

History

The Amasya Peace Treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Iran (June 1, 1555) and Georgia

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ABSTRACT. The Amasya peace treaty was the first peace agreement signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid State. In the Amasyan Peace agreement, the Ottoman Empire recognized the Safavid Empire as a State finally.

According to the Amasya peace agreement, the Ottoman Empire and Iran divided countries of Transcaucasia and Near East between them. Iran took for itself: Kartli, Kakheti, the eastern part of Samtskhe-Saatabago with Akhaltsikhe, the eastern Part of Armenia with Yerevan, North and South Azerbaijan with Tabriz, eastern Kurdistan, whereas the Ottoman Empire took for itself: Imereti, Guria, Samegrelo, western Kurdistan. The Ottomans also took Kars, but they were not allowed to restore fortresses and strongholds there.

According to the Amasya peace treaty, the attempt of Georgia's territorial unification was frustrated. In 1555, the Ottoman-Iran peace treaty impeded the process of Georgia's territorial unity, facilitating political separatism in it.

By the Amasya peace treaty, the Ottoman Empire and Iran legitimized possession of the invaded countries. During the Ottoman-Iran wars in 17th-18th centuries, the Amasya treaty was the cornerstone for peaceful resolution of the territorial problems between the two states. © 2009 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: Amasya, peace treaty, Gurjistan, Ottoman Empire, Sultan Suleyman I, Safavid State.

Suleyman I organized two military campaigns against Iran. However, he failed to defeat the Safavids eventually. Shah Tahmasp I exploited the situation, and while the Ottomans were engaged in wars with European countries, he invaded the Ottoman Empires' eastern dominions. Suleyman Kanuni decided to conduct a third war campaign against Iran, with the aim of finally overcoming the Safavids.

In summer 1554, Suleyman marched against Iran with his numerous army. During the war, Shah Tahmasp I employed the war tactics of his ancestors; he avoided battle with stronger military forces of the enemy; retreating, he burnt down everything where the Ottoman army would also pass.

On July 18, the Ottoman military forces invaded Yerevan, and later on – Karabagh. On July 28, they attacked Nakhichevan. The city environs were entirely burnt down and turned into ashes. The Ottoman army dwindled day by day. They were lacking provisions. Epidemic diseases spread among the soldiers. The winter was coming. In such conditions, Suleyman decided to withdraw and winter in Erzurum, in order to invade Iran with a big army in the spring and rout it finally.

On July 30, Suleyman left Nakhichevan, and by crossing the Araks River, arrived in Bayazid on August 6.

While Suleyman was residing in Bayazid, high-ranking officials of Iran and the Ottoman Empire exchanged letters on Iran's initiative. One can clearly see in the

correspondence that in spite of rebuking each other, the sides were interested in restoring peace [1: 315-317; 2: 46, 47; 3: 65-67; 4: 228].

The peace negotiations that started in a written format in Bayazid were continued later on. This laid the foundation for the future Ottoman-Iran peace talks.

Neither did the third military campaign bring the desired results to Sultan Suleyman, and hence he embarked on the road of reconciliation [1: 316, 317; 3: 66-69; 5: 34].

After leaving Bayazid on August 9, Suleyman arrived in Erzurum and encamped with his army near to the bordering Sazlık.

On September 26, Shah Tahmasp's ambassador Korchi Bash Shah Kulu arrived in Erzurum. He offered peace to the Sultan Suleyman in the name of the Shah.

On September 27, 1554 the sides signed an agreement on temporary peace in Erzurum (Sazlık) [1:70; 2: 4-6; 4: 239].

The armistice entailed territorial division: "Since 1534, Basra, Baghdad, Shahrizur, Bitlis, Van, Erzurum, Kars and Atabag's country that were invaded by the Kizilbash belong to the territory of the Ottoman Empire, and thus it cannot be claimed by others" [4: 240]. This clearly shows that the territories mentioned in the text belonged to the Ottomans.

It was also in the same manner that the Ottoman and Safavid empires divided Georgia into their spheres of influence: Meskheta, Kartli and Kakheti were taken over by Iran, and Imereti, Samegrelo and Guria up to the border of Trabzon became part of the Ottoman Empire. [6:450].

If Iran's Shah did not comply with the conditions of the treaty of Erzurum, Suleyman threatened to conduct a war campaign against Iran once again and to destroy Tabriz and Ardebil [3: 70; 4:240].

Thus, they settled the main disputed territorial issues as a result of the Erzurum peace negotiations. The temporary peace conditions were valid until signing the ultimate peace treaty. Later on, in 1555 the conditions were approved by the peace agreement of Erzurum.

After reaching an agreement, the ambassador of Iran promised the Sultan that within a month Shah Tahmasp would send him a new ambassador who would be authorized to sign the peace treaty with him [2: VI, 48; 7: 40; 8: II, 361].

On September 28, Suleyman I left Erzurum, heading for Amasya, where he arrived on October 30, and wintered there. The Persians suspected this as a prelude to the renewal of war in spring by the army stationed in Amasya. Their suspicion was not groundless; usually,

when the Sultan did not return to the capital after conducting a war operation and instead stayed in one of the towns of Anatolia, he began war next spring. This happened, for example, in the 1514-1515, 1534-1535 and 1548-1549 wars with Iran.

At the same time, on the one hand, Shah Tahmasp's campaign in Kartli against King Luarsab I and, on the other, the Persians' attack on the garrison stationed in Samtskhe-Saatabago aggravated the Ottoman-Iranian relations. Thus, it was expected that in the spring of the next year, the Sultan would renew war operations against Iran, in which Georgia would play a significant part, as it did earlier, in 1549. Besides, taking into consideration that the king of Kartli sought refuge from Shah Tahmasp in Imereti, and the fact that the Imeretian king Bagrat III asked for the Sultan's support due to the Shah's threats, also strengthened the suspicion of the Persians. Therefore, at the Iranian court, no one hurried to send an ambassador to the Sultan. They, instead, tried to negotiate the matter officially with the Ottomans at a lower level. A very important document has been found regarding the matter, which belongs to Shah Tahmasp's high officials' "Sevindük Bey and Ustajlu Shah-Kulu Ben Hamza. The letter was sent to an influential Turkish official, Erzurum's Beylerbey" Aias Pasha. In accordance with its content, L. Fekete assumes that it must have been written after August 1554 despite the fact that the letter has no date [9: 93-133; 10: 412-420].

Suleyman's arrival at Amasya is mentioned in this letter [9:132; 10: 412-429]. In my view, the letter might have been composed a little later, after Suleyman arrived at Amasya, e. g., after October 30, 1554.

On May 10, in 1555, the embassy of Iran arrived at Amasya. The ambassador, Ferukhzade Beg had been authorized by the Shah of Iran to sign a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire. The delegation of Iran was welcomed with delight in Amasya. They were accommodated at a specially chosen palace, and were hosted exuberantly. However, the ambassador, for his part, had brought with him luxurious presents: expensive carpets, tents with embroidered inner surface, curved saddle girth, unique swords of Damascus, gorgeous lances and shields, etc. However, all these presents were shadowed by a fabulously copied Koran. By the command of the Sultan Suleyman, the Grand Vizier and the rest of the viziers held receptions and parties [1: 329; 3: 72; 4: 241; 5: 5].

On May 21, the sitting of the Sultan's Divan (Divānı Hümayüm) was held. The Ottoman viziers, the ambassador of Iran and members of the delegation attended the sitting. They held a discussion of the terms and conditions of the peace agreement between the Ottoman

and Safavid states. The ambassador of Iran handed the Padishah a letter from Shah Tahmasp, which was full of cautious, splendid and grandiloquent words revealing the Shah's will to bring Samtskhe-Saatabago (Principality of Samtskhe) under Iran's dependence [1: 319; 3: 72, 73; 4: 241, 242; 11: II, 293, 294].

The question of fixing the border between the two states was solved, based on the *Uti possidetis* principle, e.g., the Ottoman side retained its territories that it owned at the time before signing the peace treaty.

According to the peace agreement of Amasya, The Ottoman Empire and Iran divided Georgia between themselves in the following manner: Kakheti, Mosuki, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Okros Tsikhe (also known as Altunkala), Borchalo, Kartli, Tbilisi, Gori, Surami, Meskheti were taken by Iran, and Bashiachuki (Imereti), Dadiani (Samegrelo), Guria, Part of Saatabago "Dadeli (Tao), Ardahani, Artanuji, Oltisi, Tortumi were taken by the Ottoman State from the bank of the Chorokhi River to the border with Trabzon [3: 72; 4: 241, 242; 12: II, 906].

After the meeting of the Divan ended, a reception was held, during which the embassy of Iran delivered luxurious presents to the Ottoman side. Later on, the Padishah came in person to the Divan bureau, and the viziers and the delegation sent from the Shah paid a visit to him. The latter delivered to him the Shah's highly skilled letter composed in brilliant words. After the Divan was ended, the Padishah ordered his first, second and third viziers to host the Iranian embassy on the subsequent days one after the other.

After the bilateral negotiations between Ottomans and the delegation of Iran, the border between the two states was affirmed as it was according to the last Ottoman conquests, by which - Artaani, Kars, Gole, Arpachai's environs etc. came under Turkish dominion [3: 72; 11: II, 294; 13: 349].

In Amasya, together with the representatives of the Ottoman Empire, those of different states also arrived. Some of them were interested in the successful accomplishment of the peace talks between the Ottoman State and Iran, but others were trying to hold the talks back.

For example, the ambassador of France, M. Codignac arrived in Amasya with the intention of supporting Ottoman-Iran peace. According to an agreement signed with Turkey in 1553, France expected assistance from the Ottomans if peace was achieved by the two sides [11: II, 233; 14: 97].

M. Codignac, in his letter sent from Amasya to the king of France on May 10, about ongoing negotiations

aimed at achieving peace between Iran and the Ottomans. The ambassador of France supported the Iran-Ottoman peace by all means. At the same time, he was hindering the negotiations between the ambassador of Austria, Busbeq, and the Sultan [15:558; 16: 176].

For their part, the Hungarian diplomats knew very well that if a peace treaty was signed by the Ottoman Empire and Iran, they would lose an opportunity of signing a peace agreement with the Ottomans. For this obvious reason they were advising Ferdinand to agree to a compromise with the Sultan and to speed up the peace process between the Ottoman Empire and Hungary.

On January 20, 1555, Ferdinand's Austrian ambassador, A. Busbeq arrived in Istanbul and brought new instructions that in the end did not satisfy the debating sides. The core idea of the newly brought directives was to maintain Transylvania and sign the truce with the Ottoman Empire. In Amasya, the Sultan was notified about Ferdinand's new offer. The Ottoman Sultan immediately ordered to send the ambassador of the Hungarian King to him [16:176].

On April 7, A. Busbeq, A. Verancsics and F. Zay arrived in Amasya. The Hungarian diplomats were instantly received by the Grand Vizier Ahmed Pasha and later on, by the Sultan himself. According to Busbeq, the Sultan had a dissatisfied and strict expression on his face. After delivering a welcoming speech, Busbeq asked the Sultan if he recognized Ferdinand's right to Transylvania, and the Sultan's look became even more severe and he added with a bitter tone: "All right, all right". The audience ended in this manner [17: 125].

The Hungarian diplomats met many influential officials and promised them reward in gold in case they helped them in achieving their goal by influencing the Sultan, but their attempts failed.

It is worth noting that the Hungarian diplomats met representatives of the Georgian kingdom in Amasya [16:176].

There was a sharp diplomatic dispute between the representatives of France and Hungary. Codignac, the ambassador of France, was interested in the Iranian-Ottoman peace. However, the Hungarian diplomats, on the contrary, did not wish for it. The ambassador of France was notably participating in the business of the Iranian-Ottoman peace talks [18: I, 55].

At this stage of the war with Iran, Sultan Suleyman was bored with the unsuccessful campaigns against Iran, which required a large amount of material resources. He remembered with delight his victories in Europe and decided to end the war. At the court of the Sultan, the

eastern policy lost its actuality and the “question of Gurljestan” no longer constituted a problem of state significance for them [9: 190].

The ambassadors of the Emperor of Austria and the King of Hungary were not interested in the positive resolution of the Ottoman-Iranian peace talks. A. Verancsics and F. Zay tried their best to wreck the negotiations. They persuaded influential Ottoman officials to push the Sultan tacitly towards signing the peace treaty with Hungary, which would allow the Sultan to throw his entire forces against the Persians and their Georgian allies [19: 221].

There is no doubt that Ferdinand’s short-sighted policy proved to be fatal for his state. By his persistence, he achieved only an anti-result; the Sultan favored the peace with Asia rather than with Hungary, and thus acquired an opportunity of free action in the latter country. The representatives of Hungary, despite all of their diplomatic attempts, expensive presents and tribute paid for Transylvania, managed to achieve only a temporary truce [16: 191]. On May 31, 1555 the Sultan sent a letter to Ferdinand, requesting restoration of Janosh Zhighmond’s hereditary rights [20: II, 50-54].

On June 1, 1555, the last meeting of the Divāni Hūmayūm was held in Amasya, at which the Ottoman-Iranian peace treaty was finally signed. At the same time, Suleyman Kanuni sent a letter to Shah Tahmasp, in which he stressed with delight the significance of the peace achieved between the two states. He approved the appeal of Shah Tahmasp by emphasizing the following: Unless, the Iranians violate the conditions of the treaty, the Ottomans would maintain peace and not apply to those actions that may cause conflict between the border chiefs.

Suleyman Kanuni allowed Shah Tahmasp free pilgrimage of the Iranian believers to the holy places of his Empire and guaranteed security to them [3: 86, 87; 13: 349].

Towards the close of the letter, he conveyed his protestations of friendship and asked the Shah to give a thought to the following three conditions offered by him: “Firstly, the conscience of the followers of the Prophet Muhammad will be protected. Secondly, unless sedition and unrest occur from the opposite side, the Ottoman forces would not violate the borders. Thirdly, request of the pilgrims that each Muslim can freely visit and venerate holy places in the Ottoman Empire” [3: 86, 87; 13: 349].

During the peace talks, much attention was paid to reducing existing religious controversies between Shiism and Sunnism. The Sultan recognized the vassals of the Shah as followers of the ‘veritable faith’ and allowed them to visit the holy places Mecca and Medina. The Sultan also proposed stopping abuse and defamation of the first three Caliphs and Aishe by Iran’s side.

Before leaving Amasya, Sultan Suleyman sent firmans to the Governors of the bordering provinces of Iran, in which he notified them about the peace treaty.

In Turkish historiography it was accepted that the Amasya peace treaty was signed on May 29, 1555. Evidence on this is to be found in the well-known work of J. Hammer. The latter connected the 29th of May with the day when the Ottomans invaded Constantinople in 1453 [2: VI, 70].

The historian P. Kirzioğhlu paid attention to this, identifying the mistake. He was the first who declared that the Amasya peace treaty was signed not on May 29, 1555, but on June 1, 1555. Kirzioğhlu supported his idea with the following arguments: Suleyman Kanuni met the ambassador of Iran at Amasya twice; on May 21 and on June 1. It was during the last meeting that the conditions were agreed for the peace treaty [4: 243]. M. D’osson wrongly writes that the Iran-Ottoman peace treaty was signed in Istanbul [21:VII, 682]. The results of the Amasya treaty were also mentioned in Suleyman Kanuni’s letter sent to Shah Tahmasp on June 1, 1555. In fact, the letter of Sultan Suleyman Kanuni stands as a document testifying to the fact that the Amasya peace treaty was signed in 1555. Later on, this amendment was accepted by other Turkish historians also. Here it is worth mentioning that according to the Persian sources (Hasan Rumlu, Iskander Munshi) the Iran-Ottoman peace agreement was signed in 1555 [6: 45; 22: 424].

On June 2, 1555, the ambassador of Iran left Amasya and returned to his homeland. Together with him, the ambassador of Austrian monarch, Busbeq also left the city.

At the same time, the Sultan received congratulations from the ambassadors of Venice, France and Poland for his victory in the Nakhichevan war campaigns. In 1555, Suleyman Kanuni left Amasya on June 21, and arrived in Istanbul on the July 31 [3: 78]. As soon as the Sultan Suleyman Kanuni ended the war with the Safavid State and they agreed upon the armistice, he found time for the European affairs.

After the Iran-Ottoman peace treaty, the Ottoman threat in Europe increased. On June 26, Suleyman sent

the Ottoman fleet to the Mediterranean Sea in order to assist France. Suleyman requested from Ferdinand with an ultimatum to leave Transylvania and recognize Janosh Zhigmund's hereditary rights, otherwise, he threatened him that he "will sweep away the country off from the surface of the earth".

Thus, the Ottoman-Iran war had its significance for the political situation in Europe. Namely, it was weakening the Ottoman expansion towards the West by hampering the threat of the Ottoman invasion into the region.

The Amasya peace treaty was the first peace agreement which was signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid State [2: VI, 70].

According to some scholars, the treaty between the Ottoman State and Iran was signed in 1515 [23:125; 24: 241]. It is true that in 1514, after defeating Shah Ismail on the Childiri field, the Iranians tried to sign an armistice with the Ottomans, but the Ottoman Sultans were categorical in refusing peace talks.

For half a century, Ottoman Sultans did not recognize the legitimacy of the Safavid State, the founder of which was Shah Ismail (1501-1524). By the Amasya treaty, the Ottoman Empire and Iran finally recognized the Safavid Empire as a State [3, 78].

As an outcome of the Amasya peace treaty, Shah Tahmasp achieved legitimate recognition of his state, as well as security and guarantee for the Shiite pilgrims during their visit to the holy places [3:78].

According to the Amasya peace treaty, the Ottoman Empire and Iran divided countries of Transcaucasia and the Near East between themselves. Iran took for itself: Kartli, Kakheti, the eastern part of Samtskhe-Saatabago with Akhaltsikhe, the eastern part of Armenia with Yerevan, North and South Azerbaijan with Tabriz, eastern Kurdistan, whereas the Ottoman Empire took for itself: Imereti, Guria, Samegrelo, western part of Samtskhe-Saatabago, western part of Armenia, Iraq of Arabia with Baghdad, western Kurdistan. The Ottomans also took Kars, but they were not allowed to restore fortresses and strongholds there [4: 241; 6: 10, 11; 25: 73; 26: 66, 67].

Conditions for the Amasya peace treaty were reflected in the Georgian historical sources also. Beri Egnatashvili in his "New Kartlis Tskhovreba" writes: "Then he sent a man to the Ottoman Sultan and wrote to him the following: "Let us leave each other in peace, as we both confess Mahmad with our faith", for at the time there was a battle between them. The Sultan ac-

cepted his proposal and they became reconciled. After that, they divided countries between themselves and Sultan took Imereti, Odishi, Guria, Upper Kartli up to the border of Kartli, and Kari on the border of Abotsi and Yerevan, from Armenia ... up to Baghdad. He only gave Kartli, Kakheti, Yerevan and the territory up to Kurdistan to Shah Tahmasp. And they concluded peace with each other" [27: 24; 28: II, 371].

The main diplomatic formula of the agreement signed in 1555 was the following: Iran recognized the power of the Ottomans over western Georgia, and the Ottoman Empire recognized Iran's rights in eastern Georgia, as for Meskheti, it was divided into two spheres of influence. Each of the conquerors usually had to recognize the success achieved by the other belligerent side in East Transcaucasia and western part of Meskheti. In fact, they divided between themselves not only already occupied territories, but also those not yet invaded or taken over by them [29: 68, 69; 30: 171; 31: 335; 32: 40].

Some Turkish historians write that according to the Amasya peace treaty, Azerbaijan with Tabriz came under Ottoman domination [8: II, 356; 12: II, 908]. However, this opinion was rejected by Azeri historians [33: 96].

According to the Amasya peace treaty, the attempt of Georgia's territorial integration was shattered in its foundation; Iran would not allow intervention of western Georgia in the internal affairs of eastern Georgia because that would have been considered as an Ottoman intervention in Iran's internal affairs, and the Ottomans, for their part, would not allow the integration of western Georgia with eastern Georgia, as the latter was considered to be a country protected by Iran [34: 118; 35: 122].

The 1555 Ottoman-Iran peace treaty impeded the process of Georgia's territorial unity and contributed to political separatism in it. The political leaders of Georgia had few opportunities to use the Ottoman-Iran disagreements for defending the interests of their country.

By the Amasya peace treaty, the Ottoman Empire and Iran made their possession of the invaded countries legitimate. During the Ottoman-Iran wars in the 17th-18th centuries, the Amasya treaty was a cornerstone for peaceful resolution of the territorial problems between the two states.

The Ottoman-Iranian war went on with intervals, lasting for forty-one years. The war was waged under the superiority of the Ottomans. The Turkish Army had

much better military equipment and preparation than the Iranian army. This was why the Iranian Shahs regularly applied the tactics of scorched earth. This strategy was used to hinder the ultimate victory of the Ottoman Empire over the Safavids.

During the wars, cities, villages and populated areas were devastated and destroyed. The population was on the verge of physical elimination.

The Ottoman Empire as well as Iran was not able to conduct war simultaneously in the East and West. When the Ottoman State intended to launch a war campaign against Iran, prior to this, it arranged reconciliation with European states, and only after attaining truce with

European states, it started warfare against Iran. Similarly, when the Shah of Iran had peaceful relations with the eastern countries, he launched a war campaign against the Ottoman Empire, however, after the peace treaty with the West (i. e., Ottomans) it began fighting against the khans of Central Asia.

In this state of affairs, political leaders of European states as well as of Central Asia observed ongoing wars between Iran and Turkey with great interest, and they were able to plan their foreign policy only after considering Iran-Ottoman relations. Thus the Ottoman-Iran wars were of great international significance. The first phase of the Ottoman-Iran wars ended by the peace treaty of Amasya.

ისტორია

1555 წლის 1 ივნისის ამასიის ოსმალეთ-ირანის საზავო ხელშეკრულება და საქართველო

მ. სვანიძე

გ.წერეთლის სახ. აღმოსავლეთმცოდნეობის ინსტიტუტი, თბილისი

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიკოს თ. გამყრელიძის მიერ)

ამასიის ზავის დადების შედეგად ახლო აღმოსავლეთში დამთავრდა ომი ოსმალეთსა და სეფიანთა ირანს შორის, რომელიც თითქმის ნახევარი საუკუნის განმავლობაში მიმდინარეობდა.

ამასიის ზავი იყო პირველი საზავო ხელშეკრულება, რომელიც ოსმალეთსა და სეფიანთა ირანს შორის დაიდო. ამ ზავით ოსმალეთმა ოფიციალურად კანონიერად აღიარა სეფიანთა სახელმწიფო.

ამასიის ზავით ოსმალეთმა და ირანმა ამიერკავკასიისა და ახლო აღმოსავლეთის ქვეყნები ურთიერთშორის გაინაწილეს. ირანს წილად ჰქონდა: ქართლი, კახეთი, სამცხე-საათაბაგოს აღმოსავლეთი ნაწილი ახალციხითურთ, სომხეთის აღმოსავლეთი ნაწილი ერევნითურთ, ჩრდილოეთი და სამხრეთი აზერბაიჯანი თავრიზითურთ, აღმოსავლეთი ქურთისტანი; ხოლო ოსმალეთს - იმერეთი, გურია, სამეგრელო, სამცხე-საათაბაგოს დასავლეთი ნაწილი, სომხეთის დასავლეთი ნაწილი, არაბეთის დასავლეთი ნაწილი, არაბეთის ერაყი ბაღდადითურთ, და დასავლეთი ქურთისტანი.

ამასიის ხელშეკრულება ეწინააღმდეგებოდა საქართველოს გაერთიანებას და ხელს უწყობდა მის პოლიტიკურ დაშლილობას.

ამასიის ზავით ოსმალეთმა და ირანმა ომის შედეგად დაპყრობილი ქვეყნები დაიკანონეს. XVII—XVIII სს.-ის ოსმალეთ-ირანის ომების დროს ამასიის ზავი იყო ქვაკუთხედი მათ შორის სადავო ტერიტორიული საკითხების მოგვარების საქმეში.

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