

Publication Data:

Finnegan, Rachel, 'The Divan Club, 1744-46', *EJOS*, IX (2006), No. 9, 1-86.

ISSN 0928-6802

© Copyright 2006 Rachel Finnegan

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

THE DIVAN CLUB, 1744-46

Rachel Finnegan

Preface

It is paradoxical that a *woman*, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), was indirectly one of the major influences in the establishment of the all-male Turkish Club, better known as the Divan Club. Formed in January, 1744, and surviving for only twenty-eight months, this association was a dining club exclusive to gentlemen who had made a voyage to Turkey. While she is never named in *Al-Koran* (the society's only extant record),¹ Lady Mary's memory (notably from her observations on life in the seraglio) is evoked in its most significant ritual: the official toast, "The Harem".

This monograph examines *Al-Koran* as an important, if little-known, document pertaining to the popular subject of eighteenth-century travel and travellers, particularly the remarkable individuals whose Grand Tours were extended to the Ottoman Empire.² With this in mind, this study considers the manuscript against the background of its wider historical and social context. The introductory chapter ('Eighteenth-Century Travel to Turkey') examines

¹ *Al-Koran*, the Minute Book of Divan Club, is among the family papers of John Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, whose eponymous ancestor, the 4th Earl, was its founder member. A copy is also in the National Maritime Museum, London, ref. SAN/V/113. I am grateful to the Earl of Sandwich for permission to publish *Al-Koran*, and to Kate Jarvis, Archivist at the NMM, for her kind assistance. I am also very grateful to Dr John Ennis, Head of the School of Humanities at Waterford Institute of Technology (in which I work), for kindly funding the illustrations for this study.

² The existence of this manuscript has been noted in a number of studies. See, for example, Sir Francis Dashwood, *The Dashwoods of West Wycombe* (Aurum Press, 1987) 22-4, which is the most extensive account though containing a number of inaccuracies. See also N.A.M. Rodger, *The Insatiable Earl: A Life of John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich* (HarperCollins, 1993) 7 and 118, and Bruce Redford, "Seria Ludo: George Knapp's Portraits of the Society of Dilettanti", in *British Art Journal*, V 3 (2001) 66. However, it has never been fully written up. Perhaps it has been considered too limited, containing only the Laws and "Orders", a List of Members and very brief minutes for each of its meetings, providing no details of the actual business, academic or otherwise, conducted at their fortnightly dinners. It can be assumed, however, that the Divan's activities in some way mirrored those of the contemporary Egyptian Society and the Society of Dilettanti, both of whose records are more extensive and both of which had members in common.

the circumstances under which eighteenth-century travellers visited the Ottoman Empire, focusing on the most famous example, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whose interest in the Harem has connections with the development of the Divan Club. Chapter 1 ('The Influence on the Divan of Similar Clubs in Contemporary Georgian England') looks at other London dining clubs with oriental themes, in particular the Egyptian Society, which had strong links with the Divan Club. Chapter 2 ('The Laws and Orders of the Divan Club') outlines the main objectives and regulations of the Divan Club, as can be deduced from the only surviving record. And the final chapter ('The Composition of the Divan Club') gives biographical accounts of its members (and those invited to join), with particular reference to the most important eastern travellers (Lord Sandwich, Admiral George Anson, Dr. Richard Pococke and Robert Wood) in terms of their experiences in the east, and their contribution both to travel writing and to oriental/Greek scholarship and taste.

In addition to the main source (the manuscript itself), this study considers other literary and artistic evidence, including the memoirs and travelogues of the club's members, together with their portraits (especially where they are represented in oriental dress), their collections of antiquities, and the way in which the design of their houses and gardens may have been inspired by their eastern travels.

Introduction: Eighteenth-Century Travel to Turkey

Arguably the most famous Turkish traveller of the eighteenth century, Lady Mary was in her early fifties when the Divan Club was formed, and was living in Avignon, where she was to remain from 1742-46.³ While she did not actually belong to the society, she may well have been involved in some less formal precursor that included women. Though we have no documentary evidence to prove the existence of such a set, a descendant of Sir Francis Dashwood refers, in his book, to a series of portraits of four individuals in Turkish costume.⁴ The first, depicting Sir Francis (founder member of the Divan) is entitled ‘Il Faquir Dashwood Pasha’ (his title in the Divan Club⁵; the second is of his half-sister Mary Walcot as ‘Sultana Walcotonia’; the third is said to be of Lady Wortley Montagu,⁶ and the fourth depicts the well-known courtesan, Fanny Murray.

A further portrait entitled ‘Lady Dashwood of West Wycombe’ is of his wife, whom he married in 1745, a year after the Divan Club began. It has been suggested that all four ladies (excluding Lady Mary) may have visited Turkey and even accompanied Sir Francis on his trip, and that these portraits are evidence of the fact that women were part of a forerunner to the Divan Club. This may well have been the case, since Lady Mary was based in London (where the club held its meetings) up until her departure to Italy, and had strong connections with at least two of its members. Her nephew, John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, was the Divan’s main founder and president, and her disgraced son, Edward, was also a member for a short period.

While we have records of a considerable amount of male visitors to Turkey in the eighteenth century, evidence for females is practically non-existent, which is what makes Lady Mary’s experience so unique. One of the more obvious reasons for visiting Turkey (commonly perceived as a highly dangerous destination) was in the context of the Grand Tour.⁷ Though most British Grand Tourists of the period were content to visit the classical sites of Italy, a number of more intrepid travellers extended their voyage to Greece,

³ She had initially gone to Venice, in pursuit of her great passion for Count Francesco Algarotti (1712-64), and from there went to Florence, Rome, Naples, Turin and Genoa where, in 1741, their love affair ended.

⁴ See Sir Francis Dashwood, *The Dashwoods of West Wycombe* (Aurum Press, 1987), 22-23. These portraits are by Adrien Carpentiers and George Knapton.

⁵ *El-fakir* means in Ottoman-Turkish “your humble servant”. I am grateful to Hans Theunissen for providing definitions and correct spellings of all the Ottoman-Turkish terms used in this study.

⁶ It is possible, however, that this portrait could instead represent Lady Austen. I am grateful to the author’s son, Sir Edward Dashwood, for providing me with information from the family collection.

⁷ One of the best and most detailed studies on this subject is Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (Sutton Publishing, 1992).

which, since the mid-1450s, had been part of the Ottoman Empire.⁸ Those courageous enough to venture into these parts inspired great awe in others. The anecdotist Joseph Spence, for example, who met Lord Sandwich at Turin shortly after the latter's return from his second voyage to the east (1740), remarked: "A man that has been all over Greece, at Constantinople, Troy, the pyramids of Egypt, and the deserts of Arabia, talks and looks with a greater air than we little people can do that have only crawled about France and Italy".⁹

As can be seen from the surviving accounts of such journeys, the more serious and scholarly of these Levantine voyagers engaged themselves in investigating, observing and recording the most important aspects of eastern culture. This was particularly true of its monuments and architecture, on which very little, by the middle of the eighteenth century, had been published in the western world. While some, who braved this lengthy and hazardous journey, kept diaries or travelogues for their own personal use, others set out with the express purpose of producing a publication on some aspect of Greek or eastern culture, past or present. One such resolute travel-writer was Dr. Richard Pococke, whose influential book on his eastern travels, published in 1743, earned him an honoured place a year later in the Divan Club. As discussed in the relevant biographical section below, his *A Description of the East and Some other Countries* gives a good insight into the author's views on travel in general, as well as indicating his motives for venturing into the popular genre of travel writing. His opinions are pretty standard for the period, though many of his observations are informed by his clerical profession.

Whether a trip to the Levant was part of the traveller's original scheme (as with Pococke) or whether it evolved during the course of his European sojourn,¹⁰ a considerable amount of planning was necessary to put the idea into action. Particularly important was the organisation of passes, permissions, and

⁸ For a good summary of the revival of interest in Greece, and in particular travels to this country, see Fani-Maria Tsigaakou, *The Rediscovery of Greece: Travellers and Painters of the Romantic Era* (Thames and Hudson, 1981), especially 11-20. For more detailed accounts of early travel in Greece and European Hellenism, see Warner G. Rice, "Early English Travellers to Greece and the Levant", in *Essays and Studies in English and Comparative Literature*, Vol. 10 (1933) *passim* and David Constantine, *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal* (Cambridge, 1984) *passim*. The latter considers only one of the members of the Divan Club, namely the archaeologist and Homeric scholar Robert Wood (Chapter 3).

⁹ Slava Klima (ed.), *Joseph Spence: Letters from the Grand Tour* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975) 248-49.

¹⁰ Lord Sandwich, founder of the Divan Club, may well have considered the east in his initial preparations to travel, though the opening sentence of the manuscript version of his *A Voyage Round the Mediterranean* rather makes it appear as though it were something more recently planned. In this, he states, 'On the twelfth day of July N.S. I embarked from Leghorn on board the Anne Gally an English ship of about 300 tons & 16 cannon in order to perform a voyage which I had for some time waited only for a favourable opportunity of putting in execution.' This was about ten months after his arrival in Italy. See *A Voyage Round the Mediterranean in the years 1738 & 1739*, in the National Maritime Museum, ref. SAN/F/50, 1.

letters of introduction, together with the associated problems of arranging the finances. With the right connections, much of this could be done from home prior to the trip, though such preparations were often made in Italy, in the months leading up to the voyage. Although these wealthy travellers could engage the services of a dragoman (interpreter to the English nation) to see them through many of the practical difficulties encountered in the east,¹¹ serious connoisseurs and scholars would have found it beneficial to gain, beforehand, some knowledge of Turkish or (like Lady Mary and Lord Sandwich) to take lessons when there. Furthermore, most foreign visitors would have been advised to familiarize themselves both with the customs of the host population and with the particular etiquette required when dealing with foreign officials.

An examination of extant libraries and library records (such as library catalogues or the auction catalogues of library sales) shows that certain Divan members had acquired a considerable amount of relevant literature on Greece and Turkey before they embarked upon their travels. Popular travel books on the East that may have influenced members of these individuals, and were certainly in the library of one founder member,¹² include: Sir George Wheler's *A Journey into Greece* (London, 1682) and Jacob Spon's *Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grèce et du Levant* (3 volumes, Lyons, 1678),¹³ Joseph Pitton de Tournefort's *Relation d'un Voyage du Levant, Fait Par Order du Roy* (Paris, 1717), Thomas Shaw's *Travels or Observations relating to several parts of Barbary and the Levant* (Oxford, 1738)¹⁴, and Charles Perry's *View of the Levant, particularly of Constantinople, Syria, Egypt and Greece in which their antiquities, government, politics, maxims, manners and customs ... are described* (1743). The latter book was dedicated to Lord Sandwich, whom the author had met in the Levant (1738) and whose Egyptian Society he was to join three years later. Another book in the library collections of two Divan members (Lords Duncannon and Sandwich) was Tavernier's *Six Voyages through Turkey and Persia* (1677-78).¹⁵ It is impossible to say whether any of the

¹¹ European travellers to the Ottoman Empire consistently make remarks about the difficulty of travelling, though it must be remembered that thousands returned from their journey safe. This seems to be a topos making things appear more exotic than in reality.

¹² Namely, that of the future Lord Bessborough. These volumes are listed in his extensive Library Catalogue, a manuscript kept in the former home of the Earls of Bessborough, Stansted House, in Hampshire. As discussed by R. Finnegan in "The Private Library of William, 2nd Earl of Bessborough", *Hermathena* (forthcoming, 2007), in a section entitled "Travel Books, Atlases, Topography, Geography and Maps", the largest sub-section of this collection, in English and in French, is that pertaining to the Levant, in particular Turkey.

¹³ Both books were the outcome of the respective authors' joint travels to the East in the late seventeenth century, details of which are given in W.G. Rice, and D. Constantine, *op.cit.*

¹⁴ Shaw was Chaplain to the English factory at Algiers (1720-33), during which time he made tours to Egypt, Sinai, Cyprus, Palestine, and North Africa.

¹⁵ Its full title is *The Six Voyages of Jean Baptista Tavernier, a Noble Man of France now living, through Turkey into Persia and the East Indies*.

earlier books were in the Library of Lady Mary's father (Lord Pierrepont) or husband (Edward Wortley Montagu), but it is likely, given her eagerness both to acquire and impart knowledge when resident in Turkey, that she, too, was well acquainted with the country before arriving there.

It should not be supposed, however, that the only British visitors to Turkey were Grand Tourists, or that these were the first western travellers to this land. On the contrary, the initial interest was kindled during the Crusades, whose pilgrims travelled on routes, and laid down communications that were to be used for generations. With the rise of British sea power during the war of the Spanish Succession, the Mediterranean was opened up to commerce, principally involving the sale of English cloth. The Levant Company, formed in 1581, had factories in Smyrna, Constantinople and Aleppo, the latter centre serving as the company's headquarters in the Middle East. So important was this company that it led to the establishment of an English Ambassador at Constantinople, which, in turn, made travel to this country less difficult.¹⁶ Other reasons why members of the gentry or nobility spent time in the east included involvement in academic pursuits (especially antiquarianism and linguistics), taking part in naval campaigns or other missions in the Mediterranean, and visiting family members posted in this region. The Divan Club included individuals from all these categories, as well as those who went as part of their general Grand Tour.

As is well known, Lady Mary travelled to Turkey with her husband, Edward Wortley Montagu, who had been appointed as British Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of Turkey.¹⁷ They left London in August, 1716 and arrived at Turkey in Spring of the following year. It was Edward's job to negotiate for peace between Austria and the Ottoman Empire and to protect British naval and commercial interests in the Levant. Though he expected to remain in Constantinople for up to twenty years, he was recalled after only fifteen months, due both to his ineptitude and to reshufflings of the English Cabinet.¹⁸ Their young son Edward accompanied them on their travels, and while they were in Turkey Lady Mary gave birth to her daughter, Mary.¹⁹ The painting in **Plate 1** depicts Lady Mary and her son Edward Junior, with two

¹⁶ See W. G. Rice, op.cit. 258, and S.A Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578-5782: a Documentary Study of the first Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (Oxford, 1977). One such representative was Sir Everard Fawkener, who, on his return to England, became a founder member of the Divan Club. See below.

¹⁷ Mary Morris and Larry O'Connor (eds), in *The Illustrated Virago Book of Women Travellers* (Virago Press, 2000), mistakenly claim that Lady Mary followed her husband to Turkey, thus creating a scandal, since "Women of her social class were not to travel without their husbands, particularly to the east", 13.

¹⁸ See Joseph W. Lew, 'Lady Mary's Portable Seraglio', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 24, no. 4 (summer 1991) 432.

¹⁹ Whom she, famously, had inoculated against smallpox on their return to England.

Turkish attendants: one playing the lute and the other possibly giving her a letter.²⁰

Edward's brief and unsuccessful residence in this country is in marked contrast to, and completely overshadowed by, the more positive and lasting experience of his wife. Already a dazzling figure in British court circles, and acquainted with the most eminent members of the *literati*,²¹ Lady Mary is acknowledged as being one of the most influential women of her day. By the age of fifteen she had written a number of books of poetry and secretly taught herself enough Latin to enable her to read and even imitate the Roman poets.²² Her brilliance and wit made her a popular figure, and it is because of her popularity and determination to keep in touch with friends and relations that we know so much about her life abroad. Fascinating details of her journey and her eastern sojourn are immortalized in a series of epistolary accounts known as the "Turkish Embassy Letters". These are not the originals, but copies that she later revised for publication and which, against the wishes of her son-in-law, the 3rd Earl of Bute, appeared in three volumes the year after her death, in 1763.²³ In an interesting aside in a letter to her sister Lady Mar, she justifies why she feels it necessary to keep copies of letters written to her. She states, "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 inconveniences".²⁴

Though the more traditional travelogues are of considerable importance, personal letters are perhaps of greater interest on account of the spontaneity and variety that inevitably attends a range of different recipients. Lady Mary's correspondence, however, is arguably the most famous contemporary epistolary account of a visitor to the Ottoman Empire, not only because she is a woman, but because of the extraordinary subject matter she presents to her reader.

The description of her journey to Turkey is fascinating, since she concentrates on different aspects of her voyage according to each correspondent. The reader journeys with her through the Low Countries,

²⁰ See Dea Birkett, *Off the Beaten Track: Three Centuries of Women Travellers* (National Portrait Gallery, 2004) 47.

²¹ In particular, Addison, Pope and Steele.

²² See the account of her education by Joseph Spence, in a letter to his mother from Rome, dated 25 February, 1741, in Klima, *op.cit.*, 356-57.

²³ Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M[ar]y W[ortle]y M[ontag]e, written, during her travels in Europe, Asia and Africa to persons of distinction (London: T. Becket and P.A de Hondt, 1763). For a full list of all subsequent publications of Lady Mary's correspondence, see Malcolm Jack (ed.), *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu The Embassy Letters* (Virago, 1994, reprint 2005), xli-xlii.

²⁴ Letter XLI from Pera, Constantinople, 10 March, 1718 (Virago edition, 113).

Germany, Austria, and the Ottoman Balkans,²⁵ and learns a much about the dangers she encountered, the devastation she witnessed and the kind hospitality she received along the way. At each new place she visits, she gives her various friends and relatives the historical background to the town or city, as well as mentioning more recent political and military developments experienced there. While she describes general points such as the scenery and the situation of the native population, she does not neglect to inform the reader of her own personal circumstances, too.

The sheer uniqueness and gravity of her voyage is emphasised in a letter to the Princess of Wales, where, writing from Adrianople (Edirne), she exclaims, “I have now, madam, passed a journey that has not been undertaken by any Christian since the time of the Greek emperors, and I shall not regret all the fatigues I have suffered in it if it gives me an opportunity of amusing your Royal Highness by an account of places utterly unknown amongst us, the emperor’s ambassadors and those few that have come hither always going on the Danube to Nicopolis.” As she explains, her party was unable to take this customary route because the river was frozen, and her husband (“so zealous for the service of his majesty”) insisted on crossing the deserts of Serbia.²⁶

Much of the content of her letters from Turkey, especially those written to female correspondents, is concerned with the status and position of eastern women. The intellectual climate of Europe was, at the time, eager for knowledge about other cultures, and, as a woman who had already shown herself to be concerned with female issues at home (especially matters related to marriage, dowries, etc), she was naturally interested in exploring such matters while abroad. In this respect, her letters are unique, since they provide information on subjects that had not been examined by earlier (male) travel-writers. Furthermore, certain letters appear to be answering specific questions from her correspondents, suggesting that her female friends and relatives, in particular, had similar concerns. While she is well known for her vivid descriptions of visits to the Hamam (Turkish baths)²⁷ and the Harem, she has a great deal to say about women in general and is inclined to compare and contrast the lot of eastern women with that of her compatriots. For this reason, she has, rightly, been described as an early ethnographer of middle-eastern women.²⁸ She informs her friend Mr.s. Thistlethwayte, for example, that “it is more despicable to be married and not fruitful than it is with us to be fruitful before marriage”, and that women are respected according to the number of

²⁵ This term includes Serbia.

²⁶ See Letter XXXVI, sent to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales from Adrianople on 1 April, 1717 (Virago edition, p 55-56).

²⁷ The term “bagnio” is used in historical texts.

²⁸ See Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, ‘An Early Ethnographer of Middle Eastern Women: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762)’, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40, no. 4 (October 1981) 329-38.

children they have produced;²⁹ and tells her sister, Lady Mar, about the more relaxed practices in Turkey regarding “lying in”, or confinement.³⁰

What captured the imagination of her contemporaries, however, and has continued to be of great source of interest to students of many disciplines, was Lady Mary’s vivid accounts of what she observed in the peculiarly feminine sphere of the Harem. It is clear that she deliberately concentrated her writings on such matters as a means of setting herself apart from men and thus claiming for herself life-long fame that could not be challenged by men.

Furthermore, if the original letters bore any resemblance to the ones eventually published, then she clearly considered herself to be a serious travel-writer, and contributing something quite different from earlier travelogues that lacked originality and repeated what other had already written. As she notes in one letter, “We travellers 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 what would you say if I told you that I have been in a harem where the winter apartment was wainscoted with inlaid work of mother of pearl, ivory of different colours and olive wood...and those rooms designed for summer, the walls all with the finest Persian carpets. Yet there is nothing more true...”³¹

In another letter she claims, from her visit to the Sultana Hafise, to be the first foreigner ever to have had the pleasure of learning “all about the intrigue of the seraglio”,³² and warns that all other accounts of the seraglio purporting to be based on first-hand experience must necessarily be false, since it is forbidden for male outsiders to enter such quarters. In a lengthy letter to her sister, she describes this visit to the Sultana, who had been widowed at the age of twenty-one and whose loss was as keenly felt as it had been fifteen years earlier. Lady Mary admits that she “did not omit this opportunity of learning all that [she] possibly could of the seraglio, which is so entirely unknown amongst us”,³³ and in particular notes how the Sultan makes his choice when visiting the seraglio and the inevitable jealousy of the women who are not favoured with his preference. Relating this, as she often does, to life back at home, she states, ‘this seemed to me neither better nor worse than the circles in most courts

²⁹ Letter XXXIX, from Pera, Constantinople, 4 January, 1718 (Virago edition, 106-7). See also Letter XLVII to Madame de Bonnac (originally written in French), dated April, 1718, where she asserts that she is anxious to hasten her return ‘because I am absolutely obliged to lie in every year as long as I remain here’ (Virago edition, 132).

³⁰ Letter XLI, from Pera, Constantinople, 10 March, 1718 (Virago edition, 113).

³¹ Letter XLI, *op.cit.*, 118.

³² Letter XLVII to Madame de Bonnac, April, 1718 (Virago edition, 132).

³³ Letter XLI, *op.cit.*, 116.

where the glance of the monarch is watched and every smile waited for with impatience and envied by those that cannot obtain it”.³⁴

An equally detailed account of life in the Harem is given in a letter (again to her sister) following her visit to the female quarters of the Grand Vizier’s wife, one of the highest women in the empire.³⁵ After being lavishly (though tediously) entertained by her, she was just about to depart when the Greek lady who was her interpreter earnestly solicited her to visit the Kâhya’s wife, Fatima.³⁶ Lady Mary was fascinated by the décor and atmosphere of Fatima’s quarters and considered her to be the most beautiful woman she had ever seen. So entranced was she by this woman’s sheer beauty, manners and wit that she visited her again, proving to her hostess that she was a true friend.³⁷

Lady Mary is equally intrigued by Turkish women’s clothes and hairstyles, and devotes a whole letter to describing her own new outfit, which is “admirably becoming” and to outlining the social and sexual implications of the *ferace*, an article of clothing comprising two full-length pieces of muslin totally covering the body and the face.³⁸ In her view, this garment gives women “entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery”,³⁹ making eastern women far more liberated than those from other cultures, including her own. It is Lady Mary’s fascination with the Harem that is of significance to the present study, since it informs the undoubted hedonistic aspect of the Divan Club, with its celebration of the spirit of the seraglio. While members are unlikely to have had any first-hand knowledge of this institution during their visits to the Ottoman Empire, it is clear that an admiration of the physical attributes of eastern women was a considerable factor in their interest in the orient, which in some cases continued for decades after their return to English life. Constantinople itself was a place particularly favoured by visitors to the east, not least of all because of its women who, according to one later traveller, were “exceedingly handsome and well-dressed, and [whose] manners are remarkably pleasing, a probable indication that they are no foes to love.”⁴⁰

Another visitor who fell under its spell was the nephew of Sir Edward Fawkenor (British Ambassador and Divan member) who, on receiving a letter from his uncle summoning him back home, in 1749, “was as deeply affected and as much afflicted at the necessity he found himself under of leaving this city as if his returning home had been to him a real banishment. Such is the

³⁴ *Ibid*, 116-17.

³⁵ Letter XXXIV to her sister Lady Mar, from Adrianople, 18 April, 1718 (Virago edition, 86-91). The highest woman in the empire is the Sultan’s mother.

³⁶ The position of the *Kâhya* was equivalent to the Minister for Home Affairs.

³⁷ See Letter XLI, *op.cit.*, 118-20.

³⁸ Letter XXX to Lady Mar, Adrianople, 1 April, 1717 (Virago edition, 69-72).

³⁹ *Ibid*, 71

⁴⁰ See W.B. Stanford and E.J. Finopoulos (eds), *The Travels of Lord Charlemont in Greece & Turkey 1749* (London, 1984) 205.

freedom indulged to Christians by Constantinopolitan Turks.”⁴¹ A further area singled out for discussion of this theme was the Greek island of Chios. According to Joseph Spence, Lord Sandwich was particularly struck by the beauty of the women here and declared that he should be very glad to “marry two or three of them for the fortnight or so he was to stay on their island”. However, the English nobleman was informed by the English Consul at Chios that the apparent “freedoms” these women took with strangers were “only the mode of the island”, and were not to be taken seriously.⁴²

The extent to which the contents of Lady Mary’s original letters reflected or informed the contemporary debate on eastern society is unclear, though it is true that, in this age of enlightenment, the fascination for foreign travel was associated with the growing interest in other cultures. However, it is significant, perhaps, that almost a quarter of a century after her trip to Turkey, such matters were still the subject of general gossip. In three consecutive letters to his mother, Joseph Spence, writing from Rome, chats about Lady Mary Wortley, whom he has recently met (January, 1741).⁴³ Curiously, he does not relate a single detail regarding his actual meeting with her Ladyship, but instead gives an entertaining account of her education, marriage and sojourn in Constantinople. This includes a “scandalous history” concerning her visit to the Harem, where “the Grand Signior had the politeness to fling a handkerchief at her ...” As is typical with such gossip writers, Spence is eager to point out that he is not giving scandal, but rather is repeating what Lady Mary herself has told him.⁴⁴ The fact that Spence was relaying such tales indicates that more than twenty years after her visit to Turkey, Lady Mary was still captivated by the subject of Turkish women, and more importantly, considered that her recollections would even now be of general interest to English society.

Just as the more widespread Grand Tour of Italy was to produce an untold influence on the society from which it emerged, likewise with the more limited sojourns to the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁵ As noted by one scholar, Turkey, more than any other non-European country, exerted one of the most important impacts on the arts and culture of Europe, including the expression of Turkish themes in literature, theatre, interior decoration, painting and costume.⁴⁶ In Britain, this trend was encouraged by the availability of popular engravings on Turkish themes, such as the French publication, *Recueil de cent estampes, représentant*

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 205.

⁴² See Klima, *op.cit.* 255-56. Letter from Turin dated 17 February, 1740.

⁴³ Klima, *op.cit.*, 356-62.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 357. This gesture, signifying that the Sultan wished to take her to bed, was hotly denied by Lady Mary, who attributed the slander to Alexander Pope.

⁴⁵ For a good assessment of the influence of Greek travel, see James M. Osborn, “Travel Literature and the Rise of Hellenism in England”, in *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* (LXV, n. 5, 1963) *passim*.

⁴⁶ See Aileen Ribeiro, “Turquerie: Turkish dress and English fashion in the eighteenth century”, in *The Connoisseur*, Vol. 20 (May 1979) 17.

différentes nations du Levant, a book in the private collections of several Divan Club members, and possibly known to Lady Mary, since it was published only three years before her trip to the east.⁴⁷

As can be seen from **Plate 2**, the prints contained in this publication depict in great detail the exquisite costumes of the Turks, particularly highlighting their richly ornate fabrics and designs.⁴⁸ The costume and general appearance of these people seemed to absorb the British visitors to an unusual degree, many of them, like Lady Mary, devoting pages in their memoirs or letters to describing the finer details of the national costume or of particular garments worn by the ruling families and their officials.

More lasting than visual representations of Turkish life, however, are the literary accounts (including correspondence) of those who visited the Ottoman Empire. While some memoirs remained unpublished during the lifetime of the author (such as those of Lord Charlemont),⁴⁹ others became immediate best sellers and not only encouraged an interest in travel to those lands, but served as indispensable aids to the serious traveller. We know of three travel journals written by members of the Divan Club: Dr. Pococke, Lord Sandwich, and the celebrated antiquarian and Homeric scholar Robert Wood.⁵⁰ As with other travel literature of that period, such accounts are invaluable to potential voyagers since they contain sketches, maps, and itineraries of places visited, as well as giving an account of the distances between the various locations. In addition, they often highlight the difficulties involved in travel to the east, as though to warn others of what to expect.

The adoption of oriental dress seems to have been a popular, if not necessary, part of the experience of visitors to the Levant, though the custom (at least while abroad) was often practiced for considerations quite unrelated to fashion, including disguise to enable easy access into places of interest,⁵¹ or for

⁴⁷ The full title of this work is *Recueil de cent estampes, représentant différentes nations du Levant, tirées sur les tableaux peints d'après nature en 1707 et 1708* (Paris, 1714).

⁴⁸ See *ibid*, passim, for examples of similarities between illustrations from comparable publications and the costumes of individuals such as Lady Mary, and the artist Angelica Kaufmann. Lord Charlemont makes much of the costumes he observed in Constantinople, particularly the expensive furs, worn as a status symbol in place of jewellery.

⁴⁹ His two essays on his travels to Turkey and Greece were only published in 1984 (and then only in part), though there had been considerable interest in them before that. See, for example, F. Hardy, *Memoirs of the Political and Private Life of James Caulfield Earl of Charlemont* (London, 1810), and those mentioned earlier. It must be noted, however, that Charlemont was not a member of the Divan Club as his trip to the Levant did not take place until 1749.

⁵⁰ The nature of these personal accounts varies according to the particular bias of the author. For example, Lord Sandwich already shows, in his *Voyage*, a keen interest in naval matters, and Robert Wood, famous for his later published works on Homeric topography, pays considerable attention to this subject in his earlier unpublished tour. These topics are further discussed in the relevant biographical accounts, below.

⁵¹ One intrepid Grand Tourist, the youthful Lord Charlemont, records how, when enquiring how he might best see the Porte at Constantinople, the principal dragoman, advised him to disguise himself in Greek dress, "in order to escape observation and consequent trouble". As it

self-protection by blending in with the locals, since it was considered unwise, and even dangerous, for foreign travellers to draw unnecessary and unwelcome attention upon themselves. However, whether such masquerade was an everyday mode of dress rather than one reserved for special occasions, is not so clear and would have varied according to the individual. Dr. Richard Pococke (Divan member) wrote to his mother on route to the east, informing her that he would soon be “in the Turkish habit, a turban and all”,⁵² and both the literary and artistic evidence indicates that this type of costume for visitors was almost the norm. Lady Mary’s description of her latest outfit, with intricate details on the nature and purpose of each garment, complements the more visual sources for contemporary oriental costume.⁵³

It certainly became the custom for visitors to these lands to sit for their portrait in oriental dress, both while abroad and back at home. The costumes depicted were always of the most luxurious nature, signifying wealth on the part of the sitter as well as an eagerness to emulate the most powerful citizens in the east. Undoubtedly the most successful portrait painter of this style was the French painter Jean-Etienne Liotard (1702-93), who accompanied Lord Sandwich and his party to Turkey in 1738. Both in Constantinople, where he lived until 1742, and on his return to Europe, Liotard received commissions from at least five Divan members: William Ponsonby, 2nd Earl of Bessborough (listed as Lord Duncannon in *Al-Koran*), Lord Sandwich, Sir Everard Fawkener, Dr. Pococke and James Nelthorpe.⁵⁴ His most important patron, however, was Lord Bessborough, who introduced him to London’s most fashionable society during his visit to England in 1753 and who, by the end of his life, had acquired more than seventy of his works.⁵⁵

It is difficult to ascertain a definite connection between Lady Mary and Liotard. While it is true that she could not have met him in Turkey, since her visit to that country preceded his by twenty years, she may well have met him

happened, it soon became apparent to the higher officials that there was a “stranger of rank” in their presence, and Charlemont was invited to meet with the various dignitaries and treated in a most hospitable manner. See Stanford, *op.cit.*, 163ff. For further discussion of Charlemont’s travels, see also W.B. Stanford, “The Manuscripts of Lord Charlemont’s Eastern Travels”, in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Section C, Volume 80, Number 5 (Dublin, 1980) 69-90, and Cynthia O’Connor, *The Pleasing Hours: The Grand Tour of James Caulfield, First Earl of Charlemont (1728-1799), Traveller, Connoisseur and Patron of the Arts* (Cork, 1999).

⁵² See John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800* (Yale University Press, 1997) 780.

⁵³ Letter XXX, *op.cit.* See Jill Campbell, ‘Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Historical Machinery of Female Identity’, in Beth Fowkes Tobin (ed.), *History, Gender & Eighteenth-Century Literature* (University of Georgia Press, 1994), especially 81, for an interesting perspective on this theme.

⁵⁴ Portraits of all five in Turkish costume are reproduced below.

⁵⁵ See N.S. Trivas, “London Society Portrayed by Liotard”, in *The Connoisseur* (January, 1937), Vol. IC, 30-34.

in later life, particularly when living in Europe.⁵⁶ Several portraits of ladies in Turkish costume have traditionally been identified as Lady Mary but are now considered to depict other models. An example of this is the “charming enamel portrait” dated around 1754 (the year of Liotard’s visit to England), originally said to represent Lady Mary but possibly depicting her daughter, the Countess of Bute.⁵⁷ Another such example is the portrait in the Muzeum Narodowe in Warsaw, again no longer believed to represent Lady Mary, but an unidentified woman.⁵⁸ Given this situation, it is possible that the “charming miniature of Lady Mary Wortley Montague in Turkish dress”, in the Ernst Holzcheiter collection, Meilen, has also been wrongly identified.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Liotard painted the portrait of her former lover, Count Algarotti, c.1745, presumably when he (the artist) was in Venice. However, this was four years after their relationship had ended and she was now living in Avignon. This stunning portrait is reproduced in Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800* (Unicorn Press, 2006), 338.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 31 and Plate VII, 33.

⁵⁸ Listed as Lady Mary in M. Araminta Morris, *European Paintings of the 18th Century* (London, 1981) 46, this portrait is reproduced on page 84 of the 1992 Liotard catalogue (*Dessins de Liotard*, Geneva, Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, 17vii–20ix1992; Paris, Musée du Louvre, 15x–14xii1992. Cat. Anne de Herdt), where identification of Lady Mary is refuted and entitled ‘Dame de Constantinople assise sur un divan. 1738-1742’. The refutation is based primarily on the date of the portrait: it was executed almost two decades after her departure from Turkey.

⁵⁹ See Daphne Foscett, *Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide* (Woodbridge, 1987) 590. I am extremely indebted to Neil Jeffares (author of *Dictionary of Pastellists*, op.cit.), for being so helpful to me and for providing me with information on this subject.

Chapter 1: The Influence on the Divan of similar Clubs in Contemporary Georgian England

Georgian England produced a number of lively clubs and associations of interest to former Grand Tourists, some, like the famous Society of Dilettanti, surviving for centuries and supporting important expeditions to Greece and their resulting publications,⁶⁰ and others, like the more obscure Egyptian Society and the Divan Club, being relatively short-lived and leaving little more for posterity than their association records. As is well documented, membership of the Society of Dilettanti was limited to those who had already completed their Grand Tour, or to notable connoisseurs and collectors of antiquities. Given the similarities between the Divan Club and the Egyptian Society, in particular the fact that they had shared interests and members, it may be of benefit to consider, at this point, the nature of the latter. Its last meeting, as recorded in a manuscript entitled *Journal of the Egyptian Society*,⁶¹ took place on 16 April, 1743.

There were two categories of membership to this society, as described in its Laws and as illustrated in the list of twenty-five individuals “who have not been in Egypt”. The Laws stipulated: “1: That any Gentleman who has been in Egypt, may be proposed by any of the original members, or by any other member that has been in Egypt... 2: That any Gentleman who has been in the Levant, or has otherwise distinguished himself by his knowledge, & curiosity may be proposed by any member of the Society...” and “3: That the number of the Society do not exceed thirty; except any person be proposed who has been in Egypt.” A note in the margin of the manuscript indicates that Laws 2 and 3 were later repealed.

The four original members of the Egyptian Society (the first two of whom were founder members of the Divan Club) are listed as follows: “The Right Honourable John Earl of Sandwich, the Rev^d Richard Pococke Doctor of Law, Charles Perry Doctor of Physick, and Captain Frederick Lewis Norden.”⁶² Lord Sandwich was elected as Sheik (curiously an Arabic, rather than an Egyptian title),⁶³ a position he was to retain throughout the life of the society,

⁶⁰ Notably its support of James “Athenian” Stuart and Nicholas Revett to study antiquities in Athens, which resulted in four illustrated volumes of *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762-1814), and the later expeditions to Asia Minor, by Revett, Richard Chandler and the artist William Pars, which resulted in another book published by the Society: *Ionian Antiquities* (1770). Both Stuart and Revett were employed by Divan members to “improve” their estates (see under Sir Francis Dashwood and Thomas Anson).

⁶¹ British Library ADD MS. 52362. I am grateful to the British Library for permission to quote from this manuscript.

⁶² B.L., op.cit., 15. Sandwich and Pococke were founder members of the Divan.

⁶³ In fact all the titles of officers were Arabic, Ottoman-Turkish or Persian.

and the position of Reis Effendi (Secretary)⁶⁴ was occupied initially by Jeremiah Milles until he was replaced by his cousin, Dr. Pococke. Other officers of the society included the Hasnadar (Treasurer),⁶⁵ the Mohausil⁶⁶ and the Inspector and Examiner of the Egyptian Medals.

Membership of the later Divan Club was less flexible, being open exclusively to those who had travelled to “the Sultan's Dominions”, though guests were occasionally admitted to the company, provided they gave an assurance of their intention to travel to these parts, and being barred from taking their “seat” in the Divan, until their return from the east. Considering the relatively small circle of gentlemen in a position to join any of these associations, it is not surprising that there is considerable overlap in membership of all three.

While the Dilettanti Society has been well documented,⁶⁷ the other two associations in question have attracted less interest,⁶⁸ the most comprehensive study on the whole general subject of Georgian clubs, for example, making no reference to either.⁶⁹ The records of the earlier Egyptian Society are more extensive than those of the Divan, containing the *Journal* (kept from 11 December, 1741 to 16 April, 1743), with poetry in Latin, reports of papers given, and drawings of the following objects shown to the society: a sistrum,⁷⁰ seven illustrations of a mummified Ibis having recently been opened by Dr. Pococke, and “which were ordered to be copied into the book of the society”,⁷¹ a “very curious foot of bronze of Greek workmanship, which was found [by the Sheik, Lord Sandwich] in the bottom of a well in the Island of Mycone... and which admirably well represents the ligature of the ancient sandal” (a copy of this drawing was ordered to be “inserted into the book at the expence of the

⁶⁴ Also used as the title for the Secretary in the Divan. The *Reisü 'l-küttab/Reisülküttab* or *Reis Efendi* originally was the Head of the Clerks of the Imperial Chancery (*divan-i hümayun kalemi*). This function in time developed into that of the Secretary of State/Minister of Foreign Affairs.

⁶⁵ An office and title similarly used in the Divan Club. The *Hazinedar* is an Ottoman Treasurer for instance of the Sultan or a large household (but not the Minister of Finances of the State who is called *Defterdar*).

⁶⁶ A *Muhassıl* is an Ottoman tax collector.

⁶⁷ The most detailed book on this society is Lionel Cust and Sidney Colvin (ed.), *History of the Society of Dilettanti* (London, 1914). This volume contains a very useful Appendix (239ff) which lists the members according to the Order of Election, identifying them and giving some biographical information on each.

⁶⁸ Apart from M. Annis' quite brief account, “The First Egyptian Society in London (1741-3)”, in *Bulletin de l'Institut Francais d'Archaeologie Orientale du Caire* L (1952) 99-105.

⁶⁹ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* Oxford University Press, 2000.

⁷⁰ B.L. *op.cit.*, 1.

⁷¹ See *Ibid*, 17-19. This appears to be the same sandal subsequently reproduced in Pococke's *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries*, Vol. II (1745) described as a curiosity brought back by Lord Sandwich when he “made his second voyage into the east in 1739, and was returning from Egypt” (Book II, Ch. XVI 186-7).

society”),⁷² an “intaglio in a Calaedonian of a very uncommon nature” depicting “an animal with the fore parts of a horse, wings on its back, legs like a cock with spurs on them; & a round sort of a tail...”,⁷³ an ornament of glass beads found, by Dr. Perry, on the breast of a mummy,⁷⁴ another foot produced by Dr. Pococke, this time in marble: “which he met with in the Levant, on which is represented the ancient wooden sandal...”,⁷⁵ and finally engravings of ninety-six medals occupying the final six pages of the manuscript.

These medals formed the major topic of discussion for several meetings from 5 March, 1741, onwards, when “Such Members of the society as have any curious Egyptian medals, were desired to bring them to the society at the next meeting.”⁷⁶ Martin Folkes Esquire was appointed to receive, examine and keep a register of these medals (though at a later meeting Mr. Letheuilleur was appointed “Gumrouve Gi, or inspector, Controller, & Examiner”),⁷⁷ and a committee was established and ordered to meet the following Monday at “8 of the clock”.⁷⁸ At the next meeting (April 2), Dr. Pococke “shewd the design of a copper plate for the series of Egyptian medals proposed to be engraved by the society”, though further consideration of this subject was deferred “till the expence of it be known”.⁷⁹ The total cost for the engraving, as related on 28 May, 1742, was £13 17s, payable to a Mr. Tuscher who had already drawn the medals and an ornament for a copper plate for the society.⁸⁰ It was agreed that, in order to defray the cost of this, members should pay half a guinea and new members a guinea. After this announcement, there was no further discussion of the subject, more attention being paid to the rather unpopular suggestion (continually deferred by the Society and raised by the self-seeking Dr. Perry) that “a Law might be made, in order to oblige every member of the society to purchase one copy of every book, which either has, or shall hereafter be published by any member of this society.”⁸¹ It will be remembered that his *View of the Levant* was to be published in London the following year (1743).

On subjects of particular interest, it was ordered that sub-committees should meet between sessions, reporting back to the society at future meetings. The foregoing indicates a considerable amount of scholarly activity in the

⁷² B.L. *op.cit.* 19-20.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 21.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 23.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 25.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 25.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 28. Lethieullier returned from the Ottoman Empire in 1723 and made it into the newspapers by bringing with him an Egyptian mummy. In 1757 he bequeathed this and the rest of his collection to the British Museum. See Jeremy Black, *op.cit.*, 66-67 and note 138.

Most likely from the Ottoman-Turkish *Gümrükçi* or *Gümrükçü*, or Customs Officer.

⁷⁸ B.L., *ibid* 25.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 27.

⁸⁰ See *Ibid*, 28.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 28.

society, evidence for which, though implicit, is lacking in the records of the Divan.

The two Secretaries to the Egyptian Society, Rev. Jeremiah Milles and Dr. Richard Pococke, both appear in the Divan Club, the former being introduced to the Divan on 17 February, 1743, as having an intention to go to Turkey, and the latter being a founder member shortly to publish the scholarly and popular account of his five-year trip to the east, including an expedition to Egypt. The two gentlemen were cousins and together had made a six-month Grand Tour of Italy from 1733-34. Other individuals who were members of both societies (and who are discussed below) were Lord Duncannon,⁸² the Honourable Mr. Coke,⁸³ Mr. Thomas Anson,⁸⁴ Mr. Mackay,⁸⁵ Mr. Frolich,⁸⁶ Sir Everard Fawkener,⁸⁷ and Mr. Vernon.⁸⁸ Furthermore, several members of the Egyptian Society were also members of the Society of Dilettanti.

The last recorded meeting of the Egyptian Society is 16 April, 1743, though Law 5 stipulated that the meetings of the society “be held every fortnight from the first Friday in November to the first Friday in May”. This untimely end not only to the “academic” year, but also to the society itself, has been attributed to the dissension caused by Dr. Perry’s insistence on members purchasing their colleagues’ books.⁸⁹

⁸² Though a founder member of the Divan, he was not invited to join the Egyptian Society until four months after its establishment. Proposed by the Duke of Richmond on 2 April, 1742 and unanimously elected at the following meeting, 23 April, he attended only three of its meetings over the next year.

⁸³ Proposed by Martin Folkes, 5 March, 1734 and elected at the following meeting, 19 March.

⁸⁴ Proposed by the Sheik (Lord Sandwich) on 2 April, 1742, as having been in Egypt, and duly elected (see 27).

⁸⁵ The spelling of his name appears in various different forms in the records of all three societies, however his signature included at the beginning of the *Egyptian Society Journal* is “McKye”. He was proposed by Martin Folkes on 5 March, 1743, though the Sheik moved that he should be balloted at the next meeting. This happened on 19 March, though his name is absent from the list of those who had not visited Egypt (see 25 and 27, respectively). This list was drawn up following an order made at the meeting of 18 March, 1742.

⁸⁶ Curiously, he was proposed by Lord Duncannon at the Feast of Isis, 1742, and elected by those who had been in Egypt, but is not recorded as having attended any subsequent meetings. The Feast took place on Saturday 11 December at 3 o’clock, in accordance with Law 6 which stated that this be celebrated every year by the society (see 10). Law 11 further stipulated that “every member usually residing in town do yearly pay five shillings towards defraying the expence of celebrating the Feast of Isis” (see 11).

⁸⁷ Proposed by the Sheik on 16 April, 1743. However, since this is the last recorded meeting, he was never actually elected as a member (see 34).

⁸⁸ At the meeting of 3 December, 1742, the Reis Effendi “proposed Mr. Edward Vernon who has lived many years in Egypt, and is lately arrived from that Country to be a member of this society”. He was duly elected (already being present) and was “introduced” (see 30).

⁸⁹ See M. Annis, *op.cit.* 105.

Chapter 2: The Laws and Orders of the Divan Club

This section considers the nature of the Divan Club, as can be deduced from its only surviving record, *Al-Koran*. On 8 January, 1744 (nine months after the demise of the Egyptian Society), a company of ten gentlemen and noblemen met and resolved to “form themselves forthwith into a Turkish Club”. Coming from a variety of backgrounds, and of different nationalities,⁹⁰ these were: Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Duncannon, Mr. Edgcumbe, Mr. Fanshawe, Sir Everard Fawkener, Mr. Frölich, Lord Granby, Mr. McKye, Dr. Pococke and Lord Sandwich. It being proposed that a “Vizir” should be appointed for each meeting,⁹¹ the founder of the club, Lord Sandwich, was chosen unanimously into that office. The position of Reis Effendi was also proposed, and Mr. Edgcumbe was chosen for that service for the day.⁹²

At this first meeting, a set of fifteen Laws for the Club was then drawn up by the founder members. Three concern the order in which senior members were to be appointed to the position of Vizir. Law 1 states that “the Seniority of the Members shall stand according to the order of the Names, as they are entered in the list” and Law 2 requires that “the Senior Member serve as Vizir, that has not before been in that office”.⁹³ This order of rotation, according to the alphabetical list appearing at the front of the manuscript, was strictly adhered to, with the first two members (Dashwood and Duncannon), for example, each serving twice. Law 14 required that “the Vizir of the Day have a Privilege to name a Reis Effendi for the next meeting, but that none be nominated who has served for any one of the six last meetings past.” By necessity, this law was ignored in the later meetings of the Divan (particularly after the twenty-fifth meeting, on 23 February, 1746), when attendance by founder members was dwindling.

Rules regarding eligibility for membership are set out in several of the Laws. The third Law stipulates that “none, but such as can prove that they have been in the Sultan's Dominions, be qualified to be chosen into this club”. Law 4 qualifies this, however, by requiring that: “the candidate... must be proposed by a Member present; and must be chosen by an unanimous Balot”. Law 8 further stipulates that, “when a Person Qualified to be a Member is proposed, the society may immediately proceed to a Balot”. With regard to expulsion,

⁹⁰ English, Scots, Irish and Swiss.

The title Vizir denotes a councilor of state in Turkey and other oriental countries, though it sometimes appears, in the manuscript, as “Grand Vizir”, meaning the Chief Minister of the Turkish empire.

⁹² The signature of the presiding Reis Effendi always appears at the end of the Minutes, generally followed by his title: thus, “C. Edgcumbe, Reis Effendi”.

⁹³ The title “El Fakir” (with a variety of spellings) is generally used instead of “Vizir”, and is included at the top of the page of Minutes for each meeting, with the individual's name, followed by “Pasha” (again spelled in a number of ways), thus: “El Faquier Duncannon Pachan”, or “El Fakir Granby Pasha”. See n. 5, above.

Law 12 states, “That as no Member can be Chosen by less than an unanimous Balot, so none can be expel'd but by the same.” There is no record of anyone having been dismissed in this way from the club.

Members who had not yet visited the Levant could also aspire to membership of the club, as illustrated in Law 13, which states that: “any Member may introduce a Friend once, paying his Friend's Reckoning, provided the Person introduced declare an intention of going to Turkey, on his Return from whence he may claim his Seat in this Club without Balot. But the same Person may be introduced no more than once, till qualified to be of the Society.” Several individuals fall into this category, though most are “introduced” (rather than officially elected) towards the end of the records, as though the original members were anxious to recruit new members.

Laws 5, 6 and 7 relate to the administration of the club's business. The fifth Law states that “no Business soever be done, unless five Members be present”, and the sixth stipulates that “this Society meet once every fortnight: viz, every other Friday, from the first Friday in December, to the first Friday in May. [Added later in another hand:] X NB Changed from Friday to Sunday.” Law 7 stipulates that “nothing be done, but by Balot; and that every Question proposed, except the addition of a new member, or the expulsion of an old one, be decided by a Majority of [Balls?].”

To this end it was ordered, at the same meeting (8 January, 1744), that a “Baloting Box be provided by the Earl of Sandwich, & that the sum of ten shillings & sixpence be appropriated to that use”. The box was duly purchased and Lord Sandwich was reimbursed the sum of “Half a Guinea” at the meeting of 3 February, 1744.

Several of the members present would have been involved in arranging a similar acquisition for the Society of Dilettanti. At a meeting of this more established club on 1 May, 1737,⁹⁴ it was ordered that a balotting-box be produced, with the portrait artist, Mr. George Knapton, to provide the design and Mr. Thomas Adye to execute it. A week later (May 7), it is recorded that the box should be engraved on copperplates, though it is doubtful that this was ever done.⁹⁵ On the same occasion, it was ordered that a case should be made for the box, again under the direction of Knapton. According to a bill dated 7 January, 1739, the cost of this case was £1 11s 6d,⁹⁶ and three months later Lord Duncannon was thanked for his generosity in presenting the Society with Ballotting Balls and a Bag.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Though the records do not start until 1736, it is generally thought that the society had existed since 1732/3. See, however, John Brewer, *op.cit.*, 256, who believes it dates to 1734.

⁹⁵ See Lionel Cust and Sidney Colvin, *History of the Society of Dilettanti* (London, 1914) 31-2 with accompanying photograph, 36.

⁹⁶ Eleven pounds, 11 shillings and sixpence. This is equivalent to £1,731.02 in today's currency (€2,555.00). Calculation derived from <http://www.measuringworth.com/>

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 32.

Law 9 of *Al-Koran* refers to the actual nature of the society (namely as a dining club), when it stipulates “that the master of the Tavern provide a Dinner at a Crown a head for each meeting.” It is clear from the records that errant members created difficulties for the caterers, thus putting a greater financial burden either on those who did attend the dinners, or on the association itself. On 7 December, 1744, it was ordered “That all absent Members who are in Town shall pay five shillings towards this days Reckoning”, and “That all Members in town shall pay five shillings towards the Reckoning of each Divan, unless Notice be given in [writing?] to the Master of the House”. It is not clear where these dinners were actually held up until this point, but at the meeting of 26 April, 1745, it was ordered that “the meetings of the Divan be hereafter held at the Thatched House in S^t James's Street”.⁹⁸ At the same time (throughout March and April) the presiding Reis Effendi began to specify the number of dinners to be ordered for each subsequent meeting. Clearly this was in an attempt to coerce members into making a commitment to attend these events.

While there is no reference to an entry fee (or Reckoning) for the founder members, Law 10 states that all new members should have to “pay a Guinea at Entrance”. The subject of finances leads to the requirement of a Treasurer, Law 11 recording that “Mr. Frölich be appointed Hasnadar, for the present year”. As with other contemporary clubs, penalties were imposed on members for a variety of misdemeanors. Law 15 states that, “if the Person who by his Turn is Visir, do's not attend, or refuses to act, he shall pay a Guinea into the Hands of the Hasnadar, for the use of the society; and no Excuse whatever be deem'd sufficient for such omission or Refusal. That this Regulation extend to the Reis Effendi, & Hasnadar (unless in case of sickness of the latter). Half the fine being deducted.”

Such fines are recorded both in the individual minutes themselves and on a page at the end of the manuscript, entitled “Fines Due”, which lists the three culprits, Mr. Mackye, Mr. Calthorpe and Mr. Nelthorpe. On 4 May, 1744, El Fakir Pococke Pasha “Order'd that Mackey Effendi not being present to Execute his office of Visir, is fined a guinea”; on 7 December of the same year, El Fakir Hewett Pashan Vizir ordered “that Calthorpe Pashan being absent when he should have executed the Office of Vizir be fined a Guinea”; and two weeks later (21 December), it is recorded by Edgecombe Reis Effendi that “Mr. Nelthorpe not being present to officiate as Vizir is fined one guinea”. These three obviously failed to pay their dues before the club disbanded.

However, it is clear that other fines were duly paid, or in one case, cancelled. On 18 January, 1744, for example, it was “Ordered that Mr. Frolich not being present to exercise the office of Reis Effendi is fined half a Guinea”;

⁹⁸ A popular inn used as a meeting place for many such convivial clubs and societies at that time. Sir Francis Dashwood, *op.cit.*, 23, states that the club was formally founded at this Tavern, though there is no evidence in the manuscript to support this.

on 15 February of the same year, it was “Orderd...That Dashwood Effendi having neglected to attend when he was appointed Reis Effendi be fined half a Guinea, in the absence of Dashwood Effendi, by order of the Divan”.

The following recording shows that on 6 April, only three weeks later, Sir Francis Dashwood was again in trouble: “Dashwood Pasha having been appointed Reis Effendi for this Day, & being absent from his Duty, has incurred the forfeiture of one Funduclee,⁹⁹ & ordered that the Hasnadar do levy the same, & the Vizir Granby Pasha did appoint Fanshawe Pasha to be ...Reis Effendi”. However, it transpires that he was merely late, since the next entry on that page (in a different script, presumably that of the late-comer) reads: “Dashwood Pasha presenting himself to the Divan in due time took his place as Reis Effendi accordingly”. This difference in handwriting shows that the minutes were recorded on the spot, rather than being written up at a later date.

Similarly, the Laws were all drawn up during the first meeting,¹⁰⁰ and duly recorded in the (almost illegible) handwriting of the first Reis Effendi, Mr. Edgecumbe.¹⁰¹ However, there is a reference, in the “Orders” (also made and recorded during the initial meeting), to the purchase of a book “for the Laws & Reconances [?] of the Society”, not exceeding the sum of sixpence. These records must, then, have been transcribed into the said book (which, according to the minutes of 3 February, 1744, exceeded the proposed cost, at half a Guinea) at a later date. It is clear from the minutes of subsequent meetings (for example 2 and 16 March, 1744) that once the Reis Effendi for the next meeting had been appointed, “the Koran [was] transmitted to him accordingly”. At the next meeting (held two weeks later on 16 March), it was ordered “that the word Koran¹⁰² be impressed in Gold Letters on the out side of this Book”. This clearly had not happened by the next meeting since, on 20 April (three weeks having elapsed owing to the Easter period), Edward Vernon recorded: “Ordered that Calthorpe Effendi do get the word Koran impressed in Gold Letters on the outside of this Book, before the next Divan under penalty of one Fonduklee”.¹⁰³ Since there is no further mention of the matter (and the gold lettering is evident today),¹⁰⁴ it can be assumed that it was dealt with accordingly.

⁹⁹ There are two different spellings of this word in the text. A *funduklı*/*findıklı* should be the *findık altını*, i.e. an Ottoman gold coin, value about 5 shillings (£37.39 today, or €56 today).

¹⁰⁰ In contrast with the Laws for other clubs, such as the Egyptian Society, where new regulations were added to the original ones, as required.

¹⁰¹ Only one amendment is made to these rules, the day of the week for meetings being changed from “Fryday” to Sunday (Law 6). This appears in a different hand, the result of a resolution recorded by J. Frolich Reis Effendi at the meeting of 31 January, 1746. However, the handwriting denoting the change in the Laws is not that of Frolich.

¹⁰² Mis-spelt at first as “Karan” and subsequently corrected by the Reis Effendi, Lord Duncannon.

¹⁰³ See n. 99, above.

¹⁰⁴ The wording on the spine of the book are “AL. KORAN”, in gold lettering, on a red-brown vellum. The letters are in a box with some decorative lines and inverted crescents further down

Finally, while the first page of the manuscript refers twice to “The Turkish Club”, it was agreed at the second meeting (20 January) that this society “be called by the name of the Divan”.¹⁰⁵ In addition, it was ordered by the Vizir, Sir Francis Dashwood, “that the Harem be a standing Toast of the Divan”.¹⁰⁶ As with the suggestive design of the Dilettanti’s Ballot-Box,¹⁰⁷ this toast reflects, perhaps, a certain risqué element to these convivial occasions. It is well known that the subject of “intrigues” with Turkish women was one often mentioned in the memoirs of early travellers to the Levant,¹⁰⁸ and, as discussed earlier, it is possible that one woman in particular, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, was part of a less formal precursor to the Divan Club that admitted women. This theory is reinforced by the Divan’s toast of “the Harem”, a subject close to Lady Mary’s heart and on which she was an acknowledged authority. However, this toast possibly has the alternative and inverted meaning, “To Freedom/Liberty”, since the harem symbolises “freedom” and not (as would be expected though historically untrue) captivity.¹⁰⁹

the spine. The letter 'N' is almost obscured by the binding. "AL-KORAN" also appears on the front and reverse of the book, again in capitals and in gold lettering but plain on a darker brown vellum. All the titles appear from right to left, when the book is open, in the Semitic tradition.

¹⁰⁵ Whose literal meaning is the Imperial Council and government of the Ottoman Empire, consisting of Viziers and a Grand Vizier.

¹⁰⁶ Considering the notoriety attaching to another club founded by this individual (the Knights of Sir Francis of Wycombe, or the Hell-Fire Club), it is not surprising that he should have been the one to pass such a resolution.

¹⁰⁷ As depicted in the photograph in Cust & Colvin, *op.cit.*, 36 (see n. 39, above), the figure of Justice sits with her legs astride the large circular opening in the centre of this ornate object, in an overtly obscene fashion.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, a reference to the cleanliness of Turkish women, in John Cooke (ed.), *A Voyage Performed by the Late Earl of Sandwich round the Mediterranean in the Years 1738 and 1739, written by himself* (London, 1799) 158, quoted in Rodger, *op.cit.*, 5. Lord Charlemont, who visited Greece and Turkey in 1749, devotes a great deal of attention to this subject in his Turkish essay, where he discusses the status of women (particularly regarding marriage) and relates a number of incidents relating to the punishments inflicted on those suspected of adultery, especially with Christians. See Stanford (1984), *op.cit.* 196ff.

¹⁰⁹ For an excellent discussion of this subject, see Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Harems of the Mind: Passages of Western Art and Literature* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 8, “Looking for Liberty: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Victorians”, 84-93.

Chapter 3: The Composition of the Divan Club

The remainder of this study considers the members of the Divan Club, highlighting the four individuals who made the most substantial contribution to the history of travel and travel writing. These were: Lord Sandwich, Dr. Richard Pococke, Admiral George Anson and Robert Wood. While Sandwich and Pococke were founder members,¹¹⁰ Anson and Wood were among those subsequently elected to the society.¹¹¹ Finally, guests who attended a single meeting of the Divan, and who intended to visit the east, were: Mr. Jeremiah Milles, Mr. Cambridge, Lord Coke and Mr. Blackwood.

It is not the intention to give full biographical details of all these gentlemen (many of whom in any case appear in the *Dictionary of Biography* and other biographical accounts), but rather to consider any aspects of their lives relevant to their membership of the Divan Club: for example, the circumstances of their travels to the east, and how these travels may have shaped some facet of their subsequent lives and careers. In some cases, where conclusive identification of the individual has not been possible, several alternatives are offered. In general, where there is some doubt, the individual who has some definite some link with other known Divan members is suggested as the most likely person. Where possible, this section is illustrated with contemporary or near-contemporary portraits of the members.

Lord Sandwich

John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, was the official founder of the Divan Club. This is apparent from the fact that he was unanimously elected as its first Vizir, and will account for why the only extant records of the club are still in the Montagu family. Born in 1718, and succeeding to the title and the family seat Hinchinbrooke at the age of ten, he obtained a thorough grounding in the Classics at Eton. He was admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge, from Eton on 12 April 1735 and his tutor was Thomas Parne, University Librarian. While there are no precise records concerning what individual students studied during this period, the University examinations focused largely on Mathematics, with Theological, Philosophical and Classical subjects also being studied by undergraduates. As Lord Sandwich neither matriculated (that is, formally enrolled in the University) nor graduated, it is possible that he may

¹¹⁰ In order of their appearance in the 'List List of the Members of the Divan according to Seniority', the remaining eight founder members were: Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Duncannon, Mr. Edgcumbe, Mr. Fanshawe, Sir Everard Fawkener, Mr. Frölich, Lord Granby and Mr. McKye.

¹¹¹ The other elected members were: Mr. Calthorpe, Mr. Wortley Junior, Mr. James Nelthorpe, Mr. Edward Vernon, Mr. William Hewett, Mr. Petre (also listed as Captain Petre), Mr. Anson, Mr. Maccartney, Captain Bonfoy, Captain Edgcumbe, and Mr. Wright

not have pursued any very formal course of study.¹¹² It is thought that his interest in the near-east was kindled at an early age, inspired, in part, by Silius Italicus' *Punica*, described as the "longest, and arguably the dullest, surviving poem in Classical Latin".¹¹³

He embarked on his Grand Tour in 1737 and is recorded as having been in Turin and Florence in August of that year, in Rome by February to March of 1738, and in Naples from March to April.¹¹⁴ From here, Lord Sandwich set sail to the Levant with a party whose members, apart from the artist Liotard,¹¹⁵ were all to become members of the Divan Club (Lord Duncannon, James Frolich, John McKye and James Nelthorpe). Their journey to Constantinople, via Malta, Sicily, Greece and the Greek Islands, is described in his memoirs, though he fails to mention in this the names of those who accompanied him.¹¹⁶ Also described is his exploration of Egypt (by then the rest of the group had departed for England), a journey qualifying him to join (or perhaps establish) the Egyptian Society on his return.

Such was Lord Sandwich's fascination for the east that eight months after the party (including him) had returned to Florence,¹¹⁷ he hired a ship and embarked on a second journey to the Levant. This trip lasted six months and he was back in Leghorn in December, 1739, subsequently spending a few weeks in Florence and two or three days in Turin (where he met Joseph Spence) until eventually returning to England in the middle of February, 1740.

In the same year, he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society, from which he was ejected in 1757 for non-payment of arrears, and the Society of Dilettanti, to which he was re-elected in 1775.¹¹⁸ Two years later, as discussed above, he became involved in the Egyptian Society, of which he was made the first President in February, 1742, and in 1746 he was elected Fellow of the

¹¹² See John Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of all known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest Times to 1900*, Part I, Vol. III (Cambridge, 1924) 202.

¹¹³ Rodger, *op.cit.* 4

¹¹⁴ See Ingamels, *op.cit.* 840.

¹¹⁵ Lord Sandwich is generally given credit for inviting Liotard to join this Levantine voyage (e.g. J. M. Osborn, *op.cit.* 286), though in fact it was Lord Duncannon who prevailed upon the artist to accompany them on their trip. See below, under Lord Duncannon.

¹¹⁶ However, his editor, John Cooke, states in the Preface of the published account, 'Mr. Ponsonby, late Earl of Besborough, Mr. Nelthorpe, and Mr. Mackye, accompanied his lordship on this agreeable tour...', *Voyage*, *op.cit.*, iii.

¹¹⁷ They were all in Florence on 19 October, 1738 and he set out for his second Eastern voyage in June of the following year.

¹¹⁸ It is recorded that on 2 March, 1746, he was suspended from the office of Arch Master "for his misbehaviour and contempt of the Society", though on 5 February, 1764, he was thanked for his magnificent benevolence in presenting decorations for the use of the same officer. See Cust, *op.cit.* 30.

Society of Antiquaries.¹¹⁹ His name is often mentioned in connection with the so-called “Hell-fire Club” (the Franciscans or Monks of Medmenham) established in the early 1740’s, though his involvement in this club, which he probably did not join until 1763, is very much played down in recent studies.¹²⁰ His membership illustrates a continued association with former Divan Club members, including its co-founder, Sir Francis Dashwood, and the Marquis of Granby, who was reportedly enrolled in 1776.¹²¹

Lord Sandwich is best known for his achievements in naval affairs, and in particular his reforms of the dockyards. His career began in 1740 when he joined the Admiralty and culminated in his appointment as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1748, until his dismissal three years later. The link with members of the Divan Club appears again in this profession, since in his first appointment he worked alongside Admiral George Anson and was succeeded by him in his second.

However, for our purposes, his most significant contribution to oriental studies was his scholarly narrative on his Mediterranean travels. It has been argued that, had it been published at the time rather than several years after his death, his public reputation for learning would have been made. Nevertheless the manuscript version of this work, entitled *Voyage round the Mediterranean in the years 1738 & 1739*, was cited with great respect by one authority, F.L. Norden, a member of the Egyptian Society.¹²²

The work contains sketches and numerous classical inscriptions, as well as a learned analysis of the history and sociology of the places visited. As a travelogue, it is a very useful document since it gives us detailed information about the necessary practicalities of undertaking a journey of such proportions. Though the Earl may well have considered the east in the initial preparations for his Grand Tour, the opening sentence of the manuscript rather makes it appear as though it were something more recently planned. In this, he states, “On the twelfth day of July N.S. I embarked from Leghorn on board the Anne Gally an English ship of about 300 tons & 16 cannon in order to perform a voyage which I had for some time waited only for a favourable opportunity of putting in execution.”¹²³ This was about ten months after his arrival in Italy. Of interest to the practicalities of eastern travel is Lord Sandwich’s description of the strict quarantine procedures in place at Leghorn. As he describes, “to prevent apprehensions of infection: they being in this place extremely scrupulous in affairs concerning the publick health, having formerly so narrowly escaped an imminent destruction, by refusing to admit the ship that

¹¹⁹ The requirement of election to this society is for a person to excel in the knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other nations

¹²⁰ See, for example, Rodger, *op.cit.* 80ff.

¹²¹ Dashwood, *op.cit.* 47.

¹²² See Rodger, *op.cit.*, 5 and n.29.

¹²³ *A Voyage Round the Mediterranean in the years 1738 & 1739*, in the National Maritime Museum, ref. SAN/F/50, 1.

carried that dreadful plague to Marseilles. There are here two ... Quarantine houses the one for clean & the other for foul patents the former one is just without the walls of the city in an island which has no communication with the rest of the country but by a draw bridge which is generally kept up. The other is a 3 miles distance situated upon the sea shore, & has communication with the town by a canal running out of the [?] of the fortification which surrounds the city, & is of a considerable strength, being mounted with a large number of cannon, & defended at this time by a strong garrison of Germans.”¹²⁴ Sandwich and his party performed their quarantine here on their way back from Constantinople, before setting out for Florence, in October, 1738.

Another admirer of this work was the letter-writer, Joseph Spence, who met Lord Sandwich in Turin in February, 1740 and made him the central topic of several letters to his mother. So impressed was Spence with the lively and interesting account the visitor gave of his travels, that he states, “I shall stick as close to him as I can to get as much out of him as possible, for instead of five or six weeks which we expected, he stays here only two or three days”.¹²⁵ Encouraged by his host’s enthusiasm for hearing about his recent voyage, the Earl went one step further and showed him his memoirs. In a letter dated 25 May, 1740, Spence notes, “His Lordship was so good as to show me (in the little time he stayed here) what he had wrote on his travels, and surprised me very much, not because there was a great deal of learning and judgment shown in his remarks, for I was well enough acquainted with his character before, but because they were as well wrote at the first heat, and as correctly, as most people’s things are at the third or fourth copying. I told his Lordship ‘twould be a sin not to publish them, and mentioned Dodsley’s name and character to him then, and wrote to him about it afterwards.”¹²⁶ Spence’s observations are indeed correct. With the exception of a few alterations (most notably a line scored out on the first page of the manuscript), the script is remarkably fluent and free from errors. Lord Sandwich obviously did not take his friend’s advice about publication, as the work appeared eleven years after his death (1799), by which time it had been much altered (for the worse) by its editor, John Cooke.¹²⁷

One aspect of this travelogue ignored by Joseph Spence is the illustrations in the manuscript, examples of which are the youthful Earl’s most curious rendition of “The Head of the Sphinx” (**Plate 3**) and two inscriptions from a Greek village (**Plate 4**).¹²⁸ It was his recording of inscriptions, in particular, that earned him a reputation for scholarship.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Klima, *op.cit.*, 248.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 282-83. Robert Dodsley was one of the foremost publishers of the day and was patronized by people of great rank.

¹²⁷ A Voyage Round the Mediterranean in the years 1738 & 1739, in the National Maritime Museum, ref. SAN/F/50, 1.

¹²⁸ See Klima, *op.cit.*, 268, where Spence refers to the Sphinx of Gizah, mentioned in the published version of Lord Sandwich’s memoirs (*Voyage*, 458).

The Earl's conclusion to the manuscript version of his travels is as brief as his introduction, when he states, "I set sail for Genoa, when being arrived I finished my Voyage which during the whole course of it had proved much to my satisfaction, & prosperous even beyond expectation. The End." What is meant by "prosperous" is not entirely clear, though he may well be referring to the wealth of antiquities and curiosities he acquired during the voyage, including Egyptian mummies, papyri, inscriptions, vases, intaglios and medals, some of which (especially the mummies and the medals) formed the basis of discussion and interest for many of the Egyptian Society meetings. He may also have been alluding to the considerable experience and knowledge he gained as a result of his tour of the east, especially for one so young. A further source of edification gained on this tour was undoubtedly related to sea-faring, which was to become the basis for his future career in the British Navy.¹²⁹

With regard to his role in the Divan, Lord Sandwich attended twenty-one of the meetings, including the final one on 25 May, 1746, at which, in his presidency (he was "El Fakir Sandwich Pacha") it was proposed that "the Divan stands adjourned from this Day to the first Sunday in December". As we have seen, this event never took place.

There are several portraits of Lord Sandwich in Turkish dress. One is attributed to Joseph Highmore, and is in the National Portrait Gallery. Another full-length portrait of him in the same costume was painted by Liotard, and, as with that of Lord Duncannon, is likely to have been begun, or even completed, during their sojourn in the east.¹³⁰ In 1745, George Knapton based his portrait of Sandwich on Highmore's work, as part of the series commissioned by the Dilettanti Society to depict its members in the costumes most associated with their own particular interests, in his case, travel to the Levant. In the Knapton portrait (**Plate 5**) Lord Sandwich is holding up his wine glass in a toast (presumably "The Harem") to Lord Duncannon, his counterpart in the "'Turkish' Group".¹³¹

Dr. Pococke

Dr. Richard Pococke is perhaps the best-known founder member of the Divan Club in terms of his contribution to oriental travel history at the time of election. Born at Southampton in 1704 into a church family, he was educated at his grandfather's school in Highclere rectory and then at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.¹³² While appointed as Precentor of Lismore Cathedral in 1725, aged only twenty-one (an appointment made by his uncle Thomas

¹²⁹ For a fascinating and detailed analysis of all aspects of life at sea in the British Navy, see N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (Collins, 1986).

¹³⁰ The original painting was unfortunately destroyed in a fire in a furniture store.

¹³¹ As described by Bruce Redford, *op.cit.*, 66.

¹³² He received a BA in 1725, a BCL in 1731 and a DCL in 1733.

Milles, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore), his interests appeared to be concerned less with the church than with travel.

Together with his cousin Jeremiah Mills (member of the former Egyptian Society and the Divan Club), Pococke made his first Grand Tour to Italy. This is documented through a series of letters to his mother,¹³³ outlining his six-month tour of the country from December, 1733 to June, 1734.

In May, 1736, Dr. Pococke (now having been promoted to Vicar-General of Waterford and Lismore) set out on a second, more extensive journey, this time alone. Travelling for a year through Germany and Eastern Europe, he spent a further year in Italy, where he befriended the Irishman Robert Wood (Divan member). His departure from Leghorn in September, 1738, took him on an extensive tour of the east, where he visited Alexandria, Cairo and Jerusalem over a period of three years, a voyage inspiring the famous travel book cited earlier in this study. His trip was almost contemporaneous with the earlier one of Lord Sandwich, and it is possible, though undocumented, that they might have met at some stage along the way. They certainly shared the same passion for knowledge about the east, for antiquities and for Turkish dress, both commissioning portraits in such costume by Liotard.

Pococke returned to England in 1742 and in the February was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society on the grounds of being “a Gentleman of Universal Learning, great Curiosity, every way well quallified and likely to be a very usefull and valuable member of the Same”.¹³⁴ He worked on his first volume of *A Description of the East and Some other Countries: Observations on Egypt*, which was published the following year. His Preface to this volume, which is dedicated to Henry Herbert, 9th Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery (known as the “architect earl”), suggests a certain lack of confidence in bringing to the world this work, when he states: “My Lord, As the magnificent buildings of Egypt, and antient architecture are the chief subject of this book, it could not be more properly addressed than to Your Lordship. On this account, with all its imperfections, it may meet with a more favourable reception in the world than it really deserves.”¹³⁵

As illustrated in the Preface of the second volume, such humble sentiments were hardly warranted, since the earlier book immediately brought him great acclaim. He states, in Volume II, “The kind and unexpected reception which the description of Aegypt met with from the world, for which I acknowledge myself much obliged, made me undertake the present volume with greater cheerfulness: But I feel it will be thought an ill requital for the favour shewn to the first, if the second should happen to be a trial of the

¹³³ BL ADD. MS. 19939.

¹³⁴ RS citation, Ref: EC/1741/15. Among his proposers was Martin Folkes, Inspector of Medals and Coins in the Egyptian Society.

¹³⁵ Vol. I, iii.

reader's patience."¹³⁶ Published in 1745, this book was dedicated to Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to whom Pococke was domestic chaplain. The former reciprocated this public honour by appointing him the same year to the Archdeaconry of Dublin, a position he retained until promoted to the Bishopric of Ossory, in 1756.

The second volume is divided into several sections: the first book being a description "Of Palestine, or the Holy Land", the second "Of Syria and Mesopotamia", the third "Of the Island of Cyprus" and the fourth "Of the Island of Candia". Part II of this volume is entitled "Observations on the Islands of the Archipelago, Asia Minor, Thrace, Greece, and some other Parts of Europe". As with other travel-writers of the period, Pococke is anxious not to produce a replica of other works and assures his reader, again in the Preface, that he will be very brief in his account of places "which are commonly seen" and, with those "which are visited by very few persons" he will "almost entirely confine [himself] to the antiquities, and what relates to natural history, mentioning only a few things of another nature, which are very remarkable".¹³⁷

Pococke's descriptions of antiquities are accompanied by numerous sketches, and of particular interest to this study are those linked with other members of the Divan Club. The most notable example is his description of antiquities and curiosities brought back by him and others, especially Lord Sandwich, who came across a bronze foot from Mycone "when his lordship made his second voyage into the east in 1739, and was returning to Egypt."¹³⁸ This foot is the same one discussed at a meeting of the Egyptian Society on 19 February, 1741. It was recorded, at that meeting, that "The Sheik [Lord Sandwich] produced a very curious foot of bronze of Greek workmanship which was found in the bottom of a well in the Island of Mycone in the Archipelago, & which admirably well represents the ligature of the ancient sandal. The length of the foot is 12 inches & the breadth near 5; so that the statue to which it belonged must have been at least 8 feet high. [It was] Ordered that a drawing of this foot be inserted in the book at the expence of the society."¹³⁹ The original drawings from the Egyptian Society are reproduced on page 186 of Pococke's *Description of the East* (**Plate 6**) and illustrate how such a major publication was influenced, in part, by the author's earlier membership of a learned society.

In the midst of his ecclesiastical duties in Ireland, and the writing up of his books, Dr. Pococke still found the time to belong to a number of clubs and societies, including the Egyptian Society (of which he was Secretary, see above) and the Divan. His involvement in the former may have been influenced by his acquaintance with the scientist and antiquary Martin Folkes,

¹³⁶ Vol. II, iii.

¹³⁷ Vol. II, iv.

¹³⁸ Book II, Part II, Chapter XVI, 186-87.

¹³⁹ BL ADD. MS. 52362, 19. The illustration appears on page 20 of the manuscript.

whom he met while in Italy in May, 1734, and the gentleman originally appointed as Inspector of Coins and Medals.¹⁴⁰ Folkes was to become President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries (1750-4) and retained links with Pococke on academic matters for a number of years.¹⁴¹

His *Descriptions of the east...* was a very popular and influential book and the following passage is a good illustration of his views on the benefits of foreign travel - a stock subject with travel writers, particularly as a conclusion to their work. His moralistic sentiments and his style are clearly underpinned by his profession as a member of the clergy:

When I first resolved on travelling into the East, as I foresaw that it would be a journey attended with great danger and difficulty, it was very natural to propose to make my observations as extensive as I could, particularly with regard to antiquity, natural history, customs, and manners: For there are different ends to travelling; which is of great use for young persons in order to learn the modern languages, especially if they are to be concerned in public affairs; they also go through their exercises, and not only gratify their curiosity, but by seeing different countries, often acquire a taste for antiquity, for architecture, sculpture, and planting; and it may be for the history of those countries they pass thro'. Some, who turn their travels to the greatest advantage, endeavour to mix with the people of the country, and with all strangers, in order to make proper observations on customs and manners; get over the prejudices of education, of being bigoted to their own, and learn to conform to such as are either innocent or convenient in the several countries they visit. And by making proper reflections on national virtues and vices both at home and abroad, they imitate and improve the one, and avoid and root out the other; and, when they return, introduce such useful customs, as are suited to our climate and dispositions. From observing the many inconveniences which attend different sorts of government and manners, they learn to value their own, which is a real happiness; and whatever they have suffered abroad, makes them enjoy with greater pleasure that liberty, ease, and affluence which falls to their share when they are settled in their own country. In this manner they improve their minds, which otherwise will receive but little advantage from travelling, and may be rather impaired; there being in reality no great difference in the countries themselves; and rambling makes little alteration in the mind, unless proper care be taken to improve it by the observations that are made.

There is use also in seeing the works of nature and art, in admiring the power and wisdom of the Creator, who has made such a wonderful variety of things,

¹⁴⁰ Pococke stresses his interest in coins and medals in the Preface of Volume II, when he states, "The great relation antient geography has to antient history and medals, which are a great help in the study of history, I am persuaded will plead my excuse with many, for frequently considering that subject..." Vol. II, iv.

¹⁴¹ See the letter reproduced in John McVeagh, *Richard Pococke's Irish Tours* (Dublin 1995), 199.

and given so much invention and ingenuity to mankind for the use and ornament of life.

A knowledge of antiquity and geography is of great service with regard to history, and adds an infinite pleasure to the study of it. A taste for architecture has had effects very much to the honour of our country: Painting and sculpture are such embellishments as are not without their use, circulate the money of the great among the ingenious, and from them to the lower rank of people, and encourage arts and sciences: A picture or a statue too may be a moral or political lecture, as well as a poem.

The great evolution of things, which they may observe in the several countries they pass through, may also afford matter for useful reflection. When they see the changes which have been made in governments, they may consider if there is not reason to think that they are the effects either of their virtue or immortality. When they observe countries laid waste and uninhabited, and famous cities, like the antient Babylon, destroyed and become the habitation of wild beasts, they may be sensible, that public vices are the natural causes and forerunners of the downfall of empires. And when they see great states and cities which have risen up in their stead from a low beginning, it may lead them to the consideration of those virtues, which contributed to their rise, not without a view to that power which directs the motions of the universe. And if they are convinced that the extraordinary revolutions of great empires have certainly been foretold, and have come to pass accordingly; this may be sure proof, that they are neither the effect of chance, nor even of natural causes alone, but must be wisely directed by that being who has this foreknowledge; which cannot be done without an influence of every thing from the least to the greatest, by that hand which wonderfully protects them in all changes, and brings them home in safety to a sweet enjoyment of their experience in agreeable and useful reflections.¹⁴²

Dr. Pococke attended Divan meetings very assiduously for the first year, acting as Reis Effendi for its fourth meeting and attending the next eleven consecutive sessions, during which he stood Reis Effendi for the second time as well as Vizir. However, he only attended once more, on 24 May, 1745, being absent from the last ten meetings. This is presumably because he was engaged in his clerical duties in Ireland. He remained in that country for the rest of his career, appointed Bishop of Elphin in June, 1765 and then Bishop of Meath in the July. He died two months later in Charleville, near Tullamore and is buried in Bishop Montgomery's tomb at Ardracran, seat of the Bishop of Meath. His collection of coins was sold at auction in London the following year and he left his manuscripts to the British Museum.

¹⁴² Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East and Some other Countries* (London, 1743), Book II, Part II, Chapter III, 277-78.

Liotard's life-size portrait of Pococke (**Plate 7**) was painted in Constantinople, 1740 and is likely to have been based on the red chalk and pencil sketch in the Louvre. It depicts Pococke in what has often been mistaken for the Armenian costume he wore when travelling in the Levant, though it is actually that of an official of the Sultan's court.¹⁴³ Leaning against an ancient altar on the hill at Pera, the serene Dr. Pococke gazes towards the city of Constantinople with a small leather-bound volume (perhaps a notebook) in hand, and his thumb and forefinger placed so as not to lose his page. The building in the background is the Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque in Tophane, across the water (meeting point of Golden Horn, Sea of Marmara and Bosphorus) can be seen the so-called *Saray Burnu* (Palace Cape) with the outer walls of the Topkapı palace (around the garden). Also visible is the Marble Kiosk in front of the walls and the two towers of the *Top Kapı(sı)* or cannon gate after which the palace is named.¹⁴⁴

Mr. Wood

Born in County Meath, 1716/17, Robert Wood was the son of Rev. Alexander James Wood, a Presbyterian minister.¹⁴⁵ He was educated at Glasgow University, from which he graduated in 1732,¹⁴⁶ and then at the Middle Temple (1736). He travelled extensively throughout his life, his first trip (or rather the first part of a larger trip, extending from 1738-43) based in Italy and including Padua and Venice. During his stay in this country (around 1738), he met Richard Pococke (Divan member), who was shortly to embark upon his trip to the Levant.¹⁴⁷ In May, 1742, Wood extended his journey to the Levant, sailing from Venice to Corfu, and later that year visiting the Greek islands of Mitylene and Scio. In 1743 he sailed from Latakia in Syria to Damietta in Egypt.

Unlike Pococke, who set out with the intention of producing a scholarly book on his eastern travels, or Sandwich, who wrote an account but did not go on to publish it, Wood kept note books and diaries that were incorporated, in

¹⁴³ As described in the catalogue of Liotard's collection of pictures published in Paris in 1771. See Jean-Etienne Liotard, 1702-1789, *Masterpieces from the Musees d'Art et d'Histoire of Geneva and Swiss Private Collections* (Somogy Editions d'Art, Paris, 2006) 55.

¹⁴⁴ I am grateful to Hans Theunissen for identifying these landmarks for me. See also *Ibid* 54 and Brian de Breffney, "Liotard's Irish Patrons", in *Irish Arts Review*, vol.4, no. 2, 1987, 31, who describes the scene as representing the coastline of the Golden Horn with the minaret and dome of a mosque and the fortifications of the Old Seraglio in the distance.

¹⁴⁵ Some sources put his place of birth as Riverstown Castle (e.g. Ingamells, *op.cit.*, 1015, and the epitaph on his tomb, transcribed below), while the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) names it as the manse in Summerhill, where his father was the Presbyterian minister.

¹⁴⁶ I am grateful to Dr. James Quinn, of the Royal Irish Academy Dictionary of Irish Biography Project, for allowing me to read the unpublished article on Robert Wood by Rosemary Richey.

¹⁴⁷ See Ingamells, *op.cit.*, 1015-16 and 119, respectively.

part, into his later publications on more specific aspects of the east. A fascinating insight into his earlier eastern travels is to be found in a notebook presented to the Hellenic Society in 1926 as part of the Wood Collection.¹⁴⁸ It is believed that Wood compiled this manuscript (identified by his daughter as his “Small Book”) largely from the (lost) journals he had kept of his first visit to the Levant in 1742-43. In addition to describing this tour, this document also contains material relating to the preparations for his later trip to the east (1750-51) and notes on the development of his ideas on Homeric geography.¹⁴⁹

An interesting section of this manuscript (202-55) contains passages describing his travels to the following places: the Adriatic, Egypt, and Aleppo, plus a fifty-one-day return voyage from Alexandria to Toulon. Much of the text is concerned with descriptions of the landscape and the climate, as well as the listing of the distance (and the time it took to travel) between the various (often dismal and miserable) towns and villages along his way. Occasionally the author adds a more human note, when referring to the people around him. He mentions, for example, the “severall gentlemen of the English & french factorys” with whom he dined just after leaving Aleppo in late November,¹⁵⁰ and notes, elsewhere, that his company had to leave their dining place, near the hilly and barren countryside of Orpha (modern Urfa), sooner than expected because of a squabble that broke out “between two of our servants and some Bedouins”.¹⁵¹

He seldom refers to the hazards of journeying in these parts,¹⁵² and when he does, tends to minimize them. For instance, he mentions at one point that, “during our whole journey... we met with no disturbance from either Arabs or Gurdins; we saw no wild beast of any kind, unless Jackells may be so call’d of those we had sometimes great numbers howling about our tents & sometimes stealing in to get at our provisions”.¹⁵³ Later in the manuscript he describes an encounter with a belligerent group of about a hundred Arabs, who came very close to his company when the latter were inspecting a curious well near Sicara containing embalmed birds. Luckily for Wood and his company, who had already been warned about the dangers of journeying in this area, these bandits had either failed to notice them, or believed that their guides

¹⁴⁸ This is catalogued as Item 23 in the collection, which is in the Joint Library of the Hellenic and Roman Societies, at the Institute of Classical Studies, London. I am grateful to Paul Jackson, Deputy Librarian, for his kind assistance in allowing me access to this material, and for permission to quote from the manuscript.

¹⁴⁹ For further details and analysis of this whole collection, see J. A. Butterworth, “Library Supplement: The Wood Collection”, in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* CVI (1986) 197-200.

¹⁵⁰ Obviously those involved in the Levant Company. Joint Library of the Hellenic and Roman Societies, *Wood Diary* 23, 224.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁵² Item 18 in the Wood Collection (39-50), however, does contain miscellaneous topics, including observations on the “inconveniences and hardships of travel in Greece and Turkey”. See J.A. Butterworth, *op.cit.*, 197.

¹⁵³ Joint Library of the Hellenic and Roman Societies, *Wood Diary* 23, 221.

(Arabs who had fled at the sight of this intimidating gang) were hiding close by. Clearly, Wood's group seemed less perturbed by this threat to their lives than did their guides, and quickly returned to their inspection of the well, once the danger had passed.¹⁵⁴

Whether he returned home during the intervening period is unknown, but from 1744-45 Robert Wood was in Rome acting as private secretary to his fellow-countryman, the great collector and patron, Joseph Leeson. Why Leeson (later to become 1st Earl of Milltown) required a secretary when abroad is unclear, though it is possible that Wood, who by then had spent a considerable amount of time in Italy and was highly educated,¹⁵⁵ was assisting him in his acquisition of antiquities with which to adorn his Palladian mansion, Russborough House, in County Wicklow. It must have been at this time that Wood met John Bouverie (who was acquainted with Leeson),¹⁵⁶ the French archaeologist (1722-50) with whom he was to travel, along with the archaeologist James Dawkins and draughtsman Giovanni Battista Borra, during his second, more famous tour of the Levant (1750-51).¹⁵⁷ The plans for this trip took place in Rome in the winter of 1749, and in contrast with Woods' earlier travels to the Levant, this tour, which resulted in the publication of his two celebrated and influential books, *The Ruins of Palmyra otherwise Tedmor in the Desart* (London, 1753), and *The Ruins of Balbec, otherwise Heliopolis in Coelosyria* (London, 1757), has been well documented.¹⁵⁸

These publications, the result of travel high profile expeditions to the Middle-East, were to have a major impact on western culture, and particularly influenced the development of neoclassical architecture in England. In addition, these books affected trends in interior design, especially in the highly ornate ceilings of many mansions executed in the so-called "Palmyran" style. Two such ceilings, which were designed to imitate the motifs depicted in Borra's engravings of the Temple of Bel, are to be found in the dining room and entrance hall of West Wycombe Hall, the magnificent home of Divan Club member Sir Francis Dashwood.¹⁵⁹ He was not the only gentleman to pay tribute to Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra* by commissioning such a piece: other Palmyran ceilings are to be found in Warwick Castle, Osterley Park House, Stratfield

¹⁵⁴ See *Ibid*, 241ff.

¹⁵⁵ He was received as a Doctor in the University of Padua, 1738 and was recognized as being fluent in many languages.

¹⁵⁶ On 24 October, 1745, Leeson dined with Bouverie. See Ingamells, *op.cit.*, 593.

¹⁵⁷ Bouverie died on 8 July, 1850, at Magnesia, on the River Maeander and was buried in Smyrna.

¹⁵⁸ See, in particular, C.A. Hutton, "The Travels of 'Palmyra' Wood in 1750-51", in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1927) 102-28 (which admits, in the second paragraph, that "little is known of Wood's history before this tour", p.102); Chapter 3 of David Constantine, *op.cit.*, and D. N. White's essay in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

¹⁵⁹ See Dashwood, *Op.cit.*, 203-5, which describes the recent restoration of the Palmyra Room, where the Divan paintings are housed.

Saye House, Stowe House, Woburn Abbey and No. 5 Pottergate, Lincoln.¹⁶⁰ All known examples of this style were executed between the mid-1750s and 1780, with Woburn Abbey reckoned to be the most faithful to Borra's original drawing.¹⁶¹

In 1753-54 (between the publication of these two books), Wood was back again in Italy, this time accompanying the sickly Francis Egerton, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater, on his Grand Tour. On his return to England, in December 1756, he was appointed Under-Secretary to William Pitt, an appointment he held under Pitt and his successors until 1763. From 1761, until his death in 1771, he was MP for Brackley in Northamptonshire.

His portrait, in the National Portrait Gallery, London,¹⁶² was painted in 1755, shortly before the publication of his second book, *Ruins of Balbec*, when he was still in Rome with the Duke of Bridgewater. It symbolizes his literary and classical interests, the papers in his hand representing a map of Greece. Two years earlier, in 1753, Raphael Mengs had painted a portrait more reminiscent of the Divan portraits, with Wood dressed in an ermine-edged silk coat and lace cuffs.¹⁶³

Considering the fame he was to achieve from his travels and his books, Robert Woods' election to the Society of Dilettanti was surprisingly late, in 1763. He was never elected as a member of the Royal Society, or the Society of Antiquaries, nor did he belong to the Egyptian Society. On 20 April, 1744, he was proposed by Lord Granby as a member of the Divan Club, and was accordingly elected. However, the only meeting he attended was the penultimate Divan, held more than two years later, on 11 May, 1746. His protracted absence from the club can be explained by the fact that for much of this time he was abroad.

Wood died in 1771, two years after the publication of his third book, *An essay on the original genius of Homer* (London, 1769). He was buried in a vault in the New Burial Ground, London, designed by the sculptor Joseph Wilton. His epitaph, composed by Horace Walpole, reads: "To the beloved memory of Robert Wood, a man of supreme benevolence, who was born at the castle of Riverstown near Trim, in the County of Meath, and died Sept. 9th, 1771, in the fifty-fifth year of his age; and of Thomas Wood his son, who died

¹⁶⁰ The design and authorship of this latter ceiling is discussed in Richard Hewlings, "A Palmyra ceiling in Lincoln", *Architectural History*, vol 31 (1988) 166-170.

¹⁶¹ See Susan Tebby, "The Ruins of Palmyra: New Research and Links with some 18th Century Ceilings in England", in *Transactions of the Leicester Literary & Philosophical Society*, Volume 98 (2004) 28-35. In this lecture, Tebby examines the differences and similarities between the south adyton ceiling in the Temple of Bel, Palmyra, the engravings by Borra, depicted in Wood's book, and the eighteenth-century ceilings of the above English houses.

¹⁶² By Allan Ramsay, 1755, Ref. 4868.

¹⁶³ This is reproduced in page 76 of T.J.B. Spencer, "Robert Wood and the Problem of Troy in the Eighteenth Century", in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1957) 75-105. It is noted here as being in the Earl of Ellesmere's Collection.

Aug. 25th, 1772, in his ninth year; Ann, their once happy wife and mother, now dedicates this melancholy and inadequate memorial of her affection and grief. The beautiful editions of Balbec and Palmyra, illustrated by the classic pen of Robert Wood, supply a nobler and more lasting monument, and will survive those august remains.”

A picture of this tomb (**Plate 8**) was painted by Frederick, 3rd Lord Bessborough (eldest surviving son of Divan member, Lord Duncannon)¹⁶⁴ and is reproduced above. The original is included in a collection of prints and paintings bound into a copy of Rev. Daniel Lysons’ *Environs of London* (London 1791-96), in Stansted Park, alongside a corresponding biographical note about Robert Wood. Lysons notes that “Mr. Wood... left behind him several MSS. relating to his travels but not sufficiently arranged to afford any hopes of their being given to the public”, and goes on to describe the house where he had most recently lived, which had, coincidentally, been owned by the celebrated Roman historian, Edward Gibbon.¹⁶⁵ Sadly, these manuscripts have still not been published, and a major biography of this Anglo-Irish traveller is long overdue.

Admiral George Anson

Born a year or two after his brother Thomas (Divan member), in 1697,¹⁶⁶ George Anson was to become by far the most famous of his family, in terms of his career. However, his elder brother greatly outshone him in personality and flair, and in the influence of his Classical taste. His father was a minor country gentleman, William Anson of Shugborough, in Staffordshire, who died in 1720 leaving his young son Thomas (aged only twenty-five) to inherit the estate. George, however, as second son, had already entered the navy in 1712, at the age of fifteen, in which he was to enjoy a spectacular career. His early success has been attributed to two factors: first, that his family were Hanoverians (unusual for that part of the country) and second, that his uncle Lord Macclesfield was Lord Chief Justice from 1710 and then Lord Chancellor from 1718 to 1725.¹⁶⁷ With these advantages, he was continuously employed during a period of long peace, when the navy was largely demobilised. George rose very rapidly to Lieutenant (1716), Commander (1722), and Post-captain (1724-35), during which time he travelled

¹⁶⁴ In 2nd Earl’s Library Catalogue are the following three entries for Robert Wood: “Ruins of Balbec (sic) – by Wood”, “Ruins of Palmyra - by Wood” (both in 2nd Earl’s hand), and “Woods Homer” (added at a later date, in 3rd Earl’s script).

¹⁶⁵ I am grateful to the Trustees of the Stansted Park Trust for permission to reproduce this illustration (photograph by Captain John Cunningham).

¹⁶⁶ There is a discrepancy in the records regarding the actual year of Thomas’ birth.

¹⁶⁷ See N.A.M. Rodger, Chapter 7 (“George, Lord Anson, 1697-1762”), in Peter La Fevre and Richard Harding (eds), *Precursors of Nelson: British Admirals of the Eighteenth Century* (Stackpole Books, 2000) 177.

extensively. In his latter post he went as far as North America and remained in Carolina for six years, returning in 1730. In December, 1737, at the age of thirty, he was appointed as Captain of the *Centurian* (60 guns) and was sent to West Africa, crossing from there to the West Indies. This expedition, which lasted almost two years, prepared him for his legendary mission that took place shortly after his return, when he was sent out as commander of a squadron to attack Spanish possessions in South America.

In very straightened circumstances (he was granted for the *Centurian* only 170 men out of the 300 he had requested),¹⁶⁸ he set out on what was to become a circumnavigation of the world. The squadron set sail on 18 September, 1740, and returned almost four years later, in June, 1744, having captured a wealthy Spanish galleon off Cape Espiritu Santo and sold her cargo to the Chinese for a large fortune. A detailed account of this voyage is recorded in a book compiled by Richard Walter from Anson's papers and documents,¹⁶⁹ entitled *A Voyage round the World in the years MDCCXL, I, II, III, IV...*¹⁷⁰ The first edition, published in May 1748, was a best seller and attracted almost two thousand subscribers; and went into four more editions before the end of the year. By 1776, fifteen different editions had appeared, and the work had been translated into French, Dutch, German and Italian. In 1761, however, a controversy arose concerning the book's authorship, when the editor of a volume of mathematical tracts¹⁷¹ asserted that the late Benjamin Robins had written a major part of the *Voyage*: hence the fact that, in later editions of the book, Robins' name was inserted in brackets after that of Walter. Whatever the truth of the matter, it is clear that the whole production had been carried out under the supervision of Anson himself.

This book, celebrating the distinguished career and exemplary conduct of George Anson, was extremely popular in its day, and is still regarded as a significant document in terms of travel history. Concerning its more widespread influence, it is clear that the mutiny scenes in the book inspired the creation of *Frankenstein*, since it was one of the books read by Mary Shelley and a group of friends during the development of her famous novel.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Of which, according to the records, 32 were from the hospital and sick quarters, 37 from the *Salisbury*, with officers of Colonel Lowther's regiment, and 98 marines.

¹⁶⁹ For an analysis of these documents, see Glyndwr Williams, *Documents Relating to Anson's Voyage round the World, 1740-44* (Navy Records Society, London, 1967).

¹⁷⁰ See Glyndwr Williams (ed.), *A Voyage round the World in the years MDCCXL, I, II, III, IV*, by George Anson (Oxford University Press, 1974).

¹⁷¹ James Wilson (ed.), *Mathematical Tracts of the late Benjamin Robins, Esq.; Fellow of the Royal Society and Engineer-General to the Honourable the East India Company* (London, 1761).

¹⁷² This occurred on the shores of Lake Geneva, in June, 1816, when Mary Shelley was in company with the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord George Byron and his physician and friend Dr. Polidori. Byron proposed that each should come up with a ghost story to amuse the group during a spell of wet weather, and Mary came up with the core of the tale which was then

Similarly, it has inspired more recent literature, such as Patrick O'Brian's novel *The Unknown Shore*, published in 1959.

*Anson's Voyage*¹⁷³ comprises three books written in a very simple and flowing style intended for a general readership. As a patriotic encomium, intended to explain the circumstances of the mission that was fraught with so many difficulties yet ended in such monetary success, the book often highlights the moderation and trustworthiness of the English in contrast with the iniquity of the enemy. A typical example of this is to be found in Book III, Chapter IX, entitled "Transactions in the River of *Canton*", which gives a fascinating insight into the alleged treachery of the Chinese, regarding the provision of food, reads as follows:

It were endless to recount all the artifices, extortions, and frauds, which were practised on the Commodore and his people by the *Chinese*. The method of buying all things in *China* being by weight, the tricks made use of by them to increase the weight of the provision they sold to the *Centurion* were almost incredible. One time, a large quantity of fowls and ducks being brought for the ship's use, the greatest part of them presently died: This alarmed the people on board with the apprehension that they had been killed by poison; but on examination it appeared that it was only owing to their being crammed with stones and gravel to increase their weight, the quantity thus forced into most of the ducks being found to amount to ten ounces in each. The hogs, too, which were bought ready killed of the *Chinese* butchers, had water injected into them for the same purpose, so that a carcass hung up all night for the water to drain from, it hath lost above a stone of its weight, and when, to avoid this cheat, the hogs were bought alive, it was found that the *Chinese* gave them salt to increase their thirst, and having by this means excited them to drink great quantities of water, they then took measures to prevent them from discharging it again, and sold the tortured animal in this inflated state. When the Commodore first put to sea from *Macao*, they practised an artifice of another kind; for as the *Chinese* never object to the eating of any food that dies of itself, they took care, by some secret practises, that great part of his live sea-store should die in a short time after it was put on board, hoping to make a second profit of the dead carcasses which they expected would be thrown overboard; and two-thirds of the hogs dying before the *Centurion* was out of sight of land, many of the *Chinese* boats followed her only to pick up the carrion. These instances may serve as a specimen of the manners of this celebrated nation, which is often recommended to the rest of the world as a pattern of all kinds of laudable qualities.¹⁷⁴

Anson is particularly famed for his return to England, in June of 1744, with a fortune in Spanish treasure, described in the book as "for at least

converted into a novel over the months to April 1817. See Graham Allen, "Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus", in *The Literary Encyclopedia*.

¹⁷³ As abbreviated in the library catalogue of Divan members Thomas Anson and Lord Bessborough.

¹⁷⁴ Williams, *Voyage*, 355-56.

eighteen months the great object of their [the crew's] hopes".¹⁷⁵ While this made him a national hero (evident not only from written sources but also from the amount of portraits, medals and other memorabilia produced to commemorate his achievements), this aspect of his success is considerably played down in the book, in favour of his more laudable quality of humanity.¹⁷⁶ In Book II, Chapter VIII, entitled "From *Macao* to Cape *Espiritu Santo*: The taking of the *Manila* galleon, and returning back again", Watson describes how Anson's men overcame the *Nuestra Senora de Cabadonga*, from which this treasure was obtained. The writer emphasises the superiority of the galleon, in order to highlight this English success. As he explains, it was "much larger than the *Centurion*, and had five hundred and fifty men and thirty-six guns mounted for action, besides twenty-eight pidreroes¹⁷⁷ in her gunwale, quarters, and tops, each of which carried a four-pound ball. She was very well furnished with small arms, and was particularly provided against boarding, both by her close quarters and by a strong network of 2-inch rope, which was laced over her waist and was defended by half-pikes. She had sixty-seven killed in the action and eighty-four wounded, whilst the *Centurion* had only two killed and a lieutenant and sixteen wounded, all of whom but one recovered; Of so little consequence are the most destructive arms in untutored and unpractised hands".¹⁷⁸ In Chapter 35, the author gives details of the treasure, which must by then have been very familiar to the readers. The most important point here, however, is in the concluding comment, which validates Anson's expedition. As outlined, "By this time the particulars of the cargo of the galeon were well ascertained, and it was found that she had on board 1,313,843 pieces of eight, and 35,682 oz of virgin silver, besides some cochineal and a few other commodities, which, however, were but of small account in comparison of the specie. And this being the Commodore's last prize, it hence appears that all the treasure taken by the *Centurion* was not much short of 400,000 *l.* independent of the ships and merchandise, which she either burnt or destroyed, and which, by the most reasonable estimation, could not amount to so little as 600,000 *l.* more; so that the whole loss of the enemy by our squadron did doubtless exceed a million sterling. To which, if there be added the great expense of the court of *Spain* in fitting out *Pizarro*,¹⁷⁹ and in paying the additional charges in

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 341.

¹⁷⁶ This is particularly the case with regard to his treatment of prisoners. Watson records, at the end of Book II, Chapter VI: "All the prisoners left us with the strongest assurances of their grateful remembrance of his uncommon treatment. A Jesuit, in particular, whom the Commodore had taken, and who was an ecclesiastic of some distinction, could not help expressing himself with great thankfulness for the civilities he and his countrymen had found on board, declaring that he should consider it as his duty to do Mr. *Anson* justice at all time". *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁷⁷ Light swivel-guns.

¹⁷⁸ Williams, *Voyage*, 340-41,

¹⁷⁹ The Portuguese commander of the galleon.

America, incurred on our account, together with the loss of their men of war, the total of all these articles will be a most exorbitant sum, and is the strongest conviction of the utility of this expedition, which, with all its numerous disadvantages, did yet prove so extremely prejudicial to the enemy."¹⁸⁰

The concluding paragraph to the book, briefly documenting the *Centurian's* safe arrival in England,¹⁸¹ is as follows:

Thus was this expedition finished, when it had lasted three years and nine months, after having, by its event, strongly evinced this important truth: That though prudence, intrepidity, and perseverance united, are not exempted from the blows of adverse fortune; yet in a long series of transactions, they usually rise superior to its power, and in the end rarely fail of proving successful.¹⁸²

As soon as George Anson returned to England from his circumnavigation of the globe, he joined the group of opposition Whigs led by the Duke of Bedford, and by December, 1744, newly elected as MP for Hedon, he was working closely with Bedford (now First Lord of the Admiralty) and Lord Sandwich (Divan member). In the same month, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1745, the duke of Bedford invited him to join the Admiralty with the rank of Rear Admiral of the white. As subordinate under the Duke, or Lord Sandwich and as First Lord himself, Anson was at the Admiralty with only one short break from 1745 till his death in 1762; and during this period he was committed to reforming many aspects of the navy, including the naval administration, the dockyards, and the revision of the Navy Discipline Act in 1749, that was to remain unaltered until 1865.

Regarding his personal circumstances, on 13 June, 1747, he was created by King George II, Baron Anson of Soberton, in recognition of his services to the country - the title of which became extinct on his death. In the following year he married Elizabeth Yorke, daughter of his political mentor, Philip Yorke, Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. This year (1748) also saw the publication of *Anson's Voyage*, and two years later he was elected (as Lord Anson) a member of the Society of Dilettanti. In 1751, he reached the peak of his career when he replaced Lord Sandwich as First Lord of the Admiralty. His wife died in 1760, having produced no children, and his death followed two years later, whereupon a large fortune was left to his brother Thomas Anson. It was on the proceeds of this fortune that Thomas (fellow Divan member) was able to finance both the improvements on Shugborough Hall and his large collection of art and antiquities (see below).

Lord Anson's election to the Divan Club took place very late, on 31 January, 1746, shortly after his return from his circumnavigation of the globe. He was proposed by Lord Sandwich and attended only three of the following

¹⁸⁰ Williams, *Voyage*, 344.

¹⁸¹ The entire homeward journey from Canton is recounted in a single paragraph.

¹⁸² Williams, *Voyage*, 371-72.

eight meetings over the next quarter. He was never appointed to act as either of the two officers of the society. The portrait in the National Maritime Museum, London, is believed to be of Admiral Anson before departing for his voyage around the world on the *Centurian*.¹⁸³ His right hand rests on a classical column with decorative classical motifs, suggestive of his interest in antiquities.

Other Divan Club Members

To follow are shorter biographical accounts of the lesser stars in the Divan Club, at least in terms of their contribution to travel-writing or the history of travel. Nevertheless, the fact that they were elected or introduced to the Divan Club (and therefore had already visited Turkey or intended to do so) indicates a remarkable degree of intrepidity in the field of travel. Whether they had visited the Ottoman Empire for educational, recreational, family or professional reasons, these individuals all contributed in some degree to furthering contemporary knowledge of the east. The length of the biographies provided below depends both on the amount and the appeal of available material available on the individuals. For example, more extensive biographies are given for Lord Duncannon (later Lord Bessborough) and Thomas Anson, whose reputations for Classical taste and connoisseurship make them of considerable interest to this study. These particular qualities were both inspired and enhanced by their continental and eastern travels.

Sir Francis Dashwood

Sir Francis Dashwood was born in Great Malborough Street, London, 1708, into a family that had secured its wealth through the silk trade with Turkey, thus providing him with an early introduction to the east. On the death of his father (also Sir Francis), he inherited the title of 2nd Baronet, as well as the family seat of West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, which had been purchased in 1670.¹⁸⁴ He retained this title until 1762, when he succeeded to the title of 15th Baronet Despensers.

His first Grand Tour took place in 1729-31 under the tutelage of his uncle, Earl of Westmorland, and his second was from 1739-41. While the former trip resulted in the advent of the Dilettanti Society, to which he was elected a member in 1736,¹⁸⁵ the latter trip was to lead to his membership of the Divan Club, since it was on this occasion that he visited the Levant. His eastern tour, believed to have been in the late 1730's,¹⁸⁶ took him to places with which

¹⁸³ By Allan Ramsay, c. 1740, Ref. BHC2157.

¹⁸⁴ Now managed by the National Trust.

¹⁸⁵ He has been identified as the seated figure in the famous series of paintings by Nazari depicting the foundation of the Society.

¹⁸⁶ See Dashwood, *op.cit.*, 23.

his family had long been connected through their trading concerns, such as Constantinople and Smyrna (also visited by his friends Lord Sandwich and Lord Duncannon a year earlier, in 1738), as well as Ephesus, Palmyra, Baalbek and Egypt.

While we have no memoirs from his sojourn in the east, it is known that he brought back with him an Egyptian mummy (now in the British Museum) and a model of a Turkish mosque. He also acquired a number of books of Turkish interest, still in the library at West Wycombe, such as Sir Paul Rycaut's *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1668),¹⁸⁷ and J. Fryer's *A New Account of East-India and Persia* (1698). Lasting memorials of his eastern travels include sculptures of him and his wife Sarah Ellys (whom he married in 1745) as sphinxes, and, more significantly for the Divan Club, his portrait in oriental dress (**Plate 9**), with the words "El Faquir Dashwood Pasha" inscribed on the back, denoting his position in that association.

This portrait in oils, executed by Adriaen Carpentiers around 1745, captures with great mastery the vivacious spirit of an extraordinary man, whose passion for the exotic and the ludicrous was unrestrained. It is one in a series of family portraits of subjects in "Divan Club dress", all half-length and in carved wood frames, this being a George 2nd giltwood Oxford frame.¹⁸⁸

Shortly after his marriage, Sir Francis began extensive work on West Wycombe House to reflect his interests in Greece, employing the celebrated Nicholas Revett (known to him through the Dilettanti Society) to design much of the work, which was completed in 1771. The grounds of the estate are almost as captivating as the design and décor of the house itself and include the Temple of Music and the imposing hexagonal mausoleum, in which he was buried in 1781.

Dashwood acted as Vizir for two Divans, though does not appear not to have supported the club very well, the records showing that he attended only four other meetings. Also, as described earlier, he was once absent from his duties as an officer, and on another occasion appeared late. Other clubs founded by Sir Francis were the Lincoln Club and the notorious Hell-Fire Club, or Monks of Medenham. He was also elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1746, being considered a "Gentleman of Merit, Distinction & Learning, and well qualified to be a valuable and usefull member of our body".¹⁸⁹ Among his proposers was Martin Folkes, formerly of the Egyptian Society

¹⁸⁷ Also in the Libraries of Lord Bessborough and Lord Coke. I am grateful to Sir Edward Dashwood for supplying me with details from the family inventory.

¹⁸⁸ Again, thanks are due to Sir Edward Dashwood, for giving information about this portrait and for permitting it to be reproduced in this study.

¹⁸⁹ RS citation, Ref. EC/1746/06.

Lord Duncannon

William Ponsonby (as he was known until 1724)¹⁹⁰ was born in County Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1704. The eldest surviving son of Brabazon Ponsonby (2nd Viscount Duncannon) and Sarah Margetson, he was educated at home and does not appear to have gone to university. His election to the Society of Dilettanti preceded his first known Grand Tour (1736-39), suggesting either that he had already completed an undocumented Grand Tour (quite likely, considering his age), or that he was in some other way qualified for election, for example being a well-known connoisseur and collector. His documented travels took him first to the usual places of interest (Rome, Florence, Venice, etc.) where he is known to have kept company with Lord Middlesex in Florence, and then to Greece and Turkey, from April until November, 1739. Unfortunately, we have no record of his extended Grand Tour, and have to rely on the contemporary accounts of others in his company,¹⁹¹ (together with the state papers cited in Ingamells) to supply us with the few details that do exist.¹⁹²

As far as we can gauge from the sources, the Levantine trip involved five others, four of whom went on to establish and join the Divan Club, namely Lord Sandwich, John Mackye, James Nelthorpe and Mr. Frolich. While Lord Sandwich appears to have master-minded the actual voyage (including purchasing the ship), and kept a full account of the journey, it was Lord Duncannon (as Ponsonby/Bessborough is named in records from this period) who invited the portrait artist Jean-Etienne Liotard to accompany them on their trip and was to become his most important patron. Included among his seventy or more paintings by this artist is a spectacular portrait of Duncannon himself in Turkish costume (**Plate 10**) copied by George Knapton, in 1743,¹⁹³ and used as his official Dilettanti Society portrait.

In addition, eight years later Duncannon commissioned Spencer Gervase to produce a miniature from it, which he had mounted in a diamond frame. It is likely that the original was begun, perhaps even completed, during the trip to Turkey. A later portrait of Duncannon's wife, Caroline Cavendish (daughter of the 4th Duke of Devonshire, whom he married on his return from the east in 1738), was executed with the sitter also in Turkish dress, both paintings still being in the family collection at Stansted Park, Hampshire, in England.

¹⁹⁰ His title became Lord Duncannon in 1724, until 1758, when he became 2nd of Earl of Bessborough.

¹⁹¹ For example Lord Sandwich's *Voyage...* (both the manuscript version, *op.cit.*, and the published version, *op.cit.*), and an account recorded by the artist Liotard's son (see L. Geilly, "La Biographie de Jean-Etienne Liotard, écrite par son fils", *Geneva XI*, 1933).

¹⁹² See Ingamells, *op.cit.*, 781;

¹⁹³ See Bruce Redford, *op.cit.*, 66. I am grateful to the Trustees of the Stansted Park Trust for permission to reproduce this illustration (photograph by Captain John Cunningham).

Lord Duncannon inherited his father's title in 1758, becoming Lord Bessborough, and on the death of his wife Caroline, in 1760, he sold the magnificent Ingress Park, in Kent, and commissioned Sir William Chambers to build for him Roehampton Villa, a house much admired by his visitors. It was at this point that he became more serious about collecting antiquities to furnish its elegant rooms and spacious grounds, and began to correspond with his two agents: one the notorious Thomas Jenkins in Rome, and the other his friend and fellow-countryman, James Hamilton, 2nd Earl of Clanbrassill (of the second creation) who at that time was resident in Paris. This correspondence has already been examined in a recent study that traces the fortunes of the various antiquities offered by these agents right through to their acquisition, prices paid, and whereabouts, following the dispersal of his huge collection after the Christie's sales of 1801.¹⁹⁴

Though there are several indications to suggest that Lord Bessborough may have travelled to Italy at a later date (including an invitation from Thomas Jenkins, and the fact that his library, according to two important sources, was kept up to date with all the latest travel and guide books),¹⁹⁵ there is no actual evidence for this. His Classical taste was most apparent in the elaborate effigies he commissioned to commemorate the deaths of his parents (the William Atkinson monument to the Earl and Countess of Bessborough, 1758, in the chapel at Fiddown, County Kilkenny), and his wife (the Rysback monument in the family vault of the Dukes of Devonshire, All Saints Church, Derby, 1760). The three figures in these monuments are in classical drapery and are of distinctly Roman influence. By contrast, the monument erected to Lord Bessborough himself, in 1793, is plain and uninspiring. The work of his close friend Nollekens, this is with the monument to his wife, in Derby Cathedral.¹⁹⁶

From an early age, Lord Bessborough had a distinguished political career.¹⁹⁷ With regard to membership of clubs and societies, he was a

¹⁹⁴ For a full analysis of this, together with other aspects of his connoisseurship, see R. Finnegan, "The Classical Taste of William Ponsonby, 2nd Earl of Bessborough", in *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies: The Journal of the Irish Georgian Society*, Vol. VIII (2005) 12-43.

¹⁹⁵ His Catalogue of Books at Rowhampton, 1762, a manuscript in Stansted Park Library, and the Christie's *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Late Right Hon. Frederick Earl of Bessborough*, 1848.

¹⁹⁶ This monument, together with the memorial engraving of Lord Bessborough, is examined by Rachel Finnegan, in 'John Singleton Copley, "an extreme cunning fellow": the contentious memorial engraving to William Ponsonby, 2nd Earl of Bessborough', in *Print Quarterly*, March 2007 (forthcoming).

¹⁹⁷ He was MP for Newtownards, County Down, from 1725 to 1727, and for Kilkenny from 1727 to 1758; he held the office of Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland from 1741-44; was invested as a Privy Counsellor (Ireland) in 1741; was MP for Derby from 1742-54; he was a Lord of the Admiralty from 1746-56; was MP for Saltash 1754-56; was MP for Harwich from 1756-58; held the office of Lord of the Treasury from 1756-59, and Custos Rotulorum of

Freemason and was elected, in 1733, as one of the Senior Grand Wardens of the Grand Lodge of Dublin. He was an early member of the Society of Dilettanti, being elected in 1736, and belonged to the Egyptian Society, as a member who had not visited Egypt. In addition, he was a founder member of the Divan Club, appearing second in the list of seniority, and attended eighteen meetings of the Divan. Finally, he was a Trustee of the British Museum from 1768 until his death in 1793.

Mr. Edgcumbe

There is a slight doubt as to the identity of this member. When acting as Reis Effendi, Mr. Edgcumbe signs himself as “R” Edgcumbe, but there are two Hon. Richard Edgcumbes alive during this period, father and son. It is likely, however, that the individual in question is the eldest son of Richard, 1st Baron Mount-Edgcumbe, who succeeded his father as 2nd Baron in 1758. Born in 1716, he was an exact contemporary of John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, attending Eton from 1725-32, and from there going into the army. Though we have no record of his Grand Tour to Italy,¹⁹⁸ or of any journey to the Levant, he was elected as a member of the Society of Dilettanti in 1744, the same year in which the Divan Club was established.

Apart from his military and political appointments, he was also a poet (whose achievements were recognised by his friend Horace Walpole), and an artist. His services to art were later honoured by the artist Johann Heinrich Muntz, who dedicated to him his treatise on *Encaustic, or, Count Caylus's Method of Painting in the Manner of the Antients* (London, 1760).¹⁹⁹

Mr. Edgcumbe died unmarried in 1761, his title and property (Mount Edgcumbe, Plymouth) passing on to his younger brother, Hon. George, who also became a Divan member. He acted as Reis Effendi to three Divans (the first, the penultimate and the last) and was Vizir to the fourth, and proved to be an enthusiastic member, attending eighteen meetings of this club. No portrait has been found of this gentleman.

Mr. Fanshawe:

No details of this gentleman are given in the text, including his initials. However, it is likely that it is Simon Fanshawe of Fanshawe Gate, Derby, born in 1716. We can assume this not only because his dates are compatible (as with those of Edgcumbe, above), but also because he was elected to the Society of

County Kilkenny for 1758, as well as being Governor for County Kilkenny in that year; and was Joint Postmaster-General from 1759-62 and again from 1765-66.

¹⁹⁸ He does not appear in Ingamells, *op.cit.*

¹⁹⁹ Muntz was resident artist at Walpole's Strawberry Hill between 1755-59 and for a short time was a member of his Committee for Taste, until dismissed for “very pertinent behaviour”.

Dilettanti in 1744, along with three other members of the Divan, thus indicating an interest both in travel and in connoisseurship.

While we have no record of his having done the Grand Tour at the normal age, he is recorded as visiting Italy in 1772 (five years before his death), with his wife, son and a “Miss Snelling”, probably his unmarried sister-in-law. This family was noted as being in Capua and Naples.²⁰⁰ No portrait has been found of this gentleman.

Sir Everard Fawkener

Born in 1684, Everard Fawkener had early connections with the Levant through his family trading company, and in 1716, at the age of thirty-two, was sent to Aleppo, where he remained for nine years. In 1725, probably on his return journey, he met Voltaire in Paris, with whom he was to have a close friendship for the rest of his life. In fact he seems to have been more famous for his connection with Voltaire than for any of his own achievements.

In 1735 Fawkener, largely through the success of his family business, was appointed as Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, and arrived shortly after Turkey had declared war on Russia. His brief was to concert and execute “such measures as shall appear the most effectual to prevent the Porte from coming to rupture with the Emperor or the Czarina”.²⁰¹ From 1737, after the Treaty of Nemirov, the French embassy dominated the negotiations, leaving the British and Dutch embassies with very little to do, and by 1742 things were so quiet that Sir Everard (who had been knighted at Hanover, on his way to Turkey) asked to be allowed to return to England for a short time to see to personal business.²⁰²

Two years after Sir Everard’s return to England, in 1744, he was elected to the Society of Dilettanti and in March of the following year was appointed as Secretary to the Duke of Cumberland. This was a very demanding position that allowed him little time in London (by then he had acquired a seat in Wandsworth), though he still managed to attend some sessions of the Divan. He assumed the role of Vizir on 16 March, 1744, and attended a further eight meetings, though there was a notable dropping off half way through the life-span of the society, his last attendance recorded as being on 15 February, 1745.

Two years later (1747) he married, at the age of fifty-two, and was fondly remembered by the Mektûbî Efendi (Private Secretary) to the Grand Vizir of the Porte, when Lord Charlemont visited Constantinople in 1749. As reported by Charlemont, “He... particularly desired to know whether I was

²⁰⁰ Ingamells, *op.cit.*, 348.

²⁰¹ See A.C. Wood, “The English Embassy at Constantinople 1660-1762”, in *The English Historical Review* (Vol. 40, n. 160) 554.

²⁰² This became a source for contention among the Turkish authorities, who resented his having disappeared leaving no successor in the post.

acquainted with Sir Everard Faulkner (sic), the late Ambassador at the Porte. Upon my answering in the affirmative he enquired in the most friendly manner after his health, and whether anything new had befallen him. I informed him that Sir Everard since his departure from Constantinople had been married to a lady young and beautiful. He charged me not to fail, whenever I should see his acquaintance, to present his compliments to him and to tell him that he pitied him greatly for having been weak enough to take a young wife in his declining years.”²⁰³ Fawkenner died in 1758 insolvent and intestate, and was buried in Bath Abbey.

Mr. Fröhlich

There is virtually no reference to this individual in the sources, though a contemporary observer, Joseph Spence, claims he was governor to Lord Sandwich on his journey to the Levant.²⁰⁴ Another more recent source, however, maintains that the latter's governor was the Swiss Fralioli.²⁰⁵ While the two are probably the same (Frailioli possibly being an Italian variation of the German name Fröhlich), Spence's recollections are reliable, since his travels and lengthy stay in Italy, which occupied a decade (1731-41), coincided with the Grand Tour of Lord Sandwich. As already noted, Spence's memoirs are recorded in letters to his mother, in note-books, and in anecdotes of conversations he had with distinguished foreigners while abroad.

A reference is made to this gentleman in the *Journal* of the Egyptian Society, where “The Right Honble The Lord Duncannon proposed Mr. Frolick # # # # who had been in Egypt to be a member of this society, and he was unanimously elected by those who had been in Egypt.”²⁰⁶ This curious series of four marks perhaps indicates that the Reis Effendi was unsure of his name or his status. A document dated 11 August 1747, and written from the Hague, states, “This is to certify that John James Frolich is now actually living with me...”²⁰⁷ Though signed and sealed by Lord Sandwich, the text is written in Frolich's own hand, the script being identical to the entries of “Frolich Reis Effendi” entered into *Al-Koran* when he was Secretary to the Divan Club.

At the time this document was written, Sandwich was Minister to the Congress at Breda, and was living in a “pavillion” in the grounds of Breda

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 167-68.

²⁰⁴ See Klima, *op.cit.* 243, who describes him as “my old friend Mr. Frulick”.

²⁰⁵ D. Baud-Bovy, *Peintres genevois* (1903) 1:18, cited in Ingamels, *op.cit.* n. 9, 840.

²⁰⁶ BL ADD. MS. 52362, 30.

²⁰⁷ This document, which was Lot 30 in an Ira and Larry Goldberg Coins & Collectibles Sale, Beverley Hills, 11 December, 1999, is witnessed by “H. Legge”, the English statesman, Hon. Henry Legge, 1706-64, who was, at the time, Envoy Extraordinary to the King of Prussia, and became Treasurer of the Navy from 1749-54. Legge had also been a member of the Egyptian Society (though here spelled “Legg”), having been proposed on 5 March, 1741 and elected on 19 March. Since 1741, he had also been a member of the Dilettanti Society.

Castle.²⁰⁸ Why Fröhlich was living with Sandwich at that time is unclear, though it is possible that, while on his travels, he was visiting his former pupil. Mr. Fröhlich, who was associated with the freemasons at Florence in the 1730s,²⁰⁹ attended nine Divans, acting once as Vizir and three times as Reis Effendi. No portrait of this gentleman has been found.

Lord Granby

John Manners, Marquess of Granby (1721-70), was the eldest son of the 3rd Duke of Rutland. He made his Grand Tour after leaving Trinity College, Cambridge (without obtaining a degree), under the supervision of John Ewer (his former Eton tutor, later Bishop of Bangor) and William Hewett (another member of the Divan). The latter accompanied him to Constantinople in April, 1740, though it is not known how long they stayed there. Lord Granby was elected as a member of the Dilettanti Society in 1744.

His considerable military demands took him away from London (he was appointed Colonel of a regiment during the Jacobite rising in 1745, after which he served as a volunteer for the Duke of Cumberland in Scotland, 1746), and as a result did not attend regularly at the Divan Society's meetings. He acted as Vizir on 6 April, 1744, and attended only four further sessions. At one of these (20 April, 1744), he proposed his former tutor, Hewett, as a member and paid his Harach.²¹⁰

There are two portraits of Lord Granby in the collection of the Duke of Rutland, at Belvoir Castle, Grantham, in Leicestershire. One is a small oval half-length portrait, in chalk and watercolour, with the sitter wearing a fur-edged coat, inscribed and dated 1740, Constantinople; and the other is larger, also half-length, in pastels, with the sitter in a red fur-edged cloak and white shirt, signed and inscribed "Le Marquis de Granby peint Constantinople par Liotard 1740."²¹¹ The portrait in **Plate 11** by Liotard depicts Granby in military uniform.

Mr. Mackie

This gentleman is John Mackye of Polgowan (1707-97), who assumed the name of Ross on his marriage to Jane Ross of Halkhead, daughter of the 13th Lord Ross. He graduated from Leiden University in 1728 and made his

²⁰⁸ See Rodger, *op.cit.* 44, n.19.

²⁰⁹ See Klima, *op.cit.*, 244, n. 7, where an epitaph "On Mr. Frolich" by Lord Middlesex is reproduced.

²¹⁰ *Haraç* is Ottoman-Turkish for tribute or tax. There are various spellings of the word in *Al-Koran*.

²¹¹ I am grateful to J.R. Webster, Archivist at the Belvoir Estate, for providing me with details of these portraits. Unfortunately, however, I was not given access to these portraits, or any images of them.

Grand Tour after a gap of almost a decade, during the latter part of which he joined the company of Lord Sandwich on his voyage to Constantinople (April, 1738). He departed from Florence on 21 October of that year, returning to England with his friend James Nelthorpe (member of the Divan), and was elected to the Society of Dilettanti in 1742.

An advocate by profession, Mackye also had a distinguished political career, becoming MP for Lanark Burghs (1742) and for Kirkcudbright Stewartry (1747), and later assuming the offices of Private Secretary to Lord Bute, Treasurer and Paymaster at the Office of Ordnance (1763-80), and Receiver General of His Majesty's Public Office of Revenue (1780-94).

He attended only five of the thirty-one meetings of the Divan, once as Reis Effendi. As noted earlier, he received a fine (which he did not pay) for failing to execute his office of Vizir (4 May, 1744). No portrait of this gentleman has been found.

Sir Henry Calthorpe

Sir Henry Calthorpe was the son of Reynolds Calthorpe of Elvetham Park, Hampshire, and though there is a gap in the genealogical records concerning his date of birth, it is likely that his mother was Reynold's first wife, Priscilla (rather than his second wife, Barbara Yelveton), daughter of Sir Robert Reynolds of Elvetham, and widow of Sir Richard Knight, of Chawton, Hampshire. The former died on 29 August, 1709, which means he was born before this date.

Very few details of Henry's life are known, though the fact that he was elected to the Society of Dilettanti in 1742 suggests that he did the Grand Tour. There is a reference to a "Mr. Coltrop, English" in Rome on 25 January, 1727, and the same person (named "Giacomo Calhrope") is described as lodging near the Piazza di Spagna that Easter. Given that his date of birth was around 1709, it follows that he would have been about eighteen at this time, just the right age for the Grand Tour.²¹² Likewise, there is no information available concerning his travels to the Ottoman Empire. Shortly after his election to the Divan Club, he was appointed as Knight Companion of the Order of Bath on 28 May, 1744.

Mr. Calthorpe was proposed as a member of the Divan by Mr. Edgcumbe on 20 January, 1744 (the first meeting after its foundation), and paid his Harach at the next meeting. He is duly referred to as "Sir" the following year (meeting of 15 February), in accordance with his knighthood. He died in 1788, devising his estate to his nephew, Sir Henry Gough, Baronet, on his assuming the additional name of Calthorpe. No portrait of this gentleman has been found.

²¹² See Ingamels, *op.cit.*, 174, however, where it is tentatively suggested that the gentleman in question is Mamoes Calthorpe (1699-1784), eldest son of Christopher Calthorpe of Ampton, Suffolk.

Edward Wortley Montagu

Described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as a “traveller and criminal”,²¹³ Edward Wortley Montagu Junior was born in 1713, eldest surviving son of Edward and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. His first visit to the East was at the age of three, when his mother took him to Constantinople to join her husband, English Ambassador to the Sublime Porte. There they remained for two years (he is depicted with his mother in **Plate 1**). On his return to England, he was educated at Westminster, from which he ran away several times, reputedly as far as Porto on one occasion, and was sent on the Grand Tour around 1731 with his tutor John Anderson, a Highland Scot. This was shortly after Edward had left his first wife, a “laundress” named Sally, a marriage that was quickly hushed up. Little is known of his early travels, but he was back again in Italy in 1740, where was seen in Venice and Florence.²¹⁴

Although notorious in his personal life, particularly where debts and women were concerned,²¹⁵ Edward was a skilled linguist, twice enrolling at the University of Leiden. The first time was in 1741, to study oriental languages under the eminent Dr. Schultens (he left after only three months), and then again in 1761, after the death of his father, from whom he had been disinherited. His interest in Egyptian hieroglyphics attracted the admiration of scholars such as Winckelmann, and he studied Arabic in Turin, dressed for the part in a turban and wearing a long beard. His love of travel never waned and in 1763 he journeyed, with Nathaniel Davison (who subsequently wrote an account of their voyage for the Royal Society), to Alexandria, later spending time in Greece and Constantinople. He eventually became a Muslim,²¹⁶ and died in Padua in 1767 as a result of swallowing a fish bone. His son Massoud (Mas’ud) (by a woman called Ayesha (A’isha) inherited his Arabic and Turkish library which then passed on to John English Dolben on his death ten years later.²¹⁷

Wortley Montagu’s election to the Divan Club has been attributed to his wishing to solicit members, in an attempt to pursue a diplomatic career (he had entered the army in 1741 but, within a few years, despite having had a reasonably distinguished career, was looking for a change). He had a degree of success in this, since his cousin, Lord Sandwich, recognizing his linguistic

²¹³ Isobel Grundy, Oxford, 2004.

²¹⁴ See Ingamels, *op.cit.* 669.

²¹⁵ He was disinherited by his father, and his mother, Lady Mary, often despaired of him in her letters to friends and family.

²¹⁶ As far as records show, he is the only Divan Club member to have made such an extraordinary move.

²¹⁷ These, together with Edward’s manuscripts, were sold at auction and other manuscripts are now in the Bodleian Library.

skills and, requiring someone who could speak Dutch, later appointed him as Secretary of Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle.²¹⁸

Edward was proposed by Mr. Edgcumbe (and recorded by his future patron, Reis Effendi Lord Sandwich) at the meeting of 3 February, 1744. He was duly elected, and “took his seat in the Divan” a fortnight later when he paid his Harach. He attended a further meeting on 6 April, 1744, this being the last reference to him in *Al-Koran*. His absence, at least for the next two years, is presumably linked to his military commitments, since he was involved in the Battle of Fontenoy (1745) and the Siege of Brussels (1746), after which he was returned to Parliament for Huntingdonshire in 1747. He was elected a member of the Society of Dilettanti in 1749.

A portrait by Liotard in the National Gallery, London, was formerly identified as Edward Wortley Montagu, but is now known as “Portrait of a Grand Vizir (?)”.²¹⁹ Dated between 1738 and 1743 (the years in which Liotard lived in Constantinople), it is not surprising that it had been thus identified, since this pastel portrait is very similar in pose and expression to the later painting by Mathew William Peters (**Plate 12**). It is possible that the Liotard portrait does indeed represent Wortley Montagu in his mid-twenties, the Grand Vizir costume having led to the confusion. However, it must be remembered that Liotard did paint some of his subjects in identifiable costumes or uniforms, as in, for example, Dr. Pococke (**Plate 7**) who is posing as an official of the Sultan’s court.

Jeremiah Milles

Born in Cornwall around 1714 into a large family, Jeremiah Milles was singled out for special attention by his uncle, Thomas Milles, Bishop of Waterford, who paid for his education at Eton (1725-1728) and Corpus Christi College, Oxford.²²⁰ As mentioned earlier, he was a cousin of Dr. Pococke (Divan member) and together they made a Grand Tour of Italy from 1733-34. Milles’ career in the church, again helped by his family connections, took him first to Ireland, where he held various appointments in the south-east, including Treasurer of Lismore Cathedral (1735-45) and Precentor of Waterford Cathedral (1737-44). After the death of his uncle Thomas, he took up a number of appointments in England, culminating in his election to Dean of Exeter Cathedral in 1762.

His interest in antiquarian matters is well known and he became a member of the following societies: the Egyptian Society (elected at the first

²¹⁸ See Rodger, *The Insatiable Earl*, op.cit., 44.

²¹⁹ Ref. NG 4460. See Lady Victoria Manners, “New Light on Liotard”, in *The Connoisseur*, XCI (May), 1933, where the portrait is reproduced (No. 1, p.294) entitled “A Man in Turkish Costume”. The author adamantly denies that the portrait represents Montagu (300).

²²⁰ Here he gained a BA in 1733, an MA in 1735, and a BD and DD in 1747.

meeting in 1741 and chosen as its Secretary, or Reis Effendi at the same time); the Society of Antiquaries of London (elected as a member in 1741 and as its President from 1769-84), and the Royal Society (elected 1742, two of his proposers being Egyptian Society members Martin Folkes and Captain Frederick, Lewis Norden). It must be noted, however, that he visited neither Egypt nor Turkey. He produced several works of both antiquarian and local history interest, as well as co-founding, with his cousin Richard Pococke, the Society of Antiquaries' journal, *Archaeologica*, the first volume of which was published in 1770.

He died in 1784 and was buried in London, next to his wife Edith (daughter of the Archbishop of Canterbury), who had predeceased him by twenty-three years. At the Divan meeting of 17 February 1744, Jeremiah Milles was introduced by Lord Sandwich as a person that had an intention to go into Turkey. However, this is the last we hear of him in the records, indicating that he failed to make the trip to Turkey during the short life-span of the club, his time presumably being taken up with his clerical duties in Ireland.

Edward Vernon²²¹

Born in 1684, Edward Vernon was one of the more senior Divan members. He was the second son of the statesman James Vernon and received a sound Classical education at Westminster School. Though there is no record of his having done the conventional Grand Tour, his first trip to the east was in 1704, aged nineteen, when, having been appointed Third Lieutenant on the *Lennox*, he was sent on a convoy to Smyrna with the Levant trade. Twelve years later, in July 1716, he returned to the east when ordered to take the new British Ambassador's equipage to Constantinople. The ambassador was Edward Wortley Montagu (father of Edward Wortley, Divan member), who was replacing Sir Robert Sutton in this diplomatic post. The journey proved to be a very drawn-out and precarious affair, and Vernon did not return to England until October, 1717.

Vernon's naval career continued for a further three decades, until the king dismissed him in April 1746. This situation arose out of a deterioration in Vernon's relationship with the Admiralty over a grievance he had concerning the conditions he had experienced in the West Indies in 1741, and his similar complaints regarding the state of affairs in the Downes, in 1745, when he was Admiral of a squadron. This dispute led to his being replaced by Vice-Admiral William Martin, and the whole situation culminated in the notorious

²²¹ A clergyman by the name of Edward Vernon (1695-1761) is listed as a Fellow of the Royal Society, elected in 1724, with an interest in Antiquities. It is more likely that the naval Vernon is the correct identification, particularly given his known visits to the East before the establishment of the Divan Club, as well as his connections with Lord Sandwich.

publication of his correspondence with the Admiralty from that period, a matter over which he refused to back down.

Vernon was also active in politics, though his early career was not marked by great success. While he was returned to Parliament for Penryn in 1722 (a seat held by his father on a number of occasions), he lost this seat together with that of his local borough, Ipswich, in the election of 1734. However, he won back the latter seat in 1741 and retained it until his death in 1757.

Admiral Vernon (though named throughout the Divan records as Mr. Vernon) was proposed by Lord Sandwich on 16 March, 1744, and attended a further three meetings (6 April, 20 April, and 21 December, 1744). It is possible that the difficulties in the naval matters mentioned above prevented him from re-joining the Divan in 1745, particularly as officials of the Admiralty Board were among its senior members.

It is believed that the portrait in the National Maritime Museum, London, was executed when Vernon was a captain, and then altered, in 1739, when he was promoted Vice-Admiral of the Blue.²²² This involved the substitution of a baton for a telescope, and the addition of a flag.

James Nelthorpe

Very few details are available about this gentleman's life. He was born about 1719, the eldest son of a Justice of the Peace, George Nelthorpe of Seacroft Hall, Yorkshire. His Grand Tour was conducted at a relatively early age, since he is recorded as being in France in 1735, after which he accompanied Lord Sandwich and his party to the Levant (1737-39). It was presumably during this period that he sat for his portrait by Liotard (**Plate 13**),²²³ executed in very much the same style as that of Lords Duncannon and Sandwich. However, the main distinction between these (indicating a differentiation in wealth) is that Nelthorpe's portrait is half-length in pastels, whereas the latter two sat for full and three-quarter length portraits in oils.

On 26 October, 1749, he married Lucy Wilmer (daughter of George Wilmer Esq. of York), in York Minster, and on his death, in 1768, he bequeathed the manor of Seacroft to his brother George Nelthorpe. Neither he nor his brother had issue. In his Will, dated 3 March, 1768, James asked "to be decently and privately interred in the church-yard of Whitkirk, in the same grave, or as near as may be unto my late dear wife, and to be attended by all my tenants at Seacroft."²²⁴

²²² By Charles Philips, c. 1730's-43, Ref. BHC306.

²²³ It is also reproduced in Neil Jeffares, *op.cit.*, 349.

²²⁴ Robert Skaife, *The Register of Marriages in York Minster, illustrated with Biographical Notices, 1681-1762* (1783).

An indication of his interests in architecture is that he was one of the forty-six subscribers to *Parentalia: or Memoirs of the Family of the Wrens*, (London, 1750), and his own signed, annotated copy is in the Kenneth Spencer Research Library at the University of Kansas. It is thought that Nelthorpe was responsible for the extra-illustrations, all of which are contemporary with the publication date of 1750. He was elected as a member of the Dilettanti Society in 1741, and was as a member of the Divan at the meeting of 16 March, 1744, by his friend Mr. Mackye. He attended only two further meetings and was fined for non-attendance at a third.

Mr. Wright

The identity of this gentleman is uncertain, though it is likely, given the connection with Thomas Anson, Divan member (who employed him to re-design Shugborough Hall, 1745-48, and who subscribed to his book, *An Original Theory of the Universe*, 1750), that this is the architect and astronomer, Thomas Wright (**Plate 14**). Born in Durham in 1711, Thomas Wright was educated at home and then at King James' School, Bishop Auckland, County Durham. He did an apprenticeship as a clock and watch-maker (1725-29), after which he studied mathematics and navigation, subsequently travelling and then setting up his own school of navigation in Sunderland.²²⁵

Having come from humble origins (being the son of a yeoman and carpenter), once established, he swiftly climbed the social ladder, receiving commissions from and mixing with the aristocracy in both England and Ireland. In addition to being employed as an ordinary architect, he specialised in the design of more unusual architectural features for gardens and landscaping, such as grottos, pagodas, follies and alcoves. Some of these featured in his subsequent publication *Universal Architecture*, which appeared in two parts: *Designs for Arbours* (1755) and *Designs for Grottos* (1758).

The Mr. Wright of *Al-Koran* was proposed for election to the Divan Club by Mr. Calthorpe, balloted and elected, on 6 April, 1746, which means he had proven himself to have visited the Turkish Empire. However, he is not recorded as having attended any further meetings. This (if we have the right man) may be attributed to the fact that he was in Ireland from 1746-47 carrying

²²⁵ For further details of his life, see David Knight's essay, *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

out commissions for James Hamilton, 1st Viscount Limerick,²²⁶ as well as collecting material for his subsequent book, *Louthiana*.²²⁷

Mr. William Hewitt

Born in 1693, William Hewett (frequently mis-spelled as “Hewitt” in *Al-Koran*) came from the manor in Stretton Magna in Leicestershire, a property that came into the family in 1633 when George Neale settled it on his niece Frances and her husband William Hewett. It then reverted to their son Neale Hewett.

Though his later travels in Italy are well documented, we know less about his own Grand Tour. A William Hewett is recorded as being in Padua in 1717, and, though listed in Ingamels as a different person, it is likely, given the dates (he would have been twenty-four) that this is the same man. Later, from 1739-40, he was tutor to John Manners, Marquess of Granby (Divan member), whose Grand Tour included a trip to Constantinople in 1740; and from 1752-66 he made a series of twelve tours from Naples.²²⁸

A collection of correspondence with Sir Robert Wilmot, Resident Secretary to the Viceroy of Ireland (1737-72), shows that he was also in Italy from 1750-51, since he writes to him from Ischia, Massa (where he is on top of a mountain twenty-five miles from Naples), Rome and Sienna.²²⁹ The letters concern news and gossip about his travels and the debts on his estate, with the occasional reference to Divan members such as Lord Granby (he asks Wilmot if he has heard about his marriage)²³⁰ and Lord Sandwich (for whom he seems to have little affection).²³¹ Later letters in this series, sent from various parts of Italy and elsewhere on the continent (dated 1754-57), refer to estate matters, politics and a lack of correspondence from Lord Granby, whom he imagines he must have offended. There are also several references to marble tables being shipped to England, pictures and frames, which seem to suggest that he was acting as Sir Robert’s agent while in Rome.

²²⁶ For a detailed account of the improvements he carried out to the estates at Dundalk and Tollymore, Co. Down, and Limerick’s relationship with Wright, see The Earl of Roden, *Tollymore: The Story of an Irish Demesne* (Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 2005), especially Ch. 3 and 4. Viscount Limerick was succeeded by his son James Hamilton, 2nd Earl of Clanbrassill of the 2nd creation, friend of Lord Duncannon.

²²⁷ The full title of this work is: *Louthiana: or an Introduction to the Antiquities of Ireland. In Upwards of Ninety Views and Plans: Representing, with proper Explanations, the Principal Ruins, Curiosities, and Antient Dwellings, in the County of Louth, Taken upon the spot by Thomas Wright ... Engrav’d by Paul Fourdrinier* (London, 1758)

²²⁸ Details of the latter period are documented in Ingamels, *op.cit.*, 495-96.

²²⁹ This correspondence is from the Wilmot-Horton Papers (D3155) in Derbyshire Record Office. I am grateful to Margaret O’Sullivan, County and Diocesan Archivist, for allowing me to quote from the letters.

²³⁰ Letter dated 11 November, 1750, Ref. D3155/C1186.

²³¹ Letter dated 4/15 September, 1751, Ref. D3155/C1273.

Though a colonial in the Leicester Volunteers in 1745, he is more famous for his travels, and has been described as “traveller and eccentric”. He was proposed as a member of the Divan Club by Lord Granby on 20 April, 1744, and was elected and signed up at the same meeting. His attendance record was good, his name appearing in the minutes of a further fourteen meetings; and he served once as Reis Effendi and four times as Vizir. No portrait of this gentleman has been found.

Captain Petre

The Petre family were Roman Catholics whose main branch had lived at Ingatestone Hall, Essex, from 1539. However, the eighteenth-century Barons of that name had no sons of compatible dates, and there is no mention of a Captain Petre in any of the records for the family.²³²

The only two references found to any Captain Petre from this period relate to his death. The first is a Title Copy of a Will for John Petre of London, Captain of the appropriately named ship, *Sandwich*. The Will was made on 29 July, 1749, and proved on 3 August, 1750. The second document is a Title Letter of Administration appointing William Petre, Esq., administrator of the estate of John Petre, dated 5 May, 1753.²³³ It is not known how Captain Petre died, but it was common practice for naval captains to make their Will before embarking on long and difficult journeys, and therefore likely that he met his death at sea.

Captain Petre was proposed by Lord Sandwich to be a member of the Divan Club on 1 February, 1744 and was duly elected. At the very next meeting, 15 February, he had to stand in as Reis Effendi for Sir Francis Dashwood, who was fined half a guinea for neglecting his duty in this office. Petre attended a further eight Divans, his last appearance being at the meeting of 25 February, 1745, his disappearance perhaps related to his naval duties, of which no further information is available. No portrait of this gentleman has been found.

Mr. Anson

Born in 1696, Thomas Anson was the eldest Son of William Anson of Shugborough, near Colwich, Staffordshire, and his wife, Isabella, daughter of Charles Carrier of Wirksworth, Derbyshire. He was educated at St. John's

²³² I am grateful to Mr. John Draisey, County Archivist at the Devon Record Office, for confirming this for me.

²³³ Norfolk Record Office, Ref. PET 527, 98X6; and Ref. Pet 528, 98X6, respectively. I am most grateful to Freda M Wilkins-Jones, of the Norfolk Record Office, for drawing these sources to my attention, when I had been assured that no Captain Peter had ever served in the British Navy.

College, Oxford, from which he matriculated on 2 June, 1711, aged fifteen. He was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple in 1719.

In 1720, as a young man, he inherited Shugborough from his father, and he made his Grand Tour from 1724-25, visiting Spa, Padua, Rome, Naples, Rome and Florence. In 1730, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, though his election is the only record of his membership of this society (in other words he did not attend any meetings). In August of 1734 he is said to have obtained a *ferman* (a decree given to a traveller to insure him protection and assistance) from the Sultan to visit the Levant,²³⁴ and this probably has some connection with the letter, in Armenian script, dated 25 September, 1734, from an Armenian called Babjanian of Izmir, to Sharimaniants, a wealthy merchant of Livorno. The letter asks Mr. Sharimaniants to grant Mr. Thomas Anson a recommendation, should he need one.²³⁵

While it is not clear whether or not he actually undertook the Levantine trip at that point (though there is no reason to suppose that he did not, given the arrangements he had already made), it is certain that he made an extended voyage to the Mediterranean and the middle-east from 1740-41. Brief details of this voyage are recorded in his diary, though the entries are limited only to the dates of arrivals and departures from each port.²³⁶ We know from this source that on 18 September, 1740, he sailed as far as St Helen's with his brother's squadron,²³⁷ eleven days later departing for the east aboard the *Ruxley*.²³⁸ From Lisbon, they sailed to Portmahon, arriving at Alexandria on 23 November, Kozeth (?) a day later, going up the Nile on 26 November and reaching Cairo on 30th of the month. Anson remained in Cairo (where he met Francis Congreve) just over a week, next visiting Rosetta, and arriving at Salinas in Cyprus on Christmas Day. The voyage continued on 8 January, 1741, with no further stops mentioned until 23 January, when he arrived at Scanderon (modern Iskenderun). The following day he set out for Aleppo, which took a day, and remained there for the next three weeks. The return voyage lasted from 16 February until his arrival in London almost four months later (25

²³⁴ See James Lees-Milne, "Shugborough, Staffordshire, Part 1: The Park and its Monuments", in *The Connoisseur*, 164 (1967) 211. I have not seen the evidence for this, though there is a reference to a *firman* in a note contained in his diary for his later trip to the east (Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(5)/2/4.

²³⁵ The contents of this letter were drawn to my attention by Andrew Baker, of Staffordshire County Council, who believes it shows Anson was in trouble and in need of rescuing. However, it is possible that it was simply a standard letter of introduction. I am most grateful to Mr. Baker for his generosity and kind assistance in providing me with information about Thomas Anson.

²³⁶ The brief entries from 18 September, 1740 to 27 January, 1742, in Staffordshire Record Office, Ref. D615/P(5)/2/4. I am grateful to the Archivist of the Staffordshire Record Office for allowing me to cite this manuscript.

²³⁷ Admiral George Anson, Divan member, famous for his circumnavigation of the world.

²³⁸ The ship is not named in his own diary, but Francis Congreve, author of the two letters discussed below, mentions its name three times. See next note.

June). Sadly, the only page approaching a full diary entry relates not to his experiences in the east, but rather, to the care and planting of “Roots of Plants” after a long voyage.

A further source for Thomas Anson’s presence in the east is to be found in two letters from Francis Congreve, a merchant in Cairo, to his brother, Captain William Congreve, of Brigadier General Paget’s Regiment in the Island of Minorca. The first letter, dated 8 December, 1740,²³⁹ refers to the pleasure he had in meeting Thomas Anson during the latter’s stay, of a week’s duration, in Alexandria. It is clear that he had not expected Anson to be aboard the ship, admitting: “I am sorry I could not, from the hurry of business, which a ship from home always brings with her, attend him constantly in visitting (sic) of Curiositys (sic) of this place”, further excusing himself for such neglect at the end of the letter.

In an interesting aside that highlights the communication problems encountered by foreigners living abroad, Congreve mentions that he has asked Thomas Anson to give the present letter, together with a box, marked WC (containing a quantity of coffee, and various seeds and bottles of balsam) to a Captain Vincent of the St. Albans Man of Warr (sic),²⁴⁰ or to Russell Revill Esquire (Convoy to the Turkey Ships), either of whom were sure to disembark at Majorca and thus be able to deliver the consignment to his (the correspondent’s) brother. The second letter, dated January, 1741, is a continuation of this theme, reiterating the arrangements he had made with Thomas Anson, the previous month, to deliver the letter and the package.²⁴¹

As mentioned earlier, a good indication of a gentleman’s intentions to visit the east can be obtained from relevant titles in his library collection. In Anson’s case, the details are provided by the catalogue of the sale of the property from Shugborough Hall in 1842, the first three days of which were devoted to the “valuable Library of Books”.²⁴² This document illustrates typical contemporary interests, particularly in the classics, art, architecture, antiquities, and in travel generally.²⁴³ The following are examples of relevant books that

²³⁹ The letter was received five months later, on 3 May, 1741. Records of the Congreve Family and Congreves of Stretton, Staffordshire Record Office, Ref. D1057/M/G/4/11.

²⁴⁰ The names of this ship and her captain are also mentioned in the ten-page list of ships and their captains included at the end of Anson’s diary, under “Turkey”. Staffordshire Record Office, Ref. D615/P(5)/2/4.

²⁴¹ Records of the Congreve Family and Congreves of Stretton, Staffordshire Record Office, Ref. D1057/M/G/4/14.

²⁴² A Catalogue of the Splendid Property at Shugborough Hall, Stafford: To be sold by Auction, by Mr. George Robins, on the premises, on Monday, the 1st Day of August, 1842, and Thirteen Following Days... I am grateful to the William Salt Library, Stafford, for allowing me to quote from this source.

²⁴³ It must be noted, however, that to rely solely on sale catalogues (without, for instance, the actual library catalogues or even the books themselves) can be dangerous, since there is no way of telling who actually purchased the books in the first place. They may have belonged, for example, to earlier or later members of the family. Furthermore, whole libraries may have

may either have inspired his travels to the east, or been bought soon after his return, thus indicating a continued interest in the subject. Lot 292, on the second day of the sale: “Maundeville’s (Sir John) Voiage and Travaile to Hierusalem, Inde, with other Countryes... *Lond.*, 1727; [and] Hen. Maundrell’s Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter, 1697, *Oxford*, 1740..”; Lot 317: “Frazier (M.) Relation du Voyage de la Mer du Sud, en 1712-14, *Par.*, 1732; Pausanias Voyage Historique de la Grece, traduit par M. Gedoyne... *Par.*, 1731; M. Pitton de Tournefort Relation d’un Voyage du Levant... *Amst.*, 1718, and the same translated into English, 2 *Lond.*, 1718”; Lot 432: “Knolles’ (Richard) History of the Turks, continued by sir Paul Rycart... *Lond.*, 1687... and Aaron Hill’s account of the Ottoman Empire, Portrait of the author, 1709”; Lot 435: “Le Brun’s (Cornelius) Travels into Moscovy, Persia, and the East Indies... *Lond.*, 1737, and Thos. Shaw’s Travels in Barbary and the Levant... *Oxford*, 1738.” Third day of the sale: Lot 564: Mascrier (M. De) Description de l’Egypte... 1735; and Lot 635: “George Sandys Journey in the Holy Land... 1627; [and] George Wheeler’s Journey into Greece... 1682”. The titles and their dates of publication (which correspond with many of those in Lord Duncannon/Bessborough’s Library) certainly seem to show that Anson went to great expense and effort to educate himself on eastern travel and history prior to his known trip in the 1740s.

Thomas became a great collector of antiquities, statuary, paintings and books, particularly after the death of his brother George (Lord Anson) in 1762, when he inherited a large fortune. Most of these were sold in the same auction of 1842. However, perhaps the most lasting manifestation of his love of Classical antiquity is in Shugborough Hall, which he greatly extended and improved during his lifetime. This medium-sized Georgian mansion was built by Thomas’ father (1693), after he had demolished the existing manor. Between 1745 and 1748, Thomas commissioned the architect Thomas Wright (probable Divan member, see above) to carry out improvements on the estate, including the addition of two pavillions, one either side of the seventeenth-century block. Wright also designed the rustic arch for the famous Shepherds’ Monument, and the bas-relief copy of Guido Reni’s Apollo and the Hours preceded by Aurora, for the rococo ceiling in the dining room.²⁴⁴

been acquired at other sales, thus making it difficult to assess the latest owner’s interest in certain books. An example of this is in Lot 22 of the first day’s sale (John Ball’s *Antiquities of Constantinople*, London, 1729), which is listed as being a “presentation copy to Richard Banner, of Perry Hall, county of Stafford, Esq., the former proprietor of this Library, to whom this volume is inscribed, *Lond.*, 1729”. A small collection of books is listed on the second day of the sale, as “The subscription copies of Richard Banner of Perry Hall, county of Stafford, Esq., whose Library was purchased by Thomas Anson....”. It has been impossible to discover any information about Banner of Perry Hall, though it would have been useful to know the dates of his death and library sale.

²⁴⁴ In 1794, under the direction of a later Thomas Anson, further improvements were carried out by the architect Samuel Wyatt, who, among other alterations, added a huge ionic portico,

Another important personality involved in the classical formation of Shugborough Hall was James “Athenian” Stuart, who designed for the estate a number of neo-classical structures such as the Doric portico, the Arch of Hadrian, and the Tower of the Winds.²⁴⁵ It is considered that Anson was Stuart’s most important patron,²⁴⁶ and in 1763 he gave him his most challenging commission to date, by employing him to design a new building to replace No. 15 St. James’s Square, bequeathed to him in 1762 by his brother George. This Stuart did by creating Lichfield House in spectacular neo-palladian style.²⁴⁷

Similarly, and further illustrating Anson’s classical taste, is his connection with Josiah Wedgwood. Not only did he lend Wedgwood his collection of antique gems, from which to model his cameos and intaglios,²⁴⁸ but he also lent him views of his estate, used to create topographical scenes on tableware.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, Wedgwood produced the bowl for the famous Anson Tripod designed by James Stuart to complete the top of the Demosthenes Lanthorn. It is not known, however, whether this bowl, made of basalt,²⁵⁰ was ever actually in place at Shugborough.²⁵¹

In 1747 Thomas Anson became MP for Lichfield, a position he retained until 1770, and died in 1773. On 1 March, 1745, he was proposed as a member of the Divan Club and was duly elected. The name of his proposer is not stated, though it must have been one of the original members present (Sandwich, Duncannon, Edgcumbe, McKye or Pococke). He attended a further seven Divans, acting once as Reis Effendi.

Although bought by the 3rd Earl in 1895 as a portrait of Admiral Anson, the painting depicted in **Plate 15** is now believed to be his brother, Thomas. It

according to neo-classical taste of the period. The house is now run as The Complete Working Historical Estate of Shugborough, an enterprise of Staffordshire County Council in association with the National Trust.

²⁴⁵ As noted earlier, together with Nicholas Revett, he produced, in four volumes, the famous Dilettanti Society project, *Antiquities of Athens*, published between 1762 and 1816. Both Thomas and George Anson subscribed to Volume 1.

²⁴⁶ See Kerry Bristol “The Society of Dilettanti, James ‘Athenian’ Stuart and the Anson Family”, in *The Connoisseur*, Vol. 152 9461 (2000) 47.

²⁴⁷ A further Divan link is the fact that Stuart used a motif from Robert Wood’s *Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) for the ceiling of the little drawing room in Lichfield House.

²⁴⁸ Another Divan member to have done the same was Lord Bessborough. See Carol Macht, *Classical Wedgwood Designs: The Sources and their Use and the Relationship of Wedgwood Jasper Ware to the Classical Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1957) 11.

²⁴⁹ See Robin Reilly, *Wedgwood* (Stockton Press, New York, 1989), Vol. 1, 275

²⁵⁰ A hard black vitreous stoneware, named after the volcanic rock basalt and manufactured by Wedgwood at Etruria.

²⁵¹ See *Ibid*, 446-47.

is in the manner of John Vanderbank (c.1694-1739) and depicts the sitter in a reddish brown beret, part of the regalia of the Dilettanti Society.²⁵²

Mr. Maccartney

A Mr. Maccartney was proposed by Lord Granby for election to the Divan Club on 10 May, 1745, and was duly elected, which means he had proven himself to have visited the Ottoman Empire. However, there are no further references to him in *Al-Koran*. Without an initial or any other details of this individual, it is difficult to identify him. The following are some suggestions for possible candidates, based purely on the right dates and likely connections between other members of the Divan and their circle.

1. James Macartney (born before 1730), eldest son of James Macartney and Alice Cuff. He married Catherine Coote and died in 1768. Their eldest daughter, Frances Macartney, married Fulke Greville of Wilbury, Southampton.
2. Lyttleton Macartney, second son of James Macartney and Alice Cuff (above), who was created Baron Westcote, of Ballymore, County Longford, Ireland, in 1776.
3. Francis (?George) Maccartney Esquire, whose Scottish ancestors had settled in the north of Ireland at the time of Cromwell and owned large amounts of land around Antrim. There are virtually no records relating to this man, including his dates, and he is not recorded as having made a Grand Tour. He purchased the estate of Lisanoure in 1733. His death can be dated to 1771, on account of a reference in the House of Lords Record Office, concerning his Will.²⁵³ His main claim to fame (though in the sources he is generally not even named) is the fact that he was the father of George, 1st Earl Maccartney, first British emissary to Beijing.²⁵⁴

Captain Edgcumbe

George Edgcumbe, younger brother of Divan member, Richard Edgcumbe, was born in 1720 and was educated at the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth. In 1739 he was appointed Third Lieutenant of the *Superbe*, and served in the Mediterranean for the next six years, during which time he must have visited the Ottoman Empire.

²⁵² I am grateful to Linda Smith, Operations Officer at Shugborough, for providing me with information on this portrait and to Russell Gethings, Marketing Officer, for providing the image.

²⁵³ House of Lords Record Office, Ref. HL/PO/PB/1/1771/11G3n55.

²⁵⁴ The only source giving his name is the the catalogue of graduates for Trinity College Dublin from 1593 to 1861, George Dames Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadleir (eds), *Alumni Dublinenses* (Dublin 1935).

In 1744 he was promoted to Captain and from 1745-48 remained on the *Salisbury* on the home station. It was during this period that he became involved in a number of London clubs. The first was the Divan Club, to which he was introduced on 9 March, 1746, as “intending to go into Turkey”. Curiously, the minutes of the same meeting, recorded by Fröhlich Reis Effendi, state that he was, “upon proving to have been in Turkey... elected as a member of this society.” It is likely that some misunderstanding had arisen regarding the conditions of election, and it was recognised, during the course of the meeting, that he did in fact qualify for membership. He attended three more Divans, acting as Reis Effendi for two.

In 1747 he was elected to the Society of Dilettanti, and four years later was again in the Mediterranean, where he remained until 1756. His career as a naval officer afloat continued until the death of his brother, Thomas, whom he succeeded as 3rd Baron Edgcumbe in 1761, inheriting the family estate in Cornwall. In the same year he married Emma Gilbert, daughter of the Archbishop of York. His subsequent appointments were based on English soil and were therefore more compatible with his new position as lord of the manor. These included Treasurer of the Household and Commander in Chief at Plymouth.

Lord Edgcumbe was elected as Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1775, Fellow of the Royal Society in 1784 and was created Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe in 1789. He died in 1795 and was survived by his wife and his only son Richard, who inherited his title and estate.

A portrait in the National Maritime Museum, London, by Joshua Reynolds, depicts Captain Edgcumbe in captain's full-dress uniform. The two Classical columns in the foreground are thought to represent the family home, Mount Edgcumbe House, and the ship in the background is the *Salisbury*, of which he was captain in 1747, the year after the demise of the Divan Club.

Captain Hugh Bonfoy

Hugh Bonfoy was born in 1720 and enjoyed a meteoric naval career. He joined the Royal Navy in 1739 (aged nineteen) as a midshipman on board the *Somerset*, and was made a Lieutenant by Mr. Rear Admiral Nicholas Haddock. He was then promoted to the command of the *Ferret* sloop, after which he was appointed, in 1745, captain of the *Greyhound* frigate.

Between 1753-54 he was Governor General of Newfoundland and is famous for his anti-catholic opinions. In later life he was appointed to be captain of the *Dorset*, the yacht stationed to attend on the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He died in Ireland, holding this commission, on the 12th of March, 1762.

Though his name appears in the list of those present for the meeting of 9 February, 1746, there is no reference to his being introduced, balloted or elected, and his name is never mentioned again. It is possible that he attended

the one meeting simply as a guest of another member (perhaps one of the naval officers) present.

No portrait of this gentleman has been found.

Mr. Cambridge

It is likely that the Mr. Cambridge introduced to the Divan Club is the poet Richard Owen Cambridge (**Plate 16**), at the time Richard Cambridge. He was born in London in 1717 into a Gloucestershire merchant family with Turkish trading connections, and from the age of eight was brought up by his uncle, Thomas Owen, from whom he later (in 1748) inherited a fortune and the additional name of Owen. He was educated at Eton, St. John's College, Oxford (which he left without obtaining a degree) and Lincoln's Inn, and there is no record of his having done the Grand Tour. In 1741 he married Mary Trenchard and took up residence in Whitminster, Gloucestershire, whereupon he lived the life of a gentleman.

He is famous for his satirical verse (little of which were published during his life time), including *Archimage* (published posthumously) and *The Scribleriad: an Heroic Poem in Six Books* (1751), as well as a series of essays contributed to Henry Moore's magazine, the *World*. After inheriting a fortune from his uncle, he purchased, in 1751, a villa called Twickenham Meadows, later known as Cambridge Park. Among his acquaintances were Alexander Pope and Lord Anson (Divan member). Lady Anson mentions him in her letters as popping in with gossip, and he is listed among the mourners attended Thomas Anson's funeral.²⁵⁵

In addition to writing poetry, he built boats. It is undoubtedly through his connections with the Anson family that he became acquainted with the Divan Club, though he was introduced to the society (13 April 1746) by Lord Sandwich. We are not sure whether he went on to visit Turkey, and there is no further mention of his name in *Al-Koran*. He died in 1802, and Cambridge Park remained in his family until 1824.

Lord Coke

Thomas Coke was born in 1697 and succeeded his father, Edward Coke of Holkham, Norfolk, in 1707, aged ten. At the age of fifteen his guardians sent him on his Grand Tour as a way of distracting him from his passion for cock-fighting. Accompanied by his tutor, Dr. Thomas Hobart, and his valet, Edward Jarret,²⁵⁶ he departed from England in August, 1712, visiting the usual centres in Italy, as well as France, Switzerland, Germany, Sicily and Malta.²⁵⁷ While in

²⁵⁵ I am again grateful to Andrew Baker for this information.

²⁵⁶ Jarret kept detailed accounts of the young man's expenses and itinerary.

²⁵⁷ See Ingamels, *op.cit.* for further details of his itinerary and dates.

Italy he was enrolled at Turin Academy, where he was to study for a period of four months. By the time he returned to Dover, in May, 1718, he had been away for almost six years.

Clearly this sojourn in Europe produced the desired effect, since his strong and violent passions (of which his guardian had earlier complained) turned to more aesthetic leanings. He quickly developed an interest in architecture and the fine arts, and brought back an enormous collection of paintings and antiquities. It is reported that on one occasion he was actually arrested and imprisoned for attempting to smuggle a fine headless figure of Diana out of the country,²⁵⁸ and four other precious pieces of antique sculpture acquired by him were lost at sea on their way to England.

He also collected manuscripts and books, many of which related to his later interest in the east. The majority of relevant titles still in the family Library predate Lord Coke, though it is likely, given his obvious interests in the field that they were purchased not by an earlier member of the family, but by him.²⁵⁹

Undoubtedly the most influential person he encountered on his travels was the much older William Kent, who had been sent to Italy to studying painting. They met in 1714, after which Kent acted as Coke's agent, as well as accompanying him on two excursions to Northern Italy, one that year and again in 1716. More importantly, however, since Kent was already showing a keener interest in architecture than in art, and had also become an agent for Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington,²⁶⁰ who was to be involved in the design of Coke's new seat at Holkham.

On their return to England, the three gentlemen formed a "committee of taste" to plan Holkham Hall, as a result of which the existing Elizabethan manor house was demolished and replaced with a Palladian mansion. However, as a result of losses Coke sustained from the "South Sea Bubble", the plans, originally drawn up in the 1720s, had to be greatly pared down and the foundations were not laid until 1735. Sadly, Lord Coke died in 1759 and never saw the full results of his vision. This magnificent seat was eventually completed by his widow, Lady Clifford, and his successor, Thomas Coke (the famous agricultural reformer, "Coke of Norfolk"), who was to reign at Holkham for the next sixty-five years.

Thomas Coke was knighted in 1725, created Baron Lovell in 1728, and Earl of Leicester and Viscount Coke in 1744. However, as a peer of the realm,

²⁵⁸ See Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: the Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (Yale, 1982) 62 and 67.

²⁵⁹ The earliest of these were published in Italy in the mid-1500's, such as Bassano's *I Costumi et I Modi Partricolari de la Vita de Turchi* (1545), Cambini's *Commentario della origine de Turchi* (1540), and Bishop Giovio's *Commentario de le cose de Turchi* (1538).

²⁶⁰ Kent and Lord Burlington, known as the "architect earl", arrived back in London together in November, 1719, resolved to work together.

he used his title rather than his family surname.²⁶¹ With regard to membership of societies, he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1735 and again as Baron Lovell in 1740; member of the Society of Dilettanti in 1740, again in the name of Lord Lovel, and the Egyptian Society in 1743.

At the Divan meeting of 11 May, 1746, Lord Duncannon proposed Lord Coke “on declaring his intention of going to Turkey when opportunity shall offer”, duly paying his Harach. However, since this was the penultimate meeting of the Divan Club, there is no further reference to him, and it is not known whether or not he fulfilled this intention. Certainly his interest in the east continued, as can be seen from his purchase of two further books published the following year: Edmund Chishull’s *Travels in Turkey and back to England* (London, 1747), and Guer’s *Moeurs et usages des Turcs* (Paris, 1747).²⁶²

The portrait in **Plate 17**, by Francesco Trevisani, depicts Lord Coke seated with a dog in an interior. The elaborate gilded furniture, especially the chair on which Lord Coke is seated, with intertwining herms in the style of William Kent, is in marked contrast with the more formal Classical frieze in the background. Of particular note is the large decorative box on the desk, which resembles “Bacchus’s Tomb”, the receptacle designed by Sir James Gray and carved and ornamented by Mr. Thomas Adye for the Society of Dilettanti.²⁶³

Mr. Blackwood

As with Mr. Maccartney, there is some uncertainty about the identification of this person. He was proposed as a potential member of the Divan Club by his fellow-countryman, Lord Duncannon (Bessborough) on 25 May, 1746, which was the last recorded meeting of the society; and therefore had not previously visited Turkey. There are a number of Blackwoods of around the right age and station, and the following are suggestions:

1. Sir Robert Blackwood (son of John Blackwood and Ursula Hamilton), of Ballyleidy, County Down (1694-1774). His first wife was Joyce Leeson, daughter of the Dublin brewer, Joseph Leeson (whose son Joseph became 1st Earl of Milltown, to whom Robert Wood, Divan member, was secretary in Rome) and Margaret Brice, whom he married in 1719. They had one legitimate child, John Blackwood, born 1722 (see 3, below). However, though not mentioned in the peerages, Sir Robert seems to have had another son, born around 1723/27, who took his name (Leeson Blackwood, see below, 3). His wife Joyce died in

²⁶¹ Hence his use of “Lovell” in the signature pages of the *Journal of the Egyptian Society*.

²⁶² I am grateful to Lord Leicester’s Librarian, D.P. (Sam) Mortlock, for providing me with the titles of these books, as well as for clarifying matters relating to the family nomenaature.

²⁶³ As recorded and reproduced in L. Cust, *op.cit.*, 31-32.

1741 though in 1729 he is recorded as having married Grace Maccartney, daughter of Isaac Maccartney (Sherrif of Antrim). This provides a possible link with the unidentified Divan member, Mr. Maccartney, since Isaac Maccartney, a successful merchant, was the younger brother of the army officer George Maccartney (c. 1660-1730) of Belfast. Sir Robert was created 1st Baronet Blackwood of Ballyleidy, County Down, on 1 July 1763 and was later known as 1st Baronet, of Killyleagh (the name of the estate from which his mother had come). He would have been aged fifty at the time of the Divan Club, and obviously based in Ireland, making him an unlikely candidate for our Blackwood.

2. Sir John Blackwood, legitimate son of Sir Robert and Joyce (1722-99). In 1751, he married Dorcas Stevenson, Baroness Dufferin and Clandeoye of Ballyleidy and Killyleagh, and they had eight children. Sir John was MP for Killyleagh (1761-68), MP for Bangor (1769-76) and in 1774 succeeded to the title of 2nd Baronet Blackwood. He continued to hold the office of Member of Parliament for Bangor until 1797. He would have been in his early twenties at the time of the Divan Club, but again was resident in Ireland, which more or less excludes him.
3. A more likely contender is Leeson Blackwood, the illegitimate son of Sir John Blackwood, 1st Baronet, of Killyleagh. His date of birth is uncertain (given variously as 1723 and 1727, though the former is more probable), and at a very early age, in 1736, entered the British navy and embarked as an officer under Commodore George Anson (Divan member), in his voyage around the world. He returned in 1744 with the heroic Admiral Anson, and with treasure with which he was able to support his "wife" (though he is recorded as having died "unmarried") and two sons, "Poor" Robert Blackwood and "Poor" James Blackwood (both born around 1740). Until then his family had been living on a very meager income. Leeson died in 1773 and his sons went on to become successful linen manufacturers. The link with Admiral Anson, together with his age, makes Leeson Blackwood a strong candidate for the Divan Club, his membership of the British Navy meaning he would have been based in England.

Conclusion

The Divan Club lasted only twenty-eight months, with serious efforts being made in the latter stages to encourage new membership. It is likely that the main reason for its eventual demise was the departure from England of its leading light, Lord Sandwich. The last recorded meeting of the Divan was 25 May, 1746 (attended by only three of its ten founder members: Lords Sandwich and Duncannon, and Mr. Edgecumbe) and, presumably because there were insufficient numbers to continue (as specified in Law 5 of the Club) the proceedings were adjourned until the first Sunday in December. However, the December meeting never took place. Lord Sandwich had been posted to the Netherlands in August of that year, as British representative at the peace talks held at Breda, and was to remain there until 1749.

It would be tempting to suggest that the most spectacular and enduring manifestation of the Divan Club is the artistic representation of its members in oriental costume. However, it is clear that most of these portraits (apart from that of Sir Francis Dashwood) are not actually contemporary with the dates of the club. Nevertheless, the fact that some of the gentlemen in question continued to wear Turkish dress in England (for example Lord Sandwich), or had copies and miniatures made of the original portraits (for instance Lords Duncannon and Sandwich), illustrates a lasting affinity with the whole ambience of Turkish life. Certain members continued this theme by commissioning portraits of their wives and mistresses in oriental dress several years after the demise of the Divan Club.

The very existence of this association (as with the portraits) illustrates the fact that all its members had been greatly influenced by their travels to the Ottoman Empire, and wanted in some way to recollect their eastern experiences in a group setting that was both instructive and entertaining. That so many new members were elected and potential ones introduced in such a short space of time also shows that the Divan Club was considered to be a popular association, worth joining, and that the founder members were anxious to keep it alive.

When we consider *Al-Koran* in context, particularly in light of the diverse range of personalities involved (from notable collectors, connoisseurs, academics and eccentrics, to heroes of the British Admiralty), it should be considered providential that this manuscript source has survived for over two and a half centuries to give us even the most nominal glimpse into such an exclusive group. Clearly a development of the earlier Egyptian Society, the Divan Club was even more select, since it recruited only from the ranks of those who could prove they had actually visited the Sultan's dominions.²⁶⁴ The absence of the more detailed type of records surviving from related

²⁶⁴ It will be remembered that the Egyptian Society had two categories of membership: those who had travelled to Egypt and those who had not.

contemporary clubs (such as the Egyptian Society), with reports on papers contributed and matters discussed, means we shall never know the extent to which the actual business of the Divan club was intellectual or purely convivial. However, it seems reasonable to conclude that the academic content must have been relatively compelling, otherwise it would not have attracted and retained such committed individuals as Dr. Pococke, a sober member of the clergy and a distinguished scholar.



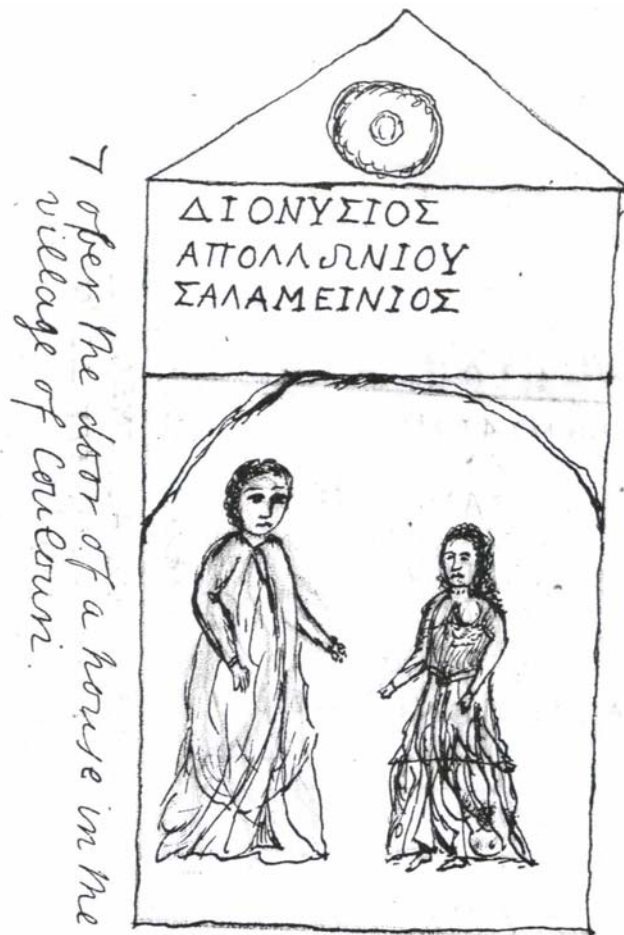
Plate 1: Portrait of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with her Son, Edward Wortley Montagu, and Attendants, by Jean Baptiste Vanmour, c. 1717, in the National Portrait Gallery, Ref. 3294.



Plate 2: Illustration from *Recueil de cent estampes, représentant différentes nations du Levant, tirées sur les tableaux peints d'après nature en 1707 et 1708* (Paris, 1714).



Plate 3: Sketch of the Head of the Sphinx, from Lord Sandwich's manuscript version of his *Voyage*, by permission of John Montagu, Earl of Sandwich.



8
In the wall of a church in the same village

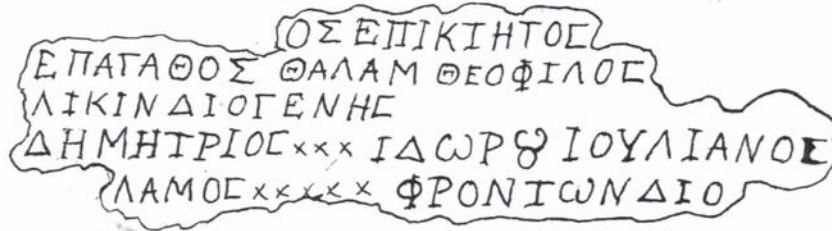
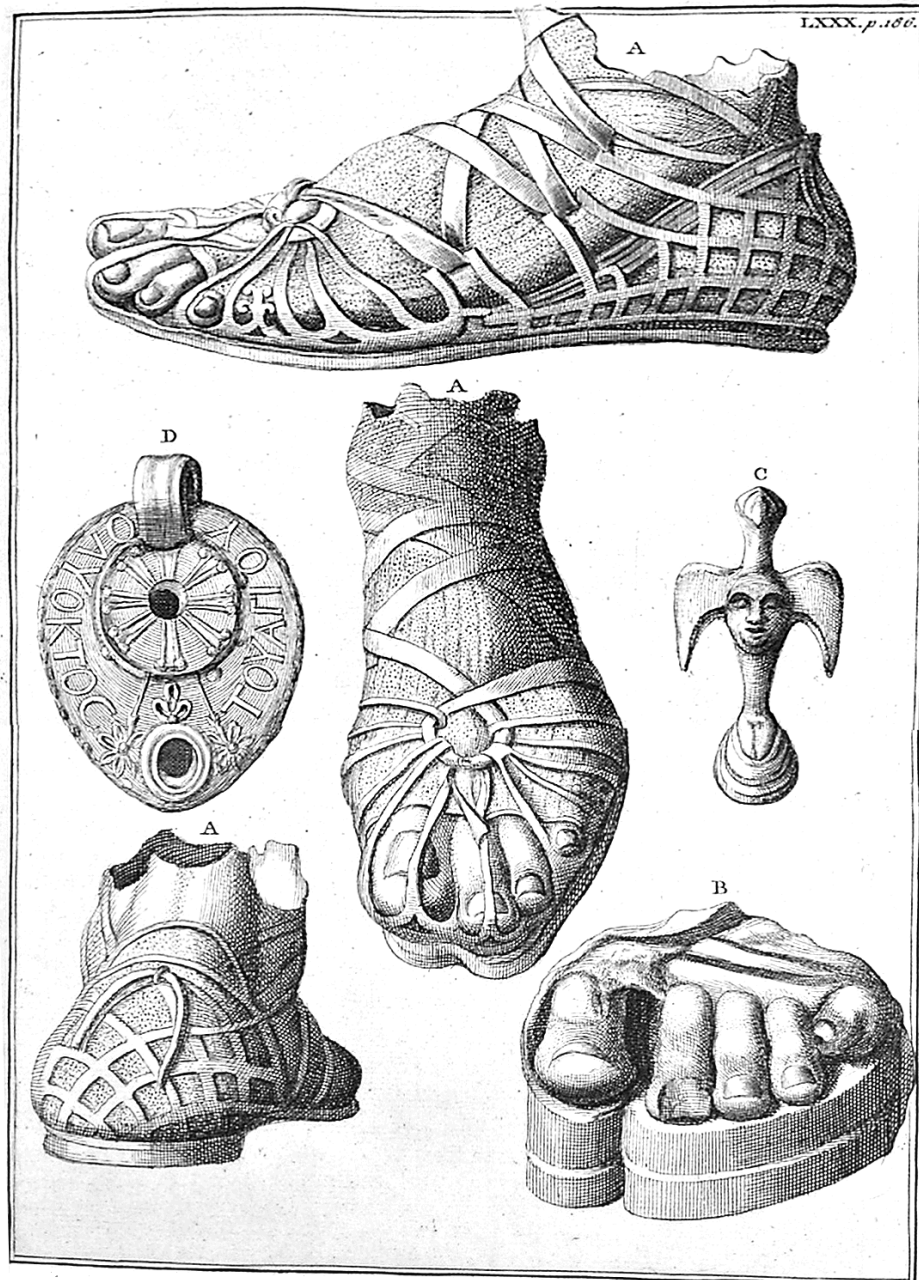


Plate 4: Greek Inscriptions from Lord Sandwich's manuscript version of his Voyage, by permission of John Montagu, Earl of Sandwich.



Plate 5: Portrait of Lord Sandwich, by George Knapton, in Brook's Club, London, by permission of the Dilettanti Society, through the Courtwald Institute.



A. BRONZE FOOT, A. A FOOT OF MARBLE, B. A BRONZE STATUE, C. A LAMP, D.

Plate 6: Sketches of Lord Sandwich's Bronze Foot, from Pococke's *Description of the East*, p.186.



Plate 7: Portrait of Richard Pococke, by Jean-Etienne Liotard, 1740. © Propriété de la Fondation Gottfried Keller, dépôt au Musée d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève.



Plate 8: Painting of Robert Wood's Tomb, by Frederick, 3rd Earl of Bessborough, in Stansted Park, Hampshire, by permission of the Trustees of Stansted Park Foundation



Plate 9: Portrait of Sir Francis Dashwood, c. 1745, in Divan Club Costume, by permission of Sir Edward Dashwood.



Plate 10: Portrait of Lord Duncannon (Bessborough), by Jean-Etienne Liotard, c. 1742-43, in Stansted House, Hampshire, by permission of the Trustees of Stansted Park foundation.



Plate 11: Portrait of Lord Granby, by Liotard, by permission of Lord and Lady Rutland, Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire.



Plate 12: Portrait of Edward Wortley Junior, by Mathew William Peters, 1776, in the National Portrait Gallery, London, Ref. NPG 4573.



Plate 13: Portrait of James Nelthorpe, by Liotard, in the Holburne Museum, Bath, Ref. A358.



Plate 14: Engraving of Thomas Wright of Durham, by Paul Fourdrinier from a painting by George Allen. Taken from his book, *Clavis Coelestis* (London, 1742).



Plate 15: Portrait of Thomas Anson, in the manner of John Vanderbank, in Shugborough House, Staffordshire.



Plate 16: Engraving of Richard Owen Cambridge. By permission of Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado.



Plate 17: Thomas Coke (b.1698) 1st Earl of Leicester (of the First Creation) (oil on canvas) by Francesco Trevisani (1656-1746) © Collection of the Earl of Leicester, Holkham Hall, Norfolk / The Bridgeman Art Library.