

**OTTOMAN-POLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS  
IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Ottoman-Polish Relations in the Sixteenth Century.

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The Ottoman Empire and Poland-Lithuania remained direct neighbors from the late Middle Ages until the end of eighteenth century. Long coexistence of both states led to development of rich and diverse forms of contacts on various levels. The sixteenth century was marked by both continuity and change in the bilateral contacts. The overall peaceful political and diplomatic cooperation during the reign of the last Jagiellonians evolved into active competition by the end of the sixteenth century. The Ottoman statesmen tried to influence results of first royal elections and to secure continuity of the balance of power in Central Europe. This policy became most successful during the reign of Stephan Bathory. The reign of Bathory's successor, Sigismund III Vasa became a step towards a century of military conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Unlike the political relations, trade and other economic activities remained stable.

The thesis will present a critical approach towards existing historiography as such and it will reexamine major questions concerning the Ottoman-Polish relations in the sixteenth century. The Ottoman attempts to influence the royal elections in Poland-Lithuania and the border activities of the Cossacks, the Tatars and the border lords will be analyzed, in order to verify whether they influenced the deterioration of bilateral political and diplomatic issues. Practical dimensions of everyday Ottoman-Polish contacts together with analysis of major reasons of changes in relations will be the focal point of this study.

Key Words: Ottoman Empire, Poland, Lithuania, Diplomacy, Trade

## ÖZET

Onaltıncı Yüzyılda Osmanlı-Leh İlişkileri.

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Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü.

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Oktay Özel.

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Ortaçağın son dönemlerinden onsekizinci yüzyıla kadar, Lehistan ile komşuydu. Bu uzun dönem boyunca, iki devlet arasında, çeşitli düzeylerde yoğun bir alışveriş yaşandı. Onaltıncı yüzyıl, bu ilişkinin hem değişimi hem de sürekliliği açısından önemli bir yüzyıldır. Bu yüzyılda, son Jagiellonianların dönemindeki barışçı politik ve diplomatik atmosfer yerini aktif bir rekabete bıraktı. Osmanlı devletadamları, ilk kraliyet seçimlerinin sonucunu etkilemeye ve Orta Avrupa'daki güç dengelerini korumaya çalıştılar. Bu politika, özellikle Stephan Bathory'nin döneminde (1576-1586) başarılı olmuştu. Ancak, Bathory'den sonra gelen III. Sigismund Vasa döneminde (1587-1632) Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile Lehistan-Litvanya Birliği arasında bir yüzyıl süren askeri uyuşmazlıklar başgösterdi. Politik ilişkilerin tersine, ticaret ve diğer ekonomik faaliyetlerde bir değişim görülmedi.

Bu tez, konuyla ilgili olarak yazılmış tarihi eserleri eleştirel bir açıdan incelemekte ve onaltıncı yüzyıl Osmanlı-Lehistan ilişkileriyle ilgili önemli soruları yeniden ele almaktadır. Osmanlıların, Lehistan kraliyet seçimlerini etkileme çabaları, Kazakların, Tatarların ve sınır boylarında soyluların sınırlardaki faaliyetleri incelenmiş, bunların politik ve diplomatik ilişkilerin kötüleşmesinde oynadıkları rolü tartışılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, Osmanlı-Lehistan ilişkilerinin gündelik hayattaki boyutları ve geçirdiği değişimler bu çalışmanın esas konusunu teşkil etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Lehistan, Litvanya, Diplomasi, Ticaret

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. Subject and Sources

Despite the fact that Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire shared important political, economic and military interest, and the scale of bilateral contacts was immense for several centuries, the topic has been researched to much smaller degree than it deserves. Especially, the sixteenth century is still much neglected. Moreover, apparently none of Turkish historians has ever used Polish archives, whereas the only Polish historian who has ever used the Ottoman archive in Istanbul on a regular basis is Dariusz Kołodziejczyk. Surprisingly, major difficulty of this kind of research is not the linguistic side, because many Ottoman documents preserved in Polish archives were already published and analyzed well before the Second World War by such famous orientalist as Jan Reychman and Ananiasz Zajączkowski. One would suspect that difficult access to the archives in Istanbul until recent years and totalitarian political system in Poland until 1989 were major obstacles in the development of research and closer collaboration of historians in this field.

There exists only several general works dealing with Polish-Ottoman issues. In Turkish historiography, the classical work *Osmanlı Tarihi* by İsmail Hakkı



Uzunçarşılı is practically the only study that covers the whole period of Ottoman-Polish contacts until the partitions of Poland-Lithuania by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Major advantage of Uzunçarşılı's work is the author's attempt to present chronological development of events between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman State with taking into consideration the role of neighboring and vassal states and general political context of a given period. The study focuses mostly on political aspects of relations and no other spheres of contacts were introduced. Despite the fact that Uzunçarşılı did not have access to European sources and publications, which is one of major disadvantages of his study, his book is a perfect reference work, and the amount of Ottoman works consulted is very impressive. İsmail Hami Danişmend's *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* is also a valuable and in many cases indispensable reference work in which Ottoman political and social events are presented chronologically. Another important, although somewhat old-fashioned work is Joseph von Hammer's *Geschichte des osmanischen Reichs*, in which Polish-Lithuanian issues are presented quite often. *Historia Turcji* [*History of Turkey*] by Reychman also covers the entire Ottoman history, but it does not deal specifically with Ottoman-Polish relations; development of events is presented according to Marxist methodology and many aspects are already out of date. The same could be said about *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [*History of Polish Diplomacy*]. This monumental work focuses on development of diplomatic relations and political priorities of all Polish state formations, from the Piast principality and kingdom, through the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, until modern times. Relations with the Ottomans are given a lot of attention, but the book was prepared rather carelessly

and there are some important errors.<sup>1</sup> Major advantage of the book, is the extremely rich set of European primary sources consulted; one should perhaps use it as a kind of archival guidebook. A popular book by Pajewski *Buńczuk i koncerz. Z dziejów wojen polsko-tureckich* [From the History of Polish –Turkish Wars] is valuable for military conflicts of the seventeenth century, but it treats earlier events very briefly. Its most interesting aspect is a number of detailed descriptions of battles, based upon contemporary primary sources. Since this study is written in a “crusading” manner, it should be approached critically by those dealing with seventeenth century Ottoman-Polish wars.

Halil İnalcık’s *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300-1600* remains one of the most important works dealing with the 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman-foreign relations in general. The author analyzes the role of Poland-Lithuania in a less detailed way than Uzunçarşılı, but puts it into broader socio-economic and political perspective, presenting the Ottoman rule in the Balkans and the Ottoman policies towards the European neighbors of the Ottoman Empire as a search for balance of power. This idea is discussed further in relevant chapters. Halil İnalcık’s most recent work *A Social and Economic History of the Ottoman Empire* also provides important details on the relations between the Porte and Poland-Lithuania, predominantly about their economic dimension. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk follows İnalcık’s ideas in *Ottoman-Polish Relations*, where he tries to correlate diplomatic relations between the two states, from the beginning until the partitions of Poland-Lithuania, with the development of ‘*ahidname*. Kołodziejczyk used sources from many different archives, including the Ottoman archive in Istanbul but he focused predominantly on

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the authors claim the Ottoman documents sent to Poland were written in Arabic, which of course is a serious mistake (Vol. I, p. 765).

*'ahidnames* and used other sources, like relevant *mühimme* registers, very scarcely. The only sixteenth-century registers used by Kołodziejczyk are the *mühimmes* number 7, 31, 68 and 69. In addition, Kołodziejczyk focuses mostly on the political and theoretical mechanisms of diplomatic relations and does not discuss practical functioning of diplomatic issues in everyday contacts. Since full texts and the transcriptions of almost all *'ahidnames* granted to the Polish kings are given, the work is one of the most valuable critical source editions for research of bilateral contacts. Short study of relations between the two states can also be found in *İslâm Asnsiklopedisi* and the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the latter having *Poland* as a separate item. However, sixteenth century was not given sufficient attention.

Existing general works reshaped numerous theories concerning the long-lasting Polish-Ottoman neighborhood, but there is still need for research, which would utilize sources from both sides on the one hand and be general in content on the other. However, it seems that without a number of articles and books concerning specific topics preparation of more general comparative and analytical works would be a difficult task, mostly due to extensive primary sources. Specific works focused on detailed issues are quite numerous, but majority of them is devoted to Polish-Ottoman military history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition, in most cases the aforementioned source limitation narrows potential comparative perspective. The present study is limited to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and therefore research devoted to other periods is not presented. Very rich bibliography of existing works on the topic can be found in Kołodziejczyk's *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations* and in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (the former is much more detailed and up to date).

Contacts between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century have been so far researched unsystematically, the studies being mainly focused on single political problems, and therefore lacking broader perspective. Polish historians have been interested in the attitude of sixteenth century Polish nobility towards the Ottomans and projects of political or military alliances between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire. In 1900 Franciszek Bujak published an article “Kalimach i znajomość państwa tureckiego w Polsce około początku XVI w.” [Calimachus and the Knowledge of the Turkish State in Poland at the Beginning of 16th Century]. In the article, the author proves that the Polish and Lithuanian gentry expressed profound interest in the Ottoman State and their knowledge was based on and shaped by the works of Kalimach, or Constantine of Ostrovica, the well-known author of renowned *Memoirs of Jannisary*. Constantine wrote his memoirs in Polish and since there exist several different manuscripts of this work, soon after the Bujak’s article a critical edition of *Memoirs of Jannisary* was published by Jan Łoś. Constantine wrote his *Memoirs* as a kind of guide in which the author explains how to combat the Ottomans and calls for united military action of Christendom. Soon after publication of this book, a debate started among Polish historians, who wanted to discover what was the real attitude of Polish kings toward the Ottomans. Three important articles on the topic were published by Janusz Pajewski: “Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego” [“Turkey and the Election of Henry de Valois”] (1933), “Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego” [“Turkey and the Election of Bathory”] (1935), and “Projekt przymierza polsko-tureckiego za Zygmunta Augusta” [“Project of Polish-Turkish Covenant at the Time of Sigismund Augustus”]. The author discovered that

there was a serious attempt to establish Polish-Ottoman military coalition against Muscovy in 1565 and then in 1569. According to Pajewski, the first project initiated by the Polish king, and the second one, supported by the sultan, were very seriously influenced by the policy of the Crimean khan Devlet Giray. Despite the fact that Muscovy was a common enemy of all three states, Crimean Tatars were afraid of their own future in case the Ottomans and Poland-Lithuania would gain too much power. The article stresses the important role of the Tatars in influencing foreign policy of their neighbors. The Tatar problem is an interesting one and has also been studied by Halil İnalcık in “Osmanlı-Rus Rekabetinin Menşei ve Don-Volga Kanalı Teşebbüsü (1569)”, “The Khan and the Tribal Aristocracy: The Crimean Khanate under Sahib Giray I”, “Yeni Vesikalara Göre Kırım Hanlığının Osmanlı Tâbiliğine Girmesi ve Ahidname Meselesi”, where the author has tried to determine what role the Crimean khanate played in the power struggle among its neighbors, being at the same time the vassal state of the Porte. Leszek Podhorodecki in his impressive monograph *Chanat Krymski i jego stosunki z Polską w XV-XVIII w.* [*The Crimean Khanate and its Relations with Poland in 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries*] presents the khanate from the perspective of Polish interest. The author followed the idea of two simultaneous internal tendencies that shaped the political thought of the Girays, i.e. on the one hand a very strong inclination towards independent policy and keeping the balance of power in the region and on the other keeping good relations (without excluding temporary tensions) with the Ottoman State.

The question of the Ottoman influence on first Polish royal elections after childless death of Sigismund Augustus in 1572 has been a subject of several articles.<sup>2</sup> The idea of considerable Ottoman influence on Poland was proposed by Ahmet Refik in the article “Lehistan’da Türk Hâkimiyeti” and developed in the book *Sokollu* by the same author. The question of first two royal elections was also discussed by Pajewski in two articles “Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego” [“Turkey and the Election of Valois”] and “Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego” [“Turkey and the Election of Bathory”]. The author supported the idea that in both cases the influence of the Ottomans on the result of the election was mostly psychological, i.e. the electors were afraid to support a candidate from such a country, which was the enemy of the Ottomans (the Habsburgs or the Muscovites). Different approach is presented by R. Nisbet Bain, who in the article “The Polish Interregnum, 1575” proposed very detailed analysis of events during the elections in Poland and on Ottoman borderland. According to Bain, the Ottomans were actively preparing military action in case the election would finish against their political interest. Bain’s article is older, but Pajewski did not use it. Instead, he based his study on various archival documents and the French diplomatic reports, published by Charrière in *Les négociations de la France dans le Levant* (1853). This topic, as one of major parts of this work, is discussed further in the second chapter.

Economic activities between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire are portrayed by Andrzej Dziubiński in a very valuable and detailed monograph *Na szlakach orientu. Handel między Polską a Imperium Osmańskim w XVI-XVIII wieku* [On the Routes of Orient. Trade Between Poland and the Ottoman Empire in 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century]. This monograph is the most serious work devoted to this topic but, despite its impressive content and numerous sources used, it has weak points. The

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<sup>2</sup> There also exists a monograph on the topic, but I have found it out after writing this study: Beydilli, K. *Die Polnischen Königswahlen und Interregnen von 1572 und 1576 im Lichte osmanischer Archivalien. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der osmanischen Machtpolitik*. Munich, 1976.

most important one is the fact that the author is unacquainted with major contemporary works on the topic published in Turkish and English. Especially lack of references to the research by İnalçık, Faroqhi, Fleet or Fisher (just to mention the most important ones), and to relevant published sources, comprises major disadvantage of the work. Various paragraphs and chapters dealing with the topic in books and articles by İnalçık, who treats trade with Poland as a part of the entire economic system of the Ottoman State, are another very important contribution to the research of the Polish-Ottoman trade. Among Halil İnalçık's works, most attention to the issue is given in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* and in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu. Toplum ve Ekonomi*. İnalçık's works are based mainly upon Ottoman sources with the use of secondary literature on the subject. Despite the existence of several works on Polish-Ottoman trade, there are still many sources, which were never researched.<sup>3</sup>

As one may observe, although many elements of the Ottoman-Polish reality have been researched, many fields have been neglected. Analysis of the whole sixteenth century is too broad a topic and therefore major stress of the present study is limited to certain aspects of Polish-Ottoman contacts in the second part of the sixteenth century. Time frames are determined in order to present how the quality and quantity of contacts between the two states changed during the transition period when the Polish-Lithuanian State transformed from the hereditary kingdom with the capital in Kraków, into the Polish-Lithuanian elective and decentralized monarchy,

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<sup>3</sup> Dziubiński mentions rich collection of Armenian legal documents from 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries written in Polish or Kipchak but in Armenian alphabet. The collection is preserved in the city archive in Lwów and only one *defter* has been so far read and used. The documents often concern Ottoman trade.

ruled by the king and the diet from Warsaw. Because the Ottoman Empire also entered a period of decentralization and internal revolts after the death of Suleyman the Magnificent in 1566, the balance of power between the two states was affected and both states shifted towards a series of wars in the seventeenth centuries.

This work analyzes how internal changes in Poland-Lithuania influenced the attitude of the Ottoman State. The basic set of primary sources consulted consists of relevant records from the *mühimme* records and various letters from the sultans, viziers or vassal lords (e.g. the Moldavian voivodes) sent to Polish kings and lords. Apart from this, several other sources, like relations of Polish envoys from their missions to Istanbul and letters of the sultan's translator Ibrahim Bey (Strasz) to king Sigismund Augustus are used. Published Ottoman chronicles are also consulted, although they include relatively limited material concerning Poland-Lithuania. Majority of source material has not been published before. Because the number of the available sources for the period is quite extent, it was impossible to consult all of them due to limitations of this work. The sources have been nevertheless selected carefully in order to present a broad spectrum of topics and issues. In the second chapter of this work, political relations between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire are presented from the perspective of the balance of power between the two states. Therefore, problems of cooperation in Transylvanian, Moldavian and Muscovite issues during the reign of Sigismund Augustus are discussed. In addition to the controversial problem of the Ottoman influence on Polish royal elections and the question of Ottoman attempts to control politically Poland-Lithuania, analysis of major reasons of changes in relations at the end of the sixteenth century constitutes



the last part of the second chapter. The third chapter is devoted to practical side of relations. In other words, everyday functioning of diplomacy and specific problems the official of both states had to face in bilateral contact are formulated. This chapter also focuses on the role the borderland played in Ottoman-Polish contacts. The important positions of the Cossacks, the Tatars and the Danubian principalities in shaping Ottoman and Polish-Lithuanian political attitudes are dealt with in certain details. During the entire sixteenth and seventeenth centuries economic relations and trade played indispensable role for both states and therefore analysis of this phenomenon is the last topic of the last chapter.

## **II. Poland-Lithuania during the Early Modern Period: An Overview of Socio-political Conditions**

The traditional name of the country in Polish, *Rzeczpospolita Szlachecka* (The Republic of Nobles) gives a general idea about the kind of country the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was. One may ask what determined the particular role the nobility played. The answer to this question is connected with the Statue of Košice<sup>4</sup> issued by King Louis of Anjou in 1374 in order to secure the Polish throne for his daughter Jadwiga by granting land-tax exemption and reduction of the taxation rate levied on nobility.<sup>5</sup> Jadwiga's premature death forced Jadwiga's

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<sup>4</sup> Today Košice is a major city in eastern Slovakia.

<sup>5</sup> Davies, N. *God's Playground. A History of Poland*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982: vol. I, p. 211.

husband, king Jagiello to introduce several new privileges for the nobility in order to secure the throne for his sons.

Theoretically, the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy had become elective even before the rise of the Jagiellonians, when Casimir the Great, the last king of the Piast dynasty died in 1370, but as long as the Jagiellonians ruled, nobody was thinking of free royal election seriously.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the dynasty had problems with the succession, and the following Jagiellonian kings had to introduce a series of legislative acts changing the legal status of the gentry in their realm, for example the rule forbidding the king from imposing new taxes and raising army without the consent of the local diets and *Nihil Novi* – a regulation passed in 1505, prohibiting the introduction of any new laws without the agreement of the diet<sup>7</sup> and the senate. When Sigismund the Old and his wife queen Bona Sforza forced the diet and the senate to crown their son Sigismund II Augustus during their lifetime in 1529, it caused a wave of protests and was seen as an exception from the custom.<sup>8</sup> The death of Sigismund II in 1548 brought a period of interregnum and struggles among factions on the one hand and concepts of total legal equality among the gentry on the other. Legal changes introduced during the reign of the Jagiellonian kings were designed not in order to weaken the king's authority, but in order to keep the balance

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<sup>6</sup> Mączak, Antoni. "The structure of power in the Commonwealth of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." *A Republic of Nobles*. ed. J. K. Fedorowicz. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982: p. 109.

<sup>7</sup> Polish diet, the *Sejm* was an assembly of all the gentry, whereas the senate played role of advisory body to the king. The members of the senate were esteemed and powerful lords, the magnates and important hierarchs of the Catholic Church. Both the diet and the senate were very influential in legislative process and gradually limited power of the king.

<sup>8</sup> *Historia Polski*. ed. Stefan Kieniewicz & Witold Kula. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1958: vol I part 2 (15th century-1764)., p. 220, Mączak, Antoni. *Money, Prices and Power in Poland, 16-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1995: p. 109.

in a triangle: the king – the magnates – the gentry.<sup>9</sup> The magnates tried to obtain privileges from the king and to secure their power. The Jagiellonians were aware of this phenomenon and tried to gain advantage for their own position.<sup>10</sup> After Sigismund II's death, the balance between the three elements was destroyed because of the *Henrician articles*<sup>11</sup> signed by the first elected king Henry de Valois. The role of the kings gradually diminished and soon "the king of the Republic was appointed as a lifelong manager, working on contract to the rules of the firm. From coronation to the grave, he could have no illusions but that he was the servant, and the nobility his master."<sup>12</sup> Henry's flight after death of his brother Charles IX further diminished the status of king and the magnates soon started taking control over the situation. The great differences in financial status among magnates and the bulk of the gentry created a system of financial support in return for political loyalty in the local diet.<sup>13</sup> The role of the magnates in the royal court also increased. Besides, the so-called senators-resident controlled king's activities between meetings of the diet. Furthermore, almost all higher administrative positions of considerable importance (e.g. hetman or chancellor) became lifetime tenure, giving their holders an opportunity to carry out independent politics.<sup>14</sup> Growth of the privileges of the gentry, and especially of the magnates led to limitations for all other groups but the Catholic Church, which kept influential political position, particularly in the

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<sup>9</sup> Wyczański, Andrzej. "The problem of authority in sixteenth-century Poland: an essay in reinterpretation". *A Republic of Nobles*, p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> *Historia Polski*. vol. I, p. 212.

<sup>11</sup> The articles were a series of rules each elected king had to accept in order to be crowned. With time, new regulations were added, thus further limiting the king's power.

<sup>12</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, pp. 334-35.

<sup>13</sup> Mączak. "The Structure of Power", p. 125.

<sup>14</sup> *Historia Polski*. vol. I, p. 556.

senate.<sup>15</sup> The hierarchs of the Church were often the members of the gentry and therefore, it would be difficult to separate them.

One of distinctive features of the socio-political system of Poland-Lithuania was the lack of townsmen in political life and the constant financial troubles of the Jagiellonians. These two factors can be linked, because the Jagiellonians did not manage to build an effective administrative structure that would help them gain the support of the town dwellers.<sup>16</sup> At the end of the fifteenth century, there were some 600 urban centers in Poland-Lithuania. This number looks impressive but taking into consideration that only five or six of them exceeded or approached 10,000 inhabitants (not citizens), it becomes clear that Poland was in fact a typical agricultural state. The greatest cities were Gdańsk-Danzig (30,000), Kraków (18,000) and Lwów, Toruń-Thorn and Elbląg (all of them c. 8,000 inhabitants). By the end of the sixteenth century, there were already around 900 towns, but only eight of them were inhabited by more than 10,000 people. Moreover, Polish-Lithuanian towns were divided into two categories: royal and private. In the late seventeenth century, only 35 percent of the towns belonged to the first category. The royal towns were usually located upon German law and the inhabitants were granted far going autonomy and numerous privileges. This was not the case in the private towns, where the inhabitants were fully dependent on the owner – usually a magnate, a wealthy clergyman or a religious institution. The owner was able to dictate the rules and laws for the city dwellers. Growth of private towns influenced considerably the character of Polish urban development. Apart from that, limited citizen rights were

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<sup>15</sup> Mączak. "The Structure of Power", p 109.

<sup>16</sup> Mączak. *Money, Prices and Power*, p. 284.

another factor weakening the structure of towns. Usually only the Catholics were granted such right, whereas in some towns other religious groups formed the majority of inhabitants. In the late sixteenth century, only 60 percent (or less) of urban population possessed citizenship. From this number only a few percent were property holders, because most of urban property passed into the Church or hands of the magnates in that period. Ordinary citizens held only around 28 percent of urban property in the end of the sixteenth century and the number was still decreasing.<sup>17</sup>

Political situation of the towns reflected their development. After John Albert had granted the gentry monopoly of land holding in 1496, wealthy town dwellers gradually lost potential influence. In 1501 and 1507, the gentry obtained a new tool to weaken the town development – this was an exemption from custom duties on commodities exported from their demesnes and on all items imported for personal use. At the same time merchants had to pay 6 percent on imports, 8 percent on exports and 2 percent on internal transactions.<sup>18</sup> In 1507 and 1538, foreign merchants were allowed both wholesale and retail at Polish markets and in 1538 and 1552 the gentry tried to abolish the guilds. Later on, a monopoly was granted for the gentry over the export route along the Vistula River.<sup>19</sup> The situation did not satisfy the gentry and in 1565, prohibition on export of anything other than cattle or oxen was imposed on the townsmen.

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<sup>17</sup> Bogucka, Maria. “Polish Towns between the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries”. *A Republic of Nobles. Studies in Polish History to 1864*. ed. J. K. Fedorowicz. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982: pp. 138-43.

<sup>18</sup> Lukowski, Jerzy. *Liberty's Folly. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the eighteenth century, 1697-1795*. London & New York: Routledge, 1991: pp. 66-67.

<sup>19</sup> Bogucka. “Polish Towns”, p. 146.

Situation of the Jews was to some extent better. Although they were not allowed to become the gentry unless they had converted, the Jews played an important role in contacts between the gentry and other social groups, acting as trade agents or moneylenders. Wealth gained by such activities allowed the Jews to avoid some prohibitions – some of them wore swords, or even entered the gentry. However, in general their political influence was rather limited.<sup>20</sup>

Having analyzed the relations between the gentry and the urban population it is possible to focus on the majority of the dwellers of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – the peasants, who in 1569 constituted about sixty percent of population, most of them being serfs. It is not easy to analyze the status of peasants because the line between a free and an unfree person was very thin. Free communities had no legal means of defending themselves if the local landholder wanted to remove their freedom. Sometimes the peasants ran away and were offered free status by another landholder. The gentry usually did not try to capture the runaways, because the cost of such an enterprise was very high.<sup>21</sup> Peasants were usually fleeing into near villages, but in the sixteenth and seventeenth century a general tendency arose to runaway into distant Ukrainian lands, and join the Cossacks, who with time became one of the most influential elements of Ottoman-Polish relations. The Cossacks were originally Tatar mercenaries garrisoned in forts on the right bank of the Dnieper River by Witold, the Grand Duke of Lithuania in the early fifteenth century. Soon however, the mercenary communities attracted not only run-away peasants, but also various outlaws, which resulted in grow of

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<sup>20</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, vol I, p. 213.

<sup>21</sup> Lukowski, Jerzy. *Liberty's Folly*, p. 49.

uncontrollable paramilitary bandit groups.<sup>22</sup>

As far as religion is concerned, the Polish-Lithuanian State was extremely diverse. The largest group were the Roman Catholics, constituting around 45 % of the population. The second biggest group (c. 35 % of population) were the Orthodox. Various Protestant groups (Lutherans, Calvinists, Arians, Czech Brethren and others) also constituted about 20 % of the population. The last important group (15 % of the population) were the Jews. The remaining 5 % included the Muslim Tatars in Lithuania and the Armenians.<sup>23</sup> Despite the fact that the figures are only approximate, it is evident that Poland-Lithuania was by no means a Catholic state.

It seems important to stress certain similarities between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman State in social and religious strata. Both states were multi-religious and multi-national structures, ruled by extended military class, which did not involve in direct economic activities. The rights of the city dwellers and peasants were limited in similar ways. Apparently, political power of Polish kings seems weaker in comparison to the Ottoman sultans but in practice, neither the Jagiellonian with early elective kings were quite powerless, nor the Ottoman sultans were almighty. In addition, both states had to face long-lasting military campaigns in the sixteenth century, which led to serious financial problems. In the end, gradual decentralization in both states led to the rise of strong local centers of power (*ayans* in the Ottoman Empire and magnates<sup>24</sup> in the Commonwealth). All of these similarities not only influenced Ottoman-Polish contacts, but they also can partially explain internal

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<sup>22</sup> Davies. *God's Palyground*, vol. I, p. 144.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.* p.162 Chart A.

<sup>24</sup> The name comes from Latin: *magnus* that means *great*. In Poland-Lithuania, they were called *magnat*, which is just a polonized version of the Latin term.

factors, which influenced development of Ottoman-Polish contacts in time.

### **III. The Ottoman-Polish Encounter: The Initial Contacts**

Looking at a contemporary map, one could be surprised how such relatively distant countries like Poland and Turkey went through a long period of a specific kind of contacts, sometimes friendly and sometimes aggressive, but always very vivid, which only very close neighbors have. To fully understand both the scale and importance of the relations in the second half of the sixteenth century, it is necessary to go back in time to the late fourteenth century and review the development of the Polish kingdom, the Ottoman conquests in Europe and then the first contacts between Poland and the Ottoman State, long before the first became the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the latter was rightfully called the Ottoman Empire.

On 5 November 1370 Casimir the Great, the last king of the Piast dynasty which ruled the Polish kingdom, whether united or split since the conversion of its founder, pagan prince Mieszko I to Christianity in 966, died. The king's death created a new political situation as the throne, according to the agreement, was inherited by his nephew<sup>25</sup>, Hungarian king Louis of Anjou.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the kingdoms of Hungary and Poland entered a phase of personal union, which changed the political perspective and ambitions of both states. Through the union, Poland became neighbor of kingdoms of Bosnia and Serbia and the Principality of Wallachia, in

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<sup>25</sup> Louis was son of Carobert d'Anjou, the king of Hungary and Elizabeth Piast, daughter of Ladislaus Łokietek, king of Poland and father of Casimir the Great.

<sup>26</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, vol. I, p. 102.



addition to the principality of Moldavia in the South East, some of these lands being under nominal suzerainty of Louis. What is also important, Polish and Hungarian territories constituted the eastern border of the Roman Christianity, with pagan Lithuania, Orthodox Ruthenia and Muslim Tatar khanate beyond the eastern frontiers and the state of warlike Teutonic knights in the north. When the King of Bulgaria and the Despot of Dobrudja became Ottoman vassals in 1372,<sup>27</sup> the Ottoman State and the Polish kingdom were only a step from becoming direct neighbors.

Lithuania was another important and interesting element on the political map of Europe at that time:

*The Lithuanians prided themselves on being the last pagan people in Europe. In the thirteenth century, when all their Baltic neighbours – the Prussians and Sudovians to the south, and the Letts, Finns and Estonians to the north – had been converted to Christianity, they still resisted. [...] By the 1370s when Louis of Anjou reigned in Poland and Hungary, Lithuania already rivalled the Angevin empire. It was ruled from the ancient capital of Vilnius in the north, and dominated by a pagan warrior elite [...]. Its inhabitants were largely East Slavs, devoted to the Orthodox faith. Its language was ruski or Ruthenian – in a form which is now known as ‘Old Byelorussian’.*<sup>28</sup>

Paradoxically the fate of pagan Lithuania became connected with the kingdom of Poland for several centuries. When Louis died in 1382 Polish lords were against a new personal union with Hungary, as the late king's elder daughter, although obtained the Hungarian crown, was engaged to Sigismund de Luxembourg, which

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<sup>27</sup> İnalcık, Halil. *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*. London: Phoenix, 1994; p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, vol. I, p 115.

was contrary to Polish political aspirations.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Louis's second daughter Jadwiga had been engaged to Wilhelm of Habsburg, Prince of Austria and the idea of alliance with the Habsburgs was popular only among some nobles. The majority was against as this would certainly lead to loss of independence of the state. Unexpected solution was found in Lithuania, which pagan prince Jogaila was aware that his last pagan country in Europe would become a precious prey for the state of the Teutonic Knight in the north. Having obtained the license from the pope to convert the Lithuanians, it was only a question of time to conquer this land. Consequently, practical calculations offered the only reasonable solution, which was tempting for both sides – marriage of Jadwiga and Jogaila and personal union with Lithuania. Both states would in this fashion consolidate power against the common enemy i.e. the Teutonic State. In 1386 Jogaila was baptized and elected the new king of Poland, known since that time as Ladislaus Jagiello.<sup>30</sup>

Since the personal union in 1385, the two states followed a long path towards the constitutional union in 1569, which once again changed the political perspective of the new Polish-Lithuanian kingdom. In the new situation, the Jagiello's realm bordered states, which would play crucial role in the development of policies towards the Ottomans, i.e. the kingdom of Hungary and principality of Moldavia in the south, the Tatar khanate in the southeast and the principality of Muscovy in the east. In 1387, the king, with the help of his cousin Witold, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, took control over the Red Ruthenia (parts of contemporary Ukraine), which had been earlier captured by Hungarians. This brought stronger

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<sup>29</sup> *Historia Dyplomacji polskiej*. Ed. Marian Biskup. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982: vol. I. p. 315.

<sup>30</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, vol. I, pp. 116-18.

Polish influences in Moldavia and, although not as strong, in Wallachia. Both principalities would play crucial role in contacts with the Ottomans in the following centuries. To understand fully why control of these places was so important for both Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire one should consult the map. It is easy to observe that the port cities of Kilia, Akkerman (called in Polish sources Białogród, which means “the white city”) and the delta of the Danube River gave control over trade in that region and perfect access to the Black Sea, in addition to military supremacy. The fact that Hungarians, Poles and the Ottomans wanted to keep their influences in the Danubian principalities is important for future development of issues among these states. Quite reasonably, both Wallachia and Moldavia can be seen as a buffer zone between the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom and the Ottoman Empire and remained so up to the end of seventeenth century.

Witold had political ambitions of his own, and followed a policy of stronger independence from his royal cousin. He partially succeeded and practically became an independent ruler in Lithuania, but after his death in 1413, the Polish and Lithuanian lords achieved an agreement. Accordingly, both states were equal and had common foreign policy and ruler. Only with time the two parts of the realm assimilated more thoroughly.<sup>31</sup> This should not be surprising, because the two units followed different political traditions. Polish kingdom was divided into numerous principalities for a long period, which led to development of strong lords having considerable influence on the king, while Lithuania followed a model, which favored strong power of the grand duke.

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<sup>31</sup> *Historia dyplomacji*. vol. I, pp.320-22.

Hungarian king, and later the emperor, Sigismund tried to find support of the Teutonic knights, in order to destroy the newly formed Polish-Lithuanian kingdom, because Jagiello was seen by him as a potential candidate to the Hungarian throne. In addition, strong Polish-Lithuanian state would undermine Sigismund's own political ambitions. Actually, when Sigismund's wife Mary died in 1395 Jadwiga had pretensions to the Hungarian throne, as an heiress of Louis. However, most important area of competition between Poland and Hungary were political influences in the Red Ruthenia, Moldavia and Wallachia. Control over these places was important for both sides for economic and military reasons, which had already been mentioned. Cooperation of Sigismund with the Teutonic order in Prussia against Poland weakened in 1397, after the defeat of Hungarian forces at the battle of Nicopolis by the Ottomans. The trouble between the two rulers lasted until the treaty of Lubowla, signed in 1412. Subjects on both sides were supporting the idea of cooperation rather than competition as strong personal and social ties were present among them. According to the treaty, Moldavia and Red Ruthenia stayed under Polish rule until death of both Sigismund and Jagiello, respectively in 1434 and 1437. What is important, Hungary on the one side, and Poland together with Lithuania on the other, agreed for permanent peace and cooperation against common enemies, especially the Ottomans.<sup>32</sup>

Quite contrary to the treaty, Jagiello did not hurry to support anti-Ottoman activities of the Hungarian king. Polish knights were taking part in Sigismund's campaigns, but on the private basis. Such a policy seems rational, because Jagiello was more concerned with securing northern borders and lands of Lithuania from the

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<sup>32</sup> *Historia dyplomacji*. I, p. 324-31.

Teutonic knights. In 1411, Jagiello and Witold initiated official diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman sultans. This was used by the grand master of the Teutonic order to accuse the Jagiellonians of preparing plans against the Christendom, together with the “pagans”.<sup>33</sup> The fact that direct contacts with the Ottomans started so late could perhaps be explained by internal issues in both states, i.e., according to Kołodziejczyk:

*Direct Polish-Ottoman relations were initiated after the delay caused by the battle of Ankara (1402) on the one hand and the battle of Grunwald-Tannenberg (1410) on the other. After 1410, the danger posed by the Teutonic order to Poland-Lithuania was removed, and the Ottomans managed to overcome the crisis caused by the invasion of Tamerlane.*<sup>34</sup>

First real meeting of the Poles and the Ottomans was probably earlier, as some Polish knights took part in the battle at the Kosovo field in 1389.<sup>35</sup> In 1393 Bayezid invaded Wallachia and waged war against its ruler Mircea the Old (1388-1418). Since that time the Ottoman sultans considered Wallachia their vassal territory. Mircea was replaced by Vlad, who recognized the suzerainty of the sultan and started paying tribute in 1394.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, Mircea continued his struggle against the Ottomans together with Venice and Byzantium so eagerly that in 1416 the newly united Ottoman state was in considerable danger. According to İnalcık, Christian forces were using Mehmed’s brother Mustafa, who launched a revolt in Rumelia in

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* I, p. 350.

<sup>34</sup> Kołodziejczyk, Dariusz. *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th-18th Century)*. Leiden: Brill, 2000: p. 99.

<sup>35</sup> Pajewski, Janusz. *Buńczuk i koncerz. Z dziejów wojen polsko-tureckich*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1997: p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam* [hereafter *EI*<sup>2</sup>], vol. II, p. 688.

1416, while the Venetian fleet attacked and destroyed the Ottoman fleet at Gallipoli.<sup>37</sup> This resembles situation in Poland-Lithuania, where Sigismund and the Teutonic knights were trying to use Witold for their own purposes and thus weaken the position of Jagiello.

When king Sigismund of Hungary felt the direct threat from the Ottomans, he asked Jagiello and Witold for help. The rulers did not want to offer military support, but instead in 1414 the Polish king sent two royal envoys: Skarbek of Góra and Gregory the Armenian to Mehmed Çelebi, who at that time resided in Bursa.<sup>38</sup> This event can be considered the official establishment of contacts between the two states. The envoys succeeded in their mission, obtaining six-year truce from the sultan, which was spoiled by a certain Hungarian magnate.<sup>39</sup> According to the old Polish chronicle, written in the second part of the fifteenth century by Jan Długosz, the envoys were received warmly by the sultan. Because the chronicler's description is quite vivid and detailed, it seems proper to present it "as it is":

*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 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*

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<sup>37</sup> İnalcık. *The Ottoman Empire*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>38</sup> Reychman, Jan. *Historia Turcji*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, 1973: p. 51.

<sup>39</sup> Kołodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p. 100.

*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>40</sup>

The idea of cooperation with the Ottomans was not welcomed by all influential persons and on their way back to Poland, Gregory was accused of being a spy and imprisoned in Hungary for 20 weeks. In addition, both Jagiello and Witold were accused of plotting with the Ottomans against Hungary. Some historians claim that the number and content of rumors suggest there existed some kind of treaty, covenant or at least cooperation between the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom and the Ottomans,<sup>41</sup> but no written evidence has been found so far. Both the king and duke Witold also tried to develop contacts with the Byzantine emperors. Major issue was unification of the churches (one should remember that most subjects of Lithuania and considerable part of the subjects of Poland, especially in Red Ruthenia were Orthodox Christians) and to some extent balancing the power of the Ottomans. Despite the fact that the union was not achieved, the contacts were quite extensive and Witold's granddaughter Anna was married to John VIII Paleologus.<sup>42</sup>

At the death of Jagiello in 1434 his eldest son Ladislaus III, who became the new king of Poland-Lithuania, was only nine years old. Because Witold had died earlier in 1430, the new situation led to the break of a civil war in Lithuania. Young age of the king left the real political power in the hands of cardinal Oleśnicki, one of Jagiello's most devoted servants. The cardinal soon solved the complicated situation

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<sup>40</sup> Michael. p. 418-19.

<sup>41</sup> *Historia dyplomacji*. I, p. 351.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.* p. 351-52.

in Lithuania by supporting Witold's brother Sigismund Kiejstutowicz, who became the new grand duke. With the death of king of Hungary Sigismund in 1440 a new problem of Hungarian succession appeared. The cardinal decided to apply for the Hungarian throne for young Ladislaus and as a result won it. Thus, the young king left for Hungary in 1440 without knowing the gloomy fate that awaited him.<sup>43</sup>

The short reign of king Ladislaus has been subject to many disputes among historians as events leading to the battle of Varna in 1444 are often seen as a milestone in establishing control over Balkans by the Ottomans, which consequently determined the fate of Byzantium.<sup>44</sup> On the other, hand, notion of league or crusade against the Ottomans is still present in current historiography and research of historians is often pre-determined by this somewhat old-fashioned approach. Limitation of historiography understood in such archaic, crusading manner is discussed at the end of this chapter. What seems important for the history of the Ottoman-Polish relations is the fact that the young king undertook the crusade against the Ottoman forces contrary to the will of the Polish diet and Polish royal advisors.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, despite the fact that the king was accompanied by some Polish knights at Varna, Poland-Lithuania did not officially take part in the crusade.<sup>46</sup> Death of Ladislaus ended the fragile union with Hungary. The new king Casimir IV, was more concerned with northern issues during his reign, fighting for access to the Baltic Sea for his kingdom. When in 1456 the Moldavian prince Peter Aron accepted the Ottoman suzerainty Poland did not act properly which led to

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<sup>43</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, p. 135-38.

<sup>44</sup> The subject is thoroughly discussed by Halil İnalcık in his *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1995 and by D. Kołodziejczyk in *Ottoman-Polish*.

<sup>45</sup> İnalcık. *Fatih Devri*, p. 29.

<sup>46</sup> Kołodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p. 100.



strange double suzerainty over Moldavia, which continued under the reign of Stephan the Great (1457-1504).<sup>47</sup> Stephen the Great renewed his vassalage to the king of Poland and sought agreement against the Ottomans with Uzun Hasan, which led to Mehmed II's invasion on Moldavia in 1476.<sup>48</sup> Poland tried to prevent the military action by sending envoy Marcin Wrocimowski to the sultan, but his mission was unsuccessful, though the relations remained peaceful and the strange status of Moldavia continued. In 1478 the Ottomans sent envoys to Poland with gifts and a proposal of combined action against Hungary, which was rejected by king Casimir.<sup>49</sup> When Mehmed II died in 1481, the Ottoman State was already a very strong and vast neighbor of the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom. Mehmed's heir Bayezid II had different political interests in the northern areas of his realm than his father had. In 1484 the new sultan launched a campaign against Moldavia and seized Kilia and Akkerman.<sup>50</sup> Poland sent first an envoy<sup>51</sup>, and then military support to the Moldavian voivode, but the cities were not recaptured. As a result, Polish envoy Mikołaj Firlej was sent to the sultan to obtain truce.<sup>52</sup> The *'ahidnâme* was prepared on 22 Mart 1489 in Latin. In brief, the sultan granted two years truce under condition that the Polish-Lithuanian side would keep friendship. In addition, all subjects and vassals of the sultan and the king were forced to follow the treaty.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid.* p. 109.

<sup>48</sup> *EF*<sup>2</sup>. vol. I, p. 1252-53.

<sup>49</sup> Kołodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p. 110.

<sup>50</sup> İnalçık. *The Ottoman Empire*, p. 30.

<sup>51</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Âlî Efendi, *Kitâbü't-Târih-i Künhü'l-Ahbâr*. Erciyes Üniversitesi Yayınları: Kayseri, 1997, p. 830.

<sup>52</sup> Kołodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p. 110.

<sup>53</sup> Full text of the treaty in Latin, together with many other Ottoman-Polish treaties, was published by Kołodziejczyk in *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 197-659.

The death of Casimir in 1492 was an occasion to the renewal of the treaty with the new king John Albert. The original document being again written in Latin was considerably longer than the previous one. The treaty confirmed truce for three years and obliged both sides to return the war captives. What seems especially important from the perspective of future development of contacts and influences, economic activities between the two states were regulated in a special article for the first time. In addition, Bayezid II tried to encourage the merchants of the city of Lwów to carry on trade with the Ottoman merchants by granting the Lwów merchants low taxes (3.3 %). The trade would however develop much better several decades later.<sup>54</sup>

John Albert followed a policy of hesitation and could not decide whether to keep peace with the Ottomans or not. Despite the existing treaty with the sultan, in 1497, king John decided to launch a campaign in Moldavia to regain access to the Black Sea lost to the Ottomans by their conquest of Akkerman and Kilia. However, the Moldavian voivode Stephen tried to use the situation to materialize his political ambitions. First, he asked the sultan for help against the Polish king, and then, pretending he changed his mind, asked for king's assistance on the contrary. As a result, royal forces fell into ambush and the battle was lost. Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Âli Efendi wrote that only one thousand people survived from the king's army and around four-five thousands were killed.<sup>55</sup> The numbers do not have to be treated seriously, but the result must have been a catastrophe, because there even exists a proverb connected with that battle in Polish: "Za króla Olbrachta wyginęła szlachta",

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<sup>54</sup> Dziubiński, *Na szlakach Orientu. Handel między Polską a imperium osmańskim w XVI-XVIII wieku*. Wrocław: Fundacja Na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1998: pp. 12-13.

<sup>55</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Âli Efendi. pp. 877-81.

which means “The gentry died out during Albert’s reign”. Moreover, the Ottomans sent 4,000 *akıncıs* into Poland under the command of Malkoçoğlu Bâli Bey in the following year.<sup>56</sup> According to Gelibolulu Mustafa ‘Âli Efendi the *akın* started in winter:

*Kara Büğdan vilâyetine ‘asâkir-i Islâm akın itmeleri ve Kemâl Reîs deryâda Efrenc-i dalâlet-renc gemilerini sıyub emvâl-i firâvânla ganîmet itdükleri ve Ya’kûp Paşa Bosna ser-haddine Derencil nâm bân-ı Halîl ile ceng idüb bi’inâyeti’llâh tutub der-i devlete göndermesi ve Malkoç-Oğlu Bâli Beğ mübâşeretîyle Leh keferesi cânibine vâki’ olan kış akını hasâreti ve Mîr-Livâ Nasûh Beğ Rûs-ı menhûs küffârına akın idüb iğtinâmı [...]*<sup>57</sup>

This was a shock for the border provinces, because the *akıncıs* pillaged several important towns, among others Braclaw, Sambor and Jaroslaw. The *akıncıs* were supported by the Tatars and the sources state that 40,000 people were killed. The number is perhaps exaggerated; nevertheless, the *akın* was painful for the local community.<sup>58</sup> Hadîdî wrote a poetical description of that *akın*:

*Ali Beg’i kığırdup didi hümkâr / Leh iklîmini yağma it yûri var  
Kızın, oğlın u mâlın eyle tâlân / Yıkup yakup it ol iklîmi virân  
Ali Beg eyleyüp emre itâ’at / Tovucalara âdem saldı o sâ’at  
İşidüp her birisi oldu şâdân / Ki san kesb eyledi genc-i firâvân  
Geçüp Tuna’yı leşger göçdi gitdi / Kesüp menzil Leh’ün iline yetdi  
Dahı hiç görmemişler yağı leşger / Müzeyyen şehr ü kendi ü şenlik iller  
Ali Beg gâzilere didi yağma / Gel imdi gör nice oldu temâşâ  
Gulâmun sîm-ber ra’nâlarını / Kız oğlanun semen-sîmâlularını  
Karınun, kocanun boynın urulrar / Kumâşun kıymetlûsin götürürler*

<sup>56</sup> Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1998. vol. II, pp. 184-85.

<sup>57</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa ‘Âli Efendi. p. 817.

<sup>58</sup> Tansel, Selâhattin. *Sultan II. Bâyezî’tin Siyasî Hayatı*. Milli Eğitim Basımevi: İstanbul, 1966, pp. 87-92.

*Cevâhir sîm ü zerle toydı leşger / Gânimet mâlına gark oldı her er  
Yıkıldı yandı nice şehr-i meşhur / Harab oldı hezârân kend-i ma'mûr  
Çerisin cem' idüp olmadı kâbil / Kiralile gele ola mukâbil  
Leh'ün iklîmini yakdı vü yıkdı / Yine leşger selâmet geldi çıkdı  
Bu da ol târihün içindeyidi / Tokuz yüz yıl dahı üçündeyidi*<sup>59</sup>

The amount of attention given to this event is surprising, because usually the Ottoman chroniclers and historians either do not include passages concerning Poland-Lithuania, like in the case of *Duru Tarih* by Bostanzade Yahya<sup>60</sup> or they talk about the Polish kingdom once or twice, like in the *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, where the anonymous author mentioned *Leh tâyifesi vilâyeti* while he presented geographical neighbors of the Ottoman State.<sup>61</sup> Even more Central Europe oriented *Tevârih-i Cedîd-i Vilâyet-i Üngürüs* by Câfer İyânî contains very few mentions dealing with Poland-Lithuania, i.e. the closest neighbor of Hungary.<sup>62</sup> In a way such a treatment of Polish issues by the Ottoman historians and chroniclers proves that the relations between the two states were not tense, because traditional enemies of the sultans like the Habsburgs or the shahs were devoted much more attention.

The Moldavian problem proved that both sides had similar military potential and the rivalry would remain unsolved. Consequently, a new peace was signed in 1499.<sup>63</sup> The Moldavian expedition of John Albert was the last military episode in the bilateral issues and afterwards peace between the two states, despite tensions and various incidents, lasted for more than a century, until 1617.

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<sup>59</sup> Hadîdî, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*. Marmara Üniversitesi Yayınları: İstanbul, 1991, pp. 347-48.

<sup>60</sup> Bostanzade Yahya, *Duru Tarih*. Milliyet Yayınları: İstanbul, 1978.

<sup>61</sup> Anonym, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*. Marmara Üniversitesi Yayınları: İstanbul, 1992, p. 81.

<sup>62</sup> Câfer İyânî, *Tevârih-i Cedîd-i Vilâyet-i Üngürüs*. Kitabevi: İstanbul, 2001. References to *Leh* on pages 3a, 7a, 50b, 54b, 64b, 81b.

<sup>63</sup> *EF*<sup>2</sup>. vol. V, p. 720.

In 1501, John Albert died and his brother Alexander, previously the grand duke of Lithuania obtained the Polish crown. The temporary treaty signed by Bayezid II with John Albert was extended into a five-years truce, granted by the sultan on 9 October 1502 and then ratified by the king on 21 February 1503.<sup>64</sup> In the following year, both sides cooperated, trying to solve the Moldavian problems. A secret envoy was sent by the king to the sultan with a proposal of common action against the new Moldavian voivode Bogdan who, in king's opinion, tried to spoil friendship between the king and the sultan. Meanwhile however, Bogdan obtained the support of Bayezid and the envoy did not succeed completely. In 1505 the Moldavian envoys came to Kraków with the proposal of marriage between Bogdan and the king's elder sister Elizabeth in return for treaty with Poland and return of some lands to the Polish crown. The sultan was afraid of the Polish-Moldavian agreement but the marriage was about to be conducted and the agreement, which included homage to the Polish king, was written down. Then Alexander died unexpectedly and the plan was never carried out.<sup>65</sup>

Death of Alexander in 1506 was followed by the coronation of his brother Sigismund, who was given the nickname "Stary" i.e. Sigismund the Old, due to the fact that he became the king in the age of forty and ruled for forty two years. His rule (and later the rule of his son Sigismund Augustus) was one of the phenomena in Europe at that time, which has often been classified as the golden age. Queen Elizabeth in England, Philip in Spain, two Sigismunds in Poland and Suleyman the Magnificent in the Ottoman Empire have often been portrayed by historians as great

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<sup>64</sup> Kołodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, pp. 112-13.

<sup>65</sup> *Historia dyplomacji*. vol. I, pp. 565-66

rulers, who not only ruled, but also shaped the history of Europe. Hence, one should not be surprised that bonds of mutual friendly relations rose between Sigismund the Old and Suleyman the Magnificent.

In 1507 Sigismund informed sultan Bayezid about his accession and the new truce for one year was signed in 1509. Then the treaties were renewed in 1510 for another year and in 1512 for five years. At the same time, the envoy tried to obtain a promise of truce from *şehzâde* Selim (importance of this attempt will be explained in the third chapter), but did not succeed. In 1511, the Crimean khan also allied with Sigismund against the Muscovites,<sup>66</sup> but the Tatars were changing alliances quite often and unexpectedly. After the succession of Selim, truce was renewed twice: in 1514 and in 1519, both times for three years. The conditions of the truce were not altered.<sup>67</sup> After Selim's return from the Persian campaign in 1515, a Polish envoy came to Istanbul to congratulate the victory,<sup>68</sup> but in spite of good relations and obtaining the truce, there were rumors in 1516 that the sultan would attack Hungary and possibly march through Polish lands. However, Selim was involved in war in Egypt and therefore Sigismund, who did not want war with the Ottomans, managed to solve the issue diplomatically.<sup>69</sup>

The succession of Suleyman to the throne in 1520 brought a very short instability in relations with Poland. Nobody expected that the new sultan would launch campaigns in Europe, at least not so soon. The conquest of Belgrade in 1521 gave the sultan direct access to Hungary. Hungarian king Louis II Jagiellon asked

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<sup>66</sup> Tansel, Selâhattin. *Yavuz Sultan Selim*. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1969, p. 227.

<sup>67</sup> Kołodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, pp. 113-15.

<sup>68</sup> Celâl-zâde Mustafa, *Selim-nâme*. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları: Ankara, 1990, p. 382.

<sup>69</sup> Tansel. *Yavuz Sultan Selim*. p. 223.

his brother-in-law Ferdinand of Habsburg for assistance, but was offered none. On the other hand, Sigismund the Old, who was the Hungarian king's uncle, offered limited military support<sup>70</sup>, which was risky from the perspective of peace with Suleyman. This led to a brief campaign of Tatar and Ottoman forces, which attacked surroundings of Lwów in 1524. However, the perspective of war with the Ottomans was extremely unpopular among Polish nobility and soon strong policy towards friendly relations was applied. In 1525 an envoy was sent to Istanbul. Major purpose of the mission was truce with Poland for six years, which would also include Hungary. Suleyman did not agree with such a solution and granted a three year *'ahidnâme* to Poland-Lithuania only. This left Louis II of Hungary without Polish support and led to the lost battle of Mohács in 1526.<sup>71</sup> The document is interesting as it is the first *'ahidnâme* given in the Ottoman Turkish. It was given for three years and included articles that regulated the status of war captives and merchants. It seems that also the sultan was not interested in campaign in Poland and focused completely on Hungary. In 1521, the prince of Muscovy proposed Suleyman alliance against Sigismund the Old, but the sultan rejected, saying that he would not ally with such a barbarian.<sup>72</sup> From the Ottoman perspective, a campaign against Poland-Lithuania would be unreasonable, because friendly relations guaranteed stability, necessary to deal with the Habsburgs and the Muscovites.

One could argue about whether with Polish support, the Hungarian fate would have been different, but unquestionably, isolation of Hungary from both the Habsburgs and Poland-Lithuania changed the balance of power in the region.

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<sup>70</sup> *Historia dyplomacji*. vol. I, p. 595.

<sup>71</sup> Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish*. p. 116

<sup>72</sup> Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*. Türkiye Yayınevi: İstanbul, 1971: vol. II, p. 74.

However, motives behind reluctant attitude of both neighbors of Hungary seem to be different. While the Habsburgs wanted to weaken the position of Hungary in order to secure their own political influences, from the Polish perspective peace with the Ottomans was needed for the security of the country, threatened by the political ambitions of Moscow, Habsburgs and the Teutonic State in the north. This explains why the idea of crusade against the Ottomans would not find support among Polish or Lithuanian lords.

King Louis II was killed at the battle of Mohács and soon after Suleyman conquered Buda. Death of the king brought political crisis as there were two candidates for the Hungarian throne: Ferdinand of Habsburg and John Zapolya, the *voivode* of Transylvania since 1510. The latter was elected king by the Hungarian diet on 10 November 1526 and crowned one day later as John I. On the other hand, Ferdinand has been the king of Bohemia since October 1526 and was pronounced king of Hungary by his supporters in December. As soon as the Habsburgs secured their positions in Italy and France, they launched a campaign in Hungary. Soon many of John's subjects changed alliance and betrayed Zapolya. The Ottomans responded to this with an offer of support for John against the Habsburgs. Finally, in 1527 John sent his envoy to Istanbul and asked for support. Suleyman acted promptly and soon signed a treaty with John.<sup>73</sup> In these events Polish king Sigismund secretly supported Zapolya, as he was considered a good candidate against the Habsburg domination. In fact, Zapolya's envoy was a Pole, "Lasczky"<sup>74</sup>, perhaps Łaski. The idea was popular among the Polish nobility as it balanced the

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<sup>73</sup> *History of Transylvania*, ed. Köpeczi, Béla. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994. pp. 247-49.

<sup>74</sup> Danişmend. *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. II, pp. 127-28.



Habsburgs on the one hand and secured peace with the Ottomans on the other. However, secrecy was needed, as Polish nobility was afraid of joint Habsburg-Muscovite actions against Poland-Lithuania. In 1528 an envoy was sent to Istanbul to obtain a new *'ahidnâme* from Suleyman. The document was granted easily.<sup>75</sup> In the following year, the Moldavian *voivode* Peter Rareș attacked the Polish frontier district of Pokucie, pretending he was doing this on the sultan's order. This led to Polish-Ottoman cooperation in the Moldavian issue again. At first Peter was defeated by hetman<sup>76</sup> Tarnowski. Then in 1538, Polish and Ottoman troops entered Moldavia and Peter was dethroned by the sultan for disturbing the Ottoman friend i.e. the kingdom of Poland-Lithuania.<sup>77</sup> This shows clearly that both sides tried to eliminate all potential sources of trouble and although Poland still did not resign from her claims to Moldavia, a new policy of common decisions and consultation can be observed. This policy was followed for most of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the Moldavian issues became one of the most important elements of coexistence of the two states.

At this stage it is possible to notice the rise of common Ottoman-Polish-Lithuanian political purposes. Both states were interested in preventing the Habsburgs in the West and the Muscovites in the east from gaining too much power. Political reality dictated to the Polish nobility that Hungarian kingdom was too weak to look for independence and the Ottoman suzerainty was more attractive than the Habsburg control. In order to facilitate and strengthen friendship, the idea of "eternal

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<sup>75</sup> Kołodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p. 117.

<sup>76</sup> *Hetmans* were military commanders in Poland-Lithuania.

<sup>77</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, p. 144.

truce” with the Ottomans became popular.<sup>78</sup> From current perspective, it seems natural but one should not forget that eternal peace between a Christian and a Muslim state (considering none of them was tributary) was unprecedented and revolutionary, bringing Polish-Ottoman relations into much higher level of development. Sigismund the Old was breaking the religious stereotypes of that time by backing up, as a Catholic, the Protestants in Prussia in 1525. The next step was eternal truce with the Muslim ruler.<sup>79</sup>

Many historians researching the Ottoman presence in Europe have been influenced by stereotypical concepts, which label the Ottoman State as the suppressor of the Balkans and the greatest threat of Christendom. Such an attitude not only limits the spectrum of historical perspective, but it also falsifies vision of the past. It is striking that some traditional European historians do notice variety and flexibility of relations between various Christian countries, especially during the age of Reformation, but in case of relations with non-Christian states like the Ottoman Empire, they tend to treat European states as a monolith. In other words, as long as the European issues are concerned, even religious disputes are noticed, but whenever the question of contacts between a particular state and the Ottoman Empire arises, some historians tend to see the history through the crusading, Christian perspective. This attitude has also been shared by some Turkish historians, like Ahmet Refik, who wrote skeptically: “Baturi İştvan Sokollu’dan ve bilhassa Üçüncü Murad’dan gördüğü himayeyi pek çabuk unuttu”.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *Historia dyplomacji*. vol. I, p. 657.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.* vol. I, pp. 657-58.

<sup>80</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001. p. 203.

The treaty, which was signed in 1533 between Sigismund the Old and Suleyman the Magnificent, stated that peace would be kept until the death of one of the two rulers. Moreover, Polish side wanted to include the sons of the two rulers into the treaty, but this was not accepted by the Ottomans.<sup>81</sup> When Sigismund the Old died in 1548, Suleyman sent to Sigismund Augustus very frank condolences, showing real affection to his late father.

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<sup>81</sup> Kołodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, pp. 117-118.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF OTTOMAN-POLISH RELATIONS DURING THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

#### **I. Period of Stability (1548-1572)**

The second half of the sixteenth century brought series of changes into Ottoman-Polish relations. Having presented, in somewhat descriptive and chronological way, the gradual development of contacts between the two states until 1548, it seems useful to portray most important characteristics of the later period in more analytical way. Consequently, it seems more reasonable to analyze major issues in an overall context instead of describing the events chronologically. The death of the last Jagiellonian king Sigismund Augustus in 1572 and establishment of the elective monarchy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth marked a new political and diplomatic period, which is analyzed in the following chapter.

Historians generally agree that friendly relations kept between the two states during reign of Sigismund the Old continued also after his death in 1548. His son Sigismund Augustus had been formally the king of Poland-Lithuania, and co-reigned with his father since 1529. Immediately after the death of Sigismund I,

Sigismund Augustus received very warm and friendly condolences from the sultan himself and from Hürrem and Mihrimah sultans. Even though diplomatic letters tend to be written in a highly exaggerated style, it is uncommon to find following phrases in carefully planned letters, sent by the Ottomans to the foreign rulers, which indicates that there really existed good and intense relations between the two states:

*[...] mektubu şerifinizde olan muhabbetleri ve Hasan kulum takrir ettiğü dostlukları cana minnet bilüp Padişah Hazretlerine arz ettikten sonra Padişah-ı âlempenah Hazretleri şol kadar hazzetmiş ki kabil-i tabir değildir. Eyitmiş ki koca kiral bizim ile iki kardeş gibi idi İnşaallahurrahman bu kiral ile ata ile oğul gibi olalım demiş ve bu sürürdan hükmü şerif emr edüb kulum Hasan'ı hâki payı şerifinize irsal eyledi ve Kiral Hazretleri mahum-i şerif ola ki Padişah yanında her ne husus için ki sizlerden fıkır olunursa onun olkadar sizleri hayrile zikretmeği cana minnet bilürüz Bu dostluğa binaen mektubu muhabbet tehi dest olmamağ için iki çift don ve gönlek uçkuru ile ve altı dane dest-mal ve bir dane el yüz makraması gönderildi<sup>82</sup>*

It is easy to observe that since signing first treaties with Poland, the sultans tried to avoid conflicts and follow the path of stability and far going tolerance. Of course, it would be naive to think that they did it without interest. During the expansion northwards the Ottomans could have followed two different paths: they could either attack all the states, which would be very unreasonable and probably lead to forced common military response of Habsburgs and Poland-Lithuania, or they could choose the states they would not attack and try to build powerful position using quarrels among various European states. Poland-Lithuania was a perfect candidate for an ally because it tried to avoid the fate of the Czechs, thus opposing the Habsburgs in the southwest, and was afraid of the Muscovites and periodically allied with the Tatars against princes of Moscow. In addition, Polish vassal state of Prussia in the north made the situation even more complicated. With such neighbors, the Polish-

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<sup>82</sup> Uçtum, N. R. “Hürrem ve Mihrümah Sultanların Polonya Kıralları II. Zigmund’a Yazdıkları Mektuplar.” *Belleten*, XLIV/176 (1980): p. 713.

Lithuanian State could not involve in a conflict with the Ottomans, which would be against the mutual interest of both states. From the Ottoman perspective the situation looked similar, but they also had to deal with Persia. In return equilibrium of power, in which neither side wanted its neighbor to become too strong, arose between the Polish-Lithuanian state and the Ottoman Empire.

Numerous sources disclose that links between the two states were based upon quite complex system of interests and prejudices. As it happens among friends, the contacts were based not only upon benefits, but also upon pretensions and troubles. These did not influence however the very foundation of the relations. One of the most important issues at the state level was the idea of Polish-Ottoman alliance against Muscovy. Pajewski, who discussed this topic for the first time, claimed that Sigismund Augustus or one of his close advisors had proposed an idea of cooperation against the common Ottoman-Polish enemy in 1565. According to Pajewski, Poland tried to establish a strong alliance against the Muscovites with the Tatars, but because the Crimean khans often changed their policies, the king decided to send an envoy to Istanbul, thinking that the sultan, as the vassal suzerain of the khanate, would force the Tatars to help the king. The envoy, Mikołaj Brzeski (in Ottoman documents mentioned as Nikola), officially complained on Tatar raids and asked for return of the war captives, but he was ordered secretly to convince Suleyman to ally with the king against the Muscovites. The sultan was preparing his last Hungarian campaign and therefore did not express interest in the proposal. Then the envoy visited the *şehzâde* Selim and repeated the suggestion. The whole issue was conducted with the utmost care because the king was afraid of potential

Habsburg-Muscovite alliance against Poland-Lithuania. The issue of alliance must have been presented unofficially, because in the letter from the sultan to the king only the question of Tatar raids and war captives were mentioned.<sup>83</sup> Relevant *mühimme* records also show that the sultan was not attracted by the proposal. There are two subsequent orders dated 13 *müharrem* 973 (10 August 1565) – the first one is the answer to the Polish king. This does not mention the Muscovites but contains aforementioned details concerning Tatar raids, war captives and question of Tatar military support for the king. In fact, this *mühimme* record must be the source of the letter prepared for the king. The following record, an order sent to the khan Devlet Giray, is similar. The sultan orders the khan to release the captives and send some troops to help the king, under condition the king pays the tribute he owes the khan.<sup>84</sup> It seems that Suleyman preferred not to get involved into the Muscovite trouble. Moreover, the sultan categorically prohibited the Moldavian *voivode* to pay taxes to Polish lords for Polish campaign against the Muscovites.<sup>85</sup> Selim's rule brought change into the situation. In 1568, the Ottomans started preparing for a new campaign. This time the major purpose was re-conquest of Astrakhan and construction of a channel linking Don and Volga rivers.<sup>86</sup> Piotr Zborowski, the Polish envoy in Istanbul at that time informed the king about the Ottoman plans:

*I know for sure that the castles on our border were ordered to be provisioned and tidied. They are assembling people in closer sandjaks, but as I was informed, there were also rumors that they send the tsar of Perekop and the*

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<sup>83</sup> Pajewski, Janusz. *Projekt przymierza polsko-tureckiego za Zygmunta Augusta*. Warszawa: Libraria Nova, 1936. pp. 1-4.

<sup>84</sup> *Mühimme Defteri* [hereafter MD] V: 70, 71.

<sup>85</sup> MD V: 1396.

<sup>86</sup> This issue is discussed in detail by Halil İnalcık in "Osmanlı-Rus Rekabetinin Menşei ve Don-Volga Kanalı Teşebbüsü (1569)". *Belleten* 46/12 (1948): 349-402.

*sandjak bey of Caffa towards the Don River, up to Astrakhan to take from the hands of the Muscovite (prince) the two ordas he captured. They say that they will connect Volga into Don at one place, where these two rivers are very close, and they will build a castle in there. I know that three hundred riverboats full of canon balls and gunpowder were being brought into Caffa.*<sup>87</sup>

At the time when the Ottoman army was already moving towards Astrakhan the sultan sent Ibrahim Beg, the translator, to the king asking for help against the Muscovites and for right to pass Polish territories by the Ottoman troops.<sup>88</sup> Closer look at the letter sent to the king shows that the sultan tried to explain his motives of war against the Muscovites and to convince the king to join him. The sultan stated that since the Muscovites had captured Astrakhan on the Kipchak border the Tatars could not go for pilgrimages easily, because the roads were closed. Moreover, the king had asked for help against the Muscovites previously and now the sultan thinks the suitable time has come. He also informed the king that concentration of Ottoman troops on Polish borders should not worry the king because the sultan did not intend to act against the old friendship. In the end Selim advised Sigismund to prepare for war against the common enemy.<sup>89</sup> The letter gives an impression that Selim really wanted to join forces and fight together, but the plans were never carried out. According to Pajewski, major reason of fiasco was the policy followed by Devlet Giray, who did not like the idea of the Ottoman conquest of Astrakhan and led a kind of triple game with Selim, Ivan and Sigismund. The khan tried to misinform each interested side about the real situation and as a result gained as much influence

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<sup>87</sup> Pajewski, Janusz. "Legacja Piotra Zborowskiego do Turcji" *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 12 (1936): 29-87; p.86

<sup>88</sup> Pajewski. *Projekt przymierza*, pp. 9-12.

<sup>89</sup> Archiwum Koronne Warszawskie [hereafter AKW] 70/219.



and independence as possible. When the khan became aware that his policy did not work as he planned and in fact brought together the sultan and the king, he decided to make a complaint on the king to the sultan using the attacks of the Cossacks as a pretext.<sup>90</sup> Devlet Giray complained that the Cossacks came by the river Özi in *şaykas* i.e. small boats, attacked places on shores, captured boys, women and animals and ran away. The sultan reacted decisively and complained to Sigismund asking for action against such events.<sup>91</sup> What is important, the sultan reminded the king that the Tatars were, as Muslims, under his protection. On the other hand, he stressed that the khan was a sovereign and ruled his own state and therefore the king and the khan should look for solution that was good for both sides.<sup>92</sup> Of course, the Cossacks did attack the Tatar settlements quite often and also the Tatar attacks were not uncommon, but the khan seemed to have preferential treatment from the sultan.<sup>93</sup>

Another important issue during the reign of Sigismund Augustus was the question of rule in Transylvania and the part of Hungary under the Ottoman rule. The split of Hungary and the rule of pro-Ottoman John Zapolya did not make the situation better for either side. The Habsburgs tried to secure political influences in eastern Hungary and in 1548 the widow of Zapolya, queen Isabelle Jagiellonka was forced to give up Transylvania to Ferdinand I. However, her counselor friar George made far going plans for unification of Hungary under the Habsburg rule without consulting Isabella. This led to political upheaval and a series of military actions,

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<sup>90</sup> Pajewski. *Projekt przymierza*, pp. 13-18

<sup>91</sup> MD VII: 2741, 2742, 2770.

<sup>92</sup> AKW 70/239.

<sup>93</sup> The role of Devlet Giray in the Ottoman policy against Russia was researched by Ahmet Türk, but the position of Poland-Lithuania in Devlet Giray's political enterprises is not mentioned in his work: Unpublished MA thesis by Ahmet Türk, *The Crimean Khanate under the reign of Gazi Giray II*. Ankara: Bilkent University, Department of social Sciences, 2000.

which resulted in the queen's abdication in 1551. Consequently, Ferdinand I was crowned the king of united Hungary and Isabelle with her son Petrovics fled to Poland to the court of Isabelle's brother Sigismund Augustus.<sup>94</sup> The Habsburgs did not think realistically and perhaps underestimated the consequences of such an action. Sultan Suleyman immediately started a campaign in Hungary against the Habsburgs.<sup>95</sup> The sultan's major idea was to bring back the son of Zapolya and to offer him the Transylvanian throne under the Ottoman supervision. The whole action was planned carefully and in 1553, both the sultan and the vizier Rustem Paşa sent letters to Isabelle and her son asking them to come back from Poland to Transylvania as soon as possible. In the letters, the queen and her son were advised to use the shortest possible way through Wallachia.<sup>96</sup> Sigismund II, was interested in prosperity of his sister and by series of negotiations with the Ottoman and Habsburg sides, supported by military successes of Ottoman forces in Hungary, obtained the Moldavian throne back for Isabelle and her son.<sup>97</sup> Common Ottoman-Polish interest prevailed and actually indirectly led to the future election of the Transylvanian *voivode* Stephan Bathory to the Polish-Lithuanian throne.

When John II died in 1571, a very interesting letter was sent to the Sigismund. Because Zapolya's son died heirless<sup>98</sup> his uncle Sigismund was entitled to John's property. Selim II informed Sigismund that the new *voivode* of Erdel would make a list of the late king John's property and send this list to Istanbul. Then the king was asked to send his people to collect the property, but the sultan stressed

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<sup>94</sup> *History of Transylvania*. pp. 255-58.

<sup>95</sup> Hammer. vol. VI, pp. 1686-690; Danişmend. vol. II, pp. 267-80.

<sup>96</sup> AKW 59/74, AKW 59/75.

<sup>97</sup> *Historia dyplomacji*. vol. I, pp. 682-83.

<sup>98</sup> Isabelle died earlier, in 1559.

that non-personal items (i.e. the items belonging to the state) would be kept in Transylvania and the king should understand it.<sup>99</sup> Death of John II brought political change to Transylvania because the sultan did not nominate a new king, but instead Stephan Bathory, the future king of Poland was appointed to the office of *voivode* of Transylvania.<sup>100</sup> What seems to be a limitation of independence of Erdel should be perhaps analyzed through the Habsburg context. Lack of natural heir to the throne would bring series of dynastical claims from the Habsburgs whereas appointment of a *voivode* guaranteed stability and peace in the region. Bathory was a good candidate, because as a son of a former Transylvanian *voivode* he had experience in dealing with the Ottomans. In addition, he was an esteemed military commander under the rule of the late queen Isabelle.<sup>101</sup>

Apart from these two important cases, everyday contacts between the two states concentrated on minor issues. In fact, both sides followed the rule “trust your friend but do not be blind”. Hence, the spies perhaps must have worked actively, at least the ones working for the Ottomans because news spread very fast. Usually orders concerning spying were sent to the *voivodes* of Moldavia,<sup>102</sup> which seems reasonable, because it was the closest neighbor of Poland-Lithuania under the Ottoman suzerainty. Even smallest elements of suspicion caused immediate reaction of the authorities in Istanbul. Especially gathering of troops near the border caused anxiety. In such case, the commanders of border areas were usually ordered to check

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<sup>99</sup>MD XIV: 288, and AKW 70/241. What is peculiar about both documents is the mistake in the name of the late John, who is called Stephen instead.

<sup>100</sup>MD XIV: 32.

<sup>101</sup> *History of Transylvania*. p. 260.

<sup>102</sup> MD III: 350.

what happens and what are the real intentions of the assembled military.<sup>103</sup> These attempts were not always kept in secrecy. In a letter to Sigismund, dated January 1572, Selim informs that his servants had sent him a report, claiming that many Polish soldiers approached the Wallachian border and are a burden to the land and the subjects. These military were under the command of a certain Laski and the sultan's people did not know what the intentions of this man were. The sultan wants to know the reason and therefore sends Turgut Çavuş to whom the king should explain the situation. Selim adds that it is enough if the king assures him that he is not going to act against the old covenants and ancient friendship. In the end, Selim stresses that if the fact that the *voivode* of Wallachia is taking a bride from Poland is the reason, then he reminds he did not allow the Polish military to cross the border. And as a conclusion, the sultan asks to send him important news concerning any topic.<sup>104</sup> Of course, such an attitude was useful and the Ottomans tried to turn the news into their advantage. For example in one of orders, dated 7 April 1566, the sultan wrote to the Moldavian *voivode* that according to the news, Habsburg forces had gathered in Vaşporak and were going to attack Poland. The sultan ordered the *voivode* to write a letter to the Polish king, to inform him about the Habsburg's plans, and to add that the sultan was going to use such an occasion and attack the Habsburgs.<sup>105</sup> Once again, it becomes obvious that Selim was preoccupied with stability in Poland-Lithuania and on the border zone.

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<sup>103</sup> MD X: 121. MD, III: 1286, 1623, 1639.

<sup>104</sup> AKW 70/245.

<sup>105</sup> MD V: 1421.

## II. Diplomacy and Power Politics (1572-1595)

Death of Sigismund Augustus on 7 August 1572 became a milestone, not only in Ottoman-Polish relations, but also in the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. While in the neighboring states the rulers tried to accumulate maximal power in their hands, in the Commonwealth there was an opposite tendency towards “democracy of the nobles”, as often called by historians. The Jagiellonian era, which lasted since the late fourteenth century, was over and after Sigismund Augustus; every new king of Poland-Lithuania was to be elected by *szlachta*, i.e. the gentry from among noble candidates. The end of dynastical kingdom ruled by rather predictable (from the Ottoman perspective) Jagiellonian kings created a serious problem for the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa and sultan Selim II, who were interested in keeping friendly and peaceful relations with their northern neighbor. Such policy followed for most of the Jagiellonian era by previous sultans secured balance of power in Central and Eastern Europe. The death of Sigismund opened potential claims of the Habsburgs and princes of Muscovy to the Polish-Lithuanian throne therefore no wonder the Ottomans decided to follow a policy of active involvement into the Polish issues.

The role of the Ottomans in first free elections and Ottoman influence on Stephan Bathory are very interesting and controversial historical phenomena on which different views have been proposed by historians. Although the research has been conducted in this field by both Polish and Turkish historians, the results are not

entirely satisfactory. The basic disadvantage of existing research is one-sided perspective, enforced through the lack of comparative study of sources. It seems therefore necessary to rearticulate certain concepts concerning Ottoman influence on Polish policy by use of existing research in addition to numerous sources from *mühimme* registers and the Central Archive of the Old Documents in Warsaw.

#### Ottoman diplomacy during the interregnum: Henry de Valois in power

According to Pajewski, the idea of making Henry de Valois, the younger brother of Charles IX of France, the new Polish king was articulated for the first time by the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, imperial translator Ibrahim Bey and a wealthy Jewish banker Jose Miquez. These three influential Ottomans revealed their plans for the Polish throne already at the end of summer 1569, i.e. three years before the death of Sigismund Augustus, to the financial agent of the French government, Claude du Bourg. Actually, Sokollu developed his plans further and proposed a marriage between Sigismund's sister Anna Jagiellonka and Henry de Valois, in addition to another marriage between John Sigismund Zapolya of Transylvania and queen Margot of France. These plans, never carried out, would spoil Franco-Habsburg relations and support the position of Transylvania, to which the Habsburg still had their claims.<sup>106</sup> According to Pajewski, Sokollu did not forget the idea and later tried to convince another French official, Grantrie de Grandchamp that potential marriage between Zapolya and Margot would be prospective, because the sultan would support his election to the Polish throne. In order to make the proposal more attractive Sokollu promised to give up Wallachia and Moldavia to young

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<sup>106</sup> Pajewski, Janusz. *Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego* Kraków: Nakładem Autora, 1933, pp. 4-6.

Zapolya in case the latter would be chosen. In 1571 young Zapolya died, which complicated the situation. Nevertheless, it is important to remember for future development of events that the idea of Polish throne for Henry de Valois was at first formulated by Sokollu.<sup>107</sup> According to Ahmet Refik, Sokollu sent Mahmut Bey to Charles IX in order to arrange marriage between Margot and Zapolya, and to make the latter the king of Poland-Lithuania. But the envoy's mission was unsuccessful, because Margot was married to Henry de Navarra in 1572. What is interesting, Ahmet Refik does not mention the death of young Zapolya as the major reason for the failure.<sup>108</sup> Joseph von Hammer also points out sending Mahmud Bey to the king of France in order to arrange the marriage between Zapolya and Margot.<sup>109</sup> Neither Ahmet Refik, nor Hammer refers to another plan arranged by Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, i.e. marriage between Anna and Henry. It seems that they did not have access to the reports of the French ambassadors used by Pajewski.

On 6 of August 1572, a messenger from the *bey* of Bender informed in Istanbul that Sigismund Augustus had died. Ottoman officials did not know what to do, because they did not obtain any official notification of king's death. According to Pajewski, this explains the existence of *nâmes* written by the sultan to Sigismund posthumously.<sup>110</sup> Such an idea seems to be a reasonable explanation. A good example of a *nâme* is the sultan's answer to the king's embassy, dated 18 *rebiülahir*

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<sup>107</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego*, pp. 6-9.

<sup>108</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 153.

<sup>109</sup> Hammer. vol. VI, p. 1835.

<sup>110</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego*, p. 9.

980, i.e. 28 August 1572<sup>111</sup>, three weeks after the news concerning Sigismund's death arrived.

After these events, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa involved in a diplomatic game with the French court, by telling the French envoy that the late Sigismund's sister Anna was chosen the new queen by Polish lords, provided that she would find a husband in two years. According to Pajewski, the real intention of the grand vizier at that time was not to support the candidacy of Henry to the Polish throne, but to create the illusion that he supported the idea, in order to spoil Franco-Habsburg relations. In reality, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa wanted the new Polish king to be chosen from among Polish lords.<sup>112</sup> The most important from the Ottoman perspective, was preventing the election of Habsburg or Muscovite candidates, because this would change the balance of power. Ahmet Refik claims that there even existed a party supporting the Muscovite candidate in Poland-Lithuania.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, according to Ahmet Refik, Sokollu obtained news concerning military intervention of the Muscovites in Poland-Lithuania in *müharrem* 980 (May-June 1572)<sup>114</sup>, which is imprecise, because the Muscovites could not intervene after Sigismund's death before July. Either there is a mistake in dating of Refik's source or the intervention did not concern Polish throne, but was one of numerous incursions of the Muscovites into the lands of the Commonwealth. In November 1572 official news concerning Sigismund's death were brought into Istanbul. In response, the Ottoman authorities sent condolences and advice concerning the election. The sultan

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<sup>111</sup> MD XIX 712.

<sup>112</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>113</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 157.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.* 159.



suggested that it would be best to choose Anna and, in case this would be impossible, such a Polish or Lithuanian lord, who would guarantee friendly relations with the Porte. In addition, the grand vizier offered military support in case of emergency.<sup>115</sup>

Interestingly enough, the grand vizier and the sultan ordered the Crimean khan to attack Poland-Lithuania before winter, but the Tatars did not do it for some reasons; instead, they spent winter in Moldavia creating great trouble for the local population. There is no direct evidence of orders given to the khan, but in the *nâme* sent to him in February the sultan explained that the Moldavian *voivode* had sent a complaint on Tatars, who would invade Poland-Lithuania, but instead entered his principality. The sultan reminded that Moldavia was a tributary state and such actions were not allowed.<sup>116</sup> This indirect order reveals the fact that the attacks on the Commonwealth must have been planned, perhaps to consolidate the gentry and magnates to choose the new ruler as soon as possible. It is highly unlikely that the khan could invade Poland-Lithuania against the Ottoman will during such an important moment as interregnum. According to Pajewski at this point the French diplomacy engaged in obtaining the sultan's support for the candidacy of Henry de Valois to the Polish-Lithuanian throne. Charles IX even demanded a statement from the sultan that the latter would support only Henry and would consider every other candidate the enemy of the Ottomans. However, Pajewski claims that the idea that had been initially developed by Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, was no more valid, partially due to prestigious purposes, but mostly because the grand vizier did not plan to

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<sup>115</sup> Pajewski. *Turecja wobec elekcji Walezego*, p. 13-14.

<sup>116</sup> MD XXI 330.

strengthen France and really wanted to see a Polish or Lithuanian lord on the throne<sup>117</sup> This information sounds credible, because according to Polish nobleman Dzierżek, who was learning Turkish in Istanbul at that time, Sokollu said that there was no difference between the prince of Muscovy and Henry de Valois, and both were the same bad solution.<sup>118</sup> Simultaneously, as Ahmet Refik suggests, Sokollu lost his patience and decided to prepare for military action in case the election would not be won by a friendly candidate. As a result, he sent orders to the *beys* of Silistre, Niğbolu, Vidin and Akkerman and to the *voivodes* of Moldavia and Wallachia.<sup>119</sup> Ahmet Refik does not mention that the same order was also sent to *akıncı beys* and the Crimean khan.<sup>120</sup> This suggests that the vizier was afraid indeed of possibility of potential election of the Habsburg or the prince of Muscovy. Pajewski suggests that in March 1573 Sokollu strongly opposed the idea of electing Henry de Valois or any foreign candidate, and instead sent the names of supported candidates: Jakób Uchański, Jan Firlej, Jazłowiecki or some other esteemed lord. In addition, the letters were sent directly to some of supported candidates, to make the idea of election more attractive for them. In response, the senate assured the sultan that they would not choose a candidate who could not keep peace with the sultan.<sup>121</sup> Pajewski's idea is true, but only partially. Similarly, Ahmet Refik also proposed a partial solution. According to him, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa at first sent simultaneous orders to the Polish lords<sup>122</sup> (to choose one from among themselves as a king), and to

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<sup>117</sup> Pajewski. "Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego", pp. 17-19.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.* p. 22.

<sup>119</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 160.

<sup>120</sup> MD XXI 405, 425.

<sup>121</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego*, p. 25-26.

<sup>122</sup> The names of the lords are not mentioned. The form "Leh beylerine" is used. Perhaps the addressees were the members of the senate.

the previously mentioned *beys* to be ready for military action. Then, according to Refik, the French asked the sultan for support and in a *nâme* dated 7 *Zilkade* 980, i.e. 11 Mart 1573, the sultan supported Henry's candidacy.<sup>123</sup>

The sources suggest a different interpretation of events. The letters were indeed sent, as both historians wrote, but they are dated 14 *zilkade* 980 (18 Mart) that is a week later than the date Ahmet Refik suggested. Moreover, there were several orders sent on that day, including all the orders mentioned by Refik, i.e. the orders for the *beys* to prepare for military intervention, and orders for the Polish lords concerning the royal election, together with the list of supported candidates. In addition, contrary to Pajewski's suggestions, the orders for the lords and bishops stated clearly that the sultan would support Henry de Valois in case the local candidate could not be chosen.<sup>124</sup> According to Pajewski, Sokollu decided to support Henry in the end of March, when the news concerning the attack of the prince of Muscovy on the Commonwealth spread in Istanbul. Pajewski also supposed that Sokollu was preparing a war in case an unfriendly candidate would be elected.<sup>125</sup> He was right only as far as the war preparations were concerned. At this point, it is possible to come back to the aforementioned Ahmet Refik's ideas concerning the attack of the Muscovites and the pro-Muscovite party. There exists a *mühimme* record, dated 7 *müharrem* 981 (9 May 1573) in which the sultan informs the *voivode* of Moldavia that he got his letter containing news on Muscovite attacks on Poland-Lithuania. This suggests that Ahmet Refik misdated the order and, as a result, put it into a wrong context.

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<sup>123</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 163.

<sup>124</sup> MD XXI 405, 406, 407, 425.

<sup>125</sup> Pajewski. *Turecja wobec elekcji Walezego*, p. 28-29.

In late June 1573 Sokollu apparently lost his patience and without waiting for the result of the royal election, decided to “help” solve the problem. In an order sent to Devlet Giray, dated 21 June, the sultan wanted the khan to attack Poland with the *beys* of Silistre, Niğbolu and Vidin, under the pretext that the lords chose their king from Muscovy that they did not pay tribute to the khan for seven years, and that they attacked Muslims at the borders.<sup>126</sup> The attacks were not carried out, because seven days later it was already known in Istanbul that Henry de Valois had been elected a new king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This news stimulated activity of the Ottoman. At first the letters were sent to the lords of Poland-Lithuania, in which the sultan congratulated them conducting the election according to his advice. He also informed that if the Muscovites attacked Poland the khan would give military support to the lords.<sup>127</sup> Orders were also sent to the *bey* of Silistre, the khan, and the *akıncı beys* to be prepared for military support to the Commonwealth in case of any attacks.<sup>128</sup> Similarly, the Moldavian *voivode* was ordered to oversee the development of events in Poland-Lithuania and to find out real intentions of the Polish and Lithuanian lords.<sup>129</sup> This suggests that Sokollu was not completely sure whether Henry would be really crowned.

One must remember that the period between election and coronation was rather long, which opened way to unpredicted development of situation. To avoid surprises the Ottoman diplomacy involved deeply in preparations of Henry’s arrival into his new realm. Ahmet Refik stresses that Sokollu tried to make the arrival as

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<sup>126</sup> MD XXII 147.

<sup>127</sup> MD XXII 220.

<sup>128</sup> MD XXII 247, 312, 313.

<sup>129</sup> MD XXII 469.

convenient as possible and suggested that the king should sail by sea into one of the Ottoman ports on the Aegean Sea, than visit Istanbul and go to his new kingdom through Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>130</sup> In this way, he would avoid the dominions of the Habsburgs. There are indeed many records in the *mühimmes* about this issue. The sultan wrote letters to the king of France and Henry as Refik suggests.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, he also promised in these *nâmes* to defend the Commonwealth from the Habsburgs and Muscovy. In other words, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa tried to use the election to strengthen the position of the Ottoman Empire, and he even stressed that the Polish and Lithuanian lords had asked the sultan for advice and the sultan suggested Henry, which was not true. The grand vizier then followed a very careful policy towards the Commonwealth – he decided to be patient until the king’s arrival and even ignored Polish raids in the borderlands, allowing the *bey* of Akkerman only a very limited revenge for the frontier attacks.<sup>132</sup> In November and December 1573, the grand vizier was preparing for the arrival of Henry into the Ottoman Empire. He informed both Henry and his brother Charles IX about possible ways into Kraków via Dubrovnik or Bosnia and ordered the *kapudanpaşa*, the *beys* of Timişvar and Kilis, and the *voivode* of Transylvania to prepare for Henry’s arrival.<sup>133</sup> In the end, Henry declined Sokollu’s proposal and came via Mainz and Frankfurt on the Oder, crossing the Polish border on 17 January 1574, to be crowned on 21 February.<sup>134</sup> Stephan Bathory, the *voivode* of Transylvania, and the future king of Poland-Lithuania wanted to attend the ceremony, but was prohibited by the sultan’s order.

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<sup>130</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 163.

<sup>131</sup> MD XXII 243, 245.

<sup>132</sup> MD XXII 516.

<sup>133</sup> MD XXIII 397, 403, 404, 405, 421.

<sup>134</sup> Davies. *God’s Playground*, vol. I, pp. 413-14.

The sultan suggested that it would be better if Bathory stayed in Transylvania and sent several esteemed lords to the coronation.<sup>135</sup> Henry's reign did not last long, due to premature death of Charles IX on 30 May 1574. With Henry's escape from Kraków to France, all efforts of the Ottoman diplomacy finished unsuccessfully. However, experience gained by Sokollu during the first interregnum turned to be very useful during the second one.

#### Diplomacy continued: Stephan Bathory – the Ottoman vassal?

Henry de Valois was informed about his brother's death two weeks later and decided to flee secretly from Kraków in the night of 18 June 1574.<sup>136</sup> The news concerning Henry's escape reached Istanbul a month later, on 18 July. Sokollu Mehmed Paşa did not expect such a sudden change of situation and he had to develop a new strategy concerning the Commonwealth. On the one hand, Henry's escape was advantageous from the Ottoman perspective, because it was easy to predict that the foreigners would not be as popular candidates to the throne as they used to be.<sup>137</sup> No historians mention that the news of Charles's death and Henry's escape could be delivered to Istanbul earlier. However, there exists a *mühimme* record, dated 21 June 1574, in which the sultan orders Abdi Çavuş to return with the letters he was supposed to give to the Polish king, because they became invalid.<sup>138</sup> It can be interpreted that the sultan was informed about the death of Charles IX and Henry's

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<sup>135</sup> MD XXIV 98.

<sup>136</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, vol. I, p. 417; AhmetRefik. "Lehistan'da Türk Hakimiyeti", *Türk Tarih Encümeni Mecmuası* 14 (1340/1924): 227-43: p. 227.

<sup>137</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego*, p. 5.

<sup>138</sup> MD XXVI 99.

escape by this time. This could be validated somehow perhaps if the letters given to Abdi Çavuş were found.

Pajewski claims that the letters for the Polish-Lithuanian senate were prepared immediately and the king of Sweden was proposed as a new candidate for the throne in Kraków. However, the letters were not sent, because, as in the case of Sigismund Augustus's death, the sultan did not obtain official notification of Henry's escape. As a result, the question of election was not included into the letters.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, the *nâme* for the Polish lords dated 24 July 1574 mentions that the sultan is aware of Henry's escape, but election is not mentioned.<sup>140</sup>

Both Ahmet Refik and Pajewski agree that grand vizier was very well aware of the fact that most influential candidate in the forthcoming election was the worst enemy of the Porte, Maximilian the Habsburg.<sup>141</sup> As long as Poland-Lithuania was in friendly relations with the Ottomans, neither Habsburgs nor the Muscovites could change the balance of power, but simultaneously Sokollu knew that he could drag the Commonwealth under the Ottoman influence only by fear of war.<sup>142</sup> This resulted in Sokollu's order to the Crimean khan to prepare for military intervention in case one of the hostile candidates was chosen.<sup>143</sup> Pajewski and Ahmet Refik mention this order, but they are mistaken about the date of orders. According to Ahmet Refik, when Henry fled, Sokollu gave orders to the khan, *serhat beyi*, and the *beylerbeyi* of Budin to prepare for war.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>140</sup> MD XXVI 278.

<sup>141</sup> Ahmet Refik. "Lehistan'da Türk Hakimiyeti". p. 227; Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego*, p. 7.

<sup>142</sup> Ahmet Refik. "Lehistan'da Türk Hakimiyeti". p.227.

<sup>143</sup> MD XXVI 413.

<sup>144</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 165.

This is true and the order, in which the grand vizier ordered the khan to be ready for intervention was dated 17 August.<sup>145</sup> In addition, the khan was ordered not to do anything against the *'ahid* with the Commonwealth. Pajewski does not give the date for the Tatar raids, but mentions them before the news concerning supposed election of Ivan. In fact, the Tatars raided eastern provinces of the Commonwealth in October 1575, after the first unsuccessful election.<sup>146</sup> Another attacks took place earlier when Sokollu Mehmed Paşa ordered the *bey* of Füleki to attack Poland-Lithuania under the pretext that that the son of the prince of Muscovy had been elected the king of the Commonwealth. According to Ahmet Refik, Sokollu hoped that such acts would force the Polish and Lithuanian lords to apply to the sultan for advice. Moreover, Ahmet Refik claims that this was the initiative of Sokollu and the vizier did not consult the *divan* in that matter.<sup>147</sup> The order is dated 4 September.<sup>148</sup> What is interesting, Pajewski claims that there were in fact rumors in Istanbul in August that Ivan would be elected the king. The rumors were spread by Stephan Bathory's agent Rac, because Bathory, the vassal of the sultan and the prince of Transylvania, wanted to be elected the king of Poland-Lithuania. After the gossips made the Ottoman officials uneasy, Rac suggested to the grand vizier that Bathory's chance in Polish elections was growing.<sup>149</sup> After comparing opinions of both historians it sounds reasonable to support the idea that perhaps Sokollu's orders for

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<sup>145</sup> MD XXVI 413.

<sup>146</sup> Bain. "The Polish Interregnum, 1575". *The English Historical Review* 2/1 (October 1889): 645-66. p. 655.

<sup>147</sup> Ahmet Refik. "Lehistan'da Türk Hakimiyeti". pp. 227-228.

<sup>148</sup> MD XXVI: 533.

<sup>149</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego*, pp. 14-15.



the *bey* of Fülelek were in fact influenced by the Bathory's agent of,<sup>150</sup> and the Tatar raids mentioned by Pajewski were in fact the attacks prepared by the *bey* of Fülelek.

Bathory, whose candidacy to the throne in Kraków was not considered seriously, was in fact very interested in winning the election. He must have been aware that in case the Habsburgs or the Muscovites gained control over the Commonwealth the position of his homeland Transylvania would change drastically. With the Ottoman support, he was able to face the Habsburgs and keep far going independence. This would doubtlessly change if the Polish-Lithuanian throne passed into hands of the enemy of the Ottomans. The best choice, from his perspective, was to win the election. Successful action of Bathory's agent in Istanbul yielded a positive result. Sokollu first sent a letter to the senate in which he mentioned the Polish lord Kostka and the king of Sweden as candidates supported by the Porte. After Bathory's diplomatic intrigue, Sokollu sent a messenger with verbal orders for the *çavuş* who had taken the letters. The *çavuş* was told to mention Bathory as the third supported candidate.<sup>151</sup>

The *çavuş* gave the speech to the diet in Warsaw and the lords were pleased with the sultan's suggestions. Theoretically, all three candidates were acceptable, but in fact, the papal nuncio strongly opposed the Polish candidate and Bathory, while

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<sup>150</sup> Election and reign of Stephan Bathory has been a subject of several studies, both in Poland and Turkey. A broad monograph *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polski z Turcją za Stefana Batorego* (*Diplomatic Relations of Poland with Turkey during the Reign of Stephan Bathory*) has been published relatively recently by Kazimierz Dopierała. The author focused on criticizing numerous stereotypes, repeated by historians. Despite the fact that Dopierała could not use the Ottoman archives, the study is very detailed and the author used a great number of translations of Ottoman documents from Polish archives. It does not however include the important publications by Ahmet Refik and other studies in Turkish.

<sup>151</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego*, p. 15; Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 198.

supporting the Habsburgs.<sup>152</sup> It is important to point out that the *çavuş* arrived in Warsaw on 8 September,<sup>153</sup> which was almost three months after the first unsuccessful election attempt. In October, the eastern provinces were raided by the Tatars, which facilitated election because the Polish lords treated it as a warning from the sultan. As a result, the king was elected in December. The majority of the lords decided to elect the Polish candidate, but both nominated candidates declined the offer. As a result, the senate and the papal nuncio supported the Habsburg, which led to riots and simultaneous election of two candidates: the Habsburg and Bathory. The latter was elected by adversaries of the Habsburg candidate, who constituted the majority. The election of Bathory was reconfirmed on 18 January 1576.<sup>154</sup> Pajewski unconvincingly claims that Sokollu did not treat the candidacy of Bathory seriously.<sup>155</sup> From Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's perspective, a friendly ruler in Poland was the most desirable thing. According to both Pajewski and Dopierała, Sokollu was afraid that Bathory would become the enemy of the Ottomans and therefore Bathory's name was always the last among the candidates supported by the sultan.<sup>156</sup> This seems controversial, because the Ottomans engaged in a developed diplomatic game to protect Bathory against the Habsburg candidate, warning the emperor that the Commonwealth was taken by the Ottoman under protection and no military actions by the Habsburgs would be tolerated.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, immediately after election the letter of support was sent to Bathory. The sultan wrote that Bathory

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<sup>152</sup> Bain. "The Polish Interregnum, 1575", pp. 650-51.

<sup>153</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego*, p. 16.

<sup>154</sup> Bain. "The Polish Interregnum, 1575", pp. 655-61.

<sup>155</sup> Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego*, p. 15.

<sup>156</sup> Dopierała. *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polski z Turcją za Stefana Batorego*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986. pp. 25-27.

<sup>157</sup> Uzunçarşılı. *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. III, p. 170; Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 198; Ahmet Refik. "Lehistan'da Türk Hakimiyeti", pp. 229-30.

should accept the Polish crown and, as long as he did not act against the Ottomans, he would be offered their friendship.<sup>158</sup> Ahmet Refik mentions that the sultan wanted to be sure that the new king would be safely crowned and therefore gave orders concerning his escort.<sup>159</sup> The grand vizier and the sultan really gave importance to this issue, because all the lords from the Polish-Lithuanian borderland were ordered to help Bathory be prepared for military action as long as the news concerning coronations come.<sup>160</sup> In addition, strong orders for the emperor were sent in which the sultan warned that he would treat the Habsburg intervention in Polish issues as a cause of war with the Habsburgs.<sup>161</sup> All these preparations show that the question of Polish election was vital for the Ottoman policy and the candidacy of Stephan Bathory was not treated lightly.

According to Ahmet Refik, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa wanted to change Poland-Lithuania into a vassal state, similar to Moldavia, Wallachia or Transylvania.<sup>162</sup> Such an idea seems a bit naive. For an experienced statesman like Sokollu it must have been obvious that what was possible with small principalities could not work in one of the biggest European states of that time. Moreover, leaving aside the size and the population, one should not forget that Poland-Lithuania in the late sixteenth century was not a centralized monarchy like the Ottoman Empire, but the republic ruled by elective kings. Therefore, the power of the kings was limited by the diet and the senate, and even if the ruler were a subject of the sultan, the rest of the officials would not be. Of course, in the end of the sixteenth century, the royal power was

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<sup>158</sup> MD XXVII 492.

<sup>159</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 200.

<sup>160</sup> MD XXVII 722, 723, 724, 727.

<sup>161</sup> MD XXVII 493.

<sup>162</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 201.

still considerable, but not strong enough to reduce the Commonwealth into a vassal state. Perhaps that is why Ahmet Refik accuses Bathory of being anti-Ottoman.<sup>163</sup> He does not seem to recognize that being a friendly ruler would not necessarily mean to be subjective. In addition, major accusation focuses on the fact that the Poles raided the Ottoman borderland and territories of the Crimean khanate. This interpretation suggests that Ahmet Refik was not aware of the internal troubles the Commonwealth had to face. Bathory, despite all his efforts, could not prevent the Cossack attacks, because the Cossacks were out of control. The king's attitude towards those rebels was very decisive and he executed some important Cossack leaders, together with some Polish lords who invaded borderland in order to improve the relations with the sultan.<sup>164</sup> On the other hand, it is true that Sokollu Mehmed Paşa did try to influence the new king by sending him somewhat patronizing letters, treating Bathory like a vassal.<sup>165</sup> But this did not mean that Bathory agreed for such a treatment. In fact, the entire issue is very delicate. In general, the relations between Bathory and the sultan were good. Soon after the coronation, Bathory sent a letter to the sultan. The sultan replied asking, traditionally, for the tribute for the Tatars and warning that the Habsburgs were following an anti-Ottoman policy.<sup>166</sup> In 1577 the new *âhidnâme* was prepared in Istanbul and sent to the king.<sup>167</sup> The text was a slightly changed version of former treaties. Some articles concerning freedom of trade were added.<sup>168</sup> The king's successes in wars against the Muscovites and his

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<sup>163</sup> Ahmet Refik. *Sokollu*, p. 203.

<sup>164</sup> Dopierała. *Stosunki dyplomatyczne*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>166</sup> AKW 71/255.

<sup>167</sup> AKW 71/259, AKW 71/260.

<sup>168</sup> Kolodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p. 185-86. For the full text of the treaty see: *ibid.* pp. 269-74.

diplomatic skills soon made him an influential political figure. In 1578, he secretly supported first English mission into the sultan. The envoy, William Harborne traveled to Istanbul via Poland and Moldavia.<sup>169</sup>

Most historians tend to treat Bathory's policy against the Ottomans as unfriendly. European historians were usually convinced that Bathory, after having been elected the king of Poland-Lithuania, at first cooperated with the Ottomans in order to fight the Muscovites and after his successes in the East, he wanted to build anti-Ottoman Christian league.<sup>170</sup> What is striking, some Turkish historians also followed this idea, presenting Bathory as a very ungrateful person, who very fast forgot the sultan's support in the election.<sup>171</sup> On the contrary, J. von Hammer, who wrote in the eighteenth century, represented a different view, treating Bathory like a blind servant of the sultan.<sup>172</sup> More positive approach to the relations between Bathory and the Ottomans has been proposed by İnalçık<sup>173</sup> and Danişmend<sup>174</sup> who formulated the idea of coherent Ottoman policy in the north. According to these two historians, Bathory and the khan were the best guarantee of keeping the balance of power against the Muscovites. In fact, this idea is close to later research of Dopierała, who suggests that Bathory treated the Ottomans in a completely different way than he treated the other neighbors of his realm. The Habsburgs, the Muscovites and the Crimean khanate were treated by the king from the position of power. The

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<sup>169</sup> Kolodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p 124.

<sup>170</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, vol. I, p. 431; *Historia dyplomacji*. vol. II, pp. 14-15.; Bain. "The Polish Interregnum, 1575", p. 666; Pajewski. *Turcja wobec elekcji Batorego*, p. 14. More examples of such attitude are given by Dopierała in the first chapter of his monograph.

<sup>171</sup> Ahmet Refik. "Lehistan'da Türk Hakimiyeti", p. 233; *Sokollu*. p. 203; Uzunçarşılı. *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. III, p. 171; Dopierała. *Stosunki dyplomatyczne*, p. 41.

<sup>172</sup> Hammer. *Osmanlı Devleti Tarihi*, vol. VII, pp. 2115-116.

<sup>173</sup> İnalçık. *Ottoman Empire*, p. 40.

<sup>174</sup> Danişmend. *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol. III, p. 12-13.

stronger his position in Poland-Lithuania the more decisive policy he applied. In the case of the Ottomans, such a strategy could not be realized, because from the very beginning, even before the election, the best supporter of Bathory was the sultan. As a result, it would be very impractical from Bathory's perspective to turn back to the Ottomans, because he had no other ally. The Habsburgs were interested in taking control over Transylvania, which could not be accepted by Bathory, and the Muscovites were the major target of Bathory's military actions, so they could not offer him interesting alliance either. This however does not mean that Bathory was following the sultan's orders.<sup>175</sup> Lack of military conflicts with the Ottomans (excluding minor issues connected with the Cossacks, some Polish lords and the Tatar raids) was the best proof of good relations between the two states and of practical realization of the common Ottoman-Polish balance of power in the region.

#### Relations in Danger: Sigismund III Vasa (1587-1632)

Bathory's reign lasted only ten years, between 1576 and 1586. He died at considerably young age and his death once more caused a problem of succession. News of Bathory's death arrived at Istanbul in the beginning of *müharrem* 995 (in the middle of December 1586).<sup>176</sup> The Ottomans did not involve into the third election as strongly as they did in the previous ones. The reigning sultan Murad III ordered the *voivode* of Transylvania to spy on the Habsburgs<sup>177</sup> and the letters to the Polish lords were sent in April 1587. In the letters, the sultan advised them to choose

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<sup>175</sup> Dopierała. *Stosunki dyplomatyczne*, pp. 157-59.

<sup>176</sup> Selânikî Mustafa Efendi. *Tarih-i Selânikî (1003-1008/1595-1600)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999. p. 178.

<sup>177</sup> Ahmet Refik. "Lehistan'da Türk Hakimiyeti", p. 237.

someone from among Polish lords if they wanted continuation of the sultan's friendship. Murad strongly opposed election of the candidates from Austria, Muscovy, France or England.<sup>178</sup> Despite the lack of as aggressive and direct diplomatic actions as previously, the Porte was deeply interested in the result of the election and took precautions to prevent the Habsburg's intervention. What is strange is that the Habsburgs tried to obtain the Ottoman support in their struggle for the Polish throne<sup>179</sup>, which did not present their political abilities in a good way. Supporting the Habsburgs would perhaps be the last possible solution for the sultan. Apart from sending the letters, Murad III ordered the *voivodes* of Moldavia and Transylvania to keep an eye open on events in the Commonwealth and inform him of developments. Meanwhile, the sultan prohibited the *voivodes* to do anything against the treaties with Poland-Lithuania,<sup>180</sup> being afraid that this could perhaps influence the result of the election.

The election was difficult. The Habsburg candidate had a strong support of the pope and the king of Spain. On the other hand, influential magnates like chancellor Zamoyski had strong anti-Habsburg preferences. The election ended with the civil war and forced coronation of Sigismund III on 27 December, but this did not end the trouble. The war continued and until the imprisonment of Maximilian by chancellor Zamoyski. The Habsburg candidate was released only on condition that he would abandon claims to the Polish throne.<sup>181</sup> All these events were carefully watched in Istanbul. The sultan sent several letters to the Polish lords in which he

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<sup>178</sup> MD LXII 141, 142.

<sup>179</sup> Ahmet Refik. "Lehistan'da Türk Hakimiyeti", p. 238-39.

<sup>180</sup> MD LXII 178.

<sup>181</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, vol. I. p. 435.

made it clear that he would support Sigismund, but not the Habsburg. In addition, the sultan ordered the borderland *beys* to prepare for military action in case of emergency and to collect the news constantly.<sup>182</sup> The sultan also sent a warm *nâme* to the lords of the Commonwealth, expressing his satisfaction and friendship. Murad stressed that he hoped that Sigismund was not only elected, but that he would be also successfully crowned.<sup>183</sup> One might assume that this somewhat passive attitude was strongly influenced by the Ottoman involvement in military actions against Georgia and Persia.<sup>184</sup>

Sigismund III Vasa's reign (1587-1632) changed the peaceful relations with the Ottomans. The king did not follow the policy of Bathory and soon revealed pro-Habsburg and pro-Catholic views, which could not be accepted by the Porte. In addition, he delayed sending the envoy into Istanbul, which was received as serious disgrace by the Porte.<sup>185</sup> But what really damaged the relations were the constant Cossack attacks on the Ottoman and Crimean lands and Polish military interventions in Moldavia in 1595. Before this, in 1591, a new *'ahidnâme* was granted by the sultan and the perspectives of crisis seemed overcome. On the other hand, the situation in Transylvania became unstable with the war against the Ottomans launched in 1593.<sup>186</sup> The sultan tried to obtain Sigismund's support in the campaign against the rebellious principality. He sent Sigismund a *nâme*, in which he informed that he had already given orders to launch a campaign and to try to catch the *voivode* alive. The most interesting point of the sultan's letter however was the proposal that

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<sup>182</sup> MD LXII 248, 249, 269, 445, 423. For the full text of 423 see Appendix III.

<sup>183</sup> MD LXII 264.

<sup>184</sup> Danişmend. *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol. 3, p. 103-11.

<sup>185</sup> Kolodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p 125.

<sup>186</sup> *History of Transylvania*. pp. 294-95.



the king should send his own candidate for ruling Transylvania, together with strong military support and then the Transylvanian subjects, tired of war, would support Sigismund's man. This letter contains several things worth mentioning and therefore a summary of the content is given below:

1. The sultan [hereafter S.] ordered the vizier Mehmed Paşa to launch a campaign against the rebellious ruler of Erdel.
2. The S. ordered the vizier to stop attacking the castles, instead the vizier should try to catch the rebel alive and punish him.
3. The S. ordered the khan Gazi Giray to help the vizier with his forces in Erdel.
4. The vizier awaited the khan near Akkerman.
5. The vizier, breaking the orders, went to Waradyn and burnt the city, then he started conquering the castle, but he had to abandon it and spent the winter guarding the Hungarian border with his army.
7. The S. will launch a new campaign in Vienna or Transylvania, and his army will be ordered to plunder, burn and destroy these lands.
8. The great grandfather of the sultan (i.e. Suleyman) was the protector of Erdel and always looked after poor people so that they had peaceful life.
9. The current ruler not only does not accept the sultan as his protector, but he tries to destroy his lands.
10. The sultan would prefer to see Transylvania unspoiled and therefore he thinks of a solution.
11. There is no real heir of rulers of Erdel among the S.'s subjects so the S. does not have a good candidate for this office.
12. The current ruler of Erdel quarreled with Maximilian von Habsburg when the latter conquered Waradyn and two other castles, so the Erdel ruler does not really have any friends left.
13. The king's envoys asked the S. to grant the king right to nominate a candidate for the ruler of Transylvania.
14. The S. agrees for this and the king should appoint the *voivode* and inform the S. about it. However, the candidate will follow the old tradition and be obedient to the S.
15. The S. thinks such a solution is good for the Porte, for Poland, and for Transylvania.
16. The S. asks the king to confirm the old friendship when the S.'s people (Müstedam Çavuş & Dragoman Hawe) arrive to the king.
17. The king should take revenge on the voivode for the blood of the lords of Erdel he shed.
18. The S. knows that one of the Erdel lords (no name) took shelter in Poland, so he or the king's servant Casper, son of Bekierz (whoever of those two seems more appropriate to the king) should be made a voivode.
19. The K. should send a strong military support with the candidate because then the lords and subjects in Erdel will turn against the current ruler (the king is advised to send news to Transylvania before sending people).
20. If necessary, the Wallachian *voivode* Heremiasz, or the *sancakbey* of Tenchin will bring their forces in support.
21. The king. can lead the *voivode* through the Wallachian border.
22. The S. asks the king. to act wisely and to send the news to the S.
23. The S. asks the king to punish the horrible Cossacks.
24. the S. asks the king. to send the *çavuş* back immediately<sup>187</sup>.

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<sup>187</sup> AKW 71/282.

In other words, the sultan thought that keeping control over the principality together with the king, would be better than letting the Habsburgs gain the profits. It is interesting that the sultan was ready for military cooperation, because his orders were very practical and detailed. The fragment where the sultan calls for peace in the province for the sake of the subjects illustrates the Ottoman notion of justice. The trouble was indeed solved with the help of chancellor Zamoyski; in 1599, Andreas Bathory was accepted by both the Polish king and the sultan. However, his rule did not last long either because he was murdered the same year and Transylvania once more fell into series of wars that lasted until peace made with the Ottomans in 1606.<sup>188</sup>

Ottoman-Polish contacts in the last decade of the sixteenth century were determined by the new political situation. The death of Bathory was the end of close and friendly relations between the two states. The Jagiellonians and Bathory were interested in southern provinces of their realms, whereas Sigismund III Vasa involved in dynastical disputes with Sweden and did not give necessary attention to the southern border. In addition, moving the king's court from Kraków to Warsaw in 1596 changed the gravity and geographical perspective of the state. Sigismund expressed deep interest in the Swedish issues and focused on war for the Swedish throne, leaving the southern border under influence of local lords like chancellor Zamoyski. These people often had ambitious plans concerning recapture of Moldavia with Wallachia and did not care for the interest of the state. No wonder the cooperation with the Ottomans gradually became more difficult.

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<sup>188</sup> *History of Transylvania*. pp. 295-99.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ASPECTS OF OTTOMAN-POLISH RELATIONS

#### I. The Rulers, the Envoys and Practical Diplomacy

Kołodziejczyk gives a detailed description of diplomatic procedures and therefore there is no need to focus on technical side of diplomacy.<sup>189</sup> Instead, it seems interesting to analyze practical aspects of diplomacy and activities of messengers and envoys that can be traced in the source material. It is worth mentioning that Polish and Ukrainian archives and libraries contain very rich collections of descriptions of diplomatic mission, together with manuscripts and reports prepared by the envoys. Most of the material is written in Polish and therefore its use by the Ottoman historians is limited. Very few of the relations were published entirely or partially. Perhaps new editions of such material, together with translation into some commonly used languages would contribute greatly to research of the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean khanate, because quite often Polish reports contain details one would not find in other sources.

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<sup>189</sup> Kołodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*. pp. 169-84.

One of the most important issues for the king Sigismund Augustus was the arrangement of the covenant with *şehzâde* Selim during the life of Suleyman. The Jagiellonians wanted to be sure that the friendly relations with the Ottomans would continue also after death of Suleyman the Magnificent. This was a typically European attitude, where the legal documents issued by a ruler, were treated as valid also after his death. The '*ahidnâmes* were, on the contrary, always granted for a definite period, and they were considered invalid after the sultan's death. Hence, the Jagiellonian diplomacy wanted to obtain not only eternal truce, but also promise from a *şehzâde* that he would keep friendly relations as a sultan. These attempts were succeeded in two steps. At first, in 1553, sultan Suleyman granted the new eternal peace after death of Sigismund the Old. The next step was achieved in 1564, when the Polish envoy Jazłowiecki obtained truce from *şehzâde* Selim. This unprecedented solution secured Polish-Ottoman relations in case of Suleyman's death.<sup>190</sup> The truce was renewed in 1568, when Selim confirmed the document as the sultan. Polish embassy, consisting of the envoy Zborowski and three hundred people, brought precious gifts for the sultan, which shows how important this issue was treated by the Polish king.<sup>191</sup> Of course wealthy and numerous embassies were sent in order to influence psychologically the sultan and the court by creating positive and powerful image of Polish-Lithuanian State. This policy was followed by both sides quite willingly. According to Danişmend, Selim developed a very rich greeting ceremony for western envoys. During such events, goods brought by the

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<sup>190</sup> Kolodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, pp. 119-20.

<sup>191</sup> Hammer. vol. VI, pp. 1832-1833. Hammer gives improper name of the envoy: Suhorovski, but this could be a translation mistake. Or, what seems more likely, Hammer based his description on the report of a foreign ambassador, who did not write the name of the envoy properly.

sultan from Persian campaigns were exhibited. The major purpose of such early psychological attempts was to convince the Christian rulers that the sultan was the most powerful and influential monarch of the time.<sup>192</sup> Another method used by the Ottomans to build their prestige outside the Ottoman State was sending messengers with news concerning the sultan's war triumphs and celebrating important events during feasts. This practice was already in use during the reign of Selim I, when successes in war against Shah İsmail were highly celebrated:

*Anadolu beylerbeyi Sinan Paşa Rumeli beylerbeyi olup, Zeynep Paşa Anadolu'ya geçip, Hüsrev Paşa Karaman beylerbeyi oldu. Devlet hazînesi sandıklarını açıp, emirlerin umûmuna ve ileri gelenlere yollu yolunca hil'atlar verdiler. Bütün kapı halkına ve yeniçerilere genel bahşîş verip, timar sahiplerinin tîmârını yükselttiler. Halkın hepsi istediklerini elde edip, sevindiler. Mamur Anadolu ülkelerine, genç tâlihli şehzâde -ömrü uzun olsun- hazretlerine ve Mısır sultanına, İslam şehirlerinden hükûmet merkezi Kostantiniyye ve Edirne ve mamur Bursa kadılarına ve diğer müslümanların hâkimlerine islam serhaddi olan Mora, Bosna, Semendire ve Hersek sancaklarına haraç veren maıyyet hizmetlilerini Eflak ve Buğdan beylerine ve kudretli sultanlardan mutlu Tatar vilâyetinin mutlu hanına ve hırıstiyanların kırıllarından Leh, Çek ve Rus ve Engürüs vilâyetleri kırıllarına, Avrupa adalarından Venedik ve Sakız beylerine, tüm sultanın memleketlerine bu şânı yüce fetih için müjde mektupları yazılıp, Saba yürüyüşlü ve nesîm hızlı ulaklar gönderildi.*<sup>193</sup>

The celebrations were probably carried out after Selim's return to Istanbul on 11 July 1515.<sup>194</sup> The authorities in Istanbul shaped morale of their subjects and respect for the sultan by celebrating successes not only in the greatest imperial cities, but also in the provinces and vassal states. After the conquest of Georgia by vizier

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<sup>192</sup> Danişmend. *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. II, p. 375.

<sup>193</sup> *Selim-nâme*, ed. Ahmet Uğur and Mustafa Çuhadar. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1990. p. 382.

<sup>194</sup> Danişmend. *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarih,i* vol. II, pp. 19-21

Ferhad Paşa in 1587, the *voivode* of Transylvania was ordered to prepare feast on this occasion.<sup>195</sup> It is easy to imagine that such celebrations would not only influence the local population, but rumors of might and power of the Ottoman armies could easily spread to the neighboring states, especially when esteemed guests from abroad were invited. In case of non-vassal, foreign states like Poland-Lithuania long letters were being sent in form of reports. In 1570, grand vizier Mehmed Paşa wrote such a report to Sigismund Augustus and informed the king about the successful war in Algeria and its incorporation into the Ottoman Empire. Mehmed Paşa also mentioned conquest of ten castles on the Venetian border by vizier's son and Ferhat Bey. Then the vizier gave details concerning the campaign in Cyprus, i.e. capture of the castle, and the exact number of killed and conquered enemies together with the estimated value of booty and prisoners (40 times 100,000 pieces of gold) and expected revenue, based upon newly produced tax registers (14 times 100,000 pieces of gold, but this number would rise when subject were not afraid of war anymore). The vizier finished his report hoping that he would write soon about successes of the Ottoman fleet under command of Piyale Paşa and Ali Paşa, who had followed the escaping enemy fleet.<sup>196</sup> It is possible to guess that information revealed in such a letter had important psychological effect on readers. In other words, such letters were written in order to convince the addressee that treating the Ottomans in friendly terms was the most reasonable solution.

The sources prove that the Ottoman State developed and used various intelligent means to promote the “propaganda of success” at home and abroad. The

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<sup>195</sup> MD LXII, 247.

<sup>196</sup> AKW 70/238.

addressees of such activities were either parts of the empire, including the vassal states or the states, which were vital for the Ottoman prosperous existence, like Poland-Lithuania. This feature became especially important after the death of Sigismund Augustus, when the Ottoman authorities tried, initially quite successfully, to secure election of such a candidate for the Polish-Lithuanian throne, who would guarantee maintaining the balance of power from the Ottoman perspective.

Covenants, truces and peace agreements were most elaborated elements of diplomacy, but in everyday contacts smaller issues were by no means less important. Envoys and messengers traveled between Kraków and Istanbul or other imperial and royal cities as reflected in the *mühimmes*. Registers of fees, assigned by the crown treasury for provisions of envoys coming into Poland-Lithuania and going to foreign states preserved in the Central Archive of Old Documents in Warsaw, are another important source concerning practical sides of Ottoman-Polish diplomatic contacts. These documents give exact dates of embassies and the names of envoys. Comparative research with the use of *mühimmes* and the fees registers would allow specifying certain technical details (e.g. number of envoys, gifts offered) of embassies and personal information concerning the envoys and messengers. This, however, is outside the scope of this work.

*Mühimme* records reveal major routes the embassies and messengers used in the sixteenth century. Major diplomatic route led through Wallachia and Moldavia and rulers of these principalities were responsible for safe passage of envoys and messengers going both sides. In practice, the sultans used to send orders first to all the kadis on the way towards border with Wallachia, although sometimes the orders

were directed to all the kadis on the way to Poland.<sup>197</sup> Usually the orders specified number of people going with the envoy and their personal belongings, for example, two orders sent in 1578 to the *voivode* of Moldavia and kadis of Moldavia and Wallachia stated that certain Bucinski, Mulenski and Istorenski together with their seven servants should be provided with safe and free passage on their way home. These people brought to the sultan a brother of former Moldavian *voivode* who tried to hide in Poland from the sultan's punishment.<sup>198</sup> There are many similar items in almost all *mühimme* registers. Furthermore, people who knew Turkish and Polish were sometimes required to accompany the messengers.<sup>199</sup> Accompanying the envoys was important from the security perspective, but it was also an easy and effective way of gaining some information or spying, hence the presence of interpreters was a good solution. Within the borders of Poland-Lithuania, foreign embassies and messengers were usually escorted by members of the royal court. Their function also included spying.<sup>200</sup>

It is interesting to note that, the orders often included special regulations for the local commanders or kadis who were supposed to assist the messengers in various ways. Horses, guides and spies were provided for the sultan's messengers sent to Poland.<sup>201</sup> Sometimes kadis also provisioned messengers, as was the case for famous Joseph Nashi, a wealthy Jewish merchant, banker and favorite of sultan

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<sup>197</sup> e.g. MD XIV, 29 – This is an order to kadis on the way to Poland. The king's envoy will go to Poland and nobody should make any harm to him and to his animals.

<sup>198</sup> MD XIX, 715, 716.

<sup>199</sup> MD VII 1775.

<sup>200</sup> *Archiwum skarbu koronnego. Rachunki poselstw.* Ed. Anna Wajs. Warszawa: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, 1999. p. 9.

<sup>201</sup> MD XXI, 429.



Selim II.<sup>202</sup> As far as the provisioning is concerned, from the moment of entering territory of Poland-Lithuania the embassies were hosted by king's people who paid either from royal or public treasury.<sup>203</sup> On the contrary, in the Ottoman Empire, only the sultan's envoys of special importance, like the aforementioned Joseph Nashi, were provisioned and the Polish embassies had to pay for food.<sup>204</sup> Apart from providing services, local commanders or rulers were also supposed to prepare reports on messengers. It seems that in cases of some importance it was easier to collect information concerning successes of missions through informal channels. Local commanders, having contacts on the other side of the border, could obtain information from private sources or they could just send their own people to see the development of affairs easily.<sup>205</sup> Because the envoys and messengers spent a lot of time waiting for decisions of the addressee of their messages, or even for appointment of meeting, spies could fasten the flow of information. Such a solution was also useful in case the messenger was arrested, which must have happened from time to time<sup>206</sup>, although in general both sides tried to prevent it.

Traditionally Polish embassies into the Ottoman state and Tatar khanates were bringing numerous gifts for the sultan and higher officials. In addition, gifts were offered to Ottoman and Tatar envoys that came into Poland. Sometimes, apart from provisioning, Tatar and Ottoman envoys into Poland-Lithuania were paid daily

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<sup>202</sup> MD VII, 1184.

<sup>203</sup> *Archiwum skarbu koronnego. Rachunki poselstw.* pp. 7-8.

<sup>204</sup> MD V, 73.

<sup>205</sup> For example the *bey* of Akkerman was ordered to inform the sultan about Turgut Çavuş, who had been sent to the Polish king with sultan's *nâme*. The sultan wanted to know when the messenger arrived in Poland and when he met the king. In case Turgut did not return, the sultan wanted to know whether the *bey* of Akkerman knew Turgut's whereabouts. MD X, 361.

<sup>206</sup> The *voivode* of Moldavia arrested a Polish envoy and his men confiscating the letters. Two letters were written to the *voivode*, who was ordered to free the envoy and his men, return the letters, and escort the embassy to the Moldavian-Ottoman border providing food, drinks etc. MD VII, 560, 570.

stipend. For example, in 1551 the envoys of the Crimean and Kazan khans were provisioned for first sixteen days and then were paid stipends for almost two months.<sup>207</sup> That particular embassy consisted of twenty-eight men and more than six hundred florens were spent daily on the stipends. In order to reduce the expenses, some of the Tatars were ordered to return after several weeks, but they would not obey. Then free provisions were no longer given and some of the Tatars decided to return home.<sup>208</sup>

Although land route through Moldavia and Wallachia was used in diplomatic contacts most widely, it is possible to find proofs that other ways were also used. This could be connected with insecure internal situation in Moldavia or Wallachia, but one should not forget that missions included various tasks; it seems that sometimes they included also private enterprises. In 1572 two men of the Polish king, “Kılış ve Severin” and their servants, wanted to sail to Alexandria, and from there to Jerusalem. The purpose of this visit is not mentioned, but one may assume that it was a pilgrimage. Receb, the *bey* of Alexandria, was ordered by the sultan to provide a boat and help them on their way.<sup>209</sup> Then they were supposed to return by boat to Dubrovnik.<sup>210</sup> Orders concerning right of free travel were needed, because the local officials in some places did not know how to deal with the foreign messengers. In 1588, the custom *emin* of Silistre seized property of a Polish envoy and taxed the money the envoy was carrying. This action was against the bilateral

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<sup>207</sup> *Archiwum skarbu koronnego*. p. 8.

<sup>208</sup> Podhorodecki, Leszek. *Chanał krymski jego stosunki z Polską w XV-XVIII w.* Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1987. p. 108.

<sup>209</sup> MD XXX, 413.

<sup>210</sup> MD XXX, 541.

practice, and therefore the sultan ordered the kadi of Silistre to return the tax to the envoy entirely.<sup>211</sup>

This case proves in practical terms the existence of some prohibitions and privileges granted to the envoys. Apart from tax exemption on personal items, sometime the envoys could bring limited amounts of luxurious goods, which were normally subject to taxation or even prohibition. For example, an envoy returning from Girit into Poland in August 1565 was allowed to take with him a small boat loaded with wine. Relevant orders concerning this matter were sent to all the kadis on the sea route the envoy was to follow.<sup>212</sup> In other case, a brother of Polish envoy was allowed to bring timber by boats on the Dniester River and sell it after paying taxes.<sup>213</sup> However, the authorities usually tried to prohibit the abuse of the regulations by envoys. The Ottoman authorities especially prohibited export of horses abroad. In one of the orders, it is stated clearly that a Polish envoy would be returning from Istanbul, via Kütahya (where he perhaps wanted to purchase some goods) into Moldavia and because it is prohibited to give good horses, i.e. warhorses to the infidels, the envoy should be given load horses he would ride himself.<sup>214</sup> Certainly, under pre-industrial conditions, warhorses were not only precious, but their number also predetermined the military power of states. In a similar order, the authorities determined the exact number of horses the envoy brought into the Ottoman Empire.<sup>215</sup> On the other hand, in necessity the sultan's envoys into Poland

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<sup>211</sup> MD LXII, 398.

<sup>212</sup> MD V, 85.

<sup>213</sup> MD VII, 1791.

<sup>214</sup> MD V, 73.

<sup>215</sup> MD XXX, 286.

were authorized to take good horses for their missions.<sup>216</sup> In most cases, the orders did not specify which items were prohibited to be carried by envoys. Instead, the general phrase “memnu’ olmayan eşyasına müdahale edilmemek” was used.<sup>217</sup>

Sometimes the envoys were supposed to fulfill complex missions, like escorting prisoners, looking for captives and slaves or obtain property of another envoy that had died on duty. New ‘*ahidnâmes* usually included articles concerning release of prisoners taken during campaigns. This was the theoretical side of the treaties. Practical realization was not easy and usually the sultan issued an order forcing release of the slaves and captives. The ones who had become Muslims were just freed whereas Christians were freed and sent back to Poland-Lithuania. Of course, the practical problem was finding the potential candidates for freeing. Therefore, the envoys traveled across the Ottoman state looking for captives assisted by the sultan’s order.<sup>218</sup> If an envoy died abroad, another envoy was sent with a letter requesting assistance. When a janissary Mehmed died in Poland, his brother Hasan came with a letter to the king, in which the sultan asked the king to help Hasan find the property left by the late Ahmed.<sup>219</sup> Things sometimes worked other way and instead of searching for captives, the envoys escorted prisoners. In the sixteenth century, the rebels, *voivodes* of Moldavia or Wallachia and their supporters, looked for shelter on the Polish side of the border. In such cases the sultan usually asked the king to catch the rebels, execute unimportant ones and send the important traitors (in some cases their heads were enough) to Istanbul in

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<sup>216</sup> MD XXX, 462.

<sup>217</sup> For example: MD X, 65, XXX, 286

<sup>218</sup> MD V 83, III 1781

<sup>219</sup> MD LXIV, 223.

chains.<sup>220</sup> Similarly, people who did any harm to the envoys or messengers were also punished with great care.<sup>221</sup> However not all cases were political; ordinary thieves, like certain servant of Hasan Bey, who stole his master's money and fled,<sup>222</sup> were also caught and punished. In a way, the sources reveal existence of an early form of diplomatic immunity and the practice of extradition between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire.

Although the envoys of both sides constituted the majority of travelers on the diplomatic route from Istanbul to Kraków, foreign envoys also used this way. In 1583, two English envoys returned from Istanbul to England via Poland and orders concerning provisioning and security were sent to *voivodes* of Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>223</sup> According to Halil İnalcık, English merchants also used the transit route through Poland, especially during the reign of Stephen Bathory (1576-1586), thus avoiding problems with crossing France or territories under control of the Habsburgs.<sup>224</sup>

Complex diplomatic procedures were not free of humorous or unusual events. In 1572, Selim II sent an envoy from Edirne to Sigismund Augustus. The sultan was informed that Laski, one of the Polish lords, gathered many soldiers near the Wallachian border. The sultan's people did not know what the intension of the Polish lord was and therefore the sultan sent Turgut Çavuş to obtain news from the king. The sultan asked the king to assure Turgut Çavuş that the king would not act

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<sup>220</sup> e.g. AKW 69/205, AKW 70/246, AKW 70/249.

<sup>221</sup> MD VII, 103.

<sup>222</sup> AKW 70/237.

<sup>223</sup> MD LVIII 868.

<sup>224</sup> İnalcık, Halil. *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. p. 369.

against ancient friendship between the two states. Then the sultan added that if the gathering was caused by the fact that the Wallachian *voivode* was going to marry a bride from Poland, then the king should know that the sultan had not agreed on the crossing of the Wallachian border by the Polish troops and make harm in Wallachia.<sup>225</sup> In other case, the sultan sent an order to certain Ahmed Çavuş asking whether the latter had given the sultanic letter to the Polish king. In case *çavuş* had not delivered the letter, the sultan wanted it back.<sup>226</sup> Sometimes the skills of royal envoys were especially praised in letters to the kings.<sup>227</sup> Some of the envoys demanded not only eulogies, but like in case of certain Süleyman Çavuş, they asked for material gratification for their services. Süleyman Çavuş who apparently worked as a spy for Polish chancellor Jan Zamoyski wrote a letter to the chancellor in 1598, stressing his important role in preparation of the new *'ahidnâme* in addition to long and faithful service to Polish case. According to Süleyman Çavuş, nobody else but him understood Polish issues in Istanbul and the new treaty had been prepared despite unregulated Polish debts to the Ottomans. In the end, the *çavuş* complained that all the prices went up, which led to the conclusion that the chancellor should send him money by merchants. Süleyman must have worked for the chancellor for quite long time, because he wrote that he had obtained payment for three years and 200 *kuruş* for one year were still to be paid (see appendix, document 1).<sup>228</sup>

In Ottoman-Polish contacts, a vital role was played by people of Polish-Lithuanian origin who in various ways became the Muslim subjects of the sultan. In

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<sup>225</sup> AKW 70/245.

<sup>226</sup> MD XXV 99.

<sup>227</sup> MD XXV 179.

<sup>228</sup> AKW 71/279. For the full text see Appendix III

the sixteenth century, there were at least three such men – Zygmunt Laskowski, Jan Kierdej (Sait Bey), who was a Lithuanian, and Joachim Strasz (Ibrahim Bey). Jan Kierdej was born in 1490 as a son of *starosta* of Krasnystaw. After becoming the sultan's servant, he was sent as an envoy into Poland-Lithuania in 1531, 1538 and 1543.<sup>229</sup> Much more is known about the last of the three. Strasz was most probably captured by Tatars and then sold to the Ottomans. His good knowledge of Polish implies that he must have been captured as a teenager rather, than a young child. In time, he became the sultan's translator, replacing Yunus Bey at this office. First documents signed by Strasz appeared before 1551. It is usually easy to recognize his work, because he used to sign the documents as *Ibrahim bej summus interpretes* or *Interpretes major majestatis suae invictissimae Imperatoris Thurcarum*. During his service as the *dragoman* Ibrahim Bey used to travel to Venice, Frankfurt, Vienna, France and Poland. Although foreign envoys always called him “the Pole”, he remained loyal to the sultan. During the reign of Sigismund Augustus, Strasz was paid 100 pieces of gold by the king for supporting Jagiellonian (both Hungarian and Polish-Lithuanian) in Istanbul. It is important to stress that Strasz obtained this sum openly and was far from spying against the sultan. More likely, he was a kind of early lobbyist.<sup>230</sup> Strasz died in *safer* 979 (July 1571).<sup>231</sup> It is difficult to establish his influence on the policies of Suleyman and Selim II towards Poland-Lithuania, but it seems that he supported the idea of Polish-Hungarian-Ottoman alliance against the Habsburgs.

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<sup>229</sup> Reychman, Jan and Ananiasz Zajaczkowski. *Handbook of Ottoman-Turkish Diplomats* The Hague: Mouton, 1968. p. 182.

<sup>230</sup> *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*. 1863.12.5, no. 219.

<sup>231</sup> MD XII 916.

As far as Ibrahim Bey's embassies to the Polish king are concerned, the archive in Warsaw contains several documents written by Strasz in Polish.<sup>232</sup> Four of the documents were used in this study: one addressed to the king and three others written to the royal chancellor. The document for the king, presented to Sigismund Augustus in 1564, concerns mostly Wallachian issues and is discussed later in current chapter. Apart from this Strasz asked king's assistance in getting debt that Erazm Haz, a merchant from Lwów, owed to Mustafa Çelebi.<sup>233</sup> Another three documents, addressed for the chancellor are very interesting, because they reveal the mechanisms of obtaining references and influences in diplomatic ways. In the first letter, Ibrahim Bey simply greets the chancellor and assures him about his truthful service to the king and to the chancellor.<sup>234</sup> Next, Strasz asks the chancellor to help him obtain written references from the king for a certain Musslij Aga (Müslîh Ağa?), who would like to become a member of the sultan's court, even the least important one. Strasz explains that the *ağa* was very helpful to the envoy of the *voivode* of Sandomierz, which should be mentioned in the reference. In the third letter a long list of people who ask for written references is given. This included:

- Cafer, son of a former *emin* Arik Mehmed, who is already the *beylerbey*'s *çavuş* but would like to become the sultan's *çavuş* and therefore he needs a reference.
- Hüseyin of Polish and Christian origin, who has got a *timar* from the sultan in the sandjak of Könstendil. The size of the *timar* is 9290 *asper*, and Hüseyin needs references in order to either become a

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<sup>232</sup> Copies of these documents together with translation into English can be found in the appendix.

<sup>233</sup> AKW 69/205; Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, pp. 135-37.

<sup>234</sup> AKW 70/227.



*çavuş* at the Porte or to obtain a bigger *timar*. The king should explain in the letter that Hüseyin used to be a king's subject, which supposedly should help. Strasz adds that without such an explanation it would be difficult to obtain the office or *timar*.

- Rizwan, another son of a Christian who is also of Polish origin. In this case a similar reference letter is necessary and the king should ask for a *timar* of several thousand *asper*, which, according to Strasz, was the standard size of a *timar* the sultan would grant.
- Rüstem, also of Christian origin, who is Ibrahim's personal servant. A similar recommendation letter is needed for him.
- One Armenian who asks for change of a *berat* for the one bearing the name of the current sultan.
- Finally, Ibrahim asks for the payment of debts by the merchants of Lwów, according to their convenience, to the Ottoman merchants. He can authorize the debt letter with his own or the sultan's signature.<sup>235</sup>

As one may see, the list was quite detailed. At this point, a question concerning the importance of reference letters written to the sultan by the king arises. From the Ottoman perspective the sultan was superior to other rulers in Europe and therefore granted privileges unilaterally. What was seen as a prestigious act by the Ottomans, had a different meaning for the Europeans and led to development of capitulation rights, which in time became harmful for the Ottoman interests. It is logical to assume that also in case of reference letters it worked in similar way. If the king sent a petition to the sultan, the latter as superior to the king in Ottoman eyes would show his grace and superiority by granting the privilege. Hence, assuming that Sigismund Augustus had written the references, one could perhaps find names of people

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<sup>235</sup> AKW 70/ 232, AKW 70/233. For the full text see Appendix III.

mentioned by Ibrahim Bey in the *ahkâm defters* or the *mühimmes* containing *timar* nominations. Actually, it is possible to prove that the assumptions are quite realistic, because similar case is mentioned in *Tarih-i Selânikî*, where on a king's request a sandjak was given to certain Mehmed Çavuş:

*Mürted Rıdvan başın getüren Mehmed çavuşa sancak virildiğidir. Ve bu esnâda Kara Mehmed Çavuş nâm kimseyle Mürted Rıdvan didükleri mel'ûnun başı Südde-i sa'âdete gönderilmiş kendüsi ibret-nümâ-yı âlem olmak-içün kazığa urulduğu arz olunup ve Kara Mehmed Çavuş'a Leh Kırâlı sancak inâyet buyurulmak recâ eylediği pâye-i serîr-i saltanate arz olundukda münâsib ise görülsün fermân olunmağla Silistre sancağı buyurulduğu sebt olundi. Fî evâsıt-ı şehr-i cumâdelûlâ, sene 1004.*<sup>236</sup>

This was written in 1004 (1596), when requests of Polish kings were treated not as seriously as they used to be during the reign of Sigismund Augustus. Therefore, one may assume that references sent by Sigismund had at least equal influence on Suleyman the Magnificent or Selim II.

Without doubt, practical functioning of diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth century is still full of neglected fields. Even the list of envoys sent by both sides available in works of Reychman and Unat are very imprecise and incomplete.<sup>237</sup> The presented examples indicate that diplomacy was not only well developed, but also had its own specific rules and dealt with a broad spectrum of topics on different levels. The messengers were both representing interests of the state and influencing informal decisions, like in case of the references. Apart from this, the documents show the

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<sup>236</sup> *Tarih-i Selânikî*. p. 554.

<sup>237</sup> Look: Reychman. *Handbook of Ottoman-Turkish Diplomats*, pp. 173-83; Unat, Faik Reşit. *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri* Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1992. p.221-36.

existence of various informal channels. It is impossible to present all aspects of practical diplomacy in brief, but analysis of documents used in this study proves that the system worked generally quite well. The Ottomans treated Poland-Lithuania not as an equal state perhaps, but their attitude was friendly, or in case of difficulties, patient and tolerant. The sentence from Hürrem Sultan's letter to Sigismund Augustus gives the very essence of how the sultans perceived the Jagiellonians: *"Etmiş ki koca kiral bizim ile iki kardeş gibi idi İnşaallahurrahman bu kiral ile Ata ile oğul gibi olalım demiş."*<sup>238</sup> On the other hands, Polish kings had to choose between the interest of the state and Christian loyalty, an aspect that was often stressed by the Habsburgs and the papacy. For the entire sixteenth century, the interest of the state prevailed and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was one of the first European states, which treated the Ottomans as difficult friends and partners rather than as the enemy that should be destroyed in the name of Christ.

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<sup>238</sup> Uçtun. "Hürrem ve Mihrümah Sultanların" p. 713.

## II. Politics on the Borderland: Tatars, Cossacks and the Voivodes

The inhabitants of borderland between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire were the major cause of trouble between the two states. Polish kings never gave up the idea of Moldavia being their vassal state; the same was the case for Wallachia. After the unsuccessful campaign of John Albert in the late fifteenth century, the Jagiellonian kings tried to follow the policy supporting the Ottoman rule in the region. When the Moldavian *hospodar* Alexander offered his vassal bond to Sigismund Augustus in 1552, the king refused.<sup>239</sup> This strategy was followed by Bathory, who punished Ivan Podkova and Samuel Zborowski, who attacked Moldavia in 1579 and in 1583.<sup>240</sup> After Bathory's death, Polish policy towards Moldavia changed, mostly due to the ambitions of chancellor Zamoyski, who wanted to nominate his own candidate Movila to the Moldavian throne. In 1594 the Wallachian *voivode* Michael the Brave rebelled against the Ottomans and obtained support from both Moldavia and Transylvania. This led to Polish and Ottoman military intervention. The treaty was signed and Movila's position was secured,<sup>241</sup> but the issue played an important role in future development of bilateral relations. This was just the beginning of Polish interventions into Moldavian and Wallachian issues. According to Selânikî, in the beginning of *Cumâdelahire* 1004 (February 1596) the Polish king and the Crimean khan asked the sultan to nominate their candidate for the Wallachian throne, as he had done before with the Moldavian

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<sup>239</sup> *Historia dyplomacji*. vol. I, p. 682.

<sup>240</sup> Dopierała. *Stosunki dyplomatyczne*, p. 159.

<sup>241</sup> Kolodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p. 126.

*voivode* Movila. The suggestion was accepted by the sultan.<sup>242</sup> Important economic and strategic position of Moldavia did not allow the Ottomans to abandon this principality, because the price was too high from their perspective. This was true especially in the second part of the sixteenth century when the Ottomans engaged in wars against the Habsburgs. According to Maxim Mihai, the Danubian Principalities at this time supported economically the Ottomans in three different ways: providing the trade monopoly inside the Ottoman system, paying provisions in goods, and collecting mandatory wholesale during wars.<sup>243</sup> Consequently, the Moldavian and Wallachian issues sharply divided both states. As long as Polish kings respected the status quo, the Ottomans were satisfied, but the intervention of Zamoyski crushed the balance. Zamoyski had his plans concerning Moldavia already before the rebellion of Michael the Brave. His correspondence with the former *voivode* Aaron (ruled 1591-1592, 1592-1595) shows that Aaron was Zamoyski's informer. The *voivode* wrote the chancellor about movements and number of Tatar forces. Moreover, in the letter dated 15 February 1595 Aaron asked Zamoyski for help, explaining that, "this land (i.e. Moldavia) is almost a wall between Turks and Christians".<sup>244</sup>

Almost every document sent from the Ottoman sultans to the kings of Poland-Lithuania contains items concerning Wallachia, Moldavia, Cossacks and the Tatars. The content is similar in general. Former *voivodes* used to escape to Poland-Lithuania, taking their property, and sometimes families or army with them. Then

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<sup>242</sup> *Tarih-i Selânikî*. p. 562.

<sup>243</sup> Maxim. "XVI. Asrın ikinci yarısında Eflâk-Buğdan'ın Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na karşı iktisadî ve malî mükellefiyetleri hakkında bazı düşünceler", p. 559.

<sup>244</sup> AJZ 149/4-5, AJZ 149/6, AJZ 149/1-2.

the Porte tried to convince the king to capture the runaways and sent them back to Istanbul. This pattern does not change, but it is not striking when one considers the number of *voivodes* in the sixteenth century. There were twenty-six changes on the Moldavian throne and thirty-six on the Wallachian. Some of the *voivodes* ruled several times, often only for a couple of months.<sup>245</sup> According to Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, rebellions caused by heavy taxes were major reasons of such a short rule of the *voivodes*.<sup>246</sup> Together with the frequency the Danubian issues were mentioned in the sultan's letters, this suggests that the situation in the two vassal states was extremely unstable.

The Cossacks were another important element of the Polish-Ottoman border. Theoretically speaking they were the subjects of Polish kings but in fact, the Cossacks were outlaws, who did not obey any rules. They inhabited the most remote areas on the southeastern border of the Commonwealth and made their living by pillaging the neighborhood. It is therefore not coincidence that, like the Danubian issues, the attacks of Cossacks were common part of almost every sultanic letter for the Polish king since the early Jagiellonian period.<sup>247</sup> In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Cossacks became very active in raiding not only the Crimean khanate and the Danubian principalities, but also the Ottoman mainland. For example in 1589, they crossed the Black Sea and plundered several Ottoman towns. Similarly, in 1614 they pillaged Trabzon, Sinope and even wanted to pillage

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<sup>245</sup> *Romen Kaynak ve Eserlerinde Türk Tarihi Kronikler*. Ed. Mehmet Ali Ekrem. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993 pp. 212-15.

<sup>246</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî. *Künhü'l-Ahbâr*, vol. III, p. 617.

<sup>247</sup> For example: M V 818, XIV 575, XXIII 1, XXVI 413, LXI 33, 35, LXII 317, 325, AKW 70/219, AKW 70/237, AKW 70/239, AKW 70/244, AKW 71/277, AKW 71/282.

Istanbul.<sup>248</sup> Bathory tried to regulate the Cossack question during his reign, and incorporate them into regular army of the Commonwealth. This attempt was only partially successful, because limited financial resources enabled Bathory to register only 600 Cossacks and the majority was still out of control.<sup>249</sup> Later kings were also unable to solve the growing Cossack problem. The Cossacks in time turned against the king and in the winter of 1647-48, the great Cossack uprising was launched by Bohdan Chmielnicki. In 1654 Chmielnicki swore loyalty to the tsar, which only deepened the problem.<sup>250</sup> The Porte started losing its patience much earlier, but the sultans did not want to recognize the fact that the Polish kings had virtually no control over the Cossacks. Finally a bloody battle between the Ottoman and Polish-Lithuanian armies took place in 1620, after the Ottomans signed peace treaty with Persia. The sultan warned a royal envoy that his patience had run out and he would fight the Cossacks. Strangely enough, the war was started by the royal forces that entered Moldavia.<sup>251</sup> Therefore, two major reasons of the war were the Cossacks and Moldavia. The problem of Cossacks was thoroughly researched by Victor Ostapchuk in "Five Documents from the Topkapı Palace Archive on the Ottoman Defense of the Black Sea against the Cossacks (1639)". Ostapchuk focuses on practical aspects of the Ottoman defense system introduced gradually by the Porte against the Cossack attacks. Ostapchuk stresses the growing role of the Cossack problem in Ottoman-Polish contacts and the use of threats by the Ottoman

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<sup>248</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, vol. I, p. 446.

<sup>249</sup> Dopierała. *Stosunki dyplomatyczne*, p. 90.

<sup>250</sup> Davies. *God's Playground*, vol. I, pp.463-65.

<sup>251</sup> Pajewski. *Buńczuk i koncerz*, pp. 53-61.

authorities in their diplomatic correspondence with the Commonwealth.<sup>252</sup> This idea fits to the content of the archival material – almost in each sultanic letter addressed to the Polish king, there is a passage where the sultan asks the king to punish the Cossacks, because their attacks are against the treaties.

The last important element of the Ottoman-Polish relations was the Crimean Khanate. Similar to the Cossack who attacked areas under the Ottoman protection; the Tatars often raided Poland-Lithuanian lands. In practical terms, there no difference the two, but from the political perspective the major difference was the fact that the Ottoman sultans treated Cossacks as subjects of the Polish kings, whereas the Tatars were treated as a separate political entity. Therefore, whenever the Polish side complained on the Tatar raids to the sultan, the answer was usually polite, but not very helpful. In the *nâme* written for Sigismund Augustus as a response to the king's complaints on the raids, Selim II wrote that the khan was, as a Muslim, protected by the sultan. Moreover, the khan was a sovereign and ruled his own country, although he "kept the sultan's flag" for a long time. Therefore, the king was advised to write directly to the khan. In the same document Selim stressed that the tribute to the khan should be always paid on time and that the king should punish the Cossacks who raided the Tatar's land.<sup>253</sup> The preferential treatment was sometimes used by the khans, who tried to influence the Porte, Poland-Lithuania and the Muscovites. In case of Poland-Lithuania, the Tatars often cooperated with the Jagiellonians in wars against the Muscovites. In 1540, Poland-Lithuania allied with the Crimean Tatars in return for annual gifts for the khan. The gift was linen cloth

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<sup>252</sup> Ostapchuk., V. "Five Documents from the Topkapı Palace Archive on the Ottoman Defense of the Black Sea against the Cossacks (1639)". *Journal of Turkish Studies*. Vol. 11/1987, pp. 49-50.

<sup>253</sup> AKW 70/239.



worth 15,000 pieces of gold. In 1542, the alliance was renewed. Despite close temporary cooperation, the Tatars often raided Poland breaking the treaties. There were small incursions in 1533, 1534, 1538 and 1541 and a big one in 1546. Due to the Habsburg intrigues, Suleyman the Magnificent ordered Sahib Giray to attack Poland-Lithuania in 1549. Another action took place in 1551 when Devlet Giray destroyed the city of Braclaw. This action was also provoked by the Habsburgs who tried to start the Polish-Ottoman war in order to weaken the Ottoman positions in Hungary. However, a year later the treaty was signed with the Crimea.<sup>254</sup> Despite the treaty, the independent raids of small independent Tatar groups still occurred from time to time. In some cases, they were provoked by late payment of tribute for the khan.<sup>255</sup> The tribute was high and constituted important position in the Crimean budget, therefore late payment created economic problem for the khanate. Only during the reign of Sigismund the Old and Sigismund Augustus that is in the period 1506-1572, Poland-Lithuania sent to the khan eleven installments of tribute, each one was worth 400,000 pieces of gold. The annual average was then 6,000 pieces of gold.<sup>256</sup>

With the end of the Jagiellonian dynasty in 1572, the sultans started using the Tatars to influence the elections in Poland, which has already been discussed in the earlier chapters. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the second half of the sixteenth century was the time when the Crimean Khanate started losing the position of regional power. The khans still influenced the development of policies – collapse of the Astrakhan campaign conducted by the Ottomans is a good example of such

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<sup>254</sup> Podhorodecki. *Chanat krymski*, p. 97-99.

<sup>255</sup> M XIV 575, 723.

<sup>256</sup> Podhorodecki. *Chanat krymski*, p. 97-99.

influence<sup>257</sup> – and tried to carry on independent policies, but military successes of the Muscovites and Poland-Lithuania, together with the rise of the Cossack problem limited the power of the Crimean Khanate. In addition, the Ottomans did not want to tolerate such failures as the Astrakhan campaign and started appointing the khans themselves.<sup>258</sup>

All geopolitical factors discussed above heavily influenced development and quality of the Ottoman-Polish relations at the end of the sixteenth century. Under such conditions, despite the efforts made by the Ottomans and, to some extent, Sigismund III Vasa it was impossible to keep the balance of power in the region. Without solving the unsolvable problem of Tatars, Cossacks and the Danubian principalities the relations gradually deteriorated and resulted in series of wars in the seventeenth century.

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<sup>257</sup> İnalçık. “Osmanlı-Rus Rekabetinin”.

<sup>258</sup> Türk, Ahmet. “The Crimean Khanate”, pp. 107-14.

### III. A World Beyond Borders: Economy and Trade

Since the very beginning trade and other economic activities played an important role in Ottoman-Polish relations. Already in 14<sup>th</sup> century, merchants of Lwów<sup>259</sup> traded with Caffa, Cyprus and Constantinople. After the conquest of Constantinople by sultan Mehmed II in 1453, the merchants of Lwów developed trade extensively, because with the Ottoman blockade of the Bosphorus, the Genoese merchants who wanted to continue trade had to use the land route from Crimea, through Akkerman and Lwów into Italy. For the entire period of the Ottoman war with Venice (1463-1475), the Lwów trade developed rapidly and the Genoese decided to become vassals of the Polish king in 1462.<sup>260</sup> The Dutch also used transit road via Lwów for their trade with the Ottomans since the fifteenth century.<sup>261</sup> Development of economic activities on that route was determined by situation in the Danubian Principalities. That is why keeping control over Moldavia and Wallachia was important not only for Poland-Lithuania and the Ottomans, but also for the kingdom of Hungary. These regions constituted the key to economic and political control of the whole region.<sup>262</sup> In 1454, the Moldavian *voivode* Aaron III accepted the Ottoman suzerainty and two years later the sultan granted privileges of free trade in Edirne,

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<sup>259</sup> The name of this old and multinational city has changed with time. It used to be called Lemberg, Leopoldis, L'viv, L'vov and Lwów. I am using the form Lwów derived from Polish throughout this work.

<sup>260</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, pp.11-12; İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History*, p. 276.

<sup>261</sup> İnalcık. *An Economic and Social History*, p 372.

<sup>262</sup> Kortepeter, Carl M. "Ottoman Imperial Policy and the Economy of The Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth Century", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 86/2 (1966): 86-113. pp. 91-93.

Bursa and Istanbul to the Moldavian merchants.<sup>263</sup> The Ottoman conquest of Caffa in 1475, and Kilia with Akkerman a couple of years later, affected the development of trade with Poland-Lithuania, but the sultan already in 1484 imposed very attractive low taxes (3.3%) on the merchants of Lwów, and in 1489 he tried to attract these very merchants to trade with the Ottomans.<sup>264</sup> In the *'ahidnâme* granted by Bayezid II in 1494 to the Polish king, free access by sea and land together with the protection of the life and property of merchants were included.<sup>265</sup> Then set of economic privileges included in *'ahidnâmes* developed gradually and constantly.<sup>266</sup> Because road from Lwów into Caffa and Akkerman led through Moldavia, in 1498 John Albert attempted unsuccessfully to re-establish Polish control over that principality, which led to the temporary breakdown of the Ottoman trade with Lwów.<sup>267</sup> This last military effort of the Jagiellonians against the Ottomans did not have ongoing effects, because Kilia was an important wine export outpost already in 1505. The wine was exported from the Mediterranean region into Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy.<sup>268</sup> Merchants of Poland-Lithuania were granted concessions from the Ottoman sultans as one of the first states, and the Ottoman-Polish trade flourished throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, and especially during Stephan Bathory's reign (1576-1586) the English used Poland as a transit country in trade.<sup>269</sup>

At first, the English tried to trade directly with Persia using the Muscovite port of

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<sup>263</sup> İnalcık. *Ottoman Empire*, p. 129.

<sup>264</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, pp.11-12.

<sup>265</sup> Kolodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, p. 185.

<sup>266</sup> Kolodziejczyk discussed addition of new articles in *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 185-189.

<sup>267</sup> İnalcık. *An Economic and Social History...*, p. 279.

<sup>268</sup> *ibid.* p 292.

<sup>269</sup> *ibid.* p 369.

Archangelsk on the White Sea, because the ports on the Baltic Sea were blocked by Polish and Swedish armies. Bathory's reign facilitated English trade, especially when the king tried to break the resistance of the port city of Danzig, by granting trade privileges to the competitive port in Elbląg. Similarly, the English also obtained first Ottoman capitulations in 1579 and in 1581 "The Turkey Company" was established. The English wanted to use the trade route from Danzig or Elbląg via Lwów, Black Sea, and Anatolia to Persia.<sup>270</sup>

The scale of Ottoman-Polish trade in the sixteenth century must have been quite impressive. According to Halil İnalcık, in mid-seventeenth century, i.e. the time of constant wars and troubles in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, one caravan of merchants was coming from Poland to Istanbul every month, in comparison to six-ten caravans a year from Persia, two a year from Basra, three to four from Aleppo, one from Ragusa, and one every eight days from Izmir.<sup>271</sup> It is reasonable therefore, to assume that in the sixteenth century, i.e. the period of friendly and intensive relations between the Ottoman Empire and Poland-Lithuania the trade must have been much more active. However, only limited data has been proposed this period so far. The numbers provided by İnalcık do not include maritime travel while, in fact, merchants traveled from Lwów to Istanbul both by land and combined sea-land route. In the first case, the journey lasted for forty days and in the latter, the travel was much shorter and took only twenty-five days.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, pp 75-76.

<sup>271</sup> İnalcık. *Ottoman Empire*, p. 146.

<sup>272</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, p. 30 Chart 2.

The merchants of Lwów imported from the Ottoman Empire mostly wine, hides, cattle, fish, salt<sup>273</sup>, textiles (*tiftik*, *çamlet*, *yağmurluk*, *boğasi*, *Musul bezi*, *alaca*, *çit*, silk, cotton and Angora wool – the last one illegally as it belonged to prohibited goods), carpets, kilims, pelts, garments, belts, leather shoes, leather products, furs (of tigers and Persian leopards), arms and armors (illegally), pottery, soap, pipes, tents, spices, fruit juices, precious stones, pearls, dyes, and horses.<sup>274</sup> The last item seems controversial, because as already mentioned in the previous chapter and will be dealt with below, horses were among items strictly prohibited by the authorities to be exported outside the Empire. On the other hand, Dziubiński stresses that there existed specialized horse trade agents in the Empire, who used to export quality horses into Poland-Lithuania.<sup>275</sup>

The Ottoman imports from the Commonwealth were not so impressive. Halil İnalcık mentions woolen cloth of English origin<sup>276</sup>, whereas Dziubiński claims that most important item was linen, especially Lithuanian brand. Apart from this, a large quantity of iron items (knives, wires) and metals, especially tin (illegally), which was used in the production of cannons were imported. A sub branch of metal imports included various mechanical and sun clocks, some of them produced in the West and some by local manufactories. The third most important imported goods were furs of Muscovy and Lithuanian origin. In addition, wax, ambers and printed books in Hebrew constituted most important items of Polish-Lithuanian trade offer. The books were mostly Talmudic comments printed in Kraków and Lublin, but

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<sup>273</sup> İnalcık. *An Economic and Social History*, p 303.

<sup>274</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, pp. 156-200.

<sup>275</sup> *ibid.* pp. 199-201.

<sup>276</sup> İnalcık. *An Economic and Social History*, p 303

books of official Polish custom and tax regulations were also popular among the Jewish merchants in Istanbul, who wanted to facilitate their business.<sup>277</sup>

Well-developed trade relations led to many practical problems, which are reflected in primary sources of that period. The sources deal with six major categories of cases: various assistance in preparation of journeys and tax exemption for merchants working directly for the sultan or king, problems of robbery on the roads, merchants' debts, orders concerning smuggling of prohibited goods, problems caused by natural deaths of merchants abroad and items concerning animals. The last category is not directly connected with trade, but still can be treated as an economic activity, because it concerns trade and grazing of animals between the two states.

Most space in the sources is devoted to tax exemptions and assistance to merchants during their journeys. Tax exemption was only applied in such cases when the trade was conducted directly in the name of the ruler i.e. the sultan or the king; hence the goods traded in that category were rather luxurious. For example, in 1588 the sultan wrote a *nâme* to the king, informing him that two imperial merchants, Mehmed and Halil, would go to Moscow to purchase furs and some other items. The sultan asked the king not to impose any taxes on the merchants on their way there and back.<sup>278</sup> Import of furs by the court in Istanbul was connected with annual nomination of higher officials by the sultan during festivities or *bayrams*. On that occasion, the sultan used to present official garments, lined with furs, to the newly appointed officials. Then the officials would present other fur-

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<sup>277</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, pp. 147-56.

<sup>278</sup> MD LXII 467.

lined garments to people who helped them in obtaining the appointment. Hence, the court was in constant need of furs. In case of closing the Lithuanian frontiers with Muscovy due to war, which resulted in limitation of fur exports from Poland-Lithuania, situation on the Ottoman court was becoming unstable, because the traditional ceremonies could not be observed.<sup>279</sup> In such context it is easy to understand that the Ottoman authorities treated the fur trade seriously and why requests concerning free passage and tax exemption for fur merchants were sent not only to Polish kings, but also to the khan, to *voivodes* of Wallachia and Moldavia, to all the kadis in places the merchants were passing and sometimes even to the rulers of Muscovy. For example, six orders in the *mühimme* register dated 25 Mart 1566 were connected with Mehmed, the sultan's merchant who was heading to Muscovy with the intention of buying furs.<sup>280</sup> There was an order prepared for each stage of merchant's journey, and all orders included the same request: to assist and protect Mehmed, and to exempt his money and furs from taxes. This method of protecting fur merchants was not exceptional. In 1585, similar orders were prepared for Dimitri, another fur merchant going to Muscovy.<sup>281</sup>

It seems that the sultan's assistance was even more developed, because it is possible to find orders in which the Polish king, the Moldavian and the Wallachian *voivodes* were asked to help the imperial merchant Mahmud bring back 114 *samur* furs he had deposited in Poland.<sup>282</sup> Royal merchants purchasing goods for the king in the Empire were also exempted from custom dues, but not entirely. According to

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<sup>279</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, pp. 89.

<sup>280</sup> MD V 1311, 1312, 1313, 1314, 1315, 1316.

<sup>281</sup> MD LVIII 506, 507, 508. For the full text see appendix III.

<sup>282</sup> MD LVIII, 306, 437.



sultan's order, custom dues were not taken for goods up to the value of 4,000 florens.<sup>283</sup> It seems that this was not a solution against the king, but rather action against fraud and abuse because the order stresses that customs officers should check whether goods were really for the king.

Another limitation concerned the prohibited goods. Polish kings prohibited selling tin to the Ottomans, who needed it for military purposes. Since 1523, there existed formal prohibition of tin export, which was renewed by Sigismund Augustus and Stephan Bathory. Nevertheless, the scale of smuggle must have been impressive, because there were sultan's agents looking for tin and despite the prohibition only in 1566 the authorities confiscated three tons of tin certain Mustafa Çelebi was trying to take out of Poland.<sup>284</sup> Among the goods prohibited for export into Poland-Lithuania were horses, cattle and wax candles. Despite the prohibitions there must have existed a developed smuggle and black market, because in 1587 the sultan repeated his orders prohibiting selling horses and cattle to the Poles and Hungarians.<sup>285</sup> Similar order, including also wax candles, was repeated a couple of months later and this time the sultan demanded heavy punishment for the smugglers.<sup>286</sup>

Existence of orders requiring good treatment of merchants suggests that various obstacles awaited the merchants every now and then. Despite the fact that articles of '*ahidnâmes*' specified rights and privileges of merchants, local authorities did not always follow the law and the sultan had to issue special orders for kadis:

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<sup>283</sup> MD VII 1403.

<sup>284</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, p. 150.

<sup>285</sup> MD LXII 65.

<sup>286</sup> MD LXII 389.

*vusûl buldukda, ahid-nâme-i hümâyûnumda mukayyed olan husûslardan eger tüccâr ahvâlidür; mer'î tutup ana mugâyir kimesneye iş itdürmeysesiz ve gelüp giden bâzergânların ahde mugâyir rencîde itdürmeyüp itmek isteyenleri sekidüp inâd eyleyenleri atebe-i ulyâma yazup bildüresiz. Şöyle ki; ahde mugâyir iş ola, sizden bilinür; ana göre basîret üzre olasız.*<sup>287</sup>

Of course, the sultan's subjects faced similar problems in Poland-Lithuania and the king had to punish abuses and mistreatments. Problem of personal and professional freedom of merchants was universal at that time and involvement in economic activities, although profitable, was quite risky. Consequently, the authorities tried to protect merchants not only in legal, but also in practical way, i.e. by asking for or supplying military guards.<sup>288</sup> Despite all the precautions, robbery and other forms of violence, including murders of merchants, were not uncommon. Sixteenth century Poland-Lithuania was not a safe place and the situation became even worse during lengthy interregnum periods in the second half of the century. In 1534, a whole caravan of Ottoman merchants, 18 persons, were robbed and killed near Kamieniec Podolski and in 1543 Mirzali, a merchant from Bursa was robbed and murdered by a hired coachman. Similar event took place in 1549 when Şeref ed-Din, a merchant from Aleppo, was also killed by a coachman. All these cases are known, because the sultan intervened but in most cases, there were no witnesses and the murders remained unidentified.

Lack of safe routes was additionally influenced by development of political events. Apart from the aforementioned interregnum periods, the second part of the sixteenth century was a time of internal troubles in Moldavia, which made transit

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<sup>287</sup> MD VII 1783.

<sup>288</sup> MD XXIX 418.

through this principality very dangerous. Moreover, *celali* rebellions, which began in the late sixteenth century in Anatolian provinces of the Empire, also influenced merchants trading with Ankara, Bursa, Tokat, Sivas and Erzurum.<sup>289</sup> Sometimes the roads could be extremely unsafe. In 1570, some Ottoman merchants going to Moscow had to buy their freedom three times on their way with animals and goods worth 70,000 pieces of gold in total.<sup>290</sup> Three years later 400 Polish soldiers raided Akkerman and murdered Crimean merchants, capturing 700 pieces of cattle. Then they killed some soldiers sent by the *bey* of Akkerman to stop them.<sup>291</sup>

Property of merchants who died abroad was subject to protection of the authorities. Regulations concerning this matter were included in the *'ahidnâmes* already in 1494.<sup>292</sup> To obtain the property of the deceased, one had to come “cum literis regalibus”, i.e. with royal letters. Respectively, to inherit the property of a merchant who died in Poland-Lithuania one needed imperial letters. These were written in a form of *nâme* for the king. A good example of such document is a *nâme* in the *mühimme* register concerning the property of Hızır bin Sefer Şah from Tokat who died in Lwów in 1574. The sultan asks the king to help get Hızır's property back and to return it to Esar and Murad veledi Segis who would come to get it.<sup>293</sup> Another example is a *nâme* for the king concerning 500 *macar altun* and some property left by the late Jew Yakup at the deposit of another Jew Musa. It is explained in the order that Yakup was a stepfather of Seleme, who initially was to inherit the property with several other persons, but turned out to be the only

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<sup>289</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, pp. 68-72.

<sup>290</sup> AKW 70/239.

<sup>291</sup> MD XXII 225.

<sup>292</sup> Kolodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish*, pp. 185, 203.

<sup>293</sup> MD XXIV 553.

inheritor. The sultan informs the king that the property will be collected by Seleme's son-in-law.<sup>294</sup> It seems that the solution was functional. More problems appeared in the case of unpaid debts. The sultan's envoy Ibrahim Bey mentioned during his speech to Sigismund Augustus debts of some merchants from Lwów who despite several requests sent by the sultan did not pay.<sup>295</sup> Due to the sultan's intervention, this and other similar cases were solved in court with an interesting outcome. Because the debts were high and the debtor bankrupted, the court in several cases judged cession of residence ownership and the Ottoman merchants were given tenement houses in Lwów and other cities. In 1579 Hüseyin, a merchant from Ankara obtained ownership of a tenement house in Kamieniec Podolski.<sup>296</sup> It is likely that the analysis of *sicill* registers from Ankara, Bursa, Trabzon and Istanbul might reveal similar cases in the Ottoman Empire.

Last important category of Ottoman-Polish economic activities concerned pasturing and grazing of animals as well as their trade. Usually shepherds of the Ottoman borderland were crossing the frontier to pasture sheep on the Polish side. In the *'ahidnâme* granted by Suleyman to Sigismund Augustus in 1553 this question was presented in the following way: ... *çoban taifesi Leh vilayetine geçdiklerinde memleket hakimlerine kendülerin ve koyunların bildirüb mahfi varmayalar ve otlak hakkı vireler çoban taifesi kendülerin bildirdiklerinden sonra koyunu zayi' olursa memleket hâkiminden talep eyleye.*<sup>297</sup> This passage was included in almost identical form into following *'ahidnâmes*. According to the theory, sheep should have been

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<sup>294</sup> M XXIX 151. For the full text see Appendix III.

<sup>295</sup> AKW 69/205.

<sup>296</sup> Dziubiński. *Na szlakach Orientu*, pp. 136-37

<sup>297</sup> AKW 157/304. Cited after Kolodziejczyk. *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, p. 238.

registered and the shepherds should have paid pasture taxes. In practice, on the other hand, the situation was much more complicated, because several complaints of the Polish king can be traced in the documents. In 1564, the sultan answered the king's complaint, stating that the shepherds should give the number of their sheep to officials on both sides of the frontier and sheep pastured on Polish side should be taxed by the royal officials, but the sultan's officials should be also present in order to prevent losses of any side.<sup>298</sup> The same problem reappeared in the answer to king's complaint sent by sultan Selim in 1571,<sup>299</sup> and in the sultan's order to the *bey* of Akkerman.<sup>300</sup> One may find other additional material concerning this topic in the *mühimmes*. In another order to the *bey* of Akkerman the sultan stressed that some people who crossed the border and used pastures on the king's side should pay *otlak resmi* to the king and if they went for trade, they should also pay *baç* and *gümrük resmi*.<sup>301</sup> The same sultanic orders were repeated in a *nâme* to the king.<sup>302</sup>

This suggests that the shepherds did try to escape paying taxes and despite the combined efforts of both sides, it was difficult to control not only the shepherds, but also other people who crossed the frontier. Sometimes the officials followed the rules too strictly and the sultan had to issue orders preventing merchants coming from Poland-Lithuania from high taxes and custom fees and from confiscation of animals.<sup>303</sup> As a conclusion, it seems worth presenting an interesting episode concerning sheep trade during the reign of Bathory. Apparently at that time sheep

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<sup>298</sup> AKW 70/206.

<sup>299</sup> AKW 70/241

<sup>300</sup> MD VII 1784.

<sup>301</sup> MD XII 679.

<sup>302</sup> MD V 70.

<sup>303</sup> MD VII 1769.

from Poland-Lithuania were sold to Istanbul and speculative market must have arisen, because in the *nâme* for Bathory written in *mühimme* (1577), the sultan asked the king to sell the sheep for export from Poland to Istanbul only to those butchers who had obtained a license from the sultan.<sup>304</sup>

Economic activities between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman states in the sixteenth century were one of the most important links between the two states. One might suppose that peaceful relations maintained so successfully at that time were stimulated by pressures of merchants and market demands on both sides. This hypothesis could and perhaps should be validated in a study focusing strictly on influences of economic relations on Ottoman and Polish-Lithuanian state policies. Limited scope of this work does not allow such a comprehensive analysis. Moreover, the spectrum of topics concerning Ottoman-Polish trade is much wider than the key elements presented above.

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<sup>304</sup> MD XXIX 140.

## CONCLUSION

Ottoman-Polish relations in the sixteenth century developed in two different phases. During the reigns of the Polish-Lithuanian kings Sigismund the Old (1506-1548) and Sigismund Augustus (1548-1572), and the Ottoman Sultans Suleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566) and Selim II (1566-1574), both states cooperated when confronted by common enemies: the Habsburgs and the Muscovites. The amicable relations that they enjoyed at that time were the result of the absence of serious problems. Minor issues like the Tatar and Cossack raids or the internal tensions in Moldavia and Wallachia were generally solved by cooperation. In addition, they came up with a common Transylvanian policy against the Habsburgs. Such a solution was profitable for the Jagiellonians, who had historical and dynastical claims to Hungary, and the Ottomans, who wanted a predictable partner in their conflicts with the Habsburgs. The Jagiellonians received the first eternal '*ahidnâmes*' from the Ottomans and obtained the truce from *şehzâde* Selim, unprecedented acts in relations of the Ottomans with the European states. These gestures show clearly that the Jagiellonians and the Ottomans treated one another in very friendly and serious manner. In their relations with another common enemy, Muscovy, the Ottomans tried to obtain an alliance with Sigismund Augustus but did not succeed, mainly due

to policy of the Crimean khan. Devlet Giray feared that common action against Muscovy would destroy the beneficial balance of power between Muscovy, Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire. The khan was aware that as long as all these three powers existed, he would be able to enjoy extensive autonomy from the Ottomans.

When the Jagiellonian dynasty ceased ruling Poland-Lithuania on 7 July 1572, the Ottomans faced the necessity of reshaping policy towards their kingless neighbor in the north. Although the Jagiellonians used to be rather predictable partners for the sultans, the “ancient” friendship between the house of Osman and the house of Jogaila lost its importance on the eve of elections to the Polish throne. Changing their policy towards Poland-Lithuania, the Ottomans influence the election so that a candidate who would be friendly towards the Porte and would not destroy the delicate balance of power in the region would come to the throne. In the light of the analyzed sources, it seems reasonable to support the idea that the Ottomans did have crucial influence, even just indirect, on the result of the elections of Henry de Valois, Stephan Bathory and Sigismund III Vasa. When the first elected king returned to France due to unexpected death of his brother, the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa decided to use the experience he had acquired during the first election in order to secure the election of Stephan Bathory. Relevant items in *mühimme* registers prove that the vizier took all precaution in case a hostile candidate would be chosen. In other words, the Ottomans would use all possible means, including military intervention, in order to prevent election of the Habsburg or Muscovite candidate.



Bathory's reign was a time of complicated yet peaceful relations with the Porte. The Cossacks and the Tatars influenced the Ottoman attitude towards Poland-Lithuania. Bathory on the other hand appears to have done his best to satisfy the sultan abstaining from engaging in anti-Ottoman policies as some historians suggested. It is equally apparent that he was not a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. Bathory was aware of the Ottoman power and did not see a better ally against the Habsburgs. Therefore, his loyal support of the Ottomans was the only sensible option in order to maintain acceptable relations with the Habsburgs in Transylvania and with the Muscovites on the eastern border. Bathory's premature death in 1586 brought end to the policy of close Ottoman-Polish cooperation. Since the first symptoms of future problems, i.e. growth of military activities of the Cossacks were seen during Bathory's reign, this period in the Ottoman-Polish relations can be treated as transitional.

The Porte was busy with Persian and Georgian campaigns and therefore could not engage as actively into the third election as it did into the previous ones. Nevertheless, the sultan clearly declared once again that the election of an Ottoman enemy would be regarded as the *casus belli*. The orders sent to borderlands and the Tatars proved that the sultan's words were gravely serious. Election of Vasa at first was seen as a good solution for the Ottoman-Polish relations. Involvement of the king in succession to the Swedish throne and Moldavian ambitions of the chancellor Zamoyski in addition to the outbreak of civil, and then Habsburg-Ottoman war in Transylvania led to resumption of hostilities. The relations were tense but there was still a chance of positive solution. Further development of the Cossack problem led

to Ottoman preparation for war. In this case, both states were not flexible enough: the Ottomans did not want to treat the Cossacks as uncontrollable rebels, but preferred to accuse the Polish king of lacking good will to tame them. On the other hand, when the Ottomans started a campaign against the Cossacks, the Commonwealth responded with anger instead of cooperation with the Ottomans against the common threat. In addition, the role of the Tatars in that time was crucial. The sultans tended to favor the Tatars, which influenced negatively the Polish-Lithuanian attitude against the Ottomans. In fact, the Commonwealth suffered from Tatar raids in a similar way the Ottomans were faced by incursions of the Cossacks.

During the entire sixteenth century, trade seems to have played a very important role in the relations between the Porte and the Commonwealth. The transit route from Istanbul to Lwów was central to economic activities of both states. Moreover, the itinerary via Poland was used as a trade route linking the Ottoman Empire with Western Europe. This supports the idea that keeping trade routes accessible had essential importance for the Ottomans.

This work focuses on various aspects of Ottoman-Polish relations throughout the sixteenth century and is based upon relevant primary sources. The results of analysis prove that not only were the Ottoman-Polish relations very vivid at that time, but the character of bilateral contacts also changed gradually. The changes were unavoidable, because from the Ottoman perspective preventing the balance of power in the region was the most important issue. Significant changes in political

relations apparently did not influence economic activities. Definitely further studies of the topic are necessary, because the existing picture is still incomplete.

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## APPENDICES

### 1. Ottoman Sultans and Polish Kings in fifteenth and sixteenth centuries:

Bayezid I	1389-1402	Louis of Anjou	1370-1382
Mehmed I	1413-1421	Jadwiga	1384-1399
Murad II	1421-1451	Ladislaus Jagiełło	1387-1434
Mehmed II	1444 and 1451-1481	Ladislaus III	1434-1444
Bayezid II	1481-1512	Casimir	1447-1492
Selim I	1512-1520	John Albert	1492-1501
Suleyman I	1520-1566	Alexander	1501-1506
Selim II	1566-1574	Sigismund I	1506-1548
Murad III	1574-1595	Sigismund Augustus	1548-1572
Mehmed III	1595-1603	Henry de Valois	1573-1574
		Stephan Bathory	1576-1586
		Sigismund III Vasa	1587-1632



2. A map of Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.



Pratim te druzem atakst list prosse klen bi te taky priti:  
na napisan bil yako ten srodni: klenmi nme jest ralsse: viz:  
: riam: takie klesstijanskem sinen akst pritiroterus pallakem bi:  
dar: prosil mie te buch mni mogl srodniar la pritiimimi listem  
yogo: kzo: Wilosseti kulke listat timaru: vedle zwiklej listej  
Jgo: Cie: Wilosseti:

Atletim abo nra wzmastim te mrim / luga ralsstimi kleni te tu  
ylenaj skoma jest tym te kstaltim: bo yleni ralsstij jest A nme  
mi jest: ralsstam te sin klesstianiski

ormamim nieke yedem skamira prosil o od mienime tege listi  
tym te kstaltim kleni tam ro m ste: yeno te bi bi na yme kras:  
stemssego ralsstam ralssego

o ty te tam dlugi kupca ralsstkego kleni ma ulmowianow abi  
nme vedle wzmamim nra zaplatiti silego nra na ymimim ralsstke  
abo mrim kstaltim bade: o yedem: yst tam srodniar prosil mie  
akst taki te bi mkeni nieplati na yst: De silegi nieplatiar bi se  
kreni to kupcow. Cysstskemi nieplatiar mogl

## 5. AKW 70/233 – English translation of the Polish document:

I offer my Services to My Gracious Lord

Concerning motives of the [recommendation] letters, I asked His Majesty, for [support for] some of my [men], which is to be written by His Majesty to My Master, it should be as follows:

The name: *Cafer*, son of certain *Arik Mehmet*, who used to be the *emin* at the Danube River and was great and renowned and famous in our state but already died. And [his son] is here with me and was before and he is also your servant, your Lordship. But, if I am to help him further, there is no need to mention his father's presence here with me in the letter, but [it should be written] that he is here, in agreement and friendship his father was supposed to have here with the subjects and some lords of His Majesty, after some business of his father. And because he was here when I came, he asked in his good manner etc. And especially, being already the *çavuş* of the *beylerbey*, with the help of His Highness he wants to obtain the position of *çavuş* of our Emperor. And thus, he asks for the letter.

And there is another one, a certain Hüseyn, though a son of a Christian, who holds on behalf of His Imperial Majesty a *timar* of 9290 *asper* in the *sancak* of Kostendil. He also asks that he could, by the recommendation of His Royal Majesty, become a *çavuş* at the court of His Imperial Majesty or that he could get a better *timar*. And there should be such a reason in the king's letter that Hüseyn was a subject of the Polish crown by birth, because without some reason it would be difficult or impossible to obtain [what he wants].

In addition, I ask for such a letter, written in the same manner like the previous one, for another [man], whose own name is *Rizvani* (?). He is also a son of Christian and a Pole by birth and he asked me to gain, with help of the recommendation letter from his Highness, several thousands [*asper*] of a *timar*, according to tradition followed by His Imperial Highness.

And the third or fourth [recommendation letter], in the same manner, [should be] for my own servant, who is here with me now. Because he is also a Muslim and his name is Rüştem. He is son of a Christian, too.

And one Armenian from Kamieniec [Podolski] asked me to obtain the renewal of his letter (i.e. *berat*) in the same manner, [i.e. with the recommendation from the king], for the one with the name of our current Emperor.

And also concerning debts the merchants of Lwów should pay to the Emperor's merchant, they can pay according to their convenience and I will acknowledge receipt with my own or the Emperor's name. And one of them already .... and he asked me for such a letter that he could pay nobody else [but the sultan's merchant]. In six months he could pay off the Emperor's merchant.



[illegible]

## 7. AKW 70/232

8. AKW 70/232. English translation of the Polish document.

Your Gracious Lordship

My dearest grateful friend. I offer my services to your Lordship etc.

Some of my friends asked me for favor for a certain *Müslîy Aga*. Could you help me obtain a recommendation letter from His Majesty to His Imperial Highness mentioning this *Aga*, who would like to become even the least important member of His Imperial Majesty's court? If your Lordship could do me a favor, it would be good to obtain such a letter from His Highness. And in the letter, it should be mentioned that the *voivode* of Sandomierz during his visits at His Imperial Highness was helped by the *Aga* and he already recommended the *Aga* [to the sultan] and [such an office at the court] was promised to him.





بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
الحمد لله الذي جعل في خلقه منافع لا تعد ولا تحصى  
والموتى في الدنيا والآخرة  
والله اعلم بالصواب

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