

Yusuf Ağâh Efendi and the first permanent embassy of the Ottoman State in London

During the reign of Selim III (1789-1807), the Ottoman Empire has changed to her directions from Nizam-ı Kadim towards modernization in central organizations under the umbrella of Nizam-ı Cedid. With Nizam-ı Cedid's novelties which had included serious new orders from especially in military area to political, financial, administrative and sociocultural institutions; the Ottoman foreign policy had undergone a change from part-time activeness to continuous diplomacy and in that point the establishment of permanent embassies in European capitals including London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin could be evaluated as both stimulating and tardy ordinance because permanent embassies had officiated as an active agent who could supply and transmit essential information and experience from the ground to the center in the topic of developments within Europe. The ideological infrastructure of Nizam-ı Cedid was shrouded undoubtedly under observations of several *sefâretnâmes* (*the book of embassy*) of former Ad Hoc envoys for instance Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi's famous work from Paris, Mehmed Dervish Efendi's reports from Saint Petersburg, Ebubekir Ratip Efendi's detailed reports from Nemçe, and Ahmet Resmi Efendi's observations from Vienna because the implications of different European states in administrative, financial and military areas and also sociocultural life within different European capitals have constituted main subject of these *sefâretnâmes*. Even if, political and economic relationships with other states has been conducted by various actors including translators, traders, military officers and Ad Hoc delegates from the very beginning of the Ottoman Empire, the state had decided to open a first permanent embassy at London in 1793 with the appointment of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi as the first permanent Turkish ambassador in between December 1793-July 1797, in the final phase of 18th century. The settlement of permanent embassy system within in the context of foreign relationships with following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 that was also named as

the Westphalia system as in the introduction of diplomacy, had caused to transformation in the existing world order. Nevertheless, the appropriation of permanent embassy system among Ottoman policy makers had took comparatively a long time that around after 340 years from European states. The usage of concept of continuous negotiation in foreign policy had to wait until the period of reformer Sultan Selim III who always had personally a curious mind about recent developments in Europe from the beginning of his lineage. Sultan Selim III was acknowledged as innovatory manager, he was liken to Peter the Great by French ambassador, Choiseul-Gouffier, he had corresponded with Louis XVI, the king of France and obviously, he had dedicated himself in order to make influential reorganizations among the Ottoman institutions according to new and modern orders which were adopted by European states.¹ In this respect, the establishment of first permanent embassy of the Ottoman Empire under the period of Selim III and his New Order movement could be analyzed as also inevitable ordinance for why firstly, the usage of continuous communication technique with Europeans and observations of their accomplishments in various areas, secondly, the intended effect of transmission of information from permanent embassies and ambassadors in different European capitals to center and its effect over the modernization progress in the empire's institutions and lastly, the education of young generation of Ottoman diplomacy officers who could serve to a sustainable Ottoman foreign policy in the world area. The alteration in the direction that from exchanges of ambassadors to permanent embassy system within the frame of Nizam-ı Cedid in this place had arose from a silent legacy coming from *sefâretnâmes* as a result of changing policy equilibrium between the Ottoman Empire and the European continent and this change had rendered service as a tool in order to move forward in the reforms of Nizam-ı Cedid. From this point of view, Yusuf Ağâh Efendi as the first permanent ambassador of the Ottoman Empire has constituted a representative ambassador image

¹ Selim III, *Yaşamları ve Yapıtları ile Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi*, C:2, , İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, December, 1999, P: 517.

succeeding from early times at the Ottoman diplomatic history, he has taken upon himself a symbolical role in the progression of modernization movement within the empire and additionally, he has represented an early prototype within the period of the formation of the Ottoman Foreign Service officer in following century.

a. The general looking towards Nizam-ı Cedid and the reign of Selim III

First of all, the changing conditions and balances in both the Ottoman Empire and the European continent should be analysed between 17th and 18th century in order to understand the structure and framework behind reforms of those times. While Sultan Murad IV (1623-1640) and the period of Köprülü family members (1656-1683), Mehmet and Ahmed as grand vezirs could be accounted as pioneer reformers of 17th century; Selim III (24 December 1761-28 July 1808) and his Nizam-ı Cedid era (1789-1807) has obviously taken a new turn into modernization in the state and it is labelled as second phase in the Turkish modernization history by Niyazi Berkes.² Even if Ottomans and Europeans were not totally foreigners to each other because there were always intermediates between them, Europe could not be reference for the Ottoman Empire even in the minds of well-educated Ottoman intellectuals until the defeat at Vienna in 1683 and the war of the Holy League beginning in 1683 and ending in 1699 with the Treaty of Carlowitz. When it came to the last quarter of 18th century, the Ottoman Empire had lost large territories in the Central Europe including Hungary, Transylvania, Serbia, Croatia and Slavonia and with diverse peace settlements like Treaty of Passarowitz (1718), Treaty of Belgrade (1739), Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) and Treaty of Jassy (1792), deficiencies within Ottoman State comparing to European states especially in military area and inevitable necessity for reforms had been noticed stringently. Additionally, Russia and her new governor Catherine the Great (1762-1796) had come in sight as unfamiliar and dangerous enemy of the Ottoman Empire for both Black Sea and Balkan

² Ed. Seyfi Kenan, *Nizam-ı Kadim'den Nizam-ı Cedid'e III. Selim ve Dönemi*, İstanbul, İSAM Yayınları, 2010, p: 11.

region. The childhood period of Selim III had witnessed those tumultuous times, he had lost his father Mustafa III in 1774 and his cage life had passed until Abdülhamit I's death on April 7 1789, however, from the beginning, the young prince Selim had been educated in order to be governor by both his father and his tutors; he had qualified friends and servants including Ebubekir Ratip Efendi, Çuhadar Hüseyin Ağa, Safiye Sultanzade İshak Bey, physician Lorenzo, he had used to attend meeting of Imperial Council with Mustafa III, he was in communication with foreign ambassadors Saint-Priest and Choiseul-Gouffier and Louis XVI, the king of France as his 'role model', his letters were ended with a title of '*saltanat veliahdı*' (*the crown prince of the reign*)³ It is obvious that Selim III was a member of his own 18th century as the generation of the Enlightenment; his minds were full of reforms unlike his previous members of his family, nevertheless, the occurrence of disorder within irregular army and the boycott movement towards him during the continuous war with Russia after the treaty of Zıstovi in 1791 and treaty of Jessy in 1792 could be evaluated as truly decisive point for Selim III's reforms ideas because he had witnessed closely to indiscipline and corruption in the state and he had ordered to prepare various *layihas*(*reports*) in order to analyse internal problems of the state. In these nearly 23 *layihas*, general complaints have been constituted around irregularity inside military, administration in provinces, problems among ilmiye class and education services, necessity of revival in economy, cultural and social areas.⁴ Modernization within military class and military technology have always constituted the first step and later developments have followed to this road in the Ottoman history because of checkmates in various war during 17th and 18th century; the advancement of European technology at military area have been noticed by the Ottoman policy makers. In this respect, Sultan Selim III also began to form a new army which was under the title of

³ Kemal Beydilli, III. Selim: Aydınlanmış Hükümdar, Nizam-ı Kadim'den Nizam-ı Cedid'e III. Selim ve Dönemi, Ed. Seyfi Kenan, İstanbul, İSAM Yayınları, 2010, p: 30.

⁴ Doç. Dr. Besim Özcan, Sultan III. Selim Devri Islahat Hareketleri (Nizâm-ı Cedîd) <https://www.tarihtarih.com/?Syf=26&Syz=384663> (26.03.2016)

Bostaniyan-ı Hassa Ocağı, called as Nizam-ı Cedid Army that transformed to a symbol name for reforms of those times. His reforms concentrated over both military and technical reform packages with French experts that the revival of the Ottoman navy, the reorganizing among *Mühendishane-i Bahri-i Hümayun* (the imperial school of naval engineering) and *Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayun*, the reconditioning of officer trainers, widened barrack buildings at both Levent and Üsküdar, the improvement in manufacturing of rifles, cannons, bombs, gun powders, and the establishment of arms factories and so on. In addition to them, Nizam-ı Cedid movement reached out to area of administration, economy and finance; rearrangement within central organizations, numbers of vezirs, payments and feeds, strengthen in the power of the provincial governors, the establishment of *Irād-ı Cedid* (the budget of Nizam-ı Cedid), organization in the provision of grain and coffee with the intervention towards international trade, however, their effects and level of newness could not be counted as much as military reforms. According to Stanford J. Shaw, during Selim III's reign, there have been consisted some windows to the West and the opening permanent embassies and the beginning of continuous diplomatic missions could be added on these windows with military instructions and rise of Ottoman press.⁵

b. The end of Ad Hoc Diplomacy and the usage of concept of continuous negotiation in foreign policy

In the 17th century, the notion of continuous negotiation has come into the picture of world policy because of the transformation from universality to power of balance within European continent. As different from modernized Europe in 18th century, European countries under the regime of feudalism had a universal dream which included to unification of tradition of both Holy Roma Empire and Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, neither Holy

⁵ Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III 1789-1807*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harward University Press, 1971, p: 180-200.

Roman Empire nor Roman Catholic Church could maximize and centralize their political and religious powers under the one inclusive title for European continent, even they had become to enemies of each other and Europe was a centre for their debates and the notion of unification within European territory had lost its meaning and the usage of *raison d'état* and balance of power between different states have been accelerated as a result of centralization of government and emergence of bureaucratic states. During the 15th and 16th century, the limited version of permanent embassies and ambassadors have been used by Italian city-states, however, this notion was enlarged and developed with contribution of Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) who was the foreign secretary at France during the reign of Louis XIII, he had collected to foreign policy mechanisms of France under the one hand as a ministry and minister; undoubtedly, his arguments and actions have shaped to both establishment of structure of French foreign policy and diplomacy for 300 years and also, have influenced over policies within Europe. Until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and the settlement of Westphalia system as in the introduction of diplomacy, traditions and practices of diplomatic missions were transformed from individualism to institutionalism; direct negotiations between kings of Europe were began to conduct by their ambassadors coming from different levels of hierarchy as legally and symbolically. With the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699 and the Treaty of Utrecht in 1712, the system of balance of power in Europe was settled and the usage of continuous diplomacy rather than Ad Hoc diplomacy between states with the mission of permanent embassies and ambassadors were established and enlarged into other countries. In this respect, the reaction of the Ottoman policy makers towards these developments should be analysed by looking missions and conversations of permanent embassies and consulates of European states in Dersaadet including Great Britain, France, Holland, Russia, Venice and Poland in order to both benefit from international trade and capitulations and establish new policies after the increasing of Russian political power

over Balkans and Black Sea Region with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, the diplomatic missions of especially Great Britain and France had scaled up. Generally, the Ottoman diplomatic history could be categorized in terms of relationships with European states by J. C. Hurewitz as four periods that firstly, unilateralism and diplomacy and transition period (1453-1699), the period of unilateralist diplomacy (1699-1793), the transmission to mutual diplomacy and lastly, the period of reciprocity in diplomacy ⁶ and also, these four periods were termed as the ‘Europeanization’ of the Ottoman diplomacy by the same author. Even if, the Ottoman Empire did not implement the concept of the permanent embassy system in her foreign policy until the last quarter of 18th century and she had follow some kind of a fabian policy on this issue; her treaties, agreements and executions which could be counted as 68 in between 1703-1774, had showed that the Ottoman policy makers did not totally isolated from European continent, they had acted as respective towards changing situations and implementations in the foreign policy; in this connection, an unsuccessful alliance attempt with Prussia in 1790 and the peace and alliance agreement with Russia in 1798 could be labelled as turning points for the Ottoman diplomatic history and foreign policy because they have represented both transformation and adaptation of balance of power strategy.⁷ Concordantly, the establishment of the first permanent embassy at London in 1793 could be evaluated as an indispensable result of changing balances of power in the world area and an effort of Ottomans in order to comply with this new condition as permanent and continuous diplomacy.

⁶ Prof. Hiroki Odaka, *Osmanlı Diplomasinin Batılılaşması, Osmanlı I: Siyaset*, Ed. Kemal Çiçek and Cem Oğuz, Ankara, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999, p: 677.

⁷ Güneş Işıksel, *II. Selim’den III. Selim’e Osmanlı Diplomasisi: Birkaç Saptama, Nizam-ı Kadim’den Nizam-ı Cedid’e III. Selim ve Dönemi*, Ed. Seyfi Kenan, İstanbul, İSAM Yayınları, 2010, p: 335-338.

c. The expanding mission of Reis-ül Küttab and the increasing of bureaucratization in the central organization of Ottoman Empire

The organization under the title of *Reis-ül Küttab (the Chief of the Scribes)* and its increasing and expanding role in the structure of bureaucracy in the Ottoman central state organization should also be understood to follow the paths of modernization in the Ottoman State mechanisms. Until the last quarter of 17th century, the *Reis-ül Küttab* who was the chief of scribal department of Imperial councils, did not attend directly to *Divan-ı Hümayun (the imperial council)*, however, his position was so critical due to his registration duties and its importance increased and transformed into foreign ministry with configurations in 18th century under the organization of *Bab-ı Ali (the Sublime Porte)*. Under the supervisor of *Reis-ül Küttab*, there were *Divan-ı Hümayun Kalemi*, *Mektubi-i Sadr-ı Ali*, *Amedi Kalemi* and *Divan-ı Hümayun Tercümanı* and also, *Beylik*, *Tahvil* and *Rüus Kalemi* had ranged according to its hierarchical positions and multiple duties. The office of *Reis-ül Küttab* presented political power and prestige, nevertheless, being a *Reis-ül Küttab* in central organization of Ottoman Empire was highly long and tough way, because it required following different hierarchical position in central bureaucratic organization and also, selectivity and merit based in which were symbolization of faithfulness and honour with using *kalem (pencil)* and *kağıt (paper)*.⁸ After the successful performance of Reis-ül Küttab Rami Mehmed Efendi, specifically due to during the times of treaty of Carlowitz and the shifting of political powers and policy making from Imperial Council at palace to the council of the Grand Vezir (*İkindi Divanı*) at the Sublime Porte, the number of works and the level of position of Reis-ül Küttabs have increased inevitably towards entering into negotiations by ambassadors, corresponding with foreign states, registrations of treaties and contracts. Rami Mehmed Efendi had appointed as *Reis-ül Küttab* for a second time by Sultan Selim III's order and with the

⁸ Recep Ahiskalı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında Reisülküttaplık (XVIII. Yüzyıl)*, İstanbul, Tarih ve Tabiat Vakfı, 2001, p:15.

ineffective role of Melek Mehmed Paşa as the head of *Bab-ı Ali*, Rami Mehmed Efendi had found a suitable base for carrying out reforms in Ottoman diplomacy; the opening of permanent embassies in important centres of Europe, the transformation from unilateralism to reciprocity with the relationships of European state, the ending of method of *tayinat* (*payments for foreign envoys*) and consideration of balance of power within European states.⁹ In the meantime, some regulations and organizations within the selection of ambassadors (*sefir-i kebir*) and his staffs (*maiyet*) including a chief secretary (*sır katibi*), two Rum translators, treasurer (*hazinedar*), attaché (*ateşe*) and auxiliary personnel and also, missions and duties of ambassadors had been constituted within the framework of the Ottoman foreign policy which could be framed in the borders of ‘balance policy’. In this connection, Yusuf Agâh Efendi had been appointed as the first permanent Turkish ambassador between December 1793-July 1797 to London and in later years, other permanent embassies were appointed to Paris, Vienna and Berlin. In addition, the informal identity of ‘*şehbender*’ (*consulate*) organization in foreign states had been transformed into legalization, the usage of appointment of consuls and registrations of them in *tayin tezkireleri* (*decisions of appointment*) had made them official by these ways.

d. The evaluating of relationship with The United Kingdom in the 18th century

During the 17th century, the framework of relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain was maintained mostly on economic area with the usage of business offices and companies rather than establishing diplomacy on political basis. Firstly, it was because of the long distance between London and Istanbul and secondly, the general incuriousness towards both Ottoman and Russian Empires of at least English bureaucrats. On the other hand, the existence of British trade networks in Levant region had obliged to British foreign

⁹ Prof. M. Alaeddin Yalçınkaya, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Batı Politikası-Zitvatorok'tan Küçük Kaynarca'ya (1606-1774)*, *Türk Dış Politikası-Osmanlı Dönemi*, Ed.Dr.Mustafa Bıyıklı, İstanbul, Bilimevi Basın Yayın, 2008, p:96-101.

policy makers to continue stabilized relationship with Ottoman State and to connect with the Sublime Porte in order to diminish the rise of French effects over Ottoman State's Levant region in both politically and economically. The Levant Company was founded in 1581 in order to develop overseas trades with the region of Ottoman Empire and until the year of 1804, it provided costs of English ambassadors and embassies in Ottoman Empire.¹⁰ Additionally, it had a lot of members and political networking among different parts of Ottoman territories and it could be said that the economic motives of the Levant Company shaped the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the United Kingdom until the middle of the 18th century, when the emergence of the term of Eastern Question had been used in foreign policy. On the other hand, there was a general sympathy towards France had been continued from 17th century among Ottoman political elites because of both political alliance in Great Turkish War (1683-1699) and personal friendship between Selim III and Louis XVI, however, the confidential image of France had been shaken after bloody results of French Revolution which began in 1789 and Selim III had decided to stay as noncommittal political position towards those staggering events especially about the future of French kingdom and because of tense relationships between other European countries over debating of official recognition of revolutionary France. In that point, the Great Britain was seen as neutral, old and good foreign country rather than France or Russia and as a loyal friend of Ottoman State from the looking of Selim III and the Sublime Porte. The inevitable necessity of establishing a permanent embassy was debated with Sir Robert Ainslie and the British ambassador noted that *“It was the Reis Efendi who opened the Business of the meeting by informing me that the Sultan's Intention of sending a Minister to the Court of London was unalterably fixed; that the Hopes conceived from this Mission intended for His Majesty were not limited to the Interests of the moment but extended by the most earnest Desire to cultivate*

¹⁰ Christine Laidlaw, *Levant'taki İngilizler 18. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğuyla Ticaret ve Siyaset*, İstanbul, Alfa Press, November, 2014. p:14.

to the almost the valuable Friendship which has so long and so happily existed between the two Powers to their mutual Benefit.”¹¹ This decision and its formal details were negotiated and agreed by a *mukaleme mazbatası* (parley protocol) on July 13, 1793 at Bebek Saray’s garden with a meeting among Mehmet Raşid Efendi as the Reis Efendi, Tatarcıklı Abdullah Efendi, George Constantine Morozi, Stephano Pisani and Sir Robert Ainslie as the British Ambassador.¹² In the documents at the Prime Ministry Archives, this political and diplomatic conversation was written on record as following sentences that “... Yesterday, Abdullah Molla Efendi as inviter and Reis Efendi had gathered with the British ambassador in the Bebek Garden that the appointment to Britain of the ambassador matter from the Ottoman State was as agreed...”¹³ Yusuf Agâh Efendi who already was in higher place at the bureaucratic service was appointed no strikingly as the first permanent Turkish ambassador to London on July 23, 1793 (14 Zilhicce 1208).

a. The biography of Yusuf Agâh Efendi as an early example of Ottoman ambassadors

Yusuf Agâh Efendi (Tripolitsa 1744 – İstanbul 1824)’s childhood passed in Morea which is in the southern part of today’s Greece and his family was called as *Moralı* or *Morayiyü’l-asl* to emphasize their birth place in Ottoman chronicles. Undoubtedly, Yusuf Agâh and his family came from Turkish Muslim origin and they were one of the notable families in the Morea. Yusuf Agâh’s grandfather was Mustafa Efendi, his father Süleyman Penah Efendi and his two brothers as Osman Efendi and Seyyid Ali Efendi (brother-in-law) were also registered as *Moralı* in the archives. Even if, there is no detailed registration of the early background of

¹¹ Mehmet Aladdin, Yalçınkaya, *The first permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe: the embassy of Yusuf Agâh Efendi to London (1793-1797)*, İstanbul, The Isis Press, 2010. P: 32.

¹² Mehmet Alaaddin Yalçınkaya, *MAHMUD RAİF EFENDİ AS THE CHIEF SECRETARY OF YUSUF AGAH EFENDİ, THE FIRST PERMANENT OTTOMAN-TURKISH AMBASSADOR TO LONDON (1793-1797)** <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/19/1151/13525.pdf> (08.04.2016)

¹³ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi. Hatt-ı Hümayûn Tasnifi: 261/ 15090. 04/R /1207 (H) – 13/July/1793. “.. dünkü gün Abdullah Molla Efendi dâîleriyle Reis Efendi kulları Bebek bahçesinde İngiltere elçisi ile içtima etmeleriyle devlet-i aliyyeden İngiltere'ye tayini musammem olan elçi maddesi ..”

Yusuf Agâh Efendi in the chronicles, it could be said that his family members had serviced the various positions in Ottoman civil service. Süleyman Penah Efendi's career as a scribe in Ottoman chancery and his elder brother, Osman Efendi's duty as the head of the financial department between September 8, 1794- March 19, 1795 and November 16, 1806 and April 9, 1807 could be given as examples for this argument. It is worth noting that Seyyid Ali Efendi was appointed as ambassador to Paris between 1797 and 1802, after the appointment of Yusuf Agâh Efendi to London as first permanent ambassador.¹⁴ In this regard, Yusuf Agâh, his family background with their duties in the bureaucracy has constituted a typical notable family portrait among Ottoman society.

Yusuf Agah's career began by his journey from Morea to İstanbul in 1756 with his father, his elder brother and Moralı Osman Efendi who was one of the heads of provincial treasury in Morea. Later on, his rise in the hierarchy of Ottoman bureaucracy had started in a place as a scribe of the Grand Vizier İzzet Mehmet Paşa at the *Mektubi-i Sadriali* (correspondence office of the Grand Vizier) in 1774; he was appointed as *Mevkufati* (controller of the office of suspended payments) in 1781, he was promoted to *Kağıd-ı Enderun Emini* in 1785 and before his ambassadorial post in 1792; he had continued to work as *Kalyonlar Katibi* (the clerk of galleons) from 1790. During his years in the Ottoman Porte, he had improved himself in various departments including clerkship, finance, and accounting. After his appointment as the first permanent ambassador of the Ottoman State to London on July 23, 1793, his ceremony with *caftan* (a common ceremony for a newly appointed person) and his degree of ambassador was given on August 6, 1793; Yusuf Agâh Efendi and his 15-person entourage (*maiyet*) including Mahmud Raif Efendi as the chief secretary (*sırkatibi*), Emanuel Persiani as the first interpreter and Greogorio Valeria as the second interpreter,

¹⁴ Mehmet Alaaddin. Yalçınkaya, *The first permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe: the embassy of Yusuf Agâh Efendi to London (1793-1797)* İstanbul, The Isis Press, 2010, P:29-30.

Mehmed Derviş Efendi as treasurer or Attaché, Mehmet Tahir Efendi as nobleman of Muslim (*ehl-i İslam kişizadesi*) and lastly, Yanko Savrud as the nobleman of non-Muslim (*zimmi kişizadesi*) had departed from İstanbul on October 14, 1793 and they had passed orderly over these places Ruse, Bucharest, Buda to Vienna and then they continued to travel over Germany and Belgium to the Ostend Port in order to pass the English Channel and reach the Dover Port on December 19, 1793.¹⁵ The arrival of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi and his *maiyet* in Great Britain was followed scrupulously in both the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain; it could be seen in their archives. The newspapers of the period like *Ipswich Journal* and *The Times* had informed their readers about the appointment and the journey of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi like sentences as “*The new embassy of Ottoman Porte was set out from Constantinople early in the present month.*” on September 21, 1793 within the columns of *The Times*¹⁶ and “*The Turkish ambassador will come to London in a short span of time.*” in the *Ipswich Journal* on September 7, 1793.¹⁷ The arrival of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi was also another centre of point for English press for instance one piece of news was written in *The Times* that “*On Saturday afternoon SUSSUF [YUSUF] EFFENDI, the Turkish Ambassador to the Court of London, with a suite of 7 persons, arrived at the Royal Hotel, Pall- mall, where they have for the present taken up their abode, until a house is prepared for the Ambassador's reception.*”¹⁸ On the other hand, the news about Yusuf Ağah’s journey in the Ottoman State’s archives was noted that “*Yusuf Ağâh Efendi who was from the civil degree among imperial council and was appointed to the Britain State with an embassy, the arrival to London city which was the*

¹⁵ Mehmet Alaaddin, Yalçınkaya, “*Yusuf Ağâh Efendi.*” Yaşamları ve Yapıtları ile Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi, C:2, İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Kültür ve Sanat Yayıncılık, 1999. P:680-681.

¹⁶ “The new Embassy from the OTTOMAN PORTE was to set out from Constantinople early in the.” *Times* [London, England] 21 Sept. 1793: 2. *The Times Digital Archive.*(20.04.2016.)

¹⁷ Emre, Aracı, *Yusuf Ağâh Efendi. 18. Yüzyıl Londra’sında ilk Türk Büyükelçi*, İstanbul, Pera Museum Press,1. November, 2013, P: 8-9.

¹⁸ Mehmet Alaaddin. Yalçınkaya, *The first permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe : the embassy of Yusuf Ağah Efendi to London (1793-1797)* İstanbul, The Isis Press, 2010. P: 46.

residence of the King of England came by enunciator writing, taking it out of in the year of 1208 seventeenth day in the moon calendar's fifth month. ''¹⁹

b. Yusuf Agâh Efendi's diplomatic missions and his political contacts with the king of England

On the day of December 21, 1793, Yusuf Agâh Efendi and his *maiyyet* had arrived at London over Canterbury and they had stopped over in St. James's Royal Hotel in Pall Mall until the arrangement of an embassy building in Adelphi. The change in the policy of embassy at the Ottoman Porte and the appointment of Yusuf Agâh Efendi were welcome in the foreign offices of Great Britain; within few weeks, Yusuf Agâh Efendi had visited Lord Grenville (the minister of foreign affairs) and he had been approved presenting his letter of credence to George III who was the king of Great Britain on January 8, 1794. The existence of a permanent embassy in London had been evaluated as an utterly advantageous situation by the Levant Company which was founded in 1581 to develop overseas trades in the region of the Ottoman Empire and the special and magnificent dinner for the first permanent Turkish ambassador was arranged by the same company on January 15, 1794; after his contact with the Prime Minister William Pitt on the same day. His diplomatic missions were quite speedy and excessive; he was accepted by the Queen of the Great Britain on January 18, 1794 and then, he had met members of the House of Lords, notables, diplomats, ambassadors, dukes and so on. While Yusuf Agâh Efendi's journey was carried out on land, there was a ship to transport gifts of the Ottoman State for the king of Great Britain, the content of gifts could be seen in the archives like that “.. *As gifts from imperial, 5 Egyptian and Turkmenia horses will*

¹⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi. Cevdet- Hariciye: 85/ 4250. 13/B /1208 (H) – 16/01/1794.

“*Sefaretle İngiltere devletine tayin olunan hâcegân-ı dîvân-ı hümayundan Yusuf Âgâh Efendi mahsuben bi's-selam bin iki yüz sekiz senesi mâh-ı cemaziye'l-evvelinin on yedinci günü İngiltere [kralının] mahalli-i ikameti olan Londra şehrine vâsil olduğunu muş'ir tahriratı vürûd etmiştir.*”

be sent to Britain by sea in this time...’’²⁰ This ship was called as *Colombo Fortuna of Ragusa*, it left from Istanbul on October 11, 1793 and it arrived in London after around 8 months . In this regard, the official presentation of Yusuf Agâh Efendi in front of the King and the Queen of Great Britain were delayed approximately 6 months because of the trip of the ship. Between these times, Yusuf Agâh Efendi had maintained contact with the royal house and political circles; he was approved in reception with ambassadors of Spain and Holland at the palace of St. James on January 8, 1794. According to *The Times* and *London Gazette*’s reports, the society of London had a great interest towards Yusuf Agâh Efendi: ‘‘*Pall Mall was yesterday filled with carriages to see the TURKISH AMBASSADOR go to St. James ’s.*’’²¹ Finally, the *Name-i Hümayun* (the Sultan’s letter) and various gifts like golden guns, four Arab horses, decorated dagger so on for George III and his family, royal family, the Prime Minister Pitt, the minister of foreign affairs Lord Grenville and other important diplomats were presented by Yusuf Agâh Efendi at the palace of St. James on January 29, 1795 and after the ceremony, the formality of Yusuf Agâh Efendi had commenced in this way. According to *The European Magazine and London Review*, the delayed parade of the Turkish ambassador was chased curiously by both London society and press: in the morning of January 29, 1795; Yusuf Agâh had used one of the carriages of George III and proceeded to St. James with a huge crowd behind him.²² It could be observed that with the help of British embassy and the Turkey Company’s couriers; the relationship between the Ottoman embassy in London and the Sublime Porte were conducted and in this regard, the detailed report of the ceremony and presentation of Name-i Hümayun were reported to the Ottoman Porte and Yusuf Agâh Efendi’s actions as an ambassador were watched and controlled

²⁰ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Cevdet-Hariciye: 8785. 26/S /1208 (H) – 03/10/1793.

‘‘... hedâyâ-yı hümayun olarak bu defa bahren İngiltere’ye îsâl olunacak beş re’s Mısırî ve Türkmen atların..’’

²¹ Mehmet Alaaddin, Yalçinkaya, *The first permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe : the embassy of Yusuf Agah Efendi to London (1793-1797)*, İstanbul, The Isis Press, 2010. , P: 142.

²² Emre, Aracı, *Yusuf Agâh Efendi. 18. Yüzyıl Londra’sında ilk Türk Büyükelçi*, İstanbul, Pera Museum Press,1. November, 2013. P: 46-47.

closely. I think that the effect of being the first permanent embassy could be evaluated as one of causes which lie behind this kind of attention from the Sublime Porte; it could be seen by usage of these sentences from archival sources that “ *In this time, with the former ambassador Yusuf Agâh Efendi who turned back from England, the letter that was sent by the King of England was translated by the interpreter of the imperial council with his skill, in order to be ordered as admirable, the letter with its originals was rendered as worthily for Sultan’s introduction..*”²³ All of this interest towards the Turkish ambassador in London was turned into diplomatic advantage and used by Yusuf Agâh Efendi in various ways. During his time in the embassy, the contemporary theme had been shaped around the French Revolution and the coalition movement of European States including Great Britain, Russia, Austria and Holland against this revolution, however, Ottoman State’s neutrality because of history of relationship with France and general sympathy towards France in both Sultan Selim III himself and the Porte had constituted serious diplomatic crises between England and the Ottoman State from time to time.²⁴ Specifically, the diplomatic activities of Yusuf Agâh Efendi could be seen in two points that “the Nemesis Affairs” and “the Russian Propaganda.” Firstly, the topic of defection of French ships to the port of İzmir and then, British military action against the admiralty law along the borders of the Ottoman sea had occupied Yusuf Agah’s agenda for a long time because this naval accident became a serious diplomatic crises between France and England and in this point, with the Sublime Porte’s directives, Yusuf Agâh Efendi negotiated with both France and England’s officers under the concept of neutrality. Secondly, after the defensive alliance between Russia and Great Britain at the beginning of 1795, the Ottoman Porte had become alarmed against Russian propaganda

²³ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi. Hatt-ı Hümayûn Tasnifi: 1408/ 57131.

“ *bu defa İngiltere'den avdet eden elçi-yi sâbık Yusuf Âgâh Efendi kulları yediyle İngiltere kralı tarafından vârid olan nâme ve mektup dîvân-ı hümayunları tercümanı kulları marifetiyle tercüme ettirilip manzûr-ı hümayunları buyurulmak için asıllarıyla ma’an takdîm-i hâk pây-i mülûkâneleri kılındığı..* ”

²⁴ Mehmet Alaaddin, Yalçınkaya, *The first permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe : the embassy of Yusuf Agah Efendi to London (1793-1797)* İstanbul, The Isis Press, 2010. P: 67-73.

and gossips about a secret alliance between France and the Ottoman State, and in this connection, Yusuf Agâh Efendi's diplomatic activities had been formed around emphasizing neutrality of the Ottoman State in order to defend himself against Russian whispers' hazardous effects.²⁵ Yusuf Agâh Efendi had interviewed Lord Grenville about the meaning of defensive alliance and transmitted routinely his ideas over those topics to the Porte. Besides these two current topics, he had prestigious image as an ambassador and he formed several friendships with bureaucrats of Great Britain like Lord Grenville, James Dalloway and Robert Liston and also, other diplomats of including Sweden and Denmark.

**c. Social-cultural interactions between members of the Ottoman embassy and the
18th century London society**

The arrival of Yusuf Agâh Efendi and his *maiyet* had constituted assuredly an alluring gossip topic both among 18th London society and London press: it could be seen clearly in the newspapers and journals of the time. Yusuf Agâh Efendi was the centre of attention with his habits, routines, appearances, his speech and movements. For instance, one of his regular habits was *nargile* (Hubble bubble) and *The Times* already gave in a place for his *nargile* practice with his lady guests: '*Jusuf Efendi, the Turkish ambassador, will probably revive the almost exploded custom of smoking. He offers his pipe to all who favour him with a visit. Several of the first female fashionables have taken a morning puff, merely for the whim.*'²⁶

The cause of considerable curiosity and attention towards both the ambassador and also his *maiyet* could be observed in various ways; even his eating habits could become an attractive issue of concern for *Hampshire Chronicle*. On the other hand, Yusuf Agâh Efendi and his *maiyet* went out in public at Covent Garden Theatre during Christmas of 1793 and later, his

²⁵ Mehmet Alaaddin, Yalçınkaya, *The first permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe : the embassy of Yusuf Agah Efendi to London (1793-1797)*İstanbul, The Isis Press. 2010. P: 74-78.

²⁶ "JUSSUF EFFENDI, the Turkish Ambassador, will probably revive the almost exploded." *Times* [London, England] 26 Dec. 1793: 3. *The Times Digital Archive*. (20 Apr. 2016.)

name had passed with regard to various recreation activities including theatre, operas and pleasure trips in gardens along with diplomatic dinner invitations and political negotiations. It could be apparently seen that Yusuf Agâh Efendi had got a foothold among 18th century London aristocracy by using the title of the Ottoman ambassador. To illustrate that there was a grand gala in order to serve the desire of the ambassador to attend a firework display at London's Ranelagh and Vauxhall gardens and this event was announced among the columns of *The Times* on July 24, 1794 that “*His excellency the Turkish ambassador having signified his intention of visiting the gardens tomorrow, Tuesday, there will be a grand gala.*”²⁷ It is not an exaggeration that all of these events in London could be named as Turkish craziness and fashion of Turquoise because this enormous interest towards Turkish culture had reverberated to subjects of theatres, marches, books, even military uniforms of military band. For example, one of these ‘*alla turca*’²⁸ popularities could be seen in musical pieces like the Turkish Ambassador's Grand March which was composed by W. P. R. Cope and the Turkish Military Symphony which was composed by Joseph Haydn on March 31, 1794 at Hanover Square Rooms. After Yusuf Agah's arrival to London, two theatre plays; *A day in Turkey* and *the Siege of Belgrade* had been performed consecutively in Royal Opera House in 1794, in this regard these two performances could be attributed to the first step of ongoing relations with the Ottoman Embassy in London and the Royal Opera House because there were other musical play performances like *Murat the Fourth* and *Pizarro* over the intention of Yusuf Agâh Efendi and other ambassadors in later times. Besides all these, the brochure of *Musleiman Adeti* or *Description of the Customs and Manners of the Turks with a Sketch of their literature* which were written by Samuel Baker and the huge oil painting portraits of Yusuf Agâh Efendi which were illustrated by Carl Fredrik von Breda had been spread out

²⁷ "King's Theatre." *Times* [London, England] 23 June 1794: 1. *The Times Digital Archive*. (20 Apr. 2016.)

²⁸ "Alla Turca: In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, compositions in naive imitation of the Turkish military style enjoyed a certain short-lived vogue. Well-known examples of the “*alla turca*” genre are the final movement of Joseph Haydn's “*Military*” *Symphony No. 100 in G Major* (1794); the final movement of Mozart's *Piano Sonata*.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <http://global.britannica.com/topic/alla-turca> (22.04.2016)

over society of London and in the *Critical Review*, they were recommended for relevant people for understanding Turkish culture and to acquaint themselves with the ambassador; his representations and portraits were given with Lady Magazine's merely for 6 cent and Yusuf Agâh Efendi's small images was spread out London society.²⁹ On the other hand, it should be noted that the financial situation of Yusuf Agâh Efendi and other embassy employees had remained insufficient time to time due to differences of value of money in between Ottoman and Britain State and extra payments were sent to them; this condition could be seen in the archives that “.. *The fifteen piaster of the aforementioned amount was situated in order to get rid of the necessity and the five thousand of the piaster for the privy secretary the translator of his cortege ...*” and also “... *it was ordered as that the aforementioned amount the acceptance from the Darphane-i Amire and the delivery as duly to the British merchant from Dover who was the resident in Asitane-i Aliyye (Istanbul) with the skill of Tecelli Efendi and to the issuing the bill by the above-mentioned ambassador with this cause must be plugged away ..*”³⁰ It is not doubtful that there was an ongoing interest towards the Turkish culture; however this clear interest had gained a popular face with after the arrival of Yusuf Agâh Efendi and his *maiyyet* to London, theirs socializing into 18th century London society and also, it increased swiftly with the existence of the first permanent embassy of the Ottoman State in London.

²⁹ Emre, Aracı, *Yusuf Agâh Efendi. 18. Yüzyıl Londra'sında ilk Türk Büyükelçi*, İstanbul, Pera Museum Press,1. November, 2013. P: 38-39.

³⁰ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi. Cevdet- Hariciye: 102/5064. 25/CA /1208 (H) – 28/01/1794.

“meblağ-ı mezburun on beş bin kuruşunu def'-i zaruret için kendi masârifine medar olmak ve beş bin kuruşu maiyyetinde olan ser katibi ve tercümanan ..” and “meblağ-ı mezburun darphane-i amireden ahz ve Asitane-i ailyede mukîm Dover nam İngiltere bâzırğânına Tecelli Efendi marifetiyle mucibince teslim ve sefir-i mumaileyhe poliçe ettirip bu vecihle tanzime ikdam eylesin deyu buyuruldu..”

d. “Havadisname-i İngiltere”’: looking from the eyes of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi and an evaluation of the age of *Sefaretname* as a tradition in Ottoman culture

Since the beginning of the Ottoman Empire, one of the missions of Ottoman envoys was reporting under a general account about their journeys, observations, activities and experiences to firstly Sultan and then Sadrazams (the Grand Vizier) and Reisülküttaps (the Chief of the Scribes). In this regard, the report of Hacı Zaganos which was in the first ten years of the reign of Mehmet II is seen as the first Sefaretname and the last Sefaretname belonged to Mehmet Tahir Münif Paşa who was the Ottoman ambassador in Iran in between 1872 - 1877. It could be said that the number of sefâretnâmes increased note worthily in between 1750-1800 years and the context and content of sefâretnâmes mostly concentrated on European culture, tradition, administration, economy and technical developments in European countries. These sefâretnâmes did not follow standard models; however, they had common features including prayers for Sultan, praises to God and the Prophet, stories about journeys and introduction ceremonies. From the beginning of the 19th century, first France and later Britain became attractive countries for Ottoman’s reforms in various areas and obviously, several reports of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi had an impact because they had provided detailed information and observations like the administration and institutions of Britain. The reports and correspondences of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi, the Sublime Porte’s writings about England and the first permanent embassy in London were collected under the title of Sefaretname by Sadrazam İzzet Mehmet Paşa’s order and it was called as Havadisname-i İngiltere (1793-1796).³¹ This work was enlightening the diplomatic activities of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi as ambassador like political reports and also, the mission of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi had gained the first-hand information and made objective observations about administration, military developments, finance and economy of Britain. Especially, while taking into account the

³¹ Mehmet Alaaddin, Yalçınkaya, *Osmanlı Zihniyetindeki Değişimin Göstergesi Olarak Sefaretnamelerin Kaynak Değeri*, Ankara, Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi, OTAM. P:379. 1997.

military reforms in Nizam-ı Cedid, the detailed information about Britain navy could be evaluated as remarkable; it had contained also personal relationship and acquaintance of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi with retired commander of Britain navy, Admiral Lord Hood.³² At the same time, it could be seen apparently that Yusuf Ağâh's reports about British political system as parliament, cabinet and crown and about the British financial system were quite comprehensive. In this connection, the reports of Yusuf Ağâh were evaluated as worthwhile for the Sublime Porte in two points; firstly, the establishment of the general structure and activities of the first permanent embassy, secondly gifts for palace of England, salaries and expenses of embassy employees had evolved towards a standard model and procedures for other permanent embassies of Ottoman State in later times.

e. Mahmud Raif Efendi as a curious mind and the “alter ego” of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi

Mahmud Raif Efendi (İstanbul, 1761- 25 May 1807) was assigned after suggestion of Reisülküttap Mehmet Raşid Efendi to the office of the chief secretary in London on August 12, 1793 when he was probably 53 years old. Before his appointment, he was in the Chamber of Mektubu-i Sadr-ı Ali as a scribe like Yusuf Ağâh Efendi and he had advanced to position of one of the Chief Clerks (Başkalfalık). As a chief secretary, he had accompanied Yusuf Ağâh Efendi in nearly every meeting, negotiations and conversations in London and also, he had dedicated to ambassador Yusuf Ağâh Efendi a Sefaretnâme in French (*Journal du Voyage de Mahmoud Raif Efendi en Angleterre écrit par lui meme*) which was not only the first and single ambassadorial account written in a foreign language but also the first work in a foreign language written by an Ottoman-Muslim. In addition to this, his book about military reforms of Nizam-ı Cedid (*Tableau des nouveaux reglemens de l'Empire Ottoman*) had been

³² Mehmet Alaaddin, Yalçınkaya, *The first permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe: the embassy of Yusuf Ağâh Efendi to London (1793-1797)*, İstanbul, The Isis Press, 2010. P: 163.

published in the press of engineering school in 1798 and his another book about geography ‘‘Ucalet-ül Coğrafya’’ was published in 1804. With Mehmet Derviş Efendi as treasurer or Attaché and Seyyid Mehmet Tahir Efendi as a nobleman of Muslim (*ehl-i İslam kişizadesi*), Mahmud Raif Efendi was one of first students who was educated in both French and English language and in this regard, Mahmud Raif Efendi was known with two nicknames: *British* and *Tanburi* (*Tanbur*: one of string instrument in Turkish classical music). After his return to Istanbul, he was appointed to various positions in Ottoman bureaucracy and his support to Selim III and Nizam-ı Cedid continued to his death in the revolt against Nizam-ı Cedid. During his years in London, he was also famous like the ambassador; he had practiced his abilities in archery at empty fields according to *the issue of the Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* in 1834.³³ Undoubtedly, he had a curious mind, the differentiation between Britain and Ottoman State in the point of political system could be interesting for him and he had emphasized this in his sentences like ‘‘*Although the laws are rigorously observed, everyone has the freedom to speak and write as he pleases; not in attacking the laws, but the reputation of often very important people, who are referred to without being named.*’’³⁴ His observations of was quite large-scale; they had involved from parliamentary system, economic institutions, military concerns, social and cultural life of London to descriptions and comparisons of British society and London as a whole. After his arrival from London, he was appointed as diplomatic representative of the Ottoman State to the coalition of the Ottoman State and Russia against France in Adriatic Sea in 1798 and he was charged with the head of Clerks (Reisülküttap) in between 1800 – 1805 as a result of Ottoman’s pro-Britain foreign policy. His years in the position of Reisülküttap was evaluated as the reformist phase because the issue of charter merchants under the insurance of foreign

³³ Emre, Aracı, *Yusuf Agâh Efendi. 18. Yüzyıl Londra’sında ilk Türk Büyükelçi*. İstanbul, Pera Museum Press,1. November, 2013. P:43.

³⁴ Mehmet Alaaddin, Yalçınkaya. *Mahmud Raif Efendi as the Chief Secretary of Yusuf Agâh Efendi, the first permanent Ottoman-Turkish Ambassador to London (1793-1797)*. P: 430.
<http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/19/1151/13525.pdf> (22.04.2016)

states among the Ottoman's borders and the debated trade issue in the Black Sea constituted two main topics in those years. At the same time, it was known that the establishment of the Ottoman consulates in coastal towns like Napoli, Marseille, Genova and Venice as another initiative provided to look out for Ottoman merchants' interest in these places.³⁵

f. The end of the beginning: end of Yusuf Agâh Efendi's office and appointment of İsmail Ferruh Efendi to London

After three years, Yusuf Agâh Efendi had requested to return back to the capital of the Ottoman State and his request had been approved with the appointment of İsmail Ferruh Efendi as the new ambassador in London at November 1796.³⁶ The financial troubles due to delays in payments of salaries, the climate of Britain as rainy, foggy and cloudy and the homesickness could be presented as reasonable causes behind his returning request to Istanbul with his *maiyet*.³⁷ Before İsmail Ferruh Efendi arrived at London on July 23, 1797; Yusuf Agâh Efendi had visited George III on July 19, 1797 and he had left from London with his *maiyet* and the letter of George III. This letter had evaluated Yusuf Agah's embassy as very rewarding and it had emphasized that he had prepared the background in order to establish and develop reciprocal respect and understanding between Britain and the Ottoman State.³⁸ It was presented to Selim III with other information about the permanent embassy in London by Yusuf Agâh Efendi. It could be said that the appointment of İsmail Ferruh Efendi indicated the adaptation of the Ottoman State in the concept of continuous negotiation in foreign policy.

Consequently, the Ottoman State had to change its foreign policy with the establishment of permanent embassies in different capitals of European states, especially in

³⁵ Kemal Beydilli, MAHMUD RÂİF EFENDİ, C: 27 P: 382-383, 2003.
<http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/pdf/c27/c270267.pdf> (15.05.2016)

³⁶ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi. Hatt-ı Hümayun Tasnifi: 3 / 1466.

³⁷ Mehmet Alaaddin, Yalçınkaya, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Yeniden Yapılanması Çalışmalarında İlk İkamet Elçisinin Rolü*, İstanbul, Toplumsal Tarih, P:45-53, 1996.

³⁸ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi. Cevdet- Hariciye: 8183. 28/RA/1212 – 20/10/1797.

order to pursue changes and developments in European continent. As a first step, London and Yusuf Agâh Efendi were selected as the first permanent embassy and ambassador.

Undoubtedly, he had authorized to represent the Ottoman State's interest and he had to follow the Sublime Porte's policies, in addition to these; he and his *maiyet* had made an effort in order to improve themselves in diplomacy area and not only in the political world but also; they performed a good performance while socializing into 18th century London society; their times in the embassy of Ottoman State overlapped the growing interest towards Turkish culture in certain extent. In this regard, he has thrust himself forward with taking upon an ambassadorial role in the establishment of the first permanent embassy in London because he managed to preserve the state's interests while dealing with different kind of diplomatic issues and his activities, reports and observations in various areas were examined gingerly by both the Sublime Porte and the Sultan. At the same time, the structure of the first permanent embassy with its procedures and rules became to standardize for another Ottoman embassies. As a result of his successful period of office in the Ottoman embassy, he constituted a symbolical role within the period of the formation of the Ottoman Foreign Service officer in following century.

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