

Mapping Changes in Ottoman-Austrian Borders During the Eighteenth Century



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Abstract Significant political, military and diplomatic changes took place in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. The Treaty of Karlowitz was signed in 1699, introducing territorial losses that dramatically changed the Empire's borders. Since the determination of these borders was important for international relations, particularly with Austria, boundary mapping was one of the main subjects of Ottoman cartography during the eighteenth century. This chapter examines these maps with regard to their political context, starting with the Treaty of Karlowitz and the subsequent treaties of Passarowitz (1718), Belgrade (1739) and Svishtov (1791).

1 Introduction

Border relations constitute one of the most important aspects of intergovernmental diplomacy. Austria was one of the most important rival powers to the west of the Ottoman Empire, as is reflected in the frequency of border changes resulting from extensive political and military developments in the eighteenth century. These began with the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, which introduced heavy territorial losses for the Ottoman Empire and saw the balance of power shift in favour of Austria. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Ottoman-Austrian borders were in flux with the successive treaties of Passarowitz (1718), Belgrade (1739) and Svishtov (1791), all of which built on the changes that were introduced at Karlowitz. The aim of this chapter is to examine changes in the location of these borders and to explain how they were established. The investigation begins by exploring the historical dimensions of Ottoman-Austrian relations and the general characteristics of the new borders that emerged as a result of this series of treaties.

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2 The Treaty of Karlowitz and Its Impact on Ottoman-Austrian Borders

The Hungarian Kingdom was eliminated in Mohaç during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the Ottoman Empire gained overall superiority in its military and political relationship with Austria after the Battle of Mohaç in 1526. This situation was reflected in diplomatic relations with the inclusion of Austrian territory within the Ottoman borders. However, as a result of the wars of the Holy Alliance that began in 1683, the situation began to change, particularly with the signing of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 between the Ottoman Empire and the three European states of Austria, Poland and Venice. Indeed, the Ottoman Empire ceded territory in Poland, Ukraine and Podolya to Lehistan; it left Mora and Dalmatia to Venice; and it ceded all territory in Hungary to Austria except for Erdel and Banat (BOA. A. DVNS. DVE. Nemçelü Ahidnamesi 57/1: 21–8; BOA. KK. d. 53: 2–6). New borders were therefore created for the new Ottoman Empire in the west and border commissions were established (beginning with Austria) to delineate these new borders. The Habsburgs commissioned Ferdinando Marsigli, an engineer in the Austrian army, as a border commissioner (Kurtaran 2017: 578). In this way, traditional methods were used to reach an agreement between the two parties in border negotiations, i.e. by adopting the principle of ‘alâ halihi’ (where each of the parties owns the territory they have already acquired) (Kurtaran 2017: 576). Under this principle the mountainous regions were completely ignored, while new borders were delineated according to natural elements such as rivers (Molnar 1999: 477). Consequently, as a result of the negotiations between the Ottoman Empire and Austria to delineate new borders, the Salankamen region was accepted as the common borderland. The borders between the two parties were subsequently determined in three regions: Belgrade (see Kurtaran 2018b: 119–145), Bosnia (see Gökçe 2001: 75–104) and Timisoara.

These new borders were recorded in the book *Tar Hudutname Daha* (Kurtaran 2017: 584), which documents the successive changes in the Ottoman borders from the Treaty of Karlowitz. According to *Tar Hudutname*, the borders of the Ottoman Empire gradually withdrew from Salankamen to Belgrade in twenty stages. The regions of the Danube and Tisa rivers were left to Austria, while some areas of Belgrade and Timisoara were given to the Ottomans (Molnar 1999: 477). The process of delineating the new borders was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Karlowitz and was based on the locations of natural and artificial features. It can be concluded from related documents that natural features, such as the Tuna, Sava and Tisa rivers, and mountains and hills, were used to establish borders as well as artificial features with markers called ‘humka’ (border stones) (BOA. A. DVN. DVE. Venedik Hudutname Defteri, 17/5: 1–54; BOA. AE. SMST. II. 10/956).

3 The Treaty of Passarowitz: New Losses and New Limits

The Ottoman Empire had suffered heavy losses with the signing of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. In seeking to compensate for these, the Ottomans began a war with Venice to re-capture the lost lands, which resulted in the Treaty of Istanbul in 1700 (see Kurtaran 2018a: 287). The Ottoman Empire also invaded Russia at the beginning of the eighteenth century (the Prut War), which led to the signing of the Treaty of Prut in 1711. Mora was conquered by the Ottoman forces in 1715 following the war with Venice (Silahdar Findiklili Mehmed Ağa 2001: 838–840) leading to an alliance between Austria and Venice against the Ottoman Empire (Zinkeisen 2007: 357). Austria, accusing the Ottoman administration of violating the Treaty of Karlowitz, demanded that the Ottomans return the territories they had gained from Venice. However, the Ottoman Empire did not respond to this demand and the Grand Vizier declared war against Austria at the behest of Damad Ali Pasha (Raşid Mehmed Efendi-Çelebizâde İsmail Âsım Efendi 2013: 981–983). The Ottoman army, which was commanded by the Grand Vizier himself, was heavily defeated by the Austrian armies under the command of Prince Eugen near Varadin. Banat and Timișoara were recovered by the Austrians as the Ottoman armies withdrew to Belgrade. With intervention by England and the Netherlands, the Treaty of Passarowitz was signed on 21 July 1718 (BOA. A. DVNS. DVE. Nemçelü Ahidnamesi, 57/1: 55–61). The agreements the Ottoman Empire signed with Austria, with the Austrian and Venetian States, and at the Treaty of Passarowitz, comprised 20 items over 24 years. The treaty signed with Venice comprised 26 items (BOA. A. DVNS. DVE. Venedik Ahidname Defteri, 16/4: 99–107; Mecmuası 2008: 170–196; Kurtaran 2018a: 288).

In the Treaty of Passarowitz that was signed with Austria, the principle of ‘alâ halihi’ was adopted as it had been at Karlowitz. Although this principle reduced the losses of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman-Austrian borders in Passarowitz largely changed in favour of Austria. In fact, as mentioned in the first seven articles of the treaty, all of Banat and Eflak to the west of the River Olt was left to Austria. In addition to the western part, which is also called Little Wallachia, the northern part of Serbia, including Belgrade, and Northern Bosnia were also ceded to Austria (BOA. A. DVNS. DVE. Nemçeli Ahidnamesi, 57/1: 56–58; Samardzic 2011: 17; Savaş 2002: 559; Kurtaran 2018a: 290).

Commissions were formed to finalize the boundaries between the parties, as in the Treaty of Karlowitz (Özcan 2007: 180). In this case, the Austrians appointed Anshelm Franz von Fleischmann as the border commissioner to determine the borders and General Petraş to assist him. Nigbolu Mutasarrıf Vezir Ahmed Pasha and the other Selanik Mutasarrıf Mustafa Pasha were appointed to determine the Danube borders on behalf of the Ottoman Empire. The border commissions both commenced their work to delineate the borders one year after the treaty was signed. After this, new boundaries were created from natural and artificial features, as for the Treaty of Karlowitz. Accordingly, the agreed borders began from the River Olt and the Ottoman lands to the west were given to Austria. In addition, a common

border was determined from where the River Olt flowed into the Danube until the River Timok. As a result of these geographical delineations, the exact boundaries between the parties were created on the condition that all the islands in the River Danube would remain in the Ottoman Empire. The new Ottoman-Austrian borders, determined by the Treaty of Passarowitz, remained valid until 1736 (Kurtaran 2018a: 291–292, 295).

4 The Treaty of Belgrade: Compensation for Lost Territories

Although the Treaty of Passarowitz signed on 21 July 1718 lasted for 27 years, aggressive policies by Austria led to the deterioration of the peace process in 1736. The Treaty of Passarowitz was broken in 1736, when the Ottoman Empire took the opportunity to attack Persia at that time and made an alliance with Russia (Uzunçarşılı 1988: 559). However, the war did not go as Austria had planned, and the Ottoman forces regained Belgrade (which had been lost at Passarowitz in 1718) (Köse 2002: 220). In the aftermath of the war, the two states signed the Treaty of Belgrade on 18th September 1739 under the mediation of France, as a result of the withdrawal of Nis and the defeat of the Austrian forces in Hisarcik (BOA. A. DVNS. DVE. Nemçeli Ahidnamesi, 59/3: 185–191; BOA. A. DVNS. MHM. d. 147: 29; Erim 1953: 81–94; Kurtaran 2018c: 384). Russia, upon accepting the peace conditions, also signed the Treaty of Belgrade between Russia and the Ottoman Empire (BOA. A. DVNS. DVE. Rusya Ahidname Defteri, 83/1: 82–118; BOA. HH. 1428/5845; 1428/58455). The Treaty of Belgrade signed with Austria comprised 23 articles and clauses and lasted for 27 years.

In the final treaty the Ottoman Empire signed with Austria (and with any European power), the Ottoman Empire took back many of the lands that were lost at the Treaty of Passarowitz. While Belgrade and Sabacz were retained by the Ottomans, the Danube and Sava rivers were accepted as borders between the two states (Uzunçarşılı 1988: 289–291; Karagöz 2008: 284). This situation created some changes in the borders between the two states that had been determined by Passarowitz. As a result, both parties began the task of delineating the borders just nine months after signing the treaty, with the Grand Vizier Nişancı Ahmed Pasha acting on behalf of the Ottoman Empire (Sertoğlu 2011: 2519; Kurtaran 2018c: 436). In addition, muhaddits were appointed to establish the location of the borders at Belgrade, Timișoara and Bosnia. Ibrahim Efendi, one of the judges of the Divan-i hümâyûn, was appointed to delineate the borders of Timișoara; Mevkufâti El-Hac Mehmed Efendi for Belgrade; and Mehmed Said Efendi was commissioned to establish the Bosnian borders (BOA. A. DVNS. MHM. d. 147: 29). They also participated in the meetings of Abu Sehl Numan Efendi as border mollas and reported the negotiations between the parties. Efendi remained in office for the duration of the report and his book *Tedbirat-i Pesendî* consists of three parts.

Austria employed Tümgeneral Kont Guadigny for its border demarcation and General Engelsofen was appointed head of the border delegation. There were also ten architects, engineers and painters in the Austrian delegation (Ebû Sehl Numan Efendi 1999: 22).

Negotiations began in 1740, when the border rulers appointed by the two states arrived in Belgrade. There were some problems of diplomatic protocol in contrast to those at Karlowitz and Passarowitz (Ebû Sehl Numan Efendi 1999: 57–58). However, as a result of the successful diplomatic activities of the Ottoman muhaddits, these problems were overcome and a border agreement was signed between the parties on 2 March 1741 (BOA. İE. HR. 19/1724; BOA. A. DVNS. NMH. d. 8: 12–13; Kurtaran 2018c: 438). The result of the collaboration between the parties by Code of Civil Procedure are the definite limits that were determined on 10th May 1741 (Kurtaran 2009: 174). Again, natural and artificial features were used by both sides to delineate the new borders. The Danube and Sava rivers were accepted as common borders, while many mountains, rivers and hills were also used. As per earlier treaties, the border markers were called ‘humka’.

As a result, after the Treaty of Belgrade in 1739, after the border-setting activities lasting about 10 months between the parties, 11 fortresses and arbors from Belgrade to Bosnia and more than 900 villages and towns remained in the Ottoman Empire. (Vak’anüvis Suphi Mehmed Efendi 2007: 666–667). The limits set out here are based on a number of minor amendments to the 1791 Treaty of Svishtov that were made by the end of the century (Karagöz 2008: 293; Kurtaran 2018c: 443).

5 The Treaty of Svishtov: Preservation of the Status Quo and New Borders

The new Ottoman-Austrian border, which was established by the Treaty of Belgrade in 1739, was re-approved by the Treaty of Istanbul in 1747 and secured a lasting peace until 1787. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, new wars with Austria and Russia began to emerge. Catherine II of Russia signed an alliance (the Greek Plan) with Josef II of Austria to dismantle the Ottoman Empire (Kurtaran 2009: 186–187). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire therefore faced a new Russian-Austrian war (Beydilli 2013: 467). However, the war did not go as intended and Austria was forced into peace with the Ottomans. After lengthy discussions between the Ottoman Empire and Austria, the Treaty of Svishtov was signed on 4 August 1791 (BOA. A. DVNS. DVE. 59/3:31-34; BOA. A. DVNS. NMH. d. 9: 225–229; Kurtaran 2009: 264–270; Kuzucu 2012: 257). According to the clauses of the 14-article treaty, it was agreed that the Treaty of Belgrade and the Treaty of 1739 would be respected. In fact, a *status qua ante bellum* was observed by both parties with the return of some lands and the seizure of captured lands. This complied with the principle of renewing the validity of the

treaty by both parties (Beydilli 2013: 469–470). Under this framework, Austria was to follow the *status quo* in 1791 and to have friendly relations with the Ottoman Empire. According to this, the land, city, fortress and palaces that were invaded by Austria would be granted to the Ottoman Empire (BOA. A. DVNS. DVE. 59/3: 31–32). In addition, after establishing the border treaty between the two states, they signed another treaty relating to the seven-point assay (BOA. A. DVNS. DVE. 59/3: 35–36; Kurtaran 2009: 273–278). The delineation of borders in the Treaty of Svishtov also used natural and artificial features in a similar way to the earlier treaties. The most important difference between the Treaty of Svishtov and the earlier treaties is that the boundaries between the parties were shown on maps for the first time. For example, maps were prepared by the Ottoman engineer Abdurrahman Efendi on the limits determined in the Svishtov negotiations (BOA. HH. Nr. 241/13550 and BOA. HH. 242/13588; 13589) (Figs. 1 and 2).

The ongoing war between the Ottoman Empire and Austria, which had begun in the early sixteenth century, ended with the Treaty of Svishtov in 1791. With the end of the war with Austria, the Ottoman Empire, first of all, was freed from waging wars on two fronts and could focus on the Russian front. However, with the impact



Fig. 1 The map created by Ottoman Engineer Abdurrahman Efendi, who showed the borders of Ottoman Austria in the Treaty of Svishtov (BOA. HH. Nr. 242/13588; 13589) (Courtesy Prime Ministry Archive)

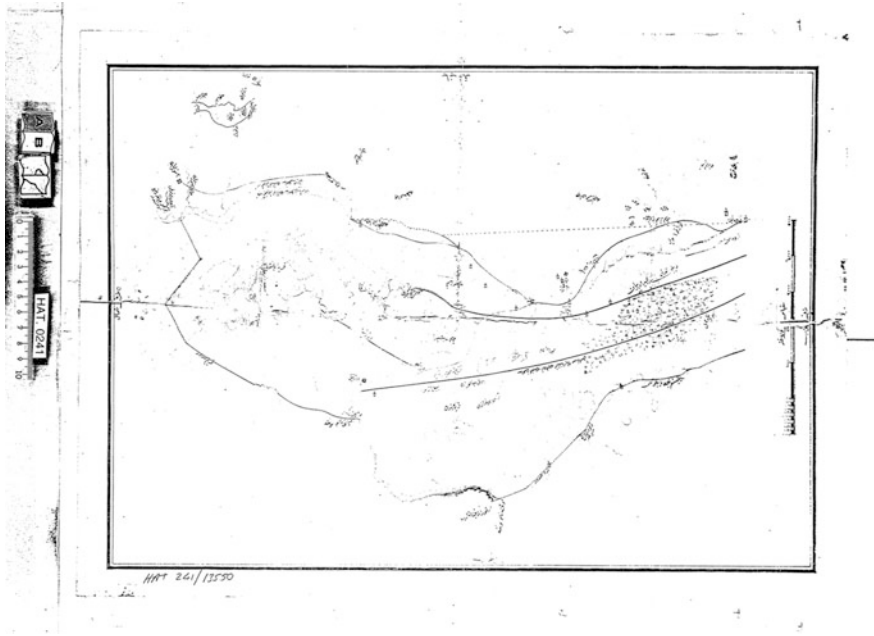


Fig. 2 A map showing the Ottoman-Austrian borders in the Treaty of Svishtov with Austria (BOA. HH. Nr. 241/13550)

of significant political developments in Europe, a peace agreement was soon reached with Russia. The Treaty of Svishtov constitutes the last phase of Ottoman-Austrian relations, bringing the war to a close and is an important turning point in its 300-year history. After this point, Ottoman-Austrian relations began to improve and the two states formed an alliance in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This period saw the reforming of Ottoman statesmen, who reinforced the joint Austrian-Ottoman policy.

6 Conclusion

This chapter describes how borders between the Ottoman Empire and Austria developed in parallel with political and military developments in the eighteenth century. A new process, which started with the Treaty of Karlowitz in the eighteenth century, introduced significant changes to these borders (including large territorial losses to the Ottoman Empire). This was followed in 1718 by the Treaty of Passarowitz, when the Ottoman Empire faced further territorial losses. However, with the Treaty of Belgrade of 1739, new borders were drawn that compensated most of its losses against Austria since the beginning of the century. The same

treaty was extended in 1747 and continued until 1787. The war between the Ottoman Empire and Austria ended with the Treaty of Svishtov in 1791. In this treaty, the boundaries between the two states remained unchanged as of the Treaty of Belgrade and its extension in the Treaty of Istanbul in 1747.

Another finding described in this chapter is how the process for establishing borders evolved from the beginning to the end of the century. It was concluded that these procedures were put into practice by the commissions formed by both states and by adhering to the conditions set out in the treaties. In these processes, natural features were used to delineate boundaries and artificial boundary markers (such as stones) were used in regions where such natural features are absent.

Finally, it is important to note that Ottoman-Austrian borders were constantly changing throughout the eighteenth century and these changes resulted in new diplomatic relations between both parties. The results of these changes were recorded under the so-called border delimitation report or *Hudutname*. Consequently, it is possible to observe the outlines of the border changes in the eighteenth century more precisely.

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