

“The hottest actual war ever carried on – the bloodiest of Napoleon’s campaigns – is not equal to that now waging between our descendants in America and the dark races; it is a war of extermination – inscribed on each banner is a death’s head and no surrender; one or other must fall.”¹⁴⁴

Robert Knox assumed that in the course of the final partition of the globe America would be conquered by Saxons, Asia would be dominated by Slaves (Sarmatians) and Africa could become Celtic.¹⁴⁵ Russian soldiers and Saxons from independent Australia (whose Anglo-Saxon inhabitants would throw off allegiance to England and set up for themselves) would probably dispute China (whose Mongolian race would perish) and Japan. The local Asian races would be supplanted by European masters and China and Japan would be converted into another Raj.¹⁴⁶ Russians would probably subjugate Tibet: “A single rail-road will do it; and with that rail, our power in Indostan ceases.”¹⁴⁷

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144) Knox 1862, 244–245.

145) Knox 1862, 293.

146) Knox 1862, 451.

147) Knox 1862, 363–364.

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Anton Prokesch von Osten: The Co-author of Austria’s Policy towards Egypt in Vormärz¹

Abstract

The primary goal of the paper is to explain the influence of the Austrian diplomat, Anton Prokesch von Osten, on Austria’s Near Eastern policy in Vormärz, in particular towards Egypt governed by the powerful pasha, Mohammed Ali, with whom Prokesch met several times and was impressed by his personality and reforms in the land on the Nile. Though Prokesch’s views were not always shared by Austrian Chancellor Metternich in the 1830s, Prokesch served him as a prominent adviser on Mohammed Ali and his political ambitions, and Prokesch also contributed by his knowledge of Egypt as well as his diplomatic skills to limit Mohammed Ali’s power and destroy Egypt as a local power in the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of the decade. The paper should contribute to the history of not only Austria’s diplomatic history but also the history of modern Egypt and its national rebirth in the 19th century.

Key words: Anton Prokesch von Osten, Egypt, Mohammed Ali, Africa, Ottoman Empire, Austria, Eastern Question, Egyptian Question

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The growing interest of academics in the relations between Central Europe and the Near East in the “long 19th century” in recent years is also clearly evident in the considerable attention paid to the Austrian prominent diplomat and orientalist, Anton Prokesch von Osten, who participated with minor interruptions in the Near Eastern policy of the Austrian Empire from the mid-1820s to the early 1870s. During this period of almost 50 years, Count Anton Prokesch von Osten became a significant expert on the situation in the Levant and was ranked among the most influential diplomats of the Austrian Empire in relation to its policy towards the Ottoman Empire and Egypt in particular.

Anton Prokesch von Osten was born on 10 December 1795 in Graz and died on 26 October 1876 in Vienna. His long life was noted for rich career. At the very beginning he was a soldier and he took part in the war against Napoleon in 1813–1815. After the end of Napoleonic wars, he taught mathematics at a military school and from 1818 to 1820, he served as Field-Marshal Karl Schwarzenberg’s secretary. Then he entered diplomatic service of the Austrian Empire and operated in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1824. At that time he gained a great reputation as a diplomat and observer, as it will be explained later in the text, which finally led to his appointment as an Austrian envoy in Greece, the post he held from 1834 to 1849. Though a close collaborator of Austrian Chancellor Prince Klemens Wenzel Lothar Nepomuk von Metternich-Winneburg, Prokesch politically survived the revolutionary years of 1848 and 1849 and during the latter, he was sent to Berlin where he represented Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph I as an ambassador until 1853. In the two following years, he was a representative of Austria at the Federal Diet in Frankfurt am Main. In 1855, he returned to the region where he gained his great reputation when he was appointed as an ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. He served at this post until 1871 when he retired.²

This paper is focused on the early period of his career before 1848, in so called Vormärz, and its primary goal is to explain the level of his influence on the relations between Austria and Egypt, an Ottoman province governed by the powerful and ambitious pasha, Mohammed Ali, whom Prokesch met several times and whose personality and reforms in the land on the Nile impressed Prokesch. Though Prokesch’s views were not always shared by Metternich, Prokesch served him as a prominent adviser on Mohammed Ali, his political ambitions and the situation in Egypt. Since this topic has been scarcely researched, this paper is particularly based upon a research of unpublished documents housed in several European archives.

Prokesch entered the Austrian navy in 1824 and operated in the following years in the Eastern Mediterranean. He soon won the respect of Metternich, Friedrich von Gentz and the Austrian internuncio in Constantinople, Baron Franz von Ottenfels, during 1825 with his informative reports on the situation in Greece, which were by far

the best source of information on the Greek insurrection since the Austrian consuls were not able to offer reliable accounts; Metternich labelled him as one of “*our most reliable and intelligent correspondents*.”³ Since Prokesch’s accounts received not only recognition at the Viennese chancellery but were also highly valued by the foreign diplomats to whom they were given, he became an important reporter on Greek military as well as political affairs not only from the purely Austrian but also the wider European perspective.⁴ For example, the Prussian envoy in Vienna wrote to his king in early 1827: “*This naval officer has demonstrated a rare intelligence and service in getting himself to all the places where he could be a spectator of the most interesting events and obtain thus prompt and direct news of them. Though the present report of Baron Miltitz [Prussia’s envoy in Constantinople] is essentially drafted upon those of Mr Prokesch of whom I am speaking, these [Prokesch’s] contain more details and more precise information, which make me wish I could mail them in their entirety to Your Majesty.*”⁵ Despite the high evaluation of Prokesch’s messages and memoirs by foreign diplomats it was quite difficult for some of them to remember the author’s name. Consequently, a Prussian envoy in Vienna named him in the beginning as “Prohaska,” the British ambassador simultaneously as “Prokisk” and “Prokesen,” later writing just “P.” to avoid another mistake.⁶

3) Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 8 September 1825, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna (hereafter: HHStA), Staatenabteilungen (hereafter: StA), England 173.

4) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 25 February 1824, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 20; Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 11 November 1824, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 21; Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 11 April and 10 June 1825, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 23; Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10 August 1827, HHStA, StA, Türkei VII, 25; Metternich to Ottenfels, Vienna, 19 April. 1828, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 35; Maltzan to Frederick William III, Vienna, 4 May, 30 July and 19 Oct. 1825, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin (hereafter: GStA PK), HA III, Ministerium des Auswärtigen I (hereafter: MdA I), 6005; Hatzfeldt to Frederick William III, Vienna, 25 January 1827, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6008; Caraman to Damas, Vienna, 6 October 1825, Archives du Ministère des affaires étrangères, Paris (hereafter: AMAE), Correspondance politique (hereafter: CP), Autriche 406; Miltitz to Frederick William III, Pera, 26 March 1825, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7260; F. von Ottenfels, Memoari Franze Ottenfelsa, Hrvatski Državni Arhiv, Zagreb (hereafter: HDA), 750, Obitelji Ottenfels (hereafter: OO) 18, pp. 147–149; Ottenfels to Gentz, Constantinople, 10 March 1825, Prokesch-Osten 1877a, p. 51; Metternich to Gentz, Ischl, 13 July 1825, Prokesch-Osten 1877a, 75; Bertsch 2005, 88–91.

5) Maltzan to Frederick William III, Vienna, 3 August 1825, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6005

6) Maltzan to Frederick William III, Vienna, 27 April. 1825, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6005; Cowley to Dudley, Vienna, 16 April and 17 May 1828, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, London (hereafter: TNA), Foreign Office (hereafter: FO) 120/91.

2) Bertsch 2005, 22–40.

In late 1826, Prokesch had the opportunity to prove that he possessed talent not only as an observer but also as a diplomat when Mohammed Ali contemplated withdrawing his military support given to Sultan Mahmud II against the Greek insurgents in 1824. Prokesch had wanted for a while to visit Egypt, and in September 1826 he was encouraged to undertake this journey by Ottenfels, who for some time had not been receiving reports from the Austrian consulate where the consuls were changing right at that time. So although Prokesch sailed at the end of September to Egypt as a private citizen without any formal delegation from his government, he was privately charged by Ottenfels to ascertain Mohammed Ali's plans and persuade him to continue in the war, something very desirable for Austria siding with the sultan and desiring the defeat of the Greek insurgents. Therefore, after his arrival in Alexandria on 5 October, Prokesch met several times with Mohammed Ali and his advisor for foreign affairs generally regarded as an Egyptian foreign minister, Boghos Jusuf Bey, and learnt that the pasha's willingness to fight was limited and very uncertain if the sultan did not meet his demands concerning the following campaign against the Greeks. Since their fulfilment was promptly ensured by Austrian diplomacy in Constantinople and Prokesch persuaded Mohammed Ali not to give up the fight against the Greeks, the pasha finally agreed to continue in supporting the sultan. It goes without saying that Prokesch's mission met entirely with Metternich's approval.⁷

Prokesch stayed in the Eastern Mediterranean until the end of the 1820s and was an active observer of the events in Greece. Furthermore, he even played a mediatory role between the two parties in conflict when he assured the exchange of Greek prisoners for captive Egyptians in the spring of 1828, and he was finally able to arrange it at the rate of 172 to 112, which was a considerably better result than the Greeks had been expecting.⁸ He was rewarded for his intelligence, observatory talent, familiarity with the situation in Greece and knowledge of Greek by Metternich in 1829 when the chancellor proposed him to the Austrian emperor, Francis I, for the post of an envoy in a Greek state that was expected to be established in the near future. Francis I shared this high estimation of Prokesch and immediately agreed. Though Prokesch accepted this offer in early 1830, he only assumed the post four years later.⁹

7) *Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10 September 1825, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 23; Ottenfels to Acerbi, Constantinople, 7 December 1826, Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10 Oct., 25 Nov., 11 and 15 December 1826, 10 Feb. and 31 March 1827, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 26; Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 25 April. 1827, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 27; Miltitz to Frederick William III, Pera, 10 February 1827, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7264; Prokesch-Osten 1877b, 5–10; Sauer 1971, 175–181.*

8) *Pfligersdorffer 1992, 88.*

9) *Metternich to Francis I, Vienna, 15 October 1829, HHStA, Staatskanzlei (hereafter: StK),*

Prokesch's instantaneous career in the Austrian diplomatic service provoked strong resentment of the well-known Austrian orientalist, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, who accused Prokesch of servility – allegedly the reason for Metternich's favour.¹⁰ However, it is impossible to agree with this accusation resulting from Purgstall's own unfulfilled diplomatic ambitions and strained relations with Prokesch. Though Prokesch definitely owed much of his career to the patronage of Gentz and Ottenfels, he was definitely not mere a yea-sayer, as claimed by Purgstall, which is important to know when assessing his role in shaping Metternich's views. He, as well as other employees of the Viennese Chancellery, was able to express his own opinions freely and he of course did so. He also could express his disapproving opinions, and his disagreement in no way harmed his diplomatic career, even in consideration of the chancellor's vanity and general unwillingness to recognise his own errors. A fitting example can be offered by pointing out Prokesch's significant and openly outspoken disagreement with some of Metternich's views in the early phase of the first Mohammed Ali Crisis from 1831–1833. Metternich naturally was not happy with this criticism and reacted with impassivity but when Prokesch proved to be correct, the chancellor acknowledged his mistake and rewarded Prokesch with an important diplomatic mission to Alexandria in 1833.¹¹

The main reason for this choice was Prokesch's correct assessment of the distribution of power between Mohammed Ali and Mahmud II from the very beginning of the war between these two men that took place in the Levant in 1832; Prokesch was the only Austrian diplomat who had not shared the generally widespread belief in the sultan's victory and had rightly predicted the defeat of the Ottoman troops, an opinion that had received no echo in the chancellery for a long time.¹² In the course of the year, however, Mohammed Ali's military victories over the sultan's armies proved the validity of Prokesch's opinions. Metternich thereby admitted his own error and tolerated his subordinate's positive attitude towards the Egyptian governor,¹³ which is also proved in

Vorträge 260; Maltzan to Frederick William III, Vienna, 26 January 1830, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6014; Prokesch-Osten 1909, pp. 11–14; Sauer, 214.

10) *Hammer-Purgstall 1940, 263; Fichtner 2008, 134.*

11) *Prokesch-Osten 1909, 169–174.*

12) *Metternich to Ottenfels, Vienna, 18 January 1832, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 56; Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 8 April 1832, HHStA, StA, England 199; Sauer, p. 274; Molden 1913, p. 36.*

13) *Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 15 February 1833, HHStA, StA, England 204; Metternich to Ottenfels, Vienna, 13 February 1833, HDA, 750, OO 38; Tatishchev to Nesselrode, Vienna, 13 February and 1 March 1833, Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii, Moscow, fond 133, Kantseliariia, opis 469, 1833/211.*

a relevant passage of Prokesch's book on Mohammed Ali quoting Metternich that, however, cannot be verified and must be accepted with reservation: *"You predicted the course of the war better than the cabinets did. You want in principle the same thing that I want; the preservation of Turkey, though in a different way. I do not reproach you for that because I value your intentions and even accept that you may have a better perspective of the matter than the cabinets. But I have to take them into account and particularly stress the principle that every insurrection with a weapon in the hand of the vassal against the sultan is reprehensible and that the preservation of the throne for the present dynasty is a political necessity for Europe. Therefore, what must be done is to bring peace between the sultan and his powerful vassal as soon as possible to remove the dangers threatening Europe from this conflict [...] We intend to send a delegate to Mohammed Ali [...] I have a mind to choose you. Prepare yourself for the journey."*¹⁴

Prokesch's goal was to urge Mohammed Ali to moderate his territorial demands and conclude peace with the sultan as soon as possible. What Mohammed Ali asked was that Mahmud II entrusted to him the administration of Syria, which was a request that could be hardly denied due to the pasha's overwhelming military victories, and Adana, which, in Metternich's opinion, could be saved through Prokesch's diplomatic mission.¹⁵ What Prokesch actually was to do in Alexandria was summarised by Metternich in this way: *"The sultan has indicated he is prepared to make concessions to him [Mohammed Ali]. You must constantly do all you can to persuade the viceroy not to make overly excessive demands."*¹⁶

Prokesch did his best after his arrival in Egypt on 2 April 1833 and, in conjunction with the British consul general in Egypt, Patrick Campbell, he tried to persuade Mohammed Ali to withdraw the Egyptian army from Asia Minor and reconcile himself to lesser territorial gains. However, Mohammed Ali refused to give in to their demands and declared that he would not conclude peace with his sovereign until he received all the required domains, and he added that no threat would induce him to renounce one inch of the terrain, particularly not that of Adana which he wanted for its strategic position as well as for its wood supplies which he needed for the construction

of his fleet. He believed that owing to Mahmud II's "generosity" he would finally get everything he wanted. If, however, his expectation unfortunately turned out to be false, he declared that he was prepared to conform to the will of God and die an honourable death with a sword in his hand and devote his last breath to the welfare of his nation. It was easy for Mohammed Ali to make such theatrical statements because he did not have to fear an attack from the almost unarmed sultan and he did not believe that any European Power would bear the costs of an assault on him for a piece of land in Asia Minor, Austria least of all since, as he told Prokesch: *"Austria will not go against me. The destruction of Egypt would lead to the ruin of Trieste, whereas the prosperity of Syria would increase the welfare of that city."*¹⁷ This was definitely an exaggeration but not without an element of truth. With regard to this fact and the lack of any coercive means, both Prokesch and Campbell were unable to make any progress during the whole month of April and at the beginning of May, they were still unsuccessful.¹⁸

Nevertheless, in early May the threat of the British cabinet to use its fleet against the Egyptian pasha if he would not reduce his demands changed the situation and enabled Prokesch and Campbell to succeed in fulfilling their task when on 9 May, and after three and a half hours of long discussion with Mohamed Ali during which *"the same ground was gone over and over and the same arguments enforced in every way which we thought likely to be of use,"*¹⁹ he obtained from his counterpart a verbal promise that if the sultan refused to grant him Adana, he would not demand it any more, would reconcile himself with Syria and conclude peace. On 14 May, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, he satisfied the request of both diplomats and gave the promise in writing. However, only two hours later, a ship which entered the Alexandrian harbour brought news that Mahmud II had finally acquiesced and surrendered Syria as well as Adana.²⁰ Mohammed Ali obtained thus everything he demanded and the diplomatic victory of both European

14) Prokesch-Osten 1877b, 37.

15) Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 17 October 1832, HHStA, StA, England 199; Metternich to Ficquelmont, Vienna, 12 February 1833, HHStA, StA, Russland III, 99; Metternich to Ottenfels, Vienna, 17 October and 15 December 1832, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 56; Metternich to Ottenfels, Vienna, 20 January and 14 February 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 59; Maltzan to Frederick William III, Vienna, 15 and 18 December 1832, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6020; Prokesch-Osten 1909, 174.

16) Metternich's instructions for Prokesch, Vienna, 23 February 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 59.

17) Prokesch to Metternich, Alexandria, 8 April 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 59.

18) Prokesch to Metternich, Alexandria, 6 and 11 April, 3 May 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 59; Prokesch to Metternich, Alexandria, 8 April 1833, Stürmer to Prokesch, Constantinople, 22 April 1833, Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 23 April and 5 May 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 57; Campbell to Palmerston, Alexandria, 9 April and 2 May 1833, TNA, FO 78/227.

19) Campbell to Palmerston, Alexandria, 10 May 1833, TNA, FO 78/227.

20) Boghos Jusuf Bey to Prokesch, Alexandria, 14 May 1833, Prokesch to Metternich, Alexandria, 13 April and 14 May 1833, Prokesch to Stürmer, Alexandria, 10 May 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 59; Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 11 and 28 May 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 57; Mandeville to Campbell, Therapia, 22 April 1833, Boghos Jusuf Bey to Campbell, Alexandria, 14 May 1833, Campbell to Palmerston, Alexandria, 16 and 29 April, 7, 8, 9 and 15 May 1833, TNA, FO 78/227.

diplomats was revealed to be entirely worthless. Prokesch reacted to the sultan's weakness with these words: "See how with an inconceivable coincidence the Porte compromises our efforts in ceding with one simple stroke everything that we have just regained."²¹ The same disillusion prevailed in Vienna where Metternich was convinced that the Ottoman ruler could have been spared from excessive loss if he had placed more confidence in the support of the Great Powers.²²

Despite the fact that Prokesch's success in the negotiations with Mohammed Ali was short-term, and it was to all intents and purposes extremely brief since it lasted only several days or, in the case of the written surrender of Adana, only several hours, the mission itself did not lack importance for Prokesch and, thereby, the future of Austro-Egyptian relations as well. First, the mission served to increase the esteem in which Prokesch was held by the Austrian ruling elites and certainly contributed to his prestige as a prominent expert on the conditions prevailing in the Ottoman Empire. This was proved when Prokesch returned to Vienna in the late summer and was immediately summoned to the North Bohemian town Münchengrätz where from 10 to 18 September 1833 Francis I and Russian Tsar Nicholas I negotiated over the political affairs of Europe and particularly the Near East. Though Prokesch arrived after the signature of a Austro-Russian convention on 18 September, he took part in further talks between the two monarchs and their prominent diplomats on the situation of the Ottoman Empire, he was praised by them for his relevant knowledge and because of this was asked for a written report on Mohammed Ali's designs and power, which gave rise to two memoirs: *Report on the Egyptian Question* and *Memoir on the Actual Egyptian Forces Compared with Those of the Sublime Porte*.²³ Prokesch maintained in them the position that Mohammed Ali never aspired to obtain control over the entire Ottoman Empire; rather Prokesch felt Mohammed Ali wanted to establish his own, Arabic, empire, one that extended from the Taurus Mountains to the deserts of the Sudan and the Arabian Peninsula.

These two documents also sent to St Petersburg and London undoubtedly influenced Austria's policy in the Levant in the following years. Having read them, Metternich actually arrived at a conclusion that Mohammed Ali did not hunger for the

sultan's throne but was undoubtedly attempting to ensure his political and territorial gains to his descendants. In addition, Metternich had little doubt that a declaration of independence and the foundation of an Arabic Empire were part of Mohammed Ali's ambitious plans.²⁴ A declaration of independence from Mohammed Ali and the foundation of a new Empire were unacceptable to Metternich, not only because it raised questions of legitimacy but also because Metternich saw no advantage in the existence of a new state. If Mohammed Ali wanted to create this new state from provinces under his administration, then, in Metternich's view, the loss of such a great territory would inevitably lead to the collapse of the relatively fragile Ottoman Empire. And even if the empire survived such a loss, its limited extent and weakened power base would have made it essentially defenceless against economic or even territorial expansion by another state.²⁵ If Mohammed Ali succeeded in seizing the sultan's power and replacing the Ottoman Empire by an Arabic one, Metternich was sure Mohammed Ali possessed the administrative genius for regeneration of the declining empire and thus originate a new threat to Austria: "Is not right that [the Ottoman Empire] stand weakened, as this is the guarantor of its tranquillity, a motive that must be vindicated towards all Great Powers in favour of its conservation? [...] It is probably even more in the interests of Austria than of Russia that the Turkish Empire has lost the force for aggression against which the former formed a bulwark with his own body during three centuries. It cannot be said that a more powerful empire, either Turkish or Arabic, would direct its forces exclusively at Russia. Quite the contrary, the longer and less defendable Austrian frontier would invite the Masters of Constantinople to direct their efforts in this direction."²⁶ Metternich did not wholly believe this because, in his opinion, Islam did not permit the existence of a healthy state organism: "The Turkish Empire decays not because it is Turkish but because it is Mohammedan. To substitute an Arabic Empire for the Turkish Empire, nothing will change; the same cause of moribundity will not cease to exist."²⁷ The result of Metternich's contemplation was the unwavering opinion that the existence of an Arabic empire in part or all of the area controlled by the Ottoman Empire did not guarantee that it would last longer than the sultan's.²⁸ Its foundation

21) Prokesch to Metternich, Alexandria, 15 May 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 59.

22) Metternich to Stürmer, Vienna, 4 July 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 59; Sainte-Aulaire to Broglie, Vienna, 27 May 1833, AMAE, CP, Autriche 418.

23) Anton Prokesch von Osten, *The Memoir on the Actual Egyptian Forces Compared with Those of the Sublime Porte, September 1833, and Report on the Egyptian Question, Münchengrätz, 18 September 1833, attached to Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 27 October 1833, HHStA, StA, England 204; Metternich to Apponyi, Vienna, 20 May 1833, HHStA, StA, Frankreich 289; Metternich to Ficquelmont, Vienna, 30 October 1833, HHStA, StA, Russland III, 99; Prokesch-Osten 1909, 192–195.*

24) Metternich to Hummelauer, Vienna, 31 October 1834, HHStA, StA, England 208; Metternich to Stürmer, Vienna, 18 February 1835, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 64.

25) Lachmayer 1952, 35.

26) Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 14 March, 1834, HHStA, StA, England 208.

27) *Ibid.* For Metternich's opinion of Islam in connection with the existence of the Ottoman Empire see his talk with Prokesch from 7 December 1839. The talk between Metternich and Prokesch, Vienna, 7 December 1839, Prokesch-Osten 1881, 183.

28) Metternich to Stürmer, Baden, 26 August 1834, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 62.

would very likely result in the European powers entering into armed conflict with each other for dominance of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East.²⁹

Second, Metternich acknowledged Prokesch's familiarity with Egypt in one more way: in the autumn of 1834, he ordered that the Austrian consul general in Alexandria, Anton von Laurin, was subordinated in diplomatic matters to the new Austrian envoy in Athens instead of the representative in Constantinople. The latter still had the right to obtain Laurin's reports, but the former was charged with supervising the political correspondence between Alexandria and Vienna, commenting on the events in the land on the Nile and instructing Laurin to persuade Mohammed Ali to remain at peace. Metternich explained this measure by way of Mohammed Ali's extraordinary significance and the necessity of receiving the news from Egypt and delivering his own instructions to Laurin as quickly as possible: "*The viceroy of Egypt is not, like other pashas, a simple administrator of regions entrusted to his care. He is a very powerful vassal and all the more formidable for his sovereign [...] It is thus of the utmost interest for us to observe and anticipate his initiatives, like those other Great Powers who would aspire to exert influence over his designs and resolutions, and predict or eliminate everything in them that could compromise the preservation of the Ottoman Empire and, therefore, for general peace of Europe. The theatre of these actions is not in Constantinople, it is where Mohammed Ali resides.*"³⁰ This step produced some surprise among the Ottomans as well as European diplomats, and the Russian consul general in Alexandria, Duhamel, even attacked it as being the utmost impropriety because Egypt formed an integral part of the Ottoman Empire and it was natural and appropriate that the agents in this province were directed by the representatives accredited at the Porte and not the Greek government; for that reason, as he declared, "*the pasha of Egypt is very flattered by this arrangement and he regards it as a semi-recognition [of his independence].*"³¹ Laurin, whose personal relationship with Prokesch was somewhat strained, was also displeased with this modus operandi and openly criticised it after his arrival in Egypt in the presence of other consuls.³²

29) Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 14 March 1834, HHStA, StA, England 208.

30) Metternich to Stürmer, Vienna, 3 December 1834, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 62.

31) Duhamel's report, Alexandria, 24 September 1834, attached to Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 21 October 1834, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 61.

32) Metternich to Prokesch, Vienna, 17 October 1834, HHStA, StK, Griechenland 12; Metternich to Ficquelmont, Vienna, 20 October 1834, HHStA, StA, Russland III, 103; Metternich to Stürmer, Vienna, 3 December 1834, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 62; Martens to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 11 November 1834, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7274; Mimaut to Rigny, Cairo, 15 January 1835, AMAE, CP, Egypte 5.

The man who objected most to the sending of reports from Egypt to Vienna via Athens was the new internuncio in Constantinople, Baron Bartolomäus von Stürmer. He joined the criticism of the new practice of sending Laurin's political reports to Vienna through Athens because he felt offended by the reduction of part of his responsibilities. In his opinion, the factor of faster delivery of dispatches was not a sufficient reason for such an important change. However, Metternich denied the allegations that the change had been caused by any reasons other than the question of expedience and Prokesch's expertise: "*This arrangement is based exclusively on the geographical situation. With the establishment of an Imperial mission in Greece we have obtained an intermediate point placed on the shortest route between Vienna and Alexandria [...] It is thus doubly advantageous for us to use this intermediate point lying on the most direct way between Vienna and Alexandria as the most expeditious way of obtaining information and having it dispatched to our new consul general in Egypt (a man otherwise entirely unqualified in the handling of political affairs) through the channel of a diplomatic agent, whose expert knowledge of men and conditions in the land will enable him to deal more appropriately with the information received.*"³³ Consequently, Stürmer was unable to influence Metternich's decision and had to accept the fact that Laurin sent his dispatches primarily via Athens and only in some cases by way of Constantinople.³⁴

This state of affairs corresponded with Metternich's high estimation of Prokesch as well as the importance he attributed to Mohammed Ali after 1833. Until the end of the 1830s, the European cabinets occupied themselves with the so-called Egyptian Question raised by Mohammed Ali's ambitions and Mahmud II's desire to annihilate his too powerful Egyptian vassal. This problem significantly exceeding the limits of an internal problem of the Ottoman Empire finally led to a new and more serious crisis in 1839 that lasted more than two years. All the time from 1833 to 1841 Prokesch served as Metternich's advisor in this Egyptian Question and though he admired Mohammed Ali, Prokesch finally assisted the Austrian Chancellor in reducing the old pasha's power.³⁵

In conclusion, Anton Prokesch von Osten obviously played an important role among the Austrian diplomats in Vormärz among whom he was considered a great expert on the conditions of the Levant and Mohammed Ali's Egypt in particular. He had already obtained this reputation in the mid-1820s and, simultaneously, he started to be regarded as a skilled diplomat. Both finally ensured him the post of Austria's envoy in Athens as well as the commission with the important mission to Alexandria in 1833.

33) Metternich to Stürmer, Vienna, 18 February 1835, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 64.

34) Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 21 October 1834, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 61; Sauer, p. 349.

35) Beer 1883, 402–420; Fischer 2006, 94–123; Šedivý 2007, 249–259; Šedivý 2006, 1–36; Šedivý 2010, 88–116.

He in no way gained the general esteem of his colleagues by assentation as claimed by Hammer-Purgstall but, on the contrary, by raising arguments even in contradiction with the opinion prevailing at the Viennese Chancellery at the time, as happened in 1832. The validity of his opinions considerably improved his position and increased Metternich's respect. Consequently, though more well-disposed towards Mohammed Ali than the Austrian chancellor himself, Prokesch continued to play the role of Metternich's adviser in the following years, and he did so either by his written comments to Laurin's reports or through personal meetings with the chancellor in Vienna. With his two memoirs from late 1833 Prokesch also significantly influenced Metternich's Egyptian policy for several years to come. Prokesch's considerable reputation was so high that it survived Metternich's fall in March 1848 and later brought him to the diplomatic post in Constantinople where, as mentioned above, he represented the Austrian and later the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1855 to 1871.

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Jaroslav Valkoun

The Sudanese life of General Charles George Gordon¹

Abstract

In early February 1885, the reports of the tragic fate of the General Charles George “Chinese” Gordon came out of the blue. The whole British society was suddenly shaken and in a state of shock. For a year’s time, they had been informed with vigorous regularity about Gordon’s defence of the civilization in Khartoum all by his self against the barbarous and fanatical Mahdi – and all of a sudden, everything was over. In the eyes of the British, in a single day, his demise made of him one of the best known heroes of the Victorian era, disposing naturally of all of the imperial virtues. As time went by, however, his personal legacy faded from the British consciousness as fast as the faith in British Empire with its values, ideals and symbols. The present paper focuses on the now forgotten Sudanese life of General Gordon, for whom the Sudan became fatal. In its opening part, the article analyses his time in Egyptian service in the position of the Governor of Equatoria (1874–1877) and consequently, the Governor-General of the whole of the Sudan during the late rule of Khedive Ismail. The fact that the growing Mahdist Revolt, which had caused destabilization of the standing Egyptian administration in the Sudan, could, under certain circumstances, be a threat for Egypt, too,

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