

Changes in the Diplomatic Measures of the Russian Empire in the Balkans after the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji (1774)

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In the last third of the eighteenth century, the foreign policy of the Russian Empire was oriented towards the Ottoman Empire and, as part of it, towards the Balkans and the Black Sea region. The aspirations of Russian foreign policy under Catherine II were shaped not only by the weakening of the government in Constantinople and the acquisition of new territories, but also by the creation of Russian economic, cultural, and political presence in southeastern Europe. The creation of official diplomatic representations was one of the main tools used by Russia to establish its presence in the Balkans.

The establishment of permanent embassies and the creation of the necessary political and infrastructural background became a decisive segment in the development of European diplomacy from the Peace of Westphalia to the Napoleonic Wars. The steps taken by the government in St. Petersburg with the creation of permanent embassies in the leading European courts were in line with the abovementioned trend, but while this kind of “catching up” process gradually moved towards Central and Western Europe, Russia applied a completely different set of conditions to maintain diplomatic relations in the case of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman diplomacy operated as a “one-sided diplomatic relation”: there were permanent Russian envoys at the Constantinople court, but no representatives were delegated by the Porte to St. Petersburg. Russia had to adapt to this special situation in the eighteenth century. This closed system was broken by the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji, which closed the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774 and included a clause according to which Russia had the right to establish consulates in the Ottoman Empire and thus in the Balkans, a key area.

The other key element of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji was the right of the reigning Russian tsar to be the protector of Christians in the Ottoman Empire, which was also fixed in this agreement. The “authority” acquired at this time was not unprecedented, as the Porte had acceded to such requests in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through capitulations with other states (such as France, Austria, or the Venetian Republic), thus establishing the “protégé” system. At the same time, the Russian government took the protection of Christians under the jurisdiction of the Porte to a new level and made it an integral part of its foreign policy. In my study, I examine how the Russian Empire applied the results of the Peace of Kuchuk Kainardji to diplomatic advocacy in the Balkans.

Keywords: Russian diplomacy, Ottoman Empire, eighteenth century, Balkan relations, Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji, diplomatic service

In the history of Russian diplomacy, the eighteenth century brought several new elements which fundamentally determined the way in which the state operated in the field of foreign relations. European diplomatic trends served as a model for the development of Russia's foreign missions and, perhaps more importantly, its institutional system. In this, as in so many other things, the reign of Peter the Great was the starting point, with the adoption of Western (i.e. European) customs, rules of sending and receiving ambassadors,¹ protocols, and the abolition (or, more precisely, the transformation) of the *prikaz* system, which created a system of colleges within which foreign affairs functioned as a separate unit. Building up the institutional system, developing diplomatic practice in line with international trends, organizing the apparatus, and the coordination of all these segments was a difficult and complex process. As part of the latter, the Russian government also paid attention to building up its foreign representations. After the Peace of Westphalia (1648), it became a priority for the European states to maintain constant communication with one another, obtain information more efficiently and monitor the internal and external activities of other (usually rival) countries, which also served to keep one another mutually under control.² The most effective way to do this was to establish permanent embassies, a process in which the Russian Empire was also involved, although at a somewhat slower pace. The measures adopted by the government in St. Petersburg to establish permanent embassies in the leading European courts were in line with the abovementioned policy. One of the first steps taken by Russia was to establish diplomatic connections with the courts of Central and Western Europe through its envoys delegated to London, Paris, and Vienna,³ though the geopolitical interests of the Russian Empire gradually shifted in the eighteenth century towards the eastern and southeastern regions of the continent.

The Balkan Peninsula, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea region occupied a special place in Russian foreign political thinking, and several foreign policy concepts were formulated which made these territories (all of which were under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman Empire) a specific target of Russian

1 Grimsted, *The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I*, 24–25.

2 Devetak et al., *An Introduction to International Relations*, 259.

Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 47; Schrek, "A modern diplomácia kialakulásának időszaka," 157–59.

3 Permanent diplomatic missions were established in London and Paris. Andrey Artamonovich Matveev arrived in England in 1707, and Johann C. von Schleinitz represented Russia at the French court from 1717. In the case of Austria, there was a regular Russian diplomatic presence from the early 1720s. Dixon, *Britain and Russia*, XXIII–XXIV. Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, 201.

expansion and influence gaining. These ambitions, motivated by economic and strategic considerations, placed the official relations with the Porte on a pedestal, together with the establishment and, if necessary, the strengthening of Russian ties with the Balkan peoples. But establishing a Russian diplomatic presence on the peninsula was far from easy. The process was slowed down (and heavily burdened) by a series of conflicts between St. Petersburg and Constantinople which flared up at times in the Russo-Turkish wars of the eighteenth century (1710–1711, 1736–1739, 1768–1774, and 1788–1792) and the peculiar and in many respects closed foreign political system that characterized the Ottoman Empire. St. Petersburg's efforts to build official relations with the Balkan provinces and the strategies adopted and tools used in the pursuit of this aim must be analyzed and interpreted in this context. Russia delegated envoys to the Ottoman capital as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century, but the Ottomans had no official representatives in Russia until 1857.⁴

The question of Russian foreign policy and Russia's great power status is a popular topic among Hungarian and international historians of Russian studies, and the process of Russia's transformation into an empire has been studied from many perspectives in recent decades. Russian diplomacy, territorial expansion, and the aspiration to gain influence over specific regions (including the Balkans) are evident components of the works focusing on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Almost without exception, every work (whether at the level of mention or deeper analysis) devotes attention to the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji, which is considered a starting point in the breakdown of parity between Russia and the Porte and also in the expansion of Russia's regional influence (whether in the Balkans or the Caucasus). The treaty signed on July 21, 1774 between Russia and the Porte after the war of 1768–1774 was literally a triumph of Russian diplomacy. The negotiations were led by Pyotr Alexandrovich Rumyantsev, and it took almost two years from the armistice for Russia and the Porte to reach a final agreement.⁵ The historiographical overview of the subject is a difficult task due to its complexity, since the topic of the peace itself and Russia's presence in the Balkans is mostly treated as one comprehensive thread, i.e. in the study of

4 The Ottoman Empire began to open up diplomatically to the European powers during the reign of Selim III. The first permanent Ottoman embassy was established in London in 1793 by Yusuf Aga Efendi, and others were opened in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna. Hurewitz, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, 147–48; Yalçınkaya, *The First Permanent Ottoman Embassy*.

5 On the circumstances under which peace was established, see Дружинина, *Кючук-Кайнарджийский мир*; Davies, *The Russo-Turkish war*; Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 213–14; 226–36.

the history of the Eastern Question in general. In order to bypass this problem, I provide a narrow interpretation of the most significant literature directly related to the subject of this paper chronologically, thematically, and in terms of theoretical methodology.

One of the main directions of research concerning the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji is the traditional political history approach, which for decades has dominated the work of historians on the subject. Part of this is essentially the traditional historiographical approach, based on the thorough processing of archival sources, in which the representatives of Russian historiography have been at the forefront. The monograph by E. I. Druzhinina can be considered a basic work, as well as the works of diplomatic historians (including I. S. Dostyan, G. L. Arsh, V. N. Vinogradov, and V. V. Degoev) that focus on issues less partial than the former, dealing rather with the Eastern Question and the Balkans at the turn of the century and during the first half of the nineteenth century.⁶ Among the works with new perspectives on Russia's international relations, in addition to N. S. Kinyapina's *Russia's foreign policy in the first half of the 19th century*,⁷ I would also like to highlight O. V. Orlik's monographs, in which Orlik examines regional aspects of Russian foreign policy in the nineteenth century.⁸ Most of these works do not deal specifically with the subject or the period covered here, but they typically present the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji as an important of reference point.

In Hungary, research on the historical background of the Eastern Question in the eighteenth century has been carried out by Erzsébet Bodnár, who in her monograph and numerous studies addresses the earliest issues of the Eastern Question (in the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century). She has devoted particular attention to the study of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji and the Turkish straits.⁹

One finds the same trend in the Western historiography, which tends to interpret the 1774 treaty and Russia's Balkan expansion in a broader perspective, such as the context of great power rivalries (Anglo-Russian competition or the

6 Дружинина, *Кючук-Кайнарджийский мир*; Достян, *Россия и балканский вопрос*; Дегоев, *Внешняя политика России*; Арш, *Россия и борьба Греции*. Арш, Виноградов, Джападзе, Достян, *Международные отношения на Балканах*.

7 Киняпина, *Внешняя политика России*.

8 Орлик, *История внешней политики России*; Орлик, *История внешней политики России. Первая половина XIX века*; Орлик, *Россия в международных отношениях: 1815–1829*.

9 Bodnár, *A keleti kérdés és a Balkán*; Bodnár, "A keleti kérdés és a fekete-tengeri szorosok"; Bodnár, "Oroszország déli törekvései."

Crimean War for instance)¹⁰, rather than in terms of practical diplomacy or the tools of diplomacy. The main proponent of the geopolitical approach is John P. LeDonne, who has analyzed Russia's role as an international political factor, including economic and military aspects.¹¹ In some cases, the geopolitical perspective is combined with an economic approach, as in the publications of Vernon Puryear, and detailed diplomatic histories have also been published telling the story of an individual or a diplomatic mission.¹²

In addition, studies focusing on the impact of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji have tended to focus on the ideological and political background of the Orthodoxy and the Russian protectorate and its manifestations in a particular area. These include Viktor Taki's analysis of the Russian protectorate as a "soft power" and Endre Sashalmi's discussion of the religious roots and political culture of Russian politics in the Balkans, highlighting the importance of the peace that brought the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774 to an end.¹³

As seen from the above, the historical literature on the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji and the subsequent period tends to focus on the territorial achievements and the rights acquired or the economic aspects, but no attention is paid to the specific changes that took place within practical diplomacy. At this point, it is important to make clear the main aspects and objectives of my inquiry. In any analysis and interpretation of large-scale political processes, it is important to map and present the less spectacular methods that are used on lower levels of diplomacy, such as the decade-long practice of establishing diplomatic representation and the instruments associated with it.

This, in my opinion, is the most important achievement of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji: the gradual transformation of the tools and methods used in Russian diplomacy until its emergence at the level of practical diplomacy, which would create the preconditions for Russian diplomatic representation in the Balkan provinces under Ottoman rule (which previously had not been possible).

I therefore do not aim in this essay to reassess the diplomatic history or geopolitical background of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji. My main objective is to define and interpret, in the context of the new foreign policy perspectives

10 On the latter interpretation, Joseph L. Wiczynski wrote an introductory essay. See Wiczynski, "The Myth of Kuchuk-Kainardja."

11 LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire*; LeDonne, "Russia's Ambitions in the Black Sea Basin."

12 Puryear, *England, Russia and the Straits Question*; Frary, "Russian Consuls"; Dvoichenko-Markov, "Russia and the First Accredited Diplomat."

13 Taki, "Limits of Protection"; Sashalmi, "Az orosz Balkán-politika vallási gyökereinek kérdéséhez."

offered by the peace treaty, the new methods and instruments used by Russian foreign policy in the Balkans, such as the diplomatic representation, the establishment of consulates, and the use of the protégé system. Furthermore, I present the mechanisms that were directly applied in everyday diplomatic practice.

The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji¹⁴ was significant for a number of reasons, but from the perspective of the discussion here, it was important because it offered an opportunity to change the diplomatic toolbox, and in the end, the Russian court took advantage of this opportunity. From a diplomatic point of view, in addition to providing Russia with a number of political advantages, the peace was a milestone in establishing formal (official) relations with the Balkan provinces and in raising diplomatic ties with the Ottoman Porte to a new level. The peace treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji resulted in significant achievements for Russia in three fields: 1) territorial; 2) economic; 3) political-diplomatic-cultural. In terms of territorial gains, Russia extended its borders to the Bug/Dnieper River.¹⁵ It finally acquired the fortress of Azov and strengthened its position in the North Caucasus. However, the second and third areas represented the real change in diplomatic terms, which were, to some extent, related to each other. A constant and key issue in the Russian concept of foreign policy was the economic consideration of more active involvement in maritime trade and thus in trade all over Europe, which would put the Eastern European state in a genuinely competitive position economically. The economic provisions of the treaty, which were advantageous for Russia and essentially opened the way for unrestricted Russian commercial shipping on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, were closely linked to the establishment of consulates and the development of a network of Russian agents.

As noted above, the peace of 1774 opened up a rather closed Ottoman system from a diplomatic point of view, and this allowed Russia to make three important advances. The first of these advances was the establishment, in accordance with Article 5, of a permanent embassy in the Ottoman capital. Diplomatic relations

14 Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire ottoman*, 338–44. There are several variations on the source publications of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji. The version of the treaty published by Gabriel Noradounghian does not cover all of the documents. A thematically arranged version of certain points of the treaty was published by A. Schopoff in his 1904 volume, which collected various firmans, documents, and conventions concerning the protection of Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Article 14, which was missing from the Noradounghian edition, are found in the Schopff volume. The articles of the Russo-Turkish peace of 1774 can also be found here: Саконов, *Плод стгаам Росоу*, 78–92.

15 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 40.

with the Ottoman Empire were different from the traditional European model, and even in the eighteenth century, they were largely unilateral. This did not mean, of course, that the Porte did not maintain diplomatic relations with other states, but the difference can be grasped in the method according to which envoys were sent. The government of the Sultan received the representatives of other countries, as had been the case in previous periods, but the Porte did not delegate permanent envoys even to the main European courts. Hence, much of the mutual communication was conducted through the foreign envoys stationed in Constantinople.¹⁶ Representation in Constantinople had long been a priority for Russia, as is evidenced by the fact that, from Pyotr Tolstói's mission as resident ambassador in 1702 onwards, Russian representatives came to the Ottoman capital quite frequently, but they came as part of temporary missions and not as officials of permanent embassies with an uninterrupted presence. Sometimes there was a gap of several years before a new Russian envoy was sent, and their titles varied widely (*resident, envoy, charge d'affaire*).¹⁷ This was the period when Russian diplomacy and foreign affairs began to professionalize on the basis of European standards.¹⁸ Thus, the peace treaty confirmed something that had essentially been in existence for decades, and the significance of the relevant article lies rather in the fact that the provision precisely defines the rank of the Russian representative in Constantinople. In this respect, Russian diplomacy took a serious step forward, because from the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji onwards, the Russian government was represented at the Sublime Porte by an envoy who was “ranked second”:

the Imperial Court of Russia will always have with the Sublime Porte a Minister of the second order, that is to say an Envoy or a Minister Plenipotentiary, and the Sublime Porte will have for his character all

16 Berridge, “Diplomatic Integration with Europe,” 117; Bóka, *Európa és az Oszmán Birodalom*, 109–10; Kürkçüoğlu, “The Adoption and Use of Permanent Diplomacy,” 131. In return, it was not until 1857 that the Porte established a permanent embassy in St. Petersburg, one of the main reasons being that the Constantinople government, following the reforms of Sultan Selim III, usually only sent ambassadors to states that were considered friendly, and the Sultan continued to maintain the reclamation of the Crimea as a long-term goal. See Kürkçüoğlu, “The Adoption and Use of Permanent Diplomacy,” 133–34, 137, 149; Naff, “Reform and Diplomacy,” 304. For the government and military reforms of Selim III, see Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 193–94.

17 See Amelicheva, *Russian Residency in Constantinople, 1700–1774*.

18 As a result of Peter's reforms, the Russian diplomatic machinery is restructured and permanent embassies are being established. In this respect, the primary targets of the Russian court were the high courts of Europe, such as Vienna, London, Paris, Berlin, etc. However, the first destinations included Constantinople as well. See Hennings, “Information and Confusion,” 1004.

the consideration and all the attentions that it has for the Ministers of the most distinguished Powers (...).¹⁹

It was an important condition that the Russian envoy would follow the Austrian imperial envoy in the diplomatic ranking.²⁰ This was linked to the fact that, under the same treaty, the Sultan recognized the Russian tsar as a padishah,²¹ and the Russian envoy was therefore to be treated with the utmost respect.²² The treaty was also clear on diplomatic protocol, and it regulated what was to be done if the Russian diplomat and the imperial envoy did not hold the same rank. In this case, “if this Minister of the Emperor has a different one, that is to say higher or lower, the minister or envoy of Russia will walk (...) after the ambassador of Holland, or, in his absence, after the ambassador of Venice.”²³

1774 was a turning point, but not only for Russian diplomacy. On the Ottoman side, it was also a stimulus for change in diplomacy, although this change was somewhat delayed. It was precisely this Russo-Turkish confrontation, i.e. the constant geopolitical threat from the tsarist court, that gave the incentive for the idea that the diplomatic behavior of the Porte had to change, and Constantinople had to find lasting allies to counter Russia.²⁴

At the same time, alongside the change in foreign political strategy, there were also tangible, almost modern elements of this shift: the establishment of the first permanent embassies (usually in exceptional cases and in the capitals of exceptionally friendly countries, for example London, Berlin, and Paris²⁵) and the associated restructuring of the internal Ottoman administrative system.²⁶

The second important advance for Russia in the field of diplomatic representation was found in provision 2), according to which the Russian envoy

19 Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire ottoman*, 323.

20 Уляницкий, *Дарданеллы, Босфор*, 166.

21 Being recognized as a padishah was of great importance. The Sultan would only recognize the rulers of other states as equals in the most exceptional cases. For instance: Bóka, *Európa és az Oszmán Birodalom*, 109.

22 Yakushev, “Diplomatic Relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire,” 150.

23 Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire ottoman*, 323.

24 Gürpınar, *Ottoman Imperial Diplomacy*, 61–62. In fact, Article 27 of the treaty was not limited to the establishment of a permanent embassy but obliged the Porte to exchange ambassadors, which took place in 1775–1776. Nikolai Vasilievich Renpin arrived in Constantinople on behalf of the Russian Empire, and Abd ül-Kerim Pasha in St. Petersburg. The details of the exchange of envoys have already been studied and addressed in the secondary literature. See Itzkowitz and Mote, *Mubadele: An Ottoman-Russian Exchange of Ambassadors*.

25 Hurewitz, “Ottoman Diplomacy,” 147.

26 See Naff, “Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy,” 295–315.

could represent Moldavia and Wallachia (Article 12, point 10) at the Porte, which in practice meant that after 1774, the Russian envoy in Constantinople could officially represent the affairs of the Danubian Principalities in the negotiations with the Ottoman government.²⁷ This provision, in turn, created a kind of dependency between the Eastern Balkan provinces and Russia. Previously, the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia had had their own envoys in Constantinople, the so-called *capu-keibayas*, who were removed from their positions during the war. Pending the peace negotiations, Russia paid attention to this case and agreed with the Porte in the same passage of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji to reinstate the representatives of the hospodars.²⁸ This measure was provided for in point 9 of the same article of the treaty, which also indicates that the two issues (the representation of the affairs of the Danubian Principalities and the reinstatement of the provincial delegates) were treated by Russian diplomacy as an integrated whole. This custom continued, and the only change was the addition of Russian diplomatic representation in Constantinople.

And finally, the third significant advance for Russia was the newly acquired right to establish consulates in the Ottoman Empire (Article 11) and thus in the Balkan Peninsula, which was of particular importance to the government of St. Petersburg and which was an important milestone in the establishment of formal (official) diplomatic relations with the Balkan provinces. The provision reads as follows:

And as it is in every respect indispensable to establish consuls and vice-consuls in all places where the Russian Empire deems them necessary, they shall be regarded and respected in the same way as other consuls of friendly powers; these consuls and vice-consuls shall be allowed to retain dragomans by the name of Berath, that is to say, by granting them imperial patents, and by granting them the same privileges as other consuls in the service of England, France, and other nations.²⁹

This led to the establishment of consulates not only in the Balkans but also in the Danubian Principalities (Bucharest and Iași) and later on the Greek mainland and islands (Athens, Patras, and Thessaloniki), in the Belgrade Pashalik (Belgrade), in Montenegro (Kotor), and in several cities in the Middle East.³⁰

27 Florescu, *The Struggle Against Russia in the Romanian Principalities*, 75; Yakushev, “Diplomatic Relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire,” 150; Demeter, *Balkán kronológia*, vol. 1, 30.

28 Florescu, *The Struggle Against Russia in the Romanian Principalities*, 25, 75.

29 Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire ottoman*, 323.

30 Prousis, “A Guide to AVPRI Materials on Russian Consuls,” 515.

The development of the Russian consular system in the Ottoman Empire, which meant the creation of a continuous Russian diplomatic presence in the Balkans, was by no means a rapid process, but rather a systematic one, which took roughly 20 to 30 years for the Russian foreign service, which gradually building this system up along the lines of its original objectives, but always in accordance with the political situation. This reflected in the fact that the first Russian consul started his work in the Danubian Principalities, which was the most important Balkan region for Russia at the time, after the Porte had affirmed Russia's right in this respect in an auxiliary treaty, in addition to the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji.³¹

The first Russian diplomat to arrive in this capacity was Sergei L. Lashkov, who served as consul in Bucharest between 1780 and 1782.³² Lashkov had previous diplomatic experience in Constantinople. He presumably learned the diplomatic service here and was chosen as the first Russian consul to the Danube Principalities on the basis of his experience in the Ottoman Empire.³³ After 1774, the Dniester River became the newly acquired natural border, and the Russian Empire became the immediate neighbor of the Moldavian Principality. From a geopolitical point of view, this implied a strong Russian presence. The acquired territory was of great importance for Russia's southwestern border defense, especially because of the frontier nature of the region.³⁴ The term *frontier* needs to be explained, as the legal status of the Danubian Principalities was completely settled during the period under study, and they were not part of the territories the status of which (i.e. to what state did they belong) was the subject of dispute. On the other hand, frontier areas are generally understood to be territories that act as intermediate areas or transitional zones,³⁵ which a neighboring state is unable to subordinate fully or integrate into its own territory.³⁶ But this was not, essentially, the case with the Danubian Principalities, as they were parts of the Ottoman Empire (as tributary states with their own internal policies),

31 Treaty of Aynalikavak in 1779. See Сперанский, *Полное собрание законов Российской Империи XX*, 800–5.

32 Dvoichenko-Markov, "Russia and the First Accredited Diplomat," 201.

33 In the late 1780s and early 1790s, another Russian-Turkish war hit the Eastern Balkans, and since the Danubian Principalities were regularly the staging ground for the Russo-Turkish wars, the Bucharest consulate had to move to Iași during the conflict. See Dvoichenko-Markov, "Russia and the First Accredited Diplomat," 201.

34 According to Florescu, the area considered a "frontier" by Russian political thought at the time included Moldova and Wallachia as well. Florescu, *The Struggle Against Russia in the Romanian Principalities*, 75.

35 Капелер, "Южный и восточный фронт России," 64.

36 Khodarkovsky, *Russia Steppe Frontier*, 47, 185.

and there was no dispute between the Porte and Russia on this point. At the same time, the region met two criteria that nevertheless gave the Eastern Balkan principalities a kind of frontier character for Russia. The first of these two criteria was the cultural overlap and the second was the fact that Moldavia and Wallachia were usually used as military staging areas in Russo-Turkish conflicts. Thus, in essence, Russia's southern border zones or frontier zones included the Danubian Principalities³⁷ as well, and this geopolitical role also enhanced the diplomatic importance of Moldavia and Wallachia.

The Russian consulate was very effective through its many connections, but soon other states also began to show interest in the region.³⁸ In addition to Bucharest, a consulate was opened in Iași, followed by diplomatic missions to the Greek territories, with Russian consulates being established in Athens, Patras, Thessaloniki, Smyrna, and the Aegean islands.³⁹ This also shows that, regarding the Balkans, the Greek region was given high priority, alongside the Danubian Principalities. In contrast to Russian-Greek relations, Russian-Bulgarian connections remained stagnant in the period after 1774.

The large Greek and Slavic populations that had settled in Russia after the Russo-Turkish war of 1768–1774 and the already existing Russo-Greek connections played a decisive role. One of the most important bridgeheads of the St. Petersburg government in this area was the consulate in Thessaloniki, founded in 1785, which had a special role as one of the paramount ports in the Eastern Mediterranean area, which also served as an information-distribution center. Local connections and transit traffic provided valuable economic and military information for the Russian consuls, who forwarded this information in their reports to the relevant department of the College of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁰ In

37 Зеленева, *Геополитика и геостратегия России*, 77–78. Researchers studying the frontier zones of the Russian Empire interpret the Danube and Black Sea region as the western part of a so-called Eurasian frontier. See Rieber, “Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy”; McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier*, 2–14; Khodarkovsky, *Russia Steppe Frontier*. Indeed, this terminology was also adopted by Viktor Taki in his works (“Russian Protectorate in the Danubian Principalities”; “Russia on the Danube”).

38 Austria opened a consulate in Bucharest in 1784. Florescu, *The Struggle Against Russia in the Romanian Principalities*, 77–78.

39 In March 1770, following the arrival of the Russian Baltic Fleet in the region, Russian agents roamed the Greek territories to incite the population and local leaders to join, which proved a partially successful Russian undertaking and which became known as the Orlov Uprising after Baron Alexei Grigorievich Orlov. Demeter, *Balkán kronológia*, vol. 1, 28; Frary, *Russia and the Making of Modern Greek Identity*, 21–22.

40 The organizational structure of the College of Foreign Affairs was as follows: reports from the Balkans and Greece were channeled to the Asia Department of the institution, which also coordinated matters relating to the Eastern Question. Prousis, “A Guide to AVPRI Materials on Russian Consuls,” 515.

addition, the consulate helped the Russian government strengthen the ties to the Orthodox through cooperation with the Greek community, which also ensuring that Christians could make pilgrimages to Mount Athos.⁴¹ Among the examples of effective consular activity in the region is the career of Angelo Mustoxidi, who was based in Thessaloniki for several decades, but Sergei Bogdanov⁴² in the Ionian Islands and Ioannis N. Vlassopoulos, who became consul in Preveza in 1804, were also prominent figures of the Russian diplomatic presence.⁴³ The functioning of the consulates, however, depended heavily on the political conditions in the region. In peacetime and in times of conflict, the role of the consulates was more appreciated, but there are also examples of the diplomatic presence being terminated due to tensions between the Sublime Porte and Russia or because of a war, for instance in 1821.⁴⁴

Consuls in the Russian service were mostly of Greek descent, sometimes with Phanariot roots. The Phanariotes, who were an influential elite, assisted the Russian government throughout the Balkans, but the Danubian Principalities and Greece were the main areas of cooperation. The Phanariotes had a special position within the Ottoman Empire. This social group of Greek origin, which had extensive international connections and generally excellent language skills, was characterized by a kind of duality. While they were strongly linked to the Ottoman political and administrative system, in which they played leading roles (for example in the leadership of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia),⁴⁵ they also developed deep ties with Russian political and cultural circles, thus predestinating the Orthodox-Russian orientation of the Greek elite, which the St. Petersburg cabinet sought to turn to its advantage.⁴⁶ In addition, the Russian

41 Frary, "Russian Interest," 17.

42 Frary, "Russian Consuls," 49.

43 Frary, "The Russian Consulate in the Morea," 59.

44 For example, the consulate in Thessaloniki temporarily ceased to operate during the Greek War of Independence. Frary, "Russian Interest," 19. And the Russian embassy in Constantinople was also suspended for similar reasons in July 1821 with the departure of Baron Stroganov from the Ottoman capital. Арш, Виноградов, Достян, *Международные отношения на Балканах 1815–1830*, 147.

45 There were usually four leading positions at the Ottoman imperial level. In addition to the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, the offices of Imperial Dragoman and Naval Dragoman were also held by Phanariotes. At lower levels, the Greek-born elite was active in many other areas, for example in the economy or the Balkan Orthodox Church. Philliou, "Communities on the Verge," 155.

46 In the second half of the eighteenth century, parallel to the growth of Russian influence, another, contradictory process can be observed. During the same period in which the Phanariot elite became a partner in cooperating with the Russians, a process of integration took place that involved the Phanariotes even more intensively in the Ottoman state structure by appointing them to key positions. According

government also had ambitious plans to create an independent Greek state. The concept of Catherine the Great and Chancellor Bezborodko was based on the revival of the Byzantine Empire. This would have created a geopolitical entity in the eastern Mediterranean that would have been committed to Russia and could have provided new support for the Russian Empire. The draft also envisaged the partition of the Balkans, with Austria receiving parts of the western Balkans and Russia acquiring the eastern provinces of the peninsula.⁴⁷

Another important means of cooperation with the Greeks was their involvement in Russian economic activity. In addition to the obvious diplomatic representation of Russia, the consular posts established in the Greek territories were given commercial tasks as well. They were given the task of exploring and observing local social, political, and, last but not least, economic conditions.⁴⁸ The opening of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles to Russian commercial shipping created new perspectives in the cooperation with the Greeks, who were experienced in Levantine trade and commerce. The use of the straits gave Russia a strategic advantage, as the Sublime Porte did not guarantee the freedom of navigation on the straits for all states. It was only a prerogative of the leading European powers (i.e. France and Great Britain). Through capitulations, countries with a permit of passage could allow merchants belonging to other nations to sail under their flags. This was the typical case in the Russian-Greek relationship, as the economic advantages that Russia had gained could be used in a spirit of mutual cooperation. It was a tool in the hands of Russian diplomacy that provided St. Petersburg a stable backdrop to shape the volume of trade in the Eastern Mediterranean. Russia considered the rights set out in article 11 of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji as obvious, but as a result of negotiations with the Porte, it requested the confirmation of these rights in two conventions over the years. The first such document was the Treaty of Aynalıkavak in 1779, which guaranteed free passage on the Black Sea and through the straits.⁴⁹ The other was a Russian-Turkish trade agreement in 1783, which guaranteed the unrestricted commercial use of the straits to the Russian

to Christine Philliou, however, this was an instinctive process, and not a consciously organized central integration policy on the part of the Porte. See Philliou, “Communities on the Verge,” 153–54.

47 Djuvara, *Türk İmparatorluğunun Paylaşılması*, 255–79.

48 Prousis, “A Guide to AVPRI Materials on Russian Consuls,” 515.

49 Сперанский, *Полное собрание законов Российской Империи XX*, 800–5; Санин, “Проблема Черноморских проливов,” 75–76.

Empire.⁵⁰ These two documents solidified the conditions of Russian trade in the Mediterranean and the results of the peace treaty of 1774. On this basis, it was common practice from the 1780s onwards for Greek merchant ships to transport their cargo under the Russian flag on the routes linking the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.⁵¹ Information on local conditions and economic developments was not only relayed by the consuls, but also by the embassy in Constantinople, which had its own department on trade.⁵² The Russian trade network built up in the Mediterranean through the involvement of people of Balkan origin (mostly Greeks) could not have functioned without the consular network.⁵³ This is where the importance of Russia's right to establish consulates throughout the Ottoman Empire comes into play, and alongside the Balkans and the Black Sea area, which were immensely important because of their geopolitical proximity, the Middle East (Alexandria, Beirut, Aleppo) also had a prominent place in this process. In economic terms, this Mediterranean network extended as far as Marseilles.⁵⁴ Russian diplomacy usually employed people who were fluent in the languages of the Mediterranean and well-versed in Ottoman social culture and the workings of Ottoman institutions.⁵⁵ This also led to closer relations between St. Petersburg and the Greeks.

The development of cultural and political ties with the Serbs, which had a tradition dating back to the decades before the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji, was another key point in Russian-Balkan relations. Among the Balkan nations, the Serbs had the strongest connection to the Russians. This connection was based on common faith and their Slavic origins. In the 1790s, national resistance among the Serbs suggested to the Porte that there was a need to reform the internal relations of the Belgrade Pashalik. This growing attachment to notions of national independence among the Serbs led to the first Serbian uprising at the turn of the century as a result of the inaction (or rather inertia) of the

50 Harlaftis, "A History of Greek-Owned Shipping," 6; Kardasis, "Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea," 109. This put Russia in a privileged position compared to other states. A similar analytical work, but regarding Eurasia, is Romaniello's monograph, which provides an excellent analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Anglo-Russian economic cooperation in which British diplomacy and business sought to use Russia's regional position and its relations with the surrounding nations and states to consolidate its own influence in the region. See Romaniello, *Enterprising Empires*.

51 Harlaftis, "A History of Greek-Owned Shipping," 27.

52 Prousis, "A Guide to AVPRI Materials on Russian Consuls," 515.

53 *Ibid.*, 516.

54 *Ibid.*

55 *Ibid.*

Ottoman central government. In this context, the attitude of Russian foreign policy is of great interest, as they maintained their commitment to the Serb cause in principle and their solidarity with the movement, but they refrained from providing any specific political or military support.⁵⁶ Russian foreign policy was strongly influenced by its involvement in the French Revolutionary Wars from 1798 (and the Napoleonic wars from 1800), and the method that was applied after 1774 changed in many respects. After the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji, Russian foreign policy towards the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire was divided into two main strands, each of which had different objectives.

The aim of the first was to maximize territorial gains while increasing political and economic influence. This phase lasted until 1774–1792, when the Treaty of Iași ended the Second Turkish War of Catherine II. From this point onwards, the original objective (rational but intensive expansion) was transformed, and the aim then was to consolidate the acquired positions and create stability there. Thus, after Iași, the Russian government concentrated on the pacification of the newly acquired territories and their incorporation into the empire. This Russian policy of consolidation was disrupted by the emergence of Girondian France in the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, which posed a direct threat to Ottoman integrity and Russian influence in the area. This became especially clear after the invasion of the Ionian Islands and the advance of French forces into Montenegro. Hence, the role of Serbia and Montenegro increased greatly.

Regarding Serbian-Russian relations, the government of St. Petersburg sought to preserve good relations and avoid the French orientation of the Belgrade Pashalik, while it was unable to provide any genuine diplomatic or military support to the provisional government led by Karadjordje (George Petrović), since, precisely because of the French threat in the Balkans, Russia had to maintain peace with the Porte. As a result, Russian-Serbian relations were unstable in the late 1790s and early 1800s, and no permanent diplomatic presence was established. In Serbia, this happened much later, although it is true that the Russian protectorate in the strict political sense was guaranteed for St. Petersburg by the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), and the consulate was opened in Belgrade in 1838.⁵⁷

56 Bíró, “A modern szerb államiság,” 75. For Russian-Serbian relations, see Попов, *Россия и Сербия*.

57 Bataković, *The Foreign Policy of Serbia*, 91.

However, there were Russian missions and delegations to Serbia,⁵⁸ which temporarily fulfilled this role, and during the uprising, the Russian Foreign Ministry⁵⁹ received delegations representing the Serbian provisional government. Thus, official contacts between the two sides did exist, but there was no permanent Russian presence on Serbian territory during the period under examination. This may have been due to the fact that, economically, the Serbian region was a peripheral area compared to the Danubian Principalities and the Greek islands, and the use of periodic missions that had been customary in the past was sufficient for political contacts.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the lack of consular representation may also have been justified by the fact that, in the unstable European political climate, Russia did not want to make such a serious gesture to a Balkan province that had rebelled against the Porte, since it would be interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire and could lead to an open confrontation between the governments of St. Petersburg and Constantinople (and even Vienna, which considered this region its own “frontier”) at a time when Russia’s main priority was to hold its ground on the European front.

The situation was different in Montenegro, where Russian foreign policy had other scopes and priorities. Relations with the Western Balkans were not particularly at the forefront of Russia’s concerns anyway, and Austria also had a strong influence in the region. On the whole, however, the Western Balkans were not excluded from the process of building a consular system, as Russia established a consulate in Kotor in 1804. Relations between Russia and Montenegro were complicated before 1774. The Russo-Turkish war of 1768–1774 was also associated with the need for closer cooperation with Montenegro, which simultaneously created a curious situation between the current prince, Šćepan Mali, and the Russian government. The figure of Šćepan Mali was problematic for St. Petersburg, since he had managed to gain support in Montenegro by impersonating Peter III. Although the phenomenon of the “false tsar” was not uncommon in Russian history, it was a particularly sensitive moment for Catherine II, who had come to power through a palace revolution against her husband Peter III. At the same time, cooperation with Šćepan Mali could have provided a new ally in the war against the Porte, so the Russian

58 For example, the missions of Konstantin Rodofinikin or Filippo Paulucci. See Bíró, “A modern szerb államiság,” 76–77.

59 Grimsted, *The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I*, 24–25.

60 Арш, Виноградов, Джападзе, Достян, *Международные отношения*, 90.

government initiated negotiations headed by Prince Dolgoruki in Cetinje.⁶¹ Although there were uncertainties about Russian-Montenegrin relations in this period, Russian diplomacy viewed Montenegro as a serious strategic partner in the Western Balkans, capable of counterbalancing the power of Venice and the Ottoman Empire.⁶²

Even so, the Russian presence was more moderate here than in the Eastern Balkan provinces, although the St. Petersburg cabinet considered it important to establish its political and cultural influence in the region. Moreover, the attitude of the Principality of Montenegro towards the Russian Empire was basically positive (especially in the ecclesiastical sphere). There was always some form of contact between the two nations, and information on the situation in the Western Balkans was regularly received from Montenegro and used by Russian diplomacy.⁶³ Russia usually represented itself in the Principality through temporary diplomatic and military missions.⁶⁴ This was also true in the 1780s and 1800s, when the Adriatic coast underwent several changes as the region became the target of French foreign political ambitions. During the Russo-Turkish War of 1787–1792, Russia sent several envoys to the region to forge an anti-Turkish alliance between northern Albania and Montenegro to support the Austro-Russian alliance in the Balkans.⁶⁵ The situation was quite complex, since the principality itself was part of the Ottoman Empire, and the smaller coastal part (and the Bay of Kotor) was under the jurisdiction of the Venetian Republic. However, the French Revolutionary Wars led to a change of authority. Venetian power was replaced by Austria in 1797, while Russia began to attach greater importance to the Western Balkans, which by the early nineteenth century was considered part of the Mediterranean sphere of influence of the Russian Empire.⁶⁶ The Russian Foreign Ministry decided in this milieu to open a diplomatic mission in Kotor that year. However, there are some differences from previous consulate openings. The newest Balkan consulate, for example, was not opened in Ottoman territory. This was a distinctive situation because, as already noted, the Russian consuls adapted to the challenges of the Ottoman political and administrative system by involving and making use of the knowledge of the

61 *Recueil Consulaire Contenant les Rapports*, 171; Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 210.

62 As Petrovich's work shows: Петровић, *Степан Малый – загадка истории*. For its part, Montenegro made serious efforts on Russia's side in the war. See Хитрова, "Черногорцы в России," 77–78.

63 Аншаков, "Российские эмиссары в Черногории," 3;

64 *Ibid.*, 4.

65 *Ibid.*, 10.

66 Schrek and Demeter, "Adam Czartoryski Balkán-koncepciói," 91.

local people. The same principle would of course have been justified in the case of Montenegro, but the city chosen for the consulate (the strategic and commercial importance of which was undeniable) was in Austrian hands after 1797 (the collapse of the Venetian rule), so it was not enough for Russian diplomacy to adapt to the Ottoman system of relations in the case of Montenegro. Russia also had to communicate with the Austrian Empire about the establishment of a diplomatic representation. Besides the special situation of Montenegro, it also had a strong leader, Petar Njegoš, who was able to build up his power partly with the help of Russian subsidies⁶⁷ and whose official approval was important for the opening of the Russian Consular Office. In May 1804, under the leadership of A. Mazurevsky, the diplomatic mission was finally opened.⁶⁸

Another key element of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji was the right of the Russian tsar to protect the Orthodox Christians living in the Ottoman Empire, which was also laid down in this agreement. The “authority” acquired at this time was not unprecedented, as the Porte had already conceded to such requests in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through capitulations concluded with other states,⁶⁹ thus allowing for the development of the so-called *protégé system*. At the same time, the Russian government took the protection of Christians under the jurisdiction of the Porte to a new level and made it an integral part of its foreign policy towards the Balkans.

During the eighteenth century, the *protégé system* became an integral part of the European diplomatic missions established in the Ottoman Empire. However, it is important to draw a distinction between the protection needs and rights that applied to individuals and communities. The representatives of the leading European states delegated to the Porte had diplomatic prerogatives granted by international law from the outset, which were supplemented over time in their dealings with the Porte by the privileges granted in the capitulations mentioned

67 Csaplár-Degovics, “Az albán nemzetállam,” 14.

68 Russia already had an active diplomatic presence in Kotor before the arrival of Mazurevsky, as the government of St. Petersburg had delegated Marcus Ivelich to Montenegro as part of a special mission, but his activities had a rather negative impact on Prince Petar Njegoš and his circle of supporters. See Распопович, “Российское консульство в Которе,” 5–8.

69 France was originally granted protectorate rights over Catholics in the Ottoman Empire in 1740, and, as a sign of reconciliation between the French and Ottoman governments, these rights were later reaffirmed during the Napoleonic Wars in 1802. Demeter, *Balkán kronológia*, vol. 1, 49; Shopoff, *Les réformes et la protection des chrétiens*, 5–8.

earlier.⁷⁰ Residents with a diverse local network of contacts and a wide range of language skills were given a prominent role in the activities of the missions, helping diplomats, consuls, and other Foreign Service representatives in other statuses. The diplomats could give local residents a mandate which allowed the transfer of privileges that came with the diplomatic service. In general, the persons concerned were non-Muslim residents of the Ottoman Empire who were also engaged in trade and were granted these privileges⁷¹ in the form of a specific type of document, the so-called *berat*.⁷² It is important, however, to clarify the definition with regard to the protégé system. A distinction must be drawn between the terms protégé and protectorate, which are similar and, in a sense, related but not entirely overlapping. In essence, the protection or rather the exceptional circumstances outlined above (as protégé) emerged at the level of practical diplomacy as a key instrument with which to gain local influence. Therefore, it is not the same as the ideological role of protection at the level of great politics. However, these concepts were not separable, since the protégé was an early, individualized and extended form of the protectorate, which did not think in terms of communities but in terms of protecting individuals. Of course, from a diplomatic point of view, the question of who was worthy of receiving a *berat* and what that person had to accomplish in order to get one from a foreign country was very subjective, and the individualized protégé system created many opportunities for misuse. In addition to diplomatic immunity, the persons who held the *berat* (the “*beratlı*”) also enjoyed customs exemptions, which again opened the door to misuse and corruption.⁷³ Most of the dragomans and agents employed by the consuls were engaged in commercial activities and bought the documents guaranteeing national tax exemption for large sums of money. These merchants carried out a significant part of the trade in the Mediterranean, and so the use of the protégé system was of particular importance for the great powers, including Russia, as it was the basis for the most important economic links of Russian diplomacy.⁷⁴ However,

70 For the capitulations of Austria and the privileges deriving from it, see Schopoff, *Les réformes et la protection des chrétiens*, 4; Thallóczy, *Utazás a Levántéban*, 93.

71 As citizens under foreign protection, they did not have to pay the internal customs in each province, which was a great advantage. They were also exempted from the jurisdiction of the Ottoman legal system.

72 Sonyel, “The Protégé System,” 57–58. Schopoff, *Les réformes et la protection des chrétiens*.

73 Sonyel, “The Protégé System,” 58. The diplomatic reforms of Selim III attempted to clarify the situation, which severely limited the number of *beratlı* officially employable by the consuls and regulated their operations. Naff, *Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy*, 301–2. However, it is another matter that the government’s efforts were largely unsuccessful.

74 Prousis, *British Consular Reports*, 18.

the method was not only important with regard to maritime and inland trade with the Middle East and Anatolia, but also for the Eastern Balkan region, as the use of *berats* was also common in the Danubian Principalities, although we have no information on the extent to which Russia used the method there.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the claim of protection over individuals evolved into a right over collectives. Although Russia was not the only power to entertain this ambition, it was Russia that used the idea and “institution” of the protectorate most deliberately to shape its relations with the Ottoman Empire. A key rhetorical and political element of the rapprochement towards the nations in the Balkans was the emphasis on belonging together on the basis of denominational and cultural ties.⁷⁶ Peter the Great had already taken upon himself the role of defender of the Orthodox Christians in the Balkans in the Russo-Turkish War (1710–1711), which was part of the Great Northern War (1700–1721). In April 1711, the tsar issued an appeal in which, based on the Orthodox religious community, he sought to establish cooperation with the nations in the Balkans, in this case the Danubian Principalities. But a similar methodology can also be observed in the same period in the case of the Western Balkan province of Montenegro, where a Russian delegation arrived in July 1711 in the hopes of organizing joint action against the Ottomans.⁷⁷ The two appeals were successful, yet both ended in failure against the Ottoman army. Nevertheless, the use of this method was an important element in relations between the Balkan nations and Russia, as it essentially set a precedent in the methodology of building alliances with the Balkans. The call on (Balkan) Christians in the Ottoman Empire for a joint action became a motif used frequently in the subsequent Russo-Turkish wars.⁷⁸ At the same time, in the conflicts between the two empires (Russia and the Porte), which were competing in a common geopolitical space, Russian diplomacy consistently sought to gain protectorate rights over the Christians.

75 There is controversial information in the literature on the number of *berats*. One reason for this is that the use of *berats* is commonly viewed from the perspective of Western European countries without Eastern European states. However, where Austria and Russia appear in the context of the protégé system, the number of issued *berats* is highly disputed. While France and Great Britain provided figures in the hundreds on the whole, Russia and Austria reported figures in the hundreds of thousands in the Danubian Principalities alone, which seems unrealistic. Thus, the number of *berats* issued for the Russian diplomatic service cannot really be quantified for sure. For instance: Prousis, *British Consular Reports*, 20; Artuç, “The Price of Legal Institutions,” 727; Naff, *Ottoman Diplomatic Relations*, 103.

76 Sashalmi, “Az orosz Balkán-politika vallási gyökereinek kérdéséhez,” 42–44.

77 Ibid., 45–46; Demeter, *Balkán kronológia*, vol. 1, 10.

78 Vovchenko, “Russian Messianism in the Christian East,” 40.

This was also the case during the Niš/Belgrade peace negotiations, which brought the Russo-Turkish War of 1736–1739 to a close and which were unsuccessful in this respect. The Russian government, which saw the end of the war as a failure, was unsatisfied with the results. The Porte had not given the tsar the authority he had aspired to establish, and the Habsburg Emperor was able to assume the role of protector of Christians (non-Orthodox Christians) in the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁹ Similar rights were also enjoyed by other European states in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century, but the other states were typically less likely to take advantage of this in practice.⁸⁰ Russia finally gained this right in 1774 and, combined with the right to build Orthodox churches, it resulted in a well-constructed cultural diplomacy.

The pursuit of a protective role, territorial gains, and the extension of power/political influence against the Ottoman Empire in the Black Sea region (and the Balkan Peninsula, especially in the Eastern Balkans) became a permanent feature of Russian foreign policy. The Russo-Turkish war of 1768–1774, which in itself determined these Russian ambitions, also fit into this pattern. The emphasis on religious cooperation, solidarity, and protection was the foundation, in principle and in practice, of Russian foreign policy after 1774.

In conclusion, the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji was a real turning point in Russian foreign policy, providing the St. Petersburg government with several advantages in asserting its geopolitical interests in general. The treaty also introduced a new approach to diplomacy and, more importantly, to the practice of diplomacy, ushering in a new era in Russia's relations with the Porte and the Balkan provinces. I have highlighted in this essay the new measures that the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji provided for Russia. The establishment and development of foreign missions (i.e. official representations in Constantinople) and the formation of cooperation with the Balkan territories (i.e. consulates in the Ottoman provinces) were the most important part of the expansion of the diplomatic toolbox. A change in diplomatic protocol occurred in 1774 in the case of the Russian envoy in Constantinople, and the possibility of establishing a Russian consulate system in the Ottoman lands became a reality. The diplomatic

79 Demeter, *Balkán kronológia*, vol. 1, 21–22; Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire ottoman*, 4.

80 The Porte itself did not completely abandon the demands of the protectorate by the Great Powers, which sought to influence the minorities within the Empire. On the contrary, the government in Constantinople also tried to form a counter-pole, although with less success, claiming similar rights over territories with mixed populations, such as the Muslim minorities belonging to the Russian Empire or the British Empire. Sonyel, "The Protégé System," 60–61.

networks established in the Balkans (especially in the Eastern Balkan region) and the opening of consulates in the Danubian Principalities and Greece were examples of this. The results of the formal diplomatic missions were slow and gradual, but their main significance lay in the fact that Russia was able to raise its political and cultural relations with the Balkan nations to a new (now official instead of informal) level. In the long term, this made it possible for Russia to integrate itself into the Mediterranean political and economic structure.

The so-called *protégé* system also played a decisive role in the transformation of Russian diplomatic practice, the main purpose of which was to provide a network of contacts to support the work of the diplomatic missions and to create a kind of information background through the diplomatic privileges granted to members of the local population by the *berats*. This was followed by the right of the Russian tsar to protect Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Although the protectorate acquired in 1774 did not gain significance until the nineteenth century, when nationalist movements began to flourish in the Balkans, its acquisition was of the utmost importance, as it fulfilled an aspiration that Russian diplomacy had had since the early eighteenth century and provided a kind of continuity between the ideals and goals of Russian foreign policy before and after 1774. Indeed, the hitherto fervently-sought right of patronage became an effective diplomatic instrument after the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji, the value and importance of which are reflected in the new European order after the Congress of Vienna (1815), in an international system in which the Russian Empire repositioned itself as the leading power not only in Eastern and Southeastern Europe but on the entire continent.

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