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THE “DECISIVE EMBASSY” OF PRINCE KRZYSZTOF ZBARASKI TO CONSTANTINOPLE (1622–1623) AND EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY AMIDST THE THIRTY YEARS’ WAR

ABSTRACT

The embassy of prince Krzysztof Zbaraski (1622–1633) is traditionally considered purely in the context of bilateral relations between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire for several reasons. First, the main goal of this embassy was to gain an imperial ‘ahdname after the first substantial military conflict between the parties in the previous year. Second, because in such terms this embassy is pictured in the two major sources documenting this mission. These are the official report by Zbaraski and the epic poem by his secretary Samuel Twardowski “Przeważna legacja” (“The Decisive Embassy”) (1633). Yet, prince’s diplomatic performance was closely observed by European residents and *ad hoc* ambassadors in Constantinople. Their dispatches give a perspective completely different from the one expressed in the official report of the prince. Specifically, they discussed whether the treaty between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire should include the paragraph regarding obligation of the Polish king to keep peace with the Transylvanian prince Bethlen Gábor. It was reported that this condition could impact Bethlen Gábor’s decision-making about resuming war with the Emperor Ferdinand II Habsburg after the Peace of Nikolsburg (1621). This article contextualises the embassy of the Prince Zbaraski within European political landscape amidst Thirty Years’ War and contrasts the results of the embassy to the tasks outlined in the ambassadorial instruction.

KEYWORDS: Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; Ottoman Empire; Transylvania; Diplomacy; Thirty Years’ War.

185



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On 9 November 1622 the grand ambassador of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Ottoman Empire, Prince Krzysztof Zbaraski entered Constantinople to start his four-month long diplomatic mission. On this occasion, the French resident Count Philippe de Cesy remarked about prince’s exceptionally splendid entrance into the city¹. On his shift, the English resident Sir Thomas Roe pointed out that the prince entered the city with «great (perhaps too much) trayne»² amounting to about 1200 people. Although some other observers claimed that the prince’s escort counted to no more than 700 people³, this anyway was nearly an unprecedented occasion for Constantinople to welcome such a numerous embassy. By way of contrast, escorts of the Habsburg ambassadors generally did not exceed 150 people with the exception of Hans Ludwig Küfstein (1628) who was followed by 400 cavaliers⁴. Prince Zbaraski had several reasons to surprise Constantinople with his numerous escort. First, he was obliged to his status of a Ruthenian prince who belonged to the richest people of his country⁵.

1 Aleksandr Turgenev, ed., *Historica Russiae monumenta ex antiquis exterarum gentium archivis et bibliothecis deprompta ab A. I. Turgenevio*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Pstratz, 1842), 422.

2 Thomas Roe, *Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe in his embassy to the Ottoman Porte, from the year 1621 to 1628 inclusive* (London: Printed by Samuel Richardson, 1775), 115.

3 Victor Ostapchuk, *The Ottoman Black Sea frontier and the relations of the Porte with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy, 1622-1628* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1989), 25, footnote 5.

4 Maria Pia Pedani, “The sultan and the Venetian bailo: ceremonial diplomatic protocol in Istanbul”, in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im mittleren Osten in der frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Ralf Kauz, Giorgio Rota and Jan Paul Niedercorn (Wien: Vöaw, 2009), 288. Ernst D. Petritsch, “Zeremoniell bei Empfängen habsburgischer Gesandtschaften in Konstantinopel”, in *Ibid.*, 318.

5 Zbigniew Anusik, “Książęta Jerzy i Krzysztof Zbarascy wobec problemów południowo-wschodniego pogranicza

Second, he needed to manifest strength and power of his king after the peace concluded between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire one year before, in October 1621, near the fortress of Khotyn (Chocim). The siege of Khotyn had ended indcisively and the conditions of the peace, which original copies were lost, could be interpreted differently, so that each party believed to be victorious⁶. Michal Wasiucionek incisively pointed out that ceremonial aspects of embassies, ceremonial entrance being one of them, were no just a performance but the very *raison d'état* of the early-modern diplomacy⁷. So Prince's Zbaraski pompous entrance into Constantinople was strategically important as it allowed to demonstrate richness and strength of the Commonwealth. Indeed, in 1622, Constantinople hosted a number of European permanent and *ad hoc* embassies⁸. So Zbaraski's performance could be observed not only by the Ottoman hosts but also by European ambassadors, who took a keen interest in diplomatic relations between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire.

The aim of the present article is to place Prince Zbaraski's embassy and its principal results within the context of this network of political interests amidst the ongoing Thirty Years' War. To do so, first, we will consider official tasks defined for the ambassador in the set of his diplomatic instructions. Second, we will analyse the attitudes of the European diplomats towards the prospective peace to be concluded between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire. Third, we will compare and contrast available evidence documenting negotiation process between the prince and the Ottoman high dignitaries. Finally, we will assess how the imperial 'ahdname delivered to Prince Zbaraski related to the interests of powers engaged into the developments of the Thirty Years' War.

THE GOALS OF PRINCE ZBARASKI'S EMBASSY

There are two diplomatic instructions, which allow one to assess the set of tasks put in charge of prince Zbaraski during his mission to the Ottoman Empire. The first one is undated⁹, the second one is divided into an official and a secret parts and dated 6 August 1622¹⁰. Yet, both the instructions are nearly identical, the differences are scarce and unsubstantial, and so one may regard these documents as a consolidated complex revealing the goals of the embassy.

First of all, Prince Zbaraski was supposed to negotiate a peace treaty to substitute the one concluded in the military camp near Khotyn and to cancel its two most irritating conditions, namely the plan to conduct a demarcation between the two countries¹¹, and the obligation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to keep its resident ambassador in Constantinople¹². The instructions underlined

Rzeczypospolitej w drugim i trzecim dziesięcioleciu XVII wieku", *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych*, 15/2 (2016): 128-33.

- 6 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th-18th centuries): an Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 130-33. Id., "Traktat Chocimski jako przykład dyplomacji wczesnonowożytnej", *Revista de istorie a Moldovei*, 57 (2004): 74-8. Tetiana Grygorieva, "Performative Practice and the Ceremonial Rhetoric of Peacemaking: The Process of Peacemaking between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire after the Khotyn War", in *Osmanischer Orient und Ostmitteleuropa: Perzeptionen und Interaktionen in den Grenzzonen zwischen dem 16. und 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Robert Born, Andreas Puth (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 240-45.
- 7 Michał Wasiucionek, "Diplomacy, Power and Ceremonial Entry: Polish-Lithuanian Grand Embassies in Moldavia in the Seventeenth Century", *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 105 (2012): 56.
- 8 On "parade of embassies" in Constantinople see Geoff R. Berridge, "Notes on the Origins of the Diplomatic Corps: Constantinople in the 1620s", *Discussion Papers in Diplomacy*, 92 (2004): 7.
- 9 BK PAN, rkps 326, 535-47.
- 10 BK PAN, rkps 326, 548-64. Previously, this document was analysed by Stefania Ochmann: "Sprawa traktatu Chocimskiego", *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis: Historia*, XII (1966): 66-70.
- 11 On the unsuccessful attempt to conduct demarcation in 1542, see Mykola Krykun, *Administratyvno-teritorial'ny ustrij Pravoberezhnoi Ukrainy v 15-18 st.: kordony voyevodstv u svitli džerel*. (Kyiv: Akademiya Nauk Ukrainy, 1993), 104-05. Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 58-9.
- 12 On the commitment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the *ad hoc* diplomacy in its relations with the Ottoman Empire see Tetiana Grygorieva, "The Trick and Traps of ad hoc Diplomacy: Polish Ambassadors' Experiences of Ottoman Hospitality", in *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630*, eds. Tracey Sowerby and Christofer Markiewicz (New York: Routledge, 2021), 194-216.

that commissaries appointed to engage into negotiations near Khotyn had no powers to spoil “olden peace” with any new conditions such as those providing for demarcation and resident. The ‘ahdnames of 1598 and 1619 were named the apparent best examples of the “olden peace”¹³. Specifically, a clear reference to the ‘ahdname of 1598 can be found in the claim for «Hungarian fortresses»¹⁴. In 1598, the sultan, who was engaged into the Long War (1591–1606) with the Habsburgs, agreed to recognize the right of the King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for the fortresses of Košice, Hust and Munkács¹⁵ if the king would manage to conquer them prior to the sultan himself¹⁶. In such a way, the sultan recognized “historical” rights of the king Sigismund III Vasa for the territories formerly belonging to the Jagiellons¹⁷. This condition was lost in the subsequent ‘ahdnames of 1607 and 1619, and so now Sigismund III tried to take the occasion and strengthen the precedent that would allow him or his descendants to justify claims to the mentioned fortresses in the future.

Second, the ambassador had to ensure that prospective ‘ahdname would be bilateral and included neither the Ottoman tributary, the Principality of Transylvania (which had been previously mentioned in the ‘ahdname of 1619) nor the Kingdom of Hungary. In such a way, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth would secure its independent foreign policy and would not be obliged to neutrality in the possible conflict between the sultan or the Transylvanian prince and the king’s brother-in-law, the Emperor Ferdinand II Habsburg.

Third, Zbaraski was expected to secure the “right” of the king to “suggest” the sultan the candidacies of the Moldavian voivodes. He was also to claim dismissal of the present Moldavian voivode Stefan Tomşa (as well as the beylerbey of Silistra Khan Temir–Kantemyr) and to instead promote the candidacy of Petru Movilă¹⁸. The representatives of the Movilă family, who were most strongly connected to the powerful Polish and Ruthenian magnates with patronage and family ties¹⁹, controlled the title of the Moldavian voivodes in the last decade of the sixteenth – the first decade of the seventeenth century. Thus, by promoting yet another representative of the Movilă family for the Moldavian voivodship and by claiming the “right” of choosing Moldavian voivodes in the future, Zbaraski was supposed to formalise Ottoman recognition of Polish influence in this principality.

Fourth, the Prince was prescribed to claim all the Polish prisoners released rather than ransomed as it was apparently specified «in all the previous treaties». The ambassador was instructed “to remind” the sultan about the practice of mutual releasing prisoners and to point out that his honorable ancestors always «released and presented prisoners» on request of Polish kings. Indeed, the previous ‘ahdnames included a condition that royal agents were allowed to search for king’s servants who remained «Poles and infidels» (i.e. Christians). However, it was specified that only those who became prisoners after issuing of ‘ahdname were to be released without remuneration. In practice, such releasing prisoners without remuneration happened only rarely. The Polish ambassadors occasionally obtained prisoners as a special gift for their king, but to claim such a gift was by no means an easy task. For example, the ambassadorial allowance of Piotr Zborowski (1568) was immediately halved after he had mentioned

13 Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 313-23, 354-62.

14 BK PAN, rkps 326, 547.

15 Today the city of Košice in Slovakia and the towns of Hust and Mukachevo in Ukraine.

16 Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 312-23.

17 The three mentioned Hungarian fortresses were in possession of Władysław III Jagiellon (of Varna) (1434–1444), who was both the king of Poland and of Hungary. The fortresses were claimed by Isabella Jagiellon, the widow of the Hungarian king John I Zápolya (1526–1540) and the regent under her young son John I Zápolya. After the partition of Hungary in 1547, initially the fortresses became a part of the Principality of Transylvania, but during the 1650s they were conquered by the Habsburgs and annexed to the Royal Hungary. On Polish diplomacy in defense of the dynastic rights of Isabella Jagiellon and her son see Andrzej Dziubiński, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polsko-Tureckie w latach 1500–1572 w kontekście międzynarodowym* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2005), 58-167.

18 Petru Movilă, son of the former voivode of Moldavia Simion Movilă, future Metropolitan of Kyiv.

19 Michał Wasiucionek, *Politics and Watermelons: Cross-Border Political Networks in the Polish-Moldavian-Ottoman Context in the Seventeenth Century* (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2016), 79-87.

to the grand vizier the “right” of the king to extradite prisoners free of charge²⁰. As prisoners were considered slaves and private property of those, who captured them, the sultan needed first to redeem them at the expense of imperial treasury if he wished to present them to the king. Noble prisoners were considered particular asset as the proprietors could account for hefty ransom from their relatives²¹. After the Battle of Cecora (1620), a number of Polish dignitaries such as Prince Samuel Korecki, Crown Field Hetman Stanislaw Koniecpolski, two sons of the former Polish Great Crown Hetman Stanislaw Żolkiewski, and many other members of prominent noble families were detained in Istanbul as prisoners²². Consequently, prince Zbaraski was supposed to persuade the sultan to make an extremely expensive present to the king.

Finally, the ambassador was expected to ensure that diplomatic gifts intended for the sultan would not be perceived as a tribute or any duty. To meet this expectation, Prince Zbaraski was to handle these gifts not in public, but in some discreet place (for example, in the garden). This assignment to avoid public demonstration of the gifts revealed firm intention to underline that these were actually gifts and no tribute²³. In case the Ottomans referred to these gifts as to a tribute, the prince would not give them at all. This latter prescription should be perceived as the last resort because the rejection to deliver gifts would fail princes’ mission at once. In the Ottoman Empire, it was nearly impossible to carry out a diplomatic mission without gifts or to present them privately. Delivering gifts to the sultan was an essential part of the reception ceremony of both the Ottoman high dignitaries and foreign diplomats.

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To conclude, the ambassadorial instructions set out an extremely ambitious program for the future diplomatic mission. The ambassador was expected not only to conclude lasting peace between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire, but also to do a root and branch review of the terms of the agreement reached near Khotyn (1621). He was also supposed to gain Ottoman recognition of the influence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Principality of Moldavia. Next, the prince was entrusted to claim Polish prisoners released rather than ransomed that would «manifest to the entire world the firmness of the peace» between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire. On his shift, the king himself intended to pass gifts to the sultan quietly, so as not to be suspected of doing so out of duty. In sum, Zbaraski’s success with the mentioned tasks would have asserted his king’s superiority over the sultan.

20 Janusz Pajewski, “Legacja Piotra Zborowskiego do Turcji w 1568 r: materiały do historii stosunków polsko-tureckich za panowania Zygmunta Augusta”, *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, 12 (1936): 60.

21 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, “Slave Hunting and Slave Redemption as a Business Enterprise: the Northern Black Sea Region in the 16th to 17th centuries”, *Oriente Moderno*, n.s. 25/1 (2006): 153-54. Will Smiley, *From Slaves to Prisoners of War. The Ottoman Empire, Russia, and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 23-38.

22 Ryszard Majewski, *Cecora – rok 1620* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1970), 219-20.

23 Previously, some European ambassadors had tried to avoid public demonstration of the gifts to claim these gifts were no tribute. Tracey Sowerby, Christopher Markiewicz “Languages of Diplomatic Gift-Giving at the Ottoman Court”, in *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court*, 56.

24 Sowerby and Markiewicz, “Languages of Diplomatic Gift-Giving”, 55, 65-71. For the importance of the gift giving at the Ottoman court also see Pedani, “The Sultan and the Venetian Bailo”, 294. On the importance of gift giving in the early modern Ottoman political culture: Hedda Reindl-Kiel, “Luxury, power strategies, and the question of corruption: gifting in the Ottoman elite (16th-18th Centuries)”, in *Şehrâyin. Die Welt der Osmanen, die Osmanen in der Welt Wahrnehmungen, Begegnungen und Abgrenzungen / Illuminating the Ottoman World, Perceptions, Encounters and Boundaries. Festschrift Hans Georg Majer*, ed. Yavuz Köse (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 107-20. Ovidiu Christea, “Diplomacy and Gifts in Constantinople: the Book of Accounts of bailo Piero Bragadin (1524–1526)”, *Revista istorică*, 29/1-2 (2018): 15-31.

FOREIGN AMBASSADORS AND THEIR ATTITUDES TO THE ZBARASKI'S EMBASSY

A number of European ambassadors in Constantinople were anxious to know whether Prince Zbaraski would be successful with his mission. Specifically, the English resident Sir Thomas Roe was instructed to most strongly support his diplomatic aspirations²⁵. In exchange for diplomatic support to Prince Zbaraski in Constantinople, the English king James I counted for mediation of the king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth Sigismund III in his negotiations with the Emperor Ferdinand II Habsburg²⁶. In 1619, James I's son-in-law, the Elector Palatine of Rhine Frederick V, contested Ferdinand II's title of the King of Bohemia. After having lost the Battle of White Mountain (1620), he was forced to flee Prague to Netherlands. At the same time, Frederick V lost control over Palatinate, which was occupied by Spanish forces, recruited by the Emperor. Thus, Sir Thomas Roe was expected to well serve to both the Habsburgs and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by preventing from possible conflict between the Ottomans and any of them, to allow for negotiations on returning Palatinate to Frederick V.

On the contrary, the *ad hoc* ambassador of the Transylvanian prince Bethlen Gábor²⁷ together with the representative of the mentioned Elector Palatine and "alternative" King of Bohemia Frederick V, Count Mathias von Thurn, hoped that Prince Zbaraski would fail his mission. Both Bethlen Gábor and Frederick V were interested in resuming war with the Emperor Ferdinand II Habsburg in the next year. To fulfill this plan, they needed, first, to secure support of the sultan and to gain military help by efforts of the pasha of Buda²⁸. Second, they strived to ensure neutrality on the part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth believing that Ottoman threat would best discourage the Polish king from helping the Habsburg Emperor. Another foe of the prospective peace between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire was Dutch resident Cornelius Haga²⁹, who assisted Count von Thurn and the Transylvanian ambassador³⁰. In the course of the Eighty Years' War, when the Netherlands hoped to finally get their independence from the Habsburgs fully recognised, they inevitably supported any anti-Habsburg initiative. At the same time, according to von Thurn, his most evident opponent, was French resident Count Philippe de Cesy «so devoted to the [Emperor] Ferdinand that he had forgotten all politeness and Christian love»³¹. Indeed, as of 1622, France, which had suffered from the Huguenot uprisings, could have no positive attitudes to the Protestant countries. Finally, two weeks after Prince Zbaraski solemnly entered Constantinople, there arrived Muscovite embassy of Ivan Kondyrev and Timofej Bormonosov. Prince Zbaraski, the English resident Sir Thomas Roe, and the French resident Philippe de Cesy were all convinced that the Muscovite embassy aimed at ruining Polish-Ottoman negotiations and at concluding an offensive alliance with the Ottoman Empire to jointly attack Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. These contemporary assessments does not match with later scholarly opinions. In particular, ambassadorial instructions to Kondyrev and Bormonosov do not reflect any intention of the tsar to break the Truce of Deulino (1618) and to resume war with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. To this one should add a reasonably modest range of gifts brought by the Muscovite embassy³².

25 Roe, *Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*, 3.

26 Anna Kalinowska, "Rzeczpospolita w działalności ambasadora angielskiego w Konstantynopolu sir Thomasa Roe", in *Polska wobec wielkich konfliktów w Europie nowożytnej. Z dziejów dyplomacji i stosunków międzynarodowych*, ed. Ryszard Skowron, (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2009), 310-12.

27 The name of this ambassador is not directly mentioned in the available sources, but it is supposed that it was the mission of Mihály Tholdalagi. Bíró Vencel, *Erdély követei a portán* (Cluj-Kolozsvár: Minerva, 1921), 121. For this reference, I am indebted to Gábor Kármán.

28 Otakar Odložilík, "Ze zápasů pobělohorské emigrace", *Časopis Matice moravské*, 56 (1932): 51-2.

29 On Cornelius Haga's mission: Alexander H. de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: a History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations, 1610–1630* (Leiden/Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1978), 83-109.

30 Otakar Odložilík, ed., *Z korespondence pobělohorské emigrace z let 1621–1624* (Praze: Nákladem Královské české společnosti nauk, 1933), 82-3, 87-8.

31 Odložilík, *Z korespondence*, 87.

32 Ostapchuk, *The Ottoman Black Sea Frontier*, 37-8.

Yet, Kondyrev and Bormonosov cannot be considered indifferent to the proceedings of the Zbaraski's embassy. They arrived to Constantinople accompanying former Ottoman ambassador to Muscovy Foma Kantakuzin (1621)³³. Foma Kantakuzin belonged to the most influential Greek families in Constantinople, he was son-in-law of the Wallachian hospodar Radu Mihnea, and close associate of the Patriarch of Constantinople Cyrill Lukaris. The choice of his candidacy as an ambassador to Muscovy revealed contextual alliance between various networks of power and Ottoman political elites striving to weaken Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. On the eve of the siege of Khotyn in 1621, Kantakuzin was supposed to persuade the tsar to support the Ottoman offensive and step against the Commonwealth. However, he arrived to Moscow late, when the Ottoman Empire and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had already stopped confrontation and achieved peace agreement. Now, Kantakuzin, who was evidently hostile to the idea of peace between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire, was the chief intermediary for Kondyrev and Bormonosov in Constantinople. One of the important goals of Kondyrev and Bormonosov was to file a complaint on the raids by the border community near Azov subordinated to the Ottomans³⁴. On their shift, the Ottomans used to condemn the raids of the Don Cossacks subordinated to the Muscovy. In their attacks of Black Sea coastal towns, the Don Cossacks were occasionally strengthened by the Ukrainian Cossacks formally subordinated to the king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. So the tsar regularly accused the king that he intentionally spoils tsar's relations with the Crimean khan by encouraging Ukrainian Cossacks' migration to Don³⁵. In sum, the Muscovite ambassadors were interested to persuade the Ottomans to help them cut the flow of Ukrainian Cossacks to Don, and Prince Zbaraski's embassy was a good occasion to promote this interest.

In sum, Prince Zbaraski inevitably had to conduct his mission within a complicated network of interests, when some part of foreign diplomats had their own reasons to support his diplomatic aspirations and some other strongly opposed the very idea of peace between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire.

NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR RESULTS

The embassy of Prince Zbaraski is documented in detail in two major sources. The first one is the narrative ambassadorial report³⁶, the second one is the epic poem *Przeważna legacja*³⁷ ("The Decisive Embassy") composed by the ambassadorial secretary Samuel Twardowski and first published in 1633, 10 years after the embassy took place. To this one should add two letters written by the ambassador when in Constantinople, both the letters are addressed to his brother, castellan of Cracow, Prince Jerzy Zbaraski³⁸. All these sources present the negotiations between the ambassador and the Ottoman dignitaries as principally bilateral.

The ambassadorial report stresses how difficult it was to obtain any peace from the Ottomans due to personal hostility of the grand vizier Gürgü Hadım Mehmed pasha to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The major reason for this hostility was named vizier's patronage over the Moldavian

33 On Foma Kantakuzin's mission to Moscow see Boris Floria, "Foma Kantakuzin i jego rol' v razvitii russko-osmanskikh otnoshenij v 20-30 gg. XVII v.", *Rossija i pravoslavnyi Vostok*, voll. 2-3 (Moscow, 2004), 250-52. Mariia Telegina, *Ceremonial Representation in Cross-Confessional Diplomacy: the Ottoman Embassy of a Christian Ambassador to Moscow in 1621* (MA thesis, Bupapest: CEU, 2017), 56-69.

34 Floria, "Foma Kantakuzin", 253.

35 Andrei Papkov, *Porubezhie Rosijskogo tsarstva i ukrainskich zemel' Rechi Pospolitoj (konets XVI-pervaja polovina XVII veka)* (Belgorod: Konstanta, 2004), 137.

36 Leon Rogalski, ed., "Poselstwo Krzystofa księcia Zbaraskiego do Turcji w roku 1622", *Dziennik Wileński, Historia i Literatura*, vol. 2 (1827): 3-27, 101-25, 237-73, 339-71.

37 Roman Krzywy, ed., *Samuel Twardowski, Przeważna legacja Krzystofa Zbaraskiego od Zygmunta III do Sołtana Mustafy* (Warszawa: IBL, 2000).

38 Anna Filipczak-Kocur, ed. *Korespondencja Krzystofa księcia Zbaraskiego koniuszego koronnego 1612-1627* (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2015), 117-23.

voivode Stefan Tomşa and the beylerbey of Silistra Khan Temir (Kantemyr)³⁹, whom Zbaraski strived to dismiss. From the very beginning, the vizier is reported to show his unfavorable attitude towards the ambassador by postponing his solemn entrance into the city, and by demanding that merchants, who arrived together with the ambassadorial escort, paid customs from the money they brought with them⁴⁰. After the initial conflicts seemed to be resolved and the ambassador entered the city, Zbaraski insisted on complaining for unfriendly behavior of Stefan Tomşa and Kantemyr. Defending his proteges, the vizier put forward counterargument that the real challenge for the peaceful relations between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire were Ukrainian Cossack naval raids to the Ottoman territories⁴¹. This sharp exchange of opinions grew into a real quarrel so that the prince demonstratively left the meeting exclaiming «the ambassadors of the king, my lord, are not to meet with such a reception, and I will not stay at such an audience»⁴².

The French resident Count Philippe de Cesy believed that getting into a sharp conflict with the grand vizier Prince Zbaraski demonstrated that he was strongly determined to defend the interests of his monarch⁴³. On his shift, English resident Sir Thomas Roe, who struggled to reconcile the parties, claimed that the demarche of the prince revealed his ignorance of the vizier's shadow play. According to Roe, the vizier consciously provoked conflict aiming at postponing negotiations until arrival of the beylerbey of Kanije, Mehmed Deák⁴⁴, who was supposed to deliver fresh news about political situation in both the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Transylvania⁴⁵. Indeed, Prince Zbaraski knew that the vizier was waiting for Deák Mehmed pasha as well as about the close connections of the latter with the Transylvanian prince claiming Hungarian crown, Bethlen Gábor⁴⁶. Yet, in his report he does not demonstrate any understanding of the impact of Transylvanian diplomacy on the proceedings of his embassy.

The prince claimed that in the conflict with the vizier, he took the most active stand contacting a number of Ottoman high dignitaries including former grand viziers Kara Davud pasha (1622) and Damat Halil pasha (1616–1619), grand mufti, janissary agha, kethüde agha, kızlar agha, and the head of the imperial chancery with rich presents – gold, sable furs and clocks. Zbaraski reported that this strategy let him leverage over the grand vizier, as the latter was publicly accused of groundless ruining negotiations with the prince at the Imperial Council. So the vizier agreed to reconcile with the prince and to arrange the latter's reception in the imperial palace⁴⁷. Yet he insisted on the ambassador's announcing the list of gifts intended for the sultan and on paying tribute of 300'000 thalers supposedly promised by the Polish-Lithuanian commissaries, who concluded the preliminary peace near Khotyn. On his shift, Prince Zbaraski claimed to follow his ambassadorial instruction: he

39 Balázs Sudár, "Iskender and Gábor Bethlen: The Pasha and the Prince", in *Europe and the Ottoman World: Exchanges and Conflicts (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Radu G. Păun (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 2013), 153.

40 Firstly, the Ottomans encouraged the import of coins into the Ottoman Empire and usually exempted European merchants from related customs. Secondly, the exemption of Polish-Lithuanian merchants from custom duties on imported money (in particular, silver coins) was recorded in the 'ahdname of 1598, and the subsequent 'ahdnames of 1607 and 1619 manifested that no new customs should be imposed on these merchants. Sevket Pamuk, *Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 74; Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 186, 322, 342, 358.

41 On the Cossack naval raids to the Ottoman territories see Victor Ostapchuk, "The Human Landscape of the Ottoman Black Sea in the Face of the Cossack Naval Raids", *Oriente Moderno*, 81/1 (2001): 23-95.

42 Rogalski, "Poselstwo Krzysztofa księcia Zbaraskiego", 114-15.

43 Turgenev, *Historica Russiae monumenta*, 422-23.

44 Deák Mehmed pasha was of Hungarian origin, a son of a Transylvanian pretender Pál Márkházi, who converted to Islam. Sándor Papp „From a Transylvanian Principality to an Ottoman Sanjak: The Life of Pál Márkházi, a Hungarian Renegade”, *Chronica*, 4 (2004), 57-67.

45 Roe, *Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*, 109, 115.

46 Rogalski, "Poselstwo Krzysztofa księcia Zbaraskiego", 109. On the connections between Mehmed Deák and Bethlen Gabor: Balázs Sudár, "Iskender and Gábor Bethlen", 167-68.

47 Sudár, "Iskender and Gábor Bethlen", 116-18.

demonstratively looked surprised to hear such a request. He then claimed that «the most precious gift» of his monarch was his friendship and suggested to deliver some gifts for the sultan in his own name to meet the following response: «if [the ambassador] is the king, then we will accept his gifts, but we will not accept [gifts] from the king's servant»⁴⁸. Prince Zbaraski claimed that although he finally agreed to deliver gifts in the name of his king, he, however, negotiated that they would not be displayed publicly but, brought into the palace discreetly, at night. The sultan allegedly was to send reciprocal gifts to the king accompanied with a letter justifying the conduct of the prince⁴⁹. This optimistic account is not supported in the report of Sir Thomas Roe, who argues that to finally gain the reception in the imperial palace of Topkapı, the prince had to renounce his demand of dismissing Stefan Tomşa and Kantemyr and to offer additional gifts to the grand vizier in the amount of 60'000 thalers. The version of the English resident can be reinforced with the observation that the prince would no further mention dismissal of these governors in his report. In any case, the official reception in the imperial palace did not help to break a stalemate, and several subsequent vizier's audiences brought no fruits. However, Sir Thomas Roe did not doubt that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire would conclude lasting peace. In his judgement, none of the parties disposed with sufficient resources to resume war. The real question, in his opinion, was when exactly this would happen and under what conditions. Roe argued that actual negotiations would start no sooner than the next messenger from the Transylvanian prince Bethlen Gábor would reach Constantinople. Reportedly, Bethlen Gábor strived to have a peace guarantee from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by being mentioned in the prospective 'ahdname. Yet, the Ottomans intended to name him the vassal of the sultan, and this would be a powerful blow to the autonomy of Bethlen Gábor's policy, because nobody would "treat with him in that condition"⁵⁰.

The importance of Transylvanian stand for the negotiations between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire can be further confirmed with the observation that actual negotiations with the vizier resumed no sooner than Prince Zbaraski requested the mediation of the mentioned beylerbey of the Kanije eyalet Mehmed Deák, who finally reached Constantinople in the company of a Transylvanian messenger. On this occasion, Count Mathias von Thurn was satisfied to remark that Mehmed Deák disposes with sufficient «authority, understanding and desire» to achieve a positive outcome. Count von Thurn definitely meant that Mehmed Deák would manage to defend interests of his patron Friedrich of Rhein and the latter's associate Bethlen Gábor⁵¹.

Mehmed Deák managed to quickly "persuade" the grand vizier that Prince Zbaraski is a credible ambassador, who wishes nothing but peace. So the next meeting of the prince and the grand vizier proceeded with the double mediation of Mehmed Deák and of Sir Thomas Roe. The prince reported about this new round of negotiations in a very sketchy manner, presenting them as a formal dispute, whether both the parties intend for peace⁵². However, due to the mediation of Roe, one can inquire about the details of this dispute. According to the English resident, the negotiations focused on three major issues. First, both the parties agreed to put an end to the raids of both the Ukrainian Cossacks and the Crimean Tatars. Second, Prince Zbaraski rejected the proposal to maintain a royal resident in Constantinople claiming that he had no authority to decide about such an important issue. Third, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth would confirm its peaceful attitude to Transylvania by not helping the Habsburg Emperor. Yet, the prince reportedly agreed to meet this request only if in the 'ahdname it would be formulated in a "traditional manner", namely that the king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth should «be a friend to the friends and an enemy to the enemies» of the sultan⁵³. The latter agreement was also no secret to Count von Thurn, who expected that the Ottoman Empire

48 Sudár, "Iskender and Gábor Bethlen", 118-19.

49 Sudár, "Iskender and Gábor Bethlen", 238-39.

50 Roe, *Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*, 115-16.

51 Odložilík, *Z korespondence*, 106.

52 Rogalski, "Poselstwo Krzystofa księcia Zbaraskiego", 255-57.

53 Roe, *Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*, 120-21.

would secure «the confederate lands» in its new treaty with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth so that the Polish king will not be able to help the Emperor with «people, money, amunition and any other way»⁵⁴.

Thus, as of January 1623, the grand vizier together with his ally Mehmed Deák managed to impose a new agenda on negotiations with the Prince Zbaraski. Now the focus of peace talks changed from securing loyalty of the Principality of Moldavia to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the relations of the latter with the Principality of Transylvania, which impacted the perspectives of the latter for participation in the Thirty Years' War. This agenda was also preserved in the negotiations with the new grand vizier Mere Hussein pasha (1622, 1623) appointed in the beginning of February, 1623. The prince reported that at the very first audience Mere Hussein pasha «burst into tears» regretting previous vizier's ill conduct with Zbaraski, and rendered the ambassador all the due honors. Zbaraski seems ignorant that although Mere Hussein pasha belonged to the rival power group within the Ottoman political elites, he, like his predecessor, belonged to the patrons of Bethlen Gábor⁵⁵. So Prince Zbaraski was happy about vizier's promise to quickly finish the negotiations and let him back home⁵⁶.

The ambassador gained further scope for his optimism as he was finally allowed to ransom Polish captives. In his poem dedicated to the prince's embassy, Samuel Twardowski claimed that to be able to ransom as many captives as possible Zbaraski gave out all the money he disposed with and even sold out his silver cutlery⁵⁷. It is difficult to find out whether the prince actually had to sell everything to redeem the captives or Twardowski's remark was a part of his artictic conception. However, one cannot but acknowledge that after four months in the Ottoman capital, when the prince needed to feed his numerous escort and to buy favorable attitude of various Ottoman dignitaries, he spent a fortune. Sir Thomas Roe reported that he lended the prince a considerable amount of money so that he could eventually go back home⁵⁸. From this perspective it is understandable that Zbaraski was strongly motivated to finish negotiations as soon as possible.

Indeed, Zbaraski's peace talks with the new vizier proceeded much faster than with the previous one. Now, the ambassador reported about three negotiation topics. The first still were the mutually destructive raids of the Ukrainian Cossacks and the Crimean Tatars, whom both the parties promised to control. This was the first time when the prince also mentioned the Don Cossacks as the negotiation subject. Yet he believed he negotiated that his king would not be responsible for Ukrainian Cossacks who join the campaigns of Don Cossacks. Zbaraski also chose to content himself with the vizier's promise that the Moldavian voivode and beylerbey of Silistra would be ordered to observe the peace with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and not to insist on their immediate dismissal. Finally, the vizier argued that the traditional formula «to be friend to the friends and an enemy to the enemies of the sultan» meant that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth should not assist the enemies of the Ottoman tributaries, in particular Bethlen Gábor. The prince shot back with an argument that it would be highly inappropriate to mention a minor ruler such as a Transylvanian voivode in the treaty between such "great" monarchs as the king and the sultan. Zbaraski claimed that he managed to agree on a neutral wording on this subject, namely that if the sultan informs the king of the war on his behalf, then the king will not help his enemy⁵⁹.

The ambassador was happy when the 'ahdname was finally issued and did not observe one of the prescriptions of his instruction, namely not to accept the treaty until he gets a copy of its text for the final check up⁶⁰. He found a skillful translator who was able to read the text of the treaty no

54 Odložilik, *Z korespondence*, 112-13.

55 Odložilik, *Z korespondence*, 114.

56 Rogalski, "Poselstwo Krzysztofa księcia Zbaraskiego", 541-42.

57 Krzywy, *Samuel Twardowski, Przeważna legacja Krzysztofa Zbaraskiego*, 217-18.

58 Roe, *Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*, 129.

59 Rogalski, "Poselstwo Krzysztofa księcia Zbaraskiego", 349-53, 355.

60 BK PAN, rkps 326, 547

sooner than he crossed Danube to find out that although in general the document was modelled upon the 'ahdname of 1619 (as it was outlined in his diplomatic instruction) yet it included several new conditions contrary to the ones he believed he negotiated⁶¹. Firstly, the king's obligation to control the Ukrainian Cossacks was specified by the requirement to prevent their joint campaigns with the Don Cossacks:

As from the side of the Polish king, his governors, commanders, Cossack brigands, dependents, and other mischief-makers no meddling or interference should touch my well-protected dominions, my border fortresses, my towns and other boroughs, villages, and lands belonging to my well-guarded dominions, the name of the Cossacks should disappear from the Black Sea, and if any damage is done by the Cossack brigands, one should not find a [false] excuse saying "the Cossacks of Muscovy have done it"; and as one should not permit the Polish Cossacks to form companionship and bring mutual aid to the Cossacks of Muscovy, [but] they should be firmly restrained and those who trespass the prohibition should be punished [...]⁶².

This specifications looks as the result of the diplomatic efforts of the Muscovite ambassadors Kondyrev and Bormonosov with the help of their promoter Foma Kantakuzin.

Secondly, contrary to the agreements, the 'ahdname included the principality of Transylvania as the area of effect of the newly concluded peace treaty. What is more, it was specified that the king was expected not just to keep the peace with Transylvania, but not to provide any assistance to the enemies of the Transylvanian prince. This condition directly forbade Sigismund III from assisting the Emperor Ferdinand II in the future conflict with Bethlen Gábor:

As particularly the present ruler of Transylvania, the pride of the great Christian princes Gábor Bethlen (may his latter moments end with good!), is a loyal and faithful servant of my felicitous threshold, and Transylvania belongs to my domain through the inheritance and transfer from my magnificent grandfathers, [royal relations] with the aforementioned should also be based on sincere amity; and if his [i.e. Bethlen's] enemy appears, no help should be given to his enemy from the Polish side, either secretly and openly⁶³.

This condition seems to be the fruit of Bethlen Gábor's inclusion into patronage networks within the Ottoman political elites.

To sum up, the "decisive" embassy of Prince Krzysztof Zbaraski was planned as a diplomatic effort that would allow the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to capitalise on successful withstanding the Ottoman attack in 1621. Ambassadorial instructions set out a number of ambitious tasks for the prince to fulfill, Ottoman recognition of royal patronage over the Principality of Moldavia being one of the key expectations. Yet, the Ottomans in the person of both the grand viziers – Gürgü Hadım Mehmed pasha and Mere Husseyin pasha – followed contrastingly different agenda, which they managed to bring in the limelight of negotiations. In the center of this agenda, promoted by Transylvanian envoys, the ambassador of the "alternative" King of Bohemia Frederick V, Count Mathias von Thurn, and indirectly by the Dutch ambassador Cornelius Haga, was the place of the Principality of Transylvania in the prospective 'ahdname for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Inclusion of Transylvania into this 'ahdname was reported to be among decisive factors for Bethlen Gábor who intended to resume war with the Emperor Ferdinand II Habsburg after the Peace of Nikolsburg (1621).

As a result, in contrast to the existing historiographical consensus that the Ottoman Empire avoided direct participation in the events of the Thirty Years' War⁶⁴, such a strategy seems to become relevant only after its resuming war with the Safavid Persia in fall 1623. At the beginning of 1623, the Ottomans

61 Rogalski, "Poselstwo Krzysztofa księcia Zbaraskiego", 354-55.

62 Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 397.

63 Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 398.

64 Maria Baramova, "Non-Splendid Isolation: the Ottoman Empire and the Thirty Years' War", in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Thirty Years' War*, eds. Olaf Asbach and Peter Schröder (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 116-17.

seriously considered taking advantage of the predicament of the Habsburg Emperor. At the end of January 1623, Sir Thomas Roe reported that he was being pressured by the vizier to write to his king with a proposal to support both the Bethlen Gábor and Frederick V. In February 1623, the Principality of Transylvania was included as the area of effect of the new 'ahdname for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In April 1623, Count von Thurn, who had been staying in Constantinople for already about 8 months, was finally officially welcome to the imperial palace⁶⁵. One could assume that von Thurn's official reception was a final marker of the Ottoman decision to support Bethlen Gábor's ambitions in Hungary. In July, this decision was reinforced with the order to the Ottoman serdar, the beylerbey of Bosnia Ibrahim pasha to join Bethlen Gábor in his offensive. Thus, willingly or not, the "decisive embassy" of Prince Zbaraski seems to contribute to this course of events.

65 Alexander Schunka, "Böhmen am Bosphorus: Migrationserfahrung und Diplomatie am Beispiel des Grafen Heinrich Matthias von Thurn", in *Migrationserfahrungen–Migrationsstrukturen*, eds. Eckart Olshausen et al. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 82-3.

ABBREVIATIONS

BK PAN: Biblioteka Kórnicka PAN.

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