

Preface

This issue has grown out of institutional cooperation between the Department of History at the University of Salzburg and the Department of Medieval and Early Modern Hungarian History at the University of Szeged, and is related to a common research subject, early modern Habsburg-Ottoman diplomacy. At the beginning of the collaboration, the main scope of the investigations was aimed at the activity of two Habsburg envoys to the Sublime Porte, Alexander von Greiffenklau zu Vollrads (1643–1648) and Simon Reniger von Renningen (1649–1666) whose correspondence with the emperor and the Viennese War Council (the body responsible for Ottoman affairs at the Habsburg Court) preserved in the Austrian State Archives are being transcribed and prepared for publication by young scholars in Salzburg and Szeged. During the sometimes monotonous work on the transcriptions, it became clear early on that these ample and extremely informative sources represent an exceptionally rich documentary source for mid-seventeenth-century Habsburg diplomatic activity at the Golden Horn. Consequently, they provide countless possibilities to capture Habsburg-Ottoman relations from perspectives which had not come to the forefront of investigations until recently.

The wide range of the topics observed and meticulously reported by the envoys stationed in Constantinople for longer periods inspired a great portion of the articles of the present issue as well. *Christoph Würflinger* deals in his paper with the encryption methods which were used in the diplomatic correspondence between the resident (Alexander von Greiffenklau zu Vollrads) in Constantinople and the Viennese War Council, enhancing the importance of the information sent to the Habsburg Court through the cyphering procedure. *Sándor Papp* approaches Habsburg-Ottoman relations from the perspective of a network analysis: focusing on the supporters and the confidants of the resident ambassador in Constantinople, he outlines the information network of Simon Reniger that consisted of Ottoman dignitaries at the Sublime Porte. *Zsuzsanna Cziráki* analyses the means of knowledge transfer related to the Habsburg envoys (resident ambassadors and grand ambassadors) in the first half of the seventeenth century, addressing the questions of where and how Habsburg diplomats were readied for their missions to the Sublime Porte.

In recent years, new projects have been launched both in Salzburg and Szeged which have broadened the scope of the ongoing investigations into Habsburg-Ottoman relations. *The Mediality of Communication* headed by Arno Strohmeyer in Salzburg examines the activity of the seventeenth-century Habsburg envoys in Constantinople in the context of the early modern communication used in the Habsburgs' Ottoman diplomacy, highlighting the role of ambassadorial reports and travel reports as unique media for collecting, processing and displaying information on the Ottoman Empire. The project *Peace Treaties between the Medieval and Early Modern Hungarian Kings and the*

Ottoman Sultans up to 1739 led by Sándor Papp in Szeged explores the late medieval and early modern peace treaties between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy on the one side and the Ottoman Empire on the other, aiming at creating a modern critical publication of the key treaties and the supplementary documents issued during the peace negotiations. Both investigations rely upon genuine archival sources, new narratives and modern technologies that are currently transforming the scientific landscape in the humanities. As reflected in the articles in the present issue, the latest research outcomes are expected to contribute to the expanding horizon of interpretations on the topic of Habsburg-Ottoman diplomacy. *Anna Huemer* delves into the multifaceted sources of a mid-seventeenth-century itinerary authored by Johann Georg Metzger and reveals fundamental intertextual links between earlier works of the genre. *Gergely Brandl, Csaba Göncöl, Krisztina Juhász, Gellért Ernő Marton* and *János Szabados* scrutinize the background negotiations for the peace treaty of Szóony (1627), relying on a database of diplomatic correspondence and other additional administrative sources that reveal the most important channels of communication related to the negotiations on the Habsburg side.

The idea of an issue dedicated to this theme was inspired by several research discussions between the members of the working groups in Salzburg and Szeged in recent years. *Early Modern Knowledge Transfer and Information Exchange – Paths of Habsburg Diplomacy at the Sublime Porte* is therefore a selection of fresh approaches to the topic of Habsburg-Ottoman relations, influenced fundamentally by the progressive trends of the “New Diplomatic History”. Aimed at drawing attention to the Habsburg diplomatic machinery related to the Ottomans, we seek to encourage further investigations in the field by capturing the formation of early modern international relations behind the scenes of the spectacular diplomatic accomplishments. Last but not least we have to remember the generous language support that we received from the Austrian colleagues during the editorial work: we owe a debt of gratitude to Anna Huemer and Christoph Würflinger who proof-read the contributions of the Hungarian authors of the present issue.

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