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THE TREATIES OF POŽAREVAC AND THEIR IMPACT ON EUROPE

Abstract: This article focuses on the three treaties which were signed in 1718 in Požarevac between Vienna, Constantinople and Venice. The reason for this is the large and long impact which can be observed until the present day, not only regarding these three powers or the Balkans, but the whole Europe. Although the political, juridical, economic and social consequences of these treaties ended mostly at the end of the First World War, the communication infrastructure, the knowledge culture and the mental effects have kept their actuality since the 18th century until today.

Keywords: war, treaty, impact, Europe, Habsburg Monarchy, Ottoman Empire, Venice, Balkans.

This paper is devoted to a subject that appears only occasionally in European history and therefore seems to have no major implications. On closer inspection, however, this impression is erroneous: the Treaty of Požarevac, signed in 1718, is an extremely important step for Europe, both in terms of the transformation of the international power structure and the creation of certain infrastructures and cultural relations with the Ottoman Empire. The first step is to address the role of the theme in various narratives. The next step is to look at the substance of the three legal instruments that make up the Treaties and, finally, to look at the wide range of effects - first on the contracting parties themselves, then on the local population within the Danube and Balkan regions and finally on the rest of Europe.

Požarevac inevitably appears in the narrative of the three concerned contracting parties, the Habsburg Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice, but without assigning this fact the key function that justifies its historical dimension. Požarevac is anchored in the narratives of the Southeast European nations, where a verifiable echo has occurred, namely in Serbia¹, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, but also in Greece.

As the border changes of 1718 regarding the area between the rivers Danube, Tisa, Maroš and the border mountains to Transylvania became sustainable, Požarevac also played a role in the history of today's regions in the mentioned catchment area – be it the Romanian

¹ For the Serbians see Györe 2014: 280.



Fig. 1. Commemorative plate in Požarevac
(photo: Harald Heppner)

Banat or the Serbian Vojvodina. While Požarevac is occasionally mentioned in the master narratives on the eastern Mediterranean, its provisions having had a noticeable influence on geopolitics and trade in the 18th and 19th centuries, there is no trace to be found in the stories about the territories without a neighbourhood relation to the central and lower Danube and Balkan regions. Even works on Europe's history do not deal with the subject, although the agreements of that time had noticeable consequences for the development of the continent.²

The following factors belong to the immediate prehistory of the peace agreement in Požarevac: The Turkish attack on Vienna in 1683 proved to be a “shot to the rear”. The hope of the Ottomans to conquer the imperial royal seat had been reversed in the following years, when the majority of the Ottoman Hungary as well as the vassal Transylvania of the Sultan came under the Habsburg rule after years of war on land and water. At the same time, Venice had seized the Peloponnese, but access to Attica with Athens remained an episode. However, the loss of the Peloponnese, documented in the Peace Treaty of Sremski Karlovci in 1699³, had caused the High Gate (Ottoman Government) to strike again in 1715 and drive the Venetians out of the Peloponnese. As the Viennese court had been one of the allies of Venice within the Holy League during the before-mentioned war, Emperor Charles VI entered the

² Duchardt 2002: 331; Peters 2011: 39–52.

³ Angeli 1876: 293–314.

war in 1716 and created the conditions by means of three military successes at Petrovaradin on the Danube (1716), at Timoșoara in the heart of the Banat (1716), which had remained Ottoman until then, and at Belgrade (1717) that the High Gate had to give in and sent its negotiators to Požarevac.⁴

Požarevac lacked any infrastructure for a large collection of conference topics in 1718. At the time of the negotiations (May to the end of July), the settlement was located in the north of the Habsburg Monarchy's occupation area, which was named, after the treaty, Kingdom of Serbia. As a result, it was necessary to establish a tent city with all the necessary agendas of supply and security. The delegations were made up of diplomats and their entourage, i.e. secretaries, translators and couriers, as well as a large number of support staff. A special feature was that a representative of Great Britain (Robert Sutton) and a representative of the Dutch general states (Jacob Graf Colyer) were invited to the peace negotiations in order to coordinate the mutual demands of the emperor and sultan in such a way that a conclusion to the negotiations could be reached at eye level.⁵

The original documents were written in Arabic script in Turkish for Sultan Ahmed III, while the copies with Latin translation were respectively sent to Vienna and Venice to be ratified. It is characteristic of the relationship between Charles VI and Prince Eugene of Savoy that the emperor only signed after the supreme commander and president of the Court War Council had also submitted his placet; he had exerted a decisive influence on the instructions and the course of the negotiations.⁶



Fig. 2. Statue of Eugene of Savoy in Budapest
(photo: Harald Heppner)

⁴ Matuska 1891: 465–483.

⁵ Samardžić 2011: 9–38; Petritsch 2018: 24–37.

⁶ Matuska 1891: 35–438.

In the case of the Peace Treaty of Požarevac there are not one but two peace treaties and one trade and shipping treaty. The most important of the two peace treaties is the one between Vienna and Constantinople, but there was also an agreement between Constantinople and Venice. In view of the Spanish War of Succession, which did not end until 1714, the interest of Emperor Charles VI in having to go to war again was not great. Had Prince Eugene not pleaded to exploit the favourable situation, he would not have won, forcing the Ottoman government to engage in peace negotiations in 1718.

The Habsburg-Ottoman peace treaty, which was signed in Požarevac on 21 July 1718 after weeks of negotiations, contains 20 paragraphs whose content and structure are based on the treaty concluded in Sremski Karlovci in 1699.⁷ Seven paragraphs concern border demarcations on the territory of today's Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia. This is followed by a number of provisions which regulate the relations between the two states and cultural systems and have a perspective character (e.g. protection of subjects, legally binding character). The emphasis lies on Paragraph 13 with the provision that imperial subjects are allowed to trade freely on land and water within the Ottoman Sovereign Base Area and to set up consulates or agents to protect them. The Habsburg chief negotiators, the general and diplomat Hugo Graf Virmond and the imperial ambassador in Constantinople, Ludwig von Talman, were met by the Defterdare (treasurer) Ibrahim Ağa and Mehmed Ağa on the Ottoman side. The period of validity was considered to be 25 years with the prospect of further extension. In fact, the state of peace lasted only 19 years, since in 1737 *Monarchia austriaca* again entered the war against the Turks at Russia's side and two years later had to accept a peace of loss, the peace of Belgrade.

The Ottoman-Venetian peace treaty consists of 26 paragraphs.⁸ The first six paragraphs contain territorial changes concerning the Eastern Adriatic border and the Ionian Islands, while the other paragraphs are a mix of provisions concerning mutual political relations and legal, economic, denominational and human aspects. The before-mentioned representatives of England and the General States were also involved in these negotiations. Several provisions refer to identical rules from the Habsburg-Ottoman Treaty, which shows to which dependency the *Serenissima* of the "Frank Nation" was already exposed during those times. The second treaty between Vienna and Constantinople was signed only one week after the first, on 28 July 1718. While the two mediators from Western Europe took part in the first, the second agreement was based only on agreements between representatives of the Emperor and the Sultan, who were of second rank (Seifullah Effendi, Anselm v. Fleischmann). This agreement also includes 20 paragraphs covering the following topics: The bilateral trade and traffic law (see paragraph 13 Peace Treaty) on water (Danube, Black Sea, Mediterranean) and on land (Balkans, Habsburg territories); the tax concession for imperial merchants according to the model of the so-called "Capitulations", which the Grand Lords had long since completed with France, England, the Netherlands and Sweden; the determination of manners, especially at sea (greeting rights, assistance in emergencies, etc.); the clarification of procedures in the event of conflict resolution (negotiation instead of arbitrary acts); the inclusion of Persian merchants with

⁷ Elibol/Küçükkalay 2011: 159–178.

⁸ Ivetic 2011: 63–72.

the simultaneous exclusion of Jewish merchants. A direct consequence of the treaty was the elevation of the Adriatic ports of Trieste and Rijeka to free ports in 1719 by Emperor Charles VI, as well as other organisational measures derived from it.⁹



Fig. 3. Grave of Aleksandar Bonneval in Istanbul
(photo: Inanc Atilgan)

⁹ Andreozzi 2017: 35–51.

Požarevac became a key agreement for the Habsburg Monarchy for the growing economic presence on land and water within the Ottoman Empire and its successor states until 1918.¹⁰ The traffic network to the southeast, which began in the 18th century and was technically expanded in the course of the 19th century, has its roots in the Treaty of Požarevac: The Danube steam navigation from Vienna to the Danube delta from 1829; the Lloyd Austriaco from Trieste to Constantinople, to the Black Sea and to the Middle East from 1836, the South Railway from Vienna to Trieste from 1857 and the railway transit route from London/Paris via Vienna and Budapest to Constantinople (Orient Express) from the 1880s. The expansion of consular offices on the Mediterranean coasts and within the Balkan regions, which was contractually agreed in 1718, led to a dense network of Austro-Hungarian offices until the outbreak of the First World War, which served not only to operationalise trade but also to gather information. The increasing demand for specialists trained in Oriental languages after 1718 led to the foundation of the Oriental Academy in Vienna in 1754, from which not only a wealth of diplomatic-consular graduates emerged until 1918, but also the first initiatives for scientific study of the Islamic Orient (e.g. Josef von Hammer-Purgstall). While Oriental Studies were further developed from the middle of the 19th century onwards by the universities and the Imperial Academy of Sciences founded in 1847, the diplomatic cadre forge still exists today. Since the 1970s, under the title “Diplomatic Academy”, it has been one of the oldest such institutions in the world.¹¹

The military defeat of the Turks, which led to Požarevac, increased the pressure to reform the Ottoman army. After his quarrel with Eugene of Savoy, Count Alexandre de Bonneval, a Frenchman, changed sides, converted to Islam and reformed the Ottoman artillery, the effectiveness of which was already felt in the next war (1737-1739). However, the efforts for further reforms cost Ahmed III his throne in 1730.¹²

As trade relations intensified during the course of the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire became more and more integrated not only into Western markets but also into Central European markets. The reception of the world of the “Turks” in the Occident, which began in the 17th century but continued in the 18th century, had a strong influence on the culture of clothing, theatre and music as well as on book and card printing. This led to an image change: the image of an “archenemy of Christendom” had dominated for centuries, but now it changed into a foil of curiosity, but also of longings around the Islamic Orient.¹³

Venice lost the Peloponnese, which had been annexed in the 1680s, but was able to retain the Ionian Islands and gain some positions in the area of Herzegovina and Albania, so that the territory of the Mark’s Republic along the Eastern Adriatic became an almost closed border from Istria to Corfu.¹⁴ Although the wording of the Treaty of Požarevac sought to maintain the eye level of the negotiating partners, it is undeniable in real political terms that from 1718 onwards Venice finally no longer played a role as an effective factor in international relations and retreated to being a regional power. The rise of the Habsburg Empire to the status of a maritime trading power, which, according to the physical principle

¹⁰ Several articles in Habsburg-Lothringen/Heppner 2018.

¹¹ Rathkolb 2004: 9–28.

¹² https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Alexandre_de_Bonneval (Accessed on 17 June 2019).

¹³ Several articles in Zimmermann/Wolf 2017.

¹⁴ Mayhew 2008: 81.

of communicating vessels, was associated with Venice's descent, is underlined by the fact that the Habsburgs took in 1797 and then again in 1815 (Congress of Vienna) the terrain along the eastern Adriatic Sea making it the province of Dalmatia, which remained in existence until 1918. This territorial expansion is a strategically important prerequisite both for Austrian-Montenegrin relations and for the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Fig. 4. Greek-Orthodox Church in Trieste
(photo: Harald Heppner)

The establishment of the “Kingdom of Serbia” and the “Imperial Wallachia” (Oltenia) gave the affected Serbs and Romanians the opportunity to gain experience with a previously foreign absolutist system based on a mix of tradition and innovation.¹⁵ Even if these

¹⁵ Dorđević 2018: 9; Papacostea 1998: 23–31.

interferences lasted only for a short time (until 1739), they still reinforced the idea among the locals that “liberation from the Turks” could become an option for their future. The immigration of predominantly Orthodox merchant families from the Balkan regions to Hungary, Transylvania, Trieste and Vienna increased distinctively after the agreements of 1718, as they took advantage of the protective provisions in the trade treaty to assume a leading role in commerce with Central Europe (see Fig. 6). The sales opportunities for natural produce (sheep’s wool, cotton, dyes, olives, leather, etc.) from the southern Balkan regions and Western Anatolia not only ensured the economic prosperity of these traders and forwarders, but also the transfer of ways of thinking and living from the Occident. Without the Western economically anchored diaspora of the Greeks, Aromunians, Armenians and to some extent Bulgarians, the insight that they wanted to get out of the Ottoman embrace would not have spread so quickly in the Balkans. Such visions and concepts began to condense from the late 18th century onwards and contributed to the secession in the 19th century.¹⁶

The rise of the Habsburg Empire to a wholesale and maritime trading power had a major impact on the entire European structure: This process tended to contribute to the fact that Vienna’s attention to the south-east (Balkans), which extended beyond its own national borders, became more and more important, as a result of which the ties to and within the German Empire inevitably diminished. The conflicts with Prussia from 1740 and with France from 1792 led to the decree of the Austrian Empire in 1804 and to the dissolution of the German Empire in 1806. This is a tendential shift of weight towards the southeast that continued until the early 20th century. If the so-called “Eastern Question” is understood to mean not only the problems surrounding the “sick man on the Bosphorus” and their consequences for the European power structure, but also the question surrounding the possibility of occidentalising the Balkan region, then Požarevac is undoubtedly one of its building blocks: Vienna’s strategy was not to change the system of the Ottoman Empire, but to adapt it to the extent necessary to enable an “eastward expansion” of Western standards. In a figurative sense, “Požarevac” can thus also be interpreted as an early measure of Europeanisation, in which not only concrete imperial but also general occidental patterns of thought and organisation were to be applied. Elements of such striving were the principle of the binding nature of international agreements as well as the meaningfulness of economic prosperity and fairness towards other cultural systems. The Austrian monarchy’s deepened and accelerated attention to the Balkans from 1718 onwards, including the Black Sea and the Levant, never attained weight of the first order for world trade, but it did attain weight concerning Russia’s behaviour: St. Petersburg’s line compared to Constantinople cannot be sufficiently explained from geopolitical, economic and denominational points of view without the Habsburg factor.¹⁷ As is well known, the Russian-Austrian relationship until the First World War was based not only, but also on the growing opposition in the Balkans. This contrast only intensified in the course of the 19th century, but has its roots in the 18th century. Tsarina Catherine II achieved this breakthrough to the south with the peace treaty of Küçük Kaijnardı (1774), whose strategic symbolism corresponds to the Habsburg treaty of 1718. In paragraph 20 of the Habsburg-Ottoman Peace Treaty there is talk of the Kingdom of Poland, which is mentioned alongside Venice as an ally of the Emperor,

¹⁶ For instance Do Paço 2015: 263–268; Katsiardi-Hering 2018: vol. 1, 37–59.

¹⁷ Lastly Heppner 2018: 373–379.

possibly in order to have an intimidating effect on Muslim negotiators. Nevertheless, Poland was unable to profit from the treaty. Quite the opposite: Oriental trade in the Danube region became a competitor to that which ran westwards and northwards via Lviv, and the steady shift of weight in the European Mighty Landscape in 1718 contributed to the fact that two generations later the kingdom was at disposition.

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МИРОВНИ СПОРАЗУМИ У ПОЖАРЕВЦУ И ЊИХОВ УТИЦАЈ НА ЕВРОПУ

Резиме

Резултати кампање која је претходила преговорима у Пожаревцу нису могли да се предвиде, те морамо да нагласимо да су околности биле последица неколико случајности у корист западњачке, хришћанске стране. ‘Аустријанци’, ‘Турци’ и представници западне Европе састали су се у градићу близу Дунава и сачинили пакет споразума који су допринели томе да сви учесници постану победници. Иако је Османско царство (и Венеција) изгубило неке територије (ограничене или неограничене), у ретроспективи је за Порту (османску владу) конференција у Пожаревцу донела знатне предности. Оне су се састојале од свакодневних ствари као што су сарадња у погледу занатства и трговине, поштанске комуникације, итд. Ова чињеница је укључивала све више цивилног становништва, не само дуж транзитних рута између Беча и Константинопоља, него дуж Дунава и широм обале Средоземног мора и у дубинама Балкана.

Ако поредимо изведбу и утицај ова три мировна споразума, морамо да схватимо колико су велике ове разлике. Док им је место у историографији прилично скромно, последице су изненађујуће. Директне и индиректне последице ових споразума су измениле однос, не само између Хабзбуршке монархије и Османског царства у погледу средње Европе и Балкана, већ представљају и значајан удео европеизације југоисточне Европе. Они се не тичу само политичке интеграције, него и цивилизацијског развоја (културних преноса, документације, мапа, итд) и менталне структуре (раст емпиријског знања, ширење хоризонта, промене у вредностима, итд.) међу различитим нацијама. Последице споразума промениле су свет и дале разлог аналитичарима да XVIII век у југоисточној Европи прогласе периодом у коме су започели неколики други процеси.

Кључне речи: рат, уговор, утицај, Европа, Хабзбуршка монархија, Османско царство, Венеција, Балкан.

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