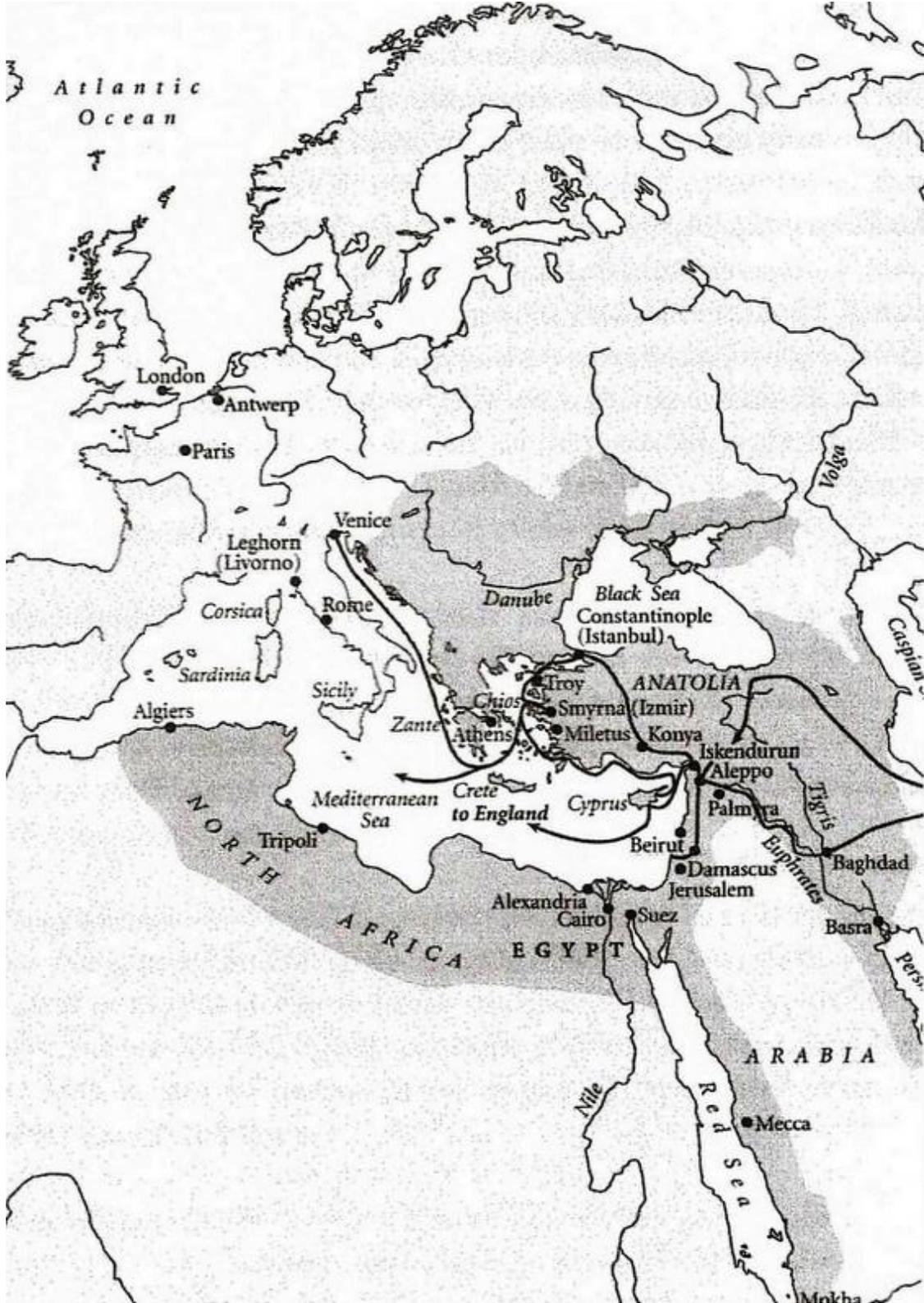


Fig 1. Map of the Levant with main trading routes



WILLIAM BARKER
MEMBER OF THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL LEVANT COMPANY
1731-1825

A LIFE IN SMYRNA

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Finally, I must thank my husband, John, for introducing me to William Barker from whom he is descended, and for valiantly proof-reading the text.

Marjorie Rear is the wife of Emeritus Professor John Rear who is a descendent of William Barker through his son, Henry Richards Barker.

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2015

INTRODUCTION

The Right Worshipful Levant Company is far less well-known than its near contemporary the East India Company. It does not help that “the Levant” is a term very seldom in use today. Nowadays we talk vaguely of the “Middle East” without ever needing to distinguish that area of the eastern Mediterranean that stretches roughly from Anatolia to Egypt. Both companies were trading monopolies, but while the first grew but slowly in certain restricted areas on the coast of the great Ottoman Empire, the second quickly outgrew its origins to pave the way for the great age of the British Empire. Using its financial assets to set up a powerful parliamentary lobby at home and buy support abroad, it had a major influence on British policy throughout the Eighteenth Century. In contrast, though a few members of the Levant Company, notably Sir Dudley North, did go into politics, it had neither the influence nor the resources of its grand, exotic, and much documented rival.

Although the Levant Company and its “Turkey merchants” never had a significant role in political dealings between the governments of Britain and the Ottoman Empire (in spite of for many years paying the costs of keeping an ambassador in Constantinople), they did play a small part in introducing the British to the Islamic world and its culture and forming a better understanding of it. It is true that Lady Mary Wortley Montague had a poor opinion of her fellow foreign residents in the Levant in this regard :

‘Tis certain we have but very imperfect relations of the manners and religion of these people, this part of the world being seldom visited but by merchants who mind little but their own affairs. . . The Turks are too proud to converse familiarly with merchants etc., who can only pick up some confused information.¹

However, to be fair to them, while she had the time and the ability to learn the language and move freely among the segregated Turkish women as well as to meet the men who were entertained at the Embassy in Constantinople, they had neither. There were, of course, exceptions to her damning characterisation and the travellers and antiquarians who visited the area did rely not just on the merchants' generous hospitality, but on their local knowledge and cosmopolitan connections to acquire a better picture of the country and its people. However, it would be too naïve to believe that when the merchants eventually returned to their homeland, they had gained not just an admiration for the sophistication of their host society but a very different view of the age-old stereotype of “infidel versus Christendom.” What they did do was to pass to the British government a better idea of the Ottoman Empire's strengths and weaknesses and how to deal with them.

Most historians of the Levant Company, even Wood,² have concentrated on the earlier days of its success. The bold merchant adventurers, the “pashas”³ such as William Harborne and Sir Paul Rycout, the Levant equivalent of the East India Company “nabobs” who went out and made fortunes and reputations in strange and wonderful places, certainly add interest and glamour to the trading figures and colour to their dealings, successful or unsuccessful, with the Ottoman Sublime

1

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, “Turkish Embassy Letters”, to the Abbe Conti from Adrianople, 1 April 1717.

² Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 1935, Frank Cass & Co.

³ James Mather. *Pashas; Traders & Travellers in the Islamic World*, Yale U.P, 2009

Porte.⁴ This, which may be described as the “Great Age of the Levant Company”, came to an end in the middle of the eighteenth century when it found it had had to widen its membership and loosen its regulations in order to continue to function. Its final demise came in 1825.

William Barker, the focus of this paper, started his career as a Turkey Merchant in Smyrna (now Izmir) in 1759 and died there in 1825. His life is thus entwined with the life of the second half of the history of the Levant Company. He and his family also became inextricably linked - by business, by friendship and by blood - with the families of British and other nationalities who not only traded in the Levant but who settled and made their homes there until driven out in the war and conflagration of 1922.⁵

⁴ The Central Government of the Ottoman Empire.

⁵ See Giles Milton, *Paradise Lost; Smyrna 1922*, Basic Books, 2008.

FROM DERBYSHIRE TO LONDON

William Barker's family was well-established in Derbyshire. Early evidence shows a respectable family of farmers and craftsmen of modest means. However, by the middle of the seventeenth century members had come to the attention of a powerful and wealthy aristocrat whose patronage transformed both their social standing and their finances. The Manners family (first Earls, and then Dukes of Rutland) had – and still have – possession of the wonderful Haddon Hall and its surrounding estates near Bakewell. In 1723 John Barker, William's grandfather, became Steward to the Duke.

When John Barker died in 1727 his two sons, John and Thomas, rode over to Croxton Park, the Duke's new hunting lodge near Belvoir Castle, from their family home at Denton about four miles away. Firstly they needed to wind up their father's business affairs with the Duke of Rutland; secondly – and no less importantly – they hoped to be able to pay their respects in person to the Duke. Thomas was obviously hoping to learn that the Duke proposed to promote him to be his steward, following in the footsteps of his father, but that was not to be. In a letter to his great-uncle, Rev. Robert Charlesworth of Castleton in Derbyshire, John reported that “His Grace then call'd my brother to him & told him as he had heard a good character of him but thought him not of years to undertake a business of such moment and he had pitch'd upon another with whom he might continue in a same capacity as under my father.”⁶

John, the elder brother, entered on the profession of physician, studying in Oxford, Leiden, and London. Meanwhile Thomas, disappointed for the moment of the coveted stewardship and unwilling to go on serving in a subordinate capacity, returned to Derbyshire and set himself to set up a new family home in Bakewell and to increase his land holdings and lead mining interests. It was an excellent time to do so. In 1721 the London Lead Company, which already had mines in Wales and Northumberland, began to take over some Derbyshire mines many of which had been abandoned earlier because of the difficulty of removing water. Advances in engineering now made it possible to drain and develop them. Alerted to these new possibilities, Thomas Barker went into partnerships with other local families for the running of individual mines and also invested in a great deal of property, not just in Derbyshire, but elsewhere in the country.⁷ William and his brothers, therefore, grew up against a background of successful financial entrepreneurship.

Thomas Barker might be considered a typical member of the new upper-middle class landed gentry. His daughters, Bridget and Suttonia, would marry advantageously; his sons would take the conventional roads into the professions. John, the eldest, would learn the running of the family business and property; the next, Thomas, after a badly-behaved period at Eton,⁸ was sent into the Royal Navy and had a reasonably distinguished career; the third, Robert, went into the Church via Cambridge University. What then were the possibilities for the youngest son, William? The obvious options were the law (would be very useful to the family business) or medicine (his uncle John could help advance him here). But William seemed to have had no great aptitude for study; eighteenth-century spelling was not entirely standardised, but his – throughout his life - was dire.

⁶ Derbyshire Record Office D7674 Bar D 676/13.

⁷ See Arthur Raistrick & Bernard Jennings, *A History of Lead Mining in the Pennines*, Davis Books, 1989.

⁸ Derbyshire Record Office D7674 Bar D 676/4.

What about the army? It took a great deal of private funding to sustain life as an officer in a good regiment and his father showed no signs of approving what he almost certainly thought of as wanton expenditure for little return. Whether or not these possibilities were ever under discussion, when his father died in 1754, William, then seventeen, had already begun his initiation into the world of commerce.

William's eldest sister, Bridget, had married in 1751 a London merchant, Thomas Dunnage,⁹ and had gone south to live in Southwark. Thomas Dunnage had, the previous year, been made a Freeman of the City of London and a member of the Worshipful Company of Cutlers, and he also seems to have acted as London agent to his father-in-law. He seems to have been a generous and charitable man as behoved a member of a Livery Company. He became Master of the Company in 1764 and is renowned for introducing the Guild medal. He was not quite free of vanity, however; as he left a bequest to the Worshipful Company of Cutlers "to keep my picture in proper repair and good preservation", but perhaps he may be forgiven for that.

In 1753 Thomas Dunnage took William on as his apprentice.¹⁰ It cost Thomas Barker a not inconsiderable sum. The duty on apprenticeships paid under the law of 1710 was at the rate of 6d in the pound on agreements of £50 or less and the tax paid was noted as 17 shillings and some pence, which means a premium of approximately £35. Thomas Barker would not have been able to afford the premiums charged by eminent Levant merchants¹¹ as they could amount to as much as £1,000, even if this had been William's ultimate ambition.¹² However the bustling city of London and the talk in the coffee shops which doubled as places of business would have been full of opportunities to learn of overseas travel, of fortunes made.¹³

Some apprentices lived a hard life, fed and treated as their masters felt fit, but, though no doubt William was expected to work hard, it would be unlikely that he was treated in any unkindly way. Says Daniel Defoe:

Indeed, the affair in this age between masters and their apprentices, stands in a different view from what the same thing was a few years past; the state of our apprenticeship is not a state of servitude now, and hardly of subjection, and their behaviour is accordingly more like gentlemen than tradesmen; more like companions to their masters, than like servants. On the other hand, the masters seem to have made over their authority to their apprentices for a sum of money, the money taken now with apprentices being most exorbitantly great, compared to what it was in former times.¹⁴

As a regulated chartered company since the late sixteenth century, the Levant Company allowed its members (who had to be Freemen of the City of London) to operate as independent traders with their own capital, controlled only by the general rules and principles described in its charter. And that trade had yielded considerable initial success. However, although by the middle of the eighteenth century it had 200 members (not all actively trading), few new members were being admitted. Trade was not prospering and the Company was finding it increasingly difficult to

⁹ The couple would go on to have several children, not all of them growing to adulthood. But two at least, James and John, worked, after apprenticeships to their father, in his business at 20 Philpott Street, off Fenchurch Street in the City of London..

¹⁰ He took on a number of others in later years, including a Henry Humphrys (brother of Valentine Humphrys, William Barker's apprentice). Some of them were specifically to learn to become brandy merchants.

¹¹ Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, 1726.

¹² William's youngest sister, Suttonia, was to marry in 1767 Thomas Ashby, a close Derbyshire neighbour, already a Turkey Merchant.

¹³ See James Mather, *Pashas; traders and travellers in the Islamic World*, Yale University Press, 2009, for details of some Levant Company merchants, trading then or previously in the Levant.

¹⁴ Daniel Defoe, *op.cit.*, Chap. 1.

compete with French and Dutch merchants, particularly in the matter of the textile trade. There was criticism that the Company's severe regulation of trade could no longer be supported. In particular, the general requirement that goods should be sent by Company ships from London alone, cargo space being allotted by the most influential members to the detriment of their competitors, was severely criticised. According to Wood, "By 1744 the French had more than 200 vessels of large size, as well as 400-500 smaller ones, engaged in the Turkey trade, whereas the English seldom sent more than ten ships annually to the Levant."¹⁵

In response to these criticisms a bill designed to open up the trade was drafted but initially failed to be passed by Parliament. Coincidentally however, in 1753, just as William apprenticed himself to his brother-in-law, the Levant Company did at last achieve a remarkable change in its organisation. A new Bill (similar in intention to the previous one) was successfully passed, allowing anyone (not just Freemen of the City) to enter the Company on payment of a £20 fee. Between 1710 and 1753 "only 140 new freemen were elected and between 70 and 80 factors in the Levant were given freedom to trade."¹⁶ These earlier factors, according to Wood, were "sons of freemen, or of gentlemen and cadets of noble families who were apprenticed to some member of the Company in London in order to learn the trade and make their fortunes." But the times were clearly changing. As the century continued, it seems that members were most likely to be "new men" and their family members or connections.¹⁷ Possibly the reason was, as Wood notes,¹⁸ that as cash was not allowed to be exported to the Levant, it was more expedient (though for a long time against the regulations of the company), if not essential, to trade on credit and having family members to offer and use credit would be less risky than resorting elsewhere.

So now the numbers of new members of the Levant Company began to shoot up. According to Wood, between 1754 and 1794 about 352 admissions were made.¹⁹ If you did not listen too carefully to those who bemoaned the drop in trade or thought that exporting metals rather than cloth meant less competition from other nations, it must have been tempting to think that the opportunities for wealth offered to Turkey merchants were still well worth taking.

What would a merchant's apprentice learn in his seven years of indenture? Daniel Defoe in his "The Complete English Tradesman" set out to describe how a merchant should learn his trade, from keeping meticulous books, knowing intimately the goods in which he dealt and using a "plain and easy style" in his letter-writing. There would also have to have been knowledge of the law of the seas and marine insurance as well as taxation.

William Barker wasted no time after the end of his apprenticeship. On October 2nd, 1759, he paid for the freedom to join the Company and made ready to set off on this new venture – and indeed *adventure*. In a letter from London to his brother dated 18 Dec 1759 he writes that:

I was unwilling to write you till I could tell you for a certainty that I should settle abroad, wether at Smyrna or Constantinople, which is at last determined in the following manner, that a Partnership between Mr. Humphreys and me is to commence upon my arrival at either Smyrna or Const[antinopl]e (as it is uncertain which place we shall go to first) upon the following terms, that I am to settle at Smyrna and Mr. H. to continue to Con[stantinopl]e, that each party shall be equally concerned in the business transacted by the other, by

¹⁵ Wood, *op.cit.*, p. 143.

¹⁶ Wood, *op.cit.*, p. 151. Merchants operating as factors in the Levant had to take the Right Worshipful Levant Company's "prescribed oath to make true Entries and Subscribe to the Tarriffs," to qualify themselves at a particular Scale, as the respective ports were known.

¹⁷ SP 105/337 gives numerous examples of this, including the Lee and Boddington families.

¹⁸ Wood, *op.cit.*, p.214.

¹⁹ Wood, *op.cit.*, p.157.

which means our Principals will find it greatly to their advantage, to do business with us, for this scheme will remove those complaints which they often make that when they send goods to one Scale²⁰ with conditional orders to the factor there, to sell or forward them to the other Scale as he shall think most for the advantage of his Principal, they often find that the Factor, rather than lose his Com[mission] upon the Sails, will sell the goods there rather than forward them to the other markets, where they might have made better account. This complaint (wether just or not) is by our present scheme removed, as there is nothing to tempt us to see at one Scale rather than the other, and besides by this means a Persons concerns at both places are in one Persons hands, and he need not fear making the Factor at one Scale jealous by consigning more goods to the other.²¹

The “Mr. Humphreys” referred to was the John Humphreys who would eventually be chosen for the post of Chancellor²² at Constantinople in March 1775.²³ He was presumably the “senior” partner in fact, as Constantinople was the home of the ambassador who had the duty of maintaining good relations between the merchants and the sultan and his officials and who appointed consuls to the factories in Smyrna and Aleppo. John was the father, of the “Vall” (Valentine) Humphreys that William bound to him as an apprentice who would “stay with me in Smyrna”²⁴ and he had a second son, Henry, who was staying in London. It was usual for the factors to take on partners “which prevented trouble for their principals in England if one of them happened to die.”²⁵

In the same letter he writes that

Since Writing the above I have waited to tell you the day we should Sail which I now believe to be Monday or Tuesday next, but as we shall go to Falmouth to take in Tin,²⁶ I may perhaps write you again from there. If not, I wish you all the health and happiness you can desire . . .

PS I have made my Will and Shall leave it Sealed with my Bro^r Dunnage for fear of Accidents.

Making his will was a sensible precaution. The Seven Years War was, after five years, still under way and his ship, the *Shardeloes*,²⁷ was going into dangerous waters where there was always a chance of capture by French men-of-war, by privateers or even by Barbary corsairs. Fortunately, following the defeat of the French at Quiberon Bay a month before the *Shardeloes* was due to leave, the focus of the war had moved towards the Americas and the dangers for shipping had lessened, though had certainly not completely disappeared. It is interesting that at much the same time a year previously the records of the British Factory in Smyrna were totally concerned with acquiring all the information they could from contacts in the Mediterranean on the activities of the French Fleet and to pass it on both to Captain A.J. Hervey who was in HMS *Monmouth*, busy keeping a famously long watch on the French coast, and to Captain John Evans of the *Preston* (a newly-launched 30-gun ship) which had been designated to escort the four merchantmen, ready-loaded and plague-free, who had been pinned down in Smyrna and anxious to leave.²⁸ In contrast, when William Barker was preparing to set sail the British Factory was far more concerned with deciding

²⁰ The three main “scales” were Constantinople, Smyrna and Aleppo.

²¹ i.e profits would be shared at whichever port cargoes were landed.

²² The Chancellor or Cancellier kept the records of the English factory and dealt with any necessary administration.

²³ “List of British Consular Officials in the Ottoman Empire,” compiled by David Wilson, 2011, *levantineheritage.com*. The Chancellor [or Cancellier] kept the records of the Factory and undertook other duties; it was a paid office and the holder was not allowed to trade his own account.

²⁴ Valentine Humphreys finally took the oath to become an independent Factor at Smyrna on July 17, 1764. SP 105/357, p. 57.

²⁵ Wood, *op.cit.* p. 215.

²⁶ The Levant Company originally dealt mostly in cloth exports, but by this date a variety of other goods were also carried. See SP 105/337, pp. 75-83.

²⁷ Lloyd's List has it as the *Shardeloes*, not *Shardelow* as William has it. It was a 25-ton ship, with a crew of 50, carrying 20 carriage guns. It was owned by John Townshend, a London merchant. It seems to have voyaged regularly to Smyrna.

²⁸ SP 105/337, pp. 8-14.

what would be an appropriate present to give to the local Turkish governor on the occasion of his sons being circumcised and whether they really had to send a representative to the ceremony.²⁹

William talks with some bravado of the chance of making “my Share of Prize money the same as any of the Foremastmen” should they have to take on an enemy vessel, but the convoy of which the *Shardeloes* was a part, would be escorted by a naval ship³⁰ and the captain of that as well as his own captain's aim in such circumstances would be to run rather than fight – to keep both ship and cargo safe.³¹

In the same letter to his brother he complains in a rather unpleasant self-pitying tone:

As Part of my Little Fortune is already spent in my Voyage to Turkey, and other necessary expenses which could not be avoided, I am afraid that at my first going into business I shall find myself a good deal straightend, and meet with some difficulties for want of a sufficiency to command my business, and as this is likely to be the case, what an easy matter it would be for my Aunt Morrice³² to be of great service to me, without any detriment to herself if she would but lend me £200 for two or three years. It would be sufficient for me till business began to fluctuate, and then as a Factor I should never want, supposing I was not worth a Shilling. I would willingly pay her Interest for it, but perhaps she thinks its safer where it is. Perhaps it may, but will not the ties of Blood Balance that and would not the great Service she would thereby do me be a sufficient recompence [sic] for the risque she would run? But why do I talk in this manner, you have told me already that she will do nothing for me, and I assure you I would rather starve than ask her.

I know I have Friends that would do it for me with pleasure, but I don't care to expose myself to the World in this manner or to lay myself under an obligation of this sort to any one. My Brother Dunnage I know will let his Account stand always in advance considerably for me, without expecting Interest, and with the help of this Indulgence and my own Industry, I hope to Rub through the Worst, as many a one has done before me in the like Situation; and I hope with the Blessing of God in a few Years to find all these seeming difficulties removed.

Clearly money was a worry. It is unclear exactly what financial resources William had on hand, if any, beside the amount he had left with Thomas Dunnage and how much he had invested in goods to be shipped out and sold. He was owed £500 under the terms of his father's will when he reached his majority, but the sum was not paid out in fact until March 1773 when he was thirty-six, though he would have received meanwhile any interest from its investment. That money was undoubtedly invested in his family's lead mining endeavours in Derbyshire and returns from that were variable and slow. It is likely the idea was that he would act on behalf of John Humphreys rather on his own behalf – at least to begin with – and rely on making money for his own investments out of commission on any goods that passed through his hands. According to Wood that would have been about 2%.³³ According to one merchant trading in Aleppo “a factor needed 2,200 to 2,400 piastres per annum, half for living expenses and the rest for business expenses such as payment of the *scrivan* or clerk's salary.”³⁴ That would approximate (in ready money) to between £200 and £240 –

²⁹ SP 105/337, p. 19.

³⁰ N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean 1649-1815*, p. 288: “The organisation of trade defence was better than in previous wars . . . Many British privateers initially commissioned at the outbreak of the war with France . . . were chartered to the Navy as 'armed ships' employed as convoy escorts.”

³¹ Rodger, *op.cit.*, p.273: “British officers were always strictly ordered to remain with their convoys and not to be tempted on any account to abandon them. The difference was that, for the British [rather than the French] this was understood as a disagreeable but essential exception to the general rule that an officer's first duty was always to defeat the enemy. . . the doctrine of the mission made a good deal of sense for navies mainly designed to defend colonies and trade.”

³² Mary Morrice (or Morris or Marris) was the unmarried sister of his mother, Sarah Marris. Her will made on 24 April 1764 [Derbyshire Record Office 7674 Bar. D 696] only mentions bequests to her sister & her niece.

³³ Wood, *op.cit.*, p.215.

³⁴ E. Frangakis-Syrell, *Persee: Trade Practices in Aleppo in the Middle of the 18th Century*, p. 124.

and that made no provision for emergencies.

He was right to be concerned. Since a by-law of the Levant Company forbade members to import coins and bullion into the Levant, some goods (known as “money goods”) were exported solely to provide cash to purchase the all-important return cargoes.³⁵ Ostensibly this was done to keep the price of goods in the Levant down, but it is easy to see that anyone without accessible credit and difficult-to-sell goods would be in trouble. Even that process was anything but simple as a factor in 1754 explained the process in detail to an inexperienced principal:

“I shall avoid if possible giving any money with your cloth, but I fear a small proportion must go to assist the sale of it; its the general practice here to give our notes payable in 12 months for the amount of the money given with the cloth, and if its paid before the expiration of the time we discount after the rate of 10 or 12 per cento per annum for it as we can agree, and the interest is passed to the principall’s credit this is only done when the silk merchant wants money before his note becomes due, and we have money of our principals to do it.”³⁶

Things apparently stood for William thus:

I have examined the Account between you and me, and find it right and have accordingly debted my Bro^r. Dunnage with the Sum of £320 8s, say Three Hundred & Twenty Pounds Eight Shillings, which Sum I hereby acknowledge to be the full Balance of all our accounts between you and me, and that as my Bro^r. Dunnage has made me good this Sum for you I have now no further Demands on you.³⁷

The *Shardeloes*, under its captain, Richard Burford, arrived in Smyrna safely on the 22nd March, 1760, a journey of approximately fourteen weeks, made with possible landfalls, not only at Falmouth, but at Leghorn and Crete. When he signed the oath of the Levant Company on March 25th, 1760, the career of William Barker, Levant Company Merchant, resident in the Ottoman Empire, could begin.

³⁵ Apparently, in Aleppo, for example, the most popular of these were cochineal, indigo, pepper, sugar and tin but since most of these had to be imported from elsewhere in the first place they would not have produced much profit.

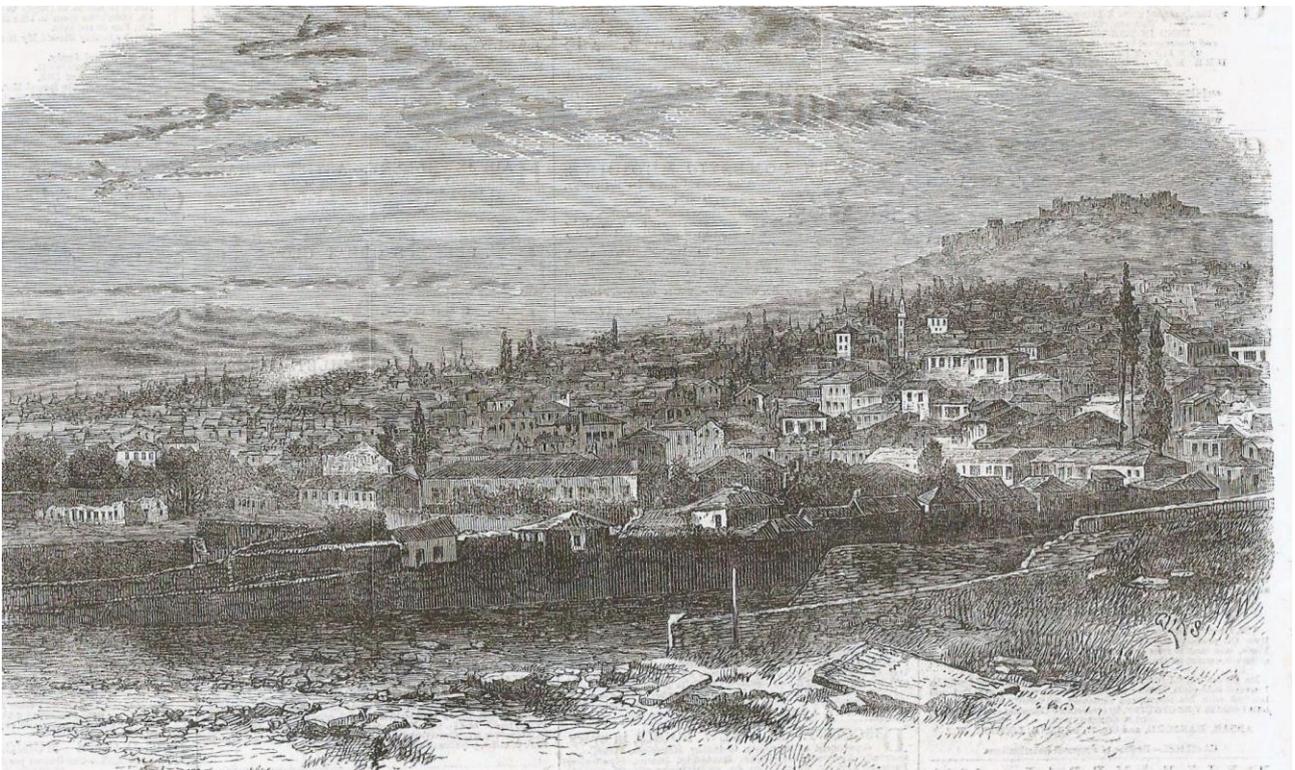
³⁶ Levant Factor, Robert Golightly, from Aleppo to his employer in London. Quoted in Ralph Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square: English Traders in the Levant in the 18th Century*, Macmillan, 1967, p. 75.

³⁷ Under the will of Thomas Barker who died in 1752 William, like his brothers and sisters, was left £500.

Arrival at Smyrna

Smyrna, now called Izmir, lies on the west coast of Turkey and had been a trading port for many centuries. Not only was the harbour good, but the overland trading routes bringing in goods such as silk and spices from a distance for shipment were well-established, while cotton for export was grown in quantity in the outlying district. According to Alexander Drummond “The town is beautifully situated in the sweep of a bay, some part of it being upon a plain, but by far the greatest part rising upon the swell of the hill where the castle stands.”³⁸

Fig. 1: View of Smyrna from the west: the Turkish Quarter & the Castle



However, daily life was not always easy and most merchants undoubtedly continued to see life there as a temporary interlude, undertaken purely as a necessary means to an end.

³⁸ Drummond, Alexander, *Travels through Different Cities of Germany, Italy, Greece and Several Parts of Asia, etc.*, p.119

You gentlemen will know that the inducements to a man living abroad and more especially in a country like this, are the hopes and expectations he has of gaining in his earlier days wherewithal to return to his native country to spend the latter part of his life with some comfort.³⁹

It is difficult to argue with that sentiment. Smyrna was hot, dirty and smelly; diseases were easy to catch. Throughout the Levant the plague visited regularly and there was the constant threat of earthquake and fire. One traveller wrote in 1791 that:

The Governor of the French Hospital in Smyrna told me that in the last dreadful plague there his house was rendered almost intolerable by an offensive scent (especially if he opened any of those windows which looked towards the great burying ground where numbers every day were left unburied) but it had no effect on the health of himself or his family.⁴⁰

That quotation perhaps also illustrates the attitude of mind of the Europeans towards the other inhabitants of the city and their well-being.

Smyrna was noisy, buzzing with numerous different languages; camels and donkeys constantly negotiated the unpaved streets, forcing their way through the crowds of pedestrians. It was unwise to travel outside the city without a guard because of bandits who roamed the countryside. Nearly a century later, Demetrios Petrocochinos could still write a little sneeringly to his father:

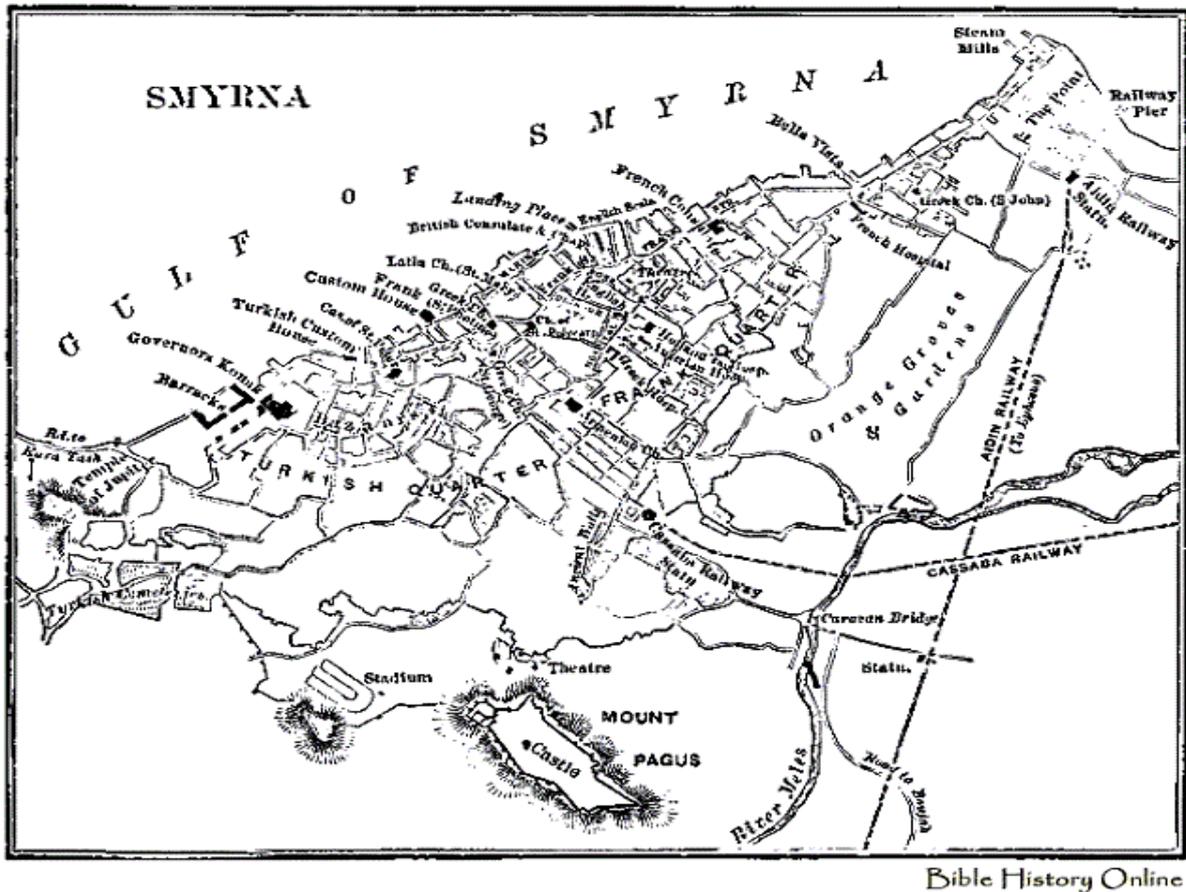
Not only is Smyrna a small city for trade, but the merchants here are crazy too . . . Levantines who have not lived in Europe probably find it beautiful, but somebody who comes from a European city cannot really like it . . . camels and their bells, porters, unpaved streets that tear ones feet and shoes . . . All these summarize Smyrna's praise.⁴¹

³⁹ Robert Golightly to Edward Radcliffe, 1745. Quoted by Sarah Searight, *The British in the Middle East*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1969.

⁴⁰ John Howard, FRS, *An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe, etc.*, 1791, p. 25.

⁴¹ Quoted in E.Sifneos, "Cosmopolitanism as a feature of the Greek Commercial Diaspora," *History & Anthropology*, Vol. 16 (2005), p.102.

Fig. 2. Map showing the various quarters of Smyrna



Bible History Online

The foreign residents, the “Franks” as they were known, lived in their own specific quarter of the city, following the established practice of the Greeks and the Armenians. The British Consulate was in Frank Street, which ran along behind the warehouses.

According to one account,⁴² Frank Street was “the city's main artery in the Seventeenth Century . . . about eight metres wide and narrowing down to five metres at certain points” and it ran for 2.4 kilometres.” Here the Levantine merchants of all nationalities built their homes, their trading houses and their consulates directly along the northern stretch of wavering shoreline, each with their separate wharf at the water's edge.⁴³ Here they felt comparatively safe from attack, from fire, from plague.

⁴² A. Frangoudaki & C. Keyder, *Ways to Modernity in Greece and Turkey; Encounters with Europe, 1850-1950*, I.B.Taurus, 2007.

⁴³ John Fuller, *Narrative of a Tour through some parts of the Turkish Empire*, London, Murray, 1830, p.42

Fig. 3: Frank Street at a much later date. But you can still appreciate the narrowness of it and the recessed entrances to buildings where pedestrians had to take refuge from passing caravanseraï



Here in Frank Street was their own social and business life and they would suffer no incursions into it from an alien culture. It is clear that they had no wish to become more closely acquainted with Turks, even of their own class or higher. Invitations to celebratory occasions seem to have been met with the sending of gifts rather than grateful acceptance of an opportunity to see something of another way of life.⁴⁴ In 1764 a Turkish coffee house appeared at the lower end of Frank Street, described by members of the English Factory as “being a receptacle for idle people”⁴⁵ and all the Frank Consuls united to have this example of Turkish customary life closed down.

The English Nation, as the Smyrna Factory titled itself, was very well organised. Its head was the Consul or Pro-Consul, paid for by the Levant Company not by the British Government⁴⁶ and their Assembly met regularly several times a year at the call of the consul, although any two merchants could call a meeting at twenty-four hours' notice if they felt there were urgent matters to discuss.

⁴⁴ SP 105/337, p. 120.

⁴⁵ SP 105/337, p.60.

⁴⁶ By 1795 this was \$4,500 p.a. Wood, *op.cit.*, p. 218.. This was approximately £450. This was increased to £8,000 in 1802 and \$12,000 in 1813.

There was no enforced attendance at these and numbers were sometimes sparse, particularly when there was nothing much to discuss besides the authorising of the usual “presents” to be sent to some Turkish official or other.

There was the important post of Cancellier (Chancellor), another paid official,⁴⁷ who wrote any letters required, kept the Minutes of Meetings and noted the oaths “to give a true manifest” of Captain and Mates of ships loading and unloading at the port. According to Wood he also “registered all acts, contracts and wills made by the factors” and “received the effects of deceased members of the nation and of bankrupts; in addition to this he examined and noted all goods arriving which were short either in weight or number as a security for the factor to whom they were consigned.” He was not permitted to trade on his own account. In addition there was a Treasurer, chosen from among the merchants, who held office for two years and whose accounts were audited every six months by another two merchants. His salary of \$400 p.a. seems small enough⁴⁸ considering that he had to collect all duties due to the Levant Company, pay out the gifts or bribes to Ottoman officials as the Nation authorised, pay the wages of Company servants such as the dragomans and deal “frugally” (a word that is constantly repeated in the Minutes of Assembly meetings) with such things as repairs to the hospital, the chapel and to the fire engine which required to be kept in a constant state of readiness. In conditions of war or natural disaster the funds at his disposal were frequently found to be inadequate and then loans had to be raised either from the English merchants, or failing that, from foreign bankers.

At the time when William Barker arrived, family men of means would have been accommodated in houses large enough not only for themselves but also for visitors and newcomers. Airy living quarters, built from wood would be on the first floor, the stone-built ground floor being used for warehouse storage and stables. There would have been enclosed courtyards to the rear. Various writers have implied that the houses along the waterfront had gardens running down to the sea, but there is no evidence given for this, at least at this era, and, in fact, given the common sense of situating the warehouses on hard ground as near as possible to the wharves, this seems unlikely. Even the smallest establishment would have needed numerous servants to run it. A tragic incident which occurred about a year before William's arrival incidentally gives a clear idea of this kind of accommodation. One of the members of the English Factory, Richard Dodd, lived in a typical set of warehouse/living quarters. In December 1758 Dodd's neighbour, a Mr. Lamera, sent a message to the English Consul that the keys to the doors of the Dodd warehouse on the ground floor were in the lock, but by noon, Mr. Dodds had not appeared to open them. The Consul, with a party of helpers, including some members of the Factory, the local medical man, Dr. Turnbull, and Captain Barker from one of the ships in the harbour, went over to Mr. Lamera's premises which adjoined Mr. Dodd's.⁴⁹ At his invitation they passed through his “gallery” (an open corridor leading on to his living quarters on the first floor) and up on to the roof by an easy access way (the roof was often used as sleeping quarters in the very hot weather). From there it was easy to pass on to the neighbouring roof and thence down into the Dodd living quarters. The locked trunk in which accounts and valuables were kept was found to have been broken open. The “Fire Warehouse” a stone-built protected area in the courtyard behind, was open, but the door to the kitchen (also to the rear) was locked and had to be broken down. The body of the strangled Richard Dodds was eventually found there in “a little separation where the charcoal was kept.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ His salary was \$400 in 1746: Wood, *op.cit.*, p.222. This was approximately £40. By 1790 it had risen to \$800.

⁴⁸ Wood, *op.cit.*, p.221, n.1, posits that the Treasurer must have had some additional channel of remuneration to make the office worth taking on.

⁴⁹ SP10/337, p. 14.

⁵⁰ Rewards were posted for the apprehension of the culprits who were thought to be two grooms who had been reprimanded for stealing. The appropriate authorities were informed, but there is no evidence in the records that they

This kind of violence was rare, though it was thought prudent to have at least one accompanying *janissary* or guard when leaving the Frank Quarter. More dangerous to life were plague and fire. The English Nation had its own fire engine which seems to have been in constant need of repair from the heat and from the depredations of rats. In addition “watchers” had to be paid to give notice of any outbreak, as well as those needed to work the engine.⁵¹ The plague regularly visited the city, but the Franks suffered from this less than the other residents,⁵² probably through the quarantine measures that were taken with ships and their sailors. The hospital, run and staffed by the Levant Company, was used for a quarantine station as well as for the treatment and welfare of anyone under the protection of the English Consul. (There appears also to have been a prison, but for whom it was used is not clear.)

In October 1759, the Consul, Samuel Crawley reported to the Assembly of the English Nation that he (and the other foreign consuls) had been asked to provide, at the command of the Grand Signior, “lists of their Nation and those under their Protection,” together with details of their marital status, length of residence in Turkey, and possessions.⁵³ This was almost certainly a result of the “Santi Case” mentioned more fully in the following chapter. This is the list which was sent:⁵⁴

Mr. Samuel Crawley, Consul, married to a Frank Lady, without any possessions, resident in Smyrna 16 years⁵⁵

Messrs. [Richard] Master & [James] Lee, established merchants, bachelors, having a country house, garden & turla⁵⁶ at the village of Budgia⁵⁷ to retire to in time of sickness, resident 20 years

Mr. Richard Lee, established merchant, married to a Frank Lady, resident () years, without any possessions

Mr. Richard White, bachelor, established merchant, without any possessions, resident () years

Mr. Joseph Chitty, bachelor, established merchant, without any possessions, resident () years⁵⁸

Mr. Richard Harris, bachelor, late British Consul at Cairo, bachelor, without any possessions, resident 25 years

Mr. George Boddington, Cancellier, married to a Frank Lady, without any possessions, resident 36 years

Mr. Philip Brown, bachelor, Chaplain to the Nation, without any possessions, resident () years⁵⁹

Mr. Andrew Turnbull, Physician, married to a Frank Lady, without any possessions, resident () years⁶⁰

Mrs. Petronella Bobbitt,⁶¹ widow to an English merchant, without any possessions

Mrs. Ann Bobbitt, wife to an English taylor, without any possessions

Mr. William Maltass,⁶² scrivani, bachelor, without any possessions, resident 4 years

were ever brought to justice.

⁵¹ SP 105/37, pp.43,44. The fire engine also needed to be repaired and the RWLC asked to send out an additional engine. In 1764 the RWLC in London sent out a new fire engine and a stone built warehouse for it was built.

⁵² The Consul, Samuel Crawley, has been said to have died of plague, but the Minutes of the Assembly give cause of death as “stagnation of blood in the lungs”. SP 105/37, p. 29.

⁵³ SP 105/337, p. 51.

⁵⁴ The blanks for length of residency are as in the document; presumably the Consul thought them unimportant to the purpose of the enquiry.

⁵⁵ 1727-1751. His wife was English.

⁵⁶ Richard Master and James Lee retired from Smyrna to London before September 1765 when they are found sitting on the Board of the RWLC. “Turla” in modern Turkish appears to mean “tour”: I can only surmise that in this context it meant surrounding grounds.

⁵⁷ Boudja. This must be the first example of what became later a general custom of building houses in the country to retire to in summer and times of sickness.

⁵⁸ He later married and at least one of his children, Joseph, was born in Smyrna.

⁵⁹ Cambridge graduate. He became a Fellow there in 1762, so presumably had left Smyrna by then. Until 1782 the Chaplain lived at the Consul's house, the Consul being entitled to an addition amount to pay for his food and board (Wood, *op.cit.*, p.223).

⁶⁰ A graduate of Edinburgh University, he had recently married Maria Gracia Robin, a Frenchwoman.

⁶¹ Widow of Henry Bobbit, merchant. His name last appeared in Assembly Minutes was November 21, 1757.

⁶² He had been acting as Cancellier, *pro.tem.* until the arrival of George Boddington. He had been born in Ripon,

Richard Young Esq. bachelor, Hanoverian subject, without any possessions, resident 1 year
 Mr. Robert Farrar scrivan, bachelor, without any possessions, resident 4 years
 Mr. John Charnaud,⁶³ scrivan, married to a Frank Woman, without any possessions, resident 7 years
 Mr. Joseph Franel, scrivan, bachelor, without any possessions, resident 4 years⁶⁴
 Mr. William Boyd, bachelor, watchmaker, without any possessions, resident 1 year⁶⁵
 John Lark, bachelor, servant, without any possessions, resident 7 years
 John Reilly, bachelor, boatman, without any possessions, resident 7 years.
 A hospital belonging to the English Nation for sailors in times of sickness
 A burial ground, walled in.

It is interesting to see the distinction made between “established merchant” and “scrivan”. The latter title meant slightly more than (literally) a clerk, but was someone who had the legal capacity to do business for his principal – and to use the principal's money to do so. They seem, however, to have no right to be present at meetings of any Assembly of the English Nation until, as both John Charnaud⁶⁶ and William Maltass⁶⁷ did, they later took the oath to become Levant Company merchants in their own right.

Obviously the floating population of those under British protection in Smyrna changed frequently. Possibly one of the most interesting was Edward Wortley Montagu who had taken a house there in 1769.⁶⁸

With some later arrivals such as Francis Burgoin⁶⁹ and John Bryer,⁷⁰ these people would, at the start of William's time in Smyrna, have formed the nucleus of his social as well as his business life. The fact that he would be trading in competition with the other merchants could not be allowed to interfere with friendly relations. And he certainly would have received a friendly welcome from all his fellow Europeans – there were not so many of them that they would have been anything but delighted to welcome an eligible bachelor at their dinners and amusements. There is mention of the Dutch families of De Hochpied and Van Lennep in the Assembly Minutes. Even where their respective countries were at war, personal relations had to continue on an overtly friendly footing, in spite of the French merchants in general being blamed for all kinds of double dealing for their own advancement over the years! To be fair, this jealousy of French merchants did have some real basis: France was a recognised long-term ally of the Ottomans, they received French Government trade subsidies, and had exemptions from some customs duties enforced on other nations.

Samuel Crawley and his wife had a number of children born in Smyrna, as did George Boddington (he and his wife, the former Miss Glicofredi, had eleven) Dr. Andrew Turnbull, married to Maria Gracia Robin, also had children. Clearly there was plenty of civilising family life around.

The presence of families in the Factory led naturally to a desire for a permanent chaplain's presence to officiate at baptisms, marriages and burials which had not always been found in earlier years. The spiritual needs of the British families were centred on the chapel in the Consul's house. By the middle of 1767 the Rev. Mr. Brown had been replaced by the Rev. Beveridge Clendon who had

Yokshire and was the founder of one of the major Smyrna “dynasties”.

⁶³ According to a descendant [*levantineheritage.com*] he was of Huguenot descent.

⁶⁴ He married an Englishwoman, Maria Pritchard, in 1774.

⁶⁵ His talents were used in the provision of “presents” for Turkish officials where money was deemed inappropriate.

⁶⁶ July 15, 1762.

⁶⁷ January 5, 1763.

⁶⁸ SP 110/87. Ambassador Murray to Consul Hayes. Edward was Lady Mary's child who received her newly discovered inoculation against smallpox

⁶⁹ Took the oath November 11, 1760.

⁷⁰ Took the oath September 26, 1760.

arrived to find the chapel in a sad state of disrepair, with no curtains for the windows, no lock for the door, no cloth for the communion table and not even “a stool for him to kneel upon.” Perhaps conscious of their neglect, the Gentlemen of the Factory agreed to deal with these matters expeditiously – though, naturally, with the usual frugality.⁷¹ Mr. Clendon visited Istanbul at one point and was described by ambassador Murray as being possibly “the best and most orthodox Divine in the world. Wearing the long gown is quite needless, for if he was clothed in scarlet, I could swear to his profession.”⁷² He was certainly an active new broom, later requesting that the burial ground be weeded and repaired.

The presence of a physician would seem to have been equally essential for the physical health of the Factory as a chaplain for its spiritual health, but, unlike the chaplain who received a salary from the Levant Company, the doctor was independent, presumably charging for his services to earn his keep. It may well be that he treated anyone who sought his services, rather than confining his skills to the English Factory, thus giving him a better and wider understanding of the local community.

The bachelors, of course, had access to more robust lifestyles. In 1743 Alexander Drummond wrote home to his brother mentioning, being introduced by Consul Crawley at an “assembly” or dance where “the ladies are all natives of the country”. By “native” he meant Greek or Armenian. Franks were forbidden to marry subjects of the Sublime Porte, but possibly informal liaisons existed. He did not envy the men their restricted lifestyles:

As there is no spot of ground which can be used as a walk, the English and Dutch gentlemen have no pleasure but within doors, unless when they can find leisure to spend a day in hunting. A game of cards in the evening, and a cheerful glass after supper, are their chief amusements.

The gentlemen did have other hobbies; some collected coins or local artefact. William Barker seems to have been interested in the collection of butterflies, which he sent back to London as a matter of interest to others.⁷³

Good evidence of the multicultural nature of Frank social life in Smyrna comes in the details of William Barker's marriage in 1763 to Flora Robin “French subject born in Smyrna”, who was the sister-in-law of Dr. Andrew Turnbull, a Scot and the English Nation’s physician. In the absence of a Church of England chaplain, the marriage was conducted by the Lutheran Minister, Christophoro Guigliumo Luduke “according to the rites of the Church of England.”

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE⁷⁴

To understand William Barker's life as a merchant in Smyrna it is necessary to have a basic understanding of how the Ottoman Empire operated. The Empire was already beginning its slow decline by the middle of the eighteenth century, yet it was still huge, stretching from the Balkans to North Africa, encompassing many different religions and nationalities. The famed tolerance of the Empire allowed the Porte to consider the European traders as guests – guests who sometimes forgot

⁷¹ SP 105/337, p.92.

⁷² SP 110/87.

⁷³ “There is no necessity for disp[laying] the wings of the butterflies and moths in that manner [pinning] you did . . . they need only be stuck through the body with a pin and in that manner sent over.” Letter from Dru Drury to William Barker, March 1766. *Letterbook*, p. 71. Natural History Museum, London.

⁷⁴ Anyone who wishes to understand the beginnings of British trade with the Levant and the early relations between the merchants and the Ottoman Empire need only read Alfred C. Wood's comprehensive book.

their manners, perhaps, and had to be reprimanded, but guests nonetheless. The Europeans, of course, did not see the relationship in this light at all; the Turks were brutish infidels with whom it was better to have as little dealings as possible. At least until the end of the century, what doings the ambassador in Constantinople did have with the Sublime Porte was, besides protecting the capitulations,⁷⁵ merely to maintain as reasonable relations as possible in order to protect British commercial interests, i.e. he was more a consul writ large than a diplomat.

Beneath the ambassador at Constantinople came in the hierarchy of the Levant Company the consuls and pro-consuls at the other trading ports, the most important being Smyrna and Aleppo. The British Consul at Smyrna (Anthony Hayes), who had been resident in Smyrna for over twenty years by 1787 sent home at the request of the British Government a report of the state of Turkish rule in the area. He felt able to state that “the number of inhabitants residing in Smyrna according to the best information attainable consists of about 140,000 including women and children of which there are 30,000 Greeks, 4,500 Armenians & 1500 Jews.” He did not mention the number of European residents, presumably because there were so few. There is little indication that anything significant, apart from an increase of movement from country to city, had changed in the quarter century or so since William Barker arrived there. Indeed the organs of government seem to have remained the same for at least the past two centuries.⁷⁶

Hayes begins by describing the rule of the city itself:

The Government of the City of Smyrna is committed to the care and management of a *Molla* [mullah] and a *Vaivode* [the mullah's deputy] both of them appointed by the *Ulema* or Turkish Clergy before whom all matters relating to religion or law, whether of a civil or a criminal nature, are heard and finally determined; but in doubtful or intricate points it is a *Fetfa* [fatwah] or written opinion of the *Mufti*, as being the interpreter of the true spirit and meaning of the laws which usually influences the determination of the Judge. This magistrate's employ to which he is seldom promoted before 20 years of service in other inferior towns of the Grand Signor's Dominions is calculated to render him during a Lunar Year of Office the sum of \$75,000 clear profit equivalent to £7,500 sterling. On all decisions concerning litigated property the said *Molla* is entitled to 10% of the sum decreed in favour of the party who gains the cause. This Magistrate is seldom changed before the expiration of his time without there are some strong and clear proofs against him concerning his corrupt administration of justice or other serious complaints of his unwarrantable abuse of power.

The *Vaivode* or *Musselim* [Mosselem] who is the second governing officer here purchases his employ from the Ottoman Porte and in the term of 12 lunar months, and if he is desirous of being confirmed in his Office on the same terms. His business is to assist and cooperate with the *Molla* in whatever has a tendency to maintain order and tranquillity in the City and adjacent parts in which he is vigilant by causing his officers and guards to patrol the town at regulated hours and whenever necessary accompanying them himself, being authorised to imprison, chastise or fine all persons guilty of riots and other misdemeanours. His Office is usually purchased for the sum of \$200,000 or £21,000 sterling.

There [are] also . . . the offices of *Haratchgee* or Collector of the Poll Tax and that of *Beitemalgee* [his deputy]. The former produces about the sum of \$118,000 levied on the male Christian subjects of the Grand Signor [Sultan] and the latter office entitles him when a family is entirely extinct and there are no relations to appropriate the property that remains to his own use. He has also the disposal of several subordinate offices which altogether is computed to render him exclusive of all expenses a clear annual profit of \$35,000 or 3,500 sterling. The General Council of the City summoned on any extraordinary occasion is composed of the

⁷⁵ These, according to Wood, *op.cit.*, p.8, were based on the terms of an alliance between France and Suleiman the Magnificent in 1535. They provided guarantees for the safety of English merchants and their goods in Turkey, etc. and included the right that, if they were imprisoned, they were to be immediately released. Needless to say, the Capitulations could only be enforced so long as the Porte in Constantinople was prepared to see that they were, which in practice meant what the Qadi could be bribed to enforce.

⁷⁶ See Suleymnan Demirci, Ph.D. Thesis 2001. *The functioning of Ottoman avariz taxation: an aspect of the relationship between centre and periphery.*

Molla, Vaivode, Serdar or Chief Officer of the *Jannisarys*, the Chief Officer of each of the two Custom Houses, the *Mufti* [Mufti] and a few of the principal men belonging to the most ancient and reputable families amongst the Turk citizens, all of whom give their opinion and vote in the matters referred to their consideration.

The countryside is much depopulated by the extortions and oppressions of the numerous *Agas* appointed to the Government of extensive districts which include many small towns and villages and who levy greater taxes on the inhabitants than are legally due and form many unjust demands against which violence they generally find it so difficult to obtain redress that it obliges great numbers of the industrious and lower class of people to sell and abandon their dwellings and landed property for to seek protection and employment in or near the capital towns where they are less liable to such ill-treatment and which in fact proceeds from the *Agas'* purchasing their offices annually at Constantinople from Government and which are usually granted to the highest bidder and therefore it induces them to commit acts of power & injustice to reimburse themselves the money given for their Employ and to acquire what they deem a reasonable compensation for their maintenance and trouble. This impolitic system greatly discourages the subjects from making improvements in agriculture & pursuing such other useful occupations that would prove beneficial to themselves and the state. Great numbers of people have of late years emigrated here from the Morea⁷⁷ through the tyranny and oppression of their Governors most of whom have met with employ and good encouragement from the proprietors of the grounds where cotton is planted in this neighbourhood and immense riches have been accumulated by the great demands for that article. It is reckoned that from about 5 months of the year \$150,000 or £15,000 sterling every week is sent from the City to the adjacent parts for the purchase of cottons exported to different parts of Europe which afterwards weekly diminishes until the next crop. The annual exportation from here calculated in years of plenty to amount to about 60,000 bales. The Custom House duties are received here by two officers or Collectors appointed for that purpose by the Grand Customer at Constantinople. One of them collects the duties on merchandise exported and imported to and from the different parts of Turkey and also receives the duty payable on Goods exported to Christendom. He purchases in farms his employ for about the sum of \$230,000 and is reckoned to gain by it annually about \$2,700 net profit. The other Customer who is only an agent or Deputy for the Chief Customer at Constantinople receives all the duties on goods and effects imported from Christendom which are calculated to amount annually to \$85,000. He is allowed a salary for his expenses and attendance and fixed salaries are assigned to the clerks and servants who are not allowed fees.⁷⁸

Obviously for the merchants of Smyrna the question of customs tariffs was of major importance. The rates had for years been steady, so steady that the European merchants believed that they had been enshrined in the Capitulations. It was a considerable shock, therefore when an Assembly of the English Nation in May 1763 was informed by Consul Hayes that a command had been received from the Chief Customs Officer from Constantinople, empowering him to

annul the ancient tariff of custom paid here on the exports of manufacturies of this country and to authorise him in future to exact the customs on the valuation of the goods at the current prices they shall be declared worth at the time of shipping, to ascertain which the goods must be unpacked which will occasion a constant scene of disorder & embroil, and prove very inconvenient. And after all the Customer will doubtless find a means to have the goods esteemed above their real value & consequently prove very detrimental to our trade.

The Gentlemen of the English Factory were incensed. Probably as much because it appears that goods were generally estimated "at much below their real value" as because it was an attack on the Capitulations. Their immediate reaction was to request the Consul to write to the Ambassador in Constantinople to get the command countermanded. The result was a minatory letter from the Ambassador at Constantinople, Henry Grenville, to the Consul: the matter

must be handled with delicacy, with dexterity and address. A high tone must spoil all. You must lend yourselves to it with all the complacency of temper and moderation possible. Some accommodation must be made, some sort of Tariff must be established. A Custom House without a Tariff is a Monster in Nature; Commerce without it cannot subsist. Do not imagine (as you seem to do, but vainly) that a tariff can be settled here. It is no part of an Ambassador's function. It is as much out of our province as it is out of our knowledge . .

⁷⁷ The Peloponese peninsula in what is now southern Greece.

⁷⁸ SP 105/337, pp 184-6.

It is a duty of your office and within your sphere of action.

He goes on that they will not get any help from him, nor anything done,

unless perhaps draw some very unpleasant and disagreeable answer from the Grand Signor. He will naturally tell us, 'here is no infraction of capitulations, nothing demanded but the Three per Cent. What do the Ambassadors complain of? Do they murmur at my officer collecting that, or my forbidding them at my peril to take more? I have nothing to do with tariffs.'⁷⁹

It was a hard lesson to accept. The Ambassador's salary was paid by the Levant Company, but he wisely preferred to avoid dissension with the Porte at whose mercy he lived in freedom. In view of there being no help coming from Constantinople, two merchants were appointed to consult with delegates from the other Frank Nations, then with the local Customs Officer and eventually come to a solution. The dispute dragged on for some while until new detailed tariffs were agreed between the Grand Customer in Constantinople and the Frank Nations – the latter being forced to agree to considerable increases in the duty payable on most items.⁸⁰

Hayes, strangely, does not mention the office of *Cadi*. This was the local official with whom the most frequent dealings of the foreign merchants took place, and who seems to be the one to be approached first in matters of urgency in cases of dispute. For example there was the case of Mr. Joseph Santi, “a respected English Merchant and lately under the English protection”, who had been arrested in Frank Street by an Albanian in March 1758 “without previous notice being given to his Consul by the *Cadi*” and put into stocks and irons. The foreign factories were all extremely careful that their privileges, guaranteed under the capitulations, were adhered to by the Turkish authorities and all of them were prepared to contribute to the expenses (“presents” or bribes as they were) of the effort to get Mr. Santi released.⁸¹

The *Cadi* also seemed to be the official who passed on “commands” from the Sultan, and who could give permission for the relaxation of Turkish laws in favour of the Frank Nations. In order to do business with local traders and foreign merchants the English Nation employed essential trusted *druggermen* [dragomans] who were basically translators both for documents, for delivering and receiving messages from Ottoman officials and, of course dealing with local tradesmen such as builders. When a new command was received from Constantinople⁸² which prohibited anyone being employed in the service of the Franks except *Baratlis*⁸³ “of which”, stated the Consul, “we have only two, one of whom is very old and infirm and the other quite infirm through age and sickness,” the Consul proposed to the *Cadi* to permit their *Giovanni de Linguao*,⁸⁴ Sig. Paolo Homere & Sig. Giovanni Masterachi who were not *Baratlis* “to assist in transacting the business of Nation”. The *Cadi* refused unless he were given \$100 when he would then promise the requisite protection from the force of the new law. It is clear that whenever these “presents” were required, the English Consul conferred with the Consuls of the other Nations to make sure that they all gave the same amounts. Whatever other commercial disputes between the English and the French and Dutch Nations, and even whether or not their countries were at war, it was in everyone's interest to

⁷⁹ SP 105/337, p. 37.

⁸⁰ Old and new tariffs are set out in SP 105/337, pp. 52-6 .

⁸¹ SP 105/37, p.6. Before the Franks could get an authorisation from the Quadi to free Mr. Santi, he had been dragged off to Constantinople for trial and there is no evidence of his final fate.

⁸² SP 105/137, p. 38

⁸³ A *Baratli* was an Honorary Dragoman recognised by the Turkish authorities. According to Wood, *op.cit*, p.148, they had patents of protection, but still had to be careful about the messages they carried for fear of punishment by the Ottoman authorities if these were not sufficiently subservient in tone.

⁸⁴ A translator, useful, though not officially recognised, who was still training to become fluent in Turkish.

maintain an united front in these matters.⁸⁵

In the matter of keeping the peace there were the *janisseries*, soldiers recruited from all over the Ottoman Empire, who also acted as armed guards to foreign nationals. Their job was not an easy one in a City where there were residents of any number of different nationalities and of several religions. These differences seem to have given regular rise to local disturbances, although the Ottoman government was itself supremely tolerant. A Presbyterian missionary from America, Pliny Fisk, who visited Smyrna in 1821, describes a not atypical sudden uprising he encountered on his return from a visit to Ephesus:

We had scarcely entered the part of the town where the Turks reside when, on a sudden, we saw the people around us in motion, and in a very few minutes the street was filled with armed Turks. It was impossible to learn the cause of it and were all in arms. Another said the Franks (i.e. the Europeans) had taken arms against the Turks. A third said they were going to attack the French ship of War. We could not learn the truth and were not a little alarmed. Flight was impossible and resistance would be utterly vain in case of danger . . . Mustapha, our Janissary, took us immediately to the headquarters of the regiment of Janisseries to which he belonged till all became quiet, and we then proceeded on our way to Frank Street.⁸⁶

Next in importance to the *Cadi* from the point of view of the Smyrna merchants was naturally the *Captain Pasha*, the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman Empire, who had to be regularly kept sweet by means of his “usual presents”, regularly requested when he brought the Turkish fleet into Smyrna. This was obviously quite a formal occasion with expressions of appreciation and goodwill on both sides: one year when the *Captain Pasha* and his fleet did not come, but merely sent a message by dragoman for his presents, the British were horrified at what they saw as an insult. Only the fact that the other Nations agreed to pay, brought them to accept the situation.

All these questions of dealing with the Ottoman officials were noted in the Minutes of the frequent meetings of the Assemblies of the English nations. Occasionally something was thought too important for a local decision (usually some matter of money) and referred to the Board of the Levant Company in London – a matter, of course, leading to considerable delay in reaching a conclusion. The usual time for an exchange of letters from a Turkish factory to London was “four to five months, and even this could not be relied upon.”⁸⁷ Even matters which had to be referred to the Ambassador in Constantinople took time to be dealt with; until 1776 messages were sent via the *Sei Bashi* (Chief Postmaster) on foot.⁸⁸ Most problems, however, seem to have been settled by discussion and a unanimous decision of the members. We cannot know how difficult these discussions sometimes were (and they were clearly not always unanimous), but the problems needing to be solved seem themselves to have come with tiresome frequency.

THE EARLY YEARS

⁸⁵ Wood, *op.cit.*, p.148. The Ambassadors at Constantinople had no such desire. The French Ambassador, particularly, took care to foment trouble with the Porte over activities of English privateers in the Mediterranean.

⁸⁶ *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 17, 1821, p. 158. It was in fact a Greek uprising which had caused the trouble.

⁸⁷ Wood, *op.cit.*, p. 229.

⁸⁸ SP 105/337. Sending post via horsemen was a method instigated by the French merchants and cost more to fund.

Fig. 4: A caravan approaching Smyrna Harbour



Reading George Boddington's beautifully written minutes of the English Nation's assemblies, interspersed with notes of the ships loading and unloading at Smyrna, it is difficult to understand exactly the difficulties experienced by this little band of expatriates perched precariously on the edge of one of the great empires. Apart from the odd adjective which creeps in to describe disaster and the frustration which comes off the page in accounts of the tortuous dealings with local officials, there is nothing to give the reader a true understanding of what they and their families had to deal with and how they coped with it all.

However, William Barker's domestic life seems to have been happy. Children arrived in quick succession: Sarula (Sarah) in 1764, Thomas John in 1765, William, 1768, Gracia (Grace) in 1769, John (Jack) in 1771, Robert in 1772 and, finally, George in 1774. From the point of view of prosperity, however, matters must have improved only slowly. The loosening of membership rules, which did lead to an increase in merchant numbers, did not mean that the majority went to live in the Levant; the trade continued to be centred in London.⁸⁹ Even the ending of the Seven Years War in 1763 did not see an immediate increase in trade with Smyrna.

In the year that William Barker arrived there, 1760, only eight ships' captains took the Levant Company's oath to "give in true manifests" at Smyrna, as they were required to do.⁹⁰ In 1761 there were only three. According to Wood⁹¹ the average annual imports and exports (to the whole of the Levant) for the years 1754-63 were £130,028 and £71,337 respectively. On this, besides the customs duties imposed by the Turks, there was "consulage" charged at 4% on imports and 7% on exports. This "consulage" had not only to pay the salaries of the local Levant Company officials, but maintain the hospital and the fire service as well as providing "presents" to Turkish officials as

⁸⁹ A letter to Thomas Ashby at Galata, Constantinople in 1779 mentions for the first time a ship sailing from Liverpool, SP 110, p. 36. Thomas Ashby married William Barker's sister, Suttonia in 1767.

⁹⁰ The *Shardeloes* seems to have managed the voyage twice.

⁹¹ *op.cit.*, p.141.

and when they were deemed necessary.⁹² Occasionally there were also expenses necessitated by the charitable duty to look after indigent British subjects, usually sailors, sick or shipwrecked, who had to be treated, maintained and given a passage home.

That the money raised from the trade⁹³ was insufficient for these necessary expenditures in these years is clear. In December 1762 the Treasurer was obliged to borrow from Messrs. Master, Lee & Bergoin for three months the sum of \$2,500 with interest of 10% p.a. In March 1763 he had to raise a further \$2,000 in zelotes from Company members, Messrs. Lee, White and Maltass, and \$2,000 from Messrs. Master, Lee & Bergoin, again at 10% interest. To reduce expenses the pilot was discharged. Some of this loan was needed for repairs to the hospital and William Barker was one of the merchants charged with the task of taking a master builder and translator to the site to make an estimate of the money needed. "Frugality" is the word always used in connection with the need for repairs; and so often does this need arise, one can only presume that the task could have been done rather better and more lastingly with a little more expenditure. But perhaps that is a simplistic view: maybe the dangers of fire and earthquake meant the merchants thought a long view of such affairs was quite without merit. On this occasion the repairs to the hospital would come to \$40, that is, very approximately, £4.

At the same time as trade was proving so slow, there came the matter of the increase in Turkish customs duties which has been mentioned in the previous chapter. William Maltass and John Charnaud were chosen to negotiate with the French, Dutch and Venetian Nations so that they could approach the Chief Customer with united proposals for a new tariff. It was accepted that some upward change was inevitable and required some "present" from them all at an agreed amount to achieve even that concession. The English Nation Deputies were worried about the eventually proposed settlement since it would mean a considerable increase in the amount which had to be paid. It is interesting that the French were prepared to agree to it, whether or not the other Nations would follow their lead, presumably either because their trade was so prosperous that the increase would make little difference to their profits or because they relied on the French government to subsidise it. However, what had to be done was done. Apparently the outcome was not as bad as had been feared and the Jewish brokers who had helped achieve a settlement were awarded an additional *aggi*" or extra perquisite on top of their normal $3\frac{1}{3}\%$.⁹⁴ What all the Frank Nations firmly refused to do was to pay off the Customer who was apparently asking them for \$3,000 for settling the Tariff.⁹⁵

According to Wood,⁹⁶ "the Jews "farmed the taxes for the Turks, especially the customs; they were the bankers to whom the Franks had recourse when they had to borrow to pay an *avania*,⁹⁷ and it was with the Jewish middle-man, not with the Turkish customer, that the English merchant usually conducted his trade." It certainly looks as if they were about to be needed by the English Nation. At the same Assembly Meeting on June 11th, 1763, the Treasurer, having stated that he needed a loan of \$1,500, was told by the gentlemen present that "they had no money to lend; the Treasurer was

⁹² SP 105/337, p.34. It was noted that the newly-appointed Qadi was given a gold watch, valued at \$150, and 2 silver watches and other items to the value of \$120 to other lesser officials.

⁹³ SP 105/337, pp.61-2. The "broke" on imports was given here as 20%.

⁹⁴ SP 105/337, p.40.

⁹⁵ SP 105/337, pp. 52-56 sets out the old and the new customs duties payable. For white cotton yarn, for example, the proposed duty rose from 60c per *kintal* (or *quintal*, equalling 100lb. weight) to \$1.20, but the ratified tariff raised it instead to \$1; coloured cotton thread rose from \$1.20 to \$2.60, rather than to \$3.

⁹⁶ *op.cit.*, p.214.

⁹⁷ A tax, especially an extortionate one, levied by the Turkish authorities.

desired to procure it from foreigners.”⁹⁸ Things must have been at a very low ebb indeed for William Barker, if even the best established English merchants in Smyrna had no surplus cash to offer.

Whether the Sublime Porte was particularly in need of money at this time or whether the Customers were just flexing their muscles again after the success with the new Tariff, a further problem soon arose.⁹⁹ Normally goods imported into Smyrna could be sent anywhere else in the Ottoman Empire without further duties being paid, so long as the Customer had provided a *tiscaree* or passport for them. Apparently Maltass, Charnaud and Bergoin had dispatched merchandise to Salonica only to hear that the Customer there said he had had a command from Constantinople authorising him to charge duty on any goods coming from Smyrna. The gentlemen of the English Nation were incensed – not to mention very suspicious. They insisted that a dragoman be sent off to Constantinople to get a copy of this alleged command and a further command to reclaim the unjustified customs duties charged at Salonica. This dispute seems to have become mired in objections and denials from both the Customer and the *Cadi* and there seems no favourable resolution of the dispute noted in the Minutes of subsequent Assemblies; presumably Customers at other ports could henceforth exact dues on goods imported from Smyrna.

When it might have seemed impossible that things could get any worse for this small band of traders and their families, a really terrible fire broke out. This fire, which started on the 6th of August 1763, lasted all of twenty-six hours:

By the English consul's account, not a merchant's or consul's house is left standing except his own, and that not entirely, nor without suffering great damage. Even their magazines, the repositories of all their various merchandise (which had hitherto been looked upon as fireproof) burnt through the intense violence of the flames. The scene of desolation is on all sides terrible. The loss sustained is reckoned, by a gross computation, at a million and a half Turkish dollars, or near £2,000.¹⁰⁰

Many local people and two Franks apparently lost their lives. Others were fortunate in being able to escape via the nearby wharves out to safety at sea. The loss and disruption, though great, appear from the records to have been stoically dealt with. The Chancellor's house “being consumed so suddenly that he had scarce time to save the lives of himself and family, being obliged to abandon his whole furniture, wearing apparel and other things of value to the fury of the flames, was now “destitute of windows, walls, etc. in some places” This house was leased at \$700 p.a. from Mr. John Homere, and it was felt it should fall to be repaired at the landlord's expense; he should also be responsible for paying off the Turks who had assisted in preventing further damage.¹⁰¹ However the *janissaries* who had assisted generally in fire-fighting and those who were employed to work the fire engine which was now “greatly damaged” and in need of repair had to paid out of the Levant Company's revenue.¹⁰² Since the repairs to the Cancellaria were urgent, money again had to be borrowed from foreigners. On top of this the Hospital had also suffered damage. The gentlemen of the English Nation, “considering their present desperate state since the Fire in being obliged to have their houses and warehouses in different parts of the city and dreading the ill consequences which may attend it should any accident of the Plague happen to them and they have no place to send a sick person to”, repairs to the hospital had to be done “with all possible despatch.”¹⁰³ Parts of

⁹⁸ SP 105/337, pp.41-2.

⁹⁹ SP 105/337, p.40.

¹⁰⁰ *The London Magazine, or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, Vol. 42, pp. 563-4

¹⁰¹ This decision and its consequences rumbled on for many months, with landlord Homere continually finding reasons for delay.

¹⁰² SP 105/337, p. 44. The Levant Company was also to be asked to send out another fire engine for their use.

¹⁰³ SP 105/337, p. 46. Mr. John Boddington lent the Company

Smyrna must have looked like the aftermath of a war zone; wooden buildings just smouldering piles of ash and stone warehouses reduced to rubble.

Finding themselves in this depressing situation, William Barker and Valentine Humphrys might be forgiven for wondering whether it was sensible to continue in Smyrna. Presumably William's partner, John Humphrys in Constantinople, was faring better and was more optimistic. His faith seemed to be proved correct when twelve ships docked and loaded and unloaded cargoes at Smyrna during the course of 1764. On July 6th of that year, Valentine Humphreys took the oath to qualify himself as a Factor.¹⁰⁴ The oath he took was slightly different to the normal one for merchants (it included a reference to an "oath of secrecy") and he was only given freedom to trade up to the amount of \$1,000. His name does not appear in records of Assemblies, so it seems he was now a member of that lesser band of *scrivans*. On the other hand he was one of the signatories of the letter described below.

Full merchant status was accorded in October to Edward Purnell – he seems to have previously been another factor for the Radcliffe Family and resident in Latakia, rather than coming out from London.¹⁰⁵ Purnell does not seem to have stayed long in Smyrna, but it was certainly not unusual for merchants to move from one Scale [the English equivalent of Italian *scala* 'trading post'] to another as business required. Evidence of greater prosperity also came in December that year when two English merchants were able to provide a further urgent loan of \$1,000 and it was no longer necessary to have recourse to foreigners for help. With such great calls on the Levant Company's revenues, it was obviously prudent to accept an increase in the consulage to an overall 10%.¹⁰⁶

Things continued to improve: twenty-two ships reached Smyrna in 1765 and two more merchants arrived to be sworn in: Nathaniel Free and Thomas William Jolly.¹⁰⁷ Possibly just because trade *was* becoming easier again, the English merchants took another considered look at their old rivals, the French and the Dutch, whose Levant trade came, they believed, at their expense. Consul Hayes wrote a letter, signed by all the Smyrna Merchants, including William Barker and Valentine Humphrys, to the Ambassador in Constantinople, asking that their concerns be passed on to the British Government:

. . . to represent the cause which we apprehend has contributed to the decay of our trade and the methods which we conceive which may the most effectually revive and restore it in as great a degree as appears at present practicable for this purpose.¹⁰⁸

They were all agreed that some of the reasons for French success were "the vast improvements of their cloth manufacture" and their "great facility of introducing into the Levant the many rich products of their American colonies" and

it cannot be denied that the light cloth, this ingenious nation has invented, so peculiarly adapted to the state of this people, and so extremely cheap withal, is now become the principal clothing & almost the only sort of cloth that finds a ready vent, insomuch that the annual consumption of it at this seale of late years notoriously augmented from about 1200 ballotts to 3,000 or 3200 ballotts and proportionately at the other markets in the Levant.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ SP 105/337, p. 64.

¹⁰⁵ See Radcliffe Family papers in Hertfordshire Archives.

¹⁰⁶ SP 105/337, p.71.

¹⁰⁷ A John Free, presumably a relative, sat on the Board of the RWLC in London.; a Thomas William Jolly "late of Threadneedle St., London, merchant and insurance broker" was made bankrupt Feb. 28, 1798 (National Archives).

¹⁰⁸ SP 105/337, p. 70.

¹⁰⁹ SP 105/337, p.71. A ballot was a small bale of 70 – 120 lbs.

Efforts had been made by traders and manufacturers to produce a rival cloth in England, but it had proved impossible.¹¹⁰ There was not much that could easily be done about these matters, but what should – and could - be easily addressed was the difference in quarantine regulations which were disadvantageous to the English. In the Levant the quarantine period was forty days from the cessation of the plague; in the *lazarettos* of Malta, Leghorn, Genoa, etc. where vessels frequently called to load and unload on the way to Turkey, they might find themselves detained for considerably longer periods should plague visit while they were in port. The letter continues:

The French, the Venetians and Italians have proper *lazarettos* and under salutary regulations perform quarantines, admitting ships from Turkey with foul as well as clean bills of health; and the Dutch who have no *lazarettos* in Holland, yet admit ships at all times to lay quarantines in the Texal and the Meuse.¹¹¹

What the Levant merchants wanted was a quarantine station in England. The idea had been originally mooted unsuccessfully in the House of Commons in 1752 and this time, in response to the plea, the money for it (£5,000) was actually voted¹¹² - though nothing in the end came of it since it was argued that the Levant trade was insufficient to justify such an expense. The Levant merchants found themselves caught in a vicious decreasing spiral: less trade, less money to improve it; less improvement, less trade. The problem was very slightly ameliorated in 1771 when an Act of Parliament allowed raw silk and mohair yarn loaded without a clean bill of health to be imported into England after being quarantined in Malta, Ancona, Venice, Messina, Leghorn, Genoa or Marseilles. However, even in 1791 the problem was still causing concern. John Howard on his travels wrote:

On finding three English ships performing a long and tedious quarantine at Malta, it occurred to me that a *lazaretto* in England might save time and expense, and for this reason prove an advantage to our commerce. I therefore consulted on the subject our consuls at Zante and Smyrna, Chancellor Boddington and several intelligent and respectable merchants, and requested they would give me their opinions . . .

The merchants (including William Barker) wrote back that they were “as much persuaded that the want of a *lazaretto* in England has been the cause of the Turkey trade not being, till now, more worth the notice of government.”¹¹³

Since the Levant Company's Regulations forbade the importation of bullion and bills of exchange, they were reliant on selling their imports for prices that would enable them to purchase Turkish produce for export. Not only were the other Nations able to trade in cash as the Turks much preferred, without factoring in to their prices the additional duty for consulage, they were able to put aside actual specie “in chests” for emergencies. The English Nations humbly submitted that:

whether it would not be a national advantage to prohibit the importation of every commodity of the growth of Turkey but from the usual ports or places of loading them in the Grand Signior's dominions in English ships.

They believed that this would not be considered an unreasonable restraint of trade, since anyone Christian,¹¹⁴ British or foreign, could pay to become a member of the Levant Company. However, opposition to the Levant Company's monopoly was increasingly in England. In Parliament Lord Sandys put the argument succinctly: “monopolizers will always make great profits both upon what they buy and what they sell; that is the true cause of the decay of our Turkey trade . . . If there had

¹¹⁰ Ambrose, G. “English Traders at Aleppo”, *Economic History Review*, Oct. 1931, pp. 248-9

¹¹¹ The other Nations are accused of their usual dirty tricks – spreading false reports of the plague to hamper British shipping.

¹¹² It was never built.

¹¹³ John Howard, FRS, *op.cit*, p. 26.

¹¹⁴ Jews were unable to take up freedom of the City of London.

been no monopoly of our Turkey trade the French would never have thought of, much less succeeded, in becoming our rivals.”¹¹⁵ That was in 1744 in the last days of the “pashas” who managed to amass vast wealth in the Levant. The idea of “great profits” being made on the earlier scale would have seemed a joke to the writers of the letter twenty years later, but the prejudice against the Levant Company and its now illusory monopoly continued.

The British Government did what governments do: it put off any decision and asked for facts to back up the contention that goods were being traded elsewhere. The merchants had obviously kept excellent up-to-date accounts for this purpose; the details requested were sent off almost as soon as the demand arrived. They listed the imports and exports from Smyrna to Marseilles for four years previously; similarly imports and exports to Leghorn (Livorno), exports to Ancona, imports and exports to and from Venice, imports and exports to Holland.¹¹⁶

On February 14th 1766 William Barker took over the post of Treasurer at Smyrna for the following two years. It was a paid post – did he appreciate the extra money? If he did, it was not to be paid to him for long. A note in the Assembly records dated October 9th, 1766, states that because

his affairs requiring his immediate departure for Cairo . . . has therefore by a power of attorney . . . transferred and made over his said office of Treasurer to Mr. Valentine Humphreys his apprentice.¹¹⁷

Barker seems to have been away from Smyrna from then on until sometime between an Assembly in July of that year and the next one in May 1767. This visit may have had something to do with the revival of trade in that port similar to that in Smyrna;¹¹⁸ and an appointment of a Vice-Consul (though not British) was made there by the British Ambassador the following year,¹¹⁹ but at this point there was no British merchant with standing should a dispute with the Ottoman authorities have arisen. According to Sarah Searight¹²⁰ the traveller, James Bruce, “was horrified to find [in 1768] no British merchants in Egypt and French merchants handling the small amount of British trade.”

This visit to Cairo is the first intimation found about the nature of his business affairs. Apparently John Humphrys, William Barker's partner in Constantinople, “was the first who . . . imagined that English shalloons might be sold in Constantinople,”¹²¹ so possibly they were concerned primarily with the wool trade. According to one writer¹²² Cairo was the principal centre of cloth production possibly in the entire Arab world, manufacturing and finishing woollen cloth of all kinds. It must have been something unexpected, however, to take him away from Smyrna at this point from his new post as Treasurer, which would have been an honour conferred by his seniority and the respect in which he was held. He was succeeded as Treasurer in April 1768 by William Maltass, another long-serving Smyrna merchant.

On a personal level there must have been much discussion at home as well as among the merchants about the decision of Dr. Andrew Turnbull, William Barker's brother-in-law, to invest in land in East

¹¹⁵ Debate on the bill “for enlarging and regulating the trade to the Levant Seas”.

¹¹⁶ SP 105/337, pp. 75-83. The items were listed by weight/bale etc., not by value, so it is not possible to quantify any fall, though fall there clearly was.

¹¹⁷ As temporary Treasurer Humphrys sat in on Assembly meetings – and continued to do so even after Barker's return.

¹¹⁸ *op.cit.*, p.166.

¹¹⁹ Richard Harris, the last Consul in Egypt had withdrawn in 1757 to live, as we have seen, in Smyrna.

¹²⁰ Sarah Searight, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

¹²¹ *Philosophical Magazine*, 1799, Some Observations on British Trade in Turkey”, p.272. “Shalloons were lightweight twilled fabrics of wool or worsted”.

¹²² Marcus, Abraham, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity; Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century*, Columbia UP, 1989, p. 159.

Florida, a state which had reverted to Britain at the end of the Seven Years' War. He planned to use Greek and other immigrant settlers to cultivate the land¹²³ and he would be taking his wife and young family with him. Barker paid over £60 to be invested by him in Florida real estate. If any of the other Smyrna merchants did the same, there is no record of it, though a number of other Levant Company members in London (including William's brothers-in-law, Thomas Ashby and Thomas Dunnage) invested enthusiastically. Possibly William Barker had no real faith in the scheme succeeding and had no plans to settle his plantation, though he might have thought it would be a good investment when he got around to selling it. However, it does seem that Val Humphreys took an especial interest and actually followed Turnbull to East Florida. On September 24th, 1769, writing from New Smyrna to Sir William Duncan in London, Dr. Turnbull mentions that he has sent him a letter "by Mr. Humphreys who came with me from Smyrna to take a look at this country." 124 Perhaps Val Humphreys came back to William Barker with the depressing but accurate conclusion that a great deal of money would have to be spent to settle his plantation and that without expectation of return in the short term.

It is in connection with Dr. Turnbull's affairs that we know William Barker had set up a commercial house in Leghorn (Livorno).¹²⁵ Presumably he did enough business there to warrant the enterprise. Having such a business in an important port not covered by the regulations of the Levant Company also meant that he could deal in specie and bills of exchange when doing business there.

Meanwhile the economic situation in Smyrna continued to improve. In July 1768 the consul reported that the Levant Company was able to reduce the consulage from 10% to 7%, calculating that that would produce sufficient income to cover salaries and necessary expenses. In 1769 nineteen ships loaded or unloaded at Smyrna. All seemed to be going reasonably smoothly in Smyrna until European politics impacted heavily on the peace and well-being - always precarious - of the city. When the Russo-Turkish War broke out there were worries in London that because the British were natural allies of the Russians some local violence might be visited on the British merchants.

The Assembly on July 23, 1770, received orders from London that they should register their debts and details of unsold goods in the Cancellaria and physically move all such goods into storage there. This last was, of course, impracticable as the Cancellaria was not fireproof whereas their specially-built fire warehouses were or should have been,¹²⁶ and this particular instruction was ignored in Smyrna as it was in Constantinople. In any case, the warnings arrived too late. The defeat of the Ottoman navy and Count Orlov's failed attempt to bring about a Greek revolt in the Morea, had the consequence of provoking on July 8th a violent and bloody Turkish uprising in Smyrna in which about 6,000 Greeks and three Franks died.¹²⁷ Additional *janisseries* had to be taken on by the English factory "for the protection of our lives and property which were threatened in a most violent and daring manner by the populace under pretence that the English had given succour to the Russians by sea and were the cause of the destruction of their fleet."¹²⁸ Additional presents were hastily sent off to the local officials to keep them sweet. As usual, the British were quick to blame the malicious-minded French:

ill-will, rancour and unjust suspicions, we perceive still remain which unfavourable impressions are

¹²³ See Appendix B.

¹²⁴ Humphreys' name does not appear in the Assembly's Minutes after January 1769 until January 1770.

¹²⁵ Andrew Turnbull to Sir William Duncan, July 11, 1772, Farrar-Duncan Archive, Dundee City Archives.

¹²⁶ SP 105/337, p. 105.

¹²⁷ *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 32, p.566. However SP 105/337, p. 107, speaks only of a massacre of "upwards of 200 innocent people cut to pieces."

¹²⁸ SP 105/337, p.106. The defeat referred to was at Chesma in July 1770.

continually fomented and nourished by the French, who render us all the ill offices possible, by officious and malicious insinuations, by translating every paragraph of news that is likely to cherish this ill-humour without ever considering that they themselves may be implicated in those bad consequences they are seeking to promote.¹²⁹

Meanwhile three British naval vessels arrived to be on standby in case of trouble: HMS *Dorsetshire*, HMS *Montreal* and HMS *Niger* all under the command of Commodore Clements. The Factory obviously hoped that they would be allowed to stay there until everything had quietened down and trade could begin again, but they were needed elsewhere. A contemporary report summarizes the swift action taken to re-establish the security of the Frank Nations:

The deputies of the several nations are returned from the Russian fleet, and by General Orlov's letter to the consuls, and what they could gather from the officers, it is almost certain that they have no intention of coming here; together with the arrival of a *Ganizaraga* (an officer of great power) who is to reside here, has restored everything to its former quiet, or rather better than before. Our nation [the British] in particular are now on a very good footing since the arrival of a *firman* . . . procured us by our ambassador, by which the Porte declares us to be their best friend and ancient allies, and commands the magistrates here to protect our persons and effects from all insults as they shall answer the contrary at their peril.¹³⁰

The war did not finally end until the middle of 1774 and the Smyrna merchants throughout this time continued to fear for their safety. HMS *Levant*, under Captain Thompson,¹³¹ which had been for some time stationed in the port, was soon after ordered back to rejoin the Mediterranean fleet, but they accepted with alacrity the offer to leave the sloop *Raven*, under Captain Affleck, there in case of further trouble. Following that, HMS *Minerva* remained in port for nearly a year.

Inevitably trade took a while to recover from these events. A request to the Levant Company for an increase in salary for the Consul, the Cancellier and the dragomans was firmly refused "for the moment" and the Factory was reduced to borrowing money from its members again. In January 1772 William Barker became Treasurer again and almost immediately his duties were increased to include the levying of a 2% consulage on all jewels, pearls and precious stones exported from Turkey or Egypt to Great Britain, thus attempting to produce the wherewithal for the requested increase in salaries. Money was urgently needed for repairs to the burial ground where the walls, including the one formed by adjacent Turkish houses, had fallen down and the door removed. In consequence "the greater part" of the grave stones had been stolen – no doubt as material for the rebuilding of the city. In no better condition was the hospital.

Trade eventually slowly improved. Alexander Clark took the Levant Company's oath in July 1772 and his arrival was followed by that of Isaac Morier in June 1773 and the transformation of Joseph Franel from *scrivan* to independent merchant in January 1775. This was followed in the May by the induction of John Jolly, Jr.

In early 1775 Ambassador John Murray was given leave of absence on account of illness¹³² and Anthony Hayes travelled to Constantinople to act as *charge d'affaires* until a new appointment could be made. In Smyrna William Barker was by a majority chosen as Pro-Consul in April 1775¹³³ In spite of his being re-elected as Treasurer in January 1776, the pro-consulship lasted until the appointment of a new ambassador and the return to Smyrna of Anthony Hayes. This appointment

¹²⁹ SP 105/337, p.107.

¹³⁰ *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 32, p.566

¹³¹ Captain Thompson had apparently been very busy entertaining local Turkish officials and was reimbursed for his trouble with a supply of "sweetmeats, coffee and liquors" to the value of \$100. SP 105/337, p.121.

¹³² He left Constantinople in May and died at Venice in August.

¹³³ SP 105/337, p. 132. His opponent was Joseph Franel.

which lasted until October 1776, would, though no-one could have guessed it, prove to be the pinnacle of William Barker's career as well as being one of the most unhappy periods of his life. On 16 December 1775 his wife, Flora, died at the age of 36, leaving behind six children, the eldest eleven and the youngest just one.

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS AND FINANCIAL DISASTER

The widower did not wait long to remarry. In November 1776 his bride, Elizabeth Mary Schnell, was just sixteen years of age, a Dutch citizen; her father Michel, was presumably another merchant. However, things did not perhaps go so smoothly in the household so far as the step-children were concerned. That was perhaps inevitable, given the ages of both children and their new “mother”, but other factors would soon come into play to make their future lives difficult. Apart from Jack and his splendid future as Consul at Aleppo and acquaintance with the great and the good, they were in some respects an unlucky family.

Plenty of ships seem to have entered the port of Smyrna in 1777¹³⁴ but this did not in itself indicate that trade was prospering. The Levant Company in London had written asking the opinion of the merchants on what should be done to prevent “itinerant merchants”¹³⁵ and captains of ships loading goods bought in Turkey on their own accounts, and not necessarily with monies raised by the sale of goods there. Certainly there had been one or two men who had taken the Oath as members of the Company in Smyrna, but then disappeared for ever from the Minutes.¹³⁶ The Factory's reply was to the effect that

we can think of no other expedients than of that, of their making an Order forbidding their Factors abroad from loading goods on board any ship commanded by a free Captain who may trade for a greater amount than what is allowed to other unfreemen captains according to the tonnage of his ship as specified in their printed regulations. And as to itinerant merchants we presume it might be prevented by the British Levant Company, that besides the usual Oath as Factors they should have resided at least 2 months on the Place before they should have permission to load any goods, giving at same time some convincing proofs of their being purchased with the produce of goods etc., etc., agreeable to the Printed Orders.

All a good deal easier said than done in such a venal country. Perhaps more interesting, however, was the list of signatories; for the first time in these records they were listed thus: “John Humphreys & Sons”, “Lee & Maltass”, “Franel & Morier” – and “William Barker”. It seems that he alone had not established a trading partnership which would allow him access to greater funds and the confidence which would come from additional support. It is difficult to know why this was. He obviously had not continued with the partnership with John Humphreys which seemed to have existed when he first came out to Smyrna; John Humphreys now appeared to deal only with his sons, Valentine in Smyrna and Henry in London. Possibly William Barker's available funds were too small to make him look a good prospect to other possible partners, or he may even have made some bad business decisions in the past which could be held against him. We may never know the truth.

Life in Smyrna went on much as usual in 1777: repairs to the hospital, repairs to the Chaplain's apartments, (expense, as usual, passed to London); Anthony Hayes returned and took up the

¹³⁴ These included the *Crown* with its Captain, Francis Werry, who was later to join the Levant Company and become Consul at Smyrna.

¹³⁵ There is evidence in the records of merchants being sworn in but never appearing at meetings, presumably having loaded a cargo and moved on to another port or back to London.

¹³⁶ For example, John Bryer appeared at only 2 Assemblies in 1760, before disappearing from the Smyrna records.

Consulship again, Val Humphrys became Treasurer for the next two years, the Captain Pasha of the Turkish fleet called on them for the usual “presents”. 1778 looked to be much the same: more repairs to the Consul’s house (the Homere family who owned it making trouble and delaying matters) and to the fire engine.¹³⁷ The alliance between The American colonies and France which was signed in February was worrying because of the possible interference with trade with England again, but such things, with the help of the Royal Navy, had been survived before.

Difficulties with the French had been simmering for some time over rival interests in Egypt which it was apparent to both sides was a strategically important stepping stone to India. The Ottoman Empire had always closed the Red Sea to Christians and their shipping, but the Porte was growing weaker and the Europeans saw their chance to establish better communications and trade routes to the east through Suez.¹³⁸ From about 1770 the British, with the connivance of the ruler of Egypt, Ali Bey, and then his successor, had tested the power of the Porte. The result was that in 1775 the English were granted by Mohammed Abou Dahab the right to sail to Suez and trade to Egypt (on the payment of certain revenues, of course). “For the next four years ships arrived annually at Suez from India and officials of the East India Company began to travel by them to Egypt.”¹³⁹ The Levant Company, was uncompromising in its opposition to this, which it saw as an attempt by the East India Company to work its way into the Ottoman trade; it also feared reprisals to its persons and property in the Ottoman Empire if the sultan’s commands were disregarded.¹⁴⁰

There was cause for celebration in the Barker household: Elizabeth Mary was pregnant with her first child. But then came calamity. Ambassador Ainslie wrote in July:

Previous to the 16th of last month some slight shocks of earthquakes had been felt here, and on the evening of that day, an exceedingly strong one happened, however happily without producing any mischief. But the shocks continued from time to time, daily, till the 3rd instant, when at half an hour after two in the morning a most violent one happened which damaged more or less a great number of buildings in the town, and threw down a Turkish mosque, where several people were killed. The consternation and terror this occasioned induced a great part of the inhabitants to retire to the neighbouring villages, gardens, etc. for safety. The next morning, amidst the repeated shocks of earthquakes, at three o’clock we had the dismal prospect of a most dreadful fire which began in the Armenian quarter of the town almost opposite to the French Consul’s house, which, being assisted by a strong northerly wind, and little water attainable upon account of the pipes being broke and choked up with earth, a consequence of the earthquakes, and the people discouraged from giving assistance by the strong shocks which threw down damaged houses and killed many, occasioned the fire to burn with most incredible fury for near twenty-four hours, consuming, it is calculated, near one-third of the city, which has occasioned a most melancholy scene of misery and desolation. The Greek Nation has suffered an immense loss of property. Armenian Jews and Turks are very great sufferers, and the city may be said almost totally ruined . . . A great part of the street inhabited by the Europeans has been destroyed, quite from the custom house to near the Capuchin convent.¹⁴¹

The *London Gazette* added a chilling coda: “It is confidently assured that the fire was occasioned by five or six Jews: one was hanged and another thrown into the fire.”

It must have been a terrible introduction to life in Smyrna for newly-arrived merchant, Peter Cazalet Jr. who took the oath on July 20th. When it seemed that things could not get worse, they did. Sir

¹³⁷ SP 105/337, p.148. London was also asked to send out another engine: “with the proper dimensions . . . a copper cistern or the case lined with copper, that water might be constantly kept in it to sell the leathers, those of wood being found by experience to split and rot . . .”

¹³⁸ According to Wood, *op.cit.*, p.167, quoting other sources: the shortest passage from London to Calcutta via the Cape of Good Hope was 150 days; via Suez it only took 63 days.

¹³⁹ Charles-Rou, *Autour d’une route*, pp.1-52, quoted in Wood, *op.cit.*, p.168.

¹⁴⁰ For a full account of the attempts to open up the Red Sea to trade, see Wood, *op.cit.*, pp. 166-174.

¹⁴¹ *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 40, p. 509, dated September 1778, quoting the *London Gazette*.

Robert Ainslie, the British Ambassador at Constantinople wrote from Smyrna:

In the midst of our disasters arising from earthquakes and conflagrations, the plague, imported in a Venetian vessel from Constantinople, hath added to our consternation. She lost three men in her passage, two since her arrival and three who have been since affected are admitted to the hospital . . .¹⁴²

The destruction and loss of life was appalling. None of the British merchants and their families were injured; ones like William Maltass, Valentine Humphrys and William Barker himself could remember the earthquake and fire of 1764 and might have been making plans for safeguarding them and their goods probably as soon as the first shocks began, but no doubt there was a certain amount of “hoping for the best” until the last minute and some heroic efforts were required in removal. The Gentlemen of the English Factory wrote to the Company in London expressing their gratitude to their Cancellier:

this worthy old servant at the age of seventy-three carried his zeal and attention so far as to hazard at the imminent risque of of his life during the fire, amidst exceedingly long and alarming shocks of earthquakes to enter into the Consularian House rendered uninhabitable two days before by preceding earthquakes in order to save the Cancellaria Books and Papers, and which he effected tho’ drove out three different times by the danger of the shocks, neglecting and abandoning his own effects to the value of near one thousand dollars for the publick service.¹⁴³

Amidst all the business of repairing and rebuilding the city, the dangers to trade and to themselves from the war was probably not foremost in the minds of the Smyrna merchants, but it was suddenly to come very close to home.

Fig. 5: Painting by Corot of Smyrna towards the harbour entrance



On the night of the 12/13th of April, 1779, a French Man of War, *The Confiance en Dieu*, with 22 guns and 150 men, attempted to enter the Port under cover of darkness. They were prevented from doing so by the swift action of Captain Smith of the British ship, *Tartar*, which had only just arrived in Smyrna. He and his nineteen men opened fire and after about half an hour’s engagement had the good aim or the good fortune to hit the French ship’s powder room, causing her to explode. The

¹⁴² *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 40, Sept. 1778, p. 509.

¹⁴³ SP 105/337, p. 149. They asked the Company to provide an addition to his salary in view of his 48 years of service which would allow him to employ an assistant. The Company replied, not with an increase in salary but a total of \$1,500 as a “present”.

British Factory's thanks to the Captain and his men were recorded in the Minutes of an Assembly on April 15th.¹⁴⁴ Worrying times continued as the *Tartar* was prevented from continuing on to Constantinople because of the danger posed by the arrival of another French warship, this time carrying 64 guns. The *Tartar* had taken on its new load and was ready to depart, but William Maltass and Valentine Humphreys, who were obviously the main owners of the cargo, persuaded the Factory that it was better to unload the *Tartar* and send the goods on by Turkish boats instead.

The Factory again agreed to raise money from its members for the payment of salaries and repairs. Originally Messrs. Maltass & Lee had lent funds at 8% as the Company in London had agreed was a reasonable rate, but by December of 1778, when a further sum of \$3,000 was needed, "while they did not mean to take advantage of the Company's necessity," they felt they had to ask for 10%. Isaac Morier then offered to make the loan at 10%, whereupon Lee & Maltass offered it at the original 8%. Clearly in difficult times putting your money out at interest was as sensible, if not more so, than in buying goods for shipment abroad.¹⁴⁵ William Barker was again in no position to offer funds. A pity, as that 8% interest it would have given him some income without risk – particularly welcome since his family was increasing. After his first son, Arthur Francis, born in 1778 there was now also another son, Richard, closely followed by the birth of a daughter, Marianna.

The French blockade of Smyrna continued, though one ship, the *Anglican*, managed to get through in May 1780. The Levant Company in London acknowledged news of its arrival and replied with the assurance that neutral ships were now being allowed to pass unmolested. Presumably trade was continuing by the normally forbidden use of these. But this concession seems to have been of little use to William Barker. In August 1780 he was absent from the Assembly of the Factory, as he was in April 1781. His name does not appear again until May 1782 when the Assembly agreed that Mr. Richard Lee should be in charge of the affairs of the Company at Smyrna while the Consul returned to England. It seemed that William Barker was no longer a suitable person to act as Pro-Consul.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ SP105/337 p. 153.

¹⁴⁵ The further loans which had to be taken out *were* at 10%. SP 105/37, p.160.

¹⁴⁶ SP 105/337, p.162.

THE BEGINNING OF THE LEVANT COMPANY

Life for none of the merchants could have been easy as war between Britain and France broke out once again in 1793. Clearly, however, they had time to think about things beyond their own monetary concerns; political ideas from France and America had found some fertile ground in Smyrna. In 1793 Robert Liston, on his way to Constantinople that year to take up the post of Ambassador, was scathing about the British community in Smyrna. His main objection to them was:

so few of them were remotely patriotic and most were traitorous Jacobins . . . several were members of the local Republican Society of the Friends of Liberty and Equality. This seemed the more shocking as the names of nearly all were twisted into the very history of the Levant Company – Abbott, Barker, Blunt, Barbaud, Morier, Prior, Strane, Thornton, Tooke, Walrond, Thomas. “Citizen Humphreys” once American but now a rabble rouser with a British passport,¹⁴⁷ was notorious for this somewhat premature announcement that the revolution had erupted in the streets of London.

Robert Liston might have been surprised by the Whig fervour of the local merchants, but years of interaction (not always friendly) between the British and the French, and latterly also with the Americans, would seem to have opened their minds to the new ideas.

It must have been clear to everyone that British commercial activity in the Levant was in decline once again, this decline hastened by the war with France. According to one commentator “the homeward-bound British convoy of 1794 lost thirty vessels to the enemy.”¹⁴⁸ The same source declared that fifteen British merchantmen reached Smyrna in 1792, ten in 1795, five in 1797, one in 1798, and none at all in 1799. The British Government was persuaded to subsidise the Levant Company’s expenses for a while which was something else Liston disapproved of. He sneered that the Levant Company was “in the doldrums, impoverished and demoralized, kept alive by annual doles from Whitehall.”¹⁴⁹

The almost complete halt in trade inward from London because of the war was further impacted by the effect on outward trade by riots not in the streets of London but on the streets of Smyrna. The so-called Rempelio Riots began, mildly enough, on March 3, 1797, during a performance by Austrian acrobats at the open-air theatre. Several Venetian subjects, “Slavonians”, (citizens of Venice, Croatia and the Ionian Islands) already with reputations as armed troublemakers, tried to enter without paying and were stopped by janissaries. A group of them later returned after revenge and a janissary was killed, the murderer taking refuge in the Venetian consulate. An infuriated mob of janissaries and Muslims, infuriated by the Venetian consulate’s refusal to hand over the culprit, turned on the whole European quarter, setting fires which spread quickly through the area, thanks to a strong southerly wind. Bands of looters in the town were apparently then joined by armed bands coming off Venetian and Ragusan ships in the harbour.¹⁵⁰ The greatest number of victims were amongst the Orthodox Greek and Armenian communities and included forty children who were burnt to death in a monastery school. There seems not to have been any loss of life amongst

¹⁴⁷ Liston was, of course, mistaken. Valentine Humphrys had visited America in the wake of Andrew Turnbull’s settlement enterprise there for a short time, but was always a British citizen; in any case he had died in London in 1786. George Perkins was, however, an American, so perhaps he was meant.

¹⁴⁸ Edward Ingram (ed.) *Anglo-Ottoman Encounters in the Age of Revolution: Collected Essays of Allan Cunningham*, Vol.1, p.73.

¹⁴⁹ Ingram, *op.cit.* p.5. According to Wood, *op.cit.*, p.180, this was £5,000 per annum.

¹⁵⁰ According to Spencer Smith, British ambassador in Constantinople. Quoted in John V.A. Fine, *When Ethnicity did not matter in the Balkans, etc.*, University of Michigan press, 2006.

the Frank community, but the consulates of England, France and Holland were destroyed as well as most of the houses, warehouses and shops in the area around Frank Street. The house of Lees was destroyed, but his stone warehouse preserved a good proportion of his goods.¹⁵¹ The houses of Robert Wilkinson and William Barker were saved, but those of Francis Werry, Joseph Fernel, the Hayes, Perkins were destroyed.¹⁵² A number of Europeans found themselves in great danger as, attempting to flee to safety in ships in the harbour, they were cut off and attacked by a mob. They were saved only by a cannonade from a Russian ship which drove off the rioters.

Even after the extinction of the fires the atmosphere in the city was volatile; eventually on April 8 the Sublime Porte had to send in a military force to produce order. Both the British and Russian consuls appealed to their ambassadors in Constantinople to disarm or expel the “Slavonians” and a *firman* was eventually issued, banning their ships from approaching the Ottoman coast. Unfortunately no reparations were offered for the damage that had ensued during the riots.

The city was hastily rebuilt again, but the merchants seem to have learned the lesson of the Lee stone warehouse. By the time of Hobhouse’s visit it was obviously as impressive as of old, if not more so:

The houses of the consuls and the principal merchants are built altogether in a very commodious fashion enclosing on three sides a court or small garden, but only one storey in height, and composed of unburnt brick in frames of plaistered laths. The warehouses, stables and offices are below, the family apartments above. The open galleries on the top of the unraised part of the lower buildings serve for communication or as a place of promenade. The best houses are at the edge of the water and as there is a stone pier for the whole length of the Frank town, are thus very conveniently situated for the loading and unloading of the boats from the ships.¹⁵³

Fig. 6: Izmir waterfront c. 1845. Detail from painting by Constantinos Kaldis in the Benaki Museum, Athens



The end of the war with France in 1815 opened enormous possibilities for English trade again.

¹⁵¹ Hyde Clarke, *History of the British Colony at Smyrna* [<http://www.levantineheritage.com>]

¹⁵² Vlami, Despina, *Trading with the Ottomans: The Levant Company in the Middle East*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁵³ Hobhouse, *op.cit.*, p.

There was no chance that their old rivals to rebuild for many years. Smyrna was a great beneficiary of the new conditions. In spite of everyone realising that the days of the Levant Company were numbered, there was a surge of new members, eager to get in on the ground floor and happy to pay their dues in order to do so. Fortunately for them these dues no longer included the payment and upkeep of an ambassador in Constantinople. In 1804 the Company was required to appoint a consul-general there as the Ambassador was to act purely in a diplomatic capacity. The first appointee was Isaac Morier, an old friend of William Barker. In the same year Morier's son, John Philip, was appointed by the crown as consul-general in Albania, Morea and adjacent territory, expenses paid by the Crown. The Company made a formal but forlorn attempt to maintain its authority over the appointment by confirming it, but they never had any control over Morrier Jnr. or his successors.¹⁵⁴

Wood sees this as the final nail in the coffin for the Levant Company's monopoly. There had been criticism for many years that its continuation was unjustified, but now there was no resisting the pressure to give it up:

The exclusive rights of the Turkey merchants were thus cracking beneath the pressure of changing circumstances as the eastern question unfolded itself, and the days had gone for ever when the control of British interests in Turkey could be abandoned to a commercial company.¹⁵⁵

However, exclusivity was now less important to the traders in Smyrna since rivals had pretty well disappeared from the trade by the victory of British sea-power and the expansion of British manufacturing, particularly that of cotton goods which appealed to the Turkish market. And Smyrna was at the centre of this expansion of trade. According to Wood, for every ship that went to Constantinople ten went to Smyrna.¹⁵⁶ The number of factors increased correspondingly. From the pathetic numbers attending Assemblies at the end of the century, they grew to an average of 9 in 1813 and 25 by 1821. Among these new additions were many whose names would dominate the foreign community in Smyrna and Constantinople for the rest of the new century. There included, for example, Atkin Wilkin ("Mr. Lee's clerk"), Richard and Frederick Wilkinson, James Brant, James Lafontaine, James Gout and Charlton Whittall. Increasingly there became no question of "going home" with the money made; more impressive houses were built on the outskirts of Smyrna and for the young people there was further intermarriage with the other merchants' families, French, Dutch, Italian. So began the heyday of this unique community, which was to last until the autumn of 1922 when Ataturk's victorious cavalry rode in and destroyed it utterly and for ever.

¹⁵⁴ Wood, *op.cit.* pp. 184-5.

¹⁵⁵ *op.cit.*, p.186.

¹⁵⁶ *op.cit.* p.195.

DESTITUTION

While the expatriate community of Smyrna was doing its best to survive the war and the consequences of riot and fire, one member had to concentrate on his own individual problems. In 1794 he was writing to his brother in Bakewell that

The Sum wanted in order to clear me of all my Creditors is about £950. But the Sum of £700 is absolutely necessary to be advanced immediately.¹⁵⁷

How had matters come to this pass? In 1780 William Barker's financial affairs had reached a critical state. To whom he owed money and why is still a mystery. The situation could have been caused by a foundered ship, taking with it to the bottom of the ocean the goods that had been bought on credit in England or a similar ship lost on the way home. Such accidents were not uncommon, but it seems that from the very beginnings of his time in Smyrna he had operated with no comfortable reserves to carry him through as others had.

He returned to England to see what funds he could raise from friends and family, but it was a vain hope, in spite of his brother John seemingly doing his best to help. He later wrote to his nephews:

When I was at Bakewell in the Autumn of the year 1780 being in want of money I sold to your Father my half of a little Estate in Lincolnshire and a Debt of the Marquis of Grandby left me by my Bro. Thos. for £400. At the same time my Brother promised to make me good a further sum to the full value of the whole of the debt & interest of the Marquis of Grandby¹⁵⁸ if it was ever paid which was then doubtfull.¹⁵⁹

So, in 1780, William's financial position was known to his family in Derbyshire. The Rev. Robert Charlesworth, a cousin of William's father, made a will in that year leaving William £2,000. In this original will (made in May 1780) he left the £2,000 to William Barker to be divided between himself and his children, or just to himself, in whatever manner his (Charlesworth's) Trustees should think fit, and because "I will not have this money liable to the demands of the creditors of the said William Barker." In a second will (made in May 1786) the wording was slightly altered: he left £2,000 to William Barker of Smyrna, asking his Trustees to pay it "in such manner as they shall think most likely to enable him to maintain and provide for himself and his family, but not to be subject to the demands of his creditors and liable to be seized and taken from him". It seems to have been accepted that William's affairs were so desperate that they were not going to be remedied in the immediate future.

By November 1782 matters had reached a point where William was forced to take out a mortgage (locally a *yedick*) on his "whole house on Frank Street ... and all the warehouses and other adherences" for a period of three years. The agreement was that at the end of that time, should the money not be repaid, the lenders had the option of selling the property to recoup their loan, and could do so even before that, should the interest not be paid. The money raised amounted to \$15,000 provided by Isaac Morier (at 5%), Joseph Franell (at 8%), Messrs. Lee & Maltass (at 5%), Valentine Humphreys (at 5%), George Oliviero (at 8%) and Antonio Bani (at 8%). The differing rates of interest may well have reflected the concern of his friends to temper business sense with

¹⁵⁷ Derbyshire Record office D7674/ Bar D 800/20.

¹⁵⁸ General John Granby, Marquis of Granby, was the son and heir of the Duke of Rutland, but never inherited the title.

¹⁵⁹ Letter to John & Thomas Barker at Bakewell, November 1795. Derbyshire Record Office D7674/ Bar D 800/22.

personal friendship; perhaps Joseph Franel was still smarting from the time he was beaten by William to the temporary pro-consulship, and was unwilling to make the sort of concession made by his other fellow merchant and friends.

The following six years must have been very difficult for the Barker household. Apart from a legacy from Valentine Humphreys of £200 for herself and £500 to Elizabeth Barker “which I expect she will readily present to her husband”,¹⁶⁰ only the income from renting out the warehouses was available to pay the interest on the *yedick* and keep themselves clothed and fed. The boys from his first marriage were away from home by this time, but the two girls were still at home, unmarried. By 1788 his children by Elizabeth numbered six. In the same will that left him the properties in Lincolnshire, Brother Thomas had given money (£50) to William's son, Thomas John, towards assisting him when put to a better school.” Obviously William had managed to send his eldest son to London for his education, but had not the wherewithal to send him to Eton, the school he and his brothers had attended. In fact, in 1780 Thomas would have been fifteen and his education finished. He was almost certainly apprenticed to a London merchant just before that and he was in Smyrna and admitted to the Levant Company on 25 March 1786.

Because of his later prominence we know a little more about William's second son, John (known in the family as Jack). He apparently was educated in London until the age of eighteen, when he joined the banking house of Peter Thelluson.¹⁶¹ This house was in Philpott Lane where the Dunnage family business also had premises – an opportunity unlikely to have been a coincidence. It would have been like Thomas Dunnage to take the boy under his wing and give him the education and start in life that he thought would not otherwise come his way.¹⁶² Robert and George likewise were looked after during their schooling and early years in London by the Dunnages, and the older girls, Sarula and Gratia, given an introduction to London society in the hope of their finding husbands.

William must have been overwhelmed with joy to hear of the Charlesworth legacy. Unfortunately Robert Charlesworth's second will had not been properly worded and opinion of counsel had to be sought as to whether or not it was valid. Eventually, after a long delay, it was decided that the second will could be legally executed and the trustees (in reality all the decisions seem to have been taken by William's elder brother, John) decided that the best way to deal with William Barker's legacy under the terms in which it was granted was to buy back the mortgage on William's house and warehouses.

That at least did mean that his home was safe, no interest on the loan had to be paid, and the income from the letting of the warehouses was paid via John Dunnage's business in some way that prevented it being seized for repayment of debts. These arrangements were all in place by July 1788. The balance of the Charlesworth legacy (£500) was paid into the hands of John Dunnage in London.¹⁶³ No doubt William was resigned to the fact that so little funds were available to him personally. He was now totally in the hands of others. In order to help his wife even sold all the jewellery that had been left to her by her mother.¹⁶⁴

He had, however, not given up hope of achieving at least some salaried position which would

¹⁶⁰ PROB May 1786. National Archives 11/1142/74. Humphreys died in London.

¹⁶¹ *Dictionary of National Biography*: Peter Thelluson was a Swiss who took British nationality in 1761. He later became a director of the Bank of England.

¹⁶² In his will [PROB/11/1368] he made a number of charitable bequests, including one to “Mary Ann Brownfield, a poor child of about seven years of age, under my protection.” Papers show that Bridget Dunnage took on the responsibility for George's education, fees, clothing and other expenses.

¹⁶³ Derbyshire Record Office D7674 Bar D 800/6.

¹⁶⁴ Derbyshire Record Office D7674/Bar D 800/9.

enable him to support his family, though he was not prepared to grovel for it. In 1791 he wrote to his brother-in-law, Thomas Dunnage, from Leghorn where he had stopped for a time after another trip to England:

I had the pleasure to write you the 11th ult. under cover to Mr. Thornton¹⁶⁵ (to save Postage) in answer to your favour advising me to join Mr. Tomlinson at Smyrna¹⁶⁶ on his own terms. This I consented to but am in hopes (as I then wrote you) that the influence of my friends would secure me a Salary equal to one half the profits on the business. This I think I am entitled to from my long experience and from the consideration that it will be chiefly my friends that will employ the house there. This, not least, I am certain of that Mr. Thornton's coming into this plan was solely on my account which he assured me when in London. And in a letter lately reced from him he advised me to attend to whatever Mr Tomlinson may advise, and that he will contribute to my welfare all in his power. I cannot think that my Relations will be less inclined to serve me with their interest and that of their connections, but am sorry that I have not a line from your Sons¹⁶⁷ on this business. I should be very sorry that this connection did not meet with their approbation. I mean to depart with my Family for Smyrna (if possible) as soon as my Wife is able to undertake the Voyage which may be in about Six weeks or two months as she expects to be brought to bed every day, and should be very glad if we were in time for Capt. Barker whom you recommend. If however I should find hereafter that my presence is absolutely necessary sooner in Smyrna I will set out alone and my Family must follow me. Mr. Tomlinson does not tell me what goods he takes out with him, but I presume no great matter as he seemed rather doubtful of remaining at Smyrna till he had made another trip to England.

William Tomlinson was still in Smyrna in 1798, but for how long and on what terms, if any, he acted with William Barker cannot be established. It was obviously not fully satisfactory since, in a letter to his brother, John in August 1794 he tells him that he is completely out of funds until the rent comes in from his house and he writes: 168

The decease of our Consul¹⁶⁹ leaves a vacancy to which I have a right to aspire, being the Oldest Factor here and being much esteem'd both by the Natives and the foreigners established at this place, which with my knowledge of the language and Customs of this Country makes me hope for a preference to all Opponents. I foresee however that I shall not succeed unless I can remove the objections which lost me the Consulship of Salonica¹⁷⁰ - I mean the want of a discharge from my Creditors. This I apprehend would be easily obtain'd if I had a friend that would advance a sum for me with which they would be satisfied. I was assured when last in England that with £200 I could have procured this discharge, the want of which has been of immense loss to me. It prevented my accepting an establishment offered at Naples,¹⁷¹ . . . It prevented my being elected Treasr. here for the next two years which if it had taken place I should now have been Pro-Consul as this by an order of the Company falls of course to the Treasr. for the time being, and this unless timely removed will no doubt prevent my being chosen Consul for this place. In short this Clog upon my industry has so effectually tyed my hands that I shall not be able to do anything for my self and family so long as I lye under it. I am therefore once more to beg of

¹⁶⁵ Possibly Henry Thornton, MP. MPs had their correspondence free of charge. He was a member of the London banking firm of Down, Thornton & Free.

¹⁶⁶ William Tomlinson. With Geo. Perkins Snr. he was later to be an Executor for William Barker's Will which was made in Smyrna.

¹⁶⁷ Thomas & Bridget's sons, John & James, also merchants, occupied adjacent premises to their father at 10 Philpot Lane.

¹⁶⁸ Derbyshire Record Office D 7674/ Bar D 800/20

¹⁶⁹ Anthony Hayes had been Consul at Smyrna from 1762 till his death in 1794. He was followed by Francis Werry who had originally been the captain of a cargo ship trading regularly with the Levant..

¹⁷⁰ According to Wood, *op.cit.* the only place showing signs of expansion for the Levant Company's trade during the 18th century, was at Salonika where its consul ranked with those at Aleppo and Smyrna . "Cloth, linens, and muslins, tin, lead, raw and wrought iron, clocks and watches were sold there in exchange for cotton, tobacco and carpets." George Moore the Consul in Salonika died in 1790 after an accident. Whether William Barker ever had a realistic hope of this opportunity is difficult to say even if his financial circumstances were different. The Consul appointed was Francis Charnaud.

¹⁷¹ No information has been found about this. There was no diplomatic representation in Naples until 1828, but presumably there must have been some *charge d'affaires* representing the Levant Company business there.

you my Dear Brother to take pity of me and my numerous family, which for their sakes and for Gods sake I hope you will do, in which case whatever money you may advance to accommodate with my Creditors shall be repaid you out of my Salery of which I would willingly give up one half annually till the whole is paid of (the remainder of my Salery with the rent of my house would be sufficient for the maintenance of my family). Nay I would even continue to allow you to take up one half of my Salery till the £2000 advanced upon my house here was paid of, which I may still hope to live to see done, and you may insure the sum you advance upon my life for your further security. The hopes of your accepting this proposal has raised my drooping spirits, flattering myself with the Idea that I may still be able to give an Education to my younger Children and not leave them in that distress which has hitherto threatened them. Think of this my Dear Sir but for a moment and then I think you cannot deny me this timely assistance in which hope I remain, etc. etc.

His brother was not without pity for his position, but he could not, of course, send out a banker's draft for the money needed since it was presumably to the local bankers that some at least of the money was owed. What John Barker did was to give him a promise to send £200 to his wife in the form of a shipment of lead. If everything had gone smoothly, on the sale of this commodity he could have cash in hand to negotiate with his creditors. However things did not go smoothly as he writes desperately to his brother in June 1795:

On the 10th of Jan. 1794 Mr. Thos. Dunnage wrote me that he had your order to ship 60 ps. of Lead to Mr. Perkins which he said he would do by first good opportunity, since which four or five Ships arrived here from London direct but without the Lead. From Mr. Tomlinson who arrived here the 1st of Dec last I learnt that the 60 ps. of Lead were shipped on board a ship that was coming here by way of Venice, which Vessel sailed from England under the same Convoy¹⁷² with him, and we heard of her arrival at Venice in Oct. last, but nothing more of this Ship or lead till 15 days ago when a Venetian Vessel arrived here from Venice with 60ps. of Lead for Mr. Perkins Sent without bill of Loading or letter of advice. These however were rec'd three days ago by Post from Venice with a letter from M^r Dunnage to Mr. Perkins of the 27th May 1794, who tells him it was sent by your orders & that he was to dispose of it for the benefit of my Wife & Children, and adds, "I expect on arrival of this lead I shall have orders to send you some more on the same account so you'l please to give me as early advice as possible."

This delay will be of great prejudice to the concern'd as our market is now overstocked with this article, and I foresee it will sell 10 or 15\$ under the last prices say \$23 at which price Mr. Tomlinson sold his which was bought and shipt at the same time with this, this with the loss of time will be a prejudice to my Wife of about \$300.

William Barker was clearly not resigned to his position of penury and he had a significant plan in mind to ease the desperation of living from day to day for household expenses:

I am further to acquaint you that upon hearing of the safe arrival of this Ship at Venice, and as we had a Squadron here which block'd up the French Frigates which had so long infested these Seas, I made no doubt of her safe arrival here, and as I had then an opportunity of making an advantageous agreement with Mr. Tomlinson and another person, to build them two warehouses in my house, they advancing me two years Rent without interest (say \$1500) which was about one half the expence, and having Mr. Perkins's eventual promise to lend me the amount of the lead (with proper security) to finish them, and as the Spring was the proper time for such buildings I undertook them accordingly, one of which is finished, the other nearly so, having taken up the Rent of my house in advance for this purpose which now distresses me very much, being deprived of the 17 ps.¹⁷³ of this Lead by Mr. Perkins's refusing the security I offer him of making over the rent of these warehouses say \$750 p.a. of which \$350 is due in advance the 1st of May and \$400, the first of Aug 1797, and the other \$750, on the same days the Year following, saying that he cannot do it without your express orders. Now as it was impossible to employ this money in a more advantageous manner, for by sinking \$1500 after two years I secure an income of \$75p.a., say, 50 % on the Capital p.a. I hope you will see it in a proper light, and that you will order Mr. Perkins to let me have this money with the security and for the purpose before mentioned: and this as soon as possible, as I shall in the mean time be much distress'd for want of it, and if you do not give him

¹⁷² Ships were being forced to sail in convoy, sometimes with the protection of a naval ship for fear of attack.

¹⁷³ A "pig" of lead (the normal measure) was equal to 175lb.

these orders he will let it out at Interest, at 7 or 8% (the most he can get from what we esteem the best houses here) and then it will not be near so secure and as I am in treaty for the building of another warehouse upon the same terms, I hope you will permit Mr. Perkins to advance me the ballance when he receives it, upon the same terms.

This extrordinary advantage arises from the value of the ground which I acquired at a very great expence by filling up the Sea before my Warfe, and which till now only brought me in \$100 p.a. Please to observe that the Warehouses will be secure from fire.¹⁷⁴

You have to admire his enterprise.

This letter was swiftly followed by a letter from Thomas Dunnage telling William that his brother John had died in August. The English family's financial affairs from that time on lay in the hands of John's two eldest sons, John and Thomas. The trials and tribulations of their Uncle William, failed businessman, remote in Smyrna, were obviously of little interest to them.

The business of his wife's £200 was a continual sore point. He wrote to his nephews in 1795:¹⁷⁵

I address you Jointly as Executors to your Deceased Father to desire you would be so good as to settle a trifling dependance between my deceased Brother and myself but first permit me to lament with you the death of your Father which I have very great reason to regret, since it was to him I looked up for assistance to my numerous Family in case of my decease before him as well as for occasional assistance during my life. I am very sorry it was not in my power to show my respect for him by putting myself and Family into mourning (which I was in hopes he would have provided for in his Will) without putting myself further inconveniency in my present very embarassed situation occasioned by the late Efforts I have made to increace my income by enlarging my house, and a number of other recuring circumstances, among which is my disappointment in not receiving the whole of the £200 promised by your Father when last at Bakewell for the benefit of my Wife which with the consent of Mr. Perkins I proposed to layout upon my house as the most advantageous and the best security for her, and which with the advanced rent I recd. for these new buildings I calculated would be sufficient to finish them and to increase my income \$1000 p.a.

Somehow that was arranged, but building estimates had their usual habit of being under-calculated:

I am not the first that has been mistaken in their calculates in building, instead of \$4000 (my calculate) this building and repairs has cost me above \$5000 to finish which I have been obliged to take up great part of my other rent in advance which will lye heavy upon me for a long time to come, if ever I am able to clear myself from this embarasment which I must beg of you to lessen in part by giving immediate orders for the remainder of the £200 being remitted to Mr. Perkins.

One event in 1795 turned out to be more fortunate for William Barker and his family than for the Royal Navy. HMS *Nemesis* took refuge from the French fleet in Smyrna, theoretically a neutral port. The French did enter the harbour, however and forced *Nemesis* to surrender. On June 17th, 1795, William wrote home:

I have the pleasure to acquaint you that my Daughter Grace is married to a M^r Richards¹⁷⁶ Purser of the *Nemesis* Frigate, a Gentleman that bears the best of Characters, and in very high esteem with the Capt. and his Brother Officers. He assures us (and I have reason to believe) that he has £1000 clear, and that his profit is at all times worth £300 p.a. and in these Seas much more. If the Plague ceases before they leave this Station he means to take her with him, if not she must follow him to Leghorn by some other

¹⁷⁴ Derbyshire Record Office D 7674/ Bar D 800/21.

¹⁷⁵ Derbyshire Record Office D 7674/Bar D 800/21. John Barker Snr. Had died in August 1795. Letters on the subject of the £200 continued well into the next century.

¹⁷⁶ The *Nemesis* was an Enterprise Class 28-gun 6th rate frigate. She was in fact captured in Smyrna that year, but in 1796 a British squadron lead by *Barfleur* brought her out of Tunis, a neutral port..

Vessall.¹⁷⁷

It is possible that Grace was provided with a dowry in the form of a property in Chapel Terrace, Bayswater, London. This was mentioned in her husband's will as "late the property of William Barker, Esq." Somehow this asset at least escaped his creditors. Grace, like Sarula, had been sent to London to stay with the Dunnages, in the hope of finding a husband. Grace had just returned from there when she met John Sleeman Richards. Sarula stayed on in England, somehow ending up in Ludlow, Shropshire, married to a man who soon after became bankrupt.

Unfortunately the good news was about Grace was matched by bad news of his son. Thomas John, whom he had obviously hoped would make a good career for himself in Smyrna, died in London in 1795 and was buried (according to a note in the Barker papers) in St. Alphage's, Greenwich. He had married, however, and had a son.

It appears that together with the rents from the new warehouses and any commissions he could make on the business dealings of Mr. Tomlinson or others (and not forgetting his wife's winnings at cards),¹⁷⁸ the family was able to maintain itself, if not in the way it had been accustomed to. There could be no question of building or buying a summer house in the popular suburbs of Smyrna such as Bournabat (Bornova) or Boudja (Buca) as more and more of the merchants did. Not only did this make it easier for them to make up the regular hunting parties which were so popular, but took them away from the danger of infections during the hottest season. When Hobhouse was in the area in 1809/1810 he visited Bornova:

At present the village is chiefly composed of very elegant country houses built in the European fashion, belonging to the merchants of Smyrna. It contains one open space, surrounded by a few neat shops and shaded by several large and aged cedar trees.¹⁷⁹

It sounds idyllic and almost certainly was. No doubt there were invitations to visit for the Barker family. It must have been a little galling to be quite so dependent on the goodwill of friends, but that had to be endured if only for the marriage chances of their girls.

In Smyrna itself life for the men centred as always around the Frank club. Hobhouse writes:

There still subsists an institution which renders residence in Smyrna agreeable to strangers as well as settlers. This is a club which supports a set of public rooms fitted up in a very comfortable and splendid style, called, as in Italy, the casino. Here there is a reading room furnished with all the papers and gazettes of Europe, except the English¹⁸⁰ and there are two other apartments with billiard tables. Refreshments of every kind can be procured in the house for those who choose to form parties for supper. The rooms open at eight o'clock every evening, and during the carnival, the subscribers give a ball to which all the respectable Greeks and the ladies of their families are invited. The annual subscription is five guineas, and all strangers not residents of Smyrna are permitted to attend the casino without payment.¹⁸¹

No doubt some kind friend would have paid William Barker's subscription when necessary.

By 1797 William Barker was sixty years old and had ten living children from his marriage

¹⁷⁷ Derbyshire Record Office D7674 Bar D 800/21. The officers and crew of *Nemesis* had done well out of prize money.

¹⁷⁸ Derbyshire Record Office D 7674/Bar D 800

¹⁷⁹ J.C. Hobhouse, *op.cit.*, p.90.

¹⁸⁰ Presumably the English Assembly thought these might give away information useful to French readers and were kept in the Consulate.

¹⁸¹ *op.cit.*, p.

with Elizabeth Schnell. For the rest of his life his financial situation was a constant worry, for the situation of his wife, should he predecease her, worry for his sons that they should be established in business, and worry for his daughters that they should find good husbands.

As far as the daughters were concerned, Grace seemed, at first, to have been fortunate. Her husband, John Sleeman Richards retired from the navy and settled first in Great Yarmouth where he had a position at the dockyard. He, Grace and their children then moved to London as a partner of Edward Barker, his brother-in-law. However, somehow at this point he was made bankrupt and retired to Pembrokeshire for a while, presumably to escape his creditors.¹⁸² William Barker's eldest daughter, Sarula (known as Sally) took even less time to fall into poverty. Like Grace she had been sent over to London to the care of the Dunnages in the hopes of meeting a husband, but she did not return to Smyrna. Somehow she eventually found herself in Ludlow in Shropshire where, in 1802 she married a James Goodwin, "shopkeeper, dealer and chapman" to which was added between 1807 and 1811, "a bankrupt" in connection with properties he owned in Narrow Lane in the town.¹⁸³ At least William kept in touch with his daughters – that is obvious from his letters to England. He also was relieved and proud that Jack had "got into so good a situation in Aleppo",¹⁸⁴ acting as Consul there for the Levant Company from November 1803 at a good salary. Jack had left London as the private secretary to Sir John Spencer Smith, Ambassador to the Porte, but had moved to Aleppo in 1799 primarily as agent to the East India Company, but also to the Levant Company.

Contact with his other sons, Robert and George, seems to have been lost, or at the very least, spasmodic. In 1804 William was writing to the Dunnages:

I should be happy to learn the wellfair of all my Relations at Bakewell, and wish you would be so good as to give me some acco^l of my Son Robert, who has never wrote me a line, and my accounts of him from others are very imperfect; as he could maintain himself by his Trade I allways looked upon him as the hapiest of all my Children . . .

He seems to have been a carpenter, since a report – fortunately false – was relayed to his father that he had died from a fall from scaffolding. More reliable apparently was a later message that he was an itinerant preacher. In any case, no firm news of his life or death reached Smyrna.

George, his and Flora's youngest son was a different matter. William seems to have seen altogether too much of him. He had had some education in London. The London funds from the Charlesworth legacy not used for taking over the mortgage were held in London by the Dunnages and had their uses. The Barker papers¹⁸⁵ contain bills and receipts for the education of George. He seems to have entered Mr. Frampton's school in July 1788 at a cost of £1.11.6d plus £5 5s for a quarter's board. His expenses there (including a visit to the dentist, were meticulously recorded by Bridget Dunnage. He had then joined the navy – twice, according to his father - which entailed the expenditure of quite a bit of money. His second cousin once removed, Charles Barker, mentioned in one of his letters, dated 1839 that "the purser on this ship was messmates with I believe a relative of mine, a Mr. George Barker who was on the *Swiftsure* . . . I think I recall something about such a person. It was about fourteen years ago."

¹⁸² *Norfolk Chronicle*, 19 Oct 1816 contains an advertisement of the auction of a Yarmouth Warehouse "by order of the assignees of John Sleeman Richards a bankrupt".

¹⁸³ Shropshire Archives LB/4/11/6/8.

¹⁸⁴ Derbyshire Record Office D7674 Bar D 800/29, dated 31 Mar 1804

¹⁸⁵ Derbyshire Record Office D7674 Bar D 746

That would have made the occasion around 1825 or so. George was undoubtedly checking out his Bakewell relatives to see whether they were worth cultivating. He was most definitely the black sheep of the family. William writing plaintively to his nephew John in Bakewell in June 1817:

I have lately been troubled for the third time with the Company of my Vagabond Son George. He Came to me naked and after the expence of upwards of \$500 to fit him out again, he got an Employ to Navigate a Swedish Schooner to Algiers and Leghorn, but fear we shall soon see him again. He has no Children by his first Wife in London, who is now married to another, and he says that he left his second Wife with two Children at Boston in America. I have written to Boston to enquire wether he was really married there, and should be glad to know by our laws in England wether his Children by his second Wife are legitimate, his first Wife being still alive.¹⁸⁶

It always worried him particularly that his younger boys were not being educated in England. In 1804 he wrote in a letter to his nephew Thomas:

My income not being sufficient to enable me to give an education to all my sons (which is the utmost of my ambition) I undertook a voyage to Egypt (on Commission business) at the risque of my life, in which I succeeded so as to be able to send one more of my sons to England for his education. I have still three boys with me which I at present do not see any prospect of my being able to send to England for their Education and this circumstance lies very heavy on my mind . . .¹⁸⁷

British government interest in Egypt had led in that year to the appointment of a consul-general there, expenses paid by them, rather than by the Levant Company merchants. The Company, however, appointed him their consul in Cairo with authority over the vice-consulate at Alexandria.¹⁸⁸ These new circumstances may have been the impetus for William Barker's journey. It is fortunate that he felt it was worthwhile as he had a very bad case of dysentery which, given his age (67), unsurprisingly took him a very long while to get over.

The Turks had declared war on Britain's ally, Russia, late in 1806. Charles Arbuthnot, the Ambassador in Constantinople and the English merchants there only just escaped being seized and imprisoned by the Turks for a perceived Russian bias. All in all it was understandable that William felt he had to concentrate on his own and his family's welfare. In order to counter any problems arising from the dispute between England and Turkey "I took the precaution to procure the Swedish protection and have not only a patent from the Swedish Ambassador, but also a *firman* from the Porte for this purpose which I keep in reserve in case of need."

Meanwhile the "problem" of the girls' future was solved. The eldest, Marianna, was obviously the one who had had to help her continuously pregnant mother in the house and with the younger children. She did not marry and died in 1813, aged 63. Mary, known as Mimica, did marry in 1806 "in the village of Budjaw"¹⁸⁹ and the groom was William Maltass, son of William's old friend and colleague from his very earliest days in Smyrna, something which must have been a great joy for him. By 1814 she had had three girls and two boys born in Smyrna. According to William Barker they intended to go to England in 1815 and settle near London where William Maltass had two brothers already in business, but if they did, they obviously returned at some later date as the couple were eventually buried in Buca

¹⁸⁶ Derbyshire Record Office D7674/BarD 800

¹⁸⁷ The lucky boy would have been Samuel, aged 11. Derbyshire Record Office D7674/Bar D 800/29. That left Frederick, aged 10, Henry Richards (9) and Benjamin (7) still to be educated.

¹⁸⁸ For further details of the situation in Egypt, see Wood, *op.cit.*, pp. 185-6.

¹⁸⁹ (sic) Register.

Cemetery.¹⁹⁰ The youngest daughter, Louisa, married an Italian merchant, Spiro Ghelasto; this couple did have a house in Buca and both were eventually also buried in the cemetery there.

These marriages obviously eased the pressure on the Barker finances, but there was still the problem of the younger boys. Did they ever receive any formal education? No evidence of has been found. They must, however, had some form of apprenticeship, because Edward became a member of the Levant Company in 1811, followed by Samuel in 1818 and Frederick in 1822. Edward seems to have had his own financial troubles, presumably the problems affecting Grace and John Sleeman Richards, his partner in London:

My Son Richard is engaged in the Counting house of Messrs. Hays and Fontain,¹⁹¹ with a good Salary. Henry is also engaged with Messrs. Lee and Brant,¹⁹² but his salary is at present only sufficient to find him in Clothes yet. Benjamin is with his Brother at Aleppo,¹⁹³ Frederick is now employ'd in the Counting house of Messrs Webb & Co at Leghorn¹⁹⁴ and Edward is in the Secritarys Office at Corfu in hopes of preferment, but has not yet settled with his Creditors.

His health seeming not to be improving; not surprisingly as he was now aged seventy-eight,¹⁹⁵ and William found himself worrying increasingly about financial provision for his wife and children after his death. He had originally thought that he had full powers to leave all his property in Smyrna as he wished, until it was pointed out that the original bequest of £2,000 from Robert Charlesworth remained the property of that man's trustees. In 1815 he was writing home that

As I foresee that my Wife and Children unprovided for, will after my Decease want assistance for some time longer, I mean with the permission of the Executors of Mr Charlesworth, to turn over the Yedick of my house to one of my sons that I may have here, under an obligation to remit to me or to my family at Leghorn the amount of the net Rents (after a deduction for himself) as I believe it will be cheaper living there than here. Besides I do not wish to leave the remainder of my Family in this country, so much subject to the Plague and other misfortunes of Rebellion Fire etc. etc. Last year we had a very severe Plague here. It was in the enjoining houses on each side and before us, and we had then six famlys in my house, and yet thank God we all escaped this terrible disorder. I could not afford to take a house in the Country, besides my two Sons were employed in two different counting houses, and lodged and boarded with me. We were in hopes that we had got rid of this disorder and counted 38 days clean so that we expected clean bills of health would be given to the shipping this day, but we were disappointed by the arrival of two Sick of the Plague from Constantinople and several incidents here which make us fear a continuation of it, and that it may increase again in the spring.

The original holder of power-of-attorney for the Charlesworth executors was Robert Wilkinson, but he himself became a bankrupt and because the original document had been lost, it was thought prudent for a new document to be sent out in the name of George Perkins. George Perkins was an interesting character: an American, he had left his homeland sometime after the War of Independence broke out and took the Levant Company's oath in Smyrna in 1782. There are unsubstantiated claims that he was involved with two of his brothers in circumventing regulations and sending Turkish opium to China. Certainly he was related to those who did.¹⁹⁶ However, although he had become William Barker's brother-in-law in 1786 through his marriage to Louisa Schnell, friends in London were less convinced of his complete probity and urged the appointment

¹⁹⁰ *Levantineheritage.com*: Listing of the Buca Cemetery.

¹⁹¹ That would be Hayes & Fontaine (William's spelling never improved!)

¹⁹² Edward Lee & Richard W. Brant (a newcomer to Smyrna, he took the oath in January 1811).

¹⁹³ He stayed there for many years, surviving the earthquake of 1822. He was Agent for the American Bible Society in Aleppo. See *Annual Report of the American Bible Society*, 1822. He returned to Smyrna where he married in 1827 Elizabeth Clara Wilkin. He died in the Crimea while acting as a staff interpreter.

¹⁹⁴ Bankers. Their most famous client was Lord Byron.

¹⁹⁵ "I have been out of order lately, but am now much better, but still troubled with an increase of my Chronicle disorder of the Vertigo, and a shortness of breath." Derbyshire Record Office D7674/BarD 800/32.

¹⁹⁶ M. Kienholz, *Opium Traders and their Worlds*, Vol. 1, 2008. Barker refused to make the change.

of his son-in-law, William Maltass, as a more suitable candidate.¹⁹⁷

There also seems to have been some doubt as to whether the Charlesworth bequest was only to William Barker and his family by Flora Robin rather than to all his children. A whiff of this and news of William Barker's worsening health, seems to have brought two of his eldest sons out of obscurity to make the journey to Smyrna and "would not be long in making demands upon Mr. C's heirs from what I have seen of two of them lately, George and Robert,¹⁹⁸ both of whom are now out on their passage to Smyrna.¹⁹⁹" The health problems seemed to be vertigo ("which is very troublesome in the night") and shortness of breath "but in appearance I seem to be very well."²⁰⁰ Later he began to have problems with his eyesight as well.

Age was beginning to catch up with his wife too; she was claiming of arthritis and sciatica. It appears that Elizabeth Mary predeceased her husband as there is no mention of her in his will.²⁰¹ He must have been lost without her. Not only did she produce thirteen children, ten of whom survived to adulthood, she seems to have been a tower of strength in the difficult days of his insolvency. Perhaps she should be remembered, not only for the number of her descendants, but by a picture of her sitting with her friends, playing cards – and handing over her winnings to the family purse.

¹⁹⁷ James Dunning to John Barker: "I hear he is a very respectable man & considered a person of good property."
Derbyshire Record Office 7674/BarD 800/36

¹⁹⁸ Clearly reports of his earlier deaths were exaggerated.

¹⁹⁹ James Dunning from London, as above.

²⁰⁰ Derbyshire Record office D7674/BarD/800/32.

²⁰¹ No details of her death or burial have been discovered.

THE END OF AN ERA

From George Perkins in Smyrna to Willkiam Tomlinson in London, August 2nd, 1825²⁰²

I am sorry that the cause of my present interruption is to acquaint you of the decease of our late aged Friend Mr. William Barker, who departed this life on the 23rd ult^o at the age of 86 years & some months, having appointed yourself with me Executors of his Will. I herewith enclose Copy of the Will, which being connected with that of the late Mr. Charlesworth, it is necessary. I have instructions from those Trustees how I am to act in the administration of this present Will. I have not been able to find a Copy of Mr. Charlesworths will among the Papers of Mr Barker, therefore cannot know how far Mr. Barker is authorized to dispose of the Legacy of Mr. Charlesworth in favour of a part only of his Children. If he has that authority there will be no one to complain, but if he has not the Authority, & the Children are all to have an equal share of the Legacy, then the Amount must be divided according to the Will of the Testator.

The Estate is indebted about £20,000 for monies taken up at different times for reparation of the Premises, & for expences of Interment of the late deceased, which sum must be paid from the Rents henceforth to come, and from the produce of the Furniture, which will not be any great amount, before any disposal can be made of the Property, to whomsoever it may concern.

Respecting a Sale of the House, the Sons here at Smirna, Richard, Henry & Benjamin, & Samuel now at Constantinople, are of opinion it will be for the Interest of the Heirs that it be not sold, on the subject of which they will address you shortly.

As a Sale of the House & Furniture, more especially the former, would prejudice the Interest of the Heirs, if they are made at the present time, or before the affairs of the Greeks & Turks are finally arranged in some manner or other, I conceive it advisable to defer all Sales, until I hear from yourself, or from the Trustees of .Mr. Charlesworth. The principal reason why a Sale of the House would be improper at this time is, on account of the number of Tenants, chief of whom are Greeks, who have come into our quarter since many opulent Greeks are absent in Europe who have not taken part in the War, will not doubt return when they can do it with safety it is not unlikely that such Rents will then advance in Value, and that there will be buyers among those who shall return & may wish to place their funds on such securities, when it would not suit so well to Merchants who wish to be sole occupiers. Consequently it may be expected there will be more bidders them, than there probably would be now.

The four sons apparently later changed their minds on the question of a sale:

In a former communication we had the pleasure to address you, copy of which we beg leave to transmit you herewith, we stated that it was our desire that the Will or our Late Father, Mr. William Barker of this place, should be carried into effect, but at the same time recommended that his House should not be sold immediately as there was then a prospect that it could be disposed of to more advantage at a later period. Since which finding part of the family do not coincide with us in this, & wishing to avoid all Law discussions whatever, beg leave by the presents fully to annul our former determination of giving up our share we may be intitled to of the Two Thousand pounds bequeathed by the late Revd. Mr. Charlesworth to our father for the benefit of his children. We beg to state at the same time that we are no more of

²⁰²

opinion, as to the propriety of a later sale of our father's premises since the daily deterioration of the Turkish coin will more than absorb any advantage that the sale of the property in question could derive at a more peaceable period. We shall feel much obliged to you, if you would acquaint the Executor of the late Mr. Charlesworth that it would be very desirable to us to see this affair speedily terminated. & begging to apologise again for trespassing on your friendship, we remain with truth & great regard.²⁰³

In fact the four were not left anything under their father's will. Their father explained that

I give devise & bequeath unto my four Daughters, Sarah & Grace, at present residing in England, Marianna and Louisa now in Smirna, & to Robert the lawful Son of my late Son William Barker, the Net clear produce of the Sale of my said House & appurtenances as set forth in for foregoing Item, to be equally divided between them, Share & Share alike, or between such of them as may then be living, hoping that my Daughter Mary who is well provided for, or my Sons who are now in a situation to provide for themselves will not attribute this to any disaffection towards them, but that they will approve of this disposition.²⁰⁴

For some reason which never becomes clear in the correspondence the sons' original decision to give up any claims on their father's estate for themselves was later withdrawn. Possibly John, the Aleppo Consul, as eldest son (and one who does not seem to have been consulted), refused to allow the agreement to go forward. More likely, the Charlesworth Trustees objected to an unauthorised distribution, circumventing the rules of the Trust. Whatever the reason, Mr. Tomlinson wrote to his fellow executor that he felt

all Idea of accommodations seems to be at an end and suppose it must go into Chancery . . . I am rather sorry to be embarked in such a Business, but my Respect for an old friend will not make me regret taking some trouble to serve his Family.

Fortunately it does not seem to have come to that; there was little money to distribute and the costs of taking a case to Chancery would almost certainly been greater.

Meanwhile, on the larger stage, the Levant Company itself was approaching extinction. In May 1824 George Canning, Foreign Secretary spoke to the Levant Company's Secretary in London, and brought up the matter of ending the Levant Company's monopoly, assuring him that should they be asked to surrender control of their consuls in Turkey to the British government, it would be a political step, implying no criticism of the Company itself. On 11 February, 182, a special general court of the Levant Company was called to meet to hear a letter from Canning that this step was being taken. The letter ended:

I cannot refrain from suggesting to you whether it may not be expedient to give up the remaining privileges of your charter, which being no longer connected with the protection of public interests may be deemed by Parliament and the public to be useless and injurious restrictions upon trade.²⁰⁵

It was unanimously agreed to offer to surrender the Charter. Permission was granted and an Act passed repealing all statutes which referred to the Company. In return for past government assistance, all its property money and effects (amounting to about £70,000) was transferred to the Crown which was to pay any debts and grant pensions to any officers who would lose their positions because of this transfer.²⁰⁶

It was a quiet ending to about two and a half centuries of British commercial contact with the Ottoman Empire. It is difficult to quantify, from the perspective of 2015, any legacy of the Levant

²⁰³ Derbyshire Record Office D7674/BarD 800/. Dated February 1st 1826.

²⁰⁴ Will of William Barker contained in Derbyshire Record Office 7674/Bar D 800/42.

²⁰⁵ Proceedings of the Levant Company, 1825, pp. 4-6.

²⁰⁶ Wood, *op.cit.*, p.201.

Company in Turkey.

Whether the news arrived in Smyrna in time to reach the ears of William Barker before he died four months later is moot.

William Barker was buried in the old Caravan Bridge Cemetery. It no longer exists. His only legacy is the numerous descendants who are spread throughout the world.

Fig. 7: The Old Caravan Bridge and Cemetery



APPENDIX A: LIST OF MERCHANTS TRADING IN SMYRNA (from 1754 – 1787)

This list is compiled from the Minutes of the Assemblies of the British Factories in Smyrna held in the National Archives of the United Kingdom, State Papers (SP) 105/337, together with other sources.

The dates of Oaths (sometimes differently worded) taken by merchants new to the city are often quite different to those listed in the Minutes of the Levant Company in London. There were also some differences in the oaths taken. In 1860 William Barker swore “to make true entries and subscribe to the tariffs to qualify himself as a factor at this scale”. Most of the others followed that format. However, in July 1764 Valentine Humphrys swore to “make true entries, as also the Oath of Secrecy and subscribe to the tariffs to qualify himself as a Factor at this scale.” Presumably this extra requirement was to allow a merchant to sit in an Assembly before he was chosen in London, and it was also applied to Richard Lee, Jr. and to Peter Cazalet. In 1794 Francis Charnaud, Saloniki Consul, was reprimanded by the Levant Company in London for claiming to have administered the oath of a Freeman, constituting him a Member of the Company, to Bartholomew Abbott. The formal procedure was that Consuls were only allowed to administer an Oath to merchants resident abroad to qualify them to be considered as future members “following a petition presented in London by their friends.”²⁰⁷ Whether or not Consuls were ignorant of the correct procedure is not clear; it seems to have made little or no difference in practice.

Factors

BARKER, Thomas John	Oath 23.03.1786	Assembly 22.01.87 - d. 1795
BARKER, William	Oath 25.03.1760.	Assembly 09.04.60 – 22.01.87
BERGOIN, Francis	Oath 11.11. 1760.	Assembly 29.12.60 – 09.03.69.
BODDINGTON, John	Oath 18.03.1763.	Assembly 31.03.63 – 08.07.68.
BRANT, Richard W.	Oath 24.01.1811	
BRYER, John	Oath 26.09.1760.	Assembly 13.10.60 – 29.12.60.
CAZALET, Peter	Oath 20.07.1778.	Assembly 20.07.78 – 20.07.78
CHARNAUD, James	Oath 18.02.1782	
CHARNAUD, John	Oath 15.07.1762.	Assembly 31.03.63 – 11.12.74.
CHITTY, Joseph	Oath before 21.11.1757.	Assembly 21.11.57 – 08.10.59.
CLARK, Alexander	Oath 27.07.1772 .	Assembly 12.08.72 – 08.06.73
DOBBS, Richard	Oath before 09.1757.	Assembly 22.9.57 - 28.10.58. ²⁰⁸
FISHER, John King	Oath 15.08.1816	
FRANEL, Joseph	Oath 07.01.1775.	Assembly 08.05.75 – 22.01.87.
GRIBBLE, Samuel Hicks	Oath 20 .03.1786	Assembly 22.01.87
HAYES, Anthony, Jr.	Oath 16.02.1782	Assembly 27.01.84 – 22.01.87
HAYES, Frederick	Oath 14.02.1785	Assembly 22.01.87
HUMPHRYS, Valentine	Oath 06.07.1764.	Assembly 06.07.64 – 23.01.84
JACKSON, John	Oath 18.01.1802	
JACKSON, Thomas	Oath 26.08.1800	
JOLLY, John, Jr.	Oath 08.05.1775	Assembly 08.05.75
LA FONTAINE, James	Oath 03.05.1791	
LEE, Edward	Oath 24.02.1785	Assembly 22.01.87 -
LEE, James	Oath before 09.1757.	Assembly 22.09.57 – 09.05.61. ²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ SP 105/121, pp.514-515. 14th October 1794.

²⁰⁸ Murdered in Smyrna.

²⁰⁹ Departed for England 29.12.60

LEE, Richard	Oath before 0917.57.	Assembly 22.09.57- 05.02.73
LEE, Richard, Jr.	Oath 08.11.1777. ²¹⁰	Assembly 21.01.78 – 22.01.87
MALTASS, John	Oath 06.12.1789	
MALTASS, William	Oath 05.01.1763.	Assembly 31.03.63 - 06.08.78
MASTER, Richard	Oath before 22.9.1757.	Assembly 22.09.57 – 29.12.60. ²¹¹
MORIER, Isaac	Oath 08.06.1773	Assembly 08.06.73 – 22.01.87
MORIER, John Philip	Oath 02.06.1797	
PERKINS, George	Oath 10.09.1782	Assembly 25.03.83 – 22.01.87
PURNELL, Edward	Oath 03.10.1764.	Assembly 10.10.64 – 10.1.65
SMITH, William	Oath 24.02.1780	Assembly 15.03.80 – 13.06.85
WERRY, Francis	Oath 10.03.1778	
WHITE, Richard	Oath before 09.1757.	Assembly 22.09.57 – 24.11.63
WHITTALL, Charlton	Oath 13.02.1812	
WILKIN, Atkinson	Oath 23.11.1804	
WILKINSON, Robert	Oath 06.02.1789	

TREASURERS

Joseph Chitty	- 08.10.1759
James Lee	08.10.59 – 09.05.1761
Francis Bergoin	09.05.61 - 06.02.1764
Richard Lee	06.02.64 - 14.02.1766
William Barker	14.02.66 – 09.10.1766 ²¹²
Valentine Humphrys	09.10.66 – 22.04.1768
William Maltass	22.04.68 – 13.02.1770
John Charnaud	13.02.70 – 01.01.1772
William Barker	01.01.72 – 06.01.1774
Valentine Humphrys	06.01.74 – 03.01.1776
William Barker	03.01.76 – 01.01.1778
Valentine Humphreys	01.01.78 – 03.01.1780
Isaac Morier	03.01.80 – 29.12.1781
Richard Lee, Jr.	29.12.81 – 23.01.1784
Isaac Morier	23.01.84 – 26.01.8176
Richard Lee Jr.	26.01.86 – 02.01.1788
Anthony Hayes, Jr.	02.01.88 -

CHANCELLORS

George Boddington	- 08.09.1757
William Maltass (pro tem.)	- 28.10.1758
George Boddington	18.01.59 -

CONSULS

Samuel Crawley	1747 - 21.12.1761 ²¹³
Anthony Hayes	31.03.63 – 18.08.1774 ²¹⁴
William Barker (Pro-Consul)	08.05.75 – 24.03.1779
Anthony Hayes	24.03.79 – 22.01.1787
Francis Werry	

²¹⁰ He took a further oath to qualify himself as a full factor on 13.07.79.

²¹¹

²¹² Relinquished his office as “his affairs required an immediate departure to Cairo.”

²¹³ Died in Smyrna 11.01.62

²¹⁴ Sent to Constantinople as *charge d'affaires* in the absence of []

CHAPLAINS

**Burridge Clendon
Robert Harris
Robert Foster
Thomas Hall
Peter Cunningham**

APPENDIX B: LEVANT MERCHANTS & EAST FLORIDA

It seems to have been traditionally accepted in the Barker family that William's original intention as a young man was to settle in Florida. In her contribution to the website, *Levantine Heritage*,²¹⁵ Mrs. Marianne Barker offers more detail: that “William emigrated to Florida where he purchased an estate, but in 1760 he left and settled in Smyrna.” As has been demonstrated, these statements are not true, but it is interesting to see how the belief arose and, perhaps even more so, how many other people with connections to Smyrna, to the Levant Company, and to the Barker family, did choose to invest there.

East Florida was included in the American territory ceded to the British by Spain in exchange for Cuba under the Treaty of Paris which ended the Seven Years War in 1763. Its population at that time was very small and the difficulties facing any settler of dealing with swamp, wilderness, malaria, and attacks by the Creek Indians had left it almost entirely undeveloped. The first civilian Governor, James Grant, however, was unswayed by the problems and decided to embark on what sounds a very modern advertising campaign, placing notices in all the English colonies and provinces, talking up the advantages of settling in such a “tropical paradise.”²¹⁶ This initiative produced no great response from Americans who were obviously best placed to understand the difficulties of settlement there, but there was some considerable interest from foreign groups.

One of these groups was the London East Florida Society which met regularly at the Shakespeare Head Tavern in the capital under its President, Lord Adam Gordon, MP. The society included many influential Whigs in Parliament and others connected to them by blood or influence who were keen to invest in this newly-available land.²¹⁷ By the end of 1766, such was the enthusiasm engendered by the favourable reports visitors to East Florida had brought back with them, Orders in Council regarding 3,569,000 acres had been issued.²¹⁸ These Orders in Council allowed interested persons to select an area to be surveyed to the extent of the grant acreage. After that an application could be made to Governor Grant for title on the clear basis that within 10 years of the date of any grant it could be shown that there was one white Protestant settler for every 100 acres.

One of those who had enthused the East Florida Society by addressing a meeting on March 19, 1767, was that enterprising and well-travelled doctor, Andrew Turnbull. During the time he had been ministering to the medical needs of the foreign community in Smyrna he was convinced that the hard-working Greek farmers who were under the “galling yoke”²¹⁹ of the Turks would benefit from settling in a free country with what he estimated to be better farming conditions and climate. This is not to say that he did not expect eventually to make a profit from his investment,²²⁰ but it does seem that his driving motivation was altruistic.

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Levantine Testimony 30 in www.levantineheritage.com.

²¹⁶ Mowat, Charles L., *East Florida as a British Province 1763-1784*, (Berkeley 1943), p.53

²¹⁷ For a list of members of the Society see George C. Rogers, Jr. “East Florida Society of London”, *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 4, April 1977.

²¹⁸ George C. Rogers, Jr., *op.cit.*

²¹⁹ Corse, Carita Doggett, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*, The Drew Press, Jacksonville, Florida, 1919.

²²⁰ He seems to have envisaged the production, principally of indigo, but also cotton and silk which would be sent to factories in England.

Those now with me are from among a people who inhabit a chain of mountains which makes the southernmost proximity of the Peloponnese. That people submitted to the Turks . . . in the beginning of this century, but finding themselves hardly used, they shook off their fetters, and continue free to this day. The Turks have often attempted to bring them under subjection, but have always failed from the impracticality of attacking them in their mountains. . . Several mountains in the Turkish Empire are inhabited by people who maintain their liberty in this manner and who rather chose to work hard in cultivating the little pieces of ground they find among the mountains than live under tyranny in the fertile and extensive plains under them.²²¹

In partnership with Sir William Duncan,²²² and Richard Grenville, the Earl of Temple,²²³ in 1767 he obtained three grants of approximately 20,000 acres each for the purpose of bringing in such deserving settlers. Two of the tracts (for himself and Duncan) were situated around Mosquito Creek, about seventy-five miles south of the seat of government in the City of St. Augustine which he was assured was the best land still available for cultivation.²²⁴ The third tract on the east bank of the St. John's River was almost contiguous to the other two and was assigned to Grenville.²²⁵ Besides the investors' own money, the enterprise was supported by subsidies from the British Government and additional funds towards the transport of the settlers on whom the grants depended.²²⁶ Under the terms of the agreement Turnbull's settlers were to be provided with food and clothing for three years and return passage if they wished to leave after a six-months' trial. In addition he agreed to give 50 acres of land to the head of every family with an additional 25 acres for each child.

Dr. Turnbull then returned to the Mediterranean and Smyrna to begin to recruit his settlers. It is at this point that it seems possible that he recruited another Florida investor – his old acquaintance and brother-in-law, William Barker. William Barker was not just well-known to Dr. Turnbull from Smyrna, but was also his banker, since he chose to make use of “Mr. William Barker's Merchant House in Leghorn” to change money.²²⁷

The problem of Turnbull's three tracts of land not being contiguous, as he had hoped, seemed to have been settled when, in a letter of November 7, 1767, to Sir William Duncan, Governor James Grant informed him that he would be able to locate 6 tracts of land of four to five thousand acres each for “Dr. Andrew Turnbull's children and friends”²²⁸ which would make an altogether huge estate. Possibly William Barker was one of these “friends” referred to, but it seems more likely that there were other, closer, influences guiding his investment.

Dr. Turnbull returned to Florida in August 1768 with his settlers, increased in number from the original 500 Greeks to 1400 in total, including many from Italy and Minorca. The colony was named New Smyrna, land was cleared and indigo began to be to be planted and, in spite of great

²²¹ Letter to Lord Shelbourne, quoted in E.P.Panagopoulos, *New Smyrna, An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey*, University of Florida Press, 1966.

²²² Letters from Andrew Turnbull to Sir Wm. Duncan [physician to George III] and others are part of the Farrar-Duncan Archive at Dundee City Archives.

²²³ Brother of former Prime Minister, George Grenville.

²²⁴ An enterprising German, Dr. Stork, had got in earlier. He had published *An Account of East Florida with remarks on its future importance to trade and commerce*, in London 1766.

²²⁵ Grenville's land was among those never cultivated.

²²⁶ “If a certain number of Protestant families occupied the land.” Greek Orthodox believers were considered “Protestant”. See “Return of Grants of Land passed in H.M. Province of East Florida from June 20, 1765, to June 22 1767”. PRO CO5/41. The fact that the Minorcans were Catholics caused some problems among the settlers, but that stipulation in the grant was never enforced.

²²⁷ Andrew Turnbull to William Duncan, Port Mahon July 11, 1767, F-D Archive. He wrote that money would be exchanged in Leghorn for bills of lading which would then be sent on to his agent in London.

²²⁸ Farrar-Duncan Archive.

initial difficulties, by 1771 the settlement appeared, from the letters he sent to his partners, to be on a reasonably solid footing. Eventually, however, for many reasons, not least the number of settlers and the commensurate expense, the enmity of Grant's successor, Governor Tonyn, and the workers' natural expectations of a better life being defeated by the employment of overseers used to dealing with slaves rather than a free – though indentured – workforce, in 1777 the settlement was finally abandoned.²²⁹

By 1772 Dr. Turnbull was advising his London friends to purchase land already granted rather than apply for an initial grant.²³⁰ Twenty thousand acres, he said, could be bought for 200 guineas and “possibly an offer of £60 might get it” if someone was anxious to sell. It seems more than a coincidence that it was £60 William Barker later remembered handing over to Dr. Turnbull.

And whereas a claim has been instituted & set up on my behalf for the restitution of certain Lands in East Florida U.S. of America, originally granted to me by the British Government, in obtaining which grant, my Agent Andrew Turnbull M.D. expended the Sum of Sixty pounds sterling on my behalf debiting me for the same in Acct. Curr. for the value of which Lands nor for my Expences thereon, I have never received any indemnification, nor made any compromise whatsoever, and the said claim being now pending and on prosecution before the proper Authorities in the United States of America . . .²³¹

The £60 paid over obtained for him a 20,000 acre tract (which covers much of today's downtown Jacksonville).²³² It extended from a northern boundary of the Trout River, for eight miles south along the western shoreline of the St. John's River, much too far north of New Smyrna to be considered a likely part of Turnbull's planned huge estate. The area has been described as presenting at this point:

. . . a pleasing prospect of excellent hummock and marsh land to British planters searching for fertile land. Upriver from William Barker's 20,000 acres. . . lay twenty miles of shoreline with expansive marshland and cypress swamps readily adaptable for rice cultivation and forest products. Several navigable streams intersected to facilitate transportation of naval stores, timber and produce from tracts that continued to be pristine forests throughout the years when the British controlled Florida.²³³

Significantly, however it was comparatively near (on the opposite bank of the St. John's River) to another plantation of interest. In 1769 William Barker's brother-in-law and old apprentice-master in London, Thomas Dunnage, together with a fellow London merchant, John Francis Rivas, and a third partner, Francis Fatio, took over a sizeable plantation on the east shore of the St. John's River – to be called New Switzerland. Fatio himself moved out there to be resident manager.²³⁴ Between 1771 and 1776 expenditure on the estate was about £5,000, but from 1772 it produced a steady income. This comparison with the fate of New Smyrna is simply explained. Gone are any altruistic thoughts of freedom for oppressed communities or use of indentured workers, the partners had avoided the worst difficulties of Turnbull's vision by employing slaves to clear the land and build houses and investing the profits from sales of agricultural products back into the plantation and in purchasing more land. Similarly, Francis Levett, another member of the Levant Company, was granted in 1767 10,000 acres adjacent to New Switzerland which he named Julianton Plantation after his wife. Francis Levett was this time based in Livorno (Leghorn) rather than Smyrna. His uncle, another Francis, was based in Galata, Constantinople, and when he died he left sufficient

²²⁹ For a full account of Dr. Turnbull's settlement, see Kenneth H. Beeson, Jr., “Janas in British East Florida”, *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XLIV, July 1965-April 1966.

²³⁰ Letter to Sir Wm. Duncan & George Grenville from New Smyrna March 6 1770. Farrar-Duncan Archive.

²³¹ Will of William Barker, dated 25 February, 1823.

²³² Badly preserved documents in the National Archives: T77/23/fragments; 77/24/fragments; T77/28/fragments.

²³³ Florida History Online, English Settlements on the St. John's River.

²³⁴ Fatio and his family stayed on in Florida during the time East Florida was ceded to Spain again in 1783.

money to his nephew for this investment.²³⁵ It does seem that these earlier investments by people he knew well were likely to have influenced William Barker more than any encouragement from Dr. Turnbull.

There is yet another interesting Smyrna connection. If William Barker was not won over himself to consider his investment a means to philanthropy, possibly his erstwhile apprentice in London who went out to Smyrna with him in 1759, but now a full member of the Levant Company, Valentine Humphreys, was. On September 24th, 1769, writing from New Smyrna to Dr. Duncan, Dr. Turnbull mentions that he has sent him a letter “by Mr. Humphreys who came with me from Smyrna to take a look at this country.” He goes on:

My want of good assistance rendered his of importance to me. He has been a Sharer with me in Fatigues and Risks not a few. He managed my affairs here lately in my absence, and I much regret his being desired by his Father to go to London. He is perfectly well acquainted with everything I have transacted and consequently can give you a better account of our affairs than any other. His intentions are to come back to this Province again either to employ a small Capital of his own or to engage in managing a Tract for another Person on being allowed a third share of the Tract and any Improvements at the end of seven years or ten.²³⁶

No doubt Mr. Humphreys had kept busy sending back his own conclusions about investment opportunities in Est Florida to his connections in Smyrna and London.

William Barker’s other brother-in-law, Thomas Ashby, a fellow Turkey Merchant, acquired in 1774 another tract of land²³⁷ in partnership with John Barker a fellow London merchant,²³⁸ which was to be renamed the Suttonia Plantation after Barker's wife.²³⁹ They wisely employed an agent on the ground. Abraham Marshall had one of the two splendid residential properties built on the ground, the other being for visitors. William Bertram visited the property in 1774 and was shown round by Marshall. So splendid indeed was the Marshall residence, that Bertram took him for the owner. He wrote:

I spent the day in the most agreeable manner, in the society of this man of singular worth, he led me over his extensive improvements, and we returned in company with several of his neighbours. In the afternoon the most sultry time of day, we retired to the fragrant shades of an Orange grove. The house was situated on an eminence, about one hundred and fifty yards from the river. On the right hand was the Orangery, consisting of many hundreds of trees, natives of the place, and left standing when the ground about it was cleared. These trees were large, flourishing and in perfect bloom, and loaded with their ripe golden fruit. On the other side was a spacious garden, occupying a regular slope of ground, down to the water, and a pleasant lawn lay between. Here were large plantations of the Indigo plant which appeared in a very thriving condition: it was then about five or six inches high, growing in straight parallel rows, about eighteen inches apart. The Corn (Zea) and Potatoes (Convolv. Batata) were greatly advanced in growth, and promised a plentiful crop. The Indigo made in East Florida is esteemed almost equal to the best Spanish, especially that sort, which they call Flora.²⁴⁰

²³⁵ Will of Francis Levett and Will of Francis Levett (Jr.) Public Record Office, Kew, brought to my attention by Linda Panisset, a descendant.

²³⁶ He appears not to have done so. What a pity he could not have managed William Barker's tract for him.

²³⁷ It is not known exactly where this was as no maps are extant, but it appears to be 2,000 acres bought from William Greenwood..

²³⁸ This was not another relative of William Barker's, but a friend from another Barker family of Bakewell and Edensor in Derbyshire. Thomas Ashby who did business and lived in London retired to Edensor. John Barker is known to have visited America and had varied business interests there. See, eg, Bagshawe Collection at Sheffield Archives, BAG.C, John Barker's Letter Books.

²³⁹ National Archives Claim T-77: 2,000 acres, 2 miles south of the St. John's River.

²⁴⁰ John Bartram,” *Diary of a Journey through the Carolinas, Georgia & Florida from July 1 1765 to April 10, 1766*,” ed. Francis Harper, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 33, no. 1.

It was obviously doing so well that the partnership later added the nearby Point Settlement (probably at today's Plummer's Point). The initial investment was £2,855, with an additional £2,250 later. This plantation was leased out in 1781 for 3 years and 4 months at £25 a year and 8% of the annual produce. The then agent estimated that approximately £175 p.a. would go to the absentee owners.

Thus, by 1775, there was quite a considerable Levant Company/Barker investment in East Florida centring on the lower part of the St. John's River.

Others were also making a success of settlement. For example one of the earliest investors, Denys Rolle, MP, and his Rollestown Plantation was also doing well. He increased his estates (adjacent to those of Lord Adam Gordon's) by buying up those of John Grayhurst (10,000 acres), William Elliot (20,000 acres), William Penrice (10,000 acres) and James Cusack (3,000 acres) – an amazing 76,000 acres, all on the east side of the St. John's River. He originally brought over from England more than 200 indentured labourers – who all almost immediately absconded – but then later bought slaves to refurbish the building and produce rice, corn and turpentine, as well as raising cattle. In contrast, there were many like the owners mentioned above, who never developed their holdings, probably never intended to and were happy to sell their tracts when a good opportunity arose.

So why did William Barker not develop *his* tract? The New Smyrna enterprise might have been a wearisome and eventually unsuccessful business, but the nearby plantations of his friends and fellow Turkey merchants were doing well. In 1766 William Barker had been appointed Pro-Consul at Smyrna and, in 1777, Treasurer. These appointments were indications of his good standing among the other merchants there and his good financial position. Did he just hope that one of his neighbours would buy him out? Or did the exigencies of his later bankruptcy put the whole project out of his mind until it was too late? His financial difficulties seem to have begun some time before 1780 and he never recovered.

As we have seen, he was certainly not alone in allowing the land to stand uncultivated in spite of the terms of the grants so it is not possible to say with any certainty that this was not a deliberate policy on William Barker's part. Successive Governors of East Florida were unable to persuade London to allow such grants to be forfeited as they legally should have been.

George C. Rogers²⁴¹ seems to believe that this was deliberate policy:

The Florida experiment was an example of what the residents of the other North American mainland colonies did not approve – colonisation of large tracts of land which had been obtained by influence at home. The East Florida Society and its operations in London symbolised the corruption of the society from which the Patriots desired to separate.

Certainly it was corruption of a kind which led to most of the lands being allowed to stay idle without penalty – most of the tracts were owned by members of the British government or their friends and relatives and, while there was no reason to act on this, the British Government sat on its hands. However, with the beginnings of American War of Independence in 1775, things changed and William Barker's undeveloped land and that of others was speedily seized and parcelled out to loyalist refugees on the very basis that the settlement clause had not been fulfilled.

William Barker's claim for compensation, referred to in his will, was, of course, completely without

²⁴¹ *op.cit.* p. 495.

foundation. Claims not filed before the end of May 1823 were automatically null and void, but in any case the “final settlement of land claims in Florida”, provided by an Act of the US Congress in 1822 only allowed for claims from citizens which were valid under the Spanish Government which took over East Florida again in 1783 at the end of the American Revolutionary War and who had never been compensated by the British government. There was no hope of compensation for land granted on conditions which had never been fulfilled.

Poor William. Not only did he never get to visit Florida, let alone settle there, but he also failed, for whatever reason, to make a return on his investment there. It is an unhappy contrast to the successes of his relations and fellow merchants.

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