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AFTER THE TREATY OF BELGRADE (1739)

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ALEKSANDER HALENKO

TOWARDS THE CHARACTER OF OTTOMAN POLICY  
IN THE NORTHERN BLACK SEA REGION AFTER  
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The policy of the Ottoman empire in the northern Black Sea region in the 18th century is represented mainly by the texts of peace treaties, concluded by the Sublime Porte with neighbouring powers in that area, such as Austria, Russia and Poland. Not being compared with other sources on the policy in regard to Russia, they were frequently misinterpreted according to the opinions and sympathies of historians. The Russian historians, both pre-revolutionary and Soviet, were inclined to exaggerate the gravity of the treaties of Pruth (1711), Adrianople (1713), and especially that of Belgrade (1739), clearly in order to emphasise the grandeur of the triumph at Küçük Kaynarca (1774), and later. For them, Küçük Kaynarca was a turning point in the struggle of the Ottoman empire against Russian advance southward. Possibly, this Russian victory overshadowed all previous successes, but the fact is that the treaty of Belgrade is commonly regarded as a victory for the Ottomans and grave for the Russians.

On closer examination the significance of the treaty does not seem so clear cut. The Ottomans, in fact, held their steppe frontier unaltered, keeping the Russians far from the coastline. They did not allow the Russians to have a fleet in the Black Sea, and even in the shallow gulf of Sivash (Zabash), where hardly any shipping was possible, merchants from Russia were compelled to hire only Ottoman ships for their trading activities.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Ottomans granted Russian merchants all commercial privileges allowed to other foreign subjects.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Ottomans did make essential concessions to Russians in commercial spheres. Therefore, from a modern point of view, such a treaty does not support the argument that the Ottomans were dominant in the Black Sea.

The results of peace talks in Belgrade could have had graver consequences for the Ottomans, if we take into consideration the Russian victories in the war of 1736-1739. The Russians captured Azov, twice invaded

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1 – Noradounghian, G., *Recueil d'Actes Internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman*, I, Paris, 1897, p. 258, 265.

2 – *Ibid.*, p. 262.

the Crimea, burned the capital Bahçesaray, and even seized the fortress of Hotin (1739). It is therefore surprising that the Ottomans were able to keep their position in the north Black Sea region intact. However, two years later Russia succeeded in neutralising the disadvantageous effect of the treaty of Belgrade as far as political problems were concerned.<sup>3</sup> Although J. Hammer's assessment overestimates, to some extent, the results of Russian diplomatic efforts, it is impossible to deny that the Russian Empress, Elizabeth I, achieved much due to the special convention of 1741. Under the terms of this convention the Sublime Porte agreed to Russian construction of a fortress near Azov (Azak), recognised the Zaporozhian Cossacks and their possessions under Russian suzerainty and, in 1747, recognised the imperial title of Elizabeth. Thus the Russians, without firing a shot, were able to achieve some important aims, partly, perhaps, as a result of the earlier successes of the Russian armies.

Returning to the commerce, why did the Ottomans yield to Russian demands in Belgrade? What was their attitude to commercial relations with the enemies in the North? Can the terms of the treaty, concerning trade, be regarded as a concession to Russia, because of apparent concessions over commerce, while the *status quo* on the borders was maintained? By answering these questions one may begin to understand the priorities of Ottoman foreign policy in this crucial period in its rivalry with Russia for predominance in the northern part of the Black Sea.

Ukraine exercised some autonomy within the borders of the Russian empire in the middle of the 18th century and, while not truly independent, its role in international relations in the Black Sea area still carried some weight. It is for this reason that the Ukrainian archives contain documents concerning relations between the Russian empire and the Ottoman empire in the middle of the 18th century. There is an intriguing collection of Turkish and Tatar letters to the *Kosh* (Headquarters) of the Zaporozhian Host (Dniپر Cossacks) and to Russian officials in Ukraine from the 1740s to the 1770s. Recently an interesting document was found in this collection which throws new light on the economic and political situation in the northern Black Sea region after the treaty of Belgrade. The document in question is a letter from the *Kadı* of Caffa to the Russian governor-general of Kiev and of the left-bank Ukraine (see plate).<sup>4</sup> Its contents are as follows:

Our faithful friend Mikhail Ivanovich Leon[t]iev, the present General of Kiev, the chief of the Christian princes and the chief of the

3 – Hammer, J., *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours*, XV, Paris, 1834, p. 33.

4 – Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine (Kiev), Fond 229, inventory 1, file 12, p. 31. The document measures 32.6 × 32.6 × 21.2 cms. and has no watermark or *invocatio*, the top of the manuscript having been cut away. The seal on the *verso* reads 'Abd ul-Fattah'. There is a copy of the document given at the end of this article

great men of the Christians – may he end his life as a Muslim! [...] The news has arrived that the Barabash merchants are coming to our capital city of Caffa. We have received and understood the illustrious order [*ferman* (issued)] by the Sublime Porte to their lands [namely]: when the Moscovite merchants bring their goods and wares from their lands to Caffa for trading purposes, they are doing so in compliance with the treaty's conditions. It is ordered that they should be careful not to take higher duties from your merchants frequenting Caffa than those of the treaty and this order and they [the Ottoman customs officers] shall return the higher [duties] imposed. Knowing this, the Barabash merchants should demand that the names of their people should be put in written form in the *Muhabbatname*.

May [our] friendship remain forever!  
I, the poor Abd ul-Fattah, the *kadı*  
In the city of Caffa, the allied

The document is verified by the seal with the inscription 'Abd ul-Fattah'.

This document has no date, but it can be established at any rate approximately, for General Leontiev occupied the post of governor-general of Kiev from 1735 to 1752.<sup>5</sup> Thus the treaty, mentioned in the document is, of course, the treaty of Belgrade of 1740. The date of the dossier which contains the document under discussion is 1749-1750. Although some dossiers of the Zaporozhian archives were collected in the 19th century,<sup>6</sup> it does appear feasible that this document does indeed date from that period and was not placed there at random. At that time there was frequent correspondence between the officials of the Sublime Porte and the Crimean Khanate on one hand and General Leontiev on the other. There are seven relevant letters, published in the collection of documents on the history of the Crimean Khanate, discovered in the archives of the Topkapı Palace.<sup>7</sup> General Leontiev could thus have been a well known person in Crimea as well as in Istanbul at this time. This supports the dating of the document to around 1749-1750. It is obvious, too, that the *kadı* of Caffa clearly distinguishes between Ukraine and Russia, referring to the merchants of the two lands by different names, *barabash* and *moscov* respectively; it was the Ukrainians from beyond the left bank of the Dnieper whom the Ottomans called *barabash*. This stresses once more that Ukraine was considered by the Sublime Porte as a area of trade

5 – Berlinsky, M.F., *История города Киева* [The History of the City of Kiev], Kiev, 1991, p. 143, 149.

6 – *Архів Запорозької Січі: Опис матеріалів* [The Archives of Zaporozhskij Sech': Description of Materials], Kiev, 1931, pp. VIII-XV.

7 – Bennigsen, A.- Boratav, N.P.- Desai, D. and Lemercier-Quelquejai, C., *Le Khanat de Crimée dans les Archives du Musée du Palais de Topkapı*, Paris, 1978, p. 222-227.

in its own right, disregarding its position as part of the Russian empire. Thus, this letter directly concerns the Ottoman trading policy toward Ukraine after the treaty of Belgrade.

The letter, being sent by a high ranking representative of the Ottoman administration and referring to the sultan's *ferman*, looks like an obvious invitation for the Ukrainians to come and trade in the sultan's lands, showing the Ottomans' strong concern for their trade with Ukraine. In comparison with other extant letters from the Ukrainian-Turkish correspondence of the 18th century, this seems surprising, for in general they depicted a Tatar-Cossack vendetta. Unfortunately, relations between the two countries have never been sufficiently studied. For the 15th and 16th centuries, H. İnalcık has shown the dependence of the Ottoman capital on food stuffs, raw materials and slaves from the Black Sea basin.<sup>8</sup> But as far as the 18th century is concerned, there are no major works to assist in asserting the validity of the letter. We do, however, have at our disposal data which could shed light on some aspects of the commercial relations between these countries.

The commercial ties between Ukraine and the Crimean Khanate, in particular concerning the salt trade, are better known. There is much documented evidence proving its vital importance for both countries. In the middle of the 17th a French officer in Polish service and a keen observer, G. L. de Beauplan, noted that Ukraine suffered from a lack of salt, which came into the country only from Pocouche (in Transcarpathian Ukraine).<sup>9</sup> In the 18th century, when hostilities between the Cossacks and the Crimeans had declined, salt began being imported from salt lakes situated in the vicinity of the Perecopian fortress (Or-Kapı) and the Ukrainians became one of the main contractors in the salt trade with the Crimea. The Crimean authorities were aware of the importance of salt exports to Ukraine, which brought them a considerable income. A letter, written on 26 April 1764 by the *emin* of the Perecopian salt lakes (Baba imam Tuzly) clearly testifies to this. The *emin* informed the Zaporozhian Cossacks that that year's salt deposits were many times larger than in previous years and that grass and water were abundant along the steppe roads.<sup>10</sup> Ukrainian merchants (*chumaks*) were granted some privileges in the salt trade. The French consul in Bahçesaray in the 1750s, Peyssonnel, once described in his *Traité sur le commerce de la Mer Noire*, how provocatively the Ukrainians sometimes behaved. Since the customs duties were imposed on every carriage, the *chumaks*, attempting to pay less

8 – See İnalcık, H., *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, London, 1973, p. 129-133, 144-145. This point of view is supported by Ostapchuk, V., "Five documents from the Topkapı Palace on the Ottoman defence of the Black Sea coast against the Cossacks (1639)", in: *Journal of Turkish Studies*, XI (1987), p. 49.

9 – G. L. de Beauplan, *Description d'Ukraine*, Rouen, 1660, p. 84.

10 – Quoted in Bukatevich, N.I., *Чумацтво на Україні [Chumak trade in Ukraine]*, Odessa, 1928, p. 14.

customs, overloaded their carriages or even used specially built carriages several times larger than usual; the customs officers were well aware of this but paid no attention to such deceit.<sup>11</sup> Of course, robbery and pillaging had not yet disappeared from the steppes and there are, for example, 37 incidents of pillaging of Ukrainian merchant caravans in the steppe registered in the Zaporozhian archives for the years 1749 to 1750.<sup>12</sup> But such incidents were an 18th century reality not merely restricted to the steppe, known popularly as the Wild Plain.

Apart from salt, the wine from the Crimea was also appreciated in Ukraine; the Cossack passion for wine is well-known.<sup>13</sup> Various sources not only contain data on the import of wine from the Crimea, but also represent the Cossacks as perceptive connoisseurs of these wines.<sup>14</sup> There were other items the Ukrainians imported from the Crimea in the 18th century. According to the estimate of the Russian consul in the Crimea in the 1760s, import to Ukraine exceeded the export from Ukraine to the Crimea by more than 60,000 roubles a year, which even made Crimea dependant on the trade with the Ukraine.<sup>15</sup> Quite apart from this evidence, it is impossible to ignore the care with which the Crimean authorities fostered their trade with Ukraine. The letter from the *emin* of the Perekopian salt lakes, mentioned above, sets a good precedent for the document being examined here.

At the same time the position of the Crimean Khans, clear though it was, was not one which could be compatible with that of the Ottoman government, on whose behalf the *kadı* of Caffa addressed the Kievan governor-general, Leontiev. Although further studies of this problem will certainly uncover new data concerning the commerce between Ukraine and the lands under the direct control of the Sublime Porte, it is still possible now to find a satisfactory explanation for the letter using data scattered through various publications.

11 – *Ibid.*, p. 24.

12 – *Ibid.*, p. 29.

13 – Beauplan wrote: «Je ne croy pas, qu'il y ait nation au monde semblable à la leur, pour ce qui concerne la liberté de boir: car ils ne sont pas si tost des ennuez qu'ils ne reprennent aussi tost (comme l'on dit) du poil de la beste, toutesfois cela s'entend pendant le temps de loisir'. See *op. cit.*, p. 6.

14 – For example, Ivan Kuliabka, the Colonel of the regiment of Lubny, in his letter to the Koshovy, the Commander-in-Chief of the Zaporozhian Host, complained of his servants, who because of their simplicity could not bring him the wine from the Crimea he had ordered them to buy, and asked the Koshovy for help in purchasing «two barrels of the best white dessert wine from Sudak or from Belbek, if the wine of Sudak should not be available and if that should be good and delicious», in: *Київська старовина*, 1992, pt. 3, p. 14.

15 – Javomitskij, D.I. (ed.), *Сборник материалов для истории запорожских козаков* [Collection of the Sources of the History of the Zaporozhian Cossacks], St. Petersburg, 1888, p. 204.



In his report to the Parliament, Sir Henry Grenville, an English resident in Istanbul in the middle of the 18th century, listed goods which flowed via the Black Sea to the Ottoman capital. In particular he pointed out such items as wheat, barley, buffaloes, live sheep and lambs, lard, candles and butter. Grenville paid special attention to the latter, jealously noting that the Turks preferred butter brought in buffalo skins, 'rancid, mixed with the mutton fat and very bad butter', to the best English or Dutch product.<sup>16</sup> He was clearly referring to the famous butter of Caffa which was reputed in Istanbul to be the best.<sup>17</sup>

Last century an amateur collector of antiquities, A. Andrijevsky, published several collections of documents of the Zaporozhian Host from the archives of the Kievan governor-general's office.<sup>18</sup> There are many documents concerning commercial relations between Ukraine and Ottoman possessions which mention various goods carried by Tatars, Turks and Ukrainians from Ukraine and into the inner Crimean markets or to the ports of Özü, Gezleve and Caffa. Among them, one can find those listed by Grenville. An idea of the goods involved is given by the register made by the Russian custom officer, Captain Krivtsov, of merchants who crossed the frontier at Sich' on their return from Ukraine in October 1747:

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 4 October  | one Armenian from Bahçesaray, Martyn Tarassov, with his four servants in four carriages loaded with butter |
| 10 October | one Greek, Stepan from Karasubazar, in one carriage, loaded with butter, also <sup>19</sup>                |

16 – Quoted in Braudel, F., *Le temps du Monde* (Russian trans.), Moscow, 1992, p. 49-50.

17 – Veinstein, G., "From the Italians to the Ottomans: the Case of the Northern Black Sea Coast in the Sixteenth Century", in: *Mediterranean Historical Review*, I (1986), p. 227.

18 – *Дела касающиеся запорожцев 1715-1774 гг* [Documents Concerning the Zaporozhians, 1715-1774], *Записки Одесского Общества Истории и Древностей* (hereafter cited as *ZOOID*), XIV (hereafter cited as *Dela*); *Материалы по истории Запорожья и пограничных отношений (1743-1767)* [The Materials for the History of Zaporozhie and Border Relations (1743-1767)], *ZOOID* XVI, p. 117-266; XVII, p. 85-156 (hereafter cited as *Materialy*); *К истории пограничных наших сношений с Крымским ханством (путевой журнал секунд-майора Матвея Миронова в командировку его к Крымскому хану 1755 г.)* [Towards the History of Our Border Relations with the Crimean Khanate (The Journal of the Travels of Major Marvej Mironov during his Mission to the Crimean Khan, 1755)], *Киевская старина*, II (1885), (hereafter cited as *K istorii*), p.339-356; *Русские конфиденты в Турции и Крыму в 1765-1768 гг.* [The Russian Secret Residents in Turkey and the Crimea in 1765-1768], Kiev, 1894.

19 – Taking into consideration that the journey to Istanbul from Ukraine took several weeks in the 18th century, it is possible that Sir Henry Grenville had sufficient reason for not admiring such butter.

- 19 October    one Perekopian janissary, Mehmet Paşa, and his six companions on horseback with 250 sheep and 100 cattle; one Perekopian Tatar, Chillilej, and his six companions on horseback with 70 sheep and 100 cattle
- 21 October    one Armenian from Danilo Ivanov, and his two companions with seven cattle and 600 sheep
- 29 October    one Perekopian janissary, Mehmet Paşa, and his three servants on horseback with 50 cattle; one janissary, Ahmet Paşa, and his 13 companions with one carriage, loaded with provisions, and 64 cattle and 900 sheep; one Turk, Ali Paşa, and his 11 companions on horseback with 135 cattle and 650 sheep<sup>20</sup>

Thus, in October 1747 the customs at Sich' alone let through eight merchants and their 45 servants and companions with 456 cattle, 2,470 sheep and five carriages loaded with butter.

In the summer the merchant caravans were more frequent and more crowded. Earlier, from 13 to 18 August of the same year, eight Turks with their servants and two Greeks, who were returning from Ukraine to the Crimea, were registered at Sich'.<sup>21</sup>

The document also refers to 35 merchants from Ukraine who moved southward with their merchandise. Furthermore, Ukrainians traded irrespective of the seasons, visiting the markets in the Crimean interior several times a year. Ivan Matvejenko, a Cossack from Perevolochna from the regiment of Poltava, described in his single application how he went to Sudak in the Crimea from October to December 1748, returning there again in May 1749.<sup>22</sup> Some people even moved into the Crimea and set up their own offices there. Thus, when in 1766 the Russian government was searching for suitable people to entrust with secret commissions, Vasilij Retsetov and Pavlo Rudenko were proposed. They were merchants from Ukraine who traded in the 'White' Sea, Istanbul and the Crimea and lived primarily in the Crimea rather than in their Motherland.<sup>23</sup> The merchant from Putivl, Aleksej Shestakov, according to another document, «conducted his commerce in the Crimea in Perekop, Bahçesaray, Gezleve and Caffa and had his own clerks in all those cities and also spoke Tatar». He was also known at the Crimean Khan's court.<sup>24</sup> His compatriot, Andrej Sushilin, lived in Bahçesaray.<sup>25</sup>

20 – *Dela*, p. 427.

21 – *Ibid.*, p. 404.

22 – *Materialy*, XVI, p. 179.

23 – *Русские конфиденнты...*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

24 – *Dela*, p. 540-541.

25 – *К истории...*, *op. cit.*, p. 352-353.



Judging from the information prepared for the Russian government about possible secret agents resident in the Ottoman empire, the direct sea trade with Ukraine clearly had a position of some importance in the economy of the Ottoman empire even in the 1760s, in spite of restrictions imposed by the treaty of 1739. It was indeed profitable. According to Semënov, a Russian customs officer and interpreter from Turkish and Tatar who had spent several years in service at Zaporozhian Sich' in the 1740s and 1750s, the Turkish merchants involved in the sea trade made a profit, excluding overhead expenses, of between 15 and 20 per cent more than that which accrued from the overland trade.<sup>26</sup> This branch of commerce must surely have flourished earlier and the Ukrainians, too, had a direct interest in participating in maritime enterprises.

Indeed, Ukrainian maritime trading was not new, for the Sublime Porte had concluded a treaty with them granting free navigation in Ottoman waters as far back as 1649.<sup>27</sup> During the following century Ukraine was the field of rivalry between the Russian and Ottoman empires. Ukraine itself, balancing between great powers in its attempts to gain independence, fell several times under the protection of the sultan when, in the period between 1709 and 1734, that is just before the war of 1736-1739, the Zaporozhian Host, trying to avoid Russian reprisals for the alliance with the Swedish king Charles XII, settled on lands belonging to the Crimean Khanate and became the sultan's subjects for the last time. In accordance with the treaties of Pruth (1711) and Adrianople (1713), Russia nominally renounced its rights regarding Ukraine. Thus, the Ukrainians, or at any rate Zaporozhian Cossacks, were not considered before the convention of 1741 as Moscow subjects *de jure* by the Ottomans. Taking advantage of the uncertainty over their citizenship, merchants from Ukraine freely sailed in Ottoman waters, including the Bosphorus and Mediterranean, even on their own vessels, until the 1740s. Two pilgrims from the Ukrainian city of Novhorod-Siverskyj on their way to the Holy Places via Istanbul in 1704, meeting compatriots, transferred from the Turkish ship on which they were travelling to the boats (*kajuk*) of these Ukrainians.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the Ukrainian merchants played an important role in Ukrainian-Ottoman trade. The lively character and mutual profit of the trade be-

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26 – *Ibid.*, p. 627.

27 – *Собрание государственных грамот и договоров, хранящихся в Государственной Коллегии Иностранных дел* [The Collection of State Orders preserved in State Collegium of Foreign Affairs], pt. 3, Moscow, 1822, p. 444-447.

28 – *Паломники-писатели петровского и послепетровского времени или путники в святой град Иерусалим* [The Pilgrim writers at the Time of Peter I and later or Travellers to the Holy City of Jerusalem] compiled by Archmandrit Leonid, *Чтения в Императорском Обществе Истории и Древностей* [Lecture Given at the Imperial Society of History and Antiquities], 1873, III, p. 3 (hereafter cited as *Palomniki*).

tween the subjects of both empires seems indisputable and confirms the reason for the sultan's *ferman* mentioned in the letter of the *kadı* of Caffa.

Nevertheless, it does not explain the contradiction between the terms of the treaty: why, on the one hand, did the treaty forbid the Russians from having any fleet in the Black and Azov seas, including the shallow Gulf of Sivash, but, on the other, grant Russian subjects commercial privileges?

The war of 1736-1739 suddenly changed the situation in the Black Sea. The Ottoman empire could not support its position in the struggle against Russia by its military successes. Therefore, during the peace talks in Belgrade the Grand Vizier Hacı Mehmed Paşa directed all his efforts at containing any Russian advance towards the sea. Amazingly, he was successful. The Sublime Porte maintained the territorial *status quo* while simultaneously imposing effective limits on the growth of Russian maritime power in the region. Though the previous treaties did not allow Russian navigation in these waters,<sup>29</sup> the Russian navy nevertheless caused considerable difficulty during the war, the Russian tsars having in practice ignored all such restrictions. Peter I resumed building up naval forces on the Dnieper and Don, designed for operations in the South, immediately after the war with Sweden had ended in 1721. The realisation of this plan was soon interrupted, but the Russians succeeded in building two fleets on the rivers Dnieper and Don by the outbreak of the war of 1736-1739.<sup>30</sup> Those fleets were used in capturing the Turkish fortresses of Azov and Özü, the Azov fleet twice ferrying a 40,000-strong army across the Sivash Gulf. During the war there were five naval battles near the entrance to Sivash.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, in the Treaty of Belgrade the Ottomans tried to get rid of the Russian naval presence in the region and, hence, pursued exclusively military objectives aimed at imposing a ban on it. That is why they forbade the Russian empire from having a fleet even in the gulf of Sivash, except for strategic reasons.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, the Ottomans foresaw that their sea trade with Ukraine would be damaged, if the military consideration alone was taken into account. That is why they granted the Ukrainians in the treaty their

29 – Noradounghian, G., *op. cit.*, p. 260; Pazukhin, A.A. (ed.), *Сборник грамот и договоров о присоединении царств и областей к Государству Российскому в XVII-XIX веках* [Collection of the Manifestos and Treaties Concerning the Joining of the States and Regions to the Russian State in the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries], Peterburg, 1922, p. 203.

30 – *Морской атлас*, III, pt. 1, Moscow, 1989, p. 934-935.

31 – Zolotarev, V.A. and Kozlov, I.A., *Российский военный флот в Черном море и восточном Средиземноморье* [The Russian Navy in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean], Moscow, 1989, p. 165.

32 – It is curious to note that in the collection prepared by A. Pazukhin, the Gulf of Sivash (Mer Zabash, as it was called in the collection of G. Noradounghian) was substituted for the Azov Sea, see Pazukhin, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

usual commercial immunities and permitted them to hire Turkish commercial ships. These concessions were not the result of any interest in trade with Russia, which, though much appreciated for its precious furs, walrus tusks and hunting birds, could not compare in importance for the empire with the Ukrainian trade.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the Ottomans felt secure, for, while the privileges were granted to all Russians, Russian merchants had not yet come to dominate Ukraine. Thus, the Ottomans in Belgrade unintentionally recognised *de facto* Russian claims to Ukraine, that key position in the region. This was registered *de jure* two years later by the convention of 1741.

Afterwards, the situation began to change quickly. The Russian government, trying to cope with the remnants of Ukrainian autonomy, did everything possible to secure the economic submission of the area. They allowed Russian merchants to penetrate Ukrainian markets and strengthen their positions there while simultaneously imposing limits on Ukrainian commerce. In the 1720s and 1730s, for example, the Russian government abolished free trade, imposed prohibitions on the trade in raw materials and cattle, introduced the Russian monetary system and later stopped paying for the Cossacks' services in silver, thus preventing a flow of silver into the Crimea.<sup>34</sup> After the treaty of Belgrade Russian merchants and officials even applied to the government for a prohibition on Turkish and Greek merchant ships at Sich', the Cossacks' capital.<sup>35</sup>

By forbidding Ukrainians free passage in Ottomans waters, the treaty, inevitably caused a decrease in commercial operations. The situation was aggravated by the seasonal limits on navigation of the Dnieper. Semënov, the customs officer of Sich' mentioned above, an acute and industrious officer, described commerce there. He noted that the port at Sich' was set up on a small tributary of the Dnieper, a considerable distance from its mouth. The harbour was small and furthermore became shallow by June and so was accessible only for two to three months of the year. Ships from Anatolian ports and the Archipelago gathered in Istanbul in March and then hurried toward Sich'. It took them at least two months, including quarantine time, to get there and return before July. Hence, the

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33 – According to M. Berindei the trade in furs and other luxury goods «constitue pendant les siècles le seul lieu constant entre deux pays», «Le rôle de fourrures dans les relations commerciales entre la Russie et l'Empire Ottoman avant la conquête de la Sibérie», in: *Passé Turco-Tatar, Présent Soviétique: Études offertes à Alexandre Bennigsen*, Paris, 1986, p. 89.

34 – See Solovjov, S.M., *История России древнейших времен* [The History of Russia from the Earliest Times], vols. XXIII-XXIV, Book 12, Moscow, 1964, pp. 38-39, 385-6; Slabchenko, M., *Организация хозяйства Украины от Хмельничны до мировой войны* [Organization of the Economy in Ukraine from the Time of Khmel-nitsky to the First World War] vol. III, Odessa, 1923, p. 86, 109, 142, 155.

35 – Skalkovskij, A., *История Новой Сечи* [The History of New Sech'], pt. 2, Odessa, 1885, p. 95.

ships from overseas were only able to come to Sich' once a year. Only the merchants from the Crimea or Özü and Akkerman could visit Sich' twice. The port, naturally, was always overcrowded, causing further inconvenience to merchants, which hampered trade and certainly lessened it in comparison with the time when Sich' was located near Liman of Dnieper (1709-1734).<sup>36</sup> Thus, the Ottomans, being dependent on the supplies from Ukraine, suffered from the decline of the trade and hence the reasons for the letter of the *kadi* of Caffa become clear, as well as those behind the failure of the Ottomans to co-ordinate their military and commercial priorities in their policy towards the Russian empire.

There is one other aspect of Ottoman-Ukrainian commercial relations highlighted by the *kadi*'s letter: the *muhabbatname*, or passports, for *barabash* merchants. The fact that the border between these empires was first clearly established with the direct participation of the representatives of the Sublime Porte after the treaty of Belgrade, in fact in 1742,<sup>37</sup> can be regarded as another sign that the Sublime Porte had resigned itself to the inevitable loss of Ukraine and turned to regulating its relations with Russian subjects. The *kadis* proposal that *barabash* merchants should have their names entered into the *muhabbatname* was adopted and such passports, where the names of merchants and their companions and servants leaving for Turkey and the Crimea together with their property and details of their journey were entered in Ottoman, were introduced under the decree issued by the Empress Elizabeth on 24 October 1754. A special service was set up at the customs on the border with the Crimea.<sup>38</sup> It was natural that another step in the further regulation of commercial operations between both countries was taken and the Sublime Porte proposed that the Russian government send a special representative to Özü to protect the interests of Ukrainian merchants.<sup>39</sup> At the same time the Sublime Porte and the Crimean Khans objected to the opening of a Russian consulate in the Crimea.<sup>40</sup> This enterprise in fact failed suddenly as the Zaporozhian Colonel Yakimov, who was in charge of the commission, having provoked a brawl in which a Turk was killed, was forced to flee the same night.<sup>41</sup> After this, talks about a Russian consulate in the Crimea foundered. At the same time, once the status of Ukraine became distinct and

36 – *Dela*, pp. 626-8.

37 – *Инструмент для разграничения земель между Россиею и Портою в 1742 году* [The Certificate of the Demarcation of the lands between Russia and the Porte], in: *ZOOJD*, II, p. 834-5.

38 – *Dela*, p. 614-618, 663.

39 – Ulianitskij, V.A., "Исторический очерк русских консульств за границей" [Historical essay on the Russian consulate abroad], in: *Сборник Главного Архива Министерства Иностранных Дел* [The Collection of the Major Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Relations in Moscow], vol. VI, Moscow, 1899, p. 420.

40 – *Ibid.*; *К истории...*, *op. cit.*

41 – *Dela*, p. 189-190.

the Russian position there strengthened, Ottoman perception of Ukraine began to change. While, in 1704, Ukrainians had freely sailed in their own ships in the Bosphorus, several decades later, in 1749, the Ukrainian pilgrim Serapion was strongly advised by Greeks not to present himself as Ukrainian (*Rusin*) or Russian (*Moskal*), but to pose as Serbian or Bulgarian, because Turks would imprison him as a Russian spy.<sup>42</sup> The estrangement between Ukraine and the Ottoman empire thus grew rapidly after the treaty of Belgrade.

Thus, the privileges granted almost as a secondary consideration in 1739 meant that the Sublime Porte renounced its pretensions to Ukraine and eventually led to the weakening of the Ottomans in the region. The Russians effectively used this situation to strengthen their commercial and political position in Ukraine, which later served as a pretext for further claims for hegemony and expansion in the northern Black Sea area.

In conclusion, by signing the treaty with Russia in Belgrade, the Sublime Porte clearly revealed two priorities in its policy towards the Russian empire in the middle of the 18th century. They aimed at maintaining both the military and commercial *status quo* in the region and, by allowing Russian subjects commercial immunities, they calculated that this would preserve their commerce with their important contractors in Ukraine and their recent subjects in the Zaporozhe. On the other hand, the concession to the Russians meant the *de facto* withdrawal of Ottoman claims to Ukraine, which was made *de jure* in the convention of 1741. Very soon the trade between these partners declined, due in part to the changed situation, thus prompting the sultan's *ferman* and the letter from the *kadi* of Caffa. It is therefore possible to date the turning point in the struggle between the Russians and the Ottomans to the treaty of Belgrade.

The document presented below testifies that Ukraine played an important role in the Black Sea basin in the first half of the 18th century and shows the potential importance of Ottoman documents from the Ukrainian archives for studies in the Ottoman history of that period.

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42 – *Palomniki*, p. 87.

حالیا کیونکہ لاری عمدة الامام المسجیة و عمدة الکبریا طائفة المسجیة صدقنی و دستر بهما لاری و حقیقت  
 قبله و سئلہ الای و نا اوله قدس صکره برابشر باز کا ندر بمقو حکومتہ اولانہ کفہ یہ کلک و اوز خیر لاری کلوب  
 و کولت علیہ نہ ید لریہ آسان بیو ریلانہ و نا: ثالثی فی طرفہ ایسا و مفہوم بیغیر مصقو بار کا ندر  
 ید لریہ اولانہ استعد و کتب بارس بیع ایچون کفہ یہ کتو رک لریہ شہ نامہ نر و طر مراعات اوجو بیہ کمرک  
 النعمه سیچون شنبه بیو ریلانہ اول طرفہ نہ تجارت و قدس بل کفہ یہ کلانہ باز کا ندر کتو خلاصہ نامہ بیو ریلانہ  
 و تعد برابشر بلکوب رفاح حال ایلہ عروت ابید رلیر التزام او حنہ نر معلوم کتو اوطق ایچون برابشر باز کا ندر  
 اوله کتو ایچا و التی سلبه محبت نامہ کتو برابشر باه را و لریہ راجه امداد  
 من الله و العالی  
 محمد کتو