

# THE SUBLIME PORTE AND TRANSYLVANIA. I. AN UNPUBLISHED OTTOMAN DOCUMENT CONCERNING THE PEACE OF VASVÁR (1664)

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A previously unpublished Turkish document preserved in the Romanian archives brings new insight into the diplomatic maneuvers deployed by the Ottomans in 1664, in the context of the peace negotiations with the Habsburg Empire. The firman was sent by the Grand Vizier from the camp of Nyitra (Nyitra) to the Prince of Transylvania, Michael Apafi, in October 1664. Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Pasha informs the latter of the stipulations of the agreed-upon treaty only after the publication of the imperial proclamation, at the end of September, although the articles of the treaty were of crucial importance to the Transylvanian prince. The document is transliterated and accompanied by a translation and a photo.

**Keywords:** Ottoman Empire; Habsburg Empire; Transylvania; peace of Vasvár; Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Pasha; Michael Apafi; archival Ottoman sources; 17<sup>th</sup> century

The Romanian archives house dozens of original Turkish documents on the relations between Transylvania and the Sublime Porte in the second half of the seventeenth century. Only part of these documents have been made available to scholars through the efforts of Romanian Turcologues, such as Gemil Tasin, Mustafa A. Mehmed, Mihail Guboglu, Maria Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, Aurel Decei, and Cristina Feneşan. Their contributions added to the main documentary corpus gathered by the Hungarian editors of Turkish sources: Lajos Fekete, Áron Szilády, Sándor Szilágyi, Antal Velics, Ernő Kammerer, Imre Karácsony, Mária Ivanics, Gyula Káldy-Nagy, Pál Fodor and Gábor Ágoston.

The unpublished Turkish documents include firmans from the sultans, orders from the grand viziers or from viziers and supreme commanders (*serdar-i ekrem*), orders and letters from regional sandjakbeys and beylerbeys to the Prince of Transylvania and to other Transylvanian officials. For their greatest part they are friendly, cordial letters of good neighborhood, dealing with bilateral economic, social and military relations, etc. The publication of these letters will enable a better understanding of relations between the central and peripheral Ottoman power and the Transylvanian hierarchy and society.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On this subject in Romanian literature see M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, “La conquête d’Oradea (Varat) par les Turcs (1660) et la question des cinq comtés (*Beş nahije*),” *Studia et Acta Orientalia* 10 (1980): 5–13, reprinted in Eadem, *Seldjoukides, Ottomans et l’espace roumain*, ed.

One of the documents housed at present by the Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (Central National Historical Archives) (previously preserved at the State Archives of Cluj and Sibiu) that has drawn the attention of researchers is a firman issued by the chancellery of the Grand Vizier Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, whom historical sources have defined as a tough and inflexible diplomat.

The document published here is the original firman sent by the Grand Vizier from the camp of Nyitra (Nyitra) to the Prince of Transylvania, Michael Apafi.<sup>2</sup> The vizierial diploma bears no date, but this deficiency is remedied by a note in Hungarian on the verso, by the addressee: “1664. 8 October. Letter brought from Deva by the man of the Grand Vizier, on the evolution of peace negotiations and the demolition of the Székelyhid <Săcuieni> fortress.”

The Grand Vizier was informing (in the *narratio*) Prince Michael Apafi that peace negotiations (*sulh*) had been carried out with the deputy (*kapu khetüda*) of the Austrian Emperor, who had been authorized (*vekâlet-nâme*) to negotiate ten articles. Subsequently, a letter with receipts (*temessükler*)<sup>3</sup> from the Padishah and a

Cristina Feneșan (Istanbul: Éditions Isis, 2006), 263–273; Ileana Căzan, “Campania antiotomană din 1664 și pacea de la Vasvár (Eisenburg). Preliminarii și consecințe,” *Studii și materiale de istorie medie* 23 (2005): 203–214; Paul Cernovodeanu, “The Issue of the Pashalyk of Oradea as Mirrored in the Relations between Transylvania and England during the Reign of Michael I Apafi (1662–1665),” *Revue roumaine d’histoire* 32, no. 3–4 (1993): 333–348; Aurel Decei, “Aspecte economice și sociale din viața Banatului în epoca otomană,” *Studii de istorie a Banatului* 3 (1971): 12–26; Călin Felezeu, *Statutul Principatului Transilvaniei în raporturile cu Poarta Otomană (1541–1688)* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1996); Idem, “Relații bilaterale politico-diplomatice transilvano-otomane,” *Acta Musei Napocensis* 39–40 (2005): 139–152; Cristina Feneșan, *Cultura otomană a vilayetului Timișoara (1552–1716)* (Timișoara: Editura de Vest, 2004); Tahsin Gemil, “‘Capitulațiile’ Transilvaniei de la jumătatea secolului XVII,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie ‘A. D. Xenopol’* 23, no. 2 (1986): 717–721; Mustafa A. Mehmet, Ludovic Demény, “Noi documente turcești privitoare la istoria Transilvaniei din secolul al XVII-lea,” *Revista Arhivelor* 32, no. 1 (1970): 211–225; Mircea Soreanu, *Marii viziri Köprülü (1656–1710). Relațiile politice și militare între țările române și Imperiul Otoman* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Preserved at the Direcția Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale (Bucharest, Romania), Documente turcești, no. 2149. Description: original; size 73.5 x 45.5 cm; writing pattern, ductus: *divani*; written in black ink, with golden *pençe* and *sahh* (= *vidi*); oval seal. A short abstract (with errors) in Mihail Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor turcești*, vol. 2 (Bucharest, 1965), 124–125. For the transliteration I used the dictionary of Ferit Devellioğlu, *Osmanlıca-türkçe ansiklopedik luğat. Eski ve yeni harflerle*, ed. A. S. Güneççal, 17<sup>th</sup> ed. (Ankara: Aydın Kitabevi, 2000), and, as basics, the classical work of Tahsin Gemil, *Relațiile țărilor române cu Poarta otomană în documentele turcești (1601–1712)* (Bucharest: DGAS, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> For the role of *temessük*-s in the diplomatic procedure, as provisional receipts that had to be completed by the granting of a “classical” imperial *ahd-nâme* on one side and the written confirmation of the Christian ruler on the other side, see Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century): An Annotated Edition of ‘Ahdnames and Other Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 50–51. But in the document issued in June 1579, probably by Kara Üveys Pasha, beylerbey of Buda, for the Transylvanian merchants the word *temessük* appears as *litteras securitas* – Mihail Guboglu, *Paleografia și diplomatica turco-osmană. Studiu și album* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RPR, 1958), facs. 15, p. 173.

letter of the Padishah (*nâme-i hümayun*) was sent to the Emperor and all the receipts were received, then a “peace and agreement” (*sulh ve salah*) of ten articles (*on madde*) was signed. According to one of these articles, the “Germans” were to be evacuated from the fortresses occupied in Transylvania, and the fortresses were to be handed over to Michael Apafi. In agreement with the decision previously reached in Istanbul, the Székelyhid (Săcuieni) fortress was to be torn down, and the signatory parties pledged not to build any new fortresses.

The parties would appoint representatives to see to the enforcement of the articles, and Michael Apafi was required to act accordingly.

The Grand Vizier concluded by letting the latter know about his planned journey from Uyvar (Újvár) to the region of Buda.

Although the vizierial firman of the autumn of 1664 could be ascribed to the epistolary style by which friendship and affection (*muhibb-nâme*) were being shown, it hardly conceals the hiatus and deterioration of the relations between the Ottoman official and his Transylvanian vassal. In the war with the Habsburg Empire, the Ottomans had seized the opportunity to extend their domination over several regions in the Principality of Transylvania. In the spring of 1664, after the Turks had occupied the market town of Huedin and the surrounding villages, the Pasha of Oradea, Küçük Mehmed, claimed for his vilayet several villages and the town of Dej, the central headquarters of the county of Dobâca, invoking the defter of Piri Pasha.<sup>4</sup> The same danger loomed over Turda and Cojocna, two important salt mines.

Michael Apafi makes a description of the Turks’ intervention in Transylvania and its impact in his message to the Sultan of July 1664: “<Köse> Ali Pasha has seized from us Oradea and other lands, despite the fact that when he seized Oradea <1660>, he swore on the glorified head of Your Highness and on the Holy Prophet Mohamed that the Moslem people shall seize no other land than what belongs to Oradea ... yet the soldiers of Oradea plundered, laid waste and seized half of Transylvania, and they continue to persecute and drive the people away ... two villages were left without a living soul.”<sup>5</sup>

The conquering spree of the Turks – who hoped that by the peace treaty with the Imperials they would obtain confirmation of the territorial annexations – was tempered by the imperial garrison of Székelyhid, which took coercive measures against village mayors and dwellers who surrendered to the Turks without a fight.<sup>6</sup>

There are two explanations for the fact that the suzerain power concealed the stipulations of the Convention of Vasvár (10 August 1664) from the Prince of

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<sup>4</sup> Szilágyi Áron and Szilágyi Sándor, eds., *Török-magyarkori állam-okmánytár*, vol. 4 (Pest: Eggenberger Ferdinánd Akadémiai Könyvtárusnál, 1870), doc. LXXV, pp. 117–118.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, doc. LXXXVI, pp. 135–136.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, doc. XCIV/a, pp. 143–144 (6 September 1664).

Transylvania for over two months: on the one hand, the dynamics of the signature and legalization of the primary agreement concluded between Raimondo Montecuccoli and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha; and on the other hand, the duplicity of the diplomatic schemes conducted by Fazıl Ahmed Pasha and Michael Apafi.

Not only did the Grand Vizier fail to dismiss the troops after 10 August, but he called up new ones at the western border, thus gaining room for maneuver and a means of pressure, in order to obtain favorable conditions for the Ottomans in the negotiations under way with the Germans.

Michael Apafi, who kept up secret correspondence with the hierarchy of the Habsburg Empire, had managed to certify Transylvania's rallying to the anti-Ottoman alliance. Through these negotiations, Michael Apafi was hoping to obtain from the German Emperor recognition of his legitimacy as Prince of Transylvania and of the sovereignty of his kingdom.<sup>7</sup>

The strategic plan of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha to secure the western and northern borders in order to concentrate the forces of the Empire on Venice, in the direction of Crete, was undermined by the initiatives of the Prince of Transylvania, the voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia, and the Khan of Crimea, all wishing to free themselves from the "protection" of the Ottoman Porte. The message of the vizierial firman of early October 1664 – the withdrawal of the German troops from Transylvania and the demolition of the Székelyhid fortress –, was meant to appease Michael Apafi's fears, who was confronted with the acute danger of having this fortress occupied by the Ottomans. The Székelyhid (Săcuieni) fortress – occupied by the imperial garrisons since 1661<sup>8</sup> – was in the close proximity of the vilayet of Oradea, and its strategic position had made it a major target for annexation by the Ottoman governor of the region. Hence, its demolition should have been considered by Michael Apafi as the lesser evil, more exactly as the best solution for securing Transylvania's borders. One should ascribe to the same "captatio benevolentiae" effort the Grand Vizier's decision to eliminate from the area the resourceful Pasha of Oradea, Küçük Mehmed, the initiator and organizer of the military interventions in Transylvania, who in September 1664 was transferred to the *eyâlet* of Karamania.<sup>9</sup>

The firman of the Grand Vizier was sent to Michael Apafi after the publication of the imperial proclamation, at the end of September, by the president

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<sup>7</sup> In the summer of 1664 a preliminary agreement was concluded in which Emperor Leopold recognized Michael Apafi as prince of Transylvania – Ágnes R. Várkonyi, "Transylvania and the Porte in the Second Half of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century," in *Beşinci Milletler Arası Türkoloji Kongresi, İstanbul, 23–28 Eylül 1985. Tebliğler III. Türk Tarihi*, vol. 2 (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1985), 663.

<sup>8</sup> The German garrisons were installed in 1661 in the following fortresses: Beclean, Cluj, Chioar, Gherla and Săcuieni. Frightened, Michael Apafi requested from the Sublime Porte the demolition of the Săcuieni fortress.

<sup>9</sup> Szilády and Szilágyi, *Állam-okmánytár*, vol. 4, doc. XCVII, pp. 151–156.

of the Imperial Privy Council, Prince Johann Ferdinand Porcia, who informed him that the Emperor had made peace with the Sublime Porte at Vasvár on 10 August 1664. Like the Ottomans, the Imperials had kept secret the peace for nearly two months.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike the Treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606), which had become valid after six years, the Treaty of Vasvár was quickly confirmed by both the Emperor and the Sultan, after approximately six months.<sup>11</sup>

Transylvania remained under the unique umbrella of the Ottoman Empire, which organized between the Habsburg Empire and Transylvania the new *eyâlet* of Újvár.<sup>12</sup> The fortress of Săcuieni, coveted by the Turks, Germans and Transylvanians, was demolished forever in 1665.

## DOCUMENT

### Hüve

1. İftihâr-ı ümerây-i el-izâm il-Iseviyye muhtâr-ı kübera-ı el-fâhim fi'l millet il-Mesihyye, maslah-ı masalih cemâhir üt-taifet ün-Nasrâniyye sâhib-i ez-zial el-himmet ve ül-vakar, sâhib-i delâil ül-mecd ve ül-iftihâr musâdakat nişân muhâlasat unvan

2. bi'l-fi'l Erdel hâkimi olan Apafî Mihâl hutimet avâkibehu bi'lhayır kabline, dostluğa layık selâm-i selâmet encâm iblağıyla inhâ-i dostâne bu dur ki: benim dostum tarafımızdan sual olunur ise Nemçe İmparatoru tarafından

3. sulh hususi için kapu kethüdasına memhûr vekâlet-nâmesi gelmekle on madde üzerine söyleşilüb ve tarafımızdan temessükler virildiğinden sonra hâlen şevketlü ve inayetlü Padişahımız hazretlerine ol temessükler mucibince nâmesi gelüb ve taraf-ı şehriyarinden dahi kenduye

4. nâme-i hümâyûni izzet makrun gönderilüb sulh ve salâh ol on madde üzerine bağlanmıştır. Zikr olunan on maddenin birisi Erdel kal'ayından olub içinde Nemçe olan kal'alardan Nemçesin ihrâc ve kal'aları size teslim etmektir

<sup>10</sup> Ágnes R. Várkonyi, "The End of Turkish Rule in Transylvania and the Reunification of Hungary (1660–1711)," in *History of Transylvania* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994), 362.

<sup>11</sup> Tahsin Gemil, *Ţările române în contextul politic internațional (1621–1672)* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1979), 195.

<sup>12</sup> For the newest studies on the *eyâlet* of Újvár (Nove Zamky) see Sadık Müfit Bilge, *Osmanlı'nın Macaristanı. Osmanlı Hâkimiyetindeki Macaristan'ın Tarihi Coğrafyası ve İdarî Taksimatı (1526–1718)* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2010), 320–327.

5. ve Sekelhiye kal'ası mukaddema İstanbul'da iken dahi yıkılmasına karar verilmişken hâlen söyleşildiği üzere yıkılıb yer ile berâber kılınub tarafeyinden min ba'd yapılmamak üzeredir. İnşa'Allahu Te'âlâ bundan sonra mevâdd icrasına tarafeynden adamlar tayin olunur vardıklarında

6. siz dahi vech-i meşruh üzere amel edesiz. Ve biz dahi hâlen Uyvar'dan hareket ve Budin canibine teveccüh etmişüzdür. Bu hususlar ma'lûmunuz olmak için mâ-beynde olan dostuluğuna binâen bildirilmiştir. İnşa'Allahu Te'âlâ mektub ile adamınız varduğunda

7. eğlendirmeyüb ol tarafın i'lamı mücib ahvalım yazub hâcilen el-vakit yollarsınız. Baki es-selâm aleyh min et-tebâ el-Hüda.

<imza>  
Sahray-ı küffâr  
nehr-i Nitra

*On the verso, in Hungarian:* "1664.8.8bris. Deuara feo vezer embere hozta level, az Bekesegnek veghez menetérol. Az Székelyh vararak el hanyasarol."

## TRANSLATION

He!

With health greetings and good wishes, according to the friendship, sent to him who is praised by the higher emirs of Jesus, the all powerful benefactor of Messiah's nation, the ordinator of peace among the communities of the Nasranian nation, ruler of the times, the support and the dignified, the leader on the path of glory, the owner of friendship and object of mutual fellowship, he who is the real ruler of Transylvania, Apafi Michael – may his end be happy! – should we be asked by my friend – the friendly message is as follows:

The German Emperor's authorization in relation with the peace, with seal affixed, being received by his deputy, ten articles were discussed, and after the receipts were granted by us and the letter in agreement with the receipts arrived from his highness, our great and generous Padishah <Mehmed IV> and the Emperor's <Leopold I> party – who was even sent and honored with an imperial letter – signed a <treaty of> peace and welfare with ten articles.

Of the ten aforementioned articles, one refers to the fortresses of Transylvania with German dwellers; the Germans will evacuate the fortresses and hand them over to you; and the Säcuieni fortification – which I had already decided to have demolished when I was in Istanbul –, such as agreed by both parties, will be demolished and leveled with the ground.

After which, for the enforcement of the articles – the Lord permitting! – commissioners will be appointed by both parties, and you yourself will act in accordance upon their arrival. As for us, we are currently moving away from Újvár towards Buda.

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Given the friendship between us, I have informed you so that you may be knowledgeable of these issues. When our man arrives with the letter – may the Lord be praised! –, you will waste no time, but write the answer about how things stand there, and send it out speedily.

In other ways, greetings to him who follows the path of the Lord!

<signature>

The Unbelievers' plain

River Nytra

*On the verso:* “1664. 8 October. Letter carried to Deva by the grand vizier’s man, on the progress of peace negotiations and the demolition of the Săcuieni fortress.”