...you will contyneue and proceade in yor charge both in the instruction of our people in knowledg of Religyon and in reproving and rebuking whatsoever you shall ether see or be dewly informed of to deserve reproof or admonition.

Sir Thomas Smith, Governor of the Levant and East India Companies, to William Biddulph, March 1600

When *The Travels* appeared in print, Biddulph’s editorial hedging about his role in publication was carefully scrutinized by none other than the gossipmonger John Sanderson, now back in London but regularly writing to friends in Aleppo and Istanbul. Thanks to Sanderson and his overseas correspondents, we know a good deal about the publication of Biddulph’s book and details of several incidents that Biddulph deliberately omitted. Through Sanderson we glimpse something of the nervous excitement generated by the book among members of the Levant Company in both England and the Levant, and why it was that Biddulph went to such lengths to hide himself behind a sham editor.

**Istanbul intrigues**

Early in 1608, Henry Lello, the officious and anxiety-prone diplomat familiarly known as ‘Fog’ by the English community in Istanbul, returned to England and was knighted for his services as ambassador. He had been succeeded by his former secretary, Dallam’s travelling companion, Thomas Glover, who had already been knighted and appointed to replace Lello on 16 August 1606. The fact that Glover received his knighthood before taking up the appointment clearly irritated Lello, who had to wait until retirement for his, and added fuel to a longstanding rivalry between the two men, which continued across the distance separating London from Istanbul. In the acrimonious quarrelling,
Sanderson and friends took Glover’s side, while Biddulph proved to be one of Lello’s staunchest supporters.

In November 1608, some months before the publication of Biddulph’s Travels, Sanderson wrote to Glover that Lello, now back in London, had recently informed him that Biddulph had visited Richard Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, and complained about Glover. Biddulph had produced ‘two letters which you [Glover] had writt against him [Biddulph]; but My Lords Grace graced him nevertheless. And said he redd to him all the lines of your letters and that they weare ridiculus.’ What the contents of these letters might have been is not reported. Sanderson does, however, note how, at Lello’s ‘request’, Biddulph had recently been able to purchase ‘an adviouson of six score pounds per yeare’ with the help of John Eldred, an influential merchant who had served in Aleppo as Consul and as Treasurer to the Levant Company, and was now a London Alderman. But why was Biddulph, now back in England, campaigning against the new ambassador, Sir Thomas Glover?

A month later, just weeks before Biddulph’s Travels appeared in print, Sanderson again wrote to Glover, this time reporting that ‘Mr Biddle is putting to print all his travailes; and,’ he adds ominously, ‘one Stracie is making a booke against you; which yf it should be so, it peradventure may cost him both his ears.’ William Strachey, the man in danger of losing his ears – and this was no idle threat – was a secretary that Glover had taken with him from London, but quickly dismissed. Strachey’s book never appeared. But Biddulph’s did. Why should the publication of Biddulph’s Travels have caused Sanderson such anxiety on Glover’s behalf?

For more than a year before Biddulph’s book appeared, Sanderson had been hearing disturbing rumours circulating in London about Glover’s behaviour since he had become ambassador. Yet despite his network of friends in Istanbul and Aleppo, Sanderson did not know everything. Unknown to him, hostilities between Lello and Glover had begun before the new ambassador arrived. With his new wife, Anne née Lamb, the recently knighted Sir Thomas returned by sea during the autumn of 1606 to take up his appointment. In November, during a stopover on Chios, he wrote ahead to Lello instructing him to vacate the Company house in Pera, and leave behind ‘all the household stuffe whatsoever, as Plate, pewter, lynene, carpetts, kitchin stuffe as all thynges belonginge unto that house’. Lello, however, dragged his heels and stayed on, largely, it seems, in order to gather as much money as possible before returning to England. But he also wanted to interfere with Glover’s assumption of office by spreading malicious gossip, and in this task he was greatly assisted by William Biddulph.

Glover becomes ambassador

According to Ottaviano Bon, the Venetian bailo, Glover entered Istanbul on 9 January 1607 ‘in honourable style, and in a few days he will be presented