

# ARMENIANS IN UKRAINE AND POLAND

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The ancestors of Armenians in Ukraine and Poland came from the Crimea where they were so numerous that, in certain medieval maps, Crimea was called "Maritime Armenia." Starting in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and especially during the Mongol invasion, they settled in the provinces of Podolie and Galicia where they were welcomed with open arms by the local population, who were Ukrainian and Orthodox. In the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the two provinces were annexed by Poland. While the Armenians had enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy in the two provinces, the situation changed in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> with the publication of the Counter Reformation. A Polish Jesuit launched an attack against the Armenian Church, labelling them "qualified heretics". Henceforth, Armenians were victimized by the aggressive politico-religious policies of the Polish Catholic Church forcing the union of the Armenian Church with the Catholic Church in 1630. The Armenian Gregorian rites were Latinized by force. It was the beginning of assimilation of Armenians and the eventual demise of the community.

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