

FREEMASONRY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IZMIR?
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
ALEXANDER DRUMMOND'S TRAVELS (1754)

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From the middle of the seventeenth century Izmir was one of the most important centres of international trade in the Ottoman Empire.¹ For this reason the Anatolian port was host to a considerable number of European residents. In theory their residence was limited by Islamic law to a period of ten consecutive years, but in practice some Europeans settled in Izmir for life.² Others merely visited the port city for a short period, few travellers failing to include it in their itinerary. It is therefore not surprising that Izmir was described and depicted by many travellers, including the French diplomat and traveller, Laurent Chevalier d'Arvieux and the Dutch draftsman, Cornelis de Bruijn (see illustration below).

Despite the continuous Western presence, Ottoman Izmir never became a prominent centre of Western learning in the Levant. Aleppo, by contrast, had hosted a number of leading scholars, including Golius and Pococke. Huntington had stayed there too, serving the English community in Aleppo as the Levant Company chaplain. From the seventeenth century the Levant Company also sent chaplains to Izmir, but the incumbents tended to be of a lesser academic calibre. For example, Edmund Castell's successor as the Adams professor in Arabic at Cambridge, John Luke, had resided in Izmir for seven years, but because he never published anything, he is considered an academic "non-entity" today.³ Another chaplain in Izmir, Edmund Chishull, was one of the few to devote a separate publication to Anatolian antiquities – but one of the principal monuments it described was found not in Izmir, but in Ankara.⁴

¹ On the vast corpus of literature on Izmir, see the bibliography of Elena Frangakis-Syrett's contribution to this volume, and those of Daniel Goffman, 'Izmir: from village to colonial port', in Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge, 1999), 79-134; Elena Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth Century (1700-1820)* (Athens, 1992); and Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550-1650* (Seattle, 1990).

² On the legal status of foreigners in the Ottoman Empire, see M.H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman legal System. Qadis, Consuls and Berathis in the 18th Century* (Leiden, 2005).

³ P.M. Holt, 'The Study of Arabic Historians in Seventeenth Century England: The Background and the Work of Edward Pococke', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 19/3 (1957), 444-455, esp. 444.

⁴ E. Chishull, *Antiquitates Asiaticæ christianam æram antecedentes; ex primariis monumentis Græcis descriptæ, Latinè versæ, notisque & commentariis illustratæ; accedit Monumentum Latinum Ancyranum* (London, 1728). For an early contribution to the natural history of the Ottoman Empire by another Levant Company chaplain, see 'An Account of a strange Kind of Earth, taken up near Smyrna, of which is made Soap, together with the Way of making it, communicated by Dr. Edward Smith, F.R.S.', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 19 (1695-1697), 228-230. This forgotten account offers details about Izmir's soap industry which might still be valuable for economic historians of the Ottoman Empire today.

little is known about its spread in the Ottoman Empire. So it is worth examining the source of this information more closely.

In 1754 a work was printed in London with the title *Travels through different Cities of Germany, Italy, Greece and several Parts of Asia, as far as the Banks of the Euphrates: in a Series of Letters, containing an Account of what is most remarkable in their Present State, as well as in their Monuments of Antiquity*. The title page indicates that the volume was printed for the author, Alexander Drummond, Esq., “His Majesty’s Consul at Aleppo”. Alexander Drummond’s contribution to the Republic of Letters consists of thirteen epistles addressed to his elder brother in Edinburgh, George Drummond, over a period of six years, between 20 July 1744 and 13 November 1750. It is Drummond’s only publication, which is still consulted frequently, because it offers a detailed account of Cyprus under Ottoman rule in this period. Already in the eighteenth century Drummond’s chapters about the island were reprinted several times.⁸ The rest of his book has received less attention, except for a brief passage about Izmir. Sarah Searight, for example, mentions “Alexander Drummond, a member of the Levant Company who founded the first freemason lodge in Smyrna in the eighteenth century”.⁹

The lodge does not appear to be mentioned by travellers who visited Izmir after Drummond. For example, the Society of Dilettanti in London sponsored the scientific expedition of Richard Chandler to the Eastern Mediterranean in 1763-1766.¹⁰ After his return to Britain Chandler (together with Nicolas Revett, the team’s architect, and William Pars, its painter) produced a work on Ionian antiquities (*Inscriptiones Antiquae pleraeque nondum editae* – Oxford, 1774), as well as a travelogue in two parts, the *Travels in Asia Minor*. This travel account appeared in 1775, while another, the *Travels in Greece*, followed a year later. The first account included their experiences in Izmir. Chandler reports interesting details about the intellectual pursuits of several Western consuls and merchants there, but says nothing about Drummond’s lodge.

This raises a number of questions. Who was Alexander Drummond? Did he really establish a freemason lodge in Izmir? If so, when? It would also be interesting to know who the members of the lodge were, and how long it remained in existence. It is these questions which this article seeks to answer.

⁸ E.g. *A Compendium of the Most Approved Modern Travels Containing a Distinct Account of the Religion, Government, Commerce, Manner and Natural History of Several Nations* (Dublin, 1757), 4 vols. This compendium was also printed in London in the same year, and later translated into German as *Sammlung der besten Reisebeschreibungen* (Troppau, 1784).

⁹ Sarah Searight, *The British in the Middle East* (New York, 1970), 29-30.

¹⁰ The Society of Dilettanti was founded in 1734 as a dining club for men who had made a Grand Tour, which included Greece. Lionel Cust, *History of the Society of Dilettanti* – ed. Sydney Colvin (London, 1914).



Portrait of Alexander Drummond.

Detail taken from the title page of his *Travels*. Courtesy of the Arcadian Library, London.

ALEXANDER DRUMMOND

Alexander Drummond was born on 18 January 1698 in Edinburgh Parish, the second son of a merchant called John Drummond (d. 1709) and his wife, Mary Menzies (d. 1736). Their three children were May, who was born around 1684 in Newton (Perth), Scotland. George Drummond was born on 27 June 1687, also in Newton. The family later moved to Edinburgh, where Alexander was born in 1698.¹¹ The earliest references to Alexander Drummond's career are found in the private diary of his brother, George. The records of the Grand Lodge of Scotland show that he was admitted a member of the Lodge Greenock Kilwinning No. 12 in 1738 as "Alexander Drummond, Collector of the Customs at Greenock".¹² Although this confirms that Drummond was a freemason, a closer look at his career raises doubts about his personal integrity, and consequently the reliability of his *Travels*.

In the records of the Scottish customs for this period there is no mention of any office of "Collector of the Customs at Greenock".¹³ Nevertheless it is clear that Drummond was employed in the customs service in some capacity, because George's diary indicates that his younger brother got in trouble because of his job in the same year he was admitted as a freemason.

In the entry for 10 January 1738 George Drummond recorded having received a letter from "my brother Sandie", "advising me of an incident threatening a discovery of his affairs". The first sign of "distress" about his younger brother is already found in an entry

¹¹ Katherine Turner, "Drummond, Alexander (d. 1769)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2005), vol. 16, 945, where May's birth is dated 1709/10; Alexander Murdoch, "Drummond, George (1687-1766)", *ibid.*, 951-53; Gil Skidmore, "Drummond, May (1709/10-1772)", *Ibid.*, 975, according to whom George (and thus Alexander, too) was a son of George Drummond of Newton. Alexander Drummond's date of birth was have found through www.familysearch.com.

¹² Grand Lodge of Scotland Library, Edinburgh: 'The Registration Book No. 1', 41. I gratefully acknowledge the help of the curator of the Grand Lodge of Scotland Museum and Library, Robert L.D. Cooper.

¹³ In the National Archives of Scotland (West Search Room) I have consulted the "establishment books" of the Scottish Board of Customs, particularly record CE3-7 (1735-1740), as well as CE 60/2/264 (1723-1734) and 265 (1734-1741), two letter books of the Board of Customs to the Collector. I have found neither Alexander Drummond's name, nor the office he held in these records, which include the customs at Greenock.

for 31 October 1737, the problem preventing him sleeping most of that night. On 12 January 1738 George Drummond wrote that “the cloud on his outward situation is as dark as it was”. He was still concerned for Alexander by the middle of March. A month later, on the morning of 13 April, Drummond heard that “the *Commission* of Customs had wrote a strong letter to Mr Walker for not having made a remittance, as ordered, which must affect my brother”. In the autumn George Drummond recorded that “a demand from the Board [of Customs] which threatens him with immediate ruin” had been sent to his younger brother. A day later, on 27 September he despairingly wrote that there was no hope for Alexander. The next day George mused that if things went wrong, his younger brother might have to leave the country. The final entry about the affair is dated 25 November 1738, one day before George Drummond’s diary breaks off. Alexander Drummond had written that his ruin was inevitable, but to George’s frustration there was nothing he could do to help.¹⁴

The first stage of Alexander Drummond’s career thus seems to have ended under a cloud, but he was not actually ruined. Nor did he have to leave the country, at least not immediately. The first of Drummond’s letters in the *Travels* dates from July 1744, so between the end of George’s diary and the beginning of Alexander’s travels, some five and a half years are unaccounted for. The records of two of Edinburgh’s principal institutions in this period, the Grand Lodge of Scotland and the University, might bridge this gap.

According to information provided by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Glasgow, Drummond was appointed Provincial Grand Master over the “Western Counties” on 7 February 1739. By this time he had already been promoted to Master of Lodge Greenock Kilwinning No. 12, which he had only joined less a year earlier. The appointment of 1739 established the Glasgow Province, which included Argyll, Clydesdale, Dumberton, Renfrew, and Stirling. Drummond was also the first to carry the title of Provincial Grand Master in a long time, it being more common in English freemasonry than in Scotland. The records for this period suggest that Drummond was an active leader, who visited and chartered several lodges in 1739 and 1740.¹⁵

The archives of the University of Edinburgh suggest that he might have spent some of the missing years there. It is in the records of John Kerr’s courses that Drummond’s name occurs. Between around 1710 and 1717 Kerr had been Master of the High School of Edinburgh, before being elected the first Professor of Greek at King’s College in Aberdeen. After the death of Adam Watt in 1734, Kerr was offered the chair of Humanity in the Scottish capital, which he held until 1741. One of the students who attended Kerr’s spring course during his final year was called Alexander Drummond. A year later a student of the same name attended the “Prelections on History and Roman Antiquities” course by Professor Charles Mackie. In 1743 this Alexander Drummond took a course with John Stevenson, the “Professor of Rational and Instrumental Philosophy”, who held the chair of

¹⁴ Edinburgh University Library, DC.1.82: George Drummond’s Diary, vol. 1, entries 31 October and 1 November 1738; vol. 2, entries 10 January, 12 January, 14 March, 13 April, 26 September, 27 September, 28 September, 21 November, 25 November 1738.

¹⁵ See <http://www.pglglasgow.org.uk/>, especially the section on the history of the lodge.

Logic and Metaphysics.¹⁶ Could this be our Alexander Drummond? Would this prominent freemason have taken courses among students many years his juniors?¹⁷ In the absence of further evidence, this period in his life remains unclear.

DRUMMOND IN IZMIR

According to the *Travels* Alexander Drummond sailed from Harwich to Holland in May 1744, setting off on the first leg of his trip to the Eastern Mediterranean, although it is not clear whether that was the destination he had in mind from the start. He subsequently travelled overland through Germany, reaching Livorno by July 1744, and continuing for Venice soon afterwards. After spending at least a month in the Republic of San Marco, he set sail for Izmir, where he wrote his fourth letter. Drummond must have known what to expect of the bustling Anatolian port, because many accounts of it by European travellers had been published by the early 1740s.

Izmir was one of the most cosmopolitan centres of international trade in the Ottoman Empire in this period. The Dutchman Nicolaus de Graaf, who visited it in 1663, gave the following description:

The city of Smyrna lies at the waterfront, against the slope of a flat mountain, and is surrounded by wonderful gardens and retreats. It is of an average size, but its buildings are not excellent: it has an old castle with good cannon. [It] also [has] nine mosques with tall spires, the most important one of which is located in the great market, opposite the big fountain. There is a covered bazaar or marketplace, where various kinds of silk and cotton textiles and other things are sold: there are also many bathhouses. The city is inhabited by various peoples, like Turks, Greeks, Jews and Christians. The Dutch, English and French all have a wonderful residential complex, free trade, and a consulate. Each residence can be recognized [from sea] by the flag raised on it.¹⁸

During the century between de Graaf's visit and that of Drummond Izmir became the most important centre of international trade in the Ottoman Empire. The communities of foreign residents also grew in this period, but they were concentrated in a small section of the

¹⁶ Alexander Morgan, *Matriculation Roll of the University of Edinburgh – Arts – Law – Divinity vol 1: 1623-1774* (Edinburgh, 1933-34), 196, 213, 218. He registered for Stevenson's course on 24 February 1743; Sir Alexander Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh during its first three Hundred Years* (London, 1884), vol. 2, 318.

¹⁷ It seems unlikely that the two Drummonds were the same person. Nevertheless, in 1748 Drummond complained that several of his old friends, including one "Macky", never wrote to him in Syria. It is tempting to identify him with Charles Mackie, with whom Drummond clearly shared an interest in antiquity and its remnants, but we cannot be certain. 'Alphabetical list of those who attended the 'Prelections on History and Roman Antiquities' from 1719 to 1753'. This unpublished hand-list can be consulted in the University of Edinburgh Library, Special Collections Department (DC.5.24); BL, Additional Manuscripts 45,932, p. 193/f. 98r: Drummond to the Earl of Leven, 4 May 1748.

¹⁸ J.C.M. Warnsinck (ed.), *Reisen van Nicolaus de Graaf gedaan naar alle gewesten des werelds beginnende 1639 tot 1687 inclus* (The Hague, 1930), 72.

town, the quay-side area called Frank Street. Towards the end of the seventeenth century the French traveller and diplomat, d'Arvieux, recorded about this part of Izmir that

Turks pass along it but rarely... nothing is spoken but Italian, French, English, and Dutch. We uncover in greeting each other; one sees Capuchins, Jesuits, Récollets. Provençal is the dominant language... the cabarets are open day and night where one plays, makes good cheer and dances after the French, Greek, and Turkish styles.¹⁹

This was undoubtedly an exaggerated and Eurocentric point of view, but Izmir does appear to have been a more cosmopolitan city than, for example, Aleppo, where *esraf* (descendants of the prophet Muhammad) formed a politically influential, conservative element.²⁰

The reference to “Monuments of Antiquity” in the title of Drummond’s *Travels* suggests that the work intended to make a substantial contribution to the Western knowledge about ancient Anatolia by supplying his readers with details about the remnants of the Greeks and the Romans. Unfortunately this is not the case at all. Instead, Drummond limited his section about Izmir to a brief sketch of the people he met there, and some trips to the countryside.

Drummond met several merchants in Izmir, both fellow Britons and other Europeans. For example, he met the Dutch consul, Daniel Alexander de Hochepped, whose family dominated Dutch diplomacy in Izmir for much of the eighteenth century, but about who have received little scholarly attention. He had been born in the Anatolian port on 19 April 1689, the son of Daniel Jean de Hochepped, the Dutch consul there from 1688 to 1723, and Clara Catharina Colijer, the daughter of Justinus Colijer, the Dutch ambassador in Istanbul from 1668 to 1682. De Hochepped the younger had been appointed his father’s successor in 1724, so by the time Drummond met him the Dutchman was one of the most senior foreign representatives in Izmir.²¹ Over the years De Hochepped had procured a variety of medals and other antique curiosities, which Drummond merely described as a “very pretty collection”.

The traveller’s British acquaintances in Izmir included Thomas D’Aeth and Richard Lee, the principal factors of the Radcliffe family in London, who had a considerable trade with the Levant in this period.²² From 1736 until the mid-1750s a firm

¹⁹ W.H. Lewis, *Levantine Adventurer. The Travels and Missions of the Chevalier d’Arvieux, 1653-1697* (New York, 1963), 19, based on Paul Masson, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1986), 418.

²⁰ Herbert L. Bodman, *Political Factions in Aleppo, 1760-1826* (Chapel Hill, 1963); M.H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Consuls, Qadis, and Beratlis in the 18th Century* (Leiden, 2005), 136, 141-157.

²¹ O. Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers residerende in het buitenland 1584-1810* (The Hague, 1979), 334, 335.

²² On the Radcliffes’ trade with the Levant, see Ralph Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square. English Traders in the Levant in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1967), 85, where D’Eath & Lee are also mentioned. For other references to D’Aeth, see Elena Frangakis-Syrett’s contribution to this volume.

called Barker & D'Aeth was active in Galata, the quarter of Istanbul favoured by most Westerners, also in the service of the Radcliffes. The earliest records about the partnership of D'Aeth & Lee appear to date from 1748.²³ The factors themselves clearly also prospered, because Drummond reports that they had a country house at Sediköy ("Sedecui"), the village near Izmir where several burgeoning foreign merchants had summer retreats – and William Sherard had founded his botanical garden there. Drummond also made some trips with them to the river Meles, but they are not described in detail.²⁴

Lee appears to have been an avid collector of antiquities, having purchased a relief from Sardis in the early 1750s. One yard high and two yards long, it showed Medusa in the middle, with other figures on both sides. After it had remained unsold for a long time, because the price was too high, Lee eventually bought it for 50 *kuruş*. He later gave it to the Levant Company chaplain, Burdett, who sent it to England as a present to William Ponsonby, Lord Besborough. Burdett had acquired another relief, with a gladiator on it, for himself from the castle in Izmir. According to another traveller, Richard Chandler, the former consul in Izmir, George Boddington, was also active in the antiquities trade.²⁵ Lee may well have told Drummond about these activities (which Chandler later recorded in his letters to the Society of Dilettanti), but they are not mentioned in the *Travels*.²⁶

THE LODGE

It was usually the consul who received and entertained visiting compatriots, and so Drummond was invited by the British consul, Samuel Crawley, to attend a social assembly of the British community in Izmir. Drummond says little about the occasion, apart from the impression the ladies allegedly had got of him beforehand. According to Drummond,

as I had formed a lodge of free masons in the place, the ladies had conceived strange notions of my character; for I had been represented to them, by some priests, as a conjuror of the first magnitude, who had the devil at my command, and raised the dead by my diabolical incantations.²⁷

Only one more time does Drummond again speak explicitly about the lodge:

²³ For the exact location and dates of the relevant correspondence, see the online catalogue of the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies: Family and business papers and correspondence of the Radcliffe family of Hitchin Priory, 1538 - 1944 [DE/R/B142 - DE/R/B390]. The firm is also mentioned in Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*, 79.

²⁴ Alexander Drummond, *Travels through different Cities of Germany, Italy, Greece and several parts of Asia, as far as the Banks of the Euphrates* (London, 1754), 114.

²⁵ The Society of Dilettanti, London, Correspondence book G1, f. 172-73, Richard Chandler to the Society, 2 November 1764; *Ibid.*, f. 175-176: Chandler to the Society, 5 January 1765. Boddington was consul in Izmir from 1722 to 1733.

²⁶ Lee assisted Chandler on several occasions, offering him lodging at his house at Sediköy. According to Chandler, Lee rented the house from a Turk. Richard Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor 1764-1765* – edited and abridged by Edith Clay (London, 1971), 54, 71, 213, 217, 224.

²⁷ Drummond, *Travels*, 120.

As I have mentioned the lodge of free masons, I cannot help congratulating myself upon the opportunity I had of making so many worthy brethren in this place, and of forming the only lodge that is in the Levant, but my joy is still the greater, when I reflect that all the members are gentlemen of amiable characters, and must reciprocally reflect and receive honour in their association with the society of free and accepted masons. The lodge of Drummond Kilwinning, from Greenock, has reason to be proud of this her first daughter, and, I assure you, I am not a little vain of being the father of such a flock.²⁸

Comments like these make Drummond's *Travels* more personal and intriguing than many earlier travelogues. Drummond's section about Izmir tells us little about the port itself, or about the Western communities residing there, apart from the interests in antiquities of some of their individual members, which is already attested in the seventeenth century.²⁹ The only significant exception is the lodge of freemasons Drummond claimed to have founded in Izmir, which must have taken place in December 1744, or January 1745. Its name points to the link with the lodge Drummond had joined in Scotland, 'Greenock Kilwinning No. 12'.

Freemasonry already existed for a long time prior to the eighteenth century, but it only took flight during the Enlightenment. The esoteric society soon spread throughout Great Britain, the American colonies, as well as Europe. According to *Tesviyye*, the periodical of the Grand Lodge of Turkey, the first lodge of freemasons was in the Ottoman Empire was founded by Levantines (mainly of Genoese origin) near Galata tower in Istanbul in the early 1720. Said Mehmed Çelebi, the ambassador to France in 1740, is widely considered the "first known Turkish Mason", while two European converts to Islam he worked with, Ibrahim Müteferrika and Ahmad Paşa Bonneval, are also thought to have been freemasons. The earliest concrete evidence of a French masonic ritual in the Ottoman capital dates from 1747. A year later Sultan Mahmud II made freemasonry illegal in the Ottoman Empire. "An English lodge was sacked by the police, but as the British ambassador gave notice in due time, the list of members had been rescued", *Tesviyye* reports, but it offers no references to any sources, so it is difficult to assess their reliability. The magazine also mentions Drummond, but again offers no further details.³⁰

The publications of Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire provide more information. Already in 1738 there were reports of lodges of freemasons in Aleppo and Izmir, but once again it is not clear whether they are reliable. Beaurepaire has described the expansion of the chief trading lodge of Marseilles, 'Saint-Jean d'Ecosse', which was founded in 1751 by a freemason from Edinburgh. In the decades that followed several "daughter lodges" were founded throughout the Mediterranean. In Istanbul it was called 'Saint-Jean d'Ecosse de la Parfaite Union', in Salonica 'Saint-Jean d'Ecosse de l'Amitié' and in Izmir a lodge was established under the name of 'Saint-Jean d'Ecosse des Nations Réunies'. Although the

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

²⁹ Sherard, for example, collected coins, medals and antiquities in Izmir, which he sent home to many of his friends.

³⁰ Celil Layikteş, 'The Hystory [sic] of Freemasonry in Turkey', *Pietre-Stones Review of Freemasonry*, www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/layikteş.html (dated 09/04/2001).

dates provided by Beaurepaire remain ambiguous, the lodge in the Ottoman capital appears to have been established in or before 1767, while the earliest reference to the one in Izmir is dated 1776.³¹ This suggests that, if Drummond indeed founded a lodge of freemasons in Izmir, it was one of the earliest traceable lodges in the Ottoman Empire.

While there is no reason to doubt that Alexander Drummond indeed visited Izmir, the marginality of its description in the *Travels* raises several questions. After all, it would have been easy for Drummond to publish more original material about Izmir and its surroundings. For example, it cannot have escaped his attention that geographical names had changed many times in the area, which confused many European travellers and historians, many of whom continued to rely on Strabo and Pliny. Even a list of only the most important place names, listing the ancient sources and providing the Ottoman name, would have been useful, but Drummond's section on Izmir offers none of these things.³² Moreover, Drummond only stayed in Izmir for two months, departing already on 22 January 1745. His *Travels* suggest that he never returned there, which seems strange, if he had just founded the first Scottish lodge of freemasons outside Scotland there. Drummond described himself as the "father" of the "flock" and named the lodge after himself, so he was probably its Master. Did he establish the lodge and then simply abandon it? An examination of the rest of Drummond's *Travels* and rare archival records provide some answers.

AFTER IZMIR: DRUMMOND'S CAREER IN SYRIA

After his stay in Izmir, Drummond was a passenger on *Thames*, a British merchantman and privateer which captured several French vessels, for a number of weeks. This was the middle of the War of the Austrian Succession, in which France and England were on opposite sides, and Drummond described the corsair activities he witnessed with boyish pleasure. At the end of January 1745 the ship called to port at Alexandretta (İskenderun). Drummond's description of the port town, which had only 150 inhabitants, is worth quoting, because, despite his instant dislike to Alexandretta, he would settle there not long afterwards. In Drummond's opinion the port was

so wretched and vile as to be unworthy of notice, were it not the marine or port of Aleppo, from which, however, it stands at the distance of seventy or fourscore miles. It is extremely unwholesome in consequence of the marshes that surround it, though these might be drained in one summer, and converted into charming fields, could any mortal be secured in the property for a reasonable number of years, after he should have laid out his money, but from brutes the actions of men are not to be expected.³³

³¹ Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, 'Le cosmopolitisme maçonnique dans les villes méditerranéennes au XVIIIe siècle', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 67, 25 Juillet 2005 [<http://revel.unice.fr/cmedi/document.html?id=122>]; Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, *L'Autre et le Frère. L'étranger et la franc-maçonnerie en France au XVIIIe siècle*, (Paris, 1998), 311-335, esp. 316, 325. I am indebted to Prof. Beaurepaire for sending me these publications.

³² Chandler announced his intention to produce a map of the area representing both the ancient names from Homer, Strabo, and other authors, as well as the Ottoman names. The Society of Dilettanti, London, Correspondence book G1, f. 175-176: 'Chandler to the Society', 5 January 1765.

³³ Drummond, *Travels*, 123.

Drummond subsequently sailed to Tripoli in Syria on the *Thames*, which took several more French prizes. The legitimacy of these captures was contested by the Ottoman authorities in Tripoli, as a result of which Drummond was put on house arrest in the residence of the British consul for nine days. It is not clear how long Drummond subsequently remained on board the *Thames*, but he eventually returned to Cyprus, where he had stayed for some time prior to his visit to Izmir.

At the beginning of May 1745 a French ship, *La vierge de grace*, arrived in Cyprus from Rhodes “with part of the Harem, or ladies belonging to the Seraglio of the pacha of Aleppo”. At the time two English ships of war were cruising in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the French captain was afraid they might intercept him on the last leg of the journey. This, at least, is what Drummond reported, who was waiting for a neutral ship to take him to Alexandretta. Realizing that it would be disastrous for the British trade if the ship were taken by British corsairs, the English consul in Cyprus, George Wakeman, persuaded the governor-general of the island, ‘Abdullah Paşa, to allow Drummond to escort the ship as a passenger. If the French vessel would encounter British corsairs, Drummond would explain the situation and persuade them to allow the ship to continue unharmed. Carrying letters of recommendation to the *beylerbeyi* of Aleppo from both Wakeman and ‘Abdullah Paşa, Drummond set sail on 15 May. After the ship had arrived safely at Alexandretta, the ladies of the harem disembarked, occupying the Levant Company house there, while arrangements were being made for their transport to Aleppo. During this time several “little civilities passed” between Drummond and the harem’s *kahya*, the black eunuch in charge. Most of the building was reserved for the ladies, but Drummond stayed in a separate room, without a view of the women’s quarters.

Through the middle of the house is a pretty broad passage like a gallery, which affords an agreeable cool walk, there being a door at each end. The use of this thoroughfare was demanded by the ladies; so that, as our chambers were detached from it, we were obliged to give notice to the black or deformed keeper, whenever we wanted to go out or come in, that the women might have time to retire.

Drummond subsequently made his first trip to Aleppo, the citadel of which reminded him of Edinburgh castle “from the west”. He met several European consuls and merchants there, and was granted an audience by the governor-general of Aleppo, Ahmad Paşa, who was known as *Kör Vizier*, because he was blind (T. *kör*). It was from Aleppo that Drummond made trips to various ancient sites in Syria, which are described in detail in his book. Several English merchants occasionally joined him, as did the Levant Company chaplain in Aleppo, John Hemming. Drummond’s descriptions of Syrian antiquities later provoked the following comment from James Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, who visited Syria around 1770:

I visited the ancient Byblus, and bathed with pleasure in the river Adonis. All here is classic ground. I saw several considerable ruins of Grecian architecture,

all very much defaced. These are already published by Mr. Drummond, and therefore I left them, being never desirous of interfering with the works of others.³⁴

By May 1747 Alexander Drummond was back in Alexandretta, having been appointed vice-consul there. A letter to Lord Cathcart of 31 March 1748 describes how the appointment had come about. During his visits to Aleppo Drummond had asked the British community to think of him in case a position became vacant. The community had the right to suggest candidates for certain posts, so their support would be invaluable. At the same time Drummond's friends in Britain were working on his behalf. When the office of vice-consul in Aleppo's principal port subsequently became available, Cathcart recommended Drummond to the British community in Aleppo as a result of the endeavours of Drummond's friends. The community in Aleppo unanimously supported the suggestion. Drummond, who was in Cyprus at the time, subsequently wrote to the Levant Company from the island, while the merchants in Aleppo urged their friends in England to support his election. The Levant Company appears to have demanded that bail be given in London, which Drummond only found out when it was officially too late. He was appointed nevertheless, because in the meantime some of his friends had stood surety for him. It is not clear who they were, because Drummond did not know either when he wrote his letter to Cathcart, and there is no further mention of them in the correspondence, but Cathcart appears to have urged Sir Everard Fawkener, the British ambassador to the Porte, to use his influence in Drummond's favour.³⁵

Some time later Drummond complained to Cathcart about "the malignancy of the air [at Alexandretta], which has much hurt my constitution, & the horrid savages that surround, & daily plague us, [which] make me live as in Hell, or a state of Damnation on Earth". He expressed similar sentiments in a series of letters to various friends in England and Scotland. They included the Duke of Argyle, the Earl and Countess of Bute, the Earl of Leven, the Earl of Morton, the Earl of Loudoun, and Lieutenant-General John Campbell. Drummond also wrote to the Earl of Glencairn in Scotland. Usually he started his letters simply by recording the date and his place of residence, but by the first week of May 1748 he was so desperate that he named it "Alexandretta in Syria or Hell on Earth" in most of his letters written that week. To Campbell he wrote that "I call this place Hell ... & the people thro' this whole country are worse than Devils".³⁶

Exactly a year after having arrived in Alexandretta to occupy his new post, the vice-consul explicitly asked his correspondents to arrange his transfer. In a letter to the Earl of Leven, for example, he complained about the climate and asked to be given an appointment elsewhere. He did not suggest a new post yet, since this obviously had to be decided in England. About a year and a half later he was no longer this modest, writing to the Earl of Morton that "could my friends procure a seat at the board of Customs for me, I should think of myself happy."³⁷ About the same time the tone of Drummond's letters

³⁴ James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773* in 5 vols. (Edinburgh, 1790), vol. I, liii.

³⁵ BL, Add MS 45,932, p. 159/f. 80r: Drummond to Lord Cathcart, 31 March 1748.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 195/f. 99r: Drummond to Lieut. Gen. John Campbell, 6 May 1748.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 476-478/f. 235v-236v: Drummond to the Earl of Morton: Aleppo, 18 September 1749.

changed subtly. In May 1748 he had described the inhabitants of the Syrian coast as “more horrid monsters than I had nohow [sic] were to be found in human shape”,³⁸ but by April of the next year he called them only “demi savages”.³⁹ Moreover, instead of writing from Hell on Earth, Drummond now began to call his residence “Drummond Castle in Alexandretta”.⁴⁰

The post of vice-consul in Alexandretta was unpopular and unhealthy, but it was lucrative.⁴¹ The Factor Marine’s annual salary was 2,000 *kuruş* or “Aleppo Dollars”, but there were several other means of income to supplement it.⁴² After all, Alexandretta was the central entrepot for Aleppo where all goods and people going to, and coming from the city were loaded. Packing animals and riding horses or camels often had to be arranged promptly and without prior notice. Travellers arriving in the port town who could not find immediate transport inevitably stayed at the vice-consular house, lodging there until they were able to move on. The new Levant Company chaplain, Thomas Dawes, and the new consul in Aleppo, William Kinloch, were forced to wait for three days on the Syrian coast, for example.⁴³ Stranded travellers like Dawes and Kinloch, and anchoring sailors depended on the Factor Marine’s hospitality and provisions, for which they undoubtedly compensated him financially. Their company was an added advantage for the vice-consul, whose solitary existence tended to be monotonous and, with few other European residents in the town, lonely. When he had guests, Drummond enjoyed playing backgammon and sharing the wine that seems to have flowed generously during his residence on the coast.⁴⁴

Drummond’s most important source of income consisted of the numerous assignments he received from British merchants, as well as those of other European communities in Aleppo. Already by the autumn of 1747 he had established a regular correspondence with most of the British merchants in Aleppo, as well as some of their Italian and French competitors. He was also in contact with his fellow vice-consuls on the Syrian coast, Edward Purnell in Latakia, Aleppo’s alternative sea port, and Thomas Crouch in Tripoli. His two dozen correspondents also included George Wakeman, the British consul in Cyprus and his Italian colleague on the island, Gerolamo Brigadi, who would later become the Venetian consul in Aleppo. Drummond conducted his correspondence in several languages, including Italian, French and Dutch – although the only letter in Dutch was actually addressed to one Captain Olaf Nielson, a Swede. His contacts further abroad included merchants in Izmir, Istanbul, Livorno, Marseilles, and many in Britain.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 194/f. 98v: Drummond to the Earl of Loudoun, 4 May 1748.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 411/f. 203r: Drummond to William Thompson, 15 April 1749.

⁴⁰ He did this for the first time in a letter to the Earl of Glencairn, dated 17 April 1749 in *Ibid.*, p. 414/f. 204v. In a letter of the same date to Sir Robert Menzies in Scotland the change is made even more explicit. Referring to himself in the third person, Drummond wrote to Menzies that “what Alex. formerly call’d Hell on Earth is now Drummond Castle in Alex.ta” *Ibid.*, p. 415/f. 205r. Only his brother he continued to remind of the “Syrian Hell” he was living in. *Ibid.*, p. 405/f. 205r: Alexander Drummond to George Drummond, 17 April 1749.

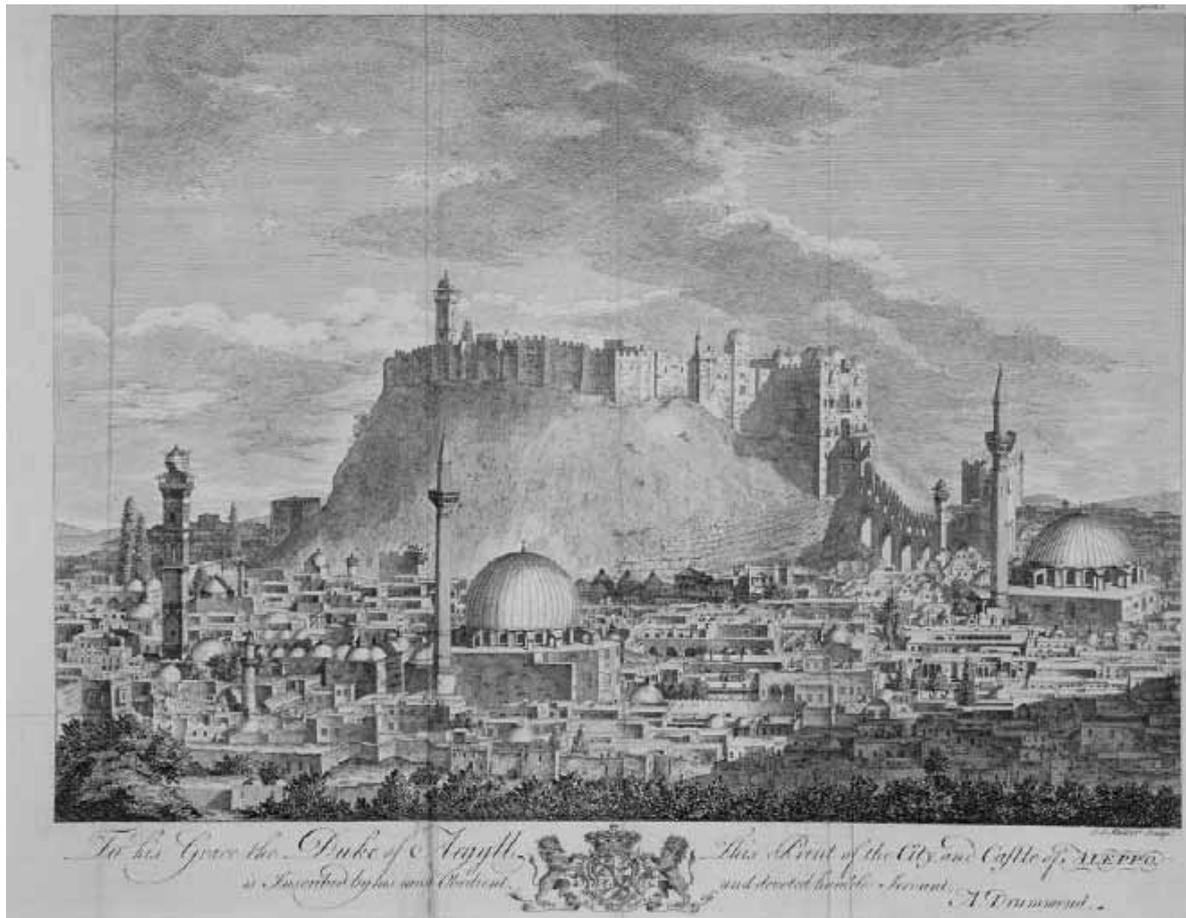
⁴¹ BL, MS Stowe 754, f. 43r: Thomas Dawes to Lyttelton, 1 January 1760.

⁴² After Drummond had left a dispute arose between his successor and the Levant Company over whether or not the annual sum received by the Factor Marine should be qualified as a salary. For unclear reasons, the Levant Company argued that it should not, while Drummond and his successor disagreed. See BL, Add MSS 45,933, f. 103v-104r: Drummond to the Levant Company, 23 October 1752.

⁴³ BL, MS Stowe 754, f. 43r: Thomas Dawes to Lyttelton, 1 January 1760.

⁴⁴ BL, Add MS 45,933, f. 3v: Drummond to Arthur Pollard, 3 February 1749/50.

In 1751 Alexander Drummond's prayers were finally answered. In a letter dated 28 June the Levant Company informed him that "upon the recommendation of your friends here, we have made choice of you to succeed Consul Pollard in the Office of Our Consul at Aleppo."⁴⁵ There can be little doubt that the people he had sent so many complaints to over the years had at last come to his rescue. As a token of his gratitude Drummond dedicated an engraving of the city of Aleppo in his *Travels* to the Duke of Argyll, his most notable patron.



The city and castle of Aleppo.
Drummond, *Travels*. Courtesy of the Arcadian Library, London.

⁴⁵ NA-UK, SP 105/118, 200: The Levant Company, London, to Alexander Drummond, Aleppo, 28 June 1751.

ANTIQUITIES

Although Drummond expressed no interest in trade in antiquities in Izmir, he participated in it actively in Syria. He even sent home several antique artefacts to powerful patrons there, like Burdett had done from Izmir. For example, when he was still vice-consul, Drummond sent a special gift to the man he evidently valued most as a patron, the Duke of Argyll. “In my last letter”, Drummond wrote in April 1749,

I gave the inscription upon a stone brought from Teybek, mentioned by Sellarus in his *History of Palmyra*, and I now have the honour to send your Grace the stone, which Mr [William] Russell has promised to take particular care of, together with a box wherein are some cedar cones.⁴⁶

Drummond had compared the stone with the text published by Abednego Sellar (1646?-1705), discovering that the author gave the same words, but in very different characters, omitting, furthermore, the last two lines.⁴⁷ While the stone was on its way to England, Drummond sent a copy of its text to Dr. Murdoch McKenzie, the physician to the British community in Istanbul. Drummond had met McKenzie several years earlier in Florence, where they had been introduced to each other by Dr. Patrick Oliphant, who was on his way to Basra. During one of his visits to Drummond in Alexandretta, William Russell suggested to him that the Scots physician in the Ottoman capital would probably also be interested in the text. Moreover, Russell suggested that McKenzie might even have useful ideas about the mysterious final lines, which several rabbis in Aleppo had examined without success.⁴⁸ In the summer of 1751 the Duke of Argyll received another remnant of antiquity from Syria. Drummond sent him “a marble bust of Jupiter, which I had from the Greek Bishop of Hamah, the ancient Epiphania, it was lately found in a grave, whence I suppose it one of the Penates of the person who was buried there.”⁴⁹

Drummond’s dispatch of antiquities to the Duke of Argyll was not only an attempt to secure the Duke’s continued patronage, it also shows that he participated in the intellectual fashion of his day of collecting and describing antiquities. Others equally felt obliged to take up these hobbies, which formed an additional source of income for most Europeans in Aleppo, too. For example, Hemming’s successor, the Rev. Thomas Dawes,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 415/205r: Drummond to the Duke of Argyll, 17 April 1749. William Russell was a brother of Alexander and Patrick Russell.

⁴⁷ A. Sellar, *The antiquities of Palmyra containing the history of the city, and its emperors, from its foundation to the present time: with an appendix of critical observations on the names, religion, and government of the country and a commentary on the inscriptions lately found there* (London, 1696).

⁴⁸ BL, Add MS 45,932, 431/213r.: ‘Drummond to Dr. Murdoch MacKenzie’, 26 April 1749. Drummond eventually published the text in his *Travels*. William Russell would later become Secretary to the Levant Company and Fellow of the Royal Society. He also had an important role in James Bruce’s travels. Russell was a (half-)brother of Alexander and Patrick Russell, the physicians at Aleppo and friends of Drummond, who published *The Natural History of Aleppo* in 1756. M.H. van den Boogert, ‘Patrick Russell and the Republic of Letters in Aleppo’, A. Hamilton et al. (eds), *The Republic of Letters and the Levant* (Leiden, 2005), 223-264.

⁴⁹ BL, Add MS 45,933, 71r: ‘Drummond to the Duke of Argyll’, 22 July 1751.

for example, wrote to Charles Lyttleton, the Dean of Exeter and future Bishop of Carlisle, that

I have lately, by way of variety, been dabbling in the study of medals, but am prevented from making any great progress, for want of proper books, tho' it is very probable, if I had them, I should soon grow tired, for it is a confounded dry piece of work: at present its novelty recommends it; one advantage I shall reap from it, will be to be able to form a tolerable judgement of the value of what is offered to me; Indeed this country is pretty well drained of its curiosities of ancient stamp, as almost every European had a commission to pick up what he can find; medals there are in abundance, mostly copper, a few silver, but few of any great value; almost all that are found are either very much defaced, or so common as not to be worth the purchase; however, I have picked up a few good ones & I hope in time to find others, that may be worth the attention of the curious.⁵⁰

Collecting coins was as popular as Dawes suggested, while some were interested in medals, too. A French merchant called Corneille Rose, for example, collected hundreds of coins over the course of his forty-five year stay in Aleppo. His sons, Antoine and André, who were born there, subsequently augmented and catalogued their father's collection in 1742, possibly with the aim of selling it. The catalogue of 90 pages, which started with Seleucus I Nicator and ended with Zenobia, exclusively lists antique medals.⁵¹ If it was indeed our Drummond who had enrolled in the University of Edinburgh in the 1730s, professor Mackie's course on Roman antiquities must have proved useful in Syria.

THE LODGE REVISITED

Alexander Drummond was consul in Aleppo for eight years. At the beginning of 1758 he announced his resignation to the Levant Company for health reasons, but he remained in office at least until June, the following year.⁵² He subsequently returned to Scotland, where he became Master of Canongate Kilwinning No. 2 and continued actively to take part in Masonic affairs.⁵³ He died in Edinburgh on 9 August 1769.⁵⁴

Drummond does not appear to have returned to Izmir after he had left in January 1745. Had he abandoned his lodge, or was the entire passage in the *Travels* possibly fictional? A reference in a letter to the Earl of Morton suggests a different solution. Drummond wrote that "we have a very pretty Society here, whereof I have the Honour to

⁵⁰ BL, Stowe 754, 84-86, esp. 85r: 'Dawes to Lyttelton', 1 March 1761.

⁵¹ BL, Add. MSS 4825: 'Catalogue des medailles antiques qui se trouvent dans le Cabinet des Srs Jean Antoine & André Rose frères d'Alep, ramassées par feu Mr Corneille Rose leur pere depuis quarante cinq ans, augmentées & expliquées pas ses dits fils à Alep 1742'.

⁵² NA-UK, SP 105/118, 383-384, 'Levant Company, London, to Porter, Constantinople', 21 April 1758; SP 105/118: 387, 'Levant Company, London, to Charles Smith Treasurer at Aleppo', 21 April 1758; SP 110/62 (1): 17r: 'Consular sentence of 7 June 1759 by Drummond'.

⁵³ See <http://www.pglglasgow.org.uk/>, especially the section on the history of the lodge.

⁵⁴ Turner, 'Drummond, Alexander (d. 1769)', 945.

be the father, and all of them desire to pay their fraternal duty to your Lordship”.⁵⁵ Drummond wrote the letter from Syria, so is that where the word “here” refers to? The records of the Grand Lodge of Scotland confirm that this was indeed the case.

“The Union Lodge from Drummond Kilwinning from Greenock” – the name exactly the same as in the *Travels* – was established at Aleppo on 30 November 1747, St. Andrew’s Day, the patron saint of Scotland in general, and of the Grand Lodge of Scotland in particular. Drummond was the Master of the lodge, but we know little about its members. Five members were recorded on 3 February 1748. The first was John Brand Kirkhouse, a Scottish merchant in Aleppo who later became chancellor of the British consulate there. The consulate’s concierge (officially called “chiaux” or “chous”), Henry King, was also member of the lodge. The remaining three members were only in Aleppo infrequently. The first was Valentine Fitzhugh, a merchant established in Istanbul, who was not a regular visitor in Aleppo. Edward Purnell, the British vice-consul at the Syrian port of Latakia, reported to the consulate in Aleppo, where he probably visited from time to time. Finally, the ship’s surgeon of the *Delawar*, Patrick Russell, called to port at Alexandretta a few times a year, to visit his brother, Alexander Russell, the Levant Company physician to the British community in Aleppo. Russell later succeeded his brother in that office, spending more than a decade in Syria.⁵⁶ Drummond’s correspondence suggests that the Levant Company Chaplain, Hemming, also joined the lodge in the course of 1748.⁵⁷

Alexander Drummond thus really did found the first chartered lodge outside Scotland, just not in Izmir, but in Aleppo. The charter (number 59) was signed four and a half years after the lodge was established, in St. John’s Chapel in Edinburgh on 8 April 1752. It is not clear when exactly the lodge became extinct, but it appears to have survived for at least half a century. It still existed in Aleppo in 1809, but no longer in 1816.⁵⁸

Why did Drummond boast of having founded a lodge of freemasons in Izmir in his *Travels*, when in reality it was located in Aleppo? The answer is probably that he did not. Although Drummond certainly wrote the raw material for his book himself, his manuscript was subsequently edited in Scotland. This was done at the request and expense of his brother, George Drummond, who paid a substantial sum to a ghost writer, the Scottish novelist, Tobias Smollett. Drummond’s manuscript was probably the first of several travel books Smollett edited between 1756 and 1770, and which included a travel account of his own, called *Travels through France and Italy* (1766). In a letter dated 27 May 1753 Smollett wrote that

⁵⁵ BL, Add MS 45,933, 476-478/235v-236v: ‘Drummond to the Earl of Morton’, Aleppo, 18 September 1749.

⁵⁶ van den Boogert, ‘Patrick Russell and the Republic of Letters in Aleppo’, *passim*.

⁵⁷ In his correspondence Drummond addressed his fellow freemasons as “brother”. Originally he did this only with the members of the lodge mentioned above, but in a letter to Hemming dated 27 October 1748 (BL, Add MSS 45,933, 269/132 v.) he addresses him as “Revd. Sir, not only this, but my very dear Brother”.

⁵⁸ George S. Draffen, *Scottish Masonic Records 1736-1950. A List of All the Lodges at Home and Abroad Chartered by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, Lodge Mother Kilwinning, Lodge Melrose St. John with the Dates of their Charters, Places of Meeting, Alterations in Numbers and Colour of Clothing* (Edinburgh, 1950), 8.

I yesterday met with Provost Drummond and took my leave of him after we had settled the manner of executing his brother's work. At parting, he told me that he left the whole to my management, and that he would entirely acquiesce in whatever I should claim by way of acknowledgement for my trouble. About a fortnight ago he gave me leave to draw upon him for fifty guineas at one month after date [...]. The other fifty guineas, I expect, will be earned in less than a month, and though Mr. Drummond desired me to write to him from time to time, I would not appear so meanly impatient as to demand this second moiety until he himself shall think proper to mention it.⁵⁹

We cannot compare Drummond's original with Smollett's version, because the manuscript appears to be lost, but the sum of 100 guineas suggests that Smollett rewrote it extensively. Furthermore, in the preface to a seven-volume *Compendium of Authentic and Entertaining Voyages*, Smollett described how he usually dealt with his original materials. Smollett tended to "polish the stile, strengthen the connexion of incidents, and animate the narration, wherever it seemed to languish." Drummond's *Travels* were probably no exception. Moreover, Smollett had no qualms about taking passages from one location and transferring them to another. In his own *Travels*, for example, he not only plagiarized an Italian guidebook about Rome, he transferred the passage in question to the section on Nice, suggesting that he made his observations there.⁶⁰ The same appears to have happened with Drummond's passage about the lodge he founded, which Smollett probably transferred from the part on Aleppo to flesh out the section on Izmir.

CONCLUSION

Eighteenth-century Izmir was not the place where one of the earliest confirmed freemasons' lodges in the Ottoman Empire was established. After Alexander Drummond had finished the manuscript of his *Travels*, he first had it bound in Aleppo, and then sent it to his brother, George, in Edinburgh. It was George Drummond who employed Tobias Smollett to polish the manuscript, giving him a free hand as well as the right to claim as much credit for his labours as he wanted. Smollett probably made considerable changes to the *Travels*, for which he accepted a handsome fee, but he did not include any references to his role in the printed work. For this reason the connection between Drummond's *Travels* and Smollett has remained unnoticed until recently. It is not clear whether Alexander Drummond was aware of his brother's initiative, but it seems likely that he only saw the actual changes when he received a copy of his book in Syria. We can only guess why Smollett transferred the passage about the founding of the lodge to the section on Izmir. Was it simply a matter of balancing the limited account of Izmir by inserting material from the much more voluminous sections on Syria? Or was it George Drummond, who instructed him to do this? A prominent freemason himself, the elder Drummond may have been aware of the sultan's prohibition of freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire of 1748. If so, he must have wanted to prevent his younger brother running foul of the authorities again, in distant Syria this time, where he would have been able to do even less for him than he had been at the start of Alexander's career.

⁵⁹ Lewis M. Knapp (ed.), *The Letters of Tobias Smollett* (Oxford, 1970), 27.

⁶⁰ Percy G. Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars 1660-1800* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962), 88-90.

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