

**Between Company and State: Anglo-Ottoman Diplomacy and
Ottoman Political Culture, 1565-1607**

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ol berîf beğ deęil bir belâ-i siyâhidi

that bloke was no leader; he was a black disaster

Anon., *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehemmed Hân: İzladı ve Varna savařları (1443-1444) üzerinde anonim Gazavâtnâme*, ed. H. İncık & M. Oęuz (Ankara, 1978), 26.

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the diplomatic relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire between roughly 1565 and 1607, using an actor-centric approach to provide case studies of the first three English embassies in Istanbul. These studies engage with wider historiographical debates in the ‘New Diplomatic History’, early modern English commercial expansion and the roots of its later evolution into colonialism, and the form and exercise of political power within the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the sixteenth to the seventeenth century. Drawing heavily on archival material from England, Venice, France, and the Ottoman Empire, the thesis argues that the success of these earliest English ambassadors to the Ottomans reflected the growing self-confidence of the merchant class driving England’s switch to an import economy. Successful import of luxury goods from Asia built the financial and social basis for the political significance of merchants to rise at home, while the diplomatic role of the company in Istanbul gave leading members plenty of practice in engaging in high politics abroad. With the Ottoman Empire being a vast, diverse, and decentralised territory, and politics in the capital becoming increasingly fractious and factional as the sixteenth century drew to a close and the seventeenth began, English merchant-diplomats had to develop their political reach and standing through building networks of alliances amongst the Ottoman political elite in Istanbul and participating in disputes and intrigues surrounding foreign (and, occasionally, domestic) affairs within the Ottoman government. The thesis reveals successive embassy households straddling the uncertain boundaries between being English state actors, developing a pioneering trading company invested with some state-like powers, and performing as players in Ottoman high politics alongside state representatives of France, Spain, Venice, and the Holy Roman Empire.

Extended abstract

This thesis focuses on the diplomatic relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire between roughly 1565 and 1607. The thesis is structured as an extensive introduction to the historiographical and theoretical frameworks, followed by chapters that serve as microhistories of the first three English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire, William Harborne, Edward Barton, and Henry Lello. The thesis draws on many historiographical traditions, not least prior and concurrent scholarship on Anglo-Ottoman relations in this period and in later centuries. Other relevant influences include the New Diplomatic History, studies of early-modern European-Ottoman and European-Asian commercial relations, and other works dealing with cross-cultural encounters and interactions in the early modern period. The historiography of Ottoman politics and society is also drawn upon to reconstruct an Ottoman political culture centred on the ‘cosmocratic’ rule of the sultan, divine arbiter of justice and equity, around whom clusters of households and networks of actors orbited, drawing closer together or repelling each other depending on their own relative direction of travel and gravity within the imperial cosmocracy, much in the manner of a nebula.

The key thematic elements to the analysis are the relationship between the Turkey/Levant Company and the English crown, how the embassies were funded (and staffed) and how this affected the daily focus of their work and expectations, the cosmocratic nebula of the political ecosystem in Istanbul and the wider Ottoman Empire, and the ‘unglamorous’ quotidian duties of ambassadors focused on keeping commerce flowing without issue or interruption. The broad arguments of the thesis are that the Turkey/Levant Company embassies to the Ottoman Empire sat awkwardly under the patronage the English crown, mostly left with a great degree of latitude to

manage their own affairs within the Ottoman world, but at the expense of light and unreliable state funding towards the upkeep of the embassies. This left English ambassadors with the responsibility to work within Ottoman political and cultural realities to ensure they had the connections to maintain good standing that allowed them to protect merchants' commercial interests, interacting directly with the shifting nebula orbiting the Ottoman imperial cosmocracy. This sometimes required choices between adapting to local customs and identities or maintaining a sense of Englishness and remaining aloof, bringing up questions of commensurability, 'norm competition' and 'ambiguity tolerance' in how ambassadors approached their roles. At one end of the spectrum was Edward Barton, who leaned into his acculturation to Ottoman expectations, and at the other, Henry Lello, who struggled with the sense of alienness and 'tyranny' that he felt regarding an increasingly troubled Ottoman political system during his embassy. Despite all this, much of the ambassadors' quotidian duties revolved around maintaining or advancing commercial rights and freedoms rather than grand negotiations or politicking, even though Edward Barton is best known for these things. Local networking within the Istanbul nebula was largely a means to the end of protecting their nation's trading position.

The chapter on William Harborne reflects the growing self-confidence of merchants as independent political actors, forming part of leading merchants Edward Osborne and Richard Staper's plan to open an Ottoman trade for their own profit. They eventually had to compromise on heading an official Anglo-Ottoman relationship when the machinery of Ottoman government mistook Harborne's mission for an official envoy. Harborne from the outset showed the importance of having Ottoman contacts who could facilitate palace interactions, understand Ottoman strategic imperatives, and – both figuratively and literally – speak the Ottoman courtly language. Harborne's existing connections with the two Ottoman envoys who had been leading the mission to Lviv, where Harborne was staying with his brother-in-law en route to Istanbul, gave

him the introduction he needed to the Ottoman leadership, getting him there not just at the right time, but saying – through them – the right things. Their willingness to work with Harborne also demonstrates that, for lower and more powerful Ottoman officials, using foreign envoys and embassies for their own purposes could be very advantageous.

There was an economic and a strategic imperative for the Ottomans to welcome granting capitulations to the English, as both nations sought to re-orient their economies amidst the great global changes underway in the sixteenth century. By the late sixteenth century, northern European powers had begun to replace the Venetians as the most valuable trade partners of the Ottomans, and English trade goods aligned well with preferred import goods for the Ottoman Empire from western Europe. Harborne's embassy was integrated into the Ottoman cosmocracy, with the sultan's divine justice placing 'Lutheran' England as a counterbalance to the power of Catholic Spain, culminating in the Ottoman refusal to renew a peace deal with Spain on the eve of their preparations to launch an Armada against England, altering the strategic balance of conflict between the two Atlantic nations.

Harborne's struggle to establish and protect English merchant rights in the Ottoman Empire demonstrated the importance of building reliable networks of allies, supporters, friends, and functionaries in Istanbul in order to progress the work and influence of an embassy – or, for that matter, any Ottoman household. The relationships Harborne was able to build quickly with some high-level influential actors, and some practical ones who could help get jobs done at a lower level, helped his embassy hit the ground running on arrival in 1583. Having allies within administrative positions, or considerable influence like religious leaders, helped Harborne compensate for a lack of working capital compared to his counterparts. However, his embassy was also hampered by the furious hostility of the high admiral, the Italian corsair renegade Uluç Ali Paşa, towards English

trade and shipping. Eventually, the pressure of Ottoman strategic interests told above all else in the struggle between the two, and the admiral had no choice but to accept the presence of an English trading nation within Ottoman ports and waters.

Second ambassador Barton took the relationship between company and state in a new direction, styling himself much more as a political ambassador keen and capable in negotiating treaties, chasing intrigues, and lobbying officials – despite infrequent and unclear political instructions from his home court. Despite the respectability Barton gained in his negotiations on behalf of Poland and in his management and manipulation of business with a volatile French embassy, Barton also courted controversy in his campaigning for Ottoman war with the Habsburgs after his monarch had decided instead to counsel peace, and in then joining the Ottoman army on campaign against the Habsburgs in Hungary in 1596, though those episodes give fascinating insight into questions of foreign ambassadors’ diplomatic and political roles within the Ottoman imperial ideology, identity, and the relationship between Barton’s company and state functions. Barton’s embassy became increasingly expensive and he struggled to balance its finances without reliable help from England, instead turning to loans from Ottoman friends and allies. There were many times at which Barton seemed more a creature of the Ottoman political ecosystem than a foreign ambassador, and he made use of his close connections and friendships with chancery officials to enforce justice for English merchants in the provinces and enhance his personal standing within the Ottoman capital. An episode that perhaps summed up Barton best was his appearance on a small rowing boat before the palace walls at Sarayburnu, prostrating himself with a petition to the sultan held to his forehead, having been tipped off perfectly by his inner palace connections that they would bring the sultan to the gardens to see it. His actions in that moment saved his barber-surgeon, John Field, from a politically motivated execution at the command of acting grand vizier Ferhad Paşa. Ferhad was a member of a rival political faction, and he had been disgraced and demoted in the preceding years

due to the success of Barton and his allies in preventing the renewal of the peace treaty between the Ottomans and the Spanish. Barton's position and actions were in many ways unprecedented, and a significant portion of his time was spent on political considerations – though this also aided a significant workload in supporting English mercantile interests within the Ottoman Empire, almost to the point of extending English protection over Flemish merchants within Ottoman domains.

The final microhistory brings us to Henry Lello, a secretary of Barton alongside Thomas Glover, but an altogether different sort of ambassador by the standards of this early period. Emerging to lead the embassy after Barton's sudden death, Lello seems in many ways the odd man out, with his rather more formal education, his non-mercantile family background in rural Shropshire, and his quite apparent unwillingness to bend to the necessities of Ottoman ways of doing business and politics. Lello was a rather different character, with strong convictions on the reformed faith, the right and proper rule of law, and the concept of tyranny. His embassy came during difficult years of upheaval in English and Ottoman politics, with two major succession crises resolving into new realities in their respective nations in Lello's time. In the Ottoman Empire, the time of troubles and violence intensified, making it even more difficult for Lello to keep onside politically. Under young Ahmed I, new realities of what was meant by sultanic order and justice began to emerge, imperilling English standing at the Ottoman porte just as Westminster turned to rapprochement with Madrid. In England, the ever-present question over which monarch followed Elizabeth I was finally resolved in favour of James VI, but his was a jagged succession that caused confusion and also threatened realities that had appeared settled. The Levant company had to fight for its status within its home country as well as the Ottoman Empire, and Lello was meanwhile left in limbo, trying to keep English commerce alive in Istanbul without much in the way of a budget nor a collection of Ottoman allies. Lello's time in the Ottoman capital marked something of an 'end of

the beginning' of Anglo-Ottoman relations, as, behind the scenes, the Levant Company and its mission were completely reformed after forcing Lello to endure over two years in limbo, culminating in his replacement by a former secretary – and arguably more of a company 'insider' – Thomas Glover. The new Levant Company had a much clearer understanding of its more limited financial and political role in Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy and compiled its first letters of instruction and mission statements for its ambassador and consuls.

The thesis concludes with considerations on the place of the first three English embassies to the Ottoman Empire within the wider trends of the time that the thesis outlined throughout. It assesses the contributions the studies have made to the historiography of Ottoman politics in this period, diplomatic history, and the study of English merchants and commercial expansion.

List of abbreviations

<i>Barton's Letterbook</i>	A series of letters from Mr. Edward Barton, during his residence as English ambassador at Constantinople, Cotton Nero B/XII, The British Library, London
<i>BL</i>	The British Library, London.
<i>TNA</i>	The National Archives of the United Kingdom, London.
<i>ODNB</i>	The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition (Oxford, 2004-2021).
<i>Venice, viii</i>	Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 8, 1581-1591, ed. Horatio F. Brown (London, 1894).
<i>Venice, ix</i>	Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 9, 1592-1603, ed. Horatio F. Brown (London, 1897).
<i>Venice, x</i>	Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 10, 1603-1607, ed. Horatio F. Brown (London, 1900).
<i>Venice, xi</i>	Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 11, 1607-1610, ed. Horatio F. Brown (London, 1904).

Introduction: framing Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations in the sixteenth century

The bookends of the first thirty years or so of Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic engagement in Istanbul might be read as an auspicious arrival and an acrimonious departure. The voyage of William Harebrowne (later Harborne) to Istanbul in 1578 at the behest of his business partners, Edward Osborne and Richard Staper, coincided with the last months of the vizierate of longstanding Ottoman grandee Sokollu Mehmed Paşa.¹ His journey to Istanbul was via Poland overland to Lviv, where Ottoman envoys were in discussions over peace between Sultan Murad III – Sokollu Mehmed’s third sultan – and King Stephen of Poland-Lithuania, whom Harborne then accompanied to the Ottoman capital disguised in Ottoman dress.² These contacts afforded him an audience with Sokollu Mehmed, and a trade deal for England was soon in the offing. The only problem was that the merchants had intended the deal to be limited to them, rather than extended to the entire English merchant community. If this was a happy tale, the return of the successor of the successor of Harborne was rather less so, at least for its main protagonist, the third English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Lello. Lello, to an extent, returned in disgrace, having protested the appointment of the erstwhile secretary to him and his predecessor Edward Barton, Thomas Glover, as the new ambassador to succeed him in a pared-down embassy regime.³ Eventually forced to give up his protest and leave on the final intercession of Robert Cecil, First Earl of Salisbury and Secretary of State to James VI, the last act of Lello’s diplomatic career

¹ Christine Woodhead, ‘Harborne, William’, *ODNB*, (Online edition, 2008).

² Susan A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade With Turkey 1578-1582: A documentary study of the first Anglo-Ottoman relations* (Oxford, 1977), 42n.

³ Henry Lello, ‘Lello to Salisbury’ 30th January 1607, SP 97/5 ff.99-100, *TNA*.

before a retirement to minor roles in England was to address the Venetian senate with a dramatic critique of Ottoman decline and degeneracy.⁴

Looking more closely at these examples, they in fact reveal similar themes, key to understanding the wider landscape and impetus of the Anglo-Ottoman relationship in this era. This was a relationship for the Ottomans that followed ordinary Ottoman processes and protocols, but for the English was set apart by the heavy involvement – if not leadership – of a mercantile monopoly in the representation of English affairs with this great power. It was through the careful planning of Osborne and Staper, taking advantage of networks of merchants and information they could provide to plot Harborne's route and strategy to maximum effect, that the initial positive contact between Harborne and Sokollu Mehmed was made, and through later planning and organisation from the Levant Company that they incorporated that a new model English embassy to the Ottomans was arranged to end Lello's time in the post. Throughout the experience of this initial trio of ambassadors, this liminal status between trade company and state representative was reflected in the issues they had to manage and how they went about managing them. By some measures, this also affected the extent to which English embassies could fulfil Ottoman expectations – such as the delay on sending royal gifts due to disagreement as to whether they should be financed by the English crown or the trade company – but in others allowed their practice to be more easily influenced to suit the requirements of Ottoman high politics, such as in Barton's freedom to consort with a range of Ottoman notables, both socially and financially.

⁴ Robert Cecil, 'Salisbury to Lello' 10th June 1607, SP 97/5 f.168, *TNA*; 'The late English Ambassador at Constantinople, now on his way home, came to the Cabinet and spoke as follows' 17th September 1607, *Venice*, xi, 28-40.

From an English perspective, four main themes emerge as the central pillars of analysis of this Anglo-Ottoman relationship. The first is this relationship between merchant company and representation of the English crown, and how the two competed and interacted through each of the embassies in focus, and how the fundamental trading relationship played into the wider diplomatic relationship between England, the Ottoman Empire, and other powers represented in Istanbul during this time. The latter three will be familiar to any student of Michael Talbot and his work on British-Ottoman relations throughout the long eighteenth century, in that similar categories are relevant to this study of an earlier case of relations between the English and the Ottomans in the early modern period.⁵ Most closely linked to trade and trade companies, is the financing of diplomacy, and how that then reflected English and Ottoman expectations about what diplomatic activity involved and represented. It is the case that there were disputes between the Turkey and later Levant Company and the English crown as to who was supposed to fund diplomacy with the Ottomans and to what extent, most starkly reflected in the replacement of Henry Lello by Thomas Glover under a new English charter. It is also the case that the English embassy routinely operated with lesser financial resources than its European contemporaries also represented in Istanbul, a case that will be demonstrated in detail throughout this study, requiring thoughtful and innovative responses from English ambassadors to maintain their influence and status at the Ottoman Porte. At the same time, English embassies were in receipt of an allowance from the Ottoman sultan, these factors representing the overlap between the theme of financial provision, and that of the interaction and accommodation between English actors and Ottoman political culture and protocols. While this thesis subtly challenges the focus of some historiographical traditions on ‘cultural incommensurability’, demonstrating that English agents and ambassadors worked confidently on a day-to-day basis without too much concern for clashes of cultural understandings and systems, it is also the case, particularly evident in the forthright

⁵ Michael Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Woodbridge, 2017), 1-3.

opinions of Lello, that ethnological understandings, particularly regarding religion, impacted on the experience of those agents, ambassadors, and their Ottoman contemporaries. Alongside this, careful flexibility was required to maintain operations and standing amongst complex and shifting networks of political power and influence. Finally, though in a somewhat less granular way than Talbot manages within his work on the later British merchant community, these questions of day-to-day diplomatic work, and regular management of networks of actors across the challenges of cultural and geographical distance combined, and what that looked like in terms of actions and outcomes, is also investigated throughout this work.

In June 1565, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa was promoted to the position of Grand Vizier of the imperial *divan* of Ottoman Sultan ‘Kanuni’ Süleyman.⁶ Referred to by regnal number as Süleyman I, he was, and remains, more widely known by the epithet ‘the Magnificent’ in Western Europe.⁷ Süleyman had been sultan since securing the palace following his father’s death in 1520, and Sokollu Mehmed was the last of Süleyman’s appointments of long-serving grand viziers during his reign. Süleyman would die during a final campaign in 1566, and Sokollu Mehmed’s career as chief political figure in the Ottoman Empire would outlive both the sultan who appointed him and the prince who would follow, with the ethnic-Serb grand vizier only relinquishing role after death by assassination in October 1579, during the reign of Süleyman’s grandson, Murad III.⁸

The vizirate of Sokollu Mehmed marks the starting point of this thesis for three reasons. First is the simple fact that, in the year before his death, it was Sokollu Mehmed who met with an English merchant called William Harborne and established the first Anglo-Ottoman trading and

⁶ İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzablı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, i (Istanbul, 2011), 696.

⁷ Colin Imber, ‘Ideals and legitimation in early Ottoman history’ in M.I. Kunt & C.M. Woodhead (eds.), *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age* (Harlow, 1995), 138-40.

⁸ Danişmend, *İzablı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, i, 1780.

diplomatic agreements. With English merchants having cultivated the support of powerful Ottoman political players such as the juriconsult and religious scholar Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, over the following years the capitulations proposed by Sokollu Mehmed were ratified by both sides and a first English embassy established in 1583. Secondly, though not directly related to Sokollu Mehmed himself, 1565 provides a convenient start point for consideration of some of the driving factors and developments behind the expansion of English mercantile activity into new markets. After first forays into West Africa in the 1550s, an increased Mediterranean presence as well as exploration of the Arctic followed. The latter established trade relations with Muscovy under Ivan IV 'the Terrible' as a consequence of adventures to the east as well as rather optimistic gold prospecting expeditions to Baffin Island in the west from 1574. In the decade immediately preceding the Anglo-Ottoman deal offered by Sokollu Mehmed, a closely connected group of London-based merchants oversaw an expansion of English trading activity in Muscovy, Spain, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Eastern and Baltic Europe. It was a period in which mercantile companies rapidly expanded English visibility and influence abroad, culminating in driving a foreign policy outcome in the case of Harborne, the Turkey Company, and the beginning of official Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy. The third and final reasoning is potentially attributable to Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, coinciding with his elevation to grand vizier, but nonetheless an interesting harbinger of things to come. A document in the British National Archives from 1565 reports of an invitation from the Ottoman Sultan to the English crown to join in alliance and friendship.⁹ The document is scrappy and of unknown provenance, as well as evidently not followed up by any sort of action. However, it is nonetheless another worthy starting point dating to 1565 from which to begin a study of the early period of this diplomatic relationship.

⁹ 'The trew Interpretatyon of a Letter sent to the Queens majesty from the great Turk' (1565), Cotton MS Nero B/XI, vii, ff.76-78, *BL*.

This introduction explores several concepts important to this thesis. First comes a consideration of the historiography of diplomacy and English foreign policy, and where this contribution sits in the wider field. This is followed by a similar exercise in discussing current Ottoman political and diplomatic historiography, outlining the conceptual contributions brought forth in this thesis that aid our understanding of late-sixteenth-century political and diplomatic life in Istanbul. A third section outlines the social world of the sixteenth-century Ottoman political world and considers questions of commensurability and identity. The final sections briefly discuss the choice of microhistorical structure of the thesis and the ways in which sources have been identified and used. Broadly speaking, this thesis covers four key themes, as introduced above. Beyond this, at the forefront of the thinking throughout this study are the following arguments that cut across each of those central themes.

First, the complex relationship between the trading company, its merchants, and the English ambassadors' status as representatives of the English crown, left ambassadors relative latitude to interpret independently or maintain constructively ambiguous to the overarching direction of their home court. At times, this facilitated a notable 'two-tier' diplomatic structure, whereby the quotidian demands on ambassadors took precedence over the wider policy positions of their court (insofar as they existed or were communicated in a timely manner to the ambassadors), though direct royal intercession or a change of royal policy (or indeed monarch) could transform the terms under which diplomacy could operate. Secondly, the experiences of English ambassadors and their embassies demonstrate the centrality of the Ottoman ideology of the 'cosmocrat sultan' to the Ottoman vision of where foreign embassies fitted within the Ottoman domestic political system and worldview, most starkly represented in the role Edward Barton played as second English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, and Selânikî's reference to *ubudiyet* – submission or service –

in describing the confirmation ceremony of foreign ambassadors.¹⁰ The ‘comsocrat’ concept being an ‘Altaic universality notion’ linked to Turkic cosmology also lends itself to a further cosmological problematisation of Ottoman political systems of factionalism; borrowing from Stanley Tambiah’s ‘galactic polity’ cosmological model of Southeast Asian kingdoms, I propose that political systems of power and networking during my period of study are most accurately categorised as something akin to a nebula forming around the core of the position of the sultan at the centre.¹¹ Thirdly, for ambassadors and other representatives, the local and proximate could hold more sway than official instructions, intentions, and interventions. For merchants making their fortunes, and those serving the embassies in various roles, experience strengthened existing bonds of kinship and business partnership, while also helping form new, long-lasting group identities that saw bonds of patronage and partnership persist throughout lifetimes. The quotidian work of the first trio of English ambassadors was what Jennifer Mori implies is the ‘unglamorous’ reality of diplomacy, supporting and securing the commercial concerns of those merchants rather than engaging in grand political negotiations (with Edward Barton again a notable exception for attempting to carry both on a regular basis), but maintenance of standing and networks within the nebula ecosystem was vital to ambassadors’ ability to do this effectively. These arguments will be explored and tested across three microhistories, one for each ambassador and his embassy, and the reasoning for this will also be outlined in this introduction.

Diplomatic History

It is difficult to begin the main body of a thesis on an early modern diplomatic relationship in 2022 and not make direct reference to the development over the past two decades of a field

¹⁰ Güneş Işksel, *La diplomatie ottomane sous le règne de Selim II : paramètres et périmètres de l'Empire ottoman dans le troisième quart du XVI^e siècle* (Louvain, 2016), passim; Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, ed. Mehmed İpşirli (Istanbul, 1989), 334.

¹¹ Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 1985), 252-286.

known as the 'New Diplomatic History'. This section will outline how this thesis envisages that field as a basis, and what it can contribute to it. As Tracey Sowerby and Jan Hennings succinctly set out, the New Diplomatic History looks to zoom in on the complexity of early modern diplomatic relationships and practices, leaving behind the more distant perspective of the traditional paradigm that placed European nation-states at the forefront of a largely linear process of development with modern norms and institutions as an inevitable end point.¹² The early modern period contained an acceleration in the development of the management of relationships between empires, nations, polities, providing a basis for some of the forms familiar to the post-WWII era. What is less certain, and far more complex and interesting, are the ways in which differing practices and institutions developed – in manners both divergent and convergent – and patterns of diplomatic norms established themselves during this period. This includes the exchange of permanent embassies, notions of extraterritoriality and immunity, and recourse to justice across territories as set out in treaties – such as the prohibition on English slaves within the Ottoman Empire. This Anglo-Ottoman case provides a number of further complicating factors, such as the cross-confessional nature of the relationship and the existence of a unique system of established norms and practices in Istanbul centred on the Ottoman capitulation system, which specified a number of requirements for representation of those wishing to trade within Ottoman territory. This included the first permanent embassies in Europe. For the period this thesis looks at, the English side of this relationship was managed as much by a trading company as the distant royal court in London.

There are few truly comparable relationships within the early modern world. As will be explored briefly in this chapter, the origins of Anglo-Russian diplomacy provided something of a

¹² Tracey A. Sowerby & Jan Hennings (eds.), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c. 1410-1800* (Abingdon, 2017), 1-17.

template for merchant-managed diplomacy, and much ink has been spilled over the operations of the Levant Company's offshoot organisation, the English East India Company, as well as its equivalents from other European states such as the Dutch VOC. Topkapı Sarayı was not the court of Aurangzeb (itself perhaps less alien to western European visitors than it has at times been presumed), and the Ottoman Empire was not so distant and obscure to Christians of Western Europe, even if it remained somewhat exotic. It was one of the world's great imperial cities, and one with its own established political culture and diplomatic rules. However, this latter point is particularly important: as it had its own established political and diplomatic culture, it was not necessarily within the realm of western European norms that its major interlocutors with permanent embassies, and that required an element of the adaptation and accommodation of differences in practices and outlook that were outlined in our key themes above.

Michael Talbot traces the origins of the New Diplomatic History debate back to nineteenth and early-twentieth century debates that need not detain us unnecessarily here; suffice to say that diplomatic history retained a reputation for state-centrism and Eurocentrism that rarely extended beyond 'the record of what clerk said to another clerk'.¹³ While this study maintains a great deal of focus on clerks speaking to each other, it is more the legacy of decades of hard work on broadening the frame of analysis and adapting wider and more interdisciplinary approaches to examination of the subject in its source base and historical interrogation that defines the key difference between what is now the 'new' diplomatic history as opposed to the old. In her 2016 overview article on the subject, Sowerby traces the development of this 'New Diplomatic History' and outlines its various departures from prior 'bureaucratic state-centric focus' and 'studies of foreign policy'.¹⁴ Sowerby identifies how a large part of that shift involved a scholarly turn towards studies of diplomats and

¹³ Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 3-4.

¹⁴ Sowerby, 'Early Modern Diplomatic History', *History Compass*, 14/9 (2016), 441-456.

their experiences, taking from this the differences that emerge between ‘diplomatic theory’ and practice, no longer viewing foreign policy, diplomacy (and, one may add, international relations) as coterminous. This is the basis upon which this thesis builds, with ambassadorial case studies at its heart. However, this is not all, neither in terms of the scope of New Diplomatic History nor the methodology employed here. The New Diplomatic History was undoubtedly a child of the ‘cultural turn’ and a gradual shift amongst historians towards greater interdisciplinarity and critical consideration of a wider source base. John Watkins famously issued a rallying call for a New Diplomatic History along exactly those lines in his 2008 special edition of the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, often seen as a – if not *the* – key touchstone for students of the New Diplomatic History.¹⁵ In a sense, this thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach simply by combining expertise in Ottoman history – which in the past has sometimes felt like a world apart from developments elsewhere in the historical discipline – with approaches from the New Diplomatic History, as well as in mining a range of archival and other sources across various provenances and languages in order to build its narratives.¹⁶ I use those legacies established by prior generations of (new) diplomatic historians to take ambassadorial experiences and see what they have to say not only about diplomatic practice and English foreign policy in the Elizabethan era, but also Ottoman politics and society, and English overseas trade and commercial life in this period.

The debt this thesis owes to the New Diplomatic History, and its place within it, is further demonstrated by comparison with older, ‘traditional’ diplomatic and international relations histories. Garrett Mattingly’s *Renaissance Diplomacy* served as the seminal text in early modern diplomatic history from its publication in 1955.¹⁷ Mattingly’s focus, evidence base, and conclusions are broadly Eurocentric, tracing the origins of a ‘modern’ brand of diplomacy with permanent

¹⁵ John Watkins, ‘Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38/1 (2008), 1-14.

¹⁶ Christine Woodhead, *The Ottoman World* (Abingdon, 2013).

¹⁷ Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London, 1955).

embassies to sixteenth-century Italy, and charting a steady progression to a recognisably 'modern' system after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This, of course, leaves no room for Ottoman requirements for European trade partners to supply resident ambassadors from the 1450s onward, or asymmetrical, piecemeal patterns of development and experimentation with different processes even across early modern Europe, let alone the wider world. England was not in the habit of maintaining permanent envoys to embassies in the sixteenth century, with its mission at Rapamat on the European shores of Istanbul a notable outlier. As will be shown in the discussion of William Harborne's embassy, a purely trading relationship with Muscovy was managed by almost entirely asymmetric and certainly sporadic deployment of English special ambassadors to Moscow well into the seventeenth century. In Mattingly's schema, such arrangements are taken as a sign of a lack of modernity, regardless of practicability or necessity. In the case of the Ottomans, a global empire with the influence to make set procedural demands of its trading partners, lack of reciprocity in stationing permanent ambassadors also casts them outside of Mattingly's Renaissance diplomacy. Yet the practicality of a one-sided relationship was clear from an Ottoman perspective: if all the world was coming to Istanbul, where was the point in going to them? Not to mention that engagement in a foreign diplomatic system proclaims a recognition of the authority and sovereignty of the other, rather than the universal sovereignty of a single sultan.

However, even recent revisions and challenges to Mattingly fail to comfortably accommodate a relationship like that which developed between England and the Ottoman Empire in this period. Isabella Lazzarini's work on Italy suggests a greater likelihood for principalities to employ resident ambassadors than republics and oligarchies, whose external relations were more focused on trade and had less need for political representatives.¹⁸ Yet, it was the ambassador of Venice who held the

¹⁸ Isabella Lazzarini, 'Renaissance Diplomacy' in I. Lazzarini & A. Gamberti (eds.), *The Italian Renaissance State* (Cambridge, 2012), 425-443.

most historic and arguably senior position amongst resident ambassadors in Istanbul. The entire system of resident embassies within the Ottoman Empire was predicated on the idea that, to uphold a trade agreement, participating nations needed a permanent political representative to manage their internal affairs and engage with the Ottoman political system on matters of mutual interest. England's most striking example of an early resident embassy was a post in Istanbul occupied by the agent of a merchant trading monopoly. Yet, a similar arrangement in Muscovy carried no such weight or permanence. The Anglo-Ottoman relationship also calls into question that resident embassies and modern diplomacy are automatically coterminous. As candidates selected from a closed group of company merchants in order to manage commercial as well as political affairs, also managing their own trade interests, the first English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire were far from the archetypal professional modern diplomat, groomed and trained by an established department of foreign services. Given the rudimentary nature of what might be termed 'foreign policy' in this period, these representatives had a lot of latitude to manage affairs and pursue policies as they saw fit. Indeed, by the time of Abraham de Wicquefort's *L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions* in 1681, his long diplomatic career had taught him that the ideal ambassador was someone possessed of the knowledge and judgement to manage situations to their national benefit.¹⁹ This thesis establishes the various manners in which the first English ambassadors to the Ottomans occupied and, in their own way, established the precedents and boundaries of a role unique in its scope and application to its Ottoman context, its time, and its span of both political and commercial worlds – not that the two were always distinct in domestic or foreign politics in either England or the Ottoman Empire. This is entirely consistent with the New Diplomatic History's turn away from 'the state' towards looking at personal relationships between individuals, within (and between) dynasties.²⁰ These three ambassadorial microhistories in fact demonstrate that personal relationships between ambassadors, members of the embassy household, and Ottoman

¹⁹ Maurice Keens-Soper, 'Abraham de Wicquefort and diplomatic theory', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 8/2 (1997), 16-30.

²⁰ Sowerby, 'Early Modern Diplomatic History', 433.

officials and go-betweens, were instrumental in supporting the successful execution of embassy business.

As will be further explored below regarding Ottoman ideology and politics, the significance of these personal relationships in achieving shared goals between ambassadors and other actors further demonstrates the complexity of the vast Ottoman imperial system, and indeed at times the difficulty the imperial centre had in enforcing common standards of law enforcement, or even hospitality to outsiders, across its huge territorial expanse. Both the old and new diplomatic history have not given enough thought and recognition to the decentralisation of dynastic empires, with the Ottoman Empire being the obvious case in point here. Local social and political contexts throughout the empire made for very different diplomatic contexts: Istanbul, Cairo, Aleppo, and Patras were very different places with very different religious and social makeups and differing local political pressures. As such, this thesis is primarily a study of diplomacy in Istanbul rather than the ‘Ottoman Empire’ as an imagined, monolithic whole. Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli in North Africa were in effect semi-detached from the Ottoman Empire. It is no surprise that a regular occupation of English ambassadors that comes to the fore in these case studies is the necessity to secure imperial decrees and even send out official Anglo-Ottoman joint parties from Istanbul to solve problems in the provinces that ought to have been covered by the word of the capitulations. Here is another arena in which this study of embassies and ambassadors illuminates the friction between theory, imperial representation, and practical reality within the Ottoman world. Gabor Kármán’s work on Ottoman tributary states has demonstrated how Ottoman vassals treated their own envoys to the sultan as *de facto* ambassadors, and also used the European diplomatic arena present in Istanbul in order to assert their own status.²¹ As will be seen, Edward Barton in particular pursued

²¹ Gabor Kármán, ‘Sovereignty and Representation: Tributary States in the Seventeenth-century Diplomatic System of the Ottoman Empire’ in G. Kármán & L. Kunčević (eds.), *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden, 2013), 153-185.

interests in Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania, further underlining the range of existing historiographical arguments and concepts further highlighted by these case studies. Moreover, other partnerships built up by English ambassadors during their working lives show how the diplomatic scene in Istanbul was used as an arena for political advancement for Ottoman actors of diverse roles and stations, keying in to work done by Giancarlo Casale, Tobias Graf, and even perhaps studies along the lines of Cornell Fleischer's *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, touching on how lower-ranking officials with limited prospects of advancement might seek out whatever patronage or advantage they might find.²²

While the cultural history and interdisciplinary influence on the New Diplomatic History has led some scholars into the study of gift-giving and the connections between literature and diplomacy, this is not dwelt heavily upon in this thesis. This is not because these avenues are not of significant relevance to the Ottomans or English, but rather because they are tangential to histories of ambassadorial careers in the manner that they are laid out here, and have, at any rate, been covered thoroughly by others already. Anders Ingram's *Writing the Ottomans* tackles the intersection between diplomacy and history-writing in early modern England, and gift-giving practices regularly form the basis of early modern diplomatic studies.²³ Where gift-giving is touched upon here, it is in the context of what that tells us about the attitudes, means, and status of English merchants in the Ottoman Empire, rather than analysed for its ceremonial or symbolic meaning. This is one of the ways in which this work sets itself slightly apart from some of the New Diplomatic History, in that, while ceremonial and the symbolic are evidently of importance, they were not of foremost significance to English ambassadors any more than religious or cultural barriers were – with more to follow on this below. The experiences of the first English

²² Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton, NJ, 1986).

²³ Anders Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans: Turkish history in early modern England* (Basingstoke, 2015); Sowerby & Hennings, *Practices of Diplomacy*, passim.

ambassadors, in my analysis and estimation, in some ways reveal some of the overstated preoccupations of new diplomatic historiography, which focuses on the material and ritual, sometimes at the expense of personal relationships, economic concerns, or indeed the traditional concerns of ‘foreign policy’ and trade. Harborne, Barton, and Lello were involved in a great number of activities and affairs in their roles, but largely they were men getting on with fairly stable jobs within well-established frameworks and processes. It appears from my research that mostly things just flowed; there were few disruptions or crises caused by cultural dislocation or mutual misunderstanding. For the most part, ‘traditional’ strategic diplomatic concerns – military, economic – largely trumped any issues of ceremonial. In the – quite literally – cut-throat world of early modern Istanbul politics, feuds and rivalries rarely stood on ceremony but rather pure political interest, be it personal, factional, or international. For example, Thomas Dallam’s organ was an extremely well-received gift to Mehmed III, but it didn’t survive his son’s reign, nor did it much help Lello when he was struggling for cash and isolated by hostility from the French embassy and disinterest in the Ottoman relationship in London.

In general, the historiography of international relations has followed the same patterns of study and basic assumptions as those that went into Mattingly’s work. As Eddie Keene notes, Martin Wight’s influential 1991 work, *International Theory*, declares that ‘one cannot talk properly about international relations before the advent of the sovereign state’ — which means to say, the models of sovereign statehood that began to develop primarily in Western Europe during the sixteenth century.²⁴ This, in part, draws from an outmoded legacy inherent in the periodisation ‘early modern’ itself, which imagines the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as incubators for the development of institutions and philosophies that put particularly western European societies on an unavoidable path to twentieth-century modernity – or, as Keene puts it: ‘this shift from the

²⁴ Edward Keene, *International Political Thought: A Historical Introduction* (Cambridge, 2005), 7-8.

medieval ‘theory of the universal community’ to the modern ‘theory of the national state’.²⁵ This linear approach relegates a multinational, non-European, Islamic empire like the Ottomans into the shadows, along with the idea that relations between such an empire and an emerging western European nation-state like England could be managed by a merchant concern. This thesis is unusual in putting forward a study of such a relationship in a sixteenth-century context, rather than looking at the East India Company or colonial Virginia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁶ Keene points out the obvious contradiction that disrupts this historical worldview, which is that, for most of ‘modernity’, the nation-state was not the dominant form of political organisation at all – vast colonial or dynastic empires were.²⁷ Even were we to concede the field to the notion that international relations occur only between sovereign nation-states, surely if that definition is to include Imperial Austria, it must then also include the Ottoman Empire? Perhaps a turn to the ‘New Diplomatic History’ obviates the supposed conflict here: as Daniela Frigo argues, diplomacy was an *institutio* rather than an institution; it was a set of defined roles and practices by which states interacted, both with each other and with non-state actors.²⁸ This, on a day-to-day basis, was not the same as foreign policy as an abstract concern relating to how polities envisioned their relationships with each other; as the studies to follow show, most of the work that English ambassadors in Istanbul did was not concerned with negotiating treaties, truces, or alliances.

A similar problem exists when considering the notion of foreign policy as the endeavour of nation states and coterminous with the definition of diplomacy. R.B. Wernham argued that Tudor English foreign policy was primarily concerned with maintaining a balance of power between Spain

²⁵ Ibid., 8.

²⁶ Rupali Mishra, *A Business of State: Commerce, Politics, and the Birth of the East India Company* (Cambridge, MA, 2018); Lauren Working, *The Making of an Imperial Polity: Civility and America in the Jacobean Metropolis* (Cambridge, 2020).

²⁷ Keene, *International Political Thought*, 9.

²⁸ Daniela Frigo, ‘Prudence and experience: Ambassadors and political cultures in early modern Italy’, *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38/1 (2008), 35-55.

and France, and not allowing either to align against English interests.²⁹ Since then, various contributions have complicated this picture, notably Simon Adams, David Gehring, David Potter, Tatyana Zhukova, and Pauline Croft.³⁰ The current historiography understands that English foreign affairs in the Elizabethan period were varied and defined by a complex interplay of commercial and religious interests, not to mention also the matter of national security. This thesis shows these same interests reflected in Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy. The following case studies show that English, French, Venetian, and other non-permanent ambassadors in Istanbul were concerned with working together on affairs to do with trade, commerce, and lobbying for Ottoman intervention in whichever affairs of the time were pressing to the ambassadors. Relations between embassies in the Ottoman capital could run contrary to supposed national policy and official diplomatic stances. This thesis argues that a multi-tier diplomacy existed between parties, meaning that diplomacy was undertaken on different levels and by different means as sovereign-to-sovereign official contact as well as (and much more commonly) lobbying between ambassadors and Ottoman officials or powerbrokers. The sovereign-to-sovereign or court-to-court communications mostly involved exchanging pleasantries, formalising agreements already prepared by other representatives, and ensuring pledges were kept and action on them would follow. On the tier of everyday duties for an English ambassador in Istanbul, the relationship was largely managed by following up on procedural concerns to do with law, commerce, and politicking, rather than following any particular grand national strategy. This split approach may suggest the Levant Company was an early, partial example of the later emergence of the company-state as a model of European imperial expansion around the globe.³¹ Company-states combined state roles (e.g. in

²⁹ R.B. Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy, 1558-1603* (London, 1980), passim; idem., *Before the Armada: the Growth of English Foreign Policy, 1485-1588* (London, 1971), passim.

³⁰ Simon Adams & David Gehring, 'Elizabeth I's Former Tutor Reports on the Parliament of 1559: Johannes Spithovius to the Chancellor of Denmark, 27 February 1559', *The English Historical Review*, 128/530 (2013), 35-54; D.S. Gehring, *Anglo-German Relations and the Protestant Cause: Elizabethan foreign policy and pan-Protestantism* (London, 2013); David Potter, *Henry VIII and Francis I: the final conflict 1540-1547* (Leiden, 2011); Tatyana Zhukova, 'The gift-giving culture of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy, 1566-1623', unpubd. PhD thesis, University of Nottingham (2018).

³¹ J.C. Sharman & Andrew Phillips, *Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World* (Princeton, NJ, 2020); P.J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Durham, NC, 2011)

handling diplomacy, taxation) with the position of being money-making corporations.³² Stern argues that the East India Company was a true company-state in its exercise of sovereignty over the English trading nation and settlers in its jurisdiction, and in particular its ability to handle external diplomacy and wage war.³³ The Levant Company also held some of those prerogatives: jurisdiction over English (and later, Flemish) visitors to the Ottoman Empire, diplomacy with Ottoman officials across the empire and other European representatives. This overlaps the multi-tier diplomacy concept presented in this thesis quite closely, though it is worth stressing that the Levant Company did not ‘rule’ in any comparable way to the later exploits of the East India Company. Merely, in this period, we see the emergence of some of those powers and responsibilities that would come to define later company-states.

Beyond the confines of what might be considered the ‘New Diplomatic History’, or perhaps to broaden the overview to include studies that sit alongside it, relating more widely to European and intercultural diplomacy in the early modern period, a range of scholarship stands out as informative to a study of this nature. Most evident as starting points are the numerous existing works within an Anglo-Ottoman context, starting from the earlier twentieth-century works of Orhan Burian, Akdes Nimet Kurat, and Mübahat Küçüköğlü.³⁴ Though this Turkish-language material has proven challenging to access and arbitrate effectively, their perspectives on and use of sources have proven instructive. Burian’s assessment that in this period, English trade with India and lands further east, despite English experimentation with exploration around the seaboard of the northern hemisphere, was the imperative to open direct trade with the Ottomans, is a compelling one.³⁵ Indeed, Burian, Kurat, and Küçüköğlü each situate the expansion of diplomatic

³² Stern, *Company-State*, 3-6; Sharman & Phillips, *Outsourcing Empire*, 5.

³³ Stern, *Company-State*, 3-7.

³⁴ Orhan Burian, ‘Türk-İngiliz Münasebetinin İlk Yılları’, *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 9/1-2 (1951), 1-41.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

representation from the west of Europe in the context of commercial expansion overseas amongst those kingdoms.³⁶ Though Kurat’s opening statement that ‘the latest of the Western European [great] powers in the establishment of economic and political relations with the Ottoman Empire was England’ is perhaps somewhat dismissive of the Netherlands, which would become very important in this opening phase of Anglo-Ottoman relations.³⁷ Most of all, these Turkish-language publications from the mid-twentieth century mark the earliest demonstrations of the benefits of working Ottoman source material alongside English and other European sources. Their careful coverage of the early history of English commercial relations with Ottoman lands is also highly useful in thinking about the wider problematic of defining a start date for the beginning of diplomatic or, in Kurat’s terminology, ‘political’ relations, and how these were from the beginning a function of the desire for commercial exchange.³⁸

This is not to dismiss the work of English historians of the early twentieth century – J. Theodore Bent, Honyel Rosedale, Mordechai Epstein, Hugh Rawlinson, and Alfred Cecil Wood – but, rather, their work is less relevant to this thesis in that it represents a corpus of scholarship that this thesis consciously tries to move beyond.³⁹ Wood in particular is perhaps the most well-known author on Anglo-Ottoman relations and the Levant Company, but with the wealth of access to sources available to scholars in 2022 – including the opportunity to combine Ottoman and European sources – and with the wide-ranging scholarship on diplomatic history, Ottoman politics and culture, courtly encounters, cross-confessional encounters, commercial history, and much more that has developed in the intervening years, it is reference to and influence from those works

³⁶ Ibid., 1-5; Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türk-İngiliz Münasebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi (1553-1610)* (Ankara, 1953), 1-7; Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisâdî Münâsebetleri*, 1 (1580-1838) (Ankara, 1974), 1-4.

³⁷ Kurat, *Türk-İngiliz Münasebetleri*, 1.

³⁸ Ibid., 1, ‘siyasî’.

³⁹ J. Theodore Bent, ‘The English in the Levant’, *The English Historical Review*, 5/20 (1890), 654-64; H.G. Rosedale, *Queen Elizabeth and the Levant Company: A Diplomatic and Literary Episode of the Establishment of our Trade with Turkey* (London, 1904); M. Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London, 1908); H.G. Rawlinson, ‘The Embassy of William Harborne to Constantinople, 1583-8’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4/5 (1922), 1-27; Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford, 1935).

that is most important here. This work is, in the terminology of Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Zoltán Biedermann, an exercise in attempting to create a ‘connected history’.⁴⁰ In particular, the following paragraphs consider the contributions of Susan Skilliter, John-Paul Ghobrial, and Michael Talbot, with nods also to Daniel Bamford and Tomasz Kowalczyk. Also worth mentioning in passing here are Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar for their wider contribution to early-modern British relations and encounters with the Islamic world, including two of very few serious considerations of the embassy of Henry Lello.⁴¹ Jennifer Mori’s work on British diplomatic culture in Europe in the eighteenth century has been useful in thinking more deeply about how to represent the quotidian life of ambassadors and their work within their embassies.⁴² Noel Malcolm has also proven useful in considering where the ideological musings of Henry Lello on the nature of the Ottoman sultanate and wider empire sit within contemporary European political thought.⁴³

The most important starting point for most of the work on Harborne and Barton in this study, came Susan Skilliter’s documentary study of Barton’s embassy and Harborne’s initial negotiations.⁴⁴ Skilliter’s combination of English and Ottoman sources, alongside those from the archives of other relevant European actors in and around Istanbul and the Eastern Mediterranean in the period, formed the model for how to approach the source base in this study. Skilliter also notably combined an understanding of contemporary English and Ottoman perspectives to illuminate the key elements in the construction and maintenance of the relationship between the two polities. Where this thesis seeks to go beyond Skilliter is in its reframing and extension of the material covered by Skilliter to reflect the development of scholarship on the Ottoman court and

⁴⁰ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘Connected Histories: Notes towards a reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 31/3 (1997), 735-62; Zoltán Biedermann, *(Dis)connected Empires: Imperial Portugal, Sri Lankan Diplomacy, and the Making of a Habsburg Conquest in Asia* (Oxford, 2018).

⁴¹ Gerald MacLean & Nabil Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford, 2011), 64; MacLean, ‘Courting the Porte: Early Anglo-Ottoman Diplomacy’, *University of Bucharest Review*, 10/2 (2008), 80-88.

⁴² Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe, c. 1750-1830* (Manchester, 2010).

⁴³ Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies: Islam and The Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450-1750* (Oxford, 2019).

⁴⁴ Skilliter, *William Harborne*; idem., ‘Turkish documents relating to Edward Barton’s embassy to the Porte (1588–1598)’, unpubd. PhD thesis, University of Manchester (1965).

early-modern diplomacy in the intervening years since the 1970s. Two such examples of the most recent direction of travel in this regard are Michael Talbot's *British-Ottoman Relations: 1661-1807* and John-Paul Ghobrial's *The Whispers of Cities*.⁴⁵

Ghobrial's works are primarily microhistories of connectedness, and *The Whispers of Cities* is a history of types of connectedness, information flows, and exchanges, which challenges some of the ways in which diplomacy as a type of exchange has been framed in prior scholarship. In his search for the meaning of 'connectedness' in the early modern world, Ghobrial makes the astute observation that 'we tend to study such phenomena from 'on high' as if atop a mountain looking down onto the Mediterranean', though this offers only 'a glimpse' of networks of connections but not the ways in which they truly manifested.⁴⁶ In considering this while thinking about the framing of my own work, I was inspired to reframe my own ambassadorial studies in this thesis as microhistories of each embassy, trying to make the most of the materials I have in order to bring out the complex cultural world of Istanbul politics in the late 1500s and explore my central research themes within that milieu. Ghobrial himself deploys his sources in interesting ways, alongside relevant scholarship, to sketch out the social and cultural world of Istanbul politics in the seventeenth century. One of the most important observations Ghobrial makes from the examples he uses throughout his work is that, while categories based on religious identities and legal distinctions between them were important, frequently the most important division in practice within the Ottoman World was that between the privileged few and the rest, with foreign ambassadors counting amongst those most privileged within the Ottoman social structure and

⁴⁵ Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*; John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford, 2013).

⁴⁶ Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities*, 11.

frequently able to engage in friendly and mutually beneficial relationships with Ottoman counterparts.⁴⁷

Talbot's work has been a rather different kind of influence, in that a reconsideration of his foci of analysis in *British-Ottoman Relations* helped me draw out the factors most important to my work to hone its focus. Talbot is notably meticulous in the way he outlines the wider historiographical ecosystem in which his research is situated, which in turn has been helpful as a model for better situating and contextualising my own work. Talbot's analytical focus has also helped guide the formulation of this thesis to contain more refined arguments. My drive to ground the work I have done here within Ottoman theoretical frameworks, alongside the wider historiography of diplomatic encounters between European and Asian powers, and what other relevant work I can, is indebted to his mastery of the historiography and how that shines through in his work. His careful consideration of the text of the capitulations is also an example of thoughtful use of source material that I have adapted in my ambassadorial microhistories here.

Most recently, during the lifetime of my work on this DPhil thesis, emerging scholars of two different aspects of early Anglo-Ottoman relations have begun to publish work. First, Daniel Bamford has published on confessional identity within the first two English embassies in Istanbul.⁴⁸ His work identifies a level of Protestant confessional identity and occasional anxiety over friendly diplomatic and commercial relations with the Ottomans given the religious and cultural differences between the two nations, but, as with the examples shown throughout this thesis, these concerns often became secondary to the necessity of maintaining good relationships, and could be variable

⁴⁷ For example, *ibid.*, 85-7, on a 'drunken Turk' suffering severe punishment for hassling William Trumbull's entourage, juxtaposed with Trumbull's lasting displays of friendship with a deposed *kaymakam*.

⁴⁸ Daniel J. Bamford, 'Without 'Conformitie of Companie': English Religious Identity and the Diplomatic Corps in Constantinople, 1578-1597' in T.A. Sowerby & C. Markiewicz (eds.), *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630* (London, 2021), 174-193.

depending on individual levels of religious conviction. Thomas Kowalczyk has also published on Edward Barton, analysing his letters as literary sources.⁴⁹ Kowalczyk, in his reading of Barton's controversial participation in the 1596 Hungary Campaign, casts Barton as a willing participant who strived to cast his involvement as a novel and necessary diplomatic act. He places Barton alongside Fynes Moryson as a bona fide example of early-modern English travel writing.⁵⁰ Kowalczyk's recognition of Barton as a careful and skilled communicator, relating news and insights about a place and environment unknown to those with whom he was corresponding at the court of Elizabeth I, is a valuable insight into one of the key functions of these first English ambassadors: conveyors of information about their world and situation. In a sense, this has been mirrored by the ways in which many modern scholars have used the dispatches of early English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire, particularly Barton, as sources to flesh out their narratives of other affairs, whether that is Malcolm's *Useful Enemies* and *Agents of Empire*, or Graf's networks of *devşirmes*, renegades, and royal women at the Ottoman court in this period.⁵¹

Pausing briefly to consider wider historiography of European commercial encounters in Asia may be fruitful here as a bridge to a closer focus on Ottoman historiography, placing it in the context of wider work in early-modern European commercial and diplomatic interactions in the wider world before taking a deeper dive. There are three examples to combine here in order to work together some of their methodologies and thought processes for use in a late-sixteenth, early-seventeenth-century Ottoman case. Felicia Gottman's *Global Trade, Smuggling, and the Making of Economic Liberalism* in part considers the relationships between trade in Asian textiles and political

⁴⁹ Tomasz Kowalczyk, 'Edward Barton in Hungary: Arguments for travel as domestic service', *Renaissance Studies*, 33/4 (2019), 590-608. Tom and I were put in touch through Christine Woodhead early in our respective PhD journeys, and we shared perspectives as well as some of my work and sources on Barton.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 593.

⁵¹ Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (London, 2015).

developments in Enlightenment France.⁵² Part of the novelty of her approach comes in considering the *materiality* of the goods – i.e. the aspects of the objects themselves that made them such a valuable trade good.⁵³ However, the most important lesson from her work is putting developments in French political economy in a global trading context.⁵⁴ This is valuable food for thought for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, both in terms of the motivations that drove English merchants to seek commercial and political relations with the Ottomans, but also the ways in which the careers made and lessons learned in the service of the Levant Company changed aspects of English politics and society – especially relevant given the developments that occur in Lello’s time and beyond. To flip the question around to the Ottoman side, what, materially, might English trade goods have done for their Ottoman buyers? How might the presence of a cosmopolitan group of European merchants have affected Ottoman politics and society? A form of answer might come in considering how Birgit Tremml-Werner frames the development of Manila as an Asian port city forming part of an early-modern regional globalisation.⁵⁵ Istanbul perhaps does not fit the definition Tremml-Werner uses of a ‘port city’, as it was already a preeminent imperial capital, or perhaps a Braudelian ‘centre’, but arguably the district of Pera does.⁵⁶ A trading colony for outsiders from its very foundation under medieval Byzantine rule, Pera formed the quasi-designated quarter for western Christian diplomacy and trade in Istanbul.⁵⁷ As in a port city like Manila, Pera drew and mixed together the permanent representation of an increasing number of regional powers in return for trade.⁵⁸ This made a suburb of Istanbul one of few theatres of sustained political and diplomatic contact, as well as commercial exchange, between England, France, Venice, and the Ottomans. Creating a unique environment for rivalries between distant home nations to be pursued or

⁵² Felicia Gottmann, *Global Trade, Smuggling, and the Making of Economic Liberalism* (Basingstoke, 2016), passim.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 131-174.

⁵⁵ Birgit Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China and Japan in Manila, 1571-1644: Local Comparisons and Global Connections* (Amsterdam, 2015), 267-314.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 268-70; See also Braudel’s conception of cities as trade centres: Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 1, trans. Siân Reynolds (London, 1986), 312-25.

⁵⁷ Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore, MA 1973), 76.

⁵⁸ Tremml-Werner, *Manila*, 269-272.

subverted, Pera also represented a degree of Ottoman control over its western European visitors and residents, with the forced relocation of the English embassy from the Muslim neighbourhood of Tophane uphill into Pera, away from the waterside, representing the policing of the locational and religious-cultural boundaries between Muslim Ottoman subjects and outsiders from western Christendom. As Lisa Hellman notes in her study of Europeans in Canton and Macao, Chinese authorities exercised control of approved quarters for foreigners, and that controlled environment could be unusually cosmopolitan as compared to the towns and villages of the hinterland.⁵⁹ Pera seems to have become recognised as such a zone within Ottoman Istanbul in this period, as evidenced by the removal of the English embassy to the district, which also, as seen below, reflects that boundaries between cultures were porous and relaxed, but only in the direction of Ottoman Islam. The physical presence of Christian embassies was therefore separate from Ottoman Muslim space, and as in Canton and Macao, it was in the interest of foreigners to be controlled and corralled in order to secure and maintain their trade.⁶⁰

Ottoman History

Daniel Goffman's book chapter 'Negotiating with the Renaissance state: the Ottoman Empire and the new diplomacy' in many ways formed the initial inspiration and impetus for this study.⁶¹ Goffman discusses the origins of a distinctive Ottoman diplomacy centred in Istanbul, involving careful, comprehensive grants of legal and commercial rights to representatives' trading nations within Ottoman territory, managing delicate cross-confessional issues such as the administration of justice in commercial (and indeed criminal) disputes, and setting out religious and cultural rights.⁶² These practices, which would become the archetype of Ottoman diplomatic

⁵⁹ Lisa Hellman, *This House Is Not a Home: European Everyday Life in Canton and Macao 1730-1830* (Leiden, 2018), 1-5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶¹ Daniel Goffman, 'Negotiating with the Renaissance state: the Ottoman Empire and the new diplomacy' in V.H. Aksan & D. Goffman (eds.), *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge, 2009), 61-74.

⁶² *Ibid.*

procedure, date back to the need for Venetian and Genoese merchants who had operated trade colonies in Constantinople to uphold their living (and with that, their way of life) in response to the changed circumstances of the city becoming Ottoman following Mehmed II ‘Fatih’ capturing the city in 1453. Mehmed, a sultan renowned for his expansion of imperial bureaucracy and governance as well as his military prowess, saw fit to grant an *abname-i hümayun* – imperial pledge – outlining the autonomous rights of the Genoese trading community of Pera in the days before completing his siege of Constantinople in 1453.⁶³ Similar documents were granted to the Orthodox Patriarch in 1454 and to the Genoese of Chios in 1470.⁶⁴ A comprehensive legal framework required a permanent representative in post to uphold and defend it. From 1454, the Venetian senate had one such representative in place indefinitely in the *bailo*.⁶⁵ This model quickly evolved into a uniquely Ottoman system of diplomatic agreement and representation. It is therefore fitting that, a century or more later, it would be English merchants who forged a new relationship between their kingdom and the Ottoman Empire in attempting to secure these same rights for themselves. Contrary to the view of Garrett Mattingly, new innovations in diplomatic practice were not solely Italian, not purely state-driven, and not the flourish of a society safe from external threat. Innovations in response to living with the threat of Ottoman expansion were adapted into general practice and have endured: permanent resident embassies; formalised, negotiable trade deals grounded in local jurisprudence; the beginnings of notions of extraterritoriality. This was an Ottoman world in which Harborne and his partners were establishing business, and its standards were those to which they were obliged to become accustomed. Current historiography allows the space in which to make that clear while also establishing fruitful global parallels and indicating local examples of wider trends.

⁶³ Ibid., 68.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 64.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 71.

This is not to say that the practice of granting capitulations as a legal document of rights always guaranteed their uniform enforcement in all localities across the Ottoman Empire. This may have been the theory, but the reality of the Ottoman Empire was one of layered heterodoxy – linguistically, geographically, in terms of religion, and in terms of the nature of rule and power across different areas of the empire.⁶⁶ While the Ottoman Empire in fact had a very stable, formalised, clearly-defined rule of law and theoretical structure of government, as Karen Barkey, Baki Tezcan, Metin Kunt, Christine Woodhead, Cornell Fleischer, and many others have shown repeatedly through their work on Ottoman power structures, politics, bureaucrats, and households, the theoretical central power of Ottoman systems of government and institutions was in fact limited and subject to the sway of individual whims, preferences, and ambitions.⁶⁷ Sixteenth-century Ottoman sultans claimed imperial titles such as *kayser*, *khan*, and *shah*, but their rule was far from absolute across the entire empire.⁶⁸ Distant provinces such as Algiers may have been theoretically directed from Istanbul and their governors centrally appointed, but tensions frequently existed and over time separate accommodations were made.⁶⁹ Other North African provinces were somewhat semi-detached from Ottoman control, with profit from piracy and slave-trading often taking precedence over imperial orders.⁷⁰ Ottoman attempts at centralisation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries focused predominantly on creating a central army, bureaucracy, and political elite loyal to the sultan alone.⁷¹ This generally worked well in the empire’s core provinces of Anatolia and the Balkans, but more distant and culturally distinct provinces often experienced more indirect forms

⁶⁶ Karen Barkey, ‘The Ottoman Empire (1299-1923): The Bureaucratization of a Patrimonial Authority’ in P. Crooks & T. Parsons (eds.), *Empires and Bureaucracy in World History: from late antiquity to the twentieth century* (Cambridge, 2016), 102-126; idem., *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, 2008), passim; Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (London, 1996), passim; Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore, 2006), 1-22.

⁶⁷ Barkey, *Empire of Difference*; Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*; Metin Kunt, ‘Royal and other households’ in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Abingdon, 2013), 103-115; Christine Woodhead, ‘Scribal Chaos? Observations on the post of re’isülküttab in the late sixteenth century’ in Eugenia Kermeli & Oktay Özel (eds.), *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and ‘Black Holes’: contributions in honour of Colin Imber* (Istanbul, 2006), 155-72; idem., ‘Introduction’ in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World*, 1-8; C.H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton, NJ, 2014).

⁶⁸ Einar Wigen, ‘Ottoman Concepts of Empire’, *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 8/1 (2013), 44-66.

⁶⁹ Tal Shuval, ‘Households in Ottoman Algeria’, *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, 24/1 (2000), 41-64.

⁷⁰ Thomas B. Rainey, ‘Sir Thomas Roe and the Barbary Pirates, 1621-1624’, *The Historian*, 27/3 (1965), 382-403.

⁷¹ Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, 2008), 74-83.

of rule.⁷² This meant that what was legal for merchants in Istanbul would not always remain so in Aleppo, or Egypt, and certainly not in more distant provinces such as Basra – a staging post for those merchants who wished to trade for Persian or Indian goods. Increasing Ottoman political factionalism was also a complicating factor, as was corruption, meaning that at times uniform enforcement of central law and policy could not be fully guaranteed even in relatively central, core provinces.⁷³

The stipulations of the capitulations, and their eventual reproduction as printed pamphlets in a western European language alongside Ottoman for reference, acted as somewhat of a deterrent – or at least a potential corrective – to the disruptive tendencies of differing legal experiences around the empire.⁷⁴ Beyond this, both *kanun* and sharia law were extensive and – at least in the case of state *kanun* – theoretically uniform across Ottoman domains. While Ottoman (and indeed Turkish) ‘rule of law’ has primarily been a debate restricted to the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, the fact that Süleyman ‘the Magnificent’ has the more proper Ottoman epithet of *Kanuni* – the lawgiver – and that Mehmed the Conqueror was as well known in his own time for his bureaucratic and legal reforms (and patronage of Renaissance artists), suggests that the early modern Ottoman Empire endeavoured to provide a uniform legal framework for all the sultan’s subjects.⁷⁵ Indeed, there are strong grounds to compare the regularisation of Ottoman imperial architecture across the empire with efforts to impose as regular and uniform a political and legal

⁷² Ibid., 83-93.

⁷³ Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge, 2010), passim; Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford, 2010), passim.

⁷⁴ ‘Capitulations’, 20th May 1604, 134CP 1 – ‘Turquie Supplement’, Centre des archives diplomatiques du ministère des affaires étrangères, La Courneuve, Paris, ff. 119-127.

⁷⁵ Avi Rubin, ‘Was there a rule of law in the late Ottoman Empire?’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 46/1 (2019), 123-138; Gülru Necipoğlu, ‘Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople’, *Muqarnas*, 29 (2012), 1-82; Cornell Fleischer, ‘The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman’ in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Soliman le magnifique et son temps* (Paris, 1992), 159-177;

structure as practicable.⁷⁶ In terms of the sharia, Ottoman juriconsults such as Ebû'ssu'ûd worked to put in place some form of wider Ottoman orthodoxy with highly regularised compendia of judgements to which others could refer, and for which the office of *seyhülislam* served as final arbiter.⁷⁷ Though, as the ambassadors in the case studies to follow learned, laws and privileges granted from the imperial centre were not always so easily recognised and enforced in the provinces, securing an imperial decree or the dispatch of an imperial *kadı* would usually suffice in smoothing any conflicts between theoretical rights and local prerogatives in cases that foreign ambassadors had to deal with.⁷⁸ Of course, this only further underlined the importance of securing the friendship of those bureaucrats responsible for writing and issuing decrees, those factions in Ottoman government that could exert pressure on troublesome provincial officials, and indeed the *seyhülislam* himself.⁷⁹

Despite the presence of rather robust and extensive Ottoman legal mechanisms, the capitulations also placed foreign ambassadors in the position of resolving disputes within their own community, or between foreign merchant communities through recourse to each other, with the Venetian *baili* standing as arbiters of disputes between the English and French embassies.⁸⁰ In this sense, ambassadors were expected to function something like Justices of the Peace for their own trading factions, resolving issues with the Ottomans raised by their merchants, and settling internal disputes within their own number. This allowed those wary that Ottoman legal avenues would prove biased against Christian outsiders to sidestep Ottoman justice and appeal either directly to Ottoman authorities for resolution of provincial quarrels, and to manage their own in-house.

⁷⁶ Gülru Necipoğlu, 'A Kânûn for the State, A Canon for the Arts: Conceptualising the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture' in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Soliman le magnifique et son temps* (Paris, 1992), 194-216.

⁷⁷ Colin Imber, 'Süleymân as Caliph of the Muslims: Ebû's-Su'ûd's Formulation of Ottoman Dynastic Ideology' in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Soliman le magnifique et son temps* (Paris, 1992), 179-184.

⁷⁸ See chapters 1-3.

⁷⁹ See esp. chapter 2.

⁸⁰ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 86-104; see chapter 3 for Lello's experience of turning to the Venetians for dispute resolution.

Examples of this come from the letters of John Sanderson, who was no stranger to getting into disputes, arguments, and indeed, physical fights, with his fellow countrymen.⁸¹ Of Lello, he writes bitterly that the ambassador had the master of the household bastinadoed for speaking badly of him, while Barton beat Sanderson for repeatedly punching one of the Aldrich brothers, while Sanderson also had to pay for the surgeon John Field to treat Edward Bushell after he had furiously smashed him in the head with the butt of a pistol until the barrel broke off.⁸² It is easy to see from Sanderson's accounts, and other events covered in the case studies to follow, why embassy households found it preferable to settle their trading nations' differences internally rather than with recourse to the local justice system. Nevertheless, this is reflective of the range of legal options open to European ambassadors in defending their interests in the Ottoman Empire, and the relative security in which they could operate – at least in theory – in that regard. While enforcing legal rights was a full-time job for ambassadors, largely the Ottoman central authorities were able to support them in this and uphold their rights to live and trade amongst Ottoman subjects.

Through the entirety of the period from 1565-1578, Ottoman politics was dominated by a single figure. Given the totemic significance of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa in sixteenth-century Ottoman history, it is incredible that there has been no substantive biography written of his life and career. Born a Serb or Croat of means and nobility in Bosnia in 1505, he entered the Ottoman *devşirme* system relatively late as an older teen and was groomed for high office in the palace school.⁸³ Mehmed was a palace favourite, quickly proving his administrative capabilities in his first two roles as grand admiral and *sancakebeyi* of Diyarbakır.⁸⁴ As a sign of imperial favour, he was married to Süleyman's granddaughter, Ismihan, the daughter of Süleyman's successor Selim and herself a

⁸¹ John Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584-1602* (ed. William Foster, London, 1931), passim.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 10-14, 247.

⁸³ Jonathan M. Blom & Sheila S. Blair, 'Sokollu Mehmed Pasha [Paşa]', *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture* (Oxford, 2009), online ed; G. Veinstein, 'Soğollu Mehmed Paşa', *Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition* (Leiden, 2012), online ed.

⁸⁴ Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 119.

descendant of wealthy Venetian notables through her mother.⁸⁵ Sokollu was therefore the archetypal Ottoman leader: a South Slav converso, multilingual, educated in the art of Ottoman governance at Topkapı, and both married into and personally engaged within a large network of internal and external political and economic interests. It is hardly remarkable that, as admiral, Mehmed invited Venetian specialists to improve quality and efficiency of Ottoman galley production, or that he was sufficiently abreast of developments across Europe to take an interest in Protestant rebellions in Habsburg territory.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, regardless of his personal talents or suitability, Sokollu Mehmed was a ruthless leader who maintained his long perch at the apex of Ottoman politics by calculation as well as administrative skill. Giancarlo Casale's *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* argues strongly for the emergence of two distinct Ottoman foreign policy factions throughout the sixteenth century: an 'Indian Ocean' faction with a more global outlook, and others who favoured more 'traditional' Ottoman patterns of showing superiority over territorial rivals such as the Habsburgs and Safavids in large-scale land wars.⁸⁷ While this is something of an oversimplification, it highlights clearly the tensions within the Ottoman Empire caused by the emergence of a range of competing political factions with differing objectives as the empire's size and administration grew and evolved to move beyond the practical control of a single individual or clique. Where strong figures spent long periods consolidating their rule, others came together to counterbalance them. This was the case with Ibrahim Paşa and Rustem Paşa before Mehmed, and certainly the latter provoked similar countermeasures within the Ottoman hierarchy. When Murad III (according to Ottoman historian Ibrahim Peçevi) nearly kissed the hand of his brother-in-law Sokollu Mehmed on his accession in 1574 – Mehmed having had almost free rein to run the empire as he wished under Murad's father

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., *passim*.

Selim II – Murad’s confidants and other anonymous writers beseeched the new sultan to take greater personal command of imperial affairs and appointments to key government positions.⁸⁸ Murad, in fact, would eventually come to be seen as something of an absolutist, pondering the abolition of the role of grand vizier altogether after 1580, and shuffling his pack regularly thereafter – though, crucially and tellingly, this came only after the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed in the autumn of 1579.⁸⁹

Therefore, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa is the key figure through which to understand the development of Ottoman foreign (and indeed, domestic) policy during the period immediately leading up to the agreement of English trade privileges with William Harborne. Whether or not we accept Casale’s precise framing and conclusions, his evidence suggests that Sokollu Mehmed Paşa was cognisant of the benefits inherent in projecting power across long distances by allowing sultanates in Indonesia, city-states in India, and distant kingdoms of Central Asia and Central Africa, to associate themselves with the Ottoman Empire. As Zoltán Biedermann suggests, the Portuguese had been doing exactly the same on a global scale, in allowing polities belonging to various Asian or African hierarchies to map themselves onto the Portuguese governing hierarchy, with the monarchy in Lisbon at its apex.⁹⁰ With the prestige of the Ottomans and their status as guardians of Mecca and Medina naturally endearing them to Islamic rulers, their presence as competitors to the Portuguese was a useful tool for rulers engaged in their local political struggles against rivals aligned with Portugal, other local powers, or none at all. It is within this framework

⁸⁸ Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge, 2010), 55-6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 56-7.

⁹⁰ Zoltán Biedermann, ‘Three Ways of Locating the Global: Microhistorical Challenges in the Study of Early Transcontinental Diplomacy’, *Past & Present*, 242/s14 (2019), 110-141.

that Sokollu Mehmed's interactions with Aceh, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Borno (Central Africa), Bukhara, Khwarazm, and Samarkand are best understood.⁹¹

However, the picture was more complicated than this. As discussed previously, Ottoman government was never a monolith, least of all in this period, despite Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's long domination of the top job. The work of Baki Tezcan, Tobias Graf, Emrah Safa Gürkan, and others, demonstrates how complex, cutthroat, and factional Ottoman politics was.⁹² This intensified in response to the dominance of Sokollu Mehmed's premiership, culminating in his assassination. The intensity and tumult grew, and formed the default that the first English embassies had to grow used to over the decades from 1578 into the 1600s, reaching a new pitch in the political violence experienced in the last years of Mehmed III and the first of Ahmed I. Much as I outlined with the nebula conception of actors and interaction in Ottoman politics, this grew out of the way in which networks of actors could come together – or work against each other – to pull and push the centre of gravity of power and politics in Istanbul back, forth, up, and down, sometimes all at once. In many ways, the work of Casale, in showing a struggle between his proposed outward-facing and more traditionalist factions, simply builds on this and begins to show some of the resultant political struggle and complexity. Graf and Gürkan take this further with their more nuanced views of households, factions, and networks, and how these could often interact as actors moved between groups – or connected groups with contradictory aims and interests through their person. What this thesis puts forward is a continued complication of this picture, using the frameworks and examples provided by the existing body of literature to further tangle English and other resident European ambassadors into the mix, along – of course – with their ancillary connections to what

⁹¹ Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 149.

⁹² Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*; Tobias Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades: Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575-1610* (Oxford, 2017); Emrah Safa Gürkan, *Sultanın Casusları: 16. yüzyılda istibbarat, sabotaj ve rüşvet ağları* (Istanbul, 2017); idem., 'Fooling the Sultan: Information, decision-making and the "Mediterranean Faction" (1585-1587)', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 45 (2015), 57-96.

E. Natalie Rothman would call ‘trans-imperial subjects’, or Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić, ‘cross-confessional diplomacy’.⁹³

Other scholars have also added to the complex mixture of Ottoman political actors, institutions, and structures in this period. Günhan Börekçi’s work on factions and favourites in the time of Ahmed I extend the study of fractious politics and patronage into the early seventeenth century, underlining the turbulent nature of Ottoman government and politics during the later period of Lello’s embassy.⁹⁴ Uroš Dakić’s contribution to Kunt’s household-as-building-block vision of Ottoman elite society with his dissertation on ‘clan politics’ and the Sokollu dynasty shows how Ottoman systems could be (mis)used to provide patronage to those with family and ethnic ties — so-called *cins* — connections, and protect family fortunes.⁹⁵ Considerations of ethnic solidarity also surface in the work of Tobias Graf on renegades and networking in Ottoman politics.⁹⁶ The work done here and in the chapters that follow in attempting to reconstruct a picture of English and wider European ambassadorial and mercantile involvement in a busy and living Ottoman politics builds on the influences of all this prior scholarship. What is clear is that Ottoman domestic politics, especially at the turn of the sixteenth into the seventeenth century, was very dynamic and often fractious, an opportunity offering high risk and potentially high reward for foreign ambassadors attempting to operate within the Ottoman system.

⁹³ E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY, 2012); Maartje van Gelder & Tijana Krstić, ‘Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19/2-3 (2015), 93-105.

⁹⁴ Günhan Börekçi, ‘Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-17) and His Immediate Predecessors’, unpubd. PhD Dissertation, Ohio State University (2010).

⁹⁵ Uroš Dakić, ‘The Sokollu Family Clan and the Politics of Vizierial Households in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century’, unpubd. MA Thesis, Central European University (2012); Kunt, ‘Ethnic-Regional (*Cins*) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 5/3 (1974), 233-239.

⁹⁶ Graf, *The Sultan’s Renegades*, passim.

In his article on ‘Locating the Global’ in early modern transcontinental diplomacy, Zoltán Biedermann theorises that the layered, hierarchical nature of Lankan political hierarchy allowed it to map comfortably onto the similarly layered monarchy of Portugal.⁹⁷ This conceptualisation originated, as discussed, in the earlier anthropological work of Stanley Tambiah, who theorised a ‘galactic polity’ in South East Asian monarchies, ‘derived from the concept of *mandala*... designs, both simple and complex of satellites arranged around a center’.⁹⁸ While Tambiah’s work underlined various important aspects of incommensurability between Theravada and European conceptions of royalty, Biedermann appears more optimistic about the ways in which Portuguese imperial power was able to map onto its models. Victor Lieberman later noted that the notion of a ‘solar polity’ was more cosmologically accurate a descriptor than ‘galactic’, though the key concept of satellites orbiting the central power remained.⁹⁹ Ottoman politics in this period also lent itself to a form of political organisation and diplomacy in which embassies effectively served as adjuncts to the wider Istanbul political scene. Metin Kunt has demonstrated that the fundamental building block of Ottoman society remained the household, with each household head branching out from their position within the imperial household like a Fibonacci tree, rather than belonging to any separate legal entity to speak of.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the Ottoman world was effectively separated into two classes: the *askeri* – effectively extended members of the royal household, engaged in political, military, or religious occupations – and the *reaya*, the tax-paying majority. As my microhistories demonstrate, in most cases, foreign permanent embassies represented households on the Istanbul scene that proved politically profitable for various Ottoman players to align themselves with or against. Most of the relationships that English ambassadors formed rule out the idea that their role was one of an English and Ottoman ‘government’ in conversation. Nor was it even two courts in

⁹⁷ Biedermann, ‘Three Ways of Locating the Global’, 110-141.

⁹⁸ Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action*, 252-286.

⁹⁹ Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830*, Vol. 1: Integration on the Mainland (Cambridge, 2003), 33.

¹⁰⁰ Kunt, ‘Royal and other households’ in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Abingdon, 2013), 103-115. I am extremely grateful and privileged to have been taught by Prof. Metin Kunt during my time in Istanbul, and it was with great sadness that I learned of his passing shortly before this thesis, which owes so much to his understanding of the early modern Ottoman world, was completed.

conversation via intermediaries, nor an ‘outsourced’ English ‘government’ diplomacy via a private company. Rather, individual connections, individual interactions, and individual knowledge formed the basis of how politics in this world worked. This thesis argues that it is important to remember where English actors stood within Ottoman political culture: William Harborne may have come to represent the institutions of the English embassy, insofar as that was an ‘institution’ rather than another ‘household’ on the Ottoman political landscape, as well as the ‘institution’ of the Turkey Company, but on his first meeting with Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, he was talking to him as William Harborne, merchant.

Here, alongside households, individual actors are also important, in that forming networks to improve their standing helped elevate and empower either the households of which they were head, or their own standing within a larger household, be that a branch of the Ottoman bureaucracy or the imperial household itself. We have seen descriptors of Lankan and wider Southeast Asian political organisation as ‘galactic’ or ‘solar’: that is to say, there were many nested layers of suzerainty and fealty spread across the island and calling back up to a small number of (or single) overlords, and that those within those hierarchies could jostle for position and primacy by expanding support networks vis-à-vis each other.¹⁰¹ Ottoman politics was somewhat similar, if on a grander and more chaotic scale. In the absence of the ability to talk about monolithic institutions interacting, or uniform experiences and adherence to expectations across the board, there is the need for another way to visualise the web of multifarious interactions and connections between different agents and their various institutions. Consider a three-dimensional graph plot. At the innermost centre, the Ottoman court. Around it, the role and relative influence of various actors is plotted, with clusters forming together to represent their institutions: households, embassies, subgroups of Ottoman government and administration, guilds, regional authorities. The result might be envisioned to look

¹⁰¹ Biedermann, ‘Three Ways of Locating the Global’, 110-141.

something like a galaxy, as in Biedermann's visualisation – though I would suggest that the Ottoman Empire be envisioned something more like a nebula. The key conceptual framework here in visualising this 'nebular' model of Ottoman political structure and ideology, alongside Kunt's model of households, Graf and Dakić's thoughts on ethnic ties within the many networks of power and patronage that Graf and Gürkan covered in such depth in their studies, and many of the other key works mentioned above, is Güneş Işıksel's model of the 'cosmocrat sultan'.¹⁰²

Işıksel's outline of the 'cosmocrat sultan' begins with the observation that Selim II 'abandoned' domestic politics to his divan, which of course contained such commanding figures as Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, and, in later iterations and under his successors, figures like Koca Sinan Paşa, Uluç Ali Paşa, Çiğalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa, and other such commanding statesmen.¹⁰³ This, in a sense, gave more breathing space for political factional struggles, though Işıksel challenges the Casalean vision of hawks and doves, or factions based on particular regional outlooks, by demonstrating that most of the divisions between divan members concerned tactics rather than fundamental ruptures.¹⁰⁴ In the period before the reign of Selim II, Ottoman diplomatic activity had travelled a long way, through various phases since the empire's emergence, from Wittekian *gazi* activity, through the reality of diplomatic marriages with neighbours and *istimalet* during the fifteenth century (especially as the Ottomans recovered from their encounter with Timur), to the emergence of new friendships and connections as well as new enmities in the sixteenth century following the huge amount of geopolitical activity under Selim I and Süleyman I.¹⁰⁵ Işıksel also recognises the reality of regional diversity that has been laboured above: *istimalet* was practiced vis-à-vis new Muslim territories, meaning an acceptance of different local forms of government, at the

¹⁰² Işıksel, *La diplomatie ottomane sous le règne de Selim II*, passim.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 1-4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 160.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 1-4; Idem., 'Diplomatie, guerre et commerces : sur la genèse de l'état ottoman', *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol – Iași*, 50 (2013), 31-47.

cost of any imagined imperial uniformity.¹⁰⁶ The Maghreb, for example, was far more distant and different, and difficult to govern directly in any meaningful sense, existing in the third of four circles of Ottoman rule: the core, *sâlyâneli*, the Maghreb, and the vassal states.¹⁰⁷ Ottoman government recognised that frontier zones required local solutions, with the state knowingly offering a great degree of latitude to local governors to conduct local diplomacy, with it frequently appearing the case that autonomy was proportional to distance (geographically and culturally) from the imperial core.¹⁰⁸

At this imperial core sat the ‘cosmocrat sultan’: if no longer a swashbuckling warrior-king of old, the *cosmocrat* was the foremost ruler and arbiter of justice on Earth; the principal intermediary between Earth and the Heavens. Işıkşel defines ‘cosmocrat’ as follows:

The Altaic universality notion is an essential component of the Ottoman ideology. The *nizâm-ı alem* or *pax ottomanica* rested upon the acceptance of harmony as something sacred, personified in the institution of the sultanate. This required that the Ottoman sultan give order to other human societies and to even correct them. Officially, in the minds of its elite, the Ottoman Emperor is the centre of the inhabited quarter of the world. This idea was so dominant that during the 18th century when it was under threat, and even after its western provinces had been gradually lost, the powerful idea of a universal God-protected empire was restated by its officials.¹⁰⁹

The take-away from this is that at the core of Ottoman state ideology was a cosmological worldview that was, in many senses, fundamentally incommensurable with Christian European understandings of the order of the world, of a society of princes, of negotiation with the Ottomans as separate sovereign societies. It is remarkably similar to Lierberman’s observation on the responsibility of the World Ruler in Southeast Asia: ‘to supervise the morals and religious orthodoxy of subject principalities, while at the same time preserving their chastened kings on their

¹⁰⁶ Idem., *La diplomatie ottomane*, 1-4.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 5-7.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 10-14.

¹⁰⁹ Güneş Işıkşel, ‘Ottoman-Habsburg Relations in the Second Half of the 16th Century: The Ottoman Standpoint’ in A. Strohmeyer, N. Spannenberger, and R. Pech (eds.), *Frieden und Konfliktmanagement in interkulturellen Räumen* (Stuttgart, 2013), 51-62.

thrones'.¹¹⁰ This completely reframes how we might look at Selânikî's reference to *ubudiyet* in relation to the presentation of Edward Barton's letter of appointment as English ambassador, or the allowance that the sultan paid out to embassy households for their maintenance, and perhaps, therefore, their service to his court. Indeed, the sultan's allowance to ambassadors differed considerably according to the status afforded by the sultan to their sovereigns: the Habsburgs first, France second, and polities such as Venice and Poland third (ultimately followed by representatives of vassal polities such as Ragusa, Transylvania, Wallachia, etc.), and English embassies in this early period, as will be seen, were highly reliant on the income from this allowance.¹¹¹ Beyond this, the level of control this worldview offered the Ottoman court over its consideration and treatment of foreign envoys is reflected both in ceremonial, land use in Istanbul (Pera as the *de facto* home of Christian embassies and merchants), and control over international representatives' overland travel – hence perhaps Harborne's initial travel to Istanbul in the midst of a *çavuş* party leaving Lviv, arriving in Ottoman dress – though it is clear from Işıksel's outlining of Ottoman ceremonial regarding overland ambassadors that Harborne in fact subverted this, or otherwise did not arrive as an 'official' envoy.¹¹² *Fethname* diplomacy is also neatly explained with reference to this worldview, in which the Ottomans declared their achievements to friendly powers perhaps therefore with reference to the centrality of the sultan in the global balance of power.¹¹³ As such, we might imagine that external states constituted a 'fifth circle' of the sultan's authority. It is also key to stress that the 'cosmocrat sultan' was very much an artifact of developments occurring through the latter half of the sixteenth century: Işıksel himself has written on how Matthias Corvinus and Bayezid II negotiated a treaty of equals in 1483 that was renewed in 1495, 1498, and 1503, while the concept of the 'cosmocrat sultan' fits comfortably into developments to the image of the sultanate and the structure of the empire itself discussed at length through historiography of

¹¹⁰ Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, 70.

¹¹¹ Işıksel, *La diplomatie ottomane*, 23-25.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 21-23.

¹¹³ Claire Norton, 'Iconographs of Power or Tools of Diplomacy? Ottoman *Fethnames*', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 20/4 (2016), 331-350.

the past few decades, from Lesley Peirce through to Colin Imber, Metin Kunt, Karen Barkey, Baki Tezcan, and Hakan Karateke.¹¹⁴

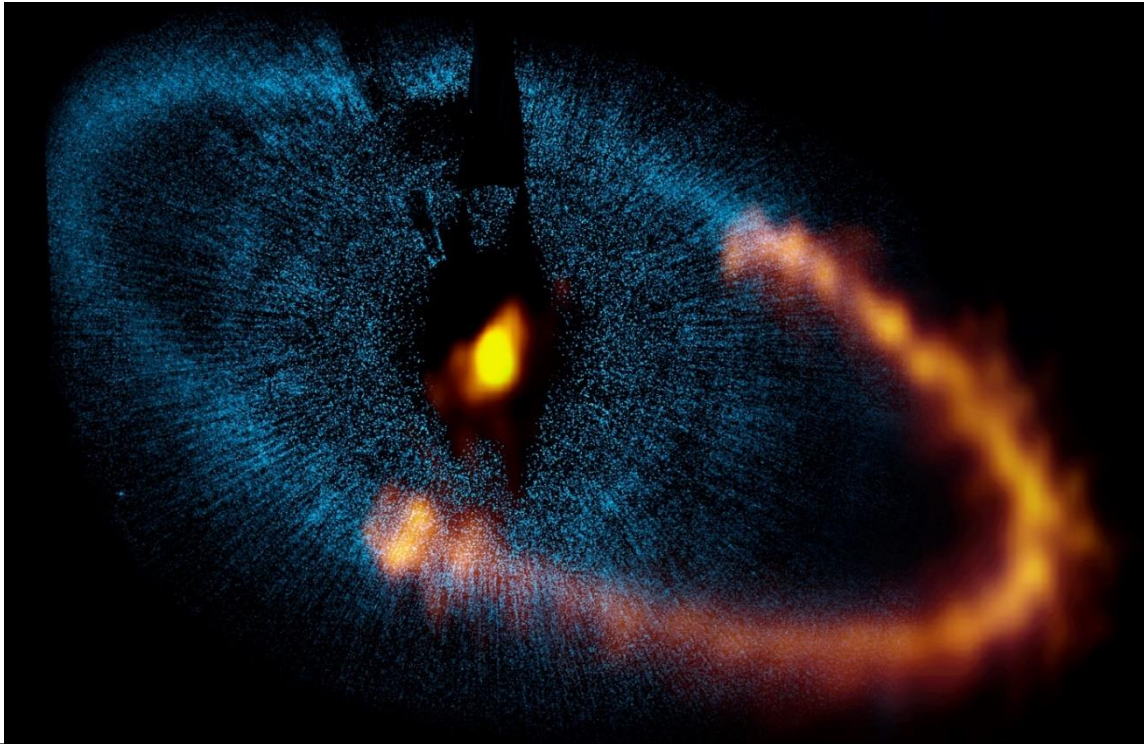
So, where does this visualisation leave us with respect to the nebular model of domestic and foreign politics in the late-sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire? At the centre of the cluster is the overwhelming gravity and authority of the Ottoman sultan. Surrounding him is his imperial household, which itself is formed of many individuals and their sub-households. Amongst these individual actors and their wider households, networks are formed that draw them together, while conflicts between groups might cause them to repel each other, depending on their relative gravity within the imperial system. As Imber observes, proximity to the sultan at the centre of the imperial cosmology gave political power to the actor, through access to conversation and control over the presentation or framing of information to the sultan, meaning connecting to networks within the imperial household, close to the sultan's gravity, was vital.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, the power and prestige of

¹¹⁴ Güneş Işıksel, 'Ottoman-Habsburg Relations in the Second Half of the 16th Century: The Ottoman Standpoint' in A. Strohmeier, N. Spannenberger, and R. Pech (eds.), *Frieden und Konfliktmanagement in interkulturellen Räumen* (Stuttgart, 2013), 51-62; Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1993), passim; Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (Basingstoke, 2002), passim; Hakan T. Karateke, 'On the tranquillity and repose of the sultan': The construction of a *topos*' in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 116-129.

¹¹⁵ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (Basingstoke, 2002), 152-3

foreign embassies was defined by their ‘place in the imperial cosmogony’ within the diplomatic and political systems of Istanbul.¹¹⁶

Not only do the groups project a relative gravity on each other, as they are dragged over time closer or further away from the favour and influence of the imperial centre, but the connections of individuals within and between those groups exert gravity on each other too. One prominent example used in this thesis is Edward Barton’s close relationship with Hamza Paşa during his time at the apex of the scribal service.¹¹⁷ The palace bureaucracy was a closely aligned subgroup of the imperial court, part of its palace structure, so naturally a favourable relationship drew Barton,



Protoplanetary debris disk around the star Fomalhaut, showing the dispersal and interaction of particles as they slowly form a planetary system around the star. In the model suggested here, actors within the sixteenth-century Ottoman capital are envisaged like these particles, orbiting the centre and affecting each other as they come together to form larger structures with stronger relative gravitational force.

LMA (ESO/NAOJ/NRAO). Visible light image: the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope; Acknowledgement: A.C. Boley (University of Florida, Sagan Fellow), M.J. Payne, E.B. Ford, M. Shabran (University of Florida), S. Corder (North American ALMA Science Center, National Radio Astronomy Observatory), and W. Dent (ALMA, Chile), P. Kalas, J. Graham, E. Chiang, E. Kite (University of California, Berkeley), M. Clampin (NASA Goddard Space Flight Center), M. Fitzgerald (Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory), and K. Stapelfeldt and

¹¹⁶ Işıksel, *La diplomatie ottomane*, 212.

¹¹⁷ See chapter 2; Kaya Şahin, ‘Imperialism, Bureaucratic Consciousness, and the Historian’s Craft: A reading of Celalzâde Muştafâ’s *Tabağâtü’l-Memâlik ve Derecâtü’l-Mesâlik*’ in H.E. Çıpa & Emine Fetvacı (eds.), *Writing History at the Ottoman Court: Editing the Past, Fashioning the Future* (Bloomington, 2013), 39-56.

followed by his embassy, followed by the wider English trading nation within the Ottoman Empire, closer to the imperial centre by their individual connection. Having Hamza able and willing to write and sign imperial orders to the requirements of the English ambassador then allowed Barton to reel in and influence unfriendly or downright hostile regional governors, by the gravity of Hamza Paşa's sultanic orders sent out to them from the imperial centre. Equally, Barton's experience illustrates a second nebula-like trend, which is the formation and destruction of other, smaller celestial centres, either in orbit of or opposition to the imperial centre. Barton was dispatched to Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli as Harborne's secretary to deal with precisely this issue: other centres of power asserting their own sovereignty over English actors rather than playing by imperial rules.¹¹⁸ It was only with intervention from Barton, as an English official, and several Ottoman imperial *kadıs* acting as central government officials, that things were once again smoothed over for English visitors to the westernmost North African 'Ottoman' provinces, at least temporarily.

Different connections might pull individuals and clusters in opposing directions at the same time – hence the three-dimensional visualisation – and were a constant dynamic rather than a fixed order. Harborne's relationships with the religious leaders Meletios Pegas (an Orthodox Christian Patriarch) and Hoca Sadeddin Efendi (Ottoman chief jurisconsult and tutor to princes), for example, had the effect of attracting Harborne and his embassy towards the imperial centre and the clusters of religious authority around it, while at the same time, his feud with Uluç Ali Paşa had a strongly repelling effect from the powerful admiralty group and its own gravitational relationship with the imperial centre.¹¹⁹ Alongside all of this is the effect of current international events and relationships. The proximity of royal relations between polities had its own gravitational effect on its relevant clusters; as strongly as Uluç Ali repelled Harborne, his embassy, and English merchants,

¹¹⁸ See chapters 1 & 2.

¹¹⁹ See chapter 1.

the reality of friendly relations between the English and Ottoman royal courts, and the shared strategic interest in containing the military and political power of the Spanish court, had the gravitational effect of pushing the English embassy closer to the Ottoman imperial core from a distance, despite also the attempts of the French and Venetian missions to mitigate against this. Later, in Lello's time, the other complicating factor of the role of the trading company and its administration, plus the much-reduced gravity of James VI's court on its Ottoman equivalent, made it much tougher for Lello to prevent a drift away from the Ottoman centre and a reduction of his own influence on other actors and institutions.

This nebula visualisation draws heavily on the work of scholars like Tobias Graf and Emrah Safa Gürkan, who have gone into great detail in demonstrating how networks of Ottoman actors came together to form factions and interest groups, either temporarily or longer-term.¹²⁰ The purpose of this device – envisioning the connections as being similar to a nebula – offers an interpretative tool for visualising and rethinking the relationships between Ottoman officials, English officials, non-officials, quasi-officials, and all the other various actors, in place of a linear or binary approach to the subject. Instead, the ever-shifting networks of connections – be they alliances or rivalries, or tangles of people involved in both at once – are emphasised. These networks could be extremely complex, and formed between those with similar ethnic backgrounds, with family ties, with shared interests, and anything else in between or besides. In terms of how this dynamic political environment affected diplomacy, distinctions emerged between local political contexts and the more traditional diplomatic history conception of foreign policy aims and international conversations. In a simplified way, this proposes the idea of multi-tier diplomacy as a more effective way of understanding Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy: there are the international factors

¹²⁰ Tobias P. Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades: Christian-European converts to Islam and the making of the Ottoman elite, 1575-1610* (Oxford, 2017); Emrah Safa Gürkan, *Sultanın Casusları: 16. yüzyılda istihbarat, sabotaj ve rüşvet ağları* (Istanbul, 2017); idem., 'Fooling the Sultan: Information, Decision-Making and the "Mediterranean Faction" (1585-1587)', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 45 (2015), 57-96.

that relate to how well-received embassies are, and how willing their hosts are to give them a friendly ear and conduct business; there are local situational factors, such as political developments domestically within Istanbul and the wider empire, or even the nature of the connections the ambassador can exploit. At a most basic level, the experience and talent of an ambassador and his household, especially vis-à-vis other embassy counterparts, could affect day-to-day and week-to-week progress far more than relations between distant courts and their shared strategic interests. However, when triggered, conversations between royal courts could call upon much greater gravity than ambassadors and embassy could muster in most cases. Of course, this simplification also obscures the multiple tiers of interaction within the Ottoman Empire itself, and the consequences of operating a vast, mostly decentralised empire, even if in theory it was governed by a strong, uniform rule of law, with institutions of the centre replicated throughout the empire to its most distant peripheries. This is where, on a granular, day-to-day political level, it is vital to keep in mind the three-dimensional nebula visualisation, where various relations, agendas, and power relationships are at play, but the greatest significance always lies with the imperial centre. While adherence to ritual, custom, and manners was of course important, the most vital local knowledge foreign representatives could possess was the intimate connection between themselves and Ottoman figures or third parties with the influence and ability to work in their interest and draw them closer to the glow of the imperial core.

Cross-confessionality, identity, and other concerns

What does the current historiography suggest in terms of how we should view the nature of the Harborne-Sokollu Mehmed agreement and the difficulties in establishing a diplomatic and commercial relationship between Protestant England and the dominant Muslim power of the time? Much is often made of the fact that the strength of Harborne's proposal to Sokollu Mehmed Paşa was English capacity to provide raw materials for the Ottoman war machine to be turned against

the Habsburgs.¹²¹ As the following microhistory of Harborne demonstrates, this was a hard-selling strategy used repeatedly by Harborne (and indeed his successor, Edward Barton) in order to establish, and often exaggerate, England's capacity as an anti-Habsburg military ally of the Ottomans. Jan Hennings has shown that gifts presented by the English Muscovy Company included materials intended as examples of trade possibilities, including resources necessary for war such as tin.¹²² This most notably worked to English favour when the Ottomans declined to renew their peace treaty with the Spanish ahead of the departure of the Armada, limiting the military capacity Spain could commit to an attack on England. The Catholic-Protestant dynamic in Christian diplomacy with the Ottomans recurs, as will be shown for the Ottomans below in the brief discussion of their foreign policy in the lead-up to the 1580s, but can also be seen in proclamations during the Dutch revolt of 'liever Turks dan Paaps', or 'rather Turkish than Popish'.¹²³ Contemporary discourse therefore floats between characterising the Ottomans as uncertain but useful counterweights to Catholic aggression, and despotic, bloodthirsty infidels.¹²⁴ Some trends in New Diplomatic History also have a tendency, drawing on this ambiguity, to overstate the difficulties of establishing methods of communication and familiarity with practices and institutions across cultures.¹²⁵

In the main, confessional antipathy was not a major factor in the day-to-day working experience of English embassies in the Ottoman Empire from 1578-1606. While those writing isolated from everyday life in Istanbul may have held strong views – particularly those of a theological bent – the prime concerns of English merchant-ambassadors in this early period were

¹²¹ Noel Malcolm, 'Alberico Gentili and the Ottomans' in B. Kingsbury & B. Straumann (eds.), *The Roman Foundations of the Law of Nations: Alberico Gentili and the Justice of Empire* (Oxford, 2011), 140.

¹²² Jan Hennings, 'The failed gift' in Sowerby & Hennings, *Cultures of Diplomacy*, 237-253.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Christine Woodhead, 'The Present Terror of the World?' Contemporary Views of the Ottoman Empire c1600', *History*, 72/234 (1987), 20-37.

¹²⁵ Sowerby, 'Early Modern Diplomatic History', 445-7.

money, trade protection, and political support.¹²⁶ Indeed, disputes and grievances relating to confessional issues were far more likely to occur between Christian communities and representatives than with their Ottoman hosts. Daniel Bamford's recent contribution to *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630* asserts the strong Protestant identities of English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire in this period, but Bamford is forced to admit that conflict was primarily driven by the other factors presented above.¹²⁷ He concludes that English religious rhetoric was most prominently deployed against 'obnoxious individuals' — which is to say more plainly, English actors used fiery religious rhetoric primarily as a means to further express their distaste for those who were already behaving in a hostile manner towards them. Henry Lello seemingly held particularly strong convictions on kingship and tyranny, with documents produced in his embassy describing Ottoman rulers to be in equal parts disreputably effeminate and brutally despotic, but this was more a symptom of his own intellectual background and a reaction to the particularly difficult period in Ottoman politics he witnessed than a guide to his general policy positions in his quotidian work as an ambassador.¹²⁸ Conversely, Alberico Gentili's 1598 work *De iure belli*, traditionally considered evidence of the foundations of international law in this period, is clear in its conclusion that the rule of Ottoman sultans is legitimate and valid.¹²⁹ It is precisely this diversity of opinion, combined with an increased diversity of religious confession that blurred older divides, which makes the impact of confessional identities so complex in considering encounters in the Ottoman world in this period.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Simon Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge: Trade, religion, and scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1760* (Oxford, 2020).

¹²⁷ Daniel J. Bamford, 'Without 'Conformitie of Companie': English Religious Identity and the Diplomatic Corps in Constantinople, 1578-1597' in T.A. Sowerby & C. Markiewicz (eds.), *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630* (London, 2021).

¹²⁸ See Chapter 4.

¹²⁹ Malcolm, 'Gentili and the Ottomans', 129-30.

¹³⁰ Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, passim.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam, in setting out his *Courtly Encounters* monograph, brings up three points which are particularly instructive in explaining how this thesis also considers issues arising from differences in religious or cultural practice and how those differences were (or were not) enshrined in law and accepted custom.¹³¹ Subrahmanyam quotes Thomas Roe's explanation to James VI that his king should, essentially, read past all the rhetoric to understand the friendly substance of Osman II's overtures.¹³² Here, the issue is less one of religion and more one of the universalistic claims of a global empire. While the rationalisation of these claims in no small part rest in traditional Islamic legal thinking – the separation of the world into *dar al Islam* and *dar al harb*, the latter being non-Muslim territory with which the Ottomans could justify constant war and rhetoric of domination – the practical outcome was one of mirroring Habsburg claims to international rule, domination, and leadership, which found their own Catholic eschatological justifications in Madrid and Vienna.¹³³ Moreover, religious justifications suited Ottoman true-believers and cynics equally well when it came to justifying conflict with the Shia Safavids, or flexing the muscle of confessional diplomacy across North Africa or the Indian Ocean, as well as perhaps serving as a valid excuse to work alongside 'Lutherans' – a category in which the English were broadly (and inaccurately) included.¹³⁴ Whether one considers the Ottoman claim to the title of Caliph sleight of hand or part of a long Islamic legal tradition, there is no doubt that religious claims were the most versatile and powerful tool in projecting an aura of universal rule, even while Ottoman sultans drew on Turkic and Roman traditions of justifiable sovereignty.¹³⁵ While the concept of 'Ottoman tolerance' is perhaps overstated in the popular imagination – Christians and Jews *were* second-class citizens under Ottoman rule and, certain regional outliers aside, power within the official political hierarchy

¹³¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1-3.

¹³³ Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, 'Between universalistic claims and reality: Ottoman frontiers in the early modern period' in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Abingdon, 2013), 205-219; Keene, *International Political Thought*, 79-81.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*; Derin Terzioğlu, 'Sufis in the age of state-building and confessionalization' in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Abingdon, 2013), 86-99; S.A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade With Turkey 1578-1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (London, 1977), 36-8.

¹³⁵ Colin Imber, 'Ideals and legitimation in early Ottoman history' in M.I. Kunt & C.M. Woodhead (eds.), *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age* (Harlow, 1995), 150-3.

required acceptance of Islam – equally, supposed Christian-Muslim antipathy and religious claims to universal sovereignty were not always a significant obstacle to Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy in this period. As outlined above within the discussion of Kunt’s exploration of *askeri* households, and Ghobrial’s examples from William Trumbull’s career in Istanbul, most often, the divides that mattered most in early-modern Istanbul were between the elite and the rest. Moreover, when further considering the nebular ecosystem of power in the Ottoman capital, and the central cosmocracy of the sultan within that, it is clear that the larger issues of incommensurability between the Ottomans and western European Christians come down to fundamentally different political arrangements and ideological constructions rather than religion per se.

Broadly speaking, though concepts in religious and state law did not always line up exactly between England and Istanbul, it would be an enormous stretch to suggest that English and Ottoman (or Protestant and Sunni) cultures were in any way antithetical. Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı similarly suggest overlapping cultural concepts and practice (such as ‘the cult of the favourite’) in *The Age of Beloveds*.¹³⁶ The New Diplomatic History, in general, can tend to overstate issues such as ‘cross-confessionality’ as frameworks, which may have real merit in the context of the Reformation in Europe, but not so much for Protestant-Sunni relations in an Anglo-Ottoman context. To begin with an extreme example, Subrahmanyam compares the optimism of science fiction encounters between humans and extra-terrestrials assuming compatible and meaningful communication is not only possible at all, but probable, and the way in which anthropological concepts of cultural incommensurability have influenced historians writing about encounters across premodern cultures.¹³⁷ The point of the contrast is to show the extreme optimism of the commensurability of imagined contacts with extra-terrestrials, and the pessimism

¹³⁶ W.G. Andrews & M. Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham, NC, 2005).

¹³⁷ Subrahmanyam, *Courty Encounters*, 2-7.

inherent in treating interactions across hitherto isolated human cultures as problematic. Non-Abrahamic cosmologies amongst the ruling cultures of wealthy and powerful foreign empires may have posed a challenge to Christians and Muslims and the very systems of legitimation discussed above, but that in itself does not mean that imperial power structures in India or China were beyond the ken of visitors from elsewhere, even if it made them more difficult to work within and rationalise for western European Christian actors. The foundations necessary to thrive on this political and commercial stage without unreasonable procedural difficulty were therefore fully in place for the English long before they arrived. Anecdotes such as the story of the entourage of the Safavid ambassador Shahqulu Khan Ustajlu in 1568 being confused by the Habsburg ambassadors doffing their caps in respect may be amusing, but ultimately such misunderstandings were of minor significance rather than presenting obstacles to cross-cultural interaction in sixteenth-century Istanbul.¹³⁸

This is not to say that religious beliefs were not very strongly held indeed amongst sixteenth- and seventeenth-century actors, and that religion and nation were not important categories and markers of difference. Eric Dursteler, from his work on Pietro della Valle, envisages a Mediterranean in this era that was cosmopolitan, and in which actors of different backgrounds interacted relatively freely, but in which religion and nation remained the primary markers of identity.¹³⁹ Dursteler rejects the classical supposed Mediterranean binaries of Christian/Muslim, Latin/Turk, Muslim/Other, these all being particularly troublesome given the multi-ethnic nature of the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, Molly Greene breaks down the representation of these binaries in her works on Mediterranean seafaring and Greeks, as have Cemal Kafadar, Suraiya Faroqhi, and

¹³⁸ Tracey A. Sowerby, 'Sociability and Ceremony: Diplomats at the Porte, c.1550-1632' in T.A. Sowerby & C. Markiewicz (eds.), *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630* (London, 2021).

¹³⁹ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 1-22.

Palmira Brummett from various Ottoman perspectives.¹⁴⁰ Dursteler also credits Joan-Pau Rubiés' work on South Asia amongst those that have 'made meaningful strides toward developing a more sophisticated model of cultural interaction that rejects the essentialization of identity'.¹⁴¹ This 'disarticulat[ion] of the notion' of a premodern world 'composed of isolated blocks, secure and content in their foreignness' is also, says Dursteler, important in countering the 'limiting and reductionist' influence of Edward Said's *Orientalism* on scholarship of the premodern world, to which its application is at best clunky, and at worst anachronistic.¹⁴² Indeed, religion and nation may have been assumed as natural and integral to identity, but were not the be-all and end-all of daily life in cosmopolitan spaces. Early-modern identities were not an 'essential, primordial quality', but rather a process or a continuum.¹⁴³ Most consequentially for this study, Dursteler makes two further key observations: first, that Venetian-Ottoman subjects were 'political amphibians' who could move seamlessly between institutions and play both sides to their benefit, and second, that nationality could transcend religious and linguistic choices or ties.¹⁴⁴ The latter is evident in the work of Graf on networks involving renegades, and indeed in the experiences of Edward Barton's contact with the English eunuch Hasan Ağa. Dursteler gives two further English examples from this period: Thomas Dallam's interaction with 'a Turke, but a Cornishe man borne' and another English traveller meeting William Robinson, 'ane Inglyshe man,... tyme hathe so allterred... that he ys becom a Slavonyan in natur'.¹⁴⁵ So, some markers of identity were important, but where might they become barriers, and how might those barriers be circumvented?

¹⁴⁰ Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton, 2000); idem., *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton, 2010); Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London, 2010); Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*; Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany, NY, 1994), 175-182.

¹⁴¹ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 9; Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnography in the Renaissance: South India through European eyes, 1250-1625* (Cambridge, 2000).

¹⁴² Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 9-10; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 2003). It has been my opinion since studying *Orientalism* as part of my MLit Middle Eastern History & Culture course at the University of St Andrews that Said's work is not applicable to the world before European imperial dominance of Asia. See also: Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: the Orientalists and their Enemies* (London, 2006); Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 415-6.

¹⁴³ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 18.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 18-22.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 18.

The primary difficulty posed by confessional or national identities for elite travellers such as ambassadors that is seen throughout the examples in this thesis came when individuals chose to use markers of difference as justifications for nefarious actions. Throughout the time of all the ambassadors, religious or national identities might be invoked to cause trouble for English merchants, who were naturally more vulnerable around the empire than what Bamford dubs the ‘nascent diplomatic corps’ in Istanbul. Dissatisfaction with the actions of merchants, or rumours about their effect on the availability and price of produce for locals, could at times lead to violent confrontation, as likewise in the case of the snowball-fight-cum-brawl between the English and French embassies against the background of rivalry and resentment in 1600. Beyond this, though William Harborne and (in particular) Edward Barton were skilled in their interaction with Ottoman court figures and other intermediaries, a cadre of actors, like those Ottoman-Venetian ‘political amphibians’, existed in order to act as go-betweens and linguistic and cultural translators between Ottomans and western Europeans. As Susan Skilliter’s work on Harborne and his own financial documents show, those Ottomans willing to facilitate English (or French) communication – not just in terms of language but access to the Ottoman political hierarchy – found handsome reward.¹⁴⁶ This was a common incentive for lower-ranking officials to involve themselves with the affairs of foreign embassies, as Tijana Krstić’s work on the careers of translators has also shown, as indeed has Tobias Graf’s work on networks of renegades sharing similar linguistic and cultural origins working in the interest of those ‘mother countries’.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, it was sometimes the case that these intermediaries found it in their interest to exaggerate the difference and difficulty of communication and political coexistence with the Ottomans; these trans-imperial subjects, after

¹⁴⁶ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 140-2; see also Chapter 1.

¹⁴⁷ Tijana Krstić, ‘Of translation and empire: sixteenth-century Ottoman imperial interpreters as Renaissance go-betweens’ in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Abingdon, 2013), 130-142; Tobias Graf, *The Sultan’s Renegades* (Oxford, 2017), *passim*.

all, appeared to have the monopoly on ‘political amphibian’ status, again giving many an opportunity to play off both sides.¹⁴⁸

From a Christian, European perspective, there could be all sorts of concerns surrounding cooperation with the Ottomans. Malcolm demonstrates the longstanding anti-Muslim theological tradition in western Christendom, most notably in places most experienced in threat or competition from Muslim neighbours.¹⁴⁹ References to Old Testament and Roman parallels when writing about the Ottomans and the wider Islamic world reflects the ways in which many western European writers reached for what frames of reference they could find in theological and classical traditions to define and essentialise the Ottomans as an ethnographical other of nefarious intentions. The great majority of early modern writers in western Europe believed the Ottoman Empire to be a system of government based on ‘tyranny’, apparently Henry Lello included.¹⁵⁰ Misinterpretations of writers like Machiavelli led to the belief that all Ottoman subjects lived in slavery, or at the very least ‘conditions of very strict obedience’, which upheld ‘a cunningly constructed monopoly of power, combined with a psychology of fear’.¹⁵¹ While those who came to settle in Ottoman lands might over time come to realise the inaccuracy of that vision, that does not mean that they would not still retain a frustration at the alienness of the system to them, and thus Lello was drawn further into his observations of Ottoman ‘tyranny’ as he saw politics descend into violence before him, and to offer later his own view to the Venetian senate on Ottoman degeneration and decline. From Ottoman perspectives, important markers of identity and ethnicity existed, but within the functioning of the empire, wide networks of affiliations could exist to allow multiple points of

¹⁴⁸ Maartje van Gelder & Tijana Krstić, ‘Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19/2-3 (2015), 93-105; E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY, 2012).

¹⁴⁹ Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 413.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 201-228.

reference when assigning or interpreting identity.¹⁵² It was possible to accommodate a range of ethnic, geographical, and religious loyalties while also showing political loyalty to the sultan and the empire.¹⁵³ However, the foremost courts remained the *kadı* courts, to which Christian and Jewish subjects also frequently sought recourse, and boundaries between communities had to be maintained both ‘for the survival of minority groups and the continuing dominance of the majority group... While the boundaries between communities were porous, they were so only in one direction, towards Islam.’¹⁵⁴ Apostasy from Islam remained punishable by death, while conversos were welcomed. ‘Tolerance’ existed so long as the primacy of the dominant group remained unchallenged, and as the experience of Lello reveals in the murder of Esperanza Malchi and the various proposed restrictions on non-Muslim dress and consumption of alcohol, at times of socio-economic upheaval, non-Muslim minorities remained a convenient target.

On an official level, the Ottoman cosmocracy was satisfied to host Christian embassies and merchants as long as they played their correct role. There was also, for the English, perhaps some advantage in their Protestant identity. Under the rule of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa in this era, the Ottoman porte appears to have operated an open door to potential strategic allies in order to promote its soft power on a global scale. Without getting bogged down in the reasons why this did not solidify into hard power of the kind Western European colonial empires came to wield, there is strong evidence to suggest the Ottomans were carefully choosing junior partners from those presenting them with envoys. Whether this was simply agreement to recognise Ottoman authority by having the *hutbe* read in the name of the Ottoman sultan at Friday prayer, or more concrete favours such as exchange of military experts and materials, the Ottomans were nonetheless

¹⁵² Tezcan, ‘Ethnicity, Race, Religion and Social Class: Ottoman markers of difference’ in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World*, 159-170.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

entertaining a wide range of visiting envoys and granting requests to at least some of them.¹⁵⁵ Clear evidence for selectiveness comes from Ottoman interaction with European states and principalities. Attempts by Florence, Genoa, Milan, and Lucca were rebuffed throughout the mid-1570s as not preferable to the Ottomans, despite the dispatch of lavish gifts from the Italian city-states.¹⁵⁶ Franco-Ottoman relations date back to the commercial proposals of 1535, which, according to the French-language copies of the documentation, gave the King of France's ambassador the right to represent merchants of all western Christian backgrounds who did not have their own national capitulations and embassies.¹⁵⁷ The fact that no original Ottoman copy of the 1535 capitulations could be found later made it difficult for France to defend these rather tenuous rights from other challengers, but nevertheless they were the second western Christian power after Venice to establish permanent diplomatic ties with the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁸ Though it was not without its controversy, this served as a useful foil to both sides against Habsburg expansion throughout the sixteenth century.¹⁵⁹

As we have seen, Giancarlo Casale argues for a central policy led by longstanding Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, dealing with the increasing geographical range of the commercial rivalry and naval threat posed by Spain and Portugal by building up networks of soft alliances along broadly confessional lines over vast distances. This allowed the Ottomans to challenge the Iberians' oceangoing supremacy by forcing them to deal with hostile actors on a number of fronts, and using the geographic vastness of the theatre of conflict to inflict maximum disruption with the minimum of forces and investment. Alternatively, others argue that this was in fact a more passive policy on

¹⁵⁵ Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 149-151.

¹⁵⁶ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 3.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁵⁸ For the struggles over the rights to represent different categories of foreigner within Ottoman territories, see chapters 2-4.

¹⁵⁹ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 1 & 2 (trans. Siân Reynolds, London, 1972).

the part of the Ottomans, pragmatically inheriting networks left behind by their Mamluk predecessors in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, and allowing autonomy to provinces distant from central imperial control.¹⁶⁰ Palmira Brummett draws the conclusion that Ottoman southward and eastward expansion in this period was driven by economic imperative and the integration of longstanding Asian trading and diplomatic networks.¹⁶¹ In all likelihood, policy changed according to needs enforced by realities on the ground (or indeed the sea) in locations very distant from the imperial capital, and also depended on the ascendancy and retreat of political actors in Istanbul and the provinces over the course of many years. European-theatre policy seems to have been somewhat more clear-cut. Overtures had been made to England in 1565 and ‘the members of the Lutheran sect in Flanders and Spain’ during the 1570s.¹⁶² The letter sent to England, preserved as ‘The trew Interpretatyon of a Letter sent to the Queens majesty from the great Turk’, contains the cordial ‘We wysh yo^{ur} good successe in all yo^{ur} actyons and doyngs’, hoping for ‘Ar lands[?] of most happy Raygn^{es} and a fountayne of most nobleness & [??] all in alyans’.¹⁶³ This is particularly interesting as it coincides with letters sent from Süleyman to Charles IX of France congratulating him on agreeing peace with England, and the beginning of Sokollu Mehmed’s premiership.¹⁶⁴ Negotiations to maintain good ties with France were ongoing, with the *beylerbeyis* in North Africa reminded not to attack anything French.¹⁶⁵ A letter from Selim II to Charles in 1572 offered Ottoman naval support against Spain, and suggested a combined French and English intervention in the Spanish Netherlands – though, given that it coincided with the year of the St Bartholomew’s

¹⁶⁰ Andrew Peacock, ‘Jeddah and the India Trade in the Sixteenth Century: Arabian Contexts and Imperial Policy’, in D.A. Agius, E. Khalil, E.M.L. Scerri & A. Williams (eds.), *Human Interaction with the Environment in the Red Sea*, Selected Papers of the Red Sea Project VI (Leiden, 2017), 290-322.

¹⁶¹ Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany, NY, 1994), 175-182.

¹⁶² Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 138.

¹⁶³ ‘The trew Interpretatyon of a Letter sent to the Queens majesty from the great Turk’ (1565), Cotton MS Nero B/XI, 7, ff.76-8.

¹⁶⁴ ‘Fransa padişahına’ 15th August 1565, 5/93, 5 *Numaralı Mübimme Defterleri* (973 / 1565-66) <Özet ve İndeks>, Divan-Hümâyûn Sicilleri Dizisi: II (Ankara, 1994), 18.

¹⁶⁵ ‘Cezayir gemilerinin Fransız topraklarına saldırdıkları’ 22nd September 1567, 7/355, 7 *Numaralı Mübimme Defterleri* (975-976 / 1567-1569) <Özet – Transkripsyon – İndeks>, I, Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn Sicilleri Dizisi: V (Ankara, 1998), 188; ‘Fransa kralının, elçisi ile gönderdiği pişkeş ve mektubun alındığı’ 23rd September 1567, 7/365, 7 *Nolu Mübimme*, 193.

Day massacre, it may be considered a speculative suggestion.¹⁶⁶ These scraps of evidence suggest an Ottoman interest in fostering good relations with Western European counterweights to the Habsburgs that owes as much to military strategy as economic imperative. Given that the Ottomans narrowly missed out on wresting control of Malta from the Knights of St John (also 1565) and removing this Habsburg forward defence buffer in the central Mediterranean, and suffered defeat at Lepanto (1571), there was a greater impetus in the 1570s for the Ottomans to find ways to contain the Habsburgs.¹⁶⁷ This fits neatly into the Ottoman vision of treaty-defined diplomatic peace implemented by Rüstem Paşa with the Treaty of Edirne (with the Habsburgs, 1547) and the Treaty of Amasya (with the Safavids, 1555). Certainly, in the case of the Habsburgs, good strategic relations with other Western European powers was of great benefit to the Ottomans as a means to guarantee peace — surely the Habsburgs would not risk renegeing on their treaties with the Ottomans when this carried the threat of inviting friction with their western neighbours.¹⁶⁸ Beyond this, the model of Ottomans as arbiters of peace under the central guarantee of the sultan yet again fits perfectly within the vision of an Ottoman cosmocracy.

If the Ottomans were perhaps somewhat favourable towards Lutheran envoys, perhaps this explains the frequency with which the Habsburgs deployed Lutheran ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire in this period, alongside the number of trusted Lutheran courtiers in Vienna, again reflecting the complex overlapping religious identities within the early modern world.¹⁶⁹ An instructive comparison here may be the experience of William Hawkins in Surat and Agra. João Vicente Melo argues that Hawkins' outspoken Protestantism clashed markedly with the image of

¹⁶⁶ A. Refik, *Türkler ve Kraliçe Elizabeth* (Istanbul, 1932), 16-18.

¹⁶⁷ H.J.A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta* (New Haven, 1994), 63-71; Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274-1580: from Lyons to Alcazar* (Oxford, 2001), 231; Andrew C. Hess, 'The Battle of Lepanto and its Place in Mediterranean History', *Past & Present*, 57 (1972), 53-73.

¹⁶⁸ Zahit Atçıl, 'The Foundation of Peace-Oriented Foreign Policy in the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Rüstem Pasha's Vision of Diplomacy' in Sowerby, T. & Markiewicz, C. (eds.), *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630* (London, 2021).

¹⁶⁹ Robyn Dora Radway, 'The Captive Self: The Art of Intrigue and the Holy Roman Emperor's Resident Ambassador at the Ottoman Court in the Sixteenth Century', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 22 (2018), 475-499.

Christianity and Europe that the Jesuits had been cultivating at the Mughal court.¹⁷⁰ Eventually, though Hawkins caused some interest at the court of Jahangir and initially damaged the standing of the Jesuits, he was unsuccessful, but the English were unafraid to use their Protestant identity to challenge the relationships local rulers had established with Catholics, such as in Japan.¹⁷¹ As in the Ottoman case, political and/or diplomatic negotiations were paramount to establishing a stable commercial foothold for merchants in amenable ports, and much as was the case with the Mughals, the English were not a direct military or territorial threat in South Asia or in the Eastern Mediterranean, but perhaps might serve as a useful counterweight to other more threatening European powers, such as the Portuguese to the Mughals and the Habsburgs to the Ottomans.¹⁷² In both cases, successful relations required a form of supplication or absorption into the local political system and the receipt of payments from the sultan, which in Hawkins' case, he tried to live up to and cultivate a fluid identity.¹⁷³ Harborne and Barton (again, in particular) were highly effective in doing so within the Ottoman court system, while Lello was more awkward.

Charlotte Backerra's use of the concepts of 'norm competition' and 'ambiguity tolerance' in her analysis of how Emperor Charles VI managed and justified his intimate relationships with men and male youths alongside his devotion to his wife and family and status as a devout defender of the Catholic faith is useful in considering in the case of western European envoys to the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷⁴ As in the case of the multiple layers of markers of identity within the Ottoman world, or in the case of Dursteler's Venetians in the Ottoman Empire, or indeed in the case of Graf's renegades:

¹⁷⁰ João Vicente Melo, *Jesuit and English Experiences at the Mughal Court, c. 1580-1615* (Cham, 2022), 131-184.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 145.

¹⁷⁴ Charlotte Backerra, 'Disregarding Norms: Emperor Charles VI and His Intimate Relationships', *Royal Studies Journal*, 6/2 (2019), 74-88.

Normally, for any given role one can play, there are numerous norms that apply to that role. Nearly every human being has several roles at any given time. In the best case, the norms for each role are overlapping. But some norm systems cannot be brought into accord, and conflicts arise from inconsistent and incompatible rules.¹⁷⁵

Backerra uses Hillard von Thiessen's example of the role of a noble as an example of norm competition: the noble is expected to serve the monarch and strive for proper administration, but the noble is also expected to support his family or dynasty by appointing family members to positions in their administration, regardless of their actual competence or suitability for the job.¹⁷⁶

Backerra further argues that actors did not have to experience competing norms as a struggle or an insoluble problem, but rather choose between different but equally legitimate norms to act upon.

There was a level of 'ambiguity tolerance' for competing norms, in which actors could behave pragmatically according to the necessities of their situation. This theoretical framework can be used fruitfully to consider how the three English ambassadors under study here managed the competing demands of their roles, both in terms of their duties as company men and ambassadors, but also the demands upon them as English men needing to fulfil roles demanded by the Ottoman political ecosystem. That might involve using their knowledge of Ottoman social cues to secure something akin to an intellectual bond – as in a *meclis* group or between close male companions drawn to each other's wit – with a *reisulkuttab* or *nişancı* because of their status in the Ottoman chancery, or their knowledge of the intricacies of Ottoman foreign policy, in order to further their ability to fulfil their role as an effective and upstanding leader of the English merchant community.¹⁷⁷ It might then involve using that relationship as a means to find a way to cover for a tricky choice not to present a royal letter on time in order to protect relations between sovereigns. Both of these are simply examples from Edward Barton that will be explored in more detail later, but they show the

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 75-6.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 76.

¹⁷⁷ Kaya Şahin, 'Imperialism, Bureaucratic Consciousness, and the Historian's Craft: A reading of Celâlzâde Muştafâ's *Tabakâtü'l-Memâlik ve Derecâtü'l-Mesâlik*' in H.E. Çıpa & Emine Fetvacı (eds.), *Writing History at the Ottoman Court: Editing the Past, Fashioning the Future* (Bloomington, 2013), 39-56; Helen Pfeifer, 'Encounter After the Conquest: Scholarly Gatherings in 16th-Century Ottoman Damascus', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 47 (2015), 219-239; W.G. Andrews & M. Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham, NC, 2005).

competing imperatives of identity and duty that ambassadors had to approach with a healthy dose of constructive ambiguity in order to achieve their goals.

This thesis therefore envisages a diverse Istanbul in which English diplomatic missions could situate themselves and find support and assistance with relative ease. With so many Ottoman officials drawn from converts – compelled or otherwise – speaking Italian or Greek and writing Latin, communication and translation was not a problem, even if the process sometimes involved an element of cultural ‘massaging’ rather than strict adherence to concepts. This is perhaps not dissimilar to Joan-Pau Rubiés’ idea of ‘language games’: a cumulative increase in knowledge of the other over time, and how to translate customs across cultures.¹⁷⁸ For example, from an Ottoman legal perspective, sultanic letters and grants to foreign courts were therefore often in *berat* form – that is to say, decrees or orders of the sultan to courtiers or administrators of inferior rank within the auspices of the empire, conveying confirmation that those orders concerning the foreign party would be carried out.¹⁷⁹ Claire Norton also demonstrates how diplomatic communication could also come in the form of a *fethname* – a bulletin of Ottoman military victories and conquests.¹⁸⁰ As Roe’s instruction to ‘oversee the vanity... from those who thinke of no equality’ indicates, politely glossing over or swerving the uncomfortable implications of receiving documents formulated in a certain manner was something to which Christian diplomats, representatives, and indeed, monarchs, were accustomed.¹⁸¹ The origins of these conversos and renegades were varied: from captives of war and fortune like Italians Uluç Ali and Kılıç Ali Paşa and English eunuch Samson Rowlie/Hasan Ağa, to those defecting to the Ottomans voluntarily – sometimes for reasons as transparently self-interested as escaping the consequences of being caught engaged in sexual

¹⁷⁸ Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnography in the Renaissance: South India through European eyes, 1250-1625* (Cambridge, 2000).

¹⁷⁹ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 86-90.

¹⁸⁰ Norton, ‘Iconographs of Power or Tools of Diplomacy? Ottoman *Fethnames*’, 331-350.

¹⁸¹ Anon., *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe, in his Embassy to the Ottoman Porte from the Year 1621 to 1628 Inclusive* (London, 1740), 30.

activity with the embassy kitchen boys, as in the case of Habsburg Ladislaus Mörth.¹⁸² If for reasons religious, moral, or otherwise, English ambassadors did not wish to associate directly with Ottomans – renegade or otherwise – as Krstić’s work on ‘cross-confessional diplomacy’ and E. Natalie Rothman’s ‘trans-imperial subjects’ have shown, there was a vast layer of local and international Latin and Eastern Christians and Jews willing to act as cultural or linguistic brokers between western Christian representatives and merchants and Ottoman officials of all stripes.¹⁸³

On Microhistory

This study quite deliberately takes a microhistorical approach. The thesis is separated into three large chapters, each in its own right a microhistorical study of the first three English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire in turn. This approach is followed with consideration of the following methodological factors. First, two interrelated visions of what microhistory can do: in the assessment of Giovanni Levi, microhistory is ‘concerned first and foremost with the actual detailed procedures which constitute the historian’s work’ and ‘call[s] into question the idea of a regular progression through a uniform and predictable series of stages’; and in John-Paul Ghobrial’s view that microhistory, deployed alongside global history, ‘seek[s] to unsettle, to surprise, and to oblige us to revise our traditional views’.¹⁸⁴ As a study influenced by aspects of the New Diplomatic History and (broadly speaking) poststructuralist historiography of the early-modern Ottoman Empire (Karen Barkey, E. Natalie Rothman, Baki Tezcan, Tobias Graf, Emrah Safa Gürkan) this thesis seeks to situate the experience of the first English embassies to the Ottoman Empire within the patterns, networks, and historical factors identified within the wider historiographical corpus,

¹⁸² Graf, *The Sultan’s Renegades*, 98.

¹⁸³ Maartje van Gelder & Tijana Krstić, ‘Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19/2-3 (2015), 93-105; E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY, 2012).

¹⁸⁴ Giovanni Levi, ‘On Microhistory’ in P. Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Philadelphia, PA, 1991), 93-113; John-Paul Ghobrial, ‘Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian’, *Past and Present*, 242/Supplement 14 (November 2019), 1-22.

while also being aware – as discussed in consideration of the New Diplomatic History above – that we should not expect to find uniform developments, structures, and relationships in all cases within the same time period, or even within the same geography and institutions. Approaching each ambassador and his embassy as an individual case and trying to mine the sources for the raw materials to begin reconstructing something approaching the reality of their experiences allows the confirmations and contradictions of our wider historical expectations for diplomatic relationships and practices within this time and geography to be brought clearly to the fore. Approaching them chronologically across three different microhistories allows a consideration of continuity and change across relatively short spans of time (just over two decades, in this case), while also keeping in view the relationship of each of these ambassadors and embassies to wider events and developments, and the wider historiographical trends and themes under consideration.

This leads neatly to the second set of interrelated considerations in following a microhistorical approach for this study. As Jan de Vries comprehensively explains, microhistories are not case studies – they do not seek to be scientific examinations of specific phenomena.¹⁸⁵ Rather, as Christian G. de Vito suggests, ‘microhistory [is] the analytical approach by which scholars derive the categories, spatial units, and periodizations of their research from... interaction between three levels: the social practices revealed by the sources; the researcher’s hypotheses and methodologies; and the knowledge derived from available scholarship’.¹⁸⁶ Throughout the research process for this thesis, I have been guided by close readings of detailed archival sources, reading from the English ambassadors’ records outwards, reaching through a variety of source material from French, Venetian, Ottoman, and other English records. This is a self-evidently microhistorical approach, which has ultimately structured the thesis around the social world of Istanbul in the late-

¹⁸⁵ Jan de Vries, ‘Playing with Scales: The Global and the Micro, the Macro and the Nano’, *Past and Present*, 242/Supplement 14 (November 2019), 23-36.

¹⁸⁶ Christian G de Vito, ‘History Without Scale: The Micro-Spatial Perspective’, *Past and Present*, 242/Supplement 14 (November 2019), 348-372.

sixteenth and early-seventeenth century. Each of the main chapters is therefore a study of how (or whether) these ambassadors and their embassies fit the wider themes and developments identified in the available scholarship for practices of diplomacy, Ottoman politics, and indeed companies of merchants and their networks and activities in this period. To put it more plainly, the microhistorical approach of this thesis builds out from the evidence base to construct a wider case for what each ambassador's story can tell – or not tell – about wider phenomena and patterns. In the words of Guy Halsall, a historian of the early medieval period in Europe, in his 'historical manifesto' delivered to second-year undergraduate students, it is a process by which the historian becomes 'the Internal Affairs guy' – a television police drama archetype who is 'there to suppose that the hero has lied or done something wrong and that the villains might have been wronged' – a stance of evidence-led scepticism that asks at every turn 'why is this lying bastard lying to me'.¹⁸⁷ In this case, the heroes and villains are not so much the historical persons under consideration, but the wider assumptions of the existing scholarship itself.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, this brings the logic of the microhistorical approach full circle back to Levi's assertion that 'the method... is concerned first and foremost with... detailed procedures which constitute the historian's work'.¹⁸⁸ This thesis painstakingly tracks references to the English ambassadors it concerns and their careers across a wide range of source material of linguistic and geographical diversity. Treating the ambassadors and their embassies as the foremost subjects of the thesis gives it the detailed narrative base from which to then contribute to or ask questions of the wider scholarly landscape in which it is situated and by which it has been influenced and supported. In many senses, the microhistory described by Levi, Ghobrial, de Vries, and de Vito is in fact a holistic history, perhaps small in its focus and attention to detail, but drawing

¹⁸⁷ Guy Halsall, 'Professor Grumpy's Historical Manifesto', *Historian on the Edge* (blog), 12 October 2012, <https://600transformer.blogspot.com/2012/10/professor-grumpys-historical-manifesto.html>.

¹⁸⁸ Levi, 'On Microhistory', 93.

on the widest possible scope of material and historiographical frameworks by which to contextualise the small ground it covers. Microhistory is, to borrow further metaphors from Physics, academic History in one of its densest forms, packing as much as possible into studies that are deliberately targeted and focused in their historical coverage. This thesis does not aim to be a Leo Tolstoy-inspired exercise in the ‘conviction that a historical phenomenon can become comprehensible only by reconstructing the activities of all the people who participated in it’ in the same vein as Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms*, however, it is at its heart a reconstructive history, which seeks to show the kinds of analyses that can come out of rebuilding aspects of the three ambassadors’ lives, work, and networks, and asking whether this is entirely what wider scholarship tells us we should expect to see.¹⁸⁹

As John Walton (with James F. Brooks and Christopher R.N. DeCorse) explains in the introduction to the 2018 volume on microhistory, *Small Worlds*, microhistory is a practice rather than a doctrine or set of codified principles, covering the wide variety of approaches to reconstructing narrative to provide ‘detailed analysis on a small scale’, and with it ‘the search for unforeseen meanings embedded in cases’.¹⁹⁰ ‘In this sense’, they explain, ‘microhistory underscores the need for local perspective in understanding global patterns and wider narratives, as well as offering unique insights into phenomena and patterns that may lie outside of macrohistorical narratives or flatly contradict them’.¹⁹¹ This describes the essence of what this thesis does, and what it is for. As shown throughout this introduction, a study of the beginnings of Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy in the sixteenth century could be many things, from economic history, trade history, company history, diplomatic history, Ottoman political and social history, cultural history. Without any underlying form or organisation, it could simply be a collection of interesting stories and

¹⁸⁹ John Walton, James F. Brooks & Christopher R.N. DeCorse, ‘Introduction’ in J.F. Brooks, C.R.N. DeCorse & J. Walton (eds.), *Small Worlds: Method, Meaning, and Narrative in Microhistory* (Santa Fe, 2018), 3-12.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

disconnected points, touching on any number of those things or none of the above. Given my instincts towards Ottoman political, social, and cultural history in this period, and the liberation from teleological assumed structural patterns that comes in tandem with the New Diplomatic History and its variegated approaches, by far the most logical way to tie this project together, in my view, is to approach from this microhistorical perspective and focus on the themes that emerge strongest from the source base. These, across all three embassies, are the importance to this relationship of the company and trading networks of the Turkey/Levant Company, the direction of travel in Ottoman politics and its practices and protocols over these roughly three decades of interaction, and the establishment and steady evolution of the English diplomatic setup, including how this compared to and related with the other powers present, from minor Ottoman vassals to the French, Venetian, Habsburg, and (eventually) Dutch representatives. To borrow Clifford Geertz's metaphor and de Vito's explanation of process, building from the source base, alongside my historiographical inclinations and the supporting world of the wider corpus of scholarship available, has given structure to this thesis 'like a magnetic field passed through iron filings', bringing the findings together in a more meaningful way.¹⁹²

This approach is also not unknown to the history of early modern commerce, where Hellman approached eighteenth-century European life in Macao through the lens of five diachronic case studies to explore her themes.¹⁹³ Her focus on the evolution of her themes over the course of a century allows her to analyse continuity and change effectively, though in my study I have decided that approaching my themes and testing my central arguments across microhistories of three embassies in succession is a more fruitful route for the nature of my periodisation and material, given that each embassy seems to represent in itself a slightly different phase in the establishment

¹⁹² Clifford Geertz, 'Among the Infidels', *The New York Review of Books*, 23 March 2006, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2006/03/23/among-the-infidels/>.

¹⁹³ Hellman, *This House Is Not a Home*, 1-23.

of the Anglo-Ottoman relationship, and how much of a difference the outlooks of the ambassadors themselves could make to the experience of their embassies. Nevertheless, keeping in mind the efficacy of this diachronic approach to showing the evolution of a relationship and a set of practices is a useful exercise throughout these three microhistories, helping the material within each of them to work together to reveal wider patterns in Anglo-Ottoman relations and politics in this short period.

Sources and source use

This thesis sits between English and Ottoman history, and therefore consciously straddles both English and Ottoman source material, with wide reference to other European archival collections, particularly Venetian material for its rich coverage of English activities in the Levant. Foremost among these in the ambassadorial microhistories is English ambassadorial correspondence, almost all of which is drawn from the National Archives at Kew (mostly digitised). Other English archival material includes royal letters, records of capitulations, and political reports on the Ottoman government, its primary actors, and its structure. The decision to lead with ambassadorial correspondence was due to the richness of the material – it is detailed and there are many documents – and the manner in which it helps place the experience of the ambassadorial household at the forefront of the investigation. However, these sources are not treated uncritically. Narrative detail is confirmed from other English printed accounts and personal letters, nineteenth-century published translations of Venetian ambassadorial correspondence, French archival and printed material, and Ottoman chronicles and archival material that has been transliterated into the modern Turkish alphabet (or translated into Turkish) and published. If nothing else, the lesson taken here from Subrahmanyam, the New Diplomatic canon, and indeed works such as *The Whispers of Cities* by John-Paul Ghobrial, is that in broadening the source base one can at least begin to replicate the complexity and multipolarity of communication in early modern Mediterranean

encounters. European diplomatic archival material is standard fare for diplomatic history, and indeed has been used to thicken the narrative of many a history of Ottoman politics. Recourse to Ottoman material is also vital, as is demonstrated by academic works on Anglo-Ottoman relations from the mid-century Turkish historians onwards through Skilliter, Ghobrial and Talbot. What sets this thesis apart from the recent work of Bamford and Kowalczyk on Barton is its depth of recourse to Ottoman and Turkish-language resources. I was also able to access valuable records of the Barton family in local archives in Nottingham, which, if nothing else, filled in some interesting blanks about his family's trading background and offered a correction to the prior record that he was from Lancashire, when his family in fact settled in London from the East Midlands following the loss of their Calais trade.

However, some of this source material is not without its pitfalls. I am confident in my understanding and deployment of English sources, even where palaeography and sixteenth-century word choice can sometimes leave room for interpretation. Published collections of French and Venetian material are accurate and reliable in the main, and my contextual knowledge allowed me to overcome some unusual renderings or translations of Ottoman names or titles. Where I have provided my own translations or summaries of French or Ottoman material, the original-language quote is included in the footnote for comparison, though I am confident in the efficacy and accuracy of my translation. However, with some uses of Ottoman archival material – particularly *mühimme defterleri* – I have drawn upon others' direct transliterations of Ottoman documents, for example the studies of specific documents or series produced by MA students at regional universities in Turkey whose methods are not always standardised. Likewise, some of the evidence drawn in this thesis from sixteenth-century Ottoman historians and chroniclers comes from modern Turkish translations or summaries. Without the hard work of colleagues working on transliterations and translations for their MA and PhD theses in Turkish institutions, it would be

much more difficult, bordering on impossible, to pinpoint evidence relevant to a discussion of sixteenth-century English embassies in Ottoman archival material or chronicles. This thesis would certainly have less insight without them. While a lot can be said about Ottoman actors using Western European sources, there is plenty more to be found by reading how they were remembered in contemporary or near-contemporary writing, or in biographical dictionaries such as the *Sicill-i Osmani*, which has been used by John-Paul Ghobrial as a means of at least recovering that memory of an Ottoman personage, if not complete details of their life and career. In addition to this, records of actions that English ambassadors had petitioned for being actioned in a *mühimme* give exciting evidence about how the connections between foreign embassies and the Ottoman bureaucracy worked. The use of sources such as these is usually limited to Ottoman historiography rather than works sitting within diplomatic history; there is an extent to which these types of Ottoman archival sources were previously explored by Skilliter, but they are not a resource that has been mined even by writers using Ottoman material extensively. They have been used in a similar fashion by Mehmet Bulut in his work on Ottoman-Dutch economic relations, and I similarly found they captured mention of merchant activity and official responses that were otherwise lost, unmentioned as insignificant in embassy dispatches.¹⁹⁴

Methodologically speaking, I have used many of these archival sources in a microhistorical fashion, trawling archives and chronicles for mentions of my ambassadors, their embassies, their networks of merchant, or other interesting contextual details about them to put together a set of historical examples that speak to my lines of inquiry. My research progressed through several phases, from gathering anything I could find on each of these ambassadors and their careers, then combining source material and observing the commonalities and conflicts that emerged, then considering the wider themes the narrative that formed evoked, before then focusing the analysis

¹⁹⁴ Mehmet Bulut, *Ottoman-Dutch Relations in the Early Modern Period 1571-1699* (Hilversum, 2001), 28.

of the material based on wider historiographical reading. While there is an element of reading some of these sources ‘against the grain’ – that is to say, pondering on omissions or looking for hidden revelations from reading them beyond their purpose – it does not extend to Kowalczyk’s literary readings of Barton’s sources, though use of literary and archival Ottoman sources outside of their original context does produce interesting insights into the Ottoman society in which my actors were immersed. Keeping in mind the goal of writing a ‘connected history’ when synthesising sources has helped to read and deploy them not just in parallel, but as part of a conscious attempt to reconstruct the actors’ social and political world. The following three microhistories are my best efforts at this.

William Harborne (1577-82, 1583-88)

What is the real story of William Harborne, first English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire? Is it that of the merchant who traded Spain for Istanbul, travelling via a relative's home in Lviv and arriving in the Ottoman capital in Muslim dress and in the company of a returning Ottoman diplomatic mission? Is it the impetuously confident man who used English capitulations before they were valid, risking scandal when the ship he had released with them turned to piracy? Is it the ambassadorial figure who set about establishing English presence officially in the Ottoman Empire for the first time from 1583-1588? The mentor grooming Edward Barton to replace him after five years, or the pugilist slugging it out with Uluç Ali Paşa over his and England's honour?

The story of the origin of English diplomatic representation in Istanbul is one of happenstance, opportunism, and lucky timing. It also reveals the politics of rivalries between viziers and their households, encompassing foreign ambassadors as part of the wider political landscape, particularly in the case of an interminable feud between Harborne and the *kapudan-ı derya* Uluç Ali Paşa. Harborne, a merchant representing a duo of influential Drapers' Company merchants, Edward Osborne and Richard Staper, was dispatched to the Ottoman capital, after working in a successful enterprise with the two men in Spain, to attempt to secure independent privileges for their clique. This would undercut the need to pay customs to the French, and the cost in time and money to arrange the correct permissions to trade under French authority, giving them an advantage over rival English merchants seeking opportunity in eastern Mediterranean markets. Harborne and others were happy to trade the raw materials necessary to help equip the Ottoman army, as well as traditional English cloth, in return for goods from the Ottoman Empire: currants, wines, and the like. The deal that Harborne in fact received was a grant of privileges to the English nation, and an offer of alliance. Not intending this to be the case, Harborne, Osborne, and Staper

contrived to edit the text they had received in order to make it appear as if it was a grant only to them. However, since the letter was addressed to Queen Elizabeth I, she accepted full English privileges on behalf of the nation. This opened a form of multiple-tier diplomacy, in which Harborne and company reacted to developments on the ground and lobbied regularly for their interests, while being supported – and occasionally contradicted – by official royal correspondence sent more sporadically. Ultimately, Harborne’s presence on the ground and contact with Ottoman officials resulted in his installation as an official ambassador in 1583, despite his own mistakes and combined diplomatic pressure from France and Venice, due to the various advantages that a trade deal presented to England and the Ottoman Empire at that time, and the political opportunities presented by the presence of another foreign embassy for ambitious Ottoman officials.

William Harebrowne was born circa 1542, the second son of his father of the same name, and his wife, Joan Piers.¹ Harebrowne senior was a leading citizen of Great Yarmouth, Suffolk, where he had settled after having left Shrewsbury as a younger man, and where his family was raised.² William Sr. had trading interests, at least in part-financing his son’s endeavours in Istanbul, and probably more widely – perhaps a result of, or reason for, having moved to the port town of Yarmouth.³ Foreign trade had evidently become a family affair, if it had not been before, as William junior had clearly been a colleague of the London merchants Edward Osborne and Richard Staper for some time before they dispatched him to Istanbul, where William Jr. was joined by his older brother Thomas, who acted as courier for the first letter from Murad III to Elizabeth I.⁴ His younger brother, Piers, was in Portugal in 1579, probably also as a merchant, and in contact with claimant to the Portuguese throne Dom António, a man whose fortunes were to become a concern

¹ Christine Woodhead, ‘Harborne, William’, *ODNB*, (Online edition, 2008).

² *Ibid.*

³ Susan A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade With Turkey 1578-1582: A documentary study of the first Anglo-Ottoman relations* (Oxford, 1977), 169-70.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 157, 199; Woodhead, ‘Harborne’.

of Harebrowne's diplomatic actions in Istanbul later in his career.⁵ Evidently, at least one of his three sisters was also involved in trade, as in his petition to Ottoman Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, he mentions a brother-in-law trading at Lviv, who, based on the evidence of a visit to the city by Henry Cavendish in 1589, Susan Skilliter speculates may have been another of Osborne and Staper's early envoys to the east, John Wight.⁶ A Percy Harebrown, resident as a merchant in 1590 in Ayamonte, Huelva, Spain, was probably also a relative of William.⁷ On his selection as English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in 1582, William Harebrowne was given permission to change his name to William Harborne.⁸ His embassy terminated in August 1588, when he returned to England, leaving his secretary Edward Barton in his place.⁹

Harborne's mission to the Ottoman Empire is due for further investigation and reinterpretation. Harborne's dispatch was clearly a part of the wider picture of connected networks of family and patronage in sixteenth century English mercantile circles, as explored in the previous chapter. Harborne had family links to European trade, with a focus on the east of Europe and the Mediterranean, was a protégé of Osborne and Staper, and later appointed his own protégé, Edward Barton, as his *de facto* successor. Barton also had extensive family links to European trade, including in the eastern Mediterranean, as will be explored in later chapters. What does this tell us about the pattern of trade expansion in Elizabethan England? Staper and Osborne, established merchants of the Drapers' Company, subsequently underwrote missions that led to the establishment of companies holding trade monopolies in the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman vassal provinces on the Danube, and in eastern Europe more generally.¹⁰ There was some parallel here with the Muscovy Company, and after only two decades, the Levant Company helped to birth the East

⁵ Woodhead, 'Harborne'; Botolph Holder, 'Holder to [Wilson?]' 31st May 1580, SP 89/1, f.101, *TNA*.

⁶ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 42n.

⁷ Pauline Croft, 'Trading with the Enemy 1585-1604', *The Historical Journal*, 32/2 (1989), 281-302.

⁸ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 199.

⁹ Woodhead, 'Harborne'.

¹⁰ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, passim.

India Company. Considering the matter more widely, what does this company-focused diplomatic activity add to the wider understanding of diplomacy in the Early Modern period? What, also, does this tell us about the nature of English and Ottoman diplomatic policy in the late sixteenth century, and the balance of European diplomacy during the period? What might the acceptance of English merchants also reveal about the nature of Ottoman politics in this period, as a wider part of this picture? What other themes might a microhistorical study of Harborne's embassy reveal?

While the focus of this chapter is Harborne's embassy, it is first necessary to outline the context for Harborne's dispatch to Istanbul in the late 1570s on behalf of Osborne and Staper. The roots of Harborne's embassy can be traced back to the mission of Joseph Clements and John Wight, sent to investigate the possibilities for trade in Istanbul for Osborne and Staper. Harborne joined them in 1577/8, and managed – through the aid of Ottoman envoy Mustafa Beg – to secure an audience with Sokollu Mehmed Paşa and began negotiating trading privileges. These were eventually ratified in both countries, and after a protracted process of discussions, financial calculations, and zealous lobbying, Harborne was appointed ambassador in 1582, arriving to take up his post in 1583. This chapter looks at the economic situation in England and the Ottoman Empire at this time, Harborne's journey to Istanbul, and considers issues surrounding the monetary cost of diplomacy to England in this period, and how this was covered. The chapter then looks at the main period of Harborne's embassy and how it fitted into Ottoman political culture and the 'cosmocracy' of the time. The chapter finishes with a look at Harborne's day-to-day duties, and how they led him into conflict with the powerful Ottoman admiral Uluç Ali Paşa. As we will see, a direct Anglo-Ottoman trading relationship came in response to sweeping changes in the balance of the global economy and patterns of trade in the sixteenth century, and was facilitated by fiscal imperatives in both countries, aside from strategic political benefits. The cost of the embassy was reasonable as compared to ad hoc English missions elsewhere, but most of that cost was expected to be paid by the takings of the Turkey Company. Harborne's place in Ottoman political society

was complicated and subject to the customary processes of negotiation and networking, but broadly in line with what would be expected based on Işıksel's 'cosmocrat' conceptualisation. Finally, we see that Harborne's quotidian duties were dominated by defending commercial interests, which formed the basis of an unglamorous feud with Uluç Ali Paşa.

Sources

In the absence of an archive of the Turkey Company's correspondence and papers, and with Harborne's initial departure for Istanbul deliberately shrouded in mystery, English sources for the earliest part of Harborne's career in the Ottoman Empire are largely limited to what Richard Hakluyt chose to preserve – or could gain access to – and fragments of official correspondence preserved in the British Library, British National Archives, and within the papers of Turkey and Levant Company merchant John Sanderson. All of this is limited by omissions caused by the incompleteness of the material available to the likes of Hakluyt and Sanderson, and their choices and biases about what was worth preserving for posterity, plus the scarcity of official documents until around 1580 – if not 1583 – as before this point Harborne was, in most senses, a non-state actor. French diplomatic correspondence relating to Harborne does not appear until 1580, after which point they find his gains very difficult to reverse. However, it is instructive for the period after March 1580 precisely for this reason; the French embassy slowly began to realise that Harborne was a rival and a threat. Habsburg diplomatic correspondence is slightly more switched-on to the negotiations between England and the Ottoman Empire, dating from 1579 – but again only after Harborne had sprung into action in earnest. A handful of relevant Ottoman documents from this period have been published by İsmail Uzunçarşılı and Susan Skilliter, with originals available in the British Library Cottonian Manuscripts, the Bodleian Library's Tanner Manuscripts, and the National Archives. However, in the face of such a fragmentary corpus, the early history of Harborne, Osborne, and Staper's mission to open English trade rights in the Ottoman Empire are

a matter of joining the dots with educated guesses, drawing on background knowledge of the wider context, and analysing the smallest details of the evidence available. Once Harborne was formally dispatched as England's 'orator' in 1583, the archival evidence is naturally more plentiful. Dispatches of the Venetian *bailo* finally consider the English merchants and their new embassy worthy of mention, and the French archival material remains plentiful and detailed as the French ambassadors stepped up their opposition to the English newcomer and his household. English correspondence is present in the Tanner MS, Cotton MS, National Archives, and – of course – Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, if not as abundant as for the embassies of Barton and Lello. Two main categories of Ottoman sources further illuminate Ottoman politics in this period. The first of these is the *mühimme defterleri*, registers of important affairs which reveal state actions and policies. Some *mühimme defterleri* have been transcribed from their registry copies and published by the Turkish national archive management, and others transcribed as MA thesis projects at Turkish universities. The other category is the histories written by Ottoman observers such as Peçevi İbrahim, Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, and Solakzade Mehmet.

The basis for Anglo-Ottoman commercial exchange in the sixteenth century

The primary export commodity of England in the late medieval period was wool, which shifted to woollen cloth following a collapse in exports of the raw material.¹¹ The value of exports steadily grew into the sixteenth century, before stagnating in the second half of the 1500s. Non-woollens accounted for only around 10-15% of English exports in the 1560s, and cloth remained the dominant export commodity for the final decades of the century, despite its continued decline.¹² 85-90% of this trade was based in London, and Antwerp served as more or less the only major import hub for English cloth.¹³ Therefore, disruption to this trade could be disastrous. Habsburg

¹¹ Martin Rorke, 'English and Scottish Overseas Trade, 1300-1600', *The Economic History Review*, 59/2 (2006), 265-288.

¹² *Ibid.*, 279.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 280.

bans on English imports throughout the 1560s hit trade hard, as did the decline of Antwerp as a major northern European entrepôt in the latter decades of the sixteenth century. However, there were other outlets. The Venice Company operated in Venetian ports across the Mediterranean, while William Harborne and his family were amongst the number of English merchants trading in Spain despite the occasionally rocky political relationship between the two kingdoms.¹⁴ Indeed, alongside Antwerp, more Englishmen in this period traded in Habsburg domains than anywhere else.¹⁵ Wider English merchant adventures had begun in earnest before issues with access to Antwerp and other Habsburg territories struck, but were perhaps intensified by these difficulties in securing stable export markets. Indeed, alongside the establishment of direct trade with Muscovy which is discussed in detail below, English merchant adventurers visited Ottoman Arabia and Safavid Persia (Anthony Jenkinson), believed they had struck gold in polar North America and brought back Inuk captives to England (Martin Frobisher and John Lok), and traded for pepper in West Africa as well as bringing the first African representatives to the English court (Thomas Wyndham, Frobisher and Lok).¹⁶ As Kurat and Kütükoğlu identified, there were also a number of English voyages towards and into Ottoman waters and lands in the century prior to Harborne's first expedition. English voyages to the Mediterranean had been underway during the mid-to-late-fifteenth century, and merchant vessels began to turn towards the eastern shores of the Mediterranean before Jenkinson's eventual journey.¹⁷

There is a wealth of recent scholarship on English trade and merchant adventures during the sixteenth century. Stephen Alford's *London's Triumph* tracks many of these stories and

¹⁴ Jason Eldred, "The Just Will Pay For The Sinners": English Merchants, the Trade with Spain, and Elizabethan Foreign Policy, 1563-1585', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 10/1 (2010), 5-28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁶ John H. Appleby, 'Jenkinson, Anthony', *ODNB* (2004); Glyn Williams, *Arctic Labyrinth: The Quest for the Northwest Passage* (Berkeley, 2009), 15-31; James McDermott, 'Frobisher, Martin', *ODNB* (2015).

¹⁷ Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türk-İngiliz Münasebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi (1553-1610)* (Ankara, 1953), 1-41; Mübahat Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı – İngiliz İktisadî Münasebetleri* (Ankara, 1974), 1-7.

developments, painting a picture of a merchant class that was dynamic, resourceful, and critically engaged in driving the growth of London to become a city of global significance.¹⁸ Alford brings merchant life – in terms of the significance of trade to London’s economy and the significance of the social, political, and cultural life of merchants and their companies – to the forefront of the story of London’s rapid growth in size and stature throughout the Tudor century, though his convincing and engaging work falls more within the realms of ‘popular history’. The broad contours of the story of London, England, and overseas trade and diplomacy in this period have been well-rendered within the historiography for some time. Kenneth R. Andrews’ *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement* (1984) remains perhaps the most robust accounts of English ventures in this period.¹⁹ As outlined above, the collapse of Antwerp as a viable market for English trade and the depression in cloth trade helped stimulate new ventures in places like the Ottoman Empire. Emerging Dutch rivalry spurred the development of the East India Company from the ranks of the Levant Company, though Dutch superiority in the far east turned English attention to the Indian subcontinent. Tension with Spain directed some of England’s growing seafaring and mercantile power into piracy, while, eventually, a weakened Spanish grip on the Atlantic allowed the first English expansion into the Americas, though it wasn’t until deep into the seventeenth century that concerted expansionist efforts gained traction. Many English endeavours in this period ended in failure, not least the Frobisher and Lok expeditions, and the bulk of the interest and capital came from private individuals and trading corporations rather than government policy.²⁰ Foreign policy aims were varied, with interest in supporting commercial activities that had proven themselves successful enough to bring in income, solidarity with Protestant causes across Europe, and preventing neighbouring powers presenting a national security threat.²¹

¹⁸ Stephen Alford, *London’s Triumph: Merchant Adventurers and the Tudor City* (London, 2017), passim.

¹⁹ K.R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement: Maritime enterprise and the genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge, 1984).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, passim.

²¹ Gehring, *Anglo-German Relations*, passim; Potter, *Henry VIII and Francis I*, passim; Zhukova, *Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy*, passim.

Yet, as Robert Brenner presents, this is not the full picture. Part of the fundamental shift ongoing in the English economy beginning in the Elizabethan period was a move towards an import economy, exemplified by the activities of the Levant Company and the East India Company, which famously traded in bullion to simply buy import goods in India, as there was little that England produced that was of interest to merchants in South Asia.²² This fundamental realignment of economic activity that began in the period in study here would eventually lead to the dominance of Levant and especially East India merchants over positions of political power and social authority in London's merchant community and in English trade more widely. This was aided by consistent demand for secular consumption domestically, but also the opportunity to develop profitable re-export trades elsewhere in Europe.²³ Naturally, the fact that the profits of trade were concentrated in the hands of concessionaries – that is to say, factors of those companies holding royal grants of monopoly to conduct trade in certain parts of the globe – enmeshed their activity in the big debates of contemporary domestic politics as well as the business of diplomacy with the countries in which they were operating. This was evident from debates on monopoly and royal prerogative in the late Elizabethan period and continued through the Stuart era to the War of the Three Kingdoms.²⁴ However, contemporary merchants would argue that controls were necessary to protect against overtrading and interference of other – particularly Dutch – merchants in the English domestic market.²⁵ Traces of this can be seen throughout these three embassy case studies in debates over how the Levant Company should be chartered, who should be included, and what the barriers to entry might be.

²² Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: commercial change, political conflict, and London's overseas traders, 1550-1653* (Princeton, 2003), 3-198.

²³ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

²⁴ Robert Ashton, *The City and the Court, 1603-1643* (Cambridge, 1979), *passim*.

²⁵ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 199.

Royal and elite spending also went a long way towards providing domestic markets for import merchandise and cementing London as a centre of its provisioning, including facilitating social interaction between the court elite, merchants, and provisioners.²⁶ The ability to draw upon court patronage was undoubtedly a great benefit to the bargaining power and growing influence of the merchant community. The establishment of a strong import economy based in London as England's primary seaport, alongside the consolidation of London as a settled court capital, played a large part in the boom in the city's population and political clout. This is both in terms of its rising prominence in Europe reflecting the rising influence of the English kingdom, and the absorption of much of England and later Great Britain into its hinterland, with its subsequent political, social, and cultural consequences for the process of state formation in the early modern and modern periods.²⁷ The social and financial standing of successful company merchants in London put them at the forefront of these developments, in positions of great influence. Thomas Smythe, for example, was a Merchant Adventurer, member of the Muscovy Company, and was simultaneously Governor of the Levant and East India Companies as well as London Sheriff when the Earl of Essex turned to him in the hope of securing London for him in rebellion against Elizabeth.²⁸ Men like Smythe were important figures in networks of patronage and personal affiliation that connected the court elites and London tradespeople, without doubt demonstrating the growing political influence of merchants in English politics in this period. Not only this, but the merchant community were also frequent creditors to the crown and court. After all, their trade was sanctioned to support the public spending of early-modern governments that frequently struggled to raise adequate revenues.²⁹ That their networks included overlapping membership of

²⁶ Ian W. Archer, 'Conspicuous Consumption Revisited: City and the Court in the Reign of Elizabeth I in M.P. Davies & A. Prescott (eds.), *London and the Kingdom: Essays in Honour of Caroline Barron* (Donnington, 2008), 38-58.

²⁷ David Harris Sacks, 'London's Dominion; the Metropolis, the Market Economy and the State' in L.C. Orlin (ed.), *Material London, c. 1600* (Philadelphia, 2000), 20-54.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 28-32.

²⁹ Susan Doran, '1603: a jagged succession', *Historical Research*, 93/261 (2020), 443-465; Diana Newton, *The Making of the Jacobean Regime: James VI and I and the Government of England, 1603-1605* (London, 2005), 35; Mehmet Bulut, *Ottoman-Dutch Economic Relations in the Early Modern Period* (Hilversum, 2001), 20-21.

many overseas trade monopolies and financial dealings with important court figures in England and elsewhere is a recurrent theme throughout the studies that follow.

The most fundamental shift in the global economy, however, came from two maritime discoveries of Atlantic-facing Europe: the Cape Route, and the Americas.³⁰ The Ottoman Empire had positioned itself smartly as the primary transit market for luxuries of Asia – spices and silks – to Europe.³¹ What Mehmet Bulut describes as an Ottoman economic ‘golden age’ reigned prior to the late sixteenth century, based around this trade hub status, abundant natural resources, and imperial self-sufficiency; imports were largely limited to luxuries such as European woollens (which made the opportunity to deal directly in English products particularly attractive), Indian textiles and spices, and Persian silks.³² Portuguese direct access to South Asia and beyond via an ocean route around Africa changed this markedly, as did then the steady flow of gold and silver from the Americas into Europe to pay for such luxuries, slowly reorienting the centre of economic gravity in Europe from south to north and west, to those Atlantic-facing seafaring nations.³³ The most prominent example of this in the Ottoman Empire, as the Ottoman economy began to reorient to the new Atlantic centre of the global economy, was decline in Venetian trade share in the Ottoman Empire as the ‘northerners’ – the French, the English, and later the Dutch – arrived on the scene.³⁴ By this time, the Ottoman economy had begun to drift into trouble, with large budget surpluses turning to large deficits, especially from 1592, amidst costly wars in the east and west and mounting unrest and rebellion throughout the heartlands of the empire.³⁵ Ottoman currency was devalued, and the seventeenth century saw Spanish and Dutch currency beginning to be used as tender in

³⁰ Ibid., 19.

³¹ Ibid., 17-19.

³² Ibid., 32.

³³ Ibid., 20.

³⁴ Ibid., 25.

³⁵ Oktay Özel, ‘The Reign of Violence: The *celalis* c.1550-1700’ in C. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 184-202; Bulut, *Ottoman-Dutch Economic Relations*, 63.

Ottoman cities, while the agrarian economy creaked under the pressure of population growth and the extension of arable land to its limits.³⁶

This socio-economic upheaval in the Ottoman Empire came as a result of global changes, just as those changes drove English attempts at goldmining in the Americas and finding northern passages to Asia, and eventually developing direct trading relations with the Ottomans.³⁷ The traditional tenets of the Ottoman economic system were challenged, those being provisionism (ensuring markets were stocked and prices were affordable), fiscalism (the maximisation of public revenues at all times, stable prices, and prohibitions on the export of precious and/or strategic metals), and the traditionalism of the agrarian socio-economic order and the division of *askeri* and *reaya*, with the sultan as ultimate guarantor of divine justice.³⁸ Writing in 1631, the Ottoman intellectual Koçi Beğ lamented the loss of Ottoman territory since 1596, and the way that domestic ‘tyrants’ had caused the *reaya* to disperse and the treasury to fall empty, disrupting the ‘circles of equity’ that defined Ottoman society.³⁹ Whether or not this criticism was entirely justified, Ottoman contemporaries were aware of a changing order. Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli’s complaints between his *Counsel for Sultans* in 1581 and his *Description of Cairo* of 1599 serve as another case in point of Ottoman writers lamenting that change was underway, and it was not necessarily a good thing.⁴⁰ Foreign merchants were therefore very welcome in the Ottoman Empire, and the *ahdname* agreements – capitulations – were considered by Ottoman statesmen to be beneficial commercial deals for the empire, granting theoretically free access as long as dues were paid and merchants accepted the ‘protection’ of their consul or ambassador.⁴¹ In practice, though foreign merchants

³⁶ Özel, ‘Reign of Violence’, 186-7; Bulut, *Ottoman-Dutch Economic Relations*, 66-8.

³⁷ Bulut, *Ottoman-Dutch Economic Relations*, 33.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 34-5, 47-8.

³⁹ Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, ed. Zuhuri Danişman (Ankara, 1985), 71-2.

⁴⁰ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton, NJ, 1986).

⁴¹ Bulut, *Ottoman-Dutch Economic Relations*, 53-5.

effectively mapped onto the Ottoman *millet* system as distinct national-ethnic communities under the protection of the sultan and their appointed community leader, they were only allowed to reside in a small cross-section of port cities or inland commercial hubs (like Aleppo), and overland travel was strictly controlled by Ottoman authorities.⁴² Nevertheless, for two polities evolving economically to adapt to new realities, the arrival and presence of English merchants in those Ottoman ports they could frequent was highly mutually beneficial.

The Harebrowne expedition

The first bid for trade rights was carefully measured and executed, and reflects well the political savvy of its patrons, Edward Osborne and Richard Staper. Susan Skilliter's treatment of the narrative is exhaustive, and is summarised here, though some of her interpretations and conclusions are worth challenging. They commissioned two agents to travel to Istanbul in 1575, Joseph Clements and John Wight, 'by way of Poland'.⁴³ Wight returned to Lviv in Poland, where he was later met by Henry Cavendish, and was probably the brother-in-law who hosted Harborne.⁴⁴ Clements secured permission for another agent, William Harborne, to join him eighteen months later.⁴⁵ Harborne travelled to Istanbul via Poland, where he met a certain Ahmet Çavuş, supposedly an Ottoman conducting some sort of embassy in Poland.⁴⁶ In fact the court *çavuşlar* Ahmet and Mustafa were present in Lviv to conclude a treaty between Poland and the Ottoman Empire, issued from Istanbul on 17th July 1577, with the dragoman Mustafa probably acting in his capacity as a Latin translator.⁴⁷ Skilliter suggests that Harborne's meeting with these Ottoman officials in Lviv was a happy accident, allowing the Englishmen to travel to Istanbul incognito amongst the

⁴² Ibid., 53-5.

⁴³ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation, Made by Sea or Over-land to the Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at any time within the compasse of these 1600 Yeeres*, v (Glasgow, 1904), 167-9.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 167-9; Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 42.

⁴⁵ Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 167-9.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 167-9.

⁴⁷ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 42-3.

returning diplomatic convoy, and facilitating the meeting between Harborne and his future Ottoman court ally, Mustafa Çavuş.⁴⁸ Given that Wight seems to have been based in Lviv, as well as Harborne's brother-in-law – if they were not in fact one and the same person – and the Ottoman envoys were happy to invite Harborne to join their convoy in Turkish dress on their return to Istanbul, it appears much more likely that the journey had been pre-arranged to meet them in Lviv. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that Clements had been able to make the acquaintance of one of these men while he was based in Istanbul, or if not, at least knew they would be in Lviv, as the treaty had been issued in July, while Clements was surely still in Istanbul, and Mustafa had been involved in representations to Poland since 1576.⁴⁹

The progress of this initial expedition is an indication of the savvy and experience of these merchants in developing new avenues for trade. As was discussed, Ottoman authorities closely controlled the overland movement of foreign merchants within their territory, as was part of the sultan's prerogative as the arbiter of justice and order.⁵⁰ Foreign merchants required a *mürurname* to be requested from the imperial chancery by their ambassador, after receipt of which, the travellers could then don Muslim dress if they so wished and carry weapons to protect them on their journey. Whether or not Wight and Clements gained an official *mürurname* for themselves and/or Harborne – which would certainly have been possible via the French embassy – travelling with the diplomatic party returning from Lviv clearly fulfilled this function for Harborne, down to allowing him to dress as a 'Turk' and arrive in Istanbul safely and without fanfare. This indicates a good level of knowledge and understanding on the part of the English merchants of what was required of them in order to access the Ottoman Empire, and indeed was a further masterstroke in allowing for acquaintance to be made between Ottoman officials and the travelling Harborne. As João Melo

⁴⁸ Ibid., 43-45.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 42-3.

⁵⁰ Güneş Işıksel, *La diplomatie ottomane sous le règne de Selâm II : paramètres et périmètres de l'Empire ottoman dans le troisième quart du XVI^e siècle* (Louvain, 2016), 21-23.

argues in the case of Hawkins adopting Mughal appearance in his mission to Agra, accepting Ottoman dress may well have helped Harborne symbolically ingratiate and integrate himself amongst the group.⁵¹ Melo explores Chris Shilling's notion of 'physical capital' – that Harborne's choice to adopt Ottoman dress in turn gave him social capital – and Nick Crossley's analysis of 'the social body', which holds that agents 'create and mould their bodies' according to 'the demands of those specific fields'.⁵² To return to the concepts of 'norm competition' and 'ambiguity tolerance', it is clear that in this instance, Harborne elected in some way to adapt to Ottoman norms in his dress and choice of travel company, in return perhaps for the advantages conveyed in terms of social capital as he drew himself closer to the Ottoman officials present.

The progress of Harborne into Istanbul diverts us momentarily into our second wider question about the functioning of Ottoman diplomatic and political ideology with regard to foreign envoys. The *çavuş* Mustafa Beg is our first case in point of exactly the kind of ambitious Ottoman official who stood to benefit from working with new foreign actors in Istanbul. Supporting English merchants in establishing themselves at the imperial court allowed him the opportunity for career progression from his role as an envoy of the sultan. He inserted himself into Harborne's dealings as an intermediary and wrote to the English monarch in place of the grand vizier. He was then Harborne's prime agent and advocate within the Ottoman system, is listed in Harborne's employ in his estimates of the cost of opening an embassy in Istanbul, and was still present in 1583 (at least, this is the date Hakluyt attributes to the letter – issues with the dating of some of the Hakluyt documents are raised below) for Harborne to write to him admonishing his 'dishonest translations' of the Sultan's commandments, and Queen Elizabeth to request his promotion in her royal letter to Murad III.⁵³ According to those accounts, the embassy spent 60,300 *akçe* per annum on three

⁵¹ João Vicente Melo, *Jesuit and English Experiences at the Mughal Court, c. 1580-1615* (Cham, 2022), 145-6.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 145-6; Chris Shilling, 'Educating the Body: Physical Capital and the Production of Social Inequalities', *Sociology*, 25/4 (1991), 653-672; Nick Crossley, *The Social Body: Habit, Identity and Desire* (London, 2001), 102.

⁵³ Hakluyt, *Navigations*, 5, 265-6; 'Letter from Elizabeth to Sultan Murad', *Venice*, viii, 55.

dragomans, with Mustafa and ‘Ahmed his *sipahi*’ taking the lion’s share, 31,040, as they are to be used ‘for the spectacle’ when dealing with lower officials.⁵⁴ He is just one example of how Ottoman officials stood to benefit financially and in terms of social prestige by associating with foreign embassies for their own ends. Another example of this is the longstanding French dragoman being awarded a promotion to *müteferrika* with increased revenues from the sultan at French insistence on the renewal of their *abdname* on 12th July 1581.⁵⁵

Mustafa Beg proved a particularly useful ally as the diplomatic negotiations and relationship progressed. Having arrived unnoticed amongst the entourage of Ahmet and Mustafa, Harborne set about pursuing his own trade interests, while liaising with Mustafa to find his way to an audience with Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. Harborne’s petition, made in March 1579, was a well-constructed ruse to obtain a meeting, evidencing Mustafa’s intimate knowledge of how to gain a beneficial reaction at the Ottoman *divan*. Petitioning the grand vizier, Harborne explains that he had sent a lone servant carrying goods and money from Lviv to Istanbul, and this unfortunate servant had been killed and robbed by thieves on the final day of his journey before arriving in Istanbul.⁵⁶ This suggests that Harborne was either very foolish or inexperienced as a merchant, to send a lone envoy on a long a dangerous journey with much of his goods and cash (which runs contrary to his supposed experience in Spain and elsewhere and the evidence of the careful preparation of this mission), or fabricated key elements of the story to create a pretext for meeting the grand vizier.

There is a very telling sentence in Harborne’s petition, which reveals how he played on some of these strategic concerns to pique the interest of the grand vizier. ‘Since Guglielmo Herbroun, an English merchant, has had brought here certain merchandise, Kersey cloths, tin and lead, and is

⁵⁴ Harborne, ‘Estimate of expenses’.

⁵⁵ Henri III Valois, ‘Henri III à Murad III’ 6th January 1581 in *Recueil des pièces choisies, extraites sur les originaux de la négociation de M^r de Germigny, de Chalon sur Saône, Baron de Gerboles, Conseilleur du Roy & son Ambassadeur à la Porte du grand Seigneur* (Lyon, 1661), 76-8; Germigny, ‘Lettre à Henri III’ 20th July 1581, *Négociations*, iv, 62-6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 45-6.

not able to get an honest price for the lead, he prays your Serenity that he may be able to send it away'.⁵⁷ Here he is clearly teasing the grand vizier with the tantalising offer of trade in war materiel and textiles known to be a popular import good for the Ottomans. If anything was guaranteed to secure Harborne a hearing, this was it. Whereas contemporary reports, and older historiography, focused on Harborne's understanding of the value of gift-giving in Ottoman culture, it is surely this demonstrable promise of war materiel that gained him favour as much as money well spent on precious objects for officials.⁵⁸ After all, de Germigny, quoted above, specifically tells us that this truly was the case. Jan Hennings has also demonstrated how English merchants used strategic gifts to royals and ministers as a means of advertising the kind of goods they had for trade.⁵⁹ Clearly it worked, as Harborne got his audience and was granted a promise of trade privileges and alliance, as the immediate dispatch of a letter from Murad III to Elizabeth I demonstrates.

Other Christian powers were clearly quite aware of a lucrative English trade in munitions and other military supplies to the Ottoman Empire. Spanish ambassador to London, Bernardino de Mendoza, wrote the following report to Philip II in November 1579:

The Turks are also desirous of friendship with the English on account of the tin which has been sent thither for the last few years, and which is of the greatest value to them, as they cannot cast their guns without it, whilst the English make a tremendous profit on the article, by means of which alone they maintain the trade with the Levant.⁶⁰

And in May 1582:

Two years ago they opened up the trade, which they still continue, to the Levant, which is extremely profitable to them, as they take great quantities of tin and lead thither, which the Turk buys of them almost for its weight in gold, the tin being vitally necessary for the casting of guns and the lead for purposes of war. It is of double importance to the Turk now, in

⁵⁷ Ibid., 46.

⁵⁸ Ibid., passim; A.C.S. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London, 1964), 1-13.

⁵⁹ Jan Hennings, 'The failed gift' in Sowerby & Hennings, *Cultures of Diplomacy*, 237-253.

⁶⁰ Bernardino de Mendoza, 'Mendoza to Philip II' 28th November 1579 in *Calendar of letters and state papers relating to English affairs: preserved principally in the Archives of Simancas, 1568-1579* (London, 1896), 706.

consequence of the excommunication pronounced *'ipse facto'* by the Pope upon any person who provides or sells to infidels such materials as these.⁶¹

French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Jacques de Germigny, had also noticed this 'heinous and pernicious contraband' in 1580:

What has given the Englishman so much favour with these people here is that he brought large quantities of steel and broken pieces of bronze and brass to make artillery, and secretly promised to bring more here in future, which is a heinous and pernicious contraband to all Christianity.⁶²

The English merchant vigorously continues his affair at this Porte, and seems to be highly favoured, due to the occasion of the steels, tin and brass that he had brought them and promises to bring hereafter, [and] for the idea that they have that the noise [impression?] of being sought [after] for peace and alliance from several Christian princes will greatly favour and strengthen their affairs in Persia.⁶³

Though it would have been controversial for English merchants to have been trading in such goods with the Muslim Ottomans, and there is a chance that Mendoza and Germigny had reason to exaggerate in order to damage the standing of the English in the opinion of their readers in Madrid and Paris, it is clear that at least on some level, this strategic trade in metals formed a key basis of the formation of an Anglo-Ottoman trade relationship. Rhoads Murphey shows that the spending on military ordnance for the 1630 Yemen campaign came to 171,030 Egyptian *para*, or 342,060 *akçe*. Of this, 79,200 was spent on copper, 19,040 on tin, and 72,790 on 'miscellaneous materials'. A further 150,000 *para* (300,000 *akçe*) worth of spending on lead is categorised under 'Miscellaneous accounts'.⁶⁴ This amounts to 642,060 *akçe* of spending on metals for one small campaign, suggesting a large market for metal to feed the Ottoman war machine. At the 1582 exchange rate suggested in Harborne's estimates of embassy costs (60 *akçe* = 7 shillings), this comes to roughly £3745 15s

⁶¹ Idem., 'Mendoza to Philip II' 15th May 1582 in *Calendar of letters and state papers relating to English affairs: preserved principally in the Archives of Simancas, 1580-1586* (London, 1896), 366.

⁶² Jacques de Germigny, 'Lettre à Henri III' (May 1580) in E. Charrière (ed.), *Négociations de la France dans le Levant* (Paris, 1853), iii, 924-5n : Ce qui a donné le plus de faveur audit Anglois envers ces gens-icy est qu'il a apporté grande quantité d'acier et pièces d'images rompues d'airain et laiton pour fondre artillerie, et fait promesse secrètement d'en apporter davantage pour l'advenir, qui est ung contrebande odieux et pernicious à toute la chrestienté.

⁶³ Idem., 'Lettre à Henri III' (May 1580), *Négociations*, iii, 913n : Le marchand anglois poursuit vivement son affaire en cette Porte, et semble estre beaucoup favorisé, tant à l'occasion des aciers, étain et léton qu'il leur a apporté et promet apporter cy-après, que pour l'opinion qu'ilz ont que le bruit d'estre recherchés de paix et alliance de plusieurs princes chrestiens advantagera et fortifiera grandement leurs affaires de Perse.

⁶⁴ Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* (London, 1999), 61-3.

– enough to run Harborne’s embassy for two and a half years.⁶⁵ This would have been a lucrative trade for both parties regardless of the scale on which it was conducted.

Despite Harborne’s apparent admirable preparation for a mission to negotiate privileges with the leadership of the Ottoman Empire, his status as a ‘diplomat’ in the strictest, most official sense, is a matter for debate, at least during this initial expedition. He certainly represented the Osborne-Staper network, but it appears doubtful that he was in possession of any royal letter or credentials from the English crown. At the very least, no document of that sort pertaining to Harborne’s first Istanbul trip has survived. The Ottoman letter to Elizabeth of March 1579, given below first in its Latin-alphabet Ottoman form, translated by İsmail Uzunçarşılı, and secondly in Skilliter’s English translation, emphasises this lack of clarity over Harborne’s status:

Âstane-i saadet âşyanıma adamlarunuz gelüp gitmek ve ol cevânibin tacirleri ve bazirgânları memalik-i mahrusamıza gelüp ticaret eylemek hususların ilâm eylemişsin.⁶⁶

It seems that thou hast notified the particulars concerning your agents [envoys] coming and going to my Threshold, the nest of felicity, and the traders and merchants of those parts coming to our divinely-protected dominions and carrying on trade.⁶⁷

The use of the Turkish *-miş* participle to indicate the past in this sense gives the whole sentence an inherent element of uncertainty – ‘it *seems* that thou hast notified’. This participle is used to refer to a past that is uncertain or unconfirmable, or even to relay hearsay. This reveals a confusion as to whom Harborne was supposedly representing in his petition to the Ottoman court. No royal letter from the 1570s opening correspondence with the Ottomans survives in the English archive. If Harborne was in possession of official credentials, they have likely been lost, though royal letters were present on mercantile trips to Morocco and India that ultimately allowed access to rulers.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ William Harborne, ‘Estimate of expenses incident to the office of ambassador at the Court of Constantinople’, MSS Tanner 79, ff. 179-80, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁶⁶ İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, ‘Ondokuzuncu asır başlarına kadar Türk-İngiliz münasebatına dair vesikalar’, *Belleten*, 14/49-52 (1949), 573-650.

⁶⁷ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 49.

⁶⁸ Melo, *English Experiences at the Mughal Court*, 110.

The Latin translation of the letter, presumably originally written up by Mustafa Beg, further adds to this confusion. He dances around the Turkish *-miş* tense as follows:

A certain man has come to us in the name of Your Sacred Royal Majesty and has made known the kindness, courtesy and all kinds of friendly offices on your part, and has requested that license and liberty should be given by Our Imperial Highness for coming and returning out of Your realm into Our Imperial dominions, so that those people who carry on trade may be able to come freely to Our Imperial dominions, with all their goods, and return home again.⁶⁹

Again, no specific reference is made to having received any royal letter, and Harborne's identity and status is obscured. Indeed, it is a distinct possibility that Sokollu Mehmed was quick to suggest full English trade rights and an alliance because Mustafa had indicated that this is what Harborne was looking for. Since Harborne had no Turkish himself, and no other representation – not to mention that Mustafa was later proven to be mistranslating documents – there is no way that Harborne could be sure that Mustafa was translating his words accurately.

This raises questions about the nature of negotiators and diplomats in this Early Modern context. Who here are the diplomats, what constitutes a negotiation, and where can we say the act or process of 'diplomacy' begins? Ahmet and Mustafa were certainly, diplomats of a sort, representing the Sultan on the various assignments they received – but advancing their careers by working with foreign merchants seems quite removed from international diplomacy. Can Harborne, a non-state actor representing his business associates, be categorised as performing diplomacy? In many ways, that the Ottomans should initiate royal correspondence with Elizabeth Tudor in England following a meeting about commerce with Harborne subtly challenges the received wisdom that envoys, agents, orators, ambassadors – whatever the preferred title – tend to act as proxies for their princes, or are always in some sense 'courtly'.⁷⁰ Sokollu Mehmed clearly respected Harborne's right to 'ask the question' on behalf of his countrymen, but the quick recourse

⁶⁹ Murad III Osmanoglu, 'Correspondence with Turkey' 20th March 1579, SP 97/1 f.1, TNA.

⁷⁰ Douglas Biow, 'Castiglione and the Art of Being Inconspicuously Conspicuous' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38/1 (2008), 35–55.

to royal correspondence – initiating a multi-tier diplomacy throughout this negotiation, between royal correspondence on one hand, and Harborne’s in situ lobbying on the other – indicates the need for official court-to-court contact to buttress the ad hoc nature of face-to-face negotiations with representatives, whether on official business or self-appointed.

That one of Harborne, Osborne, or Staper doctored Mustafa’s Latin translation of the imperial letter to Elizabeth further suggests that an embassy and full English access was not what they were looking for. Indeed, the clearest evidence that Harborne was primarily, if not entirely, a representative of Osborne and Staper’s clique is their subtle forgery of Mustafa Beg’s Latin translation of the letter. As Skilliter demonstrates, they edited pronouns and added qualifying statements to Mustafa’s original text to make the offer read as if it was offering privileges only to them. An example Skilliter gives is the addition (in italics) to make the offer of ‘Licence and liberty *to him and two other merchants*’, rather than simply license and liberty to the nation.⁷¹ Elizabeth wrote back requesting that the rights be valid for all English subjects:

As by your good means matters are so far advanced that he has begun to incline to Harborne's request on behalf of himself and his partners, and we would not willingly be excluded from the conveniences granted to the subjects of other states, we have written to his Highness to testify our gratitude, and to ask him to allow to all our subjects the same permission that he has granted to a few; promising like liberty to his subjects in our dominions. We beg that you will aid us in obtaining this request.⁷²

Either the Elizabethan court had not been fooled by the forgery or were not willing to accept rights based on a three-man monopoly. The first attempt by a sixteenth-century English Istanbul agent to fool their monarch had failed. It would not be the last. However, this had the effect of strengthening Mustafa further, since he was now being asked by a foreign monarch to work for a deal he had already concluded!

⁷¹ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 52.

⁷² Elizabeth I Tudor, ‘The Queen to Mustafa Beg’ 25th October 1579, SP 97/1 f.4, *TNA*.

It is at this point that the first correspondence between Harborne and a secretary of state emerges. In a letter to Harborne dated 27 October 1579, Dr Thomas Wilson congratulates Harborne on his success, but informs him that the queen wishes ‘that the grant hereafter may be given in universall to all merchantes to trade thither’ – further evidence of limited government knowledge of Harborne’s mission and its aims until the sultanic letter was sent.⁷³ He adds: ‘If anie thing be said unto you for an amitie or league to be concluded, you may say after the trafficque is agreed uppon, the same may after come in consultation. But except you bee asked and earnestlie called uppon, doe not entermeddle towching the amitie, but rather stand as ignorant what to say’.⁷⁴ Skilliter suggests that this letter indicates a close contact between Wilson and Harborne throughout the latter’s journey, and that it hints at the possibility of Harborne being made a future ambassador, as it also states ‘those who were the principall dealers hitherto should have the chiefest preheminance tyme after’.⁷⁵ Her interpretation requires some revision. Firstly, it is the first extant letter addressed to Harborne from any English official. Secondly, the manner in which Harborne is congratulated suggests Wilson was unaware of what Harborne had been doing until now. Thirdly, the letter specifically asks Harborne not to interfere, especially where questions about any alliance are concerned. He is told only to answer that freedom of English traffic is to be agreed first, and nothing more. This does not suggest he is ambassador-in-waiting. Finally, the allusion to ‘chiefest preheminance’ reads, in the context of the Muscovy and Eastlands companies, as a promise of inclusion in the top tier of any subsequent trade monopoly rather than a suggestion of future ambassadorial duties. If anything, this letter to Harborne suggests the opposite of Skilliter’s proposed reading: that Harborne had little to no prior contact with the English court, was a merchant conducting one of many adventures undertaken at the time by English merchants and was considered as such by Wilson.

⁷³ Thomas Wilson, ‘to William Harborne’ 27th October 1579, Cotton MS, Nero B/XI, f.178, *BL*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*; Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 76.

The first English capitulations were granted in May 1580. In 1580, we also see Harborne ‘the man/agent of the Queen of England’, petitioning the imperial *divan*, via ‘Mustafa the translator’ for permission – which was granted – to load ‘forbidden goods’ onto a ship leaving Istanbul.⁷⁶ As an addendum to this *hüküm* in the 43rd *mühimme defteri*, it is remarked that a passport has been prepared for the ambassador expected from England, indicating the Ottoman acceptance of the English *abdname*.⁷⁷ The terms granted to the English closely match the French capitulations renewed in 1569.⁷⁸ As Skilliter demonstrated, the main difference is the clause relaying the process for the liberation of slaves, which is a much simpler and more advantageous capitulation in the English case. Even before these new capitulations, the willingness of the Ottomans to protect English shipping was demonstrated in releasing a number of English captives recently taken by the *kapudan-ı derya* Uluç Ali Paşa, much to the admiral’s chagrin, making England a lasting enemy in the Ottoman government.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, given the welcome commercial contact with a nation that appeared to be able to provide plenty of necessary woollens and metals to support the Ottoman army, it seemed the Ottomans were quick to extend the sultan’s divine justice to include the distant nation of England and its merchants, plus its potential strategic value politically, while the English court seemed cautiously accepting of merchants setting up their own trade and representation there, even if the political dimension was not yet decided.

The cost of diplomacy

Given the commercial core of the relationship being constructed in this period between England and the Ottoman Empire, one of the thorniest issues to decide was who would pay for the costs of keeping an embassy open as a necessity in managing English merchant affairs in the

⁷⁶ ‘Hüküm 58’ (1580), 58/43 in Sevilay Sakarya, ‘43 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (H.988/M.1580) Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirmesi [s. 1-108]’, Unpubd. MA thesis, Erciyes Üniversitesi, Kayseri (2014), 86.

⁷⁷ ‘Hüküm 59’ (1580), 59/43 in S. Sakarya, ‘43 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri’, 86.

⁷⁸ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 91.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

Ottoman Empire. It would seem from the evidence of Harborne that, from the very beginning, it would be the trading company that was expected to shoulder the large majority of the responsibility. The relatively hands-off approach of the English court allowed ambassadors significant freedom in their management of their work, but it came at the cost of minimal and unreliable funding from the English crown. This in turn necessitated English ambassadors to integrate themselves into Ottoman political networks and factions in order to maintain standing and get their job done without recourse to funding on a par with other large European embassies in the Ottoman capital.

Harborne produced two documents detailing his projected expenditure, which are preserved in the Bodleian Library's Tanner Manuscripts. Another anonymous and less thorough estimate of expenditure exists in the Yelverton collection of the British Library, in a hand quite reminiscent of Harborne's secretary Edward Barton, along with a list of the sultan's supposed quarterly payments from the imperial treasury.⁸⁰ Evidently Harborne's group had made serious preparations for the English embassy at the same time that they were lobbying at court for its official creation. From Harborne's detailed estimates of expenditure, it is possible to assess quite accurately the costs of England's embassy in Istanbul. The mixture of currencies used in his document also suggests rough 1582 values of 60 *akçe* to 1 ducat, with both equivalent to 7 English shillings.⁸¹ This gives a rough exchange rate – imagined rather than real, as English currency was not exchangeable at this time – of 8.57 between the *akçe* and the shilling, or 171.4 between *akçe* and pound. The total estimated annual cost of Harborne's embassy at 1582 prices was therefore £1561 6s, since the values in *akçe* come to 267,606.⁸² Of this, 87,000 *akçe* – £507 12s – was covered by the sultan's annual stipend for ambassadors, leaving an outstanding amount of £1053 14s to be covered by the company and

⁸⁰ William Harborne?/Edward Barton?, 'An Estimate of those Charges incident to anie Christian Ambassador at Constantinople' (no date), Add. Mss 48026 ff.4-5, *BL*; William Harborne?/Edward Barton?, 'A Briefe extract specifyinge the certen daillie paymentes answered quarterlie in time of peace by the Gran Sig^r out of his treasure' (no date), Add. Mss 48026 ff.251-3, *BL*.

⁸¹ Harborne, 'Estimate of expenses'.

⁸² *Ibid.*

English government. Gary M. Bell's figures suggest that the official outlay from the English crown for Harborne's embassy was £200 per annum.⁸³ This left the Turkey Company with the not insubstantial bill of £854 towards the embassy every year. If these figures are correct, it is no wonder that there was so much squabbling over money and accumulation of debt as the embassy developed in the following two decades. Interestingly, it also means that the second biggest investor in the English embassy, after the Turkey Company, was the Ottoman sultan, providing a third of the embassy's annual revenue. The English crown's contribution pales in comparison to these figures.

The list of expenses also provides an insight into the membership of Harborne's embassy household and how it was run. Harborne's personal household consisted of 23 members, of whom 16 were salaried. Salaried individuals included the secretary Edward Barton, the minister Peter Sefton, Elias Osborne – presumably offspring or a relative of Edward Osborne the head of the company – and the embassy dragomans. The embassy also covered rent and food costs for the house of John Bate. Master Bate was another influential Turkey Company merchant, who was living in the house formerly rented by Harborne in Istanbul and was probably responsible for the on-the-ground logistics of renting the old mansion of Arap Ahmet in Istanbul after Harborne was confirmed in England as ambassador.⁸⁴ The dragomans were the single largest expense other than food. As mentioned above, Mustafa Beg was retained for his influence over lower officials, but Giacomo de Merzo was deployed for engagements with higher officials, presumably to protect Mustafa against pressure from above. It was something of a coup for the English embassy to be able to take on de Merzo, who had been a Venetian consul that the *bailo* was very disappointed to lose to the service of another ambassador, though he stood to earn more in a higher position in English service.⁸⁵ A third dragoman, Giacomo de Antonio, was employed for everyday household

⁸³ Gary M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives 1509-1688* (London, 1990), 283.

⁸⁴ Harborne, 'Estimate of expenses'.

⁸⁵ Moresini, 'to the Doge and Senate' 17th May 1583, *Venice*, viii, 571-2.

translation business.⁸⁶ The rent for the mansion, ‘Rapamat’, was only 14140 each year and included the wages of a gardener. 12920 was spent on four janissaries, and 9666 on stable costs, including wages for stable workers. 3720 was to be spent on domestic servants, all of whom seem to be male Orthodox Christians: Dymo (Dimitris?) the porter, Mighell (Michalis) the cook, Wills the tailor, and George (Giorgios) the ‘Greek scullion’.⁸⁷ 6400 went on liveries for household members, and 1900 on clothing costs for specific embassy members, including the minister. 4280 and 3400 respectively were put aside for purchasing *bayram* gifts, and for ‘the fees of officers of the court’, which included ‘The Treasurer of the Household who payeth our pension in money’. Only 6000 was estimated as the cost of going to and from court, and charges for documents and notaries.⁸⁸

For a direct comparison of costs, extensive records of spending for the Habsburg embassy to the Ottoman Empire in the early 1580s exist. In 1582, at a rate of 1 taller to 45 *akçe*, the Habsburg embassy spent 1280 *taller* 9 *akçe*.⁸⁹ This equates to 57609 *akçe* spent in a single month, which is roughly £336 2s – more than the English embassy was allotted by the English crown in a year, and 21.5% of their annual budget. If the English embassy was to come in on budget for the year, their maximum monthly outgoings would be £130 2s – a fraction of the money being spent by the Habsburgs. The total Habsburg spend from 8th March 1580 to 19th August 1583 was 28,372.56 *taller* – 1,276,765 *akçe*.⁹⁰ Their three-year spend would have kept Harborne’s embassy going for 4 years and 282 days. This suggests that the English embassy was being run very cheaply by the standards of diplomacy in Istanbul at the time. The £1913 19s 1d spent on gifts for Harborne’s arrival was, after all, a one-off expense not intended to be repeated regularly – hence the five-year delay after Harborne’s departure before Barton was similarly recognised.⁹¹ Besides which,

⁸⁶ Harborne, ‘Estimate of expenses’.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Tobias P. Graf, *Der Preis der Diplomatie: Die Abrechnungen der kaiserlichen Gesandten an der Hohen Pforte, 1580-1583* (Heidelberg, 2016), 64.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, xiv.

⁹¹ ‘Presents to the Sultan by Harborne’ 24th April 1583, SP 97/1 ff.24-6, *TNA*.

Harborne suggests that representatives of Florence had spent the enormous sum of 10,000 ducats – 600,000 *akçe*, over £3500 – in unsuccessfully attempting to establish diplomatic and commercial ties with the Ottomans, again much more than the English spent.⁹² Since the English embassy could not necessarily outspend its rivals, it had to find other ways to compete for influence. One way they could do this was by building up networks of contacts within the Ottoman political system. Indeed, it seems that this was the expected standard of operating an embassy in Istanbul. An undated and unnamed English document amongst the MSS Tanner 79 at the Bodleian Library, collected alongside some of Harborne’s correspondence, and in a hand not unlike his, shows the extent of English interest in understanding the Ottoman hierarchy. The list includes, in order of importance and with a description of each role, from ‘the vicerey’ (grand vizier) and ‘bassaes of the benshe’ (the *divan*), down through *beylerbeyi*, admiral, janissary commander, *müftü*, *kadı*, *boca* (referring to Sadeddin), *nişancı*, *reisülküttab*, eventually covering palace roles such as *peyk*, ‘black bassa’, *bostancıbaşı*, *kapıcıbaşı*, and *acemoğlani*.⁹³ The document is remarkable for its comparisons with English positions of similar role and influence, with *çavuş* compared to ‘owr gentellman pensioners’ and Hoca Sadeddin Efendi (at this stage, incorrectly) to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It also clearly relates each position to their connections and influence with the highest officials, and therefore with influencing policy, which suggests that it was intelligence intended to aid embassy functioning, and intelligence well gained. The comparisons to English offices of state and church indicates Harborne’s awareness and keenness to clarify an unfamiliar political structure to an English audience – perhaps company or court funders of his embassy.

Looking at a wider comparison to contemporary English diplomatic spending, there was clearly no consistency in strategy concerning finance or policy across different embassies at this

⁹² William Harborne, ‘to Walsingham’ 28th August 1583, SP 97/1 ff.36-7, *TNA*.

⁹³ ‘Names and offices of the Great Turk’s servants’, MSS Tanner 79, ff. 181-2.

time. If lessons were learned from merchant establishments in Moscow or Istanbul, they certainly weren't applied across contexts. From a New Diplomatic History perspective, this is entirely what one would expect to see. Developments were not uniform and did not apply across differing geographies and cultural experiences. While the Ottoman system demanded a permanent English presence for any trade arrangements to be ratified, in Moscow, the Muscovy company was left to manage its own affairs with only occasional special embassies sent for official dialogue between royal courts.⁹⁴ This difference brought advantages and challenges. There was no permanent crown representative to upkeep, but no permanent crown representative to respond to developments and crises should they occur. Each special embassy essentially started afresh, with a new representative required to travel to Moscow and wait there for an audience with the Tsar, with all the outlay of time and resources that this demanded, for, as discussed, rather little strategic gain. Gary M. Bell's *Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives* lists crown envoys to Moscow as follows:⁹⁵

Envoy	Status	Expense	Period
Anthony Jenkinson	Semi-official commercial agent	£0/not specified	Apr 1566 – Dec 1567
Thomas Randolph	Special ambassador	£1526 17s	Jun 1568 – Aug 1569
Anthony Jenkinson	Special ambassador	Not specified	Jun 1571 – Sep 1572
Daniel Sylvester	Special ambassador	Not specified	May 1575 – Mar 1576
	Special ambassador	Not specified	Jun 1576 – died by lightning strike 1577
Sir Jerome Bowes	Special ambassador	£1882	June 1583 – Sept 1584
Jerome Horsey	Agent	£0	Mar 1586 – Oct 1587

⁹⁴ A.J. Gerson, 'The Organization and Early History of the Muscovy Company', in *Studies in the History of English Commerce in the Tudor Period*, ed. A.J. Gerson, E.V. Vaughan, and N.R. Deardorff (New York, 1912), 1–121.

⁹⁵ Gary M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives 1509-1688* (Cambridge, 2011), 221-4.

Dr Giles Fletcher	Special ambassador	Not specified	Jun 1588 – Sep 1589
Jerome Horsey	Special ambassador	40s/d = c£1080	Mar 1590 – Aug 1591
Francis Cherry	Special ambassador	Not specified	Apr 1598 – Mar 1599
Timothy Willis	Special ambassador	Not specified	Jul 1599 – spring 1600
Sir Richard Lee	Special ambassador (Muscovy & Sweden)	Not specified	May 1600 – July 1601
John Merrick	Special ambassador (Muscovy & Sweden)	Not specified	Oct 1601 – Sep 1602
Sir Thomas Smith	Special ambassador	Not specified	Jun 1605 – Sep 1605

Here we see that there were twelve separate ambassadors to Muscovy in a period of only a decade more than that of the first three English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire. Two of these doubled up as ambassadors to Sweden, while three failed to secure an audience with the Tsar, Timothy Willis even being expelled from Muscovite territory.⁹⁶ The Ottoman practice of requesting resident representatives was highly unusual for this time, but in the travel time and breaks of several years between some missions, here the logic and utility of maintaining semi-permanent or permanent representatives across such distances is illustrated – though clearly this was not a practice that caught on quickly, if at all during the early modern period outside those places pioneering it. Data on specific crown outlay on these special embassies is far from exhaustive. However, the forty shillings per day granted to Jerome Horsey is indicative of something of a standardised payment for special ambassadors. These envoys were certainly not working for free – Horsey’s ultimately fruitless embassy ran up costs of somewhere in the region of £1080. Later data for the 1618 embassy to Moscow of Dudley Digges (£1000) and Richard Bradshaw in 1657 (£1200), serve as further evidence of this similar budgetary ballpark for special ambassadors.⁹⁷ This was not limited to Moscow; special ambassadors sent to Portugal, Poland, and elsewhere were also

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 224-6.

regularly allotted a budget of 40s/d.⁹⁸ Interpreting the special embassies listed above without financial data as falling within that sort of budgetary range suggests an overall outlay of something like £13300 on embassies to Moscow from 1568-1605. What of those permanent commercial embassies in Istanbul?

Envoy	Status	Expense	Period
William Harborne	Visiting merchant	£0	1578-1582
	Resident ambassador	£200 p/a	Nov 1582 – Dec 1588
Edward Barton	Agent (1588-93) Resident ambassador	£1500 p/a	Aug 1588 – Jan 1598
Henry Lello	Agent (1598-9) Resident ambassador	£1350 p/a	Jan 1598 – Jun 1607
Thomas Glover	Resident ambassador	£100 p/a	Nov 1606 – Jan 1613 ⁹⁹

The cost of maintaining permanent embassies was clearly significantly higher in theory than the daily forty-shilling minimum standard for special embassies. However, in a similar timespan that saw twelve different envoys to Muscovy, there were only four English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire, each obtaining the role after significant experience working within Istanbul and the wider empire. On paper, the overall cost to the English crown of Harborne's embassy was £1200, Barton's £15000, Lello £10800, and Glover around £600. However, embassies were not always paid their dues promptly, if at all.¹⁰⁰ The markedly reduced outlay on Glover illustrates the reboot that occurred following Lello's tenure and the more narrow, commercial focus English diplomacy in the Ottoman Empire was set up to take after 1607. By the time of Sir Thomas Roe

⁹⁸ Ibid., *passim*.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 283-5. Where dates and agent status differ from Bell is based on the findings of this thesis.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapters 2-3 to follow.

in 1621, the annual cost had jumped back up to £1800, and by later in the seventeenth century, Sir Daniel Harvey (£3000 p/a, 1668-72) and Sir John Finch (£2800 p/a, 1672-82) led significantly more expensive embassies.

The overall running cost of English embassies in Istanbul to the crown between 1582 and 1607 was therefore a theoretical sum of £27000, though in reality not all of this money may have been paid out.¹⁰¹ At the 1582 rate of c£508, the Ottoman treasury spent £12700 in embassy stipends on the upkeep of the English embassy between 1582 and 1607.¹⁰² At certain points, particularly in Lello's leanest years at the beginning of the reign of James VI, the Ottoman stipend was surely the English embassy's most reliable source of income. The total known running cost of embassies to Muscovy from 1566 to 1607 is c£4488. However, applying the 40s/d rate to those special ambassadors for whom there is no specific data, the full cost may have been in the region of £13300. This is only around half the supposed cost of the English embassy in Istanbul, and there were some efficiencies in terms of ambassadors also visiting neighbouring Sweden, but the success rate of these occasional visitors was rather more limited. On several occasions, special ambassadors to Muscovy did not receive the audiences they desired or were expelled altogether. English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire enjoyed permanent access to the full range of Ottoman political actors in the capital as well as permanent representatives of France and Venice and visiting delegations from numerous other nations, all under consistent leadership. Harborne served as an envoy to Poland on his departure, and Lello to the Venetian senate.¹⁰³ Access to the Ottomans also proved financially lucrative for at least some notable, identifiable merchants, as well as strategically useful, particularly in the 1580s, in defence against Habsburg aggression. Put simply, though at least twice as expensive on paper, the permanent Istanbul embassy delivered far more in

¹⁰¹ See the recurrent financial issues ambassadors faced in each of Chapters 1-3.

¹⁰³ See Chapters 2 & 4.

terms of practical utility than mercantile agency in Moscow and infrequent special embassies. If Harborne's budget of £1054 p/a is accurate, and the costs of the embassy increased even a small amount year-on-year, it is clear that Turkey Company merchants paid out most of the costs of the upkeep of his position, and probably also a significant chunk of the costs of Barton and Lello's embassies, even with the official level of payment from the English treasury vastly increased. In the coming examples we will see that the level of financial support from the English crown was broadly in proportion to the amount of interest Elizabeth I's court had in directing their ambassador in Istanbul, leaving Harborne relative latitude to construct his own place within Ottoman politics, amongst the networks and clusters of the nebula of the imperial cosmocracy. This proved the best way for Harborne to defend the merchants reliant upon his official protection from the intrigues of both Ottoman court actors and rival European powers.

Opening Harborne's embassy: friends, rivals, and pirates

The Ambassador of the Queen of England, in spite of all the opposition offered to him by the French Ambassador, has this morning kissed the Sultan's hands. His suite consisted of over eight Chiaus. He has had the usual banquet and the same provision as the French Ambassador. He has presented his Majesty with a most beautiful watch set with jewels and pearls, ten pairs of shoes, two pretty lap dogs, twelve lengths of Royal cloth, two lengths of white linen, and thirteen pieces of silver gilt. He has been well received by his Majesty, who is flattered that such a powerful Queen should have sent from four thousand miles away to tell him that she is all for him and desires his friendship.¹⁰⁴

Following Harborne's return to London, his lobbying on behalf of the newly-formed Turkey Company for the creation of an embassy in Istanbul was eventually successful, and he was dispatched to Istanbul with credentials and gifts in 1583.¹⁰⁵ Between 1582-3, the French embassy continued to protect English trade in the Ottoman Empire, and the French government English

¹⁰⁴ Giovanni Francesco Moresini, 'to the Doge and Senate' 3rd May 1583, *Venice*, viii, 55.

¹⁰⁵ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 176-200.

shipping in the Mediterranean.¹⁰⁶ Once in Istanbul, Harborne's embassy began the process of network-building to aid his ability to defend English interests within the Ottoman Empire. However, the route to Harborne's installation had not been straightforward, and he first relied on support from home and connections built in Istanbul to rescue him from the consequences of an impetuous mistake and a lesson in not trusting all the merchants and seamen under his protection: the incident of the *Bark Roe*.

Harborne travelled to Chios to engage in trade after his successful time in Istanbul. Evidence from French ambassador Jacques de Germigny's letter to Henri III about Harborne reveals that, as part of his supposed ambassadorial duties to Christians trading under the French flag, he secured aid for Harborne's trade activities in Chios when he faced difficulty there.¹⁰⁷ Germigny explicitly connects this with his duty to demonstrate French pre-eminence over Christian trade:

Wishing to assure myself that nothing should come about to the prejudice of your Majesty's authority through those letters [i.e. the royal correspondence initiated by Harborne's mission], I did not want to enquire about their contents: which I said to him to encourage him to communicate them to me, and so he played his little game, informing me that he had a single letter from said queen to this lord, requesting the release of certain English slaves. Upon which I answered him that, in view of the fact he was trading under your banner, it would not be a bad idea if I sent your dragoman.¹⁰⁸

Reliable intercession was supposed to undermine Harborne's cause and reaffirm the dominant French position. This was a catastrophic policy misstep, which shows de Germigny's lack of practice with the Ottoman legal system. Murad III made it quite clear that the Ottomans considered themselves free to negotiate commercial matters with any visiting envoy, regardless of whether or not the French considered this a violation of their privileges, though the Ottoman side was happy to accept French advice and mediation in dealing with the English proposals.¹⁰⁹ The sultan was, of course, in the divinely appointed position of being able to enforce order and justice

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 194-5.

¹⁰⁷ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 79-80.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 120-2.

between the Ottomans neighbours east and west. The irony of de Germigny's duty to uphold the honour of his nation and office (and to 'further the Catholic cause'), and therefore meticulously support Harborne as an English merchant regardless, is that without French support, and without an English *ahdname* having been ratified by both courts and an ambassador in place, Harborne would have had a much harder time of getting ordinary business done in Istanbul, let alone elsewhere.¹¹⁰ There is only so far that letters between royal courts could go; the reality of day-to-day life with low-level officials and ordinary people would have been much more difficult for Harborne had the French embassy been more reticent in their support once, as they called it, the 'little game' of the 'arrogant merchant' had been discovered.¹¹¹ It was the case, particularly away from Istanbul in the vast and often decentralised Ottoman territories, that foreign merchants would largely have to deal with temporary officials (*emin*), such as tax-farmers (*mültezim*).¹¹² These officials may have been underinformed, or simply dishonest brokers, meaning there was a constant potential for strife and need for negotiation with them, which was why some merchants carried printed copies of their capitulations.¹¹³ This would become a problem for Harborne in Chios.

Harborne had further business interests to pursue in Chios and planned a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.¹¹⁴ Meanwhile, de Germigny and incoming Venetian *bailo* Paolo Contarini were confident that the English capitulations would be withdrawn with Harborne no longer present in the Ottoman capital, if they had not been already, and Germigny once again aided an English merchant invoking the protection of the French *ahdname*.¹¹⁵ Also in September 1580, the *Bark Roe*, a 160 ton merchant ship owned by a Newcastle merchant named Roger Roe, left London for the

¹¹⁰ 'Instruction à Monsieur de Germigny, sur sa négociation à la Porte du Grand Seigneur' in *Recueil des pièces choisies, extraites sur les originaux de la négociation de M^r de Germigny, de Chalon sur Saône, Baron de Germoles, Conseiller du Roy & son Ambassadeur à la Porte du grand Seigneur* (Lyon, 1661), unpaginated for first 9 pages, iv of unpaginated section.

¹¹¹ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 78-80; Idem., 'The Turkish documents relating to Edward Barton's embassy to the Porte (1588-1598)', unpubd. PhD thesis, University of Manchester (1965), 5-6.

¹¹² Bulut, *Ottoman-Dutch Economic Relations*, 54.

¹¹³ 'Capitulations', 20th May 1604, 134CP 1 – 'Turquie Supplement', Centre des archives diplomatiques du ministère des affaires étrangères, La Courneuve, Paris, ff. 119-127.

¹¹⁴ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 131-8.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 133-8.

Mediterranean.¹¹⁶ It traded its cargo at Livorno, Malta, and finally Chios. Along with the cargo destined for Italy, it was carrying lead from broken bells, quite possibly bound for Ottoman Chios.¹¹⁷ Skilliter presents depositions of the crew of the ship made to the Maltese Inquisition as illustrative evidence of their encounter with Harborne on the Aegean island.¹¹⁸ From one of these statements, it is suggested that Harborne was somewhat prematurely referring to himself as the ‘Queen’s ambassador at the court of the Turk’. Others more simply refer to him as an agent or negotiator, but emphasise his wealth and standing, his janissary guard, and his lodging alongside his Flemish partner with the French consul on Chios. They played the role of generous hosts to the ship’s captain.

It was Harborne’s swaggering largesse and association with the *Bark Roe*’s captain that provided the catalyst for his most significant and damaging error of his negotiation period in the Ottoman Empire. When the ship tried to leave Chios, a local official challenged their right to trade under French documentation, presumably as Harborne had let word get around that he was ‘the English ambassador’. Harborne alleges that what happened next was ‘at theire and the consul his requeste’ – and therefore not really his fault: ‘to ease them both of trouble and greate expence, w^{ch} laps of time mighte have procured to theire great prejudice, by vertue of thinglishe charter not ever before shewed, I released Gratis: and sett free out of that porte wthout anie extraordinarie charge to anie of theofficers’.¹¹⁹ Harborne used the English privileges knowing that they were not yet valid. He admits himself that they had yet to come into effect, and that the *Bark Roe* had valid French documentation, that the French consul could have intervened to force the customs official to accept. Perhaps, having styled himself as the *de facto* ambassador, he felt pressured into acting to ensure a smooth release of the ship, thinking that it was unlikely that a premature use of the English

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 150.

¹¹⁷ Andrew P. Vella, *An Elizabethan-Ottoman Conspiracy* (Valletta, 1972), 40.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 151-3.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

abdnâme would provoke any negative consequences. What stands out is Harborne's claim that he produced the document at the urging of the French consul. While this may be a fabrication to take some of the heat away from Harborne having acted rashly, if true, it suggests that Harborne may have fallen into a carefully laid trap. Perhaps, unlike his superior in Istanbul, the French consul at Chios was happy to withdraw French protection for English trade, knowing that the English *abdnâme* could not yet stand up by law, calling its validity into question. Certainly, there was less pressure on a local consul to uphold French universal claims than for the ambassador. Whatever the reason, Harborne may have got away with prematurely using his recently gained English privileges, had it not been for the subsequent actions of the *Bark Roe* once their free passage had been secured.

The incident of the *Bark Roe* brings to the fore an issue endemic to the Mediterranean in the early modern period, which was piracy.¹²⁰ This was a thorn in the side for early English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire in maintaining relations between their state and the others affected – all of those alongside them in Istanbul plus the Ottomans – and between the trade company, its merchants, and their own state. The *Bark Roe* incident is perhaps indicative of one of the more pragmatic reasons behind the Turkey and eventual Levant Companies serving as monopolies for their membership network and their apprentices and preferred appointees – if the company could control its membership, they could then have a level of confidence that dues would be paid (to them and the Ottomans), documentation would be used correctly, and their ships would not then have decided to turn to piracy, preying on Ottoman shipping they encountered on their way home. The *Bark Roe*, in a blatant act of piracy in Ottoman waters, attacked and hijacked two Greek ships, subjects of Uluç Ali Paşa, who had been flying Christian standards.¹²¹ The Greek sailors who had managed to escape from the captured ships raised the alarm with Marco Seguri at Zante, a Venetian

¹²⁰ Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton, 2000); idem., *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton, 2010).

¹²¹ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 159-60; Harborne, 'to the Ld. Treasurer', f.4.

who was shipping cargo aboard their vessels, and immediately escalated the case to the *bailo* in Istanbul. The Greek sailors escalated the issue themselves to the Ottoman court, invoking the protection of Uluç Ali Paşa as their *beylerbeyi*.¹²² He, already annoyed that Harborne's English negotiations had forced him to free his English slaves, demanded a 40,000 ducat fine to be levied against his goods as well as punishment against his person and the rest of the English trading nation within Ottoman domains.¹²³ Seguri complained to the *bailo* that he had lost 12,000 ducats on the ships, giving the *bailo* ample excuse to ensure that the English *abdname* was conclusively revoked.¹²⁴

Harborne was arrested, despite Mustafa Beg rallying to his defence, and had no other option than to request to be sent to the French embassy in the custody of a *çavuş* in the hope of obtaining the protection provided by the valid French *abdname*. 'Monsieur de Germigni... frendlie wth his secretaire and drogeman returning me, certified that I was under his protexion'.¹²⁵ This must have been a victorious moment for de Germigny, who in stepping in to save Harborne, was able on this occasion to prove the supremacy of French representation in the Ottoman capital, and seemingly sweep aside any pretence of equal English terms. The English *abdname*, it seemed, had been revoked. Harborne was ordered to remain in the city until the Greek case had been settled, and the Ottoman authorities sent word to the *kadı* of Chios to determine whether the *Bark Roe* had departed under the French flag, or illegally under the invalid English charter. Harborne scrambled to persuade and bribe the necessary parties to conceal the truth ('remembering a pennie before extremetie to excuse a pounce out of time not regarded'). Luckily for Harborne, *kaymakam* Siyavuş Paşa and the *nişancı* Feridun Paşa were much more well-disposed to establishing Anglo-Ottoman ties, with Siyavuş speaking to Harborne through Mustafa on 8th June 1581 to assure him that the

¹²² Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 160.

¹²³ Harborne, 'to the Ld. Treasurer'; for Hasan's career and political preferences, see: Tobias Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades* (Oxford, 2017), and Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York, 2010).

¹²⁴ Harborne, 'to the Ld. Treasurer'.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

revoked *abdnâme* would still be ratified as soon as an official ambassador arrived with gifts.¹²⁶ It seems that, once taken into the orbit of the sultan, it was much harder for the English nation to then be set loose or spat out than the disturbance that one act of piracy could account for.

Germigny wrote to Henri to report on this English scandal, and the failure of Harborne's attempt to use the English capitulations. However, despite apparent assurances from Siyavuş that the matter will be 'hindered', Germigny writes that Harborne expects an ambassador to arrive soon, and that he is continuing to resist this unless the king has other diplomatic intentions.¹²⁷ France now had the Venetian embassy working in concert to 'interrupt the negotiation of these English merchants'.¹²⁸ Despite a letter of apology sent by Elizabeth I to Murad III, in which she obliquely admits the piratical tendencies of some of her subjects, the momentum was now with France.¹²⁹ Their privileges were renewed and extended on 12th July 1581, apparently invalidating all of Harborne's efforts.¹³⁰ The opening article of the new French *abdnâme* explicitly stated that English merchants must trade under French protection:

Apart from the Vendiklü, the merchants of Jeneviz and İngiltere and Pürtuqāl and İspāniyye and Qatalān and Chichiliyye and Anqūna and Dūbrevenik and all those who travel under the name and banner of the Emperor of Frāncha from days of old until the present time, by whatsoever means they travel, from henceforth also, as before, in that way they shall come and go with their galleons and ships, minding their own business, as long as on their part there shall not be committed any action contrary to the peace and good harmony which causes security and happiness.¹³¹

The second clause also granted the French official pre-eminence amongst Christian princes and their representatives.¹³² Germigny reported this diplomatic victory much more concisely in his

¹²⁶ Ibid; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, vi, ed. Nuri Akbayar & Seyit Ali Kahraman (Istanbul, 1996), 1779; Christine Woodhead, 'Scribal Chaos? Observations on the post of *re'isülküttab* in the late sixteenth century' in Eugenia Kermeli & Oktay Özel (eds.), *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and 'Black Holes': contributions in honour of Colin Imber* (Istanbul, 2006), 155-72.

¹²⁷ Jacques de Germigny, 'to Henri III' 10th June 1581 in Ernest Charrière (ed.), *Négociations*, 55n.

¹²⁸ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 164.

¹²⁹ Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 189-91.

¹³⁰ Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 170.

¹³¹ 'Translation of Articles I, II, XIX, XXV, of the capitulations granted by Murād III to Henri III of France. Constantinople, first decade of Jumādā II 989 / 3-12 July 1581', in Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 170-1.

¹³² Ibid., 170-1.

report of 20th July 1581.¹³³ Germigny reported further on French reaffirmation of pre-eminence over English merchants in a letter of 16th September, remarking on how he had extended French consular authority to English merchants trading in Morea, and boasted of Harborne resubmitting himself to French authority in writing.¹³⁴ Harborne's rash decision to use the as-yet invalid English *abdname*, which embroiled him in the *Bark Roe*'s blatant act of piracy, seemed to have lost England everything that he had gained. Moreover, it had lost him much of the credit – both materially and in terms of his standing at court – that he had gained in the process of his successful Istanbul negotiations. How could it be that he was installed as a resident English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire only eighteen months later?

Elizabeth I was moved to write a letter of apology to Murad III regarding the *Bark Roe* incident, emphasising how it was intolerable to her:

how much it doeth infringe the credit of our faith, violate the force of our authoritie, and impeach the estimation of our word faithfully given unto your Imperiall dignitie.¹³⁵

The queen further promised restitution and affirmed her commitment to friendship with Murad.¹³⁶ This was multi-tier diplomacy coming to Harborne's rescue, underpinning the establishment of English capitulations. Elizabeth indicated her nation's desire to engage positively with the sultan and uphold justice, and therefore there was no concern in subsequently accepting and confirming her ambassador on his arrival with a suitable gift. It probably also helped that, in Elizabeth's letter, the English crown attempts to pass the blame onto poor enforcement by French officials, claiming that the *Bark Roe* committed its acts of piracy while trading under the French flag.¹³⁷ This is an episode in which the value of strong royal-tier diplomacy was a required corrective

¹³³ Germigny, 'to Henri III' 20th July 1581 in E. Charrière (ed.), *Négociations*, iv, 62-66.

¹³⁴ Idem., 'to Henri III' 16th September 1581 in E. Charrière (ed.), *Négociations*, iv, 78n.

¹³⁵ Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 190.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 190.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 191: 'Neither they which have committed these evil parts had any power under your highnesse safeconduct graunted unto our subjects, but from some other safeconduct, whether it were true or fained, we knowe not, or whether they bought it of any person within the government of Marseils'.

for the churn of ordinary quotidian experiences in Anglo-Ottoman trade – in this case, English piracy – as Harborne’s position was not yet established sufficiently to manage the fallout and defend himself. This would soon change once he was, per Ottoman protocol, officially in post.

The example of the *Bark Roe* incident strongly brings several aspects to the fore. First, once a nation had shown their friendship to the sultan and been drawn into the Ottoman orbit, it was difficult for them to be shaken out of this, regardless of scandal or third-party pressure. The French and Venetians no doubt tried very hard to remove this English presence from the Ottoman Empire from March of 1580, when Germigny wrote to Henri III about hearing ‘just a few days ago’ about the true extent of Harborne’s activities.¹³⁸ However, even with Harborne having been implicated in an act of English piracy, and despite the temporary Ottoman clarification in the new French capitulations that the English should continue to seek the protection of the French ambassador in the meantime, proper recourse to Ottoman protocol in the eventual receipt of a declared ambassador with gifts to attend the ceremonial eventually secured English independent rights within the Ottoman Empire. Vital in this was also the tone struck in Elizabeth I’s royal correspondence with Murad III, which framed matters in a way agreeable to Ottoman conceptions of order, justice, and the balance of friendship between nations in contact with the central figure of the sultan. Likewise, Harborne’s standing that he had built in Istanbul also helped his cause, with contacts in palace positions willing to reassure him and defend his position, and indeed the promise of valuable trade with England – even the *Bark Roe* had been trading in lead, after all. Most interestingly, the episode that Harborne experienced serves as a good indicator of why much of the daily duties of ambassadors consisted of doing things that supported the ability of company merchants to trade freely; out in the provinces, even with valid credentials, things could be difficult or go wrong. This experience likely stood Harborne in good stead in understanding how precarious

¹³⁸ Published as a footnote in E Charrière, *Négociations*, as a footnote, 884-6; Translated by S. Skilliter in *William Harborne*, 78-80.

things could be for his colleagues trading out in places like Chios, Patras, and Aleppo. It also, as we will see, seeded another reason for his eventual clash with Uluç Ali Paşa.

Building connections in the Ottoman Capital

While Mustafa Beg, who supported Harborne throughout the establishment phase of the embassy, clearly stood to benefit from the establishment of an English embassy with him as head dragoman, it is also clear that Siyavuş Paşa, as *kaymakam*, and *nişancı* Feridun Paşa, had much to gain from reinstating English privileges after the *Bark Roe* incident. Siyavuş Paşa, as a *damat* of the Ottoman dynasty and second vizier standing in for the absent grand vizier, through supporting the smooth ratification of a new *abdname* and a new foreign embassy could gain credit and reputation, as well as a new set of foreign political actors with an allegiance to him to use in internal political rivalries with other viziers.¹³⁹ Remembered by historian Peçevi İbrahim as close to the sultan, another personal advantage for him in arranging for the arrival of a new embassy was the new source of gifts it would bring to the sultan and himself as grand vizier.¹⁴⁰ Germigny, for example, had arrived with gifts of clocks ‘en tour de garny de deux bouëttes de crystal’ for Sokollu Mehmed Paşa in order to curry his favour for France, as well as equivalent gifts of clothing to those given to the sultan, a mirror for Mehmed’s wife, and a smaller clock for his son.¹⁴¹ Also described as *ılmli* – restrained – in his actions according to B.S. Baykal’s modernisation of Peçevi, his desire to seek a moderate course may have been a driving factor in accepting an English embassy as arranged by the great Sokollu Mehmed and approved by Murad III as part of a new balance of the status quo, and to avoid a course of action contrary to the wishes of Sinan, still officially grand vizier.¹⁴² As *nişancı*, Feridun was one of the first ports of call for ambassadors seeking official documents, and subsequently made a lot of money out of associating with embassies, so would naturally be

¹³⁹ İsmail Hami Danişmend, *Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı*, v (Istanbul, 1971).

¹⁴⁰ Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, ii, ed. B.S. Baykal (Ankara, 1982), 14-5.

¹⁴¹ ‘Instruction à Monsieur de Germigny’, ix-1.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 15.

interested in allowing the English to set up their embassy despite pressure from elsewhere. The Habsburg embassy spent 43 *taller* on the *nişancı* in a single transaction in September 1580, which is 1978 *akçe* or £11 11s – a large sum for a single assignment.¹⁴³ The *nişancı* was also listed amongst the positions which would receive gifts on an ambassador's official arrival, both from the French and the English.¹⁴⁴

In the addenda to Harborne's report to Walsingham shortly after arriving in Istanbul in 1583, he complains that while the sultan was very pleased with the gifts presented to him, Siyavuş, now grand vizier in his own right, was not.¹⁴⁵ Harborne suggests that this was because the grand vizier's 'hollow heart, filled up with the Venetian their gold'.¹⁴⁶ It may simply have been the case that, with competition for the grand vizirate open following the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed in 1579 and the death of elderly statesman Şemsi Ahmed in 1580, receiving financial and moral support from the Venetians in return for his favour was a useful source of cash and prestige to consolidate his hold on the position.¹⁴⁷ This seems a reasonable supposition given Siyavuş' apparent tendency towards moderation. If the influence of the Venetians and French in lobbying against the English was on the rise, it would have been a resistance-free political course to follow for the grand vizier, with few consequences amongst other viziers, and support from Uluç Ali. Moreover, if Peçevi's suggestion that Siyavuş was unmoved by bribes is to be accepted, this indicates even more strongly that it was purely for political benefit that he should give the newly-arrived English embassy the cold shoulder.¹⁴⁸ Reliable allies in Istanbul – foreign or otherwise – were especially useful with so many vezirs serving as generals on the eastern front in the Ottoman-Safavid War. Koca Sinan Paşa's first vizirate had collapsed due to pressure from rivals in Istanbul following a defeat sustained

¹⁴³ Graf, *Preis der Diplomatie*, 11.

¹⁴⁴ 'Instruction à Monsieur de Germigny', 1-2; William Harborne, 'Presents to the Sultan'.

¹⁴⁵ William Harborne, '[Harborne to Walsingham]' 23rd May 1583, SP 97/1 f.32, *TNA*.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Danişmend, *İzablı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, i (Istanbul, 2011), 1780-1.

¹⁴⁸ Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, ii, 15.

by one of his lieutenants in Georgia.¹⁴⁹ Harborne was gone from Istanbul for many months, while the Venetian *bailo* was present and reliable. However, Siyavuş soon brought his own vizirate crashing down through his interference on the eastern front, in attempting to cause a revolt amongst rival vizier Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa's troops, which conversely led to them successfully campaigning for Siyavuş' removal on 25th July 1584.¹⁵⁰

Despite his long absence, the connections that Harborne had established in his first visit proved instantly useful. He successfully poached de Merzo from Venetian service, clearly following prior promises given his appearance in the cost estimates of 1582, and, in his attempts to prevent Merzo joining Harborne, the *bailo* enlisted the services of Solomon Ashkenazi, knowing him to also be a close contact of Harborne.¹⁵¹ Ashkenazi was a former physician and confidante of Sokollu Mehmed, and like Harborne, a merchant and former Ottoman envoy to Venice.¹⁵² These contacts from outside the official political hierarchy could be useful allies, as they were more reliant on embassy patronage for their wealth and standing, and may have different relationships with Ottoman officials than the ambassador, which in turn could be advantageous. Edward Barton's letter to Walsingham of 13th September 1588 reveals that Harborne had used 'Dom Álvaro' to free English captives kept by the unfriendly Uluç Ali Paşa, since the admiral was more kindly disposed to Álvaro and willing to send him nine English slaves as a present.¹⁵³ Given the difficulty of implanting the English embassy in the volatile political climate of 1580s Istanbul, Ottoman allies obtained during the original 1577-82 mission, and any *zımmi* and non-Ottoman go-betweens available for service, were vital to Harborne in getting his job done in those early years. Unfortunately, 'the compendious brevitie' that Harborne recommended to Barton as the ideal

¹⁴⁹ Danişmend, *Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı*, v.

¹⁵⁰ Idem., *İzablı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, i, 1783.

¹⁵¹ Moresini, 'to the Doge and Senate', 17th May 1583.

¹⁵² Benjamin Arbel, 'Ashkenazi, Solomon' in N.A. Stillman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (Leiden, 2010), online edition.

¹⁵³ Edward Barton, 'Barton to [Walsingham?]' 13th September 1588, SP 97/1 f.144, N.A.

register for reporting back to the English court in dispatches means that it is largely from other sources that information about these connections is gleaned, obscuring further details about how he initiated and valued these relationships.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the development of relationships with figures as close to the imperial household as possible, and spread across other valuable Istanbul households and networks, gave Harborne various useful connections to exploit in establishing the position of his embassy within the sultan's orbit in the 1580s.

The quotidian workload and the importance of good connections

The freedom of English slaves, despite being required by the *ahdname* ratified by both sides by the opening of Harborne's embassy, appears to have been a difficult issue for the ambassador to resolve in his first year, and is indicative of the difficulty Harborne had in re-establishing himself after a long absence from Istanbul.¹⁵⁵ Sustained French and Venetian pressure on the grand vizier to have Harborne cast out by the sultan and the English capitulations annulled caused a delay in freeing one Edward Buggins, despite it being one of Harborne's customary two free wishes to the sultan on his acceptance as ambassador.¹⁵⁶ The Venetian ambassador received official instructions to support French attempts to remove Harborne on 5th January 1584, with 5000 chequins to be offered to Siyavuş Paşa for his support, and up to 500 for any other figures who could be of assistance.¹⁵⁷ Combined French and Venetian efforts had the support of the *yeniçeri ağası* İbrahim Ağa, as well as the grand vizier, but Murad III, pleased with his correspondence with Elizabeth, held firm that he could not insult a friendly prince by expelling their embassy after it had been accepted.¹⁵⁸ This, of course, would be against the principles of the cosmocrat sultan, seeking to extend his divine order to encompass a global balance under Ottoman justice. By September of

¹⁵⁴ William Harborne, 'Letter of Instruction to Barton', MSS Tanner 79 f.77, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

¹⁵⁵ Idem., 'Harborne to Walsingham' 27th January 1584, SP 97/1 f.52, *NA*.

¹⁵⁶ Idem., 'Harborne to Walsingham' 15th January 1584, SP 97/1 f.46, *NA*.

¹⁵⁷ 'The Doge and Senate to the Venetian Ambassador in Constantinople' 5th January 1584, *Venice*, viii, 78.

¹⁵⁸ Giovanni Moresini, 'to the Doge and Senate' 6th March 1584, *Venice*, viii, 83-87; idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 20th March 1584, *Venice*, viii, 83-87; idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 22nd May 1584, *Venice*, viii, 92-96; Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, vi, 1765.

1584, with French ambassador Germigny leaving without success, and Siyavuş having been ousted from power, the chance to remove Harborne and the English embassy appeared to have passed.¹⁵⁹ Ironically, this is the first point at which Harborne asks to be granted leave to return to England, exhausted from the difficulties of his first year as ambassador.¹⁶⁰ In the same dispatch, he also reveals that Safiye Sultan and Şehzade Murad had preferred Sinan Paşa – former associate of Sokollu Mehmed – and had pressured Özdemiroğlu Osman to secure Sinan’s return to the grand vizirate after the downfall of Siyavuş, perhaps hinting at the source of pushback against pressure from France and Venice through Siyavuş and the *yeniçeri ağası* to remove Harborne, a campaign harmful to the interests of the Ottoman economy and its governing ideology.¹⁶¹ If the *beseke* and *şehzade* were opposed to Siyavuş – perhaps not surprising given his supposed closeness to the sultan and marriage to another female of the imperial dynasty – it makes sense that they would seek to block him the major political coup of forcing the expulsion of an embassy and reversing a foreign policy decision, if this was truly what Siyavuş wanted at all. It would also have demonstrated that France and Venice wielded a troubling level of influence over Ottoman policy had it been allowed to happen, not conducive to conception of Ottoman-led worldly order.

This dispatch also contains the report of Harborne’s intent to tackle the problem of hostility towards English shipping from the North African coast, a mission for which his secretary, Edward Barton, was chosen as an envoy.¹⁶² This trip shows further evidence of an embassy being integrated into the politics of the host court. Barton was an important figure in the embassy’s functioning in the Ottoman political landscape, to the extent that Harborne was recommending him as his successor as early as November 1584 based on his competence in Ottoman affairs.¹⁶³ He was dispatched on a mission to North Africa in 1584-5, in which he was charged with the protection

¹⁵⁹ Giovanni Moresini, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 3rd September 1584, *Venice*, viii, 101.

¹⁶⁰ William Harborne, ‘Harborne to Walsingham’ 1st September 1584, SP 97/1 f.68, *NA*.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*; Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 156.

¹⁶² Harborne, ‘to Walsingham’ 1st September 1584.

¹⁶³ William Harborne, ‘Harborne to Walsingham’ 24th November 1584, SP 97/1 f.77, *NA*.

of English trade shipping in Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, and then with the release of the crew of the English ship *Jesus*, captive in Tripoli.¹⁶⁴ His visit to the Barbary coast sees him displaying the skills that would stand him in such excellent stead once he took on the role of ambassador. This trip to North Africa was undoubtedly a formative experience for Barton, so early in his career, and aged perhaps 22 or 23. Due to the hostility of Catholic navies and pirates in the western Mediterranean towards English shipping, Turkey Company shipping was routed along the friendlier North African coast, via Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. Nevertheless, Catholic galleys still lay in wait to ambush English ships on the edges of these friendly zones, necessitating them to pre-emptively fire at any unidentified galleys approaching them, causing friction with North African sailors.¹⁶⁵ Several English ships were sunk or captured off the coast of Algiers, and the survivors taken into slavery.¹⁶⁶ Meanwhile, in May 1584, the crew of the English ship *Jesus*, visiting Tripoli, had been sentenced to become the slaves of Beylerbeyi Ramadan Paşa for harbouring and attempting to aid the escape of a European merchant, Patrone Norado, who owed a significant sum of money to a local man.¹⁶⁷

Barton was dispatched by Harborne to the North African coast to resolve this situation, with Harborne sending on further instructions by letter on 24th June 1584, along with three imperial orders for the three *beylerbeyleri* in Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli.¹⁶⁸ Barton seemingly went first to Algiers, where he was received by Uluç Hasan Paşa with apparent success, as English rights were reaffirmed despite the belief of Algiers-based factor John Tipton that English ships could legally be sunk or captured if they mistakenly opened fire on Barbary ships.¹⁶⁹ Uluç Hasan would later be an ally of Barton during his time as ambassador, so this meeting in 1584 is undoubtedly of significance, especially as it put the English embassy in contact with Uluç Hasan's English eunuch

¹⁶⁴ Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 269-309.

¹⁶⁵ See the Sultan's order to Hasan Paşa, Beylerbeyi of Algiers, and Harborne's letter of explanation and instruction to John Tipton: Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 275-283.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 275-6.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 296-302.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 284-5.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 274-282.

majordomo, Hasan Ağa, to whom Harborne wrote in 1586, and who was a captive from one of the English ships.¹⁷⁰ This was both an important Ottoman court connection to develop, and evidence of the continued value of identity based on national origin between those who shared it in common, regardless of subsequent affiliations. Barton's dispatch on meeting again with Hasan Paşa in 1588, this time as *de facto* English ambassador and Ottoman grand admiral, reveals one of the motivations for the friendship between the two – as a former corsair and outsider from Ottoman central government, Hasan faced a great deal of hostility from other officials at court, which the friendship of the English embassy could help to mitigate through their stronger relations with key viziers, again showing the clustering effect within the Ottoman political nebula.¹⁷¹

No evidence survives of Barton's visit to Tunis, but the account of the captive Thomas Sanders explains the manner in which Barton rescued the remaining crew of the *Jesus* in Tripoli. Barton arrived on 27th April 1585 with a *kadı*, a soldier, a Greek dragoman, and 'another Turke', and was hosted 'in a Captaines house', where he received and entertained the captives, promising them their freedom in the morning.¹⁷² Here we see Barton's talent for combining business with hosting social gatherings, and a keen awareness that he would need an Ottoman *kadı* with him if he was to argue a point of imperial law with the *beylerbeyi* that would result in him having reluctantly to give up his slaves. When Ramadan Paşa requested Barton's message, it was the *kadı* he allowed to speak for him.¹⁷³ Barton received 13 surviving captives from the original 26 but could not secure the release of two young men who had been passed on to Ramadan Paşa's son and allegedly forced to convert to Islam.¹⁷⁴ However, this narrative does not entirely make sense. Ramadan Paşa died in the winter of 1584, and Harborne reports that his son's boat was sunk by two Venetian galleys en

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 281-3.

¹⁷¹ Barton, 'to Walsingham' 13th September 1588.

¹⁷² Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 306.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 307.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 307-8.

route to Istanbul, killing all on board.¹⁷⁵ That a letter full of alliteration from Harborne, intending to entertain Walsingham, was written in Barton's hand in December 1584 is sure evidence that the dates given in Hakluyt are incorrect, unless the handwriting attributed to Barton by Skilliter was misidentified.¹⁷⁶ This is unlikely to be the case, as a letter written in this hand for Harborne concludes with a first-person declaration of acceptance by Barton as an addendum, written and signed in the same hand.¹⁷⁷ Whatever the case, Barton then remained in Tripoli for around three months, possibly due to the presence of plague in Tripoli disrupting shipping, but possibly also to repair some of the damage done to English trade in the city by the *Jesus* fiasco.¹⁷⁸ He took the freed captives with him as far as the English trading post in Zante, and departed for Istanbul on a ship from Marseilles.¹⁷⁹ This experience of managing an entourage of captives in his charge would prove good experience later, both for his duties to the hostages of the Imperial embassy in 1596, and the management of a large embassy household, both of which will be examined in further detail in the third chapter, focusing on Edward Barton's career. Indeed, it is remarkable that as soon as he had freed the remaining crew of the *Jesus*, he set about running them as his household for the time being, appointing Sanders as his cater due to his command of Italian and Spanish.¹⁸⁰ Two of this *Jesus* household returned with him to Istanbul.¹⁸¹

The dispatch of Barton on the *Jesus* mission to North Africa shows the value of the ambassador's effective management of his embassy as a household, and is again a reminder that the primary task that ambassadors faced was in keeping their merchants free to trade in Ottoman lands. The episode also brings out further evidence of the importance of networking and clustering

¹⁷⁵ William Harborne, 'Harborne to Walsingham' 7th December 1584, SP 97/1 f.79, *TNA*.

¹⁷⁶ Idem., 'Harborne to Walsingham' 11th December 1584, SP 97/1 f.81, *TNA*.

¹⁷⁷ Idem., 'Letter of instruction to Barton'.

¹⁷⁸ Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 308-9.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 308-9.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 308.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 309.

of households and actors in the face of the Ottoman cosmocratic political nebula, and of understanding and respecting proper Ottoman processes: Barton's use of a *kadı* from Istanbul alongside the capitulations and sultanic decree was good insurance that Barton could come away with a positive outcome, even in the somewhat semi-detached provinces of the Maghreb.

Ambassador Harborne vs Uluç Ali Paşa

Prior scholarship on Harborne's embassy has spun a narrative of the English ambassador resisting French and Venetian diplomatic pressure to establish and then maintain English diplomatic and trade rights throughout his time in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸² As argued above, the French embassy did press for the English *ahdname* to be annulled before it came into effect, even if the Venetians were far less active. However, once the embassy was established and in place, while the French and Venetians found opportunities to lobby for the removal of the English, their efforts were far from uniform and sustained, and ultimately unlikely to succeed against the grain of Ottoman ideology and strategic interest. Rather, it was the politicking of the *kapudan-ı derya* Uluç Ali Paşa that put most pressure on the English embassy in this period. Contrary to the accepted narrative of the French and Venetians using the admiral's well-known antipathy towards the English as part of their campaign to expel the English embassy, it was in fact Uluç Ali who led the most consistent and coherent anti-English campaign in Istanbul and on the Mediterranean Sea. He attempted to draw the other embassies into his campaign for his own political benefit, to rid the Mediterranean of another *harbi* nation protected by law from plunder by his navy, and to reassert the authority of the admiralty vis-à-vis the ever-changing membership of the Ottoman *divan*. It is the strongest example in Harborne's tenure of the value and pitfalls of trying to maintain strong factional connections within the orbit of the Ottoman court, and of how what seems like courtly

¹⁸² A.C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London, 1935); Arthur Leon Horniker, 'William Harborne and the Beginning of Anglo-Turkish Diplomatic and Commercial Relations', *The Journal of Modern History*, 14/3 (1942), 289-316; Skilliter, *William Harborne*; Woodhead, 'Harborne'.

politicking and lobbying is in fact closely connected to the daily mission of keeping trade open and safe for company merchants.

In Istanbul, Harborne was getting to grips with a sixth different grand vizier since first arriving in the Ottoman capital. He had opened negotiations with Sokollu Mehmed Paşa in 1579 shortly before he was assassinated and the *abdname* was delayed by the illness and death of Şemsi Ahmed. It was confirmed by the caretaker Lala Mustafa, who made way for the permanent appointment of Koca Sinan, whom Harborne never met as he was away on duty in Persia while Harborne was first in Istanbul and had been replaced by his stand-in Siyavuş by the time Harborne returned. Now Siyavuş had precipitated his own dismissal and been replaced by Özdemiroğlu Osman, a successful general and administrator on the peripheries of the empire, but an unknown quantity in the capital, and – unusually for a grand vizier in this period – born into a Turkic Muslim family and not in receipt of any palace education.¹⁸³ Harborne's first account of him casts the vizier as a people's hero. He speaks of his liberality and charity, his refusal to accept bribes, his generosity towards the families of his soldiers, and his supposed disdain for corruption in the admiralty – an indication that Harborne saw him as a potential ally against his enemy Uluç Ali Paşa.¹⁸⁴ Peace with Poland was maintained, given Osman's focus on the eastern front, with Mustafa Beg reprising his prior role as the sultan's envoy to the Polish king.¹⁸⁵ Osman's preoccupation with the Safavid War, and subsequent rivalry with Uluç Ali Paşa – much more a Mediterranean warrior, and a longstanding palace figure besides – seems to have served Harborne well. Harborne reports that Uluç Ali was recalled to port and his intended Aegean outing with forty gallees was instead performed by a vice-admiral commanding only twenty.¹⁸⁶ Ali apparently took Harborne's

¹⁸³ Danişmend, *İzablı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, i, 1783; Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, vi, 1329; Kemal Çiçek, 'Osman Paşa, Özdemiroğlu', *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 33 (Istanbul, 2007), 471-3.

¹⁸⁴ Harborne, 'to Walsingham' 1st September 1584.

¹⁸⁵ Idem., 'Harborne to Walsingham' 15th September 1584, SP 97/1 f.75, *TNA*.

¹⁸⁶ Idem., 'Harborne to Walsingham' 30th April 1585, SP 97/1 f.97, *TNA*.

complaints about his protégé Hasan, and Barton's dispatch to meet him in Algiers, as cause for further hostility towards the English nation, despite Hasan himself being unperturbed.¹⁸⁷

By this point, Osman Paşa had departed to lead a campaign in Tabriz, leaving a vacancy only filled by Hadım Mesih Paşa after Osman's death on 30th October 1585.¹⁸⁸ Ottoman records from the 55th *mühimme defteri* suggest that the period of Özdemiroğlu Osman's absence from the capital but continued influence from afar was a productive one for Harborne in consolidating English interests. First, a passport was handed over to the dragoman of Transylvania for safe conduct to the province for agents of the English ambassador.¹⁸⁹ This is followed, on or shortly after 8th January 1585, by a passport and notification to all relevant *beys* and *kads* for the safe conduct of a medium height blue-eyed unbeliever named 'Rondariş' to travel to England by way of France.¹⁹⁰ Harborne also presented a petition to protect English merchants, including the consul, being attacked in Morea. According to the *mühimme*, one had been killed.¹⁹¹ The *mühimme* entry suggests a date early in 1585 (the hijri year being 993), and a petition specific to the problems of current merchants in Patras. The documents preserved by Hakluyt reveal in the case of Morea that local officials had taken against English merchants at Patras and were effectively ignoring English rights.¹⁹² The 'commandment' for Patras, and the others in this collection, are all 'central government' reminders to provinces seeing English trade to accept the rights granted to the nation by the *ahdname*.¹⁹³ This is a further complicating factor in the overall picture. If ambassadorial negotiations could be hampered or supported by the tides of Ottoman political rivalries, and buttressed and rescued by direct royal intervention, equally the situation for English merchants in the Ottoman provinces was affected by idiosyncrasies of more minor Ottoman officials, and

¹⁸⁷ Idem., 'Harborne to Walsingham' 18th May 1585, SP 97/1 f.103, *TNA*.

¹⁸⁸ Çiçek, 'Osman Paşa', 473.

¹⁸⁹ 's.57/h.102' (1584/5), 55/102 in Musa Günay, '55 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri', Unpubd. MA Thesis, Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, Samsun (1996), 74.

¹⁹⁰ 's.120/h.224' 8th January 1585, 55/224 in M. Günay, '55 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri', 152.

¹⁹¹ 's.189/h.341' (1585), 55/341 in M. Günay, '55 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri', 233.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 283-5.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 285-91.

required intervention from the ambassador and Ottoman ‘central government’. That is, if powerful figures in the capital were willing to let that happen easily – which Uluç Ali’s opposition to Harborne and Barton’s interventions in North Africa suggests was not always the case.

There is evidence to suggest that Ali attempted to scupper justice for the supposedly put-upon English currant merchants in Patras and may even have had a hand in their harassment. His involvement in lobbying the Venetian embassy and the new French ambassador to work towards an expulsion of the English embassy is indicative of how foreign embassies, like local Christians, could be drawn into the political rivalries and feuds of Ottoman viziers fighting for power and proximity to the imperial centre. More pointedly, in this case, the feud was between the vizier and another ambassador, rather than another Ottoman actor. Venetian *bailo* Lorenzo Bernardo reports a conversation between his dragoman and Uluç Ali, in which the latter alleged that English merchants hoarded raisins in large warehouses in Patras and inflated the prices, and that a renegade in Ali’s household had added the rumour – again an allegation originating with Uluç Ali – that the English raisin warehouses at Patras were full of jars bearing Ottoman labels that can only have been stolen by English pirates in North Africa.¹⁹⁴ Bernardo remarks that Ali’s tirade ‘gave one pause’, as it seemed unbelievable to him that there could be such mutual dislike between people he assumed to be equal in their enmity towards Catholicism.¹⁹⁵ However, it was no exaggeration; the feud between Harborne and Ali only deepened with time. It is tempting to conclude that the admiral had a hand in the harassment of English merchants in Morea, through his huge network of connections throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, though no evidence for this is likely to be found. On the other hand, the fact that he would continue to raise the issue of currants in Morea a year after the matter had been settled in favour of the English merchants demonstrates the extent of his willingness to campaign against English interests and frustrate the freedom of English trade

¹⁹⁴ Lorenzo Bernardo, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 18th February 1586, *Venice*, viii, 136-43.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 136-43.

and shipping. If the resident ambassadors' assessment that Osman was determined to address supposed corruption within the admiralty is true, this may also be part of a wider example of foreign embassies being drawn into a political dispute between viziers. As Osman's stance towards the admiralty would have brought him into direct conflict with Ali, a campaign against a judgement handed down on his watch in favour of English merchants, accusing them of piracy and financial misdeeds, would have embarrassed the grand vizier if successful during his time, and still had potency afterwards as an assertion of the independence and influence of the admiralty. The logic is that, by interfering with the admiralty, viziers give foreign interlopers free reign to commit piracy and financial corruption within the Ottoman realm. This campaign was unsuccessful, as Ali tried to motivate Venice and France to move against Harborne again, his invitation to discuss currants with the Venetian dragoman coming at the same time as a similar invitation to the French agent, believing the new ambassador to have already arrived.¹⁹⁶ When he was finally able to meet the incoming François Savary de Lancôme in April 1586, the only specific piece of information Ali gave Lancôme was his strong dislike for the English ambassador, leaving the French ambassador confused as to why he had been summoned.¹⁹⁷

From September 1585 until February 1588 there are no extant reports from Harborne in the State Papers collection, and so Ottoman and Venetian sources come to the fore in further detailing the *kapudan-ı derya*'s attempts to have the English trading rights annulled. His lobbying to the French and Venetian embassies, and rumour-spreading around Istanbul did not cease, but shared French and Venetian anti-English rhetoric, when contrasted with Uluç Ali's claims, suggests that the ambassadors were unwilling to be drawn entirely into the admiral's orbit in advancing the anti-English cause. It is perhaps this lack of coherence of approach that ultimately prevented any progress in having Harborne and the English merchants removed. While Uluç Ali's argument

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 136-43.

¹⁹⁷ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 20th April 1586, *Venice*, viii, 149-59.

remained that English merchants were piratical, untrustworthy, and swindling the Ottoman authorities through their currant trade in the Morea, the French and Venetian embassies made the contrasting argument that English trade was fundamentally worthless to the Ottoman Empire. Their insistence that English trade did not bring worthwhile value to the Ottomans was predicated on the infrequent visits of English ships to Istanbul, though there is abundant evidence of much greater English activity at Patras and Chios, as shown above.¹⁹⁸ John Sanderson also alleges a sizeable English population – 50 merchants – in Lebanese Tripoli.¹⁹⁹ Regardless, it had been the Ottoman position since 1579 that trade with England was very valuable to them, as was the acceptance of England into the sultanic world order. It suited the French not to be drawn in too closely to Uluç Ali in an anti-English scheme, as they needed to work with the English on occasion against the admiralty to protect shipping and seek redress where it had been disrupted by Ottoman captains. In February 1585, the French agent and English ambassador were working together to seek justice against the captain Murat Reis, who had inflicted injury on ships from both nations.²⁰⁰ The grand vizier's resolution that Murat should be summoned to court suggests further his uneasy relationship with the admiralty.²⁰¹

The dissatisfaction of 'certain renegades' – undoubtedly sailors connected with the renegade admiral Uluç Ali Paşa – with being made to repair damage done to English shipping led to complaints to the Ottoman *divan* in March 1585.²⁰² The rhetoric of Harborne's response is very telling as to how he wished to present the utility of England as a partner to the Ottomans. He focuses on England's war capacity and its supposed abundance of war materials.

It is most powerful in its infinite number of warlike inhabitants. It has thirty-nine counties (Beglierbey) full of cities, forts, and villages. In the City of London alone there are three hundred thousand warriors always ready. It is rich in all kinds of fruits, and in mines of silver, tin, copper, lead, iron, sulphur, saltpetre. That part which does not

¹⁹⁸ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 17th March 1586, *Venice*, viii, 143-9.

¹⁹⁹ John Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584-1602* (ed. W. Foster, London, 1931), 5.

²⁰⁰ Giovanni Moresini, 'to the Doge and Senate' 26th February 1585, *Venice*, viii, 105-9.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 105-9.

²⁰² Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 12th March 1585, *Venice*, viii, 109-114.

feed horses or other beasts, yields crops or metals, so that there is no part of it impossible for man's use. All kinds of animals abound, noble horses, bulls, chiefly because there are no wolves, sheep with wool like silk, from which they weave cloth of all sorts. The workmen are able masters of every craft. There is great abundance of rabbit skins, leather of bull, calf, sheep, lamb, and goat skin, which not only supplies Europe but also Asia, Africa, and America.

The people are naturally brave, indomitable, and valourous in war. They attack the foe with such ardour that they usually come out not dead but victorious. They are impatient of injuries and revenge them fiercely. They religiously keep their treaties and highly honour their allies. Their judges are most learned and full of sound judgments, they take no bribes.²⁰³

Here Harborne is hitting all the same notes as he had in establishing the embassy and the image of England's place in the Ottoman cosmocracy: English mineral wealth, its materials traded worldwide, and its value as a reliable military presence. This, coupled with the arrival of an English ship bearing the key materials mentioned – cloth and tin foremost – secured the arrest of Murat Reis and victory for Harborne in that affair.²⁰⁴ However, English shipping continued to be preyed upon, and with Osman absent from Istanbul and struggling on the eastern front without adequate cooperation from viziers in Istanbul, Harborne had little hope of restitution from Uluç Ali at the admiralty.²⁰⁵ On the death of Osman Paşa in October 1585, the Ottoman bench shuffled like a pack of cards once more, with Cığalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa and Sokollu Hasan Paşa appointed to the *divan* and 90-year-old Hadım Mesih Paşa appointed *sadrızam*.²⁰⁶ Mustafa Âlî, himself frequently frustrated by lack of opportunities for promotion, writes of a discontent amongst the most educated and capable in this period about lack of promotion through the ranks, while singing the praises of the then *reisülküttab* Hamza Çelebi, a man later identified as a longstanding ally of the English embassy by Edward Barton.²⁰⁷ While the frustration and uncertainty caused by lack of political stability at the top of the Ottoman hierarchy gave opportunities for embassy patronage of

²⁰³ William Harborne, 'The true description of England and its present State' (March 1585), *Venice*, viii, 109-114.

²⁰⁴ Giovanni Moresini, 'to the Doge and Senate' 29th March 1585, *Venice*, viii, 109-114.

²⁰⁵ Lorenzo Bernardo, 'to the Doge and Senate' 30th October 1585, *Venice*, viii, 122-5; William Harborne, 'Harborne to Walsingham' 7th September 1585, SP 97/1 ff.113-4, *TNA*.

²⁰⁶ Harborne, 'to Walsingham' 7th September 1585; Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, 81; Danişmend, *İzablı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, i, 1784.

²⁰⁷ Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî ve Kümbül-Abbâr'ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet Devirleri*, iii, ed. Faris Çerçi (Kayseri, 2000), 493; Edward Barton, 'A brief account of the present chief governors of the Turkish Empire' (January 1593), Cotton Nero B/XI f.214, *BL*.

influential individuals looking to further themselves, it also meant that those who had held their positions for longer periods of time, such as Uluç Ali, retained the upper hand in reinforcing the gravity of their positions and their networks of supporters. The continuity of Ali's role as admiral certainly granted him added prestige and influence, and this may also explain the prominence of *ex officio* intermediaries in Ottoman politics becoming involved with embassies. Hoca Sadeddin Efendi was in a position of continued influence with Murad III as his former tutor, regardless of which other positions he held, and was sought out by the English embassy and others, acting as an ally to Harborne in promoting anti-Spanish policy to the sultan, and ultimately through his actions delaying an Ottoman-Spanish truce renewal that would have allowed the Spanish much more freedom of troop deployment to the Armada in 1588.²⁰⁸ Likewise, *haseki sultan* Safiye was in a constant *ex officio* position of influence due to her relationship with the Sultan, and others like Gazanfer Ağa, who held his position within the palace as *kapı ağası* (Chief of the White Eunuchs, also known as *bâbüssaâde ağası*) for thirty years, remained constantly influential players for ambassadors to seek access to, despite their lack of official political power.²⁰⁹ Indeed, Gazanfer's patronage of Uluç Ali must have made Harborne's task doubly difficult during his time as ambassador.²¹⁰ However, Italian convert Gazanfer's connections to other Italian converts who became *kapudan* after Uluç Ali – Uluç Hasan and Çiğalazade – must have conversely made him a much more attractive figure to English ambassadors following Ali's death.

In January 1586, further evidence of the impotence of the viziers of the *divan* against the admiralty comes with another Anglo-French protestation about the damage done to shipping by Uluç Ali's protégé Hasan, whom the admiral protected from due repercussions, despite the two

²⁰⁸ Sanderson, *Travels*, 61; Liane Saunders, 'The Motives, Pattern and Form of Anglo-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations c.1580-1661', unpubd. DPhil thesis, University of Oxford (1993), 238; Conyers Read, *Mr Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth*, iii (Oxford, 1925), 326-32.

²⁰⁹ Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ii, 546; Tobias Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades: Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575-1610* (Oxford, 2017), passim.

²¹⁰ Graf, *Renegades*, 156.

having fallen out in 1585.²¹¹ It is possible that it was in fact Gazanfer who was primarily protecting Hasan from Anglo-French pressure on this occasion, though Ali was always motivated to assert the rights of Ottoman ships to attack others. In February, Uluç Ali's encouragement to the Venetians to lobby against England was prefaced with his insistence that he was determined to protect Venetian shipping as valuable as compared to the worthless English, as a clear inducement to join him in seeking to remove the English from the Ottoman Empire.²¹² At this point, Uluç Ali was not just frustrating English trade, he was a major obstacle to Harborne's newfound political role as English ambassador. He received orders from Walsingham dispatched on 5th October 1585 to work for Ottoman naval support against Spain, which was impossible without the support of the *kapudan*.²¹³ This was made obvious to Harborne in March 1586. He visited Ali due to his failure to effect change through other channels but was left waiting long enough to cause him to storm out, sending a secretary – probably Barton – back with his protestations that the French or Venetian representatives would never have been treated the same way. It was this protest that was met with mockery: 'Just look at this fellow who wishes to stand on an equality with France and the Venetian Signory'.²¹⁴ A month later, in a return of Ali's snub, Harborne only made matters worse by ordering an English ship to set sail before Ali, a keen admirer of Francis Drake, could send a complimentary letter and gifts to Drake with the captain. Fearing violent repercussions, Harborne sought the aid of Mesih Paşa, but again the viziers of the bench were unable to mediate the behaviour of the admiral.²¹⁵ Unfortunately for Harborne, this also coincided with the arrival of François Savary de Lancôme as French ambassador, with the intent of reviving French pressure on the English position in Istanbul. He subjected secretary Barton to a second verbal barrage as Harborne's proxy in as many months, furiously responding to Barton referring to Harborne as 'ambassador' with 'tell your master that he had better mind his trade and not usurp titles like these, or I'll have him

²¹¹ Lorenzo Bernardo, 'to the Doge and Senate' 8th January 1586, *Venice*, viii, 128-36; Graf, *Renegades*, 119.

²¹² Bernardo, 'to the Doge and Senate' 18th February 1586.

²¹³ Read, *Walsingham*, iii, 226-8.

²¹⁴ Lorenzo Bernardo, 'to the Doge and Senate' 4th March 1586, *Venice*, viii, 143-9.

²¹⁵ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 2nd April 1586, *Venice*, viii, 149-59.

drummed out of the place'.²¹⁶ By this point it appears Harborne was more relaxed about the potency of French diplomatic pressure, reportedly remarking coolly: 'I think that he won't be quite strong enough to turn me out', rightly so, given how clear the sultan had been about the impossibility of removing a friendly embassy once it had been agreed.²¹⁷ However, the first French demand was that the English embassy should be removed.²¹⁸ Despite this demand and Lancôme's meeting with Ali, his inaugural audience was cut short by Siyavuş Paşa, once more grand vizier following the death of Mesih Paşa. The demand was not only impossible, it was a misplaced insult to Ottoman visions of the sultan's responsibility for maintenance of order between nations.

Lancôme's truncated audience with the sultan – an indication of continued French diplomatic weakness at the porte over their insurances about the English – and Ali's refusal to acknowledge that French sailors had been taken as slaves by ships under his jurisdiction, left him enraged with the *kapudan*, and isolated Ali from a potentially useful anti-English ally, or indeed puppet.²¹⁹ Also that April, former French Vice-Consul in Alexandria, Paulo Mariani, defected to English service, bringing with him the favour of Damat Ibrahim Paşa to the English embassy – a further indication of the increasing gravitational power of the cluster around the English embassy household.²²⁰ Uluç Ali's political strength vis-à-vis the English embassy was being reduced, and it seemed the chance to press harder for English expulsion had now passed him by. Harborne doubled down on the connection to Ibrahim, arranging to send him game and fowl as supplies for his wedding to the sultan's daughter, from which he gained the title *damat*.²²¹ The political situation put Harborne in the ascendancy; English quarrels with Spain suited the Ottomans while they continued to throw their military might and most capable leaders at the Safavid War. A meeting

²¹⁶ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 12th April 1586, *Venice*, viii, 149-59.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 149-59.

²¹⁸ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 20th April 1586, *Venice*, viii, 149-59.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 149-59.

²²⁰ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 29th April 1586, *Venice*, viii, 149-59.

²²¹ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 15th May 1586, *Venice*, viii, 159-69.

between Harborne, Ali, and Siyavuş saw Ali accused by Harborne of ignoring sultanic orders in allowing the plunder of English shipping on the African coast, and the two came to blows as Ali vehemently defended himself. Siyavuş responded by having a sultanic letter sent to Elizabeth apologising and reaffirming that perpetrators would be dealt with and the capitulations upheld.²²² This was the end of the road for Uluç Ali Paşa as far as his power to obstruct the English embassy was concerned. An English ship taken at Alexandria was promptly given orders for release in September 1586, as Harborne's lobbying for Ottoman action on Spain increased in intensity.²²³ Ali was reduced to merely making bitter private remarks about Spain's chances of conquering England.²²⁴ With the French ambassador Lancôme completely sidelined by Siyavuş, Harborne had ridden the storm of political pressure for the English embassy to be removed.²²⁵ A sultanic letter to Elizabeth of January 1587 confirmed English security in Istanbul, with clear reference to the unfolding situation with Spain, as well as to the reciprocal bonds between the parties to upholding worldly order and justice:

Accordingly my imperial majesty is convinced that you are right faithful to my sublime porte, and it is therefore necessary for you to observe all the terms of the various obligations which bind both parties. And do not fail to write to me of your health, and to tell me what happens in your part of the world; and as for your complaint against Hassan Aga on account of some slaves he has been degraded, and when he comes here we will speak and act as becomes our good Friendship.²²⁶

Uluç Ali Paşa died on 21st June 1587 and was replaced by Damat Ibrahim. He had made a last few attempts to rally the Venetian and French embassies against Harborne throughout the year, but to no avail.²²⁷ The wider political situation had eclipsed him. He delayed a decision on the renewal of the truce with Spain and the intercession of Sadeddin ensured that it was not renewed.²²⁸

²²² Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 23rd June 1586, *Venice*, viii, 169-74.

²²³ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 17th September 1586, *Venice*, viii, 201-9.

²²⁴ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 30th September 1586, *Venice*, viii, 209.

²²⁵ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 24th December 1586, *Venice*, viii, 228.

²²⁶ Murad III Osmanoğlu, 'to the Queen of England' 21st January 1587, *Venice*, viii, 228-40.

²²⁷ Lorenzo Bernardo, 'to the Doge and Senate' 19th February 1587, *Venice*, viii, 240-9; Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 17th June 1587, *Venice*, viii, 283-90.

²²⁸ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 1st April 1587 & 4th April 1587 & 16th April 1587, *Venice*, viii, 261-9.

By 1588 the political situation was such that the sultan and *nişancı* were chastising the new Venetian *bailo*, Giovanni Moro, over rumours that Venice was helping Spain and undermining England, against the desired balance of global power the Ottomans sought to cultivate.²²⁹ Such was Harborne's confidence and security at this point, that he was able to write a provocative memorandum to the sultan in 1587-8, complaining that the sultan had not done enough to assist England and exhorting him to make war on Spain.²³⁰ Harborne departed for England in August 1588, with Edward Barton taking charge of the English embassy as agent.

Harborne's ongoing rivalry with Uluç Ali Paşa demonstrates how so much of his embassy's efforts to establish key connections within the Ottoman political ecosystem directly connected to the protection of English merchants' freedoms and livelihoods. Uluç Ali Paşa, frustrated with the arrival of the upstart English, and probably wary of the sense of rising significance of Atlantic nations in the Mediterranean regional system at the expense of its traditional powers, like Venice and indeed the Ottomans, remained hostile to English trade and did everything he could to disrupt it. Piracy was used as an excuse for Ali's concern, but it is tempting to wonder if his concern was more the ways in which the successes of English pirates demonstrated the superiority of Atlantic oceangoing ships over Mediterranean galleys. Nevertheless, Harborne's connections within the Ottoman capital, particularly to holders of key offices like the *nişancı*, who had both a great overview of foreign affairs and direct authority over the production of key documentation to support English merchants around the empire, allowed him to serve the function of protecting company merchants well. It was not until orders arrived to lobby for Ottoman hostility to Spain that Harborne had a real sense of geopolitical diplomatic duty in his role, and given his promotion of England as a nation robust and rich in resources, and friendly to the Ottomans and their conceptions of order

²²⁹ Giovanni Moro, 'to the Doge and Senate' 18th May 1588, *Venice*, viii, 351-61.

²³⁰ William Harborne, *Coppie de la requeste presentee au Turc par l'agent de la royne d'Angleterre [W. Harborne], le 9 de novembre 1587. Trad.* (Verdun, 1589), passim.

and justice, suggestions that they could keep Spain in check whilst the Ottomans were busy in the Safavid east were welcome. Murad III himself outlined why the English embassy and the trade rights it protected were welcome in the Ottoman Empire; the English monarch was a friendly prince whose nation had entered into relations with the Ottomans and it would be a grave insult – perhaps a crime of disorder – to then terminate this. This made Ali’s protestations ultimately fruitless, as disruptive as some of his scheming was to English merchants, and indeed left the French in the position where their continued demands that the sultan expel the English were ultimately taken as an insult in the first reception of ambassador Lancôme. The gravity and influence of the English cluster grew, and the Ottomans duly did not renew their truce with Spain, allowing Harborne success in both the geopolitical mission he had been given, and the ‘unglamorous’ work of maintaining English trading rights.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered the contextual economic and political grounding of Anglo-Ottoman trade and provided a microhistorical investigation of some of the key features and events of William Harborne’s first English embassy to the Ottoman Empire. Harborne was a man from a merchant background, already a key figure in the influential partnership of Osborne and Staper, with whom he traded in Spain. As part of a pattern of English responses to the changes to the structure of global trade and trade networks occurring during the sixteenth century, they investigated the possibility of establishing direct trade rights for themselves and the Ottoman Empire. As both the English and Ottoman crowns were struggling with generating public revenues, the establishment of a private trading company with a monopoly over English trade with the Ottomans was a welcome benefit to the economies of both nations, especially given the goods being traded were considered welcome luxuries on both sides, as well as the strategic value of English metals to an Ottoman Empire engaged in war with Safavid Iran. The English fitted into

an established Ottoman system for managing foreign trade that paralleled Ottoman conceptions of order, justice, and indeed ethnography, with foreign trading nations mapping onto the Ottoman *millet* system, with ambassadors and consuls as appointed community leaders. Their nations were taken into the system of the Ottoman cosmocracy. In the interest of defending Ottoman order, there were restrictions on residency and overland travel for foreign merchants, which was reflected in Harborne's arrival, in which he adapted his dress to Ottoman style in line with his passport rights in order to build relationships with the Ottoman officials he met. These relationships, the suitability of England as a friendly partner within the Ottoman universalistic ideology, and Harborne's ability to demonstrate the value of English trade goods to the Ottomans in the form of well-chosen examples and gifts to Sokollu Mehmed Paşa and later other officials, allowed Harborne to quickly negotiate independent English trade rights within the Ottoman Empire.

The value of royal diplomacy alongside his actions in the Ottoman Empire was brought into focus in how Elizabeth I's letters established the parameters of English cooperation with the Ottomans, despite plans from Harborne, Osborne, and Staper to keep the rights personal to themselves, and then rescued Harborne's position when he tried to act too soon and got caught up in a piracy scandal, pre-empting Ottoman processes before he had his proper official place within them. The temporary Ottoman clarification that the English formed an official part of the French *millet* within their worldview until the embassy was properly established underlines the significance of proper order and justice to Ottoman approaches to foreign merchants, and indeed the emphasis on proper control of activities. Harborne returned and went through the proper ceremonial, giving gifts and establishing vital friendships and connections to build up the gravitational power of the English embassy and its cluster within the Ottoman cosmocratic nebula, building connections that drew it closer to the imperial centre of gravity and other influential households. However, the most important illustrative example of both this, and its importance to his everyday work of keeping

merchants free to trade in accordance with the capitulations, was in his long feud with the admiral Uluç Ali Paşa, who tried everything he could to have Harborne dismissed and English merchants laid open to predation by his fleets again, but to no avail as Harborne's connections, and the favourable place of England within the Ottoman cosmocracy, helped the English embassy and trading nation to become secure within the Ottoman world by the time of his departure in mid-1588.

Edward Barton (1588-1598)

In the autumn of 1593, Edward Barton faced a problem. Still waiting for the arrival of his official letters of presentation and crucial gifts to the Ottoman sultan to confirm his ambassadorial status, he found his household at the centre of a revenge plot from hostile Ottoman vizier Ferhad Paşa. Barton had helped to bring down Ferhad's vizirate in April 1592 by mobilising a network of palace allies and agents of intrigue to bring treaty negotiations between the grand vizier and the Spanish ambassador to a crashing halt. Ferhad, while acting as *kaymakam* – deputy grand vizier – found opportunity for vengeance. Barton's barber-surgeon, John Field, was accused of facilitating a prison break.¹ According to Richard Wrag, a passenger of the *Ascension* which delivered the English gift to the sultan, Field was accused of helping break Genoese prisoners out of 'castles standing toward the Euxine Sea' – Rumeli Hisarı.² Ferhad offered Barton the choice between his own arrest or the arrest and probable execution of Field.³ Barton used an especially Ottoman method of presenting an *arz* in defence of his household: he took a small boat out to the side of the palace and held the document to his head in sight of the palace, showing his supplication to the sultan, until a dwarf was sent to receive it.⁴ The timely arrival of the *Ascension*, bearing Barton's long-awaited official credentials and gift, secured the intercession of the Sultan on this occasion, and the restoration of Barton's reputation and Field's liberty. Ferhad was again humiliated at Barton's hands, forced to publicly reconcile with him in Barton's audience with the sultan and place

¹ Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, ed. Mehmed İpşirli (Istanbul, 1989), 518; Susan Skilliter, 'The Turkish documents relating to Edward Barton's embassy to the Porte (1588-1598)', unpubd. PhD thesis, University of Manchester (1965), 77-8.

² Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation, Made by Sea or Over-land to the Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at any time within the compasse of these 1600 Yeeres*, vi, (Glasgow, 1904), 96.

³ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 78-9.

⁴ Hakluyt, *Principal navigations*, vi, 96-7.

a garment of gold upon his back.⁵ Ferhad's letter to Elizabeth I, accompanying the sultan's response to the gifts and audience with Barton, was conciliatory, referring to Barton and his household as 'your honourable gentlemen'.⁶

This was a resounding victory for the young English ambassador, at the moment of his official confirmation, over an experienced and hostile Ottoman statesman, but it is made all the more remarkable by Barton's means of achieving it. This man of thirty or thirty-one years old, of St Katharine's Dock, London, England, was both educated and comfortable enough in Ottoman court ceremonial and well-regarded enough in Ottoman court circles for his act of supplication to Sultan Murad III to work flawlessly in securing the safety of himself and his household. The performative supplication was not to end there. As Ottoman contemporary Selânikî Mustafa Efendi wrote of the sultan's reception of Barton, his household, and his credentials and gifts, the ceremony confirmed the ambassador's *ubudiyet*: submission. In a section titled roughly as 'To the great divan from the enclosing ocean: the coming of the English ambassador', Selânikî describes Barton's reception as follows:

The ambassador of the province of the isle of England, which is three thousand seven hundred miles distant by way of sea from the Golden Horn of Kostantiniyye, came and gave on behalf of the woman who is their leader, [who] by inheritance of lands and complete power and right of sovereignty, governs the Lutheran nation, their letter of submission and appropriate gifts and presents to the threshold of prosperity and protection. That day the *divan* was crowded and the ambassador received a banquet and generosity according to the messenger's law.⁷

Indeed, Barton's remarkable career poses some interesting questions about his role as English ambassador in the Ottoman Empire. Who was he truly serving? His queen? His company? The Ottoman political hierarchy? Himself? All, at different times, seem plausible answers – and often at the same time, too. His career highlights how, as Lauren Working puts it, 'Early modern

⁵ Ibid., 97.

⁶ Ferhad Paşa, 'Letter (mektüb) from Ferhād Pasha, Second Vizier and Qā'immaqām, to Queen Elizabeth' 5th November 1593 in S. Skilliter (trans.), 'Edward Barton's embassy', 205-11.

⁷ Selânikî, *Tarih*, 334. I am grateful to Günseli Gürel, and Zeynep Çavuşoğlu for confirming the accuracy of my translation based on İpşirli's transliteration, and Abdurrahman Atıl for checking the original manuscript for words missed by İpşirli, in order to try to make better sense of Selânikî's somewhat puzzling sentence structure.

political practice was imbedded in the social'.⁸ Barton's skill for networking, hosting, and adapting to Ottoman social expectations served him excellently in his time as ambassador. Barton's experience also shows the level to which foreign embassies were embedded in Ottoman political tussles and factionalism, not excluding collaboration and competition between each other for greater standing within Istanbul politics. Lastly, Barton's embassy shows the tensions at the heart of the relationship between representing monarch and country and being the figurehead of a company operation, especially for one so adept at ploughing his own furrow within Ottoman politics too.

Sources and chronology

Edward Barton (c1562-1598) is perhaps the most curious of the first cohort of English ambassadors to the Ottoman Porte. Noted for his apparent fluency in Turkish ('as I have oft advised yo^{ur} hono^{ur} I have the Turkish tongue, by vertue of w^{ch}, I doe my busines my selfe wthout help of other^{es}') and his outgoing personality, Barton gained the favour of William Harborne from early in his career as company secretary. He was preferred to take up the vacant ambassadorial role on Harborne's departure, Barton being perhaps twenty-six years old at the time.⁹ George Keith, 11th Earl Marischal, quoted in Jennifer Mori, sums up the career path of Barton in his advice to young James Boswell a century and a half later: 'you must begin as a secretary, and if you are not with a man of your mind, you are very unhappy. Then, if you should be sent Envoy...' – Barton was lucky that he and Harborne were men of the same mind, and he did then progress to roles as envoy and ambassador, doing the 'unglamorous' work that Mori identifies.¹⁰ Scholarship has focused on his role in mediation between the Ottomans and the Kingdom of Poland, and his

⁸ Lauren Working, *The Making of an Imperial Polity: Civility and America in the Jacobean Metropolis* (Cambridge, 2020), 19.

⁹ Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer (?)', *Barton's Letterbook*, f.53; Christine Woodhead & Joel Butler, 'Edward Barton', *ODNB*; Susan Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 4.

¹⁰ Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe, c. 1750-1830* (Manchester, 2010), 1.

attempted mediation in the war between the Ottoman Empire and the Austrian Habsburgs in Hungary, culminating with his eventual participation in the campaign of 1596 in the entourage of the Ottoman army.¹¹ His career is therefore fairly well-studied in terms of his deeds, and his writing often proves a valuable source for Ottomanists researching this period. An apparently confident young man, he ‘came out of England very young’, never to return, and never to marry or father children whilst he was away.¹² Barton died in January 1598 in Istanbul.

This section outlines the sources used in researching this chapter, before presenting new evidence on Barton’s early life and origins, then providing a general chronology of his Turkey/Levant Company career.

A life in letters

Much of the source material available for Barton comes from his own correspondence with the English court, kept both at the British Library and within the British National Archives. Most of these letters deal with Barton’s various political activities in Istanbul, rather than company business. While this could, in effect, be a matter of self-selection – letters sent to figures such as Francis Walsingham, William Cecil, and Thomas Heneage may naturally be more likely to focus on his diplomatic intrigues than day-to-day company issues – Skilliter suggests that it may also be reflective of a changed English mission under Barton, following the focus on becoming established commercially under Harborne.¹³ Most of Harborne’s correspondence with English men of state such as Walsingham focuses on the establishment and protection of the English trade, while Barton’s does not. Interestingly, Ottoman documents concerning Barton are also weighted towards

¹¹ Woodhead & Butler, ‘Edward Barton’; Gábor Várkonyi, ‘A konstantinápolyi angol politika a tizenöt éves háború időszakában (Edward Barton angol portái követ jelentései Konstantinápolyból, 1593-1597)’, *Aetas – Történettudományi folyóirat*, 2000/4 (2000), 88-102.

¹² Edward Barton, ‘To the Lord Treasurer (?)’, *Barton’s Letterbook*, f.114; Woodhead & Butler, ‘Edward Barton’.

¹³ Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 12.

politics and diplomacy rather than commercial activity.¹⁴ Harborne was an Englishman present to establish a lucrative trade arrangement, while Barton, more immersed in the Ottoman world and comfortable moving in Ottoman high political circles, saw himself much more as an ambassador with a political mission. Beginning with William Harborne's final letter of instruction to Barton, there is a large corpus of correspondence from Barton or other members of the embassy household to various members of the English state apparatus in London.¹⁵ .

Harborne's letter of instruction also highlights one of the problems of using these diplomatic dispatches as sources. One of his instructions to Barton reads:

in yo^{ur} writinge use a compendiose brevitie, as the cause shall require, for M^r Secretarie beinge continuallie occupied wth grave and majgestic affayers of estate muste nott be trobled wth circumstances.¹⁶

This reflects the fact that, even though Barton may mention his connections and meetings with a number of different Ottoman, English, and European contacts, the full nature of his conversations with them is scarcely ever fully revealed, nor letters recopied in full. Therefore, while Barton offers tantalising evidence of some of his many associates, acquaintances, and networks, the true nature of his relationships with them can only be inferred from a range of half-told anecdotes and oblique references that appear in his letters and reports. Likewise, Barton sees no reason to mention much at all about his day-to-day company business, and downplays his conflicts with English merchants on several occasions.¹⁷ Here surviving Venetian and Ottoman records are useful; there are several surviving Ottoman legal documents, both those translated by Susan Skilliter and those transliterated as student projects at Turkish universities, relating to appeals made by Barton on behalf of English merchants. The letters and testimonies of English merchants and visitors in Istanbul are also useful to fill in some of the blanks surrounding Barton's everyday life and work

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ William Harborne, 'Letter of Instruction to Barton', MSS Tanner, 79, f.77, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

¹⁶ Harborne, 'Letter of Instruction to Barton'.

¹⁷ Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 3rd November 1594, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.108-112; idem., 'To [Heneage?]' 16th June 1594, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff. 71-8.

in the Ottoman capital. In the absence of surviving letters from Heneage, Walsingham, or Cecil to Barton, directions from the English court, and the frequency of their receipt, can only be inferred from any direct responses to letters that Barton chose to give in his own dispatches.

Family origins and upbringing

Judging from the age given on his tombstone, now removed to Haydarpaşa İngiliz Mezarlığı from its original location on Heybeliada, Barton was probably born in 1562, being 35 at his death early in 1598.¹⁸ The tombstone is one of very few sources of information about Barton's origins, giving his age and bearing his family arms. Skilliter connects the arms with the Barton family of Smithills, Lancashire.¹⁹ However, the arms shown on Barton's tombstone lack the cadency mark



1: Barton arms at Holme, photographed by Lionel Wall. Note the matching leaf design at the bottom of this crest and the top of the tombstone crest.



2: Edward Barton's tombstone. The crest was carved inexpertly by local craftsmen unfamiliar with English heraldry, therefore lacks the precise detail of the Holme carving. However, it is recognisably the same coat of arms.

¹⁸ Woodhead & Butler, 'Edward Barton'.

¹⁹ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 7.

used by the Smithills branch of the family. A comparison of the arms carved on the tombstone and the arms carved into the Church of St Giles in Holme, suggests that Edward was descended from the Bartons of Holme, Nottinghamshire:

The Bartons of Holme descended from John (d. 1491), a merchant of the staple at Calais.²⁰ While his eldest son, Ralph (d. 1508/1510), was charged with managing the family estate in Nottinghamshire, John's second son, Thomas, continued the family trade in Calais.²¹ Thomas was succeeded in the Calais trade by his sons Thomas, William, and John, who developed various professional connections to London.²² Edward's father was also called John, as is shown in his sister Mary's legal dispute with tenants of the family's properties in the St Katharine's Dock area of London.²³ As well as Mary, Edward had an older brother called William, also living in St Katharine's Dock.²⁴ Given the evidence of the arms on Edward's tombstone, the family connection to overseas trade and the London docklands, and the recurrence of preferred male given names through the family, it seems certain that Edward Barton was descended from this line of the Bartons of Holme.

As a boy brought up in a trading family of perhaps middling status, it seems likely that his parents would have sought opportunities for their son amongst their network of business contacts within the London trading community. London merchant families saw themselves as a distinct class and maintained close social ties, alongside their business associations.²⁵ Indeed, the Locke family into which Edward's sister married was also well-known as a City of London merchant

²⁰ 'Will of John Barton of Holme' (1490-1), DD1609/6/1-6, Nottinghamshire Archives, Nottingham.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² 'Calais' 3rd December 1532 in J. Gardiner (ed.), *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, v (London, 1880), 671; 'Bonds' 30th June 1536, SP 1/104 f.214a, *TNA*; 'Privy Council to the Council of Augmentations' 17th July 1546, SP 1/222 f.22, *TNA*.

²³ 'Jadwyn v Lough' (1558-1603), C 2/Eliz/12/3, *TNA*.

²⁴ Woodhead & Butler, 'Edward Barton'.

²⁵ For a study of one such London trading family from the fifteenth into the sixteenth century, see: Alison Hanham, *The Celys and their world: an English merchant family of the fifteenth century* (Cambridge, 1985).

family.²⁶ With the London-based Turkey Company exploring new, potentially highly lucrative ventures just as Edward was coming of age, this may conveniently explain Barton's connection to William Harborne and his decision to travel with his patron to Istanbul. Barton, says Fynes Moryson, 'was no more learned then the Grammer schoole', which further suggests that he was probably trained by Harborne, either formally as an apprentice or otherwise, for some time before departing with him for Istanbul in 1582-3.²⁷ His grammar school education may account for his apparent command of Latin.²⁸ This is as much as can be known of Edward Barton's origins in the absence of further evidence about his childhood and adolescence. He was roughly twenty years old when he departed for Istanbul with Harborne.

Barton's Turkey Company career

Barton quickly impressed Harborne with his skill as a linguist, administrator, and negotiator, to the extent that Harborne was recommending him as his successor as early as November 1584.²⁹ This was likely to have been a direct result of Barton's display of aptitude in his trips to North Africa in 1584-5, in which he was charged with the protection of English trade shipping in Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, and then with the release of the crew of the English ship *Jesus*, captive in Tripoli.³⁰ The problems faced by the English in North Africa at this time were explored in the previous chapter in the context of William Harborne's reactions to the initial challenges of establishing English trade in the Ottoman realms. In Barton's case, his visit to the Barbary coast sees him displaying the skills that would stand him in such excellent stead once he took on the role of

²⁶ John Warburton, *London and Middlesex illustrated: by true and explicit account of the names, residence, genealogy, and coat armour of the nobility, principal merchants, and other eminent families, trading within the precincts of this most opulent city and county* (London, 1749), 87-8.

²⁷ Fynes Moryson, *Shakespeare's Europe: The Fourth Part of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary*, ed. Charles Hughes (Manchester, 1902), 27.

²⁸ Edward Barton, 'E Barton to Cecil' 5th July 1596, SP 97/3 f.139, *TNA*.

²⁹ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 4; William Harborne, 'Harborne to Walsingham' 25th November 1584, SP 97/1 f.77, *TNA*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4; Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 269-309.

ambassador. This trip to North Africa was undoubtedly a formative experience for Barton, so early in his career, and aged perhaps 22 or 23. Due to the hostility of Catholic navies and pirates in the Western Mediterranean towards English shipping, Turkey Company shipping was routed along the friendlier North African coast, via Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. Nevertheless, Catholic galleys still lay in wait to ambush English ships on the edges of these friendly zones, necessitating them to preemptively fire at any unidentified galleys approaching them, causing friction with North African sailors.³¹ Several English ships were sunk or captured off the coast of Algiers, and the survivors taken into slavery.³² Meanwhile, in May 1584, the crew of the English ship *Jesus*, visiting Tripoli, had been sentenced to become the slaves of Beylerbeyi Ramadan Paşa for harbouring and attempting to aid the escape of a Western European merchant, Patrone Norado, who owed a significant sum of money to a local man.³³ The story of Barton's trip has already been covered extensively in the previous chapter, but he continued to show his value to Harborne on his return. His command of the Ottoman language was of particular help to Harborne. His master was able to write to the translator Mustafa Çavuş, complaining that his secretary (i.e. Barton), would report to him with evidence of mistranslation of the Sultan's 'commandments' on Mustafa's part.³⁴

In August 1588, secretary Barton was left in sole charge of English representation within the Ottoman Empire, perhaps indicating the low importance with which Ottoman affairs were regarded in England, where foreign policy concerns during the 1580s were dominated by issues with Spain, France, the Netherlands, and Imperial and Baltic trade.³⁵ The decision to leave Barton in charge was evidently one made primarily in Istanbul, albeit surely with the blessing of Walsingham (Barton sends his thanks for his honour's favour in securing his 'preferment' in his

³¹ See the Sultan's order to Hasan Paşa, Beylerbeyi of Algiers, and Harborne's letter of explanation and instruction to John Tipton: Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 275-283.

³² *Ibid.*, 275-6.

³³ *Ibid.*, 296-302.

³⁴ 'Hi nostri, Secretarius et minimus interpres ex nostra parte dicent in tribus illis receptis mandateis errata'. Hakluyt, *Navigations*, v, 265-6.

³⁵ G.D. Ramsay, 'The Foreign Policy of Elizabeth I' in C. Haigh (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 1991), 147-168.

third letter after the departure of Harborne).³⁶ It was ordinarily the case in England that ambassadors would be selected from amongst the great and good – lords, bishops, high gentry – in keeping with the contemporary Western European understanding that the status of the ambassador represented the status of the monarch, and their attitude towards the court they were in dialogue with.³⁷ An ambassador of inappropriate status or qualification would cause insult to the host monarch or embarrassment to England. Barton did not fit the usual qualifications for an English ambassador abroad, as set out by Etienne Dolet in his treatise on the ‘Functions of the Ambassador’ (1541), or mirrored by the types of men sent from the English court to other European courts, and the French and Venetian ambassadors in Istanbul, another clue to the unusual role and status of the Turkey Company itself within this relationship. Dolet explains that ambassadors should not be young men (Barton was 26), must be exceptionally well-educated (Barton was only a grammar school graduate), and if a man of high birth were possessed of all these qualities, he should be preferred over lower-born candidates.³⁸ Barton and Harborne’s status as ‘lowly’ merchants caused insult to the aristocratic French Ambassador, Savary de Lancôme, on his arrival in 1586, when he refused to accept that English merchants could hold an equivalent post and title to his own.³⁹ It was also used as grounds to frustrate the English by the anti-English admiral, Uluç Ali Paşa, a renegade of Calabrian origins who perhaps shared certain Western European expectations about the social status of ambassadors.⁴⁰ As a point of contrast, the last Elizabethan ambassador to Madrid was John Man, an alumnus of Winchester College, New College, Oxford (BA 1533, MA 1538, BCL 1540), who studied for some time in Italy, spoke Italian

³⁶ Harborne, ‘To Walsingham’ 24th November 1594; Edward Barton, ‘Edward Barton to [Walsingham?]’ 31st August 1588, SP 97/1 ff.140-143, *TNA*.

³⁷ Tracey A. Sowerby, ‘Richard Pate, the Royal Supremacy, and Reformation Diplomacy’, *The Historical Journal*, 54/2 (2011), 265-285.

³⁸ J.S. Reeves & J.E. Dunlap, ‘Etienne Dolet on the functions of the ambassador’, *American Journal of International Law*, 27/1 (1933), 80-95.

³⁹ Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 5-6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5; Tobias Graf, *The Sultan’s Renegades: Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575-1610* (Oxford, 2017), 127-8.

and had served in various church and cathedral positions.⁴¹ The advantages that Barton did have were his command of Turkish and his familiarity with the workings of the Istanbul embassy.

Embassy: organisations, costs, foci

The early part of Barton's embassy was defined by a number of successful projects. As will be seen, he successfully mediated an Ottoman peace with Poland-Lithuania, and his anti-Spanish lobbying to the Ottoman palace was so successful that it brought down the vizierate of Ferhad Paşa in 1592. Barton also represented Henri IV to the Ottomans for a time – ambassador François Savary de Lancôme refused to recognise the then-Protestant king's legitimacy – before working alongside Lancôme's nephew, François Savary de Brèves, to effect a virtual coup at the French embassy and place Brèves in charge. What is remarkable about Barton compared to Harborne and Lello was how much of his work life was devoted to political endeavours rather than simply managing and expanding English merchant traffic in the Ottoman Empire. Through this selection of examples from Barton's embassy, we will see evidence of the costs associated with his embassy to the Ottoman Empire, the relations between the company, its factors, Barton and the Ottoman and English states, and Barton's interactions with the Ottoman political world.

Barton bore the official title of Agent until his official accreditation as English Ambassador in 1593, a delay caused in part because of the uncertainty caused by disputes in London between the Turkey Company and the Venice Company over the renewal of privileges, but also due to English ambivalence towards Ottoman gift-giving custom.⁴² One of the key disagreements over

⁴¹ Gary M. Bell, 'John Man: The Last Elizabethan Resident Ambassador in Spain', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 7/2 (1976), 75-93.

⁴² Liane Saunders, 'The Motives, Pattern and Form of Anglo-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations c.1580-1661', unpubd. DPhil thesis, University of Oxford (1993), 70-1.

who should pay for the gifts.⁴³ By the time of former English Izmir Consul Paul Rycaut's famous guide to the Ottoman Empire, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1670), there was nearly a century of experience in what was required of embassies to the Ottomans:

As it hath always been a custom amongst the Eastern Princes to send Presents each to other, as Tokens of Friendship an Amity... Ambassadors and Representatives, from other Princes, who have their Dominions more remote, and whose principal Design is esteemed for the promotion of Trade and Commerce, as the *English, French and Dutch*, are always permitted with their Presents, which the Turk by custom calls his right, and judges not himself obliged to return the like.⁴⁴

Barton had been accompanied by gifts, at the cost of the company, for his first audience with the sultan as agent and again during his renegotiation of the English *abdname* terms. However, in order for him to be officially upgraded to full ambassador status and received as such by the Ottomans, a suitably grand gift for the sultan was required. This gift to Murad III did not arrive until October 1593.⁴⁵ One can sense in the lengths Barton's associate Thomas Wilcox, on returning to Istanbul from England, went to in order to beseech William Cecil to heed the ambassador's calls for an official gift, the level of disconnect in understanding between Englishmen with experience of Ottoman culture and those who remained in London and had not built up the same 'local knowledge':

After my aryvall hear the second daie her ma^{ties} ambassador and I went wth her highness letters, and the full interpretation of them to the grand bassa, of whom the[y] wear most honorablie wreaid, to the great increase of her ma^{ties} auctoritie.⁴⁶

[Barton], you^r honor shall be mor larglie of all things informed, who for want of dew mentenance and of the ordenerie present, w^{ch} hathe ben for 5 years dailie expected, but yett still delayed, is not able to accomlishe so manie great offices to the increase of the most excellent ma^{ties} honor... the auctoritie of her ma^{tie}, w^{ch} in this court is of great estimation, but the gredy covetousness of the mynisters in this court is such, that not having thear ordinarie present, yea and manie tymes some extraordinarie gyfte, they will hardlie geve that favourable audience to anie... [he hath] great hope... that you^r honor will take spedie order for the sendinge awaie of the present, as also for the dew allowance of the ambassador.⁴⁷

⁴³ Ibid., 69-71.

⁴⁴ Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire. Containing the Maxims of the Turkish Polity; The most Material Points of the Mahometan Religion; Their Sects and Heresies; Their Covenants and Religious Votaries; Their Military Discipline: With an exact Computation of their Forces both by Sea and Land* (London, 1687), 40.

⁴⁵ Woodhead & Butler, 'Edward Barton'.

⁴⁶ Thomas Wilcox, 'To Sir William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer' 20th March 1591, SP 97/2 ff.76-7, *TNA*.

⁴⁷ Idem., 'To Sir William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer' 8th April 1591, SP 97/2 f.82, *TNA*.

In practice, Barton's personal reputation amongst his many friends and contacts allowed him the influence to continue acting as a *de facto* full ambassador, a fact noted by Wilcox as further incentive to Cecil to arrange for an appropriate gift to be sent (Wilcox also tells Cecil that he has assured Barton that the English court does care greatly about his Turkish affairs – surely an indication of Barton's frustration with the situation).⁴⁸ Ottoman documents also continue to refer to him as *elçi* (ambassador) without fail throughout the period from 1588-93.⁴⁹ However, lessons were not learned, and on the death of Murad III and the accession of Mehmed III in 1595, no further English gift was forthcoming, due to the Levant Company's frustration with continually having to foot Barton's diplomatic bill with no help from the crown.⁵⁰ It was only following Barton's death in early 1598, and the appointment of Henry Lello as ambassador, that the company, panicked at the thought of their representative losing full recognition as *elçi*, provided gifts to Mehmed III. Even then, their gift of Thomas Dallam's elaborate organ did not arrive until 1599, and only then was Lello granted full ambassador status.⁵¹ The lesson here in the relationship between company and state is that the English crown's interest in funding the English embassy was limited, especially when it came to providing the means for grand ceremonial. Trade was still flowing unencumbered, and so the embassy remained at arm's length from crown support.

Barton was confirmed as ambassador and sent credentials and a gift for the sultan in 1593, and guaranteed a regular salary of £1500 p/a from the newly reincorporated Levant Company.⁵² Once it had arrived, the gift presented to the sultan in October 1593 was well received, mainly consisting of expensive cloth.⁵³ Gifts were also provided for key Ottoman allies of Barton, including Çiğalazade, Sadeddin Efendi, 'the black eunuch', the *reisülkeüttab*, and the *nişancı*.⁵⁴ Gifts

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's Embassy', 11.

⁵⁰ Saunders, 'Anglo-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations', 69-71.

⁵¹ Ibid., 71.

⁵² Hakluyt, *Navigations*, vi, 71-92; Woodhead & Butler, 'Edward Barton'.

⁵³ 'Divers thinges provided to send her ma^{tes} Ambassador at Constantinople: In the shippe Assencion' (1592), MSS Tanner 77, ff.52-4, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

were also provided to members of Barton's embassy household: the *çavuş*, three dragomans, 'the hogi of the house or notary' – perhaps a secretary employed to write in official Ottoman styles that neither Barton nor the dragomans could replicate (and perhaps also a clue as to where Barton learned his Turkish) – and 'the customer', presumably in charge of provisioning the household.⁵⁵ That the increased regular salary was only confirmed in 1593 perhaps indicates the reasons for Barton's constant financial troubles in the embassy, ultimately leading to his loans from Ottoman beneficiaries, and the accusations of counterfeit coins being struck in the English embassy.⁵⁶ As Barton's career demonstrates, the English embassy in Istanbul had a great deal of independence in managing its own affairs, but at the expense of unreliable financial support from the English crown.

Another major milestone in Barton's ambassadorial career was his trip to join Mehmed III on campaign against the Habsburgs in Hungary in the summer of 1596. Barton writes, regarding the sultan's command for him to join the campaign:

My preparacon to dep^{ar}te wth the grand signior is sollicited, but noe provision assigned insomuch as I draw backe from goeing in as much as mee lyeth, the rather because as abovesaid it is suspected the grand signior will not passe Andronople [Edirne] this Som^mer, and againe to force them unto due provision for soe chargeable a voyage, w^{ch} would require triple the expence I am able to defray, unles I have provision from the grand signior according to Sinan Bassa his former promise.⁵⁷

Evidently, Barton could not afford to pay the costs of an expensive journey to Hungary with the army and did not trust Mehmed III to travel that far with his army at any rate. There were also the symbolic ramifications of an English representative travelling with an Ottoman army on campaign against Christians to consider. While the honour of travelling with the Ottoman imperial army may have excited Barton's supporters, such as Sanderson and Fynes Moryson, it was useful as propaganda for those with somewhat less affection towards Edward Barton and Elizabeth I,

⁵⁵ Ibid. Or alternatively, perhaps 'costumer' – the outfitter to the embassy household.

⁵⁶ Tomasz Kowalczyk, 'Edward Barton in Hungary: Arguments for travel as diplomatic service', *Renaissance Studies*, 33/4 (2019), 600.

⁵⁷ Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 5th June 1596, *Barton's Letterbook*, f.348.

especially as de Brèves had refused his similar invitation to join the campaign.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Barton was keen to act as a mediator in any negotiations between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs resulting from the campaign, and took pride in being trusted with the safe return of the long-imprisoned remaining 23 members of the previous Habsburg embassy to the Ottomans.⁵⁹ As Tomasz Kowalczyk has shown, Barton was keen to defend and justify his participation in his writing, and seemed buoyed by the adventure once it was underway.⁶⁰ In July, funds and supplies were secured for his departure by an imperial *ferman*.⁶¹

Barton's party was large, and generous provision was made for them. He took with him his secretary Glover, and another English associate, Jasper Thompson. Skilliter suggests that the Venetians Pasqual Dabri and Zuanne Alberti were also part of Barton's entourage, having been deported in disgrace from the Venetian embassy.⁶² There were a further twelve of Barton's men in the party, plus a Muslim worker called Mohammad, two *çavuş*, one dragoman, and three janissaries.⁶³ At Barton's rear came the 23-strong remainder of the Imperial embassy of 1593, entrusted to Barton's custody. The imperial *ferman* specifies the generosity of provision allowed for Barton and his company: at each station, 200 loaves of bread, 5 sheep, 20 chickens, 5 *okea* of honey, 5 *okea* of sugar, 10 bushels of barley and as much hay as should be sufficient.⁶⁴ Considering there were 21 horses for Barton's entourage, eight for the four carriages of the Imperial company, and 36 camels in tow, the cost of the hay alone must have been quite high, leaving aside the food.⁶⁵ Barton's time on campaign underlined his skill as an observer of Turkish affairs. This is both in the literal sense, for the account he wrote of the Battle of Haçova from his vantage point atop the sultan's pavilion,

⁵⁸ Sanderson, *Travels*, 156-7; Moryson, *Shakespeare's Europe*, 29; Woodhead & Butler, 'Edward Barton'.

⁵⁹ Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 27th June 1596, *Barton's Letterbook*, f.356.

⁶⁰ Kowalczyk, 'Edward Barton in Hungary', 590-608.

⁶¹ 'Order (ferman) from Mehemed III to the Cadis in the Qazas between Constantinople and the Imperial camp' 10th July 1596, in S. Skilliter (trans.), 'Edward Barton's embassy', 223-7;

⁶² Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 102.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁶⁴ 'between Constantinople and the Imperial camp', 225.

⁶⁵ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 102.

and in that of him being a good reader of political mood.⁶⁶ He successfully pleaded the case for the release of the remainder of the Habsburg embassy household from Ibrahim Paşa in Belgrade on 17th August, then, when the Ottoman army came across a massacre of Muslims by Christian forces at Hatvan, sent the Imperial embassy off to Buda by night as the army caravan set off for Eger.⁶⁷ Not only did this probably save the lives of the embassy household, it allowed them to liberate five more of their compatriots in Buda, as Barton had sent them away with the release orders before any Ottoman vizier might be tempted to revoke them.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Elizabeth I was displeased at Barton for joining the Ottoman campaign, for the propaganda opportunity it had handed to her enemies.⁶⁹ Mehmed III tried to rectify this by praising Barton's services and encouraging Elizabeth to be approving of her ambassador's actions, in a letter of March 1597.⁷⁰

It was late in his time as ambassador (during 1597), immediately after returning from the 1596 campaign, that Barton was visited by the gentleman traveller Fynes Moryson. From Moryson, we have a description of the new English house at Pera, obtained after the removal of the English embassy from Rapamat (the house of 'Arap Ahmet') in Fındıklı at the behest of angry locals, tired of the rowdy goings-on at the residence.⁷¹ He describes it as 'a faire house within a large field, and pleasant gardens'.⁷² Barton continued to work towards the English aim of peace between the Ottomans and the Austrian Habsburgs throughout 1597. Late in the year, or perhaps in early January 1598, he was struck by a sudden bout of dysentery and fell gravely ill.⁷³ Barton died in

⁶⁶ Edward Barton, 'Barton to Cecil – a journal of the Turkish expedition into Hungary' 5th January 1597, SP 97/3 ff.147-159, *TNA*.

⁶⁷ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 105-6.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁶⁹ Moryson, *Shakespeare's Europe*, 29.

⁷⁰ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 112.

⁷¹ Sanderson, *Travels*, 10; 'Order (ferman) from Murad III to the Cadi of Galata', in S. Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 212-5.

⁷² Moryson, *An itinerary written by Fynes Moryson, Gent., first in the Latine tongue, and then translated by him into English: containing his ten yeeres travel through the twelve dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland, and Ireland: divided into III parts*, I (London, 1617), 261.

⁷³ Sanderson, *Travels*, 175.

Istanbul on 28th January 1598.⁷⁴ Henry Lello suggests that as many as 300 people accompanied Barton's body to the waterside before it was taken by boat from Istanbul to the Princes Islands.⁷⁵ He was buried by the Greek Orthodox monastery on Heybeliada, where his grave remained until being moved to its current location at Haydarpaşa İngiliz Mezarlığı (where the above photograph was taken), between Kadıköy and Üsküdar, just to the north of the disused Haydarpaşa train terminus, on Istanbul's Asian shore.

Barton: both social and political

The first major theme that this case study of Barton's embassy brings to the fore is that of the importance of the social to the political in the early modern world, both for Ottomans and Barton's dealings with Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians. This thesis has already touched on the importance for English ambassadors in building close working bonds with key Ottoman allies, as well as the importance of quasi-familial relationships between merchants working together on projects or adventures. To quote Lauren Working once more, 'Early modern political practice was imbedded in the social'.⁷⁶ The primary means of maintaining or extending political authority was via networks of affiliations and patronage.⁷⁷ Without valuable social connections to other actors, there was little possibility of achieving political goals. This was the same too in the Ottoman Empire, where elite sociability and male bonding followed similar patterns to those familiar in other parts of Europe, as well as a distinctive role for elite women existing within the Ottoman political hierarchy — one which, for cultural reasons, necessitated contact via go-betweens or letters, but social contact all the same.⁷⁸ Recent scholarship has also emphasised the importance of social

⁷⁴ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 115.

⁷⁵ Sanderson, *Travels*, 174.

⁷⁶ Working, *Making of an Imperial Polity*, 19.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 19-21.

⁷⁸ W.G. Andrews & M. Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham, NC, 2005); Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1993).

networks and go-betweeners in Ottoman governance and diplomacy.⁷⁹ To return to the conception of early modern Istanbul politics functioning like a nebula, with clusters forming and attracting or repelling others by their gravity, social interaction and familiarity was the means by which those gravitational bonds formed. Barton's embassy was the epitome of this. Indeed, no early modern ambassador to the Ottoman Empire better fitted into the Ottoman ideology of cosmocracy, underlining again the surprising accuracy of Selaniki's terming of Barton performing *ubudiyet*.

Barton maintained close alliances and connections with both renegades and *devşirme* recruits within the Ottoman imperial household, and evidently also with members of vizier and other lower households, as is evidenced from his frequent mentions of enquiring with the 'agents' of various viziers.⁸⁰ Barton's awareness of the value of hospitality, and the bonds of loyalty built between boon companions, is evident from his close friendship and regular hosting of the *nişancı* Hamza Paşa. Barton refers to Hamza as his 'especiall friend'; a late-night wine-drinking buddy who even did Barton the honour of visiting the English ship *Ascension* 'where I made him a banquet'.⁸¹ A 'clerk of the Divan-ı Hümayûn' – in other words, an Ottoman bureaucrat of probable *devşirme* origin – who apparently progressed through the ranks due to his intelligence, it seems reasonable to propose that Hamza and Edward bonded on an intellectual level, since evidence suggests that this had also been the case between Barton and the equally learned Meletios Pegas and George Dousa.⁸² As *nişancı*, Hamza Paşa would have made an especially useful 'especiall friend' for Barton to have, since the position was effectively the Ottoman *divan*'s equivalent to a 'foreign minister' until the mid-seventeenth century.⁸³

⁷⁹ Graf, *Sultan's Renegades*; E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY, 2011); Idem., 'Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51/4 (2009), 771-800.

⁸⁰ Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 23rd December 1593, *Barton's Letterbook*, f.8

⁸¹ Barton, 'The Present cheife Governors of ye Turkish Emprye January 5th 1595', 5th January 1595, SP 97/1 f.137, *TNA*.

⁸² Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ii, 603-4; Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 10.

⁸³ Gábor Ágoston, 'Administration, central' in G. Ágoston & B. Masters (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 2009), 11-2.

Barton enjoyed the friendship of high-ranking Ottoman officials and scholars throughout his career. Figures such as the Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria and Constantinople Meletios Pegas, Hoca Sadeddin Efendi (tutor to Murad III, and later *Şeyhülislam*), and various Ottoman officials of high and low standing, were consulted and befriended by Barton throughout his time as English ambassador.⁸⁴ The letters of his Levant Company associate, sometime Secretary, and deputy during Barton's absence in 1596, John Sanderson, reveal the extent of Barton's close connections to networks of powerful Ottomans. Sanderson remarks on Barton's influence and standing amongst 'both Christians, Turks, and Jewes', and lists an impressive array of Barton's friends and admirers in high places: Safiye Sultan (with whom Elizabeth I exchanged gifts and letters, on Barton's prompting), Damat İbrahim Paşa, [Venedikli/Uluç] Hasan Paşa, Ciğalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa, and the aforementioned Hoca and Patriarch.⁸⁵ According to Sanderson, with these contacts '[Barton] made and displaced both princes and patriarchs, befriended viceroys, and preferred the suites of cadies'.⁸⁶ Sanderson's assessment of Barton's influence is clearly somewhat exaggerated, and probably coloured by his clear respect and admiration for the ambassador (feelings that rarely come across in Sanderson's descriptions of others), who had died by the time of Sanderson's writing. However, it gives a clear indication of Barton's connectedness with influential people across a range of functions, ranks, and households.

Meletios Pegas was Patriarch of Alexandria from 1590 until his death in 1601, and Constantinople from 1597-98.⁸⁷ A close friend of Barton, the two appear to have connected on an

⁸⁴ Sanderson, *Travels*, 61.

⁸⁵ Sadeddin was first secured as an ally by Harborne, see: Saunders, 'Anglo-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations', 238; Sanderson, *Travels*, p. 61; 'Present of Sultan to Queen Elizabeth' (1593), SP 97/2 f.230, *TNA*; Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 17th February 1594, *Barton's Letterbook*, f.34.

⁸⁶ Sanderson, *Travels*, 61.

⁸⁷ Patriarchate of Alexandria, 'Meletios Pegas (1590-1601)' at: <http://www.patriarchateofalexandria.com/index.php?module=content&cid=001003&cid=172&lang=en> (13/10/2017).

intellectual level, as per John Sanderson's report on the friendship between Barton and Meletios, preserved in Samuel Purchas:

He often frequented, and was very inward with our Ambassadour Master Edward Barton; I have heard him reason often, and seene him pray one time, in the Ambassadors chamber together with us... Yet did he aspire and got by Master Bartons meanes and his money, to be Patriarke of Constantinople, which soone he was weary of. Of all these Moderne Greekes, I have not heard of a better man; most certainly he was a true Christian Professor, although the times permitted not that he might declare it, except in private, to some of Learning and understanding.⁸⁸

If Sanderson's account is to be trusted, Meletios was a regular guest of Barton's household, and Barton extended his patronage to see his ally elevated in status within the Greek Orthodox hierarchy and within Istanbul. Presumably, given the closeness between the two men, their shared prayer together, and Barton's original burial on Orthodox land in Heybeliada, Barton was one of the men with whom the patriarch shared his expertise on matters of Christian faith. I. I. Podea also quotes Meletios Pegas as referring to Barton as 'very learned'.⁸⁹ Sanderson also shares Henry Lello's account of Meletios and Edward's last goodbye, on the latter's deathbed:

Master Edward Barton the Ambassador, as Master Henry Lillo did tell mee, who did see it, said, that few dayes before his decease, the Patriarke and he did weepe upon one anothers neckes, he kissed the dying man, who had seriously recommended a Kinsman, and other his Servants unto him, pretending (that of the monies which by his promises he was behind with him) his desire was that he would be good unto his said Servants, and so they parted.⁹⁰

From this, we see that as well as sharing a close friendship, Barton benefited from the patronage of the Orthodox priest which gave the English embassy access to loans and the favour of Greek trans-imperial intermediaries within Istanbul and the wider Ottoman Empire. His friendship was also useful in easing the travel of Levant Company factors within his zones of influence, as letters of favour given to Sanderson for his trip to Jerusalem attest.⁹¹ English association with Jeremias II Tranos, serving his third term as Patriarch of Constantinople, alongside Barton's friendship with

⁸⁸ Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes, Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others*, ix, (Glasgow, 1905), 484-5.

⁸⁹ I.I. Podea, 'A contribution to the study of Queen Elizabeth's Eastern policy (1590-1593)', *Mélanges d'Histoire Generale II* (Cluj, 1938), 430.

⁹⁰ Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, ix, 485.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 478-486.

Meletios, led to Barton gaining contact with Aaron of Moldavia and supporting his appointment as Prince, via the recommendation of patriarchs eager to curtail Jesuit influence in the region.⁹² Jeremias was returning from a visit to Moldavia when he was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople for the third time in 1589.⁹³

Born in Istanbul in 943AH (1536/7) and descended from a scholarly family, Sadeddin was educated through the Islamic schooling system and associated with the *Şeyhülislam* under Süleyman I, Ebüssuûd Efendi, teaching in important *medreses* until being made Şehzade Murad's tutor in May 1573.⁹⁴ This gave him significant influence over Murad while he was sultan, rivalling the influence of Safiye Sultan and the long-serving white eunuch Gazanfer Ağa, and he remained with the imperial family to also tutor Mehmed III.⁹⁵ He was an ally to the English mission from its earliest days, supporting both Harborne and Barton in their endeavours.⁹⁶ Sanderson describes Sadeddin as 'a very comely, grave and wise Turke, who was Sultan Mahomets Schoole-master, (and I may well say Counseller) was a very true friend, and an assister of Master Barton, in all his businesse with the Grand Signior'.⁹⁷ Barton would often turn to Sadeddin to intercede on his behalf in disputes with other nations' representatives and with Ottoman officials.⁹⁸ While Harborne was able to pay Sadeddin to ensure the Ottomans maintained their anti-Spanish position in 1587, by Sadeddin's death in 1599, the Levant Company reportedly owed him seven hundred thousand *akçe*, debts accumulated propping up Barton's cash-strapped embassy.⁹⁹ Sadeddin's connection with the English embassy might therefore be understood through the lens of household politics; supporting English aims benefitted the *alim* financially and politically. Though Sadeddin fell out of favour

⁹² Podea, 'Eastern Policy', 430-1; Borys A. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: the Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 30-40.

⁹³ Guziak, *Crisis and Reform*, 30-40.

⁹⁴ Şerafettin Turan, 'Hoca Sâdeddin Efendi', *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 18 (Istanbul, 1998), 196-8.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 196-7.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁹⁷ Sanderson, *Travels*, 61.

⁹⁸ Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 17th June 1594, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.78-81; *idem.*, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 28th December 1594, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff. 124-5.

⁹⁹ Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 224.

under Mehmed III, he was made *seyhülislam* from November 1597 until his death in October 1599.¹⁰⁰

A clue to how Barton may have strengthened social bonds with such elite and scholarly men may be found in Helen Pfeifer's 'Encounter After the Conquest: Scholarly Gatherings in 16th-Century Ottoman Damascus'. This explores *meclis gruplar* – gatherings – of learned men to discuss literature, history, theology, and — in Barton's case — likely politics too.¹⁰¹ Pfeifer somewhat misleadingly translates *meclis* as 'literary salon', where a better English term might be 'intellectual gathering'. Men of education and standing would meet to discuss matters of intellectual import, and also engage in the all-important politics of visiting – or, in Barton's words '[coming] to do me honor'.¹⁰² Barton was evidently a good conversationalist when he was hosting. His skill with Turkish is noted by Mustafa Selaniki, who also suggested that Barton's written Turkish was equally good.¹⁰³ This, and the respect shown to him by Christian scholars such as Meletios Pegas and George Dousa, and highly educated Ottomans such as Sadeddin Efendi and Hamza Paşa, all suggests that Barton had the intelligence and eloquence to hold his own in gatherings of intellectual and elite circles. There is further evidence of the impression he had on intellectual and well-educated elite men in his heartfelt goodbye to Patriarch Meletios Pegas, and the jovial relations between Barton and Damat İbrahim Paşa observed by Sanderson.¹⁰⁴ For a man who Moryson explains, 'had strong parts of nature, and knew well how to manage great Affaires in the Turkes Court; yet... could not know the English Court', bonds of alliance with Ottoman political actors were perhaps the strongest support network Barton had.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, it might be possible to consider Barton a 'favourite' within Ottoman elite structures of homosociality, as explored by

¹⁰⁰ Turan, 'Hoca Sadeddin', 197.

¹⁰¹ Helen Pfeifer, 'Encounter After the Conquest: Scholarly Gatherings in 16th-Century Ottoman Damascus', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 47 (2015), 219-239.

¹⁰² Ibid.; Barton, 'Chief governors'.

¹⁰³ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 9.

¹⁰⁴ Sanderson, *Travels*, 157.

¹⁰⁵ Moryson, *Itinerary*, 29.

Andrews and Kalpaklı in *The Age of Beloveds*, favoured for the quality of his company by older Ottoman men who admired the younger English ambassador, who stood out for his ability to speak Turkish and adapt himself to Ottoman customs and ceremonial.¹⁰⁶ Certainly Barton was not someone overly troubled by ‘norm competition’ and was certainly tolerant of the ambiguity of sliding between English, European, and Ottoman company and the norms and expectations that came with them.

Without doubt, Barton’s social connection to these men reaped political and practical rewards. Sadeddin’s *ex-officio* political clout, as a man of Islamic religious standing and high education, as well as a former royal tutor, was extremely valuable when he could be persuaded to inveigh on political matters, as his influence in anti-Spanish affairs shows. Not only this, but his financial support of Barton’s embassy is also as important as it is startling. It seems incredibly unorthodox for religious figures to be lending money to keep a foreign embassy afloat. And yet this was also a benefit of Barton’s association with the Orthodox patriarchs. Meletios Pegas was also a creditor of the English embassy in this period, as well, seemingly, as a useful ally in obtaining permission for English merchants to visit Christian religious sites. The political and religious connection between the English embassy, the Orthodox patriarchs, and the tributary provinces on the Danube, is also significant, and is discussed later in the chapter in fuller detail. It was the connection to Hamza Paşa that brought the clearest everyday practical benefit. As one of the heads of the Ottoman scribal service, he could be relied upon to get orders signed and documents produced for the English embassy and its merchant community whenever they were required.

The *fermanlar* sent on Barton’s behalf in response to complaints from English merchants also give an interesting insight into Barton’s day-to-day company business. Particularly interesting is the

¹⁰⁶ W.G. Andrews & M. Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham, NC, 2005), *passim*.

ferman sent from Mehmed III to the Morea *sancakbeyi* and the Patras and Lepanto *kadılarzı*, in July 1595. This *ferman* is noted ‘bā hatt-ı Hamza Çelebi’, i.e. from the hand of the *nişancı* Hamza Paşa.¹⁰⁷ Beyond revealing the utility of social connections with Ottoman office holders, the document also reveals the sorts of problem cases that Barton had to intervene in as part of his work representing the Levant Company. The problem in Morea was the oppression and extortion of English merchants by minor local officials. The *naẓır* of Lepanto, Arslan, had forced the merchant John Brewer into buying currants at a grossly inflated price, and had been harrying him ever since. Not one, but two interventions had already been made on Brewer’s behalf; the first another imperial *ferman* requesting the case to be referred to Istanbul, and the second an intervention by the local *kadı*.¹⁰⁸ The *kadı* had been forced to intervene when, rather than take his dispute with Brewer to the ‘felicitous Threshold’, Arslan imprisoned Brewer for three days.¹⁰⁹ This was the cause of this particular *ferman* being generated, and its tone suggests that patience with Arslan had worn thin: ‘If he is obstinate and intractable, you must submit information by writing to my felicitous Porte’.¹¹⁰ Morea appears to have been particularly troublesome territory, with two other *ferman* sent in 1595 regarding certain Abdu’l-Latif Çavuş and İbrahim Ağa organising the raiding of an English shop in Patras.¹¹¹ The local English consuls generally appear to have been unable to deal with injustices done in their local zones, and were forced to refer these cases to Barton for resolution in Istanbul, in a similar way to how he was required to travel to North Africa to deal with the major problems faced by the English merchants there during his time as secretary. John Tipton, despite having been in place as consul at Algiers since Barton’s visit in 1585, still asked for Barton’s intervention to receive permission via *ferman* for extra fishing rights in the waters off the North African coast.¹¹² Ironically, as much as some factors saw fit to complain about the increased cost of Barton’s

¹⁰⁷ Hamza Paşa, ‘Order (*ferman*) from Mehmed III to the Sanjakbeg of the Morea and the Cadis of Patras and Lepanto’ trans. S. Skilliter in ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 217-222.

¹⁰⁸ Hamza Paşa, ‘Order to Morea’.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 155-6.

¹¹² Ibid., 151-2.

embassy, and his repeated requests from them for money, it was the web of connections he built up in Istanbul that made him of such use in solving problems sent to him from around the various English consulates in the Ottoman Empire. The extent to which Barton was able to build up these useful political connections, influence the actions of these people, and raise his and English prestige in the meantime, will be explored in the discussion of his embassy below.

Palace allies and networks: Safiye Sultan

Palace allies were always helpful, be they bureaucrats, or even women of the royal household. The ‘Sultanate of Women’ is a paradigm in Ottoman historiography referring to the supposedly increased power of Ottoman imperial women in the governance of the empire throughout the latter half of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century.¹¹³ As Leslie Peirce notes in *The Imperial Harem*, matriarchal figures within early modern Ottoman households tended to hold influence over family politics and younger members of the family, male and female; the Ottoman dichotomy of power was not vertical (upper/lower), but horizontal (inner/outer).¹¹⁴ As such, the *harem* was the centre of activity for the dynastic household, being its innermost sanctum, the private home of the sultan and his immediate family, and therefore the vortex of imperial power. This is reflected in the gradual increase in exclusivity as one moves through the four zones of the Topkapı Sarayı, the Ottoman imperial palace. The first courtyard was a public space, in which subjects could present themselves to petition to the sultan and his *divan*. The second courtyard was the sphere of government, where the likes of Barton were received and the viziers went about their business. The third courtyard, inaccessible to outsiders, was where the sultan lived, surrounded by the *devşirme* boys and the white eunuchs, attended to by dwarves and mutes – none of whom threatened the masculinity of the sultan. Beyond that was the family harem, a world only of women, children, the

¹¹³ Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, passim.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-10.

black eunuchs, and the sultan himself.¹¹⁵ As later sixteenth century sultans began a steady migration of their quarters to the family harem, access to the sultan became more guarded and proximity to the sultan (and therefore power) limited to fewer actors – eunuchs and women of the harem.¹¹⁶ The structure of Ottoman succession and the training and experience afforded to princes also changed, beginning to resemble something more like primogeniture and concentrating more potential for power amongst favoured concubines, their eldest sons, and then queen mothers once their sons had ascended to power.¹¹⁷

The various reasons behind these changes need not detain us unnecessarily. What is most important here are the consequences of these changes with regard to the diplomatic sphere. That European diplomats recognised the importance of *haseki* and *valide sultans* is clear; Murad III's mother, Nurbanu Sultan, had been an ally of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, as well as having been known to favour Venetian interests, as a former subject of Venice before her arrival as a captive to the Ottoman court.¹¹⁸ Safiye Sultan, prominent in the period of Edward Barton's embassy as Murad's *haseki* and Mehmed III's *valide sultan*, was also diplomatically very active, and was one of the prominent channels Barton turned to when faced with the conundrum of having to reverse English policy on the outbreak of the Long War in Hungary without losing face.¹¹⁹ Safiye was presented to Murad as a thirteen-year-old slave in 1563, and became his *haseki* during his time as prince, only having to share Murad's attentions with other concubines once he had risen to the sultanate.¹²⁰ She maintained lines of communication with the world outside the palace via her Jewish *kira*, Esperanza Malchi, who was tasked with procuring goods for the *harem* and helping coordinate Safiye's business

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 10-2; Gülru Necipoğlu, 'Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople', *Muqarnas*, 29 (2012), 1-82.

¹¹⁶ Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 91-4.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 92.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 222.

¹¹⁹ Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 11th November 1593, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.3-5; Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer' 25th November 1593, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.5-6.

¹²⁰ Maria Pia Pedani, 'Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy', *Turcica*, 32 (2000), 11-13.

interests.¹²¹ She had a close alliance with the long-serving renegade eunuch Gazanfer Ağa, whose mother also enjoyed access to the imperial *harem* on her visits to Istanbul, facilitating a temporary further point of contact with the women of the imperial household for European ambassadors, particularly the Venetian *bailo*.¹²² Safiye was a patron of Damat İbrahim Paşa and Halil Paşa, her sons-in law via her daughters Ayşe Sultan and Fatma Sultan respectively, though she developed a distaste for Çiğalazade due to his consecutive marriages to two of her rival royal women: the daughters of Ayşe Hanım, who was herself the daughter of Mihrimah Sultan and therefore granddaughter of Süleyman I.¹²³ Safiye was a useful point of contact for Barton and for the Venetian *bailo*, as were the trans-imperial networks formed by the number of Venetian converts to Islam within Ottoman palace service.¹²⁴ Her letters to Elizabeth I indicate a willingness to lobby on England's behalf, and her contacts with Barton bear this out.¹²⁵ She also displayed an interest in portraits of the English queen, suggesting a connection based on interest in a shared royal female identity.¹²⁶

Barton communicated with Safiye by means of the *kira*. This methodology was different from Christian court practice, where one could lobby a female member of a household face-to-face, but was done for the same reasons in both cases: to gain intelligence on the husband/partner's motives and to persuade the female to lobby her partner on behalf of vested interests. That Barton used Safiye in this way is clear; he mentions sending word to Safiye to obtain information on Murad III's thoughts on continuing to make war in Hungary or considering peace.¹²⁷ Due to Safiye's connections to Venice, a letter from Barton to Safiye from 24th January 1592 survives in the Venetian archives, enclosed in a dispatch sent by *baili* Lorenzo Bernardo and Matteo Zane. In the

¹²¹ Ibid., 12-15.

¹²² Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades*, 156-9; Pedani, 'Safiye's Household', 14-17.

¹²³ Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades*, 156-9.

¹²⁴ Pedani, 'Safiye's Household', 9-32; Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 219-28.

¹²⁵ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 227-8.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 219.

¹²⁷ Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 25th November 1593.

letter, clearly a translation from the original Ottoman due to its turns of phrase ('Most puissant Empress!'; 'all gratitude which shall be manifest on the first occasion, God willing'), Barton requests Safiye's aid in following up a petition which the *mufti* and *kapudan paşa* had not adequately followed up.¹²⁸ In this letter, Barton touches upon the subject of potential Ottoman peace negotiations with Spain, and plays up the feminine connection between Elizabeth and Safiye:

I trust that your Highness will warmly support the interests of my Queen. She is a woman, and yet has fought and harassed for a long time this mighty Sovereign. Worthy therefore is she that his Majesty's power should be displayed in her favour. I implore your Highness to show your benignity towards my Queen, and now is the time to do it; and I would pray you, as you please, to make use of Mehemet Aga to lay the matter before the Sultan.¹²⁹

Barton also encouraged Elizabeth I to send gifts to Safiye, and the two exchanged correspondence.¹³⁰ Safiye was clearly willing to at least represent herself as a potential intermediary between Elizabeth and the sultan, both during her time as *haseki* and as *valide sultan*.¹³¹ The gifts exchanged between queen and 'sultana' were substantial; lavish clothing and tiaras were sent to England in return for expensive carriages and artwork depicting Elizabeth, sent to Istanbul.¹³² The exchange of correspondence, images, and gifts over such distance, between powerful females who would never meet, one of whom being apparently completely secluded from the outside world, may seem odd at first glance. However, to anyone reading this in the internet age, it should be abundantly clear that important relationships can be forged indirectly via the medium of messengers conveying information over great distances. Female agency cannot be dismissed as a valuable part of Barton's web of political and diplomatic connections, and the prominence of Ottoman royal favourites and matriarchs may equally have normalised the concept of dealing with a female English dynastic head within Ottoman diplomatic circles.

¹²⁸ Idem., 'Memorial presented by the English Ambassador to the Sultana, wife of the Grand Signor', *Venice*, viii, 1-8.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 227-8; Safiye Sultan, 'The Sultana, wife of Amurat iii, to queen Elizabeth, complimentary' [no date], Cotton Nero B/VIII f.64, *BL*; Idem., 'Sultana to Queen Elizabeth' 31st July 1594, SP 97/2 f.295, *TNA*.

¹³¹ Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 228.

¹³² Ibid., 219, 228; 'Present of Sultan to Queen Elizabeth' (1593), SP 97/2 f.230, *TNA*. This document reveals that the carriage, received in Istanbul with Lello's gifts for the Sultan, had been planned as early as 1593, but simply not actioned or delivered in Barton's time.

Together, the examples of Barton's close personal relationships with powerful Ottoman figures and his engagement with key figures with intimate access to the sultan shows his willingness to embrace competing norms between English and Ottoman social and political systems to increase the gravity of his embassy household and its cluster within the Ottoman nebular cosmocracy. To be a confidant and discussion partner of figures like Sadeddin, Meletios, and Hamza shows a level of social adaptability that was a boon to an ambassador working in an environment that relied on networking and standing within a patrimonial world. Alongside that, Barton understood the power of royal women during the reigns of Murad III and Mehmed III and was able to take advantage of clever parallels with his own female monarch to encourage links between Safiye Sultan and the English trading nation in the Ottoman Empire, drawing his cluster closer to the imperial household at the centre of the cosmocracy.

Anti-Spanish Faction: a case study in political-social networking in Ottoman politics

Barton's success in his early attempts to drive out Spanish representatives negotiating a treaty with the Ottomans serves as an excellent example of the political power of the networks Barton had built up. French ambassador Lancôme was an enthusiastic supporter of Spanish interests in Istanbul and supported the Spanish agent Giovanni Steffano Ferrari in his efforts to obtain an invitation for the Spanish special ambassador, Count Ruggiero Marigliani, to visit the Ottoman capital and discuss a treaty (since the Spanish would not send their ambassador directly without invitation). Ferrari and Marigliani had attempted this strategy previously, in 1589-90, but Barton's alliances with Koca Sinan Paşa and Sadeddin Efendi, and Sinan's distaste for the Habsburgs, saw Ferrari dismissed empty-handed in January 1590.¹³³ Uluç Hasan Paşa also claimed involvement in

¹³³ Giovanni Moro, 'To the Doge and Senate' 11th November 1589, *Venice*, viii, 472-6; Idem., 'To the Doge and Senate' 6th January 1590, *Venice*, viii, 478-481.

having the Spanish agent dismissed, according to the Venetian dispatches.¹³⁴ The second coming of Ferrari was much more difficult for Barton to manage, with Ferhad Paşa now grand vizier, and much more sympathetic to peace in the west. Ferhad was an Albanian *devşirme* recruit and a favourite of the sultan, a former janissary *ağa*, and a veteran of the Safavid campaigns.¹³⁵ As such, his focus was on the east rather than the west. He was also embroiled in courtly rivalries with some of Barton's closest allies. He granted a safe conduct for Marigliani in November 1591.¹³⁶

Barton immediately had to step in to disrupt Ottoman-Spanish negotiations as much as possible. How he did so is indicative of Barton's general approach to diplomatic practice, and the power of personal connections and interactions in early modern diplomacy and politics. Barton mobilised all his palace allies in a race to prevent the Spanish obtaining a truce with the Ottomans. Venetian ambassador Lorenzo Bernardo received intelligence that Barton visited Çiğalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa at the arsenal on 14th December, and by 27th December could report more fully on the gravity of the situation, enclosing a translation of an English *arx* to the sultan with the report.¹³⁷ Barton had the advantage of being on the right side of palace rivalries in this argument; Ferhad was the only vizier strongly in favour of entertaining Ferrari and receiving Marigliani.¹³⁸ Barton was at the centre of a network of Ferhad's rivals: Çiğalazade, Boyalı Mehmed Paşa, Şeyhülislam Mehmed Efendi Bostanzade, and, according to the Venetian report, 'the sultan's secretary' and the *nişancı*.¹³⁹ Usage of the term 'secretary' in English documents suggest it was used to refer to various secretarial roles, since 'Musa Çelebi' is given as the title holder in 1595 by Barton, while a certain 'Musa Efendi' held the actual position of *riyâset kaymakamı* (secretariat deputy).¹⁴⁰ The term may simply have been

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ii, 518.

¹³⁶ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 45.

¹³⁷ Lorenzo Bernardo, 'To the Doge and Senate' 14th December 1591, *Venice*, viii, 564-70.

¹³⁸ Idem., 'To the Doge and Senate' 27th December 1591, *Venice*, viii, 564-70.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Edward Barton, 'Names of the Viceroys' (March 1595), SP 97/3 f.19, *TNA*; Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, iv, 1120.

used to describe whomever the writer was most used to encountering undertaking high secretarial duties in the palace. However, Skilliter suggests that the recurring ‘secretary’ in the Calendar of State Papers of Venice is a mistranslation of ‘hoca’ on the part of the editor, Horatio F. Brown, thus referring to Sadeddin Efendi.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, it is striking that Barton should have such a wide network of contacts in the Ottoman chancery, including the *nişancı* of 1591, *riyâset kaymakamı* Musa Efendi, and Hamza Paşa, who held various titles and was *sadaret* in 1591-2, another role with close secretarial links to the sultan. It is reasonable to speculate that these men were probably also involved in Barton’s efforts against Ferhad Paşa and Ferrari in 1591-2. As men with access to the sultan, they would have been useful for Barton’s diplomatic endeavours, but also, as was shown by Hamza Paşa’s authorship of one of the *fermans* secured in aid of English merchants, useful for more ordinary company business.

The positioning of Çiğalazade and Sadeddin Efendi as allies of Barton and rivals of Ferhad Paşa in this instance is particularly interesting. While Sadeddin had been a useful contact for Barton for some time, Çiğalazade had only recently taken up the role of *kapudan paşa*, but would become a useful ally and contact for Barton. Born Scipione Cicalla/Cigala, son of Genoese corsair Visconte Cicalla, in 1561 at the age of 17, Çiğalazade Yusuf Sinan was taken captive at sea by Maghrebin corsairs and sent to Istanbul, where he converted to Islam and joined Ottoman service.¹⁴² Barton remained well-informed on the activities of Çiğalazade and his household while he was admiral of the fleet, and frequently updated Heneage and Cecil on the status of Ottoman sea power, hopeful that his connections with the household of the admiral would eventually see an Ottoman fleet take to the seas against the Spanish.¹⁴³ Barton clashed with Çiğalazade over his refusal to recognise the right of Flemish merchants to trade freely in Ottoman waters under the English flag, but generally

¹⁴¹ Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 47.

¹⁴² Graf, *The Sultan’s Renegades*, 123.

¹⁴³ Edward Barton, *Barton’s Letterbook*, passim.

the men were on friendly terms.¹⁴⁴ Çiğalazade briefly became grand vizier following his successes on the battlefield at Haçova (1596), but lasted only a month before his enmity with Safiye Sultan saw him replaced by Damat İbrahim Paşa.¹⁴⁵ He had been allied to Gazanfer Ağa before the latter became close with Safiye Sultan.¹⁴⁶

What is also interesting is how the concerns of the ‘anti-Spanish’ party match up almost exactly with Barton’s complaints in his *arz*: Bernardo describes their position as follows:

Each and all declare that Spain is using all her subtlety to protect herself against the power of this Grand Signor, with the object of finding herself freer to harass France and England precisely as she did in the case of Portugal, whose example ought to suffice to exclude all question of a truce. They urge that it does not comport with the honour of the Sultan to abandon the Queen of England now, when she, for so many years, has fought single handed against Spain, to the great benefit and security of the Turks, who were at that time occupied in the Persian war; during all this period she was never assisted nor favoured by the fleet that had been so often promised her, and now she would be left exposed to the great power of Spain, whose sole object is aggrandisement.¹⁴⁷

Bernardo’s translation of Barton’s petition similarly reads:

when you were at war with Persia, and in doubt lest the King of Spain by attacking your kingdom should divert you from your enterprise, you invited the Queen, our mistress, to move her arms against the King of Spain; and that she, though only a woman, ignoring the greatness of the King's power, did undertake a war on him for no other reason than because of her affection for your Serenity.

It is, therefore, only right that you should grant to my mistress that assistance which has been so often promised to her whenever your war with Persia was at an end. That war is now over, and I see no reason why you should not help my mistress; but no assistance is asked, only a pledge not to hamper her who has undertaken a war on your behalf alone.

Often has your Serenity written to my mistress promising to be friend of her friends and foe to her foes, but now it seems that the contrary is to be the case. For the King of Spain has sent an Ambassador to the Porte, and the Ambassador has sent on an Agent to precede him. He made presents to the Grand Vizir, who replied, “Let the Ambassador come; I will secure a peace for him.”

I know not whether this be by order of your Serenity, but when my mistress has undertaken a war on the King of Spain, and you have many times promised her help, how can you now refuse your friendship, and conclude an alliance with the King of

¹⁴⁴ Idem., ‘To the Lord Treasurer’ 3rd November 1594, *Barton’s Letterbook*, ff.108-112.

¹⁴⁵ Graf, *The Sultan’s Renegades*, 157-9.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 157-9.

¹⁴⁷ Bernardo, ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 27th December 1591.

Spain; I leave this to the judgment of the Almighty God, the just judge, to judge between your Serenity and my Queen.

It is not fitting, therefore, that you, the most mighty Prince in the world, should abandon my mistress and make friends with the King of Spain, who, eleven or twelve years ago, on the opportunity of a truce with you, seized the kingdom of Portugal, and now desires a truce again for no other reason than to occupy France, which he has always coveted ever since the death of the murdered King. My mistress hitherto has prevented him; and he, hearing rumour of your preparations, sends to beg peace, especially as there is a severe famine in Spain.¹⁴⁸

The arguments employed line up exactly between those reported to be coming from within the Ottoman court, and the case made by Barton from without. This is suggestive of a shared, co-ordinated strategy in order to achieve their policy aims, and further evidence of Barton's embeddedness within Ottoman political factions; his connections here are working as one clear anti-Spanish bloc, while their rival entertains the possibility of truce with Spain in part out of his enmity with that bloc and with Barton himself.

In his report of 27th December 1591, Lorenzo Bernardo also writes, with some consternation, that Barton had attempted to convince him of the need to oppose an Ottoman truce with Spain for the good of the Venetian Republic. He says that Boyalı Mehmed Paşa first sent for his dragoman, and said, 'What is the Bailo about? Doesn't he see that Spain means to conquer France, and then all Italy? God forgive the Sultan for believing in the naval power of Spain. She is always beaten. It is the Venetians who, by their naval victory [at Lepanto], have given this reputation to Spain'.¹⁴⁹ He was then visited by Barton's associate, Paulo Mariani. The *bailo's* response to this is worth quoting in full:

This English Agent, who fills this post with little prudence and less respect towards the Republic, sent to me the other day his confidant, Paulo Mariani. He is young and a merchant, with little knowledge of affairs, and is carried away by his passions.

Mariani told me that the Agent was extremely active in his opposition to the truce, and in the course of his operations he had discovered something of moment to the Republic, which was this, that the Grand Vizir, among the arguments which he employed to win

¹⁴⁸ 'Translation of Memorial presented by the English Agent to the Grand Signor' 27th December 1591, *Venice*, viii, 564-70.

¹⁴⁹ Bernardo, 'To the Doge and Senate' 27th December 1591.

over the Sultan, pointed out that if he signed the truce with Spain he would have his hands quite free, and all his troops fresh to demand from the Republic either the payment of tribute or the kingdom of Crete.

I, on hearing this diabolic invention, could not contain myself; I gave Mariani a sharp answer, and complained of the English Agent's conduct; I begged to inform him that by the grace of God the Republic was in good peace and understanding with Spain and with Turkey; and both were prepared to include the Republic in any treaty. The English Agent's suggestions were scandalous, and the Grand Vizir had cause to complain of his false and malignant machinations.¹⁵⁰

Mariani was a vital intermediary for Barton in thwarting the Spanish attempt at negotiating a truce, and in his simultaneous dealings with the French embassy. Mariani was a Venetian Catholic who had been in the service of the French consul in Alexandria, before conflict had led to his banishment to Istanbul in 1586.¹⁵¹ He was added to the household of the English embassy by Harborne with the support of İbrahim Paşa, who was well inclined toward Mariani, remembering him from his time in Cairo.¹⁵² He was a close associate and confidante of Barton, but was greatly mistrusted by other Englishmen (Sanderson refers to him as 'Catholike Roman Christian Corrupter'), forcing Barton to defend him repeatedly.¹⁵³ With both Barton and Mariani's ally İbrahim Paşa away on campaign in 1596, the French ambassador, de Brèves, was finally able to arrange for Mariani to be executed, with acting ambassador Sanderson apparently unable or unwilling to intervene.¹⁵⁴ Mariani granted Barton greater access to contacts he had built up in Cairo, such as Damat İbrahim Paşa and his network, and the Şeyhülislam Bostanzade, who had been *kazasker* (head military judge) of Egypt during Mariani's time there. However, he was (according to Sanderson) an enemy of Sinan Paşa.¹⁵⁵ It seems safe to also surmise that close partnership with Mariani also granted Barton and the English embassy greater access to Venetian and French

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. Bernardo always refers to Barton by his proper title, agent, and Zane later complains of how Barton is named and treated as an ambassador by the Ottomans by virtue of his contacts within the Ottoman court.

¹⁵¹ Lorenzo Bernardo, 'To the Doge and Senate' 29th April 1596, *Venice*, ix, 149-59; Idem., 'To the Doge and Senate' 24th December 1596, *Venice*, ix, 223-228.

¹⁵² Bernardo, 'To the Doge and Senate' 19th April 1596.

¹⁵³ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 30; Sanderson, *Travels*, 61-3; Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 25th April 1594; Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer' 27th May 1594; Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer' 17th June 1594; Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer [?]' 10th August 1594; Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer [?]' 24th August 1594.

¹⁵⁴ Sanderson, *Travels*, 61.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 129.

networks across the Mediterranean, especially considering his involvement in the French embassy affairs, and the fact that Barton would send him as an emissary to the Venetian *bailo*.

Despite everything being stacked in his favour, Marigliani refused to travel from Ragusa to Istanbul with Ferrari, requesting instead that Ferrari negotiate on his behalf.¹⁵⁶ New Venetian *bailo*, Matteo Zane, remarked at the damage this decision had done to the prestige of Ferhad Paşa, and thus to the chances of the success of the treaty negotiations.¹⁵⁷ Refusing to do the Ottoman royal house the honour of a visit after having been invited was a sure way to sabotage his own prospects of success. Victory for Barton's anti-Spanish party came when the sultan refused to allow Ferhad to even acknowledge receipt of Marigliani's request, and on 22nd March the grand vizier was forced to terminate negotiations.¹⁵⁸ He was also now under pressure from prominent members of Barton's faction, including Safiye Sultan, Sadeddin Efendi, and Bostanzade, all of whom favoured the return of Koca Sinan Paşa as grand vizier.¹⁵⁹ Ironically, the former janissary *ağa* Ferhad was toppled by a revolt of the janissaries in April 1592.¹⁶⁰

The example of this episode shows quite clearly the importance of Barton being embedded in a reliable social network of potential political allies. As will be explored further in the next section, faction-building was also an important part of Ottoman politics in Barton's time, bringing households and their heads together to support shared political interests. In this case, the combination of Barton and several of his allies proved so successful that it not only thwarted Spanish attempts at diplomacy, but saw a great political rival removed from office. *Ex-officio* contacts proved equally vital in forming a united political front as viziers. Safiye Sultan, Sadeddin Efendi, chancery bureaucrats, and junior members of the embassy household, all played their roles.

¹⁵⁶ Matteo Zane, 'To the Doge and Senate' 1st March 1592, *Venice*, ix, 14.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁵⁸ *Idem.*, 'To the Doge and Senate' 22nd March 1592, *Venice*, ix, 14-21.

¹⁵⁹ *Idem.*, 'To the Doge and Senate' 7th March 1592, *Venice*, ix, 14-21.

¹⁶⁰ *Idem.*, 'To the Doge and Senate' 5th April 1592, *Venice*, ix, 21-6.

Similarly, connections to palace figures probably also played a large role in Barton's later success in defending himself and his household from Ferhad's vengeance, with palace insiders surely contriving for the sultan to see Barton's waterborne act of supplication and receive another petition against Ferhad.

Factions and households

If Barton's successful ousting of the Spanish ambassador and his foremost Ottoman supporter, Ferhad Paşa, is an instructive case study of the importance of Barton being embedded in Ottoman socio-political networks, then it is also just as prominent an example of Barton forming part of an anti-Habsburg faction in Ottoman domestic politics. As we have seen, Ottoman politics in this period was often a battleground between factions who supported different or opposing policy goals, made up of a range of actors within and without the royal household. United fronts on issues grew out of social networks between different households, either through household heads (such as Barton as head of the English embassy), or key allies within households — for example, Safiye Sultan or Gazanfer Ağa within the royal household, or Çiğalazade within the political hierarchy of the imperial household. Enough connections between powerful enough actors across the Ottoman elite could shape policy with the dramatic results that brought down Ferhad Paşa's vizierate, or form a constant lobby to slowly build pressure on an issue against the dominant direction of travel at the palace or amongst the *divan*. Visualise again the gravity of units coming together in clusters, attracting their own and repelling rival comers. As was the case with Ferhad, groups like the *sipahis* or janissaries could be used as pawns to force a dismissal via a revolt, or at other times formed powerful political blocs in their own right, demanding their own restitution of wrongs and political scapegoats — as will be seen repeatedly in Lello's experience as ambassador. Being on the right side of these forces was of clear benefit to an ambassador like Barton. However, allying with Ottoman political factions also brought its risks. Forming up on the

losing side of a political stand-off could bring diplomatic difficulties at the time or in future and could also lead to the ambassador or embassy household becoming a pawn in the power games of a faction, or hostile vizier. Extending household patronage to certain individuals or groups could mitigate or exacerbate issues when they arose. This section looks further at the benefits and drawbacks of Barton's involvements in Ottoman factional and household politics.

While Barton was successful in his venture against the Spanish ambassador and Ferhad Paşa in 1592, the enmity caused between the English ambassador and the vizier due to his involvement in the faction that brought Ferhad down, as shown at the beginning of this chapter, would cause more trouble the following year. The consequences could well have been deadly; Ferhad wanted to execute a member of Barton's household, John Field, on the accusation that he had facilitated a prison break. Field had, allegedly, visited the prison, and the English embassy was at this point still conveniently located by the dockside in Fındıklı, perfectly placed to aid the escape of prisoners and slaves. This naturally had attracted the frustration of some Ottoman officials before and would again until the embassy was moved from Rapamat to the current site of the Istanbul British Consulate, in the 'Vines of Pera'. In 1594, Murad III removed the English with the following ferman, while Barton remained weak from being on the wrong side of first Ferhad, then Koca Sinan Paşa:

[You] have submitted a written report to my exalted Porte... a great crowd of Tophane inhabitants have had recourse to your court, declaring that the ambassador of England and his retinue are living in the Arab Ahmed house in Tophane but, far from behaving decently, they indulge all the time in every kind of disorder, and some libertines come from outside and joint the depravity and bring in prostitutes... Moreover, since the aforesaid house is on the sea-shore, they hide and smuggle fugitive slaves...¹⁶¹

Nevertheless, Barton was able to skilfully overcome the issue caused by Ferhad Paşa in September and October 1593 with his recourse to Ottoman ceremonial and friends in interior palace circles. What was more difficult was managing being on the wrong side of Sinan throughout

¹⁶¹ Murad III Osmanoğlu, 'Order (ferman) from Murad III to the Cadi of Galata. [Constantinople, 8 June 1594.]' trans. S. Skilliter in 'Edward Barton's embassy', 212-6.

the following years. Barton had been enthusiastically part of the Ottoman anti-Habsburg faction, only to be forced into a humiliating U-turn when orders came from Elizabeth I to instead favour peace, at least between the Austrian Habsburgs and the Ottomans. ‘Wee have in like manner sent o^{ur} I[ett]res to the Emperor of Germany, moving him wth the like,’ wrote Elizabeth to Murad, in a letter she sent but — as will be demonstrated later — he never received.¹⁶² Infuriatingly, just at the moment the Ottomans had declared war on the Austrian Habsburgs with Barton’s enthusiastic support, he received the news that he was in fact supposed to be supporting peace. Barton was then left to deal with abandoning the faction in the ascendancy, which the French ambassador remained part of, and dealing with the fallout of being out of favour. By working the household of Sinan Paşa and with the intercession of his remaining court allies such as Damat İbrahim Paşa, Safiye Sultan, and Çiğalazade, Barton eventually received a letter of rapprochement from Sinan on 18th March 1594, though he remained on the wrong side of the political argument when it came to the ongoing Long War.¹⁶³ Barton continued to look for opportunities to lobby for peace and for the dispatch of an Ottoman fleet against the Spanish in the coming years. With the interests of Ottoman strategy – and therefore the interests of most of his court allies – against Barton’s position, it was to no avail.¹⁶⁴ However, he did maintain enough political capital to continue furthering the interests of the visiting Polish ambassador in 1594, and to continue working to free slaves with some success – including members of the family ‘late Imperial ambassador’ who were allegedly bound for slavery in the galleys.¹⁶⁵

Falling out of the dominant political group was not easy, then — but what strategies did Barton have to maintain good relations with other key figures? As the master of an influential household in his role as ambassador, there was at least some patronage he could offer others in

¹⁶² Elizabeth I Tudor, ‘(The Queen) to (the Grand Signor)’ 15th April 1593, SP 102/61 ff.57-8, *TNA*.

¹⁶³ Idem., ‘To the Lord Treasurer’ 20th March 1594, *Barton’s Letterbook*, ff.39-40.

¹⁶⁴ Idem., *Barton’s Letterbook*, passim.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., passim.

order to generate goodwill. Being too close to certain palace figures could prove tricky — Harborne’s palace ally Mustafa Beg was dismissed after the fall of Kanijeli Siyavuş Paşa in 1001AH/1592-3CE, as were his palace associate Cüce Nâsuh Ağa and his underling Ahmet Çavuş in 1593, wiping out several English allies at once.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, offering patronage to others tended to be a net benefit that helped to secure vital connections in the political network. During the period of Çiğalazade’s brother Carlo Cicala’s stay in Istanbul in 1593, Barton offered English ships as a means of transporting the Cicala family to the household of their renegade relative in the city, and he maintained close links with Çiğalazade while the latter oversaw the admiralty, a position of great importance for English trade and military strategy.¹⁶⁷

The English embassy was also structured much like an Ottoman household, with the agent-ambassador at the head, and various servitors and recipients of patronage below. The list of those who accompanied Barton on campaign in 1596 gives some idea of the structure of the embassy household at the time. He took with him his secretary Glover, and another English associate, Jasper Thompson. Skilliter suggests that the Venetians Pasqual Dabri and Zuanne Alberti were also part of Barton’s entourage, having been deported in disgrace from the Venetian embassy.¹⁶⁸ There were a further twelve of Barton’s men in the party, plus a Muslim worker called Mohammad, two *çavuş*, one dragoman, and three janissaries.¹⁶⁹ Sanderson narrates how Barton gave out garments to the men of his household, like a monarch to grantees or visiting ambassadors.¹⁷⁰ In the case of adopted non-Englishmen such as Paolo Mariani, and other trans-imperial brokers and translators, it even had its own *nöker* — that is, unattached men from other ‘tribes’ absorbed into the household for

¹⁶⁶ Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, i, 160, iv, 1143, 1229.

¹⁶⁷ Edward Barton, ‘To the Lord Treasurer’ 23rd December 1593, *Barton’s Letterbook*, ff.9-19; Idem., ‘To the Lord Treasurer’ 20th January 1594, *Barton’s Letterbook*, ff.25-7; Idem., ‘To Thomas Heneage’, 24th May 1594, *Barton’s Letterbook*, ff.63-66.

¹⁶⁸ Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 102.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 102.

¹⁷⁰ Sanderson, *Travels*, 8-10.

their utility to its head.¹⁷¹ A later example from the English embassy under Sir Thomas Roe shows the ambassador extending his patronage to the children of certain favoured families, accepting the young son of his dragoman Laneroto as a company apprentice and employee, as ‘being employed so young, he might prove more faithfull to the nation when he should be of age and full capacity’.¹⁷² This was a practice common in Ottoman households, in which children would be brought in with their parents’ consent in order to add new talent to the household and expand networks of patronage in the local area, also mirroring systems of apprenticeship familiar to Levant Company merchants.¹⁷³ With so many similarities between the operating of an English merchant household and an Ottoman household, it was easy for the English embassy to function in both worlds. However, one particular episode shows Barton extending household patronage far beyond the norm, with surprising results. His support for the nephew of the French ambassador Lancôme, François Savary de Brèves, saw him forge documents, have a fellow ambassador arrested and thrown into a common dungeon with down-and-out petty criminals, and effectively overthrow the French embassy, all while he claimed to be the true official representative of the Protestant French king, Henri IV.

Patronage above and beyond: Barton and Brèves

The story begins again with the victory over the Spanish ambassador and Ferhad Paşa, both of whom had been supported by Lancôme. Barton was also able to petition at this time as a representative of Henri IV. Since Lancôme refused to recognise the Protestant king, it fell to Barton to present Henri’s letter to the Sultan, reaffirming the friendship between France and the Ottoman Empire, apologising for the delay in appointing an ambassador, and requesting further support for

¹⁷¹ On *nöker*, see: Metin Kunt, ‘Royal and other households’ in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Abingdon, 2012), 103-115.

¹⁷² Saunders, ‘Anglo-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations’, 238.

¹⁷³ Charles L. Wilkins, ‘Masters, Servants and Slaves: Household formation among the urban notables of early Ottoman Aleppo’ in C.M. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Abingdon, 2012), 297.

Portuguese pretender Dom António.¹⁷⁴ Marigliani, as seen above, refused to travel, and Ferhad lost his job. Meanwhile, the problem of Lancôme and his lobbying with Spanish financial backing still remained. The arrival of ‘a bill of exchange for three thousand two hundred sequins’ for Lancôme from the Holy League’s ambassador to Rome startled Barton and Lancôme’s young cousin, Savary de Brèves, into action.¹⁷⁵

The Barton-Harborne relationship stands in contrast to that within the French embassy between the established French ambassador, Savary de Lancôme, and his young cousin/nephew, François Savary de Brèves.¹⁷⁶ There are marked similarities between Barton and de Brèves. Both were in their twenties, both arrived in Istanbul in the households of incoming ambassadors, both set about learning Turkish, and both were talented men who made themselves indispensable to their masters before they took the lead of their embassies.¹⁷⁷ However, their relationships with those masters, and consequent paths to the position of ambassador, could not be more divergent. Brèves, ‘a follower of Navarre’, was happy to dump his older relative in order to secure representation for Henri IV in Istanbul.¹⁷⁸ Their origins were also very different; Barton a merchant from a family of little note, and the title ‘Comte de Brèves’ giving away François Savary’s aristocratic origins. Had Barton lived beyond his thirties and returned to England, it is difficult to imagine that he would have had the credit and connections to go on to tutor a royal prince, for example, such as de Brèves did, after also having been appointed French ambassador to Rome.¹⁷⁹ While Savary de Brèves is well-known for his career as an orientalist after having left Istanbul, there is limited scholarship on his career as French ambassador in Istanbul. Isabelle Petitclerc’s 1988 Sorbonne PhD thesis is the only extant work of scholarship on de Brèves’ diplomatic career in Istanbul, a

¹⁷⁴ Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 51-2.

¹⁷⁵ Zane, ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 11th May 1592, *Venice*, ix, 26-37.

¹⁷⁶ Isabelle Petitclerc, ‘François de Brèves: ambassadeur de France à Constantinople (1585-1605)’, Unpubd. PhD Thesis, Université de Paris IV – Sorbonne (1988), iv.

¹⁷⁷ Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 29.

¹⁷⁸ Zane, ‘To the Doge and Senate’, 11th May 1592.

¹⁷⁹ Petitclerc, ‘de Brèves’, vi.

1904 Francophone biography of de Brèves by J.B. Derost no longer being commonly available. However, while acknowledging that she is filling a ‘black hole’ in French historiography, Petitclerc perhaps overstates her case in describing de Brèves as ‘incontestably... the diplomat closest to Turkish circles that there had been until then’, given that he operated alongside an equal in that regard in Barton.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Brèves emerged as a valuable ally to Barton, and became over time a formidable rival, to Barton and then to his English successors.

In this instance, an alliance between the two men, with the help of Barton’s palace network, helped to remove Lancôme from the French embassy (and indeed Istanbul), and replace him with Brèves. After hearing of the arrival of Lancôme’s funding, Barton sent word to Çiğalazade with the deception that Lancôme was receiving money from the Pope.¹⁸¹ Barton later explained the full depth of his strategy of subterfuge to Burghley: he had an incriminating letter to Lancôme forged with official seals from the Vatican.¹⁸² He explains:

Takinge the ocasion to doe somme good... I connterfeted a letter in Italyan from cardinall Santa Severina... the charge of all the affaires of the levant for the pope, havinge on of his seales by me. And diverted the same unto Lancomo, By w^{ch} I recommended the pope’s letters unto himme, as if indeed they had bin sent to himme from the pope. As I made Antony Lanys [Antoine Lasne] that caryed the same to affirme. And that he had comishon to deliver the same unto Lancomo.¹⁸³

Here we see Barton taking the opportunity to indulge in some subterfuge with faked letters, using the skills of Antoine Lasne, a man described by Matteo Zane as ‘a French renegade’ of ‘thoroughly bad character’ who had ‘insinuated himself into the good graces of Cardinal Santa Severina’.¹⁸⁴ Here is the likely origin of Barton’s papal seals. Barton’s appeal to Çiğalazade had the desired effect, and he sent for Lancôme, who refused to meet him. He went to the new grand vizier, Siyavuş Paşa,

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. vi: ‘Breves est incontestablement non seulement la diplomate le plus proche des milieux turcs qui ait été jusque-là, il est aussi l’Européen de son temps qui aura le plus longuement séjourné en Orient islamique’. The second statement is also problematic (though Brèves two decades is not an insignificant length of time), as it dismisses slaves, renegades, and merchants who spent much of their lives within the Ottoman world – including the later English ambassador Thomas Glover.

¹⁸¹ Zane, ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 11th May 1592.

¹⁸² Edward Barton, ‘To Burghley and decipher’ 17th November 1592, SP 97/2 ff. 179-, *TNA*.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Zane, ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 11th May 1592.

who was on bad terms with Lancôme as he had not yet come to greet or congratulate him on his new position, and Sadeddin Efendi, and the three of them petitioned Murad III to act against Lancôme. His embassy was stormed by force, and most of his household were arrested, but Lancôme managed to remain hidden and at large. In the meantime, his papers were taken and translated, and Barton's forgery was found amongst them, resulting in Lancôme, who had fled to de Brèves' house, being sent off to the common prison. Barton and de Brèves managed to instead have Lancôme consigned to the protection of a *çavuş*, but only after the ousted French ambassador had spent around 24 hours amongst the common criminals.¹⁸⁵ As clever as the plot to remove Lancôme was, the decision to then intervene on his behalf after he had been arrested was a smarter move; Barton did not want to set the precedent of foreign ambassadors in Istanbul being consigned to common prisons on the whims of the sultan and his viziers. Zane was particularly well informed on this, as de Brèves came to him to recount his version of events, seeking his support to take over from his cousin as French ambassador. The *bailo*, however, saw Barton and de Brèves designs for what they were: an attempt to protect the primacy of their pro-Henri, anti-Catholic policy amongst the Ottoman government.¹⁸⁶

This French affair was far from over, even with Lancôme seemingly out of the picture. He was handed over to the custody of Barton and de Brèves, set to be sent on board an English ship to Venice.¹⁸⁷ This matter was complicated when Sadeddin Efendi was forced to pacify a disagreement with Bostanzade over Lancôme's liberty by suggesting the ambassador should be returned to the custody of Siyavuş Paşa. Lancôme was sent to 'the Tower of the Black Sea', Rumeli Hisarı, on 10th June, and his property inventoried and handed over to de Brèves. By this point, Brèves had already begun to assume something like the role of ambassador, and was returning regularly to Zane for advice and requests of favour. For the first time, he came out against England,

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Matteo Zane, 'To the Doge and Senate' 16th May 1592, *Venice*, ix, 26-37.

complaining about English claims on the rights to a coral fishery in Barbary that had historically been French-controlled.¹⁸⁸ Even with Lancôme safely in Rumeli Hisarı, Barton still had to worry about the Spanish truce situation, as Marigliani had still not departed from Ragusa. His attempts to present letters from Elizabeth and Henri on the matter were frustrated by the embarrassment caused by one of his dealings in Eastern Europe, having supported the selection of Aaron of Moldavia as Prince of Bogdania, only for him to have by now rebelled against Ottoman rule.¹⁸⁹ This distracted Barton at the moment when he was supposed to be representing both English and French interests to the sultan, exemplifying how his many diplomatic interests could overstretch him on occasion.¹⁹⁰

In November, the affair with Lancôme was still ongoing, and Henri IV yet to appoint a new ambassador in his place. Lancôme was removed to ‘a less severe prison’ and his nephew released to recover some of Lancôme’s property, despite protests from Barton, Brèves, and Sadeddin.¹⁹¹ However, shortly after, dispatches came from both Henri IV and Elizabeth I, confirming Barton as ambassador and hinting at an appointment for Brèves.¹⁹² Queen Elizabeth’s letter to Barton hails him as ‘Trusty and welbeloved’ and confirms that his gifts for the Ottoman royal court will be dispatched as soon as possible.¹⁹³ In Barton’s case, his appointment had probably come as a result of the urging in Murad III’s letter to Elizabeth I of August 1592, with the Ottomans presumably anxious for official credentials to be presented to Barton in order to justify his deep embeddedness in Ottoman political factions and the level of status and patronage he enjoyed.¹⁹⁴ Brèves took advantage of his now quasi-official status by immediately attempting to undo some of the damage

¹⁸⁸ Idem., ‘To the Doge and Senate’, 13th June 1592, *Venice*, ix, 37-41.

¹⁸⁹ Matteo Zane, ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 10th July 1592, *Venice*, ix, 41-4.

¹⁹⁰ Idem., ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 27th July 1592, *Venice*, ix, 41-4.

¹⁹¹ Idem., ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 14th November 1592, *Venice*, ix, 49-51.

¹⁹² Idem., ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 29th November 1592, *Venice*, ix, 49-51.

¹⁹³ Elizabeth I Tudor, ‘Queen Elizabeth to Barton’ 8th December 1592, SP 97/2 ff.183-5, *TNA*. This letter is dated from December but given its content must be the same letter referred to by Zane. It is probable that the date is wrong, or that this is a later copy.

¹⁹⁴ Murad III Osmanoğlu, ‘Letter (nāme-i humāyūn) from Murad III to Queen Elizabeth. Constantinople, 30 July-8 August 1592’ in S. Skilliter (trans.), ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 196-204.

wreaked by his predecessor's effective three-year absence and rebuild French prestige, complaining about captured Frenchmen being used as galley and construction slaves within the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹⁵ By the end of December, Barton and de Brèves were trying to get rid of Lancôme for good, showing evidence of his service to Spain and requesting that they might send him to Toulon.¹⁹⁶ In the meantime, Barton and Brèves were working together in an attempt to gain a grain export contract from the Ottomans.¹⁹⁷ Lancôme was eventually sent away to Sicily in March 1583, after having been stranded on the island of Marmara for two months.¹⁹⁸ The entire saga, from the arrival of the Spanish agent Ferrari to the departure of Lancôme, demonstrates Barton's deep embeddedness in Ottoman political factions, and his flexibility in dealing with a range of useful intermediaries and allies, from French renegades to French nobility. The alliance with Brèves showed the standing of the English embassy as a household in this period, and the remarkable level of patronage it was able to extend. For Barton to be able to coup another western European embassy and have a big say in the arrest and fate of a rival ambassador (albeit one in disgrace) shows an astonishing level of influence. However, the episode also raises questions about the level of independence he and his embassy had come to enjoy. He was using English sovereign prerogatives to dictate his own local diplomatic policy towards French institutions!

The alliance between Barton and Brèves would eventually turn to enmity, as shared Anglo-French policy against the Austrian Habsburgs was reversed on orders from Queen Elizabeth in summer 1593 – the instructions inconveniently arriving just after open war between the Ottomans and the Austrians had been declared.¹⁹⁹ This English volte face, plus Henri's conversion to Catholicism in July 1593, transformed the productive Barton-Brèves partnership into a tense rivalry, which can only have been further strained by each man's intimate knowledge of the other's

¹⁹⁵ Zane, 'To the Doge and Senate' 29th November 1592.

¹⁹⁶ Idem., 'To the Doge and Senate' 27th December 1592, *Venice*, ix, 52.

¹⁹⁷ Idem., 'To the Doge and Senate' 23rd January 1593, *Venice*, ix, 52-8.

¹⁹⁸ Idem., 'To the Doge and Senate' 14th March 1593, *Venice*, ix, 60-64.

¹⁹⁹ Woodhead & Butler, 'Edward Barton'.

skills in both negotiation and deception.²⁰⁰ What is interesting about Brèves' own memoir, and Petitclerc's work on Brèves' embassy, is that it makes no mention of Barton's influence in gaining Brèves his position, nor particularly the manner in which his cousin Lancôme was ousted.²⁰¹ Petitclerc simply reaffirms the political imperatives for removing a pro-Spanish Catholic zealot from the French embassy during the early 1590s in order to defend Brèves from the apparent contemporary accusation of being motivated by jealousy and greed.²⁰² This underlines how profoundly strange and embarrassing it was to France in the 1590s that the English agent in Istanbul should have manoeuvred to remove the French ambassador, temporarily take charge of French affairs, and see his ally granted the position of ambassador soon after. This can only be put down to Barton's remarkable skill as an early modern diplomat, in combining subterfuge, close personal connections with powerful allies, and a very loose definition of 'English interests', to effect change in line with his personal priorities. Yet, there were structural factors that helped enable Barton to behave in such a manner so successfully. If there was any moment at which the Levant Company showed that it had some of the elements that might later be identified in examples of the company-state, it was the first half of Barton's unusual ambassadorial tenure.

Between company and state?

Edward Barton's time as ambassador was the moment in which the Levant Company's political operation in Istanbul showed the most autonomy and exploitation of the prerogatives invested in his position, independent of direction from the English court. Barton worked for several policy outcomes that aligned with instructions from Walsingham and served English foreign policy interests, but he also spearheaded a range of personal political intrigues, the combination with

²⁰⁰ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 30-77.

²⁰¹ Petitclerc, 'de Brèves', 155-157: in her 400+ page thesis, Petitclerc devotes just two and a half pages to discussing the removal of Lancôme; François Savary de Brèves, *Relation des voyages de Monsieur de Breues: tant en Grece, Terre-Sainte et Égypte qu'aux royaumes de Tunis & Arger* (Paris, 1628), passim.

²⁰² Petitclerc, 'de Brèves', 155-6.

Brèves to bring revolution to the French embassy being just a single example. Despite seeking instruction from Walsingham early in his embassy, Barton went on to work semi-independently on initiatives such as the mediation of a peace treaty between the Ottomans and the Polish delegation and worked on a hybrid of English religious foreign policy imperative, company commercial interest, and personal political interest with his involvement in the politics of the Danubian principalities. Barton accrued significant personal debts in the latter case, as did other English merchants. Finally, Barton broke ranks to act independently of English foreign policy on the Austrian Habsburgs, protecting his own connections to pro-war Ottoman grandees through deception and refusal to present royal letters, culminating in his presence as Mehmed III's guest on his 1596 campaign in Hungary. Barton went so far as to justify his actions by blaming a lack of proper oversight from England, writing to Heneage that he was acting in the best interests of Englishmen in the Ottoman Empire and of the Levant Company, would never have had enough time to write back for further advice on the matter, and citing the Latin proverb *qui tacet consentire videtur*: 'he who remains silent appears to agree'.²⁰³ 'And I esteemed', continues Barton, 'ther so long silence to so many my [lett]res was a license and a probation of my actions, and therefor they must blame themselves and excuse me'.²⁰⁴ To what extent had Barton truly come to exercise English sovereignty as an independent actor, and was this reflected throughout the Levant Company? Whatever the case, Barton's standing within the Ottoman system certainly helped to elevate and encourage his ability to act independently.

Barton's first set of instructions came from the departing William Harborne, who brought the young man to Istanbul and clearly considered him his protégé. The following is from Harborne's instructions to Barton, written in Barton's own elegant italic hand, probably as his last duty as Secretary:

²⁰³ Barton, 'To Heneage' 15th January 1596, f.86.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

M^r Barton touchinge yo^{ur} proceedinge in her mag^{ties} service, I neede not to sett you in mynde; beinge assuredly p^{er}swaded, you will walke carfallie in the same & desier thalmightie, to give yow his grace to discharge your dewtie therein to his good likinge, and yo^{ur} com[m]endation, & future welfare, w^{ch} god graunte, and I wish yow: in yo^{ur} writinge use a compendious brevitie, as the cause shall require, for M^r Secretarie beinge continuallie occupied wth grave and majgestic affayers of estate muste nott be troubled wth circumstances etc.

To write to me under cipher or otherwise, yow maye directinge yo^{ur} l[ette]res under covert to my good freinde Sir Edward Osborne or M^r Richard Staper. & wherin favore, I will nott fayle yow; and this beseechinge god to prosper yow even as my selfe I end. praynge god to graunte us after a glad meetinge in England a joyfull resurrection in heaven Rapamat this 3rd August 1588.²⁰⁵

The bond between Harborne and Barton appears to have been one of master and particularly beloved favourite pupil. The affection, trust, and confidence that Harborne had in Barton is clear. He keeps his instructions brief, apparently content that Barton would largely know what he was doing without too much instruction. He is instructed to keep his expenses minimal in order to keep the company happy, on the various salaries and debts of the embassy's dragomans, *çavuş* and janissaries, and on not going out of his way to lodge visiting Englishmen at his house.²⁰⁶ Most intriguingly, Harborne advises Barton not to rush into dealings with the grand vizier or admiral over company business, but instead 'before yow deale wth them therein, yow deliberatlie debate Y^e cause wth their 2 servantes heere'.²⁰⁷ Nothing in these instructions indicate that Barton should expect to be able to act entirely independently of superiors in London, though a permissive reading of writing with 'compendious brevitie' and not troubling Walsingham with circumstances may suggest an acceptance that the secretary did not need to know everything that the ambassadors in Istanbul were getting up to.

²⁰⁵ Harborne, 'Letter of Instruction to Barton'.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. 'Touchinge the comp^{nie} I doubte nott butt yow will use such conveniente moderation in yo^{ur} expences, as may be verie well liked, and they have therby good cause to deale the more bountifully wth yow att yo^{ur} retorne for the sayed expences any way needful. Nicholas Salter shall deliver yow Y^e money and att everye monethes end, receyve yo^{ur} accounte; and passe the same in the Comp^{nies} their books as heertofoer hath byn accustomed'.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Indeed, Barton requested instructions from Walsingham repeatedly throughout his first years in the role. He wrote to Walsingham on 15th August 1588 requesting instructions, as his connections to key figures within the Ottoman court were already providing an opportunity for him to agitate for Ottoman action against Spain, but he felt he could not act without permission from Walsingham himself.²⁰⁸ On 31st August, Barton sent – with his thanks for his ‘preferment’ – a full report of the current state of Ottoman relations with all the neighbouring kingdoms and principalities, filling several folios.²⁰⁹ His requests for instruction continued for some time, through his letter reporting his meeting with his old acquaintance from Algiers, by then Ottoman grand admiral, Uluç Hasan Paşa (in which letter he reports that the other ambassadors receive instructions from their governments at least monthly, if not fortnightly at critical times) and into 1589, when Barton informed Walsingham that he was still endeavouring to carry out his last instructions sent to Harborne.²¹⁰ Instructions were still not forthcoming, and Barton doubted whether his position was still wanted (especially given the embassy’s constant financial issues) and whether his letters were arriving in London:

Yf soe her highnes pleasure be to maintayne the residence here of anye her Amb^f or Agent then that yo^{ur} honnor did eyther take order wth the companie to have the ordinarie allowance here of househould expences to be by them increased or to procure wth her Mat^{ies} daylie charge accordinge for her highnes affaires.

My third petition to yo^{ur} honno^{ur} is that... in yo^{ur} honno^{ures} l[ett]er you required my often advises I fell into suspicion that they might be continually intercepted, not comminge into yo^{ur} honno^{ures} handes.²¹¹

It seems that Barton eventually gave up on receiving regular instruction from Walsingham, as he eventually used this ambiguity to his advantage. Two days later, he sent another copy of the same letter, with the addition that he had pretended to the sultan that he had received a letter from Queen Elizabeth, asking for Murad’s final decision in whether or not he would sail against the

²⁰⁸ Edward Barton, ‘Edward Barton to [Walsingham?]’ 15th August 1588, SP 97/1 f.132, *TNA*.

²⁰⁹ Barton, ‘To Walsingham’ 31st August 1588.

²¹⁰ Edward Barton, ‘Barton to [Walsingham?]’ 13th September 1588, SP 97/1 f.144, *TNA*; idem., ‘[Edward Barton?] to [Walsingham?]’ 14-28 February 1589, SP 102/61 f.9, *TNA*.

²¹¹ Idem., ‘Edward Barton to [Walsingham?]’ 27th June 1589, SP 97/1 ff.172-3, *TNA*.

Spanish, as she was considering offers of peace, thus surprising the Ottomans into promising the preparation of a fleet against Spain.²¹² This lack of response from Walsingham, when the letters from Barton were clearly arriving in London, is indicative of the low priority of Ottoman affairs to the English government at this time, much as the interminably slow preparation of Barton's official accreditation and gift is. It would seem that, at least in the late 1580s, the English attitude towards Barton's role was primarily that he was in place to manage the protection of commercial interests, with occasional instruction to be sent from England only when it was particularly vital to do so. Indeed, other than the instructions left behind by Harborne, there are very few extant copies of further English instructions sent to Barton.²¹³ The existence of other instructions and their timing can only be inferred from Barton's correspondence with Walsingham and Cecil.

One aspect of this problem was the issue of lines of communication. Correspondence could take several weeks – even months – to travel from one side of Europe to the other. One of Barton's first letters as Harborne's replacement, sent 15th August 1588, asks for speedy policy instructions regarding the Portuguese pretender Dom António, since Barton's letter may take until October to reach Walsingham in London, and a reply may not reach Istanbul until January or February of 1589.²¹⁴ In his letter to the Lord Treasurer of 27/5/1594, we find Barton fretting about the arrival of letters from the same, dated 29th December, 16th February, and 23rd March.²¹⁵ Even if this were an unusually long delay, it remains indicative of the difficulties of communication across long distances in this period. As a further example of this communication lag, news of the English defeat of the Spanish Armada in August 1588 took until October of the same year.²¹⁶ Long distance communication was costly as well as slow; costs for letters brought from the Emperor's court in

²¹² Idem., 'Edward Barton to [Walsingham?]' 29th June 1589, SP 97/1 f.174, *TNA*.

²¹³ Gary M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives 1509-1688* (Cambridge, 2011), 283; John Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584-1602: With his Autobiography and Selections from his Correspondence* (ed. William Foster, London, 1931), 279.

²¹⁴ Edward Barton, 'Edward Barton to [Walsingham?]' 15th August 1588, SP 97/1 f.132, *TNA*.

²¹⁵ Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer' 27th May 1594, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.66-71.

²¹⁶ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', p. 15.

June 1553 amounted to £13 6s 8d, for perhaps half the distance of London-Istanbul.²¹⁷ The cost of special post from London to Paris (and back again) in 1566 was £20 or more.²¹⁸ Difficulty with communication was an excuse Barton would use repeatedly to justify any of his independent initiatives that sparked controversy.

It is not entirely clear that all company factors particularly appreciated Barton's presence as a political actor, either. Certainly, the factors requested to pay for Barton's expenses were not always fully convinced of their value to the company. A George Barre of the Turkey Company wrote to William Cecil in 1590:

The sayde Mr Barton hathe in her ma^{ties} name made a peace betweene the Grand Senior and the king of Poale... I beseeche yo^{ur} L. in the behalfe of the whole Companie, to write yo^{ur} honourable letter to the same Mr Barton to be moderate in his Expenci^{es}, and also to take of all englishe march[a]nt^{es} which hathe, or shall Trade that Countrey, for marchandice till farther order be taken, the so[m]me of fower uppon the hundrithe [i.e. 4%].²¹⁹

Burghley's letter of instruction to Barton in response in October 1590 is thankful for Barton's interventions in the Polish negotiations, but ultimately says that he cannot be of any help with Barton's complaints about lack of funding.²²⁰ It also lacks any further instruction on Poland or Eastern Europe, which is important in judging just how independent Barton's policy was in these areas later in this chapter. A document dated from slightly later the same month sets out the company's response to Barton's complaints about payment – they claim to have paid him £2709 over the two years since the departure of Harborne.²²¹ This pales in comparison to the 28,372.56 thalers spent over a 3-year period by the Imperial embassy in 1580-3.²²² Even working from a very crude conversion rate of dividing the thaler by five to reach an approximate pound value

²¹⁷ Philip Beale, *A History of the Post in England from the Romans to the Stuarts* (Aldershot, 1998), 132.

²¹⁸ Tracey A. Sowerby, 'Elizabethan Diplomatic Networks and the Spread of News' in J. Raymond and N. Moxham (eds.), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2016), 305.

²¹⁹ George Barre, 'George Barre to Lord Burghley' 18th August 1590, Lansdowne Vol/65 f.96, *BL*.

²²⁰ William Cecil, '(Burleigh) to (Barton)' 2-3 October 1590, SP 97/2 ff.44-5, *TNA*.

²²¹ 'Money Received by Barton' 16th October 1590, SP 97/2 f.47a, *TNA*.

²²² Tobias Graf (ed.), *Der Preis der Diplomatie: Die Abrechnungen der kaiserlichen Gesandten an der Hohen Pforte, 1580-1583* (Heidelberg, 2016), xiv.

demonstrates the gulf in spending power between Barton's embassy and contemporary rivals. Likewise, the Turkey/Levant Company document, when contrasted with Barton's claim that the Imperial ambassador offered 50,000 ducats to prevent peace between the Ottomans and Poland, demonstrates the meagre finances of the English embassy in this period; the Imperial embassy could afford to pay several times more in a single bribe than Barton's entire budget for two years. The company certainly did not share a united vision of themselves as political players within the Ottoman Empire, at least not if consternation over Barton's Polish deal and disinterest in funding their political representative is anything to go by.

Dom António and the Danube: backing pretenders

Two of Barton's political endeavours involved backing candidates for rule in opposite parts of Europe: Dom António for the Portuguese throne, and candidates such as Aaron of Bogdania in the Ottoman vassal states on the Danube. Support for Dom António aligned with wider English foreign policy and served as a useful pretext to lobby the Ottomans for a sea campaign against Spain in the Mediterranean. Interference in the politics of Ottoman vassals was a potentially lucrative pursuit for merchants in search of favourable trade terms in return for English support, though it was a risky business, extending political and financial credit to princes wont to rebel against Ottoman authority and cause difficulty for their supporters and creditors. This is not to say there was no English strategic interest in these provinces at all; reducing the influence of the Jesuits in the region was a welcome benefit, and Robert Cecil later ordered Lello to work for the release of the Prince of Moldavia imprisoned in Istanbul in 1605. However, the main benefit of English involvement in the politics of the principalities came from the potential gains from high-interest loans to Aaron, and in solidifying Barton's place in his network of Ottoman elite allies.

António Aviz, known as Don Antonio to the English (Dom António in Portuguese), was a grandson of King Manuel I of Portugal, and claimant to the vacant Portuguese throne following

the 1580 succession crisis.²²³ He became a useful instrument to frustrate Spain, which had annexed Portugal. First he aligned with Catherine de Medici (Queen Mother of France), then, following the promise of commercial capitulations to the English in the Portuguese Empire, and a fortress on the African Atlantic coast, also to Elizabeth – with the added advantage of turning Spanish attentions away from the Netherlands.²²⁴ English attempts to further António’s cause continued throughout the 1580s, and had their knock-on effects in Istanbul.²²⁵ António had sent diplomatic representation to the Ottomans in 1583, and, as was shown in the previous chapter, it became Harborne’s concern to help further António’s cause in Istanbul, though this was made extremely difficult after Harborne sparked a feud with *kapudan paşa* Uluç Ali.²²⁶ The Dom António situation highlights how the Anglo-Ottoman relationship continued to follow the principle of informal strategic partnership against the Habsburgs. We have seen how Harborne and Walsingham managed this confluence of English and Ottoman interests, particularly in relation to the Spanish Armada. The Dom António saga was a continuation of these shared anti-Spanish aims, but crucially was further indication of the limitations of Ottoman intent to act, and the disunity of strategic aims within the Ottoman ruling class.

For Barton’s part, his role was a continuation of Harborne’s efforts, begun shortly before his departure for England, to raise an Ottoman fleet in support of António’s return to Portugal.²²⁷ Harborne and Barton’s petitions to Murad III suggest that England had renewed hostilities with Spain in accordance with the wishes of the Ottomans and in respect of the friendship between the two nations, therefore appealing to Ottoman honour to uphold their end of that friendship by

²²³ Gordon K. McBride, ‘Elizabethan Foreign Policy in Microcosm: The Portuguese Pretender, 1580-89’, *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 5/3 (1973), 193-210.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 193-5.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 195-210.

²²⁶ Giovanni Francesco Moresini, ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 14th June 1583, *Venice*, viii, 57-9; Lorenzo Bernardo, ‘To the Doge and Senate’ 2nd April 1586, *Venice*, viii, 149.

²²⁷ William Harborne, ‘[William Harborne] to [Walsingham?]’ 1st August 1588, SP 97/1 f.128, *TNA*.

providing their support. Harborne attaches one such petition to his report of 1st August 1588, which reads as follows:

4 yeares past at yo^{ur} highness request and my earnest entreaty & not onelie dissolved a former League wth Spania a common enemie to both magiesties but also p_{er}secuted him wth most cruell warre, so well ^{to} diminishe his intollerable pryde and ambition.²²⁸

Harborne goes on to suggest that the English could agree peace with the Spanish if the Ottomans were not forthcoming in naval help in reining in Spanish ambition and helping António claim the throne.²²⁹ However, the Ottomans remained passive in the face of this petition. As we have seen, Harborne had previously been at least able to ensure the Ottomans did not agree peace with Spain, reducing their forces available to attack England with their Armada, but that was as far as the Ottomans were willing to commit. Murad III's response to Elizabeth – dated a few days prior to Harborne's letter, but clearly in response to the petition which must have been submitted some days before – explains the reasoning behind this:

Your ambassador resident at the Sublime Porte has presented letters signifying that your Highness has waged war now for four years with the King of Spain, and all has gone as you wished; also that Don Antonio being both natural King and heir of Portugal, the King of Spain has snatched Portugal from him, whom you had determined to restore to his kingdom... your ambassador demanded that in the coming spring our galleys might be sent to Spain that by the joint action of both of us the Spaniard might be the more easily overcome... Be it known to your Highness as for some years and months now it has been our design to wage war in the East to the end we might annex the Persian kingdom at this time called Rasilbas; which accomplished, forthwith we will pay attention to the matter on your behalf and lay hold of it, and make it our care to satisfy your desire.²³⁰

With war in the east ongoing, and the Ottoman *divan* dominated by those interested in pursuing that war, military action in the west was not forthcoming.

Barton continued to press the English demand for Ottoman naval support throughout the following months, and indeed years. The full extent of English investment in putting António on

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Murad III Osmanoglu, 'Murad II [sic], Sultan of Turkey, to the Queen' 28th July 1588, in E. Salisbury (ed.), *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, 13 (London, 1915), 378.

the Portuguese throne is beyond the scope of the brief discussion here, but at any rate he was tactically useful as an anti-Spanish threat, which was also recognised by the Ottomans. In 1589, António had sent one of his illegitimate sons, aged somewhere between ten and twelve at the time, as a hostage to secure the support of Ahmed I al-Mansur of Morocco.²³¹ When Ahmed did not send any support to an English-led botched landing at Lisbon in mid-1589, and refused to release his young hostage, Cristóvão, agitation from Barton throughout 1590 eventually provoked an Ottoman response.²³² The sultan promised substantial naval support in return for similar English investment, and arranged for the removal of Cristóvão from Fez to Istanbul, sending messages to Ahmed to that effect.²³³ Here, the age of the boy becomes important. The careers of various Christian ‘renegades’ in Ottoman service began as adolescents who found themselves in Ottoman captivity.²³⁴ An isolated twelve-to-fourteen-year-old, of relatively high social upbringing, offered opportunities to progress through service to the Ottoman sultan, would fit the pattern of many ‘renegades’ – some of whom held powerful positions in this period. It is possible that the Ottomans considered taking Don António’s son both diplomatically useful in the short term, and potentially politically useful in the long term, should he convert and serve their cause. However, Cristóvão was sent instead to England by Ahmed, and political rivalry between Ottoman viziers delayed Ottoman activity to the point that the promised fleet was no longer forthcoming.²³⁵

Barton happened to have inherited charge of the English embassy at the same time as an old acquaintance, Uluç Hasan Paşa, was made *kapudan-ı derya*. Hasan was an Ottoman seafarer of Venetian ethnic origin who rose through the patronage of Uluç Ali Paşa, of similar Italian origins.²³⁶ He became *kapudan-ı derya* in 1588 and promised Barton that he would show good favour to the

²³¹ Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 38.

²³² Ibid., 38-44.

²³³ Summary of the letter from Murad to ‘Muley’ Ahmed in Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 134-5.

²³⁴ Graf, *The Sultan’s Renegades*, passim.

²³⁵ Skilliter, ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 44-50.

²³⁶ Graf, *The Sultan’s Renegades*, 155-9; Emrah Safa Gürkan, ‘His Bailo’s Kapudan: Conversion, Tangled Loyalties and Hasan Veneziano Between Istanbul and Venice (1588-1591)’, *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 48 (2016), 277-319.

English, raise a fleet to attack the Spanish, and ensure the freedom of English captives taken at sea.²³⁷ He had an English eunuch, Hasan Ağa, in his household.²³⁸ His amity with Barton is likely to stem from Barton's successful trip to Algiers in 1584-5, where Hasan was governor.²³⁹ The success of this trip impressed Harborne, and it may reasonably be speculated that Barton also made enough of an impression on Hasan Paşa to retain his friendship upon his appointment to the *kapudanlık* in Istanbul in 1588. Hasan also maintained good relations with the Venetian *bailo*, arguably due to his Venetian origins.²⁴⁰

Having found an ally in the new admiral Hasan Paşa, Barton knew that he could use this to challenge the Ottoman excuse of having no capable leader for a naval assault on Spain:

I implore your highness most humbly that Your Highness not again let pass unutilized this favourable moment; but a small squadron of not more than 100 triremes [galleys], which next summer you would deem fit to send under an able leader, since you possess him now, will suffice.²⁴¹

Since Barton was not only acquainted, but entangled with the fortunes of Ottoman viziers, he could call upon his knowledge and contacts in his lobbying to the sultan. Given the English victory over the Spanish Armada, in response to which Murad III sent his congratulations to Elizabeth, Barton also realised that he could impress upon the sultan that the English had been successful in creating an opportune moment to further weaken Spanish sea power.²⁴² However, with the possibility of no Ottoman help forthcoming, and evident division within the Ottoman administration between those in favour of the English (and Barton personally) and those against, Barton had to play some different cards. In his second *arç-u hal* of December 1588 or January 1589, we see Barton attempting to entice the Ottoman navy into action by emphasising their shared confessional

²³⁷ Barton, 'to [Walsingham?]' 13th September 1588.

²³⁸ Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades*, 155-6.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 118-9.

²⁴⁰ Gürkan, 'His Bailo's Kapudan', 277-319.

²⁴¹ Barton, 'Edward Barton to [Walsingham?]' 13th September 1588; *Idem.*, 'Petition from Barton to Murad III' 30th October 1588, in Arthur Leon Horniker, 'William Harborne and the Beginning of Anglo-Turkish Diplomatic and Commercial Relations', *The Journal of Modern History*, 14/3 (1942), 312-3.

²⁴² Murad III, 'Letter from Murad III to Queen Elizabeth' 28th February 1589, SP 102/69 f.11-2, *TNA*.

opposition to the Spanish – which was of course one of the main motivators behind Anglo-Ottoman amity:

In the past we have repeatedly reported... the mighty campaigns which my Sovereign the Queen of England has been waging during five years, at so great a cost and with so much blood of her subjects, against the idolatrous King of Spain, the captain of all the (idolatrous) kings... Your Imperial fleet may be fitted out and sent against the King of Spain, especially as now the idolatrous kings in union with the King of Spain are sending all their troops in order to assist him against my Sovereign, thus exhausting their powers.²⁴³

Barton repeatedly showed he was capable of petitioning the Ottomans persuasively in pursuit of the aims of the English court, but, without strong Ottoman interest in Dom António's cause, there was little chance of success. Barton clearly pursued this policy at length, as a direct representative of English interests in Istanbul.

Barton continued to sporadically receive instructions relating to Dom António into the 1590s, but no entreaty for Ottoman military support for his claim was successful. With the rise of Ferhad Paşa, a vizier more hostile to the English due to his rivalries with Barton's other influential Ottoman contacts, to the position of grand vizier in 1591, that put paid to any Ottoman action on António.²⁴⁴ Barton had done his best to follow a direct English foreign policy strategy but was unsuccessful. It was a rather less official pursuit that helped close off Dom António's chances of Ottoman support in the end: Barton's support for Aaron of Bogdania, with Ferhad becoming grand vizier freshly annoyed with Barton for this.

Barton makes frequent references to the state of affairs in Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia, revealing a significant English interest in these Ottoman vassal provinces around the

²⁴³ Edward Barton, 'Petition from Barton to Murad III' (December 1588 – February 1589), in S. Skilliter (trans.), 'Edward Barton's embassy', 187-191.

²⁴⁴ Elizabeth I Tudor, 'The Queen to (Barton)' 24th August 1590, SP 97/2 f.37, *TNA*; Lorenzo Bernardo, 'To the Doge and Senate' 30th November 1591, *Venice*, viii, 564: 'The English Ambassador has presented a petition begging for the support of the Turkish fleet on behalf of Navarre. Your Serenity will see the nature of its contents from the enclosed. But its effect will be small, for the Sultan will only give promises and the Grand Vizir will not support it owing to his personal hatred for the English Ambassador, who by the help of the Queen has succeeded in settling the Bogdonians against the Pasha's wishes'.

Danube and the Black Sea.²⁴⁵ This was in part a business concern, with opportunities to further English trade at the frontiers of the Ottoman world, but it was also part of a general anti-Catholic strategy that guided some English diplomatic imperatives in this period.²⁴⁶ The opportunity to undermine Jesuit activity in Moldavia provided good pretext for intervention, though the frequent visits to the region by merchants in Barton's household, such as Wilcox, William Babington, William Aldridge, George Anglesey, and Edward Bushell, indicate the commercial interest in the region.²⁴⁷ Harborne had secured English trade privileges in the region on his journey home in 1588.²⁴⁸ Given that English cloth was valued at 2600 *akçe* per bale in Tulcea in Ottoman Moldova early in the sixteenth century, a thousand *akçe* more than French cloth, and over three times more than Ottoman domestic Salonika cloth, the commercial attraction was clear.²⁴⁹ However, it was Barton's connections to the Orthodox Patriarchs Meletios Pegas and Jeremias II that saw him introduced to Prince Aaron.²⁵⁰ Indeed, the primary motivating factor behind involving the English embassy in supporting Aaron's bid for rule over the province of Moldavia seems to have been cementing the English ambassador's position amongst his network of factional allies in Ottoman politics, and the promise of large returns for company factors willing to extend 20% interest loans to Aaron to help him finance his charm offensive in the Ottoman capital.

Aaron, as well as indicating a break from predecessor Peter the Lame's accommodating policy towards the spread of Catholicism in the province, was part of a network that included Meletios and Jeremias, Bostanzade, Sadeddin Efendi, and Solomon Ashkenazi.²⁵¹ Ashkenazi and

²⁴⁵ I.I. Podea, 'A contribution to the study of Queen Elizabeth's Eastern policy (1590-1593)', *Mélanges d'Histoire Generale II* (Cluj, 1938), 423-476.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 429-30.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 429; 'Extract – letter of Agent of Transylvania. Enclosing letters from Aldrich and Bushell, merchants.' 22nd April 1594, SP 97/2 ff.279-80, *TNA*; Edward Bushell, 'Another copy of E. Bushell to (E. Barton)' 1st April 1594, SP 80/1 f.138, *TNA*.

²⁴⁸ Hakluyt, *Principal navigations*, 6, 58-60.

²⁴⁹ Tasin Gemil, *Romanians and Ottomans in the XIVth-XVth Centuries* (trans. R. Bejan & P. Sanders, Bucharest, 2009), 283.

²⁵⁰ Elli Kohen, *History of the Turkish Jews and Sephardim: Memories of a Past Golden Age* (Lanham, MD, 2007), 101-3.

²⁵¹ Mihai Maxim, 'L'autonomie de la Moldavie et de la Valachie dans les actes officiels de la Porte, au cours de la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle', *Revue des Études Sud-est Européennes*, 15/2 (1977), 207-232.

Barton were friends during this period, though they later fell out due to Ashkenazi's connections to Álvaro Mendes. Mendes menaced Barton's embassy on two occasions, such as in 1594, when he accused the ambassador of harbouring Spanish spies. Barton was forced to call on contacts of standing in England to vouch for him, and both times complained that Mendes, who was himself in touch with Burghley, made spurious allegations in order to further his own ambition to become English ambassador.²⁵² As well as being involved with allies of Barton, Aaron also needed to convince other useful mutual contacts, such as Safiye Sultan and other influential *harem* members, and Koca Sinan Paşa. To do this, Aaron spent up to 110 million *akçe*.²⁵³ This astronomical figure was in part raised from loans from the Turkey Company. This involvement with the internal politics of an Ottoman vassal for financial and political gain is the clearest example of the Turkey/Levant Company taking advantage of its elements of company-state authority for its own benefit. While the Turkey and Levant Companies never quite possessed the range of freedoms, commercial incentives, and geographical separation that its successor the East India Company enjoyed, involvement in the affairs of the likes of Aaron of Bogdania shows that there were instances in which the company as a group leveraged its access to diplomatic sovereignty to pursue material gains. Though there are further instances to see of Barton leveraging the company's state-like powers to act independently, this is the truest example of company-state like behaviour from the early Turkey/Levant Company, which showed the potential its political privileges bestowed, and was almost certainly a function of the level of freedom crown disinterest gave to the company in this period, combined with Barton's drive for Ottoman politicking and networking, and his and the English trading nation's security within the Ottoman cosmocracy that this brought with it. However, the consequences of this endeavour were far from universally beneficial.

²⁵² 'Information of Don Solomon's messenger against Barton' (1593), SP 97/2 f.232, *TNA*; Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 27th May 1594, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.66-71; William Cecil, '[Burghley?] to [Alvaro Mendes]' 22nd March 1591, SP 97/2 f.165, *TNA*.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

Thomas Wilcox was in fact owed significant sums of money by Aaron of Moldavia, which, along with failing health, almost convinced him to return to England.²⁵⁴ The *voivode* was not good for the return on the loans he had taken out from company factors, especially following his rebellion in joining up with the Holy League against the Ottomans following the outbreak of war.²⁵⁵ Ironically, as will be seen, it was a war that Barton did so much to encourage that cost the company its investment in Prince Aaron. Before considering this, we first turn to another of Barton's eastern European initiatives, and one that was a resounding success: his negotiation of peace between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire.

Peace and war: Poland and the Habsburgs

An area of Eastern Europe policy that certainly caused concern and drew orders from London for Barton was the potential outbreak of war between Poland and the Ottoman Empire, which Barton successfully worked to prevent. After concluding their war in Persia, the Ottomans turned to deal with the incursions from the Cossacks into their territory, and prepared to make war on Poland, Haydar Paşa having made pre-emptive raids into Polish territory in the summer of 1589.²⁵⁶ Peter of Moldavia attempted to mediate in order to prevent his territory becoming the front line in an Ottoman-Polish war, and his agent in Istanbul carried out secret negotiations with the grand vizier Sinan Paşa.²⁵⁷ Elizabeth I sent out instructions to Barton to work for peace on 21st March 1590.²⁵⁸ The Ottomans had offered Poland humiliating terms in return for peace, which they were unwilling to accept: 'a tribute of 300,000 thalers, the punishment of the Cossacks, the restitution of prisoners, and reparations for the damages caused'.²⁵⁹ Their position was not helped by the death of the Polish ambassador a matter of days after his arrival in Istanbul, though Peter's

²⁵⁴ Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer' 5th July 1594, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.22-25.

²⁵⁵ Matteo Zane, 'to the Doge and Senate' 14th February 1593, *Venice*, ix, 58-59.

²⁵⁶ Podea, 'Elizabeth's Eastern policy', 435.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 438.

²⁵⁸ Sanderson, *Travels*, 279.

²⁵⁹ Podea, 'Elizabeth's Eastern policy', 436.

negotiations managed to reduce Ottoman demands to ‘a present of 200 “soroks” of sables and 80,000 thalers as reparations for the damages caused by the Cossacks’.²⁶⁰ This was still too much, so two more ambassadors were sent, with orders from Polish Chancellor Zamoyski to solicit Barton’s help in reaching a resolution.²⁶¹

Barton was in negotiations with Sinan Paşa, an experienced grand vizier. ‘Koca’ Sinan Paşa was an Albanian *devşirme* recruit who enjoyed a long and distinguished career in Ottoman imperial service.²⁶² He worked his way through the ranks of regional governorates and was conqueror of Yemen as governor of Egypt in 1571.²⁶³ He held the position of grand vizier on five separate occasions, but repeatedly fell into disfavour as battlefield engagements went against him.²⁶⁴ Barton had a mixed relationship with Sinan. His attitude towards Barton, as the prominent Protestant representative in Istanbul, was generally favourable, though he made his dissatisfaction clear in cases where their interests clashed rather than aligned, such as in the case of the Polish negotiations, and following the English U-turn on war between the Ottomans and Austrian Habsburgs.²⁶⁵ In this instance, Barton was able to gain the upper hand on the *sadrazam*. England shared good relations with Poland, as is shown by the constant recourse to the overland Polish route from England to Istanbul during the first decades of the English resident embassy in the Ottoman Empire. Both William Harborne on his way to Istanbul in 1578 and on his journey home in 1588, and Thomas Wilcox during the Polish peace negotiations, travelled via the Polish route and were hosted by Polish notables along the way.²⁶⁶ Barton also secured a *ferman* to all governors between Istanbul and Poland, to be carried by members of Barton’s household using the route in order to

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 435-8.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 438-9.

²⁶² Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, v, 1512.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Woodhead & Butler, ‘Edward Barton’.

²⁶⁶ Bell, *British Diplomatic Representatives*, 283; Wilcox., ‘To William Cecil’ 21st January 1592.

secure their protection.²⁶⁷ Good relations with Poland were vital, according to Elizabeth, due to the various important military supplies England drew from trade with the country, and the necessity of keeping trade with Poland open was demonstrated by letters exchanged between Elizabeth and Sigismund II Augustus in 1559 over disquiet caused by English Baltic trade with Muscovy.²⁶⁸ Barton also pointed out the potential danger of war in Poland to the situation of Henri IV in France, as it would upset the balance of power on the continent.²⁶⁹

After being invited by the Polish delegation to use his superior experience in Ottoman politics to intervene on their behalf, Barton gained an audience with Sinan, ‘for Christianity sake’, in which he argued:

[Her majesty] doth find hir self greatly aggrieved, that having so longe seince often by l[jett]res promised all favor and freindship against the common enemy, now with out just cause, not having performed any parte thereof, they shold troble and moleste hir freinde of whom she hath byn and is continually furnished with all kind of warlick munition... [giving] favor unto [Spain] who shold there by not onlie have leysur to increase his owne forces, but com[m]odity to indamadg [Elizabeth] and other [the Sultan] his freind^{es}.²⁷⁰

This passage references the Ottoman promise that, upon conclusion of the war with Persia, imperial attention would be turned towards helping the English struggle against the Spanish, not the softer target of menacing a neighbouring kingdom which shared friendly relations with England. Barton claims that he and the grand vizier ‘bickered’ back and forth for four days, until the Imperial ambassador offered 50,000 ducats in an attempt to prevent a treaty.²⁷¹ Barton reminds Walsingham that he, conversely, had to go into debt to keep the English embassy going, and ‘to confesse the truth I am nott of the welthiest [sort]’, complaining that his financial situation gave

²⁶⁷ ‘Order (fermān) to all the Sanjakbega and Cadis between Constantinople and Poland [Constantinople, 18-27 January 1589.]’ in S. Skilliter (trans.), ‘Edward Barton’s embassy’, 193-5.

²⁶⁸ Sanderson, *Travels*, 279; Hakluyt, *Principal voyages*, ii, 485-7.

²⁶⁹ Barton, ‘Barton to Walsingham’ 14th June 1590, SP 97/2 f.25, *TNA*.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.* This document is written in Barton’s hand as his secretary Thomas Wilcox had been sent to deliver letters between Sultan Murad III and Queen Elizabeth I. It has been deciphered and marginalia added by either Walsingham or Burghley, who incorrectly interpret Barton’s symbol for the grand vizier as ‘Hassan Bassa’. Koca Sinan was grand vizier at this time, and it makes little sense that Barton would hold such an audience with any other vizier.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

him mind to request recall to England.²⁷² This was perhaps a calculated message, considering Wilcox's instructions to secure financing for Barton from the English court once he arrived in London to deliver royal letters.²⁷³ Once the 'bickering' was concluded, a deal was agreed between the Polish ambassador and the Ottomans, with an Ottoman demand for cash tribute dropped, replaced by the demand of a hundred bundles of sable furs, and the obligation for the Polish king to punish the Cossacks and return any Ottoman subjects who had been taken prisoner.²⁷⁴

This was another coup for Barton in building his standing at the Ottoman porte, despite still being a mere agent awaiting the arrival of official credentials. He was given credit for the successful peace negotiations in Sinan Paşa's letter to Elizabeth, and also took the 'blame' from Sigismund for 'interfering without his knowledge', when the Polish king had to justify his fraternisation with the English queen to the Pope.²⁷⁵ Here we have an example of Barton receiving direct orders to support a policy, but then using his standing in Istanbul and the messy circumstances surrounding the Polish delegation to take charge of the situation and lead the negotiations himself. Barton's ability to take initiative and deliver on instructions without the requirement for micromanagement, and often in a way that improved his own political standing in Istanbul, clearly made him a good ambassador for Elizabeth and her court to call upon. In this case, he secured a peace for Poland almost singlehandedly. However, his confidence in moving in Ottoman circles, using the significant diplomatic and political powers invested in the Levant Company, and operating enthusiastically without regular communication with the English court outlining their interests, would ultimately lead to a series of failures on Austrian Habsburg policy that would damage his standing in London and Istanbul.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Podea, 'Queen Elizabeth's Eastern policy', 440.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 440-1; Edward Barton, '(E Barton) to [Walsingham]' 24th June 1590, SP 97/2 f.27, *TNA*. In the intervening ten days, Barton had evidently managed to appoint a new secretary.

²⁷⁵ Hakluyt, *Principal voyages*, vi, 69-73; Podea, 'Elizabeth's Eastern policy', 442.

Barton and French ambassador Brèves had worked together before to forge documents for political gain, as was shown in the case of the arrest of the previous ambassador, Lancôme. In late 1592, they took the dramatic step of altering French royal correspondence with Murad III in their wholesale determination to encourage a war between the Ottomans and the Austrian Habsburgs. As Susan Skilliter demonstrated, Brèves and Barton worked together to doctor the French royal letters that had arrived in November 1592 so as to make them appear more provocative of war between the Ottomans and Habsburgs than they had been intended to be.²⁷⁶ Skilliter compares Zane's dispatch from November, reporting leaked intelligence of the content of the original letters, and Zane's further report of 13th December when the new content was revealed, as well as Ottoman letters sent to Henri and Elizabeth at this time, in order to show the deception in action. Unfortunately for Barton, this policy, directed by Hurault de Maise, director of French affairs in the Levant, was at odds with the intentions of Elizabeth, who sent a letter to the sultan urging peace, and instructions to Barton to do the same.²⁷⁷ Elizabeth's letter to Murad reveals her desire for renown as a peacemaker: 'wee have in like manner sent o^{ur} l[ett]res to the Emperour of Germany, moving him wth the like'.²⁷⁸ Her instructions to Barton were unambiguous: 'howe agreeable it is for us being a Chris[t]ian prince to wishe for p_{re}servation of peace, and avoiding of all manner of warres'.²⁷⁹ These letters managed to arrive shortly after war had been declared, and Sinan Paşa, again grand vizier, had ridden out with the army.²⁸⁰

With Sinan gone, Ferhad Paşa was made *kaymakam* and had already threatened Barton once since inheriting the role, so Barton had to decide what to do with these letters in such unfavourable circumstances. Zane explains that Ferhad was, as usual, not particularly interested in war in Europe, but was unfavourable to any move that would bring Sinan back to Istanbul and cost him his

²⁷⁶ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 67-72.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 71.

²⁷⁸ Elizabeth I Tudor, '(The Queen) to (the Grand Signor)' 15th April 1593, SP 102/61 ff.57-8, *TNA*.

²⁷⁹ Idem., 'Queen Elizabeth to Barton' 19th April 1593, SP 97/2 ff.194-5, *TNA*.

²⁸⁰ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 71.

position as *kaymakam*. He also reported that Barton, with no other allies to turn to, had confided in him about the receipt of the letters from Elizabeth, but diplomatically declared that he could do nothing to support Barton without further instruction from the Doge.²⁸¹ Barton had no choice but to consult with Sinan, riding out to meet him at his camp outside the city, but the vizier was enraged by the apparent English U-turn, and wrote a terse response to Elizabeth.²⁸² Barton, consequently, saw no point in presenting the letters to the sultan, though he reported that he had done.²⁸³ Clearly, Barton had been so used to acting on his own initiative, especially with the support of Brèves, that receiving contrary policy instruction from his queen was something of a shock, and caused problems that could only be solved by further deception. He went back into Ottoman political mode, sending a petition to the sultan notifying him of Elizabeth's latest victories, in order to generate a royal letter from Murad to Elizabeth, making it seem as if he was responding to her letters.²⁸⁴ This shows a thorough understanding of the Ottoman political and diplomatic system, and he took full advantage of his knowledge and the powers he had at his disposal to exploit it. Throughout the autumn and winter of 1593, he played household politics, turning to Safiye in the hope of her being able to convince the sultan to make peace, and using 'the agent' of Sinan in an attempt to regain favour with the vizier.²⁸⁵ Unfortunately for Barton, this meddling only left Sinan feeling even more betrayed, and he reported the English as being supporters of the Habsburg cause. Barton was forced to write to Ferhad and a new ally, Damat İbrahim Paşa, to explain that this was not the case.²⁸⁶

That Barton was able to use the Ottoman system to deceive his own distant court is a prime example of how the geographical distance and unique local knowledge that came from representing

²⁸¹ Matteo Zane, 'To the Doge and Senate' 24th July 1593, *Venice*, ix, 78-95.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Edward Barton, 'Barton to Burghley' 11th July 1593, SP 97/2 ff.202-3, *TNA*.

²⁸⁴ Skilliter, 'Edward Barton's embassy', 74-6, 146-7.

²⁸⁵ Edward Barton, 'To the Lord Treasurer' 11th November 1593, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.3-5; Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer' 25th November 1593, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.5-6; Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer' 23rd December 1593, *Barton's Letterbook*, f.8.

²⁸⁶ Idem., 'To the Lord Treasurer' 23rd December 1593, *Barton's Letterbook*, ff.9-19.

a distant trading company facilitated independent actions. Barton understood the seriousness of the Ottoman political situation and the delicacy of the apparent English about-turn well enough to decide he had to betray his own monarch in not delivering her letters and fudging his representation of her views. Nevertheless, it was the great degree of independence that he and the Levant Company had been invested with to wield on the opposite side of the European continent from home that drew Barton into trouble in the first place; he was free to pursue over-enthusiastically his own political interests with Brèves, doing much to help provoke a war before it was clear what his monarch and her court wanted. The ruse persisted for a long time; it was only in 1596, as we saw above, that he admitted to Heneage that he had not delivered the letters received in the autumn of 1593, and this he blamed on the English court for not informing him of the error of his strategy soon enough. His subsequent accompaniment of the 1596 Ottoman campaign army only compounded matters, regardless of the credit it gave Barton within the Ottoman Empire. Barton saw out the rest of his embassy trying in vain to lobby for peace between the Ottomans and the Austrian Habsburgs, his pre-emptive use of his ambassadorial powers in 1592-3 setting up the conditions for his declining favour in London and Istanbul thereafter.

During Barton's embassy, there were flickers of the Levant Company's ability to function in some ways like a company-state, particularly in the range of interest shown in the affairs of the Danubian provinces and specifically Prince Aaron of Bogdania. Barton himself tried at first to stick to the direction of Walsingham and Burghley, but found little instruction forthcoming, and found only frustration in trying to continue English policy in favour of Dom António, despite his most creative efforts. On another strategic royal request, he went above and beyond not just to support peace between Poland and the Ottomans, but to negotiate it himself. However, some of Barton's most independent efforts, which took most advantage of the powers that representing the Levant Company gave him, which other ambassadors working on royal appointment and direct instruction did not enjoy, ultimately backfired. He conspired with François Savary de Brèves to place him in

charge of the French embassy, having documents forged on their behalf to help ensure that happened. The two did the same to help provoke war between the Ottomans and Austrian Habsburgs. Unfortunately for Barton, this was not at all what his monarch had wanted, so he relied on further deception to manage the situation in Istanbul and avoid disappointing his home court further. This left Brèves the new most favoured ambassador in the Ottoman capital in Barton's place, his most high-risk independent manoeuvres ending only in failure and scandal. Alongside this, he struggled to receive consistent financial backing from company factors, exemplifying a Levant Company in possession of some political powers unusual for their time, but too disunited to use them in ways that truly resembled later examples of the company-state. It is tempting to wonder what kind of career Barton might have had if he held a similar role in the East India Company a generation later. The EIC initially shared ships with the Levant Company, and certainly shared members and organisational structure. The building blocks of what would make the EIC a commercial and political force were certainly present — albeit in fits and starts — in the Levant Company during Barton's time as ambassador in Istanbul.

Conclusion

Given Edward Barton's career has been narrated exhaustively elsewhere, this chapter — after revising the common misconceptions about his origins — focuses instead on what can be learned from Barton's embassy considering current historiographical concerns. What comes to the fore in a study of Barton's embassy is the extent to which he was embedded in Ottoman social-political networks and political factions. This both aided Barton's ability to work effectively as an ambassador representing a merchant community spread across Ottoman domains, and shaped the areas of political action in which he could be successful. His relationships with Ottoman political leaders and palace bureaucrats allowed him plenty of avenues to respond efficiently and effectively to the needs of merchants seeking justice, as well as to his crown or his company's policy needs from the Ottomans. However, his connections and membership of factions also shaped how he

was received and the political fights he was able to engage in and win. His membership of an anti-Habsburg network led to the dismissal of the Spanish ambassador in 1592 before any negotiation with the Ottomans began, and saw rival vizier Ferhad Paşa removed from office as the faction Barton had sided with held the ascendancy. His standing in that period also helped him successfully plot to remove the serving French ambassador François Savary de Lancôme, and have him replaced by his close relative, Barton's ally François Savary de Brèves. During this moment of success, he and the Levant Company were also able to intercede successfully in favour of Aaron of Bogdania taking control of the Ottoman vassal principality of Moldavia. However, no amount of political alignment could help Barton instigate an Ottoman naval campaign against Spain, and his prior alignment with the anti-Habsburg grouping backfired spectacularly when Elizabeth backed peace negotiations for a war Barton had helped start, and Barton struggled for favour in Ottoman politics in the aftermath.

Edward Barton was clearly an ambassador who revelled in the ability to act independently and make the most of his familiarity with Ottoman politics. Perhaps the best way to understand that independence is to look at the structural conditions allowing it — namely, Barton's role as both an ambassador and the local figurehead of a merchant company. Recent studies have emphasised the role of the company-state in western European imperial expansion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is a case to be made for the Levant Company as an early example of this trend, possessing the building blocks that would transform later merchant companies into the 'outsourcing [of] empire'. The Levant Company was rather more just the outsourcing of diplomacy, though this in itself provided ample opportunity for its members to exploit this investment of sovereign power. This was most evident in the backing of Aaron of Bogdania through political and financial support. Though they were successful in helping Aaron to become a *voivode*, the venture was ultimately unsuccessful when he used the Long War as cover to rebel and did not repay his debts. Nevertheless, it is an early example of a merchant company

with some sovereign powers using them to bend the domestic politics of their host nation to their will. Largely, it was Barton alone who took advantage of the prerogatives available to him. He did at first seek regular guidance from Walsingham and Burghley but followed his own instincts and imperatives once that was not forthcoming. As an adept practitioner of Ottoman politics, he was able to do this with confidence that only grew following successes between 1590 and 1593. It was his rush to provoke war in Hungary that proved his undoing, as it emerged that Elizabeth supported peace, and had written to the Ottomans to tell them this, just after Barton had successfully campaigned in favour of war alongside Brèves, to the extent of forging French royal letters. The loss of face for Barton undermined the independence he enjoyed, and the ease at which the Levant Company had been able to secure smooth operations with the Ottomans under his embassy. Barton went to the lengths of failing to deliver royal letters and using his knowledge of the Ottoman system to generate a 'reply' by other means, deceiving his monarch and her court in the process. Barton was offered some rehabilitation in Ottoman terms in 1596, with the invitation for him to accompany the campaigning army against the Habsburgs, but despite his good work in securing the return of Imperial captives, this only courted further controversy in London and elsewhere in European Christendom. Barton's talent for using the Ottoman system and the respect he enjoyed in Istanbul set him apart from the vast majority of his contemporaries and later early modern ambassadors to the Ottomans. It is no surprise that under his tenure, the very beginnings of later models for trade company success were fleetingly visible in 1590s Istanbul.

Henry Lello (1598-1606/7)

Henry Lello, despite being England's third ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, and embarking on a noted career in England following the end of his embassy – including a spell as warden of Fleet Prison – has not been subject to any focused scholarship. Orhan Burian (1952) wrote a short introduction to Lello to accompany his edited publication of the ambassador's final report on Ottoman politics in his time.¹ Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar have touched on Lello in their joint work on *Britain & the Islamic World* and MacLean's article on 'Courting the Porte', which characterises Lello as familiar with Ottoman ceremonial, but anxious and condescending, admired only by the 'pious Levant Company chaplain', William Biddulph.² He also appears in various general histories of the Levant Company, as well as finding mention in various works on the Ottoman world in his period. He served through the turbulence of Mehmed III's reign and Safiye Sultan's prominence and downfall as an epitome of the 'sultanate of women'. He was also in office while James I & VI acceded to the English throne and strongly considered terminating the English relationship with the Ottomans. As well as serving as ambassador in the midst of these moments of upheaval, Lello was also the serving representative of the Levant Company in Istanbul while it helped spawn the East India Company from its ranks in Aleppo and London.³ Evidently, his time as ambassador has remained overlooked for too long – a case made by Burian as long ago as 1952.⁴ This study of Lello reveals a man who may at first appear an intransigent, short-tempered, and out of his comfort zone as an ambassador to the Ottoman porte. However, he faced difficult circumstances: the dominance of François Savary de Brèves as prime foreign political actor in Mehmed III's Istanbul; the difficulty of serving as a foreign representative to an increasingly

¹ Orhan Burian, *The Report of Lello, Third English Ambassador to the Sublime Porte / Babıâli Nezâdinde Üçüncü İngiliz Elçisi Lello'nun Muhtırası* (Ankara, 1952).

² Gerald MacLean, 'Courting the Porte: Early Anglo-Ottoman Diplomacy', *University of Bucharest Review*, 10/2 (2008), 80-88; MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford, 2011).

³ A.C.S. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London, 1964), 31.

⁴ Burian, *Report of Lello*, ix.

unstable Ottoman court; a crisis of his company's own making over whether their new monarch should continue the post in Istanbul; and frequent and destructive acts of piracy by English sailors on the Mediterranean Sea.

At times, his standing and situation was only worsened by his own inflexibility, lack of tact, and consequent political isolation, to the extent that whispers between Ottoman and foreign ambassadorial households branded him 'a lunatic', 'ignorant', and 'unfit to serve' while strongly preferring his secretaries, Thomas Glover and Paul Pindar. However, a deeper look at Lello's circumstances reveals something far more complicated than the traditional view of 'an anticlimax' after the Barton years overseen by a man 'lacking the strong personality of Edward Barton, [who] would not take any step on his own initiative'.⁵ While it is demonstrated below that there were many respects in which Lello lacked the confidence – perhaps even the competence – of Barton to serve as a fully autonomous political actor in turn-of-the-seventeenth-century Ottoman Istanbul, there are also factors that explain Lello's actions as the deliberate and considered choices of an experienced and rational actor. He originated from the village of Clunton in Shropshire, where he owned property throughout his life, as well as in the neighbouring village of Clun.⁶ He had some higher education and studied at the Inns of the Court – indicating a strong legal background – according to William Biddulph, who knew him in Istanbul.⁷ Biddulph speaks of Lello as a strongly religious man, who 'first of all reformed his familie, and afterwards so ordered himselfe in his whole carriage, that he credited our Countrey', and who lived an 'unspotted life'.⁸ A fascinating sermon by Henry Greenwood was dedicated to Lello after his death in 1627, preached at the Fleet on 25th December 1627.⁹ Though the dedication recognises him in his capacity as warden of the prison,

⁵ Ibid., ix.

⁶ Henry Lello, '[will]' in Henry F. Waters, *Genealogical Gleanings in England*, I (Boston (MA), 1885), 61-2.

⁷ Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, viii (Glasgow, 1905), 259.

⁸ Ibid., 259-60.

⁹ Henry Greenwood, *The Blessed'st Birth that euer was: or, The Blessed Birth of our Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ* (London, 1634).

the sermon first focuses on the role of angels as messengers of God before it moves on to the story of the nativity – surely a nod to Lello’s diplomatic career. This context of his educational background and religious conviction is vitally important in understanding Lello’s embassy and making sense of his responses to events and people, and choices made while in office.

Lello’s will also reveals two further interesting points which further illuminate themes explored so far in this thesis. First, we see that Lello becomes the business partner of John Eldred, an associate and friend from his time in the Levant Company. Together, they bought the rights for Fleet Prison in perpetuity, and Lello later bought out Eldred’s share for the sum of £8000.¹⁰ Not only did Lello retain a working relationship with Eldred long after his time in Istanbul, he also makes a bequest to his ‘loving friend Sir Paul Pindar, Knight’.¹¹ The vital importance of the personal connections, friendships, and kinships between these English merchants abroad has already been explored somewhat in the prior chapters, but again, it is vitally important in Lello’s case, and the vital role played by Paul Pindar as highly-respected secretary in the functioning of Lello’s embassy household is repeatedly apparent throughout his time as ambassador. Connected to this theme of the power of networks of friends and kinsmen (and women) is Lello’s bequeath of his entire interest in the East India Company to his closest male heir, his nephew Edward Hopkins.¹² The East India Company emerged from the milieu of the Levant Company during Lello’s time as ambassador, and this is another reminder of the fundamental interconnectivity between these different trading companies, with the same leading merchants often serving as members of several companies.

This chapter looks at episodes from Lello’s embassy in the context of Anglo-Ottoman trade and the relationship of the Levant Company with the changing face of the English state in a period

¹⁰ Lello, ‘[will]’, 62.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹² *Ibid.*, 61-2.

of royal succession. Amongst the issues considered are the financial health of the embassy after Barton, the ways in which Lello secured himself as ambassador, and the various troubles Lello experienced in his relationships with other embassies in a changing Ottoman political world. Also under consideration is Lello's relationship with the Ottoman political order, and the changing nature of Ottoman imperial ideology and how that affected the place of England within it. Lello's discomfort with Ottoman culture was clear throughout his embassy, and his observations draw out questions surrounding commensurability and divergent values between England and the Ottoman Empire. Finally, the chapter looks at some aspects of his day-to-day work, which often revolved around firefighting difficulties caused by issues with the company's status at home and his lack of gravity within the Ottoman imperial cosmocracy. Despite this, we see Lello eventually learn from experience and secure some victories through working within Ottoman norms, though his conviction that the Ottoman Empire was corrupt never left him. Eventually, it was his quiet conservatism that kept the English embassy and English trade rights alive in Istanbul while the Levant Company lurched into crisis in London – only for him then, to his mind, to be double-crossed and replaced by former friends and colleagues sent to replace him by a 'Levant Company 2.0', which this chapter argues was clearly a reaction to changing royal priorities under a new English monarch, as well as a means to reduce the cost of the English embassy in Istanbul to both the crown and the company, also clarifying the role of the ambassador around the quotidian duty of defending and enhancing English trade rights.

Company, state, and the security of English trade rights

The biggest issues that Lello had to deal with during his embassy all pertained to the question of the status of the Levant Company and his embassy vis-à-vis changing political realities in England and Ottoman Istanbul. If this thesis has argued thus far that the unreliable financial support for embassies came with the trade-off of relative freedom for the Levant Company to manage its own affairs, Lello's case is the apogee of this – during the upheaval caused by the 'jagged

succession' and confusion over government affairs during the early years of James VI, Lello's embassy was left without royal funding or any guarantee that it would remain in place in the long term, with the Levant Company also falling foul of James' double-granting of privileges already promised to (or in the possession of) others.¹³ The reformulation that this enforced upon the Levant Company culminated in a much streamlined organisation that replaced Lello with Glover. Alongside this, Lello experienced conflict with the French and Venetian embassies, resulting in the outbreak of violence in 1600. To begin, however, we should consider how it came to be that Lello succeeded Barton after the second ambassador's sudden death.

Lello was – at least as far as he presented himself in his first surviving representation to Sir Robert Cecil – unwilling to become involved too deeply in any 'negotiations' without instruction from the government.¹⁴ Barton's final letters to Cecil in autumn 1597 – the last received at Whitehall on 3rd February 1598, after his death – continue in much the same vein as his previous correspondence, relaying detailed information about the progress of the ongoing war, affairs in Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, and Poland, and the tribulations of various Ottoman political actors.¹⁵ The weight of evidence in Barton's case suggests he was a highly autonomous actor unafraid to pursue new policy interests without direction from Whitehall. Lello was perhaps less inclined to be as active as his predecessor immediately after stepping in as agent in the interim, following the precedent set by Harborne (and by Barton during his absence during the 1596 campaign) that the secretary serve as agent in the absence of an official ambassador.

¹³ Susan Doran, '1603: a jagged succession', *Historical Research*, 93/261 (2020), 443-465; Diana Newton, *The Making of the Jacobean Regime: James VI and I and the Government of England, 1603-1605* (London, 2005), 1-50; Susan Doran & Paulina Kewes, 'Introduction: a historiographical perspective' in S. Doran & P. Kewes, *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England* (Manchester, 2014), 3-19.

¹⁴ Henry Lello, 'Hen. Lello to Sir R. Cecil' 1st March 1598, SP 97/3 ff. 232-3, *TNA*. The letter refers to 'my last of 15 February', which indicates prior outgoing correspondence from Lello to London intercepted or otherwise not preserved.

¹⁵ Edward Barton, 'Barton to [Cecil]' 10th November 1597, SP 97/3 ff. 228-32, *TNA*.

It is unclear at this juncture how and when Lello had assumed charge of the embassy – if indeed he fully had beyond resuming correspondence – as there was seemingly no contingency in place for an ambassador’s death in office, save for the precedent of secretary succeeding outgoing ambassador in the case of Harborne’s departure. In his first letter, his: ‘I Intend to contynue untill I receave yo^{ur} hon^{ours} directives for my government in his place’ suggests an expectation of imminent instruction from the English court on how to proceed. A rare example of a letter from Cecil to an ambassador from August 1598 sees Cecil offering his apologies to Lello for his absence from court and resultant inaction in responding to his letters, and reveals that Lello had sent Cecil a carpet as a gift, prompting Cecil to respond ‘I am sorrie that you should any way charge y^r selfe towards me except I had some occasion to doe you pleasure: seeinge there is as yet noe opportunitie in p^{ar}ticular’.¹⁶ This suggests Lello angling for favour in confirmation as ambassador but receiving no solid guarantees from the minister. The gift of a carpet is also notable. Had this been given to an Ottoman vizier in the hope of receipt of favour, some scholarship may have labelled it a bribe, but in this case, it underlines a shared gifting culture in the politics and society of both England and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷ Lello himself, as will be seen, left Istanbul complaining about the level of bribery outstripping the rule of law. Nonetheless, an Ottoman carpet was clearly a gift of high status: the painting *The Somerset House Conference, 1604* features both Cecil and a table topped with a luxurious carpet in the Ottoman style.¹⁸ Lello was evidently very pleased with Cecil’s comments, responding on receipt of the letter the following January ‘trewly right Hon^{ble} it was kinde in his kinde, thatt is, as comminge from so greate and worthye a counsellor to so meane a persone: right hon^{ble} itt was favorable’.¹⁹ The letter also touches on a minor dispute with the French embassy over

¹⁶ Robert Cecil, ‘Cecil to Lello’ [August] 1598, SP 97/3 ff.278-9, *TNA*.

¹⁷ MacLean & Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World*, 109-10.

¹⁸ Unknown Artist. (c1604). *The Somerset House Conference, 1604* (oil on canvas). London: National Portrait Gallery.

¹⁹ Lello, ‘Lello to Cecil’ 3rd January 1599, SP 97/4 ff.6-8, *TNA*. It is the content of this letter that dates the above to August.

priests and proper conduct, which may indicate that François Savary de Brèves saw opportunity to put pressure on the English position in Istanbul following the sudden death of Edward Barton. This further suggests that, as much as Lello had assumed *de facto* leadership of the embassy, his position was precarious while he was not officially endorsed as an ambassador. It is perhaps for this reason that he kept a low profile – certainly relative to Barton at any rate – until the time of his official confirmation. It would seem that Lello’s *de facto* position at the head of the Istanbul embassy, his willingness to spend on gifts for Cecil, and perhaps also key company factors, and the lack of another experienced candidate, secured Lello’s selection as the new ambassador from the Levant Company and the English court. His confirmation will be explored in more detail in relation to Ottoman ceremonial later in this chapter.

If Lello’s financial position was secure enough later in his life following his mercantile career that he could buy the wardenship of Fleet Prison for thousands of pounds, it was the debt that Barton had accrued during his embassy that caused that caused some difficulties for Lello and the Levant Company, and perhaps precipitated some of the changes brought in with the switch to Glover in 1607. Edward Barton’s sister, Mary Locke, sued a large number of company officials – including Lello and Richard Staper – on the accusation that they had embezzled Edward Barton’s estate in Istanbul under false pretence of paying off his household debts.²⁰ The response on behalf of the company was detailed in its explication of the levels of debt left behind by Barton’s embassy, its annual allowances for ambassador and household (though these somewhat contradict figures given by Barton, Harborne and the company at other junctures), and the type of representation for which the company believed it was paying.²¹ The company’s response is clear that the allowances paid for the upkeep of the ambassador’s household are for ‘entertaynm^t of the said gov^{er}no^{ur} and

²⁰ Thomas Badger, ‘The Replicacon of Mary Locke als Loughe Complt to the Answeres of S^r John Spencer, S^r Thomas Smyth, S^r Thomas Lowe, Knights Thomas Cordell, Richard Staper, William Barraway, Nicholas Locke, Morys Abbot, Robert Sandy, Nicholas Walton & John Elldred’ (1603-1625), C 2/JasI/L10/58/1, *TNA*.

²¹ *Ibid.*, C 2/JasI/L10/58/2.

Companye as was convenient for a man of that qualite and might mayntayne the honor of this kingdome'.²² The phrase 'mayntayne the honor' is ambiguous, but reactive rather than proactive. It was shown above that Barton's proactive diplomatic strategy caused consternation amongst company members on occasion. This legal rebuttal provides another reminder of the company's general scepticism for proactive diplomatic strategy in Istanbul, and the centrality of the primary aim of protecting and enhancing commerce, which suggests that Lello also saw his role as one of protecting English interests from circumstance in Istanbul rather than taking on a role in shaping circumstance.

What is also significant is the level of debt attributed to Barton. Locke is apparently dissatisfied that Barton's assets were allegedly used to cover debts owed to household staff, with the dragoman Hasan Ağa being named as part of the case.²³ Locke frames Barton's achievements as a positive, profitable development for the company that should outweigh any monies owed. The company counters that while Barton was successful and highly respected in his role, he also amassed huge debts – '371000 chequins' to 'Aron Prince of Bugdania', other bills to 'the Prince of Moldavia', as well as other household charges.²⁴ This reflects the understanding of the latter years of Barton's embassy as outlined above – that he became deeply involved in Danubian trade and politics and was so short of funding that he was borrowing money from various Ottoman and other grandees. Not only did this leave Lello's embassy in a difficult financial starting position, it also came with the added frustration of Mary Locke suing Lello for Edward and then Robert Barton's estates, apparently suspecting that there was rather more money in the Ottoman trade than she was privy to.²⁵ It is easy to understand how she came to this conclusion, given one of Barton's contemporaries as an agent of Osborne and Staper, the defendant John Eldred, had

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., C 2/JasI/L10/58/1.

²⁴ Ibid., C 2/JasI/L10/58/2.

²⁵ Thomas Badger, 'Mary Locke vs Henry Lello' (1603-1625), C 2/JasI/L10/61/1-2, *TNA*.

accumulated enough wealth trading with the company from Aleppo that he was able to buy the manor of Great Saxham in 1597 and build a large house known as 'Nutmeg Hall'.²⁶ The office of ambassador was, seemingly, more prestigious but far less lucrative. As Jennifer Mori makes clear, diplomatic work remained badly paid long into the eighteenth century, and often precluded ambassadors from marriage until later in life, as their role made it awkward to provide for and raise a family, materially and socially in terms of being based abroad.²⁷ It is also likely the case that the Locke family were not held in the highest of regard by the Levant Company and vice versa. The merchant and associate of Martin Frobisher, Michael Lok, of the same London merchant family, served as consul in Aleppo for two years of a four-year tenure from 1591 and alienated merchants there, then filed a suit against the Levant Company in Venice for compensation for his dismissal and caused it continuous difficulty until accepting a compromise fee of £300 in 1601.²⁸ The Levant Company appointed its factors as consuls in cities around the Ottoman Empire, and they had no official standing within the English diplomatic system, only receiving official permission from the crown to make these appointments in 1605.²⁹ As was seen in the time of Barton, the appointment of consuls could cause ructions between factors, the ambassador, and the company leadership in London. Lok is another example of this, but as with the suit of Mary Locke, these experiences seem to have fed into the company's reappraisal of the roles and budgets of ambassadors and consuls in 1606-7 when appointing Glover.

Anglo-French trade privileges and rivalries

The next event from Lello's embassy that highlights the underlying commercial struggles that he was dealing with is the series of events that led to a deadly fight between the English and French

²⁶ R.C.D. Baldwin, 'Eldred, John', *ODNB*.

²⁷ Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy*, 62.

²⁸ James McDermott, 'Lok, Michael', *ODNB*.

²⁹ Niels Steensgaard, 'Consuls and nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650', *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 15/1-2 (2011), 34.

nations in Pera in 1600. Amongst other factors in this outburst of violence were Lello's attempts to have a Protestant church opened in Pera, the continued fight over representation of Flemish and indeed Dutch merchants, which brought with it consular fees that were evidently lucrative enough for Charles I to wish to seize them from the Levant Company in the 1630s and 40s, and loose comments from Lello that offended the honour of the French king.³⁰ A look at the direction of travel of capitulations renewed by the Ottomans for England and France also indicates how Ottoman conceptions of justice, order, and balance influenced their reaction to this intractable dispute between the two embassies.

The first contentious issue was the English request of an Anglican church in Pera, an ambition that Capello described as 'chimerical'.³¹ It was this request that caused Lello's first diplomatic spat. The *bailo* reports that he had recourse to the *şeyhülislam* and the 'Chief Eunuch' – presumably referring to Gazanfer Ağa, whose influence at the Topkapı Palace remained uninhibited. During Lello's official reception as ambassador, he held a long conversation with Halil Paşa, *kaymakam* while Damat İbrahim Paşa was on campaign in Hungary, in which he responded to questions regarding the King of France, his conversion, and the Pope inclining him towards Spain. Halil then, probably in a deliberate ploy to cause trouble, repeated this to François Savary de Brèves, but phrased more pointedly, causing him to become scandalised. Halil claimed to de Brèves that Lello had said that the French king had turned from 'the good religion' and become an 'idolater', and 'that this being the case, no reliance could be placed upon the amity of France, but only upon his mistress, who was most constant and sincere'.³² These battles indicate that cross-confessional issues between Christian embassies in Istanbul were never far from the fore.

³⁰ Mark Charles Fissel, 'Early Stuart Absolutism and the Strangers' Consular' in T.G. Barnes, B. Sharp, and M.C. Fissel (eds.), *Law and Authority in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to Thomas Garden Barnes* (Newark, 2007), 186-224.

³¹ Capello, 'to the Doge and Senate' 2nd October 1599, *Venice*, ix, 377-83. Original Italian: 'chimere'.

³² Idem, 'to the Doge and Senate' 16th October 1599, *Venice*, ix, 377-83; MacLean, 'Courting the Porte', 86.

As is suggested by Biddulph and often supported by Lello's written rhetoric, Lello was a devout Protestant. In this context, it is perhaps not a great leap to imagine Lello spoke exactly as quoted by Halil Paşa, or at least carried enough of a reputation for his religious observance that it was plausible for Halil to exaggerate what Lello had said in this manner. As will be seen, Lello often viewed the actions of the French and Venetian ambassadors as motivated by religious enmity with him and the English nation. It is perhaps the case that this early experience of the incident of the English church gave him this unyielding first impression. Nonetheless, what is notable about Lello is just how much his Protestant faith emerges as a factor in his relations with others in Istanbul. One might wonder just how strict the 'reformer of his family' Lello was, and whether the English embassy maintained or tempered its reputation for raucous merrymaking and secret entrances for prostitutes (or smugglers – or both) it had gained in the time of Barton. As was discussed, Barton's own religious convictions were evident, but perhaps open to question by more fervent Protestants – Barton was close friends and debating partners with Orthodox patriarchs and Muslim officials, after all. It may be the case that with the accession of an English ambassador with a much more decidedly Protestant identity, English networks of 'cross-confessional diplomacy' – as discussed by Maartje van Gelder, Tijana Krstić, Emrah Safa Gürkan, and others – were disrupted.³³ That is to say, where Barton was more comfortable bridging confessional and cultural boundaries in his own right, and situating himself within networks of formal and informal go-betweens lubricating relations between Protestants, Catholics, and Ottomans, Lello's religious conviction placed him further towards the periphery of these groups. A greater reliance on third parties to maintain lines of communication between the English embassy and other stakeholders — Ottoman, French, and Venetian – of course made Lello's embassy more vulnerable to crossed wires, gossip and hearsay,

³³ Maartje van Gelder & Tijana Krstić, 'Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19/2-3 (2015), 93-105; Emrah Safa Gürkan, 'Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560-1600', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19/2-3 (2015), 107-128.

and bribery to interfere with processes of communication and negotiation. As Rothman has demonstrated, go-betweens had an interest in maintaining the perception of difference between different groups to protect their own roles, and so could at times – intentionally or not – make things more difficult rather than easing communication between parties.³⁴ That said, Lello’s primary go-between in his conversation with Halil was Glover, so any issues of mistranslation, if they occurred in this case, came from within his own embassy.³⁵

In this case, Capello reports that he tried to calm the French ambassador, reminding him that it was Elizabeth’s intention to preserve cordial relations with France, and reassuring de Brèves that it was probably a mistake of one of the dragomans, or Halil trying to be controversial on purpose. Lello, knowing nothing of this conversation between Halil and de Brèves, sent his secretary to invite the French and Venetian ambassadors to a feast aboard the English ship. De Brèves was angered and dismissed the secretary, despite the secretary swearing Halil’s tale to be untrue. The secretary then came to Capello and begged for his favour and support in accepting his master’s invitation. The *bailo* responded warmly and accepted the invitation to celebrate with the English ambassador, but states that he used the opportunity to reiterate the message that indelicate handling of the religious differences between Protestants and Catholics in dealings with the Ottomans could have serious consequences. He raised again the issue of the proposed Anglican church in Pera. He was satisfied with his discussion with the secretary, whom he described as: ‘most acute, and who really governs the Ambassador, a man more practical than speculative’.³⁶ The secretary in question, though not named, was the man who would succeed Lello as ambassador several years later, after the embassy of Thomas Glover, Paul Pindar. He is named as such by

³⁴ E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY, 2014), passim.

³⁵ MacLean, ‘Courting the Porte’, 86.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 337-83.

Thomas Dallam at the time of his visit.³⁷ The ‘young Englishman’ who had been in the service of Barton and was fluent enough in Turkish to act as interpreter at Lello’s reception was highly likely to have been Glover, Lello not being noted for his command of Turkish.³⁸ Lello’s deployment of the two for significant tasks is another reminder of the centrality of the embassy household as a unit, and the importance – as seen with Harborne and Barton – of the working relationship and trust between ambassador and secretary.

That the delicacy of religious issues between England, France, and the Ottomans should raise its head again is of no great surprise. One does not sell out or humiliate other Christians of any flavour to the Ottomans. Describing the French monarch as an idolater to a Muslim official would certainly have breached these expected standards. The matter of the religious upheaval in France, and the subsequent return of its monarchy to the Catholic fold – as well as the agreement of peace with Spain at Nantes in 1598 – undoubtedly made the issue even more delicate. Moreover, there was the growing counter-Reformation struggle to influence eastern Christians within the Ottoman Empire, as is evidenced in Barton’s involvement in the politics of the Ottoman vassals on the Danube. This issue is also made clear by how Capello couched his objections to an Anglican church in Pera in terms of ‘the position of the Perots and other Christians here resident’, opining that: ‘we Ambassadors were here with the object of serving our masters and cultivating friendly relations among ourselves, and therefore it became none of us to stir hand or mouth in matters of religion, for that subject was far removed from our sphere and quite outside our commission from our respective Sovereigns, and, moreover, was so delicate and sensitive that to meddle with it might produce the gravest consequences’.³⁹ Given that there was already a Catholic church present in

³⁷ Thomas Dallam, ‘Master Thomas Dallam’s Diary’ in J. Theodore Bent (ed.), *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant* (Cambridge, 2010), 63 (1-98).

³⁸ Capello, ‘to the Doge’ 16th October 1599.

³⁹ Ibid.

Pera, one must wonder how much of Capello's statement was just rhetoric – cover for the meddling of Catholics in 'Perot' affairs to the exclusion of the possibility of similar Protestant interference.

The next, and perhaps most bizarre, of the early controversies of Lello's embassy was a violent snowball fight between the English and French embassies in January 1600. This was to spark a major row and emphasise the deep divisions between the French and English embassies in Istanbul since peace was made between France and Spain, despite the supposed cordial relations between the two monarchs. While the Venetian report emphasises their role as mediators in investigating the cause of a brawl involving both embassies, Lello's account reads more like a brutal French ambush with scant provocation.⁴⁰ He reports 'some of my people being in the streets with the neighbor greekes throwing of snowe: it happened that the maister of his howse to passe by and one of the balles to hitt him'.⁴¹ Lello suggests that the offending snowball had been thrown by one of the local men at another local man, but this hardly seems to matter given what was to follow:

and wthin 2 howres were assembled to the number of 30 or 40 persons french: having sent to a shippe here in porte to call all the mariners whoe wth their weapons, dagges, staves, and swordes stood privily in a howse, in the street where my servantes were to returne home being abroad some at the marchantes howses, and some gone to doe busines. whereof I being advised sent presently to com[m]and them they should not meddle wth the french but rather come some othere way, because I knew they had not weapons: but before the advise; three were sent as farre as the place where the french waited for them: whoe issued out and hurte them all one after anothere being 6 and 8 uppon a man, and ever as they came by, 2 and 3, in a companie wounded them to the number of 6, and that most cowardly cutting and slashing their leggs armes after they were downe some wth 7 or 8 woundes very dangerous, wherby I thinke two will be maymed for ever:⁴²

Lello's account is of a brutal ambush by French merchants upon members of his household, far removed from the 'snowballing' mentioned by the Venetians. It is remarkably unusual that a snowball fight should descend into armed brawling and allegations of maiming – and indeed,

⁴⁰ Girolamo Capello and Vincenzo Gradenigo, 'to the Doge and Senate' 24th January 1600, *Venice*, ix, 387-92.

⁴¹ Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' 15th January 1600, SP 97/4 f.73, *TNA*.

⁴² *Ibid*.

murder – whether in the sixteenth century or any other. Even in the case of ‘the revolt of the snowballs’ on the Venetian island of Murano in 1511, there was no armed brawling between rival groups.⁴³ Strangely, Istanbul saw a twenty-first-century example of such a snowball fight leading to murder based on pent-up religious and social enmity, 415 years almost to the day from the Anglo-French snowball fight, but there appears to be little comparable historic precedent for a snowball fight breaking out between rival embassies and progressing to an armed turf war.⁴⁴

Offence over snowballs does not typically justify violent acts of revenge unless at least one party is looking for an excuse to attack the other; it is indicative of the nadir to which relations between the English and French embassies had descended since Barton had helped install de Brèves as a partner and ally. The matter of the church and the insult to the conversion of King Henri had clearly taken its toll on relations. Taking Lello’s account at face value, persons associated with the French embassy were guilty of a serious crime against members of his household, for which he would not have been without justification in seeking justice within the Ottoman legal system, and de Brèves had protected the offenders within his home. The intervention of the incoming and outgoing Venetian *baili*, both resident in Pera at this time, allowed mediation without resorting to ‘complaints to or amongst this Barbarous people’ – but this was immediately threatened by Savary de Brèves having sent a complaint to Halil Paşa, not only laying the blame at the door of the English embassy but claiming that the French embassy had been attacked and men killed.⁴⁵ Lello was understandably enraged further by this, especially as the vizier had, as a result, begun to refuse ordinary business requests from the embassy on behalf of English merchants and – in the words of the English dragoman – referred to Lello as ‘a lunatic’.⁴⁶ In return, Lello sent

⁴³ Claire Judde de Larivière, *La révolte des boules de neige : Murano face à Venise, 1511* (Paris, 2014), passim; Dennis Romano, ‘Review: La révolte des boules de neige’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 68/4 (2015), 1389-90.

⁴⁴ ‘Bu bir nefret cinayetidir: Gazeteci Nuh Köklü, 'kartopu oynarken' öldürüldü.’ *Radikal*, February 2, 2015.

⁴⁵ Lello, ‘Lello to Cecil’ 28th January 1600, SP 97/4 f.123, *TNA*.

⁴⁶ Capello and Gradenigo, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 7th February 1600, *Venice*, ix, 392-9.

word to Çiğalazade, requesting his intercession, though after a conversation between Çiğalazade and Halil, they decided it was not worth them interfering in squabbles between Christian embassies.⁴⁷ The two *baili* were therefore able to calm the situation again, and continued to offer their mediation between the two embassies, as both Lello and the Venetians agreed was better to avoid embarrassment and scandal that caused ‘an occasione to make the Turks laughe at christians’.⁴⁸

It is indicative of the depths of mistrust between the English and French in Istanbul during this time that a simple stray snowball could provoke such a violent conflict between the two embassy households and their national merchant communities. Various factors played into this conflict, demonstrative of how local rivalries could create hostility between representatives of monarchs who – on a courtly level – were on good terms. At the heart of this conflict was the matter of who held responsibility over representation of Flemish merchants. The late ambassador Barton had been in partnership with de Brèves in installing him as French ambassador in the first place, but rivalry over Ottoman political influence and this issue had generated friction between the two embassies. Barton temporarily secured English protection over all other Christian merchants without an embassy within the Ottoman Empire from Çiğalazade, this state of affairs lasting a few weeks during his brief time as *sadraxam* following his heroics on the field at Haçova in 1596, a particularly sore point as this was a right the French traditionally claimed, including over English merchants before Harborne’s confirmation in 1583.⁴⁹ The rebellion in the Low Countries complicated this disagreement further. Flemish merchants active in the Ottoman Empire sought to trade under the English flag, since the Flemish rebels had sought the protection of England. The French embassy contested that they were not English subjects and therefore ought to trade

⁴⁷ Ibid., 392-9.

⁴⁸ Lello, ‘to Cecil’ 15th January 1600.

⁴⁹ Susan A. Skilliter, ‘The Turkish documents relating to Edward Barton’s embassy to the Porte (1588-1598)’ unpubd. PhD thesis, Manchester (1965), 108.

under the French banner.⁵⁰ Vizier Halil Paşa attempted to settle this jurisdictional dispute in 1600, calling on *bailo* Capello for his guidance, which Capello tried to refuse, before eventually giving as neutral and non-committal an account as he could muster, after the vizier had taken him to a private side-room and presented him with a map of Europe, demanding to know who was the current master of Flanders.⁵¹ On Capello reporting this to Lello, it gave the ambassador further occasion to lambast Halil as ‘a meddlesome fellow’ who was only motivated by money, and Brèves as ‘an encroacher’, suggesting that in Lello’s mind the French ambassador was overstepping his bounds, causing a dispute over jurisdiction in Istanbul while the matter was not so contested between their sovereigns.⁵² Lello writes to Cecil:

In my last I advized yo^{ur} Honor how the French Ambr goeth about continually to gett from us the Flem[m]ing^{es} of the united provinces saying her ma^{tie} hath nott to doe with them; they are the king of spaines subjects. He doth her Highnes wronge to take the protection of them from her.⁵³

In truth, what was clearly an important matter of principle and prestige for Lello and Brèves in Istanbul was likely of little consequence to wider Anglo-French relations in the view from London or Paris. Both had motive to seek to represent Flemish merchants; Lello’s embassy relied on duties paid by merchants granted English credentials to survive, and likewise Brèves was also short on money and looking to return to France.⁵⁴ The Venetian ambassador in France remarks on the arrival of the secretary and dragoman from the French embassy in Istanbul arriving in Paris to raise money to pay of Brèves’ debts, without which he could not return home.⁵⁵ The battle raged on between the embassies, but something of a victory was granted to Lello in the renewed capitulations of 1601: not only was the English customs tariff lowered from the standard 5% rate

⁵⁰ Capello, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 3rd June 1600, *Venice*, ix, 411-7.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Lello, ‘Lello to Cecil’ 29th May 1600, SP 97/4 f.87, *TNA*.

⁵⁴ Capello and Gradenigo, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 7th February 1600; Capello, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 22nd February 1600, *Venice*, ix, 392-9; Francesco Contarini, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 1st May 1600, *Venice*, ix, 406-10.

⁵⁵ Contarini, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 1st May 1600.

to 3%, but English protection was granted to merchants from a collection of Dutch provinces at least, if not all Flanders.⁵⁶ Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, Gelderland in the United Provinces were at least the predominant seafaring provinces of the Netherlands, pointing to an amusingly ingenious solution from Ottoman authorities that may not have ended the dispute in perpetuity between England and France, but at least in the interests of balance, order, and justice, granted the English embassy representation of a great degree of the more active Dutch mercantile provinces, at least until the independent Netherlands established their own capitulations in 1612.⁵⁷ The reduction in the customs tariff is also indicative of how English trade had become important enough to the Ottomans for the porte to begin offering incentives to English commerce. Brèves was deeply annoyed, but the clause stood until all rights to representation of foreign merchants without an embassy were handed over to England in 1675.⁵⁸ The battle went on, with French complaints in 1607 about English claims of authority over all other Christian nations upheld by Ahmed I, and Glover still keen to secure full rights over representation of ‘foresters’ for the English in 1608.⁵⁹ It was, however, a major achievement of Lello’s time to have gained these concessions for the Levant Company.

From these examples, we see that rivalries with the French over the expansion of English commercial rights persisted and sometimes manifested in unusual ways in Istanbul, despite the good political relations between the countries away on the other side of the continent. The famous snowball fight, as brutal as it was, was almost entirely based on commercial and confessional rivalries between the two embassies. Lello’s perceived slight against the French king to Halil Paşa

⁵⁶ Alexander H. de Groot, ‘The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries’, *Oriente Moderno*, 22/83 nr 3 (2003), 600-1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 601; Cristoforo Valier, ‘to the Doge and Senate’, 19th May 1612, *Venice*, xii, 358-366.

⁵⁸ Agostino Nani, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 17th April 1601, *Venice*, ix, 449-457.

⁵⁹ Ahmed I Osmanoglu, ‘[The Grand Turk] to Henry IV of France’ 10th May 1607, *Calendar of the manuscripts of the most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury*, 19, ed. M.S. Guiseppi (London, 1965), 126; Thomas Glover, ‘Sir Thomas Glover to Sir Thomas Lowe’ 17th July 1608, SP 105/109 f.33, *TNA*.

was an inflammatory religious barb, but – amidst a backdrop of increasing English and Dutch economic influence in the Ottoman Empire – the open sore between the two embassies remained the battle over representation of Christian merchants without an embassy, which culminated in flashpoints such as the snowball fight that turned into a pitched battle.

The Levant Company interregnum: Lello's Jacobean limbo

The most pertinent example of how changing English political realities forced a change in the Levant Company's outlook during Lello's embassy – culminating in his eventual removal – comes in the limbo Lello's embassy experienced following the death of Elizabeth I and the accession of James VI. This episode brings out clearly how the beginning of the Jacobean era saw the trade-off between company autonomy and royal funding tip further towards the company managing its own affairs in the Levant without much in the way of financial support from the English crown.

The news of Elizabeth I's death and James VI's accession to the English throne arrived in Istanbul in June.⁶⁰ An Ottoman letter was en route to Elizabeth, and Francesco Contarini reports that 'the news of the death of the Queen made them think of altering the letters and addressing them to the new King, but they have not done so, in order to avoid being the first to make advances'.⁶¹ James' accession caused major upheaval for Lello and the Levant Company operating in the Ottoman Empire. From 1603-1605, there was significant disruption to the legal status of the Levant Company in London and Istanbul.⁶² For the Ottomans, uncertainty over James' foreign policy intentions gave excuse for them to threaten to invoke their legal tradition of requiring all

⁶⁰ Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' 4th June 1603, SP 97/4 ff.224-225, *TNA*; Contarini, 'to the Doge and Senate' 13th June 1603, *Venice*, x, 42-57.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 42-57.

⁶² Wood, *Levant Company*, 37-9.

laws and agreements to be reconfirmed on the accession of a new sovereign, causing more headaches for Lello. In England, James had not yet the experience of being monarch of a somewhat larger country with more global connections, and so was dismissive of the value of keeping an ambassador in Istanbul.⁶³ Not only this, following some faulty manoeuvring by the company, the new king levied impositions on currants and wine – the major Levant Company imports after the siphoning of fabric trade to the East India Company – and then farmed this out to his Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Suffolk, for further gain (that is to say, £5500 rather than £4000). All this caused unappreciated complications for the Levant Company, meaning Lello was not paid for most of this period. In a representation of the repercussions of the ‘jagged succession’ of James VI for English merchants abroad, Lello’s embassy was fraught with difficulty while waiting for matters to be settled in London.

Lello advised Cecil immediately that the death of Elizabeth technically voided all English privileges, and as such immediate renewal from James was necessary.⁶⁴ However, life would go on almost as normal within the Ottoman system on the understanding that a renewal was forthcoming, just as Barton not only survived, but thrived long before official confirmation of his position as ambassador. Lello reminded Cecil of this in his letter of the following month, but his correspondence dried up through the middle of 1603, as he had sent Glover to England, and, as he states in his letter of 27th August 1603, ‘by my Secretarie yo^{ur} hon^{our} shalbe advised aswell of the present state of this countrey’.⁶⁵ The first indication of trouble ahead came with the news that the Levant Company had tried its luck with the new monarch by forfeiting its patent, a move which was quickly followed by instructions to the Lord Treasurer to continue the levy of £4000 per

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 37-9.

⁶⁴ Lello, ‘to Cecil’, ff.224.

⁶⁵ *Idem.*, ‘Lello to Cecil’ 2nd July 1603, SP 97/4 f.226, *TNA*; *Idem.*, ‘Lello to Cecil’ 27th August 1603, SP 97/4 f. 229, *TNA*.

annum on their staple trade goods – currants, oil, and raisins – to make up for the lost income.⁶⁶ As Wood suggests, this was undoubtedly a ploy from the company to squeeze more favourable terms from a new king, but it soon backfired.⁶⁷ The instruction for the continued enforcement of a £4000 levy was followed by the company immediately petitioning for a renewal of their charter on the same terms, which served as an opportunity for rivals excluded from the Levant trade by their monopoly to demand a widening of access.⁶⁸

While the Levant Company continued to make profit for the likes of Eldred to invest at home, clearly their political standing was not so elevated by their successes in the Ottoman Empire that they could overstretch their bounds with the new king. However, though the status of the company was subject to doubt and delay throughout 1603 and 1604 in London, for Lello and the merchants in the Ottoman Empire, life continued relatively normally. Indeed, in November 1603, Lello wrote to his new king to explain his role and how he was fulfilling it, also finding occasion to include a subtle reminder that the sultan expected letters from King James, if not more.⁶⁹ With impeccable timing, James did pen letters to Mehmed III on 26th December 1603, the sultan, unbeknownst to those in London, having died four days previously.⁷⁰ In the meantime, Lello, perhaps unsure of exactly what was going on at home in England, wrote to update Thomas Parry, ambassador in France, on the ongoing strategic affairs in the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Mediterranean.⁷¹ The Venetian Ambassador to England, Nicolo Molin, reports at this time that the Levant Company talk of Lello being out of favour and the withdrawal of their merchants, but Molin was surely picking up on their bluff with the king, as trade continued and Lello was doing

⁶⁶ 'The Council to the Lord Treasurer' 31st October 1603, SP 14/4 f.106, *TNA*.

⁶⁷ Wood, *Levant Company*, 38.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 38-9.

⁶⁹ Lello, 'to James I'.

⁷⁰ James VI Stuart, 'James I to the Sultan' 26th December 1603, SP 97/4 ff.243-6, *TNA*.

⁷¹ Lello, 'Lello to Sir Thos. Parry, ambassador in France' 26th November 1603, SP 97/4 f.235, *TNA*.

his job as ever, for example arresting a rogue consul who had been involved in piracy.⁷² Indeed, Contarini continued to complain throughout 1603 of the protection Ottoman officials were willing to give the English over the ongoing quarrels regarding piracy.⁷³ This said, Lello does make repeated mention in his letters that documents of confirmation from James VI to the sultan were necessary to ease his position in Istanbul and ensure that he maintain the respect of Ottoman officials and the capitulations for English trade remain in force. He sent Glover to report the same, arriving in December 1603 – probably the catalyst for the royal letters.⁷⁴

This disruption could not have come at a worse time, as the political situation in Istanbul worsened. 1603 began with a joint *sipahi*-Janissary revolt that brought the execution of Gazanfer Ağa and Osman Ağa, the latter being chief eunuch of the *harem*, in a further blow to the inner palace faction led by Safiye.⁷⁵ Further dismissals and executions followed as viziers allied alternately with the *sipahis*, janissaries, and sultan against each other. Yemişçi Hasan Paşa held a ‘dictatorial’ role as grand vizier for months until his eventual deposition and execution in October 1603, even unsuccessfully attempting to secure the execution of the great survivor, Cığalazade.⁷⁶ Mehmed III had executed his eldest surviving son, Mahmud, in June over fears he was a threat to his father’s rule given the repeated unrest. This was precipitated by the interception of a message from the prince’s mother to the teen relating that a seer had informed her that he would be sultan in six months following the unpleasant death of his father. Fifteen-year-old Mahmud was imprisoned, beaten, and tortured for a confession that this meant he was plotting to kill Mehmed and ascend to the sultanate, and – whether or not this followed – Mahmud was executed along with his

⁷² Nicolò Molin, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 17th November 1603, *Venice*, x, 109-155; Contarini, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 27th September 1603, *Venice*, x, 88-98.

⁷³ Contarini, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 23rd August 1603, *Venice*, x, 73-87.

⁷⁴ Molin, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 25th December 1603, *Venice*, x, 116-126.

⁷⁵ Günhan Börekçi, ‘Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-17) and His Immediate Predecessors’, unpubd. PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University (2010), 54-6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 58-9.

household.⁷⁷ Only Mahmud's mother survived, because – as Günhan Börekçi demonstrated – she was also the mother to one of the only two remaining princes, four-year-old Mustafa.⁷⁸ This left Mustafa and thirteen-year-old Ahmed as the only remaining heirs to the increasingly infirm, obese, and embattled Sultan Mehmed. Lello's letters relate in patient detail this continuing political maelstrom, which cannot have given his new king a convincing impression of the value of upholding a diplomatic relationship with the Ottoman Empire. While trade continued, it is hardly surprising that Lello had concerns over maintaining his status and enforcing the terms of English trade, as the domestic political situation remained conducive to local Ottoman governors putting pressure on English merchants in pursuit of their own financial gain and profiting from harbouring English pirates.

The Levant Company's gambit in London left their status unresolved. New suggestions in February 1604 clashed with a company rebuttal, as an impasse developed between the Levant Company trying to re-establish its terms, those who wanted to be allowed to join the trade, and the king.⁷⁹ One of the company, perhaps Staper, wrote to Cecil emphasising what was required, especially highlighting the need to place and support an ambassador and consuls to protect English trade, using the many years of safe passage into Algiers secured by Harborne's dispatch of Barton to solve problems there in the mid-1580s as an example.⁸⁰ However, agreement over the reappointment of the Levant Company's patent was scuppered by the protestation of newcomers against having to pay a £50 entry fee.⁸¹ It would not be until 14th December 1605 that a new charter was signed, and in the meantime, the £4000 dues had been farmed out for collection to the Lord

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 65-7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁷⁹ 'Suggestions for fresh regulations of the Levant trade' 20th February 1604, SP 14/6 f.138, *TNA*; 'Statement by the Levant Company of the condition of their trade during the late reign, and of the ruin threatening them by its being open to all' February 1604, SP 14/6 f.136, *TNA*.

⁸⁰ '[Rich. Stapers ?] one of the Levant Co. to [Cecil?]' February 1604, SP 14/6 f.134, *TNA*.

⁸¹ Molin, 'to the Doge and Senate' 28th April 1604, *Venice*, x, 140-148.

Chamberlain, the Earl of Suffolk, for £5500, imposing further expenses on the Levant Company.⁸² The company's counter-plea that they were exempt from the tax on account of their upkeep of the ambassador was, according to Molin, dismissed by James on the grounds that 'he had no wish to continue friendly relations with the Turk'.⁸³ James may have had his suspicions over the role of the Levant Company in upholding an official embassy overseas, as was later reflected by his son Charles' view on the Virginia Company that 'to whom it may be proper to trust matters of Trade and Commerce, but cannot bee fit or sage to communicate the ordering of State-affaires'.⁸⁴ Thus, for the first time, Lello's status as official English ambassador as well as company agent in Istanbul was in real jeopardy.

That James should have doubted the utility of an embassy to the Ottoman Sultan perhaps makes sense in the context of his religious and political convictions, but reluctance to maintain the embassy surely came against the advice of his English advisers. Throughout the year before his accession, the Lords of the Council had been exchanging intelligence and instructions with Lello. A draft of a letter from Cecil to Lello of 21st July 1602 survives, though full of crossings-out and difficult to follow, but apparently arrived in final form to Lello in December 1602, prompting two responses.⁸⁵ Lello was issued with specific instructions on some of the matters on which they had exchanged correspondence.⁸⁶ With, of course, the precedents of Harborne's hand in preventing the renewal of treaties between the Spanish and Ottomans before the launch of the Armada in 1588, and Barton's successful involvement in various negotiations on matters of English interest, the precedent for and utility of an English ambassador in Istanbul was clear. This was a large part of the reason why French and Venetian ambassadors had so often campaigned for the removal of

⁸² Wood, *Levant Company*, 39.

⁸³ Molin, 'to the Doge and Senate' 6th October 1604, *Venice*, x, 184-9.

⁸⁴ Lauren Working, *The Making of an Imperial Polity: Civility and America in the Jacobean Metropolis* (Cambridge, 2020), 95.

⁸⁵ Robert Cecil, 'Cecil to Lello' 21st July 1602, SP 97/4 ff.179-81, *TNA*; Henry Lello, 'Lello to Nottingham' 6th December 1602, SP 97/4 f.191, *TNA*; Idem., 'Lello to Nottingham' 18th December 1602, SP 97/4 f.193, *TNA*.

⁸⁶ 'Lords of the Council to Lello' [c. Dec. 1602], SP 97/4 f.197, *TNA*.

the English embassy in its early years. However, with James negotiating peace with Spain, and Lello's reports from Istanbul constantly bearing tidings of political chaos in Istanbul, rebellion in Anatolia, war going against the Ottomans on two fronts, and now a teenager in Topkapı, it is hardly surprising that the value of an ambassador to the Great Turk might seem suspect to a cash-strapped new English king. James evidently changed his mind during 1605, but political circumstances in England and the Ottoman Empire remained markedly unfavourable to Lello and the Levant Company from 1603-1605.

It is to Lello's credit that he was able to continue fulfilling his duties in this period, given the upheaval caused between James VI and the Levant Company. While Lello was diligently going about his work in Istanbul, he and Glover were omitted from a list of members of the company drawn up in November 1604, on which Eldred, Harborne, Pindar, and Sanderson featured – evidently the name of the ambassador that the Levant Company assured their king was so important escaping the member tasked with compiling the list.⁸⁷ This oversight aside, Lello gave no indication that anything was badly wrong until December 1605, then revealing that he had not been properly paid since Elizabeth I's death.⁸⁸ His correspondence in 1605 begins to carry reminders to follow up on enquiries about his maintenance and requests of new letters from the king, but only as postscripts or afterthoughts in detailed updates on the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁹ Amongst other things, he was requested by James to work towards the liberty of Thomas Sherley, who had been in Ottoman captivity since February 1603.⁹⁰ This was a cause which earned Lello only abuse from Sherley, but was nonetheless a matter of import for the king.⁹¹ Cecil requested further duty toward a captive from Lello in June 1605, this time to help secure the release

⁸⁷ 'Names of the members of the Levant Company' 10th November 1604, SP 14/10a f.12, *TNA*.

⁸⁸ Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' 2nd December 1604, SP 97/4 f.278, *TNA*.

⁸⁹ *Idem.*, 'Lello to Cecil' 17th February 1605, SP 97/5 f.7, *TNA*; *Idem.*, 'Lello to Cecil' 19th March 1605, SP 97/5 f.9, *TNA*.

⁹⁰ *Idem.*, 'Lello to Cecil' 21st May 1605, SP 97/5 f.13, *TNA*; Richard Raiswell, 'Sherley [Shirley], Sir Thomas', *ODNB*.

⁹¹ Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' 5th June 1605, SP 97/5 ff.18-19, *TNA*.

of ‘The Prince of Moldavia who now remains prisoner in the Castle of Asia’.⁹² Lello gave another reminder of the difficulties he faced in his letter of 11th August 1605, though negotiations to fix the problem were evidently ongoing in England, Staper writing to Cecil of the precarious position of the Levant Company due to the ongoing situation.⁹³ According to Staper, the Istanbul embassy was £2500 in debt, and the Aleppo consulate £3000 in debt.⁹⁴ The Council had resolved to try to keep the trade alive, recognising the utility of the embassy in Istanbul, and gave the king’s order to the Levant Company to find a way to resolve the mess and restore a profitable trade.⁹⁵ Lello’s reminders amongst his ordinary reports were therefore not falling on deaf ears, though in the meantime his situation got no easier. Lello’s answer to Cecil regarding freeing prisoners was that it could not be accomplished without money.⁹⁶

Lello had Sherley free in December following the presentation of a personal letter on his behalf from James, the same month a new charter was finally issued to the Levant Company. The appreciation shown for Lello in keeping the ship steady during two-and-a-half years of non-payment of his salary and confusion over the status of the trade is clear in the tribute to his work in the commission register book of the new company. It begins:

After our very hartie Commendacions to your good [illegible] The company of the Levant marchant^{es} havinge ben lefte at large sence the death of her late Ma^{tie} until this tyme.⁹⁷

After these thanks, it goes on to commend Lello’s work to keep the trade open and alive in the face of Ottoman injustices. However, it then further continues to explain the new iteration of the Levant Company’s intention to lay a new foundation of profitable government: by nominating

⁹² Robert Cecil, ‘[The Earl of Salisbury] to Mr. Lello’ (26th June 1605), *Calendar of the manuscripts of the most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury*, 17, ed. M.S. Guiseppi (London, 1938), 277.

⁹³ Lello, ‘Lello to Cecil’ 11th August 1605, SP 97/5 ff.26-7, *TNA*; Richard Staper, ‘Rich. Stapers to Salisbury’ 8th July 1605, SP 14/15 f.4, *TNA*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, f.4.

⁹⁵ Molin, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 4th May 1605, *Venice*, x, 237-242.

⁹⁶ Lello, ‘Lello to Cecil’ 19th September 1605, SP 97/5 ff.30-1, *TNA*.

⁹⁷ ‘To Mr Lillo Embassadour’ 10th April 1606, SP 105/143 f.5, *TNA*.

Glover to succeed Lello as ambassador. After eight difficult years fighting for English trade in the Ottoman Empire, this declaration in London on 10th April 1606 signalled the beginning of the end of Lello's diplomatic career. As part of the same shakeup, Pindar was sent to serve as consul at Aleppo, Glover being the chosen successor to Lello of the two men who had served as secretaries and close working partners of Lello in the embassy.⁹⁸ This development was clearly connected to several developments in England. First and foremost, the accession of a new English king with a different ideological outlook had fundamentally changed some of the basic premises by which diplomacy with the Ottomans could be conducted. A commercial relationship would remain, but its politics would be restrained to doing favours for the crown like securing the release of Sherley and supporting the crown's interest in advancing the Protestant cause in southern and eastern Europe, which would ultimately end in trouble for Glover due to his instructions to lobby on behalf of the unfavoured Moldavian pretender Stefan Bogdan.⁹⁹ This brought with it a significant reduction in royal expenditure on the Istanbul embassy, from £1350 per annum to a paltry £100, half of what Harborne had initially been granted.¹⁰⁰ Lello was clearly unfavoured by the company and found himself replaced by Glover, perhaps as his reported favour in Istanbul circles was thought to represent better value for the reduced amount of money promised by the crown. In line with the role of consul now being made official within the company's charter, another capable, popular, and experienced hand was required in Aleppo to sort out the problems that had accrued there during an effective interregnum in the company's status. Most of all, despite the Jacobean succession increasingly having been planned for in the late years of Elizabeth's reign following Essex's rebellion, this example goes to show the level of difficulty the piecemeal and sometimes confused nature of that succession caused across diverse aspects of English life – not least for merchants in the Ottoman Empire who relied on the assent of their monarch to the company and

⁹⁸ SP 105/143 f.10r, *TNA*.

⁹⁹ MacLean and Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World*, 62-3.

¹⁰⁰ Gary M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives 1509-1688* (Cambridge, 2011), 285.

the Ottoman state to do so.¹⁰¹ When that was unclear or disrupted, what had been a very profitable trade was thrown into difficulty.

Lello was furious to have been replaced. ‘By the marchants order I am to [now?] away; my place conferred upon an other, & the like goodwill I have sowe brought them’, he wrote to Levynus Muncke in July 1606.¹⁰² At the very least, he wanted his money. He wrote to Cecil in August, ‘touchinge my provision whyle I remayne heere, or for my retorne, they make no mention at all, much les my rewarde, wch hath bene hetherto unrecompensed’.¹⁰³ Lello shared openly that it was not the replacement that bothered him (after nearly nine years, he probably wanted to leave), but the lack of respect he felt the merchants had shown him. Meanwhile, Glover was ready to depart with his gifts for the sultan.¹⁰⁴ However, he did not arrive until late December, and Lello carried on with the job unperturbed – though, in November, the English ambassador to Venice announced to the Senate that ‘Sir Thomas, who had been bred at the Court at Constantinople, and was therefore deeply versed in matters Turkish, had been chosen as Ambassador to Turkey’.¹⁰⁵ As of 22nd October, Lello claimed that he had not received any further notice from the company and evidently did not trust them to pay his dues.¹⁰⁶ In his next, he claimed that he was having to sell his possessions to support himself.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, Glover wrote the same month to confirm himself to Lello, explaining that he had put himself forward for the good of country and company to prevent any of the unsuitable people vying for the position taking the post, explaining to Lello that he would be paid on return, and beseeching him not to create any fuss on Glover’s arrival.¹⁰⁸ He

¹⁰¹ Alexandra Gajda, ‘Essex and the ‘popish plot’’ in S. Doran & P. Kewes, *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England* (Manchester, 2014), 115-133.

¹⁰² Lello, ‘Lello to Levynus Muncke’ 17th July 1606, SP 97/5 f.92, *TNA*.

¹⁰³ Idem., ‘Lello to Salisbury’ 3rd August 1606, SP 97/5 f.74, *TNA*.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Lowe, ‘Thomas Lowe, Governor of the Turkey Company, to the Earl of Salisbury’ 6th August 1606, *Cal. Salisbury*, 226.

¹⁰⁵ ‘The English Ambassador came to the Cabinet and spoke as follows’ 8th November 1606, *Venice*, x, 418-437; Ottaviano Bon, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 27th December 1606, *Venice*, x, 438-451.

¹⁰⁶ Lello, ‘Lello to Salisbury’ 22nd October 1606, SP 97/5 ff.79-80, *TNA*.

¹⁰⁷ Idem., ‘Lello to Salisbury’ 8th November 1606, SP 97/5 f.84, *TNA*.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Glover, ‘Glover to Lello’ November 1606, SP 97/5 ff.129-30, *TNA*.

also asks Lello to leave the embassy house and not to sell any of the furniture. He would, naturally, have been honoured for Lello to remain a guest at the house, but for the fact his party for presentation to the sultan was thirty strong.

Despite having ‘alreadie deliv^{er}d my howse, & in a man^{er} my charge to my successor’, Lello continued to write reports by his own hand to Cecil in 1607.¹⁰⁹ He was, he claimed, stuck – ‘I have written to them to know how they will dispose of me for without meanes I cannot gett home’ – and so carried on writing to Cecil regardless, probably to put pressure on the company to pay him and send him on his way.¹¹⁰ The problem was not just the removal of Lello, but of his staff and servants too – and Lello made sure Cecil knew it.¹¹¹ Glover was already working on his own business, and wanted his predecessor gone. In April, he used his authority to order Lello to leave, calling his new household to bear witness to this, which Lello refused.¹¹² Lello was certain that Glover had 1000 dollars given to him by the company to pay the former ambassador off, which he was instead keeping for himself.¹¹³ Lello again appealed to a ‘lawfull neede’ to aid his return home. His non-departure had become an unwelcome matter for Cecil and the Council – the depositions sent to them read almost like small children telling tales:

Thomas Armestead, Henry Leake, and Josias Piggot wer present when Nicolas Healy, Servant and m^r of the house to the said S^r Thomas cam to the said M^r Lello being at dinner wth divers strangers, on good fryday last past and said openly to his face that his maister sent him to tell the said M^r Lello that he was a Traitour to his prince and country, and so he would prove heere and in England and therfor he warned the said m^r Lello to be gone quickly out of the Countrey, or els he would send him packing.¹¹⁴

If Cecil cared little for the squabbles over who traded under which flag, he cared even less for the newfound enmity between Glover and Lello. He wrote to Lello on 10th June, evidently sick of the

¹⁰⁹ Lello, ‘Lello to Salisbury’ 15th January 1607, SP 97/5 f.95, *TNA*.

¹¹⁰ *Idem.*, ‘Lello to Salisbury’ 30th January 1607, SP 97/5 ff.99-100, *TNA*.

¹¹¹ *Idem.*, ‘Lello to Salisbury’ 15th February 1607, SP 97/5 ff.105-6, *TNA*.

¹¹² Glover, ‘Glover to Salisbury on refusal of Lello to go’ 3rd April 1607, SP 97/5 f.103, *TNA*.

¹¹³ Lello, ‘Lello to Salisbury’ 17th April 1607, SP 97/5 ff.146-7, *TNA*.

¹¹⁴ ‘Copies of letters to the Council and Turkey Co. on Lello’ 15th April 1607, SP 97/5 ff.135-6, *TNA*.

letters from the two of them and others, to tell Lello ‘what the originalls are betwixt yow, I knowe not’, but that Lello was now under suspicion of harming Glover’s own newfound squabbles over flag rights with the French – probably a ploy to encourage Lello to leave.¹¹⁵ However, by this point, Lello was already gone. He travelled on an English ship to Crete, then Zante, then Corfu – where he was banqueted by the Venetian governor – before arriving to address the Venetian cabinet on 17th September 1607, after a journey of three months or more.¹¹⁶ He delivered to the Venetians a familiar address on the decline and degeneration of the Ottoman Empire, before continuing on his way home, his stubborn tarriance for half a year in Istanbul no impediment to a successful career in England that followed, dying Warden of Fleet Prison in 1627.

Much as in the case of the company’s wrangle with Lok over his removal from his post as a consul, Lello’s difficult departure further illustrates how the often-informal processes of company governance and decision-making could themselves end in confusion and acrimony. Lello’s selection process was mysterious, and his removal seemingly also fudged. Perhaps the nature of Lello’s departure was further evidence in support of the company’s apparent decision to clarify the roles of ambassadors and consuls and give clearer briefs of their roles.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, if this was Levant Company 2.0, it was the changes to the capitulations in 1601 upon which they continued to make their profit, and which then did not budge significantly until 1675, despite the apparent regard in which Glover was held until his dealings with Bogdan brought him down in 1611, and despite also Pindar coming next in line to inherit the role from then.¹¹⁸

Lello in the Istanbul nebula

¹¹⁵ Cecil, ‘Salisbury to Lello’ 10th June 1607, SP 97/5 f.168, *TNA*.

¹¹⁶ ‘The late English Ambassador at Constantinople, now on his way home, came to the Cabinet and spoke as follows’ 17th September 1607, *Venice*, xi, 28-40.

¹¹⁷ ‘To Mr Lillo Embassadour’ 10th April 1606

¹¹⁸ MacLean & Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World*, 62.

What then of Lello's experiences in interacting with the Ottoman cosmocracy? His personal convictions seem to sit awkwardly with the concepts of cosmocracy, *ubudiyet*, and 'ambiguity tolerance' that have been discussed in the microhistories of Harborne and Barton, just as those concepts may not have sat well with James VI, either.¹¹⁹ However, looking at some of the things Lello observed unhappily about the Ottoman Empire allows for some consideration of wider issues of attitudes towards the Islamic world and 'Oriental Despotism', as well as displaying some ways in which Ottoman society's self-perception began to be disrupted by the troubles the empire was experiencing in this period.

From the time of his sudden promotion to the position of agent and throughout his embassy, Lello expressed exasperation at the 'inconstances of the sultan: in all his accione for whatt he commandeth one day wth the counsell & advise of some, is the next day Revocated by the advise of others'.¹²⁰ His trust in Ottoman political figures, even from his earliest encounters, appears to have been remarkably low. In the same letter as the above, he says of the *seybüislam* 'the sultan nott haveinge one amongst all his co[u]nsellers able to manage his affaiers in this tyme of trowble excepte the Muffty who is instructed by [de Brèves]... w^{ch} I could nott easely beleve he should carry such a wicked mynde'.¹²¹ Of Safiye Sultan, he remarks: 'She was & is thought she once againe will carry the chieffest sway of this Empier & displace this nowe [grand vizier] & prefer to the place Ebrahim Bassa her son in law', which directly proceeds and precipitates his comments about the sultan.¹²² By the end of 1598 he was slamming the sultan as 'a man of no wisdome or capacitie' and 'the Empresse who hath no regarde butt to monye', while lampooning the suspected promotion of the vizier Deli İbrahim Paşa, 'thatt is to saye Ebrahim [the] foole'.¹²³ This 'Ibrahim the Fool' is

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 62.

¹²⁰ Lello, 'Hen. Lello to Sir R. Cecil' 3rd June 1598, SP 97/3 ff.243-4, *TNA*.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Idem., 'Hen. Lello to Sir R. Cecil' 22nd December 1598, SP 97/3 ff.271-3, *TNA*.

a pejorative mistranslation of the meaning of the Ottoman epithet ‘deli’ (lit: ‘crazy’), which usually was earned by men with a quick temper rather than those lacking in wit. These criticisms of Ottoman officials put Lello at odds with those within his household apparently more favoured and comfortable moving in Ottoman circles, such as Pindar, Glover, and indeed the visiting Dallam, as well as the ways in which Harborne and Barton went about treating with and reporting on their Ottoman contacts (Barton’s ‘my especiall friend’, for example).

However, in the context of Lello’s staunch Anglicanism and background in English legal thought, this makes a lot of sense. Take, for example, a long English document purporting to be a history of Mehmed III, denouncing him as ‘a Prince by Nature of Witt & Courage: but by Accidente, dull, timorous, & very effeminate’ and under the undue influence of his mother and other palace women, dates from around this time and is highly likely a product of Lello’s embassy.¹²⁴ Here, once more, we find a strong, well-defined conception of tyranny, kingship, and the rule of law. Mehmed is accused of revelling in cruelties from a young age, back to his time as a boy in the palace and a *şehzade* in Manisa, slaying sufis for speaking ill of him and mutilating women’s breasts – reminiscent of the brutal dismemberment of enemies by *sipahi* rebellions during Mehmed’s reign as sultan. His relative seclusion is also taken as evidence of the ‘inclination of a Tirant’.¹²⁵ Seemingly Lello or some other anonymous member of his household saw Mehmed III as failing on all counts to live up to their measure of a just and ideal prince, an opinion perhaps emboldened by their experience of *sipahis* and janissaries rising up against the interior palace cliques surrounding Mehmed III, including eventually *valide sultan* Safiye. He describes Mehmed III as ‘a man of as little judgement as a child’, and rails against how he surrounds himself ‘with none but with women, dwarfs, and eunuches: his officers ignorant and corrupt his chests empty, his coyne base and false

¹²⁴ ‘A circumstantial account of the person, family, court, forces, cominiones, &c. of Mahomet III. Ottoman emperor, 1595-1603.’ (1595-1603), Cotton Nero B/XI ff.1-16, *BL*.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, f.2.

and his last of all his souldiers insolent, and disobedient'.¹²⁶ It is also worth noting that Lello's strong conception of tyranny extended beyond critiques of the Ottoman Empire: Lello assured Cecil that he was a constant advocate for Elizabeth I as protector of Flanders from 'the Tyranny of the Spaniard'.¹²⁷ His letter to James VI also describes the various problems of Mehmed III's rule as if a dramatic shadow to the fine example of James (and indeed Elizabeth) as a Christian Prince.¹²⁸

Noel Malcolm has argued that 'the underlying assumption of the great majority of early modern writers in Western Europe was that Ottoman rule was based on oppression'.¹²⁹ However, Lello cannot be placed amongst those who had assumed that all Ottoman subjects lived in slavery due to a misinterpretation of the works of Niccolò Machiavelli; Lello was a man with direct personal experience of Ottoman government and social systems.¹³⁰ Rather, Lello's observations perhaps chime with those of Giovanni Botero, who clearly had a decent understanding of some Ottoman systems, describing how the sultan in theory holds sway over all his territories and holds power over the order of the social hierarchy in a rule 'of such an absolute kind', concluding with the charge of 'entrusting everything to renegades'.¹³¹ Botero's description is somewhat dramatized, but there are echoes here of the Ottoman ideology of a sultan with absolute say and responsibility over justice, balance, and the social order, and who appoints renegades enslaved as children to his imperial *divan*. Perhaps we should focus on some of Lello's direct allegations: effeminacy, inefficacy (under the influence of women and secluded in his palace), and cruelty. The arguments about inefficacy and frequent changes or reversals of policy seem in line with Jean Bodin's conception of tyrannical monarchy in which 'the prince contemning the lawes of nature and nations, imperiously

¹²⁶ Lello, 'to Cecil' 29 May 1600, SP 97/4 f.87, *TNA*.

¹²⁷ Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' 7th November 1601, SP 97/4 f.150, *TNA*.

¹²⁸ *Idem.*, 'Lello to James I' 12th November 1603, SP 97/4 f.231, *TNA*.

¹²⁹ Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies: Islam and The Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450-1750* (Oxford, 2019), 201.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 205-6.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

abuseth the persons of his free borne subiects, and their goods as his owne'.¹³² This could equally cover Lello's views on 'cruelty'. However, similarity with Botero's 1590s reading of the nature of Ottoman tyranny is here too, in Lello's complaints about the way in which the sultan shares government with the influence of the advice of his council and palace members. The conception of sultanic rule as arbitrary is also later reflected in English polemics against the ship money.¹³³ Lello's views on Ottoman rule were therefore far from unusual in English and wider European intellectual circles.

The charge of 'effeminacy' is somewhat harder to pin down. Perhaps this was something to do with the 'sultanate of women' and the level of power Safiye Sultan held within the royal household.¹³⁴ Perhaps it was to do with Ottoman ideals of masculinity or male sociability that contrasted with some of his cultural expectations.¹³⁵ It was certainly the case that rural Shropshire, where Lello grew up, was a society ordered by gender and social class, and the expectations that came with those roles, in this period, but it is difficult to delve further into what might be meant by 'effeminacy' in this case without making assumptions and guesses.¹³⁶ Perhaps the answer lies in Mehmed III having grown fat and infirm surrounded by luxury rather than actively campaigning while his empire was beset by wars and rebellions.¹³⁷ There may in fact be Ottoman origins to some of Lello's criticisms of Mehmed III, as Murad III was similarly described as arrogant, inconstant, naïve, and overly comfortable by Selaniki.¹³⁸ Whatever it was, Mehmed III's rule was more closely constrained by Ottoman law and political order than Lello thought. Tezcan demonstrates how

¹³² Ibid., 211.

¹³³ Ibid., 350-1.

¹³⁴ Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1993), passim; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge, 2010), 56.

¹³⁵ W.G. Andrews & M. Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: love and the beloved in early-modern Ottoman and European culture and society* (Durham, NC, 2005), passim.

¹³⁶ Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York, 1988), passim.

¹³⁷ Oktay Özel, 'The Reign of Violence: The *celalis* c.1550-1700' in C. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 184-202; Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 64-68.

¹³⁸ Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 98.

Mehmed III had to consult the mufti on whether he could execute his own son in 1603, an episode which Lello himself reported upon.¹³⁹ Lello is one of the many contemporary voices on seventeenth-century Ottoman political upheaval that historians have been guilty of taking at face value in his commentary of tyranny, impotence, and decline. As Tezcan argues, the rebellions and upheavals of this period of Ottoman history form part of an ongoing socioeconomic transformation of the Ottoman Empire throughout the early modern period, away from patrimonial rule, and towards more varied forms of government and social organisation.¹⁴⁰

This is represented in the scandal involving palace women that gave Henry Lello and John Sanderson – another trusted member of the extended embassy household, despite his prickliness – cause to describe one of the most violent political murders of their time in the Ottoman Empire. In an act of rebellion against the power and influence of *valide sultan* Safiye, and the subsequent wealth and influence of her representative in the world outside the palace, Esperanza Malchi, *sipahis* stabbed Malchi to death in a palace courtyard in full view of the sultan and *divan*.¹⁴¹ Her body was dragged to the At Meydanı to be eaten by dogs, save for her severed head and – in direct reference to her status as a powerful woman – her severed vulva, which were paraded around the city on pikes.¹⁴² Her eldest son was similarly killed the following day, and the family's sizeable assets (fifty million *akçe*) confiscated.¹⁴³ According to Selaniki, Safiye complained of the 'obscene fashion' in which her agent had been killed, almost certainly in reference to the public display of her dismembered head and genitals, if not also the feeding of the rest of her body to feral dogs: this marked the event as a brutal killing even by the tumultuous standards of turn-of-the-seventeenth-

¹³⁹ Ibid., 68-9.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 1-13; 227-243.

¹⁴¹ John Sanderson, 'Sundrie the personall Voyages performed by John Sanderson of London, Merchant, begun in October 1584. Ended in October 1602. With an historicall Description of Constantinople.' in Samuel Purchas (ed.), *Hakluytus Posthumus or, Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ix (Cambridge, 2015), 435.

¹⁴² Ibid., 435: 'her shamefull part'.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 435-6; Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 242-3.

century Ottoman politics.¹⁴⁴ Malchi had been Safiye's trusted servant for many years and her son, known as *küçük padişah* – 'the little sultan' – controlled the customs office.¹⁴⁵ She was familiar to the English embassy, having been constantly involved in their negotiations with Safiye, and even having written to Elizabeth I in 1599.¹⁴⁶ Lello's report suggests that the Malchi family may have been the patsies for *sipahi* dissatisfaction with reform to their pay: '[they] demanded of the mufty their generall Pope: whether itt were lawfull for this Jew to take from them the kings liberallity, and to sell itt for her owne private gaine'.¹⁴⁷ What transpired was a major affront to sultanic authority:

They presently returned to [the vizier] his pallace demanding audience: whoe att first would not grant the same, they beganne to throwe stones at his windoes to force him out, where they required him to deliver them the heads of the Kira the sayd Jew woman, and 2 of her sonnes: whoe answered hee could not without [the sultan] his com[m]and: for wch he prayed tyme to advise him.

Upon her entrance they rann at, some with swords, some with daggers, and some with knives, every one thinking himself happy that might give her out stobbe till they had cut her in peeces.¹⁴⁸

This must have been extremely disruptive for the English embassy, given the faction around Safiye on which they had been reliant was now under attack. The *sipahis* called for Safiye Sultan to be banished to Mecca, and for the heads of the *bostancı* and *kapıcı*, the former being one of Lello's most reliable palace allies.¹⁴⁹ Lello appears quite satisfied to be able to report in his next letter that the *valide sultan* had recovered from this setback and was pushing the sultan for the dismissal of Halil Paşa, who she blamed for failing to protect her household from the riotous *sipahis*.¹⁵⁰ However, her authority was undermined and her position tenuous. This sort of political uncertainty kept Lello's morale low. That February he had expressed doubt to the Venetian *bailo* that England would maintain a presence in the Ottoman Empire for much longer, referencing recent commercial

¹⁴⁴ Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, ed. & trans. Mehmet İpşirli (İstanbul, 1989), 861-2.

¹⁴⁵ Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 242.

¹⁴⁶ Sanderson, 'Voyages', 435; Leah Borntein-Makovetsky, 'Malchi (Malkhi) Esperanza' in Norman A. Stillman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (Leiden, 2010).

¹⁴⁷ Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' 29th March 1600, SP 97/4 ff.77-8, *TNA*.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Idem.*, 'Lello to Cecil' 12th April 1600, SP 97/4 f.81, *TNA*.

expansion into India and bemoaning how he was ‘lightly esteemed and constantly insulted’.¹⁵¹ The mob murder of Esperanza Malchi and the political difficulties faced by some of his more reliable palace contacts can only have reinforced his doubts.

Indeed, it is notable that Lello openly refers to ‘factions’ in his letters to Cecil of the time, referring to the repercussions of the murder of Esperanza Malchi thusly: ‘[Safiye Sultan] by little and little revengeth herself upon all those whoe were thought to be favoritts of that factions of the spahies: beginning first with Halul Bassa’.¹⁵² Regardless of the particularities of the intrigues and actions between factions, it is clear that the Ottoman Empire in 1600 was a polity in crisis. This is not to accept the long-outmoded notion of an Ottoman apogee under Süleyman followed by an inevitable post-1566 decline; rather, modern scholarship emphasises the evolution of the Ottoman Empire through phases of crisis and resolution, progress and setback, prosperity and decline, throughout the long centuries between 1299 and 1923. On one hand, Suraiya Faroqhi and others have consistently pointed out that by the latter half of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was so vast and its governance so complex that individual charismatic sultans would have been an impediment to smooth government.¹⁵³ As Baki Tezcan argues throughout *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, acts such as political murders and rebellions carried out by the janissaries and others (especially given the links between the janissaries and the *esnaf* merchant/artisan class explored by Cemal Kafadar and Donald Quataert) that so disgusted and outraged Lello may be reframed – as they consistently were by other contemporary observers – as acts of popular rebellion to limit absolute government, not so

¹⁵¹ Capello and Gradenigo, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 7th February 1600.

¹⁵² Lello, ‘to Cecil’ 12th Apr 1600.

¹⁵³ Suraiya Faroqhi, ‘Politics and socio-economic change in the Ottoman Empire of the later sixteenth century’ in M.I. Kunt and C.M. Woodhead (eds.), *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World* (London, 1995), 96.

removed from anything happening in seventeenth-century England.¹⁵⁴ In this case with Lello, we see the difficulties caused by the intersection of this factional household politics and the networking required both as a function of cross-confessional diplomacy and the Ottoman household-centric political system. A foreign embassy over-reliant on one political grouping for its lobbying needs stood to suffer heavy disruption to its ability to protect and further its commercial aims with the Ottoman government (this being Lello's overriding interest) if and when this grouping lost its favoured status. Indeed, rebellions like that directed against Esperanza Malchi as a proxy for the patrimonial system reflected in Istanbul's nebular political ecosystem, inhibited the ability of embassies to function within that world as its underlying foundations were rocked. These outbreaks of violence, and perhaps Lello's concerns, were reactions to an Ottoman Empire that had set out on a journey of change that would continue over the coming decades and centuries.

Of alcohol and identity

One such manifestation of these issues that again tested Lello's skill as ambassador and his ability to work the levers of Ottoman political administration in the interest of protecting the English trading nation, was the prohibition on alcohol in April 1601. This followed directly from another rising of the *sipahis* in discontent with Mehmed III's rule in March 1601, which was in this case defused by Çiğalazade's intervention and the dismissal of Lello's ally (and another of the influential powerbrokers of the inner palace), the *bostancıbaşı* Ferhad Ağa.¹⁵⁵ Orders had been issued the previous year banning Jews and Christians from wearing silk – almost certainly in response to the *siphabi* lynching of the powerful Jewish Malchi family – and this measure was also apparently directed at the non-Muslim population, despite alcohol featuring in Ottoman elite social life, also

¹⁵⁴ Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge, 2010), passim; Cemal Kafadar, 'On the purity and corruption of the janissaries', *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, 15 (1991), 273-80; Donald Quataert, 'Janissaries, artisans, and the question of Ottoman decline, 1730-1826' in E. Benito Ruano & M. Espadas Burgos (eds.), *17º Congreso Internacional de Ciencias Historicas, Madrid – 1990* (Madrid, 1992), 264-8.

¹⁵⁵ Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 65-6.

meaning the palace authorities losing the revenue from alcohol duty.¹⁵⁶ That said, Lello's later assessment, 'they required the vizrey to give out a command that noe christian, Jewe, or Turke *not being a souldier* might weare any fine cloth', suggests that it was as much a reassertion of the superiority of the *askeri* class than specifically targeted toward religious identities – wine and silk for the *askeri*, but not for others.¹⁵⁷ Turns toward the conservative and revivalist interpretations of *şeriat* became a feature of seventeenth-century Ottoman administrations in crisis, whether that be the apparent dominance of the 'kadızadeli' faction over governance in the second half of the seventeenth century at the expense of Sufism, Christians, and Jews, or Ottoman authorities deploying religious controls for their own benefit.¹⁵⁸ Expressions of scholarly and lay religious fervour against alcohol especially, but also activities such as drinking coffee and smoking tobacco (a substance prohibited by Ahmed I in 1611 to limited success), were not unknown – especially when such activities were framed as originating from an external threat to the purity of the Islamic world – but rarely particularly popular.¹⁵⁹ However, given the order was repealed the following year, it seems this instance is a clear example of Ottoman authorities using religion to aid the security of their rule, taking frustrations directed at palace factions and turning them outwards on non-Muslims in order to manage the crisis.¹⁶⁰ There was also an obvious secondary advantage: restricting inns, taverns, and *meyhanes* as visible venues of boundary-blurring social interaction and discussion, and potentially as venues for politics. There continued to be a sporadic reaction against coffee houses, and anxieties remained around smoking as a group social activity.¹⁶¹ It is notable also that,

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.; W.G. Andrews & M. Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: love and the beloved in early-modern Ottoman and European culture and society* (Durham, NC, 2005), passim.

¹⁵⁷ Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' 16th Feb 1602, SP 97/4 f.158, *TNA*.

¹⁵⁸ Madeline Zilfi, 'The kadızadeli: discordant revivalism in seventeenth-century Istanbul', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 95/4 (1986), 2551-69; M.D. Baer, 'The great fire of 1660 and the Islamization of Christian and Jewish space in Istanbul', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 36 (2004), 159-81; Katib Çelebi, *The balance of truth* (trans. G.L. Lewis, London, 1956); Rıza Yıldırım, 'The Rise of the 'Religion and State' Order: Re-confessionalisation of State and Society in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire' in Vefa Erginbaş (ed.), *Ottoman Sunnism: New Perspectives* (Edinburgh, 2019), 12-46.

¹⁵⁹ James Grehan, 'Smoking and "Early Modern" Sociability: The Great Tobacco Debate in the Ottoman Middle East (Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries)', *The American Historical Review*, 111/5 (2006), 1352-1377.

¹⁶⁰ Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 66.

¹⁶¹ Grehan, 'Smoking and "Early Modern" Sociability', 1363.

for all the English embassy's reputation for uncouth partying, Barton had made a habit of entertaining visiting foreign delegations and Ottoman officials alike with wine and food. This instance fomented a new crisis for the English, French, and Venetian embassies to manage: how could they survive without wine and spirits?

Though *bailo* Agostino Nani 'did not touch spirits', as he believed 'no respectable Italian ever did', the crackdown on wine gave cause for the three resident ambassadors to work together, each relying on their personal networks and political capital to find ways of dealing with the situation.¹⁶² This narrative relies on the account of Nani, as Lello apparently made no mention of it in his reports. Further intervention followed in July of 1601, with the new grand vizier following the news of Damat İbrahim Paşa's death in Hungary, Yemişçi Hasan Paşa, responding to a riot of drunken janissaries by ordering a search and destroy mission on all alcohol in the city.¹⁶³ After an initial draconian sweep by the *kadı* of Galata, which destroyed any vessels found to be containing alcohol, imprisoned the owners, and seized their property, Nani was able to intervene and protect property and reverse the damages done to foreign merchant households. The ambassadors decided to lodge a joint protest with the grand vizier, then to forward their complaints to the sultan should they have no joy in preventing further clampdown on the consumption of alcohol. Notably, Lello was not present as Brèves and Nani attended the grand vizier and the Venetian handed over the petition on behalf of the three embassies. Nani puts this down to Lello's refusal to associate with Brèves, but it was likely also a practical consideration given the English embassy's relative diplomatic isolation – Lello's attendance may have been more hinderance than help.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Lello attempted a separate audience with the grand vizier, producing a *batt-i hümayûn* ordering full observance of the English capitulations – which included permission for English merchants to make and keep wine

¹⁶² Agostino Nani, 'to the Doge and Senate' 23rd May 1601, *Venice*, ix, 457-462.

¹⁶³ Idem., 'to the Doge and Senate' 12th July 1601, *Venice*, ix, 463-467; Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' 18th July 1601, SP 97/4 f.138, *TNA*.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

– as if an imperial order from Çığalazade might force a rival vizier to back down. It did not; it just made the vizier angrier with Lello. However, we see here again the logic of a legalistic mind at work. The prohibition endured until the autumn of 1602, when the political situation appeared calmer. Here, once more, we see the limits of what pressure from ambassadors could achieve – even together – when running up against the interests of the Ottoman court. Despite each ambassador working all the political networks they had, nothing budged until the Ottoman government was ready for it. Nani notes that it is remarkable that at a time of such weakness, Yemişçi Hasan and the *şeyhülislam* Hacı Mustafa Sunullah Efendi could so strictly enforce a sudden prohibition on alcohol.¹⁶⁵ This is exactly why: because they had to enforce measures that would quell unrest amongst the *sipahis* who were looking for strong, equitable, Muslim government.¹⁶⁶ Nani’s warning of disillusioned Christian taverners journeying north to join the war against the Ottomans pales in comparison to the real existential threat of further uprisings from within the Ottoman military.

That non-Muslim communities in both of these episodes bore the brunt of upheaval within and frustration with the Ottoman political system and the patrimonial cosmocracy of the sultan reflects again on how tolerance and porous social boundaries largely flowed one-way towards Islam within the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁷ It also perhaps explains the depth of some of Lello’s later unhappiness with Ottoman rule, especially as witnessing the difficulties of this period of Ottoman history confirmed some of his pre-held beliefs about the arbitrary and tyrannical nature of the government of Ottoman sultans. Where this is perhaps simply a matter of divergent values between Lello and Ottoman ideology and political structure, it was no doubt influenced by his experience

¹⁶⁵ *Sicill-i Osmani* gives the changeover month in 1601 between Hacı Mustafa Sunullah Efendi and Hocasadettinzade Mehmet Çelebi Efendi as August, therefore Nani was still referring to Mustafa Sunullah when he writes of ‘the [grand] mufti’ in July 1601.

¹⁶⁶ Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 64-8.

¹⁶⁷ Baki Tezcan, ‘Ethnicity, race, religion and social class: Ottoman markers of difference’ in *The Ottoman World*, 159-170.

of genuine upheaval in the Ottoman Empire during his time as English ambassador. Clearly, Lello also held divergent values from his immediate predecessor, but one wonders whether that was also true of Harborne's values, or whether that is simply reflective of his residency in Istanbul during a more stable period. Harborne certainly showed more of a capacity for 'ambiguity tolerance' in his decision to adapt to Ottoman norms on his journey into and negotiations within Istanbul, but equally was keen to leave the Ottoman Empire by the time 1588 came. Perhaps it was exactly that tolerance of a certain level of ambiguity that allowed Harborne to rub along more easily in the Ottoman Empire of the 1580s, which saw at least a shuffling pack of viziers of the bench and imperial officials if not outright violent conflict. Nevertheless, this was a period in which Ottoman society was reappraising its own models of government and if their leadership lived up to those ideals, let alone Lello passing judgement from a different perspective too.

Dallam and the organ

The ceremonial surrounding Lello's installation was also not without intrigue. The first controversies emerged at the beginning of the ceremonial surrounding Lello's confirmation as ambassador. In a typical protest over English showmanship, especially the now customary ordnance salute and trumpeting for the sultan on the arrival of a ship bearing English gifts, Capello was not impressed with the English showing off their ship, as 'it will open the eyes of the Turks to things they do not know' – this being a comparison of English large oceangoing ships, 'wonderfully well found in all that is required for fighting', with Mediterranean gallies used in Venice and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁸ That said, the process of Lello's confirmation as ambassador did not just break social rules between western Christians in Istanbul. A first surprise is Lello's open impertinence towards Cecil in a letter of 30th June 1599, in which he complains: 'Our ship, with her Majesty's present, greatly here expected, and although I have advised of her coming into these parts, yet I

¹⁶⁸ Capello, 'to the Doge and Senate' 18th September 1599, *Venice*, ix, 373-7; Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' (8/9/1599), SP 97/4 ff.45-6, *TNA*.

can scarcely be believed by reason of her long tardance, and have excused it, as well as I can, by saying that other of our English ships coming for these parts were in danger of the galleys'.¹⁶⁹ Given Barton's much longer wait, and his much more restrained pleading for the arrival of his gift and credentials for the sultan, this outburst of frustration from Lello is particularly striking, and perhaps reveals his sense of insecurity – he needs that delivery to secure his status. That said, it may also be a function of the settled status of the English embassy that he expected the arrival of gifts and credentials from London as a matter of course.

Ottoman rules of etiquette would also be broken as the men conveying the gifts crossed usual social boundaries. The gifts provided for Lello to give to Mehmed III included an ornate, multi-purpose organ produced by Thomas Dallam and shipped from London as a kit to be reassembled in Istanbul, and a carriage sent to Safiye Sultan from Elizabeth I.¹⁷⁰ The presence of Dallam and the gift of the organ he built produced some unusual results. 'The present I meane the instrument, although att first here thought to be of small esteeme, yett nowe beinge sett up in my howse by the oppinion of such as have seene itt is thought the sultan will highly esteeme the same'.¹⁷¹ 'Because there was no roome heie enoughe to sett it up in his house, he caused a roome to be made with all speede withoute the house in the courte, to sett it up in, that it myghte there be made perfitt before it should be carried to the surralia'.¹⁷² The organ, built by Dallam who accompanied it to Istanbul, could play several compositions by itself and also served as a clock.¹⁷³ Dallam reports several strange events regarding Englishmen and royal women during his visit to Istanbul. The first such breach of Ottoman custom is his mention that Pindar had been sent to

¹⁶⁹ Lello, 'Henry Lello to Sir Robert Cecil' 30th June 1599 in R.A. Roberts (ed.), *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, ix (London, 1902), 219.

¹⁷⁰ Idem., 'Lello to Cecil' 25th August 1599, SP 97/4 ff.43-4, *TNA*; Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1993), 228. Safiye sent lavish clothing and a pearl tiara in return.

¹⁷¹ Lello, 'to Cecil' 8th September 1599. It is tempting to imagine the secretary dutifully recording Lello's dictation verbatim as he tried to correct the opening of his sentence: 'the present – no, I mean the instrument'.

¹⁷² Dallam, 'Diary', 58.

¹⁷³ Capello, 'to the Doge' 18th September 1599.

deliver Safiye's present, and that 'At that time the Sultana did Take greate lykinge to Mr. Pinder, and after wardes she sente for him to have his private companye, but there meetinge was croste'.¹⁷⁴ If this is true as opposed to an exoticised exaggeration of the storyteller, it appears rather unusual – if not unique – that an Ottoman queen mother should attempt to arrange a private meeting with a male member of a foreign embassy household. Dallam's gift was of such interest that, in being asked to play it at its presentation, was allowed physical contact with Mehmed III, who wanted to sit as close as possible while watching Dallam and allowed their legs to brush together as they sat.¹⁷⁵ In a further strange relaxation of protocol in reward for Dallam, he was shown around the innermost court of Topkapı Sarayı, the sultan's private residences, and then – even more surprisingly – allowed to spy through a fence at Mehmed III's *harem*.¹⁷⁶ He observed several women playing with a ball, but gawked for so long that it angered his guide (perhaps fearing that they would both be caught), and he was forced to move on.¹⁷⁷ What to make of these enormous breaches of protocol allowed for the entertainment of Dallam, and the honour of Pindar?

Pindar's invitation from Safiye may be written off either as the overtures of a very powerful woman who saw no problem in demanding whatever meetings she liked, or indeed as Dallam's romantic exaggeration for his later English reading public. However, with Dallam's visit to the palace, something far more interesting is happening. From Dallam's experiences in the Ottoman palace, it seems he was being treated almost as a gift object himself – the genius behind the hi-tech organ presented alongside it. This neatly explains his constant invitations back to the palace to tend to the organ, and the repeated beseeching from members of the palace that he should stay there forever alongside the organ. As an item of palace furniture, it therefore would not matter if he touched or was touched by the sultan, observed his private quarters, or witnessed the women of

¹⁷⁴ Dallam, 'Diary', 63.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 70-2.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 74.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 75.

his harem – with ‘gift object’ status, he was no longer an outsider any more than was a peacock or guinea fowl trotting around the sultan’s gardens. Such an impressive, intricate, and complex gift as the organ required a skilled player to complete and maintain it, hence the attempts to coax Dallam into staying with it. However, Dallam did not, and subsequently returned to England, his role as inventor, constructor, and presenter of the organ complete. Indeed, Lello and Aldridge were full of scorn for the organ as a gift when it arrived in pieces, indicating the distance of the Istanbul embassy for the procurement of the gifts they would present – the spectacle at the *saray* was very much down to Dallam and his gifts, literal and figurative. One must wonder if the destruction of this most unique of English diplomatic gifts to any sovereign under Ahmed I was as much to do with the frustration or embarrassment of having nobody who could play or maintain it, rather than the religious motivations that are frequently mooted. Given the English embassy’s struggle for prestige and favour during the early seventeenth century, it may even have been a deliberate symbolic snub. Perhaps Ahmed simply wanted to move away from the troubled end of his father’s reign, and redefine his sultanate around new ideals. At any rate, the organ began and ended its time in Istanbul in pieces.

Everyday work: piracy, trade, and flags

Much like his predecessors, Lello’s day-to-day work revolved around reacting to the requirements of keeping trade ticking over and reacting to issues that threatened it. Though the French embassy had its own problems in 1600, they still managed to cause difficulties for Lello. De Brèves was in debt and looking to return to France, his secretary and dragoman being dispatched to Paris to raise funds and arriving on or around 1st May 1600.¹⁷⁸ This was little comfort

¹⁷⁸ Contarini, ‘to the Doge and Senate’, 1st May 1600.

to Lello, who still found his rivalry with the French ambassador unbearable. He complained to Cecil of the constant effort of the French ambassador to convince the Ottomans that ‘o^{ur} m^{er}chant^{es} come only into these part^{es} to robbe aswell Turks as Christians’.¹⁷⁹ The conduct of English pirates on the Mediterranean was making this an easy mantra for the French embassy to keep up; Capello was able to report on 6th May that two more heavily-laden French trade ships had been captured by English pirates – Lello’s complaint to Cecil of the French opposition is dated 10th May.¹⁸⁰ Lello could only respond that if such a thing were proven, the ‘malefactors’ should be punished; it is easy to see why he would be frustrated at constantly having to defend the English trading nation against the ire caused by pirates who, by nature of being pirates, were out of their control. Lello’s denials of English guilt and weak talk of restitution hardly strengthened his position. It was clearly the case that de Brèves wanted him gone, and the Venetian *baili* – by their own admission – were under orders to work with the French to have the English embassy ejected and its rights annulled, however unrealistic an aim this may have been, whenever the opportunity presented itself.¹⁸¹ Repeated reports of English piracy were an ideal pretext. The problem affected French, Venetian, and Ottoman in equal measure, and Lello’s failure to get a handle on the situation, call effectively on Ottoman allies, or propose any constructive path forward, only exacerbated the French advantage. All Lello could do was insist that the French were complaining about something out of his control.

His own complaints about the French, on the other hand, were very much within the control of the French embassy. Lello alleges that, using their influence over local Christians in Istanbul, the French embassy had a renowned preacher preach ‘that the Lutherans (meaning us) were greate robbers by sea... and they must seeke for remedy and revenge against them’.¹⁸² The French

¹⁷⁹ Lello, ‘to Cecil’ 10th May 1600, SP 97/4 f.85, *TNA*.

¹⁸⁰ Capello, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 6th May 1600, *Venice*, ix, 406-10.

¹⁸¹ Nani, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 17th April 1601, *Venice*, ix, 449-457.

¹⁸² Lello, ‘to Cecil’ 10th May 1600.

embassy was consistently using its networks of influence to undermine the English mission at every opportunity, and maintaining the upper hand in the battle over the right to represent the Flemish and claim their duties. This, of course, suited Ottoman officials, who could use the apparent confusion to detain and extort Flemish merchants trading under the English flag, on the grounds they should have been trading as French.¹⁸³ As we have seen, the spat was a thorn in Lello's side (and hardly beneficial to merchants from the Low Countries besides), with so much time, effort, and political capital invested over this matter of local sovereignty that was ultimately of little consequence to the English and French crowns outside of the context of the Istanbul embassies claiming more duties from Flemish merchants. In 1607, when the same conflict broke out again between new ambassadors for France and England respectively, Jean-François de Salignac and Thomas Glover, the Venetian ambassador to England Zorzi Giustinian reported that neither King James nor Lord Salisbury (Cecil) thought it worth complaining about the Venetians siding with the French on the matter.¹⁸⁴ Lello told Cecil that he quite simply could not do his job without some help in countering de Brèves: 'I shall nott be able to incounter with him, and mayntaine Queens h^onor in this post: Yf I have nott some assistance, or incouragment by yo^{ur} ho^{nr} meanes from her highnes how to deale with him.'¹⁸⁵ Lello accused de Brèves of being a highly-paid spy of the Spanish king, requesting a letter to be sent from Elizabeth to the French king to request his intercession to remove a man not working in his interest, which certainly does not square with Brèves apparent financial difficulties and desire to leave for France.¹⁸⁶ These are bold claims that draw into question whether Lello possessed adequate judgement, temperament, and competence to fulfil his role at that time. Perhaps it was this lack of judgement in tempering his hatred for de Brèves that led to him spreading rumours that the French embassy was hosting agents en route to Persia to negotiate some anti-Ottoman business with the shah, inflaming matters yet further.¹⁸⁷ Brèves got his own

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Zorzi Giustinian, 'to the Doge and Senate' 18th July 1607, *Venice*, xi, 9-18.

¹⁸⁵ Lello, 'to Cecil' 10th May 1600.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Capello, 'to the Doge' 6th May 1600.

back quite quickly, stoking similar rumours over the presence of Anthony Sherley representing Safavid Iran in Europe.¹⁸⁸

The matter of piracy escalated further in June of 1600. Despite Lello writing to Cecil on 5th July to insist everything was fine, and everything that they had been hearing in royal correspondence from the French king was a lie planted by de Brèves, English vessels had been arrested in the port of Candia.¹⁸⁹ In the same month came a petition on behalf of the Levant Company as a whole, rather than in Lello's name, that took the step of requesting the queen help halt the influx of English pirates into the Mediterranean and causing difficulties for them.¹⁹⁰ Meanwhile, de Brèves had been forwarded letters from his king showing that England intended to make peace with Spain, playing on the Ottoman conception of England as a useful anti-Spanish outpost to use it as ammunition to push his friends on the *divan* to cancel their friendship with England altogether, especially given the evident piracy problem. According to Capello, Ahmed Paşa, Çiğalazade, the *kazasker*, and the *seyhülislam* ('the preaching Emir') were won over, and Lello suffered a humiliating encounter with erstwhile passionate English ally, Çiğalazade.¹⁹¹ Lello met the *kapudan paşa* to complain about the French, before being ambushed by Çiğalazade with evidence of Anglo-Spanish peace proposals, dressed down about the damage caused by frequent English piracy, and teased as a fantasist over his allegations that the French king planned a secret trip to Rome to kiss the Pope's hand, and his veiled threat of English action against Venice. The *kapudan* concluded by telling Lello he was unfit to be an ambassador. Capello conceded in an update of 15th July, having spoken to Çiğalazade, that the reality was rather less dramatic, and that Lello had merely complained of Brèves' supposed vendetta against him, while the *kapudan* took the matter of English piracy very seriously and had

¹⁸⁸ Nani, 'to the Doge and Senate' 1st December 1601, *Venice*, ix, 481.

¹⁸⁹ Capello, 'to the Doge and Senate' 3rd June 1600.

¹⁹⁰ 'Petition of the Levant Co. to the Queen' June 1600, SP 97/4 f.89, *TNA*.

¹⁹¹ Capello, 'to the Doge and Senate' 17th June 1600, *Venice*, ix, 411-7.

dismissed Lello as an ‘ignorant’ man ‘of no importance’.¹⁹² In this period, the Venetian senate also wrote to Elizabeth to complain about the matter of piracy.¹⁹³ Lello, on the other hand, reported that an unnamed paşa had confirmed ‘that her Ma^{ties} freindship wth them was to be regarded better then that of any other Christian princes’, and that the real problem was that, as their religious enemy, the Venetian ambassador was also out to help the French end English trade in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹⁴ The accusations of robbery were just French or Venetian chicanery accepted by the *kapudan paşa* for the love of their bribes, a remarkable claim given Çiğalazade’s clear and evident history as a pro-English *paşa*. Lello was struggling badly with the situation. It certainly says something about Lello’s standing in the summer of 1600 that rumours were circulating between embassies and dragomans that he had been dismissed as a fanciful idiot by the vizier in charge of the admiralty.

The reality was, of course, that piracy was a problem endemic to the Mediterranean, barely respecting national or religious loyalties or identities.¹⁹⁵ This was not always immediately evident to contemporaries; Molly Greene cites an encounter in 1671 between Mehmed IV and Maltese privateer Chevalier de Téméricourt, in which the sultan tries – and fails – to square the Knight of the Order’s nationality with his actions, given the state of peace and complex set of agreements between his empire and France.¹⁹⁶ The reason for consternation with English piracy was no different; England was supposed to be a friend of the Ottoman Empire, yet pirates and privateers *from* England plundered Spanish, Muslim, Greek, French, and Venetian shipping alike, with little regard to the difference. While piracy was far from a solely English pursuit, it is clear that English piracy in the Mediterranean was a growing phenomenon, especially given the English had been

¹⁹² Idem., ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 15th Jul 1600, *Venice*, ix, 417-21.

¹⁹³ ‘To the Queen of England’ 8th July 1600, *Venice*, ix, 417-21.

¹⁹⁴ Lello, ‘to Cecil’, 5th July 1600, SP 97/4 ff.91-3, *TNA*.

¹⁹⁵ Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton, NJ, 2000), passim; idem., *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton, NJ, 2010), passim.

¹⁹⁶ Green, *Catholic Pirates*, 15.

absent in large numbers from those waters for a generation or two prior to Harborne's dealings in Istanbul and beyond. Some individual pirates – veterans of naval campaigns of war and plunder against the Spanish – are well-known enough to have popular histories written about them.¹⁹⁷ The prevalence of sanctioned English piracy against the Spanish, repeatedly highlighted in Venetian dispatches, may have had some impact on the more widespread appearance of English pirates in the Mediterranean. However, Englishmen who turned to piracy were not just naval veterans or deserters; Harborne foolishly used his credentials to release the *Bark Roe* before they were valid, but it only became a problem because the *Roe* went from being a trading vessel to a pirate ship once it had departed.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, there were plenty of English sailors from a variety of backgrounds engaged in piracy, some, such as John Ward, as Barbary pirates under the tacit sanction of the Ottomans.¹⁹⁹ The boundaries were porous. English merchant Samson Rowlie, captured into Barbary slavery, became eunuch *majordomo* Hasan Ağa for Italian renegade corsair turned Ottoman official, Uluç Hasan Paşa.²⁰⁰ This angle of overlapping loyalties and lack of clear national allegiance was one that Lello did not see to exploit, nor did he point out the regularity with which his predecessors had had to negotiate release or recompense for English merchants who had suffered the depredations of piracy in Ottoman waters over the previous two decades.²⁰¹ Perhaps it was the case that Lello was too inexperienced at this point to fully grasp and exploit the dynamics of contemporary piracy. He had not, as Barton and Harborne before him, had experience of dealing with piracy in an Ottoman or Mediterranean context before taking up the post.

So, the issue of piracy remained a difficulty for Lello. It was also a difficulty for the Ottoman state apparatus, unable to begin to control more distant ports with the same level of efficiency as

¹⁹⁷ Greg Bak, *Barbary Pirate: The Life and Crimes of John Ward, the Most Infamous Privateer of His Time* (Stroud, 2006).

¹⁹⁸ See chapter 2.

¹⁹⁹ Christopher Lloyd, *English Corsairs on the Barbary Coast* (London, 1981), *passim*.

²⁰⁰ See chapter 3.

²⁰¹ Lloyd, *Corsairs*, 83-92.

Istanbul or Alexandria. Evidence of collusion from provincial officials in piracy is widespread. In the case of a group of English pirates who in 1601 had drawn enough ire that the *beylerbeyi* of Algiers was under instructions not to release them even if Lello managed to acquire documents ordering it, the *kadi* at Patras, as well as the English consul there, were found to have colluded with these and other pirates and were sacked and sent to their respective capitals to face the consequences.²⁰² As English merchant of Patras – apparently acting as a sort of interim consul on ‘orders from England’ – Mat Stocker, noted: ‘as long as this Cadi remains in office I shall be able to do nothing; for he shares with the privateers and is their confederate. On the tenth of the last month for example, the “Griffin” a Flemish ship came into this port; she is a noted privateer. By the help of the Cadi she was able to revictual and then sailed away to the Levant’.²⁰³ A letter from Elizabeth also arrived on this matter, dated 30th December 1600.²⁰⁴ Nani assessed that such direct royal intercession would most likely salve Ottoman annoyance with England rather than deal with the underlying issue of privateering. The letter was surely a direct consequence of the company’s petitioning for top-level royal diplomacy on the matter, rather than relying on the ineffective strategy pursued by Lello in Istanbul. In his letter of May 1601, Lello indicates that he is investigating the matter, but nothing more – other than to say that the story is not as bad as the Venetian ambassador has said it was, ‘god be praised’.²⁰⁵

Evidence of collusion between English and Dutch pirates and Ottoman local officials, disincentivised by lack of opportunities for progression, or simply acting opportunistically, is manifold. Maffio Michiel, Venetian governor in Zante, reported in June 1603 that Ottoman officers openly sheltered English privateers against imperial orders.²⁰⁶ Francesco Contarini, *bailo* in Istanbul

²⁰² Nani, ‘To the Doge and Senate’ May 13th 1601, *Venice*, ix, 457-62.

²⁰³ Mathew Stocker, ‘Mathew Stocker, merchant in Patras, to the illustrious gentleman Henry Lello, Ambassador of the Queen of England in Constantinople’ 20th February 1601, *Venice*, ix, 457-62.

²⁰⁴ Elizabeth I Tudor, ‘Queen Elizabeth to the Sultan’ 30th December 1600, SP 97/4 f.115

²⁰⁵ Lello, ‘Lello to Cecil’ 23rd May 1601, SP 97/4 f.136, *TNA*.

²⁰⁶ Maffio Michiel, ‘to the Doge and Senate’ 9th June 1603, *Venice*, x, 42-57.

in the same month, reported that the *beylerbeyi* in Tunis was making huge profits by working with English privateers.²⁰⁷ The following month, Michiel was under pressure from the *sancakbeyi* in Morea to free an English pirate he had captured.²⁰⁸ Stocker's experience in Patras was far from unusual, and difficulty in getting local Ottoman officials to act when he wanted to prosecute pirates was a headache for Lello, especially at times when central government officials in Istanbul were also unperturbed.²⁰⁹ It is easy to understand how, in such an environment, numerous English and Dutch captains came to lead Barbary pirate crews. This then pushed the problem out into the North Atlantic, as northern European captains and crew took advantage of local knowledge to lead Barbary fleets to raid the coastlines of the British Isles, and as far afield as occasional raids on Iceland and the Faroe Islands by the 1620s.²¹⁰ In the wider context of growing involvement of English sailors in Mediterranean piracy, Ottoman indifference and co-option of the pirates, and its subsequent expansion throughout the following decades, it is understandable that there was realistically little Lello could do to curb pirate attacks as an English ambassador. However, his seeming inaction still did little to calm the Venetian representatives.

Lello repeated requests to Cecil for instructions from the privy council on what to do about the frequent problem of pirates generating complaints against the English nation.²¹¹ He also discussed the successes of pirates of Naples, Messina, and Malta in hassling Ottoman and Venetian shipping, alluding to a former English vessel in Neapolitan hands that had captured several Venetian ships, causing Nani to initially misidentify the incident as another occurrence of English piracy against Venetian merchants.²¹² The entire episode in Patras seems to have happened outside

²⁰⁷ Contarini, 'to the Doge and Senate' 28th June 1603, *Venice*, x, 42-57.

²⁰⁸ Michiel, 'to the Doge and Senate' 4th July 1603, *Venice*, x, 58-72.

²⁰⁹ Contarini, 'to the Doge and Senate' 28th June 1603; *Idem.*, 'to the Doge and Senate' 12th July 1603, *Venice*, x, 58-72.

²¹⁰ Þorsteinn Helgason, *The Corsairs' Longest Voyage: The Turkish Raid in Iceland 1627* (Leiden, 2018), *passim*; the village of Hvalba on the Faroe island of Suðuroy contains a stretch of coast known as 'Turkargravir' (Turks' Graves), where two raiding corsair ships ran aground in 1629.

²¹¹ Lello, 'Lello to Cecil' 25th March 1601, SP 97/4 ff.131-4, *TNA*.

²¹² *Idem.*, 'Lello to Cecil' 22nd February 1601, SP 97/4 f.127, *TNA*; Nani, 'to the Doge and Senate' 3rd March 1601, *Venice*, ix, 447.

of Lello's knowledge up until the point he received the letter from Stocker about it – despite the incident being known in England for Stocker to receive orders and the Patras consul to have been dismissed – or Lello deigned it unnecessary to include such a significant and damaging act of English piracy in his reports to Cecil. Either way, it was clear Lello was struggling for ideas. The event seemingly took place in late January or February; Nani obtained a document sent from Süleyman, Beylerbeyi of Algiers, to the palace, reporting on the event and dated 5th Sha'ban, which was 9th February 1601.²¹³ He was also able to report that Lello was aware and taking action on the matter before his report of 17th April in the Gregorian style (which was 7th April for Lello), telling Çiğalazade that he would 'make an example of them' when they arrived in Istanbul – indicating it was already common knowledge that they were on their way.²¹⁴ Stocker, in fact, knew them by name: the captain, Buckley, was under arrest in Algiers, and the other leaders were called Brooke and Lever and had found safe haven in Patras before. He had arrested them in Patras somewhere between their arrival on Buckley's damaged ship on 16th February and his letter on 20th February.²¹⁵ It seems strange that Stocker should have received orders from England so quickly; perhaps the act of piracy had happened several months earlier and was only now being reported over fears the ambassador may be able secure Buckley's release, or perhaps Stocker had simply seen the royal letter en route to Lello in Istanbul and intelligently improvised a response based on his inference of the ramifications for his position in Patras.

Stocker may well have been one of the Levant Company's merchant-consuls and in a role that revolved around acting on these day-to-day matters of issues with merchants, or perhaps Lello's standing with merchants was simply low enough that Stocker took matters into his own hands. Stocker had received 'letters and orders from England' effectively appointing him acting

²¹³ Süleyman Paşa, 'Copy of letter from Suleiman of Catania, Pasha of Algiers, to Bairan, Chiaia of the Arsenal' 5th Sha'ban 1009, *Venice*, ix, 449-457.

²¹⁴ Nani, 'to the Doge and Senate' 17th April 1601, *Venice*, ix, 449-457.

²¹⁵ Stocker, 'to the illustrious Lello'.

consul if he were not already and instructing him to apprehend the pirates should they reappear.²¹⁶ This is further evidence of the Levant Company's serious response to the problem of piracy, ongoing outside of Lello's control. Stocker, evidently, was part of lines of communication that Lello was not – notable considering the headaches that complaints about English piracy were causing for the ambassador and his request for instructions. Yet more evidence of company activity taking place away from Lello is an assessment by a certain Thomas Wilson of the grant in Algiers obtained for John Tipton and William Aldridge by Edward Barton.²¹⁷ This evidently cannot be the same Thomas Wilson who acted as a handler for William Harborne and died in 1581; it is more likely his supposed nephew and foreign intelligencer for Robert Cecil, Sir Thomas Wilson (d. 1629).²¹⁸ His commentary proposes some amendments to the grant to improve the condition of English trade in Algiers and beyond. It is perhaps evidence of a plan being devised by Cecil or the Levant Company to be sent to Lello for actioning, or, given that Wilson himself was dispatched as an ambassador to Florence in December 1601, a potential task for him to pursue in Algiers himself. Whether or not this suggests that Lello was being circumvented by the company is a matter for interpretation; at any rate, it is further evidence of a thriving company apparatus beyond the embassy in Istanbul, with prerogative to pursue negotiations wherever they wished. What is also interesting, tying in with both the revelation of collusion between consul, *kadi*, and pirates in Patras, and the evidence Faroqhi presents regarding the frequency of trade in contraband in ports such as Bursa and Izmir, that it is during this period the Levant Company chose to appoint consuls in Chios – the island just outside of the bay of Izmir – and then Izmir itself, indicative of the growth of English trade in these areas handily distant from uniform enforcement of Ottoman law.²¹⁹ The Levant Company's growth continued apace, whether by strictly legal profits or otherwise.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Thomas Wilson, 'Grant of Sultan to Typton and Aldridge with note by Wilson' [c.1600], SP 97/4 ff.117-8, *TNA*.

²¹⁸ A.F. Pollard & Sean Kelsey, 'Wilson, Sir Thomas', *ODNB*.

²¹⁹ Faroqhi, 'Politics and socio-economic change', 103.

From this we see the Levant Company again learning the value of having good consuls, appointed properly. They were able to take some of the load of this day-to-day work that involved chasing legal resolutions to issues cropping up in and around Ottoman ports and their waters away from the distant embassy in Istanbul, which as we see here, was not always fully looped into events as they developed. Whether or not Lello was always up to speed on events or particularly good at reacting to them, the evolution of the role of consul to give more practical support in liaison with officials in London and the embassy in Istanbul is clear to see here. On top of this, we get a glimpse of just how much of a problem Anglo-Dutch predation on Mediterranean shipping had become for the Levant Company's standing within the Ottoman Empire. In the letter to the French, Murad III suggests that he will beseech the new English king to take control of his nation's pirates, or risk the capitulations not being renewed.²²⁰ This again, is an indicator of the number of pressing issues outside of Lello's control that he had to deal with during his embassy. He undoubtedly had a difficult time in difficult circumstances, through an era that brought about evolution in English and Ottoman politics, and in the organisation of the Levant Company itself.

'A man of as little judgement as a child', or 'Right Worthy and Right Worshipfull'?

Henry Lello was ambassador in a period of change. Had Edward Barton not died young and suddenly, Lello might never have been an ambassador at all, with Glover and Pindar perhaps more likely candidates to have been groomed to take over in the way Harborne did for Barton. Nevertheless, across the three themes of company and state interaction and diplomatic funding, place within the Ottoman imperial system, and the day-to-day dirty work, Lello lived, as the saying goes, in interesting times.

²²⁰ Murad III Osmanoglu, 'The Sultan of Turkey to King Henry IV of France', *Calendar of the Marquis of Salisbury*, 15, 225.

Firstly Lello's succession had to be secured by correspondence and gifts shared with Cecil, and maintained through a law suit brought by the sister of the deceased Edward Barton, reflecting the financial difficulties that came with being an early modern ambassador. After his confirmation, Lello was locked into a fractious rivalry with the French embassy. This encompassed a variety of things, being in part confessional and connected to Lello's intention to open a Protestant church in Pera, and not aided by Lello's loose words about the idolatry of Henri IV of France, translated into Ottoman as they were by Thomas Glover. The rivalry culminated in the outbreak of a violent brawl in the streets of Pera during a snowball fight, as members of the embassy households and wider trading community targeted each other, first with snowballs, then with weapons. This was all underpinned by the ongoing battle over who got to protect Flemish and Dutch merchants in the Ottoman Empire. In a move reflective of Ottoman conceptions of balance, order, and justice, a Solomonic compromise was agreed, whereby the English embassy represented the main seafaring provinces of the Netherlands. English duties were also cut to 3%, and the deal endured until 1675, a significant success for Henry Lello as a commercial representative.

In line with developments precipitated by the Jacobean succession in England and problems with English piracy in the Mediterranean, the Levant Company went through a period of transformation of its own during the second half of Lello's tenure. Shaken by the jagged nature of James VI's succession and the upheaval and confusion this caused, the Levant Company essentially experienced an interregnum of its own, struggling to reconfirm its charter rights in England, and leaving operations in the Ottoman Empire in a long limbo, which Lello had to endure without receiving payment from the crown. As a response to these pressures, the reimagined Levant Company gave clearer guidance for the roles of its ambassador and consuls and received less financial support from the English crown. The importance of good consuls was made clear by the problem of piracy and the struggles to respond to it across the vastness of the Ottoman Empire

and its waters, with it taking up a large proportion of Henry Lello's time, energy, and political capital, and Mat Stocker exemplifying the difference that good consular intervention could make to the problem. This explains why, as Glover was chosen to succeed Lello in a newly streamlined Istanbul embassy, Pindar was sent to serve as consul in the key trade centre of Aleppo, where a lot of debt had been accrued during the company's 1603-1606 interregnum.

Lello's experiences in the Ottoman Empire, and his reactions to them, also reflect the ongoing change within Ottoman society and politics. Lello's strong opinions on Ottoman 'tyranny' and his complaints about Murad III may well have their roots in European intellectual movements that used the Islamic world as a 'shadow' or foil for politics in Christendom, in order to draw contrasts and make a case for their preferred political organisation, just as Lello drew comparisons between his monarchs and the Ottoman emperors he encountered, but they were also rooted in observation of the upheaval before him. Undoubtedly as a function of wider changes to the balance of global economics, trade, and the balance of power, the Ottoman Empire was also undergoing deep-seated socioeconomic and political changes in this period, and Lello witnessed some of the manifestations of that. Combined with his existing opinions, his disgust at the violence and experience of English rights to dress as they preferred and drink alcohol being threatened, informed the highly critical view of the Ottomans that he delivered to the Venetian Senate on his way home. Nevertheless, the English embassy still existed within a nebular system of networks around a dominant imperial centre in this period, and Lello remained a part of that, engaging with a range of Ottoman officials, albeit sometimes with difficulty. The delivery of Thomas Dallam's organ as Lello's confirmatory gift to Murad III brought out some interesting responses within the Ottoman court that challenge some expectations about the boundaries of ceremonial (the sultan sitting close with Dallam at the organ) and of a gift itself (whether or not Dallam was considered part of the gift as the organ man), but perhaps the starkest conclusion to draw, as Gerald MacLean did in his

study of it, is that Lello was ultimately outshone by Dallam, Glover, and Pindar, regardless of anything else.²²¹

²²¹ MacLean, 'Courting the Porte', 80-88.

Conclusion

By 1607, the Levant Company was well-established enough to reinvent itself on its own terms. Its political star may have waned somewhat in Istanbul through a difficult start to the seventeenth century, but profitability was not in question. Eldred's Nutmeg Hall was illustrative of the profit to be made in imports from the Ottoman Empire, as was the central assumption of Mary Locke's suit against the company that her heavily indebted brother must surely have amassed a greater estate for her to have inherited. Far from a sign of weakness, the wrangling between the Levant Company and James VI shows the confidence and strength of Levant Company and East India Company merchants that they believed they could challenge an incoming monarch for superior terms. Though it did not work straight away this time, it fits into the wider pattern established in the historiography by writers such as Brenner of the increased financial – and subsequent political – clout of import merchants progressively throughout the seventeenth century.¹ At the very least, the Levant Company won the opportunity to reformulate their diplomatic operations within the Ottoman Empire, appointing fresh blood with a more direct company mandate in Glover and then Pindar, the latter of whom would grow into a customs farmer and domestic political figure in his own right, reflective of the wider trends discussed.² The end of Lello's embassy was therefore the conclusion of the establishment phase of the Levant Company operation in the Ottoman Empire, and with it the Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic and trading relationship. What followed was the development of a commercial entity secure and confident in its purpose at home and within the Ottoman world, as well as in command of a fresh outlet in South Asia through the East India Company.

¹ Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: commercial change, political conflict, and London's overseas traders, 1550-1653* (Princeton, 2003).

² Robert Ashton, 'Pindar, Paul', *ODNB*.

This thesis has sought to examine the embassies of William Harborne, Edward Barton, and Henry Lello across four major themes. First was the relationship between the Turkey/Levant Company and the English crown, how the two competed and interacted through each of the embassies in focus, and how the fundamental trading relationship played into the wider diplomatic relationship between England, the Ottoman Empire, and other powers represented in Istanbul during this time. The second was the way in which diplomacy was funded and arranged between the state and the trade company, and how this then affected how diplomacy was pursued and structured. Thirdly was broadly how the English embassy fitted into the political world of the Ottoman Empire, and how ambassadors and their embassies rose to the various challenges that presented. Fourthly, the thesis looked at what these ambassadors focused their energies on most commonly on a day-to-day basis. The perhaps unsurprising conclusion to draw from these three embassies was the intricate link between commerce and diplomacy in the context of a relationship overseen by a trading company invested with a large degree of freedom to arrange and manage its own affairs within the Ottoman Empire by the English crown. With funding from the English state minimal, unreliable, and sometimes entirely absent, it was the profit that came from protecting a growing trade relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire that served to fund embassy business in the main. Therefore, the relationship between the ambassadors and merchants was symbiotic.

Harborne, an experienced merchant who had secured the first grant of capitulations from the Ottomans, was most emblematic of this. He directly experienced the challenges that English merchants could face in the Ottoman world in his journey to Istanbul to seek commercial rights and during his unfortunate travails in Chios soon after. He saw the value of an interdependent support network of English merchants in being able to rely on the work and hospitality of others working alongside him to the same end, like John Bate, Joseph Clements, and John Wight, staying with the latter on a fateful lay-over in Lviv to pick up the company of Ottoman envoys. Operating

with as little as £200 per year in support from the English crown, he carefully established an embassy that primarily worked in the interest of protecting English merchants and developing their ability to trade profitably and without undue hindrance in the Ottoman Empire. The clearest example of his work in defending merchants' rights in Ottoman ports and waters comes in the form of his long battle with Uluç Ali Paşa, the Ottoman grand admiral who would have preferred to be free to attack English shipping rather than receive English merchants as welcome, protected guests. Barton also worked hard to defend English merchants and to expand English protection to merchants from the Low Countries, though the relationship between him and company factors was more complex. So financially embattled that he borrowed money from Ottoman grandees and was accused of striking counterfeit coins, Barton's everyday focus often had pretensions of a much higher and more expansive political role than simply dealing with merchant concerns, even if there is ample evidence from English records, the *mühimme defterleri*, and indeed *Koca Sinan Paşa'nın Telhisleri* that Barton was a frequent and capable advocate for Turkey/Levant Company merchants when they were imperilled or in need of support.³ Some factors were displeased with his political activities and their expense, but ultimately Barton's standing helped to ensure the company's growing security within the Ottoman Empire. Lello was different again, an educated and seemingly sometimes aloof man, often ridiculed by merchants, including those in his own household.⁴ A lot of his time was spent managing fallout from difficult changes taking place in Ottoman and English politics at this time, as well as dealing with increasing complaints of Anglo-Dutch piracy in the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, it was his 1601 capitulations renegotiation that secured increasingly profitable English trade a reduction in its customs dues from 5% to 3% and rights of representation over at least some of the Dutch-speaking merchants that the Levant Company had been looking to profit from supporting.

³ Sinan Paşa, *Koca Sinan Paşa'nın telhisleri*, ed. Halil Sahillioğlu (İstanbul, 2004), 196, 224, 256.

⁴ Gerald MacLean, 'Courting the Porte: Early Anglo-Ottoman Diplomacy', *University of Bucharest Review*, 10/2 (2008), 86.

So, if each ambassador shows that the relationship between embassies and the merchants they represented was intrinsic, in what ways was this representation organised? Each embassy in turn shows the regular lack of interest of the English court in the management of the Turkey/Levant Company's relationship with the Ottoman Empire. As Jennifer Mori has argued was often the case for British representatives abroad later in the early modern period, ambassadors were underfunded, and their work was unglamorous.⁵ As the work of English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire in this period, except for in the curious case of Barton, was mostly occupied with managing commercial concerns rather than being involved with any grand negotiations or lobbying campaigns, there was little reason for the English crown to intervene more than sporadically – or even respond to letters regularly. So, the trade-off for a lack of crown funding was a freedom from much in the way of crown interference. Harborne got what he needed in the late 1580s when directly asked to encourage the Ottomans not to renew their peace deal with Spain in the interests of English national security, and the most important task asked of Henry Lello by his new king was to secure the freedom of Thomas Sherley and get him shipped home. Otherwise, ambassadors were largely free to keep their focus on the business of trade. In Barton's case, this freedom was interpreted very liberally to get involved in a large number of negotiations and political intrigues, but his constant financial insecurity is perhaps the best indicator of his level of importance as judged from the English royal court. Barton's energetic networking and politicking would eventually bring him trouble, first in having helped develop the immediate proximate conditions for the outbreak of war between the Ottomans and Austrian Habsburgs through his involvement in underhand schemes, only to find upon the arrival of new royal letters from Elizabeth to the sultan that this was not what his monarch had wanted at all. The second, and most major overreach that Barton committed in view of his responsibilities to the English crown was his active participation in Mehmed III's 1596 Hungary campaign against the Habsburgs in the war he had

⁵ Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe, c. 1750-1830* (Manchester, 2010), *passim*.

helped to encourage. Whether or not, as Tomasz Kowalczyk implies, the experience of travel was good for Barton's mental wellbeing, it went down incredibly badly with the home court he was supposed to be representing.⁶ However, in Barton's defence of his actions as a form of diplomatic service, he could well also easily have argued that, had the English crown not wanted him to behave in the way he did, they ought really to have taken much more responsibility for directing him towards actions they *did* want him to take.

So, the relationship between company and state could be glacial and it could be fraught. In Lello's time, it was fundamentally changed by the jagged succession of James VI and the confusion and upheaval this caused to the company's ability to operate at all. Protracted negotiations over a new charter for the company in London left its ambassador and consuls struggling in a kind of interregnum, lacking in clarity over how to continue to perform their duties, where the money to do so was coming, and whether their posts would even be continued. This lengthy process led to reform of the Levant Company's operations in the Ottoman Empire under the twin pressures of changing realities in both polities. Trade remained profitable and the 1601 capitulations favourable if they could be defended, but it was clear that James VI was uncomfortable with the concept of being seen to be in league with – or worse still, having submitted to – the Ottomans.⁷ Royal financial input was slashed by over £1000, and the experience led the Levant Company into drawing up clearer direction for their ambassadors and their roles, as well as making official the position and responsibilities of consuls. Given the difficulty of looking after an expanding trade network and policing issues such as piracy across the vast distances of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the difficulty that often came with dealing with regional semi-officials distant from the imperial core and its directives, the evolution of the place of consuls was a natural and necessary response. In a nod to the popularity of Lello's secretaries, Glover and Pindar, as compared to him, this was used

⁶ Tomasz Kowalczyk, 'Edward Barton in Hungary: Arguments for travel as diplomatic service', *Renaissance Studies*, 33/4 (2019), 590-608.

⁷ MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford, 2011), 62-3.

as an excuse to replace Lello with Glover and place Pindar in the important role of consul in the major Ottoman trade centre of Aleppo, distant from the Ottoman capital and on the overland trade route to the Persian Gulf and on to India. This development marked the transition to a new phase of the Levant Company after its establishment over the first three embassies.

The position of the English embassies within the Ottoman political ecosystem was also explored in great depth here. Drawing on the work of Güneş Işıksel, Stanley Tambiah, Vic Lieberman, Zoltán Biedermann, and several others, the thesis conceptualised the Ottoman political ecosystem as akin to a nebula of colluding and competing clusters of households and actors, orbiting the core of the cosmocrat Ottoman sultan at its centre. Various factors could affect the gravitational pull that various actors and clusters possessed, and their relative closeness to the Ottoman centre of power, and careful networking and politicking was required to maintain adequate connections to the centre and relative gravity for embassies to be able to conduct their business smoothly within a sometimes difficult and dangerous political landscape. The ideology of the sultanic cosmocracy also governed Ottoman attitudes towards their place in maintaining the balance of power between sovereign nations beyond the official reach of the sultan's government, out in the most distant circle of the sultan's authority. England was a perfect candidate to add to the cosmocrat sultan's careful balance of power, justice, and divine authority, serving as a valuable commercial partner for the Ottomans during the transformation of the global economy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and a welcome counterbalance to powers such as Spain abroad, or the French within the fifth, diplomatic sphere of contact with the Ottoman sultan. It was this place in the Ottoman cosmocracy that eased Harborne's entry into the diplomatic circle of the Ottoman Empire, and what helped to keep him there and see his embassy and commerce between the nations come to flourish before his departure, despite pressure from Uluç Ali internally, and the French and Venetians externally.

The English place in this cosmocracy reached its apogee across these three embassies during the time of Edward Barton, whom Selaniki considered to be performing *ubudiyet* on the part of the English nation to the Ottoman sultan, and who also networked tirelessly and seamlessly across the range of Ottoman officials. This active participation in the crunching factionalism within the Ottoman nebular polity brought with it some conflicts with rival embassies and Ottoman political figures, but it also brought plenty of advantages in terms of his ability to call on networks to support his political positions, be they concerned with the high politics of diplomatic negotiations, or the unglamorous quotidian work of supporting English trade. Both Harborne and Barton showed a great tolerance of the ambiguities brought about by ‘norm competition’ between their roles as merchants, ambassadors, and players within the Ottoman system. As a fluent Turkophone with a great level of cultural understanding, Barton’s fluidity of identity between English merchant and respectable Ottoman figure repeatedly proved highly useful in his embassy career, even if its outcomes were not always appreciated by company merchants and the English court alike.

It was something of a cosmic irony that Barton should then die young and be followed by Henry Lello, other than the similarly comfortable and fluid Glover or Pindar. Lello held strong, if not uncommon in European intellectual circles, opinions about the tyranny of Ottoman government and the flaws of Mehmed III as a ruler and sultan. Nevertheless, his complaints were rooted in the realities of upheaval in Ottoman politics in his time, as the *celali* rebellions simmered away in Anatolia, and protests and uprisings against the perceived misrule of the sultan sought to impose limitations on the traditional patrimonial structure and authority of the imperial household. These changes also affected foreign embassies and merchant communities, as Ottoman authorities sought to quell dissent over socioeconomic pressures and political unrest by imposing restrictions that fell most heavily on non-Muslim communities. Nevertheless, Lello remained capable of working with Ottoman statesmen and officials within the Ottoman system, albeit while convinced of its degeneracy. Lello was a first-hand witness to some of the dissatisfaction and pressures that

would lead to changes in the function and ideology of Ottoman rule over the following century, and his observations were not entirely removed from those of Ottoman contemporaries, either, even if they were naturally exaggerated and coloured by European perceptions of Ottoman ‘tyranny’ that were as much a mirror for their own ideals of Christian rule as complaints based on a thorough understanding of the Ottoman political situation.

Writing in 1631, the Ottoman intellectual Koçi Beğ lamented the loss of Ottoman territory since 1596, and the way that domestic ‘tyrants’ had caused the *reaya* to disperse and the treasury to fall empty.⁸ Where Lello saw tyranny in arbitrary rule, inconstancy, and cruelty, Koçi saw it in something more akin to a failure of the Ottoman system to live up to its ideal of ‘circles of equity’, divine justice and good order upheld by the rule of the sultan, a foundational ideology at the heart of Ottoman government, economic management, and social structures. Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli’s complaints between his *Counsel for Sultans* in 1581 and his *Description of Cairo* of 1599 serve as another case in point of dissatisfaction with the Ottoman order being upheld imperfectly or incorrectly.⁹ Yet, for English merchants, the Ottoman Empire was a land of great riches throughout the 1580s, 1590s, and into the seventeenth century. Their interests expanded and incorporated new urban centres such as Izmir. In the mid-1620s, Thomas Roe, who had been England and the East India Company’s ambassador to the Mughal court, served as ambassador to the Ottomans as a natural progression of his career. English merchants continued making money, and the Ottoman Empire remained held in high regard. Yet, perhaps here, in the origins of the Levant Company and the East India Company, lay the first indications of the changing global order. William Harborne, Edward Barton, and Henry Lello were men of relatively humble origins and means, learning to operate and negotiate within a strong Ottoman Empire from a position of relative weakness. Over time, that power dynamic would shift, eventually quite dramatically. Just as the changing global

⁸ Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, ed. Zuhuri Danişman (Ankara, 1985), 71-2.

⁹ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton, NJ, 1986).

economic order drew England and the Ottoman Empire into this relationship, the dynamics of the relationship would continue to evolve with the shift in political gravity from the Mediterranean to north-western Europe and in economic gravity to the Atlantic and the nations that controlled global trade from there through later colonial systems. This study of the first English ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire, and their place within that world, is a snapshot of a relationship instigated by the first dynamics of that greater early-modern global change, and how the small roles of these handfuls of actors reflect the echoes of those wider patterns.

Glossary

Acemoğlanı	Palace novice; novice <i>devsirme</i> recruit; ‘acem’ (non-Arabic-speaking) + ‘oğlan’ (boys).
Ağa	Title for chief servant of a household (therefore often given to eunuchs) and positions such as head of the janissaries; survives in modern Turkish ‘ağabey’ (abbreviated <i>abi</i>), meaning a literal or figurative big brother (e.g. an older male with whom one shares friendly respect).
Ahdname	<i>Abdname-i Hümayun</i> , an imperial pact, privilege, or grant; ‘capitulations’; from Persian.
Akçe	Ottoman unit of currency; ‘asper’.
Anadolu	Anatolia.
Arz	<i>Arz-ı hal</i> ; <i>arz-u hal</i> ; written petition, usually to the sultan.
Askeri	Ottoman military-administrative class; from Arabic.
Bâbüssaâde	(Saadet Kapısı) Gate of Felicity, the gate in Topkapı separating the outer and inner courts (enderun and birun).
Bailo	(Italian) – Venetian ambassador to the Ottoman Empire; pl. <i>baili</i> .
Bayram	Eid; more generally meaning ‘festival’.
Bey/Beğ	Gentleman or (minor) lord; title given to minor Ottoman postholders.
Beylerbeyi	‘Bey of beys’; Ottoman high governor.
Beylik	Minor Turkic emirate, common in post-Byzantine, pre-/early-Ottoman Anatolia.
Bostancıbaşı	Chief imperial palace guard (lit. ‘head-of-the-keeper-of-the-gardens/shores’).

Çavuş	Ottoman title for sergeant, guard, bodyguard; used for emissaries of the sultan.
Cüce	Dwarf.
Damat	Imperial son-in-law.
Dar al harb	‘Abode of war’; historical Arabic terminology for non-Islamic territory.
Dar al Islam	‘Abode of Islam’; historical Arabic terminology for lands ruled by Muslims.
Deli	(lit. ‘crazy’) Epithet given to those known for their short temper.
Devşirme	Ottoman practice of recruiting talented-looking Christian boys for high imperial service and/or the janissary corps; from Old Turkish ‘devşirmek’, ‘to collect’.
Divan	(Divan-ı Hümayûn) Ottoman council of state; ‘the bench’ (as in ‘viziers of the bench’), from Persian.
Elçi	Ambassador.
Emir	Prince, chief, leader (generally monarch of lower rank than ‘Sultan’); from Arabic.
Esnaf	Merchant/artisan.
Ferman	Ottoman imperial command or edict.
Fethname	Ottoman bulletin of recent conquests; from Arabic ‘fethî’ (‘relating to conquest’) and Persian ‘name’ (‘letter, text’).
Hadım	Eunuch.
Harbi	From or pertaining to the <i>dar al harb</i> .

Harem	Private, protected; referring to the women's and children's quarters of a household; for similar reasons archaically used to refer to effeminate men; from Arabic.
Haseki Sultan	Favoured concubine/wife.
Hatt-i Hümayûn	Mandate or decree of the sultan.
Hisar	Castle, fortress.
Hoca	Tutor, teacher.
Hutbe	Sermon or oration given after Friday prayer.
Hüküm	Judgement, decree, command, edict.
İstanbulu	Istanbulite, native or resident of Istanbul.
Kadı	Islamic religious judge.
Kadızedeli	A seventeenth-century Islamic revivalist movement considered by some historians to be the root of the modern day <i>salafi</i> movement that has been influential in the spread of extremism.
Kanun	Law; generally in the sense of Ottoman secular state law; from Arabic.
Kanuni	'The lawgiver'; epithet of Süleyman I 'the Magnificent'.
Kapı Ağası	Chief white eunuch of the Ottoman palace.
Kapıcı	'Doorkeeper'; title of Ottoman palace officer responsible for e.g. bringing petitions to the sultan.
Kapıcıbaşı	Chief <i>kapıcı</i> .
Kapudan	Captain; <i>kapudan-ı derya</i> or <i>kapudan paşa</i> – Ottoman high admiral; from Italian 'capitano' and Persian 'deryâ' (ocean, sea).
Kapudanlık	Admiralty.
Kaymakam	Deputy grand vizier.
Kayser	Caesar; Kaiser.

Kazasker	Chief military judge.
Khan	(Sometimes ‘Han’) commander; [tribal] leader.
Kılıç	Sword.
Kira	Female agent of female members of the imperial household who handled their business in the outside world; generally of Jewish origin.
Lala	Manservant responsible for the care of a child, given as an epithet to some Ottoman royal tutors; from (old/middle) Persian.
Majordomo	(Italian) Chief servant of the household; interchangeable with Ottoman <i>ağa</i> .
Meclis	Assembly, council, meeting, gathering; in the modern sense, senate, parliament; from Arabic.
Meyhane	Wine house; drinking house; inn.
Mezarlık	Cemetery; <i>Haydarpaşa İngiliz Mezarlığı</i> – ‘The English Cemetery of Haydarpaşa (a neighbourhood in Kadıköy/Üsküdar named after a Haydar Paşa)’.
Müfti	Islamic jurisconsult; expounder of sharia law.
Mühimme	<i>Mühimme defterleri</i> – books of records of the imperial affairs of state; from Arabic ‘mühimme’, meaning ‘urgent, important’ and ‘defter’ (‘copybook, ledger’ or in a modern sense ‘exercise book, notebook, folder’).
Müteferrika	Ottoman title for an officer responsible for licenses and petty disputes.
Nişancı	Title of the head of the scribal service responsible for signing off royal orders.
Nöker	Young man unattached to any household; nomad; from Old Turkish.

Oka/okka	Ottoman unit of weight roughly equivalent to 1.25kg (2.8lb).
Padişah	High Sultan, from Persian.
Para	Money; currency; coin.
Paşa	Honorific title denoting high political or military office; similarity to English title lord indicated by colloquial ‘paşa olmak’ – ‘to get drunk as a lord’.
Perots	Christian population of Pera.
Peyk	Footman.
Reaya	Taxpaying subjects; from Arabic.
Reisülküttab	(Reisülküttab) High ranking chancery officer (‘captain of the books’) later considered a sort of de facto foreign minister.
Riyâset Kaymakamı	Secretariat deputy.
Rumeli	Ottoman Balkans; from Old Turkish ‘Rum’ (Rome/Roman – modern Turkish ‘Greek’) and ‘ili’ (land of...).
Sadaret	Post with secretarial duties to the sultan.
Sadrazam	Synonym for grand vizier; ‘sadr-ı azam’ meaning ‘most important minister’.
Sancakbeyi	Ottoman regional governor; ‘sancak’ (‘flag’) + ‘bey’ (‘commander’).
Saray	Palace.
Sicil/sicill	Record, register; usually used in the sense of judicial records, but in the context of ‘ <i>Sicill-i Osmanî</i> ’ meaning ‘a record of Ottomans’.
Sipahi	Cavalryman.
Sultan	King, emperor; from Arabic.
Şah	Shah; Persian title for kings/emperors.
Şehzade	Ottoman prince.

Şeria/şeriat	Islamic religious law; sharia.
Şeyhülislam	Chief jurisconsult of the Ottoman Empire; abolished in 1924 along with the Ottoman 'Caliphate'.
Taller	(Taler/Thaler) (German) Early modern currency of the Holy Roman Empire; 'dollar'.
Topkapı	Literally 'cannon-gate', the name of the Ottoman imperial palace.
Valide Sultan	Queen mother.
Venedikli	Venetian.
Voyvode	Prince of Balkan/Eastern European Ottoman vassal states/principalities.
Yemişçi	Fruit grower; greengrocer – epithet of Yemişçi Hasan Paşa.
Yeniçeri	Janissary.
Yeniçeri Ağası	Commander of the Janissaries.
Yıldırım	Lightning; epithet of Bayezid I.
Zimmi	Non-Muslim Ottoman subject; from Arabic.

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