

TREATIES IN HISTORICAL STUDIES – THE 1607 TRADE TREATY BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND POLAND

INTRODUCTION

After the Ottoman Empire had established itself as the dominant power in the Black Sea, it started to form relationships with other states on the shores of the Black Sea. The first relations between the Ottomans and Poland began in 1414, with the request of the King of Hungary to Poland for assistance in the fight against the Ottomans. The King of Poland, Wladyslaw Jagiello, sent Skarbek of Góra and the Armenian Gregory to Mehmed I as ambassadors to negotiate. As a result, Mehmed I signed a six-year treaty with Hungary.

On the 22nd March, 1489, Kazimierz IV Jagiellon sent two ambassadors to the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II and succeeded in signing the two-year treaty. This treaty was renewed during the reign of Jan Olbracht (Jan Albert) and articles regarding trade were included.

Nine years on from this treaty, King Jan Olbracht attempted to seize Moldavia, and therefore Stephen III, the prince of Moldavia, requested help from Bayezid II, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. With the support of the Ottomans, Poland was repelled from the lands of Moldova. After that, the Ottoman Empire sent Malkocoglu Bali Bey, the governor of Silistre, to raid Poland. However, peace was made with Poland in 1500, since the war

between the Ottomans and Venice had begun. This agreement was extended after one year.¹⁾

Ottoman-Polish relations were most stagnant in the 16th century. Poland had stopped siding with Hungary, and had received the support of the Ottomans against the Habsburgs in return, along with some commercial concessions.²⁾ However, Poland had provided some aid to Hungary after the Ottoman Empire conquered Belgrade, leading to an icy period in the relations between the two states. In retaliation, the Ottoman Empire sent Tatar soldiers to attack the Lwów (Lviv) area, however the Polish King sent an envoy to Suleiman the Magnificent to sign a six-year treaty, as the Polish nobility had been reluctant to go to war. In reply to the treaty proposed by the Polish gentry, Suleiman offered a three-year treaty, but rejected covering relations with Hungary. After this treaty had been signed, a Polish ambassador traveling to Istanbul was able to convince Suleiman to sign a treaty that would stand for as long as the two sovereigns lived. During the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the two states had friendly relations. Hurrem Sultan, who had Ruthenian ancestry, swayed Poland's attitude.³⁾

The 17th century was the most intense period in Ottoman-Polish relations. In this period, frequent Cossak raids caused economic losses for the Empire.

On the other hand, the Habsburg and Catholic orientated policies of Sigismund III caused a rift in relations between the two states. This situation had almost led to open war in 1617, but a consensus was reached. According to this agreement, the Ottoman Empire was to prevent the raids of the Crimean Tatars, while Poland was to prevent Cossak plunder in Ottoman lands, and abstain from intervening in the internal affairs of Wallachia and Moldavia. In 1620, relations with Poland became even more strained, and Osman II embarked on a successful campaign in Poland. The continued Cossak raids caused problems between Poland and the Ottoman Empire. In 1621, Osman II invaded the city of Khotyn. The Polish forces resisted at first, then sued for peace. The conditions of the previous treaty were adopted once more,⁴⁾ however these treaties were unable to prevent Cossak and Tatar raids. As Abaza Mehmed Pasha approached the Castle of Kamieniec Podolski (Kamy-

¹⁾ Baykal (1985: 249).

²⁾ Kolodziejczyk (2002: 680).

³⁾ İnbaşı (2001: 27).

⁴⁾ Uzunçarşılı (1995: 128–132).

anets – Podilski), Murad IV attempted to achieve peace by offering new treaties. Poland was also offered treaties during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim.⁵⁾

The treaty of 1607 signed with Poland, at a time when the relations between the two states were at a high point, shed light on the commercial relationship between the countries, and is the main topic of our paper.

Before discussing the content of the treaty, I would like to say a few words about treaties in general and their diplomatic implications.

THE TREATY AND ITS SECTIONS

The word ‘treaty’, or *ahidnâme* in Turkish, means, ‘an agreement carrying the mutual conditions and signatures of both parties’.⁶⁾ In diplomacy, a treaty can be defined as a legal document that strong states grant to others, in order to regulate their diplomatic relations. Ottoman treaties generally consist of: an introduction, *tughra* (seal or signature), titles, preface, treaty articles and date.

The introduction consists of prayers to Allah and his messenger Muhammed. The document seen in the image, shows the Ottoman text and transcription of the introduction.

The *tughra* is considered as the signature and insignia of the sultan in Ottoman diplomacy. As treaties are considered to be contracts, they carry the *tughra* of the reigning sultan.⁷⁾

The sultan’s titles include his ancestors for the previous few generations.⁸⁾ The treaty continues with *elkab* (official titles granted to persons of rank) and further prayers.⁹⁾

The preface includes the justification for the treaty and the conditions. Each condition is given clause by clause. Some treaties may not include an itemised list, but the conditions may be given within the text. The conditions

⁵⁾ Topaktaş (2005: 120).

⁶⁾ Sertoğlu (1986: 10), Pakalın (1983: I, 29), Kütükoğlu (1998: 163).

⁷⁾ Sertoğlu (1986: 344), Pakalın (1983: III, 525).

⁸⁾ Kütükoğlu(2004:165).

⁹⁾ *Leh kralı ve Luka ve Rusya ve Purusya Meruta ve Leponya'nın Dukası ve İstevsa vilâyetinin vârisi olan iftihârü'l-ümerâi'l-izâmi'l-I seviye muhtarü'l-küberâi'l-fi hâmfî'l-milleti'l-mesihîye muslih-i mesâlihi cemâhirü't-tâ'ifetü'n-nasraniye sâhibü ezyali'l-şaşimeti'l-vakâr sâhibü delâili'l-mecdeve'l-iftihâr Viladi lakoş hutumet avakibühubi'l-hayr...(8/4).*

in the Ottoman-Polish trade treaty of 1607 are given within the text. Finally, the treaty includes the *hijri* date in Arabic. 20 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 1016.¹⁰⁾

OTTOMAN – POLISH TRADE TREATY OF 1607

This section of the treaty was available and has been examined. When we look at the conditions of the Ottoman-Polish Trade Pact of 1607, we see that the treaty ensures the safety and livelihoods of Ottoman and Polish traders, with provisions for the payment of damages in the case of attack, the punishment of criminals, the regulation of taxation orders and finally the repatriation and exchange of prisoners.

The Ottoman Empire was to release any prisoners of war that had converted to Islam without ransom, while those who did not were to be released after payment. The sale of captives was strictly prohibited, as stated in the treaty.¹¹⁾

The Ottoman Empire was sensitive towards the implementation of these conditions appearing in the treaty. This is established in the orders sent to the relevant authorities during the implementation of the treaty.

These orders mostly concern preventing overcharging on customs tax for Polish-Lithuanian and other nationalities, the safety of traders, and the return of goods and inventory lists of those who had died to their legal heirs.¹²⁾

Furthermore, orders were issued permitting Polish traders to operate between the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean and to prevent over-taxation between land and sea trade routes. Some orders were issued by imperial edict and included the names of traders who were not to be subjected to extra taxation. The ledger includes orders preventing the over-taxation of goods transported by traders (cloth) and ensuring their safety during their travels.¹³⁾

Some orders cover ensuring the security of Polish nobleman purchasing livestock from the Ottoman Empire to be transported back to Poland and

¹⁰⁾ ...*tahiren fi evâhiri Muharemi'l-haram sene hamsîn elf..*

¹¹⁾ PMOA,(55\1: 4\2) cat. A.DVN.DVE (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's).

¹²⁾ PMOA(55\1: 4/2–12/5) cat. A.DVN.DVE (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's).

¹³⁾ PMOA(55\1: 26–27\9) cat. A.DVN.DVE (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's).

specifically state that the trade of livestock was to be permitted. This order covers camels, horses, ponies and oxen.¹⁴⁾

Two fairs were organized each year in Poland. Orders were issued to allow traders to travel and take part in these fairs for commercial purposes. Care was taken to prevent overcharging on customs duties for goods taken to these fairs.¹⁵⁾ One of the most interesting orders issued during the implementation of the treaty, was related to the scarcity of rice in Poland, and the Ottoman policy to allow rice to be traded with Poland.¹⁶⁾

This order, stemming from the economic situation of the period, is significant in alleviating the issues faced by the Polish people.¹⁷⁾

CONCLUSION

The Ottoman-Polish trade treaty of 1607, recorded in ledger 55/1, is a significant document, illustrating the growth of trade between the two countries. The treaty in question stipulates various provisions for the trade activities between the Ottoman Empire and Poland. This treaty was arranged so as to keep mutual interests in mind during the commercial activities between the two countries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü (1992) = Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi, (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministers) Catalogue A. DVN.DVE, Ankara 1992.
- Baykal (1985) = Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, "Tarih Boyunca Osmanlı-Polonya İlişkileri" (The Relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Poland throughout History), in: *Present to Yusuf Hikmet Bayur*. Ankara 1985: 249.

¹⁴⁾ PMOA(55\1: 45\94-40\71) cat. A.DVN.DVE (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministers).

¹⁵⁾ PMOA(55\1: 44\90) cat. A.DVN.DVE (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministers).

¹⁶⁾ PMOA(55\1: 37\57) cat. A.DVN.DVE (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministers).

¹⁷⁾ PMOA(55\1: 38\60) cat. A.DVN.DVE (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministers).

- Develiođlu (2001) = Ferit Develiođlu, *Osmanlıca-Türkçe Ansiklopedik Lûgat* (Ottoman-Turkish Language Dictionary), Ankara 2001.
- İnbaşı (2004) = Mehmet İnbaşı, *Ukrayna'da Osmanlılar Kamanıçe Seferi ve Organizasyonu* (1672) (The Ottoman Empire In Ukraine. Kamyanets Attack and Organization (1672), Istanbul 2004.
- Kolodziejczyk (2002) = Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, "1795'e Kadar Osmanlı Leh İlişkilerinin Karakteri Üzerine Bazı Tespitler" (Some Determinations on the Character of the Relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Poland up to 1795), *Türkler*, Volume IX (2002): 679-685.
- Kütükođlu (2004) = Mübahat Kütükođlu, *Osmanlı Belgeleri Dili* (Diplomatik) (The Language of Ottoman Instruments (Diplomatic), Istanbul 2004:165.
- Türkođlu (2007) = Züleyha Türkođlu, "55/1 nolu Lehistan Ahidnâme defterin transkripsiyon ve deđerlendirmesi" (The Transcription and Evaluation of the Treaty with Poland - 55/1, Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi, unpublished master's thesis, Tokat 2007: 25-34.
- Topaktaş (2005) = Hacer Topaktaş, "Osmanlı Sefâretnâmeler Işığında 1730-1763 yıllarında Osmanlı Devleti ile Lehistan/Polonya Arasında Diplomatik ilişkiler" (Diplomatic Relationships between the Ottoman Empire and Poland, from the years 1730 to 1763, in light of the Ottoman Ambassadorial Reports (Sefaretnâme), Black Sea Technical University, The Institute of Social Scientists, unpublished master's thesis, Trabzon 2005: 120.
- Uzunçarşılı (1995) = İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* (The History of the Ottomans), Volume III/I-IV/I, Ankara 1995: 128-680.
- Pakalın (1983) = Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, "Osmanlı Tarih ve Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü" (Historical Phraseology and Glossary of the Ottoman Empire), Volume I-II, Istanbul. 1983.
- Şemseddin (1989) = Sami Şemseddin, "Kâmûs-ı Türkî" (Turkish Dictionary), Istanbul 1989.
- Sertođlu (1986) = Murat Sertođlu, "Osmanlı Tarih Lûgatı" (The Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire) Istanbul 1986.