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On the Role of the Polovtsians in the Campaign of Prince Vsevolod Olegovych of Kyiv against the Galician land in 1144

Annotation: The article examines the participation of the Polovtsians in the campaign of Prince Vsevolod Olegovych of Kyiv against the Galician land in 1144. The introductory part outlines the political situation in Rus' in the early 1140s, presents the causes of the conflict between the ruler of Kyiv and the prince of Halych, and describes the actions of the armies led by Vsevolod Olegovych and Volodymyr Volodarevych. The main part of the text focuses on the role of the Polovtsians in Vsevolod Olegovych's Galician campaign. The author seeks to identify which of the Polovtsian hordes supported the Kyivan ruler and to estimate the size of the Polovtsian contingent that took part in the expedition. The study also attempts to reconstruct the course, nature, and consequences of the Polovtsians' military operations in the Galician territory. Furthermore, the author explores whether the nomads supporting Vsevolod should be regarded as allies of the Kyivan ruler or merely as mercenaries.

Keywords: Vsevolod Olegovych, Volodymyr Volodarevych, Polovtsians, Galician land, Terebovlia, Zvenyhorod, Ushytsia, Mykulyn, 1144

O roli Połowców w wyprawie księcia kijowskiego Wsiewołoda Olegowicza do ziemi halickiej w 1144 roku

Streszczenie: Artykuł omawia problem udziału Połowców w wyprawie księcia kijowskiego Wsiewołoda Olegowicza do ziemi halickiej w 1144 roku. We wstępnej części pracy podano zarys sytuacji politycznej na Rusi w pierwszej połowie lat 40. XII wieku, przedstawiono przyczyny konfliktu między władcą kijowskim a księciem halickim oraz pokazano działania wojsk Wsiewołoda Olegowicza i Włodzimierza Wołodarewicza. Główna część tekstu poświęcona omówieniu roli Połowców w kampanii halickiej Wsiewołoda Olegowicza. Autor próbuje ustalić jaka z hord połowieckich okazała wsparcie władcy kijowskiemu i jak liczny mógł być kontyngent połowiecki, który wziął udział w wyprawie. W pracy także dokonano próby rekonstrukcji przebiegu, charakteru i skutków działań militarnych Połowców na terenie ziemi halickiej. Ponadto, autor stara się wyjaśnić czy wspierających Wsiewołoda koczowników należy traktować jako sojuszników władcy kijowskiego czy jako zwykłych najemników.

Słowa kluczowe: Wsiewołod Olegowicz, Włodzimierz Wołodarewicz, Połowcy, ziemia halicka, Trembowla, Dżwinogród, Uszyca, Mikulin, 1144 rok.

The appearance of the Polovtsians¹ in the Black Sea steppes in the mid-11th century had a significant impact on the political and military history of Rus'. For nearly two centuries, most of the Rus' principalities, to varying degrees, felt the influence of the Polovtsian threat. Even those Rurikid princes whose domains were located far from the Polovtsian nomadic territories were forced to take them into account. The princes of Halych were not exception in this regard, as they repeatedly encountered the Polovtsian factor during the 12th century.

Despite the availability of sources and a substantial body of literature devoted to Rus'-Polovtsian relations², the issue of Galician-Polovtsian contacts in the mid-1140s has so far received little scholarly attention. Historians have traditionally focused on the relations between the Galician-Volhynian Romanovych dynasty and the Polovtsians in the first half of the 13th century, while only occasionally addressing the interactions between the Principality of Halych and the Polovtsians in the final decades of the 12th century³. As for the participation of the nomads in the Galician campaigns of the Kyivan princes during the middle of that century, this question has

¹ While they are also known as the Cumans in English-language historiography, this article employs the term *Polovtsians*, in accordance with the terminology used in the Rus' chronicles.

² Unable to list all the works devoted to Rus'-Polovtsian relations here, I will mention only the key studies: П. В. Голубовский, *Печенеги, торки и половцы. Русь и Степь до нашествия татар*, Киев 1884 (2n ed.: Москва 2011); А. Расовский, *Русь, Черные Клобуки и Половцы в XII в.*, „Известия на Болгарско-то историческо дружество”, т. 16–18: Сборникъ въ память на Проф. Петъръ Николъ, 1940, pp. 369–378; idem, *Половцы. Черные Клобуки: печенеги, торки и берендей на Руси и в Венгрии (работы разных лет)*, Москва 2012 (as well as other studies by this author); С. А. Плетнёва, *Половецкая земля*, [in:] *Древнерусские княжества X–XIII вв.*, ред. Л. Г. Бескровный, Москва 1975, pp. 260–300; eadem *Половцы*, Москва 1990 (2n ed.: Москва 2010. See also her other works); Моргунов Ю. Ю., *Древняя Русь и кочевники Причерноморья*, [in:] *Русь и Восток в XI–XVI вв. Новые археологические исследования*, Москва 2010, pp. 62–75; А. Ф. Литвина, Ф. Б. Успенский, *Русские имена половецких князей: Междинастические контакты сквозь призму антропонимики*, Москва 2013; С. Темушев, *География и динамика половецких набегов на Русь (вторая половина XI – начало XIII века)*, [in:] *Rus' and the World of the Nomads (the second half of the 9th – 16th c.)*. Publication from the 7th International Scientific Conference, Plzeň, 23rd–26th November, 2016, ed. V. Nagirnyy, Krakow 2017, pp. 125–140 (*Colloquia Russica. Series I*, vol. 7). Among more recent studies, see: V. Nagirnyy, *O zabíjaní kumánských zajatců na Rusi: pomsta, krutost' alebo nevyhnutnosť?*, [in:] *Smrť v Stredoveku. Death in the Middle Ages*, eds. M. Hlavačková, Ž. Lysá, Bratislava 2024, pp. 293–299.

³ For example, see: О. Б. Головкин, *Половецкий фактор у політичному розвитку Південно-Західної Русі (остання третина XII – перша половина XIII ст.)*, „Східний світ”, 2004, nr 1, pp. 60–72; В. Нагірний, *До питання про датування першого походу галицько-волинського князя Романа Мстиславовича проти половців*, „Вісник Національного університету «Львівська політехніка»”, vol. 571: *Держава та армія*, 2006, pp. 85–88. As for the relations between the Galician Rostyslavychi and the Polovtsians in an earlier period, this issue has been scarcely addressed in scholarly literature. An exception may be considered the paper by the Ukrainian researcher Iryna Tymar entitled *Участь половців у конфліктах Ростиславичів із П'ястами (кінець XI – перша третина XII ст.)* (*The Participation of the Polovtsians in the Conflicts between the Rostislavichii and the Piasts (late 11th – first third of the 12th century)*), presented at the international scientific conference *Colloquia Russica series Rus' and Poland (10th–14th centuries)*, held in Przemyśl on December 5–8, 2018. However, to the best of my knowledge, it has not been published.

not yet become the subject of a separate study. In this article, I will attempt to fill this gap, at least partially, by examining the role of the Polovtsians in the campaign of the Kyivan prince Vsevolod Olegovych to the Galician land in 1144.

The late 1130s and early 1140s were marked by significant shifts in the balance of power in Rus'. In March 1139, following the death of Yaropolk Volodymyrovych (on February 18, 1139), Vsevolod Olegovych, a representative of the Chernihiv branch of the Rurikid dynasty, ascended the Kyivan throne. By the early 1140s, he had managed to normalise relations with his closest relatives – his brothers and nephews – as well as with the Mstyslavychi and most of the Monomakhovychi⁴. In the following years, Vsevolod established dynastic alliances with the Polish prince Władysław II the Exile (in 1142)⁵ and the Polotsk prince Vasylo (in 1143)⁶, thereby constructing a system that allowed him to dominate the political life of Rus'.

At the same time, important changes took place in the Galician lands. Around 1141, Prince Ivan Vasylovych of Halych died, and his domains passed under the rule of his cousin, Prince Volodymyr Volodarevych of Peremyshl⁷. Thus, in the southwestern part of Rus', a new principality emerged – economically and militarily powerful, and headed by an ambitious ruler.

In the first years following Vsevolod's accession in Kyiv and Volodymyr's in Halych, relations between them remained friendly and were based on the alliance concluded in the spring of 1139, as a result of which Volodymyr and his cousin Ivan Vasylovych supported Vsevolod in his struggle against the sons and grandsons of Volodymyr Monomakh (the Monomakhovychi and the Mstyslavychi)⁸. In the following years, the Galician-Kyivan alliance remained strong, as evidenced by the joint participation of Kyivan and Galician forces in assisting the Polish prince Władysław II the Exile in 1142⁹. However, by 1143 this alliance began to crumble. The cause was Vsevolod's decision to grant the Volhynian principality of Volodymyr to his son Svyatoslav, as explicitly noted by the author of the *Kyivan Chronicle*: „рокооторостаа . Всеволодь с Володимѣромъ про сѣа вже сѣде сѣъ его [Всеволода – V.N.]

⁴ *Ипатьевская летопись*, [in:] *Полное собрание русских летописей*, т. 2, Санкт-Петербург 1908, col. 303–313; *Лаврентьевская летопись*, [in:] *Полное собрание русских летописей*, т. 1, Ленинград 1926–1928, p. 307–310.

⁵ This alliance was sealed by the marriage of Władysław's son, Bolesław the Tall, to Vsevolod Olegovych's daughter, Zvenyslava, concluded in 1142. See: *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 313; D. Dąbrowski, *W sprawie polsko-ruskich relacji w pierwszej połowie XII w. Wokół małżeństwa Bolesława Wysokiego ze Zvenislavą Wsiewłodówną*, „Sobótka”, 2013, nr 3, pp. 3–10; idem, *Piasten und Rurikiden im 11 bis zur Mitte 13 Jahrhunderts*, [in:] *Fernhändler, Dynasten, Kleriker. Die piastische Herrschaft in kontinentalen Beziehungsgeflechten vom 10. bis zum frühen 13. Jahrhundert*, hrsg. D. Adamczyk N. Kersken, Wiesbaden 2015, pp. 175–176.

⁶ *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 313; *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 310. The alliance was sealed by the marriage of Vsevolod's son, Svyatoslav, to Vasylo's daughter. See: Л. Войтович, *Княжа доба на Русі: портрети еліт*, Біла Церква 2006, p. 401.

⁷ *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 308.

⁸ *Ibidem*, col. 304.

⁹ *Ibidem*, col. 313; *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 310. See also: D. Dąbrowski, *W sprawie polsko-ruskich relacji w pierwszej połowie XII w.*, pp. 12–15.

Володимири”¹⁰. It seems evident that such actions aroused the dissatisfaction of the prince of Halych, whose lands became surrounded by the territories of Vsevolod himself (to the east), his son Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich (to the north), and his ally, the Polish prince Władysław II the Exile (to the west). It should also be remembered that to the southeast, Volodymyr Volodarevych’s principality bordered the Polovtsian steppe, and the nomads could at any moment side with Vsevolod Olegovich. As a result, the princes of Kyiv and Halych began to accuse each other („почаста на са искати вины”)¹¹, and soon afterwards Volodymyr Volodarevych returned to Vsevolod the cross-oath charter („Володимерко възверже емоу [Всеволоду – V.N.] грамотоу хрътнюю”)¹², marking the beginning of open warfare.

In response to the actions of Volodymyr Volodarevych, the Kyivan prince organised a large anti-Galician coalition at the beginning of 1144. It included Vsevolod Olegovich himself; his brothers Ihor and Svyatoslav Olgovich; Vsevolod’s son, Svyatoslav, prince of Volodymyr; his nephew, Volodymyr Davydovich, prince of Chernihiv; Vyacheslav Volodymyrovich, prince of Turov; Izyaslav Mstyslavych, prince of Pereyaslav; Rostyslav Mstyslavych, prince of Smolensk; Borys and Hlib Vsevolodkovychi, princes of Grodno; Rostyslav Hlibovich, possibly prince of Minsk; and the Polish prince Władysław II the Exile¹³. It is important to note that the prince of Kyiv did not limit himself to these forces but specifically sent his second nephew, Izyaslav Davydovich, to seek aid from the Polovtsians¹⁴. Volodymyr could oppose this coalition only through an alliance with the Hungarian king Géza II, which, however, brought no desired result („Оутры приведшо емоу . к собѣ в помощь . и быша емоу нѣ на коую же ползоу”)¹⁵.

The main forces of Vsevolod’s and Volodymyr’s armies met near Terebovlia, on the eastern border of the Principality of Halych. According to the *Laurentian Codex*, the Kyivans and their allies were unable to cross the Seret River and therefore moved further west along its left bank, while the Galician troops followed them along the right bank. Over the course of a week-long march, the opposing forces passed through Rozhne Pole and the Holohory Highlands and approached the city of Zvenyhorod¹⁶.

¹⁰ „Vsevolod quarreled with Volodymyrko over his son [Vsevolod’s – V.N.], who had taken the seat in Volodymyr”. *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 314–315.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*, col. 315. The *Laurentian Codex* is more concise and merely reports that the Kyivan prince and his allies „въѣдоша [на кони] на Володимерка на Галичь” („mounted [their horses] and set out against Volodymyr to Halych”). *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 311.

¹³ The list of participants in the campaign is provided by the *Kyivan Chronicle*. See: *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 315. Unlike the Kyivan chronicler, the author of the *Laurentian Codex* confined himself to a general remark: „совокупи въ князи Рускиѣ Всеволодъ” („Vsevolod gathered all the Rus’ princes”). See: *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 311. The later *Nikon Chronicle* mentions also the Czechs among the participants of the coalition, but this report is not confirmed by other, earlier sources. *Летописный сборник, именуемый Патриаршей или Никоновской летописью*, [in:] *Полное собрание русских летописей*, т. 9, Санкт-Петербург 1885, p. 167.

¹⁴ *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 311.

¹⁵ „The Hungarians, whom he had brought to aid him, turned out to be of no use to him”. *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 315; *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 311.

¹⁶ *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 311.

On the way, Vsevolod's forces were joined by the Polish detachments of Władysław II the Exile and the Polovtsian contingent led by Izyaslav Davydovych. The allies managed to cross the Bilka River¹⁷, outflank the Galician troops from the rear, and cut off their lines of communication with Halych and Peremyshl.

As reported in the *Kyivan Chronicle*, this caused great panic among the Galician soldiers („видивше . же то Галичане . съчъпоуша рекоуче . мы сде стоимы . а внамо жены наша возмоутъ”)¹⁸. The author of the *Laurentian Codex* explicitly noted that the Galicians „were distressed” („сътъснушаси”)¹⁹, that is, deeply alarmed by the prospect of their wives and families being captured by Vsevolod's forces²⁰. Finding himself in a critical situation, Volodymyr Volodarevych was forced to enter negotiations, submit to Vsevolod Olegovych, and pay a tribute of 1,200/1,400 grivnas of silver²¹. In return, the prince of Kyiv agreed to make peace and return to Volodymyr the cities he had previously seized²². The author of the *Kyivan Chronicle* concludes his description of these negotiations with an ironic remark about the prince of Halych's conduct, noting that „преди много гѣивъ . а послѣди много . заплативъ”²³.

The events described above are placed by the Rus' chroniclers under the year 6652 (1144/1145)²⁴, but modern historiography has suggested that they should be dated to April – May 1144²⁵, a view that seems quite convincing.

In light of the objective set at the beginning of this article, the most interesting aspect is the participation and role of the Polovtsians in Vsevolod Olegovych's campaign. This issue has so far escaped the attention of historians and undoubtedly

¹⁷ The author of the *Kyivan Chronicle* names this river as the Bilka („межу ими рѣка Бѣлка” / „between them flowed the river Belka”). *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 315. The same designation is used by the author of the *Radziwiłł Chronicle*. See: *Радзивиловская летопись*, [in:] *Полное собрание русских летописей*, т. 38, Ленинград 1989, p. 112. As for the *Laurentian Codex*, it refers to „рѣка мѣлка” („a shallow river”). *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 311. It is possible that the scribe made an error, writing „мѣлка” instead of „Бѣлка”. On the other hand, the term „мѣлка” (shallow) does not contradict the identification of this river as the Bilka, since this stream is indeed small and shallow, unlike the wide and full-flowing Dnister.

¹⁸ „Seeing this, the Galicians became frightened, saying: ‘We are standing here, while our wives will be taken there’”. *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 315–316.

¹⁹ *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 312. Also in: *Радзивиловская летопись*, p. 112 („сотошнуша”).

²⁰ On the meaning of the word „сътъснушаси”, see: И. Срезневский, *Материалы для словаря древне-русского языка по письменным памятникам*, т. 3: Р-Я [цитированный юс малый] и дополнения, Санкт-Петербург 1903, p. 852.

²¹ The *Kyivan Chronicle* gives the amount of the tribute as 1,400 grivnas (*Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 316), while the *Laurentian Codex* records it as 1,200 grivnas (*Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 312). See also: М. С. Грушевский, *Исторія України-Руси*, т. 2, Київ 1992, pp. 423–424; Л. Войтович, *Галицько-волинські етюди*, Біла Церква 2011, pp. 162–163.

²² *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 316; *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 312.

²³ „at first he spoke much, but in the end he paid much”. *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 316.

²⁴ The Rus' chroniclers used the Byzantine system of chronology, according to which the count of years began not from the Birth of Christ but from the Creation of the World, with the new era starting in 5508 BCE. However, unlike the Byzantines, the Rus' chroniclers began the year not on September 1 but on March 1. Since the chronicle year 6652 does not fully coincide with the year 1144 but corresponds to the period from March 1, 1144, to February 28, 1145, it seems appropriate to indicate both dates in the text – the Old Rus' and the modern one.

²⁵ D. Dąbrowski, *W sprawie polsko-ruskich relacji w pierwszej połowie XII w.*, p. 17.

deserves careful consideration. At the same time, a number of important questions arise. For example: To which specific Polovtsian groups did Vsevolod Olegovych turn for help? What was the possible size of the Polovtsian detachment brought by Izyaslav Davydovych? Where exactly did the Polovtsian contingent operate, and what were the results of its actions? Were the Polovtsians allies of the Kyivan prince or merely hired mercenaries?

As for the first of these questions, researchers have at their disposal only a brief note from the *Laurentian Codex*, which reads: „Всеволод [...] Изаслава Двѣвича посла в Половцѣ . повести ъ на Володимера”²⁶. Unfortunately, the chronicler does not specify to which particular Polovtsian horde Izyaslav was sent, and the *Kyivan Chronicle* makes no mention at all of Vsevolod’s appeal to the nomads for assistance²⁷.

At first glance, it might seem that the prince of Kyiv sought the support of the so-called „wild Polovtsians”, who roamed somewhere between the Oskol and Don rivers or along the Don itself²⁸. These Polovtsians were closely connected with the Chernihiv branch of the Rurikids, to which Vsevolod himself belonged²⁹. They had aided Vsevolod in 1128 in his struggle against the sons of Volodymyr Monomakh, Mstyslav and Yaropolk³⁰, and quite possibly also in 1135³¹, 1136³², and 1139³³ during his conflicts with the Kyivan prince Yaropolk Volodymyrovych³⁴. A little later, in 1146, the same „wild Polovtsians” supported Vsevolod’s brother, Svyatoslav Olegovych, in his confrontation with the prince Izyaslav Mstyslavych of Kyiv³⁵. However, it should be remembered that the encampments of the Don „wild Polovtsians” were located far from the theatre of operations. To reach the Galician lands, they would have had to cover a vast distance (over 1,000 kilometres) and pass through the territories of other Polovtsian hordes – a task not always possible, given the internal rivalries among various groups of nomads. Therefore, it seems least likely that Vsevolod turned to this particular group of Polovtsians for assistance.

It seems more plausible that Izyaslav Davydovych went to seek assistance from another group of „wild Polovtsians” who roamed between the Southern Buh and the Dnister rivers, along the southern and southeastern borders of the principality of Halych³⁶. Supporting this hypothesis is the fact that during Vsevolod Olegovych’s campaign in the Galician lands in 1146, it was precisely these Polovtsians who fought

²⁶ „Vsevolod [...] sent Izyaslav Davydovych to the Polovtsians, to lead them against Volodymyr”. *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 311.

²⁷ *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 315.

²⁸ The Lviv scholar Vira Hapulo shares this point of view. See: В. Гупало, *Звенигород і Звенигородська земля у XI–XIII століттях (соціоісторична реконструкція)*, Львів 2014, p. 97.

²⁹ See: С. Плетнева, *Половцы*, Москва 2010, p. 100.

³⁰ *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 290–191.

³¹ *Ibidem*, col. 296.

³² *Ibidem*, col. 298, 300.

³³ *Ibidem*, col. 301.

³⁴ See: С. Плетнева, *Половцы*, Москва 2010, p. 118.

³⁵ *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 334.

³⁶ С. Плетнева, *Половцы*, Москва 2010, p. 101.

on the side of the prince of Kyiv³⁷. Furthermore, there is another possible way to identify the „Половцѣ” mentioned by the chronicler. It should be noted that Vsevolod sent his nephew Izyaslav Davydovych to the nomads – a figure who later maintained close relations with the Polovtsian horde led by Bashkord, which roamed the steppe region along the basin of the Southern Buh River³⁸. It was Bashkord, with his twenty-thousand-strong horde, who came to Izyaslav Davydovych’s aid in 1159, when the prince was threatened by a coalition of Rus’ princes led by Mstyslav Izyaslavych³⁹. It is quite possible that Izyaslav’s connections with Bashkord’s Polovtsians were first established in 1144, and that it was precisely this Polovtsian contingent that took part in Vsevolod Olegovych’s Galician campaign.

It is difficult to determine the possible size of this Polovtsian detachment. The chronicle’s brief account does not allow us to specify numbers, yet the context of events permits a cautious assumption that the Polovtsian force must have been substantial. This is supported by the fact that they succeeded in capturing two Galician towns – Ushytsia and Mykulyn – both of which were well fortified⁴⁰. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the entire horde accompanied Izyaslav Davydovych, since in that case the chronicler would probably have emphasized that „Половцѣ дикѣи вси” took part in the campaign (as he did in 1146)⁴¹, or mentioned a „множество Половецѣ”⁴², as was recorded during Yuriy Volodymyrovych’s Chernihiv campaign in 1152⁴³ or Hlib Yuriyovych’s campaign against Pereyaslav in 1154⁴⁴.

Despite the brevity of the chronicle accounts, it is nonetheless possible, with a high degree of probability, to outline the task assigned to the Polovtsians and the area of their operations. As for the former, it is clarified by the chronicler’s statement that Vsevolod ordered Izyaslav Davydovych „Половцѣ . повести ѣ на Володимира”⁴⁵. This means that Izyaslav and the Polovtsians were to act independently – at least during the initial stage of the campaign – by invading the principality of Halych from

³⁷ *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 319; С. Плетнева, *Половцы*, Москва 2010, p. 100–101.

³⁸ С. Плетнева, *Половцы*, Москва 2010, pp. 114–115.

³⁹ *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 501, 502.

⁴⁰ See: С. Маярчак, *Літописна фортеця Ушиця у Середньому Подністрів’ї*, [in:] *Воєнна історія Поділля та Буковини, Кам’янець-Подільський* 2009, pp. 45–49; М. Ягодинська, *Давньоруські пам’ятки Західного Поділля у X–XIII століттях*, Тернопіль 2018, p. 45; М. Kamińska, *Grody południowo-zachodniej Rusi w okresie od 1240 do 1340 r. w świetle źródeł archeologicznych i historycznych. Praca doktorska. Maszynopis*, Kraków 2020, pp. 731–733, 846–848. The strong fortifications of the first of these towns are evidenced by the fact that fifteen years later, Prince Ivan Rostyslavych, despite commanding a large contingent of Berladnyks and Polovtsians, was still unable to capture Ushytsia. *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 497.

⁴¹ „all the wild Polovtsians”. *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 319. The later *Nikon Chronicle* states that Izyaslav Davydovych brought „множество Половецѣ” („a multitude of Polovtsians”), see: *Летописный сборник, именуемый Патриаршей или Никоновской летописью*, т. 9, p. 167, but this information should be treated with caution, since the account of Vsevolod Olegovych’s Galician campaign in that chronicle contains numerous inaccuracies.

⁴² „great multitude of Polovtsians”.

⁴³ *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 457; *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 338.

⁴⁴ *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 471, 474; *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 343.

⁴⁵ „to lead the Polovtsians against Volodymyr”. *Лаврентьевская летопись*, p. 311. Also: *Радзивилловская летопись*, p. 112.

the southeast. Later, they were likely meant to join Vsevolod Olegovych's main forces and conduct raiding operations in the enemy's rear, aiming to disrupt his lines of communication.

According to the *Laurentian Codex*, during the campaign in the Galician lands („Изаславъ Дѣдвичъ с Половци . переємъ два города . Оушицю и Микулинъ”)⁴⁶. This passage allows us to assert with confidence that the nomads invaded the Principality of Halych in the area where the Ushytsia River meets the Dnister. The first point on their route was the border fortress of Ushytsia (modern-day Stara Ushytsia in the Khmelnytskyi region of Ukraine⁴⁷), which, as the chronicle reports, was taken by them. It is evident that the detachment led by Izyaslav Davydovych then advanced northwestward, in the direction of Terebovlia. It is reasonable to assume that Terebovlia was intended as the place where the Polovtsians were to join Vsevolod's main forces. However, this plan was most likely thwarted by the fact that the Kyivan troops had already moved toward Zvenyhorod. From Terebovlia, the Polovtsian detachment must have continued northwest – not along the left bank of the Seret River (as Vsevolod's main army did), but along its right bank, effectively following the Galician troops. This is confirmed by the capture of the town of Mykulyn (modern-day Mykulyntsi in the Ternopil region of Ukraine⁴⁸), which is situated precisely on the right bank of the Seret. The town itself was well fortified and could likely have withstood a siege⁴⁹, but its garrison had probably left together with Volodymyr Volodarevych's main forces, which greatly facilitated the nomads' capture of Mykulyn.

The chronicler names the area of Rozhne Pole and Holohory as the place where the Polovtsian detachment joined the forces of the anti-Galician coalition⁵⁰. The exact location of the first site, Rozhne Pole, is not known, although most scholars believe it was situated on the Galician-Volhynian borderland, near the modern Ukrainian city of Zolochiv in the Lviv region⁵¹. The second site may refer either to the settlement of Holohory (in Zolochiv district, Lviv region), located directly on the route from Terebovlia to Zvenyhorod, or to the entire Holohory Highland, which stretches from

⁴⁶ „Izyaslav Davydovych with the Polovtsians captured two towns – Ushytsia and Mykulyn”. *Лаврентьевская летопись*, р. 311.

⁴⁷ *Етимологічний словник літописних географічних назв Південної Русі*, ред. О. Стрижак, Київ 1985, р. 168; С. Маярчак, *Літописна фортеця Ушиця*, р. 45–46.

⁴⁸ *Етимологічний словник літописних географічних назв Південної Русі*, р. 88; О. Купчинський, *Літописні географічні назви „Микулин” і „Рожне поле” та їх історична територія у XI–XIII століттях*, [in:] *Confraternitas: ювілейний збірник на пошану Ярослава Ісаєвича*, ред. М. Крикун, Львів 2006–2007, р. 83; М. Ягодинська, *Давньоруські пам'ятки Західного Поділля у X–XIII століттях*, р. 45.

⁴⁹ М. Ягодинська, *Давньоруські пам'ятки Західного Поділля у X–XIII століттях*, р. 45.

⁵⁰ *Лаврентьевская летопись*, р. 311; *Радзивиловская летопись*, 112. The later chronicles: *Летопись по Воскресенскому списку*, [in:] *Полное собрание русских летописей*, vol. 7, Санкт-Петербург 1856, р. 34; *Московский летописный свод конца XV в.*, [in:] *Полное собрание русских летописей*, vol. 25, Москва–Ленинград 1949, р. 36; *Летописный сборник, именуемый Патриаршей или Никоновской летописью*, vol. 9, р. 167.

⁵¹ М. Грушевський, *Рожне поле*, „Записки Наукового Товариства ім. Т. Шевченка”, т. 77, 1906, кн. 3, pp. 171–173; Б. Гошовський, *Княжі Голі Гори і Рожне Поле*, „Літопис Червоної Калини”, ч. 4, 1939, р. 16; О. Купчинський, *Літописні географічні назви „Микулин” і „Рожне поле”*, р. 86–87 (The historiography on the issue can also be found there).

the modern village of Pluhiv in Zolochiv district to the town of Bibrka in Lviv district, Lviv region. As shown in the research of Vitaliy Lyaska⁵², the latter interpretation of Holohory's location appears more convincing.

It is quite possible that after the Polovtsian contingent joined Vsevolod Olegovych's forces, the nomads were employed by the prince of Kyiv for raiding operations along the Galician army's lines of communication. It is also likely that they took part in Vsevolod's flanking maneuver, which allowed him to seize strategic high ground south of Zvenyhorod, cutting off Volodymyr Volodarevych's communications with Halych and Peremyshl, and ultimately leading to the Galician prince's effective capitulation.

In conclusion, it is possible to attempt to answer the question of whether the Polovtsians were allies of the Kyivan prince or merely mercenaries. The basis for this, though admittedly fragile, can be found in the chronicler's statement that after the prince of Halych paid a tribute of 1,200/1,400 grivnas of silver, the prince of Kyiv distributed it among his relatives and allies: „Всеволодъ [...] раздая браѣи на части . Вачеславоу Ростиславоу Изаславоу и всѣи своеи братѣи . кто же башеть с нимъ быть”⁵³. There is little reason to doubt that among the „brothers” of Vsevolod who received a portion of the Galician silver was Izyaslav Davydovych. Undoubtedly, some of this money was passed on by the princes to their warriors as payment for their participation in the campaign. In this connection, it is reasonable to ask whether a portion of the silver received by Izyaslav Davydovych might have been used to pay the Polovtsian mercenaries for their military assistance.

To summarize the findings of this brief study, it is worth noting that it is most likely that the „wild Polovtsians”, whose encampments were located between the Southern Buh and the Dnister rivers – or those belonging to the horde led by Bashkord, which roamed the steppe region of the Southern Buh basin – took part in Vsevolod Olegovych's Galician campaign of 1144. As for the possible size of the Polovtsian detachment that operated as part of the anti-Galician coalition, it must have been considerable, though it is unlikely that the entire horde took part in the expedition against the prince of Halych. With a high degree of probability, we can delineate the area of the Polovtsian contingent's operations: the nomads invaded the principality of Halych near the confluence of the Ushytsia and Dnister rivers, and their further route led toward Terebovlia, where they were to join the main forces of the prince of Kyiv. However, since Vsevolod and his allies failed to cross the Seret River and moved toward Zvenyhorod, the Polovtsians were forced to pursue them and managed to unite with the Rus' forces only in the area of Rozhne Pole and Holohory. As a result of their actions in the early stage of the campaign, the Polovtsians captured two important

⁵² В. Ляска, *Голі Гори та Печера Домажирова: причинки до історичної географії галицько-волинсько-го пограниччя у першій половині XIII століття*, [in:] Данило Романович і його часи, ред. В. Нагірний і М. Волощук, Івано-Франківськ – Краків 2017, р. 13 (*Colloquia Russica. Series II*, vol. 3).

⁵³ „Vsevolod [...] divided it among his brothers – Vyacheslav, Rosyslav, Izyaslav, and all his kin who had fought with him”. *Ипатьевская летопись*, col. 316. Так же *Лаврентьевская летопись*, р. 312 („тѣмъ серебромъ подѣли браѣю свою . почень ѿ старѣишихъ . и до меншихъ” / „He divided that silver among his brothers, starting with the eldest and down to the youngest”).

settlements – the border fortress of Ushytsia and the town of Mykulyn, located along the route from Terebovlia to Zvenyhorod. It can be stated with considerable confidence that, in the second stage of the campaign, the nomads carried out raiding operations behind enemy lines with the aim of disrupting his communications. Whether the Polovtsians acted as Vsevolod Olegovich's allies or as ordinary mercenaries cannot be established with certainty, yet the context of the chronicle accounts tends to support the latter possibility.

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