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# Edward Barton and Anglo-Ottoman Relations, 1588-98

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Sussex

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## Abstract:

This thesis explores the unpublished correspondence of the second English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Edward Barton. From 1588, Barton oversaw the flourishing of a diplomatic relationship between England and the Ottomans which outgrew its commercial roots during the 1590s to become a controversially close alliance. Barton had the unique ability of being fluent in Turkish; this, combined with his talent for creating and manipulating wide and varied epistolary networks, led to him becoming the most enmeshed European agent in Istanbul in the closing decades of the sixteenth century.

Working from a rich yet largely unexplored archive of correspondence, this thesis examines Barton's writing to determine the nature of his role as he balanced the interests of the English court with those of the Levant Company, which he also represented, and the Ottoman hierarchy. It asks to what extent Barton fashioned his embassy through writing, and finds that his constant reportage assumed a variety of forms to forge a role for him as a globally aware, linguistically skilled and unconventional ambassador.

Growing out of the precedent set by his predecessor William Harborne and the ambassadorial ideals common to the period (Chapter One), Barton's writing enabled control over wide-ranging networks of couriers, fixers, and forgers (Chapter Two); it also facilitated a remarkable embeddedness in the varied faith networks of sixteenth-century Istanbul (Chapter Three) which ensured his status as one of the most powerful intermediaries in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the case of his unauthorised 1596 journey into Hungary with the Ottoman army, his writing started to follow the conventions of travel writing as he attempted to make the case for the new kind of diplomacy he had come to embody (Chapter Four). As a result, his decade of office saw his embassy oversee an unprecedentedly close relationship between England and the Ottomans, facilitated and fashioned by his varied forms of writing.

The thesis concludes that Barton's correspondence shows us an agent who wrote his way to the top, using a variety of means; his methods tell us as much about early modern cross-cultural epistolary encounters as they do about the mechanics of the unlikely flourishing of the Anglo-Ottoman relationship.

**Declaration:**

*I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another university for the award of any other degree.*

*Signature:* .....

Tomasz David Kowalczyk

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Finally, to Sophie, for everything, 'the w<sup>ch</sup>', as King Henri IV wrote to Barton in 1592, 'shall giue me cause always to loue you'.

# Abbreviations

## **BL**

London, The British Library

## ***Cal. S.P. Venetian***

*Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, 38 vols, ed. by Rawdon Brown and others (London: HMSO, 1864–1947)

## **Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations***

Richard Hakluyt, *The principall nauigations, voyages, traffiques and discoueries of the English nation*, 3 vols (London: George Bishop, Ralph Newberie and Robert Barker, 1598–1600)

## **OED**

*Oxford English Dictionary*, online edn., <<http://www.oed.com>>

## **ODNB**

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>>

## **Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes***

Samuel Purchas, *Haklvytvvs Posthumus or Pvrchas His Pilgrimes. Contayning a History of the World, in Sea voyages. & lande-Trauells, by Englishmen & others* (London: Henry Fetherston, 1625)

## **Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’**

Susan A. Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents relating to Edward Barton’s Embassy to the Porte, 1588–1598’ (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 1965)

## **SP**

London, The National Archives, State Papers

## **Wernham, *L&A***

*List and Analysis of State Papers: Foreign Series, Elizabeth I*, ed. by R. B. Wernham, 7 vols (London: HMSO, 1964–2000)

# A Note on the Text and Dates

## Transcription Conventions

All transcription from archival material has been diplomatically transcribed as accurately as possible, with deletions and superscript letters intact. Ciphred passages have been decoded and contractions expanded; both are indicated with square brackets. No changes from the original have been made with regards to i/j or u/v.

## Dates

The discrepancies which come about due to the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in Europe, but not in England, in 1582 and the ten day difference that can result from Old/New style dating, have been elided where possible in the following discussion. Where specific dates are mentioned, they are consistent with the text of the archival document to which they refer.



# Introduction

Edward Barton served as the English representative in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, modern day Istanbul, then known to the English as Constantinople, from 1588–98, and was the second to do so.<sup>1</sup> In his dual role as agent of the newly-formed Levant Company and Crown-endorsed ambassador, he oversaw the advent of an unprecedentedly close relationship between England and the Ottomans, at that point a wide ranging empire at the height of its power.<sup>2</sup> Having travelled to Istanbul as a young secretary, before long his unprecedented command of Turkish and ability to read Ottoman documents, as well as the ideological ties between English Protestantism and Sunni Islam, had distinguished him to the extent that during his lifetime he became one of the most powerful European agents in the early modern Eastern Mediterranean, besting his long-established French and Venetian rivals.

Yet there has been little written directly about Barton. His predecessor, William Harborne, has had more sustained scholarly attention as he had been instrumental in the establishment of the commercial and diplomatic relationship between England and the

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<sup>1</sup> The Ottoman capital is referred to as Istanbul in the entirety of this thesis, except when it occurs in quotations. The ideologically charged nature of the term ‘Constantinople’, harking back to a time of Christian dominion of the city, was insisted upon by the earliest scholars of Anglo-Ottoman relations, which inevitably coloured their perception of the Ottoman capital. This thesis uses the modern Turkish name for the Ottoman capital, judging it to be more representative of the fundamentally Muslim space in which Barton operated, and accurately representative of the current Turkish capital.

<sup>2</sup> The ‘golden age’ of Suleiman the Magnificent was still lingering by the end of the sixteenth century, though most historians agree that, generally speaking, a period of Ottoman decline started about this time; though this has been subject to much debate and review. See Leslie Peirce, ‘Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries’ in *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 19.1 (2004) 6–28. Caroline Finkel’s *Osman’s Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2006) gives a nuanced overview of the Empire’s various states during its entire existence, and for a more focused early modern study see Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Ottomans which would prove as controversial as it was lucrative. Harborne's achievement has, until recently, been understood as a heroic, patriotic mission in dangerous foreign lands. In fact, as scholars have now shown, his success was more the result of a combination of raw mercantile ambition on the part of the traders who funded him and the willingness of Queen Elizabeth to risk a diplomatic relationship with a major Islamic world power.<sup>3</sup> She faced protests and scandal as a result.

The history of the 'Turkey trade' has largely been overshadowed by the wider narrative of English global expansion in another direction which has come to characterise understandings of subsequent English 'foreign policy' – that associated with the East India Company. Indeed, the timing of England's diplomatic concentration on the Levant, which lessened just as the East India Company was incorporated and starting to become influential, lends itself to an interpretation of the Anglo-Ottoman interaction as a precursor, or sideshow. In fact English diplomatic interest in the Ottomans largely ended with the accession of James I and his policy of appeasing Spain, cutting off any development of the relationship Edward Barton had done so much to facilitate. It remained a lucrative trade, but trade only, as James explicitly forbade any diplomatic interaction with a power still mainly characterised by notions of 'infidelity'.<sup>4</sup> One of the arguments made in this thesis is that Elizabethan policy toward the Ottomans by the 1590s was leading towards a closer diplomatic and possibly military alliance. As such, a consideration of Anglo-Ottoman interactions in the Levant in the final decades of the sixteenth century hints at what might have transpired had Elizabeth been able to secure the relationship she had set about building with the Ottomans from the 1580s. This policy

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<sup>3</sup> Susan Skilliter's *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578–1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), whilst still succumbing in part to the myth of Harborne as a patriotic adventurer, was the first to examine the archival context of the establishment of the trade, and to accurately describe the power dynamics that were in play from a survey of documentary evidence.

<sup>4</sup> See Matthew Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism: England, China and the Rainbow Portrait* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), pp. 143–44, 181–82.

was headed and publicly endorsed by Elizabeth, but also engineered by her privy councillors, particularly Francis Walsingham, William Cecil, and Robert Cecil, who all corresponded regularly with Edward Barton, facilitating this policy on the ground.

This thesis, based upon the correspondence of a hitherto under-studied but pivotal figure in these Anglo-Ottoman encounters, aims not only to restate the importance of Barton as a merchant and ambassador, but also to illustrate a crucial period for Elizabethan diplomacy, particularly cross-cultural diplomacy. In particular, it aims to restate the importance of Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy during the period. Barton undertook his ambassadorial role in tandem with his commercial responsibilities as a Levant Company agent, and the tensions between the two roles are readily apparent in his letters. These were symptomatic of broader tensions between Company and Crown, and Barton's career acts at various points as a flashpoint for clashes between these two often competing interests. Barton encapsulates these tensions perhaps more than any other figure in this period. His work is thus of major importance, and crucial to any understanding of his methods is the writing, which sent news of commercial and diplomatic developments back to London and described and chronicled his life in Istanbul. The extent to which this epistolary communication was fundamental to the execution of a relationship between two powers which were attempting to bridge considerable cultural differences has been given some critical attention, but little scholarship has been devoted to a single individual's archive of correspondence.

Barton's letters present a compelling narrative of the machinations of commerce and diplomacy in 1590s Istanbul. They were instrumental in the major episodes of his career: from facilitating an important peace between the Ottomans and Poland, to embedding himself within various faith networks in Istanbul, to undertaking an unauthorised and scandalous journey into Hungary alongside the Ottoman army. On each

occasion, Barton's letters were key, but used in differing ways to suit his motives and demands. His archive reveals the power and flexibility of the epistolary medium, particularly when facilitating cross-cultural diplomacy at great distance from England. All of this had resonances beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire: aside from the immediate intentions of the Elizabethan court in their dealings with the Ottomans, the methods and means of communication developed in the Anglo-Ottoman encounter were the first of their kind, and there is evidence that they served as a model for ventures further afield.<sup>5</sup> These particularities, and the contents of the career that Barton's correspondence give us access to, signify that he was pioneering a new kind of diplomacy. Tasked with a largely mercantile remit at the outset, Barton wrote his way towards an autonomous mode of diplomatic representation which pushed back against established ambassadorial ideals.

## An Overview of Barton's Career

Barton's early life and education are unknown. Skilliter's analysis of the coat of arms found on his gravestone links him to the Bartons of Smithills in Lancashire.<sup>6</sup> Yet he does not appear in the records there and the coat of arms on his tombstone lacks a Smithills cadency mark, which instead suggests the Bartons of Holme in Nottinghamshire. His origins are further complicated by the existence of a sketch by John Sanderson, a merchant and prolific diarist and one of the most useful primary sources on Barton and the Levant Company, of Barton's seal, which is completely different from the one on his tombstone and links to a line of Bartons in Whenby, Northumberland.<sup>7</sup> From this line of the family, baptism records from Dullingham in Cambridgeshire show an Edward Barton

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<sup>5</sup> See Gerald MacLean, *Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire Before 1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 17–18; Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism*, pp. 11–13.

<sup>6</sup> Susan Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 241, f. 347.

baptised on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1562 who went on to matriculate but not graduate from Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge.<sup>8</sup> This could well be the man who became England's ambassador, but if so it would contradict a report from his friend Fynes Moryson that Barton 'was no more learned then the Grammer schoole and his priuate studyes in Turkye could make him.'<sup>9</sup> The Holme lineage may present a more natural progression for Barton to have entered Harborne's service, given that they were a well-established mercantile family likely to have the necessary connections.

Regardless of the specifics of his family line, however, we can be sure that from middling socioeconomic roots, as a young man Barton found himself in London and the best candidate for William Harborne's open secretarial position. The only extant physical description of him comes from Moryson in 1597, a year before Barton's death, describing him as 'courteous and affable, of a good stature, corpulent, faire Complexion and a free chearefull Countenance, which last, made him acceptable to the Turkes, as likewise his person, (for they loue not a sadd Countenance, and much regard a comely person) [...]'.<sup>10</sup> He owned a tenement in St. Katherine's dock in London which brought him some income, and had a sister, Mary Lough, an elder brother William who was a spendthrift and financially reliant on Edward, and an elder 'kinsman' Robert, who was in a similar line of work, involved with the Levant Company, and who also travelled to Istanbul in his line of work.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The Dullingham parish baptism records are held at the Cambridgeshire Archives, P60/1; see the *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College 1349–1897*, 8 vols, I, ed. by John Venn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898–1998), p. 108.

<sup>9</sup> *Shakespeare's Europe: Unpublished Chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary*, ed. by Charles Hughes (London: Sherratt & Hughes, 1903) p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> *Shakespeare's Europe*, p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> Most of this information comes from a letter sent from Barton to Thomas Humphrey in 1591: SP 105/109, f. 3. See also Christine Woodhead, 'Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)', *ODNB*; 'kinsman' Robert, most likely a brother, featured prominently in Sanderson's accounts, particularly in the squabbling about Barton's will after his death. See *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant, 1584–1602*, ed. by William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931) pp. xxxii, 234.

English commercial interests in the Levant had first been established in the mid-fifteenth century. By the 1550s English traders had grown to be reasonably familiar in Istanbul, but from then until the 1580s trade died off.<sup>12</sup> Then, two prosperous London merchants of the Turkey Company, Edward Osborne and Richard Staper, desired to formalise what they knew could be a lucrative trade between England and the Ottomans, and petitioned Queen Elizabeth I to that effect.<sup>13</sup> In 1578, they sent out Harborne, then a merchant, who was to act as the official English representative in the negotiations to secure trading privileges for English trading vessels in the lucrative Ottoman waters, a privilege which since the early sixteenth century had been the sole preserve of the French. Remarkably, he was successful, securing the privileges (granted by documents sometimes known as ‘capitulations’) in 1580 and returning in 1582 to renew them before leaving in 1588. He was succeeded by Barton, then only 25, who had probably accompanied him in 1582 at around 20 years old and who by 1584 had developed the unique ability among European diplomats of being able to speak Turkish and understand written Ottoman script despite his youth and apparent lack of formal education. The years of Barton’s office that followed contain some of the most controversial and unorthodox cross-cultural diplomacy of the Elizabethan era. Succeeding Harborne as ‘agent’ and not officially appointed ambassador until 1593, Barton held the latter role *de facto* as soon as Harborne departed in 1588. Upon that departure, English commercial interests in Istanbul were very strong, to the extent that in 1589 some Florentine merchants preferred English rather than the historically dominant French protection for their trade, considering English influence at the centre of Ottoman power, known as the Sublime Porte, superior.<sup>14</sup> The embassy

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<sup>12</sup> Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 1–7.

<sup>13</sup> Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Woodhead, ‘Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)’, *ODNB*; ‘Sublime Porte’ metonymically refers to the high seat of Ottoman power, the ‘porte’ itself referring in Ottoman times to the Imperial Gate, or *Bâb-ı Hümayûn*, of the Topkapı palace.

household, called ‘Rapamat’ by the English, was at Fındıklı, just to the east of where the rest of the European representatives and their households resided in Beyoğlu (then known as to the English as ‘Pera’).<sup>15</sup>

During his early years in Istanbul as a secretary, Barton was essentially apprenticing Harborne. From around 1582 to 1588, he travelled extensively in the Eastern Mediterranean with a variety of remits. Mostly, he acted to represent Harborne’s authority – the ambassador’s presence was required in Istanbul – but Barton was also responsible for some more mundane clerical duties for the Company.<sup>16</sup> As will be shown in the first chapter of this thesis, these were crucially formative years in his apprehension of what the ambassadorial role would require, and how to succeed in it. During the 1580s, Barton developed an appreciation of just how far the influence of a mobile, linguistically skilled, documentarily-sanctioned agent could extend. When Harborne left in 1588, leaving Barton little written advice on how to proceed, it is clear that Barton was trusted enough to make his own way in what he saw as a mutable, meritocratic sphere. He had the experience of not only the formal diplomatic and commercial exchanges that a secretary would be party to, but, as Harborne’s generic ‘fixer’, he also had seen the off-the-record side of how to generate influence in Istanbul. This particular confluence of conditions meant that Barton had a way to transcend his class roots at a court in which he was less constrained by his middling birth. That he had a linguistic skill which elevated him in a profound respect above all his European counterparts only strengthened his claim to a post which had traditionally been reserved for those of a higher social status. Few could

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<sup>15</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, pp. 85–86. Barton was evicted from this house due to the ribald behaviour there in 1593, eventually moving to Beyoğlu: see Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, pp. 88–89.

<sup>16</sup> There are extant documents from Harborne’s period of office signed by Barton, indicating he was performing clerical and secretarial duties as well as less conventional duties. See, for example, Bodleian, Tanner MS 79, f. 117.

argue that he would not have appeared to be the best candidate for the post when Harborne left.<sup>17</sup>

And so in 1588, with Harborne's firm recommendation, Barton acquired the post of Agent of the Levant (then simply 'Turkey') Company in Istanbul, still working from the embassy household at Pera.<sup>18</sup> Though he was to all intents and purposes acting as the ambassador, inheriting all of Harborne's influence and quickly accruing more, the lack of an official gifting ceremony – which would not be for another five years – meant that he was officially recognised as 'agent' until then. Barton's career in Istanbul, due to its unique successes, ran continually until his death in 1598. This was an exception to the usual length of Company posts, and despite the fact that he was asking to be recalled by 1591, longing to return to England and acquire influence where it could more readily be translated into material gain.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, a longing to be rewarded for his work in Istanbul with a post in England is a frequent refrain throughout the 1590s, alongside constant financial woes and, occasionally, an expressed distaste for having to live and work amongst Muslims.<sup>20</sup> In addition, on Harborne's departure and Barton's establishment of his own kind of embassy, allegations of improper conduct at the headquarters in Istanbul started to flourish, ranging from excessive bawdiness to counterfeiting. Yet, despite this, he remained an extraordinarily effective facilitator in Istanbul, and so relief would not be forthcoming at any point in his career. In fact, during the next ten years of Barton's tenure,

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<sup>17</sup> The timing of Harborne's departure is in line with Company policy of appointing an agent for three years, then an ambassador for five. Barton expected to serve for the same duration. See Skilliter, *William Harborne*, p. 194.

<sup>18</sup> The Levant Company was founded as the Turkey Company in 1581; their charter was renewed as the Levant Company in a merger with the overlapping Venice Company in 1592.

<sup>19</sup> For example, in SP 97/2, ff. 44–46, 96–98.

<sup>20</sup> See Franklin L. Baumer, 'England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom', in *The American Historical Review*, 50.1 (1944), 26–48, p. 26; Wernham, *L&A*, III, pp. 503–04; Chapter Three of this thesis deals in part with Barton's disavowal of the Muslims he lived and worked amongst.



the Levant Company remained consistently strong due to Barton's diligent work to that end.<sup>21</sup>

Despite his commercial success, his tenure is also characterised by a shift towards the diplomatic, which was largely absent from Harborne's time in Istanbul. Though Harborne had pressed for anti-Spanish Ottoman military pressure and that was to become a key part of Barton's remit, Barton delved more deeply into Ottoman diplomatic affairs, eventually finding himself at the centre of grand diplomacy between major powers which far exceeded his Company duties. Indeed, the merchants of the Company expressed annoyance at the expense Barton's diplomatic activities incurred, complaining that if Elizabeth I desired Barton to act on her behalf in matters such as these, he should be paid an allowance by the Crown.<sup>22</sup> She would prove reluctant to do so, unwilling to be seen to be too cosy with the Ottomans, yet she and her advisors drove Barton to intervene in hefty political affairs in Istanbul far beyond the anti-Spanish brief often assumed to be the extent of English diplomatic interests at the Porte.<sup>23</sup> Barton's first major diplomatic success came in his central involvement in brokering a peace between the Ottomans and the Kingdom of Poland in 1591, earning personal praise from Elizabeth and establishing himself as a serious diplomatic intermediary in the region.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the 1590s, his linguistic advantage and willingness to push boundaries gave him an edge over the other European representatives in Istanbul both commercially and diplomatically, to the variously satisfied or condemnatory reactions of Elizabeth and her councillors.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The first two chapters of Wood's *History of the Levant Company* give a concise summary of the Company's affairs during Barton's tenure.

<sup>22</sup> Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 24–26; *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. xx.

<sup>23</sup> See Woodhead, 'Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)', *ODNB*, for an overview, and Chapters Two and Four of this thesis for examples.

<sup>24</sup> This episode and the praise Barton received is the focus of Chapter Two of this thesis.

<sup>25</sup> While there is explicit praise for Barton from Elizabeth for his work in 1591, he was disavowed and punished for his 1596 voyage into Hungary, as detailed in Chapters Two and Four of this thesis.

Having spent the 1590s in favour at the Porte and at the English Court, Barton's final and most controversial act came to define his career. In 1596, he was invited by the new Sultan Mehmed III to accompany the Ottoman army into Hungary. Barton swiftly asked permission of his superiors but no word arrived from England. In a remarkable act of bravado, Barton decided to attend the campaign without having gained sanction, and his extensive writings from the frontline of an anti-Christian military campaign remain compelling reading. Despite the campaign going smoothly, this generated considerable controversy on the continent, and Barton was duly reprimanded for this transgression too far. The Hungary affair, although controversial, was in some respects the pinnacle of his career – one defined by a series of increasingly fragile negotiations. The longer Barton remained, the more his authority grew, the higher the stakes became, and the more precarious his status became. He would die from dysentery just over a year later in January 1598, having kept a low profile since his return. News of his death travelled far and wide and hundreds of onlookers attended his funeral procession. If he is remembered today it is as a transgressive agent, one with little prestige, notable primarily for his ability to speak and read Ottoman Turkish.

This linguistic skill is what has marked Barton out in recent scholarly discussions, and certainly makes a case for him to be the subject of extended study. Though it is impossible to know how many Christian agents in Istanbul were able to speak Turkish and read Ottoman script, which comprises elements of Arabic, Persian and Turkish, there were none in any position of political power until the later 1590s, when the French agent François Savary De Brèves, no doubt sensing the extent of Barton's advantage, learnt to speak Turkish, going on to become a celebrated orientalist.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the French diplomatic corps in Istanbul went on to place such a great importance on 'having the

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<sup>26</sup> See Alastair Hamilton, 'François Savary de Brèves,' in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History* ed. by David Thomas and John Chesworth, vol. 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 415–22.

language’ that they would set up the *Ecole des Jeunes des Langues* seventy years after Barton’s death.<sup>27</sup> Barton’s multilingualism (he was also versed in French, Italian, Latin and some Greek), though certainly one of his distinguishing features, does not, however, appear in the almost entirely unilingual archive of correspondence that this thesis takes as its source material. There is no evidence within this body of writing that he wrote frequently in Turkish or Ottoman – indeed, it is likely that he possessed only enough of a familiarity to read either in a rather limited fashion, particularly at the beginning of his career – and these letters curiously – perhaps necessarily – mask the reality of the varied and multifaceted methods of communication Barton drew on during his career in Istanbul. Ultimately, Barton is marked out as a unique and noteworthy figure by the extraordinary closeness he fostered between England and the Porte, his linguistic skills, his own personal proximity to the Ottoman hierarchy, and his willingness to exploit the freedoms that distance from the source of his authority enabled.

### Critical Work on Anglo-Ottoman Relations and Barton, 1825–1965

Given the unlikely nature of the establishment of the trade – Harborne’s wresting control from a well-established French monopoly – the first ambassador has dominated histories while Barton has been remembered as little more than a minor clerical figure, despite the uniqueness of his character and tenure. The story of England’s establishment of the ‘Turkey trade’ as a component of well-established national stories of Elizabethan global expansion has generated interest from historians of varying schools since the middle of the nineteenth century. Although most histories made some mention of Barton, not until the middle of the twentieth century was he critically examined as a person of interest in

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<sup>27</sup> See Marie de Testa and Antoine Gaultier, *Drogmans et Diplomates Européens Auprès de la Porte Ottomane* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2003), pp. 43–46.

a sustained manner. His earliest scholarly mention comes in 1825, in *Account of the Levant Company: with Some Notices of the Benefits Conferred upon society by its Officers, in Promoting the Cause of Literature, Humanity, and the Fine Arts* by a former Company chaplain, Robert Walsh.<sup>28</sup> As the rather hyperbolic title suggests, this was not so much a historical account but rather a sentimental homage to the recently decommissioned Company. Setting the tone of much of the scholarship that followed, Barton is mentioned in passing not as one of the ‘officers’ promoting literature, humanity and the fine arts to which the title alludes, but rather as a footnote to the establishment of the trade, and his place of burial is noted as a curiosity for any interested travellers in the Ottoman capital. The fixation on Barton’s grave as a site of interest would dominate the brief accounts of his life that followed and has perhaps led to the aforementioned misunderstandings regarding his background.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the story of the establishment of the Levant trade is only given short consideration by Walsh, as Harborne’s story is similarly neglected. Almost half a century later, J. Theodore Bent’s two works on the Levant trade – one a formal historical article, one an edited collection of travel writings by Englishmen in the Eastern Mediterranean – both reserve brief mentions for Barton.<sup>30</sup> Bent’s work shows more awareness of the significance of Barton’s career than Walsh’s – amongst other things, his involvement in the Hungary campaign is included, and so here Barton slowly begins to re-emerge as a figure of some importance.

Curiosity regarding Barton’s grave aside, the story of his career was left largely untouched by chroniclers of the Company and of East-West relations more generally until

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<sup>28</sup> Robert Walsh, *Account of the Levant Company: with Some Notices of the Benefits Conferred upon society by its Officers, in Promoting the Cause of Literature, Humanity, and the Fine Arts* (London: J. & A. Arch and Hatchard & Son, 1825).

<sup>29</sup> Walsh’s mention of the grave originates in the published writings on Constantinople of James Dallaway in his 1797 work *Constantinople: Ancient and Modern, with Excursions to the Shores and Islands of the Archipelago and to the Troad* (London: T. Bensley, 1797).

<sup>30</sup> J. Theodore Bent, *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1893); ‘The English in the Levant’ *The English Historical Review*, V.XX (1890), 654–64.

his distinctiveness was recognised by a group of scholars at the turn of the twentieth century. Though their interest was in the establishment of Anglo-Ottoman relations more broadly and therefore in William Harborne, Barton started to appear as more than a footnote in the contributions of Edwin Pears, H. G. Rosedale, and Mortimer Epstein in 1893, 1904 and 1908. Of these, Rosedale's 1904 work *Queen Elizabeth and the Levant Company* is noteworthy in its appreciation of the importance of early modern epistolary conditions and conventions.<sup>31</sup> Though Rosedale's effort is less a scholarly work than a religiously-charged exploration of what he saw as a crucial part of 'Gloriana' statecraft in action, his archival focus and reproduction of documents narrows the history of Anglo-Ottoman relations tightly onto the documents that facilitated them. Pears' and Epstein's works, concerned with nascent Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy and commerce respectively, constitute important moments in the historiography of this field, establishing narratives that paved the way for more detailed studies of their chosen topics.<sup>32</sup> In 1922, H. G. Rawlinson published 'The Embassy of William Harborne to Constantinople, 1583–8', which strengthened serious critical interest in the establishment of relations, but gave no hint that Barton's tenure was of interest at all.<sup>33</sup>

In the 1930s and 40s scholarship on Anglo-Ottoman relations began to explore some of the key themes which have come to define the field today. Alfred C. Wood's 1935 *History of the Levant Company* remains the authoritative history of the company, and its chapters on the early years offer a thorough narrative of events which captures the commercial precarities and tensions the early agents had to navigate, and spends some time considering the diplomatic stresses put on the early ambassadors; his analysis is

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<sup>31</sup> H. G. Rosedale, *Queen Elizabeth and the Levant Company: A Diplomatic and Literary Episode of the Establishment of our Trade with Turkey* (London: Henry Frowde, 1904).

<sup>32</sup> Edwin Pears, 'The Spanish Armada and the Ottoman Porte', *The English Historical Review*, 8.31 (1893), 439–66; Mortimer Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London: Routledge & Sons, 1908).

<sup>33</sup> H. G. Rawlinson, 'The Embassy of William Harborne to Constantinople, 1583–8', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 (1922), 1–27.

uniquely shrewd for the period in the recognition that ‘the ‘activities of the first two ambassadors at Constantinople prove conclusively that the political motive was present from the start in the reopening of communications with Turkey.’<sup>34</sup> Three years later, I. I. Podea published an article entitled ‘A Contribution to the Study of Queen Elizabeth’s Eastern Policy’, which, though now obscure, was ground-breaking in its consideration of an ‘eastern policy’ at all, but also, crucially, in its recognition of Barton as a diplomatic agent at the centre of this policy.<sup>35</sup> Arthur Leon Horniker’s 1942 article ‘William Harborne and the Beginning of Anglo-Turkish Diplomatic and Commercial Relations’ is an updated, more thorough version of Rawlinson’s effort twenty years earlier, and though its subject is again Harborne, Barton features here not only as a go-between but as an agent in his own right whose work was central to diplomatic concerns at the Porte.<sup>36</sup> Two years later, Franklin L. Baumer contributed ‘England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom’, an important piece in that Baumer was concerned not with the story of the establishment of relations but of the period that followed it – Barton’s tenure.<sup>37</sup> Its consideration of wider ideological forces and its appreciation of the high stakes of Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy during the Barton period make a convincing case for the importance of his career.

Despite this growth of interest in Barton, his appearance in Samuel Chew’s formidable 1937 work *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* exemplifies the general perception of Barton and his role. Chew’s summation was as follows:

Barton’s career in Turkey affords us an interesting and rather pathetic early example of the Englishman who, in the modern phrase, ‘goes Balkan,’ that is,

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<sup>34</sup> Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> I. I. Podea, ‘A Contribution to the Study of Queen Elizabeth’s Eastern Policy’, *Mélanges d’Histoire Générale*, 2 (1938), 423–76.

<sup>36</sup> Arthur Leon Horniker, ‘William Harborne and the Beginning of Anglo-Turkish Diplomatic and Commercial Relations’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 14.3 (1942), 289–316.

<sup>37</sup> Franklin L. Baumer, ‘England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom’, in *The American Historical Review*, 50.1 (1944), 26–48.

whose morale declines in exotic surroundings. John Sanderson, who had known him in England, made his first visit to Constantinople while he was ambassador and actually performed his functions in the capital during Barton's absence with the Turkish armies. Sanderson is one witness of this deterioration. He found that life in the Levant had effected a sad alteration in the ambassador, who 'from serving God devoutly and drinking puer water' had come to 'badnes stoutly and much wine.' The serious-minded merchant paints a disquieting picture of life at the English embassy at Galata, where poisoners and filthy livers, 'garboylers,' assassins, drunkards, and harlots rioted. Members of the staff of the embassy 'plied their whores so, that at one time was rumord to be in the house seventeen, with whome and alcami he waisted his allowance.' [...] Fynes Moryson, however, records his gratitude for the courteous entertainment 'with lodging and dyet' which this 'worthy Gentleman' afforded him during his stay in Constantinople in 1597. This may mean no more than like many another wastrel Barton was affable and hospitable [...]<sup>38</sup>

Chew was among the first to study Barton, his character, and his conduct closely, but the faulty assumptions he arrived at only muddled the waters further. Chew is perhaps the first scholar to offer an image of Barton as a distinct personality, and it is perhaps for this reason that Baumer, in an otherwise balanced article, referred to Barton as a 'hard-boiled man of the world' a few years later.<sup>39</sup> Such subjective appraisals of Barton's character have hindered the study of him as an independent agent, especially when he was placed in contrast with the heroic, patriotic Harborne. One of the key aims of this thesis, accordingly, is to challenge this dominant and misleading interpretation of Barton (and, by extension, agents like him) as either heroic, 'civilising', proto-colonising or corrupt and immoral forces stoutly defying or indulging in the oft-imagined corruptions of the Orient. These wider themes as well as the specific characterisations of Barton came to pervade scholarship on Anglo-Ottoman interactions until 1965, when the field was fundamentally altered.

In that year, Susan Skilliter, a historian under the supervision of the distinguished Ottomanist Paul Wittek, wrote a doctoral thesis at the University of Manchester entitled

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<sup>38</sup> Samuel Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 159–60.

<sup>39</sup> Baumer, 'England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom', p. 40.

‘The Turkish Documents Relating to the Career of Edward Barton’s Embassy to the Porte (1588–98)’.<sup>40</sup> This pivotal work had the dual preoccupations of reclaiming the stories of English interests in the Ottoman Empire from Ottoman archival sources and focusing specifically on Barton, who had not previously been the main subject of a scholarly study. It was overwhelmingly successful, uncovering the full extent of a remarkable career gleaned from multilingual archival research, yet was never published. It was not until 1979 and her seminal study of Harborne, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, that Skilliter would publish a book-length work.<sup>41</sup> Like her thesis this was a multilingual archival documentary study, this time of the origins of Harborne’s embassy, combining the commercial nous that characterised Alfred Wood’s history with an appreciation for the realities of the lives of the agents and what was at stake in the Anglo-Ottoman experiment. Thanks to her doctoral thesis, its brief consideration of Barton related his role in a balanced and factual manner. Importantly, hers is largely the informing work behind Christine Woodhead’s 2004 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry, which is generally an accurate and thoughtful summation of Barton’s career.<sup>42</sup> The importance of Skilliter’s work cannot be overestimated not only because of its shrewd take on Barton and on Anglo-Ottoman relations as a whole but also because it pioneered a bilingual archival approach to the subject. Yet as a result Skilliter’s coverage of Barton’s own considerable correspondence was necessarily limited.

This thesis seeks to supplement, challenge, and extend Skilliter’s work by concentrating on this largely unexplored English archive. It is concerned with his writing as it engaged with and subverted epistolary conventions and forged a career at a great distance. This is supplemented by some translated documents which are available thanks

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<sup>40</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’.

<sup>41</sup> Skilliter, *William Harborne*.

<sup>42</sup> Woodhead, ‘Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)’, *ODNB*.



to the diligent work of Skilliter and others, but it is hoped that more about Edward Barton might be gleaned from the Turkish archives in due course, and as conditions allow. It is to be hoped that this consideration of Barton's correspondence generates further interest, stimulates a recognition of his relevance and importance for late-Elizabethan 'foreign policy', and spurs further research into his archival context, particularly on the Turkish side, but also in the Polish, Hungarian, French and Italian equivalents. The way has been laid by Skilliter to carry out a thorough examination of Barton's Turkish archival presence; such an examination is long overdue. However, in 1965 Skilliter ended her thesis with the following:

[...] more [than the above], however, can be learned from the rich contemporary material in European languages, especially from the large collection of Barton's correspondence which has already been assembled and which, it is hoped, will be ready for publication in the not too far distant future.<sup>43</sup>

This thesis aims to go some way towards the understanding that Skilliter hints an in-depth consideration of Barton's correspondence can provide. Given the vast nature of Barton's correspondence, publication of it in its entirety is perhaps unlikely. Yet over fifty years later, it is perhaps time to give wider recognition to this extraordinary body of correspondence which gives a deeply informative insight into 1590s Istanbul and the tumultuous circumstances in which the Anglo-Ottoman relationship briefly flourished.

## Theoretical Framings of Anglo-Ottoman Exchange, 1999–present

The late twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen interest in Barton spring up in a variety of contexts. Skilliter's work on him and his role in international diplomacy saw him receive significant attention in Polish, Hungarian, and Greek histories.<sup>44</sup> A surge of

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<sup>43</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 118.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Anna Kalinowska, 'Działalność Ambasadora Angielskiego w Konstantynopolu Edwarda Bartona a Stosunki Polsko-Tureckie (1589–1597)', in *Przegląd Historyczny* 94.3 (2003), 251–68; Paul Cernovodeanu, 'An English Diplomat at War: Edward Barton's Attendance of the Ottoman campaign

interest in the cultural impact in England of these encounters, kickstarted by historicist works from Lisa Jardine, Jerry Brotton, Nabil Matar, Gerald MacLean and Matthew Dimmock, found a new place for Barton, building upon the foundations laid by Skilliter but with a new set of concerns.<sup>45</sup> Whereas the works already discussed had largely been historical considerations of the events and significance of the early Anglo-Ottoman exchanges, this later group of scholars, largely through surveying the literary resonances of these early modern intercultural connections, examined their impact on English culture and thought at large, with an abiding literary focus. Most mention Barton to some extent, usually as an example of the duality and adaptability required of agents facilitating Anglo-Islamic exchange in the early modern Eastern Mediterranean, and he thus accrued new significance as an intercultural facilitator, adaptable and mutable in his identity and his methods.

The version of the Eastern Mediterranean this body of work evoked, with its porous borders, uncertain identities, and routes of cultural transmission stretching to the English stage and beyond, is the one which this thesis takes as a given, and the plasticity which it allowed agents such as Barton is a crucial presupposition of this work. Additionally, due to the work of this group of scholars, the complex ways in which English interests in the Eastern Mediterranean were felt back in England itself are now better understood. Perhaps the most obvious marker of this is the spate of ‘Turk plays’

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in Central Europe (1596)’ in *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire*, XXVII.4 (1989), 429-49; Vassiliki Tzoga, ‘Meletios Pigas (1550–1601), Patriarch of Alexandria’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Athens, 2009).

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art Between East and West* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Gerald MacLean, *Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire Before 1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2005); and *Cultural Encounters Between East and West, 1453–1699*, ed. by Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005); Eric R. Dursteler has provided an astute summary of some of this work in ‘On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 15 (2011), 413–34.

which became a crucial element of the English dramatic repertoire in the late sixteenth century. Turban-donning figures were circumscribed on stages where a ‘Mahomet’s head’ was a central prop; the figure of the ‘Turk’ was invoked in sermons and painted on signs for public houses.<sup>46</sup> And, as Brotton, Dimmock, Matar, MacLean and others, most recently Anders Ingram, have now demonstrated beyond doubt, it is no coincidence that this was concurrent with the English diplomatic experiment in Istanbul. The explicit links between theatrical performances of Islam and the performativity of cross-cultural diplomacy have also been convincingly demonstrated in a volume edited by Sabine Schülting, Sabine Lucia Müller, and Ralf Hertel.<sup>47</sup> The importance of spectacle and performativity is readily apparent in Barton’s correspondence and so this body of work constitutes another important context when considering his career.<sup>48</sup> Timothy Hampton’s 2009 work *Fictions of Embassy* and a recent volume edited by Tracey A. Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood, *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*, have made fruitful connections between literature and diplomacy in the early modern period.<sup>49</sup>

A complementary understanding of these exchanges has also emerged fairly recently from the work of a group of historians working towards what some have termed

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<sup>46</sup> For the extent to which this was the case, see Anders Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans: Turkish History in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Dimmock, *New Turkes*; Claire Jowitt has demonstrated how ‘Turk plays’ were used as political allegory in ‘Political Allegory in Late Elizabethan and Early Jacobean “Turk” Plays: *Lust’s Dominion* and *The Turke*’, *Comparative Drama*, 36.3/4 (2002–03), 411–43, expanded on in *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics 1589–1642: Real and Imagined Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

<sup>47</sup> *Early Modern Encounters with the Islamic East: Performing Cultures*, ed. by Sabine Schülting, Sabine Lucia Müller, and Ralf Hertel (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). For a similarly thorough discussion of performative early modern diplomacy, see *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power: The Making of Peace*, ed. by Nathalie Rivière de Carles (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

<sup>48</sup> The performative aspect of Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy is readily apparent through the various descriptions of the formal gift-giving ceremonies which were key mediums for diplomatic contact, but Barton showed an awareness for ceremonial performativity outside of those formal encounters: see Chapter Two of this thesis, which details Barton’s creation of a public, performative spectacle in 1593 during a spat with Ferhād Paşa, when he sailed to the palace and held a petition to his forehead.

<sup>49</sup> Timothy Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Tracey A. Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

the ‘New Diplomatic History’, which amongst other things gives more consideration to cultural factors. Though not directly related to Barton, the work of E. Natalie Rothman, Virginia Aksan, Daniel Goffman and John-Paul Ghobrial, amongst others, presents a similar picture of the liminality and porousness of the Ottoman cultural sphere; Rothman’s study of ‘trans-imperial subjects’ is of particular interest when considering agents such as Barton.<sup>50</sup> Noel Malcolm’s formidable 2015 work, *Agents of Empire*, perhaps fits most closely with this group of historians, though the scholarship within it, an erudite multilingual archival examination of the agents which facilitated encounters in the early modern Eastern Mediterranean, defies easy categorisation.<sup>51</sup> Malcolm’s short consideration of Barton within that work gives the latter his due recognition as a unique agent, and the figure which emerges from this thesis broadly concurs with Malcolm’s model, although it is nuanced by an exploration of the way Barton’s faith facilitated the creation of religious networks in Istanbul. Additionally, histories of epistolary transmission and royal authorship inform the consideration of correspondence which follows. The work of James Daybell, Rayne Allinson, and Carlo M. Bajetta have all contributed nuanced and detailed understandings of what it meant to send letters across continents and have raised crucial questions of royal authority and authorship especially in conditions where the secretariat and privy councillors had a great deal of agency.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See, for example, E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Agents between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* ed. by Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

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

<sup>52</sup> See James Daybell, *The Material Letter: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing in Early Modern England, 1580–1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012); Rayne Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters: Royal Correspondence and English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); *Elizabeth I’s Italian Letters*, ed. by Carlo M. Bajetta (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

## Methodology

In this thesis I take the view that the work of Skilliter and Woodhead has provided a thorough overview of Barton's career, though there remain elements and events which require elucidation and further consideration. My work builds on the foundation set by these scholars, turning a microhistorical lens onto Barton's writing itself, examining not only how he rhetorically reported news of his exploits and of the situation in Istanbul back to England, but also how he used this medium to fashion himself and author his own authority in 1590s Istanbul. The time is ripe for a re-evaluation of Barton following Skilliter's pioneering work, now encompassing an analysis of the intricacies of a role known to be hybrid, nuanced, and fraught in various ways, and largely constructed by agents themselves. Writing was absolutely central to each of these aspects, and Barton's large archive of personal correspondence offers the opportunity for a productive case study. This approach means the lack of incoming correspondence, relative paucity of translated Ottoman archival sources, and scantiness of primary accounts from other sources than Barton himself, are lesser issues.

A tight focus on Barton's writing can reveal not only the extent of English interests in 1590s Istanbul, but the quest of one agent to shape the reception of his actions at home and abroad, to describe a profoundly 'strange' environment, and to thus define the fundamentals of what was a novel and loosely defined role. Barton's writings straddle the boundaries between conventional diplomatic reportage, travel writing and familiar correspondence, subverting the conventions of each of these genres at will as and when it was advantageous to do so. And though they are somewhat unique in this regard, particularly in terms of the extent to which Barton was willing to manipulate epistolary conventions to gain an upper hand, they share many of these traits with other diplomatic writings of the period, and so this study has implications beyond 1590s Istanbul. As such,

this thesis is not primarily concerned with decoding the intricacies of intercultural diplomacy in 1590s Istanbul, though it does uncover some heretofore unknown episodes on the English side of those encounters. With its prioritisation of the written word and with epistolary conventions, the following is in dialogue less with Ottoman historiography than with histories of diplomacy, travel writing literature, and sixteenth century letter writing. It is to be hoped that the inferences drawn herein demonstrate the worth of a different, multifaceted approach to diplomatic archival material which might otherwise be regarded as workaday documents.

Given the timing of the Anglo-Ottoman experiment, positioned just before the incorporation of the East India Company and the colonial expansion which would follow over the next three centuries, this thesis is also an examination of the methods of a series of proto-colonial exchanges which shared many key features with later colonial exploits, though within a profoundly different balance of power dynamic.<sup>53</sup> A key supposition of this thesis, and any work on this area, is that the diplomatic exchanges between England and the Ottomans are fundamentally shaped by a dynamic in which England is by far the less influential party. This widely exempts the following considerations from the dominant dynamic which came to follow, powerfully identified by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, first published in 1978.<sup>54</sup> Barton was operating at a pre- or proto-colonial moment to which the Saidian Orientalist power dynamic is not fully applicable: a time before British imperialism had taken root, when the Ottoman Empire was a major global power still at its height, and when an isolated Protestant England was fundamentally threatened by the looming Catholic presence on the continent of the Spanish and Habsburg empires. Gerald MacLean's idea of 'imperial envy' is a helpful lens through which to interpret the events of Barton's career, which demonstrate an Elizabethan

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<sup>53</sup> MacLean, *Looking East*, pp. 20–23.

<sup>54</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 2003).

willingness to recognise the military might and material riches of the Ottomans as of great use in the epoch-defining war against Spain. This was as much a pragmatic concern as it was a religious one. An oft-repeated anecdote about the Anglo-Ottoman alliance is that the metal plundered from dissolved English monasteries, along with tin from Cornish mines, was sent to Istanbul to build the guns to sink Spanish ships.<sup>55</sup> That Barton gained his ambassadorial post just as the Armada was sunk further illustrates how profound the stakes of a potential military alliance with the Ottomans were at this point, giving Barton's actions in the 1590s even more significance. Combined with the fact that Barton operated at a period of what Garrett Mattingly has termed diplomatic 'contraction', in which he was one of only three resident representatives in non Protestant diplomatic settings, it is easy to understand why controversy was always close to his career, and also why the Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic experiment deserves to be treated as more than, as some scholars have suggested, a 'bluff'.<sup>56</sup> In some quarters, the amicability between England and the Ottomans represented one of Elizabeth's great successes, the courting of such a mighty global power a triumph of her statecraft. The anonymous play *The True Tragedie of Richard the third*, published in 1594 as Barton was at his most influential, closes with an appraisal of Elizabeth that includes the following:

She is that lampe that keeps faire Englands light,  
And through her faith her country liues in peace:  
And she hath put proud Antichrist to flight,  
And bene the meanes that ciuill wars did cease.  
Then England kneele vpon thy hairy knee,  
And thanke that God that still prouides for thee.  
The Turke admires to heare her gouernment,  
And babies in *Iury*, sound her princely name,

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<sup>55</sup> Dimmock, 'Guns and Gawds: Elizabethan England's Infidel Trade' in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. by Jyotsna G. Singh (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), pp. 205–22 (p. 216).

<sup>56</sup> Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), pp. 176–77: 'After 1589, Elizabeth's only official diplomatic residents were with non-Catholic powers, her ambassador with the Huguenot king of France, her agent with the States of the rebellious Netherlands, and her newly established ambassador at Constantinople [...]'; Lisa Jardine, 'Gloriana Rules The Waves: Or, The Advantage of Being Excommunicated (And A Woman)' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 14 (2004), 209–22 (p. 222).

All Christian Princes to that Prince hath sent,  
After her rule was rumord foorth by fame.  
The Turke hath sworne neuer to lift his hand,  
To wrong the Princesse of this blessed land.<sup>57</sup>

These evocations of Elizabeth's fame which explicitly link her diplomatic prowess with her connection with the Ottoman Empire – 'the Turke' – are an indication that Barton's career represented a key facet of Elizabeth's perceived efficacy as an international broker. It was Barton who facilitated the closeness evoked here: Sultan Murad III, who in 1594 'admire[d] to heare her gouernment', would have received Elizabeth's letters via Barton, who sometimes altered their contents.<sup>58</sup> On a wider scale, it is clear that, for the author of this play and thus likely for many other parts of the English collective consciousness, the Elizabethan worldview combined a proto-Orientalist view of the East with recognition of a power balance that had to be skilfully managed by the English monarch. This seems closer to an 'imperial envy' than a Saidian model of pre-colonial Orientalism.

## The Material Basis of Barton's Archive

Barton's known correspondence, of which a great deal survives, is on the whole contained to two archival collections: the Cottonian manuscripts held at the British Library, and the State Papers held in the National Archives.<sup>59</sup> Various documents in his hand and copies of letters in other hands survive in Cotton Nero B XI and XII. The Cottonian papers were assembled by Sir Robert Bruce Cotton (1571–1631), a contemporary of Barton's who inherited papers from, amongst many others, Barton's regular correspondent William Cecil. His extensive archive was passed down through the Cotton family, surviving a

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<sup>57</sup> *The True Tragedie of Richard the third* (London: Thomas Creede, 1594), sig. I2r.

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter Two of this thesis for details of the most notable incident of Barton doctoring royal correspondence.

<sup>59</sup> London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero B XI and XII; London, The National Archives: Public Record Office, state papers, SP 97/2 Turkey, SP 97/3 Turkey.



costly fire in 1731 before forming a part of the new British Museum's collections in 1753. The Cotton Manuscripts are famed for their depth and range, and the sources found in the Cotton papers pertaining to Barton and Anglo-Ottoman relations are indispensable. The multilingual and diverse variety of sources within complement the fastidiously calendared and well-preserved collections of the State Papers. The Cotton Papers also contain, in Cotton Nero B XII, Barton's only known letter-book, spanning three crucial years of his office, from 1593–1596. Similarly, the Tanner manuscripts held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, assembled by Thomas Tanner (1674–1735), shed some light on Barton's religious endeavours, including correspondence facilitated by him without explicitly mentioning him. This range of material, including letters from those around Barton as well as his own, provides crucial context for the letters found in the SP/97 series of the State Papers held at the National Archives in Kew.

These letters form the basis of this thesis. They were sent, generally, according to a regular schedule: a packet was dispatched from Istanbul every two weeks, though this was prone to interruptions by the many pitfalls of epistolary communication in the early modern Eastern Mediterranean. They usually travelled by the standard shipping route back to England around the Iberian coast, though there is evidence that when the letters contained particularly sensitive material Barton ensured they were sent by a safer overland route through Poland instead.<sup>60</sup> He was explicit about the importance of the trustworthiness of carriers and the threat of interception, and was assigned a cipher devised by Frances Walsingham's trusted agent Thomas Phelippes.<sup>61</sup> Copies of the key to his cipher still exist in the State Papers, enabling the full decoding of Barton's correspondence.<sup>62</sup> Anxieties about the transmission of Barton's letters were shared by

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<sup>60</sup> SP 102/61, f. 9; Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters*, pp. 134–35.

<sup>61</sup> Daybell, *The Material Letter*, pp. 159–61.

<sup>62</sup> SP 106/1, ff. 17–18.

both William and Robert Cecil, with the former advising the latter of special care with letters to Barton, writing in 1595 that ‘hearewith must be remembered that theare be our letter written to Mr. Barton, which would be written with somm good Caution, least it might be miscarried and so cumm to the hands of suche as ar readie to detract anie thinge, thowghe never soe well ment by hir Majestie’, though he had claimed that Barton’s cipher was so thorough that it took too long to decode.<sup>63</sup> The letters were always addressed to the Secretary of State, and were duly copied by one of his secretaries into letter-books at the embassy. On receipt in London, Barton’s outgoing letters were read and passed to a secretariat including Christopher Parkins and John Wolley for copying, and for decoding and translation if necessary.<sup>64</sup> Very little of Barton’s incoming correspondence survives, though his letters often explicitly address and repeat points presented to him in letters from England. It can be hoped that further work in the Turkish archives may be able to locate Barton’s own collection of papers in the future, if they are still extant.

## An Overview of the Thesis

The four chapters that follow are ordered loosely chronologically. Chapter One surveys the years of Barton’s secretaryship and his accession to the position of ambassador from 1582–90, which served as an apprenticeship to the various roles he would inherit. Through an examination of the writings by and about him from this period, the germ of his appreciation for documentary authority, multilingual mobility, and improvisation become apparent as his work for Harborne establishes themes which would ensure his success in the coming decades. It culminates in his establishing diplomatic success, brokering an Ottoman peace with Poland, which drew direct personal praise from

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<sup>63</sup> *The Letters of Lord Burghley, William Cecil, to his Son Sir Robert Cecil 1593–1598*, ed. by William Acres (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 175; Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters*, p. 135.

<sup>64</sup> *The Letters of Lord Burghley*, p. 175.

Elizabeth I. Chapter Two looks at the writing produced by Barton during the years 1590–93, which included some remarkable feats of disobedience and forgery – the fruits of the autonomy granted to him after the Polish peace – but which also came at a time when allegations of improper conduct began to plague his embassy and affect how he was seen in England. Chapter Three assesses Barton’s place within the faith networks of 1590s Istanbul, with particular attention paid to his feud with the Jewish agent Solomon Ben Ya’esh and the correspondence he fostered between the chief rabbi in Istanbul, Abraham Ben Reuben and the prominent English Hebraist Hugh Broughton, which led to Barton’s inclusion as a missionary figure in some late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century pamphlets. Chapter Four considers the extraordinary writing surrounding Barton’s unprecedented journey into Hungary, showing the climax and downfall of his career in just over a year. The writing from this period is perhaps the most emblematic of what can be termed Barton’s personal project – his own brand of diplomacy which he repeatedly preferred to conduct regardless of Crown-sanctioned advice. The Conclusion reflects upon a series of lawsuits from Barton’s sister-in-law which are rare markers of how Barton was publicly perceived in England in the years following his death. The resulting picture is one of an extraordinary agent who, by the end of his relatively short life, had risen to a position of unprecedented authority in his chosen cultural sphere, who had reinterpreted and reshaped orders from the highest powers frequently and willingly, and had sought to go much further than his role would traditionally have allowed. It is also a picture of the stresses early modern commercial agents and ambassadors were subjected to, especially when they operated at a great distance from their native countries. Barton was the pioneer of a new kind of commercially-oriented diplomacy which resulted from late Elizabethan England’s specific circumstances, but which was also of his own making.

His immediate legacies are difficult to discern, but at a point when the figure of the cross-cultural intermediary is newly prominent, Barton appears more relevant than ever.

# Chapter One

## Secretary, Agent, Ambassador: Writing Autonomy, 1582–90

This chapter examines the writing by and about Barton produced during his initial years in Istanbul, from his arrival in 1582, through his assumption of Harborne's role, to his establishing success in 1590. For the first part of this period, from 1582–88, he acted as Harborne's secretary; then, upon Harborne's departure in 1588, Barton was technically an agent of the newly-incorporated Levant Company, though, as will be explored, he performed the roles of a *de facto* ambassador. After three years in that capacity, the necessary gifts from England, subject to delay but eventually received in October 1593, meant that he was then ceremonially confirmed as Porte-endorsed ambassador. Barton cut his teeth as a merchant, negotiator and clerk during these early years, and also learned to speak Turkish and read Ottoman script, all while preparing to inherit an unprecedentedly prestigious role for one of his social standing.<sup>1</sup> By 1584 Harborne was writing back to England recommending Barton due to his particular skills.<sup>2</sup> These early years culminated in what was undoubtedly Barton's establishing diplomatic episode in Istanbul: his role in brokering a peace between Poland and Sultan Murad III in 1590, widely known in Christian diplomatic circles and generating sincere gratitude and credit from the English court. Coming just before his confirmation as ambassador, this

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<sup>1</sup> Of the few Elizabethan resident ambassadors abroad in the late sixteenth century, none had so low a social standing as Barton. Most were more typical Elizabethan ambassadors: courtiers who performed service abroad as young men in search of greater favour at court later. See Tracey A. Sowerby, 'Francis Thynne's *Perfect Ambassadors* and the Construction of Diplomatic Thought in Elizabethan England', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 82.4 (2019), 491–517.

<sup>2</sup> SP 97/2, ff. 124–25.

mediation can be understood as the gateway to the remarkable agency and autonomy he went on to display over the following decade. The correspondence which was responsible for brokering the deal also displays signs that Barton was already skilfully and effectively manipulating information to his advantage, turning a somewhat inevitable peace deal between Poland and the Ottomans into triumph for English statecraft and a specific endorsement of Elizabeth's Ottoman-oriented foreign policy. This chapter examines writing by Barton, Harborne, and Elizabeth I amongst others in order to illustrate the evolution of Barton's early role, at first seeking to understand the precedent set by Harborne before exploring the ways in which Barton's role diverged from Harborne's precedent and from wider expectations of ideal ambassadorial conduct in the period. In doing so, this chapter also aims to illustrate the emergence of certain preoccupations which would go on to become key themes of Barton's career. These include the use of a linguistic advantage to full effect, the deployment of unrestricted and fast mobility in fashioning authority, and, most importantly, the development of an epistolary model through which Barton became able to fashion a remarkable degree of authority and autonomy throughout his career, and which was his foremost tool in doing so.

## Ambassadorial Paradigms

Barton's early years in Istanbul as a secretary are obscure due to a lack of archival documentation. It was only with his assumption of the role of foremost English representative that his reports back to England started, and thus his archive created. It is impossible to be sure of the exact date he arrived in Istanbul, because his route into an association with Harborne is unclear; as we have seen, the consensus has been that Barton moved to London and entered Harborne's service in the early 1580s and accompanied him on Harborne's return to Istanbul as formalised ambassador in 1583. Accordingly, the

first extant documentary mention of Barton comes from a Harborne letter in 1584, passages of which, from the copy published in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, are analysed below.<sup>3</sup> This is the earliest Barton can be placed in Harborne's service, and therefore in Istanbul, hence the assumption that Barton accompanied Harborne on his return to the Porte the year before.<sup>4</sup> The letter gives Barton directions on a mission to spread the English trade into Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis. A few chapters later in Hakluyt's volume, the first report of Barton helping merchants survives in the dramatic account of the ship *Jesus* by Thomas Sanders, written in 1585.<sup>5</sup> From then until 1586, Barton's name only appears in rare passing mentions in Harborne's correspondence. John Sanderson preserved copies of two letters from Barton in 1586 and 1587 – extremely rare examples of Barton's own writing during this period – which survive in the British Library's Lansdowne manuscripts, and the next archival appearance of Barton is in the second half of 1588, when he succeeded Harborne and began to send regular dispatches back to England at the rate of roughly once a fortnight.<sup>6</sup> Despite this relative lack of written sources from the years 1582–88, these early mentions are particularly telling not only because they can place him at the outset of his career, but also because they give a sense of the variety of his responsibilities, and the first clue that a 'secretary' was responsible for much more than traditional secretarial duties in a situation so remote from the source of his authority as an agent of the English Crown.

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<sup>3</sup> 'A Letter of the English Ambassador to M. Edward Barton.', in Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, p. 177.

<sup>4</sup> It is possible he went out in 1578, when he was only eighteen, but did not appear in any written accounts until 1584. This would have given him a more plausible timeframe during which to learn Turkish. However, the sudden appearance of Barton in written accounts starting in 1584 strongly suggests his presence on Harborne's latter journey; a six-year period without any mention of him seems unlikely. In 1595 and 1596, Barton mentions having been in Istanbul for around fourteen years: see BL, Lansdowne MS 846, f. 218: '[...] some of us have nott seene hir Hignes nowe fourteene years [...]' (October 20<sup>th</sup> 1595); and SP 97/3, f. 126: '[...] after fourteen yeares continuall peregrinadge in these barabarous contreis, in wch I have spent the best of all my tyme [...]' (May 14<sup>th</sup> 1596). This strongly suggests he accompanied Harborne in 1583.

<sup>5</sup> Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, pp. 184–91. Sanders' account was also seen as noteworthy enough for an abridgement to be reproduced in Edward Arber, *An English Garner: Ingatherings from our History and Literature*, 7 vols (London: Arber, 1877–1883), II (1879), pp. 24–26.

<sup>6</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 19.

‘Secretary’, ‘agent’, and ‘ambassador’ were all terms which connoted specific responsibilities. In Barton’s case, the responsibilities expected from all three of these roles were decided by the only available precedent – Harborne. G. R. Berridge and Alan James’ handbook, *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, is an illuminating starting point from which to understand the distinctions between these terms – a source written with attention to diplomatic vocabulary from the early modern period to the late twentieth century, it shows the extent to which diplomacy was particularly preoccupied with terminology, official nomenclature, and the status implied therein. Accordingly, in Berridge and James’ glossing of these terms there is an important sense of hierarchy indicated by these titles. ‘Secretary’ is, in this context, associated with mundane clerical duties and does not imply any diplomatic authority, though it is open to a certain amount of polysemy.<sup>7</sup> Berridge and James gloss the term ‘agent’ as ‘the lowest of diplomatic ranks [...] Agents were maintained at courts where commercial advantages might be obtained by their presence but political interests were marginal’; they gloss ‘Ambassador’ conversely as ‘a diplomatic agent of the highest rank’.<sup>8</sup> However, all three terms have multiple possible interpretations; this was true even more so in an early modern setting when resident ambassadors were only just starting to be conceptualised, and Barton occupied all three positions. Precedents set by existing Christian agents in Istanbul, who had sought and contested trade supremacy in the region since the early sixteenth century, were of a more immediate concern to Harborne and Barton, tasked with effecting the same for England.

The Venetian *bailo*, a resident fixture since 1454, was concerned with maintaining diplomatic stability between the Ottomans and their neighbouring Venetian possessions.

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<sup>7</sup> Posts such as the Secretary of State show that the title was used in various ways and indicated a wide range of responsibilities. In the case of the Turkey and Levant Companies, however, the title certainly referred to clerks in more plainly hierarchical terms. See ‘Secretary’, in G. R. Berridge and Alan James, *A Dictionary of Diplomacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 239.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Agent’, in Berridge and James, *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, p. 5; ‘Ambassador’, in Berridge and James, *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, p. 10.



There had often been a Papal Nuncio present at court, and Harborne himself had sometimes been referred to in the early documents he obtained from Sultan Murad III as ‘nuncio’, suggesting a more explicitly religious aspect to his endeavours.<sup>9</sup> The French representatives had always operated as political, state-endorsed ambassadors since the establishment of formal trade and military cooperation in 1536 with Jean de la Forêt’s embassy.<sup>10</sup> The Ottomans themselves seemed not to regard these distinctions. Skilliter has noted with interest that all Turkish documentation referred to Barton as *elchī* – ambassador – even before his official accreditation; and like Harborne before him, he was further distinguished by being known as the ‘Lutheran elshi [*elchī*: envoy]’.<sup>11</sup> Though there may have been nothing expressly new about Christian political negotiations at the Porte, the distinctive Protestantism of the English agents facilitated easier relations. As Susan Skilliter, Jerry Brotton, Rayne Allinson and others have shown, the Protestant-Muslim common ground – based almost entirely on anti-Catholic sentiment and a shared iconoclastic tendency – shaped the royal epistolary exchanges between Elizabeth and Sultan Murad III at the outset of Anglo-Ottoman relations.<sup>12</sup> The discrepancy between Barton’s readymade status as the ‘Lutheran elshi’ to the Ottomans and a mere ‘agent’ to his English superiors characterises his early career. Lacking the material abundance of a fully-fledged ambassador, necessary to make his closeness manifest from 1588 until 1593, Barton instead had to develop methods of accruing influence which did not require formal recognition as ambassador, with funds supplied to him only by the Levant

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<sup>9</sup> H. G. Rawlinson, ‘The Embassy of William Harborne to Constantinople, 1583–8’ in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 (1922), 1–27 (p.5).

<sup>10</sup> De Lamar Jensen, ‘The Ottoman Turks in Sixteenth Century French Diplomacy’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 16.4 (1985), 451–70 (pp. 454–55).

<sup>11</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, p. 26, n. 2; *Shakespeare’s Europe: Unpublished Chapters of Fynes Moryson’s Itinerary*, ed. by Charles Hughes (London: Sherratt & Hughes, 1903) p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> See Jerry Brotton, *This Orient Isle* (London: Allen Lane, 2016); Rayne Allinson, ‘Letters Full of Marvels’, in *A Monarchy of Letters: Royal Correspondence and English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 131–50; and Noel Malcolm, ‘Protestantism, Calvinoturcism, and Turcopapalism’, in *Useful Enemies: Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 76–104.

Company. The Company itself, being responsible for Barton's salary, regarded Barton's title as 'agent' in a strictly commercial sense, and saw those responsibilities as paramount.

There were wider expectations attached to the role of state representative in the sixteenth century. By the 1580s, writing devoted to the study of the roles of the newly resident ambassadors and idealised conceptions of ambassadorial conduct in a residential setting was an established tradition. Catherine Fletcher has identified the first work in this genre as prominent humanist Ermolao Barbaro's treatise, *De Officio Legati*, dated to the second half of the fifteenth century, which spawned a spate of humanist works on the nature of the role of resident ambassador.<sup>13</sup> Fletcher argues that this tradition initiated a model of humanist ambassadorial conduct which would go on to set up expectations for Barton during the late sixteenth century:

It is clear from the [fifteenth-century Italian] treatises that by the turn of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, a resident ambassador was understood to represent a prince or republic, to hold formal credentials (thus distinguishing him from an agent) and to be responsible for managing general 'day-to-day' business (whether or not in conjunction with a specific mission).<sup>14</sup>

Most of this applies without exception to Barton. The fraught distinction between agent and ambassador is one that would upset Barton's transition from secretary to ambassador, and questions as to the exact usage of this terminology remain. This relatively new model for the resident ambassador embodied many of the ideals Barton would seek to emulate during his office. They were, to use Fletcher's term, 'fixers', who procured safe-conducts for their countrymen and allies; they usually worked with others as part of a network; they had a good knowledge of local customs and society and thus good contacts. They were also skilled linguists and translators, possessing at the very least good Latin, the diplomatic *lingua franca*, though some Italian states struggled to find men sufficiently

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<sup>13</sup> Catherine Fletcher, "'Furnished with Gentlemen': the Ambassador's House in Sixteenth-Century Italy". *Renaissance Studies*, 24.4 (2010), 518–535 (p. 39).

<sup>14</sup> Fletcher, "'Furnished With Gentlemen'", p. 42.

accomplished in other languages to work as ambassadors.<sup>15</sup> And crucially, they were responsible for the writing which could facilitate a wide network of news and intelligence, encompassing varied and multilingual sources. These models were fashioned, written about and performed from the late fifteenth century onwards. By the time Barton was working as a secretary, the genre had become established in the Anglophone literary tradition. Ian Atherton argues that it was particularly popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>16</sup> Jean de Villiers Hotman's *The Ambassador* was published in 1603, but its French predecessor, *Traitté de l'ambassadeur*, had been circulating in manuscript form in the late sixteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the most notable English treatise on the notion of ideal ambassadorial conduct devised during Barton's life was Francis Thynne's *The Application of Certain Histories Concerning Ambassadors and Their Functions* written in 1578, a prescription for who ambassadors should be and how they should behave from the son of the former master of the royal household, William Thynne. Though not published until 1651, when it was then recast into a piece called *The Perfect Ambassadors* (London: John Colbeck, 1652), Thynne and Hotman's writing reflects the type of scholarly thought directed towards the ideal role of an ambassador during the late sixteenth century.<sup>18</sup> These later texts are more concerned with the ambassador's ideal function as closely demonstrative of the monarch they represented, including in their noble behaviour, the maintenance of proper conduct in their household, and even their physical appearance.<sup>19</sup> This was a model meant for a gentleman well versed in the

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<sup>15</sup> Fletcher, "Furnished With Gentlemen", p. 44.

<sup>16</sup> Ian Atherton, *Ambition and Failure in Stuart England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 173.

<sup>17</sup> Jean de Villiers Hotman, *The Ambassador* (London: James Shaw, 1603); for details of its earlier form and circulation see David Baird Smith, 'François Hotman', in *The Scottish Historical Review*, 13.52 (1916), 328–65.

<sup>18</sup> Francis Thynne, *The Application of Certain Histories Concerning Ambassadors and Their Functions* (London: J. Crook and J. Baker, 1651); *The Perfect Ambassadors: Treating of the Antiquitie, Priveledges, and Behaviour of Men Belonging to that Function* (London: John Colbeck, 1652).

<sup>19</sup> Atherton, *Ambition and Failure in Stuart England*, pp. 171–74. Fynes Moryson assessed Barton's career as fatally flawed by his lack of knowledge of English courtly customs: 'But the truth is, that howsoever Mr.

intricacies of life at court. But when reading *The Ambassador* and *The Perfect Ambassadour* alongside the earlier humanist Italian tradition with Barton in mind, it is apparent that he conforms not to the model of the courtly ambassador as modelled by thinkers like Thynne and Hotman, but to the kind of hybrid ‘fixer’ first described by Barbaro. Barton fulfils few of Thynne or Hotman’s requirements while excelling in the areas prioritised by the earlier Mediterranean ambassadors.<sup>20</sup>

Ian Atherton has summed up the critical consensus on the traditional model of early modern courtly ambassador:

Self-fashioning as an ambassador was a less creative and a more prescriptive process than self-fashioning as a gentleman or a local politician. Presenting oneself as an ambassador meant conformity to two norms: consonance with notions of the ‘perfect ambassador’ and congruity to the royal will. In the first the diplomat had to represent in himself those virtues thought most meet in an ambassador; in the second he had to represent the views and person of the king.<sup>21</sup>

Atherton is describing the seventeenth-century ambassador John Scudamore, the type of courtly diplomat concerned with conforming to Thynne’s ideals. However, this consensus further illustrates the uniqueness of Barton’s position. He was not constrained by conformity to either of the norms mentioned above – in fact, he demonstrably subverts both of those norms during his office, as will be discussed in later chapters. In these terms, Barton cannot be described as a ‘virtuous’ man. By all accounts, he ran a household of ribaldry, counterfeiting and subterfuge.<sup>22</sup> The part of the virtuous nobleman is not one with which Barton ever concerned himself with playing. We have seen how he did not have the social standing of the typical ambassador, and, crucially, his career is punctuated

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Barton had strong parts of nature, and knew well how to manage great affairs in the Turk’s court; yet he coming young to serve our first Ambassador there, and being left to succeed him, could not know the English court, nor the best ways there to make good his actions.’: *Shakespeare’s Europe*, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> G. R. Berridge has discussed the paradigm of the ‘perfect ambassador with particular reference to the Anglo-Ottoman context: see G. R. Berridge, ‘British Ambassadors and their Families in Constantinople’, in *The Counter-Revolution in Diplomacy and Other Essays* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 120–45 (pp. 120–23).

<sup>21</sup> Atherton, *Ambition and Failure in Stuart England*, p. 171.

<sup>22</sup> For some examples of the chaos that sometimes broke out at the embassy household, see *The Travels of John Sanderson*, pp. 10–15.

by instances of divergence from royal prescription, at times often suggesting that he thought he knew best. Barton was thus about to become England's second resident ambassador to the Ottoman Empire at a time when that role, its requirements and expectations were still in flux; moreover, he did not fit the emerging trend of ideal ambassadorial conduct. He fulfilled none of the conventional requirements for English diplomats, and in any case was operating way beyond the usual spheres of early modern English diplomacy. He was also a representative of the Levant Company, a fact which has led most histories of Barton to conflate the diplomatic and mercantile sides of his remit and to underestimate the gravity of his diplomatic concerns. This liminality was a crucial enabling factor, another path towards autonomy: between both ideals, he was constrained by neither. A departure from norms and ideals, this duality allowed Barton to conduct a new diplomacy which was largely commercial at its outset but which became increasingly political during his career.

Even as a mere 'agent', Barton was able to effect a shift towards a serious political relationship between England and the Ottomans. Thanks to French and Venetian contact, Christian representatives negotiating expressly political and even military alliances had, to a limited extent, been a fixture of diplomacy in Istanbul since the mid-sixteenth century. But from an English popular perspective, any diplomatic engagement with an Islamic global power was controversial and certainly not an established practice, especially when it sought to establish a religious common ground. Though Harborne opened the trade and enjoyed a degree of closeness with the Ottoman hierarchy, it is Barton who has been associated with the politicisation of English interests at the Porte. Skilliter sums up the shift thus:

The place in the diplomatic life of Constantinople which Barton inherited from Harborne was very different from the uncertain position in which the latter had begun his term of office in 1583. Hence it is not surprising that the work of the two men, and thus the documents issued during their terms of office, should reflect

this great difference as much as their diverse characters and ambitions. The documents issued in Harborne's time are almost entirely concerned with establishing and protecting the trade, whilst those of Barton's time are chiefly political.<sup>23</sup>

This shift came partially from directions from the English court, but also to a large degree from the proximity to the Ottoman hierarchy Barton started to forge as a secretary and agent, even before becoming ambassador. Whilst there is little written material by the man himself that can reveal Barton's exact activities and priorities in the 1580s, what is extant does reveal some of his key preoccupations during this crucially formative period of his time in and around Istanbul. From the available evidence, an image of Barton emerges as actively invested in channelling the power of writing as an effective tool in cross-cultural, multilingual mediation. This investment was coupled with a continuous desire to forge and maintain autonomy through a network of trusted mobile agents. This combination would go on to characterise his career.

At the end of Barton's secretarial career, in 1588, Harborne wrote to Barton detailing his take on ideal ambassadorial conduct in the instance of the English embassy to Istanbul, here reproduced in full:

William Harborne to Edward Barton, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1588

M<sup>r</sup> Barton touching yo<sup>r</sup> proceedinge[s] in her mag<sup>ties</sup> service, I neede nott to put you in mynde; beinge assuredly p[er]suaded; you will walke carfullie in the same, & desier that mightie, to giue yor best to dischardge your dewtie therin, to hir good likinge, and yo<sup>r</sup> comendation, & future welfare, w<sup>ch</sup> god graunte[s], and I wish yow: in yo<sup>r</sup> writinge use a compendious breuitie, as the cause shall require, for m<sup>r</sup> secretarie beinge continuallie occupied w<sup>th</sup> graue and maiestic affayers of estate muste nott be trobled w<sup>th</sup> circumstances Etc.

Touchinge the Comp<sup>nie</sup> I doughte nott butt you will use such conueniente moderation in yo<sup>r</sup> expences, as may be uerie well liked, and they haue therby good cause to deale the more bountifullly w<sup>th</sup> yow at att yo<sup>r</sup> retorne. for the sayed expences any way needfull Nicholas Salter shalbe deliuer yow y<sup>e</sup> monye, and att euerye monethes end, receyue yo<sup>r</sup> accounte; and passe the same in the Comp<sup>nies</sup> their bookes as heertofo<sup>r</sup> hath byn accostomed

Towchinge yo<sup>r</sup> Droguemen, Bastia[n] et Solemon be payed on y<sup>e</sup> laste of Iulie, their wages Bastian after 150d [ducats] p[er] an<sup>o</sup> and Solomon after 100d w<sup>ch</sup> is their due stipende. of the sayed Solomon yow muste take his and his brothers

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<sup>23</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 12.

bill, for the paiment of 12d the 3<sup>d</sup> of Iune nexte com[m]inge, for the like some lent hime in ill d and restated hime after 10 p[er] 5<sup>0</sup> w<sup>ch</sup> byll they both muste firme in presence of christian perotte[s]<sup>24</sup>, w<sup>ch</sup> Nicholas Salter is to see done, and to keepe theire bill.

The Chaus is payed 30d for and uppon his halfe yeares wages. so att the yeares ende, w<sup>ch</sup> w<sup>th</sup> him and all the other droguemen endeth the laste of m<sup>r</sup>che, att w<sup>ch</sup> tyme, all these expences and thatt of dyett and c is to be cleared.

The 2 Ianissaries y<sup>t</sup> are w<sup>th</sup> me as to haue beside[s] their ordinarie wages, w<sup>ch</sup> runneth on still from y<sup>e</sup> first of this moneth of me fiue beside[s] the 2 garmente[s] giuen them for their uoiadge, w<sup>ch</sup> 5d I shall answere them and yow are to answere onlie their accustomed stipend att their retorne.

Touchinge any affayres for y<sup>e</sup> Comp<sup>nie</sup> w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> uicrey, admirall, or other, where their seruante[s] maye demaunde yo<sup>r</sup> helpe, or else yew iudge needfull to be effectuated, I thinck itt good before yow deale w<sup>th</sup> them therin, yow deliberatlie debate y<sup>e</sup> cause w<sup>th</sup> their 2 seruante[s] heere, or w<sup>th</sup> on of them att leaste, for thatt they traded up therin, maye resolute yow formalie of any such doughte, as yo<sup>r</sup> contraries will obiecte, in preiudice of the same.

Towching such Ientlemen or others of o<sup>r</sup> nation w<sup>ch</sup> may haue occasion to travell thether, for thatt I haue, as yow doe s[ur]lie knowe, founde them to requite my cortesie w<sup>th</sup> greate discortesie att theyre retorne, I thinck itt nott needfull that you lodge any of them in yo<sup>r</sup> howse: butt send yo<sup>r</sup> drogueman to gett them a lodginge, and making them p[ar]takers of yo<sup>r</sup> dyett, when they resorte to yow shewing them al lawfull fauore in their proceeding[s] that yow maye.

To write to me under cipher or otherwise, you maye directinge yo<sup>r</sup> l[ett]res under couert to my good frende s<sup>r</sup> Edward Osborne or M<sup>r</sup> Richard Staper. & wherein I may stand yow in stead, in all honest and lawful fauore, I will nott fayle yow; and thus beseech god to prosper yow euen as my selfe I end. pray o<sup>r</sup> god to graunte us after a glad meetinge in Ingland a ioyfull resurection in heauen Rapamatt  
this 3<sup>d</sup> Iuly 1588

I moste dutifully and faythfully promise, follow and execute the aboue sayed order, to her mag<sup>ties</sup> hon<sup>r</sup>: and the Comp<sup>ies</sup> profitt so far forth as god shall giue me grace

Yo<sup>r</sup> Hon<sup>re</sup> moste dutifully imbounden Edw: Barton <sup>25</sup>

This letter constitutes the only extant instructional writing from Harborne to Barton written upon the occasion of the latter's succession to the former's post: no other instructions from the hand-over period survive. At only two folio pages, it is shorter than typical instructions from an ambassador to their successor during this period – perhaps surprisingly, given that this was a very recently created position and came with more

<sup>24</sup> 'Perottes' – inhabitants of Pera, the district in Istanbul where the European representatives lived.

<sup>25</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Tanner MS 79, f. 77. The portentous omen of counterfeiting – 'ill d[ucats] – rears its head here: see Chapter Two of this thesis for how accusations of counterfeiting plagued Barton's embassy.

challenges than conventional ambassadorial placements.<sup>26</sup> Yet its brevity is indicative of the nature of the 1588 transfer of power from Harborne to Barton: matters of payment within the embassy household dominate the priorities, and only a few opening sentences give a sense of the wider expectations which came with the role (this focus on managing the personnel at the embassy fits well with the Thynne-Hotman ambassadorial model discussed above). There is little sense that Harborne is leaving a position of stately importance; instead, the overriding concerns are domestic practicalities, and questions of trade and diplomacy are left, to a large extent, unwritten and uninstructed, though the Company is mentioned briefly.<sup>27</sup> This is not because these things were not discussed off the record, but the fact that so little time is spent here on formally explaining to Barton the intricacies of performing the role of ambassador in 1580s Istanbul indicates just how informal and unorthodox this situation was, and how involved Barton had been over the past five years. It can therefore be read as an early hint at the autonomy to come for Barton; Harborne's words here seem to suggest that as long as Barton maintained the post with care, his remit was fairly unrestrictive. In fact, the ending to the short paragraph discussing matters of public service – 'm<sup>r</sup> secretarie [Francis Walsingham] beinge continuallie occupied w<sup>th</sup> graue and maiestic affayers of estate muste nott be troubled w<sup>th</sup> circumstances Etc.' – is almost euphemistic in its downplaying of the importance of the post. This sense is heightened when one is aware of the grand diplomatic narratives Barton would find himself at the centre of in less than two years' time – themselves certainly 'graue and maiestic affayers' in which not only the Secretary of State but the

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<sup>26</sup> 'Introduction', in Gary M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Representatives 1509–1688* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1990), pp. 1–15 (p. 11).

<sup>27</sup> Typical instructions of the period would give a sense of the ongoing political imperatives that would be at stake in the embassy, along with more practical advice about how to conduct diplomacy in a given power structure – all are absent here. See, for example, Robert Cecil's instructions to Sir Richard Lee regarding his imminent mission to Russia: *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House*, 24 vols (London: HMSO, 1883–1976), X, ed. by R. A. Roberts (1904), p. 170.



queen herself were demonstrably invested.<sup>28</sup> Similarly noteworthy is the lack of any mention of the anti-Spanish agitation which had been the main thrust of Harborne's diplomatic agenda at the Porte, particularly given that this letter was written weeks before the Armada sailed for England.<sup>29</sup> The lack of diplomatic accountability suggested by this letter, combined with Harborne's apparent trust in Barton and appreciation of his unique advantages, sanctioned the approach Barton had been taking in his preparatory years leading up to his taking over.

Given that so little space is dedicated to instructing Barton how to negotiate his new role, it is telling that Harborne reserves special mention for how Barton should write during his post. The importance of writing effectively as a representative of Crown and Company is stressed here and learning how to effectively do this would have been one of his key concerns as a secretary, especially since that role was largely concerned with handling Harborne's correspondence. 'Compendious breuitie' reveals how Harborne thought an ambassador should write, and thought it important enough to be one of the few instructions on ideal ambassadorial conduct given to Barton. It is unique. The virtue of compendiousness was to be expected of ambassadors in their capacity of news-gatherers for obvious reasons, but that Harborne should insist on brevity – concision – reveals a dynamic at play that is specific to the writing of the English embassy in Istanbul. It anticipates the praise Barton would receive directly from the queen herself for 'circumspect' mediatory writing as discussed in the next chapter. But while Elizabeth praised Barton's circumspection because it made it hard for English words to be misrepresented, Harborne encouraged something quite different with his 'compendious breuitie'. An autonomy is here signalled where Elizabeth would have none; there is a

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<sup>28</sup> Barton's first involvement in a major diplomatic episode, as discussed in the next chapter, came in 1590–91, and drew Queen Elizabeth's special praise.

<sup>29</sup> Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925), III, pp. 225–30.

tension of ideals here between restrained but effective writing for the English court and cautiously guarded writing which may find its way into the hands of any number of malicious detractors across the continent. Barton was tasked with finding a balance between the two. That Harborne's parting advice recommends a degree of autonomy in writing is an important sign that this was a governing influence on the role associated with the post.

### Barton's Apprenticeship

Despite the lack of Barton's own writing during the years 1582–88, the sources mentioning him still provide an idea of how he conducted his secretaryship during those years. Harborne's parting instructions to Barton echo some of the expectations suggested by the first extant communique from Harborne to Barton, dating from 1584, which was seen as significant enough to include in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*:

A letter of the English ambassador to M. Edward Barton.

Master Barton I send you 3. commandements in Turkish, with a copy thereof in English, to the ende our ships might not come in danger of breach of league, if they should shoote at the gallies of those of Algier, Tunis, and Tripolis in the West : which after you haue shewed the Bassas, receiue againe into your hands, and see them registred, and then deliuer one of them to our friend M. Tipton, & the like you are to do with the priuilege which you cary with you, and see them iointly registred in the Cadies booke, deliuering the copy of the said priuilege sealed by the Cadi, also to the sayd our friend M. Tipton, taking a note of his hand for the receipt thereof, and for deliuerie at all times to us or our assignes. And require them in her maiesties and the grand Signors name, that they will haue our ships passing too and fro under licence and safeconduct for recommended in friendly maner. Touching your proceedings in Tripolis with Romadan, as I haue not receiued any aduise thereof, since your departure, so must I leaue you to God and my former direction. The ship patronised of Hassan Rayes, which you wrote to be ours, prooued to be a Catalanian. As for ours, by report of that Hassan and other Iewes in his ship, it was affirmed to be sold to the Malteses, which with the rest you are to receiue there. And hauing ended these affaires and registred our priuilege, and these three commandements, in Tripolis, Tunis, and Alger, I pray you make speedy returne, and for that which may be recouered, make ouer the same either to Richard Rowed for Patrasso in Morea, or otherwise hither to Iohn Bate in the surest maner you may, if the registering of that your priuilege and these

commandements will not suffer you in person to returne with the same. From my Mansion Rapamat in Pera this 24. of Iune 1584.<sup>30</sup>

The first reference to Barton in any of Hakluyt's volumes, this letter is particularly illuminating regarding the responsibilities the young secretary was entrusted with by Harborne. These responsibilities anticipate methods and patterns which would go on to distinguish Barton's power as an effective ambassador. At the start of this letter, at the centre of the focus for Hakluyt's readers, is an instance of non-English documentary transmission. Harborne entrusted crucial papers written in Ottoman script to Barton with English copies on hand, though these were presumably for the benefit of others – Harborne, not possessing the requisite linguistic skill, saw Barton's language skill as his main attribute.<sup>31</sup> The importance of Barton's skill in reading and speaking Ottoman Turkish cannot be understated, as it was a major reason for his appointment to the post of ambassador: later in 1584, Harborne would recommend Barton as his successor to Walsingham on the following grounds:

By hir Mag<sup>ties</sup> I[ett]res to be sent by the next shipp [...] the Title of Agent maie be p[er]mitted to the Secretarie attendinge the com[m]ing of a noth<sup>er</sup> Ambassado<sup>r</sup>, (as the frenche doe to saue expen[n]ce, ffor that he hauing the Language, and accompanied w<sup>th</sup> some one of more yeares: as coordinato<sup>r</sup>, is, and shall be soe well instructed in the needfull how to gouerne him selfe, as noe detriment shall Anie waie growe, butt duple comoditie expected By his three yeares Continuum ; A noth<sup>r</sup> present @ muche diminishing O<sup>r</sup> Chardge according to that inferio<sup>r</sup> Degree.<sup>32</sup>

Here, Barton's 'hauing the Language' is his notable skill – his other attributes are secondary, and there is no sense that he is exceptionally competent in other areas, as Harborne indicates he requires a degree of supervision by an older presence. Though much has been made of Barton's linguistic advantage, Harborne's words here combined with his instructions above make explicit the practical gains that this advantage produced.

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<sup>30</sup> Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, p. 177.

<sup>31</sup> Hakluyt's volume also reproduces the type of safeconduct mentioned by Harborne: see Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, p. 198.

<sup>32</sup> SP 97/2, ff. 124–25.

Barton's secretarial undertakings were situations where the authoring, comprehension and transmission of multilingual safe-conducts could mean life or death for merchants and their stock.<sup>33</sup> Harborne's letter from *Principal Navigations* above, with its description of the process of carrying and registering these documents with a *kadi* – regional judge – clarifies just how much of an advantage Barton's Turkish gave him, especially when asked to make sure details were included in these documents. These experiences in the manufacturing of documentary authority and the appreciation of the dynamic they brought were equipping Barton with the skills he would go on to use to manipulate documentary channels in favour of English interests as ambassador. Barton either did not attend university or left without graduating; in any case, it is clear that there was no one in England sufficiently knowledgeable in Ottoman Turkish to instruct him in that subject. His other languages, on the other hand – French, Latin, Italian and some Greek – would have certainly been possible to at least acquaint oneself with in England (though this would still have been impressive for one so young) and then perfected in the field. This means that the entirety of his familiarity with both the Turkish tongue and Ottoman script – which are not the same, and would have required separate prolonged study – were learned by Barton on the job. Furthermore, if the assumption that he travelled with Harborne on Harborne's return to Istanbul in 1583 is correct, we know from Harborne's 1584 letter of recommendation on the basis of Barton 'hauinge the languadge' that he had acquired sufficient proficiency in Turkish in only around a year. This implies a degree of urgency which Barton applied to the dedicated study of language, a fact which is here an early signal of an intention to fashion a uniquely powerful presence at the Porte.

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<sup>33</sup> The letters contained in Sanderson's manuscript (BL, Lansdowne MS 241) dating to 1580s Istanbul contain a great deal of stories of death, capture and shipwreck at the hands of pirates and navies from diverse nations. Merchants had to place their lives in the hands of Harborne and Barton and their ability to negotiate the web of multilingual documentary authority which granted safety in Eastern Mediterranean waters.

Harborne also hints at the growing autonomy Barton was starting to fashion for himself: 'Touching your proceedings in Tripolis with Romadan, as I have not received any advise thereof, since your departure, so must I leave you to God and my former direction.' It is difficult to tell whether this is an admonishment or otherwise, but regardless, this is evidence that Barton enjoyed a significant degree of independence even in his dealings as a secretary. This would become crucial to his latter efficacy as ambassador, but it is worth noting that it is this initial trust from Harborne which allowed him to first perform, and then learn the benefits of, autonomy and the limits of accountability. Had Barton not been able to distinguish himself by his knowledge of Turkish, is unlikely that Harborne would have been quite so willing to grant him such authority. Yet the agency of autonomous agents loosely directed by the senior representative in Istanbul would go on to be the defining mode of administering power for English diplomats in Ottoman domains for the next twenty years. As much as language gave agents like Barton an advantage, the mobility and autonomy of go-betweens who were not restricted by the need to maintain a personal presence at the embassy headquarters and at diplomatic ceremonies was equally important. In Barton's later correspondence from his time as ambassador, a continuous roster of trusted yet shadowy intermediaries, often anonymous, but the most prominent named – Thomas Wilcocks, Paulo Mariani, Thomas Glover – was responsible for effecting Barton's authority at a distance, necessarily with little direction.<sup>34</sup>

A picture of Barton as secretary is emerging from Harborne's writing, but there is little sense of how others, more distant from the immediate processes of diplomacy and commercial mediation, saw him in this role. Thomas Sanders' account of the events surrounding the fate of the English ship *Jesus* which set sail from London in 1583,

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<sup>34</sup> The conditions of transmission meant that continuous instructions were hard to produce, and Barton, urged to adopt 'compendious brevity' in all his written communications, only provided brief instructions.

published in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, includes a passage in which Barton gives much-needed assistance to the crew.<sup>35</sup> It is a valuable indication of how Barton was regarded not by the superiors who directed him and had a hand in fashioning his role, but by those who encountered him as an agent with some degree of authority in the wider Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>36</sup> Sanders details the travails of the ship in 1585, and the crew's call for help:

[...] the right worshipful sir Edward Osborne knight directed his letters with all speed to the English Embassadour in Constantinople, to procure our deliury: and he obtained the great Turkes Commission, and sent it foorthwith to Tripolis, by one Master Edward Barton, together with a Justice of the great Turkes, and one souldiour, and another Turke, and a Greeke which was his interpretour, which could speake besides Greeke, Turkish, Italian, Spanish and English. And when they came to Tripolis, they were well interteined. And the first night they did lie in a Captaines house in the towne : all our company that were in Tripolis came that night for joy to Master Barton and the other Commissioners to see them. Then master Barton said unto us, welcome my good countreymen, and louingly interteined us, and at our departure from him, he gaue us two shillings, and said, Serue God, for to morrow I hope you shall be as free as euer you were; We all gaue him thanks and so departed.<sup>37</sup>

Several things are of note in this first known description of Barton's own actions. Firstly, the recurring theme of the importance of his title is already apparent: here a junior 'Master' Barton – contrasted against Osborne, a 'right worshipful sir' – is described as one of a group of 'Commissioners'. This vague marker of authority, probably used here to signify Barton's connection with the company more than anything else, shows that those who met him at this point encountered him as a hybrid facilitator rather than a

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<sup>35</sup> Thomas Sanders, 'The voyage made to *Tripolis* in *Barbarie*, in the yeere 1583. with a ship called the *Jesus*, wherein the aduentures and distresses of some Englishmen are truly reported, and other necessary circumstances obserued.', in Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, pp. 184–91.

<sup>36</sup> Since Barton was travelling extensively in his various modes of work for Harborne, his authority was probably much more apparent outside Istanbul where Harborne and European representatives monopolised respect. The story of the *Jesus* is a valuable illustration of power balances in the early modern Eastern Mediterranean, as explored by Jonathan Burton, 'English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on "Turning Turk" in Early Modern Texts', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 2.1(2002), 35–67; Nabil Matar, 'Piracy and Captivity in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Perspective from Barbary', in *Pirates? The Politics of Plunder, 1550–1650*, ed. by Claire Jowitt (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 56–74.

<sup>37</sup> Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, p. 189.

secretary, despite the short length of time he had been in Istanbul.<sup>38</sup> He leads a company of several other anonymous go-betweens, placed at their head; quite an extraordinary vision for Hakluyt's readers, one of an Englishman leading a multi-ethnic party to deliver an Ottoman commission to free English mariners in the Mediterranean. It is hardly surprising that Barton's party is diverse and skilled in the various languages of the region. Sanders' account also gives a sense of Barton's mobility, detailing his presence on a trading ship in Zante.<sup>39</sup> The germ of Barton's appreciation of the power of the flexible go-between and the advantages language skills could bring is palpable here: a combination of authority, flexibility, and mobility, and there is a concurrent religiosity implied here too, with his injunction to 'Serve God'.<sup>40</sup> Sanders goes on to detail Barton's genial hosting – another theme of his career – before detailing his involvement in the negotiations around the release of a group of English hostages from the *Jesus*:

The next day in the morning very early, the King hauing intelligence of their comming, sent word to the keeper, that none of the Englishmen (meaning our company) should goe to worke. Then he sent for Master Barton and the other Commissioners, and demaunded of the saide Master Barton his message : the Justice answered, that the great Turke his Souereigne had sent them unto him, signifying that he was informed that a certaine English shippe, called the *Jesus*, was by him the saide king confiscated, about twelue moneths since, and nowe my saide Souereigne hath here sent his especiall commission by us unto you, for the deliuerance of the saide shippe and goods, and also the free libertie and deliuerance of the Englishmen of the same shippe, whom you haue taken and kept in captiuitie. And further the same Justice saide, I am authorized by my said soueraigne the great Turke to see it done : And therefore I commaund you by vertue of this commission, presently to make restitution of the premisses or the value thereof: and so did the Justices deliuer unto the King the great The Turkes commission to the effect aforesaide, which commission the king with all obedience receiued : and after the perusing of the same, he foorthwith commanded all the English captiues to be brought before him, and then willed the keeper to strike off all our yrons, which done, the king said, You Englishmen, for that you did offend the lawes of this place, by the same lawes therefore some of your company were condemned to die as you knowe, and you to bee perpetuall captiues during your liues : notwithstanding, seeing it hath pleased my soueraigne lord the

<sup>38</sup> *OED*, 'Commissioner, *n.*3: Chiefly with a capital initial. A member of a permanently constituted commission or official body. Frequently in titles.'

<sup>39</sup> Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, p. 190.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of Barton's Calvinism and his place within wider faith networks in Istanbul during his career, see Chapter Three of this thesis.

great Turke to pardon your said offences, and to giue you your freedome and libertie, beholde, here I make deliuey of you to this English Gentleman : so hee deliuered us all that were there, being thirteene in number, to Master Barton [...] And because I had the Italian & Spanish tongues, by which their most traffique in countrey is, Master Barton made me his Cater to buy his victuals for him and his company, and deliuered me money needful for the same. Thus were we set at libertie the 28. Day of April, 1585.<sup>41</sup>

Sanders is keen, likely for patriotic reasons, to give credit to Barton for the deliverance of the crew. It is clear here though that the process of their release is not as straightforward as Barton petitioning for their release and it being given. His personal presence as part of a multilingual and multi-skilled team was his route to wielding leverage in this case. What is particularly striking here is the combination of documentary and personal authority: the sultan's authoritative message was delivered orally, in combination with the documents. Sanders' account also suggests that Barton was already honing not only his own executive efficacy, but also the ability to shape the messages of others around him, so that he could in effect ventriloquise them: this was a key facet of his travels and mediations outside of the capital, and this would involve, as in the above example, people other than himself through which messages could be delivered with different degrees of authority.

The appreciation shown here that Barton held for mobility, and for the usefulness of other agents through which he could operate, necessitated the need for a diverse group of mediators in his embassy household upon his assumption of Harborne's role. Accordingly, he would later populate his embassy copiously, to an extent (and an expense) which prompted complaints from some Levant Company merchants.<sup>42</sup> An

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<sup>41</sup> Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, pp. 189–90.

<sup>42</sup> Laura Jane Fenella Coulter, 'The Involvement of the English Crown and its Embassy in Constantinople with Pretenders to the Throne of the Principality of Moldavia between the Years 1583 and 1620, with Particular Reference to the Pretender Stefan Bogdan between 1590 and 1612' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1993), pp. 444–45.



inventory of the embassy household dated to 1592 shows that a varied and numerous staff was employed there:

Thynges to be provyded for her Ma<sup>ies</sup> Ambassado<sup>r</sup> at Constantinople.

A Basen and ewre of Silue<sup>r</sup>

Bowles of siluer for wyne - 6

Hanginges of Tapestrye for his Chamber of no ymagerie but flowers -

Pewter uessell of all sortes for his house .-.

2 dossen of siluer sponnes w<sup>th</sup> forkes to putt into the ~~h~~ blades

24 paires of course Canuas sheetes ~~for h~~

6. Paires of fine sheete for his owne ueill

Dammask and diap[er] for Table Clothes.

Servanntes.

The m<sup>r</sup> of his house a preas[t]e

A Secretorye

2 w<sup>th</sup> these to serve as gent.

4 Ianisaries

4 Drugmen

2 Pages

8 household seruantes - whereof { 1 Butler; 2 housekeep[er]s; 1 Tailer; 1 Chamberm<sup>n</sup>; 3 other of occupations as: { 1 Joiner; 1 painter; 1 Carpent<sup>er</sup> or smith

To all of the seruantes of all Sortes: xxii <sup>43</sup>

Listed alongside the furnishings of the embassy, these individuals seem like resources, and no doubt the manpower afforded to Barton was substantial. Catherine Fletcher has convincingly demonstrated how important it was for sixteenth-century Italian ambassadors' households to be 'furnished with gentlemen' who behaved in a virtuous manner and were an important part of diplomatic entertainments; Harborne's parting instructions to Barton also prioritised this while indicating his frustrations at this duty.<sup>44</sup> The protocol that was behind the establishment of the embassy would certainly have been governed by this same ideal of a well-functioning, civilized space in which every member had a specific job. Yet in practice, the way Barton would utilize these various servants

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<sup>43</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, f. 125.

<sup>44</sup> Fletcher, "'Furnished With Gentlemen'".

would be anything but conventional, and anything but civilized. The embassy household was the site of stamping counterfeit coins, forging incriminating letters, and doctoring royal correspondence.<sup>45</sup> John Sanderson, a merchant, traveller and close associate of Barton, details declining to stay at the embassy on account of the extreme bawdiness he encountered at the premises, including the copious presence of sex workers and a brawl which almost culminated in a fatality.<sup>46</sup> The agents Barton utilised – the aforementioned Wilcocks, Mariani and Glover being the most prominent – were frequently at the centre of the scandals that were generated at the embassy household, as they were seen to encapsulate the unorthodox nature of the way Barton’s embassy operated. Suspicion fell where Barton subverted the norms. In addition, then, to a growing autonomy and appreciation of documentary authority, Barton also from the beginning of his work in Istanbul was developing networks of mobile agency which could deliver authority not only through documentary channels, but also orally. The inclusion of the ‘Hanginges of Tapestrye for his Chamber of no ymagerie but flowers’ in the inventory are also of note: a symbol that Barton was abiding by the aniconism prevalent in his Islamic surroundings, a sensitivity which belies his willingness to adapt to the cultural norms in Istanbul, even if the bawdiness he oversaw led to the forced relocation of his household (and, in 1595, he requested a portrait of Elizabeth from England, to be hung there.)<sup>47</sup>

There is no further mention of Barton in the State Papers until his accession to Harborne’s role in the autumn of 1588. Four years without mention is a significant gap in the records, and the only clue of his movements during these years come from two letters amongst John Sanderson’s manuscripts. One is from 1586, the other from 1587,

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<sup>45</sup> See Chapters Two and Three of this thesis.

<sup>46</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, pp. xvii–xviii, 10–11.

<sup>47</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, pp. 85–89; Woodhead, ‘Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)’, *ODNB*; the portrait was requested ‘to show to y<sup>e</sup> Turkes the picture of hir who fro[m] east to west, is renowned the mirror of the wourlde’: BL, Lansdowne MS 846, f. 218. On the further significance of this, see Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism*, pp. 119–20.

neatly filling the gap left by Barton's invisibility elsewhere. As with the scant material from his early years, these are only fleeting glances, but they are illustrative of his responsibilities in his years as secretary to Harborne. Whereas with the earlier material included in Hakluyt and the correspondence around Barton's succession to Harborne's role which may only exist due to the unusual circumstances that gave rise to those events being recorded and written about, these early Sanderson letters contain more workaday, mundane subject matter. They hint at the reality of Barton's day-to-day life as a secretary in Istanbul: the spaces between events like his succession, the *Jesus* incident, and Company excursions. The two documents from Sanderson's collected correspondence in the Lansdowne manuscripts, reproduced in William Foster's *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant*, show two different sides of the correspondence Barton was conducting during those years, and are the only extant indications of what his personal correspondence would have looked like at this time.<sup>48</sup> They are a rare indication of his priorities during these years. One adopts a form which would go on to become familiar as an informational dispatch, whilst the other is a more personal note:

Edward Barton at Constantinople to J. S. in Egypt, 30 May 1586

[...] Signor Paulo Mariani is com to Constantinople, and hath his diett and lodging in My Lord his house ; who likewise doth defend him against the French amb[assado]r, who did by all means laboure to have him confined to Argier for murther which he should comitt in Cairo, and other crimes which perticularlie he would not mencion nor openlie here laie to his chardge, but desired that he might be put in prison or kept sure till the first conveiance or passadge for Cairo, and then to be sent to be judgd there of all matters which should be laid to him ; thinkinge herby that Sinan Bassa, his utter enimye, wolde geve such sentence upon him as the Frenchmen themselves shold require. But My Lord delivered him out of thire hands and upon this matter went to the Vicerey, requiringe that he might not be sent to be judged of Sinan Bassa, his enimie; and obtained that he should goe and be judged by Bustanzade, the Cadilesqueir of Cairo, which is Signor Paulo his frinde, and that in none of his matters or controversies Sinan Bassa doe intermedle or be hinderance of right justice. He hath the favour of what

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<sup>48</sup> Sanderson's manuscript, BL, Lansdowne MS 241, is a fascinating and varied commonplace, comprising many differend forms of correspondence, journals, and travel writing. William Foster produced a concise edition of Sanderson's correspondence, including a short biography, in *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant*. I have largely retained Foster's transcriptions in this thesis due to his judicious editing.

comandments he himself will and after what forme he desireth. Ebrahin Bassa doth take his part. So that we all hope he shall retorne speedely with former honor and herafter live ther in ease and creditt, to Vento his continuall shame and utter undoinge. Wee doe dalie expect that a new bassa should be sente for that place ; which thinge if it happen, all his matters will have the better succease. The fondigo [factory: Ital. fondaco] somtimes belonginge to the Genoves [i.e. Genoese] is againe graunted. In the latter ende of Aperill the marriadge was solemnised between the Gran Signor his daughter and Ebrahin Bassa; wherby he is now in favore above all other bassaes [...] William Hils, T. Tonson, John Hickday, William Goodlad be departed for Ingland [...]<sup>49</sup>

Particularly notable here is that Barton is rehearsing the kind of writing that would characterise his ambassadorial dispatches. The content is concise and informed, and suggests that Barton was actively acquainting himself with the concerns that would dominate his tenure as ambassador. The intricacies of relationships at the Porte, an obvious awareness of Ottoman hierarchies: there are hints here that Barton is going above and beyond his remit as secretary and learning how to gather and report relevant information. Harborne's own dispatches were reporting on the same events; Barton, in his role as a secretary, would have been privy to this information and is here relaying it to a friend along with news of the trade and of other Englishmen in Istanbul. Though it almost reads as gossip, there can be no doubt that the above is a sign of Barton's growing awareness of the political, diplomatic and commercial situations surrounding him. This is Barton observing and reporting; even, perhaps, cultivating connections – Mariani would later become a key ally. The only other letter dating from Barton's secretarial tenure stands in complete contrast to the above. It is a short, familiar note, a rare indicator of Barton's personality in his own words, and domestic in its concerns:

Edward Barton at Constantinople to J. S. at Tripoli (Syria), 23 September 1587

[...] I was not a little sory, at the receipt of your last letters, for the greevouse sicknes I perceived by them you had susteyned [...] I hartelie thanke you that, in your so great vexation of bodie, you weare mindfull of my former request to you for the smaule portion of spices I requested might be sent to my mother [...] I pray

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<sup>49</sup> From the extract published in *The Travels of John Sanderson*, pp. 129–30. For the full letter, see BL, Lansdowne MS 241, f. 390.

commend me to my good frend, Signor John Eldred, whose prosperouse retorne  
frome Jerusalem I am glad to heare of [...]<sup>50</sup>

Whilst not as rich in information about the nature of Barton's actions and priorities during his spell as a secretary, this familiar note shows an altogether different side of him: an image of a young merchant. It reminds us that Barton had a network of family and friends which he communicated with, some of whom he was almost impossibly distant from. Not all of his dealings were high-stakes diplomacy, and he also made an effort to create friendship networks in the Eastern Mediterranean – not only with Englishmen such as John Sanderson, but also with prominent intellectual and religious leaders like the Orthodox Patriarch Meletios Pigas, George Dousa, Sadeddin Efendi and Hamza Paşa.<sup>51</sup> These relationships would come to his aid during difficult situations in his career, and in one case, that of his correspondence with Hugh Broughton, covered later in this thesis, would go on to define his legacy. Though only a fragment, this affectionate note to Sanderson is a reminder of the reach of Barton's epistolary network and an indication of the spirit in which it was conducted.

From the material relating to Barton's years as a secretary we can see the importance of intermediaries and the power of official documents in the commercial realm of the Eastern Mediterranean. Barton was himself an intermediary, and relied on intermediaries himself. The concomitant importance of the requisite degree of autonomy to carry out these transactions unhindered, and in less formal situations, is also apparent. An appreciation of these factors would be central to Barton's career as he transposed this to his diplomatic dealings in setting up a wide-ranging documentary network administered by a group of trusted mobile intermediaries. It is safe to assume that he spent his career as a secretary throughout the 1580s developing both practical and theoretical

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<sup>50</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 140. For the full letter, see BL, Lansdowne MS 241, f. 405.

<sup>51</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 10–11; see Chapter Three of this thesis.

knowledge as a uniquely trusted and effective agent, the only Turkish-speaking Christian representative in that part of the world at that time. It is thus not surprising that Harborne would recommend him so early on in his career as a secretary, perhaps only a year after he travelled to Istanbul, a full four years before he would eventually assume the role. His talents in this hybrid position and quick adaptation to the modes and methods of cross-cultural mediation had clearly marked him out for greater things. These talents constituted the development of his ability to wield power and authority to shape encounters through writing.

### Challenges and Opportunities: Peace with Poland, 1588–90

Barton soon forged an opportunity to establish himself diplomatically at the Porte. The three years that followed Harborne's return to England and Barton's assumption of the role of main English representative at the Porte were characterised by tension between Polish and Ottoman forces in the borderlands between them. Barton's dispatches paint a thorough picture of the state of affairs. In late 1589, he wrote of significant mobilisation of forces on both sides: Jan Zamoyski, Polish Grand Chancellor and holder of significant diplomatic and executive power at the Polish court, waited with 50,000 men and the entirety of the Polish Cossack forces on one side of the Danube, while an Ottoman general, the *Beylerbey* of Greece, was encamped on the other bank in Silistra with 130,000 men of his own, across the modern day Romanian-Bulgarian border. Meanwhile, 200,000 Tartars had invaded Poland as far as Buska, taking between 20–100,000 prisoners as they raided towns and villages. The *beylerbey* and Zamoyski remained encamped on opposite sides of the river, Barton reported in October, and with winter

being the most appropriate time to effect a crossing, he anticipated a bloody conflict in the coming months.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, all was not well in Istanbul. Barton reported that ‘the Third Pasha of the Bench, [...] the only man of good government and warlike policy’, had been murdered whilst sleeping by two of his servants, who were ‘Germans turned Turk’, one of whom had formerly been in the service of the Imperial ambassador in Istanbul.<sup>53</sup> The perpetrators were captured and tortured, two of them then killed, with a third sent to Emperor Ferdinand II to warn him that the offence would be revenged the coming spring with a devastating assault, unless complicated demands including repayment of arrears of tribute and restoration of territory were met.<sup>54</sup> Simultaneously, yet another Spahi mutiny had upset the balance of power in the city, forcing Ottoman officials to give handouts to Spahis to ease their complaints. This, in turn, led to more unrest between Spahis and Janissaries, which had had devastating consequences in the past, and so demanded immediate attention.<sup>55</sup> Outside of Istanbul, revolts in Tripoli and Egypt diverted yet more money and manpower away from the borderlands. Accordingly, Barton gave a strong sense in his writing that a war on another front was one that Murad III neither wanted nor could afford.

Barton’s dispatches throughout 1589 and early 1590 show that the advanced positioning of the *beylerbey* of Greece and the surrounding skirmishes were little more than sabre-rattling, and that fully-blown war was never a viable option, especially with the antagonistic and aggressive diplomatic stance employed by the Ottomans towards Ferdinand II. These gung-ho threats of war against the Emperor led Barton to ruminate

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<sup>52</sup> SP 97/1, ff. 180–82.

<sup>53</sup> SP 97/1, ff. 184–86.

<sup>54</sup> See Wernham, *L&A*, I, p. 440; SP 97/1, ff. 190–92; SP 97/2, ff. 5–7.

<sup>55</sup> Former Spahi mutinies had earlier rocked the capital with grave consequences, such as the catastrophic debasement of the *akce* (silver currency; ‘asper’ in English correspondence) and deaths of prominent officials. The news of fresh spats between Spahis and Janissaries was reported by John Wroth in SP 99/1, ff. 82–84.

on the belligerence of Ottoman policy at this time, speculating as to whether it was because of the organisation of the army: the Ottomans were always close to war on many fronts because ‘being all one charge to the Grand Signor to have peace or war, for that all his soldiers have either favours or stipends for their lifetime be there war or peace and no sooner one dieth but 20 seek his place [...] and greater security is it for him to keep them exercised because being here resident idle, they daily make some tumult or other’ – i.e., the soldier revolts that continuously disrupted administration in Istanbul.<sup>56</sup> Barton’s official direction from England was to discourage war with Poland at all costs, the Poles being good allies and trade partners with England. Most importantly, though, this was not the direction in which Elizabeth wanted Ottoman military pressure to move – rather, towards Spain. At the post-Armada moment when tensions were at their highest, naval superiority was of crucial importance, and in these early years of Barton’s career, he was continually instructed to agitate for an Ottoman anti-Spanish naval presence.<sup>57</sup>

However, whilst the Polish tensions were building, things had seemingly turned against England. News reached Barton that a Spanish agent called Giovanni Stefano Ferarri had, as an envoy to Istanbul in the previous months, bribed his way towards procuring a five-year peace between the Ottomans and Spain.<sup>58</sup> Worryingly for Barton, what he said seemed to be true. News had travelled far enough for it to be reported in English newsletters in France, and Barton’s complaints to the Vicerey that this peace was counterproductive to the league between the Ottomans and England were met with silence.<sup>59</sup> Ferrari had managed to bribe many of the influential Viziers at the Porte to his ends, even offering the sultan an additional 200,000 ducats to supplement the deal.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Wernham, *L&A*, I, p. 440; SP 97/2, ff. 5–7.

<sup>57</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, pp. 17–18.

<sup>58</sup> SP 97/1, ff. 188–90.

<sup>59</sup> SP 101/IX, ff. 105–07.

<sup>60</sup> SP 97/1, ff. 188–90.



However, despite his claims to the contrary, the Spanish agent eventually came up short – although many of his bribes succeeded, the sultan was less easily swayed, and Ferrari was expelled on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1589.<sup>61</sup> We might, in this example of an agent over-extending themselves, detect a portentous omen for Barton’s own career. Regardless, this was no doubt a warning shot which went to the core of Barton’s mission, and a cause for significant angst. Anti-Spanish agitation was a major part of his *raison d’être* at the Porte, and Ferrari’s actions had come close to scuppering Barton’s cause within just two years of his assumption of the role. His ongoing cause of persuading the sultan to field a navy against Spain now hung in the balance; war on another front had never been less desirable for any who were sympathetic to Ottoman interests. Barton here sensed a crucial opportunity for himself and for England.

With armies on the banks of the Danube, turmoil in Istanbul and diplomatic scandals threatening to boil over, the Porte started to express a palpable keenness to sue for peace in the Polish matter. Yet another complication stood in the way. Murad now awaited the arrival of a Polish ambassador, without whom peace talks would be impossible. Yet as the closing months of 1589 wore on, none came. On December 27<sup>th</sup>, Barton wrote that ‘all marvelled at the delay of the Polish ambassador’s arrival’.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, tensions heightened further in Istanbul. The arrival of a Persian ambassador prompted another Spahi revolt. They rioted in the city. Concurrently, Ferhād Paşa, an extremely influential vizier, had returned from his military posting in Persia in elaborate ceremonial style, bearing extravagant gifts and 500,000 ducats which paved the way to his promotion to General. Yet the news he brought with him was of more belligerence on yet another front: there had been bloody exchanges near Babylon and at castles throughout Persia, and he complained that had the sultan not been distracted elsewhere,

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<sup>61</sup> SP 97/1, ff. 192–93.

<sup>62</sup> SP 97/1, ff. 192–94.

in Barton's words, 'he would have as much to do with the Persian as ever he had'.<sup>63</sup> As Ferhād Paşa was delivering this assessment, the Polish envoy Jan Zamoyski, younger cousin of the Polish Grand Chancellor of the same name, finally arrived, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1590, with a retinue of 100 men in 50 coaches. Because of the ongoing hostilities and the delay, he was 'meanly received', despite the extravagance of his ceremony outdoing that of the Persian ambassador. This cold reception was widely interpreted as a sign of war, and the ambassador and his retinue were effectively imprisoned. Further, the ambassador had broken his leg at the outset of his journey, and had become gravely ill; the seriousness of this was perhaps exacerbated by the sultan's orders to provide only one meal a day for the Polish contingent.<sup>64</sup> Ten days after his arrival, he died. Despite his harsh treatment of the Poles, Murad now granted an audience to them, allowing them to present themselves and their message to him in person, kissing his hand. It was speculated that the motive for the sultan to do this was simply to receive the lavish gifts the Poles had brought, yet Barton saw this for what it was: demonstrating his unrivalled understanding of Ottoman *realpolitik*, he wrote to Francis Walsingham that the sultan had no choice but to stall the Poles, who were ready to invade with much more force than the Ottomans could match, being stretched so thin and wracked by the soldier revolts.<sup>65</sup> Barton saw that peace was near inevitable, and that he could interject himself as representative of England into affairs to win favour.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, the Polish contingent were sent back to Poland with an ultimatum – a complicated set of demands which required the reinstatement of some former Ottoman territories and the rebuilding of Ottoman cities razed by the Poles, amongst other things, and crucially, the payment of an annual tribute in *akce* equal to 100

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<sup>63</sup> Wernham, *L&A*, I, pp. 444–45; SP 97/2, ff. 5–7.

<sup>64</sup> See Wernham, *L&A*, I, p. 445.

<sup>65</sup> SP 97/2, ff. 7–9.

pounds to bring them in line with other Christian tributary states. His next reports detail ‘great overthrows’ sustained by the Ottoman armies in Hungary and Tripoli, and the defeat of the raiding Tartars in Poland.<sup>66</sup> This unwelcome news for the sultan, whose desire for peace would have been growing by the day, was followed by worse: Jerome Horsey, reporting from Hamburg to England, wrote of letters from Warsaw which reported the levying of taxes throughout the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and the swift raising and mobilisation of an army of 200,000 men in under a month, to be dispersed on the Ottoman borders.<sup>67</sup> Horatio Palavicino, the English agent in Germany, accompanied this news with speculation that Ottoman aggression would not go beyond the actions of the Tartars, to which the Ottomans were only loosely aligned.<sup>68</sup> It seems an open secret, then, that the Ottomans were unprepared and reluctant for war on a large scale, and the events of early 1590 show Poland calling their bluff. Barton’s writing began to show a corresponding frustration and bewilderment at continuing Ottoman belligerence given this situation, driven by an awareness of the political realities at the Porte.

Barton was, clearly, situated at the centre of all of this. Almost all of the above news survives in his dispatches: it is clear that he excelled at the information-gathering aspect of his role, and is frequently critical of sources, refusing to trust hearsay and making sure the numbers he quotes are accurate. His reportage is an advanced synthesis of multilingual sources and is extremely diligent in its detail. This may not have been unusual for agents of his type, many of whom completed similar work – although Barton is distinguished by the cross-cultural aspects of his work – but what is unique is the nuanced appreciation of the workings of the Ottoman court, particularly the previously

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<sup>66</sup> SP 97/2, ff. 11–12; Wernham, *L&A*, I, p. 447.

<sup>67</sup> SP 82/3, f. 122.

<sup>68</sup> SP 81/6, ff. 5–7.

obscure cultural aspects such as gift-giving rituals and lavish ceremony, that pervades all of his writing. For example, the near continuous procession of various ambassadors and envoys through Istanbul is reported not only descriptively, but comparatively: Barton has an appreciation for which gifts are more, or less, desirable and valuable to the sultan and his viziers, unmatched by other Christian agents.<sup>69</sup> We have seen that this was widely known – all contemporary accounts of Barton’s efficacy detail his intimate knowledge of these matters. His early dispatches therefore encapsulate not only exactly why he was so well placed to intervene in matters such as these Ottoman-Polish tensions, but why he was trusted to do so: he prided himself on being unique in this way, and it gave him some renown not only in the Eastern Mediterranean, but also within the circles of other ambassadors, diplomats and envoys in Istanbul – and consequently, his fame stretched to the furthest reach of their dispatches. His extensive network of correspondence – with other diplomats, heads of state, and merchants throughout Europe – also brought him recognition. In short, Barton had done much work to quickly establish himself as the go-to go-between to mediate in these instances of cross-cultural diplomatic flashpoints. Five years later this would culminate in the extraordinary case of the new Sultan, Mehmed III, employing Barton on a diplomatic mission by special invitation to mediate between the Ottomans and the Holy Roman Empire. This position of relative power he occupied was soon turned into an opportunity for his own interests. His thorough reportage was matched with an ability to manipulate the information he controlled in order to amplify English interests.

Barton’s task now, throughout 1590, was to procure a lasting peace which would satisfy all sides, and which would enhance his reputation as a mediator. We know that a

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<sup>69</sup> His correspondence from 1590 shows this neatly, with the embassies from both Poland and Persia offering an opportunity for direct comparison. This was important information, as Barton’s very position relied on periodically renewing his position through gift-giving.

peace was achieved, and that Barton had an input; the extent of this input has been generally considered to have been crucial. The details of Barton's mediation are described by Skilliter as follows: Barton was recommended as counsel for the Polish ambassador sent for peace talks in Istanbul on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1590, by Polish Grand Chancellor Jan Zamoyski.<sup>70</sup> The new ambassador, Zamoyski's younger cousin, was inexperienced, and the Grand Chancellor advised him to 'refer to Barton' for help.<sup>71</sup> From here, being under explicit instructions from England to broker peace in order to protect the Anglo-Polish munitions trade, Barton, working with the new Polish ambassador, drew up a petition which he promptly presented to the Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Paşa, which essentially presented a reasonable compromise that was particularly sympathetic to the Poles. Demonstrating the Ottoman unwillingness to enter into war, these terms were quickly accepted by Murad III, who then wrote them into a letter sent to Sigismund III on June 20<sup>th</sup>. That the terms drawn up by Barton were so sympathetic to Polish interests ensured they would be accepted, and a peace was assumed, although not formally certified until late 1591, after overcoming some difficulties caused by troop movements in Central Europe.<sup>72</sup> This is, as far as critical work solely on Barton goes, the extent of his mediation, and this story has been perpetuated in the majority of work on Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy. Given the constant pressure and expectation Barton dealt with daily during his career, one might wonder where the cause for special mention in what seems to be a fairly simple and mundane intervention by Barton. Even Skilliter, whose work has shown a penchant for tales of the dramatic heroism and the unlikely successes of Harborne and Barton, concedes that:

There is no doubt that Barton acted as mediator in the crisis, nor that it was his suggestion which was accepted, but it seems equally true that the Turks did not wish to begin a new war so soon and that they would probably have adopted any

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<sup>70</sup> I have corrected this date from that given by Skilliter – June 9<sup>th</sup> – as per SP 97/2, ff. 21–23.

<sup>71</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> SP 97/2, ff. 86–87; Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 27.

reasonable solution suggested to them. As a result of his success Barton - and hence the Queen - certainly won prestige at the Porte and in Europe at large.<sup>73</sup>

Key drivers of the positive reception of Barton's mediation are letters sent from the Sultan to Sigismund and Elizabeth, translated by Skilliter, in both of which he specifically highlighted the role played by Barton, offering great praise for his mediation.<sup>74</sup> In fact, the reality is more indicative of Barton's methods. Barton had managed to read the inevitable outcome and sculpt it into a great victory for English interests as well as his own personal gain. The correspondence surrounding – but not directly concerning – the Polish negotiations can reveal much more of Barton's tactic in this regard for the first time.

Barton asked to be recalled in the same letter, dated June 14<sup>th</sup>, as he broke news of his terms having been accepted by the sultan and thus a peace having been reached.<sup>75</sup> Yet only ten days later, he wrote again, boasting that 'extreme danger to Christendom' – he elsewhere referred to this danger as 'the sword of [a] *flagellum dei* on Christian necks' – had been averted due to his 'diligent service' in wielding 'Her Majesty's credit'.<sup>76</sup> There are several problems with this which indicate that there is a degree of manipulation at play. Firstly, upon successful completion of the peace, Barton's tone switches from cynicism as to the sincerity of Ottoman belligerence to exaggerating the danger to fellow Christians, which in itself is somewhat jarring given the hostility shown towards Catholics in his writings elsewhere. Secondly, the timing of the letter makes little sense. It is possible that he was keen to emphasise his role in the negotiations in order to receive favour upon his return to England, but the correspondence of this period shows a

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<sup>73</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 27–28. Barton's involvement was lauded on the Polish side to the extent that the story of his mediation spurred a nineteenth-century author, Henry Krasinski, to write a fictional tale about Barton emigrating to Poland, marrying a woman there, and fathering a daughter on whose life the book is based: see Henry Krasinski, *Mary Barton; an Historical Tale of Poland* (London: A. K. Newman and Co., 1846).

<sup>74</sup> Transcribed and translated by Skilliter in 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 126–27.

<sup>75</sup> SP 97/2, f. 25.

<sup>76</sup> Wernham, *L&A*, I, pp. 451–52.

continuing use of Barton's mediation to legitimise his presence in Istanbul, rather than to secure a reputation in England. A petition written by merchants of the Levant Company in the direct aftermath of the Polish peace uses Barton's diplomatic skill as a crucial advantage which cements his necessity as a permanent presence at the Porte and, by extension, the necessity of a formal royal charter for the Company.<sup>77</sup> Finally, the deliberateness of Barton's actions in spreading news of his intervention around Central Europe and the Middle East leave little doubt that there was a calculated nature to writing his involvement in this matter.

Barton's use of his extensive network – particularly his close advisors, secretaries and translators – to shape the reception of his actions is also evident in the Polish negotiations, but has received little attention. It is well known that Barton employed Thomas Wilcocks to act as an emissary between the two powers; he is constantly mentioned in the correspondence, and singled out later for special praise by Elizabeth herself. What has not been remarked upon is that as soon as peace was concluded, Barton dispatched Wilcocks again to England via Warsaw, specifically to spread news of his own actions in the matter. Barton sent the Moldavian Chancellor, Bartolomeo Bruti, with him; Bruti was a close correspondent of Barton's and a crucial ally for much of his career.<sup>78</sup> This prompted the Polish king Sigismund III to write to Elizabeth, thanking her but also especially thanking Barton and citing his skill (the letters carried by Bruti); Elizabeth replied in the same vein, reserving special mention for Barton and his skill as a mediator.<sup>79</sup> Indirectly, through his instructions to Wilcocks, Barton had ensured news of his skilful diplomacy had come not only from the hand of another – a tactic which he would return

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<sup>77</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XI, f. 120.

<sup>78</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 24–26; see also Coulter, 'The Involvement of the English Crown', p. 197.

<sup>79</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 26–27.

to throughout his career – but the hand of a Christian monarch.<sup>80</sup> His documentary authority had expanded its reach to another European court. Even Elizabeth's letters to Sultan Murad III, thanking him for making peace with Poland, specifically mention Barton and Wilcocks by name.<sup>81</sup> Simultaneously, Barton's close connections with the Ottoman officials Ferhād Paşa and Cıǧalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa meant that he could ensure news of his successes would reach Murad independently of him. Letters from David Passi, a prominent Jewish merchant, politician and spy, who had links to England, and whose correspondence Barton had cultivated for some time, also spoke of admiration for his skill and the esteem he was held in at the Porte; Barton had also in fact retained a member of the ill-fated Polish embassy of 1589, who he 'daily solicited to write to the King of Poland' in favour of a peace on Barton's terms.<sup>82</sup> Again, Barton preferred to have his influence expressed through the words of another, and was able to engineer it. It may not have been the primary method through which he conducted his affairs, but he continually surrounded himself with options that ensured should the conventional means fail, he had other options. One of Barton's foremost preoccupations was to encourage, manufacture and control this spread of news about him. The Polish peace – or rather, his manipulation of its reception – is an example of him exercising this control to his advantage for the first significant time in his career.

### Elizabeth's Letter of Commendation

These tactics quickly paid off. In a culmination of the authority Barton had already accrued via documentary power, autonomy, and mobility, he garnered special praise in a

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<sup>80</sup> Wernham, *L&A*, II, pp. 452–53.

<sup>81</sup> SP 102/61, ff. 24–25; SP 102/61, ff. 27–30; and SP 102/61, ff. 83–85.

<sup>82</sup> Wernham, *L&A*, II, p. 450.



long letter signed by Elizabeth I thanking him for his efforts, duly reported by Wilcocks, in procuring the peace. The letter begins:

Trustie & wellbeloued we greete you well. We cannot but confesse that though we haue uery many s[er]uants that both at home & abroad haue s[er]ued us faithfully, circumspectlie & wisely in discharg of their selues to o<sup>r</sup> great contentac[i]on, yet amongst their all we haue found none that in forreine s[er]uice behaued themselues more faithfully, circumspectly & wisely to the cons[er]uacon & increase of o<sup>r</sup> honor and estimacon in the sight of the world than we find by manie Accou[n]ts of yo<sup>rs</sup> that you happelie & well performed amongst the w<sup>ch</sup> besides manie forme[rs] this yo<sup>r</sup> last wise negotiaco[u]n in o<sup>r</sup> name, first w<sup>th</sup> sinon Bassa & next w<sup>th</sup> the Emperors Ma<sup>tie</sup> there at Constantinople we do accompt uery singular, & higher esteemed of in that you haue in o<sup>r</sup> name proued in the time of so mightie & terrible a warre fully prepared by the said Emperor against the K: of Polonia to haue the said warre happelie staied so good & honorable a peace & league made betwixt the said Emperor & the K: of Poland to the generall benefitt of Christendome & particularly to the state of the K: of Pole as he & his Realme hath cause to acknowledge to us the benefitt thereof, & so both the said K: & his Chancellor haue by their seu[er]all l[ett]res brought to us by this Braue Thomas Wilcocks declared & Certefied wherefore we would haue you assurd yo<sup>r</sup> self y<sup>t</sup> this yo<sup>r</sup> s[er]uice especially being accompted by yo<sup>r</sup> owne discretion w<sup>th</sup>out any speciall direction from us, though wisely cou[er]ed w<sup>th</sup> o<sup>r</sup> name hath ben & is uery gratefull unto us & des[er]ueth o<sup>r</sup> great fauo[r] & gained to yo<sup>r</sup> self in p[er]ticular no small estimacon amongst all such as understand & Can Iudge of the same.

And though we did before the Com[m]ing of this Braue Thomas Wilcocks who Came not hither before y<sup>e</sup> xxiii<sup>th</sup> of the last moneth of sept understand partly by yo<sup>r</sup> owne l[ett]res sent by the way of Uenice & partly by Comon respect y<sup>t</sup> about Iune last this Conclusion of the peace betwixt the grand seignor & the Pole had bin made by the means of o<sup>r</sup> Credit used & deliverd by you, for the w<sup>ch</sup> we did by som form[er] l[ett]res sent from hence in the end of August both to the Grand Seignor gave him threats for the same & by p[er]ticular l[ett]res to yo<sup>r</sup> self did much comend you : yet the Certaintie of the whole p[ro]ceedinge hath now so manifestly appeared unto us by such l[ett]res as this beare[r] hath brought unto us all at one time, that is first speciall l[ett]res uery honorably & louingly written by the Grand Seignor him self, And the like also from Sinon Bassa ~~ue~~ both written at Constantinople in the middle of Iune: & by other l[ett]res also written from Heddre Bassa, the Captaine Generall of the Turkes armie out of the Camp toward the soldiers of Polonia & our other priuie l[ett]res sent to us from our Bartholmew Brato, written in the moneth of August & in the end of the same moneth other l[ett]res also brought by this Braue from the K. of Polonia & from the Chancellor thear, by all who besides yo<sup>r</sup> owne l[ett]res, brought by him dated also in Iune we haue at uery good length, perceued howe the great terrible intended warre hath been avoyde, & a good & p[er]petuall league of peace accorded by the said Grand Seignor to the K: of Pole w<sup>th</sup> uery resonable & honorable Condicio[u]ns such as were p[ro]pounded by you & w<sup>th</sup>out any tribut at the first demaunded w<sup>th</sup> terrible threats by the l[ett]res afore mencio[u]ned by the Grand Seignor & his .2. Bassas it is manifestly testified y<sup>t</sup> where the Grand Seignor had refused the supplicacopn

of the K: of Pole sent by .2. of his Amb<sup>rs</sup> & that he had purposed to send his armie into Poland to haue subuerted his Kingdome yet upon the interposico[u]n of you as o<sup>r</sup> Amb<sup>er</sup> [...]<sup>83</sup>

This is the opening to one of the few extant indications of how Elizabeth viewed Barton's work at the Porte, and what value she attributed it. News of Barton's actions had travelled fast, and news of the peace redounded to Barton's individual reputation, as well as to England's credit. The letter from which the above extract is taken, running at five pages long, is an extraordinary appraisal of an effective English diplomatic presence at the Ottoman court. From the opening Elizabeth is effusive in her praise of Barton, not only in the matter of the Polish peace but in more general terms. While Elizabeth's own correspondence with Sultan Murad III and his consort Safiye has been well discussed and documented, this letter to Barton is both a valuable indication of Elizabeth's opinion of Barton's work, and also how she viewed the emergent diplomatic – rather than merely commercial – element of the early Anglo-Ottoman contact.<sup>84</sup> Before the Polish peace, there had been little in the way of non-commercial diplomacy effected by either Harborne or Barton. As such, as well as being Barton's career-establishing episode, the peace and Elizabeth's response as indicated by this document represents more widely the furthering of a diplomatic dimension to England's contact with the Ottomans.

Some contextual factors in particular are crucial to the import of Elizabeth's words in this letter. Firstly, they came at the same time Barton was strongly protesting that he was unappreciated, had been away for too long, and should be granted a new position in England. Though pleased with his success in the Polish peace, the complaints generated

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<sup>83</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B VIII, f. 50.

<sup>84</sup> For examinations of the correspondence between Elizabeth and Sultan Murad III and/or Sultana Safiye, see particularly Allinson, 'Letters Full of Marvels'; Skilliter, 'Three Letters from the Ottoman "Sultana" Safiye to Queen Elizabeth I', in *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, ed. by S. M. Stern (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1965), pp. 119–57; Leslie Peirce, 'The Politics of Diplomacy', in *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 219–29; and Lisa Jardine, 'Gloriana Rules the Waves: Or, the Advantage of being Excommunicated (and a Woman)', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 14 (2004), 209–22.

by a perceived lack of reimbursement would last throughout his career, and they are at their strongest in 1590.<sup>85</sup> Barton's desire to be recalled is all the more fervent given his successes in the Polish negotiations – he wastes no time in voicing his concerns as soon as the Polish peace is concluded – and as such there is a strong likelihood that Elizabeth's letter was designed to placate Barton's angry protests and reinforce his position as her official diplomatic representative. The words used in this letter conspicuously reference Barton's standing as a diplomat rather than a merchant. The distinction between the two was the cause for much anxiety as the English agents tried to stake their claims in a context historically dominated by French and Venetian merchants. The Venetian agent Lorenzo Bernardo details two early events involving Barton which show the tension between Company and Crown. In February 1586, Barton had, on Harborne's behalf, gone to an influential Ottoman vizier, the *Kapudan Kılıç Ali Paşa*, to complain about the unequal treatment of the English compared to other European agents. Lorenzo relates:

Whereupon the Capudan, bursting with scorn and rage, drove the secretary from his presence with scurrilous abuse, making use of these actual words, "Just look at this fellow who wishes to stand on an equality with France and the Venetian Signory."<sup>86</sup>

Barton had been similarly rebuked only a month later, and Bernardo details another exchange between the new French agent Jacques Savary de Lancosme and Barton. Barton had gone to greet Lancosme on Harborne's behalf and, according to Bernardo:

The secretary [Barton] began, "My Master the Ambassador", when the French Ambassador broke in in a rage, saying "Ambassador! Why, he is a merchant, your master, Ambassador! I know only one Ambassador at the Porte, and that is myself; out of this at once, and tell your master that he had better mind his trade and not usurp titles like these, or I'll have him drummed out of the place."<sup>87</sup>

Later, Elizabeth herself would publicly scold a Polish diplomat at the English court along the same lines in a famous speech, the importance of this distinction between agent and

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<sup>85</sup> Wernham, *L&A*, I, p. 453.

<sup>86</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, VIII, pp. 143–44.

<sup>87</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, VIII, p. 154.

ambassador going well beyond the bounds of Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy.<sup>88</sup> Her tactic in the 1590 letter of continuously reaffirming Barton's serious diplomatic credentials flatters him, whilst also being the first royal recognition of Barton as ambassador, effectively acting as a promotion: a reward for brokering the Polish peace. This letter precedes, by around three years, the Ottoman grant of full ambassadorial status to Barton.<sup>89</sup> Yet here there can be no doubt that this is the status Barton held in the eyes of Elizabeth, though she would delay the ceremonial confirmation of such, as the letter demonstrates:

the great Bassa Sinon doth largely Confirme by his l[ett]res unto us, & so doth also Hedre Bassa the Captaine generall: so as hereby & by the l[ett]res of the K: of Pole himself & the Chancelor of Polonia & by the priuat l[ett]res of Bartholme Brato we find it manifestly certified y<sup>t</sup> yo as o<sup>r</sup> Amb<sup>r</sup>: haue soe wisely used o<sup>r</sup> Creditt, & declared o<sup>r</sup> earnest desire to haue this peace Concluded as therein you des[er]ue great praise & o<sup>r</sup> hono<sup>r</sup> thereby is largely aduanced in the sight of the world, & y<sup>e</sup> K: of Poland & that p[ar]te of Christendome singularly be holding unto us [...]<sup>90</sup>

Recent scholarly work has emphasised the uniquely material power that letters held in early cross-cultural epistolary exchanges.<sup>91</sup> Certainly, documents such as this one had a value far beyond the content of the words within them: this letter was imbued with a material royal agency which facilitated commercial interactions; its physical presence – in addition to safe-conducts and passports, for example – making it an emblem or token of royal authority. Elizabeth goes to some length to assure Barton that his status is certified not only by herself but by the 'priuat l[ett]res' of important Ottoman and Polish figures: this is a kind of remote documentary certification that extends beyond the queen's own epistolary authority and reinforces her praise with a multilingual, cross-cultural body of documentation. This shows an awareness of the importance of royal epistolary agency,

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<sup>88</sup> See Janet M. Green, 'Queen Elizabeth I's Latin Reply to the Polish Ambassador', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 31.4 (2000), 987–1008.

<sup>89</sup> The details of Barton's ceremonial confirmation as ambassador can be found from an eyewitness account written by Richard Wrag in Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, pp. 303–11.

<sup>90</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B VIII, f. 51.

<sup>91</sup> See, in particular, Allinson, 'Letters Full of Marvels'.

but perhaps underappreciates the degree of control Barton had over documentary exchanges as a mediator. Barton's career shows, again and again, instances of him manufacturing exactly this kind of multi-documentary agency for himself, without royal assistance.<sup>92</sup> Despite his full recognition still being three years away, Elizabeth's unofficial certification here was welcome as a material indicator of this status.

In addition to the recognition and affirmation of Barton as ambassador, the rhetoric used by Elizabeth in this letter is a valuable indication of her assessment of Barton's work as a part of her 'foreign policy' – where he fit into the Elizabethan diplomatic project as a remote agent abroad. The most striking example in the extracts above is the repetition, three times in the opening two pages, of the phrase 'in the sight of the world'. Used as a qualifier to praise Barton, augmenting his good work as it was visible on the highest stage of global diplomacy, Elizabeth is keen to drive this message home. It was certainly imagery she was familiar with. Four years earlier, speaking before the lords and commons in response to a petition against Mary, Queen of Scots, Elizabeth had used identical phrasing in a reflection on the nature of the royal person:

we princes, I tell you, are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world duly observed. The eyes of many behold our actions; a spot is soon spied on our garments, a blemish quickly noted in our doings. It behooveth us therefore to be careful that our proceedings be just and honourable.<sup>93</sup>

These famous lines were, it seems, reprised to Barton some years later to show an appreciation of his importance as part of Elizabethan statecraft, while simultaneously being imbued with a new significance given the controversial nature of an Anglo-Islamic relationship. It is worth noting that Elizabeth does not explicitly distinguish Barton's service by the fact that it is taking place outside of European borders. His 'forreine

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<sup>92</sup> Chapter Two of this thesis details Barton's constant forgery and manipulation of documentary transmission to gain advantage.

<sup>93</sup> *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 186.

service' is, at first glance, the same that is practised by others, elsewhere, aside from the explicit reference to the 'Grand Signor', itself a significant marker. But there is no other obvious sign that he is having to negotiate a cultural divide, or deal with the 'infidel' – none of this is included. Yet Barton's service is preferred amongst those 'at home & abroad': high praise indeed. And if, as Stephen Greenblatt has posited, 'Elizabethan power [...] depends on its privileged visibility', Barton's dealings with sultans and kings in a highly ceremonial, material diplomacy, the discussion of which circulated throughout Europe in letters and ambassadorial dispatches, would certainly seem to confirm this reading of the workings of Elizabethan power and statecraft.<sup>94</sup> Despite a lack of any special mention of the fact Barton is working outside and on the peripheries of Christendom, he is clearly distinguished by this fact.

One way in which this is implicitly the case is signalled by the repetition of 'circumspectly' in the opening address and throughout. This indicates precisely which key attributes of successful royal representatives were particularly desirable, but crucially, those at which Barton had excelled in a foreign setting. 'Circumspect', in addition to the modern meaning – evoking caution and restraint – also, in this period, had connotations of consideration and respect.<sup>95</sup> 'Faithfully, circumspectly and wisely', repeated two times in the opening lines, are clearly the specific attributes for which Barton has drawn such glowing praise. And this is further heightened by her comparison of Barton against her other agents. The three desired traits, repeated, communicate that competence and loyalty are only good as far as they exist within a cautious and restrained model, something she clearly appreciates in Barton. The specificity of these attributes points towards the fact that Barton had to be, above all, careful in his negotiations. Elizabeth had set out similar parameters of success in the 1582 commission given to

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<sup>94</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 64.

<sup>95</sup> *OED*, 'Circumspect, *n.*3: Considered, respected.'

William Harborne certifying him as a trusted commercial agent, the only extant document to which the above 1590 letter to Barton can be compared. In Harborne's commission, there is a similarly paratactic accumulation of qualities and titles:

*fide, obseruantia, prudentia & dexteritate multum nobis chari Guilielmi Harebrowne, e custodibus corporis nostri vnus, plurimum confidentes, eum Oratorem, Nuntium, Procuratorem, & Agentem nostrum certum & indubitabum, ordinamus, facimus, & constituimus, per praesentes [...]*<sup>96</sup>

This is comprehensive, formal, and designed to certify and authorise Harborne's mission without any room for doubt in the interpretation. Yet the equivalent in Elizabeth's words to Barton are, she writes, 'confessed' – highly personal – and any parataxis ('faithfully, circumspectly & wisely') is repeated self-consciously for an almost intimate effect at the opening. Additionally, these are slightly different qualities to those presented to Barton in 1590. *Fide, observantia, prudentia, & dexteritate* are translated by Hakluyt as 'trustinesse, obedience, wisdom, and disposition'.<sup>97</sup> Hakluyt possibly misjudges the importance that the Queen places on restraint as essential to effective diplomacy in Istanbul: strongly implied by *prudentia* and *dexteritate*, his English words neglect to represent this dimension, favouring the evocation of an unshakeable obedience instead, which was certainly not enough for Elizabeth. Her advice to Barton in the 1590 letter concerning restraint and caution is striking:

And not to be in excesse wordes, contained in o<sup>r</sup> l[ett]res, for auoidinge us such offence as mighte bie gathered by such as beare us ill will if the same weare certefied as written by us: Wee therefor haue in the closing upp of o<sup>r</sup> l[ett]res inserted a Request of Cred<sup>e</sup> ^credit^ to be geuen to yowe: and for that purpose wee doe require yo<sup>r</sup> good consideracon [...]<sup>98</sup>

Circumspect, restrained ambassadorial behaviour even requires an economy of words, so as not to run the risk of controversy in a setting where misinformation often ruled, with

<sup>96</sup> The full commission, in both Latin and English: 'The Queenes Commission vnder her great seale, to her seruant master *William Hareborne*, to be her maiesties Ambassadour or Agent, in the partes of Turkie. 1582.' is in Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, pp. 157–58; this quote, p. 157.

<sup>97</sup> Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, pp. 157–58.

<sup>98</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B VIII, f. 50.

various factions across the Eastern Mediterranean constantly looking to intercept English intelligence and propagandise against Elizabeth. The queen had control over her own public correspondence with the Sultan and Sultana, but maintaining an autonomous agent at the Porte was an altogether more risky affair, which spurred this targeted advice. As his earlier letter showed, Harborne's last act as ambassador was to advise Barton, his successor, to employ a similar economy of words, though for different reasons - brevity and clarity. Regardless, where Harborne could present his royal commission as documentary evidence of his authority, Barton was tasked with writing his own through words imbued with royal agency. For this reason, Elizabeth urges caution, not only in his actions as royal representative but specifically in his written communication. This economy of meaning, more than a little reminiscent of Harborne's 'compendious breuitie', is particularly important given the plasticity of the Istanbul in which Barton lived and worked. Though Elizabeth is warning against carelessness, she is not chiding Barton for his adventurousness in his dealings: in fact, this is more akin to a recognition of the power he held as an intermediary to shape meaning and intention, urging caution whilst recognising the value of his position rather than dissuading him completely. The enclosing of a 'Request of Credit' with these royal letters emphasises this – money from the Crown to Barton was rare, with only one recorded instance of Elizabeth sending £600 – less than half of Barton's yearly Company salary of £1,500 (which was, significantly, over seven times as much as Harborne's £200 per annum).<sup>99</sup> Elizabeth here footnotes the letter with the final material reward – cash.

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<sup>99</sup> Bell, *Handlist*, p. 283; Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 18. Fynes Moryson later wrote that Barton earned 1500 'Zechines' (often 'sequins', 'chekens' or similar in English correspondence – Venetian ducats).



The close of the letter reprises some of the rhetorical motifs from the opening, and reiterates that Barton's success in the Polish peace agreement is, in Elizabeth's eyes, a bedrock for further negotiations:

And to concead for that we haue sene the good experience how wisely & Circumspectly you haue carried yo<sup>r</sup> self there to o<sup>r</sup> hono<sup>r</sup> & satisfaction in all the causes wherein you haue delt in that lott we doe comitt the farde[r] handling and dealing in this great cause to yo<sup>r</sup> wisdome as you shall see times & places C[on]uenient, whereof we doe not doubt to haue the like successe[s] hereafter wards as hitherto we haue seene by ^yo^ form[er] actions Sum other things most p[ar]ticular you shall understand by Treasurer of Englands l[ett]res according as we haue directed him./  
primo Octob. 1590.<sup>100</sup>

Perhaps the most important part of the letter, this is the culmination of the praise offered above. Not only certification for Barton to continue dealing with crucial diplomatic affairs, but to do so with an unprecedented degree of autonomy. Barton is to continue at his own discretion, guided by his own wisdom, and to act only when he sees 'times & places C[on]uenient'. In the 1582 commission, Elizabeth refers to Harborne as 'one of the esquiers of our bodie': Harborne is a strictly commercial agent in that document, given some diplomatic agency, but always couched within terms of trade and commerce.<sup>101</sup> Here, the remit goes far beyond that: Elizabeth is giving her personal blessing to Barton's mission, but also giving him more autonomy, and recognising his efficiency in carving out his own authority in Istanbul. This can be read as a partial recognition of Barton as a loose cannon who was vastly effective but potentially hard to control, his distance from London combined with his apparent efficacy aiding the decision to give him a wide remit. It is in this sense that the continued mention of Thomas Wilcocks in the 1590 letter must be understood. Wilcocks, a somewhat notorious messenger and man-of-all-trades who was Barton's key right-hand man for much of his career and would in 1591 be the subject of accusations and scandal, is mentioned positively. Wilcocks was a part of Barton's

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<sup>100</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B VIII, f. 53.

<sup>101</sup> Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.ii, p. 158.

apparatus of autonomy, and so Elizabeth's repeated acknowledgement of 'Braue Thomas Wilcocks' as a key player in the Polish peace is a further endorsement of Barton's heightened autonomy. It is no coincidence that Wilcocks was the agent tasked with spreading news of Barton's procurement of the Polish peace into England. This letter certainly represents a widening of Barton's remit, and a platform from which his career could prosper, his credentials in central Europe and at the Porte already established by the Polish peace. It also recognises Barton's unique autonomy in a crucially emboldening way. Remarkably, in less than three years Barton had established himself as indispensable to the Queen and worthy of the highest praise.

As has been discussed, the events of the years immediately following Harborne's departure and Barton's unofficial assumption of his responsibilities saw several situations which can be described without exaggeration as critical moments for the new English representative. The foremost of these is the Polish peace, the success of which acted as a catalyst for a career in which he was trusted to be involved in exchanges on the grandest scale. Beyond this royal letter, the correspondence surrounding the events of Barton's early career shows him starting to develop techniques and strategies which ensured a tight grip on the control of news and information coming in and out of Istanbul, which would prove crucial to establishing his importance as an English presence at the Porte. The scholarly consensus is that Barton's mediation in the Polish-Ottoman tensions of 1589–90 was his establishing episode.<sup>102</sup> It is now clear that Barton, to a significant extent, manufactured the reception of his work in this affair to propagandise his importance at the Porte and secure his career as a vital diplomatic agent. His mediation was his establishing episode, but only because he pursued a unique course of action to make it so; Elizabeth's letter was the ultimate prize.

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<sup>102</sup> See Woodhead, 'Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)', *ODNB*; Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 27–28.

This episode illustrates that Barton's network of influence, even early in his career, was deployed to its fullest extent in shaping the news of his intervention to ensure his mediation between Poland and the Ottomans was a focus of contemporary commentary. The royal letter of 1590 shows that this policy was broadly successful. The next chapter will assess how in his early years Barton continued to build these networks and conduct the everyday business of diplomacy in Istanbul, making full use of the remit he had fashioned for himself and the substantial autonomy it granted him; these early years provided foundations of skills and relationships which were indispensable in the years to come.

## Chapter Two

### Forging Influence, 1590–93

Having established himself in Istanbul through the later 1580s with the Ottoman hierarchy, gained the trust of the English court, and materially founded his embassy, the years that followed saw Barton represent English interests in Istanbul according to a distinctive set of patterns. Once unofficially promoted to ambassador in English eyes by Elizabeth's 1590 letter, from 1590–96 Barton freely set about the tasks which came with his new role – conducting diplomacy when necessary, facilitating commerce, and continuously documenting the state of affairs he oversaw, aided by his various networks. This chapter details the events of those years, aiming to explore how Barton developed methods which not only represented a radical departure from the established model set by Harborne, but also facilitated a relationship between England and the Ottomans which, by 1596, had outgrown even its closest rival, the Franco-Ottoman equivalent.<sup>1</sup> This chapter unravels the means by which Barton was able to so effectively cement the burgeoning relationship established by Harborne. It details how the new ambassador used all the tools at his disposal – both material and immaterial, often unconventional, and sometimes controversial. These practicalities have thus far been neglected by the majority of scholarly work on Barton, despite the wealth of archival material from these years. This examination of Barton's practices during these early years, based on hitherto

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<sup>1</sup> By 1596 Barton's influence was such that he was temporarily able to secure new capitulations which prioritised English traders over their French counterparts, undoing the French commercial ascendancy in Ottoman waters which stretched back to the early sixteenth century. See Chapter Four of this thesis.

unexplored documents from his archive of correspondence, fleshes out the realities of his governance of the English embassy in the 1590s.

Though scholars have generally recognised the adaptability the early Anglo-Ottoman go-betweens had to develop, alongside a real willingness to improvise and disobey, very few have written in detail about the practicalities which led to the necessity of these traits.<sup>2</sup> So, while Daniel Goffman sums up the nature of these early agents as ‘marginal men, even cultural hybrids who prospered by learning to live with, rather than by trying to recast, the civilization with which they had to treat’, an in-depth study of the documents detailing the workings of the 1590s English embassy in Istanbul is a valuable indication of just how one of these men – Barton – was marginal, how he prospered, and to what degree this was achieved by ‘learning to live with’ the Ottomans.<sup>3</sup> In fact, this case study can provide more depth to such readings and can thus go some of the way towards remedying a more straightforwardly Orientalist view which might read Barton as a ‘cultural hybrid’ who, to whatever extent, had ‘gone native’.<sup>4</sup> Instead, more complex combinations of, and tensions between, motives – of national service and commercial success; of proximity to the Ottomans coupled with a willingness to exploit the weak spots in the hierarchy at the Porte – becomes evident, and gives a more complete picture of the new kind of diplomacy Barton was conducting during these years. This, in turn, can help us understand the mechanisms of the prospering Anglo-Ottoman relationship.

This chapter builds on the arguments presented in the previous chapter: I have shown how Barton’s adherence to and departures from Harborne’s model combined to create his specific set of aptitudes, and how he utilised these aptitudes and his network to

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<sup>2</sup> The exception here is Skilliter, whose thorough archival work underlines a detailed exploration of events in and around the embassy. Her work also recognises the amount of documentary manipulation Barton effected.

<sup>3</sup> Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558 – 1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> See the Introduction to this thesis for an outline of how Barton has been a figure particularly vulnerable to this kind of reductive reading.

control the spread of news from an embassy household populated by useful agents. The analysis presented here can be read as a culmination of those developing themes – working examples of how they shaped Barton’s career. It will argue that Barton’s methods hinged on the prioritisation of manufacturing material, documentary authority by any means on one hand, whilst also fostering and exploiting a polyglot network of mobile intermediaries who went far beyond the remit of the ‘fixer’, much as Barton himself had done over the preceding decade. These are the recognisable patterns of Barton’s actions during these years, occurring with striking repetition. Due to the wealth of archival material available from Barton’s correspondence in this period, this chapter focuses upon three distinct flashpoints – firstly, the accusations of misconduct at the embassy levelled at him in 1590 by a group of merchants; then his clash with the Grand Vizier Ferhād Pasha; and finally Barton’s framing and imprisonment of his French counterpart and Harborne’s old rival, the ambassador Jacques Savary de Lancosme.<sup>5</sup> These instances of conflict forced Barton into situations where he had to utilise the entirety of his power and influence, and crucially, all three events display striking similarities in the way Barton relied on material documentary authority and mobilised his network of trusted intermediaries. This chapter argues that the ways in which the English embassy was designed to function in 1590s Istanbul shows a willingness and an aptitude for improvisation, underhand dealings, forgery, counterfeiting and misinformation.

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<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that from 1590, Barton was also increasingly involved in the claims of Aron Vodă (Aaron the Tyrant) and Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave) to the Moldavian and Wallachian thrones, respectively. The English involvement here, continuing well after Barton’s death into the seventeenth century, is a subject which has merited a thesis of its own: Laura Jane Fenella Coulter’s ‘The Involvement of the English Crown and its Embassy in Constantinople with Pretenders to the Throne of the Principality of Moldavia Between the Years 1583 and 1620: with Particular Reference to the Pretender Stefan Bogdan Between 1590 and 1612’ (Unpublished doctoral thesis: University of London, 1993). Barton’s own involvement is obscure, but, in Coulter’s words, Barton was persuaded towards involvement because ‘he had very particular ideas of his own about how their foreign policy should operate’ (p. 175). This is yet another example of Barton’s networks of influence extending way past his remit, and further, a sign that Barton was trying to manufacture an altogether more potent and lasting power by propping up a monarch in an adjacent vassal state.

Further, this willingness and aptitude seems to have been developed out of an awareness of similar methods used by agents in the Ottoman sphere who had been able to accrue great influence in the same manner. In this way, these years are also a story of the English embassy taking and adapting older techniques of garnering influence and turning them into tactics which proved successful during their trial in the mid-1590s.

As I have already noted, no new ambassador could be ceremonially confirmed until a shipment of gifts, which the hopeful representative could present to the sultan, was delivered. Barton's complaints as to the delay and subsequent lack of such a shipment started to appear from 1590.<sup>6</sup> To his frustration, none would appear until October 1593 on the ship *Ascension*.<sup>7</sup> This in-between period, then, might be seen as a time in which Barton's status was slightly more fragile. Instead, however, he pursued an aggressive policy of expanding his influence. In the years between his 1588 *de facto* assumption of the role of ambassador and his ceremonial confirmation of the same, three scandals with Barton at their centre occurred, and significantly, the fallouts of all these scandals were shaped to Barton's advantage. As the first chapter has shown, Elizabeth's 1590 letter was intended to be Barton's *carte blanche* to continue in an unorthodox, autonomous way. Yet Elizabeth would be forced into restating her confidence in Barton even before his ceremonial confirmation as ambassador. What might have been a period of quiet consolidation after his royal endorsement instead saw Barton utilising the buzz generated by scandal to gain influence.

During the Polish peace Barton had manipulated correspondence to alter the reception of his actions; he soon moved onto altering the contents of the correspondence itself. In March 1591 Barton was tasked with translating and presenting letters from Queen Elizabeth to Sultan Murād III, sent to solidify relations between the two monarchs

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<sup>6</sup> Wernham, *L&A*, I, p. 453.

<sup>7</sup> See the account of Richard Wrag in Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, pp. 303–11.

and enhance Barton's position at the Porte. They contained, amongst other things, Elizabeth's stated desire to make peace with Spain, but Barton knew that this policy was unlikely to play well with the sultan. Accordingly, he doctored his translation, making the letter read as if Elizabeth wanted to pursue war, subsequently explaining in his next dispatch that his version of the queen's letter would better please the sultan – he knew best. Reporting on the exchange a month later, he wrote to Robert Cecil:

yo<sup>r</sup> h<sup>o</sup>r required my verdict if whether it were acceptable and com[m]endable unto theise, I should be so arrogant to amend any parte[s] therof beinge most wysely and learnedly written, and should be laughed at w<sup>th</sup> Apollos showmaker and rightly taunted w<sup>th</sup> ne Sator ultra Crepidam.<sup>8</sup> But [...] that as I remember by S<sup>r</sup> Franncis Walshinghams licence to m<sup>r</sup> Harborne I did thinke it hurtfull to use the phrase vsed in the Q[ueen's] last l[ett]res declaringe her earnest desier and christian-like endeavor to obtayne an honorable peace w[i]th the k[ing] of Spayne, but rather the sayd l[ett]res beinge co[m]mitted to me to enterpret I altered the same[...]if I haue offended I humbly crave yo[ur] ho[nor's] pardon [...] if there be any offence co[m]mitted it is not of malice or any estimation of myne owne wit, but of zeale to doe the Q[ueen] greater service. [...]<sup>9</sup>

This extract shows Barton at the height of his post-Polish-peace pomp: this is really an admission of ambassadorial misconduct, a confession of taking the job into his own hands – anathema to the model ambassadors who were supposed to be the bodily representation of their monarch. Barton did not, however, seem to be too concerned about the outcome, adopting a jocular and familiar tone. Invoking the authority of Walsingham and Harborne, he was, by this point in 1591, able to present himself as possessing a deep enough knowledge of his surroundings to be able to flatly contradict the decisions of the queen and her advisers. On this report's reception in London, Cecil annotated the offending passage with 'y<sup>e</sup> Q[ueen's] l[ett]res to ye Gra[n]d S[i]g[or] altered by barto[n]' bracketing it and underlining parts of it, with a portentous cross in the margin.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Sutor, ne ultra crepidam*: roughly 'Shoemaker, not beyond the shoe'. A proverb to encourage people to stick to their areas of expertise, and not exceed them.

<sup>9</sup> SP 97/2, f. 95.

<sup>10</sup> SP 97/2, f. 95.



Rayne Allinson has called this an example of Barton's 'extraordinary boldness, and the ultimate powerlessness of the English government to enforce its policies at so great a distance', going on to add that the purposeful mistranslation was

an extraordinary act, which in any other context might have been punished as treason [...] Barton does not appear to have been punished, presumably because distance and lack of adequate news made the English government entirely dependent on its resident ambassador's initiative. [...] Clearly, Elizabeth valued his service enough to keep him at the post – and since news took several months to a year to reach Istanbul from London, there was not much she or her counselors could do about her rogue ambassador.<sup>11</sup>

Allinson picks up on a crucial fact: that even as early as 1591, Barton was operating in an unorthodox, brazen way. We will see that this unorthodoxy extended further than merely changing the contents of letters. Allinson is also correct to highlight the importance of the distance between Barton and those he was answerable to, undoubtedly a factor forcing the English court's hand when it came to trying to keep a grip on Barton. The documents below show that Barton may have been a 'rogue ambassador' in his methods, using a specific set of tools at his disposal which no ambassador had previously possessed, but also that he was continually encouraged by the English court in the 1590s to use any means to further English interests at the Porte. By the time of his ceremonial confirmation, Barton had assumed an unrivalled position at the Porte which had been brought about and was subsequently propped up by an array of documents which had been generated by a carefully curated, diverse group of multilingual correspondents.

### Accusations of Improper Conduct and George Gifford's Report

The first of the major scandals Barton faced in the early 1590s was caused by accusations from four merchants of the Levant Company – Thomas Dawkins, Gabriel Whettenhall,

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<sup>11</sup> Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters*, pp. 147–48.

Thomas Butterworth, and Thomas Belk – of improper conduct, particularly the counterfeiting of coins, in the embassy, which they alleged Barton tried to cover up with bribes. These accusations went to the core of Barton's professional and personal practice and conduct, and essentially sought to have him deemed unfit and replaced by another English representative. The specifics of the complaints and the charges against him seem to have taken many forms, existing in several extant documents, but the clearest expression of them reads as follows:

Certayne nottes to Informe you Lo of the abuses comitted in the agents house at Constantinople

Impri. the 16 august 1590 it was knowen and discoouered unto us a practise w<sup>ch</sup> had bine before tyme used of the Coyning of falce Dollars of sondrye stampes w<sup>ch</sup> weare Coyned by Tho Wilkocks and his man / w<sup>ch</sup> other tockes grauers of the stampes w<sup>ch</sup> dollars the agent hid away to his owne esteates

The 21 of August 1590 Gorg. Hopson Catter for the Agent Confessed unto us that he was in great Dainger for passing away the said falce dollars & he was forced to giue mony to Escape

Robert Corse Confessed unto us that he did see the coyning of two falce Pistolletes of gold: w<sup>ch</sup> the Coyner Tho wilkockes man Confessed Likewise

The 2 of September 1590 we w<sup>th</sup> Tho Dawkines went in to the Agent & Chargid him w<sup>th</sup> this Coyning in his house / wherupon he brought out certaine meeteel & swore that wilkockes should neuer come in to his howse Agayne.

The 19 of september 1590 the Agent wrotte a Letter unto Thomas Belk to saye Requyring him that he would Throwe suche Coyne as he hade ill by him in to the sea / & to send him worde of the uallewe: and he would answer him in a carpitt.

Ther was seuerall Praktisses used for the Confiscating of Tho Dawkines goodes w<sup>th</sup> a prentended murthe by wilkockes & his man w<sup>ch</sup> was preuented only by the power of god

Before Tho wilkockes Coming ther was a Reesonable Rate of Expences in the howse w<sup>ch</sup> after wardses ther was so small a Regarde taken that it did amount unto doble so muche as it did before / besides other Somes of mony w<sup>ch</sup> he did Lend to wilkockes Pawllo Maryane and Sebastian.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XI, f. 123.

In a mirror image of the praise given in the queen's 1590 letter, both Barton and Thomas Wilcocks were now implicated where before they had been valued agents of the Crown, with the personnel at the embassy suddenly subjected to a high degree of scrutiny. The irony is even sharper given the timing of these accusations: the first draft of the queen's 1590 commendatory letter was drawn up just ten days after the supposed discovery of the clandestine activities at the embassy. It is impossible to know whether these accusations were the result of a mercantile grudge (Barton had frequent run-ins with merchants of the Company, many of whom resented his diplomacy being funded by Company money) or whether these merchants had exposed a culture of illegal behaviour at the embassy (as we will see, forgery was one of Barton's fortes; he would also have been aware of the vulnerability of Ottoman coinage to debasement).<sup>13</sup> Yet the lines these accusations follow are instructive regardless of their veracity. Before exploring their result, and Barton's response, it is worth sustaining the above scrutiny on the personnel associated with the embassy. Exactly what type of 'gentlemen' had Barton 'furnished' his embassy with?

Particularly with regards to Barton's career, the importance of these marginal characters, whose names appear only briefly in scattered archival references, cannot be overstated. The work of Emrah Safa Gürkan has convincingly challenged, in his words, the 'Eurocentric view that associate the birth and development of modern diplomacy only with Christian Europe' by switching the focus 'from the office of the ambassador to a large number of informal diplomatic actors (Jewish brokers, dragomans, renegades, go-betweens, etc.) with different areas of competence, functioning in diverse networks of contact and exchange.'<sup>14</sup> It is in precisely this light that the work of Barton's embassy

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<sup>13</sup> See Baki Tezcan, 'The Ottoman Monetary Crisis of 1585 Revisited', in *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 52.3 (2009), 460–504; and Sekvet Pamuk, 'In the Absence of Domestic Currency: Debased European Coinage in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire', in *The Journal of Economic History*, 57.2 (1997), 345–66.

<sup>14</sup> Emrah Safa Gürkan, 'Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560–1600', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19 (2015), 107–28 (p. 107).

during the early 1590s must be understood. A nuanced understanding of the work of the embassy during this time requires a recognition that the utilisation of networks to create agency and authority was not a privilege reserved for monarchs. In fact, the porous borders of the early modern Eastern Mediterranean encouraged the existence of these multilingual networks, many of which were created by expanding commercial incentives. Between Company and Crown, Barton was well placed to know the importance of such networks. He would also have been aware of several precedents set by influential agents in Istanbul before his tenure. The Fugger network extended to Istanbul in Barton's time, though they mostly engaged with the Ottomans from Venice. Joseph Nasi (d. 1579) had become known for his network of agents and had risen to an incredibly influential position in Porte hierarchy, whilst also commanding influence in the Polish court and enjoying monopolies on the wine and beeswax trades, amongst others. In fact, Nasi's outsider allure – his network of Western agents, Jewish connections and the resultant knowledge put him in favour at the Porte, and, combined with his commercial success, made him a potential role model for Barton.<sup>15</sup>

Nasi was eventually given the title of the Duke of Naxos; one of his cousins, Solomon Ben Ya'esh, born Alvaro Mendes and known to the English as Don Solomon, would become one of Barton's key rivals in Istanbul.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Bartolomeo Bruti, who Barton knew personally from his time as Harborne's secretary and whose service he had enlisted during the Polish peace, was an Albanian agent who performed a multitude of

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<sup>15</sup> This 'outsider allure' was considered important in an Ottoman system which recognised the value of a diverse, polyglot human makeup of its hierarchy – from the many Jewish agents who rose to power in Istanbul from the sixteenth century onwards, to Christians forcibly taken by the *devşirme* ('blood tax') system, to the converts and eunuchs who often came from Christian backgrounds. In addition, the millet tax system was, though fiscally punitive to non-Muslims, more tolerant than global equivalents in terms of personal liberty, and gave non-Muslims a chance to accrue power and influence where in other spheres they might be denied that chance. For a discussion of the Ottoman tradition of ruling with a richly varied ethnic and linguistic government within a wider tradition of a polyglot Eastern Mediterranean, see Eric R. Dursteler, 'Speaking in Tongues: Language and Communication in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Past and Present*, 217 (2012), 47–77.

<sup>16</sup> Barton's interactions with Ben Ya'esh are covered in Chapter Three of this thesis.

roles for a multitude of superiors, commanding a wide network and rising to enjoy great influence during his lifetime, culminating in a chancellorship. Unsurprisingly, Barton was 'attach[ing] himself very closely to him [Bruti], seeking to make use of him' as soon as he took over from Harborne, and would later employ his nephew Pasquale Bruti as a dragoman (translator) at the embassy.<sup>17</sup> Laura Jane Fenella Coulter has summed up well the outlooks of men such as these when she writes that Bruti set the precedent for those who:

were politically adept and thrived through intrigue, making their fortunes through manipulating the Ottoman system on behalf of businessmen, embassies and even pretenders to the thrones of Wallachia and Moldavia. They took advantage of contacts made and favours done to amass large amounts of money and, even more importantly, positions of influence and power.<sup>18</sup>

These highly visible success stories represent only a tiny minority of the agents Barton would have been aware of. And while figures such as Nasi undoubtedly exemplified the level of influence and power Barton demonstrably worked towards throughout his career, Barton knew his situation was fundamentally different. Whereas Nasi, other Jewish brokers, and even ethnic Albanians such as the Brutis were able to change their names, adopt new identities and guises and even change or conceal their religion to achieve their goals, Barton, with his Crown-endorsed remit, had no such flexibility beyond his rare linguistic talent. Instead, he relied on the flexibility of those around him. When called upon at short notice by Bartolomeo Bruti for support, Thomas Wilcocks wrote in 1591 that Barton was able to assemble a network of 'grekish marchants [...] other marchants both Christians turks and Jewes, m<sup>r</sup> Barton his friends'.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, p. 358. On the importance of translation in the early modern Ottoman context, see Tijana Krstić, 'Of Translation and Empire: Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Imperial Interpreters as Renaissance Go-Betweens', in *The Ottoman World*, ed. by Christine Woodhead (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 130-142.

<sup>18</sup> Coulter, 'The Involvement of the English Crown', p. 222.

<sup>19</sup> SP 97/2, f. 188.

But who were these ‘friends’? Populating a complete roster of 1590s embassy personnel is impossible, and so the specifics of Barton’s network will always remain slightly obscure: as in the list of employees reproduced in Chapter One, most of the staff are never mentioned by name in any of Barton’s correspondence. There are those whose names, likely by design, appear infrequently, their roles never explained – such as David Passi and Moshe Benevisti, who were certainly attached to the embassy but whose jobs have never been clarified beyond the loose assumption that they were spies.<sup>20</sup> However, the merchants’ accusations name two of the most important embassy-adjacent intermediaries – Thomas Wilcocks and Paolo Mariani – both of whom were crucially important to Barton. We have already encountered Thomas Wilcocks with the establishment of the Polish peace in 1590, during which he played an instrumental role as a courier. He was the most trusted of the intermediaries working out of Barton’s embassy: throughout Barton’s career he was entrusted with carrying Barton’s more important letters as well as royal correspondence. Very little about him is known; indeed, it is only due to his association with Barton that he is written about at all. We know that he was a merchant working as Barton’s secretary during this time, much the same as Barton had apprenticed Harborne from a background of apparent obscurity; that he was Barton’s trusted courier, and that he was trusted even by Ottoman officials to carry correspondence to Queen Elizabeth.<sup>21</sup> He was singled out for particular praise by the English court for his actions in helping to broker the Polish peace – specifically, for travelling to deliver crucial documents at his own expense, a clear demarcation of his role in enabling the mobility of Barton’s writing during this period.

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<sup>20</sup> Only with regards to English affairs. Passi and Benevisti are briefly written about by Noel Malcolm in *Agents of Empire*, p. 226. Their involvement in English matters is most visible in the case of Barton’s feud with Solomon Ben Ya’esh: see Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>21</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, p. 26.

Paolo Mariani represents an altogether different style of intermediary. A Venetian merchant, he was appointed the French consul in Egypt in the 1580s and, in Noel Malcolm's words, 'had fingers in many pies'.<sup>22</sup> Having started his career as a dragoman, Mariani was following the precedents set by Nasi and Bartolomeo Bruti, and by the time he worked for Barton was a well-known presence in Istanbul. According to John Sanderson, by his death 'he had so besotted and was so beloved of most in the citie'.<sup>23</sup> Sanderson, who had stayed with Mariani and Wilcocks in the embassy in 1596, had much to say about the former: he was 'a maker of patriarks and princes, a setter up and pullar downe of them and ambassiators, a poysoner and filthy liver, a warrs and peace maker, a garboyler [...] a Matchivilian Italian'.<sup>24</sup> Even the partisan words of Sanderson, well known for his uncompromising views on those he deemed morally dubious or dishonourable, cannot help but recognise the sheer power that Mariani wielded in the 1590s working out of Barton's embassy. The English anxiety at the presence of these two men in particular at the embassy is telling, and probably explains some of the English merchants' anxiety about his conduct, given that men like Mariani and Wilcox were not necessarily working in the Company's interests. Barton was adopting the customs of those who had been successful in gaining influence in Istanbul before him. This was certainly a Barton-led endeavour, rather than a general feature of Anglo-Ottoman relations. As Coulter puts it:

The English Embassy's intelligence network increased in size under Edward Barton. The merchants complained about the size and cost of his staff and the fact that he employed men such as Thomas Wilcox and Paolo Mariani at all. Barton maintained a wide range of acquaintances, extending from Meletius Pigas, Patriarch of Alexandria, to Moshe Benevisti and David Passi, who were alleged to have been spies. Meletius Pigas became Patriarch of Constantinople, and his friendship provided Barton with a useful entree into the Greek Orthodox establishment which was responsible for the whole of the Orthodox Christian community within the Empire. Its members included bankers and merchants with

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<sup>22</sup> Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, p. 360.

<sup>23</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p.13.

<sup>24</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p.13.

connections all over the Empire and beyond its borders. [...] these men's usefulness to Barton must have been immense, because he could tap into their intelligence networks too.<sup>25</sup>

Chapter Three will explore in depth the religious networks Barton became a part of during his career. It is worth noting here, though, that quite outside of religion these networks also served a more practical purpose, just as they had done for Nasi and Bartolomeo Bruti.

The accusations of Dawkins, Whettenhall, Butterworth and Belk did not relent, and so Barton was forced into action. Like Barton's letters, there were several iterations of their complaints, sent to diverse interlocutors throughout English merchants' Mediterranean networks, and accordingly, before long, word reached England, Burghley, and Elizabeth. We know that these letters were taken seriously because of the response: Walsingham sent a specially commissioned gentleman-pensioner of the English court to Istanbul to report on the state of affairs there pertaining to trade, commerce and diplomacy, but especially with regards to Barton's behaviour, demeanour and general efficacy in his role. The commissioned man was George Gifford, brother of the better-known Gilbert Gifford. His personal motives for the visit to Istanbul have long been a source of speculation – it has been suggested that his trip to Istanbul, sponsored ten years earlier in 1581 by Thomas Cavendish, was nothing more than the result of a wager.<sup>26</sup> Yet Gifford's report on Barton and English trade in Istanbul, extant in the State Papers, certainly suggests a special commission, especially given the opening sentence, in which Gifford writes to Walsingham that 'it pleased you to comaund me set downe something concerning Turkey; and of the state of the Ambassador theare.'<sup>27</sup> Documents from late 1590 show scrutiny on the sums of money moving in and out of the embassy, with specific

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<sup>25</sup> Coulter, 'The Involvement of the English Crown', pp. 444–45.

<sup>26</sup> See Anthony Parr, *Renaissance Mad Voyages: Experiments in Early Modern English Travel* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 133–36.

<sup>27</sup> Gifford's report is two sides long, and can be found at SP 97/2, f. 161.



reference to Barton.<sup>28</sup> There is a palpable sense in this period, at the crucial moment of consolidation of the embassy in the midst of the Polish negotiations, that affairs in Istanbul were monitored at every opportunity. Gifford's report, dated February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1591, is a valuable insight into not only the state of English interests in Istanbul in 1590, but also an indicator of how Barton had learned to fabricate his defence. He would reprise similar tactics throughout his career, as he continued to be dogged by scandal. Gifford's report also reveals the preoccupations of the English court and its secretariat with regards to intelligence coming from Istanbul – Gifford would have been extensively briefed, and so his writing followed specific lines of inquiry, mostly centring on Barton.

Firstly, Gifford makes general arguments for Barton's presence as the official English representative in Istanbul, and his skill in performing that role:

First maie it please yo<sup>r</sup> good Lordship, I Iudge that you esteme it needfull polity to construe friendship with the grand se<sup>r</sup>: The generall state of Christendome standing as it doth./  
 Secondly I knowe yo<sup>r</sup> L.p well understandeth that there is no use to be made of his friendship w<sup>th</sup>out an Ambassado<sup>r</sup> lodger theare, as the generall part of the princes of Christendome hathe or sueth to haue./  
 Thirdly the profit that her ma<sup>tie</sup> reapeth by her Ambassadors residence there, is the free trafique of her marchauntes into those parties, whearby her Subiecte[s] and Contrey are enriched, and also many other Comodities that may ensue when her ma<sup>tie</sup> pleaseth to make prooffe of her credit w<sup>th</sup> the grand se<sup>r</sup>: By w<sup>ch</sup> she is able to plesure her freinde[s] & displeasure her Enemies as oth<sup>r</sup>[e]s by infinite somes of money cannot compare[e].<sup>29</sup>

Alongside the aforementioned petition of the Levant merchants and a spate of other documents from the time of the Polish peace up until Barton's formal confirmation as ambassador in October 1593, these arguments appear in various but similar forms.<sup>30</sup> Many of them come from sources close to Barton, perhaps unsurprisingly, since most English travellers or merchants who passed through Istanbul encountered the English embassy in some capacity during their stay. It is no surprise that Gifford stayed with

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<sup>28</sup> SP 97/2, f. 46.

<sup>29</sup> SP 97/2, f. 161.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, BL, Cotton MS Nero B XI, ff. 120, 126, 127.

Barton in the English embassy in 1591. Given the skill and preoccupation Barton continuously shows for the shaping of opinion towards himself, it is unsurprising that Gifford's argument is so similar to other extant appraisals of his presence, especially from those that were his guests at the embassy household.<sup>31</sup> Gifford continues in the vein of other similar documents: whether it be a new royal charter for the Company, or haste in ceremonially appointing Barton as ambassador, the Crown must ensure the permanence of English ventures at the Porte with a gesture of money, gifts, and documents, with nothing less than national security at stake. This is down to Barton's diplomatic, rather than commercial, skill, as he 'geueth himself wholie to matters of state':

[...] it is needfull that there be speedily some certein order set downe for the maintenance of the Ambassado<sup>r</sup> there, for the credit of her ma<sup>tie</sup> and good of o<sup>r</sup> contrey [...] the disgrace, damage and detriment that this Ambassador in his time hath doon to the Spaniard the League and other their partakers long labouring for peace and not obteyning the same by his diligence and carefull indeuours in these parties, redound not smally to the honor of her ma<sup>tie</sup> and our Contrey, And contrary, the fauour that he hath woon to the Pole: the French king, and oth<sup>le</sup><sup>r</sup> her ma<sup>te</sup><sup>[s]</sup> freindes, no lesse witnesseth her ma<sup>tie</sup><sup>[s]</sup> greatnes, Beside the like seruices are to be expected daily as occasion shall fill out, for he geueth himselfe wholie to matters of state thereby the better to serue her ma<sup>tie</sup> and annoy her Enemies, and this do the marchauntes chieflie mislike, who rather desire he should be theare in the nature of a factor than of an Ambassador./<sup>32</sup>

The Polish peace is – of course – referred to. The argument here is explicitly that Barton is much more than a mercantile presence at the Porte, and represents an opportunity for a strong diplomatic relationship between Elizabeth and Murad, a necessity given the 'generall state of Christendome'. This is down to his grasp of the language, resulting in an unrivalled mastery of the Ottoman court for a stranger:

[...] her Ambassador needeth no other mediator or Spokesman then himselfe, being so well able to deliuer his mynde in their owne language w<sup>ch</sup> is a thing they maruelouslie respect and like of, whearby her ma<sup>te</sup><sup>[s]</sup> Ambassado<sup>r</sup> hathe more free

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<sup>31</sup> Barton was famed for his hospitality and Gifford, John Sanderson, Fynes Moryson and William Aldrich all lodged there during their travels to Istanbul. See William Foster, 'Introduction', in *The Travels of John Sanderson*, pp. xvii–xx. All of these men at some point produced documentary affirmation of the efficacy of Barton as ambassador which was sent back to England.

<sup>32</sup> SP 97/2, f. 161.

Accesse, Audience, Credit and franck discourse then any oth<sup>[e]r</sup> Ambassado<sup>r</sup> whosoeuer, insomoe that he preuaileth for those he fauoureth [...]<sup>33</sup>

There is not a hint of doubt in Gifford's appraisal of Barton: England have a valuably effective representative at the Porte. Allowing for transmission, Gifford would have written his report shortly before Barton received his royal commendation and thus the security of a great autonomy which would define his career. Barton had never been in more need of remote certification, his career hanging in the balance. Though there is no solid evidence to prove or disprove the specific accusations of counterfeiting money, it is likely that the accusations against Barton and his embassy were at least in part true. John Sanderson, who in general remained fairly positive towards Barton after some minor disagreements, remarked repeatedly on the debauched nature of affairs at the ambassadorial household, despite his general approval of Barton, who was evicted twice.<sup>34</sup> As this chapter will explore, later in 1591 Barton would counterfeit incriminating letters in order to have his French rival expelled. Coupled with his constant financial insecurity and also his large degree of power and influence at the Porte, it is more than likely that Barton's eye for the manipulation and bending of documentary authority also extended to money. In this light, Gifford's report was clearly a product of Barton's influence, given that other accounts indicate it is extremely unlikely Gifford would not have witnessed any wrongdoing. The lengthy conclusion, in which he refuted all of the accusations against Barton and his household, point-by-point, underscored his certainty that Barton's embassy was not only effective, but legitimate. It starts:

And for the Accusations made to yo<sup>r</sup> honor against him for Coyning : his fauoring of Straung<sup>[e]rs</sup>, and the wrong that he hath doon to a Iewe that is supposed to be well affected to our Contrey : Thies Accusations (right hono<sup>r</sup>able) proceed but from his Enemies, and are suggested (I assure yo<sup>r</sup> h.) against him by malice from some coming from thise parties, enuying they were not imploied by him, whome he knew in his Discretion unwourthie thearof for their want of Secresye Iudgement and Language, as Wytnall, Belk, & Butterwourth, of whose intended

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<sup>33</sup> SP 97/2, f. 161.

<sup>34</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 10.

practise heerein the Ambassador is able to produce their owne handes against them.<sup>35</sup>

Particularly significant is the scrutiny that these accusations afforded to Barton's household, and the dealings therein. The suggestions of wrongdoing at the embassy are more than mere accusations – they aim at the core of Barton's cultivation of authority in Istanbul. The commission of an independent agent – Gifford – to assess, on behalf of the Crown, how exactly Barton operated belies a suspicious curiosity from the English court as to how exactly Barton wielded his authority and managed to navigate the alien structures of the Sublime Porte. Gifford's response to this is strong. He continues to offer specific defences of Paolo Mariani and Sebastian, the two members of the household singled out for accusation by Dawkins, Whettenhall, Butterworth, and Belk. This develops into a general defence of the make-up of the personnel at the embassy, which included staff of Jewish, Ragusian, French, and Polish backgrounds, as well as four Turkish Janissaries.<sup>36</sup> Barton's unorthodox networks and connections are implicitly defended, even championed, as Gifford uses the diversity of the household to argue for Barton's cultural dexterity. Tellingly, a key defence here is that 'the Ambassador is able to produce their owne handes against them' – the power of Barton's information-gathering, at the centre of not only diplomacy but also trade, gives him a catalogue of documentation which he can now employ to vindicate himself. This sentence also directly signifies a spoken conversation between Gifford and Barton in which Barton proffered his evidence, asserting once more his own documentary authority in order to garner more.

Though the Polish peace would encounter some later difficulties, Barton's involvement was, to all intents and purposes, finished, and Gifford's report also ended the continuing suspicion towards Barton's actions and those of his household, at least

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<sup>35</sup> SP 97/2, f. 161.

<sup>36</sup> SP 97/2, f. 161.

temporarily. Barton certainly negotiated the crisis successfully. The evidence above shows that the process, rather than merely the events, of his ascendancy is worth attention. It shows recurring themes that will resurface throughout his career. The use of multiple, multilingual sources offering varied documentary authentication, reference and prestige; the deployment of a network of interlocutors; the drive to have news of his deeds reach those in power through the mouths and hands of others; these all define Barton's *modus operandi*. That Gifford's report and the Queen's commendation of Barton follow similar lines and highlight similar points is a reminder of the flexibility of royal agency on both sides of this correspondence. While Barton could use the royal letters and the authority they gave as crucial tools for his trade – indeed, this is how much of the earlier Anglo-Ottoman exchanges facilitated by Harborne had functioned – it is also worth considering that, since no holograph letter exists, only copies, one can only tentatively attribute words such as those commending Barton to Queen Elizabeth herself. What does survive in the archive is evidence of a close relationship initially between Barton and Walsingham, later with Lord Burghley, and briefly with Robert Cecil.<sup>37</sup> That the commendation and Walsingham's commission to Gifford are roughly contemporaneous shows, at the very least, a difference in opinion regarding Barton's work within the royal secretariat; perhaps, given the content of the royal letters to Sigismund and Murad which afford explicit praise to Barton and Wilcocks, and their replies which do the same, this can be extended as a difference in opinion between the monarch and some of her advisors.<sup>38</sup> As

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<sup>37</sup> Each had profound but differing impacts on the direction of English 'foreign policy' as Elizabethan councillors. See R. B. Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy, 1558–1603* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 7–9. Conyers Read produced separate volumes on each of the secretaries, facilitating in-depth discussions of the intricacies of their differing policies: see Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955); *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1960); and *Mr Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925).

<sup>38</sup> Robert Cecil employed an eastwards-looking policy which is likely to have been more sympathetic to an unconventional, potentially scandalous Anglo-Islamic alliance than his counterpart privy counsellors. See Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth*.

Chapter Four will show, it is likely that Elizabeth's outward communications as to her intentions in Istanbul differed from her instructions – or lack of instructions – to Barton himself. However, this would have mattered little to him at this point of the establishment of his career. There is a clear sense that after the letter of October 1<sup>st</sup> 1590, Barton was emboldened and autonomous, and became a formidable presence at the Porte, as the events directly succeeding the Polish peace would show. His demands to return home quickly vanish, unsurprisingly, and only surface again in times of financial crisis, or, as later chapters will show, when he needs specific permissions from the English court. Barton was now, to all intents and purposes, England's fully-fledged ambassador, unhindered by the delay in his ceremonial confirmation. The Gifford episode shows that, to a very significant extent, he manufactured this opportunity through the control and manipulation of correspondence, its context, and its transmission.

### Barton and Jacques Savary de Lancosme

The events surrounding Gifford's report produced documents which are telling not only because they give an insight into Barton's embassy, the various autonomies operating within it, and the wider tensions at play in the English commercial milieu at Istanbul, but also because they reveal Barton's propensity for creating a supportive and insulating group of intermediaries around him. In fact, this grew throughout his dealings in the Polish peace process, and proved important as he negotiated a controversy which threatened to undermine the English project in Istanbul. In 1589 Barton had clashed with his rival, the French ambassador Jacques Savary de Lancosme, who had been present at the Porte since 1586, and had clashed with Barton even in his time as a secretary.<sup>39</sup> In

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<sup>39</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 5–6.

1589, Giovanni Stefano Ferrari, a Spanish agent who had already unsuccessfully tried to appeal to the Porte for a Spanish-Ottoman truce in 1587, had returned with the same aim. This time Lancosme, who had refused to recognise the Protestant King Henri IV's claim to the French throne and had taken up with the French Catholic League without relinquishing his position in Istanbul, sided with Ferrari, leading his protégé François Savary De Brèves to disavow him and join with Barton against his former master. Due to Barton's influence, Ferrari was duly expelled (though he would attempt a truce yet again in 1592, and yet again be bested by Barton), and Lancosme was cut off from receiving his Ottoman ambassadorial stipend in 1590.<sup>40</sup> Barton's rival was now potentially even more troublesome – courting the Spanish, with no allegiance to his French master and thus unhindered by having to toe a French line, Lancosme now presented more of a rogue, unstable threat. Skilliter's portrait of Lancosme, in her typical style, runs as follows: 'haughty and ineffectual [...] conceited, a bigoted Catholic, a fervent Leaguer, and absurdly unsuccessful in all his diplomatic relationships at the Porte, he had declared himself Barton's enemy from the first.'<sup>41</sup> There can be no doubt that Lancosme was an extremely unwelcome influence in Istanbul from Barton's point of view, especially since disavowing Henri IV. Moreover, newly lacking a representative, the French king now trusted Barton as his agent – an extraordinary development that only enhanced his prestige as leader of a Protestant bloc in the sultan's court. Lancosme's presence went from inconvenient to intolerable, and so Barton's hand was forced. His response is indicative of the manner in which Barton approached obstacles, mobilising his network, exploiting the potency of word of mouth and the power of reputation in the mutable

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<sup>40</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 55; for a deeper study of Lancosme at the Porte, see Abel Rigault, 'Savary de Lancosme; un episode de la Ligue à Constantinople (1589–1593)', *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, 16 (1902), 522–78.

<sup>41</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 29.

Ottoman sphere, and, most importantly, exploiting the fragility inherent in the production and deployment of documentary authority in 1590s Istanbul.

Lancosme, though deprived of his stipend in 1590, lingered at the Porte despite French affairs now being in Barton's hands. His persistence paid off: in 1592, he received a payment of 4,000 *écus* (gold crowns) from the Catholic League's resident ambassador in Rome.<sup>42</sup> Newly empowered by this financial boon, Lancosme was once more becoming a threat to Protestant interests at the Porte. Barton decided to take action, and mobilised his network. De Brèves, loyal to Henri IV and no doubt sensing an opportunity to usurp Lancosme's vacant ambassadorial office, and Mariani, 'Lancosme's bitter antagonist', were recruited. In Skilliter's words, 'the triumvirate of these three young and unscrupulous adventurers was to prove itself a force against which the other European diplomats were powerless.'<sup>43</sup> Skilliter here recognises the sheer potency of Barton's network, though she perhaps underestimates its extent: the efficacy of these two men was undoubtedly forceful, and Barton was certainly stronger with their aid, but their wide, multilingual reach into Christian courts was more important than their individual characteristics, and this is why Barton continuously solicited them. Besides, for this episode Barton also enlisted Antoine Lasne (referred to by the English as Anthony Lane), a former French convert to Islam who had returned to Christianity, and who, after rising to a position of some power in Rome, acquired a seal belonging to a Giulio Antonio Santoro, the Cardinal Santa Severina. Barton wasted no time in befriending this man and using the seal to forge incriminating letters, written by himself in Italian, which were then addressed and sent to Lancosme.<sup>44</sup> Another of his contacts, whom he had cultivated as a close friend throughout his time in Istanbul, Cıǧalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha, at this time

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<sup>42</sup> Rigault, 'Savary de Lancosme', p. 553.

<sup>43</sup> Skilliter, *The Turkish Documents*, p. 30.

<sup>44</sup> Barton includes an account of this deed in his dispatch of the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1592, SP 97/2, ff. 179–84 (ff. 179–80).



*Kapudan Paşa* (Grand Admiral), was tipped off and duly ‘found’ the papers. In Barton’s own words:

I connterfeted a letter in Italyan from cardinall Santa Seuerina who hathe charge of all th affaires of the leuant for the pope; hauinge one of his seales by me. And diuerted the same unto Lancome. By wche I recommended the pops letters unto hime, as if indeed they had bin sent to hime from the pope. As I made Antony Lanye that caused the same to affirme. And that he had comison to deliver the same unto Lancomo. W<sup>ch</sup> deuice, was not only the greatest cause of is futuar troubles. But also matter agaysnt the Spa: Ambassador [...]<sup>45</sup>

Barton is here candidly – proudly, even – informing the English court of the implementation of one of his ‘deuises’ not long after Gifford was sent to root out similar practices. His unauthorised possession of the material goods which enabled forgery – in this case a seal, in the case of counterfeit money, the ‘sondrye stamps’ mentioned by his accusers – is frankly admitted here, in a clear sign that Barton knew he had the trust of the English court to behave in an underhand manner when incriminating an enemy of the English cause in Istanbul.<sup>46</sup> Andrew Gordon has written that

The dependence of early modern England upon habits of copying can hardly be overstated: government, commerce, and the law were all built upon manual processes of textual reproduction. For the textual practices of correspondence in particular, the traffic of information, the exercise of authority, the management of patronage relations, and the running of any large household all relied heavily on the activity of copying. The specter that haunts that dependency is forgery.<sup>47</sup>

Barton knew this as much as anybody. All of the facets Gordon mentions were exploited by Barton’s ‘diligent’ manipulations of epistolary culture to some extent during the early 1590s alone. It is perhaps no surprise that Barton’s closest correspondent Robert Cecil,

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<sup>45</sup> SP 97/2, ff. 179–80.

<sup>46</sup> It is possible that Barton was here operating with the knowledge of previous successes of using forgeries to discredit diplomats in Istanbul: this was a long established practice. Matheo Zane casually remarked in 1593 that forgery was ‘a step which these [European] representatives sometimes take’: *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 84. Perhaps the most visible precedent with ties to Barton’s own network was in 1571, when the influential statesman Sokollu Mehmed Paşa bested Giovanni Marigliani, Phillip II’s representative at the Porte, via a series of forgeries. See Emrah Safa Gürkan, ‘Espionage In The 16th Century Mediterranean: Secret Diplomacy, Mediterranean Go-Betweens And The Ottoman Habsburg Rivalry’ (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Georgetown, 2012), pp. 309–11.

<sup>47</sup> Andrew Gordon, ‘Material Fictions: Counterfeit Correspondence and the Culture of Copying in Early Modern England’, in *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain*, ed. by James Daybell and Andrew Gordon (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp. 85–109 (p. 86).

who oversaw Barton's most autonomous and controversial years, was himself a secretary who fully understood the importance of the copying cultures of the secretariat – and their limitations. The usefulness of having an agent in Istanbul able to take full advantage of these limitations was, at this point, seen to outweigh the potentially scandalous consequences. This is evident because shortly after receiving news of these illicit activities, another letter was addressed to Barton and signed by the queen, which opened:

Trusty and welbeloued we Grete yow well; although We hope that yow haue bene duly informed, how well we haue accepted yoor s[er]uices ther fro[m] tyme to tyme, as being done both faythfully and wisely, yea fortunatly as y<sup>r</sup> successes haue declared, yet we haue thought it good too your better Comfort to gyue yow e knolledg of our allowanc of your s[er]uices past by this our own l[ett]re; and y<sup>e</sup> rather for y<sup>t</sup> we understand, y<sup>t</sup> so[m]e both english and others enuyi[n]g your creditt in y<sup>t</sup> place, and your good success agaynst y<sup>e</sup> spaniards and fre[n]ch legars, haue gon about by falls report[es] to depraue your action[n]s and to diminish your creditt w<sup>th</sup> us, wherein they shall certainly be deceaued and shall receaue such reproof as is dew for y<sup>e</sup> same And therfor we requ[ir]e yow to co[n]tynew y<sup>r</sup> good werk w<sup>ch</sup> yow haue begun [...]<sup>48</sup>

As was the case in 1590, Barton again received an official communication which, whilst not mentioning the more underhand of his dealings, advises him to keep doing whatever he is doing without worrying about any negative rumour that may be generated – such as the accusations of Whettenhall and the others. Significantly, unlike the 1590 letter it does not linger on the specific characteristics which had made Barton successful, highlighting only that Barton had performed 'faythfully and wisely'. There is none of the focus on circumspect or restrained behaviour, no advice on how to write: this is a more advanced recognition of Barton's practice which leaves unsaid the unconventional but effective ways in which Barton was generating influence and power at the Porte.

Aside from the element of forgery in the Lancosme episode, it was also an event which was designed to create attention, attract an audience, and boost Barton's reputation by making a spectacle of his rival. The performativity of early modern diplomacy in this

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<sup>48</sup> SP 97/2, f. 183.

case was not limited to the art of the ceremony: here, Barton's props were the counterfeited letters, the cast his assembled network of contacts, and the audience the ready-made gossip chamber of Pera. An anonymous document which survives in the Cottonian manuscripts details the spectacle that unfolded as a result of Barton's forgery:

The moneth of October 1592: Monseir de Lancomye, Imbassador for Henrye late k. of France was deliu[er]ed prisoner to her ma<sup>ts</sup> Imbassador at Constantinople:/

The Englishe Lo: Imbassador at that tyme being Agent for the newe k. of France, did upon honste cause use dilligence at the Turkishe courte, and caused Monseir de Lancomy to be apprehended and Imprisoned as a Traytor to the k. his m<sup>r</sup>. and [e]xpecting the promisses against him he was by order of the great Turk deliu[er]ed to the discretion of the English Imbassador in this manner

Chous Basha being then uiza kinge caused Lancomye to be fetched from the Castle, wher he was in prison & so accompanied w<sup>th</sup> xx<sup>tie</sup> Chouses sent him to the Englishe Embassador his house at Rapamat, and w<sup>th</sup> whose Chouses sent this message w<sup>ch</sup> hereafter shall followe to be deliu[er]ed in the open street at the Embassador his gate

The forme of that message was thus:

The moste happye and great Emperour, greeteth thee well, and in regard of thy Iust allegac[i]ons against this uniust man, he honoreth thy renowned m[in]istrye by geuing him prisoner into thy handes: willing that the end of his life here or the beginning of his trauell towards the k: his m<sup>r</sup> should be in all poynts directed by thy discretion

And so bowing them selues to the grownde, They cryed lett o<sup>r</sup> Emperour lyue with increase of greatnes and the Englishe Queene in p[er]fect happynes:

The Embassador after lowe reu[er]ence deliu[er]ed them this Answer: uiz: Humble thanks to his hignes for so honoring my m<sup>re</sup> and gracing her s[er]uant, And maye it stand w<sup>th</sup> his Imperiall pleasure, my intent is forthw<sup>th</sup> to Imbarque this prisoner towards the k. of France and by l[ett]res, will aduise this singular fauor of his greatnes towards that kingdome: This ended, the Chouses tooke leaue, and the multitude of beholders Cryed god saue the Emperour and blesse the Embassador of England: The people being dep[ar]ted; The French Lancomy was Imediately imbarqued upon his uoyage. But this matter raised such rumor in these p[ar]ts, and from from thence so suddenly spred by l[ett]res to all [christ]ian Courts of the world, as yt is thought the glory thereof will be an euerlasting memorye of her ma<sup>tie</sup> and this realme/<sup>49</sup>

It is likely that many documents like this were created in the aftermath of Lancosme's delivery. This is in English; the Venetian dispatches contain a similarly detailed Italian report, described excitedly by Skilliter as 'a splendid account of these adventures'.<sup>50</sup> This

<sup>49</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XI, f. 127.

<sup>50</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, pp. 27–30.

document has a Turkish counterpart, reproduced and transcribed by Skilliter, described as the official document ‘which gave Lancosme’s life into Barton’s hands’.<sup>51</sup> It may be useless to speculate as to who exactly authored the above, but the rhetoric contained within it is perfect for Barton’s cause. The very fact that Lancosme was delivered to the care of Barton implies a great deal of authority, an authority which is demonstrative of the fact the Barton’s embassy had already upset the diplomatic power balance in Istanbul and the assumed parity between all European representatives in Istanbul. The height of the spectacle is heavily skewed here to English interests; the theatrical bowing of the *çavuş* (Ottoman soldier-messengers; ‘Chous’ above and often ‘Chaus’ or ‘Chiaus’ in English correspondence) and their cry of ‘lett o’r Emperor lyve with increase of greatnes and the Englishe Queene in p[er]fect happynes’ completes an image of Ottoman military submission; of Barton’s mastery of the Ottoman court. Although this account’s mere existence is proof enough that Barton’s actions in the Lancosme affair were designed to specifically create talk, rumour, and boost his reputation, the document itself goes to pains to demonstrate to its reader (presumably someone in power at the English court) that the power of the talk generated by this performance would create an ‘everlasting memorye’. The author even highlights the transition from ‘rumor’ into ‘lettres’: two of the essential channels which Barton exploited to his advantage during this period.

Another document in the same collection of Cottonian manuscripts suggests that such exploitation paid off. Barton knew that the public performance of these dramatic diplomatic encounters would lead to a spike in multilingual documentary circulation. Rumours had evidently done enough for Barton to receive a letter from the office of Henri IV himself:

monnseur Ambassador yo’ diligence and dexterytye hath in thend surmonnted the malis of S<sup>r</sup> lancosme. hauinge discouerd and brought to light his treasons. Suche thinges god will not suffer to lye hidden nor pase unpunished.

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<sup>51</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, pp. 171, 253.

Before that w<sup>ch</sup> you haue wrytten me, I haue p[ar]ticulerlye understoode by letters from the Signior of Beuoyes of all that hathe passed in this matter And that after all the formalityes wear p[er]formed ther. The grand Singior Refferd the punishment to my selfe, And apoynted the sayd Lancosmo to be sent prisoner unto me by waye of the black sea./

[...]

You may beleue, that I hold in estimation that w<sup>ch</sup> hath bin don of yor past to cutt hime from his meane[s] w<sup>ch</sup> I thanke you for, Ashewringe you, that I will not suffer the somme yor good offices for me, to be unknowen to the queen the suffraing madamm my good sister to thend that you maye haue so muche the more comendations, and thanks, from her on my behalfe. The w<sup>ch</sup> yor good affection to my affares I may requyt in some suche cause

[...]

The w<sup>ch</sup> shall giue me cause always to loue you <sup>52</sup>

That these two extant documents generated by the climax of Barton's rivalry with Lancosme exist as copies suggests the existence of further copies, now lost, which would have circulated around the Eastern Mediterranean and further, to European courts. The choice of language in this letter closely mirrors some of Elizabeth's own priorities when it came to her 1590 instructions to Barton. Barton's industry is praised, but what is really foregrounded in the above is his subtlety and skill: the circumspect, restrained ambassadorial behaviour we have already seen the English court praise. Henri chooses to contrast Barton directly with Lancosme in terms of their inherent vices and virtues, contrasting 'diligence and dexterity' with 'malice'; Barton's skill has uncovered dark Catholic treasons, his dexterity ensuring they were 'brought to light' – perhaps even brought into 'the sight of the world', to borrow the phrase of another monarch writing to Barton. But much more important than the king's rhetorical flourishes are the promises of further action, and a firm reassurance that Barton's good work over a long period of time has not gone unnoticed: the 'sum of yor good offices' will be not only remembered but relayed directly to Elizabeth.

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<sup>52</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XI, f. 130.

## Performative Petitioning

Barton's theatricality when it came to making private diplomatic disputes public was not limited to his European rivals. Nor, noticeably, was the use of material official documentation as a prop. On the eve of his long-delayed ceremonial confirmation as ambassador, Barton became embroiled in another potentially disastrous scandal. Ferhād Paşa, an influential Ottoman statesman who was at this point a provincial governor or *kaymakam*, accused Barton's barber/surgeon, John Field, of conspiring to break prisoners out of the tower at Galata.<sup>53</sup> Matheo Zane, the Venetian representative to the Porte, related the fallout of this episode:

The Sultan is in a furious rage on account of the escape of the prisoners from the Tower of the Black Sea. The governor of the Castle has been put to death, and a Sanjakate offered to any one who gives information on the subject. A general Inquisition has been ordered on all Perottes and Franks, and as is usual with the Turks it will be badly arranged and highly dangerous.

The English Ambassador being questioned by the Grand Vizir on this subject was the object of violent threatening language; so much that his Dragoman fled in terror lest he should be arrested; and the Ambassador himself on his departure felt the same alarm and appealed to the Sultan. With the help of a negro, a familiar of his Majesty, the Ambassador handed in his petition at the kiosk in person, from a boat, a thing which no one ever remembers to have been done by a public personage before. The Ambassador received a favourable answer [...]<sup>54</sup>

Zane's summary of events is concise; even so, it captures the unprecedented nature of Barton's public performance to the sultan. In fact, this seemingly minor act of sailing out to sea in order to deliver his petition more directly was impudent, transgressive, and showed a confidence in his good reputation to go over the heads of even the most senior Ottoman statesmen and appeal to the sultan himself via a back door, ignoring the strict ceremonial prescriptions which usually governed audiences. Like the climax of the Lancosme affair, this was by design an attention-grabbing scene; the document, in this case Barton's petition or *arz*, was also a crucial part of the spectacle. Unsurprisingly, an

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<sup>53</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 77–78.

<sup>54</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 104.

account of this episode, written by Richard Wrag, was published in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*:

At the departure of Sinan Bassa the chiefe Vizir, and our ambassadors great friend toward the warres of Hungarie there was another Bassa appointed in his place, a churlish and harsh natured man, who upon occasion of certain Genouezes, escaping out of the castles standing toward the Euxine Sea, nowe called the blacke Sea, there imprisoned, apprehended and threatened to execute one of our Englishmen called Iohn Field, for that hee was taken thereabouts, and knowen not many days before to haue brought a letter to one of them: upon the solliciting of whose liberties there fell a iarre betweene the Bassa being now chiefe Vizir) and our ambassador, and in choler he gaue her maiesties ambassador such words, as without sustaining some great indignitie hee could not put up. Whereupon after the arriuall of the Present, he made an Arz, that is a bill of Complaint to the grand Signior against him, the maner in exhibiting whereof is thus performed.

The Plaintifes expect the grand Signiors going abroad from his pallace, wither to Santa Sophia or to his church by the sea side, whither, with a Perma (that is one of their usual whirries) they approach within some two or three score yards, where the plaintife standeth up, and holdeth his petition ouer his forehead in sight of the grand Signior (for his church is open to the Sea side) the rest sitting still in the boat, who appointeth one of his Dwarfes to receiue them, and to bring them to him. A Dwarfes, one of the Ambassadors fauorites, so soone as he was discerned, beckned him to the shore side, tooke his Arz, and with speed caried it to the grand Signior. Now the effect of it was this; that except his hignesse would redresse this so great an indignitie, which the Vizir his slaue had offered him and her maiestie in his person, he was purposed to detaine the Present untill such time as he might by letters ouer-land from her maiestie bee certified, whither she would put up so great an iniurie as it was. Whereupon he presently returned answeare, requesting the ambassador within an houre after to goe to the Douan of the Vizir, unto whom himselfe of his charge would send a gowne of cloth of gold, and commaund him publicly to put it upon him, and with kind entertainment to embrace him in signe of reconciliation. Whereupon our ambassador returning home, tooke his horse, accompanied with his men, and came to the Vizirs court, where, according to the grand Signiors command, he with all shew of kindnesse embraced the ambassador, and with curteous speeches reconciled himself, and with his own hands put the gowne of cloth of gold upon his backe. Which done, hee with his attendants returned home, to the no small admiration of all Christians that heard of it, especially of the French and Venetian ambassadors, who neuer in the like case against the second person of the Turkish Empire durst haue attempted so bold an enterprise with hope of so friendly audience, and with so speedie redresse.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Richard Wrag, 'A description of a Voiage to Constantinople and Syria , begun the 21. of March 1593. and ended the 9. of August, 1595. wherein is shewed the order of delivering the second Present by Master Edward Barton her majesties Ambassador, which was sent from her Maiestie to Sultan Murad Can, Emperour of Turkie.', in Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, pp. 303–11 (pp. 304–05). Wrag, an English traveller, travelled to Istanbul on the *Ascension*, the ship which carried the presents to confirm Barton's embassy, and wrote lengthy and detailed descriptions of his journey and surroundings.

Wrag's account fleshes out the details missed by Zane, confirming that this was a flashpoint which incorporates all of the features of Barton's *modus operandi* we have seen throughout the accounts in this chapter. Firstly, and crucially, Wrag mentions that Barton held his petition to his head as a symbolic gesture. This was not a commonly used diplomatic gesture: Barton was improvising, playing on associations here with kneeling as an act of submission – the forehead touching the ground, particularly common at royal audiences. The document, when presented thus, takes on a new significance, foregrounded whilst still displaying deference. That Barton felt able to improvise in this way, bold enough to row to the sultan's back door and perform the plaintiff role, is a good indication of the risks he was willing to take in the name of firmly establishing himself and the English embassy more widely. Both Wrag and Zane also detail the fact that Barton was able to gain such intimate access to the sultan through a fringe member of the royal harem – one of his 'favorites': though they disagree on whether this was a eunuch (Zane's 'negro') or a 'dwarf'. Barton's diverse network even incorporated characters such as these, embedded at the Porte on a different level to the diplomatic ceremonial he was able to access himself, allowing him to exert influence at another, deeper level. Barton's reward for his success here were a humbling, forced apology from Ferhād and the lavish ceremony described by Wrag, by the end of whose account one is hardly surprised to read that Barton's actions attracted the 'no small admiration of all Christians that heard of it'. Not seen, but heard: again a hint suggesting the power of word of mouth after such a spectacle had been performed. Both Zane and Wrag express surprise in their accounts at the sheer audacity of Barton's clash with the 'second person of the Turkish Empire'; Barton, by this point in 1593, was clearly operating with an almost unfettered autonomy, having twice been encouraged by the queen despite instances of disobedience and



forgery, making use of his command of both the words and writing which governed the majority of his transactions as well as an ability to manipulate a wide-reaching network.

These events show how, at crucial points, Barton successfully combined his material control of epistolary agency with mastery over the agents who could deliver, forge and plant them. They are the most salient examples of this combination during the early 1590s, and Barton's day-to-day dealings certainly involved similar methods, though perhaps to slightly lesser extents. When not forced to counterfeit, manipulate or perform in a dramatic fashion, Barton's preferred tactics were less extreme. His genial hosting of the English visitors to the embassy house enabled him to curate a strong group of literate and internationally mobile men able to vouch for him back in England. Some of the writings produced by this group – such as those of John Sanderson and Fynes Moryson – have been deemed significant enough to be edited and published as scholarly works or as literature in their own right. The less visible writing happening in the embassy in the 1590s, though, was probably much more important to Barton's constant mission of creating and renewing his reputation. This is the writing produced by men such as Wilcocks, Gifford, and even some of the Company's merchants. William Aldrich, like Gifford, was one of Barton's favoured men: in 1593, he was sufficiently trusted to deliver a letter from Murad III to Elizabeth.<sup>56</sup> He wrote in Barton's favour more than once, and this constant flow of good news to the English court was instrumental in upholding his reputation at such a distance, particularly since he was unable to present himself in England. Alison Games has recognised the importance of the combination of early modern English travellers' – a category in which she includes ambassadors – literary tendencies with their inclinations to assemble large entourages:

Writing gave these men the power to make permanent their own version of their rule, but it also provided them with an outlet for their occasional loneliness.

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<sup>56</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 146. Aldrich returned to Istanbul in 1596, when he was involved in a brawl with John Sanderson. See *The Travels of John Sanderson*, 'Introduction', pp. xvii–xviii.

Within these small worlds, the men at the top were especially isolated, unsure whom to trust and reluctant to confide in underlings. Governors and consuls sought to relieve their solitude in part through the entourages they brought with them. They were often able to appoint an entirely new staff to accompany them, as Thomas Glover did when he was appointed as the new Levant Company ambassador.<sup>57</sup>

Games highlights loneliness as the cause for both an entourage and a need to constantly write, whether it was reportage, personal correspondence or even, in the case of the infamous Sherley brothers, specially commissioned fiction designed to glorify their actions abroad.<sup>58</sup> There is no doubt that Barton repeatedly expressed his unhappiness at his continued presence in Istanbul. The existence of only fragmentary elements of his personal correspondence means any diagnosis of loneliness would be speculative. Yet Games' recognition of these two characteristics of early modern Englishmen's experiences abroad shows how the entourage and the constant manufacturing of epistolary and literary agency worked in tandem to secure status in spheres which were outside of the networks of patronage and prestige found in their home country.

Tellingly, by the end of this period, Barton did not have to rely on his own letters to make a case for his efficacy in Istanbul. Another document from the Cottonian manuscripts makes a concise case for Barton's continued presence at the Porte, almost mechanically passing through the points that Barton made less strongly in his own correspondence. It does not carry the name of an author, but documents such as this one were being fashioned by the English entourage Barton created around himself and carried to England frequently; letters like this were sent with agents like Aldrich and Wilcocks:

The Commodities growne, and w<sup>ch</sup> hereafter maie growe by residency of her ma<sup>ts</sup> Imbassador at Constantinople w<sup>th</sup> the discommodities by his non residency uiz.

The Spanishe King about 3 yeares past, sent Don Marco of Naples towards Contantinople w<sup>th</sup> pretence to make league w<sup>th</sup> the Turke and to haue the sam. Marco a resident Imbassador at that Courte, he arryued at Ragonsa and from

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<sup>57</sup> Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion 1560–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 172.

<sup>58</sup> Games, *Web of Empire*, p. 171.

thence sent to the uiza Kinge of Turkye, who was called Ferhat Bassa p[re]ferring him for a p[re]sent xx thousand Chakens of gould so he would be a meane to the great Turke for his acceptance at that courte, And for better abling the uiza:king to compassse this worke, he also p[ro]mised a sworde enieweled esteemed worthe xxv thousand Crownes to be p[re]sented to the great Turke as sente from the Spanishe kinge //

The uiza kinge followed the suyte effectually, But before it was finished, the English Lo: Imbassador traueled w<sup>th</sup> the great Turke Soultana against those p[ro]posed and w<sup>th</sup> expence of Two thousand peeces of gould, to many ministers overthrowe those large Cofers w<sup>th</sup>stoode the force of that uiza kinge, and caused Don Marco hastely to be Commanded home to his m<sup>er</sup> his great dishonor and her ma<sup>ts</sup> uniu[er]sall fame.

The spanishe confederato<sup>ns</sup> seeing such large Ciuility in her ma<sup>tie</sup> at the Turkyshe court, Do not only, Enuye it, but also so feare it, and therfore do seeke, by secret ministers and larger Imployments of money to disgrace her highnes Imbassador who amongst the spanishe pack is accompted the onlye occasioner of her ma<sup>ts</sup> so great glorye, lately reuised in those and sundry other p[ar]ts of the worlde. But her ma<sup>ts</sup> s[er]uant by his Industrie p[re]uenting their practises, kepeth them in a contynuall Inresoluc[i]on about sundry their intents p[re]iudiciall to the happines of England; as thus: If they could disgrace her ma<sup>ts</sup> s[er]uant and ingraft at that court a spanishe Imbassador, Then, where as nowe, they mainteyne seu[er]all fortes by sea and land in the Leuant Straights. [...]

But rather shall stand in Contynuall doubttes, that her highnes s[er]uant will p[ro]cure the Turke to send out some Army of Gallies to disturbe them. By w<sup>ch</sup> meenes they remayne troubled, unresolved and Imp[er]fect in many of their euill deuises against the Englishe quietnes

[...]But once I knowe there is no light so directly leading to a p[er]fect League as this. uiz. The Imbassador shall p[ro]cure the Turke to send C galleyes for Argele in Barberye uoyssed to go upon the Coaste of Spayne:[...]

Nowe if this Course maye seeme unpleasant, for that some will Iudge yt to sauour of reusing Infidelitys againste Christianity, To suche, I answer, That it is so farr frome hurt of Christendome, as I rest half assured, that ther is no waye so likely to acquyet the troubled p[ar]ts thereof as this. The watchfull delayes, That will bee betweene these two flectes, wilbe muche more then the hurt that maye happen to eyther p[ar]te, And the whole Circomstance, depending upon this worke, were rightly Considered. It can be taken but for a petty dannger whose effects, ~~whose effects~~ shall breed p[er]fect quietnes to England; and a principall meanes of Amitye and Concord in many other disturbed p[ar]tes of Christendome. /

Nowe because yt maye be obiected, That this ouermuch familiarity and forcible effectac[i]ons w<sup>th</sup> the Turke wilbe taken in euill opinion amonge all other [christ]ian Command<sup>[ers]</sup> And p[er]haps by some yt maie be brought w<sup>th</sup>in the Compas of Conscience, as not fitting w<sup>th</sup> [christ]ian profession, to suche obiections I laye open, for my Answer the examples of all other [christ]ian princes of w<sup>ch</sup> the moste p[ar]te haue league w<sup>th</sup> the Turke alredy, and by all indeauour they seeke to mainteyne the same. The rest w<sup>ch</sup> haue not do instantly labour, by lawefull and unlawefull meanes to possesse yt. The k. of spayne respecteth not speach of Prince, nor bond of Conscience, but p[er]seuereth in this & all other

causes as ~~that~~ best fitteth his affayres eyther to the good of his owne realme or to the hurt and annoyance of his enemyes: And I thinke, that in causes concerning the safety and insafetye of a kingdome, strict poynts of Conscience haue no authority. I leaue all the p[ro]misses to be considered, by richer understandings then my owne. /.<sup>59</sup>

This letter survives as a copy attached to, and written in the same hand as, the account of Lancosme's capture above: it is part of a package of favourable reports on Barton sent back to England. Written in the interested tone of a well-wisher – a traveller in Istanbul, perhaps – a patriotic Englishman who cannot help but notice the sheer efficiency of his ambassador, this rhetorically watertight appraisal makes an irresistible argument. Adopting the familiar commercial register of commodities and discommodities, its content is anything but mercantile. It plays heavily upon the Spanish threat and Christian interest and suggests Barton is at the centre of diplomacy on a global scale. It also suggests that Barton sits at the centre of a grand English plan for pushing the Ottomans into action against Spain and justifying the consequences. It is a thorough account, including information presented as common knowledge at the Porte but which, in reality, shows that the writer is privy to sensitive information only Barton would have had access to: detailed financial and military figures. In this way, it is similar to many of Barton's own arguments for his efficacy during this period, combining these specifics with invocations of global visibility and high-stakes diplomacy. The progression of its argument is a telling indication of wider English attitudes towards Anglo-Ottoman cooperation. It starts with a specific example of Barton's efficacy – his career is continually related as a series of incidents which are navigated shrewdly and effectively throughout his office – before anticipating and addressing some of the wider ideological concerns about any Anglo-Ottoman alliance which strayed into a non-commercial diplomatic realm. In progressing like this, this letter reveals not only the position Barton and those close to him adopted

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<sup>59</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XI, f. 126.

when arguing for their importance, but also what a favourable version of an Anglo-Ottoman alliance looks like. The language used throughout signals that Istanbul has become a centre for Christian monarchs to assert influence by proxy. According to this letter, European ambassadors were not in residence at the court, they were ‘ingrafted’ – the figurative use of which, common in the period, is explained by the *OED* as ‘To implant (virtues, dispositions, sentiments) in the mind; to incorporate (a thing) into a previously existing system or unity, (an alien) into a race or community; and the like’.<sup>60</sup> Two of the central, and most remarkable, facets of Barton’s success at the Porte – the closeness afforded to him by way of his speaking Turkish, and his Protestantism, are elided here. This is because the author’s stated aim is to make sure that the idea of the embassy falls within the ‘Compas of Conscience’, suitable for the ‘Christian profession’. A less controversial angle is preferred – England stands to miss out, the author, claims, if it does not deal with the Ottomans. After all, ‘all other [christ]ian princes of w<sup>ch</sup> the moste p[ar]te haue league w<sup>th</sup> the Turke alredy, and by all indeauour they seeke to mainteyne the same. The rest w<sup>ch</sup> have not do instantly labour, by lawefull and unlawefull meanes to possesse yt’. A sense of opportunity was not limited to the commercial side of English interests in the Levant. This letter prioritises an image of Istanbul as an important centre of global diplomacy which England risks exclusion from if it does not support Barton’s embassy. The overall effect constitutes a telling reconfiguration of the argument for Barton’s embassy which removes any potential controversy and presents the cross-cultural city of Istanbul as a place of opportunity for English Christian interests without any of the inconvenient irregularities of the reality of Barton’s dealings in Istanbul. Documents like this and the others in this chapter are the underpinnings of Barton’s unprecedented authority at the Porte. Alongside his more underhand and dramatic

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<sup>60</sup> *OED*, ‘Ingraft, verb 2. A’.

dealings, this constant manufacturing of flattering news from a wide range of sources continually refreshed the prestige and political agency of the English embassy.

This chapter has surveyed some informative instances of Barton's conduct in the years that followed Harborne's departure. Of course, the incidents detailed above form only a tiny fraction of the dealings of Barton and the embassy more widely. But they all point towards a set of methods and preoccupations which clearly grow out of the model established by Harborne and which rely on the increasing autonomy Barton was granted by the English court. Also evident is that even by 1593, he had accrued a wealth of multilingual documentary fortifications of his role: letters signed by Queen Elizabeth and Henri IV, Gifford's thorough report, dramatic and descriptive Venetian dispatches, Wrag's account which would eventually be published, and the anonymous arguments for his efficacy which survive in the Cottonian manuscripts. These documents, which also suggest an array of similar documents which are no longer extant, worked together to cement Barton's place at the top of the diplomatic hierarchy of Istanbul. Their creation and transmission were dependent on the network he had set about building at the embassy headquarters on Harborne's departure. The next chapter takes an overlapping but much less visible aspect of Barton's career – faith and religious networks – in order to ascertain to what extent Barton and those around him saw his mission as ideologically driven. In the multi-religious culture of Ottoman Istanbul Barton was widely recognised as the 'Lutheran' ambassador, but what part did his own faith and the faith of others play in his political and commercial dealings?

## Chapter Three

### Barton's Faith Networks, 1593–96

The previous chapters have shown how, in the early years of Barton's office, he adopted and remodelled existing templates of ambassadorial conduct, particularly through the wide-ranging epistolary networks which enabled him to accrue an unprecedented degree of autonomy in Istanbul. Between Company and Crown, Barton had carved out a solid base of influence at the Porte. This chapter studies Barton as he operated at the centre of a less archivally visible network: one representing various and intermeshing religious interests in Istanbul. Remarkably, Barton's correspondence includes contact with all of the major religious leaders there as well as his more customary political connections, encompassing Muslims, Orthodox Christians, and Jews. Barton saw his correspondence with these varied groups as integral to the maintenance of his influence; moreover, his role as a facilitator of Christian, rather than merely English, interests was also an important factor in the justification of his continued presence as ambassador. It had certainly been a key part of Harborne's remit. The ideologically potent idea of the English ambassador as a missionary at the Ottoman court offered some sort of counter-balance to the anxious preoccupation with 'Turning Turk' back in England.<sup>1</sup> That England should have an explicitly religious presence at the Porte was a particularly tempting argument for

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<sup>1</sup> Aside from the ambassadors' own writings about their Christian influence in Istanbul, the idea of any travelling Englishmen, particularly merchants, acting as missionaries gained great traction during this period of increasing global mobility. James Shapiro writes that 'by the early seventeenth century, merchants trading in foreign ports were even encouraged to carry with them pocket-sized guides for converting non-Christians': James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 146. For a thorough consideration of the trope of 'turning Turk', see Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005).

the English court to make for the maintenance of the embassy there, in both Harborne and Barton's cases.

This chapter explores Barton's faith networks in order to establish the religious dynamic of his embassy. In particular, it looks at Barton's feud with the influential Sephardi Jewish agent Solomon Ben Ya'esh (also known as Solomon Abanaes, Alvaro Mendez, and, to the English, simply Don Solomon), the terms of which were mainly political and diplomatic but during which the evocation of religion is an unmissable sign that Barton considered his religious clout as crucial to the success of his embassy.<sup>2</sup> The chapter then turns to formerly unstudied material published after Barton's death, pamphlets by the renowned Hebraist Hugh Broughton, who used Barton as a conduit and legitimising religious presence through which he could influence the most eminent rabbi in Istanbul, and in turn perhaps secure the conversion of Ottoman subjects – even the sultan himself – to Christianity. From these documentary traces emerges a sense of the centrality of religion to Anglo-Ottoman engagement in the 1590s. Shared faith, common religious ground, and the suggestion of the possibility of the conversion of the Ottoman populace were all part of the language in which this relationship was discussed. As a result, the resonances of Barton's presence in Istanbul beyond the political and diplomatic become clearer.

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<sup>2</sup> Ben Ya'esh, the name chosen upon Mendes' public return to Judaism and the one given by D. Gershon Lewental in 'Ben Ya'esh (also Ibn Ya'ish or Abenæs), Solomon', *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman A. Stillman (Leiden: Brill, 2010) is preferred here, though the name varies widely across differing sources. English sources vary between Alvaro Mendes or Mendez, Solomon Abenæs, Don Solomon or similar; the Arabicisation of his name produces Ibn Ya'Ish. Barton, in August 1592, refers to him as 'Aben-Rioli' (see Wernham, *L&A*, IV, p. 397).



## Sixteenth-Century Faith Communities in Istanbul

In contrast to Harborne, Barton's correspondence is conspicuously devoid of much religious commentary. The most telling clue to any specific devotional allegiance comes from a letter sent from Thomas Humphrey to Barton in August 1591.<sup>3</sup> Written from St Katherine's dock, where Barton owned a tenement and where his siblings lived, Humphrey enclosed a copy of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the seminal Calvinist text, in a letter that began with a prayer: 'The swete & euerlastynge peace of god thorowe Christe Iesus o<sup>r</sup> only Lorde And Sauyor, Rest upon you nowe & euer Right worshipfull & my most derely beloued frende m<sup>r</sup> edward Barton Amen'.<sup>4</sup> This glimpse of Barton's personal devotion comes from one of the few fragments of what might be described as 'personal' rather than 'business', correspondence. It confirms the fact that Barton was Calvinist, and corresponds with reports, recorded in the Venetian *relazioni*, that Barton attempted to install a Calvinist preacher from Geneva at one of his local catholic churches in Pera, and that he had similarly sent to Geneva for preachers for other churches in Istanbul and on Chios.<sup>5</sup> The master of his house is also recorded as a 'preas[t]e' – presumably Calvinist – in 1592.<sup>6</sup> He was a religious minority in this European quarter of Istanbul: estimates from sources including a 1580 papal legate put the number of Protestants in the city at around 150, in contrast to the almost 4000-strong

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<sup>3</sup> SP 105/109, f. 3. Sent from a friend of Barton, Thomas Humphreys, this letter contains the only mention of Barton's elder brother William, who was 'leading a shameful life and wasting the Queen's bounty which Barton so liberally shared with him', and the only mention of his sister Mary Lough contained in his correspondence.

<sup>4</sup> SP 105/109, f. 3.

<sup>5</sup> See *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. by Eugenio Albèri, 15 vols (Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1839–62), IX, iii.3 (1855), p. 405: 'Onde usano di permettere nei loro stati, sino ai luterani, il libero esercizio di qualsivoglia religione senza timore di essere contaminati; e l'ambasciatore d'Inghilterra ultimamente si e attentato di dimandare una chiesa cattolica di Pera per introddurvi un predicatore calvinista, che esso dice di chiamare da Ginevra.'; for the churches in Istanbul and Chios, see Podea, 'A Contribution to the Study of Queen Elizabeth's Eastern Policy', p. 458.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter One of this thesis.

Latin Rite Christian community.<sup>7</sup> Barton's Calvinism is an important context for his wider engagements with the varied faith communities in Istanbul. Indeed, part of the tradition that Harborne had established involved profiting from the perceived closeness between his English Protestantism and his Muslim superiors at the Porte, based on a shared anti-Catholic agenda; Harborne, too, like many prominent English merchants, was Calvinist.<sup>8</sup> This is particularly pertinent given the emphasis Calvinist teachings placed on the labour involved in conversion – the labour of conversing and being understood over empty ceremonial conversion rituals. As Matthew Dimmock has surmised in his discussion of early modern conversion practices, for Calvinists and the targets of their conversion, 'coming to know the truth required work'.<sup>9</sup> A demonstrable investment in trying to implant Calvinist preachers into the city, close attention to the scripture as implied by his receipt of Calvin's *Institutes*, and a close correspondence with all of the major faith leaders in Istanbul suggests that Barton's career offered him an opportunity for evangelism. This willingness to engage, however, created an uneasy balance for agents like Barton who had to be careful not to be seen to become too close to other faiths, and specifically to Islam, not least because of the fears around apostasy and 'Turning Turk'. This is often reflected in his correspondence. As early as 1588, he is restating his position – that the Anglo-Ottoman alliance functions so well 'as especially for that [neither] her Majestye nor hers worshippe idols as other Christians which brings them into great contempte to him [the sultan] & his' whilst simultaneously condemning the Ottomans, claiming that they only pursue exchanges 'if they perceauē it will yeald them anie small lucre w<sup>ch</sup> they onlelie honnor and worshippe not esteminge howe onhonestlye

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<sup>7</sup> Eric Dursteler, 'Education and Identity in Constantinople's Latin Rite community, c. 1600', *Renaissance Studies*, 18.2 (2004), 287–303 (p. 289).

<sup>8</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 26, n.2.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Dimmock, 'Converting and Not Converting "Strangers" in Early Modern London', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 17 (2013), 457–78 (p. 467).

or ongodlye soever they come by it', and that 'doing otherwise offendeth against [the sultan's] deuilish prophet Mahumet's commandment.'<sup>10</sup> Barton would straddle this balancing act throughout his career, tapping into common Christian stereotypes of Muslims whilst also defending his interactions and closeness with them. And one of the key tools he had to construct this defense was the tradition of religious exchange which characterized political and diplomatic life in Istanbul, which allowed him to generate influence of a slightly different kind. This environment gave him the opportunity not only to become embedded within Muslim religious communities during his office, but also to facilitate connections with the Jewish and Orthodox communities which would shape the reception of his actions in profound ways.

Such an environment was unique. The protection of the *dhimmi* (literally 'protected persons', applicable to non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire) through the millet system, which allowed the Christian and Jewish communities in Ottoman domains to exercise a degree of autonomy and self-government, gave rise to an atmosphere of religious toleration in Istanbul which was often commented on by English travellers in the city.<sup>11</sup> The Eastern Orthodox and Jewish communities were given protection which allowed their religious leaders – patriarchs and rabbis – to rise to positions of considerable influence. In addition, some Jewish agents were able to turn the extent of their persecution in Europe to an advantage, the Jewish diaspora becoming the source of multilingual, multifaceted networks of influence. The most prominent Jewish agents in Istanbul during the sixteenth century enjoyed connections which stretched throughout Europe and in some cases into royal courts. The Ottoman hierarchy in particular seemed to understand

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<sup>10</sup> SP 97/1, ff. 140, 132.

<sup>11</sup> See Sanderson's writing below; it should also be noted that religious persecution still abounded and was inherent in Ottoman law – for example the law of *devshirme*, a 'blood tax', in which non-Muslim subjects were forcibly recruited into the Ottoman slave class; for details on this, and more generally on the make-up of Ottoman society, see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 140–41.

the value of these networks, promoting Joseph Nasi and Solomon Ben Ya'esh to knighthoods and dukedoms. As part of his ongoing quest for influence and to promote English interests, Barton knew how important it was to embed himself within the Muslim faith networks in Istanbul; he acted to secure this quickly and effectively. But it can also not be overstated how important his interactions with the Jewish and Orthodox communities in Istanbul were: they provided an opportunity for Barton to represent himself as striving for the benefit of the whole of Christendom, whilst also working towards the eventual conversion of the whole populace of the Ottoman Empire. By his death, Barton could count the highest religious authorities in Istanbul amongst his close personal correspondents and friends.

Barton had wasted no time in integrating himself in the most important faith community in Istanbul. By 1592, he had the ear of the highest-ranking, most influential religious leader in the city. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March that year, Venetian ambassador to the Porte Matheo Zane reported that:

I have been to visit the Mufti, who is held in high consideration and with whom the Sultan discusses all the more important questions. The English Ambassador is in such close relations with the Mufti that he seems to have absorbed many of the Ambassador's ideas and thoughts.<sup>12</sup>

The Grand Mufti, also titled the *Shaykh al-Islām* and thus the most senior Muslim cleric in the Islamic world, acted as the chief religious advisor to the sultan, and also ruled on legal matters. For Barton to enjoy such considerable influence before he had even been ceremonially confirmed as ambassador suggests he made gaining it his priority: given the strict ceremonial conventions which governed audiences with the sultan, proximity to one of his top advisors was the next best thing. Barton had known exactly how powerful the Mufti was since the early days of his career, writing in 1590 that *the Shaykh al Islām* was 'elected by the gran sig<sup>f</sup>: for the ancienst, and of the best lyfe, amongst all the cheife

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<sup>12</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 19.

doctors of their lawe; w<sup>ch</sup> sayed Mufty is of such authority thatt none, no nott the gran sig<sup>r</sup>: will gainsay his sentence'.<sup>13</sup> The potential religious implications of a practising Calvinist having the ear of the highest religious authority hardly need explaining. That the Venetian agent could ascertain the extent to which Barton had influenced the mufti – Zane suggests the mufti was ‘absorbing’ and thus repeating Barton’s ‘ideas and thoughts’ – also suggests that Barton’s religious enmeshment here was to some extent a public, performative demonstration of the shared iconoclastic tendency which underpinned the Anglo-Ottoman understanding. One of John Sanderson’s accounts, which was later published in Samuel Purchas’ *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625), also details Barton’s embeddedness within the Ottoman hierarchy, with particular reference to religion:

Many worthy things passed in this my long abode at *Constantinople*. Amongst other I note the extraordinarie esteeme was had of the Ambassadour afore named, with them all in generall, both *Christians, Turkes, and Iewes*. By meanes chiefly of the *Turkes* Mothers fauour, and some money: hee made and displaced both Princes and Patriarches, befriended Vice-royes, and preferred the suites of *Cadies* who are their chiefe Priests and spirituall Iustices. The *Hoggie*, a very comely, graue and wise *Turke*, who was *Sultan Mahomets* Schoole-master, (and I may well say Counseller) was a very true friend, and an assister of Master *Barton*, in all his businesse with the *Grand Signior*, and had a Catholike *Roman Christian* Corrupter about him, a Consull, by name *Paulo Mariani* [...]<sup>14</sup>

Sanderson’s opening words speak to an atmosphere in Istanbul of remarkable religious interchange, not without conflict, but which characterised the atmosphere of the city. It is worth noting that this is the second of Sanderson’s accounts of Istanbul to appear in the *Pilgrimes*, this one dated to the mid 1590s: he is emphasising that this ‘extraordinarie esteeme’ had been brought about by Barton, in contrast to earlier situations. Worthy of note too is that the ‘Christians, Turkes, and Jewes’, one of whom – the ‘Hoggie’ Hoca

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<sup>13</sup> SP 97/2, f. 60.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Sundrie the personall Uoyages performed by IOHN SANDERSON of London, Merchant, begun in October 1584. Ended in October 1602. With an historicall Description of *Constantinople*.’, in Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, pp. 1614–40 (pp. 1620–21).

Sadeddin Efendi, tutor to Murad III – was ‘a very comely, grave and wise Turke [...] a very true friend, and an assister of Master Barton’, are joined by a ‘Catholike Roman Christian Corrupter’. Although his own prejudices remained, the traditional religious divisions of Christendom were no longer relevant, Sanderson suggests, in the atmosphere of religious and social pliability that characterised late sixteenth-century Istanbul. There is also a sense of Barton’s unique efficacy through versatility – that ‘hee made and displaced both Princes and Patriarches, befriended Viceroyes, and preferred the suites of Cadies who are their chiefe Priests and spirituall Justices’. In the theocratic state which Sanderson outlines, Barton’s authority seems even more impressive; Sanderson juxtaposes the political and the religious, not only giving a sense of the workings of the Ottoman system but also arguing that the ‘extraordinarie’ nature of the ‘esteeme’ Barton was held in was due to his ability to straddle the political/religious boundary as well as religious boundaries themselves. Sanderson goes on to discuss one of Barton’s more remarkable religious connections, the Orthodox patriarch Meletios Pigas, Patriarch of Alexandria:

This holy Patriarke *Padre Melete*, was a very comely blacke long bearded man. He neuer did eate any sort of flesh in all his life time. He often frequented, and was very inward with our Ambassadour Master *Edward Barton*; I haue heard him reason often, and seene him pray one time, in the Ambassadors chamber together with us: he spake in Greeke, which Master Barton did little understand; my selfe nothing at all except *Theos*, &c. When he hath eaten with the Ambassador, our Table was euer furnished with the best fish, and not the weakest Wine [...] This man was very meeke in the shew of his behaiour towards all sorts and manner of men, which amongst his *Greekes* made him to be much respected and beloued. Yet did he aspire and got by Master *Bartons* meanes and his money, to be Patriarke of *Constantinople*, which soone he was weary of. The *Turkes* Ministers did so much and extraordinarily exact upon him, so that before his death hee resigned it [...] <sup>15</sup>

This appraisal of Pigas is informative. It starts with a more complete physical description of Pigas than was ever given about Barton by anyone, including Sanderson himself.

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<sup>15</sup> Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, p. 1639.

Lingering on Pigas' beard, his manner, his praying and dining habits, it is an unambiguously positive portrait of a religious aesthete. Much of Sanderson's account, in the extract above as well as in the wider piece, seems to fall back upon flattering portrayals of the Orthodox and Jewish communities in Istanbul typical of English accounts. Sanderson hints that Barton's – English – money has gone towards procuring influence for this patriarch, only for the sultan's 'ministers' to force him out of his position.<sup>16</sup> This line, of Christian cooperation in an immoral and unholy arena, pervaded even accounts like Sanderson's, which generally adopted a more positive, curious manner in their coverage of non-Christian communities. To underline the amity between Pigas and Barton, Sanderson included a transcript of a letter from the former to the latter:

Most Illustrious Ambassador of the Renowned Queene of *England*, my beloued sonne, these dayes are so peruerse by the iniquitie of our times, that if our Lord preuent not, there is no hope at all of any good. [...] and if you find the distaste of this miserable time of ours; bewaile you also that wee haue beene borne in such an Age, worse then the World of Iron stormie. Our Lord blesse you and saue you, this sixe and twentieth of May, 1593. From the Cell of the Patriarke of Alexandria<sup>17</sup>

According to Sanderson, Barton's successor, Henry Lello, reported that Pigas was Barton's deathbed companion three years after this letter was sent.<sup>18</sup> The pervasive tone here, common in letters of its type, is of a defeated acceptance of the material and political world Pigas and Barton found themselves in, the only hope being their shared God – 'if our Lord prevent not.' Pigas invokes the Ages of Man – an apocalyptic worldview pervasive at this time, particularly in Orthodox communities due to the writings of Saint

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<sup>16</sup> William Biddulph later suggested that Barton's influence was responsible for Pigas' downfall: 'After whose [Barton's] death, this good man *Milesius* was by the Gréeke displaced from being Patriarch of *Constantinople*; (which they durst not doe whiles master Barton was liuing) because, being a man of knowledge, he laboured to reform the Greekes from many of their superstitious customes. Whereupon (presently after the death of master *Barton*) they said their Patriarch was an Englishman, and no Gréeke, and therefore Manzulled him, that is: displaced him.': William Biddulph, *The Travels of Certaine Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bithnia, Thracia, and to the Blacke Sea* (London: W. Aspley, 1609), p. 40.

<sup>17</sup> Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, p. 1639.

<sup>18</sup> Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, p. 1639.

Jerome – which stated that the Age of Iron, or ‘World of Iron stormie’ as Pigas puts it, was a morally decrepit age of self-driven and tyrannical interests.<sup>19</sup> There seems to be a common ground between Pigas’ Orthodoxy and Barton’s Calvinism here which both men were happy to explore; this evocation of a marooned religious morality, stranded amongst ‘heathens’, was to become crucially important in arguments for the ideological importance of Barton’s position, by himself and, as will be seen, others. It makes Barton a bastion of ‘true’ Christianity; a proponent of a versatile Protestantism which could cut across devotional lines easily. He was able to draw upon ideas of anti-Islamic Christian cooperation whilst also being the European most embedded within the religious structures of the Porte. His friendship with leaders like Meletios Pigas allowed him to defend accusations of overfamiliarity whilst his friendship with the Grand Mufti allowed him what Matheo Zane describes as an unheard of level of influence with the sultan’s chief religious advisor. His friendship with a prominent rabbi would also lead to publications in England arguing for the conversion of Ottoman Jews. First, however, we turn to the major feud which characterised Barton’s career from 1593–96. It demonstrates some of the outcomes of Barton’s unique position within the religious communities already discussed, but also how he himself wrote of the interactions he was able to participate in as a result – and what he gained from them.

### Barton, Solomon Ben Ya‘esh and English Religious Anxieties

Having successfully manipulated his way to the top of the Porte’s diplomatic hierarchy during the early 1590s, Barton prepared to inhabit his role as the most influential European representative at the Porte with the fortifying assuredness given to him by the

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Jean-Nicolas de Parival, *The History of This Iron Age, Wherein is Set Down the True State of Europe as it was in the Year 1500*, trans. B. Harris (London: E. Tyler for J. Crook, S. Miller and T. Davies, 1656).



bestowal of autonomy from the English court. But 1593 brought its own obstacles. First and foremost was Elizabeth I's decision in that year to reverse the English policy towards the Habsburgs, deciding now to urge peace in a 'charm offensive' instead of supporting the Ottoman belligerence on that front.<sup>20</sup> This left Barton in, as Skilliter puts it, a 'situation of the greatest difficulty': one of having to 'communicate the Queen's pacific message at the very moment when the Turks were most enthusiastic for war.'<sup>21</sup> It also brought him into conflict with French policy and thus their capable agent, de Brèves, formerly an important ally for Barton. The arrival of English gifts securing the Ottoman recognition of Barton as the English ambassador went some way to mitigate these hindrances, but retaining the level of influence he had attained would prove a constant struggle. Perhaps most threateningly, the presence of Solomon Ben Ya'esh, a Portuguese Sephardi agent with significant influence, presented Barton with an uncomfortably powerful rival who matched the English agent in the scale of his connections, skill, and financial clout. Scholars of Anglo-Ottoman exchanges at the end of the sixteenth century have generally overlooked the importance of Ben Ya'esh, despite the fact that his career, friendship and subsequent feud with the English in Istanbul all affected Barton's embassy profoundly. Jerry Brotton briefly covers an interaction Barton had with him in 1595; he is given little more than a namecheck in Skilliter's work.<sup>22</sup> Noel Malcolm's work mentions Ben Ya'esh in terms of his influence with Harborne and the sultan, but does not cover his dealings with Barton; Laura Jane Fenella Coulter's thesis casts Ben Ya'esh as a 'bitter enemy' to Barton without a wider sense of who he was or the chronology of his connections to and involvement in English affairs.<sup>23</sup> A reconsideration of Ben Ya'esh

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<sup>20</sup> Baumer, 'England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom', pp. 34–35; Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 415–16.

<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth dispatched Christopher Parkins to Prague to try and facilitate this peace. Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 71–72.

<sup>22</sup> Brotton, *This Orient Isle*, pp. 206–07; Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 191–92.

<sup>23</sup> Coulter, 'The Involvement of the English Crown', p. 206; Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, p. 371.

necessitates a recognition of the importance of his presence for English affairs in Istanbul. But his story also offers an insight into the religious dimensions of the role of ambassador in Istanbul, and illustrates how Barton's writing reflected English anxieties about devotional fragility and the instability of agency and identity in the Eastern Mediterranean sphere.

One scholar in particular has paid great attention to Ben Ya'esh. In 1924 Lucien Wolf, in his exhaustive essay 'Jews in Elizabethan England', selected Ben Ya'esh as 'the most important and picturesque figure in the story I am now telling'; it is certainly the case that the scope of his fortune and proximity to various centres of global power were uniquely illustrious.<sup>24</sup> Ben Ya'esh was born Alvaro Mendes in Tavira, Portugal, in around 1520, one in a line of *conversos* (Spanish and Portuguese Jewish converts to Christianity).<sup>25</sup> He made his fortune in an Indian diamond mine before returning to Europe, receiving a Portuguese knighthood around 1555, and then settling in Madrid, Florence, and Paris. Throughout these years he was mobile, paying visits to other major European cities as well as London and Istanbul where his family network was already well established. In Wolf's words:

His great wealth and political acumen, and more especially his devotion to Portugal and his hatred of Spain, brought him into contact with the leading statesmen of Northern Europe. Queen Elizabeth formed a high opinion of him, and he was frequently consulted by Henry III of France and Catherine de Medici.<sup>26</sup>

Ben Ya'esh became heavily involved in the Don Antonio affair of the Portuguese crown, during which time he visited England and became closely aligned with his brother-in-law

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<sup>24</sup> Lucien Wolf, 'Jews in Elizabethan England', *Transactions (Jewish Historical Society of England)*, 11 (1924), 1–91.

<sup>25</sup> Also known as *marranos*, *anusim*, sometimes 'New Christians' and, in England, 'Crypto-Jews', many Jewish people on the Iberian peninsula were forcibly converted to Catholicism during the Spanish Inquisition, particularly around the end of the fifteenth century with the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Many continued to outwardly profess Christianity to avoid persecution whilst still privately adhering to Jewish religious customs. For a discussion of this community from an English perspective, see Shapiro, 'False Jews and Counterfeit Christians', in *Shakespeare and the Jews*, pp. 13–43.

<sup>26</sup> Wolf, 'Jews in Elizabethan England', p. 25.

Rodrigo Lopez, chief physician to Elizabeth I, with whom he lodged in Holborn, being visited by Elizabeth there. In 1579, probably encouraged by the death of and subsequent power vacuum left by Joseph Nasi in Istanbul, he arrived at the Porte with a vast fortune of 850,000 ducats.<sup>27</sup> The sultan readily accepted him as Nasi's successor, appointing him to the titles of Duke of Mytilene – a province of Lesbos – Grand Commissary of the Court, and the lordship of Tiberias in Palestine. Probably due to his already-established network in London and shared anti-Spanish sentiments, he quickly became embroiled in English affairs in Istanbul. He was the first to deliver the news of the defeat of the Spanish Armada to the city (Barton having to swallow his pride and merely 'confirm the news').<sup>28</sup> During the 1580s, he worked closely with Harborne and Barton, especially in their attempt to procure Ottoman naval support against Spain. The association continued once Harborne had left. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1588, upon Harborne's departure, Barton urged Francis Walsingham to heed

the aduise of Don Alures Mendas Portingall Jewe, her M<sup>ats</sup> most affectionate seruant to send a shippe onelye of merchandise w<sup>th</sup> some ordinarie preasants [...] without mencion of new Ambassador to kepe theise in suspence whether her Ma<sup>tie</sup> will continewe the league or not [...] his opinion I esteem is now lesse pollitike then effectionate knowinge for certaine that the Grand Signor hath great accompte of the friendshippe, league and amitie w<sup>th</sup> her Ma<sup>tie</sup> [...] <sup>29</sup>

Using 'her M<sup>ats</sup> most affectionate seruant' to 'kepe theise in suspence': there is no doubt whose side Ben Ya'esh was on in the late 1580s. A few sentences later Barton refers to the Ottoman hierarchy as 'hungry dogs'.<sup>30</sup> The English agents were aware that the long established power of Ben Ya'esh's predecessor was now in his hands, and looked to exploit him accordingly: Walsingham had earlier written to Harborne that 'if directly you

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<sup>27</sup> Halil İnalçık, 'Foundations of Ottoman-Jewish Cooperation' in *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth Through the Twentieth Century*, ed. Avigdor Levy (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002) pp. 3–15 (p. 11).

<sup>28</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, VIII, p. 399.

<sup>29</sup> SP 97/1, f. 132.

<sup>30</sup> SP 97/1, f. 132.

cannot do it without dishonour to her Majesty, the said Don Alvaro might prove a good instrument to work a reconciliation [between Harborne and the *Kapudan Kılıç Ali Paşa*] underhand, having such credit with him as it seems.’<sup>31</sup> Yet by 1597, it was Barton, not Ben Ya‘esh, who seemed to have inherited the unbridled influence of Nasi: in that year, the Venetian ambassador Girolamo Capello stated that Barton ‘supplies all the news of Christendom’ at the Porte.<sup>32</sup> Compare this to the similar words of the French ambassador during Nasi’s time, Jean de la Vigny, who had written that Nasi was ‘the true mirror in which [sultan Suleiman I] saw all the developments in Christendom.’<sup>33</sup> How had Barton, by the end of his career, somehow managed to supplant the massive influence of Ben Ya‘esh, especially with the latter’s proximity to the English court? Barton’s writings in his feud with Ben Ya‘esh can shed valuable light not only on how Barton operated within interfaith networks in late sixteenth-century Istanbul, but also how his writing back to England tapped into established and prevalent fears about the nature of religious difference in order to secure his position as the most influential European agent in Istanbul.

Four years after Harborne’s departure, Ben Ya‘esh and Barton started to quarrel. This could be seen as inevitable given the lengths to which Barton went to ensure that only he directed English interests in Istanbul. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1592 Giovanni Dolfino, the Venetian ambassador to Germany, reported that ‘a nephew of Alvaro Mendez has passed from England to Constantinople on business for his uncle, and to negotiate for the help of a Turkish fleet to the injury of Spain’.<sup>34</sup> This implies that Ben Ya‘esh was well-

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<sup>31</sup> Conyers Read, *Mr Secretary Walsingham*, III, p. 331. Original in Bodleian, Tanner MS 79, f. 125.

<sup>32</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, p. 114.

<sup>33</sup> Howard M. Sachar, *Farewell España: The World of the Sephardim Remembered* (New York: Vintage, 1994), p. 85.

<sup>34</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 39. This nephew was probably Jacob Añes, who later entertained Thomas Coryat in Istanbul in 1612, inviting him to a circumcision ceremony: Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, p. 1824–25. For more on the Añes or ‘Amis’ family, and some illustrative examples of the connections between the Jewish community in London and Istanbul, see Alan Stewart, ‘“Come From Turkie”: Mediterranean Trade in Late Elizabethan London’, in *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early*

known, and well-trusted, enough by the English court for his own intermediary to travel between London and Istanbul on both personal and diplomatic business. That Ben Ya'esh's nephew should be trusted, and was seemingly endorsed by the court, would likely have been unwelcome news in Barton's embassy. This was the intermediary of a rival agent, not one but two steps removed from Barton's own carefully curated sphere of influence. Even more troublingly, this agent was worthy of enough attention to merit mention in other ambassadors' reports, of which Barton would have been aware. That Ben Ya'esh had a network to rival Barton's was a cause for concern. Barton had been aware of Ben Ya'esh throughout his time in Istanbul; it was only now that he was becoming a major threat. But Barton's feud with him represented a different challenge to those he encountered with Lancosme, or his Levant Company detractors. Ben Ya'esh's particular, and much more potent, threat came from the fact that this was not an agent answering directly to anyone. Instead, Ben Ya'esh was the latest head of a network which had exerted influence in Istanbul since the early sixteenth-century – a heritage Barton couldn't hope to emulate. Perhaps most dangerously, because of this heritage to the English court Ben Ya'esh represented the allure of seamless integration into existing Ottoman power structures which was Barton's own selling point. In response, Barton's writing to England about Ben Ya'esh adopted a new tactic.

Barton was in constant financial trouble, whilst Ben Ya'esh's riches represented many times Barton's yearly company salary. Indeed, the dispute between the pair arose over money – Don Antonio, who had sent a Jewish employee, David Passi, to the embassy, accused Ben Ya'esh of having gotten his fortune by nefarious means, and Barton agreed; Paulo Mariani was also agitating against the unchecked influence of Ben Ya'esh due to his own interests in the power vacuums in Moldavia and Wallachia. But

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*Modern English Writings*, ed. by Goran V. Stanivukovic (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 157–79 (pp. 172–73).

Barton had picked a formidable rival. Ben Ya‘esh’s influence in England – his connection to Lopez which not only enabled communication, but also close physical proximity to the queen – meant that he was able to undermine the crucial network of intermediaries Barton had carefully constructed, and which had been instrumental in creating the influence Barton now enjoyed. It is no surprise, then, that Ben Ya‘esh sought to directly attack the reputations of Barton’s trusted embassy agents, utilising English connections which could hurt Barton immeasurably. In mid-1591, Ben Ya‘esh dispatched his agent, Solomon Cormano, to the English court. Cormano probably stayed with Rodrigo Lopez in Holborn in order to utilise the latter’s close connection to the queen. His goal was defame Barton and to procure a vindication of Ben Ya‘esh from the highest authority he could. Luckily Barton had warning and help from friends in high places: according to Barton, the governor of the Levant Company Richard Staper wrote to him on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 1591 ‘in these worde[s]’:

Yow shall understand thatt Don Solemon the rich Jew hath written to Hir Mag:<sup>tie</sup> complayning mightely of you for diuerse matters nott here to be rehearsed, & sent his l[ett]re to Doctor Lopes, one of his religion, and one of Hir Mag:<sup>ties</sup> phisitions, who hath so preferred the same, y<sup>t</sup> Mr. Harborne was by Hir Mag:<sup>ties</sup> express com[m]and[ment] sent for up in great hast about the same, who doth stand yo<sup>r</sup> freinde, or otherwise yow mighte loose some parte of Hir Mag:<sup>ties</sup> fauour, & be dismissed of yo<sup>r</sup> place, butt I trust all shalbe well, for yow may assure yo<sup>r</sup> selfe yow haue an assured freind of M<sup>r</sup> Harborne, & likewise of my self, & I wish yow as my good freinde, nott to be in hatred of the foresayedd rich Jew; if you can otherways choose, for he hath a meane to Doctor Lopes to certify Hir Mag:<sup>ty</sup> of any thinge from tyme to tyme, w<sup>ch</sup> is a greate matter w<sup>th</sup> a prince as yow may Consider.<sup>35</sup>

Yet again, Barton’s network of influence had determined his staying power. Harborne had intervened to salvage Barton’s reputation in London, and Staper’s warning about the unique power of Ben Ya‘esh was shrewd. Barton, however, was not one to be deterred so easily. He started immediately to defend himself. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1592, in the same letter as he had reported Staper’s advice, he complained that:

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<sup>35</sup> SP 97/2, f. 169.

[...] my creditt heere hath susteyned no small blott, for thatt itt is published abroad by the Jewes of Don Aluaro Mendez his howse, thatt he hath procured by meanes of a Jewish doctor in England, thatt I shalbe depriued (only for his cause & for defending [Henri IV of France] honor, against him) of the chardge of Ambass<sup>r</sup>: A rumor, little sounding to y<sup>e</sup> H<sup>r</sup> of [Queen Elizabeth] & odious to all w<sup>ch</sup> knowe my services & his Jewish mallice. And to intreate Doctor Lopes Jewe, as m<sup>r</sup> Stapers seyeth to be freinde[s] w<sup>th</sup> me, or to ioyn freindship with Aluaro Mendez against y<sup>e</sup> Honor of [Queen Elizabeth] [Henri IV of France] & undoing of sundry florentyne merchante[s], whose iuste cause hath often byn reco[m]mended unto me, my sincerity, zeale, & conscience will nott permitt me: yea rather will suffer paciently all the dishonour Doctor Lopes hath procure against me, then consent therto: though greatly greived in mynde thatt I shalbe depriued of the com[m]odity to performe at the com[m]ing of the present certayne designes no lesse pleasing to god, & honorable to [Queen Elizabeth] then any formerly atcheived by mee. amongst w<sup>ch</sup> the greatest w<sup>ch</sup> offendeth my conscience, is thatt I had determined to haue craued a church of the gran sig<sup>r</sup>: in Gallata, as I haue alredey another promised me in scio [Chios]. on both of w<sup>ch</sup> churches I purposed of my owne expences to haue mainteyned two Italian preachers, to haue instructed the ignorant Idolatrous people, I hoped w<sup>th</sup> great frute[s], & increase of true religion, butt hauing byne a greivous offender, god wold nott haue such a Holly worke performed by me, both doth reserue itt for another more worthy, whom I expect according to advise euery day as a fauour longe seince desyred by me, & refer larger discourses. Uppon my accusations, untill the departure of M<sup>r</sup> Wilcox, & his Company, w<sup>ch</sup> I hope wilbe within these 8 dayes. Till when desyering yo<sup>r</sup> H<sup>r</sup> to be fauorable patron of my Innocency, I com[m]itt yo<sup>r</sup> Hon<sup>r</sup> to the protexion of the almighty this 23 Aprill 1592

Yo<sup>r</sup> H<sup>rs</sup> most dutifull euer to commaund Edward Barton <sup>36</sup>

This is a straightforward attempt by Barton to play off his Christianity against the Jewish influence of Ben Ya‘esh, whose influence is painted here as invasive and creeping: anonymous ‘Jewes of Don Aluaro Mendez his howse’ who ambiguously ‘published abroad’ untruths are contrasted with Barton’s ‘sincerity, zeale, & conscience’ in the interest of the ‘honour’ of two Protestant monarchs, Elizabeth and Henri IV. Faced with the unsurpassable riches of Ben Ya‘esh and the formidable reach of his network, Barton, for the first time in his career, began to explicitly argue for the religious benefits of his standing in Istanbul. If he was not in favour with the sultan due to the machinations of Ben Ya‘esh, he could have no hand in the conversion of the ‘ignorant, idolatrous’

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<sup>36</sup> SP 97/2, f. 169.

Ottoman subjects of varying faiths. Ending on a note of Puritan humility, Barton made his first strike against the growing English influence of Ben Ya'esh.

Unfortunately for Barton, this would not be enough, even having benefited from Harborne's intervention. Solomon Cormano's suits over 1591 paid dividends. What Cormano procured for Ben Ya'esh in March 1592 was, as Wolf rightly notes, a 'remarkable tribute to a sixteenth-century Jew': a letter to the sultan from Elizabeth herself, seemingly vindicating Ben Ya'esh.<sup>37</sup> It read:

Your Majesty's subject, Solomon Abenjaish, Knight, has lately sent us letters praying that since he is troubled unjustly and undeservedly by many calumnies and lies of enemies we will graciously assist him by our testimony. Therefore, since we have found him, being a man of consequence, most ready in the furthering of business and our affairs for many years, we desire to signify to Your Majesty what opinion we have of him. Now we can truly testify that not only we ourselves but also many other Christian Princes have wished him to tarry and dwell in our Kingdoms because of his virtue, honesty and industry wherof, without doubt, he could have lived quietly in all plenty and abundance, but when he chose rather to dwell at Constantinople in your dominions than anywhere else in the world, the artifices and lies of the Ministers of the King of Spain prevented him from resting even there in safety [...] We judge that these calumnies were falsely brought against him that he might lose faith and credit thenceforward with Your Majesty (although he has acted and does act zealously against the King of Spain and his allies for the furthering of our interests). Similarly therefore if our Agent residing at Constantinople has said or done anything against his reputation or interest we interpret it to have been done by the deceit and artifices of Paolo Mariani the Italian who being a spy there for the King of Spain has persuaded himself that, this being done, he would certainly enter his favour.<sup>38</sup>

This letter, which was accompanied by a reprimand to Barton directly, is all the more remarkable given the timing, coming only a year after the letter from Elizabeth to Barton which praised him and seemingly secured his autonomy, discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.<sup>39</sup> Suddenly, Barton's title is 'Agent' again – Elizabeth and her courtiers could draw back and distance themselves from Barton's actions when necessary. For Ben Ya'esh it

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<sup>37</sup> Wolf, 'Jews in Elizabethan England', p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> Wolf's abridged translation from Latin, 'Jews in Elizabethan England', p. 27. The original is in BL, Lansdowne MS 67, f. 107, endorsed 'Copie of a letter required to be written to the Grandseign' in favour of Solomon Abonnex.'

<sup>39</sup> Wolf, 'Jews in Elizabethan England', p. 28; see SP 97/2, ff. 165, 169.



served the dual purpose of matching the prestige afforded to Barton through his own epistolary connection to the queen, while also placing fresh doubt on the integrity of the personnel on the embassy payroll – in this case, none other than Paulo Mariani, a man who had already raised suspicions pertaining to conduct at the embassy.

Barton changed his strategy. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1592 he wrote to England, methodically explaining his quarrel with Ben Ya‘esh and defending his own motives.<sup>40</sup> According to Barton, Ben Ya‘esh had meddled in Lancosme’s imprisonment, writing later on, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1592, that Lancosme ‘remaineth in the Castle of the Black Sea, not having other friends to labour for his liberty but Alvaro Mendes, Jew, who procureth the same with tooth and nail, though I hear it be in vain’, and had ‘molested’ Florentine merchants operating under English protection, causing Ben Ya‘esh to entirely lose the favour of the sultan.<sup>41</sup> This much all followed the patterns of Barton’s previous rivalries. But here Barton went in a new direction. He wrote that Ben Ya‘esh’s agent Cormano had kept Elizabeth’s letters for too long, and during this time had been ‘showing them in every tavern and bragging of them, interpreting them at his pleasure to the common people and boasting that by them came the confirmation of my disgrading at his suit.’<sup>42</sup> Cormano continued his boasts: that the messenger, ‘or rather, ambassador as he termed himself’ had been personally banqueted by William Cecil, that Cecil had visited him frequently, and, crucially, that ‘he and all his trayne used publikely the Jews rytes in prayinge, accompanied w<sup>th</sup> diuers secret Jewes resident in London.’<sup>43</sup> This is where Barton started to construct a narrative against Ben Ya‘esh that works on several levels. The above letter plays on not only the implied threat of a secret, subversive Jewish network operating right under Cecil’s nose in London (in which Cecil is softly implicated,

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<sup>40</sup> SP 97/2, ff. 167–70.

<sup>41</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XI, f. 128; SP 97/2, ff. 167–70.

<sup>42</sup> Wernham, *L&A*, vol. IV, p. 397.

<sup>43</sup> Wernham, *L&A*, vol. IV, p. 397.

having entertained Ben Ya'esh at his home), but also the more specific threat that these agents supposedly working in English interests were fundamentally un-Christian: Barton's evocation of a proud, boasting Jewish agent, wilfully brandishing and misrepresenting the queen's documentation, tapped into already keenly-felt anxieties about conducting diplomacy at such great distances and relying on remote agents. By emphasising the wilful misinterpretation of important written material that carried the royal seal, it perhaps also called attention to the scriptural divide between Jews and Christians. The mutability of the multi-faith, unstable devotional sphere of Istanbul is invoked in all of its uncertainty. Crucially, Barton is the only clear remedy to all of this: an English Christian who had mastered this instability and had even demonstrably made it work in English favour over the preceding years. Elizabeth was convinced: as we have seen, December 1592 saw Barton receive praise and further instructions for his remit, granting him more autonomy, and Ben Ya'esh recedes from favour. Only half a year earlier Barton's very position had been under threat.

How purposeful were all of these hints, evocations and veiled threats? Barton knew what he was tapping into. As early as 1587, it was reported that Ben Ya'esh's public adoption of Judaism had already caused him to lose allies in Christian circles at the Ottoman court: 'he [Ben Ya'esh] is on very bad terms with the French ambassador (in Turkey) who treats him with contempt, as he knew him here as a professed Christian, whereas now he is a Jew' wrote the Spanish ambassador to France, having intercepted one of Ben Ya'esh's letters.<sup>44</sup> Whether Barton's change in attitude towards Ben Ya'esh was spurred by the latter's public adoption of Judaism (though his Jewishness was always mentioned even before this), or whether Barton simply saw an opportunity to seize upon already-held prejudices which would see him gain favour, the correspondence from this

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<sup>44</sup> *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs: Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas*, ed. by Martin Hume, 4 vols (London: HMSO, 1892–99), IV, p. 92.

period points towards a nuanced understanding on Barton's part regarding how he could manipulate religious fault-lines to his advantage. Rodrigo Lopez was executed for alleged treason, a plot to poison the queen, in 1594. Elizabeth delayed signing the death warrant, leading some historians to believe that she doubted the guilt of her former favourite. His Judaism was cited against him as evidence of his duplicity: Lopez's fall from grace is indicative of the power of the exact anxieties Barton shrewdly identified and exploited in his writing to England in the early 1590s, perhaps even contributing to them in the process. After Ben Ben Ya'esh's fall from influence, Barton's authority as sole English representative, and most powerful Christian at the Porte, was almost untouchable. He had successfully bested a more powerful rival through a canny appreciation for the pressure points in an uncertain devotional landscape. The Ben Ya'esh feud serves not only to demonstrate another of Barton's wrangles with a rival and his methods of manoeuvring them into obscurity – even those who were incredibly powerful and well-connected – but also to demonstrate the importance of faith networks in Istanbul, their connections to Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy, and their volatility. It also spurred a new and curious stage in Barton's career, beginning in 1595: a correspondence with English scholar Hugh Broughton, with the eventual aim of converting the Ottoman population to Christianity.

### Hugh Broughton's Pamphlets

Barton's involvement in this scheme was due to his connections with the various faith communities in Istanbul, and it placed him centre stage in published printed material. In 1597, a pamphlet appeared entitled *An Awnsweare vnto the Righte Honorable the Lordes, of the Quene of Englandes most honorable privy councell*, written by the prominent Hebraist Hugh Broughton. The subtitle on the cover advertises the content as 'Concerning an Ebrew epistle of a rarely lerned Iew, most reverent towards the Ebrew skill of English

& endeuoring the good of all Christen-dome.’<sup>45</sup> Upon turning the page, the reader immediately comes across the prefatory transcription of a short letter, an endorsement, signed off – in an uncharacteristically concise manner – ‘*Yours Barton.*’<sup>46</sup> Barton’s was a name unlikely to inspire much recognition outside of courtly diplomatic and political circles, but was clearly deemed worthy of inclusion here, given pride of place at the start of this treatise. His name would be key to the arguments Broughton would go on to make in his published material over the next decade, continuing for years after Barton’s death: arguments centred upon Barton’s importance as a key facilitator of the eventual conversion of non-Christians in Istanbul to Christianity. This was the climax of the religious aspect of Barton’s career: Broughton cast the English ambassador as the crucial cog in the eventual conversion of the people he was living amongst. By 1595 Barton had shown that he could, and would, manipulate his position within religious communities to his political advantage, and his writing about his encounters within those communities to further promote his cause. Broughton’s pamphlets reveal that during the same year a more explicitly missionary pursuit was undertaken by Barton: the fostering of a correspondence which would have resonances for decades, and which reveals a separate set of priorities, outside of his diplomatic or mercantile remits. This correspondence was conducted in 1596 between Rabbi Abraham ben Reuben, a leading rabbi in Istanbul, and Broughton, who suddenly started to invoke Barton’s name and reproduce parts of his correspondence in his religious pamphlets at the turn of the seventeenth century. This unlikely link, which has hitherto never been discussed, sheds light not only on another set of motives and priorities which are not visible from Barton’s diplomatic correspondence, but also shows

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<sup>45</sup> Hugh Broughton, *An awnswear vnto the righte honorable the Lordes, of the Quene of Englandes most honorable privy counsell concerning and Ebrew epistle of a rarely lerned Iew, most reverent towards the Ebrew skill of English, [and] endeuoring the good of all Christendome* (Basel: Conradus Waldkirch, 1597), title page.

<sup>46</sup> Broughton, *An awnswear vnto the righte honorable the Lordes*, p. 1.

how Barton's legacy in England would start to take shape: how his actions in Istanbul would resonate in England, and how his entire life's work became directly associated with religious concerns.

Broughton was perhaps the outstanding English scholar of Hebrew during his lifetime and gained some notoriety due to his acerbic temperament and extreme dedication to the study of Judaica and the translation, adaptation, and hermeneutics of Jewish and Christian texts.<sup>47</sup> The somewhat rambling, hyperbolic exclamations contained in his pamphlets and the sheer depth of his erudition led to some ridicule. The year before his death, Ben Jonson satirised him in *The Alchemist* as a spectacle of the dangers of scholarship: overexposure to Broughton's writings sends a character raving mad.<sup>48</sup> Jonson had earlier satirised him in *Volpone*.<sup>49</sup> His writings became a byword for the dangers of the overzealous study of erudite arcana, but his ideas endured: John Lightfoot saw enough value in Broughton's major works to collect them together in a single volume published in 1662, prefaced by a short biography.<sup>50</sup> The publications in which he mentions Barton come from the latter stage of his life and career, when he was living abroad and developing his relationship with rabbis and theologians he had met on his extensive travels over the previous twenty years.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> G. Lloyd Jones, 'Broughton, Hugh (1549–1612), Divine and Hebraist.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>48</sup> Ben Jonson, 'The Alchemist', in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), III, II.iii.237, IV.v.1–32.

<sup>49</sup> Ben Jonson, 'Volpone, or The Foxe', in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, III, II.ii.118–119.

<sup>50</sup> The volume is arranged in four parts and consists of Broughton's published works, bookended by a preface and a 'funeral poem', titled *The Works of The Great Albionean Divine, Renown'd in Many Nations for Rare Skill in Salems & Athens Tongues, and Familiar Acquaintance with all Rabbinical Learning, M<sup>r</sup>. Hugh Broughton: Collected into one Volume, and Digested into Four Tomes* (London: Nath. Ekins, 1662); hereafter *Works*.

<sup>51</sup> There are six pamphlets mentioning Barton, the first appearing in 1597 and the last in 1611. They are, in chronological order: *An awnswear vnto the righte honorable the Lodes, of the Quene of Englandes most honorable privy counsell concerning and Ebrew epistle of a rarely lerned Iew, most reverent towards the Ebrew skill of English, [and] endeuoring the good of all Christendome* (Basel: Conradus Waldkirch, 1597); *Tvvo epistles vnto great men of Britanie, in the yeare 1599 Requesting them to put their neckes unto the work of theyr Lord: to break the bread of the soule unto the hungry Iewes, by theyr writings, or by theyr charges, through such as be ready to declare all that theyr necessity doth require.* (1599; reprinted 1606);

Barton's name appears in six pamphlets throughout the first decade of the seventeenth century, as Broughton, no doubt disappointed with the failure of his previous project – to be appointed an official translator of the Bible – wrote prolifically on the possibility of English religious influence in the Levant with its particular diversity and confluence of religious devotion, where Orthodox traditions existed alongside Islam and Judaism in close proximity to the Holy Land. Broughton's pamphlets relate that Barton, who had an existing relationship with Rabbi Reuben, induced him at Broughton's behest to produce an extended treatise discussing the Jewish community in Istanbul and promoting the Bible, with Broughton's eventual aim being their conversion to Protestantism, and for the Orthodox and Muslim communities there to follow. Broughton's writing is a useful indication of Barton's stature and image insofar as it demonstrates the specific associations Barton would gain in the wider textual contexts of the seventeenth century. It is also one of the few direct indications of how a reader completely removed from the Levant trade might have come across news of a man called Edward Barton, the English ambassador in Istanbul; and not only news, but a printed reproduction of his correspondence. Barton's note in Broughton's 1597 pamphlet *An Awnsweare [...]* reads as follows:

THE ARGUMENT OF THE EPISTLE FOLOVING, CONTEYNED in a letter of the Ligier at Constantinopole, Written to a Certen gentle-man.

HERE is a Iew, taking him self lerned, and hearing of the good fame of N. hath invited him to make profe of his lerninge, by the due awnsweare, expected by the Iew from the sayd N. And therfore I require your W. though as I heare he be not in london, yet to cause the same to be sent vnto him, and to procure awnsweare:

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*A defence of the booke entitled A co[n]cent of Scripture for amendment of former Atheian most grosse, and Iudaique errors, which our translations and notes had: against the libel, scoffing a Scottish mist: and slaundering that the Iewes epistle sent from Byzantian Rome, was a forged worke, and not in deed sent thence. (1609); A reuelation of the holy Apocalyps (1610); A petition to the King. For authority and allowance to expound the Apocalyps in Hebrew and Greek to shew Iewes and Gentiles: that Rome in Caesars and pope, is therein still damned. And for translators to set over all into other large-vs'd tongues. (Amsterdam: G. Thorp, 1611); and A require of agreement to the groundes of divinitie studie wherin great scholars falling, & being caught of Iewes disgrace the Gospel: & trap them to destruction. (Middelburg: Richard Schilders, 1611).*

and yf it were possible, to cause him to come hither, being as I here litle esteemed there. I assure yor W. it might turne to the benifit of Christendome.

*Yours Barton* <sup>52</sup>

A coded note from the English ambassador referring to a high-stakes epistolary exchange involving unnamed and mysterious parties in England – including a ‘Iew, taking himself lerned’, with all the shadowy associations that entailed – this extract is clearly designed to intrigue readers. It appears to have been originally sent from Barton to the gentlemen of the Privy Council (‘W’) and then forwarded on to Broughton, a process of transmission confirmed in Broughton’s later correspondence. Barton is situated as an authority, particularly an epistolary one, as someone who exists outside the normal sphere of political workings in London, and as one whose very existence suggests religious and cultural difference and the multi-religious sphere of Istanbul. His writing is prioritised here and placed at the beginning because it is invested with a particular power: Barton has the ability to sum up the whole of the ‘argument of the epistle folovving’ in a few lines: such is his authority, such is the power of his Crown-ratified ambassadorial writing, shaped by Harborne’s earlier warning to avoid ‘excesse wordes’ and the Queen’s endorsement of circumspect ambassadorial restraint in words.<sup>53</sup> This reproduction prefaces what would be the theme of Broughton’s late work up until his death in 1612 – that there was a demand from Istanbul for a Hebraist (‘N.’ is, of course, Broughton himself) to be sent to convert Jews in Istanbul to Christianity; that done, he could work on others, further afield. Istanbul was to be prioritised because of its religious connotations and, clearly, the strong English engagement there which existed through Barton. The prefatory note from Barton rehearses some familiar themes: ‘turn to the

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<sup>52</sup> Hugh Broughton, *An Awnsweare vnto the Righte Honorable the Lordes, of the Quene of Englandes most honorable privy counsell* (London: 1597).

<sup>53</sup> Broughton certainly agreed with Harborne on the power of conciseness and brevity, himself possessed of a style ‘curt, and something harsh, and obscure: for he desired to speak much in little’, according to John Lightfoot. Broughton, *Works*, ‘Preface by John Lightfoot’.

benefit of Christendom' is typical of his rhetoric, always shaping events in non-Christian domains to the Christian advantage. Further, 'turne' is an apt verb with many implications here, not least conversion, but also a signal of Barton's power to transform, to alter, as one who is experienced in and has some degree of control over what would later be described by Broughton as the 'strange alteration' of the Porte.

This short introductory letter is indicative of the way Broughton would deploy Barton's name over the next decade in his published work: first and foremost as a marker of authority. It signals the beginning of Barton's role in Broughton's plan to convert diverse religious communities across the world, a project explained in much more detail in an introductory section to a later tract:

*To the Christian Reader, about the Turkie Cause.*

For better understanding of *the Turkie Cause*, a Narration of the whole matter may be added. There was one *M. Edw. Barton*, made the Queens Agent at *Constantina*, called *Byzantium*, before *Constantine* our glory, hating *the Idols of old Rome*, removed the Empires Seat thither, and called it *Constantines City*, and *New Rome*. This Agent there being a special wise man, grew in great favour with the Great Turk, whose mother (a report is) was a Jew. Also he fell into acquaintance with the chief Rabbin of the Jews Synagogue: to whom he expounded the Book of *Scripture-Concent*; as the Jew himself in effect recordeth: and greatly moved him to affect Christians.

Now the *Lord Barton*, the *Rabbin*, and the *Jewesse Queen-mother*, all three, dealt with the Turk to consider, *that all Turks perish for ever*, and how unnatural a thing it was for a father to have his Funeral celebrated with the death of an exceeding great Troop of sons: and told him how *Christianity was better*; and how, by peace with the Emperour, and change of Countries, his sons might be among Christians, and their Princes sons would gladly dwell in his territories. The *Turk* began to consult how his own side could be brought to that. Then the *Lord Barton* gave him this intelligence: That there was one in *England*, who from a child had both night and day studied the *Ebrew Bible* with all Judaique Ebrews, and the holy Greek Testament equally, expounding the tongue and matter of the Old Testament, with all kind of Greek Authors: which in the University he professed after one years abode there: for he was of his acquaintance, and knew all his affairs. Then he bade send for him: and he should teach in Ebrew or Greek, in what Church he would in *Bizantium*, with safeguard and all countenance: that, by Jews and Greeks assent, the Janisaries might come to their Parents Faith, and be glad to live for a better hope. All *Germany* knew, that in the *Turks Court* strange alteration was: and he suffered *Buda* unvictualled 3. dayes, that it might have been taken: but that our General stayed to have the Duke Matthias to come thither to have that glory. But before his coming it was vicutalled. This the *Lord Bartons*



*authority* (as Mardocai) Germany Knew. Now to allure the Christian thither, the Jew is set on [...]’<sup>54</sup>

Here, the entire ‘*Turkie Cause*’ is initiated by Barton and he is thus inseparable from its continuing state. Where James Shapiro has explained Barton’s role in this affair simply as one who ‘promoted’ the correspondence – and that is certainly one of the few material things he seems to have done during this exchange – it is clear that Broughton is using Barton’s name and evoking the associations of his position and career in a way designed to do more than simply suggest that Barton was behind the cause of converting Jews, Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Istanbul to Protestantism.<sup>55</sup> In fact, Broughton claims that a team of Barton, Reuben and the Sultana Safiye led a conversation with Sultan Mehmed in the direction of his and the Ottoman Empire’s conversion to Christianity.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the sultan willingly ‘began to consult how his own side could be brought to that’, at which point Barton steps in to deliver news of hope from an English scholar, which is where Broughton’s particular concerns begin. Given Barton’s reports of the intensely regimented and strictly regulated manner of audiences with the sultan, the claim of an intimate conversation with Mehmed about something as delicate as his religion is completely unbelievable.<sup>57</sup> Yet the extract is telling because of the skills and authority Barton is endowed with in it. Not only does he have the ear of the sultan, but was able to tell him personally that ‘*Christianity was better*’; he is even here compared to Mordecai of the Hebrew Bible, a Persian Jew whose proximity to and influence on the

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<sup>54</sup> Broughton, *Works*, p. 717.

<sup>55</sup> James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 147.

<sup>56</sup> Broughton mistakenly, and conveniently, subscribed to a myth about Safiye’s origins – that she was Jewish. This was probably due to a conflation of her background with that of her mother-in-law, Nurbanu, whose heritage is still contested: see Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, p. 308. Broughton’s recognition of the closeness between Barton and Safiye was grounded in reality: Barton had facilitated the correspondence between the Sultana and Queen Elizabeth, and they were frequent allies, with Safiye advocating for Barton’s diplomatic usefulness at two major occasions during his career. See Jardine, ‘Gloriana Rules the Waves’, pp. 219–20; Chapter Four of this thesis details Safiye’s eagerness for Barton to accompany the Ottoman army in 1596.

<sup>57</sup> These conversations may well have occurred between Barton and the Grand Mufti – in fact, given Sanderson’s evidence as to the closeness between the pair, it was likely – yet Barton’s limited and always formal contact with either Sultan he had audiences with suggests no opportunity to discuss such matters.

Persian king was his defining feature.<sup>58</sup> Barton features here because his reputed closeness to the Ottoman establishment had given him an almost mythical status in England, to the point where writers who had never met him – Broughton never travelled to Istanbul – cite him as one who rivalled the equivalent Queen Mother for influence.

The gravity of the religious aspect of this material is incongruent with the bulk of Barton's correspondence. There is no suggestion of the sultan's conversion in any of Barton's considerable correspondence, and any such suggestion would have been out of character. There is the occasional disdainful aside towards Muslims and non-Christian Ottoman subjects, but there is rarely a hint of religious missionary work in his writing, and certainly no religious reflections on Judaism specifically. But, given that *An Awnsweare* was published during Barton's lifetime, and that he saw fit to connect Broughton and Reuben at all, this tentative plan for mass conversion appears to have been endorsed by Barton. This was an opportunity, through Broughton, to have a hand in adding a more ideological, missionary dimension to his career – something possibly congruent with his Calvinist beliefs – whilst maintaining a degree of insulation from the ideas in the pamphlets: any talk of an attempt to convert Ottoman subjects would have been far too risky to write about in his correspondence, which was prone to interception and interference, and if discovered would completely derail his project in Istanbul. Any enthusiasm for the project on Barton's part was secondary to Broughton's co-opting of Barton's authority in order to add a practical authenticity to work which was prone to be regarded as excessively cerebral and esoteric – even fantastical. The repeated use of Barton's name and evocation of his position in Broughton's religious treatises is testament to the unique role Barton held as a cross-cultural mediator, and indeed,

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<sup>58</sup> The implicit link here also sets up Sultana Safiye as analogous to Mordecai's cousin Esther, the Jewish Persian queen who foiled a Persian plot to murder Jews, and on whose story the Purim festival is based. On the political significance of characterisations of Esther in a different context, see Nicole Hochner, 'Imagining Esther in Early Modern France', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 41.3 (2010), 757–87.

Broughton's work suggests the convergence in Barton of cultural and religious access and familiarity with a Crown-endorsed authority. Sixteenth-century Istanbul had no shortage of culturally mobile intermediaries – this was, in many ways, how the city functioned – but Broughton recognised the rarity of Barton's situation, and saw the opportunity that his closeness to both the English and Ottoman monarchs combined with his embeddedness in Istanbul's various faith networks presented.

The scale and implications of Broughton's scheme are clear from the published material. Yet Barton appears only sporadically throughout these pamphlets, as if co-opting his authority was only desirable in certain situations, as part of specific arguments. Accordingly, it is the manuscript material where different arguments are deployed according to their intended recipient. In an undated letter from Broughton to members of the English parliament, not only is the extent of his vision clearly visible, but Barton's role according to what Broughton saw as the most valuable aspect of his character – his endowment with royal power through the queen – is developed further.<sup>59</sup>

To all the Gentelmen that are in place to have a voice in the parlement of Englande

The Greate hope (Christian Gentlemen) of workinge good, to all Christendome, w'ch the Ambassadour speakinge as w'th the Queenes authoritie from Constantina signified into Englande, might not be neglected, w'thout extremitie of impietie; Wherein because the Jewes epistle gevinge an entrance, was directed unto me, I, as I was bounde; open to the Cause, to her .M & to y'r LL. [...] how greate charge lyeth uppon the Realme herein, that maye soone bee seene; The turninge of the Greeke emperour, both is a matter as greate as ever our kingdome wroughte: & a new building from Englande of old BIZANTIUM, to macke itt of Constantina a new Rome, a newe Jerusalem, as our Helenaes sonne builde it a new at the Virgin sea of Elisa, soe the occasion offred to our nation in menye licke pointes, as by a righte belonging unto us, shoulde kindle hope, and, stirre a most fervent desire. Neither is the matter of unlikelyhood or difficultie, the familiaritie of our Embassadour w'th the G: Turke, & his skill in divinitie coulde doe no lesse then see, or flame his desire to knowe all our religion. that being done, every p[ar]sell of y'r declaration mighte be handled w'th such skill, that he and all the reste, would be more desirous then wee could be to have a Philadelphian, w'th a Jherusalem descendinge from heaven. [...] a treatise in Hebrewe is requested,

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<sup>59</sup> The letter is undated, but the existence of a similar letter to the Privy Council published in 1599 – as well as the fact Broughton here seems to believe Barton is alive – places this a few years before the turn of the seventeenth century.

shewing the Bibles glorye, and traditions vanitie, much is hearin Contayned for the scripture & againste traditions, here both testaments touns & purenes of copies would be handled: heare a cleare abridgemen[t] of the wholle bible would be offred: [...] this would helpe all Greack landes much, & renowne the Weste over the Easte: & every whit of this, would cleare exceedinglye our owne divinitie. [...] It is Atheisme for any that can to refuse: & little better to refuse to requeste such as are hoden able. You Christian gentleme[n] must use speedy zeale to enforce this worcke forward: or an absolute aunswere & to tacke order in the nexte parlamente for Charges for this paynes: [...] I am contente to put upp whollye, all the most savage & brutish tumultuous injuries, w'ch uppon cheife deserte, have been done me: & am contente to goe or write or both to try the good of this hope, w'ch the Q. herselfe by her Ambassadour stirred, & maye not w'th majestie contemne her owne beginninge. yf all this be despised, & noe aunswere sente me, by the nexte ordinarie meanes, from such of you as see this: & others of the former epistle: Those shalbe a p[er]petuall Gilead, a Jogar Sahautha; an heape of witnesses that I doe Englande noe injurie, in that I seeke to some other nations to laye hole uppon the glorie, w'ch England contemneth. Thus hoping that policie w'th religion will beare swaye in you, I com[m]end you all to the grace of God in Christe to bee guided by his wisdome./  
Yours in the L. H.B.<sup>60</sup>

A new Rome, a new Jerusalem, a new England, and all of this 'stirred' by Barton himself: the stakes for which Broughton argues, and the importance which he attributes to Barton here, could scarcely be higher. Barton figures in this argument to Parliament because he is a direct representative of the Queen's authority in Istanbul. The argument is softened accordingly: Barton's importance in the matter is solely due to his representing the Queen, but his 'familiaritie' with the sultan is less prominent than in the previous excerpt, where the sultan, as an inquisitive student of religion, sought Barton to attain the means with which to effect his conversion. Instead, here Barton is deployed in his official capacity, but tellingly, this is also the genesis of the claims of a particularly material aspect to Barton's influence: the offering of an exegetical treatise on the Bible to the Sultan. This treatise is the key, the one aspect of the plan which 'would helpe all Greack landes much, & renowne the Weste over the Easte'. Barton becomes the means to overcome this opposition, intended as the bearer of a crucial text in which the hope of all Christendom is invested. Broughton's *Works* contains a similar letter, translated into and printed in

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<sup>60</sup> University of Birmingham Special Collections: Cadbury Library, Ladd/531.

every Western language, including Hebrew and Greek.<sup>61</sup> Every translation mentions that Barton has provided the impetus for this matter to be brought before the Privy Council, in the English version pleading that ‘It is high time (right Honourable) that some order were taken for that matter which the Queens Embassadour of Byzantium judged likely to turn to the good of Christendom by right usage.’<sup>62</sup> The spread of epistolary religious material is here crucial to the cause, and Barton is chosen as the central agent through which to bring this widespread conversion about. Broughton ends with a defensive claim that those in Parliament should not dislike what he is proposing, not only because ‘it is Atheisme’ to do so, but because he places Barton so close to the Queen that ‘this hope [...] the Q. herselfe by her Ambassadour stirred’.

When Broughton states that in Istanbul ‘a treatise in Hebrewe is requested, shewing the Bibles glorye, and traditions vanitie’, Barton’s own religious position begins to feature. In a passage that invokes Barton’s royal authority through his connection to the queen, he is simultaneously positioned as the only agent in the position to push an explicitly Protestant agenda directly to the sultan. His was the uniquely Protestant position of the ‘Lutheran elshi’, a fact which had cemented the Anglo-Ottoman alliance from the beginning, and one which lent itself to arguments for Barton’s importance as a religious presence at the Porte. In evoking the anti-Catholic common ground between the two powers in his letter to Parliament, Broughton aimed to remind the recipients of the unlikely closeness Barton had brought about, and thus how well-placed he was to facilitate a religious shift at the Porte. This is combined with another of Barton’s distinctive advantages: his command over important documents coming in and out of the city. That the culmination of Broughton’s scheme took the form of the physical

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<sup>61</sup> Broughton, ‘To the Right Honourable, the Temporal Lords of the Queen of Englands most Excellent privy Councill’ and subsequent translations, in *Works*, pp. 673–84.

<sup>62</sup> Broughton, *Works*, p. 673.

implantation of a treatise is remarkably congruent with the kind of authority Barton was in the habit of manufacturing and wielding at the Porte. Though he could not be the author of this treatise, he had the right combination of material advantages in Istanbul to be able to make sure it would end up in the sultan's possession. For Broughton, this was usefully compatible with the very message the treatise carried, promoting 'the Bibles glorye, and traditions vanitie': the scripture itself does the converting work when adequately explained in accessible language; liturgical and cultural differences are bypassed by the presence of the newly accessible holy word. Though his project was idealistic and speculative, he recognised and promoted Barton's position as the rare embodiment of Protestant Englishness' apparent ability to connect, engage, and overcome other faiths regardless of setting. This, to Broughton at the very least, is what Barton represented from the English point of view: an agent whose power through versatility was complete, from language to commerce to religion.

Barton's death in 1598 did not deter Broughton from continuing to cite his authority in published work. Barton's passing is not mentioned by Broughton; the ambassador's existence slides silently from present to past in his pamphlets, his authority perhaps even augmented by becoming part of the history of close Anglo-Ottoman relations which he was known to have overseen. Broughton himself died in 1612, only a year after the last pamphlet mentioning Barton was published. He would never see his grand plan come to fruition, or indeed be given any real attention by parliament – there is no record of any formal response to Broughton's petitioning. Broughton's continued use of Barton's name for some years after the ambassador had ceased to operate – indeed, for some years after the Anglo-Ottoman alliance was put on hold by James I, who was against the idea of a close relationship with the Ottomans, particularly one based on shared religious principles – suggests that Barton's name carried some weight with those

at whom Broughton's pamphlets were aimed.<sup>63</sup> Barton's inclusion in Broughton's pamphlets is also a fitting indication of the mercurial nature of his involvements in the various faith communities in Istanbul during his office. By turns sympathetic and antagonistic, there can be little doubt that, given the evidence of the years 1593–96, Barton was deeply enmeshed in Istanbul's various religious communities throughout his career, and constantly used his correspondence and ability to control documentary authority to bend this enmeshment to his advantage.

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<sup>63</sup> James I's turn away from the Ottomans was a continuation of a cooling-off which had characterised the later years of Elizabeth's own policy. See Baumer, 'England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom', p. 33.

## Chapter Four

### The Hungary Campaign, 1596

By 1595, Barton's position was strong. Despite his frustration at being hamstrung with regards to policy towards the Habsburgs after Elizabeth's change of policy towards them in 1593, he was in good credit with the sultan and his advisors, deeply embedded in Istanbul's diverse faith networks, and had bested his influential rivals – in the process securing repeated endorsements from Queen Elizabeth, whose doubts had seemingly been assuaged. Barton was now one of the most powerful agents in Istanbul. Accordingly, the Anglo-Ottoman alliance was at its strongest, facilitated and now controlled by Barton in a globally visible manner. The other European agents in Istanbul keenly reported news of English interests there, and English merchants trading in the Levant enjoyed privileges akin to that of their French counterparts due to Barton's successes. He may have been slightly troubled by the new antagonism of François Savary de Brèves, the French agent who had previously worked with Barton to secure the French ambassador Lancosme's dismissal, but who had now succeeded to Lancosme's post. Since his promotion, relations between the two had worsened and become what Skilliter described as a 'deadly rivalry'; frustratingly for Barton, de Brèves now also shared his skill in speaking Turkish.<sup>1</sup>

This minor annoyance became more pressing when, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1595, Sultan Murad III died and was succeeded by his son, Mehmed III. This was inconvenient

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<sup>1</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 29–30. It is worth noting that de Brèves was in some ways very similar to Barton: in age, in the rare skill of acquiring the Turkish language, and seemingly in political nous. Skilliter, in typical style, characterises them as two sides of the same coin: 'two young, unscrupulous and successful adventurers.' ('The Turkish Documents', p. 62.). However de Brèves, unlike Barton, lived into his sixties, becoming a prominent Orientalist.



to Barton. He had already needed more gifts from England to renew his status as ambassador under Murad, and now the English privileges themselves would also need refreshing; the letter sent from the new sultan to Elizabeth informing her of his succession advises that ‘she should [...] send an embassy to renew the long-established friendship between England and the Porte’, and Elizabeth responded in the affirmative.<sup>2</sup> Barton’s anxiety was justified: the next English shipment of gifts confirming a new ambassador would not arrive until 1599, over a year after Barton’s death.<sup>3</sup> Murad’s death meant that Barton would have to work his way into the affections of Mehmed without the assistance of Crown-endorsed gifts from England. With a lively and talented French rival, this would be no mean feat; Barton sought an opportunity to prove his worth to the new sultan, and he did not have to wait long for such an opportunity to present itself.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1596, the Ottoman army marched out of Istanbul, destined for Hungary. The Ottomans had suffered heavy defeats in the immediately preceding years of the Long Turkish War against the Habsburgs, which had begun three years previously. Seemingly in response, Mehmed III took the unusual step of deciding to accompany the army; no sultan had done so since Suleiman I, in 1566.<sup>4</sup> A clear affirmation of his new imperial agency, Mehmed doubtless saw the chance not only to hark back to the successes of Suleiman, but also to physically lead his forces into a key frontier as a desirable way to begin his reign. As part of this statement, Mehmed desired the presence of European observers who would witness the army in motion and relay news of the splendour and scale of the Ottoman forces across the Christian world. The resident European representatives in Istanbul had, on some previous military expeditions, accompanied the

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<sup>2</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, pp. 159–60.

<sup>3</sup> Much has been written of this English gift shipment, which included a remarkable clockwork organ made by Thomas Dallam. His diary is a rich source of information: see J. Theodore Bent, *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1893).

<sup>4</sup> *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (Longman: New York, 1995), p. 3.

army in a limited capacity, mainly to observe the pomp of Ottoman military ceremony.<sup>5</sup> On this occasion in 1596, Mehmed sent word to Edward Barton and de Brèves, informing them of their duty in accompanying the army. The Venetian agent expected an invitation but none came, to the consternation of his superiors; de Brèves flatly refused to attend.<sup>6</sup> It mattered little to Mehmed, as Barton was the most useful of the three to his ends: Mehmed and his mother, Safiye, had persistently asked Barton to act as a mediator between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs.<sup>7</sup> The reputation he had accrued for his command over both the Turkish and Latin tongues meant that more than any other, he was the most suitable agent for this undertaking.<sup>8</sup> Barton's presence was so desired that he managed to negotiate the release of a group of prisoners formerly of Friedrich von Kreckwitz's Imperial embassy in Istanbul, whom he could now deliver to safety by travelling with the army, to his credit in Christendom.<sup>9</sup> Mehmed would even supply provisions for the entire retinue for the extent of the journey.<sup>10</sup> De Brèves' refusal was down to the scandal and expense he knew participation would entail, he may also have sensed the potential advantage on offer from publicising Barton's attendance, which he would go on to do. Yet Barton not only accepted the sultan's invitation, but departed without receiving any permission from Elizabeth I. Mehmed's personal presence on campaign was unusual; Barton's was unprecedented. The inclusion of a Christian

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<sup>5</sup> Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, p. 415. On one occasion, in 1548, the French ambassador's involvement had stretched as far as giving some military advice to the Ottomans. There has been a mistaken suggestion that Barton was present at the 1594 siege of Raab: see Sidney Lee's 1885 *ODNB* entry for Barton, which reproduces the suggestion from *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, ed. by Henry Ellis, 11 vols (London: Harding, Triphook and Lepard, 1824–46), III, p. 87, based itself on Ellis' reproduction of BL, Cotton MS Nero B XI, f. 243.

<sup>6</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 222.

<sup>7</sup> SP 97/3, f. 125.

<sup>8</sup> SP 97/3, f. 124.

<sup>9</sup> There were twenty-three of these prisoners, who had been the household of von Kreckwitz. An account from one of the surviving prisoners is published as *The Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz*, trans. A. H. Wratislaw (London: Bell and Daldy, 1862); their account was also reported by the Fugger newsletters: see *The Fugger News-Letters, First Series*, ed. by Victor von Klarwill, trans. Pauline de Chary (London: John Lane, 1924), pp. 200–02.

<sup>10</sup> For further discussion of this provision, see S. A. Skilliter, 'An Ambassador's Tayin: Edward Barton's Ration on the Egri Campaign, 1596', *Turcica*, XXV (1993), 154–62.

diplomat as an active participant, rather than as a passive observer, on a Muslim military campaign into the territory of the Holy Roman Empire against a Christian army would prove to be the scandalous climax of Barton's career.<sup>11</sup>

This chapter examines Barton's writing concerning his Hungary voyage, as he recorded a transgressive encounter which resonated far beyond the Porte, exposing the fragility of his position. Barton's writing here, more than anywhere else in his correspondence, is purposeful in its construction – at times self-consciously literary, at times dishonest, and at times unerringly accurate reportage. This is correspondence from the culmination of Barton's career, which, quite apart from relaying news from the campaign, makes arguments for the new style of diplomacy he was modelling. This writing demonstrates that Barton was a pioneer of diplomatic innovation, displaying adaptability, improvisation, and boldness; far from being merely a report of his actions, his correspondence formed an active part of his project to fashion a new model of ambassadorial representation. The Hungary campaign, by far the most adventurous and controversial episode in Barton's career, provided an opportunity for his writing to morph in form, content and motive. Specifically, here Barton wrote forcefully to argue that this transgressive and controversial travel experience was in fact crucial to diplomatic practice which needed to evolve in order to successfully negotiate a cross-cultural alliance. The 1596 correspondence shows that Barton was extremely daring, confident that the rewards of his attendance would outweigh the controversy he knew it would generate, and further, that rather than a reluctant passenger on a forced voyage – as most other accounts have argued – his was a calculated presence in an episode he saw primarily as one of the great diplomatic opportunities of his career.<sup>12</sup> His writing shows a continuous awareness of the

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<sup>11</sup> This was exacerbated by the status in the Early Modern Christian imagination of Hungary as the *antemurale* or *propugnaculum Christianitatis*: 'bastion of Christianity'.

<sup>12</sup> Almost every modern text mentioning Barton's involvement in the Hungary voyage follows the line that he was forced to participate. However, Susan Skilliter and Christine Woodhead have noted that this was

need to describe his travel experience as an impartial observer, but is also palpably burdened by the necessity to propagandise and shape his actions into something more permissible to Christendom. Barton's writing here morphed into a self-consciously literary argument for his specific model of an autonomous, mobile, culturally enmeshed ambassador.

Barton's shift in writing style during his months in Hungary allow his reportage to be considered alongside early modern English travel writing such as that produced by Fynes Moryson and John Sanderson. When read alongside writing like this, and compared with the usual contents of his dispatches, certain preoccupations in Barton's writings, such as descriptions of the practicalities and technicalities of travel – distances, costs, sleeping arrangements, and so on – stand out: this was a new mode of communication for him. These preoccupations illustrate his motivations as a travel writer in this instance rather than as an ambassador, and Barton's writing can be seen to correlate neatly with wider trends of both late sixteenth century epistolary culture and travel writing. By 1596, the *ars apodemica*, a humanist genre of travel-advice literature advising on the specifics of ideal travel reportage, was widely established, and its conventions increasingly adopted among the social elite in Europe.<sup>13</sup> Barton's correspondence follows the conventions of that genre, which grew out of the expectation that even casual travellers had a duty to write in as much detail as possible about the social and political

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not the case, and a close reading of his correspondence shows he was a willing and eager participant. See Woodhead, 'Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)', *ODNB*, and Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 100–01. Barton's forced presence in Hungary even served as a cautionary tale of bad conduct in the definitive eighteenth-century ambassadorial manual: see Abraham de Wicquefort, *The Ambassador and his Functions*, trans. by John Digby (London: Bernard Lintott, 1716), pp. 297–98.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Williamson, '“Fishing After News” and the *Ars Apodemica*: The Intelligencing Role of the Educational Traveller in the Late Sixteenth Century', in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 542–62; Andrew Hadfield, '“How harmful be the errors of princes”: English Travellers in (Western) Europe, 1545–1620', in *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance, 1545–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 17–69. For a consideration of how this applied to diplomats, see Gary M. Bell, 'Elizabethan Diplomacy: The Subtle Revolution', in *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of De Lamar Jensen*, ed. by Malcolm R. Thorp and Arthur J. Slavin (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 1994), pp. 267–88.

hierarchy, landscape, and military aspects of the regions they encountered on their travels, often as preparation for future Crown service.<sup>14</sup> Barton would have been aware of the expected conventions of travel writing, but it is his continuing departure from these conventions that reveals how his Hungary correspondence was shifting the conventions of diplomatic reportage. As we have seen, Barton's writing had to fulfil a number of duties, already straddling the boundaries between differing expectations as to the contents of his dispatches.<sup>15</sup> His writing may have adopted the typical model of sixteenth-century travel reportage, but that model was used as a framework from which to posit arguments for the importance of travel for a new, mobile ambassador at a time when English resident ambassadors were only newly established and taking root.<sup>16</sup>

Though not shaped to fit audience expectations in the same way as conventional writing which followed the guidelines of the *ars apodemica*, Barton's fortnightly dispatches were, from the beginning, negotiating a delicate balance of commerce, politics, diplomacy, and faith, as his previous letters have shown. Here, they were also fundamentally concerned with describing and relating a profoundly 'strange' place to an increasingly curious English court, with an immediacy which printed material could not hope to achieve.<sup>17</sup> The stimulus of his 1596 Hungary voyage allowed him an opportunity for a different mode of descriptive writing which he embraced as an opportunity. In many ways, the transition was seamless: Barton developed efficient accounting and

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<sup>14</sup> Barton's continued focus on fortifications, ordinance and the political hierarchies in his dispatches from Istanbul and in the field closely follow the conventions of the *ars apodemica*. See Williamson, pp. 543–44.

<sup>15</sup> As Williamson notes, the nature of the early modern distinctions between news, intelligence, and knowledge was and remains difficult to ascertain, but each category certainly carried with it its own expectations and connotations. See Williamson, "Fishing After News", p. 542.

<sup>16</sup> Garrett Mattingly describes the late Elizabethan period as one of diplomatic 'contraction', during which Barton was only one of three resident ambassadors in non-protestant settings. See Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, pp. 176–77. That Barton adopts and adapts conventional modes of late sixteenth-century humanist epistolary communication but uses them to his own specific ends recalls Timothy Hampton's theory of a 'diplomatic poetics': see Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>17</sup> For the evolving conceptions of the Ottoman world in England at large and a survey of this continuing curiosity, which reached a peak around this time, see particularly Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans*, and Dimmock, *New Turkes*.

inventorying skills during his years as a secretary, evidenced by his reports and accounts for the Levant Company, surveys of the Ottoman leadership, and inventories of gifts given and received at the Porte. Though used differently, these skills are on frank display in the Hungary material. We know, for example, the exact extent of Barton's retinue and provisions for the journey and are given meticulous estimates of the numbers on the battlefield in the dramatic climax of this period of reportage. Where previously there were descriptions of Ottoman political hierarchies, now there are observations about social hierarchy amongst the ethnic groups he encounters. Barton's writing amply satisfied all of the requirements of conventional reportage in these ways. However, in using his position to undertake an unauthorised and controversial voyage and document it in the style of an interested observer, producing writing that encompassed travel practicalities, ethnographic observations and eyewitness accounts of conflict, Barton was arguing that his position gave his writing a particular efficacy. He was laying out new terms for effective diplomacy, prioritising travel experience and knowledge as essential facets of good ambassadorial practice.

Barton quickly started to make a case for his accompaniment of the new sultan.

In a letter to Robert Cecil on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, he wrote:

both he [The Grand Signior] and his [uicereys], but especially the [old Empress], wold giue much to haue some hon.<sup>ble</sup> composition of these tumulttes, and doe nott cease to sollicite me therto, as knowinge my former indeuor therin, butt beinge depriued by [Queen Elizabeth] both of the couradge to attempte the same, by forbiddinge me, to deale therin, as also of the meanes to effectuatt any good successe, by reason of the obstinacy of [the Holy Roman Emperor] nott consentinge therto, I remayne idle, w<sup>th</sup>out comodity to shewe the sufficiency w<sup>ch</sup> I perswade my selfe to be of to accomodate matters to com[m]on content, and to the singuler increase of [Queen Elizabeth] reputation.<sup>18</sup>

Despite often writing about his diplomatic work in mercantile terms, Barton clearly placed a high worth on his diplomatic – not mercantile – activity as the way he could

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<sup>18</sup> SP 97/3, f. 124; BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, f. 335.

fulfil his potential and 'shewe his sufficiency': this is a key theme of his writing around the Hungary voyage. The arrangement with the Imperial hostages gave him a perfect opportunity to act as a mediator between the two powers and repeat his major establishing success of mediating between the Ottomans and Poland in 1591 (his 'former indeuor'), which brought him into Elizabeth's great favour.<sup>19</sup> The frustration he felt at this fairly recent policy shift could easily have spilled over into disobedience, especially in one with Barton's taste for disobedience.<sup>20</sup> In January 1596 this frustration is explicitly expressed: Cecil's letters admonishing Barton for ignoring the ban on diplomacy involving the Habsburgs in September 1595 'were of no small grieve unto mee, as p[er]ceiuing thereby that my negotiation here, is either not well considered, or by others not well construed'.<sup>21</sup> Later in the same letter, there is bitterness in his report that he had to seek the opinion of others before acting: 'I could not doe lesse, least I should seeme to trust too much to my owne witt'.<sup>22</sup> Barton's frustration exemplifies the shift from his former autonomy of the opening years of the 1590s, when he could go as far as to doctor royal correspondence without punishment. This was amplified by the risk of English interests slipping out of favour at the Porte. He began to sense an opportunity to show his worth as an ambassador in an unorthodox manner: travelling with a Muslim army into Hungary. Rather than the forced encounter that this has often been assumed to have been, Hungary represented nothing but opportunity.

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<sup>19</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 34–36.

<sup>20</sup> For this side of Barton's character, see *The Travels of John Sanderson*, pp. 11–14.

<sup>21</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, f. 297.

<sup>22</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, f. 298.

## Before the Journey: February-July 1596

Barton fervently wrote to England to try and obtain permission to accompany the sultan throughout 1596, but, remarkably, received no reply.<sup>23</sup> There are two major themes in his writing in this period. Barton constantly tries to elicit a response from England to give him any indication of their opinion on his participation. He also repeatedly describes the journey as compulsory and frequently expresses great dismay at the costs he will have to cover to make it viable. The constant lamentations about his forthcoming ‘forced uoyage’ and the strength of his complaints that the affair would leave him significantly out of pocket suggest that he wanted to be seen as a wholly reluctant participant. The financial complaints were certainly justified: Barton was unable to travel on Mehmed’s departure, as his state of acute ‘financial embarrassment’ prevented him doing so.<sup>24</sup> Barton’s Company wages, by this point, were rarely, or barely, paid; his allowance of £1,500 a year would not cover even the initial costs of the journey, estimated by himself at four to five thousand ducats.<sup>25</sup> His loan of a thousand ducats from a factor, John Bate, which he would later repeatedly implore Cecil and the queen to repay in full on his behalf, was insufficient, as was the early redemption of his next yearly pension.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the voyage would require a lengthy absence in uncomfortable and dangerous conditions, and would mean his proximity to those Ottoman officials who remained at the Porte would be compromised, particularly with the other European representatives remaining. All of this has led the majority of critical work on Barton to assume that his accompaniment of the sultan was forced. Noel Malcolm’s chapter on the Hungary expedition rightly

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<sup>23</sup> There is no similar gap, or a lack of reply from England, anywhere else in Barton’s correspondence.

<sup>24</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, p. 100.

<sup>25</sup> SP 97/3 f. 84; Cotton Nero B XII, f. 304.

<sup>26</sup> John Bate was known to Barton from his earliest days as secretary as a financial intermediary, as mentioned by Harborne in his very first letter to Barton, reproduced Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, II.i, p. 177; see Chapter One of this thesis.



concludes that Barton was not forced, but his assertion that Barton set out ‘with a certain trepidation’ due to the recent policy change and the controversy that would be generated is not supported by Barton’s attitudes in his earlier writings.<sup>27</sup> The overriding sense of Barton’s correspondence is one of opportunity and the possibility of both personal and national advancement. Similarly, Skilliter notes that Barton ‘was eager to act as a mediator’, but assumes the sultan forced him to attend, and seems to miss the fact that Barton not only had much to gain from the journey, but also that his writings show a palpable enthusiasm for participation, and a frustration at any obstacles to it.

A deeper look into the context of Barton’s participation, and his extant writings around it, show that Barton was in fact a willing participant who was extremely conscious of the diplomatic and commercial benefits it could bring in his interest and it is entirely possible that this view was shared by Cecil. That this was the case reframes the entire episode from one in which Barton has been seen as a prisoner of the sultan’s whim into one in which Barton spearheads a daring and controversial English diplomatic move. This re-imbues Barton with a crucial agency, and though it is unclear if Cecil and Elizabeth’s lack of reply to Barton’s letters was a deliberate move to give Barton autonomy and a silent consent, the previous autonomy with which Barton had had so much success was again deployed – whether authorised or not – in the English interest. For proof that Barton regarded the voyage as optional, we need look no further than the first mention of his participation in the voyage, in January 1596. Upon the amiable request from Koca Sinan Paşa to make himself ready for the voyage, he responded:

I answered I would gouerne my selfe as the other Embassado<sup>r</sup>s did, whoe hitherto make no p<sup>r</sup>eparation, and I if neede should soe require know not how to be supplied, for I cannot make the due prouision of horse and Coach, tentes and other extraordinary charges dependent [...]<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, p. 417.

<sup>28</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, f. 302.

A few days later, he updated Cecil:

Notw<sup>th</sup>standing all w<sup>ch</sup> discourse, yet I haue not fully resolued *the visier Bassa* of my setting fourth, but deferre the same for greater leisure to consult thereof, least I might seeme to doe any thing rashly, & my next shall aduise yo<sup>r</sup> hono<sup>r</sup> of what is resolued & concluded [...]<sup>29</sup>

Even a brief look at the letters of early 1596 show that Barton felt from the outset that not only was he free to choose whether to attend, but that participation was desirable; his problem, rather, was how to provide for the cost of the voyage if he did go. Initially it seems that he had elected to go if it were not for the financial constraints he faced, and that he would rather have consent from Elizabeth. His only other concern is also voiced in early 1596: that his participation would give rise to ‘malicious rumours’ from other Christian representatives at the Porte, especially de Brèves.<sup>30</sup> Rather than using this concern as a further reason not to attend, he finds a solution: for de Brèves also to attend, so that he can be a witness to Barton’s noble deeds, or at least the absence of any wrongdoing: ‘*ocularis testis*’, as he puts it.<sup>31</sup> The journey, despite its risk and danger, was desirable for a European ambassador, and it was not only Barton that believed so – the Venetian agent speculated that Barton’s involvement indicated the sultan’s favour.<sup>32</sup> De Brèves had to convince the authorities into inviting him: Barton writes that it is only ‘after many suits’ that the invitation is extended to the French ambassador, before he eventually declined to travel.<sup>33</sup> This demonstrates how optional these invitations were: he faced no sanctions. In these early days, Barton actively sought to overcome the obstacles which stood in the way of his participation in the campaign, and there is no evidence to show that he was in any way coerced. The changes in the tone and focus of his letters in 1596

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<sup>29</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, f. 304.

<sup>30</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, f. 305.

<sup>31</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, ff. 306–07.

<sup>32</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 222.

<sup>33</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, f. 305.

show a calculated reworking of his argument in order to draw more support – both financial and official.

Barton also sensed the opportunity of another great diplomatic triumph. Despite the embargo on diplomacy concerning the Emperor, he was keen to reap the rewards of another grand peace-making mediation. Not only had the events of the Polish peace in 1591 been responsible for greatly enhancing his reputation, but the contacts he made during that process would also be called upon in 1596. He had succeeded in his long-held goal of securing the release from captivity of the Imperial prisoners from von Kreckwitz's embassy. As we will see, Barton's successful delivery of these prisoners from harm would go on to be the most common defence of his attendance, an easy and open propaganda opportunity through which to show that Barton went to Hungary only in the interests of Christendom. It also corresponded to Elizabeth's own self-image as a 'liberator'.<sup>34</sup> Barton hoped also that the freeing of the prisoners would accelerate the peace effort with the Emperor. Further, Barton knew the credit he would gain with Mehmed for responding positively to his invitation would further their relationship, especially given the sultan's stated desire for peace. Christine Woodhead has identified this web of motives as a response to the controversy generated by the expedition, rather than premeditated:

In mitigation [of accusations of heresy], Barton could argue, first, that he had been able to secure the release from prison of the household of the late Habsburg ambassador and to ensure their safe conduct home in the rear of the Ottoman army; second, that he would have been ideally situated to promote peace negotiations should circumstances have permitted; and third, that his presence was testimony to the high regard in which the English were held by the Ottomans.<sup>35</sup>

This has been the scholarly understanding of the dynamic of Barton's Hungary voyage and the accompanying fallout. Yet this still implies that Barton made the most out of a forced voyage, when his writings seem to suggest otherwise. All of these arguments,

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<sup>34</sup> See Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism*, pp.117–20.

<sup>35</sup> Woodhead, 'Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)', *ODNB*.

rather than tacked on opportunistically to spin the journey positively in the Christian world, are in fact made in the letters sent to England before the voyage. His letter of April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1596 outlines his motives for attendance along exactly the same lines as Woodhead: there were strong motives not expressed before the journey, but the line of beneficial participation was established way in advance.

The thrust of Barton's 1596 correspondence is that it was the expenses, and not the journey itself, that were 'forced' upon him. His letters on the eve of his departure show an awareness of how much his attendance was desired by the sultan and his advisers, and how he could use this to his financial advantage:

This [Sultana Safiye] [Sultan Mehmed's mother, the *Valide sultan*] doth continually solicitt my preparation to accompany [The Grand Signor] butt as I haue oft write, he is a man of small wisdom, and of greatt inconstancie, and doble harted: besydes hetherto hath assigned me no camells, nor mules, for my carriadge, w<sup>ch</sup> [Sinan Bassa] most abundantly and honorably had ordeyned, so thatt I make shewe to drawe back, and to be unwilling to goe, knowinge thatt they both [haue need of me], and will not suffer me to remayne heere, wher as yf I should shewe them a desyer to goe forth, and nott to force them unto my due prouision twenty thousand duckettes wold nott suffice [...]<sup>36</sup>

By this point, any reluctance was merely a 'shewe' to secure further financial and material reimbursement. It was now assumed that the journey was necessary and important, and that Barton would undoubtedly go. Yet Barton would obtain no consent from England; this is a completely artificial progression. Barton proceeds to frame his plea for financial assistance in a more compelling manner:

[I] hope speedely to receyue from [*Queen Elizabeth*] by y<sup>r</sup>. hon<sup>rs</sup>. mediation, some lardge gracious bountifulnes. lardge I say in respect of the greate expences I shalbe forced to make, and want I shalbe driuen unto, and gracious in respect of the desyer I may, and comodity w<sup>ch</sup> shall occure to doe many hon<sup>ble</sup>. seruices ther, and then; wher, and when, the forces of the east and weast Empires shall be brought in face of the other [...]<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> SP 97/3, f. 125.

<sup>37</sup> SP 97/3, f. 126.

The rhetorical opposition of ‘east and weast’ is a common feature of the letters in the buildup to June, and was reprised frequently. The lyrical nature of the writing is an obvious attempt to persuade: the opposition of East and West, mirrored by the rhyme of ‘ther, and then [...] wher, and when’ aiming to inspire a sense of a grand, fundamental conflict from which England should not be excluded. This was one of Barton’s key tactics in his writing to court around the Hungary campaign.

Yet still, no consent would come, and so Barton’s hand was forced. His previous efforts having failed, he again switched the focus of his case. Sent after the above, on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1596, very close to his departure, the letter below shows a clear statement of intent to attend not out of obligation, but out of a profound desire to attend so that he could effect major diplomatic change, even to the extent that he effectively offers to resign over the affair. The letter is also a rare insight into how Barton personally regarded the nature of his role. In the following extract, the typical complaint of a lack of finance develops into a meditation on the nature of his role, and a quite extraordinary ultimatum presented to Cecil and Elizabeth:

my allowance is nott so much I assure yo<sup>r</sup> hon<sup>r</sup> as the [*Venetian*] spendeth on his Interpreters: w<sup>ch</sup> as itt is most true, so humbly require y<sup>r</sup> hon<sup>r</sup> to haue respect unto my Zealous desyer to do [*Queen Elizabeth*] and contry hon<sup>ble</sup> seruice, and eyther prudently to provide, the expedient for the inlardgement, of [*Queen Elizabeth*] reputation in these parttes, or speedely and pollitikly to resolute, thatt neyther the hon<sup>ble</sup> actions in this occasion, nor inlardgement of [*Queen Elizabeth*] reputation in these partts, will counteruaile the expence in this uoyadge requisitt, and theruppon by comodity of sendinge of the present, in August nextt (as the Company promise me) to send a newe Ambass<sup>r</sup>, or to shun expence an Agent, to succede in my place, and to obteyne for me a gracious congie to riturn being as all men, and my self thinke highe tyme, thatt after fourteen yeares continuall peregrinadge in these barabarous contreis, in w<sup>ch</sup> I haue spent the best of all my tyme, I should obteyne of [*Queen Elizabeth*] a gracious consent therto, : w<sup>ch</sup> neyther do I nowe expostulatt, as wearie to serue [*Queen Elizabeth*] in whose seruice I wold be content to spend a thousand liues, butt in case as aboue sayed, the publik negociation in these partes, shoulbe butt of small delightt to [*Queen Elizabeth*] and thatt my residence heer should only serue for the companies affayres, a newe Ambass<sup>r</sup> or Agent, though wanting both experience, and

language, should be of sufficient ability therto: in w<sup>ch</sup> nott w<sup>th</sup>standinge, as in all other thinges I remitt my selfe to y<sup>r</sup> hon<sup>rs</sup> most prudent censure. the 14<sup>th</sup> May.<sup>38</sup>

The admission of Barton's strong desire to return to England is not surprising: we have seen him wishing to return home for similar reasons four years previously. Here, though, his message is more sophisticated, and much stronger than previously expressed. It relies on the extent of his influence at the Porte, and shows the extraordinary position he held. Firstly, it is made clear that Barton's trip into Hungary will work in great ways for the reputation of England and Elizabeth – not only with the Ottomans, but also with the Emperor, whose prisoners Barton is asked to mediate for. Yet Barton asks a hard question of Cecil and the queen: does his work 'counteruaile' the expense continually caused in his name? If not, he insinuates that he is too useful, with too much experience and skill in language to be kept on as a representative solely of the Levant Company. In short, Barton asks the queen whether the whole endeavour is worth it, and the implied question is whether her interests in Constantinople are – sincerely – diplomatic and political, or merely commercial, whilst highlighting his own strengths and making clear that he is the most effective agent England could hope to employ. Further, he asks that they resolve this 'speedely' and 'pollitikly': Barton's pressure here indicates the skill and efficiency needed to effectively negotiate at the Ottoman court, and the implication is that he, and not Cecil or Elizabeth, who is best placed to make decisions of any weight regarding Ottoman politics. The effect is completed when, rather than signing off with his usual diplomatic commonplace – some version of 'I remain your most humble and obedient servant', as well as a prayer for the wellbeing of the reader – the letter ends curtly, with 'I remitt my selfe to y<sup>r</sup> hon<sup>rs</sup> most prudent censure'. Barton's message is unequivocally brusque, demanding and full of confidence in his ability. There is little sense that he values Cecil's censure; rather, that he awaits written permission for the voyage which he

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<sup>38</sup> SP 97/3, f. 126.

has already decided to undertake. Strikingly, the terms in which the necessity of the voyage is expressed have now moved from ‘forced’ to ‘requisitt’, and not requisite for Ottoman satisfaction, but rather for ‘the inlargement of [*Queen Elizabeth’s*] reputation in these partts.’<sup>39</sup> And the subsequent implications could not be clearer: either Elizabeth supports Barton’s voyage, or she critically undermines his whole mission and role, effectively relegating him to a servant solely of the Levant Company. Here, Barton communicates that the real worthwhile power in Constantinople is diplomatic power, and it is clear that by this point in 1596 diplomatic power took precedence over mercantile interests in his opinion; it could drive commerce as well as create political opportunities for England. There is an extreme contrast between this ultimatum and the writing that had started out as subservient and amicable requests for an opinion on the affair, such as in his letter from before the voyage on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February that year:

[...] [i] require yo<sup>r</sup> hono<sup>rs</sup> fauor to ascerteyne her Highnes of all such loyall industrie, w<sup>ch</sup> so mighty a Prince can require of soe meane a subiect, as alike alsoe desire yo<sup>r</sup> hono<sup>r</sup> at yo<sup>r</sup> Comodity to aduise mee of her highnes opinion touching this my uoyage, whether it be taken and construed in good part or noe, that accordingly I may either couragiously proceed therein or politikely w<sup>h</sup>draw my selfe therefrom [...]<sup>40</sup>

Having exhausted all available options and still without a reply, Barton’s last word on the matter of his attendance comes on July 1<sup>st</sup>, two days before he set off, in the document which officially appointed Sanderson in his place. Though the body of the letter deals mainly with Sanderson’s financial responsibilities, Barton prefaces it thus:

For that it hath pleased the Grand Sig<sup>r</sup> uppon what designe best known to him selfe that I should accompany him in thes hungarish warres & being requisit as well for the honor of hir maytie and such hir highnes busines, as might occure as also for the benifitt of the company & thier negotiation in the Leuant passage [...]<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> On the importance of Elizabeth’s global reputation, see Dimmock, ‘Introduction: Compassing the World’, in *Elizabethan Globalism*, pp. 1–31.

<sup>40</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, ff. 310–11.

<sup>41</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 241, f. 51.

‘Requisit’ is recited, and the movement from voluntary attendance to forced voyage is complete: the inherent incongruity in Barton’s admission that good work can be done on the voyage, though the sultan insists on his presence ‘uppon what designe best known to him selfe’, shows the confusion of his letters to England. The potential benefit to the Levant Company also briefly but unconvincingly resurfaces: he has tried all angles from which to secure permission and financial support, and settles on an uncomfortable contradiction.

The entire dynamic of the currently received understanding of Barton’s motives in accompanying Mehmed III into Hungary thus stands significantly altered. Only Skilliter, in her unpublished work, has recognised that Barton had any eagerness in the matter.<sup>42</sup> In all other accounts, the contemporary English state line deployed in the aftermath of the voyage seems to have won out, with the journey remaining involuntary and inconvenient rather than willingly attended. This has removed crucial agency from Barton, casting him as a passive presence rather than as an active diplomatic agent who recognised that the opportunity of the voyage outweighed the controversy that he knew it would generate. It shows a daring outlook and a bold set of priorities from an ambassador at the peak of his powers who appreciated he had a unique status as the only ambassador of his type (though this was increasingly threatened by de Brèves). It means the journey should be read as the outcome of Barton’s professional judgement, not of circumstance, and it should be understood that the unprecedented event of a state-endorsed English retinue travelling into Europe as part of an invading Muslim army is a direct consequence of the innovative project of a uniquely powerful agent. Whether this can be extended to the English court, through Cecil to Elizabeth, and indicate anything of the aims and ambitions of late sixteenth-century English foreign policy is harder to ascertain, but

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<sup>42</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, p. 100.



Barton's role as set up by the English court allowed the flexibility and, crucially, deniability which shaped his actions. It is likely that the court's silence in 1596 was a decision from the English court to enable plausible deniability. *Qui tacet consentire videtur* (roughly 'silence equals consent') was a commonplace of the time, especially in cases where the transmission of information was fraught with difficulty: Barton used it himself when bemoaning the lack of reply to his letters.<sup>43</sup> Barton's unique position frequently extended into a complete autonomy, and it was one of his strengths that he could work independently of instructions and work around and sometimes underneath existing frameworks, confident in his unparalleled knowledge of the Ottoman court, customs, and languages. Given the other encouragements towards to the Anglo-Ottoman alliance over the preceding decade, it is more than likely that Cecil shared Barton's priorities: a mutually convenient diplomatic relationship over an increasingly outdated but still very influential and widely-held belief in a united Christendom. Whatever the case, the English presence on the voyage that followed and the events within it cannot be conceived of as anything but as part of a purposeful diplomatic project on Barton's part, and attempts to remove his agency from the situation bear more relation to later attempts to distance England from the Ottomans than the true diplomatic dynamic of the period.

Barton had made the first mention of the journey tentatively at the beginning of the year; he would depart in early July without any reply, and no hint of whether Queen Elizabeth thought his participation was desirable or forbidden. Barton sensed an opportunity for personal and professional advancement. He also knew that the controversy it would generate would threaten his standing and career, and even the English project in Istanbul as a whole. But one of these considerations seemingly outweighed the other, and his writing shows clearly that he was a willing participant

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<sup>43</sup> Barton wrote later that he assumed the lack of reply from court should be taken as permission, utilising the same Latin phrase: SP 97/3, f. 157.

because he could use this opportunity to display his efficacy as a new kind of ambassador. Over the first half of 1596, his line of argument for persuading Robert Cecil to sanction participation went through several stages: first, that he was forced to accompany the sultan; second, that he could act as an important mediator between the sultan and the Holy Roman Emperor, particularly in dealing with the Imperial hostages; then that he could act as an independent Christian observer. Arguments like these would go on to be key parts of the rhetoric he deployed in his writing while travelling.

Barton held a profound appreciation for the significance of the presence of Mehmed on this occasion.<sup>44</sup> In a last-ditch attempt to convey the gravity of this fact to Cecil, he observed of the new sultan:

[Mehmed] by his p[er]sonall presence in the campe and conuersation amongst his soldiers (wher befor he was alwayes deteyned w<sup>th</sup>in four walls, seeinge and knowinge no more than itt pleased the [Empress], and [viziers] to aduise him) beginneth to take uppon him, the gouernment of the Empire <sup>45</sup>

For Barton, Mehmed's personal attendance comprised his physical presence and his ability to converse with his subjects as well as his ability to gain a direct, unfiltered experience of events, unpolluted by opinions of aspirational courtiers and unobstructed by the 'four walls' of the seraglio. It is no coincidence that this fit perfectly with Barton's arguments for his own involvement, intimating that the experience of travel – 'seeinge and knowinge' – as well as the social act of conversation only obtainable by participation in the voyage was a powerful and desirable combination; it also suggests that this was an

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<sup>44</sup> The idea that the knowledge of the eyewitness was superior to that accrued only by study: John Stells' epistle at the opening of Thomas Washington's translation of Nicholas de Nicolay's *The Nauigations, peregrinations and voyages, made into Turkie* is rehearsing a well-worn trope when it states that 'the perfect prayse of wisdom and learning, is not to be sought for in bookes, but to be gotten by verie vse and practise [...] To vndertake traueilling, the vtilitie (which is not small) springing from thence, shoulde inuete all liberall mindes and free natures.' This prefaces a piece detailing the experiences of a Christian ambassador abroad. See Nicholas de Nicolay, *The Nauigations, peregrinations and voyages, made into Turkie*, trans. by Thomas Washington (London: Thomas Dawson, 1585). On writing versus real-life experience during this period, see Andrew Hadfield, 'The Benefits of a Warm Study: The Resistance to Travel before Empire', in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance*, pp. 101–14.

<sup>45</sup> SP 97/3, f. 137.

opportunity for Barton to gain unmediated access to the sultan. Accordingly, the same lines of argument can be found throughout Barton's correspondence in 1596. Suddenly, the stakes are raised: for Mehmed, Barton implies, it is only with this travel experience that he 'beginneth to take uppon him, the gouernment of the Empire'. Barton escaping the detainment of his own 'four walls' in Pera is thus imbued with a specific importance. His own 'p[er]sonall presence in the campe' may not be as ceremonially visible as that of the sultan, but it carried with it its own implications and, crucially, a sense of rare and exciting opportunity. Here was a chance to put an Englishman in position to accrue experiential knowledge and sidestep the typical limitations of early modern diplomatic service.

It is in the build-up to the voyage that we first see Barton's attempt to pitch his participation as model ambassadorial conduct and practice. He twice repeated a case for his involvement due to his being the only man in the entire empire with the necessary language skills to mediate between two world powers, particularly in Latin and Turkish.<sup>46</sup> Garrett Mattingly has shown from his survey of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuals of proper ambassadorial practice that language, especially Latin, was increasingly prioritised as a necessary skill for good ambassadors.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Barton begged Cecil to urgently send him an assistant before he set off not only to act as a 'witness of credit', but also to learn the 'manners and practick' of diplomacy in Istanbul, implying that the experience of travel into Hungary would be a particularly good opportunity for a new agent to learn how to conduct oneself as an ambassador in Istanbul.<sup>48</sup> Barton valued travel as an intelligence-gathering exercise more than others, but had not had the chance to put this into practice for a long time. For an agent whose career was defined by its liminality, cross-cultural agency and transgression of

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<sup>46</sup> SP 97/3, f. 133.

<sup>47</sup> Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 217.

<sup>48</sup> SP 97/3, f. 107. Thomas Glover, then Barton's secretary and who would go on to be ambassador, did accompany the party.

expectations, norms, and values, Barton's term of office is notable for its relative stasis, as his personal presence in Istanbul was necessary to allow him to exercise the linguistic skills that gave him such an advantage.<sup>49</sup> Yet his life before assuming office was defined by travel and adventure, not only in his initial move to Istanbul as Harborne's secretary, but also in the years performing that service. As an intermediary, his duties necessitated fast and frequent travel. From the early days of his career, Barton had had to become a kind of professional traveller, learning skills on the job. He knew and appreciated more than others how important the spatial boundary-crossing of a network of intermediaries was for aiding his cultural boundary-crossing at the Porte. Travel and the mutability it brought not only for him, but also his network of travelling intermediaries, were key tools which defined his career. To use one of his own phrases, this travel gave him the opportunity to 'run with the hare, and hold with the hounds' – accrue favour on both sides of the religious divide, and come out best.<sup>50</sup>

## The Voyage

Still having received no reply from England, on July 4<sup>th</sup> Barton wrote that 'after many threats wee are come to deedes, yesterday being the 3<sup>d</sup> of Iulye wee set forth on our hungarish uoyage'.<sup>51</sup> This letter is the last to be copied into his letter book, and from now on he would send reports to John Sanderson, who he had appointed his deputy at the embassy household in Pera, who would relay them to England from there, often under instructions to add commentary or summarisation. Barton's travelling schedule meant he

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<sup>49</sup> There is no record of Barton ever returning to England.

<sup>50</sup> SP 97/3, f. 149.

<sup>51</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B XII, f. 358. The Venetian ambassador reports that Barton sets out on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and most other sources claim the 12<sup>th</sup>. It appears clear from this letter that Barton set forth on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, but perhaps did not join a larger entourage, or leave the city limits, until just over a week later, hence the discrepancies. His letters in the days immediately after the 3<sup>rd</sup> are still sent from his tents in the 'uines of Pera', so the party were sluggish to move out of the outskirts of Istanbul.

could not keep up his usual pattern of fortnightly reportage. Sanderson, deputising in Istanbul, was given control of Company affairs; he would wait for dispatches to arrive from Barton. Generally, the transmission of letters from Barton in the field back to Pera took around a month once he was past Edirne.<sup>52</sup> The early writing from Barton to Sanderson reveals a discrepancy between what he wanted to informally report to a colleague, and what he prioritised in his official reports; Barton's tone here, more than anywhere else, resembles that of an eager and curious traveller, and not that of a forced participant:

Knowing you wilbe glad to heare of our welfare, we advise you to have arrived heere in Andronoplie the 10<sup>th</sup> of this present with a most prosperouse voyadge and (that will content you and not displease us) with very smaule charge. I would requier you, Signor Agent, to geve advise therof to the Counsell, I meane in perticuler unto Sir Robert Cicill; inferringe that we heard no newes by the waye wourth the advise unto His Honnour and therefore writt not. The Grand Signor rested heere five dayes, and will rest in Sophia ten dayes; so that we ar in good hope to overtake him before he come to Bellograde. All our company is in good health (God be prayسد), and my perticuler helth increaseth by my travaile, beinge lightened of a great burthen of malancolines, and comforted by daylie newe sights. Yet I cannot assure you of my resolution to retorne; but will advise you with the first, when myself am resolved, and wishe you your contents. My request to you, Signor Gio[vanni] Sanderson, is to make me all the mony you may, as well that due by John Field, that of the cloth left with you, as that of Signor Petro M[ariani] (to whome I pray commend me) and that also of the French ambassiator, by whome, I pray, send me what newes you can learne, and also by what other commoditie you can find.<sup>53</sup>

The jovial tone of the above, with its jokes about money and light-hearted asides, lies in stark contrast to the letters he sent in the quest for consent, in which financial worries were a constant refrain, as were pleas for reimbursement, complaints of a lack of funding, and even threats to resign his post if he was not sufficiently paid.<sup>54</sup> On the eve of the voyage, a spat over money led to Barton accusing Sanderson of possessing a 'cancared

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<sup>52</sup> See the dates of the letters to and from Sanderson in *The Travels of John Sanderson*. The first dispatches from Edirne took two weeks to reach Istanbul.

<sup>53</sup> 'Edward Barton at Adrianople to J. S. at Pera, 11 July 1596', in *The Travels of John Sanderson*, pp. 149–50.

<sup>54</sup> Though this is first suggested in 1591, it is most strongly articulated during the pursuit of consent for the Hungary voyage. See his letter of May 14<sup>th</sup> 1596, SP 97/3, f. 126.

mind'; here, only weeks later, he makes light of the entirety of these issues and writes as if he is already refreshed and stimulated, attesting to the fact that he was always a willing, and never a forced, participant.<sup>55</sup> This first dispatch is not the writing of a beleaguered agent forced to follow orders from a foreign monarch. Rather, it reveals the sense of opportunity Barton felt that his close proximity to an Ottoman military campaign would bring.

Accordingly, Barton's profile amongst the Ottoman army could hardly be described as clandestine. His sizeable retinue included the Imperial prisoners to be delivered as well as a party of Venetians, recently expelled from their embassy in Istanbul.<sup>56</sup> Barton's personal party was twenty-five strong, accompanied by a coach and twenty-one horses; the Imperial party rode beside, carried in four coaches by eight horses, twenty-seven strong in total.<sup>57</sup> The thirty-six camels provided by the sultan made up the rear-guard of this Christian retinue, along with their twelve handlers. Due to the size of the retinue and the extraordinary nature of the circumstances, several first-hand accounts of the journey survive, and thanks to Susan Skilliter's work with Turkish archival material, we know the technicalities and extent of Barton's ration provision.<sup>58</sup> He had been provided by Mehmed with documents to submit to provincial religious leaders, *kadis*, which enabled him to provision at each stop along the way, with a typical supply according to eyewitness Thomas Glover being 'fiue Sheepe, two hundred Loaes of Bread, fiue Meatres of Wine, one loade of Hay, with twentie Kylowes of Barley.'<sup>59</sup> The party would travel at night, avoiding the heat, and hoped to arrive at their destination

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<sup>55</sup> 'Edward Barton at Pera to J. S. at Galata, 26 August 1595', in *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 142.

<sup>56</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 222; Wernham, *L&A*, VII, p. 289.

<sup>57</sup> For a full breakdown of the specific people involved, see Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 102.

<sup>58</sup> Skilliter, 'An Ambassador's Tayin'.

<sup>59</sup> Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, p. 1354.

before full daylight set in. They would then meet with local officials to gain their provisions, and make account of the same, before heading off again.<sup>60</sup>

From Edirne, the party headed North-West to Plovdiv, then to Pazardzhik, Sofia, Nis, and Smederevo before reaching Belgrade in early August. During this first month of travel, Barton elected to write a continuous narrative of his experience in the style of a travel journal, which would comprise his dispatches back to Robert Cecil in England. This narrative prose is a marked change from the succinct, formal content of his other dispatches, and makes for fascinating reading as a description of a particularly cross-cultural travel experience. By itself, however, this was not enough. Barton had to ensure the reportage reached England accompanied by mitigating and vindicating arguments for his involvement. For this, he saw Sanderson as the perfect conduit. On reaching Belgrade, Barton wrote to Sanderson:

We ar safely, without any disgust by the waye, arived in Belgrade, wheare we expect the Grand Signor his pleasure to passe over the River Laura in Hungaria; which I hope will succed within thes few days. At my arivall God graunted me sutch favoure in the Grand Signor his eyes that, by his imperiall commaundement he freelye gave me, sett at libertie not onelie those 22 persons of the Empirore his familie, but six other imprisoned in Buda, of no smaule credit credit and importance; whome I meane, God willinge, with my drugaman to send to the Empiroure so soone as we shall come to Buda, and hope all my travaile and expence shall not be in vayne. I pray you direct the inclosed to the Right Honorable Sir Robert Cicille, to whome you may writt your verdict, sainge that, as my voyage is of honorable fame in these parts, so is to be hoped therby many wourthy servises [...] You may besides aleadge the great expence I am at, and the requisitnes that I be supplied frome Hir Highenes<sup>61</sup>

Sanderson would dutifully forward Barton's enclosed dispatch as soon as he received it just over a month later. His accompanying note, carefully engineered by Barton via his instructions above, is telling in its attempt to shape reportage that was potentially provocative and suggests some trepidation concerning its reception in England:

This present 3 of September I received the inclosed frome the Honorable Lord Ambassador, of whose prosperytie the Almighty be praysed. For suerlie, as His

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<sup>60</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 104.

<sup>61</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 153.

Lordships voyadge is of honorable fame in thes parts, so is to be hoped therby many wourthy services, espetially that His Lorship shalbe recedent in place wheare the forces of the east and west empiers shalbe in ballance of their uttermost valouer; which urdgeth him assuuredly extreame and lardge expence. No doubt Hir Highenes will have a royall respect therto, being solicited by Your Honour, and of hir princelie liberalitie alowe the neadfull; for this Hir Magesties ambassador his indevors (by God His permission) will increase Hir Highenes fame througheout the wourlde <sup>62</sup>

These are Barton's words channelled through Sanderson's pen, who was now co-opted as a seemingly impartial observer able to testify to the importance and gravity of Barton's actions. Sanderson added only one rhetorical flourish of his own, but it is telling. He reserved special mention for the fact that Barton will be 'recedent in place wheare the forces of the east and west empiers shalbe in ballance of their uttermost valouer'. This is a reprisal of a trope Barton had frequently deployed in his attempts to gain permission to travel. Yet coming from Sanderson, these words were more powerful. By coaching an apparently impartial observer to champion his cause, Barton extended the reach of his conception of good ambassadorial conduct, delivering rhetoric of grand diplomacy, reputation, and the making of history from a source other than himself.<sup>63</sup>

Barton's first dispatch from Belgrade takes on describing, relating and testifying to an extent never visible elsewhere in any of his correspondence. This narrative is where we find his description of his travel experience in its purest form. His stop at Belgrade allowed him to complete and dispatch the account he had been writing as he went. 'Now after twenty dayes easy iourneis by reason of the slowe pace of our Camels we be arriued

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<sup>62</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 154.

<sup>63</sup> Early modern epistolary transmission practices meant that all postal communication was open to be altered by various mediators: see James Daybell, 'Postal Conditions', in *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512–1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 109–147. In Barton's case this was exacerbated by long distances and hostile forces such as rival agents or pirates, for example. Barton's career shows a constant appreciation of the volatility this brought to his and others' written communication. In addition to using Sanderson as a temporary agent here, he always employed a number of semi-official go-betweens and translators, often instructing them to use unconventional delivery routes so as to avoid detection. As Chapter Two of this thesis has shown, he also doctored correspondence himself, adopting the position of the mediator and harnessing its considerable power.



in Sophia', he began, and went on 'I thought itt my duty to giue relation of my uoyadge hetherto; and of the newes passinge in the campe, by wayefarers brought us.'<sup>64</sup> Here, Barton showed that he was reaping the rewards of travelling amongst the Ottomans: he was privy to the goings on in the camp, has first-hand access to the news-bringers he would be so far from in Istanbul, uniquely available to him as a Turkish-speaking European representative. Yet upon opening the letter, Cecil would have found something resembling a travel journal. At first sight, it might have seemed there was little of political import in what Barton described to open his letter:

The cheife thinge worthy of a<sup>c</sup>count, w<sup>ch</sup> we sawe in this iorney were first a bridge thirty mile distant from Constant<sup>ple</sup> called Ponte grande, consistinge of twenty fye arches all made of exceedinge great marble stone, no lesse necessary for all uiandante[s], by these partes passinge, then perpetually famous for the founder who was, Sultan Soliman, hauinge byn acheiued w<sup>th</sup> exceedinge greate expence, and many yeares labour of infinitt workmen. The second an In, for hospitality of all passengers, built in Burcas by the greatt Mehemet Bassa uicerey att the makinge of league between [Queen Elizabeth] and [Sultan Murad III] yea soule cause therof: w<sup>ch</sup> In built all of great marble, and free stone is capable of 500 men, w<sup>th</sup> theire horse, a seuerall roome w<sup>th</sup> a chimney prepared for euery two men, to whome I meane to all the passengers is provided both at midday and nighte plenty of uictuall free att the chardge of the reuenues belonging to the sayed In: in w<sup>ch</sup> is also provided seuerall roomes for woomen, w<sup>th</sup> allowance of meate, accordinge as to the men, and att night two candles for euery seuerall roome:<sup>65</sup>

Barton continues in this style until the relation of his journey is complete. Why is Barton writing like this? An unauthorised, potentially scandalous journey is not an obvious occasion for a lengthy description of the practicalities of sleeping at inns along the way or describing interesting sights. Yet in fact, this is the core of Barton's argument towards travel as diplomatic service. His comments on the great Ottoman statesmen who built the bridge and the inn invoke a grander picture of the Ottoman Empire, showing that he has not only admired the sights along the way, but asked and learnt about them. In this way, descriptions of travel experience become authorising intelligence-gathering: as an agent

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<sup>64</sup> SP 97/3, f. 141.

<sup>65</sup> SP 97/3, f. 141.

of the English Crown, this is valuable information not only to him but to England as a whole, exposing the inner workings of a vastly powerful empire. That there are two men to a room, or that women are given the same rations, or that there are two candles per room may seem inconsequential. But Barton, perhaps anticipating the publication implications of the travel anthologies which were newly popular with an English reading public, knew that of anyone, he was the best placed to satisfy the curiosity inspired by England's continuing fascination with the 'Turk'. By cataloguing the mundanities of something so integral to an empire's strength as the sleeping and eating habits of its army, he made a case for himself as an inherently cross-cultural and knowledgeable agent. The inclusion of this material, which is so obviously absent in the rest of his reportage, is designed to give it a powerful authenticity which can only be garnered through this particular travel experience. He continued:

In Baba nott far thence distant is sayed to be <sup>a</sup> burning lamp w<sup>ch</sup> neuer decreaseth, and yett is neuer soccoured w<sup>th</sup> oyle or mach, by this we passed at midnightt (as we alwayes by reason of the heate trauel in the nightt tyme) and therfor could nott see the truth nor much desyered the same, nott to fall into the common errour of others to beleue so supernaturall a thinge <sup>66</sup>

Ensuring his distance from superstitious Muslim customs, Barton reassured Cecil that such an outlandish phenomenon barely even piques his curiosity. Yet by including the description of the lamp, Barton evoked a sense of mystery associated with common superstition and the 'supernaturall'. Including it, however, to spurn it, is intended to show that Barton was unpolluted by his experiences amongst Muslims. This is especially pertinent given the ongoing suspicions surrounding Barton's autonomy and closeness with the Ottomans, especially at the height of the depictions of 'turning Turk' in literature. Repositioning himself as a detached and morally incorruptible observer, Barton elevated his travel writing into responsible reportage concerned with the building of empires and

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<sup>66</sup> SP 97/3, f. 141.

their functions rather than the superstitions they contain. All of these themes were revisited and rehearsed in Barton's dramatic concluding account of the journey.

### Barton's Report of the Battle of Keresztes

The dénouement of this episode is spectacular: a ten-thousand-word report of the successful siege of Eger (Agria, Erlau – a city in northern Hungary) and the nearby battle of Keresztes. It is a formidable piece of writing, devoted to detailed and vivid descriptions of dramatic events. This is a far cry from the mundanities of the subject matter of Barton's previous observations, and his rhetoric changed accordingly. Suddenly, the high stakes of imperial battle became evident; narratives of Christendom versus 'the Turk' and atrocities against Christians were invoked. On this occasion, Barton dedicated a month after his return to carefully construct a compelling account of the conflict. In January 1597, almost exactly a year before his death, he sent the result to Cecil. 'Right Hon.<sup>ble</sup>', Barton began,

beinge returned to Constant:<sup>ple</sup> after fiue monethes trauayle in my Hungary uoyadge, I remitt unto y<sup>r</sup> prudent discretion, whatt chardge and payne I might haue sufryred in the same, I wold to god I could as well ascerten my selfe, of hir highnes and yr hon.<sup>res</sup> well likinge of my sayed trauayle, thatt att least hauinge passed the troblesomnes of the uoyadge noe feare of hir Mag.<sup>ties</sup> and yr hon.<sup>res</sup> discontent, mighte farther disquiet my tyreed mynde. whatt my intent was in this my forced uoyadge, my formeres haue described, whatt the successe hath byn nott accordinge to the uayne rumors of others butt in uerie truthe as hauinge my selfe byn present witnes of all w.<sup>ch</sup> hath passed, the sequell shall unfold.<sup>67</sup>

Immediately striking is the stubbornness with which Barton returned to financial complaints: 'chardge' precedes 'payne' in the 'forced' voyage he has 'sufyred'. Yet, as we have seen, in July he had written cheerily to Sanderson that the opposite was true.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> SP 97/3, f. 147.

<sup>68</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 150.

In addition to the discrepancy between actions and intentions shown above, this contrast between the extant letters sent to Sanderson from the field and this longer dispatch shows that the latter is an artificially crafted defence of Barton's involvement first, and diplomatic reportage second. His contrast between 'intent' and 'successe' acknowledges a difference between reality and reportage, but this is reportage he, and not the 'uayne rumors of others' will be able to govern.

Prefaced and concluded with strong defences of his participation, the writing constantly worked, within the factual subject matter, to shape the reception of Barton's actions. He struggles throughout this piece to justify his close involvement with the battles as a Christian in the Muslim camp. Yet a more sophisticated argument is rehearsed throughout: that he acted as the '*ocularis testis*' mentioned in his earlier letters. His presence was important not only to report on events, but also to witness the clash between Christendom and 'the Turk', or to use his own preferred terms, East and West: all categories which his career exposes as unstable, and the limitations of which he was surely aware. But here, more than in any of his other correspondence, Barton here played into stereotypical conceptions of the 'Turk'. First, he insists on his naivety, assuring Cecil that his movements around the Ottoman and Imperial camps at Mezokeresztes were inspired only by curiosity and ignorance:

I as unskilfull immartiall pointtes as the rest, though curious both in the exploite of Agria, and inthis enterprise, thatt nothinge should be done, Ignorante me, w.<sup>th</sup> my family on horseback, nott only entred, and ueywed the turkish trenches, order of the same, and slaughter in them com[m]itted, butt passed euen to the drinke of the riuer, whence wee might in parte perceauie, and uewe the schristian lodgings, att w.<sup>ch</sup> tyme wee found nott the euent, accordinge to the reporte, thatt the christians were fled, butt that they prepared the pollitike ordering of all their forces to come uppon [The Grand Signor]<sup>69</sup>

Through portraying himself as a careless wanderer and observer, then, Barton actually proves his importance: he is able to ascertain that 'he found nott the euent, accordinge to

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<sup>69</sup> SP 97/3, f. 149.

the reporte', and, in doing so, salvages the reputation of the Christian soldiers who were actually governing themselves with 'pollitike' competence. Yet the battle turns, and the Imperial troops are routed despite having an advantage. In this case, Barton is able to pronounce judgement, using his privileged role as an advocate for Christendom behind enemy lines, that it is 'a pitifull thinge surly to consider, whatt exceedinge damage to christendome by the ill gouernment thatt day of the christians'.<sup>70</sup> Quickly establishing himself as an important observer for the good of Christendom, he is not above criticising the Imperial Catholics, reminding Cecil that it is Christendom, not Christians, that he was working for in this mission.

Next, Barton turned to much more familiar tropes to cement the projection of his role on the voyage:

my selfe w.th my family the day after the battayle were sourowfull beholders and wittneses, for uewing the turkishe campe were sawe the same couered w.th christian carcasses, especially in on place such ^a^ mortality as the same seemed uerie well to be the slaughter house [...] the christians bodies remayned nott scatteringly as in other places, butt for a quarter of myle longe heaped or ranged together ten and twelue on a breast, the sightt of w.ch so trobled my spiritt, as thatt I haue nott the couradge to behold the whole dolefull plott <sup>71</sup>

These passages, with their focus on sights of atrocities committed by the barbaric Turk fit more into the wider deployment of the 'Turk' tropes common in writing and drama of the period.<sup>72</sup> The horrors of the battle evident, Barton now explained why this matters:

the Tartars barbarous theeuish condition makinge the same manifest to the world, by spoylinge the deade bodies both of Turkes and christians euen of their shirtts, so thatt the shamfull company of circumcised might be decerned from the uncircumcised, and w.ch was esteemed by the turkes reproche, unto the christians many women were founde amongst the deade carcasses, yea some women were found slayne w.th younge children in their armes <sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> SP 97/3, f. 149.

<sup>71</sup> SP 97/3, f. 150.

<sup>72</sup> For extended discussion of the extent to which this was the case, see Anders Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans*; Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes*; and Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>73</sup> SP 97/3, f. 151.

The Tartars are Barton's easiest target – he and England have no loyalty to them as they did to the Ottomans, and accordingly the moral outrage at the barbarity of the atrocities committed is shifted onto them. But the rhetoric here is central to Barton's case for his involvement. Just as in the preceding paragraphs the poor organisation of Christian soldiers is extrapolated into 'exceedinge damage to christendome', here war crimes make barbarity 'manifest to the world'. This is another leap which solidified Barton's claim to crucial importance, recalling Elizabeth I's words of congratulation to him in 1591 that his work was all the more important for having been conducted 'in the sight of the world'. In her letter congratulating him on the Polish peace, she told Barton his job is harder and his accomplishments grander for being effected 'in the sight of the world', and had famously declared that 'we princes...are set on stages, in the sight and view of all the world.'<sup>74</sup> The only way atrocities such as those committed by the Tartars, and these crucial ideological clashes between East and West can be made 'manifest to the world', was through interlocutors in distinctively hybrid positions such as Barton, who, by travelling, are 'seeinge and knowinge' the truth. In this way, he argued that the value of his travel experience, and its fruits – the reportage – could not be higher and was unique to an ambassador as capable as Barton, who was daring to go where other Christian agents would not.

Barton's reportage from Hungary had a lasting impact. Peter Mundy would travel with an identical itinerary under the guidance of one of Barton's successors, Paul Pindar, in 1620.<sup>75</sup> Henry Blount's journey with Ottoman soldiers over the same ground was likely inspired by knowledge of Barton's voyage.<sup>76</sup> It had set a precedent. Travelling in the

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<sup>74</sup> BL, Cotton MS Nero B VIII, f. 50; *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 94.

<sup>75</sup> *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667*, ed. Richard Carnac Temple (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1925), I, pp. xxvii–xxxv, 42–72.

<sup>76</sup> See Gerald MacLean, 'Henry Blount: *A Voyage into the Levant* (1636)', in *Travel Knowledge: European "Discoveries" in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Ivo Camps and Jyotsna Singh (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 75–84 (p. 81).

Ottoman borderlands, when English interest in the figure of the ‘Turk’ was at its highest – due in part to uncertainty generated by the Ottoman-Habsburg conflict – was clearly an experiential mission with added ideological implications. ‘When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes home’, Gerald MacLean has noted,

a peculiarly British form of neo-colonial occupation becomes evident: the one being practiced whenever visitors cannot help but imagine themselves agents while in Turkey, eager to find parts to play in the great game of European diplomacy.<sup>77</sup>

MacLean posits that the ideal model for the pioneering traveller into the Levant at which Lady Montagu aimed was ‘an informed adventurer going somewhere for the first time and with a mission.’<sup>78</sup> And though comparisons between Barton and Lady Montagu may at first seem unlikely, this is the very same model that tempted Barton into Hungary, and necessitated his writing as an argument for and defence of his conduct. Or rather, this ideal is what Barton evoked in his reportage home in an attempt to justify and vindicate his controversial model of diplomacy, couching it in neo-colonial terms. Barton pioneered an itinerary that would be repeated by similar figures after him, and his mission could not have been grander: to mediate between two of the largest global powers. Working within and around established epistolary practices, Barton posited arguments for a new, itinerant ambassador whose mobility was integral to his efficacy.

Barton would have left the Hungary voyage feeling triumphant. He had secured the safe passage of von Kreckwitz’s embassy, and he had written impressively defending his conduct. Crucially, he had also made a major breakthrough in trade rights for the English. Barton’s long-standing friend, Cıǧalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa, had been promoted to the post of Grand Vizier for displaying heroism on the battlefield, and had instantly rewarded Barton’s loyalty to him. Skilliter summarises thus:

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<sup>77</sup> MacLean, ‘Ottomanism Before Orientalism? Bishop King Praises Henry Blount, Passenger in the Levant’, in *Travel Knowledge*, pp. 85–96 (p. 85).

<sup>78</sup> MacLean, ‘Ottomanism Before Orientalism?’, p. 85.

Chighalazade showed his appreciation of Barton's friendship. Through his intercession a berat [license] was issued, granting the protection of non-Muslim merchants from countries without diplomatic representation at the Porte to the English. In this document [...] the Sultan enumerates the four motives which caused him to grant this coveted privilege to the English – a 'petition' by Barton, a letter from the Queen, Barton's attendance at the campaign, and a 'petition' made by Chighalazade [...] Consequently he has given orders that from henceforth the merchants of Ancona, Spain, Portugal, Sicily, Catalonia, Genoa, Florence and the Flanders shall travel in the Ottoman dominions under the English banner and pay their consulage to the English consuls in the ports. The French officials are commanded not to interfere with these merchants or claim that they have any rights over them. The Sultan further ordains that this new privilege shall be added to the English capitulations, which shall be renewed after the Queen has sent her envoys to congratulate him upon his accession. The protection of these merchants, the 'merchants forestiers', among whom the English were also included until 1580, when they achieved the right to trade independently, had always been the prerogative of the French since 1535. Thus, by snatching the privilege away from the French Barton acted in the best interests of the Levant Company and also achieved a major diplomatic victory over de Brèves.<sup>79</sup>

Not only had Barton argued effectively for his own worth, but his presence had borne fruits which formalised the Anglo-Ottoman closeness which his career had exemplified. This major victory for English interest would not have been possible were it not for his close relationships with senior Ottoman officials and his personal presence in Hungary. This was a ready-made vindication of his involvement in the Hungary affair, and is the climax of the early modern Anglo-Ottoman relationship. Barton would have been sure his transgressive, unauthorised encounter had been conducted according to the best interests of England. Protection of the harbī merchants (the foreign merchants; 'merchants forestiers') was a long-held English goal which established England firmly at the top of the diplomatic hierarchy in Istanbul, greatly disadvantaging French interests in the process. Its importance cannot be overstated – it is the pinnacle of Barton's career, especially since Barton's autonomous actions had led to the licence being granted. The sultan's formal confirmation of the new English pre-eminence, translated by Skilliter, can

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<sup>79</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 107–08.



be read as the remarkable culmination of English influence in Istanbul, linked explicitly and unquestionably due to Barton's involvement in the Hungary voyage:

[...] when this time my august Majesty departed and set out in person for the Imperial expedition, although it was my Imperial command for the ambassadors of the Queen of England and the Padishah of France, and all the other ambassadors who are at my felicitous Threshold to go on my Imperial expedition, not one of the ambassadors came (but) the ambassador of the aforesaid Queen of England who is at my felicitous Porte, for friendship's sake, came beside my Imperial stirrup. The aforesaid ambassador and his men, in perfect service and comradeship, were not separated from my Imperial stirrup at the conquest of the castle of Eger and at the pitched battle in the camp. Besides, the most honourable minister, the very illustrious commander, the basis of the order of the world Chighalazade Sinan Pasha (may God Almighty make his honouring eternal!), once my Qapudan, now my Grand Vizier, while he was my Qapudan, sent a letter to my exalted Court, submitting (as follows): 'The English are enemies of our enemies and friends of our friends and at this time never cease from war and battle with the King of Spain, who is our enemy. Kind help is necessary; it is befitting that the harbī merchants should be appointed to the English.' Therefore it will be proceeded upon in pursuance of the described opinion of my aforesaid former Qapudan, and in recognition of the request of the aforementioned Queen, and the service and work performed this time by her aforesaid ambassador and his valiant men on my Imperial expedition. The abundance of my Imperial favour is now graciously granted on his behalf and my Imperial order emanates as follows: After to-day when all the harbī merchants listed above shall hereafter come to my well-protected provinces, travelling to and fro under the aforesaid Queen's banner, and have recourse to the English consuls in the ports, and have their affairs attended to by the English ambassador and consuls, and discharge the consulage to the consuls of the Queen of England, henceforth there shall be no interference on the part of the French ambassador and consuls.<sup>80</sup>

This could not be more unambiguously pro-English and anti-French, vindicating Barton's presence in Hungary and seemingly securing English interests in Istanbul for the foreseeable future. It bode very well for Barton's standing, a firm endorsement not only of his judgement but also of the 'comradeship' he had facilitated between his embassy and the new sultan. As unprecedented in a diplomatic sense as it was in a cultural sense, this document seemingly spoke volumes about the depth of the friendship Barton had cultivated between England and the Porte.

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<sup>80</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 242–44.

But the victory was short lived. Two things happened almost concurrently: first, Cıǧalazade fell out of favour as quickly as he had been promoted, and was stripped of his title and sent into exile.<sup>81</sup> Then de Brèves, who had remained in Istanbul and close to the centre of power during Barton's absence, managed to present his gifts to the new sultan.<sup>82</sup> He had also managed to procure the execution of Paulo Mariani, one of Barton's closest allies, which Barton 'resent[ed] very much.'<sup>83</sup> The net effect of this was that the trading privileges were returned to the French only two weeks after the licence granting them to the English was issued. Barton was now empty-handed: there was no peace between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, and no trading privileges gained from the voyage. His writing from the previous year – his carefully-constructed case for attendance, his ten-thousand-word report, his sophisticated arguments for mobile, observational diplomacy – could now be read as testament to his inefficacy by his superiors. No present was forthcoming to give him the material means to combat de Brèves' growing influence. Barton's career had peaked in the most spectacular of fashions.

## The Aftermath

The Hungary voyage, more than any other element of Barton's tenure, has a traceably wide impact. Barton's tombstone inscription highlights his involvement in the '*Bello Vngaric*' as his defining feature.<sup>84</sup> An account written by Thomas Glover, Barton's

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<sup>81</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 109.

<sup>82</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 166.

<sup>83</sup> *Cal S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 247; see also *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 13, and Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, p. 1621.

<sup>84</sup> The inscription is still visible today, though badly weathered; Skilliter's transcription, made when the letters were more legible, reads: 'EDVARDO BARTON ILLVSTRISSIMO SERAEVENTISSIMO ANGLORE REGINE ORATORI VIRO PRAESTANTISSIMO QVI POST REDITVM A BELLO VNGARIC CO QVOCVM IN VICTO TVRCARE IMPERATORE P PROPECTVS FVER AT DIEM OBIIT PIETATIS [ERGO] AETATIS AN XXX[V] SALVT VERO ANNO MDXCVII XVIII CAL IAN AR'. See Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', pp. 116-17. The 'rudely done' Latin and inaccurate crest have been attributed to an inexperienced craftsman.

secretary and later ambassador himself, was published in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, though it seems truncated and sanitised when read against Barton's own reportage, the title glossed with a defence:

If any think it ill that a Christian Ambassador should accompany the *Turke* in this warre against Christendom: they may please to vnderstand, that his intents were to doe service to the Christians, if occasions were offered for peace: as also he did in deliuerie of the Emperors Seruants here mentioned, etc.<sup>85</sup>

Such qualifiers were clearly necessary for the episode's publication. There is little doubt that this was the major part of Barton's legacy; the shockwaves his actions created would spread beyond his immediate realm of influence. The controversy which accompanied the voyage was, as expected, substantial. The rumours amongst the other European representatives in Istanbul started up: Venetian ambassador to the Porte Marco Venier reported the following:

[the Hungary voyage] is described by the English Ambassador in a way which accords neither with the Turkish account nor with facts, and makes the hearer marvel [...] The Ambassador denies that he was in arms against the Christians as he is charged with being. He does not deny, however, that on Ibraim's invitation he went to see the trenches before Erlau and examined and approved them; nor does he deny that on being questioned whether he had borne arms for the Turks against the Christians, and slain a lot of them, he, to satisfy them, said it was quite true; if they said he had killed four, he assured them he had killed ten.<sup>86</sup>

The spread of such shocking news triggered a wide-ranging damage limitation exercise from Cecil and Elizabeth in the years after the journey. Barton was careful enough to secure a letter from Mehmed praising his actions, and excusing his involvement, but his own writing in this period says little: no doubt he was eager to downplay the controversy, and accordingly there is little acknowledgement of the voyage in his 1597 correspondence

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<sup>85</sup> 'The Iourney of *Edward Barton* Esquire, her Maiesties Ambassador with the *Grand Signior*, otherwise called the Great *Turke*, in *Constantinople*, *Sylvan Mahvmet Chan*. Written by Sir *Thomas Glover* then Secretarie to the Ambassador, and since employed in that Honourable Function by his Maiestie, to *Sylvan Achmet*. Two Letters are also inserted, written from *Agria*, by the said Ambassador *Barton*.' in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, pp. 1354–60 (p. 1354).

<sup>86</sup> *Cal S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 247.

through to his death in January 1598.<sup>87</sup> He makes only passing mention to his involvement in a letter to Cecil sent in January 1597:

[...]I esteemed it no less needless to renew and refresh my ancient dutiful thankfulness unto you for the manifold favours received in the life of Sir Tho. Henage; by whose due relation and serious requests your honour not only preferred divers my humble suits unto her Highness, but took the protection of my credit against sundry false malicious obtractors of the same; for requital of which, not remaining in me any other ability but a grateful devoted mind, with the same incessantly pray unto God to bless and prosper all your virtuous and heroical designs, humbly craving pardon for my present negligence in the due discourse as well of the affairs of those parts as also performance of my Hungary voyage [...]<sup>88</sup>

There is a more than a sense of a winding down of responsibilities here, perhaps in advance of an expected and desired return to England. The tone is grateful and apologetic, strikingly at odds with the strongly-worded defence of his actions in the long dispatch sent in the same month, as well as the headstrong ultimatum sent before his departure. The ‘malicious obtractors’ anticipated by Barton in his letters early in 1596 had indeed struck at the voyage as hard evidence of Anglo-Ottoman military cooperation. The resignation implied by these apologies and admission of not having ‘any other ability but a grateful devoted mind’ suggests Barton was under fire from many sides, struggling to defend himself from these accusations. Barton’s mind in the build-up and immediate aftermath of the voyage had been far beyond merely ‘grateful and devoted’, and there is a definite sense that a punishment for Barton lurks behind this letter.

Fynes Moryson, who stayed at the English embassy at Pera in 1597, wrote a rare account of Barton’s personal nature, with the aim ‘to preserue his memory as much as I can’.<sup>89</sup> The piece is tellingly defensive in tone, and is likely to have been written as a response to the controversy which the Hungary campaign generated – ‘preserue’ meaning

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<sup>87</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, pp. 242–43.

<sup>88</sup> *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House*, VII, ed. R. A. Roberts (London, 1899), pp. 31–52.

<sup>89</sup> *Shakespeare’s Europe: Unpublished Chapters of Fynes Moryson’s Itinerary*, ed. by Charles Hughes (London: Sherratt & Hughes, 1903), p. 27.

closer to 'protect' or 'defend' in this instance. Moryson is enthusiastic about Barton's personality, but includes a fairly lengthy defence of the Hungary voyage, writing that 'his journey into Hungary, made the Queene of England much offended with him [...] whereof the French Ambassador accused him to the Emperor, and the French King, who expostulated with the Queene that her Armes should be borne in the Turkes camp against christians'.<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, he is alone in mentioning the trading privileges gained as a direct result of the journey – 'he was much envied by some Christians especially by the French Ambassador who formerly had enjoyed that priuiledge' – omitted by Barton in his own dispatches. Skilliter has suggested that Moryson's account was partially influenced by what Barton told him during his stay.<sup>91</sup> Yet given the extent of Barton's conscious control of his reputation, it is not unreasonable to posit that this account, like those of Sanderson, was fed directly to Moryson, perhaps whilst he was in receipt of Barton's hospitality in Istanbul. It is unusually positive about Barton, given the period, and the only criticism follows the tone of apologetic excusal set in the above January letter to Cecil:

But the truth is, that howsoever Mr. Barton had strong parts of nature, and knew well how to manage great Affaires in the Turkes Court; yet he coming yong to serue our first Ambassador there [Harborne], and being left to succeed him, could not know the English court, nor the best wayes there to make good his actions.<sup>92</sup>

Barton is completely blameless in this version of events, and acted nobly: it is the machinations of the English court, the workings of which are unknown to him, that have been his downfall. This interpretation of the fallout of the voyage would certainly fit with Barton's own position, who would feel not only vindicated by the gaining of the privileges in Hungary, but also that he acted only with good reason, according to his

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<sup>90</sup> *Shakespeare's Europe*, p. 29.

<sup>91</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 112–13.

<sup>92</sup> *Shakespeare's Europe*, p. 29.

judgement which, as we have seen, he believed to be far superior to the opinions of those who remained in England.

Neither Barton's, Moryson's, or even Mehmed's efforts to mitigate the damage done to the reputation of the English diplomatic activity in Istanbul seem to have succeeded, however. This is evident through perhaps the most telling extant record of the controversy generated by Barton's Hungary voyage, which comes after his death in January 1598. In 1600, Cecil drafted a letter of instruction to Sir Richard Lee, who was about to be sent as an English ambassador to Russia. Strikingly, nearly half of the letter instructs Lee how to deflect the rumours stirred up by Barton's embassy to the Porte and his closeness to the Ottoman court, and specifically his attendance on the Hungary voyage:

Among other imputations, which heretofore have been cast forth in those parts, the proceedings of our agent at Constantinople hath been much spoken of, wherein, as formerly directions was given to Cherry how he should answer, so may you, if occasion be offered, maintain the same to be true, as followeth; first, for his going along with the Turkish army into Hungary, he was forced thereto by the Grand Signor's commandment; and it was merely without our knowledge and liking; and that as soon as we heard of it, we reprov'd him sharply for the same. Neither did his going prove any ways to the detriment of Christendom, as appeared by the fruits of it, in procuring the liberty of so many poor captives. Besides that during his continuance at Constantinople, he did sundry good offices to the Empire, as in procuring the liberty and sending back freely some of the servants of the Emperor's Ambassador that had been long detained there as prisoners, for which he received great thanks from the Emperor's Court, and from time to time employed his endeavours, both there and in other parts of the Turk's territories, for the freeing of many distressed Christians, whereof yearly he procured the liberty of many.<sup>93</sup>

This is an important document regarding the fallout of Barton's Hungary voyage: a rare piece written by Cecil which gives an idea of the response in England. From it, we cannot ascertain for certain what actual events transpired, but the official line from court is clear. Barton acted out of order, and was punished for it; his actions have thrown the reputation of the queen into doubt with other Christian leaders; the 'fruits' of Barton's actions were

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<sup>93</sup> *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House*, X, ed. by R. A. Roberts (1904), p. 170.

the delivering of the prisoners, and not the trading privileges. These instructions hint at the Europe-wide shockwave caused by Barton's actions, eliciting not only a defence of the Hungary voyage, but also a defence of Barton's very presence and his role, as well as a more generalised defence of the Anglo-Ottoman project.<sup>94</sup> Yet it raises more questions than provides answers: if Barton's plan to travel was so disliked, why was no instruction sent to order him against it; and why is there a recourse to the rhetoric of Christendom and 'the Turk' in advice given to Lee, a new ambassador to a different region whose concerns were almost purely commercial? These are familiar questions which recall the contradictions implied by Barton's lack of instruction in 1596, and hint at the wide divide between the language and medium of diplomacy and the realities on the field. Cecil's instructions to Lee highlight the extent of the autonomous agency Barton had. In his opportunism, use of intermediaries to his advantage, sense of priorities, willingness to risk his career, and calculated persuasive rhetoric, he was undoubtedly going far beyond his remit. His death in the midst of this fallout meant he could muster no attempt to salvage the reputation of his office, and his replacement, Henry Lello, was notoriously ineffectual at the Porte.<sup>95</sup> The Anglo-Ottoman dynamic would shift significantly in the years following Barton's death, as the accession of James I and his peace with Spain ushered in a period of extreme cooling-off for diplomatic affairs in the region.<sup>96</sup>

Though Barton was still active in his work after the Hungary voyage, he would never again achieve the visibility and diplomatic clout which has set apart his office.<sup>97</sup> Letters from the sultan to the Queen in March 1597 excusing Barton for his conduct seem

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<sup>94</sup> This shockwave was pronounced: rumours quickly spread across the courts of Europe and in response Christopher Parkins, a court secretary often responsible for the reception and translation of Barton's letters, was dispatched to Emperor Rudolph II's court as a damage limitation exercise. For his orations to the Emperor, see SP 80/1, f. 142. See also Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism*, p. 208.

<sup>95</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 175.

<sup>96</sup> Baumer, 'England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom', pp. 36–37; Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism*, pp. 181–82.

<sup>97</sup> Skilliter, 'The Turkish Documents', p. 113.

to have done little to restore his reputation in England.<sup>98</sup> At the Porte, he was still in good favour with the sultan, despite having lost the commercial privileges, and worked towards peace between the emperor and the sultan, as reported by the Venetian agent Girolamo Capello in December 1597: ‘The desire for peace continues [...] the whole affair is greatly favoured by the English Ambassador [...]’, adding that Barton still ‘supplies all the news of Christendom’.<sup>99</sup> Despite his apparent disgrace, Barton seems to have sensed the opportunity that brokering another peace deal could have afforded him: a way back into the fold, proving his worth in England again. Perhaps sensing a propaganda opportunity, he rescued and sheltered an escaped Dutch prisoner, an event duly related by George Dousa.<sup>100</sup> He would not live to see if his reputation ever recovered. The Hungary campaign of 1596 had given Barton an opportunity to push his new model of diplomacy to its limits, and he had very nearly been successful. Had bad timing, his talented rival de Brèves and the internal politics of the Porte not conspired against him, and had the English gifts been forthcoming, his participation in the voyage may have been seized upon as a great English victory: a commercial as well as a diplomatic triumph, with peace and English trade supremacy credited to Barton’s autonomous actions.

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<sup>98</sup> Skilliter, ‘The Turkish Documents’, p. 112.

<sup>99</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 304.

<sup>100</sup> George Dousa, *De itinere suo Constantinopolitani Epistola* (Leiden, 1599), pp. 22–23.



# Conclusion

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 1598, Edward Barton succumbed to dysentery, from which he had been suffering for several weeks.<sup>1</sup> He had earlier relocated to one of the Prince's Islands in the Bosphorus, Heybeliada, to attempt to 'change aier' and convalesce.<sup>2</sup> He was dutifully attended by his secretary and eventual successor, Henry Lello, as well as visitors such as Meletios Pigas.<sup>3</sup> His funeral was a sizeable spectacle. Lello reported that:

The lose and untimely death of my Lord Ambassiatore here, which how dollorus it hath ben unto me God...knoweth. And to discourse you of his sicknes and maner of his death, funerall, and what sence hath happened, would aske a longe tim, which I now have not, but I refer you to my next...[PS.] He was buried honorably, having about 300 persons accompaninge his corpes to the waterside and so retourned, for he was buried at the monistary 20 miles of. The French ambasitore and he became frinds before his death.<sup>4</sup>

The end of Barton's life had seemingly allowed him to reconcile with de Brèves, and Lello's report underlines that even though he may have died in relative obscurity given the former height of his position, he was still a very important figure in Istanbul in 1598. The news duly made its way across Europe. The Venetian agent, Girolamo Capello, curtly noted that 'The English Ambassador is dead. [...] By the death of this Ambassador the Turks have lost their intermediary in treating of peace with the Emperor', while a Fugger agent's attention was caught by the grandiose ceremony: 'the funeral of the late English envoy was carried out with great solemnity and attended by many distinguished

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<sup>1</sup> Woodhead, 'Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)', *ODNB*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 174. His gravestone was later moved to the Haydarpaşa English Cemetery in Üsküdar, where it can be seen today.

<sup>3</sup> Lello witnessed Pigas visiting the dying Barton just before his death: 'Master Henry Lillo did tell mee [John Sanderson], who did see it, said, that few dayes before his decease, the Patriarke and he did weepe upon one anothers neckes, he kissed the dying man': Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, p. 1639.

<sup>4</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 174.

gentlemen and representatives of foreign countries.’<sup>5</sup> Barton then seemingly disappears from the correspondence of the Company, aside from references to practicalities; Lello’s attention quickly turns to agitating for a new present to be sent to Sultan Mehmed III, already late, and now even more necessary to confirm his role as the new English representative.<sup>6</sup> In succeeding him, Lello found Barton a tough act to follow. Elizeus Sotheren wrote in March 1598 to Sanderson that,

This morninge to all our greaffs here in gennerall wee had newes that My Lord Embassadore is dead in Constantinople of the fluxe. So for this we have in truth great cause to be hartely sorry; and more for that in that place is now none of our nation capable to supply his rom. I wishe it had not ben your happ to have come away before this chance had happened, for now ther is none fit in any sort to performe the place; being Harry Lylow, for want of a better, [is] faine to supply<sup>7</sup>

Barton’s death did, in many ways, signal the end of the unorthodox and daring closeness between England and the Ottomans, an end which had been foreshadowed by Elizabeth’s 1593 change in policy, and which was definitively brought to a close by Elizabeth’s death and James I’s accession. England would, by the 1620s, regain a monopoly in Ottoman waters as English trading supremacy took root, but the diplomatic proximity of the 1590s would never resurface. The period of relative friendship between the two powers, which had been pioneered by Harborne and extensively developed by Barton, came to an end with the latter’s death.

Barton’s immediate legacy in the Eastern Mediterranean is fairly straightforward. Within the diplomatic and mercantile communities in Istanbul and its satellite trading ports, Barton had accrued considerable fame. William Biddulph best sums up Barton’s legacy for those who were aware of his work:

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<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Venetian*, IX, p. 308; *The Fugger News-Letters, Second Series*, trans. L.S.R. Byrne (London: John Lane, 1926), p. 302.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 175: by March 1598, Lello was stressing ‘howe necessary itt is the present be hastened, especially for the establishing of an ambassiatore and conferminge ther cappitilacions, which most not be delayed, My Lord beinge dead.’

<sup>7</sup> *The Travels of John Sanderson*, p. 175.

*Edward Barton, an English Gentleman, and Lord Ambassadour for Quéene Elizabeth, of famous memorie, (and the mirror of all Ambassadors that euer came to Constantinople) who for his wisdom, good government, policie, and Christian cariage hath left an immortal fame behind him in those Countries, to this present day, and lieth buried at an Iland of the Gréeke, within twelue miles of Constantinople called Bartons Iland to this day.*<sup>8</sup>

Samuel Purchas published Biddulph's letter in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, omitting the phrase 'and the mirror of all ambassadors that ever came to *Constantinople*' and removing the comma after 'queen *Elizabeth*', altering it to be much less effusive in its praise of the late ambassador.<sup>9</sup> Barton was perhaps too transgressive for Purchas to allow such expansive praise to be heaped on him in his volume, with its evangelical overtones. Even in the early seventeenth-century compendia which so frequently mention Barton, his reputation was subject to review, at least partially; this revisionism would grow and grow, creating a faulty consensus which cast Barton as a kind of rogue who, to use Samuel Chew's Orientalist euphemism, had 'gone Balkan'.<sup>10</sup> Barton's posthumous reputation was at stake and precarious, and this is exemplified nowhere more so than in a spate of legal proceedings brought about by his sister against the Levant Company in the early seventeenth century.

### The Mary Lough Suits: Barton Remembered Thirty Years On

The scant manuscript material concerning Barton written after his death is almost entirely based in the Parliamentary Archives at Westminster. These archives contain a complete account of a dispute raised with the Levant Company by his sister, Mary Lough.<sup>11</sup> Lough

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<sup>8</sup> William Biddulph, *The Travels of Certaine Englishmen*, p. 40. Biddulph was probably erring on the careful side in his appraisal of Barton: his subsequent account of Henry Lello is a rare example of shining praise for Barton's successor, suggesting that he had a patriotically-driven sympathetic tendency towards the English representatives.

<sup>9</sup> Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, p. 1337.

<sup>10</sup> Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, p. 159.

<sup>11</sup> Also spelled Locke or Lock. She is mentioned as Barton's sister in Thomas Humphrey's 1591 letter, endorsing her claims of relation to Barton. See SP 105/109, f. 3 and Woodhead, 'Barton, Edward (1562/3–1598)', *ODNB*.

brought a petition before the Chancery court in 1608, when it was quickly dismissed; in 1624 she renewed the cause with a fresh vigour.<sup>12</sup> This escalation would develop into a protracted legal battle which would last for four more years.<sup>13</sup> The surviving documentation of this affair is by far the most extended posthumous discussion of Barton and his embassy, incorporating arguments from his family and the Company for his efficacy or inefficacy in his role in efforts to establish whether or not he was an extraordinary, or indeed adequate, representative of English interests in Istanbul. Lough submitted the following to the House of Lords in 1624:

Certaine speciall seruices and other things p[er]formed by Edward Barton Esquier  
Embassador for the late Queene Elizabeth in Turkey

For Religion hee preuayled so farr with the greate Turk that he receaued the Bible  
and read itt and itt remayneth to this daye in the Turkes library,

He caused the patriarke of Constantinople to leaue diuers sup[er]stitious things  
that were used in their Religion,

Hee freed all the Christian Captiues from the Turkes Gallyes,

The greate Turke at the battle of Agrea, hauing taken diuers Christian princes and  
greate Lordes prisoners he obteyned them of the Turke, Carried them to  
Constantinople, furnished them euery one, according to his degree & sent them to  
their Contry ransome Free

The Turke hauing sent a greate Army 30. Daies march towards Poland intending  
the ruyne of itt he preuailed so farr w<sup>th</sup> the greate Turke as the Army was called  
home and peace concluded w<sup>ch</sup> indured many yeares, And the Turke ^offred to^  
ymploye all that greate Army against the Queenes Enimies: M<sup>r</sup> Barton was so farr  
from Ostentaco[u]n, as that hee writt no newes thereof, Butt an Embassador was  
sent from the King of Poland to the Queene to giue her thanks for the seruice m<sup>r</sup>  
Barton had donne his m.<sup>r</sup> and all Christendome

And brought the first newes thereof,

The French Embassador in Turkey seeking to dishonor the Queene & her  
Kingdome to imbase then w<sup>th</sup> the Turke m<sup>r</sup> Barton carried the busines so at the  
French Embassador was disgraced and giuen to m<sup>r</sup> Barton to doe w<sup>th</sup> him what he  
would . For w<sup>ch</sup> the french king sent a special Embassador to the Queene to excuse

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<sup>12</sup> Lello, in his response to the later petitions, mentions that Lough's first dispute was raised as soon as he returned from Istanbul, around the close of the first decade of the seventeenth century. Lello gives the date as the 'fift yeare of his Mates [James I's] raigne': 1608. The same document also details how after her initial petition was dismissed, Lough brought the issue to a trial of Lello under common law, at the King's Bench. He was brought before a jury, acquitted, and reimbursed for 'damages and charges'. The documentation for this trial is held at the National Archives, C/2/JASL/L10/61.

<sup>13</sup> From April 1624 to May 1628.

him of the fault com[m]itted by the Ambassador and approued that w<sup>ch</sup> m<sup>r</sup> Barton hadd donne and desired that m<sup>r</sup> Barton might bee Ambassador there for him also w<sup>ch</sup> the Queene graunnted,

The king of Spaine gaue the Turkes cheefe Bassa 20000. Chicqueenes to procure a Spanish Ambassador to be leiger in Turkey intending to worke som displeasure to the Queene, But m<sup>r</sup> Barton nott onely preuented the Spanyards purpose butt also caused the Bassa to be displeased w<sup>th</sup> greate displeasure,

Hee brought their Custome from 5<sup>£</sup> In the hundred to 40<sup>£</sup> w<sup>ch</sup> comes to many thousand pounds euery yeare w<sup>ch</sup> the m[er]chants enioye to this daye,

Hee did all the good Offices possible as some of the m[er]chants hath deposed, The marchants confessed by their l[ett]res that w<sup>th</sup>out his being there they could not trade,

All theis things are prooued by the l[ett]res of the greatest Councillors of Estate of that tyme, by the oaths of som of the marchants themselues & by other ancient proofes,

Yett this gentleman that sought the honnor of Godd his Queene & Contry, and did the m[er]chants so greate good cannot get his expences as others had that neither did any seruice to the Queene or state or half so great good to the marchants,

The marchants are so many that 10<sup>£</sup> a man will giue satisfacco[u]n w<sup>ch</sup> is a matter of nothings to them for there is nott one of them butt hath gotten 10000<sup>£</sup> by the good he didd them and the Queene gaue them the Importe of Currants w<sup>ch</sup> was worth to them 8000<sup>£</sup> a yeare for to beare the Embassadors charge [...]<sup>14</sup>

This extract was annexed to Lough's petition in 1624 and constitutes, along with its accompanying counterpart, a fairly extraordinary defence of the by now long-dead ambassador's value as well as a perplexing but indicative retelling of the years of his embassy. The legal dispute was along fairly straightforward lines: that Lough, now impoverished and living in great need of help and with hungry children, should be afforded a payment from the Levant Company equal to the value of Barton's estate upon his death, which she argued was significant. Because the case depended on the lack of the satisfactory execution of Barton's will, the implicated party was Lello, Barton's death-bed companion, now retired and enjoying a knighthood. Effectively, Lough was here accusing Lello of stealing Barton's estate as he came into possession of the embassy and

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<sup>14</sup> '1623–4, March 20. –Petition of Mary Lough', Parliamentary Archives, House of Lords Papers, HL/PO/JO/10/1/34, ff. 194–95 (f. 195). This is the earliest of two extant copies of this document. The later copy was submitted to Chancery around four years after the original, to reaffirm the religious significance of Barton's tenure. There are no significant differences between the two.

its contents: the late ambassador's will had not been executed at all, and it would have been Lello's responsibility to do so.

After her initial 1624 petition was dismissed, she tried again with subsequent appeals annually until 1628, when the case was thrown out altogether as she stopped appealing Chancery's decision. But with each new attempt, Lough gained a new response from a different party. Alongside direct responses from the court and from Lello himself, the lengthiest response to Lough's petition came directly from the Levant Company, who provided a comprehensive dismissal of all of Lough's claims. Their explanation of the fact that Barton's will was not executed – which is implicitly admitted – was that Barton was financially insolvent when he died, and moreover that even if he had had an estate, that he was wasteful, irresponsible and ineffectual in all of his roles as an ambassador, merchant, and representative of the English in general and so did not deserve the rewards for his service for which Lough now asked. An extraordinary situation thus developed in which some of those Barton would have considered his closest friends, such as Lello and his other Company associates, and his sister, publicly aired contrasting histories and appraisals of his career in a charged dispute. This writing is concerned with re-shaping Barton's career, most significantly the importance of the reception of Barton's work in Istanbul, and shows the extent to which Barton's reputation was open to revision and reshaping in the centuries after his death.

Lough's initial petition, like its annexed counterpart above, instantly jumps to superlatives, withholding little throughout in an impassioned and forceful argument.

After the address and initial overtures, it states its case: that Barton was an agent

whose merite far exceeded m<sup>r</sup> Harbornes and such was his estimac[i]on in the Turkey Empire as he was not only an honor to all Christendome and a protector of the Christian princes Embassadors from the Tiranny of that gouernem<sup>t</sup> but did attayne such renowne as caused the eyes of greate princes & potentats to be cast upon him as a fit man to stand them in stead with the grand Seigneur in whome the Bashawes and Turkey noble men feared that m<sup>r</sup> Barton had such intent as he could

& would preuaile w<sup>th</sup> the grand seignor to make him a Christian, and to preuent the effecte of that feare they wrought measures to shorten the daies of m<sup>r</sup> Barton by poysonninge as it was conceiued.<sup>15</sup>

Harborne, who by all accounts was much more influential in England and certainly better-known, is ‘far exceeded’: Lough claims that Barton brought a closer relationship with the Porte and more prosperous times for English merchants there, claims which are now demonstrably true.<sup>16</sup> Harborne was very senior to Barton in the company – Lough’s opening is designed to provoke, and it does so by creating a narrative which is similar to that which Barton himself continuously sculpted in writing during his life. Here, much like we have already seen in Barton’s writing, grand narratives of Christendom, tyranny, and most importantly renown are evoked as evocative symbols upon which Lough’s whole case would rest. Her claims are not wholly unreasonable, bar the last. Barton certainly achieved a closeness to the Ottoman hierarchy which did surpass that of Harborne, and this did lead to the turning of the head of at least one Christian prince as was the case during the Lancosme affair, when Barton was briefly trusted with executing France’s interests in Istanbul as well as those of England; this is also mentioned prominently in the annexed document. Indeed, Lough is playing upon the same anxiety Barton often relied on: that he provided an opportunity for England which would be unwise to spurn; that he, and only he, could effect his new diplomacy successfully enough for the English state to make other major Christian powers jealous.

It is, however, the claim of Barton’s poisoning which is the most striking element of Lough’s petition. Her appraisal of Barton’s importance hinges on his presence as a prominent Christian voice at the Porte. In the annexed document, her ambitious claims

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<sup>15</sup> ‘1623–4, March 20. –Petition of Mary Lough’, HL/PO/JO/10/1/34, f. 194.

<sup>16</sup> Harborne remained an active part of English public life upon his return and was considerably famous in his birthplace of Great Yarmouth. It is doubtful whether even if Barton had survived he would have been able to do the same, on account of the more controversial and scandalous nature of his association with the Ottomans. See Skilliter, *William Harborne*.

about Barton implanting a Bible into Sultan Murad III's library (likely influenced by the connection with Hugh Broughton), freeing Christian captives from galleys, and his presence in Hungary being purely in the interests of delivering the Christian captives all suggest that Lough chose to portray Barton in extremes: while Barton had talked up his Christian credentials to his superiors throughout the 1590s, these claims reach a new level of hyperbole and conjecture. The assertion that Barton was so much a Christian influence on the sultan that influential viziers poisoned him to erase him as a threat is almost certainly untrue. Lello, close to Barton and in the embassy before, during, and after his death, would surely have been privy to such information, yet nothing approaching a plot to poison the ambassador is ever mentioned in any of the extant correspondence.<sup>17</sup> Rather, this assertion is a sign of the significance, particularly religious – particularly Protestant – which Barton seemed to gain after he died. Indeed, the annex to her petition is subtitled 'for religion', implying that the 'speciall seruices' he had performed were all in the name of Christian interests at the Porte: the sense of this is so strong in the document that the Parliamentary Archives catalogues describe it as a list of 'special services rendered by Barton in protecting Christians', despite there being no mention of Christians in the original title.<sup>18</sup> In effect, he is here recast into a missionary figure, his transgressions like that of the Hungary campaign transformed into valuable religious services that only he in his unique position could perform.

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<sup>17</sup> There is extended discussion of Barton's death in Sanderson's correspondence, detailing the squabbling over his will involving Lello and Barton's 'kinsman' Robert just after Edward's death: see *The Travels of John Sanderson*, pp. 226–35. Sanderson, never Barton's biggest promoter and prone to reporting hearsay, is extremely likely to have mentioned something as scandalous as a poison plot had he been aware of such a rumour. It persisted well into the late nineteenth century: in W. A. S. Hewins' *English Trade and Finance, Chiefly in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1892), Barton's career is summarised as follows: 'That the post [of resident ambassador in Istanbul] was one of difficulty and danger at that time is evident from the fate of Sir Edward Barton. The presence of Barton was a great advantage to the merchants, and the Christian population in general, to whom he rendered many services. But he aroused the hostility of the Turkish nobles, who procured his death by poison.' (p. 45). Lough's suits have obviously been used as a source here: Barton's apparent religious relevance sets him up in a telling opposition with the 'Turkish nobles' who eventually poison him.

<sup>18</sup> '1623–4, March 20. –Petition of Mary Lough', HL/PO/JO/10/1/34.



The reply of the Company to Lough's petition is a remarkable disavowal of an agent who, given the evidence of the archival material, was crucial not only for the Company's interests in Istanbul, but also for Elizabeth's initiative to encourage relations between the two states. A three-page, systematic breakdown of how Barton was not useful, but rather dangerous to English interests in the Levant, it is a remarkable document, coming as it does thirty years after his death. It tells a more familiar story of Barton's career, one that played into anxieties about his conduct which had existed, as we have seen most explicitly from Walshingham's inquest and Gifford's report, since the early years of his tenure at the Porte.<sup>19</sup> Just as Lough attempted to build Barton's reputation and worth along the same lines as he himself had done, the answers of Lello and the Company ripped it away by directly reversing another of his methods:

The Answer w<sup>ch</sup> the gou'nors and and Company of m[er]chant[es] trading the leuant seas doe in all humbleness offer the petico[u]n of Mary Loughe Sister and administratrix to Edward Barton Esqr deceased exhibited unto the right honnourable the Lords Spirituall and temporall of the high Court of p[ar]liament/

Wherin they most humbly shew that aboute 40 yeares since the then Turkey Company all of them (saue one or two being now dead) did imploy as agent for them in ~~Constantinople~~ Constantinople one Will[ia]m Harbourne m[er]chant in the petico[u]n menco[u]ned and Edward Barton being then a younge man did attende and wayte uppon m<sup>r</sup> Harbourne in that place and m<sup>r</sup> Harbourne about 30 yeares sythens dep[ar]ted from thenc and came for England and left Edward Barton agent ^there^ for the then company and that the late queens Ma<sup>tie</sup> did afterwards make Edward Barton her agent for the use of the m[er]chante[s] in w<sup>ch</sup> Imploymente[s] they did allowe and paye Edward Barton such meanes as hee and they agreed uppon

They doe not knowe nor beleue that eyther it was his Ma<sup>te[s]</sup> pleasure or that the then Company was soe unaduised as to agree to allow him all such chardges and expence as he should gyue upp in accompt att his returne nor doe they beleue that his expence[s] in the said Companies affaires did amounte to 2600<sup>l</sup> p[er] Anno nor that the company did allowe therof nor that they allowed Will[ia]m Harborne soe much as in the petico[u]n is suggested

They doe not knowe or euer heard that Edward Barton was a man of such great Iudgment desert and meritt as the petico[u]n menco[u]ns neyther did he doe any such extraordinary good for the Company any mann[er] of ways that euer they heard of for they haue been uery credibly informed that m<sup>r</sup> Harborne did settle the trade there and left all things fitted for m<sup>r</sup> Barton and it is beyond the knowledge of the now company that m<sup>r</sup> Barton was such a renowned p[er]son as the

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<sup>19</sup> See Chapter One of this thesis.

petico[u]n menco[u]ns him to haue been But it is uery euident that the petico[u]n is much mistaken in all the mat[er]iall p[ar]ts of her allegaco[u]ns in her petico[u]n [...] <sup>20</sup>

The company here did little more than make Barton into an irrelevance, an obscure agent who merely inherited and kept going Harborne's post. For the Company, again directly responding to Lough's terminology, he certainly was not one to which the paratactic recital of desirable traits – 'iudgement desert and meritt' – as could make him 'such a renowned person' apply as Lough suggests, let alone have any bearing on questions of national interest. In fact, there is no sense that he was anything other than a caretaker: the word 'ambassador', or anything like it, was anxiously avoided, rendering many of Lough's claims irrelevant. That such a competing account is present here testifies to the divisive nature of Barton's ambassadorial project, exposing the tensions around the question of who he represented and to what degree of success. Even allowing for the obvious vested interests of the two parties here, there is little to no agreement on even basic aspects of Barton's career, showing how much of a mystery he and his methods were to many in England. Both parties felt the same empowerment that pervades Barton's own correspondence: that it was possible to endlessly shape and reshape actions, motives, and reception through writing. Anxieties about Barton's conduct are duly addressed:

That m<sup>r</sup> Barton was a uery great spender at Constantinople as they haue credibly heard & that he tooke uppon him many great businesses of his owne for his priuatt gayne while he was there and soe was deeply indebtet that the then company durst nott send any goods tither during his abode ther left that he should haue disp[er]sed therof for his owne necessities <sup>21</sup>

The allegations of counterfeiting and improper conduct of 1591 and the subsequent suspicions of Barton and those around him at the embassy would have lingered for some time, and is one of the only parts of Barton's career whilst he was alive for which there

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<sup>20</sup> '1624, April 16. –The answer of the Governor and Company of Merchants trading to the Levant Sea to the Petition of Mary Lough.', HL/PO/JO/10/1/34, ff. 7–9 (f. 7). Signed by Heneage Finch.

<sup>21</sup> '1624, April 16. –The answer of the Governor and Company', HL/PO/JO/10/1/34, f. 6.

is an extant indication of the reception of his actions at court. Barton's proximity to the Ottomans and his distance from England had made him a viable target for unwarranted suspicion before, and the Company now hoped it would do so once again. Having thoroughly refuted Lough's claims of the sheer importance of Barton's position and work at the Porte, the company now attacked another element of the authority that Barton had worked so hard to accrue. As we have seen, the authority Barton forged for himself had to be ratified by external witnesses in documentary form. The importance of testimony, documentation, and witnessing was integral to Barton's method of diplomacy; we have seen him bend the rules and exploit the limits of what was, inescapably and fundamentally, material writing during the Lancosme affairs and Hungary campaign, for example. Now, to undo the last of this credibility, the Company turned this against him, when discussing the dismissal of Lough's earlier 1608 petition:

[...] after examinac[i]on of witnesses diu[er]se hearings wer hadd ~~against~~ before the Lord Ellesmere late Lord Chancellor of England and after his Lorshipp had giuen the petic[i]on and per counsell lib[er]ty p[er]use and uewe the companyes books and letters and after diu[er]se maisters of the Court had sev[er]all dayes p[er]used all the said books and wrytings his Lordship did apoynte a solemne hearing of the cause himself and hauing heard all the depositions and books redd did absolutly dismissee the petic[i]on [...] <sup>22</sup>

The competing narrative established by the Company here is undoubtedly powerful. In a public high court, they provided documentary testimony from multiple sources which attest to Barton's inefficacy and carelessness. This directly countered the tactic Barton had continually utilised throughout his career and shows the fragility of the influence and autonomy he forged in Istanbul. That the company had a wealth of documentary evidence to show that all was in order was a luxury that Barton rarely had in Istanbul; and if he did, it meant little in a world of bribery and gift-giving, most often off the books. Rather, his documentary authority, as we have seen, came from others – either from the Queen or her

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<sup>22</sup> '1624, April 16. –The answer of the Governor and Company', HL/PO/JO/10/1/34, f. 6.

secretary as the perfect rejoinder to Company criticism, or else from trusted and independent outsiders. And if these options were not available he would forge, spin, and propagandise in order to subvert the established modes of documentary authority; this was the power of his writing and the nature of his position. Yet the Company's response here recognises that, outside of the unique plasticity of early modern Istanbul, accounts and records would represent a hard documentary authority with which Barton's unofficial diplomatic and commercial dealings could not compete. These dealings were so dependent on the conditions in Istanbul that their legitimacy did not translate back to England. That Lough had no letters to submit in support of her petitions, only making vague references to supporting documents, speaks volumes: the case quickly takes on the dynamic of an unlikely and romantic story against a credible company who can back up their claims with hard evidence.

### Barton's Correspondence: Conclusions

The Lough suits crystallise the many contradictions of Barton's career. They also exemplify the difficulty of ascertaining an objective truth from the body of writing which surrounded the young ambassador; one of the side effects of the malleability of the documentary authority which this thesis has shown Barton to have constantly manufactured is that its veracity is always open to doubt. The archival evidence considered throughout this thesis has been varied in form, focusing predominantly on the fortnightly dispatches Barton sent to England, but encompassing a web of documentary material pertaining to his career which sheds new light on more than the contents of his career and his actions in Istanbul. It has aimed to reveal Barton's embassy as a centre of knowledge-production which was adaptable, complex, and unorthodox. It was also frequently disobedient and transgressive. It seems clear from the evidence that Barton

should no longer be considered simply as an example of an enterprising Englishman abroad at the outset of English colonialism, as previous scholarship has concluded. Instead Barton should be understood as the cultivator, overseer, and facilitator of a series of increasingly powerful networks operating out of Istanbul in the late sixteenth century whose political and diplomatic worldview was quite divorced from that of later trading company colonisers. Rather, starting as one of the intermediary interlocutors whose importance has been stressed in much recent scholarship on the early modern Eastern Mediterranean, Barton is an example of an agent visibly gaining an appreciation for the dynamics of agency, knowledge and news production and how these applied to new mercantile and diplomatic intentions. He should therefore be recognised as a unique concatenation of acutely Elizabethan motives which did not survive beyond the 1590s.

The theoretical models proposed by scholars such as Nabil Matar, Gerald MacLean, Jerry Brotton and Matthew Dimmock provide a coherent lens through which to view the writing produced by Barton – and the writing which fell under his influence – during his career. New research being carried out which reassesses the Elizabethan worldview, uncovers the concerted, Cecil-led eastward tendency of the late sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup> This thesis has aimed to bring an archival consideration of Barton, initiated by the virtuostic work of Skilliter, in line with the new understandings that the work of this later group of scholars has facilitated. Barton's place in the wider context of Anglo-Ottoman, and even Anglo-Islamic and East-West cultural exchange, is perhaps harder to ascertain. As I began to suggest at the start of this thesis, the evidence suggests that Barton embodied an uneasy balance between a Saidian model of proto-colonial Orientalism and what Gerald MacLean has termed 'imperial envy':

English – and latterly British – attitudes towards the Ottomans and the Ottoman Empire from the mid-sixteenth through the eighteenth century were initially and

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<sup>23</sup> See particularly Dimmock, 'Reorientations' and 'Conclusion: Dreaming of China', in *Elizabethan Globalism*, pp. 219–62.

substantively characterized by imperial envy, a structure of feeling that combined admiration with contempt, fear with fascination, [and] desire with revulsion [...] imperial envy most usefully describes the ambivalent structure of admiration and hostility towards the Ottomans that distinguishes a great deal of writing of the time [...]<sup>24</sup>

MacLean's formulation in part addresses the conflicting attitudes Barton displays towards his adopted country. Barton's repeated disavowals of his foreign surroundings display some traits of proto-Orientalist attitudes. Yet his actions, particularly in the constant control and manipulation of correspondence in order to bring the English and Ottomans closer together (for both England's perceived advantage and his own); his conducting diplomacy and commerce in the Turkish language; and his becoming deeply embedded in the hierarchy and faith networks in Istanbul, point towards a positive conception of the Ottomans which could be described as a kind of envy. Yet Barton was hardly an imperial agent of any kind, with his varying motives and unusual methods, and for the vast majority of his career accepted the Ottoman political system as the valid *status quo* without comment. Istanbul represented opportunity for advancement to Barton, rather than a model of imperial prowess. His view of the Ottoman system was not, on the whole, characterised by 'imperial envy', which emerged from different sources in the late sixteenth century. Instead, we can see Barton as an agent who embodied an imperial ambivalence, a taste for autonomy, and a skill in letters: his was a practical, 'dirty' diplomacy, tending to privilege results over ideology. His lack of knowledge of English courtly etiquette, coupled with the fact he was not a nobleman and thus not a model 'cosmopolitan' early modern ambassador, invites a reconfiguration of what Elizabethan 'foreign policy' entailed in this instance – less calculated policy, and more a benign distancing which gave license to an autonomous 'rogue ambassador' using any means

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<sup>24</sup> MacLean, *Looking East*, p. 245.

necessary to effect national and personal advancement.<sup>25</sup> In all of this, Barton was an agent who broke the mould and defies easy classification.

Hugh Broughton's pamphlets and Mary Lough's petitions show us another side of Barton's endeavours, one that has been completely overlooked in previous scholarship on Barton. Though the extent to which his Calvinism determined his personal actions in Istanbul is only partially visible, his refashioning by Broughton and Lough as a missionary Protestant presence speaks volumes about the ideological stakes of his position in a wider English consciousness at the time. One of the key conclusions of this thesis is that Edward Barton was an expressly religious, as well as diplomatic and commercial, presence at the Porte, and his embassy should be understood as symptomatic of England's complex position in the early modern Eastern Mediterranean. His language and actions as ambassador are invariably couched and justified in religious terms, and his successes and failures are celebrated and explained through recourse to his explicitly Protestant role. As the European continent negotiated inter-Christian conflict and the dawn of a new, aggressive English mercantilism approached, Barton briefly found himself at the crossroads of these concerns.

This thesis has also shown how elements of Barton's correspondence can be profitably considered amongst the wider genre of early modern travel writing. During a period of rapid growth of interest in and recording of the experiences of English travellers abroad, Barton produced writing which was tasked with the relation of his surroundings and his situation. It is perhaps because of the controversial nature of Barton's situation that his writing was never selected for publication outright by Hakluyt, Purchas, or similar; that his descriptive writing of 1596, a valuable historical source in itself and a

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<sup>25</sup> On the extent to which 'cosmopolitanism' is applicable in an early modern setting, see Games, *Web of Empire*, and Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

vivid piece of narrative writing, should be elided in discussions of early modern travel writing would be to unfairly recreate the historical biases that his writing has been subject to. It should not be held against the contents of Barton's writing that it is diplomatic correspondence: as Chapter Four shows, Barton's 1596 journal is a valuably rich source of carefully constructed early modern travel writing.

In light of these contexts, Barton's correspondence offers more than a glance into the diplomatic and commercial workings of 1590s Istanbul. It reveals the inner workings of an agent whose relatively short career encompassed a range of vivid and often dramatic situations. The analysis presented in this thesis has aimed to reclaim Barton from his common characterisations as the Levant Company merchant whose diplomatic remit was a sideshow, the debauched and irresponsible bawd, or the patriotic Englishman who was doing his best for Queen and Country against the odds. In fact, Barton was an agent made as much by the conditions in 1590s Istanbul as by his own actions. His letters afford us an opportunity to understand not only the particular confluence of influences and tensions of his time, but also to appreciate how his writing was continually deployed as his most valuable asset, at times his only tangible tool, but always central to the diplomacy he conducted. The varied ways in which this worked are remarkably visible through his archive, which stands as a monument to an intricate and unconventional exercise in Elizabethan statecraft. I hope this thesis has made a case for Barton's archive to be considered as an important source for those with a variety of interests: from early modern ambassadorial paradigms, to unconventional travel writing, to Elizabeth I's concerns beyond the borders of Christendom. His writing merits further sustained attention: specific examples such as Barton's 1593–96 letterbook, or the long report of his actions in Hungary, stand as candidates for published editions in their own right. And more work on Barton, following Skilliter's example, is essential in other European but particularly



the Turkish archives, as there is doubtless similarly informative and indicative material by and about Barton in those contexts: he did, after all, conduct his diplomacy ‘in the sight of the world’. In this, he briefly represented a new formulation in the evolving category of the early modern resident ambassador: how they might act, what they could achieve, and how they should write.

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— *Tvvo epistles vnto great men of Britanie, in the yeare 1599 Requesting them to put their neckes unto the work of theyr Lord: to break the bread of the soule unto the hungry Iewes, by theyr writings, or by theyr charges, through such as be ready to declare all that theyr necessity doth require.* (1599; reprinted 1606)

— *A defence of the booke entitled A co[n]cent of Scripture for amendment of former Atheian most grosse, and Iudaique errors, which our translations and notes had: against the libel, scoffing a Scottish mist: and slaundering that the Iewes epistle sent from Byzantian Rome, was a forged worke, and not in deed sent thence.* (1609)

— *A reuelation of the holy Apocalyps* (1610)

— *A petition to the King. For authority and allowance to expound the Apocalyps in Hebrew and Greek to shew Iewes and Gentiles: that Rome in Caesars and pope, is therein still damned. And for translators to set over all into other large-vsued tongues.* (Amsterdam: G. Thorp, 1611)

— *A require of agreement to the groundes of divinitie studie wherin great scholers falling, & being caught of Iewes disgrace the Gospel: & trap them to destruction.* (Middelburg: Richard Schilders, 1611)

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