The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................... ix

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1

SECTION ONE
THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE OTTOMAN TRIBUTARIES

The Legal and Political Status of Wallachia and Moldavia in
Relation to the Ottoman Porte .................................................................................... 9
Viorel Panaite

Sovereignty and Subordination in Crimean-Ottoman Relations
(Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries) .............................................................................. 43
Natalia Królikowska

Between Vienna and Constantinople: Notes on the Legal Status
of the Principality of Transylvania ............................................................................ 67
Teréz Oborni

Janus-faced Sovereignty: The International Status of the Ragusan
Republic in the Early Modern Period ..................................................................... 91
Lovro Kunčević

Cossack Ukraine In and Out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648–1681 .................................. 123
Victor Ostapchuk

SECTION TWO
THE DIPLOMACY OF THE TRIBUTARY STATES
IN THE OTTOMAN SYSTEM

Sovereignty and Representation: Tributary States in the
Seventeenth-century Diplomatic System of the
Ottoman Empire ....................................................................................................... 155
Gábor Kármán

Diplomatic Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Dubrovnik ................................................................. 187
Vesna Miović

Enemies Within: Networks of Influence and the Military Revolts against the Ottoman Power (Moldavia and Wallachia, Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries) ........................................ 209
Radu G. Păun

SECTION THREE
MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

The Friend of My Friend and the Enemy of My Enemy: Romanian Participation in Ottoman Campaigns ........................................ 253
Ovidiu Cristea

The Military Co-operation of the Crimean Khanate with the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries .... 275
Mária Ivanics

‘Splendid Isolation’? The Military Cooperation of the Principality of Transylvania with the Ottoman Empire (1571–1688) in the Mirror of the Hungarian Historiography’s Dilemmas .............. 301
János B. Szabó

The Defensive System of the Ragusan Republic (c. 1580–1620) ...... 341
Domagoj Madunić

SECTION FOUR
INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION: ON THE “COMPOSITENESS” OF THE EMPIRE

The System of Autonomous Muslim and Christian Communities, Churches, and States in the Ottoman Empire ........................................ 375
Sándor Papp

CONTENTS

What is Inside and What is Outside? Tributary States in Ottoman Politics ................................................................. 421
  Dariusz Kołodziejczyk

Notes on Contributors ..................................................................... 433

Personal Names ........................................................................... 439
Place Names ................................................................................ 446
In the second half of the seventeenth century a great upheaval occurred in the Ukrainian territories of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth that led to the unraveling and eventual transformation of the international order in Eastern Europe. For more than a generation the revolt against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth sparked in 1648 by Bohdan Khmelnytsky, hetman of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, and the ensuing wars and social upheavals, to greater or lesser extents drew in most near and distant neighbors—in particular the Ottoman Empire, the Crimean Khanate, Moldavia, Transylvania, Muscovy, and Sweden. This whirlwind of events eventually brought the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy into their first major military conflict (the 1569 Ottoman Don-Volga-Astrakhan expedition and later proxy encounters in the North Caucasus notwithstanding) and contributed to the demise of the Commonwealth. By the late 1660s the Ottomans felt compelled to reverse their centuries-old policy of avoiding expansion beyond the northern Black Sea coastal region and engage in an active northern policy that led to a struggle for the steppes between the Dniester and Dnieper Rivers and beyond.

Between the Ukrainian revolt of 1648 and the Treaty of Bahçesaray of 1681, when the Porte effectively abandoned its active northern Black Sea policy, though it still held on to Podolia, a major subplot emerged: the search by Cossack hetmans and Ottoman sultans and viziers and their respective envoys for mutually agreeable terms by which Cossack Ukraine, once a fierce foe of the Turks and Tatars, could become a subject

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1 By “Cossack Ukraine” we refer to those areas of Ukraine dominated by the Ukrainian (as opposed to the Russian Don) Cossacks—originally these were in the lower Dnieper region, known as Zaporozhia (south of the modern city of Zaporizhe). After 1648, we use the term “Cossack Ukraine” to indicate in addition those territories no longer under the control of the Commonwealth, that is, the provinces of Kiev, Bratslav, and Chernihiv, but not the predominantly ethnic Ukrainian provinces of the Polish Crown Podolia, Volhynia, and eastern Galicia (region of Lviv, so-called Red Ruthenia). Although the boundaries of Cossack Ukraine waxed and waned during the upheavals of our period the conventional name Hetmanate has been used to refer to this polity because of the presence of
of the Porte. This essay seeks to provide an interpretation and better understanding of the Ukrainian-Ottoman encounter during this turbulent and pivotal period. While it brings into play key primary sources as well as essential secondary literature, because of space limitations, it relies on generally accepted knowledge to provide an outline of events and their relevant contexts.²

To understand the swings in the Porte’s stance toward the Black Sea and the expanses to its north, it is necessary to place this portion of the northern frontiers in the longue durée.³ After the fall of Constantinople, state-like institutions (e.g., internal administration, courts, army, foreign relations). From the late 1660s through the end of our period Cossack Ukraine was de facto divided in two along the Dnieper—in the west the Right-Bank Hetmanate and in the East the Left-Bank Hetmanate. In summary, although in this essay we use both “Cossack Ukraine” and “Hetmanate,” we prefer the former during the periods of war and internal anarchy discussed here, namely, the Khmelnytsky years (1648–1657) and thereafter the so-called “Ruin” a name that Ukrainian historiography has applied to the devastating period that ended in the early 1680s.


³ For a more elaborate version of the following presentation of the Black Sea as an Ottoman mare nostrum see Victor Ostapchuk, “The Human Landscape of the Ottoman
Mehmed the Conqueror (1451–1481) moved to turn the Black Sea into an “Ottoman lake” by taking control of key ports and fortresses on various shores of the sea and most significantly, by gaining control of the southern shore of the Crimea and establishing suzerainty over the Crimean Khanate in 1475. Control of the Black Sea meant, above all, control of trade so that the immense food, raw material, and human resources of the Black Sea basin could be channeled toward the interests of empire-building, including the provision of regular and affordable supplies for the growing capital city of Istanbul. Halil İnalcık has indicated the significance of control of the sea for the strength and well-being of the Ottoman Empire.4 As Gheorghe I. Brătianu demonstrated, the move to control the Black Sea occurred almost as a corollary of control of the Straits and is analogous to earlier Byzantine and Venetian control of the Straits, which amounted to control of Black Sea trade (the former directing it to Constantinople and the latter to the Mediterranean). And while this control was established relatively easily along most stretches of coast by simply taking over Italian emporia and fortresses, there were two achievements in which Ottoman success was no trivial matter: the establishment of suzerainty over the Crimean Khanate—a Chinggisid successor state of the Golden Horde—and Bayezid II’s (1481–1512) conquest of Kili and Akkerman at the mouths of the Danube and Dniester in 1484.

Rather than attempting to establish themselves in the steppe zone to the north by subduing the Tatars, the Ottomans seemed to understand the nature of the northern Black Sea steppes, and realized that attempting to conquer this somewhat arid and sparsely populated zone would be futile and pointless. Thus they did not attempt to take direct control, instead they established Ottoman provincial rule in strategic coastal areas, such as Kefe, Azak, Akkerman, Kili, and, in 1528, Özi. In these locales Ottoman institutions were not fully established (e.g., there was no timar system in the province of Kefe). Instead of attempting to eliminate the region’s largely nomadic order, they established a mutually beneficial economic relationship with the Crimean Khanate. In this new situation, the Tatars mounted ever larger raids into the southeastern regions

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of Poland–Lithuania (mainly Ukraine) and southern Muscovy to obtain captives for the vast Ottoman slave market. The Ottoman–Crimean relationship, although not without its periodic conflicts, afforded the Porte sufficient influence among the Tatars in the Crimea and beyond to manipulate the steppe region in its favor.

This important development set the stage for the ensuing centuries. Being the first power not only to take control of the Black Sea but also to establish a strong relationship with the inhabitants of the steppes, the Ottomans in effect locked their northern neighbors Poland–Lithuania and Muscovy out of the Black Sea region for several hundred years. In the steppe zone controlled by a militarily formidable Crimean Khanate that directed its raiding activity against its northern neighbors, the Porte had a very effective “active” buffer zone protecting its Black Sea dominion. Thus from the late fifteenth to the late seventeenth century the Ottomans displayed no interest in expanding past the northern seaboard of the Black Sea and were satisfied with a passive, defensive stance in the region, preferring to concentrate their efforts on expansion in central Europe, the Mediterranean, and in the East. Exceptions to this policy, such as the Don-Volga-Astrakhan campaign of 1569 or the Hotin War of 1621, only served to underscore the difficulty and futility of expansion to the north. At the same time, as Professor İnalcık has pointed out, while maintaining a passive Black Sea policy the Ottomans were, apparently, keenly aware of the relative strengths of the two major powers to the north, Poland–Lithuania and Muscovy, and concerned that neither of these powers became powerful enough to challenge Ottoman dominion over the Black Sea.5

What about Ukraine? It is one of the great ironies of the history of this region that the power and sway of the steppe, which in the Mongol era destroyed the East Slavic empire of Kievan Rus’, was in the post-Mongol period a prime stimulant for the rebirth of East Slavic power and sway in that same steppe. The dangerous conditions that a successor state of the Golden Horde (and therefore also of the Mongol Empire), namely the Crimean Khanate, maintained in the Pontic steppes eventually led to a response by the sedentary peoples. This response was partly modeled on the post-Mongol tradition of kazaklık, a state of vagabondage in the steppe wilderness that involved raiding, often with the goal of attracting a

retinue of followers in order to gain political power. Desperate or adventurous inhabitants of the lands to the north of the steppes and even further afield, men from of all walks of life—runaway serfs, hunters, trappers, traders, townsmen, and even nobles—learned, often by example from the Tatars and Nogays, how to survive in the “Wild Field,” as the Pontic steppes were referred to then. With the help of gunpowder weapons and tactics, they went on the offensive against the Tatars and became a formidable force that by the end of the sixteenth century challenged the hinterland whence they originally came, that is, the military forces of the joint Lithuanian and Polish state.

These were, of course, the Cossacks. Relevant for us is their Ukrainian incarnation, whose refuge was in the hard-to-access waterways, islands, and marshes of the middle Dnieper “beyond the rapids” (zaporozhe), the so-called Zaporozhian Sich (sich, “stockade”). In this environment, came another perhaps unexpected transformation—land dwellers became mariners and in the latter part of the sixteenth century the Zaporozhian Cossacks embarked on a spectacular career raiding first the northern and western coasts of the Black Sea and eventually all of its shores and shipping lanes. By the 1610s the Zaporozhians (and also their Russian counterparts, the Don Cossacks), became a primary problem for the Ottoman Empire: the Black Sea was no longer a peaceful and prosperous “Ottoman lake.”

After military adventures in Ottoman, Muscovite, Danubian, and Polish–Lithuanian lands, and possibly even further west as mercenaries in the Thirty Years War, by mid-century, the Ukrainian Cossacks became increasingly confident actors on the international scene. This was in spite of the fact that they remained nominal subjects of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and even experienced severe repression in response to several serious uprisings in the 1630s. Mostly thanks to the Cossack phenomenon, which managed to “cossackify” the aspirations and lifestyles of much of the peasant and town populations of the hinterland, the former heartlands of Kievan Rus’ gradually took on a new identity. Aside from social and economic factors, crucial was a revival of the endangered Orthodox heritage and culture that was in a life-death struggle (and dialogue) with Polish, in particular Roman Catholic, culture. While the old East Slavic

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6 On Turkic kazaklık as well as Slavic Cossackdom now see Joo-Yup Lee, “The Formation of the Qazaqs and the Socio-Political Phenomenon of Qazaqlıq” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2012).
word okraina, that originally meant “borderland,” in the sixteenth century was a place name referring to the middle Dnieper region, it eventually came to denote the southern and eastern borderlands of the Commonwealth. However, with the new period inaugurated by the events of 1648, Ukraina\(^7\) as a place name increasingly came to denote wherever the Cossack movement was active, even including all the provinces inhabited by Ruthenians.\(^8\)

Thanks to the military prowess and steppe survival skills of both the Tatars (those connected with the Crimea as well as the independent, fully-nomadic Tatars of the steppe, known as Nogays) and the Zaporozhian Cossacks, for centuries the Ottoman, Polish–Lithuanian, and Muscovite empires could not subdue the borderlands between them. Only in the late eighteenth century, when the Russian Empire, having eliminated the khanate and hetmanate, completed the incorporation of the territory that would become modern Ukraine. Moreover, just as practically speaking the perennial threat from the south for the two northern powers were Tatar raiders rather than the Ottomans, so for the Ottomans the first challenge to their Black Sea realm and the greatest threat from the north were Cossack interlopers rather than the northern powers. And in each case the challenges were often directed at the heartlands and not merely the borderlands. By the time of Khmelnytsky the survival of Ukrainian Cossackdom seemed to hinge on its ability to become a legitimate player on the international scene rather than merely a destabilizing frontier phenomenon.

\textit{Bohdan Khmelnytsky’s Explorations in Multi-vectorism and the Porte}

The dean of modern Ukrainian historiography, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, has provided an insightful explanation of Khmelnytsky’s foreign policy machinations. In his efforts to find a place in the international community for the nascent Ukrainian polity, the hetman navigated between and

\(^7\) On the evolution of the \textit{okraina}/Ukraina as words and concepts, see Omeljan Pritsak and John S. Reshetar, Jr., “The Ukraine and the Dialectics of Nation-Building,” \textit{Slavic Review} 22 (1963): 224–255 and now most recently Natalia Iakovenko, “Choice of Name versus Choice of Path: The Names of Ukrainian Territories from the Late Sixteenth to the Late Seventeenth Century,” in \textit{A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography}, ed. Georgiy Kasianov and Philipp Ther (Budapest and New York, 2009), 117–148.

\(^8\) Ruthenian is a conventional term for East Slavs in Poland–Lithuania, in opposition to those in Muscovy, mostly commonly applied to Ukrainians, but also to Belorussians.
within several major systems of states and powers. One system was an anti-Catholic block of Orthodox and Protestant states: Muscovy, Ukraine, Moldavia, Wallachia, Transylvania, and Sweden. Operating within this system, Khmelnytsky politicked and connived to bring about an anti-Commonwealth alliance of at least some of these significant powers. Such an alignment could even accommodate membership for a part of the Commonwealth itself, namely, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, whose ruling elite was heavily Protestant. Another completely different system was an anti-Ottoman coalition involving Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transylvania—vassal states of the Ottomans—Muscovy and even the Commonwealth itself. The elimination of the Crimean Khanate and truncation if not destruction of the Ottoman Empire offered tempting prospects to all these players, not least Ukraine. A variation of this system was a European, largely Catholic alliance, involving Venice, then bitterly at war with the Ottomans, and Poland–Lithuania, including Cossack Ukraine. Indeed Khmelnytsky participated in the discussions for setting up such a crusade, hosting envoys of the Venetians and lending hope to the Poles that he would abandon his war on them and re-channel the energies of the Cossacks to the south. Yet another system involved Ukraine and the Crimea with possibly the Commonwealth against Muscovy, the Don Cossacks, and even some of the Circassians. Finally, there was the Ottoman system, in which Ukraine would find a place in an orbit of the Porte, similar to the Crimean Khanate, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transylvania.9 The international relations of this era were made inscrutable by Khmelnytsky’s ability to operate within several of these systems practically simultaneously. For his contemporaries he was a most slippery ally or opponent. He is no less slippery as an object of research to the historian, who—unaware of these various systems—can easily fall into error and take at face value words and actions of this consummate politician to mean that the hetman was certainly an ardent and sincere follower of, for example, the Muscovite tsar or the Ottoman sultan, when at any given time he may have been so only partially or even not at all.

The initial spark that supposedly set off the great Ukrainian revolt was almost a private affair—a conflict in early 1648 between Khmelnytsky and a Polish noble over property and a woman. It should be noted that in the years prior a perfect storm was gathering, thanks to huge dissatisfaction

with the socioeconomic and political state of affairs among various sectors of Ukrainian society, be they Cossacks, peasants, nobles, or churchmen. In any event, feeling deeply wronged at the hands of the Polish administration, which refused to give him redress, Khmelnytsky went to the Zaporozhian Sich and roused its garrison to attack the Polish authorities, who had severely curtailed their rights and activities after the last major Cossack uprising ten years earlier. With each success on the battlefield more Cossacks joined Khmelnytsky, including the so-called Registered Cossacks who were on the payroll of the Polish Crown and considered more loyal to it. By the end of the 1648 campaigning season the forces of Khmelnytsky had spectacularly defeated the armies sent to stop him and rolled through Ukraine to the edge of Poland proper.

A critical defining occurrence that determined whether the movement unleashed by Khmelnytsky would be another essentially social and economic revolt rather than what can be called an early modern national movement was the hetman’s stay in Kiev during the winter of 1648–1649. Prior to this his demands were primarily directed at redressing Cossack grievances. But in Kiev Khmelnytsky was swept away by the tumultuous reception that he was given by Ukrainian townspeople, church leaders, and intellectuals. He realized that what he had started was something much larger than he had ever imagined. During that winter Khmelnytsky incorporated into his agenda the strivings of the disaffected elements of Ukrainian society and prepared for an all-out war with the Commonwealth. It was during the winter of 1648–1649 that the idea of forming some sort of an independent or semi-independent Ukrainian state began to circulate. Already the seeds for the internationalization of the conflict were planted and the winter months inaugurated frequent diplomatic traffic between Khmelnytsky and neighbors of the Commonwealth.10

Khmelnytsky would never even have made his triumphant entry to Kiev at the end of 1648 and his revolt would have been no more than just another Cossack uprising had the hetman not initially made a bold and decisive move: he sent messengers to the Crimea and obtained the military support of the Crimean Khanate. In the following weeks and months and years it was demonstrated again and again that Tatar cavalry operating with Cossack infantry was a most formidable combination capable

10 Hrushevsky, History of Ukraine-Rus’, vol. 8, 515–529. See also Plokhy, Cossacks and Religion, 221, 227–228.
of defeating just about any force the Commonwealth could muster. The Crimea, however, entered into the Ukrainian–Polish conflict out of self-interest. On one hand, the Cossack onslaught on the Commonwealth was evidence that a major northern power, which in the first half of the seventeenth century was the stronger of the two (as compared to Muscovy) was weakening. Disorder in the north was always to the khanate’s advantage and the endless campaigning brought by the Khmelnytsky war with Poland yielded enormous opportunities for booty and the acquisition of captives for the slave market, a mainstay of the Crimean economy.

On the other hand, in the long term the emergence of a strong Cossack entity geographically closer to the Crimea than the Commonwealth or Muscovy was not a favorable prospect for the khanate. The Cossacks, as a potential rival, threatened the very existence of the khanate while as allies they eliminated Ukraine as a source of captives, leaving the Crimea with the prospect of relying on lands further removed to the north, in the Commonwealth and Muscovy. Throughout his career, Khan İslam Giray III (1644–1654) made sure that Khmelnytsky persevered in his struggle with the Poles, yet he prevented the hetman from attaining total victory. Thus in several great and potentially decisive battles, at Zboriv in 1649, at Berestechko in 1651, and at Zhvanec’ in 1653, İslam Giray’s actions prevented Cossack victories and forced Khmelnytsky to negotiate a compromise with the Commonwealth.

Without İslam Giray, the Khmelnytsky movement would surely have met with defeat or been forced to come to terms with the Poles, yet with him as sole ally, total victory could never be. Khmelnytsky realized this early in the struggle. After the campaign of 1648, the hetman sent envoys near and far in order to connect with all states that were present or potential enemies of the Commonwealth. Aside from the Crimea, his major hopes were Transylvania, whose ruler György Rákóczi I (1630–1648) had ambitions for the Polish throne, and Muscovy, the old rival of the Commonwealth that had lost significant territories to Poland–Lithuania in the wars of the first half of the century. The hetman was able to reach an understanding in principle for military support from the Transylvanian prince’s son and successor, György Rákóczi II (1648–1660, with interruptions), though it would be several years before his armies moved against Poland. Almost from the beginning of his struggle with the Commonwealth, Khmelnytsky offered to enter into the suzerainty of the tsar, hoping to thereby draw Muscovy into the war with its western neighbor. However, for almost six years Moscow steadfastly rebuffed Khmelnytsky’s
offers, repeatedly maintaining that it could not actively aid him since it had an “eternal peace” with the Commonwealth established in 1634 by the Treaty of Polianovka.

There is evidence suggesting that envoys of Bohdan Khmelnytsky began traveling to Istanbul in 1648.\(^\text{11}\) However, it was only after the setback in Zboriv in August 1649, when İslam Giray forced Khmelnytsky to come to terms with the Commonwealth by withdrawing his support from battle just as the Cossacks were on the verge of defeating the Polish army, that Khmelnytsky set out in earnest to establish closer relations with the Ottomans. His immediate goal was to appeal to the sultan to order the Crimean khan to support the hetman without hesitation. Ultimately it was hoped that the Ottomans would take an active role, at least by ordering military support from the vassal states of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transylvania, if not by putting their own forces into the struggle with the Commonwealth, thereby assuring his chances for victory.

For Khmelnytsky, however, there were even greater attractions in the Ottoman system. Once it became clear that reconciliation with the Poles was impossible, the hetman and his colleagues began to think in terms of establishing a Cossack or Ukrainian state, either independent or allied with some other state. Of course the lack of a ruling dynasty was a serious weakness as far as gaining internal and external legitimacy was concerned. The model of Moldavia and Wallachia, Orthodox and culturally akin societies with a degree of autonomy and relatively unhampered ruling elites under the protection of the Porte, was an alluring prospect for the Ukrainian elites. The idea of seizing or being appointed by the sultan to the

\(^{11}\) This has been a point of controversy. Pritsak insists that not only had Cossack envoys already visited Istanbul by 1648, but that a short-lived trade pact was then concluded with the Porte. Abrahamowicz and Hösch argue that there is insufficient evidence for such a treaty, and do not recognize any diplomatic relations in that year. Pritsak has replied to his critics and there are other, Polish sources referring to such contacts that have been pointed to (see Stepankov reference below). For us here whether relations began in 1648 or 1649 is of no consequence. See Omeljan Pritsak, “Das erste türkisch-ukrainische Bündnis (1648),” *Oriens* 6 (1953): 266–298, esp. 280–285. Edgar Hösch, “Der türkisch–kosakische Vertrag von 1648,” *Forschungen zur Osteuropäische Geschichte* 27 (1980): 233–248; Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, “Comments on Three Letters by Khan Islam Gerey III to the Porte (1651),” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14 (1990): 132–143, esp. 137–138; Omeljan Pritsak, “Shche raz pro soiu z Bohdana Khmel'nyts'koho z Turechchynoiu” [Once again on the union of Bohdan Khmelnytsky with Turkey], *Ukrains'kyi arkheohrafijichnyi shchorichnyk* 2 n.s. (1993): 177–192; Valeriy Stepankov, “Mizh Moskvoiu i Stambulom: Chy isnuvala problema vyboru protektsii u 1648–1654 rr.” [Between Moscow and Istanbul: Did a problem of choosing protection exist in 1648–1654?], *Ukraina v Tsentral'no-Skhidnii levropi* 4 (2004): 223–236, esp. 225–226.
voievodship of Moldavia must have occurred to Khmelnytsky very early on. When the current voievod (or hospodar) of Moldavia, Vasile Lupu, got wind of Khmelnytsky’s plan, he tried to appease him by assuring him that someone of his greatness deserved to become the ruler (kniaz, “prince”) of Rus’ (Ruthenia).\(^\text{12}\) For that matter the idea of a separate Ukrainian entity gained some currency among the Tatars and Ottomans; thus the Ottoman chronicle of Na’ima has İslam Giray in 1648 telling the Ottomans, “if God is willing, my intention is to have a Ruthenian king (Rus kirali) appointed by the sultan, just as the Moldavian [voyvoda] is.”\(^\text{13}\)

When by 1650 it became obvious that the Porte was unwilling to allow Ukraine to extend its direct influence into Moldavia, Khmelnytsky pursued a plan of marrying his eldest and most able son Tymish to the daughter of Vasile Lupu, thereby establishing a degree of dynastic legitimacy and political access to Moldavia. It was on this card that Khmelnytsky put much of his hope; he pursued it for the next two years, finally succeeding in 1652 in forcing Lupu to give the hand of his daughter Roksanda (also known as Helen, perhaps as in “Helen of Troy”) to Tymish, only to have his dynastic dreams shattered when his son fell in battle during one of his military interventions there in the following year.

In any event, from fall 1648 until spring 1651 there was a frequent exchange of envoys between Chyhyryn, Khmelnytsky’s capital, and Istanbul, involving not only envoys from the sultan, but from other high officials, such as viziers and the aga of the janissaries.\(^\text{14}\) From the very beginning the hetman’s representatives received a seemingly warm welcome. As noted, the Ottomans were most pleased to have the Cossacks as a friendly rather than hostile neighboring power: throughout the correspondence the Porte reminds Khmelnytsky to keep the Cossacks away from the Black Sea. In return the Ottomans pressured the Crimean khan to remain loyal to Khmelnytsky and made vague promises of sending to Khmelnytsky’s aid “whatever number of troops” he needed. Khmelnytsky’s letters to the Porte characteristically include statements that he wishes to be, requests to be considered, or even is a subject, or more literally, slave (Turkish kul, Arabic ‘abd) of the sultan. In his letters to the hetman,

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\(^\text{12}\) Hrushevsky, History of Ukraine-Rus’, vol. 8, 525.


the sultan acknowledges this but does not explicitly and unambiguously refer to him as his subject. There are some indications that though very pleased with this situation, the Ottomans were careful about or even wary of accepting the hetman and his Cossack army. In one letter dated 10 August 1650 (12 Şa’ban 1060) there is phrase to the effect that “we are close to accepting your request for slavery.” We know that the Ottomans were nervous about Cossack military and political interventions in affairs of its vassal states and were opposed to the marriage of Tymish Khmelnytsky to Lupu’s daughter.

For that matter, it is difficult to judge to what degree Khmelnytsky was sincere in his declaration of being an Ottoman subject. We know that at the same time he was working to convince the Muscovite tsar to accept him into his suzerainty. As we shall see below, the hetman not only kept his options open by appealing to several sovereigns at once; he would reveal the fact of his applications to one sovereign in order to blackmail the other into acting in his favor. In any event, by March 1651, a letter from the Porte explicitly refers to the hetman as being a subject of the sultan (the document uses both the Turkish kulluk and Arabic ‘ubudiyyet, “state of slavery, servitude”), and though it comes closer to granting unambiguous subject and protected status, it stops just short of it. It states that if the hetman continues to be faithful, remains in good relations with the khan, keeps the center informed of events with frequent envoys, then he will surely be placed “under the shadow of protection” and be granted an ‘ahdname-i hümayun (“imperial letter of oath”). The ‘ahdname had several related usages in Ottoman diplomatics and diplomacy: a unilateral granting of peace and protection to a polity of lesser stature, and acceptance of a bilateral peace treaty to a state of essentially equal stature and status. Of course, given the hetmanate’s parvenu status any ‘ahdname to the hetman could only be a unilateral grant of protection by the sultan to


an inferior and thus contain a clear formalization of the suzerain-vassal relationship. In late July another Ottoman envoy was sent to Chyhyryn with a sultanic letter promising much: aid from forces in Dobruca; orders to the rulers of Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia to be ready for action; and the eventual issuance of an ‘ahdname.18

Despite the prospects that an Ottoman orientation would be offered to Khmelnytsky and Ukraine, by late 1653 it was clear to the hetman that the promise was not about to be realized. No military aid was forthcoming from the Ottomans and the alliance with the Tatars was unraveling, as once again the khan reached an understanding with the Polish king, leaving Khmelnytsky vulnerable. In general, it seems that the possibilities for plunder and captive-taking in the lands under the Polish Crown were nearly exhausted. With his son Tymish dead, the Danubian principalities opposed to him because of his military interventions in Moldavia in 1652, and the Porte displeased therewith, Khmelnytsky’s Ottoman system lay in shambles. As for the Ottomans, we must remember that not only was the main Ottoman army bogged down in a long war in Crete; during these years the Ottoman government was beset by some of the worst internal difficulties in the history of the empire: intrigues from various factions within the harem, as well as infighting between the janissary establishment and the court sipahis. In 1648 Sultan İbrahim was deposed and executed, and there were eight different grand viziers over six years. Given this situation, it is not surprising that the Ottomans did not engage in an active northern policy, even though the Khmelnytsky movement presented probably the best opportunity hitherto for them to move into Ukraine and expand the borders of the empire well beyond the Black Sea coast.

Though a historian should avoid speculation, one can surmise that if the Ottomans really wanted to, they could have found a way to alter their commitments, either by coming to an agreement with Venice and ending the war over Crete, or by temporarily easing this commitment, and taking advantage of the weakness of the Commonwealth, the timidity of Muscovy, and the plea from Ukraine. For example, when it was decided that Prince Rákóczi had become too independent in his dealings with European states, in 1658 Grand Vizier Mehmed Köprülü set aside the war with Venice to march on Transylvania.19 In the early 1660s further troubles with

Austria compelled the Ottomans again to leave the Venetian campaign on the back burner and campaign in Central Europe. But then Köprülü was a different kind of leader, and had he been in power earlier who knows what might have happened in Eastern Europe? Despite the difficulty of the moment, the Ottoman attitude vis-à-vis the northern Black Sea frontier during the Khmelnytsky period bears a striking similarity to their attitude in earlier periods: if no power became too strong, that is, strong enough to threaten their control of the Black Sea region, the Ottomans were content to stay out of the northern steppes, leaving the Crimean Khanate to tend to the Porte’s (as well as its own) interests in the region.

_Ukraine between Muscovy and the Ottomans_

Finally, in late 1653 Muscovy agreed to enter into a war with the Commonwealth and accept Ukraine under its protection. After years of appeals by Ukrainian politicians and churchmen to the religious and cultural affinities between Ukrainians and Russians, as well as threats to go over to the Turks and Tatars and go to war against Muscovy, Moscow finally agreed to a major change of course. Although appeals to protect its coreligionists against the Catholic Poles were recognized, it seems that the main factor was Moscow’s fear that if it did not join Khmelnytsky, the hetman and Ukraine would become unequivocal subjects of the Ottoman Empire. An equivalent danger was that the hetman would yield to the current urgings of the khan to resubmit to the Polish king and join a Crimean–Commonwealth war effort against Muscovy.

The 1654 Treaty of Pereiaslav by which Bohdan Khmelnytsky accepted the protection of the Muscovite tsar greatly altered the nature and course of the struggle over Ukraine. However, because Russia eventually prevailed vis-à-vis Poland–Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire and became the sole ruler of Ukraine, Pereiaslav is too often seen as more of a turning point than it actually was; in other words, it is often assumed that when, in 1654, Russia entered solidly into the conflict, the tide had turned against the Poles and Ottomans. In fact, Pereiaslav was only the starting

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20 Cf. a reason given in the decision of the Zemskii Sobor to accept Ukraine under the suzerainty of the tsar, 1 October 1653: “And so that not to let them go into the subjection of the Turkish sultan or Crimean khan…,” _Vossoedinenie Ukrainy s Rossiei: Dokumenty i materialy v trekh tomakh_, vol. 3: 1648–1654 gody [The reunification of Ukraine with Russia: Documents and materials in three volumes], ed. P.P. Hudzenko, et al. (Moscow, 1953), vol. 3, 414, no. 197.
point for Muscovy/the Russian Empire—the road to Russian supremacy in Ukraine and in the northern Black Sea region was still long and hard. The Ottoman reaction to the treaty is revealing. The sources on this are not abundant, but from reports of Polish and Cossack diplomatic missions to the Porte, it seems that at first the Ottomans did not believe that Khmelnytsky had really sided with the tsar and when the existence of the treaty was confirmed they were clearly displeased; at one point in late 1654 an envoy arrived in Chyhyryn ordering Khmelnytsky to end his treaty with Moscow; if he failed to do so, the sultan threatened to send all his armies against the Cossacks.\footnote{Hrushevsky, \textit{History of Ukraine-Rus'}, vol. 9, book 2, part 1, 472.}

However, if there was a strong reaction, it did not last long; it should be noted that in the Ottoman chronicles the Treaty of Pereiaslav is passed over without mention. Already by the beginning of 1655 the Ottomans adopted a much more conciliatory tone toward the Cossack envoys. Khmelnytsky’s envoys maintained that the khan had abandoned them and he was forced to conclude a \textit{military} alliance with Moscow against Ukraine’s enemies. The envoys professed the hetman’s continued allegiance to the sultan, entreating him to accept Ukraine under the sultan’s hand, while ordering the Crimeans and other Ottoman vassals not to harm Ukraine.\footnote{E.g., G.A. Sanin, \textit{Otnosheniia Rossii i Ukrainy s Krymskim Khanstvom v seredine XVII veka} [The relations of Russia and Ukraine with the Crimean Khanate in the middle of the seventeenth century] (Moscow, 1987), 104.}

From Istanbul’s point of view, as at first from Bahçesaray’s point of view too, Pereiaslav was but one of a series of Khmelnytsky’s demarches in his struggle with the Commonwealth and it saw no fundamental change in the erratic and anarchic international scene in Eastern Europe.

Thus at the end of June/beginning of July 1655 the sultan issued another letter to Khmelnytsky. It is a rather extraordinary document: the Ottoman text—surviving only in copy form in the so-called Göttingen Codex—is perhaps the elusive \textit{ahdname} that the Porte had long refrained from issuing to the hetman. Though it does not refer to itself as an \textit{ahdname}, it invokes the hetman to “send according to custom an \textit{ahdname}” to the Porte.\footnote{“Sen dahi ayiniň üzure \textit{ahdname} gönderesin.” Rypka, “Dalși příspěvek,” 227. Note the bilateral nature of the transaction—in response to the sultan’s issuance of this (implicit?) \textit{ahdname}, the hetman is requested to issue his confirmatory \textit{ahdname}. Cf. Kołodziejczyk, \textit{Ottoman–Polish Diplomatic Relations}, 4–5. Until recently there was no evidence of such a reciprocal mission as requested by the Porte. However, in 2004 Vera Chentsova discovered evidence that there was a Cossack mission to Istanbul in November or December 1655, which Jaroslav Fedoruk views as indirect evidence that Khmelnytsky attained Ottoman}
turn to Moscow for military aid, the letter expresses joy that the hetman returned to the sultan’s protection and promises to force the Crimea to align itself again with the Cossacks. Russian historians have dismissed Bohdan Khmelnytsky’s reaffirmation of vassalage to the Porte as merely a tactic on the part of the hetman to obtain support or neutrality from the Crimea, since after all the hetman’s aides kept Moscow informed of his continued ties to the Porte. It is true that by resubmitting to the Porte in 1655 Khmelnytsky did not consciously and deliberately intend to leave the suzerainty of Moscow. However, it seems that he was, indeed, playing the two against each other, telling each side that he had allied with the other only for tactical reasons—in fact, Khmelnytsky was maintaining the Ottoman system in which he, inter alia, had operated for so many years.

If indeed the Ottomans perceived no grave danger from the new Ukrainian–Muscovite relationship, the Crimean Khanate reacted strongly to it, and already in 1654 was closely cooperating with the Commonwealth to break up this new alignment and force the Ukrainian Cossacks to join the Tatars and Poles in an attack on Muscovy, which it considered the stronger northern neighbor once Ukraine was aligned with it. Following Khmelnytsky’s death in 1657, instability in Ukraine increased, as dissatisfaction with Muscovite policies and tensions between the upper and lower strata of Cossack society led to rebellions and struggles between pro-Commonwealth and pro-Muscovite groupings. Throughout most of the next ten years Moscow and Warsaw were at war over Belorussia and Ukraine. For brief periods the Cossacks reached rapprochements with the Tatars, but mostly the Crimea remained aligned with the Commonwealth. In 1658 the Union of Hadiach negotiated by Khmelnytsky’s successor, Hetman Ivan Vyhovsky set up a new, tripartite Commonwealth, wherein the Grand Duchy of Rus’/Ruthenia would be on equal footing with the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This seemed a reasonable resolution of the decade-long conflict and an end to the multiple systems that drove the tangled international relations of the nascent hetmanate (and for that matter would have meant the end of the hetmanate as such). However the inertia of social, political, and military conflicts

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led to the fall of Vyhovsky leaving the tripartite Commonwealth stillborn. By 1660 Ukraine was effectively divided along the River Dnieper between the Commonwealth controlled west and Muscovite controlled east.

In the years immediately following the death of Khmelnytsky we have no evidence of diplomatic relations between the Cossacks and the Ottomans. This could simply be for lack of sources, but it seems as if in the early years of the Köprülü era the Porte was satisfied to leave the northern policy to the Crimea given the anarchic and indecisive course of the struggle between Moscow and Warsaw. Instead energies were poured into dealing with outstanding problems in Transylvania and the Danubian principalities, other internal problems, and above all bringing the Cretan War to a successful conclusion.

Petro Doroshenko: A Willing and Devoted Vassal of the Porte?

The *de facto* partition of Ukraine between Commonwealth and Muscovite halves did not last long. The Commonwealth was first to lose effective control of its half. In 1663 a rebellion broke out against its rule and by 1665 the strongly pro-Commonwealth hetman, Pavlo Tetera, was forced from the scene. In the meantime the Tatars broke with the Commonwealth and again supported the Cossacks. In late 1665, with their help Petro Doroshenko captured the hetmanship over Right-Bank Ukraine. Of old Cossack lineage, Hetman Doroshenko was a strong and gifted leader, intent on taking Ukraine out from under both the Commonwealth and Muscovy. Very early in his hetmanship we can see Doroshenko turning to the Ottomans for support. By 1666 we see a renewal of the Cossack–Ottoman correspondence. Developments in the relations between the Commonwealth and Muscovy forced the Porte to pay more and more attention to the north. At this time the two northern powers, exhausted by perennial and inconclusive warfare, were engaged in peace negotiations that culminated in the Truce of Andrusovo in 1667. Completely ignoring Ukrainian preferences and interests, Warsaw and Moscow made the *de facto* partition of Ukraine along the Dnieper (with the exception of Kiev going to Muscovy) official for the next thirteen and a half years. There were also provisions in the treaty for cooperation against the Tatars and Ottomans.

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25 Letter of the grand vizier from Shevval 1076/April 1666 in the Göttingen Codex, see Dorošenko and Rypka, “Dorošenko a jeho turecká politika,” 9–10.
The Andrusovo Treaty was met with a very negative reaction in Ukraine, especially in the Right-Bank.

At the same time not only the Tatars, but also the Ottomans reacted strongly to the arrangement. In contrast to the Treaty of Pereiaslav, Andrusovo was regarded by the Porte as a dangerous change in the international situation. With the two northern powers reaching an agreement and thereby having good prospects for establishing strong presences in their respective halves of Ukraine, the Ottomans feared they could soon fall victim to the alliance. The Ottoman chronicle of Raşid cites a letter from the Porte to the King of Poland soon after the treaty warning him to abandon what it calls “mutual assistance and union” (ta’azud ve ittihad) with the Muscovites. As Andrusovo made no provisions to accommodate Doroshenko’s hetmanate, it seemed only a matter of time before he would be eliminated. Given the plight that the Commonwealth–Muscovite alliance brought to Doroshenko and the threat that it implied to Ottoman control of the Black Sea, the interests of Doroshenko and the Ottomans converged. It was the Treaty of Andrusovo that stimulated a more active Ottoman policy in this region.

In 1668 the Left-Bank hetman Ivan Brukhovetsky rebelled, sending out proclamations in his realm explaining his break with Moscow: “[Moscow together with Poland] want to raze and plunder Ukraine, our dear homeland, and destroying all the great and lesser inhabitants, turn it into nothing.” Besides contacting Doroshenko, Brukhovetsky opened direct negotiations with the Crimean Khanate and the Porte to submit Left-Bank Ukraine under the Porte. However, the Ottomans, still tied up in the war with Venice over Crete, were in no position to enter into active involvement. Later that year Doroshenko and his Cossack army set out across the Dnieper with Tatar support and on 8 June 1668, after eliminating Brukhovetsky, became the sole hetman of all Ukraine, both Left- and Right-Bank (respectively east and west of the Dnieper). This achievement brought Doroshenko to the height of his power. The Ottoman attitude to this is not clear, but without any concrete military support from the Porte, despite his high degree of popularity at the time, Doroshenko was unable to hold on to the Left Bank and it soon lapsed back under Muscovite

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27 Akty, otnosiaschiesia k istorii uzhnoi i zapadnoi Rossii [Documents concerning the history of southern and western Russia] [henceforth Akty IuZR] (St. Petersburg, 1867), vol. 7, 47.
control. Certainly the Crimean Khanate seems to have been ill-disposed to his enhanced stature and power and at the time of Doroshenko’s triumph it supported a rival hetman from the Zaporozhian Sich, Petro Sukhovy (Sukhovienko). Doroshenko understood that he would not be able to survive as the sole hetman and so he returned to his earlier idea of placing Ukraine under the protectorate of the Ottomans.

Apparently the Ottomans were eager to do whatever they could at the time to take advantage of such an opportunity. On 10 August 1668 envoys from the sultan arrived at Chyhyryn. Although we do not have the letter that they delivered, there were reports that the sultan offered to have Doroshenko become his subject without requiring that Ukraine pay any taxes (harac) and he promised to give him the same status as the Crimea. The only stipulation was that he allow the garrisoning of 1,000 janissaries in Chyhyryn and the same number in Kodak, the latter being a strategic fortress on the Dnieper (just south of today’s Dnipropetrovsk and at the northern end of the nine cataracts after which the Zaporozhe region began). Doroshenko reportedly consented to these terms, with the exception that 1,000 janissaries be garrisoned only in Kodak.

Doroshenko then called together his officers for a counsel in which it was decided to accept Ottoman protection on the basis of seventeen articles, the most important of which are as follows: they would always be ready to go to war against the enemies of the sultan; they would request that all Crimean, Nogay, Circassian, and Bucak (Southern Bessarabia) forces that come to the hetman’s aid be placed under his and his successors’ operational command; as a symbol of this, the sultan would grant him a mace, standard, and horse tail banner (tug, horse tail attached to a flag staff); receipt of such symbols would not mean that the Cossacks were to be considered simple subjects or tax paying tributaries nor would their hetman be changed at will by the sultan; that Turkish and Tatar armies would cause no harm to his people, nor enslave and send them to Istanbul; Moldavian and Wallachian armies sent to aid the hetman would bring no harm and the Ukrainian clergy would receive its ordination from the patriarch of Constantinople; the hetman would continue to sit until the end of his life and not be deposed by anyone from the Porte or by any Cossacks who do not agree with him and who want to install a new hetman; that the hetman would reunite the entire Ruthenian Orthodox nation, from Peremyshl’ and Sambor in the West, to Kiev and beyond, to the Vistula and Niemen Rivers, and to Sevsk and Putivl’ in the East and liberate them from the the Poles and Moscow; in court cases between a Cossack and Turk each would have recourse to his own courts; and that
the sultan and khan make no agreements with other states, especially the Polish king and Muscovite tsar, without notifying the hetman.28

There is also a report that the Ottoman çavuş went to each of Doroshenko’s colonels one by one and closely questioned them to determine if they really wanted to be under the sultan or if Doroshenko had forced them to say this. They replied that they were not forced by the hetman to say this and that they wanted to be subjects of the sultan like the Moldavians and Wallachians. On 24 December 1668 envoys of Doroshenko presented a letter of submission to the sultan with a request for a horse tail pole and standard.29 By June 1669 the Porte issued a patent (berat, nişan) granting Doroshenko all of Cossack Ukraine as an Ottoman sancak or province. The original is preserved in Moscow and there is a chancery copy in Istanbul. The following passages are relevant here:

The possessor of this celebrated royal mandate and exhibitor of this eloquent and justly eminent imperial document (…) the dedicated and devoted hetman of the three Cossack peoples—the Sarı Kamış (Zaporozhians), the Barabaş (Left-Bank Cossacks) and the Potkal (Right-Bank Cossacks)30—Petro Doroshenko (…) sent envoys and emissaries to my prosperous court (…) and he offered service (hidmet) and submission (‘ubudiyyet) to our Sublime Porte (…) and he was numbered among the totality of subjects of my customary grace—Wallachia, Moldavia and others (…) [and] he requested to be given the horse tail pole (tug) and standard (‘alem) and banner (sancak), in order to become ruler of the regions and I gave my imperial assent to his request with the stipulation that he remain constant on the path of obedience (…) and I showed my favor by confirming his appointment, gave him jurisdiction over the three regions as a sancak (…) he should guard and defend his country, and preserve and protect the populace; he should take proper steps and measures in the provinces, and keep order and discipline among the three Cossack peoples and on occasion of campaign (…) he should arrive at the appointed place with his army in order and in formation (…) all of the populace should have recourse to his government in all necessary matters, major and minor, within his jurisdiction (…)31

28 Akty IuZR, vol. 8, no. 73, 218–220; see also Doroshenko, Doroshenko, 213–216.
30 The identification of these three names is in Pritsak, “Das erste türkisch-ukrainische Bündnis,” 293–295.
31 Original: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi archiv drevnikh aktov [Moscow], fond 89, opis 2, no. 36 (I thank Dariusz Kołodziejczyk for providing me with a copy of this document); Ottoman chancery copy: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [Istanbul], İbülemin Hariciye 52.
Important points in the *berat* include the broad degree of autonomy granted, the lack of a requirement to pay the *harac*, and the Ottoman government’s recognition of Doroshenko’s authority as applying to all of Ukraine: Right-Bank, Left-Bank, and Zaporozhia. Despite the high tone and the impression of good relations that the Ottoman chronicles and this document suggest, even in the beginning there was some tension between the desiderata of Doroshenko and that of the Porte. Aside from the fact that at the time the Crimeans were supporting a different candidate to the hetmanship, Sukhovy (against whom Doroshenko spent almost a year fighting, before finally eliminating him), there is evidence that the Porte wanted to install in the place of Doroshenko Iurii Khmelnytsky, son of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, who himself had already been hetman twice before and had proven to be weak and untalented, that is a potentially useful non-entity. The Ukrainian historian, Dmytro Doroshenko, has suggested that like the Poles and Muscovites, the Ottomans did not see it in their interest to have a man of strong will and competence in the seat of the hetman.³² The contemporary Ukrainian chronicle known as *Litopys samovydtsia* [*Eyewitness chronicle*] relates that the Ottomans were not overly eager to take in the Cossacks because they had allegedly betrayed every other sovereign of theirs, and the Turks supposedly reminded the Cossacks that it was not they who needed the Cossacks but the Cossacks who needed them and so they had better be obedient.³³ Whether or not the Ottomans really intended to install the young Khmelnytsky in place of Doroshenko, they kept him in reserve for possible installation later in a manner reminiscent of the way they traditionally kept the Crimean Khanate and Danubian principalities in line by maintaining a reserve of potential rival princes.

The Ottomans were unable or unwilling to intervene until two years later when Jan Sobieski, together with a rival candidate for the hetmanate, Mykhailo Khanenko, carried out an offensive against Doroshenko. A correspondence recorded in the Ottoman chronicles between Istanbul and Warsaw on the subject of the Commonwealth’s attempts to unseat Doroshenko and take back Right-Bank Ukraine reveals some of the differing assumptions and attitudes of the two sides. Take, for example, the letter of

³³ *Letopis’ Samovidtsa po novootkrytym spiskam* [*The eyewitness chronicle according to newly discovered copies*], ed. Orest Levitskii (Kiev, 1878), 104.
Grand Vizier Ahmed Köprülü to the Polish deputy chancellor from early 1672:

(…) you have written saying, “The country of Ukraine (Ukraniya memleketi) is our hereditary possession and its people are our subjects (re’aya).” But in truth when God (…) wills that the people of a country who are continuously in debility and rebellion be granted security and mercy, they seek the protection of a padishah of the rank of Alexander (…). Although the people of the Cossack dominion (kazak vilayeti) have for a long time themselves [been a separate] people (kavim), by way of accord they entered into obedience under you with guaranties and oaths and however many conditions and terms. They remained such a situation for a considerable length of time. Finally, being unable to bear the oppression and encroachment and the tyranny and torment that you have rendered them, which is contrary to the treaty and compact between you and them, the Cossack people with their possessions and their souls and so as to defend their country have in totality withdrawn their obedience to you and have taken to the sword to do battle and make war with you (…) and then they turned to the Crimean khan for refuge while you continued your encroachment and aggression against them—it has now been more than twenty years that they have been fighting and battling protecting their possessions and souls from you (…) and when they let their request for refuge and for the horse tail pole and the banner to be known to the padishah (…) they were accepted into the servitude of the padishah and (…) the horse tail pole and banner were granted to them. After they passed a period of time in such a situation you said “We plan to appoint another governor and judge to that country and the country of Ukraine is our hereditary possession.” How can this be? And to say of a people who have renounced obedience to you for so much time and have endured being in the middle of battle and war with you, “[They] are our subjects” can only be “correct” by a forced interpretation.34

This letter was a kind of declaration of war: in early summer 1672 the main Ottoman army with Sultan Mehmed IV (1648–1687) at its head marched on the strategic fortress of Kamianets’ (Kamaniçe in Turkish; Kamieniec in Polish; today Kamianets’-Podil’s’kyi) located north of the Dniester River, in Podolia. By the beginning of September, after a nine-day bombardment, the fortress fell and Sultan Mehmed IV entered the city with Doroshenko at his side. While Doroshenko’s Cossacks together with the Crimean Tatars played an important role in vanguard battles ahead of the Ottoman army, the actual capture of the fortress itself was achieved by the latter. Thereafter the Ottomans, Tatars, and Cossacks went north

to besiege Lviv, but the siege was lifted after a ransom was promised. In October the Ottomans and Commonwealth forces reached an agreement at Buchach, where a treaty known by the same name was signed. According to it, the province of Podolia was ceded to the Ottoman Empire, the Commonwealth agreed to pay a yearly tribute, and Right-Bank Cossack Ukraine maintained autonomy under Ottoman protection. Thereafter the Ottomans set about turning Podolia into a regular Ottoman eyalet or province known as the eyalet of Kamaniçe: a beylerbeyi and other provincial officials were appointed, and a survey of the population for tax purposes (defter-i tahrir or mufassal) was compiled. For Doroshenko this was a severe disappointment since he had hoped that the rather prosperous province of Podolia, whose peasantry was completely Ukrainian, would fall under his jurisdiction. Instead he was left with only the war-torn and depopulated Right-Bank Cossack territories. To maintain decent relations, the Ottomans relented and also granted him the southeastern Podolian city of Mohyliv as a life tenure.

A scrutiny of the actions that followed the conquest of Polodia makes Ottoman motivations for moving into Ukraine clearer. While before the Poles they claimed that they were going to war to protect their new Cossack subjects of the “country of Ukraine” (Ukrayna memleketi), this was a secondary consideration. First, it cannot be denied that at this time the Commonwealth was weak and an easy, attractive prey to a sultan who had never before had the opportunity to lead a holy war, or gaza. Rather than occupying and defending the Cossack land of Doroshenko, the Ottomans directed their thrust further west against Kamianets’, the magnificent fortress that guarded some important routes into both Ukraine and Poland.

Second, control of Kamianets’ and indeed of Podolia was of great strategic importance in more than one respect. Its importance was not only due to the fact that it guarded passages into Poland and Ukraine. Metin Kunt has proposed that during this period, the Ottomans were erecting new regular provinces on their European borders so as to gain better control of older autonomous entities traditionally under rather loose control of the center. By forming the two new eyalets of Uyvar and Yanova, the principality of Transylvania would no longer be a borderland and eventually the Ottomans could eliminate its ruling establishment and turn it into a regular province. Similarly, Kunt has suggested that with the eyalet of Kamaniçe the Ottomans would be in a position to eliminate the autonomous status of Moldavia. Certainly an immediate benefit that could be expected from the eyalet of Kamaniçe was enhanced control over both

Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate. Moreover, a strong presence in Podolia put the Ottomans into a powerful position over their subjects to the east, the Right-Bank Cossacks.35

As it turned out, war and conflict plagued most of Podolia’s existence as an Ottoman province until 1699 when it reverted to the Commonwealth in the Treaty of Karlowitz. Nevertheless, some stability was attained and during the years of a lull in conflict and with the Ottoman presence in Podolia a considerable volume of Ottoman documentation on the area was generated, the most important of which is a large mufassal tahrir defter, a full edition of which has been published by Dariusz Kołodziejczyk.36

The decision to enter Ukraine compelled the Ottomans to engage in campaigns there for seven straight years. The critical year for Ottoman rule in Ukraine with Doroshenko as their vassal was 1674. In that year Muscovy came very close to a direct military confrontation with the Ottoman Empire. Moscow was hoping that Doroshenko would betray the Turks and pledge his allegiance to Muscovy, but the Left-Bank hetman Samoilovych, fearing that he would be replaced as hetman by Doroshenko, moved against the latter, crossing the Dnieper into Right-Bank Ukraine. Muscovite forces had to follow and very soon they, along with Samoilovych, occupied much of Doroshenko’s territory. Doroshenko himself was besieged in his capital, Chyhyryn.

The Ottoman army headed by the sultan himself moved into Ukraine to save Doroshenko. But before an Ottoman–Muscovite confrontation could occur, the Muscovite forces withdrew from the Right-Bank in the face of the Crimean army headed by Khan Selim Giray I (1671–1704, with interruptions). Nevertheless, the Ottoman forces moved across Doroshenko’s realm, besieging and destroying fortresses, towns, and villages that had gone over to the Muscovites. The chronicle of Silahdar details this harsh campaign in which many settlements were razed and plundered and their inhabitants killed or enslaved. The chronicle refers to these settlements as rebellious (‘isyan eden)—a harsh reaction is allowed by Islamic law

against subjects (zimmis) who rise in rebellion against the Darü'l-İslam.\textsuperscript{37} Many of the harsh reprisals were perhaps due to Kara Mustafa Pasha's well-known brutal leanings—he had led bloody seizures, for example, the capture of the towns of Ladyzhyn and Uman. In all fairness, it must be pointed out that Doroshenko himself harshly suppressed towns that had sided with the Muscovites. In any event, the harsh reaction of the Ottomans and Doroshenko meant for all practical purposes the end to a viable Cossack Ukraine as a subject of the Porte. Now the population was firmly against Doroshenko and the Turks, whereas before the people were rather well-disposed to Ottoman protection.\textsuperscript{38} The violence of 1674 caused a large migration of the population of Right-Bank Ukraine to the Left-Bank.

Doroshenko himself held on for another two years, but finally, in 1676, he surrendered Chyhyryn to the Muscovites, who treated him relatively well, allowing him to live out his remaining years in far off Muscovite provinces. From the Ottoman decision to take the best part (Podolia) for themselves, one gets the impression that they were skeptical about the viability of Cossack Ukraine as a polity, even as a vassal. Its instability made them treat it as, at best, a frontier buffer zone. In reading the Ottoman chronicle accounts of their systemic destruction of strategic fortresses and palankas in Ukraine, it seems that they were deliberately trying to ensure that the region would remain a thinly populated frontier or borderland which a foe, be it Muscovy or the Commonwealth, could not re-occupy and easily establish a strong presence in. Given the geopolitical situation and internal realities in Doroshenko’s realm, the Ottomans apparently decided not to risk too much and not to place too much faith in a vassal Cossack state. Rather, they acted conservatively to assure the best defense of their nearby realms.

\textsuperscript{37} In this connection an interesting question: did the Porte consider Ottoman Ukraine as dar ül-İslam? It should be noted that no harac was imposed on this “tributary” (better vassal) territory; Silahdar at one point mentions returning back to the dar ül-İslam from Ukraine, but this refers to 1674 after the rebellions that according to Islamic law would have meant the subject territory would have reverted to dar ül-harb status. Perhaps we have here a certain inertia in labeling or reflection of the unsettled conditions in Ottoman Ukraine, Silahdar, \textit{Tarih}, vol. 1, 642–643.

\textsuperscript{38} In fact there was a strong trend of philoturkism with Ottoman entry into Ukraine as the Turks were seen as able to establish order and justice, in contrast to the vicious anarchy that characterized the Ruin period until this point.
The Ottomans continued to recognize some use for the Cossack vassal state and appointed Iurii Khmelnytsky as hetman in place of Doroshenko. The fall of Doroshenko brought the Ottomans into their first war with Muscovy as the presence of Muscovite forces in the Right-Bank could not be tolerated by the Porte. There is no space to go into these events in any detail here. In 1677 an Ottoman force was unable to dislodge the Muscovites and the Left-Bank Cossacks from Chyhyryn and so in 1678 Sultan Mehmed IV led a major expedition that, thanks to Ottoman expertise in engineering, demolitions, and other aspects of siege warfare, successfully captured Chyhyryn. What was left of the fortress itself was razed to the ground. Interestingly, from an Ottoman gazaname on the Chyhyryn campaign we learn that Iurii Khmelnytsky himself asked the Ottomans to destroy Chyhyryn and requested and was allowed to move his capital to the town of Nemyriv (approximately 300 kilometers to the west). Moreover the same gazaname relates that before withdrawing at the end of the campaign season, the Ottomans made sure that the young Khmelnytsky gained control of his Ukraniya memleketi. Thus here we see that the Ottomans were still thinking that some sort of Ukrainian vassal state on the Right-Bank might continue.

After 1678 there were no more significant Ottoman campaigns in Ukraine and in 1681 peace was reached with Muscovy in Bahçesaray (and in 1682 confirmed in Istanbul). It is clear that the Ottomans had no interest in extending their rule beyond the Dnieper by going to war against Muscovy over the Left-Bank hetmanate, even though there had been opportunities and on several occasions Doroshenko had invited the Ottomans to undertake a joint campaign to oust his rivals in the east and unify Ukraine. In the treaty with Muscovy it was agreed that the Dnieper River would be the border although Moscow would continue to hold Kiev and the surrounding area as it had since Andrusovo. Ottoman suzerainty over the Right-Bank was recognized although it was to be a kind of demilitarized buffer zone: frontier fortresses were not to be built or rebuilt. The Zaporozhia, however, was to belong to neither side. Neither side had much of an appetite to go to war with the other and it was no accident that the Ottomans, even prior to the treaty of 1681, did not attempt to consolidate

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39 Lubomyr Hajda, “Two Ottoman Gazanames concerning the Chyhyryn Campaign of 1678” (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1984), 204, 207, 246, 249.
their position in Ukraine by building up a strong military presence there. A frontier buffer zone seemed to suit their interests.

All in all, what we have called an Ottoman “active northern policy” in the 1670s was actually more defensive than expansionist in its goals. Developments in the north between the Commonwealth and Muscovy and Doroshenko’s invitation had left them no choice but to intervene. Aside from taking strategic Podolia, the Ottomans had no interest in conquest to the north or east. We submit that this was in line with their traditional, centuries-old Black Sea policy to do what is necessary for the security of their Black Sea dominion. In the 1680s, rather than engage in wars of conquest on the frontiers of the Commonwealth or Muscovy, they preferred a no less difficult conflict in central Europe which was an attractive object of conquest. That the Ottomans were not inclined to develop their control in Ukraine and instead left it as it was and went on to fight a probably even more dangerous war for Vienna tells us much about Ottoman goals and policy in the northern Black Sea region.

*Tributaries, Vassals, Polyvassalage*

For the outlined period, Ottoman–Ukrainian rapprochement was an uneven process that took place in a climate of great instability and fluidity, involving interests that were often as contradictory as they were overlapping. Even in the Ottoman camp, both the Crimea and Moldavia preferred to have specific relationships with the hetmanate rather than accommodate Ottoman interests.40 Certainly the vagaries of the situation in the north, as well as problems elsewhere, both at home and abroad, explain why it took the Porte so many years to agree to become fully involved in Ukraine. Hence, there was so much back and forth, especially in the Khmelnytsky period, with repeated requests to be accepted into the Ottoman fold and repeated prevarications by Istanbul. So to what degree was Cossack Ukraine an Ottoman entity in this period? Since Islamic-style tribute (*harac*) was never imposed and scarcely discussed,41 technically

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40 For lack of space we have not delved into the complexities of Crimean–Cossack relations. Suffice it to say that the khanate was inclined to view the Ukrainian Cossacks as being subject to it and to act as an intermediary between Chyhyryn and the Porte (cf. the Crimean Khanate vis-à-vis certain polities in the North Caucasus in the mid-sixteenth century).

41 E.g., according to an indirect source—a letter written in October 1648 by a Polish official in Kamianets’ to one in Lviv—Khmelnytsky’s envoys promised *inter alia* to pay *harac* in the manner of Moldavia and Wallachia and supply military support to the
speaking, we cannot call the hetmanate an Ottoman tributary. This is, of course, why we have preferred the term “vassal,” of course not in the original Western medieval sense, but in the sense of the relationship between a subject state and a suzerain, a state in which there are mutual obligations—mainly non-aggression and protection of the subject by the suzerain in exchange for, when needed, military service by the subject on behalf of the suzerain, and possibly rendering tribute. The question of the degree to which Khmelnytsky was ever a formal vassal of the sultan is obscured by repeated references of his entering into or being in a state of servitude/slavery to the sultan. While in the case of Doroshenko we have both an Ottoman original and an Ottoman copy of a patent of investiture—the nişan/berat cited above—that leaves no doubt as to his formal relationship to the Porte, for Khmelnytsky the most solid document attesting formal vassal status is the sultan’s letter to him from mid-1655, also cited above. However, Na’ima’s chronicle under the year 1063/1653 maintains that in this year Khmelnytsky was granted some of the standard symbols of investiture—the banner (‘alem) and drum (tabl), along with a patent (berat) granting him his territories as an Ottoman province (eyalet).

The “multiple ambiguity” of Ukraine’s situation in these years was crucial in deciding the nature of relations with the Porte and, for that matter, with all the surrounding powers. The multiple systems in which Khmelnytsky operated dictated that his relations with the surrounding powers remained as fluid, murky, and as undefined as possible. Similarly, Doroshenko, even while a subject of the Ottomans, maintained contacts with Poland and Muscovy, and continually explored possibilities of rapprochement with either or both of them in the event the vicissitudes of the international situation required him to abandon his Ottoman
orientation. Recently a leading Ukrainian historian of this era, Taras Chukhlib, has characterized the relations of the Cossack Hetmanate as being one of “polyvassalage”—the various bilateral relations in which it operated allowed the hetmanate to be a vassal of several suzerain states simultaneously.

Of course simultaneous vassalage is nothing new to this part of the world. Thus, in the sixteenth century some of the polities of the North Caucasus managed not only to be vassals of the Crimean Khanate and/or the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy, but members of their ruling class had no problem professing Christianity and Islam before their various suzerains at virtually the same time. In the seventeenth century, Moldavia managed, in certain periods, to act as a subject of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth without relinquishing Ottoman subjecthood. While the term polyvassalage may accurately describe the actual situation in all of these cases, it is problematic, as proposed, because it pertains more to a de facto situation or even a tactic of international relations rather than to a legitimate system recognized by all parties. Certainly there is evidence that the Ottomans, Poles, and Muscovites were often aware of Khmelnytsky’s and Doroshenko’s rapprochements with opposing parties, but usually they chose to pretend they were not aware of any dual loyalty if they could not depose them, or the hetmans were able to convince their suzerain that they were engaging with an opposite party only for tactical or military reasons.

The failure of the Ukrainian-Ottoman venture was a true turning point in the history of the northern Black Sea basin. The lapse of active Ottoman involvement there meant that at this stage a more independent Ukrainian state would not come to be. For the Ottomans it eventually meant repeated direct confrontations with the Russian Empire. That the

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45 See Taras Chukhlib, Kozaky i monarchy: Mizhnarodni vidnosyny ran’omodernoii derzhavy, 1648–1721 [Cossacks and monarchs: International relations of the early modern state, 1648–1721] (Kyiv, 2009).


47 The term “condominium” is applied to situations in which two or more powers shared sovereignty over a territory by common agreement, as was the case in certain sectors of the Ottoman–Hungarian frontier in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This term cannot be applied here given a lack of any common agreement by the suzerain powers.

Ukrainian Cossacks, who were so adept in fighting in this region ended up on the Russian rather than Ottoman side in the Russo-Ottoman wars of the eighteenth century was of no mean significance. Reliance on the old defensive Black Sea policy in the second half of the seventeenth century, a policy that previously had been so appropriate given the geopolitical realia of the region, meant that in the end Ottoman presence in the northern Black Sea would not last.