

OTTOMAN EMPIRE
AND
EUROPEAN THEATRE

I

THE AGE OF
MOZART AND SELIM III
(1756 – 1808)



edited by
MICHAEL HÜTTLER · HANS ERNST WEIDINGER

HOLLITZER

II



DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN

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Series Editors

HANS ERNST WEIDINGER · MICHAEL HÜTTLER



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Editorial assistance, copy-editing and index: Caroline Herfert, Inge Praxl (Vienna, Austria)

English copy-editing: Heather Evans (Kingston, Canada)

Turkish copy-editing: Suna Suner (Vienna, Austria)

Layout: Nikola Stevanovic (Belgrade, Serbia)

Cover-design: Daniel Egg (Vienna, Austria)

Printed and bound in the EU

Cover-image: Tughra of Sultan Selim III

The symposia were supported by the Turkish Embassy Vienna, the Austrian Foreign Ministry, the UNESCO International Theatre Institute (ITI) – Austrian Centre, the Austrian Cultural Forum Istanbul, and Deniz Bank AG.

Michael Hüttler and Hans Ernst Weidinger (eds.): *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre*. Vol. 1: *The Age of Mozart and Selim III (1756–1808)*.

Wien: HOLLITZER Wissenschaftsverlag, 2013 (Ottomania 1)

© HOLLITZER Wissenschaftsverlag, Wien 2013

HOLLITZER Wissenschaftsverlag

Trautsongasse 6/6, A-1080 Wien

a division of

HOLLITZER Baustoffwerke Graz GmbH

Stadiongasse 6-8, A-1010 Wien

www.hollitzer.at

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ISBN 978-3-99012-065-1 (hbk)

ISBN 978-3-99012-067-5 (epub)

ISBN 978-3-99012-066-8 (pdf)

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THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND EUROPE IN THE WAKE OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

MEHMET ALAADDİN YALÇINKAYA (TRABZON)

At the end of the sixteen-year period following the failed siege of Vienna, the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Karlowitz with the Catholic wing of the Holy League in 1699. This event represented the first and most important loss of Ottoman territory. Then in 1700 the Ottomans signed the Treaty of Istanbul with Russia. In fact, the Treaty of Karlowitz both marked a turning point in Ottoman relations with Christian Europe and signalled a temporary end to domestic economic and political problems. The loss of territory, which was considered an inseparable part of the Ottoman Empire, had a profoundly negative effect on Ottoman morale.¹ Some state officials believed that efforts directed towards saving the empire were bound to fail. The Ottoman ruling elite and some intellectuals of the period argued that the superiority of the Europeans in certain areas should be accepted and that European practices should be adapted for Ottoman reforms. From the very beginning, Ottoman reformers were of the opinion that with the adoption of the European military system and technology it would be possible to repel the threat of Western encroachment on Ottoman territory.² Thus the traditionalist reform movement appeared as a synthesis of the old and the new ideas. Although this movement did not become successful to the extent it was intended, it opened the way for the radical reforms made during the reign of Mahmud II (b.1785, r.1808–1839) at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The reforms of the early eighteenth century were limited because of the resistance of those who argued that the reform movement would only weaken the Ottoman system. Therefore, the reform movements of the eighteenth century achieved only limited results. Most of the reformers did not reap the fruits of their labour and paid for their radical views with their lives. They did, however, bequeath their knowledge to the next generation and served as models for the reformers who followed them.³

1 Kemal Çiçek: "II. Viyana Kuşatması ve Avrupa'dan Dönüş (1683–1703)", in: *Türkler*, 9, 2000, pp. 746–764. – Feridun Mustafa Emecen: "Kuruluş'tan Küçük Kaynarca'ya", in: *Osmanlı Devleti ve Medeniyeti Tarihi*, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu. Istanbul: İslam Tarih, Sanat ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi, 1994–1998, 2 vols., vol. 1 (1994), pp. 5–63.

2 For the Ottoman image of the West cf. Bernard Lewis: *Muslim Discovery of Europe*. New York: Norton, 1982. For a general study on early Ottoman modernization cf. Fatma Müge Göçek: *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

3 For information regarding Ottoman reform policy cf. Mehmet Alaaddin Yalçinkaya: "XVIII.

OTTOMAN-EUROPEAN RELATIONS
IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY:
THE OTTOMAN REVIVAL AND EARLY REFORM AGE

The first European-style reform movement in Ottoman history began during the reign of Ahmed III (1673–1736, r.1703–1730). The reason for the introduction of European-style reform at this time was the belief that the Ottoman military system and technology were ineffective in competition with the Europeans. The Ottomans believed that it was necessary to adopt these systems from the Europeans.⁴ European restrictions on the export of raw materials to the Ottoman Empire, which were needed for weapons production, were abolished after the Treaty of Karlowitz. After the Treaty of Karlowitz the Ottomans no longer constituted a threat to Europeans. However, the Protestants of northwestern European countries such as Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden, and the other allied countries began to feel the necessity to improve relations with the Ottomans. The mentality of the Crusaders was waning in the Protestant world and in the emerging competition between the ‘great powers’, cooperation with the Ottomans was considered an important political asset.⁵

The Ottomans recovered some lost territories from the Russians at the Pruth campaign in 1711 and also during the Ottoman-Venetian war in 1715. The demonstration of the superiority of the Ottoman army against the Russians and the Venetians during the expedition of Pruth, and Ottoman achievements in the period following the Treaty of Karlowitz led the Ottoman rulers to believe that they could regain further lost territories.⁶ The expedition to Russia and Venice had demonstrated that the Ottoman Empire could defeat the European states if only one state faced it in the battlefield. After the Austrian-Venetian alliance in 1716, again the Ottomans were defeated and lost some territories. Through the mediation of British and Dutch ambassadors, the Treaty of Passarowitz was signed

Yüzyıl: Islahat, Değişim ve Diplomasi Dönemi (1703–1789)”, in: *Türkler*, 12, 2002, pp. 470–502. – Stanford Jay Shaw: *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye*. İstanbul: E. Yayınları, 1994 (orig. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 1977), vol. 1, pp. 307–310.

- 4 For a special study on Ottoman and Western military technology cf. Jonathan Grant: “Rethinking the Ottoman ‘Decline’: Military Technology Diffusion in the Ottoman Empire, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries”, in: *Journal of World History*, 10/1, 1999, pp. 179–201. – Rhoads Murphey: “The Ottoman Attitudes towards the Adaptation of Western Technology: The Role of the Efrenci Technicians in Civil and Military Applications”, in: *Contributions à l’histoire économique et sociale de l’Empire Ottoman*, ed. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Paul Dumont. Paris: Peeters, 1983, pp. 287–298.
- 5 Mehmet Alaaddin Yalçinkaya: “The Eighteenth Century: A Period of Reform, Change and Diplomacy (1703–1789)”, in: *The Turks*, ed. Hasan Celâl Güzel. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002, 6 vols., vol. 4, pp. 91–123 (especially p. 92).
- 6 David Jayne Hill: *A History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*. New York: Fertig, 1967, 3 vols., vol. 3, pp. 340–402.

on July 21, 1718, and each side retained the territories it had captured. Ottoman initiatives to recapture territories lost after the Treaty of Karlowitz were successful when the Ottomans fought separate wars against Russia and Venice. When they fought both Austria and Venice, however, the Ottoman army lost a number of logistically important territories. Apart from losing their territories alongside the Danube,⁷ the Treaty of Passarowitz represented a small but significant Ottoman defeat. The Ottomans not only lost territories and troops, but their prestige and morale were damaged. These defeats proved that minor Ottoman reforms were not sufficient to challenge Europe's new infantry and artillery units. Although the reorganization of Ottoman forces was successful, the Janissaries no longer spread fear and terror throughout Europe as they had done in the classical period of Ottoman history. Apart from the armed forces, the government was in need of deep-seated, long-term reforms as opposed to minor innovations. Unfortunately, the Ottoman ruling elite established an administrative system which continued to cater to their needs. It was a system based on the maintenance of class privilege, not a modern merit-based system.⁸

THE TULIP ERA

After the Treaty of Passarowitz, the Ottomans had started a new reform period to save the empire's decline. During the Tulip Era (1718–1730), the number of diplomatic envoys and representatives who were sent to foreign countries increased dramatically. These envoys, sent to Paris, Vienna, Warsaw, Poland and Russia, not only carried out diplomatic and commercial negotiations, but also began to collect information and prepare reports on the diplomacy, culture, art, agriculture, industry, and technological power of Europe. The most influential of these reports was prepared by Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi (d.1732), who resided in Paris from 1720 to 1721. The effect this report had on the reform movement was felt immediately and it opened the first and most important breach in the Ottoman iron curtain.⁹ The Ottomans benefited from working with Europeans who were converts to Islam, but eventually they treated all Europeans in the same manner.¹⁰ The mutual taboos which had existed for centuries began to disappear in both Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

7 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı: *Osmanlı Tarihi*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1978, vol. 4/1, pp. 140–146. – Lavender Cassels: *The Struggle for the Ottoman Empire: 1717–1740*. London: Murray, 1966, p. 14.

8 Yalçınkaya: “The Eighteenth Century”, p. 97.

9 There are many Turkish and foreign studies on Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed and his time in Paris. The most outstanding of these studies is Göçek: *East Encounters West*.

10 Quataert outlines the changes in the European attitude towards the Ottomans as well as the changing Ottoman approach to the Europeans, cf. Donald Quataert: *The Ottoman Empire 1700–1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 6–11.