

**Joshua KOZAKIEWICZ**

**M.A. Thesis In History**

**June 2011**

**OF CROWNS AND KAFTANS:  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTTOMAN – POLISH DIPLOMATIC  
RELATIONS  
TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

Thesis submitted to the  
Institute of Social Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
History

by  
Joshua KOZAKIEWICZ

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## APPROVAL PAGE

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**Thesis Subject** : Of Crowns and Kaftans: The Development of Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations to the Seventeenth Century  
**Thesis Date** : June 2011

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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It is approved that this thesis has been written in compliance with the formatting rules laid down by the Graduate Institute of Social Sciences.

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## **AUTHOR DECLARATIONS**

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has consisted of:

i) Research Methods course during the undergraduate study

ii) Examination of several thesis guides of particular universities both in Turkey and abroad as well as a professional book on this subject.

Joshua Kozakiewicz

June, 2011

## **ABSTRACT**

**Joshua Kozakiewicz**

**June 2011**

To study the diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is to consider the relations, though not strictly limited to the political, between two very similar, yet very different, traditions.

The Ottoman Empire rose out of the Medieval Middle East, claimed Anatolia as their base, and set their sights on spreading their Islamic faith, and the civilization which came with it, far into the European continent. Thus, they heavily influenced what we traditionally recognize as the 'Western' world. On the other hand, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth grew as a classic European superpower, and not unlike the Ottomans, an extremely diverse entity for its day. Known rather romantically in the Ottoman annals as Lehistan, this historic state always held a special place in the foreign relations, as well as the folklore, of the Ottoman Turks. To them, the Commonwealth was a Christian power in whom they found an equal, a nation or rather a group of nations whose political institutions, military endeavours, and high cultural foundations rivaled their own.

These two states shared a border for much of their histories, when not directly, through their allies. For this reason it is also necessary to study the influence of their relations on the whole of Southeastern and Eastern Europe, as well as on the foundations and development of a distinctly Western tradition, of which we will argue, the Ottoman Empire, to a certain degree, rightfully belongs. History is the story of peoples, both past and present, and is an ongoing phenomenon in which we all take part. Thus, it is necessary to study the events of the past in order to better understand the most recent developments in this same corner of the world. The relations between the Ottomans and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth can help us to realize the importance of international communication in the historical context, as well as to see the achievements of that time in the possibilities which face our communities even today.

## KISA ÖZET

Joshua Kozakiewicz

Haziran 2011

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Polonya-Litvanya Milletler Topluluğu arasındaki diplomasiyi araştırmak için, siyasetle sınırlı olmayan, çok benzer ve hala da iki farklı olan genelliklerin arasındaki ilişkilere değinmek lazım.

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Ortaçağda Orta doğuda kurulmuştur, temelini de Anadolu olarak ilan etti. Bununla birlikte gelen İslam inancını ve medeniyetini uzakta olan Avrupa kıtasına yaymak için hedeflendi. Öylece "Batı" olarak tanıdığımız dünyayı çok etkilemiş oldular. Öte yandan, kendi zamanında farklı bir oluşum olan Osmanlı gibi de Polonya-Litvanya Milletler Topluluğu Avrupa klasik süper gücü olarak büyüdü. Osmanlı Türklerinin folkloru gibi de Osmanlı vakayinamelerinde daha çok romantik olarak tanınan Lehistan, dış ilişkilerinde özel yere sahipti. Onlar Hıristiyan gücü olarak düşündükleri Milletler Topluluğunda eşit, ulus ya da daha çok ulus grupların siyasi enstitülerin, askeri çabaların ve güçlü kültür temellerin tek başlarına rekabet ettiğini görüyorlardı.

Bu iki devlet tarihleri boyunca doğrudan yada müttefikleri aracılığıyla sınırı paylaşmıştır. Öylece, belirli derecede Osmanlı'nın ait olduğu Batı geleneklerin ve temellerin gelişmesinin ve tüm Güneydoğu ve Doğu Avrupai etkilemiş oldukları ilişkileri araştırmak çok önemli. Tarih – insanların hikâyesidir, geçmiş ve gelecek, devam eden ve biz de katıldığımız bir fenomendir. Öylece, dünyanın bugünkü gelişmelerini daha iyi anlamak için geçmişteki olayları daha iyi araştırmamız lazım. Tarihsel anlamda, Osmanlılar ve Polonya-Litvanya Milletler Topluluğu arasındaki ilişkilerin bize Uluslar arası iletişimin önemini ve o zamanın içerisinde kazandıkları başarıyı görmek için bize daha iyi anlamaya yardımcı olabilir.

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Lastly, I would like to appreciate the support and patience shown to my work by both my wife, Regina, and my brother-in-law, Robert, whose efforts were crucial to my success not only at the university, but for my life in Turkey, as well.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The study of history is always a study of peoples. After all, history is inherently tied to the human experience; it is something we make, or at the very least, something that happens to us. That is why the topic of diplomatic relations within the historical perspective seems so intriguing. My own background is in both the schools of international relations, as well as history and Middle East studies. When presented with the challenge of reconciling two different paths of study during my previous and current academic endeavours, it seemed suitable to bring my interests from international relations together with my interests in historical survey, and to inspire the project-at-hand with my own cultural background.

Being the descendent of Christianized Polish Tatars, who seemingly gave up at least part of their ancient Turkic customs in the interest of serving their new lords, the Kings of Poland, sometime in the Sixteenth Century, the two cultures, and subsequent histories, of Poland and Turkey have fascinated me for much of my life. The chance to work with a topic which is generally laced with much stereotyping also did not discourage me, but rather it provided a sufficient challenge to show just how these two seemingly (vastly) contrasting institutional traditions not only coexisted in a local setting (the Eastern and Southeastern Europe of the Fourteenth-Nineteenth Centuries) but worked together and mutually established, over time, a very close, working relationship, truly beneficial to both communities of Christian

and Islamic descent. The title of my thesis reflects two objects which represent the idea of monarchy for both cultures; crowns of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and kaftans, the ceremonial garments of the Ottoman sultans. Both objects conveyed power to the peoples of these sovereigns for many generations. Also, the length of the period I chose to study appropriately shows the development of relations, from the very beginning, through the most important events of each nation's life, and our study ends with a year, actually shortly thereafter, which can be seen as a turning point for each state in question; 1672, when the Ottomans' power peaked in Europe, and their eventual decline began, and for Poland, as well, the beginning of the end of their greatness as a European power, which would eventually be divided among its jealous neighbours almost to disappear from the map entirely.

For this project, the work of Polish academic Kołodziejczyk proved exceedingly helpful, for he had already forged the way for any future historians considering the relations of the Commonwealth and the Ottomans with his work beginning back in the 1990s. Until that point, we would have found a surprising lack of resources dealing exclusively with the topics that lie here within. Apart from the national archives, only sources dealing with the vast histories of the states in question would have been helpful to us. Instead, today we are able to not only study the original documents ourselves, thanks to the efforts of Turkish historians, whose keen sense of preservation of their own historical tradition can be seen as nothing less than

exemplary, but also to consider the already expert examination of these same events through the historian's eye.

Apart from Kołodziejczyk's works, which proved the most beneficial to my studies, I was also able to make use of the works of several of Turkey's most prominent historians, the likes of İnalcık and Karpaz, as well as the informative study of the Ottomans in Ukrainian territory prepared by İnbaşı. Other well-known English-language writers that were most useful to the topics in question included Itzkowitz, Shaw, and Eversley. I was also able to make use of Polish-language sources, sometimes already quoted in other sources which I used, of authors who usually deal with the history of Poland's own Muslim minority, and through these studies, sometimes focus instead on the relations of Poland with its Muslim neighbours, the historians Abrahamowicz and Baranowski.

Although I was not able to use, in great quantity, the original Ottoman language documents which are now present in the archives of both the Topkapı Palace Museum, Turkish national archives, or the various archival collections of Istanbul's Islamic and academic communities, I did have the chance to view the translations of such documents, or the abstracts of such documents, because of the efforts of the Polish historians' research. On such occasions, it seemed ironic that English should act as a mutual translate-to language for the Polish and Turkish, much like the old imperial documents appeared not only in Ottoman Turkish and Polish, but Latin as well. Such are the fates of history.

It is in the interest of further academic research and discussion of the events and concepts within, that this thesis then was created. The importance of just such a topic will not be lost on most academics from various fields of the liberal arts, that is, not only historians. The significance of Muslim-Christian diplomatic relations, and most specifically, Ottoman-Polish diplomatic relations, should be seen in the events of our modern time.

Firstly, within the study of international relations in a world defined and framed by a so-called "clash of civilizations," used by so many politicians and people across the world to justify the inhumane behaviour against their neighbours, which they pass off as "state interest." Considering the historical example, Muslim and Christian communities have not always been in conflict with one another, and very much on the contrary have created and shared a very rich history of mutual cultural, political and social contact reaching well back to the very foundations of Europe as we know it.

Secondly, the growth and establishment of Muslim communities across the map of Europe has raised many questions dealing with the possible integration and internal relations of such groups in a traditionally Christian Europe. May the historical example of Bosnian, Bulgarian, and Albanian Muslims in the Balkans, all loyal Ottoman subjects, as well as the Lipka Tatars of Poland, who, on the other hand, virtually served as the Kings' very own bodyguards, show those with concerns in such matters that Muslims have lived with, around, and within Europe for a very long time.

Thirdly, and possibly most importantly for the modern political trends in the region, can be the question of Turkish formal accession to the

European Community, with acceptance to the E.U. Historians may now, more than ever, have an extended role to play in presenting the historical truths of Turkey's role in the development of Europe, and putting to an end the stereotype of the classical view of the "Turkish threat" to both Europe and Christendom.

As is a growing trend among academics whose major research deals primarily with the Ottomans in Europe, I would like to state my support, with this work, for the theory of inclusiveness of Ottoman state and society, culture and religion, in the portrait of European civilization. It should not be seen as some classical foreign threat, but rather an integral part of the history of Europe and European peoples, and an irreplaceable piece of the diverse identity which Europe has assumed for itself over many centuries of continuous cultural advancement and renewal. It is hoped that by showing the historical relations between two of Europe's premier powers, that people of today will better understand the need for historical awareness and its implications on the modern world

# CHAPTER 1

## DIPLOMACY IN THE CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC WORLDS

### 1.1. AN INTRODUCTION TO CONTRASTING TRADITIONS

In order to speak about the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, we must first introduce both foreign relation perspectives of the states in question. There is a clear contrast which is typically established by historians studying such fields, when regarding the diplomacy of the Ottoman state with the world around it. In doing so, it remains crucial for us to consider the fact that the Ottomans were the caliphatic representative of the Islamic world, serving both the Muslims and the non-Muslims under their sovereignty, for over five centuries. This special position played a very important role in the policy-making of the caliphate, the Islamic state, with its neighbours.

As Dariusz Kołodziejczyk points out in his work, although much study has been conducted regarding the diplomacy of the *Porte*, much remains to be discovered. The basic difficulty, he believes, lies in the lack of correspondence between certain Islamic-Ottoman concepts regarding foreign relations and those of the Christian tradition very much the foundation of the collective European culture and the politics it shaped. European statesmen were very much engaged in the politics of give and take, that is, any treaty or the relations therein agreed upon would be mutually beneficial for the parties involved. Actually, not until the end of the eighteenth century did the Ottoman state employ diplomacy in the sense in which it was defined and perceived in the West. Neither the fundamentals of diplomacy, that is, maintaining diplomatic representatives or observing reciprocity, were adopted by them.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, up until 1793, the Ottoman state did not send permanent representatives to foreign states. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not established until 1837; see Mehmet İpşirli, *History of the Ottoman State, Society & Civilization*, Ed. İhsanoğlu, Ekmeleddin vol.1, Istanbul, 2001. p. 199.



Peace treaties from the European perspective were understood as a single document often regarding a single issue, which both parties would agree to, and afterward would be ratified by the respective ruling bodies of those countries. In the Islamic world, such documents are difficult to find, as when making a treaty with a European state, the Ottomans always considered their caliphatic responsibility and the Islamic views on relations with non-Muslims. Ottoman foreign relations always followed the foundations established by previous Islamic and Turkish states, and looked for solutions with Islam as its guide, after all, the empire itself had begun as a *ghazi* state; basically an organized governmental system, established by warriors of the faith, which characterized itself within the constant framework of the sacred struggle with the infidel.<sup>2</sup> This is often considered by scholars as a result of the chancery tradition, rooted in the belief that a permanent peace between the Muslims and non-Muslims was impossible. Only a temporary truce could ever be sought after. Strong Muslim rulers would only establish peace for a year at a time.<sup>3</sup>

The concepts of *DârüIslâm* and *dârülharb* were always at play.<sup>4</sup> From its inception, perpetual war in *dârülharb* (abode of war) had been the *raison d'être* of the Ottoman *ghazi* state, and the equation of foreign policy with military adventure was contingent upon Ottoman military superiority.<sup>5</sup> Yet as the empire grew, and the Ottomans took scores of non-Muslims under their control, peaceful relations also became necessary. When engaging in relations with non-Muslims, the Muslim ruler had a special status, since he was the one that decided whether any resulting treaty or agreement would

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2 Parry, V.J., Halil İnalçık, A.N. Kurat, and J.S. Bromley. *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*. Cambridge University Press, 1976, p.3.

3 Treaty of Hudaibiya (628 A.D.) Concluded and sworn by Prophet Muhammad with the Quraysh tribe of Mecca; see Khadduri, Majid. *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, Baltimore, 1955. pp. 219-220.

4 *DârüIslâm* being the Domain of Islam, *dârülharb* the countries outside the rule of Islam; *DârüIslâm* being the Domain of Islam, *dârülharb* the countries outside the rule of Islam; see Ahmet Özel, "Darü'l-harb" and "Darü'l-İslam", *DIÄ*, vol.8, pp.536-537 and pp.541-543.

5 Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Ottoman Diplomacy at Karlowitz*, *Journal of American Oriental Society*, Vol. LXXXVII, 1967, pp.498-512.

be renewed or not. Anything granted by the Muslim sovereign to the non-Muslims was binding, as he swore an oath before God, instead of just a promise to the Christian ruler. Most of the time, a document from the Christians in response was not required or even expected. As a result, we often find documents whose purpose was to regulate the relations themselves.<sup>6</sup> Hosting diplomats from Christian nations, known to the Muslims as *müste'min*, was also a practice very closely observant of Islamic practice, following the principles of *emân*. Delegates visiting the Ottoman lands were to be shown the utmost hospitality and assured the highest protection, unless the country from which they had come was at odds with the Ottoman state.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, documents prepared by the Ottomans often showed a unilateral character, whilst European documents reflected a bilateral one. The Arabic *imtiyazat* can be translated as "privileges" or "concessions," stressing this unilateral nature, defining something the sultan "granted" to the non-Muslims. The most common Ottoman diplomatic document was the *'ahdname*, *'ahd* coming from the Persian word for "oath" or "pact," *name* meaning "letter." Its name stressed the intention to keep the terms therein, and represented the sultan's word on any particular topic. *'Ahdnames* were granted personally by each sultan, and they had to be confirmed by his successor in order to be valid.<sup>8</sup>

We can also confidently add that the Ottomans more often than not felt themselves as having the "upper-hand," so to say, in many of its political maneuverings. They were very often ready and willing to use military force when needed to push its own political interests, both close to home and further abroad. If the party with which they were engaged in relations did

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6 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations, 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century*. Brill, Leiden, 2000., p. 3.

7 See Mehmed Âkif Aydın, "The Ottoman Legal System" in *History of the Ottoman State, Society & Civilization*, vol.1, p.480.

8 Halil İnalçık, "Imtiyazat," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, vol.3, Leiden, 1971, pp. 1179-89.

not agree to the terms they themselves preferred, or which was most beneficial to them, they could apply pressure by moving their own forces or the forces of their allies. This reality also often bothered representatives of other states visiting the imperial capital. Noting their readiness to fight, negotiators from Christian nations sometimes found the diplomatic process rather perilous.<sup>9</sup> Regarding our own topic, at many times this meant the Crimean Tatars at the southeastern border of the Commonwealth.

## **1.2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE OTTOMAN STATE**

Every country's diplomatic strategy depends largely on its geographic location. Considering this reality, the Ottoman Empire was heir to four of the world's great civilizations (Romans, Byzantines, the Arab states and Seljuks) in terms of political, economic, and military power. This meant a responsibility to establish and engage in foreign relations with many different representatives of varying religio-cultural traditions.

The Ottomans had learned a lot from their early encounters with the Byzantines, of whom the prior would become successors. Although at most times hostile, relations were never completely severed. Though they mainly relied on conquest and *gazâ*, having been established at the very beginning as a *beylik* with a definite military character, at times the Ottomans turned to diplomacy to reach their aims. In the fifteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had been only one of the many local powers in southeastern Europe.<sup>10</sup> This meant, as Kołodziejczyk points out, that they had to accept certain established local rules, the "law of the land," so to say. Scholars have recognized the period of expansion of Ottoman territories into Southeastern and Eastern Europe as one of "Westernization" of the chancery tradition which it was previously bound to. The main objective of expansion into

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<sup>9</sup> See the section titled *Ambassadors* in İpşirli, op. cit., p. 214.

<sup>10</sup> Kołodziejczyk, op.cit., p.5.

Europe had been the spread of Islam, but once they had secured inroads there, the Ottomans looked to establish their own sovereignty, either by themselves, or through relations with local rulers.

Becoming a true world empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottomans were required to maintain diplomatic relations with the European states to the north. Prior to this period, they had already developed distinct policies regarding their northern borders. From the beginning, Northern policy was shaped by views developed to counter the rise of power of several European states upon the collapse of the Golden Horde state.<sup>11</sup> War continued to be relied upon well into and throughout the seventeenth century. Once they had established themselves as a serious player in the region, which led to a greater sense and rise of a definite "megalomania," the Ottomans gained, along with the sovereignty that goes along with it, a further degree of power in the way that they had the position to grant unilateral privileges on behalf of an increasingly omnipotent *padishah*. This can, and has, been identified as the "resislamization" of Ottoman diplomacy.<sup>12</sup>

An honorific title which was generally used for all Christian rulers was *Kidvatu l-Umera'i'l-Milleti'l-Mesihyye'*, the Leader or Pride of the *Emirs* of Christendom. Secondary rulers, such as those princes owning positions of power in the various Eastern European *eyalets*, were instead titled *emir par excellence*, denoting the role of the *emir*, or military commander, as chief, itself part of the Caliphate's own tradition.<sup>13</sup>

When speaking on this topic, we should also note the importance of particular political positions, characteristic of the Ottoman state and not of other states, which took part in the diplomatic process. At the center of

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11 İpsirli, op. cit., p. 200.

12 Theunissen, "Ottoman-Venetian diplomatics," pp.252-4.

13 İnalçık, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire*, Indiana University Turkish Studies, Bloomington. 1993, p.382.

Ottoman administrative power was the *Dîvân-i Hümayûn*, the Imperial Council, itself the most influential component of the central administration in periods of expansion until the second half of the seventeenth century, when the power of administration was being transferred to the *Paşa Kapısı*, the residence and office of the grand vizier, and the *Bâb-i Âli*, commonly referred to in Western sources as the Sublime Porte.

The *divân*, in its most basic form, had existed since the rule of the Caliph Omar. It had existed in the Ottoman state since the time of its establishment.<sup>14</sup> Its departments, or *kalems*<sup>15</sup>, included the office of the grand vizier (*vezîriâzam*), the viziers, the chief judges (*kazaskers*), the heads of the Office of Finance (*defterdârs*), and the head of the chancery (*nişancı*). Their duties were to examine all kinds of administrative, legal, political, and economic matters related to the Ottoman state, as well as its international relations. After working through these matters in their own *divâns*, they would bring their decisions before the sultan to take the final approval. Thus, Ottoman administrative policy was made in this way.

Regarding foreign matters, the responsibilities of the *divân* included the determination of the fundamental policies of the state, maintenance of the established principles of foreign relations, reception of visiting ambassadors, evaluation of requests for meetings by and issuing invitations to foreign representatives, as well as determination of conditions for peace, monitoring of the conditions for war and the actual process of war, and formation of policies related to the state's borders.

The grand vizier, sometimes known as the *Bâb-i Âsafi*,<sup>16</sup> was second in line to the sultan himself. He was his absolute representative regarding

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14 A.A.Duri, "Divan." *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2, pp. 323-7.

15 The various departments of the Imperial Council, the high-ranking employees of government departments; see İpşirli, op. cit., p. 152.

16 İpşirli notes that this term is sometimes identified with *Paşa Kapısı*, and was later replaced by *Bâb-i Âli*, in the seventeenth century, when referring to this office among both Western travelers and diplomats; see İpşirli, op. cit., p. 188.

matters of religion and state, and enjoyed many wide-ranging privileges because of his status. For example, only the grand vizier could present official documents submitted by the *defterdâr* and *beylerbeyis* to the sultan. It was also the grand vizier who held the authority to attach his official sign, known as *pençe*, to letters addressing the foreign heads of state.<sup>17</sup> The role of this office frequently changed with the development of the state and its components, but his responsibility of carrying the heavy load of the central administration was constant. As we shall later see, the grand vizierate became increasingly powerful in terms of diplomatic relations especially during the reign of Suleyman I, and later with his son Selim I, as on many occasions Sokollu Mehmed Pasha allowed his personal opinions on various issues to affect and determine the official imperial foreign policy.

Ottoman bureaucracy centered around the position of the *kâtibs*, or scribes. Ottoman scribes were expected to be well-educated in the fields of semantics, composition, and literature, as well as history, geography, and customary/traditional (non-religious) law, or *örfî*, and trained to use these skills when his office required. Consequently, the senior scribes were required to know the appropriate honorary titles, prayers, verses and hadith to be used when properly preparing '*ahdnames* for Western heads of state, as well as the respective titles used by the Christian monarchs and government officials. The *reîsülküttâb*, the Chief of Scribes, was tied to the grand vizier. In addition to his other duties (as head of all kalems of the Divân), he managed foreign affairs and dealt with foreign ambassadors.

The Head of Chancery, known as the *nişancı*, had existed in the Ottoman state from the time of Orhan Gâzî. It was his duty to apply the royal seal, the sultan's *tuğra*, to any official documents issued by the Ottoman administration. As the Ottoman state became more powerful, so did its bureaucratic positions, and this is also true of the *nişancı*. As its territories expanded and its alliances and rivalries took shape, it was the Head of the

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17 İpsirli, op. cit., p. 161.

Chancery's duty to determine which Ottoman titles corresponded to the Christian titles.<sup>18</sup> As more and more prominent statesmen, as well as many high-ranking government employees, were appointed to it, the office itself gained respect and importance. During the seventeenth century, however, the position lost some of its importance to the *reîsülküttâb*, but the Head of Chancery continued to have symbolic importance until the eighteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

Because they had adopted a method in diplomatic relations, as well as in times of war, which related matters to, and was consistent with, the policy which had been practiced in the Islamic world for many centuries, the Ottomans were able to remain outside the realm of European politics and, for the most part, reserve for themselves a degree of freedom in their decision-making and policy.<sup>20</sup> This further allowed their push into Europe, where the conquered lands and their inhabitants now took the legal status of *mu'ahidin*, literally beneficiaries of the Ottoman sultan.<sup>21</sup> By the end of the Sixteenth Century, there were four major European *hükümet sancaks*, or legal administrative divisions; they were, Moldavia, Wallachia, Transylvania, and Ragusa. They were given some independence, yet were in a real sense "peripheral holdings" of the sultan, a reality which held at its very core certain obligations.<sup>22</sup>

To those territories, whose status included the annual tribute-payment to the Ottoman padishah, their main obligation to the Porte can be summed up in the following phrase: "*Dosta dost ve düşmana düşman olub*" or "Be a

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18 İnalçık, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire*, Indiana University Turkish Studies, Bloomington. 1993, p. 382.

19 İpşirli, op. cit., pp .170-172.

20 İpşirli, op. cit., p. 199.

21 Initially, this term was reserved for only higher-ranking individuals in these territories, but during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, it was extended to the whole populace. See ViorelPanaite, "*The Re'ayas of the Tributary-Protected Principalities*" in Karpat, Kemal H. and Robert W. Zens. *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities And Political Changes*.The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, p.17.

22 Peter Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule: 1354-1804*,\_University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1996, pp.41-42; İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1973, p.106.

friend to the friends of my enemy.” It was a phrase which had survived in the diplomacy of both the Islamic and Christian worlds since ancient times. On most occasions, this benefited the Ottomans in that they could usually count on intelligence collecting on the part of those regional officials, so much so that they were often able to move massive amounts of troops using information their “allies” collected. As seen in the diplomatic strategies of those neighbouring countries throughout the Ottoman Age in Europe, this phrase very often characterized, and sometimes even appeared in, various official correspondances and treaties, many involving the Kings of Poland.<sup>23</sup>

### **1.3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE POLISH - LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH**

Historians including Kołodziejczyk have always considered the prominent (albeit rather stereotypical) role played by the “Turkish threat” in the politics of European states, and was no different for Poland. Internal propaganda on the part of the Polish nobles began as early as the middle of the fifteenth century. At the same time, the nobles created for themselves the image of the ultimate Christian-European state, the *antemurale Christianitatis*<sup>24</sup>, who served Europe as its defender from the Muslims. During times of conflict, particularly in the seventeenth century, the dissenting image of the “Turk” and anti-Turkish (anti-Ottoman) sentiment grew among Polish noble circles. Although they criticized Ottoman “paganism” and “tyranny,” the Poles could not help but see their state with a sense of wonder and admiration, partly due to its “oriental” character, partly because of its wealth, power, and order.<sup>25</sup>

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23 Kemal H. Karpat and Robert W. Zens, *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities And Political Changes*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, p.70.

24 Marina Ciccarini, *Il richiamo ambivalente. Immagini del Turco nella memorialistica polacca del Cinquecento*, Bergamo, 1991.

25 Refer to the works of Bohdan Baranowski, *Znajomość Wschodu w dawnej Polsce do XVIII wieku*. Łódź, 1950; Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu w Polsce w XVII i XVIII w.* Cracow, 1935; and Jan Reychman, Ed. *Szkice z dziejów polskiej orientalistyki*. Warsaw, 1966.



Contrary to the cherished role of Christian saviour of the nobles, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, or for the sake of simplicity, Poland's role as the ultimate Christian state can be called questionable, since wars with the Ottomans actually took up little time in their mutual, mostly peaceful relationship.<sup>26</sup>

The relationship with Hungary, as well as the union (at the beginning, 1385, of a 333personal nature, later, in 1569, of a constitutional nature) with Lithuania, forever changed the political perspective of the Polish state. Early on, the two states of Poland and Lithuania were surprisingly independent and however equal they had been perceived, the nature of their union slowly saw the strong assimilation of the two parts and the greater assumption of Polish culture by the nobles. The states bordering Jagiello's realm during that period, the kingdom of Hungary, the principality of Moldavia to the south, as well as the Crimean Khanate and principality of Muscovy to the east, meant that relations with the Ottomans were always going to be on the political agenda.<sup>27</sup>

This Polish-Hungarian friendship, it should be noted, always played a key role in the region's politics. Not only had they both been seen for a long time as bastions of Christendom, but their relationship was very much based on familiar ties as well. As early as 1468 does a letter appear, addressed from the King of Hungary to King Kazimierz IV promising, "*We shall be friends to every friend of the king, and we shall be enemies to the king's enemies, without difference, be they Christians or Muslims.*"<sup>28</sup> Later on, the semi-mythical, much-celebrated national hero of the Hungarian nation, Janos Hunyadi, the White Knight and the "soul of hostility" towards the

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26 Kołodziejczyk, *Native Nobilities and Foreign Absolutism: A Polish-Ottoman Case*, Studia Caroliensia, 3-4. 2004, pp. 303-308.

27 Marian Biskup, Ed. *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. 1, Warsaw, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982, pp.320-322.

28 Kemal H. Karpat and Robert W. Zens, op.cit., p.71.

Ottomans,<sup>29</sup> was himself a sort of adopted son of King Sigismund, who had after all, been responsible for ennobling him. The events in Hungary usually held very serious ramifications for the Commonwealth and its army, and vice versa.

In order to understand the diplomatic policy-making of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, we should understand the composition of key parts of the state which were directly involved in such processes. Being a union of two, brotherly states, the Commonwealth's highest political bodies were the king himself, two chancellors, and two vice-chancellors, one of each from Poland, and the same from Lithuania. We should note, however, that after 1573, the king did not have the authority to make any decision regarding war or peace without consulting the senate. The senate's main duties were to always be present at court and to prepare and send envoys to foreign lands, under the royal orders. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the restrictions on royal power forbid the king from receiving or sending envoys on his own, so that every diplomatic decision was made along with the senators.

A special role was played by the Crown hetmans in diplomacy with the Ottomans, Crimean Tatars, Moldavia, and Wallachia. In 1595, the grand hetman even managed to simultaneously act as the chancellor, and thus was free to conduct war against the Turks and Crimean Tatars on his own authority, as well as discuss or conclude peace, as necessary. During the following conflicts between the Ottomans and Poland, this precedent was followed, and the grand hetmans were most influential in concluded truces. At times, the hetmans were even authorized to send their own envoys. The most notable of such were Zamoyski, Żółkiewski, and Koniecpolski.

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29 Lord Eversley, *The Turkish Empire From 1299 to 1914*, T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., London, 1923, p. 66.

Historians have noted that the limits imposed on the executive power of the Polish king, as well as the internal disagreements between the various branches of the Commonwealth's decision-making body, the king, magnates, and the nobility, as well as the highly-refined, and sometimes cumbersome, check and balance system which kept them together, combined to paralyze the foreign policy of the Commonwealth during the seventeenth century. This hierarchical system, most Polish historians agree, was modeled on Ottoman diplomacy.

The Ottomans were not unfamiliar with the decision-making policies of the Commonwealth. Consequently, Polish envoys were generally referred to as representatives of "the Polish king and the republic." When it sought fit, the Porte was even capable of using the ideologies and system of the Commonwealth against them. Much in line with the Islamic concept of diplomacy, the first mention of a permanent Polish envoy to the Porte did not appear until 1621, and even then it was not implemented. In fact, the only permanent envoy Poland had, until the reign of Władysław IV (1632-1648), had been that of the Papacy. The greater part of Ottoman-Polish relations were maintained by temporary embassies.

Polish envoys were divided into "small" and "great," depending on the matters which were to be discussed. Small envoys were sent to discuss smaller, less-serious matters. The members of such envoys were generally chosen from among the senate, and many of them gained considerable experience during their years as diplomats, usually traveling to the Ottoman capital several times during their career. Embassies resulted in tremendous costs for both the Turks and Poles over time, and the rising cost of keeping them meant that they began to be chosen from among the Commonwealth's magnates, who were capable of supporting their own diplomatic missions, instead of from the senate. It has been noted, however, that the envoys chosen from the senate were much more educated and experienced in dealing with diplomatic matters than were their aristocratic colleagues.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE BEGINNINGS OF OTTOMAN - POLISH RELATIONS

Poland, known to the Ottomans as Lehistan, following the the semi-mythic tradition of Poland's first king, Lech, always held a special place in Ottoman culture, and consequently, its politics. Although when looking to the Ottoman chronicles, Poland is hardly often mentioned, and when it is mentioned, it is only in passing , the strong relationship between them is realized from a broader look at the two nations' histories. Despite powerful campaigns aimed at vilifying the "Turk" as the epitomy of craftiness and perverseness, Polish nobles still looked on him with a sense of a curiosity not at all dissenting.

Although they probably met on the battlefield much earlier<sup>30</sup>, the first instance of Ottoman-Polish diplomatic relations takes us back to the beginning of the fifteenth century. In 1386, Władysław Jagiello married Polish queen Jadwiga Hedwig, becoming King Władysław II of Poland<sup>31</sup>. With the support of his ally, Witold of Lithuania, he would become the first Polish king to initiate official diplomatic contact with the sultan.<sup>32</sup> Such contact was delayed, according to Kołodziejczyk, only because of the battles each state had been involved in; one at Grunwald-Tannenberg (1410), the other at Ankara (1402).<sup>33</sup>

The Balkans had always been a sort of crossroads for the various empires of history. In 1393, sultan Bayezid had led the first Ottoman invasion of the region, focusing his attention on Wallachia. In 1389, the Wallachian prince, Mircea, agreed to pay tribute to the sultan, and from that time on it was considered a vassal territory by the Ottomans, and regular tribute began to flow to the Ottoman capital. Most importantly, the

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30 Some historians mention the Battle of Kosovo (1389) and the fact that Polish knights were present there. See Janusz Pajewski, *Buńczuk i koncerz. Z dziejów wojen polsko-tureckich*, Poznań, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1997, p. 7.

31 Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, *Tarih Boyunca Osmanlı-Polonya İlişkileri*, Ankara, 1985, p.248.

32 Krzysztof Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p.22.

33 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p.99.

establishment of an Ottoman presence in the region meant a real and considerable danger for the Christian kings.<sup>34</sup>

According to Polish historian Jan Długosz, in 1414 the Polish king sent two envoys to the Ottomans to negotiate a truce regarding the situation of Hungary, who had felt threatened by growing Ottoman power and who had asked the Poles for their assistance in the matter.<sup>35</sup> This action, taken in place of direct intervention in Hungary by Poland, can be considered the first official contact between representatives of the two states. Polish envoys were received warmly by the sultan in the capital at Bursa, and were granted a six-year truce.<sup>36</sup>

This truce was seen as a great success on the Polish side, despite ensuing events which saw a continuation of hostilities in the state in question. The negative turn of events also gained attention in Poland, where the idea of cooperating with the Ottomans at the expense of their Hungarian neighbors proved grossly unpopular among those most influential, with one of the royal envoys even being accused to being an Ottoman spy. Some historians, as did numerous onlookers during that period, assert that since that time, an alliance had been established between the Ottomans and the Poles, but any factual document truly representing such has never been found.<sup>37</sup> Along with this reality, subsequent events involving Hungary and Poland lend to such a claim's falsity. In any case, the report of this first, historical agreement, read as follows:

*King Władysław, who is genuinely sorry for the Hungarians and wants to remove the threat hanging over them, sends two of his knights, Skarbek of*

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34 N. Beldiceanu, "Eflâk." The Encyclopedia of Islam. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, vol. II, Leiden, 1960, pp. 687-89.

35 Jan Reychman, *Historia Turcji*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, 1973, p. 51.

36 Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam ansiklopedisi: Osmanpazarı – Resuldar, "Polonya," vol. 34, Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007, p. 310.

37 See Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p. 24; *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, Ed. Marian Biskup, vol. I, Warszawa, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982, p.351.

*Góra and Gregory the Armenian, to the Sultan, demanding that he stop his invasion of Hungary, release all his prisoners and conclude a truce for six years, otherwise the King will attack the Sultan with all his forces.*

*The Sultan receives the two envoys graciously and generously provides them with everything they need. He invited them to several banquets and finally promises to end hostilities and conclude a six-year truce with Hungary.*

*To add weight to his promise, he agrees to send his own envoys to Hungary.*

*Skarbek travels through Wallachia and returns safely to Poland to report to Władysław; however, the Turks hesitate to set out without a written safe conduct, so Gregory goes ahead to arrange for one, but when he applies for it to the Ban of Temessna, he is thought to be a spy and put in prison, where his goods, clothes, parcels and even his boot laces are rigorously searched in case he is carrying letters from the Turks.*

*When the Turks learn what has happened, they resume ravaging Hungarian territory and even King Władysław cannot stop them, though repeatedly asked to try. The Polish envoy is finally released and returns to King Władysław.<sup>38</sup>*

In 1434, Władysław Jagiello died, and his nine-year old son succeeded him, taking the name Władysław III . The Treaty of Lubowla, signed in 1412 between Poland and Hungary, had established both Moldavia and Red Ruthenia under Polish rule. Since as early as the 1340's, Poland had pushed to gain control of the important trading cities of Halicz and Lwow, both in western Ruthenia. As a result, Poland would gain a border with the Danube, and its borders subsequently approached the Black Sea. As was expected, the Polish State profited greatly by these events.<sup>39</sup> Strong personal and social

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38 Maurice Michael, *The Annals of Jan Długosz*, Chichester, IM Publishers, 1997, pp.418-419.

39 Refer to the works of Kołodziejczyk, "Political and Diplomatic Relations between Poland and the Ottoman Empire throughout History," *War and Peace; 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman-*

ties, as well as a desire to cooperate for their common good, had made such an agreement between the Poles and Hungarians possible. Along with official recognition of the unification of these territories under the Polish crown, the two nations had informally agreed to cooperate against any common enemy. To many influential nobles, this especially included the Ottomans.<sup>40</sup>

The year 1439 saw an Ottoman diplomat make the journey to the Polish capital for the first time. On this occasion, it was to offer an alliance with the Poles. The timing of this visit is interesting, however, since the Ottoman-Hungarian war had recently got under way. A year later, when Hungarian king Sigismund died, Polish cardinal Oleśnicki, who had been one of King Jagiello's most trusted servants, offered Władysław as a candidate to be his successor.<sup>41</sup> Upon successfully being placed on the Hungarian throne, Władysław was left without a choice regarding such an alliance. We know from various chronicles that the young king, not wanting to betray Hungary, refused to provide the Ottoman party with the answer they desired.<sup>42</sup> Despite Ottoman dissatisfaction with this decision, Lithuanian delegates were entertained by Sultan Murad the following year, and were again offered friendship and alliance.<sup>43</sup>

The crusade which took place in 1444, known to historians as the "long campaign,"<sup>44</sup> was supposed to offer a Christian response to the Muslim push into Transylvania. In 1440, the Ottoman army had turned up to besiege the Hungarian fortress at Belgrade, but under the leadership of sultan

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*Polish Relations*. Istanbul, 1999, p. 21; *Developments in the Character of Ottoman-Polish Relations until 1795*, *Türkler*; 9, Ankara, 2002, p. 680.

40 Biskup, op. cit., pp. 324-331.

41 Norman Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 1, New York, Columbia University Press, 1982, pp.135-138.

42 Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, *Lech*, E12, V, Leiden, 1978, p.720.

43 Jan Reychman, *The 550<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Poland and Turkey*, Ankara, 1964, p.1.

44 Kenneth M. Setton, Harry W. Hazard, and Norman P. Zacour, Ed. *A History of the Crusades*, vol. IV: *The Impact of the Crusades on Europe*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1990, p. 271.

Murad, they were unable to take it.<sup>45</sup> The Vatican's prolonged call to "expel the Turks from Europe" saw volunteers from all Christian countries, many among their ranks themselves from Polish lands, although Poland, as a sovereign political entity, did not officially want to support the struggle against them.<sup>46</sup>

Two years earlier, Władysław had denied an Ottoman delegation, sent by the sultan to propose peace in exchange for the city of Belgrade. Since then, he had united the Polish and Hungarian crowns, and had established Janos Hunyadi as voivode of Transylvania, and in doing so, further ignited the cause of crusade. Now, contrary to the wishes of the Polish diet and his own royal advisers, the Polish king was swayed by the papal legate. Together with his chancellor and vice chancellor, who had previously been responsible for directing the foreign policy of the state<sup>47</sup>, he accepted the pope's holy mission, becoming the principle commander of elements of the Hungarian army.<sup>48</sup> Sultan Murad looked for a way to establish peace, but found few takers, as the Hungarians were keen on taking the offensive and bent on dispelling their Ottoman rivals once and for all. Władysław committed his negotiator, but all they could agree to was a short-term truce.

On the battlefield, Hunyadi was quickly becoming the terror of the Ottomans. On his first encounter with the Turks he commanded an army one-quarter the size of the Ottoman force. Despite the disparity in numbers, they inflicted upon the Turks a serious defeat, killing over twenty-thousand. Upon hearing the news of Hunyadi's victory, Sultan Murad sent eighty-thousand more soldiers under the command of a different general, but they too were defeated. Enthusiasm among the Christian states was roused by such military victories, and their confidence swelled tremendously, albeit

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45 See the opening chapter of Peter Sugar, *Southeastern Europe Under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*, University of Washington Press, 2007.

46 Mehmet İnbaşı, *Ukrayna'da Osmanlılar*, İstanbul, 2004, p.23.

47 Kenneth M. Setton, Harry W. Hazard, and Norman P. Zacour, op. cit., p.304.

48 İnalçık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1995, p.29.



dangerously. At this time, a coalition was being formed under the leadership of the Polish monarch. Gaining the support of previous Ottoman allies in Serbia further strengthened the Christians' morale. Under the full support of the Papacy, who had itself had been waging a propaganda war against the Muslim infidels as well as selling indulgences to any faithful Christian warriors willing to take up the fight, together with an Ottoman army stretched thin by conflicts in its Eastern territories, Europe's hopes of ousting the Ottomans looked favourable.<sup>49</sup>

Within a few months, Christian forces had resumed the crusade. Christian Coalition armies defeated the Turks in several battles across the Balkans, and Hunyadi returned to Buda the triumphant war hero. The results of these victories meant that Serbia was now independent of Ottoman control, and Wallachia would be ceded to Hungary. The treaty was meant to last ten years, and was sworn to by the sovereigns Władysław and Murad on their respective holy books. The losses had even further-reaching consequences in the Porte. Murad, weary of war, abdicated his sultanate to his first son, Mehmed.

The Hungarian Diet, although having previously accepted the leadership of their Polish brethren, were outraged with the signing of any accord with the Turks. They were determined to inflict the most serious casualties against the Ottomans, and looked to further weaken the Turkish forces as to prevent their future offensive into Europe. The Serbian monarch was convinced to again take up arms in hope of gaining further territories for his kingdom, but even with these additional troops, Hunyadi commanded a combined force of no more than ten-thousand. Meanwhile, in Anatolia, Murad had been called upon to again gather his army for a push against the reduced Christian forces. The Ottomans arrived at the city of Varna before

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49 Lord Eversley, *The Turkish Empire From 1288 to 1914*, T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., London, 1923, pp. 66-67.

the Christians could even get wind of their military movements.<sup>50</sup> In a victory which, since then, is recognized as having truly established the Ottomans in the Balkans,<sup>51</sup> Christian armies were humiliated at Varna, and upon the death of King Władysław III in 1444, the formal, albeit fragile, unity between Poland and Hungary was severed.

While the Ottomans were busy capturing Constantinople, Poland was pushing its borders as far as the Baltic Sea. In 1456, the Polish vassal in Moldavia, Petru Aron, accepted Ottoman sovereignty.<sup>52</sup> Sultan Mehmed II set his sights on the Crimea, and quickly established the Ottomans as a force there. This, of course, had repercussions for Bogdan, which was a territory the new Polish king, Kazimierz, who had taken the throne in 1447, was keen on protecting under Polish interests. Despite such developments, the Ottomans and Poles avoided conflict for nearly another forty years.<sup>53</sup>

That same year, Petru Aron died, and was succeeded by Stephen IV (also known in history as Stephen the Great), who would live to rule until 1504. Contrary to Ottoman interests, he supported continuing vassalage to Poland, which eventually led to the Ottoman invasion of Moldavia twenty years later. Poland sought to prevent sending its own troops and thus intensifying the conflict, and sent their diplomat to the sultan. Although unsuccessful in his mission, as the Ottomans refused to withdraw completely from Moldavia, leaving a double suzerainty there, hostilities ceased and Ottoman-Polish relations continued along a peaceful path. Two years later, in 1478, Ottoman envoys were sent to Poland with the proposal of a combined front against Hungary, which was understandably rejected by Kazimierz. In 1481, Mehmed died, and his son took power.

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50 Eversley, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

51 See Colin Imber, *The Crusade of Varna, 1443-5*, Ashgate Publishing, 2006, pp. 9-31.

52 Baykal, op. cit., p.248.

53 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p.21.

In May, 1484, the newly-crowned sultan Bayezid II, left the imperial capital with the intent of deciding the fate of Bogdan once and for all. Obviously this meant bringing it permanently into Ottoman hands. Crossing the Danube, he brought a number of Crimean Tatar regiments over to join the ranks of the Ottoman army, and together in the summer of 1484, they invaded the cities of Kili and Akkerman. Stephen requested military support and protection from the Polish king, but the Polish forces were unable to contain their adversaries.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, a Polish representative was dispatched to Constantinople to secure a truce. Two years was all that was granted by the sultan, which was supported by an imperial *ahdname*, on condition that the Poles would promise to forge friendly relations with the Ottomans.<sup>55</sup> In return, the Ottoman diplomat was sent to Poland to acquire Kazimierz's sign.

Five years later, after the death of Kazimierz, a similar agreement was extended to his son, King Jan Albert (1492-1501), this time for a term of three years. First, a written confirmation was required and sent to Istanbul<sup>56</sup>, and after the king himself was instead asked to confirm the treaty with an oath, taken in the presence of the Ottoman envoy, and to provide a royal ratification.<sup>57</sup> All captives which had been taken during the conflict were to be returned to their countries, and in the years that followed, further agreements regarding economic cooperation between the two countries were appended<sup>58</sup>, with economic activities between the two states being specially regulated for the first time.<sup>59</sup>

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54 Baykal, op. cit., p.249.

55 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p.110.

56 A. Sokołowski and J. Szujski, Ed. *Codes epistolares saeculi decimi quinti*, vol.1, Cracow, 1876, no. 333, pp. 348-349.

57 Ed. A. Lewicki, *Codex epistolares saeculi decimi quinti*. Vol.3, Cracow, 1894, no. 402, pp. 416-7.

58 Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, *Catalogue des documents Turcs, Documents Concernant la Pologne et les Payes Voisins de 1455 a 1672*, Warsaw, 1959, pp. 22-31.

59 Andrzej Dziubiński, *Na szlakach Orientu, Handel między Polską a imperium osmańskim w XVI-XVIII wieku*, Wrocław, Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1998, pp. 12-13.

The fifteenth century relations show a marked difference from the centuries that would follow. What we can see from these earliest instances of Ottoman-Polish relations is somewhat of a cautiousness on the part of the Ottomans. Not yet the mighty world empire who confidently dealt with powerful neighboring states on all sides, they were, figuratively, testing the waters of a sea they had fully yet to sail.

## CHAPTER 3

### OTTOMAN-POLISH RELATIONS DURING THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Historians agree that Ottoman-Polish diplomacy evolved from a relationship primarily economic into one more political, as both states grew in power and expanded their borders, to the point that they were nearly touching. Of course, if we were to look at a map of the European continent from the period in question, we would see a much different representation than the land-locked, nation-state puzzle which is apparent today. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth stretched over the lands of the modern-day countries of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, most of Ukraine, and at times, parts of Moldova (Moldavia). The Ottomans, who had idealized themselves as the fore bearers of Islam in the West, had extended their territories to include most of the Balkans, with allies in the Crimea. This meant that only Hungary, who like Poland at times had been envisioned by Rome, center of the Catholic world, or had even envisioned themselves as the defenders of Christendom, and consequently of European civilization, lent itself as a sort of no-man's land between the two powers. Poland, along with Hungary and Venice, had proved to be the most valuable Christian states for the Ottomans, as these were the ones with whom they, at one time or another, shared a border. As history reveals, neither Wallachia, nor Moldavia, could ever truly be incorporated or assimilated into the Ottoman Empire, so the Ottomans attempted to promote their own interests in these lands so they could tie themselves to a powerful Poland, and kept themselves close to a powerful Poland so that they could increase their sovereignty in Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>60</sup>

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60 See Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 103, 230.

Hungary often played an important role in Ottoman-Polish relations. This role is rooted in the history of the two states, in particular an event towards the end of the fourteenth century. When Kazimierz the Great died in 1370, his nephew, the Hungarian king Louis of Anjou, took the throne. This was the beginning of somewhat of a personal union between the two states, and brought Poland to the border of the Ottoman-controlled Balkans, as well as the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>61</sup>

Struggles over the inheritance of royal power provided fertile ground for diplomacy to flourish and negotiations with surrounding states to develop.<sup>62</sup> Hungary, quite expectedly, more often than not tended to side with the Poles. This, as European neighbors, was both culturally and religiously, as well as geographically strategic. However, powerful elements in Hungary sometimes pushed for a more neutral policy, or even seldom followed Ottoman protocol, that is, if it leaned to their benefit.

The same can be said of the peculiar case of the Zaporozhnian Cossacks, who, since declaring their "national interests" in sharp contrast to the noble culture and politics of the Commonwealth, as well as in definite religious opposition to what they viewed as the "Turkish devil," had become a balance of power not to be taken lightly. Sometimes acting in favor of one, sometimes the other, sometimes on their own, they nearly always lived up to their reputation on the steppes.

The Black Sea offered a prime trade route right at the fringes of the European continent, with its economic power centered in Venice, and Asian markets which reached as far as India and even China, and nearly every land in between. For centuries before either the Ottoman state or the Commonwealth had come into existence, the region was one of the most sought after for those who could navigate it.

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61 Norman Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

62 İpsirli *op. cit.*, p. 203.

For the Ottomans, Black Sea policy had typically based on the interest of security after the fall of the Byzantine capital, meaning twin imperatives: keeping the sea itself peaceful, in the interest of their own trading vessels, and keeping the northern steppe wild. This same "wild field," as Polish writers often referred to it, was, according to some historians, the very roots of the Cossack community's existence. So long as most foreign vessels were barred from entering it, and as long as a stable relationship could be maintained with client states along its edges, the Ottomans held a virtual monopoly on the Black Sea's wealth, whilst the Crimean Tatars had kept a natural check on the imperial ambitions of the growing northern powers. The Cossack sea raids showed the vulnerability of the Ottomans to concerted attacks from the northern shore.<sup>63</sup> Now, not only was Ottoman economic prestige on the line, but also the reputation of an increasingly agitated padishah.<sup>64</sup>

The Ottomans had first mounted an attack on the important Black Sea trading town of Akkerman in 1420, but to no avail, as they encountered strong resistance by forces under the leadership of Moldavian prince Alexander. Having secured control of the Bosphorus Straits in 1453 with the capture of the Byzantine capital, the Ottomans, as did the prior imperial powers before them, had fully turned their efforts to monopolizing the other strategically important trade routes up north, to the mouth of the Black Sea and beyond, and to opportunities that lay therein. In 1484, they returned to Akkerman, and this time, along with taking Kili, which had been originally established to counteract Ottoman trade in the region, and which was left virtually defenseless by the Moldavian prince Stephen during the campaign, the Ottomans gained a decisive victory which would have lasting influence not only on their own economic power, but also on the economic history of the region.

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63 Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History*, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp.139-140.

64 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 129.

The opportunity for trade and economic control spurred the necessity for diplomacy, as did the expansion of the Empire itself, both geographically as well as in terms of the goals it set for itself. It is historically accurate to say that only strong states, both economically and militarily, can succeed in diplomacy. As the Ottoman state grew, so did its territories, and so did the necessity to develop relations within its own back yard. Consequently, not only did the necessity increase, but so did the Ottomans' ability to affect the world around it. Once only one of several players on the field of European stratego-politics, it became the dominant force to be reckoned with. It closely monitored the developments in Europe and attempted to create policy based on the assumption that they could ultimately benefit from such events.<sup>65</sup>

Whatever struggle there had been for its control, the Ottomans managed to assert themselves rather satisfactorily all around the Black Sea region, turning it into what some historians have repeatedly called a "*Turkish lake*." The arrival of the Ottomans meant the local powers that be began a jostle to be among their list of allies. As the saying goes, with power comes friends. Ottoman economic interests actually lent themselves quite well to their political interests, and political mingling expanded economic capabilities even more.

The Poles, in their own right, had seen the Black Sea as an opportunity to strengthen their own economic position in Europe. Although they posed no direct threat to Ottoman economic power in the region, their interests in the Black Sea trade routes (primarily the sending of grain and wood to Venice)<sup>66</sup> We know from two documents, both preserved in the Topkapı Palace Museum archives and dated to 1497, that the Ottomans knew of the Polish king's actions, but not of his exact intentions. Regardless,

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65 İpsirli op. cit, p. 203.

66 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p.122.



these particular letters, addressed to the royal court from Bogdan (voivode) Stephen, got the attention of the Turkish capital. The first reads, "...*The Sultan's envoy has been accorded all due respect. Armies have been gathered at Erdal (Transylvania)...The king of Poland is also gathering forces in Krakow and big concentrations are evident in Kamanice, and it is unknown whether these forces are to march against Bogdan or the Crimean Tatar Khan.*" The second, "...*the King of Poland is in the vicinity of Krakow gathering an army and has sent a part of his forces to Kamieniec.*"<sup>67</sup>

These events sparked a rivalry which, without much time would spill over onto the political scene.<sup>68</sup> Despite having established peace with the Ottomans in 1492, Jan Albert, under pressure from Pope Alexander Borgia<sup>69</sup>, indeed sent Polish troops in 1497<sup>70</sup> in order to, as the Poles were planning, regain access to the Black Sea by reasserting Polish control in Moldavia. The king's tactics aimed primarily at weakening Ottoman positions along the Danube, where they had established several fortifications.<sup>71</sup> Stephen, interestingly, asked for Ottoman help this time against the Poles, and although he later changed his mind and opted favorably for the Polish side, Jan Albert's forces were completely overwhelmed, and catastrophe ensued. The Ottomans dispatched four thousand of their soldiers to Poland the following year, where with the help of numerous Crimean Tatar volunteers, they went about pillaging several important border towns.<sup>72</sup> It would be the last incident of open conflict between the two nations for nearly a century.

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67 Nigar Anafarta, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile Lehistan arasındaki münasebetlerle ilgili tarihi belgeler, Historical documents concerning relations between the Ottoman Empire and Lehistan (Poland)*. Istanbul, Bilmen Bsmv., 1979, p.9.

68 Bartl, *The Cossack State and Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century and first half of the Eighteenth Century*, İlmî araştırmalar VI, Istanbul, 1995, p. 301.

69 The pope, who had been monitoring developing Ottoman-Polish relations from Rome, wished to sway the king's mind regarding the Ottomans, using Poland's position as a defender of Christendom.

70 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p.22.

71 İnbaşı, op. cit., p. 25.

72 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı,, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1998, vol. II, pp. 184-85; Selâhattin Tansel, *Sultan II. Bâyezit'in Siyasî Hayatı*, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul, 1966, pp. 87-92.

Jan Albert died in 1501, leaving the throne to his brother, Alexander, who in his own respect, reestablished and furthered healthy relations with the Ottomans. A five-year truce followed the temporary treaty between the two in 1502<sup>73</sup>. This reawakening of good will encouraged the parties involved to search for a solution to contentions over Moldavia. The behavior of Stephen ten years earlier had made the Poles weary, and it was commonly believed that his interests had played a key role in stirring up trouble between them and the Ottomans. This time, Alexander would allow no room for the new Moldavian voivode, Bogdan, to create such enmity. A royal envoy was sent in secret to the sultan, but it proved too late, as Bogdan had already secured the support of Bayezid.

Meanwhile, the Ottomans themselves were busy securing healthy relations on paper with Poland's neighbors; Hungary and Kazimierz IV's son, Czech king Władysław II. The pact, itself part of Topkapı's collection and dated to November of 1503, established that *"...A seven year peace pact between the two states is drawn up and present to the King's messenger...During this period, both sides pledge to never engage in acts of aggression against each other and not to raise an army. Furthermore, in compliance with the wish of the King of Hungary, the said seven year pact also holds true for the Kingdom of Poland (among other European nations)."*<sup>74</sup>

In 1505, Moldavian envoys arrived in Krakow with a marriage proposal which would formally tie them to the Polish kingdom, and which would establish peace and alliance, as well as promote Polish sovereignty on Moldavian lands. Ottoman fears of such an alliance never materialized into anything more than a proposal, as Alexander unexpectedly died that year.

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73 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

74 Anafarta, op. cit., p.9.

Alexander's brother Sigismund was coronated in 1506. Accordingly, a year later, a one-year truce was agreed between him and sultan Bayezid, in continuation of the former king's friendly policy towards the Ottomans. On one hand, the Polish diplomacy reflected its fears of an expanding Muscovy, as well as the constant threat of Crimean Tatar raids. On the other, for Poland to have formally joined any union of Crusader forces would have contradicted their policy towards the Ottomans. This apparent catch twenty-two meant that Poland now faced was somewhat of a neutral position to both, and thus, rather astutely, they continued along the same way with the Turks.

The treaties which had existed were renewed in 1510 and again in 1512, this time for a period of five years. Furthering positive developments in relations with the Muslims, king Sigismund had also forged a valuable alliance with the khan of the Crimean Tatars, securing their support and services in opposition to a then strengthening Muscovy, although this relationship was never as sturdy or reliable as the one which had existed with the sultan.<sup>75</sup> When Selim I took the reins of the sultanate in 1512, the conditions of friendly relations with the Poles were not changed, and the agreements which had been concluded with Sigismund were again renewed, in 1514 and 1519, this time for three years. As the Ottomans returned home for the eastern campaign in Persia, Polish diplomats greeted them in the imperial capital with a message of congratulations<sup>76</sup>, and despite rumors that Selim was planning a campaign to Hungary which included marching through Poland, Sigismund managed to avoid war by relying on smart diplomacy.<sup>77</sup>

To understand the next step in Ottoman-Polish relations, one must grasp the importance and significance of Sultan Suleyman's reign. The Sixteenth Century has often been referred to as the Classical Age of Ottoman history. When Suleyman took control of the Ottoman Empire in 1520, the

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75 Selâhattin Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, Ankara, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1969, p.227.

76 Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p.31.

77 Tansel, op. Cit., p. 223.

young sultan envisioned Belgrade as the gateway to the conquest of Central Europe. Such a victory would allow the Ottomans, also busying themselves with Rhodes, which was seen as the “stepping stone” to ultimate supremacy in the Mediterranean, to triumphantly establish themselves in Europe. Where Mehmed the Conqueror had failed, Suleyman planned to succeed. He was relentless and unyielding, and his actions would have far-reaching implications for European, let alone Turkish, politics for ages to come.<sup>78</sup>

Polish fears towards Muscovy were again raised when the Grand Prince Vasiliy III Ivanovich courted the new sultan in 1521, proposing an alliance against Sigismund. Poland recognized that as Muscovy sought to further grow and gain power for themselves, their hard-fought friendship with the Ottomans was crucial to their own security as well as their sovereign existence.<sup>79</sup> Suleyman, however, duly declined such an accord, since he could not see himself becoming the ally of such a barbarian<sup>80</sup>, and because developing any such friendship would understandably damage the invaluable, and most importantly, stable friendly relations which had already been established with the Poles. The Ottomans knew that they would need this stability if they were to successfully and permanently position themselves on the map of Europe.

Although he had, early in his sultanate, declined an alliance with Muscovy, Suleyman did receive the backing of Crimean Khan Mahmud Giray. In a letter dated to 1521, the khan declared himself and his children the “*faithful servants of the Sultan*” and revealed his intention to attack Poland. However, after receiving Sigismund's emissary, and already having their hands full closer to home with the Cossacks and Nogais, Giray realized that attacking Poland was not in their best interest, and so, requested permission

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78 Norman Itkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition*, The University of Chicago Press, 1972, p.34.

79 Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p. 33.

80 İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol. II, İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1971, p. 74.

from the sultan to with go any new campaign.<sup>81</sup> Such military undertakings, the khan determined, would have to wait.

When Suleyman proposed, and later embarked on, his premature military campaign into Europe, no one had been expecting it. Not least that he would capture the city of Belgrade, then a Hungarian city, so soon, and with it extend the borders of his empire. In doing so, he positioned for himself direct access to Hungary, and an upper hand in regional politics, as well as a psychological edge with which to deal with the Christian states. Prior to this, Suleyman had encouraged Poland to remain neutral to the increasingly precarious position of Hungary<sup>82</sup>, but desiring to assist their neighbors, Poland looked for a way to help. Divergent interests again involving Hungary led to a short-lived rift in relations between the two states. When Ottoman troops, along with their Crimean Tatar allies, established their presence in the outskirts of Lwow in 1524, Sigismund, who had until that point looked for a way to avoid direct conflict with the Ottomans, was forced to send his delegates to request a new six-year agreement. Suleyman refused the articles referring to Hungary, and only accepted the agreement for a term of three years.<sup>83</sup>

As hard as he tried, the Ottoman sultan could not fully take Hungary within his empire's domains. He did manage, however, to capture its most important political and social centers. Despite Suleyman's movements into Europe as well as a recent, noticeably stalwart/robust attitude on the part of the Ottomans toward formal diplomacy with the Europeans, and furthermore, although he had antagonized the Habsburgs and in doing so, had virtually claimed the Hungarian throne for himself, relations with Poland had remained, for the most part, unharmed.<sup>84</sup> Many historians often point to and even claim an undoubtedly strong influence of the sultan's wife,

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81 *Anafarta, op. cit., pp. 10-11.*

82 Baykal, *op. cit., p.250.*

83 Kołodziejczyk, *op. cit., p. 22*; Reychman, *The 550<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Poland and Turkey*, Ankara, 1964, pp. 2-3.

84 İnbaşı, *op. cit., pp. 26-27.*

Roxolana, herself of Ruthenian origin, on the Ottoman policy-making of this period regarding eastern Europe.<sup>85</sup>

The Battle of Mohács (1526) was another turning point in the histories of the Ottoman Empire and Poland. Although the Polish gentry were sympathetic to their Hungarian neighbours, the nobles remained divided on exactly which course of action to take. Hungarian forces were left without the Polish support which they could previously rely upon and were soundly defeated, thus allowing Suleyman to make his way to the Hungarian capital and claim Buda without any complications. When the Hungarian king was killed during the fighting in 1526, a struggle for the throne had ensued, and the Ottomans promptly sought to use it as their first opportunity to show their influence there. They lent their support to the candidate John Zapolya<sup>86</sup>, who had previously been the voivode of Transylvania as well as an Ottoman vassal, and he was crowned as John I by the Hungarian nobles at the Tokay diet in November of the following year. In doing so, the Ottomans again strengthened their position in opposition to the Habsburgs, who themselves had been looking to gain a foothold in Hungary. Comfortably seizing the rest of the country soon after Suleyman would turn Hungary under Zapolya into a sort of buffer between them and the Habsburgs.<sup>87</sup>

The sultan summoned John's delegate one year later, and formally offered him support against the Habsburgs. Sigismund simultaneously supported John due to the nature of his coronation: on one hand, it served to further neutralize the Habsburg threat; on the other, it had bolstered peace with the Ottomans. Again fearing Muscovy, this time due mainly to the possible combined force of the Muscovian princes and their Habsburg counterparts, Poland applied to Suleyman for support in 1528, which was easily obtained, probably because they had both supported the same

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85 Dziubiński, "Polish-Ottoman Trade in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries." *War and Peace; 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman-Polish Relations*. Istanbul, 1999, p. 41.

86 Béla Köpeczi, Ed., *History of Transylvania*. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994, pp. 247-49.

87 Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 92-93.

candidate.<sup>88</sup> Five years later, a Polish delegate was again entertained by the sultan, and this time was granted an ahdname which was valid until either the king's or sultan's passing.<sup>89</sup>

In 1529, when Suleyman laid siege to Vienna, the Commonwealth was spared of any such attack. Ottoman efforts to expand in central Europe would not be realized, due to a combination of difficulties during the campaign. The Ottomans had reached their limit of viable expansion in the West, and although they had not gained formal control of the important city of Vienna, they now possessed territory in Hungary as well as a new vassal in Zapolya, its military efforts succeeding in neutralizing the Christian ability to counterattack.<sup>90</sup>

For a couple years, the Moldavian issue witnessed somewhat of a cooling down, but in 1530 the voivode Petru Raresh sparked a rebellion and attacked Poland. Claims he was acting by decree of the Ottoman sultan were repudiated by Suleyman, and Polish troops were committed in the padishah's "revenge expedition" of 1531. The combined forces easily succeeded in stamping out the rebellion. The Ottoman troops stayed to annex the steppes between Bender, Bucak, and Turla, thus strengthening their sovereignty in Moldavia, although the conflict had acted to resolve the Polish-Ottoman border in favor of the Poles. A warrant for the capture of the dethroned voivode was issued from Istanbul, and he was to be punished for disturbing a friend of the Ottomans,<sup>91</sup> but managed to escape to Transylvania

Although the two nations could not come to an agreement on the lands east of their common border, a matter which remained unresolved for the next hundred years<sup>92</sup>, cooperation regarding Moldavia had again acted to

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88 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 117.

89 Abrahamowicz, *Catalogue des documents Turcs, Documents Concernant la Pologne et les Payes Voisins de 1455 a 1672*, Warsaw, 1959, pp. 35-113, 120-85.

90 Shaw, op. cit., p.93.

91 Norman Davies, op. cit., p.144.

92 See Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 118.

strengthen the relations between the two states. As a result of talks which took place following the incidents in Moldavia, the Ottoman-Polish border was officially drawn for the first time.<sup>93</sup> What we can notice through such events is that although Poland had no plan to give up its own political interests so easily, it was quite willing to put them on hold for the time being in order to keep the peace with the Turks. In the process, they were disposed to follow the Ottomans' desire to eliminate all potential rivals<sup>94</sup> for control of the region, both for the sake of their friendship, as well as for their own benefit. That desire also included, as it did for the Poles, the containment of both the Habsburgs in the west, and Muscovy to the east. Rather than chance the existence of the state itself by underestimating the Habsburgs, the Polish nobles, for the most part, preferred concord with the sultans; at least that way they were almost guaranteed to keep an upper hand over the other Christian states and promote their position in the Ottoman pecking order.

The reign of Sigismund had witnessed the strong establishment of peace between the Ottoman Empire and Poland, not least because of his own diplomatic abilities. On the contrary, the personalities of the two rulers, he and Suleyman, were very much a crucial factor in the two nations' ability to shape diplomacy in a friendly way. When Sigismund died in 1548, his son Sigismund Augustus took the throne. The sultan promptly established the same good relations with the new king, offering condolences<sup>95</sup> for his father's death, and indicating the desire to continue on the same path he had forged with the late Sigismund. As it had initially done twenty years earlier, during this period the concept of "endless peace"<sup>96</sup> really became a popular one among the nobility, and although traditional Islamic perceptions of international relations warned against any such commitment to the

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93 İnbaşı, op. cit., p. 27.

94 Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p.34.

95 Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p.38.

96 Biskup, op. cit., p. 657.



Christians, the Ottomans seemed destined to secure just such a relationship, which should be seen by no means unprecedented.

The common anti-Habsburg policy of the two states served to further strengthen their relationship, much in the way that cooperation on Moldavia had previously done. Endless peace got support from the Ottoman side in 1553, and was formally accepted in March of 1554 by the Polish nobles. Not only should we recognize the significance of such an arrangement from the historical perspective of wider Christian-Muslim political relations, but we must not overlook the fact that with this "endless peace," the two states were departing from their previous policy of short-lived truces. The Ottomans were establishing perpetual peace with the "infidel," whilst the Poles were engaging in the same with "the Turk." During this period, one should also not fail to recognize the role of the sultan's Grand Vizier, Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, himself of Balkan origins and a part of the *devşirme* system. Sokullu served under three Ottoman sultans, and was always Suleyman's closest advisor. He played a key role in the military expeditions and diplomatic communications of Suleyman in Europe, and took part in the disputes over the Polish Crown, helping to maintain continuous peace with the Poles for nearly a decade.<sup>97</sup>

In 1564, it was prince Selim who hosted and granted imperial capitulations to the Polish delegate. The Ottoman-Polish peace was thus secured for the rest of Suleyman's lifetime. It is interesting that Selim had been given his father's blessing to conduct foreign policy on his own during this period, due to his recently acquired position and unprecedented status following the events of his brother's rebellion.<sup>98</sup> He was even allowed to issue

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97 see Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam ansiklopedisi: Osmanpazarı – Resuldar, "*Polonya*," vol. 34, Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007, p.312.

98 Prince Bayezid had been executed earlier that year, leaving Selim as the sultan's sole heir. See Kołodziejczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

his own personal seal<sup>99</sup>, showing the maturity he already possessed in dealing with matters of the state.

The dread of a strengthening Muscovy, who had recently dealt a death blow to their Muslim neighbors with the conquest of Kazan in 1552 and Astrakhan in 1556, never seemed to go completely away. In 1565 Sigismund Augustus's advisers proposed an Ottoman-Polish alliance against the growing eastern threat. In previous years, the Poles had looked for support among the Crimean Tatars to launch a front against the Muscovian princes, but to no avail, as their khans were well-known for perpetually changing their policies regarding diplomacy, and with this reputation, proved to be a less-than-reliable potential ally. Sigismund Augustus deduced that if he could gain support on the issue from the sultan, the sultan in turn, could pressure the Crimean Tatars to join any alliance which would be struck. The royal proposal, brought to the sultan in secret, was never accepted however, as Suleyman was preparing his last great push into Hungary, and had already planned to commit the majority of his forces there. Although he did not seemingly wish to get involved directly in any conflict with Muscovy, Suleyman did order Devlet Giray to commit his troops to the will of the Polish king, on the promise that the khan would be appropriately remunerated.<sup>100</sup>

Due to the long campaigning abroad, as well as other personal issues, the Ottoman Sultan Suleyman now grew weak. The grandeur which had characterized him throughout his life now quickly faded, and he died in 1566.<sup>101</sup> The historical records, as did many statesmen during his own time, have remembered him as the "magnificent" sultan. He was beloved not only by his subjects but by foreign onlookers as well, so much so that news of his death was concealed from the masses for three weeks; even the letters reporting Ottoman victories continued for some time to bear his name. This

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99 Petra Kappert, *Die osmanischen Prinzen und ihre Residenz Amasya im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, Istanbul, 1976, p. 140.

100 See Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p. 40.

101 Sutherland Menzies, *History of the Ottoman Empire in Europe*, William L. Allison, New York, 1880.

is only partly because of his success as a law-giver in his own realms. It always had something to do with the ability he possessed abroad, both diplomatically and as a military leader. Western political and military leaders continued to reserve their highest commendations for him even after his death.<sup>102</sup> Suleyman was replaced by Selim II, and with him, came a change in the previously neutral policy towards Muscovy.

Where Suleyman had not wanted to become directly involved in the developing rivalry between Muscovy and their Polish allies, Selim instead readied the imperial troops for a campaign to Astrakhan, one which he envisioned as a sort of re-conquest of the former Muslim-controlled territories.<sup>103</sup> The sultan sent his delegate to Poland to request for the right to pass through Polish lands on his way to Astrakhan<sup>104</sup>, as well as to warn the king to ready his own forces in preparations which were supposedly being made against the common enemy, Muscovy.<sup>105</sup> The Polish side politely declined sending troops, but did allow a royal envoy to observe the campaign from the front lines.<sup>106</sup>

During these years, happenings both on and around the Black Sea were often most absorbing for all parties involved. For the Ottomans, Black Sea policy had typically based on the interest of security after the fall of the Byzantine capital, meaning twin imperatives: keeping the sea itself peaceful, in the interest of their own trading vessels, and keeping the northern steppe wild. So long as most foreign vessels were barred from entering it, and as long as a stable relationship could be maintained with client states along its edges, the Ottomans held a virtual monopoly on the Black Sea's wealth, whilst the Crimean Tatars had kept a natural check on the imperial ambitions of the growing northern powers. The increased number, and bolstered

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102 Jason Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizons*, Picador, 1998, p. 81.

103 İnalçık, *Osmanlı-Rus Rekabetinin Menşei ve Don-Volga Kanalı Teşebbüsü (1569)*, 1948, pp. 349-402.

104 anusz Pajewski, *Projekt przymierza polsko-tureckiego za Zygmunta Augusta*. Warszawa, Libraria Nova, 1936, pp. 9-12.

105 See Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p. 41.

106 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 123.

success, of Cossack sea raids showed the vulnerability of the Ottomans to concerted attacks from the northern shore.<sup>107</sup> Now, not only was Ottoman economic prestige on the line, but also the reputation of an increasingly agitated padishah.<sup>108</sup>

In 1568, looking to take advantage of Ottoman power for his own sake, and at the same time, towards damaging Ottoman-Polish relations, Devlet Giray had sent a delegate to Istanbul to make a complaint about Cossack raids, under the pretext that they had been instigated by the Polish king himself.<sup>109</sup> This would become a reoccurring issue of contention between the Turks and Poles during the following decades. Devlet Giray reported to the sultan that the Cossacks had come as pirates, capturing their women and livestock, and escaped back to the place from where they had come. While we consider the role played by the Cossacks, we must usually also recognize how the Crimean Tatars had simultaneously attempted to increase their own standing. They too looked to benefit from the relations of the two regional powers, and their constant interactions with the Cossacks during this period, whether hostile or friendly, also proves an absorbing topic. It was the first instance of Crimean intervention, if we can call it that, in the diplomatic ties between the Ottomans and Poland. The seventeenth century would offer many further examples of such "intervention."

The death of Sigismund Augustus, the last drop in the Jagiellonian bloodline, brought a time of confusing prospects to Poland. As local rulers in the surrounding territories jostled for maximum power in their own lands, the Polish-Lithuanian boyars, determined to strengthen their personal union, came together and tried to determine which direction their state would take next.<sup>110</sup> The Ottomans, in their own right, also looked to grant support to a candidate which would follow the previous diplomatic policy set forth by the

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107 Charles King, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

108 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 129.

109 Janusz Pajewski, op. cit., pp. 13-18.

110 Kołodziejczyk, *Polonya ve Osmanlı Devleti Arasında Tarih Boyunca Siyasi ve Diplomatik İlişkileri*. İstanbul, 1999, p.24.

Jagiellonians, and one who would not pose too large of a threat to their own sovereignty in Moldavia and Hungary.<sup>111</sup> So, to prevent both the Habsburgs and Muscovy from promoting their own interests in Poland, grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha gave imperial backing to Henry de Valois, the younger brother of the king of France.

It had been originally suggested that Mehmed had been willing to send imperial troops if Henry, or any foreign candidate for that matter, was chosen. When the Polish candidates he suggested were turned down, the grand vizier apparently changed his opinion, frightened by the prospect of greater Habsburg or even Muscovian influence.<sup>112</sup> The Poles promised Selim that they had no intention of electing a candidate who would go against the Ottomans.<sup>113</sup> In 1572, the “democracy of the nobles” responded, by choosing Henry in a historical vote. From this time on, having no Jagiellonian dynasty to guide the royal succession, the Polish szlachta, the nobility, would choose its leaders.<sup>114</sup>

Henry's reign lasted only four months. When the French King Charles IX died later that year, Henry returned to France to assume the position, taking the title Henry III. Again, competition for the Polish crown began, and this time the Ottomans supported the voivode of Transylvania, Stephan Báthory. Stephan had previously been supported by the Turks when he had become voivode, and was considered a good candidate due to his experience in dealing with the Ottomans.<sup>115</sup> It becomes increasingly obvious during this period that the Ottomans felt rather familiar with, and confident in dealing within, the political happenings of the Christian states. Stephan assumed the thrown in 1576.

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111 Baykal, op. cit., p.252.

112 See Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p.51.

113 Pajewski, *Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego*, Kraków: Nakładem Autora, 1933, pp. 25-26.

114 See Wawrzyniak, op. cit., p.46.

115 Béla Köpeczi, Ed., *History of Transylvania*. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994, p. 260.

The following year, the new king sent his delegate to Istanbul to renew the agreement with the Turks, and in 1577, it was officially approved by the Polish monarch.<sup>116</sup> When rumors from the Vatican tried to vilify Stephan as the sultan's puppet, Poland became increasingly isolated from the Christian world for several years. In any case, it did work to preserve diplomacy with the Porte, and in 1578, the two countries exchanged diplomats again. Friendly relations would continue throughout the decade that followed, despite constant rumors that the Polish king had been attempting to create a "Holy Alliance" of Christian allies against the Ottomans. His mediatory role in the European politics of the Ottoman state even resulted, later that same year, in the first English delegation to Istanbul.<sup>117</sup> Stephan died in 1586, and the son of the Swedish king Jan succeeded him. He would be known as Sigismund III (Sigismund Vasa).

Sigismund Vasa's candidacy has been originally supported by the Turks, as the Porte had again been wary of any push by the Habsburgs or Muscovites onto the Polish political scene, and initially the good relations between the two states continued. Under increasing pressure from the Habsburgs, Sigismund Vasa acted in opposition to the Ottomans, instead favoring pro-Catholic, and in turn pro-Habsburg, policy. At the same time, he had delayed the Polish envoy to the Porte, and furthermore, the envoy died before he could secure any agreement. The threat of a possible Ottoman campaign panicked many in Poland, but then in 1591, the Ottomans entered into conflict with the Habsburgs. Friendly relations with Poland were supported, and consequently renewed, with the help of Jewish interest from Istanbul in Polish trade<sup>118</sup>, namely one Solomon Ashkenazi. He had practiced in Poland and now resided in Istanbul, and was extremely knowledgeable about both countries. This expertise was much appreciated in the Porte, and

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116 See Fig.III.

117 The English delegate had arranged travel through Poland and Moldavia, so as not to reveal his mission to the Habsburgs. See Kołodziejczyk, *Polonya ve Osmanlı Devleti Arasında Tarih Boyunca Siyasi ve Diplomatik İlişkileri*. İstanbul, 1999, pp. 24-25; *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations, 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Brill, Leiden, 2000, p. 124.

118 Richard Knolles, *The Turkish History, vol. 1*, London, 1687, p. 709.

as the personal physician and close friend to Mehmed Sokullu, this individual had a great effect on the state policy towards Poland during these years.<sup>119</sup>

Transylvania soon became a hotspot for upheaval, with Wallachian hospodar Michael Vitaezul leading a rebellion against the Ottomans. When war broke out in 1593, the sultan asked the Polish king to commit his troops, as well as a replacement for the current voivode, who upon capture, it was planned, would be brought before the sultan himself and punished. Combined Ottoman-Crimean Tatar regiments entered Moldavia, who had offered Michael Vitaezul support in his rebellion, with the aim of making it a regular Ottoman province. Poland responded to the sultan's request by granting the Moldavian throne to Jeremy Movila. The Commonwealth and the Porte, expecting an Ottoman-Habsburg confrontation, concluded that keeping ties was in the best interest of the two states, and so representatives of both sides signed an agreement, along with the Crimean khan, in 1595. Movila was officially confirmed as Moldavian voivode by the new sultan, Mehmed III, two years later. In addition, several amendments were made to the original ahdname in the following years, and the Ottomans formally requested the Poles assistance against the Habsburgs by recapturing several Hungarian fortresses which had been lost in 1594.<sup>120</sup>

Although during the fifteenth century, and definitely during the sixteenth century, Ottoman-Polish diplomatic relations had been established, and continued to grow on a foundation of mutual benefit, friendship, and alliance, the seventeenth century presents a marked difference, not only in the political interests of the respective states, but also in the area in which those interests would intersect. As we will see, the role the Zaporozhnian Cossacks and Crimean Tatars played<sup>121</sup> to both the Ottomans and the Commonwealth during this century cannot be satisfactorily emphasized without understanding the social reality and period from which the Ruthenian

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119 Peter Sugar, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

120 Kołodziejczyk, *op. cit.*, p.126.

121 İnbaşı, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

Cossack movement itself was born, thus, an overview of this reality will also appear in the following chapter.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **OTTOMAN-POLISH RELATIONS DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

Polish-Ottoman relations entered the seventeenth century much in the way they had continued throughout the last century; there was peace, but it was constantly being threatened by events in their common vicinity. The previous agreements with Poland were renewed by Ahmed I when he took the throne in 1603, but much as Moldavia had served to stir up trouble for both sides in the sixteenth century, Ruthenia would have much the same effect on relations during this period.

Sigismund Vasa's prevailing pro-Catholic and pro-Habsburg tendencies continued to hurt diplomatic relations with the Porte. First, the king granted permission to the Habsburgs to use Polish mercenaries in a fight against a Hungarian rebel, himself who had been under protection of the padishah. Next, when Polish magnates again became too involved in the affairs of Moldavia for Ottoman comfort, war seemed inevitable. Although the latter had not been officially prescribed by Sigismund, the Turks understood it as a declaration of war. Until this point, the Ottomans had marked the Seventeenth Century with a seventeen-year peace with the Christian states. Polish and Ottoman troops met at the river Dniester in 1617, but a truce between the two camps was quickly concluded. The agreement, known as the Peace of Buzsa, stipulated that the Polish king put an end to Cossack raids along the Black Sea coast, as well as keep a check on his magnates' efforts in Moldavia. In return, the sultan promised to halt Crimean Tatar raids on the Commonwealth. Two years later the terms were royally ratified.<sup>122</sup>

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122 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p.130.

The peace did not last for long, as the Cossacks, rather unsurprisingly, resumed their Black Sea raids. They had first made a name for themselves in the Christian world after numerous attacks on the core provinces of the Ottoman territories back in 1594, with an attack on the trading town of Akkerman. They had also become synonymous with a constant struggle with the Crimean Tatars. Other times, the Cossacks were fiercely independent and paid tribute to neither the Poles nor Ottomans. Many among their ranks came from the peasantry who found themselves left out and opposed to the practices of the Polish state of nobles. The "wild steppe" over time became home to many mounted brigands and outlaws.<sup>123</sup> Their base for attacking both the Ottomans to the south, by way of the Black Sea, as well as the Crimean Tatars, was at the end of the Dniepr, popularly known as "zaporog," referring to the waterfalls that exist there. Consequently, history thus knows them to this day as the Zaporog (Zaporozhnian) Cossacks.<sup>124</sup>

At the beginning of the Seventeenth Century their raids were intensified, and in 1601 and 1606, they again attacked Akkerman, followed by Kili in 1602 and 1606, and Kete in 1614, each time further serving to disrupt Ottoman economic activities there.<sup>125</sup> During the period between 1609 and 1613, they even made their way to the mouth of the Danube, attacking Ottoman fortifications there and plundering Varna. Later that year, the Cossacks sailed down to the Black Sea coast of Ottoman Turkey, where they looted the towns of Trabzon and Sinop between the years 1613 and 1615. Attacks on imperial positions at the end of the Bosphorus and in the vicinity of the capital in the years 1615, 1620, and 1624 was cause for considerable panic in the imperial capital, and such movements finally got the lasting attention of the sultan.<sup>126</sup>

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123 Charles King, op. cit., p.140.

124 See Bartl, *The Cossack State and Ottoman Empire and in the Seventeenth and First half of the Eighteenth Century*, İlim Araştırmalar VI, Istanbul, 1998, pp. 301-329.

125 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 129.

126 Omeljan Pritsak, *The First Turkish-Ukrainian Union (1648)*, Translated by Kemal Beydilli, İlim Araştırmalar VII, Istanbul, 1999, p. 258.

That same year, Moldavia again gained the attention of the Porte; this time the rebellion was led by hospodar Casper Grazziani. He had been given the support of the Polish grand hetman, who entered Moldavia with Polish forces, but was subsequently surrounded and defeated by the sultan's forces under the leadership of Iskender Pasha, who had headed the Ottoman army in 1617. During the events which followed the fight, many prisoners were taken, among them an audacious noble named Bohdan Khmelnytsky.<sup>127</sup> Late in the year, Ahmed died and his imbecile brother Mustafa I took the throne. His reign lasted all but three months, and he was deposed in favor of his younger brother, Osman II, very soon the following year.<sup>128</sup>

During these years, the relationship between Poland and the Ottomans became understandably strained. Osman grew anxious to flex his muscles in any struggle with Poland, and tensions would boil over in 1621. While the bickering over issues concerning relations with the Commonwealth continued in the Porte, the young sultan, against the advice of his ministers, readied his army and marched on Poland. Osman's forces took support from the Crimean khan, and opposite them, the Commonwealth army was joined by the Cossacks.<sup>129</sup> Osman was so confident about his chances, that he even divided the spoil before fighting had begun.<sup>130</sup> He led an army which contained over one-hundred thousand men. At a fortified camp near Hotin, itself consisting of nearly one-hundred thousand with sixty thousand reserves readied nearby, the combined Polish-Cossack army resisted the Ottoman offensive. Fighting only lasted a few weeks, and envoys met on the battlefield to negotiate a truce. The finished document was accepted and signed by the parties two weeks later, but the Poles demanded a royal tugra be issued to ensure that it be kept. Grand vizier Dilaver Pasha, who had been the chief negotiator, assured the Polish camp that a formal ahname would

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127 See Pajewski, *Buńczuk i koncerz. Z dziejów wojen polsko-tureckich.*, Warsaw, 1978, pp. 62-85.

128 Menzies, *Sutherland. History of the Ottoman Empire in Europ.*, William L. Allison, New York, 1880, p.168.

129 Kołodziejczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

130 Menzies, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

be issued as soon as the Polish ambassador returned to Istanbul.<sup>131</sup> According to the truce, Cossack and Tatar raids were to be stopped by the king and sultan, respectively. Poland was to stay out of the affairs of Moldavia, Wallachia, Transylvania, and Hungary, and relations between them and the Crimean Tatars, as well as the hospodars, were to remain as had been previously established by the Turks. Besides these provisions, the Ottoman-Polish border was confirmed along the river Dniester. With this conflict, it really became clear that the diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the Commonwealth had entered into a new period. The sultan returned triumphantly, however falsely, to the imperial capital, but his unpopularity among both his Janissaries and ministers, as well as his subjects, finally caught up to him. Osman was strangled in prison, and Mustafa was re-instated to the throne.

In turning up to fight against the Ottomans and Crimean Tatars in the Hotin war, the Cossacks were quite literally declaring their own sovereignty over Ruthenia. At the same time, and although they had fought together on this occasion with the crown, their readiness for open conflict was a warning to the Polish nobility that their irresponsible policy towards their eastern territories was in need of change. Due to the Cossacks' involvement in the Hotin War, both the Porte and the Crimean khan carefully began to monitor their movements so that they could properly prepare for any further entanglement.<sup>132</sup> Another strengthening country, Sweden, would see their chance to move on the Baltic city of Riga during this conflict, with both the Poles and Ottomans too busy to notice. In the following years, the Swedes would also make their mark on the history of the Commonwealth, and not in a positive way.

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131 See Pajewski, *Buńczuk i koncerz. Z dziejów wojen polsko-tureckich*. Warsaw, 1978, pp.103-105.

132 Victor Ostapchuk, *The Ottoman Black Sea Frontier and the Relations of the Porte with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy, 1622-1628*. Cambridge, 1989, pp. 29-40.

A Polish delegate again made his way to the Porte in 1622, but lengthy negotiations with the grand vizier went on without a result. Only after a new grand vizier was chosen a few months later, an agreement was reached. Interestingly, the Polish ambassador was asked to present the old *ahdnames* which had been granted by sultans Suleyman and Bayezid. These were read aloud and it is reported that the grand vizier was deeply moved by their sincerity. At a special council which was convened to bring back the peace between the Ottomans and Poles, other documents including the 1598 *ahdname* of Mehmed III and the truce following Hotin, were presented and discussed.<sup>133</sup> Their effect on the Turks seemed to be a rekindling of the friendly relations which had been sought after and preserved for so long the previous century. In 1623, the Polish diplomat secured the sign of sultan Mustafa.

When Murad IV took the Ottoman throne later that year, a new *ahdname* was required. It seemed to be good timing, as the Polish nobles had been unsatisfied with the terms of the earlier document, and the king ordered his delegate to return to Istanbul, easily obtaining a new version of *ahdname*.<sup>134</sup> Much of its articles went unchanged, however, it was royally confirmed in 1624.

Poland knew that the Cossacks were not to be fully trusted. Khmelnytsky, who had managed to escape the Turks and had returned to Ruthenia several years earlier, had been enjoying much support as the head of the Cossacks' forces. Under his leadership, they had continued their raids against the Commonwealth, and such attacks seemed unlikely to come to an end while avoiding serious conflict.

What is interesting to note at this point is that the Cossacks, however independent they had been, often looked to the Crimean Khans in their

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133 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

134 See Fig.IV.

struggle for independence. They could more often than not find an ally, ready and willing, in the Crimean Tatars. If they were to be in contention to the Polish kings, they more often than not expected the Crimean Tatars to be up to such a fight and to come to their aid. If, however, they had set their sights on some Ottoman position, they frequently requested the assistance of the Crimean Tatars in such instances as well. Subsequently, when anyone mounted a challenge against the khan, the Cossacks were expected to offer their forces in return. In this way, the two parties actually worked together in the years between 1624 and 1636.<sup>135</sup>

When the Ottomans sent their own expedition by sea a few years later, bolstered by coordinated land forces charged with containing the frontier, they could not bring peace to the Black Sea region. During their campaign, Ottoman commanders had on several occasions applied to the Polish grand hetman to organize a common action against Khmelnytsky's Cossacks<sup>136</sup>, and in 1630, in the interest of Ottoman-Polish peace, a further agreement was reached.<sup>137</sup> It again discussed the terms regarding the two nations' subjects, Cossacks and Crimean Tatars respectively, and disbanded the buildup of Ottoman and Polish troops along the border. Also importantly to the Poles, separate orders were given to the Nogai chieftains who had been originating their own incursions from Budjak and Akkerman. Poland was also told to stay out of the affairs of Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia.<sup>138</sup>

In 1632, Sigismund Vasa died, and although Poland was no longer a hereditary monarchy, his son Władysław IV was easily promoted to the throne. Despite the truce struck in 1621, and the subsequent agreements between the countries' delegates, the situation along the Ottoman-Polish border was quickly deteriorating. Crimean Tatars (Nogais) from Budjak had

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135 Omeljan Pritsak, op. cit., pp.258-259.

136 Abrahamowicz, op. cit., pp. 260, 269-273.

137 See Fig.V

138 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p.136.

intensified their raids into Polish provinces, with the Ottoman governor of the region setting up camp around the Polish fortress at Kamieniec Podolski. In 1633, he attacked the Polish troops there but there was no result, and he returned to Moldavia.<sup>139</sup> It remains unknown whether or not the governor had taken the padishah's approval to act in such a way, as at that time an alliance with Muscovy against the Poles had become popular among many in the imperial capital. It is likely that he acted alone, however, as those closest to the sultan, as well as the ruler himself, seemingly wished to preserve the peace.<sup>140</sup>

In 1634, delegates were again exchanged and agreements focusing on the Cossacks and Crimean Tatars were signed. In the new ahdname, free trade between the two powers was also to be protected and guaranteed. This new agreement seemed to reflect the characteristics of previous ones which had been concluded between Suleyman and the Polish kings during the sixteenth century.<sup>141</sup> The original document has been preserved at the Topkapı Palace archives. Władysław, recognizing the role he played for his own nation and the neighboring nations, sent a message of friendship to Istanbul. The Polish king informed the Ottomans about their actions regarding Russia, and even communicates the desire to “...*uphold the pledge and obligations set down at the time of Sultan Suleyman. The peace and quiet that had prevailed has not been broken...*” and that “...*the Poles have only defended themselves...They had not built walls and fortresses on Ottoman land and neither had they wished to inflict any damage.*” In the same letter, the king shares his concerns regarding both the Cossacks and Crimean Tatars, and the devastating raids of both those groups on Polish territories: “*The Cossacks are continuously inflicting damage and causing harm to Poland. This should not constitute a reason to break the peace.*” The

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139 Leszek Podhorodecki, *Wojna polsko-turecka 1633-1634 r.*, in *Studia do Historii Wojskowości* 20, 1976, pp. 23-72.

140 Kołodziejczyk, op. Cit., p.137.

141 Abrahamowicz, op. cit., p.298.

letter of Władysław to Murad IV closes, "It is requested to renew the written pledge based on these conditions."<sup>142</sup>

It was still evident that the Ottomans and Poles during this period felt a sort of yearning to return to a less complicated time, when their friendly relations were based solely upon themselves, and not muddled with the interests of their allies/neighbors. Despite several attempts at solving the Crimean Tatar and Cossack questions, these remained unresolved through the 1640's. This period was truly a turning point in Polish history, and the Commonwealth was now approaching the end of its golden age. By securing an agreement with the Ottomans, they hoped to finally find some answers to these bothersome questions.

Poland now looked to the growing principle power to her East. Russia for some time had been emerging on the European stage, and in 1647 ended hostilities with its annual adversary in the interest of mounting a challenge to any possible approaching Crimean-Ottoman attack. Through the Cossacks, Russia was now directly affecting the political relationship of the Poles and Ottomans. Witnessing the possibility of a shift in control of the all-important Black Sea, the Turks were again forced to bolster their defenses there. They pressured the Crimean Khan to control his relentless rivalry with the Cossacks, and from raiding into Russian territories. In the meantime, Russia gained the responsibility of attempting to hold back the Cossacks own raids against Ottoman dominions, though they found it useful to use the threat the Cossacks played to the Porte for their own interests. In a letter later sent from the Muscovite government to the sultan, they warned:

*"We have warned you many times that you should not interfere in Poland and the Cossacks...If you do not give back to Poland the fortresses you have captured, we are determined to fall upon you the Cossacks."*<sup>143</sup>

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142 *Anafarta, op. cit., p.14.*



In the years following Hotin, Khmelnytsky had periodically applied to the Crimean khan for his help in rivaling the Commonwealth. Each time, the khan had refused to give the support of his forces, but after a period of relative calm in the region, he finally secured Islam Giray's allegiance in 1648. Knowing that he probably could never completely rely on the khan's word, Khmelnytsky began to court the sultan later the same year. He simultaneously accepted Islam Giray's delegate, and we can understand from the language of the agreement which was struck that the Crimean khan was planning his own upcoming offensive against Poland.<sup>144</sup>

With the agreement, Khmelnytsky could put to rest some of the doubts he previously had held towards his Crimean ally, and he was now in command of forces which were quite capable of mounting a serious threat to the Commonwealth's army. In order to prevent further Polish sovereignty in Ruthenia, it was just such an alliance on which the Khmelnytsky would rely; one which became increasingly common.<sup>145</sup>

The alliance between the Cossacks and Crimean Tatars, though not lasting very long, proved to be extremely important historically.<sup>146</sup> During these years, the situation between Poland and the Cossacks became ever more intense. Khmelnytsky was officially recognized as Cossack hetman by election, and led a rebellion against the Commonwealth of Nobles in 1648. At the same time in Istanbul, the sultan's elite troops, the janissaries, began their own rebellion, demanding that sultan Ibrahim be removed from the throne. He was replaced by Mehmed IV, who felt that the Ottomans had become too involved in the north, and thus decided to hand over control of northern policy, as it were, to the Crimean khan. This is what the khan had really desired all along, and in 1649, together with the Cossacks under

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143 İnalçık, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire*, Indiana University Turkish Studies, Bloomington. 1993, pp. 380-381.

144 Pritsak, op. cit., pp. 259-260.

145 Ostapchuk, *500 Years of Turkish-Russian Relations*. Ankara, 1999, pp. 102-105.

146 Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars*, London, 1978, pp. 41-42.

Khmelnysky, an attack on Poland proved devastating, and the king's forces were crushed. With these events, Khmelnysky was proclaiming himself the leader not only of the Cossacks, but also of the territories of Ruthenia, and of a national Ukraine.

The khan proved his reputation for being unpredictable in 1649, signing a treaty known as the Zboriv Agreement with Poland. Khmelnysky, who had begun to believe he could rely on his Crimean associate, was left without a choice, and was forced to accept it himself. Because of the agreement, the Cossacks did gain a degree of autonomy in the lands they had captured the year before from the crown, but less than a year later, a Cossack delegation was in Istanbul to negotiate patronage under Mehmed IV. In 1650, Mehmed sent Khmelnysky a protocol *tesrifat* from the imperial capital, containing a kaftan concerning the acceptance of Ottoman protection as a nation, *tabiiyet*, of the empire.<sup>147</sup>

In the spring of 1651, a new struggle between Poland and the Cossacks began. The Cossack leader informed the sultan that his army of forty-thousand was ready to move against the Commonwealth.<sup>148</sup> In the actual letter of Khmelnysky dated to September 1653, he informs Grand Vizier Mehmed Pasha:

*"The King of Poland has attacked the Cossacks with his full forces and the Voivode of Transylvania has also sent reinforcements. Between them they have pledged eternal friendship. He is in a most difficult position and has always been faithful to the Sultan. He requests aid from the Ottoman Sovereign..."*<sup>149</sup>

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147 Bartl, *The Cossack State and Ottoman Empire and in the Seventeenth and First half of the Eighteenth Century*, İlim Araştırmalar VI, Istanbul, 1998, pp.308-309.

148 İnbaşı, op. cit., pp. 33-35.

149 Anafarta, op. cit., p. 15.

Mehmed, after receiving a letter personally signed by Khmelnytsky,<sup>150</sup> and having promised protection to him, demanded the Crimean khan join the fight along with his forces. The combined Cossack-Crimean Tatar army was not good enough this time though, and having lost the battle, they had to relinquish some of the territorial sovereignty they had been granted by Jan Kazimierz two years prior with the Zboriv Agreement. Besides this, many of the Cossacks joined the king's forces under Polish vassalage, and Khmelnytsky began to look for a new alliance abroad, and with whom he could create a rift between the Ottomans and Poland.<sup>151</sup>

During this period, the Ottomans realized just how critical their participation in the politics of eastern Europe had become. After a series of negotiations, Khmelnytsky, although having formed a friendship with the sultan, found his ally in Muscovy. The tensions between the Commonwealth and the Cossacks eventually spilled over into a war between Poland and Muscovy over Ruthenia. The relationship with Muscovy is understandable, if we consider that even Ivan had made controlling the wild steppe a significant goal of his imperial policy during Muscovy's period of expansion in the middle of the sixteenth century, seeing the steppe as something of a boundary between their empire and Poland.<sup>152</sup> At the same time, Swedish attacks to the north of Poland instigated a new struggle with the Swedes. The sultan, hoping to win a new vassal, had initially given support to the Cossacks, but the alliance with Muscovy changed all that. However, the Turks met 1656 Polish appeals for assistance against their enemies with a reserved inclination<sup>153</sup>, criticizing the recent rebirth of Polish pro-Catholic, and subsequent pro-Habsburg, policy.<sup>154</sup>

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150 See Fig.V

151 İnbaşı, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

152 Charles King, op. cit., p.140.

153 Ludwik Kubala, *Wojna szwecka w roku 1655 i 1656 (szkiców historycznych serya IV)*, Lwów, 1914, pp. 305, 482-483.

154 Poland had supported their Catholic brethren in the Thirty Years' War.

One must try to understand the difficult position of the Commonwealth at this point. Being at war in both the north and east, and at the same time, attempting to balance its relations with both the Ottomans and, to a lesser extent, the Crimean Tatars. They had already, two years prior, engaged the Crimean Tatars and been assured of their support against either Muscovy or Sweden, as the khan recognized both of those nations as a threat greater, as potential neighbors, than any the Poles could play.<sup>155</sup> At the same time, events involving Transylvania helped to secure Ottoman support against the Swedes. When a Transylvanian prince concluded an alliance with Sweden against the Commonwealth, the Ottomans were again directly involved. This time, Turkish troops were readied and relocated to Poland in order to give assistance to the combined Polish-Crimean Tatar forces, but even so, they won an easy victory on their own. In 1658, a Polish representative was sent to Istanbul to formally acknowledge Mehmed's support.<sup>156</sup>

During the next decade, Cossack delegations to Istanbul were numerous and several agreements were concluded.<sup>157</sup> The protection under Ottoman nationality was renewed in 1666, and under the Cossack hetman, Petro Doroshenko, support of the Crimean khan was secured in case he was to move against the Commonwealth.<sup>158</sup>

Poland's position did not become any easier, as they were forced to sign a truce in 1667 which ended the fighting with Muscovy. This date also marked the almost three-centuries long competition for dominance of the Eastern European territories to the East of the Commonwealth.<sup>159</sup> When news of the agreement reached Istanbul, it was met with great anxiety, and the Ottomans feared any possible alliance between Poland and Muscovy

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155 Biskup, op. cit., pp. 198-199.

156 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 142.

157 Bartl, *The Cossack State and Ottoman Empire and in the Seventeenth and First half of the Eighteenth Century*, İlim Araştırmalar VI, Istanbul, 199, pp.313-315.

158 İnbaşı, op. cit., p. 36.

159 Kołodziejczyk, Dariusz, *The Ottoman Survey Register of Podolia (ca. 1681) Defter-i Mufassal-i Eyalet-i Kamanıçe*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 3.

against them, or against its Crimean allies<sup>160</sup>, in which case, they would in some way become eventually involved. That same year, a Polish delegate attempted to ease the sultan's fears, but the Turks refused further negotiations until Poland annulled any peace it had established with Muscovy. Apparently, being already engaged in the Mediterranean, the Ottomans were little willing to begin any new conflict.

In signing the Truce of Andrusovo, the Poles and Russians had consciously disregarded the Cossacks, and aimed to divide Ruthenia between themselves. Their twenty-year long struggle for independence from the Commonwealth had seen them humiliate the king's army, draw Russia to war with Poland, as well as numerous, and alternating, relations with both the Turks and Crimean Tatars. Doroshenko sent his envoys to the sultan, as well as the Crimean khan, to offer his suzerainty in return for military protection against both the Poles and Muscovites.<sup>161</sup> The prospects of Ottoman-Cossack peace were not entirely new, as Khmelnytsky had courted the sultan before. The Ottomans, in their own interests, also looked to secure the Cossacks as allies due to fears that renewed Black Sea raids would again target the imperial capital and interrupt Ottoman trade.<sup>162</sup>

Although they had succeeded in keeping themselves out of any conflicts in eastern Europe, politically the Ottomans were now very much obliged to act. They had gotten used to the practice of balancing power in the region between the Poles and Muscovy, and while the destruction of the Cossack hosts seemed improbable, protecting them and directing their attacks seemed a rather attainable course of action. So, finding themselves in a delicate position, and despite knowing that an alliance with the Cossacks would weaken the Commonwealth's interests as well as possibly damaging their own diplomatic relations, the Ottoman grand vizier in 1668 warned Jan

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160 Zbigniew Wójcik, *Między traktatem andruszowskim a wojną turcką. Stosunki polsko-rosyjskie 1667-1672*, Warsaw, 1968.

161 V. Omelchenko, Ed., *Hetman Petro Doroshenko, Ohljad joho žyttja i polityčnoji dijalnosti*. New York, 1985.

162 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p.145.

Kazimierz against violating the sovereignty of the Cossacks in Ruthenia. The official reply from the Porte to joint Polish and Muscovian calls against their involvement in Ukraine was typical of what we should expect: full of confidence, yet showing a noble humility in its words, carefully conceived, yet to the point:

*God be praised, such is the strength of Islam that the union of Russians and Poles matters not to us! Our Empire has increased in might since its origins; nor have all the Christian kings that have leagued against us been able to pluck a hair from our beard. With God's grace it shall ever be so, and our Empire shall endure to the Day of Judgement!*<sup>163</sup>

In order so that they could control the Cossacks, the Ottomans required a more local stronghold; that stronghold, they believed, was the Polish fortress and regional capital, Kamieniec Podolski. Seizing it would also allow them to strengthen control of the Crimea, as well as the Crimean Tatars raids, which traditionally passed through those lands.<sup>164</sup> In 1669, Doroshenko was accepted as an Ottoman vassal, and was given presents symbolizing the sultan's faith in him.<sup>165</sup> Polish-Cossack relations took a turn for the worst two years later, as Polish grand hetman Jan Sobieski invaded Cossack Ukraine. Polish king Michał Wiśniowiecki, who had come to the throne one year earlier, again showed policy in favor of the Habsburgs, and Poland again hurt the relations with the Porte. The last Polish diplomat to head to the Porte prior to the outbreak of war was received in 1670, looking to renew the conditions put forth in 1667, but as the Poles had gone against the demands of the padishah, preparations for war in the Ottoman camp had already begun.<sup>166</sup> In 1671, an Ottoman diplomat headed for Warsaw. In the last letter to the Polish king, dated to the same year, the Ottoman grand vizier Ahmed Köprülü himself argued:

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163 Lord Eversley, op. cit., p.174.

164 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 145.

165 Horse-tail and tambour, as well as banner, were symbols of sovereignty originally presented to Osman Bey himself by the Selcuk sultan. See İpşirli, op. cit., p.134.

166 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., pp. 141-143, 146.

*The Cossacks, a free people, placed themselves under the Poles, but being unable to endure Polish oppression any longer, they have sought protection elsewhere, and they are now under the Turkish banner. If the inhabitants of an oppressed country, in order to obtain deliverance, implore the aid of a might emperor, is it prudent to pursue them in such an asylum? When the most mighty and most glorious of all emperors seen to deliver and succour from their enemies those who are oppressed and who ask him for protection, a wise man will know on which side the blame of breaking peace ought to rest.*<sup>167</sup>

In not acknowledging the rights of its subjects, the Polish throne was in full responsibility for the breaking of Polish-Cossack relations. Poland was therefore no longer the legitimate ruler of the Ukrainian lands, and the Ottomans were willing to go to war in the defense of their struggle. The Cossacks had accepted nationhood for themselves, and protection of such under the sovereignty of the sultanate.<sup>168</sup>

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was completely unprepared for the war in which they were about to take part. Although Sobieski had requested for the necessary funds to raise a proper army with which to confront the Ottoman-Cossack threat, his opponents argued that with such an army Sobieski himself could become too powerful and even overthrow the king. The fighting itself lasted four years, with Sobieski's success being rather bittersweet for the Commonwealth. Although they gained important victories at Choczim and Lemberg, their Wallachian and Moldavian allies had deserted them, and it wasn't long before the Ottomans managed to turn the tide against Sobieski, even with the new-found military support of the Russians.

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167 Eversley, op. cit., p.174.

168 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 146.

Superior fighting resources and the ingenuity of its commanders, especially Ibrahim Pasha, finally allowed the Turks to gain the upper hand.<sup>169</sup>

An official communication, dated to 1672 and belonging to the Topkapı archives, between the Crimean Khan Selim Giray and Köprülüzade Ahmed Pasha, gives us a valuable glimpse into the occurring events and the complicated prisoners exchanges and political maneuverings which took place.<sup>170</sup> The Ottoman army arrived in Kamieniec in 1672, and after several weeks of bombardment, Poland was forced to surrender, thus relinquishing their control of the province. Although the military wanted to continue on to Lwow, the sultan seemed satisfied with the acquisition of his new *eyalet*.<sup>171</sup> Peace was concluded between the Polish diplomats and grand vizier by October with the Treaty of Buczacz. Ironically, it was not by force that the Ottomans finally took control of their long-desired fortress, the goal of their campaigning in Podolia. Rather, the Commonwealth was forced to hand it over to the Sultan in accordance to the newest treaty.

1. *One should not bring harm or damage to the people, wives, and property of the Lipka Tatars who have recently left [Poland] and joined the imperial army; those from among the aforementioned tribe who want to emigrate to the Islamic domain should not be hindered; their people with their wives and property should be allowed to go and nobody should hinder [them].*
2. *Every year a gift of twenty-two thousand gold coins should be given to the glorious imperial stirrup of the padishah, regarding the day of Kasim of this year 1083 as the beginning of the year [of account]; they should bring and deliver the whole sum to the imperial public treasury on the day of Kasim of the year 1084, which is the end of the*

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169 Eversley, op. cit., p.175.

170 Lehistan documents, 16.

171 Kołodziejczyk, *Podole pod panowaniem tureckim. Ejalet Kamieniecki 1672-1699*, pp.56-60.



*year [of account], on condition that nobody from among the Muslim soldiers, or from among the Tatars or Cossacks, arrives in company, strikes or raids their [Polish] provinces. If such occurs, they should notify the governor of Kamieniec, and if he does not stop and prevent [these raids], they should apply to the felicitous threshold. Thereafter, if it is still not prevented and if a raid takes place, they should not give the gift for that year.*

- 3. The province of Podolia within its old boundaries becomes [a domain] of his majesty, the refuge of the universe, the majestic and great padishah; the Polish soldiers may safely leave the fortress situated within [this province] with their people, wives, and property, but they should not take any of the cannons and munitions. In return, the Ruthenian forts conquered outside Podolia should be returned to them [to the Poles] with men and cannons that are present there now...After a survey register of the province of Podolia is executed, if anybody from among the Polish nobles, being the former fort owners, wishes to remain within the [Podolian] borders, the taxes required by Islamic law [due] from the forts and villages, being previously in their hands, will be calculated and collected from the hands of these nobles as a lump sum. And the necessary means, sufficient to supply their necessities of life, will be assigned [to them]. They and their children will be exempt [from extraordinary taxes]; as long as they commit no treachery, they will not be dismissed from these services and they will not be molested contrary to the shariat. If an order is issued concerning the conscription of boys to the janissary corps, none will be taken from among them and their subjects. Except for their [churches converted to] Friday mosques and mosques situated in the fortresses, the churches remaining in their hands will be free from interference, and – as with other border provinces - they will not be molested while performing their false rites. The nobles who want to leave Kamieniec and Podolian forts and go to Poland may depart*

*safely with their people and children within two months, and nobody should hinder them. But nobody from among the [ordinary] subjects should leave under this pretext.*

4. *Ukraine within its borders will be given to the Cossacks. If a dispute arises concerning the frontiers and borders of the provinces of Ukraine, they should be separated as in the province of Podolia. Within two months, Polish soldiers should leave without delay...Recently constructed buildings should be demolished. If the Cossacks remaining on the side of the Cossack leader would like to go to their homes in Ukraine, nobody should hinder them; as long as they leave quietly, they should not be molested.*<sup>172</sup>

Podolia now belonged to the Ottomans and Ukraine became the sovereign home of the Cossacks under Doroshenko. The victory completed Ottoman control of the Black Sea for the first time. Although they had already begun a gradual decline, victory showed the European powers that they were still a force to be reckoned with.<sup>173</sup> Actually 1672 marked the attainment of the largest dimensions in European territory for the Ottomans, having extended the domains of Islam as far as the Dniester. To the southwest, Moldavian and Wallachian palatine rulers were chosen by the sultan; Transylvania saw a similar situation.<sup>174</sup> The most sobering reality of the aftermath of the conflict was that the Polish crown, which had successfully maintained peaceful relations, in one form or another, with the Turk for nearly two and a half centuries, was now an Ottoman vassal.

1672 had been another turning point for the Commonwealth. The army was strengthened according to Sobieski's wishes, and he was able to gain a victory against the Ottomans, again at Hotin in 1673. When king Michał Wiśniowiecki died, Sobieski took the throne in 1674. The sides met again in 1674 and 1675, but upon these encounters, it was always apparent

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172 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., pp. 499-500.

173 Shaw, op. cit., p.213.

174 Parry, op cit. p. 178

that the statesmen were ready to renew negotiations. Initially, Poland had looked to regain some of the territories it had lost over the previous years, whilst the Ottomans were looking for a promise of alliance against Muscovy. In reality, this new agreement did little more than to confirm the terms of Buczacz.<sup>175</sup>

Sobieski as king had little in common with Sobieski as commander. Ironically, he had spent most of his life at war with the Turks, yet, realizing both the importance of his new position, as well as the fragile state of the Commonwealth, he knew it was now time to leave hostilities to the past. He also realized the threat Prussia was beginning to play, and applied to the sultan to ensure a new friendship with the Ottomans. In 1676, Ahmed Köprülü Pasha died. His experience and skill in handling diplomacy with the Christian states had gained him the highest of ranks among Ottoman statesmen. Under him, the Ottomans lands in Eastern Europe had reached their limit.<sup>176</sup> He was regarded as fair and observant towards his duties, as well as an esteemed literary and social patron.<sup>177</sup> When a new grand vizier, Kara Mustafa Pasha, was elected, he very soon won a reputation for making problems for the European delegates. It was well known at the time that he had ambitions to again lead an attack on Vienna. He characteristically did not grant Sobieski's desire for a new alliance so easily. Instead, initially, the Porte just confirmed the Treaty of Buczacz, along with several new terms regarding the rights of the remaining Polish inhabitants of Podolia.<sup>178</sup>

It was not until late in the year 1676 that new terms were agreed and a new treaty signed. King Sobieski and Sultan Mehmed IV determined, with the Zurawno Treaty, the right of Polish Muslims, namely Lipka Tatars, to "become subjects of the Ottomans and reside within their realms if they wished to do so." As well as this consideration, the Polish-Ottoman border

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175 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., pp.148-149.

176 Shaw, op. cit., pp.213-214.

177 Eversley, op. cit., p.175.

178 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p.150.

would remain unchanged, and non-Muslim communities existing on lands recently ceded to the Ottomans were free to stay or leave as they pleased. Also, Ukraine became, officially, the Cossack state, and the fortresses of Pavolecza and Piarzako reestablished the Polish-Ukrainian border. Polish merchants were "not to be hindered in their trade with the Ottoman State," and upon payment of the required customs duties, Ottoman, Crimean Tatar, and Cossack forces, were not to enter Poland with the intent to plunder. The treaty also ensured, on paper, the continued good relations between Poland and the Crimean Khan, who could expect the regular annual taxes in exchange for an obligation of loyalty to the previous pact of friendship. As well as these terms, Poland was, quite expectedly, not to assist any enemies of the Ottoman State, politically, financially, or militarily. It was concluded, "As long as Poland does not engage in any activities contrary to the terms of the prevailing peace treaty, the Ottoman State will not do so either."<sup>179</sup>

Sobieski was not the only one whose high expectations regarding the Ottoman-Polish relations had been dashed. Doroshenko had hoped that an alliance with the Ottomans would lead to the sultan's granting him control of important territories in Ukraine. Instead, again not wanting to become militarily involved with Muscovy, the Ottomans strengthened their control of the lands they already held in Podolia. Doroshenko was removed from power and replaced by Khmelnytsky's son, Jurko. Jurko's period as hetman never came close to matching his father's, and he remained constantly subject to the Ottoman governor in Kamieniec.

The following years marked a period of peace unique in seventeenth-century Europe. From both the perspective of the Ottomans, as well as the Commonwealth, peace was considered temporary.<sup>180</sup> In the summer of 1682, the Ottomans were again preparing for a campaign against the Habsburgs. They had been seduced into the war by the rise of Hungarian nationalism,

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179 *Anafarta, op. cit., p. 18.*

180 Kołodziejczyk, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-153.

inherently anti-Habsburg, and which itself had sought to gain Ottoman assistance in return for acceptance of the sultan's sovereignty. Hoping to make use of the nationalist fervour for his own desire, namely pushing back the Habsburgs, Mehmed recognized one of the movement's leaders as King of Hungary, and went about conquering the country's northern territories the same year. Poland, under pressure from the Catholic church, was convinced to sign an agreement with the Habsburgs in 1683. In one way or another, Polish forces under the leadership of Sobieski turned up at Vienna later that year. The Ottomand advance began in June, and continued through July. Sobieski's maneuverings and a staunch defense of the city led to the Ottoman retreat. Despite an impressive "Christian" victory over the Turks, the Commonwealth did not regain its lost territories until the following decade. Kara Mustafa was blamed entirely for the defeat, dismissed, and executed in December. These events, together with the disorganization that followed, now all but wrote off the Ottoman military threat, at least to the extent which it had been feared for nearly three centuries.<sup>181</sup>

Most importantly for the Commonwealth, participation in the Holy League formed in 1684 led the Poles to a previously unwanted peace with Muscovy. Sobieski died in 1696, and was replaced by Augustus II. Following a string of Ottoman defeats in Europe, their envoys were sent to Karlovitz in 1698 to begin negotiations with the Holy League. Poland's role in the victory at Vienna, especially the heroics of Jan Sobieski, were quickly, and rather ignominiously, forgotten.<sup>182</sup> The Commonwealth no longer had the reputation it once did, and was now being considered as one of the weaker parties in the negotiations.

Despite their reduced position, the Poles relied on the diplomatic abilities of their allies, who pressured the Ottomans to return Kamieniec in return for several positions held by Poland in Moldavia. In 1699, a series of

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181 Shaw, *op. cit.*, p.214.

182 Kołodziejczyk, *op. cit.*, pp.154-155.

treaties was signed between Ottoman representatives and ambassadors from Austria, Venice, Russia, and the Commonwealth. The events of this year conclude our period of research; a period defined by the constant balance of the realities of war and peace. A friendship which had first blossomed in the initiatory days of their respective "Golden Ages" had witnessed all the usual stages of friendship, its ups and downs, its joys and its pains. Once good friends, Poland and the Ottomans had taken up the sword against one another and had both survived, with just enough life left, to come together again at a table of negotiation. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk sums up the final days of the seventeenth century quite fittingly:

*After twenty-seven years of wars, the previous Ottoman-Polish border was restored. The provinces of Podolia and Ukrainian territories which were captured in 1672 were restored to the Commonwealth. In Polish historiography, the conquest of Podolia has been considered a grave error by the Ottomans because it impelled the Commonwealth toward an alliance with the Habsburgs and provoked a long and exhausting war in which the real winners were the Habsburgs and the Russians. Yet, on the other hand, Podolia as an Ottoman province had proved to be very useful as a northern bulwark of the empire, assuring Moldavian and Crimean loyalty to the Porte. The Cossacks - the main reason for its foundation – ceased to threaten the Ottoman Black Sea.<sup>183</sup>*

Dated to October 1699, and still residing in the Topkapı Palace Museum archives, is the original document concerning the Ottoman-Polish relations at the close of the Seventeenth Century.<sup>184</sup> It reads:

"For the purpose of restoring neighborly relations between the Ottoman State and Poland which has prevailed between these two countries

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183 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., pp. 156-157.

184 See Fig.VI.

during the Pact of friendship between Sultan Mehmed II and Augustus II King of Poland and has deteriorated due to the war, the Governor-General and Commander Ekrem Husein Pasha has reported that William II King of England, and the Netherlands will act as Intermediaries, whereupon the decision is taken to make peace and at Karlowitz. Polish and Ottoman representatives and emissaries and the representatives of the mediator countries, come together on January 6, 1699, reach an agreement and in this respect, the wishes outlined in the letter presented by the Polish emissary Stanisław Matteuss Rzewaski are accepted and the Karlofcha Treaty goes into force. The Treaty made in Istanbul on October 11, 1699, comprises eleven articles...

- 1. By virtue of this agreement, the feelings of enmity between the two sides are put to an end, and friendship will prevail. The people of both nations should be at ease, and the borders will be preserved exactly as they were before the two wars.*
- 2. The fortresses which still hold Polish forces and are within Bogdan's old borders, drawn up before the war, should be emptied and brought to their old state.*
- 3. The Kamieniec Fortress, which before the war, was within Poland's borders, to be emptied, and the Ukrainian chiefs living in Bogdan to be ousted, beginning in March and ending by May 15. During the emptying no harm is to come to anyone and no force should be used.*
- 4. No Ottoman subject, and the (Crimean) Tatars in particular are to raid the Polish border on any excuse whatsoever. They should abide by the peace treaty. Anyone acting contrary to this is to be punished. The Poles too, in the interests of upholding the peace, should act accordingly.*

5. *As Poland has always been a free state, the Ottoman State, and those annexed to her, should not impose any demands on Poland.*
6. *As the fact that, at the end of the war, Bucaks and other Tatars living on occupied soil from Bogdan, is contrary to the peace treaty with Poland. They should be ousted and sent to their old places of abode.*
7. *Religious services in churches are not to be hindered.*
8. *People coming from Poland for trading purposes, should be permitted to freely sell their wares after they have paid their respective Customs duties and no further taxes should be demanded of them. Without the relevant permission, trade should not bring to their country articles that are prohibited. The goods of merchants from both sides, who have died outside their country, should not be touched, and disagreements in this respect should be dealt with justly and impartially.*
9. *Polish prisoners taken during the war to be let free after payment of the respective tributes. Any disagreements arising therefrom to be dealt with righteously and justly. Prisoner noblemen to be freed from prison upon payment of the respective tributes.*
10. *As outlined in past treaties, as long as friendly relations continue, the Bogdan "Voivode" should also continue his old relations with Poland. Anyone committing a crime in Bogdan or Wallachia and escaping to Poland will be returned, and any*



*Polish subject, seeking asylum in the Ottoman State after committing a crime, will similarly be returned.*

*11. Any conditions in the old treaty which are contrary to the present one, but which nevertheless do not conflict with the interests of the two states, should continue to remain in force, others which are harmful should be deleted. Thirty days after the signing of this treaty, anyone caught acting contrary to the conditions therein, will be punished. As long as all concerned abide by this treaty, peace and friendship will prevail.<sup>185</sup>*

The terms of the 1699 agreement leaves us in a poignant moment for both nations. Poland, whose territory had been stretched to nearly one-million square kilometers, and had seen the rise of democracy in highly diverse and educated republic, would soon cease to exist on the European map. The Ottoman Empire, once the caliphatic superpower knocking on the doorstep of Europe, would come to be called within the next hundred years as both "sick" and "decrepit." Both had become exhausted by war and expansion, and both would be forced to yield their earlier greatness in the century that followed. This is exactly the reasoning behind grouping together this period, the establishment of Polish-Ottoman relations through to the end of the Seventeenth Century, for the sake of this particular research. Although the century which followed was itself of extreme importance for both states, the period covered in this thesis seemed the most significant. Its significance, along with its long chain of intertwining events, also helped to establish its limits, its beginning and its end, specifically 1414-1699.

The Ottomans always knew that they had two primary options when building their foreign relations in Europe: one was to rely solely on military force and conquer anyone that stood in their way; the other, to build a working friendship with strategic states whom they could trust and from

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185 Anafarta, op. cit., pp.18-19.

whose local position they could benefit. The first seemed rather improbable, although their military was unquestionably among one of the best in the world at that time. That had been witnessed during Suleyman's campaigns into Europe. But such an approach would be costly, not to mention highly unfavorable, to say the least, among the populations they would be bringing under their control. Poland was different, and accordingly, deserved a different approach. Over the years, the Ottomans rarely felt directly threatened by the Poles, another important factor in their decision to make agreement upon agreement with them, and so they enjoyed a special status, and gradually became a favored party of the Turks.

## CONCLUSION

Both the Ottoman Empire and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth reached the pinnacle of their power and influence through war as much as they did through diplomacy. When not struggling on the battlefields with each other, it is possible for us to witness, historically, the great working relationship which at one time was made possible by the esteemed leaders and representatives of these nations. The friendship they forged was unique for its time, and was nothing less than groundbreaking in the history of the relations of world civilizations. For one of the first times in history, Islamic and Christian civilizations broke down the wall of animosity and misunderstanding, which had taken centuries to build, in favor of a collective good which could serve to unite their own communities, as well as promote a type of cultural trade at a time when brothers of the same faith were often sworn enemies.

When I began my research, I had assumed, as I'm sure did many other historians well before my time, that the relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire were, for the most part, shaky if not downright catastrophic. We can easily hear and see countless examples of the wars waged between these two great world civilizations, but it is rare that anyone stops to think of, let alone point out, the numerous times that a European power and the Caliphate forged a sturdy peace. That is what proved so intriguing about this very topic. Not only was I able to do an in-depth analysis of both traditions' political agendas in a period I chose for myself, but I was able to use the outlook of the contrasting political and social traditions to frame a study which would scan a period that began and ended with peace, but saw its own share of struggle along the way: and what better example than the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a nation or actually a group of nations, which forged an example of international relations for its neighbors, whilst serving as the prime representative of the Christian West to the Ottomans for several centuries.

We know that the first instance of formal Ottoman-Polish diplomatic relations came in the early Fifteenth Century, although these two powers met earlier on the battlefield, and had also made contact through similar political interests, namely the Balkans. Poland, a country though not geographically, but who had started to become politically, at the center of Europe in that period, had to move away from the misnomer which had previously guided the Europeans contact with the Muslims. One way they countered the "Turkish threat" with the popular court culture known as Sarmatism, a view which saw the Polish nobility as descendents of this famous "Eastern" warrior caste. Ironically, many times did the fashions of the day in Krakow closely resemble those same styles being worn by the sultan and his advisors in the Seraglio. In order for this to even take place, the Turks themselves also needed to position themselves in relative opposition to the traditionally closed politics dealing with the Christians. Having not been able to secure close, friendly ties with any Christian state prior to our example in this work, the Ottoman Turks made a breakthrough for cultural communications across civilizations when they, the leader of the Muslim community throughout the world, reached out to their northern Christian neighbours.

As the century progressed, so did diplomatic contact, but although the Turkish and Poles began to become closer to one another, the Poles relationship with other European states, as well as the head of their own religious tradition, served to form a less clearly-established policy regarding the Muslims. Hungary, for example, who had been formally tied to Poland since the end of the Fourteenth Century, made its way into the politics of these states more often than any other secondary player in its evolving scenarios. Very often what happened in Hungary profoundly affected what would happen when delegates of the respective nations would visit the others capital. In this way, we can frame the diplomatic relations of the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth more accurately

as the diplomatic relations of Europe (chiefly Eastern/Southeastern Europe) and the Islamic World (the Caliphate).

As the two nations grew and matured during the next century, so did their aspirations abroad. Economic interests sometimes intersected with political interests, and now the Ottoman Empire and the Commonwealth virtually shared a border, with Poland wielding overwhelming control in Hungary's politics, and the Turks holding the reins in the borderlands of Moldavia and Wallachia, as well as several Balkan territories. The most important aspect of the relationship during the Sixteenth Century was the reign of Suleyman. The magnificent sultan may have had as much influence abroad as he had had in his own realms, and this was true especially with regards to Poland. The idea of "endless peace" now entered the repertoire of Ottoman diplomacy with the Christians. Realizing the implications and perils of the constant instability in the neighbourhood in which they lived, no more would they look for only previously held short truces with their Polish allies, but rather for something for binding and concrete. Although this was the case, the drawing of an Ottoman-Polish border for the first time also led to a major unresolved issue which would itself last well into the coming century.

The final century discussed in this work is the Seventeenth Century. It seemed suitable to close my study with this century due to the important events which took place near to the end of it. This is also the period when the Ottoman-Polish relations, already well established, became increasingly unstable. Both the Crimean Tatars, as well as, and possibly more importantly, the Cossacks, had their own role to play in the events which transpired over this century. Whereas the previous century had been characterized by the magnificent example and leadership of Suleyman, this period would see the political rivalry fully at play on the map of Eastern Europe, with the continent's two most powerful states vying for the supreme position, even if it was to come at the expense of a politically familiar party. Not only would the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-

Lithuanian state ultimately shape the continent for generations to come, but history would also witness the ultimate turning point for each of these states, reminding us that even the most powerful political entities are ultimately vulnerable. Soon, Poland would almost entirely be wiped off the map, and the Ottoman Empire would come to be known as the “sick man” of Europe.

This work concludes several months of personal research, over a time in which I grew very well aware of just how close the relationship, both diplomatically as well as culturally, which had existed between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth truly was. The “Turkish threat” which had for so long characterized the relations between the Muslims and Christians during the Middle Ages faded, and history saw a rise of a great mutual awareness and understanding, itself partly as a result of, and at the same time, partly a reason for, such advanced political ties. I hope that this thesis proves sufficient in its task, and that with this work, the reality of a historical Muslim-Christian cooperation has become clearer than ever for my colleagues, as well as academics of various disciplines related to this field of study.

# FIGURES

## AHDNAMES and DOCUMENTS

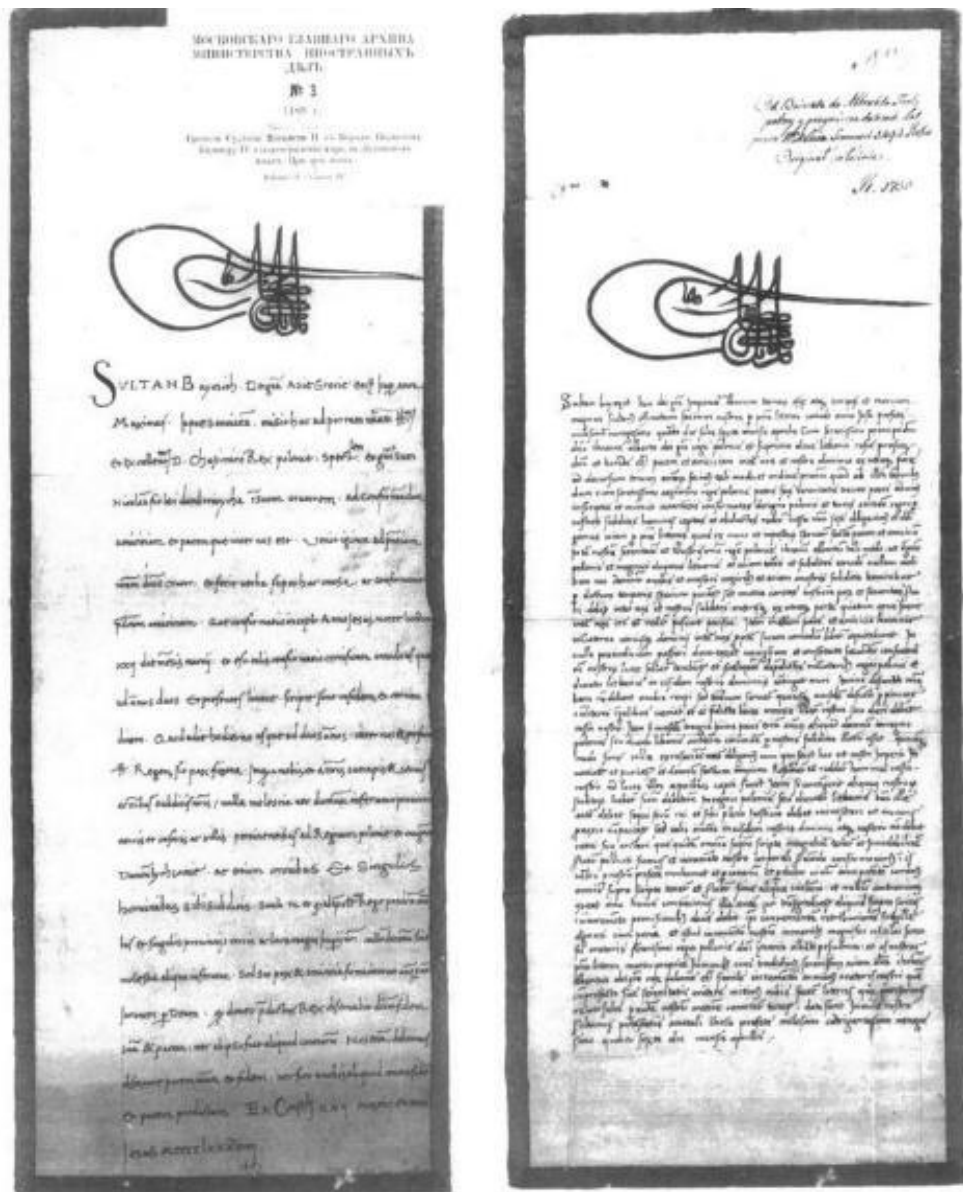


Fig.I (March 1489) *Ahdname* of Sultan Bayezid II to King Kazimierz<sup>186</sup>  
 Fig.II (April 1494) *Ahdname* of Sultan Bayezid II to King Jan Albert

186 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 725.

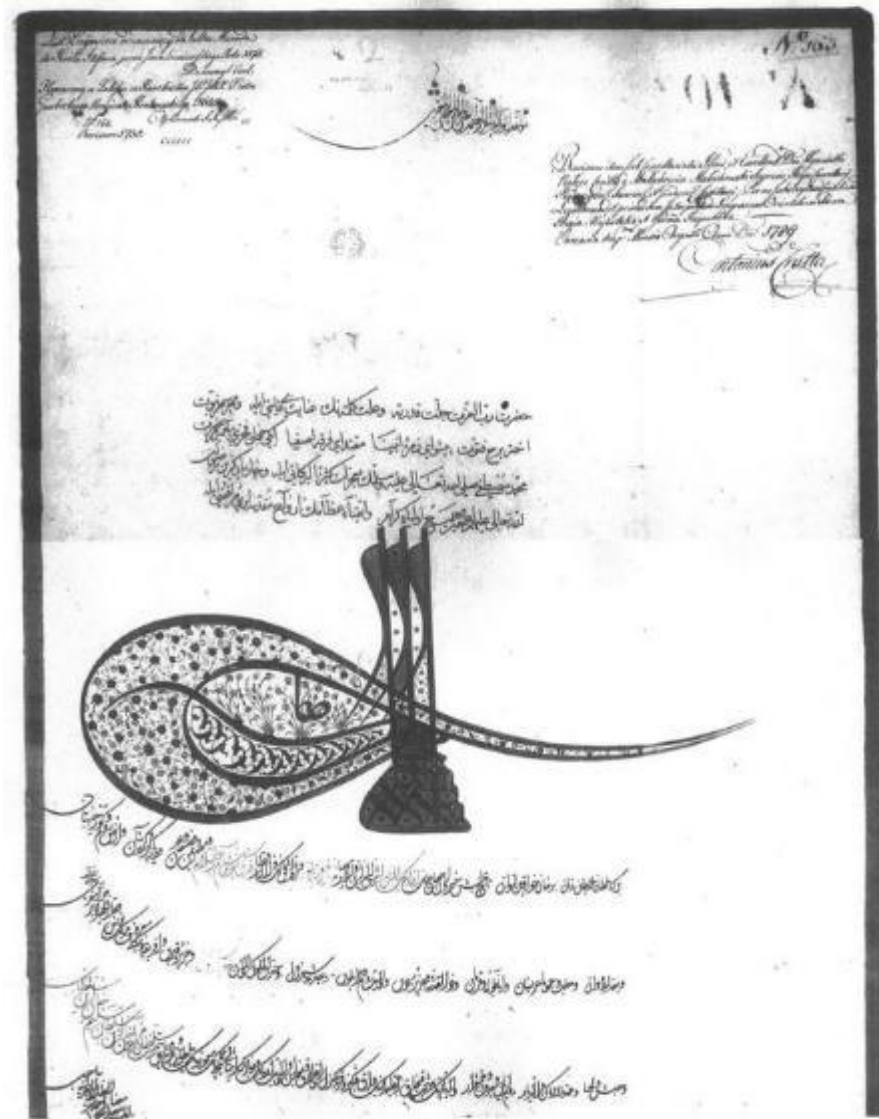


Fig.III (July 1577) *Ahdname* of Sultan Murad III to King Stephan Bathory<sup>187</sup>

187 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 735.



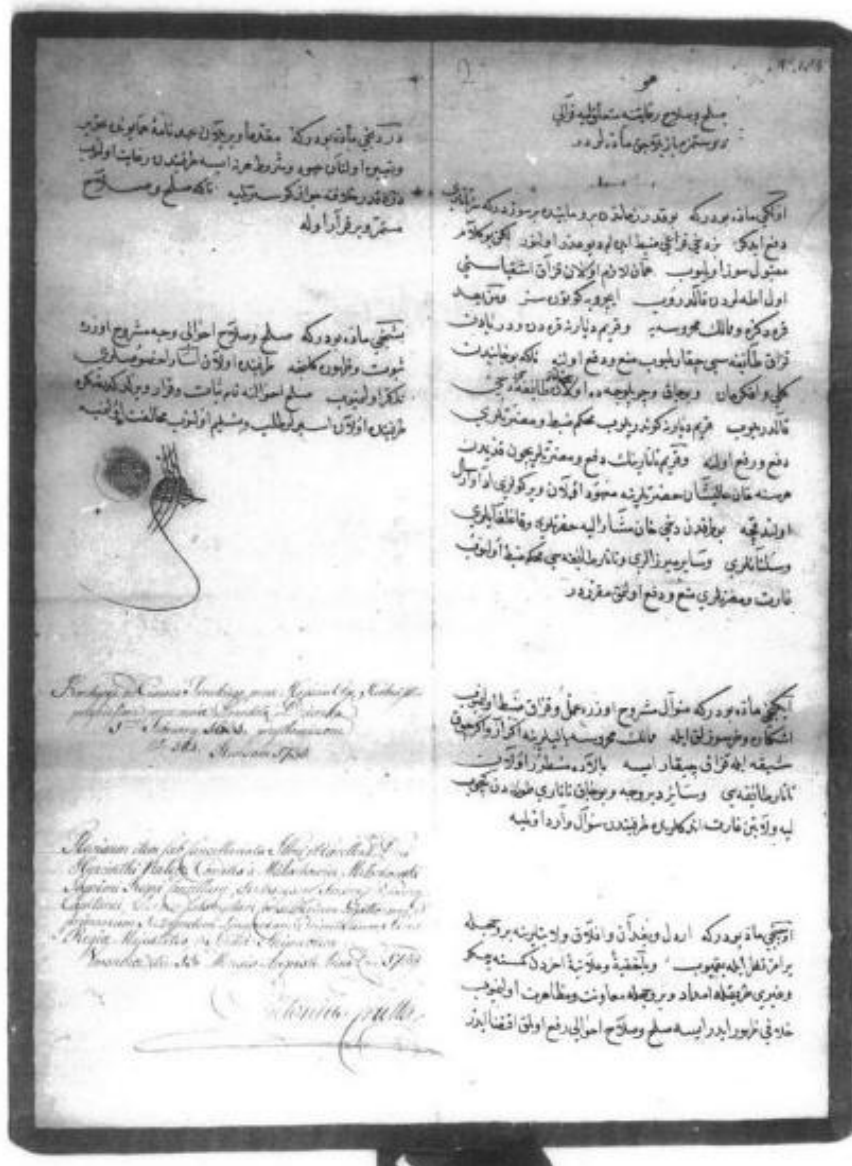


Fig.IV (September 1630) Peace agreement between Ottomans and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth<sup>188</sup>

188 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 763.



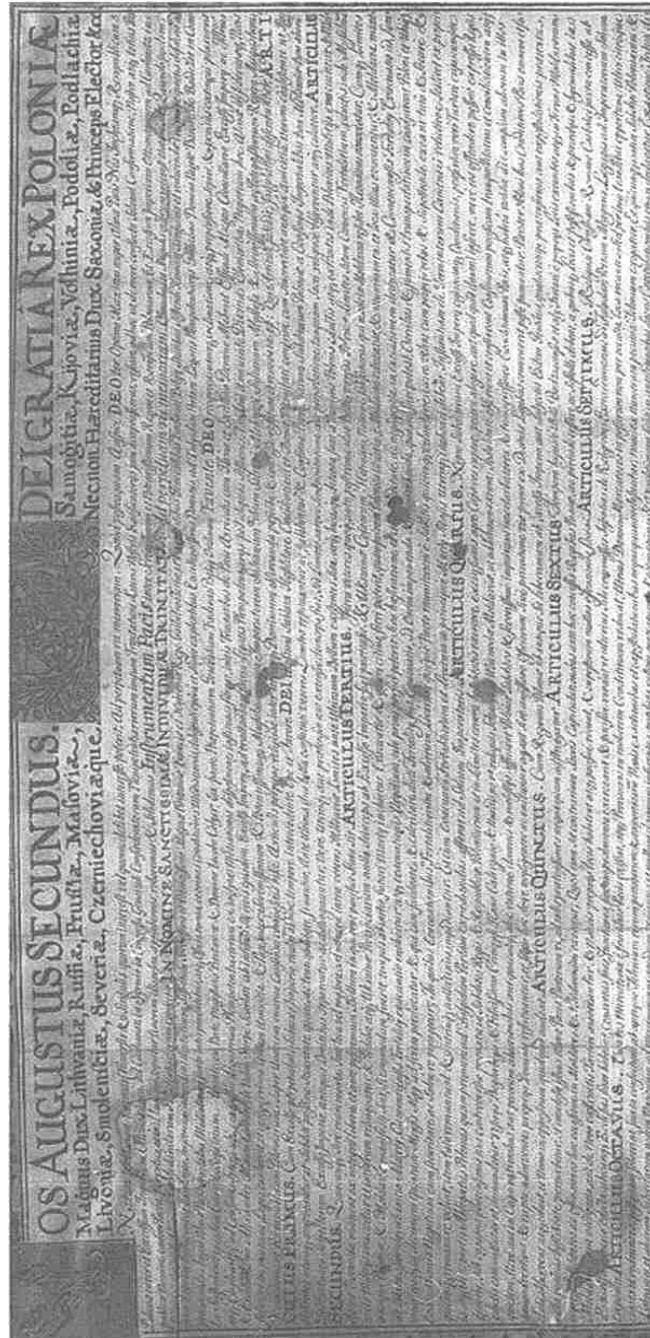


Fig. VI (January 1699) Polish document of the agreement of terms of the Treaty of Karlowitz<sup>190</sup>

190 Kołodziejczyk, op. cit., p. 796.



Fig.VII Ottoman Janissaries, depiction by Haiden in 1526<sup>191</sup>



Fig.VIII King Jan Sobieski at the Battle of Vienna, 1683<sup>192</sup>

191 <http://www.worldaffairsboard.com/attachments/ancient-medieval-early-modern-ages/19688d1268601841-ottoman-empire-3haiden1526.jpg>

192 <http://www.omdurman.org/sobieski.jpg>



Fig.IX Polish winged cavalry, *Husaria*, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries<sup>193</sup>



Fig.X Polish-Lithuanian soldiers during the Polish-Ottoman wars of the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>194</sup>

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193 <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/48/Husarz-StefanoDellaBella.png/593px-Husarz-StefanoDellaBella.png>

194 [http://www.worldaffairsboard.com/attachments/ancient-medieval-early-modern-ages/19173d1267231531-polish-lithuanian-commonwealth-727px-polish\\_soldiers\\_1674-1696.png](http://www.worldaffairsboard.com/attachments/ancient-medieval-early-modern-ages/19173d1267231531-polish-lithuanian-commonwealth-727px-polish_soldiers_1674-1696.png)

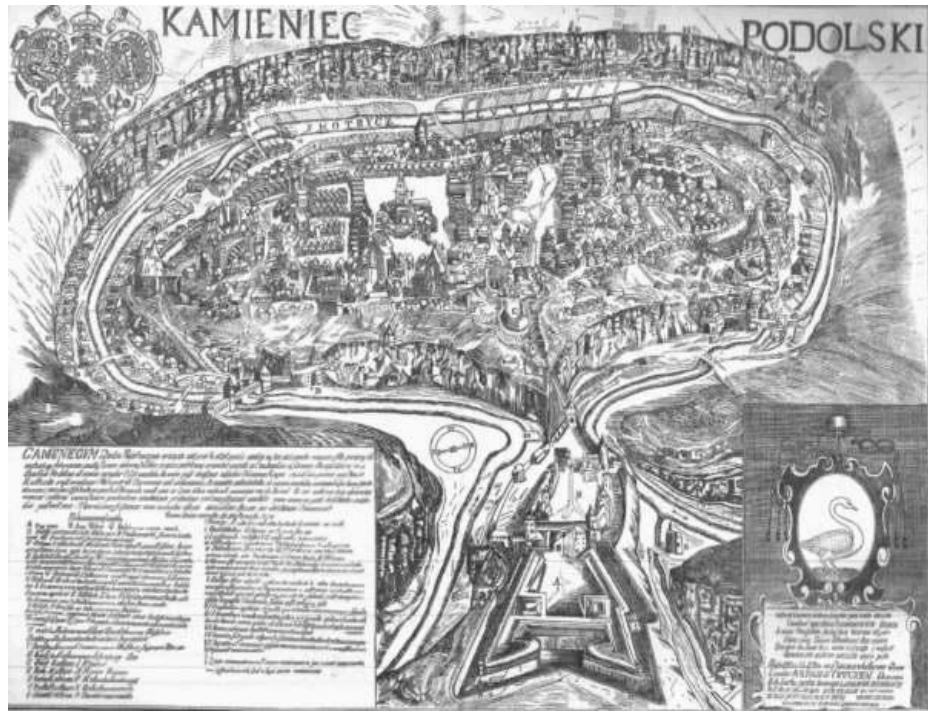


Fig.XI 1693 engraving of the Polish fortress at Podolski<sup>195</sup>

195 <http://www.kolekcjonerzy.mnw.art.pl/fotki/grpol15219.jpg>

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