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THE RISE OF THE AMBASSADRESS

THE RISE OF THE AMBASSADRESS:

ENGLISH AMBASSADORIAL WIVES AND EARLY MODERN DIPLOMATIC

CULTURE*

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ABSTRACT. *This article reveals how the ambassadress became an important part of early modern diplomatic culture, from the invention of the role in the early sixteenth century. As resident embassies became common across the early modern period, wives increasingly accompanied these diplomatic postings. Such a development has, however, received almost no scholarly attention to date, despite recent intense engagement with the social and cultural dimensions of early modern diplomacy. By considering the activities of English ambassadresses from the 1530s to 1700, accompanying embassies both inside and outside of Europe, it is possible not only to integrate them into narratives of diplomacy, but also to place their activities within broader global and political histories of the period. The presence of the ambassadress changed early modern diplomatic culture, through the creation of gendered diplomatic courtesies, gendered gift-giving practices and gendered intelligence-gathering networks. Through female sociability networks at their host court, ambassadresses were able to access diplomatic intelligence otherwise restricted from their husbands. This was never more true than for those ambassadresses who held bonds of friendship with politically influential women at*

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their host or home court, allowing them to influence political decision-making central to the success of the diplomatic mission.

In the spring of 1585, a French translation of the English Catholic libel, commonly known as *Leicester's Commonwealth*, was published in Paris. But there was a striking difference between the English tract defaming the earl of Leicester, and the French version. In the English tract, Lady Douglas Stafford was described as the earl of Leicester's lover, an adulterer, an accessory to a murder, and as a woman that concealed the birth of at least one illegitimate child.¹ In the French version, however, Lady Douglas is mentioned only once by name, as one who was appalled by Leicester's corrupt behaviour and who immediately reported his excesses to Elizabeth I.² But why was Douglas presented in such a different manner in the French version? By 1585, she was married to Edward Stafford, the English resident ambassador in France, and she lived with him in Paris. Her husband has long been thought to have had a role in the tract's publication in France and he had a vested interest in protecting his wife's reputation in the French capital.³ Douglas was a vital asset to her husband's embassy, as a close confidant of Catherine de' Medici, the dowager queen of France.⁴ Edward Stafford needed the French to continue to respect his wife as an ambassadress and to allow her access to social networks at the French court: his wife's friendships in Paris facilitated the collection of diplomatic intelligence and were central to the success of Stafford's embassy.

Lady Douglas Stafford was far from the only example of an early modern Englishwoman journeying with her ambassador husband to his diplomatic posting. Her role as an ambassadress was one invented in the early sixteenth century. Early

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ambassadors such as Douglas were often labelled with continental terms, such as the French *ambassadrice*, but 'ambadress' was adopted more regularly in English sources from the seventeenth century.⁵ It is important to note that the term 'ambadress' was not then understood in the modern sense, suggesting these women were ambassadors in their own right; such a status was almost never awarded to non-royal women in the early modern period, with the exception of Renée de Guébriant's 1645 mission.⁶ Women like Douglas accompanied embassies in their role as wife to the accredited resident ambassador, in doing so creating the new role of the early modern ambadress.

The early sixteenth-century invention of the ambadress was the result of the development of singly-accredited, resident embassies in that period: ambassadors accompanied English resident embassies from the 1530s. The impact of reformation change on the marital status of ambassadors further amplified the numbers of accompanying wives. In the early sixteenth century, the English crown sent a mixture of clerical and lay appointments to act as their ambassadorial representatives.⁷ However, after the death of Mary I, English resident ambassadors were laymen, with the exception of John Man, dean of Gloucester and ambassador to Spain in 1566; even Man, though, was a post-Reformation married cleric, although widowed by the time of his Spanish embassy.

However, despite recent intense engagement with the social and cultural dimensions of early modern diplomacy, only the activities of high-ranking women at their home courts have been explored.⁸ The new role of the ambadress stationed at a foreign court has received almost no scholarly attention, with the notable exception of valuable case-studies on post-Restoration ambassadors by Laura Oliván Santaliestra and Florian Kühnel.⁹ Yet without the longer view of the activities of such

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women, we are unable to understand the evolution of the role. By considering the activities of English ambassadresses from the 1530s to 1700, both inside and outside of Europe, it is possible to integrate them not only into narratives of diplomacy, but also to place their activities within broader global and political histories of the period.

I

The rise of the ambadress can be charted with numbers. Through the sixteenth century, and particularly throughout the seventeenth century, wives increasingly joined resident embassies, stationed with their husbands for considerable periods in their host country: 21 of the 84 (25 per cent) sixteenth-century English resident ambassadors were accompanied by a wife in post, compared to 35 of the 61 (57 per cent) seventeenth-century English resident ambassadors.¹⁰ Some of the resident embassies dispatched by Henry VIII in the 1530s were the first to include an ambadress. John Wallop's wife Elizabeth accompanied the latter stages of his first embassy to France ending in 1537, and John Hutton asked permission to bring his wife over to Antwerp to join his embassy to the Low Countries in June 1537.¹¹ Many of the early English ambadresses were native women who married their ambassador husband whilst he was in post. Three Henrician resident ambassadors were thus married on embassy: Gregorio Casali, Edward Harvel and Thomas Cranmer, respectively resident to the pope, the Venetian court and the Holy Roman Emperor.¹² It is to be noted that Casali's marriage during his residency with the pope was an exception, as in all other cases celibate clergyman were chosen as English ambassadors to the papal court in the first half of the sixteenth century, reflecting the culture of the receiving court. Under Edward VI, Thomas Chamberlain, the resident

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ambassador to the Low Countries, likewise married a local woman.¹³ Whilst the number of continental resident embassies contracted in the later sixteenth century under Elizabeth I, those that still received ambassadors saw an increasingly higher proportion of accompanying ambassadresses. The French court, the one permanent English resident embassy throughout the reign, received high numbers of ambassadresses, with 10 of the 13 married English ambassadors (77 per cent) accompanied by their wives.¹⁴ Ambassadresses also accompanied all married resident Elizabethan ambassadors to Scotland.¹⁵

The seventeenth century saw a greater number of ambassadresses form part of resident embassies sent to a wider variety of host countries. After the resumption of formal diplomatic relations with Spain in 1605, all married English resident ambassadors sent to that court from 1610 were accompanied by their wives.¹⁶ Similarly, all married resident ambassadors to Venice lived in the city with their wives, except the wife of John Dodington.¹⁷ All English married ambassadors to the Low Countries and the Spanish Netherlands in the seventeenth century were also accompanied by their ambassadress, as were all married resident ambassadors to the Hanse towns.¹⁸ This was not just the case for European embassies: great distance became more likely to encourage wives to accompany resident embassies from the seventeenth century. Of the ten married resident ambassadors that arrived in Turkey in the seventeenth century, all but two were accompanied on embassy by their wives.¹⁹ Partially this was because the duration of these distant embassies would have otherwise split couples for considerable periods of time. Yet the threat from the supposed licentiousness of the Levant, a regular theme in travellers' writings of the period, was also a factor: the lack of a wifely presence became understood as threatening the respectability of a diplomatic household in Istanbul.²⁰ Such

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considerations may lie behind the accusations against Edward Barton, ambassador to Turkey between 1588 and 1597. The Levant company official John Sanderson noted that the unmarried ambassador had become increasingly dissolute whilst enjoying a bachelor lifestyle in Istanbul, with allegations that he built a separate entrance to the diplomatic household in Pera 'for convayance of whores'.²¹ This is not to argue that all seventeenth-century married ambassadors were accompanied by their wives: Robert Southwell repeatedly and unsuccessfully tried to arrange for his wife to join him in Portugal during his three years there as resident.²² However, of the 46 married English resident ambassadors in the seventeenth century, 35 (76 per cent) were accompanied on embassy by their wife.

As the diplomatic careers of many male ambassadors in this period saw them moving from post to post, some wives became serial ambassadresses stationed in several countries: Anne Carleton joined her husband on his early seventeenth-century postings to Venice and the Low Countries.²³ Experienced ambassadresses could provide useful training to future ambassadorial wives, just as male ambassadors routinely sought advice about their posting from those who had served before them.²⁴ When preparing to leave with her husband for his first posting to Venice in 1610, Anne Carleton sought 'direction in her great affairs' from Magdalen Edmondes, drawing on the latter's time as an ambassadress in Brussels, whilst her husband Dudley sought advice from Thomas Edmondes on the basis of his previous ambassadorial experience in the Spanish Netherlands.²⁵ Anne Carleton asked Magdalen Edmondes the same questions as her husband put to Thomas Edmondes: 'What judgment to make of such of our English, as live in that Court; with whom, of strangers, to hold correspondence; of whom to beware, what course of intelligence is to be observed; and what else you shall think fit to advise me'.²⁶ As the place of wives

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in resident embassies became accepted practice, increased emphasis was placed in advance on the benefits ambassadors could bring to the embassy. When the bachelor Henry Wootton was taking his leave as resident ambassador in Venice in 1610, he celebrated the married status of his successor, Dudley Carleton, telling the doge that 'he rejoiced at the coming of [Anne Carleton] for she would show herself as spirited as any lady of France and would prove that England was not in the wilds'.²⁷

The position held by these early modern ambassadors within diplomatic culture, particular in the sixteenth century, is not easy to recover, only facilitated by the vast amounts of written documentation that resident embassies generated. This was primarily in the form of correspondence, both official and familial, although letters by the women themselves occasionally survive; for example, Anne Bendish noted that she had written over forty letters to her mother alone whilst stationed with her ambassador husband in Istanbul in 1649, but only one is still extant.²⁸ It is only from sifting through the 'world of paper' created by resident embassies that a sustained picture of the activities of several ambassadors can be assembled from the scattered evidence.²⁹ The ambassadors featured in this article changed early modern diplomacy, as we shall see, through the creation of gendered diplomatic courtesies, gendered gift-giving practices and gendered intelligence-gathering networks. Through female sociability networks at their host court, ambassadors were able to access diplomatic intelligence otherwise restricted from their husbands. This was never more true than for those ambassadors who held bonds of friendship with politically influential women at their host or home court, allowing them to influence political decision-making central to the success of the diplomatic mission.

II

Once arrived in their host country, ambassadresses formed part of the ritualised world of early modern diplomatic culture. It is well understood that ambassadorial protocol in this period had a symbolic dimension, as ambassadors represented their monarch in their host country.³⁰ However, the significance of the developing protocols shown towards ambassadresses has received little attention in studies on early modern diplomatic ritual, despite the increased acceptance of such gendered ceremonial by the end of the period.³¹

Diplomatic theory was slow to acknowledge the ceremonial importance of ambassadresses. Early seventeenth-century written treatises on the 'ideal ambassador' focused on the social function of wives within an embassy. Jean Hotman's 1603 advice-book on diplomatic courtesy, *The Ambassador*, makes clear the ambassadress's social value. 'It shalbe the best way', he wrote, 'if [the ambassador] can, to bring his wife with him, whose eie [eye] wil stoppe infinite abuses amongst his people, and disorders in his house, unlesse hee can trust therewith some one of his owne followers, that may carry an eye and charge over the rest'.³² Yet on the ground there was recognition of the ambassadress in diplomatic ceremonial even in the sixteenth century. The French developed the most elaborate early diplomatic protocols, seen in the formal reception of ambassadresses at the court after their arrival in the French capital. Henry Cobham's wife Anne sent a detailed description back to England, presumably to Francis Walsingham and Thomas Wilson, the principal secretaries, of her initial reception at the French court in February 1580. Anne had been invited by Catherine de' Medici, but she describes her reception by all the ladies of the court, as well as her greeting by the French king and queen. The material features of the

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document sent back to England are telling. It is not in Anne's own hand, nor is it written as a letter, lacking conventional contemporary epistolary features: this is simply a report of the event. The secretarial endorsement to the document, providing a summary of the contents for filing and possible later discussion, is therefore instructive.³³ In stating that the contents concern 'The French courtesyes to the Lady Ambassadour', the endorsement reveals that the document was valued within the English royal secretariat for the information it provided regarding developing European diplomatic protocols towards ambassadresses.³⁴

Even at this relatively early point in the history of the ambadress, it is evident that the French court was beginning to develop the courtesies which would be described by the diplomatic theorist Friedrich Carl von Moser as 'settled ceremonial' by 1754: Anne Cobham was kissed by the king and the queen at her initial reception, something the French would come to stipulate as an honour only afforded to an ambadress, rather than the wife of an envoy.³⁵ Such ritualised protocols towards ambadresses at the French court were reinforced by the invention of the new courtly role of *conducteur des ambassadeurs* in 1578. The early seventeenth-century implementation of the post of *conducteur* in Spain and master of ceremonies in England led to a similar adoption of several aspects of French ceremonial towards ambadresses.³⁶ Other countries lagged behind French precedent in terms of ritualised protocol towards ambadresses. The Venetian doge and senate were given confidential advance warning of Anne Wake's arrival in Padua in November 1626, but the Paduan *capitano* and *podestà* were unsure of how to respond to this news in terms of ceremony.³⁷ Despite the staggered adoption of protocols towards ambadresses, by the end of the seventeenth century their ceremonial importance was fully recognised by diplomatic theorists. Abraham de Wicquefort's *L'ambassadeur et ses*

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fonctions (1680-1) briefly outlines the courtesies that should be afforded to an ambassador's wife, while von Moser's *L'ambassadrice et ses droits* (1754) offers a more complete consideration of the ceremonial and legal status accorded to ambassadresses, focusing primarily on the courts of France, Spain and England.³⁸

The theorists were silent on one aspect of the ritualised world in which ambassadresses operated: gift-giving. Recent scholarship has considered the power of gift-giving within diplomatic ceremonial, but the gendered role of ambassadresses in this process also deserves attention.³⁹ Research has explored the range of departure gifts given to ambassadors by host rulers, but by the late seventeenth century, ambassadresses were also routinely given departure gifts: Anne Fanshawe received a present worth 2000 pistoles from Mariana of Austria, the Spanish queen regent, upon leaving Spain in 1666, whilst Louis XIV gave diamond bracelets to the departing Anne Spencer in 1673 and to Robina Lockhart in 1675.⁴⁰ Male ambassadors regarded such gifts as 'a gratuity' against the expenses of the embassy, and it is likely that their wives viewed these gifts in the same vein; certainly Anne Fanshawe's estimation of the financial worth of her departure gift in her later *Memoirs* indicates her awareness of the political significance of diplomatic gift-exchange.⁴¹

Whilst gift-giving to ambassadresses in some ways resembled the presentations to their husbands, it did have a gendered aspect. Male ambassadors were not supposed to receive gifts during their embassy as they raised questions of corruption; Jean Hotman stated that 'gifts do oblige and those that receive them become slaves to those that give them'.⁴² Yet gifts to ambassadresses circumvented this problem, as the gift was directed at the wife not the ambassador. By interrogating the circumstances in which gifts were presented to ambassadresses, it becomes apparent that they were given with great calculation. For example, Charles Emmanuel

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I, the duke of Savoy, presented a diamond necklace to Anne Wake in May 1627 as part of attempts to thwart a possible Anglo-Spanish peace, while Anne Fanshawe received a diamond from Mariana of Austria in 1665, during the period her husband was negotiating a trade treaty between England and Spain.⁴³

Gifts presented to Anne Throckmorton by Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1561, whilst Anne was resident in France with her ambassador husband, reveal the advantages of this gendered gift-giving. Anne Throckmorton had presumably met Mary Stewart at the French court, for when Mary left France for Scotland in August 1561, she wrote to Anne from Calais. Mary described herself as the 'good friend' of Anne and told her that she was sending her head steward D'Esguilly to visit her, as a remembrance of her affection.⁴⁴ Nicholas Throckmorton himself recorded further evidence as to D'Esguilly's visit, noting that the Frenchman came not only to deliver Mary Stewart's letter to Anne, but also to present her with a variety of expensive gilt gifts from the Scottish queen. Nicholas Throckmorton reported that d'Esguilly used 'many courtoise wordes to my wief' on 'the said Queenes behalf', adding 'Which done, [d'Esguilly] departed without any speeche to me, being at that tyme through myne indisposicion compelled to keepe my bedde'.⁴⁵ It is entirely possible that d'Esguilly had hoped to see Nicholas Throckmorton himself on the visit and was denied by the latter's illness. However, it is clear from Mary Stewart's letter that she had chosen particularly to maintain her friendship with Anne Throckmorton upon her departure from France through elaborate gift-giving. The goodwill of a well-placed ambassadress in Paris may have been thought worth maintaining. However, it may also be that gift-giving to Anne offered a strategic advantage: whilst presenting gifts to Nicholas Throckmorton as a serving ambassador might have raised questions of

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corruption, presentations to Anne avoided such accusations, while still courting her husband's favour.

There was a further gendered dimension to the role of ambassadresses in diplomatic gift-giving. During the seventeenth century it became increasingly accepted that ambassadresses both gave and received food-related gifts. Such practice followed established diplomatic tradition, as there are plentiful examples of male ambassadors throughout the early modern period receiving food gifts, such as venison.⁴⁶ Thus Magdalen Edmondes received apricots and ice in the summer of 1608 from those seeking favour with her ambassador husband in Brussels.⁴⁷ Anne Fanshawe was gifted chocolate from the Portuguese whilst her husband was in the midst of negotiations in Lisbon in 1666.⁴⁸ Her collection of recipes from her time in Madrid further suggests that she received recipes as gifts. Many of her Spanish recipes are recorded with the date '10 August 1665', so may even be royal gifts; her *Memoirs* note that the only visitor Anne received that day was the marquis of Aitona, sent to her from the queen regent.⁴⁹ Anne Carleton turned to a gift of food to capture the affections of the former archbishop of Spalato, Marc'Antonio de Dominis, after his arrival in The Hague in 1616. In order to welcome de Dominis and to underline English benevolence towards the exile, Anne Carleton had '*panatelle alla veneziana*' made for him, after hearing about his longing for the delicacy since leaving Italy.⁵⁰ The presence of wives in diplomatic culture did not mean that male ambassadors were no longer the recipients or providers of food gifts; instead, food gifts were deemed a particularly appropriate gift for ambassadresses, acknowledging their authority over food preparation in the ambassadorial household. There is no evidence of wives giving more expensive gifts, but occasionally ambassadresses had to assume the gift-giving responsibilities of their husbands. Taking leave of the Spanish court in July

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1666 after the death of her husband in post, Anne Fanshawe presented the secretary of state with an expensive gold watch and chain, and the master of ceremonies with an ornate clock. Although Anne was forced to sell her personal goods in order to finance her family's return journey to England, she nevertheless fulfilled the gift-giving obligations of her deceased ambassador spouse.⁵¹

Despite the development of diplomatic ceremonial towards ambassadresses, personal discernment continued to be important: ambassadresses needed to remain responsive to the particular ceremonial customs of their host court. When Anne Fanshawe was received by the duke of Albuquerque's brother in Spain in March 1664, she was careful to lay her 'hand upon His Excellency's wrist of his right hand', as this was 'the Spanish fashion'.⁵² Anne showed similar sensitivity to Spanish customs when Richard Fanshawe was returning to his post in Madrid in March 1666, accompanied by the resident ambassador to Portugal Richard Southwell: Anne sought advice from the Spanish master of ceremonies as to how the arrival of the two English ambassadors should be organized. She was adamant with her husband that Southwell should not 'use the northern custom to salute me and mine', for it was 'a thing never to be forgiven or forgotten at this Court'.⁵³ Sensitivity to local customs was particularly important for ambassadresses outside of Europe. Anne Glover was the first English ambadress to accompany her husband to Istanbul. She was received by Sultan Ahmed I in September 1607 and had to follow the rules of the Ottoman court. Ahmed 'wore no gloves, nor suffered any to doe so in his presence', including the women of the court: Anne thus removed her gloves on a visit to the imperial harem.⁵⁴ Jane Wych was granted access to the *valide sultan*, the mother of the sultan and head of the harem, whilst in Istanbul with her ambassador husband between 1628 and 1639, where on one occasion she was asked whether all Englishwomen 'were so

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made and shaped' differently than Turkish women. Within the female realm of the harem, Jane responded with the removal of her corseted stays, revealing her 'naturall and reall shape'.⁵⁵ These requests to Anne Glover and Jane Wych, asking them to reveal parts of their body, were surely recorded precisely because they fit with the contemporary European perception of the salacious nature of the Ottoman harem.⁵⁶ Yet they also unwittingly reveal the access these ambassadress were granted to female figures at the Ottoman court, and the necessity of fulfilling local protocols.

Conversely an ambassadress's lack of awareness of local customs could have considerable consequences. Anne Wake's preference for Paduan bread, praised by contemporaries for its quality over that baked in Venice, caused a diplomatic incident in 1628, when Venetian officials seized bread sent to her in her host city.⁵⁷ The English embassy secretary was sent to return the box of imported bread to the Venetian *collegio*, with the message that the ambassador hoped to show his regard for the city through such an act; the gesture was rejected and the bread returned to Anne Wake, with mutual satisfaction on both sides.⁵⁸ Failure to embrace certain Spanish customs likewise hindered Anne Fanshawe's efforts to be accepted in Madrid in 1664. When she was visited by the imperial ambassadress, the countess of Pötting, she engaged her in polite conversation, but offered no afternoon refreshments, known in Spain as a *merienda*. The count noted the slight against his wife in his diary, suggesting that Anne should have followed this local convention.⁵⁹

The presence of ambassadresses in diplomatic culture also allowed the extension of specifically gendered courtesies. From 1621, the French employed the courtesy of allowing ambassadresses to sit in the presence of the queen, known as the *tabouret*.⁶⁰ However, this courtesy was withdrawn from Elizabeth Scudamore, the English ambassadress in Paris, in May 1638, in response to complaints about the

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treatment of the French ambassadress in England.⁶¹ Pregnancy and childbirth could also result in the extension of specific courtesies. When Bridget Morison was heavily pregnant in 1552, she had to be left in Innsbruck by her ambassador husband Richard, whilst he travelled with the Imperial court. Charles V's chief minister, Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, responded to the situation by offering the service of the town burgomasters to find the most honest women to wait upon Bridget during her confinement.⁶² Moreover, specific courtesies were extended to ambassadresses in the event their husband died in post. When Elizabeth Hoby's ambassador husband died in July 1566 from the plague sweeping Paris, Protestant representatives were sent from the French court by Charles IX and Catherine de' Medici to express condolences to the young widow.⁶³ On the death of her husband Richard Fanshawe in Madrid in June 1666, Anne received visits from the dukes of Medina de las Torres and Aveiro, the marquis of Trucifall, the count of Monterrey, the count and countess of Pötting, as well as several other ambassadresses. The queen regent even offered Anne a permanent home at the Spanish court and a pension, if she converted to Catholicism.⁶⁴ Gendered courtesies towards ambassadorial wives did not end with the death of their husbands. Friedrich Carl von Moser clarified the underlying diplomatic theory in 1754: after the death of the ambassador in post, his ambassadress was to continue to be treated to ceremonial courtesies until her departure from the host country.⁶⁵

III

The presence of ambassadresses within an embassy also allowed the cultivation of gendered friendship networks in the host country. Of course, not all the friendships developed by ambassadresses were solely with other women. Elizabeth Hoby, for

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example, received visits at the Parisian embassy in June 1566 from Marie Bourdin and Marie Bochetel, respectively the wives of the French secretary of state and the incoming French ambassador to England. However, Jacques Amyot, former tutor to the king, and Jean-Baptiste du Bourg, the master of requests, also accompanied the ladies on their visit.⁶⁶ Nevertheless ambassadresses did have a particular ability to cultivate friendships with other women. Francis Walsingham's diary as French ambassador from 1570 to 1573 makes apparent the advantages of having a wife within the embassy; Walsingham regularly received visits from women of the French court at his Parisian residence due to the presence of Ursula Walsingham and he felt the significance of these visits necessitated recording in his journal.⁶⁷ Whilst Robert Bowes was resident ambassador in Scotland between 1582 and 1583, his wife Eleanor held dinners attended by well-connected Scottish noblewomen, including the countesses of Argyll, Orkney, and Atholl.⁶⁸ As the presence of ambassadresses from other countries within a host capital increased during the seventeenth century, so too did the potential of the ambassadorial household as a focus for female sociability networks. When settled in Madrid in 1664, Anne Fanshawe received the resident and extraordinary Imperial ambassadresses, in addition to visits by ladies of the Spanish court, including the marchioness of Liche and the duchess of Medina de las Torres.⁶⁹

Language skills aided the development of these friendships. Several ambassadresses stationed in Paris were conversant in French, including Anne Cobham and Douglas Stafford; the latter in particular used her skills in French and Italian in forming her friendship with Catherine de' Medici when she arrived in France in 1583.⁷⁰ Although they could rely on interpreters, some ambassadresses resident further afield also developed the language skills that could be beneficial to friendships within their host city. In 1611, Beatrice Digby was urged, prior to her departure to

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Spain, that the acquisition of Spanish would be 'a means of conciliation of love amongst those with whom, for a time, you have to live'.⁷¹ There is evidence that even wives stationed in Istanbul sought to be able to converse in the native language: Jane Wych acquired some Turkish during her residency from 1628, which she may have used in her visits to the imperial harem.⁷²

Often these gendered relationships are only briefly recorded in correspondence or ambassadorial journals. So what, then, can be said of their political significance? It is evident that these social connections could allow the embassy to gather additional diplomatic intelligence. News-gathering was a primary responsibility of resident ambassadors in this period; complex negotiation was a secondary task, often entrusted to special embassies.⁷³ It is apparent that some ambassadresses were particularly aware of the type of intelligence sought by the embassy, through detailed acquaintance with their husbands' diplomatic papers. Anne Cobham was cognisant of at least some of her husband's ambassadorial letters; her own letter to the earl of Leicester on 13 May 1580 is a copy of key sections from her husband's diplomatic correspondence to the principal secretaries Francis Walsingham and Thomas Wilson.⁷⁴ Anne Fanshawe endorsed her husband's ambassadorial correspondence in 1663 with brief details, indicating her acquaintance with their contents.⁷⁵

Diplomatic intelligence could be bought by the embassy.⁷⁶ Yet it could also be acquired through the development of friendship networks, giving political significance to the gendered friendships of ambassadresses. Thomas Hoby's ambassadorial correspondence reveals in detail how his wife Elizabeth used her social function as mistress of the embassy household for intelligence-gathering. When receiving Marie Bourdin and Marie Bochetel at home in 1566, she instigated conversations regarding religious developments with the French women that were

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then reported back to England. Likewise, she used her position as ambassadress to make visits outside of the embassy household to facilitate the acquisition of intelligence. By calling upon the duchess of Étampes, erstwhile mistress to Francis I, at her home in Paris, Elizabeth fostered the friendship that later led to the duchess professing herself keen to work on behalf of English interests.⁷⁷

The friendships developed by ambassadresses at their host court provided the greatest opportunity for intelligence-gathering. Such opportunities were recognised almost from the very invention of the role of ambassadress. When Ralph Sadler was appointed the first resident English ambassador to Scotland in 1543, Henry VIII argued that Sadler's wife would be integral to the success of the embassy. The king told his ambassador that 'by your lettres and freendes here, to take such ordre as your wief [wife] may be conveyed to youe assone as you can conveniently'. Henry believed that Ellen Sadler would be able to gather information from the Scottish court, for the king underlined her presence would be 'to thintent youe may bothe furnishe that place and also advertise us from tyme to tyme of the state of thoccurences there'.⁷⁸ But more importantly, Henry stated that Ellen should serve the young Mary, Queen of Scots, in support of the recently-signed Treaty of Greenwich, which stipulated that he could appoint up to twenty English attendants to Mary's household. Sadler protested his wife's unfitness to join the young queen's household, as Ellen Sadler had not been raised at court; he did promise to arrange for his then-pregnant wife to join him in Scotland as soon as she was able, but given her lowly background it seems unlikely that he was sincere in that pledge.⁷⁹ Henry's plan for Ellen Sadler was in some ways unusual and indicative of the early development of the role of ambassadress: the idea that an ambassadress should hold a formal position in the foreign queen's household was not suggested for later English ambassadresses. However, in other ways, the role

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proposed for Ellen foreshadows that taken on more regularly by later ambassadresses: Ellen was meant to act as an informal spy, based on her gendered access to women at the Scottish court.

The significance of the courtly intelligence-gathering of ambassadresses varied by host court. They were especially valuable assets at courts where connections could be made with influential female political figures. Catherine de' Medici as the dowager queen of France is a prime example of such a politically powerful woman and the Elizabethan ambassadresses that became close to her were able to gain valuable information about the political workings of that court. Valentine Dale's wife Elizabeth relayed information gathered from Catherine de' Medici in 1575 back to England, including details about the dowager's female courtly faction of Anna d'Este, duchess of Guise and Nemours, and the recently-crowned Queen Louise, as well her hostility to her other daughters-in-law, Elizabeth of Austria and Mary Stewart.⁸⁰ The resident ambassador in France from 1583, Edward Stafford likewise benefitted from his wife Douglas's connections with women at the French court and especially with Catherine de' Medici; in May 1584, Catherine de' Medici arranged to visit Douglas to pass on information from the French king regarding the possibility of a league with the English against the Spanish.⁸¹ Edward Stafford was well aware how these female relationships benefitted his embassy and his calculated presentation of his wife Douglas's religious sensibilities was part of his efforts to advance her at the French court. In December 1583, Stafford was visited in Paris by a Jesuit, who pledged his loyalty to the English and warned Stafford that his wife was thought by the French to be Catholic. Stafford told the Jesuit that he had long suspected as much. In his report back home, Stafford explained his behaviour, arguing that through such a means he intended 'to have ytt given abroad thatt she is so, which I have gone aboute, ever

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sence I came hether, to blowe abroad, to make thoose woemen thatt be privatest aboute the Queen Mother, of the best sort thatt come to see her, to spacke franklyer to her'.⁸²

Stafford was adamant regarding the political potential of advancing his wife as a closet Catholic with French courtly women, writing to Elizabeth I that 'this your Majesty maye assure yourself of, thatt there are four woemen in the court ... thatt have all the newes'.⁸³ Stafford was explicit that these women were integral to his intelligence-gathering activities, adding 'with theese, [my wife] havinge conference, as theie all desier her companye, among woemen ... fewe thinges butt are ryped upp; and the more bendyng theie fele in Relligion, the more franknes bothe in men and woemen commonly theire is'.⁸⁴ It is widely accepted that a male diplomat in this period would engage in dissimulation to further their priorities: Stafford's scheme reveals that such dissimulation was not limited by gender.⁸⁵

In the end, however, Stafford received strict instructions from England against such a scheme. Moreover, we have to be careful at taking Stafford's protestations at face-value. There were suspicions in England regarding the couple's Catholic associations, so this scheme may have been offered by Stafford as a pre-emptive means of defence.⁸⁶ Yet his advancement of the arrangement reveals the potential that ambassadresses offered for the gathering of intelligence within an embassy. It was a cheap option; given Stafford's dire financial status he could hardly afford to pay for intelligence.⁸⁷ But more importantly, Stafford was certain that his wife could access information beyond his grasp. This is not to say that male ambassadors could not approach politically influential courtly women themselves; ambassadresses provided another means of gaining intelligence, based on sociability and gendered friendship networks, that could be worked in tandem with the ambassador's own efforts.

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It was not only in late sixteenth-century France that ambassadresses could use such courtly relationships with women at the apex of political power to their advantage. Anne Fanshawe's late seventeenth-century *Memoirs* make clear the advantage she gained from her relationship with Mariana of Austria, the Spanish queen regent from 1665. The benefit of this relationship is especially clear when Anne's husband left her in Madrid whilst on a diplomatic mission to Lisbon in 1666, attempting to arrange a truce between Spain and Portugal as the basis for a trade treaty with England; the embassy secretary, Lionel Fanshawe, also accompanied the mission.⁸⁸ The Portuguese negotiations were extremely complex and during his absence Anne forwarded confidential letters to her husband from the queen regent, disguised within her own letter packets; as her letters were sealed and sent by diplomatic passport it was calculated that this was the best way for information to reach her husband without interception.⁸⁹ Anne's well-known relationship with the queen regent moreover allowed her to access further sources of information at the court, which she passed on to her husband via messengers: a Scotsman serving the duke of Medina gave her news about the reception of the possible treaty in England and the Holy Roman Empire, as well as the declaration of hostilities between the English and French as part of the second Anglo-Dutch war.⁹⁰ As the negotiations in Portugal became protracted, Anne demanded a new cipher in order to continue to convey her intelligence confidentially to her husband.⁹¹ The Venetian ambassador to Spain acknowledged the political significance of Anne's intelligence-dissemination to her absent husband.⁹²

The ambassadresses interacting with Catherine de' Medici and Mariana of Austria had access to unusually influential female political figures, as queen dowager and queen regent respectively. However, there is evidence of other ambassadresses

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using connections to politically influential women at foreign courts to their own advantage. Utricia Swann, the wife of the resident ambassador to the Hanse towns William Swann, capitalised upon her prior contacts during his absence from the diplomatic household in Hamburg in 1673. Utricia was known particularly for her relationships with high-profile women at the court of The Hague: she was formerly a lady-in-waiting to Mary Stuart, the princess of Orange, and had a long friendship with Elisabeth of Bohemia, the well-connected Princess Palatine.⁹³ During her husband's absence in 1673, Utricia was able to use her connections at The Hague to pass on information to Joseph Williamson, an English representative at the congress of Cologne; for example, she passed on information about the Dutch position regarding possible peace with the English.⁹⁴ Utricia's enquiries at The Hague led her to conclude that she could 'finde little grownd to beleeeve their report'.⁹⁵ The activities of Anne Fanshawe and Utricia Swann are, of course, particularly apparent in the archival evidence during the absence of their husbands from the embassy household, recorded precisely because such information needed to be conveyed to their absent spouse or their diplomatic contacts. Nevertheless their valuable gendered connections were either formed or sustained when their husbands were present in the embassy.

It was not only at western European courts that ambassadresses could gain intelligence from influential female political figures. The Ottoman harem of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been recognised as a locus of power within the court, but it was an area only accessible to ambassadresses: their husbands were forbidden entry to this female sphere.⁹⁶ There is a paucity of surviving evidence relating to many of the early English ambassadresses' visits to the harem. However, it is clear that whilst in Istanbul in 1688 with her ambassador husband, Katherine Trumbull developed a relationship with Sultana Ümmühan, the aunt of the deposed

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Sultan Mehmed IV, through visits to the harem.⁹⁷ On such visits, Katherine was able to collect news from the Ottoman court, such as the rumour in July 1690, later disproved, that Sultan Mehmed had died.⁹⁸ We should not dismiss Katherine's collation of inaccurate information in the harem as a product of her gender: male ambassadors in this period were advised to consider all information they procured, true or false.⁹⁹

The ability of ambassadresses to be involved in intelligence-dissemination was therefore at its greatest when they could form relationships with the most politically influential women at foreign courts. Yet, the agency of ambassadresses could also result from the recognition of their own standing with powerful women at their home court. Such considerations underlie the activities of the unusually politically active group of Elizabethan ambassadresses, many of whom were close intimates to Queen Elizabeth I. This can be seen in the actions of Elizabeth Hoby following the unexpected death of her ambassador husband Thomas in Paris in July 1566. After Thomas's death, Elizabeth was delivered a message in person by James Stewart, half-brother to Mary, Queen of Scots, from the Huguenot leader, Admiral Coligny; the latter warned the English of future violence between the Huguenots and Catholics in France that summer, which he asked Elizabeth to relay back to England. There was confidence, rightly held, that Elizabeth's connections with the English queen and with her brother-in-law Cecil, the queen's principal secretary, would enable her to ensure the message was considered by the highest levels of English governance.¹⁰⁰ The importance of home connections can be seen particularly in the activities of Margery Norris a few years later, during her ambassador husband's frequent absences from Paris in service of the peripatetic French court. Margery was likewise a close friend of Elizabeth I, shown by the queen's nickname for Margery as 'Mine own Crow', on

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account of her dark complexion.¹⁰¹ Again, Margery's acknowledged standing at the English court facilitated her ability to act as a proxy ambassador during her husband's absence. As English principal secretary, William Cecil corresponded with Margery Norris in Paris whilst her husband was absent in Reims in May 1569; the embassy secretary, Edmund Mather, also appears to have been absent from Henry Norris's service and the ambassadorial household.¹⁰² Margery arranged for intelligence to be forwarded to Cecil from a contact of her husband's, as such information could not be sent confidentially to Henry Norris himself; Margery was obviously actively involved in the circulation of this intelligence as she told Cecil that her husband 'hath apuyntyd me to send to you al soche as dothe so come to my hands'.¹⁰³ During her husband's absence from Paris later that year in December 1569, it was again Margery who received early news of the Northern Rising in England, as well as the reaction of Mary, Queen of Scots, to the rebellion, from the French ambassador to England, La Mothe-Fénelon.¹⁰⁴ Margery also received direct intelligence regarding the Northern Rising from William Cecil, and she responded to the principal secretary directly.¹⁰⁵ During this period, Margery was better informed than her husband; intelligence from England reached her in Paris four days before it got through to her husband in the city of Tours.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, Margery's standing with the English queen led her to attempt personally to resolve a diplomatic incident in Paris in March 1569. One of the embassy servants returning to Paris from England was arrested, and letters from Elizabeth I were seized. Margery's efforts to protest the arrest and to recover the letters led her to appeal to Francis, duke of Alençon, then governing Paris in the absence of the king.¹⁰⁷ When the details of this incident were relayed to Cecil in England, it was made clear that all approaches towards Alençon to resolve the matter

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were made under the authority of Margery Norris ('in whose name all thinges wherr spoken'), not her ambassador husband.¹⁰⁸

Elizabeth Hoby and Margery Norris's political agency is again particularly evident in the archival record during the absence of their husbands, but the close relationships between Elizabeth I and many of the late sixteenth-century English ambassadresses was recognised more widely by the French: Anne Cobham was questioned at length for details about her friendship with the English queen on her visit to the French court in February 1580.¹⁰⁹ The relationship between many of the Elizabethan ambassadresses and the queen did not only empower their activities in France. Elizabethan ambassadresses yet to join their spouses on the continent still participated in diplomatic culture in diverse ways, as did those that returned to England in advance of their husbands. Nicholas Throckmorton forwarded letters to the queen and her principal secretary Cecil enclosed in correspondence supposedly sent to his wife Anne in England; such a scheme was so secret that mention of the arrangements was only made in cipher.¹¹⁰ In return, Anne Throckmorton provided detailed information from home, drawn from her close relationship with the queen, to be utilised in her husband's diplomatic affairs, such as Elizabeth I's plans for a meeting with Mary, Queen of Scots.¹¹¹ Newly returned to England in 1572 following the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France, Ursula Walsingham was charged by her ambassador husband to see that 'two thinges' were confidentially 'imparted unto her Majestie'.¹¹² The actions of these Elizabethan women reveal that it would be a mistake to view their contributions to diplomatic culture as limited only to their time in their host country.

IV

Whilst the survival of evidence varies greatly between women, it is possible to establish the rise of the ambadress as a force within diplomatic culture, from the invention of the role in the early sixteenth century. By the seventeenth century, wives were routinely included as part of embassies and correspondingly held an ever more formalised role in diplomatic protocol. Ambadresses had to follow such rules carefully, to the extent that their symbolic role became progressively more important. When Anne Spencer met the French queen for the first time in 1673, there was 'little said' in the fifteen-minute audience; the embassy secretary noted the purpose of the visit was 'onely to looke upon one another'.¹¹³ Yet personal sensitivity to the customs of a host country still remained key to the success of ambadresses: diplomatic ceremonial for ambadresses was far from uniform even within Europe.

There was a gendered dimension to the activities of these early modern ambadresses. Specific courtesies were provided for them, recognising their feminine status, such as allowing them to sit in the royal presence, or in the provision of special considerations for wives who were pregnant. Gendered gift-giving practices developed, as gifts presented to wives circumvented accusations of corruption that could be levelled at serving ambassadors. Ambadresses were also able to form female sociability networks at their host court, thus accessing intelligence otherwise restricted from their husbands. This was never more true than for those ambadresses who held bonds of friendship with powerful women at their host or home court: the group of Elizabethan ambadresses were thus able to exploit relationships both with Catherine de' Medici as dowager queen in France, and their standing with Elizabeth I at home, in order to act as important intelligence gatherers

for the embassy. As research increasingly focuses on the social and cultural dimensions of early modern diplomacy, the role of the ambassadress needs to be incorporated into new narratives of diplomacy. Just as it is now accepted that men other than ambassadors, including merchants, scholars, artists and even slaves, contributed to the exchange of diplomatic information, it is necessary to recognise that ambassadresses were also an important part of this process.¹¹⁴ Edward Stafford reached such a conclusion in 1583, when he wrote from Paris that there are 'woemen in the court ... thatt have all the newes'.¹¹⁵ He may have been writing of French courtly women and celebrating his wife's ability to access such gendered intelligence through her friendship with Catherine de' Medici. However, he equally could have been describing his own wife: as an ambassadress, she herself was one such well-informed woman, who should be acknowledged as a significant participant in early modern diplomatic culture.

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¹ D. C. Peck, ed., *Leicester's Commonwealth: the copy of a letter written by a master of art of Cambridge (1584) and related documents* (Athens, OH, and London, 1985), pp. 58, 61, 63.

² K. Gibbons, *English Catholic exiles in late sixteenth-century Paris* (Woodbridge, 2011), p. 99.

³ Ibid. See also M. Leimon and G. Parker, 'Treason and plot in Elizabethan diplomacy: the 'fame of Sir Edward Stafford' reconsidered', *English Historical Review*, 111 (1996), pp. 1134-58, at p. 1143.

⁴ For Douglas Stafford and Catherine de' Medici, see below.

⁵ For the use of 'ambassadrice/ambassatrice', see, for example, J. Finet, *Finetti philoxenis* (1656), pp. 9, 71-2, 199; for 'ambassadress', see G. Miège, *A relation of three embassies from his sacred majesty Charles II* (1669), pp. 129, 297, 408.

⁶ For Renée de Guébriant, see A. Tischer, 'Eine französische Botschafterin in Polen, 1645-1646: die Gesandtschaftsreise Renée de Guébriants zum Hofe Władysławs IV', *L'Homme*, 12 (2001), pp. 305-21.

⁷ D. Potter, 'Foreign policy', in D. MacCulloch, ed., *The reign of Henry VIII: politics, policy and piety* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 103-4.

⁸ For the English court, see, for example, N. Mears, 'Politics in the Elizabethan privy chamber: Lady Mary Sidney and Kat Ashley', in J. Daybell, ed., *Women and politics in early modern England, 1450-1700* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 67-82; G. Allen, *The Cooke sisters: education, piety and politics in early modern England* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 126-36. For European courts, see, for example, N. Akkerman and B. Houben, eds., *The politics of female households: ladies-in-waiting across early modern Europe* (Leiden, 2013); the early chapters of C. Bastian, E. Dade, H. von Thiessen and C. Windler, eds., *Das geschlecht der diplomatie: geschlechterrollen in den außenbeziehungen vom spätmittelalter bis zum 20. jahrhundert* (Cologne, 2014); and the early chapters of G. Sluga and C. James, eds., *Women, diplomacy and international politics since 1500* (Abingdon, 2016).

⁹ L. Oliván Santaliestra, 'Lady Anne Fanshawe, ambassadress of England at the court of Madrid (1664-1666)', in Sluga and James, *Women, diplomacy and international politics*, pp. 68-85; F. Kühnel, '"Minister-like cleverness, understanding and influence on affairs": ambassadresses in everyday business and courtly ceremonies at the turn of the eighteenth century', in T. A. Sowerby and J. Hennings, eds., *Practices of diplomacy in the early modern world c. 1410-1800* (Abingdon, 2017), pp. 130-146.

¹⁰ Data on resident embassies is primarily drawn from G. M. Bell, *A handlist of British diplomatic representatives, 1509-1688* (London, 1990), as well as D. B. Horn, *British diplomatic representatives, 1689-1789* (London, 1932).

¹¹ For Elizabeth Wallop, see John Wallop to Lord Lisle, 18 Dec. 1536, London, The National Archives (TNA), State Papers (SP) 3/8, fo. 45r; Mary Bassett to Lady Lisle, 17 May 1537, TNA, SP 3/1, fo. 129r. For Elizabeth Hutton, see John Hutton to Henry VIII, 17 June 1537, TNA, SP 1/121, fo. 136r.

¹² For Livia Casali, see C. Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: the rise of the resident ambassador* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 100-1. For Apollonia Harvel, see H. F. Brown, 'The marriage

contract, inventory, and funeral expenses of Edmund Harvel', *English Historical Review*, 20 (1905), pp. 70-77, at. p. 70. For Margarete Cranmer, see D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: a life* (New Haven and London, 1996), p. 72.

¹³ For Anne Chamberlain, see J. Lock, 'Chamberlain, Sir Thomas (c. 1504-1580)', *ODNB*.

¹⁴ There is no evidence of Philippa Smith, Grace Mildmay or Dorothy Parry accompanying their ambassador husbands to France. Evidence for all other Elizabethan ambassadresses in France follows below, with the exception of Margaret Paulet, for whom see J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis and D. D. Heath, eds., *The works of Francis Bacon* (14 vols., London, 1861-79), II, p. 670; and Dorothy Unton, for whom see J. G. Nichols, ed., *The Unton Inventories, relating to Wadley and Faringdon, Co. Berks. in the Years 1596 and 1620* (London, 1841), p. lxvii.

¹⁵ For Eleanor Bowes, wife of Robert Bowes, see below. For Isabel Bowes, wife of William Bowes, see William Bowes to Robert Cecil, 16 June 1599, TNA, SP 52/64, fo. 83r.

¹⁶ For Beatrice Digby, Gertrude Aston and Anne Fanshawe, see respectively J. Stoye, *English travellers abroad, 1604-1667: their influence in English society and politics* (London and New Haven, 1989), p. 256; H. Hackett, 'Unlocking the mysteries of Constance Aston Fowler's verse miscellany (Huntington Library MS HM 904): the Hand B scribe identified', in J. Eckhardt and D. Starza Smith, eds., *Manuscript miscellanies in early modern England* (Farnham, 2014), p. 101; and below.

¹⁷ For Anne Carleton and Anne Wake, see below; for Anne Feilding, see R. Brown *et al*, eds., *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice (CSP Venetian)*, (38 vols., London, 1864-1947), XXIII, 1632-1636, p. 348.

¹⁸ For the Low Countries: for Elizabeth Winwood, see Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), eds., *Report on the manuscripts of the duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry* (3 vols., London, 1899-1926), I, p. 93; for Anne Carleton, see below; for Margaret Boswell, see R. Vaughan, *The Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell and the state of Europe during the early part of the reign of Louis XIV* (2 vols., London, 1839), II, pp. 379-80; for Anne Morgan Strickland's connections to the Low Countries, see T. Venning, 'Walter Strickland (1598?-1671)', *ODNB*, and 'Warrants of the Council of State', 28 June 1652, TNA, SP 25/29, p. 50. For the Spanish Netherlands: for Magdalen Edmondes, see below; for Deborah Trumbull, see HMC, *Report on the manuscripts of the marquess of Downshire* (5 vols., London, 1924-88), IV, pp. 6, 14, 185, 229; for Dorothy Temple, see E. A. Parry, ed., *Letters from Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple, 1652-1654* (London, 1888), p. 322; for Marie Bulstrode, see

J. D. Davies, 'Bulstrode, Sir Richard (1617-1711)', *ODNB*; for Maria Eckart, see 'Allowance of the account of Maria Spierinck', 24 Mar. 1692, TNA, SP 44/341, fo. 287r. For the Hanse towns: for Utricia Swann, see below; for Isabella Wyche, see the earl of Conway to the commissioners, 29 Aug. 1681, TNA SP 44/56, p. 52.

¹⁹ For Anne Glover, Jane Wych, Anne Bendish and Katherine Trumbull in Turkey, see below; for Eleanor Roe, see M. J. Brown, *Itinerant ambassador: the life of Thomas Roe* (Lexington, 1970), p. 166; for Mary Crowe, see M. C. Fissel and D. Goffman, 'Viewing the scaffold from Istanbul: the Bendysh-Hyde affair, 1647-1651', *Albion*, 22 (1990), pp. 421-48, at p. 430; for Elizabeth Brydges, see Elizabeth Brydges to Mary Brydges, 1686, London, British Library (thereafter BL), Additional MS 42180, fo. 14r; for Mary Hussey, see 'Additional instructions to Francis Wheler', 20 Nov. 1693, TNA SP 44/205, fo. 91r.

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²¹ W. Foster, ed., *The travels of John Sanderson in the Levant, 1584-1602* (London, 1931), p. 10.

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²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ *CSP Venetian*, XII, 1610-1613, p. 39.

²⁸ Anne Bendish to Lady Baker, 10 Oct. 1649, Chelmsford, Essex Record Office, MS D-DHf O25, unfoliated.

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³⁰ See W. Roosen, 'Early modern diplomatic ceremonial: a systems approach', *Journal of Modern History*, 52 (1980), pp. 452-76.

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- ⁴¹ Loftis, *Memoirs*, p. 186.
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- ⁴⁴ Mary, Queen of Scots, to Anne Throckmorton, 13 Aug. 1561, TNA, SP 70/30, fo. 30r.
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- ⁵⁴ T. Gainsford, *The glory of England, or a true description of many excellent prerogatives and remarkeable blessings, whereby she triumpheth over all the nations of the world* (1618), p. 35.
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- ⁷¹ See the Bodleian copy of J. Sanford, *Propylaion, or An entrance to the Spanish tongue* (1611), Wood 310 (3), dedicated to Beatrice Digby on sigs. A2r-A4r.
- ⁷² W. Seaman, 'The epistle dedicatory', in H. Sadeddin, *The reign of Sultan Orchan, second king of the Turks* (1652), 4th unpaginated page.
- ⁷³ See, for example, M.S. Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy, 1450-1919* (London, 1993), pp. 12-13; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, pp. 105-21.
- ⁷⁴ For Anne's letter, see Anne Cobham to Leicester, 13 May 1580, BL, Cotton Caligula MS E. VII, fo. 204r-v. For Henry Cobham's letters, see Cobham to Walsingham and Wilson, 8 Apr. 1580, TNA, SP 78/4A, fos. 43r-44v; Cobham to Walsingham and Wilson, 3 May 1580, TNA, SP 78/4A, fos. 66r-67v.
- ⁷⁵ HMC, *The manuscripts of J.M. Heathcote*, pp. 116.
- ⁷⁶ For an example, see 'Bill of travelling and other expenses', 1566, BL, Additional MS 18764, fo. 1v.
- ⁷⁷ Allen, *Cooke sisters*, p. 139-40.
- ⁷⁸ J. Bain, ed., *The Hamilton papers: letters and papers illustrating the political relations of England and Scotland in the XVIth century* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1890- 92), I, pp. 560-1.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 569-70. For Ellen Sadler's background, see A. J. Slavin, 'Parliament and Henry VIII's bigamous principal secretary', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 28 (1965), pp. 131-43.
- ⁸⁰ Dale to Burghley, 5 Mar. 1575, TNA, SP 70/133, fo. 135v.
- ⁸¹ TNA, SP 78/11 fo. 86r.
- ⁸² Stafford to Elizabeth I, 1 Dec. 1583, BL, Cotton Galba MS E/VI fo. 186r.
- ⁸³ Stafford to Elizabeth I, 26 Dec. 1583, BL, Cotton Galba MS E/VI, fo. 194r.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ For ambassadorial dissimulation, see J. R. Woodhouse, 'Honourable dissimulation: some Italian advice for the Renaissance diplomat', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 84 (1994), pp. 25-50; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, p. 77.
- ⁸⁶ Walsingham to Stafford, 1 Dec. 1583, TNA, SP 78/10, fo. 95r; Leimon and Parker, 'Treason and plot', p. 1141.
- ⁸⁷ Leimon and Parker, 'Treason and plot', p. 1157.
- ⁸⁸ For Lionel Fanshawe, see Loftis, *Memoirs*, p. 180.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 180-1.

⁹⁰ HMC, *The manuscripts of J.M. Heathcote*, pp. 231, 234-5.

⁹¹ For Anne's request, see *ibid.*, p. 227. For the cipher itself, see *ibid.*, p. 228.

⁹² *CSP Venetian*, XXXIV, 1664-1666, p. 259.

⁹³ M. Dewhurst, 'The double edged sword: William Cavendish's political career 1644–1660', in P. Edwards and E. Graham, eds., *Authority, authorship and aristocratic identity in seventeenth-century England* (Leiden, 2016), p. 239; C. Pal, *Republic of women: rethinking the republic of letters in the seventeenth century* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 60, 254.

⁹⁴ Utricia Swann to Williamson, [before Nov. 12/22] 1673, TNA, SP 82/12, fo. 88r.

⁹⁵ Ibid., fo. 88v.

⁹⁶ For the political nature of the harem, see L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial harem: women and sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 1993). For establishing contacts with the harem, see M. P. Pedani, 'Safiye's household and Venetian diplomacy', *Turcica*, 32 (2000), pp. 9-32.

⁹⁷ 'Journal of William Trumbull in Paris and Constantinople', 1685-1692, BL, Additional MS 52279, fos. 133v, 157r. For Katherine in Istanbul, see also J-P. Ghobrial, *The whispers of cities: information flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the age of William Trumbull* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 50, 83, 119-20.

⁹⁸ BL, Additional MS 52279, fo. 157r; Ghobrial, *The whispers of cities*, p. 120.

⁹⁹ See Machiavelli, 'Advice to Raffaello Girolami', p. 118.

¹⁰⁰ Allen, *Cooke sisters*, pp. 140.

¹⁰¹ L. S. Marcus, J. Mueller and M. B. Rose, eds., *Elizabeth I: collected works* (Chicago, 2000), p. 389.

¹⁰² Margery Norris to Cecil, 12 May 1569, TNA, SP 70/107 fo. 28r. See also Mather to Cecil, 27 May 1569, TNA, SP 70/107, fos. 52r-53r.

¹⁰³ TNA, SP 70/107, fo. 28r.

¹⁰⁴ For Margery's intelligence, see Henry Norris to Cecil, 19 Dec. 1569, TNA, SP 70/109, fo. 49r-v.

¹⁰⁵ Margery Norris to Cecil, 18 Dec. 1569, TNA, SP 70/109, fo. 45r.

¹⁰⁶ For intelligence reaching Henry Norris, see *idem* to Cecil, 22 Dec. 1569, TNA, SP 70/109, fo. 56r.

¹⁰⁷ Rogers to Cecil, 7 Mar. 1569, TNA, SP 70/106, fos. 19r-22r; Margery Norris to Cecil, 7 Mar. 1569, TNA, SP 70/106, fo. 27r.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, SP 70/106, fo. 20r.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, SP 78/4A, unfoliated.

¹¹⁰ Throckmorton to Cecil, 4 Aug. 1559, TNA, SP 70/6, fo. 38r.

¹¹¹ Anne to Nicholas Throckmorton, 10 July 1562, TNA, SP 70/39, fo. 21r.

¹¹² Burghley to Walsingham, 25 Sept. 1572, BL, Harley MS 260, fo. 335v.

¹¹³ Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, p. 58.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, F. de Vivo, *Information and communication in Venice: rethinking early modern politics* (Oxford, 2007); and articles in the special edition, M. van Gelder and T. Krstić, eds., 'Cross-confessional diplomacy and diplomatic intermediaries in the early modern Mediterranean', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19 (2015).

¹¹⁵ BL, Cotton Galba MS E/VI, fo. 194r.