DIPLOMACY AND COMMERCE IN COMPOSITE EMPIRES: BRITISH-OTTOMAN IMPERIAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

by

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the nature of British-Ottoman imperial relations between 1675 and 1809, a crucial period for Ottoman state formation and British imperial expansion. It situates British commercial and diplomatic activities within the context of wide-ranging geo-political, administrative-fiscal, and socio-economic changes unfolding in the Ottoman lands that shaped the Ottoman imperial systems, the British imperial enterprise, and inter-imperial power dynamics in the eastern Mediterranean.

In this period, British ambassadors, consuls, and merchants participated in Ottoman conventions of diplomacy, commerce, and finance to accrue the benefits of overseas commerce and obviate hindrances. By examining British activities in Aleppo, Izmir, and Cyprus, this dissertation reveals that the conditions of politics, trade, and finance tied British engagements to the workings of Ottoman bureaucratic-legal, administrative-fiscal, and socio-economic structures. Consequently, the British became entangled in complex relationships and situations in these places. These entanglements were constitutive of the Ottoman Empire and the British imperial enterprise.

In examining British engagements and entanglements in the empire, this dissertation shows fluid imperial boundaries and volatile socio-political and commercial dynamics that rendered trans-imperial relationships essential for the functioning of Ottoman and British imperial structures. Those relationships created overlapping imperial systems that shaped the dynamism of Ottoman administrative and fiscal capacity and forms. They moreover conditioned the power relations between British officials and merchants and the Ottomans, and thus shaped the contours of the British imperial enterprise in the eastern Mediterranean. As such the dissertation proposes a more dynamic approach to imperial history writing through the concept of composite empires.

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Abbreviations

BOA	Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi
İSAM	İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı)
KKMA	Milli Arşiv ve Araştırma Dairesi, Kuzey Kıbrıs
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
HALS	Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
BL	British Library
TDVİA	*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*
EI²	*Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition*
EI³	*Encyclopaedia of Islam, third edition*

Notes on Transliteration, Toponyms, Dates and Exchange Rates

1. Languages and Transliteration

This dissertation has included materials in a number of languages, most prominently English and Ottoman Turkish, and to a lesser extent French and Italian. When providing words and short phrases from English language documents in the text and the footnotes, I modernised archaic English spellings to reflect modern conventions. For example, early modern English has a long s without a crossbar. Therefore, instead of 'horſe', I wrote 'horse'. When I quoted lengthy passages in English, I preferred to retain the original spelling to reflect eighteenth-century orthography unless modern rendering is required for clarity. The English translation of French and Italian sources is provided in the text whereas the original scripts are given in the footnotes. Where relevant, contemporary English renderings of Ottoman Turkish names and words are provided with their original spelling, followed by either the Ottoman Turkish transliteration or the modern English usage in square brackets: 'Mr. Turner…informed the bashaw [pasha]'.

In transliterating Ottoman Turkish terms, phrases, and passages, I use the guidelines of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* in conjunction with the conventions established by Eleazar Birnbaum:[1]

[1] Eleazar Birnbaum, 'The transliteration of Ottoman Turkish for library and general purposes', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 87/2 (1967), pp. 122–56; 'IJMES Transliteration System for Arabic, Persian, and Turkish', online document [TransChart.pdf (cambridge.org)]

Transliteration of consonants:

ا	-	ح	ḥ	س	s	غ	ġ or ğ	و	v
ب	b	خ	ḫ	ش	ş	ف	f	ه/ة	h/t[2]
پ	p	د	d	ص	ṣ	ق	ḳ	ى	y
ت	t	ذ	z̲	ض	ż	ك	k or g	ء	ʾ
ث	s̲	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ل	l		
ج	c	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	م	m		
چ	ç	ژ	j	ع	ʿ	ن	n		

There are four back vowels (a, ı, o, u) and four front vowels (e, i, ö, ü) in Turkish that are indicated by letters, letter combinations, and diacritics.

Transliteration of vowels:

Long vowels	ا	ā[3]
	ى or ي	ī
	و	ū
Short vowels	-َ	a or e
	-ُ	u or ü/o or ö
	-ِ	ı or i
Doubled	ـِيّ	īy
	ـُوّ	ūv
Diphthongs	وَ	ev
	يَ	ey

[2] If ه is used as a final vowel ending, it is transliterated as ‘e’ or ‘a’. Render it as ‘t’ in the Arabic grammatical construct (iḍāfah or iżāfet) case.

[3] Macrons are only used for words of Arabic and Persian origins only. For words where ء (hemze) rests on or under initial ا elif and ا elif functions as a short vowel as in أسدي (esedī), macrons are not indicated.

The vast majority of Ottoman Turkish sources used in this dissertation is unedited manuscripts. I preferred to provide transliterations of all passages that I translated from primary sources to make these sources accessible to the wider scholarly community. Some parts of these passages are irrelevant to larger arguments or illegible. In such cases, the irrelevant and illegible parts are indicated by ellipsis as (…). These guidelines and conventions are also given for official titles that have not entered English usage. Hence, I write *muḥaṣṣıl* (tax collector), but kadi, pasha, and mufti since these terms have already been Anglicised. Throughout the dissertation and where relevant and appropriate, I give the English translation of Ottoman Turkish words, phrases, and passages in the text, followed by their transliterations in brackets. Otherwise, the transliterations are given in the footnotes.

Names of people are given in their modern forms by considering their area of activity. Hence, Muhammed in Izmir and Muhammad in Aleppo. However, when names of people are translated from Ottoman Turkish primary sources, I follow the transliteration conventions outlined above by considering their place of origin. Hence, a certain Halil in Cyprus is given as Ḫalīl if translated from an Ottoman Turkish source; a certain Muhammad in Aleppo is given as Muḥammad if translated from an Ottoman-Turkish source. An exception is made, however, in Chapter Two. Each section of this chapter focuses on a different local actor or family who was employed in British consular services as dragoman(s) (interpreter, translator). The principal actors of this chapter were the Omiros family, particularly Geōrgios Omiros, who were members of the Greek Orthodox community in Izmir, Jirjīs ʿĀʾida who was a Catholic Arab in Aleppo, and Sargis, son of Avag, who was an Armenian-Cypriot in Cyprus. Different primary sources gave different spellings of these names depending on their European renderings and the phonetic nature of Ottoman record-keeping. For example, Geōrgios Omiros was referred to as Georgio Homero or Hornero in English-language documents and Corci Omero in Ottoman-Turkish documents; Jirjīs as Giorgios in English-language sources and

Circis in Ottoman Turkish materials; Sargis as Sarkes or Serkis in both English and Ottoman Turkish documents. For the sake of consistency and clarity, on the one hand, and to demarcate the linguistic and geographical terrain in which these locals operated, on the other hand, I transliterated their names by considering their home country and mother tongue. Since Jirjīs ʿĀʾida was a native of Aleppo and spoke Arabic as his native tongue, I transliterated his name from Arabic by using the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* guide.[4] For the same reasons, Sargis is transliterated from Classic and East Armenian, not from West Armenian, by using the *Library of Congress* system (hence, Sargis, not Sarkis as in West Armenian).[5] Similarly, the guidelines of the *Library of Congress* are used in transliterating Geōrgios Omiros from Greek since he and his family were members of the Greek Orthodox community in Izmir and spoke Greek as their mother tongue.[6]

2. Toponyms and Imperial Subjects

This dissertation focuses on three Ottoman provinces, the names of which are given in their modern Anglicised form which, to some extent, also reflects the vocabulary of the records of the Ottoman Empire: Aleppo (Ott: Ḥaleb), Izmir (Ott: İzmir), and Cyprus (Ott. Ḳıbrıs). The same rule is applied for other place names as well, for example it is Istanbul rather than Constantinople and Iskenderun rather than Alexandretta. In conformity with the Ottoman conventions, Ottoman subjects are defined by their religious affiliations as Muslims and non-Muslims, and where relevant their religious communal identities such as Jewish or Armenian

[4] 'IJMES Transliteration System for Arabic, Persian, and Turkish', online document [TransChart.pdf (cambridge.org)]
[5] [Armenian romanization table (loc.gov)]
[6] [ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Greek (loc.gov)]

and principal location of activity or provenance are signified (for example, a non-Muslim Ottoman subject in Izmir or an Armenian merchant in Aleppo).

The Ottoman documentation largely uses the term *İngiltere* (lit. England) to refer to the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland which the Ottomans conceived as parts of a singular polity (*İngiltere diyarı*, lit. the territories of England). Thus, *İngiltere* denoted the Kingdom of Great Britain both before and after 1707 (when the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland were united into one kingdom), and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland after 1801 (when the Kingdom of Great Britain and the Kingdom of Ireland were united into one kingdom). Accordingly, all merchants coming from the British Isles to the Ottoman realms were referred to as *İngilterelü* (lit. English) irrespective of their nationality and where they came from. On the other hand, the English documentation often refers to their merchants trading in the Ottoman Empire interchangeably as 'English' and/or 'British' 'nation'. The 'Englishness' of the merchants trading in the eastern Mediterranean was secured by the charter of the Levant Company which stipulated that the members of the Company must be merchants and freemen of London, a provision which was abolished in 1753 (when the company lifted the barrier on membership yet required members to hold British nationality). Yet even before 1753 and increasingly after 1707, the official correspondence of the Levant Company referred to merchant communities in the Ottoman provinces as 'British Nation' or 'British Factory'. Similarly, the Levant Company documentation often referred to ambassadors and consuls as, for example, 'Consul for His Majesty the King of Great Britain'. In this dissertation, therefore, I use Britain as the generic term for the kingdom of Great Britain both before and after 1707, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland after 1801 to avoid confusion. Accordingly, when I talk about the Levant merchants of Great Britain on general topics or on issues without any specific time limit, I use British merchants. For example, I refer to Alexander Drummond, who was a Scottish merchant serving as factor marine in Iskenderun

and consul in Aleppo in the mid-eighteenth century, as British factor marine and consul. Where it is possible and relevant to distinguish the nationality or the contemporary official renderings of the nationality of the officials or merchants for clarity and precision, I use English/Scottish/Welsh merchants prior to 1707 and British merchants from 1707.

3. Dates

Almost all Ottoman Turkish sources that I have used in this dissertation used the Islamic Hijri calendar. Throughout the thesis, I converted the dates in the Hijri calendar to their Georgian counterpart and provided only the Georgian dates in the text—e.g., in January 1788—while giving both the Hijri and Gregorian dates in the footnotes—e.g., 1 Ṣafer 1203/1 November 1788.

Until September 1752 when the Gregorian calendar was uniformly accepted, the Julian calendar was in use in Britain and its colonies. Some English language documents used in this dissertation gave both the Julian and Gregorian calendars between 1 January and 24 March when the two calendars differed. For example, 6 March 1747/8 suggests the Julian calendar of 1747 but the Gregorian calendar of 1748. In such cases, I provide the Gregorian dates. Otherwise, I provide the dates of English-language documents as given in the sources because it is difficult to know which calendar the source in question was using at the time.

4. Currencies and Exchange Rates

The Ottoman silver *guruş*, also known by the British as the ‘piaster’, was the basic unit of account and the principal means of payment in transactions in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century. This Ottoman *guruş* was fixed in the early eighteenth century at forty paras

or 120 *akçe*s, also known as the ‘asper’. The Dutch lion thaler or the *esedī* (early Ottoman) *guruş* was also in circulation for the most of the eighteenth century for medium and large transactions and extensively used by the British. The lion thaler was around 144 *akçe*s in 1731. The exchange rate of British pound sterling to Ottoman silver *guruş* was 1:4.66 in 1693, 1:7.52 in 1743, 1:19.17 in 1803, and 1:19.90 in 1810.

INTRODUCTION

Approaching Eighteenth-Century Imperial History

Current scholarship characterises the eighteenth century as a period in which Britain and its empire witnessed early iterations of imperial expansion in North America, the Caribbean, and South Asia. Yet the emerging empire was not an all-powerful and coherent entity. Historians of the Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, portray the same century as a period of imperial transformation and integration. The Ottoman Empire is no longer seen in a period of decline and as a passive 'periphery' to be exploited. As British imperial scholars Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper have recently put it succinctly, "The world in the eighteenth century was still multipolar."[7] Linda Colley moreover noted that "western European governments remained diffident about challenging it [the Ottoman Empire] in any more substantial fashion, and early modern Britain never seriously contemplated doing so."[8] In the eighteenth century, as the British Empire grew, the Ottoman Empire remained an important and powerful entity.

Despite this understanding, we still know little about the nature of Anglo-Ottoman imperial relations in this period. We now know that the subjects of both empires lived in an increasingly connected world in which the essence of states and empires was politically and culturally diverse. Such connected imperial circuits created fluid and permeable imperial boundaries and thus presented economic and social opportunities as well as daunting risks for British merchants in the Ottoman Empire. British merchants had to navigate a multitude of diplomatic, social, commercial, and financial engagements with a variety of Ottoman actors,

[7] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 180.
[8] Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 89.

to take advantage of such benefits and obviate hindrances. How then did these engagements shape the nature of Anglo-Ottoman imperial encounters during the 'long' eighteenth century?

This dissertation answers this question by examining the multiplicity of quotidian engagements performed by British officials and merchants in Ottoman Aleppo, Izmir, and Cyprus between 1675 and 1809. This dissertation shows the sheer complexity of British diplomatic, commercial, and financial engagements in the places under examination. As a result of their legal status and diverse engagements in the Ottoman Empire, the members of the Levant Company—namely British consuls and merchants—became highly integrated in the fabric of the Ottoman 'composite empire' and created complex networks of relationships that crossed and blurred the formal imperial boundaries.[9] On another level, this is also the story of the negotiation of political, social, and economic power between the British and diverse Ottoman actors where neither the British nor the Ottomans held hegemonic power. If anything, the Ottomans usually had more power and control in their encounters with the British. As such, this dissertation reveals the limited nature of British imperial power and the strengths and agency of the Ottomans in the eighteenth-century eastern Mediterranean. It moreover shows the multiplicity and contingent complexion of British imperial trajectories in the early modern period where the agency of local actors played a vital role. Last but not least, through varied British engagements in Ottoman political, administrative, legal, fiscal, financial, commercial, and social patterns and systems, it demonstrates the entangled histories of British trading communities in the Ottoman Empire.

Such an undertaking poses significant challenges in writing and conceptualising this history of imperial relations between the British and the Ottomans. Rather than offering an

[9] On the concept of composite empire for the Ottoman polity, see Daniel Goffman and Christopher Stroop, "Empire as Composite: The Ottoman Polity and the Typology of Dominion," in *Imperialisms: Historical and Literary Investigations, 15001900*, eds. Balachandra Rajan and Elizabeth Sauer (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

event-centred political history of Anglo-Ottoman relations, this dissertation explores a series of intimate encounters between the British and the Ottomans through a close reading of various primary sources. This is not to say that this dissertation is not concerned with the political dimension of Anglo-Ottoman relations. On the contrary, it reveals how the political, socio-economic, and cultural dynamics conditioned, and were also shaped by, the multiplicity of British engagements by examining varied British-Ottoman encounters. In seeking to examine the motivations of British engagements and how these engagements were navigated in the Ottoman provinces, I have been able to construct a comprehensive and complex history of British-Ottoman relations in the eighteenth-century eastern Mediterranean. Imperial encounters between the British and the Ottomans were messy, discordant, and contingent and as a result, British agents were able to exercise only time-limited economic and political influence.

In this regard, consider, for example, an Ottoman imperial order issued in March 1724 in response to a British petition complaining about the involvement of non-Levant Company merchants in Ottoman trade. This order stated that:

> Other than the merchants of a body corporate and politic called the Company that was instituted by the English kings to perform long-distance trade from the English territories and avoid exceeding trade expenses in the Well-Protected domains, no other English subjects were allowed to trade in my Well-Protected Domains.[10]

In 1580, the Ottoman state granted the Capitulations (*ʿahdnāme-i hümāyūn*), a treaty of friendship and commerce, to the British through William Harborne, an agent for Edward

[10] "İngiltere diyarı memālik-i maḥrūsetü'l-mesālike ziyāret-i baʿīd ve ticāretiñ maṣārıfī ḥaded-i bīrūn olmak taḳrībiyle İngiltere ḳralları ṭarafından mevżūʿ olan Ḳūmpān taʿbīr olunur cumhūr tüccārından maʿdā sāʾir reʿayāsına memālik-i maḥrūsemde ticārete iz̲n vėrilmeyüb", see BOA, A.{DVNS.AHK.MR.d. 00002 (Mora Ahkam Defteri 2, henceforth cited as AHK.MR.d 2)/Page 68/Entry 1, Evāḫir-i Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1136/March 1724.

Osborne and Richard Staper.[11] Within a year, Queen Elizabeth I gave a group of London wholesale merchants an exclusive right to trade in the Ottoman Empire. This charter founded the English Levant Company in 1581. Since then, the Ottoman state recognised the monopoly of the Levant Company on English trade in the Ottoman realms. The Capitulations gave a distinct legal status to the subjects of the British state or rather precisely the members of the Levant Company. This status came with the granting of *amān* (safe-conduct) to the British in the Ottoman Empire. The beneficiaries of *amān* were *müsteʾmin*s whom the Ottomans conceived as a group and community (*İngiltere ṭāʾifesi*), or perhaps as a corporate body *avant la lettre* that enjoyed the right to live and trade without hindrance and administrative and judicial autonomy, albeit in a limited way, in the empire.[12] However, the quote above shows that the members of the Levant Company sought Ottoman protection to regulate and secure trade in Ottoman domains. And for this protection, the British were expected to display and maintain friendship (*dostluḳ ve muṣāfāt*) towards the Ottomans, which the imperial order above also mentioned.[13] The maintenance of friendship entailed showing allegiance to the sultan and his representatives in the provinces through conforming to a variety of expectations and practices. In return, the Ottoman state considered the British trading community a constitutive body of the Ottoman social structure among the rest of the Ottoman subjects (*reʿāyā*) and offered the protection needed. Previous generations of Ottoman historians noted that the French and British increasingly abused their capitulatory privileges due to their mercantilist policies

[11] The 1580 Capitulations contained twenty-two provisions that defined the status and liberties of all subjects of the Queen of England. This grant was cancelled by the Ottoman sultan Murad III in 1580 because of the absence of a permanently residing English ambassador in Istanbul and was put into effect in 1583 after the formation of the Levant Company in 1581 and the appointment of William Harborne as the first English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Hence, after 1583, only the members of the Levant Company enjoyed the capitulatory provisions. For the framework and development of the Capitulations granted to the British, see Chapter One.

[12] Maurits H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beratlıs in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), esp. chapter one.

[13] "İngiltere ḳralları ezmune-i sābıḳadan bu ana gelince ḫalḳ-ı ʿan-ı selef Devlet-i ʿAliye-i ebed-es-ṣāliḥ ile dostluk ve muṣāfāt üzere olan…" [From the old times until now, the English kings have been in friendship with the Eternally Righteous Sublime State [that] was created from an ancestor], see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/Page 68/Entry 1, Evāḫir-i Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1136/March 1724.

in the eighteenth century and growing influence on the Ottoman state in the nineteenth century.[14] Thus, by revealing the British community's integrated and weak position in Ottoman state structures, I contend that the British did not grow increasingly abusive of their capitulatory privileges for imperialistic aims during the eighteenth century.

Viewing the British trading community as an integrated component of Ottoman society was in line with the Ottoman worldview based on universal rulership and empire.[15] The head British dragoman (the corruption of the Arabic word *tarjumān* by European languages, meaning interpreter and translator) in Istanbul insinuated this Ottoman vision when he informed the British ambassador, William Paget, in 1697 that the Ottoman government desires non-violence by Europeans and safe trade on its seas in order that "l'utile comune alle Nationi sue confederate" [the benefits [are] common to all its allies].[16] "Nationi sue confederate" here referred to communities that were the subjects of foreign countries in friendship with the Ottoman state. These communities included within and constitutive of the Ottoman body politic. British officials and merchants did not perceive themselves as inextricably linked to the Ottoman world. Yet throughout the century, they often conformed to this vision, at times negotiated and navigated it, and at times capitalised on the opportunities that came with it. To be sure, they did so in pursuit of their own agendas—i.e., protecting and maximising their economic and social capital—which were dependent on and inextricable from British prestige and power on a global level. In other words, if the British were to succeed, they had to play the

[14] For an authoritative article on this view, see Halil İnalcık, "Imtiyāzāt," in *EI*[2], eds. Peri Bearman et al. Consulted online on 24 November 2023.
[15] Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 29–31, 103–20; Mehmet Sinan Birdal, *The Holy Roman Empire and the Ottomans: From Global Imperial Power to Absolutist States* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Christopher Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam: Persian Emigres and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), esp. chapter six; Güneş Işıksel, "Hierarchy and Friendship: Ottoman Practices of Diplomatic Culture and Communication (1290s-1600)," *The Medieval History Journal* 22, no. 2 (2019): 286–293.
[16] "la felice Porta desidera li suoi mari pacifici, a finche il trafico sia tranquillo, e pacato, e l'utile comune alle Nationi sue confederate," cited in Tristan M. Stein, "The Mediterranean in the English Empire of Trade, 1660-1748" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2012), 241, fn. 118.

game by the rules set by the Ottomans. British imperial experience in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire was less a story of domination than one of accommodation and subordination. This line of historical narration and conceptual organisation requires us to go beyond the imperial formulations and interpretations that have dominated the field of imperial history.

On Empires and Imperial Formations

The aftermath of World War II and the ensuing projects of decolonisation witnessed the development of different historical approaches and methodologies to move away from Europe-centred narratives of imperialism.[17] The main objective was to better understand the development and nature of the British Empire within the wider context of world history. The de-centring of Britain and its empire within broader world histories went hand in hand with 'area studies' of the 1960s and 1970s.[18] Moreover, 'Subaltern Studies' and the postcolonial theory and studies attempted to dismantle the metropole-periphery dyad and give a greater voice to those whose subjectivities and experiences remained silent.[19] Meanwhile, global approaches encouraged students of empire to compare empires within a larger temporal and spatial context to highlight the co-existence of multiple empires across Eurasia.[20] In addition,

[17] For an elaborate discussion of different methodologies and approaches to British imperial historiography, see Durba Ghosh, "Another Set of Imperial Turns?," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 3 (2012): 772–93.
[18] William M. Mathew, "The Imperialism of Free Trade: Peru, 1820–70," *Economic History Review* 2nd series 21, no. 3 (1968): 562–79; Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784-1806* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Christopher A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-cultural trade in world history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
[19] G. Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1475–90; Ann L. Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda" in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. Ann L. Stoler and Frederick Cooper (London: University of California Press, 1997); Catherine Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries—A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
[20] Christopher A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1989); Christopher A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modem World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2004); John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire since 1405* (London: Penguin, 2008); Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 1–22.

networked approaches urged scholars to consider the role of intricate imperial networks in spreading and undermining the effects of European imperial expansion and methods of rule.[21] These studies have revealed how overlapping empires and contingent events and practices shaped empire-building processes. Hence, they challenged, if not completely eliminated, European centrality in imperial narratives.

In the last two decades, these shifts in historical methodologies led scholars of empire to re-conceptualise the concept of informal empire, which offered some possibilities to examine the effects of British interactions with the Ottomans upon shaping imperial systems. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher first introduced the concept of informal empire as a political and economic category of analysis to understand the 'extra-European' roots of European expansion in the nineteenth century.[22] Where there were local crises and proto-nationalist movements, the British state used its power and prestige to promote trade in order to extend and consolidate its imperial power and influence overseas.[23] In 1997, John Darwin claimed that "the chaotic pluralism of private and sub-imperial interests" shaped the British informal empire throughout the nineteenth century.[24] Other scholars stressed the relevance of culture to discussions of imperial encounters by showing how literary and legal practices created zones of influence and

[21] Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth Century South Africa and Britan* (London: Routledge, 2001); Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).
[22] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review* 6, no. 1 (1953): 1–15.
[23] For the criticism of the concept of informal empire for its conceptual ambiguity and impracticality, see Desmond C. M. Platt, "The Imperialism of Free Trade: Some Reservations," *The Economic History Review* 21, no. 2 (1968): 296–306; Katharine West, "Theorising about 'Imperialism': A Methodological Note," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 1, no. 2 (1973): 148–49; Peter J. Cain and Antony G. Hopkins, "The Political Economy of British Expansion Overseas, 1750–1914," *The Economic History Review* 33, no. 4 (1980): 464; Martin Lynn, "The 'Imperialism of Free Trade' and the Case of West Africa, c.1830–c.1870," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 15, no. 1 (1986): 34–36; Ann L. Stoler, "On degrees of imperial sovereignty," *Public Culture* 18, no. 1 (2006): 136.
[24] John Darwin, "Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion," *English Historical Review* 112, no. 447 (1997): 641.

shaped institutions.[25] Most recently, Cátia Antunes and Amélia Polónia have put the concept into use for the early modern period and associated the 'informal empire' with non-institutionalized and self-organised networks of imperial overseas agents encompassing people of diverse nationalities, religious affiliations, and ethnic backgrounds.[26] Thus this conceptualisation has considered indigenous dynamics and conventions, and how the tension in these networks produced complex imperial systems in the Atlantic, Asia, and the Mediterranean. It has moreover considered how networks projected imperial power beyond the limits of territorial control through diplomatic, commercial and legal strategies.

Yet the overarching objective of the concept remains to "identify the informal building of the European overseas dominium in the first global age."[27] Informal empire is broadly concerned with how the engagements of European imperial agents in other polities resulted in the re-ordering of relationships, with European imperial powers triumphing at the end. As it stands, the concept often sees European imperial expansion and supremacy as inevitable. Put differently, it presents an approach that views the eighteenth century more in terms of where it led. Thus, the concept not only reaffirms the national perspectives in empire studies discussed below, but also limits our ability to better historicise the grounds for inter-imperial engagements and see the multiple set of relationships and entanglements at stake, all of which shaped how British diplomatic and commercial and various Ottoman imperial systems functioned.

Therefore, I propose a dynamic, global conceptual framework that goes beyond classical notions of diplomacy, commerce, or colonialism (formal and informal imperialism):

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[25] Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. chapter seven; Matthew Brown, ed., *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008); Gregory A. Barton, *Informal Empire and the Rise of One World Culture* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[26] Cátia Antunes and Amélia Polónia, eds., *Beyond Empires: Global, Self-Organising, Cross-Imperial Networks, 1500–1800* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016).

[27] Cátia Antunes and Amélia Polónia, "Introduction," in *Beyond Empires: Global, Self-Organising, Cross-Imperial Networks, 1500–1800*, eds. Antunes and Polónia (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 3.

composite empire. The concept of the composite empire helps us analyse British-Ottoman encounters against the backdrop of sweeping geo-political and socio-economic changes unfolding in and around the Ottoman Empire. It moreover helps us understand the inclusivity of the Ottoman systems of rule for external actors. Such a conceptual framework requires two methodological-theoretical shifts. Firstly, we need to transcend what Ann Stoler called "colonial archive".[28] Stoler noted that colonial archival documents did not emerge in a vacuum. Such documents were shaped by the perceptions and sensibilities of imperial authorities abroad and bureaucrats at home depending on their know-how at a given moment in a particular context. Imperial agents and officials continuously reproduced these documents in reference to both previous documentation and future imaginations to put matters of concern into order. In this way, they constructed "historical narratives" that identified certain features of colonial rule.[29] Consequently, "outright conquest, European settlement, and legalized property confiscations are taken as their [European empires] defining attributes. Deviations from that norm become just that: aberrant, quasi-empires; exceptional cases; peripheral form", wrote Stoler.[30] To Ann Stoler, informal empire was one of these "unhelpful euphemisms, not working concepts" that imperial scholars invented to describe such deviations.[31] Unsurprisingly, scholars of the British Empire have predominantly examined former British colonies in North America, the West Indies, and South Asia. Reading and deconstructing such archives together with the archival materials in non-European languages allows us to consider empires like the Ottoman Empire in relation to the British Empire before the nineteenth century—some historians marked the early nineteenth century as a starting point of the British 'informal

[28] Ann L. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).
[29] Ibid., 29.
[30] Stoler, "On degrees of imperial sovereignty," *Public Culture* 18, no. 1 (2006): 136–37.
[31] Ibid.

empire' in the region due to its intensified diplomatic and commercial power.[32] Further, it enables us to examine the nature of inter-imperial interactions and thus reveal the power structures of imperialism.

The second methodological-theoretical shift takes us to trans-imperial history. This approach grants more space to underrepresented and marginalised viewpoints with a view to understanding the essence of cooperation, competition, and connectivity between, across, and beyond empires.[33] According to traditional scholarship, the Ottoman Empire "slipped into an awesome backwardness" in the eighteenth century because of its despotic and conservative nature, whereas Western European states and societies progressed towards 'modernity'.[34] Thus, the Ottomans were treated as a passive periphery to be exploited and an ideological 'Other' to be compared with the developments in Western Europe.[35] Over the years, some scholars underscored the importance of Anglo-Ottoman interactions during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for the later development of the British Empire in the Atlantic and South Asia.[36] Such marginalised position in the world order led Ottomanists to emphasise the

[32] Peter Sluglett, "Formal and Informal Empire in the Middle East," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V: Historiography*, eds. Robin Winks and William Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 416–36; Glen Balfour-Paul, "Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century*, eds. Judith Brown and William Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 490–514; Maya Jasanoff, *The Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750- 1850* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 122.

[33] Daniel Hedinger and Nadin Heé, "Transimperial History – Connectivity, Cooperation and Competition," *Journal of Modern European History* 16, no. 4 (2018): 429–52.

[34] Eric L. Jones, *The European Miracle: environments, economies, and geopolitics in the history of Europe and Asia*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 183. On this perspective also, see Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, trans. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1978); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The modern world-system I. Capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European world economy in the sixteenth century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974); Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 2, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990* (Cambridge, Mass., and Oxford: Basic Blackwell, 1990); Richard Bonney, "Introduction: The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe c. 1200–1815," in *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe c. 1200–1815*, ed. Richard Bonney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1–17.

[35] Kerem Nişancıoğlu, "The Ottoman origin of capitalism: uneven and combined development and Eurocentrism," *Review of International Studies* 40, no, 2 (2014): 325–47.

[36] Ralph Davis, "England and the Mediterranean, 1570-1670," in *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England*, ed. Frederick J. Fisher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 117–137; Richard T. Rapp, "The Unmaking of the Mediterranean Trade Hegemony: International Trade Rivalry and the

'differentness' of their historical subject. Yet thanks to the works of Ottoman historians since the 1980s, the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century is now seen as an integrated, networked and dynamic unit that consisted of a "constellation of power foci involving a variety of agencies".[37] These works moreover showed the similar developments, common experiences, and distinguishing features between the Ottoman Empire and its people and the polities and societies of Europe in the early modern era. Some Ottoman historians even emphasised the composite nature of the Ottoman empire that "produced a body politic able to incorporate diverse religious, economic, and social groupings."[38] Among these groupings were the British Levant Company merchants who were integrated into the Ottoman administrative and legal system while retaining their administrative and judicial autonomy for the affairs concerning their community members. Güneş Işıksel maintained that Ottoman authorities viewed the heads of *müsteʾmin* communities as "agents of the Ottoman polity", albeit in semi-official capacity.[39] They lived in coastal towns of the Ottoman provinces and participated in enmeshed networks of relationships with different segments of Ottoman society.[40] Hence, Ottomanists have indicated the inclusivity of the Ottoman system for external actors. I aim to build on this

Commercial Revolution," *The Journal of Economic History* 35, no. 3 (1975): 499–525; Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (London and New York: Verso, 2003); Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. chapter two.

[37] Tolga U. Esmer, "Economies of Violence, Banditry and Governance in the Ottoman Empire around 1800," *Past and Present* 224 (August 2014): 188. Also see Rifaʿat ʿAli Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Regime Revisited: Privatization and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Politics and Society* 21, no. 4 (1993): 393–424; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016).

[38] Goffman and Stroop, "Empire as Composite," 137.

[39] Işıksel, "Hierarchy and Friendship," 293.

[40] Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642-1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); Edhem Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); İsmail H. Kadı, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century: Competition and Cooperation in Ankara, Izmir, and Amsterdam* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 272.

scholarship to demonstrate the role of external actors, namely British diplomatic actors and merchant groups, in the Ottoman political, administrative, legal, fiscal, and financial systems—not as outsiders but as insiders.

Taken together, these two shifts allow us to consider the Ottoman Empire in relation to the British Empire and the British actors within the context of the Ottoman Empire. And this is key to offering a fuller history of Anglo-Ottoman imperial relations. In doing so, this dissertation aligns with the recent scholarship that most early modern empires were entangled in nature and had pluralistic legal regimes to accommodate and manage diversity which was significant for the maintenance of their empires.[41] In writing of the role Portuguese Madeira, the Cape Verde Islands and Salvador in provisioning British ships, Stephen Conway warned us that "Tempting though it is to regard these outposts of other empires as parts of Britain's informal empire, the temptation should be resisted. They sustained not just the British, but foreign imperial powers more generally."[42] The Ottoman Empire was no different. Just as the British Empire operated on overlapping imperial systems, so too did the Ottoman Empire.

I should note that the exclusive focus on the British and the use of the concept of the composite empire—a concept of early modernist historiography developed first with respect to Europe—may seem to run the risk of obscuring Ottoman realities. However, I suggest that situating British officials and merchants into Ottoman society and examining their entanglements in diverse investment sectors and their dialogue with the Ottomans enables us to avoid falling into the trap of Eurocentrism and better comprehend the nature of imperial encounters and power relations at work. As Rolf Strootman beautifully put it, "Imperialism in

[41] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997): 735–62; Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*; Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Entangled Empires: The Anglo-Iberian Atlantic, 1500–1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

[42] Stephen Conway, *Britannia's Auxiliaries: Continental Europeans and the British Empire, 1740-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 12.

this and other periods was a complex and often messy business".[43] To explore such complexities and messiness, this dissertation draws upon the themes of entrepreneurship, cosmopolitanism, diversity, legal pluralism and social networks to explore the contingent practices of Ottoman and British actors and the constructiveness of their interactions within the composite nature of the Ottoman Empire.[44]

Historiography of British-Ottoman Relations in the Eighteenth Century

British imperial historians have not considered the eastern Mediterranean an area of imperial interest for British policymakers before the French expedition to Egypt in 1798.[45] In line with traditional approaches focusing on the structure of commercial monopolies as factors determining the success or failure of British imperial expansion, early modern British-Ottoman imperial and commercial relations have so far been examined in concert with the history of the English Levant Company. Such focus has, however, obscured the agency of both British merchants and Ottoman subjects, and their cross-cultural, socio-economic networks of relationships that shaped the character of British-Ottoman imperial relations.

A History of the Levant Company by Alfred Cecil Wood has been the basic textbook ever since its publication in 1935.[46] While offering comprehensive information about the

[43] Rolf Strootman, "Introduction: Maritime Empires in World History," in *Empires of the Sea: Maritime Power Networks in World History*, eds. Rolf Strootman, Floris van den Eijnde, and Roy van Wijk (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 17.
[44] Alison Games, *Webs of Empire*; David Hancock, *Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History;* Lauren Benton and Richard J. Ross, eds., *Legal Pluralism and Empires, 1500-1850* (New York: New York University Press, 2013); Jeff Fynn-Paul, ed., *War, Entrepreneurs, and the State in Europe and the Mediterranean, 1300–1800* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014); Myles Lavan, Richard E. Payne and John Weisweiler, eds., *Cosmopolitanism and Empire: Universal Rulers, Local Elites, and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Stephen Conway, *Britannia's Auxiliaries*.
[45] Bayly, *The Imperial Meridian*; Jasanoff, *The Edge of Empire*; Robert Holland, *Blue-Water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean since 1800* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).
[46] Alfred. C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935).

Company's administrative structure and the organisation of commerce in the eastern Mediterranean, Alfred Wood maintained that the Levant Company was "the commercial machinery" which, after a period of "a prosperous and an expanding" trade in the seventeenth century, slipped into "adversity and decline" after 1718.[47] This decline stemmed from the changes in shipping methods, the competition between British merchants in Turkey and those in Livorno, the rise of French trade in the Ottoman Empire, and the disruption of trade from Persia, not to mention the constant warfare between European powers in and around the Mediterranean.[48] Thus, this interpretation treated the Ottoman Empire and its subjects as if they played no part whatsoever in shaping the contours of British-Ottoman relations in this crucial period. Wood's work also influenced subsequent studies examining British trade in the eastern Mediterranean in terms of the methodology and sources used such as the Levant Company records and the periodisation of the Company's history.[49] These studies provided valuable insights into the British Levant trade and the experiences of merchants in the Ottoman Empire. Despina Vlami's work examined the later history of the Levant Company, increasing our understanding of changing entrepreneurial forms and multifaceted mercantile networks through relations of interdependence between British Levant Company merchants and local Jewish and Greek Ottoman merchants.[50] James Mather, on the other hand, demonstrated how the British Levant Company merchants accommodated themselves to historical conditions in

[47] Ibid., 229.
[48] Ibid., 42, 136–178.
[49] James Mather, *Pashas: Traders and Travellers in the Islamic World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009); Christine Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant: Trade and Perception of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2010); Despina Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans: The Company in the Middle East* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris & CO., 2015).
[50] Vlami, *Trading* with *the Ottomans*; Vlami, "Entrepreneurship and Relational Capital in a Levantine Context: Bartholomew Edward Abbot, the "Father of the Levant Company" in Thessaloniki (Eighteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)," *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 6 (2010): 129–64; Vlami and Ikaros Mandouvalos, "Entrepreneurial forms and processes inside a multiethnic pre-capitalist environment: Greek and British enterprises in the Levant (1740s–1820s)," *Business History* 55, no. 1 (2013): 98–118.

the Ottoman in pursuit "less of conquest than of peaceful commerce" and how centuries of cultural encounters helped shape British perceptions of the Ottoman Empire.[51]

Other studies that drew extensively on Wood's source base and chronology also discussed the reasons of the Company's decay and tended to grant little agency to historical conditions in the Ottoman Empire. Michael Wagner, for example, emphasised the 'rise' of the French against the British. He also discussed the difficulties in selling British-produced goods through barter in the Ottoman Empire that caused a conflict between the Levant silk merchants and the silk manufacturing industry in England from the 1740s. Yet the study did not pay enough attention to the bargaining power of local merchants and the strength of Ottoman-produced goods as factors that hindered the sale of British products and forced British merchants to use commercial credit extensively in the Ottoman realms.[52] Martin Devecka, on the other hand, related the Company's misfortune to its "failure" in becoming a "territorialized" company-state. The failure of 'territorialisation' was not because of the "success" of the Ottoman Empire, but because of the British Crown's encroachment on the Company's administrative autonomy from the 1630s owing to the importance of the Ottoman Empire in European diplomatic circles and because of intra-European economic competition in the eastern Mediterranean.[53] The Levant Company operated as a regulated company since 1592 and therefore did not enjoy the sovereign prerogatives in the same capacity that its contemporaries such as the English East India Company did. It was these prerogatives that transformed chartered companies into company-states, a term coined by Philip J. Stern.[54]

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[51] Mather, *Pashas*, 3.

[52] Michael Wagner, "Companies, Commerce and Politics: The Hudson's Bay, Levant and Russian Companies, 1714-1763" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 2012); Michael Wagner, *The English Chartered Trading Companies, 1688-1763: Guns, Money and Lawyers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

[53] Martin Devecka, "Raisins d'etat: Trade, Politics, and Diplomacy in the History of the Levant Company," in *Chartering Capitalism: Organising Markets, States, and Publics*, ed. Emily Erikson (Bingley: Emerald Group Pub. Ltd, 2015), 77–94.

[54] Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Also see Jason C. Sharman and Andrew Philips,

Furthermore, Devecka only partially considered the importance of historical contingency, namely the importance of the Ottoman Empire for Britain, in explaining the character of the Levant Company. One also wonders how the political structures of the Ottoman Empire and the agency of the Ottomans shaped the organisational complexion of trading companies, and more broadly imperial encounters.[55] Alternatively, Cornel Zwierlein pointed out that the discussions over different conceptions of political and economic empire in Britain, namely those advocating a regulated trade organisation or a joint-stock enterprise or a free-trade, were as significant as the French competition in the decay of the Company.[56]

However, other historians made use of different sources and employed varied methodologies and, in this way, revealed the dynamics of British commerce in the Ottoman Empire and even challenged the traditional characterisation of the British presence in the region during the eighteenth century. Ralph Davis made extensive use of the Radcliffe family business papers in his *Aleppo and Devonshire Square* and explored the English commission trade, shipping patterns, moneylending activities, and cloth trade in the Levant while underscoring the centrality of silk trade to the British commerce in Aleppo during the first half of the eighteenth century.[57] Through an examination of various British archival documents, including the Lloyds shipping lists, with a small number of Ottoman-Turkish sources, Üzeyir S. Serdaroğlu rejected the Levant Company's 'decline' paradigm. His study showed the expansion of British entrepreneurial activities and networks into British colonies in the Atlantic, thanks to the institutional-organisational transformation of the Levant Company between 1744 and

Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World (Princeton, New Jersey and Woodstock, Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press, 2020).

[55] For a contemporary text on how political conditions and geographical factors influenced the forms of trading organizations, see John Houghton, *A Collection for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, vol. 2 (London, 1727-28), 6.

[56] Cornel Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns: The French and British in the Mediterranean, 1650-1750* (Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press*, 2016), 111.

[57] Ralph Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square: English Traders in the Levant in the eighteenth century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1967).

1753.[58] Katerina Galani also nuanced this general narrative arc of the company by demonstrating how British Levant Company merchants successfully adopted flexible business strategies in the shipping sector, such as forming partnerships with local carriers and merchants in the face of changing economic and political conditions in the eastern Mediterranean in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[59] These studies thus showed how different sources and methodologies can offer new ways forward for thinking about the dynamics and trajectory of corporate trading companies.

In the last two decades, Ottomanists have examined British consular and commercial activities in the Ottoman Empire by relying on Ottoman Turkish sources.[60] More recently, historians have begun to utilise Ottoman Turkish archival materials in conjunction with British sources to resituate British mercantile activities in the Ottoman legal, economic and social contexts.[61] In this way, Mehmet Sait Türkhan, for example, situated British mercantile activities in the Ottoman economic context and revealed various British trading activities in Aleppo, Iskenderun, and Cyprus such as moneylending to Ottoman subjects and officeholders and participating in carrying and local trade during the eighteenth century. As such, these studies have enriched our understanding of British commercial activities in the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, these studies have not convincingly placed varied British activities within the

[58] Üzeyir S. Serdaroğlu, "The Evolution of Commercial Institutions and Business Networks in the Ottoman Empire: British Merchant Families and Individual Merchants in the Levant Trade in the 18th Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 2018).
[59] Katerina Galani, *British Shipping in the Mediterranean during the Napoleonic Wars: The Untold Story of a Successful Adaptation* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), esp. chapter seven.
[60] Kemal Çiçek, "Diplomat, Banker ve Tüccar: 18.Yüzyıl Başlarında Larnaka'da Para Ticareti ve Yabancı Sermaye," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 21 (2001): 269–283; Ali E. Özkul, "Osmanlı İdaresinde Kıbrıs Adasındaki İngiltere Konsolosluğu ve Faaliyetleri," in *Kıbrıs'ta Osmanlı İzleri*, ed. Şevket Öznur (Lefkoşa: Kıbrıs Türk Yazarlar Birliği Yayınları, 2014), 529–564; Mehmet Demiryürek and Hakan Yazar, "Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kıbrıs'ta İngiltere Konsolosluğu (1700-1800)," *Belleten* 81, no. 290 (2017): 89–134; Hakan Yazar, "2 Numaralı Mora Ahkam Defterine Göre; Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İngilizler, 1717-1750" (master's thesis, Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, 2014); Miyase Koyuncu Kaya, "An English Merchant in Ottoman İzmir (Smyrna): William Barker (1731-1825)," *Belleten* 84, no. 300 (2020): 717–744.
[61] Mehmet S. Türkhan, "18. Yüzyılda Doğu Akdeniz'de Ticaret ve Haleb" (Ph.D. diss., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2014); Kaya, "An English Merchant in Ottoman İzmir (Smyrna)".

British diplomatic and commercial enterprise in the eastern Mediterranean. For such an understanding, we need to take into account how the relations of interdependence, collaboration, and competition between British merchants and different Ottoman actors affected the British imperial experience in the eastern Mediterranean. Such an undertaking then requires an understanding of British Levant merchants' engagement in political, commercial, and social patterns of the Ottoman Mediterranean, which can only be achieved by utilising Ottoman Turkish materials in conjunction with a careful reading of British sources.

Through such a perspective and methodology, Michael Talbot has offered a fresh and exacting analysis of British diplomatic practice in Istanbul over the long eighteenth century.[62] He has brilliantly shown how British diplomats in Istanbul complied with and operated under Ottoman conventions to maintain peaceful relations with the Ottomans while protecting the trading rights and privileges of the British Levant Company merchants. In this sense, Talbot's book joins with other work underscoring the centrality of accommodation in Anglo-Ottoman relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[63] Talbot has built his work partly on the work of Maurits van den Boogert, who schematised how the Ottomans incorporated foreign trading communities into the legal and social structures of the Ottoman state through the capitulations granted to them.[64] Although foreign trading communities were granted administrative and jurisdictional authority over their own matters and held a monopoly on English trade in the Levant, they operated under Ottoman administrative and legal authority. This created the intersecting lines of sovereignty and legal regimes that not only limited the expansion of British sovereignty and trade in the eastern Mediterranean, but also conditioned the characteristics of British engagements in the Ottoman Empire. The work of Colin

[62] Michael Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017).
[63] Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*; Games, *Web of Empire*, esp. chapter two; Mather, *Pashas*; Stein, "The Mediterranean in the English Empire of Trade, 1660-1748".
[64] Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, 6, 52–61.

Heywood, Tristan M. Stein and Michael Talbot has demonstrated, for example, how the Ottoman exertion of jurisdictional authority over its 'defined' seas contested the British Crown's claims to authority over its subjects and ships in the eastern Mediterranean, thereby shaping the character of British trade and navigation on the sea.[65]

Michael Talbot has also illustrated that much of the interaction and negotiation between the British and the Ottomans related to commerce, since British ambassadors, consuls and merchants were primarily concerned with the protection of their trading interests in the empire. Therefore, it was not political events, but rather commercial activities and the attendant interactions and negotiations that shaped Anglo-Ottoman relations.[66] Similarly, Huw Bowen claimed that "the organization of trade and commerce must also be seen as playing an important role in shaping the very nature of Britain's imperial relationships" especially in North America, the West Indies and Asia.[67] Hence both scholars underscored the performance and organisation of commerce in moulding imperial relations. In this period, English chartered trading companies played an important role in regulating British commercial organisation and activity in foreign ports. Some even assumed governing responsibilities in British trading outposts and bore diplomatic costs in foreign countries. In this way, they served the British state's economic

[65] Colin Heywood, "The Kapudan Pasha, the English Ambassador and the Blackham Galley: An Episode in Anglo-Ottoman Maritime Relations (1697)," in *The Kapudan Pasha, his Office and his Domain. Halycon Days in Crete IV: a Symposium held in Rethymno, 7-9 January 2000*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2002), 409–438; Colin Heywood, "Ottoman Territoriality Versus Maritime Usage: The Ottoman Islands and English Privateering in the Wars with France, 1689-1714," in *Insularités ottomanes*, ed. Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein (İstanbul: Institut français d'études anatoliennes, 2016), 145–173, Insularités ottomanes - Institut français d'études anatoliennes (openedition.org); Stein, "The Mediterranean in the English Empire of Trade, 1660-1748"; Michael Talbot, "Ottoman seas and British privateers: Defining maritime territoriality in the eighteenth-century Levant," in *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History*, eds. Pascal W. Firges et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 54–70; Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean: Ottoman Responses to Maritime Violence, 1718-1770," *Journal of Early Modern History* 21 (2017): 283–317.
[66] Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations,* 24.
[67] Huw V. Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of the British Overseas, 1688-1775* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 36.

and diplomatic interests. Stephen Conway therefore viewed these companies "as partners of the British state".[68]

However, as mentioned in the previous section, merchants in this period lived in a highly decentralised and pluralistic world and displayed a loose adherence to prescribed behavioural trends. Instead, they were highly integrated into the political, legal, commercial and cultural environments of their host countries as part of their own strategy for success since their home states lacked the capacity to regulate and secure trade.[69] This integration, I argue, created opportunities and necessities for diplomatic, social and commercial engagements in foreign polities that were not always in accordance with the trade regulations prescribed by chartered companies. Contrary to Molly Greene's argument that for at least western European powers in the Mediterranean "Economic competition along national lines (national trade, in other words) was much more of an eighteenth-century phenomenon", this dissertation maintains that Anglo-Ottoman imperial and commercial encounters over the eighteenth century were still defined by transnational, cross-cultural networks of contingent relationships.[70] Competition between the British and the Ottomans was present as often as cooperation, while these were not mutually exclusive characteristics of the multiplicity of relations between them.

With this understanding, this dissertation pushes Danial Goffman's argument further. Goffman claimed that the British Levant Company merchants appeared less as "superimposed yet separate entities" with imperialistic aims than as integral components of "the Ottoman social structure" in the seventeenth century. Merchant groups were only able to dissociate themselves from the Ottoman body politic and impose their own principles over the Ottoman

[68] Conway, *Britannia's Auxiliaries*, 15.
[69] See Stein, "The Mediterranean in the English Empire of Trade, 1660-1748," 99; Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*, xvii; Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchants in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 3–4.
[70] Molly Greene, "Beyond the Northern Invasion: The Mediterranean in the Seventeenth Century," *Past & Present* 174 (2002): 44.

in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when power relations shifted in favour of the British.[71] This dissertation contends that British merchants were not "superimposed yet separate entities", nor were they able to "impose" their own terms and principles over the Ottomans even in the eighteenth century. The Ottoman Empire brought together and managed a range of political entities and social groups that were hardly coherent and homogenous. Through their engagements, British merchants became a constitutive part of the Ottoman Empire where they did not enjoy outright power. Instead, they constantly needed to navigate a complex range of engagements and relationships they had with the Ottomans in the provinces. As Daniel O'Quinn recently noted in his book that examines European literary texts and works of art on the Ottomans to explore European perceptions of the Ottomans and the currents of European imperial discourses, "understanding European engagement with the Ottoman Empire is necessary for comprehending the global dynamics of French and British imperialism".[72] For this reason, this dissertation examines how British merchant's multifarious engagements in political, commercial, and social patterns of the Ottoman Empire shaped their experience in the empire's provinces through an examination of various records produced by the British and the Ottomans.

Sources and Methodology

This dissertation draws upon a range of primary sources found in different archives in the UK, Turkey and Cyprus to better contextualise the multiplicity of British engagements and relationships in the Ottoman provinces. The Levant Company, which had a monopoly to trade in the Levant between 1581 and 1825 and funded the British embassy in Istanbul between 1581

[71] Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*, 22–23.
[72] Daniel O'Quinn, *Engaging the Ottoman Empire: Vexed Mediations, 1690–1815* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 366.

and 1804, produced large quantities of correspondence between the Company, the government, the ambassadors, the consuls and merchants. These records are now largely held in The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA) in Kew under the State Papers (SP) series and constitute one of the source bases of this dissertation. These documents are of a diplomatic and commercial nature and provide rich insights into British commercial organisation, and the cultural practices of diplomacy and commerce in the Ottoman Empire. Of particular significance for this dissertation are Registers of the Cancellaria in Izmir and Aleppo, recording minutes of the Assembly of the British Factory in both cities, and the letter-books of factors in Aleppo.[73] Minutes of the Assembly document commercial and diplomatic negotiations, complaints, and disputes through which we can understand British diplomatic and commercial organisation and practices at the provincial level. For the British factory in Izmir, these minutes are almost intact, whereas for Aleppo they start from the mid-eighteenth century. The letter-books of factors in Aleppo, which do not exist for the factors in Izmir and Cyprus to the best of my knowledge, contain mercantile correspondence between merchants in Aleppo and those in Britain, Iskenderun, Latakia, Tripoli of Syria, Acre, and Cyprus. We can thus learn about commercial and diplomatic networks and practices of British merchants active in various places in the eastern Mediterranean. Since there are no surviving records of the British consulate in Cyprus, these letter-books produced in Aleppo have proved to be very fruitful for this dissertation.

Another type of source, providing information about British merchants in Cyprus as well as those in Aleppo and Izmir, is the business papers of British merchants who resided in Britain or the Ottoman Empire. These business papers were in the form of letter-books or loosely bounded correspondence or separate letters. The collections that have been most useful

[73] Factory is derived from the Italian fattoria denoting a fortified trading post or 'branch' of a trading company in a foreign commercial centre.

for the purpose of this dissertation were the business papers of John Mitford in Chancery Master Kindersley's Exhibits in TNA, Alexander Drummond in the British Library, John March in London Metropolitan Archives and the Radcliffe family in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies. Since these letters were produced independently of the Levant Company and exchanged privately between merchants themselves, they reveal the divergences between the Levant Company's regulations towards trade and the actual motivations for British engagements in the provinces.

Moreover, there is a plethora of registers and documents regarding the affairs of British merchants that were produced by the Ottoman state and are now held in the Presidency's Ottoman Archives (BOA) in Istanbul, Turkey. In the BOA, I have mainly consulted the *Cevdet* series, the *Ali Emiri* series, the *İbnülemin* series, the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* (imperial commands) collection, the *Mühimme defterleri* (the registers of important affairs), and the *Düvel-i Ecnebiye İngiltere Defterleri* (register of foreign states, Britain). This corpus contains British petitions to the *Divan-ı Hümayun* (imperial council) in Istanbul, Ottoman imperial orders dispatched to the provincial authorities as well as the summaries of these petitions and imperial orders. Examining these documents enables us to bring the Ottoman side of the interaction and thus move away from a British-centred analysis of British-Ottoman relations. British petitions were concerned with the quotidian commercial and diplomatic problems that British merchants faced with in the provinces. Therefore, these petitionary documents and the summaries of Ottoman imperial orders reveal the political, social, commercial, and cultural context of British engagements and how British merchants and officials navigated these commercial, judicial and diplomatic processes.

However, not all disputes made their way to Istanbul. Many cases were also resolved in local Ottoman courts. For this reason, this dissertation makes use of the Ottoman court records of Aleppo, preserved in the Turkey Religious Foundation Center for Islamic Studies

(İSAM) in Istanbul, and of Cyprus, kept in the National Archives and Research Office in Kyrenia, North Cyprus. The Ottoman court records of Izmir are unfortunately not extant for the eighteenth century due to a fire that broke out in the court in April 1854, destroying all court registers up to that date.[74] These courts were presided over by an Ottoman-appointed judge (kadi) and traditionally assumed judicial and notary functions, but in the eighteenth century they also served as local assemblies where the Ottoman officials, provincial officeholders, and local communities met to sort out various public affairs. Thus, local courts did more than resolve disputes. The following chapters will show that British merchants often appeared before these courts to register their credit and sales contracts. And considering the multiple functions of Ottoman courts enables us to see these transactions beyond the context of notary functions of courts, revealing how integrated British community members were in political economies of Ottoman provinces.

Of course, these sources come with certain problems and limitations other than the fact that some registers of the Levant Company are incomplete and non-existent as mentioned above. Although the accounts of the Levant Company and correspondence of British merchants noted the agency of Ottoman actors during commercial, judicial and diplomatic procedures, they are also full of self-aggrandisement and bigotry. For example, in his letter-book, Alexander Drummond wrote of the significant role and opportunistic conduct of local caravan guides (sing. *maʿlem*, referred to as 'mallem' in the Levant Company records and British merchants' correspondence) in the carriage of goods along the Aleppo-Iskenderun route. Yet he often described these guides as 'mountain rogues' or 'dogs', suggesting their false-heartedness.[75] Thus, the reader must always be mindful of the perceptions and intentions of the authors. Was

[74] Abdullah Martal, "İzmir Kadı Sicillerindeki Kültürel Mirasımız," *Kebikeç* 4 (1996): 74–5, esp. fn. 8.
[75] BL, Add MS 45932, to John Free, 29 January 1748; BL, Add MS 45932, to Peter Shaw, 6 April 1748; BL, Add MS 45932, to Arthur Pollard, 21 April 1748; BL, Add MS 45932, to Arthur Pollard, 19 December 1748; BL, Add MS 45932, to John Free, 19 December 1748.

Drummond really convinced of the deceitfulness of these guides whom the British contracted with? Or was Drummond trying to lay the consequences of an unsuccessful commercial operation at the guides' door? After all, letter writing as an emotional ritual helped merchants construct and maintain what Toby L. Ditz called 'credible personas', which was essential to pursue a career in trade when the nature of market transactions was fiercely competitive and highly personalised.[76]

Documentary productions of the Ottoman state, including the British petitions, on the other hand, used certain terminology and formula that portrayed a particular image of the Ottoman state with its claims to universal monarchy. The Ottoman court records used certain language and structure as well. In these formulaic texts, the voices of British officials, merchants, and Ottoman subjects might not be adequately reflected, and thus their agency might be somewhat occluded. Thus, one should not take the descriptions of affairs provided in these documents at face value. Furthermore, although the Ottoman bureaucratic mechanism received and produced a lot of paperwork from different parties involved in affairs, it can be quite difficult to locate these documents in the Ottoman archives even if they survived. In fact, to deal with a growing body of paperwork, the state began from the mid-seventeenth century to keep a separate register for each foreign community—i.e., *Düvel-i Ecnebiye İngiltere Defterleri*—in which the affairs that made their way to the Imperial Council were recorded in summary. Each entry in these registers is composed of the summaries of British petitions, the

[76] Toby L. Ditz, "Secret Selves, Credible Personas: The Problematics of Trust and Public Display in the Writing of Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia Merchants," in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonia in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 219–242. On emotional aspect of letter-writing, see essays in Merridee L. Bailey and Katie Barclay, eds., *Emotion, Ritual and Power in Europe, 1200–1920: Family State, and Church* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Andreea Marculescu and Charles-Louis Morand-Métivier, eds., *Affective and Emotional Economies in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). On letter-writing in cross-cultural trade in the early modern Mediterranean, see Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009); esp. chapter seven; Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley, New York and London: University of California Press, 2011), esp. chapter five.

counter-letters by the defendants, if any, and the Ottoman imperial orders. Fortunately, these summaries provide a lot of detail, and yet the reader should be aware of potential omissions. Finally, documentary productions of the state ended with a prescription for what should be done, not how the cases were resolved. If there are multiple entries of a particular case in one register or a different archival source, we can sometimes trace its trajectory. But the final conclusions of cases remained almost always unrecorded, making it almost impossible for scholars to see who or which group prevailed at the end.

For this reason, this dissertation uses a variety of sources discussed above and cross-references them if possible and where relevant to offer a more accurate picture of British-Ottoman relations. Together, this corpus reveals the multiplicity, complexity, and contingency of British engagements with different segments of Ottoman society in the provinces under examination. Diplomatic recognition, social accommodation, and economic gain meshed together to form the basis for British engagements, whilst the Ottoman culture of diplomacy, commerce, and finance as well as the Ottoman perceptions of the British shaped how these engagements and relationships were navigated.

Temporal and Geographical Scope

Chronologically, the dissertation spans the period from the Ottoman's grant of the final draft of the Capitulations to the British in 1675 to the Treaty of the Dardanelles in 1809 concluding the first Anglo-Ottoman War (1807-1809). The Capitulations revolved around the rhetoric of friendship (*dostluḳ*) and its maintenance, and determined the commercial rights and legal status of British subjects in the Ottoman Empire. As such, it provided the parameters of commercial and imperial relations between the two empires and their subjects over the long eighteenth century that informed the multiplicity of British engagements and performances in the Ottoman

realms. The ending date of 1809 was chosen because the ensuing period witnessed a change in what Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper called 'repertoires of power' performed by the British that were not so evident in the preceding period.[77] Between the French expedition to Egypt in 1789 and the Treaty of the Dardanelles in 1809, the British became politically active in the region. Meanwhile, the rhetoric of friendship was replaced by that of progress and civilization after 1809 to further British economic and political power in the Ottoman Empire, opening a new chapter in Anglo-Ottoman relations in the nineteenth century.

The period spanning from 1675 to 1809 was also a crucial period of transformation for both the British and the Ottoman empires. Britain witnessed a series of domestic reforms, industrial developments and early iterations of imperial expansion that facilitated and underpinned its economic growth and political and military strength in the eighteenth century. The economic, military and political power brought about intensive colonial engagements in some parts of the world such as the Caribbean and South Asia. The Ottoman Empire also underwent a profound transformation in this period. The transformation was broadly characterised by the introduction of new administrative and fiscal forms, the emergence of a centralised bureaucracy at the imperial centre and new political and economic actors who became instrumental in provincial governance, and the monetisation of the Ottoman economy. Periods of socio-political unrest and violence were also common in this century, not to mention a series of wars from 1768 that brought about unbearable military and fiscal crisis. Examining various forms of British engagements in the Ottoman Empire will allow us to understand the nature and extent of British diplomatic and economic power as well as the place of British officials and merchants in the Ottoman Empire. Particularly, the dissertation shows how British consuls and merchants became bound into the Ottoman culture of diplomacy, commerce, and

[77] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 294, 303–306; For the ratification of the Capitulations, see KKMA, Kıbrıs Şeriye Sicilleri (Ottoman court records of Cyprus, henceforth cited as KŞS) 26/Page 129/Entries 271-272; *Treaties &c. between Turkey and Foreign Powers, 1535–1855* (London, 1855), 269–273.

finance, and thereby into the Ottoman body politic as the 'English party'. Yet British diplomatic and economic power in the empire was contingent and time-limited rather than omnipotent and persistent.

To provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of British imperial presence in such an integrated body politic comprised of numerous provinces, this dissertation takes a provincial perspective and focuses on the three Ottoman provinces, namely Aleppo, Izmir and Cyprus. These places, unlike Bagdad, Basra, and the North African Regencies of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, fell under the remit of the Levant Company's jurisdiction. Moreover, they were all significant domestic and international commercial centres in the eastern Mediterranean. Over the century, the British were present in Aleppo from the late sixteenth century, Izmir from the early seventeenth century, and Cyprus from the late seventeenth century. A British factory was established in Salonica in 1718 and remained small until the first decades of the nineteenth century. Compared to Istanbul, Aleppo and Izmir, Cyprus has not received much scholarly attention in the scholarship on British-Ottoman relations. This is understandable since the large volumes of the Levant Company records regarding Istanbul, Aleppo, and Izmir were available. However, the British consular reports of Cyprus are not extant and the correspondence of British merchants of Cyprus is scarce. Thus, one of the contributions of this dissertation is to shed light on British activities in Cyprus.

Furthermore, each of these places had some similarities and differences in respect of Ottoman provincial administrative, fiscal and commercial structures, on the one hand, and British commercial organisation, on the other. As such, a provincial perspective allows us to explore the nuances of British engagements in the Ottoman Empire. This dissertation examines British activities in these places and makes comparisons when appropriate, such as in British gift-giving practices, credit activities, and diplomatic and legal engagements. However, it is not a work of comparative history. It instead utilises a trans-imperial approach to understand

the historically contingent nature of British activities in these places and how the motivations for and consequences of such engagements and performances differed and diverged in several contexts.[78] At this point, it is appropriate to take a glance at the provinces in question, before discussing the structure of the thesis.

The Provinces at a Glance

The provinces and cities in question were all commercial centres in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Aleppo and Izmir emerged as the main provincial factories of the British trading community by the 1620s, and Cyprus joined these factories in the 1690s with the permanent establishment of an English consulate there.[79] Aleppo was the capital of the Aleppo province since 1534 (the city surrendered to the Ottoman sultan Selim I in 1516) and fell under the jurisdiction of a centrally appointed governor (*beylerbeyi*). The province was one of the custom centres of the empire owing to its population and commercial capacity. As a gateway to Syria, Iran and India, Aleppo was particularly important for British merchants to find outlets for British goods and export Ottoman products, principally silk, cotton and dying goods. Iskenderun was the port-city of Aleppo, so the British also had a factor marine there who organised the shipment and transportation of the goods.

As one of the chief cities of the Arabic-speaking world, Aleppo retained its traditional institutions and privileged social groups after 1516. Amongst these three provinces, Muslim and Christian Arabs were most populous in Aleppo and some members of these communities became significant commercial actors who had extensive patronage and business networks. The British interacted and formed partnerships with local figures, mostly non-Muslim subjects

[78] Hedinger and Heé, "Transimperial History – Connectivity, Cooperation and Competition," 429–52.
[79] For the locations of Aleppo, Izmir and Cyprus in the wider Ottoman geography, see Appendix I.

of the empire, to come to grips with the local culture of diplomacy and commercial dynamics. One of the sections of Chapter Two examines the complex partnership relationship between the British factory in Aleppo and Jirjīs ʿĀʾida, a Catholic Arab who was an influential merchant, financier, and the British dragoman.

British merchants resided in khans—inns, caravanserais—in Aleppo to protect themselves from different dangers such as physical molestations or plagues. The central khan which also housed the English consulate was Khan al-Gumruk [lit. the customs house], also known as the Great Han by the British. Located in the walled city of Aleppo between the Bab Antakya and the citadel of Aleppo, the khan was built as a double-storey building by Sokullu Mehmed Pasha (Grand Vizier between 1565 and 1579) in 1574. While the rooms on the ground floor were used as storerooms and warehouses, the ones on the first floor were the houses and offices of merchants.[80] Merchants also rented warehouses and offices in building complexes within the walled city of Aleppo.[81]

The heyday of the British factory in Aleppo lasted until the 1720s. British trade began to suffer following the overthrow of the Safavids in Iran, an important market for British exports and imports and a huge land mass connecting western and near eastern markets with markets in the far east, between the 1720s and 1740s, and from local turmoil unfolding in Aleppo from the 1770s. The latter undermined Ottoman authority in Aleppo and deprived the British of sufficient and effective protection. Under these circumstances, trading in Aleppo became dangerous and costly, resulting in the closure of the factory there in 1791.

[80] Türkhan, "18. Yüzyılda Doğu Akdeniz'de Ticaret ve Haleb," 158–160.
[81] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/Page 58/2, Evāsıṭ-ı Receb 1133/May 1721; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/Page 84/Entry 5, Evāʾil-i Ramażān 1140/April 1728; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/Page 114/4, Evāʾil-i Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1146/November 1733.

Izmir, on the contrary, was a thriving commercial centre during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[82] Izmir and its environs were brought under the control of the Ottomans in 1425 and became the capital administrative-judicial district (*ḳażā*) of the sub-province (*sancaḳ/livā*) of *Sığla* in the early sixteenth century. Situated in Western Anatolia, *Sığla* was one of the sub-provinces of the province of the Mediterranean islands (*Eyālet-i Cezāyir-i Baḥr-i Sefīd*) formed in the 1530s.[83] This province fell under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman Admiral (*kapudan paşa*) who was usually not present in Izmir, unlike the Ottoman governor in Aleppo, but made annual visits to the town while patrolling the islands and coastal waters in the Mediterranean.[84] It is assumed that for most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Izmir was governed as a judgeship by kadis. By the early eighteenth century, however, Izmir became a *voyvoda*ship, a provincial administrative revenue unit, whereby numerous urban and rural revenue units (sing. *muḳāṭaʿa*) were bundled together and contracted out to local tax-farmers and governors (*voyvoda*).[85] In the eighteenth century, the *voyvoda* of Izmir held administrative and jurisdictional authority over the *voyvoda*ship of Izmir, the sub-province of *Sığla* under the *ḫāṣ* status (a large fief producing an annual income over 100,000 *aḳçe*s) and other dependencies of *Sığla*. The revenues of this large administrative unit constituted a *ḥāṣṣ* or appanage-like (*arpalık*, lit. fodder money) grant and were assigned to high-ranking government officials such as the grand vizier or members of the imperial household such as *vālide sulṭān* (the mother of

[82] Mehmet Kuru's Ph.D. dissertation has shown the role of ecological, economic, and political circumstances in the rise of Izmir as a commercial centre on the Western Anatolian coast in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see Mehmet Kuru, "Locating an Ottoman Port-City in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Izmir 1580-1780" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2017).

[83] İdris Bostan, "The Establishment of the Province of Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid," in *The Kapudan Pasha, His Office and His Domain. Halcyon Days Crete IV, Rethymno, 7-9 January 2000*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2002), 241–251.

[84] For the place of Izmir within the wider geography of the province of the Mediterranean islands, see Appendix II.

[85] BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d, 156/111, Evāsıṭ-ı Ṣafer 1167/December 1753; BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d, 156/761, Evāʾil-i Z̲īlḥicce 1167/September 1754; BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d, 162/886, Evāsıṭ-ı Receb 1175/February 1762.

the reigning sultan).[86] Such beneficiaries leased the office to the *voyvoda*s of Izmir who managed provincial administration, revenue collection, and remittances. The members of the renowned Karaosmanoğlu family obtained the *voyvoda*ship of Izmir in the second half of the eighteenth century and, as we will see, established connections with foreign trading communities in Izmir.

Izmir became one of the main entrepots for western and eastern long-distance trade where a variety of goods such as silk, cotton, mohair yarn and carpets were exported out of the empire. Therefore, the zone comprising the city and its environs was one of the most important customs zones in the empire that fell under the remit of the customs of Istanbul. Turks, Armenians, Jews and Orthodox Christians were engaged in different sectors of trade and especially non-Muslim merchants assumed critical roles in trade routes linking the Anatolian markets with their counterparts across the globe. Thus, such density and diversity resulted in interactions in various forms between British merchants and significant commercial players in Izmir.

British consuls and merchants resided in a separate quarter in the city for Europeans, known as Franks Street, that was located at the seafront parallel to the coast of the harbour. As will be discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, this quarter was partly formed by European merchant communities in Izmir from the early seventeenth century and became essentially instrumental for British commercial operations as well as the representation of the British consular body in Izmir. Plagues, earthquakes, and fires hit the city over the eighteenth century. There were also periods of violent disturbances that badly affected the lives and trade

[86] Robert Mantran, "Arpalıḳ," in *EI*^{2}, eds. Peri Bearman et al. Consulted online on 30 November 2023. During his visit to Izmir in 1739, Richard Pococke noted that Izmir and its environs belonged to the *vālide sulṭān*, see Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East, and Some Other Countries*, vol. 2, part 2 (London, 1743), 38.

of British merchants. However, the living and trading conditions were relatively favourable to British merchants, attracting many merchants in the second half of the century.

However, the British interest in establishing merchant-houses in Cyprus, a province of the Ottoman Empire since 1571, faded away by the 1770s. Between the 1690s and 1720s, several merchants came to settle in Cyprus and there were generally two to three merchant-houses comprising mainly of two to three merchants. After the 1720s, there was usually only one merchant-house formed of two merchants, one of them acting also as the British consul. First, the easing of the monopolistic structure of the Levant Company in the 1740s and 1750s and then the decline of Aleppo trade from the 1770s changed the British commercial organisation on the island. Thereafter, the Company appointed a British consul to the island who organised and coordinated British trade and shipping. Local non-Muslim merchants from the Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Jewish communities became partners and acted on behalf of British merchants over the century.

Still, Cyprus retained its importance throughout the eighteenth century due to its commercially oriented agriculture and its proximity to port-cities of the Syrian, South Anatolian, and the Egyptian coast. Although the market for British exports was modest in Cyprus, Cypriot silk, cotton and dying goods were esteemed by British merchants, and British ships sailing in the eastern Mediterranean docked at Limassol, Paphos, Larnaca, and Famagusta for provisioning purposes. Among these ports, Larnaca emerged as the main trading port of Cyprus through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although ships continued trading through other ports mentioned above. British and other European consuls and merchants lived in the Chrysopolitissa neighbourhood in Larnaca, about a twenty-minute walk from the port.

For most of the century, Cyprus was the personal *ḫāṣṣ* of high-ranking Ottoman officials such as the grand vizier and other viziers. These high-ranking officials were hardly present on

the island. Instead, *muḥaṣṣıl*s (tax-farming governors) managed revenue collection and provincial administration, and revenues were either allocated to high-ranking officials or to the Imperial Treasury. While doing so, *muḥaṣṣıl*s worked with the representatives (sing. *reʿāyā vekīli* and *ḳocabaşı*) of the non-Muslim communities.[87] This in turn affected the nature of British interactions with those who held posts of authority in Cyprus.

In this context, the relationships taking place between the British and the Ottomans in the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, were quite different than those in the provinces. These three provinces had their own governance regimes and commercial dynamics, which were in a state of flux, that bore resemblances with one another. Yet they also had certain peculiarities stemming from ecological, geopolitical, and socio-cultural factors. Accordingly, British officials and merchants had to go through an active process of acculturation and adaptation that entailed constant dialogue and interaction with diverse actors in order for them to first survive and then succeed as entrepreneurs in the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter Outline

The dissertation is composed of four chapters. The first three chapters examine British diplomatic, social, and financial engagements, respectively. The last chapter, however, analyses how the British navigated their neutrality and for what reasons. Having been placed in the Ottoman administrative and legal system through the capitulations, provincial authorities and officeholders were responsible for the protection of the lives and trading rights of British merchants. Moreover, these authorities and officeholders had various means at their disposal to exert authority to increase their revenues and boost their prestige and authority. Increased

[87] On these administrative histories, see the section one of the chapter one.

revenue sources were important not only because they had to remit provincial revenues to the Treasury or the beneficiaries of these incomes, but they also drew their sustenance from these incomes. Consolidating their prestige on the other hand helped them form patronage networks and remain in bureaucratic and official circles. Chapter One focuses on the two means through which these authorities and officials exerted their authority: gift-giving and taxation. It examines how British officials and merchants navigated such local exertions of authority and for what reasons. The chapter argues that the British in the provinces had to conform to the Ottoman conventions of gift-giving practices over the eighteenth century to establish and maintain cordial relationships with authority- and power-holders in the provinces. Maintaining such relations was important since the protection of their capitulatory privileges rested with these authorities. Moreover, it argues that the distinct customs regime applicable to the British caused ambiguous jurisdictional boundaries within and between provinces. Such ambiguities generated more space for greater exertions of local authority in the form of taxation. Therefore, petitioning became a crucial instrument of British diplomacy to ensure that the customs regimes stipulated in the capitulations were observed. Through these engagements, the British entered tributary relations with authorities and bureaucrats, and thus they were able to secure their trading interests in all three provinces at least until the 1790s.

In navigating these complex diplomatic processes, the British had to form relationships with local figures who were well-acquainted with local cultures of diplomacy and commerce. Chapter Two therefore analyses the importance of these local figures, known as dragomans, for British trading communities and the nature of relationship between them. The dragomans in question in this chapter were members of the Omiros family in Izmir, Jirjīs ʿĀʾida in Aleppo, and Sargis[88], son of Avag, in Cyprus. Dragomans who were employed in British consular

[88] Similar to Jirjīs ʿĀʾida, I transliterated his name from Armenian by using the *Library of Congress* guide because he was a member of the sizeable Armenian community in Cyprus and most probably spoke Armenian as his

services were significant and powerful figures who had extensive patronage and business networks. Their power and connections were the main reasons why the British employed them. Contrary to the commonly held view that dragomans were merely intermediaries, this chapter argues that they were important figures in their own right. The British partnered with these people to ensure a smooth functioning of diplomacy and commerce, while the dragomans extended their patronage and business networks by becoming British protégés. Yet their relationships with dragomans went beyond the professional. As will be shown, members of the Omiros family who served as the British dragomans throughout the eighteenth century also became the landowners of the British factory in Izmir. The central argument of this chapter is that the relationship between the British and their dragomans was always contingent and entailed a lot of give and take for the relationship to be beneficial to both the British and the dragomans. It sees agency, power, and the accrual of benefits on both sides.

While Chapter Two examines social networks and power dynamics revealed through these relationships, Chapter Three concentrates on economic and financial networks by investigating credit relations between British and Ottoman merchants, communities and officeholders. The chapter investigates to what extent credit relations and disputes arising from non-payment of debts led to power asymmetry between the British and the Ottomans. Neither the British nor the Ottomans were able to assert economic and symbolic dominance over one another throughout the century. British merchants had to navigate the risks involved and gauge the creditworthiness of the Ottoman borrowers when engaging in credit. So, perceptions of risk and trust were key. Debt collection processes were equally difficult and there was no guarantee that the debt would be recovered easily. Local Ottoman borrowers were equipped with the required commercial and legal knowledge to postpone debt recovery processes, and the

native language. Since he was a native of Cyprus, I rendered his name as Sargis not Sarkis based on the phonetic values of Classic and East Armenian.

Ottoman state was not always able to enforce payments. The chapter moreover shows that there were social and economic motivations for engaging financially with the Ottomans. For example, providing financial services to Ottoman officials was seen by the Ottomans as a sign of friendship. Just as engaging in gift-giving and petitioning practices situated the British into wider Ottoman administrative and legal structures, so too engaging in financial practices caused the British to become bound into the developing Ottoman fiscal mechanisms.

The final chapter focuses on how, when and why the British sought to remain neutral in periods of socio-political unrest in the provinces. This chapter queries whether the British were willing to provide diplomatic, military and financial aid to the Ottoman provincial authorities during regional and local uprisings in our provinces. It adopts a case study approach to examine the stance of the British factories during the uprising of the Sarıbeyoğlu in Izmir, the Riot of 1764-66 in Cyprus, and the campaign of Shaykh Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar al-Zaydānī towards Damascus. Conditions of neutrality seemed to have been differently interpreted by the Ottomans and the British. The latter considered their involvements, in any form, in local power struggles as political actions in defiance of cordiality, whereas Ottoman provincial officeholders viewed their involvement and assistance as sine qua non for inter-imperial amity and peace. Yet claims of neutrality by both the British and the Ottomans were constantly redefined by situational exigencies. In large measure, the unwillingness of the British to embroil themselves in such conflicts was due partly to financial considerations and partly to political considerations. This chapter also tries to understand the Ottoman perceptions of British diplomatic and financial power. It reveals that the Ottoman understandings of British capabilities were moulded largely by the pressing conditions and circumstances in the provinces. Overall, the chapter shows that while the Ottomans were aware of how the British might be of any help to them during such tumultuous times, the British were in no position to pursue an aggressive, expansionist policy over the eighteenth century.

Taken together, this dissertation shows that British officials and merchants were not only an integrated component of Britain's wider commercial empire, but they were also highly integrated into the Ottoman legal and structures. This process began with the granting of the Capitulations to the English but was really shaped by their continual involvement in diplomatic, social, commercial, and financial spheres of activity in the empire. Through these engagements, British merchants sought to maintain and further their trading interests in the empire to accumulate economic and social capital. Yet their power was generally time-limited and contingent due to factors that they could not always anticipate and control. All in all, this dissertation reveals a different trajectory of British imperial experience in the eastern Mediterranean during a period when the roots of British imperial expansion and rule were planted elsewhere. As such, this dissertation invites us to think anew about the complexity of British imperial enterprises and experiences across the globe during an important period of British imperial expansion. Secondly, it forces us to reevaluate the nature of Ottoman imperial power, the agency of its imperial subjects, and the workings of the Ottoman Empire in an age of European overseas expansion and early modern state formation.

CHAPTER 1: Navigating Exertions of Local Authority and Protecting Commercial Interests: Gift-giving and Petitioning in the Provinces

> [W]hen he [an Ottoman officeholder] knows that all he can *amass by his rapine and oppression*, must contribute to fill the coffers of his superiors, it is surprising that he should take so much pains to render himself odious and detestable by his tyranny and injustice. For every individual governor and officer of the porte, acts uniformly in his station, as if he thought heaven was to be obtained by no other conduct than that which renders his fellows-creatures miserable upon earth: and, that the more he pillages, the higher he shall mount by the favour of his prophet.[89]

British merchants in the Ottoman Empire were no strangers to the material demands of Ottoman provincial authorities such as the taxes and gifts routinely referenced in Ottoman imperial orders and the assembly records of British factories in Aleppo and Izmir in the eighteenth century. The British occasionally, but not always, associated the emoluments of indigenous officialdom with corruption and despotism, as Alexander Drummond did in his travel account, due to changing attitudes towards corruption and office from the late seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries in Britain and British colonial settlements.[90] Yet for Ottoman provincial officeholders, taxes and gifts were sources of income that had economic and symbolic value signalling authority and honour. In fact, in the Ottoman realm, authoritative and social relations were constructed through taxes and gifts, the receipt of which marked local authority.[91] This chapter questions the place of the British in provincial socio-political contexts.

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[89] Alexander Drummond, *Travels through different Cities of Germany, Italy, Greece, and several parts of Asia as far as the banks of Euphrates* (London, 1754), 137.

[90] Paul Masson, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1896), esp. chapter one; Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 124; For revisionist accounts on this, see also Merlijn Olnon, "Towards classifying avanias: A study of two cases involving the English and Dutch nations in seventeenth-century Izmir," in *Friends and Rivals in the East: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Levant from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, eds. Alastair Hamilton et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 159–86; Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, esp. chapter three. On changing attitudes towards office and corruption in Britain and its empire, see Mark Knights, *Trust and Distrust: Corruption in Office in Britain and its Empire, 1600-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), esp. 374–415.

[91] Halil İnalcık, and Donard Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 55–77; Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 27–29. For similar relations in Mughal India, see Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Sudipta Sen, *Empire of Free Trade: The East India Company and the Making of the Colonial Marketplace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1998).

It also examines how power relations between the British factories and Ottoman officeholders look like, if we stop viewing gift exchange or tax demands necessarily as corruptive and despotic exactions, but rather as exertions of local authority. To answer those questions, this chapter investigates the British gift-giving and petitioning strategies against the backdrop of exertions of local authority.

Based on an English royal charter issued first in 1581 and again in 1661, the Levant Company was granted the authority to make laws to organise, finance, and stimulate trade in the Ottoman Empire. The Company conferred the authority on British ambassadors and consuls to maintain British merchants' interests and adjudicate disputes amongst members of the British trading community. In protecting the merchants' interests, the consuls took the Capitulations as the legal basis that delineated the rights and privileges accorded unilaterally by Ottoman sultans to the British in return for the friendship expected of the British. Such rights ranged from freedom of movement and trade to fixed customs duties and the resolution of commercial disputes. The observance of these rights rested with provincial officeholders, under whose authority the British lived and traded.[92]

However, the capitulatory privileges were not immutable since Ottoman imperial edicts (*fermān*s) and established legal practices modified the capitulatory articles over time.[93] Moreover, Ottoman provincial authorities not only showed a lack of respect for the British privileges, but also sought ways to exert their authority through material demands such as tax impositions and demands for gifts. These demands were within their normal remit of authority. Yet they did not necessarily conform, and were at times contrary, to specified privileges

[92] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 219–220; Niels Steensgaard, "Consuls and nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 15, no. 1-2 (1967): 15; Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans*, 15–16; Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, 38–41; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 31–40. For the capitulatory articles defining the responsibilities of provincial authorities, see BOA, A.{DVN.DVE. d 035/1 (İngiltere Nişan Defteri, henceforth cited as DVN.DVE. d 35/1)/Pages 2-3/Articles 2, 3, and 13.

[93] Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, 34–62; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 27.

enjoyed by the merchants through the sultan's capitulations.[94] Therefore, British ambassadors and consuls had to engage in gift-giving and petitioning practices with provincial and central authorities to ensure that their commercial privileges were formally acknowledged and duly protected in local contexts. In other words, while endeavouring to ensure enforcement of their capitulatory privileges, the British also endured and navigated exertions of local authority.

The first section of this chapter outlines the Ottoman governance of, and provincial authority-holders in Aleppo, Izmir, and Cyprus to understand the local power dynamics within which the relationship between the British and Ottoman provincial officials took place. It shows how Ottoman provincial administrative-fiscal regimes created more space for greater exertions of authority by officials over British communities and how earlier British efforts to stabilise their commercial rights proved to be of limited success. The second section then examines the Ottoman-British gift-giving practices to learn why the British conformed to the Ottoman conventions of gifting practices and what these relationships tell us about the power dynamics at work. It argues that the British entered tributary relationships with provincial officeholders for the acknowledgment and observation of their commercial rights by officeholders. Yet by engaging in gifting practices, the British also showed off their wealth and even influenced consumption, aesthetics patterns, and other aspects of social life in the empire.

The final section analyses British petitioning strategies to explore what sorts of textual strategies the British employed and why and how they petitioned the authorities. It also considers the efficiency of this strategy to offer a lasting remedy to problems the British faced. British textual strategies refer to the language and discourses British officials and dragomans used in their petitions to Ottoman statesmen to be able to engage with the Ottoman legal system. These textual strategies were shaped by Ottoman petitionary language and concepts and used

[94] Steensgaard, "Consuls and nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650," 16, 19.

successfully to clarify and re-assert their trading privileges over the century. Such constant petitioning further placed the British in Ottoman bureaucratic structures and created mechanisms by which British petitioning contributed to, and was also shaped by, Ottoman bureaucratic reforms. However, the financial condition of the British factories, the geographical distance between Istanbul and the provinces, and the agency of provincial officeholders all limited the efficiency of the British strategies. Overall, this chapter reveals how gift-giving and petitioning signalled unequal power relations between the Ottomans and the British in favour of the former, resulting in different trajectories of the British presence in the provinces. It also shows how the British became integrated into Ottoman administrative and legal structures through participation in gift-giving and petitioning practices that were essential for the acknowledgment and protection of British commercial interests in the region.

Provincial Authority and British Privileges

British trading communities in different geographies such as Hudson's Bay, the West African Coast, and South Asia lived in trading forts and enjoyed full or partial jurisdictional autonomy according to the treaties signed with local rulers. Yet since the protection of their rights, goods, and personnel depended on the strict observation of these treaties by local rulers, British communities sought strategies to engage with these rulers to ensure the implementation of such treaties.[95] The British also enjoyed trading rights and jurisdictional autonomy over their own matters in the Ottoman Empire. However, as mentioned in the introduction and will be elaborated in the following pages, the Capitulations placed the British in the Ottoman administrative, legal, and social structure. British merchants did not reside in trading forts but

[95] Sen, *Empire of Free Trade*; Guido van Meersbergen, "Dutch and English Approaches to Cross-Cultural Trade in Mughal India and the Problem of Trust, 1600-1630," in *Beyond Empires: Global, Self-Organizing, Cross-Imperial Networks, 1500–1800*, eds. Cátia Antunes and Amélia Polónia (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 69–87.

in khans and houses in the Ottoman provinces.[96] Moreover, Ottoman provincial authorities were responsible for the protection of British merchants and their trading rights. Therefore, the British had to understand local power dynamics defined by the administrative and jurisdictional organisations in the provinces. Accordingly, they had to engage in culturally informed diplomatic practices such as gift-giving to foster authoritative and personal relationships, a practice that began to be viewed as a threat to good governance and was tried to be curtailed by legislation in England after the Glorious Revolution of 1688.[97] Moreover, engaging in petitioning practices was needed to defend their rights and interests. These practices were vital to developing their commerce.

This section sketches out the administrative and jurisdictional structures in the provinces during the eighteenth century to understand under which conditions and with whom the British were engaged and interacted. It argues that the changes in Ottoman administrative-fiscal regimes in the provinces from the seventeenth through the eighteenth century conferred significant authority on provincial officeholders, but also caused jurisdictional ambiguities over administrative and revenue collection units. Such strengthened authorities and ambiguities allowed more space for exertions of local authority and required the British to negotiate with provincial officeholders to make adjustments to their capitulatory privileges while navigating exertions of local authority. Ottoman scholarship has shown that not only did the Ottoman economy evince a strong degree of resilience to European market competition throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but provincial officials also exercised authority over European traders by influencing the export price of the goods, levying taxes on commercial commodities, and demanding gifts from European communities.[98] The underlaying factors

[96] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 70–77; Daniel Goffman, *İzmir and Levanten Dünya, 1550–1650*, trans. Ayşen Anadol and Neyyir Kalaycıoğlu (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995), 44–47.
[97] Knights, *Trust and Distrust*, 388–89.
[98] Mehmet Genç, "A Study of the Feasibility of Using Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Financial Records as an indicator of Economic Activity," in *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy*, ed. Huri İslamoğlu-İnan

behind such exertions were two folds: a) the Ottoman methods of provincial governance and revenue collection and b) the constant reconfiguration of the administrative-revenue units in the provinces.

The Ottoman state delegated the right to individuals to coordinate administration and collect and remit taxes from the administrative units of different sizes (*tīmār*, *zeʿāmet*, and *ḫāṣṣ*), and individual urban and rural revenue units (*muḳāṭaʿa*, singular) such as mines, factories, and customs. One of the main pillars of Ottoman administrative structure was centrally appointed provincial military governors (*pasha or vālī*, singular) who were usually assigned a *ḫāṣṣ* (a large estate comprised of various agricultural and urban units that traditionally produced more than 100,000 *akçe*s tax revenue per year). They were responsible for the maintenance of order in wartime and peacetime and the collection of revenues, and thus had administrative and fiscal authority over their offices, the revenues of which were often collected by their deputies (*mütesellim*, singular).[99] More often than not, local contractors (*muḥaṣṣıl* and *mültezim*, singular) or salaried officials (*emīn* and *ʿāmil,* singular) assisted military elites or their deputies in the collection of revenues. The judge of the province, kadi, was another centrally assigned official vested with judiciary and administrative powers.

Various divisions of tax revenue units belonging to the members of dynastic and imperial elites were also farmed out (*iltizām*) to the highest bidders amongst local contractors

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 345–373; Şevket Pamuk, "The Evolution of Financial Institutions in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1800," *Financial History Review* 11, no. 1 (2004): 7–32; Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Ottoman de-industrialization, 1800-1913: assessing the magnitude, impact, and response', *Economic History Review*," 64, no. 1 (2011): 159–184; Suraiya Faroqhi, "Ottoman cotton textiles: The story of a success that did not last long, 1500-1800," in *The spinning world: A global history of cotton textiles 1200-1850*, eds. G. Riello and P. Parthasarath (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 89–104. For authority exertions, see Gilles Veinstein, "Ayân de la région d'Izmir et le commerce du Levant (deuxième moitié du XVIIIe siècle)," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 20 (1975): 137, 147; İsmail H. Kadı, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century: Competition and Cooperation in Ankara, Izmir, and Amsterdam* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 275; Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 96; Eldem, "French Trade and Commercial Policy in the Levant in the Eighteenth-Century," *Oriente Moderno* 18(78), no. 1 (1999): 38.

[99] Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman warfare, 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 35-48; Yücel Özkaya, "Mütesellim," *TDVİA*. Consulted on 15 July 2022.

or run by salaried officials, a process which gained momentum in the eighteenth century due to high inflation, fluctuation in the real value of revenues, and the costs of war.[100] These processes caused the oppression of taxpayers in the provinces as the tax-collectors were intent on maximising their revenues at the expense of imperial subjects. To alleviate this problem and ensure effective revenue collection, new methods of revenue collection were introduced such as the *malikāne* in 1695 and the *eshām* (sing. *sehm*, meaning share) in 1774. Consequently, the state outsourced and redistributed more and more revenue sources to semi-private entrepreneurs. Thus, these entrepreneurs obtained public offices and became deeply involved in the business of provincial administration with strengthened fiscal and administrative authorities.[101] The taxes on goods, tributes and gifts, and other regular and extraordinary fees were all provincial, culturally coded incomes under their jurisdiction.[102] For this reason, when provincial authority-holders demanded their sources of incomes in the forms of gifts and taxes, the British came to understand and deal with these material demands. Although some of these demands were not specified in the Capitulations, they were not contrary to them, whereas other demands were at odds with the Capitulations.

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, new administrative lines that developed with local notables and groups came to coexist with older forms of governance in provinces. For example, besides a centrally appointed governor, Aleppo became a provincial tax farm (*muḥaṣṣıllık*) before 1689 whereby the *muḥaṣṣıl* supervised the main group of tax farms as the

[100] İnalcık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* 55–75.
[101] Linda Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 120–21, 178–79; Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Ekonomi* (Istanbul: Ötüken Yayınları, 2000), 95-183, 186–198; Erol Özvar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Malikane Uygulaması* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2003); Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi (XVIII. yy dan Tanzimat'a Mali Tarih)* (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986), 34–74, 77–134; "From Financial Crises to the Structural Change: The Case of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century," *Oriente Moderno* 18, no. 79 (1999): 49–54; Murat Çizakça, *Comparative Evolution of Business Partnerships: The Islamic World and Europe, with Specific Reference to the Ottoman Archives* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 159–178, 179–189; Pamuk, "The Evolution of Financial Institutions," 18; Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 13.
[102] İnalcık and Quataert eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 55–77; Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 27–29.

tax-farming governor with the help of numerous local tax collectors (*mültezim* and *mutaṣarrıf*, singular).[103] The post of the *muḥaṣṣıl* would become so powerful towards the end of the eighteenth century that a British merchant writing of Aleppo in 1792 suggested that this officeholder was the real locus of power in the province: "[m]uhassil [i.e., İbrahim Ağa] being so powerful in Aleppo by controlling all the villages and the tax farm of core, the Pasha do nothing."[104] While Izmir, the capital of the sub-province (*sancaḳ/livā*) of *Sığla*, fell under the jurisdiction of the province of the Mediterranean islands (*Eyālet-i Cezāyir-i Baḥr-i Sefīd*) controlled by the Ottoman Admiral, the beneficiaries of 'the provincial tax farm (*voyvodalık*) of Izmir, the *sancaḳ* of *Sığla* and its dependencies' outsourced it to local tax farmers (*voyvoda*s) who maintained order and collected revenues on behalf of the real beneficiaries by the assistance of many other local tax collectors.[105] Over the century, Cyprus was governed as provincial *ḫaṣṣ*es of the Ottoman administrators, provincial tax farms (*muḥaṣṣıllık)* of the *muḥaṣṣıl*s, the *malikāne* or *eshām* province, and the imperial *ḫaṣṣ* holdings (*ḫavāṣṣ-ı hümāyūn*). The pashas rarely came to the island; rather they subleased it to the *mütesellim*s or *muḥaṣṣıl*s. The latter came to control provincial administration and revenue collection in the second half of the century by sharing its authority with the representatives (*ḳocabaşı*s or *reʿāyā vekīli*s) of the Christian community such as the bishops and dragomans.[106]

The reshuffling and reconfiguration of administrative and revenue collection units not only affected the Ottoman customs regimes and caused ambiguity and conflict between officeholders over their administrative-jurisdictional zones, but it also created more space for

[103] BOA, AE.SSÜL.II/5/420, 29 Z̲īlḥicce 1100/14 October 1689.
[104] TNA, SP 110/53, 18 September 1792.
[105] Necmi Ülker, "The Rise of Izmir, 1688-1740" (Ph.D. diss., the University of Michigan, 1974), 266; Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım*, 51–52, 106–107; BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d. 156/761, Evāʾil-i Z̲īlḥicce 1167/September 1754; BOA, AE.SABH.I. 303/20314, 11 Z̲īlḳʿade 1199/15 September 1785.
[106] Antonis Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island: Cyprus in the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 2011), 122–188; Ali E. Özkul, *Kıbrıs'ın Sosyo-Ekonomik Tarihi, (1726-1750)* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2010); Fatih Erdem, "18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Kıbrısı'nda Muhassıllık İdaresi (H. 1130-1199/M. 1718-1785)" (master's thesis, T.C. Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi, 2021).

greater exertions of authority over British communities. At times, even European mercantile activity contributed to the reshuffling of administrative revenue collection units.[107] The Ottoman Empire was comprised of several customs zones in which customs were tied to various administrative-revenue units. For instance, the customs of Aleppo and Cyprus were parts of the provincial tax farms (*muḥaṣṣıllık*) and managed by customs commissioners, whereas those of Izmir fell under the remit of the customs of Istanbul whereby the chief customs officer in Istanbul leased it to the third-party customs commissioners in Izmir.[108] Therefore, the British traded on multiple jurisdictions over customs.

The framework of British commerce and their trading privileges and rights in the Ottoman domains were set forth by the Capitulations granted by the Ottomans to the British first in 1580. The initial grant was secured by William Harborne, a factor for Edward Osborne and Richard Staper and the first English ambassador to the Porte between 1582 and 1588, but its provisions were put into effect in May 1583.[109] The capitulatory stipulations were renewed, modified, and confirmed in 1601, 1607, 1612, 1618, 1621, 1641, 1662, and finally in 1675. The 1675 treaty, comprised of sixty-four articles in the Ottoman text and seventy-six in the English version, was a cumulative text that recorded the amendments and additions to previous treaties reflecting the needs of different moments.[110] The 1580 treaty was concerned primarily

[107] BOA, A.{DVN.DVE.d 36/2 (İngiltere Mahlut Defteri, henceforth cited as DVN.DVE.d 36/2)/Page 11/Entry 1, Evāḫir-i Zīlḥicce 1163/November 1750.
[108] According to Yavuz Cezar, the customs of Aleppo were separated from the *muḥaṣṣıllık* of Aleppo and leased as 'ber vech-i malikane esham' in 1786, see Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım*, 107, 109. İzmir ve Sakız ve tevabii Gümrük Mukataası (Customs revenue unit of Izmir, Chios, and its dependencies) consisted of İzmir Efrenç Gümrüğü (Foreign Customs of Izmir), İzmir Meyve Gümrüğü (Fruit Customs of Izmir), Sakız İskelesi (the port of Chios), and Eski ve Yeni Foça İskeleleri (Old and new ports of Foça), see Saim Çağrı Kocakaplan, "İstanbul Gümrüğü (1750-1800): Teşkilat ve Ticaret" (Ph.D. diss., Marmara Üniversitesi, 2014), 35.
[109] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 8–13; Arthur L. Horniker, "William Harborne and the Beginning of Anglo-Turkish Diplomatic and Commercial," *The Journal of Modern History* 14, no. 3 (1942): 300–302. Murad III's letter to Elizabeth I about the effectuation of the cancelled treaty is published in Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türk-İngiliz Münâsebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi (1553–1610)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1953), 187.
[110] The Ottoman-language copy of the 1675 Capitulations is in the İngiltere Nişan Defteri (BOA, A.{DVN.DVE. d 35/1), fols. 2–28, evāsıṭ-ı şehr-i Cemāziyelāḫire sene sitta ve semānīn ve elf (the middle of the month of Cemāziyelāḫir of 1086/1-11 September 1675). For the English-language version, I use *The Capitulations and*

with ensuring the security of British merchants at sea and on land, delineating their limited autonomous position, and granting them the right to use Ottoman local courts in the empire. Thus, this treaty not only granted safe conduct to British Levant Company merchants, but also positioned them within the Ottoman legal system. The subsequent treaties addressed the issues of lawsuits, debts, abuses, and the collection of customs and duties.[111] The provisions in these treaties conditioned the relationship between the British and the Ottomans by explicating the obligations of British merchants whilst residing and trading in the Ottoman realms, such as paying the specified taxes and displaying friendship towards the Ottomans. The provisions also clarified the responsibilities of Ottoman officials towards the British, for example ensuring the freedom of movement of British merchants without hindrance and the rightful collection of taxes from them in the empire. Such structuring of the relationship between the Ottomans and the British positioned the British community within the Ottoman administrative-legal system and society over the seventeenth century. It also informed how the British were to navigate their obligations that were explicitly and implicitly stated in the Capitulations, such as taxes and gifts respectively.

The Capitulations imposed specified tax responsibilities with certain privileges and exemptions on British merchants. For example, while Ottoman merchants were required to pay customs dues (Muslims paid 4 per cent and non-Muslims paid 5 per cent) in each customs zone, beginning in 1601 the British needed to pay 3 per cent *ad valorem* customs dues on all transactions in the Ottoman Empire. Upon the one-time payment of customs on an item, they were to receive an *edā tezkeresi* (lit. payment receipt) exempting them from any further taxation

Articles of Peace between the Majesty of the King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland &c. and the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire (London, 1679). (Henceforth cited as *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Article no)

[111] Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 28–30.

even if they brought the goods into a different customs zone.[112] Additionally, British subjects and their dependents (*tābiʿ*, including Ottoman non-Muslims under British protection) were exempt from the poll tax (*cizye* or *ḫarāc*) and 'the butchery tax' (*ḳaṣṣābiye aḳçesi*) levied on Ottoman non-Muslims, and the inheritance tax (*resm-i ḳısmet*) on Ottoman subjects.[113] These privileges offered, on paper at least, advantageous terms to British merchants in comparison to Ottoman merchants.

However, some of these tax privileges were open to interpretation, and provincial officials capitalised on these opportunities to increase their share of customs within the legal framework of the Capitulations. For example, tax-farmers and customs officers tended to place more value on British exports and imports to receive more customs duties.[114] Therefore, the proviso of 3 per cent *ad valorem* did not provide stable tariffs to British merchants due to the agency of provincial officials. Variations in weights, measures, and money in the empire also led to different interpretations of the value of the goods. Such variations allowed officials to speculate on the value of goods and obtain imperial commands to legitimise further taxation of the goods.[115] By 1675, the British ambassador obtained fixed import and export tariffs on individual items and most traded commodities and had them incorporated into the Capitulations to reduce ambiguity and conflict.[116] This example shows not only the connection between

[112] *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Articles XXXI, XXXVII, XXXIX; Alexander H. De Groot, "The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries," *Oriente Moderno* 83, no. 3 (2003): 600; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 36.
[113] *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Articles XXXII, LXVI, XXVIII; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 37.
[114] BOA, DVN.DVE. d 35/1/Pages 19-20/Article 44.
[115] *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Article XLV.
[116] *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Articles LXVIII, LXIX; BOA, DVN.DVE. d 35/1/Pages 24-26/Articles 54–57. According to one account, the tariffs were granted to Sir Sackville Crow, the British ambassador to the Porte between 1638 and 1647, but were not inserted in the Capitulations; thus, they had gradually lost their validity as the customs officers disobeyed and the Porte refused to enforce its provisions. Sir John Finch, the British ambassador active between 1674 and 1681, eventually inserted them in the Capitulations of 1675. See George. F. Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople: A Record of Sir John Finch's Embassy, 1674-1681* (London: Macmillan and CO., Limited, 1920), 26–28.

diplomacy and commerce, but also the ability of British factories to come up with plans and convince the ambassadors to have them formalised.

As the commodities traded by the British changed and diversified over time, a separate catalogue was kept for tariff rates by the British chancelleries and the customs officers in each province to avoid disputes over taxation. These catalogues were not however added to the Capitulations.[117] For example, in April 1686, the customs officer and the British consul of Izmir agreed a fixed 'Tarife of Customs', including around eighty export and import items to be in effect from 1 December 1686.[118] The Porte authorised such tariff settlements between provincial officials and British factories and allowed officials and European factories to update the rates observing the 3 per cent *ad valorem* each year in the first month, Muḥarrem, of the *hicrī* calendar in accordance with the prevailing prices in each province.[119] This would ensure the collection of maximum customs payable on commodities and avoid the erosion of the state's revenues due to high inflation. As will be shown, both capitulatory and locally agreed tariffs were disregarded on various pretexts, requiring the British to request the Porte to re-authenticate the tariffs.

Such distinct and varying customs regimes applicable to the British complicated the implementation of British privileges at a local level. The ability and efforts of provincial officials to devise strategies to increase their revenues at the expense of the British speak to the weak position of the British in the provinces. Constant reconfiguration of the administrative-revenue units led not only to ambiguous jurisdictional boundaries that generated more space for greater exertions of local authority, but also entailed the possibility that the new officeholders would not respect the Capitulations or recognise the terms of commercial rights

[117] Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 35.
[118] TNA, SP 105/334, undated, pp. 109–110.
[119] TNA, SP 105/335, 16 February 1699, p. 7; BOA, AE.SMST.IV. 6/485, 5 Muḥarrem 1223/3 March 1808. Also, see BOA, C.ML. 583/23974, Evāḫir-i Ramażān 1220/December 1805; BOA, C.İKTS. 2/59, 20 Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1218/7 September 1803.

settled with their predecessors. Although European merchants were at times able to contest such exertions by taking advantage of the fluid boundaries, they had to ensure the acknowledgment of their rights by provincial officials.[120] Hence, this chapter shows that British success depended on the efficiency of their strategies in dealing with such issues. In this manner, the financial position and political leverage of British factories in the provinces were essential to pursue their strategies. Conforming to the Ottoman conventions of gift-exchange was a prerequisite for fostering accommodative relationships with provincial officials in a way to acknowledge their authority and effectuate their trading privileges.

Gift-giving

In 1681-82, Baron Chandos, the British ambassador between 1680 and 1686, struggled to obtain an imperial order against the impositions on British silk exports from Izmir by the head customs officer in Istanbul and his officer in Izmir. For this reason, Chandos advised the British consul of Izmir to offer gifts to the customs officer there. Chandos hoped to garner support from the customs officer who might then influence the kadi to procure a document quashing the decision of the head customs officer in Istanbul and thus avoid delays in shipping.[121] Having arrived in Istanbul in 1681, Chandos seemed not to have got along with the French and even British Levant merchants, resulting in him being recalled to England in 1684. Yet, one thing he grasped well was the subtleties of Ottoman diplomatic culture to remedy commercial nuisances: gift-giving.

British capitulatory and locally agreed trading privileges depended on the acknowledgement and enforcement of their rights by provincial authority holders such as

[120] Rhoads Murphey, "Conditions of Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean: An Appraisal of Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Documents from Aleppo," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 33, no. 1 (1990): 43.

[121] BL, Stowe 119, from James Brydges, Baron Chandos to Consul Ray of Izmir, 8 December 1681; BL, Stowe 119, from Chandos to Consul Ray of Izmir, 25 October 1682.

pashas, kadis, *muḥaṣṣıl*s, and *voyvoda*s. If the British were to protect their trading interests, they had to first recognise the authority of, and build cordial relations with, ever-changing provincial authorities, the most significant prerequisite for which was gift-exchange. This section argues that gift-giving was one of the practices, to which the British were expected to conform, by which they displayed friendships towards the Ottomans for the protection of themselves and their commercial interests in the provinces. Money spent on the gifts formed a substantial amount of the British factories' expenses. Their inability to afford such costly rituals constrained their capacity in local power dynamics and thus affected their position in the provinces. Gift-exchange promoted patronage and networks of obligation and helped construct authoritative relations between different segments of Ottoman society. Therefore, engaging in such cultural practices not only helped the British form networks to protect and further their commercial interest, but also defined the position of the British in Ottoman social strata. Regular gifts given on specific occasions or dates and established gift-like payments strengthened the idea of tributary relations between the British and Ottomans in the provinces. These regular gifts or gift-like payments assumed the form of *pīşkeş*—a tributary offering made by an inferior to a superior as a mark of respect and dependence.[122] There were also social gifts given on random occasions that might not have implied British officials and merchants' dependent position, although it is difficult to distinguish social gifts from tributary ones since the former could easily transform into the latter.[123] Whether it be tributary gifts or social presents, both had repercussions on the British factory's financial power. This section focuses

[122] On *pīşkeş*, see İnalcık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* 75; Ann Lambton, ""Pīshkash": Present or tribute?," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57, no. 1 (1994): 145–158.

[123] For a contemporary comment on the subtle difference between quotidian and tributary presents, see Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople: A Record of Sir John Finch's Embassy, 1674-1681*, Appendix IX, 394. "In the same way, *bakshish* generally, if considered in its origin, is only a very natural expression of love and respect. Presents have always been and still are the proper tokens of friendship among men the world over. But observances of this kind have a knack of degenerating; and the Turk in power soon learnt to exact presents as tribute".

mostly on tributary gifts since it is illustrative of the position of the British in local power relations and the stakes involved in these practices and exchanges. But before examining gift-giving practices, let us discuss the concept, culture, and significance of gift-giving within wider Ottoman society in the early modern period.

In his classic and oft-cited work, Marcel Mauss proposed the gift-economies in 'archaïque' societies, where socioeconomic exchanges and contracts were handled through gift-exchange, creating obligation networks binding the society together. In these exchanges, reciprocity was key, and therefore, gifts were exchanged unwittingly. Not only did gift-exchange foster trust and amity, but it also entailed the communication of status and honour between the giver and recipient.[124] Scholarship demonstrated that gift economies did not wane throughout medieval and early modern times; rather, they coexisted and governed societal and inter-polity diplomatic relations in early modern Europe, North America, the Mediterranean, and Eurasia.[125]

The Ottomans inherited earlier Islamic, Persian, Byzantine, and Turkic conventions of gift-exchange whereby the ideas of sovereignty, superiority, and dependency were mediated through textiles, foodstuff, animals, and precious stones.[126] Gift-exchange was a complex practice of communication that defined the relations between the Ottoman sultans, the sultan's

[124] Marcel Mauss, "Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïqués," *L'Année sociologique (1896/1897-1924/1925)* Nouvelle série, 1ère Année (1923-1924): 30–186; Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (London: Cohen & West Ltd, 1954).
[125] Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth Century France* (Madison, Wisconsin and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000); Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2012); Pekka Hamalainen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Zoltán Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen, and Giorgio Riello, eds., *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 105–140; Birgit Tremml-Werner, Lisa Hellman, and Guido van Meersbergen, "Introduction. Gift and Tribute in Early Modern Diplomacy: Afro-Eurasian Perspectives," *Diplomatica* 2 (2020): 185–200; Christina Brauner, "Connecting Things: Trading Companies and Diplomatic Gift-Giving on the Gold and Slave Coasts in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of Early Modern History* 20 (2016): 408–428.
[126] For a discussion on this mixed heritage, see Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relation*, 110–114.

servants, and the wider world.[127] The Ottoman imperial discourse of universal rule developed in the first half of the sixteenth century deeply influenced the diplomatic gift-exchange at the Ottoman court and across the empire.[128] For example, Ottoman statesmen offered tributary gifts (*pīşkeş*) to the sultan or the real beneficiaries of administrative-revenue units upon their appointment to display their respect towards the sultan and his officials from whom these statesmen obtained their offices. Similarly, the bestowal of gifts by the Ottoman sultans to their officials indicated the extension of imperial protection over the officials and provided a supplement to their incomes.[129] Such practices of gift exchange established hierarchical relationships and fostered bonds between the sultans and their officials. Hedda Reindl-Kiel moreover showed that officials redistributed gifts to promote patronage and obligation networks to build their career paths through displaying respect towards the recipients as well as their social standing. Thus, gift-giving was more of a morally acceptable strategy for career advancement in the Ottoman realms.[130]

Gift-giving ceremonials between the Ottomans and other polities were also essential elements of diplomatic etiquette that displayed the Ottoman ideals of superiority against European polities, which was the imperial ideology for political legitimation and helped

[127] Christopher Markiewicz and Tracey A. Sowerby, "Languages of Diplomatic Gift-Giving at the Ottoman Court," in *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630*, eds. Tracey A. Sowerby and Christopher Markiewicz (New York and London: Routledge, 2021), 54, 76.
[128] Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman," in *Soliman Le Magnifique et Son Temps, Actes Du Colloque de Paris. Galeries Nationales Du Gran Palais, 7–10 Mars 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 159–77; Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship*, 240–284.
[129] Carter V. Findley, "Political culture and the great households," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Volume 3: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 75; Phokion P. Kotzagerogis, "About the fiscal status of the Greek Orthodox Church in the 17th century," *Turcica* 40 (2008): 67–80; Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "East is East and West is West, and Sometimes the Twain Did Meet Diplomatic Gift Exchange in the Ottoman Empire," in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, vol. 2, eds. Colin Imber, Keiko Kiyotaki, and Rhoads Murphey (London: I.B.Tauris, 2005), 113–124; Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under Ottoman Rule, 1516–1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 63.
[130] Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "Luxury, Power Strategies, and the Question of Corruption: Gifting in the Ottoman Elite (16th–18th Centuries)," in *Şehrâyîn: die Welt der Osmanen, die Osmanen in der Welt: Wahrnehmungen, Begegnungen und Abgrenzungen*, ed. Yavuz Köse (Wiesbaden: Festschrift Hans Georg Majer, Harrossowitz Verlag, 2012), 109, 118–119; Reindl-Kiel, "East is East and West is West," 114.

enhance inter-imperial relations.[131] Recently, Christopher Markiewicz and Tracey A. Sowerby have shown how the Ottoman sultans and their leading statesmen offered and received gifts from the representatives of independent polities and tributary states and displayed these valuable items at the Ottoman court.[132] These practices of exchange and ceremony served to showcase the global reach of the sultans' political networks. Such practices also had the effect of acknowledging the internal hierarchies of and maintaining amicable relations with foreign polities. Friend (*dosṭ*) and friendship (*dosṭluk*) were the themes on which British-Ottoman imperial relations were built, a relationship based on mutual obligations, the violation of which was the *casus belli*.[133] If establishing and maintaining friendly relations with the Ottomans were indispensable for the British to represent their merchants' interests at the Ottoman court, gift-giving was an essential rite for an expression of commitment to form such relationships.[134] Any disrespect towards provincial officials would then threaten their safety and hinder trade, if not yet the *casus belli*.

British subjects were not unacquainted with gift-giving culture. In England, offering gifts to someone of high standing and status came to be associated with corruption because of threatening political stability from the late sixteenth century, yet reciprocity of various kinds retained its importance for cultivating social ties and communicating status since honour was a key social asset as much for the British as for the Ottomans.[135] Elsewhere across the globe

[131] Birdal, *The Holy Roman Empire and the Ottomans*, 139–140; Reindl-Kiel, "East is East and West is West," 115; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 106–108.
[132] Markiewicz and Sowerby, "Languages of Diplomatic Gift-Giving at the Ottoman Court," 53–84.
[133] On the foundation of peace-oriented foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, see Zahit Atçıl, "The Foundation of Peace-Oriented Foreign Policy in the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Rüstem Pasha's Vision of Diplomacy," in *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630*, eds. Tracey A. Sowerby and Christopher Markiewicz (New York and London: Routledge, 2021), 132–152.
[134] Edward J. Lawler and Yeongkoo Yoon, "Commitment in Exchange Relations: Test of a Theory of Relational Cohesion," *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 1 (1996): 94; Ania Loomba, "Of gifts, ambassadors, and copy-cats: Diplomacy, exchange, and difference in early modern India," in *Emissaries in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Mediation, Transmission, Traffic, 1550–1700*, eds. Brinda Charry and Gitanjali Shahni (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 41.
[135] Felicity Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 180–206; Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, 43–44, 79, 195.

the British also conformed to the indigenous etiquettes of gift-exchange although such rituals of courtesy in colonial and imperial contexts such as in South Asia and the western Mediterranean, became increasingly contentious over the eighteenth century.[136] As we will see, a similar timeline was at play in the provinces under examination, albeit at odds with the prevailing trends in South Asia and even in Istanbul.

Generally, the British perceived the Ottoman conventions of gift-giving as despotic and corrupt. John Finch, the British ambassador between 1672 and 1681, described the British factories sending him gifts as 'the men of great bribery'.[137] Yet, the British were amenable to such practices to display their amity, cultural cachet, and wealth by way of the value of the gifts they presented and the extent of respect they were awarded by the Ottomans.[138] As Christian Windler has compellingly argued, ambiguity in the meanings attached to material exchanges in pluralistic and overlapping imperial and cultural contexts allowed for different and contradictory interpretations of shared diplomatic practices.[139] Moreover, offerings to the 'Other' deriving from the imperial discourses of otherness tended to render reputational concerns trivial.[140] Therefore, given the pluralistic cultural and imperial Ottoman context and the religious, cultural, and legal 'otherness' of the Ottoman regime, the British conformed to

[136] Bernard S. Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian Indian," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 171–172; Natasha Eaton, "Between mimesis and alterity: Art, gift and diplomacy in colonial India, 1770-1800," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 4 (2004): 843; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations,* 117; Christian Windler, "Performing Inequality in Mediterranean Diplomacy," *The International History Review* 41, no. 4 (2018): 947–961.

[137] *Report on the Manuscripts of Allan George Finch, Esq., Burley-on-the-Hill, Rutland*, vol. 2 Historical Manuscripts Commission, His Majesty's Stationery Office (London, 1922), 71

[138] On this dual functioning of the gift-exchange, see Asaf Darr, "Gifting Practices and Interorganizational Relations: Constructing Obligation Networks in the Electronics Sector," *Sociological Forum* 18, no. 1 (2003): 33; Avner Offer, "Between the gift and the market: the economy of regard," *Economic History Review* 50, no. 3 (1997): 450; Zoltán Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen, and Giorgio Riello, "Introduction: Global Gifts and the Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia," in *Global Gifts: and the Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, eds. Biedermann, Gerritsen, and Riello (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 1–33.

[139] Windler, "Performing Inequality in Mediterranean Diplomacy," 952.

[140] Ibid.

Ottoman conventions of gift-giving to maintain their interests in the Ottoman lands.[141] For instance, during the public rejoicings for a royal birth in 1776, the British factory in Aleppo saw fit to offer generous gifts "[i]n order to keep up some proportion with the other European nations established here, who are making very grand […] preparations and in order to preserve our Credit, in the country, & make it appear to the Turks that the British nation are no less *Friends* to the Ottoman Porte than they [i.e., other Europeans]".[142] Not only were the eminence and honour of the British showcased through offering and advertising valuable artifacts of gifts vis-à-vis other European communities, but the British also displayed their friendship towards the Ottomans.[143] The term 'friend/friendship' signified a relationship that was imbued with a spectrum of meanings in both interpersonal and inter-state relations, such as the one characterised by dependence and submission and the one marked by mutual respect.[144] In the Ottoman diplomatic language, however, friendship denoted a relationship whereby the parties involved were expected to display fidelity and sincerity towards each other through practices of friendship, one of which was gift-giving.[145] Through these practices, while the Ottomans placed the agents of foreign polities in a subordinate position in line with their claims to

[141] Jennifer Pitts, *Boundaries of the International Law and Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2018), 28–67; Katharine W. Swett, ""The account between us": honour, reciprocity and companionship in male friendship in the later seventeenth century," *Albion* 31 (1999): 1.
[142] TNA, SP 110/59, 20 September 1776.
[143] For the use of the term *ṣadāḳat* in one of the capitulations, see Michael Talbot, "A treaty of narratives: Friendship, gifts, and diplomatic history in the British Capitulations of 1641," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 48 (2016): 374, fn. 33.
[144] Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, 75; Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 14–15; Swett, ""The account between us"," 1–30; Nicola Di Cosmo, "Kirghiz nomads on the Qing frontier: Tribute, trade, or gift-exchange?," in *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries, and Human Geographies in Chinese History*, eds. Nicola Di Cosma and Don J. Wyatt (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 366; Evgeny Roshchin, "The Concept of Friendship: From Princes to States," *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (2006): 600; Arno Strohmeyer, "Power and the Changing Face of Habsburg-Ottoman Friendship (Sixteenth–Eighteenth centuries)," in *Power and influence in South-Eastern Europe, 16th–19th century*, eds. Maria Baramova et al (Zurich and Berlin: Lit, 2013), 9–24; Karl-Heinz Ziegler, "The Influence of Medieval Roman Law on Peace Treaties," in *Peace Treaties and International Law in European History: From the End of the Middle Ages to World War One*, ed. Randall Lesaffer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 338–364; Atçıl, "The Foundation of Peace-Oriented Foreign Policy in the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," 132–152; Maxwell Hudson, "Beyond Topkapı: Ottoman Diplomacy Through Venetian Eyes," in *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630*, eds. Tracey A. Sowerby and Christopher Markiewicz (New York and London: Routledge, 2021), 109–131.
[145] Işıksel, "Hierarchy and Friendship," 289–292.

universal rulership, the British anticipated that the Ottomans would honour them and protect their commercial rights.

From this perspective, scrutinizing the practice of gift-giving illuminates the contours of relations between the Ottomans and the British in the provinces. Furthermore, since the expenses of the gifts were met either by the consulage fees of the factories or by allowances from the Levant Company, it enables us to realise the financial impact of gift-giving on British trading communities.[146] Examining gifting practices in the provinces poses some challenges. First, there are Ottoman protocol registers (*teşrifat defteri*, singular) in the Ottoman archives that detail the gifts the Ottoman sultan dispersed to foreign envoys on different occasions at the Ottoman court.[147] To the best of my knowledge, there are no Ottoman records kept systematically that provide information about gift-exchange between Ottoman officeholders and the British in the provinces. The Ottoman Turkish sources that I have consulted are mainly concerned with commercial affairs and do not enumerate gifts exchanged. That being said, a few Ottoman Turkish sources expose gift-like payments and power struggles at the local level. Second, the assembly records that proved to be the most valuable sources in terms of imparting information about the occasions and practices of gift-exchange are either incomplete or inconsistent.[148] The assembly records of Izmir were almost complete over the eighteenth century, whereas those of Aleppo dated from 1768 until the closure of the factory in 1791, and those of Cyprus were nonextant unfortunately. Therefore, where possible, I utilise travel accounts as well as a variety of primary sources to give a more accurate picture of gift-giving practices.

[146] Consulage fees were customs dues paid by merchants on the goods laded on British ships to pay the salaries of the Levant Company officials and the ambassador.
[147] Hakan T. Karateke, ed., *An Ottoman Protocol Register, Containing Ceremonies from 1736 to 1808: Beo Sadaret Defterleri 350 in the Prime Ministry Ottoman State Archives* (İstanbul and London: Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Centre; The Royal Asiatic Society, 2007); Zeynep T. Ertuğ, "Osmanlı İstanbul'unda Merasim ve Teşrifata Dair," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 8, no. 16 (2010): 133–38.
[148] TNA, SP 105/335-339 for Izmir; TNA, SP 110/58-59 for Aleppo.

Gifts-Giving Practices: Occasions and Changes

Trading under the zones of authority of Ottoman provincial officials required the British to offer presents each year to the highest officials in the provinces to recognise their authority. In that regard, gift-giving was vital to acknowledge provincial authorities while also presenting the opportunity to showcase British wealth and standing through the value of the presents offered. Gift-giving took various forms, ranging from annual or ceremonial *ḫil'at*s[149] to other objects such as watches sent annually or formal occasions, and from formal offerings of material objects to annual cash payments. These regular or established gifts went in hand with social gifts to officials when, for example, a personal or national favour was requested. The beneficiaries of the gifts differed from one province to another and changed over time.

In Izmir, the main beneficiaries of the gifts were the Ottoman admiral, the kadi, the *voyvoda*, and the customs officer. The assembly records of Izmir are rich in occasions of gift-giving and demonstrate that the British were continuously engaged in gifting practice throughout the century thanks to the British factory's economic capacity to meet the expenses of the gifts offered. The British factory in Izmir offered annual presents to the admiral over the eighteenth century.[150] During his annual visit of the Mediterranean, the admiral's fleet docked at the port of Izmir and demanded his 'usual presents' from European communities there. The British explicitly stated that gifts were given to the admiral "for shewing [*sic*] us the same Honours as he did the French Nation" and for his "civility" towards the British factory. Moreover, gifts were the precondition for the official recognition of the British and their privileges in Izmir as one letter read as "the distribution of usual present on such occasions

[149] For *ḫil'at*s, see pages 61 to 74 below.
[150] TNA, SP 105/334, fol. 60r, possibly in 1686; TNA, SP 105/336, 29 June 1733; TNA, SP 105/334, fol. 69r, in 1744; TNA, SP 105/122, p. 59, 28 October 1796; TNA, SP 105/337, 28 August 1798.

meets our approbation".[151] Hence, British gift-giving acknowledged the authority and protection of the admiral, an act confirming their dependent status in Izmir.

A few entries in the assembly records in Izmir from the 1680s detailed the occasions of gift-giving and the beneficiaries. The British factory offered gifts to several officials, including the kadi, the *bey* (governor), the *voyvoda*, the chief customs officer, among others, on the first day of March on their appointment. When a new consul arrived, he was expected to offer gifts to the kadi and his officers.[152] The kadi and a few other officials also received cash presents on the festival of *Ramazan Bayramı* (Eid al-Fitr) which was a public feast and celebration at the end of the holy month of Ramadan.[153] Lastly, the British sent cheese, tin, and pepper to many of the abovementioned provincial officials upon the arrival of their ships loaded with cloth once every year.[154] British gift-giving upon new official appointments, public celebrations, and the arrival of the ships were intended to acknowledge the officials' authority while confirming their dependent status in the provinces.

Equally important was to correctly assess the value and the recipient of the gifts to differentiate the hierarchy in the ranks and influence of provincial officials. In the 1680s, for example, the British dispatched six 'vests' of kaftans (viz. three cloth kaftans, two satin kaftans, one silver brocade kaftan) to the Ottoman admiral and three to his steward. A vest was presumably equal to twelve to thirteen pikes (each pike was equal to 27 inches or 68 centimetres) of cloth used in making a single robe or kaftan.[155] Hence, it tended to imply

[151] TNA, SP 105/122, p. 59, 28 October 1796.
[152] TNA, SP 105/334, fol. 59v-60r. Other officials receiving gifts upon their appointments were the farmer of the stamp tax (damgagee/tamgaci), the farmer of poll tax (haratchgee/haraççı), the chief Jew of the customshouse, the governor (bey—when he came in Izmir), and the commander (serdar).
[153] TNA, SP 105/334, fol. 59v-60r. Ramazan Bayramı (Eid al-Fitr) was noted as 'the great Byram'. The officials were the kadi's officials, an officer of the court (muzur) who summoned people before the court, 'the Turk' who informed the British of the ships, and the janissaries of the consul.
[154] TNA, SP 105/334, fol. 59v.
[155] Luca Molà, "Material Diplomacy: Venetian Luxury Gifts for the Ottoman Empire in the late Renaissance," in *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, eds. Biedermann, Gerritsen, and Riello

prestige on the part of the recipient. While the admiral and his retinue received their textile gifts in vests, the other officials were gifted with textiles in pikes. Five pikes of cloth, two *okka*s[156] of coffee, and two *okka*s of sugar went to the kadi and the *bey* of Izmir, whereas the *voyvoda* and the customs officer received only five pikes of cloth. Similarly, upon the arrival of the ships loaded with cloth, the kadi, the *bey* of Izmir, and the customs officer were gifted with one cheese, five *okka*s of tin, and five *okka*s of pepper and the rest received one cheese, three *okka*s of tin and pepper.[157]

The evaluation of the gifts was not a one-sided process, however. Provincial officials could, and did, communicate the sorts of gifts they thought appropriate. Having learnt that the admiral returned watches and plates offered by the French, the British decided to send forty pikes of velvet.[158] Besides showing the Ottoman agency in gifting practices, the British apprehension of appropriate presents is striking. The practices of other European communities presented a reference that facilitated the British assessment of 'correct' gifts. However, it also limited British agency in altering gifting practices: once other European 'nations' were engaged in gift-giving, the British had no choice but to send presents to keep up with their European competitors to maintain favour in the Ottomans' eyes.[159] Since textiles remained 'the currency of the Ottoman honours system' in this period, they constituted the majority of British gifts presented to the officials.[160] Moreover, following the prevailing consumption trends was also of paramount importance. Foodstuff, silver plates, timepieces, and metalware were

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 57, 63, 74. For the length of a pike in this period, see Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 33, fn. 1.

[156] An oka or *okka* is about 1.2828 kg, though units varied according to each region. See Halil İnalcık, "Introduction to Ottoman Metrology," *Turcica* 15 (1983): 314–15.

[157] TNA, SP 105/334, fol. 59v-60r.

[158] TNA, SP 105/336, 1 October 1733.

[159] TNA, SP 105/336, 1 November 1737; TNA, SP 105/336, 2 August 1738; TNA, SP 105/336, 11 September 1740; TNA, SP 105/336, 27 June 1746.

[160] John M. Rogers, "Ottoman Luxury Trades and their Regulation," in *Osmanistische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. In memoriam Vančo Boškov*, ed. Hans Georg Majer (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986), 139, cited in Reindl-Kiel, "East is East and West is West," 118.

supplemental gifts that illustrate the values and consumption trends of the late seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire. Offering gifts of such range cemented trust and friendship as well as promoting commercial products: diplomacy and commerce were but intertwined activities.

British offerings were usually, but not always, reciprocated by the officials. Officials of higher ranks gave robes of honour' (*ḫil'at*, kaftan) and horses to the British.[161] These offerings had a long lineage dating back to medieval ages which symbolised dependence on the giver and compensation for the British gift expenditure.[162] The assembly records of Izmir are usually silent about gifts by officials. Yet, evidence suggests that the admiral did not even send gifts but a message via his dragomans for presents. As such, the ways the officials responded to British offerings also served to establish and consolidate imbalance and hierarchies, rather than merely implying reciprocity and friendship.

Nevertheless, the assembly records allow us to discern some changing attitudes towards gift-giving and alterations in gift-giving practices in Izmir over the eighteenth century. For instance, the admiral received seven vests of kaftans in 1744 instead of six in the 1680s which indicates not only the continuation of regular gifts, but also the readjustment of their composition owing to the inflationist Ottoman economy as the gifts were the constituents of the officials' income. Furthermore, as time wore on foodstuffs became ordinary gifts and were replaced by timepieces and military equipment from the middle of the century.[163] Although timepieces were common items of ceremonial gift-exchange from the sixteenth century, they

[161] On the use of horses by Europeans, see Alexander Russell, *The Natural History of Aleppo. Containing a Description of the City, and the Principal Natural Productions in its Neighbourhood. Together with an Account of the Climate, Inhabitants and Diseases: Particularly of the Plague*, vol. II (London, 1794), passim.
[162] İnalcık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* 75; Steward Gordon, "Introduction: Ibn Battuta and a region of robing," in *Robes of Honour: Khil'at in Pre-Colonial and Colonial India,* ed. Stewart Gordon (New Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 24–25; Lynn Jones, "'Abbasid suzerainty in the medieval Caucasus: Appropriation and adaptation of iconography and ideology," *Gesta* 43, no. 2 (2004): 143; Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1963), 2, 43, 58–70.
[163] Michael Talbot, "Gifts of time: Watches and clocks in Ottoman–British diplomacy, 1693–1803," *Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte* 17 (2016): 64.

gained prominence in the eighteenth century due to changing attitudes towards time and order, not to mention their symbolic value. British merchants in London invested in gifts of timepieces and consigned them to their agents in Izmir, Aleppo, Cyprus, and Tripoli.[164] There were table clocks (*peşteḫte sāʿat*) and watches (*ḳuyūn sāʿat*) in a damaged ship coming from Salonica to Izmir in 1742.[165] In 1759, there was already a British watchmaker, William Boyd, in Izmir, who was possibly occupied with the provisions of timepieces to officials and ordinary customers.[166] In due course, timepieces began to replace textiles as well. Thus, the British sent a gold watch valued at 150 lion dollars (the exchange rate of British pound sterling to Dutch lion thaler was 1:5.88 in 1763, hence the watch was around £25) on the appointment of a new kadi in Izmir in the early 1760s.[167] Such high valuation of British watches in the Ottoman realms reflected the prominence of British timepieces in Europe in the eighteenth century.[168] There also seems to have been an increase in buckshot, small round-ball pieces of lead or iron fired from a gun, importation in Izmir from the 1750s as there were several disputes between British merchants and the tax-farmers of buckshot regarding the taxation in Izmir.[169]

The popularity and reception of these gifts do not necessarily suggest European technological supremacy. The materiality of the gifts was not an alluring prerequisite for their entry into Ottoman elite culture. If gifts were to have a place in Ottoman elite culture, they had

[164] For watches consigned either directly to Izmir or over Istanbul, see HALS, DE/R/B 73/7, 8 October 1715; LMA, MS 08724, to Thomas Talbot Foley, 17 April 1769; LMA, MS 08724, to Peter Tooke, 30 March 1770; LMA, MS 08724, to Isaac Morrier, 12 May 1773; LMA, MS 08724, to George Abbott, 26 February 1783.
[165] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/166/1, Evāḫir-i Muḥarrem 1155/March-April 1742.
[166] TNA, SP 105/337, 5 October 1759, William Boyd was resident in Izmir since 1758, see Marjorie Rear, *William Barker Member of The Right Worshipful Levant Company 1731-1825 A Life in Smyrna*, (2015), 17–18. Accessible at: Biography-of-William-Barker-Levant-Company-Merchant-Marjorie-Rear.pdf (levantineheritage.com)
[167] Rear, *William Barker*, 25, fn. 92.
[168] Alun C. Davies, *The rise and decline of England's watchmaking industry, 1550-1930* (London: Routledge, 2022).
[169] TNA, SP 105/336, 29 December 1752; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/Page 78/Entry 1, Evāsıṭ-ı Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1174/January 1761; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/85/6, Cemāz̲iyelevel 1176/November-December 1762.

to respond to Ottoman aesthetics and needs.[170] Thus, such exchanges of technological and military gifts suggest inter-imperial exchanges of various services essential for the functioning of imperial systems. Nevertheless, British gift-giving influenced Ottoman conventions of gift-exchange and consumption patterns in the long run. New items and products introduced in the Ottoman market created a demand for them because of their symbolic and practical values. In time, these items shaped new consumption patterns and diplomatic practices in the empire.

On the other hand, towards the mid-eighteenth century, there were concerns about the expenses incurred due to gifts. In 1748, the Aleppo and Izmir factories exchanged correspondence regarding their expenditure, an integral part of which was the "presents to Turks".[171] The growing volume of trade and the stable levels of expenditure of the British factory in Izmir throughout the century helped the British afford these costs. The matter of contention seems to have been more about the way the officials in Izmir demanded the gifts. In 1780, the British factory in Izmir decided not to send any presents to the admiral since he did not send a letter to the British consul to send his regards and treated annual gifts as annual tributes.[172] Such ill-treatment dishonoured the British. They assented to the etiquettes of diplomatic exchange as long as their reputation was not tarnished, especially in the eyes of other European communities. Rather interesting was the courage displayed to stop gifting the admiral. This determination might be suggestive of the growing British irritation towards being treated as subservient which might be informed by their intensifying assertiveness in politics. We do not know how this crisis was resolved, yet the British continued sending presents to the admiral thereafter.

[170] Gülru Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral: The Agency of Ornament in Ottoman and Safavid Visual Cultures," in *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, eds. Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 132; Talbot, "Gifts of time," 55–79.
[171] BL, Add MS 45932, a postscript from Alexander Drummond to Henry King, 7 January 1748.
[172] TNA, SP 105/337, 20 August 1780.

Michel Talbot showed that the British were able to cut off the practice of tributary gifts from the 1770s in Istanbul thanks to the changing attitudes of the Ottomans towards such rituals as well as growing European irritation. However, ordinary social gifts such as watches, clocks, glasses, textiles, and foodstuff continued to be exchanged.[173] Istanbul, in this regard, bears some resemblance to what was taking place in Mughal India where the East India Company's regulations in the 1770s sought to transform Mughal gift-giving rituals into a form of contractual economic exchange owing to ideological and economic considerations.[174] Although similar concerns such as political corruption and financial burden were at play, neither the factory in Izmir nor in Aleppo, as shall be seen, could suspend gift-giving practices.

Unfortunately, we do not have another list of officials receiving gifts at the end of the eighteenth century to chart changes in the number of officials gifted and the presents given. Nevertheless, the continuation of presents was apparent in the gift-giving to the *voyvoda*s of Izmir at the turn of the nineteenth century. The *voyvoda*s of Izmir assumed greater status from the 1760s and came to be dominated by the Karaosmanoğlu family who developed cordial relations with the Europeans in Izmir. On various occasions of social unrest, the members of the Karaosmanoğlu family proved to be the only effective powerbrokers to restore order in eighteenth-century Izmir.[175] Even European trading communities in Izmir requested the Karaosmanoğlu family members intervene at times of unrest for their security. For instance, Hacı Hüseyin was backed by the Europeans and appointed as the governor by the Porte to restore order in Izmir with the outbreak of the riot of 1797.[176] Knowing that their safety

[173] Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 213.
[174] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian Indian," 171–72; Eaton, "Between mimesis and alterity," 843.
[175] Elena Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth Century (1700-1820)* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992), 57–65; Feryal Tansuğ, "Revisiting the Escalation of Intercommunal Violence in Izmir (1797): "Anti-Greek", or a More Complex Dynamic?," in *Ottoman War and Peace: Studies in Honor of Virginia H. Aksan*, eds. Frank Castiglione, Ethan Menchinger, and Veysel Şimşek (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020), 401–425.
[176] BOA, HAT/187/8805, Evāḫir-i Ẕīlḥicce 1211/June 1797. "Maḥal-ı merḳūmda olan ḳōnsolōslar ṭaraflarından Ḳara-ʿOsmān-ẕādeye ʿaceleten yazıldı" [having written in urgency to Karaosmanoğlu by the consuls in the said place].

depended on the Karaosmanoğlu family, the British sent regular presents to the family members as a sign of recognition of their authority and friendly relations. In August 1798, the British factory in Izmir decided to make a present of 600 lion dollars to "Hagi Huseyin Effendi, the chief of Cara Osman Oglu Family, as a customary practice."[177] Such a yearly payment of a sum demonstrates the perpetuation of presents that signified the tributary nature of the relations with the *voyvoda* of Izmir. Even so, after the Anglo-Ottoman War of 1807-1809, the British sent gifts to Hacı Hüseyin for his protection of the factory during the war.[178] The British were aware of the fact that their safety and privileges depended on amicable relations with provincial officials and the growth of British trade in Izmir was the principal determinant of the financial capacity of the factory to afford gift expenses over the century.

Offering social gifts to officials was a regular occurrence in Izmir over the century. Although less significant in exposing tributary relations, they indicate the cultures of commerce and their financial impact on factory finances. For instance, the British offered presents to several officers including the kadi and *voyvoda* in 1699 for the implementation of an imperial order regarding the British.[179] After registering and reading aloud the admiral's command concerning lowering the prices of provisions for the British in the court, the kadi demanded a present.[180] Depending on the circumstances, therefore, the British offered presents to procure commands, judicial decrees (*iʿlām*), and testimony (*hüccet*) which implied a cyclical pattern between petitioning and gifting.[181] Without doubt, regular offerings to officials helped the British navigate judicial and diplomatic processes in the provinces. Hence, social gifts

[177] TNA, SP 105/337, 28 August 1798. The Karaosmanoğlu family rose to prominence in Manisa, Aydın, and Izmir in the eighteenth century, obtained various tax farms, and dealt with foreign traders. On the Karaosmanoğlu family, see Yuzo Nagata, *Tarihte Ayanlar: Karaosmanoğulları üzerine bir inceleme* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997). Karaosmanoğlu Hüseyin Ağa was mentioned in the Ottoman documentation as Aydın *muḥaṣṣılı*, Bergama *voyvodası*, Saruhan *mütesellimi*, İzmir *muḥāfıẓı*.
[178] Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*, 78, fn. 17.
[179] TNA, SP 105/335, 16 February 1699, fols. 7-8.
[180] TNA, SP 105/336, 18 November 1735.
[181] For a few examples, see TNA, SP 105/336, 15 September 1735; TNA, SP 105/336, 30 November 1748; TNA, SP 105/336, 3 July 1751.

supplemented the regular gifts in a bid to ameliorate their living and trading conditions through displays of amity. However, they constituted an additional financial burden on the factories considering the prevalence of these random offerings.

Unfortunately, the available information on gift-exchange in Cyprus is scarce, yet several accounts may provide similar insights into the practice of gift-giving in the island. The British had loosely established a factory in Cyprus in the late seventeenth century.[182] The lack of social and economic capital compelled the British to cooperate with local merchants/families who were well-acquainted with the know-how of the local mercantile dynamics. The Jauna family was one of those families, who were apparently of Cypriot origin, and had been serving as agents for the British in both Cyprus and Tripoli.[183] A letter dated 6 January 1700 shows that a certain 'Carragose', a servant of Pietro Jauna who was acting on behalf of the British in Cyprus, incurred an expense of ten lion dollars in the name of 'Pheseche' [*pīşkeş*] in 1697.[184] Designating the sum as *pīşkeş* is intriguing as the British never named annual presents as such. Presumably, the British logged it in the register as it was communicated to them by their agents in Cyprus. There were other instances where the Ottoman sultan bestowed *ḫilʿat*s (*ṣōf kerāke*, camlet garments) to the British protégés in Aleppo after their appointments and *pīşkeş* payments.[185] In this instance, however, the fact that the agent demanded reimbursement for the *pīşkeş* meant that the British were accountable for tributary presents in return for their representation, and observance of their privileges, in Cyprus. Even if the British were not present in Cyprus, provincial officials endeavoured to establish a tributary relationship with the

[182] Matthew Lister was consul in Cyprus in 1663, Fowke Foulk in 1664, Anthony Bowyer in 1667, see *Report on the Manuscripts of Allan George Finch, Esq., Burley-on-the-Hill, Rutland. Vol. 1 Historical Manuscripts Commission* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1913), 263, 330, 465. Richard Westbrook was appointed as consul in 1694, see KKMA, mah.s. 28/113/1, 27 Z̲īlḳaʿde 1105/20 July 1694.
[183] Bruce Masters, *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East: Mercantilism and the Islamic Economy in Aleppo, 1600-1750* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1988), 96; Trivellato, *The Familiarity of* Strangers, 151, fn. 95.
[184] TNA, SP 110/73, 6 January 1700, pages 36-38.
[185] BOA, C.HR/158/7868, 21 Muḥarrem 1217/24 May 1802.

British through their agent, suggesting that the protection of their privileges did not come for free.

As the consuls established a permanent settlement in Larnaca, Cyprus from the late seventeenth century, they sent annual presents to the representatives of the governor (*mütesellim*) and/or the provincial tax farmers (*muḥaṣṣıl*) of Cyprus in Nicosia. Garnering the support of the top-ranking officials was significant for the British because the officials represented the sultan's will and had vast connections. Moreover, a crucial part of British commerce, namely the negotiation of the bills of exchange, was handled in the seat of local government with the treasurer. Hence, the help of governing elites might expedite the processes of negotiating bills of exchange and investing in commercial goods.[186]

In 1745, the governance of Cyprus changed from *muḥaṣṣıllık* to *paşalık* (i.e., from being governed by a *muḥaṣṣıl* to a pasha).[187] Upon the governor's arrival, the British consul of Cyprus, George Wakeman, attended the governor's audience in Nicosia, the details of which were narrated by Alexander Drummond during his first visit to the island: the governor bestowed a "kurk or robe lined with fur" on the consul and the consul in return offered an expensive "vestment". This routine ceremonial was not so common in Cyprus since most governors subleased the administrative revenue unit of Cyprus to their representatives. Drummond here illustrates the bestowing of a *ḫil'at* which symbolised the patronage and

[186] For an example of a mediation of the muḥaṣṣıl of Cyprus in getting the bills of British merchants negotiated in 1717, see HALS, DE/R/B 31/3A+3B, from Samuel Palmer and William Lupart in Cyprus to George Radcliffe and Everard Fawkener in Aleppo, 15 November-1 December 1717. On the bills of exchange during the early modern era, see Francesca Trivellato, *The Promise and Peril of Credit: What a Forgotten Legend about Jews and Finance Tells Us about the Making of European Commercial Society* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019).

[187] Historians of Cyprus believe that the island became a paşalık in 1746 and governed for three years as *malikāne* by Ebu Bekir Pasha until 1748 when the island was given to the Grand Vizier as *ḫāṣṣ* and governed again as *muḥaṣṣıllık* until 1751. The pasha in question was the infamous Ebubekir Pasha who exceptionally came to Cyprus, instead of appointing a representative, to personally administer the island. For a detailed discussion on the administration of Cyprus, see Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 122–37. The island was given to the Grand Vizier as *ḫāṣṣ* from the 1st of Muḥarrem 1162/22 December 1748, see KKMA, KŞS 16/225/385, 19 Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1163/26 May 1750.

generosity of the governor. By accepting the robe of honour and offering a kaftan to the governor, the consul affirmed his dependent status while also having the chance to promote the fineness of British commodities.

It is obvious from the notes of Drummond that the British were quite aware of the implications of the change in the governance of Cyprus. He wrote that "to him [the new pasha] much greater honour is done than to a musallem, to whom the consuls only sent their annual presents…".[188] The new pasha was, reportedly, a pasha of three tails[189] and therefore, the British were expected to be in the pasha's audience and offer more expensive and prestigious presents to him. Understanding the hierarchical differences and offering presents accordingly was key to the British's ability to mobilise the support of provincial officials for the sake of trading privileges and thereby enjoying a degree of comfort.

As mentioned above, the *muḥaṣṣıl*s of Cyprus acquired more responsibility in provincial governance and revenue collection. Because they laid at the centre of the provisions of bills to the Ottoman treasury in Istanbul, the business activities of European communities coincided with those of the *muḥaṣṣıl*s. As we will see in Chapter Three, British merchants frequently sold their bills of exchange to provincial officials in return for ready money to maintain their investments in the provinces.[190] Therefore, European consulates sought to form cordial relations with the current top-ranking officials through gift-exchange to develop their commerce. The Venetian consulate reports attest to the reciprocal gift-exchange between the

[188] Drummond, *Travels through different Cities*, 170–1.

[189] As a pre-Islamic Turkic tradition, the horse-tail battle standards (*tuğ*s) were signs of military rank. In the Ottoman Empire, the sultan had six or seven *tuğ*s, the grand vizier had five, the viziers and pashas had three and two respectively and, the begs were entitled to have one *tuğ*. A three-horse-tail standard was the highest military rank after the Grand Vizier. See Emel Esin, "The Horse in Turkic Art," *Central Asiatic Journal* 10, no. 3/4 (1965): 198; Tülin Çoruhlu, "Tuğ", in *TDVİA*. Consulted on 4 December 2022.

[190] A chronic problem of getting the bills drawn on Cyprus negotiated for investments, see HALS, DE/R/B 29/3, from Samuel Palmer in Cyprus to George Radcliffe in Aleppo on 8 June 1717; HALS, DE/R/B 264/1, from George Wakeman in Cyprus to Arthur Radcliffe in London on 13-18 March 1749; TNA, SP 110/49, from Michael Devezin in Cyprus on 2 June 1782.

muḥaṣṣıl and the Venetian consul in Cyprus in the 1770s.[191] Yet it is difficult to know whether these gifts were in the form of tributary or social gifts.

Changes in the fashions and trends of gifts are also observable in Cyprus as British-made timepieces made their way into Cyprus. In the mansion, which belonged to the great palace dragoman of Cyprus, Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios (d. 1809) in Nicosia, there is a grandfather clock made by Isaac Rogers in London. According to the museum label, the clock originally belonged to Michael Devezin, the British consul of Cyprus (1778-1792), and later came into the possession of Zenon D. Pierides, the British acting consul between 1876 and 1877. In 1961, Pierides donated the clock to the Department of Antiquities, which placed it in the Geroskipou Museum of Folk Art. When the Department of Antiquities created the Ethnological Museum within the mansion of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios in 1987-88, the clock was transferred to the mansion.[192] Seemingly, the clock was designed at the request of, and in accordance with the personal tastes of, Devezin. The clock's golden enamel dial, Turkish hour and five minutes numerals in Arabic together with Roman numerals, and floral paintings all reflected the early modern Ottoman aesthetics.[193] The only exception to the prevailing aesthetics was the image of a woman on the body (Figure 1). Thus, ostensibly, this clock was designed for the Ottoman market, yet we do not know if Devezin sold or gifted it to someone. Alternatively, Devezin could use the clock to advertise the perfection of British-made timepieces and display his wealth in Cyprus. These items entered Ottoman elite culture and had an impact not only on the Ottoman patterns of consumption and aesthetics, but also on how the Ottomans understood time and organised the temporal dimension of social life.[194] However,

[191] Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 135.
[192] The visit took place on 10 February 2022. I express my thanks to the Department of Antiquities for providing information about the journey of the clock via an email dated 15 January 2024.
[193] Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral,"132–55; Talbot, "Gifts of time," 55–79.
[194] Avner Wishnitzer, *Reading Clocks Alla Turca: Time and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

this example also shows how British commercial products were shaped by local patterns of aesthetics. Whether such items were sold and gifted or used for advertisement, merchants had to be attuned to the needs of the Ottoman market.



Figure 1. Grandfather-clock made by Isaac Rogers in London (photographed in the Ethnological Museum House of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, Nicosia Cyprus, in February 2022).

Beyond doubt, spending many years in a foreign country in conformity with local cultures of trade and patterns of aesthetics helped foreign expatriates like Devezin gain the

respect of local officials and even produced genuine friendly relations with them. Before Devezin's departure to England, the kadi of Larnaca visited him together with other 'Turks' to express their grief over his departure and gave him a Turkish letter for Frederick North, a correspondent of Devezin.[195] The communication between the provincial officials in Cyprus and North was an interesting incident in itself, showing a deep reverence for the consul towards the end of the century, which might be suggestive of the growing British esteem in the eastern Mediterranean. The example of Devezin suggests that trade, aesthetics, diplomacy and prestige were all intimately related.

Ottoman-European gift-exchange in Aleppo dated as early as the sixteenth century when European merchants were expected to import a certain amount of silver, possibly in pieces of eight, as tributary gifts each year.[196] Unfortunately, we lack consistent data for the early eighteenth century. By contrast, for the second half of the century, the minutes of the assembly, the letter book of Alexander Drummond, and Ottoman Turkish sources demonstrate multiple beneficiaries of gifts and gift-like payments in Aleppo. The safety of caravans along the Iskenderun-Aleppo route (a journey of eight to ten days) and customs duties were of great concern to the British and determined the recipients of gifts and the nature of gift-exchange.[197]

Situated at the top of the power pyramid, the pashas received presents from the British on various occasions such as once a year, on their appointment, and during royal births and religious festivals. In 1731, the Levant Company sent a clock and fine cloths to the British consul in Aleppo to be given as presents to provincial officials.[198] In 1750, Alexander Drummond, the British factor marine in Iskenderun, informed William Fitzhugh of the watches

[195] BL, Add MS 61869, fols. 108-109, 16 December 1782. Frederick North was a member of the Parliament and an old prime minister.
[196] İnalcık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* 57; Elias I. Muhanna, "The Sultan's New Cloths: Ottoman—Mamluk Gift Exchange in the Fifteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 189–207.
[197] For the Aleppo-Iskenderun caravan route, see Appendix III.
[198] TNA, SP 105/117, to Nevil Coke, the British consul in Aleppo, 16 November 1731.

for the pasha.[199] As a rule, throughout the eighteenth century, a combination of fine cloths and timepieces were sent to the officials, while pashas and *muḥaṣṣıl*s offered *ḫilʿat*s (fur), fabrics such as handkerchiefs and horses to the British.[200]

Bestowing horses was of particular importance in the gift-giving culture of Aleppo, stretching back to the pre-Ottoman era.[201] In early modern Europe, Asia, and Africa, horses were highly valued diplomatic gifts, in that they not only had commercial exchange values but also bestowed status on their owners.[202] Contrary to *ḫilʿat*s that were given from a superior to an inferior, horses could also be offered to those of equal and higher ranks. As mentioned above, British consuls sent horses to their ambassadors in Istanbul possibly to strengthen their patronage networks, which shows how British consuls, like Ottoman officials, redistributed presents for their career advancement. Provincial officials' offerings of horses, as high-status gifts, to British consuls represented a bestowal of honour on British factories, on the one hand, and an extension of their supreme power, on the other. Furthermore, horses also had practical value for the British. The non-Muslim subjects of the empire were only allowed to ride mules and donkeys, not horses. This prohibition for *müsteʾmin*s was not articulated in the Capitulations, although one historian argued that an imperial order of the late sixteenth century stipulated that the British could not ride stallions but castrated male horses.[203] Both primary and secondary sources made mention of horses without specifying whether the horses were

[199] BL, Add MS 45933, to William Fitzhugh in Aleppo, 8 October 1750. William Fitzhugh was one of the wealthiest merchants of Aleppo in the mid-eighteenth century.
[200] TNA, SP 110/58, 9 October 1771; TNA, SP 110/58, 19 September 1775; TNA, SP 110/59, 27 July 1780. Also see Russell, *The Natural History of Aleppo*, vol. II, 19–23.
[201] Muhanna, "The Sultan's New Cloths," 199.
[202] Antonia Gatward Cevizli, "Portraits, Turbans and Cuirasses: Material Exchange between Mantua and the Ottomans at the End of the Fifteenth Century," in *Global Gifts: and the Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, eds. Biedermann, Gerritsen, and Riello (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 34–55; Biedermann, Gerritsen, and Riello, "Introduction: Global Gifts and the Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia," 20–22; Rémi Dewière, ""Ismaël pria Osman de luy donner quelques Chrestiens": Gift Exchanges and Economic Reciprocity in trans-Saharan Diplomacy (Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries)," *Diplomatica* 2 (2020): 223–247.
[203] Kurat, *Türk-İngiliz Münâsebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi*, 37.

gelded or not. However construed, officials distinguished the British from other non-Muslim subjects of the empire and signalled their privileged status by offering horses.

Having the goodwill of pashas and their retinue was significant because it was the pashas who were vested with the authority to observe the capitulatory privileges of the British and ensure order in the countryside.[204] And gifting was essential to establish cordiality with them. In an assembly meeting, the consul noted that "the refusing of which [offering presents] might in consequence irritate the two persons abovenamed [referring to the servants of the pasha] and might prejudice the Nation in regard to future caravans."[205] The British were aware of their weak position in local power dynamics and the possible repercussions of refusing to comply with the officials' demands for gifts, so they acceded to the request.

The pashas were the safety valve for the British where the consul/merchants/dragomans could appear before him and seek remedy for their problems.[206] The British therefore could not afford to lose that protection which constrained their leverage to alter gifting practices in Aleppo. On his appointment in Aleppo in 1771, the new pasha sent a horse to the consul "as customary".[207] The British factory, however, decided not to offer anything too valuable in return to "avoid establishing an Precedent of this kind and desired to know the Sentiment of the Gentlemen present on that…"[208] Despite coinciding with wider British ideologic and economic considerations in the 1760s and 1770s around the globe as is discussed, the endeavour of the Aleppo factory seems to have rested purely on economic deliberations.[209] The

[204] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/129/562, Evāḫir-i Z̲īlḥicce 1183/April 1770. "öteden berü valī-yi memleket tarafından iḳtiżā iden neferāt taʿyīn olunagelmiş…" [ever since the appointment of necessary officials/soldiers were required of the governor of the province].
[205] TNA, SP 110/58, 3 June 1771.
[206] For a few examples where Alexander Drummond, factor marine in Iskenderun, advised the consul in Aleppo to solicit help from the pashas of Aleppo to ensure safety in Aleppo-Iskenderun route, see BL, Add MS 45932, to James Porte, 27 May 1748; BL, Add MS 45932 to Arthur Pollard, 27 October 1748; BL, Add MS 45932 to Arthur Pollard, 19 April 1749.
[207] TNA, SP 110/58, 9 October 1771.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian Indian," 171–72; Eaton, "Between mimesis and alterity," 843.

volume of British trade in Aleppo was dwindling from the 1760s, and because consulage fees generated through trade met the expenses of gifts, the decline in the factory's income would constrain its financial capacity to cover the money spent on gifts and gift-like payments. In 1783, the money spent on presents by the factory constituted almost half of the consular expense in Aleppo: 1500 of a total of 3825 lion dollars was spent for presents.[210] Therefore, the Aleppo factory tried to relieve themselves of the economic burden of gifts, but to no avail. In a meeting in 1774, the consul expressed his anxiety about feeling unprotected in Aleppo due to the absence of the pasha.[211] Hence, gift-giving had to continue, even if less in value, so that they could reach the pashas. In 1775, the British consul attended the audience of a newly appointed pasha and was given a *ḫil'at* as a sign of recognition of his authority. At the next assembly meeting, after having agreed with the French, the factory decided to offer more gifts than they usually did because the new pasha "being in no wise [*sic*] a Friend to the Franks" might otherwise not support them.[212] The factory had to engage a generous offering to garner support from and enhance friendship with the new pasha. In 1780, as economic resources of the factory deteriorated even further, the British were only able to offer a present at "the price of a vest of cloth" in return for a horse by the pasha.[213] When the authority of pashas in Aleppo was significantly undermined in the 1780s, the British suffered greatly from the inadequate protection of trade routes and caravans in the countryside, and the British, as a result, closed their factory in Aleppo in 1791.

Besides the pasha, the kadi, mufti, *nakibüleşraf*/*naqīb al-ashrāf* (an official appointed as head of the lineal descendants of the Prophet Muhammed), customs officer, and *muḥaṣṣıl*

[210] TNA, SP 110/74, 28 November 1783.
[211] TNA, SP 110/58, 12 March 1774.
[212] TNA, SP 110/58, 19 September 1775.
[213] TNA, SP 110/59, 27 July 1780.

also received gifts until 1791.[214] Even so, Robert Abbott who remained in Aleppo as the British agent after 1791 requested the ambassador to procure an imperial order from the Grand Vizier to put an end to the offerings to the pasha, kadi, and mufti.[215] One important post exclusive to Aleppo was the *nakibüleşraf*/*naqīb al-ashrāf* which was one of the recognised branches of the Muslims religious establishment in the official authority structure in Aleppo, whose members enjoyed a range of special privileges.[216] Upon their appointments, the *naqīb*s also received gifts since their leverage grew in the second half of the century, so much so that they became essential figures in provincial administration.[217]

As in Izmir and presumably in Cyprus, all these officials also had a say in the quality of goods they received. In 1776, the dragoman reported that "on delivering some of the Presents of the Company, the Quality of their Cloth was complained of as inferior to what was customarily sent out".[218] This was a clear indication of the correlation that officials considered between the quality of gifts and their rank and standing. This awareness then reflected the apportioning and composition of the gifts to the officials. For instance, during the public celebration of a royal birth in 1776, the British gave two vests of cloth, several silver-mounted pistols to the *kahya*[219]; 1 vest of cloth to the *muḥaṣṣıl*; and a musical clock worth at least 300

[214] TNA, SP 110/59, 20 September 1776; TNA, SP 110/58, 13 June 1776, among the goods to the customs officer was 'Tocky' which was a kaftan with muddy or cloudy decors; Alexander Drummond, *Travels through different Cities*, 185.
[215] TNA, SP 110/50, 2 May 1791.
[216] Margaret L. Meriwether, *The Notable Families of Aleppo, 1770-1830: Networks and Social Structure* (University of Pennsylvania, 1981; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1988), 90–1; Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1989), 59.
[217] TNA, SP 110/58, 3 January 1772; TNA, SP 110/58, 1 September 1772. For the role of *naqīb*s in provincial governance such as provisioning the city, revenue collection, communicating imperial orders in the city, and recruiting an armed force for public defence, see İSAM/Halep Sicilleri, Evamir-i Sultaniye(henceforth cited as İSAM/ES/D/F/E)/Register 10/Folio 23/Entry 49, 13 Rabīʿülevvel 1186/14 June 1772; İSAM/ES/R 10/F 27/E 56, 21 Rabīülevvel 1186/22 June 1772; İSAM/ES/R 10/F 32/E 71, 29 Rabīʿülāḫir 1186, 30 July 1772; İSAM/ES/R 10/F 45/E 108, 30 Ẕīlḳʿade 1186/22 February 1773; İSAM/ES/R 13/F 46/E 95; 96, 20 Şaʿbān 1190/4 October 1776.
[218] TNA, SP 110/58, 8 April 1776.
[219] Governor's steward responsible for overseeing provincial affairs and ensuring communication. For kahya, see Mehmet Canatar, "Kethüda," in *TDVİA*, Consulted on 22 July 2022.

guruş to the pasha as a sign of friendship.[220] Just like timepieces, firearms were also specifically designed for the Ottoman markets and highly valued items for Ottoman elites who either used them in their hunting activities, a popular leisure activity undertaken with great ceremony that suggested their ability to marshal and govern, or redistributed them to other officials.[221]

Similar to the *voyvoda*s in Izmir and the *muḥaṣṣıl*s in Cyprus, the *muḥaṣṣıl*s assumed more power over the century in Aleppo. They oversaw the collection of taxes within the jurisdiction of the *muḥaṣṣıllık* (provincial tax farm) of Aleppo, of which the customs of Aleppo and Iskenderun was a part. A great deal of British taxes and customs went to the coffers of the *muḥaṣṣıl* who remitted the agreed-upon amount to the imperial treasury and kept the rest as profit. In that regard, gaining the favour of the *muḥaṣṣıl* was important for the British in terms of obtaining favourable tariffs, avoiding extortion, and even taking counsel concerning quotidian problems. As early as 1728, the consul sent a "gold watch" to the *muḥaṣṣıl*.[222] In 1771, the *muḥaṣṣıl* sent a horse to the consul and the British reciprocated.[223] Six years later, during the negotiations for the renewal of tariffs with the *muḥaṣṣıl*, the treasury had to borrow a substantial amount of 11.000 *guruş* to defray the costs of gifts to the *muḥaṣṣıl*.[224] These expenses placed an extraordinary financial burden on the Aleppo factory given the financial difficulties they were experiencing towards the end of the century.

However, these presents to the *muḥaṣṣıl*s for the renewal of tariffs were only a part of their offerings in Aleppo. Each year, the British consuls and the *muḥaṣṣıl*s negotiated and updated the tariffs according to the 3 per cent *ad valorem*. Even so, as will be discussed in the next section more thoroughly, both locally agreed and capitulatory tariffs could, and did, remain

[220] TNA, SP 110/59, 20 September 1776.
[221] Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 135; Melis Taner, ""Power to Kill:" A Discourse of the Royal Hunt During the Reigns of Süleyman the Magnificent and Ahmed I" (master's thesis, Sabancı University, 2009).
[222] HALS, DE/R/B 50, 6 November 1728.
[223] TNA, SP 110/58, 3 June 1771.
[224] TNA, SP 110/59, 4 April 1777.

below the 3 per cent *ad valorem* due to the inflationary economy.[225] Not only did the British pay less than the Ottomans, but they also paid less than their capitulatory dues. Thus, this caused an endemic extortion by the tax-farmers, including the *muḥaṣṣıl*s, and disputes over the taxation of British goods in Aleppo. One such dispute took place in 1747 between the British factory and the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Aleppo when the *muḥaṣṣıl* increased the export duties payable on British goods with authorisation by the finance department.[226] To obviate over-taxation and reduction in the state's revenues, the British ambassador and Hacı Ahmed Ağa, the representatives of the consul and the *muḥaṣṣıl* respectively in Istanbul reached an agreement with the approval also of the minister of finance (*defterdār*) and the customs officer of Aleppo. Accordingly, the British factory was to pay 2000 *guruş* per annum, in the name of the *tecdīd - i taʿrīfe* (lit. renewal of tariff) to the current and succeeding *muḥaṣṣıl*s of Aleppo in addition to their tariffs and supplementary treasury taxes due to the provincial revenue unit (*muḥaṣṣıllık*) of Aleppo.[227]

The British ambassador defined the lumpsum in 1747 as "an annual present of 2000 guruş", although relevant Ottoman orders and assembly records did not describe it as such.[228] The Ottomans instead used the term *tecdīd-i taʿrīfe*: an annual tariff renewal fee. This suggests

[225] According to the silver contents, one British pound sterling was 4.66 Ottoman *guruş* in 1693, 7.52 in 1743, 9.91 in 1763, and 19.17 in 1803. See Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 97.
[226] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/202/2, Evāsıṭ-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1160/late April – early May 1747. "ve zikr olunan mevādıñ ḫilāfına māliye tarafından ibrāz eyledikleri evāmire" [and the commands they procured from the finance department that contradict with the mentioned [Capitulatory] articles..]. The Capitulations of 1675 noted that "And if the *Testerdar* [defterdār, lit. record keeper, an office in the financial administration of the Ottoman Empire] shall give any Command contrary to this [the tariff rates of the 1675 Capitulations], let it not be obeyed, but be esteemed invalid", see The *Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Article LXIII.
[227] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/9/1, 27 Receb 1163/2 July 1750; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/10/1, 25 Şafer 1161/25 February 1748. The initial copies did not describe the payment as 'the renewal of tariffs'. A later imperial order described the payment of the sum as such, see BOA, A.{DVN.DVE.(3)/Folder 83/File 50, 2 Rabīʿülāḫir 1203/31 December 1788. "Ḥaleb'de ticāret iden İngiltere tüccārının medīne-yi mezbūreye idḫāl ve iḫrāç eylediği ḥarīr ve sāʾir emtiʿalarından Ḥaleb ḫazīnesi defterlerinden muḳayyıd olan taʿrīfe mūcibince lāzım gelen rüsūmātını baʿd'l-edā tecdīd-i taʿrīfe nāmıyla" [having paid their customs dues on their exports and imports of silk and other goods in accordance with the tariffs registered in the treasury register of Aleppo, British merchants of Aleppo were to pay, in the name of the renewal of Tariffs].
[228] TNA, SP 110/72, fols. 102-103, 10 August 1747.

that the British were well-aware of the tributary nature of the payment and were compliant with being reduced to a 'formalised' dependent status under the provincial authority.[229] I surmise that the term *tecdīd-i taʿrīfe* pertained to, and yet disguised, a tributary payment by the British community in Aleppo while still alluding to the notions of dependency and submission. In doing so, the Porte maintained inter-imperial relations at an honourable level. In this sense, the Porte drew upon older formulaic phrases such as *tecdīd-i berāt* (lit. renewal of an investiture document). *Berāt*s were associated with an annual lump sum payment called *ḫarāc* or *rav akçesi* (a yearly tribute) by the leaders of the Greek Orthodox and Jewish communities respectively in return for the verification of their privileges and duties by the sultan.[230] Both payments were meant to underline the Ottoman state's superiority and compensate the loss in the state's revenues occasioned by the judicial autonomy accorded to these communities. Similarly, the tariff rates below the 3 per cent in Aleppo deprived the *muḥaṣṣıl*s and thus the state of revenues. In exchange for renewing and confirming the British tariffs, provincial officials and the Porte introduced a new yearly payment and named it after the tariffs as in the *berāt*s. I inferred that alternative concepts and terms articulated through Ottoman epistolary prose like *tecdīd-i taʿrīfe* functioned as a substitute for or variegated the ritualised concept of friendship and diplomatic gift-exchange, all of which filtered the notions of subservience through practices of courtesy while at the same time insinuating Ottoman supremacy and authority over resources.[231] As Pierre Bourdieu noted, converting socio-economic practices

[229] For similar power dynamics between the British and local rulers in India, see Guido van Meersbergen, ""Intirely the Kings Vassalls": East India Company Gifting Practices and Anglo-Mughal Political Exchange (c.1670-1720)," *Diplomatica* 2 (2020): 276.

[230] Phokion P. Kotzagerogis, "About the fiscal status of the Greek Orthodox Church in the 17th century," *Turcica* 40 (2008): 67–80; Phokion P. Kotzagerogis, "Socio-economic Aspects of a Tax: The Metropolitans' and Bishops' pişkeş (second half of the seventeenth century," in *New Trends in Ottoman Studies. Papers Presented at the 20th CIEPO Symposium*, Rethymno, 27 June – 1 July 2012, ed. Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymnon: University of Crete, Dept. of History and Archaeology & Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas – Institute for Mediterranean Studies, 2014), 207–222; Minna Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul: The Formative Years, 1453–1566* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 27–33.

[231] On the significance of the projection of Ottoman imperial power across imperial boundaries through textual materials and arts of communication and the role of secretaries in text production, see Rhoad Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household, 1400-1800*

into explicit norms institutionalise obligation.[232] And, in time, such institutionalised practices of gift exchange establish durable relations of reciprocity that strengthen the receiver's position against the giver. This is what happened with the *tecdīd-i taʿrīfe*.

The annual lump sum was modified in 1754-55 when 'the tax revenue of coffee', of which 'the cotton and leather taxes' were a part, was separated from the *muḥaṣṣıllık* of Aleppo and outsourced to the contractors on a life-term basis. To balance the accounts (*li-ecli taʿdīl*), accordingly, of the total of 2000 *guruş*, 1500 *guruş* remained due to the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Aleppo and the remaining 500 *guruş* to the superintendents of 'the tax revenue of coffee' until 1788.[233] In January 1788, the Levant Company advised the Aleppo factory to suspend the sums as the volume of trade no longer covered the factory's expenses.[234] This triggered an argument between the Aleppo factory and the recipients of the sums. While the British explicitly stated that the proposal came from the 'British King' to tip the balance in their favour, the recipients claimed that besides losing their hold of the state revenues, "if an imperial order incompatible with the ancient custom be given to the British merchants, hence causing an irregularity in customs matters, it is obvious that other European merchants will also dare to make a fuss of various sorts".[235] Put differently, the recipients wanted to maintain the status quo in their

(London: Continuum, 2008), 253–268; Christopher Markiewicz, "Persian Secretaries in the Making of an Anti-Safavid Diplomatic Discourse," in *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500-1630*, eds. Christopher Markiewicz and Tracey A. Sowerby (New York and London: Routledge, 2021), 27–52.

[232] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), 102–3, 112.

[233] İSAM, ES/R 13/F 89/P 171-72/E 186, 16 Rabīʿülāḫir 1191/27 May 1777; TNA, SP 110/59, 4 April 1777. The names of the superintendents of "the tax revenue of coffee" were Ali and Ahmet (Ally and Ahmed Effendi); BOA, A.{DVN.DVE.(3)/Folder 83/File 50, 2 Rabīʿülāḫir 1203/31 December 1788; TNA, SP 110/58, 13 February 1771. British assembly records in Aleppo recited an imperial order that "the usual Custom on Cotton" should be paid to "the aga of the malkana of the Tahmis" and "not to the Muhassil".

[234] TNA, SP 110/59, 5 January 1788; BOA, C.HR/180/8988, 1 Ṣafer 1203/1 November 1788. "Medīne-yi Ḥalebde mukīm İngiltere tüccārının bir müddetden berü aḫz ve iʿṭāları munḳaṭıʿ olmaġla…İngiltereye irsāl olunagelen penbe ve ḥarīr ticāreti muʿaṭṭal olub" [the British commerce in Aleppo was cut off for a while…the trade of cotton and silk exported to England left untended]

[235] BOA, C.HR/73/3603, 17 Ẕīlḥicce 1202/18 September 1788. "Eger ki ḳāʿide-yi ḳadīmine münāfī emr-i ʿālī İngilterelü tüccārına virilür ise mūceb iḫtilāl-i umūr-ı gümrük oldukda ġayrī sāʾir efrānce tüccārı günagün umūra taṣaddī idecekleri ẓāhir ve be-dīdār olmaġla."

relations with Europeans. Any crack in established relations, which Europeans could exploit, would not only undermine their authority over revenue sources, but also the tributary relations based on 'the ancient custom' with Europeans in Aleppo.

Despite an initial imperial order rejecting the proposal, the British managed to cancel the lump sum payments by a second imperial order dated 31 December 1788.[236] The Porte, however, could not ensure enforcement of the new ruling, which "Embarrassed" the Pro-consul of Aleppo because he could not fulfil the demands of the Company.[237] Here, a picture emerges that suggests different stances concerning a tributary payment. For the officials, the matter was non-negotiable due to the rationale explained above. Although the British were aware of the obligatory nature of an 'annual present', they nevertheless thought that they could negotiate the maze of the so-called tribute system on the grounds of new commercial realities in Aleppo. I contend that such different stances represented each party's interests and concerns and were not irreconcilable. From the perspective of officials in Aleppo, they did not want to relinquish a steady income imbued with authoritative meanings given the power they accumulated in the late eighteenth century. The British however could not afford such payments even if they were willing to pay due to their financial conditions at the time. Furthermore, as the government's control was teetering on the brink of collapse during the 1780s and 1790s in Aleppo, with local political factions challenging the authority of the pashas, British privileges withered away.[238] Stripped of their administrative powers in Aleppo, the pashas were no longer able to ensure the implementation of the Porte's orders. Nor was the Porte able to convince local authorities in

[236] One of the copies of the order rejecting the British proposal was deposited in the British Chancery of Aleppo and is now preserved in the National Archives in Kew, see TNA, EXT 6/58/2, Evāʾil-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1203/late December 1788 – early January 1789. Another copy that was registered in Düvel-i Ecnebiye İngiltere Defteri (Registers of Foreign Countries, England) gives a precise date of 31 December, see BOA, A.{DVN.DVE.(3)/Folder 83/File 50, 2 Rabīʿülāḫir 1203/31 December 1788. For the British reflection on this, see TNA, SP 110/59, 21 May 1789, which reads '"a Strong Command from the Ottoman Porte in favour of the abovementioned late Mauhaussel for the Immediate Payment of the Said Deposit". For the abrogation, see BOA, A.{DVN.DVE. 84/File 23, 28 Şevvāl 1204/11 July 1790.

[237] TNA, SP/110/59, 2 August 1790; TNA, SP 110/59, 11 April 1791.

[238] Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 86–100.

that regard. Thus, it was not different or contradictory attitudes towards the *tecdīd-i taʿrīfe*, but a combination of political and commercial circumstances that prevented compromise between the parties. Under this state of affairs, the factory in Aleppo closed in 1791.

Besides displaying British dignity and showcasing commercial products, gift-giving or gift-like payments enabled the British in the province to get protection from, and avoid over-taxation by, the authorities. The case of the *tecdīd-i taʿrīfe* also demonstrated that petitioning the Porte was pivotal in tax-related matters in terms of navigating exertions of local authority, a subject which will be examined next.

Petitioning

A British assembly held on 28 July 1798 in Izmir informed the merchants that the customs officer of Izmir summoned the British dragoman to communicate his intentions to the factory. The officer noted that he received an imperial edict to levy 3 per cent *ad valorem* tax on all British exports from the Ottoman Empire and even maintained that he "had the power" to introduce a new tariff for all European merchants. Upon these claims, the factory in Izmir decided to send a memorial to Spencer Smith (British plenipotentiary in Istanbul between 1796-98) and request him to procure an imperial order in their favour.[239] Having been informed of the situation, Spencer Smith instructed his dragoman to form an Ottoman petitionary document laying the particulars of the British side of the story to be presented to the Ottoman bureaucrats in Istanbul. The original Ottoman translation of the petition (*taḳrīrāt*) accused the customs officer in Izmir responsible for duties on dried fruit of double charging customs by disobeying the *edā tezkeresi* obtained by the British, confirming payment of customs at other Ottoman ports. Moreover, he was accused of changing (*taġyīr*) an agreed-upon tariff with the British factory. Given that the Capitulations stipulated a one-time customs payment, the British rightly

[239] TNA, SP 105/337, 28 July 1798.

claimed that the double charging of customs was in contradiction with the Capitulations.[240] Knowing, however, that the tariff was locally agreed in Izmir with an official of higher rank and then authorised by the Porte, an attempt at altering the tariff in place was in defiance of "the ancient custom" and "goodwill".[241] As a result of this clear wording and convincing arguments compatible with the components of the Ottoman law, the British succeeded in obtaining an imperial order against the claims of the customs officer nearly two months later, for which the factory congratulated the plenipotentiary.[242]

The unfolding of the case above underscores the importance of petitions and immersion in textual strategies in maintaining British commercial interests throughout the century. It also demonstrates the tension between provincial authorities and British consuls and merchants over the taxation of British products. The Capitulations acknowledged the possibility of disputes over taxation and provided an institutional framework for the relationship between the British merchants and provincial officials: While the former secured freedom of movement and protection of themselves and their merchandise from the encroachments of provincial officials; the latter guaranteed their shares from the taxation of British imports and exports, namely 3 per cent *ad valorem*.[243] However, as the petition above articulated, such disputes were frequent in

[240] For the Ottoman translation of the original *taḳrīr*, see BOA, C.HR/111/5512, 25 Ṣafer 1213/8 August 1798. "ʿahd-nāme-yi hümāyūn şurūtuna muḫālefeti bedīhī olan iddiʿāyı". [it is self-evident that the pretension is in contradiction with the terms of the capitulations].

[241] BOA, C.HR/111/5512, 25 Ṣafer 1213/8 August 1798. "ʿādet-i ḳadīme külliyen muġāyir olan muḳaddime-i na-merżiyesinden…taʿrīfe-i ḳadīmenin fiyātını terḳi ḳaydına düşmek muġāyir-i deʾb-i inṣāf" [an unsatisfactory preliminary discourse that is in defiance entirely of the ancient custom…to cancel the long-established tariff rates is contrary to the custom of goodwill].

[242] TNA, SP 105/337, 28 August 1798. "His Excellency had procured to annul the pretensions". For the Ottoman rescript sent in response to the *taḳrīr*, see BOA, A.{DVNSHADR.d 10 (Hadariye Defteri 10, henceforth cited as DVNSHADR.d 10)/Page 87/Entry 7, Evāʾil-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1213/mid-September 1798. The translation of the original *taḳrīr* notes that the imperial edict sent in response was registered in 3 Rabīʿülevvel 1213/15 August 1789, so there was at least 15 days gap until its registration into the register concerning the British affairs.

[243] On the role of commercial treaties in creating an institutional regime for the merchants trading overseas in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular, see Koen Stapelbroek and Antonella Alimento, *The Politics of Commercial Treaties in the Eighteenth Century Balance of Power, Balance of Trade* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*. For the articles concerning the relations between British Levant Company merchants and provincial officials, see BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Pages 2-12/Articles 13, 27, 28, and 29.

the eighteenth century because provincial officials were eager to maximise revenues for their remittances to the treasury or simply for personal gain.[244] This prompted the British to request the intervention of the state, regularly, by way of dispatching imperial rescripts summarizing the British privileges. Effective and constant petitioning by the British was therefore an indispensable instrument of British diplomacy at the Ottoman court if they were to maintain and further their privileges in the provinces.

The institutional regime founded by the Capitulations allowed the British access to power mechanisms that ensured the implementation of their capitulatory privileges at the local level.[245] In the Ottoman context, the subjects used petitioning as a strategy to protect themselves from the oppression of local authorities.[246] Underlying this was the need to bring justice to subjects and ensure an effective revenue collection. These needs also represented the two interlinked components of Ottoman theories of state: the provision of justice and the wealth of the state. Similarly, since Europeans were granted protection to encourage the empire's economy and trade, they were regarded as integral parts of the fabric of society. Michael Talbot and Edhem Eldem have demonstrated how the British and French conformed to the formulaic phraseology and terminology of Ottoman petitions in the Ottoman legal system, which rendered ambassadors as a dependent of the sultan.[247] Viewing the presentation and reception of written petitions as an important technology of early modern state formation, Robert Travers

[244] BOA, C.HR/111/5512, 25 Ṣafer 1213/8 August 1798. "iskelelerde ümenā ṭarafından ḫilāf-ı rıżā māl iṭlāḳıyla mücerreb'l-ẕuhūr olan taʿarruż ve rencīde-i beyhūde iḥtimālātı" [the possibilities of frustrating offence and harassment that became evident through experience with the customs officers' remittance of a lumpsum [to the treasury] at ports which were contrary to the sultan's consent]

[245] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Page 7/Article 18. This article allowed the British to petition the Porte for any disputes and ordered the officers to respond to British petitions.

[246] Suraiya Faroqhi, "Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 35, no. 1 (1992): 1–39; Boğaç A. Ergene, *Local Courts, Provincial Society and Justice in the Ottoman Empire: Legal Practice and Dispute Resolution in Çankırı and Kastamonu (1652-1744)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 104; James E. Baldwin, "Petitioning the sultan in Ottoman Egypt," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75, no. 3 (2012): 499–524.

[247] Michael Talbot, "Petitions of the Supplicant Ambassador: British Commercial Representation to the Ottoman State in the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 46 (2015): 163–191; Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 272–77.

argued how co-opting and transforming late Mughal, Persianate practices of petitioning helped the East India Company consolidate British colonial rule in Bengal.[248] Conforming to and co-opting Ottoman practices of petitioning did not lead to such conclusions since the British lacked unrestricted administrative-legal autonomy in the Ottoman lands. Yet, British petitioning contributed to early modern Ottoman state-building in many ways. By receiving such petitionary texts and dispatching imperial rescripts in response, the Porte bestowed patronage and disseminated its ideas of superiority and legitimacy over the constituents of the Ottoman society, of which the *müsteʾmin*s were a part, as a means of serving its ideological needs for political legitimation.[249]

The *müsteʾmin*s, on the other hand, utilised these diplomatic conventions to make forays into cross-cultural power systems to rekindle their privileges and have a grip on rapidly and constantly changing circumstances when, as they said, "we can get no redress, nor satisfaction from our Caddi".[250] Moreover, in some measure, British participation in Ottoman practices of claimsmaking and dispute resolution affected administrative and taxation policies in the provinces and language of imperial orders. Successful and effective diplomacy was however contingent on 'successful textual strategies' in the early modern period.[251] In this manner, just as the secretaries of the state were significant for the Ottoman bureaucratic checks and balances within the empire and maintenance of inter-imperial relations, so too were the dragomans in European service in text production, diplomatic mediation, and cross-cultural

[248] Robert Travers, *Empires of Complaints: Mughal Law and the Making of British India, 1765-1793* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).
[249] Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 91, 255; Birdal, *The Holy Roman Empire and the Ottomans*, 139–140; Heather L. Ferguson, *The Proper Order of Things: Language, Power, and Law in Ottoman Administrative Discourse* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2018).
[250] TNA, SP 105/336, 12 October 1751, from Izmir factory to the ambassador in Istanbul. For a general view on how trans-imperial agents operated in pluralistic legal regimes, see Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16–17.
[251] Tracey A. Sowerby, "Early Modern Diplomatic History," *History Compass* 14, no. 9 (2016): 447.

understanding of early modern diplomacy.[252] Dragomans employed by both the British consuls/merchants in the provinces and the ambassador in Istanbul were essential for cultural translation to coax the Porte to take necessary measures in the face of the infringement of their commercial rights. Following the assembly meetings in the provinces, consuls would call the dragomans in and have them pen a memorial, usually in Italian, concerning the issue(s) at stake to be sent to the ambassador in Istanbul. Occasionally, the factory would also appeal to the kadi, pashas, or other provincial officials to procure judicial degrees (*iʿlām*) or missives (*mürāsele*) to substantiate their claims as mentioned briefly in the previous section. The 'Publick Cash', that is the factories' funds managed by the treasurers, met the expenses involved such as obtaining documents, paying the carriers, and gifting the officials.[253] All these procedures took a great deal of effort and money. Therefore, the factory's finances and the distance between the provinces and Istanbul were of serious concern to the British factories and had a significant impact on the functionality and efficiency of petitioning from the provinces. Put differently, the success of petitioning depended partly on the ability of the British to mobilise economic resources and human capital.

Having received and read the memorial along with additional documents, the ambassador then handed it over to the embassy dragomans to render it into an Ottoman petitionary form. The petitions referred ably to the components of Ottoman law, of which the

[252] On the secretaires of the Ottoman state, see Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 253–268; Markiewicz, "Persian Secretaries in the Making of an Anti-Safavid Diplomatic Discourse," 27–52. On dragomans, see Alexander H. de Groot, "The dragomans of the embassies in Istanbul, 1785-1843," in *Eastward Bound: Dutch Ventures and Adventures in the Middle East*, eds. Geert van Gelder and Ed de Moor (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994), 130–158; Gilles Veinstein, "L'administration ottomane et le problème des interprètes," in *Études sur les villes du Proche-Orient, XVIe-XIXe siècle: Hommage à André Raymond*, ed. Brigitte Marino (Damascus: Institut français d'études arabes de Damas, 2001), 65–79; Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Natalie Rothman, T*he Dragoman Renaissance: Diplomatic Interpreters and the Routes of Orientalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021); Emrah S. Gürkan, "Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560–1600," *The Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 107–28; John-Paul A. Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[253] TNA, SP 105/335, 21 March 1758.

capitulations were a part, and invoked principles of the circle of justice—an important concept in Ottoman statecraft whereby justice increases wealth and wealth consolidates justice—to mobilise the Porte to act in their favour. This practice produced thousands of imperial rescripts sent to the provinces in response to British petitions, which form one of the source bases of this section in particular and the thesis in general. Moreover, numerous original Ottoman translations of British petitions were preserved in the Ottoman archives, allowing for a comparison of the language and style between the original translations and the rescripts. Furthermore, when they are cross-referenced with the assembly records of the factories wherever possible, we can understand the textual strategies the British used and the efficiency of the petitions in the provinces in terms of navigating through local power dynamics and negotiating their privileges.

Petitioning helped rekindle and reassert British trading rights. Even so, it was used, on occasion, skilfully in evading taxes. Moreover, the compensation the British paid for the damages inflicted on Ottoman subjects during the Anglo-French privateering in the Mediterranean was artfully used in obtaining rescripts from the Porte: in return for paying compensation for Ottoman subjects' sufferings, the British expected provision of justice by the Porte. However, there were diverse factors that circumscribed the efficacy of petitioning and implementation of imperial rescripts. This section first discusses the British immersion in textual strategies before moving on to examine the reasons for and efficiency of petitioning.

A Discourse of Oppression, Friendship, and Justice

Engaging in petitionary practices required the British to conform to the formulaic sorts of Ottoman petitionary documents that rendered the ambassadors as a supplicant to the Ottoman sultans. But it more importantly offered the British the opportunity to deploy rhetorical

expressions intended to bring contested issues to the fore and stimulate counteractions by the Porte. The dragomans assumed a vital role in reading and understanding the issues at stake and rephrasing the British memorials into an Ottoman petitionary form by utilising terms, idioms, and phrases about the relationship between the Ottoman state and its subjects, the Ottoman notions of statehood, and the relationship between the Ottoman state and European powers. In this regard, the original Ottoman translation of the petition cited in the opening of this sub-section, which represents a typical example of British petitions, serves as a model to decipher British textual strategies.[254]

The Ottoman text begins with narrating the attempts of the customs officer at disregarding the customs payment receipts obtained in other ports before arriving in Izmir and changing the tariffs already in place. A slight difference appears in the phrasing of the attempts in question between the British assembly records and the original Ottoman translation. Both texts underscore the attempt at altering the tariffs in Izmir which were contrary to the "ancient custom". Since the customs officer of Izmir worked for the head customs officer of Istanbul, the authority to change the tariffs did not rest with him, but with the head customs officer. Yet the assembly records do not speak of the non-acceptance of the payment receipts, but of the intention to levy 3 per cent *ad valorem* on all British exports from the Ottoman Empire. Here, the assembly records refer to the Ottoman goods exported from other Ottoman ports and the customs officer's intention to charge the 3 per cent customs for these goods again when they entered the customs zone of Izmir. This, therefore, needed a rephrasing in the Ottoman text because invoking the 3 per cent *ad valorem* on all British exports and imports may not bear any relation to the double charging of customs, but may sound in perfect conformity with the Capitulations and may not coax the Porte into issuing an imperial order in the British's favour.

[254] BOA, C.HR/111/5512, 25 Ṣafer 1213/8 August 1798. All the run-in quotations in the text between pages 87 and 90 are quoted from this source.

Thus, the resulting re-phrase reads the officer "does not execute the payment receipts coming from other ports" [*sāʾir iskelelerden gelen erzāḳda tezkeresine ʿamel itmeyüb*]. This rewording informed the Porte that the British had already paid the customs dues at another port and indicated that both attempts were inappropriate (*nā-hemvār*) that troubled (*taʿcīz*) the British. The term *taʿcīz* was one of the most common words in petitions regulated by the Ottoman *kanun* that described the oppression, injustice, and transgression of provincial officials against the Ottoman subjects across the empire in the early modern period.[255] In this sense, the British equated their discontent with those of the Ottoman subjects and positioned themselves in the Ottoman society and legal system.

To stimulate counteractions, the text then relates the actions to the components of the Ottoman law: the legal customs, of which the Capitulations were a part, and the Ottoman kanun to illegitimate them.[256] Thus, the inappropriate practices were defined as "being in defiance entirely of the terms of the Capitulations and the ancient custom" [*şurūṭ-u ʿahd-nāme-yi hümāyūn ile ʿādet-i ḳadīme külliyen muġāyir olan*]. By invoking nonconformity with the Capitulations, the British reminded the Ottomans that the Capitulations were the main legal basis governing the relations between the subjects of the two empires. It is hard to know how these petitions were viewed and received. Yet, the Ottomans knew that the Capitulations, as treaties of friendship and commerce, carried contractual, mutual obligations. It was the responsibility of the sultan and his officials to maintain justice for the British within his realm.

[255] Other terms were *rencīde* (offence), *ẓulm* (oppression), *taʿaddī* (aggression), and *tecāvüz* (transgression), see Hidemitsu Kuroki, "Account Books of Oppression and Bargaining: The Struggle for Injustice and Profit in Aleppo, 1784-90," in *Syria and Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule: Essays in honour of Abdul-Karim Rafeq*, eds. Peter Sluglett and Stephan Weber (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 430; Başak Tuğ, *Politics of Honor in Ottoman Anatolia: Sexual Violence and Socio-Legal Surveillance in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 50, 83; Oktay Özel, *The Collapse of Rural Order in Ottoman Anatolia: Amasya 1576-1643* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 134–182; Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 123; Viorel Panaite, *Ottoman War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Its Tribute- Payers from the North of the Danube* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 388; Ferguson, *The Proper Order of Things*, 140–1.

[256] Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, 58–9.

In this sense, the petition used a rhetorical expression of oppression and injustice to describe the officer's action as contrary to the friendship between the empires.

Thereafter, the text starts detailing how those actions affected their trade and why the Porte should help the British. First, it pointed out the economic repercussions of such conduct by the officials. Thus, the British stressed that such practices ruined their trade (*İngilterelünün aḫz ü ʿiṭāsı ʿumūmen ber-ṭaraf olmak*), which could also harm the state's revenues in the long term. Without the proper function of trade, the British would not be able to pay their customs which would then result in the reduction of the state's revenues. By doing so, the British associated their commercial interests with the fiscal interests of the Ottoman state, albeit in an indirect manner, and therefore aimed at prompting the Porte to take necessary measures in their favour. After this, it accentuates the breach of goodwill (*muġāyir-i deʾb-i inṣāf*) by the officer, and the [Ottoman] custom of everlasting justice (*ʿādet-i müstedīme-i ʿadl*) to the British. Goodwill and provision of justice were the thrusts of British-Ottoman diplomatic and commercial relations as specified in the Capitulations.[257] Preservation of both was the sultan's obligation to the British who "is the friend (*dost*) of, and most-faithful (*aṣdaḳ*) to, the sultan". This obligation is explicitly articulated: "British merchants' privileges were expected to be protected and they be treated with kindness" [*muʿāfiyet ve mücāmelede emīnü'l-ḥāl olmalarına ḥamiyyet olmak*]. In fact, the notions of goodwill and justice came to assume a reciprocal character in practice, especially from the mid-eighteenth century, despite the unilateral nature of the Capitulations. Alexander Drummond noted in 1748 that just as the British compensated the losses of Ottoman subjects that they incurred at sea owing to the Anglo-French privateering in the Mediterranean, so too the Porte should compensate the British merchants' losses incurred on route by robbers and bandits.[258] Hence, highlighting friendship in texts contributed to

[257] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Pages 27-28/Article 64; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 30–1.
[258] BL, Add MS 45932, to Arthur Pollard on 27 October 1748.

forging shared understandings of appropriate diplomatic actions over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and thereby came to call for reciprocity more tenaciously manner at some point in the eighteenth century.

Having established the causative rationale for the Porte's intervention, the petition ends with the requests for measures expected from the Porte. The petition made it clear that the British privileges were regularly set in order (*müretteb*) through negotiations (*muḫābere ve müzākere olunsa*) in Istanbul, and yet it was the Porte's responsibility to avoid (*ber-ṭaraf olmağla*) the possibilities of frustrating harassment and offence (*taʿarruż ve rencīde-i beyhūde iḥtimālātı*) through commands and warnings (*emr ve tenbīhāt*). What is interesting here is the overt statement of negotiations taking place in Istanbul, which intended to remind the Ottomans that the British were no passive players. Consequently, the Porte warned the kadi that the British state was the ancient friend (*ḳadīmī dostu*) of the Sublime state for which any action violating both the Capitulations (*ʿahd-nāme-yi hümāyūn*) and the ancient custom (*muʿtād-ı ḳadīm*) be avoided (*defʿ*).[259]

This skilfully written text is the quintessential example of British petitionary documents, in that it explains the causes of trouble with specific terms associated with oppression, legitimates them in accordance with the components of Ottoman law, motivates counteraction by invoking notions about the Ottoman statehood and inter-imperial interactions, and lastly calls for intervention. Further, it shows the dependence of the British on the significant role of dragomans in composing such texts imbued with a multitude of cultural terms and phrases to draw the Porte's attention.

On the other hand, these textual practices suggest the partial success of petitioning in terms of prompting the Porte to compose and dispatch imperial rescripts to the provincial

[259] BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/87/7, Evāʾil-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1213/mid-September 1798.

officers to remedy the British complaint. Repeated British petitions and imperial commands on the same matter—a frequent pattern throughout the eighteenth century—do not suggest the ineffectiveness of petitioning. Rather, they show the British involvement in Ottoman bureaucratic systems and their active stance to discourage the authorities from encroaching upon their privileges by engaging in such lengthy, costly, and tangled bureaucratic procedures that demonstrated their determination, legal knowledge, and financial capacity.[260] Some of these engagements proved to be effective and some were not depending on the peculiarities of each case.

Yet, these engagements also shaped the Ottoman bureaucratic system and record-keeping practices. Growing volumes of petitions filed by foreign communities in provinces led to the production of *Düvel-i Ecnebiye Defterleri* (Registers for Foreign States) from the seventeenth century as a part of broader Ottoman imperial reform projects.[261] Alongside the registers, the British petitions and imperial decrees began to be assembled in a separate collection from the 1740s again in the context of another change in Ottoman record-keeping system which coincided with the formation of the province-specific *Şikayet Defterleri* (Registers of Complaints) and the *Vilayet Ahkam Defterleri* (Registers of Provincial Orders).[262] The British trading community was a constitutive part of Ottoman society. Being a part of this societal and bureaucratic organism enabled the British to utilise the imperial government's power to re-assert their trading privileges in the provinces. Perhaps more importantly, British

[260] For an explicit articulation of this attitude, see TNA, SP 105/336, 5 December 1751, which reads: "The passive inactive temper of the French, Dutch, & Venetians upon repeated Affronts & Demands of this Aga, & his Predecessors has encourag'd him to encroach upon all Franks, never dreaming of any opposition, but Your Excellency's Zeal & Vigour for the honour & Interest of the Nation, has convinc'd him, & all people here that we will not tamely submit to such Insults, & this Event has brought honour and Credit to Your Excellency & the Nation in the City and Neighbourhood, & we flatter ourselves will prevent the Aga's from attempting anything further against us".

[261] BOA, A. {DVN.DVE.d 901-916B; BOA, A. {DVN.DVE.d 1-111.

[262] BOA, A.{DVN.DVE/1-506. On the changes in Ottoman bureaucratic system and record-keeping practices, see Halil İnalcık, "Şikayet Hakkı: *ʿArż-ı Ḥāl* ve *ʿArż-ı Maḥżar*'lar," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 7-8 (1988): 33–54; Baldwin, "Petitioning the Sultan in Ottoman Egypt," 499–524.

diplomatic engagements both contributed to, and were shaped by, Ottoman bureaucratic reforms. Thus, in line with recent research on the effects of outsider involvement upon shaping state formation, I argue that British diplomatic and trading communities contributed to the co-production of the Ottoman Empire.[263]

Be that as it may, petitions did not offer permanent solutions to the disputes over the double charging of customs and various tax levies on goods and transactions. Significant, in that regard, was the geographical distance between the provinces and Istanbul, different attitudes of provincial officials and British consuls/merchants towards the customs regulations in the Ottoman Empire, and constantly changing configuration of revenue units in the provinces.

Reasons and Efficiency of Petitioning

The Capitulations provided a different tax regime for European merchants in terms of once-payable customs dues and tax exemptions. The specified fixed tariffs on several British exports and imports also offered predictability and proved advantageous over the long term since the customs dues were not updated every year.[264] Thus, tariff rates remained below the real values of the goods due to inflation. Keeping customs duties as low as possible was and would become even more important for the British as the century wore on. It strengthened their purchasing power despite the competitive market in Britain over Ottoman export goods and their

[263] Fynn-Paul, ed., *War, Entrepreneurs, and the State in Europe and the Mediterranean, 1300–1800*; Conway, *Britannia's Auxiliaries.*

[264] The silver content of the Ottoman guruş reduced gradually by a total nearly of 62 per cent from 1690 to 1808. See Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 163.

counterparts from Italy, Spain, the West Indies, and South Asia, and the European and local competition in the Ottoman Empire.[265]

Provincial authorities, on the other hand, had their own agendas in mind as they tried to maximise their revenues for their gain and their remittances to the Treasury. One recurring source of contention especially in the provinces was unauthorised attempts at altering capitulatory customs regimes by disregarding locally agreed tariffs and double charging customs duties. In 1699, the British consul of Izmir requested the ambassador to insert some of the commodities registered in the local tariff catalogues in the Capitulations so that they could "be free from the expencefull [*sic*] adjustments of the Tariffe with every new Customer".[266] Although locally agreed tariffs provided stability in dues payable on certain commodities, they were not free from defects. For example, officials in charge of customs collection reversed the British tax advantages by charging a premium, known as an 'agio', on customs observing the 3 per cent *ad valorem*, and the British needed to offer gifts during the negotiations for tariffs.[267] The Porte advocated these augmentations through premiums as long as they observed the 3 per cent *ad valorem*. Similarly, the customs officers could update local tariffs provided that they procured a command via the head customs officer of Istanbul from the Porte. After all, just as provincial officials were concerned with maximising their incomes, so too the Porte was intent on keeping up the state's revenue. Thus, the Porte authorised the

[265] The out-letter book of John March, a Levant merchant in London who lived in Izmir early in the century, contains numerous entries about these dimensions of trade with the Ottoman Empire, see LMA, CLC/B/227/MS08724. Also see TNA, SP 105/337, 15 December 1790. Even the British consul in Izmir admitted this fact: "The difference between the present estimate of Goods and their real value is certainly considerable and it must no doubt have been so, tho' not in so great degree, when this estimate was first established, but our answers to this is that the Trade has for a long time past, and is at present in a situation that will not suffer any additional burthen; that an augmentation of Custom would be highly detrimental to it"

[266] TNA, SP 105/335, 16 February 1699.

[267] TNA, SP 105/335, 28 November 1698.

update of local tariffs applicable in Izmir in 1763 despite the British efforts to avoid its materialisation.[268]

Nevertheless, the commissioners in Izmir attempted to alter the tariffs without authorisation from time to time as is demonstrated with the case in 1798 at the beginning of this section. As the British ambassador, Charles Arbuthnot, noted in 1807, the tariff "is everywhere shamefully eluded".[269] The customs commissioner in Izmir had no right to introduce a new customs regime because the post was under the authority of the head customs officer of Istanbul. Therefore, they claimed to have an imperial order at hand as a bluff to beguile the British into paying higher customs dues. Sometimes, the officials did indeed procure commands from the finance department, a phenomenon addressed in the Capitulations that invalidated such documents.[270] The British were perfectly aware of the Capitulations and the extent of authority of the commissioners in Izmir. Given this, they adeptly invoked their capitulatory privileges and established practices to ward off any intention to alter the tariffs without the will of the head customs officer in Istanbul. Presumably, since the Capitulations enumerated only a few fixed tariffs payable on commodities at the port of Izmir and therefore, most items were taxed through local tariffs, the customs commissioners leaned towards either readjusting the values of customs or entirely disregarding them. Similar problems also occurred in Aleppo before 1747, although more commodities received set tariffs in the Capitulations payable in Aleppo.[271] Seemingly, the agreement of an annual tributary payment in 1747 discussed above counterbalanced, to some extent, the loss to the officials and the state. Underlying these attempts was the attitude of provincial officials towards the public offices they occupied, understanding them as their purchased property, and thereby entailing the right

[268] Rear, *William Barker*, 21–2.
[269] Cited in Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 206.
[270] The *Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Article LXIII.
[271] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/202/2, Evāsıṭ-i Rabī῾ülāḫir 1160/April-May 1747.

to charge various taxes on Ottoman subjects and foreign traders. Hence, such exertions of local authority over the British were widespread in the eighteenth century, which conditioned the British gift-giving and petitioning strategies to navigate these relations.

However, this does not mean that provincial officials were always in defiance of the classical Ottoman fiscal regulations. An example of this was double charging customs on British goods transferred from one place to another in the empire. As stated above, Ottoman merchants were required to pay customs in each customs zone, whereas the British were liable for customs dues once only. This difference constituted one of the most common problems the British faced in the period under examination. In 1718, when a British caravan arrived in Aleppo from Isfahan by way of Erzurum, a major entry point for silk coming from Gilan in Persia, they were charged with customs dues in Aleppo a second time. The British claimed that although they had paid their customs dues and obtained a payment receipt in Erzurum, the customs officer in Aleppo did not accept the receipt and extracted 5000 *guruş* (approximately £700 sterling) from them.[272] The British obtained two imperial orders in 1718 and 1721 reciting British tax privileges and demanding full restitution (*istirdād*).[273] Yet, the officer refused to redress the money by arguing that the receipt issued in Erzurum was fake.[274] Upon investigating the allegation, the Porte verified that the receipt was genuine and commanded full restitution. Unfortunately, we cannot follow how this case was resolved since there is no other entry regarding this matter.

However, the case is indicative of the limits of rule enforcement by the Porte, on the one hand, and the officials' agency in the provinces, on the other. In such far-away provinces, the Porte's ability to enforce a ruling depended on cooperation with provincial officials such as

[272] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/43/1, Evāsıṭ-i Muḥarrem 1131/December 1718. The exchange rate of the British pound sterling to Ottoman *guruş* was around 1:7, see Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 97.
[273] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/60/3, Evāḫir-i Şevvāl 1133/late August 1721.
[274] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/62/3, Evāḫir-i Rabīʿülevvel 1134/mid-January 1722.

pashas and kadis. The enforcement power of these figures was in turn informed by the power dynamics in the provinces. Since the officials at the top of the power pyramid had also connections with lower-ranking officeholders enforcing a decree in the third party's favour might be quite challenging, especially in far-away places where provincial surveillance was loose. Furthermore, by demanding customs in their jurisdictional customs zones, provincial officials were not in defiance of the Ottoman policy, but of the capitulatory regulations.[275] Even so, after having received an imperial command, officials could, and did, produce various pretexts to get around the decrees and thus impede British operations. As a major source of their sustenance, officials were determined to collect the maximum customs in their provinces at the expense of other customs zones in the empire: in the case above, the customs officer in Aleppo undermined the authority of those of Erzurum as far as the capitulatory regimes are concerned.

The perennial quest for revenue even led to disputes over customs in the same customs zones. For example, 'Izmir, Chios, and dependent customs' constituted the Aegean Sea customs zone, which was a part of the Istanbul customs zone. Therefore, customs dues collected in Izmir and Chios belonged to the Istanbul customs zone. Yet, each customs commissioner was keen on maximising his revenues since 'foreign customs of Izmir' and 'the ports of Chios' were farmed out to different commissioners. In June 1733, the British succeeded in obtaining an imperial command to ensure that the customs officer of Izmir accepted the *edā tezkere*s acquired and did not charge the British more than 3 per cent.[276] Just four months later, the French 'nation' informed the British that the customs officer in Izmir refused to accept one of their *edā tezkere*s obtained at Chios before arriving in Izmir. And when the French dragoman reminded him of "y^{e} validity of y^{e} Capitulations, he say'd, wthout regard to them, he would

[275] Kadı, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century*, 322–23.
[276] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/111/2, Evā'il-i Muḥarrem 1146/June 1733.

have his customs".[277] Here, despite a previous decree by the Porte, the customs officer was overtly disregarding the imperial order sanctioning the observance of the Capitulations simply because he was deprived of his share of customs dues for which he contracted with the state.

A factor that seemingly contributed to the prevalence of the double charging of customs was European contraband trade in the empire. In the eastern Mediterranean, the British docked at rather smaller ports to obtain *edā tezkeresi* in return for a smaller sum without even discharging their cargoes. In this way, they evaded paying greater sums at their main destination points such as Izmir and Aleppo. Crete, Chios, and Bozcaada were amongst the ports en route to Izmir, whereas Cyprus and Latakia to Aleppo.[278] Provincial officials in big commercial centres were trying to maximise their incomes to cover the debt which they contracted with the state. Occasionally, provincial officials managed to garner support from the Porte in nullifying *edā tezkeresi* issued in smaller ports, especially those from Cyprus towards the end of the eighteenth century when the British systematically evaded taxes possibly because of their decreasing volume of trade in Aleppo. Without detecting systematic contraband or concrete evidence substantiating it, however, it was difficult to invalidate an *edā tezkeresi*, in that one-time customs dues and *edā tezkeresi* were capitulatory regulations that were designed to stimulate the international trade of the empire while preventing over-taxation by officials and tax evasion by Europeans. In this manner, petitioning allowed the British to utilise loopholes in the Capitulations or sultanic decrees that lacked the full capacity to address contraband trade in Ottoman domains. Without any evidence concerning contraband, the principle of the *amān* and the proviso of the once payable 3 per cent remained in force.

[277] TNA, SP 105/336, 22 October 1733.

[278] For Izmir, see Mübahat Kütükoğlu, "Ahidname," *TDVİA*. Consulted on 3 November 2021; Ülker, "The Rise of Izmir," 279. For Cyprus, see Ali E. Özkul, "The Ottoman Empire's Tax Policy in Cyprus," in *Archivum Ottomanicum* 32 (2015): 53–82; BOA, C.ML/679/27864, 21 Şafer 1154/8 May 1741; BOA, C.HR/26/1263, 10 Şaʿbān 1204/25 April 1790; BOA, C.ML/473/19284, 8 Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1204/24 January 1790; BOA, C.HR/38/1891, 14 Şevvāl 1206/5 June 1792.

Different understandings of customs regimes, corruption of provincial authorities, and European contraband led to a chronic problem of the double charging of customs dues. For instance, in 1756, the customs commissioner of Izmir claimed that he would no longer accept any *edā tezkeresi* unless they were obtained from Istanbul and Edirne and included authorisation to inspect European vessels and warehouses on the grounds of European contraband based on four commands.[279] In their memorandum to the ambassador, the Izmir factory invoked the 45th article of the 1675 Capitulations regarding the proviso of 3 per cent *ad valorem* which signified their knowledge of the implications of the capitulatory articles. It was only eight months later when the factory received a letter from the ambassador informing them that the head customs officer in Istanbul discredited the statement of his commissioner in Izmir.[280] The weapon of the 3 per cent was again in play. Yet, the time elapsed until such proclamations were countermanded could be quite long which posed serious impediments to British trade in the provinces.

Nevertheless, petitions helped reassert the British customs privileges repeatedly in the eighteenth century. Also, it seems that the language of British petitions became more forceful in the second half of the century. One petition from Aleppo in 1767 stated that the double charge of customs was not only an "offence to the Capitulations" but also "a reason for suspending and interrupting the commerce that yields peace".[281] While earlier petitions confined themselves to highlighting the infringement of their tax privileges, from the mid-eighteenth century they began to underscore the significance of friendship for the maintenance of inter-imperial relations. Hence, the statement above underlined the Porte's obligation to avoid hindrances to trade which was essential for the maintenance of peaceful relations. Such

[279] TNA, SP 105/336, 5 February 1756; TNA/SP 105/336, 6 February 1756.
[280] TNA, SP 105/336, 26 October 1756.
[281] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/115/514, Evāḫir-i Şaʿbān 1181/December 1767. "rencīde ve semere-yi ṣulḥ olan umūr-ı ticāretiñ taʿṭīl ve ınḳıṭāʿına bāʿis"

assertive petitions not only led to the issuance of imperial rescripts, but also shaped how the rescripts were structured in the long term. For instance, upon receiving a petition concerning the double customs levies in Izmir in 1781, the Porte not only recited the relevant capitulatory articles, which was usually the case earlier in the century, but it also referred to a previous imperial rescript dated in 1777.[282] In addition to being contrary to the Capitulations (*ḫilāf-ı ʿahdnāme-yi hümāyūn*), the double charge of customs was a breach of the sultan's command (*muğāyir-i emr-i ʿālī*). In doing so, the Porte attempted to bolster the enforcement power of the text by referring to concrete previous examples instead of deploying the vague phrase 'ancient customs' to deter provincial officials from disobeying the capitulatory tax privileges. References to similar previous cases and the accompanying imperial rescripts came to embody a new formula in Ottoman rescripts issued in response to British petitions: *emṣāl* (sing. *meṣel*, lit. precedent). Copies of Ottoman rescripts were also recorded in the kadi courts, a central institution of the provincial order. There were however local communal archives below the kadi courts and the archives of regional officials.[283] The format of documents recorded and produced in these 'decentralised' archives differed from those produced in the kadi courts. I do not know whether the documents in these archives adopted such new formulae since I did not consult them during my research. *Emṣāl* served as a principle rooted in a previous legal case that established a legally binding precedent for similar affairs. Thus, the Porte commanded the kadi and the *voyvoda* of Izmir in 1782 to abide by the Capitulations and the imperial rescript

[282] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/176/904, Evāiʾl-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1195/March-April 1781.

[283] Demetrios Papastamatiou, "Tax-Farming (iltizam) and Collective Fiscal Responsibility (maktu) in the Ottoman Southern Peloponnese in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," in *The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, the Greek Lands: Toward a Social and Economic History: Studies in Honor of John C. Alexander*, ed. Elias Kolovos, Phokion Kotzagiorgis, and Sophia Laiou (Istanbul: Isis, 2007), 289–307; Sokrates Petmezas, "Christian Communities in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Greece: Their Fiscal Functions," in *Parallels Meet: New Vistas of Religious Community and Empire in Ottoman Historiography*, ed. Molly Greene (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2003), 71–116; Vasilis Panagiotopoulos et al. eds., *Archeio Ali Pasa: Syllogēs I. Chōtzē*. 4 vols. (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2007–9).

dated in 1772 on a similar case in Latakia that is given as a precedent when the British were charged with more than 3 per cent on their exports.[284]

Still, these assertive texts did not provide a lasting remedy to the recurrent charging of customs in Aleppo, Izmir, and Cyprus as similar disputes appeared in the documentation over the century.[285] Administrative posts changed hands so frequently and every new officer was intent on expanding his revenue base. The British therefore had to petition the Porte demanding the remembrance of their tax privileges. Similarly, the constant reconfiguration of the revenue units in the provinces obfuscated jurisdictional boundaries and begot supplementary treasury taxes, thereby creating more room for exploitation by provincial officials as well as manoeuvre by the British.

In need of revenue, the Ottoman state experimented with various tax collection methods in the provinces, with many revenue sources being farmed to provincial figures. This process increased the number of tax collectors who levied taxes on goods or services under their jurisdiction. The British, on the other hand, resorted to petitioning in a bid to either evade or avoid additional taxation. For instance, the Ottoman state began farming out cotton and cotton yarn taxes to semi-private entrepreneurs on a life-term basis (*mālikāne*) in 1734.[286] In the same year in Aleppo, the British filed a petition claiming that a British merchant had bought raw cotton and cotton yarn in Aleppo and paid the necessary treasury taxes (*resm-i mīrī*) before the

[284] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/180/937, Evāʾil-i Receb 1196/June 1782. "emṣāl olmak üzere verilen emr-i şerʿīfe daḫī muḳayyed olunmağın".
[285] For Cyprus, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/33/1, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāziyelevvel/April-May 1717; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/213/3, Evāḫir-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1162/mid-March 1749; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/87/372, Evāḫir-i Şaʿbān 1176/March 1763; KKMA, KŞS 24/71/3, Cemāziyelevvel 1219/August 1804. For Aleppo. see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/183/2, Evāḫir-i Cemāziyelevvel 1158/June 1745; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/88/376, Evāʾil-i Zīlḥicce 1176/June 1763; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/115/514, Evāḫir-i Şaʿbān 1181/December 1767. For Izmir, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/108/3, Evāsıṭ-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1145/late September-early 1732; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/47/4, Evāʿil-i Şevvāl 1169/June-July 1756; TNA, SP 105/336, 5 February 1756; SP 105/336, 26 October 1756; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/176/904, Evāʾil-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1195/March-April 1781; BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/103/1, Evāʾil-i Cemāziyelāḫir 1214/October-November 1799.
[286] In 1734, the revenues of cotton and cotton yarn began to be leased on a life-term basis until 1793 when they were reverted to a more direct imperial control under the new revenue regime, see Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve Ekonomi*, 150.

tax farm was leased to new tax-farmers.[287] Such reconfigurations created ambiguities as to whom the taxes were due. We do not know for certain whether the British bought the goods before or after 31 August 1734. Notwithstanding this ambiguity, petitioning initiated an investigation that cast doubt on the lawfulness of taxation and bought time for the British if they were to avoid or postpone paying the taxes.

Moreover, petitions referred not only to previous tax-farmers in charge, but also to different places where the taxes were paid. In Izmir, the tax-farmers of the imperial scale tax, who acquired the revenue unit on a life-term basis with an annual payment (*māl*) of 4000 *guruş*, coaxed the Porte into sanctioning the charging of scale tax (*ḳanṭār resmi*) on British exports and imports. Problems occurred when British merchants had already paid their scale taxes in other localities and were subject to additional impositions upon their arrival in Izmir. Hence, the British procured an imperial order exempting them from paying scale taxes in Izmir provided that they had already paid and obtained payment receipts in places of purchase.[288]

Supplementary treasury taxes prove that the British were subject to more than the 3 per cent *ad valorem* set by the Capitulations. Obfuscating when and where they bought the goods was, however, far from providing a lasting solution. The British had to elucidate their status in commercial exchange and transactions taking place. Imperial decrees articulated that the *resm-i mīrī* was payable by the sellers (*bāyiʿ*) who were then given payment receipts, so that they could transfer and load the goods onboard. Yet, the term *bāyiʿ*, by definition, was somewhat equivocal in the sense that it may refer to local merchants as wholesalers and retailers, but it may also refer to British merchants as sellers at local markets and/or exporters out of the

[287] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/126/3, Evāʾil-i Ṣafer 1148/June-July 1735. Similar changes occurred in Izmir and Cyprus in 1734, see TNA, SP 105/336, 2 November 1734.
[288] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/123/543, Evāsıṭ-i Ramażān 1182/January 1769; BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/77/3, Evāḫir-i Şevvāl 1210/May-June 1796.

empire.[289] Therefore, officeholders could well argue that the British were sellers/exporters and thereby liable to treasury taxes regardless of whether the taxes had been paid by local merchants. To avoid this, the British redefined themselves as buyers/customers (*müşterī*) through petitions to circumvent the payment of the *resm-i mīrī* on cotton and cotton yarn in the latter half of the century.[290]

Apparently, re-positioning their status in commercial exchanges through repetitive petitions culminated in the Porte drawing clearer boundaries between the parties involved in transactions. In March 1793, a new revenue treasury (*irād-ı cedīd ḫazīnesi*) was formed in the Ottoman Empire by which the *resm-i mīrī* on cotton and cotton yarn were increased and diverted to the new treasury. As in 1734, the new order of 1793 created ambiguities in terms of taxpayers and collectors. In the same year, the British in Cyprus complained that they were prevented from transferring their cotton whose taxes had already been paid and a payment receipt had already been procured. In reference to a recent command to the kadi of Izmir, the command explicated that as formerly, the cotton sellers (*penbe bāyiʿi*) were liable for the *resm-i mīrī* in the new regime. More significantly, it differentiated the long-established roles of market players in these transactions, namely the tax commissioners (*emīn-i muḳāṭaʿa*), cotton sellers (*penbe bāyiʿi*), and European merchants (*müsteʾmen ṭāʾifesi*). This differentiation—to the best of my knowledge, this is the first document making such differentiation—enabled the British to protect themselves from tax impositions. Even so, the possibility of the British being willing to pay the *resm-i mīrī* that might spoil the collection of taxes from the sellers was enunciated.[291] This suggests that the British cooperated with cotton sellers to evade taxation to

[289] For a similar issue on customs payable on silk in Izmir, see TNA, SP 105/335, from London to British consul, William Sherrard, of Izmir, 14 November 1706.
[290] İSAM/ES/R 6/P 179/E 332, 25 Rabīʿülevvel 1177/3 October 1763; İSAM/ES/R 12/PP 203–205/E 262, Evāsıṭ-i Receb 1189/September 1775. For the treasury taxes on cotton and cotton yarn paid by the buyers in Izmir, see Kadı, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century*, 281.
[291] KKMA, KŞS 21/239/542, 1 Receb 1207/12 February 1793.

minimise their spending because if the *resm-i mīrī* was paid by the cotton sellers it would result in augmentation in cotton/cotton yarn sale prices. From this viewpoint, how Ottoman imperial decrees were penned and formulated was shaped as much by British petitioning practices as by their contraband trade, not to mention the Ottoman bureaucratic record-keeping improvements over the century.

Despite constant petitioning, taxation continued to be a problem for the British well into the nineteenth century. The remarks of Charles Arbuthnot, the British ambassador to the Porte between 1804 and 1807, about the objectives of, and competition between, provincial authorities as well as the limits of the Porte's power in the provinces are illuminating in that regard. He wrote in 1808 that "the Governors, or Pachas [*sic*], of the different Provinces, so far from holding friendly intercourse with each other, are, upon their authority & for their own objects…; and indeed they never agree in anything except in one uniform resistance to the orders of the Porte."[292] Indeed, the Porte's commands were not easily enforced in the provinces, as was the case in Cyprus, where the British consul was taxed during a tax exemption period in 1804.[293] Nevertheless, the petitions were taken into consideration and imperial decrees were sent accordingly as long as European communities conformed to the Ottoman conventions of diplomacy. Yet when European consuls in Aleppo and their respective ambassadors in Istanbul capitalized on the Anglo-Ottoman War of 1807-1809 and pressured disproportionately the Porte to reduce the customs below the 3 per cent in Aleppo in 1808, the Porte sided with provincial officials and totally ignored the European demands.[294] This not only shows the Porte's competence but also the diplomatic etiquette that Europeans had to follow if their requests were to be considered.

[292] Arthur Aspinall, ed., *The Correspondence of Charles Arbuthnot,* Camden Third Series, vol. LXV (London: Royal Historical Society, 1941), 2.
[293] KKMA, KŞS 24/71/3, 5 Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1219/12 August 1804.
[294] BOA, AE.SMST.IV. 6/485, 5 Muḥarrem 1223/3 March 1808.

Concluding remarks

To bring their Capitulatory rights into effect and protect their trading interests in the provinces, the British had to engage with local conventions of commerce and diplomacy that rendered them an integral segment of Ottoman society. The conditions that drew the British into the local power dynamics were informed by the Ottoman methods of provincial administration and revenue collection. The period under examination witnessed the increase and empowerment of officials who were engaged in provincial administration due to the expansion of the *iltizām* and the experimentation of other administrative/revenue collection methods such as the *malikāne* and *eshām*. The acknowledgement and protection of the capitulatory right depended on the accommodative and tributary relationships with provincial authorities whose income and sustenance were comprised of taxes and gifts.

Conforming to the local conventions of gift-exchange was a prerequisite for maintaining 'friendship' with these authorities. The British offered tributary presents to recognise provincial officials' authority in return for an expectation for the protection of their trade which consolidated asymmetrical and tributary relationships between themselves and authorities in the provinces. Yet, engaging in such established practices allowed the British to display cultural cachet and advertise commercial products which affected the composition of gifts being exchanged. Due to the increased financial burden of gift-giving on British factories and the changing attitudes towards the practice, the British attempted to suspend the practice. The evidence suggests that the Izmir factory was rather concerned with the rules of diplomatic etiquette. Both factories, however, could not put an end to the practice. Moreover, the Ottoman agency and the divergence between European communities in terms of gift-giving constrained the British agency in changing or ending the gift-exchange. Consequently, the Aleppo factory

closed in 1791 because it could not meet the expenses, whereas the Izmir factory survived thanks to its financial capacity.

Petitioning was another strategy by which the British accessed various power mechanisms beyond provincial reach. Rhetorical expressions of oppression, justice, and friendship helped the British have their problems heard in Istanbul even if that meant being a supplicant to the Porte. Petitioning reasserted the British trading rights and countermanded the claims of provincial authorities. Furthermore, constant petitioning influenced how the imperial orders were written and formulated to intensify the assertive force of the texts. However, the distance between the provinces and Istanbul posed a challenge to the enforcement of imperial orders in the provinces. In addition, distinct customs regimes applicable to the British caused ambiguity and even allowed for the transgression of the Capitulations by officeholders seeking to maximise their revenues. The reshuffling and reconfiguration of administrative posts and revenue units even aggravated the efficiency of petitioning as almost every new officer resorted to the same methods to increase their income generally at the expense of European merchants in general, and the British, in particular.

The success of these strategies depended on British leverage in local power relations which was in turn informed by British merchants' economic strength and social capital in the provinces. These then relied on cooperation with locally influential people such as dragomans who were equipped with local language(s), cultures, and market connections.

CHAPTER 2: The 'men on the spot' and 'men of substance': The relationship between British agents and dragomans

> [B]oth acting & honorary [dragomans] are upon the same footing with regard to protection and Trade, the trade of the Acting must in a great measure be managed by their Servants because the attendance of the Masters, wou'd occasion their neglect of the National Affairs…[A]ll Acting Drugomen here the French excepted, carry on an Inland Trade, without it they could not live, nor serve their nation as they ought, their Salaries being trifles, as ours are natives, *fatall experience has shown they should be men of substance, for were that is we have the better chance to find virtue*, needy circumstances being often so powerful as to banish her, all of ours are removed from the low temptations to be dishonest, & they have given one reason to believe their actions are the effect of Just principles, whence they are much esteem'd by all the Governors to the meanest artisan.[295]

The British overseas directors, consuls, and merchants were the 'men on the spot' who were engaged with a multiplicity of local and intercontinental agents and interests.[296] They were the driving force behind, and the beneficiaries of, imperial expansion, in that they capitalised upon the opportunities created by commercial and territorial expansion to increase their wealth and social standing. Along these lines, the existing scholarship has often attributed the trajectory of British presence in the Ottoman Empire to the organisational performance of the Levant Company and its factories.[297] Yet, as we have seen, local factors and agents played an important part in limiting British merchants' ability to navigate complex diplomatic, commercial, and social engagements. As Alexander Drummond noted, the British had no other choice but to rely on native 'men of substance' if they were 'to find virtue'. Put differently, British presence and power were always contingent, and therefore, cooperation with wealthy and influential local

[295] BL, Add MS 45933, from Alexander Drummond in Aleppo to James Porter, the British ambassador (1746-61), in Istanbul, 4 May 1753, pp. 128–129. Emphasis added.
[296] The term 'man on the spot' was introduced by John S. Galbraith, see John S. Galbraith, "The "Turbulent Frontier" as a Factor in British Expansion," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, no. 2 (1960): 150–168.
[297] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*; Wagner, "Companies, Commerce and Politics"; Wagner, *The English Chartered Trading Companies*; Devecka, "Raisins d'etat: Trade, Politics, and Diplomacy in the History of the Levant Company," 77–94; Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, 111.

figures was of paramount importance in allowing them to survive and expand their commerce in the Ottoman Empire.[298]

Drummond's view, in this regard, allows us to shift focus away from British consuls and merchants as lone overseas imperial agents to the men they worked through and with, namely dragomans. Chosen amongst Ottoman non-Muslim subjects due to their linguistic knowledge and commercial expertise, dragomans were salaried employees of European powers who enjoyed consular protection.[299] The Porte issued *berāt*s (Ottoman deeds of appointments for European protégés) to authorise their appointment and service. Besides being diplomatic and cultural go-betweens representing 'the National Affairs' of the British at the Ottoman court, dragomans themselves were important commercial and trusted figures in their own right in the Ottoman provinces. These personal qualities were considered for their employment in British services. Both honorary—i.e., those holding the privileges of dragomans without necessarily being employed in that capacity but acting as business partners to the British—and acting dragomans helped the British navigate various diplomatic, commercial, and social relations in the provinces and expanded their networks. Interaction within these networks generated social capital that in turn offered collective and individual benefits for both British officials and

[298] For the gentlemanly ideals and virtues in commerce in the eighteenth-century context, see Kathleen Wilson, "Empire of virtue. The imperial project and Hanoverian culture, c.1720-1785," in *An imperial state at war: Britain from 1689 to 1815*, ed. Lawrance Stone (London: Routledge, 1994), 128–64; Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 56–70.

[299] Russell, *The Natural History of Aleppo*, vol. II, 56. "The sons of Christians in any tolerable circumstances, are taught to read and write the Arabic, and usually follow the profession of the father, in some branch of trade; or they serve in quality of Scrivans, or agents to the Turkish merchants. They are more accustomed to travel with the caravans, than the Aleppeen Turks, but few in proportion leave their native town." The Capitulations did not speak of the religion of those being employed as dragomans as the relevant article read as: "İngiltere elçileri ve ḳonsolosları istedikleri yasakçıları ve murād eyledikleri kimesneleri tercümānlıḳda istiḫdām idüb" [British ambassadors and consuls can employ any guards and anyone as dragomans]. See BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Page 8/Article 22. Nevertheless, the post was occupied by non-Muslim Ottoman subjects such as Christians and Jews since they might have found it convenient to obtain European privileges, while Europeans could have the chance to avoid direct contact with Muslims, though they did engage with Muslims. Murat Çizakça and Macit Kenanoğlu moreover argue that Ottoman Muslims must have found it difficult to enter European consular services due to religious and social pressures. Murat Çizakça and Macit Kenanoğlu, "Ottoman Merchants and the Jurisprudential Shift Hypothesis," in *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Suraiya Faroqhi and Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Peeters, 2008), 204.

merchants and dragomans. However, such networks could, and did, limit British autonomy and agency as the personal business connections of their dragomans led occasionally to a conflict of interests between them.[300] The nature of the relationships between the British and their dragomans did not exclusively favour either side. It was rather constantly dependent on time and circumstance. Thus, focusing on British-dragoman relations reveals the importance of dragomans to the British imperial experience while also allowing us to expose the limits of British agency and the subtleties of power dynamics in local political, cultural, and economic contexts. Such an understanding in turn provides a nuanced view of how social relations worked and shaped imperial systems.

But before examining these complex relationships and power dynamics at work, let us first consider the conventional and recent approaches to the role of dragomans in Ottoman-European commercial-imperial relations. Previous generations of British imperial historians and Ottoman historians, who were interested in examining the extra-European roots of European imperialism and identifying the socio-economic position of non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire respectively, characterised European protégés—i.e., Ottoman *berāt*-holders—as 'compradors', 'collaborators', and 'imperialist instruments' of European powers in the context mostly of the nineteenth century.[301] These insights, which were

[300] For such an intricate relationship between the British and their dragomans in Izmir in the seventeenth century, see Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*, 130–31; For similar relations between the Dutch consuls in North Africa and the Jewish go-betweens in the seventeenth century, see Erica Heinsen-Roach, *Consuls and Captives. Dutch-North African Diplomacy in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2019), chapter six. For similar relations between the British and the Banians in India, see Amrita Sen, "Searching for the Indian in the English East India Company Archives," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 17, no. 3 (2017): 37–58.

[301] Gallagher and Robinson, "Imperialism of Free Trade," 1–15; Ronald Robinson, *African and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: Macmillan, 1961); Ronald Robinson, "Non-European foundations of European imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration," in *Studies in theory of imperialism*, eds. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (New York: Longman, 1972), 117–42; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 448; Halil İnalcık, "İmtiyâzât," in *TDVİA*. Consulted on 4 December 2022.

deemed essential for the existence of informal imperial control, no longer hold true.[302] In examining early modern cultural mediation, recent scholarship has underscored the reciprocal, interdependent, and mutually constitutive relationship between what Natalie Rothman called 'trans-imperial subjects' and host subjects in the Venetian and Ottoman empires.[303] Such interactions depended on mutual gain and trust, but they also re-produced and refined these notions as early modern merchants constantly considered and communicated what constituted trustworthiness (*ṣadāḳatlü*, *muḥabbetlü*, *sırdāş* in Ottoman Turkish parlance) and collective profit. Since trust is a key concept of this chapter in particular and the entire dissertation in general, some notes on the articulation of the notion of trust in both Ottoman and British sources will be useful here. As we will see in Chapter Three, British merchants used the term 'trust' when articulating the notion of trust. The records of the Ottoman state that I use in this dissertation mostly use the terms '*dost*' (friend) and '*dostluḳ*' (friendship) to articulate the notion of trust in personal and diplomatic relationships. Although not used in this dissertation, personal correspondence in Ottoman parlance between provincial officials and Venetian foreign consuls/merchants in Cyprus uses the word '*iʾtimād* (trust) as in '*iʾtimād ettik*' (we trusted you).[304] In analysing the document of the Deed of Alliance (*Sened-i İttifāḳ*), Ali

[302] Anthony E. Atmore, "The Extra-European Foundations of British Imperialism: Towards a Reassessment," in *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Colin Clifford Eldridge (London: Macmillian, 1984), 106–25; Reşat Kasaba, "Was There a Compradore Bourgeoisie in Mid-nineteenth century Western Anatolia?," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 11, no. 2 (1988): 215–228; Maurits H. van den Boogert, "European Patronage in the Ottoman Empire: Anglo-Dutch Conflicts of Interests in Aleppo (1703-1755)," in *Friends and Rivals in the East: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Levant from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, eds. Alastair Hamilton, Alexander H. de Groot, and Maurits H. van den Boogert (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 187–224; Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, 92–116.

[303] Geoff R. Berridge, "Dragomans and oriental secretaries in the British embassy in Istanbul," in *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?*, ed. Ahmet Nuri Yurdusev (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 151–66; Frank Castiglione, "Family of Empires: The Pisanis in the Ottoman and British Empires" (Ph.D. Diss., The University of Michigan, 2016); Maria Fusaro and Andrée May, "Les Anglais et les Grecs: Un réseau de coopération commerciale en Méditerranée vénitienne," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 58, no. 3 (2003): 605–25; Maurits H. van den Boogert, "Ottoman intermediaries in the 18th century: Analysis of a "dirty trade"," *Oriente Moderno* 93 (2013): 515–30; Cihan Artunç, "The Price of Legal Institutions: The Beratlı Merchants in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of Economic History* 75, no. 3 (2015): 720–48; İsmail H. Kadı, "Explaining the Vitality of Eighteenth-century Non-Muslim Ottoman Merchants: How to Cope with Transaction Costs?," *The Medieval History Journal* 22, no. 2 (2019): 253–77.

[304] I thank Gökhan Toka for sharing this information with me.

Yaycıoğlu maintained that the term '*emniyet*' (lit. security or confidence) referred to the concept of trust.[305] The fact that various words were used in articulating the notion of trust suggests the commensurability of shared diplomatic and business language, that is different expressions of the notion of trust were not meaningless to the British and the Ottomans.[306]

Turning back to our analysis, while protégés gained judicial, and fiscal privileges, and additional income for their services thanks to European protection, Europeans cut their transaction costs and navigated their relationships with Ottoman authorities thanks to their employees' knowledge about local cultures of trade. Rothman and others moreover demonstrated how these interactions cutting across linguistic, religious, and political boundaries shaped understandings and categorisation of differences.[307] In this body of literature, dragomans are generally described as commercial, cultural, and diplomatic brokers in inter- and trans-imperial contexts.

This chapter instead views dragomans as business partners of the British in the provinces to explore the complexities and contingency of the relationships between the British and the dragomans. I contend that in their relationships with the British, dragomans can neither be relegated to any sort of broker, nor can they be considered as the 'collaborators' in need necessarily of European protection. Instead, they were merchants of great wealth and prestige in their own right. In this regard, my arguments join with those of Ralph Davis, Maurits H. van den Boogert and Elena Frangakis-Syrett, who accentuated the wealth and prestige of the

[305] Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 212, 223.
[306] On the concepts of incommensurability and commensurability in cross-cultural relations, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Par-delà l'incommensurabilité: pour une histoire connectée des empires aux temps modernes," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 54, no. 4 (2007): 34–53; Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters*.
[307] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997): 735–62; Rothman, *Brokering Empire.*

protégés even outside European consular structures.[308] Yet this chapter further argues that besides gaining access to additional diplomatic channels, acquiring a degree of protection for themselves and their possessions, and obtaining certain tax exemptions, dragomans also expanded their business portfolios by partnering themselves with the Europeans. Without doubt, these gains were accompanied by economic profit and social status. However, their privileged position was also a source of mistrust and antipathy towards them even from their own communal members. It was European merchants, including the British, who needed such figures to protect and improve their commercial interests in the Ottoman Empire. Such an analysis thus aligns itself with recent revisionist approaches towards the 'rise' of non-Muslim Ottoman subjects over the eighteenth century.[309] It is not the intention of this chapter to deny that European protection offered many opportunities to the protégés. Yet, that protection itself was not the primary reason for their 'rise'; rather, many of the local merchants who were chosen as dragomans—the highest ranking protégés—had already accumulated enough economic and social capital that rendered them vital for European communities.

By examining the structural and practical aspects of British trade, the first part of this chapter maintains that the parameters of British mercantile actions compelled the British to establish contractual relationships with experienced and prestigious local figures to enhance their commercial potential. It then considers three case studies, each focusing on the relationship between the British and the dragomans at different periods and in different places over the eighteenth century. Each study shows that under myriad commercial, social, and

[308] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 145-146, 217; Maurits H. van den Boogert, "Intermediaries par excellence? Ottoman Dragomans in the Eighteenth Century," in *Hommes de l'entre-deux. Parcours individuels et portraits de groups sur la frontière de la Méditerranée (XVIe-XXe siècle)*, eds. Bernard Heyberger and Chantal Verdeil (Paris: Indes Savantes, 2009), 95-115. Also see, Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "Commercial Practices and Competition in the Levant: The British and the Dutch in the Eighteenth-Century in Izmir," in *Friends and Rivals in the East: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Levant from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Hamilton, Groot, and Boogert (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 147.

[309] Fariba Zarinebaf, *Mediterranean Encounters: Trade and Pluralism in Early Modern Galata* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017), 170–175; Maran Momdjian, "The Levantine Consuls of Aleppo: The Commercial Elites 1750-1850" (Ph.D. Diss., The University of California, 2017).

political concerns, British consuls and merchants relied on dragomans' linguistic skills, social networks, and commercial expertise while the dragomans took advantage of British consular protection and business networks. These were contingent relationships. Both parties constantly evaluated their relationships and decided their commitments by considering the exigencies of a particular situation as well as the long-term ramifications. The relationships gave rise to both greater cooperation and conflicts of interest. Thus, these case studies allow us to observe how circumstantial, regional, and global developments played upon local dynamics and influenced the relationship between the British and the dragomans. Taken together, the complexities and contingency of these relationships suggest that imperial systems—be it diplomatic, commercial, and social—were not limited to the operations of a single imperial power or social group, but instead created avenues and necessities for interdependent and dynamic trans-imperial relations.

British Agency and Dragomans

The language and cultural barriers for merchant communities were the most visible factors that limited British agency in the Ottoman Empire and necessitated the employment of local agents, especially dragomans. As we have seen, the British were involved in various diplomatic processes both in the provinces and Istanbul, none of which would have been possible without dragomans who offered advice to the factories, produced petitionary documents, and negotiated with local authorities and central bureaucrats. Yet, there was more to it than advising, negotiating, and drawing up documents. The trade organisation of the Levant Company, commercial partnerships between British merchants, European (particularly the French) and local competition, and strict timeframes for shipment, among other factors, determined the parameters of British commercial actions. The Ottomans acknowledged these challenges and

granted the British the right to employ dragomans both as channels of communication with provincial authorities and central bureaucrats, and as commercial brokers.[310] This section elaborates on the interplay between these dimensions and the practicalities of British trade and representation to reveal the importance of dragomans.

The Levant Company was a regulated company whose members and factors traded with their own capital at their own cost under the aegis of the Company regulations. British merchants in the empire formed partnerships to commission trade on behalf of their principals for which they assumed full legal responsibility, while also trading for their own profit. This legal liability might lead to a great deal of latitude for merchants in pursuing investment strategies depending on local conditions. Yet, some merchants in the Ottoman Empire might become averse to becoming legally responsible for a potential financial loss of an enterprise.

In addition, the Company did not sanction merchants' private enterprises so long as they paid the incumbent taxes such as consulage fees, which in turn encouraged their autonomous economic activity. This autonomy, however, was not unlimited. The Company discouraged unfettered trade due to its monopolistic, conservative principles and "the pernitious [*sic*] Consequences" the merchants could suffer: "None of their Factors shall directly or indirectly with English or Strangers trade to or at any other place within the Dominions of the Gr:Sig: than at their Established Factorys [*sic*]".[311] The Company thus intended to concentrate their trade in certain markets to control the supply of British exports, specifically woollen cloths, and keep the prices up in the Ottoman Empire as well as avoiding likely exactions by the Ottomans beyond urban spaces. The British used the term 'strangers' or 'merchant-strangers' to denote people who were not born in territories under the sovereignty of the British monarch and who were not Protestant. European and later American merchants

[310] Kurat, *Türk-İngiliz Münâsebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi*, 183–86.
[311] TNA, SP 110/67, 29 November 1690.

fell under this category. These merchants were not free of the Levant Company but were required to pay a consulage fee on the condition of trading in the Ottoman domains under the British banner and protection, a privilege also interpolated in the Capitulations.[312] The term 'strangers' also referred to local Ottoman commercial actors such as carriers and merchants.[313] I have not been able to locate any reference where the British described the dragomans as 'strangers' which is understandable since they were the protégés of the British. Nevertheless, since the dragomans were Ottoman subjects who enjoyed British consular protection but were not free of the Company, we can surmise that the Company's limitation also encompassed the dragomans. Such an inference is even more plausible because it was the British officials' responsibility to seek justice for their dragomans in case of their ill-treatment. Despite these considerations, the Company connived at the involvement of dragomans in local trade for British merchants. The rationale behind this connivance was that dragoman business connections and expertise facilitated British access to Ottoman markets and products.

Moreover, the commission trade and the purchase limits for Ottoman exports set by the principals constrained the latitude of merchants in the empire. The determining factor here was the market difference between Britain and the Ottoman Empire: Ottoman exports faced stiff competition with goods imported from the West Indies, European countries, and South Asia in Britain. This competition forced the prices of Ottoman exports down in the British market. Accordingly, the principals tended to limit the purchasing limits of their associates in the Ottoman Empire. Richard Stratton wrote of Aleppo that "the success of Trade depends very much on the Conducters".[314] He advocated that the merchants in the empire should have

[312] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Pages 9–11/Article 25; *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Article XXXIII. The merchants of other European countries that were listed in the Capitulations were those of Spain, Portugal, Ancona, Sicily, Florence, Catalonia, and all the Flemings and other *ḥarbī* (all non-Muslim 'enemy' foreigners whose sovereigns did not have peace agreement with the Ottomans) nations.
[313] TNA, C 113/11/item 28, from Charles Frye in Izmir to John Mitford in London, 15 March 1724. TNA, SP 105/335, from the Levant Company in London to William Raye, English consul in Izmir, 21 June 1699.
[314] HALS, DE/R/B 232/7, 29 Dester? 1744.

sufficient latitude to pursue investments as they saw fit and thus tried to coax his principal into increasing his purchasing limit. Another merchant also noted that "[t]he lowness of our limits, together with the obstinacy of the Silk Merchants has hitherto rendered Barter Bargains impracticable".[315] The former point buttressed Stratton's argument whereas the latter introduced another problem for the British which shall be discussed shortly. Under these circumstances, the British had to rely on local merchants who negotiated and struck deals with local traders and producers in urban markets and the hinterland with various trade methods suitable to local conditions.

The popularity of French cloth in the Ottoman Empire and local demand for Ottoman products posed additional challenges to British trade that entailed cooperation with local merchants. Stanhope Aspinwall, the chargé d'affaires, wrote in 1746 that "[t]he Turks can neither be cloathed … nor have coffee to drink, without them [the French]; for they bring large quantities of that…"[316] While British exports expanded around the globe in the eighteenth century, French exports were more popular in the Ottoman Empire. Further, the demand for Ottoman products by local merchants, artisans, shopkeepers, and even chambers of commerce in the provinces strengthened the hands of local traders who bargained with the British.[317] Local traders such as those dealing with silk, known also as 'silk men', capitalised on such competition between different European communities and between Europeans and local market players, and did not rush to reach an agreement.

[315] HALS, DE/R/B/238/1, 22 April 1755 – 30 May 1755.
[316] TNA, SP 97/32, to the Duke of Newcastle, 24 June 1746.
[317] TNA, SP 105/335, from Izmir, 30 August 1698; HALS, DE/R/B 125/37A+37B, from Izmir, 26 December 1716-6 February 1717; HALS, DE/R/B 88/9A, from Izmir, 27 August 1717; LMA, CLC/B/227/MS08724, from Izmir, 18 September 1769; TNA, SP 110/30, from Aleppo, 9 December 1734; TNA, C 113/11/item 43, from Tripoli Syria, 5 September 1747; TNA, C 113/12/item 39, from Aleppo, 22 July 1751; TNA, SP 110/37, from Aleppo, 13 September 1763; HALS, DE/R/B 221/3, from Cyprus, 8 October 1734; BOA, A.{DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d, 5, Page 198/Entry 1, Cyprus, Evāḫir-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1181/September 1767.

Faced with such competition, British factors carefully developed sales strategies to diversify cloth sorts and thus increase their sales. For this reason, merchants in the Levant constantly informed their principals in Britain of what kinds and colours of cloth should be consigned to be sold in the Ottoman provinces.[318] After all, as one contemporary noted: "It [western woollen cloth] must be appealing and agreeable to the eye. It is an appearance that always makes the buyer's mind."[319] In addition, the arrival of eastbound European ships and Ottoman caravans could differ. This difference posed strict timeframes for investing in goods and loading them on board. Local merchants not only handled their business more efficiently during these times, but they also used this difference to raise the prices of their goods.[320] Trading in such complex webs of trading actors, commercial interests, consumer tastes, and strict timeframes put the British in a weak bargaining position and required knowledge. Such expertise could only be acquired from seasoned local merchants who could help facilitate and expedite the processes of investment and shipment. A British merchant noted that a British factory in Cyprus employed a local Greek Cypriot merchant, Kostanti Loiziou, as their dragoman who facilitated their trade on the island.[321] Similar considerations were at play when the British formed partnerships with local merchants by employing them as dragomans.

[318] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 113–122.

[319] Antoine Galland, *Le Voyage á Smyrne: un manuscrit d'Antoine Galland (1678): contenant Smyrne ancienne & moderne & des extraits du Voyage fait en Levant*, Chandeigne, (Paris, 2000), 157, fn. 1. The full quote that Galland cited from an anonymous source, *Mémoire sur le commerce de Smirne*, is: "L'assortiment de cet article n'est pas moins essential que sa qualité. Il doit être riant et agréable à la vue. C'est une illusion qui décide toujours l'acheteur. Les couleurs qui ne doivent jamais manquer dans un assortiment sont l'écarlate, le feu, la soupe au vin, le violet pourpré ou cramoisi, le bleu de roi et le vert." [The assortment of this good [western woollen cloth] is as essential as its quality. It must be appealing and agreeable to the eye [of the buyers]. It is an appearance that always makes up the buyer's mind. The colours which should always be present in an assortment are scarlet, fire, la soupe au vin [possibly a dark brownish purple], purple or crimson violet, royal blue and green.]

[320] TNA, C 113/11/item 43, from Tripoli Syria, 5 September 1747. HALS, DE/R/B 235/5, 19 April 1749. William Hammond noted that "We have remaining [*sic*] at Market 70 to 80 Fangots of Silk which we believe will be left behind as the Proprietors are determined to wait the arrival of the Thames".

[321] HALS, DE/R/B 31/5A+5B, Palmer and Lupart in Cyprus to George Radcliffe and Everard Fawkener in Aleppo, 27 December 1717 – 5 January 1718.

The Porte was aware of the significance of dragomans to European merchants. The dragomans were equally important to the Ottomans since the Capitulations as treaties of commerce were designed to increase international trade and contribute to the economy of the empire. The policy of buttressing the domestic economy and international trade heralded the enrichment of dragomans and other protégés in the long run. To provide incentives for those being employed in European consular services, the Capitulations granted several tax exemptions to the protégés such as the *ḫarāc* poll tax in 1580, the inheritance tax (*resm-i ḳısmet*) on their estates in 1601, and 'the butchery tax' (*ḳaṣṣābiye akçesi*) after 1601.[322] Moreover, they were placed under European consular protection from 1580. They were deemed as the representatives (*vekīl*s) of the ambassadors and consuls after 1601 to avoid their harassment by provincial figures to maintain British commerce and dignity.[323] Thus, the Capitulations provided incentives for these relationships. While dragomans were expected to facilitate British trade, the British needed to protect the privileges and business interests of dragomans. These commitments fostered trust between them. In addition, the Capitulations laid down the institutional framework for maintaining trust by allowing each party to use the Ottoman legal system for dispute resolution. Initially, British officials, merchants and local figures formed partnerships in anticipation of good behaviour built upon inferences of personal qualities such as wealth, prestige, intelligence and selflessness, and intentions such as advancing each other's wealth and standing through diligence.[324] The durability of the relationship may then have cemented trust and allowed parties to take additional risks to

[322] Kurat, *Türk-İngiliz Münâsebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi*, 184–185, 205–206; BOA/DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Page 14/Article 35; *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Articles XXXII, LXVI, XXVIII, XLIV; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 37.
[323] BOA/DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Page 14/Article 35.
[324] For the working of trust in various levels in the Atlantic context, see Sheryllynne Haggerty, *'Merely for Money'?: Business Culture in the British Atlantic, 1750-1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 66–96.

establish new forms of bonds depending on circumstantial expediencies. The following section examines such a relationship between the British factory and the Omiros family in Izmir.

Dragomans and the Landlords of the British: The Omiros family of Izmir

By the early eighteenth century, Izmir had already become one of the liveliest commercial centres in the Levant thanks to a combination of several developments over the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The disappearance of arbitrage opportunities in the eastern parts of the Ottoman Empire, the monetization of the Ottoman economy, and the expansion of domestic markets in Anatolia all contributed to the development of Izmir.[325] Consequently, both European trading communities, which had hitherto been based in Chios, and many important Chiot merchants came to settle in Izmir during the first half of the seventeenth century as Izmir superseded Chios.[326] One of these Chiot merchant-families was, or is assumed to be, the Omiros family which retained its prominence well into the twentieth century in Izmir. According to an account, Pavlos Omiros was the first member of the family who settled in Izmir in 1623 and acted as the English dragoman there until 1658.[327] The Omiros were a Greek Orthodox family of merchants-cum-dragomans and benefactors. Several members of the family served the British and other European countries as dragomans over the eighteenth century.

[325] Kuru, "Locating an Ottoman Port-City"; Baki Tezcan, "The Ottoman Monetary Crisis of 1585 Revisited," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 52, no. 3 (2009): 460–504.
[326] Kuru, "Locating an Ottoman Port-City," 131; Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*, 27; Daniel Goffman, "Izmir: from village to colonial port city," in *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, eds. Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 89–95.
[327] Nikos Kararas, "Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης (The Omiros Family of Smyrna)," *Mikrasiatika Chronika* 7 (1957): 175. I am grateful to Antonios Savva for translating this article for me.

This section focuses on the relationship between Geōrgios Omiros (d. 1751)—a great-grandson of Pavlos Omiros and the British dragoman at least from 1729 to 1751—and the British factory and consul in Izmir in a period of economic stability in the first half of the century. The Omiros family was one of the affluent and influential families in Izmir. The longstanding relationship between the British and the family played an important role in the employment of Geōrgios as their dragoman. He helped the British in local diplomatic processes such as gift-giving practices and dealing with kadis. Furthermore, Geōrgios became the landlord of British consul(s) as the factory rented one of the family's houses on Franks Street and used it as the consular house (presumably from the 1730s to the 1790s). Personal trust between the British and the family was also at work in this new connection. Yet such layered relationships were contingent, in that they generated areas of mutual and conflicting interests and required both parties to consider the pressing conditions and long-term consequences when deciding on a course of action.

This section uses Nikos Kararas's *Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης' (The Omiros Family of Smyrna)* which provides information about the genealogy of the family and some of their activities marking their position in the society.[328] Kararas was born in Izmir in the late nineteenth century and presumably moved to Athens after 1922 where he produced several books on Izmir between 1955 and 1971.[329] Ümit Eser noted that Kararas was in contact with Smyrniote Greeks in Athens and Christian communities in Izmir, and had access to their personal and familial documents.[330] Kararas based his account of the family predominantly on these documents as well as the information he gathered from the living descendants of the family and others.[331] However, since this work is not a thorough historical research it should

[328] Kararas, "Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης (The Omiros Family of Smyrna)," 173–200.
[329] Ümit Eser, "Homeland as *Terra Pericolosa*: Post-Catastrophe Homecoming Narratives of Smyrniote Greeks in Early Republican Turkey," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 40, no. 1 (2022): 185.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Kararas, "Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης (The Omiros Family of Smyrna)," 173.

be approached with caution. Moreover, the piece was published in 1957 two years after the incidents of 6–7 September 1955, also known as the Istanbul pogrom, during which violent nationalist mobs attacked the non-Muslims of Istanbul and Izmir. Therefore, national and religious sensibilities might have affected his historical narration which may have distorted reality. Nonetheless, when used with this awareness and in conjunction with other secondary sources, the assembly records of the Izmir factory and relevant Ottoman-Turkish documents, his account has helped reconstruct the relationships in question.

Both Geōrgios's father Pavlos (d. 1728) and his son Pavlos (d. 1823) served as the British dragomans in Izmir.[332] The family-owned lands, gardens, and properties in the vicinity of Izmir such as Seydiköy (today Gaziemir), Çamaltı Tuzlası, Deryanda/Tiryanda (today Torbalı) and Cordelio (today Karşıyaka).[333] Further, they had an extensive trading portfolio, running the gamut from husbandry to international cloth trade. According to a notarial record dated 1757, a family member was in a partnership with Murat d'Isay, a Greek merchant presumably based in Amsterdam, and they were indebted to Hendrik Momma, a Dutch cloth producer-merchant, in Amsterdam.[334]

[332] According to Kararas, his father, Pavlos, served the British as dragoman between 1689 and 1693. See Kararas, "Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης (The Omiros Family of Smyrna)," 177. Pavlos was still the dragoman in 1699, see TNA, SP 105/335, 28 February 1699. One of Geōrgios's sons, Pavlos was first chosen as the 'Giovani di Lingua' [lit. 'language youth' from the Turkish *dil oğlanı*, referring to apprentice dragomans.] in 1759 and then as the second dragoman for the British factory in Izmir, see TNA, SP 105/337, 23 January 1759; TNA, SP 105/337, 28 September 1759. For the molestation of the servants of Pavlos in the bazaar, see BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/74/4, Evāḫir-i Şaʿbān 1173/April 1760. In 1767, Pavlos was promoted to be the first dragoman, see TNA, SP 105/337, 30 October 1767. By 1778, Calost Abro replaced Pavlos as the first dragoman. According to Kararas, Pavlas was one of the notables (sing. kotzabasi or *ḳocabaşı*) of the Greek Orthodox community in Izmir who was chosen as the consultant to the Metropolitan of Izmir. See Kararas, "Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης (The Omiros Family of Smyrna)," 192.

[333] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/9/2, Evāḫir-i Şevvāl 1164/September 1751; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/14/3, Evāḫir-i Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1164/April 1751; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/15/3, Evāsıṭ-i Şevvāl 1164/September 1751; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/22/3, Evāḫir-i Z̲īlḳaʿde 1165/September-October 1752; Kararas, "Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης (The Homer Family of Smyrna)," 177–78. One of the family's estates in Karşıyaka from the seventeenth century was over 83,000 square meters by 1925. See Ümit Eser, "Of the Relics that We Estimated to Have No Worth (Bizce Hiçbir Kıymeti Olmadığı Anlaşılan Eşyanın): Disputes over a Church Property in the Early Republican Period, 1922-1945," *Diyâr* 1, no. 2 (2020): 276–277.

[334] Kadı, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century*, 130, 189. It was possibly Iōannēs Omiros, another son of Geōrgios, as he was the Dutch dragoman until he was removed from the office in 1762.

Some members of the family were also involved in philanthropic activities, and some were even amongst the intellectuals of the Greek Orthodox community in Izmir. Geōrgios Omiros, together with three other Greek notables, were at the forefront of the foundation of the Evangelical School of Izmir in 1733. According to several accounts, the school was placed under the protection of the British consulate of Izmir in 1747 to avoid possible Ottoman confiscation, although I have not been able to locate this information in the Levant Company registers.[335] By some accounts, Geōrgios was also amongst the members of a brotherhood founded in 1745 to provide financial aid to the Greek Hospital.[336] Geōrgios's grandson and namesake was also active in the foundation of, and one of the professors in, the New Public School, the precursor of the Philological Gymnasion, in 1803.[337] All these connections attest to the extent to which the family and its members were grounded in social, commercial, and intellectual circles in Izmir from the seventeenth century. The partnership between the family and the British factory had much to offer to both parties.

Geōrgios as the Diplomat

In period of economic stability and growth in Izmir, the British found it convenient to employ Geōrgios Omiros as their dragoman because his connections and knowledge about local dynamics would help the British understand and manage the intricacies of local diplomatic

[335] Georges Chassiotis, *L'instruction publique chez les Grecs depuis la prise de Constantinople par les Turcs jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1881), 66; Gerasimos Augustinos, *The Greeks of Asia Minor: Confession, Community, and Ethnicity in the Nineteenth Century* (Kent, Ohio and London: The Kent State University Press, 1992), 159–160; The school was initially known as Greek School, a public school for the Greek community in Izmir oriented toward religious-centred education. Also see, Kararas, "Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης (The Omiros Family of Smyrna)," 179.

[336] Kararas, "Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης (The Homer Family of Smyrna)," 179–80; Spyros N. Michaleas et al., "The Greek Hospital and Pharmacies of Smyrna (1723-1922)," *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* 19, no. 2 (2021): 272–73.

[337] Augustinos, *The Greeks of Asia Minor*, 159. A public school oriented towards rather secular- and science-centred education which represented the Modern Greek Enlightenment ideas. The Gymnasion closed on 16 July 1819 after which the local Greek notables reached an agreement with the board of the Evangelical School for educational reforms in the curriculum already in place.

practices in Izmir. As Chapter One has shown, diplomatic engagements were essential for the acknowledgement and protection of British privileges. Thus, when the Kapudan Pasha "peremptorily insisted on five pikes of Cloth as a present to his own Cap^{t} [captain]" in addition to the previous gifts, Geōrgios convinced the Izmir factory to comply with the request because they could have been placed at a disadvantage against other European communities which had already abided by the request. Accordingly, the factory requested Geōrgios to deliver the account to the treasurer to pay for the presents.[338] Due to his professional responsibilities, he offered advice to the British, judged the appropriate gifts, and represented the British in diplomatic ceremonials as the official representative (*vekīl*) of the British factory. Therefore, his wealth, prestige, and diplomatic expertise helped the British display their social and material capital at the Ottoman court. Thus, his actions helped gain the respect of Ottoman authorities in Izmir.[339]

Similarly, diplomatic engagements also aimed to improve their trading and living conditions at the local level. Often, the dragomans conferred with local authorities such as kadis to procure judicial documents supporting their cause or register and enact the issued imperial order at the local courts. For instance, the factory was having problems with the prices and supply of provisions in Izmir in the 1730s. Provisions were vital for the British community and seamen who were increasingly frequenting the port-city in this period. Without an adequate supply of provisions, not only would the British have to obtain their provisions from the French and Dutch bakeries situated on Franks Street, but the British ships might also be detained at the port while the French and Dutch ships departed first with more reasonable terms.[340] It should be mentioned here that during my research on Aleppo, Izmir, and Cyprus, the only historical evidence regarding the European-owned bakeries was from Izmir, which might

[338] TNA, SP 105/336, 15 September 1735.
[339] For another role in gift-giving, see TNA, SP 105/336, 11 September 1740.
[340] TNA, SP 105/336, 27 May 1737.

suggest a unique character of Izmir compared to Aleppo and Cyprus in terms of the extraterritorial rights granted by the Porte to Europeans.[341] In 1732, the British had procured an order from the Porte allowing them to build a new bakery to produce bread and hardtack biscuits for their merchants and seamen.[342] Apparently, however, this order fell into disuse.[343] When the British obtained a renewed order from the Porte in 1737, Geōrgios was ordered to "present it directly to y^{e} Cadi" to put the order into execution.[344] The new order also restated that the British could also sell bread produced in their bakeries in the Armenian and Jewish quarters of Izmir. This attests to the involvement of the British in local trades, which met with opposition from some notables (*aṣḥāb al-āʿyān*) in Izmir, reflecting a tension between the British and local people over the control of the market. Despite this tension, however, the Porte sanctioned the production and sale of British products in local markets. After meeting with the kadi, Geōrgios informed the consul that the kadi assured him that he would execute the orders. However, the kadi postponed their implementation and reminded the consul that "he [the consul] was oblig'd to him [the kadi]".[345] It was not uncommon for the kadis to make material demands before and/or after producing judiciary documents in favour of European countries at the expense of local interest groups, who were presumably local tradesmen in this case. For this reason, the factory requested Geōrgios to "come to Town & attend y^{e} Meckama [the court—*maḥkeme* in Ottoman-Turkish] to expedit [*sic*] y^{e} affair".[346] Eventually, Geōrgios succeeded.

[341] There was also a European bakehouse in the Galata neighbourhood in Istanbul, see Maurits H. van den Boogert, "Westerns in Vakıfs: Endowments and Infidels in the Ottoman Empire (Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)," *Turkish Historical Review* 9 (2018): 73.
[342] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/108/2, Evāsıṭ-i Ṣafer 1145/August 1732.
[343] TNA, SP 105/336, 27 May 1737. Apparently, this order was not used by the British because a house, which was originally bought as a bakehouse, was used as a hospital by the British and other European communities, see TNA, SP 105/336, 27 December 1734.
[344] TNA, SP 105/336, 2 August 1737. For the renewed order, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/135/7, Evāʾil-i Rabīʿülevvel 1150/June-July 1737.
[345] TNA, SP 105/336, 8 August 1737.
[346] TNA, SP 105/336, 8 August 1737.

Obtaining an imperial order from the Porte was one thing. The more difficult part was to ensure its implementation in the provinces which in most cases entailed backchannel diplomacy. Usually, the British factories tasked the junior dragomans with dealing with trivial, less complicated affairs such as negotiating a bargain with a local merchant. Yet, on more pressing occasions, the British demanded help from their senior dragomans, requesting them to personally act in diplomatic proceedings. In this regard, Geōrgios's knowledge of local diplomatic practice and his social network were significant assets for the British to protect British diplomatic and economic interests. In servicing the needs of the British factory, Geōrgios received a salary and became integrated into the British trading network. But he also boosted his prestige by officially representing the trading community of another country at the Ottoman court. As long as his and the British interests intersected, Geōrgios would continue representing the British in the best possible way to retain and reinforce his position. Yet, besides this designated relationship, there developed a different bond between the family and the British: the landlord-tenant relationship.

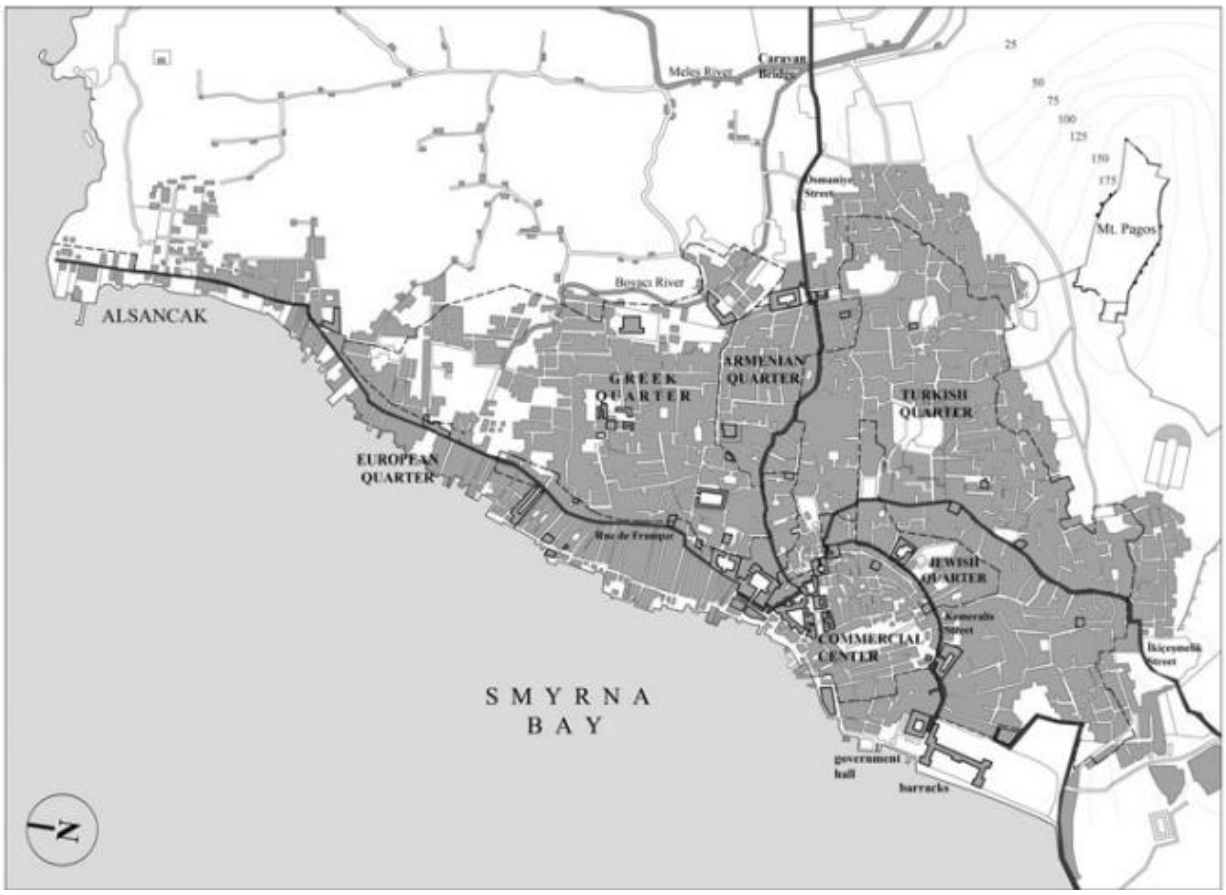
The Omiros Family as Landlords

At some point between 1733 and 1743, during the tenure of Geōrgios Omiros, the British consul became the tenant of the Omiros family in Franks Street.[347] They seem to have used the house as a consular building until 1793 when the factory purchased the house of Joseph Franell,

[347] TNA, SP 105/336, 28 February 1733. The British consul rented a house from a waqf building in October 1731 with a rent of 400 *guruş* per annum. Immediately two months after the contract, the trustee of the waqf died and there occurred a dispute between the officials of the waqf and the then steward of the *voyvoda* and the British consul over the rent and construction of shops by local notables adjacent to the consular building. Thus, it seems that the house belonging to the Omiros was rented after 1733. The earliest record that I found attesting to their landlord-tenant relationship dated back to 1743, which was about a dispute between the British and Geōrgios about the rent, see TNA, SP 105/336, 14 October 1743.

a British merchant in Izmir, in Franks Street for that purpose.[348] Franks Street was formed during the first half of the seventeenth century through a contemporaneous settlement of European merchant communities in Izmir. It was positioned at the seafront parallel to the coast of the harbour (Map 1). Due to its demographic composition, it resembled the Galata district in Istanbul, with a predominantly European and non-Muslim population.[349] The quarter became a commercial hub and attracted European merchants due to its location as it stretched along the city's seafront and its segregated nature. Its lively commercial life as the quarter housed a customs house, covered market, several khans, and shops was also key.[350] The street also housed European consular buildings and the houses of merchants, many of which had backdoors leading onto the wharfs, belonging to the houses.[351] Although shipment of goods from these wharfs was not legal since the 1650s, the location of the house nevertheless enabled the British to oversee maritime activities and assert themselves in the urban space vis-à-vis other European communities.[352] The street provided a segregated space for its residents. But the proximity of each quarter, on the one hand, and the position of the street to the commercial centre and the harbour, on the other, enabled its residents to mingle with other residents of Izmir to support their everyday lives. The coexistence of consular buildings with various commercial and social structures in the street suggests the social, commercial, and diplomatic use of a lively urban space by residents of different quarters to meet varied needs at different times of the day.

[348] TNA, SP 105/337, 26 July 1792; TNA, SP 105/337, 25 February 1793; BOA, C.HR. 153/7640, Evāḫir-i Z̲īlḥicce 1207, July-August 1793; BOA, HAT 1454/13, 17 Ṣafer 1208/24 September 1793.
[349] According to an assembly record, two-thirds of the quarter was inhabited by Europeans, see TNA, SP 105/337, undated (August 1778).
[350] Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*, 38–41, 49–50; Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis, *Une Ville Ottomane Plurielle: Smyrne aux XVIII^e^ et XIX^e^ siècles* (Istanbul: Les Éditions Isis Istanbul, 2006), 43–48, 141–148.
[351] Jean de Thévenot, *The Travels of Monsieur de Thevenot into the Levant: In three Parts. Viz. into I. Turkey. II. Persia. III. The East-Indies* (London, 1687), 92.
[352] The Ottomans built a fortress, Sancakburnu Castle, at Izmir's gulf in 1658 or 1659 to defend Izmir from the belligerents (the Ottoman Empire was at war with Venice) as well as regulate shipping and avoid contraband to increase the revenues of the state, see Goffman, "Izmir: from village to colonial port city," 107.



Map 1. Quarters of Izmir in the early nineteenth century. The map is prepared by Ceylan I. Gençer.[353]

Thus, the British needed a secure place of consular residence, which they could use in peace for many years to fulfil their quotidian social needs, organise commerce and shipping, settle commercial and diplomatic disputes, and represent the British nation overseas.

However, Europeans were not permitted, at least in theory, to possess real estate in the Ottoman Empire as they enjoyed the *amān*, not *ẕimmī*—non-Muslims granted protection by Muslim rulers to live under their rule—status. The *amān* status was granted to non-Muslims who came to the empire from outside Islamic lands for a certain period. The holders of this

[353] Ceylan I. Gençer, "Dualities in the transformation of the urban realm: Smyrna and Salonica 1840–1900," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 31, no. 2 (2016): 139–163, at 142.

state, *müsteʾmin*, enjoyed several tax exemption and protection of their '*māl*' (pl. *emvāl*; lit. any property, possession and riches), '*eṣvāb*' (lit. cloths), and '*erzāḳ*' (lit. provisions), whereas the *ẕimmī*s were Ottoman subjects liable to taxation on their real estates (*emlāk*) and lands (*arāżī*) assessed on their household.[354] Yet, the Capitulations specified neither what kinds of property the terms '*māl*', '*emvāl*', '*erzāḳ*' denoted, nor the prohibition of European *emlāk*-and *arāżī*-ownership in the Ottoman Empire. This therefore created a legal loophole whereby some British merchants invested in various sorts of property, on the one hand, and the Ottoman officeholders laid claims for taxation, on the other. Notwithstanding this ambiguity, the Capitulations stipulated that nobody "shall seal off the houses [of consuls]", intending to accord the consuls a degree of jurisdiction on, and protection for, their residential buildings.[355] While this is an issue which deserves a thorough examination, here it suffices to say that European real estate ownership became a matter of concern for the Porte from the 1750s, if not earlier.[356]

Aside from this legal aspect which might have induced the British to rent a house, other factors could render rented houses preferable. First, as far as the consular building was concerned, the factories could not have secured an allowance from the Levant Company to buy a house. The second reason relates to the tax demands of Ottoman officials derived partly from

[354] For the terms *māl*, *emvāl*, *eṣvāb*, and *erzāḳ* in the Capitulations, see BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Pages 1, 7/Articles 1, 17, 19. For an example of the formulation of taxes levied on estates and lands in the Ottoman Empire, see İSAM, ES/R 15/P 85/E 85, 11 Receb 1191 and 6 Cemāẕiyelāḫir 1194/15 August 1777 and 6 June 1780. "ḫāne-yi ʿavārıża bağlu emlāk ve arāżī" [extraordinary state levies on estates and lands assessed on the household]. On this, see Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 87-118.

[355] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Page 7/Article 17, "naṣb ve taʿyīn eyledikleri konsolosları [?] olunmayub ve evleri mühürlenmeyüb" [the consuls appointed shall not be…and their houses shall not be sealed off]

[356] BOA, AE.SMST.III. 363/29038, Evāḫir-i Muḥarrem 1173/September 1759. This imperial order stated that European consuls and merchants "had been residing [in Ottoman domains] as guests" [bi-ṭarīḳü'l-müsāfire meks ve iḳāmet iden]. Another document dated 1759 published by Boogert referred to the prohibition of European real estate ownership in the Abode of Islam according to sharia. In contrast, the document I utilised rather insinuated the illegality of the phenomenon by referring to the possessed properties that were hidden and concealed by Europeans. See Maurits H. van den Boogert, "Ottoman Amān: Western Ownership of Real Estate and the Politics of Law prior to the Land Code of 1876," in *Legal documents as sources for the history of Muslim societies: studies in honour of Rudolph Peters*, eds. Maaike van Berkel, Léon Buskens, and Petra M.Sijpesteijn (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 256. For a late order, see BOA, C.HR/123/6113, 7 Rabīʿülevvel 1207/23 October 1792. This order rather stated that Europeans "shall reside as tenants henceforth" [baʿde'l-yevm müstāciren sākin olmağla].

the legal loophole described above. Rented houses or registering the property in the name of an Ottoman subject could, and did, avoid possible scenarios where Ottoman officials might have otherwise intended to levy taxes on taxable properties and lands which Europeans possessed. When, for example, the tax collector of Seydiköy, a village in Izmir, had pretensions to "the field & Turla" [*tarla*, arable field] belonging to Charles Frye's son, Paggen Shaw offered to make "a Sale of it to our Drogurman Sig. Georgio Ornero [*sic*] at least pro forma".[357] Such an investment by a British merchant in land and arable fields demonstrates how British merchants capitalised on the loophole mentioned above and were involved in agricultural production which is an interesting case in itself. However, here we rather consider the likelihood of British merchants being molested by the Ottomans. The registration of the title-deeds of European properties under the name of Ottoman subjects—in this instance Geōrgios Omiros—was used to conceal their real estate ownership to avoid further encroachments on their properties.[358] This example illustrates how suddenly arising problems informed the British reactions and how these reactions pushed them into forming additional relationships with local figures.

Although these factors may explain why the British opted to rent a house for consular residence, they do not still explain why the British entered such a relationship with Geōrgios Omiros. The answer may lie in establishing rental agreements with individuals and families whom they knew and trusted to some extent. In fact, the Omiros family had been the landlord of the British before. On 10 January 1712, Pavlos Omiros attested that he received 500 lion

[357] TNA, C 113/12/item 26, 5 June 1740. Charles Frye and Paggen Shaw were British merchants of Izmir. For similar cases of Ottoman encroachments on British possessions in Izmir, see TNA, SP 105/336, 11 October 1751; TNA, SP 105/336, 12 October 1751; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/15/5, Evāsıṭ-i Z̲īlḳaʿde 1164/September-October 1751.

[358] For the registration of real estates on the name of Ottoman subjects in Aleppo and Cyprus, see BOA, C.HR/123/6113, 7 Rabīʿülevvel 1207/23 October 1792; Boogert, "Ottoman *Amān*," 245-65; Marc Aymes, "The port-cities in the fields: investigating an improper urbanity in mid-nineteenth-century Cyprus," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 133–149.

dollars from the British consul, William Sherard, in Izmir, "for one Year's Rent advanced of his dwelling House".[359] We do not know how long the British used this house as their consular building, but the consul rented another house on Franks Street in October 1731 at 400 lion dollars per annum. Yet, just two months after the start of their contract, a dispute occurred between the landlord, local officials and the British over the rent and construction works that lasted until February 1733.[360] This shows that the capitulatory stipulation that consular houses shall not be sealed off offered only a limited feeling of security. Local dynamics were so fluid and complex that all scenarios could not be covered in the Capitulations. These conditions required constant diplomatic and judicial engagements. Apparently, these disputes caused much trouble to the British and pushed them into signing, once again, a lease with the Omiros family whom they had known for a long time and worked with before.[361] Hence, the British might have hoped for a long-term, stable relationship with their landlords immune to Ottoman encroachments, which proved to be overall the case as the British remained as tenants until the late eighteenth century; yet, not without problems.[362]

It soon became clear that this rental agreement prompted points of contention between Geōrgios Omiros and the British consul and complicated the relationship of the British with the family. The British employee-dragoman was now the landlord of British consul(s). As early as 1743, the consul informed the factory about "a difference between him and his Landlord Sig^{r} Georgio the head Druggerman [*sic*], who demands to have his House deliver'd up to him,

[359] TNA, SP 105/339, fol. 35r., 10 January 1712.
[360] TNA, SP 105/336, 28 February 1733.
[361] For similar qualms, Sir Dudley North sold his own house in Istanbul to a "rich Turk whose person he knew well, and that he was an honest man" and became his tenant. See Roger North, *The Lives of the Right Hon. Francis North, Baron Guilford; The Hon. Sir Dudley North; and the Hon. And Rev. Dr. John North*, vol. II (London: George Bell and Sons, 1890), 71.
[362] TNA, SP 105/336, 20 November 1755. "the Gentlemen having…considered the numberless Disputes and Imbroils [*sic*] the said Family have given to them [the factory], the Ambassador, and the Right Worshipfull Levant Company, ever since the death of Sig^{r} Georgio Homero, their late head Druggerman [*sic*], by their refusing to confirm their Father's Agreement with the Consul to let their House remain a Consularian House."

or else to have his Rent encreas'd [*sic*] to [*guruş* symbol] 800 p^{r} annum".[363] The articulation of this disagreement in assembly registers insinuates that Geōrgios gave an ultimatum to the consul, upon which the factory decided to take the matter to the Levant Company directors in London. The assembly records were silent as to how this affair was resolved, though another entry implies that Geōrgios and the consul reached a compromise as the rent appears to have been readjusted at around 666 *guruş* per annum.[364] As a British protégé, Geōrgios assisted the British in maintaining and furthering their commercial interests and representation in Izmir. Yet, unsurprisingly, as their landlord, he prioritised his familial interests over the British's interests. Arguably, being the landlord afforded a great deal of leverage to the family members in their relationships with the British factory. As complex local dynamics forced the British to reevaluate their position in Izmir and form additional connections with the family, the power balance shifted slightly in favour of the family.

To obviate possible rental disagreements and secure their tenancy rights, the British consul, Samuel Crawley (1742-1762), entered into an agreement of a perpetual lease contract for the consular house with Geōrgios Omiros on 20 October 1746 to secure the future possession—that is the right of occupancy—of the consular house.[365] According to this, providing that the consular house is sold in the future, the new proprietor would recognise the British right of occupancy. Later, possibly after 1755, his sons would also confirm this right.[366] Since the sixteenth century, the Ottoman land tenure system recognised that cultivators and tenants who had lived on a property for ten years could not be easily evicted as long as they

[363] TNA, SP 105/336, 14 October 1743.
[364] TNA, SP 105/336, 20 May 1752. "l'Affitto della Casa Consolare per anni sei, consistente in quattre mille Piastre" [the rent of the consular house for six years, consisting of four thousand piastres]. Hence, the annual rent was around 666 *guruş*.
[365] TNA, SP 105/336, 4 December 1751; TNA, SP 105/337, 3 January 1778. A perpetual lease contract was in contradiction with Islamic law except for waqf-property. Yet neither the Porte nor the local authorities were eager to follow this legal principle so as not to discourage European trade.
[366] TNA, SP 105/336, 20 November 1755. By 1755, the British and Geōrgios's sons had several disputes about the agreement of 1746. The sons were Iōannēs (b. 1719-d. 1808), Loukas (Lukas) (d. 1785), and Pavlos (Paulos) (b. 1739-d. 1823).

paid a 'fair rent' and thus did not cause economic harm to the proprietors or the beneficiaries of the Imperial Treasury.[367] Such strengthened right of use stemmed from continuous use and labour invested in the property by making repairs, planting trees, and erecting buildings, of which they had the freehold.[368] Seemingly, the British factory in Izmir was aware of these dynamics and thought that as long as they had a valid contract and paid an adequate amount of rent, the family could not force them out. Thus, the factory noted in 1778 that "the Bond signed by the Father, & afterwards confirm'd by the Signature of the Sons, was fully sufficient, that the older the contract, the Better…And on the other hand, at present our Right was suppos'd & consider'd as conformable to the Custom & Laws of the Country as Legal."[369] It is striking how the factory sought to secure their tenancy right over the consular house by signing a contract with Geōrgios and how their thirty-two years-long contractual tenancy relationship with the family contributed to their understanding of tenancy rights. The British came to understand that long-term uses and practices were as significant as written contracts. As such, although the family could assert their landownership as a lever against the factory, the British could still draw upon their experiences to devise strategies and even learn through these processes to ameliorate their position against the family.

On the other hand, engaging in such a close, contractual association linked the interests of the British with those of the family so much so that British diplomatic engagements and commercial investments were undertaken to maintain both parties' interests. In this regard, the Capitulations provided the framework for the British to appeal to the Ottoman courts to uphold

[367] Baber Johanson, *The Islamic law on land tax and rent: the peasants' loss of property rights as interpreted in the Hanafite legal literature of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 66; İnalcık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 103–114; Sabrina Joseph, *Islamic Law on Peasant Usufruct in Ottoman Syria: 17th to Early 19th Century* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), chapter three; Malissa Taylor, *Land and Legal Texts in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire: Harmonization, Property Rights and Sovereignty* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2023), 40, 91–93.
[368] Colin Imber, "The status of orchards and fruit trees in Ottoman Law," *Tarih Enstitüsu Dergisi* 12 (1982): 763–774.
[369] TNA, SP 105/337, 3 January 1778.

their interests.[370] For instance, upon the death of Geōrgios Omiros in 1751, the British intervened in several cases to protect the estates and effects of the family from the intrusion of Ottoman subjects.[371] In effect, these interventions went beyond protecting both parties' economic interests. The British might have felt obligated to fulfil their formal and informal responsibilities to the family. After all, they had a long history with the family, who were their landlords and could provide dragomans to the British.

Yet such involvement by the British was not always obligatory but depended on the dynamics of each incident. For example, when the Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Church in Izmir, potentially the executor of the estate of Geōrgios Omiros, offered the factory if they would consider buying the consular house presumably to settle the deceased's debts, the factory responded that "the Nation had no intention to buy the House".[372] Arguably, the factory believed that their tenancy was secure thanks to the agreement of 1746, a position preferred to stay out of any embroilments with the Ottomans. However, in 1752, when the family requested financial aid from the British factory on the grounds, in their words, of "secur[ing] the honour of our four sisters" for their nuptials, the British consented to extend the loan to them.[373] Yet the loan was not unconditional: the British demanded the hypothecation of the family property, including the consular house, and an interest payment as security for the debt. While this time the family decided not to borrow, three years later they did borrow. Although the British suspected the family of using the sisters as a pretext for borrowing money, they nevertheless agreed to loan 3000 *guruş* "to prevent as much as possible any further disturbances of that kind with the said Family, and to secure the said home to remain always a Consularian house for the

[370] For the right to appeal to the courts, see *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace*, Article IX.
[371] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/14/3, Evāḫir-i Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1164/April 1751; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/15/3, Evāsıṭ-i Şevvāl 1164/September 1751; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/2/22/3, Evāḫir-i Z̲īlḳaʿde 1165/September-October 1752.
[372] TNA, SP 105/336, 4 December 1751.
[373] TNA, SP 105/336, 20 May 1752, "per metter [sic] in Sicuro l'Onestà di quattro [reventi?] nostra Sorelle"; TNA, SP 105/336, 20 November 1755.

use of our Nation".[374] These examples explicate that there were various motivations behind these acts, which the British reflected upon their short- and long-term ramifications when making decisions. In the latter case, the British wanted the loaned amount to be deducted from the annual rent, the consular house to be hypothecated until the debt was paid, and the sisters to be accountable for the debt. In assisting the Omiros family, the British endeavoured to maintain trust to retain their occupancy rights and protect their future economic and diplomatic interests. Presumably, these acts then resulted in the ratification of the perpetual lease contract of 1746 by Geōrgios's sons in 1755 that allowed the British to use the house until the 1790s. Notwithstanding the British financial power and their relatively secure occupancy rights, these implied obligations speak to the contingency of those strengths. The British continued to rely on locally influential figures and developed strategies to make their relationships work.

The Omiros family helped the British factory to navigate various diplomatic and commercial processes in Izmir. They also provided long-term housing to the British consuls. The family, on the other hand, became more involved with the British factory. Consequently, they obtained consular protection, economic gain, and social status. In their relationship, there were moments of harmony, compromise, and conflict. Various motivations at different times informed their actions and commitments. Within these dynamics, trust underlying their relationship had to be constantly reassured through acts of commitment. Just as the local conditions required the British to partner themselves with the Omiros family, so too the obligation networks created through their varied partnerships bound the interests of both parties together and thus occasionally constrained the latitude of the British in Izmir, a town gradually

[374] According to Niko Kararas, Georgio's daughters Maria died unmarried in 1787, Elisavet (Betty) died unmarried in 1796, Sophia (Sophoula) died married in 1785, and Adamantia (Diamantoula) or Susana married in 1779 and died as a widow in 1798. See Kararas, "Η Οικογένεια των Ομήρων της Σμύρνης (The Homer Family of Smyrna)," 180.

replacing Aleppo. So, what can we learn by examining the British factory's relationship with their dragomans in Aleppo? The next section answers this question.

"Knows how to support and facilitate trade": Jirjīs ʿĀʾida of Aleppo

While the previous section has examined the relationship between the British and the Omiros family with regards to diplomatic representation and accommodation issues, this section underlines how significant the dragomans were for the British trade in the provinces and how the power dynamics in play between the British and their dragomans constantly changed depending on time and circumstance. The dragoman in question here is Jirjīs ʿĀʾida, who entered British consular service in 1743 and eventually succeeded his father, Shukrī ʿĀʾida, as the British head-dragoman in Aleppo in 1747, serving in that capacity until his death on 16 March 1775.[375] Jirjīs's term of office was marked by a period of change for the British Aleppo factory. His appointment coincided with the death of Nadir Shah of Persia, which at first led to misplaced hopes for the revival of Persian trade.[376] Meanwhile, compared to the unfavourable trading conditions in Aleppo, the burgeoning commerce of Izmir attracted British merchants.[377] The political instability in Aleppo from the 1770s impeded British trade.[378] Thus, the factory's trade was in a period of stagnation, if not decline. According to Colville Bridger, a British merchant of Aleppo active in the 1750s and 1760s, the number of British merchant-houses

[375] According to Maurits van der Boogert, Jirjīs was first appointed as an honorary dragoman in 1747 and then became the head-dragoman in the following years, see Maurits. H. van den Boogert, "Provocative Wealth: Non-Muslim Elites in Eighteenth-Century Aleppo," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010): 220, fn. 5.
[376] John Perry, "The Zand Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: Volume 7*, eds. Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 63–103; Rose Greaves, "Iranian Relations with the European Trading Companies, to 1798," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: Volume 7*, eds. Avery, Hambly, and Melville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 350–373.
[377] An incoming caravan of Iranian silk to Erzurum was equally distributed to Izmir and Aleppo in 1753, see HALS, DE/R/B 235/43, 6 May 1753. For the trade of Izmir in the eighteenth century, see Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*. For competition with colonial goods, see HALS, DE/R/B/237/7, 31 July 1754; TNA, SP 110/38, fol. 48v, to Jacob Bosanquet on 12 August 1765; LMA, CLC/B/227/MS08724, 28 April 1769; LMA, CLC/B/227/MS08724, 14 September 1772.
[378] Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 86–100.

reduced from eight to five by the end of 1763.[379] When Jirjīs died in 1775, the numbers of British merchants were only four which reduced further to three in 1791.

These local dynamics impelled the British to employ a member of the ʿĀʾida family whom the British knew and worked with and whose connections might help navigate a multiplicity of agents and commercial obstacles in Aleppo and beyond. Jirjīs ʿĀʾida was a wealthy merchant, extensive real estate owner, financier, and affiliated with the notables of Aleppo. His character, business portfolio and networks in the region enticed the British to employ him after his father. However, his personal and business connections also constrained his capacity to serve the British and even led to divergent views towards him by the Levant Company officials and members. Both mutual and conflicting interests were defining characteristics of their contingent relationship. Acts that the British and the dragomans were expected to perform for one another were shaped by regional and local dynamics in which they were often involved. Before examining the centrality of dragomans to the British and the contingent nature of relationships and power structures at work, this section first discusses the background and business portfolio of Jirjīs ʿĀʾida to understand why the British chose to enter a partnership with him.

Who was Jirjīs ʿĀʾida?

Jirjīs came from a Catholic family of merchants-cum-dragomans whose members had also served the British. Merchants were one of the high-status groups (*Ḥalebī bezirgān ṭāʾīfesi*, lit. Aleppine merchant community) that was recognised by the Ottoman state. Through his familial

[379] Norman Davis ed., *Colville Bridger in Aleppo: His Personal Letters home to his family in Shoreham, and in Sussex, and to Business friends in London, during his stay in Syria, 1754-1766* (Shoreham-by-Sea: unpublished: copy held in British Library, London, 1998), to Harry Bridger, 15 October 1763.

connections, he had an extensive web of trade and inherited considerable property in Aleppo.[380] According to Abraham Marcus, the ʿĀʾida family were amongst the few non-Muslim families in Aleppo who invested in real estate.[381] Real estate was both a steady income-producing asset and a source of social prestige. Merchants had an organic connection with public affairs and the business of provincial governance, most evidently in the provisioning and remittance of bills of exchange to state-functionaries and the imperial treasury.[382] For example, he was the creditor of Germanos Sadir and Anton Diyab (both Dutch protégés) on whom the poll-tax collector (*cizyedār*) of Aleppo drew a bill of 2000 *guruş* payable in Istanbul.[383]

In fact, Jirjīs himself was involved in public finance. For instance, he and his patron, Ṭāhāzāde es-Seyyid Muḥammad Efendi, also known as 'Çelebi effendi', ventured into a joint undertaking of assuming the responsibility for communal expenses of a village in Aleppo for the year 1764-65 through an advance payment to the imperial treasury.[384] Not only did such activities expand his business portfolio, but more significantly Jirjīs would have likely to receive an agreed-upon share of the produce of the village in return for his investment. Through this partnership, for example, the British could access the agricultural produce of Aleppo.

Furthermore, Jirjīs was the protégé (*ʿavne)* of Ṭāhāzāde es-Seyyid Muḥammad who belong to the *ashrāf*—i.e., the lineal descendants of Prophet Muhammed.[385] An affiliation with one of the high-status groups and prestigious lineages in Aleppo further consolidated his

[380] Masters, *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance*, 98–99.
[381] Marcus, *Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 191, 366; Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 77.
[382] İSAM, ES/R 15/F 75/P 151/Entry 1, 28 Şevvāl 1193 and 22 Ẕīlḳaʿde 1193/8 November 1779 and 1 December 1779. "muḥaṣṣıl-ı mūma ileyhin meblağ-ı mezburu…ḳāʿide-i belde üzere Haleb tüccārı ṭaraflarından salyānecisine teslīm şarṭıyla ḥavāle ve temessükāt iʿṭā" [in accordance with the ancient custom of the town, the general tax-farmer shall transfer the said sum to the collectors of annual revenues via the Aleppo merchants]. This sentence meant that the tax-farmer shall buy a bill of exchange from the Aleppo merchants payable to the collector of annual revenues in Istanbul or elsewhere.
[383] İSAM, ES/R 6/F 92/P 177/E 330, 15 Ẕīlḥicce 1176/27 June 1763.
[384] İSAM, ES/R 6/F 46/P 87/E 95; 96, 14 Receb 1190/29 August 1776; 20 Şaʿbān 1190/4 October 1776.
[385] İSAM, ES/R 7/F 97/P 187/E 260, Evāsıṭ-i Ẕīlḳaʿde 1180/April 1767.

influence in the society.[386] Like Jirjīs, İbrahim Ağa (Qattaraghasi), who would later become the first native pasha of Aleppo, was also the protégé of Ṭāhāzāde, who used patronage to control resources in the city.[387] As one of the most influential figures of this noble lineage in the eighteenth century, Ṭāhāzāde was active in provincial administration and regional and international commerce. As will be discussed, besides creating avenues and opportunities for investment, the connection between Jirjīs and Ṭāhāzāde also limited Jirjīs's capacity to serve the British on certain occasions.

Jirjīs utilised almost all available sources to him to establish and elevate his standing in Aleppo. His wealth and prestige made him the ideal candidate for the post of British dragoman, who had adequate social and economic capital to buy patronage. By entering British consular networks, Jirjīs expanded his business even further, acquired judicial and diplomatic channels available to him, enjoyed certain tax exemptions, and elevated his social status in Aleppo under the status of a dragoman. The British relied largely on his business web, commercial expertise, and political connections to facilitate their trade operations and diplomatic engagements in Aleppo.

Commercial Partnership

Richard Stratton, a British merchant in Aleppo, wrote in 1748 to his principals in London that "I have sold your 15 Fangots[388] of French Colours[389] as Esteem'd in account sales to Giorgios Aide Against White Silk".[390] Jirjīs facilitated British transactions with, and access to, the

[386] Meriwether, *The Notable Families of Aleppo,* 90-91; Marcus, *Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 59.
[387] Meriwether, *The Notable Families of Aleppo*, 286.
[388] Derived from Italian 'fagotto', meaning a bundle. Approximately one to three hundred weights. According to Davis, it referred to a small bale of cloth containing 3,3 instead of 5 pieces of cloth, see Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 104.
[389] Middling quality cloth.
[390] HALS, DE/R/B 232/35A, 1 November-22 November 1748.

customers and Ottoman export goods. In this very case, he was one of the primary customers of the British who bought their fabrics in return for 'white silk' imported mainly from Antioch, Syrian Tripoli, Cyprus, and Bursa. Although the transaction seems to have been a barter, the silk might have been delivered in several ways. Firstly, Jirjīs could directly deliver the silk from his warehouse to Stratton in the amount of the proceeds of cloth sales. Secondly, he could deliver the silk after selling the cloth to third parties such as local merchants or shopkeepers. This meant a sale of cloth on credit in return for a future payment. For instance, on 30 January 1759, Jirjīs made a bargain with es-Seyyid el-Ḥāc Yūsuf of Belen to barter 5550 *z̲irā'*[391] of broadcloth against seventeen *ḳanṭār*[392] of thrown silk.[393] The final consignee of the thrown silk was not specified in the document. To understand transaction processes, nonetheless, we can assume that Jirjīs might have been entrusted with the broadcloth to sell it to potential customers and return the proceeds of the sale to British merchants. These transactions suggest that the British operated through the business network of Jirjīs.

Thirdly, we also know that British protégés provided the British with a promissory note allowing the British to claim repayment from third parties such as local merchants.[394] In this scenario, one may strongly speculate that the third parties were the debtors of the protégés and thus in-kind payments to the British would serve to clear the debts due to the protégés. In such a labyrinth of credit relations, the solvency of British protégés was vital for the future prospect of British commerce, for which we frequently encounter lawsuits filed by the British regarding the payment of debts due to their protégés and molestation of their protégés in the hinterland.[395]

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[391] A *z̲irā'*=a pike=27 inches.

[392] A *ḳanṭār*/quintal was divided into 100 *raṭl*s/rotellos; the *raṭl* was the equivalent of around 4 lb. 12 oz or two kilos. Thus, 17 ḳanṭār equals roughly 3,400 kilos.

[393] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/79/3, Evāsıṭ-i Z̲īlḥicce 1174/July-August 1761; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/82/5, Evāʾil-i Receb 1175/January-February 1762. "on yedi ḳanṭār ibrişim muḳabelesinde bāliğ eylediğiniz maʿlūm olan beş bin beş yüz z̲irāʿ çūḳaya dāʾir" [respecting to the five thousand five hundred *zirāʿ* broadcloth that it is known that [you] attained in exchange for seventeenth *ḳanṭār* thrown silk].

[394] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 145, 146, 216, 217

[395] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/91/4, Evāḫir-i Şevvāl 1142/May 1730; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/109/2, Evāʾil-i Receb 1145/December 1732; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/127/5, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1148/October-November 1735; BOA,

As will become clear in Chapter Three, such an extensive credit-debt nexus stretching from Aleppo to London and even beyond fostered an international market integration and supply chain given that most factors, like Richard Stratton, had dealings with merchants in Britain operating on a global scale.[396]

Relying on Jirjīs's networks also helped the British distribute the risk of potential financial losses to more than one trader. On 23 February 1773, Robert Abbott sold some lengths and bundles of cloth to Hüseyin Pasha, the governor of Aleppo, on credit to be paid in ninety-one days.[397] While some clothes worth 1284.5 *guruş* were directly sold by Robert Abbott, some worth 1365 *guruş* were sold by Jirjīs. However, both cloth sales, alongside an interest-bearing loan[398] of 2000 *guruş*, were due to Abbott. This indicates that Jirjīs bought those cloths from Robert Abbott on credit and then re-sold them to Hüseyin Pasha on account. Hence, the liabilities were distributed between Robert Abbott and Jirjīs ʿĀʾida. This case came to our attention because Hüseyin Pasha died without paying his debt. Thus, we can assume that many more similar transactions went unrecorded provided that the debts were cleared eventually.

Moreover, venturing into trade in distant places where Ottoman authority was loose involved greater risks and necessarily entailed reliance on business associates established in those places. Both Shukrī and Jirjīs ʿĀʾida were engaged in Persian trade and had business connections in Baghdad.[399] In this regard, these connections facilitated the British entrance into

AHK.MR.d 2/169/6, Evāḫir-i Şaʿbān 1155/October 1742; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/200/2, Evāʾil-i Muḥarrem 1160/January 1747; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/147/722, Evāḫir-i Ẕīlḳaʿde 1189/January 1776; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/183/967, Evāsıṭ-i Şafer 1197/January 1783.

[396] For Richard Stratton's business connections, see David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11, 116, 122, 134, 218, 244.

[397] İSAM, ES/R 12/F 7/P 7–8/E 8, Evāḫir-i Şafer 1188 and 14 Rabīʿüssānī (Rabīʿülāḫir) 1188/May 1774 and 24 June 1774; İSAM, ES/R 12/F 7–8/PP 8-9/E 9, 12 Rabīʿülāḫir 1188/22 June 1774; İSAM, ES/R 12/F 8/P 10/E 11, 1 Ẕīlḥicce 1186/23 February 1773.

[398] The rate of interest in 2000 *guruş* for 91 days was %18 as it produced 90 *guruş* for 91 days, making up a total of 2090 *guruş*.

[399] For the connections of Shukrī ʿĀʾida in Baghdad, see HALS, DE/R/B 226/1A, 5-16 February 1734.

trade with such faraway areas. As mentioned, the appointment of Jirjīs coincided with the death of Nader Shah in 1747 which caused some expectations regarding the revival of the Persian trade.[400] In the summer of 1749, Jirjīs tasked an Armenian agent to go to Baghdad for the sale of the wares of four British merchants and of his own to his associate, Ohan, son of Zahver. Among the goods were British woollens and Aleppo cotton fabrics amounting to 91.331,5 *guruş*. The largest proprietor was Jirjīs himself with 40.000 *guruş*, followed by William Fitzhugh with 30.831,5 *guruş*, then by John Free with 13.000 *guruş*, then by Alexander Russel with 4500 *guruş*, and finally by William Hammond, who was the new partner and successor of Richard Stratton, with 3000 *guruş*. Upon the caravan's arrival in Baghdad, however, the Ottoman governor (*vālī*) of Baghdad, Mehmed Pasha, seized the British goods in the Baghdad customs house to pay the troops stationed there.[401] William Hammond wrote in November that "unless Immediately redress'd from the Port [*sic*] as it will totally stop the Currancy [*sic*] of Business that way, which is at present the only Channel through those parts into Persia."[402] Hammond's words attest to the centrality of Baghdad for Persian trade, access to which could only be provided by merchants having extensive trading networks. The proportion of the capital Jirjīs himself invested in this undertaking demonstrates his business connections and wealth in proportion to other investors.[403] The closest investor to Jirjīs was William Fitzhugh whose trading partner was Josiah Chitty, one of the wealthiest British merchants in Aleppo in the 1740s.[404] Such joint undertakings resembled the early joint-stock partnerships whereby the

[400] HALS, DE/R/B 232/36, 7 December 1748 – 24 January 1749; HALS, DE/R/B 232/37, 8 February 1749; HALS, DE/R/B 235/6, 18 May 1749.
[401] İSAM, ES/R 1/F 83/P 158/E 286, 3 Cemāẕiyelāḫir 1163/10 May 1750; Türkhan, "18. Yüzyılda Doğu Akdeniz'de Ticaret ve Haleb," 211.
[402] HALS, DE/R/B 235/10, 1 November 1749.
[403] The annual salary of Jirjīs ʿĀʾida was only 400 *guruş* in 1754, see Boogert, "Ottoman intermediaries in the 18th century," 524; When he died in 1775, his annual salary was 700 *guruş*, 418,60 *guruş* of which was his annual gratuity. See TNA, SP 110/58, 27 March 1775.
[404] HALS, DE/R/B 235/41, 27 January 1753. Other factors were Thomas Vernon and William Bellamy who were described by William Hammond "as the two great Houses Mr Vernon and Mr Bellamy are driving on with Such fury, that Nothing good can be expected by waiting".

investors distributed their liabilities intending to receive capital and dividends after the ventures. In this context, dragomans like Jirjīs ʿĀʾida were so central to British trade in the provinces, because their stock and business networks allowed British merchants to spread risk and access to markets in the vicinity of Aleppo and beyond the Ottoman domains. It is highly possible that Jirjīs had easier access to British and other European products. In this way, he could target different customer profiles and different markets in the Near East. Hence, partnering with the British resulted possibly in the westward and eastward expansion of Jirjīs's business networks and activities.

Jirjīs was also important to the British in recovering their goods because he was not only the head dragoman, but also the largest stakeholder in this venture, to whom the British merchants might have entrusted their goods. However, Jirjīs was arrested after this incident in May 1750, the reasons of which will be discussed shortly. In May 1750, the British petition to Porte for restitution stressed the freedom of trade and safe conduct granted to Jirjīs as their chief dragoman in Aleppo.[405] Apparently, his arrest exacerbated the situation due to the lack of proper diplomatic representation at the Ottoman court and the intertwined commercial relations between both parties. Underscoring his status and role might have been intended to draw the Porte's attention to how much the British suffered, first with the seizure of their goods in Baghdad and then with the arrest of their chief dragoman. After all, for British commerce to persist, expand, and flourish, the solvency of British employees, on whose networks and capital the British had come to rely, was crucial in such intricate undertakings.

[405] İSAM, ES/R 1/F 83/P 158/E 286, 3 Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1163/10 May 1750 "Birbirimiziñ māl ve erzāḳ-ı ḳıymeti başḳa başḳa şerḥ ve beyān ve temyīz ve ʿayāndan māʿadā mesfūr ʿĀʾida oğlu Jirjīs ṭāʾīfemiziñ bāş tercümānı olub tercümānlıḳ ḫidmetinde olmağla manṭūḳ ʿahd-nāme-yi hümāyūn ve yedinde olan berāt-ı ʿālīşān gidişde ve gelişde ve menāzil ve merāḥilde kendülerine ve e̱svāb ve davārlarına ve emvāl ve erzāḳlarına daḫl ve taʿarruż icāb itmeyen tercümānların başı olduğunu" [In addition to the declarations of the values of our goods and effects, the said Jirjīs, son of ʿĀʾida, is the head-dragoman of our community and in that capacity, himself, his men, flock of sheep and goats, and estates and effects are not supposed to be intervened and attacked while trading and at stations according to the capitulations and his deed of appointment].

Receiving redress from the Porte in instalments of 5000 *guruş* took almost a year of diplomatic efforts due to the lack of British documentation regarding the ownership of goods.[406] The compensation agreed was only 30,000 *guruş*, less than a third of the whole damage that might nevertheless help keep the British merchants and Jirjīs solvent. In fact, according to the Capitulations, no British subject could be held accountable for any offences committed by another British subject, unless proven otherwise. As the Capitulations increasingly gained a reciprocal character over the eighteenth century, the terms of this stipulation equally applied to the Ottomans. That is, although the Ottoman sultan and his officials were responsible for providing justice to the British, they could not be held accountable for any offences committed by an Ottoman subject. In this manner, convincing the Porte to be held liable for the wrongdoings of the governor shows how the British the concept of reciprocity in their diplomatic engagements. However, the connection between the Porte and the governor of Baghdad seemed to have also affected the Porte's attitude towards the incident. The governor was the chief appointed official in Baghdad and used the money for public expenditures, namely paying the troops stationed there. Therefore, since the goods were illegally seized by the governor for public purposes, the Porte must have felt obliged to compensate the British as a sign of friendship. This case reveals how commerce and diplomacy were interlinked and how the British effectively used petitioning on pressing circumstances to protect their commercial interests. Moreover, the fact that the prosperity of the British and Jirjīs was enmeshed suggests a growing interdependence between the British and Jirjīs. Yet, as the next section will show, the nature of their relationship was dependent on various conditions.

[406] BOA, A. {DVN.DVE (3)/81/13, 15 Receb 1163/20 June 1750; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 178; Boogert, "Provocative Wealth," 221–22.

Trust and Commerce: Contingency of Relationships

On 3 April 1749, Alexander Drummond, the British vice-consul and factor marine in Iskenderun, sent a bottle of brandy to Jirjīs ʿĀʾida as a gift to maintain friendly relations with him.[407] We have seen in Chapter One that gift-exchange was essential to display goodwill to cultivate cordial relations with Ottoman officeholders. In the relationship between the British and their dragomans, trust also rested on the fulfilment of a set of obligations by both parties who partnered themselves with one another on a promise that they would protect each other's interests and reputation. These promises could be written in contracts or merely implied. In either case, partners needed to contribute to the partnership by providing money, guidance or diplomatic protection. And the choices informing these commitments were shaped by power relations. This last part of this section reveals how such complex power dynamics made these relationships extremely contingency. In doing so, I look at certain cases, starting with the Baghdad case discussed above.

During the negotiations between the British and the Porte about the redress, Jirjīs ʿĀʾida was accused of conspiring with the governor of Baghdad to sell the seized goods in Aleppo. This allegation was believed to have been put forward by Yusuf Dib, an Orthodox Christian who was also a British dragoman, presumably due to a power struggle between the two figures for economic and religious reasons.[408] Consequently, the Porte revoked Jirjīs's *berāt* and imprisoned him in the citadel of Aleppo in May 1750. Apparently, the British consul was aware

[407] BL, Add MS 45933, The Letter book of Alexander Drummond, vol. 1, a letter to Arthur Pollard dated 3 April 1749.

[408] Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World*, 76–77. Economic considerations rested on the idea that protégés did not share the burden of their communally 'distributed and portioned' taxes because of their tax privileges. On this, see BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d, 162/1316, Evāḫir-i Ṣafer 1175/September 1761: "tevziʿ ve taḳsīm olunagelen tekālifden ṭāʾīfeleri sehmlerine iṣābet ideni biʾl-maʿye edāda taʿallul ve muḫālefet" [opposing to the payment of the portioned and distributed taxes corresponding to their shares]; For some cases in Aleppo, Cyprus, and Izmir see, BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/123/3, Evāsıṭ-i Ramażān 1147/February 1735; BOA, AKH.MR.d 2/192/2, Evāʿil-i Rabīʿülevvel 1159/March-April 1746; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/37/6, Evāḫir-i Ṣafer 1168/December 1754, respectively.

of Jirjīs's innocence, for which he applied immediately to the Porte with a joint letter expressing the ill-treatment of dragomans with reference to Jirjīs ʿĀʾida. The British factory claimed that Jirjīs and other dragomans "refrained from serving the British consuls and merchants" under these circumstances, which "left the entire British trade untended" [ḫidmetlerinden teneffür ve ictināb mesellü taḳrībiyle…umūr-i ticāretleriniñ cümlesi muʿaṭṭal olduğundan].[409] The Porte in response ordered the avoidance of such actions for Jirjīs to be desirous of performing his services (tercümān-ı mesfūrun ḫidmetlerine teġrīb…olunaraḳ).[410] If the British failed to provide sufficient protection for their partners facing various molestations, the trust underlying their relations would be lost. Lack of trust would then translate into lack of assistance to British commerce and diplomacy. Moreover, any ill-treatment towards the dragomans meant not only besmirching the reputation of Jirjīs, but also those of the British as the dragomans were deemed the official representatives of the British officials and communities. Hence, at stake here for the British was to extricate Jirjīs from this difficult situation and thus maintain trust with him, through official assurance structures such as the law and diplomacy; this was important to protect the commerce and dignity of the British and the dragomans in Aleppo. Such engagements for Jirjīs indicate the weak position of the British in local power dynamics and were no exception, as evident in similar engagements for him in 1758 and 1767.[411]

As a result of the ambassador's intervention and the bribes offered by the British consul of Aleppo to local authorities, Jirjīs ʿĀʾida was released in October 1750.[412] Rather astonishingly, Jirjīs himself met the expenses of bribes amounting to 6,700 *guruş*, in that the Levant Company directors attributed the Baghdad incident to Jirjīs's "own private Trade to

[409] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/7/3, Evāʾil-i Şevvāl 1163/September 1750.
[410] Ibid.
[411] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/64/3, Evāḫir-i Şaʿbān 1171/April-May 1758; On the revocation of his deed in 1767, see İSAM, ES/R 7/F 97/P 187/E 260, Evāsıṭ-i Z̲īlḳaʿde 1180/April 1767. On his release, see BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/119/Entry 2, Evāʾil-i Rabīʿülevvel 1182/July 1768. He was reported to have been in British service for 25 years, from 1743.
[412] Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World*, 76–77.

Bagdat, and his and his agent's mismanagement of it".[413] For this reason, the Company stated "We cannot make him any Allowance according to our Rules". For one thing, this shows the financial strength of Jirjīs in paying his own 'ransom' considering the substantial damage he had incurred during the venture and the time he spent in prison. But more importantly, it demonstrates the divergent views between the Levant Company directors in London and the factory in Aleppo towards working with high-profile dragomans in the provinces: the Company implicitly rebuked the factory that working with such wealthy dragomans would always bear the risk of such mismanagements and conflict of interest between them in the provinces, a concern which was more explicitly articulated on another occasion in 1767 as we will see shortly. Indeed, the fidelity and functionality of dragomans were a matter of concern for the Levant Company, the ambassadors, the consuls, and merchants.[414] The Company officials occasionally complained that the extensive private trade networks and affiliations of their dragomans with local powerholders could, and did, collide with the British commercial and diplomatic interests in the provinces. A closer look at the intricate relationship between Jirjīs and Ṭāhāzāde will further exemplify these relations. In around 1771, the Pignero factory of the Sephardic Jewish community in Aleppo, along with their warehouseman or broker, Murad, went bankrupt. The amount in dispute was 70,000 *guruş*, part of which was owed to the British. When asked to offer "all the Assistance possible in the affair" for the recovery of the debt, Jirjīs remained "indisposed".[415] The reason behind his reluctance was Ṭāhāzāde who "openly set himself to oppose and cross the measures that had been taking in the affair" and in that regard

[413] TNA, SP 110/74, from London, 14 June 1751. "We have receivd [*sic*] your Letters of the 3^{d} and 11th of Jan.^{ry} and 9th of Feb.^{ry}, in the first of which you recommend to us your head Drugoman Sig.^{nr} Giorgio Aidy, but as it does not any ways appear to us, that his Expense was incurr'd by his being a Drugoman in the Nation's Service, but by his own private Trade to Bagdat, and his and his agent's mismanagement of it, We cannot make him any Allowance according to our Rules, but must abide by our first Resolution of 23^{d} of March 1749, not to be at any charge on account of that Engagement of his". Also see Boogert, "Provocative Wealth," 222.
[414] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 225–26; Boogert, "Ottoman Intermediaries in the 18th Century," 515–30.
[415] TNA, SP 110/58, 3 June 1771.

"threaten our first Drogerman Giorgios Aide."[416] Presumably, Ṭāhāzāde was also a creditor in the Pignero case and trying to take the lion's share from the debt. His disposition towards Jirjīs makes more sense given the fact that he was indebted 40,000 *guruş* to Jirjīs.[417] Thus, one could imagine that the threat was about non-payment of the debt to Jirjīs if Ṭāhāzāde was unable to recover his own money in the Pignero case. Local figures employed as dragomans enjoyed greater latitude than European communities thanks to their local networks and knowledge. Thus, they were much freer to shift their dispositions depending on the circumstances. The British factory in Aleppo was aware of these constantly shifting power structures in the provinces, which accordingly informed the decisions of partners. Hence, since the decisions were contingent on these changing power structures, then the nature of relationships between the British and the dragomans was equally contingent. While on one occasion, Jirjīs could well represent the British interests, on another, his connections might restrain his capacity to serve the British or even collide with the British interests.

Yet dragomans were so central to British commerce and diplomacy in the provinces, and the British had no chance but to protect their partners, however divergent the views were towards them. When Jirjīs ʿĀʾida's *berāt* was revoked and he was imprisoned for a second time in April 1767, having formally been accused of harassing the Muslims together with his patron Ṭāhāzāde, the British ambassador wrote to Jirjīs that "your capacity and Industry have brought upon the Envy of your idle Neighbours".[418] His riches and the extent of his economic activities were to blame. The reason for his arrest was more than the harassment of the Muslims. The British believed that Yusuf Dallal, a notable Orthodox Christian from Aleppo, plotted the arrest due to the religious, economic, and status strife between the two.[419] Dragomans were often

[416] TNA, SP 110/58, 3 January 1772.
[417] TNA, SP 110/58, 21 April or May 1773.
[418] TNA, SP 110/87, 27 May 1767, cited in Boogert, "Provocative Wealth," 220.
[419] On the revocation of his deed, see İSAM, ES/R 7/F 97/P 187/E 260, Evāsıṭ-i Ẕīlḳaʿde 1180/April 1767; Boogert, "Provocative Wealth," 232–35.

involved in intra- and inter-communal conflicts in the provinces on account predominantly of religious and economic reasons. Such hostility and dissent might, and did, impede the performance of the dragomans in British trade and as a result produced a negative attitude towards them.

Despite these views, however, the British factory in Aleppo initiated diplomatic engagements with the Porte to ensure his release. At this point, the British trade seems to have become increasingly dependent on local merchants, with the number of experienced British merchants of Aleppo dwindling. Colville Bridger wrote of Aleppo in 1765 that "with the Government of the Country (which becomes intolerable [*sic*]), the miseries it is subjected to, & the badness of Trade together, a person can scarce be said to live in it, much less to enjoy Life."[420] The connections, finances, and expertise of dragomans were all vital to navigating various challenges in Aleppo.[421] Thus, a letter from the Levant Company directors to the consul of Aleppo reads "We have ernestly recomended [*sic*] the affair to his Exc:y who has your Interest and M[r] Aidy's much at heart", which indicated the extent to which the interests of Aleppo factory and Jirjīs ʿĀʾida were intertwined.[422] After 15 months of various diplomatic efforts, the Porte pardoned (*cürmü ʿafv*, lit. forgiveness of penalty) and released (*iṭlāḳ*) him in 1768.[423] More staggeringly, the imperial order justified his pardon and release because he served the factory for twenty-five years and "knows how to support and facilitate trade" [emr-i ticāretin tervīcine ʿārif].[424] Here, the Porte endorsed the British arguments. Although we do not have the original British petition, the British underscored the significance of Jirjīs for

[420] Davis, *Colville Bridger in Aleppo*, to Robert Hayman, 4 April 1765.
[421] TNA, SP 97/43, fol. 152, from John Murray to the Early of Shelburne, 1 June 1767: "but it is generally imagined, that his Offence is his Riches, as he is a man that has carried on a very large Trade for many years, & is supposed to be the richest man in the Place. He has a good Character, and has rendered great services to the Factory by his Power amongst the Turks."
[422] TNA, SP 105/119, p. 231, 31 July 1767.
[423] On his release and reappointment, see İSAM, ES/R 8/F 43/P 81/E 106, 5 Rabīʿülāḫir 1182/20 July 1768.
[424] İSAM, ES/R 8/F 43/P 82/E 180, Evāʾil-i Rabīʿülevvel 1182/July 1768; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/119/2, Evāʾil-i Rabīʿülevvel 1182/July 1768.

British trade in Aleppo, which was equally important for the Porte as the welfare of the state was contingent on the continuation and burgeoning of its international trade.[425]

Constantly changing power structures and the ensuing events rendered the relationship between the British and Jirjīs extremely contingent. However, despite divergent views towards him, he was too valuable to lose in such a difficult period for British trade in Aleppo. Twenty-three years after the death of Jirjīs in 1775, this time the British were struggling not to keep their dragoman in operation, but to employ a prominent figure as their dragoman in Cyprus as the eastern Mediterranean became one of the areas of intensified inter-imperial conflict across the world.

An Honorary British Dragoman during an Intensified Inter-Imperial Conflict: Sargis of Cyprus

The Napoleonic expeditions in the eastern Mediterranean marked a change in inter-imperial relations in the region in both the short and long run. It was after this moment in the history of the eastern Mediterranean when the British began pursuing a more assertive, if not dominant, commercial, and imperial agenda in the region. On another level, the emerging transit trade linking Britain with the Levant in a bid to bypass Napoleon's continental blockade increased the role of local merchants and shipowners in the eastern Mediterranean, thereby intensifying British reliance on local commercial actors.[426] The transit trade as well as the joint Anglo-Ottoman campaign against the French increased the geostrategic significance of Cyprus due to

[425] For an example of the impact of the stagnation of international trade in Aleppo on the customs revenue of Aleppo, see BOA, C.ML. 313/12830, Evāḫir-i Z̲īlḳaʿde 1226/December 1811.

[426] Gelina Harlaftis, "The 'Eastern Invasion': Greeks in Mediterranean Trade and Shipping in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, eds. Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood, and Mohamed-Salah Omri (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2010), 223–252; Katerina Galani, "The Napoleonic Wars and the Disruption of Mediterranean Shipping and Trade: British, Greek and American Merchants in Livorno," *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 7 (2010): 179–198; Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans*, 113.

its proximity to, and commercial links with, the Syrian coast and its role in the provisioning of the Anglo-Ottoman navies.[427] This section focuses on the relationship between Sargis, son of Avag, the British honorary dragoman in Cyprus between 12 October 1798 and June 1806, and the British in and around Cyprus to reveal how imperial systems were dependent on polycentric and dynamic trans-imperial connections and how power was contingent and contested in these trans-imperial networks of relationships.

Sadly, the English consular records of Cyprus are not extant, which makes it difficult to trace precisely the activities in which Sargis was engaged for the British such as translating documents, striking commercial deals, and counselling the British consul and agents. Therefore, this section draws upon some Ottoman-Turkish primary documents and secondary literature on Sargis to reconstruct the relationship between them. In considering the interplay between the British commercial organisation and representation in Cyprus between the 1770s and 1798, the new geopolitical conjuncture in the region in the late eighteenth century, and Sargis's business profile, the first part of this section reveals that his business networks and diplomatic expertise and new geopolitical developments in the region were key elements for his incorporation in British service. The remainder of the section then investigates the benefits of this partnership for the British, the Ottoman governments, and Sargis. It shows that Sargis assisted British trade in Cyprus and transit commerce with the Syrian coast. He also supervised the provisioning of the British navy during the joint Anglo-Ottoman campaign against the French. The latter point underscores the importance of Sargis for the Ottoman government as well. Sargis, on the other hand, entered British service to first recover his privileged status after having lost French protection and then maintain his personal and familial wealth and prestige in Cyprus. As shown in previous sections, since the British interests were inextricably linked

[427] Güven Dinç, "The Ports of Cyprus and the French Invasion of Egypt (1798–1801)," *Mediterranean Studies* 24, no. 1 (2016): 23–46.

to those of their partners, they were required to intervene diplomatically to protect their dragoman's interests, as well as their own. Such British interventions for Sargis show how he managed to garner British support for his benefit. But they also insinuate how local power dynamics interacted with British concerns and then shaped British acts. These interventions even put the British in precarious positions. From a broader perspective, the section reveals the paradoxical relationship between the rise of British imperial power in the region and the vulnerability of British representation and power at a local level, indicating the inconsistency of British power in the eastern Mediterranean.

Why was Sargis appointed?

Since the 1770s, the Levant Company found it too costly to encourage the settlement of a factor in Cyprus; instead, it opted to function through commission trade and appoint a consul to coordinate the investment and shipping activities.[428] Meanwhile, the relaxation of the Company's monopolistic structure from 1753 encouraged individual merchants to engage in trade with Cyprus.[429] Michael Devezin was the British consul of Cyprus from 1778 until the closure of the Aleppo factory in 1791, and the Pro-Consul of the British Aleppo factory between 1786 and 1791. Michael Devezin also noted that the treasurers of the British factory in Cyprus were appointed amongst the Greek Cypriot community.[430] After Michael Devezin died in 1792, the Company assigned Anton Agop, a local Armenian merchant, in September-October 1793

[428] The last Levant Company merchants forming a factory in Cyprus were William Bashley Turner and John Baldwin. "The loss we have sustained by the death of M^{r} John Baldwin our late Consul at Cyprus & of M^{r} W^{m} Bashley Turner has given us much concern—As there was no Englishman left on that Island we entirely approve of the appointment of M^{r} Benedetto Astier to act as pro Consul till the arrival of M^{r} George Baldwin…that we would appoint him our Consul there for nine months", see TNA, SP 105/119, to William Smith, 16 August 1771. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Marina Mattei, the Ragusan consul in Cyprus, Antonio Rizzini, Giaxich & Company, a Ragusan factory in Cyprus, and Gerolamo and Antonio Callimeri, local merchants of Cyprus, all conducted commission trade on behalf of the Company merchants.

[429] Serdaroğlu, "The Evolution of Commercial Institutions and Business Networks in the Ottoman Empire," 277–87.

[430] Michael De Vezin, in *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus*, ed. Claude Delaval Cobham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 371.

as the British agent in Cyprus to collect the unpaid debts of the late consul.[431] Thus, the British already become dependent on local figures to carry out trade and manage other commercial affairs on the island.

Napoleon's Egyptian campaign changed the political landscape in the region and led to the joint Anglo-Ottoman military campaign against the French. These developments also increased the geostrategic significance of Cyprus with regards to the provisions for the British and Ottoman navies and the development of the London – Malta – Cyprus – Syrian coast transit trade route to bypass the French continental system. As a result of these new political and commercial circumstances, the British decided to strengthen their foothold in Cyprus. On 16 September 1799, Antoine Vondiziano, a Cephalonian merchant in Cyprus, was appointed as the British vice-consul of Cyprus, responsible for coordinating British commerce and provisions for the British navy.[432] For the post of dragoman, Sargis was chosen.

Sargis was one of the most influential merchants of Cyprus in the second half of the eighteenth century, whose family members were also involved in trade and served several European communities in Cyprus. As a provincial entrepreneur, Sargis's portfolio ran the gamut from credit extension to communities and local notables to commercial agriculture such as an arable field for dyeing stuff in Famagusta, and from estate management including shops and residential properties to philanthropic activities such as providing water through water-wells to the waqf of Aya Sofya-i Kebir Mosque (historically known as St. Sophia Cathedral; today Selimiye Mosque) in Nicosia.[433] His business networks and operations extended from

[431] KKMA, KŞS 21/271/Entry 2, Evāḫir-i Ṣafer 1208/September-October 1793. For Anton's willingness to be appointed and the British considerations, see TNA, SP 110/50, to Peter Tooke in Istanbul, 19 September 1792. Anton's name appears in another entry in the Ottoman registers of the British as the servant of Devezin which was presumably why he was chosen to take care of Devezin's debts on the island. See BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/180/941, Evāsıṭ-i Receb 1196/June 1782.

[432] KKMA, KŞS 22/71/Entry 1, Evāsıṭ-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1214/September 1799; KKMA, KŞS 23/47/Entry 4, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1214/November 1799.

[433] My knowledge of Sargis, son of Avag, was informed by the works of Antonis Hadjikyriacou and Ali Efdal Özkul upon which this section is built and to which I intend to contribute. See Hadjikyriacou, "Society and

Cyprus to Istanbul, and from Jerusalem to Venice. One account evidenced that he was involved in the cotton and silk trade with Venice.[434] Istanbul was central to his commercial dealings as the financial centre of the empire. For example, Sargis and a certain Stephan had dealings with an Armenian merchant called Agop in Istanbul before 1775.[435] He also served as the French dragoman in Cyprus between 1775 and 1798, and in this way, he expanded his business networks to Western Europe and improved his diplomatic skills.[436]

Moreover, Sargis had commercial and financial relations with the provincial authorities such as the *muḥaṣṣıl*, the bishops, and the infamous Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios who was the dragoman and the representative of non-Muslims in Cyprus.[437] His business connections in Istanbul helped these authorities transfer provincial revenues from Cyprus to the imperial capital. For instance, the late *muḥaṣṣıl*, ʿAbdülbāki Ağa[438], of Cyprus, was indebted 7395 *guruş* to Sargis and Avakim, son of Stepan, from 1783-84. In this case, the French had intervened on behalf of Sargis and managed to obtain an imperial order for the repayment of the debt. The fact that the Ottoman treasury raised the funds from the debtors of ʿAbdülbāki Ağa to pay off the debt attests to Sargis's involvement in the web of public finance between Cyprus and Istanbul.[439] Being well-versed in regional commercial dynamics and equipped with such extensive business connections rendered Sargis an ideal business partner for the British. It was

Economy on the Ottoman Island," 241–50; Ali Efdal Özkul, "Osmanlı İdaresinde Kıbrıs'ta Serkis Ağa Liderliğindeki Bir Ermeni Tercüman Ailesi ve Faaliyetleri (An Armenian Family of Dragomans (Translators) and Activities Led by Sarkis Aga in Cyprus Under the Ottoman Rule)," *Akademik Bakış* 14, no. 28 (2021): 225–46.

[434] KKMA, KŞS 23/44/1, 27 Şevvāl 1214/24 March 1800; Mehmet Demiryürek, "XIX Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Osmanlı-Nederlanda İlişkileri ve Nederlanda'nın Kıbrıs Konsolosluğu," *Kebikeç* 25 (2008): 146–48.

[435] BOA, A.{DVNS.AHK.CZRK.d, 5, Page 365/Entry 3, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1189/August 1775.

[436] KKMA, KŞS 20/99/2, 27 Muḥarrem 1189/30 March 1775; KKMA, KŞS 20/100/1, 27 Muḥarrem 1189/30 March 1775.

[437] Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 244; Özkul, "Osmanlı İdaresinde Kıbrıs'ta Serkis Ağa," 236.

[438] He was reported to have served as the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Cyprus for nine years between 1775 and 1785.

[439] KKMA, KŞS 21/64/1, 27 Ṣafer 1201/19 December 1786. On this issue, see Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 244. The debt was to be paid by the Ottoman treasury after the sum of 6643.5 *guruş* had been collected from the debtors of ʿAbdülbāki Ağa, see KKMA, KŞS 21/83/1, 13 Rabīʿülāḫir 1201/2 February 1787.

different local dynamics and regional developments that compelled the British to work with such a seasoned merchant and diplomat. This choice suggests a weak position of the British in local and regional power structures. It moreover indicates that the formation of the British-Sargis partnership was contingent on certain conditions. However, the appointment of Sargis would not be easy.

The Appointment of Sargis: A British Diplomatic Success?

On 12 October 1798, the British appointed Sargis as the British dragoman in lieu of Stefano Pisani, the late head-dragoman of the British ambassador in Istanbul.[440] Instead of taking up the post in Istanbul, he remained in Cyprus and became the honorary British dragoman. However, the Ottoman government denied the initial British application to the Porte to obtain a *berāt* for Sargis. He was among the list of French protégés in Cyprus whose *berāt*s were revoked and whose estates were seized by the Ottomans with the outbreak of the Franco-Ottoman War of 1798-1802 by the Ottoman ruling of 12 September 1798.[441] Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Ottoman subjects who became foreign protégés were believed to have caused unfair competition between the Ottoman subjects and reductions in state revenues because they enjoyed several judicial and fiscal privileges thanks to the Capitulations. The

[440] BOA, MFB/1241, 3 Cemāziyelāḫir 1213/12 November 1798. Etienne Stefano Pisani was one of the members of the Pisani family who served the British as dragomans over the eighteenth century. He took up his position in the British embassy in the 1760s and retained it until his death on 15 March 1797. For the Pisani family, see Castiglione, "Family of Empires".

[441] BOA, HAT 264/15333, undated (Evāḫir-i Zīlḥicce 1213/May-June 1799). "Fransalu ḥimāyesinde olarak yedlerine berāt ve evāmir virilenlerin berāt ve evāmir ḳuyūdu refʿ ve terḳīn ve reʿayānın düvel ḥimāyesine ilticādan tecennüb ve ibāları żımnında kendülere ʿibret olmak içün içlerinden baʿżısının sāʾir Françelü mesellü emvāl ve eşyāları żabṭ" [The deeds of appointments and orders given to French protégés shall be annulled and the properties and goods of some protégés shall be seized to serve as an exemplary in a bid to discourage the Ottoman non-Muslim subjects from taking refuge with European states]. See also Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 244. Hadjikyriacou related the revoke and confiscation to 'an unknown misdeed'; Özkul, "Osmanlı İdaresinde Kıbrıs'ta Serkis Ağa," 231; Vedat Turğut, "208 Numaralı Mühimme Defterinin Transkripsiyon ve Tahlili, 1798–1800 (H 1213–1215)" (master's thesis, Sakarya University, 2006), 81. The Porte issued an imperial order that the two French dragomans, including Sargis, and their servants shall not be imprisoned and their houses shall not be sealed off like the French consul and merchants on the island.

imperial memorandum of 1786 stipulated that the *berāt*-holders and their servants (sing. *ḫidmetkār*) should reside next to their respective consuls and not perform artisanship and trades in the local markets.[442] However, dragomans like Sargis and their servants remained quite active in trade, and it was difficult to disassociate them from their own business activities. In this context, the ruling of 12 September 1798 revoked the *berāt*s to discourage those from entering European service, flaunt Ottoman authority over its subjects and revenues, and punish the French for their actions. For this reason, the Ottoman government was not willing to confirm his appointment because by approving his new service, they would contravene both the Ottoman memorandum of 1786 and the ruling of 1798.

The British, however, committed to fighting the issue to the bitter end, even involving the Ottoman ambassador, İsmail Ferruh Efendi, in London. Eventually, the British succeeded in obtaining a Sultanic order for his appointment on 12 November 1798 and the release of his estates.[443] The involvement of the Ottoman ambassador in London in the Sargis affair implies a change in British-Ottoman imperial relations, moving away from Istanbul-based diplomatic engagements to the ones taking place in both Istanbul and London, with British diplomats lobbying the Ottoman ambassador for the issuance of Sultanic order in their favour. Without doubt, the British-Ottoman military alliance against the French and the success of the British navy in the eastern Mediterranean afforded the British the leverage to follow a firmer diplomacy with the Ottomans. Additionally, the presence of the Ottoman ambassador in London allowed for additional means to pressure the Porte. The business profile of Sargis when

[442] Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, 107–9. As shown in the previous section on Jirjīs ʿĀiʾda, the ban imposed on dragomans to be involved in local trades was introduced in 1709, yet it was not formally incorporated into the Capitulations. In this manner, the memorandum of 1786 was built upon, and formally recognized, previous Ottomans rulings with an addition to restrict the movement of dragomans and their servants.

[443] BOA, HAT 264/15333, undated (Evāḫir-i Z̲īlḥicce 1213/May-June 1799); BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d, 208/213, Evāḫir-i Şevvāl 1213/March-April 1799; Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 245. His date of appointment was provided in another imperial order, see BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d, 224/9, Evāsıṭ-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1221/June-July 1806. Also see TNA, SP 105/190, p. 90, 12 November 1798.

combined with the changing political landscape and commercial structure in the region explains why the British pressed hard to obtain the *berāt* for Sargis.

From a British viewpoint, this was a remarkable diplomatic success, having pressed the Porte to issue a *berāt* that breached their own previous ruling. Yet, looking from a broader perspective reveals a rather different picture. The Ottomans needed the British troops to carry out the campaign against the French, during which Cyprus became a significant strategic base for provisions. The security of Cyprus was also in jeopardy due to the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt.[444] If the Ottomans needed British military assistance to fight the French and protect the island with its enhancing geostrategic importance, the British then ought to have a strong agent in Cyprus to carry out British commerce thanks to the new trade opportunities and coordinate provisions for the British navy. Eventually, it was a *quid pro quo* arrangement. The paradox was that the British diplomatic success in coaxing the Ottomans into such an arrangement did not correspond to British commercial and imperial representation on the ground as they were dependent upon local merchants. Thinking of how the British and the Ottomans could benefit from this partnership allows us to see how imperial systems were dependent on interdependent, polycentric, and dynamic trans-imperial relations.

What was in this partnership for Sargis?

Having been stripped of his fiscal and judicial privileges, Sargis needed capitulatory protection for the recovery and maintenance of his status and estates. Immediately after his appointment, he also secured the post of British chief-dragoman of Cyprus for his son, Kirkor, in 1799 after

[444] Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 94–95; KKMA, KŞS 23/Page 34/Entry 2, 15 Ṣafer 1216/27 June 1801. "Ḳıbrıs cezīresiniñ mekāyid-i aʿdādan muḥāfaẓası" [to safeguard the island of Cyprus from the stratagems of the enemies].

the death of Yorgi, son of Nikolo, the British dragoman in Cyprus since 1772.[445] Another son of his, Avakim, also appeared as a British dragoman in 1801.[446] British protection would also likely increase his sway given the prominent role of the British in the Ottoman campaign against Napoleon, as reflected in the remarks, perhaps in an exaggerated fashion, of Lieutenant Colonel William Martin Leake, who joined the British fleet in Cyprus in 1800, that "Sarkes, who is an English *baratli*, and under that protection has amassed a considerable property, and lives in splendour…".[447] Although travel narratives contained exaggeration and bigotry, British protection contributed to Sargis' social network and opened alternative diplomatic and judicial channels to him.

These channels not only served to protect the personal and familial interests of Sargis, but also allowed the British to maintain trust in their relationship with Sargis. When there occurred a family dispute between Sargis and his brother's sons over the accounts of the company with, and the inheritances of, his late brother, Aretin, Sargis managed to strengthen his position by obtaining a *taḳrīr* from the British ambassador, Lord Elgin, for the Porte.[448] The diplomatic note supplemented other judicial documents which Sargis had procured from the Ottoman court in Nicosia. The fate of this family dispute remains unknown. It is telling, nevertheless, the extent to which Sargis made use of British diplomatic channels to defend his interests. British backing thus was a precondition for Sargis' future service to the British.

However, British aid went beyond a simple gesture of goodwill that cemented trust with Sargis. The economic and social capital of their dragomans, the faculties on which British commerce and representation depended, were also at stake. The initial division of the estates

[445] BOA, MFB/1233, 25 Z̲īlḥicce 1213/30 May 1799. Kirkor was also acting as the consul of Denmark in Cyprus, see Turğut, "208 Numaralı Mühimme Defterinin Transkripsiyon ve Tahlili," 155.
[446] BOA, TS.MAe/171/2, Evāḫir 1215/May 1801.
[447] William M. Leake, in *Excerpta Cypria*, 339.
[448] KKMA, KŞS 23/44/2, Evāḫir-i Z̲īlḥicce 1216/April-May 1802; BOA, C.ADL. 45/2737, 15 Z̲īlḥicce 1217/8 April 1803. For a further discussion on this dispute, see Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 246–47.

and effects of Sargis's late brother took place in 1800 in which Sargis was indebted 509.317 *guruş* 18 *para* to his brother and thus the inheritors. Sargis had paid the sum, the receipt of which was registered in the Ottoman court records of Cyprus in 1800. A few years later, however, the inheritors claimed that there were still outstanding loans to the company of Sargis and Aretin, for which they had debt certificates, with half of the debt remaining due to the inheritors. Although we cannot verify whether the initial sum paid by Sargis amounted to his entire debt and whether the debt certificates introduced by the inheritors were genuine, a matter of concern here was the running capital of Sargis who faced the threat of losing his assets. Furthermore, since the heirs accused Sargis of "using all sorts of injustice and obvious oppressions" to avoid paying the heir's shares from the company's accounts, his reputation was in jeopardy too.[449] The British economic interests and dignity in the region were deeply connected to their dragomans' interests. As such, various concerns associated with local dynamics shaped British engagements in the provinces and Istanbul. British economic power was intimately tied to the diplomatic skills and business networks of Sargis. Such connection compelled the British to engage in diplomacy in order to protect his partner's interests. Through these engagements, they repositioned themselves within the prevailing conditions and power dynamics.

A further examination of how Sargis was implicated in local power struggles not only suggests a potential British intervention, but more importantly shows the precarious positions the British and even the Ottoman government could find themselves in. During the infamous riot of 1804 in Cyprus, both Ottoman Muslim and non-Muslim authorities in Cyprus indicted Sargis for "evil actions through following the armoured bandits", meaning that he sided with the rioters against Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios.[450] Instigated by the power struggles between

[449] Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 247.
[450] KKMA, KŞS 24/78/1, 10 Rabīʿülevvel 1219/19 June 1804. "zırıh-ı eşkiyāyı müttebiʿtinden…sū-yi ḥareket".

provincial officials (the *muḥaṣṣıl*, palace dragoman, and archbishop) and a popular reaction, led allegedly by the Muslim elites, against the growing power and wealth of Ottoman non-Muslims, the rioters targeted Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios.[451] Interestingly, despite the alleged power struggle between Muslim and non-Muslim authorities, both strove to end the rebellion and even associated Sargis with the rebels, depicting a well-elaborated aspect of power struggles in Cyprus over the long eighteenth century that trespassed religious and ethnic boundaries.[452]

To absolve himself of the allegations, Sargis stated that "no matter how much his reputation is tarnished", he wanted to "be interrogated as required" to clear his name.[453] Ultimately, the Ottoman government found these allegations to be "lie and calumny" against Sargis.[454] We do not know whether Sargis helped the rioters and positioned them against Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios. Nor do we have an understanding as to why Sargis was blacklisted. We can speculate that some local authorities in Cyprus who had a conflict of interest with Sargis or were dissatisfied with him not being part of this turmoil sought ways to incorporate him and tarnish his standing in the heat of social and political unrest. On the other hand, Sargis may have tapped the situation to eliminate one of the most prominent players in the commercial and

[451] Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios was of Greek origin, the palace dragoman, and the representative of the non-Muslim community in the island. According to a record, he was serving as a dragoman since 1773/74 (for 35 years), see BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d, 226/20, Evāsıṭ-i Receb 1222/September 1807. During the absence of a dragoman in Cyprus, the Porte underscored the important role of dragomans in provincial governance, "ehālī ve reʿayāsının cizye ve tekālif-i sāʾirelerinin tevzīʿ ve taḥsīli ve her ḫuṣūṣlarının rūʾyet ve tanżīmi tercümana maḫṣūṣ olduġundan" [since the dragomans were responsible for the collection and delivery of the poll tax and other extraordinary imperial taxes from the inhabitants and non-Muslims [in Cyprus] and the management of all their matters]. For more on the riot, see Michalis N. Michael, "Local authorities and conflict in an Ottoman island at the beginning of the nineteenth century," *Turkish Historical Review* 2 (2011): 55–77.

[452] Marios Hadjianastatis, "Crossing the line in the sand: regional officials, monopolization of state power and 'rebellion'. The case of Mehmed Ağa Boyacığlu in Cyprus, 1685-1690," *Turkish Historical Review* 2 (2011): 155–76; Michael, "Local authorities and conflict in an Ottoman island," 57–77; Antonis Hadjikyriacou, "Local intermediaries and insular space in late-18th century Ottoman Cyprus," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 44 (2014): 427–456.

[453] KKMA, KŞS 24/78/1, 10 Rabīʿülevvel 1219/19 June 1804. "her ne ḳadar iʿtibār-ı derūn ẓuhūr gelmiş ise de medīne-yi mezbureye ḥīn ve rumūzda gerekdiği gibi taḥḳīk ve tecessüs olunub".

[454] Ibid., "ifk ü iftirādan ʿibāret olub".

political life in Cyprus. Putting all these questions aside, his willingness to be absolved is worth noting, showing his grasp of the importance of his reputation, a trait equally significant for the British. We could assume, albeit could not substantiate with available data at hand, that the British intervened on behalf of Sargis, for the Ottoman imperial order described him as "a resident of Nicosia and an active British dragoman".[455] The emphasis on his status and role as dragoman might have intended to increase the enforcement power of the imperial order in Cyprus. As such, thinking of why the dragomans demanded help from their European partners and why European factories intervened for their local partners shows the complexities of considerations and power dynamics at work. It was not only Sargis who found himself in a difficult situation, but also the British and even the Ottomans.

In the imperial order exonerating Sargis, the Ottoman government expressed their "positive inclination towards him [Sargis]".[456] This high esteem becomes revelatory when considering the value of his business portfolio for the British interests, which will be discussed in detail below, and the Ottoman administrative-fiscal system. So much so, in 1804, British vice-consul of Cyprus, Antoine Vondiziano, loaned 30,000 *guruş* to the archbishop and prelates of Cyprus to hire ships necessary for the transfer of troops and munitions from Anatolia to suppress the riot.[457] The vilification and conviction would endanger the loan since Sargis would probably mediate between the archbishop and prelates, on the one hand, and the British consul, the *muḥaṣṣıl*, and the Ottoman bureaucrats in Istanbul, on the other, given his financial connections with both sides. As such, the relationships between figures like Sargis and foreign consulates were not projects that undermined Ottoman sovereignty as traditional scholarship

[455] Ibid.
[456] KKMA, KŞS 24/78/1, 10 Rabīʿülevvel 1219/19 June 1804. "Kendisine ḥüsn-ü tevcihātımız olmağla".
[457] BOA, C.HR/101/5050, 26 Şaʿbān 1225. Harry Luke recited a letter written by Vondiziano to Bartolomeo Pisani in 1809 in which Vondiziano stated that he loaned 40,000 guruş, see Harry Luke, *Cyprus under the Turks 1571-1878: A Record Based on the Archives of the English Consulate in Cyprus under the Levant Company and After* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 128.

tended to claim. On the contrary, I suggest these relationships were often equally essential for the Ottoman government's objectives in the region. This revelation again points to overlapping imperial systems based on complex trans-imperial networks of relationships.

Serving the British in Different Capacities

Sargis assumed a significant diplomatic and commercial role for the British in the region.[458] Since the service of British factor marine or vice-consul in Iskenderun had been discontinued in 1783 British trade with Syrian port-cities was carried out through Cyprus.[459] Moreover, the growth in demand for cotton towards the end of the century gave an impetus to the expansion of European trade with Sidon and Acre. After holding Acre successfully against the forces of Napoleon, Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar expelled all French merchants from Acre. The British then immediately filled the gap by dispatching Luigi Pasquale Malagamba as British vice-consul to Acre in 1799.[460] This was a period in which new avenues for commercial expansion and political supremacy were emerging in the Mediterranean, to which the British were extremely responsive as reflected in the timing of assignments of Vondiziano, Sargis and Malagamba.

Apparently, Sargis was one of the key players in the London-Malta-Cyprus-Acre transit trade to bypass the continental blockade, a trade mostly dominated by local merchants enjoying British protection.[461] The inheritance registers of Sargis, who died in around 1810, reveal commercial links between these figures as Sargis was indebted an enormous amount of money

[458] When Edward Daniel Clarke, the British traveller, visited Cyprus in 1801, Sargis organised their audience with the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Cyprus. Clarke noted his amicable and ostentatious acceptance by the *muḥaṣṣıl*, see Edward Daniel Clarke, in *Excerpta Cypria*, 387.
[459] Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans*, 62, 65.
[460] Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 56–57; Bruce McGowan, "Âyanlar Çağı, 1699-1812," in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi*, vol. 2, eds. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (Istanbul: Eren, 2004), 851, 858; Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1995), 99.
[461] Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans*, 113.

to the British agents. Among his creditors were the British consul, Antoine Vondiziano, his wife, Nikola Vondiziano, and the British vice-consul in Acre, Luigi Pasquale Malagamba, with the largest British creditor being Antoine Vondiziano with 9730 *guruş*, followed by Pasquale Malagamba with 6720 *guruş*, and then by Nikola Vondiziano with 2797 *guruş*.[462] His inheritance registers also evidenced an immense amount of grain, barley, cotton, and carob stored in his warehouses.[463] We do not know how much, if any, of these goods belonged to the British. Based on his debts, we can nevertheless speculate that some of the goods might have been registered on British merchant's accounts.

Moreover, Sargis helped coordinate the communication between the Ottoman and the British authorities and the supply of the British navy during the Anglo-Ottoman campaign. Sargis was stationed in Nicosia, the seat of the provincial government, where he ensured the communication between many institutions and agents such as the Porte, provincial authorities, the British ambassador, the British navy, and British agents in Cyprus. A letter written by Antoine Vondiziano from Cyprus in 1799 to the British ambassador in Istanbul attests to his critical diplomatic role: At the request of Vondiziano, Sargis informed the ambassador, Spencer Smith, of a British warship, dispatched by admiral Nelson from Messina, that carried news for Sir Sidney Smith and provisions for the navy.[464] During the joint-campaign, Cyprus was the perfect victualling station for the Ottoman and the British fleets active in the region. In that regard, the Porte also dispatched several orders to Cyprus to provide the British navy with

[462] BOA, C.ML. 110/4890/1, 20 Z̲īlḳaʿde 1225/17 December 1810 (2 Muḥarrem 1226/27 January 1811).
[463] Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 249.
[464] Luke, *Cyprus Under the Turks, 1571-1878*, 118. From Antoine Vondiziano in Cyprus to Spenser Smith, the ambassador, in Istanbul on 26 November 1799. "je [Antoine Vondizione] recommande au Sieur Serkis, Berataire Anglais à Nicosie, pour vous dire, Excellence, que le transport Anglais, Valiant, No. 19, Captaine William Willis, mentionné dans ma d[re] très humble du 18, vient de Messine, expedié par l'admiral Nelson, avec de depêches pour mr. le commodore [Sir Sidney Smith], et quantité de provisions consistants en viande saleé de Boeuf, de porc, legumes, farine, vinaigre, et de munitions de guerre." [I recommend to Sir Serkis, an English berāt-holder in Nicosia, to tell you, Excellency, that the English transport, Valiant, No, 19, Captain William Willis, mentioned in my very humble [letter] of 18, comes from Messina, dispatched by the admiral Nelson, with some news for the commodore, and amount of provisions consisting of salted beef, pork, vegetables, flour, vinegar, and munitions of war.]

provisions such as grain, wheat, hardtack biscuits, and wine.[465] For example, the list of provincial expenses registered in the Ottoman court records of Cyprus listed hardtack biscuits that were prepared in Larnaca and Nicosia and then delivered to the British navy, and wine bought in Cyprus for the British navy.[466] There is no mention of Sargis' role in these orders. Nonetheless, one could imagine without exaggeration that Sargis as the British dragoman oversaw the processes of the production of hardtack biscuits and the transfer of provisions to the British navy.

Sargis served the British officially for seven years and seven months until his *berāt*, together with other British *berāt*-holders in other Ottoman provinces, was cancelled in June 1806.[467] The main reason for these cancellations was possibly the diplomatic crises in Istanbul during the War of the Third Coalition between 1805 and 1806. Throughout 1806, the Ottomans aimed at reinstituting good relations with France to counteract Russia's attempts to advance towards the Mediterranean and reinforce the Ottoman defence on the Danube, while Napoleon endeavoured to reestablish the Ottoman-French alliance against Russia and Britain, which were the two component parts of the Third Coalition against France and its client states.[468] In this regard, Horace Sébastiani, France's *ambassadeur extraordinaire* to the Porte, tried to convince

[465] KKMA, KŞS 23/15/Entry 1, 2 Zīlḥicce 1215/16 April 1801; KKMA, KŞS 23/20/Entry 1, 2 Ṣafer 1216/14 June 1801.
[466] KKMA, KŞS 23/31/Entry 1, undated, the lists of provincial expenses from 26 Muḥarrem 1216 to 17 Şaʿbān 1216/8 June 1801 to 23 December 1801.
[467] BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d 224/9, Evāsıṭ-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1221/June 1806; The revocation of his *berāt* was registered in the Ottoman court of Cyprus in August 1806, see KKMA, KŞS 24/175/Entry 1, 3 Cemāziyelāḫir 1221/18 August 1806. Harry Luke published a letter written by the British vice-consul in Cyprus to the consul-general in Istanbul about the revocations of the *berāt*s, see Luke, *Cyprus Under the Turks, 1571-1878*, 136–37. From Antoine Vondiziano in Cyprus to Isaac Morrier, the consul general, in Istanbul, 31 July 1806 "la venue du dernier commandement de la Porte, aussi prejudiciable que contraire aux capitulations, par lequel Elle vient arbitrairement de casser tous les Barats et firmans du Pays qui y sont veritablement attachés aux Consulats de Chypre. Parmi ces Barats il y en a deux qui nous appartiennent, l'un du S' Serkis Avaq, et l'autre de son fils Krikor" [the arrival of the last command of the Porte, both prejudicial and contrary to the capitulations, by which the Porte has just arbitrarily revoked all the berāts and fermāns of the nations which are originally attached to the consulates of Cyprus. Among these berāts there are two which belong to us, the one of Sir Serkis Avak, and the other one of his son Krikor].
[468] Stefania Costache, "At the end of Empire: Imperial Governance, Inter-Imperial Rivalry and "Autonomy" in Wallachia and Moldavia (1780s-1850s)" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Illinois, 2013), 59–63.

the Porte to oust the rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia. These two Ottoman principalities in the Balkans were important for the Ottomans due to their logistics and provisioning facilities. They moreover served as a buffer zone between the Ottomans and the Russians. Napoleon aimed at eliminating Russian influence in the Ottoman provincial administration. The Porte knew that ousting the two rulers would be firmly protested by the Russians and the British and might even lead to an open conflict between the Ottoman and the Russians and the British, in which case the British fleet could have played a vital role as the Ottomans witnessed when the British naval aid drove the French out of Egypt.[469] Therefore, the Porte did not renew its alliance with Britain and enacted the 1786 memorandum on the protection system in June 1806, two months before removing the two rulers from office in August 1806, as a means of asserting its authority over imperial revenues and subjects. In this way, it drew a new framework for inter- and trans-imperial relationships taking place within imperial systems and thus cut the ties between the British and their Ottoman partners. As long as the Ottoman and the British interests overlapped to some extent, the British managed to obtain an Ottoman *berāt* for Sargis's appointment in 1798. Yet the source of authority rested with the Ottomans. Thus, when the Ottoman and the British interests ceased to intersect, the Porte revoked the *berāt*s, thereby ruling out the possibilities for trans-imperial networks of relationships. These developments show how trans-imperial networks of relationship and imperial systems, which affected and were shaped by these relationships, were dependent on the prevailing conditions and imperial power dynamics. They moreover reveal the limits of British imperial power in the eastern Mediterranean, despite the intensifying British political clout in the region after the Napoleonic campaign of Egypt.

The emerging geopolitical and commercial dynamics opened avenues for the construction and flourishing of trans-imperial relationships. Yet these opportunities

[469] Ozan Özavcı, *Dangerous Gifts: Imperialism, Security, and Civil Wars in the Levant, 1798-1864* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 67–70.

disappeared when new historical conditions ushered in a new era of imperial relations in the eastern Mediterranean. The British, the Ottoman government, and Sargis all found something in these trans-imperial networks of relationships. The British had to consider the local conditions and power structures when deciding on their engagements in their relationships with Sargis. Hence, the nature of their engagements and the relationships that these engagements formed were constantly contingent.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has shown that imperial systems in the eastern Mediterranean were dependent not on a single imperial power, but rather on trans-imperial networks of relationships. These imperial systems produced diplomatic, social, and commercial processes that could only be maintained by relationships between various political and socio-economic actors from different backgrounds. The chapter has moreover revealed how both the formation of these complex relationships and the relationships themselves were contingent on local, regional, and global power structures. When actors entered these business partnerships or when they decided on their engagements within these partnerships, they constantly considered the short- and long-term consequences in terms of how they could benefit or be harmed as a result of their action choices.

The first introductory part of this chapter demonstrated how the Levant Company's commercial organisation and regulations, European and local competition, manifold local dynamics, and circumstantial expediencies compelled the British to enter contractual relationships with local figures who were far from being passive actors. They were wealthy and prestigious, seeking to improve their familial and personal standing in the provinces. The

Capitulations provided an institutional assurance for the establishment and maintenance of trust in the relationship between the British and their dragomans.

Each case study then considered the relationship between the British and their dragomans in different time frames with idiosyncratic historical conditions. The chapter on the Omiros family in Izmir has documented the family's longitudinal ties with the British, which resulted in the appointment of Geōrgios Omiros as the chief British dragoman in Izmir in the first half of the eighteenth century. During a critical period of the town's development, Geōrgios represented the British factory at the Ottoman court for various diplomatic, commercial, and social reasons. Pressing circumstances moreover forced the British factory and consul to become the tenants of the Omiros family. Of course, their past relationship played a big role in this new connection with the family. However, the landlord-tenant relationship further complicated the relationship between the British and the Omiros family because of the conflicting interests that emerged from time to time. The family benefited from their partnership with the British as they expanded their business and diplomatic networks which were sources of wealth and prestige. Furthermore, the dragomans sought to take advantage of different opportunities created by their partnerships with the British to further their familial and personal interests. Faced with these dynamics, the British sought to come up with solutions to navigate these conflicting interests and amend their position in the relationships and thus in Izmir.

Similar dynamics can easily be observed in other sections of the chapter. The chapter on Jirjīs ʿĀʾida demonstrated for example how a local merchant became an essential component of the British trading community and assisted them in various undertakings thanks to his economic capital, social networks, and commercial expertise. As the trade of Aleppo was becoming deteriorated during his tenure, Jirjīs became an extremely valuable asset for the British to lose. Several arguments he was embroiled in Aleppo and his business connections

occasionally hindered British trade and representation. His entanglements even caused negative views by different British actors towards him, and yet the British had to protect his interests and ensure that he remained active in trade. These dynamics speak strongly to the contingent nature of the British power in the provinces and of the relationships themselves.

The last section on Sargis has explored how the new geopolitical dynamics in the eastern Mediterranean compelled the British to employ Sargis as a seasoned entrepreneur in Cyprus. He became not only a nodal point in the emerging transit trade in the region, but also a crucial agent in Nicosia coordinating the communication between various commercial and political actors. His role in British service also proved to be beneficial to the Ottoman government, showing the extent to which imperial systems could derive benefit from trans-imperial relationships. Yet imperial systems were dependent on the prevailing conditions and imperial power dynamics, and hence constantly contingent. These dynamics moreover reveal the limits of British imperial power in the eastern Mediterranean, despite the intensifying British political clout in the region after the Napoleonic campaign of Egypt.

We also see that there were different credit relations between the British and their dragomans. The next chapter moves on to examine cross-cultural and trans-imperial financial relations and entanglements to understand how British commerce and the Ottoman commercial and fiscal systems functioned as well as revealing different forms of imperial power and instances of subtle power shifts in British-Ottoman imperial encounters.

CHAPTER 3: Cross-Cultural Credit: British Merchants, Ottoman Merchants, Communities, and Authorities in the Provinces

> since some merchants are heavily indebted to the British, a permission was sought for a diplomatic note asking for the collection and preservation of the debts in their imperial mint to protect them from irreparable loss occasioned by the death or bankruptcy of merchants and to obviate future needs to claim the debts, yet the debts were not able to be collected, or in any case, firmness was not able to be displayed in regards to the debts of the merchants since there is no command regarding the aforementioned debts in any honourable imperial rescript, so again courage is shown in seeking permission from the sovereign's whim: in this respect, if it could be ordered through [your] favour, the command and order is for Your Highness, my puissant, illustrious, lofty, benefactor of comfort.[470]

We have seen in Chapter Two that the Ottomans did not renew their alliance with the British in 1806 as they were leaning towards aligning themselves with the French. Meanwhile, from 1806 until January 1807, the British made attempts to dissuade the Ottomans from going to war with Russia, the ally of the British against Napoleonic France, to keep their campaign focused on France. Having failed to do so, the British ambassador, Charles Arbuthnot, secretly sailed from Galata towards the Dardanelles on 29 January 1807, an event which presaged the first Anglo-Ottoman War of 1807-1809. Geopolitical issues have been generally assumed to be the main causes of, and concerns during, inter-imperial tensions. Yet, the diplomatic note (*taḳrīr*) quoted above, which was submitted immediately after Charles Arbuthnot's departure, was not concerned with geostrategic issues, but with a commercial one: cross-cultural credit.

Penned with an assertive and yet courteous tone, the *taḳrīr* attributed the collection and preservation of the debts owing from Ottoman debtors to British merchants to the Porte's negligence, in that it failed to issue an emphatic imperial command in that regard. The already

[470] BOA, HAT 107/4212, Evāḫir-i Z̲īlḥicce 1221/February-March 1807, a *taḳrīr* submitted by British ambassador to the Porte. İngilterelünün baʿż-ı tüccār z̲immetlerinde ḫaylice maṭlūbātı olduğundan ol maḳūle tüccārın fevti veyāḫūd iflāsı mülāḥaẓasıyla maṭlūbāt-ı mezkūreniñ telefden şiyāneti ve baʿde-zamān iddiʿāyı müstelzim olmaması içün maṭlūbāt-ı merḳūmeniñ taḥṣīl ve żarbḫāne-yi ʿāmirelerinde ḥıfẓ olunması z̲ikr olunan taḳrīr-i çākirīde istīẕān olunmuş ise de şeref-rīz ṣudūr olan ḫaṭṭ-ı hümāyūnlarında maṭlūbāt-ı mezkūreye dāʾir irāde-yi şāhāneleri olmamaḳ cihetiyle taḥṣīl veyāḫūd ʿalā'l-ḥāle tüccār z̲immetlerinde terekküne cesāret olunamamağla tekrār ḫülyā-yı mülūkānelerinden istīẕāne cesāret ḳılınmanın bu bābda teveccühle irāde-yi seniyeleri būyurulūr ise emr ü fermān şevketlü, kerāmetlü, mehābetlü, ḳudretlü, velī-niʿmetim efendim pādişāhım ḫażretlerinindir.

issued imperial rescript in response to the previous *taḳrīr* had ordered the protection (*ḥıfẓ*) of British possessions (*emvāl*) and effects (*eşyā*), not the debts (*z̲immet*/*maṭlūbāt*). The timing of the *taḳrīr* indicates that the British ambassador capitalised on the mounting inter-imperial tension to induce, if not bully, the Porte to issue an order to protect British merchants' properties and finances. Having taken the *taḳrīr* under this geopolitical conjuncture into consideration, a senior official of the Porte penned an instructive marginal note on the top right corner of the document in question that commanded the collection of the debts and outlawed their spending. More perplexingly, it stated that if spent, "it might then bring trouble" (*taʿcīzi müntic olur*). The passive construction and incomplete immediate context of the remark make it difficult to identify the root of this trouble.[471] One thing seems clear, however: having learned a lesson from the French case in 1798 when the Porte seized the possessions of French merchants with the outbreak of the Franco-Ottoman War of 1798-1802, the British took the necessary precautions. The Porte, on the other hand, considered the issue potentially troubling, be it for the British or the Ottomans, and complied with the request.

The *taḳrīr* and marginal note alert us to some questions about credit relations in British-Ottoman trade. What was the function of British merchant capital in the provincial economies of the Ottoman Empire? When and why were the British concerned with debts? Where did power lie in such financial relations/transactions? Did any dependency accrue? Was there any dispute concerning credit between the British and Ottoman subjects that caused an escalation in inter-imperial tension over the eighteenth century?

Scholarship on Ottoman-European commerce has underscored the prevalence of commercial credit as a means of settling commercial transactions, balancing European trade

[471] Ibid. The marginal note: "düşirilüb ḥıfẓ oluna lākin bir aḳçesi ṣarf olunmasun sonra taʿcīzi müntic olur bir aḳçe ṣarf olunduğuna rıżām yoḳdur." [It should be [collected?] and preserved, but let not one asper be spent [since] it might then bring trouble; I [the sultan] do not consent to the spending of one asper]

deficits, accessing agricultural products, and raising money for personal profit.[472] These studies also consider local dynamics that entailed credit schemes and instruments such as bills of exchange and promissory notes in the empire. However, the role of cross-cultural financial structures and relations in imperial systems and their implications in inter- and trans-imperial relations remain understudied. Edhem Eldem was the first scholar who questioned "the extent to which the Ottoman fiscal system had become dependent on French traders and the bills of exchange they provided to local authorities in the provinces".[473] He concluded that French credit did not dominate Ottoman financial networks, rather it came to coexist with local financial networks, and French merchants relied as much on local credit networks as on their own for their commercial and financial operations.[474] Most recently, Ellen Nye has shown how Peter Whitcomb, a seventeenth-century English merchant in Istanbul, became involved in Ottoman financial-fiscal structures by providing loans to Ottoman officials in the empires' provinces and managing this business through Ottoman epistolary business culture and a variety of legal practices.[475]

[472] Gwilym Ambrose, "English Traders at Aleppo (1658-1756)," *The Economic History Review* 3, no. 2 (1931): 246–267; Halil İnalcık, "Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of Economic History* 29, no. 1 (1969): 139–40; Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 189–221; Masters, *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance*; Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*; Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "Trading practices in Aleppo in the middle of the 18th century: the case of a British merchant," *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 62 (1991): 123–132; Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 135–180; Dilek Desaive, "Transactions et Crédits à Chypre au XVIIE Siècle," *Association Pierre Belon/études balkaniques* 1, no. 5 (1998): 123–141; Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*; Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 141–173; Çiçek, "Diplomat, Banker ve Tüccar," 269-83; Kenneth M. Cuno, "Contrat Salam et Transformations Agricoles en Basse Égypte à l'Époque Ottomane," *Annales HSS* 61, no. 4 (2006): 925–940; Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on an Ottoman Island," 209–237; Demiryürek and Yazar, "Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kıbrıs'ta İngiltere Konsolosluğu (1700-1800)," 89–134; Ali E. Özkul, "Kıbrıs'ta İngiltere Konsolosluğu ve Faaliyetleri," in *Osmanlı Döneminde Akdeniz Dünyası*, eds. Haydar Çoruh, M. Ziya Köse, and M. Yaşar Ertaş (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayıevi, 2011), 303–351; Zoe A. Griffith, "Egyptian Ports in the Ottoman Mediterranean, 1760-1820" (Ph.D. Diss., the University of California, 2017).

[473] Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 130.

[474] Ibid., 113–173.

[475] Ellen M. Nye, "'A Bank of Trust': Legal Practices of Ottoman Finance Between Empires," *Journal of Early Modern History* 27 (2023): 502–525.

This chapter seeks to build upon this view to answer the questions outlined above. By situating British merchant capital and financial networks into the existing and developing Ottoman financial networks and commercial dynamics, the first section of this chapter argues that British capital and networks emerged as much out of necessity as a profitable investment method, thus becoming an integral part of provincial economic structures and fiscal-financial mechanisms in the long eighteenth century. The second section considers the forms of credit in conjunction with the risk attached to credit and the perceptions of trust to reveal the social and economic benefits accrued to both lenders and borrowers. Further, it pays attention to debt reclamation processes, showing that despite the obligation networks of credit and legal procedures in place that might have placed Ottoman borrowers at a disadvantage vis-à-vis British lenders, Ottoman debtors were not passive players, nor was the enforcement power of the Ottoman state omnipotent. The third section then examines the credit relations between British merchants and provincial officeholders, revealing that the British provided officeholders with merchant capital and financial instruments. Both parties enjoyed several benefits from such relations and dealings, and yet, the British were far away from asserting economic and symbolic dominance over the officeholders. Finally, the concluding remarks summarise the findings of the chapter while discussing whether and when the top British officials took exceptional measures to ensure the security of British financial capital in the Ottoman Empire over the eighteenth century.

Placing British Merchant Capital into Ottoman Provincial Economies

> In Aleppo and Constantinople…those who want to draw or remit on Germany, Sweden, Denmark…have their correspondents in Amsterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg, there is only England

> or the most by bankers and merchants of the towns of France where considerable production and trade are taking place that draw the bills and make the remittances directly.[476]

This remark from a French Levant merchant possibly in the early eighteenth century demonstrates a well-established financial network between England and major commercial centres in the Ottoman Empire at the time thanks to the development of trade connections and financial instruments in England and the ways in which it worked quite differently with various Europeans commercial centres.[477] Pewterers' Hall, the Salters' Hall, the Sword-Blade coffee house at 10 Birchin Lane, and John's coffee house on Cornhill in central London housed both the Levant Company meetings and the company treasurers and merchants where the business of trade with the Ottoman Empire was handled.[478] British merchant capital and financial networks overlapped with Ottoman fiscal systems—viz., the mechanisms associated with provincial revenue apportionment, collection, and remittance processes—that had been developing from the seventeenth century and provided an alternative source of capital within provincial economic structures. Two articles of the 1580 Capitulations granted to the British provided a legal framework for credit relations of British merchants in the empire. However, the Levant Company introduced several regulations over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to prohibit credit transactions and bullion exports in the Ottoman Empire to encourage British exports. Yet, most, if not all, British merchants breached these regulations and used credit transactions for various practical reasons, which will be examined below.

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[476] Cited in E. Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul*, pp. 165–166, fn. 43. "A l'Alep et à Constantinople…ceux qui veulent tirer ou remettre en Alemagne, en Suède, en Dannemark…ont leur correspondance à Amsterdam, à Anvers, à Hambourg, il n'y a que Englettere [sic] ou la plus par des banquiers et des négotiants des villes de France où il se fait des manufactures et un commerce considérables [qui] font les traites et remises directement." The translation is mine.

[477] Craig Muldrew, "The Social Acceptance of Paper Credit as Currency in Eighteenth-Century England: A Case Study of Glastonbury c. 1720–1742," in *Financing in Europe Evolution, Coexistence and Complementarity of Lending Practices from the Middle Ages to Modern Times*, eds. Marcella Lorenzini, Cinzia Lorandini, D'Maris Coffman (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 135–161.

[478] For a bill drawn from London to Aleppo via the treasurer at the Sword-Blade coffee house, see TNA, SP 110/74, 5 March 1762 and Appendix V. For other gathering places, see Wagner, "Companies, Commerce and Politics," 85–86.

The fourth article of the 1580 Capitulations, which was re-interpolated in the 1675 version, stated that:

> if any Englishman who is either indebted or act as surety flees from the empire or goes bankrupt, the debt shall be demanded from the debtor; anyone whose surety cannot be proven by the plaintiff via an authentic act at hand shall not be held accountable for the debt [of anyone else].[479]

The Capitulations stipulated that no British merchant could be held responsible for someone else's debt, unless proven otherwise. Despite their unilateral principle, the Capitulations assumed a reciprocal character over the seventeenth century. Thus, the Porte disassociated Ottoman subjects, or perhaps even itself, from the debts of other people. As we will see, this article conditioned the British-Ottoman credit relations. Moreover, the fifth article stated that:

> British merchants, translators and brokers of Britain and its dependencies may, if they wish, go to the local judges to record their matters in the court registers to procure proofs relating to trade and trading on credit, commerce and sureties, and other legal matters in the Well-Protected Domains. [480]

The Capitulations therefore empowered and even obligated the kadis to register credit contracts and settle debt cases in local courts. This legal framework established trust mechanisms between market players and encouraged international trade of the empire, in that currency was scarce in the Ottoman Empire and credit was essential to carry out everyday business activities.

[479] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 035/1/Page 3/Article 4. İngilterelünün biri medyūn veyāḫūd kefīl olub firār iderler ise veyā müflis olur ise deyn borcludan ṭaleb olunub elinde müddaʿīniñ hüccet-i şerʿīye ile kefīl olmayacaḳ āḫar kimesne tutulub deyn-i mezbūr āḫarden ṭaleb olunmaya.

[480] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 035/1/Page 3/Article 5. İngiltere ve oña tābiʿ olan yerlerin bāzirgānları ve tercümānları ve simsārları ile memālik-i maḥrūsede beyʿ ve şirā ve vīresi ve ticāret ve kefālet ḫuṣūṣları ve sāʾir umūr-ı şerʿīyeleri vāḳiʿ olduḳda murādları olur ise ḳāżīya vārūb ṣebt-i sicil ittirüb hüccet alalar

This framework moreover helped the development of the British financial network between Britain and the Ottoman Empire with the foundation of the Levant Company.

By 1595, the Turkey Company and the Venice Company had merged to form the Levant Company as a regulated company. After paying a membership fee, merchants became members of the Company, namely freemen, and traded at their own expense and risk, being subject to the Company's regulations of trade.[481] Freemen formed partnerships with other freemen or non-freemen settled in Britain and outposts in the eastern Mediterranean. The British factories stationed in Ottoman cities combined commission trade with their private trade and assumed full legal responsibility for their commercial operations. In this commercial organisation, credit arrangements were common between the British principals in Britain and their factors in the Ottoman Empire.

The Levant Company intended to encourage the sale of British exports while promoting the purchase of Ottoman goods, thus favouring barter transactions in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the Company banned all credit dealings in the Ottoman Empire initially in 1612 on the grounds that credit arrangements hindered the sale of British products, especially British woollen products, in the Ottoman domains and that credit activities could drag British factories into undesired situations and result in their financial loss.[482] The latter point alludes to the incapacity of the British in these relations to recover their debts. This ban was re-issued after the re-establishment of diplomatic-commercial relations in 1661. The 'Oath against Trusting' in 1672 prohibited:

> sell[ing] or barter[ing] upon Trust for my own or any English-man's account…tak[ing] in payment or in pawn as security for goods sold or bartered…any Temesooks, Mery

[481] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 21–23; Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans*, 14; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 23.
[482] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 213. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 214, fn. 4.

> [mīrī] Tescarees, Beghlar Tescarees, Sebeb Takrirs [taḥrīr], Hojets, or any assignments or other writing or writings of what nature soever of or from any person or persons of what nation so ever.[483]

This chapter will show that this regulation was at variance with local conditions of trade that compelled British merchants to breach this prohibition. The Company issued a revised version of this ban in 1702 to allow merchants to sell Ottoman, Persian, and Indian goods that might not be proper for the British market on credit.[484] By doing so, it hoped to allow more flexibility to merchants who might be involved in private trade at their own risk and discourage them from entering credit relations with the Ottomans, but to little avail. As the British consul of Aleppo noted, "it is impossible for any Consul to distinguish what Goods belong to y^{e} Factors, & what to y^{e} Principalls [*sic*]".[485] Therefore, for the goods bound for Britain, merchants could well claim that the goods traded on credit were for their private trade in the Ottoman Empire and thus contravened the regulation.

Although this ban was finally lifted in 1744, British merchants continued to trade on credit and lending in the Ottoman Empire as much out of necessity as a lucrative investment method even prior to 1744. The reasons were closely associated with a) the development of Ottoman fiscal mechanisms from the late seventeenth century onwards; b) the balance of British trade in the Ottoman Empire, and c) other local commercial dynamics. The dynamics of Ottoman fiscal mechanisms and local political economies were both related to and shaped by new methods of provincial administration and revenue collection systems. As previous chapters have shown, more and more semi-private entrepreneurs such as governors, local notables, and merchant-financiers were involved in the business of provincial administration

[483] Cited in Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople: A Record of Sir John Finch's Embassy, 1674-1681*. For the whole text see Appendix VII.
[484] Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople: A Record of Sir John Finch's Embassy, 1674-1681*, 398.
[485] TNA, SP 110/23, the British consul of Aleppo to the Levant Company headquarters in London, 22 October 1703.

in the eighteenth century. They formally or informally contracted with the state or state functionaries and acquired public offices by assuming the responsibility of revenue collection in, and remittance from, provinces/districts/villages.[486] Thus, while providing credit to the state, they became indebted to it until all the accounts were settled. Meanwhile, communities consented to become indebted to these contractors who agreed to pay communal expenses on their behalf in advance.[487] After incurring these expenses, contractors met with community leaders at the district courts to settle accounts by apportioning the total amount incurred from a district community. Then, the community leaders went to their localities to collect their apportioned shares in cash or kind to reimburse the officeholders.[488]

Usually, provincial communities were short of money or would not be willing to dispose of their liquid assets. Therefore, local entrepreneurs also extended credit to communities, who would repay their debts in kind and/or in cash. Similarly, these entrepreneurs worked with financiers (*ṣarrāf*s/*simsār*s) who provided funds and sureties to them.[489] Research revealing these complex processes contends that such intricate obligation networks between various actors brought about collective processes of Ottoman public finance that helped tether the Ottoman Empire together.[490] The need for money by both provincial communities and

[486] Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Ekonomi*, 95–183, 186–198; Özvar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Malikane Uygulaması*; Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım*, 34–74; Ariel Salzmann, "An ancien régime revisited: "Privatization" and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire," *Politics & Society* 21, no.4 (1993): 393–424; Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*.

[487] Evgeni Radushev, "Les Dépenses Locales dans L'empire Ottoman aux xviiie siècle selon les données des registres de cadi de Ruse, Vidin et Sofia," *Études Balkaniques* 3 (1980): 74–94; Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım*; Yücel Özkaya, "XVIII. Yüzyılın Sonlarında Tevzi Defterlerinin Kontrolü," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1 (1981): 135–155; L. Sevinç Küçükoğlu, "New Fiscal Actors to Control Provincial Expenditures at the End of the 18th Century," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 54 (2019): 241–276.

[488] Radushev, 'Les Dépenses'; Salzmann, "An ancien régime revisited"; Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım*; Özkaya, "XVIII. Yüzyılın Sonlarında Tevzi Defterlerinin Kontrolü"; Antonis Anastasopoulos, "Imperial Institutions and Local Communities: Ottoman Karafarye, 1758–1774" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Cambridge, 1999), Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 117–56.

[489] Yavuz Cezar, "The Role of the Sarrafs in Ottoman Finance and Economy in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, vol. 1, eds. Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 61–76; Ali Yaycıoğlu, "Perdenin Arkasındakiler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sarraflar ve Finans Ağları Üzerine bir Deneme," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 51 (2019): 375–96.

[490] Salzmann, "An ancien régime revisited," 395; Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 79.

officeholders was one of the causes of the integration of British financial networks into provincial economies through various credit relationships with different segments of Ottoman society. I contend that British financial networks helped sustain the link between the provinces and the empire's capital. These dynamics reveal how British commercial systems and Ottoman fiscal-financial systems overlapped, which suggests the trans-imperial nature of different dimensions of imperial systems.

The balance of British trade in the empire was another determinant of this process. Over the eighteenth century, the British had a trade deficit in the provinces as the export of Ottoman goods from the provinces exceeded usually the value generated through the sale of British imports. Big commercial centres, especially Istanbul, however, provided a surplus as the proceeds of sales exceeded the amount of Ottoman exports.[491] In this disequilibrium between imports and exports, coins and bullions imported into the empire supplemented barter transactions and balanced trade in the provinces from the 1680s. However, in 1718, the Company banned the exportation of coins and bullion by reason of hindering the sale of British cloths.[492]

Although such traffic continued, albeit arguably less in volume, other viable alternatives were needed: financial structures and instruments. British merchants channelled their capital from Britain to the Ottoman Empire and between British trading factors from places of trade surplus to places of trade deficit in the empire. In this way, they not only maintained their investments in the provinces as they were waiting for the realisation of the returns in Britain and the consignment of a new batch of goods, but they also balanced their

[491] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 189–206; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 72–75, 91–92.
[492] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 192.

trade deficit. Such money transfers were made via bills of exchange.[493] Yet, in order to get the bills of exchange negotiated, there had to be a demand for bills.

As far as the remittances between British merchants are concerned, the accounts were settled between British Levant merchants themselves or with their correspondents, in that most British merchants trading in different provinces conducted commission trade on the same merchants' behalf in Britain. For example, Samuel Bosanquet in London gave the factor of Turner and Baldwin in Cyprus a commission of 8000 *guruş* to invest in silk. To fulfil the commission, the factor drew a bill on Thomas Lansdown in Aleppo on Samuel Bosanquet's account. Thomas Lansdown who was possibly indebted to the factor in Cyprus would then accept the bill and invest in silk, thereby assuming the responsibility of the commission. As a result, the factor as a drawer of the bill would complete his commission, while Thomas Lansdown would clear his debt to the factor.[494] Such drawings helped British merchants fulfil their commissions, maintain their investments, and balance their trade.

Regarding British capital transfers from places of surplus such as Istanbul to places of deficit such as the provinces, it was the monetary flows in the opposite direction that facilitated such remittances. Such a movement had already existed in the Ottoman Empire through provincial revenue transfers to the capital of the empire. Hence, the demand for bills was created by provincial officeholders.[495] When Samuel Palmer and William Lupart, a newly established merchant-house in Cyprus, could not sell their goods due to the modest market there, they asked George Radcliffe, their associate in Aleppo, for a bill of 2000 *guruş* payable to them for investment in Cyprus. More significantly, they wanted the bill drawn on George

[493] For a study of bullion exports and bill of exchanges in British 'dependencies in South Asia and 'colonies' in the Atlantic, see Jacob M. Price, "What Did Merchants Do? Reflections on British Overseas Trade, 160-1790," *The Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 2 (1989): 267–284.
[494] TNA, SP 110/38, Thomas Lansdown in Aleppo to Turner and Baldwin in Cyprus, 3 August 1765. For further information on money remittances between British merchants, see Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 203–6.
[495] Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 113–47.

Radcliffe's correspondent in Istanbul since provincial authorities in Cyprus were demanding bill of exchanges on Istanbul to remit provincial revenues to the imperial treasury during harvest season.[496] As the Ottoman fiscal mechanisms developed, the harvest period naturally became the season for provincial revenue transfers to Istanbul whereby provincial authorities collected their debts either in kind or in cash from the communities and remitted them to the treasury or state-functionaries via bills of exchange. Thus, it was a win-win negotiation: foreign merchants sold their bills for cash for their investments and provincial authorities obtained bills drawn on Istanbul for their remittances.

Alternatively, if British merchants trading in places of a surplus could find someone there willing to buy their bill of exchanges, they could sell and draw the bill on their correspondents in places of a deficit. For example, on March 14, 1698, Sherman Witkin in Istanbul sold a bill of 1300 *guruş* to the customs officer there at interest and drew the half amount, 650 *guruş*, on his correspondent, Edward Pilkington, in Izmir. The customs officer instructed his customs officer in Izmir to pay the sum to Pilkington when it became due in thirty-one days.[497] Such remittances by way of Ottoman financial networks integrated British merchant capital and networks into a wider Ottoman financial structure.

What is more, a negative balance of trade in the provinces translated into a lack of ready money on the part of the British. Financial wherewithal was necessary to not only maintain investments while waiting for the realisation of the returns in Britain, which could take years, but also bear various expenses incidental to trade such as brokerage, packing, and portage. Therefore, besides trading on account with their correspondents, British merchants, who had sufficient funds and were risk-takers, were engaged in lending activities with the Ottomans to

[496] HALS, DE/R/B 30/3, 5 August 1717. Harvest season for silk commenced in late April and they appeared in markets in early June.

[497] This bill in Ottoman Turkish script was reproduced in Thomas Vaughan, *A Grammar of the Turkish Language* (London, 1709), 8–9. The bill is dated 14 March 1698 and was endorsed by the customs officer in Izmir on 12 May 1698. For a copy of this reproduction, see Appendix IV.

raise money in order to discharge intermediary charges, clear off other debts, and invest in commodities. Alternatively, they also borrowed from well-off people including the Ottomans.

In addition to money transfers and lending activities, various financial schemes and instruments further entrenched British capital and networks in local economies owing to local commercial dynamics. As the international trade of the Ottoman Empire grew over the long eighteenth century, local producers and merchants developed ways to trade with foreign merchants to protect their assets and accumulate wealth. Often, local merchants capitalised upon intra-European competition over exports into the Ottoman Empire. The oft-noted British commodity that was negatively affected because of this competition was British woollen products.[498] Their relative unpopularity in Ottoman markets drove their barter prices high, that is their European counterparts undersold them, thus raising the prices of Ottoman goods against British exports from the late 1720s onwards. This in turn produced a domino effect, in that more expensive Ottoman exports became less competitive in Britain, for which British manufacturers and merchants raised the prices of British cloth to compensate for their loss. Thus, an Aleppo merchant noted that "since returns have been so bad, and forced a rise upon Cloth, the Shopkeepers take away no more than they have a pres[d] occasion for, and where we used to receive a purse of money now, are glad to see an [*sic*] hundred Dollars at a time."[499] The difficulty in selling British cloth hampered their investments.

To diversify exports and facilitate barter transactions, British merchants incorporated what they called 'money articles' such as indigo, cochineal, and pepper obtained from their colonies and trading stations in the Caribbean and South Asia.[500] The fact that the British

[498] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 96–133; Ralph Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East, 1580-780," in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East from the Rise of Islam to the Present Day*, ed. Michael A. Cook (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 193–206; Eldem, "French Trade and Commercial Policy in the Levant in the Eighteenth-Century," 27–28.
[499] HALS, DE/R/B 206/1, 10 February 1736-1 March 1736.
[500] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 197; Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 113–47.

imported these commodities from their colonial settlements and trading stations because they were saleable for cash in the Ottoman realms indicates inter- and trans-imperial trading networks and transactions in the region. Yet even these goods might not be adequate to assist in transactions. The main problem in this regard was the scarcity of money in the provinces which hindered the sale of British exports. Other market dynamics such as European competition and harvest issues also affected British commerce. Peter Shaw, a British merchant in Aleppo, wrote, for example, that "silk has been so scarce and dear this year that Cloth and Pepper would not purchase it".[501]

Moreover, Ottoman traders and customers improved their judgements about British colonial products, so much so that a British merchant described them as "the perfect judges of Indigo" to emphasise their knowledge about colonial products and their force in bargains.[502] As a rule, local merchants determined barter prices based on the valuing of Ottoman exports in conjunction with foreign imports. For instance, local merchants could wait and not engage in buying British cloths until the arrival of new consignments at the market because the accumulated stock would raise the value of silk at the market by reducing that of cloth.[503] Such strategies helped local merchants protect the value of Ottoman exports since European products bartered would not be converted easily into cash.

Trading with ready money could avert this disadvantage by striking cut-price deals. As mentioned, however, the British suffered from the lack of money and devised strategies to channel and raise funds. Here, various moneylending methods such as *salam* (forward-purchase) contracts and financial instruments such as bills of exchange and promissory notes

[501] TNA, C 113/12/N/A, from Peter Shaw in Aleppo to Mitford and Fry in London, 19 February 1750.
[502] TNA, SP 110/37, from Thomas Lansdown to Humphrys and Barker in Galata, 22 December 1762.
[503] For some examples, see TNA, C 113/12/N/A, from Richard Stratton in Aleppo to John Mitford and Charles Fry in London, 9 October – 1 November 1748; TNA, C 113/12/37, from Daniel and James Fremeaux in Izmir to John Mitford and Charles Fry in London, 31 October 1743.

came into play. Such methods and instruments offered as many advantages to local merchants/producers as to British merchants.

Having established such complex and yet interrelated dynamics to draw a framework of the role of British merchant capital within Ottoman provincial economies, the next section focuses more closely on the multiple forms of credit relations the British had with Ottoman subjects to explore the nature of power dynamics in such relationships.

British Merchants, Ottoman Subjects and Communities

> [T]here always is a joint Interest account with the Ragione can it possibly be otherwise, have not you even several Debtors in that old balance sent you for money at Interest to our Ragione & do not you know that that Method of lending money at Interest is Continued; yet you think you are not Concerned with Beraud freres, who have owed us that sum or more ever since we have been a Ragione, but you will be informed when I lend for the Ragione's account, I won't take upon me to do it, for most of the money we lend on our joint is to silk People or others with whom we have other dealings & is not a fix'd Sum lend as in your time, but generally lent & paid in odd Sums at a time…[504]

The passage above from a commercial correspondence penned by Richard Stratton, a British merchant in Aleppo, in 1741 mentioned not only the loans at interest despite the Company's prohibition, but also the prevalence of the *salam* method of moneylending between British merchants and local merchants. The mechanism of the *salam* contract involved the advance purchase of goods prior to the harvest season by the first party for their future delivery by the second party at a reduced price.[505] Seven years later, Stratton noted this time the risks attached to moneylending by writing that "that great part of the little money I have got on this Country has been by Trade, & not so much from my Commission or lending money, having lost by the

[504] HALS, DE/R/B 226/111A, Richard Stratton in Aleppo to Arthur Radcliffe in London, 12 October 1741
[505] Cuno, "Contrat Salam et Transformations Agricoles," 925-940; Beshara Doumani, "Le contrat salam et les relations ville-campagne dans la Palestine ottomane," *Annales HSS* 61, no. 4 (2006): 9901–24.

latter."[506] British merchants were engaged in often credit relations with Ottoman subjects and provincial communities whether as lenders or borrowers. Through such relationships, they ensured access to goods and established business networks in the provinces. Yet any form of credit contained a serious element of risk. Thus, trust was at the centre of these relations. Repayment of debts was a challenging problem for the British over the century. Deaths or bankruptcies of Ottoman debtors hindered debt recoveries. Furthermore, the agency of Ottoman debtors in diplomatic and judiciary processes limited British leverage in these processes and thus their commercial success in financial relationships.

Risk, Trust, and Forms of Credit

An eighteenth-century merchant would say, "[b]etter a loss at sea than a bad debt at land".[507] The developing English maritime insurance market created an efficient system of indemnification for losses at sea occasioned by imperfect market information in far-flung maritime trade and by the perils of sea such as shipwrecks and pirates and privateer prey.[508] Navigating credit relations and financial loss on land entailed however a different *modus operandi* whereby merchants had to learn about the practicalities of local law and court proceedings and improve their skills for evaluating the trustworthiness of potential business partners to eliminate the risks attached to credit as much as possible. This section therefore examines forms of credit in conjunction with the elements of risk and the notion of trust.

[506] TNA, C 113/12/N/A, from Richard Stratton in Aleppo to John Mitford and Charles Fry, 9 October 1748
[507] North, *The Lives*, vol. II, 50.
[508] Adrian B. Leonard, "Contingent commitment: The Development of English marine insurance in the context of New Constitutional Economics, 1577-1720," in *Questioning Credible Commitment: Perspective on the Rise of Financial Capitalism*, eds. D'Maris Coffman, Adrian Leonard, Larry Neal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 48–75; Adrian B. Leonard, "Underwriting Marine Warfare: Insurance and Conflict in the Eighteenth Century," *International Journal of Maritime History* 25, no. 2 (2013): 173–185; For maritime insurance contracts of the Radcliffe family, see HALS, DE/R/B 293/16, 3-5 April 1714; HALS, DE/R/B 293/27, 5-6 March 1715; HALS, DE/R/B 293/35, 3-4 October 1716.

Despite the prevalence of commercial credit in the Ottoman Empire, analysing the forms of credit is an onerous task. Commercial correspondence of British Levant merchants frequently speaks of 'lending/laying money at interest', whereas Ottoman Turkish documents refer to moneylending as *istiḳrāż and istidāne* or as *cihet-i ḳarż-ı şerʿīden…alacak haḳḳı olmak*. Yet, most documents did not specify the purpose of loans, the method of repayment, and whether any interest was charged on the loan. A merchant might note that he lent at interest and yet he might not detail whether he loaned goods or money or financial instruments, or whether the repayment be made in cash or kind. Notwithstanding these limitations, this section highlights various methods of credit to explore their functions in provincial economies and the implications of such transactions in inter-imperial commercial relations.

Polhill, Barker, and Morse, a merchant-house in Izmir, noted in August 1714 that both Europeans and local merchants were selling their cloth on credit to shopkeepers who, for this reason, were no longer visiting British warehouses.[509] Nearly a year later, the same factor expanded upon their disadvantageous position against other market players and hinted that British merchants in Izmir would "breach their Oath" under these trading conditions.[510] Obviously, British methods of trade were contingent upon local commercial dynamics such as market competition and consumer purchasing power in the provinces, and it was these dynamics that compelled the British to breach the Company regulations and adopt prevailing trading methods in the empire. In their first year in Cyprus, Samuel Palmer and William Lupart had difficulty in bartering their products against Cypriot goods owing to a modest market there. Having observed other merchants' investment methods, they thought fit to lend 2000 or 3000 lion dollars out to local merchants annually for a period of five to nine months at 20 percent

[509] HALS, DE/R/B 125/6, from Polhill, Barker, and More in Izmir to Ralph Radcliffe in London, 20 August 1714.
[510] HALS, DE/R/B 125/13, from Polhill, Barker, and More in Izmir to Ralph Radcliffe in London,7 June 1715.

interest to be paid in silk.[511] This was the quintessential *salam* method. In this method, the advance payer had to trust the borrower or supplier to provide the goods on time, and there was always a risk as far as the repayment was concerned. The death or bankruptcy of borrowers could impede repayments. Debtors could also seek to postpone or cancel their obligations either in informal negotiations or court proceedings. Merchants would therefore arrange these schemes in such a way as to reduce the risk of financial failure. For instance, Palmer and Lupart distributed their capital in small sums to different merchants via bills of exchange, thus spreading the risk around. In this case, the creditors were the payees by which they secured supplies of silk. However, the repayment would have been directed to other merchants, be they British, European, or Ottoman, by making the bills payable to them to settle accounts. Yet this also created a complicated credit nexus that might affect several people's solvencies. Due to this connection, one should also be mindful when studying the Ottoman records as any creditor figuring in the registers might not suggest the actual creditor, but instead the final payee.

Secondly, Palmer and Lupart charged 20 percent interest due to the risk involved in repayments. In practice, such interest charges were designed to allow for discounts in repayments.[512] Interest rates in the Ottoman Empire ran the gamut from 7 up to 70 percent, which rendered moneylending extremely profitable as long as they were repaid.[513] Yet the fact that higher interest corresponds to the risks involved meant that it was equally perilous for the lenders. Therefore, British merchants demanded commercial-legal documents such as payment

[511] HALS, DE/R/B 31/5A+5B, from Palmer and Lupart in Cyprus to George Radcliffe and Everard Fawkener in Aleppo, 27 December 1717-5 January 1718.

[512] The *salam* method of moneylending involved legal artifice by which interest charges were concealed through discounts for advance payments. See Timur Kuran, *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 149.

[513] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 210, 217; Ronald C. Jennings, "Loans and Credit in Early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records: The Sharia Court of Anatolian Kayseri," *Journal of The Economic and Social History of the Orient* 16, no. 2/3 (1973): 184; Desaive, "Transactions et Crédits à Chypre au XVIIE Siècle," 123–141; Elena Frangakis-Syrett, ed., "Networks of Friendship, Networks of Kinship: Eighteenth-Century Levant Merchants," in *Trade and Money: The Ottoman Economy in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2007), 217; Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 150–51.

receipts (*temessük*, singular), notes (*tezkere*, singular) vouching for the payment of the debts, and court testimonies (*hüccet*, singular), which they obtained after registering their contracts at local courts. The Capitulations encouraged British merchants to obtain such written documents so that they could claim their debts. As will be shown, merchants were familiar with not only the risks but also the diplomatic-judicial channels available to them. Such an awareness enabled them to request additional securities that were not stipulated in the Capitulations. In high-risk cases, for example, British merchants included collaterals in the contracts whereby the borrower could pledge (*rehn*) his/her (im)moveable property, of which the lender could take either the possession or the proceeds of the sale in the event of a default. These securities were also registered in local courts and both parties were given *hüccet*s.[514] While this issue will be dealt with later in the section, here it suffices to say that local courts could treat the collateral differently in the provinces, which might have affected how the British used such guarantees.

Thirdly and perhaps more importantly, they secured a future delivery of Ottoman goods at a cut-price thanks to the interest charges, regardless of whether the prices of these goods increased over the arranged period. Such investments in agricultural produce in the provinces then helped link supply in British or other foreign markets to demand at the source of production.[515] Thus, besides assisting British exports from the Ottoman Empire, commercial credit fostered international market integration.

The *salam* method also offered some advantages to local merchants and producers. First, they obtained funds to meet their various expenses such as tax burdens and farm inputs.

[514] In Cyprus, BOA, AHK.MR 2/81/2, Evāḫir-i Ṣafer 1140/October 1727; In Tripoli Syria, BOA, AHK.MR 2/127/4, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāziyelevvel 1148/September-October 1735; In Latakia, BOA, AHK.MR 2/154/3, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāziyelāḫir 1153/September 1740; In Acre, BOA, AHK.MR 2/155/1, Evāʾil-i Şaʿbān 1153/October-November 1740; In Aleppo, BOA, AHK.MR 2/177/6, Evāʾil-i Şevvāl 1156/November 1743; In Aleppo, BOA, AHK.MR 2/211/2, Evāḫir-i Zīllḥicce 1161/December 1748; In Izmir, BOA, C.HR/128/6395/1, 23 Cemāziyelāḫir 1205/27 February 1791.

[515] Nelly Hanna, *Making Big Money in 1600: The Life and Times of Ismaʿil Abu Taqiyya, Egyptian Merchant* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 86–87.

This was essential in an environment, where staying afloat depended largely on good harvests and therefore sufficient rainfall, among other factors. Selling on credit and payment in kind in time provided local merchants an opportunity to utilise their capital in provincial economies, instead of disposing of their assets at hand immediately. In this sense, British merchant capital financed different sectors of the provincial economy. However, despite a constant need for money, Ottoman subjects were not passive actors dependent on foreign capital, in that *salam* contracts allowed local affluent merchants to speculate on the prices of Ottoman exports, especially during the harvest season since they could hold on to their own stocks while waiting for the best opportunity for a bargain with the arrival of trade ships from overseas. For instance, while endeavouring to procure returns for *the Anglicana* until the next harvest, Thomas Lansdown lamented that silk prices on credit—to be paid back to him in twelve months—were nearly equal to current barter prices.[516] Thus, besides risk management strategies, British merchants often needed to trade on credit with local merchants with whom they developed a certain level of trust, be it their dragomans or not, helping them to navigate economic transactions.

As far as personal trust is concerned, the borrower's reputation, integrity and wealth were important.[517] In explaining how the British trusted and traded on credit with Ottoman Muslims, Daniel Defoe noted that "[t]hey have obtain'd it [trust/credit] by a just, punctual, and honourable Practice *in Trade*, and you *Credit them without Scruple*; nay, rather than a Christian".[518] So, it was not religious affiliation that defined the parameters of credit, instead it was the knowledge about and perception towards an individual's character. Such inferences could be drawn from public opinion through gossip and information exchange between

[516] TNA, SP 110/37, from Thomas Lansdown in Aleppo to Isaac Hughes & Son in London, 20 November 1761.
[517] For a study on British perception of trust towards the Ottomans, see Jonathan S. Couch, "Traders and New Ideas about the East: The British Levant Company and the Discourse on the Ottoman Empire, 1681-1774" (Ph.D. Diss., the University of Maryland, 2013), 69–91.
[518] Daniel Defoe, *An Essay Upon Publick Credit* (London, 1710), 13. Italics belonged to Daniel Defoe.

merchants, which reduced information costs.[519] However, gossip could also be malicious to tarnish someone's reputation, so public views were not fully reliable. Merchants therefore drew upon their previous experiences with other merchants and considered the likelihood of future financial and social rewards. When John Mitford in London learnt that his correspondent in Izmir lent 1000 *guruş* from the account of John Mitford and Charles Fry to 'Hogia Agup' [Hoca Hagop=Master Hagop] to clear off another debt, he found it "strange…that he [the correspondent] knowing the Circumstances of the Man should trust him, or lend out any Money".[520] Lending to someone without the requisite reputation might imply that the correspondent loaned out of necessity to an 'untrustworthy' borrower due to an urgent need to raise money. Furthermore, given that trust is an emotive process and constructed over time by way of successful dealings, the correspondent might willingly take the risk in the hope of nurturing personal/business connections with 'Hogia Agup'.[521] Hence British merchants considered various possibilities while placing trust in someone. Trust was not only the requisite for, but it was also the result of, credit relations.

One of the families in Aleppo with whom some British merchants developed a certain degree of trust and traded on a large scale was the Jewish al-Harari family.[522] The family was heavily engaged in trade and had connections with rich, local estate owners which seemingly led to positive judgements of British merchants about them. This is striking considering antisemitic sentiments within the Levant Company circles in the 1740s, viewing Jewish

[519] Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 1998), 152–53; Carl Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit: The English Financial Revolution, 1620-1720* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 174; North, *The Lives*, vol. II, 48–49; Sally E. Merry, "Rethinking Gossip and Scandal," in *Reputation: Studies in the Voluntary Elicitation of Good Conduct*, ed. Daniel B. Klein (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 47–74.
[520] TNA, C 113/11/28, from John Mitford in London to Charles Fry in Izmir, 13 April 1724.
[521] Haggerty, *'Merely for Money'?: Business Culture in the British Atlantic, 1750-1815*, 74.
[522] For some notes on the Al-Harari family in the nineteenth century, see Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World*, 121, 124.

mercantile activities as a threat to British commercial interests in the Levant.[523] Richard Stratton's perception towards the family is illuminating in this regard, and deserves to be quoted at length:

> [t]he Harrari's have long since paid for all the Cloth I sold them, &since that I have sold them some Thousand Dollars in Indigo best part they have also paid for, & have lately sold them more about [guruş symbol] 9000. in Cloth that Came by the Thames of w^{ch} I have trusted them about [guruş symbol] 3000. You may believe I have a great good Opinion of them as I trust no others. they [*sic*] have large dealings with one Hagi Baracat who has the Care of the late Hagi Nassan's estate and children.[524]

The wealth and business network of the family, on the one hand, and the long-term, successful business relationship with the family, on the other, shaped the perceptions of trust and thus facilitated British operations in the provinces. So much so that such perceptions transcended wider biases towards a certain religious-ethnic community.

Moreover, credit schemes and relations resulted in a chain of credit stretching from Britain to the Ottoman realms. In the case above, Edward and Arthur Radcliffe in London consigned cloth and indigo to Richard Stratton in Aleppo who sold or bartered these goods on credit to Michael and Aaron Harari, who could also resell them to other merchants on account. Different from the *salam* method, the capital Stratton lent was his consigned goods, not his money or credit instruments, indicating another form of credit. Such forms and connections of credit tied Ottoman customers to British merchants in London and constituted a major concern for the unpaid debts and the insolvency of British merchants. This explains the enormous

[523] Eliezer Bashan, "Contacts between Jews in Smyrna and the Levant Company of London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," *Jewish Historical Studies* 29 (1982-1986): 54–73; Wagner, "Companies, Commerce and Politics," 243–290.
[524] HALS, DE/R/B 232/26, from Richard Stratton in Aleppo to Edward and Arthur Radcliffe in London, 10 December 1746.

number of credit cases logged in a variety of registers and assortments of folios preserved in the Ottoman archives.[525]

British merchants figure predominantly as lenders in the Ottoman registers for British merchants' affairs. However, this does not mean that they never borrowed from the Ottomans. Not only did Ottoman merchants loan to British merchants, but they also claimed their debts from British chancelleries. For instance, after the bankruptcy of the merchant-house of Pullinger and Medley in Aleppo in 1738, a certain 'Hagi Shaban Cuttange' came to the British chancellery of Aleppo to register his debt of 4136 *guruş* twenty-five *akçe*s due from the said house upon four promissory notes dated from June 1738. The said merchant-house bought galls on credit from the said Ottoman merchant payable in time—viz., is one note in six months, one in three months, and the other two upon demand.[526] It is impossible to know exactly why Pullinger and Medley borrowed from 'Hagi Shaban'. Was it because they were short of money? Or were they trying to display their creditworthiness to nurture business relationships with those who had access to agricultural products? Apparently, the former was the case since other British merchants surmised that they were on the brink of bankruptcy.[527] In fact, British financial power was not omnipotent in the Levant, but it was rather dependent on different variables, ranging from bad sales in Britain to the incapability of negotiating bills of exchange in the Ottoman Empire. So much so that they could have failed to pay for the customs dues on goods. For example, the well-off merchant-house of Charles Fry and John Mitford in Izmir borrowed from 'Mehemet Aga Customer & J. March Treasurer' to pay for customs on goods

[525] In this dissertation, I have extensively used three Ottoman registers for British merchants' affairs, namely Mora Ahkam Defteri No 2 (A.{DVNS.AHK.MR.d 02) comprised of 221 pages, İngiltere Mahlut Defteri (A.{DVN.DVE.d 36/2) comprised of 187 pages, and Hadariye Defteri 10 (A.{DVNSHADR.d 10) comprised of 279 pages. These registers cover the years between 1717 and 1812 and contain a few thousand entries. For example, there are 993 entries in İngiltere Mahlut Defteri. In each of these registers, at least one-third of all entries relate to credit-related cases.

[526] TNA, SP 110/60, 30 January 1739.

[527] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 220.

consigned on them.[528] Such extensive credit networks and contingent credit relations suggest how imperial subjects functioned in overlapping and dynamic imperial systems in which no single group had ultimate power.

Notwithstanding these vulnerabilities, British merchants were amongst the moneyed groups in the provinces and their activities went beyond moneylending merely to individual Ottoman subjects. They also extended credit to provincial communities. For instance, the correspondent of John Mitford in Izmir lent 1900 *guruş* at interest for Mitford's account to 'the Armenian Community' in Izmir to be repaid in twelve months.[529] Usually, provincial communities borrowed from British merchants to pay off their collective expenditures. British merchants, on the other hand, secured access to Ottoman exports and raised their capital since repayments were made in kind and cash. Again, trust mattered. The correspondent assured Mitford that he 'would lend more as secure Persons offered.'[530] Different from individual loans, communal loans provided a peculiar element of security because community members often 'stood surety for each other' (*birbirlerine kefīl bi'l-māl olub*).[531] This might reduce the risk with a consideration that the community members, or at least a few of them, would eventually pay their debts to protect their community's reputation.

A case from Aleppo sheds further light on the purposes and mechanisms of British communal loans. In 1731-32, the notables (*āʿyān ehālīsi*) of Antioch borrowed (*istiḳrāż olub*)

[528] TNA, C 113/11/28, from Charles Fry in Izmir to John Mitford in London, 17 January 1724.
[529] TNA, C 113/11/28, from John Mitford in London to Charles Fry in Izmir, 5 August 1723.
[530] Ibid.
[531] On this form of mutual surety, see Hülya Canbakal, "Vows as Contract in Ottoman Public Life (17th–18th centuries)," *Islamic Law and Society* 18 (2011): 85–115; Antonis Anastasopoulos, "Political Participation, Public Order and Monetary Pledges (Nezir) in Ottoman Crete," in *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi*, eds. Eleni Gara, Mustafa Erdem Kabadayı, and Christoph K. Neumann (Istanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 127–42; Santa Barbara, "Before Banks: Credit, Society, and Law in Sixteenth-Century Palestine and Syria" (Ph.D. Diss., University of California, 2018), 231–26. For such cases registered in the Ottoman records, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/99/4, Evāḫir-i Şevvāl 1143/April-May 1731; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/100/1, Evāḫir-i Şevvāl 1143/April-May 1731; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/100/2, Evāḫir-i Şevvāl 1143/April-May 1731.

13,500 *guruş* from a British merchant (whose name is omitted in the document) in Aleppo to pay for the taxes due from the district of Antioch (*ḳażā-yı mezbūreye iṣābet iden tekālīfleri ḫuṣūṣlariçün*).[532] The taxes were a part of the provincial revenues of Aleppo assigned to the governor there. The debt contract with the British merchant was registered and signed by the notables of Antioch and the kadi of Aleppo at the court of Aleppo. The debtors agreed to transfer (*ḥavāle-yi şerʿīye ile ḥavāle*) the debt to the British, and to facilitate this transfer, the governor of Aleppo drew an order of payment—a bill of exchange—on the debtors to the order of the British merchant.[533] This complicated loan case requires some unpacking. The governor was the creditor of the people of Antioch because he contracted with the state in advance for the designated provincial taxes, part of which were due from the people of Antioch. Having lacked the wherewithal to pay for their district expenses, the notables—who were possibly local tax-farmers—borrowed from the British merchant and agreed to pay it back via *ḥavāle*. The term *ḥavāle* in Islamic finance denotes the transfer of a debt from one debtor to another.[534] In the Ottoman Empire, *ḥavāle*s also meant the assignment of the payments of public expenditures on revenue sources to the order of third parties.[535] Thus, here it refers to the assignment on the provincial revenue sources of Aleppo of the payment of the district expenditures of Antioch in favour of the British merchant. Put differently, the people of Antioch would transfer the debt via a bill to the governor who would then extinguish it to the British merchant.

The document does not detail why the governor extinguished the debt. Did he use that sum to settle his debt with the merchant? Or did he use it as a means of payment, along with

[532] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/122/3, Evāʾil-i Ramażān 1147/January-February 1735; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/132/5, Evāʾil-i Ṣafer 1149/June 1736.
[533] Ibid. "ve mezbūrlar daḫī ḥavāleyi ḳabul edüb meblağ-ı merḳūmun edāsıçün defter-i mezbūrun üzerine sābıḳ Ḥaleb vālisi vezirim Meḥmed Paşa daḫi buyuruldu keşīde kılmış iken…"
[534] Kilian Bälz, "Ḥawāla, money transfer," in *EI*^{3}, eds. Kate Fleet et al. Consulted online on 22 January 2023 http://dx.doi.org.bham-ezproxy.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30391.
[535] Halil İnalcık, "Ḥawāla," in *EI*^{2}, eds. Peri Bearman et al. Consulted online on 22 January http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2807; Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 157–60;

other sums, for something else such as a bill of exchange drawn on Istanbul? In fact, as will be discussed later, British merchants were involved in such financial relations with provincial officeholders. In this context, such assignments were common security arrangements. The case displays the extent to which the British were involved in such complex fiscal structures in the provinces. The funds helped communities pay off their required taxes and the British in return raised their capital and formed acquaintances with diverse provincial actors for future relations. While doing so, they utilised, or placed trust in, local courts as the assurance structures of trust mechanisms to register their credit contracts to enforce payments.

While the repayment appears to have been in cash in the case above, British merchants also made deals to receive their loans in kind. In 1747-48, George Wakeman, the British consul of Cyprus, reached an agreement with the peasants (*reʿāyā*) living in the villages of the Karpasia subdistrict in Cyprus for a loan—the amount was omitted in the text—to spend for their annual public expenditures including the poll tax. In return, Wakeman demanded that the payment be made from the agricultural products produced by the *reʿāyā*, which they agreed.[536] The source speaks of the 'spending' (*ṣarf*) of the credit which alludes to a *salam* contract. The Karpasia region housed extensive *vaḳf* (religious endowment) estates reserved for agricultural production.[537] As such, the subjects could spend the loan on covering their farm inputs such as labour and seeds as well as paying their taxes. Wakeman, on the other hand, secured supplies of raw materials in the hinterland by way of a forward-purchase loan. To reduce the risk of

[536] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/26/2, Evāḫir 1166/March-April 1753. "Ḳarpās nāḥiyesi ḳaryelerinin reʿāyālar beher sene üzerlerine edāsı lāzım gelen cizyeleri ve ʿādet-i beled adına olan tekāliflerçün…Corci Vekman nam ḳōnsōlos bin yüz altmış senesinde her birilerine maʿlūmu'l-miḳdār aḳçe virüb reʿāyā-yı mesfūr dahī hāṣıl eyledikleri maḥṣūlātlarından ḳōnsōlos-u mesfūra edā eylemeleri şarṭıyla ḳavl ve taʿhhüd ve yedine temessükler virüb"[the consul George Wakeman loaned a certain sum to the tribute-paying subjects of the villages of the Karpasia subdistrict to pay for their poll taxes and other taxes required of the district in 1160 [the Islamic Hijri calendar] on condition that the said subjects pay off the said consul from their agricultural products [which] they agreed and promised and given him payment receipts].

[537] Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on an Ottoman Island," 207.

repayment, George Wakeman wanted payment receipts/bonds (*temessük*s) against his debt, so that he could go to the local court in case of non-payments.

British merchants were perfectly aware of the risks involved in credit extensions and therefore did not content themselves with trusting the borrowers. Various securities were requested and included in the contracts, some of which were mentioned in this section. Yet the disputes on debts were unavoidable. The following section examines debt reclamation processes by focusing on two case studies in order to understand the limits of British capacity in debt recoveries and the consequences of cross-cultural credit relations.

Debt Reclamation Processes

An imperial order issued in April 1741 addressing the kadi of Aleppo informs us that Ṣārımzāde Aḥmed Efendi, a resident of Antioch, was indebted 5576 *guruş* to Peter Lupart, a British merchant in Aleppo, from 1727-28.[538] At first sight, the case appears as a long-lasting debt relationship and dispute. However, there was more to it. Examining the case through a few entries in the Ottoman registers of British affairs illuminates standard legal procedures, possible complications, legal strategies used by both parties and the parameters of British leverage and Ottoman law enforcement in debt reclamation processes. After examining these processes, the last part of this sub-section discusses the details of a certain credit transaction between a British factory and an Ottoman merchant in Cyprus, revealing the extent to which the British gained leverage over the debtors and were engaged in local commerce. In this way, this sub-section shows not only the complexities of power dynamics in cross-cultural, trans-imperial credit

[538] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/156/4, Evāḫir-i Muḥarrem 1154/April 1741.

relations, but also how British merchants became entangled in the Ottoman legal and commercial structures as a result of these relations.

Standard procedures concerning unpaid debts commenced with a decision of British merchants in the provinces on how to collect their debts. Preferably, the British did not initiate legal action since it would necessarily incur judiciary charges and other expenses such as bribes and gifts. Initially, British merchants endeavoured to recover their debts by simply asking the debtors for repayment, and presumably, most debts were recovered in time by this method thanks to the personal connections of British merchants and their employees with Ottoman subjects. When this method failed, however, British merchants gathered in the assembly meetings to deliberate over the most suitable legal path to pursue. Usually, the cases were first brought before the kadis where all interested parties—British merchants, dragomans, and Ottomans—were summoned to the court for hearings and proofs.[539] This enabled the British to avoid the substantial expense of initiating a diplomatic process in Istanbul. Going to Istanbul from far-flung places like Cyprus would be substantially costly. Thus, George Treadway, Harvey Pretty, and Thomas Coke in Cyprus decided to recover their debt in Cyprus and succeeded in obtaining an order from the kadi of Nicosia regarding the collection of their debt of 903 *guruş* from an Ottoman merchant who had bought British cloths and fabric on credit.[540]

However, if the parties could not reach an agreement in the local courts, the British had two legal paths to follow thereafter. Firstly, they could move the case to Istanbul for trial. The sixteenth article of the Capitulations of 1675 allowed the British to transfer their lawsuits with a value of more than 4000 *akçe*s (33.33 *guruş*) to the *Dīvān-ı Hümāyūn* (the Imperial Council).[541] Michael Talbot argued that this article had been issued in the early seventeenth

[539] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Pages 7/Article 16. This article stipulated that ambassadors, consuls, or dragomans should be present at the court for the cases to be heard.
[540] KKMA, KŞS 10/139/4, 7 Z̲īlḳaʿde 1133/30 August 1721.
[541] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Pages 7/Article 16.

century and 4000 *akçe*s became far less considerable a sum due to inflation and the devaluation of Ottoman currency in the eighteenth century.[542] Although the British could transfer the lawsuits to Istanbul, this method was not always viable owing to a variety of diplomatic and judiciary expenses, not to mention the time concerns. The second strategy was to send a petition to the Porte by way of the ambassador to obtain an imperial command that ordered and instructed the provincial authorities as to how to adjudicate the matters locally.

In Ṣārımzāde's case, the British seem to have decided to move the case to the *Dīvān-ı Hümāyūn* for trial after having failed to resolve it in Aleppo. The reason for this course of action was probably to recover the outstanding debts of Peter Lupart who died in 1738.[543] The funds raised would then be used to pay the creditors of Peter Lupart. We do not know who his creditors were, however. The entries inform us that the designated payee was Peter Shaw, a British merchant in Aleppo who was described as the partner (*şirk*) of Lupart.[544] One of the partners of Peter Lupart was Herbert Hyde, whereas we do not have any evidence regarding his partnership with Peter Shaw. We can thus deduce that Peter Shaw was either one of the creditors of Lupart, or perhaps more probably, the attorney of the creditors tasked with suing the debtors to recover the outstanding debts after his death. The chain of credit linking diverse actors both Ottoman and British merchants created a matter of concern as the solvency of several people was at stake. Thus, the British initiated a diplomatic proceeding in Istanbul.

Upon being notified by the British ambassador, the *Dīvān-ı Hümāyūn* summoned Ṣārımzāde for trial. The trial "attested the debt by witness testimony" [*meblağ-ı mezbūr şuhūd ve ʿudūl ile ṣubūt bulub*], and the defendant was accordingly sentenced to prison in Istanbul to extract information about his concealed effects and restore the money to Peter Shaw, a common

[542] Talbot, "Petitions of the Supplicant Ambassador," 178–79; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 179.
[543] Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 244. Another imperial order dated 1744 ordered the collection and delivery of many debts due to Peter Lupart in Aleppo, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/180/6, Evāsıṭ-i Ramażān 1157/October 1744.
[544] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/156/4, Evāḫir-i Muḥarrem 1154/April 1741.

practice both in the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe.[545] Additionally, the Ottoman courts imprisoned the debtors to prove their insolvency which resulted in debt cancellation and release, though there were different legal opinions about this practice.[546] Therefore, when facing incarceration, the debtors might have declared themselves bankrupt as a legal strategy to have themselves pardoned.[547]

The imprisonment of debtors, however, was not the primary method to force payments. As a rule, Ottoman authorities warned the debtors first, and if unsuccessful, considered other measures to enforce repayments. Amongst them were the imprisonment of the debtor and the sale of the debtor's effects and estates to clear off the debts.[548] Presumably, the *Dīvān-ı Hümāyūn* or the local court of Aleppo had already issued a warning that did not prove to be satisfactory, after which the British opted to move the case to Istanbul. The method of imprisonment was also jettisoned on the grounds that incarcerating debtors might be counterproductive as it could exacerbate the debtors' income-earning ability. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Porte followed a contingent approach. It evaluated the circumstances of each case and the people involved. In this case, arguably, Ṣārımzāde denied either the debt or the repayment. Therefore, the Porte might have thought it fit to temporarily imprison him in a bid to pressurise him to either declare bankruptcy or propose a payment method, rather than forcefully seizing and selling his estates.

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[545] Ibid. On imprisonment in the Ottoman Empire and England, see Boogert, *The Capitulations and The Ottoman Legal System*, 210–11; Barbara, "Before Banks," 147–66. Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 261–306.

[546] Colin Imber, "Four Documents From John Ryland's Turkish MS No. 145," *Tarih Dergisi* 32 (1979): 181; Barbara, "Before Banks," 151.

[547] For some examples, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/53/5, Evāsıṭ-I Şevvāl 1132/August 1720 in Izmir; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/159/4, Evāʾil-i Ramażān 1154/November 1741 in Aleppo; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/168/3, Evāḫir-i Şaʿbān 1155/October 1742 in Aleppo; BOA, A.{DVN.DVE (3)/Folder 81/Folio 28, 23 Z̲īlḥicce 1169/September 1759 in Istanbul.

[548] For the position of Islamic schools on the confiscation and sale of the estates of the debtor, see Barbara, "Before Banks," 149–50.

Having spent some time in prison—the document does not detail how long—Ṣārımzāde admitted that he could not pay his debt in Istanbul and promised to restore the sum from his effects and estates in Antioch. Thereupon, the *Dīvān-ı Hümāyūn* sent him to Aleppo with a state commissioner (*çavuş*); so, although he was freed from prison, he was not released from his obligation to repay the debt. The tone of the document implies that imprisonment proved to be fruitful. Yet, the defendant might confess as a pretext to set himself free and buy time to postpone the payment. In fact, after Ṣārımzāde arrived in Aleppo, events unfolded rather interestingly. Ṣārımzāde not only borrowed (*istiḳrāż edüb*) another 300 *guruş* from Peter Lupart by a payment receipt (*temessük*), but he also resorted to various pretences and stratagems intending to cancel his obligation (*iḅṭāl-ı ḥaḳḳ murād itmekle*), so that the attorney could not sue him further.[549]

Just as British merchants were aware of the Ottoman legal and diplomatic processes such as deciding a viable course of action, bringing witnesses, and obtaining legal documents, so too were the Ottoman subjects. Returning to Aleppo allowed Ṣārımzāde to use his connections such as local notables and religious scholars of Islam, which he lacked in Istanbul, who helped him to make false testimony and present forged judicial orders before the court—viz., a claim to have already paid his debt in soap and silk, and the forged order to pay his debt in instalments.[550] The court did not accept these claims to execute the Porte's order. Even so, he then claimed to have had endowed (*vaḳf itmişim deyü iddiʿā*) all his estates and effects. Religious endowments were protected by Islamic law and were immune, at least theoretically,

[549] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/158/2, Şaʿbān 1154/October-November 1741.

[550] Ibid. "baʿż-ı āʿyān ve ʿulemādan kimesnelere istinād ile evāmir-i ʿaliyyeye muḫālefet ve ibṭāl-ı ḥaḳḳ murād itmekle Ḥaleb ḳāżīsı ḥużūrunda lede'l-murāfaʿa muḳaddemā ṣabūn ve ḥarīr teslīm eyledim deyn-i mezbūra taḳāṣ olundu deyü iddiʿāsı kıẕb-ı ṣarīḥ olunduğu tekrār nümāyān olundukdan ṣonra ışdār eyledüğü taḳsīṭ emrini ibrāz edüb taʿannüdü ẓāhir olmağla" [[He] opposed to the imperial order and intended to cancel the obligation of debt by leaning upon some of the local notables and religious scholars of Islam [whereby] at the hearing before the judge of Aleppo, [he] claimed to have previously cleared his indebtedness by giving soap and silk [which] was found not to be true again; then he presented the order of instalment payment issued [which] attested his obstinacy]

from state confiscation, if not from state regulations.[551] We do not know whether these properties were endowed before or after the litigation. Ostensibly, this statement intended to "preclude the execution of the imperial order" [*tenfīẕ-i emr-i şerīf etdürmeyüb*]; thus, the sale of these "endowed properties" [*emlāk-ı mevḳūf*]. Personal connections and the knowledge of the Ottoman legal system allowed Ṣārımzāde to tap into different stratagems to cancel his debt. In contrast to the leverage of provincial figures and the various methods they could employ, British merchants had fewer legal strategies. Often, the problem was not the lack of knowledge about the Ottoman legal system, but the means and connections to defend their rights by enforcing the implementation of imperial orders.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, British merchants were persistent in seeking justice to the bitter end. Apparently, the British submitted another petition to the Porte about the endowed properties. The Porte in response ordered the imprisonment of Ṣārımzāde this time in Aleppo and the sale-transfer (*ferāğ*) of the endowed properties to other people with the permission of the *vaḳf*'s overseer (*mütevellī*) if the accused refused to restore the sum of 5876 *guruş*.[552] Thus, the Porte used its regulatory right to *vaḳf* properties while respecting the authority of the overseer for the re-assignment of these properties and revenues. The British pushed the boundaries of diplomacy, enabling the issuance of not just a simple imperial order but a complex one entailing the consideration and application of Islamic law.

However, other factors affected the outcomes of British diplomatic efforts. A follow-up entry informs us that this first order concerning the sale-transfer and the incarceration never reached Aleppo because the carrier died on his way.[553] Even so, the commissioner left Aleppo,

[551] Haim Gerber, *Islamic Law and Culture, 1600-1840* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 29; Colin Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 1997); Hasan Yüksel, "Vakıf-Müsadere İlişkisi (Şam Valisi Vezir Süleyman Paşa Olayı)," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 12 (1992): 399–424; Joseph, *Islamic Law on Peasant Usufruct in Ottoman Syria*, 42–65.
[552] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/158/2, Şaʿbān 1154/October-November 1741.
[553] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/163/3, Zīlḥicce 1154/February March 1742.

and Ṣārımzāde was subsequently released from custody. In this regard, besides stratagems employed by the debtors, there were accidental factors such as the death of the carrier and moral hazards such as the commissioner abandoning his duty that neither the British nor the Porte could control. These dynamics underscore the limits of the Porte's enforcement powers in far-flung provinces as well as the importance of luck for the eighteenth-century merchants seeking justice and financial recovery.

It seems that the terms and conditions of this order were never applied. Rather, the interested parties reached an agreement that appears to have been of more service to Ṣārımzāde. Instead of losing his properties, he rented (*icār*) his endowed properties (*emlāk-ı mevḳūfe*) to Peter Shaw for fifteen years at 400 *guruş* per year.[554] That is, Peter Shaw and Ṣārımzāde signed a lease contract, which would be renewed every year, whereby Ṣārımzāde assigned the annual rent of his property amounting to 400 *guruş* to Shaw for fifteen years with the permission of the *vaḳf*'s overseer. Hence, the British were compelled to yield to the proposed indemnification clauses lasting as long as fifteen years, instead of pursuing a costly diplomatic and judiciary approach with no guarantee of success. British officials and merchants constantly evaluated the conditions and adapted their actions to make the best of the situation. Thus, besides agreeing to the proposed contract, Peter Shaw demanded a guarantor (*kefīl*) be included in the contract due to mistrust developed between the parties over the years. As a result, Ṣārımzāde advised a certain Derviş (who was the *ʿabd-ı muʿtefī* in the postscript of the deed of trust of the *vaḳf* in question) who agreed to act as a guarantor, showing the negotiated nature of any contract, with each party enjoying a certain degree of leverage to insert their terms.

The agreement proved to be fruitful as payments were continued for some time until both the debtor and the guarantor ceased the payment. Upon this, another petition was sent to

[554] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/196/2, Evāsıṭ-i Şaʿbān 1159/August-September 1746.

Istanbul, and the Porte, having examined the course of events and previous orders in the registers, re-issued the order regarding the sale-transfer of the *vaḳf*'s properties and the imprisonment of the debtor. The entries about this case in the Ottoman registers of British affairs end there, and we do not know how and whether the case was resolved. This constitutes one of the problems of working on these registers reserved for foreign countries. They were the summaries of Ottoman imperial orders mandating provincial authorities to resolve the cases in the ways sanctioned by the Porte. Therefore, generally, we are not informed of how the disputes were settled. Comparing these entries with Levant Company records could give us an idea of how this case came to an end. Yet, unfortunately, Levant Company records are silent about this case. Nevertheless, the summaries of the testimonies of all interested parties and those of the authoritative instructions have enabled me to reconstruct commercial disputes to analyse them in detail. Among other things which are already discussed, perhaps the most striking is the fact that it passed nearly twenty years from 1727-28 to 1746, and yet the British merchants could not still fully recover their debt. Although eighteenth-century merchants were quite flexible in allowing time for the debtors to use their human capital in the economy to be able to pay their debts, such a long period was extremely detrimental to the finances and operations of several merchants who were tied together through chains of credit.

As is shown, the debts were paid either in cash or in kind or from the proceeds of the sale of the debtor's possessions or by the assignment of revenues. However, there was another payment method resulting from a loan contract: *beyʿ bi'l-vefā* (loan sale). It is a sale contract whereby somebody in need of money sells his/her estate(s) to the lender, with the reservation of a right to repurchase the estate(s) once the debt is paid off.[555] Religious scholars were and are not of unanimous opinion as to whether this is an actual sale or a pledge contract.[556]

[555] Ali Hikmet Berki, ed., *Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye* (İstanbul: Hikmet Yayınları, 1985), Article 118.
[556] Süleyman Kaya, "XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Nazari ve Tatbiki Olarak Karz İşlemleri" (Ph.D. Diss., Marmara Üniversitesi, 2007), 81–83.

Moreover, the Ottoman provincial court system allowed for the legal opinions of jurisconsults (muftis) of different Islamic religious schools towards the land ownership rights of peasants, including the status of pledged or sold properties.[557] Such a divergence of opinions regarding the nature and conditions of these contracts resulted in different implementations of the transactions by the kadis.[558]

These contracts were registered in Ottoman provincial court records, which enable us to conduct a thorough analysis of the details of these contracts. Unfortunately, the court records of Izmir are not extant, nor have I been able to use the local court registers of Aleppo. Although some entries in the Ottoman Registers of British Affairs reveal some information about these contracts, I opted to give an example from the court register of Cyprus to show that such contracts not only provided security for British loans, but also allowed British merchants to establish a degree of control over the sold or pledged properties, with access to agricultural products and rental incomes.[559]

On 9 April 1719, Recep, son of Hüseyin, a resident of Āynaḳōfa (Agios Iakovos, today Altınova) village and the dragoman of the merchant-house of George Treadway, Thomas Coke, and Harvey Pretty residing in Larnaca appeared before the local court of Nicosia, Cyprus.[560] In return for a loan of 1259 *guruş*, the said Recep pledged or sold (*vefā-i beyʿ ve teslīm idüb*) his estates, including an orchard (*bāğçe*) of ten *dönüm*s[561], another orchard of twenty *dönüms*, and

[557] Ḥanafī fiqh stipulated that the lender must assume both the ownership and the usufruct of a mortgaged property for the duration of the loan, whereas Shāfiʿī fiqh maintained that debtors must alienate their ownership rights but could enjoy their right-of-use. See Barbara, "Before Banks," 199–200.
[558] For such a case, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/127/1, Evāsıṭ-i Ṣafer 1148/July 1735.
[559] For some cases about the relationship between credit and property, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/127/1, Evāsıṭ-i Ṣafer 1148/July 1735; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/127/4, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1148/September-October 1735; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/158/2, Evāsıṭ-i Şaʿbān 1154/October-November 1741; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/175/1, Evāʾil-i Rabīʿülevvel 1156/April-May 1743; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/179/3, Evāsıṭ-i Ṣafer 1157/March-April 1744; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/207/2, Evāḫir-i Rabīʿülāḫir 1161/April-May 1748; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/212/3, Evāḫir-i Muḥarrem 1162/January 1749.
[560] KKMA, KŞS 10/109/4, 5 Şaʿbān 1133/1 June 1721. For the full transcription and translation of this entry as well as the locations of orchards and lands on the map of Cyprus, see Appendix VI.
[561] A *dönüm* is approximately 919 square meters or around a quarter of an acre, see İnalcık, "Introduction to Ottoman Metrology," 340.

a dyestuff field (*boyā tārlāsı*) of six *dönüm*s in three separate villages in the island. These properties would be sold to pay off the loan if he defaults on his debt obligation before the maturity date. The orchards contained two single-storey houses, fruit trees, a cistern, a water wheel, and a water mill. According to the Ottoman land regime, orchards, and urban property were often considered private property (*mülk*), whereas arable lands were regarded as state-owned (*mīrī*) lands. Theoretically, the sultan asserted the ownership of *mīrī* land on behalf of the public treasury and leased usufruct rights of these lands to peasants. In this order, peasants could freely sell or transfer their orchards. However, the transfer rights for the peasant occupiers of *mīrī* land were more nuanced: By developing the notion of 'delegation' (*tefvīz*), the sixteenth century legal synthesis of land law provided a legal framework whereby the peasants were allowed to transfer usufruct rights, not the ownership of the land, with the permission of the beneficiary officeholders in the provinces who were assigned to collect taxes from administrative benefices of different sizes such as *tīmār*[562], *zeʿāmet*[563], and *ḫāṣṣ*[564] organised under the *mīrī* system.[565] Although the land law of the sixteenth century did not address convincingly the legitimacy of the transfer of the usufruct against a debt, some muftis started to allow these forms of pawn and transfer with the permission of the beneficiary officeholders in the eighteenth century.[566] In fact, we know that peasants sold or transferred their properties for loans, the transactions of which were registered and validated by the kadis who considered dissenting interpretations of both Islamic and Ottoman law and local dynamics

[562] A prebend with a nominal value of less than 20,000 *akçe*s.
[563] A prebend with a nominal value between 20,000 and 100,000 *akçe*s.
[564] A prebend with a nominal value of more than 100,000 *akçe*s.
[565] Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe: Taxation, trade, and the struggle for land, 1600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 45–79, 121–170; İnalcık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 103–78; Imber, *Ebuʾs-suʿud*, 115–38; Fikret Adanır, "The Ottoman Peasantries, c. 1360–c. 1860," *The Peasantries of Europe from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. in Tom Scott (New York: Longman, 1998), 269–310; Taylor, *Land and Legal Texts in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, 9–10.
[566] Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud*, 131–32; Taylor, *Land and Legal Texts in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, 98–99.

when making decisions, a process contributing to the strengthening of peasants' property ownership rights over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[567]

Rather interestingly, as mentioned in Chapter Two, foreign subjects living in the Ottoman domains were not allowed, or more accurately, were not explicitly forbidden by the Capitulations, to possess real estate in the empire. British merchants cashed in on this legal ambiguity and were involved in such transactions. Even so, the kadis often treated foreign merchants and Ottoman subjects alike and registered their contracts accordingly. Thus, while the kadi of Nicosia recorded the "purchase" [*iştirā*] of the orchards by the British merchants at 1059 *guruş*, he logged "the transfer of the usufruct" [*ferāğ ve ḥaḳḳ-ı taṣarrufunu tefvīż*] of the dyestuff field with 'the beneficiary officeholder's permission" [*bā-iẕn-i ṣāḥib-i ārż*] to the same merchants at 200 *guruş*.[568] Thus, the kadi applied the procedure described above for the transfer of the usufruct against the debt for the British merchants. As a result of these interactions around financial and legal transactions, while seeking ways to reduce the risk attached to credit, British merchants not only enhanced their knowledge about legal systems and commercial dynamics, but also became entangled in these structures. Moreover, it was not only Ottoman subjects who strengthened their property rights, but also foreign merchants. Although this issue awaits further research, I surmise that it was the growing extent of foreign landownership that forced the Ottoman state to initiate an investigation of this phenomenon in the 1750s and issue some imperial orders henceforth, albeit unevenly, that articulated more clearly the prohibition of foreign landownership in the empire. From this viewpoint, our inability to understand the

[567] Molly Greene, "An Islamic Experiment? Ottoman Land Policy in Crete," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 11, no. 1 (1996): 60–78; Dina R. Khoury, "Administrative Practice between Religious Law (Shari'a) and State Law (Kanun) on the Eastern Frontiers of the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Early Modern History* 5, no. 4 (2001): 305–330; Özer Ergenç, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Anadolu'sunda Tarım Üzerine Yeni Boyutlar: Muzâraʿa ve Murâbaʿa Sözleşmeleri," *Kebikeç* 23 (2007): 129–139; Joseph, *Islamic Law on Peasant Usufruct in Ottoman Syria*, passim; Barbara, "Before Banks," passim, Boğaç A. Ergene and Atabey Kaygun, "Change Visible from a Distance: Digital Analysis of the *Fetva*s of Ottoman *Şeyhülislam*s in the Early Modern Era," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 54 (2022): 442–461.

[568] All possessed properties were around 33,084 square meters or 9000 acres.

evolving status and rights of, and perceptions towards, foreign subjects in the ever-changing dynamics of the Ottoman Empire and the impact of these bottom-up processes on the Ottoman law-making may have stemmed from either the retrospective approaches—reading developments through future legislative moments—or the projective approaches—reading developments on the basis of classical textbooks such as the ones produced in the sixteenth century—or both. For the purpose of this dissertation, these dynamics show how fluid the imperial boundaries were and how the issues related to subjecthood in the empire were in the making in the eighteenth century.

As a consequence of these contracts, British merchants established a degree of leverage over the debtor and control over the sold or pledged properties. The actual sale of Recep's estates took place in 1721 two years after the registration of the contract when he defaulted on his debt. Yet, even before the actual sale, the borrower alienated some of his property rights to the lenders. For example, neither party could sell the pledged property to third parties without mutual permission.[569] Further, the lender could enjoy the benefits of the produce of the property with the permission of the borrower who might want to assign the income generated from their properties to the lenders to repay the debts. British merchants thus secured direct access to agricultural goods and diverse incomes. After signing the contract and taking possession of the pledged properties, British merchants could rent these properties to the borrower or third parties without requiring the permission of the borrower. The only condition for rental arrangements to be valid was to renew the contract at regular intervals.[570] As such, it bears resemblance to the abovementioned agreement between Peter Shaw and Ṣārımzāde. So, technically, the borrower might become the tenant of the lender, and yet, the case of Ṣārımzāde showed the

[569] For example, in Tripoli Syria where an Ottoman borrower sold his pledged properties to a French merchant without the permission of the British consul there who was the creditor, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/127/4, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1148/September-October 1735. For more on this subject, see Kaya, "XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Nazari ve Tatbiki Olarak Karz İşlemleri," 114–16.
[570] Kaya, "XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Nazari ve Tatbiki Olarak Karz İşlemleri," 120–23.

intricacies of these dynamics. Alternatively, British merchants could use the pledged properties themselves. However, this must have been the least preferred option to generate revenue owing to the huge human labour and financial wherewithal needed to maintain and oversee the operations.[571]

On the other hand, the debtors would prefer to mortgage their collaterals on the grounds that had the said merchants brought the case to the court to reclaim the debt, Recep might have been required to sell some of his properties to restore the sum. Despite limiting his control over the properties, such a contract permitted the continued use of collaterals to be able to pay his debt off.[572] Thus, such contracts could offer certain advantages to both sides.

Upon Recep's default on the loan, the British merchants together with their dragoman appeared before the court and registered the absolute sale (*beyʿ-i ḳaṭʿī*) of the orchards and the transfer of the usufruct of the farm to themselves. These contracts gave the lenders the priority against other debtors to benefit from the sale of the pledged properties, which provided an additional element of security against loans.[573] Similar cases in the Ottoman registers of British affairs instructed the kadis to administer the sale of these properties and deliver the proceeds of the sale to British merchants against the loans.[574] However, in this case in Cyprus, British merchants themselves bought and took possession of pledged properties. I have not been able to show whether similar transactions took place in different provinces in the Ottoman Empire.

[571] For similar investments and considerations of advantages and disadvantages in British colonies in the Atlantic, see Simon D. Smith, *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of Lascelles, 1648-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 177–225.
[572] KKMA, KŞS 10/109/4, 5 Şaʿbān 1133/1 June 1721. "ecel-i ḥulūlinde deyn-i mezkūru edādan ʿāciz olursam beyʿ-i mezbūr ṣābite munḳalib olmak üzere ḳavl eylemişidi" [[the debtor] had promised that the sale in view be turned into an irrevocable sale, if I would not be able to pay the debts before the maturity date].
[573] Kaya, "XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Nazari ve Tatbiki Olarak Karz İşlemleri," 130–37.
[574] BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/81/2, Evāḫir-i Ṣafer 1140/October 1727; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/84/1, Evāḫir-i Ramażān 1140/April-May 1728; BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/127/4, Evāsıṭ-i Cemaziyelevvel 1148/September-October 1735; BOA/MAD 2/155/1, Evāʾil-i Şaʿbān 1153/October-November 1740.

Therefore, current knowledge does not allow me to argue that these transactions were unique to Cyprus.

The contract does not inform us about what the British did with these properties. Did they sell or rent them to clear off their outstanding debts? Or did they hire locals to till the land and take care of the houses? The former is more likely to be the case due to the abovementioned reasons. Notwithstanding our uncertainty on these questions, we can conclude that British merchants employed specific credit schemes not only as risk-spreading strategies, but also as a means of diversifying their portfolios, with enticing economic and social rewards. Fruit trees in the orchards may well include mulberry trees significant for silk production and trade. Hence, possessing the orchards and the farm could have facilitated the merchants' access to the most desirable agricultural products of the island, namely silk and dyeing stuff, not to mention the rental income that could have been generated from other properties. Furthermore, investing in real estate and even trees improved the social capital of British merchants. Real estate was a safe form of equity that could be used as collateral, thus conveying a sense of credibility to the merchants trading on credit. However, since the political economy of Ottoman provinces was shaped predominantly around agricultural production, possessing land and trees also communicated social mobility and prestige.[575]

All in all, there existed different forms and relations of credit between British merchants and Ottoman subjects and communities. The disputes and the danger of debt default were inescapable. The British used diverse legal strategies through judicial and diplomatic channels available to them to secure and recover their loans. The efficiency of these strategies was, however, dependent upon diverse dynamics and often constrained by local agency. British merchants were also engaged in credit relations with provincial officeholders that offered many

[575] Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 155–218; Beshara Doumani, *Family Life in the Ottoman Mediterranean: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 224–74.

benefits to both sides. However, the dynamics that threatened debt recoveries were rather complex. The following section will further reveal the overlap of the imperial systems of different polities and the complexities and contingency of power dynamics at play in these trans-imperial networks of relationships.

British Merchants and Provincial Officeholders

> All those who come into posts of authority and profit in Turkey are sure to pay for them…This makes the pashas who solicit for better preferment and all the pretenders to places, prodigiously greedy of money; which they cannot have without borrowing and, if they can but get the money, they care not upon what terms, for the place to be paid for will soon reimburse them. The lending these men money is a very easy trade as to the terms, but a very difficult one as to the security. [a]ll interest for the forbearance of money is unlawful…Therefore they are forced to go to tricks and, like our gamesters, take the interest together with the principal…And the security is very frail for the personal is worse than nothing; for who would travel as far as Trebizond to sue a basha?[576]

As shown in the first section of this chapter, research on Ottoman finance and economy underscored the centrality of merchant-financiers who provided funds and sureties to provincial officeholders. The credit relations between these officeholders and foreign merchants, however, have not yet received the attention they deserve, despite a growing body of work examining the commercial relationship between them.[577] This section therefore scrutinises British merchants' credit relations with provincial officeholders in the cities under examination. Sir Dudley North, who expressed the utterances above, made his fortune out of moneylending in Izmir and Istanbul during the 1660s and 1670s and, was therefore well-aware of not only the prospects of moneylending, but also the risk attached to it. Ottoman provincial officeholders borrowed from British merchants to acquire public offices and remit revenues to the treasury

[576] North, *The Lives*, vol. II, 73. For similar insights by the French ambassador to the Porte in 1703, see Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 129.
[577] Veinstein, "Ayân de la région d'Izmir et le commerce du Levant," 137, 147; Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*, 39–40; Çiçek, "Diplomat, Banker ve Tüccar," 269–83; Kadı, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century*, 179–82; Türkhan, "18. Yüzyılda Doğu Akdeniz'de Ticaret ve Haleb," 134–53.

or the beneficiaries of these administrative-revenue units. The high demand for, combined with a scarcity of, capital in the provinces created a profitable market for moneylending to provincial officeholders. Entering credit relations with these officeholders also offered economic and social benefits to the British, ranging from the negotiation of bills of exchange to the assignments of provincial revenue sources to British merchants, and from the establishment of personal and business connections to the active role the British played in the appointment of these officeholders in the hopes that they could act in concert with British commercial interests in the region.

Yet, occasionally, the (non)engagement of such transactions proved to be problematic. Besides those challenges discussed in the previous section, the constant reassignment of provincial public offices to different provincial officeholders, on the one hand, and the nature of the relationship between these officeholders and the state in the absence of a clear differentiation between public revenue and private wealth before the nineteenth century, on the other, complicated credit relations with provincial officeholders. Moreover, the refusal to extend credit brought about reprisals from these officeholders.

Purposes and Forms of Credit

Cross-cultural credit between British merchants and provincial officeholders offered mutual benefits, served diverse purposes, and assumed various forms. Moreover, it constituted one of the foundations of friendship between the British and provincial authorities. This could not have been better expressed than the words of the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Cyprus to the Venetian consul in 1766: “The friendship we expect from you has only to do with bills of exchange. If you can provide us with as many bills as we might need, we in turn will not, within the limits of our

power, forsake our friendship in matters relating to your business and affairs."[578] Furnishing local officeholders with financial instruments was then an act of friendship, just like gift-giving, in order to gain their favour necessary to effectuate the capitulatory privileges and protect their commercial interests in the provinces. Therefore, the demands of officeholders for bills of exchange did not always overlap with the needs of British merchants to cash their bills as displayed in the first section of this chapter. The officeholders asked, at various times, for funds from British merchants for their own ends. For example, when the representative (*çuḫādār*) of the previous pasha of Aleppo in Istanbul came to Aleppo to collect the debts due to Edward Stafford, a British merchant and treasurer in Galata, the pasha asked for another loan with the promise of "repay[ing] it y^{e} Franks [i.e., Europeans] wth Interest after he came to his Pashalick".[579] Having received an assurance from the representative about the pasha, the consul of Aleppo informed Stafford that they "have ever found him [the representative] a very honest, serviceable Man, and I believe you can't imploy [*sic*] a better in recovering money due to you from Turks."[580] Forming a partnership with the agents of provincial authorities in Istanbul, with whom they developed a certain level of trust, was essential to maintain business with provincial authorities and balance their trade deficit in the provinces. British merchants in Istanbul, who often had a surplus, could loan to these agents who would make the payments to the treasury and the officeholders would repay the debts with interest to the British merchants in the provinces. In return for financial aid from foreign merchants to acquire or maintain the offices, provincial officials were expected to protect their capitulatory privileges and facilitate their commercial operations.

[578] Cited from Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 131. The translation belongs to Edhem Eldem.
[579] TNA, SP 110/23, the British consul of Aleppo to Edward Stafford in Galata, Istanbul, 30 May 1704. The representative was "Saury Usine Chohadar".
[580] Ibid.

The Ottoman court registers of Cyprus show that Edward Stafford was very active in lending to the provincial governors (*vālī* or *beylerbeyi*) of Cyprus in the early 1690s.[581] The amounts of debts ranged from the substantial sum of 2000 to 7500 *guruş* vis-à-vis other individual loans of 100-300 *guruş* to Ottoman subjects in Cyprus at the time.[582] Amongst the guarantors were the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, the Cypriot prelates, the beneficiary of an administrative-revenue unit, and the provincial finance minister, all of whom were instructed to pay the debts off to Richard Westbrook, the British consul of Cyprus. It is assumed that Cyprus was governed as *ḫāṣṣ* between 1687 and 1718 and the administrative power rested with either the Grand Vizier or other highest-ranking officials.[583] Once the officeholders took over the administrative benefice by a forward payment, the peasants and provincial tax collectors had to pay the arrears to the beneficiaries or their agents in Istanbul. In these cases, however, the governors assigned the revenues of the island to the consul since they were indebted to Edward Stafford, a method that offered an additional element of security when entering credit relations with provincial officeholders because of an expected revenue flow. The guarantors made the payments to the British consul in cash and/or in-kind such as silk and cotton by which the consul secured access to not only local currencies essential to maintain their operations, but local goods too.

The assignments of provincial revenue sources seem to have been key in credit relations with provincial officeholders. Not only did the British evaluate the creditworthiness of these officeholders by considering the revenue sources they farmed, but they also openly demanded

[581] KKMA, mah.s. 28/111/2, undated; KKMA, mah.s. 28/113/1, 27 Z̲īlḳaʿde 1705/20 July 1694; KKMA, mah.s. 28/114/1, 27 Z̲īlḳaʿde 1705/20 July 1694; KKMA, mah.s. 28/152/2, 17 Rabīʿülevvel 1106/5 November 1694; KKMA, mah.s. 28/153/2, 17 Rabīʿülevvel 1106/5 November 1694; KKMA, mah.s. 28/173/2, 17 Rabīʿülevvel 1106/5 November 1694; KKMA, mah.s. 28/no page no/no entry no, 19 Rabīʿülevvel 1106/7 November 1694.
[582] KKMA, mah.s. 28/149/2, 1 Rabīʿülevvel 1106/22 August 1694; KKMA, KŞS 6/12/2, 4 Ṣafer 1110/12 August 1698; KKMA, KŞS 6/13/1, 4 Ṣafer 1110/12 August 1698; KKMA, KŞS 6/13/2, 4 Ṣafer 1110/12 August 1698; KKMA, KŞS 6/15/1, 4 Ṣafer 1110/12 August 1698.
[583] For a discussion of the administrative history of Cyprus for the long-eighteenth century, see Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 126–37.

such assignments against their credits. Samuel Harvey in Aleppo and John Woolley in Istanbul were largely involved in credit relations with different officeholders in Aleppo in the early eighteenth century, and thus, Harvey's correspondence with Woolley sheds invaluable insights into these aspects. When reporting how the separation of a revenue unit from the provincial revenue unit of Urfa exacerbated the finances of the governor of Urfa, Harvey wrote:

> [T]he mocata [*muḳāṭaʿa*] of Sarug [?] is a good Cargoe, but tis [*sic*] Said Since taken from the Bassalicke of Ourpha [Urfa] that Bassa has very much enjured [*sic*]…but in case continued apart from the Bassalicke of Ourpha that mocata will quickly flourish againe, & a round Sum will be collected there.[584]

The extent of their involvement in provincial financial structures compelled Harvey and Woolley to keep track of the constant reconfiguration of revenue units and reflect on how these alterations might affect the financial capacity of these officeholders and thereby debt repayments. Upon such consideration, for example, Harvey's scribe advised Woolley to invest in promising public revenues by writing that "you doe [*sic*] might well to assigne [*sic*] most of your mony [*sic*] due P [par] Optaraman [i.e., Abdurrahman] Aga to be paid out of the Cussabia [*ḳaṣṣābiye*/the butchery tax] & Coffee duties those mocatas bring in dayly contanti".[585] Abdurrahman Ağa was the tax-farmer of 'the butchery and coffee revenue unit' in Aleppo in partnership with Hacı Ömer Ağa and Osman Effendi, for whom Harvey noted that "[h]is [Abdurrahman Ağa] engenuity [*sic*] is without exception & those [the partners] as act for Him here are very well experienced in business."[586] Information exchange between British merchants was vital in terms of evaluating the credibility and trustworthiness of provincial officeholders. Besides the personal aspect of trust, the revenue units these officeholders farmed

[584] TNA, SP 110/22, 26 March 1701, Samuel Harvey to John Woolley in Istanbul.
[585] TNA, SP 110/22, 12 April 1701, Samuel Harvey to John Woolley in Istanbul.
[586] TNA, SP 110/22, 26 March 1701, Samuel Harvey to John Woolley in Istanbul.

were of paramount importance, in that they served as a safe form of security against debts and investment in public revenues.

Repayments against such investments were often made in kind because amongst the revenue units provincial officeholders farmed were lands producing agricultural goods such as cotton and cereal crops. Thanks to in-kind payments and assignments, British merchants secured direct access to Ottoman goods. For example, a certain Latif Çelebi who looked after a *çiftlik* (large agricultural estates) around Aleppo offered to pay his debt to Harvey in barley or wheat.[587] Agricultural goods, however, were not always consigned abroad as foreign merchants needed special permission by the Porte. As such, these goods were traded in local markets, leading to the engagement of foreign merchants in private trade. Harvey wrote to Woolley on 28 November 1701 that "the wheat soe [*sic*] ordinary and cannot exp^{t} to dispose of it till Spring".[588] In June 1702, he informed Woolley that "people begin now to demand your wheat", but went on to note that "noe [*sic*] trusting millers they are Such Rascalls, as opportunities offer for ready money I will Sturdy your convenience & advantage".[589] The British had seemingly past engagements with the guild of bakers and millers in Aleppo as a result of their private trade that produced mistrust towards the millers at the turn of the early eighteenth century. In this regard, credit relations with officeholders required different approaches to evaluate risk and the creditworthiness of debtors while also opening new avenues for trade with local tradesmen that created new conditions of (mis)trust.

With commercial investments and reputational concerns at stake, British merchants were also engaged in lending to help officeholders maintain their offices or replace the ones already in an office with new officials. The Ottoman state outsourced provincial revenue units

[587] TNA, SP 110/22, 12 April 1701, Samuel Harvey to John Woolley in Istanbul.
[588] TNA, SP 110/22, Samuel Harvey in Aleppo to John Woolley in Istanbul on 28 November 1701.
[589] TNA, SP 110/22, Samuel Harvey in Aleppo to John Woolley in Istanbul on 2 June 1702.

to individuals or groups of individual entrepreneurs who had the financial and social capital to obtain or maintain their offices mostly through auctions, but in return for administrative services too. As shown, these officeholders formed connections with local and foreign merchants by way of credit-debt nexus during or in advance of their tenure. Therefore, merchants had vested interests in the success of officeholders as long as the prospects for recovering the debts were promising. Moreover, foreign merchants considered the civility they received from the officials for the protection of their capitulatory rights. When, for example, Samuel Harvey learned that the abovementioned Abdurrahman Ağa was seeking to obtain the provincial revenue-unit (*muḥaṣṣıllıḳ*) of Aleppo, he advised Woolley that "a sum of mony must be ready to assist when ffriends [*sic*] are wanting…soe [*sic*] consequently Debts must be continued, whether may hapen [*sic*] soe or noe, Pvide for the worst & take care whilst Hee is with you that you are not Served as last year."[590] The assignments Harvey and Woolley were expecting to receive against their debt were still outstanding. Thus, Harvey thought fit to assist Abdurrahman Ağa financially so that he could somewhat remain invested in provincial revenue sources and pay his debts to the merchants in the following years.

Mostly, these economic concerns were intertwined with social aspects of commerce, namely maintaining good relations with these officeholders. In November 1755, the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Aleppo asked Alexander Drummond, the British consul of Aleppo, for 30,000 *guruş* in toto to procure his 'Baraat' (*berāt*, an imperial writ for the appointment to hold an office) to maintain his office.[591] The mechanisms for such transactions were as follows: A British merchant drew a bill of exchange to his correspondent in Istanbul payable to a designated payee such as the agents (*ḳapı-ketḥüdāsı*, Porte-steward, or *çuḥādār*, footman) of provincial officials there. Upon receiving the bill, the agents presented it to the correspondent who accepted and paid it. In

[590] TNA, SP 110/22, Samuel Harvey to John Woolley in Istanbul, 17 April 1701.
[591] BL, Add MS 45933, Alexander Drummond to Valentine Fitzhugh in Istanbul, 10 November 1755; BL, Add MS 45933, Alexander Drummond to Valentine Fitzhugh in Istanbul, 17 November 1755.

order to make the payment, however, the correspondent had to receive a letter called *müʾekkid kāğıdı* (lit. a paper of corroboration) or *poliçe temessüğü* (lit. bill document) from the drawer authorising the payment. Theoretically, the *muḥaṣṣıl* as the purchaser or taker of the bill could make an outright payment or arrange with the drawer to pay later. While an outright payment expedited the process, credit payments required the drawers to convince their correspondence to honour the bill. Here, the latter was the case. In seeking to persuade Fitzhugh, Drummond wrote of the *muḥaṣṣıl*'s "kindness to our Nation."[592] Chapter One underscored the vitality of accommodative relationships with provincial officials to defend and implement the capitulatory privileges at a local level. Contributing to the needs of these officials might further reinforce the relationships between them, thus granting better protection to the British.

On the other hand, lending was also used as a strategy to install or oust officeholders in the provinces who infringed the rights of British merchants. Such strategies were also used against once-trusted figures in the provinces. Trust is a socially-constructed, emotive process shaped by shared norms, mutual expectations, and past experiences.[593] As the merchants constantly evaluated these dynamics, their perceptions towards the trustworthiness of the people they were dealing with changed over time. From late 1701, several British merchants in Aleppo voiced their concerns about the actions of the abovementioned Abdurrahman Ağa and his ill-treatment of British merchants.[594] These complaints seem to have intensified once he obtained the *muḥaṣṣıllıḳ*. As such, George Brandon, the British consul of Aleppo, informed Robert Sutton, the British ambassador, of the matter in July 1706 who, at the request of the consul, visited the grand vizier to induce him "to chastize and Remove him [Abdurrahman

[592] BL, Add MS 45933, Alexander Drummond to Valentine Fitzhugh in Istanbul, 17 November 1755.
[593] Lynne G. Zucker, "Production of trust: Institutional sources of economic structure, 1840–192'", *Research in Organizational Behavior* 8 (1986)*:* 53–111; Dario Gaggio, *In Gold We Trust: Social Capital and Economic Change in the Italian Jewelry Towns* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 323; Haggerty, *'Merely for Money'?: Business Culture in the British Atlantic, 1750-1815*, 66–96.
[594] Couch, "Traders and New Ideas About the East," 87–100. Harvey's correspondence reveals that the Ağa was also substantially indebted to several British merchants in Aleppo, see TNA, SP 110/22, 28 November 1701.

Ağa] from his Office."[595] Even so, having learned that the Ağa was indebted to the state, the ambassador noted that he had notified his "friends" who might be interested in obtaining the *muḥaṣṣıllıḳ* of Aleppo. However, apparently, the Grand Vizier was reluctant to oust him from office owing to his relationship with the vizier and his debt to the state, despite various diplomatic tactics the British employed.[596] Eventually, in a letter dated 10 October 1706, consul Brandon noted that "[y]ou can all bear me wittness [*sic*] that I have ever discouraged as much as was in my power the Lending of Money to Turks, but his Exc^{y} telling me that it might be a means to facilitate our Designe against Abduraman Aga".[597] Both the ambassador and the consul realised that funding the people desiring to obtain the office might be a worthwhile, albeit risky, method to replace Abdurrahman Ağa. In this context, the perception of trust was incessantly reframed, and depending on the circumstantial expediency, British authorities in the empire breached the Levant Company's regulation against credit and channelled their funds to oust the officials from the office, who they once assisted in obtaining that very post.

Examining the multiplicity of credit relations with provincial officeholders reveals the extent to which British merchant capital and networks became so instrumental in British commercial operations and Ottoman fiscal mechanisms. Yet, such dealings with the officeholders created their own complications for British merchants, particularly in the drawing or payment of bills of exchange and debt recovery processes, which the next sub-section explores.

Complications in Bills of Exchange and Debt Recovery

[595] TNA, SP 110/67, Robert Sutton, the ambassador, 3 September 1706.
[596] TNA, SP 110/67, George Brandon from Istanbul, 2 September 1706.
[597] TNA, SP 110/67, George Brandon, the consul of Aleppo, to an unknown person, 10 October 1706.

In Henry Wilkinson's words, "[t]he borrower is a servant to the lender".[598] This sub-section challenges this statement by examining the complications mentioned above. To begin with, since extending credit was regarded by the officeholders as one of the components of trust and friendship, refusing to provide funds was one of the reasons for mistrust and antagonism. Once the bills were drawn from the provinces, the correspondents in other provinces or Istanbul had to receive a letter authorising the payment to the agents of provincial officeholders. British merchants and their dragomans as affluent local merchants became connected to each other due to the credit nexus between them that resulted in the coalescence of their financial networks. Hence, British merchants and dragomans appeared as both drawers and drawees in bill transactions, who occasionally refused to draw bills of exchange or accept to pay them. For one thing, the correspondents had to have a surplus at hand and be willing to dispose of it to balance a trade deficit in the provinces. Secondly, the correspondents had to receive a letter from the drawer that the payment had already been made or would be made later. In either case, however, the correspondent had to trust the drawer and had enough capital at hand to pay for the bill.

When any of these conditions were not present, the drawers and drawees could protest to draw the bill or accept to pay it. This may in turn affect the relationship between the British and officeholders, so much so that the former could be harassed in reprisal.[599] For instance, upon being instructed by the Porte to remit the annual revenues (*mīrī māl*) of Aleppo amounting to 100,000 *guruş* via bills of exchange to Istanbul, the governor informed the Porte that he would make the remittance by British dragomans, that is purchasing bills of exchange from the dragomans drawn on their correspondents in Istanbul payable to the agent of the governor

[598] Henry Wilkinson, *The Debt Booke* (London, 1625), 5.
[599] On the non-acceptance of the bills of exchange by French merchants in Istanbul and the reprisals by provincial officials, see Eldem, *The French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 136–41.

there.[600] The dragomans, however, declined to draw any bills because not all of them traded with Istanbul and those who did trade were not necessarily indebted to their correspondents in Istanbul. Against this response, according to the report of the British consul of Aleppo to the ambassador, the governor "insulted the dragomans by demanding the bills by threats and force".[601] Such reprisals occurred from time to time when the demands of officeholders were rejected.[602] In this context, although British merchants and their dragomans provided the means of appropriation to those in need, including the provincial officeholders, there did not necessarily develop an asymmetric power relation between the British and officeholders, with the former asserting their economic and symbolic capital over the latter. In fact, the officeholders enjoyed a rather greater degree of political clout in the provinces who might insult the British and hinder their trade in the event of a rejection of their requests.

Similar problems were present in debt recovery processes too. As discussed in the first chapter, the reassignment of provincial officeholders to different posts made it impossible to set out a stable regime. Thus, the British were required to re-establish their capitulatory and locally agreed rights. At the start of the section entitled 'British Merchants and Provincial Officeholders', the quotation from Sir Dudley North noted that such assignments also complicated the debt recoveries because it was difficult to put pressure on the officeholders once they were relocated to far-flung provinces. Furthermore, there were some practical issues in dealing with officeholders in places where the British were not settled at all. For instance, the governor of Aleppo was indebted to Charles Smith, a British merchant in Aleppo, 2500 *guruş*, half of which had already been paid and another half to be paid in thirty-one days. In

[600] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/164/838, Evāsıṭ-i Z̲īlḥicce 1191/January 1778.
[601] Ibid., "günā-gūn tehdīdāt ile cebren ve ḳahren poliçe teklifi ile taʿaddī olunduğun".
[602] For other examples of reprisals, see BOA, AHK.MR.d 2/55/2, Evāsıṭ-i Muḥarrem 1133/November 1720; BOA, C.ML/147/6248, 2 Muḥarrem 1198/27 November 1783; İSAM, ES/R 18/F 48/P 91/E 157, 18 Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1200/18 April 1786; İSAM, ES/R 25/F 25/P 46/E 44, 10 Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1219/17 August 1804; İSAM, ES/R 30/F 121/P 236/E 189, 20 Z̲īlḳaʿde 1221/30 January 1807.

the meantime, however, the governor was reassigned to Kars, around 700 km or 440 miles, northeast of Aleppo, where there was not any settled British merchant.[603] Therefore, Smith sent a letter to the agent of the governor in Istanbul, asking for payment, who rejected the request and sent the letter back to Aleppo. Consequently, the Porte ordered the current governor of Aleppo to recoup the debt from the representative (*vekīl*) of the previous governor residing in Aleppo. Thus, the British were forced to confront tangled diplomatic and judicial processes when facing such situations. Nevertheless, they were able to mobilize the Porte to devise repayment plans. So much so, knowing that no one could be held responsible for someone else's debt in accordance with the Capitulations, the Porte here ordered the representative to clear the debt, likely while he was in Aleppo to balance the accounts with the current governor.

On the other hand, the nature of the relationship between the state and the officeholders also complicated the debts due from the officeholders to British merchants.[604] The conventional Ottoman imperial discourse established and consolidated over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries considered the sultan an all-powerful sovereign receiving his authority from God, while regarding military, bureaucratic, and administrative officeholders as servants (*ḳul*) of the sultans.[605] According to this convention, the officeholders enjoyed many privileges and derived their wealth from the offices through the sultan's grant (*berāt*) in the Ottoman administrative system. Hence, the wealth accumulated belonged to the sultan who administered it on behalf of the public treasury and who could confiscate the wealth once the officeholders were removed

[603] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/150/740, Evāḫir-i Ṣafer 1190/April 1776; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/155/781, Evāḫir-i Receb 1190/September 1776.

[604] Edhem Eldem only briefly touched upon this subject, see Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 237.

[605] Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550–1650* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 31–76; Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 18, 289–91, Halil İnalcık, "Comments on "Sultanism": Max Weber's Typification of the Ottoman Polity," in *Princeton Papers in Near East Studies: Number 1*, eds. Charles Issawi and Bernard Lewis (Princeton, New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1992), 49–72; Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600* (London: Phoenix, 1994), 65–103; Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*; Taylor, *Land and Legal Texts in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, esp. chapter two.

from office or died.[606] Despite a growing awareness of the significance of the security of property, office, and life over the eighteenth century, the practice of confiscation continued until 1839 due to the low capacity of the Ottoman state to tax, administer, and fight with internal power groups and external enemies.[607] The state was liable to pay the debts of officeholders after seizing their receivables.

However, the process and form of confiscation might, and did, endanger the collection of British debts. In 1795-96, Joseph Franel and one of the members of the Lee family in Izmir sold some steel and lead on credit and loaned some money, amounting in total to 8768.5 *guruş*, to a certain Buldanlı Hacı Osman there. Having paid 1300 *guruş*, Hacı Osman died in Izmir within a year or two after contracting a debt with the said merchants. After his demise, the state initiated a process of the confiscation of his wealth, which indicates that Hacı Osman was involved in, and accumulated wealth as a result of, public matters that qualified him for confiscation.[608] This process, however, did not result in full state confiscation, but in a deal with the heirs called *muḫallefāt bedeli* or *bedel-i muḫallefāt* (lit. inheritance value) whereby the state transferred the wealth to the heirs—the transferee could be a third party—in return for a payment, 125,000 *guruş*, assessed on the 'real' value of the inheritance, to the treasury in annuities.[609] Accordingly, the heirs became liable for the debts of the deceased since it was not a full state confiscation. Yet, when the merchants demanded payment from the heirs, they refused to pay by claiming that they did not have enough assets at hand after making the payment to the treasury. After this response, the merchants seem to have appeared before the

[606] For a recent study of the Ottoman state confiscation, see Yasin Arslantaş, "Confiscation by the Ruler: A Study of the Ottoman Practice of Müsadere, 1700s-1839" (Ph.D. Diss., London School of Economic and Political Science, 2017).
[607] Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 40–45, 107–109; Arslantaş, "Confiscation by the Ruler," 207–39.
[608] BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/98/1, Evāsıṭ-i Muḥarrem 1213/June-July 1798; BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/104/1, Evāʿil-i Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1214/October-November 1799.
[609] Ibid., "cānib-i mīrīden baʿde'l-żabṭ birle… ve faẓlasın beynü'l-vereşe tevzīʿ ve taḳsīm". On this type of deal, see Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 107–109; Arslantaş, "Confiscation by the Ruler," 17.

court of Izmir and procured a letter from the kadi, "asking for the payment of the debt from the payment made to the state" [*cānib-i mīrīye verilen bedel-i muḫallefātından iʿṭā olunmasını inhā ve istidʿā*]. The Porte, on the contrary, clarified that "the said debt is not required of the state [but should] be paid and satisfied by the heirs in accordance with the required law in force" [*meblağ-ı mezbūr cānib-i mīrīden lāzım gelmeyüb ber-müḳtezā-yı kāʾide-i merʿīye vereşe ṭarafından irża ve eskāt olunmak*].[610] The partial confiscation complicated debt recovery processes and lengthened diplomatic engagements for the British to understand who was liable for the debt and devise strategies to enforce repayments.

Upon the arrival of this order in Izmir, all parties involved were summoned before the court of Izmir. Here, the heirs testified that their father had effects and estates in Algiers and Tunisia which may help to pay their debts off. In this light, the Porte ordered the kadi to reassess the value of receivables and debts. It further commanded that "after clearing the sum due to the state, the remaining sum shall be used to do justice to the creditors".[611] Hence, the state prioritised the debts due to the state, which posed another question of whether the proceeds of these sales would be adequate to pay the British merchants after paying the annuities to the state. After a month or two, the ambassador submitted another petition asking for speeding up the reassessment abovementioned.[612] Consequently, the Porte instructed the heirs and the kadi that the payment should not be postponed further.

However, an imperial order dated in February 1801 suggests that the proceeds of the sale of the effects and estates of the deceased in Algiers and Tunisia did not meet the debts due to British merchants. Although we do not have the original petition to the Porte, it seems that the British asked again for the payment of the debt by the state since the heirs were reluctant

[610] BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/104/1, Evāʿil-i Cemāziyelāḫir 1214/October-November 1799.
[611] BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/106/8, Evāsıṭ-i Şevvāl 1214/March 1800. "cānib-i mīrīye edāya müteʿahhid olduḳları meblağ-ı mezbūr tamamen baʿde'l-edā bāḳī ḳalan meblağ bil-cümle eṣḥāb-ı duyūna ʿalā'ṭ-ṭarīḳ'l-ġuremā ḥaḳḳ ve ʿadl oluna".
[612] BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/110/1, Evāsıṭ-i Muḥarrem 1215/May-June 1800.

or unable to settle the debt. It is not possible to deduce whether the heirs capitalised on the ambiguity created by the confiscation process or lost their assets as a result of the confiscation. The Porte did not either elaborate on the financial capacity of the heirs in the imperial orders. Upon this request, the Porte contented themselves with reiterating that the heirs are liable to pay the debts of the deceased in the event of a deal between the state and heirs over the confiscation by noting that "the remaining sum is left to the heirs on the condition of paying and satisfying the creditors".[613] Thus, "it is not lawful to pay 8768.5 *guruş* by the state".[614] This is the last entry in the register about this case, and I have not been able to find any documentation showing how the dispute was resolved, if at all. The last entry insinuates that the British merchants were locked in a situation, unable to make any progress as the heirs were either reluctant or unable to clear their father's debt and the state disassociated itself from the debt by sketching out the legal procedures. The length of diplomatic engagements lasting around two years shows the enormous effort the British put forward to ensure the payment of the debt, but apparently to no avail. Ultimately, the nature of the relationship between the state and the officers does not make it clear where public revenues ended and where private wealth began. Although the Porte tried to set out who was liable for the debts of the deceased in the event of a partial state confiscation, the process itself was complex enough to limit the British capacity to recover their debts from the heirs of a late provincial officeholder.

Concluding Remarks

[613] BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/118/5, Evāʾil-i Şevvāl 1215/February 1801. "eṣḥābü'l-duyūnunu daḫī irża ve eskāt itmek şarṭıyla veresesine terk ve iḥsān olunmuş olmağla".
[614] BOA, DVNSHADR.d 10/118/5, Evāʾil-i Şevvāl 1215/February 1801. "sekiz bin yedi yüz altmış sekiz guruş beş akçeyi cānib-i mīrīden iʿṭāsına mesāğ olmamağla".

The British were engaged in credit relations with different segments of Ottoman society over the eighteenth century and the Capitulations provided the legal framework for credit relations between British merchants and Ottoman subjects in the empire. The multiplicity of reasons necessitated credit transactions in the provinces which proved also to be a lucrative business for the British. Thanks to these relations, the British funded their commercial operations, accessed Ottoman products, and formed business and personal connections with the Ottoman subjects. Even so, some credit arrangements offered substantial benefits to British merchants: they possessed real estate, received direct assignments on provincial revenue units, and even played provincial officials off against one another. British merchants constantly assessed the risk factors associated with credit, evaluated the creditworthiness of Ottoman subjects, and introduced trust-fostering mechanisms in debt contracts.

Amongst the Ottoman borrowers were individual subjects, local communities, and provincial officeholders. In this sense, the British provided the Ottomans with the means of appropriation which were used for various purposes in provincial economies such as meeting tax burdens and obtaining and maintaining public offices. Thus, the British supplemented, or even combined with, the already existing credit and obligation networks of the Ottoman Empire and in this sense, contributed, albeit seemingly not deliberately, to the sustained integration between the provinces and the imperial centre.

On the other hand, neither the financial power of the British was omnipotent, nor were Ottoman subjects passive players. Rather, different variables and local agency affected the financial capacity of British merchants to provide credit as well as the British leverage during diplomatic and judicial processes to recover debts. And yet, it seems that the British managed somehow to succeed in recuperating their debts or at least, receiving a portion as an indemnity since the issue of Ottoman debts did not evolve into an affair negotiated at the highest level between the British ambassadors and the Ottoman bureaucrats over the century.

It was, however, the political events or conjuncture during which the merchants on the ground and the top officials in Britain such as the Levant Company officials became concerned with the security of British assets. The root of this concern was the fact that Ottoman subjects might encroach upon the effects and estates of British merchants in retaliation for the suffering and loss of Ottoman subjects by other polities. For instance, during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768-74, the British government not only aided the Russians in terms of maritime navigation and provisions, but the British ambassador, consul, and even merchants did not inform the Ottomans of the planned Russian attack on the Ottomans.[615] Paradoxically, John Murray, the British ambassador, acted as a mediator between the Ottomans and the Russians. After learning about the Russian attack, British factories in the empire asked the Company headquarters in London for the protection of their assets, including the debts due from the Ottoman subjects. The factories thought that the Ottomans could encroach upon their assets when they found out that the British helped the Russians. Upon this request, the Levant Company directors instructed John Murray:

> [t]o secure to the Subjects of Great Britain the payment of all Debts due to them from the Subjects of the Porte up to the time of negotiation; & to prevent their being in future deprived from receiving all the satisfaction the effects of Debtors will extend to, without their pretence of enjoying any kind of privilege to screen them from the payment of their Debts, as has lately been practised in the case of Calif Eskinazi & Company.[616]

The rumours of British assistance were growing in the port-cities of the empire by this time, and yet, the ambassador, as a mediator in the negotiations, was asked to use his leverage to obtain an imperial order from the Porte for the collection of debts due to British merchants in

[615] Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 52, 181–82, 204; For early notices, see LMA, CLC/B/227-128/MS 08724, John March to Francis Bergoin and John Charnaud in Izmir, 8 September 1769; LMA, CLC/B/227-128/MS 08724, John March to Francis Bergoin and John Charnaud in Izmir, 17 October 1769; LMA, CLC/B/227-128/MS 08724, John March to Edward Purnell in Latakia, 6 April 1770.
[616] TNA, SP 105/119, to John Murray, 1 June 1770.

the provinces. The ambassador was further advised to communicate with the consuls "to have all the Debts due to the several British Factors registered in Cancellaries, together with the marks numbers & other particulars of what goods may remain unsold & the goods themselves deposited in Cancellaries".[617]

However, between 5 and 7 July 1770, the destruction of the Ottoman fleet by the Russians in Çeşme Bay instigated a mob to attack the non-Muslim Ottoman and European subjects, including the British, in Izmir.[618] It was not until late July that the British factory in Izmir met and decided to register all the debts due to British merchants there in chancellery.[619] In the meantime, at the request of the British factory in Izmir, the ambassador submitted a forceful *ṭaḳrīr* which denied their association with the Russians as lie and calumny (*ifk ve iftirā*) and demanded the protection for the persons (*nefs*), property (*emvāl*), and goods (*eşyā*) of the British consul and merchants there through the mobilization of the provincial authorities and officials.[620] Although the Porte agreed to grant increased protection, and one of the members of the Karaosmanoğlu family arrived in Izmir to restore order in October, the turmoil lasted months and even years, during which the British factory in Izmir was compelled to offer gifts to the provincial officials and solicit protection from a British squadron to ensure their safety.[621]

We do not know whether the ambassador communicated the British concern for debts with the Ottoman bureaucrats before the outbreak of the mob. His *taḳrīr*, however, did not refer specifically to the debts in the heat of the disorder in Izmir. Similar concerns were present in 1807 when Charles Arbuthnot sailed away from Galata on the brink of the first Anglo-Ottoman War. This time, however, the memories of the Porte's actions against the French after the

[617] TNA, SP 105/119, to John Murray, 1 June 1770.
[618] Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*, 59–61.
[619] TNA, SP 105/337, 23 July 1770.
[620] BOA, C.HR/79/3907, 7 Rabīʿülāḫir 1184/27 September 1770; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 181.
[621] LMA, CLC/B/227-128/MS 08724, John March to John Charnaud, 4 October 1770; TNA, SP 105/337, 10 November 1770; TNA, SP 105/337, 10 December 1770.

Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798 were still fresh and the British had a lot to learn from them. Following the declaration of war against the French, the Porte ordered the seizure (*ẓabṭ*), registration (*taḥrīr*), sealing (*temhīr*), and preservation (*ḥıfẓ*) of the French properties, goods, and cash (*nuḳūd*).[622] Furthermore, the debts (*ẕimemāt*) due to or from British merchants were ordered to be collected and delivered to the imperial mint upon the notification of state agents tasked with registering the estates and effects belonging to the French in the provinces.[623] Hence, immediately after sailing away from Galata and before the escalation of inter-imperial tension, Charles Arbuthnot sought to secure the British estates and effects in the provinces and their debts in the imperial mint in Istanbul with a consideration that such precautionary measures could avoid, albeit with no guarantee of success, the encroachments of Ottoman subjects in the provinces and the state seizure with the outbreak of a potential war in the near future.

What seems different in 1807 is the timely measures taken by the British ambassador and the assertive and arrogant language used in the *taḳrīr*. John Murray first adopted an accommodative strategy, using his leverage as a negotiator between the Ottomans and Russians at the time, and submitted a forceful *taḳrīr* only when the lives of British merchants were under threat owing to the violent mob. Moreover, while John Murray reminded the Porte that the British were a true and faithful friend to the Ottomans, Charles Arbuthnot's *taḳrīr* pursued a more confrontational stance by capitalising on the current geopolitical conjuncture, insinuating the Porte's negligence in the issuance of a relevant imperial order for the collection and preservation of the British debts as shown in the opening quotation of this chapter.[624]

[622] Turğut, "208 Numaralı Mühimme Defterinin Transkripsiyon ve Tahlili," 62–70, 90.
[623] Ibid., 101–2, 173–75.
[624] BOA, C.HR/79/3907, 7 Rabīʿülāḫir 1184/27 September 1770. "devlet-i ʿaliyye-yi dāʾimü'l-ḳarār ṭāʾīfe-yi meẕḳūreyi ḫāliṣ ve ṣādıḳ dost nikāhıyla naẓār idüb".

Such a change in British diplomatic engagements with the Porte might be indicative of a growing British self-confidence which seems to become more evident after the Franco-Ottoman War of 1798-1802. While the Porte seemed to have understood the alterations in the exertions of British imperial power on the global stage towards the end of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, the next chapter moves on to scrutinise the moments and period in which the British imperial and commercial power became noticeable in the provinces. In doing so, it tries to understand the Ottoman perceptions of British power as well as the British attitude towards involvement in political events in the provinces, questions that help us further unpack the nature of British imperial enterprise and power in the Ottoman Empire.

CHAPTER 4: Navigating Neutrality During Political Instability: An Attempt at a Qualitative Understanding of the Projection, and the Ottoman Perceptions, of British Imperial Power

> Of all the Princes so far remote as *England*, none amongst this people stands in better account than his Majesty of *Great Britain*, not only for the convenience of the Trade, which provides the Empire with many necessary Commodities; but for the same of his shipping, and power at sea, which makes him, though divided from all parts of the world, yet a borderer on every Country, where the Ocean extends: And this esteem and honour the *Sultan* bears towards His Majesty, hath been evidenced in several particulars, and by none more than by the security and freedom his Merchants live in, in these Dominions, and a readiness always in every reasonable request, to gratifie [*sic*] His Majesty's Embassadors.[625]

British appreciation of the Ottoman Empire's critical position in European power politics and trade was pivotal to the inception of Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic and commercial relations in 1580. Consequently, the Sultan granted the Capitulations to the British to increase its international trade and imperial revenues. Paul Rycaut's utterances regarding the role of British trade and shipping in shaping the Sultan's perception of British imperial power were to some extent true. And yet, that regard towards the British was not unconditional. A staunch (*rāsiḫ-dem*) and enduring (*s̱ābit-ḳadem*) sincerity of heart (*ḫulūṣ-i füʾād*) and good friendship (*ḫüsn-ü muvālāt ve muṣāfāt*) was expected of the British towards the Ottoman Empire if they were to maintain peace (*ṣulḥ*) and amity (*dostluḳ*) with the Ottomans.[626] Yet the practices corresponding to signs of friendship were not always as clear-cut as gift-giving. Such practices arose out of certain situations. Nevertheless, the British were expected to adhere to conduct that would not disturb order in the Ottoman provinces. For this reason, the British Crown started constraining the Company's institutional autonomy from the 1620s to avoid political actions by the British

[625] Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire. Containing the Maxims of the Turkish Politie, the Most material Points of the Mahometan Religion, Their Sects, Hereries, their Convents and Religious Votaries. Their Military Discipline, With an exact Computation of their Forces both by Land and Sea* (London, 1670), 91–92. Italics belongs to Paul Rycaut who was the British consul in Izmir between 1667 and 1678.
[626] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 35/1/Page 28/Article 63, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1086/September 1675.

subjects in the empire and ensure the observance of cordiality with the Ottomans.[627] The Company ruled that British officials and merchants in the Ottoman realms should not "interfere in any affair relation to Bashaw [pasha] or other Governors, or anything belonging to them".[628] British officials and merchants had to eschew any form of political involvement in local power politics, whether at times of crisis or not, to avoid interfering in the internal affairs of provincial governments that could contribute to political instability within the empire. Undermining political stability could violate peace and amity, which would in turn threaten the trading interests and security of British merchants.

Despite this ruling, the British were occasionally involved in events or actions that could affect the existing power dynamics in the provinces as is shown in the context of cross-cultural credit relations. This chapter demonstrates that British factories occasionally found themselves in situations where provincial officials and notables asked them for military, financial, and diplomatic assistance. In scrutinising the moments in which Ottoman requests and British deliberation and responses occurred, this chapter reveals that during tumultuous times, British factories' stance toward involvement in local political events lined up with those of the Crown and the Company due to a variety of reasons to be discussed below. In practice, however, the British offered different forms of political assistance such as diplomatic aid. Material conditions determined when, why, and how the British intervened or not. At the same time, this chapter shows that the Ottomans understood such offerings as highly conditional and situational. British assistance first suggests that British-Ottoman relations were not bound by dominance or subjugation. These empires came to depend on trans-imperial relationships. The power residing in these relationships was erratic, conditional, and subject to alterations over

[627] On the Crown's and then the Parliament's attempts at controlling the appointment of Company officials, see Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*; Devecka, "Raisins d'etat: Trade, Politics, and Diplomacy in the History of the Levant Company," 77–94; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 62–70.
[628] TNA, SP 110/58, 22 January 1772.

time. The limited nature of British involvements attests to the non-expansionist, somewhat conservative, but impromptu complexion of British imperial enterprise in the Ottoman realms.

Understanding the British imperial enterprise as conservative stands in stark contrast to Martin Devecka's arguments. Devecka maintained that the Levant Company did not establish an "administrative bailiwick" in Iskenderun during the tumultuous seventeenth century "not because the Ottomans were already exerting control over the region", but due to inter-European rivalry and the lack of the administrative independence of the Levant Company.[629] This reasoning, however, tends to misinterpret the symbiotic relationship between the Ottoman state and provincial authority-holders that shaped the methods and relations of provincial administration and revenue collection in the empire: The former delegated administrative and fiscal duties to officeholders as local representatives of the Ottoman government who derived their legitimacy, wealth, and clout from the offices they obtained through bargains and negotiations with the state. Therefore, the British had to be in constant negotiation with central bureaucrats and provincial officeholders while navigating their trading rights and interests. For example, the British attempt at building a fort or castle for the safety of the port of Iskenderun in 1704 was not authorised by the grand vizier.[630] Similarly, their intention to build a new warehouse near the same port in 1776 was not permitted by the governor of Aleppo.[631] In addition, Devecka's inference takes the lack of the Company and its members' agency for granted. Thus, it fails to observe rather complex considerations and exigencies of material conditions and relationships taking place at a ground level that informed the moments and nature of British (non)involvement during such times.

[629] Devecka, "Raisins d'etat: Trade, Politics, and Diplomacy in the History of the Levant Company," 87–88.
[630] TNA, SP 97/21, 7 November 1704.
[631] TNA, SP 110/58, 8 April 1776.

An examination of these moments therefore allows us to analyse how, why, and when the British refused or acquiesced to Ottoman demands. Just as the Ottoman perceptions of British economic and social capital were conditional, so too British responses were informed by situational conditions relating to local power dynamics and financial conditions. When faced with such requests, British factories assembled and deliberated over, often with other European communities, potential courses of action. The decisions they arrived at were dependent on circumstantial expediencies rather than strict adherence to official regulations. These considerations both enabled and constrained the manifestation of British imperial power in the provinces. In grappling with these complex situations, this chapter takes a case study approach and queries: (a) how might the processes of British refusal and acquiescence illuminate the nature and extent of their social and economic capital, hence the exercise of British imperial power in the Ottoman Empire?; (b) how might the moments of Ottoman demands for British assistance reveal the Ottoman comprehensions of British financial strength, military might, and diplomatic prowess?; and c) how might these Ottoman demands and British (non)actions elucidate the nature of British imperial presence in the Ottoman domains?

In answering these questions, the first part of this chapter examines the Sarıbeyoğlu incident in 1738 in Izmir, when the local notables of the city asked the British factory to provide them with ammunition and naval protection in the face of a regional, popular uprising instigated by Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa, a powerful provincial figure who led an armed insurgence in western Anatolia. The second part then focuses on the diplomatic intermediary role of Timothy Turner, the British consul of Cyprus, in the riot of 1764-66 in Cyprus. The last part analyses the Ottoman request for an unofficial foreign loan for defence purposes from the British factory in Aleppo owing to the conflict between the alliance army of Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar al-Zaydānī and the Mamluks and the Ottoman forces in northern Palestine between 1771 and 1773. In all these cases, the British were not the only or first Europeans whom the Ottomans approached as the

requests were usually made to several European communities in the provinces. Remaining neutral was key to British factories, for which they invoked their *amān* status against Ottoman requests to stay away from local conflicts. The Ottoman officeholders, on the other hand, had a different vision of the responsibilities of the *müsteʾmin*s during occurrences that threatened order in the provinces. Therefore, ever-changing situational dynamics related to disparate understandings of the nature of European responsibilities and material conditions played a big part in determining how, why, and when the British responded to the demands in question. Furthermore, the weak position of the British, like other European communities, in local power dynamics entailed strategic cooperation between European powers during these times to ensure the safety of their lives and trade as well as offset any possible repercussions. Thus, the chapter also offers a nuanced perspective on the traditional narratives of European military and economic competition overseas by highlighting cooperation between them. Taken together, this chapter further elaborates on how the Ottoman imperial systems depended on the facilities of the British factories in particular situations and how different dimensions of British power became evident in certain situations, and yet their exercise remained time-limited.

The British and the Sarıbeyoğlu Incident in Izmir in 1738

Between 1737 and 1739, a gang led by Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa, a violent 'bandit' from Sarayköy village near Kütahya, expanded their activities in western Anatolia towards Izmir.[632] Sarıbeyoğlu was one of the local notables (*āʿyān*) in western Anatolia who consolidated his power base in the region. He resorted to military mutinies since 1732 to further expand his

[632] Mehmet Yaşar Ertaş, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Bir Osmanlı Eskıyâsı: Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa," in *Uluslararası Denizli ve Çevresi Tarih ve Kültür Sempozyomu: Bildiriler 6-7-8 Eylül 2006 Denizli,* vol. 1, ed. Ayfer Özçelik (Denizli: Pamukkale Universitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Yayınları, 2007), 404–5; Necmi Ülker, "Sarıbeyoğlu'nun İzmir'e Yürüyüşü ve Avrupalı Tüccarlar," *Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 4 (1989): 43–51.

power, a course of action that put him into conflict with the state. Such mutinies may or may not have been the result of grievances such as unfair treatment by the state. Yet the insurgents occasionally pursued armed mutinies to force the state to engage in dialogue with them.[633] In this way, they hoped to force the state to answer their demands or recognise their power. The Ottoman official documentation often branded such rebellious people as 'brigand, bandit; rebel' (*şaḳī*), and Sarıbeyoğlu was branded as such. The Ottoman state even obtained a non-binding legal opinion (*fetvā*) for his execution. However, with the outbreak of the Ottoman-Russian War and the renewal of the Ottoman-Habsburg conflict from 1736, the sultan pardoned Sarıbeyoğlu in 1736 on the condition that he join the Ottoman army.[634] On his way to join the army, however, he changed his mind for unknown reasons and returned to pursue his military mutinies in the region presumably by taking advantage of the current state of wars on the empire's frontiers. From this point on, Izmir became the central focus of his activities. In 1736, he threatened to plunder the town, forcing the local notables in Izmir to take protective measures.[635] The real threat came in March 1738 with the news that Sarıbeyoğlu approached Alaşehir, Manisa, around 73 miles away from Izmir. It was at this point when provincial authorities and elites in Izmir demanded assistance from European trading communities in the defence of the city.

In the essay, "*Sarıbeyoğlu'nun İzmir'e Yürüyüşü ve Avrupalı Tüccarlar*" (The March of Sarıbeyoğlu on Izmir and European Merchants), Necmi Ülker underscored the collaboration between the provincial authorities and European communities in Izmir in the defence of the

[633] Virginia H. Aksan, "Manning a Black Sea garrison in the 18th century: Ochakov and concepts of mutiny and rebellion in the Ottoman context," in *Mutiny and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jane Hathaway (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2002), 63–71; Palmira Brummett, "Classifying Ottoman mutiny: the act and vision of rebellion," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (1998): 91–107.
[634] Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 102–16.
[635] Ertaş, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Bir Osmanlı Eskıyâsı: Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa," 44–45.

city and revealed the precautions taken by the British factory.[636] Elena Frangakis-Syrett also discussed the Sarıbeyoğlu incident in terms of local disturbances affecting the trade of Izmir.[637] Both scholars pointed to the neutrality of European trading communities against Ottoman demands and the protective measures they employed. In what follows, we analyse the courses of actions taken by the Ottoman provincial officials and the British factory in Izmir against this threat. This analysis reveals that by the 1730s, Ottoman provincial authorities and notables in Izmir were aware of the destructive capacity and availability of British guns and ammunition in Izmir as well as their shipping capacity in the Aegean Sea. British trade and shipping in the eastern Mediterranean made these capacities known to the Ottomans, but a fuller appreciation of these services developed with the emergence of the need for the protection of the city. Despite these perceptions, the British avoided getting involved in the affair to maintain their neutrality and employed protective strategies only when the security of their trade and lives were at serious risk. One of these strategies insinuated a sense of extraterritoriality, albeit an improper one.

The Ottoman state did not immediately close avenues of negotiation with Sarıbeyoğlu after his rejection to join the army. However, by 1737, the opportunity for reconciliation failed.[638] While the state tasked provincial governors with reinforcement of troops and financial resources to contain his activities, he declared his intention of marching towards Izmir thanks to his band's military capabilities. The war fought on multiple fronts presumably constrained the state's capacity for the swift conveyance of troops and ordnance to reinforce Izmir's defence. Thus, on 6 March 1738, the British factory in Izmir gathered for an emergency meeting to discuss a message they received from the city's officials and notables. The message informed the British that Sarıbeyoğlu and his army were stationed around Alaşehir, threatening

[636] Ülker, "Sarıbeyoğlu'nun İzmir'e Yürüyüşü ve Avrupalı Tüccarlar," 43–51.
[637] Frangakis Syrett, *The Commerce of Izmir*, 58–59.
[638] Ertaş, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Bir Osmanlı Eskıyâsı: Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa," 407–9.

to move towards Kasaba (Turgutlu), and asked them, together with the French, Dutch, and Venetians, "to supply them wth a quantity of ammunitions to be sent to Casaban".[639] At first sight, this demand might attest to the incompetence of the Ottoman state in protecting Izmir given the current state of affairs with Austria and Russia. Yet I contend that it suggests the Ottomans' ability to tap into the resources of foreign communities that were considered members of the Ottoman society.[640] This vision then informed the responses of the provincial officials when faced with emergency situations: Requesting arms from European residents of Izmir to forestall Sarıbeyoğlu's progress towards the city. Upon this request, the British, French, Dutch and Venetian consuls gathered to decide a course of action and resolved to invoke their *amān* status by stating that "as the Frank Nations are only settled here by permission of y^{e} Grand Signior it would not be prudent in them to meddle in y^{e} affair".[641] As the legal basis of the Capitulations, this status was granted to the subjects of European countries to live and trade temporarily in the Ottoman Empire without hindrance. As such, they had no right as temporary residents to interfere in the internal affairs of the empire. The British viewed non-political action as key to the preservation of friendly relations. As for the Ottomans, however, *müsteʾmin*s were thought of as no different from ordinary Ottoman subjects in times of crises when lives were at risk, due to the view that all foreign subjects residing and trading in the Ottoman domains thanks to Ottoman protection should concern themselves with the cause of the inhabitants of the host country as a prerequisite for cordial inter-imperial relations. With this understanding, the British were expected to align with officeholders to maintain order in the provinces. Hence, a divergence emerged in British and Ottoman understandings of the nature of responsibilities expected of the *müsteʾmin*s in situations that threatened political order in the provinces. Such different understandings then resulted in divergent expectations and

[639] TNA, SP 105/336, 6 March 1738.
[640] On the view that inter-imperial exchanges of firearms do not suggest Ottoman decline or dependency, see Kenneth Chase, *Firearms: A Global History to 1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 95–98.
[641] TNA, SP 105/336, 6 March 1738.

actions. Rather than complying with the Ottoman request, thus risking the foundations of inter-imperial relations, the British thought, at this stage, that it would be adequate to task an extra Janissary with patrolling Frank Street at night for their safety.

To avoid harming their relationships with provincial authorities, however, the British developed cooperative strategies with other European communities mentioned above because they had similar policies of impartiality in the Ottoman Empire. European consuls commonly met and deliberated over a proper course of action, especially at times of political instability in the provinces. Recent scholarship on European commercial and imperial activities overseas has moreover shown that inter-imperial cooperation was necessary for self-sustainability and self-protection from local economic and military threats.[642] Thus far, the scholarship on European trade in the Ottoman Empire in the early modern period has been biased by the focus on European economic and military competition.[643] The weak power of Europeans in Ottoman provincial contexts generated fear and evoked solidarity between Europeans during these times. Therefore, European trading communities developed cooperative relationships through the exchange of services and took collective strategic decisions at these moments. Since the request was made to every single European factory and the current political situation affected all of them, European consuls gathered to produce strategic, eloquent responses to the Ottoman authorities to maintain their security and cordial relations with the Ottomans.

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[642] For the significance of cooperation in overseas contexts, see Antunes and Polónia, "Introduction," 1–11; Elisabeth Heijmans, *The Agency of Empire: Connections and Strategies in French Overseas Expansion, (1686-1746)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020), 141–81.

[643] Charles M. Andrews, "Anglo-French Commercial Rivalry, 1700-1750: The Western Phase, I," *The American Historical Review* 20, no. 3 (1915): 539–556; Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*; Arthur L. Horniker, "Anglo-French Rivalry in the Levant from 1583 to 1612," *The Journal of Modern History* 18, no. 4 (1946): 289–305; Alexander H. de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: a history of the earliest diplomatic relations, 1610-1630* (Leiden and Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1978); Wagner, "Companies, Commerce and Politics". Scholarly focus on maritime history and European privateering in the Mediterranean also considers European competition, see Daniel A. Baugh, "Great Britain's 'Blue-Water' Policy, 1689-1815," *The International History Review* 10, no. 1 (1988): 33–58; David J. Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990); Heywood, "The Kapudan Pasha, the English Ambassador, and the Blackham Frigate: An Episode in Anglo-Ottoman maritime relations (1697),". 409–38.

The Ottoman grasp of how Europeans could be of any help in these moments was shaped by their long-standing patterns of exchange and the inherent necessities of these situations. The officials were aware of the British ammunition not because the British were engaged in any form of warfare in the Ottoman domains, but because metal and military goods such as guns, pistols, tin, and gunpowder constituted one of the mainstays of British-Ottoman commerce since the sixteenth century.[644] Further, the Porte occasionally purchased British-manufactured ammunition over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For example, the Porte purchased gunpowder from British merchants on credit in 1699 to be paid in seven to eight months from the revenues of Aleppo and Syrian Tripoli.[645] As seen in Chapter One, British factories also gifted provincial officeholders with various military equipment to foster trust. Furthermore, English glazed gunpowder was processed by the Ottomans at the Gallipoli powder-mill since 1717.[646] These exchanges promoted the British armaments industry in the empire and informed the Ottomans' decisions to seek British assistance as the need arose. Yet, the Ottoman demands were not confined to military equipment, but included shipping services.

Upon a rumour of Sarıbeyoğlu's approach to Bayındır, twelve hours from Izmir, some of the notables sent another message to European communities on 14 March, asking them to inform their respective ambassadors in Istanbul about the growing threat and "to let Two frank ships lay…to prevent y^{e} Rebels from entering in case of their approach."[647] Demanding two European ships for coastal defence is striking and again may suggest incompetence in provincial protection in case of a landing operation. European shipping underwent technical innovations, an increase in shipping tonnage, and organisational reforms in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which rendered European ships efficient in the carrying trade in the

[644] Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 84–86.
[645] BOA, İE.AS/35/3162, 13 Receb 1110/15 January 1699.
[646] Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapon Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 141–43; Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 85.
[647] TNA, SP 105/336, 14 March 1738.

Ottoman Mediterranean—i.e., the waters east of the imaginary border between Morea and the Gulf of Sirte in Libya—and beyond.[648] Over the eighteenth century, Ottoman authorities and merchants chartered European ships when there were no Ottoman ships available at the ports.[649] Quantitatively speaking, the French were primus inter pares in this trade.[650] British shipping consolidated its strong position in the eastern Mediterranean over the seventeenth century during which they actively participated in the carrying trade in the Ottoman Mediterranean.[651] From the 1680s, the Levant Company discouraged British flagged ships from participating in this carrying trade because of a variety of expenses incurred at sea due to corsair, privateer attacks and the exactions of Ottoman officials.[652] Notwithstanding this policy change, British ships, including armed ones for privateering, continued engaging in carrying trade in the following century. For example, *Union Galley*, a ship of around 280 tons, manned with 55 men and 22 guns was laying at anchor in the port of Smyrna on 22 August 1712 and planning to leave in twenty days for Livorno.[653] Similarly manned and armed European ships were thought to provide additional protection off the coast of Smyrna possibly owing to the inadequacy of Ottoman ships and the absence of a strong artillery fortress at the Gulf of Izmir. In this manner, the correlation between British trade and shipping and the Ottoman esteem

[648] A Levant Company regulation dated 1 June 1688 stipulated that "every Comander [*sic*] who takes in Clith [*sic*] here Shall first enter into Covenants with us to carry 15 Seamen for each 100 Tons his Shipp is in burthen." see TNA, SP 110/67, p. 72. For a recent article on the Ottoman attempts at defining Ottoman maritime territoriality in the eastern Mediterranean, see Talbot, "Protecting the Mediterranean: Ottoman Responses to Maritime Violence, 1718-1770," 283–317.
[649] Griffith, "Egyptian Ports in the Ottoman Mediterranean, 1760-1820," 166–72.
[650] Daniel Panzac, *La caravane maritime: Marins européens et marchands ottomans en Méditerranée, 1680-1830* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2004), 181–82; Daniel Panzac, "International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24 (1992): 189–206.
[651] Davis, "England and the Mediterranean, 1570-1670," 117–37; Rapp, "The Unmaking of the Mediterranean Trade Hegemony," 499–525; Maria Fusaro, "After Braudel: a Reassessment of Mediterranean History between the Northern Invasion and the Caravane Maritime," in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, eds. Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood, and Mohamed-Salah Omri (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2010), 1–22; Colin Heywood, "The English in the Mediterranean, 1600-1630," in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, eds. Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood, and Mohamed-Salah Omri (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2010), 23–44.
[652] TNA, SP 110/67, 10 June 1687.
[653] TNA, SP 105/339, p. 72.

towards the British, as noted by Rycaut in the opening quote, holds, to some extent, true, especially during moments of political instability.

Moreover, by entreating the consuls to acquaint the ambassadors in Istanbul with the situation, the notables hoped that the ambassadors' connections in Istanbul would help in coaxing the Porte into channelling the personnel and equipment needed to hold the insurgents at bay and perhaps suppress the insurgence. It was feared that the insurgence might lead to an incursion into the town. Thus, British military equipment, ships and diplomatic connections, and the previous relationships underpinning the realisation of these services by the Ottomans played a vital role in shaping the Ottoman perceptions of British imperial power in the empire. These benefits were considered significant tools possessed by a friend who could be asked to contribute to combat against a regional uprising.

After consultation with other European consuls, the British maintained their neutral stance. They, nevertheless, reminded the provincial authorities of their responsibilities for their protection according to the Capitulations and asked the extent to which they could depend on provincial authorities in this matter. *Turnacıbaşı* (lit. the chief-crane-keeper [of the sultan], the title also used for those appointed as the guardian of provinces/cities), *mütesellim* (the deputy of the provincial governor), and Hacı Osman Ağa (one of the chief notables in Izmir) assured the British for their protection. Unsurprisingly, this assurance seemed somewhat weak given their previous requests for arms, ships and diplomatic intervention. Therefore, they loaded their goods on board the ships on 15 March amongst the growing rumours of Sarıbeyoğlu's intrusion.[654] British merchants who supplied the officeholders and the Porte with the products of the British armaments industry and shipped their goods with well-armed and manned ships seemed to have given the impression to Ottoman officeholders in Izmir that the British were

[654] TNA, SP 105/336, 14 March 1738; TNA, SP 105/336, 23 March 1738, a report to the British ambassador on Sarıbeyoğlu.

able to furnish them with arms and vessels when and if needed. It is quite difficult to ascertain when the British started to be perceived as active contributors, but it would be safe to assume that such perceptions were shaped by the long-standing commercial exchange between the two empires and materialised with the emergence of a needy situation. However, the British thought of diverse repercussions that could have been brought upon them if they were involved in local politics. Although the British factory could contribute to the designed defensive strategies, their own protection rested on provincial officeholders. Feeling a lack of protection, they sought to ensure the safety of their own goods, so that they could leave Izmir if the situation deteriorated further.

In their negotiations with Ottoman provincial officials with regard to involvement in political actions, the British acted in line with their official policy informed by the Company's regulations and the Capitulations. They were only accountable to their respective ambassadors who represented their interests in Istanbul on behalf of the British Crown. Theoretically, British factories in the provinces would only embroil themselves in such situations provided they had received explicit instruction from the ambassador. On the other hand, alignment with a local power group was also risky in moments of crisis since they risked backing the losing side. Maintaining impartiality was important as much for the future as for current relations with provincial power holders. After all, as long as the British traded in the provinces, they relied on provincial authorities for the security of their trading interests and lives.

The next few days seemed to have been rough for the inhabitants of Izmir. Sarıbeyoğlu was reported to be around Seydiköy and Buca on 16 March, whose officers were engaged in diplomacy with the authorities in Izmir until 18 March. As a result of the negotiations, a sum of money was raised to pay for the expense of the march of Sarıbeyoğlu in exchange for the

cessation of his campaign.[655] After receiving the sum, Sarıbeyoğlu marched away from Izmir. Yet the threat did not disappear. Rumour had it that Sarıbeyoğlu dispatched a letter to Istanbul, requesting an imperial order for his appointment as the governor of Izmir, and if not granted, he would return Izmir.[656] Having heard the rumours, on 19 March, *Turnacıbaşı* imparted this information to the Dutch and French consuls respectively who then contacted local authorities and notables to learn whether the rumours were true. Allegedly, they first denied the hearsay, but then found it to be true. The initial inconsistencies in the two statements and the manners in which the officeholders handled the matters seemed to have shattered the British's confidence in the competence of officeholders in Izmir when considering the possibility of Sarıbeyoğlu's return. Furthermore, Izmir emerged as an emporium connecting markets in Western Anatolia and beyond to world markets from the seventeenth century. Therefore, the concentration of Sarıbeyoğlu's activities in Izmir's immediate hinterland, encompassing the towns of Balıkesir, Kütahya, Uşak, Denizli Aydın, and Manisa, hampered British access to the products and markets of the hinterland and beyond. Under these circumstances, the British, the French, and the Dutch consuls met on 21 March to consider the request of the notables presented at the meeting on 14 March and agreed to inform their respective ambassadors of the present situation in Izmir to use their connections with the bureaucrats there to restore order in Izmir.[657] The British report dating on 23 March elaborated upon the course of events and demanded the ambassador to expedite the dispatching of a pasha to Izmir who would assist provincial authorities in restoring and maintaining order in the town. Through a re-assessment of the state of their safety and trade, the British, the French, and the Dutch communities decided to petition their respective ambassadors to intervene in the affair to ensure better protection of their lives and trade. Hence, the last paragraph of the British petition read: "Thus Your

[655] TNA, SP 105/336, 23 March 1738, a report to the British ambassador on Sarıbeyoğlu.
[656] TNA, SP 105/336, 24 March 1738.
[657] Ibid.

Excellency will observe what a bad situation we are at present in thro' y^{e} mal administration of the Magistrates within and the Rebels without, by which not only y^{e} trade is entirely stopt [*sic*], but y^{e} city itself in eminent danger".[658] Providing ammunition and ships to provincial authorities was thought to bring only a temporary solution and many other unintended consequences such as antagonising local power groups. The latter could occur if Sarıbeyoğlu became the governor of Izmir, knowing that the British sided with his opponents. On the contrary, Europeans believed that soliciting the help of their respective ambassadors and coaxing them into using their diplomatic connections to restore tranquillity in Izmir was a sounder strategy in line with their official policy.

It is difficult to gauge the extent to which the ambassadors' engagements in Istanbul drew the Porte's attention. Yet, the subsequent assignments allude to a degree of success. The British report of 23 March noted that "a Pasha (as we hear will be sent) we beg if possible may be a Teftishgee (*Teftişci*, lit. inspector), w^{ch} we humbly conceive will be y^{e} only means to prevent y^{e} danger we are present threatened wth, & secure us for y^{e} future".[659] In April 1738, the Porte appointed Mirahur-ı Evvel Ahmed Ağa as the pasha of Aydın in the capacity of bandit inspector (*eşkıya müfettişi*) to deal with bandit groups active across a wide expanse encompassing Samsun, Adana, and western Anatolia.[660] Following this appointment, Sarıbeyoğlu was besieged in Honaz Castle, though he managed to escape from there. It was not until May 1739 that he was eventually captured and executed.[661] This mediation seemed to have had an impact on bringing the seriousness of the affair to the fore. However, one can hardly argue that it relates to an aspiration to acquire leverage in local politics or even in

[658] TNA, SP 105/336, 23 March 1738, a report to the British ambassador on Sarıbeyoğlu.
[659] Ibid.
[660] Ertaş, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Bir Osmanlı Eskıyâsı: Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa," 409.
[661] BOA, A.{DVNSMHM.d 145/1128, Evāḫir-i Şaʿbān 1151/December 1738. An imperial order to the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Aydın, Ahmed Pasha, and other provincial office- and powerholders; Ertaş, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Bir Osmanlı Eskıyâsı: Sarıbeyoğlu Mustafa," 409.

Istanbul, although it may incidentally have produced such an effect in consequence. It was more of an aspiration towards tranquillity in Izmir. Provincial officeholders' awareness of the importance of European ambassadors in mediating between them and the authorities in Istanbul was the reason they requested help from European factories in Izmir. Successful mediations further consolidated the view that similar European interventions could be fruitful at such times.

Despite informing their respective ambassadors, Europeans in Izmir seemed to have been sceptical about their safety in their quarters presumably due to the lack of protection provided by provincial authorities. For this reason, in late March 1738, the British, the French, and the Dutch jointly asked the local authorities whether they could build four gates at the city's expense for "y^{e} preservation of their Persons, Houses, & Estates" on Frank Street.[662] This precautionary action attests to a feeling of insecurity on the part of Europeans. This does not necessarily imply a divergence between the Ottoman understanding of British power and the British self-perception of their capabilities. The British could assist the Ottomans in defending the city, but if the intruders had entered the city, they would not have been able to defend themselves. They thought that outer gates could ensure better isolation and protection. Instead of requesting permission to take up arms or providing the Ottomans with their military equipment, this defensive proposition suggests the aversion of the British in particular, and the Europeans—namely the French, Dutch, and Venetians—in general, to any action that might be deemed politically and militarily aggressive, being in defiance of their policy of impartiality. Such reluctance to political involvement may also indicate their conservative policy and weak position in the Ottoman realms. The Europeans further believed that the expense to be incurred should be covered by the provincial officeholders who were indeed responsible from their

[662] TNA, SP 105/336, 24 March 1738.

safety. The officeholders replied however that "y^{e} City had already been at so great charge".[663] The inhabitants of Izmir incurred a great deal of expense due to the protective measures employed since 1736 and the money raised for Sarıbeyoğlu. Therefore, European communities had to chip in jointly for the construction of the gates at their own expense.[664] To initiate the procedures, they obtained a *hüccet* (a warrant) from the court of Izmir and then tasked two master builders to examine the ground and calculate the estimated expense, which cost a moderate sum of a thousand lion dollars.[665] The fact that local power dynamics constrained the economic and social capital of Europeans entailed ad hoc cooperative relationships between European powers to counterbalance their weak position in provincial contexts.

Permission to build gates at their own expense around Frank Street to mark a defined area of land mostly inhabited by European consulates and merchant-houses and defend it from intruders expresses a sense of European territoriality on Ottoman soil. Beyond any doubt, this construction project was exceptional, but the pressing circumstances made it possible. As shown in the introduction to this chapter, Ottoman authorities did not usually permit Europeans to undertake such works, except for minor repairs. Additionally, the Levant Company was resistant to giving allocations for these projects. Residing in a commercial neighbourhood protected by outer gates delivered material benefits to Europeans in terms of organizing commerce and ensuring their safety. Furthermore, a sense of belonging to a marked territory might confer symbolic benefits such as exerting imaginative control over a marked space. Notwithstanding these material and symbolic benefits, no European community ever enjoyed administrative and judicial autonomy over a defined geographical space in the Ottoman Empire since they were subject to the authority of provincial officeholders in this period. Even European consular jurisdiction was limited due to overlapping legal regimes in the Ottoman

[663] Ibid.
[664] Ibid.
[665] TNA, SP 105/336, 30 March 1738; TNA, SP 105/336, 3 April 1738.

Empire.[666] In this sense, the concept of early modern European territoriality in the Ottoman Empire differed considerably, for example, from the British factories in South Asia where they lived in fortified enclaves in which they enjoyed administrative and jurisdictional autonomy. Furthermore, the extent of protection this construction work hoped to achieve remained limited. As is seen in the concluding section of Chapter Three, the British in Izmir were still vulnerable to external threats from time to time. The British indeed had the diplomatic prowess and financial strength to propose and then complete this project. Yet the fact that the Ottoman authorities and the Levant Company directors consented to its happening insinuates how fragile and vulnerable the British were in the provinces, with the Ottomans and the Levant Company acknowledging the inadequate measure of protection they could offer to the British.

The uprising was eventually contained nearly fourteen months after the permission for the gates was granted. Thus, neither were the gates tested, nor the Europeans offered further assistance. Provincial officeholders and notables in Izmir came to realise the significant role the Europeans could play in moments threatening provincial political stability. Yet they also acknowledged the vulnerabilities of the Europeans during these times. Hence the section suggests how British diplomatic prowess, military capacity, and financial strength were time-limited and contingent on rapidly changing local power dynamics. To maintain cordial relations with Ottoman provincial authorities and notables, who would lose their posts or be given preferments, and avoid any unintended consequences, the British limited direct involvement in the conflict. Nevertheless, the pressing circumstances compelled them to communicate and collaborate with local powerholders and other European communities and employ the protective strategies described above. The next section will show that British consuls were also engaged in diplomatic mediation in the provinces in the event of local uprisings.

[666] Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, 60; Stein, "The Mediterranean in the English Empire of Trade, 1660-1748," 346.

A British Consul as Diplomatic Mediator in the 1764-66 Riot in Cyprus

This section examines the engagement of Timothy Turner, the British consul of Cyprus (1759-68), in peace mediation between the provincial government and insurgents in February 1766 during the 1764-66 Riot of Cyprus. Amidst growing concerns over the security of their lives and trade in Larnaca and under the pressure of local authorities, the consul was involved, albeit unwillingly, in negotiations. This mediation did not bring an end to the conflict, yet it enabled the consul to enhance his power and reputation in the eyes of provincial officeholders and the British trading community in the Levant. One of the repercussions was, however, a hefty financial burden on the consul, hence the Levant Company.

Scholarship on the intermediary roles of European consuls has focused, by and large, on the representation of the members of European trading communities in their disputes with Ottoman subjects at the Ottoman court, a subject discussed in previous chapters.[667] Concentrating merely on this capacity of consuls, however, overlooks their prestige and status in local power dynamics and the varied dimensions of their engagements in the provinces. Thanks to their various social and economic interactions with provincial authorities and notables, some consuls, if not all, developed a degree of symbolic power over time and became trusted figures in provincial contexts, so much so that they were considered worthy of acting as diplomatic mediators in local conflicts as their respective ambassadors did in inter-imperial negotiations.[668] This section therefore begins with a discussion of the sources of Timothy

[667] Steensgaard, "Consuls and nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650," 13–55; Geoff R. Berridge, *British Diplomacy in Turkey, 1583 to the Present: A Study in the Evolution of the Resident Embassy* (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009), 75–97; Heinsen-Roach, *Consuls and Captives: Dutch-Norther African Diplomacy in the Early Modern Mediterranean*; Maïa Pal, *Jurisdictional Accumulation: An Early Modern History of Law, Empires, and Capital* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 194–236.

[668] Elisabeth Heijmans noted such roles of French directors in Ouidah, see Heijmans, *The Agency of Empire*, 168, 180.

Turner's prestige before moving on to examining his role in the conflict as well as the implications of his involvement.

Timothy Turner was appointed as the British consul of Cyprus in 1759 after John Boddington who was chosen to serve temporarily as the consul of Cyprus (1757-59) following the death of George Wakeman in March 1757.[669] He was the third longest-serving British consul of Cyprus, after George Wakeman (1741-57, 15 years) and Michael Devezin (1778-92, 14 years). Spending many years on the island enabled him to master local commercial and power dynamics, and network with a range of people in Cyprus and even beyond. He began trading in Cyprus and Acre in the 1760s by partnering with the brothers John and George Baldwin. During his consulship, like his predecessors, he assumed the patronage of other European merchants active on the island by serving as their vice-consul. Official documentation evidenced that Turner acted as vice-consul for Denmark and Austria from 1760 and 1762 respectively.[670] Several accounts also informed us that he acted in the same capacity for Tuscany and the Netherlands.[671] As mentioned, inter-imperial European cooperation was prevalent in the Ottoman Empire. Such arrangements of foreign protection offered mutual advantages to the 'protecting' and the 'protected' countries. The 'protected' countries, for example, obtained diplomatic representation at the Ottoman court which they could not otherwise afford. British consuls, on the other hand, hoped to gain financial advantages such as collecting additional commercial and administrative fees from the 'protected' merchants in return for the protection provided. They also anticipated that representing other European

[669] For his admission to the Levant Company on 27 July 1759, see TNA, SP 105/333, p. 24. For the appointment of John Boddington upon George Wakeman's death, see BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/55/2, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāz̲iyelāḫir 1170/March 1757.
[670] Demiryürek and Yazar, "Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kıbrıs'ta İngiltere Konsolosluğu (1700-1800)," 118.
[671] Abbé Giovanni Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus, Syria, and Palestine: with a General History of the Levant*, vol. I (London, 1791), 255; Luke, *Cyprus Under the Turks, 1571-1878*, 94–5, 100; Otto Schutte, *Repertorium der nederlandse vertegenwoordigers, residerende in het Buitenland 1584-1810* ('s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 349.

countries and coordinating their trade would promote and increase British shipping in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, assuming the protection of other European countries accorded extra diplomatic stature to the consuls as well as consolidating their standing in the society.[672]

Chapter Two has shown that British consuls and merchants entered partnerships with local dragomans who were equipped with the required linguistic, commercial, and diplomatic expertise to facilitate their trade and representation in the provinces. In Cyprus, the dragomans, together with the bishops and notables, had long been delegated the right of collection of non-Muslim taxes, most notably the *cizye*.[673] The holders of this right were named the *reʿāyā vekīli* (lit. the representative of tribute-paying subjects). The office of *reʿāyā vekīli* as a corporate entity became institutionalised, albeit without fixed boundaries of jurisdiction, in the final third of the eighteenth century.[674] Therefore, they enjoyed a special role and status in Cypriot society, not to mention their administrative-fiscal or trading networks. Upon his employment, Timothy Turner appointed Yasef veled-i Şahbaz as his dragoman whose *berāt* was renewed in 1765.[675] Yasef, also known as Aci Yasef or Hajiiosif, acted in the capacity of the *reʿāyā vekīli* and palace dragoman in Cyprus in the 1760s.[676] Theoretically, Turner became the 'patron' of Yasef, but in practice, it was the terms of cooperation based on mutual economic and social benefits that defined the parameters of this partnership. In entering such a relationship with Yasef, Turner accessed the circles of provincial authorities and state functionaries that expanded his networks and helped boost his prestige on the island. Another significant British dragoman was Peter

[672] Boogert, "European Patronage in the Ottoman Empire," 192–94.
[673] For similar procedures across the empire, see Tom Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 107–137.
[674] Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 162–88.
[675] For the renewal of his service, see KKMA, KŞS 20/83/Entry 1-2, 28 Receb 1178/21 January 1765.
[676] BOA, K.K.d. 7532, 22 Z̲īlḳaʿde 1178/13 May 1765; KKMA, KŞS 19/66/Entry 1, Evāḫir-i Z̲īlḥicce 1181/May 1768; KKMA, KŞS 19/140/Entry 1, 25 Receb 1183/24 November 1769; KKMA, KŞS 20/23/Entry 3, 12 Şevvāl 1183/8 February 1770.

Crutta, who replaced his father, John Crutta, in 1761.[677] Turner also employed a certain Girolami Caridi—possibly a member of the Carides family that settled in Larnaca during the early eighteenth century—to assist him in managing the shipping trade and collecting the consulage fees in Larnaca.[678] Timothy Turner seemed keen on utilising his patronage networks for his establishment in the Cypriot society by creating channels of contacts to access commercial and legal knowledge as well as establishing connections with the higher echelons of provincial administration.

These interpersonal connections also led to financial exchanges with provincial officeholders. For example, the merchant-house of Timothy Turner and John Baldwin loaned 3470 *guruş* to a previous Janissary officer (*yeniçeri żābiṭi*), Hacı ʿAbdülbāki, on the security (*rehn*) of his properties in the Larnaca district, including an agricultural estate (*çiftlik bāğçesi*), in 1765-66.[679] Hacı ʿAbdülbāki Ağa is one of the well-known figures in the history of Cyprus who held various administrative posts over the 1760s and 1770s and eventually became the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Cyprus (1775-85).[680] Providing financial services to provincial officeholders was deemed a means to raise capital, access to Ottoman goods—the fact that one of his agricultural estates geared towards commercial cultivation was mortgaged against the loan may suggest in-kind repayment—and cement trust. It furthermore displayed the financial strength of the lenders, notwithstanding all the complications they encountered in debt recovery processes. All these connections and activities played a part in bolstering Turner's economic and social capital

[677] For the Levant Company's confirmation of Peter Crutta's appointment, see TNA, SP 105/119, from the Levant Company to Timothy Turner, 1 December 1761. For John Crutta, see Boogert, "Ottoman intermediaries in the 18th century," 520–21; Drummond, *Travels through different Cities*, 146, 171, 280.
[678] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/85/363, Evāsıṭ-i Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1176/November-December 1762. For the Carides family, see Margarita Ioannou, "Petrakes Carides: Prosopographical approach of a Cypriot scholar of the 18th century," *Yearbook [Epistemoniki Epeteris] of the Cypriot Company of Historical Studies* 13 (2016): 407, fn. 1.
[679] BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/104/478, Evāḫir-i Ṣafer 1180/July-August 1766.
[680] On ʿAbdülbāki Ağa, see Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 251–61.

in Cyprus; thus, making him one of the ideal figures to act as an intermediary between the provincial authorities and the rebels as a non-Ottoman, neutral agent.

Having discussed the sources of Timothy Turner's prestige in Cyprus, we now turn to his involvement in the 1764-66 Riot. Abbé Giovanni Mariti wrote in detail about Turner's role in the revolt in his travel account.[681] Mariti visited Cyprus in the 1760s and acted on behalf of the British consul when Turner was away for the negotiations. Arguably, Giovanni Mariti obtained such detailed knowledge about the events unfolding from 1764 through his acquaintance with local figures and Turner. For example, it was Peter Crutta, the British dragoman abovementioned, who informed European consulates in Larnaca of the incident of Silahdar Çil Osman Ağa on 4-5 November 1764 in Nicosia that instigated the subsequent rebellion.[682] This section cross-references Mariti's account with various secondary and primary sources to provide a more accurate picture regarding the consul's diplomatic engagements in 1766 and the positive and negative repercussions of his involvement.

The riot was one of the two other revolts (the others being the Boyacıoğlu incident of 1685-90 and the 1804 revolt) that marked the culmination of social and economic tensions in Cyprus over the long eighteenth century. It broke out after the appointment of Silahdar Çil Osman Ağa as the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Cyprus on 1 July 1764 owing to the fiscal and administrative policies that his predecessors, himself, and his successor followed.[683] The attempts of Osman Ağa to impose extra taxes on the tax-paying population caused a public outcry, as a result of

[681] Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus,* 180–216.
[682] Paschalis Kitromilides, "Repression and Protest in Traditional Society: Cyprus 1764," *Kypriakai Spoudai* 46 (1982): 92. Kitromilides included the report of Venetian Consul, Gerolimo Brigadi, from Larnaca, dated 13 November 1764. See ibid., 95–97: "In ora tutto è quieto, e tranquillo il paese, guisto [sic] alla rellazione fattami dal cancelliere Crutta, che s'attrovava in Nicosia e nel successo, da dove ritornò ieri sera. [At the moment everything is calm, and the country is tranquil, according to the report produced for me by Chancellor Crutta, who was in Nicosia, from where he successfully returned yesterday evening].
[683] Erdoğan Keleş, "Kıbrıs Muhassılı Silahdar Osman Ağa'nın Muhallefatı (1764)," *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research* 21, no. 47 (2020): 133. He was appointed for a year until 19 June 1765; Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 181.

which the representatives of taxpayers went to Istanbul to have their complaints heard there. In late October 1764, the representatives returned to Cyprus with the bailiff (*mübāşir*) Çuhadar Hacı Mehmet who was to investigate the complaints and ensure that all the taxes were collected in accordance with the new order (*niẓām-ı cedīd*) of 1751 in Cyprus, whereby administrative changes (the island was reverted from the *mālikāne* status to the imperial *ḫāṣ*-holdings and then to a *ḫāṣ* of grand vizier) accompanied with significant tax-reductions.[684] Osman Ağa refused to appear before the court of Nicosia to hear the imperial order presented by the *mübāşir* and instead, invited the *mübāşir* and provincial authorities to his palace, where he reportedly staged a trap for the guests that caused the injury of several people. Infuriated with this, the crowds stormed the palace and killed the *muḥaṣṣıl* in the ensuing brawl. Having learned of the death of Osman Ağa, the Porte appointed Hafız Seyyid Mehmet as the new *muḥaṣṣıl* on 16-25 November 1764 to restore order and maintain peace on the island.[685] Yet even the new *muḥaṣṣıl*'s intention to impose criminal sanctions on the inhabitants to compensate for the properties of the officials plundered during the incident and discourage the occurrence of similar commotions in the future caused further uneasiness amongst the population, culminating in the gathering of insurgents around the citadel commander (*dizdār*) of Kyrenia, Halil, in July-August 1765.[686]

The rebels besieged Nicosia in December 1765, while, in the meantime, the new governor, Süleyman Pasha, and the commander-in-chief, Kaptan İbrahim Bey, were expected

[684] Hadjikyriacou, "Society and Economy on the Ottoman Island," 135, 168, 190–95,

[685] This chapter draws extensively on the existing literature on this riot and accordingly, provides the names of the Ottoman officials as they are given in these studies. Hence, I write Hafız Seyyid Mehmet, instead of Hafız Seyyid Mehmed.

[686] Mehtap Özdeğer, "Kıbrıs'ta Malî Kaynaklı Bir İsyan Girişimi: Muhassıl Çil Osman Ağa Vak'ası ve Tahkikatı (1764-1765)," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları* 171 (2007): 47–67; Keleş, "Kıbrıs Muhassılı Silahdar Osman Ağa'nın Muhallefatı (1764)," 135; Erdoğan Keleş, "Kıbrıs'ta Girne Dizdarı Halil İsyani (1765-66)," in *Sosyal, Beşeri ve İdari Bilimler Alanında Akademik Çalışmalar*, Cilt 2, ed. Hasan Selim Kıroğlu (Ankara: Gece Publishing, 2020), 349–57; Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 183–84, 189–92.

to arrive in Cyprus.[687] In January 1766, the rebels attempted to seize Famagusta, but to no avail. Reportedly, the next target was Larnaca. Seeing that the rebels were determined and grew aggressive, provincial authorities decided to find a middle ground between the provincial government and the insurgents through the mediation of a prestigious, neutral agent. The first option was the French consul who refused to get involved in the affairs of the government.[688] Among European trading communities, the French were the biggest trading partner of the Ottoman Empire and had strong diplomatic ties with the Ottomans over the eighteenth century until the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt. Even Mariti acknowledged that "[t]he authority of the French consul [André Benoît Astier, 1755-94] is without doubt the most extensive."[689] Hence, André Benoît Astier, who would be referred to as *ḳoca konsolos* (elderly, great consul) by the time of the French expedition to Egypt in 1798, seemed to have assumed a more prestigious position in Cyprus vis-à-vis his British counterpart at the time.[690] Timothy Turner was the next stop. According to Mariti, Turner expressed his willingness to help provided that his French and Venetian fellows would act in concert with him. However, since the French were not willing to interfere, Turner too declined the request. This statement seems true given the cooperative relationship between European consuls under the circumstances discussed above. Mariti went on to write, however, that:

[687] TNA, SP 97/43, from William Kinloch, the British consul of Aleppo, to John Murray, the British ambassador, 15 February 1766, cited in a letter from John Murray to Henry Seymour Conway, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 15 March 1766; Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 193–94; Keleş, "Kıbrıs'ta Girne Dizdarı Halil İsyani (1765-66)," 358–59.
[688] Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 196–97; Keleş, "Kıbrıs'ta Girne Dizdarı Halil İsyani (1765-66)," 359.
[689] Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 255. For more on André Benoît Astier, see Ömerül Faruk Bölükbaşı, "Napolyon'un Mısır'ı İşgalı Sırasında Kıbrıs'ta Bir Fransız: André Benoît Astier ve Mallarının Müsaderesi," in *Bir İnsan-ı Selîm: Prof. Dr. Azmi Özcan'a Armağan*, eds. Refik Arıkan, Halim Demiryürek (İstanbul: Lotus Yayınevi, 2016), 555–88. Astier also acted as the British Pro-consul, and Imperial, Tuscan Pro-vice consul between 1771 and 1774 after the death of William Bashley Turner and John Baldwin (d. 1771) until the appointment of John Boddington in 1774. For the minutes of the assembly of the Aleppo factory that resolved to apply to Astier to act in that capacity on behalf of the British in Cyprus, see TNA, SP 110/58, 6 May 1771. For the will of John Baldwin, see TNA, PROB 11/970/315, 27 August 1771.
[690] Bölükbaşı, "Napolyon'un Mısır'ı İşgali Sırasında Kıbrıs'ta Bir Fransız: André Benoît Astier ve Mallarının Müsaderesi," 557–60.

> [the] Turks, well knowing what weight Mr. Turner's mediation might have…informed him that, if he did not comply, he would be called the author of those evils which were ready to fall upon the kingdom, and that the people would not cease to reproach him for those disasters which it was now in his power to prevent. The consul, hard pressed on all sides, at length resolved to use his influence to preserve the tranquillity of the island.[691]

Unfortunately, we have not been able to discover any account written by Timothy Turner that substantiates Mariti's statement. We should nevertheless admit that the remarks of Mariti are coherent and may in fact reflect the real situation. We have seen throughout the dissertation that British consuls not only conversed with their European counterparts, but also preferred joint actions, especially in situations concerned with local power dynamics. Naturally, Turner would not have wanted to embroil himself in such a commotion without the support and assistance from other European consuls, which might have left him in a difficult situation. With this understanding, it seems to hold true that provincial authorities pressurised and even threatened Timothy Turner to inveigle him into using his leverage to help them restore order in the island. Underlying this insistence was the fact that the European consuls were approached to intervene because the officeholders viewed them as neutral actors. They could intervene without bias and partially. Previous chapters have shown that Europeans were intimately tied to the workings of Ottoman politics and trade. For example, although the British had been discouraged from engaging financially with the Ottomans, they did so because they had to. The Ottomans viewed British financial services as an act of friendship, not as aggressive political acts. Apparently, the British on the spot were committed to limiting their political involvement during tumultuous times. They could and did sell guns to the Ottomans, but they avoided doing

[691] Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 198.

so amidst, for example, a local riot. They feared that their involvement could result in an alignment with a local power group whose agenda could have been at odds with the state, thus positioning the British against the Ottoman state. Acting against a local power group might also have put the British in a difficult situation if that group had come out victorious in the power struggle and obtained posts of authority in the provinces. Hence, material conditions on the ground shaped European neutrality—when and why they opted to remain neutral. As this section in particular and the chapter in general will show, any sense of neutrality was highly contingent both for the British and the Ottomans. Such an understanding explains Timothy Turner's willingness to help with the backing of his European fellows because his diplomatic mediation was in line with the state's demands and would not lead to an alignment with a local power group.

To begin with, he got in touch with the rebels and learned their intentions. The demands included a) a general amnesty for all insurgents; b) an assurance that the taxes would be collected in accordance with the new order of 1751; c) an assurance that the officeholders who supported the causes of the insurgents would not be dismissed and receive their usual emoluments; and d) a petition by all the inhabitants of Nicosia to the Sultan for the appointment of Halil as the *muḥaṣṣıl* of Cyprus. After asking whether the governor acquiesced in these demands, Turner was authorised to pursue negotiations, although the first two articles were more agreeable than the last two articles. He then informed Halil that he was commissioned as the mediator to carry out negotiations between them and the government before leaving for the rebels' campsite in Kythrea (Değirmenlik in Ottoman parlance and modern-day North Cyprus).

After some consideration, Timothy Turner, Stephan Saraf (an Italian merchant), Peter Crutta, and some prominent officials in Larnaca set out for the campsite on 13 February 1766

and arrived there the next day.[692] Giovanni Mariti was to handle British affairs in the absence of the consul. On 15 February, Turner was in Nicosia to deliver the demands of the rebels to the governor who agreed to grant a general amnesty but replied that he would not comply with the fourth article. The following day, Turner was again in Kythrea where he learned that the rebels insisted upon the last two articles. "This obstinacy disconcerted Mr. Turner so much, that he abandoned the negotiation", wrote Mariti.[693] He portrayed Turner as being agitated by the tenacity of both sides and indifference to his laborious and costly effort, yet bold enough to stop acting as an intermediary in the negotiations. Due to the absence of British consulate reports of Cyprus or any correspondence written by Turner, we cannot say much about his disposition. Nevertheless, a letter in Italian from Thomas Lansdown in Aleppo to the factor of Turner and Baldwins in Cyprus corroborates his absence in Larnaca at the time. Lansdown wrote on 28 February 1766 that: "[W]ith the arrival of Cap Hey in Alexandretta I have had two [?] of 18 & 19 [?] that in the absence of your Signor Turner, Signor Mariti wrote me in your name to get me involved in the freight that the Captain made for Cyprus…"[694] This was a response to a letter written by Mariti when the consul was away for the negotiations between 13 and 24 February 1766.

Mariti also narrated that before returning to Larnaca, Timothy Turner went first to Nicosia to take leave of the governor there where he was detained at the request of 'the people' in Nicosia on the grounds that his presence in the city provided some tranquillity. This equally speaks to the relatively weak position of the British consul, despite his prestige in Cyprus. One of the key elements of the Capitulations, that is freedom of movement and trade, was violated

[692] Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 198–200. Stephan Saraf was an Italian merchant who did commission business with British Levant merchants.
[693] Ibid., 201.
[694] TNA, SP 110/38, from Thomas Lansdown in Aleppo to Turner and Baldwins in Cyprus, 28 February 1766. "Con L'arrivo di Cap Hey in Alessandretta, mi sono capitate due gme [sic] de 18 & 19 sperante [sic], che in assenza del vro [vostro] Sig^{r} Turner, il Sig^{r} Mariti m'ha scritto in vro [vostro] nome p [per] darmi parte del Nolo che il dello capitano ha fatto per Cipro".

by the provincial governor even if not in bad faith. It was only after the arrival of a squadron led by Kaptan İbrahim Bey in Limassol that the governor allowed Turner to return to Larnaca on 24 February.[695] Thomas Lansdown wrote of Aleppo to Turner and the Baldwins on 21 March that "I have none of your favours unanswer'd and long to hear that you are well return'd to Larnica [*sic*] and that the troubles on your island are subsided."[696] Although a short period of tranquillity was restored in the spring of 1766 with the arrival of Süleyman Pasha and İbrahim Bey, the riot was far away from being contained.[697]

The situation took a turn for the better with the landing of the *mutaşarrıf* (governor) of the Teke district, Ahmet Pasha, together with the troops, at Larnaca in late June 1766.[698] According to Mariti, a second point where Timothy Turner's mediation came into play was Ahmet Pasha's meeting with Turner on 30 June to learn about "the intentions of the rebels as well as those of government."[699] Mariti also recounted that Ahmet Pasha "took the advantage of the mediation of Mr. Turner, and sent to Halil's camp a letter, in which he testified a desire of seeing the rebels return to their duty; promising afterwards to examine their claims at leisure, and to pursue such measures as might be satisfactory to all parties…"[700] Seeing that Halil lost support amongst his followers, "Mr Turner…informed the bashaw [pasha] of the success of his letter, and the desertion of the rebels".[701] For this second mediation, we do not have any document at hand to corroborate or refute the remarks of Mariti. However, his narration does not seem implausible. In fact, one contemporary chronicle made mention of a warning letter

[695] Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 203; Keleş, "Kıbrıs'ta Girne Dizdarı Halil İsyani (1765-66)," 360.
[696] TNA, SP 110/38, from Thomas Lansdown in Aleppo to Turner and Baldwins in Cyprus, 21 March 1766.
[697] TNA, SP 97/47, from John Murray to Henry Semour Conway, 15 May 1766. Upon receiving a letter from Timothy Turner on 15 March 1766, Consul Kinloch in Aleppo informed John Murray that "the publick Tranquillity of that Island, which had been long disturbed, was restored by the arrival of the new Governor from hence."
[698] Keleş, "Kıbrıs'ta Girne Dizdarı Halil İsyani (1765-66)," 368; Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 205; TNA, SP 97/43, from John Murray to Charles Lennox, 3rd Duke of Richmond, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 16 August 1766. In contemporary sources, Ahmet Pasha was mentioned as 'Khur Ahmet Pasha of Satalia or Kior-Mahamed, a bashaw of two tails…from Satatu".
[699] Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 207.
[700] Ibid., 208.
[701] Ibid., 209.

sent by Ahmet Pasha to the rebels, which lends some credence to Mariti's account.[702] In this light, it would not be surprising that Ahmet Pasha conversed with Timothy Turner about his own experience and then composed the letter for the insurgents to cut Halil's umbilical cord.

Having lost the support of his followers, Halil receded from Kythrea and took refuge in the Kyrenia Castle. Thenceforth, Ahmet Pasha set out for Nicosia and thence to Kyrenia, leaving the captain of the *Semend-i Bahri* (*Sea Horse*), Maliki Hacı Mehmet, in Larnaca to preserve order in the town. Güllüoğlu Mustafa of Silifke and Mir Cafer Bey, the other two captains, would join the campaign led by Ahmet Pasha later. Immediately after Ahmet Pasha's departure, however, a rumour spread in Larnaca that Güllüoğlu Mustafa and his men would sack the town, which caused consternation amongst the inhabitants of Larnaca, including all European communities. In fear of assault, Europeans rushed towards the seashore to seek shelter on board their vessels where they encountered Maliki Hacı Mehmet who allowed nobody but women on board. "Europeans, upon this occasion, plead that they were strangers", wrote Mariti, insinuating that they invoked their *amān* status to be able to get on board. As we have seen, invoking their legal status was the chief instrument for Europeans to express their neutrality to protect themselves. Mariti's remarks do not allow us to ascertain who claimed neutrality but imply a joint statement of a few European consuls.[703] What seems clear is that some European officials, fearing assaults, used this claim to disassociate themselves from the Ottoman subjects to fend off any entanglements with a group of Ottoman soldiers who were reported to have gone astray. While Timothy Turner was willing to offer his mediation on certain conditions, the British and other European officials in Larnaca did not want to face off

[702] Çeşmî-zâde Mustafa Reşîd, *Çeşmi-zâde Tarihi*, ed. Bekir Kütükoğlu (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1959), 50. "Ahmed Paşa dahi Halil'in askerine nesâyihi mutazammın buyuruldularla kendülere sû-i kasdi olmadığın tahkîk ve bu tarîk ile şîrâze-i cemʿiyyetlerin tefrik u temzîḳ etmekle". [Ahmet Pasha also made certain in an imperial order containing advice to the soldiers of Halil that he does not have malice aforethought towards them and thus, tearing the bond of union into ribbons].

[703] France, Britain, the Netherlands, Venice, Genoa, Austria, Sweden, Sicily, and Dubrovnik had consulates in Cyprus at that time. See Ali E. Özkul, "The Consuls and their Activities in Cyprus under the Ottoman Administration (1571-1878)," *Turkish Studies* 8, no. 2 (2013): 239–83.

with a group of violent soldiers. These considerations then conditioned their claims of neutrality.

As for the Ottomans, while European neutrality was the requirement for their involvement in the affair in the first instance, this time an Ottoman naval official did not consider them as neutral agents, but rather as intimately involved European subjects. Arguably, Maliki suspected that Europeans would leave the island. According to Maliki, this would be a wrong action because "in cases of danger all ought to be soldiers [and] the cause of the inhabitants was that of every sovereign who kept up an intercourse with them; and that the Europeans even ought to assist them to repel the attacks of an audacious rebel".[704] As discussed in previous chapters, Europeans residing and enjoying capitulatory rights in the Ottoman domains were expected to conform to certain expectations that might emerge in particular situations. The cost of friendship was not always clear. The British had to understand situational dynamics and react accordingly. On this very occasion, the cost was to stand shoulder to shoulder with local inhabitants to ward off any danger putting lives at risk. Women were exempted from this obligation since they were not subject to military service. Here we see not only a divergence in the understanding of responsibilities intrinsic to neutrality, but also how contingent any sense of neutrality was. Such different conceptualisations and expectations could easily frustrate the very intention of the British to preserve cordiality with the Ottomans. Consequently, the rumours turned out to be unfounded having learned that Güllüoğlu joined Ahmet Pasha in Nicosia. On 26 July, Timothy Turner informed the ambassador that Ahmet Pasha besieged the castle of Kyrenia where the rebels took refuge, though he was not able to subjugate the rioters yet.[705] Eventually, the castle fell and Halil was executed on 16 August.[706]

[704] Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 209–211.
[705] TNA, SP 97/43, from John Murray to Charles Lennox, 3rd Duke of Richmond, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 1 September 1766.
[706] TNA, SP 97/43, from John Murray to William Petty Fitzmaurice, the Earl of Shelburne, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 16 October 1766; Keleş, "Kıbrıs'ta Girne Dizdarı Halil İsyani (1765-66)," 369; Mariti, *Travels through Cyprus*, 215. The governor of Cyprus informed the European consuls on the island that

The second part of this section has demonstrated the role of Timothy Turner in the riot that attests to the honour provincial officials and notables conferred on him, even though this role was forced upon him. However, Turner also suffered from being held in custody which restricted his freedom and hindered his business in Larnaca. Yet there was more to it. He also incurred expenses on account of neglecting his business, on the one hand, and travelling back and forth during the negotiations and spending some time in Nicosia, on the other. To cover his expenses, Turner applied several times for allowances to the Levant Company. Thus, in March 1766, the Levant Company granted Timothy Turner an allowance of 332,42 lion dollars incurred "on account of the late Rebellion".[707] Such allowances were extraordinary in the sense that the expenses were not established and customary consular expenditures such as the salary of consuls or dragomans. Moreover, they were sustained while the consul was acting outside of his designated jurisdiction and duties. Obviously, Turner transgressed the Levant Company's regulations towards the involvement of local political affairs. And yet, the Company must have been informed that the consul was dragged into the affairs, thus agreeing to grant him allowances to maintain his finances. Otherwise, the Company could well claim that since the expense was incurred because of the consul's negligence—i.e., 'personal avania'—the bearer had to meet the costs.

The Levant Company wrote to John Murray, the British ambassador (1766-75), in late October 1766 that "[t]ruth seems to have been our national defence in Turky [*sic*] in the worst of times…the affair of Mr: Boumuster and of Consul Turner at Cyprus might have cost subjects of other Nations large sums and the event not to their Honour."[708] The Levant Company was concerned with the national protection schemes in the Levant due to recent incidents, especially in Izmir, Latakia, and Cyprus. In 1758, Richard Dobbs, a British merchant in Izmir, was

Halil and his followers were defeated and executed, see Giustiniana M. O'Riordan, ed., *Archivio del Consolato Veneto a Cipro (fine sec. XVII – inizio XIX)* (Venice: Ministero per i Beni Culturali di Stato Di Venezia, 1993), 101.
[707] TNA, SP 105/119, from the Levant Company to Consul Turner, 21 March 1766.
[708] TNA, SP 105/119, from the Levant Company to John Murray, 31 October 1766.

murdered by his servants;[709] a fire that broke out in August 1763 devastated Frank Street in Izmir;[710] and Izmir and its environs were badly affected by the conflict between the Karaosmanoğlu family members and the Porte.[711] In Latakia, Daniel Boumeester, a Dutchman acting as the British vice-consul of Latakia in 1755-58, was forced to declare bankruptcy, owing to his outstanding debts to his creditors, including the Ottoman provincial governors.[712] After transferring his house and orchards to Edward Purnell, Boumeester fled from the Ottoman Empire.[713] Seven years later, the debts of Boumeester were not yet settled, for which Grand Vizier Muhsinzade Mehmet Pasha sent a letter to Henry Grenville, the British ambassador (1761-65), requesting an investigation and payment of the debts. Thus, he intended to put pressure on the British trading community to clear off outstanding debts.[714] Although no other British subject could be held responsible for his fellow's obligations according to the Capitulations, it was nevertheless the ambassador's and the Company officials' responsibility to ensure that the debts of th[ei]r [*sic*] countryman were paid off. In such cases, the Levant Company might need to raise some money for this purpose. Arguably, the Levant Company's allowance was intended for the protection of Timothy Turner's finances, so that he could meet his obligations too. This was particularly significant for preserving the creditworthiness of British officials and merchants in the Ottoman Empire. Once the riot was entirely suppressed, the Company wrote to Turner that "the Amount of extraordinary Expences you have been at of [*guruş* symbol] 441 $\frac{100}{38}$ is allowed & we are sorry to find the low state that your trade is brought to, but as tranquillity is now restored & the Pacha [*sic*] with his troops departed, we hope Trade

[709] TNA, SP 105/337, 8 November 1758; TNA, SP 105/337, 18 January 1759; BOA, DVN.DVE.d 36/2/82/1, Evāʾil-i Cemāz̲iyelevvel 1175/November 1761.
[710] Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*, 56; TNA, SP 105/119, from the Levant Company to Anthony Hayes, 16 December 1763.
[711] Yuzo Nagata, "Karaosmanoğulları," in *TDVİA*. Consulted on 20 September 2023; TNA, SP 105/119, from the Levant Company to John Murray, 31 October 1766.
[712] Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, 207.
[713] Mehmet S. Türkhan, "Lazkiye Limanı'nda İngiliz Konsolosları ve Tüccarları 1700-1772," *Cihannüma Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırma Dergisi* 7, no. 2 (2021): 243.
[714] BOA, A.{DVN.DVE (3)/Folder no: 81/File no: 62, 15 Rabīʿülāḫir 1179/1 October 1765.

will revive."[715] Despite his economic and social capital that qualified him as the negotiator, Turner underwent a financial loss, not to mention his detainment in Nicosia, which might have endangered his reputation. British consuls and merchants might well be subject to a variety of repercussions when navigating around the boundaries of neutrality.

However, this does not mean that there were not any positive returns if these involvements were successfully navigated: Timothy Turner also improved his reputation within the British trading community in the Ottoman Empire and intended, seemingly, to use this asset in his preferment. The Levant Company assured John Murray in October 1766 that the ambassador's "favourable mention of Consul Turner of Cyprus will weigh in with us when we think of a Consul for Aleppo".[716] Apparently, Timothy Turner solicited the assistance and backing of John Murray for his nomination to the consulship of Aleppo. Turner would not have had the support of the British ambassador had he not practiced such meticulous and constructive diplomacy. A few months later, the Company also promised Turner that his "repeated desire of being appointed Consul at Aleppo will be considered when we proceed to the Choice of a Consul for that place.".[717] Knowing that the election for the consulship of Aleppo was approaching after William Kinloch, the consul of Aleppo, was tasked with taking charge of the British embassy upon Henry Grenville's leave in 1765, Turner seemed to have been keen on expanding his support base for his appointment to the post after having managed to play his part in the negotiations and return to Larnaca safely. In this manner, his role in the revolt lent him a great deal of credit. However, Timothy Turner died in August 1768 and never became the consul of Aleppo.[718] Henry Preston, who served as the vice-consul of Aleppo (1766-68) in lieu of Kinloch, was succeeded in 1768 by William Clarke.

[715] TNA, SP 105/119, from the Levant Company to Consul Turner, 27 February 1767.
[716] TNA, SP 105/119, from the Levant Company to John Murray, 31 October 1766.
[717] TNA, SP 105/119, from the Levant Company to Consul Turner, 27 February 1767.
[718] TNA, PROB 31/568/21, 31 October 1770. His only child, Maria Theresa Turner Spinster, was under the guardianship of William Baldwin, the father of John and George Baldwin, in Surrey, England when Timothy

The aftermath of his death is also telling with regards to the personal accumulation of social capital. On 8 September 1768, John Baldwin as the succeeding British consul of Cyprus registered the inventory of clothes, books and goods belonging to Turner, of which we only have the records of his apparel containing coats, waistcoats, and breeches.[719] Yet, the new consul failed to appoint a personal representative to take charge of the properties of Timothy Turner as required by the Levant Company regulations to manage outstanding debts and the inheritance.[720] It was two years later on 31 October 1770 when George Baldwin made a declaration in Surrey, England, of some goods and receivables of Timothy Turner. These included some property deposited in the Bank of England worth roughly eighty pounds, some household furniture in Cyprus worth approximately twenty-five pounds, and around three hundred eighty and eight pounds owed to him by "divers persons Arabians and others resident in parts beyond the Seas".[721] Despite Turner's prestige on the island and within the British trading community, the Levant Company and the British community in Cyprus were incapable of making the necessary arrangements to resolve issues related to his credit/debt and inheritance. This suggests that the British presence in Cyprus was weak, notwithstanding Turner's reputation—it became weaker and dependent on other European and local merchants henceforth. The honour held by Timothy Turner might not have necessarily represented the esteem shown towards the British community in Cyprus. The components of British imperial power were not ever-present, but syncretic. While the first two sections have concentrated on British military, naval, and diplomatic prowess, the following section moves on to examine

Turner died. From 1770, George Baldwin became the guardian of the effects of Timothy Turner and administered them for the use and benefit of Maria Theresa until she attained the age of twenty-one years.

[719] Luke, *Cyprus Under the Turks, 1571-1878*, 115–16.

[720] TNA, SP 105/332, pp. 4–5, from the Levant Company to the British consul, William Raye, in Izmir, 30 November 1677.

[721] TNA, PROB 31/568/22, 31 October 1770. A British pound was around ten Ottoman *guruş* in 1768. Thus, the total receivables of Timothy Turner were approximately 4858 *guruş*. For exchange rates, see Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 97.

another element of British imperial power, namely financial capital, and its reception by provincial officials in Aleppo.

A Request of an Unofficial Foreign Loan from the British in Aleppo for the Defence of Damascus in 1772

Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar al-Zaydānī extended his sphere of influence in Palestine by obtaining the revenue collection rights of several towns such as Tiberius, Haifa, and Acre, and monopolizing the trade in cotton, grain, and olive oil from the 1730s. Ẓāhir met ʿAlī Bey of Egypt before 1760 when ʿAlī Bey was driven out of Cairo and sought refuge in Palestine. In 1760, ʿAlī Bey assumed the positions of Ottoman Viceroy (*Kaymakam*) of Egypt and the governor of Cairo (*Shaykh al-Balad*) and thus became ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr. In 1769, Ẓāhir concluded an alliance with ʿAli Bey and their joint forces initiated a campaign from 1770 on Palestine and Syria against ʿUthman Pasha al-Kurji (the Ottoman governor of Damascus between 1760-71) to consolidate their power bases in Palestine and Egypt in defiance of Ottoman authority.[722] They first occupied Damascus for two weeks in June 1771 and then Acre and Sidon in September and October 1771, which caused a great deal of anxiety amongst the inhabitants of Aleppo, Syrian Tripoli, and Sidon.[723] Consequently, ʿUthman Pasha was deposed in October 1771 and replaced by Muhammad Pasha. In January 1772, the Porte appointed ʿUthman Pasha al-Wakil as the commander-in-chief (*serasker*) and the governor of Egypt. ʿUthman Pasha al-Wakil established his headquarters in Damascus and opened negotiations with Ẓāhir to bring an end to the conflict while erring on the side of caution, but to no avail. The Mamluk-Ẓāhir forces

[722] Amnon Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century: Patterns of Government and Administration* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1973), 15–16; Jane Hathaway, *The Arabs Lands Under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800* (Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2008), especially chapter 5; Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 117–45; Ahmad H. Joudah, *Revolt in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century: The Era of Shaykh Zahir al-Umar* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2013), 33–77; Mahmoud Yazbak, "The Politics of Trade and Power: Dahir al-ʿUmar and the Making of Early Modern Palestine," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 56 (2013): 696–736.

[723] Joudah, *Revolt in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century*, 83–86.

continued their expeditions in the summer of 1772, this time with the support of the Russian squadron cruising in the eastern Mediterranean since 1770. The Russians bombarded Beirut on 18 June and sacked the city after a brief military landing on 23 June 1772.[724] The fact that the Ottomans had been fighting against the Russians on the Danube since 1768 placed an unbearable strain on the meagre financial capacity of the Porte in terms of resource extraction and channelling to finance the war in northern Palestine. Therefore, the Porte instructed the provincial officials in Damascus, Tripoli-Syria, Latakia, and Aleppo in February 1772 to raise funds from local and European merchants in their administrative zones for the imperial campaign against the joined rival forces.[725] The British declined the request twice on the grounds of neutrality by invoking the relevant Company regulation. Again, material conditions shaped their adherence to neutrality. Extending credit to state functionaries during a local riot was seen as a political act and in that sense differed from regular British loans. The fact that despite pressures from local powerholders, the British factory did not comply with the request suggests the inconsistent nature of their power. They declined the request because of their weak position in Aleppo and withstood the pressures due to their relative strength. Yet, inter-imperial power dynamics could not be characterised by a scale of strength and weakness. What constituted strength and weakness was contingent; imperial encounters were always messy. The initial Ottoman request and the subsequent pressures then speak to the Ottoman disposition to tap into the resources of *müsteʾmin* communities and hence a trans-imperial dimension of imperial systems in the eastern Mediterranean.

Upon his appointment, ʿUthman Pasha al-Wakil urged the Porte to send money and soldiers for his campaign. The size of the imperial army in Palestine was moderate over the eighteenth century, whereas local figures such as Ẓāhir could organise and raise sizeable

[724] Ibid., 93–107; Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century*, 45–46.
[725] İSAM, ES/R 10/F 29/P 52-53/E 62, Evāsıṭ-i Z̲īlḳaʿde or Z̲īlḥicce 1185/February or March 1772.

household troops that could compete with imperial troops.[726] To recruit soldiers and supply provisions to the army, the Ottoman Treasury initially sent 1000 *kese* or 500,000 *guruş* to the commander-in-chief. The governor of Hama and Hums also dispatched 500,000 *guruş*-worth of provisions to Damascus while some revenue sources of Aleppo and Damascus, amounting to 550 *kese* or 275,000 *guruş*, were directed to the needs of the army. Additionally, the two-year revenues of the tobacco customs of Arabia were assigned to ʿUthman Paşa al-Wakil. The Porte also dispatched several military units from the Ottoman Army's artillery corps as well as ammunition.[727]

However, not only were the assigned and dispatched funds insufficient, but also the redirection of further resources would take too long to reach Damascus. During the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768-74, the coffers of the Ottoman Empire had already been squeezed which grew into a perilous, long-lasting monetary crisis from the conclusion of the war and led to the introduction in 1774 of the *eshām*, a new method of long-term domestic borrowing discussed in Chapter One. Hence, fighting against the Mamluk-Ẓāhir forces in Syria and Egypt only aggravated the pressure over state finances.[728] Financial conditions forced the Porte to seek funds from the monied groups in the empire. Accordingly, the Porte ordered that any further funds required of the commander-in-chief be borrowed from local and foreign merchants in Damascus, Tripoli-Syria, Latakia, and Aleppo under the condition that the state would repay the loan to the associates of the lenders in Istanbul.[729] In this sense, this was a state-guaranteed

[726] Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century*, 270–93; Hathaway, *The Arabs Lands Under Ottoman Rule*, 85–87. On the rise of provincial household armies, see Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650*; Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, "Changes in the Structure and Strength of the Timariot Army from the Early Sixteenth to the End of the Seventeenth Century," *Eurasian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2005): 157–188.

[727] İSAM, ES/R 10/Folio 29/P 52-53/E 63. Evāsıṭ-i Z̲īlḳaʿde or Z̲īlḥicce 1185 and 12 Rabīʿülāḫir 1186/February-March 1772 and 13 July 1772.

[728] Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım*, 74–77; Virginia H. Aksan, "Whatever Happened to the Janiassaries? Mobilization for the 1768-1774 Russo-Ottoman War," in *Ottomans and Europeans: Contacts and Conflicts*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2004), 237; Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870*, 146.

[729] İSAM, ES/R 10/F 29/P 52-53/E 63. Evāsıṭ-i Z̲īlḳaʿde or Z̲īlḥicce 1185 and 12 Rabīʿülāḫir 1186/February-March 1772 and 13 July 1772. "Umūr-u mühimmeniñ teʾḫīrine bāʿiṣ olmamak içün serʿasker-i müşārileyhe ziyāde aḳçe

foreign loan by which the Porte took on responsibility for settling the debt. To be precise, it was not an official foreign loan the Porte asked directly from another state, but an unofficial loan requested of European communities residing in the Ottoman dominions on the securities provided by the Ottoman state. The earliest attempts of the Porte to secure official foreign loans occurred during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1787-92 owing to budgetary strains. In this period, the Porte sought funds from Morocco, the Dutch, and Spain through their ambassadors in Istanbul without success.[730] The first official loan the Porte requested of Britain took place in 1799 during the wars of the second coalition, which did not pass in the British Parliament in 1800.[731]

Süleyman Kaya and Kahraman Şakul discussed these forms of unofficial, sometimes forced, foreign loans in the context of Ottoman war finances in the eighteenth century such as borrowing from European merchants and communities and confiscating and liquidating the goods and properties of European merchant-communities whose sovereign was at war with the Ottoman Empire.[732] The latter happened to French merchants with the outbreak of the Franco-Ottoman War of 1798-1801 as we mentioned in Chapter Three. Both are of the opinion that these short-term borrowings do not necessarily insinuate the Ottoman state's inability to reorganise and redirect its resources for financing wars, nor signal its dependence on foreign

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iḳtiżā eylediği şūretde Şām-ı şerīf ve Ṭrāblus-şām ve Lāzḳiye al-ʿarab ve Ḥaleb tüccārlarından ve müsteʾmen bezirgānlardan der-i ʿaliyyemde olan şerīklerine cānib-i mīrīden edā olmak şartıyla müşār ileyhiñ temessükiyle lüzūm-i miḳdār-ı aḳçe istiḳrāż" [To avoid the postponement of the important affair, if the mentioned commander-in-chief requires any further asper, the required amount of aspers be borrowed from the local and foreign merchants in Damascus, Tripoli-Syria, Latakia and Aleppo on the condition that the Imperial Treasury would reimburse their associates in Istanbul with the bill obligatory of the said commander-in-chief].

[730] Abdurrahman Şeref, "Ecanibden İlk İstikraz Teşebbüsümüze Ait Birkaç Vesika," *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası* 30 (1915): 321–337; Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım*, 89–92, 137–38.

[731] İsmail H. Uzunçarşılı, "Türk-İngiliz Münasebatına Dair Vesikalar," *Belleten* 13, no. 51 (1949): 594–96; Ercüment Kuran, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı İkamet Elçiliklerinin Kuruluşu ve İlk Elçilerin Siyasi Faaliyetleri, 1793-1821* (Ankara: Türk Kültürü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1968), 40; Mehmet A. Yalçınkaya, "İsmail Ferruh Efendi'nin Londra Büyükelçiliği ve Siyasi Faaliyetleri (1797-1800)," in *Pax Ottomana. Studies in Memoriam Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç*, ed. Kemal Çiçek (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2001), 405; Kahraman Şakul, "An Ottoman Global Moment: War of Second Coalition in the Levant" (Ph.D. Diss., Georgetown University, 2009), 211–13.

[732] Süleyman Kaya, "XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Kredi" (master's thesis, Marmara University, 2003), 21–34; Şakul, "An Ottoman Global Moment," 185–87, 222–24.

funds. Rather, when faced with financial and logistical difficulties, the Porte was able to devise ad hoc solutions by drawing on the financial networks and resources of various financial actors and groups both within and beyond imperial boundaries. Şakul further queries whether any other European financial instruments other than French bills of exchange were in active circulation in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire.[733] As Chapter Three has shown, British merchants were engaged in moneylending and provisioning of bills of exchange as early as the late seventeenth century, if not earlier, although it is difficult to surmise the proportion of British bills circulated vis-à-vis their French counterparts due to incomplete data. No doubt, these long-standing financial connections between British merchants and the Ottomans shaped the Ottoman view that the British were amongst a group of financially competent merchant-financiers in the empire. In this regard, it is hardly surprising to see the Ottoman state's attempts to mobilise foreign resources to cover its unbearable budgetary strains at a pressing time when the Ottomans were fighting on multiple fronts.

After receiving the imperial order, the commander-in-chief recommended the governor of Aleppo would raise 100 *kese* or 50,000 *guruş* in return for "Drafts or Bills for the same upon Constantinople which the s^{d} Command assures will be punctually discharg'd."[734] Subsequently, the steward of the governor of Aleppo relayed this order to the dragomans of all European communities in Aleppo to acquaint their respective consuls. The British consul in Aleppo then shared this request with the merchants at an assembly meeting in which each British merchant, after deliberation, opined that "I am of opinion we cannot [,] consistent wth the Levant Company's orders [,] lend to Government any Money on this occasion."[735] Here is a good example of the hierarchy of communication of an imperial order—the Porte-the commander-in-chief-provincial governors-stewards-dragomans-consuls-merchants—and how European

[733] Şakul, "An Ottoman Global Moment," 239.
[734] TNA, SP 110/58, 11 July 1772. In a letter dated 25 June 1772 cited in the minutes of the assembly meeting.
[735] Ibid.

communities discussed such requests and decided their way of proceeding. Again, material conditions led the British factory in Aleppo to comply with the Levant Company's policy of neutrality and refuse to extend credit to the commander-in-chief, hence the Porte. A matter of concern was more than merely antagonising a local power. British trade in Aleppo was in decline from the 1760s due to the gradual relocation of European commercial activities to Izmir and the political turmoil in Aleppo from the 1770s.[736] By 1773, the factory's income hardly equalled its expenditure.[737] Therefore, the British factory in Aleppo under budgetary strains eschewed possibilities of financial loss as a result of such a financial engagement. Similarly, the British Parliament resolved not to grant a loan to the Ottoman state in 1800 because of budgetary strains. Distrust in Ottoman institutions such as the imperial council (*divān-ı hümāyūn*) and the fiscal bureau might also have accounted for the British refusal, although the evidence at hand does not reveal the British being mistrustful of the Ottoman institutions. The British use of the kadi courts and the imperial council indicates a certain level of trust in the Ottoman legal system. Yet, as we have seen in Chapter Three, debt recoveries could be troublesome for British merchants due to lack of law enforcement, among other factors. Such uncertainty over the legal system might cause worries and mistrust given the large amount of money demanded.

We do not know how other European communities responded to this demand and how much, if any, money was raised. The assembly minutes of the Aleppo factory recounted that the governor of Aleppo had been remiss in raising 100 *kese* for the commander-in-chief who then therefore demanded 500 *kese* or 250,000 *guruş*. Only 100 *kese* or 50,000 *guruş* was

[736] Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 86–100; Talbot, *British -Ottoman Relations*, 91. For a contemporary account of the decline of British commerce in Aleppo in the 1780s, see BOA, C.HR/Dosya no: 180/Gömlek no: 8988, 1 Ṣafer 1203/1 November 1788. "Medīne-yi Ḥalebde muḳīm İngiltere tüccārının bir müddetden berü aḫz ve iʿṭāları munḳaṭıʿ olmaġla…İngiltereye irsāl olunagelen penbe ve ḥarīr ticāreti muʿaṭṭal olub" [the British commerce in Aleppo was cut off for a while…the trade of cotton and silk exported to England left untended]'.

[737] Talbot, *British -Ottoman Relations*, 91.

demanded from "the Europeans for which he [the governor of Aleppo] offers assignments on the Miri or Bills of Exchange on Constantinople."[738] The imperial order for this second request is also preserved in the Ottoman court records of Aleppo.[739] According to the order dated in May 1772, the Porte demanded a larger sum due to its acute budgetary strains that frustrated a speedy conveyance of necessary supplies for the army. It was thus ordered that 500 *kese* be procured from merchants in Aleppo and sent immediately to the commander-in-chief. Upon receiving the payment receipts (*poliçe temessükātı*) or bills of exchange drawn on Istanbul, the Imperial Treasury would discharge the debts in cash on their maturity dates.[740] Strikingly, the imperial order identified merchants of Aleppo, be it local or European—who were expected to contribute to the current cause of the empire—as "the merchants of Aleppo who are wealthy and powerful" [*mütemevvil ve zī-yi ḳudret olan tüccār-ı Ḥaleb*]. In fact, large-scale merchants were one of the most distinguished segments of the Aleppo society.[741] As such, the Porte not only justified its demand, but also acknowledged the financial strength and significance of European merchant-financiers in the empire. This is a telling clue not only regarding the high esteem the Porte showed towards the British merchants in Aleppo thanks to their economic activities, but also how the Porte viewed them and their money as an indispensable part of the Ottoman society. Hence, they were expected to contribute to the needs of the empire.

The loan requested from the British was offered to be secured either on the assignments of provincial revenue sources of Aleppo or by the Imperial Treasury in Istanbul. Around this time, the British were heavily involved in this form of lending to provincial rulers in India, namely the Nawabs, to assist them in defraying the costs of war against their regional rivals

[738] TNA, SP 110/58, 11 July 1772.
[739] İSAM, ES/R 10/F 32/P 58/E 71, Evāsıṭ-i Ṣafer 1186 and 29 Rabīʿülāḫir 1186/May 1772 and 20 July 1772.
[740] Ibid., "bu ṭarafda żarbḫāne-i ʿāmiremde naḳden teslīm olunmak şarṭıyla beşyüz kese mütemevvil ve zī-yi ḳudret olan tüccār-ı Ḥalebden tedārik ve Serʿasker-i müşārileyh ṭarafına ʿaceleten irsāl ve muʿtād-ı beled olan vaʿdeleriyle poliçe temessükātı der-saʿādetime irsāl olunmak fermānım olmağın".
[741] Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 51, 56–59.

that shaped future British imperial engagements in the Indian subcontinent.[742] Likewise, the French in India loaned to provincial rulers in return for obtaining tax collection rights and enjoying administrative and judicial autonomy.[743] The same does not hold true for the Ottoman Empire. Although Ottoman provincial officeholders had the means to exert their authority, they were not autonomous rulers in the provinces. On the contrary, their power and wealth not only stemmed from their relationships with, but were also constantly controlled by, the Ottoman state. Thus, the officeholders were in no position to grant administrative and judicial prerogatives over a marked territory to foreign trading communities. They were merely responsible for the implementation of trading rights and consular jurisdiction stipulated in the Capitulations.[744]

At times of political stability, the British provided diverse financial services to provincial officeholders and in turn accessed imperial revenue sources either in kind or in cash and fostered trust and friendship with the officeholders by creating obligation and favour networks. The recipients would have been expected to return the favours in some form at some point in the future. Additionally, favours assert the economic position of the donors. As such, these networks could elevate the British leverage both in Istanbul and the provinces which might then translate into better imperial representation and stronger trade in the empire.

However, lending to officeholders during tranquillity was not considered in the same category as lending amidst turmoil even when the demand was authorised by the Porte. The British Crown and the Company considered the latter a risky political act, in that it meant getting involved in a regional power struggle between provincial powerholders where the

[742] For a recent and refreshing article on this subject, see Jessica Hanser, "From Cross-Cultural Credit to Colonial Debt: British Expansion in Madras and Canton, 1750-1800," *American Historical Review* 124, no. 1 (2019): 87–107.
[743] Heijmans, *The Agency of Empire*, 108–132.
[744] Steensgaard, "Consuls and nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650," 13–55; Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, passim.

British could inadvertently undermine political stability within the empire. Hence, they could violate the foundations of peaceful imperial relations. The British officials and merchants on the ground also shared this view. But more practical considerations were also at play. To be precise, the British in the provinces opted to stay aloof from such involvements believing that their actions might have come back to haunt them if the group they supported had lost the feud. Moreover, the British feared further financial entanglements given the factory's financial condition at the time. Therefore, when the governor Hüseyin Pasha, the kadi Ṭāhāzāde es-Seyyid Muhammed Efendi, the *muḥaṣṣıl*, and other notables in Aleppo communicated the second request to the British factory via their dragoman, Jirjīs ʿĀʾida, Jirjīs, on instructions received from the factory, "signify'd to the Bashaw [pasha] that they could not meddle in Affairs regarding the Government."[745]

In response, Ṭāhāzāde, who arguably found the British answer flimsy, sent word to the factory with vehemence that "this was an Affair of Consequence, and that no Excuse would be admitted of, & expected an immediate answer to be given before the Cady."[746] The power held by Ṭāhāzāde in Aleppo has already been noted in Chapter Two. The cooperation of local elites like Ṭāhāzāde especially during political crises and wartimes became necessary to the maintenance of law and order in the provinces as a consequence of the changes in provincial administration and revenue collection methods from the late seventeenth century mentioned in previous chapters. Ṭāhāzāde, for example, was responsible for coordinating army recruitment for the public defence in Jaffa.[747] With such political clout, the threatening tone of Ṭāhāzāde, seemingly, attempted to pressurise the British into complying with the Porte's request, but to no avail. The Aleppo factory unanimously rejected the demand with the justification that "[w]e

[745] TNA, SP 110/58, 11 July 1772.
[746] Ibid.
[747] İSAM, ES/R 10/F 45/P 84/E 108, Evāsıṭ-i Şevvāl 1186 and Last day of Z̲īlḳaʿde 1186/January 1773 and 22 February 1773.

have positive Orders from our Superiors not to lend money, or mix in Affairs of the Government on any occasion, nor can we do it, without an Express order from our Ambassador."[748] Even against this threat, the British displayed an act of strong courage and abided by the Company regulations which Timothy Turner could not manage to do. There may be a few explanations for this difference. First, the larger British trading community in Aleppo and the greater solidarity between European communities might have afforded the British the leeway to withstand insistent requests and pressures. Second, given the inadequate finances of the factory and the relatively large amount of money demanded, they could not afford to offer the loan. Or perhaps, both were true: They were not as powerful financially as they were politically, which suggests inconsistencies in different forms of British power. Indeed, their political clout was also fragile. In refusing to provide finances to the Ottomans, the British left themselves open to reprisals. To counter this, they felt obliged to engage in other forms of exchange, namely gift-giving, to preserve cordial relations with the officeholders. Thus, in September 1772, the Aleppo factory sent their dragomans Nicolo Fakr and Elias Gadban to Ṭāhāzāde to give him the "usual present".[749]

It is difficult to speculate whether the British response would have been different if Aleppo had been under a serious threat, putting the trade and lives of British merchants there at serious risk. Perhaps, they would have deserted Aleppo in the event of its occupation. The French in Acre, for example, considered leaving Acre amidst the intensified warfare in the region in June 1772.[750] As we have also seen, the British did not prefer to stay in cities, but strove to get on board their ships when faced with imminent danger. Over 1772 and 1773, the combat between the Ottoman and the Mamluk-Ẓāhir forces took place along the coast of Syria at Jaffa, Acre, and Beirut. Further, Damascus withstood the rival forces, except for a brief

[748] TNA, SP 110/58, 11 July 1772.
[749] TNA, SP 110/59, 1 September 1772.
[750] Joudah, *Revolt in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century*, 108–9.

period of surrender. Notwithstanding the Russian privateering activities in the easternmost part of the Mediterranean, Iskenderun, the main trading port of Aleppo, was not subject either to amphibious assault or military landing.[751] Therefore, Aleppo did not face a serious threat of military occupation. With all these in mind, combined with the current political situation and the financial condition of the factory in Aleppo, the British adhered to the principle of impartiality, and turned down the tenacious, emphatic request. Even if they had complied, the following process could have brought nothing, but financial and judicial complications discussed in Chapter Three. This was the case when Antoine Vondiziano, the British consul of Cyprus (1799-1838), loaned 30,000 *guruş* to Cypriot Orthodox prelates during the 1804 revolt in Cyprus to hire ships for the transfer of Ottoman troops from Anatolia to suppress the riot, but was still unable to recover it in 1810.[752] We do not know why Vondiziano and other consuls lent to the prelates. Was it because of the relationships between the prelates and the consuls in Cyprus? Would they have lent the money if the request had come from other Ottoman officials? These questions are difficult to answer. Nevertheless, Vondiziano's loan may suggest a change in British attitudes towards involvement in political events in the Ottoman provinces with the intensification of the British clout at the Ottoman court. Yet the difficulty in recovering the loan speaks equally to the vulnerabilities of the British and sheds light on why they usually opted to stay away from such engagements.

[751] For Russian privateering activities, see Joudah, *Revolt in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century*, 108; İSAM, ES/R 11/F 15-16/P 26/E 32, Evāʾil-i Cemāziyelevvel 1187/July 1773.

[752] BOA, C.HR/101/5050, 26 Şaʿbān 1225/24 September 1810. Luke recited a letter by Antione Vondiziano to Bartolomeo Pisani in 1809 wherein Vondiziano stated that he had lent 40,000 *guruş* "Owing to the necessities of the country on the occasion of the rising of the Turks in 1804, the Greek Bishops had recourse for considerable loans to the Consuls, all of whom came to their assistance, lending to them against notes of hand, wherein the Bishops undertook to repay within a short time. They have hitherto, however, been unable to meet their obligations; and I myself am unfortunately a creditor to the extent of 40,000 piastres", see Luke, *Cyprus Under the Turks, 1571-1878*, 128. The fact that other consuls also offered financial aid exemplifies the concerted actions of European communities in such situations.

Concluding Remarks

Each of our case studies has revealed the role of British trading, shipping, diplomatic, and financial activities in shaping the notions of British economic, social, and cultural capital in the Ottoman provinces. Both the Ottoman perceptions of British capabilities and the actual British diplomatic prowess, financial strength, and military power were neither mutually exclusive nor static. They evolved and took new shapes in constant dialogue with each other and historical situations. This dynamic process impacted the Ottoman understanding of the components of British power, on the one hand, and the parameters of the exertion of that power by the British, on the other, both of which were subject to modifications over time.

Such a change manifested itself in the 1806-1808 crises and revolutions in Istanbul and provinces.[753] During these years, three governments fell, two sultans were deposed and killed, and the military and fiscal reform agenda of Sultan Selim III (the *Niẓām-ı Cedīd*, literally the New Order) was abolished. During such tumultuous times, the British diplomatic mission was involved in Ottoman domestic politics. The Revolutionary-Napoleonic Wars led to a state-sponsored imperial agenda, resulting in the British capture of Seringapatam in 1799 and the British counter-invasion of Egypt in 1801. Since then, Egypt occupied a critical position for the British imperial interests in India. The Levant Company's reluctance to pursue an aggressive and potentially entangling policy was replaced by a more assertive one. Rather than staying neutral for the sake of inter-imperial amity and peace, the British now pursued an aggressive foreign policy to preserve the Ottoman Empire's neutrality during the Coalition Wars to maintain power balance in Europe and beyond. In Chapter Two, I have shown how the

[753] On the role of Britain in these crises and revolutions, see On the British incident, see Fatih Yeşil, "İstanbul önlerinde bir İngiliz filosu: Uluslararası bir krizin siyasi ve askeri anatomisi, " in *Nizâm-ı Kadîmden Nizâm-ı Cedîde: III. Selim ve dönemi*, ed. Seyfi Kenan (Istanbul: İSAM, 2010), 391–493; Aysel Yıldız, "Vaka-yı Selimiyye or the. Selimiyye Incident: A Study of the May 1807 Rebellion," (PhD diss., Sabancı University, 2008), 268–329; Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 171–73. Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 205–08.

Russian and British ambassadors protested the removal of the governors of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1806. These protests happened during the Edirne Incident in August 1806, a series of events that prevented the reformed troops of the New Order from moving into the Balkans. So, the rumours of a potential war with Russia and Britain caused tensions not only between the Ottomans and the British communities across the empire, but also between the New Orderists and a coalition of janissaries and provincial powerholders.[754] This time, the Ottomans did not view the British political involvement as the sine qua non of inter-imperial amity and peace. Instead, they did not renew their alliance with Britain.

A few months later, while the repercussions of the Edirne Incident were continuing, a British squadron passed through the Dardanelles and anchored off the Princes' Islands on 18 February 1807 to eliminate the French influence in the Ottoman administration and prevent an Ottoman war with Russia. The British naval expedition to Istanbul was called "the British Incident" (*Vaḳʿa-i İngiliz* or *İngilizlü Vaḳʿası*). This incursion lasted until 1 March and caused chaos and panic among the residents of Istanbul, many of which were politicised and armed. The politicized and armed populace of Istanbul partly attributed the causes and results of this incident to the New Order's inefficient and clumsy reform agenda.[755] Thus, it served as one of the steps leading to the Kabakçı revolt of May 1807 in Istanbul, as a result of which Sultan Selim III was deposed and the program of the New Order fell. Moreover, this incident contributed to the Ottoman-French alliance and resulted in the Ottoman's declaration of war on Russia in March 1807. It also dealt a severe blow to the status of the British in the Ottoman Empire. Seen no longer as friends, many merchants left the empire and settled in Malta only to return after the re-affirmation of the Capitulations in 1809.

[754] Yeşil, "İstanbul Önlerinde Bir İngiliz Filosu," 395.
[755] Yeşil, "İstanbul Önlerinde Bir İngiliz Filosu," 466.

Another political moment precipitated the signing of the Treaty of Dardanelles in January 1809 which restored peace and reaffirmed the Capitulations between the Ottomans and the British. On July 7, 1807, the French emperor and the Russian Tsar signed the Treaty of Tilsit, ending the war and launching an alliance between Russia and France. Since British, French, Russian, and Ottoman imperial interests were shifted and revised, they forged new diplomatic alliances. For most of the eighteenth century, British conservative foreign policy and their legal status, financial conditions, and leverage in local contexts affected how they reacted against local political events. Later, broader geopolitical developments played a more significant role in informing British political involvement in the region. Although the British naval expedition failed, situational dynamics continued to influence the Ottomans' perceptions of British power. British political actions rendered the status of the British in the Ottoman Empire, yet they also displayed their naval power. However, the fact that British merchants suffered great losses indicates that growing British imperial power could not provide adequate commercial protection in the Ottoman Empire. All these dynamics speak to the inconsistencies of British and Ottoman imperial power.

Lastly, British-Ottoman negotiations over political involvements in the eighteenth century suggest how the Ottoman imperial system rested on trans-imperial networks of relationships both at times of tranquillity and turmoil in the provinces. In a new stormy political atmosphere and socio-economic realities from the late eighteenth century, inter-imperial relationships and imperial systems would be revised, which would be the story of the next century.

CONCLUSIONS: Reconstructing British-Ottoman Imperial Encounters

This dissertation's examination of diplomatic, social, financial, and political interactions between the Ottomans and the British in Aleppo, Izmir, and Cyprus has revealed the messy and contingent nature of imperial encounters in the eastern Mediterranean between 1675 and 1809. These dynamics invite us to rethink questions of European imperial expansion, Ottoman state formation, and inter- and trans-imperial power dynamics during the 'long' eighteenth century.

The years between 1675 and 1809 witnessed the expansion of western European empires and the reconfiguration of state-society relations across the globe, as growing military expenses and bureaucratic machineries forced governments to restructure their relationships with populations and work with entrepreneurs and contractors. Developed in sixteenth-century Europe, chartered trading companies remained vitally important for governments in this period since they assisted trade, generated wealth, and managed diplomatic and commercial representation in foreign and distant places. Contrary to its contemporaries such as the East India, Royal African, and Hudson's Bay companies, the Levant Company has been given less attention in histories of the British Empire and has generally been held up as an example of a 'failure' in British history in the Mediterranean. At the same time, the Ottoman Empire has been sidelined and excluded in histories of the British Empire, in particular, and the wider context of inter-state relations in Europe, in general, due to Europeanist, path-dependent, modernisation theory.

Throughout this dissertation, I have used an array of Ottoman-Turkish, English, and to a lesser extent, French and Italian diplomatic, judicial, and commercial sources to depict British-Ottoman encounters from Ottoman and British viewpoints points. I have argued that the British imperial experience in the Ottoman Empire can neither be described as a 'failure', nor a 'success'. What constituted a failure or success was time-limited and case-specific.

Moreover, the Ottoman Empire was neither a passive and isolated political entity, nor did its imperial subjects lack agency in their relationships with other polities.

This dissertation has shown that the British and Ottoman empires were comprised of overlapping imperial systems. Trans-imperial relationships between the British and the Ottomans were central to the functioning of these overlapping imperial systems and thus empires in the eastern Mediterranean. For British commercial and diplomatic systems, which were intimately linked, to work in the region, British Levant Company officials and merchants had to interact with different local actors and navigate Ottoman cultures of commerce and diplomacy. In line with the Ottoman claims to universal rulership, the 'composite' nature of the Ottoman Empire came to accommodate the imperial subjects of 'friendly' polities within Ottoman administrative and legal structures through the Capitulations to enhance resources and services offered by these foreign imperial agents.

Understanding overlapping imperial systems and contingent power dynamics aligns with the recent conceptualisation of empires. That is, empires were neither clearly and nationally bounded polities, nor were they formed merely of competitive interactions. I have argued that both the British imperial enterprise and the Ottoman Empire were not self-sufficient and all-powerful. They were dependent on permeable boundaries, constantly shifting categories and power dynamics, and systematic and ad hoc recruitments and redistribution of people and resources.[756] Tolga Uğur Esmer viewed the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries "as a dynamic, constantly moving constellation of power foci involving a variety of agencies".[757] This dissertation has demonstrated that British officials and merchants were bound into these networks of power foci, thanks to the Capitulations and their continuous engagements, and in the process benefited from commercial activity with the Ottoman Empire.

[756] Stoler, "On degrees of imperial sovereignty," 135–38.
[757] Esmer, "Economies of Violence, Banditry and Governance in the Ottoman Empire around 1800," 188.

The profitability of Levant trade varied from merchant to merchant, place to place, and time to time. By examining the Radcliffe family's cash book 1752-56, Michael Wagner estimated that annual profits ranged from 5 to 10 per cent with £12,000 turnover and £11,000 expense.[758] Merchants also invested in stocks, bonds, and real estate in Britain, and some (Dudley North, Richard Stratton, and Colville Bridger) even secured public positions when they returned home. Those engagements with the Ottoman imperial subjects and structures positioned British diplomatic, commercial, and financial networks within the Ottoman body politic, and consequently, limited the latitude of British political, social, diplomatic, financial, and commercial activities in the empire. The British imperial enterprise remained conservative, averse to unfettered commercial and political expansion. Furthermore, the ability of British officials and merchants to control their relationships and transactions with the Ottomans remained limited and depended on favorable conditions and circumstances. Usually, the British conformed to Ottoman conventions of diplomacy and commerce. Playing the game by the rules set by the Ottomans allowed the British to interact with the Ottoman bureaucratic organisation, diplomatic systems, commercial structures, and financial-fiscal mechanisms. As such, British interactions with Ottoman subjects and imperial structures shaped the character of British imperial enterprise in the eastern Mediterranean. Further, such interactions affected the workings of the Ottoman Empire by compelling the Ottomans to regulate their relations with the British and reflect on their bureaucratic, administrative, fiscal, and commercial structures.

To reveal these dynamics, this dissertation firstly focused on British diplomatic engagements in Aleppo, Izmir, and Cyprus to explore the place of the British in provincial socio-political contexts. It treated the tax and gift demands of Ottoman provincial officeholders as local exertions of Ottoman authority. It investigated British participation in Ottoman conventions of gift-giving and petitioning to navigate local exertions of Ottoman authority

[758] Wagner, "Companies, Commerce and Politics," 186.

while protecting British commercial interests in the provinces. The Ottoman methods of provincial governance and the constant reconfiguration of Ottoman administrative-fiscal regimes in the provinces shaped the relationship between the British trading communities and Ottoman provincial officeholders and notables. The pervasive demands of officeholders might conform to Ottoman conventions of authority exertion and diplomacy. But those demands might simultaneously contravene the capitulatory privileges and rights granted to the British. Therefore, the British had to evaluate what was lawfully expected of them and what was not. Seeing that gifts were within the normal remit of provincial officeholders' authority and gift-giving was an essential aspect of diplomacy in terms of garnering favour and smoothing social and political communication with influential persons in provincial administration, the British conformed to Ottoman practices of gift-giving. In doing so, they often entered tributary relationships with provincial officeholders. Michael Talbot examined the gift-giving practices of British ambassadors in Istanbul and observed similar power dynamics at work.[759] The French, Dutch, and Venetian trading communities also employed similar gifting strategies in Istanbul and the empire's provinces.[760] This dissertation has offered the first comprehensive analysis of British gift-giving practices in the Ottoman provinces over the eighteenth century. As such, it has allowed us to see how Ottoman provincial officeholders structured their relationships with British trading communities and how the British adhered to those practices to improve their position in provincial contexts. The British adopted similar methods of diplomacy in South Asia with Mughal local officeholders and in West Africa with the rulers of Allada, Dahomey, and other kingdoms.[761] Some unsuccessful attempts to terminate gift-giving practices in the Ottoman provinces also coincided with the change of perceptions towards gifts

[759] Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations*, 105–40.
[760] Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 237–40; Kadı, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century*, 98–142.
[761] Margot C. Finn, "Colonial Gifts: Family Politics and the Exchange of Goods in British India, c. 1780–1820," *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 1 (2006): 203–31; Brauner, "Connecting Things," 408–28; Meersbergen, "Dutch and English Approaches to Cross-Cultural Trade in Mughal India and the Problem of Trust, 1600-1630," 69–87.

in South Asia. These findings attest to the global practices and dynamics governing diplomatic relations while showing the idiosyncrasies of the development of gift-giving practices in different historical settings with different political, economic, and cultural realities on the ground.[762]

Separately, the British continuously opposed certain tax exactions by officeholders that could be within their normal remit of authority but were contrary to the customs regime stipulated in the Capitulations. They participated in Ottoman conventions of petitioning to the Imperial Council by using the discourse of inter-imperial friendship and oppression to re-assert their tax privileges and have them re-interpolated in Ottoman imperial orders. These imperial orders were not universally implemented in the provinces. Nevertheless, they helped protect British commercial interests in the long run. Although these petitions were concerned with taxation, the resolution of these tax-related matters required the Ottoman government to evaluate, and if needed change, their current administrative-fiscal, legal, and commercial regulations. As such, British diplomatic petitions caused the Ottoman government to consider their policies and issue imperial orders to resolve points of contention, shaping Ottoman policies in the provinces. The Ottoman government also modified the content of their imperial orders from the 1760s to improve the enforcement power of their rulings. By examining why and how the British petitioned the Imperial Council and how the Ottoman bureaucratic machinery dealt with and responded to these voluminous petitions, this dissertation elaborated on the development of Ottoman record-keeping practices and new concepts and explicit language used in imperial orders over the eighteenth century.[763] Thus, participation in Ottoman conventions of gift-giving and petitioning suggests how British commercial organisation

[762] Biedermann, Gerritsen, and Riello, "Introduction: Global Gifts and the Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia," in *Global Gifts: and the Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, 1–33.
[763] İnalcık, "Şikayet Hakkı: *ʿArż-ı Ḥāl* ve *ʿArż-ı Maḥżar*'lar," 34; Baldwin, "Petitioning the Sultan in Ottoman Egypt," 504.

overlapped with Ottoman administrative, judicial, and diplomatic structures. The Ottomans, like their Indian counterparts, incorporated British trading communities into Ottoman political and legal structures and established their authority over them by receiving British gifts and petitions, and offering presents and issuing decrees in return.[764] Such engagements demonstrated the extent to which British gift-giving and petitioning shaped the position of the British in provincial contexts, but also affected Ottoman diplomatic practices, bureaucratic organisation, and administrative policies in the period under examination.

Next, the dissertation investigated the nature of the relationship between British factories and their dragomans to illuminate the functioning of British commercial organisation in the eastern Mediterranean and the Ottoman imperial system on different levels. Specifically, it explored why and when British factories and local merchants equipped with extensive commercial knowledge, diplomatic skills, and social connections—predominantly among the non-Muslim subjects of the empire—formed business partnerships in the empire. Contrary to the existing scholarship considering dragomans commercial, cultural, and diplomatic brokers, I treated them as business partners of the British, who were incorporated into British consular and trading networks. Because British presence and power were always contingent in the provinces, they needed the help of influential local figures, whom they could trust to a certain extent, to expand their local networks to receive the diplomatic, commercial, and social assistance they needed. The dragomans, on the other hand, enriched their business portfolio, enjoyed certain judicial and fiscal privileges, and improved their diplomatic connections and standing by entering British consular and trading networks.

However, trust between the British and their dragomans was always contested. To make their partnership work, both had to make commitments to cultivate and renew trust between

[764] Guido van Meersbergen, "The Diplomatic Repertoires of the East India Companies in Mughal South Asia, 1608–1717," *The Historical Journal* 62, no. 4 (2019): 875–898.

them. Yet, both parties had their concerns and responsibilities stemming from their business interests, familial problems, and organisational regulations. Therefore, conflicts of interest emerged between them from time to time that limited their abilities to act for their partners. Faced with such complex situations and power dynamics, the partners had to navigate their relationships through an active process of give and take. As such, this dissertation demonstrated how the British and locally influential figures created complex, dynamic, and interdependent, trans-imperial relationships. Neither the British nor affluent and notable merchants were self-sufficient in provincial contexts. Their capabilities were always contingent. Still, both had opportunities and mechanisms to augment their positions. In this regard, dragomans often had an advantage over foreign trading communities thanks to their local connections and knowledge of local diplomatic and commercial practices.

It was such contingent dynamics governing the relationship between the British and their dragomans that went on to shape the contours of imperial systems. This dissertation has shown that diplomatic, commercial, and social systems in the Ottoman Empire created avenues for or necessitated collaboration between Ottoman subjects and foreign merchants. The Ottoman government took advantage of or discouraged these trans-imperial partnerships depending on rapidly changing geopolitical developments in the region, especially between 1789 and 1807. The Capitulations allowed and even encouraged the *müsteʾmin*s to work with Ottoman subjects and provided legal forums for them to resolve their disagreements through Ottoman sharia courts, the Imperial Council, and consular courts. In the long run, therefore, these trans-imperial partnerships became widespread, practical, and efficient, so much so that Ottoman bureaucratic, diplomatic, financial, and even military structures came to be based on such partnerships, which was evident in the correlation between the dragomanship of Sargis in Cyprus and the Anglo-Ottoman alliance against the French. Incorporating Ottoman subjects formally in British consular and trading networks as dragomans also suggested the trans-

imperial and multi-cultural character of the Levant Company like its contemporaries the East India and Hudson's Bay companies, despite the tentativeness of the Levant Company towards establishing intricate connections with the dragomans.[765]

Shifting from social to financial relations, the dissertation moreover revealed a variety of overlapping messy entangled financial networks formed between the British and different segments of Ottoman provincial societies. It showed how local commercial and political conditions forced British merchants to engage in various credit relations with Ottoman subjects, communities, and officeholders in the provinces in defiance of the Levant Company regulations against credit transactions in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the dissertation demonstrated the divergence between the official British policy towards credit and actual commercial practices on the ground until 1744 when the Company abrogated the ban on credit. Exploring British credit relations with different segments of Ottoman society showed that British merchants and their financial resources became integrated into provincial economic structures and fiscal-financial networks across the empire. Credit activities enabled British merchants to access Ottoman goods and construct personal and business relationships with the Ottomans. Even, the British acquired property such as houses, orchards, and arable lands in the Ottoman lands when the Ottoman debtors defaulted on their debts. This dissertation has also shown that the British owned houses and lands in Izmir, although I have not been able to identify how and why they did so. The question of British property ownership awaits further research since I have not been able to elaborate on the extent of foreign property ownership and the approaches of kadis and the Ottoman government towards this phenomenon in different places. Only Ottoman subjects had the right to purchase real property in the Ottoman lands. Despite this regulation, however,

[765] Despina Vlami and Ikaros Mandouvalos, "Entrepreneurial forms and processes inside a multiethnic pre-capitalist environment: Greek and British enterprises in the Levant (1740s–1820s)," *Business History* 55, no. 1 (2013): 98–118; Sen, "Searching for the Indian in the English East India Company Archives," 37–58; David C. Smith, "The Hudson's Bay Company, Social Legitimacy, and the Political Economy of Eighteenth-Century Empire," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (2018): 71–108.

the Ottoman government did not explicitly prohibit foreign ownership of real property until 1792. More research on when and how foreign merchants acquired land, what they did with it, and how the Ottoman state reacted against these developments can provide answers to the development of Ottoman notions of subjecthood and land law over the early modern era. Such research can moreover enhance our understanding of histories of capitalism in the Ottoman realms by allowing us to compare the forms and repercussions of vertical investment in the empire with those in the Atlantic.[766]

The Ottomans, on the other hand, obtained British financial resources to maintain their sustenance, invest in provincial economic sectors, meet their communal expenses, and settle their debt with the state. As such, the dissertation contributed to the work of Edhem Eldem and Ellen Nye by showing that British financial networks and resources intersected with and lubricated Ottoman financial-fiscal mechanisms.[767] British involvement in the Ottoman financial-fiscal system and their property ownership demonstrated the permeability of imperial boundaries. Not only did British credit supplement the domestic credit market and contribute to the functioning of the Ottoman fiscal apparatus, but various British investments also had potential effects on the development of Ottoman notions of subjecthood, land law, and European enterprise forms and capital formation in the empire.[768]

Again, trust was key in cross-cultural, trans-imperial credit relationships. Just as the Capitulations prepared the ground for partnerships between the British and their dragomans,

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[766] Smith, *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic*, 177-183; Haggerty, *'Merely for Money'?*, 62–64;

[767] Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, 113-73; Nye, ""A Bank of Trust": Legal Practice of Ottoman Finance Between Empires," 502–525.

[768] Recent research has drawn attention to entrepreneurial networks in the formation and functioning of early modern states and empires. For a few selected works, see Fynn-Paul, ed., *War, Entrepreneurs, and the State in Europe and the Mediterranean*; Conway, *Britannia's Auxiliaries*; Edgar F. Cravo Bertrand Pereira, "A Contractor Empire: Public Private Partnership and Overseas Expansion in Habsburg Portugal, 1580-1640," (Ph.D. Diss., Leiden University, 2020); Bernhard C. Schär, "Switzerland, Borneo and the Dutch Indies: Towards A New Imperial History of Europe, c. 1770–1850," *Past and Present* 250 (2022): 134–167.

so too capitulatory provisions concerning credit and debt offered an additional layer of trust mechanisms between commercial actors to encourage credit transactions and stimulate economic activity across the empire. Additionally, British merchants evaluated and communicated different risk factors and viable investment methods with their associates in different Ottoman towns and cities. British merchants also borrowed from the Ottomans. Despite the financial strength of British merchants, local conditions that compelled the British to loan and borrow credit with a variety of risks involved suggest the contingency of British economic and diplomatic power in trans-imperial contexts. Such contingency is most evident when we look at the debt recovery processes in which the agency of Ottoman debtors and the relationship between the Ottoman state and its officeholders, particularly the seizure by the public authority of officeholders' estates, hindered the recovery of British loans.[769] Other scholars have also noted the contingency of British economic power in overseas contexts that stemmed from different political and economic realities in different parts of the Atlantic and South Asian regions.[770] Similarly, political, economic, and financial dynamics in the Ottoman lands did not lead to a dependence by the Ottomans on British financial resources. These dynamics tied British financial networks to the Ottoman economic and political structures and limited their economic and political power.

Thanks to the legal, diplomatic, and bureaucratic mechanisms in place, British merchants often recovered their debts, if not in full but at least in portions, enabling them to remain afloat. These mechanisms might attest to the relative strength and smooth functioning of the Ottoman economy given that many merchants did engage in large sums and were able to recover their debts. Seemingly, significant political events and geopolitical conjuncture

[769] For the classic and still influential text on the impact of financial and political developments in Britain on the formation of the British "fiscal-military state" and the expansion of its empire in the eighteenth century, see John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

[770] Hanser, "From Cross-Cultural Credit to Colonial Debt," 87–107.

concerned British officials in London and the Ottoman Empire about the security of British economic assets in different Ottoman provinces. The fear that the Ottomans could plunder or seize British merchants' effects and estates in the event of an Anglo-Ottoman conflict forced the British to ensure the security of British assets through diplomacy. Although the tone of British diplomatic petitions intensified in the early nineteenth century, that anxiety indicated that British political power was fragile as late as 1807.

This dissertation lastly showed how the fragility of British power in the provinces also shaped their attitudes towards involvement in political events during moments of political instability. It revealed that the Ottoman state and its provincial officeholders were aware of the myriad of services the foreign communities could offer at times of political instability to restore order in the provinces. The rationale behind their demands for help from these communities was the idea that the *müsteʾmin*s as the subjects of 'friendly' polities were integral components of the Ottoman body politic. As 'temporary' Ottoman residents and allies the *müsteʾmin*s were expected to provide assistance to the Ottomans when lives were at risk as a prerequisite for the sultan and his officers to observe the rules of peace and friendship towards the British. Thus, the *müsteʾmin*s could and should not remain neutral during such times. However, the conditions of neutrality were contingent. Timothy Turner in Cyprus was pressured to intervene in the riot of 1764-66 not only because he was supposed to according to the idea mentioned above, but because he was thought to be a good fit for that role seeing that he could act as a neutral agent between the insurgents and the Ottoman establishment in Cyprus. As such, the Ottoman claims to universal rulership and the role of each semi-autonomous group living in the Ottoman domains only partly shaped the perceptions of the Ottomans in terms of how, why, and when the *müsteʾmin*s could or should help. These perceptions and the attendant expectations were rather informed by constantly changing conditions.

However, the 'official' British policy on such occasions was to refrain from involvement in local and regional power struggles such as riots and mutinies. Their rationale was partly that as 'temporary' residents they had no right to be involved in such political occasions, which would be an act against the rules of peace and friendship. Therefore, the British often invoked their *amān* status to assert their neutrality to eschew involvement in political events. Yet, the British responses and actions were not shaped by strict adherence to the Levant Company regulations. On the contrary, the British considered the potential political and financial repercussions of their involvement when deciding how and why they would or would not get involved. Both the 'official' British stance and the consideration of potential consequences demonstrated the weak position of the British in provincial contexts. Their aversion to aggression and expansionist policy in the eastern Mediterranean over the long eighteenth century, or to be more precise, until the end of the Franco-Ottoman War of 1798-1802, moulded the posture of the Levant Company, and thus the British commercial and diplomatic enterprise in the region. This posture of the Company was quite different from that of its contemporaneous rival, the East India Company, which adopted an aggressive policy in defending its jurisdictional authority and commercial interests from the 1680s due to fierce commercial rivalries and devastating political instability in South Asia.[771] As such, British-Ottoman imperial encounters were governed less by static, overarching imperial policies than by volatile politico-social dynamics in the Ottoman lands.

Since volatile politico-social dynamics were as significant as the Ottoman claims to universal rulership in defining the Ottomans' disposition towards the *müste'min*s, the Ottoman's demands and the British responses can illuminate the level of Ottoman protection in the provinces and their ability to mobilise the resources available. Such large-scale uprisings and mutinies were common yet sporadic in the Ottoman Empire. The state handled and

[771] Stern, *The Company-State*, especially chapter three.

contained them through various methods. In doing so, the state and its officers did not hesitate to request aid from or occasionally pressurise foreign trading communities to help them restore order in the provinces. Such demands, forceful or not, do not indicate the weak level of Ottoman protection in the provinces, as the state eventually contained these insurrections. Rather, they suggest the ability of the Ottoman state to create a body politic that enhanced and diversified the resources and services available to them. However, the Ottomans did not always effectively mobilise foreign resources and services. While the *müsteʾmin*s were generally willing to engage financially with the Ottomans, they needed to be convinced if they were to provide political assistance. During the Sarıbeyoğlu incident in Izmir, the riot of 1764-66 in Cyprus, and the occupation of Damascus by the alliance army of Ẓāhir and the Mamluks in 1772 British aid was limited to diplomatic assistance. Such limited help showed the difficulty in coaxing or even pressurising the British into providing the help needed. Nevertheless, the British diplomatic assistance in Izmir and Cyprus demonstrated the efficacy of foreign assistance and its importance for the Ottoman imperial system. Such findings thus support the view that inter-imperial exchanges of military, diplomatic, and financial services do not signal an imperial weakness. Rather, they were of paramount importance for the effective functioning of the Ottoman Empire, like other early modern empires.[772]

Taken together, this dissertation contributes to the fields of British and Ottoman imperial history by shedding light on the contours of British imperial enterprise in the eastern Mediterranean and on the trans-imperial dimensions of the functioning of the Ottoman Empire over the long eighteenth century. Throughout this dissertation, we saw the entangled nature of

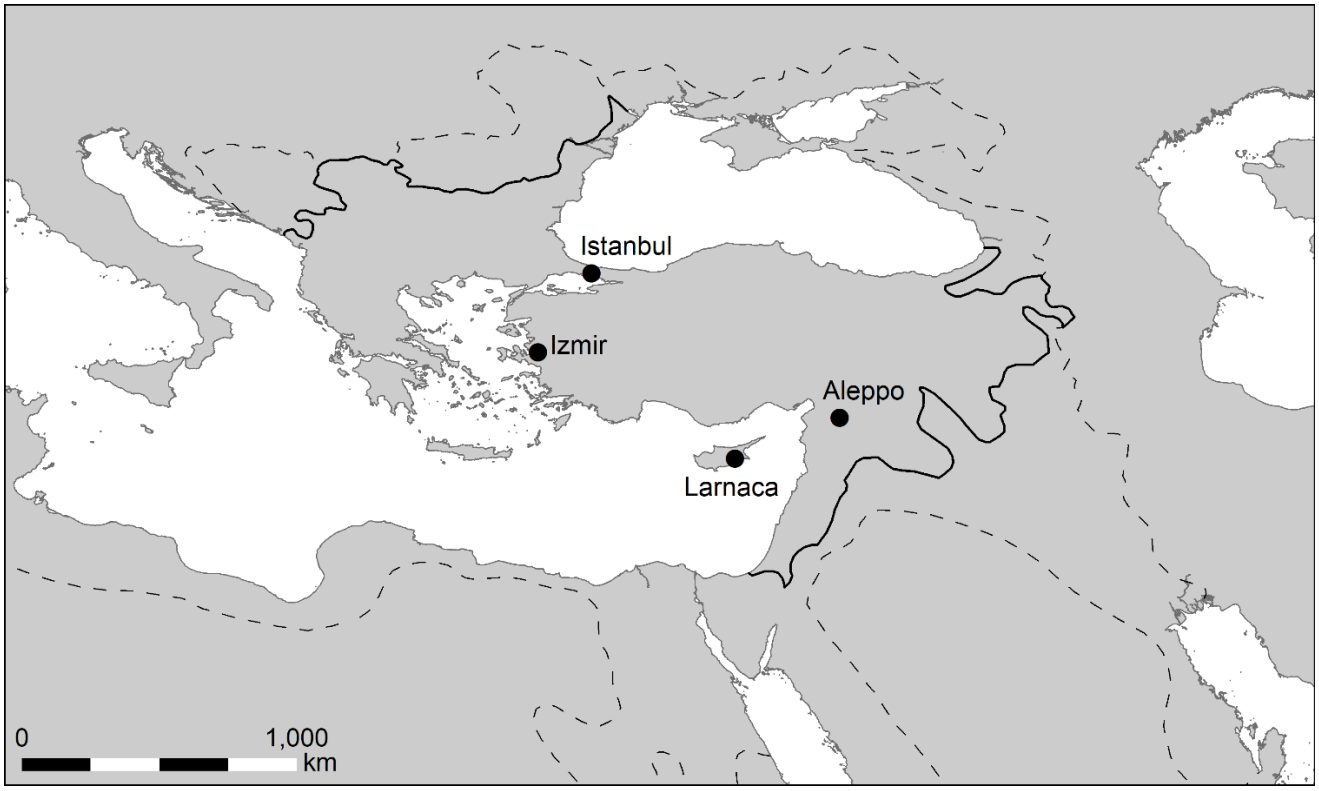
[772] For a forceful statement of this argument for the British Empire, see Conway, *Britannia's Auxiliaries*. For Ottoman military history along this line, see Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*; Kahraman Şakul, "Military Engineering in the Ottoman Empire," in *Military Engineers and the Development of the Early-Modern European State*, ed. Bruce P. Lenman (Dundee: Dundee University Press, 2013), 179–199. For Ottoman diplomatic history, see Rothman, *Brokering Empire*. For a collection of chapters on military, cultural, and diplomatic exchange in early modern empires, see Wayne E. Lee, ed., *Empires and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2011).

the British imperial enterprise in the region and the Ottoman Empire. We saw how the composite nature of the Ottoman Empire and highly volatile and competitive political, social, and commercial dynamics across the empire encouraged and necessitated inter-imperial interactions and thus created overlapping imperial systems. Operating within these overlapping British and Ottoman political, social, commercial, and financial imperial systems involved subordination, adaptation, compromise, negotiation, and improvisation because the factors and conditions informing British-Ottoman engagements and entanglements were quite dynamic and volatile. Under these conditions, the ability of the British and the Ottomans to navigate such engagements and entanglements was always contingent, and the nature of their relationships was messy. Such contingent and messy British-Ottoman imperial encounters rendered the British imperial enterprise as something that could not be entirely separated from the Ottoman body politic and that was always in interaction with the Ottoman imperial system. Although the British mercantile interests could not either be separated from the British interests, power, and prestige on a global level, the British on the ground could not realise those interests by strict adherence to the trading regulations of the Levant Company. It was those dynamics that not only gave the British imperial enterprise in the eastern Mediterranean a distinct character, but also afforded the British a role in actively participating in the Ottoman imperial system and thereby shaping it. This dissertation revealed this line of historical narration by examining an array of sources to highlight varied British engagements and entanglements in the Ottoman provinces, enabling me to show the complex nature of British-Ottoman imperial encounters over the long eighteenth century. Consequently, this dissertation has depicted inter-imperial encounters as much from an Ottoman vantage point as from the British one. In doing so, it challenges European conceptual frameworks in accounting for the expansion of the British Empire and its relationship with other polities. It is precisely this framework that brought such underdetermined messy and contingent relationships and power

dynamics between the Ottomans and the British to the forefront that offered an analytically productive lens also on the history of the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire.

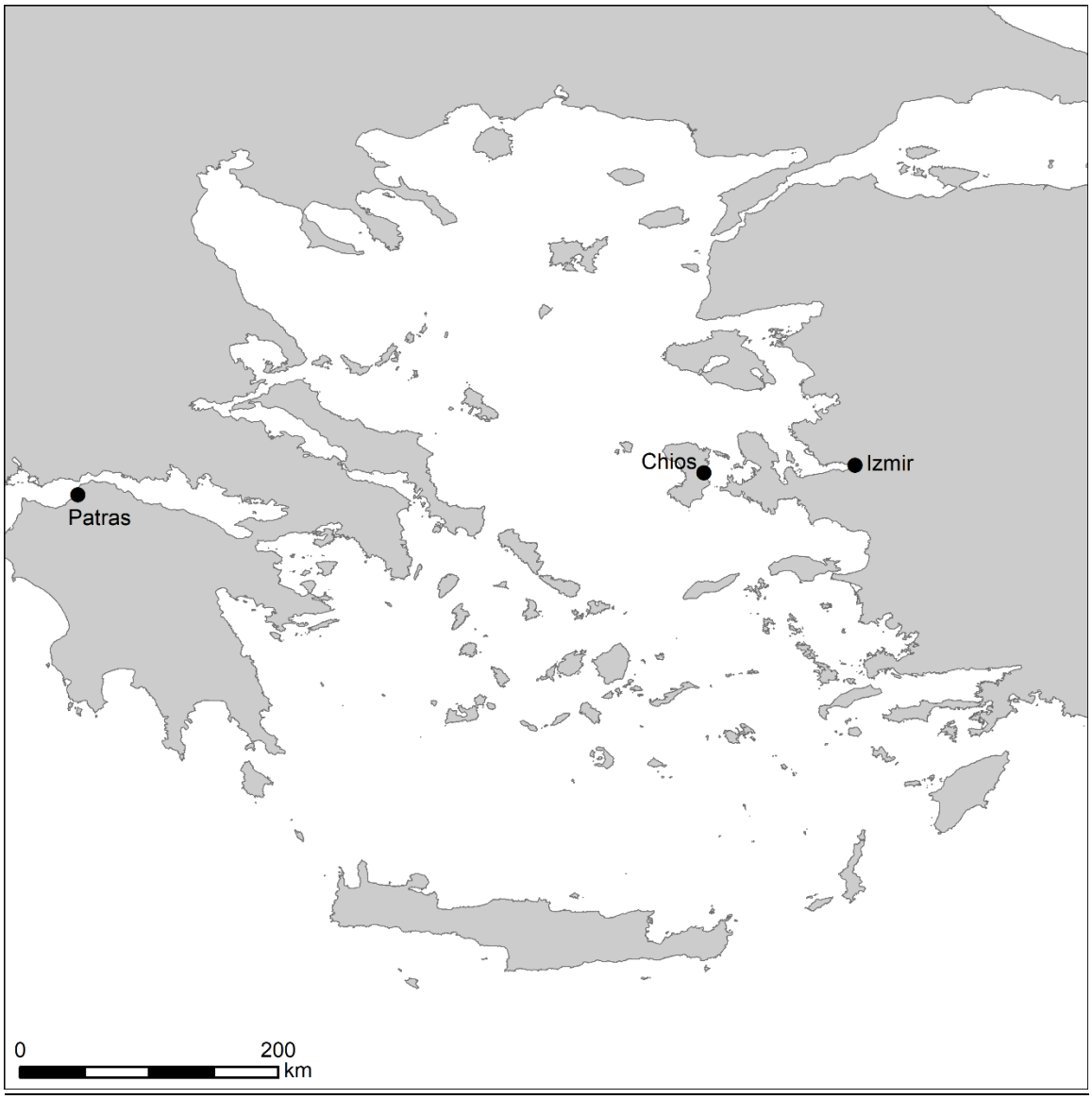
APPENDICES

Appendix I: Aleppo, Izmir and Cyprus in the Ottoman Empire



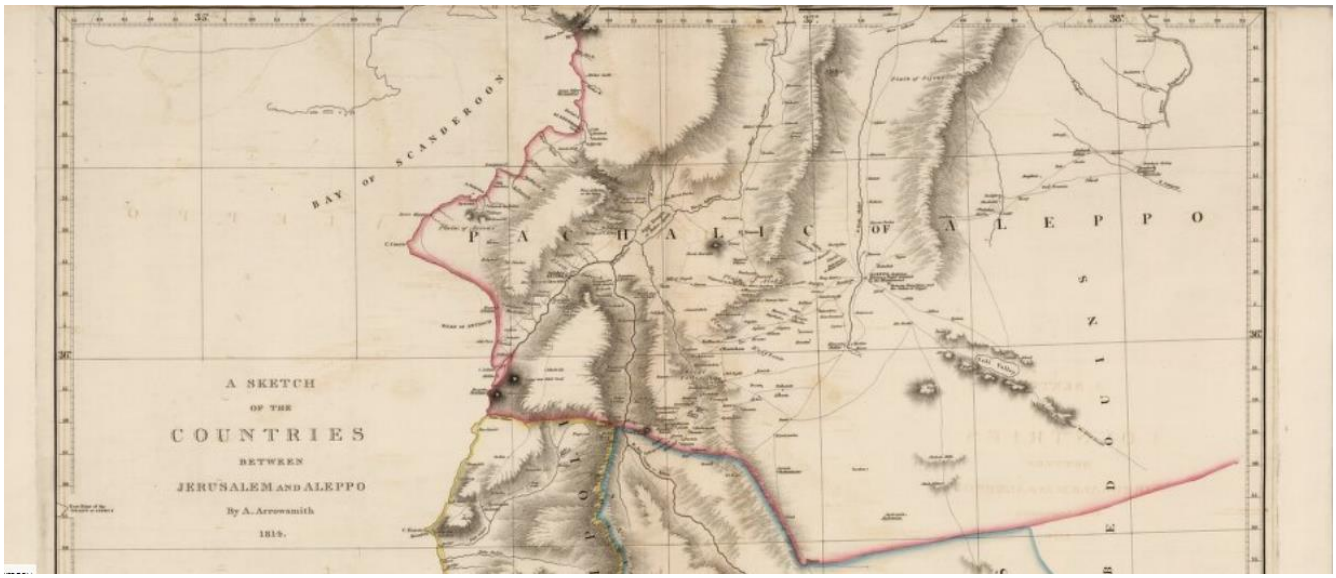
I would like to thank Theodore Reeves for creating this map for me.

Appendix II: Izmir in the wider geography of the Province of the Mediterranean islands



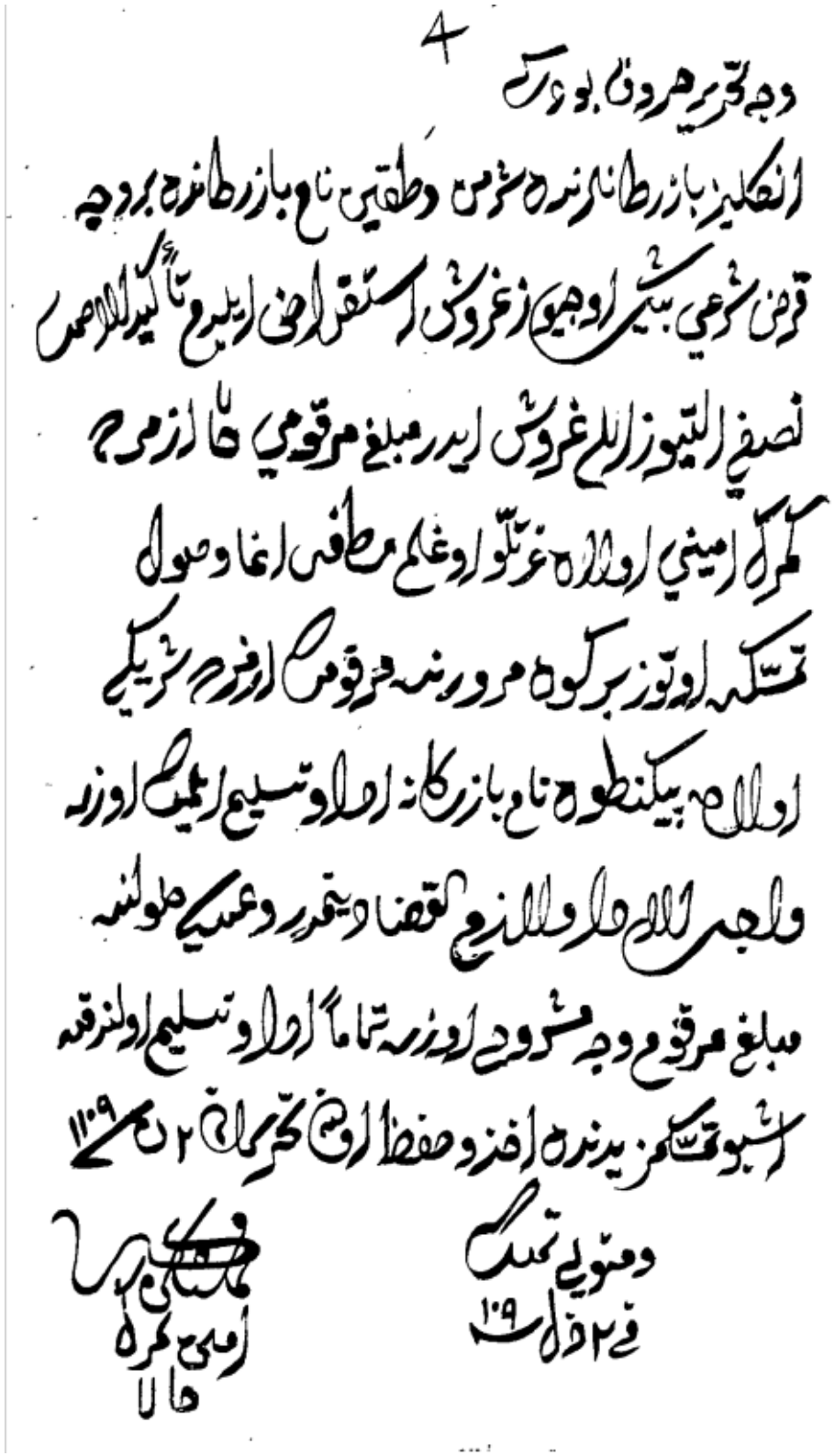
I would like to thank Theodore Reeves for creating this map for me.

Appendix III: A Map of the Aleppo-Iskenderun Caravan Route

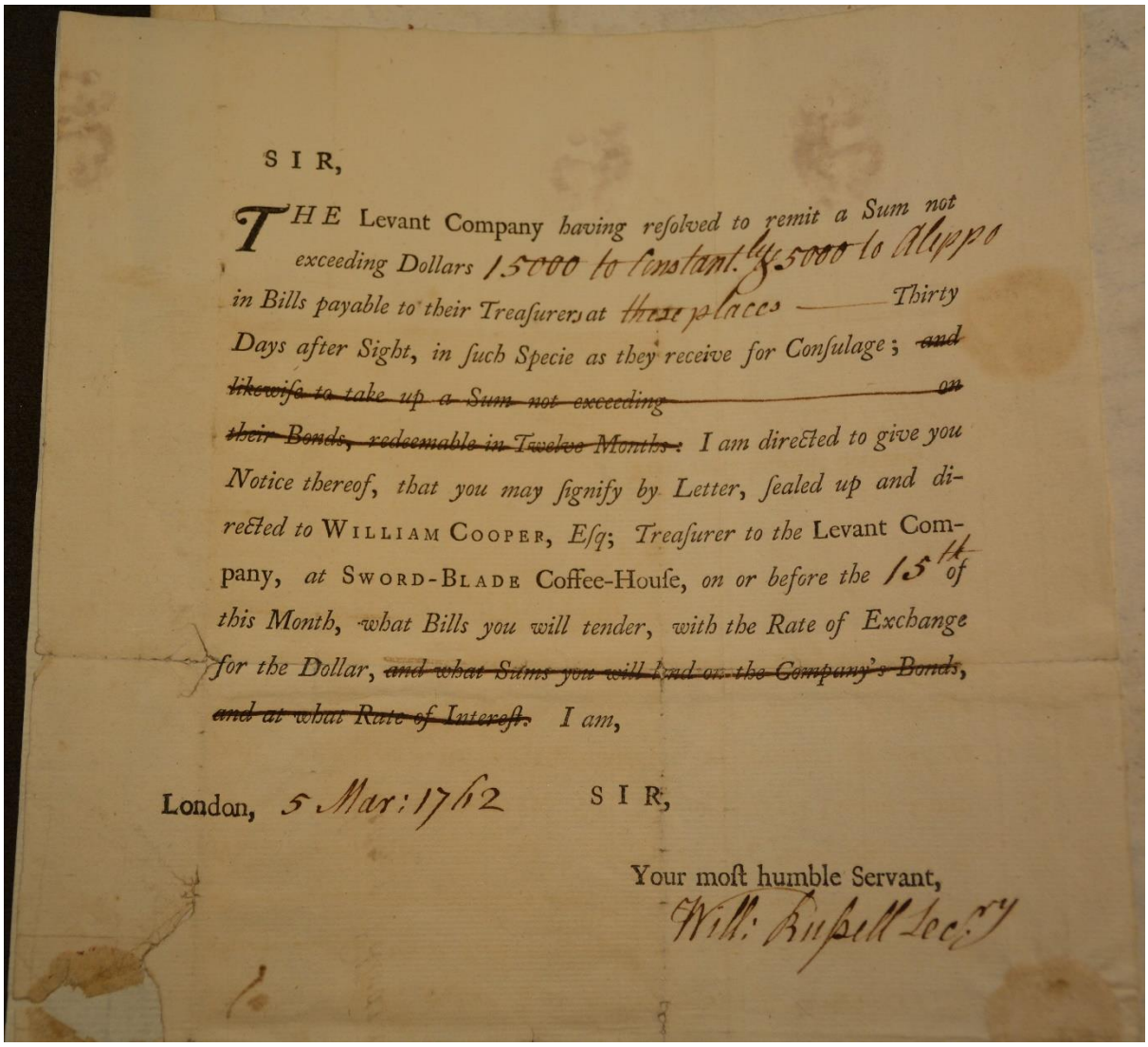


This section of this map is taken from *A Sketch of the Countries between Jerusalem and Aleppo,* published by A. Arrowsmith, (London, 1814). Composite: A Sketch of the Countries between Jerusalem and Aleppo. (oldmapsonline.org). Consulted on 1 December 2023

Appendix IV: The Bill of Exchange by the Customs Officer in Istanbul



Appendix V: The Bill of Exchange issued by the Levant Company



SIR,

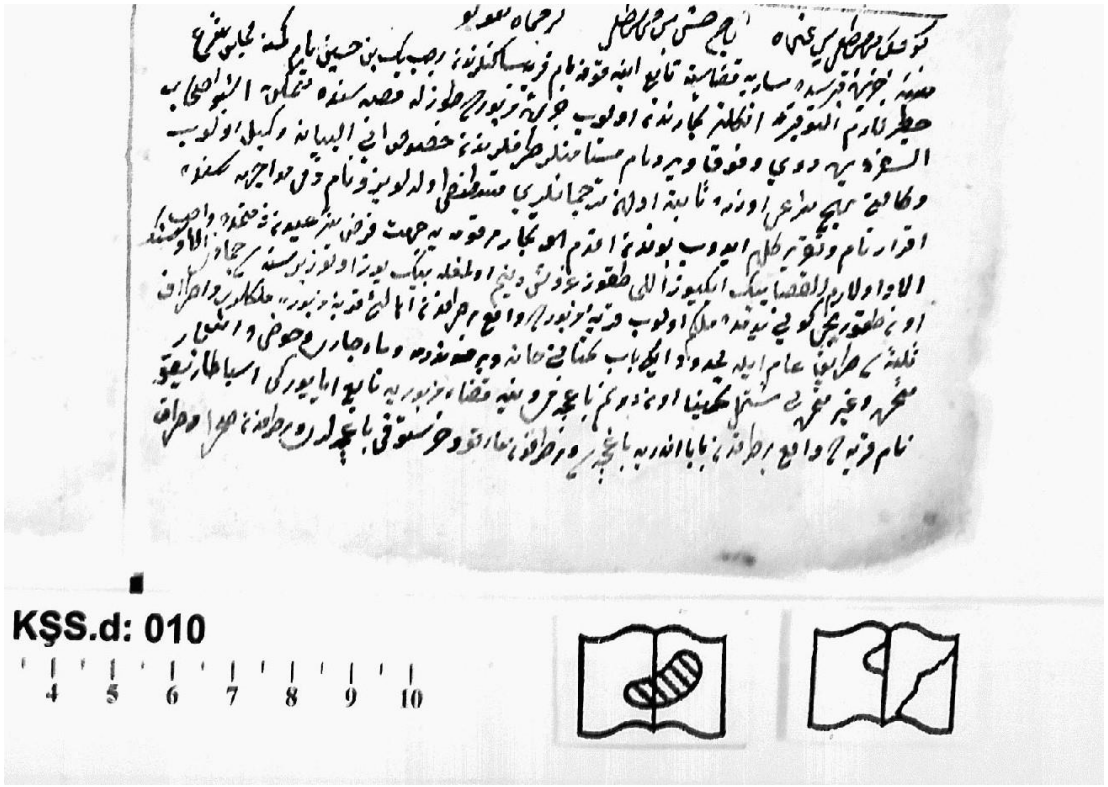
THE Levant Company *having resolved to remit a Sum not exceeding Dollars* 15000 *to* Constant. £5000 *to* Aleppo *in Bills payable to their Treasurer, at* three places ——— *Thirty Days after Sight, in such Specie as they receive for Consulage;* ~~*and likewise to take up a Sum not exceeding* ——— *on their Bonds, redeemable in Twelve Months:*~~ *I am directed to give you Notice thereof, that you may signify by Letter, sealed up and directed to* WILLIAM COOPER, *Esq; Treasurer to the* Levant Company, *at* SWORD-BLADE Coffee-House, *on or before the* 15th *of this Month, what Bills you will tender, with the Rate of Exchange for the Dollar,* ~~*and what Sums you will lend on the Company's Bonds, and at what Rate of Interest.*~~ *I am,*

London, 5 Mar: 1762 SIR,

Your most humble Servant,

Will: Russell Secry

Appendix VI: The Transliteration and Translation of An Ottoman Court Record of Cyprus about the Purchase of Orchards and an Arable field by British Merchants as well as a Map showing the Location of the Purchased Properties in Cyprus





Transliteration

Medīne-yi cezīre-yi Ḳıbrīsda Mesāya ḳażāsına tābiʿ-i Āyna ḳōfa nām ḳarye sākinlerinden Receb bin Hüseyin nām kimesne meclis-i şerʿi ḥaṭr-i lāzımü't-tevḳīrde İngiltere tüccārından olub cezīre-yi mezbūrda Ṭūzla ḳaṣabasında mütemekkin işbu eṣḥābü'l-sifr Tīredvey ve Ḳōḳā ve Pred nām müsteʾminler ṭaraflarından ḫuṣūṣ-ı ātī'l-beyāna vekīl olub vekāleti ṣaḥīḥ müddāʿī üzere sābite olan tercümānları Ḳosṭanṭi veled-i Lūizū nām zımmī muvācehesinde iḳrār-ı tām ve taḳrīr-i kelam idüb bundan aḳdem bu tüccār-ı merḳūmeye cihet-i ḳarż-şerʿīden zimmetimde vācibü'l-edā ve lāzımü'l-ḳażā bin ikiyüz elli dokuz guruş deynim olmağla bin yüz otuz bir senesi cemāzīü'l-evvelinin on dokuzuncu günü yedimde mülküm olub ḳarye-yi mezbūrda vakiʿ bir ṭarafdan ehāli-yi ḳarye-yi mezbūre mülkleri ve eṭrāf-ı salisesi ṭarīḳ-i ʿāmm ile maḥdūd iki bāb taḥtāni ḥane ve bir ṣündürme ve mā-i cārī ve ḥavż ve eşcār-ı müsmire ve ġayrī müsmiresi müştemil taḫmīnen on dönüm bağçemi ve yine ḳażā-yı mezbūreye tābiʿ-i Āyāyōrgi İspeṭāriḳo nām ḳaryede vāḳiʿ bir ṭarafdan Pāpā Ānderiye bağçesi ve bir ṭarafdan Mārḳō ve Ḫristōfi bağçeleri ve bir ṭarafdan ṣaḥrā ve ṭaraf-ı rābiʿ ṭarīḳ-i ʿāmm ile maḥdūd iki bāb taḥtāni ḥane ve iki ṣündürme ve bir dolāb ḳapūsu ve iki değirmen dolāb ḳāṭırı ile taḫmīnen yirmi dönüm bağçemi ve Ḳārpās ḳażāsına tābiʿ-i [Pezköy?] nām ḳaryede vāḳiʿ bir ṭarafdan Pāpānyerō bōstānı ve bir ṭarafdan Pāpā Āndoni bōstānı ve bir ṭarafdan āb-ı deryā ve ṭaraf-ı rābiʿ ʿarṣa-yı ḫālī ile maḥdūd ve taḫmīnen altı dönüm bōyā tārlāmı bā-izn-i ṣāḥib-i ārż zikr olunan iki ḳıṭʿa [altmış?] dönüm bağçemi bi-cümletü'l-tevābiʿ ve'l-levāḥiḳ tüccār-ı merḳūma bi-ṣafḳa vāḥide bin elli dokuz guruşa vefā-i beyʿ ve teslīm idüb ānlar daḫī ber-vech-i muḥarrer iştirā ve teslīm ve ḳabż ve ḳabūl eylediklerinden ṣoñra ve semeni olan meblağ-ı mezkūr bin elli dokuz guruşu deyn-i mezkūrdan ol miḳdār guruşa taḳās idüb eyledim ve zikr olunan bōyā tarlasını daḫī iki yüz guruş bedel-i muḳābelesinde ferāğ ve ḥaḳḳ-ı taṣarrufunu tefvīż idüb ānlar daḫī tefevvüż ve ḳabūl eylediklerinden ṣoñra bedel-i mezkūr deyn-i mezkūrdan ol ḳadar guruşa taḳās idüb ānlar daḫī maḳāṣet ve ḳabūl eylediklerinden ṣoñra ecel ḥulūlinde deyn-i mezkūru edādan ʿāciz

olursam beyʿ-i mezbūr sābite munḳalib olmak üzere ḳavl eylemişidi ki ḥālā ecel-i mezbūr mürür idüb deyn-i mezkūru edādan ʿāciz olmağla ḳavl-ı mezbūr üzere sābite munḳalib olmağla ḥālā bedelinden beyʿ-i ḳaṭʿi ile ʿalā'l-iştirāk'es-sevī[773] emlāk-ı mezkūre mülk-ü müşterāsıdır ve zikr olunan tarla daḫī ḥaḳḳ-ı ḥuḳūḳlarıdır. Keyfe-mā-yeşāʾn ve ḥasbe-mā yuḫtārdan mutaṣarrıf olsunlar benim ḳaṭʿen ʿalaḳa ve medḫalim yoḳdur didikde gıbbu't-taṣdīki'ṣ-ṣerʿī mā-vaḳaʿ bi't-ṭaleb kütb olundu. Fī'l-yevm-i ḫāmis min Şaʿbāni'l-muʿaẓẓam li-sene-yi selase ve selāsīn ve miʾe ve elf.

5 Şaʿbān 1133

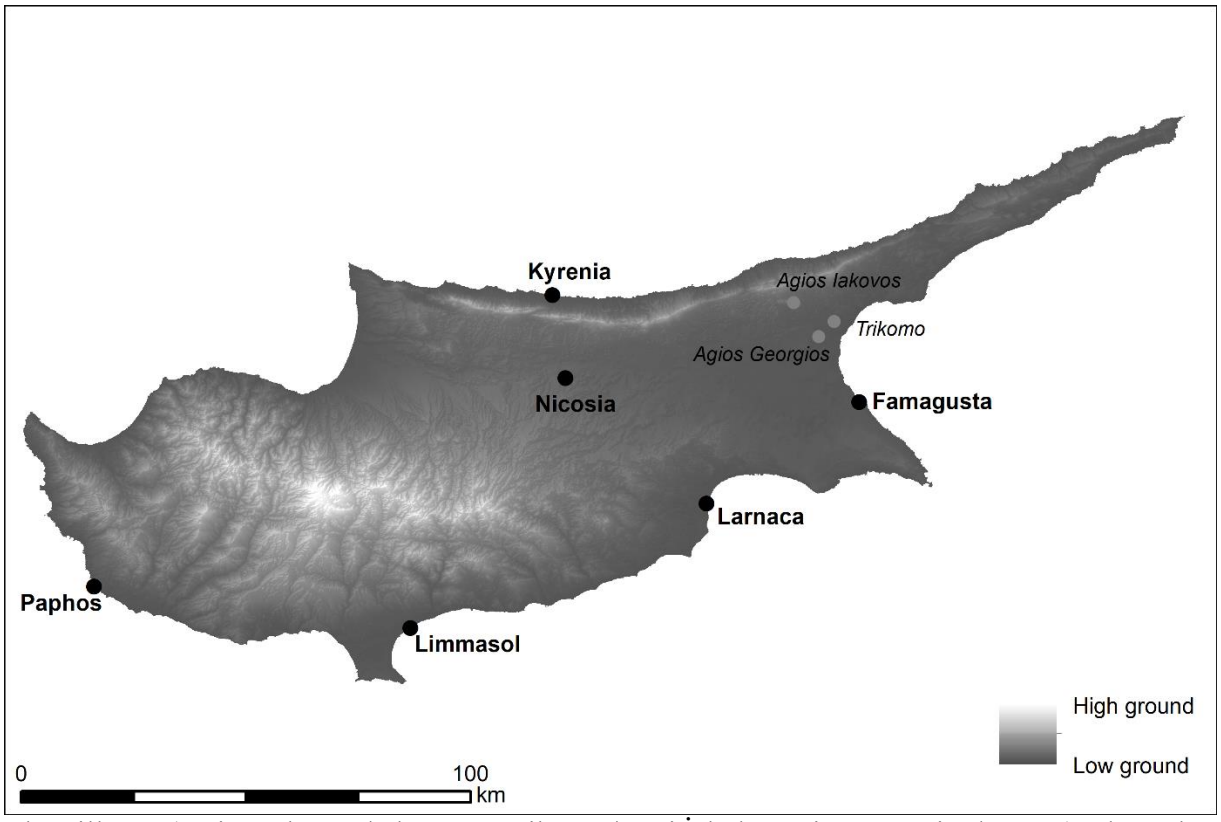
Translation:

Receb, son of Hüseyin, the resident of Āyna ḳōfa village in the Mesāya district of Cyprus, appeared before the Sharia court in the presence of Ḳosṭanṭi veled-i Lūizū, who is the dragoman and the legal representaive on the matter expressed below of Tīredvey (George Treadway) ve Ḳōḳā (Thomas Coke) ve Pred (Harvey Pretty), English merchants in Ṭūzla (Larnaca) and the possessors of the document, affirmed and declared: that since I have been indebted 1259 guruş to the said merchants [which] requires payment, on Cemaziyelevvel 19, 1131 [9 April 1719], having properties in my possession, [which consist of] an orchard of approximately 10 dönüms in the said village that is bounded on one side by the properties of the villagers and the rest by the public road and that contains a two-door single storey house, an entrance hall, a running water, a water pool, and fruit and other trees; an orchard of approximately 20 dönüms in Āyāyōrgi İspeṭāriḳo village of the said district that is bounded on one side by the orchard of Pāpā Ānderiye, on another side by the orchards of Mārḳō and

[773] *ʿalā'l-iştirāk'es-sevī* refers to *mufāwada* partnerships where all partners contribute or invest an equal amount to the partnership. The equality principle applies to the amounts invested, the division of profits and losses as well as the personal status of partners. Thus, by entering such a partnership, each partner empowers his/her colleague to act freely with the entire partnership capital and colleagues stand in mutual agency and surety for each other. See Çizakça, *A Comparative Evolution of Business Partnerships*, 6-7, 77-79.

Ḫristōfi, on the other side by an empty field, and on the other side by a public road and that contains a two-door single storey house, two entrance halls, a water-wheel, and two donkeys pulling the water-wheel; and a dyeing stuff-arable field of around 6 dönüms in [Pezköy?] village of Ḳārpās district that is bounded on one side by the vegetable garden of Pāpānyerō, on another side by the garden of Pāpā Āndoni, on the other side by sea, and on the other side by a public field, [I] transferred and delivered, upon a single mutual agreement, the aforementioned two pieces of orchards with all of its dependencies and appendages at 1059 guruş to the said merchants and exchanged the sum of 1059 guruş for the said debt after the merchants purchased, received, seized, and accepted [the transfer of the properties], and [I] ceded and transferred the right-of-use of the said dyeing stuff-field, with the permission of the holder of the field, in exchange of 200 guruş [and the merchants] accepted and took the possession of [the field], after [which] the value of transfer was exchanged for the debt at that guruş and the merchants accepted and docked the credit side of Receb's account in retaliation. Then, [the debtor] had promised that the sale be turned into an absolute sale, if [he] fails to pay off the debt before the maturity date agreed upon. [The sale] has become valid as promised, [since he] has failed to pay off the debt upon the passage of the agreed-upon date. Still, with the value, the said properties are the joint-and-equally-purchased property [of the merchants] and even the mentioned field is their true right. Having said that [they] shall possess [the properties] in whatever manner they will and choose, [which] I have no interest in and I have nothing to do with, after the legal confirmation, everything, that happened, has been written upon their request. On the 5th of the month of Şaʿbān in the year 1133 (1 June 1721).

The Map of Cyprus showing the locations of orchards and arable field



The villages (Agios Iakovos/Altınova, Trikomo/Yeni İskele, Agios Georgios/Aygün) where the British merchants purchased orchards and an arable field is italicised and indicated in light grey. I would like to thank Theodore Reeves for creating this map for me. © EuroGeographics 2024

Appendix VII: The Oath against Trusting enacted by the Levant Company

I A. B. do solemnly swear in the presence of Almighty God and upon the holy Evangelist that I will not sell or barter upon Trust for my own or any English-man's account, any Cloth or other goods and commodities whatsoever, nor suffer it to be done by any other person or persons for or under me directly or indirectly.

And I do further swear that I will not deliver out of my possession, nor suffer to be delivered directly or indirectly any goods or commodities for my own or any English-man's account, before I have received full payment for the same in mony, if such goods and commodities were sold for mony, but if such goods and commodities were sold in barter against goods I will not deliver the goods I so sell before I have received the full value in the goods bartered for, and they to be at my immediate disposal to all intents and purposes as if I had bought and paid for them with mony.

And I do likewise further swear that I will not take in payment or in pawn as security for goods sold or bartered, neither by myself or any other person directly or indirectly, any Temesooks, Mery Tescarees, Beghlar Tescarees, Sebeb Takrirs, Hojets, or any assignments or other writing or writings of what nature soever of or from any person or persons of what nation soever.

All which I will duely observe without any equivocation or mental reservation so long as I shall remain in Turky, unless the Levant Company shall sooner annul their order in this behalf.

So help me God.

At a General Court of the Levant Company held at Pewterers' Hall London the 24 October 1701.

Ordered that every person taking this Oath shall repeat the words after him that administers it and the same shall be entered in Cancelleria and subscribed by the respective parties.[774]

[774] Cited in Abbott, *Under the Turk in Constantinople: A Record of Sir John Finch's Embassy, 1674-1681*, 397–99. George Frederick Abbott reproduced the whole text from a letter from Sir Robert Sutton, British ambassador to the Porte from 1701 to 1716, to the Secretary of State on 30 November 1702, see TNA, SP 97/21.

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Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri, Mora Ahkam Defteri 2 (Registers of Imperial Council for the Ledger of Morea, A.{DVNS.AHK.MR.d. 2)

Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri, Hadariye Defteri 10 (Registers of Imperial Council for the Hadariye Ledger, (A.{DVNSHADR.d. 10)

Divan-ı Hümâyûn Sicillatı Mühimme Defterleri (Registers of Imperial Council for Important Affairs, A.{DVNSMHM.d. 6, 92, 96, 99, 106, 107, 110, 115, 116, 119, 118, 119, 120, 121, 124, 126, 127, 129, 130, 132, 133, 139, 140, 145, 146, 151, 152, 156, 162, 163, 164, 168, 168, 171, 175, 176, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228)

Divan-ı Hümâyûn Sicilleri, Cezayir ve Rakka Ahkam Defterleri (Registers of Imperial Council for the Ledger of Cezayir and Rakka, A.{DVNSAHK.CZRK.d. 1–8, 12)

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Muhimme Evrakı (Documents of Important Affairs, 3-A, 4-A, 8-A)

Mektubi Evrakı (Documents of Chief Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, A.}MKT)

Mektubi Kalemi Meclisi Vala Evrakı (Documents of Chief Secretary of Supreme Council, A.}MKT.MVL)

Cevdet Tasnifi (Cevdet Series):

Maliye (Financial, C.ML)

Hariciye (Foreign, C.HR)

Adliye (Judicial, C.ADL)

Askeriye (Military, C.AS)

İktisat (Economic, C.İKTS)

Dahiliye (Internal, C.DH)

Bahriye (Naval, C.BH)

Darbhâne (Mint, C.DRB)

Zabtiye (Public Security, C.ZB)

Evkaf (Mortmain Estates, C.EV)

Belediye (Municipal, C.BLD)

Eyalet-i Mümtaze (Privileged Provinces, C.MTZ)

Ali Emiri Tasnifi (Ali Emiri Series):

II. Süleyman (Süleyman II, AE.SSÜL.II)

II. Mustafa (Mustafa II, AE.SMST.II)

III. Ahmed (Ahmed III, AE.SAMD.III)

I. Mahmud (Mahmud I, AE.SMHD.I)

III. Osman (Osman III, AE.SOSM.III)

III. Mustafa (Mustafa III, AE.SMST.III)

I. Abdülhamid (Abdülhamid I, AE.SABH.I)

III. Selim (Selim III, AE.SSLM.III)

IV. Mustafa (Mustafa IV., AE.SMST.IV)

İbnülemin Tasnifi (İbnülemin Series):

Hariciye (Foreign, İE.HR)

Askeriye (Military, İE.AS)

Müzehheb Ferman ve Beratlar (Imperial Edict and Certificates, MFB)

Kamil Kepeci Tasnifi Defterleri (Kamil Kepeci Series Registers, K.K.d)

Hatt-ı Hümayun (Imperial Rescripts, HAT)

Maliyeden Müdevver Defterler (Registers of Circulars from the Finance Office, MAD.d)

Bab-ı Defteri, Başmuhasebe Kalemi Defterleri (Registers of Chief Auditor's Office, D.BŞM.d)

Hariciye Nezareti, Mektubi Kalemi Belgeleri (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Documents of the Ministry's Chief Secretary, HR.MKT)

Topkapı Sarayı (Topkapı Palace):

Müze Arşivi Evrakları (Museum Archive Records, TS.MA.e)

Müze Arşivi Defterleri (Museum Archive Registers, TS.MA.d)

Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi (İSAM) (Turkey Religious Foundation, Centre for Islamic Studies), İstanbul

Türkiye Harici Siciller (Ottoman Court Records outside Turkey):

Halep Sicilleri, Evamir-i Sultaniye (Ottoman Court Records of Aleppo, Imperial Orders, ES/Registers 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20, 23, 25, 30 and 31)

Kuzey Kıbrıs Milli Arşiv ve Araştırma Dairesi (KKMA) (North Cyprus National Archives and Research Office), Kyrenia, Cyprus

Kıbrıs Mahkeme Sicili, 28 (Ottoman Court Records of Cyprus, mah.s. 28)

Kıbrıs Şeriye Sicilleri (Ottoman Court Records of Cyprus, KŞS.d. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 23-1, 24.

The National Archives (TNA), Kew, London

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Records of the Admiralty, Naval Forces, Royal Marines, Coastguard, and related bodies (ADM):

Records of the Navy Board and the Board of Admiralty (ADM 106/851)

Records of the High Court of Admiralty and colonial Vice-Admiralty courts (HCA):

High Court of Admiralty: Prize Court: Registers of Declarations for Letters of Marque (HCA 26)

High Court of Admiralty: Prize Court: Prize Papers (HCA 32)

Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PROB):

Exhibits: PROB 31/568/21-22

Will Registers: PROB 11/536/278; 11/732/130; 11/497/297; 11/970/315

Foreign Office and predecessors: Political and Other Departments: Miscellanea, Series I, 1639-1950 (FO):

FO 95/8/14

Foreign Office: Records of Embassies, Legations, Consulates, etc:

FO 329: Consulate, Cyprus, Ottoman Empire: Register of Deeds (FO 329/1)

Chancery: Master Kindersley's Exhibits (C 113):

C 113/11–12

Items Extracted from Classes held at Chancery Lane before 1997: Flat Documents (EXT 6)

EXT 6/58

Hertfordshire County Council: Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), Hertford, Hertfordshire

Family and business papers and correspondence of the Radcliffe family of Hitchin Priory, 1538-1944, BUSINESS RECORDS (DE/R/B):

DE/R/B 1; DE/R/B 11; DE/R/B 13; DE/R/B 14; DE/R/B 15; DE/R/B 22; DE/R/B 24; DE/R/B 29; DE/R/B 30; DE/R/B 31; DE/R/B 32; DE/R/B 33; DE/R/B 34; DE/R/B 40; DE/R/B 44; DE/R/B 45; DE/R/B/ 50; DE/R/B 52; DE/R/B 71; DE/R/B 72; DE/R/B 73; DE/R/B 77; DE/R/B 88; DE/R/B 92; DE/R/B 113; DE/R/B 114; DE/R/B 125; DE/R/B 126; DE/R/B 131; DE/R/B 151; DE/R/B 152; DE/R/B 193; DE/R/B 194; DE/R/B 206; DE/R/B 208; DE/R/B 210; DE/R/B 220; DE/R/B 221; DE/R/B 226; DE/R/B 232; DE/R/B 243; DE/R/B 235; DE/R/B 237; DE/R/B 238; DE/R/B 249; DE/R/B 264; DE/R/B 293; DE/R/B 294; DE/R/B 329; DE/R/B 356; DE/R/B 373; DE/R/B 387.

British Library (BL), London

Manuscript Records:

ADD MS 33085 (Correspondence of Thomas Pelham)

ADD MS 34455 (The Auckland Papers, 1798-1802, Vol. XLIV)

ADD MS 45932, 45933 (The Letter-Books of Alexander Drummond, Vol. I, II)

ADD MS 61869 (North Sheffield Park Papers)

ADD MS 72550, 72610 (Trumbull Papers)

DROPMORE MS 59265

DROPMORE MS 59267

MS 74047 (Everard Fawkener)

MS 34910 (Nelson Papers, Vol. IX)

STOWE MS 219, 220

London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), London

Business Records (CLC/B)

Out-Letter Book of John March (MS 08724)

Families and Individuals

Papers of the Boddington family of London (MS 10823)

Derbyshire Record Office (DRO), Derby, Derbyshire

Barker family of Darley, Rowsley and East Lodge, Bakewell - 1476-1922 (D7674)

D7674/B 6-9, 11-16, 18-23, 25-44

Gwent Archives (GA), Wales

Bosanquet Family Records (GB0218.D2184A)

Muniments of Title – Deeds (D2184A.21)

Business and Personal Accounts (D2184A.40)

Business and Personal Correspondence (D2184A.60)

Personal Papers – Certificates of Marriage (D2184A.67)

The Mansion of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios – Ethnological Museum, Nicosia

Exhibition Features:

Samples of Manuscripts: Correspondence between Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios and the Ottoman officials

Grandfather Clock: Manufactured in England and Initially Belonged to Michael Devezin

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