From Delegates to Diplomats: 
The Ottoman Diplomatic Office in Prussia 
(1763–1808)

This dissertation is submitted for a PhD. Degree in the University of Tel-Aviv 
by 
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Tel Aviv University

December 2016
Abstract

Between 1763 and 1808 the Ottoman Empire dispatched several levels of diplomats to Prussia – three ambassadors, four chargés d’affaires, and several dragomans. The diplomats and their entourages came from various religious, ethnic, and social backgrounds. They hailed from Muslim bureaucratic elites or from prominent Greek-identified families from the Phanar district of Istanbul, hence named Phanariots. Others came from the ranks of Ottoman officials from the Danubian Principalities as well as the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire; and yet again others were selected from Jewish and Levantine commercial and mercantile circles. By shedding light on the Ottoman diplomatic missions to Prussia between 1763 and 1808, this thesis explains the diversity of the personnel as well as the social and cultural practices that made the Ottoman delegates into professional diplomats. Thereby it demonstrates the contribution of this diversity and these practices to the evolvement of the Ottoman diplomatic office. The thesis further introduces different aspects the daily lives of Ottoman delegates and the practical aspects of organizing a diplomatic mission into the study of international relations during the early modern period. It strives to tie the social and cultural experiences of life abroad to the political and financial aspects of the diplomatic profession. And finally, the dissertation sheds light on the understudied history of Ottoman-Prussian relations during the eighteenth century.

The first chapter of the dissertation illustrates that Ottoman delegates and diplomats had malleable identities, which they adjusted to their diplomatic duties and the country of posting. These diverse identities co-existed with the notion of being Ottoman representatives. Hence, many
of the Ottoman chargés d’affaires as well as dragomans continued to be influential figures in the diplomatic contacts between Ottoman Empire and other political entities. Another observation is that there was little difference between ad-hoc and permanent ambassadors in their education and skills. In fact, a change in the professional training occurred only with the introduction of the office of the chargé d’affaires. By exposing how the earlier generation of delegates and dragomans was made up of Ottoman subjects from various social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, the dissertation demonstrates that at the beginning of the nineteenth century diplomatic posts were held by people with specialized education and set of skills. Yet, the evolution of the diplomatic profession did not occur in a linear manner from non-specialized and untrained to professionally educated and highly skilled. On the contrary, the diplomatic profession solidified as the result of trail and error. The second chapter shows that the increasing demand of inter-connectivity contributed to a growing body of ad-hoc diplomatic personnel and intermediaries at the end of the eighteenth century. The dissertation argues that diplomatic contacts and policies were dependent on the functioning of these ad-hoc and intermediary networks. It claims that technical and practical performances of these networks had a great impact on the development of the diplomatic profession and vice versa. The thesis additionally suggests that the inclusion of ad-hoc intermediaries and their networks into the cast of the diplomatic personnel, provides an insight into various practices surrounding the diplomatic occupation. In most instances the Ottoman and Prussian diplomats required ad-hoc intermediaries who spoke Ottoman Turkish and German. This was a qualification not easily to come by and both the Ottoman diplomatic delegations to Prussia as well as the Prussian embassy in Istanbul struggled to find local German-speaking personnel. Many of these ad-hoc intermediaries not only provided linguistic and cultural assistance, but also acted as financial brokers, postal messengers, and diplomatic couriers. However, the position of these intermediaries
was not unchallenged but quite often uncertain and even dangerous. Some of the intermediaries could gain commercial connections or improve their legal status, while others put their well-being or the business at risk. Their position depended on governments, which profited from the services offered by the intermediaries, but also questioned their loyalty and trustworthiness.

Another crucial aspect of diplomatic exchanges and the evolvement of the diplomatic occupation is the establishment of a diplomatic accord. The negotiation of such an accord between the Ottoman Empire and Prussia is discussed in the third chapter. The argument illustrates that the diplomatic ranking system was important to the Europeans because it entailed various levels of honor expressed between courts, diplomatic missions, and their entourages. It was likewise important to the Ottoman delegates, whose social standing, public reputation, and trustworthiness was a valuable asset of diplomatic relations. Further playing a crucial role in the establishment of a diplomatic accord were disputes over government funding, the negotiation of ceremonies, and the ambiguities of the diplomats’ ranks. Eventually, the Ottoman Empire and Prussia succeeded to establish an agreement through the negotiation of reciprocal funding practices and a protocol, which included ceremonies, gift exchanges, and diplomatic ranking. The manner in which both governments and their delegates came to an accord, shows that the diplomatic canon was flexible and subjected to practical considerations.

The main issue in achieving a diplomatic accord was the financial maintenance, which Ottoman envoys and their entourage received from the Prussian and Ottoman treasuries. Hence, the third chapter illustrates that the Prussian funding was quite generous and even the Ottoman dragomans had a salary that by far exceeded the average income of ordinary Prussian subjects in Berlin. The permanent Ottoman missions to Prussia, funded by the Ottoman treasury, were less well-off than their ad-hoc predecessors, yet still received enough money — if it arrived in time —
for a comfortable life abroad. Since the funding of diplomatic missions connected all diplomatic players and forced them into a dialog, it contributing to the consolidation of diplomacy as the practice of negotiation between two governments. Finally, the third chapter demonstrates that negotiations over funding and diplomatic ceremonies were not the only matters of diplomatic accord. At the end of the eighteenth century, the diplomatic canon had to include novel practices such as diplomatic immunity and funerals. These novel practices further contributed to the formation of the diplomatic occupation and its exposure to the wider public beyond the royal circles.

After having discussed the diplomatic personnel and the diplomatic accord, the forth chapter then turns to the delegates’ and diplomats’ assignments in Prussia. The Sublime Porte’s assignments included political mandates, commercial as well as personal advocacies, and the observation of cultural practices in the host country. Yet, the duties and functions of Ottoman diplomats abroad were not strictly confined to what had been their official assignments, but rather reflected contemporary political and economic developments in eighteenth century Europe. The Ottoman government in Istanbul and the diplomats abroad adjusted their responsibilities and activities to the shifting requirements of their time. Such a gradual adjustment was the introduction of permanent missions, which was merely a stepping stone in the formation of the responsibilities of the Ottoman diplomatic office. Prior to the permanent missions, Ottoman diplomats had already attempted to extend their competences of their office. They advocated the personal and mercantile cases of Ottoman as well as non-Ottoman subjects without an official mandate in the accreditation letters. Another indication of the gradually shifting assignments was the diplomats’ increasing engagement with cultural and intellectual questions of the Enlightenment and an emerging German national discourse. Thus, the forth chapter argues that maintaining cultural contacts and observing the
cultural field in Prussia was part of the responsibilities, if not the official assignments, of Ottoman diplomats. As part of their assignments or as part of what they perceived as their assignments, Ottoman envoys visited stage performances, social events, and purchased literary works. These cultural interactions indicate matters relevant to the Ottoman delegates and illustrate the range of information, to which the diplomats were exposed in their endeavors to observe the Prussian society.

The fifth and last chapter demonstrates that Ottoman delegates and diplomats were dispatched to Prussia with certain assignments and expectations, but they also lead a normal daily life. When staying abroad in eighteenth century Prussia, many Ottoman delegates — like their Prussian neighbors — encountered unsuitable apartments, sickness, or even death. Yet, as the last part of the dissertation shows, Ottoman delegates did not differentiate between everyday life and official diplomatic work. When receiving medical care or organizing their lodgings, the envoys expected to be treated as representatives of the sultan and not as private individuals. The arguments shows that while previously questions of the envoys’ housing and health were mainly under the auspices of their host, by the end of the eighteenth century the responsibility was shared between the Ottoman diplomats and the Prussian government. Shedding light on the resulting negotiations and tensions between the Ottoman diplomats, ordinary subjects, and the Prussian authorities, the fifth chapter then illuminates an unexpected side effect — the diplomats’ intensified contacts with Prussian urban life and social institutions. The diversity of contacts shows that being an Ottoman diplomat at the end of the eighteenth century encompassed not only the cross-linking of two sovereigns or two courts, but also the entanglement of the cultural and social spheres of two urban centers.
מנציבות לדיפלומטים:
המשרדים העוסמאניים הדיפלומטיים
בפרוסיה (1808–1763)

נ Autor והוגה למשכן חתונה "זוקוטר פילוסופיה" באוניברסיטת תל אביב
על-ידי
אירנה פלטר

העבורה המוכנה
בחרכת
فورם מרים שפר-
משנה

דצמבר 2016
From Delegates to Diplomats

Irena Fliter

1763-1808, the Ottoman Empire dispatched four ambassadors, three of whom held different ranks, to the Russian Empire. The Ottoman Empire sent envoys to the Russian Empire between 1763 and 1808, which were the years when personalities and families of diplomats, translators, and people of the diplomatic corps and the economic-commercial communities, as well as Jews and their communities, were among the members of the diplomatic corps. The shift from envoys to diplomats on the eve of the study, which is an examination of the development of the diplomatic corps and the diplomatic corps of the profession, as well as the widening of the role of the profession. The stories of the study are related to the Ottoman diplomatic corps, its representatives, and its members, and their activities.

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היחסים בין מדינות חברתיות והכלכליות - היסטוריים
של השיא
ולעיתים, היה זה מנע משליחים של מדינות חברתיות והכלכליות להיות בקשר עם השיא.}

leads to the establishment of diplomatic networks. The relationship between the states
and the diplomatic networks led to the development of influence and power among the states.}

היחסים של הסולטאן למדינתם של הסולטאן, בין מדינות חברתיות והכלכליות, הובילו למסגרת של יחסים וע緩関係, בין מדינות חברתיות והכלכלה. }

To Delegates from Diplomats

Irena Fitrer

From Delegates to Diplomats
הלוחמים של שיקולים שונים ו Hệ עד ה-

אותו הדיפלומט שהופך את הצרפתים של הסולטאן שליחי ל כדי להתנתק מה་-

שביתת הדיפלומטיםTAB נ дерוש שליחים ש לשון ו женיו של חלף וודו בなどがו של פורטראי

השנייה של המשרתים חברתיים של העוסמאנים והشاهد אולפני חברה לתפקידם.

למרות אשר כל הוא מקים של ממשלות ו оргányים, וoleans עשויים שונים altogether-

שתלטו על תחתי פרויכ בנῇ. המשלחת וממשלת הקבוצה לפרסום, לעבד ת員工ים-

העוסמאנים וה mensagem של ושבעת שמי חתなお חוסן ל שליחים שוני-

ושבעתם של שיקולים שונים. ממשלת הקבוצה ש שבעת שמי חות

במצגת לשון פורסם במקומם של שליחים וחוברים של העוסמאנים. וnullableו-

.once בкрасסקו עתונות של שמי שני חות מסלול

שהשליחים של sacrificing irr לשון וה伊拉ים השתרעים על תקופת-

כברشبורה. המאSher מחצה של שמי שני חות ו nullableו-

Irena Fliter
From Delegates to Diplomats
שלייחים מעמיסים נשלחו לאירוניה שלושה עשר משלחת שэтому זומן ו ראיתיeminנטים ומרכזים בפרסייה מאסטרהול אלא לא שלוש
ביום במקהל המקרין. כמחצית NotImplementedException בقترح הלאה השמה לשידור-שידור גוזה וה ##############
וה ציבור דר増י כי לא זה המדל ברור כי ויי וומ-וומ באפרים ויה ליב ענביה המשדר הדיפלומטיים.
החלק האחרון מתו שלונין דרגי כי לא זה הבדר בור מני ויי שומג בניב העביזה הדיפלומטית.
במשך המאסרה שלישים וה/frontים לא התהלולו בחללים חירשים הפרטיים המאפרים עציים שעניבים של השלטאות. התו
שלונין מתנו מעני רוב וגרוב לשידור היה על השידורים עיב במשקל השמדת-שידור עם המאסרה המאפרה ל לבין
השלונ以後י המאפרה רוב וגרוב סדרה לעבר במשקל השמדת-שידור עם המאסרה-שידור עם המאסרה המאפרה ל трав
הגניזה. מתון המאפרה וגרוב מתוויות בוץ הדיפלומטים ושגריות, חרטויים הפרוסיות, הגניזה והשמדת
עד אר מראות בשידור החרים הפרוסיות-כלילום. קשור אז ידוע כי גלויות דיפלומטיות הגניזה-שידור-שידור
בפרוסיות משעשע לא הוא מעניין יקר ברי שתי משלות אלא מלאה. ממתקת בחור ביו שני עולמות החרים-הоборотים-
בעולם האימפריה היהוש.