

Travelling / Royal and diplomatic visits

Up until the 18th century, diplomatic relations between sovereign countries were maintained by regular diplomatic visits on the part of their respective ambassadors. At the beginning of the 19th century, the desire for more sustained diplomatic contact resulted in the establishment of permanent diplomatic missions. Gradually, all major European powers established embassies in Istanbul in order to ensure constant contact with the Ottoman court and access to its sultan. Embassies and consulates all over the Middle East and North Africa followed suit. In turn, towards the end of the century, Arab and Ottoman missions and embassies became an increasingly common sight in European capitals, aimed not only at consolidating diplomatic relations, but also at facilitating arrangements towards the systematic modernisation of their armies and administrations. The most important, permanent Ottoman embassies were situated in London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna. With the long-term presence of ambassadors in the different capitals of Europe and the Arab and Ottoman world, political links between the two became ever more comprehensive and far reaching, a fact that was also emphasised publicly with great pomp and circumstance through the staging of carefully choreographed state visits.



Working Number: DZ 057

Name: The Swedish consulate

Holding Museum: Musée Public National des Antiquités

Date: 1832

Materials: -

Curator Justification: At the beginning of the 19th century resident missions were established all over the Arab and Ottoman world, initially to protect the interests and communities of European merchants. The Swedes had established trade relations with Algeria in the early 18th century. At the time, the first Consul was a Scottish merchant George Logie.



Working Number: AT 001

Name: Ambassador Mohammed ibn 'Abd al-Malik, Pasha of Tangier, visits Vienna on February 14, 1783

Holding Museum:

Date: Kunsthistorisches Museum

Materials: After 1783

Curator Justification: -

Although Morocco retained formal independence throughout the 19th century, European powers increasingly succeeded in tying the country into complex diplomatic, political and economic agreements, which were intended to disadvantage one or the other political foe in the quest for strategic advantage in the Mediterranean. Austria established relations with Morocco later in the 17th century, followed by a diplomatic agency accredited to the Sultan of Morocco, and set up in Tangier in 1885.



Working Number: TN 024

Name: Painting of Mohamed Sadok Bey and Napoléon III

Holding Museum: Musée d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine de Kassar Saïd

Date: 1862

Materials: Canvas, wood, coloured pigments, gold leaf

Curator Justification: This painting was created in the 1860s, at a time of intense diplomatic activity between the Bey of Tunis and the French

Emperor Napoleon III. The French had taken an intense interest in Tunisia since the 18th century, vying for influence in the face of fierce political and commercial competition from Italy and Britain. France eventually occupied Tunisia in 1881, thus consolidating its presence in North Africa.



Working Number: AT 009

Name: Pair of pistols, a diplomatic present of Sidi Mohammed II, Bey (1855–1859) of Tunis, to Emperor Franz Joseph

Holding Museum: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Collection of Arms and Armour

Date: 1857

Materials: Wood, iron, diamonds and gold

Curator Justification: These pistols were part of a strategy on the part of the Bey of Tunis to secure a lasting alliance with the Austrian Empire in view of a perceived growing threat posed by the French presence in Algeria. His efforts were aided by the fact that, in the late 1850s, Austria was on the brink of a war with France, which was to erupt eventually in 1859.



Working Number: AT 015

Name: Portrait of Sultan Abdülaziz (1830–1876)

Holding Museum: Austrian National Library

Date: 1867

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The Ottoman Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (Abdülaziz), visited Vienna with his sons, nephews and his Grand Vizier Fu’ad Pasha in 1867. The stop-over, during which he was also received by the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef I, formed part of a European tour that marked the first time an Ottoman sultan had visited a non-Muslim state outside the context of war.



Working Number: AT 042

Name: Medal of Emperor Franz Joseph I

Holding Museum: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Coin Cabinet

Date: 1869

Materials: Silver

Curator Justification: Counting honorary “King of Jerusalem” among his official titles, the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I visited Jerusalem in 1869, en route to the opening of the Suez Canal. Less a diplomatic visit than a spiritual one, it was nevertheless designed to demonstrate Austria’s power and influence in the region.



Working Number: AT 106

Name: ‘Abd al-Hamid (Abdülhamid) II (1842–1918)

Holding Museum: Austrian National Library

Date: After 1876

Materials: -

Curator Justification: In 1867, Ottoman Sultan ‘Abd al-Hamid II accompanied his uncle, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (Abdülaziz), on a diplomatic visit to Austria,

England and France, occasioned by an invitation on the part of the French Emperor Napoleon III to attend the World's Fair in Paris that year.



Working Number: ET1 025

Name: Set of pictures documenting the visit of King Fu`ad to Italy

Holding Museum: Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Date: 1927

Materials: -

Curator Justification: In 1917, the British de facto rulers of Egypt had selected Ahmad Fu'ad II (1868–1936) to become the first King of Egypt. During his subsequent European tour in 1927 an important stop was made in Italy, a country with which Egypt held very close ties, not least due to the large and influential Italian community residing there. Here, the king is pictured visiting an electrical power station at Santa Croce, in the Veneto region.



Working Number: FR 061

Name: The Empress visits the Orient

Holding Museum: National Library of France

Date: 19th century

Materials: -

Curator Justification: An influential diplomat in her own right, the French Empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III, visited Constantinople in 1868. Her visit included a reception at the palace of the sultan's mother, who it is said disapproved of the Empress's manners, even disciplining her on one occasion when she overconfidently broke Ottoman protocol.



Working Number: IT2 010

Name: The Welcome to the Italian Delegation in Morocco

Holding Museum: National Gallery of Modern Art (GNAM)

Date: c. 1879

Materials: Oil on canvas

Curator Justification: In the wake of Italy's unification, the new nation quickly cast its eye to catching up with the colonial ambitions of other European powers, particularly in North Africa. This painting shows an Italian delegation visiting the Moroccan sovereign in Fez during the 1870s, an occasion vividly recounted by the Italian author Edmondo de Amicis, who witnessed it.



Working Number: IT1 024

Name: Menu for the gala dinner offered by the Italian king in honour of the Ambassador from Morocco, who visited Italy in June 1890

Holding Museum: Central State Archives of Italy

Date: 1890

Materials: -

Curator Justification: In the wake of Italy's unification, the new nation quickly cast its eye to catching up with the colonial ambitions of other

European powers, particularly in North Africa. Relations between Italy and Morocco intensified, and in June 1890, the Sultan of Morocco sent an ambassador to Italy, to meet the Italian king and present him with “extremely rich gifts”. In turn, the ambassador was received and hosted with the highest honours.



Working Number: IT1 046

Name: The Moroccan Embassy in Rome

Holding Museum: State Library of Modern and Contemporary History

Date: 1890

Materials: -

Curator Justification: This image provides fascinating insight into the complexity of intercultural diplomatic visits in the 19th century. While all the subjects are taking part in the same official photo to mark the occasion, the costumes and poses of the Moroccan dignitaries and their Italian counterparts subtly suggest that during their diplomatic encounter they had to grapple with very different world views and attitudes along the way.



Working Number: MO 007

Name: Painting, Royal Audience

Holding Museum: Royal archives

Date: 23 November 1868

Materials: Oil on canvas

Curator Justification: This painting depicts an audience given on 23 November 1868 by the Moroccan Sultan Sidi Muhammad ‘Abd al-Rahman, in Fez, for guests from the British delegation in Tangier, including Sir John Drummond-Hay. The strong political influence of British ambassadors on Moroccan foreign policy was well established by that time, and Morocco remained informally part of the British Empire until 1904.



Working Number: MO 009

Name: Painting, Diplomatic visit to England

Holding Museum: Royal archives

Date: 1901

Materials: Oil on canvas

Curator Justification: Mehdi M’nebhi was ambassador and defence minister to the Moroccan Sultan Mulay ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (1894–1908). In 1901, both visited London in an attempt to secure Britain’s support in the face of increasing French aggression on Morocco’s border with Algeria.



Working Number: RO 035

Name: Order of the Medjidie that belonged to Alexandru Ioan Cuza

Holding Museum: National Museum of Romanian History

Date: 1860

Materials: -

Curator Justification:

Alexandru Ioan Cuza, elected Domnitor (ruler) of Moldova and Wallachia in 1859, was awarded the Order of the Medjidie by Sultan 'Abd al-'Aziz in September 1860. The investiture, undertaken by Romania's Ottoman overlords, always required an official visit to Istanbul.
