PREFACE

The present work actually belongs to a bygone period in Ottoman historiography. In the present era of brilliant studies on prosopography, material culture and the intellectual and spiritual life of our ancestors, a study of international diplomatic relations provided with the apparatus of a typical “nineteenth-century” source edition seems completely obsolete.

The more one studies Ottoman history, however, the more one realizes how valid still is the motto of Leopold Ranke “wie es eigentlich gewesen.” This fact led Colin Imber to introduce his recent study on Ottoman origins with a provocative motto from The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, stating that “it is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. . .”\(^1\)

Meticulous studies by Lajos Fekete, Tayyib Gökbilgin, Halil İnalcık, Mübahat Küttükoglu, Josef Matuz, and Victor Ménage have tremendously enriched our knowledge about the functioning of the Ottoman chancery and the function and composition of the most typical documents. Nevertheless, an extensive list of questions concerning even the most basic historical facts still awaits a response by the modern historian.

One of the most successful enterprises realized in the recent years is the pioneer study by Hans Theunissen, which is devoted to Ottoman-Venetian diplomatic relations from their initiation up to 1640. This study demonstrates that even an apparently well documented and thoroughly researched historical topic required the serious revision of numerous errors and misinterpretations.\(^2\)

Ottoman-Polish diplomatic relations, the object of this study, have been the subject of much less investigation than the Venetian ones. Nevertheless, a number of individual issues have already been studied by French, German, Rumanian, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Polish

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historians, of whom we might note here only Zygmunt Abrahamowicz and Jan Heychman.  

The present study provides a detailed analysis of the various types of Ottoman and Polish instruments of peace, a chronological survey of the armistices, treaties and demarcations given against the general background of Polish-Ottoman political relations, and a full edition of the documents preserved in the original or in copies in various European collections. Those documents preserved in the original are published here in facsimile as well.

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For the extensive literature on Polish-Ottoman relations, see the Bibliography.