

## BORDERS AND CONTAGION. OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATION OF BOSNIA BETWEEN BORDER REINFORCEMENT AND HEALTH PROTECTION (1866–1867)

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to highlight the role played and the measures taken by the administration of the Ottoman *Vâli* Topal Osman Pasha during the cholera waves of 1866 and 1867 in the *vilâyet-i Bosna*. Through the study of Swiss, Ottoman, Italian, and French documents, the paper analyses the strategy and the nature of the sanitary measures taken by the imperial provincial administration and their use in border disputes between Austro-Hungarian Dalmatia, Ottoman Bosnia, and Montenegro. In this way, it will be possible to answer the following questions: What was the role of the Governor General Osman Pasha in the development and imposition of sanitary measures against the epidemics of 1866-7? Were they based only on medical knowledge or on the defence of local social and economic interests as well? And, finally, did these measures contribute in any way to the strengthening of the political-sanitary borders between Bosnia, Dalmatia, and Montenegro?

**Keywords:** Sanitary Cordon, Borders, Quarantines, Bosnia, Cholera, Ottoman Empire

**Apstrakt:** Cilj ovog rada je da istakne ulogu i mjere koje je poduzela uprava osmanskog valije Topal Osman-paše tokom talasa kolere 1866. i 1867. godine u Bosanskom vilajetu. Kroz proučavanje švicarskih, osmanskih, italijanskih i francuskih dokumenata, u radu se analizira strategija i karakter

sanitarnih mjera carske provincijske administracije i njihova primjena u graničnim sporovima između Austro-Ugarske Dalmacije, Osmanske Bosne i Crne Gore. Na taj način će se moći odgovoriti na sljedeća pitanja: Kakva je bila uloga guvernera generala Osman-paše u razvoju i uvođenju sanitarnih mjera protiv epidemija 1866–1867? Da li su se zasnivale samo na medicinskom znanju ili na odbrani lokalnih društvenih i ekonomskih interesa? I konačno, da li su ove mjere na bilo koji način doprinijele jačanju političko-sanitarnih granica između Bosne, Dalmacije i Crne Gore?

**Ključne riječi:** Sanitarni kordon, granice, karantena, Bosna, kolera, Osmansko Carstvo

## Introduction

‘Only the fear of incurring a severe reprimand from the consular corps invited by the Pasha to concede to the examination and adoption of these hygiene measures held them back and prevented them from completely abstaining from attending the committee meetings where they only seemed to attend under duress. There was no goodwill, energy or dedication to public service among them, and no good results to be expected.’<sup>1</sup>

The history of Bosnia-Herzegovina has long attracted the attention of historians, both as part of the history of Yugoslavia,<sup>2</sup> and as an autonomous national entity as well.<sup>3</sup> In the past few years, this area of study has received renewed interest, due to its geographical location and nature as a complex society. This area is of immense interest to scholars due to its peculiar geographical position between the countries of continental, Mediterranean, and Balkan Europe, between different imperial and national administrations, as well as its past as an Islamic “frontier society”.<sup>4</sup> The history of the

<sup>1</sup> Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (in further text: CADN), Nantes, Fond: FRMAEE 623 PO/1/2 (in further text: FRMAEE 623 PO/1/2), volume (in further text vol.) 2, dispatch (in further text: d.) 32, the consul general, Alphonse Rousseau, to the direction of consuls and commercial affairs, 24 September 1866, Sarajevo, 178-179. The author is responsible for the translation of the reported documents from French and Italian into English.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Clissold (ed.), *A Short History of Yugoslavia from Early Times to 1966*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> Noel Malcolm, *Storia della Bosnia. Dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, Milano: Bompiani, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Michael R. Hickok, *Ottoman Military Administration in Eighteenth-Century Bosnia*, Leiden: Brill, 1997; Fatma S. Turhan, *The Ottoman Empire and the Bosnian Uprising. Janissaries, Modernisation and Rebellion in the Nineteenth Century*, London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014.

formation of Bosnian-Herzegovinian national-borders during the so-called Eastern Question, their nature of political and cultural boundaries between Europe and the Balkans,<sup>5</sup> and their reinforcement through the imposition of quarantines and sanitary measures between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, are topics that have been little investigated in existing historiography and, yet, present very promising avenues of research in the field of border and migration studies.<sup>6</sup>

After the Ottoman conquest, which occurred between 1386 and 1463, Bosnia and Herzegovina was administratively re-ordered and included within the Ottoman *memâlik-i mahrûse* (lit. the Ottoman well-protected domains).<sup>7</sup> For centuries the *eyâlet-i Bosna* and its provincial society contributed in various ways to the prosperity of the Empire, for example through the *devşirme*, the conscription of boys to serve as Janissaries.<sup>8</sup> During the eighteenth century, the river Sava and the Dinaric Alps became the established border between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, due to the loss of Hungarian, Croatian, and Dalmatian territories sanctioned by the treaties of Passarowitz (1718), Belgrade (1739), and Campofornio (1797). In particular, the northern border was further reinforced by the creation of the Habsburg sanitary-military border in 1770, a border that included garrisons and quarantines built by Empress Maria Theresa of Austria in order to control population movements arriving from the Ottoman Balkans.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Maria Todorova, *Immaginando i Balcani*, Lecce: Argo, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> This article is part of a two-years project entitled *Pandemics and Borders. Pandemics as Driver towards Modern Borders and International Collaboration in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Mediterranean and South Eastern European Periphery*, funded by the Swiss Network of International Studies (SNIS). For further details see: <https://snis.ch/projects/study-aims-to-investigate-the-nature-scale-and-root-causes-of-missed-opportunities-for-the-detection-and-referral-of-vawg-in-primary-care-and-emergency-departments-in-tirana-albania-and-belo-horizon/>.

<sup>7</sup> Gábor Ágoston, Bruce Masters, *Encyclopaedia of the Ottoman Empire*, New York: Facts on File, 2009, 91.

<sup>8</sup> Radovan Samardžić, *Mehmed Sokolovič. Le Destin d'un Grand Vizir*, Lausanne: L'Âge de l'Homme, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> Irina Marin, *Contested Frontiers in the Balkans. Ottoman and Habsburg Rivalries in Eastern Europe*, London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013, 32-33.

In this process, most of the “natural” coastal hubs for Bosnian products, like the city-ports of Istria, Dalmatia, the Adriatic islands, and the Bay of Kotor, were absorbed within the Habsburg Empire and the rising Principality of Montenegro, the territory of Neum, or Neum corridor, and the Herzegovinian Sutorina corridor. Therefore, the porous nature of borders regarding the movements of goods and people between the Ottoman Bosnian province and Austro-Hungarian Dalmatia became a key feature in the efforts to the commercial trade of the province. The further strengthening of the Ottoman-Austrian borderline between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century represented a recurring problem for the Bosnian economy, which continued to require access to the Adriatic city-ports<sup>10</sup> and collaboration with the Austro-Hungarian administration.<sup>11</sup>

The Montenegrin-Ottoman border in the *sancak-ı Hersek* has a different history. During the eighteenth century, the Principality of Montenegro began its expansion toward Ottoman territories thanks to the support of the Russian Tsardom and the Habsburgs.<sup>12</sup> The Austrian government had recognised the independence and the borders of the Principality of Montenegro since 1841.<sup>13</sup> By contrast, the Sublime Porte only came to recognise the political autonomy of the Principality and negotiate well-defined borders with the territory in 1858.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, Montenegro continued to put pressure on the borders of the *eyâlet-i Bosna* and the *sancak-i İşkodra*, until its defeat and the signing of the Convention of Shkodër in 1862,

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<sup>10</sup> Giorgio Ennas (ed.), *Reports of Cesare Durando Italian Vice-Consul in Sarajevo (1863–1867)*. “Accapparrarne gli animi per il nostro interesse”, Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2020, 37; Pavle I. Mitrović, Hamdija Kreševljaković, *Izveštaji Italijanskog konzulata u Sarajevu: 1863–1870 godine*, Sarajevo: Narodna štamparija, 1958.

<sup>11</sup> Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, (in further text: BOA), Istanbul, Fond: Hariciye Nezareti (in further text: HR), Siyasi (in further text: SYS), 209, 12, 2, d. 2176/11, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emin Âli Pasha, 12 March 1866, Dubrovnik.

<sup>12</sup> Živko Andrijašević, *Storia del Montenegro*, Lecce: Besa Muci, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, 99–100.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, 98–108.

with which the Herzegovinian-Montenegrin border was put under Ottoman military control with the creation of fortifications and blockhouses.<sup>15</sup> However, during the 1860s and 1870s, the Montenegrin government continued its expansionist attempts towards the Ottoman border-territories, counting on Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Italian support.

Finally, between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, the growing conviction of the necessity to protect Europeans from the spread of contagious diseases emanating from Ottoman territories transformed the Habsburg-Ottoman and Montenegrin-Ottoman borders into political, sanitary,<sup>16</sup> and cultural boundaries as well. As reported in travellers' memoirs, such as those written by Lazzaro Spallanzani, the Habsburg barracks along the military border and the quarantines of Slunj, Kostajnica, Gradiška, Brod, and Mitrovica, represented not only the passage from the Ottoman to the Habsburg territories, but also from the "Orient" to Europe,<sup>17</sup> and from "plague-infected" to "healthy" territories.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Paul Dumont, "Il periodo dei Tanzimat (1839–1878)", in: Robert Mantran (ed.), *Storia dell'Impero Ottomano*, Lecce: Argo, 1999, 550.

<sup>16</sup> Jovan Pešalj, *Monitoring Migrations. The Habsburg-Ottoman Border in the Eighteenth Century* (PhD Thesis), Leiden: Leiden University, 2019; Nükhet Varlık, *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World: The Ottoman Experience, 1347–1600*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Paolo Mazzarello, *L'intrigo Spallanzani*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, E-kindle edition, 2021, 2186.

<sup>18</sup> The division between a "naturally healthy" Europe opposed to a "naturally infected-contagious Orient" typical of European elites since the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards is part of what Alexander I.R. White has called 'Epidemic Orientalism.' He defined it as the 'way of apprehending and recognising infectious diseases as a threat that is based on the ways that the West has come to see itself in relation to the rest of the world.' In fact, since the 1850s the existence of epidemics able to cross imperial or national-state borders represented one of the main challenges for governments. From this point of view, the preservation of hygienic conditions through the adoption of preventive measures became one of those characteristics that, in the eyes of Europeans, divided civilised states from non-civilised states and, consequently, possible subjects of international intervention. Therefore, 'the International Sanitary Conferences, in attempting to produce globally sanctioned regulations for the control of infectious diseases, also produced a global *vision of division*, separating the world between those requiring epidemic controls to halt the spread of disease from afar, and those upon which controls could be implemented for the benefit of the other group.' Also the Balkans fit into this pattern. Alexander I.R. White, *Epidemic Orientalism. Race, Capital, and the Governance of Infectious Disease*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023, 2, 25.

## Osman Pasha's governorship between reforms and territorial disputes

Between the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the border-province of Bosnia the notabilities of the *ayans* and *kapudans* played an important role within provincial society as tax collectors and military and political leaders. As pointed out by Fatma Sel Turhan, after the elimination of the Janissaries during the *Vaka'á-i Hayriyye*, or "Auspicious Event", the centralising reforms pursued by Sultan Mahmud II concerned the local *ayans* and *kapudans*, who considered these administrative innovations as a clear attack on their autonomy, rights, and influence in the province. In fact, administrative centralisation was carried out by the imperial government with the 'dismantling' of the traditional system of land tenure, thus encroaching on the *kapudans* and *ayans*' 'monopoly' over Bosnian economy and society.<sup>19</sup> For this reason, the Bosnian province became 'one of the main battlegrounds' between the imperial elites and the local notabilities. The former promoted administrative centralisation, while the latter tried to preserve their rights and privileges, with the support of local populations impoverished by the heavy taxation required by sultan's reforms.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, at the beginning of the 1830s, *ayan* families led part of the local population in uprisings against the officials sent from Constantinople.

The uprisings of the *Kapudan* Hüseyin Gradašćević (1831–3) and the *Mutasarrıf* İstolçeli Ali Pasha Rıdvanbegović (1847–51) against Mahmud II and Abdülmecid I's centralising reforms and their suppression by Marshal Ömer Lütfi Pasha Latas, marked the end of the traditional *eyâlet-i Bosna* system and of the *ayan* families' monopoly over local society and economy. The Ottoman *timâr* (lit. landholding system) was abolished and the traditional *sancaks* were replaced by nine new districts administered by *kaymakams* (lit. lieutenants), salaried by the Porte and led by two *mutasarıfs* (lit. administrators), one for Bosnia and another for the *sancak-ı Hersek*, included in the administration of Bosnia, and a *vâli*, or governor-general.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> F. Turhan, *The Ottoman*, 75-76.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>21</sup> N. Malcolm, *Storia della*, 176-177.

The increasing tension between the provincial notabilities and the Ottoman administration produced a final rebellion in 1850–1. After the victory of the imperial army, the *Vâlî* Ömer Pasha definitively united the Bosnian and Herzegovinian administrations and exiled numerous Muslim families involved in the turmoil.

For this reason, before the Austro-Hungarian occupation in 1878, the Ottoman province of Bosnia became one of the main laboratories of the new reforms implemented by Sultan Abdülmecid I and his brother Abdülaziz through the new *Vâlî* Topal Osman Pasha, who administered the province for a decade, from December 1861 until January 1869, and again from February until May 1869. As written by Noel Malcolm, most of the information regarding this long governorship is contained in the memoirs of the Swiss physician Joseph Koetschet, who was a supporter and advisor of Osman Pasha, and who described this period as a prosperous decade in the history of Bosnia. It was, he wrote, a time when ‘Muslims, Christians and Jews went their ways peacefully side by side.’<sup>22</sup>

Although this description can be considered essentially apologetic, Osman Pasha’s general commitment to the good administration of his province was shared by Ottoman and international agents as well, such as the European consuls in Sarajevo. They admitted that in the 1860s Osman Pasha built new infrastructures and reformed the provincial administration of Bosnia, even if he tried to limit the influence of European consuls and elements from the Principality of Serbia. Among other challenges, his administration faced the cholera waves of 1866–7, trying to find an equilibrium between the protection of the prerogatives of imperial administration from foreign intervention, of the local populations from disease, and finally, of Ottoman-Bosnian economic interests.

Born in İzmir in 1804, Osman Pasha pursued a military career. After leaving the military sector, he worked for the imperial administration in

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<sup>22</sup> Josef Koetschet, *Osman Pascha, der letzte grosse Wesier Bosniens, und seine Nachfolger*, Sarajevo: Studnička, 1909, 25.

the Balkans. His administrative skills in Belgrade were greatly appreciated by the Ottoman statesman Emin Âli Pasha, who supported his appointment as governor of the *eyâlet-i Bosna* in 1861 for the implementation of Porte's centralising reforms. In his reports, the Italian vice-consul in Sarajevo, Cesare Durando, described Osman Pasha as an Ottoman official, generally considered as a genuine supporter of the reforms.<sup>23</sup> But Durando reported how Osman Pasha was also considered by European consuls as an ambiguous man, due to his loyalty to the Sublime Porte, his efforts to strengthen the imperial administration, and his support of reforms that favoured the Bosnian-Muslim population.

In fact, Osman Pasha's main objectives were clear: the re-establishment of the relations between the imperial administration and the Bosnian Muslim notability, which had been broken during the revolts and Ömer Pasha's purges;<sup>24</sup> the creation of modern infrastructures, such as roads, customary services, quarantines, and hospitals; the administrative transition from the traditional Ottoman *eyâlet* to the new *vilâyet-i Bosna* system; and, finally, the reinforcement of the Bosnian borders against the coordinated Austro-Montenegrin expansionist efforts along the boundaries of the Empire. It was precisely from the perspective of strengthening the Ottoman borders in which Osman Pasha's use of quarantine structures and sanitary cordons should be contextualised.

As written by Yaron Ayalon, in the nineteenth century the creation of customary services and quarantines became fundamental to the strengthening of state-borders, making the central power of the capital more visible and concrete in remote provincial centres as well.<sup>25</sup> Not only the Ottomans, but also the representatives of European powers were conscious of such

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<sup>23</sup> G. Ennas, *Reports of*, 6, d. 3, 13421/63, the vice-consul, Cesare Durando, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emilio Visconti-Venosta, 15 August 1863, Sarajevo, 30.

<sup>24</sup> Giorgio Ennas, "Non una di queste proposte fu messa in esecuzione." Sarajevo e l'epidemia di colera del 1866", in: *RiMe*, Cagliari-Milano-Roma: Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea, 2021, 275-293.

<sup>25</sup> Yaron Ayalon, *Natural Disasters in the Ottoman Empire. Plague, Famine, and Other Misfortunes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 190.

political usages of sanitary institutions. Therefore, throughout the nineteenth century, state administrations consciously used the construction of blockhouses, customary services, and quarantines as boundary markers in disputed areas, such as in the case of the Sutorina corridor, which, although Ottoman territory, was located between Austrian Dalmatia and the Montenegrin territories in the Bay of Kotor, and, for this reason, exposed to Austro-Montenegrin expansionist projects.<sup>26</sup>

This link between the creation of quarantines-customary services and border disputes is well-described by Osman Pasha in a document written by the French consul general in Sarajevo, Alphonse Rousseau. In this report, the imperial governor explicitly affirmed that, even if in an area like the Ottoman Sutorina the construction of quarantines and fortifications was practically ‘useless’, through the creation of these buildings, the Porte aimed to ‘assert once more and in a more obvious manner, its unquestionable right to the possession’ of this territory, that was the ‘object of Austria’s ancient and ardent covetousness.’<sup>27</sup> From this conversation between the *vâli* and the French consul, the nineteenth century conception of these infrastructures as border-markers clearly emerged. Even in autumn 1866, in the early days of the cholera wave, the project for the creation of new customary and sanitary infrastructures on the south-western border to strengthen the Ottoman border against Austro-Hungarian ambitions continued.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the Porte desired to maintain ‘its possession rights’ also on the village of Klek, through the creation of forts and quarantines.<sup>29</sup>

As highlighted by the events of autumn 1866 and summer 1867, this jurisdictional function was considered even more important than their

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<sup>26</sup> Nedim Tuno et al., “Border Reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Access to the Adriatic Sea at Sutorina by Consulting Old Maps”, in: *Kartografija i geoinformacije*, 2011, 10 (16), 26-55. Available on: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/77939> (3 June 2023).

<sup>27</sup> CADN, FRMAEE 623 PO/1/2, vol. 2, d. 97, the consul general, Alphonse Rousseau, to the political direction, 20 March 1866, Sarajevo, 151-152.

<sup>28</sup> CADN, FRMAEE 623 PO/1/2, vol. 2 d. 108, the consul general, Alphonse Rousseau, to the political direction, 12 September 1866, Sarajevo, 174-176.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

eventual usefulness in the case of epidemics. Indeed, in peaceful times, these infrastructures had effectively supported Ottoman positions against the claims of its neighbours, while during epidemic times administrators like Osman Pasha considered the use of sanitary cordons and quarantines potentially dangerous for local economies and territorial disputes. The discriminatory measures taken against Ottoman citizens, often applied by European governments under the pressure of domestic public opinion, entailed a very high risk of commercial isolation in economically depressed areas that imperial administrators sought to avoid as far as possible.

### **The cholera summer of 1866**

During the spring of 1866 cholera remained essentially sporadic in the Balkans. As had occurred in 1865, western and eastern Balkan governments intermittently imposed temporary bans on the import of goods, sanitary cordons, and quarantines at the borders with the Ottoman Empire. Since early March 1866, consuls and sanitary boards between the Red Sea and the eastern Mediterranean registered the gradual re-appearance of cholera on the main trade routes originating from Alexandria, Egypt.<sup>30</sup> Despite the assurances of the Ottoman and Egyptian governments about the sporadic nature of the cholera cases in their territories, in the second half of March the Kingdom of Greece put all arrivals from Egypt under an eleven-day quarantine.

In June 1866, cholera broke out in the Mediterranean and the sanitary boards of Constantinople and Jedda imposed a precautionary fifteen-day quarantine and disinfection in the main ports of the Empire for all arrivals from Egypt.<sup>31</sup> In the same period, cholera reappeared in the Balkans.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> BOA, HR, İdare (further in the text: İD), 1458, 62, 1, d. 436/12, the consul general, Naoum Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emin Âli Pasha, 13 March 1866, Malta.

<sup>31</sup> Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (further in the text: ASDMAE), Fond: Moscati VI (further in the text: M. VI), Folder (further in the text: F.) 814, circular without number, the Ottoman sanitary board of Constantinople, May 1866, Constantinople.

<sup>32</sup> BOA, HR, İD, 1458, 70, 1, d. 2145/107, the plenipotentiary minister, Fotiadis Bey, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emin Âli Pasha, 20 June 1866, Athens.

After the appearance of several cases in Sulina and Kherson, both Constantinople and the Danuban Principalities imposed quarantines on suspected arrivals from the Black Sea.<sup>33</sup> Apparently, the city of Constantinople, well-defended by a complex quarantine-system, initially remained immune from the contagion. In contrast, the situation remained very difficult in the eastern Balkans, where it was ‘getting worse every day’,<sup>34</sup> reaching its peak only in August 1866. Throughout all this, European Great Powers such as Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, and Italy systematically tried to prevent their own trade from being slowed down by the measures imposed by the Mediterranean states. They sought to achieve this aim through diplomatic pressure or by way of false sanitary declarations.

Cholera finally arrived in the city-ports of European states such as France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary as well. It was through this route that, at the beginning of autumn 1866, cholera reached the western Balkans, brought by ships coming from city-ports on the other side of the Adriatic, like Trieste.

### **The “failure” of the Ottoman northern-cordon**

Having probably arrived from Ottoman Bosnia,<sup>35</sup> the epizootic that spread through Italy’s Marche region in autumn 1863 and across the Italian peninsula demonstrated the difficulty of efficaciously imposing a sanitary cordon in areas that were highly permeable to animal and population movements, similar to the events that happened at the Austro-Ottoman border.<sup>36</sup> Between 1863 and 1865, the Bosnian economy, which was still deeply based on the

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<sup>33</sup> ASDMAE, M. VI, F. 807, report (further in the text: r.) 46, the consul general, Teccio di Bayo, to the minister of foreign affairs, Alfonso La Marmora, 11 July 1866, Bucharest.

<sup>34</sup> ASDMAE, M. VI, F. 807, r. 9, the consul general, Teccio di Bayo, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emilio Visconti Venosta, 13 July 1866, Bucharest.

<sup>35</sup> In his report, Cesare Durando assumed that the disease came from Bosnia, but it is also true that he used this argument to downplay the effectiveness of the sanitary measures imposed by the Ottoman and Dalmatian authorities. In the 1860s, the Mediterranean states were cyclically ravaged by animal or human epidemics.

<sup>36</sup> G. Ennas, *Reports of*, 14, d. 2, 19168/63, the vice-consul, Cesare Durando, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emilio Visconti Venosta, 28 November 1863, Sarajevo, 43.

work of pack animals, was severely damaged by several epizootic waves. During the cholera wave of autumn 1866, the permeability issue of these borders and the jurisdictional use of quarantines and sanitary cordons made by Austria-Hungary, Montenegro, and the Sublime Porte emerged.

Towards the end of August 1866, French Consul Rousseau informed his government that cholera had broken out in Belgrade, 'both in the citadel and in the town.'<sup>37</sup> He reported that several inhabitants had already emigrated to the Ottoman-Bosnian border, where Governor General Osman Pasha intended to impose a 'strict sanitary cordon' to prevent their arrival. The communications between the semi-autonomous Principality of Serbia and the *vilâyet-i Bosna* would be limited to several contact points which included: the Brisko ladder on the river Sava; through the Drina between Bulina and Zvornik; and, finally, a commonly used point on the Raska located a short distance from the *sancak-ı Yenipazar*. Unfortunately, after news arrived confirming that cholera had already crossed the border, the creation of a sanitary cordon against the spread of cholera from Serbia became 'superfluous' for the imperial authorities, since by then the disease was already on both sides of the border.

A short time later, the Ottoman consul general in Dubrovnik, Persich Efendi, informed the Sublime Porte of the arrival of several victims infected by cholera from Trieste.<sup>38</sup> Persich Efendi sent this information to the Ottoman administrators and sanitary offices along the Adriatic coast, suggesting that they adopt appropriate measures to prevent the spread of the disease throughout the imperial provinces. Simultaneously, the Austro-Hungarian administration of Dalmatia imposed an eleven-day quarantine, medical inspections, and the preventive fumigation of passengers, luggage, and goods on arrivals 'without distinction.'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> CADN, FRMAEE 623 PO/1/2, vol. 2, d. 31 and 125, the consul general, Alphonse Rousseau, to the direction of consuls and commercial affairs and the French embassy, 25 August 1866, Sarajevo, 174.

<sup>38</sup> BOA, HR, İD, 1459, 11, 1, d. 2547/128, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emin Âli Pasha, 10 September 1866, Dubrovnik.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem.

Despite the preliminary efforts of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman authorities, Durando reported that on 12 September cholera infection arrived in Sarajevo, after spreading in the surrounding areas.<sup>40</sup> The sources unanimously attributed the arrival of the epidemic in Sarajevo to Jewish migrants who had escaped from the epidemic through the Serbian border.<sup>41</sup> To face this threat, Koetschet invited Osman Pasha to immediately isolate the infected migrants who, at this point, were residing in the Jewish district, by creating a sanitary cordon. In this way, Koetschet hoped to prevent the spread of the epidemic to the urban centre. Alas, the Ottoman governor, who was probably concerned by the possible economic consequences of the preventive measures for the Bosnian economy, postponed his decision.

As a result, the disease soon spread to other areas of the Bosnian city. Under the pressure of European representatives, Osman Pasha received instructions from Constantinople for the creation of a sanitary commission in Sarajevo to elaborate efficacious sanitary measures and combat the epidemic. This commission comprised the *Mutasarrıf* Munib Pasha as president, Durando as representative of the consular corps, Koetschet as civil physician, the representatives of the religious communities of Sarajevo, and several members of the local notability. The Italian vice-consul became aware of the resistance of the Muslim representatives of the commission and was convinced that the hygienist measures he had proposed were not being implemented by local authorities and not even followed by the majority of the population,<sup>42</sup> who preferred to resort to a rough purification of the supposedly infected

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<sup>40</sup> G. Ennas, *Reports of*, 58, d. 36, 14363/66, the vice-consul, Cesare Durando, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emilio Visconti Venosta, 16 September 1866, Sarajevo, 138-139.

<sup>41</sup> The epidemic wave of 1866 has been studied in depth by Bosnian historiography. See: Hamdija Kreševljaković, *Požari, poplave i zarazne bolesti u Sarajevu*, Sarajevo: Napredak, Hrvatski narodni kalendar, 1928; Vjekoslav Kušan, *Zdravstvene prilike starog Sarajeva*, Beograd: Štamparija centralnog higijenskog zavoda, 1934; Izet Mašić, *Zdravstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini tokom osmanskog perioda*, Sarajevo: Avicena, 1994; Salih S. Hadžihuseinović Muvekkit, *Povijest Bosne 2*, Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1999; Hana Younis, *Svakodnevni život u Sarajevu pred kraj osmanske uprave*, Sarajevo: Centar za osmanističke studije, 2019.

<sup>42</sup> G. Ennas, *Reports of*, 59, d. 37, 16454/66, the vice-consul, Cesare Durando, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emilio Visconti Venosta, 27 October 1866, Sarajevo, 139-141.

miasmas through the burning of odorous plants. Nor were his instructions followed by the Ottoman administration, which in response to the epidemic closed all public offices.<sup>43</sup>

Rousseau supported Durando's negative attitude concerning the Ottoman administration's bad handling of the epidemic situation. In his reports concerning the Bosnian situation, the French consul underscored the delayed imposition of a sanitary cordon on the northern border as one of the causes of the spread of cholera among the Bosnian population, especially in Zenica and on the road between Sarajevo and the Bosnian Brod.<sup>44</sup> Osman Pasha was therefore forced to impose a sanitary cordon on provincial borders. Travellers and goods coming from Austria and Serbia would be subject to a mandatory ten-day quarantine before entering the Ottoman territories from the quarantines of Brod, Gradiška, Kostajnica, and Zavalje.<sup>45</sup>

However, even after Osman Pasha took the presidency of the sanitary commission in October 1866, the provincial administration continued to "fail" to rigorously impose the measures desired by the consuls. From Constantinople, the French-Italian epidemiologist and member ad interim of the imperial sanitary board, Dr. Barozzi,<sup>46</sup> described the Bosnian sanitary cordon 'along the entire Austro[-Ottoman] border' as a failure due to the fact that it was entrusted to the local *zapties* (lit. gendarmerie), who perpetrated 'every kind of abuse', provoking complaints from the Austrian and Prussian representatives against these measures and demanding 'the abolition of this illusory cordon.'<sup>47</sup> In the meantime, on the other side of

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<sup>43</sup> J. Koetschet, *Osman Pascha*, 15.

<sup>44</sup> CADN, FRMAEE 623 PO/1/2, d. 32, the consul general, Alphonse Rousseau, to the direction of consuls and commercial affairs, 24 September 1866, Sarajevo, 178-179.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>46</sup> Yılmaz Özgür, "An Italian Physician in the Caucasian Migration of 1864: the Mission of Dr. Barozzi in Trabzon and Samsun", in: *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* [Journal Of Modern Turkish History Studies], XIV, 5-44, 2014, 10-11.

<sup>47</sup> CADN, Fond: FRMAEE/166/PO/E (in further text: FRMAEE/166/PO/E), F. 465, d. 255, the French representative ad interim at the sanitary board of Constantinople, Dr. Barozzi, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Nicolas Prosper Bourée, 19 October 1866, Constantinople.

the border, having been informed regarding the cases of cholera in Sarajevo, the Austro-Hungarian administration of Dalmatia decided to impose a sanitary cordon on its own border with the *vilâyet-i Bosna*. They forbade the introduction of wool and similar goods arriving from Ottoman territories.<sup>48</sup> This closure of the border was considered as excessive by Persich Efendi, who wrote to the administration criticising it for compromising Bosnian trade with Dalmatia.<sup>49</sup>

In his letter, the Ottoman consul general underscored that cholera had been traced to Trieste, where it ‘developed, grew and persisted in much greater proportions’. Meanwhile in Sarajevo, there were ‘only’ thirteen registered cases of mortality. For the entire duration of the epidemic in Trieste, the Ottoman administration of the *vilâyet-i Bosna* continued to accept goods arriving from Dalmatia ‘without distinction’, but subject to the ‘strictest’ sanitary precautions. Therefore, the complete closure of the Dalmatian border to importations from Bosnia and the *sancak-ı Hersek* appeared to the Ottoman administration as a blatant contradiction and a violation of the principle of reciprocity between the two empires. Its main purpose seemed not to allude to the ban, but rather appeared as a way to damage the Bosnian economy, which depended heavily on the trade across the Austro-Hungarian borders for its economy.<sup>50</sup>

To avoid the amplification of diplomatic issues, already escalated due to the rigorous imposition of a sanitary cordon, Persich Efendi proposed that the Austro-Hungarian authorities of Dalmatia allocate different frontier points, ‘of which Dalmatia abounds’, where goods from the Ottoman hinterland could be purged within quarantines, ‘thus preventing the common trade from being impeded in time.’<sup>51</sup> Even if in that moment the cholera wave had

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<sup>48</sup> BOA, HR, İD, 1459, 18, 1, d. 2596/139, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emin Âli Pasha, 1 October 1866, Dubrovnik.

<sup>49</sup> BOA, HR, İD, 1459, 18, 2, copy n. 2590 annexed to r. d. 2596/139, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to captaincy of Dubrovnik, 1 October 1866, Dubrovnik.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem.

already spread to the *sancaks* of Mostar, Travnik, Banjaluka, and Zvornik as well, the primary objective of the imperial administration and diplomacy was most likely to avoid the economic collapse of the *vilâyet-i Bosna* and the consequent uprisings this could spark. In contacting and offering an alternative to the Dalmatian authorities, Persich Efendi probably gained the support of the imperial administration, who sought to preserve the economic relations with Dalmatia as these were fundamental to the survival of the provincial economy. After all, for the Ottoman authorities, cholera had crossed the border. It was therefore pointless to definitively compromise the Bosnian economy as well. This decision had important implications from the point of view of different local populations in Bosnia.

In the section of his memoirs regarding Osman Pasha's management of the epidemic, Koetschet in part downsized the negative records of consular agents, reporting that the number of the victims remained around 400. The French Consul Rousseau reported a similar number, calculating that, since the middle of September 1866, 434 persons had officially died in Sarajevo from the disease, including 257 Muslims, 112 Orthodox Christians, 34 Catholics, 19 Jews, and 12 Romani or 'Bohemians'.<sup>52</sup> These lists did not include members of the Ottoman army or 'clandestine' inhabitants. For Osman Pasha and his administration, the situation continued to be difficult until the end of autumn. In fact, after the cholera outbreak in several districts of Montenegro in November 1866, the authorities of the Principality unilaterally decided to impose a military-sanitary cordon around Montenegro, apparently in the effort to limit contagion from the *sancak-ı Hersek*. At the end of October 1866, the Prince of Montenegro personally asked Persich Efendi to inform Osman Pasha of the imposition of a twelve-day quarantine and a military-sanitary cordon on the Herzegovinian-Montenegrin border, to prevent the spread of the epidemic from Nikšić.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> CADN, FRMAEE 623 PO/1/2, vol. 2, d. 131, the consul general, Alphonse Rousseau, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Nicolas Prosper Bourée, 30 October 1866, Sarajevo, 181-182.

<sup>53</sup> BOA, HR, SYS, 209, 44, 7, annexed to the d. 2652/153, the prince of Montenegro, Nicholas I, to the consul general, Persich Efendi, 27 October 1866, Dubrovnik.

For the Ottoman consul this decision seemed more linked to the ‘personal ambition’ of the prince ‘to deal with quarantines and sanitary cordon, as if it were a great state, rather than by feeling of preservation against’ the epidemic.<sup>54</sup> A few days later, Persich Efendi interpreted the imposition of this ‘military border system towards [the *sancak-ı Hersek*]’ and of the sanitary measures as creating the opportunity for the Montenegrin authorities to impose military conscription and justify military manoeuvres on the Montenegrin-Herzegovinian border with the support of Vienna.<sup>55</sup> As in the case of the Sublime Porte, the Montenegrin administration also used sanitary cordons and quarantines to limit the spread of epidemics on its territory, but, above all, to strengthen its national borders, asserting its sovereignty over them and shoring up its international status.

From these documents, we can clearly understand that in the 1860s the use of sanitary cordons and quarantines was crucial more from a political than an epidemiological point of view. The management of sanitary measures was recognised as a fundamental move for the assertion of national sovereignty by European states and highly Europeanised administrations, as in the case of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. But, in implementing these measures, the different governments also had to pay attention to the possible economic and social consequences. While provincial governors such as Osman Pasha deliberately used quarantines as official border-markers in disputed areas, they often avoided applying them too zealously in the case of epidemics, as they were worried about the possible economic and social consequences for local populations. Moreover, the prospect of armed uprisings against the measures imposed by the centre or attacks by neighbouring states was a real and present danger.

However, after a short period of sporadic outbreaks, the arrival of winter and cold temperatures finally marked the end of the cholera epidemic in the

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<sup>54</sup> BOA, HR, SYS, 209, 44, 6, d. 29, 2652/153, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emin Âli Pasha, 29 October 1866, Dubrovnik.

<sup>55</sup> BOA, HR, SYS, 209, 44, 4, d. 2659/155, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emin Âli Pasha, 6 November 1866, Dubrovnik.

*vilâyet-i Bosna*, Dalmatia, and Montenegro in 1866. After four weeks and the general decline of the number of infected people in Bosnia, Koetschet announced to Osman Pasha the end of the epidemic, giving his consent for the re-opening of the border.<sup>56</sup> From Constantinople, the Ottoman Sanitary Board confirmed the end of the epidemic only in December 1866, granting clean bills of health for the departures from Constantinople and free access to Ottoman ports.<sup>57</sup>

But the consequences of the cholera wave of 1866 were not yet finished. From a diplomatic point of view, Persich Efendi painted a very negative picture of the situation in the areas between Montenegro, Austrian Dalmatia, and the *vilâyet-i Bosna*, despite the efforts of the Ottoman administration to fight the cholera epidemic. At the end of the crisis, the Ottomans found themselves isolated, and, in terms of international respect for its own borders, the imperial administration of Bosnia had 'very few means at its disposal' to prevent the 'too systematic annoyances' that 'almost always' beset the authorities of the province.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, from a sanitary point of view sporadic cases of cholera continued to occur until January 1867. For this reason, states like Greece, Austria-Hungary, and Great Britain continued to impose sanitary cordons and quarantines as barriers to limit the quantity of Ottoman people and goods coming from imperial provinces.

### **The cholera wave in the *sancak-ı Hersek* of 1867 and the Ottoman sanitary success**

After remaining in an endemic or sporadic state across the entire Mediterranean throughout the spring of 1867, cholera reappeared in Dalmatia

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<sup>56</sup> J. Koetschet, *Osman Pascha*, 15.

<sup>57</sup> CADN, FRMAEE/166/PO/E, F. 465, d. 259, the French representative at the sanitary board of Constantinople, Sulpice Antoine Fauvel, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Nicolas Prosper Bourée, 5 December 1866, Constantinople.

<sup>58</sup> BOA, HR, SYS, 210, 5, 10, d. 2715/166, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs, Emin Âli Pasha, 17 December 1866, Dubrovnik.

and the *sancak-ı Hersek* in May.<sup>59</sup> Apparently, two cholera cases occurred in the town of Breno (Župa dubrovačka), and in the Austrian district of Dubrovnik. Since the border between Breno and the Herzegovinian centre of Trebinje was an area of mobility for local shepherds' transhumance *ab antiquo*, contact between the members of the two communities was common and the contagion soon arrived in Ottoman Trebinje as well. Persich Efendi informed Osman Pasha of the outbreak and proposed the adoption of sanitary measures 'to restrict communications' and create a barrier to stop the spread of the disease.<sup>60</sup> Simultaneously, 17 cases were registered in Montenegro, particularly in the centres of Cetinje and Rijeka. Nevertheless, for the new French consul general in Sarajevo, Pierre Jules Moulin, the Ottoman administration was not taking the situation seriously enough.<sup>61</sup> In his opinion, the local government seemed to think that 'there is nothing very serious going on'. This idea was probably motivated by the fact that he did not know which specific 'precautionary' and 'hygienic measures' the imperial administration was taking in the *sancak-ı Hersek* 'to contain the disease', 'smother it', 'or at least to prevent it from penetrating Bosnia.'<sup>62</sup>

However, in early June 1867, Moulin reported that no cases of cholera had been officially reported by the administration in Bosnia nor in the *sancak-ı Hersek*. As a result, the imperial administration decided not to prescribe any preventive measures that it considered unnecessary.<sup>63</sup> On the contrary, the cases that occurred in Breno and in Trebinje persuaded the Austro-Hungarian authorities of the necessity to impose a quarantine in Dubrovnik on the arrivals from Trebinje. Once more, this created a

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<sup>59</sup> Giorgio Ennas, "Dans l'intérêt de la Santé Publique de l'Empire". The Ottoman Consuls during the Cholera Epidemic of 1867", in: *EJOSS*, Istanbul: Euras Journal of Social Sciences, 2022, 3, 225-244.

<sup>60</sup> CADN, FRMAEE 623 PO/1/2, d. 5, the consul general, Pierre Jules Moulin, to the direction of consulates and commercial affairs, 25 May 1867, Sarajevo, 232-233.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>63</sup> CADN, F. 623, vol. 2, d. 6, the consul general, Pierre Jules Moulin, to the direction of consulates and commercial affairs, 8 June 1867, Sarajevo, 235-236.

border-issue between the Austrian and the Ottoman administrations. For the French consul, the Dalmatian authorities discovered ‘something’ regarding the sanitary situation of Trebinje, and, for this reason, they proposed the creation of an Austro-Ottoman medical commission to examine the sanitary situation of the Herzegovinian centre. Concerned by the possible implications of foreign interference on their border territories, the Ottoman authorities imposed a sanitary cordon to the origins from Breno and Dubrovnik, a decision that Moulin described as an ‘administrative reprisal’.

In fact, this incident regarding Austro-Ottoman medical jurisdictions re-opened an issue about the traditional pasture privileges of local populations across the inter-imperial border. Koetschet reported that, since the closure of the border by the Austrian and Ottoman authorities, the Dalmatian and Ottoman dwellers, ‘especially those of Breno’, were prevented from driving their cattle to the high pastures of the *sancak-ı Hersek*, ‘which had been their custom for ages’. For this reason, minor clashes had taken place between members of the Ottoman and Dalmatian communities.<sup>64</sup> Osman Pasha, concerned by possible foreign intervention and possible territorial adjustments to the detriment of imperial borders, appointed an official, Konstantin Efendi, and Koetschet to negotiate with the Dalmatian authorities. In an epidemic context, even a minor border incident like this could result in the Ottoman authorities being deprived of part of what they considered to be their legitimate sovereign rights. In the end, after several negotiations, the Ottoman and Austrian authorities decided to maintain the status quo.

At the beginning of July 1867, cholera broke out in Trebinje and on the other side of the Sava river, in the Dalmatian centre of Brod as well. In the latter case, eleven victims died of cholera in ten days.<sup>65</sup> Persich Efendi reported that the population of 15 villages in the district of Trebinje had

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<sup>64</sup> J. Koetschet, *Osman Pascha*, 23-24.

<sup>65</sup> CADN, F. 623, vol. 2, d. 10, the consul general, Pierre Jules Moulin, to the direction of consulates and commercial affairs, 5 July 1867, Sarajevo, 245-246.

already been infected by cholera.<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, the sanitary board of Dubrovnik adopted sanitary measures ‘of all kinds’, but the situation seemed irrevocably compromised due to the limited resources of the local administration and the ‘nature of the country’, probably the border porosity, which made ‘any sanitary cordon impossible’ and ‘would entail enormous sacrifices.’<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the consul general regretted the bad behaviour and the prejudices of the ‘people and authorities’ of Dubrovnik toward the Ottomans ‘as if we wanted to pass the disease on to them.’ In his opinion, this general anti-Ottoman attitude did not allow for cooperation between the Ottoman and Dalmatian authorities to fight the contagion and ensure the well-being of the local populations.

Persich Efendi did little to oppose Ottomans passing through the frontier because he considered the Dalmatian sanitary cordon against the caravans arriving from the Ottoman territories to be too detrimental to local trade. Moreover, he asked Osman Pasha ‘for much more energetic measures to ward off the sad consequences of this plague.’<sup>68</sup> His appeal appears to have been taken up by Osman Pasha. As had occurred in the autumn of 1866, Osman Pasha ordered the closure of the Herzegovinian town by way of a sanitary cordon. Moreover, he ordered the imposition of a ‘strict quarantine’ along the Sava and ‘on goods of Austrian origin.’ Koetschet was sent to the Bosnian town of Brod, situated on the river Sava, on the opposite side of the Dalmatian Brod, ‘in order to organise the quarantine service in such a way as to make it effective.’ Finally, a building where ‘goods and travellers will be required to undergo customary purifications’ would be selected, and a new sanitary commission organised in Sarajevo.<sup>69</sup>

Yet, by the end of July the situation had changed. The physician sent by Osman Pasha, ‘with the mission of organising a quarantine service against

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<sup>66</sup> BOA, HR, SYS, 210, 16, 6, d. 3010/77, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs ad interim, Safvet Pasha, 8 July 1867, Dubrovnik.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem.

arrivals from Austrian Brod, reported that cholera had already crossed the Sava and appeared in the Bosnian Brod, making the imposition of a sanitary cordon unnecessary once again for the Ottoman authorities.<sup>70</sup> For Moulin, Osman Pasha was ready to retire the precautionary measures that he 'had deemed necessary' previously and that, in his opinion, the circumstances rendered 'superfluous.' In the meantime, while the cholera cases remained sporadic in Bosnia, they had become heavily concentrated in Herzegovinian lands, particularly in the town of Trebinje, and in Dalmatian centres and the district of Dubrovnik, which suffered the most from the epidemic. The French consul was worried that the sanitary cordons on the Austro-Ottoman border and the *sancak-ı Hersek*, and around the town of Trebinje would not be enough to limit the contagion to the districts of Dubrovnik and Trebinje. In fact, towards the end of July, cholera cases were still increasing in the Austrian, Ottoman, and also Montenegrin districts of Kotor, Dubrovnik, Trebinje, and Nikšić.<sup>71</sup> In response, the Ottoman authorities decided to intervene more vigorously in the *sancak* by imposing sanitary measures and deploying 'energetic activity'. In Persich Efendi's opinion, these measures along with those adopted by 'neighbouring authorities' contributed 'both to rouse our population from apathy and to treat and take precautions against the contagion.'<sup>72</sup>

Finally, thanks to the adopted measures and the seasonal change, the disease 'lost much of its strength' and mortality became 'minimal' towards the end of August 1867, with the only exception of Montenegro, where it was still widespread.<sup>73</sup> In a letter, Osman Pasha complimented Persich Efendi for his support of Ottoman citizens and the administrative authorities of

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<sup>70</sup> CADN, FRMAEE 623 PO/1/2, d. 11, the consul general, Pierre Jules Moulin, to the commercial direction, 20 July 1867, Sarajevo, 247-248.

<sup>71</sup> BOA, HR, İD, 1459, 56, 1, d. 3053/90, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs ad interim, Safvet Pasha, 29 July 1867, Dubrovnik.

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>73</sup> BOA, HR, İD, 1459, 56, 5, d. 3101/104, from the consul general Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs, Fuad Pasha, 28 August 1867, Dubrovnik.

the *sancak-ı Hersek*.<sup>74</sup> Simultaneously, the governor-general blamed the Dalmatian authorities for the ‘obstacles’ they had sought to impose on the Ottomans ‘in the form of sanitary measures.’ In fact, he found it ‘completely superfluous to dwell on the uselessness of the exaggerated measures’ that they adopted ‘against the people from Ottoman territory’. In his opinion, these measures were less justified by the fact that the ‘same epidemic’ existed in the district of Dubrovnik as well. General Mustafa Pasha, commander of the military forces in the *sancak-ı Hersek* and the man responsible for the implementation of the sanitary measures, informed Moulin that in the town of Nikšić, cholera had ‘claimed between one hundred and one hundred and fifty victims a day for a month’ in a population of approximately 5.000 souls.<sup>75</sup> Impressed by this striking statistic, the French consul informed his government that it was generally agreed that this time the imperial administration, physicians, and army had done everything they could to stop the epidemic and limit human loss.

Nevertheless, the end of the epidemic did not bring an end to the territorial disputes in the area, which, on the contrary, had already been stirred up in September 1867. According to Ottoman sources, local governments sought to divert widespread dissatisfaction with the handling of the epidemic towards the ‘Turkish threat’ to the borders.<sup>76</sup> Against these subversive efforts, considering the evident impossibility of the Ottoman border authorities in imposing the ‘respect due to [the] international rights’ of the Sublime Porte, Persich Efendi proposed that Osman Pasha should try to ‘impose’ on Montenegro and Austria-Hungary the importance of respecting the established borders, and at the same time making every possible effort to persuade the local populations that the imperial

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<sup>74</sup> BOA, HR, İD, 1459, 56, 6, annexed to d. 3101/104, copy 469, from the governor general Osman Pasha, to the consul general, Persich Efendi, 19/31 July 1867, Sarajevo.

<sup>75</sup> G. Ennas, *Reports of*, 68, d. without number (further in the text: w.n.), 18742/67, the vice-consul, Cesare Durando, to the minister of foreign affairs, Pompeo di Campello, 29 August 1867, Sarajevo 154-155.

<sup>76</sup> BOA, HR, SYS, 210, 21, 3, d. 3126/107, the consul general, Persich Efendi, to the minister of foreign affairs, Fuad Pasha, 11 September 1867, Dubrovnik.

government would be 'ready' to safeguard their interests and rights in the future.<sup>77</sup>

## Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the role of Osman Pasha's administration in the imposition and management of sanitary measures on Bosnian borders during the cholera waves of 1866 and 1867. Moreover, it has described the political-jurisdictional use made by Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and Montenegrin governments of customary and quarantine stations to assert direct sovereignty rights in disputed areas, such as in Herzegovinian Sutorina and the Trebinje district. Finally, it has mapped the sanitary cordons imposed by the imperial administration along its borders, highlighting how these preventive measures increased border tensions.

From the analysis of Swiss, French, Ottoman, and Italian documents, it has emerged that during the epidemic crises of 1866 and 1867, Governor General Topal Osman Pasha played a key role in the decision-making process regarding the adoption of sanitary measures to prevent the spread of cholera in the *vilâyet-i Bosna*. With the help of Ottoman and foreign experts and collaborators such as Koetschet and Persich Efendi, Osman Pasha decided when and where to impose sanitary cordons on the borders with Serbia and Austrian Dalmatia. Moreover, he also decided whether to make them at least partially open to the passage of goods and people. In fact, from the Ottoman documents, it seems that the "failures" of the imperial authorities to impose cordons effectively to stop cholera were not so much due to the incompetence of the border authorities, as several European agents believed (thanks to Ottoman suggestions as well), but rather to the realisation that once the disease had spread throughout the territories it was pointless to keep such measures. Such strict imposition of quarantines risked to further damage local economies and populations, already impoverished by epidemics, famines, and conflicts.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibidem.

Finally, it can be confirmed that measures such as the creation of customary services and quarantines not only contributed to the strengthening of inter-imperial and international borders, but also that in the 1860s central governments and provincial administrations deliberately used these infrastructures to mark and reinforce their presence in disputed areas. Such behaviour risked becoming the object of negotiations between neighbouring powers. However, even if this political use of sanitary structures was recognised by all the international actors of the time, it is also true that, in cases such as the Austro-Hungarian government, the provincial authorities and populations, who were deeply persuaded of the “natural” contagiousness of Asian and Balkan populations, also resorted to sanitary cordons in an attempt to avoid contagion. This measure risked to heavily damage their economic activities. The Ottomans, however, who in times of epidemics always risked finding themselves cut off and isolated from the main international trade routes, tended to keep their sanitary measures at a “low intensity”, in order to preserve local economy and society. For the Empire, it was common practice to remove such measures quickly, or at least as soon as they were deemed no longer useful for preserving the lives of their own citizens.

In conclusion, the sources analysed convey an image of the imperial provincial administration as being greatly interested in the preservation of the health conditions of its own populations. Likewise, the sources also show that the Sublime Porte was convinced of the need to strengthen its already existing borders through the creation of new sanitary and customs structures. This was also due to the coexistence of the Ottomans’ desire to use the most advanced techniques of the time to protect the health and economic prosperity of their populations. This was a twofold strategy. Firstly, maintaining the health and economic conditions of local populations across the Empire prevented possible uprisings. Secondly, it discouraged foreign intervention in Ottoman internal affairs, including

sanitary matters, in a period characterised by the increasing use of this tool for the resolution of complex international issues.<sup>78</sup>

The case of the reformist Governor General Osman Pasha in the volatile area of the *vilâyet-i Bosna* is of particular importance to historians. Exposed to the expansionist threats of Austria-Hungary and Montenegro, susceptible to the epidemic waves passing through the Red Sea and the Adriatic, but deeply tied to the latter for the survival of its own economy, this case study demonstrates complex entanglements between trade, sanitary measures, and provincial governance. Ultimately, it suggests that this area is particularly significant for border-sanitary studies and certainly deserves further investigation.

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## GRANICE I ZARAZA. OSMANSKA UPRAVA BOSNE IZMEĐU POJAČANJA GRANICA I ZAŠTITE ZDRAVLJA (1866–1867)

### Sažetak

U ovom radu je prikazana uloga Osman-pašine administracije u namećanju i upravljanju sanitarnim mjerama na bosanskim granicama tokom epidemija kolere 1866. i 1867. godine. Nadalje, opisano je političko-jurisdiksijsko korištenje uobičajenih i karantinskih stanica od strane osmanske, austrougarske i crnogorske vlade za ostvarivanje prava direktnog suvereniteta u spornim područjima, kao što su hercegovačka Sutorina i Trebinjski okrug. Konačno, prikazani su sanitarni kordoni koje je carska administracija nametnula duž svojih granica, ističući kako su ove preventivne mjere povećale napetosti na granicama.

Iz analize švicarskih, francuskih, osmanskih i italijanskih dokumenata proizlazi da je tokom epidemija kolere 1866. i 1867. godine guverner general Topal Osman-paša igrao ključnu ulogu u donošenju odluka o usvajanju sanitarnih mjera radi sprječavanja širenja kolere u Bosanskom vilajetu. Uz pomoć osmanskih i stranih stručnjaka i saradnika poput Koetscheta i Persich Efendije, Osman-paša je odlučivao kada i gdje nametnuti sanitarne kordone na granicama sa Srbijom i austrijskom Dalmacijom. Također je odlučivao da li će ih barem djelimično otvoriti za prolaz robe i ljudi. Naime, iz osmanskih dokumenata proizlazi da “neuspjesi” carskih vlasti u efikasnom namećanju kordona kako bi zaustavili koleru nisu bili toliko posljedica nesposobnosti graničnih vlasti, kako su vjerovali mnogi evropski agenti (zahvaljujući sugestijama osmanske vlasti), već su bili posljedica spoznaje da je jednom kad se bolest proširila po teritorijima bilo besmisleno zadržavati takve mjere. Takva stroga primjena karantina rizikovala je da se dodatno naruši lokalna ekonomija i stanovništvo, već siromašno zbog epidemije, gladi i sukoba.

Konačno, može se potvrditi da su mjere kao što su stvaranje uobičajenih službi i karantina ne samo doprinijele jačanju unutar carskih i međunarodnih granica već su i centralne vlade i pokrajinske administracije 1860-ih namjerno koristile te infrastrukture kako bi označile i ojačale svoju prisutnost u spornim područjima. Takvo ponašanje rizikovalo je postati predmetom pregovora između susjednih sila. Međutim, čak i ako je to političko korištenje sanitarnih struktura bilo prepoznato od svih međunarodnih aktera tog vremena, isto je tako istina da su se u slučajevima poput austrougarske vlade pokrajinske vlasti i stanovništvo, koji su bili duboko uvjereni u “prirodnu” zaraznost azijskog i balkanskog stanovništva, također koristili sanitarnim kordonima kako bi izbjegli zarazu. Ova mjera je, međutim, rizikovala da teško ošteti njihove ekonomske aktivnosti. S druge strane, Osmanlije, koji su se tokom epidemija uvijek bojali ostati odvojeni i izolirani od glavnih međunarodnih trgovinskih puteva, težili su održavati svoje sanitarne mjere “niskog intenziteta” kako bi sačuvali lokalnu ekonomiju i društvo. Za Carstvo je bila uobičajna praksa brzo ukloniti takve mjere ili barem onda kada se smatralo da više nisu korisne za očuvanje života vlastitih građana.

U zaključku, analizirani izvori daju sliku carske provincijske administracije kao veoma zainteresovane za očuvanje zdravstvenih uslova sopstvenog stanovništva. Također, izvori pokazuju da je Visoka Porta bila uvjerenjena u potrebu jačanja već postojećih granica stvaranjem novih sanitarnih i carinskih struktura. Ovo je također bilo posljedica osmanske želje za korištenjem najnaprednijih tehnika tog vremena kako bi zaštitili zdravlje i ekonomski prosperitet svojih stanovnika. To je bila dvostruka strategija. Prvo, očuvanje zdravlja i ekonomskih uvjeta lokalnog stanovništva širom Carstva spriječilo je moguće pobune. Drugo, odvratilo je strane intervencije u osmanske unutrašnje poslove, uključujući pitanja sanitarne zaštite, u periodu karakteriziranom sve većom upotrebom ovog alata za rješavanje složenih međunarodnih problema.

Slučaj reformističkog guvernera generala Osman-paše u nestabilnom području Bosnskog vilajeta ima poseban značaj za historičare. Izložen ekspanzionističkim prijetnjama Austro-Ugarske i Crne Gore, podložan epidemijskim talasima koji prolaze kroz Crveno more i Jadran, ali duboko vezan za ovo posljednje radi opstanka vlastite privrede, ovaj studijski slučaj pokazuje složene zaplete između trgovine, sanitarnih mjera i pokrajinske uprave. Konačno, sugerira da je ovo područje posebno značajno za granično-sanitarne studije i da svakako zaslužuje dalje istraživanje.