

Precursors to the Prince: The Grand Tour in the Ottoman Empire

The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace

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Welcome to a podcast from Royal Collection Trust, where we'll be tracing Britain's links with the Ottoman Empire. During the 18th and 19th century the Ottoman Empire was an ally and travel there relatively safe. British tourists often extended their Grand Tour far into the east. These included people as diverse as the poet Lord Byron and the politician Benjamin Disraeli, as well as the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. But what were their aims and motivations in travelling so far? Coming up, historian and author, Dr Philip Mansel, gives a lecture entitled 'Precursors to the Prince: the Grand Tour in the Ottoman Empire' to an audience at the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace. This is an enhanced podcast so make sure you look at the images when they appear on the screen of your device.

[applause]

[00:52]

Dr Philip Mansel: Thank you very much. I'm going to run through quite a lot of pictures to begin with and then concentrate on the period, the early 19th century leading up to the Prince's tour in 1862. And let's forget about today and any preconceived ideas we have, because the Ottoman Empire was very much part of Europe and indeed part of the Grand Tour, much more and from much earlier than I think we imagine. The Grand Tour was normally a period of two to three years' travel, generally for education for wealthy young men in their twenties and normally it's considered to focus on Italy, but in fact many travellers always sailed on from Venice, Naples or Malta to Greece, to Constantinople and beyond, as the Prince of Wales did in 1862. As early as 1663 the English ambassador, Lord

Winchilsea, wrote from Constantinople, 'This city I hold much better worth seeing than all Italy'. And I'm beginning with this picture, anonymous, probably by Vanmour, of Constantinople about 1700, and you see Istanbul itself, Galata, which is the area where Europeans lived and along here were and still are the European embassies, now Consulates General, and this is the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. This is Europe, this is Asia. And the great poet, Nabi, wrote, 'Heaven in vain revolves round all the world, it sees nowhere a city like Constantinople. The two banks of the Bosphorus were compared to a diamond between two emeralds, the jewel in the ring of universal empire.' And the motive for travelling here, there were three forces: power, scholarship and pleasure, as happened with the Prince of Wales. Alliances, scholarship or biblical research and pleasure, including hunting, which of course the Prince of Wales did on his tour. The Ottoman Empire was a great military and economic power. And there you see another view of Constantinople which comes from Ripley Castle in Yorkshire, it's by an artist who's only now being researched, called Jan van der Steen [ph], who then went on with a group of English travellers to Aleppo and then on to India, and he died in Bengal in 1782. Here you see Topkapi Palace, the Galata Tower, which is still there, and a Sultan's procession. All these pictures, often by not very famous artists, are only now being fully researched. There you see another view, the same view by Cassas. Again, you see Topkapi Palace, Aya Sofya, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and old Turkish houses. And this is a map of the Ottoman Empire around 1700, all these countries: Turkey, Syria, Egypt, they were all part of the Ottoman Empire from about 1500 right until the 1870s when it started to lose territory. So it's a huge power, and please note, you see it says Turkey in Europe, Turkey was very much part of European diplomacy. Whatever zealots on both sides might desire, there was no holy war between the Ottoman Empire and Europe. And indeed, there was an alliance with France from the 1530s which went on really until 1914, tremendously important commercially and culturally. Thanks to the French Embassy in Constantinople there were travellers writing books, exploring every aspect of the Ottoman Empire, including its manuscripts, and a scholar there made the first translation of 'The Thousand and One Nights', Antoine Galland, around 1700. So there was a French translation of 'The Thousand and One Nights' many years before there was a French translation of Shakespeare. And trade also led to the establishment of diplomatic relations between England and the Ottoman Empire in 1579 and already diplomacy was

privatised. The first English Ambassador, William Harborne, was in reality a tin merchant who imported tin from Cornwall to Constantinople and exported Malmsey wine and currants. And this goes on, there was something called the Levant Company, which in fact paid the Ambassador's salary and many consuls' salaries. [06:06] So diplomatically and commercially the Ottoman Empire was always part of Europe and travellers would purchase through their embassies in Constantinople or in consulates round the Empire, firmans, which were in fact travel permissions enabling them to go round the Empire in safety. You showed your firman and people sort of bowed and said great, and if you were lucky you weren't bothered. I quote from one firman given to two English officers in 1800. It asks for them, and I quote, for them 'to be conveyed in a hospitable manner with a courier for known purposes and to be provided on their journey with necessities for travelling and the customs of hospitality to be observed towards them. Our Divan has written and issued this command and sent it by a courier. God willing they pass in safety and with despatch to their intended place'. Of course this firman was paid for and then you would hire in ports an interpreter who would also provide cooks, tailors, valets, secretaries and companions, and this was quite standard and people who bothered travellers tended to be bastinadoed and even sold into slavery. This is what happened when Lord Byron – we'll be coming to him later – was insulted in Athens. And, for example, just an average English traveller called Thomas Watkins, who travels through Italy to Constantinople in 1788, he enjoyed the hospitality of the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Robert Ainslie, he recorded that he was served 20 different wines after dinner. That was the scale of diplomatic hospitality. 'The most rich and rare of Europe, the Greek Islands, Jerusalem and the coast of Asia Minor.' No nonsense about difficulty in finding alcohol in those days in the Middle East. He wrote of Constantinople, 'I am persuaded the whole earth has not in point of prospect anything so grand, so various and so beautiful'. And they loved watching the Sultan's processions and the horses and the horse furniture, the uniforms of the Janissaries and so on, the splendour, the novelty, the silence and solemnity of this spectacle cannot but make a most powerful impression upon every foreign spectator'. And more and more travellers are coming in the 18th century as they're more interested in classical antiquity and also in the botany of Asia Minor, always very good because it's both warm and quite a lot of rain for tulip bulbs of course, and many other rare plants often used for medical purposes.

[09:10]

And after 1699 the Ottoman Empire's no longer an expansionist power, it's been defeated at the Siege of Vienna, it's on the whole a force for stability. Let me quote: the Empress Maria Theresa, herself ruler of Austria, 1777, 'I will never prepare myself for the partition of the Ottoman Empire and I hope that our descendants will never see it expelled from Europe'. They realised it was a controlling factor in the Balkans, and these are widely shared, Metternich had exactly the same views and of course the mentor of Queen Victoria, the Duke of Wellington himself, 1829, he sends a British fleet, not for the last time, to protect the Ottoman Empire from an invading Russian army and he wrote, 'The Ottoman Empire exists not for the benefit of the Turks, but for the benefit of Europe'. And in effect the Ottoman Empire needed European allies so much, it was a force for stability in the Balkans and also we now realise, in 2014, in the entire Middle East. In effect it brought the Middle East and Europe together in Istanbul and it was from Istanbul that reforms started to modernise the Empire, really as early as the 1780s with the navy, after the suppression of the Janissaries in 1826, with the army and soon after, with the civil service and the administration.

[10:46]

Now, I'm going to take you through some pictures. That is the conqueror of Constantinople, Mehmed the Conqueror, just to show you that he's painted by an Italian artist, Gentile Bellini, he's shown almost as a Renaissance prince with an Italian frame, and it's from him that there are always embassies in Constantinople. This is a French traveller, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, painted around the 1670s by Philippe de Champaigne. He writes a famous travel book about the Ottoman Empire, 'Les Six Voyages', and he's also dealing in jewels, so he went there, he bought some jewels, some of which were later in the French crown jewels. This is a view of Ankara by a famous Dutch artist living in Istanbul, Jean-Baptiste Vanmour. That is... sorry, it's Athens. It's got the Parthenon in the background, by Vanmour. This is Vanmour's view of an embassy into Constantinople, the Venetian Ambassador is arriving, he's wearing a rather curious costume, in 1730, just to show you how elaborate the diplomatic ceremonial was, linking the Ottoman Empire and the powers of Europe. And here you see the Dutch Ambassador by the same artist Vanmour, Calkoen, who is crossing the courtyard of Topkapi Palace to present his respects to the Sultan and the Grand Vizier. And all these pictures, he collected them, in his will he asked

for them to be kept together and they are now almost all on show in the Rijksmuseum in a special room, called the Turkish Cabinet, showing the people of Istanbul as well as the diplomatic ceremonial. Here you see the French Ambassador and his sons. Here's the French Ambassador's party and his sons being presented to the Grand Vizier in the Divanhane which still exists today in Topkapi Palace, 1724, and the alliance with France and the Ottoman Empire is as strong as ever. And you see just how many people are with the French Ambassador. They would be merchants living in the city, diplomats working in the embassy and travellers going round the Ottoman Empire. [13:15] This is some views from a collection of pictures of Istanbul in Sweden which have just unfortunately been sold, nobody knows where they are, again showing how common it was to have views of Istanbul. Here you see Greek ladies of Istanbul. The beauty of the Greek ladies of the Empire, the islands, was one of the attractions for some visitors to the Ottoman Empire. That's by Antoine de Favray, about 1770. And the Ottoman Empire also influenced Europe, it's not just Europeans going there, many people brought back Turkish fashions to Europe and here you see Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the French philosopher, whose family worked in Istanbul and in Isfahan as watchmakers, because the ruling classes of Persia and the Ottoman Empire needed European watches, and he's wearing an Armenian hat. And here we come to some English travellers, called... this is William Ponsonby, later Earl of Bessborough. He's travelling in the Ottoman Empire with his friend, John Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, in 1740 and the habit was to bring back Turkish dress and have yourself painted by a smart portrait painter in London or Paris or wherever. He wouldn't actually have worn that himself probably in the Ottoman Empire, they just wore normal traveller's dress. And here you see his companion, Montagu, later Earl of Sandwich, later First Lord of the Admiralty. He actually invents the sandwich, because he was a gambler. And he is painted by Knappton, and you see in the background one of the mosques of Istanbul. And he founded – he's studying the Ottoman Empire partly as a preparation for his political career. He admires Islam: 'Their piety towards the creator, the exact observance of the laws of their religion, the obedience to the commands of the sovereign, respect of their superiors, their charity towards all distressed persons, sobriety, moderation, gravity, solidity, their actions are virtues which are seldom wanting, even to those of the meanest rank'. He's really seeing Islam as a force for hierarchy; it's a very 18th century point of view. And

he wrote a sophisticated analysis of the military and naval structure of the Empire, interspersed with copies of ancient Greek inscriptions.

[16:04]

And back in London he founded the Egyptian Society, 1741, the first Egyptian society abroad. He calls himself Sheikh Pyramidum and it's open to any gentleman who has been in Egypt. And he also founded the Divan Club, open to gentlemen with the intention of going to Turkey. And he travelled with a great artist called Liotard, who - there's going to be a Liotard exhibition at the Royal Academy next year - and this is Liotard's picture of Mademoiselle Glavani, an Italian living in Constantinople. And this Turkish gentleman is in fact an English merchant called Mr Levett, dressed up. And you see what Liotard has focussed on, it's the textiles. This is in fact Tartar dress. Textiles, musical instruments, pipes, a rosewater sprinkler and an incense burner. That's what fascinated 18th century Europeans; the décor of life. And this is Richard Pocock, a very learned traveller, with Ponsonby and Montagu, painted in Istanbul. He's wearing the costume of the Christians. They in theory had to wear dark colours, whereas bright colours were restricted to Muslims. And in the background is Seraglio Point, the tip of Topkapi Palace. He later wrote a brilliant travel book on the Middle East which is now being rediscovered by Lebanese historians. It's a very accurate account of travelling in the Middle East. He says how peaceful Damascus is, how easy it is to go to cafés in Aleppo, how accessible mosques are, less trouble going to mosques than to Roman Catholic churches in Italy. It has a rather dull title like 'The Antiquities of the Middle East', in fact it's a very lively book and I'm sure will be published in an accessible form soon. That is Liotard's self-portrait showing how he keeps his version of Turkish dress and a beard, even when he goes back to his native Geneva. He called himself 'Le Peintre Turc'. This is a view of Smyrna, one of the great ports of the Middle East, half Christian, known as Infidel Smyrna. Even today, the Turkish President, Erdogan, calls it 'Gavur Izmir' because it doesn't vote for him. It's the last bastion of old-fashioned secular Turkey. You see the number of boats alone shows what a lot of trade is going on. And this is Smyrna itself, which is where the Prince of Wales went in 1862 also. And this is a family of Smyrna, Dutch merchant called Mr Van Lennep, settled there. His wife is dressed in local Greek dress, his father-in-law in Turkish dress, all his children, and one of them married Monsieur de Chabannes, and the other married Lord Radstock, an English admiral, and became in fact a

woman of the bedchamber to Queen Charlotte, the great-grandmother of the Prince of Wales. And this is his daughter, who marries a Mr Morier, and their son writes, 'Hajji Baba Isphahan', James Morier, a famous book on Persia. So you see how international and accessible the Ottoman Empire was. Here you have an English merchant of Aleppo, called Mr Hunter. In the background is the citadel of Aleppo. Aleppo was then an international city, remarkably peaceful, known for the gentleness of manners of its inhabitants. There were English and French and Italian merchants living there and to anybody interested in horses, it's from Aleppo that a lot of the prize stallions of the desert were shipped to England, including the Darley Arabian, I think it's called, which is the ancestor of some of the best racehorses of today. I'm only just learning how... So even the world of horses was completely international and the Ottoman Empire was an essential part of it.

[20:26]

And now these are the views by James Stuart, the English architect who did Spencer House, among other places, his views of Athens in about 1752. You see Athens as a half Muslim city with Muslim ladies. And here he is himself, the artist, he's got permission to draw. And these are two Turkish officials, they're checking that hidden treasure isn't being removed secretly. And here you see an arch, I think of Hadrian, which is still there in Athens today. And these are two Englishmen discovering the ruins of Palmyra. Well, as we speak, Palmyra is completely out of control, being looted and bombed. Here are the ruins. They're called Wood and Dawkins, he was called Palmyra Wood, and this picture they commissioned later - it's now in Edinburgh I think - are showing their discovery of Palmyra and they're seeing Palmyra, they're comparing it to Britain. The desert was to Palmyra what the sea was to Britain; the source of its safety and its riches. And they published books about Palmyra, really before Paestum, south of Naples or Split on the Dalmatian Coast, just to show you how accessible and familiar the Ottoman Empire was. Here is the escort. Here are the drawings of the Great Colonnade of Palmyra, done by their artist - you always travelled with an artist if you could afford to - called Giovanni Battista Borra. That is Baalbek, which the Prince of Wales visited. It's in a better condition than the Prince of Wales saw it because there was an earthquake. Baalbek, the temple in the plains of Lebanon, the largest single temple in the Roman Empire. It was such a rich agricultural

area, it could afford to build. And here you see the Colonnade at Stowe which Borra worked on, Stowe the great country house of the Marquises of Buckingham. Palmyra and Baalbek are inspiring the country houses and the cafes and the amusement gardens, like Vauxhall Gardens, of London and Paris from the mid 18th century. Again, the peacefulness is really quite hard to imagine today. And there were more footpads and highwaymen, even between Kensington and London in the 1750s than in the Syrian desert, at times, at any rate.

[23:09]

This is 1780s, the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, a French *érudit* and diplomat, later Ambassador to Istanbul, commissions with these wonderful pictures showing his travels round the Ottoman Empire. You see him and his companion and the Turkish escort. This is a temple in Rhodes, halting on the way, being received by a local Turkish governor. Here is the European, here is his box of presents. You always had to have presents, like watches, to make sure you were welcome, and this is the interpreter. A Christian always had to wear a fur bonnet, the Turk would wear a turban. And this is the book Choiseul-Gouffier commissioned. In fact, he was a secret philhellene, and it shows Greece in chains awaiting its liberation. And this is a rival book commissioned by someone called Mouradgea d'Ohsson, who is an Armenian in Istanbul working for the King of Sweden, and it shows Mohammed and the Kaaba and it has got a sort of programme of reform, saying as Mohammed was a great law giver who reformed the habits of the 7th century, so there will be a reform in the Ottoman Empire in the late 18th century. And you see for his book he even commissioned the first view of Mecca, the Kaaba, and the mountains surrounding it. This would have been done from travellers' tales, done as a sketch in Istanbul and then worked up into a beautiful fashionable print in Paris in the 1780s. Choiseul-Gouffier commissioned a travelling artist called Cassas, who there will be exhibitions about him soon, he's travelling round the whole Ottoman Empire in 1784-6 and here's a specimen of his pictures. You see Topkapi Palace with a great ceremony, you see Cape Sounion in Attica in Greece. It's always the European visitors, their Turkish escort. This is, again, Athens. This is Baalbek, views in Lebanon, Baalbek again. The Sphinx, rather fantasised and exaggerated, but it's not true that Napoleon began the rediscovery of Egypt, there were always scholars in Egypt in the 17th and 18th century, there were always European consuls and traders and travellers,

and in fact there were some very detailed accounts of the antiquities of Egypt in the 1780s and 1770s. And these are views by a rival artist called Luigi Mayer, commissioned by the British Ambassador, Sir Robert Ainslie, in the 1790s. And he works with his wife, Clara Mayer, and again, hopefully, there will be exhibitions of his work. A very detailed record of many areas of the Ottoman Empire. This is a village called Defterdar Burnu, which still exists, up the Bosphorus. Of course now, you have to imagine these beautiful forested hills all covered with housing estates, without exception. Greeks dancing in Tarabya, which still exists, now almost entirely modern. Samos, an island. Ruins in Rhodes. This is Arwad off the coast of Syria, still under government control now. This is near Tartus on the coast of Syria, some Phoenician tombs. This is Jerusalem. One novelty of the Prince of Wales's tour in 1862 is the interest in Christianity and holy sites. On the whole, 18th century Grand Tourists were not concerned, they were much more interested in antiquity. This is one of the first views of Jerusalem that I know. Jerusalem, again, with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Rosetta in Egypt, a port on the coast of Egypt, showing a beginning of interest in Islamic architecture. And this is the Ambassador leaving Istanbul, going overland, in 1794. And this is what they saw along the route. This is one explanation of why on the whole travel was quite easy in the Ottoman Empire, because of ruthless suppression of banditry or lawlessness. That is the British Ambassador's travelling carriage. And Luigi Mayer, his artist, went with him and he died in Sussex in the early 19th century. But all his drawings were published as prints. The Grand Tour in the Ottoman Empire takes off after 1789, there's the French Revolution, French invasion of Italy in 1796, Italy is in effect closed to travellers, so of course they go to the Ottoman Empire.

[28:24]

Here is Thomas Hope, 1798, painted by William Beechey. I hope some of you saw the wonderful exhibition about him at the Victoria & Albert Museum a few years ago. Again, you see this incredible costume, which is – well, different sources say different things – but I think it's an Albanian costume of the Ottoman Empire. He brought it back with him, he wouldn't have worn it, and it is now in the National Portrait Gallery, as is this portrait. And you see in the background a mosque of Constantinople. And he became a taste guru, very wealthy Anglo-Dutch banker, he's the first person to use the phrase 'interior decoration'. He was much criticised for writing about doorknobs at the time of the Napoleonic Wars.

[laughter] I think that's a sign of strength rather than weakness. And his wife gave enormous parties; they had Greek rooms, Egyptian rooms, Indian rooms. And he also wrote an extraordinary novel. It's called 'Memoirs of a Greek Written at the Close of the 18th Century'. It took London by storm in 1819, Byron was jealous of it, he said there were two things he regretted; that he hadn't written it and that Tommy Hope had. And it has everything in it: opium, Wahhabi Islam coming from Saudi Arabia, wars in Syria, Greeks against Turks, the pilgrim caravan going to Mecca, 'winding their way through the white sands like a black and slender millipede'. And he starts praising 'the energy and freedom of the desert, a country where the heart resembles a volcano whose eruptions never cease'. And he talks about the future of Egypt, manners and customs, the prohibition against Christians riding horses, the opium market 'where insanity is sold by the ounce'. And here are some of his drawings, which are now in the Benaki Museum in Athens. You see there he is talking to his escort. Dancing boys, a view on the Nile. That is the Sultan receiving an Ambassador. That is the Capuchin Convent in Athens where he stayed and later Byron stayed, and you see the Ottoman Empire, the Empire of the Caliph of the Muslims, which was one of the Ottoman Sultan's titles. But they allow foreign Catholic orders to live more or less wherever they want, since the early 17th century. They're not proselytising among Muslims, they're proselytising among Greeks and Armenians. And this is a brilliant view, about 1796, of the Column of Pompey in Alexandria. How they get up to the top I simply have no idea. You see, he's one of the travellers in Egypt before Napoleon and he takes a great interest, being a decorator, in Ottoman art. This is of the fountain outside Topkapi Palace which you see in a photograph in the exhibition. Details, unfortunately he never made a book of all these things. He was so rich, he had commissioned so many pictures, he never got round to it. That is the Sultan's mother's reception room in a palace which no longer exists in the grounds of Topkapi Palace. That is a fountain which still exists in Üsküdar, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. Jezzar Pasha is a very interesting man, a very cruel... he builds a mosque in Ottoman style in Acre, on the coast of Israel/Palestine, which is still there, and the Siege of Acre, 1799, Bonaparte is trying to burst out of Egypt and go north and he's halted there. And it is an example of Anglo-Ottoman military co-operation because the governor is advised by General Admiral Sir Sidney Smith and the Royal Navy. Together they defeat Bonaparte and it's probably Bonaparte's first defeat. And these are more views of

Attica by Fauvelle, the dealer, a French consul and antiquities dealer, living in Athens for 30 years, who helped Lord Elgin get the marbles. And these are really wonderful views from a private collection around 1810 or 1820. That's the Arch of Galerias in Salonica. This is Dodwell, another traveller. He says I'm not going to talk about Greece, it's so familiar to all readers – this is about 1810 – there's no use in talking about it. There was a wonderful exhibition of Dodwell in the British Museum recently. Again, a view of Greece.

[33:23]

And now we come to the greatest Grand Tourist of all in the Ottoman Empire, Lord Byron. Again, this is Albanian costume which he sends back, he gave to a lady friend, it's now in Bowood House in England, it's painted in 1813. And this is the Ottoman Governor of Northern Greece and Albania, Ali Pasha, painted in 1819 by a French artist who is sort of playing multiple games, with England, with France, with the Ottoman Empire, with Greek conspirators with whom he's in touch, which side is he going to join, is he going to support Greek independence. Byron called him, 'the mildest mannered man who ever slit a throat'. [laughter] And he gave Byron 'letters, guards and every possible accommodation'. He sent him sugared almonds and begged him to visit him often and at night when he was more at leisure. And he said he knew Byron was well born as he had 'small ears, curly hair and little white hands'. And in fact, Byron, contrary to the myth, he has a lot of Turkish friends, his notes in his poems on Ottoman subjects are fascinating about the Ottoman Empire, he rather admired it. He writes more poems on Turkish than on Greek subjects and his interest in Greece was really an interest in liberation in general and finding a cause which would make him even more famous than he already was, rather than the Greeks themselves, about whom he could be quite cutting. And he praises the Ottoman Empire and says he hopes it stays in Istanbul. And when he's, in 1810, he sees half of London is in Athens, including Lord Sligo, Lord Guilford, Lord Plymouth, many other writers: Henry Gally Knight, John Galt, Lusieri the artist, many, many others. They give balls and enjoy themselves very much. And by now, more and more travellers are coming to the Ottoman Empire. 1810, there's Pitt's niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, is also travelling around the classic route: Constantinople, Palmyra, Aleppo, Damascus, Alexandria and Cairo and she herself, she lives near Baalbek and admits that she herself was an old ruin and she lived there until 1839, again having quite good relations with the Ottoman hierarchy of governors. A Foreign

Office messenger called William Turner travelled throughout the Ottoman Empire and he concluded, 'If indeed I have learnt anything by my travels, it is that England is the only country for an Englishman to live in'.

[36:24]

And the next great traveller is William John Bankes, who you see here. A friend of Byron, and he collected a lot of things in the Middle East, which are now in his country house, Kingston Lacy in Dorset. Drawings are throughout Syria he went, and also in Dorset County Record Office, a full record of Damascus and Aleppo. You see some of his sculpture. And there is the obelisk he brought back from Egypt. The first obelisk to arrive in England is on his lawn in Dorset and the Duke of Wellington himself helped supply soldiers to get it from Southampton to Dorset and to erect it there. And this is someone called Mr Cumming-Bruce, painted in Arab dress in front of Baalbek. Irby and Mangles travelling in Egypt – Egypt is now even safer than normal because Muhammad Ali Pasha, a ruthless and brilliant moderniser has seized power in 1805, he's very keen on European technology and European merchants and trade, he's really running the trade single-handedly himself. It's he who really creates modern Alexandria and he welcomes European visitors. And this is just an ordinary sketchbook by a sailor, 1834. And this is David Roberts, the great English artist of the Middle East, travelling there in the 1830s. And these are two pictures from the Royal Collection. On the left is Muhammad Ali Pasha - they're painted for Queen Victoria by David Wilkie – and on the right the young Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Abdülmejid. By the way, the first member of the British royal family to go to the Middle East was the very scandalous and unsuitable Princess of Wales, Caroline of Brunswick, who knew Byron and had listened to his stories and she travelled throughout the Empire: Tunis, Athens, Cairo, Jerusalem, Constantinople. She received a guard of honour from the Bey of Tunis, to commemorate her visit to Jerusalem and of course to annoy the Prince Regent, she founded the Order of St Caroline of Jerusalem, the motto of which of course was 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'. And she says, 'The dear Arabians and Turks are quite darlings' and she returned to Italy with Turkish, Arabian and African servants as well as many textiles bought in the Ottoman Empire. I'd love to know what happened to them.

[39:07]

In the 1830s, Princes are now beginning to visit the Ottoman Empire. Queen Victoria was a close friend, and indeed a cousin of Louis Philippe and his children,

because a lot of Louis Philippe's children married Coburg Princes and Princesses. And the Duc de Montpensier and the Prince de Joinville, sons of Louis Philippe, travelled through the Ottoman Empire in the 1830s. And a famous English politician had travelled in the Ottoman Empire, and that is Disraeli – 1830-31. He even considered, according to what he writes, joining the Ottoman army. And he was in Turkey for 16 months. He lived, and I quote, 'quite as a Turk'. And maybe this influenced his pro-Ottoman policy in the great crisis of 1877-8 when England sent the Royal Navy to Istanbul to protect it from a Russian army, and that is when there are crowds in Constantinople shouting 'We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do, we've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too. The Russians won't have Constantinople'. It's very much an issue in English politics. The Liberals, Gladstone, are denouncing the Ottoman Empire, they say it must leave Europe bag and baggage, the atrocities. The Tories and the crowd is pro-Turkish and pro-Ottoman. And Lamartine, the great French poet, travels throughout the Ottoman Empire, he says how safe it is, perfect security. 'To understand Europe you must be in Asia. All these rumours, all these systems of Paris are pitiful when one sees them from the mountains of Lebanon.' And 1839-40 there is a huge crisis between Muhammad Ali on the left and Abdülmecid on the right. Muhammad Ali wants to make Egypt independent, he is backed by France. Britain, Russia and Austria support Abdülmecid, again, supporting the Ottoman Empire's part of the status quo, and in the end he wins, Egypt remains part of the Ottoman Empire, but it becomes hereditary in the family of Muhammad Ali, it continues on its modernising mission. His son, Sa'id Pasha, who receives the Prince of Wales in 1862 in Egypt and his grandson, Isma'il, who says Egypt is no longer part of Africa, it is from henceforth part of Europe and he organises the digging of the Suez Canal. Abdülmecid is very pro modernisation, he adores Western music, he goes to mosque to the sound of the latest tunes by Donizetti and Verdi. He has an opera house – which no longer exists, unfortunately – outside Dolmabahçe Palace and he's very conscious of being part of the great family of European sovereigns, with Queen Victoria whose government had given so much support in 1840. And indeed, she is obsessed with the Eastern question in 1839-40. At the time of the birth of the Princess Royal she says she's thinking so much about it that she almost called her Turko Egypto. [laughter]

So it's all very much linked, so it's very normal and natural, as I hope I have shown, for the Prince of Wales as part of his education as a young man, keep him out of trouble also, to go round the Ottoman Empire. And I note he goes there, not to Italy. Also, other Princes are going; 1860, the future Leopold II of Belgium goes to Constantinople. This is a picture of some Austrian Archdukes being entertained in Izmir by the Governor of Izmir. And you see, of course there is the Crimean Alliance; England and France defend the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire against Russia, 1854-6. It's a successful Muslim-Anglo-French alliance, though the English Ambassador, or a diplomat in his embassy said independence and integrity were two qualities 'most lacking in the Ottoman Empire'. And here you see part of the propaganda for the Crimean Alliance. Incidentally, proof of how open and relatively tolerant the Ottoman Empire was, particularly if there were European countries helping it. Vast numbers of English and French troops are going through Istanbul on their way to the Crimea, 1854-6. Their behaviour was like all troops in all history. And nothing seems to happen, there's no incidents, there's no riots, there's no hatred, no sudden murders, it's just accepted by the city. And here is, we've seen these wonderful photographs by Francis Bedford, there was an earlier photographer called James Robertson, working for the Ottoman Empire in the mint, modernising the mint, taking photographs, and here you see his photograph and you see the rather bizarre combination of the minarets of Istanbul and the guards' busbies of the British guards on their way to the Crimea. We're in 1855. So I would like to conclude with a quote from 'Dr Thorne', published in 1858, by Anthony Trollope, and he describes Frank Gresham, after graduating from university as, and I quote, 'Doing the fashionable thing; going up the Nile, crossing over to Mount Sinai, thence over the long desert to Jerusalem and home by Damascus, Beirut and Constantinople, bringing back a long beard, a red cap and a chibook, just as our fathers used to go through Italy and Switzerland and our grandfathers to spend a season in Paris'. And this isn't really the end of the story, because 1862, the Prince of Wales goes round the Ottoman Empire, but 1867 the Ottoman Sultan pays a return visit to London and Paris, he's received by Queen Victoria at Windsor, massed choirs in the Crystal Palace sing hymns specially composed in honour of the Ottoman Empire, he visits Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie and the Universal Exhibition in Paris, so the Ottoman Empire was very much part of Europe and a natural destination for the Grand Tour. Thank you very much.

[applause]

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