



Routledge Research in Early Modern History

DIPLOMATIC CULTURES AT THE OTTOMAN COURT, c.1500–1630

Edited by
Tracey A. Sowerby and
Christopher Markiewicz



Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500–1630

In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman court in Constantinople emerged as the axial centre of early modern diplomacy in Eurasia. *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500–1630* takes a unique approach to diplomatic relations by focusing on how diplomacy was conducted and diplomatic cultures forged at a single court: the Sublime Porte. It unites studies from the perspectives of European and non-European diplomats with analyses from the perspective of Ottoman officials involved in diplomatic practices. It focuses on a formative period for diplomatic procedure and Ottoman imperial culture by examining the introduction of resident embassies on the one hand, and on the other, changes in Ottoman policy and protocol that resulted from the territorial expansion and cultural transformations of the empire in the sixteenth century. The chapters in this volume approach the practices and processes of diplomacy at the Ottoman court with special attention to ceremonial protocol, diplomatic sociability, gift-giving, cultural exchange, information gathering, and the role of para-diplomatic actors.

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Christopher Markiewicz

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Abbreviations

Archives

ASVe	<i>Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice</i>
BOA	<i>Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul</i>
HHStA	<i>Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna</i>
TNA	<i>The National Archives, London</i>
TSMA	<i>Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, Istanbul</i>
TSMK	<i>Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul</i>

Journals

AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AO	<i>Archivum Ottomanicum</i>
AOASH	<i>Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
HJ	<i>Historical Journal</i>
JEMH	<i>Journal of Early Modern History</i>
JMEMS	<i>Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</i>
JMH	<i>Journal of Modern History</i>
JOS	<i>The Journal of Ottoman Studies (Osmanlı Araştırmaları)</i>

Printed Sources

Charrière	<i>Negociations de la France dans le Levant: ou, Correspondances, mémoires et actes diplomatiques des ambassadeurs de France à Constantinople et des ambassadeurs, envoyés ou résidents à divers titres à Venise, Raguse, Rome, Malte et Jérusalem, en Turquie, Perse, Géorgie, Crimée, Syrie, Égypte, etc., et dans les états de Tunis, d'Alger, et de Maroc</i> , ed. Ernst Charrière, 4 vols. (Paris, 1848–1860)
CSPF	<i>Calendar of State Papers Foreign of the Reign of Elizabeth I</i> , ed. Joseph Stevenson et al., 23 vols. (London, 1863–1950)

- CSPV *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice*, ed. R. Brown et al., 38 vols. (London, 1864–1947)
- Feridun Beğ Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşe'ātü's-selāṭīn*, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1274–1275 [1858])
- Ibn Iyas Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr wa-waqā'i' al-duhūr*, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1960)
- Iskandar Munshī Iskandar Munshī, *The History of Shah 'Abbas the Great/ Tārīk- e 'ālamārā-ye 'Abbāsī*, ed. and trans. Roger Savory, 3 vols. (New York, 1978–1986)
- al-Nahrawali *Journey to the Sublime Porte: The Arabic Memoir of a Sharīfian Gent's Diplomatic Mission to the Ottoman Imperial Court in the Era of Suleyman the Magnificent*, ed. and trans. Richard Blackburn (Beirut, 2005)
- Sanuto Marino Sanuto, *I Diarii Marino Sanuto (MDCCCCXCVI–MDXXXIII) dall'autografo Marciano ital.*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al., 58 vols. (Venice, 1879–1903)
- Selaniki Selānikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selānikî*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli, 2 vols. (Istanbul 1989)

Note on Transliteration

Arabic and Persian terms, texts, and book titles that appear in the body of the text are transliterated following a slightly modified version of the system used by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. No macrons or diacritics are included. Ottoman Turkish terms are rendered according to the principles of modern Turkish orthography. Names and titles in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish cited in endnotes and in the bibliography are fully transliterated with all macrons and diacritics according to the transliteration principles governing the language of that work. Terms that have entered regular English usage are not translated (pasha, vizier, etc.). Names of individuals generally follow the transliteration conventions of the language that predominated in their principal location of activity. Hence, although Turkic, names of Mamluks are transliterated using Arabic conventions (Qayitbay, Tanibay, etc.), while names of Turkmen from Safavid Iran are transliterated using Persian conventions (e.g. Tuqmaq Khan).

Major toponyms are rendered in their established anglicized form whenever possible. We refer to the city of Constantinople by this name since it is closest to official Ottoman usage (*Kostantiniyye*) during the period covered in this volume. Minor place names are transliterated according to the principles of the language that predominated in the area (e.g. Marj Dabiq).

Dates are given in the Common Era, except for Table 2.1, where equivalent dates for the Hijri calendar are also included.

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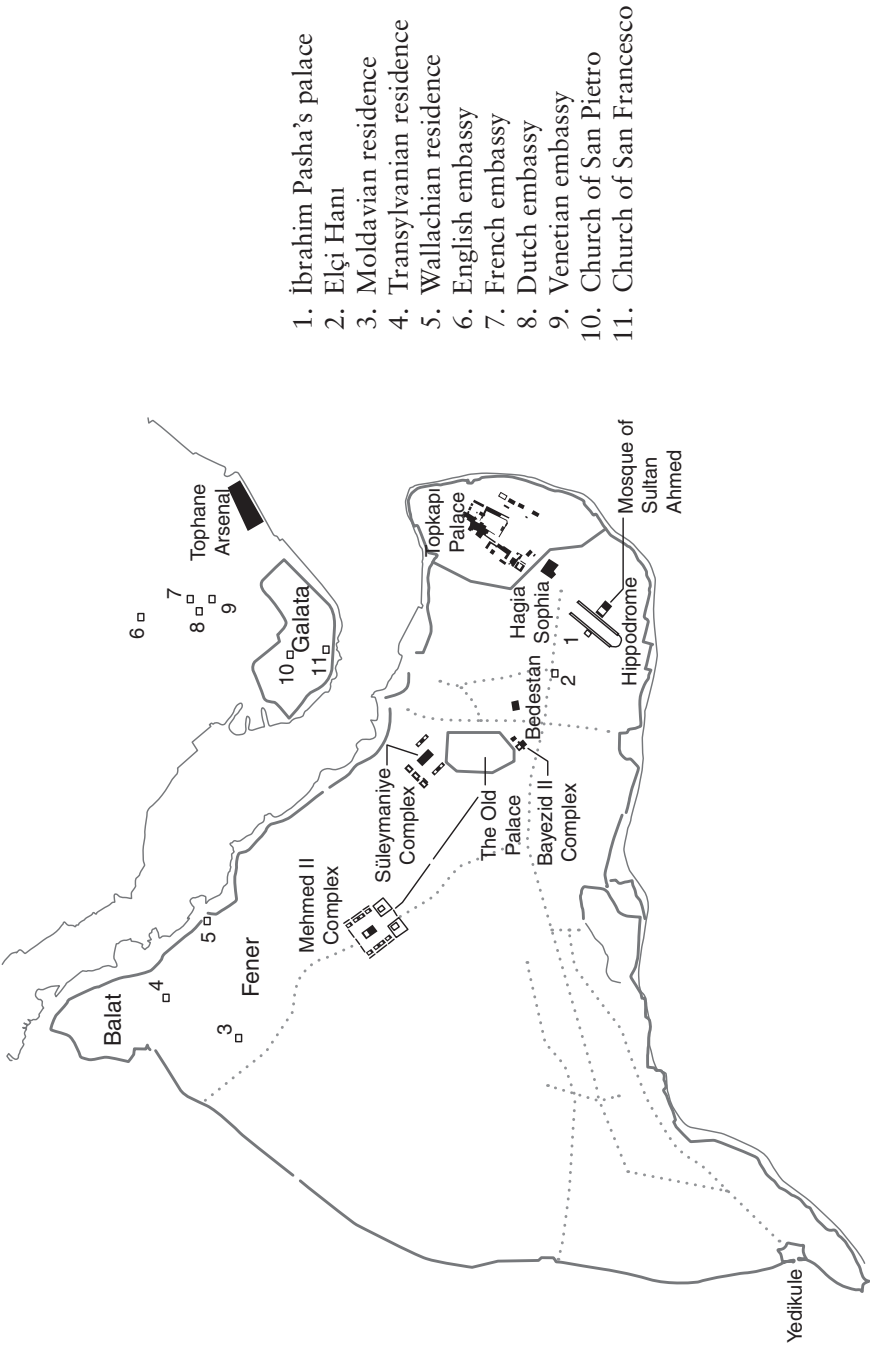
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Map: Constantinople in the Early Seventeenth Century

Introduction

Constantinople as a Centre of Diplomatic Culture

Tracey A. Sowerby and Christopher Markiewicz

On 18 January 1590, the six year-old Safavid prince, Haydar Mirza, arrived in Constantinople accompanied by Mahdiqulu Khan, the Safavid ambassador, and over 500 attendants guiding a caravan of gifts. He was greeted by a train of thousands of Ottoman troops at Üsküdar, before the Ottoman admiral ferried him and his extensive retinue to the city aboard a fleet of ships. This embassy was central to ending twelve years of war between the two empires since the young prince was a hostage sent by his uncle Shah Abbas to guarantee the terms of peace ultimately concluded during this mission.¹ The enormous spectacle the prince's arrival generated and the monumental political development it signalled offered Ottoman poets and litterateurs an opportunity to laud the majesty and might of the Ottoman sultan Murad III.² For one of these poets, the arrival of the Safavid prince verified the sultan's capital as a veritable Mecca of diplomacy for rulers from China to Europe:

Murad Khan, that qibla of Creation's fortune
To the Kaba of his court kings and dervishes come . . .

He offered the world gracious, bountiful banquets
Kings and princes to his court as guests come³

Notwithstanding the possibility of poetic exaggeration, the Ottoman court at Constantinople was a major centre of diplomacy by the end of the sixteenth century. In the same year that the spectacular Safavid embassy arrived in the city, the English resident ambassador, Edward Barton, recorded that there were also ambassadors from France, the Holy Roman Empire, Morocco, Poland, and Venice, as well as agents from Moldavia, Ragusa, Tartaria, Transylvania, and Wallachia.⁴ Three decades later in 1620 diplomats from all of these same polities received expense stipends from the sultan, as did representatives from Bohemia, England, Hungary, Mingrelia, Moravia, Persia, Silesia, the United Provinces, and several German princes.⁵

The Ottoman Empire's place at the intersection of Africa, Asia, and Europe and the consequent diplomatic footfall and cultural exchanges it produced

makes it of particular interest to diplomatic historians. Scholarship on early modern diplomacy has expanded in both scale and scope over the last two decades. Alongside more traditional studies of foreign policy, scholars have turned their attention to those processes, practices, and personnel that were essential to early modern diplomatic interaction. Taking a range of new and often interdisciplinary approaches, the ‘new diplomatic history’ considers a wide array of themes including many which are addressed in this volume such as the actions, agendas, and networks of diplomats; cross-confessional diplomacy; diplomatic ceremonial; the roles of non-ambassadorial diplomatic actors; the significance of material culture and gift-giving; and para-diplomatic activities such as procuring art.⁶

In parallel with these developments, historians have approached the study of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century—during a period of imperial expansion and consolidation—frequently with a view toward understanding both the development of imperial culture, broadly construed, and the place of the Ottomans and their empire in the wider world.⁷ Diplomacy is often an important component of these studies since its practices and processes developed in tandem with imperial culture and reflected Ottoman worldviews. More narrowly, the study of Ottoman diplomacy often focuses on the political aspects of Ottoman foreign relations, frequently when viewed from the perspective of the specific bilateral relations which the empire enjoyed,⁸ yet in recent years, historians have approached Ottoman history from a wide range of perspectives.⁹ A growing body of work expands our understanding of Ottoman diplomacy by excavating the diplomatic roles and agency of a range of actors from the tributary states to lower level diplomatic figures, including many with transimperial ties.¹⁰ While much interest in the cultural aspects of Ottoman diplomacy tackles representations of diplomatic encounters with the Ottoman Empire,¹¹ an increasing body of literature examines the cultural aspects of diplomacy, such as ritual and gift-giving.¹² Several of these approaches are combined in Güneş Işıksel’s wide-ranging study of Selim II’s diplomacy.¹³

Central to this volume is the conviction that diplomatic practice and diplomatic cultures can best be understood when approached as holistically as possible. In particular, examining a wide range of relationships and aspects of diplomatic culture over a relatively short period of time reveals the complexities and nuances of how diplomacy was practiced in any given normative system. Consequently, our volume analyses diplomacy at a single court, in contrast to the majority of historical explorations of diplomacy which have focused on specific diplomats, negotiations, aspects of practice, or bilateral relations between polities. The benefits of such an approach are illustrated by the work of Catherine Fletcher, who adopted it in order to chart the development of the resident ambassador at the court which did most to determine its evolution: Renaissance Rome.¹⁴ Frédéric Bauden and Malika Dekkiche’s volume on Mamluk Cairo comes close to this approach, with many essays that explore the diplomatic culture of the

Mamluk Sultanate's court. It is, however, a much broader volume concerned not solely with diplomacy at the court, but with Cairo's role at the heart of a wide array of mercantile, political, and religious networks.¹⁵

The Ottoman court's place as a significant global hub invites us to understand how it functioned as a centre of diplomacy and how diplomatic cultures developed as ambassadors from across Africa, Asia, and Europe interacted with the Ottomans and, sometimes, each other. Although most diplomatic missions sent to the sultan were special embassies of short duration and often of limited scope, the Ottomans' wide-reaching networks made the Ottoman court a melting pot of diplomatic practices with the potential to influence diplomatic attitudes across several continents. At the same time, the development of the diplomatic community in Constantinople deserves serious consideration by scholars of European diplomacy, not least because, as Daniel Goffman has suggested, European resident diplomatic practices developed in dialogue with the Ottomans.¹⁶

Activity at the Ottoman court, therefore, affected development of diplomatic practices across a wide geography. Such activity was equally diverse and this volume explores many facets of this diversity. Christopher Markiewicz and Zahit Atçıl examine Ottoman diplomatic actors, focusing on the Persianate secretaries who shaped Selim I's diplomatic correspondence and the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha respectively. Markiewicz and Tracey Sowerby's co-authored chapter combines Ottoman and external perspectives to analyse the protocols, performativity, and material qualities of diplomatic gift exchanges. Two sets of large scale prints designed by the Netherlandish artist Pieter Coecke van Aelst are contextualised through Cornelis de Schepers's embassy in Talitha Schepers's contribution. Several of the essays explore diplomatic practice and cultures through the lens of one polity's diplomats, as Daniel Bamford, Tetiana Grygorieva, and Maxwell Hudson do for England, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and Venice respectively. Aneliya Stoyanova, meanwhile, discusses the relationship between Spanish and Imperial diplomats at the Porte and Tracey Sowerby examines the wider contours of diplomatic community in Constantinople and how it was shaped by Ottoman protocol.

Constantinople as a Diplomatic Centre

If the court was central to diplomatic activity in the sixteenth century, it also became increasingly centred within the city of Constantinople over the same period. Constantinople emerged as a major site of diplomacy in tandem with its emergence as a major imperial centre and capital. The city that the Ottomans conquered in 1453 was a shell of its former self. Its population hovered at a low point—between 40,000 and 50,000—and many of its most iconic monumental buildings and spaces wallowed in varying states of disrepair and decay.¹⁷ Within a century, the city re-emerged as one of the largest and most cosmopolitan in the world. Mehmed II initiated many of

these developments in the decades following the conquest, but the sixteenth century witnessed their acceleration and realisation to make the city the grandest in Europe, a thriving and vibrant metropolis with a bustling and extensive imperial court established at its heart, but active across the wide urban fabric.

Beginning with Mehmed II, Ottoman sultans conceived of Constantinople as an important imperial centre. Mehmed II's conversion of Hagia Sophia from basilica to mosque powerfully marked a decisive shift in the city. Throughout his reign, Mehmed introduced policies, or encouraged construction intended to renew the grandeur of the former Byzantine capital. The imperial mosque he founded in the 1460s would become a major locus of religious learning, while in the 1470s, he built the New Palace—now known as Topkapı Palace. He encouraged his leading statesmen to establish their own charitable endowments which helped dot the city with a number of mosques, schools, and other institutions. From early in his reign, he renovated and expanded the water supply system, established expansive commercial spaces, encouraged settlement in this city through the offer of tax incentives, and forced the resettlement of some populations from Anatolia.¹⁸

Notwithstanding such investment in the city, its status as capital requires some qualification for the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. During these decades, the Ottoman court was located wherever the sultan was and he was as likely to be campaigning or wintering in Edirne as he was to be residing in Constantinople. For instance, after wintering at court in Edirne in 1484, Bayezid II received ambassadors from disparate realms—the Bahmani Sultanate in the Deccan, Mamluk Egypt, and Hungary—while camping in nearby spring pastures.¹⁹ The notion of a capital city as permanent seat of government, then, mapped imperfectly onto the place of Constantinople within Ottoman modes of governance. Indeed, the term capital is difficult to locate in Ottoman terminology. Terms associated with the regalia of the sultan and the location of executive authority were becoming closely, although somewhat imprecisely, linked with Constantinople by the turn of the sixteenth century. The Ottoman historian Idris Bidlisi regularly referred to the city as 'the abode of vicegerency (*dar al-khilafa*)' in his dynastic history, which circulated as early as 1506, even as he also referenced Edirne as 'the abode of sovereign authority (*dar al-saltana*)' in the same work.²⁰ In contrast, his younger contemporary, Kemalpaşazade, writing a few decades later in the reign of Süleyman (r. 1520–1566), distinguished Constantinople as 'the place of the throne (*tahtgah*)', even when the sultan was elsewhere, and relegated Edirne to the status of 'the ancient abode of dominion (*dari'l-mülk-i kadim*)'.²¹ By Süleyman's reign too, chancery documents produced in the city were routinely identified as completed in the place of sovereign authority—Constantinople (*bi-makam-ı dari's-saltanat*).²²

These differing views of Bidlisi and Kemalpaşazade are perhaps more than incidental since they also reflect considerable developments within

Constantinople during the reign of Süleyman, who expanded and intensified the policies initiated by his great-grandfather. By the middle of the sixteenth century one contemporary observer estimated that Constantinople and its environs contained 120,000 households, a figure equivalent to almost 500,000 inhabitants by modern calculations, yet by the end of the century, the capital and its suburbs accommodated approximately 700,000 people.²³ The rapid growth of the city depended fundamentally upon the development of complex systems of provisioning and water supply. During Süleyman's reign, the provisioning networks required to feed the growing city stretched as far as Crimea and Egypt to supply grain and extended to distant reaches of the Balkans and Anatolia to supply sheep.²⁴ In the 1550s and 1560s, Süleyman's chief architect, Sinan, oversaw the vast expansion of the system of aqueducts that brought fresh water to the centre of the city from sources located as far as fifty-five kilometres beyond the city walls.²⁵

More famous than Sinan's critical expansion of the water supply system are his contributions to the transformation of the monumental architecture of the city, much of which was built in the latter half of Süleyman's reign. Before the completion of these buildings, the Ottoman court experimented creatively with the Byzantine inheritance, especially during the grand vizierate of İbrahim Pasha (1523–1536), when the Hippodrome emerged as a major site for ceremony and celebration. The construction of a palace for the grand vizier overlooking the Hippodrome enhanced the prominence of the space, especially since İbrahim Pasha frequently conducted official business from this residence.²⁶ Moreover, the eclectic aesthetic outlook of the grand vizier left a mark—albeit if only temporarily—through his decision to decorate the Hippodrome with the monumental spoils of Ottoman conquest.²⁷ Notwithstanding this experimentation, by the middle decades of the sixteenth century, a confident Ottoman architectural aesthetic increasingly dominated the cityscape. Through the work of Sinan's extensive office—by his own estimation, he designed thirty-nine mosques across the city, including the imperial Şehzade Mosque and the Süleyman-iyye Mosque complex—he left a profound mark on Constantinople by the end of Süleyman's reign.²⁸

In the midst of these vast changes to infrastructure, demography, and public architecture, Süleyman invested heavily in the development of Topkapı Palace. During the 1520s, the sultan ordered many of the buildings on the palace grounds to be remodelled or rebuilt entirely on a grander scale. At the centre of these renovating projects were alterations made to the second of the three palace courts—which separated the first court where many of the supporting offices and depots of the palace were located from the third court which contained the private gardens and apartments of the sultan's household—and several buildings immediately adjoining it. Crucially, the second court contained some of the most important sites of government, including the Public Treasury and the Imperial Council Hall. Süleyman also oversaw

the complete remodelling of the Hall of Petitions at the entrance to the third court, which served as the sultan's audience chamber.²⁹ Collectively, the renovations to the palace were dramatic. The Venetian ambassador Marco Minio noticed the 'great difference' in appearance between his two visits to Constantinople in 1521 and 1527, while another ambassador, Tommaso Contarini, commented in 1528 that 'in terms of pomp what it once was is not to be compared to what is here now, for everything is extremely pompous, and they have made many beautiful ornaments'.³⁰ Minio and Contarini, no doubt, formed their impressions of the renovations during their ceremonial engagements at the palace, namely the banquet reception for ambassadors hosted by the viziers in the Council Hall upon their arrival and the audience with the sultan in the Hall of Petitions. The architectural elaboration of the palace enhanced and broadened the possibilities for diplomatic exchange, both within the palace and more broadly through the processions and ceremonies that unfolded across the city, often in proximity to the monumental buildings constructed by the imperial dynasty and its leading statesmen.³¹

On another level the possibilities and places for diplomacy expanded over the course of the sixteenth century as a result of changes in the patterns of governance and the expansion of the central administration. Certainly, the growth in the number, specialisation, and professionalisation of the secretaries was a necessary consequence of implementing and maintaining imperial authority across a vast empire,³² yet secretaries—as demonstrated by Christopher Markiewicz's chapter—also contributed to diplomatic activity in both formal and informal respects. Beyond this growth in government, the sixteenth century witnessed a reorientation in the role of the sultan in quotidian political and administrative affairs. Especially in the latter half of the century, sultans increasingly removed themselves from an active role in government and embraced a conception of imperial majesty that emphasised sovereign omnipotence and omnipresence through silence and physical absence.³³ In their place, the grand vizier and the other members of the Imperial Council assumed more active roles in governing and their residences became important sites for the formal and informal receptions of ambassadors. Finally, the increase in government personnel coupled with the increasingly sedentary and secluded life of the sultan ultimately strengthened the position of the city as sole capital of the empire. After all, even if viziers and much of the army continued to campaign frequently, the sultan and large portions of the court remained in the city and therefore facilitated the ongoing work of foreign ambassadors and their agents.

Contours of the Diplomatic Cityscape

Even if the Ottoman Empire frequently waged war throughout the sixteenth century, an increasing awareness among leading Ottoman statesmen of the

necessity of peaceful relations—as proposed by Zahit Atçıl’s chapter—facilitated the establishment and maintenance of a growing diplomatic community in the city. This was only enhanced by several shifts in Selim II’s reign—most notably a marked decrease in campaigns led by sultans and the hardening of the empire’s boundaries—that generated a greater emphasis on diplomacy.³⁴

The vast majority of ambassadors who arrived at the Porte were diplomats from Africa, Asia, and Europe tasked with a specific, discrete negotiation or honorific mission, and expected to stay for a comparatively short period of time. Indeed, many of the Ottomans’ most important relationships were managed entirely by means of *ad hoc* embassies until the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the patterns of diplomacy that emerged at the Ottoman court encouraged the establishment of permanent representation in Constantinople. Venice maintained a *bailo* from 1454 and over the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, residents from France (1534), the Holy Roman Empire (1547), England (1583), and the United Provinces (1612) would join them. Since *ad hoc* embassies were the preferred diplomatic tool of the Ottomans—the first Ottoman residency was only sent in 1793—early scholars viewed the diplomatic asymmetry between Ottoman and European powers as atypical. With historical attention largely focused on the introduction and expansion of resident diplomacy, the Ottoman system seemed anomalous to modern scholars.³⁵ As historical priorities have shifted, however, it has become clear that resident diplomacy was the European exception, not the norm across the globe. Most polities chose, like the Ottomans, to practice diplomacy *ad hoc* and even within Europe, both *ad hoc* diplomacy and asymmetrical relations between polities were not uncommon.³⁶ Moreover, as Tetiana Grygorieva’s contribution to this volume discusses, not all European polities who engaged in regular diplomacy with the Ottomans chose to rely upon resident embassies: Poland-Lithuania for one determined that the use of *ad hoc* embassies more closely met its diplomatic needs. Even when polities such as France established residencies, this did not preclude their regular sending of *ad hoc* embassies.³⁷

Ambassadors and diplomatic agents who were posted to the Sublime Porte on an ongoing basis were usually housed in the Vigne de Pera or in nearby Galata.³⁸ There were, of course, exceptions: the Imperial ambassadors, including their residents, were usually accommodated in the heart of Constantinople, often in the Elçi Hanı.³⁹ This palace’s location near the Hippodrome fitted with the Ottoman strategy of emphasising the pre-Ottoman, particularly Roman, heritage of the city in their diplomatic affairs.⁴⁰ Concurrently, it also made monitoring the Imperial ambassadors’ activities and restricting their movements easier, important considerations in light of the ongoing Habsburg-Ottoman rivalry.⁴¹ Although there were occasions when the Imperial resident was permitted to hire a house privately, these were usually short lived. The Habsburg ambassador Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, for one, believed that the permission he had received to rent a mansion for

his embassy privately was revoked because it impeded the Ottomans' ability to surveil him.⁴² When the Imperial ambassadors found their own long-term residence in the early seventeenth century, they remained in the old city.⁴³

While resident embassies were predominantly sited in or near Galata, other embassies were lodged across the water in the old city. Indeed the dominant determinant of an embassy's location in the period covered by this volume appears to have been whether the embassy was a special or resident one.⁴⁴ Some European diplomats at the court interpreted the spatial separation of the embassies in religious terms, commenting that the Christian ambassadors were lodged in Pera and the Muslim ones in the city. The reality was more complicated, however, and not just because Imperial diplomats were lodged in the old city. Special embassies arriving from European princes were sometimes given accommodation there too, though several lodged in Pera instead. European ambassadors arriving at the Porte from rulers who only sent special embassies often turned to the resident community for current information and even brokerage to aid them in their missions, as suggested by Grygorieva's discussion of the reliance of Polish ambassadors on residents for help in the absence of long-standing information networks or social ties of their own in Constantinople.

A different category of ongoing diplomatic representative, the envoys from within the Ottoman Empire who represented the European tributary states, were also housed in intramural Constantinople, rather than in Pera, in what Gábor Kármán has suggested was a deliberate policy of separation. Their lodgings in the far northwest of the city reflected their different status. Transylvanian orators were lodged in the Jewish quarter of Balat near the city walls, in a house which had been given to them by Süleyman, while the Moldavian and Wallachian orators had residences in Fener (a Greek quarter) and Balat respectively. Crucially, however, these orators did not have ambassadorial powers: their main duty was to relay information back home. Important negotiations were conducted by special envoys sent to Constantinople for a specific purpose, who stayed in the orators' residences during their missions.⁴⁵

Unlike their resident counterparts, special ambassadors were commonly allocated houses and palaces in intramural Constantinople for the duration of their embassy.⁴⁶ In 1568 and 1576 the Ottomans made Hançerlü Sultan's palace available to the Safavid ambassadors; in 1590 and in 1620 Pertev Pasha's palace was placed at the Safavid ambassador's disposal.⁴⁷ The Moroccan ambassador Abu'l-Hasan Ali al-Tamgruti, meanwhile, was accommodated near Topkapı in 1589–1590.⁴⁸ As Grygorieva discusses in her contribution to this volume, Polish embassies were also regularly housed in relative proximity to Topkapı. Similarly, diplomats sent from the African and Arab provinces of the empire appear to have been lodged in intramural Constantinople rather than Pera. In the case of the Sharifian envoy Shaykh Qutb al-Din Muhammad al-Nahrawali, lodgings in Mahmud Pasha quarter were deemed suitable.⁴⁹

The Diplomatic Community

Whether as resident ambassador or *ad hoc* envoy, the appointment of a diplomat to the Ottoman court entailed careful consideration of his social status, past political or diplomatic experience, linguistic skill, and manners. Analysis of these aspects of the ambassador therefore reveals the priorities and objectives of the various polities who sent missions to or maintained embassies at the Ottoman court.

Muslim rulers often entrusted diplomatic correspondence to merchants, yet for more important matters, special envoys were appointed usually from either the military or scholarly classes. Since the tenth century, members of the military class—most often Turkic in origin in the central Islamic lands between the Nile and Oxus—dominated government, yet scholars from the urban notable class played an important role within the financial and recordkeeping arms of administration. The preponderance of ambassadors from these classes is therefore not all that surprising.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Mamluk sultans of Egypt and Syria tended to favour the appointment of Mamluks, that is to say the mostly Turkic and later Circassian soldiers of servile origin who formed the military class. Such a tendency accelerated in the final decades of the sultanate. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Mamluk sultans mostly ceased appointing members of the Egyptian scholarly class as ambassadors. Instead, a marked preference arose for the Royal Mamluks of the reigning sultan (*al-khassaki*), or Mamluks who held high-ranking positions within their central administrations. Between 1502 and 1516, only one of the ambassadors recorded in extant sources, a man named Hamid Maghribi, appears to be a free-born Muslim. The majority of ambassadors sent by Sultan Qansawh al-Ghawri during these years were his own Mamluks. On several other occasions during the same period, he sent other leading Mamluks of his central administration, including Tanibay, the treasurer, in 1503; Allan, the *dawadar*, one of the top-ranking Mamluk administrators; and in 1509 and 1516 respectively Inalbay and Mughulbay, both of whom were *dawadar sikkîn*.⁵⁰ By Qansawh's reign the post was so closely associated with leading Mamluk officers that the sultan was hard pressed in August 1515 to appoint anyone to convey his reply to the Ottoman gift of an adversary's decapitated head since all of his mamluks and *amirs* considered the mission a certain death sentence.⁵¹

Safavid ambassadors likewise hailed both from the military and scholarly classes. In the first half of the sixteenth century, scholars from the urban notable class were occasionally sent to the Ottoman court to lay the groundwork for rapprochement between the two hostile empires. Such was the case when Amir Abd al-Vahhab arrived at Selim I's winter camp in Amasya in early 1515, a few months after the Battle of Chaldiran, and when Sayyid Shams al-Din Dilijani arrived in Istanbul in 1553 to present overtures for a lasting peace.⁵² In the early seventeenth century, it seems that Safavid shahs

still occasionally preferred to rely on scholars for peace negotiations as evidenced by Abbas's appointment of Qazi Khan, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad and the chief religious administrator (*sadr*), to consolidate Safavid gains in Azerbaijan and Armenia by securing peace in late 1612.⁵³

The appointment of scholars as ambassadors was, however, increasingly exceptional. Military men and other *qizilbash* officers from the Turkmen confederations (*uymaq*, singular) predominated. Indeed, the Ottomans, for their part, came to expect it and even requested their appointment on occasion. Upon one such request in 1619, Abbas appointed Yadigar Ali Sultan Talish, a descendant of a leading officer of Shah Ismail, the founder of the dynasty. Yadigar Ali had previous diplomatic experience as a representative to the Mughals and was noted especially for 'his eloquent and persuasive tongue', both of which likely served him well in his efforts to re-establish peace.⁵⁴ This preference for prominent members of *uymaqs* was already well established in the reign of Tahmasb, especially after the Treaty of Amasya in 1555. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, embassies were often headed by *qizilbash* officers who frequently held governorships in provinces on the Ottoman frontier, such as Shirvan or Azerbaijan. For much of the sixteenth century, these officers and their Turkmen confederations dominated political life in Persia, and frequently exerted enormous influence over the shah. Moreover, on account of their appointments as governors, these ambassadors usually had first-hand military experience of dealing with the Ottomans. For instance, Shahqulu Khan Ustajlu and his son Tuqmaq Khan Ustajlu were both governors of Shirvan when they were each appointed by Tahmasb to congratulate the accessions of Selim II and Murad III, while Mahdiqulu Khan Chaushlu was governor of Ardabil and mentor (*lala*) of Shah Abbas when he was appointed ambassador in 1590. The association between ambassadors and governors was so strong that Abbas reversed his initial appointment of ambassador in 1596, in favour of Zu'l-Faqar Khan Qaramanlu, nominal governor of Azerbaijan, after the shah's leading statesman, Farhad Khan, reminded Abbas that 'in the time of Shah Tahmasb, the governors-general of the frontier marches had traditionally been appointed as ambassadors to the Ottomans'.⁵⁵ No doubt, Farhad's objection was largely intended to support his brother, Zu'l-Faqar, but it is equally likely that Abbas was persuaded by the strong tradition of these sorts of appointments.

European resident ambassadors could expect to spend many years in Constantinople. While the average length of a Venetian *bailo*'s tenure was three years in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, those of other European residents was longer. The first ten English residents spent an average of a little under seven years in Constantinople, while their Imperial peers who served before 1643 averaged roughly four and a half years.⁵⁶ The earliest fifteen French residents stayed at the Porte for three years or fewer, but the pattern shifted to much longer embassies averaging just under ten years each for the four resident embassies between 1591 and 1631.⁵⁷ In many

cases, embassies in the seventeenth century were longer on average than those in the sixteenth. The first resident from the United Provinces, Cornelis Haga, served for twenty-seven years, while his nephew (who succeeded him) served for nine. Many European residents were either unmarried or were not accompanied by their wives. This was true of the Venetian *baili*, Imperial residents, and the earliest English residents, although ambassadors were becoming a more common sight in Constantinople in the early seventeenth century, likely one consequence of the shift towards longer residencies.⁵⁸

Autonomous European rulers who maintained resident embassies in Constantinople in this period largely deemed that their embassies should be headed by aristocratic personnel.⁵⁹ The vast majority of residents sent from the French and Imperial courts were noblemen, while Venetian *baili* were drawn from the patriciate class, predominantly from its inner oligarchy.⁶⁰ English residents were of slightly lower social status until the arrival of Sir Sackville Crowe, a baronet, in 1638, marked a shift to the appointment of minor nobility. European polities also took slightly different approaches to their selection of residents. Eric Dursteler's analysis of twenty-six *baili* between 1573 and 1645 highlighted that all had held significant positions before taking up their post.⁶¹ Venetian *baili* were predominantly graduates of Padua, and later of the Rialto and Venice's own schools offering a humanist education. Some, such as Gianfrancesco Morosini and Alvise Badoer came to diplomatic work through service to a family member in a Venetian embassy; others, such as Andrea Gritti and Antonio Barbarigo, did so via mercantile apprenticeships, although this latter route became less common across the period.⁶² England also valued prior mercantile and diplomatic experience. Of the ten English ambassadors who resided at the Porte between 1583 and 1650, the majority had prior mercantile experience in the Mediterranean and directly relevant prior diplomatic service. William Harborne, who is discussed at length in Daniel Bamford's contribution to this volume, had undertaken a longer-term special embassy before becoming the first English resident ambassador, while the four ambassadors who followed had all acted as embassy secretary and had links to the Levant Company. This pattern changed with the appointment of Sir John Eyre in 1619: he and his four immediate successors were all courtiers and all but Sir Thomas Bendish had relevant experience—Eyre and Sir Peter Wyche had held diplomatic postings in Madrid, Sir Thomas Roe had led the first English embassy to Mughal India, and Sir Sackville Crowe had been secretary of the navy.⁶³

An overwhelming majority of both French and Imperial residents appointed before 1640 likewise had previous experience of the Ottoman court. Many of the men selected to lead the Imperial embassy had previously taken the Imperial tribute to the sultan or had led other special embassies; several more had served as secretaries to earlier ambassadors.⁶⁴ At least nine of France's first twenty-one resident ambassadorial or ministerial appointments had previous experience of the sultan's court: five had undertaken at least one earlier special mission there, one had previously held a residency

there, and three had served in the household of an earlier resident. One would go on to serve a second term as resident and one further ambassador undertook a special embassy to the Ottomans after his term as resident. French kings found it convenient to maintain a *chargé d'affaires* in Constantinople at numerous points in the sixteenth century. On these occasions, the task was almost always entrusted either to an embassy secretary or to a special ambassador who was asked to prolong his stay. The policies of the French Kings and Holy Roman Emperors therefore ensured that, particularly in the sixteenth century, their chosen representatives understood the conventions of the Ottoman court. Further considerations influenced the selection of Habsburg residents. Here too, specialist knowledge was key. Proficiency in one of the native languages of the viziers might recommend a candidate, so too might experience of prior negotiations with the Ottomans in provincial settings, while the consultation of the Hungarian council when ambassadors were selected could lead to the appointment of men with military experience against the Ottomans.⁶⁵

The Emerging Diplomatic Corps and Non-Ambassadorial Diplomatic Actors

The backgrounds of diplomats sent to the Ottoman court varied widely and the sort of diplomatic community they constituted in Constantinople, therefore, presents a number of challenges and opportunities for historians. The contributions by Stoyanova and Atçıl demonstrate the benefits of paying particular attention to the actions, interests, networks, and agency of individual diplomatic actors. Both take an 'actor-centred' approach to their respective subjects: Habsburg diplomats and the Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha.⁶⁶ Focusing on the two case studies which enable us to see the intricacies of the relationships between Spanish and Imperial diplomats at the Porte, Stoyanova reveals the benefits and limits of dynastic diplomatic cooperation. Atçıl's study of Rüstem Pasha contributes to the growing scholarship on the increasing political role of grand viziers.⁶⁷ He highlights that by the mid-sixteenth century the grand vizier had acquired a central role not only in the formulation and execution of foreign policy, but also in the day-to-day practice of diplomacy through ceremonial occasions and specific negotiations. Hudson and Sowerby further show the significance of all of the viziers in courtly sociability and ceremonies that occurred outside the palace.

The socio-political imperatives facing diplomats were strong at any court, but were perhaps especially pronounced in Constantinople, where ambassadors were so rarely included in the formal occasions of the Ottoman court.⁶⁸ As they generally lacked opportunities to press their business, discern the attitudes of key politicians, or discuss Ottoman policies relatively informally at the court itself, other arenas for diplomatic sociability took on greater significance. In Constantinople court sociability was often spread across the

houses of leading Ottoman statesmen. Consequently, ambassadors solicited formal and informal visits in order to further their business at the Porte (Atçıl, Hudson, Sowerby). The diplomats from Muslim polities analysed by Sowerby appear to have focused their sociability almost exclusively on Ottoman courtiers, clerics, and legal scholars, and other Muslim groups temporarily based in the city.

The religious complexity of Constantinople and the diplomatic community there impacted diplomats' sociability and identity. Beyond the majority Sunni Muslim population, there were large communities of Jews and Christians of different confessions in the city. Recent research has highlighted some of the ways in which the city's religious diversity influenced ambassadors' diplomatic strategies.⁶⁹ Cross-confessional diplomacy in Constantinople was not limited to Muslim-Christian relations. As Markiewicz's chapter highlights, the Ottoman court amplified anti-Safavid rhetoric in confessional terms to help realise certain diplomatic objectives. Even so, as shown in the chapters by Atçıl and by Markiewicz and Sowerby, during peaceful periods of Ottoman-Safavid relations diplomatic interactions necessarily had to overcome the hostile confessional policies and rhetoric of bellicose periods. The confessional struggles of Europe were echoed in the religious rivalry among European diplomats at the Porte, as Daniel Bamford discusses in some depth. The broader intra-faith confessional dynamics of Europe have been characterized as having a profound impact on the foreign policies and alliances European princes pursued.⁷⁰ English resident ambassadors might advocate actions that were to the detriment of their queen's Catholic rivals and might even engage in bitter disputes with their own Catholic peers at the Porte. But contingent circumstances and personality could all impact the stance they took towards any one individual and Sowerby's study reveals that sociability and cooperation across intra-Christian confessional boundaries was common throughout this period, while interactions between Muslim and Christian diplomats were much rarer.

Despite their religious differences, European diplomats regularly socialised with one another. This was in part because concern for a ruler's reputation meant that ambassadorial hospitality had to be maintained at an honourable level.⁷¹ Frequently, this merely replicated an established facet of the European diplomatic *modus operandi*, for sociability across delegations was common in European courts, even among diplomats of rival polities. As the number of European residents grew, a sense of community developed which facilitated cooperation at moments of crisis. Indeed both Bamford's and Sowerby's essays suggest that whatever the religious difference among the European diplomats, serving at an Islamic court created a common sense of Christian identity among them in opposition to their host's religion, even at the same time as different Christian groups disliked and competed with one another. Social interactions were particularly important for ambassadors on *ad hoc* embassies, whose limited experience of local conditions compelled them to seek out other Christian diplomats for information and

aid, as both Bamford and Grygorieva illustrate. Collectively the chapters suggest that a 'diplomatic corps' had formed in Constantinople in the latter part of the sixteenth century, several decades earlier than had been proposed by Geoff Berridge.⁷²

The development of a diplomatic community among European residents held strong advantages for some rulers. Stoyanova discusses how, for Philip II of Spain, the presence of Imperial residents representing his uncle Ferdinand I and cousin Maximilian II facilitated his own diplomatic relations with the Ottomans, as both emperors allowed their ambassadors to negotiate on Philip's behalf. The benefits of close political ties were equally clear to Henri IV of France, who depended upon the ambassador of his ally Elizabeth I of England to represent him at the Porte in the fraught early years of his reign, as Bamford discusses. There were, however, limits. The Ottomans viewed Imperial negotiations on behalf of Spain as merely a prelude to establishing full diplomatic relations, while the English ambassador's work for the French king more closely resembles the role of a *chargé d'affaires* than an ambassador with full representative character.

The imperative to obtain current, accurate intelligence was another key driver of the sociability between different members of the nascent diplomatic corps in Constantinople. While ambassadors were important nodes in news networks in early modern Europe, those posted in Constantinople increasingly facilitated information flows stretching across Eurasia.⁷³ Moreover, resident ambassadors at the Porte represented a precious source of reliable information about Europe for the representatives of several European tributary states.⁷⁴ For the Polish ambassadors discussed by Grygorieva, conversations with resident ambassadors were an indispensable means of gaining crucial knowledge about Ottoman protocol and court politics. Indeed the contrast between the two case studies that are the focus of Stoyanova's essay clearly demonstrates the advantages that accrued to special ambassadors who could draw upon the resources of their resident peers.

An ambassador's peers in the diplomatic community were just one potential source of intelligence. Diplomats also developed information networks that stretched beyond other ambassadors and Ottoman viziers. The English resident ambassadors discussed by Bamford cultivated friendships with the Ottoman chief jurisconsult (*şeyhülislam*) and the sultan's tutor, while Stoyanova's Imperial Habsburg residents built up a wide network over time, as successive ambassadors inherited their predecessor's contacts and expanded them, including paid informants. Strong information and social networks aided an ambassador's work at any court,⁷⁵ but it was even more important for European ambassadors in Constantinople given the linguistic challenges they faced and the decentralized structure of diplomatic life at the Porte. Special envoys with pre-existing contacts in Constantinople likewise sought to capitalize on these relationships as Sowerby's discussion of the Sharifian envoy al-Nahrawali shows.