

We see here again that it was not merely to a city he was accredited as Ambassador, but to a country or State, the various parts of which he visited. Whilst it is quite true that the vast tract of fertile land between the Volga on the east and the Dnieper on the west, and running north to Russia was practically in the hands of the Tartars, who roamed over it at pleasure, yet a portion of it was still known as Tanais. This is apparent from the words of our author, not only in the passage just quoted, but in several others. Speaking of a horde of Tartars who passed near the city, he twice uses the expression, "*fiume della Tana*," which cannot be translated "the river Tanais," but "the river of the Country of Tanais." He says also this horde came "before the plain, or country of Tanais," (*avanti il Campo della Tana*,") and "it went or passed before this plain in eight different groups." Again when the chief of the horde had encamped near the city, our author was asked by the authorities to be the bearer of presents to him. We are told it was customary to give a novena of presents, or nine different articles. These were duly taken forth and presented to the chief by our author who "recommended to him the country together with the people," (*li raccomandai la terra insieme col popolo*"). The land of Tanais was still, in the estimation of its people, a distinct portion of the plains of Tartary.

The city was walled and had a beautiful tower over its gateway. Its civil head was styled, as in Rome of old, Consul. It was as it had long been, and as it continued to be for more than one hundred years, a busy mart, where buyers and sellers from Italy, the Grecian Islands, Russia, Persia and even Egypt met and exchanged commodities. The search for buried treasure is not peculiar to moderns. Our author tried his hand at it. A summary of his narrative on this point will reveal to us how thoroughly well known Tanais was to the Venetians and many others. He tells us there were many sepulchral mounds around Tanais. In the time that Messer Pietro Lando (evidently an Italian) was Consul, a man named Gulbedin came from Cairo where he had heard from a Tartar woman that a great treasure was buried in one of these mounds, the whereabouts of which she made known to him. For two years he dug, then died before he had reached the treasure. On the night of the feast of St. Catherine (25th Nov.) 1437, seven merchants, Francisco Corharo, Catharin. Contarini, Giovan Barbarigo, Giovan da Valle, Moise Bon, Bartolomeo Rosso and our author, (several of whom were Venetians and all Italians), were together in the house of Bartolomeo Rosso, "a citizen of Venice," and talking over this incident of Gulbedin, they made an agreement to hire a hundred and