, in: A. Z. Helcel (ed.), *Jakuba Michałowskiego ... Księga pamiętnicza*, Kraków, 1864, No. 1, p. 1.

the Tatar rabble, whom the Cossack commanders had bribed to do the terrible job.

This being the situation after the Batoh defeat, the Court of King John Casimir conceived the idea to draw the Kalmuks into this war against the Tatars and Dnieper Cossacks, so that with the aid of these eastern neighbours of the Crimea and the Nogais, the enemies of Poland might be taken between two fires. The idea matured in late April 1653. The King and the Crown Chancellor Stefan Koryciński resolved to send on this mission to the areas of the lower Volga one Kasper Szymański, a nobilitated townsman, who had previously travelled as an envoy to the Crimea⁶, and who therefore could speak Turkish and Tatar, languages which could serve as a makeshift in negotiations with the Kalmuks, of course with the aid of a Kalmuk interpreter.

The instruction in Polish, given to K. Szymański, ordered him to make haste and to take „all precaution“ both on his way there, and in his return journey. „Upon coming there“ he had to find out „the very first vizir“ of the Kalmuks, to greet him on the King's behalf and to deliver the letter destined to him, then through his intermediary to get an audience with the „highest senior *murza* (i.e., *mīrzā* — Z. A.) or whatever his name can be, who rules over these states“, to deliver the King's second letter to him, and to offer „to the said supreme ruler of Kalmuk peoples and other seniors“ — „His Majesty's lasting and staunch friendship“. The King wished to have „friendship“ and „good understanding with the Kalmuk people“ who were „chivalrous men“, whereas

⁶ B. Baranowski, *Znajomość Wschodu w dawnej Polsce do XVIII wieku* (title in French: *La connaissance de l'Orient en Pologne avant le XVII-eme s.*), Łódź, 1950, p. 217 (Chapter: „Znajomość stepów kałmuckich“, i.e., „The Knowledge of the Kalmuk Steppes“). Z. Wójcik, *Organizacja dyplomacji w drugiej połowie XVII wieku* (The Organization of Diplomacy in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century), in *Polska służba dyplomatyczna XVI—XVIII wieku* (Polish Diplomatic Service in the 17th and 18th Centuries), ed. by Z. Wójcik, Warszawa, 1966, pp. 326 and 364 refers to K. Szymański as a townsman. In fact, he was one by origin, but by 1653 he had been already nobilitated (cf. on the subject Baranowski, *op. cit.*, p. 123), for in the letters cited below in connection with his planned mission that year he is called in Polish „szlachetny“ ('noble') and in Latin „nobilis vir“.

his envoy knowing about their „inborn enmity to Crimean Tatars and the hordes which are under the Khan of Crimea“, was to inform them of the harms done to the Polish King by the Khan. In fact, the latter, „who had been a prisoner of the late Father of His Majesty the King, and then was mercifully released by him, now instead of showing his gratitude for such magnanimity — having broken his oath and associating with the Cossacks, these rebels against His Majesty the King, with all his hordes is attacking and storming“. Further (concealing the truth about the defeat at Batoh and probably referring to his own triumph over the Tatars and Cossacks in 1651) the King enjoined that the Kalmuks should be told about the „disastrous“ flight of the Tatars „last year“, when the Khan „had set all his power to destroy His Majesty's troops, with a multitude innumerable of the rebels“. Moreover, „being cognizant of the wrongs which they (i.e., the Kalmuks — Z. A.) used to suffer from that treacherous people (i.e., the Tatars — Z. A.)“, the Polish King „deigned to require“ of the Kalmuks that they should provide armed reinforcement against the Tatars „as against a common enemy“. The King's advice was to strike at a moment when the Tatars would attack Poland, leaving Crimea undefended, since then one might well expect to gain — apart from the booty — „also the Crimean State itself“. The King promised further, that after a successful expedition of the Kalmuks to the Crimea he would pay directly to their envoy 50.000 thaler (in „hard“ coin), help the Kalmuks by force of arms to consolidate their position in Crimea for good, and enter with their ruler and his successors into a „perpetual“ covenant. The Royal Envoy was to take with him some trusted man who in case of his death or illness would be able to replace him and fulfill the mission⁷.

⁷ Instructia slachetnemu (*sic!*) Kasprowi Szymańskiemu, posłańcowi J. K. Mei do narodu kałmuckiego (Instruction to the noble Kasper Szymański, His Majesty the King's Envoy to the Kalmuk People). Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Arch. Koronne, Dz. Kałmucki (Central Archives of Old Records in Warsaw, Crown Archives — abridged: AGAD, AKW — Kalmuk Section). The instruction is not dated. Wójcik, *op. cit.*, p. 326 cites also the copy of this instruction in AGAD, AKW, Libri Legationum, vol. 35, f. 83v—84r.

There were also two letters written in support of this mission, one from the King to the ruler of the Kalmuks, the second from the Crown Chancellor to their „Great Vizir“. The Polish drafts of these letters are dated April 29, 1653⁸. The letters were to be submitted to the Kalmuks in Turkish translation which, undated, was made by an unknown interpreter of the Crown Chancellery⁹. The content of the letters was as follows: In view of the world-famous victories won by the Kalmuk troops over all their adversaries, the King is dispatching to that people his faithful servant „Szymanowski“ (*sic!*) who will, according to his instruction, inform the addressees by word of mouth about the King's plans. The request to give credit to the Envoy's word is followed by the statement that should the Kalmuks fulfill the hopes set on them, there will be eternal friendship and fraternity between them and Poland. The letters conclude with a request that the Envoy may be promptly dispatched back.

K. Szymański received from the Treasury Zł. 8.000 for his travel expenses to go to the Kalmuks¹⁰.

Only these facts about K. Szymański's Legation to the East have been known so far to the Polish historians¹¹. But he had a double goal to attain, not just to canvass Kalmuk co-operation for Poland against the Crimea. From the Kalmuks he was to travel to the relatively near Persia, to the Court of Shah Abbās II (1642—1666).

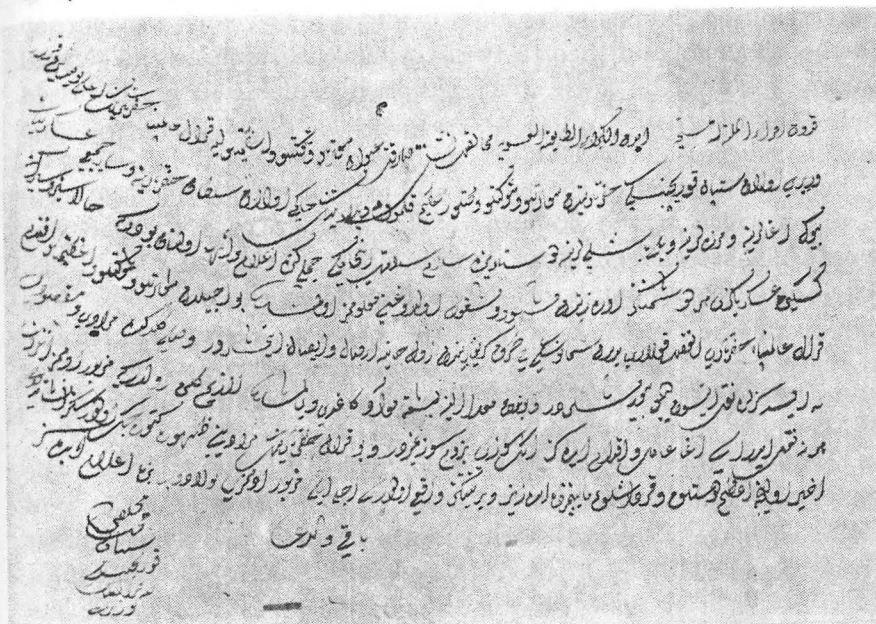
⁸ The drafts of both letters have been appended to the instruction. Baranowski, *op. cit.*, p. 217 and Wójcik, *op. cit.*, p. 326 cite also the copies of these drafts in AGAD, AKW, Libri Legationum, vol. 35, f. 84—85.

⁹ Czartoryski Library in Cracow, MS 609, P. (the old „pagina“) 149 (letter of King John Casimir) and 153 (letter of S. Koryciński). Cf. the photocopies in the article. The two letters bear traces of red wax seals on their verso; both seals, affixed in sealing wax through a sheet of paper, and then detached from the letters, are with them.

¹⁰ A record in AGAD, AKW, Rachunki Sejmowe, vol. 51, f. 62v: „Panu Kasprowi Szymańskiemu do Tatar Kalmudzkich *ex Senatus consulto* wysłanemu — fl. 8000“ (To Mr. K. Sz. *ex Senatus consulto* sent to the Kalmuk Tatars — Fl(orins) 8000).

¹¹ Baranowski, *op. cit.*, p. 217—218. Wójcik, *op. cit.*, p. 326 and 364.

To prove this, there are two — hitherto unnoticed — letters, sealed and ready to dispatch: from the King to the Shah, and from the Great Crown Chancellor to the Persian Great Vizir. They are written in Latin (Latin having been the language used by the Polish Court in their letters sent to Isfahan and to Istanbul as well, whereas the letters sent to Crimea were written, as a rule,



Great Crown Chancellor S. Koryciński's Turkish Letter to the Kalmuks

in Polish). The two letters are dated April 30th, i.e., they were written on the very next day after preparing the above mentioned drafts of the letters to the Kalmuks. We can read there that the King, sending „a noble man“ (*nobilem virum*) K. Szymański „ad Calmucenses Tartaros“, instructed him also to wish the Shah a happy reign on his behalf and to assure him of the King's loyalty to the friendship which had united his predecessors with the Kings „Persarum et Medorum“¹².

¹² Czartoryski Library in Cracow, MS 610, P. 93 (letter from the King to the Shah) and 86 (letter from S. Koryciński to the Vizir). Both letters bear traces of wax seal.

The aim of K. Szymański's legation to Persia was not specified in the letters. The instruction to the Envoy to Persia has not been found yet, and any assumption on the subject might prove far-fetched in view of the so far insufficient knowledge of the history of the relations between Poland and Persia in the seventeenth century. Thus we shall only stress that the idea itself of entrusting K. Szymański with this mission, i.e., with his journey to the Kalmuks and then to Persia — notwithstanding the general impracticability of the whole enterprise (which will be discussed below) — was really quite a sensible one. Since there were no conflicts between the Kalmuks and Persia¹³, the Polish King — if he was informed of the fact — might well expect that the local Kalmuk ruler of the steppes to the north of the Caspian Sea would not set any obstacles against his Envoy's going to Persia. This was of course to a great extent dependent on how the matters would stand between K. Szymański and the Kalmuks.

This we are faced here with the question what was the course and the result of this double Polish legation to the East in 1653.

Bohdan Baranowski, the distinguished investigator of the history of Polish relations with the East and of the history of Polish Oriental studies though the seventeenth century, who was the first to comment on K. Szymański's mission to the Kalmuks, has provided the following answer to the question: „Poland had entered into relations with the Kalmuks, but it did not bring this country any special profit. The Kalmuk seniors used to send also letters to the King, to Chancellor Koryciński and Polish dignitaries, written in Turkish. ... This exchange of letters concluded for the time being the relations between Poland and the Kalmuks“¹⁴.

The legation under discussion attracted also the attention of Zbigniew Wójcik, another eminent expert in Polish Oriental policy

¹³ The first contacts between the Kalmuks and Persia took place in 1656—1658, when a legation sent by Shah 'Abbās II accompanied with Persian merchants came to Daichin, Monchak and other taijis, which was followed by a Kalmuk legation sent to the Shah's Court. Cf. *Ocherki*, p. 103.

¹⁴ Baranowski, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

in the 17th century. In his „Organization of (Polish) Diplomacy in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century“ he states that K. Szymański was sent to the Kalmuks in April 1653, then adding: „The question of letters which were allegedly to be received in reply from the Kalmuks by the King and the Crown dignitaries, is not clear“. Z. Wójcik, while himself not doubting that „the letters from the Kalmuks, written in Turkish, reached Poland“, adds however that the present author, in his commentary upon the Crimean chronicle of the Rule of Khan Islam Gerei III, „states differently“¹⁵.

Indeed I am of a different opinion, but evidently I have been not explicit enough in stating my objections¹⁶. Therefore, let us consider the question once more.

All the four letters which were to be taken by K. Szymański on his journey, are in Poland. They are original letters, bearing the King's and Chancellor's signatures and seals. Thus one would have to assume that the Oriental addressees of these letters returned them. Such a step, however, from the diplomatic point of view would be tantamount to an utmost insult to the senders, and would certainly have brought a breach with Poland, while there is nothing to indicate this fact within Poland's farther international contacts in the seventeenth century, at least as far as the (better known to us) relations between Poland and Persia are concerned. Nevertheless one could retort to this that the letters which are now in Poland, had been for some reason or other considered by the Polish Court itself as unfit to be dispatched, and replaced by some others. Then, however, there should have been also the answers of the Oriental addressees. It is a fact that there are no Persian letters in reply to K. Szymański's legation. And again one could assume that the Envoy for some unknown reason did not reach Persia after his visit to the Kalmuks — were it not for the fact that the letters regarded as coming from the Kalmuks actually did not come from them.

The misunderstanding should be attributed to the fact that

¹⁵ Wójcik, *op. cit.*, p. 326, note 187.

¹⁶ Cf. Hadży Mehmed Senai z Krymu, *Historia chana Islam Gereja III* (History of Khan Islām Gerei III), ed. by Z. Abrahamowicz, Warszawa 1971, note 465.

the two above-mentioned Polish historians have founded their opinion on a work by E. Zawaliński (an orientalist whose article they regard as an authoritative source in the matter), „Collections of Turkish Documents in the Czartoryski Library of Cracow“. In the Chapter „C. Kalmuk Documents“, E. Zawaliński referred to the Catalogue of this Library, where there was mention of letters „cuiusdam Kaba bey“. Then he wrote about ca. ten letters „with Kapa bey's seal“ in MSS. 609—610, 914 and 2760, which according to him „constitute a fragment of the Polish-Kalmuk exchange of letters, written in Turkish (about 1653)“, further adding: „The Kalmuk „hākim“ sent his letters to the King, Koryciński and Wisniowiecki“¹⁷.

There is some difference between this text and the corresponding passage in the MSS. Catalogue of the Czartoryski Library. Namely, the description of MS. 610 contains the mention that among „epistolae Turcarum“ there are also „epist. archet. 5 cuiusdam Kaba bey ad imperatorem Tartarorum“, paginated 36, 42, 44, 50 and 52¹⁸. The author of the catalogue is mistaken as regards the names of the addressees. In fact, the letters were addressed, respectively: *kansilerge* 'to the Chancellor', *körelge* 'to the [Polish] King'¹⁹, *hōca bāya* 'to [an unknown] rich nobleman', *Vişnoveskiye* 'to Wiśniowiecki' and *Koriçiniskiye* 'to Koryciński'.

Thus, E. Zawaliński is right as far as the addressees of these letters were concerned. His error lay in the wrong reading and interpreting of the name of the sender of these letters as well as others, in the mentioned by him MSS. 609, 914 and 2760, where both the signature and the seal are the same as in the above mentioned five letters in MS. 610.

The signature is not clear too, it may be read either كبا or كپا , but the name on the seal is quite distinct كپا . If the author of

¹⁷ E. Zawaliński, *Zbiory tureckich dokumentów w bibliotece Czartoryskich w Krakowie*, „Rocznik Orientalistyczny“, vol. XIV (1939), pp. 131—132.

¹⁸ I. Korzeniowski, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum Musci principum Czartoryski Cracoviensis*, vol. I, Cracoviae, 1887—1893, p. 186.

¹⁹ About this old Crimean title bestowed upon the Kings of Poland, here used probably for the last time, cf. P. Pelliot, *Notes sur l'histoire de la Horde d'Or*, Paris, 1950, *passim* (there recorded as *köräl*).

these letters were a Kalmuk, then he probably might have written in Turkish, having in view the convenience of the addressees in Poland (where the Kalmuk language was not known), using for this aim some Crimean prisoner as his scribe. Why, however, should the *hākim* (Ar. 'ruler') of the Kalmuks, an ardent Lamaist like every neophyte, proud of his own, national „clear writing“, use a seal with a legend written in the alphabet of the Muslim — his abhorred enemies? A seal, moreover, which had the Muslim formula *mazhar-i lutf-i ilāhī* 'the object of the divine (lit., of Allāh's) grace'?²⁰ As to the name itself, there is no record at that time — or at any later date in history — not only of a „ruler“, but even any minor taiji of the Kalmuks by the name *Kaba* or *Kapa*. Neither is such name possible on Turkic grounds: *Kaba* is an adjective 'big, bulky' or 'common, vulgar', *Kapa* could be only the imperative from *kapamak* 'to close, shut' and would then mean 'close!' — no such names are known. The situation is different with كپا . It is the Turkic *kaya* 'rock' and such names derived from toponyms (presumably, in connection with the child's sudden birth near some „rock“) are indeed attested among Turkic peoples²¹. Further, the title *bey* applied to a Kalmuk sounds rather suspicious.

In fact, the sender of these letters was not the „hākim of the Kalmuks“, but Kaya bey, a man quite renowned in Crimean 17th-cent. history. Information about him is to be found in Evliyā Çelebi, an author who knew much about the Tatars, and who had particularly close and friendly relations with just that bey, one of the four Crimean *karaçı* and the head of the powerful Crimean house of Manşūr²². There is also ample information about Kaya bey in Muscovite sources of that time²³. Further

²⁰ Taiji Daichin used to write to Moscow in Kalmuk and in Kalmuk alphabet. Cf. the reproduction of his letter to Tzar Michael, 1661, in *Ocherki*, p. 131.

²¹ The name *Kaya* was given to the daughters of two Ottoman sultans, Murad IV and Ibrahim. Cf. A. D. Alderson, *The Structures of the Ottoman Dynasty*, Oxford 1956, p. 150.

²² Evliyā Çelebi, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 122—123.

²³ Cf. A. A. Novoselskii, *Bor'ba Moskovskogo gosudarstva s tatarami v parvoi polovine XVII veka* (The Struggle of the Muscovite

he is mentioned in the Chronicle by Mehmed Senā'i, the Crimean historian of Islām Gerei III²⁴. Kaya bey, who had taken part in the Tatar expedition against Poland in 1649, wrote (as mentioned above) friendly letters to the Polish King and magnates after 1654, when, after the Dnieper Cossacks had subjected themselves to Moscow rule, he following the order of the new Khan Mehmed Gerei IV, was commanding a part of the Tatar troops sent to reinforce the Poles fighting the Cossacks in the Ukraine.

What has lead E. Zawaliński to reach the conviction that these letters came from the Kalmuk ruler, is yet a mystery.

One point is certain: the attractive legend about the letters which were to be written by Kalmuks to Poland in 1653, is dispelled altogether.

Thus it can be assumed that K. Szymański either did not start on his journey at all, or, if he did, he must have turned back shortly afterwards without reaching either of his places of destination: neither Isfahan, nor even the Kalmuks.

In order to elucidate the circumstances which in 1653 induced the Royal Court at Warsaw to conceive the idea of a military alliance with the Kalmuks against the Crimea, and the reasons why the mission of K. Szymański had failed, further studies would be required upon a source material more extensive than that available to us at the moment. It seems, however, that an idea of such a mission was virtually bound to be a failure. The Polish King, evidently, did not take into account the situation of the Kalmuks as Moscow's subjects, and K. Szymański's Legation had been prepared without the Tzar's agreement or knowledge. Thus, it is very likely that it was Moscow, for which it was customary to set a careful guard forbidding to cross her territories leading to Persia, which jeopardized the Polish Envoy's journey to the Kalmuks and to the Shah of Persia. This might have been due to the attitude adopted by Moscow to the events which had taken place in the Ukraine and induced Poland to seek aid with the Kalmuks not only against the Crimea, but also

State against the Tatars during the First Half of the 17th Century), Moscow—Leningrad 1948, pp. 389—390 (mention from 1644 when in the sources Kaya was still called *murza*, i. e. *mīrzā*).

²⁴ Cf. the above cited edition of his work, f. 39v—40r.

against the Ukrainian Cossacks who at that time were thinking of a possible merger with Moscow.

The Kalmuks whose ties with the Tzarist government were becoming growingly closer, were not to participate in those events until 1655. When this happened, they naturally took the part of the Dnieper Cossacks and of their new protector — Moscow — against the Crimean Tatars, but also against Poland as allied since 1654 to Crimea in their war with Dnieper Cossacks²⁵.

The story of the unrealized legation of Kasper Szymański to the Kalmuks (his mission to Persia being treated here as a thing of secondary portent) is an interesting contribution to the political thought in Poland and Polish seventeenth-century diplomacy.

Finally, we should consider, however briefly, the two Turkish letters from the Polish King and from the Great Crown Chancellor to the Kalmuks. What is most striking about them, is the great number of different errors contained there — errors in spelling, phraseology, and style. The letters are written on a coarse grey paper, with a thin quill, and in a pale brown ink by an unskilled hand. What a contrast in comparison with letters from the Orient, even from the Crimea!

The great number of errors in these texts makes their translation into English quite difficult, and even a commentary would be too bulky since the significance of these letters for Orientalists is not so high. I hope that the photocopies (without the addresses) here appended will satisfy the readers.

²⁵ Cf. *Ocherki*, pp. 112, 114, 126 and Baranowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 218—220. The latter author mentions also a Polish legation to the Kalmuks in 1672. Again, the result of this mission is rather obscure. The authors of the *Ocherki* do not know anything about this legation (nor, evidently, about a Polish legation to the Kalmuks in 1653).