IV. Turkish Embassy Letters As A Travelogue

Lady Mary's husband, Edward Wortley Montagu, was engaged by the British government after its foreign-policy makers decided to increase England's prominent presence in world affairs but this mission was to be accomplished through the Levant Company which claimed to serve the cause of development of art and research, geography and travel, suppression of slavery, and the spread of civilization. Wortley was entrusted with two tasks by the Levant Company. The first and most important task was diplomatic. In 1715, Turkey had declared war on the Venetian Republic, aiming at the recovery of previously lost territory. The year after that, Austria was preparing to divert its forces from Mediterranean England in accordance with the terms of the treaty to assist Venice and this meant upsetting the balance of power in Europe. England, as a result, was resolute in preventing any war between Austria and Turkey.

Wortley was also asked to represent the Levant Company in order to promote Britain's commercial relationship with the Ottoman Empire, since the Company, established in 1581, held the charter for trade in the Near East. It is reported that the Levant Company experienced great prosperity during Wortley’s tenure i.e. 1716 and 1717. The Company exported 43,000 cloths, and big hauls of lead, tin, sugar, etc. to Turkey and imported raw silks, mohair and other products from there. Capitulation treaties, which allowed European powers to conduct free and unrestricted trade, greatly facilitated the success of the Levant Company, though this trade was highly unbalanced.

Wortley failed in his diplomatic mission and was asked to return to England, but fortunately, Lady Mary had imposed another task on herself. She honestly shared in
her husband’s mission but also maintained a traveler’s daily journal, which later became the source of TEL. From the very beginning, she was circumspect in this regard. Most English travelers to the Orient carried over a sort-of Englishness that feigned superiority of rights, powers and capabilities but Lady Mary opted to remain a neutral observer.

**Travel and Travelers**

Travel carries a special aura among its cognate words, journey, visit, tour or excursion etc. they are cognate words only in the sense that they involve displacement in space, otherwise their imports are different. A journey may not have any personal purpose and a visit may be a ritual or a routine duty but not an exercise in enriching personal experience. A tour also differs from a travel in several respects. Firstly, a tour is highly focused on the picturesque and other aspects get marginalized. Tourists are usually guided by some other person or follow some guidebook and therefore, their narrations are apt to be limited and perhaps unreliable too. They adhere to culturally specific rules or official guidelines which may overshadow their own opinion, especially their political opinion. Even if a tour is accepted as a mode of travel, its basic characteristics happen to be at variance with those of travel:

Within tourist mode of travel they did so thorough representing themselves as spectators/consumers/imperial subjects by visual identification through clothes, mode of travel, and places to visit or stay. Ali Behdad in his book *Belated Travellers*, recognizes this mode of travel as desire for and commodification of the Orient as disappearing exotic.¹
Travel is not only intimately personal but stems from an individual’s inherent need to resolve the mystery of the ‘Other’ by knowing him more personally and precisely in order to update his own Self:

Travel has long been a means of changing the Self, a method of altering social status.---the transformation through travel literature was no longer a cliché.--- the possibility not only of social mobility, in the sense of movement from one place to another, but also of cultural mobility ----political views were the means of this transformation of culture. Scholars of travel literature have agreed that when one writes about the ‘Other’, one interprets the Other for one’s own audience. In effect, this act of cultural appropriation is not only a familiarization of the Other but in case of some travelers in the past it was a way of changing one’s own habits.²

Grewal goes one step ahead and looks upon travel as a metaphor, especially in the nineteenth century England:

More than a trope, travel is a metaphor that, I argue, became an ontological discourse central to the relations between the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’, between different forms of alterity, between nationalisms, women, races and classes. --- whether travel is a metaphor of exile, mobility, difference, modernity or hybridity, it suggests the particular ways in which knowledge of a Self, society and nation was, and is, within European and North American culture, to be understood and obtained.
“To examine such uses I work on texts that utilize travel, traveling, and its culture in order to reveal the ways in which movement within space came to be ideologically inscribed in the nineteenth century in British culture, and then to examine how such ideologies were developed by non-Europeans. Such movements were also crucial for class and gender formation in multiple and linked locations.³

Paul and Janet emphasize that travel ensues from some individual curiosity, a movement within the individual psyche. They call it Curiosity Travel and further categorize it as Pleasure Travel for ‘satisfaction of their daydreams and their curiosities’, and Conquest Travel which may be inspired by commercial motive, military enthusiasm, missionary zeal or diplomacy. Pleasure Travel, in its turn, may take the shape of Religious Travel, History Travel, Literary or Romantic Travel, Scholarship Travel, Sex Travel or simple sight-seeing. It is true that Religious Travel predates other forms of travel because religion has been the prime source of conscious unfolding of the Self. Both pilgrims and peripatetic sages are quite an ancient phenomenon and almost universally acknowledged. In the Middle Ages, one could see them in the form of Hajis or Vaishnav Bhakts, or Grand Tourists. A basic feature common to them was their experience and feelings of homelessness and the same became their drawback. They never participated in the daily social life of local people. Religious travelers, however, were soon followed by semi-religious History travelers.

Literary Travel was initiated by Romantic poets who included Greek antiquity in the list of places to be visited during the Grand Tour. The main purpose of these poets
was to demystify the Orient, its symbols and inhabitants, especially its women and races/tribes. According to Grewal:

With the rise of Romanticism, Europeans had new reasons to venture into areas that no one hitherto desired to visit. Romanticism, combined with the scientific imperative, enabled exploration and mapping in the search for noble sages, for the ‘Other’ required by the Romantic Self to be complete. This was a search for the past, for what was authentic in contrast to the alienation of the industrial age, and led to a new perception of nature within the discourse of the needs of the all-important Self.⁴

This urge for the new perception of nature ultimately culminated into a drive for the reconstruction of cultural formation, a drive that smoothed transition to colonization under political influence. Apart from the requirements of imperial diplomacy, Political Travel was also prompted by the ‘freedom’ offered by Colonization:

For the many women travelers who went to Asia and Africa to escape circumscribed lives in England, these lands became the places that, on the one hand, proved women to be equals of men, including taking the role of the colonizing male. Travel became synonymous with political freedom because the Romantic discourse enabled them to label their escape from some domestic gender constraints—though this freedom was only that of becoming a version of the imperial Englishman.⁵

Birkett—claims they traveled without the definite goals that many male explorers had.—In fact, the escape from England, the alienation
felt at home, the freedom gained from travels, and the value of solitude were intrinsic to the male Romantic traveler from Byron to Burton.6

Scholarship Travel undertaken to acquire knowledge covers a broad spectrum of sciences, ranging from theology and mysteries to architecture and medicine. It fetches opportunities for broadening the mind and reforming the Self and remains popular in our age. Sex Travel catered to the eccentricities of rakes, for instance, Paul and Janet report that an eighteenth century British ambassador spent 12 years in Constantinople ‘upon a sofa with the women’. These rakes exploited, and still exploit, cultural differentials.

Lady Mary, on her way to Turkey, actually undertook the same route as was prescribed for the Grand Tour, which was initially an Italy-oriented ‘Bordeaux to Holy Land’ pilgrimage initiated in AD 333 that took two to three years’ time. With the rise of the Ottomans, the traditional Italy was replaced by the Ottoman Empire and the purpose of the tour was reduced to the objectives of pleasure and scholarship. This new Grand Tour also included a visit to Greek ruins falling in the Middle East. Lady Mary too, in the course of her travels treaded this path, but a closer look at her travel reveals many interesting facts.

Starting on 1 August from London, Wortley’s entourage crossed the Channel at Gravesend on a ‘Yatch’. On the other shore, a longboat carried them to Hellevoetsluis from where they set out for Rotterdam on ‘Voitures’ via Dover-Hague. While Dover was neat, Lady Mary was impressed by the cleanliness of Rotterdam where she roamed all over town in her slippers without receiving one spot of dirt, and noted the absence of ‘loathsome cripples’, especially street beggars. She found the Hague
reminiscent of London. The entire Dutch country amused her. Their next destination 
was Vienna via Hague-Nijmegan. They passed through a series of German princely 
states, merchant cities and unindustrialized Rhineland, taking rest at inns ‘very 
indifferent’ and full of rooms where ‘wind came in from a thousand places’. 

Around 6 a.m., they reached Cologne and this meant they could easily sleep for three 
hours. In the day, Lady Mary spared time for sightseeing but found ‘wine at supper 
more worthy of comment than the medieval splendor outside’, perhaps with the 
exception of the Catholic Church. On halting at Ratisburg (Regensburg), once the seat 
of the Holy Roman Empire, they found the Hanoverian ambassador’s wife as their 
host. They journeyed down the Danube from Ratisburg to reach Vienna, the city she 
has described colorfully in her letters. Here the Emperor Charles VI received Wortley 
on the very first day. The Emperor was happy that his general Prince Eugene had 
battered Turkish forces and was set to take hold of Belgrade. Vienna had to be a 
battleground for testing Wortley’s peace negotiation skills.

Apparently, the political scenario had changed drastically by the time Wortley 
reached there. Yet, he decided to continue the mission. They detoured via Prague, 
‘once the royal seat of Bohemian kings, and Leipzig-Brunswick, enjoying the beauty 
of natural scenes and meeting political heads till they reached Hanover. After the 
talks, Lady Mary returned with a message of the imperial majesty to the Duchess of 
Blankenburg and then back to Vienna to proceed for Adrianople via Peterwardein and 
Belgrade, visiting the fields of Karlowitz and witnessing the horrors of war and 
arrogance of the Janissaris. After a long and arduous journey, they settled in 
Constantinople. Both Adrianople and Constantinople were the cities where Lady Mary 
enjoyed and explored the Orient.
Wortley's diplomatic mission looked like a dismal failure, partly because of the Ottomans’ defeat at Peterwardein on August 5 and partly because of some political intrigues back home. He was recalled in 1717 but they remained in Constantinople till 1718, the year Lady Mary bore a daughter. *Preston*, the ship sent to carry them back, anchored at Constantinople on 18 June 1718 and left the shore on 5 July after a seven-gun salute to the retiring ambassador. Passing through the Seven Towers, the state jail, the ship sailed ahead towards Tunis via the Sea of Myammar and Bay of Troy. The poetic landscape on the shore kept conjuring up memories of antiquity, and enthralling Lady Mary who was spontaneously quoting from classics and commenting on all that she saw firsthand. On the eve of 29 July, their ship anchored off the shores of Porte Fatima in Tunis, the land she eagerly explored for a few days and reported back dexterously. On 2 August, they departed to go to Toulon and moving past Sardinia (4 August), Monte Carlo (8 August) and Elba (9 August), they were at the opening of the Genoa Gulf harbour on the dawn of 15 August. From this point, the children pursued the sea route and the Montagu couple opted for land travel to Paris via Genoa, Turin, Venice, and Lyon. Rough weather put both the parties, the children and the couple, on trial repeatedly. After a short stay at Dover, they returned to London.

These details show that Lady Mary’s travel had the distinct elements of a historical travel. It was also a Scholarship Travel, as she carried out the search for truth in the tradition of science and rational philosophy during her travel. Her allusion to Dr. Samuel Clarke’s rational theology and discussions on Transubstantiation theory of William Whiston, the chair of mathematics at Cambridge, her analysis of Oriental poetry and arts, and her quest for smallpox remedy are its sufficient proof. Her
description of scenic sites and architectural monuments points to the traces of Romantic Travel. As a matter of fact, none can deny that TEL, the travelogue of her journey to the Orient, is, in its outcome, a Literary Travel. Her activities during the travel definitely required political business, at least as the spouse of the Ambassador Extraordinary but Lady Mary totally suppressed what could be details of her Political Travel except for a few ceremonies and feasts.

**Travelogues and TEL**

A travelogue, also known as a travel or road journal, is a special type of Travel Literature in which, according to Mary Louise Pratt, a traveler explicates his experience by entering a space of negotiated intercultural contact to create the 'domestic subject' through the purported 'discovery' of the exotic spaces. A travelogue is normally written in the form of a diary or journal maintained during the course of a journey and this distinguishes it from other forms of travel literature such as proceedings of conferences, periodicals, monographs, anthologies, and encyclopedias. Lady Mary experimented with her travelogue and wrote it in the form of letters. Although the history of travelogues dates back to the second century when Pausanias penned *Description of Greece*, a systematic study of travel literature is a comparatively new discipline that gained currency towards the end of the twentieth century, in the wake of the growing trend of interdisciplinary studies on cultural diversity, comparative literature and gender studies.
Billie Melman writes:

By ‘travelogue proper’ I mean the narrative of a progress from one spot to the other, in an open landscape. By definition, then, the very locus of the travel account is non-domestic, and had been popularly identified, until the nineteenth century, as ‘masculine’. To be sure, travel is a universal theme.\(^8\)

She sees a travelogue as the product of rhetoric and representations. She points out that manners, chiefly Muslim women’s social behaviour, constitute the subject-matter of representations which can be approached either directly or indirectly: “By direct approach I mean general information, or statements directly addressed to the reader, by an authoritative narrative ‘I’, or an impersonal voice.”\(^9\) which does not “necessarily draw on evidence gathered ‘on the spot’, but is derived from external authorities”. She calls it ‘non-descriptive parts’ and claims that they abound in any travelogue. For the other part, she writes: “informative parts of the narrative are descriptive ones, those parts which profess to rely exclusively on the personal participant’s observation as part of the inter-subjective experience.”\(^10\) Ostensibly, all narratives of TEL are subjective.

Now, there remains the other point of merit, the social status of the traveler defined in terms of gender. Although interaction surged with the beginning of the Ottomans’ decline and transformation of Turkish society through penetration of Western capitalism since the seventeenth century onwards and travel accounts gained popularity, but most of these travelogues came from male writers; Robert Withers,
George Sandy, John Covel, Jean Dumont, and Aaron Hill, which are lacking in different dimensions:

But deception, or the stretching or varnishing the truth, are not the only flaws of the descriptions of non-witnesses. The narrative of men-travellers has other flaws: citation, or reference to textual authority substitutes for first-hand information. Moreover, the narrative is rhetorical rather than descriptive or representational and the reader is hectored with general information, obtainable from external authorities (reports of earlier travelers, the *Nights* and oriental fiction). Lastly, the accounts tend to be vague and anecdotal rather than circumstantial, and lack the realistic detail characteristic of descriptions of public spaces.---

--A few of the travelers admit to their ignorance and even acknowledge their indebtedness to female informants.\(^{11}\)

Her travel to the Orient made Lady Mary aware of previous voyage writers’ unscrupulous statements: “Now that I am a little acquainted with their ways I cannot forbear admiring either the exemplary discretion or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts of them.”\(^ {12}\) She has pointed out a number of lapses in male writings in several letters included in *TEL*:

Your whole letter is full of mistakes from one end to the other. I see you have taken your ideas of Turkey from that worthy author Dumont, who has writ with equal ignorance and confidence. 'Tis a particular pleasure to me here to read the voyages to the Levant, which are generally so far removed from truth and so full of absurdities I am very
well diverted with them. They never fail to give you an account of the women, which 'tis certain they never saw, and talking very wisely of the genius of men, into whose company they are never admitted, and very often describe mosques which they dare not peep into.¹³

But she also traces the path through which written mistakes have crept into otherwise reputed records:

….but I cannot forbear taking notice to you of a mistake of Gemelli (though I honour him in a much higher degree than any other voyage-writer). He says that there is no remain of Calcedon. This is certainly a mistake. I was there yesterday and went cross the canal in my galley, the sea being very narrow between that city and Constantinople, 'tis still a large town and has several mosques in it. The Christians, still call it Calcedonia, and the Turks give it a name I forgot, but which is only a corruption of the same word. I suppose, this an error of his guide, which his short stay hindered him from rectifying, for I have, in other matters, a very just esteem for his veracity.¹⁴

At one place she describes the dilemma confronting voyage writers as a potential source of misleading narrations:

We travelers are in very hard circumstances. If we say nothing but what has been said before us we are dull and we have observed nothing. If we tell anything new, we are laughed at as fabulous and romantic, not allowing for the difference of ranks, which afford difference of company more curiosity, or the changes of customs that
happen every twenty year in every country. But people judge of travelers exactly with the same candour, good nature and impartiality they judge of their neighbours upon all occasions. For my part, if I live to return amongst you I am so well acquainted with the morals of all my dear friends and acquaintances that I am resolved to tell them nothing at all, to avoid the imputation, which their charity would certainly incline them to, of my telling too much. But I depend upon your knowing me enough to believe whatever I seriously assert for truth, though I give you leave to be surprised at an account so new to you.¹⁵

For her own travelogue, she writes:

You will perhaps by surprised at an account so different from what you have been entertained with by the common voyage writers, who are very fond of speaking of what they don't know.¹⁶

Contrary to the male travelers, female travelers were late comers, though they had been working in the Orient as ethnologists, missionaries, and reformists for a long period. It was a primary advantage with them that they had easy access to the private and personal spaces of Eastern women, and were able to observe their inner workings to the satisfaction of the search for the ‘truth’ of the ‘Other’ and thus they were equally capable of strengthening the West’s position as the knowing subject, notwithstanding the rigors of a female’s travel those days. Nevertheless, their writings are substantially different and better disposed towards the Orient.
Although the earliest male travelogues depicted the local inhabitants as ‘Noble Savages’, they also highlighted their Englishness by superimposing their powers, rights and privileges over their narrations in order to inspire their audience back home. Female writers were no less English, some of them even tried to pose themselves as ‘equal’ in colonial prospect but they did not define their work in purely heterosexual but in humanistic terms. Whereas male writers employed the vocabulary of power, emphasizing masculine terms like ‘penetration’, ‘mastery of virgin lands’/territories, or ‘weak cultures’, female writers took up more profound social, cultural, religious and theological issues.

Lady Mary was one of these feminist beacons and her role has become increasingly significant in a world dominated by transnational elites and multinational corporations that feminism functions by suppressing feminine consciousness and concealing the role of a transparent investigator. She has enunciated her principles of voyage writing in several letters of TEL:

I can only tell you that if you please to read Sir Paul Rycaut you will there find a full and true account of the viziers, the Berglerbleys, the civil and spiritual government, the officers of the seraglio, etc., things that ‘tis very easy to procure lists of and therefore may be depended on, though other stories, God knows - I say no more - everybody is at liberty to write their own remarks. The manners of people may change or some of them escaped the observation of travelers, but ’tis not the same of the government, and for that reason, since I can tell you nothing new I will tell nothing of it. In the same silence shall be passed
over the arsenal and seven towers, and for the mosque, I have already described one of the noblest to you very particularly.7

So, the account must be novel but truthful instead of being exciting:

You content yourself with telling me over and over that the town is very dull. It may possibly be dull to you when every day does not present you with something new, but for me that am in arrear at least two months news, all that seems very stale with you would be fresh and sweet here. Pray let me into more particulars. I will try to awaken your gratitude by giving you a full and true relation of the novelties of this place, none of which would surprise you more than a sight of my person, As I am now in my Turkish habit.18

Yet, truthful but not trivial:

You chide me for my laziness, in not telling you a thousand agreeable and surprising things that you say you are sure I have seen and heard: Upon my word, madam, 'tis my regard to truth, and not laziness, that I do not entertain you with as many prodigies as other travelers use to divert their readers with. I might easily pick up wonders in every town I pass through, or tell you a long series of popish miracles, but I cannot fancy that there is anything new in letting you know that priests can lie, and the mob believe, all the world over. Then as for news, that you are so inquisitive about, how can it be entertaining to you, that don't know the people, that the Prince of -- has forsaken the Countess of, or that the prince such-a-one has an intrigue with the countess such-a-one?19
And neither an imitation, yet full of curiosity:

I have seen some hundreds of relics here of no less consequence, but I will not imitate the common style of travelers so far as to give you a list of them, being persuaded that you have no manner of curiosity for the titles given to jaw bones and bits of worm-eaten wood.\(^{20}\)

She wants a travelogue to be brief and to the point:

My letter is insensibly grown so long, I am ashamed of it. This is a very bad symptom. 'Tis well if I don't degenerate into a downright story teller. It may be our proverb that knowledge is no burden may be true to oneself, but knowing too much is very apt to make us troublesome to other people.\(^{21}\)

And non-repetitive and original but entertaining:

I think I have now told you a great deal for once. If you don't like my choice of subjects, tell me what you would have me write upon. There is nobody more desirous to entertain you than, dear Mrs. Thistelthwayte, etc.\(^{22}\)

It should also be of lasting value so that it is preserved for posterity:

I had rather ten of my letters should be lost than you imagine I don't write and I think 'tis hard fortune if one in ten don't reach you. However, I am resolved to keep the copies as testimonies of my inclination to give you, to the utmost of my power, all the diverting
part of my travels while you are exempt from all the fatigues and inconveniencies.  

This was the blueprint for Turkish Embassy Letters. Although TEL was produced in the context of eighteenth-century gender relations, geopolitics and class constraints, its narratives still illuminate discursive, religious, social, political and economic frames of association and togetherness.

In the context of the religious aspect of Lady Mary’s travel, Billie Melman writes:

Before the eighteenth century the only tradition of female travel was religious (p14)

Naturally the practice of pilgrimage died down in west even before the Reformation.---What is significant is that the pilgrimage as image and a metaphor lived on in the literary imagination and in popular idiom after the Reformation (p15)

---evangelicalism and evangelical gender ideology, which stress the moral superiority of women, sanctioned a career in ‘the world’. So that those parts of the empire identified with the Scripture were particularly appealing to religiously motivated women. (p 16)  

Billie Melman describes ‘the evangelical travelogue on Middle East’ as the first model and identifies two other models as ‘Harem Literature’ and ‘travelogue proper’ developed in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She further identifies three patterns within the ‘Travelogue Proper’:
Two structures or patterns of Eastern career emerge. The first is non-specialist travel, combined with a writing career. The second pattern is a semi-professional, semi-scientific career connected with the new branches of Bible and oriental studies, themselves devoted to the authentication of the Scriptures as accurately accurate texts and the rise of quasi-scientific, voluntary evangelising societies.\(^{25a}\)

The third pattern of Middle Eastern travel presents another example of the negotiability of socialized and symbolic spaces. Missionary work philanthropy were gradually becoming attractive and respectable occupations.\(^{26}\)

This analysis shows that *TEL* is a ‘Travelogue Proper’ conforming to the first pattern of an Eastern career but with the assimilation of philanthropic elements, and as such, its non-religious narrations and descriptions shall be studied here.

**Narrations and Descriptions**

It is not difficult to see that *TEL* exhibits the same mix of heterogeneity that appears in the nature of Lady Mary’s travel. Its historical nature is evident from historical insights. Her description of ceremonies and feasts, novelties and cities and regions gives a feel of literary travel. Romanticism can be noted in aesthetic details of nature and its bounties. Even conquest travel is represented by her explorations in markets and exchanges. Lady Mary’s description of smallpox,\(^{27}\) architecture and ethnography are evidences of her scholarship travel but only the last two shall be discussed here as her engagement with smallpox has already been dealt with in Chapter 1.
Historical Insights

Lady Mary uses her narrative as a take-off point to digress into more intricate and underlying issues, which often are restricted to the sublime past of Christianity, ancient Greek civilization or machinations by the Turks. In a letter written to Lady Mar from Peterwardein, she conjures memories of the Christian past, although she takes it as a principle of travelogue-writing that details of history should be left to standard history books. In fact, it was not history but her remarks and undertones of such letters that she wanted to project.

Hungary’s Past

She recalls the history of 1594 in January 1717, and reinforces the Christian claim over Raab by pointing out that a cathedral is still present in the city.

Raab is a strong town, well garrisoned and fortified, and was a long time the frontier town between the Turkish and German empires. It has its name from the river Raab on which it is situated, just on its meeting with the Danube, in an open Champaign country. It was first taken by the Turks under the command of the Pasha Sinan in the reign of Sultan Amurath III, in the year 1594 The governor being supposed to have betrayed it, was afterwards beheaded by the emperor's command. The counts of Schwarzenberg and Palffy retook it by surprise in 1598, since which time it has remained in the hands of the Germans, though the Turks once more attempted to gain it by stratagem in 1642. The cathedral is large and well- built, which is all that I saw remarkable in the town.
What she narrates below are parts of the memories of the Holy Roman Empire:

Buda was first taken by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1526, and lost the following year to Ferdinand I, King of Bohemia. Suleiman regained it, 1529, by the treachery of the garrison, and voluntarily gave it into the hand of King John of Hungary, after whose death, his son being an infant, Ferdinand laid siege to it and the Queen Mother was forced to call Suleiman to her aid, who raised the siege, but left a Turkish garrison in the town and commanded her to remove her court from thence, which she was forced to submit to in 1541. It resisted afterwards the sieges laid to it by the Marquis of Brandenburg, 1542; Count Schwarzenberg, 1598, General Russworm in 1602, and the Duke of Lorrain, commander of the emperor's forces, in 1684, to whom it yielded, 1686, after an obstinate defence, Abd pasha, the governor, being killed fighting in the breach with a Roman bravery. The loss of this town was so important, and so much resented by the Turks, that it occasioned the deposing of their emperor Mehmed IV, the year following.\textsuperscript{29}

We did not proceed on our journey till the twenty third, passing through Adom and Fodwar, both considerable towns when in the hands of the Turks. They are now quite ruined; only the remains of some Turkish towers show something of what they have been.\textsuperscript{30}
Mohac is witness to two strategic battles, the first in 1526 at the beginning of Turkish dominion in Hungary and the second at its end in 1687, two years before the birth of Lady Mary:

We came the twenty fifth to Mohacs, and were showed the field near it where Louis, the young King of Hungary, lost his army and his life, being drowned in a ditch trying to fly from Balybeus, the general of Suleiman the Magnificent. This battle opened the first passage for the Turks into the heart of Hungary.31

----with letters to the Pasha of Belgrade, and took that opportunity of seeing the town, which is not very large, but fair built and well-fortified. This was a town of great trade, very rich and populous when in the hands of the Turks. It is situated on the Drave, which runs into the Danube. The bridge was esteemed one of the most extraordinary in the world, being 8000 paces long, and all built of oak, which was, burnt, and the city laid in ashes by Count Leslie, 1685, but was again repaired and fortified by the Turks who, however, abandoned it, 1687, and General Dunnewaltt took possession of it for the Emperor, in whose hands it has remained ever since, and is esteemed one of the bulwarks of Hungary.32

Christian Bulgaria

In her letter to Abbe Conti, Lady Mary narrates the antiquities of Bulgaria, which were Greek, the country being dominated by poor Christian peasants:
You will expect I should say something to you of the antiquities of this country, but there are few remains of ancient Greece. We passed near the piece of an arch which is commonly called Trajan's Gate, as supposing he made it to shut up the passage over the mountains between Sofia and Philippopolis, but I rather believe it the remains of some triumphal arch though I could not see any inscription, for if that passage had been shut up there are many others that would serve for the march of an army, And notwithstanding the story of Baldwin Earl of Flanders, being overthrown in these straits after he had won Constantinople, I don't fancy the Germans would find themselves stopped by them. 'Tis true the road is now made with great industry, as commodious as possible for the march of the Turkish army. There is not one ditch or puddle between this place and Belgrade that has not a large strong bridge of planks built over it, but the precipices are not so terrible as I had heard them represented. At the foot of these mountains we lay at the little village of Kiskoi, wholly inhabited by Christians, as all the peasants of Bulgaria are.33

Old Castles

This letter shows a region closely tied up with Greek history:

The second day after we set sail we passed Gallipolis, a fair city situate in the Bay of Chersonessus and much respected by the Turks, being the first town they took in Europe. At five the next morning we anchored in the Hellespont between the Castles of Sestos and Abydos, now
called the Dardanelli. There is now two little ancient castles, but of no strength…

That of Abydos is undoubtedly very amorous, since that soft passion betrayed the castle into the hands of the Turks in the reign of Orchanes, who besieged it.---This town is in Asia, first founded by the Milesians. Sestos is in Europe and was once the principal city in Chersonessus. Since I have seen this strait I find nothing improbable in the adventure of Leander or very wonderful in the bridge of boats of Xerxes.

Ancient Greece

Here are some excerpts of her letter written to Abbe Conti from Tunis and she is altogether enchanted by these scenes of ancient mythology:

Not many leagues sail from hence I saw the point of land where poor old Hecuba was buried and about a league from that place is Cape Janissary, the famous promontory of Sigeum, where we climb to the top of it to see the place where Achilles was buried and where Alexander ran naked round his tomb in his honour, which, no doubt, was a great comfort to his ghost. I saw there the ruins of a very large city and found a stone on which Mr. Wortley plainly distinguished the words of Sigaeon Polin.

We saw very plainly form this promontory the River Simois rolling from Mount Ida and running through a very spacious valley. It is now a considerable river, and called Simores, joined in the vale by the
Scamander, which appeared a small stream half choked with mud, but is perhaps large in the winter. This was Xanthus amongst the gods, as Homer tells us, and 'tis by that heavenly name of Scamander, till the adventure which Monsieur de la Fontaine has told so agreeably abolished that heathenish ceremony. When the stream is mingled with the Simois they run together to the sea.

All that is now left of Troy is the ground on which it stood.37

North of the promontory of Sigeum we saw that of Rhoeteum, famed for the sepulchre of Ajax. While I viewed these celebrated fields and rivers I admired the exact geographs of Homer, whom I had in my hand. Almost every epithet he gives to a mountain or plain is still just for it, and I spent several hours in as agreeable cogitations as ever Don Quixote had on Mount Montesinos.38

Passing the strait between the island of Andros and Achaia (now Libadia), we saw the promontory of Sunium (now called Cape Colonna), where are yet standing the vast pillars of a temple of Minerva. This venerable sight made me think with double regret on a beautiful temple of Theseus which I am assured was almost entire at Athens till the last campaign in the Morea that the Turks filled it with powder and it was accidentally blown up. You may believe I had a great mind to land on the famed Peloppones, though it were only to look on the rivers of Asopus, Peneus, Inachus and Eurotas, the fields of Arcadia and other scenes of ancient mythology. But instead of demi-
gods and heroes I was credibly informed 'tis now overrun by robbers --
--sailed quietly by Cape Angelo, once Malea, where I saw no remains
of the famous temple of Apollo. We came that evening in sight of
Candia. It is very mountainous; we easily distinguished that of Ida. We
have Virgil's authority here was 100 cities---the chief of them, Gnossus
the scene of monstrous passions. Metellus first conquered this birth
place of his Jupiter. 59

**Church of Annunciata**

Here she compares a Jesuit Church with the famous but controversial St.
Sofia:

Here are also some inestimable ancient busts. The church of St
Lawrence is all black and white marble,----The church of the
Annunciata is finely lined with marble, the pillars of red and white
marble, that of St Abrose, very much adorned by the Jesuits; but I
confess all those churches appeared so mean to me after that of St
Sophia... 40

**Novelties**

Lady Mary has given interesting descriptions of some novel things almost unknown
or indescribable in England. Her style of narration is such that it makes these details
even more special and readable:
Camel

You never saw camels in your life, ---the first sight of them was very much so to me, ---I am going, to make a bold observation and possibly a false one, ---but I do take them to be of the stag kind; their legs, bodies and necks are exactly shaped like them, and their colour very near the same. 'Tis true they are much larger, being a great deal higher than a horse and so swift that, after the defeat of Peterwardein, they far out-ran the swiftest horses and brought the first news of the loss of the battle to Belgrade. They are never thoroughly tamed; the drivers take care to tie them one to another with strong ropes, fifty in a string; led by an ass on which the driver rides. I have seen three hundred in one caravan. They carry the third part more than any horse--- They seem to me, very ugly creatures, their heads being ill-formed and disproportioned to their bodies. They carry all the burdens, and the beasts destined to the plough are buffaloes, an animal you are also unacquainted with.⁴¹

Stork

Here are, some birds held in a sort of religious reverence, and for that reason, multiply prodigiously; turtles, on the account of their innocence and storks because they are supposed to make every winter the pilgrimage to Mecca. To say truth they are the happiest subjects under the Turkish government, and are so sensible of their privileges they walk the streets without fear and generally build in the low parts
of houses. Happy are those that are so distinguished. The vulgar Turks are perfectly persuaded that they will not be that year attacked either by fire or pestilence. I have the happiness of one of their sacred nests under my chamber window.42

Court Dwarf

I believe I forgot to tell you one curiosity in all the German courts which I cannot forbear taking notice of. All the princes keep favourite dwarfs. The Emperor and Empress have two of these little monsters, as ugly as devils, especially the female, but all bedaubed with diamonds and stands at her majesty's elbow in all public places. The Duke of Wolfenbuttel has one, and the Duchess of Blankenburg is not without hers, but indeed the most proportionable I ever saw. I am told the King of Denmark has so far improved upon this fashion that his dwarf is his chief minister. I can assign no reason for their fondness for these pieces of deformity, but the opinion that all the absolute princes have, that it is below them to converse with the rest of mankind, and not to be quite alone they are forced to seek their companions amongst the refuse of human nature, these creatures being only part of their court privileged to talk freely to them.43

Mummy

I have bespoke a mummy, which I hope will come safe to my hands, notwithstanding the misfortune that befell a very fine one designed for the King of Sweden. He gave a great price for it, and the Turks took it
into their heads that he must certainly have some considerable project depending upon it. They fancied it the body of God knows who and that the fate of their empire mystically depended 'on the conservation of it. Some old prophecies were remembered upon this occasion, and the mummy committed prisoner to the seven towers, where it has remained under close confinement ever since. I dare not try my interest in so considerable a point as the release of it, but I hope mine will pass without examination.  

**Greek Medals**

I have already made some progress in a collection of Greek medals. Here are several professed antiquaries who are ready to serve anybody that desires them, but you can't imagine how they stare in my face when I enquire about them,---I have got some very valuable of the Macedonian kings, particularly one of Perseus so lively I fancy I can see all his ill qualities in his face.---you are not to suppose these antiquaries, who are all Greeks, know anything. Their trade is only to sell. They have correspondents at Aleppo, Grand Cairo, in Arabia and Palestine, who send them, all they can find, and very often great heaps that are only fit to melt into pans and kettles. They get the best price they can for any of them, without knowing those that are valuable from those that are not. Those that pretend to skill generally find out the image of some saint in the medals of the Greek cities. One of them, showing me the figure of Pallas with a victory in her hand on a reverse, assured me it was the Virgin holding a crucifix. The same man offered
me the head of a Socrates on a Sardonix and to enhance the value gave
him the title of St Augustine.\footnote{45}

Likewise, she describes buffoons in a Turkish military procession led by the Grand
Signor.\footnote{46} She also mentions black eunuchs accompanying or helping Turkish ladies.\footnote{47}
Tendir described in letter no.39, \footnote{48} may also be included in this category.

\textbf{Ceremonies and Feasts}

Although Lady Mary was not content with her reports of court appearances, her
narratives surely appear in their best form when she reports group activities. Besides
her lively behaviour, she appears keenly attentive, very perceptive and a good
surveyor of her surroundings. She places her data naively and in time with her
remarks and opinions as a special bonus. During her journey to the Orient, Lady Mary
was naturally invited to a number of functions and events, mostly in her capacity as a
companion to the Ambassador Extraordinary but credit goes to her artistry which
enabled her to renovate official visits to a private bonanza. Her sharp observation
helps her in portraying these events and her account gives a special meaning to what
she wrote and indicated in undertones. Here are some ceremonies and feasts she has
mentioned zestfully in her colourful style.

\textbf{May Day Dance}

May Day was celebrated in Vienna as a public ceremony with the participation of the
general public in a set uniform but their fashion for this ceremony did not appeal to
the taste of Lady Mary and this led her to write:
They build certain fabrics of gauze on their heads about a yard high, consisting of three or four storeys, fortified with numberless yards of heavy ribbon. The foundation of this structure is a thing they call a bourle, which is exactly of the same shape and kind, but about four times as big as those rolls our prudent milk-maids make use of to fix their pails upon. This machine they cover with their own hair, which they mix with a great deal of false, it being a particular beauty to have their heads too large to go into a moderate tub. Their hair is prodigiously powdered to conceal the mixture and set out with three or four rows of bodkins (wonderfully large, that stick out two or three inches from their hair) made of diamonds, pearls, red, green and yellow stones, that it certainly requires as much art and experience to carry the load upright as to dance upon May day with the garland.49

Private Audience

As she was one of the few who had the privilege of a private audience, Lady Mary waxed lyrical on the charms of the reigning Empress. Her allusion to the ‘Graces’ and ‘Medicis’ is a skilful device to convey the extent of the Empress’ beauty and wealth:

I had a private audience, according to ceremony, of half an hour, and, then all the other ladies were permitted to come make their court. I was perfectly charmed with the Empress. I cannot however tell you that her features are regular. Her eyes are not large, but have a lively look full of sweetness, her complexion the finest I ever saw, her nose and forehead well made but her mouth has ten thousand charms that touch
the soul. When she smiles, 'tis with a beauty and sweetness that forces adoration. She has a vast quantity of fine fair hair; but then her person! One must speak of it poetically to do it rigid justice; all that the poets have said of the mein of Juno, the air of Venus, come not up to the truth. The Graces move with her; the famous statue of Medicis was not formed with more delicate proportions; nothing can be added to the beauty of her neck and hands. Till I saw them, I did not believe there are any, in nature so perfect ---

...she ordered me a seat at her right hand, and had the goodness to talk to me very much, with that grace so natural to her. I expected every moment when the men were to come in to pay their court, but this drawing room is very different from that of England. No man enters it but the old grand master, who comes in to advertise the Empress of the approach of the Emperor. His imperial majesty did me the honour of speaking to me in a very obliging manner, but he never speaks to any of the other ladies and the whole passes with a gravity and air of ceremony that has something very formal in it.

**Empress Amelia**

In the following letter she gives considerable details of a Viennese court and its inner working, thereby revealing her eye for detail:

The empress Amelia, dowager of the late Emperor Joseph, came this evening to wait on the reigning Empress, followed by the two Archduchesses her daughters, who are very agreeable young
princesses. Their imperial majesties rise and go to meet her at the door of the room, after which she is seated in an armed chair next the Empress, and in the same manner at supper, and there the men have the permission of paying their court. The Archduchesses sit on chairs with backs without arms. The table is entirely served, and all the dishes set on by the Empress’ maids of honour, which are twelve young ladies of the first quality. They have no salary but their chambers at court, where they live in a sort of confinement, not being suffered to go to the assemblies or public places in town, except in complement to the wedding of a sister maid, whom the empress always presents with her picture set in diamonds. The three first of them are called ladies of the key, and wear gold keys by their sides; but what I find most pleasant is the custom which obliges them as long as they live after they have left the Empress' service, to make her some present every year on the day of her feast.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{Mother Earth}

The ascetic Empress Mother, Eleonore Magdelene (1655-1720), served both a royal custom and a public ritual, perhaps depicting Mother Earth in her persona:

I had an audience the next day of the Empress Mother, a princess of great virtue and goodness, but who piques herself so much on a violent devotion she is perpetually performing extraordinary acts of penance, without having ever done anything to deserve them. She has the same number of maids of honour, whom she suffers to go in colours, but she
herself never quits mourning, and sure nothing can be more dismal than mournings here, even for a brother. There is not the least bit, of linen to be seen; all black crepe instead of it; the neck, ears and side of the face covered with a plaited piece of the same stuff and the face that peeps out it, the midst of it looks as if it were pilloried.53

Waiting on the Empress

The main purpose of the Wortleys’ journey, was to meet royal personages in order to persuade them to agree to a truce in the region. This court appearance, therefore, was of great consequence to them. Lady Mary has adroitly sketched both the court and its proceedings:

The next day I was to wait on the Empress Amelia, who is now at her palace of retirement, half a mile from the town. I had there the pleasure of seeing a diversion wholly new to me, but which is the common amusement of this court. The Empress herself was seated on a little throne at the end of the fine alley in the garden, and on each side of her ranged two parties of her ladies of honour with other young ladies of quality headed by the two young Archduchesses, all dressed in their hair, full of jewels, with fine light guns in their hands, and at proper distances were placed three oval pictures which were the marks to be shot at. The first was that of a cupid filling a bumper of Burgundy, and the motto, "Tis easy to be valiant here", the second a fortune holding a garland in her hand, the motto 'For her whom Fortune favours'. The third was a sword with a laurel wreath on the point, the motto 'Here is
no shame to the vanquished’. Near the Empress was a gilded trophy wreathed with flowers and made of little crooks, on which were hung rich Turkish handkerchiefs, tippets, ribbons, laces etc. for the small prizes. The Empress gave the first with her own hand, which was a fine ruby ring set round with diamonds, in a gold snuff box. There was for the second a little cupid set with brilliants and besides these a set of fine china for a tea table, encased in gold, Japan trunks, fans, and many gallantries of the same nature. All the men of quality at Vienna were spectators but only the ladies had permission to shoot, and the Archduchess Amelia carried off the first prize. I was very well pleased with having seen this entertainment, and I don't know but it might make as good a figure as the prize shooting in the Aeneid, if I could write as well as Virgil. This is the favourite pleasure of the Emperor, and there is rarely a week without some feast of this kind, which makes the young ladies skilful enough to defend a fort and they laughed very much to see me afraid to handle a gun.

Viennese Carnival

The carnival was an annual event enjoyed by all people. Lady Mary recounts various aspects of this celebration and frankly points out what did not satisfy her:

I am at this time at Vienna, where the carnival is begun, and all sort of diversions in perpetual practice, except that of masquing, which is never permitted during a war with the Turks. The balls are in public places, where the men pay a gold ducat at entrance, but the ladies
nothing. I am told that these houses get sometime, a thousand ducats in a night. They are very magnificently furnished and the music good if they had not that detestable custom of mixing hunting horns with it, that almost deafen the company. But that noise is so agreeable here they never make a consort without them. The ball always concludes with English country dances to the number or thirty of forty couple, and so ill-danced that there is very little pleasure in them. They know but half-a-dozen, and they have danced them over and over this fifty year. I would fain have taught them some new ones, but I found it would be some months labour to make them comprehend them.

Last night there was an Italian comedy acted at court. The scenes were pretty, but the comedy itself such intolerable low farce, without either wit or humour, that I was surprised how all the court could sit there attentively for four hours together. No women are suffered to act on the stage, and the men dressed like them were such awkward figures; they very much added to the ridicule of the spectacle.  

**Grand Vizier’s Dinner**

Vienna, Adrianople and Constantinople were crucial to the mission entrusted to the Wortleys. They, therefore, exploited every opportunity to further the British interest in these cities. Lady Mary found two dinners and a military procession worthy of mention in her letters. The first described here was hosted by the Grand Vizier’s Lady. It is reported in her letter to Anne Thistlewayte, in this Lady Mary emphasizes Turkish grandeur and hospitality.
I was invited to dine with the Grand Vizier's lady, and it was with a great deal of pleasure I prepared myself for an entertainment which was never given before to any Christian. I thought I should very little satisfy her curiosity, which I do not doubt was a considerable motive to the invitation, by going in a dress she was used to see, and therefore dressed myself in the court habit of Vienna, which is much more magnificent than ours. However, I chose to go incognito to avoid any disputes about ceremony, and went in a Turkish coach, only attended by my woman that held up my train and the Greek lady who was my interpretress.56

I was met at the court door by her black eunuch, who held me out of the coach with great respect, and conducted me through several rooms, where her she-slaves, finely dressed, were ranged on each side. In the innermost I found the lady sitting on her sofa, in a sable vest. She advanced to meet me, and presented me half a dozen of her friends with great civility. She seemed a very good woman, near fifty years old.57

She entertained me with all kind of civility, till dinner came in, which was served, one dish at a time, to a vast number, all finely dressed after their manner, which I do not think so bad as you have perhaps heard it represented.---- Their sauces are very high, all the roast very much done. They use a great deal of rich spice. The soup is served for the last dish and they have at least as great variety of ragouts as we have. I was very sorry I could not eat of as many as the good lady would have
had me, who was very earnest in serving me of everything. The treat concluded with coffee and perfumes, which is a high mark of respect;--
- I returned her thanks and soon after took my leave.

I was conducted back in the same manner.58

Lady Kabya’s Dinner

Lady Kabya’s dinner was an unexpected outcome of the above dinner and was granted spontaneously in consideration of the dulness of the former, Lady Mary found her host more hospitable and so rich in taste that the two became friends. This rich narration indicates her elaboration on the splendour of Turkish nobles and their cultural traditions:

All things here were with quite another air than at Grand Vizier's and the very house confessed the difference between an old devote and a young beauty. It was nicely clean and magnificent. I was met at the door by two black eunuchs who led me through a long gallery between two ranks of beautiful young girls, with their hair finely plaited almost hanging to their feet, all dressed in fine light damask brocaded with silver. I was sorry that, decency did not permit me to stop to consider them nearer. But that thought was lost upon my entrance into a large room or rather pavilion built round with gilded sashes which were most of them thrown up and the trees planted near them gave an agreeable shade which hindered the sun from being troublesome, the jessamines and honeysuckles that twisted round their trunks shedding a soft Perfume, increased by a white marble fountain playing sweet
water in the lower part of the room, which fell into three or four basins with a pleasing sound. The roof was painted with all sorts of flowers falling out to gilded baskets that seemed tumbling down.59

She was dressed in a caftan of gold brocade, flowered with silver, very well fitted to her shape, and showing to advantage the beauty of her bosom, only shaded by the thin gauze of her shift. Her drawers were pale pink, her waistcoat green and silver, her slippers white, finely embroidered, her lovely arms adorned with bracelets of diamonds and her broad girdle set round with diamonds; upon her head a rich Turkish handkerchief of pink and silver, her own fine black hair hanging a great length in various tresses, and on one side of her head some bodkins of jewels.60

She told me the two girls at her feet were her daughters, though she appeared too young to be their mother.

Her fair maids were ranged below the sofa, to the number of twenty, and put me in mind of the pictures of the ancient nymphs. I did not think all nature could have furnished such a scene of beauty: She made them a sign to play and dance. Four of them immediately begun to play some soft airs on instruments, between a flute and a guitar, which they accompanied with their voices, while the others danced by turns. This dance was very different from what I had seen before: Nothing could be more artful or more proper to raise certain ideas; the tunes so Soft, the motions so languishing, accompanied with pauses and dying eyes,
half falling back and then recovering themselves in so artful a manner that I am very positive the coldest and most rigid prude upon earth could not have looked upon them without thinking of something not to be spoke of.  

When the dance was over, four fair slaves came into the room with silver censers in their hands and perfumed the air with amber, aloes wood and other scents. After this they served me coffee upon their knees in the finest japon china, with soucoup of silver gilt. The lovely Fatima entertained me all this while, in the most polite agreeable manner, calling me often guzel Sultanum, or the beautiful Sultana, and desiring my friendship with the best grace in the world, lamenting that she could not entertain me in my own language.

Parade at Camp

It could not have been by accident that Lady Mary opted to detail a military procession. Its special decorum apart, the ruthlessness rampant in the Turkish military must have been a motive in reporting her lengthy commentary to Abbe Conti:

Now the Grand Signor is resolved to lead his army in person every company of them is obliged upon this occasion to make a present according to their ability. I took the pains of rising at six in the morning to see that ceremony, which did not however begin till eight. The Grand Signor was at the seraglio window to see the procession, which passed through all the principal streets. It was preceded by an Effendi mounted on a camel richly furnished, reading aloud the
Alcoran, finely bound, laid upon a cushion. He was surrounded by a parcel of boys in white, singing some verses of it, followed by a man dressed in green boughs representing a clean husbandman sowing seed. After him several reapers with garlands of ears of corn, as Ceres is pictured, with scythes in their hands seeming to mow; then a little machine drawn by oxen, in which was a windmill and boys employed in grinding corn, followed by another machine drawn by buffaloes carrying an oven and two more boys, one employed in kneading the bread and another in drawing it out of the oven. These boys threw little cakes on both sides among the crowd and were followed by the whole company of bakers marching on foot, two and two, in their best clothes, with cakes, loaves, pasties and pies of all sorts on their heads; and after them two buffoons or jack puddings with their faces and clothes smeared with meal, who diverted the mob with their antic gestures. In the same manner followed all the companies of trade in their empire, the nobler sort such as jewellers, mercers etc. finely mounted and many of the pageants that represented their trades perfectly magnificent, amongst which the furriers made one of the best figures, being a very large machine set round with the skins of ermines and foxes, etc. so well stuffed the animals seemed to be alive, followed by music and dancers. I believe there were, upon the whole, at least 20,000 men, all ready to follow his highness if he commanded them.

The rear was closed by the volunteers who came to beg the honour of dying in his service----63
Cities and Regions

Lady Mary stayed in about two dozen towns and cities during her travel but she gives detailed accounts of only three, Vienna, Adrianople and Constantinople. This may be because she stayed there for longer periods and interacted with more people. Tunis was a stop on her return journey. Her passing remarks about the Holy Land are found in her reference to the Grand Tour:

Vienna

The following four excerpts from TEL represent various aspects of life in Vienna. She found Vienna too populous and poorly planned. But she admires the hospitality and dining manners of its people and shows special likeness for the one arranged in the Vice-Chancellor’s garden. In the final excerpt, she describes an opera, based on a well-known plot. But she was surprised to see their reticence over the poet’s liberty in mishandling it, which she counted among ‘their entertainment’.

This town, which has the honour of being the Emperor's residence, did not at all answer my ideas of it, being much less than I expected to find it --- most of the houses being of five and some of them six, storeys. You may easily imagine that the streets being so narrow, the upper rooms are extreme dark and, what is an inconvenience much more intolerable in my opinion, there is no house that has so few as five or six families in it.64

I have already had the honour of being invited to dinner by several of the first people of quality, and I must do them justice to say, the good
taste and magnificence of their tables very well answers to that of their furniture. I have been more than once entertained with fifty dishes meat, all served in silver, and well dressed; the desert proportionable, served in the finest china. But the variety and richness of their wines is what appears the most surprising. The constant way is to lay a list of their names upon the plates of the guests along with the napkins, and I have counted several times to the number of eighteen different sorts, all exquisite in their kinds.

I was yesterday at Count Schonborn's, the vice-Chancellor's garden, where I was invited to dinner, and I must own that I never saw a place so perfectly delightful as the Fauxbourg of Vienna. It is very large, and almost wholly composed of delicious palaces, and if the emperor found it proper to permit the gates of the town to be laid open, that the Fauxbourg might be joined to it, he would have one of the largest and best built cities in Europe.--- The dinner was perfectly fine and well ordered, and made still more agreeable by the good humour of the count. I have not yet been at court, being forced to stay for my gown, without which there is no waiting on the Empress though I am not without a great impatience to see a beauty that has been the admiration of so many different nations.65

But if their operas are thus delightful, their comedies are in as high a degree ridiculous. They have but one playhouse, where I had the curiosity to go to a German comedy, and was very glad it happened to be the story of Amphitriton, that subject having been already handled
by a Latin, French and English poet, I was curious to see what an Austrian author would make of it. I understood enough of the language to comprehend the greatest part of it; and, besides, I took with me a lady that had the goodness to explain to me every word. The way is, to take a box which holds four, for yourself and company. The fixed price is a gold ducat. I thought the house very low and dark, but I confess, the comedy admirably recompensed that defect. I never laughed so much in my life. It began with Jupiter's falling in love out of a peephole in the clouds, and ended with the birth of Hercules.----- But I could not easily pardon the liberty the poet has taken of larding his play with,---in the direct view of the boxes, which were full of people of the first rank, that seemed very well pleased with their entertainment and they assured me this was a celebrated piece.66

Adrianople

She identifies an ancient city in Adrianople, which she introduces as ‘the first European seat of the Turkish empire’ still over-populated with people having temporary business at court or camp:

---this is the same city that was anciently called Orestesit or Oreste, which you know better than I do. It is now called from the Emperor Adrian and was the first European seat of the Turkish Empire, and has been favourite residence of many sultans. Mehmed IV the father, and Mustafa, the brother of the reigning emperor were so fond of it that they wholly abandoned Constantinople, which humour so far
exasperated the janissaries that it was a considerable motive to the rebellions which deposed them. Yet this man seems to love to keep his court here. I can give no reason for this partiality. 'Tis true, the situation is fine and the country all round very beautiful, but the air is extreme bad and the seraglio itself is not free from the ill effect of it. The town is said to be eight miles in compass; I suppose they reckon in the gardens. There are some good houses in it, I mean large ones, for the architecture of their palaces never makes any great show. It is now very full of people, but they are most of them such as follow the court or camp, and when they are removed, I am told, 'tis no populous city. 67

**Constantinople**

Lady Mary stayed at Pera, a suburb of Constantinople and later moved to Belgrade village because of the excessive heat in the city. Like the dominant Christian population of Pera, she adopted a yashmak, Turkish veil, in this city. As always, she tried to study Greek antiquity there and in the old Constantinople:

> Our palace is in Pera, which is no more a suburb of Constantinople than Westminster is a suburb to London. 68

> The heats of Constantinople hive driven me to this place, which perfectly answers the description of the Elysian fields. (from Belgrade village). 69

> Since my last I have stayed quietly at Constantinople, a city that I ought in conscience to give our ladyship a right notion of, since I know
you can have none but what is partial and mistaken from the writings of traveler, 'Tis certain there are many people that pass years here in Pera without having ever seen it, and yet they all pretend to describe it.\textsuperscript{70}

Pera, Tophana and Galata, wholly inhabited by hank Christians, and which together make the appearance of a very fine town, are divided from it by the sea, which is not above half so broad as the broadest part of the Thames, but the Christian men are loathe to hazard the adventures they sometimes meet with amongst the events or seamen (worse monsters than our watermen) and the women must cover their faces to go there, which they have a perfect aversion to do. 'Tis true they wear veils in Pera, but they are such as only serve to show their beauty to more advantage, and which would not be permitted in Constantinople. Those reasons deter almost every creature from seeing it, and the French Ambassadress will return to France, I believe, without ever having been there. You'll wonder, madam, to hear me add that I have been there very often. The yashmak, or Turkish veil; is become not only very easy but agreeable to me, and if it was not, I would be content to endure some inconvenience to content a passion so powerful with me as curiosity…\textsuperscript{71}

I must add in the description of Constantinople that the Historical Pillar is no more, dropped down about two year before I came. I have seen no other footsteps of antiquity, except the aqueducts, which are so vast that I am apt to believe they are yet ancienier than the Greek
Empire, though the Turks have clapped in some stones with Turkish inscription to give their nation the honour of so great a work, but the deceit is easily discovered.72

…it is vulgarly reported Troy stood and I took the pains of rising at two in the morning to view coolly those ruins which are commonly showed to strangers, and which the Turks call Eski-Stamboul i.e. Old Constantinople. For that reason, as well as some others, I conjecture them to be the remains of that city begun by Constantine.73

The Holy Land

Her anxiety over discovering the French Ambassador’s intentions with regard to the Holy Land is noticeable:

I hear the French Ambassador's business at Adrianople is to buy the Holy Land, and that there is a thousand purses offered for it, which is to pass through his hands. I believe he neglects no opportunity.74

The Holy Land was the center of changes in the Christian perceptions in her time.75 Instead of dashing to that place, she opted for Turin during her return journey.

Tunis

Apart from her reference to its shimmering heat, Lady Mary has given only a fleeting description of Tunis but she has considerably dwelt on its history:

Soon after daybreak I arrived at Tunis, a town fairly built of a very white stone, but quite without gardens, which, they say, were all
destroyed and their fine groves cut down when the Turks first took it. None having been planted since, the dry sand gives a very disagreeable prospect to the eye, and the want of shade contributing to the natural heat of the climate renders it so excessive I have much ado to support it. 'Tis true here is every noon the refreshment of the sea breeze, without which it would be impossible to live, but no fresh water but what is preserved in the cisterns of the rains that fall in the month of September. The women in the town go veiled from head to foot under a black crepe and, being mixed with a breed of renegades, are said to be many of them fair and handsome. This city was besieged in 1270 by Louis, King of France, who died under the walls of it of a pestilential fever. After his death, Philip, his son and our Prince Edward, son of Henry III, raised the seige on honourable conditions. It remained under its natural African kings till betrayed into the hands of Barberussa, admiral of Suleiman the Magnificent. The Emperor Charles V expelled Barberussa, but it was recovered by the Turks under the conduct of Sinan Pasha in the reign of Selim II. From that time till now it has remained tributary to the Grand Signor, governed by a bey who suffers the name of subject to the Turks but has renounced the subjection, being absolute and very seldom paying any tribute.76

**Markets and Exchanges**

The contract which Wortley signed with the Levant Company required him to represent the commercial interests of England and it seems that he did a good job in this respect. Lady Mary, as the companion of her husband used to visit commercial
places and she has reported these transactions while she was in Pera as the following
details of exchanges, markets and merchants reveal.

Merchants

'Tis certain we have but very imperfect relations of the manners and
religion of these people, this part of the world being seldom visited but
by merchants, who mind little but their own affairs, or travelers who
make too short a stay to be able to report anything exactly of their own
knowledge. The Turks are too proud to converse familiarly with
merchants etc., who can only pick up some confused informations,
which are generally false, and can give no better account of the ways
here, than a French refugee lodging in a garret in, Greek Street, could
write of the court of England. 77

Exchanges

I had the curiosity to go to see the Exchange in my Turkish dress
which is disguise sufficient, yet I own I was not very easy when I saw
it crowded with janissaries; but they dare not be rude to a woman and
made way for me with as much respect as if I had been in my own
figure. It is half, a mile in length, the roof arched and kept extremely
neat. It holds 365 shops furnished with all sorts of rich goods, exposed
to sale in the same manner as at the New Exchange in London, but the
pavement kept much neater and the shops all so clean they seemed just
new painted. Idle people of all sorts walk here for their diversion, or
amuse themselves with drinking coffee or sherbet, which is cried about as oranges and sweetmeats are in our playhouses.\textsuperscript{78}

This copious subject has drawn me from my description of the exchange founded by Ali Pasha, whose name it bears. Near it is the, Shersi, a street of a mile in length, full of shops and all kind of fine merchandise but excessive dear, nothing being made here. It is covered on the top with boards to keep out the rain that merchants may meet conveniently in all weathers. The Bedesten near it is another exchange, built upon pillars, where all sort of horse furniture is sold; glittering everywhere with gold, rich embroidery and jewels it makes a very agreeable show.\textsuperscript{79}

The exchanges are all noble buildings, full of fine alleys, the greatest part supported with pillars, and kept wonderfully neat. Every trade has their distinct alley, the merchandise disposed in the same order as in the New Exchange at London. The Bedesten, or jewellers' quarter shows so much riches, such a vast quantity of diamonds and all kind of precious stone. that they dazzle the sight. The embroiderers' is also very glittering, and people walk here as much for diversion as business. The markets are most of them handsome squares, and admirably well provided, perhaps better than in any other part of the world. I know you'll expect I should say something particular of that of the slaves, and you will imagine me half a Turk when I don't speak of it with the same horror other Christians have done before me---\textsuperscript{80}
Scenic Nature

TEL is full of scenic details provided by Lady Mary but she makes only cursory remarks and before the reader could envision the scene, she moves on to some other discourse. She does not show any inclination to glorify nature, instead her sense of aesthetics is devoted to adoring feminine beauty, as discussed earlier. Here is how she describes the Bosphorus:

---indeed the pleasure of going in a barge to Chelsea is not comparable to that of rowing upon the canal of the sea here, where for twenty miles together down the Bosphorus the most Beautiful variety of prospects present themselves. The Asian side is covered with fruit trees, villages and the most delightful landscapes in nature. On the European stands Constantinople, situated on seven hills. The unequal heights make it seem as large again as it is (though one of the largest cities in the world), showing an agreeable mixture of gardens, pine and cyprus trees, palaces, mosques and public buildings, raised one above another with as much beauty and appearance of symmetry as your ladyship ever saw in a cabinet adorned by the most skilful hands, jars showing themselves above jars, mixed with canisters, babies and candlesticks. This is a very odd comparison, but it gives me an exact image of the thing.81

Too much presented, but everything in a fleeting manner. She describes Hebrus in a similar haste:
The most remarkable accident that happened to me was my being very near overturned into the Hebrus, and, if I had much regard for the glories that one's name enjoys after death I should certainly be sorry for having missed the romantic conclusion of swimming down the same river in which the musical head of Orpheus repeated verses—-82

Nothing can be pleasanter than the canal, and the Turks are so well acquainted with its beauties, all their pleasure seats are built on its banks, where they have at the same time the most beautiful prospects in Europe and Asia. There are near one another some hundreds of magnificent palaces. Human grandeur being here yet more unstable than anywhere else, ---83

Elsewhere, she comments:

I am at this present moment writing in a house situated on the banks of the Hebrus, which runs under my chamber window. My garden is full of tall cypress trees upon the branches of which several couple of true turtles are saying soft things to one another from morning to night. How naturally do boughs and vows come into my head at this minute! And must not you confess, to my praise that 'tis more than an ordinary discretion that can resist the wicked suggestions of poetry in a place where truth for once furnishes all the ideas of pastoral? 84

Here, the Hebrus evokes the ancient world:
The river Maritza (anciently the Hebrus on which it is situated) is dried up every summer, which contributes very much to make it unwholesome. It is now a very pleasant stream.  

**Architecture**

Lady Mary has taken up certain issues that apparently relate to architecture, for instance a seraglio, but it lacks forthrightness and detail. The seraglio was introduced to the Western people as a place where Oriental women were supposedly enslaved under tyrannical male control. Thus it served to epitomize a despotic state, held as a perversion. Here is a description of a seraglio that she wrote to Mrs. Thistlethwayte:

> We are now lodged in a palace belonging to the Grand Signor.---
> Every house, great and small, is divided into two distinct parts, which only join together by a narrow passage. The first house has a large court before it, and open galleries all round it----- This is the house belonging to the lord, and the adjoining one is called the harem, that is, the ladies' apartment (for the name of seraglio is peculiar to the Grand Signor's). It has also a gallery running round it towards the garden to which all the windows are turned; and the same number of chambers as the other, but more gay and splendid, both in painting and furniture. The second row of windows is very low, with grates like those of convents.

She goes on to describe the interior decoration of rooms and galleries. Finally, she describes a third part of the house:
Each house has a bagnio, which consists generally in two or three little rooms, on the top, paved with marble with basins, corks of water, and all conveniences for either hot or cold baths.\textsuperscript{87}

Other seraglios are described in almost similar details:

-----at Ciorlu we were lodged in a conac or little seraglio, built for the use of Grand Signor when he goes this road. I had the curiosity to view all the apartments destined for the ladies of his court. They were in the midst of a thick grove of trees made fresh by fountains, but I was surprised to see the walls almost covered with little distiches of Turkish verse writ with pencils.\textsuperscript{88}

I have taken care to see as much of the seraglio as is to be seen. It is on a point of land running into the sea; a palace of prodigious extent, but very irregular, the gardens a large compass of ground full of high cypress trees, which, is all I know of them, the buildings all of white stone, leaded on top, with gilded turrets and spires, which look very magnificent, and indeed I believe there is no Christian king's palace half so large. There are six large courts in it all built round and set with trees, having galleries of stone; one of these for the guard, another for the slaves, another for the officers of the kitchen, another for the stables, the fifth for the divan, the sixth for the apartment destined for audiences. On the ladies' side there is at least as many more, with distinct courts belonging to their eunuchs and attendants, their kitchens, etc.\textsuperscript{89}
The whole description of the architecture seems lost in detailing the purposes of the seraglio and its corresponding interiors. This is nothing unusual as she herself confesses, ‘I understand so little of architecture I dare not pretend to speak of the proportions’ She uses architecture and natural sceneries for their semiotic value as discussed earlier. She creates an imaginary Orient with these elements. As in the case of her last visit to St. Sophia, the former centre of Byzantine Christendom in the company of a Greek friend, the princess of Transylvania, who instantly burst into tears on perceiving the fallen grandeur of her people. It reads as follows:

**St. Sofia**

Lady Mary has described a number of Mosques, and appreciates the magnificence of some of them like the mosque of Sultan Selim I, but nowhere has she found more solace than at St. Sophia. This made her resolve, ‘there is nothing worth seeing in Constantinople but St. Sophia’:

The next remarkable structure is that of St Sophia which it is very difficult to see. I was forced to send three times to the Kaymokam (the governor of the town), and he assembled the chief effendis or heads of the law and enquired of the mufti whether it was lawful to permit it. They passed some days in this important debate, but I insisting on my request, permission was granted. I can't be informed why the Turks are more delicate on the subject of this mosque than any of the others, where what Christian pleases may enter without scruple. I fancy they imagine that having been once consecrated, people on pretence of curiosity might profane it with prayers, particularly to those saints who
are still very visible in mosaic work, and no other way defaced but by
the decays of time.\textsuperscript{91}

On looking for more details, one finds:

The dome of St. Sophia is said to be 113 foot diameter, built upon
arches, sustained by vast pillars of marble, the pavement and staircase
marble. There is two rows of galleries supported with pillars of
particular red marble, and the whole roof mosaic work, part of which
decays very fast and drops down. They presented me a handful of it.
The composition seems to me a sort of glass or that paste with which
they make counterfeit jewels.\textsuperscript{92}

All this reads like a civil engineer’s map but this symbolic description is very much in
place:

They show here the tomb of the Emperor Constantine, for which they
have a great veneration. This is a dull, imperfect description of this
celebrated building, but I understand architecture so little that I am
afraid of talking nonsense in endeavouring to speak of it particularly.\textsuperscript{93}

**Ethnography**

Perhaps the most significant part of \textit{TEL} comprises details of the heterogeneity of the
ethnic groups living in Turkey. Lady Mary has sketched them in beautiful colours,
covering the maximum possible panorama. Some of these narrations furnish details
which would otherwise be unavailable:
The Turks

Lady Mary spoke of Turks at length and in high esteem but these references are scattered over a number of letters. She describes the Turks as a respected and confident nation, far from their stereotypical image of being cruel barbarians. More significantly, she applauds their humanity and genius:

I cannot forbear applauding the humanity of the Turks to those creatures. They are never ill used and their slavery is in my opinion no worse than servitude all over the world.94

… the Turks not taking that pains to introduce their own manners as has been generally practised by other nations that imagine themselves more polite.95

The Turks are very proud and will not converse with a stranger they are not assured is considerable in his own country. I speak of the men of distinction, for as to the ordinary fellows, you may imagine, what ideas their conversation can give of the general genius of the people.96

She vehemently rejects the idea popular in British society that the Orientalists’ ‘knowledge’ is inferior and of no practical use:

Thus you see, sir, these people are not so unpolished as we represent them. 'Tis true their magnificence is of a different taste from ours, and perhaps of a better. I am almost of the opinion they have a right notion of life; while they consume it in music, gardens, wine and delicate eating, while we are tormenting our brains with some scheme of
politics or studying some science to which we can never attain, or if we do, cannot persuade people to set that value upon it we do ourselves. 'Tis certain what we feel and see is properly (if anything is properly) our won, but the good of fame, the folly of praise, hardly purchased, and when obtained, poor recompense for loss of time and health! We die, or grow old and decrepit before we can reap the fruit of our labours. Considering what short lived, weak animals men are, is there any study so beneficial as the study of present pleasure?97

She finds the Turks hale and hearty and fun-loving:

---for some miles round Adrianople the whole ground is laid out in gardens, and the banks of the rivers set with rows of fruit trees, under which all the most considerable Turks divert themselves every evening, not with walking, that is not one of their pleasures, but a set party of them choose out a green spot where the shade is very thick and there they spread a carpet on which they sit drinking their coffee and generally attended by some slave with a fine voice, or that plays on some instrument. Every twenty paces you may see one of these little companies listening to the dashing of the river, and this taste is so universal that the very gardeners are not without it.98

Yet she also points out their negative traits:

Here is the best manufacture of silks in all Turkey. The town is well built, the women famous for their beauty, show their faces as in Christendom. There are many rich families, though they confine their
magnificence to the inside of their houses to avoid the jealousy of the
Turks, who have a pasha here.  

This venerable sight made me think with double regret on a beautiful
temple of Theseus which I am assured was almost entire at Athens till
the last campaign in the Morea that the Turks filled it with powder and
it was accidentally blown up."  
Here are many tombs of fine marble
and vast pieces of granite, which are daily lessened by the prodigious
ball; that the Turks make from them for their cannon.

There are two reasons behind such descriptions: first, she has a strong distaste for
despotism and narrates the entire establishment of Turkish military in dull colours.
Moreover, she looks upon Turkish society as composed of two classes, the upper
ruling class and the ‘Vulgar Turks’:

….’tis very rare that any Turk will assert a solemn falsehood. I don't
speak of the lowest sort, or as there is a great deal of ignorance, there is
very little virtue amongst them, and false witnesses are much cheaper
than in Christendom, those wretches not being punished (even when
they are publicly detected) with the rigour they ought to be.

This social division is more marked in her narrations of Turkish ladies. On the one
hand, she wholeheartedly confesses that ‘they have more liberty than we have’
which she attributes to their compulsory seclusion:

……no woman, of what so ever rank being permitted to go in the
streets without two muslins, one that covers her face all but her eyes
and another that hides the whole dress of her head, and hangs half way down her back and their shapes are also wholly concealed by a thing they call a ferace which no woman of any sort appears without. This has straight sleeves that reach to their fingers ends and it laps all round them, not unlike a lift hood. In winter 'tis of cloth and in summer plain stuff or silk. You may guess then how effectually this disguises them, that there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave and 'tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her, and no man dare either touch or follow a woman in the street.103

But when one scratches the surface to find reasons justifying Turkish women’s greater liberty, he finds that Lady Mary has rationalized it in three ways: ‘This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery,’104 as a result of which ‘the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians.’105 Her third reason is pecuniary, as mentioned elsewhere, they have liberty to spend as per their whim, all financial responsibility falling on males. For this reason, some critics have alleged that Lady Mary was envious of the Turkish ladies’ control over their financial affairs, while others have accused the Wortleys of giving special favour to the Turks in the hope of receiving special ‘gifts’ from them.
Lady Mary commented on the prosperity of Jews in Turkey. Her account endorses that they were not only free and rich under the Ottomans but excelled the common Turks in terms of their effectiveness and influence.

Every pasha has his Jew who is his *homme d'affaires*. He is let into all his secrets and does all his business. No bargain is made, no bribe received, no merchandise disposed of but what passes through their hands. They are the physicians, the stewards and the interpreters of all the great men. You may judge how advantageous this is to a people who never fail to make use of the smallest advantages. They have found the secret of making themselves so necessary they are certain of the protection of the court whatever ministry is in power. Even the English, French and Italian merchants, who are sensible in their artifices are however forced to trust their affairs to their negotiation, nothing of trade being managed without them and the meanest amongst them is too important to be disobliged since the whole body take care of his interests with as much vigour as they would those of the most considerable of their members. They are many of them vastly rich but take care to make little public show of it, though they live in their houses in the utmost luxury and magnificence.¹⁰⁶

Lady Mary has described a number of Christian sects, rather than as one monolithic group, giving the impression that they were disintegrated and poor besides being
neglected by the government, and worse, tormented by mutual rivalry. Some sects
studied by her include:

**Roman Catholics**

I confess there is nothing gives me a greater abhorrence of the cruelty of your clergy than the barbarous persecutions of them, whenever they have been their masters for no other reason than not acknowledging the Pope. The dissenting in that one article has got them the titles of heretics, schismatics, and, what is worse, the same treatment.¹⁰⁷

But I was particularly diverted in a little Roman Catholic church, which is permitted here where the professors of that religion are not very rich, and consequently cannot adorn their images in so rich a manner as their neighbours, but, not to be quite destitute of all finery; they have dressed up an image of our Saviour over the altar, in a fair full-bottomed wig, very well powdered.¹⁰⁸

**Paulines**

I found at Philippopolis a sect of Christians that call themselves Paulines, They show an old church where, they say, St. Paul preached, and he is their favourite saint, after the same manner as St. Peter is at Rome; neither do they forget to give him the same preference over the rest of the apostles.¹⁰⁹
Greek Church

Here is a famous ancient Greek church. I had given one of my coaches to a Greek lady who desired the convenience of traveling with me. She designed to pay her devotions and I was glad of the opportunity of going with her. I found it an ill-built place, set out with the same sort of ornaments but less rich than the Roman Catholic churches. They showed me a saint's body, where I threw a piece of money and a picture of the Virgin Mary drawn by the hand of St. Luke, very little to the credit of his painting, but, however, the finest madonna of Italy is not more famous for her miracles: The Greeks have the most monstrous taste in their pictures, which for more finery are always drawn in a gold ground. You may imagine what a good air this has, but they have no notion either of shade or proportion. They have a bishop here who officiated in his purple robe, and sent me a candle almost as big, as myself for a present when I was at my lodging.\textsuperscript{110}

Armenians

Now I have mentioned the Armenians, perhaps it will be agreeable to tell you something of that nation. ----They are now subject to the Turks, and, being very industrious in trade, and increasing and multiplying, are dispersed in great numbers through all the Turkish dominions. They were, as they say, converted to the Christian religion by St.Gregory, and are perhaps the devoutest Christians in the whole world. The chief precepts of their priests enjoin the strict keeping of
their Lents, which are at least seven months in every year, and are not to be dispensed with on the most emergent necessity. No occasion whatever can excuse them if they touch anything more than mere herbs or roots, without oil, and plain dry bread. This is their Lenten diet.111

'Tis true they seem to incline very much to Mr Whiston's doctrine, neither do I think the Greek Church very distant from it, since 'tis certain the insisting on the Holy Spirit only proceeding from the Father is making a plain subordination in the Son. But the Armenians have no notion of transubstantiation, whatever account Sir Paul Rycaut gives of them (which account I am apt to believe was designed to compliment our court in 1679), and they have a great horror for those amongst them that change to the Roman religion.112

What is most extraordinary in their customs is their matrimony, a ceremony I believe unparalleled all over the world.113

Rascians

---we left Peterwardein the next day, being waited on by the chief officers of the garrison and a considerable convoy of Germans and Rascians: The Emperor has several regiments of these people, but to say truth, they are rather plunderers than soldiers, having no pay and being obliged to furnish their own arms and horses. They rather look like vagabond gypsies or stout beggars than regular troops. I can't forbear speaking a word of this race of creatures who are very
numerous all over Hungary. They have a patriarch of their own at Grand Cairo, and are really of the Greek Church.\textsuperscript{114}

**Arnounts**

But of all the religions I have seen the Arnounts seem to me the most particular. They are natives of Arnawutluk, the ancient Macedonia, and still retain the courage and hardiness, though they have lost the name of Macedonians, being the best militia in the Turkish Empire, and the only check upon the janissaries. They are foot soldiers; we had a guard of them relieved in every considerable town we passed. They are all clothed and armed at their own expense, generally lusty young fellows dressed in clean white coarse cloth, carrying guns of a prodigious length, which they run with upon their shoulders, as if they did not feel the weight of them, the leader singing a sort of rude tune, not unpleasant, and the rest making up the chorus. These people living between Christians and Mohammedans, and not being skilled in controversy, declare that they are utterly unable to judge which religion is best, but to be certain of not entirely rejecting the truth they very prudently follow both and go to the mosque on Fridays, and to the church on Sundays, saying for their excuse that at the day of judgement they are sure of protection from the true prophet, but which that is, they are not able to determine in this world. I believe there is no race of mankind who have so modest an opinion of their own capacity.\textsuperscript{115}
Dervishes

Whirling dervishes had long been the subject of interest and curiosity in the West. They are supposed to be mystics, practising Islam. They usually inhabited hans (monasteries) where they performed their peculiar rites which ended in their whirling dance. Some of them also tormented themselves with fire. Lady Mary gives an interesting account of this group:

Behind the mosque is an exchange full of shops where poor artificers are lodged gratis. I saw several dervishes at their prayers here. They are dressed in a plain piece of wollen cloth with their arms bare, and a wollen cap on their heads like a high crowned hat without brims.¹¹⁶

The other public buildings are the hans and monasteries, the first very large and numerous, the second few in number and not at all magnificent. I had the curiosity to visit one of them and observe the devotions of the dervishes, which are as whimsical as any in Rome. These fellows have permission to marry, but are confined to an odd habit, which is only a piece of coarse white cloth wrapped about them, with their legs and arms naked. Their order has few other rules, except that of performing their fantastic rites every Tuesday and Friday, which is in this manner. They meet together in a large hall, where they all stand, with their eyes fixed on the ground and their arms across, while the imam or preacher reads part of the Alcoran from a pulpit placed in the midst; and when he has done, eight or ten of them make a melancholy consort with their pipes, which are no unmusical
instruments. Then he reads again and makes a short exposition on what he has read, after which they sing and play till their superior (the only one of them dressed in green) rises and begins a sort of solemn dance. They all stand about him in a regular figure, and while some play the others tie their robe, which is very wide, fast round their waists and begin to turn round with an amazing swiftness and yet with great regard to the music, moving slower or faster as the tune is played. This lasts above an hour without any of them showing the least appearance of giddiness, which is not to be wondered at when it is considered they are all used to it from infancy, most of them being devoted to this way of life from their birth, and sons of dervishes. There turned amongst them some little dervishes of six or seven years old who seem no more disordered by that exercise than the others. At the end of the ceremony they shout out; ‘there is no other god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet’, after which they kiss the superior's hand and retire. The whole is performed with the most solemn gravity. Nothing can be more austere than the form of these people. They never raise their eyes and seem devoted to contemplation, and as ridiculous as this is in description, there is something touching in the air of submission and mortification they assume.¹¹⁷

While summing up this discourse on her travelogue, one notes that Lady Mary recurrently complains of 'fatigues' which seems rather puzzling as she also reports her good health. Then the fatigue may not be any physical crisis but an Oriental allusion to her travel in ontological space. Secondly, her fatigue not only bolsters her position
as a woman traveler but also strengthens her in countering the conquering voice of European masculine travelers busy in producing Oriental geography. No doubt her arguments are often based on prerogatives of class and gender but her feminine emotional response not only balances it but keeps her at a safe distance from the colonialist narratives. Moreover, her status of a women traveler increases the authenticity of her narrative. In terms of both ‘knowledge of the native and his introduction’, Lady Mary excels in being authentic.

This is why *TEL* is not merely a travelogue: it is rich in both customary and exotic details, lighter and worrying moments, and novel descriptions and strange narrative contents conforming to all the conventions of a travelogue and at the same time it fulfills its role as a travelogue and rather transcends the category of travel literature. But this conclusion may entail ignoring the true nature of her travels. Lady Mary’s travel to the Orient not only stabilized her literary stature but transformed the stereotyped image of the Turks---- monsters, degenerate in morals and uneducated in real life. As Anita Desai writes, “The great success of the Turkish Letters lies partially in the circumstances of her escaping for a year or two from her confining society and experiencing a new world without the prejudices with which she was born.” This newly earned experience also turned her travelogue, *TEL*, into a highly rewarding contribution to cross-cultural studies and intellectual history.
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