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European-Ottoman Sociability in Istanbul

On the morning of 3 September 1687, only a few days after his arrival in Istanbul, William Trumbull set out for his first meeting with an Ottoman official, a man named Receb Pasha who was serving at the time as *kaymakam* of Istanbul. Little is known about Receb Pasha whose appearance in the Ottoman historical record is confined to a few, short lines in a nineteenth-century biographical dictionary.¹ Like other middling officials of his type, his career is rattled off in brief, summary form before the biographer notes only that he died in 1687. By the time he met Trumbull, Receb Pasha had already started receiving news of a mutiny on the frontiers of the empire. In only a few months, this mutiny would culminate in the execution of Receb Pasha and his patron, the grand vizier Süleyman Pasha, and, ultimately, in the deposition of Sultan Mehmed IV. When Trumbull reflected on this meeting, years later, he presented a much fuller account of the man's life than can be obtained from any Ottoman source. He described, for example, how Receb had climbed the ranks of Ottoman officialdom from a 'poor foot-boy' running alongside Süleyman Pasha's horse to his current status as *kaymakam*.² More recently, Receb had watched over Süleyman's interests at court while he had been away leading the Ottoman army on campaign against the Habsburgs. Interestingly, Trumbull's admiration for Receb far surpassed that which he would express for other officials during his time as a diplomat in both Paris and Istanbul. For example, this was how he described their first meeting:

On the 3rd of September 1687, I had my first audience of the *kaymakam*, Rageb, a person of wonderful qualities. For I do not think that nature ever sowed a richer soil or brought forth a man of greater talents. I have had the honour to converse with some of the chief ministers of state in Christendom, with ambassadors and others celebrated for their abilities and experiences, yet I am of opinion that (excepting only some unnecessary accomplishments) this person of mean extraction, of no education, and of small experience—one who grew like a mushroom the work of few hours by the mere strength of his natural parts—equalled if not exceeded any of them. He had a majestic presence, without pride. He was of a becoming gravity but exceedingly civil. He never interrupted others when they spoke, though they were longer than he wished and himself answered in few words but pertinent and comprehensive. He had a clear and

¹ Mehmet Süreyya, *Sicill-i 'Osmānī* (Westmead: Gregg's International Publishers, 1971), vol. 2, p. 371.

² The full account comes from 'Memorials of my Embassy in Constantinople' in BL Add. MS 34799, ff. 7–9.

undoubted courage, and found nothing too great for him to undertake or too hard to overcome, except the effeminate mind of his own Master. For he had certainly preserved the late Grand Signor, if that poor-spirited man had not followed the cowardly advice of his chief eunuch (to try to sweeten with fair words the mutinous soldiers) rather than the council of his brave *kaymakam* to march out of Istanbul and meet them.³

Even though the two men would have known each other for only a few months at most before Receb's execution in November 1687, Trumbull's esteem for the *kaymakam* is revealing of how the business of diplomacy and trade created a regular rhythm of interactions between Europeans and Ottomans in everyday life. It is also a reminder of the potential for friendship that existed within the world of elite sociability in the Ottoman capital.

Yet this world of intimacy seems all but absent if one sifts through the official dispatches regularly sent by English ambassadors back to their correspondents in London or Paris. Consider, for example, Trumbull's account of his first meeting with Receb as it was reported in one of his earliest dispatches sent to the Secretary of State. Like other accounts of such meetings, it was written in an impersonal third-person tone, most likely by one of Trumbull's secretaries.

The two Ambassadors [Trumbull and his predecessor, Lord Chandos] went together to the audience of the *kaymakam*. As they passed over in boat from Tophane to Istanbul, both going and returning, they were saluted by not only the English but [also] the French Ships, of which several were in Port, and a Dutch ship, a thing not formerly practiced for any ships of another Nation to salute on such occasions. At the waterside, his Excellency was met by the *çavuş başı* & fifty *çavuş* who went first; then followed the janissaries and liveries of the Ambassador a foot [and] the Druggermen on horseback. The *çavuş başı* went before the Ambassador, of whom the old one had the hand going and the new Ambassador returning. There were a hundred horse sent from the Grand Signor's stables, the *kaymakam's* [horses sent] for their Excellencies, the Gentlemen and [the] Merchants, so that the cavalcade consisted of 150 horse[s] with the *çavuş* and [it] was very handsome and orderly. The Grand Signor stood in a chamber upon the wall of the Seraglio, fronting the *kaymakam's* gate, and saw it through the lattices. The old Ambassador said he was come to resign his place to the new [one], who having made his compliments to the *kaymakam*, presented him his Majesty's letter for the Vizier Azem [e.g., the Grand Vizier], accompanied with one of his own. The usual ceremonies on such occasions being passed, the Ambassadors with 28 of their retinue were vested & the *kaymakam* showed great respect and civility to the Ambassadors in their reception, which was on the *sofra*. The return was in the same manner as the going, and the Grand Signor was then in the kiosk of the Seraglio on the waterside.⁴

In its emphasis on the 'usual ceremonies' exchanged between Trumbull and Receb Pasha, the official account of this meeting echoes the humdrum details of most European accounts of such ceremonial events. A procession through the city, the

³ BL Add. MS 34799, ff. 7^r-7^v.

⁴ BL Add. MS 72554, f. 7 in 'The Newes sent my Lord President 15th September 1687'.

hidden presence of the sultan, and the presentation of an official letter written by the King: these are the hallmarks of any meeting between a European diplomat and his Ottoman counterpart as they were reported in the letters of English ambassadors to their correspondents in London. It reveals little about Trumbull's actual experience of the event, nor does it offer a clue as to how this first meeting with Receb Pasha would gradually develop into the close friendship intimated in Trumbull's own reflections on the man. As such, the official dispatch is typical in how little it reveals about what life in Istanbul was actually like for someone like Trumbull.

The official dispatch is silent, for example, about the intricate personal networks of sociability that connected European diplomats and merchants with Ottoman subjects in seventeenth-century Istanbul. In part, this is because accounts of such events were themselves a genre with long-established conventions for what was reported and what was left out. Trumbull would have encountered these modes of diplomatic reportage in some printed texts like Rycaut's *Present State* but especially through the collection of archival documents that he had obtained in London as described in the previous chapter.⁵ For this reason, when it came to reports about audiences with Ottoman officials, ambassadorial dispatches tended to focus on matters of ceremony, precedence, and tradition. Little, if anything, was ever reported about the details of personal interactions or conversations that took place at such events. In this respect, it is not surprising that Trumbull reported little beyond the common platitudes about the 'usual ceremonies' in his dispatches to London—few ambassadors ever did.

The vision of the Trumbull-Receb relationship as it emerges in his writings is also at odds with the picture painted by other forms of evidence. This is especially the case with visual depictions of Ottoman ceremonies that included the presence of European diplomats and merchants. Consider, for example, an engraving of the reception of a Habsburg diplomat by the Sultan Ahmed III in 1720 as shown in Figure 5. The sultan sits in apparent silence, separated from the officials and representatives gathered together to see him. Within the crowd, the Europeans themselves are easily identified, flanked as they are by guards at their arms on each side. In the expansive chamber, lit only by a few small windows, there is also a pervading sense of silence and stillness in the room, broken only perhaps by an occasional whisper or murmur such as that of one official in the bottom right who, with a finger lifted, appears to be giving some instruction to one of the members of the Habsburg suite. Such representations of Ottoman ceremonies, widespread as they are, tend to reinforce a certain idea of the separateness of Europeans in Ottoman society, who stand out here as little more than a few European faces in a sea of Ottoman hats, feathers, and costumes. In many ways, evidence from visual culture reflects the more general place of Europeans within the framework of Ottoman law. From a legal perspective, that is, European merchants and diplomats

⁵ In addition to Rycaut, see the anonymous pamphlet, *A narrative of the success of the voyage of the right Honourable Heneage Finch, Earl of Winchilsea . . . from Smyrna to Constantinople* (London: I.R., 1661).



Figure 5. This engraving depicts the meeting of Sultan Ahmed III with an embassy sent by Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor, which had visited Istanbul from 1719 to 1721. Such ‘public’ audiences were a regular feature of diplomatic life in Istanbul. From Gerard Cornelius von den Driesch, *Historische Nachricht vont der Röm*, Nuremberg, 1723.

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were considered *müstemin* (Ar. *musta'min*), that is individuals granted *amān*, or protection, a legal status accorded only to non-Muslim foreigners living (temporarily, in principle) in the Ottoman Empire. In practice, this meant that Europeans in Istanbul were neither counted as Ottoman subjects nor could they be construed as a part of the *dhimmi* class of local Christians and Jews. Yet such legal categories, it must be said, functioned as normative principles about how Ottoman society should be organized, and they are limited in what they reveal about the reality of social interaction on the ground. It would be wrong to use such official, visual, and normative sources as an indication of the place of Europeans in everyday life in seventeenth-century Istanbul.

Uncovering this world of European-Ottoman sociability requires us to consider a different type of source more extensively: not the official reports that have been the basis of the study of European-Ottoman relations going back as far as the nineteenth century but rather the more informal, ephemeral, and personal documents produced in the course of everyday encounters between Europeans and Ottomans. For far too long, accounts of European-Ottoman exchanges were based on official dispatches held in national archives—the *relazioni* of Venice, the *dépêches diplomatiques* in the Quai d’Orsay in Paris, or the State Papers of London. But in recent

years, scholars have paid more and more attention to the various life-cycles experienced by these documents before they ended up as 'official' dispatches in the final forms in which they were deposited in state archives. Much of what is of interest to cultural historians lies in the intermediate stages of documents, for example the preparatory drafts, notes, and scribbles that took place before the final draft of a letter had been prepared for dispatch to Europe. This chapter uses such documents in these intermediary stages to explore the practice of sociability between Europeans and Ottomans in Istanbul.

In Trumbull's case, this also means paying special attention to the detailed diary that Trumbull kept of his daily experiences throughout his residence in Istanbul. Given the extensive and copious records kept by Trumbull, it is possible to place his diary in conversation with a wide range of other sources: from preliminary drafts of his letters, to a variety of newsletters he obtained in Istanbul, to the detailed records kept by the chancery. What emerges in these sources is a vision of the close relationships that connected Trumbull to a host of Ottoman subjects—Greek, Turkish, and Arabic-speaking—as well as a spectrum of European merchants, renegades, converts, priests, and less easily identified interlopers. That such interactions took place between such a range of individuals in Istanbul is central to the question of how wider information flows accumulated around such relationships. For this reason, before we consider how information transcended language barriers in Istanbul (the subject of the next chapter) we must reassess the place of Europeans in the social and political networks of the Ottoman capital. This was a world where relationships between Ottomans and Europeans were cemented through the exchange of gifts, where personal interaction was a regular feature of daily life, and a world where even friendship connected the lives of Europeans and Ottomans.

A MATERIAL WORLD

One could say that the world of William Trumbull in Istanbul was held together by Venice treacle. A salve with the consistency of thick molasses, treacle figured as a common ingredient in early modern European recipe books.⁶ It was a useful antidote to venom and was believed to fight a host of infections and diseases including the plague. The special reputation of Venice treacle made it natural for Ottoman officials to sometimes call on European diplomats when they wanted a cure from a faraway land, the powers of which one doctor traced back to the first-century Cretan physician Andromachus.⁷ In April 1678, for example, the English

⁶ See, for example, the Trumbull family recipe book, BL Add. MS 72619; Elaine Leong and Sara Pennell, 'Recipe Collections and the Currency of Medical Knowledge in the Early Modern "Medical Marketplace"', in *Medicine and the Market in England and its Colonies, c. 1450–1850* (London, 2007); on the use of potions in this period, see David Gentilcore, *Medical Charlatanism in Early Modern Italy* (Oxford, 2006).

⁷ William Gibson, *The farrier's dispensatory* (London, 1721), 146, cited in OED. On the actual efficacy of treacle, see Stephanie Pain, 'Mithridates's marvellous medicine', *New Scientist* (26 January 2008).

embassy sent a pot of Venice treacle to the *beylikçi* upon 'his earnest request'.⁸ The gift was recorded in the chancery register as having a value of about one and a half *akçes*, and it was a small price to pay to keep the English merchants on good terms with the countless bureaucrats that kept the Ottoman state functioning.⁹ In the fall of 1687, then, as Trumbull arrived in Istanbul, an assortment of treacle, ointments, and oil of cloves was sent to the Ottoman court along with the free services of one 'Doctor Malucelli', whose arrival must have been welcomed with open arms by one court official who suffered from a particularly severe 'indisposition in his feet'.¹⁰

Medicines were not the only commodities in motion between Ottoman and European circles in Istanbul. Sugar to 'an old Efendi, a friend of the nation', parmesan cheese 'for several at Court', and wine: these gifts were all recorded each month in the chancery registers of the English embassy.¹¹ Lest these gifts be dismissed as simple bribes, this was a culture of giving that operated in both directions, linking not only Europeans with Ottomans but also Ottoman officials with each other.¹² At the new year, for example, the Voivode of Pera presented the 'usual' (*al solito*) gift of fish to the English nation.¹³ Admittedly, foodstuffs were a trifle compared with the more expensive items regularly handed out to Ottoman officials: anything from telescopes to barometers to high-quality fabric.

Ottoman officials were especially fortunate if they were given a watch or a clock. In August 1688, the recently appointed grand vizier Bekri Mustafa Pasha was given a pendulum clock and a 'gold watch with several motions' valued at 230 *akçes*; for most officials, a clock worth about 35 *akçes* was more common.¹⁴ Watches were especially appreciated because they were the veritable gifts that kept on giving. Ottoman officials rarely had to mend their own clocks. Instead, any repairs were carried out by the small community of Protestant watchmakers who plied their trade in Istanbul, the expenses of which were usually paid for by European embassies. In 1685, Pierre de Girardin carried out a census of people falling under French protection in Istanbul. It mentioned some forty individuals identified as 'watchmakers' (*horlogeurs*). Some of these men had been born in Istanbul, such as one 'Jean Favre', while others like Jean Bouillon, Bernard Artaut, and Pierre Dunan had been there for over twenty years. Girardin's report also revealed the extent to which these men were established in local networks through intermarriage. Favre and Charles Rey de Rosez, for example, were both married to Greeks, and at least three of the men were described as being married to a 'slave'.¹⁵ With the permanent presence of such artisans in Istanbul, a single gift might last a lifetime, as was the

⁸ PRO SP 105/176, f. 482.

⁹ See, for example, the treacle sent to Mehmed Efendi, chief scribe to the Customer Hussein Ağa, in August 1678 in PRO SP 105/176, f. 483.

¹⁰ For Dr Malucelli's visits to the Court (at a cost of 7 *akçes*), see BL Add. MS 72558, f. 67r.

¹¹ BL Add. MS 72558: on sugar, f. 67v; on cheese, f. 178r.; on wine, PRO SP 105/176, f. 483.

¹² See, for example, the account of gifts exchanged between Ottoman officials at the circumcision festival of Mehmed IV's two sons in 1676 in Sieur de La Croix, *Mémoires du Sieur de La Croix* (Paris, 1684), vol. 2, 140–8.

¹³ See, for example, PRO SP 105/176, f. 482.

¹⁴ BL Add. MS 72558, ff. 147v and 149r; cf., 'Hilargrin[?]' watch on f. 147v.

¹⁵ The report was copied into Girardin's journal in BNF MS Fr. 7163, ff. 50–4.

case for one *reis efendi*, who received years of free repairs for his watches, first in 1677 and then throughout his career as he worked his way up the ranks.¹⁶ The average cost of a repair was 4 *akçes*, which was well worth the price if it meant preserving the friendship of an official whose 'armpits were swelling', as one Ottoman proverb put it, as he rose through the ranks of Ottoman officialdom.¹⁷ Within this world of gift-giving, even the most idiosyncratic demands could be met. In 1678, the English embassy recorded several gifts given to the *bostancı başı* to assist him with the building of a new house including 'red lead and other paints' and a 'chest of red earth . . . upon his earnest request'.¹⁸

The journal kept by Antoine Galland during his two year residence at the French embassy reveals how books, maps, and manuscripts were also exchanged between Ottomans and Europeans.¹⁹ Certainly, European printed books could be had from the Jesuits, and it is to them that Antoine Galland turned in 1672 for a copy of Athanasius Kircher's *Musurgia Universalis* (1650).²⁰ But Ottoman subjects also traded in European manuscripts: from one such peddler, Galland was able to obtain a Latin manuscript 'in vellum', which he estimated to be at least two hundred years old.²¹ Much like in Europe, where scholars were connected through correspondence networks, the exchange of books cemented social relationships between Ottomans and Europeans in Istanbul. Galland met regularly with Ottoman scholars who took him to visit booksellers, mapmakers, and other luminaries in the capital including the historian and polymath Husayn Efendi, better known to contemporaries as Hezârfenn, the 'man of a thousand arts'.²² With the help of two dragomans, Hezârfenn had incorporated Greek and Latin sources into his short history of the world. In September 1673, he was invited to dine at the French embassy by Galland and the ambassador Nointel, and he showed a special interest in several sketches of the grand vizier and the sultan by a roving French artist, Rhombart Fayd'herbe.²³ The conversations that took place in such interactions were not recorded by Galland in any detail, nor is it clear how exactly these men communicated with each other. Still, it is difficult to exaggerate how ordinary such relationships between Europeans and Ottomans must have been in daily life in the Ottoman capital.

¹⁶ An entry in the register for February 1678 mentions expenses 'paid for mending the Old Rais Effendi, now Janizarys Effendi watch' in PRO SP 105/176, f. 481.

¹⁷ The saying 'Koltukları kabarmak' comes from a nineteenth-century proverb collection compiled by Ahmed Midhat Efendi in E. J. Davis (ed.), *Osmanli proverbs and quaint sayings* (London, 1898).

¹⁸ PRO SP 105/176, ff. 483-4.

¹⁹ Antoine Galland, *Journal d'Antoine Galland pendant son séjour à Constantinople (1672-1673)*, ed. Charles Schefer (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1881).

²⁰ Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia Universalis, sive Ars magna Consoni et Dissoni in x. Libros digesta*, 2 vols. (Rome: Francisci Corbeletti, 1650). On Kircher, see Paula Findlen (ed.), *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man who Knew Everything* (London, 2004).

²¹ Galland, *Journal*, 25.

²² The only extensive study of Hezârfenn remains Heidrun Wurm, *Der Osmanische Historiker Hüseyin b. Gäfer : genannt Hezârfenn, und die Istanbul'er Gesellschaft in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1971).

²³ Galland, *Journal*, 150.

Medicines, clocks, books: the exchange of such gifts was but one expression of a vast world of sociability that connected Europeans and Ottomans in Istanbul.²⁴ At a more basic level, European diplomats and Ottoman officials were similar by virtue of their status as part of the elite in the Ottoman imperial system. This was at least how William Trumbull interpreted his treatment during his first audience with Sultan Süleyman II in August 1688. Two guards held Trumbull's arms as he was escorted into the sultan's chamber. When writing his memoirs years later, Trumbull referred to this as 'a mark of respect among the Turks, and so all their great men are attended'.²⁵ In an imperial system where status could be identified by counting horsetails, several other outward signs attested to the privileged status of European diplomats, alongside senior Ottoman officials.²⁶ Like other Ottoman officials, Trumbull was granted a daily allowance (*tayin*) by the state. A receipt drawn up for that very purpose for William Hussey, Trumbull's successor, included a daily cornucopia of goods: rice, butter, honey, raisins, cherries, onions, olives, fish, cheese, oil, herbs, candle wax, tallow, rice meal, eggs, yoghurt, milk, lemon water, vinegar, sugar, coffee, bread, coal, tobacco, wood, wine, chickens, barley, hay, flower, almonds, fresh cheese, fruit, lemon sherbet, conserve of roses, saffron, snow, and water—amounting to a total value of 4,461 *akçes*. In addition, Trumbull would have been provided with 600 *akçes* a day for miscellaneous expenses as well as a further supplement during Ramadan.²⁷

The status of European diplomats within the Ottoman system was also reflected in the way they were treated when they arrived in the Ottoman territories. If arriving by land, diplomats were usually appointed an official host (*mihmāndār*) to escort them all the way from the frontiers of the empire to the capital.²⁸ If a diplomat arrived by sea, his entrance could be a sensational event that drew large crowds to the port, attracted by news of a new diplomat and the sounds of merchant ships firing off one salute after another. Ottoman subjects were often recruited to assist with unloading and transporting an ambassador's goods from the ship to his residence.²⁹ Such events could sometimes be the occasion for calamities as was the case in 1685 when the ship of the French ambassador, Pierre de Girardin, entered the port for the first time. As several French ships saluted him, one of the cannons misfired into a local house, resulting in the death of a man. Forty *écus* were

²⁴ See Natalie Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (London, 2000); and the development of such ideas in Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner, and Bernhard Jussen (eds.), *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-modern Figurations of Exchange* (Gottingen, 2003), which also contains a useful bibliography of the literature on gift-giving. In an entirely different context, although perhaps more comparable to the Ottoman system, is the work on *guanxi* in China, for example Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets: The Art of Social Relationships in China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

²⁵ BL Add. MS 72555, f. 2.

²⁶ I have been influenced here by Roland Mousnier, *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598–1789*, trans. Brian Pearce (Chicago, 1979).

²⁷ See 'An account of the tayne demanded of the supreme vizier Mustafa Pasha Kuperlee by Sir William Hussey', 23 May 1691, BL Add. MS 72550, f. 111.

²⁸ Ignatius d'Ohsson, *Tableau générale de l'empire ottoman* (Paris: Didot, 1787), vol. 7, p. 492.

²⁹ BL Add. MS 72558, f. 66v.

taken from the ship's bombardiers, to which Girardin added a further sixty, and all of it was handed over as compensation to the family of the deceased.³⁰

When it came to ceremonial events, European diplomats were treated with the same pomp and circumstance used for senior Ottoman officials as well as notables arriving from the Islamic east such as the Tartar Khan or the envoys of the Uzbeks. This is even apparent in the provision of music for official processions through the city. Although written in a later period, Ignatius Mouradca d'Ohsson's *Tableau générale de l'Empire Ottoman* describes the details of ceremonial life in Istanbul in encyclopaedic fashion. In a section on music, Ohsson charts how subtle differences in the number and types of instruments during official processions were related to an individual's status in the imperial system.³¹ For example, the music that was played during a sultan's procession included sixty-two musicians, a number that was doubled during military processions when the sultan left the city for campaign. A similar selection of instruments was used for the grand vizier, but only a total of nine musicians. As for European diplomats, after public audiences they would travel back to their embassies accompanied by four companies of palace musicians. According to Ohsson, this music was the same as that 'used for Ottoman officials (*fonctionnaires*) who, on the day of their appointment, are honoured with the same military orchestras'.³² For the crowds that regularly gathered to watch such processions, the sights and sounds of a European diplomat's return to Pera would have been remarkably similar to those associated with Ottoman officials. Similarly, public audiences with the grand vizier or the sultan regularly ended with the giving of gifts to both European diplomats and Ottoman notables, with the quality of the fabric and the number of vests corresponding to an individual's elite status. Some Europeans were less interested in the gifts themselves than the money that could be obtained by selling them. This was the case in 1677 when John Covel, the embassy chaplain, sold his vest for a small profit after an audience with the sultan.³³

THE BUSINESS OF DIPLOMACY

The elaborate organization required by the routine ceremonies of diplomatic life in the Ottoman capital meant that such events routinely required the participation of both European and Ottoman elites and their households. From his arrival in Istanbul, Trumbull began to interact almost immediately with a host of Ottoman officials, and the demands of his post meant that he would encounter all ranks of Ottoman society from grand viziers down to the most lowly Ottoman scribes. Lord Chandos' dismissal required the approval of the Ottoman authorities, and so

³⁰ BNF MS Fr. 7163, ff. 37, 72–3.

³¹ On the value of the *Tableau générale* as a source, see Carter Findley, 'A Quixotic Author and His Great Taxonomy: Mouradca d'Ohsson and His *Tableau General de l'Empire Othoman*', unpublished paper available for download at (<http://www.oslo2000.uio.no/program/mt1b.htm>).

³² Ohsson, *Tableau générale*, 492.

³³ BL Add. MS 22910, f. 194; J. T. Bent (ed.), *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant: Extracts from the Diaries of Dr John Covel, 1670–1679* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1893), 196.

Trumbull's first task was to meet with Receb Pasha to obtain approval for this step. With two English diplomats on horseback, the affair was doubly lavish and necessitated the participation of Ottoman merchants and subjects. Because it was now Trumbull who was the ambassador, his personal servants had first choice of the embassy's stock of liveries and horses. As for Lord Chandos, additional supplies had to be hired at the covered market (*bezesten*) in order 'to avoid buying new' ones, as the embassy's chancery book described it.³⁴

The last time the embassy had invested this much in ceremonial garb was in preparation for the arrival of the Earl of Winchilsea after the Restoration in 1660.³⁵ Twenty-seven years later, no expense could be spared. Saddles decorated in crimson velvet and embroidery were commissioned along with silver stirrups for the two horses that carried the diplomats. Even the embassy servants were given fresh pairs of boots to wear. In total, the preparations cost some 830 *akçes*, but the expenses were well worth it. Trumbull's first encounter with an Ottoman official went off without any mishaps, even down to the detail of what food was served. At somebody's request, a platter of baklava was later sent by Receb Pasha's cook to the English embassy.³⁶

During his four years in Istanbul, Trumbull attended ten such 'public' audiences with Ottoman officials, ranging from the head of the imperial guard (*bostancı başı*) to the admiral of the navy (*kapudân pasha*) and to the sultan himself. 'Public audiences' were designated as such by contemporaries in part because they were in fact public events, fully in view of the residents of the Ottoman capital. Indeed, one should not ignore the extent to which Ottoman subjects participated in the preparations for these events. For the meeting with Receb Pasha, for example, janissaries had been borrowed from the Dutch embassy. Later in preparation for a public audience with the new grand vizier Mustafa Pasha in April 1688, the Master of the Imperial Stables (*mir-âkhür*) sent several of his own servants to the English embassy to assist with the carrying of presents during the procession. Crowds normally gathered on such occasions, attracted by the sight of a European diplomat being escorted by the imperial guard and, more likely, by the sound of cannons being fired from merchant ships in the port.

All of this required money, and a good deal of it. For when Trumbull's procession made its way to the centre of Ottoman officialdom, it was not out of the kindness of their hearts that ship captains saluted him with gunfire. In May 1688, several captains came to the embassy to collect what was owed to them: 7 *akçes* for Captains Bumsted, Jewell, Morris, and Cook, each of whom had fired fourteen guns in Trumbull's honour; 13 *akçes* for Captain Burrett's 26 guns; and 28 *akçes* for larger ships that fired 56 guns like those belonging to Captains Bailey and Fowles.³⁷ Captains who were fortunate enough to be in the right port at the

³⁴ BL Add. MS 72558, f. 67v.

³⁵ BL Add. MS 72558, f. 67v, for the reference to 'furniture for 3 horses fitted for his Excellency on public occasions which having been ever since the Earl of Winchilsea's time and become old to refit'.

³⁶ The embassy paid for the baklava a price of 3 *akçes*, BL Add. MS 72558, f. 69r.

³⁷ BL Add. MS 72558, f. 69v.

right time were not the only ones who benefited financially from public audiences. During processions, European diplomats regularly stopped at the Arsenal to distribute money to the slaves and captives imprisoned there.³⁸ Moreover, when Trumbull visited his Ottoman counterparts, he brought presents not only to them but also to everyone around them. When Trumbull came to meet the grand vizier Siyāvūş Pasha in January 1688, for example, he carried with him 180 pikes of fine cloth for the vizier along with gifts for no less than twenty-one other bureaucrats and assorted members of the vizier's household, all the way down to the man who served as a lowly scribe to the assistant of the vizier. On the same day, the chief *tezkereci* managed to have his watch mended for free.³⁹

Given the great expense of public audiences, what were Trumbull's encounters with his Ottoman counterparts during these events actually like? Perhaps one of the most intriguing descriptions of such an event comes from an extended account of Trumbull's meeting in January 1691 with the grand vizier, Fazil Mustafa Pasha, which Trumbull scribbled into his diary shortly after it had taken place. Trumbull had left the embassy early on the morning of 5 July in order to publicly congratulate the grand vizier on his reappointment during the shuffling of positions that followed the accession of Ahmed II to the sultanate. Trumbull had travelled across the Golden Horn and then on horseback, a journey of about forty-five minutes, and was joined on this occasion by two secretaries, Jacques d'Ayrolle and Thomas Coke, the embassy chaplain William Hayley, the dragoman Demetrasco Timone, as well as ten footmen, four of whom were dressed in 'Greek liveries'. Upon arriving at the Imperial Council, Trumbull took a seat 'over against' the grand vizier in a room 'full of my people and other Turks' including the *reis efendi* and the vizier's assistant (*kethüda*). What followed was a lively conversation between Trumbull and Fazil Mustafa Pasha mediated by his dragoman Demetrasco. This was how Trumbull described the exchange:

I said, I came with great satisfaction to join to the universal joy my congratulations for his arrival and success.

He [i.e. Fazil Mustafa] said, Thank the Ambassador.

I said, This was one of the greatest blessings of God when a person so just and prudent came to the government, who did not only know what was right, but had the will to execute it.

Vizier. Though the Mussulman Faith has been afflicted for some time, yet now it had pleased God to relieve them, as he had formerly done.

I said, That he was well acquainted with the ancient friendship what had passed inviolable between the 2 crowns for now above 100 years past; and as my

³⁸ For one such description, see Edouard de La Croix, 'Etat de la marine de l'empire Othoman, et le journal de l'armée navalle', BNF MS Fr. 14679, ff. 58–9.

³⁹ The gift registers kept by the English embassy provide a unique glimpse into fine gradations in status between Ottoman officials. On the event of Trumbull's audience with Siyavush Pasha, the officials who received gifts included, in order of seniority: 'the grand vizier, the vizier's *kethüda*, the *reis efendi*, the *cavus bashi*, the chief *tezkereci*, the second *tezkereci*, the *capicilar kethudasi* (introducer of ambassadors), the *mokhur aga*, the *salam aga*, the *bostanci oda bashi*, the *caftanci*, the *imbrabor*, the *cavuslar emin*, the *chavuslar katibi*, the *hassas bashi*, the *su bashi*, the *capicilar bolukbash*, the vizier's *bash choadar*, the *kiah's muhardar*, and the two chief scribes', BL Add. MS 72558, f. 79v.

predecessor and all the English nation had in the times of his noble progenitors, both his father and brother, received protection and favours, and our capitulations been formerly maintained, so I had no doubt of the same under his advancement.

Vizir. I know well that the English friendship has been true and constant, and I shall not be wanting on my part to do all that shall be reasonable, *mentre che non sara inespedito* (so my druggerman translated it).⁴⁰

Trumbull's reference to Fazil Mustafa's 'father and brother' recalls the great reformer Mehmed Köprülü and his son Ahmed, both of whom had been grand viziers to Mehmed IV.⁴¹ It is a crucial reminder of how personal networks were handed down from one generation to another.⁴² When he said the English had been 'true and constant', therefore, Fazil Mustafa Pasha might have been thinking about the way the French had secretly supported the Venetians against his brother, Ahmed, during his struggle to conquer Candia in the late 1660s.

After this first exchange of compliments, the usual delicacies were brought out including sweetmeats, coffee, sherbet, sweet-water, and perfumes. The formalities completed, Trumbull and Fazil Mustafa Pasha begin their conversation again in the presence of the *reis efendi*. Trumbull's record of it continues in the form of a dialogue:

Vizier: What news? Which I ask of you, because I know you will only tell what is true, and [you English] are not liars.

I said, I had not lately received any letters; only I heard my successor was departed, and came by way of Vienna.

Vizier: Does he come by land or sea?

I said: I could not yet tell him; When I knew, would inform.

Vizier. How is England (*in che stato*) with France?

I said, In war.

Vizier. It is much it should last so long.

⁴⁰ Trumbull, *Diary*, ff. 177–8. Although Trumbull's diary is mainly in English, Trumbull sometimes used Italian phrases when quoting things said to him by his dragomans. The vizier's comment 'mentre che non sara inespedito' obviously refers to the words spoken by Trumbull's dragoman, and not Fazil Mustafa.

⁴¹ Mehmed Köprülü was appointed grand vizier in September 1656, a post he held until his death in October 1661. Before his death, Mehmed agreed with Sultan Mehmed IV that his son, Ahmed, should succeed him. Consequently, Ahmed served as grand vizier from Mehmed's death in 1661 until his own death in 1676. His younger brother, Mustafa, served as grand vizier from 1689 until his death in September 1691. On the Köprülü dynasty, see M. Tayyib Gökbilgin's entry 'Köprülü' in *EI2*. On vizierial households more generally, see Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj, 'The Ottoman Vezir and Paşa Households 1683–1703: A Preliminary Report', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94.4 (1974), 438–47, and especially 444.

⁴² For a sense of how relationships formed in the past impacted on later interactions between Ottomans and Europeans, see Thomas Smith's report of the hospitality shown to him by an Ottoman gentleman in Bursa: 'But to satisfie us, he told us, that he had formerly received very great kindnesses from an English Merchant at Smyrna, and that he was resolved for his sake to be civil to his Countreymen, wherever he met them. Not content with this, he would scarce give us leave to depart, proffered us the use of his House, while we stayed in Bursa; and upon our refusal, took a solemn farewell of us, and sent one of his Slaves to attend upon us to the Seraglio, which we had a great mind to look into', in Thomas Smith, *Remarks upon the Manners, Religion and Government of the Turks* (London: Moses Pitt, 1680) pp. 37–8.

I said, It had not yet lasted above a year and a half.

Vizier. Wars between you in Christendom are to be quickly ended.

I said, The cause of this war being by reason of the injustices and usurpations of the French, I thought this would last till they were forced to make restitutions of what they had got unjustly. But yet this might not be long, for the French were necessitated to seek for peace, and did their utmost endeavours to obtain it. And this I knew, that on the Rhine, nothing was done this year, for the French would not fight, but retired for the Germans; and the Dauphin was returned to Paris.

Vizier. This is the art of war.

I said to him, I had any news worth imparting to him, if he would give me leave, I would come and acquaint him.

Vizier. Yes, for I know you will tell me only the Truth. Then added, Methinks it is long since any of your ships came to this Port.

I said, Not above 2 months some were arrived.

Vizier. I thought they had been only the Dutch ships.

[*At this point, the reis effendi intervened, saying*:] Ours [i.e., the English] and theirs came together.

Vizier. How long were they departed from England?

I said, Almost a year, having been detained by storms and contrary winds and forced to stay at Cadiz.

Vizier. Where is Cadiz?

Again, the reis effendi: Near the Straights.

Vizier. In what dominions is Cadiz?

Reis Effendi. In the King of Spain's.

Then I said that I had troubled him too long and made an excuse;

So I took leave, saying, I would come another time, wishing him all health and prosperity.⁴³

Thus ends the only trace of a conversation that took place between a European diplomat and a son of the great Köprülü household, the culmination of a ceremony that lasted only a few hours.

Not all such encounters were described by Trumbull in such detail. After his first audience with Sultan Süleyman II on 7 August 1688, Trumbull only wrote in his diary, 'My audience with the Grand Signor passed over well, thank God (*Laus Deo*)'.⁴⁴ But from other notes drawn up by him after the event, it is clear that public audiences provided an important occasion for sociability between Europeans and Ottomans. At the same audience with the sultan, after a brief greeting from the grand vizier, Trumbull watched as he continued with the business of the Imperial Council including the payment of the janissaries. After this was completed, five tables were set up. At the first sat Trumbull and the grand vizier, almost certainly with their dragomans alongside them. At a similar occasion some ten years earlier, the English ambassador John Finch described how the dragomans made he and his Ottoman hosts 'mutually intelligible' to each other.⁴⁵ As for the twelve English

⁴³ Trumbull, *Diary*, ff. 177–8. We should not be surprised by Fazil Mustafa's reliance on the *reis effendi*, which in many ways mirrored Trumbull's own dependence on his secretary, as we shall see in chapter five.

⁴⁴ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 102v.

⁴⁵ This was most likely a reference to Giorgio Draperis, in G. F. Abott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople* (London: Macmillan, 1920), 141.

merchants that Trumbull had brought with him, they were divided into groups of four and each group was hosted at a separate table by a different Ottoman official. One group sat with the viziers of the Council; the second was accompanied by the Imperial Treasurer (*defterdâr*); and the third group sat with the head of the chancery (*nişancı başı*). Alone at a fifth table were the two imperial judges of Rumelia and Anatolia (*kazasker*), who as members of the *ulema* were, Trumbull noted, rarely seen dining publicly with non-Muslims. The meal included some sixty dishes, and a further 108 settings were put out for the rest of Trumbull's party who had not been admitted into the audience. The fact that some merchants like Dudley North had at least a basic command of spoken Turkish suggests that the meal would have been an opportunity for conversation, even within the highly ceremonial confines of the event. Unfortunately, unlike his discussion with Fazıl Mustafa Pasha, Trumbull did not record any specific details of what words were exchanged, if any, on this occasion.⁴⁶

In addition to public audiences, Trumbull also met directly with Ottoman officials in informal settings. Unlike public audiences, the incidence of private meetings left fewer traces in official sources. In his diary, for example, Trumbull mentions no fewer than ten 'private' meetings he had with Ottoman officials, none of which appear in any official sources of the Levant Company. On such occasions, Trumbull usually describes himself as having travelled 'incognito' or as having entered an official's residence 'through the back door'. The reasons for meeting privately with Ottoman officials ranged from the practical to the more strategic. Because they were conducted without any ceremonies, private meetings were much less expensive than public ones. In a meeting with the *kaymakam* in March 1690, Trumbull took with him only two dragomans, two secretaries, two janissaries, and four footmen for protection. Surprisingly perhaps, this was a small retinue when compared with the number of people he brought with him to a public audience.⁴⁷ Secondly, private meetings gave diplomats an opportunity to improve their relationships with Ottoman officials without the interference of other European diplomats. This was especially important during Trumbull's residence in Istanbul, given that one of his main responsibilities involved privately opposing French efforts to keep the Ottomans at war with the Habsburgs.

Incidentally, Trumbull's meeting with Receb Pasha, which opened this chapter, was not mentioned anywhere in Trumbull's journal. This was likely the case with most of the meetings Trumbull had with Ottoman officials, certainly the private ones. In most cases, Trumbull kept only brief records of what transpired. In December 1688, for example, Trumbull met with Kollikos Mehmed Pasha, who had recently been appointed Admiral of the Navy. After stopping at the Arsenal to

⁴⁶ My account of Trumbull's audience in August 1688 relies on his memoirs in BL Add. MS 72555. The manuscript is incomplete and begins in mid-sentence. The earlier folios of the manuscript appear to have ended up in All Souls MS 317, although the manuscript lacks the section that would have included Trumbull's reflections on the first year of his residence in Istanbul. Nevertheless, some idea of these reflections appear to be available in an earlier draft form, now in BL Add. MS 34799.

⁴⁷ On this occasion, Trumbull travelled on foot and 'went in back door of [the] Caimacam[s]' house, in Trumbull, *Diary*, ff. 150–1.

meet with English captives, Trumbull went to meet the official and, afterwards, he described the experience in a few, terse lines in his diary: 'He [Kollikos Mehmed] rose up when I was vested and stood still till I put it on. Very civil. Gave me 3 English slaves and said he would always keep the capitulations'.⁴⁸ Still, it is clear that these private sessions offered both diplomats and Ottoman officials an opportunity to obtain information from each other as well as to verify (or discredit) information they had obtained from others. After one meeting with a *kaymakam*, for example, Trumbull wrote that the *kaymakam* 'called for coffee, sherbet, and perfumes. And when I would have departed, [he] stayed me and talked of news, cursing the French Ambassador for [undermining] the peace [i.e., with the Habsburgs]'.⁴⁹ For this reason, private meetings were themselves a subject of constant speculation among European diplomats, merchants, and even mid-level agents in the embassies. After a public audience of the French ambassador with the *kaymakam*, Trumbull mused in his diary that the two had probably met afterwards in a private session, the 'Caimacam desiring news'.⁵⁰ With regard to another meeting between the French ambassador and the *kaymakam*, Trumbull elicited the opinions of his staff: the dragoman Antonio Perone 'said it was to tell news' although Thomas Coke, the Company secretary, thought otherwise.⁵¹ What matters, at any rate, is the extent to which contemporaries recognized the potential for private meetings to become the setting for the exchange of news between Europeans and Ottomans.

THE ENGLISH EMBASSY

Outside the official business of diplomacy, one of the most important sites for sociability was the English embassy itself where Ottoman officials, merchants, scholars, and brigands might interact daily with European merchants and dignitaries. 'Coffee and sherbet for strangers' was kept on hand for Turkish guests who might drop by for all sorts of reasons.⁵² In February 1688, a 'Turkish effendi' stopped at the embassy to ask Trumbull if he could borrow one of his dragomans. Trumbull obliged and even asked the scholar to stay for dinner.⁵³ A month later, Trumbull and the English merchants organized a feast in honour of Yeğen Mehmed Ağa, an official who had recently been appointed as an envoy to England and France to announce the accession of Sultan Süleyman. The celebration was part of an elaborate plan by Trumbull to persuade the envoy not to travel to London so that the Levant Company might avoid the high cost of gifts and expenses that would be required of them if the envoy ever made it there. For his part, Yeğen Mehmed Ağa brought to the embassy with him 'many other considerable Turks', and 207 *akçes* were spent on sugar, sweetmeats, sherbet, perfume,

⁴⁸ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 111v.

⁵⁰ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 161v.

⁵² BL Add. MS 72558, f. 77v.

⁴⁹ Trumbull, *Diary*, ff. 150–1.

⁵¹ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 164v.

⁵³ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 98r.

sweetwater, coffee, and even tobacco and pipes to entertain all the guests.⁵⁴ No mention is made in Trumbull's diary about what was discussed that evening once the pipes had been lit.⁵⁵

Dinners and celebrations at the embassy might attract the interests of Ottoman subjects even if the celebrations had nothing to do with them. This was the case in October 1688 when the English embassy organized a 'public rejoicing' in honour of the recent birth of the Prince of Wales. The French apothecary, Jean-Paul Chabert, was placed in charge of the event, and detailed records of the menu, seating arrangements, and even the order of drinking toasts exist today among Trumbull's papers. Present at the party were the entire European community of Istanbul, including the Dutch ambassador, Jacobus Colyer (with his mother and brother alongside him), the French ambassador, Pierre de Girardin and his wife, and the heads of all the major religious orders including the Dominicans, Capuchins, Franciscans, and the Jesuits, not to mention several dragomans all in attendance with their masters. It is unclear whether any Ottoman officials were present at this dinner, yet this is not to say that Ottoman subjects did not participate in other ways. In one description of the event, no fewer than twenty janissaries were enlisted to help that evening. Eight were assigned to the gates, and they were forbidden 'to let in the Turks'.⁵⁶ The reference to 'Turks' here is to large crowds of local residents who had gathered at the embassy and had been given bread and permitted to watch the fireworks. In this way, the public, charitable acts of European diplomats mirrored those of their Ottoman counterparts for the local population.⁵⁷

Ottoman merchants also came to the embassy for assistance in matters of business and trade. In November 1687, for example, the *bostancı başı* sent his lieutenant (*haseki*) to Trumbull to ask for help in recuperating money owed to him by one Yusuf Efendi in Tripoli. Given that English merchants were active in the Tripoli trade, he might have expected that Trumbull could have some influence in the matter.⁵⁸ In this case at least, the official clearly had overestimated Trumbull's power, and Trumbull apologized that he could do not do anything to help his cause. On another occasion in August 1689, Trumbull was greeted by another man, named Yusuf Efendi, whom Trumbull described as 'a brutal fellow' who had been attempting to secure a loan from the English merchants. Apparently, he assumed that Trumbull could simply order one of his merchants to hand over the loan, and Trumbull had to explain that he had no such jurisdiction over the English merchants: 'The nation were free, if they would lend, let it be so. But I would use no force'.⁵⁹

The English embassy was also integrated into the ebbs and flows of local Ottoman politics. Trumbull's arrival in the Ottoman capital coincided with the

⁵⁴ BL Add. MS 72558, f. 73v.

⁵⁵ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 98v.

⁵⁶ BL MS Add. 72550, f. 105v.

⁵⁷ For a description of the celebration, see BL Add. MS 72550, ff. 102–8, and the French account of it in BL Add. MS 72554, ff. 65–9.

⁵⁸ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 94r.

⁵⁹ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 144r.

great turmoil caused by the deposition of Mehmed IV in November 1687. In the chaos following the army's march into Istanbul, the rebels targeted several Ottoman officials in search of their wealth. It was in this context that one panicked official called on and asked if he could hide his jewels in the embassy until the rebels had been put down. The man had even brought his servant with him to act as a witness. Trumbull offered to help and accepted the jewels into the embassy. Later that same day, the official returned and requested that Trumbull return the jewels to him. Without the man's servant being present to witness the return of the jewels to their owner, Trumbull refused to hand them over, and he threatened to simply hand the jewels to the *kaymakam*. This was enough to convince the official to be patient: he found his servant and later returned to the embassy. With his dragomans present as witnesses to the exchange, Trumbull returned the jewels to the official who explained to Trumbull, through the mediation of Trumbull's dragoman, Draco Testa, that he had been 'melancholy and afraid, i.e., of being killed, and having his jewel lost'.⁶⁰

Even in less chaotic times, Ottoman officials relied on European diplomats for assistance when it came to carrying out specific tasks related to the administration of the empire. It was in this way that Trumbull came to play a role in the transport of a few Ottoman governors and officials to their respective provinces. In February 1689, for example, the *kapudān pasha* sent to Trumbull to ask permission for a *kadi* to travel to Alexandria on the ship of Captain Wanslaw. Given the recent surge in activity by French corsairs, Trumbull was reluctant to take responsibility for the *kadi* or his goods in the event the ship was captured. The next day, the matter was brought to Trumbull again, this time by a Turkish merchant (formerly based in Aleppo) who came to the embassy along with another Ottoman gentleman and Alexander Jacob, the Levant Company treasurer. Jacob had himself been based in Aleppo before coming to Istanbul, and presumably he was friends with the Turkish merchant. They renewed their request that the *kadi* be permitted to travel with Captain Wanslaw, and Trumbull finally assented but only under the condition that Jacob draw up an official *hüccet* that cleared the English nation of any responsibility for the safety of the *kadi*, his household, or his goods.⁶¹ This was part of the larger role played by English shipping more generally, especially when it came to trade routes that lay west to North Africa and east to India. As far as the Ottoman state was concerned, English merchants and diplomats might be enlisted to ensure that its officials made it safely to their posts, and chancery records indicate that English diplomats provided transport and protection for Ottoman officials dating back at least to the 1650s.⁶²

If Trumbull's days were taken up by trade and diplomacy, a significant amount of his time in Istanbul was also spent travelling in the capital and further afield. Like

⁶⁰ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 111r.

⁶¹ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 119v.

⁶² See, for example, the letter of recommendation by Thomas Bendysh for the Ottoman envoy to the Indies, 'Siydoo Mohi Yolu', to travel to the Indies on an English ship on 23 June 1650 or the 'passaporta' for Mehmed Pasha, governor of Algiers, who travelled on a Dutch ship along with fifty in his company on 12 December 1650 in SP 105/174.

many of his contemporaries, Trumbull's wanders and adventures—rambling, or 'a *spasso*' as he called it—took him to ancient sites such as the Roman aqueducts ('noble pieces of architecture'), the Hippodrome, and the church of Hagia Sophia.⁶³ Several of the sites that Trumbull explored were not ancient ones at all, but rather what we might call 'modern' Ottoman, Muslim sites: mosques, *tekkes*, and even the homes of Ottoman officials and subjects. Long before the architectural changes of the eighteenth century that witnessed a surge in the number of gardens and fountains in Istanbul, the homes of high-ranking Ottoman officials had been ideally situated for social gatherings and long afternoons in contemplation of pleasant views along the waterways.⁶⁴ English merchants regularly visited these sites, and Trumbull was no exception. He even took his wife with him on several of these journeys. In December 1688, for example, Trumbull mentions that he went 'with my wife on *spasso* to the canal to see Solyman Pasha's house'.⁶⁵ A few days later, Trumbull travelled with several English merchants including John Evans, Ralph Lane, and Peter Whitcombe to see 'the house and the canal belonging to the Silahdar Ağa', or the imperial sword-bearer.⁶⁶ In October 1689, Trumbull even visited the fortress of Yediküle, or Seven Towers, the famous jail where Trumbull's Venetian predecessors had often found themselves imprisoned. From Yediküle, he and his party travelled by water to the house of the Master of the Imperial Stables where a group of merchants and Ottomans dined together at the official's kiosk.⁶⁷

Trumbull's visits to these sites points to a larger pattern of attendance by Europeans at events organized by Ottoman officials. These interactions were the subject of great interest among members of the Levant Company. In May 1690, Ralph Lane, who had lived as a merchant in Istanbul for over twenty years, submitted a written report to Trumbull about a gathering at 'a place called the Vizzir's Garden where I was invited by a friend to see an entertainment the Vizier today made [for] the Grand Signior'.⁶⁸ Lane speculated that the entertainments were organized by the grand vizier as a 'reconciliation feast' in response to rumours that the Sultan's favourites were opposed to the vizier in an attempt to improve his 'interest within the Seraglio'. Aside from the 'eating part', Lane described several displays of marksmanship, bombs, and the setting off of several mines. That other Ottoman subjects were present here is clear from Lane's description of the shock sent through the crowds when the mines were sprung ('they came tipping and tumbling one another down like nine pins and rolling head over heels to the bottom of the mountain'). The displays were followed by a match of *cirit*, a sport played on horseback, at which point Lane reports that he left 'for I was made ragingly hungry by seeing so much good victuals and could get none of it'. Such events could provide the basis for political and ethnographic analysis of the

⁶³ On the aqueducts, Trumbull, *Diary*, ff. 133r., 151v.

⁶⁴ Shirine Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle, 2007).

⁶⁵ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 109v. Trumbull might have been referring here to the house of the former grand vizier Süleyman Pasha, who had been executed just a few weeks after Trumbull's arrival in Istanbul.

⁶⁶ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 111r.

⁶⁷ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 167r.

⁶⁸ Letter from Lane to Trumbull, May 1690, BL Add. MS 72528, f. 22.

Ottoman world. Lane's report, for example, presented Trumbull with information about the sultan himself:

I observed the Grand Signor lay down to sleep twice, he being always intensely obedient to the two notorious and lazy impulses of nature, and indeed I dare say he was all this while sensible of nothing else, for one ought not to presume to tell lies of a prince and to do his Majesty farther right, I am well informed he is so little troubled with the understanding, I think its called the intellectual . . . [animale rationale], that he has but a very little almost invisible bit of it in him, in so much that when his will is asked about anything, which by their law they are to ask of him, in some things, when they would have it in the affirmative, they cry, Emperor look down, look down, & when they would have it in the negative, Emperor look up, look up.

Lane does not reveal the origin of this anecdote, nor is it possible to verify its authenticity. But as we shall see in Chapter 5, such reports and observations obtained from personal encounters between Europeans and Ottomans would reappear in the letters and dispatches sent by Trumbull himself to his correspondents in Europe. This was one way that social interactions between Europeans and Ottomans in Istanbul could impact on flows of information about the Ottoman world circulating in Europe.

During his travels, Trumbull was often accompanied by his wife, Katherine, a reminder of the place of women in this public world of sociability in Istanbul. The two occasionally took evening strolls through a nearby cemetery.⁶⁹ In March 1689, they crossed the Golden Horn in order to visit the local mosques. The tour began with a visit to Hagia Sophia from where they continued onwards to the mosque of Sultan Ahmet and, lastly, the mosque of the Valide Sultan (today's Yeni Cami). Trumbull was especially pleased that, 'the Turks [were] very civil (as to me and my wife) to let us come in with our shoes on. [They] cried out a little against the rest [i.e. the rest of Trumbull's party], but let them pass'.⁷⁰ In a separate trip, Trumbull was less fortunate when he attempted to climb to the top of a mosque so that he might capture a view of the Ottoman capital. As he described it, the local residents were frustrated with visitors constantly looking into their houses:

Went a *spasso* with Hayly [the chaplain] and Mr Evans to take a view of Istanbul upon the top of that mosque, but the old man was out of the way, and the others said they durst not, the parish complaining that those that went up over looked [in] their houses, i.e., [at] their wives and women.⁷¹

This is a common refrain in early modern travelogues, but it appears here to be based on some of the real problems arising from the mobility of Europeans in Istanbul. Like other diplomats, Trumbull even managed to visit several places of Muslim devotion. At the embassy, he had occasionally come across religious men who he referred to as 'greenheads'. This was on account of the colour of the hats they wore, a privilege allowed to them as *sayyads*, or descendants, of the Prophet. In

⁶⁹ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 128v.

⁷⁰ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 151v.

⁷¹ Trumbull, *Diary*, ff. 167–8.

October 1689, Trumbull spent the morning at a *tekke* watching the dervishes. This was how he described the ceremony in his diary:

Went to see the dervishes here. Heard a sermon about charity, which brings us near to God. The rest in praise of their Prophet. Great silence and gravity in their devotions. Strong swiftness and continuance in turning around.⁷²

That such ceremonies might be open to Europeans is clear from the several engravings of the ceremonies that circulated in printed European works of the time, such as an image of whirling dervishes in Istanbul printed in London in 1714 (see Figure 6). Less clear, however, is exactly how Trumbull was able to make sense



Derviches dans leur salle de Sema, achevant de tourner.

Figure 6. In Pera, Trumbull attended a dervish lodge where he commented on their 'strong swiftness . . . in turning around'. This engraving of a similar scene was published in Jacques Le Hay's *Recueil de cent estampes representant différentes nations du Levant*, London, 1714.

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⁷² Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 168v.

of a Turkish sermon 'about charity', let alone how he interpreted particular acts of devotion used by the dervishes themselves. As in so many other instances, he was probably relying on information he had obtained from local informants.

It is important to remember that Trumbull's travels in the Ottoman capital would not have been possible without the explicit sanction and participation of Ottoman officials and subjects. On the most basic level, Trumbull's staff of embassy janissaries (*yasakçılar*) facilitated Trumbull's interactions with local Ottoman subjects. In May 1688, during a journey to Therapia (modern-day Tarabya), a coastal village north of Istanbul, Trumbull became anxious after hearing rumours that an English merchant had recently been infected there by the plague. He instructed his janissary to confirm with local residents whether the claim was true. When Trumbull arrived at the house that had been appointed for him, 'the Janissary called the woman of the house who confessed one was sick there of a swelling under his throat but denied [that] it was the plague'.⁷³ More generally, Trumbull was only permitted to travel if he had obtained the permission of the *bostancı başı*, the official responsible for monitoring all movement along Istanbul's waterways and land routes. Lest this be seen as some sort of blanket restriction on European mobility, it bears noting that Trumbull would have been accustomed to such surveillance from England where, in principle, travellers also had to secure approval from the King before going abroad.⁷⁴ As it turned out, not all of Trumbull's requests were granted. In March 1688, Trumbull lamented that the *bostancı başı* had 'refused to give me leave to see Besiktas'.⁷⁵ Yet through restrictions, Ottoman officials did their part to contribute to the security of Europeans. This was the case when Trumbull, his wife, and several English merchants were returning from a visit to the house of Süleyman Pasha. They were harassed by a 'drunken Turk'—how, Trumbull does not say. Because of the man's claim that he was a janissary, or perhaps in spite of it, Trumbull ordered two of his dragomans, Draco Testa and Giorgacchi Yerrachi, to seize the man and hand him over to the Janissary Ağa. As one of the dragoman reported back to him later, Trumbull had the full support of the Janissary Ağa:

The next day, Giorgacchi went [to the Janissary Ağa] and the fellow [i.e., the drunken Turk], saying he was a Topci [*topcu*, member of the artillery corps], the Janissary Ağa called for the Topci Basha, and ordered him to give him 100 drubbs on the buttocks for saying the day before he was a janissary, and 100 on the feet as being now a topci, and then to be banished, with his complements to me.⁷⁶

The incident could be taken as an indication that the identities that mattered most in Istanbul were not always those prescribed by Ottoman law—*musta'min*/subject, Christian/Muslim—but rather the social distinctions that marked elites off from everybody else.

⁷³ Trumbull, *Diary*, 130r.

⁷⁴ Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 22.

⁷⁵ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 123r.

⁷⁶ Trumbull, *Diary*, ff. 109–11.

As with official ceremonies, listening in to the conversations that took place as Europeans travelled in the Ottoman world is difficult given the sources. One journey, however, reveals that local politics and trade were at least a topic of conversation between Europeans and Ottomans. The Black Sea was a regular destination for English merchants, and the merchant Ralph Lane even kept a house there. In June 1688, Trumbull travelled to the Black Sea and stayed with a man who claimed to be the former assistant to Kara Mustafa Pasha, the infamous grand vizier who had commanded the siege of Vienna in 1683. On this evening, Trumbull must have been especially amused by the conversation, because he recorded part of his discussion with the Ottoman gentleman in his diary:

He asked me, What was the reason our cloth from England was not so good as it used to be? I asked him, What was the reason money in this empire was not so plentiful as heretofore, adding [that] if you'll find good money, we'll find good cloth. At which the other Turks and he fell a laughing.⁷⁷

Because Trumbull did not speak Turkish, we know that this exchange was only made possible through the mediation of a dragoman (or some other go-between), silent and invisible as ever in the sources. The next chapter provides a fuller discussion of the role of such intermediaries in circulating information. For now, I only want to highlight the potential of such encounters, which resulted in the exchange of information, stories, and anecdotes, as people gathered together in what is perhaps one of the oldest ways of passing time, chatting away about news of current events.

CONCLUSION

The image of Trumbull and a few Ottoman officials connected in a moment of laughter as they poked fun at national trade and politics reveals how personal relationships in Istanbul, even brief, fleeting encounters, could set the stage for the exchange of information between Europeans and Ottomans. In this respect, Trumbull's experience in Istanbul was no different from that of countless other Europeans who were able to integrate themselves into local networks across China, India, and Latin America. Vast networks of gift-giving, similar status in ceremonies, and daily exchanges brought about through the business of diplomacy: all of these contributed to a world of sociability in the Ottoman capital that included both Europeans and Ottomans.

But at the centre of all this, we must remember, were individuals, with their own aspirations, fears, and circumstances. Consider, for example, one poor soul, a deposed *kaymakam*, who was surprised to find that he still remained in Trumbull's good graces after he had been deposed. Trumbull sent his dragoman, Antonio Perone, to greet him, and the old *kaymakam* 'took it very kindly, saying, this was

⁷⁷ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 132v.

true friendship, which few showed when out of office'.⁷⁸ The words of this man reveal as much about the precarious position of an official in an imperial system where a new vizier could be appointed each year, as they do about the potential for friendship between Europeans and Ottomans. Even when these individuals could not understand each other's languages, they were connected by networks of people—dragomans, doctors, servants, scribes, renegades, and other agents—who were in constant motion between Ottoman and European households and, as such, they were at the centre of information flows between Istanbul and London.

⁷⁸ Trumbull, *Diary*, f. 170r.