

THE DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATION
OF ENGLISH TRADE TO ASIA: 1553-1605

by

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ABSTRACT

Two primary motives behind Elizabethan trade with Asia were the desire to tap directly the markets of eastern Asia and the need to maintain avenues of distribution for English goods which were jeopardized by the decline of Antwerp. Though the first effort to reach eastern Asia by sea in 1553 failed it resulted in the formation of the Muscovy Company. Subsequently, that body attempted a land route and though it failed again the outcome was the beginning of direct English trade with Persia. Under the auspices of the Muscovy Company, trade was conducted with Persia for 20 years and seemed finally to be on the verge of resulting in a permanent establishment when it was brought to an end in 1580 by a political controversy between the Russian and Ottoman governments.

By September 1581 the Muscovy Company's Asian trade had been replaced by that of the Turkey Company's trade with the Ottoman Empire, using the Mediterranean sea route. The timing of the Turkey Company's appearance was probably determined in part by the political troubles in Persia and similar troubles which interfered with Anglo-Spanish trade. The Turkey merchants

traded in a joint-stock under a monopoly of seven years duration granted by letters patent. During the same period another group of merchants held letters patent which granted them a monopoly of trade by sea with Venice and the Venetian dominions to last for six years. This Venice Company conducted a regulated trade based mainly on the import of currants.

The two letters patent expired at about the same time and the companies subsequently decided to unite and form a single trading body encompassing both monopolies. This Levant Company, chartered in 1592 for 12 years, had a somewhat broader membership base and was organized as a regulated company. Because the Company raised large sums of money by way of an imposition on currants imported by non-members, the patent was called into question and lifted at the end of eight years. A new patent in December 1600 transferred the income from these impositions to the crown at the rate of £4000 per year. Controversies over these impositions and over the payment of the ambassador in Constantinople resulted in the voluntary surrender of that patent and its replacement in 1605 by the charter of monopoly which, in effect, remained in force until 1825.

The English were continually interested in, and periodically attempted, to trade directly with east Asian markets. But it was not until the Dutch presented effective competition that any serious effort was made by the merchant community to organize a trade based on the sea route around Africa. This resulted in letters patent of 31 December 1600 which created the East India Company.

Throughout the period under consideration the companies were continuously faced with several problems. The need to secure a set of formal privileges from the government in whose territory they wished to trade; the need, consequent upon the first, to maintain some degree of formal diplomatic representation with those governments, and thus, the need to work closely with the English government; the need to maintain in those places where they traded, a permanent commercial establishment; and finally, the need to solve the problem of how to acquire the purchasing power to conduct an unfavorably balanced trade in an area where payment in hard money was favored over payment in goods.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chap. I	Introduction	6
Chap. II	The Muscovy Company's Persian Trade	65
Chap. III	The Origins of the Turkey Company	108
Chap. IV	The Turkey Company	155
Chap. V	The Venice Company	223
Chap. VI	The Making of the Levant Company	274
Chap. VII	The Levant Company and the Origins of the East India Company	313
Appendices:		
A.	Biographical Sketches	385
B.	Incoming cargoes of the Levant Trade	411
C.	English Shipping to the Mediterranean 1572-1604	423
Bibliography		464
Tables:		
I	A numerical measure of the instability of total annual London cloth exports	20
II	Annual Export of Short Cloths from London	23
III	Export of Kerseys from London	52
IV	Spices unladed at London and Southampton	56
V	The Turkey Company's Shipping	215
VI	Subsidy Assessments	386
VII	Shipping List	430
Graph of Short Cloth Exports from London		16

CHAPTER I

Introduction

For future historians one of the great phenomena of the twentieth century will have been the dismantling of the Asian and African empires created by the Atlantic nations of Europe during the past few centuries. The most powerful and perhaps most influential of those empires was that put together by the English. Today, in mid-twentieth century Britain, there is almost nothing left of it and one of the pressing political issues the British government periodically faces is the extent to which it should continue to maintain its political and military presence in Asia - or to use the term that is a favorite of the English "east of Suez". It is four centuries since the English first presented themselves in Asia and their active and continuous efforts were first directed that way. Those efforts, in their sixteenth century origins, were primarily commercial in content, though they had political and military overtones. Since then much has been written about all aspects of the British in Asia, though most of it takes up a detailed, serious consideration beginning only with the English in India in the seventeenth century. This is

not surprising since the English East India Company - the instrument of English presence in India - was certainly one of the most spectacular and influential commercial organizations in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was also one for which there is extant an immense quantity of documentary material.

In the sixteenth century there were few if any Englishmen who thought in terms of empire. Those interested in Asia were mainly businessmen and were concerned to do what they could and what they thought necessary to insure the continued, profitable functioning of their capital investments. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, this had led them, in the political arena, only to the point where they possessed somewhat precarious privileges to trade in some Asian territories and had a few diplomatic representatives to look after their interests. They also had traveled far and explored much, by land and sea, from the 1550's, in order to find the most profitable ways in which to use their capital. There was a unity in their activities, defined by their never ending desire to reach the markets of eastern Asia. But the efforts to realize that desire can be examined separately under the headings of the Persian

trade of the Muscovy Company, the west Asian trade of the Turkey and Levant Companies, and the foundation of the East India Company in 1600. It is with these and particularly the second theme, that this study will be concerned.

There has been some historical work produced which deals with Elizabethan interest in Asia. Sir William Foster¹ has written what is primarily a narrative of travel and exploration into Asia in a very interesting and useful book which covers all the various English attempts to reach India. The Persian expeditions of the Muscovy Company have been dealt with by E. V. Vaughan² in what is mainly a straight forward narrative of these expeditions. T. S. Willan, in his history of the Russia Company,³ takes notice of the Persian trade but it is peripheral to his main concern. The Levant trade has been dealt with at greater length. A. L. Rowland,⁴ in a work similar to that of Vaughan's on the Persian ex-

1 England's Quest of Eastern Trade, 1933.

2 "English Trading Expeditions Into Asia Under the Authority of the Muscovy Company (1557-81)", in Studies in the History of English Commerce in the Tudor Period, 1912.

3 Early History of the Russia Company, 1553-1603, 1956.

4 "England and Turkey: The Rise of Diplomatic and Commercial Relations" in Studies in English Commerce and Exploration in the Reign of Elizabeth, 1924.

peditions, attempts no more than a narrative history. The two studies of the Levant Company by A. C. Wood and Mordecai Epstein⁵ deal only superficially with the trade under Elizabeth. The latter is mainly useful for a few documents printed in the appendices. The former is mainly concerned with the Company from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.

Two tasks will be attempted in the following pages. First, to fill in or supply the narrative history of this trade which has not so far been presented and second, where possible to analyse and make some critical comments on the problems inherent in the trade and how they were met by the merchants concerned. For both tasks the most important means will be a critical re-examination of sources already known. This is justified on the grounds that for the most part the previous writers on this subject have made only casual and superficial use of the documentary evidence. It has sufficed for them to present an exposition of the trade but not an explanation of it. There are gaps even in the exposition. For example, the Venice Company, which became an integral

5 A History of the Levant Company, 1935 and The English Levant Company, Its Foundation and its History to 1640, 1908.

part of the Levant Company, has never been adequately presented. Making closer and more critical use of material already known and cited, a fuller and more coherent account than hitherto is presented in Chapter ^v~~IV~~. Similarly, re-examining old material in the same manner, an account is given of the origins of both the Turkey and Levant Companies in Chapters III and VI. No attempt is made to give an explicit narrative of the Russia Company's Persian trade because that has been done in some detail. But in Chapter II the six expeditions into Persia are re-examined with the object of pointing out and discussing some of the problems faced by the English in a commercial enterprise in Asia. To the extent possible, these same issues are followed up in Chapters ^{IV}~~III~~ and VII for the differing conditions of Asian trade under the Turkey and Levant Companies. Aside from new light shed by known documents there is that cast by new documents. On the one hand these are scattered items found in expected and unexpected places; some previously overlooked altogether, some whose significance had been missed. On the other hand there are the results of a systematic search through the surviving official government records kept in the Public Record Office. In addition to the State Papers - which really

are included in the remarks above - the most important are those found in the various departments of the Exchequer and in the High Court of Admiralty. Between them they have provided much of the material for the list of Mediterranean shipping in Appendix C. From the former has been learned most of what is known about the size and nature of cargoes in the Mediterranean.

It is essential at the outset to make clear certain limitations on the study that is to follow. These stem from two shortcomings in the evidence. First, the survival of the official, government records of trade has been so haphazard that there is seldom found the same kind of data for more than two consecutive years. Second, there has been virtually no survival at all of the private records of the companies and merchants that conducted this trade to Asia. A great part of the extant evidence was generated originally out of the formal relations between the merchants and companies and the crown and its officials. Thus there are questions which cannot be answered. For example, what was the basis upon which decisions were made in London about the kinds and quantities of goods ^{which} were sent out each year? How was it decided where the ships would go in the Mediterranean? Though it is known where a great many of them did go, it

is only possible to suggest why they went to particular places in different years. Knowledge of the total movement of goods and money both inward and outward is not known for even one year during the sixteenth century. Thus questions of price structure, of changes in investment from year to year, and all the other questions which one might ask about the internal functioning of a commercial enterprise cannot be raised here. A model for the analysis of an early business enterprise in Asia based on the kind of records that are missing for the Elizabethan period is to be found in the recent study of the East India Company by Dr. K. N. Chaudhuri.⁶ For the earlier period, under consideration here, the historian has to be content to observe from the outside. With this limitation it is still possible to offer greater knowledge and understanding of this trade in the sixteenth century than has been done to the present. Questions about why the trade came into existence when it did, where it did and in the manner it did can be asked and reasonable answers provided. Something of the nature of this organization can be exposed, and more particularly, why that organization went through several changes. It is possible,

6 The English East India Company, 1965.

viewing from the outside, to say something of the interdependence between company and government. Finally, it is possible to raise some question about the overall problems the merchants faced in attempting for the first time to initiate a trade outside the confines of Europe.

It was pointed out above that English commercial relations with Asia during the second half of the sixteenth century can be conveniently subsumed under three headings; the Persian trade, the Levant trade and the East India trade. The former and latter of these were of considerable interest and importance and will be dealt with, but the story of Anglo-Asian trade under Queen Elizabeth is primarily the story of the Turkey and Levant Companies.

The Turkey Company stands apart from other chartered trading companies of the Elizabethan period by virtue of its joint-stock financial organization and its role as the transmitter of Asian commodities to England. This is not to say that it was the only joint-stock enterprise of the period nor that it was the only medium through which Asian commodities reached England. It was, however, the only such company founded before 1600

that carried on a continuous, successful trade and whose express purpose was to deal in Asian commodities. The nearest rival for the above claims is the Russia Company, which was chartered in 1555 with a joint-stock capital and which traded into Persia from about 1560. The events which led to the founding of the Russia Company were inspired by the desire of the English to reach eastern Asia but the company, itself, was not founded for the purpose of carrying on a trade with Asia. It did carry on such a trade, which lasted for about 20 years, but this represented only a small portion of its total investment. The only other company trading specifically outside the boundaries of Europe was the Barbary Company founded in 1585 to trade with Morocco and organized on a regulated basis.⁷ The best known overseas enterprises of the Elizabethan period, which ostensibly had Asia as their objective, were those led by such persons as Frobisher, Cavendish, Lancaster, and others. However, they will not be considered here in the context of Anglo-Asian trade because it is questionable whether they were serious mercantile enterprises. An examination of this doubt is taken up in Chapter VII.

7 T. S. Willan, Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade, 1959, pp. 99f.

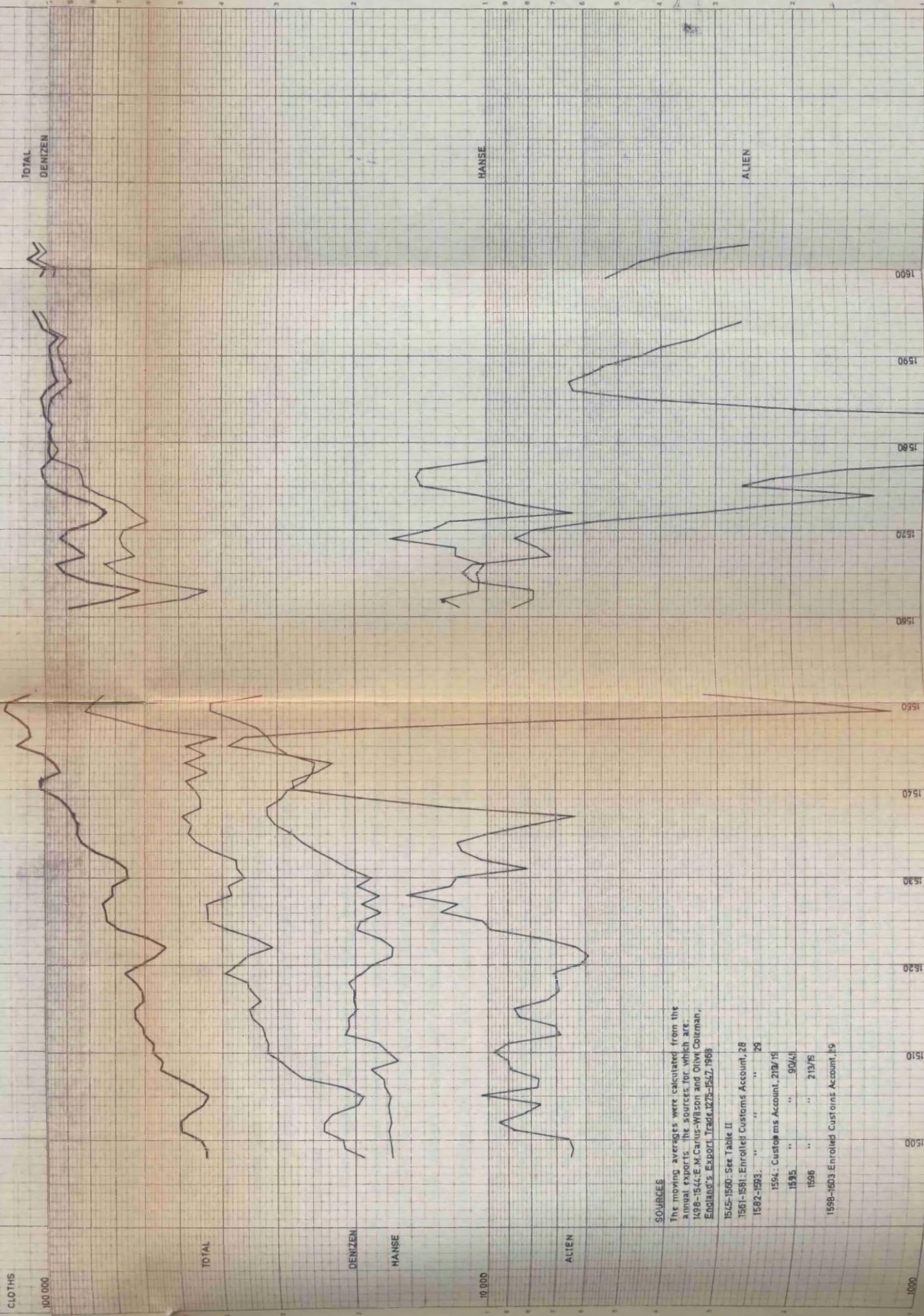
Though this Anglo-Asian trade in general and the Turkey Company, in particular, can be distinguished by a combination of purpose and financial organization, it would be a distortion of perspective to focus sharply on this singularity too soon. Failure first to take up a consideration of English export trade in general would obscure the fact that this direct trade with Asia, which came to be a major factor in London's economic life⁸ and ultimately developed into an empire, was, in the sixteenth century, only a minor consequence of a major re-orientation of English overseas trade which took place during the 1560's and 1570's. An understanding of this re-orientation will be facilitated by first examining England's export trade during the period in question.

The history of English exports in the third quarter of the century is, perhaps, best seen in relation to a general view of the entire century. It is an accepted generalization that cloth was dominant among English export commodities and that London was dominant among English ports. Thus the figures for London cloth exports

8 K. N. Chaudhuri, "Treasure and Trade Balance: the East India Company's Export Trade, 1660-1720", Econ. H.R., vol. xxi, 1968, p. 480.

EXPORT OF SHORT CLOTH FROM LONDON: 1498-1603

3-YEAR MOVING AVERAGE



SOURCES
 The moving averages were calculated from the annual exports. The sources for which are:
 1498-1544: E. M. Carus-Wilson and Orvi Coikman, England's Export Trade, 1475-1547, 1968
 1545-1560: See Table II
 1561-1581: Enrolled Customs Account, 28
 1582-1593: " " " " 29
 1594: Customs Account, 213/15
 1595: " " " " 90/61
 1596: " " " " 213/15
 1598-1603: Enrolled Customs Account, 29

reflect the general course of English trade.⁹ There has been some criticism of the reliance on cloth exports and in particular London cloth exports as an indicator of the development of English trade by Profs. Lawrence Stone and J. D. Gould.¹⁰ They both take figures for the number of sacks of wool exported during the century, convert these into equivalent cloths per sack, add that to the actual number of cloths entered in the petty customs accounts, to arrive at a figure for total woolen

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- 9 The generalization about the export of cloth was first highlighted by F. J. Fisher, "Commercial Trends and Policy in Sixteenth Century England", Econ. H.R., vol. x, 1940, pp. 96ff.
- 10 Lawrence Stone, "State Control in Sixteenth Century England", Econ. H.R., vol. xvii, 1947. J. D. Gould, The Great Debasement, 1970. Prof. Gould's book appeared after all the research on this Introduction had been completed by the present writer. His work is concerned primarily with the Great Debasement itself and is a detailed analysis of monetary policy and mint activity during that period. In the later part of the book Prof. Gould presents an analysis of woolen exports in light of his foregoing discussion of the monetary situation. He presents there much of the same material that follows in this Introduction up to the accession of Queen Elizabeth including Table II. In general Prof. Gould's conclusions do not detract from any of the points made here. Where there are points at variance they are taken up separately. It should be pointed out that neither Prof. Gould nor the present writer were aware of each other's work while research was in progress. Thus in so far as the present work is concerned it will stand as original work and no reference will be made to the same research done by Prof. Gould except where there is a point of difference.

exports for the first half of the century. On the basis of the series so compiled it is contended that England actually experienced very little growth in total woolen exports. This is undeniably true and any analysis of sixteenth century English economic life must take this observation into consideration. But the fact remains that the export of cloth as opposed to wool and grown in volume considerably by mid-century and then maintained itself roughly at the level reached in the 1540's throughout the second half of the century. The exigencies of the export of this cloth acutely exercised the Merchant Adventurers in the 1550's, 60's, and 70's; the re-orientation of English trade after 1560 was largely focused on the disposition of this cloth; and finally, it was this English cloth and not English wool which found markets throughout Europe and in some cases throughout the world. An attempt to emphasize the relatively stable level of total woolen exports at the expense of rising cloth exports can only result in the obfuscation of a major development in the overseas trade of the Tudor period.

Sixteenth century London cloth exports were characterized by a long term growth lasting until about mid-century. Then from 1560 to 1575 they showed fluctuations greater than any previously experienced which ended with

a sharp rise followed by virtual stagnation for the remainder of the century. It is convenient to look at these fluctuations during four separate periods. The first was the growth during the first four decades of the century, the second was the period of the debasement of the coinage, the third was a period of re-orientation in English export trade, and the last the latter part of Elizabeth's reign. Though the fluctuations of the different periods can be seen by an inspection of the annual figures, it is possible to present a fairly simple measure of this instability through some statistical analysis which makes the picture clearer. The method used was to calculate the amplitudes between succeeding turning points in the annual movements of cloth exports, then to take an average of these amplitudes for different periods during the century for purposes of comparison. The results of these calculations are shown in Table I. It can be seen from the table that at no time during the sixteenth century could the annual exports of cloth have been described as stable. At best, during the first period, it could be expected that on an average of every two years the level of cloth exports would rise or fall by about 17% from its previous high or low point. Similarly, during the last quarter of the century there was

TABLE I

A numerical measure of the instability of total annual London cloth exports[†]

Inclusive dates	Avg. amplitude between turning points	Avg. period of turning points
1497-1541	17.3%	1.8 years
1542-1552	28.7%	1.6 "
1560-1576 ⁺⁺	66.3%	2.7 "
1577-1604	15.7%	1.2 "

+ The calculations are based on the annual cloth exports from London the sources for which are given in Table II and the graph ^{on facing} p. 16 .
It should be noted that within each of these periods there was a wide spread in the sizes of the amplitudes. During the first and last periods this spread was from 2.2% to 48.2% and during the middle periods from 36.9% to 143%.

++ Incomplete returns account for this seven year break.

an average change of 16% nearly every year. However, by contrast, during the debasement this instability increased to changes of about 29% every year and a-half. Finally, during the first fifteen years of Elizabeth's reign changes of 66% could be expected about every two and a-half years. Even in a century when merchants ordinarily must have been accustomed to the unpredictable affecting their trade - adverse winds delaying their sailing times, political conflicts closing their ports, and royal needs debasing their money - the middle decades of the sixteenth century

probably seemed especially uncertain and trying times for mercantile pursuits.

Both the long term growth of the first half of the century and the fluctuations of the third quarter are said to have been largely functions of England's economic dependence on Antwerp.¹¹ The growth of the first half of the century though slow in the long run was not steady. It was marked by periods of changing rate of annual increase. These changes have been attributed to the depreciation of the coinage begun in in the 1520's and continued into the 1550's.¹² Another analysis of this same phenomenon categorically denied this attribution and emphasized the relation between changing market conditions in Germany and the fluctuations in English cloth exports.¹³ A recent analysis of the debasement of English money and the course of the London-Antwerp exchange supports a de-emphasis of their effect on movements in cloth exports.¹⁴ Though the evidence seems to support this de-emphasis it is difficult to understand how a depreciation in the rate of exchange from 26/8 Fl to 13/4 Fl per pound sterling between 1526

11 Fisher, op. cit., p. 97. 12 Ibid., pp. 99-101.

13 Stone, op. cit., p. 100.

14 Gould, op. cit., pp. 132 + 33.

and 1551¹⁵ could have had no effect at all on the overseas market for English commodities. Table I shows that during the debasement there was a greater instability in cloth exports than prior to it. It also shows, however, that the greatest instability in cloth exports was experienced after the coinage had been returned to normal. A close look at the separate movements of the London cloth exports of English, alien, and Hanse merchants¹⁶ brings to light some interesting and neglected factors operating during the 1540's and 1550's which were not inherent in the market itself and which help explain the instability remarked upon above.

One such element was a royal proclamation promulgated in April 1539 to the effect that alien merchants would henceforth for 7 years be required to pay only such customs and subsidy as do the King's own subjects. The text of the proclamation states that it was issued for the purpose of encouraging trade.¹⁷ It succeeded in this in the most spectacular manner for the alien merchants. Over the 43 years preceding this proclamation,

15 Fisher, op. cit., p. 99.

16 The figures representing these exports are presented in Table II.

17 Hughes and Larking, Tudor Royal Proclamations, 3 vols. 1964-9, no. 189.

TABLE II

Annual export of short cloths from London

M'as-M'as	Denizen	Alien	Hanse	Total
1537-38	49288 ¹	4608	30778	84674
38-39	37699	28319	31143	97161
39-40	47934	24567	27262	99762
40-41	52684	29746	27619	110049
41-42	44701	29268	23412	97381
42-43	32363	14679	24226	71268
43-44	69094	23295	27052	119441
44-45	29766 ²	50359 ³	33963 ³	114088
45-46	46130 ⁴	42008 ³	31050 ³	119188
46-47	49480 ⁵	14793 ³	29689 ³	93962
47-48	79331 ⁶	1063 ⁶	38816 ⁶	119210
48-49	(80353) ⁷	1361 ³	43584 ³	(125298)
49-50	87181 ⁸	1183 ⁸	44302 ⁸	132666
50-51	69859 ⁹	2979 ⁹	39854 ⁹	112710
51-52	65690 ¹⁰	5454 ¹⁰	13829 ¹⁰	84968
52-53				
53-54	96993 ¹¹	10703 ¹¹	27903 ¹¹	135599
54-55				
55-56				
56-57	87295 ¹²	13583 ¹²	11160 ¹²	112038
57-58				
58-59	79141 ¹³	12007 ¹³	14	
59-60	89863 ¹⁵	11444 ¹⁵	8381 ¹⁵	109688

Sources;

- 1 1537/38 - 1543/44: E. M. Carus-Wilson and Live Coleman, England's Export Trade, 1275-1547, 1963, pp. 118-19.
- 2 PRO:Customs Acct. 165/7.
- 3 BM: Cotton, Claudius EVII, f. 99v-100.
- 4 PRO:Customs Acct. 165/8.
- 5 PRO:Exch.Accts. Various 347/16.
- 6 PRO:Customs Acct. 84/4 and 84/5.
- 7 Estimated.
- 8 PRO:Customs Acct. 167/4.
- 9 PRO:Customs Acct. 166/8.
- 10 PRO:Customs Acct. 166/1.
- 11 PRO:Customs Acct. 87/4.
- 12 PRO:Customs Acct. 86/7.
- 13 PRO:Customs Acct. 86/12.
- 14 No Account.
- 15 PRO:Enrolled Customs Acct., 28.

Comments on Table II:

The statistics printed by E. M. Carus-Wilson and Olive Coleman are based on the LTR Exchequer Enrolled Customs Accounts. However, the last roll from Henry VIII's reign [no. 27] lacks the London returns for the years 1544/5 to 1546/7 and the next roll [no. 28] begins with the year 1559/60. Thus the figures for the intervening years have had to be supplied from other sources, mainly miscellaneous KR Customs Accounts. London cloth returns for Henry VIII's reign have been in print for many years in George Schanz, Englische Handelspolitik gegen end des Mittlealters, 1881, vol. II, pp. 86-87. For the last three years of the reign Schanz supplied figures for denizen merchant's exports by taking the average of the five previous years and applying it to each of the unknown years. His figures for alien and Hanse merchants he took from an earlier printed source, Johann Martin Lappenberg, Urkundliche Geschichte Hansische Stahlhofer zu London, 1851, p. 175. The document printed by Lappenberg [no. 154] contains the missing figures, ^{which} come from BM:Cotton, Claudius EVII, ff. 99-100. This entire Cotton volume, of some 400 folios, consists of contemporary copies of a great variety of documents pertaining entirely to the affairs of the Hanseatic merchants in London. The last document in the volume dates from the mid-1550's suggesting that it was put together shortly after that, when the English were working to deprive the Stillyard of its privileged position. The item in this collection, printed by Lappenberg, is a list of the number of cloths shipped annually from London by alien and by Hanse merchants for scattered years beginning with Edward II and then for every year from 1537 to 1550. For the years before 1545 there are figures in the Enrolled Accounts as well as those in the Cotton Mss. Comparison of the two sets of figures shows them to be nearly identical thus providing confidence in the reliability of the figures for years when there are no official returns. Using the returns for aliens and Hanse given in this Cotton Mss. it is possible also to find the correct figures for the exports of denizens during the years 1545 to 1547. For each of these years there is a KR Customs Account book which contains the daily entries of the cloths passing through the customs house. Two of these books (165/7 and 165/8) contain entries for

Comments on Table II, cont.:

all three classes of merchants. Thus it was only necessary to count the cloths entered in these books, and subtract from that total figures for alien and Hanse merchants, to find the number of cloths exported by denizen merchants during those years. For the third year in question, 1546/7, there is a similar book which contains only cloth entries for denizen merchants. A count of these gives the denizen exports for that year.

In the recent work on the Great Debasement cited above, J. D. Gould presents a series of tables of English cloth exports for the years 1544/5 to 1560/1 (pp. 173-81). In these he presents the figures for the outports as well as for London and thus has fuller information than is to be found here. The figures for the outports confirm that their cloth exports were insignificant next to those of London. In so far as the London figures are concerned this table and Prof. Gould's table are in complete agreement with one exception - the denizen exports for the years 1544/5 to 1546/7. For those years Prof. Gould presents no figure at all evidently unaware of the method for determining them which was described in the preceding paragraph. For the second of the three years in question - 1545/46 - he gives the figure for denizen cloth exports of 45,857 which he found in a Declared Account for that year (E351/607). This writer overlooked that document in his researches and thus resorted to the more cumbersome procedure described above.

Though Prof. Gould presents no figure for denizen cloth exports for 1546/7 he does present a lengthy criticism (op. cit., Appendix D) of a document (PRO:SPD Edward VI, 2 no. 13) which purports to give a figure for that year which suggests that total exports were about 172,00 short cloths for that year. His contention is that the document itself is ambiguous and that there is no literary evidence to suggest 1546/47 was such a boom year. The figures presented in this table confirm Prof. Gould's doubts.

the annual cloth exports of those merchants averaged 8300 short cloths per year.¹⁸ Over the seven years the proclamation was in force - 1538/9 to 1545/6 - the average was over 30,000 short cloths per year. The year following the expiration of the proclamation, alien cloths exports fell to 14,600 and during the remainder of the century averaged only about 6000 per year. It can be argued that the sudden increase in alien cloth exports was only the expected consequence of debasement. It will be noticed though, that the overall rate of growth of cloth exports remained unchanged. What was actually happening was that denizen exports remained fairly level while those of the aliens increased. This effect is best seen on the Graph and by noting that the alien merchants share of total exports also increased. Thus during the period 1497 to 1538 their average annual share of cloth exports from London was 14%; during the period the proclamation was in force this average was 30%, and during the period from 1546 until the end of the century this average was under 6%. There are two possible ways in which a reduction in duty could have stimulated cloth exports. The old rate for aliens was 4^s9^d for a white cloth or

¹⁸ The average for alien cloth exports were made up from the annual exports for the entire century the sources for which are given in the Graph and Table II.

6^s3^d for a colored cloth and the new rate was 1^s2^d for either type of cloth.¹⁹ Thus the alien merchants saved ~~with~~ ^{either} 3^s7^d or 4^s1^d per cloth. The importance of this reduction in customs lay in the area of the difference between the buying and selling price of the cloth. Its effect could have been to reduce the selling price and thus make the cloth more competitive with cloth transported by English merchants or it could have left the selling price unchanged and simply reduced the costs and stimulated investment by increasing profits. There is no positive evidence as to which of these policies was followed. But it is reasonable to conclude that in view of the leveling out of denizen exports during the period of equal customs duties, that the aliens presented effective competition to the English merchants. This may also explain why the proclamation was not renewed in 1546.

A drop of 20% in cloth exports coincided with the expiration of the favorable customs concession for alien merchants. It might have been expected that the English merchants would have immediately gained lost ground. But their exports increased only slightly in 1547. This can be explained in part as a consequence of oversupply

19 T. S. Willan, A Tudor Book of Rates, 1962, pp. 71-2.

and in part as the consequence of the disruption of the internal communications of Germany.²⁰ Thus changes in the level of exports can be explained partly as the result of oversupply, partly as the result of the expiration of a grant of favorable duties to one segment of the merchant community and partly as the result of the disruption of communications in Germany.

By 1548 total cloth exports were back up to their 1546 level. A look at the breakdown of the figure for total exports in that year shows that the greatest part of the net increase was accounted for by an increase in the exports of English merchants. A recovery was only to be expected with alien competition removed and once stocks had been sold off and conditions returned to normal in the market area. However, it is worth noting another factor which probably contributed to this recovery. In November 1547 the Merchant Adventurers complained that increases in the price of cloth made it impossible for them to transport as many cloths as previously without violating a statute of 27 Henry VIII which

20 It was in the Spring of 1547 that the Emperor Charles V marched an army into Germany and defeated the Protestant Schmalkaldic League at Mühlberg. Prof. Stone alludes to this in explaining the export decline of 1547 (op. cit. p. 106.).

forbade the export of cloths above a certain price. Their request that this statute be lifted was granted.²¹ This would have had the effect of making it possible for the Merchant Adventurers to meet a demand for a wider range of cloths. It is not possible, of course, to indicate the precise extent to which the release of this prohibition affected exports.

The recovery which began in 1548 continued until 1550, when the total exports for London reached 132,666 short cloths. This recovery was about proportionately equal for both English and Hanse merchants with alien exports remaining insignificant. Then in 1550 there began what appears to be another collapse from oversupply in the market. Indeed, in April of that year the Merchant Adventurers reported to the Privy Council that there "lie at Andwerpe such a numbre of our clothes onsolde, that till they were uttered these here (London/ wolde not well be bought..."²² A decline in the total London exports for 1551 reflected the conditions of which the merchants complained. This decline was, again,

21 PRO:Customs Account 195/25. The statute referred to is 27 Henry VIII c. 13 which prohibited the export of unfinished cloth whose value exceeded £4 for white and £3 for colored cloths.

22 APC, 1550-52, p. 20.

about equally proportionate for English and Hanse merchants. The fall in exports continued in the following year dropping to 88,000 cloths or a decline of 33.5% in two years; seemingly a continuation of the result of the oversupply of 1550. However, the figures for the three classes of merchants show that from 1551 to 1552 the exports of English merchants remained nearly unchanged, those of the alien merchants increased slightly and those of the Hanse merchants fell to about one-third of their immediately previous number and account for the entire fall in cloth exports from 1551 to 1552. The explanation for this radical drop in Hanse exports is found in a decree of the Privy Council, dated 24 February 1552, which cancelled the "privileges, liberties and franchisies" of the Hanse merchants.²³ Thus, again what appears on the surface to be simply the expected consequence of a market condition turns out to be largely the result of the intervention of an element from outside the market proper.

It must be said again that the above analysis is not intended to deny the efficacy of the factors cited

23 Salis. Mss., vol. 247 f. 270. This decree was revoked on 28 October 1553 (ibid., f. 1) and a new set of Hanse privileges was given in 1560. (Ibid., f. 47.)

by Profs. Fisher and Stone but merely to point out first, that those factors were not mutually exclusive, as Prof. Stone would seem to have them, and second, that there were non-market internal elements at work which caused or intensified changes in export levels which have been explained solely in terms of internal monetary and external market conditions.

The merchants engaged in active trade during the years under consideration here were aware, certainly, of these extra-market factors and of the effect they were having on the export of cloth. They would have been aware also that export instability caused by the factors cited above could not be corrected by simply redirecting one's trade to other geographical areas. Of course, such a redirecting of one's trade might be an efficacious response to exchange instability in a given market. But during the third quarter of the century the only new enterprises undertaken which might be seen as an attempt at redirecting trade were the 1553 Northeast Passage voyage with its resulting Muscovy trade and the West African and Moroccan trade. Neither of these areas, however, absorbed very substantial quantities of English cloth. Nevertheless, the English did not at that time seek further for new

markets. Thus it can be suggested that despite the disturbances in the level of exports the merchant community did not interpret the situation as one which necessitated any long term readjustment in its markets.

Prof. Fisher has emphasized the seeking of new markets as a response to the depressions of the 1550's, 60's, and 70's.²⁴ But it can be seen from the previous discussion of the 1540's and 1550's, that if the extra-market factors had not been present the whole picture of a period of depression and instability in exports would have taken on a different complexion. Furthermore, the English merchants, to judge by their actions, seem not to have taken seriously the need for new markets. The decline of cloth exports in the early 1560's was perhaps not a depression in the strict economic sense of the term. The fall in cloth exports beginning in 1561 was a consequence of strained relations between England and Spain which resulted in the Low Countries issuing a complete prohibition on English imports early in 1563. In that year and the following, London cloth exports fell to half of what they had been in 1560. The exporters of cloth - the Merchant Adventurers - were under

24 Op. cit., pp. 105-6.

no illusions that this fall in exports was the result of economic instabilities. They were aware that it only required a settlement of political differences between England and Spain to set their trade back on its old course. Trade was restored effective 1 January 1565²⁵ and cloth exports for the subsequent year shot up to 134,000 pieces, completely cancelling out the decline of the two previous years. In fact, the total number of cloths exported during the three years 1563 to 1565 was only about 7% below the total for the previous three years - 1560 to 1562 - and almost exactly the same as the total number exported during the following three years - 1566 to 1568. This suggests that cloth export fluctuations during the 1560's do not reflect economic depression arising from unstable demand but rather the arbitrary and erratic influence of factors external to the economics of the market. A similar situation existed in the early 1570's. Trade between England and the Low Countries was stopped in 1571, as an aftermath of the English seizure of the Spanish pay ships in 1568, and was not restored until 30 April 1573.²⁶ Decline and

25 Hughes and Larking, op. cit., no. 530.

26 Hughes and Larking, op. cit., no. 595.

recovery in cloth exports perfectly match these dates.

Prof. Stone's explanation for the changes that took place in English trade is that the "reorganization of the whole export business was brought about largely by chaotic monetary conditions produced by reckless debasement and sudden deflation followed swiftly and unpredictably one after another".²⁷ The trouble with relying too heavily on monetary conditions for an explanation of the unstable trade conditions of the 1540's, 50's, and 60's is that the precise effect of any given alteration in the coinage cannot be known unless one also has detailed information on both prices and demand elasticities. Very little is known about the former and nothing about the latter. The best that can be said is that monetary conditions were unstable until Elizabeth's revaluation and that this must have had some effect on overseas trade. But it is perhaps going too far to burden monetary conditions with responsibility for the "reorganization of the whole export business". Furthermore, this "reorganization" did not really take place until after the money was returned to normal in 1560. Nevertheless, there is little reason to doubt that both mone-

27 Stone, op. cit., p. 106.

tary conditions and markets were operative elements in the changes that took place in English trade.

Both Profs. Fisher and Stone agree on the importance to English trade of the Antwerp market. The former made an observation that has become a basis for any consideration of English overseas trade during the period in question when he stated that "It was a commonplace of the age that English commerce was overwhelmingly dependent upon the Low Countries and that economically London was a satellite of Antwerp". He goes on to say that "it is hardly fanciful to see a connection between the growth of London trade and the fact that it was during these years that Antwerp was climbing to the zenith of its power as the commercial and financial center of the western world".²⁸ Prof. Stone concurs that prosperous trade conditions demanded normal political and economic relations with the Low Countries. But he extended the London-Antwerp line by arguing that prosperous trade was also dependent on open communications across to north Germany and down the Rhine to the markets of Italy.²⁹

28 Fisher, op. cit., p. 97.

29 Stone, op. cit., p. 106.

The whole issue of the inter-relations among the increase of English cloth exports, the German market, exchange depreciation, and Antwerp is a very complex affair. It involves, further, the inter-relations among other diverse elements from climatic conditions to the relative price of gold and silver. All of this cannot be rehearsed here. It has recently been set out in all of its detail in three substantial volumes by the Dutch historian, Herman Van der Wee.³⁰ Before discussing some of the specific reactions of English merchants to the troubles that beset their relations with Antwerp it is not amiss to summarize some of what Van der Wee has to say about the Antwerp market, particularly with respect to those things which might be relevant to English commerce.

Van de Wee emphasizes that the emergence of the Antwerp market at the beginning of the sixteenth century was "inseparably connected with the growth of the trans-continental trade which was centered in Central Germany".³¹ This trade was stimulated by the commercial expansion of South Germany which was, in turn, connected with the in-

30 The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the European Economy, 3 vols., 1963.

31 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 119.

crease in the production of German silver from the mid-fifteenth century. The effect of this silver production was to draw the South Germans to the Brabant fairs where they exchanged it for Flemish and English cloth.³² Between 1496 and 1512, the same time this German silver was finding its way to Antwerp, English cloth merchants, secured a number of advantages with respect to tolls³³ which served to facilitate the penetration of English cloth on the Antwerp market at the expense of Netherlands cloth. To this mutual stimulation of English cloth and German silver was added the Portuguese spice trade which was centered at Antwerp from 1501.

Silver played a far more direct role in channeling the spice trade than it did in channeling the cloth trade. This is explained, in part, by the higher price of silver in Asia than in Europe. Initially, in the fifteenth century, German silver was channeled into Asia by way of Italian commerce, partly by direct trade between Germans and Italians but mainly through the Italian overland trade with the Netherlands.³⁴ The Portuguese discovery of the sea route to India very quickly undermined the Venetian spice trade in Antwerp. But even before the discovery

32 Ibid., p. 124 n. 65. 33 Ibid., p. 123.

34 Ibid., p. 124.

of this route the Portuguese had been attracted to Antwerp, in part because of the German silver for which they sold their spices and in part because they found it profitable to make payments there with gold, because its price there was higher than in Spain and Portugal.³⁵ Furthermore, the Portuguese used considerable quantities of copper in their African and Asian trade, which they acquired in Antwerp from various German merchants. To meet this demand the Fugger's export of Hungarian copper shifted from Venice to Antwerp between 1497 and 1515.³⁶

During the first half of the sixteenth century all of these interacting elements came together at Antwerp and contributed to its growth into a European entrepot. Silver, was, perhaps, one of the most influential of these elements not only in the rise of Antwerp but also in its subsequent decline. It was the increased production of German silver which stimulated the expansion of the South and Central German market areas, attracting English cloth and Portuguese spices to Antwerp which functioned as the market place where these were exchanged. Similarly, it was the decline in the production of German silver and

35 Ibid., p. 125.

36 Ibid., vol. 3, p. 66.

the introduction into Europe of ever increasing quantities of American silver which began the decline of Antwerp. German silver production reached its maximum in the decade 1526-35 at the same time as American silver began to push silver prices in Seville below those in Germany thus compelling the Portuguese to buy in the former city.³⁷ Added to this declining attractiveness of the German market were the disturbances of the Reformation which drove up grain prices and interfered with the east-west overland trade between Antwerp and South Germany.

It was not until the 1540's and 1550's that the South German market showed serious signs of decay which placed the market for English cloth in jeopardy. It can be seen from the graph that the long term increase in cloth exports was slow and Van der Wee feels that the collapse of the Antwerp portion of the English market would have happened before it did except for the debasements of Henry VIII which effectively enabled English cloth to replace Netherlands cloth in the German market.³⁸ But the growth of English cloth exports could not continue indefinitely; the market had limits to its ability

37 Ibid., p. 159.

38 Ibid., p. 185.

to absorb more cloth and the benefits of exchange depreciation could not last forever.

Van der Wee was apparently unaware of the non-economic events peculiar to England which affected the changes in English cloth exports and he concentrated on exchange depreciation, thus supporting Prof. Fisher, and on the German market, thus supporting Prof. Stone. He has little to say about the effect of political relations between England and Antwerp, especially about their effect on English trade after 1560.³⁹ He does make clear, however, that Antwerp was in decline before the break with England. It can be suggested from this that the re-orientation of English trade would have taken place because of Antwerp's economic decline if it had not taken place because of the political break between England and the Spanish Netherlands. This hypothesis cannot be tested, of course, but there is very good reason to support the contention that it was not exchange depreciation, nor export depressions, nor disturbed markets in Central Germany that impelled the re-orientation of English trade but rather the severance of commercial relations between England and Antwerp which was the

39 This is only to be expected since Van der Wee was writing about Antwerp and not about England.

result of worsening political relations between Queen Elizabeth and King Philip II.

The merchant group primarily concerned with this problem of the break with Antwerp was the Merchant Adventurers and an account of this break-down of commercial relations is primarily an account of that company. But an account of the Merchant Adventurers proper is out of place in this study. Nevertheless, they cannot be entirely dismissed because it is through their arguments and negotiations for suitable alternative market towns that there can be seen some signs of the English merchant's awareness of Asian markets.

One of the general explanations given for the motives of English merchants with respect to overseas trade between 1550 and 1575 is couched in terms of the search for new markets. While the general truth of this is not questioned, clarification of the term "markets" will serve also to clarify some points which often pass unnoticed or, at least, whose significance is not emphasized. The term "market" is used in two, often overlapping, senses. First, in referring to the place or area where the goods are consumed or to the group of people by whom they are consumed; second, as the place where the goods are sold to other merchants to be trans-

ported to more distant places. The first meaning is the proper use of the word and the second is better designated as "outlet". If "market" is taken in the first sense of the word then the only new markets developed after 1550 were Russia and Morocco. This leaves the above generalization about new markets to be one concerned with outlets and, in fact, the evidence bears this out.

It cannot be said just when the English became aware of the weakness of Antwerp. It would be surprising if some merchants were not sensitive to the situation in the 1540's but debasement and official friendly relations with Spain under Queen Mary served to reduce their active response to the growing decay of Antwerp. However, from very early in Elizabeth's reign, when political relations with the Spanish Netherlands began to take a turn for the worse, there are a number of documents which indicate that the merchants were very much aware of the growing disabilities of Antwerp and which offer solutions to the problem.

The earliest of these was a paper drawn up by the Merchant Adventurers in response to queries put to them by Sir William Cecil, who was no doubt gathering information and views about the stoppage of trade with Antwerp.

It specifies the final markets, ranging from the Low Countries to the Indies, for tin, lead, and a variety of English cloth. This list of markets is followed by a statement which makes two points illustrating something of the context in which the merchants were thinking.

First, that "...suche comodities as be consumed in other places except the Low Countries maie be transported, uttered, and solde in other places...". Second, that "...leving upon occasion the saide Low Countries we thincke that for sarving of Eastland, Germany and Itlay, Emden in frizeland or hamboroghe to be the fittest place."⁴⁰

By December 1564 the stoppage had become alarming enough to the merchants to persuade them to address the Privy Council, this time more to the point. "If the breach with the Low Countries cannot be healed then steps must be taken to see to the vent of those commodities elsewhere."⁴¹ The paper then goes on to suggest what the alternatives are.

Firste that those which are to be spent in Spain, Portugal, Barbary and Levant are to be transported directly thither.
Such other of the same commodities as are

40 PRO:SPD Eliz. 15 no. 67. The calendar dates this paper 1560 but there is no internal evidence which precludes its origin from a few years later.

41 PRO:SPD Eliz. 35 no. 28.

spent in France and have usually been transported thither, are in like manner to be conveyed into that Realme. The like is for Russia, Muscovia, Media, Persia, and all other places northeastwards within the sound. Touching the residue being the great masse and consumed and uttered in the Lower and higher Germanyes, holst, mecleburgh, Pomerland, Swethin, Denmark, Boheame, Hungar, Itlaye and Turkye it is not reasonable to be denyed but that Emdeyne or Hamburg by their situations are moste apte and surer to be trafyqued unto for places of discharge of the commodities of this Realm thither shipped, there to be uttered and from there transported into any the later mencyoned Regions.

Cecil put the problem in more general terms when he wrote, in the same year, that "...the commodities of England ought to go to sundry places rather than one, especially one whose lord is so powerful."⁴² It can be seen from the above examples that the English were more concerned to find new routes along which to send their commodities than they were to find new markets for them.

The Merchant Adventurers, however, were themselves not involved in carrying their goods directly to the final consumer area and thus were always at pains to assure the government that the various continental merchants would be on hand at Embden, Hamburg, or elsewhere, to buy the goods from the English and transport them to their final destinations. Cecil, at the end of the document cited

42 Tawney and Power, vol. 2, pp. 45-7.

above, commented on a specific commodity, kerseys, which "wer wont to be sent into Italy by experience may pass thyther from Embden". A more pointed and detailed statement on this issue was made by Thomas Aldersey, a prominent member of the Merchants Adventurers Company. In a letter to Cecil, dated May 1564, just before the first English cloth fleet sailed for Embden, he wrote:⁴³

"...I dowt not but your honor doth consyder that the grownd of our hope to bryng the trafficke to Emden a place not acostomid from andwarp which is so famous for trade of marchandyse is that the comodyts of Yngland be of soche estemasyon and so nesary for all contrayis that the being together in any plase (convenyent to be comen unto) wyll drawe marchants owt of all Contaryis to fetch the same and also to bryng there commodyts to the same place..."

Fourteen years later the Merchant~~s~~ Adventurers still showed concern for the continued flow of goods to their old markets. In 1578, after ten years stay at Hamburg, a quarrel with the authorities of that city provoked the Merchant Adventurers into looking for a new mart town. In the process they again communicated with the English government by way of memoranda and petitions which throw light on some of their thinking and give evidence of some of the new routes already in use by other

43 PRO:SPD Eliz. 34 no. 3.

English merchants. In a memorandum addressed to Lord Burghley, arguing in favor of Embden as the replacement for Hamburg it was repeatedly emphasized that "All theis commodities shipped by Italians and other strangers..may be as well and as safely shipped by way of Embden as by the way of hamborough..."⁴⁴ A more general statement about trade to the northern ports is made in another memorandum of the same year. Arguing that the English can be independent of the vent of the Hanse towns the document points out that these northern towns are small users of English goods and pass them on to other markets. Their trade thus depends on English goods coming to their ports. These English goods, however, can get to their final markets other ways. The document then discussed some of these alternate routes.⁴⁵

"Where by some few of the Hanse townes some small quantity of our kerseys were conveyed to Venice and other parts of Italie in time of restraint: We have also open (beside many places in Germany) many good places of vent for that trade to utter as many as went by the Hanses and many more. For we have open for cloth and especially for kerseys the trade of France by Rohan and other places, some to be spent there, and some to be carried to Lyons, to Marsilles, and by land wayes into Italie and further by sea into Turkye. We have open the whole trade within the Streights,

44 PRO:SPD Eliz.127 no.88.

45 PRO:SPD Eliz. 126 no. 27.

and of the Levant seas of late greatly frequented. We have also open for colored clothes and kerseys the whole trade of Russia and those northe partes. Speaking nothing of Spaine, barbarie and those partes."

Thus in the late 1570's, the Merchant Adventurers whose trade exceeded in bulk and value that of any other segment of the English merchant community, were still primarily motivated by concern with access to old markets rather than the seeking of new markets. The arguments presented here have not been done so to convey the impression that English merchants, in general, were in no manner interested in new markets but rather that the adjustment of English trade during the 1560's and 1570's was dominated by the need to insure continued access to market areas already long supplied by English goods.

One of these market areas was the Mediterranean; in particular Italy and the lands bordering the eastern Mediterranean. Though the Merchant Adventurers at no point actually discussed access to Asia, they were always conspicuously concerned with access to Italy because at that time it was mainly through the hands of Italian merchants that English goods reached Asia. It was the kersey, a light-weight, inexpensive, cloth that figured largely in consideration of the continued access to the Italian market. The document of 1560 which lists

the final markets of various kinds of English cloth states that:

"Hampshire kersies and such like and northerns are mainly sold in Hungary and Italy and countries beyond them. White kersies called devonshires - the finest being the least in number - go to Spain and the Indies."

This statement goes on to indicate that some of the better white cloths of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, and Somersetshire, and Kentish cloth went to Italy.⁴⁶ In the list of alternate routes, presented in December 1564, Embden or Hamburg are stated to be places from which goods could be transported to Italy and Turkey.⁴⁷ In his general discussion of the Antwerp trade Burghley remarked that the kerseys which "wer wont to be sent into Italy by experience may pass thyther from Embden".⁴⁸ The clearest statement on this issue was made by Thomas Aldersey in his letter of May 1564. At the time of the stoppage of trade with Antwerp in 1563-4 many merchants avoided the restriction by passing through France before or after going to Antwerp. Aldersey, in trying to persuade Cecil not to permit this, conveys to the modern student some sense of the importance of the Italian market for ker-

46 PRO:SPD Eliz. 15 no. 67. 47 PRO:SPD Eliz. 35 no. 28.
48 Tawney and Power, vol. 2 pp. 45-7.

seys. He said that,⁴⁹

"...seing Carsis which is a good part of owre comdyts serve most for Ytaly and other Contrayis beyond the same yt is of nesese to kepe them with in the lymytts of ower trade otharwyse a thyrd part of the effect hopid for is cut off at one choppe; for yf the Italyans maie pas throwe france to and fro every man maye se that in short tyme all carsis spent in Ytaly and beyond yt shall by the sayd Ytalyans be transported that waye and the whole Comodyts of Ytaly and comying through it shalbe by them broght into this Realme the same waye so that the y and the whole trade of there contrayis shalbe cutte of from us..."

This awareness of the market for kerseys was repeated in 1578 in the document quoted above. [p. ⁴⁶ 23]

Though Aldersey's attribution to the Italians of one-third of the trade in English cloth is a clear exaggeration, the trade in kerseys was an important branch of the cloth trade and one of the most important markets for this trade was the Levant. That this was so can be shown both qualitatively and quantitatively. Kerseys were exported long before the sixteenth century but it was only from late in the reign of Henry VIII that they seem to have become a significant portion of cloth exports. Van der Wee attributes a large part of the expansion of cloth exports in the 1540's to the increasing export of

kerseys. This he attributes to the English textile industry's shift to the production of lighter cloth to meet the demand of the expanding southern and Levant markets.⁵⁰ The importance of the Levant market is attested to further in the correspondence of the Van der Molen commission merchants in Antwerp. From their letters it has been concluded that all kerseys bought by Italians were sent to the Levant.⁵¹ Those bought by German merchants were sent to Hungary and says, a cloth similar to kerseys, were bought by Italians for their home consumption. The fluctuations in demand for kerseys, which paralleled the fluctuations in political relations between the Venetians and Turks, give further proof of the importance of kerseys in the Levant.⁵²

It is unfortunate that the quantitative information about kerseys in the Levant is based on data from the export end of the trade. The historian might feel a little more at ease if he could actually see these large quantities of kerseys in the warehouses of Levantine ports. There are, however, a few qualitative judgments on the importance of the kersey trade. It is one his-

50 Op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 185-6.

51 Florence Edler, "Winchcombe Kerseys in Antwerp (1538-44)", Econ. H.R., 1936, p. 57.

52 Ibid., passim.

torian's judgment that "kerseys were truly the foundation of the commerce with Syria and for a long time one of the essential products of exchange between Occident and Orient."⁵³ A similar judgment was made in 1513 by a Venetian though he did not specifically mention the Levant.⁵⁴

The early date of this opinion raises the question of what portion of the English cloth trade was accounted for by kerseys and when this portion began to increase. It has been said that kerseys began to be exported in large numbers at the end of the fifteenth century.⁵⁵ However, the earliest numerical data found for the sixteenth century dates only from 1538. For a period of three decades following this it is possible to piece together enough export figures to gain some general idea of the importance of the kersey trade. [Table III/ Most of the figures that have been found are those for the Italians and destined for the Mediterranean. This is

53 Lettres d'un marchand venitien: Antrea Berengo (1553-6), ed. with an introduction by Ugo Tucci, 1957, p. 16.

54 Fernand Braudel, La Méditerranéan et le monde méditerranéan à l'époque de Philippe II, 2de ed., 2 vols., 1967, vol. I, p. 194-5. Braudel quotes a document from the Venetian archives. The statement translated by Braudel into French is that kerseys were "un des plus importants fondements du commerce dans n'importe quelle partie du monde..."

55 Eileen Power and N. M. Postan, Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century, 1933, p. 324.

Table III: EXPORT OF KERSEYS FROM LONDON

	Year	Number of kerseys	% of English cloth exports	% of Total cloth exports	Med. kerseys as % of total cloth exports	Source
I	Dec 1538	16 000 directly to Chios			5.5	Florence Edler, "Winchcombe kerseys in Antwerp (1538-44)" <u>Econ HR</u> , 1936, p. 59
II	1544	30 777 by English merchants	14.85			PRO: KR Customs Acct. 165/6
III	1543-45	45 828 exported from Antwerp per year of which 28 982 per year were exported by Italian merchants		14	8.9	Wilfrid Brulez, "Les routes commerciales d'Angleterre en Italie au 16 ^e siecle", in <u>Studi en onore de Antore Fanfani</u> , 1962, vol. IV, p. 129 n. 21
IV	1547	35 139 by English merchants	23.8			PRO: Exch. Accts. Various 347/16
V	1 May 1549 to 30 Apr 1550	49 964 to Antwerp by the Merchant Adventurers	21.2			Oscar de Smedt, <u>De Engelse Natie te Antwerpen in de 16 eeuw</u> , 1950-51, vol. II, p. 433
VI	Oct. 1560 to Oct. 1561	21 175 received by Italian merchants in Antwerp			8.6	PRO: SPD Eliz. 20 no. 14
VII	Easter 1565 to Michaelmas 1565	27 463 of which 6 860 were exported by Italian merchants		17.5	4.4	PRO: KR Port Books 1/4 and 2/1
VIII	Oct-Sept 1569-70 1570-71 1571-72	35 570 re-exported 19 132 from 14 162 Hamburg			13.1 8.3 7.5	Richard Ehrenberg, <u>Hamburg und England</u> , 1896, pp. 329-30
IX	1578	17 017 to Hamburg by Italians and other strangers			5.6	PRO: SPD Eliz. 127 no. 88
X	1592	4 584 by the Levant Company			1.4	PRO: LTR Enrolled Customs Acct. no. 29
XI	1593	9 948 by the Levant Company			3.9	ibid.
XII	1594	7 776 by the Levant Company			2.3	PRO: KR Customs Acct. 213/19
XIII	1596	20 968 by the Levant Company			7.25	ibid.
XIV	1598	54 731 of which 18 031 by the Levant Company and 5 663 by aliens overland to Venice		17.3	5.7 7.5 1.8	PRO: SPD Eliz. 268 no. 101

Comments on Table III:

Kerseys are expressed as the actual number of pieces but for the purpose of calculating percentages they are converted to notional short cloths on the basis of three kerseys to one cloth.

The term "Mediterranean kerseys" includes those going to Italian markets as well as to the Levant.

I. The only reservation about the percentage here is that there is no way of knowing whether or not these kerseys represent all that were sent to the Levant in this year.

II. and IV. These figures were compiled by counting entries in these cloth books.

III. To arrive at these figures Brulez surveyed a known portion of the packs of cloths exported from Antwerp during 31 months in the years 1543-45. The London cloth export figure used to calculate the percentages was the average for 1542 to 1545. Since Brulez's figures represent only the kerseys that went to Antwerp the percentage is probably low.

V. This figure is for a twelve month period but it is one which does not coincide with the Exchequer year. The percentage is based on the average of denizen exports for 1550-51 and as in number III above it is only for kerseys sent to Antwerp.

VI. This figure derives from a document addressed by English merchants to the English government complaining of some Italian merchants who have evaded alien customs. It names the merchants and states how many kerseys each of them received. It is worth noting that this number of kerseys represents a greater number of notional short cloths than is ascribed to aliens in the Enrolled Customs Accounts. Clearly one of the parties was not honest.

VII. The percentage is based on only half the year - Easter to Michaelmas - but unless the proportion of kerseys exported is greater in the first half than in the latter half of the year this percentage should not change.

Comments on Table III, cont.:

VIII. Ehrenberg gives figures for monthly re-exports from Hamburg for three years running. From his table totals were chosen to match the Exchequer year.

IX. This document is a memorandum from the Merchant Adventurers written at the instance of their leaving Hamburg in 1578. It argues that "all theis commodities /cited in their statistics/ may be as well and as safely shipped by way of Embden as by the way of hamborough..." Any doubts as to the accuracy of their figures are dispelled by BM:Harl. 167 ff. 75-96 which is a detailed list of all the merchants, not of the Merchant Adventurers, who shipped goods out of London during the Exchequer year 1577-78. The totals taken from the Harleian Mss. are identical to those in PRO:SPD Eliz. 127 no. 88; thus the latter must have been derived from the former which in turn was derived from the relevant Port Books. That this was so is clear from the form of the entries in the Harleian Mss. which are identical in form and language to those found in the Port Books.

X. and XI. These entries in the Enrolled Customs Account probably resulted from a provision of the Levant Company's charter of 1592 which permitted the company six months from the date due to pay its customs.

XII. and XIII. These two figures are probably in the accounts for the reason given for items X and XI. They derive from a book of miscellaneous customs accounts. This book appears to be something in the nature of the customer's final work book in which the completed entries were made prior to being enrolled. However, for some reason, there are no detailed entries in the Enrolled Customs Account for the four years 1594 to 1597.

XIV. As well as the information given here this document lists the cloth exports of the various trading companies. No reason for its compilation is given.

not merely a fortuitous coincidence but a reflection of the general concern of the Merchant Adventurers for this branch of the cloth trade in the 1560's and 1570's. The size of the trade as a portion of total cloth exports is about 15% for all kerseys exported and about 5-8% for those going to the Mediterranean. It cannot be said that the latter amounts to a very large part of total cloth exports but it was large enough to be taken into account in any proposed move of the Merchant Adventurers. This is clear from the repeated references to the Italian overland trade in the Merchant Adventurer's petitions and memoranda addressed to the government during the 60's and 70's.

The above discussion of English trade has focused, so far, on the export trade. This is mainly a reflection of the issues raised most often by the Merchants Adventurers, themselves. They constantly emphasized their immediate concern for getting their cloth to a suitable outlet. However, at the same time they did not fail to point out that the foreign merchants who commonly exchanged their goods for English cloth at Antwerp would now come to whatever new port the English chose and bring with them their same goods. Thus, the solution to the one problem provided a solution to the other.

Table IV: SPICES UNLADED AT LONDON AND SOUTHAMPTON

Year	Port	Spice (lbs)						Total	Source
		Cinnamon	Clove	Ginger	Mace	Nutmeg	Pepper		
1488	London	110	216	2931	142	Nil	3882	7281	KR Customs Acct. 78/7
	S'htn	Nil	7077	4546	1300	Nil	27455	40378	" " 142/10
1492	S'htn	Nil	8225	47854	5980	5275	89575	156909	" " 142/11
1495	London	201	1428	3369	1275	1325	4900	12498	" " 79/5
1501	S'htn	1339	1000	7486	Nil	Nil	4520	14345	" " 209/2
1506	S'htn	1	333	522	432	287	39	1614	" " 195/8
1517	S'htn	Nil	6	116	Nil	Nil	266	388	" " 143/2
1520	London	536	1142	7322	Nil	758	34245	44003	" " 81/8
	S'htn	Nil	Nil	5700	100	Nil	4300	10100	" " 143/5A
1547	London	2225	1517	2274	259	275	60916	67466	" " 85/3
1554	London	414	1980	2027	45	450	30331	35247	" " 86/2
1557	London	610	870	3175	368	383	18638	23994	" " 86/6
1560	London	11666	3568	14867	2790	4083	142224	179198	SPD Eliz. 8 no. 31
1566	London	—	—	3000	—	1300	27000	31300	Lansdowne 8 f.75
1568	London	1916	2976	17332	1800	3324	63234	90582	KR: Port Book 4/2
1584	London	500	4936	—	1355	—	57514	64305	Lansdowne 41 ff.115-134v
	S'htn	—	300	—	—	—	21305	21605	" "
1588	London	5740	1911	54937	428	55995	19960	138973	KR: Port Book 7/8 and 8/1
1596	London	1292	9925	7875	3278	19524	5860	47754	Lansdowne 81 f.115

This leaves an unfortunate blank in the record, for where it was possible to piece together contemporary material, other than statistical, on kerseys, an important export to Asia, there is no similar material on spices, the most important import from Asia. Some statistical material, however, does exist which makes it possible to form a few generalizations. This material, based mainly on the Customs Accounts, is summarized in Table IV.

Spices had two characteristics which make it fairly easy to trace their movement. They all originated outside the boundaries of Europe and none of them were subjected to any secondary processing other than garbling. It was only necessary to transport them from one place to another. Furthermore, there were seldom more than one or two routes by which they were transported into Europe and there were relatively few merchants or groups of merchants involved in the transportation. All of these characteristics make spices easier to follow than many other commodities. The purpose here will be to examine only that branch of the spice trade which reached England.

Until the first years of the sixteenth century spices were imported to England almost entirely by Italian merchants, principally Venetians,⁵⁶ and by 1485 these

56 A. A. Ruddock, Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton, 1270-1600, 1940, p. 79.

spices, and other luxury goods, were being unladen almost entirely at Southampton.⁵⁷ The customs returns for 1488 and 149² demonstrate this clearly. There are figures for both London and Southampton in 1488 from which it can be seen it was the latter rather than the former port which was receiving the spices. There is only a Southampton return for 149²; but the large quantity for that year suggests that London imported only a small quantity. The low return for London in 1495 adds support to the contention that the capital was importing directly only small quantities of spice. From 1501 the position of Southampton rapidly deteriorated as seen in the returns from that year and for 1506 and 1517. This was in large part because in 1501 the Portuguese first began bringing their spices to Antwerp. It was only to be expected that these spices would enter the London-Antwerp flow of trade goods and that London would begin to replace Southampton as the importer of spices. Because there are only Southampton customs returns extant between 1501 and 1520, this expectation cannot be confirmed, though there is no reason to doubt it. However, returns for both ports in 1520 showing that

57 Ibid., p. 84.

London imported four times as much spice as Southampton, confirms that the shift had actually taken place. Even though there are no further complete returns for Southampton, the relatively high figures for London during the rest of the century suggest that the capital remained the dominant port for the English spice trade. The settling of the Portuguese spice mart at Antwerp was thus instrumental in bringing the English spice trade to London and cutting into Italian trade with England. But even before the Italians lost their spice trade their carrack and galley trade with England, in general, was well into a decline⁵⁸ which was only hurried along by the advent of the Antwerp-London spice trade.

A further interesting point about the English spice trade is that it was concentrated in the hands of relatively few merchants. It is possible to determine this for those years and ports where there is extant a Customs Account or Port Book. However, in some cases the quantities imported were so small that it would be meaningless to speak of their being concentrated in only a few hands. In the other cases though, the conclusion is quite definite and quite consistent. At no point can

58 Ibid., p. 207.

it be said that very many merchants were engaged in the spice trade. For the earliest years recorded in Table IV there were a total of 17 merchants importing spices to Southampton, all of whom were Italian. In 1492 there were 27 such merchants, again all of them Italian. The largest number of spice importers was 58, all English, in 1568. The concentration went further than this. In 1488 three merchants imported 65% of the pepper to Southampton; in 1492 four merchants accounted for 51% of the pepper. In the same year four merchants also accounted for 65% of the ginger brought to Southampton. These examples all refer to the years when the spice trade was in the hands of Italian, mainly Venetian, merchants. The situation was no different after the shift from Southampton to London and from Italian to English merchants. Thus in 1520, six English merchants imported 52% of the pepper into London and four merchants accounted for 66% of the ginger. In 1547, seven merchants accounted for 51% of the pepper and in 1568, ten merchants accounted for 53% of that spice. The same pattern is discernible for ginger, the only other spice generally imported in large quantities.

The fact that so few merchants could supply the market needs for spices facilitated the ease with which

the market shifted from place to place in England. Unlike the export of cloth, which required years to adjust to new circumstances, spices shifted from Southampton to London and from Italian to English merchants very quickly. Similarly, with the advent of English sea-going trade to the Levant one would expect to find that spices were now concentrated along that route and in the hands of the merchants monopolizing that route. However, only one year, 1588, yields evidence on this point. In that year the Turkey Company imported 41.9% of the pepper, 38.2% of the cinnamon, 88.5% of the nutmeg and all of the mace. If the company is thought of as a single importer this shows a considerable degree of concentration. The import of spices shown in Table IV for 1584 are all from Spain and Portugal and indicates that substantial quantities of spice, especially pepper, were coming from that source. This was the result of another shift of the spice trade, due, this time, to the closing of Antwerp.

Kerseyes and spices were the two primary commodities of exchange between England and Asia. Tin and silk also figured in that trade but it has not been possible to find similar statistical material for them. The total export of tin can be determined but there is almost no indication of how much of this entered the Asian market.

Silk, though it appeared in the Customs Accounts and Port Books, is difficult to identify as to its source. Unlike spices, raw silk had to be fashioned into fabric and it is nearly impossible to tell from the customs entries whether the fabric had been manufactured in Asia or in Italy. Raw silk, of course, is easy enough to identify and there are scattered figures for it. [see Appendix B/ But figures for total silk imports are so few as to be useless for making general remarks about them.

Before turning to the Asian trade, itself, some remarks are in order concerning the general framework within which long distance trades had to operate in the second half of the sixteenth century. Some of the basic problems which beset such trades were a consequence of the particular character of certain economic factors which were peculiar to the time.⁵⁹ In general, investment was in the form of circulating capital. In the export trades this took the form of goods rather than precious metals. The reason for this predominance of commodities

⁵⁹ In the following discussion some of the detail and much of the conceptual framework is based on the introduction to B. E. Supple, Commercial Crisis and Change in England, 1600 - 1642, 1959; and on R. W. K. Hinton, "The Mercantile System in the Time of Thomas Mun", Econ. H.R., 1955, pp. 277-90.

over metal was the general shortage of the latter and official attitudes with respect to bullion as wealth which resulted in a prohibition on its export.

In face of a shortage of money rapid turnover became of paramount importance in providing capital for expansion so that a relatively small initial investment could do the work of several times its value in a year's time. If the process of investing £100 in goods for export which are then turned into goods for import the sales of which are then reinvested, with profit, in exports, is repeated three times in a year then the velocity has enabled the merchant to gain the same benefit from a £100 investment as he might have from £300. At the same time the merchant avoids tying up his capital for a longer time in a period of relatively high interest rates. The success of this process depends, of course, on short trade routes and on substantially equivalent demands for both imports and exports.

These economic factors - a short money supply and a premium on rapid turnover of investments in goods - tend to discourage the long term investments required to explore distant markets. As trade routes lengthen, turnover slows down and initial investment must increase in order to maintain the same effective level of profit.

These requirements need not present insuperable barriers, though they will mean that the small merchant cannot operate independently as he could in the short distance trades. However, a more difficult problem to overcome is one where the foreign demand for domestic exports is less than the domestic demand for foreign imports. This was the case vis-à-vis England and Asia. The problem was compounded further by the fact that the gold-silver ratio was lower in Asia than in Europe. Thus to a limited consumer demand for English cloth there was added the pressure of making payments in money because of its relatively higher value. This problem constantly beset the English during the second half of the sixteenth century. The manner of its solution cannot be spelled out because of the paucity of records. But the inclusion in the East India Company's charter of the right to export bullion and constant references to the need for money prior to 1600, certainly suggest that the merchants involved knew how they would have liked to solve the problem.

CHAPTER II

THE MUSCOVY COMPANY'S PERSIAN TRADE

The Levant and East India Companies so dominated England's Asian trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the history of those companies has dominated the history of that trade. This has not so much distorted the perspective in Anglo-Asian trade as it has tended to obscure the Muscovy Company's Persian trade. For nearly a quarter of a century it was the only English commerce with Asia. Several historians have written accounts of this Persian trade, based on Hakluyt's documents, but they have treated it either as an independent entity¹ or in connection with the Muscovy trade² rather than as an ~~integrated~~ part of England's continuous effort and desire to trade with eastern Asia. Sir William Foster included a chapter on the Persian trade in England's Quest for Eastern Trade but his presentation of it is detached from any consideration of other efforts to trade with Asia. None of the accounts of the Levant trade so much

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- 1 Earnest V. Vaughan, "English Trading Expeditions into Asia Under the Authority of the Muscovy Company (1557-81)" in Studies in the History of English Commerce in the Tudor Period, 1912.
 - 2 T. S. Willan, The Early History of the Russia Company, (1553-1603), 1956.

as mention it.³

All present day accounts of this Persian trade are indebted to Richard Hakluyt for preserving most of the record. But his disconnected presentation of the story is responsible for its obfuscation. In one section of his anthology he stated that Elizabethan shipping to the Levant was discontinued for twenty-five years⁴ then in an entirely different section⁵ he presented his account of the Persian trade which took place during this interval. Thus any sense of the continuity in England's trade with Asia is severed. There is no reason to believe that Hakluyt, himself, intended to create a sense of division or that there was any confusion in his own mind about the relation between these trades. The separation between them in the Principal Navigations rather stems from the anthology's organization along geographical lines. The inclusion of material in one part or another of the work seems to be based on the direction in which one sailed

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- 3 Mordecau Epstein, The English Levant Company, 1908; A. C. Wood, A History of the Levant Company, 1935; and A. L. Rowland, "England and Turkey: The Rise of Diplomatic and Commercial Relations" in Studies in English Commerce and Exploration in the Reign of Elizabeth, 1924.
- 4 Richard Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, 12 vols., 1904; V,168. This edition is used hereafter throughout and will be cited simply as "Hakluyt" followed by volume and page number.
- 5 Hakluyt II and III passim.

upon leaving English shores rather than upon one's ultimate objective. It is clear throughout the story of this Asian trade that the markets of Eastern Asia were the ultimate objective of the merchants concerned. But it remains to examine more closely the connecting links between the various attempts to reach those markets.

The renewal of the Levant trade in the late 1570's was, in large part, a result of the demise of this Persian trade. But that the reverse may have been true in the early 1550's can only be speculated. The juxtaposition of the end of the one trade and the beginning of the other lends itself to this speculation - perhaps even inspires it. The last merchants' voyage recorded by Hakluyt which sailed into the eastern Mediterranean was that of the Bark Aucher. It departed from Plymouth in January, 1551, made port at Cadiz, Messina, Candia, and Chios, and returned to England probably late that year or early the next.⁶ Two other ships, the Jesus of Lubeck and the Mary Gonson, both belonging to the King, were chartered by merchants in 1552 for a voyage to "Levants end"⁷. Finally, Hakluyt records the voyage of the Mathew Gonson which, in March 1553, intended to sail to Candia. However,

6 Hakluyt V, 77 ff.

7 James A. Williamson, Maritime Enterprise, p. 233.

the account does not follow her all the way so it is not known if the voyage was completed.⁸ This marks the end of the Levant trade of the early sixteenth century for there is not another English merchant ship known to have been in the Mediterranean until 1572. [1]⁹ But two months after the departure of the Mathew Gonson, Richard Chancellor and Hugh Willoughby departed with their small fleet to seek out the North-east Passage to China. This may have been merely a coincidence.

The chronology of the events alone does not permit one to be more definite about this. But the presence of some merchants in both the Levant trade and the Russia Company suggests that there might have been something more than mere coincidence at work. At least three members of the Russia Company, John Gresham, Thomas Curtis, and John Starkey¹⁰ appear in Hakluyt's accounts of the early Levant trade.¹¹ In addition, Hakluyt mentions William Locke and Nicholas and William Wilford in this trade. The former is probably the William Locke who was the father of Thomas Locke, a charter member, and of Michael Locke, who became active in the Russia trade several

8 Hakluyt V, 76.

9 Numbers in brackets are references to the entries in the Shipping List, Appendix C.

10 T. S. Willan, The Muscovy Merchants of 1555, 1953.

11 Hakluyt V, 62-69.

years later.¹² The case of the Wilfords is based on less certain evidence. In the 1555 charter there appears an Elizabeth Wilford, widow, and a John Wilford,¹³ but no connection has been established between either of them and Nicholas and William Wilford. It is reasonable to suggest that in the case of these merchants their decision to enter the new enterprise was prompted by the fact that the Levant trade was no longer desirable and that the capital formerly invested in the Mediterranean was now seeking new employment. But this does not confirm that the demise of the Mediterranean trade provided the impulse behind the enterprise of 1553. If a large number of the Russia merchants had previously been Levant merchants, then such an argument could be made. But there were only those few named above, out of some 200 persons listed in the 1555 charter, who can be connected with the Levant trade. There may have been more but had there been many more the fact would probably have come out, either in the contemporary accounts or in Prof. Willan's researches on the Muscovy merchants.¹⁴

A further argument against any substantial connection between the two trades is the fact that none of

12 Willan, *op. cit.*

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

the reasons given by contemporaries for undertaking the 1533 voyage makes any mention whatever of the Levant.

Clement Adams, whose account of that voyage was printed by Hakluyt wrote, as an explanation of it, that

"...out Marchants perceived the commodities and wares of England to be in small request with the countreys and people about us, and neere unto us, and that those Marchandizes which strangers in the time and memories of our auncesters did earnestly seeke and desire, were nowe neglected, and the price thereof abated, although by us carried to their owne portes, and all forreine Marchandizes in great accompt, and their prises wonderfully raised.../thus/ certaine grave Citizens of London...began to think with themselves howe this mischiefe might bee remedied.../and/ seeing that the wealth of the Spaniards and Portugals, by the discoverie and search of newe trades and Countreys was marveilously increased, supposing the same to be a cause and mean for them also to obtaine the like, they thereupon resolyed upon a newe and strange Navigation..."¹⁵

Thus Adams ascribes the voyage to the desire for new markets and to emulate the Spaniards and Portuguese. The Russia Company, itself, in an explanation of its origin, written in 1600, said that

"In the time of King Edward VI the king and his councell, finding it inconvenient that the utterance of the comodities of England, especiallye cloth, should soe muche depend upon the Lowe Countries and Spain and that it should be beneficial

15 Hakluyt II, 339-40.

that the 1550's was a period of severe fluctuations in cloth exports, that nearly three-quarters of the original members of the Russia Company were described as merchants, and about half of them were engaged in foreign trade.¹⁸ Furthermore about 75 of them were exporting cloth between 1547 and 1554.¹⁹ Thus their primary reason for engaging in any new enterprise at that time would be related to their interests in the cloth trade.

It must be concluded then that if there was more than a casual relation between the early Levant trade and the enterprise of 1553 it was too tenuous to have left any evidence of its existence. The evidence that does exist points toward internal conditions and their relationship with England's cross-channel trade as the main cause of the new enterprise. The evidence also points toward the successes Portugal had in tapping Eastern wealth as an inspiring factor. The historian of the Russia Company makes no reference to the Levant in his discussion of the reasons for the 1553 voyage and concludes that no single reason can be found but that its purpose was "...to tap the riches of the east by a route free from Portuguese interference and to open up a new and direct

18 Willan, op. cit., pp. 22, 37.

19 Ibid., p. 24.

source of supply for gold and spices."²⁰ The only issue that might be taken with this statement of purpose is that it does not take into account the problems faced by the exporter of English cloth. To have an unhampered means of acquiring wealth is a continuous and fundamental motive for all businessmen at all times. It requires something more to explain why a particular course of action, leading to that end, is taken at a particular time.

There is, nevertheless, one more connecting link between the two trades worth noting - perhaps the most interesting link of all - in the person of Anthony Jenkinson; a link which is formed by his own activities and possibly also by his personal connections. In January 1568 he married Judith Marsh,²¹ daughter of John Marsh, one of the charter members of the Company.²² Judith Marsh, through her mother, was the grand-daughter of William Gresham.²³ It is probably this William Gresham, brother of Sir John Gresham, the charter member, and uncle of Sir Thomas Gresham, who is mentioned by Hakluyt in connection with the early Levant trade.²⁴ There is nothing

20 T. S. Willan, The Early History of the Russia Company, 1956, p.2.

21 Miscellanea Geneologica et Heraldicae, 2nd Series, vol. V, p.7.

22 Willan, Muscovy Merchants. 23 Ibid.

24 Hakluyt V,62.

more than this to go on, and it may mean nothing. All of Jenkinson's connections with the Marsh's and the Gresham's may have originated only after the beginning of his service with the Russia Company. It should be noted, however, that Jenkinson was admitted to the Mercers Company in 1555 by redemption gratis²⁵ and that the Greshams were prominent members of this company.

More definite is that in 1553 Jenkinson was in Aleppo, in Syria, when the Sultan Suleiman arrived on his way to wage war on Persia. He received from the Sultan a safe conduct to trade with Ottoman territories. Unfortunately, the most important question about his presence in the Levant cannot be answered. Did he secure this on his own initiative or was he acting for some mercantile interests? However, it can be suggested, from a remark he made some years later, that his expectation was greater than his achievement. In 1562, when he was in Persia, Jenkinson was asked by Abdullah Khan, the king of Shirvan, if the English were friendly with the Turks. He replied that they had never been "and therefore they would not suffer us to passe through their countrie into this Sophie his dominions..."²⁶ He could not have been denied

25 M&C, lxxxviii; see note 30 for this reference in full.
 26 M&C, 143.

this passage unless he had asked for it, suggesting that his purpose in 1553 may have been to try to open up a trade with Persia. In the end he was given only the privilege printed by Hakluyt.²⁷

Jenkinson does not appear on the scene again until three and a-half years after his presence in Syria. It is not known when he returned to England though it could not have been much before early 1554.²⁸ In the meantime, some months before this, Chancellor and Willoughby had set out to tap the Asian trade by another route. Though Chancellor succeeded in opening trade with Russia, he had not attempted, in effect, the Northeast Passage, thus leaving its feasibility still an open question. Before it was pursued further, the merchants who backed this original voyage secured letters patent forming them into a corporate body and then immediately sent a delegation to the Czar to formalize their relations with him. It was thus not until April 1556 that Stephen Borough, in the Searchthrift, began the second attempt to find the Northeast Passage.²⁹ Like all those who came after he failed to penetrate the ice and fog at the

27 Hakluyt V, 109.

28 He witnessed the entry of Suleiman into Aleppo on 4 November 1553. (Hakluyt V, 105.)

29 Hakluyt II, 322.

entrance to the Kara Sea. On his return he wintered at Colmogro and arrived in England the following year, probably sometime in the spring.

It was not until May 1557 that Anthony Jenkinson departed from London on his projected overland voyage to eastern Asia. What his activities had been from November 1553, when he was in Aleppo, until then is not known. It is reasonable to suppose that he returned with his privilege from the Sultan with the intention of putting it into effect, finding, when he arrived back in England that plans to tap Asian trade by another route had already been put into operation. If this route should prove successful Jenkinson's privilege would be irrelevant. Thus no action was likely to be taken on it until definite news was heard from Stephen Borough. His failure left open the way for one further possibility - the overland route through central Asia. Whether the initiative came from Jenkinson or the Russia Company cannot be determined. In view of his previous experience he was the logical person to send, a decision which was fully justified by the results he achieved. Within a few years he had succeeded in laying the ground-work for the Russia Company's trade with Persia. The correspondence of the Company with its agents in Persia and their

accounts, written during the 20 years this trade lasted, constitute a record from which it is possible to make a useful and interesting analysis of some of the commercial and political problems presented by trade in Asia during this time.³⁰

In its inception this Persian trade bears an interesting parallel to its parent Muscovy trade. Just

30 These documents have been used by E. V. Vaughan, op. cit., but he presented an essentially chronological narrative of the expeditions as they occurred one after the other. It is very useful, as such, in keeping the story clear in one's mind. Foster, op. cit., has taken a similar approach to Vaughan's but with much less detail. Willan, op. cit., has some interesting and useful comments and observations on the Persian trade scattered throughout his history of the Russia Company, but he did not attempt to give any systematic analysis of the trade. Much of the particular detail that appears in the following analysis has been used in the above secondary accounts; some of it has not been used. Because of the confusion that would ensue from continual cross-reference to these secondary works and because all the original sources have been re-examined, references for the facts are made to these sources only. They have all been collected together and edited by E. Delmore Morgan and C. H. Coote in Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia, 2 vols., 1886. With the addition of a few items not printed by Hakluyt, these volumes contain all but three of the extant documents relevant to these Persian voyages. For convenience the documents have been referred to in this edition throughout the present study and it will be cited simply as M&C followed by the page number. There were seven expeditions in all though only six were counted by Hakluyt as Persian expeditions. The Jenkinson voyage of 1557-60 stands separately from the others which were:

1st - 1561-63	4th - 1568-69
2nd - 1564	5th - 1569-74
3rd - 1565-67	6th - 1579-81

as the Chancellor-Willoughby voyage of 1553 - though failing in its main object of reaching eastern Asia by sea - discovered the Muscovy trade; so also the Anthony Jenkinson voyage of 1557 - though failing in its main object of reaching eastern Asia by land - discovered the Persian trade. The effort to find a route to the furthest reaches of Asia did not end with these two failures. It was to be continued, not only by the Muscovy Company but also by the English in general, until success was finally achieved in 1600. That this route was the purpose of the Chancellor-Willoughby and Jenkinson voyages is clear enough but with the beginning of the Persian voyages it can be reasonably asked if, in view of the energy being devoted to developing and maintaining the trade with Persia, the Muscovy Company was still genuinely interested in gaining direct access to the east Asian markets. Examination of the letters and accounts of the voyages to Persia show that they always had the objective in mind though they did not continuously devote all their energies to this end.

Success was dependent on gaining permission from the Shah of Persia to pass through his lands. Thus the question only comes up in the records on the few occasions when actual negotiations with the Shah were taking

place. In their instructions to Jenkinson in 1561, the Muscovy Company specifically stated that he should attempt to have included in the privileges from the Shah permission to pass through Persia to and from India.³¹

When the privileges were granted, however, they were silent on this matter. In 1570, Thomas Bannister had an audience with Shah Tahmasp in Kazvin during which negotiations were conducted for further privileges. A year later, in a letter to William Cecil, Bannister reported that the Shah "...grawnted all my requestes saving one and that was that we might passe through his domynyons into the indiaes which he should not then grawnt, but said an other tyme I shold have hitt...".³² It is never stated why the Shah refused this request, but the most likely explanation is that he wished to protect his own merchants who traded with India from English competition.

Because of this repeated refusal, the English merchants' most active concern was concentrated on Persia itself and the details of its trade. Nevertheless, the focus of this concern reveals that though passage through Persia was blocked their main interest was

31 M&C, 117.

32 PRO:SPForeign General Series, 118, 2 May 1571.

still with the spices that came from further east. The Company was quite explicit about this desire for spices in its instructions to its agents in 1567. "Our chiefe desire is to have a greate trade for the said spices and drugges to serve this reallme...therefore you must use herein all diligence, circumspection and travaill which waye it may be sonest and best brought to passe..."³³

Part of their reason for expressing such concern for quick success was that they had "...undertaken (at this late parliament tyme) to perfome the same to the Queenes Maiestie and the nobillitie of this Realme"³⁴. Having committed themselves, they were now anxious that their agents in Russia and Persia rescue them. The emphasis on the spice trade was also reflected in a letter written a year later by Thomas Bannister and Geoffrey Ducket to Sir William Cecil in which they spoke of the benefits to be derived from the Muscovy trade, among which was "...the honor that will insewe by Bringinge the trayd of spyces this waye..."³⁵

With the way through Persia into India remaining closed, the English considered other alternatives.

33 M&C, 220.

34 Loc. cit. The occasion for this statement to the Queen and nobility was the petitioning for a new patent which was granted in December 1566. (Willan, Russia Company, pp. 75-77.)

35 M&C, 260.

Jenkinson made inquiries among the merchants of India when he was in Kazvin between November 1562 and March 1563. He asked them about the trade in spices and they assured him that they could bring as much spice as the English would buy.³⁶ This is the only record of any attempt to deal directly with the merchants of India possibly because the English soon learned what Geoffrey Ducket reported some years later in his "Further observations concerning the state of Persia". He wrote that "The most part of spices which commeth into Persia is brought from the Islande of Ormuz...The Portingals touche at Ormuz, both in their voyage to East India and homeward againe, and from thence bring all such spices as are occupied in Persia and the regions thereabout..."³⁷ The possibility of opening trade in Ormuz was considered as early as 1566. In that year Arthur Edwards, in a letter to the Company, stated that if he had had another Englishman with him to whom he could have intrusted his business he would have taken an interpreter and gone to Ormuz.³⁸ A year later the Company, having received Edward's letter, instructed its agents, who were preparing for the fourth voyage into Persia, that they

36 M&C, 149.

37 M&C, 435.

38 M&C, 401.

should acquire some slaves who had been to Ormuz and spoke both Portuguese and Persian and with them go to that place "there to practice for the trade of spices and drugges to be brought to the Casbin from Oromes or Callecut".³⁹ However, when they arrived in Persia, the English found they could not follow through with this plan because a war between the Portuguese and Indians had closed the way to Ormuz.⁴⁰ Unable to get closer to the source of the spice trade, the English had to be content to pursue their trade entirely within the boundaries of the lands of the Shah of Persia.

Confined thus, the detailed knowledge of this market became important to the merchants. This detail was not determined with the same precision that the present day businessman would insist upon before committing his capital. At the same time a reading of the record impresses one with the amount of market exploration that did, in fact, take place. It impresses one, also, with the genuine effort that was made to be accurate and thorough in surveying the market. It is only to be expected that such information would be required inasmuch as this was the first time, in well over a generation,

39 M&C, 222.

40 M&C, 409.

that the English had to concern themselves personally with transactions outside the boundaries of Europe. The Persian trade was thus an unknown quantity to them. They might speak of the "traffique of Persia" but Persia was large and they had to find out just where in that largeness was to be found the best traffic. They had to determine just what kinds of goods could be sold where and what kinds were for sale; and at what prices. They had to assess the seriousness of the competition from Turkish, Armenian, Italian and other merchants. Finally, they had to insure for themselves formal, friendly relations with the Shah of Persia, for without the Shah's good will and without a written statement of privileges they could carry on no trade at all.

One might expect that a businessman would insist on some preliminary exploration of these problems before venturing his capital in the trade itself. But, unlike the present day businessman, the sixteenth century merchant could not commit sufficient capital to carry him through an exploratory period without any return. Thus he had to explore and exploit at the same time. Should it turn out that there was no immediate return it was very difficult for him to raise further capital. In the sixteenth century merchant's account books there was no place for expenditure on research and development

which could be absorbed by future profits. Merchants, therefore, could not always count on being able to follow directly through to their objective. As important as it may have been to reach a given market to sell their goods it was even more important that the goods not remain in hand.

This can be seen from Jenkinson's instructions for the first Persian voyage, written in May 1561. There is also discernible here the conflict between the desire on the part of the Company to open this trade and its desire for a quick turnover of its investment. The Company stated first to Jenkinson that it was lading 400 kerseys especially to be carried into Persia but "...nevertheless if you chance to finde goode sailes for them in the Mosco, we thinke it were good to sell part of them there, and to carry the lesse quantity with you, because we be uncertain what vent or sale you shall finde in Persia or other places where you shall come".⁴¹ Further on in the instructions they reveal, in more detail, their indecision about what is really the best thing to do.

"...if passage can not be had in Persia by Astracan, or otherwise, the next Summer, which shall be the yeere 1562, then our minde is, that you procure to sell our kersies, and other such

41 M&C, 115-16.

wares as are appoynted for Persia, in the Mosco or other the Emperours dominions, if you may sell them for any reasonable price, and then to employ your selfe with such other of our servants as you shall think meete for the search of the passage by Nova Zembla, or else you to returne for England as you thinke good, Provided alwayes that if you doe percieve or understand, that passage is like to be had into Persia the Summer following, which shall be in the yeere 1563, and that if you can not sell our karseis in the Emperours dominions, as aforesayd, at a reasonable price: then we will rather they may be kept till the sayd summer in the yeere 1563 and then you to proceed forwards upon your iourney towards Persia, as aforesayd, If passage into Persia can not be obtained the next yeere, neither yet in the meantime, good sale of our karseis in the Emperours dominions, then we thinke good for you to see if you can practice to carry your sayd wares by safe conduct through Polonia, or any other wayes unto Constantinople, or els where you thinke sale may be had, then in Russia."⁴²

While the above may show uncertainty, it is uncertainty about market conditions and not about the priorities of business. First the goods must be sold at a reasonable price, and only then consideration given to the exploration of a given market. Ideally both should be carried out. Behind all this is the implicit imperative to Jenkinson that the kerseys must not be brought back to England. This explains all the elaborate alternatives set out with the telling "or els where" at the end of the instructions. If the Company's investment could have

42 M&C, 117-18.

been wholly in money instead of goods the entire problem of vent would have been eliminated and only the much simpler one of purchases would have been present.

For these reasons the English remained fairly cautious and restrained in their efforts to open up the trade of eastern and southern Asia. They followed up leads which took them to the next town a few days journey away rather than striking out with boldness across a continent. This should not be held as a criticism suggesting that they might have accomplished more if they had been less timid. They had the temerity but were confronted by economic and political conditions which, though they understood, they could not overcome. Consequently most of the details of trade sent home by the merchants in Persia were concerned with the immediate problems of local trade.

First to be considered among these was the outlook for the market itself. Jenkinson was disappointed in this when he reached Bukhara, in central Asia, in 1558.

"There is yeerely grat resort of Marchants to this Citie of Boghar, which travaile in great Caravans from the Contries thereabout adioyning, as India, Persia, Balke, Russia, with divers others, and in times past from Cathay, when there was passage, but these Marchants are so beggarly and poor, and bring so little quantities of wares, lying two or 3. yeeres to sell the same, that there is no hope of any good trade there to be had worth the following"⁴³

43 M&C, 87.

Not only did he find "no hope of any good trade" but he also learned that even if the way to Cathay had been open it was a nine month's journey away.⁴⁴ One cannot help but suppose that this would have been no inhibition to Jenkinson but it is doubtful if the Muscovy Company would have seriously tried to develop such a route. It had taken Jenkinson nine months to reach Bukhara from London; another nine months to Cathay would make a round trip of at least three years. Merchants would certainly have been reluctant to tie up their capital for that length of time even with assurance of a good return.

The blocked route to Cathay did not end matters, for Jenkinson's inquiries concerned the trade of Bukhara in general. He learned that Indian merchants came there carrying cambrics, muslins, cottons and linen but no gold, silver or spices. In the main they took away with them silk, hides from Russia, slaves, and horses; "but of car-seis and other clothe, they make little accompt".⁴⁵ This was the first indication of what ultimately had to be re-learned by the East India Company: that the market for English cloth in India was minimal.⁴⁶ Merchants of Persia, Jenkinson learned, bring linens, silks and horses and take

44 M&C, 91

45 M&C, 81

46 K. N. Chaudhuri, The English East India Company, 1965, pp. 137-8.

back with them hides and slaves. Woolen cloth, however, they would not buy "for they bring thither themselves, and is brought unto them as I have enquired from Aleppo in Syria, and the parts of Turkie".⁴⁷ In fact, Jenkinson not only met with English cloth in Bukhara brought from Aleppo, but it was being sold at prices competitive with those he offered.⁴⁸ When he stopped at Astrakhan on his return journey, he found things no different. There he met with merchants of Shamakha, in Shirvan, and offered to barter their goods for his kerseys but they refused on the grounds that they could buy the same cloth in their own country for the same price.⁴⁹

It was thus clear that the desired trade could only be found by penetrating Persia itself. The six expeditions which did this all traveled down the Volga River to Astrakhan, then continued by ship south along the west shore of the Caspian Sea to the province of Shirvan where they landed and traveled inland to Shemakha, the chief city of the province. Shemakha became, in effect, the jumping off point for the journey into Persia and for the journey back to Russia. From Shemakha the regular route, followed by at least several members of each expedition, was south

47 M&C, 89.

48 M&C, 98.

49 Loc. cit.

as far as Kazvin, where the Shah held court. On the way they stopped to trade at Ardabil, Jevat, and sometimes Tabriz. From this regular route side journeys were made for the purpose of investigating market reports. For example, in April, 1563, Jenkinson sent Edward Clark into Arrash, in Georgia, to investigate the availability of raw silk,⁵⁰ but apparently without success - though three years later Arthur Edwards gave a glowing account of the amount of silk available there.⁵¹ In 1568 several members of the 4th voyage were supposed to take some kerseys to Arrash to sell but for some reason, not explained, this was not done.⁵² Thomas Bannister traveled there in 1571 and evidently succeeded in buying some silk but while there he died.⁵³

Another side journey off the route to Kazvin was to the province of Gilan along the southwestern shore of the Caspian Sea. Report of this locale was first made in 1565 by Edward Chenie who said spices could be had there.⁵⁴ In August of the following year, in his letter to the Company, Arthur Edwards also wrote of Gilan. He seems to have been formulating plans to make Gilan rather than Shirvan the port of call for English trade to Persia.

50 M&C, 150-1. 51 M&C, 388-9.

53 PRO:SP Foreign 118, 2 May 1571.

52 M&C, 408.

54 M&C, 381.

He said that he sent his two previous letters with a company servant to Gilan, from there to embark for Astrakhan. He also said that there was much silk and galls available there and gave his calculation of the carrying charges from Gilan to England.⁵⁵ This report evidently impressed the Company. Instructions for the 4th voyage specifically stated that the agents in Persia should negotiate with the ruler of Gilan for permission to build forts, near a place of anchorage, to protect English shipping.⁵⁶ Finally, in the spring of 1569, Arthur Edwards sent Lawrence Chapman from Kazvin to Gilan, a distance of five days journey. Chapman was not enthusiastic about the situation. He described the journey there as very dangerous and troublesome. The area recently had been overrun by the Shah, he said, and was still suffering from the spoliation and only the poorest people travel there.⁵⁷ Thus no further effort was made to open this branch of the trade.

In addition to their remarks on the location of the market the English agents attempted to give some idea of the size and quality of this market. Their remarks were designed to give guidance to the merchants in London about

55 M&C, 400.

56 M&C, 220.

57 M&C, 412-13.

what and how much they should send to Persia. Some of these reports seem exaggerated and were often vague. In 1566 Arthur Edwards wrote to the Company that they might have vent for 30 to 40,000 pounds a year which was one-half of what they might buy.⁵⁸ The Company found this report ambiguous and wrote back asking if Edwards meant pounds in weight or sterling.⁵⁹ Some months later Edwards again wrote to London and reported that the Armenian are said to carry over 150,000 pounds of silk each year to Aleppo and return with over 15,000 kerseys.⁶⁰ He also estimated that the Company could have 200 to 300 tons a year lading from Gilan in silk and alum.⁶¹ It is perhaps significant that at the same time he was giving these reports, Edwards urged the Company to send him no more than 2000 kerseys.⁶² This more restrained - or perhaps realistic - view of the market is to be found in Lawrence Chapman's report of the 4th voyage in 1569. He said that in Tabriz no more than 300 to 400 kerseys could be sold, for money or barter, and no more than 1000 in the whole country.⁶³ In 1570 Thomas Bannister confirmed this report by saying that the agents of the 5th voyage had sold only 1000 kerseys in the various Persian towns they had

58 M&C, 388.

61 M&C, 400.

59 M&C, 210.

62 M&C, 397.

60 M&C, 397.

63 M&C, 410.

visited.⁶⁴

These great differences in the reports are not necessarily an indication of the unreliability of the reporters but rather that they were reporting different things. In the one case an attempt was being made to estimate the market potential; in the other case a statement was being made about what part of that potential can be realized. The difference between them was considerable because the problems of buying and selling effectively in this market were considerable. Not the least of these was one which the English in Persia felt was fundamental to the eventual success or failure of their enterprise. This was the problem of the continuous presence in Persia of one or more factors. Though it is never stated in so many words, the record of these voyages conveys the sense that for each one the stock was raised anew and accounted separately. There is no doubt, however, that all the Englishmen in Persia - who had not died - returned to Russia or England at the end of each expedition.⁶⁵ It was to the consequences of this that they addressed themselves in their letters to the Company. One result was not being on the scene to take advantage of the best

64 PRO:SPF General Series 111, 16 April 1570

65 Prof. Willan makes this same observation about the separate voyages. (Russia Company, p. 152.)

market. Arthur Edwards first raised this point in his letter of April 1566.⁶⁶ Three years later the 4th expedition reported that by the time they arrived in Shemakha in September, 1568 the market was already so glutted with goods that no one would buy a single kersey from them.⁶⁷ The implication here is that if a factor had been present throughout the year with a stock of goods he could have taken advantage of the best time for sales. The lack of continuous reports on the market could also inhibit good vent of commodities. In 1570 Thomas Bannister raised this problem when he wrote that "...if there were w factor here had ben or merchants or a man of understanding that he had given good advice to have sorted the kersies in collers fitt for the country they had ben all gone if they had ben more but for lack of good advises the kersies were not sortid fitt for this countrey..."⁶⁸ There was, however, optimism that factors would eventually be left in Persia. As early as 1566, Arthur Edwards, assumed that this would come to pass.⁶⁹ Later in the same year he wrote of the desirability of making sales and purchases in time to deliver goods to Colmogro by the end of June so they could be laded on the Company's

66 M&C, 388.

67 M&C, 408.

68 PRO-SPF General Series 111, 16 April 1570

69 M&C, 388.

ships making their regular annual return to England and he concluded that "This I doubt not to bring to passe within a yeere or two, when we are thoroughly settled in these parts, and better knowen".⁷⁰

That there had to be factors left in a country in order to carry on a successful trade was taken for granted by all merchants. Even those who traded no further from London than Antwerp had their factors in continuous residence. For those in Persia this necessity was further impressed upon them by the presence of factors from other nations. Arthur Edwards reported that because the Turks have "manie in residence" in Persia they are able to buy silk at the best prices when it is first brought to market.⁷¹ Several years later Lawrence Chapman made a similar report complaining that when he arrived at Tabriz he found that the Turks in residence had already satisfied the market for cloth and thus he, Chapman, could not get a good price for his.⁷² The irony of this competition was that the cloth with which the English merchants were competing was English cloth which had been bought in England by Venetians, transported by sea to the ports of the Levant and then carried inland by Turks and Armenians.

70 M&C, 401.

71 M&C, 401.

72 M&C, 408-9.

This competition was evident from the very beginning. As pointed out above when Anthony Jenkinson was in Bukhara in 1558, he found there English cloth which had been brought from Persia; and at Astrakhan he was told by merchants of Shemakha that they could buy kerseys in their own country for as good a price as he offered.⁷³ Arthur Edwards reported that Armenian merchants traded with the Venetians at Aleppo exchanging raw silk for kerseys.⁷⁴ He said that to break the competition offered by these merchants the English had to be prepared to receive a 100 mules lading a year and pay for it in one-third money, and the rest in cloth and kerseys.⁷⁵ A further source of competition is brought to light in the Company's instructions to their agents in 1567. They gave order, at that time, that kerseys were not to be sold in Russia because it had been reported that the Russians carry them into Persia for resale.⁷⁶ Edwards also suggested that some of this competition might be met if the Company made greater use of ready money. In 1566 he suggested that some bullion be sent to be coined in Persia, for it would please the prince and be profitable to the Company.⁷⁷ He then went

73 M&C, 89, 98.

74 M&C, 396, 397.

75 M&C, 410. He did not specify the nature of the lading.

76 M&C, 221-2.

77 M&C, 400.

on to report that the Turks "bring great store of silver to be coyned...and having monie in readiness at the time of the yeere, they buy silke the better cheape, when men bring it first to be solde"⁷⁸ The only other reference to ready money came from Lawrence Chapman in 1569 when he reported that because of Ormuz being closed and spices difficult to obtain they could be had for ready money only.⁷⁹ The factors in Persia did not dwell on this point to any great extent but it is clear from casual remarks of theirs that while the Persian were willing to barter and did present some demand for English goods, they would have preferred payment in ready money and would give better prices for such.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most revealing fact about this Anglo-Persian trade - a fact which goes far to explain the desire for its continuance - is the difference between sales and purchase prices of the commodities involved. A detailed analysis of price structures is not possible because there are not enough examples given. But what is given does enable one to see the enormous potential of profits in this trade. For example clove and cinnamon which cost about 3^s4^d/lb. in Persia⁸⁰ sold

78 M&C, 401.

79 M&C, 414.

80 M&C, 396.

for 6^s - 6^s6^d/lb. in London and Antwerp;⁸¹ mace at 3^s4^d - 4^s2^d/lb. in Persia⁸² sold for about 11^s/lb. in Antwerp;⁸³ nutmeg at 2^s6^d/lb. in Persia⁸⁴ was 3^s6^d - 8^s/lb. in London;⁸⁵ for pepper and ginger the two prices were so close that it is questionable if they were profitable. More telling than these differences were those for the English commodities. Kerseys which averaged between 25^s and 35^s a piece in London, going up to 50^s or 60^s for fine ones,⁸⁶ sold for no less than 70^s and as high as 90^s each in Persia;⁸⁷ tin which cost about £3 to £4 a hundred in England⁸⁸ sold for £5.16^s to £7.10^s in Persia.⁸⁹ There must also be added to these prices the English customs payments and freight charges.

Given these figures alone, the Persian trade should have been profitable. That it was so appears to have been the case, but so little was said on the subject and that so vague, it is often difficult to know. Every adventure was so beset by misadventure and dishonesty on

81 PRO:SPO Eliz. 91 f. 170; SPD Suppl. 13, f. 122, 130, 143.

82 M&C, 396, 414.

83 PRO:SPD Suppl. 13, f. 122.

84 M&C, 391-2.

85 PRO:SPD Eliz. 91 f. 170.

86 Some examples are in PRO:HCA Libels 47, no. 450; 48, no. 12; Court of Requests Proceedings 127/16; and BM:Cotton Mss. Nero BIV, f. 241v-242.

87 M&C, 388.

88 George R. Lewis, The Stannaries, pp. 276-77.

89 M&C, 391-2.

the part of local officials and merchants that the English felt themselves fortunate to come out with their initial investment. But they do seem to have done at least this.

Jenkinson, after his return from Bukhara wrote that

"...although our journey hath bene so miserable, dangerous, and chargeable with losses, charges and expenses, as my penne is not able to expresse the same; yet shall wee bee able to satisfie the worshipfull companies mindes, as touching the discoverie of the Caspian Sea with the trade of merchandise to bee had in such landes and the countreyes as bee thereabout adjacent, and have brought of wares and commodities of those countries able to anser the principal with profite..."⁹⁰

The account of the 2nd voyage suggests that a profit was made on the principal. The author of the account, Richard Chenie, wrote that, initially, the merchants started out with £1000 of the Company's money.⁹¹ Later in the report he wrote that in addition to the goods being returned home out of Persia, £1000 in debts still had to be collected.⁹² Whether or not a profit was made depends upon what value of English goods was carried into Persia; of this nothing was said. If the value was less than that of those sent out then there was a profit. The report's conclusion that the Persian trade "...is a voyage to be followed"⁹³ suggests that it was worthwhile. The accounts

90 M&C, 108.

92 M&C, 380.

91 M&C, 378.

93 M&C, 381.

of the 3rd and 4th voyages, though they are the fullest in detail, say nothing that enables one to make a judgment about their profitability. The 5th voyage nearly ended in disaster as the result of an attack upon its train by Cossacks who stole all the goods. However, with the help of Russians from Astrakhan, the English were able to recover some of what they lost. According to the account £5000 was recovered out of £30-40,000 worth of goods originally in hand.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it was possible for them to report afterwards that the Company "notwithstanding all misfortunes, lost nothing of their principall adventure, but only the interest and gaine that might have risen by the use of their stocke in the meane time".⁹⁵ The most explicit statement on profit refers to the final adventure and comes from Bernadino de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador in London. He wrote to Philip II that the expedition which returned from Persia in October, 1581, even though it lost two-thirds of its merchandise realized a profit of 6%.⁹⁶ One might wonder how Mendoza knew this; however, Prof. Willan accepts the statement and uses it to show how small a profit was earned; 2% a year for the three years of the expedition.⁹⁷ This cannot be disputed but it fails

94 M&C, 429-30.

95 M&C, 431.

96 Cal. SP Spanish, 1580-86, p. 367.

97 Willan, Russia Company, p. 155.

to consider that this profit was made after the loss of a portion of the goods. The portion lost, however, was probably a good bit less than two-thirds. Mendoza was given to exaggerating the exploits of the English when he wanted to alarm Philip II into taking action against them. Furthermore, the account of the voyage, though it mentions the loss of goods, gives no sense that such a large portion was lost.⁹⁸ There is, nevertheless, the clear implication of the possibility of a much greater profit. The extent of this possibility is made clearer in the example from the 5th adventure cited above. This suggests that the initial outlay was £5000 and that from this there had been realized goods and money to the value of 6 to 8 times that amount. Even granting a degree of exaggeration in these figures they give an indication of a very profitable trade.

It was a trade that had the seeds of success in it. These were recognized by the English merchants on the scene who knew what steps had to be taken to insure that they took root and grew into a successful enterprise. They were also optimistic that in time this would happen. From a present day vantage point one is inclined to agree, though perhaps with somewhat less

98 M&C, 459 and passim.

optimism, that barring the intervention of any further obstacle the English would eventually have set up one or more permanent factories somewhere in Persia. But a further obstacle did intervene; one before which the English merchants were virtually helpless and which finally brought the Muscovy Company's Persian trade to an end. This was the state of political relations between the English and the Russians on the one hand and between the Persians and the Ottomans on the other.

Political relations of one kind or another were always a problem for the English in Persia. Their first order of business had been to establish friendly relations with Shah Tahmasp and secure from him a written privilege regulating the conditions upon which they would be allowed to trade. Anthony Jenkinson failed to do this, not because the Shah was uninterested or unwilling, but because four days before he arrived at the Shah's court in Kazvin, a Turkish ambassador had arrived to conclude a treaty of peace with the Persians.⁹⁹ In response to the complaints of Turkish merchants present there, the ambassador persuaded the Shah not to favor the English.¹⁰⁰ Jenkinson did, however, receive a pri-

99 M&C, 142.

100 M&C, 144.

vilege from Abdullah Khan, the ruler of Shirvan, apparently at the instance of the Shah, who was desirous of opening trade with the English but who had to bend before the Turkish pressure.¹⁰¹ This privilege was the basis of the second voyage into Persia and it was not until June 1566 that Arthur Edwards received a general privilege from Shah Tahmasp¹⁰² which was renewed and appended in 1568.¹⁰³ On both of these occasions Edwards reported that after receiving the privilege the attitude of the Persian merchants and officials completely changed. Where before they would have little to do with the English or treated them with contempt and dishonesty, afterwards they treated them with great favor and friendship and expressed great willingness to do business with them.¹⁰⁴ It is evident that as time passed stable relations with the Shah became more certain. These did not always extend to all parts of Persia, however, and the English sometimes had to seek reconfirmation of their position by means of a letter from the Shah, to overcome the obstinacy of a local official. It seems likely that in time this would all have been regularized.

What interferred more seriously with this trade

101 M&C, 150.

103 M&C, 416-20.

102 M&C, 395.

104 M&C, 395 and 417.

were those political relations which could prevent the English from gaining access to Persia. These included both Anglo-Russian and Ottoman-Russian relations. The difficulty with the overland route, from a political point of view, was that it subjected the English merchants to the will and activities of the ruler of each territory through which they had to pass. Anthony Jenkinson, for example, had to petition the Czar for a special license to make overland journeys into Asia in 1557¹⁰⁵ and again in 1561¹⁰⁶ when starting out on the first Persian voyage. On the latter occasion, however, the Czar refused him permission for reasons not made entirely clear. It was not until the spring of 1562 that he received the passport and then only as a result of the intercession of Osep Nepea, the former Russian envoy to England.¹⁰⁷ The members of the 2nd and 3rd voyages also, presumably, had to obtain special license to travel through Russia, though nothing is said on the matter in the accounts. It was not until September 1567 that Ivan IV embodied in the Muscovy Company's charter the explicit privilege to make use of this route.¹⁰⁸

This did not mean that the Czar would not create

105 M&C, 41.

107 M&C, 122-4.

106 M&C, 124.

108 Willan, Russia Company, p.89.

further difficulties if he so chose. Unfortunately for the English merchants, Ivan IV was most anxious to conclude a mutual defense pact with Queen Elizabeth. She, however, was most anxious to avoid any such commitments while at the same time continuing to benefit from friendly commercial relations with the Russians. Ivan would have none of this, and in retaliation, revoked all of the Muscovy Company's privileges in October 1570. These were not restored for another two years.¹⁰⁹ These difficulties between the two rulers had their repercussions on the merchants returning from the 5th Persian voyage. The Czar let it be known that no cooperation was to be extended to the English. This news reached Geoffrey Ducket in Persia who wrote from Shemakha, in April, 1572, that he was delaying the dispatch of goods out of Persia because he had received news of a proclamation forbidding anyone from selling ships or ships' stores to the English.¹¹⁰ Political events had delayed this same expedition at its start when a Turkish army had beseiged Astrakhan during the time the English were preparing for their journey into Persia.¹¹¹ The unexpected strength of the city,

109 Ibid., pp. 112-28, where there is a detailed discussion of these negotiations.

110 PRO:Colonial Office, General Series 1, no. 4.

111 M&C, 424.

the coming of winter and a Russian army combined to discourage the Turks who lifted the siege after six weeks, thus permitting the English to continue on their way.

This northward reach of the Sultan's power was part of the overall Ottoman policy to dominate the Steppe region north of the Caspian and Black Seas.¹¹² It was a continuation of this policy which blocked the last of the Anglo-Persian expeditions at its entrance to Persia. When the small group of English merchants arrived in Shirvan in the summer of 1580 they discovered that the province had been conquered by an Ottoman army and was under the rule of a Turkish military commander. The disposition of all trade was under his control and, though he was willing to trade, he was willing to do so only on his own terms. Though these terms, according to the account, were "...not with equitie in all points..." they also were "...not extreme ill".¹¹³ The latter is evident from the reported profit made by the expedition.¹¹⁴ Despite these problems the English intended that several factors remain in Baku after the main party returned to Russia with the Company's goods.¹¹⁵ This did not come to pass, though the Turkish

112 Halil Inalcik, The Origin of the Ottoman-Russian Rivalry and the Don-Volga Canal, 1948, p. 50.

113 M&C, 461. 114 See supra p.99. 115 M&C, 460.

commander had agreed to it. The reasons for this failure, so far as can be determined from the account, were the injury of one of the factors and the loss of a small boat and a chest of money.¹¹⁶ The account is confusing and vague on the change of plan.

This is an important issue because it was the first time a decision to leave factors behind had been made and it was the absence of permanent factors that was considered to be one of the chief obstacles to a successful trade in Persia. It is possible the Company had finally decided to take steps to establish a permanent organization in Persia. Whether or not this setback alone would have brought the trade to a halt is not known. It is known that two of the merchants who were supposed to have remained in Persia, and a third Englishman, did remain in Astrakhan to sell the remainder of the Company's goods.¹¹⁷ The Company might have seen fit to send them back to Persia the next spring; even though the Persian trade would then have been complicated by the necessity to establish formal relations with the Turks. Any such thoughts became pointless, however, because two weeks before the members of the expedition reached London on

116 M&C, 457-9.

117 M&C, 472. There is no indication of when they finally left Astrakhan for England.

25 September 1581¹¹⁸ the grant of letters patent to another group of London merchants marked the fruition of efforts to establish exclusive, commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire.

118 M&C, 474.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGINS OF THE TURKEY COMPANY

Thought about other approaches to Asia was not entirely neglected while the Persian trade continued. The failure of Jenkinson to reach Cathay inspired at least one person to suggest that the effort to reach the East be continued along another route. In November 1566, Thomas Champneys wrote to Queen Elizabeth from Naples stating he had met a man well acquainted with the East and in view of Jenkinson's failure he thought it would be to the realm's advantage if she would send this man to establish contact in her name. He gave no further information than this, so it is not possible to evaluate the seriousness of Champney's contact. At the same time he also wrote to William Cecil requesting that he urge the Queen to reply quickly to his letter so he could report back to his contact. However, no reply is known to exist.¹ A more interesting and informative letter was printed by Hakluyt dated February 1569.² In this letter Gaspar Campion,

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1. The letter to the Queen is in HMC: Cal. Salis Mss. I, pp. 340-1 and that to Cecil in PRO:SPD Eliz. 41 no. 2. Champney wrote another letter to Cecil in October 1566 (Cal.SPF, 1566-68) from which it seems he was in Naples on government service, evidently to gather intelligence.
 2. Hakluyt V, 111-17.

writing to Michael Lok, urged that at the expense of some merchants he be sent to secure a safe conduct from the Turks to trade in Chios. Campion went into some detail about the state of this trade in the past and said he had lived in Chios for over 20 years and was well acquainted with conditions there. According to him the inhabitants of the island were so desirous of English trade they would be willing to help pay the necessary charges attendant upon getting the safe conduct. As in the case of Champney's letter no reply to this one is known to exist, and probably no action was taken on it. Michael Lok was perhaps not the ideal person to whom such an appeal should be addressed. At the time, he was involved in the affairs of the Muscovy Company and became its London agent in 1571.³ Furthermore, a few years later he was actually urging the continuation of the Persian trade.⁴ In view of this he does not seem a likely person to have actively supported a return to the Levant trade.

The first step toward this return was taken by two merchants of London, Edward Osborne and Richard Stapers. The only authority providing information about this step

3. Willan, Russia Company, p. 287.

4. PRO:SPF General Series 134, 8 May 1575.

is Richard Hakluyt. In the Principal Navigations he printed a short account of a journey undertaken by two men, John Wight and Joseph Clements, who were sent to Constantinople in about 1575 by Osborne and Stapers for the purpose of procuring a safe conduct for their factor, William Harborne. They succeeded in this, according to the account, after remaining there eighteen months.⁵ Hakluyt has an extremely good record for reliability and no evidence is known which throws doubt on this event. It has been repeated, without question or comment, by Epstein, Rowland, and Wood.⁶ Yet taken alone, the incident is puzzling. Nothing is immediately apparent to explain why it required a year and a half in Constantinople to procure this safe conduct. There is, furthermore, the question why a safe conduct was needed in the first place. Other Europeans had been in continuous residence at the Turkish court for more than a generation. The capitulations of 1536 between Suleiman I and Francis I gave the protection of the French flag to all Christians coming to the Turkish dominions. Also,

5 Hakluyt V, 168/

6 Mordecau, Epstein, The English Levant Company, 1908, p. 9; A. L. Rowland, "England and Turkey: The Rise of Diplomatic and Commercial Relations", in Studies in English Commerce and Exploration in the Reign of Elizabeth, 1924, p. 8; A. C. Wood, A History of the Levant Company, 1935, pp. 7-8.

when Harborne did travel to the Sultan's court he carried a royal letter. Though this did not give him ambassadorial status, it would give him a certain degree of diplomatic immunity as a nuncio. Furthermore, according to Hakluyt's account, before Harborne, who traveled overland to Constantinople, left Poland, he felt it necessary to dress himself like a Turk and to seek the favor of the Turkish ambassador to Poland and join his company which was about to return home.⁷ All of this seems excessive if Harborne already had a safe conduct from the Sultan. No historian has raised these doubts, however; all have been content to accept a literal interpretation based solely on Hakluyt's own words:

"Wherefore about the yeere 1575 the fore-said R. W. marchants at their charges and expenses sent John Wight and Joseph Clements by the way of Poland to Constantinople, where the said Joseph remained 18 monethes to procure a safe conduct from the grand Signior, for M. William Harborne, then factor for Sir Edward Osborne, to have free accesse into his Highnes dominions, and obtained the same."⁸

There are at least two points of criticism that can be raised about this statement with respect to its literal interpretation. First, the term "safe conduct" usually is taken to mean simply an assurance that the person possessing it may pass through a territory or

7 Hakluyt V, 168.

8 Ibid., 168.

into it and out again without being subject to any hindrance from the governing authority. This is the meaning that has been attached to the above "safe conduct" procured for Harborne. But the term is used in other places as well with an additional meaning. In the account of the Bark Aucher the question comes up of acquiring a safe conduct from the Turks so the ship can trade to Chios.⁹ In 1569, Gaspar Campion, in his letter to Michael Lok, speaks of the "procurement of a safe conduct from the great Turke, for a trade to Chio".¹⁰ In both these cases the sense of "safe conduct" is that of a license to trade. The privilege granted to Anthony Jenkinson in 1553 is entitled by Hakluyt "The safeconduct or privilege..."¹¹ thus equating the safe conduct with the privilege and lending a broader meaning to the term. The texts of this privilege as well as that of the privilege granted by Murad III in June 1580¹² both support this broader interpretation. They contain within them both a grant of privilege for the purpose of trade and a grant of freedom from molestation.

The second point to be made about Hakluyt's account concerns the statement that the "safe conduct" was speci-

9 Ibid., 72
11 Ibid., 109.

10 Ibid., 111.
12 Ibid., 169-71

fically for Harborne to have free access to the Turkish dominions. This would seem to undermine the broader interpretation given above. In support it can be pointed out that the account of the renewing of the Levant trade was put together many years after the events. It was not included in the 1589 edition of the Principal Navigations¹³ but was gathered in the 1590's when Hakluyt was preparing the second edition. Further, it is not a first-hand account but was written, in his own words, from information gathered from members of the Levant Company. At the time that was done it was then more than fifteen years since the events had taken place and much had happened in the interval. In retrospect, one can surmise, it would be the embassy of Harborne which would stand out. It was he who established formal commercial and political relations between England and Turkey and thus it would not be surprising if certain events preceeding his mission were remembered as having been intended only to facilitate it.

If then one looks at the expedition of Wight and Clements to Turkey in a broader context and as only one of several related events, it takes on a new meaning.

13 A facsimile of this edition was published by the Cambridge University Press, 2 vols., 1965, for the Hakluyt Society.

The door to this approach had been closed to historians of the Levant trade by two tacit assumptions on their parts. First, it has been assumed that from the beginning the intention of the Turkey merchants was to carry on their trade by the sea route alone because in the end this is what they did do. Second, it has been assumed that the revival of the Levant trade took place independently of the Muscovy Company's Persian trade.¹⁴ If these assumptions are not made then other possibilities can be considered; possibilities that grow from the fact that in the mid-1570's the whole question of how to continue the Persian trade was under examination.

It was pointed out earlier that one of the problems facing the Persian trade was its dependence on the good will of the rulers of the territories which intervened between England and Persia. The withdrawal of this good will by Ivan IV must have given pause for thought. The Muscovy Company certainly could not think seriously of setting up any sort of permanent organization in Persia if its access to the country was not secure. Thus it would have been natural for the Company to consider the

14 Willan, Russian Company, p. 154, does make the point that the Turkey Company's trade might have been instrumental in bringing this Persian trade to an end if other events had not intervened first.

possibility of finding an alternative route to Persia. In theory there were four other approaches; from the south through the Persian Gulf, from the northeast through lands east of Muscovy, from the northwest from a Baltic port and through Poland, and from the west through the Mediterranean and Syria. The first of these routes meant sailing through waters claimed by the Portuguese as their exclusive preserve. In the mid-1570's England was on friendly terms with Portugal and thus not yet ready to challenge her monopoly. There is no evidence that any thought was given at that time to attempting this route. The other three routes were all seriously considered and tried, with the last finally becoming the basis of the English Levant trade.

The attempt to realise these three routes was undertaken by two groups of merchants. The route from the northeast by the Muscovy Company and the routes from the west by those who eventually formed the Turkey Company. The overlapping membership in these two groups and the timing of events which followed one after the other make it possible to reconstruct a fairly detailed, overall plan of action, into which all the known facts fit and which had the object of finding a viable commercial route to Persia. However, there is no evidence independent of

those events, which serves to corroborate that such a plan ever existed. Each group of merchants must have known what the other was doing and both had basically the same end in view. But there is no positive evidence that they had joined forces before the inception of the Turkey Company. It is entirely possible that initially they worked independently of each other. The Muscovy Company certainly did not have to do otherwise because it held a monopoly of all activity toward the northeast. Once, however, that route proved inaccessible, ~~to~~ the members of the company who wished to pursue the objective by another means could no longer do so as Muscovy Company merchants. They would have to work alone or join with the group that was already actively working to establish trade along a different route.

It was this other group - Osborne and Stapers - which initiated the voyage of Clements and Wight discussed above.¹⁵ The precise authority under which these agents acted is unknown, but it is highly probable that they were acting solely for the merchants and not for the crown. It is less certain, but still very probable, that their mission had nothing to do with paving the way

15 It is not known if Osborne and Stapers had yet been joined by other merchants.

for William Harborne, though it may have contributed to this, in effect. In the broader context of a general desire to insure access to Persia, the aim of these two men could very likely have been to secure a license to pass through Ottoman territory to Persia.¹⁶ The English merchants had received trading privileges from the Shah in 1566 and 1568¹⁷ which were still in force. Thus it was only necessary to gain permission from the Sultan to have free access to Persia. There is nothing to indicate that this permission was ever granted. For the Sultan to permit the English to pass back and forth through Turkey to trade with Persia would have been in direct opposition to the interests of Turkish merchants. One thing which the English had learned from their earlier experience in Persia was the extent to which they were in competition with Turkish merchants dealing in their own English goods. The desire to protect his own merchants would weigh with the Sultan in considering any English request to have access to Persia. This was a situation the English had faced once before when the Shah of Persia denied them access to India¹⁸ in order to protect the trade of

16 See supra Chap. II, p.74 for the possibility that Jenkinson tried this in 1553.

17 M&C, 395 and 416-20.

18 M&C, 117; see also supra Chap. II, p. 79.

Persian merchants. The Sultan had a further reason to deny such a request. In the 1560's the English learned that one of Shah Tahmasp's interests in establishing commercial relations with them was to gain relief from dependence on Turkish merchants.¹⁹ Turkish diplomatic pressure prevented a successful negotiation between the English and Persians at that time.²⁰ The situation had not changed significantly and the Sultan was not any more likely now to permit the Persians an economic advantage by facilitating commercial relations between them and the English. An attempt to gain access to Persia through Turkey under the circumstances described above could easily explain the need to remain in Constantinople for eighteen months. The procuring of a simple safe conduct does not explain that length of stay. It is not stated anywhere when Clements and Wight returned to England but if their stay in Turkey of eighteen months is accepted they could not have returned much before the end of 1576. There is evidence that at about the same time the above events were taking place the Muscovy Company was thinking seriously about the possibility of reaching China and Persia by the northeast route. This evidence consists

19 M&C, 150.

20 M&C, 144.

of two anonymous memoranda which delve into the whole problem of the Persian trade. One of them dates from late 1576 or early 1577 and the other from the first half of 1579.²¹ In discussing the route the suggestion is made that two persons be sent:

"...with order to discover passage by Sea to Cathaia from St. Nicholas in Russia and to discover the nations not only rounde aboute the Caspian sea, but also suche as adioyne to the greate River of Obbe and this to this speciall ende that we may passe up Eastwarde from St. Nicholas with our commo-
dities, and passe to Cathaia by sea, or that we may finde out by the Obb a vent or other-
wise som passage to the Caspian side or to the borders of Persia without setting foote in the domenyons of the Russian and this lease he might quarrel with us and staie our passage to Persia when our vente of kerseis in Asia hanges only on the coorse and not anyway els."²²

The other memorandum recognises the possibility that this

21 PRO:SPD Eliz. 223 nos. 52 and 53. These documents have been dated 1589 by the Calendar, however, it is clear from internal evidence that they were written before that and at two different times. From references to Persian affairs in the earlier and shorter one /no. 53/ it can be dated from sometime between May 1576 and November 1577; probably closer to the latter date. The other document /no. 52/ seems to have been written during the first half of 1579. It contains a heading on one page with the date "1589"; however, the "8" is clearly written over a "7" and in a different ink, both of which indicate that the change was made at a later date. Internal evidence suggests not only the 1579 date but also the earlier part of the year. Prof. Willan gives "1579 or 1580" for both documents (Russia Company), p. 148 n. 1).

22 PRO:SPD Eliz. 223 no. 53.

right of passage could become a problem in the East as well and states that "...if it appere that the dominions of any prince lie betweene Persia and the portable places of the Ob which prince is not in legue with the Sophie, then may the embassador be an occacion of a league..."²³

The attempt to realise this plan was carried out simultaneously with the last of the overland Persian voyages. In May 1580 Arthur Pet and Charles Jackson sailed from Harwich with the intent of finding this Northeast Passage. Their instructions from the Muscovy Company were that they should first try to find the sea passage to Cathay, but should this be impossible, even after passing the mouth of the Ob, they should return to that river and sail up it 'as far as they can.'²⁴

Though the Company was interested in discovering the Ob, their primary objective was still to find that elusive all-water route to eastern Asia. As it turned out Pet and Jackman failed to sail beyond the entrance to the Kara Sea. The Company, however, attacked this problem on two fronts at once. A year before Pet and Jackman sailed the members of the 6th Persian voyage departed from Gravesend. No doubt the Company expected that one

23 PRO:SPD Eliz. 223 no. 52.

24 Hakluyt III, 251-8.

of these expeditions, at least, would be successful. With the failure of both, the Company, or members of the Company, if they wished to continue this trade, would have to look outside the confines set by their monopoly.

It has been seen that an attempt to reach this objective, by a route outside the limits of the Russia Company's monopoly, had already been undertaken by another group of merchants. The question that arises is when these two groups joined forces. The only names of merchants associated with the origins of the Turkey Company were Edward Osborne and Richard Stapers. The charter of that company names two additional merchants, Thomas Smythe, the customer, and William Barret. Osborne is known to have been a member of the Muscovy Company in 1584 but how far back his membership goes is not known. Smythe was probably a charter member of that company. The first complete list of the Turkey Company's membership, dated 1583,²⁵ contains the names of twelve merchants, nine of whom were also members of the Muscovy Company. There is also evidence that the Muscovy Company, acting in its corporate capacity, in-

25 BM:Cotton Mss. Nero BVIII, f. 53.

vested in the Turkey Company.²⁶ Though it is not known when the association between these Muscovy merchants and the Turkey trade began it is unlikely that Osborne and Stapers proceeded very far without some assurance that if they should succeed in procuring the necessary privileges they would then receive the necessary financial backing. To try to define too closely the connection between the Muscovy Company and the first tentative steps which led to the Turkey Company would be hazardous in the present state of knowledge about the activities of the merchants involved.

The failure of Wight and Clements to achieve what very likely was their objective did not mean that the Sultan would be unwilling to permit the English to carry on trade in Turkey, itself, or any other Ottoman territory. To do this meant either of two things for the English; that they trade under the protection of the French flag or that they attempt to establish themselves as an independent nation at the Porte. The former was easy enough and had been done by the English in the past. The latter course was not so simple. It meant establish-

26 This question is taken up in Chapter IV. Detailed references for the activities of the merchants mentioned in the text are given in the Biographical Appendix.

ing diplomatic relations with the Porte and negotiating for a separate set of commercial privileges. The decision to do this meant that the crown would henceforth have to play an active role. Before considering the motives and activities of the government in the beginnings of this trade it is necessary first to take up one other problem. There is evidence that the merchants who ultimately followed the Mediterranean route to the Levant experimented first with a route which would take them by sea to a Baltic port and then overland through central Europe to Constantinople.

It was pointed out above that there were two possible approaches to Persia and Turkey from the West; one by sea and the other overland from a Baltic port. The possibility that the latter may initially have been considered by the merchants has not been explored by earlier students of the Levant trade. The first point that must be made with respect to this is that nothing in all the various privileges received by the merchants restricted them to any particular route. Both the first and second set of privileges granted by Murad III specifically permitted the merchants to enter his territory by sea or land²⁷

27 Hakluyt V, 170 and 185.

and likewise the letters patent of 1581 prohibited all persons, except those specified, from trading to the dominions of the Grand Seignior by sea or by land.²⁸ Thus the choice of a route was left open to the merchants. However, the text of this patent by its continued and casual reference to ships, mariners and seafaring suggests that it was assumed the trade would be conducted by sea. It granted freedom and authority to traffic in all "...Seas, rivers, ports, regions, territories, dominions, coastes and places..." to which they might come in pursuing the trade "...with their ships, barks, pinesses and other vessels..."²⁹ In general where the patent lay down rules and regulations for the merchants to follow they were placed in the context of a seagoing trade.³⁰

Two questions are raised by this emphasis on the trade by sea, Did the merchants actually consider the overland route, and, if so, when did they abandon the idea? There are several pieces of evidence which, when taken together, present a reasonable case for an affirmative answer to the first question. The most telling is a list of names contained in a document endorsed "The

28 Ibid., 185.

29 Ibid., 196.

30 Ibid., 196-7 and 199.

names and particular tax of the Marchants tradinge to the East countres".³¹ In this list is the name William Barret who later was included in the Turkey Company charter and who was that company's first agent in Aleppo. Though it is not certain it is very possible that he was already connected with Osborne and Stapers at the time the list was compiled. Also in this list is the entry "William Harborne per Mr. alderman Osborne". Neither Barret nor Harborne are known to have been merchants in their own right nor are they known to have ever had their names connected with any other trading company, except, of course, the Turkey Company. Harborne, is known, however, to have acted as factor for both Osborne and Staper in Spain in 1575.³² The most likely explanation for the entry of Harborne's name in the above manner is that the list was made up after he left for Constantinople in July 1578. There would seem to have been little reason for entering his name at all, if he was to be in Turkey, unless his sponsors were intending to trade there using the overland route. With

31 PRO:SPD Eliz. 127 no. 73. The calendar dates it "about 1578". It has no contemporary date but it contains seventeen names which do not appear in the Eastland Company charter of 17 August 1579 [PRO:SPD Eliz 131 no. 70] suggesting that it preceded the charter.

32 See Biographical Appendix.

Harborne a recognised "Marchant tradinge the East contres" Osborne and Stapers would have the convenience of sending goods directly from London all the way to the Levant in his name and perhaps Barret's as well if it was intended initially to send him to Aleppo. For reasons taken up below, they probably never did this. They are known, however, to have shipped cloth, conyskins, indigo, and tin to Hamburg in 1578,³³ the same year Harborne travelled to Constantinople. In fact, Harborne travelled by way of Hamburg and possibly accompanied these goods. They also laded £1000 worth of cloths and kerseys in two ships for Danzig in November or December 1579.³⁴ It is not known if any of the above goods were intended for Turkey. It is known, with respect to their Hamburg trade that they were not Merchant Adventurers. The trade to Danzig may simply have been part of Osborne and Stapers' Eastland trade. Both of them and George Barne, later a Turkey merchant, were named in the Eastland Company's charter of 1579³⁵ and were the only Eastland merchants who were also members of the Turkey Company. Two of them, Barne and Osborne, were also members of the Russia

33 BM:Harl. Mss. 167 f. 75, 91-93v.

34 BM:Lans. 29 no. 54.

35 Harborne and Barret were not named in the charter.

Company.³⁶

This interlocking membership of men who were all so prominent in companies with potentially overlapping trade routes suggests something more than coincidence. But it does not rule out coincidence. The membership of the three men in the Eastland Company need not be explained by any prior plan of theirs to trade overland to Turkey. It is only natural to expect the same merchants to find their way into companies which monopolize closely related trades. However, the trade of all three, as recorded in the Port Books, was predominantly with France and Spain and there is no record of any of them trading at any port north of Antwerp prior to the period in question.³⁷ It is reasonable, then, to suggest that the interest of these merchants in the Eastland trade, coming when it did, was related to the problem of gaining access to Persia.

Further evidence of a plan to use a route other than the Mediterranean comes from a report written in May 1582 by the Spanish ambassador, Bernadino de Mendoza,

36 Barne was one of the governors of the Russia Company in 1580. See Biographical Appendix.

37 The Muscovy trade of Barnes, which may date back to well before this period, would not show up in the record since that company traded in a joint stock.

addressed to Philip II.³⁸ Mendoza was very interested in English activity vis-à-vis Turkey and began reporting on it to King Philip as early as September 1579.³⁹ According to Mendoza's dispatch of 1582, the English had negotiated with the Sultan for permission to transport goods from "Azov by the Don and Pont Euxine" to Constantinople. The plan was to bring the goods out of Persia by way of the Caspian Sea and up the Volga River to the point where it comes within about seven miles of the Don River, and from thence to carry them overland the short distance, down the Don and across the Black Sea to Turkey. Mendoza's analysis of the reasoning behind this plan was that the English wished to avoid "...having to pass as at present, by Italy". He went on to say that the Sultan, aware that this diversion of the trade from Italy would hurt the king of Spain, granted the English privileges to trade in Turkey but, realizing the potential benefit to him in the Don-Volga route and wishing to exploit it himself, remained silent on that part of the English request.

This is an intriguing report with a central truth

38 Cal SP Spanish, 1580-86, p. 366.

39 Cal SP Spanish, 1568-79, p. 699.

in it, but a close analysis suggests that Mendoza could not have been very well informed about circumstances around the Caspian Sea. It was pointed out above that one of the main motives of the Muscovy merchants in the 1570's was to avoid passing through the Czar's territories. But the entire course of the Volga was within his jurisdiction. If Mendoza was aware of this fact, his failure to consider it may be explained by his ignorance of the English desire to circumvent Muscovy. It may also be explained by the Muscovy Company's last Persian expedition from 1579 to 1581, which made use of the Volga-Caspian route. A further point, which throws some doubt on the detailed accuracy of this report, is its geographical shortcomings. A glance at the map will show that if one were in Persia, even as far north as Tiflis, and wished to go to Constantinople, the trip by way of the Don-Volga route would be nearly a thousand miles longer than that by a route which carried one directly east across the Black Sea from Batum or Trebizond. If one were further south, in Tabriz, Kashan, Esfahan, or Shiraz, all centers for this trade, then the Don-Volga route would be even further removed from practicality. Mendoza might have been unaware of this geography, but certainly the English, who had been trading in Persia

for twenty years, were not. The one case which appears to have been intended as an exploration of the way back from Persia to England testifies to this. On his second voyage to western Asia, John Newberry traveled as far as Ormuz and returned overland by way of Persia north to Yerevan; then, rather than continuing on to the Caspian, he turned west passing through Turkey to Constantinople.⁴⁰ His return from Constantinople provides a piece of evidence which helps support the contention that the English were interested in the overland route from a Baltic port. From Constantinople he traveled north by way of the Black Sea and the Danube River, then through Poland to Danzig and then by ship to England. The knowledge he gained on this journey through eastern Europe might be most instructive in helping to understand why this route was not used. Purchas, however, did not consider it worth printing and cut off the narrative when Newberry entered Poland with no more than the statement that "His journey thorow Poland to Dantzick and comming to Hull by Sea is omitted".⁴¹ What remains of Mendoza's report, then, is only that there was in the air some plan to try to reach Persia and Turkey without passing through Russia or through

40 Purchas VIII, 450-81.

41 Ibid., 481.

the Mediterranean. This could be either the northern route to the east of Persia or the overland route from the Baltic.

The failure in 1580 of Pet and Jackman to find the Northeast Passage meant that for all practical purposes there was no northern route. The reasons for not using the Baltic-overland route, however, are not clear. There is no simple case of failure here. Harborne, in 1578, traveled to Constantinople overland from Hamburg, and Newberry managed to return overland to Danzig in 1582. In general this was a main route into central and eastern Europe. But, given the present state of the evidence, it cannot be known why the English did not generally use it for access to Constantinople.

The question of when this plan was given up, or better, when the Mediterranean route was finally decided upon, produces conflicting answers. Osborne and Stapers' trade to Danzig and Newberry's voyage suggest that the plan may have still been alive in 1580 and perhaps in early 1582.⁴² But in conflict with this is the fact

42 Newberry's instructions at the beginning of his voyage are not known, so it cannot be said whether or not he intended all along to take the route through Poland. If there were to be a change or addition to his instructions the logical place for him to receive it was in Constantinople (he did not pass through

that Newberry's outward journey was by way of the Mediterranean sea route in an English merchant ship and with him traveled William Barret, who was to become the first agent in Aleppo for the Turkey merchants.⁴³ It would seem from this that the decision had been made. One possible explanation of this conflict is that the merchants had not yet made a final decision and before doing so wished to try the overland route travelling northward. The same factor which facilitated the southward journey - river travel - could easily make the northward journey impractical.⁴⁴ A more serious objection to this plan still being alive in 1582 or even in 1580 is the existence of a memorandum by Sir Francis Walsingham entitled "A Consideration of the trade into Turkey".⁴⁵ In this

Aleppo on his return where he arrived 1 March 1582 and departed 4 April. [Purchas VIII, 476/ But Harborne, who had been in that city, had probably returned to England by then (he left England to return to Turkey in November 1582) and it is not known what other Englishman may have been there at the time who might have communicated with Newberry.

43 Purchas VIII, 451.

44 The letters from English merchants in Persia, printed by Hakluyt and Purchas, contain a number of observations about the practice in travelling south of sailing down the Euphrates River but the necessity, in travelling north, of walking along its banks.

45 Printed by Epstein, op. cit., pp. 245-51 from the mss. copy in PRO:SPD Eliz 144 no. 70. Another copy of this is in BM:Cotton Mss. Nero BXI f. 280. Both of these are written in a clerk's hand.

paper Walsingham concerns himself with the non-commercial aspects of this trade such as diplomacy and security. But he assumes throughout that the trade will be conducted by sea through the Mediterranean and makes no mention of overland trade. Thus at the time this memorandum was first written it would seem that Walsingham, at least, and perhaps the government, in general, were not considering and may never have considered, the use of the Baltic overland route. The date of the document is, thus, of particular importance with respect to this problem.

The British Museum copy of this memorandum has no date but the one in the Public Record Office has a cover page with the above title on it and under that the date "1580" all in a sixteenth century hand. On the basis of this Epstein and all others who have mentioned the document have accepted that it was written in that year. Internal evidence, however, contradicts this date. Walsingham, not surprisingly, is mainly concerned with "surety" for the trade. With respect to one aspect of this he recommends that there be made "choice of some apt man to be sent with her majesty's letters unto the Turks to procure an ample safe conduct, who is always to remain there at the charge of the merchants, as agent

to impeach the indirect practices of the said ambassadors, Venetian and French whose repair thither is to be handled rather by land than by sea..." It was exactly this plan that was actually carried out. Harborne left England in July 1578 and traveled overland from Hamburg to Constantinople. It is illogical to accept that Walsingham worked out this plan of action a year and a half after it was initiated. It must be concluded that the memorandum dates from several months before July 1578, at the latest. This being so, it must also be accepted that as early as that no plan for overland trade was being considered; at least not by the government. This does not preclude the possibility that the merchants continued to explore the viability of the overland route. However, they were no longer entirely free agents once the government began to take an active interest in the Turkey trade.

If a choice were open between the use of two routes it can easily be understood why the English government would support the sea route rather than the land route. From the crown's point of view the great contribution of foreign trade, outside the economic sphere, was its role as a training ground for mariners and a supplier of large

ships suitable for use in the navy should the need arise. But, it was long distance maritime trade that made the greatest contribution in this respect, for it was these trades that used the largest ships. Consequently, the crown was always anxious to encourage them. The merchants were well aware of this fact and continually appealed to it when seeking support from the government for one reason or another. Thus it is easy enough to see why Walsingham might urge the use of the Mediterranean route rather than any other and why his "Consideration" was so concerned with "surety" at sea.

It would be interesting to know if the government's entry into the affairs of the Levant was by its own initiative or by petition from the merchants. The decision of the English to try to establish their right to trade in Ottoman territories under the protection of their own flag, rather than under the French flag, meant establishing diplomatic relations with the Sultan and negotiating a separate treaty of privileges. This could only be done in the Queen's name and thus it became a matter of foreign policy to be determined by the Queen and her councillors. But there still remains the question of where the initiative lay. In face of the evidence - or rather lack of it - the best that can be suggested

is that the government was probably brought into the matter when the merchants realised they would have to negotiate with the Sultan to establish themselves at the Porte. This would require that they petition Queen Elizabeth for a letter of recommendation, at the least, and thus raise the whole question of Anglo-Turkish relations. It would be a case, then, of the flag following the trade.

However, it may have happened, it would, nevertheless, remain that the political needs of the merchants must fit in with the Queen's foreign policy, or, at least, not represent a position contrary to that foreign policy. It would, of course, facilitate matters if fulfillment of the merchant's requirements also meant fulfillment of the Queen's requirements. The problem of political relations between Islam and Christendom need not detain the student of Anglo-Turkish diplomatic relations, for while it was always in the air and while the Christian seems to have felt sincerely that cooperation and alliance with the Islamic world was somehow unchristian this never prevented such alliances coming into being when it suited both parties. The more pertinent question is why Elizabeth felt the need to establish political relations with the Porte; or rather, what conditions

prevailed, other than economic, that might have made representation at Constantinople seem desirable. Writers on this subject have seen it in terms of the war with Spain in the 1580's and have emphasized the Queen's policy of trying to persuade the Sultan to attack Spain from the rear. However, there was no war with Spain when Harborne left for Constantinople in 1578. There was not even the prospect of the union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns; for King Sebastian did not die at Alcazar until August of that year. Nevertheless, it can be reasonably argued that it was the affairs of Spain that provided the political climate for the first Elizabethan diplomatic contact with the Ottoman empire. A recent historian of the Habsburgs, Dr. John Lynch, has made two pertinent observations which help to place the whole matter in context. Speaking of Philip II he says that "Gradually after Lepanto, and more urgently from 1578, when truces with the Turk became regular..." Philip began "...turning Spain unreservedly from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, in order to face the greatest danger which threatened him and to prepare for the day of reckoning with his enemies on the north".⁴⁶

46 John Lynch, Spain Under the Habsburgs, 1964, vol. 1, pp. 302-3.

The argument here is that Philip II was disengaging himself from his wars in the Mediterranean in order to concentrate all his resources on protecting his Atlantic empire from the French and English. With respect to Elizabeth's policy he says that she "was not averse from a political understanding with the Turk, especially in 1580" for it "...would be a means of striking at Spain without actually declaring war".⁴⁷ Lynch does not bring Elizabeth's policy back to 1578. This can be explained, in part, by the fact that English policy was not very clear before that time. Queen Elizabeth was a very cautious ruler and it would be surprising to find her committing herself all at once to any policy, no less one as potentially unpopular as would be an alliance with the Turk. If, however, she could make her initial contact under the aegis of establishing commercial relations it would permit her to test the climate before taking a further step. Such evidence as survives lends itself to this interpretation. The instructions William Harborne carried from Osborne and Stapers are unknown as are those from the Queen. But that he did carry a letter from her addressed to Murad III, is attested to by Jacques de Germigny, the French

47 Ibid., pp. 234-5.

ambassador to the Porte. In a dispatch to the French king dated March 1580 he reported that Harborne had arrived some eighteen months earlier with a letter from the English queen in which she expressed a desire for peace between herself and the Porte and the privilege of commercial traffic for all her subjects.⁴⁸ If Germigny's knowledge of this letter was accurate and Elizabeth actually specified in her first letter that she wished a general privilege for all her subjects then Harborne would seem to have placed the interests of his employers above the instructions of his queen. The Sultan's grant in March 1579 was not general in its coverage but gave license specifically to Harborne and "two other merchants", obviously Osborne and Stapers.⁴⁹ It seems unlikely that at this juncture these merchants would do anything to jeopardise their standing with the crown. It is more likely that Germigny did not know the contents of Harborne's letter. He did not know of the Sultan's first reply to Elizabeth of March 1579.⁵⁰

48 Ernest Charrière, ed., Negotiations de la France dans le Levant, 3 vols., 1848-60; vol. III, p. 884.

49 Hakluyt V, 170.

50 Charrière, III, p. 884. The most detailed account of these early negotiations is an A. L. Horniker, "William Harborne and the beginnings of Anglo-Turkish diplomatic and commercial relations", J. of Mod. Hist., 1942, pp. 289-316. Horniker

What is more likely is that Harborne carried a letter which expressed no more than friendship and goodwill for the Sultan on the part of Elizabeth and commended the bearer to him. This appears to be the case, judging from Murad III's letter of March 1579 where he says that there "hath come unto us in the name of your most excellent Regall Majestie, commending unto us from you all kindnesse, curtesie and friendly offices on your part...".⁵¹ Elizabeth's reply in October of the same year adds to the impression that her first letter did not say anything about trade. She stated that the Sultan's grant "...was given to a few of our Subjects, and at their onely request without any intercession of ours...".⁵²

This same letter from the Queen made it perfectly clear that whatever Harborne's instructions may have been, he had not acted in concert with the queen's view of the relations that ought to exist between her subjects and a foreign prince. She explicitly requested then that the privileges be made general for all her subjects.⁵³ To have failed to gain this point would

was the first writer on this subject to make use of Germigny's dispatches printed by Charrière. He accepts Germigny's statement that Elizabeth asked for a general privilege in her first letter.

51 Hakluyt V, 169. 52 Ibid., 176. 53 Ibid.

have left her in an embarrassing and unsatisfactory position. It would have created a situation where the crown's authority vis-à-vis its own subjects was limited by a foreign ruler. For if Osborne, Stapers and company held a monopoly of their trade from Murad III then Elizabeth could neither insist that more of her subjects be included nor could she withdraw the monopoly from those who held it. That the relation between sovereign and subjects was probably the crown's main consideration and that it intended to permit some form of limitation to those who would follow this trade rather than open it to all Englishmen is attested to by a letter addressed to Harborne by Secretary Thomas Wilson and sent with Elizabeth's first reply to Murad III. Wilson wrote that "...hir majesty's desire is that the graunt hereafter may be given universall to all merchants to trade thither which graunt beying assented unto, it is reason that those who were the principall dealers hitherto should have the chiefest preheminance thereafter".⁵⁴ Thus it was intended that Osborne and Stapers have their monopoly but that they have it from the English Queen

54 BM:Cotton Mss. Nero BXI, f. 178. This letter, a copy of the original, has escaped the notice of previous writers on this subject.

and not from the Ottoman Sultan.

Murad III evidently had no objections to Elizabeth's request and in June 1580, in a letter addressed to the Queen, he extended the license, previously granted to Harborne, to all Englishmen. This new license was accompanied with a set of 22 articles which gave a reasonably precise definition of the English merchants' position in the Ottoman dominions.⁵⁵ The articles have little to say about commercial matters but rather are concerned mainly with the Englishman's security in his person and goods. In general they do not prescribe what the English shall do or not do but rather what shall or shall not be done to or for them by the Sultan's subjects. The articles are designed not so much to regulate English activity as to regulate Turkish activity in order to protect the English. Only three of the articles explicitly give the English positive rights; the general license to trade freely, the right to appoint consuls, and the right to settle disputes among themselves without reference to Turkish courts. Other than that the articles provided that if any Englishman was captured he was to be immediately released, that any

55 Hakluyt V, 183-89.

goods recovered from a wrecked ship were to be restored, that no Englishman would be arrested for another man's debt or crime, that if a slave was found to be English he would be released, and that the Turkish navy was not to molest English merchant ships. Upon the death of an Englishman his goods were to be disposed of according to his will and testament or according to the judgment of the English consul. One interesting item was that Englishmen were explicitly excused from paying any personal taxes. The privileges end with the usual proviso in such documents that all of the officials of the Ottoman government were to observe and honor the provisions stated.

It would seem then that the matter was settled. But this was not the case because behind the explicit issue of commercial relations lay the implicit issue of an alliance between Elizabeth and Murad III. Elizabeth was content to put this off as long as possible and to make no greater commitment than was necessary. Murad III, on the other hand, was more insistent on this point. Some of this difference between the two rulers comes through in their correspondence. There are two levels at which the whole communication took place. One at the highest level, between Elizabeth and Murad, in which

the matter of an alliance is treated with polite aloofness. Another, at a lower level, between lesser personages, in which the matter is stated in more pointed terms.

In his first letter to Elizabeth, in which the first privileges were granted to Osborne and Stapers, Murad said nothing of an alliance, limiting himself to the usual extravagant praise and expressions of friendship.⁵⁶ However, on the same occasion the dragoman, Mustapha Bey, also wrote to Elizabeth, In his letter he gave himself much of the credit for the English success so far and for initiating the idea of an alliance. It is most likely that he couched his letter in these personal terms so that if rejected it would be he and not the Sultan who was being refused. He wrote that "...I think it will not be alien to you to have an alliance with our emperor, who can aid you against all the enemies of your religion".⁵⁷ The Queen answered Mustapha Bey's letter in October but remained silent on the matter of an alliance.⁵⁸ However, in her letter of the same date to Murad, asking for a general privilege,

56 Hakluyt V, 169.

57 Cal. SP Foreign, 1578-9, p. 454.

58 Cal. SP Foreign, 1579-80, p. 77.

she avoided direct confrontation with the issue by saying that "...at this time wee doe extende our good minde unto your highnesse...meaning to yield a much more large and plentiful testification of our thankfulness, when time convenient shall fall out...".⁵⁹

The full import of her meaning comes out in the letter cited above written by Secretary Wilson to Harborne in which he said "If anie thing be said unto you for an amitie or legue to be concluded you may say that after the traffique is agreed upon, the same may after come in consultation. But except you bee asked and earnestlie called upon, doe not entermeddle touching the amitie, but rather stand as ignorant what to say"⁶⁰

Thus while the English government did not reject an alliance with the Ottoman government it did seek to put it off as long as possible.

Murad III, in the document granting the general privilege of June 1580, outwardly assumed that the alliance had been agreed upon. "...As wee have entred into amitie, and most holy legue with the most excellent kings and princes our confederates...so also we have contracted an inviolable amitie, peace and league

⁵⁹ Hakluyt V, 175.

⁶⁰ BM:Cotton Mss. Nero BXI, f. 178.

with the aforesaid Queen."⁶¹ As on the previous occasion Mustapha Bey wrote a separate letter to Elizabeth in which he stated more clearly the true situation. In speaking of the privilege just granted he said that it was "a privilege which other Princes have been unable to obtain without an envoy and great charge. I pray your Majesty to send an envoy to secure the confirmation of a solemn treaty".⁶² Sometime during the next six months the Queen had a change of mind for in January 1581 she wrote to Murad III, this time promising that an envoy would be sent.⁶³ She gave as an excuse for not previously sending one that "Princes hostile towards us" have caused "tumult in our realm, with the minds of certain conspirators excited towards civil strife", and promised that as soon as the trouble is quieted "we will salute your Majesty with the same embassy, as is meet, in testimony of love and kindness". No reason is given for her change of mind but it is explicable in view of two occurrences preceeding it. First, by September 1580,

61 Hakluyt V, 185.

62 Cal. SP Foreign, 1583 & Add., p. 718.

63 Bodleian: Tanner Mss. 79, f. 159 This is listed as a draft copy of the letter. There is no copy in any of the State Paper collections. That the letter was actually sent is known from references to it made by the English merchants and by Turkish officials.

Philip II had successfully occupied Portugal creating considerable alarm in England by his sudden acquisition of strength.⁶⁴ Second, in December of the same year, Arthur Pet returned to London from the Northeast Passage voyage to report failure. Thus, that avenue to Asia was closed leaving only the possibility of contact by way of the Ottoman Empire. The pressure of these events may have prompted Elizabeth's promise to send an envoy, but it was to be nearly three years before the promise was fulfilled.

At about the same time this letter was written another incident took place, in the Mediterranean, which made clear the need for formal relations with the Porte if trade was to be carried on. In about January 1581, the Bark Rowe of Newcastle, /no. 64/ Peter Baker, master, arrived at Chios under the guise of being a French ship with a French crew and carrying a French license. When the Turkish customs officials suspected that they were actually dealing with Englishmen they attempted to detain them. According to the testimony in the Admiralty Court it was bribery that secured their release. According to Harborne, as he said in a letter to Burghley,

64 R. B. Wernham, England Before the Armada, 1966, pp. 356-7.

it was his bringing forth the charter of privileges which secured their release.⁶⁵ Whichever way it happened the ship and crew were released. The Bark Rowe then shaped a return course, but when off the Island of Sapiento, a Turkish protectorate, it attacked and robbed two Greek ships. When report of this incident reached the Turkish authorities they commanded Harborne to give surety for satisfaction of the loss claimed by the Greeks and forbade him to leave Constantinople before trial with the Greeks to settle their claim. Harborne appealed unsuccessfully to a number of Turkish officials and even accepted the intercession of the French ambassador to be released from his obligation to the Greeks. The basis of his appeal was the article in the charter that no Englishman would be held accountable for crimes

65 Part of this incident was told in the High Court of Admiralty by a member of the crew. (PRO:HCA Exams 24, ff. 158-9) There is not enough testimony given there to determine why it became a court case. The most important part of the story comes from a letter written by Harborne to Burghley, dated at Pera on 9 June 1581. (BM:Harl. Mss. 6993, no. 2) This letter has been overlooked by previous historians of the Levant trade. It is the earliest one known from Harborne and the only one known dating from before he became ambassador. Aside from the flattery addressed to Burghley, the letter confines itself entirely to an account of this incident. It is also an eminent example of the tortuous use of parenthetical phrases.

committed by another Englishman.⁶⁶ The validity of this claim was denied by the Turkish officials. Finally he gained an audience with the Grand Vizier, who, according to Harborne's letter, told him that:

"at the comming of thie Queene hir Magesties Imbassador, promised to be sent by hir last letter, the articles of your preveledge shall be confirmed amd moste faythfullie observed, whoe with the frenche above otheres shall be most deare to my Master and his, In the meanse time not culpable of this crime objected to the/e/, Inioye thie libertie under the french protexion, for noe man what soe ever shall harme the."

Harborne, thus, was released from his responsibility for the piracy of the Bark Rowe but was informed that so long as there was no ambassador there would be no effective charter of privileges.

News of this incident did not first reach England in this letter to Burghley but rather in an earlier one Harborne had written to which he refers. He also said that he had recently been ordered to return home. The purpose of this letter seems to have been to flatter Burghley by personally informing him of what had happened. Three days after Harborne, in Pera, wrote his letter, Osborne and Stapers, in London, wrote to Walsing-

66 Hakluyt V, 187, article 12.

ham expressing the fear that this incident might provoke the confiscation of their merchandise, then in Turkey, and suggested that those who set out the voyage be called upon to put up surety for the stolen goods.⁶⁷ The affair was evidently considered to be quite serious for two weeks later the Queen wrote again to Murad apologising for the unauthorized actions of some of her subjects and asking that the privileges not be withdrawn.⁶⁸ This episode must have brought home to Elizabeth the need for a fully accredited ambassador if there was to be any security in the trade. Nevertheless, it was more than a year before Harborne's commission was signed.

During the interval between the incident of the Bark Rowe and the appointment of Harborne as ambassador letters patent were issued by the Queen, dated 11 September 1581, granting a monopoly of English trade with the Turkish dominions to Edward Osborne, Richard Stapers, Thomas Smythe, William Barret, and other persons to be named by them, the total membership not to exceed twelve.⁶⁹

67 PRO:SPD Eliz. 149, no. 40. This may explain why the incident became a case in the High Court of Admiralty. The testimony there was given in August.

68 Hakluyt V, 189-91.

69 Hakluyt V, pp. 192-202. Hakluyt gave the fourth name listed as "Garret" and thus initiated an error which has been perpetuated faithfully by all the historians

Though the company formed under the authority of these letters patent came to be known as the Turkey Company no name was prescribed in the document. Furthermore, the company was given neither corporate status nor a particular financial organization by the provisions of the patent. The members of the company were granted a monopoly of the trade to the dominions of the Grand Seigneur to last for seven years, the right to assemble from time to time to make laws governing their trade, the right to license other English subjects to trade within the area of the monopoly, and the right to petition for a renewal of the patent at the end of the seven year period. The crown on its part provided that violators of the monopoly would be subject to forfeiture of their goods and imprisonment, that the government would not interfere in the activities of the company headed by Osborne nor would it make any grants contrary to the provisions of these letters patent. Aside from appointing Edward Osborne the first governor to be succeeded, if he should die, by Richard Stapers, the crown reserved

of the Turkey trade. No "William Garret" who was living in 1581, has turned up in the records. However, in the Privy Seal Warrant authorizing the patent enrollment and in the Patent Roll itself the name is clearly William Barret. (PRO:Chancery, Privy Seal Warrants, bundle 1374 and Patent Roll 24 Eliz. pt. 13).

for itself the right to appoint two persons of its own choosing to be members of the company and the right to abrogate the patent upon one year's notice if it should be in the crown's interest to do so. In addition the crown required from the company that it give notice to the Lord Admiral of the departure of its ships within fifteen days of their setting sail, that the Master of the Ordnance be permitted to take stock of their ordnance, powder, and munition both before the departure and after the return of their ships, and, finally, that the company import and export goods of sufficient value to pay customs to the Queen totaling £500 per year.

Fourteen months after issuing these letters patent, seventeen months after apologizing for the incident of the Bark Rowe, and twenty-two months after promising the Sultan to send an envoy to him Queen Elizabeth signed the commission appointing William Harborne her ambassador to the Porte.⁷⁰ There is not enough known about related events during this period to permit any clear explanation for this delay. Especially after the reports following in the wake of the Bark Rowe which indicated that without an official representative in Turkey the English merchants

70 Hakluyt V, 222-4.

were effectively without their charter of privileges. There was some discussion during that time about who was to pay for the customary present to the Sultan and his officials and who was to pay the charges of the Queen's agent. But it does not seem likely that this problem alone could have caused much delay; the merchants were not really in a position to be adamant about this, even after they received their royal patent. It says nothing, one way or the other, about who was to be responsible for the costs of maintaining diplomatic relations with the Ottoman government, but without these there could be no trade, thus the merchants had no real choice.

Whatever the cause of the delay it was not until 20 November 1582 that the Queen signed Harborne's commission. Six days before that the Susan of London, /no. 106/ Richard Parsons, master, departed from Blackwall bound for Constantinople. Adverse winds caused an eight week delay, however, and it was 14 January before she was able to put into the Isle of Wight. There William Harborne and his party boarded her and on the 19th she finally got away. Nine weeks later she put into Constantinople.⁷¹ The arrival of the Susan was reported

71 Hakluyt V, 243-58.

to the Doge and Senate of Venice by their ambassador, Giovanni Morosini. He was quite indignant that when the Susan passed the Seraglio Point it set off a great noise of artillery (34 pieces according to Hakluyt's account): the indignation arising not from the fact that the English thus saluted the Sultan but that it was Good Friday and all the Christians in the city were celebrating mass.⁷² At the end of April the English ambassador was presented to Murad III to perform the customary ceremony of kissing the Sultan's hand, and thus began England's first formal diplomatic representation in Asia.

72 Cal. SP Venetian, 1581-91, p.152.

CHAPTER IV
THE TURKEY COMPANY

The story of the Elizabethan sea trade to the Levant begins with Hakluyt's observation that it "...was utterly discontinued, in maner quite forgotten, as if it had never bene, for the space of 20 yeres and more".¹ This generalization has been accepted by all historians of the Levant but a close examination of it here is not amiss and may serve to throw some light on patterns of Mediterranean trade. The previous historians of this trade have accepted Hakluyt at his word.² A more detailed examination of the records has been made by Prof. T. S. Willan who searched the Port Books for London and the out-ports, the records of the High Court of Admiralty, the Acts of the Privy Council and the various collections of state papers. None of these sources revealed to him any English ships trading to the Levant

1 Hakluyt V, 168.

2 Epstein, op. cit., p. 8; Rowland, op. cit., p. 3; and Wood, op. cit., p. 3. Rowland states, with respect to Hakluyt's generalization, "That this should be literally true seems difficult to believe yet a painstaking search has revealed nothing to contradict Hakluyt's statement." Unfortunately, Rowland gives no indication of where he took pains to search and thus one cannot rely entirely on his conclusion.

in the 1560's and 1570's.³ Willan states that some Anglo-Mediterranean trade was carried on by foreign merchants using foreign ships and he notes ten such sailings between 1562 and 1569.⁴ Further confirmation of this small North-South maritime trade comes from the Belgian historian Wilfrid Brulez who cites, from the Antwerp archives, a declaration made by some Italian merchants in 1556 to the effect that they send few, if any kerseys from England to Italy by sea.⁵

The earliest record of an English ship in the Mediterranean during Queen Elizabeth's reign is the Harry of London which unladed at London from Civita Vecchia in August 1572. /1/⁶ The next voyage found /2/ is noted in the most important record for English ships in the Mediterranean during the sixteenth cen-

3 T.S. Willan, "Some Aspects of English Trade with the Levant in the 16th Century", E.H.R., vol. IXX, 1955, p. 400.

4 Ibid., p. 401-2.

5 Wilfrid Brulez, "Les routes commerciales d'Angleterre en Italie au 16e siecle" in Studi in onore de Amanitore Fanfani, 1962, vol. IV, p. 126 n. 10. In general Brulez maintains that the only merchandise which travelled by sea was that of greater bulk and lower value.

6 Henceforth, throughout this work, numbers in square brackets following the mention of a ship or voyage are a reference to its entry in the Shipping List (Appendix C). Sources for the voyage will be found there and thus will not be given with the text.

ture. This is a record of the ships of all nations which entered the Tuscan port of Leghorn during the second half of the century.⁷ Thirty-six English ships are recorded entering that port during the 1570's. In addition English sources reveal another twenty English ships clearing to or entering from Marseilles, Genoa, Leghorn, Civita Vecchio, Naples, and Messina. [See Appendix C/ These figures should actually be larger for neither the Leghorn nor the English records are complete. Though Prof. Willan noted the work of MM. Braudel and Romano and cited several of the voyages from the English sources mentioned above he did not count these as Levant voyages.

No doubt this is correct at first glance; certainly it would be stretching geographical terminology to include the Western Mediterranean in the Levant. But looking further, it can be seen that for a number of

7 This record was first examined and analyzed by Profs. F. Braudel and R. Romano and their conclusions printed in Navires et Marchandises à l'entrée du Port de Livorne (1547-1611), 1951. However, this work, though very valuable, gives only statistical summaries of the shipping recorded in the Leghorn documents; thus leaving it impossible to identify individual English ships. However, a grant from the Central Research Fund of the University of London and the generous advice and assistance of Dr. A. A. Ruddock of Birkbeck College, have made it possible to obtain a complete microfilm of these Leghorn records. Using this microfilm the particular English ships entering Leghorn have been identified.

voyages the ports of the Western Mediterranean were not terminal points. Only three such voyages have been identified in the 1570's all going to Zante. (nos. 17, 25 and 28/ But it can be seen from the Shipping List that during subsequent years there were many others, some going further than Zante, and further information might reveal that there were even more than the above three during the 1570's. In general, it seems to have been the case that for many Levant voyages a first port of call in the Western Mediterranean was not simply a convenient place to re-victual but served as an integral part of a trade pattern. There are several contemporary statements which support this generalization. Hakluyt printed a letter dated February 1569, addressed to William Winter by Jasper Campion. The letter urged Winter to back a trading voyage to Chios and in discussing the requirements of the voyage stated that the ship that goes must go to Genoa or Leghorn "...and from thence she must make her money to buy wines, by exchange to Candia, for there both the custom and exchange are reasonable: and not do as the Mathew Gonson and other ships did in time past, who made sale of there wares at Messina for the lading of their wines, and payed for turning their white money into golde after foure

and five in the hundreth and also did hazzard the losse of shippe and goods by carrying away their money".⁸

Campion is referring here to the Levant trade of the first half of the sixteenth century but the advisability of making a call at an Italian port was reaffirmed in June 1577. A memorandum of that date, proposing a voyage to Alexandria and Constantinople, suggested that the ship call at Messina and "take in such goods as may avayle in freight for Alexandria, etc."⁹ In 1578 another memorandum made reference to this pattern of trade when it stated that "The shippes which arrived at Lygorno..., which carrye herrings and cloth for which there shall never want ladinge whether it be to go unto Zante for currants, as last yere, or to lade allom..."¹⁰ To judge from the available evidence the pattern described above prevailed for the Venice trade rather than the Turkey trade. In fact, no ships have been found during the 1580's which called at an Italian port before going on to a Turkish port. This may, of course, simply be a result of incomplete information.¹¹

8 Hakluyt V, 117.

9 PRO:SPO Eliz. 114 no. 44.

10 BM: Lans. 26 no. 18. This document seems to have been written by Horatio Pallavicino at the time he was negotiating for a monopoly of the alum trade.

11 The Venice Company's trading pattern is covered in greater detail in pp. 267 ff.

The earliest English ship known that went beyond the Western Mediterranean was the Flying Hart /6/ which put into Southampton from Venice in February 1574. The only lader of the ship named was a merchant of London but he was not one who later had any connection with the organized Levant trade. The next ship found east of Italy is the Merchant Royal /17/ which called at Leghorn in January 1576 and then went on to Zante and Candia. This ship was sent out by some of the merchants who later formed the Venice Company and by their claim it was their first venture into the Venice trade.¹² Record has been found of only five more English ships east of Italy in the 1570's. Two of them traded in the Venetian dominions /nos. 28 and 54/¹³ and two of them entered Turkish ports /52 and 55/. It was one of the latter, the Prudence of London /52/ which departed London in 1579, and was the first English ship of which a record survives to enter a Turkish port during Elizabeth's reign. There may have been earlier ones whose records have vanished.

The evidence, as it now stands, supports Hakluyt's generalization in the main. Nothing has been found which detracts from Prof. Willan's conclusions about the lapse

12 PRO:SPD Eliz. 232 no. 3.

13 Another ship, the Jonas /no. 25/ intended to go to Zante but evidently never made it that far.

of English trade to the Mediterranean. He did not mention the Flying Hart in 1573 nor the Merchant Royal in 1575 however the presence of these two ships in the Mediterranean does not undermine the generalization. The above remarks concerning the desirability of ships calling at a west Mediterranean port before going further east suggests that there could have been any further number of ships in the Levant during the 1570's. There were a large number of English ships that unladed at Leghorn and there is no substantive reason to argue that some of them did not continue eastward. It is unlikely that English sources will reveal any more such voyages. Confirmation of them, if they existed, will have to come from sources similar to the Leghorn records, in other Mediterranean ports. Until, and if, such confirmation is found it will have to be accepted that the English Levant trade did lapse after 1550 and that it was not revived until the late 1570's at the earliest.

There is little doubt that the difficulties in the Muscovy Company's Persian trade acted as a stimulus to this revival. But it must also be accepted that this was not the only stimulus. Ten of the twelve Turkey merchants were members of the Spanish Company of 1577 and it is probable that increasing hostility between

Spain and England which caused increasing difficulties in the Anglo-Spanish trade provided a reason for some merchants to redirect their interests to the Levant. This connection cannot be spelled out in the present state of knowledge about Elizabethan Anglo-Spanish trade. It will require a great deal of research in both English and Spanish archives into the details of commercial transactions in Spain, before a positive case can be made that it was the impossibility of continuing to do business in Spain that drove certain merchants to do business elsewhere. There is nothing in any of the documentation on the Turkey trade which suggests that the Turkey merchants were at all inspired by the above considerations. They must have been acutely aware that Spain was implacably hostile to their Mediterranean trade and would and did do as much as possible to destroy it but this is not the same as saying that the English extended their interests into the Levant because they could no longer function in Spain. Such evidence as there is suggests that even while the Turkey merchants were trading in the Levant they continued to trade with Spain, though probably on a lesser scale than before. A record of Iberian trade for the year 1584 indicates that even then Anglo-Spanish trade was

still substantial.¹⁴ The whole question of the exact influence of Anglo-Spanish trade on the renewal of the Turkey trade must remain open for the present.

There is similarly a lack of evidence about the actual formation of the Turkey Company itself. In the case of most chartered trading companies there are to be found a number of preliminary documents in the form of petitions and memoranda which help explain exactly how the company came into existence.¹⁵ For the Turkey Company, however, the first evidence of a chartered company is the charter, itself, inscribed on the Patent Rolls.¹⁶ There are two explanations for this lack of preliminary documentation aside from the possibility that it has all simply perished with time. First, is that there was no opposition or counter claim on the part of other merchants to the ambitions of Osborne, Stapers and their associates. Much of the preliminary documentation referred to above resulted from such opposition or from the conflicting claims of other merchants. Second, is that Osborne and Stapers did

14 BM: Lans. 41 ff. 108-168v.

15 Chapters V and VI make use of such preliminary materials for the Venice and Levant Companies.

16 See supra, p.150 for references and details of this patent.

not originally intend to apply to the Queen for a privilege of monopoly. Rather they intended to rely on the Sultan's letter of March 1579 which gave trading privileges only to themselves.¹⁷ When, at Queen Elizabeth's request, the Sultan extended this privilege to all Englishmen in June 1580¹⁸ Osborne and Stapers were forced to seek their exclusive privilege from their own government. Secretary Wilson's letter to William Harborne in October 1579 made it clear that the crown did not intend to dispute a grant of monopoly and thus acquiring it would be a routine matter.¹⁹ One might expect in such circumstances that there would be at least a formal petition or some suggestions from the merchants about what provisions they wanted the charter of privileges to contain. There is one document containing two short sentences each of which contains a proposed provision for the letters patent. One requests that the merchants be required to pay no more than £500 per year in customs both inward and outward and the other requests that the members be allowed to re-export goods without being charged double customs.²⁰ It is

17 Hakluyt V, 169-71.

18 Ibid., 183-89.

19 See Supra p.141 for the relevant passage in Wilson's letter.

20 BM: Lans. 34 no. 64. The letters patent, when issued, required the Turkey merchants to pay no less than £500 customs per year and was silent on the matter of re-exports.

possible these two suggestions were the only ones specifically emphasized. Most of the provisions of the letters patent were fairly routine and did not differ materially from other grants of trade monopolies except for the details of names and places.

Some of what seems to have been a lack of communication between the merchants and the government may be explained by taking a closer look at the merchants themselves. It is probable that those merchants who were the members of the Turkey Company were in closer personal contact with government circles than the usual group of merchants and thus discussions that ordinarily took place by way of the written word took place, in this instance, by word of mouth. Furthermore, the members of the Turkey Company were a very interesting group in themselves and it is worthwhile to offer a few generalizations about them.²¹ The letters patent stated that the company might have as many as twelve members but named only four. The only complete list of the twelve members is in a petition written sometime in 1584. The twelve names, in the order listed are: Sir Edward Os-

21 Each of the members has a separate entry in the biographical appendix where the sources for specific facts are cited.

borne, George Barnes, Richard Martin, Martin Calthorpe, John Harte, William Masham, John Spencer, Thomas Smythe, Richard May, Richard Saltonstall, Richard Stapers and Henry Hewitt.²²

Three of the twelve company members, Smythe, May, and Hewitt, never held any office in the city of London government. Of the remainder, all were aldermen, six of them during the 1580's; eight were sheriffs of London, six of them during the 1580's; three were Lord Mayors of London, Osborne in 1583-4, Barnes in 1586-7, and Calthorpe in 1588-9,²³; and finally, Osborne, Barnes, Saltonstall and Harte, served as members of Parliament, the first three during the 1580's. The membership of the Turkey Company thus represented a considerable concentration of power and influence within the City of London and they must have found it not difficult to communicate informally with members of the government.

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- 22 BM: Cotton Mss. Nero BVIII, f. 53. The petition is undated but it lists Osborne as "Sir Edward Osborne, Lord Maior of London". He was knighted on 2 February 1584 (DNB) and his mayoralty ended November 1584 thus placing the petition between those two dates. Osborne, Stapers and Smythe were named in the patent along with William Barret who had since died in Turkey. See supra, p.150 for further information on Barret.
- 23 Calthorpe died during his mayoralty and his unexpired term was filled out by Richard Martin another member of the Company.

The government, for its part, especially Burleigh and Walsingham, probably were familiar with most of these men and requests coming from them would be received in a different spirit than such coming from persons less well known. Close contact between the government and the Turkey Company members was furthered by the fact that two of the latter were actually government officials themselves. Richard Martin was a warden of the mint from 1572 and master from 1581. As such he was in constant communication with Burleigh and well known to him. Thomas Smythe was farmer of the customs inward for London throughout the life of the Turkey Company and was thus in constant touch with the government with respect to many mercantile matters.²⁴ A personal contact

24 There is an interesting communication from Burleigh to Smythe which concerned the former's fee as Lord Treasurer. This was £365 per year and was evidently paid to him by a tally drawn on the London customs receipts. It was thus Thomas Smythe, as customer, who was responsible for seeing that Burleigh received his pay when it was due. There is a short note extant, from Burleigh to Smythe, in which the Lord Treasurer thanks the Customer for offering to pay £100 of this fee before it was due, which was Michelmas, and is sending his servant along to collect the same from Smythe. The note is dated 16 August 1581, just under four weeks before the date of the Turkey Company's letters patent. This note is in PRO:Exchequer, Privy Seal Warrants for Issue, 124, pt. 4 no. 36. There are several receipts in the same place, signed by Burleigh, which indicate that he ordinarily received his Lord Treasurer's fee in two equal installments, one at the Annunciation of Our Lady and the other at Michelmas.

between the Company and the government was George Barnes whose sister, Anne, had been Sir Francis Walsingham's first wife. Barnes is also known to have imported goods from Russia in partnership with Walsingham.

As a group, the twelve Turkey merchants were men who seem to have reached a high point in their careers. In age they ranged from their late 40's to their early 60's. They held a number of official positions as indicated above and all were quite wealthy. This latter point is always very difficult to judge about sixteenth century merchants. In the present case the judgment has been made on the basis of their assessment for the subsidy and the general details of their activities.²⁵

The assessments for the Turkey merchants in 1582 ranged from £90 to £300 and averaged £216. A comparison with the Venice merchants²⁶ and a perusal of the subsidy rolls in general indicates that these assessments are well above the average. There is no way of knowing what these assessments meant in terms of real wealth; they are useful only for comparative purposes.

The commercial activities of these twelve merchants

25 The subsidy assessments used are set out in Appendix A, Table VI.

26 See *infra* p. 261.

support the generalization that they were all well to do merchants. Almost all of them were engaged in several commercial activities other than the Turkey trade. Ten of them were members of the Spanish Company and six of these were assistants of that company as well. Nine of the Turkey merchants were members of the Muscovy Company, three of them governors during the 1580's. Three members belonged to the Eastland Company and one to the Barbary Company. There is evidence several others traded to Morocco before the formation of the Barbary Company and a number of them also traded to France. Finally, three of the Turkey merchants and possibly a fourth were Merchant Adventurers. One of those three, Richard Saltonstall, was governor of that company. Some of them also engaged in non-mercantile business affairs. Three were investors in the Mineral and Battery Works Company and one also in the Company of Mines Royal. As a group these twelve showed very little interest in privateering or in the enterprises of such persons as Frobisher and Drake. George Barnes made moderate investments in privateering and a few others may also have done so. Barnes and Smythe both were interested in Edward Fenton's voyage of 1582 and Smythe invested in Gilbert's venture of 1578. Other than this there is no positive evidence

that these Turkey merchants interested themselves in what can, at best, be called quasi-commercial ventures.

It was these twelve merchants who constituted the Turkey Company and received letters patent dated 11 September 1581 to run for seven years. But, by its own admission, the Company did not begin its shipping until September 1582 and ended it in September 1587.²⁷ Thus it took the Company a year to prepare its first shipping and its last shipping was sent out a year before the expiration of the patent. The Company itself gave no explanation for this attenuation of its trade. The initial delay of a year can easily be explained by the necessity to wait for William Harborne's commission. This was not signed until November 1582. In the same month the ^{Susan}~~Prudence~~ of London set out for Constantinople and was evidently the first English ship to voyage to Turkey under the new patent. It is also possible the delay was due to a shortage of ready money. This was met by a loan from the Queen in August 1582.²⁸ Ending the trade a year early is not so easily explained but was probably related, in part, to the war with Spain and to the export depression of 1586-7.

27 PRO:SPD Eliz 233 no. 13.

28 See infra p.195 for details on this loan.

During the five years they conducted the trade the Turkey merchants, by their own account,²⁹ used 19 ships which made 27 voyages to the Mediterranean. They traded to nearly all the major ports under the rule of the Sultan: Algiers, Tripoly, Alexandria and Cairo in North Africa; Petras in Greece; Tripoly in Syria; the island of Chios and Constantinople. Inland from the Mediterranean they frequented Aleppo, "Angorie" (Ankara), Baghdad and Basra. The export commodities of their trade were few; kerseys, broadcloth, tin, pewter and black cony-skins. Their imports covered a whole range of commodities. The most valuable were raw silk and the various spices and drugs. Manufactured goods were mainly a variety of textiles, carpets and quilts. Bulky commodities of lesser value were cotton wool and yarn, galls, currants and olive oil. The latter two commodities were purchased by the Turkey Company in Petras since the other sources of them were all in the Venetain dominions. The remainder of the Company's imports were purchased mainly in Aleppo which was the market place for goods which came from all parts of eastern Turkey, Persia, India and the spice islands. Though the Company did attempt to pur-

29 PRO:SPD Eliz 233 no. 13.

chase directly in other places there is no evidence that any of them became important and some of them were abandoned altogether before 1588.

The organization of the Turkey Company was that of a joint-stock trading company. As such it was a trading body itself, in contrast to a regulated company, in which trade was conducted by individual merchants. Thus the Company issued instructions to its agents in the Mediterranean with respect to the details of commodities to buy, prices in London, markets that should be explored, markets that should be abandoned, and, in general, all the detailed instructions involved in the overall direction of the trade. These instructions were issued in the name of the Company and replies were directed to the Company as a whole. Lack of documentation makes it impossible to penetrate into the generality of the Company to learn how it was organized and how decisions were reached. Who actually ran the Turkey Company is not known. One can presume that Edward Osborne and Richard Stapers were the two most active members and in general they spoke for the Company. Letters from the Company were signed by Osborne in the name of the Company³⁰ and the Company's imports were entered in the

30 An example of one such letter is in Hakluyt V, 268.

customs house under the name "Edward Osborne, Richard Stapers & Co."³¹ Letters from the Company's agents were addressed to "Edward Osborne and Company". Beyond these clues there is no evidence bearing on the decision making process in the Turkey Company.

The Company's overseas organization is clearer though lack of detail precludes precise statements. There were two organizations actually, one diplomatic and one commercial. In general they were separate consisting of two groups of personnel. The diplomatic organization was centralized with the ambassador, William Harborne, its focal point in Constantinople and consuls, appointed by him, situated at various strategic places around the periphery of the Ottoman Empire. On 24 April 1583, the day after his formal reception by the Sultan, Harborne appointed Harvey Millers consul for the English nation in Alexandria and Cairo³² and in June he appointed Richard Foster consul in Aleppo, Tripoly and all other parts of Syria.³³ By March 1585 John Tipton had been appointed consul for Algeria, Tunis, and Tripoly in Africa.³⁴ At Petras William Revet was consul in 1585³⁵

31 See Appendix B.

32 Hakluyt V, 259.

34 Ibid., 279.

33 Ibid., 260.

35 Foster, Sanderson, p. 3.

and Philip Grimes in April 1586³⁶. The main function of the consuls was to represent and protect the interests of the Company's resident factors. In particular it was the consul's business to see to it that the provisions of the Sultan's charter of privileges were honored by the local political authority. This consular organization was directed by the ambassador, William Harborne, who was responsible to the English government rather than to the Company. The major part of his activities were concerned with representing the interests of his government at the Turkish court and toward preventing the representatives of other European powers from undermining the position of English merchants in the Ottoman territories. In these matters he was answerable to Sir Francis Walsingham and nearly all of Harborne's surviving correspondence concerns itself with these matters.³⁷

Alongside this consular organization was the Turkey Company's commercial organization which was directed by the Company from London. It consisted of the several

36 Hakluyt VI, 40. Grimes later became a son-in-law to Richard Stapers.

37 It is to be found in PRO:SPF Turkey, vol. 1 and is calendared. There are detailed accounts of Harborne's diplomatic activity in H. G. Rawlinson, "The Embassy of William Harborne", Tr. of the Royal H.S., 4th Series, vol. V, 1922 and A. L. Horniker, "William Harborne and the beginning of Anglo-Turkish diplomatic and commercial relations", in J. of Mod. Hist., vol. XIV, 1942.

factors whose function it was to conduct the normal commercial activities of the Turkey Company. One, at least, of these agents was present before the consular organization came into existence. This was William Barrett who arrived in Aleppo in 1581³⁸ and who was replaced in June 1584 by Anthony Bate.³⁹ Under the authority of the Company John Eldred, William Shales and two others were sent as agents to Baghdad and Basra in the summer of 1583⁴⁰ and at about the same time James Towerson was sent to Ankara in central Turkey.⁴¹ The latter died sometime before 25 October 1586 and was supposed to have been replaced by John Eldred, but whether or not Eldred actually went to Ankara is not known.⁴² At no one of these latter places was there a consul. William Shales was sent to Egypt, after returning from Baghdad and Basra, where he was joined by John Sanderson in October 1585.⁴³ It is nowhere made clear who the factors were in Petras and Algiers, Tripoly, and Tunis. When Lawrence Aldersey visited Petras in April 1586 he found there beside the consul, Ralph Ashley and John Dorrington.⁴⁴ These men may have been the Company's

38 Purchas VIII, 450.

39 Hakluyt VI, 9.

40 Locke, 48. See note 52 for this reference in full.

41 BM:Lans. 241 f. 393.

42 Foster, Sanderson, p. 136.

43 Foster, Sanderson, p.xiii. 44 Hakluyt VI, 40.

factors. Ashley was included as a member of the Levant Company in 1592⁴⁵ and may have been serving his apprenticeship in 1586. There is no mention of who served the Company in Algiers, Tripoly and Tunis. John Tipton, who was appointed consul in 1585, had been in Algiers since about 1580⁴⁶ and may have served in both capacities. There is nothing in the record to indicate that the Company's trade to those parts of Africa was very extensive and it may not have been felt worthwhile to maintain a separate consul and factor there.

It would probably be a mistake to carry the idea of separate diplomatic and commercial organizations too far. Though there were generally different individuals carrying out the separate functions, all the diplomatic appointees were originally merchants, including the ambassador. The reason for the formality of separate personnel was that the Ottoman government was unwilling to deal officially with anyone who did not derive formal authority from the English government. This became clear in the case of Harborne and the Bark Rowe which was instrumental in the appointment of an English ambassador.⁴⁷ Another instance of the need for an official

45 Ibid., 76.

47 See supra p. 147.

46 Wood, op. cit., p. 15 n.

representative was in 1584 when Edward Barton, Harborne's secretary, had to go to Tripoly in Barbary from Constantinople, in order to secure the release of the Company's ship, the Jesus [139/ which had been confiscated by the local authorities. The point of Barton's visit was that the assertion of privilege based on the Sultan's charter of 1580 could not officially be conveyed by just any Englishman who happened to be present but had to come from an official spokesman for the English government. It was probably as an aftermath of the case of the Jesus that John Tipton was appointed consul in that area. In the case of Tipton it is probable that he continued to function as a merchant after becoming consul but this is not clear. In fact, while it is clear that there were individuals who had the primary purpose of acting as official representatives of the English and there were different individuals who had the primary purpose of acting as factors for the Turkey Company, it is not clear to what extent these persons kept their functions separate from each other. There is no evidence that those who were not consuls ever were involved in diplomatic business. This was undoubtedly because the Turkish officials would only deal at that level with official representatives. On the other hand it is probable that the consular per-

sonnel, did not give up all their mercantile activity upon their appointment. Though the consuls may have continued to function in commercial affairs, these were nevertheless supervised from London by the Company, itself, which communicated directly with its factors to issue them instructions. There was no chief factor who directed the Company's commercial activities upon instructions from London as there was an ambassador who stood between the consuls and the English government. The Company communicated directly with its factors whenever possible. There are very few surviving letters which bear on the commercial affairs of the Company during the 1580's. But these support the above generalizations.⁴⁸

It is clear from the start that though the English had received privileges enabling them to trade with the Ottoman Empire they had not lost interest in the attempt to reach out closer to the source of eastern goods. The Turkey merchants sent out two expeditions to explore several routes and following that had, for a time, a factor at Baghdad and Basra on the eastern border of Ottoman territory. The first of these exploratory ex-

48 These few letters have been printed, in whole or in part, in Foster, Sanderson, pp. 130-39.

peditions was that of John Newberry from September 1580, when he departed from London, to August 1582, when he returned there.⁴⁹ During the course of this voyage Newberry travelled to Aleppo, then south to Baghdad, Basra and Ormuz, from there north to Shiraz, Hispahan, and Tabriz in Persia and then west overland through Turkey to Constantinople from where he returned to England overland by way of Poland and Danzig.⁵⁰ This expedition of Newberry's is one of the less noted and understood English travels into Asia. The reason is largely that the account itself lacks any clear narrative or any traveller's descriptions of places or incidents along the way. Instead it consists of a series of notes containing the names of towns and cities visited and the time required to travel from one to the next, a brief statement on the commodities available for purchase at each town often with their prices, freight charges for goods between towns and the tolls and customs charged along the way. It is evident that Newberry was exploring the practicability of conducting a trade along all

49 Purchas VIII, pp. 450-81. Newberry had made an earlier voyage to Aleppo and Jerusalem in 1579 (Purchas VIII, 449-50) but the account of it is so brief that it is impossible to determine if its purpose was more than a pilgrimage.

50 See supra p.130 for some comments on the latter stages of this voyage.

or part of the route he followed. He was undoubtedly trying to determine not only the nature and prices of goods along the way but also the total cost of the transportation of such goods. On the basis of information of this sort Osborne, Stapers and Company could decide whether or not it was worth trying to push their own trade routes beyond Aleppo or if they should simply be content to buy and sell goods there and let others worry about their transport. The main determining factor would be if the cost of goods at some point east of Aleppo or Constantinople plus the cost of their carriage by Englishmen would be less than the cost of the same goods bought at Aleppo or Constantinople. The nature of Newberry's notes makes it impossible to reconstruct these total costs. He quoted prices and weights in terms of a myriad of local currencies, measures and weights and gave no equivalents that would enable one to translate his information into known currencies and measures.⁵¹

51 A narrative account of this expedition is in Foster, England's Quest for Eastern Trade, pp. 79-89. Foster saw no purpose to the voyage other than for Newberry to satisfy his curiosity. Foster felt that the account represents Newberry's rough notes which he never had a chance to amplify. He states that had Newberry been writing for publication or for friends at home he would have given fuller descriptions and "would at the same time have omitted trivial details of the

The exact conclusions that the merchants in England drew from Newberry's information are not known but seven months after his return he departed again under the auspices of the Turkey Company, this time in company with Ralph Fitch and others for the purpose of exploring the possibility of extending their trade routes beyond Ormuz into India, itself, and perhaps even beyond that. At the same time the Turkey Company intended to explore the possibility of also conducting a trade from Baghdad and Basra which were within the Ottoman dominion at that time. There is no evidence that the English made any further attempt, until many years later, to trade directly with Persia proper. It is possible that one of Newberry's purposes was to determine whether or not it would be possible to do so without passing through Ottoman territories. This being impossible the Company settled on what were Persian cities, now under Ottoman rule.

When Fitch and Newberry travelled out on their way to India they were accompanied by John Eldred, William Shales and several other servants of the Turkey Company. They carried with them £2000 worth of kerseys, cloth, tin

prices of commodities". Such a remark would seem to indicate a frame of reference in which commercial motivations have no place. The "trivial detail" was the very reason for the voyage.

and other goods, more than half of which was left in Baghdad with two factors, William Skinner and Ralph Allen, to be sold. The remainder, £764 worth, was carried to Basra and divided so that £400 worth was carried by Fitch and Newberry "for the Indies" and the remainder stayed with Eldred and Shales.⁵² Fitch and Newberry's adventures in India is one of the better known episodes in English travel literature and has been recounted a number of times.⁵³

Their purpose, of course, was to explore the possibilities of trade with India and lands beyond. The only immediate effect the voyage could have had on the Turkey Company was to point out to it that the way to India through Ormuz was closed because of Portuguese hostility. It seems that Newberry intended to return to Aleppo through northern India and Persia in order to urge a new expedition to India; this time by sea around Africa.⁵⁴ He died some-

52 J. Courtenay Locke, The First Englishmen in India, 1930, pp. 48-9. Knowledge of the Turkey Company's agents' first experience in Baghdad, Basra, Ormuz and India all comes from a few accounts and letters printed by Hakluyt and Purchas. These have all been brought together in one volume and edited by Locke. For convenience they will be cited from that volume.

53 One of the best secondary accounts is that in Foster, op. cit., chaps. VIII and IX.

54 Foster, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

where along the route and so it can never be known what the Company's reactions to his information would have been. Fitch continued on to explore further the markets of eastern India with the planned expectation that within two years time he would meet Newberry in "Bengala" returning aboard an English ship. When Newberry did not appear Fitch proceeded further east reaching finally as far as Malacca. On his outward journey Fitch crossed India by a roundabout overland route but on his return he traversed by ship nearly the entire coast of the Indian peninsular. The only account of Fitch's travels was written by himself after his return and it is not very informative on commercial matters. What notes he may have taken along the way are unknown. There is nothing from his hand comparable to the notes Newberry took down during his second voyage. Thus there are no clues to what reports and advice Fitch may have given the Company when he finally returned to England in 1591. It can be presumed, however, that it was his report which was responsible for the inclusion of India in the Levant Company's charter of 1592.

Those who remained behind in Baghdad and Basra when Fitch and Newberry continued on to Ormuz and India, had the purpose of exploring local market conditions.

Their reports were not hopeful, either from Baghdad or Basra. In English goods, the merchants had with them kerseys, cloth, tin and some others, unspecified. In July 1583 Eldred complained⁵⁵ that in two weeks time they had been unable to sell anything and probably would not be able to do so until winter because the market was already flooded with kerseys and tin. These, he said, had been bought at Aleppo from William Barrett, presumably by local merchants, and were goods that had arrived on the Company's ship, the Emmanuel of London /no. 112/. Here, clearly, was a case of poor coordination between the Company's regular trade and its exploratory ventures. The prices offered for English goods were no higher in Baghdad than in Aleppo, according to Eldred, but he had hope that the situation would improve.⁵⁶ By November of the same year Eldred and Shales were in Basra at the head of the Persian gulf, where the situation was no better. Basra, it turned out, was no market at all but only a transshipment point for goods passing from Ormuz to Baghdad.⁵⁷ In face of their inability to sell anything they decided to carry their goods into Persia. But just before they were to depart two Venetians arrived from Ormuz with a

55 Locke, 48.

56 Ibid., 49.

57 Ibid., 63.

variety of spices. The latter were in need of money because they had taken up 10,000 ducats - probably in Ormuz - to be repaid in Basra and found when they arrived in Basra that the market was poor and their creditors would not let them take up the same sum to be repaid in Baghdad. They thus offered to deal with Eldred and Shales for half money and half commodities.⁵⁸ In January the latter reported that they had delivered to the Venetians 2000 ducats in goods and 2830 ducats in money in exchange for cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves, and some other commodities. The money they took up at 15% to be repaid in Baghdad, with an interest charge of 4% per month for the time they remained in Basra. It is not so stated but presumably they expected to repay the 2830 ducats from the sale of the Company's goods that had been left in Baghdad with William Skinner and Ralph Allen.

It is clear from the reports that it was important to have ready money available in order to take advantage of any market situation. As early as May 1583, when he was still in Aleppo, Newberry, writing to Leonard Poore, advised that "...there should come in every ship the

58 Ibid., 64.

fourth part of her Cargason in money, which would help to put away our commodities at a very good price".⁵⁹ In Baghdad, in July, Newberry wrote again to Poore, this time in face of the poor market in Baghdad, suggesting that the portion of money be increased "...With half money and half commodity may be bought here the best sort of spices and other commodities that are brought from the Indies...".⁶⁰ In another letter, written at the same time he concluded that "...without money there is no great profit made".⁶¹

It is not certain from the record of this trade that has survived what the Company decided to do. It probably gave up the idea of basing factors at Basra. They would only be useful if a trade was being conducted from Ormuz. But after learning of the arrest of Fitch and Newberry and the general hostility of the Portuguese, the English must have given up that idea altogether. There is evidence that the Company continued to trade at Baghdad for a few years. After his return to England, John Eldred prepared an account for Hakluyt, in which he stated that he had made three voyages between Aleppo and Baghdad and had spent a total of two years there.⁶²

59 Ibid., 42.

61 Ibid., 50.

60 Ibid., 52.

62 Ibid., 45, 47.

The Turkey Company did not limit itself to investigating trade to the east but also turned attention to Egypt. The information about the trade there comes mainly from letters written by John Sanderson and William Shales. Sanderson had been sent out to Turkey in 1584 and spent a year serving Harborne, then in October 1585 he was sent to Alexandria to act as assistant to the factor there, William Shales.⁶³ Whether or not Shales was already in Alexandria when Sanderson arrived or whether they went together is nowhere indicated. Shales was last known to be in Basra in January 1584 with John

63 Sir William Foster, The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant, 1584-1602, 1931, p. xiii. This volume is based on a manuscript in the British Museum, Lansdowne 241, which consists of a large collection of Sanderson's correspondence plus miscellaneous items ranging from autobiographical to a list of the tare of barrels used in shipping goods. Foster edited this volume for the Hakluyt Society and was thus primarily interested in it as a travel document, though he did print a number of letters that contain mainly commercial information. However, many of the letters Foster included he did not print in their entirety; and, in general, the material he omitted was information of commercial interest. Furthermore, he did not print all of the letters. There are a total of 421 letters in the manuscript volume, in addition to the miscellaneous material, and Foster printed all or part of only 150 of these. There are relatively few letters from the 1580's and Foster printed these in their entirety, though he did leave out some miscellaneous lists of prices and quantities. The bulk of Sanderson's letters date from the period 1599 to 1602.

Eldred,⁶⁴ thus could easily have been in Alexandria some time before Sanderson's arrival. Sanderson stated in his own account of his travels that the William and John [no. 168/] was supposed to have come to Alexandria when he and Shales were there but that the consul at Petras, William Revet, sent it to Tripoly in Syria instead.⁶⁵ The result was that the two factors had almost no goods to trade while in Egypt except some that were sent to them from Aleppo. Why this change of plan took place is not told. The incident suggests, however, that the two men were sent to Egypt to initiate the Turkey Company's trade there. By October 1586 they had received instructions to leave Egypt and finally departed in March 1587.

In a long letter addressed to the Turkey Company in October 1586, Shales and Sanderson assessed the situation for trade in Egypt.⁶⁶ The essential problems presented there were not very different from those faced by the English merchants in Persia some years earlier. It was important that a factor be present throughout the year to take advantage of the best times for buying and selling. This point evidently did not have to be

64 Locke, 64.
66 Ibid., pp. 131-36.

65 Foster, Sanderson, p.3.

urged on the Company and it is implicit in the descriptions Shales and Sanderson give of the market. What they do urge upon the Company quite explicitly is the necessity to trade with both goods and money. "It is requisite that heere yf we trade, the contry be furnished with money and goods in such sort that we may waite as well the time of imployments as for sales." The problem was that prices varied with the coming of caravans and ships. When the caravans arrived with spices, the greatest quantity of which was pepper, prices fell and when ships arrived in Alexandria, with merchants wanting to buy, prices rose. The technique used by the Venetians was to have several ships arrive with goods and money in July, August, and September when caravans were getting ready to leave for Mecca and the demand for European goods was high. After the caravans left in early October the proceeds of sales were invested in spices and other goods to be returned to Europe. If prices turned unfavorable then the Venetians bought and sold in small quantities "...with commoditie of the time...". Then either at the end of October or in early April another ship arrived to lade the returns of the sales and purchases. If a ship arrived after the end of September it was required to remain for its lading until early

spring. On the other hand, merchants of Marseilles, Florence, Sicily, Genoa, and Ragusa arrived in Egypt bringing almost all ready money and bought at the price they found. This was, in part, because their charter parties permitted them to remain in port for only a certain number of days. Also, probably, because they did not maintain a permanent establishment in Egypt. Sanderson and Shales mentioned that the Venetians, who seem to have been the chief European merchants in Alexandria and Cairo, kept three or four factors there.

The two Englishmen recommended to the Turkey Company that it follow the procedure used by the Venetians. The ships should arrive in August or September and order should be given to Constantinople or Aleppo that the Company agents there send money to Egypt so the lading may be ready when the ships arrive. They pointed out also that if the English ships bring such goods as amber, quicksilver and vermilion, which are most suitable for the caravans travelling to Mecca, the profits to be made would more than compensate the cost of having the ships remain in port for two months. If, however, English goods are brought, the best course is for the ships to depart without a return lading, the goods then sold during the winter and lading be made ready for the

next ship which arrives. This plan raises the question of the employment of English ships in the Mediterranean while they wait for return cargoes. In general they made the rounds of the main ports in which there were English factors, carrying goods either for themselves or for others. One example of this is seen in the instructions for the Royal Exchange sometime in the 1590's which went from London to Zante to Scanderoon, back to Zante and Petras, then back to Scanderoon for its final lading for England.⁶⁷

The Turkey Company decided not to pursue its trade in Egypt and by 25 October Sanderson and Shales had received orders to sell all their goods and depart for Tripoly in Syria. This was evidently the result of a decision made by the Company to contract all its operations and concentrate on the trade at Aleppo. In June 1586 the Company wrote to the Aleppo factors instructing them to give up the operations in Baghdad and Basra.⁶⁸ Furthermore, it stated, it intended to send only a small quantity of goods in November or December - £2000 to £3000 worth at the most. Its reasoning was that "...this

67 See appendix B. This question is taken up in greater detail in Chap. V pp. 269ff.

68 Foster, Sanderson, pp. 130-31.

peryllous time we will not bare so great adventure, but will retier home our stocke so fast as we can..." The "peryllous times" probably referred to the hostilities between England and Spain and the depression of 1586-7 but whether or not the Company meant literally that it intended to liquidate its trade in western Asia seems unlikely. Not long after this it petitioned for a renewal and broadening of its monopoly which does not suggest a desire to withdraw from the trade.⁶⁹ Possibly the members were just being pessimistic. William Harborne, at the end of his term as ambassador, also indulged in this pessimism. In February 1589 he wrote to Walsingham to the effect that some of the Turkey merchants were so discouraged about the expenses of the trade that they were considering giving it up.⁷⁰ It is possible, however, that Harborne was trying to alarm the government into renewing the monopoly on terms desired by the Turkey merchants. On the other hand there is some evidence that the Company was having its financial difficulties, though these were probably not sufficient to cause its withdrawal from the trade.

The finances of sixteenth century mercantile

69 See Chap. VI for greater detail on this petition.

70 Cal SP For., 1589, pp. 112-3. See also Chap. VI.

enterprises present questions which generally produce very little in the way of answers. Knowledge of the details of investment are dependent on the survival of company records and for the Turkey Company, as with most other such companies of the period, no such records have survived. Some generalizations can be hazarded on the basis of indirect evidence and on remarks made for other purposes. The company was organized on a joint-stock basis during the life of its letters patent.⁷¹ But it must be stated at the outset that there is no knowledge whatever of how much of that joint-stock was contributed by each member of the company, nor if further calls for funds were made upon the members, nor if the stock was continuous,^{or} ~~nor if it was wound~~ up at the end of each voyage. The absence of any hint whatever, that the stock was periodically wound up suggests that it was probably continuous until the monopoly ran out in September 1589; though even then there is nothing in the record to indicate how it was finally distributed.⁷² Sources of its capital are equally un-

71 The issue of when this type of organization was given up is discussed in detail in Chapter VI.

72 However, John Sanderson remarked that the lading of the Hercules, in 1588, was worth over £70,000 and that Martin Calthorpe, his master, "had 5000 li. wourth for his part". (Foster, Sanderson, p. 6.)

known; however, businessmen of the standing and breadth of activity of the Turkey merchants can be assumed to have had some capital of their own. As merchants they most probably had stocks of goods and some of them owned or had an interest in merchant ships.

There is evidence that the Muscovy Company, as a company, invested in the Turkey Company. The petition mentioned above which lists the twelve Turkey merchants sets off two of the names with the designation "for the Muscovie company".^{72a} This cannot simply be a means of identifying members of that company since nine of the twelve Turkey merchants were also Muscovy merchants and only two are so identified. The governor of the Muscovy Company, George Barnes, is in the list of Turkey merchants but is not so identified. It must be concluded that these two, Richard May and Richard Saltonstall, represented the Muscovy Company as a company and that the other Muscovy merchants simply represented themselves. This being so it can further be concluded that the reason for this was that the Muscovy Company invested in this new trade and appointed two of its members to represent its own interests. In view of the time,

72a BM:Cotton, Nero BVIII, f. 53.

money, and effort the Muscovy Company had put into its own Persian trade it is not surprising it would wish to have a hand in exploiting the same trade which now intended to follow a different route. There is no further evidence on this point and no indication of how much of the total capital may have been supplied by the Muscovy Company.

One of the most difficult business needs to meet in the sixteenth century was that for ready money. The Turkey Company solved this problem initially by borrowing a large sum from the Queen. Though Elizabeth did give financial support to certain ventures of exploration and discovery she was not inclined to lend money for purely commercial purposes. The loan to the members of the Turkey Company is the only such loan of which any record has been found and it actually came about as a means for the Queen to avoid repaying money she owed to some of these same merchants. On 11 September 1581, the same day the Turkey Company's letters patent were issued, the Earl of Leicester, in the name of the Queen, signed receipts for a total of £5000 received from nine merchants to be repaid in three months time.⁷³

73 BM:Lans. 31 nos. 14-23.

This money was to be for the use of Don Antonio of Portugal. Half of the sum borrowed was lent by Richard Martin, Martin Calthorpe, John Harte, and John Spencer, all members of the Turkey Company. The other half was lent by five other merchants not known to be associated with the Company. Sometime before the end of the following year Richard Martin, in the name of the Turkey merchants, petitioned the crown for the loan of 10,000 lbs. weight of silver bullion to maintain their trade.⁷⁴ The loan was authorized by an Exchequer Warrant for Issue, on 31 August 1582.⁷⁵ This warrant has a long text which explains in some detail how this loan came to be approved. When Leicester borrowed the original £5000 the crown put up a large and valuable diamond as security. The time for repayment came and past without repayment being made. Apparently the terms of the £5000 loan were such that this meant the diamond would be automatically forfeited. Elizabeth, however, was unwilling to sacrifice it and instead accepted an offer from the merchants that they forgive her the £5000 and the diamond and all interest which should have accrued in exchange for which she would lend them the 10,000 lbs.

74 PRO:SPD Eliz. 235 no. 12.

75 PRO:Exchequer Warrants for Issue, 124 pt. 4 no. 44.

weight of silver bullion to be repaid in five equal, annual installments. The bullion was paid out of the Exchequer on 9 September 1582 in ingots and valued at £3.3^s2 7/8^d per pound weight, or a total value of £31,619.15^s10^d.⁷⁶ The money was duly repaid as prescribed in five equal installments of 2000 lbs. weight at the opening of each Michelmas Term beginning in 1583. The last payment was received on 2 October 1587.⁷⁷ Nowhere in the official recording of these transactions is the Turkey Company mentioned. It must be assumed, however, that the loan was used for the furtherance of its trade. The petition from Richard Martin states that

76 PRO:Exchequer, Tellers Roll, 140. The bullion more than likely came from that which was brought back by Francis Drake after his circumnavigation. There is a document (PRO:SPD Eliz. 144 no. 60) dated December 1580, certifying the amount of bullion brought into the Tower by Drake. It came to 22,899 lbs. and 5 1/2 ozs. of silver and 101 lbs 10 ozs. of gold. The certificate was signed by Drake and Richard Martin, the latter obviously in his capacity as an official of the mint. Martin's personal knowledge of this bullion may have been the original inspiration for the Turkey Company's request for a loan, which was submitted by Martin in the Company's name. In the end the loan was a very good business deal for the Queen. She lent to her own subjects a sum of money which was not hers, it having been stolen from the Spanish, and on which she earned an interest (£5000) of nearly 16%.

77 The first four of these payments are recorded in PRO:Exchequer, Tellers Rolls 142, 143, 144, and 145. The last is to be found in PRO:Exchequer, Receipt Book 1842.

it was for that purpose and makes reference to the £5000. Furthermore, the money was not issued from the Exchequer to the nine members who had lent the original £5000, but to Edward Osborne, George Barnes, Richard Martin, Martin Calthorpe, John Harte, and Customer Thomas Smythe. All six of them were members of the Turkey Company but only Martin, Calthorpe and Harte had contributed to the £5000. It must be assumed also that the merchants had to satisfy the contributors to the £5000 who were not members of the Turkey Company. It is conceivable, though there is no evidence on the point, that the latter became hidden investors in the Company.

It was probably the Company's success with the above loan that prompted it, on two subsequent occasions, to petition the crown for further loans though there is no evidence to suggest that either of them was ever granted. Sometime during the mayoralty of Edward Osborne (1583-4) the Company petitioned the crown for the loan of 2000 lbs. weight of silver to be repaid in equal portions in six annual installments.⁷⁸ At the rate calculated for the first loan in 1582 this would have come to £6323.19^s2^d. In addition the Company also said it

78 BM:Cotton Mss. Nero BVIII f. 53.

would give to the Queen £3000 in spices, Turkey carpets, quilts and other goods at the end of three years or at the rate of £500 per year. In either case it represents what amounts to a substantial interest on the loan. The request for a loan in the terms stated would seem to represent something more than simply the need for more capital. The Company was not lacking 2000 lbs. weight of silver or its equivalent in coined money for it did make its annual payment on the loan of 1582.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Company could not have been lacking in goods - or did not expect to be lacking in goods - for it offered to pay an extraordinarily high interest in the form of goods. What it might have been lacking was ready money. Certainly the offer to pay interest in the form of goods rather than money suggests a shortage of cash rather than a lack of capital. There is no record of the payment of the above sum out of the Exchequer, thus from negative evidence it must be concluded that the loan was not granted. There is one piece of evidence which throws a slight doubt on this conclusion. In February 1585 the Company again petitioned for a loan of 10,000 lbs. in weight of

79 It is, of course, very possible that this 2000 lbs. of silver was to be used for the annual payment on the loan of 1582.

silver bullion.⁸⁰ It can be argued that it would hardly have done so if it had been refused one-fifth that amount only a year or so earlier. This, however, is supposition only. The second request for a loan is real enough. It was addressed to Lord Burleigh and signed by ten of the twelve Turkey merchants.⁸¹ It gives very little information; only that the loan was to be for "certayn yeares for the better mayntenance of our Trade...". Again there is no evidence that it was granted.

The observation that the Company was not lacking in goods with which to make an interest payment to the Queen and the Company's general concern about money payments raises the issue of the balance in this trade. It has been thought to be unfavorably balanced for England,⁸² and what little evidence can be brought to bear on the question confirms this view. Appendix B contains the inward ladings of four Turkey Company ships. Two of these came from Petras and carried mainly currants.

80 BM:Lans. 43 f. 176.

81 Richard Saltonstall and Henry Hewitt did not sign it.

82 T. S. Willan, "Some Aspects of English Trade with the Levant in the Sixteenth Century", EHR, vol. LXX 1955, p. 410 and Ralph Davis, "England and the Mediterranean, 1570-1670", Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England, ed. by F. J. Fisher, 1961, p. 124.

The other two came from Tripoly in Syria and contained what was most likely a more typical cargo of the Turkey trade. The valuations given for these cargoes are official ones based on the Book of Rates. The real value of the imports varies from commodity to commodity and from time to time with price changes. In the case at hand the real value was very much higher than the rated value. John Sanderson claimed that the cargo of the Hercules /190/ was worth more than £70,000.⁸³ John Eldred remarked that the Hercules, on this occasion, "was the richest ship of English marchants goods that ever was knowen to come into this realme".⁸⁴ Sanderson's accuracy cannot be completely tested; however, some measure of the value of the Hercules' cargo can be made. In June 1586 the Company sent its agents in Aleppo a list of prices then current in London.⁸⁵ At those 1586 prices, the same commodities on board the Hercules in 1588 were worth £47,022. This excludes the various textiles, drugs and miscellaneous items in the cargo for which no prices are known. Thus the cargo was certainly worth a good deal more than its rated value and possibly as much as Sanderson claimed. Similarly, this

83 Foster, Sanderson, p. 6. 84 Hakluyt VI, 9.

85 Foster, Sanderson, p. 13ln.

is the case with the Toby of London /191/, whose cargo, excluding several items whose prices again are not known, was worth £19,153 at the June 1586 prices; over three times its rated value. It is worth noting that most of the known value of the two cargoes was accounted for by a few items - indigo, galls, silk, cotton, wool, and nutmeg. This may have been a peculiarity of those particular cargoes, but the lading of the Royal Exchange /315/ tends to confirm this pattern. No comparable prices are known for 1596 and there is no justification for using the 1586 prices. In terms of bulk alone, however, the five commodities listed above appear in greater quantities than any other item except currants. Furthermore, in 1588 the import of commodities from Turkey was the result of the single decision of the Turkey Company; in 1596 the imports were the result of the independent decisions of a number of merchants. That the overall proportion of imports for certain commodities should be similar in both cases suggests that market demand was the operating factor and probably represented the general pattern of imports to be found until the advent of the East India Company.

A commodity not considered above is currants which were also imported by the Turkey Company. The greatest

quantity of that commodity, however, was imported by the Venice Company. The Turkey Company's source was Petras from where it imported about 170 tons in 1588 compared to the 600 tons imported by the Venice merchants. In terms of value currants represented a relatively small portion of the total imports of the Turkey Company. They were rated at 30^s the hundredweight which over a period of several years seems to have been a fair average of their real price which ranged from 25^s to 35^s per hundredweight. Thus the rated values of the ships from Petras are not so far removed from their real values as to be unusable.

It will be seen from the above remarks and from the loadings of the ships in Appendix B that the cargoes from Tripoly were far more valuable per ton of lading than those from Petras. The 95 tons of lading on board the Gift of God [196/ from Petras was worth about £4000 while the 120 tons of lading on board the Toby from Tripoly was worth over £20,000. The lading of the Toby represents a more typical cargo from Syria than does the Hercules in terms of value. In 1596 the Royal Exchange, in from Scanderoon, had a cargo whose rated value, excluding currants, was £11,683.16^s11^d. Thus, by the same reasoning applied to the Toby's cargo the real value of

it was certainly in excess of £20,000. In July 1594, the Ascension of London /no. 277/ unladed from Scanderoon, Constantinople, and Zante with a cargo officially rated at about £28,000.⁸⁶ In the same month the Consent /no. 281/ unladed from Scanderoon with a cargo officially rated in excess of £10,000.⁸⁷ The real values of the last two ships would have been considerably greater than their rated values, though any rough estimate is complicated by the fact that after 1592 the Levant ships from Syria were more likely to have stopped at one of the Venetian ports for currants. While the above figures are certainly somewhat vague they do contain enough consistency to indicate that the inward cargoes of a ship in the Turkey trade was very likely to be worth at least £20,000 and not unlikely to be worth as much as £30,000. Those cargoes which were predominantly of currants, by contrast, were probably never worth much more than £5000.

The problem of English exports in the Turkey trade is even more difficult for there is less information with which to work. There are only two years in which

86 PRO:Exchequer Warrants for Issue, 127. It paid petty customs inward of about £1400.

87 PRO:Exchequer Warrants for Issue, 132. It paid petty customs inward of about £500.

surviving Port Books entries for exports to the Levant are known - 1598-99 and 1604-05.⁸⁸ These will be taken up in Chapter VII but there is no evidence to suggest that in the 1580's exports to the Levant were not primarily kerseys, some braodcloths, conyskins, and tin. Table III gives some figures for the export of kerseys by the Levant Company but they are all from 1590's. The most explicit statement of the value of cargoes arriving in Turkey comes from William Harborne, though his remarks are confined to the ships arriving at Constantinople and Chios. After his return from Turkey he became involved in a difference with the Company over the amount of money owed to him and in justifying himself wrote out the benefits of his services to both the Company and the Realm. Among these services was a reduction in customs at Constantinople and Chios from 5% to 3%. There are several copies of his various claims in which he gives estimates of how much

88 PRO:Exchequer, Port Book 10/11. This Port Book has been misplaced by the Public Record Office and thus could not be consulted. Fortunately, some years ago, it was consulted by Prof. Willan who printed the totals of goods exported by the Levant Company in "Aspects of English Trade with the Levant in the Sixteenth Century", EHR, 1955, p. 409. The Port Book is only for tonnage and poundage and thus does not show cloth exports.

the Company saved by virtue of this reduction in customs. In only one of these documents, however, does he give detailed figures of the saving on the cargoes of different ships.⁸⁹ The figures he gave were the actual amounts which represented 2% of the rated value of the goods for customs purposes. Using these an idea of the total values of the cargoes can be gained. Fortunately Harborne also listed the savings with the names of the ships which were:⁹⁰

	<u>Ship</u>	<u>Value of Cargo</u>
1582	<u>The Susan</u> /no. 106/	£ 6,475
1583/4	<u>The Charity</u> /nos. 116 & 145/	18,900 (together)
1585	<u>The Toby</u> /no. 166/	11,675
1587	<u>The Hercules</u> /no. 190/	1,525
		<u>£38,575</u>

These five voyages, one each year, are the only ones found going to Constantinople. It seems to have been the pattern that only one ship per year went to that city or Chios though this can be positively affirmed for only one year. In March 1584 the Venetian ambassador in Constantinople, Giovanni Morosini, wrote to

89 Bodleian:Tanner 77 ff. 1 seq.. Other copies of his claims are in BM:Lans 57 no. 23 and 241 f. 115.

90 Harborne gave his figures in acques, a small Turkish coin which the English called aspers. These were rated at 60 per ducat. The ducat was generally rated at 5^s and sometimes at 6^s8^d. The lower figure is used above.

Venice that during the past year the English had sent only one ship to that city. [no. 116/]⁹¹ Furthermore, it also cannot be asserted positively that the cargo on which customs was paid in Constantinople or Chios was the entire cargo of the vessel. Though, to judge from the calculated values it probably was. In March 1585 Morosini remarked that an English ship had arrived [no. 145/ with a cargo of cloth, tin and other goods and that "the Turks are glad, for the city is almost without cloth for clothing".⁹² If there was such a shortage in the city the ship was probably able to unlade completely and Harborne's figure refers to the entire cargo. Likewise, in March 1586, the Venetian ambassador reported that the English ship which entered Constantinople with a cargo had sailed away in ballast.⁹³ [no. 164/ Bearing these reservations in mind it can be seen that during the first four years of the trade the value of the cargoes sent to Constantinople increased from about £6500 to about £11,500 with an average for the four ships of £9262. The low value for the Hercules in 1587 is a reflection and confirmation of the Company's state-

91 Cal. SP Ven. 1581-91, p. 84.

92 Ibid., p. 113.

93 Ibid., p. 146.

ment in October 1586 that it intended to severely contract its exports.⁹⁴

In so far as the balance of imports and exports is concerned in the Turkey trade the above figures confirm that the balance was unfavourable for England. The imports seem to have been worth somewhere between £20,000 and £30,000 per vessel returning from Turkey and between £4000 and £5000 per vessel returning from Petras with mainly currants. The exports to Constantinople should be valued lower than the figures based on Harborne's notes because the values of the cargoes entering Constantinople were based on their customs ratings at that city. These were undoubtedly higher than in England thus making the balance even more unfavorable. Cargoes destined for Aleppo probably were of greater value than those destined for Constantinople since the former was the chief market place for the Turkey trade. It is uncertain what the situation was with respect to Petras. It was seen above that imports from there were much lower in value than from further east. Although the Gift of God and the Mayflower were entered in the Port Books as from Petras only (see Appendix B/ and

94 See supra p.191. This is the same Hercules whose return cargo in March 1588 was so valuable.

they carried mainly currants, this is no assurance that they had not also been further east. They both carried some raw silk. If they had been east to Syria they no doubt carried a usual cargo to Tripoly. If not the question of the outward cargo is not so easily solved. Petras, like the Venetian islands, was not much of a market for English goods. The Venice merchants solved this problem by going first either to Venice or Leghorn. Venice was out of bounds for the Turkey Company but Leghorn was not. However, none of the evidence bearing on the routes followed by the Turkey Company's ships indicates that any of them went to Leghorn before proceeding to Petras. The most likely explanation is that for the Turkey merchants, the currant trade served the purpose of filling the empty holds of ships that had been unable to find an adequate return cargo further east. This point was only raised for the first time some years later when the Levant merchants were protesting the imposts laid on currants by the Venetians. They petitioned their own government sometime in late 1603, for some relief from these imposts on the grounds that currants were "...our chiefe ballasting homewarde".⁹⁵

95 PRO:SPD James I, 10 no. 23.

An answer to this petition, denying the need to give relief to the Levant Company, did not deny the point made above but, in fact, affirmed that "the trade of the Inglish marchants in Turkey was much holpen by the benefitt of the Cornithes [sic] of Zante and Zephalonia bought there in the places where they grewe for the ballasting of there shippes, and soe consequently for the ease of their freights...".⁹⁶ In the 1580's the Turkey merchants did not have access to Zante and Zephalonia but Petras could easily serve the same purpose.⁹⁷

The existence of an unfavorable balance in the trade raises the question of how the Company met its foreign debts. There were three possible means by which this could be accomplished though the silence of the Company on this matter and the lack of records make it impossible to be more than suggestive. They were the export of bullion, the transfer of funds by exchange directly from London to the Levant, and the transfer of funds to the Levant raised in other branches of foreign trade by individual members of the Company. The

96 PRO:SPD James I, 10 no. 27.

97 The currants from Petras were considered inferior to those from the two Venetian islands. The maximum amount available from there was about 400 tons per year in the first years of the 17th century. (PRO:SPD James I, 10 no. 26.)

first means was nominally illegal and though there is no doubt that merchants did carry coin out of the realm and probably the Turkey merchants were not innocent of the practice, it is unlikely that sizeable deficits arising from an entire branch of English trade were settled by illegal means. It was possible, of course, to secure the Queen's license to export bullion but no such license has turned up issued to the Turkey merchants.⁹⁸

The second means would seem to be the most likely method used. The bill of exchange was the standard means by which merchants ordinarily transferred funds from one place to another and changed them from one currency to another. Prof. de Roover, however, states that it was unlikely there was a bill market at Constantinople.⁹⁹ This is confirmed by Prof. Braudel who states that the

98 The Russia Company received at least three such licenses: the first in May 1582 for the export of 1000 lbs. weight of bullion, (BM:Cotton, Vespasian C XIV, f. 420) another in June 1584 for 1500 lbs. weight of bullion, (BM:Salis. Mss., 13, f. 48) and the third in June 1588 for "1500 li. in bullion and dollers". (PRO:Signet Office Docquets, vol. 1. The distinction between weight and value is not clear in this entry.) Prof. Willan noted the first two of the above licenses but not the third in Russia Company, p. 187.

99 Raymond de Roover, Gresham on Foreign Exchange, 1949, p. 108.

bill of exchange is rarely found going between the Christian and Islamic worlds and that between Venice and Constanti-
nople only very small sums were transferred by bill.¹⁰⁰

The last means is the one which seems, from a present vantage point, to have been the most likely used. The evidence, however, all pertains to the trade of the 1590's and will be considered in Chapter VII. It will suffice to point out here that, as seen above, most members of the Company had trading interests elsewhere. It thus would be quite easy for the Company to acquire any credits raised by such trade through bills of exchange and then buy the necessary coins to be shipped to the Levant. A similar technique was used by the East India Company, though it called on the credits raised by its own re-exports and returned its Spanish rivals to London to be placed aboard its own ships.¹⁰¹ The evidence of the of the Turkey Company's re-export trade is slight. Nothing is said of it in the patent of 1581. A year or so later it is assumed by the Company that there will

100 Fernand Braudel, La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Époque de Philippe II, 2 vols., 1966, vol. I, p. 423.

101 K. N. Chaudhuri, "The East India Company and the Export of Treasure in the Early Seventeenth Century", Econ. HR, vol. XVI, no. 1, 1963, pp. 31 ff.

be re-exports.¹⁰² In the patent of 1592 provision is made for re-exports to be free of a second customs payment. Thus there must have been some re-exports in the interim. But whether or not they were sufficient to finance a large part of the Turkey trade is not known.

It is tempting to try to estimate the total value of the Turkey Company's trade during its five years of operation. The Company, itself, stated that it had paid customs of £11,359.6^s during that time.¹⁰³ But because no breakdown of this sum was given it must be assumed that it included customs both inward and outward. Thus no conversions can be made to quantities or total official values. An analysis of the Company's total shipping might help but the information known is not detailed enough for this purpose. The Company stated in 1590 that it had used 19 ships which made 27 voyages during the five years from 1583 to 1588.¹⁰⁴ It also gave the names of these ships and how many voyages each made but it did not state where or when each ship went. It has been possible to identify 19 of these voyages definitely and several others with less certainty.

102 PRO:SPF Turkey, 1 f. 15 and BM:Lans. 34 no. 64.

103 PRO:SPD Eliz. 233 no. 13.

104 PRO:SPD Eliz. 233 no. 13.

In a number of instances it seems to have been the practice for the Turkey and Venice merchants to share a ship. This can be seen from the lading of the Mayflower [Appendix B/ which in addition to currants in the name of Osborne, Stapers & Company, had currants in the name of Edward Holmden and William Garraway, both members of the Venice Company. The only other evidence which indicates that the two companies may have shared the same vessels is that several ships put into both Venetian and Turkish ports. This in itself is not proof that they took in lading at the Venetian ports. Those Turkey Company voyages which are definitely identified are all listed in the Shipping List [Appendix C/. They are abstracted in Table V along with those which have not been definitely established. It can be seen that the voyages are fairly evenly distributed over the five years. Unless the voyages for which there is no definite record all took place about the same time it would seem that the Turkey Company sent out four or five ships a year. This number is just under what the Company stated it planned to send. On 20 July 1584, Edward Osborne wrote to the King of Algiers complaining about depredations on English shipping and requesting further that the Algerians "...would suffer us to

TABLE V

The Turkey Company's Shipping

1582

- /106/ The Susan, 300 tons, Zante, Chios, Constantinople
/112/ The Emmanuel, 200 tons, Tripoly (Syria)

1583

- /115/ The Tiger,¹ 150 tons, Tripoly (Syria)
/116/ The Charity, 130 tons, Constantinople

1584

- /139/ The Jesus, 100 tons, Tripoly (Africa)
/144/ The Merchant Royal, 300 tons, Petras
/145/ The Charity, 130 tons, Petras, Constantinople
The Elizabeth Stokes,² 120 tons, Petras
The Solomon, 130 tons, ?
The Mary Martin, 130 tons, Petras

1585

- /162/ The Mary Rose, 130 tons, Scandroon
/165/ The Merchant Royal, 300 tons, Petras
/166/ The Toby, 200 tons, Constantinople
/168/ The William & John, 120 tons, Tripoly (Syria)

1586

- /175/ The Toby, 200 tons, Petras
/180/ The Tiger, 150 tons, Algiers, Tunis, Alexandria
/181/ The Golden Noble, 140 tons, Algiers

1587

/190/ The Hercules, 250 tons, Petras, Chios, Tripoly (Syria)
Constantinople

/191/ The Toby, 200 tons, Tripoly (Syria)

/196/ The Gift of God, 100 tons, Petras

/198/ The Mayflower, 160 tons, Petras

SUPPLEMENT

The Toby is listed as having made four voyages altogether. Therefore her other one, which has not been found in the sources, must have been made sometime before 1585. Also listed is a second voyage of the Susan, a voyage of the Elizabeth Cocken of 120 tons, and a voyage of the Bark Burr of 120 tons, none of which have turned up in the records. There is a Bark Reynolds listed by the Company, which also has not turned up in the records. The same ship /78/ was sent out by Osborne and Stapers in 1581 to Constantinople. But because of the early date of that voyage it is uncertain if it was made under the letters patent. Similarly the Company's shipping list states the Gift of God made two voyages. The same ship returned from Tripoly in January 1590 /200/ but the late date of this makes it uncertain if this voyage was made during the life of the letters patent. The ship also made voyages to the Mediterranean in 1582, 1583, and 1584 /95, 128, 152/ and anyone of these might have taken in a Turkey Company port.

Notes:

- 1 The Company listed only one voyage of the Tiger but two have been found. The sources leave little doubt that both were under Company auspices.
- 2 These three ships appear in the Company's list of its shipping. The only record found of them is a document printed by Hakluyt (Vol. V, pp. 280-82) which is a list of English ships captured by various North African men-of-war. The document is dated 30 March 1585 thus the voyages listed were made before that but how long before is not known. One of those in the list is the Jesus 139 which was arrested at Tripoly in 1584. In that list also are the three ships named by the Company in its shipping list. The voyages may not all have been in the same year. It is not known what finally became of these ships though the document does give the names of crew members who were released. The other ships in Hakluyt's list, six of them, must have preceded the Turkey Company's charter. Some of them may have had nothing to do with Osborne and stapers.

use our traffique with sixe ships yerely into Turkie unto the dominions of the Grand Signior in peace and safetie..."¹⁰⁵.

There was English shipping to the territories included in the Turkey Company's patent before it was issued. Those early voyages which have been identified are listed in the Shipping List but there is no way of knowing how complete a list this represents. Only four voyages are definitely established with respect to time and place. Those of the Prudence of London in 1579 [52/], the Providence in 1579 [no. 55/], the White Hind in 1580 [75/], and the Bark Reynolds in 1581¹⁰⁶ [78/]. In addition

105 Hakluyt V, 270.

106 The Bark Reynolds, Mr. David Philly, was captured and the means to its release presents an interesting story. It was returning from Constantinople in May 1582 when it was captured by some Maltese and taken to that island. There, evidently the crew came under the suspicion of the Inquisition. How and when the news of its capture reached England is not known but on 5 July Walsingham wrote to Cobham, English ambassador in France, to the effect that the Queen had written to the French king asking that he send a letter to the Pope in favor of the release of the ship. He requested that Cobham do what he could to speed the dispatch of the King's letter. The speed was necessary, said Walsingham, not only for the sake of the ship, goods and crew but so that "the parties who are interested therein may understand by their speedy dispatch from thence that my commendation had not been unfruitful toward you in their behalf..." (Cal. SP For., 1582, p. 136) Two weeks later Cobham had seen the King, informed

there are the six ships about which Osborne wrote to the King of Algiers. [see Table V Supplement/ There may have been others, record of which has not survived.

The Prudence, White Hind, and Bark Reynolds are known

him of the matter of the detained ship and in turn had received a promise that the King would take the matter into consideration and do what he could. Two days after that the King addressed a letter to the Pope requesting that he order the Inquisition to release the ship and its crew. The King explained that not only was the detention an interruption of free trade but that if the Queen's request were granted "she might on other like occasions show her recognition of any pleasure done her". (Ibid., p. 211) An Englishman, William Shute, was given the responsibility from the beginning for seeing to the necessary arrangements for the release of the ship and acting as a personal courier for messages, written and verbal, between London, Paris, Rome, and Malta. In Paris he received a safe conduct from the King which relieved him of possible subjection to the Inquisition. He arrived in Rome 14 August from where he reported to Cobham who reported to Walsingham (Ibid., p. 321-2) that the French ambassador, M. de Foix, had had audience with the Pope, delivering to him the King's letters and obtaining the Pope's letter, directed to the Grand Master and the Inquisition at Malta, to release the Bark Reynolds. Shute was told in Rome that in June the Pope had given order for the ship to be released and, in fact, that she had already departed on her voyage to England. Indeed, the Grand Master of Malta issued a safe conduct to the ship on 12 July. (Hakluyt V, 217) But there was some doubt if it had actually been released and there was no news from Malta because of interrupted communications. Shute thus was to leave for the island on 21 August. That is the last that is heard of the matter in the surviving record. When the ship was actually released and when it arrived in England are not known.

to have been wholly or partially freighted by Osborne and Stapers. About the others nothing is known.

The total tonnage sent out by the Company, according to its list was 4620 tons or an average of 924 tons per year. It can be seen from the cargoes listed in Appendix B that the above quantity of cargo was probably not often realised. The cargoes from Syria were high in value but relatively low in bulk thus the desire and need to fill the holds with the currants of Petras. Evidently this was only done with those ships which had very small cargoes, such as the Gift of God and the Mayflower. It is interesting to note, apropos of the Company's claim that it maintained so many large ships, that only a little more than half of the 4620 tons of shipping was accounted for by ships of 160 tons burden and above. Seven of the 19 ships were of that size and only five of them were 200 tons or larger. This need have had no effect on the value of the trade for reasons given above but it does throw doubts on the Company's claims about its invaluable services to the Queen's navy. Actually the Venice Company used more large ships than did the Turkey Company. None of the above discussion of the Company's shipping makes it possible to arrive at an estimate of the total value of the trade. There

is enough detail about cargoes to arrive at some conclusions about voyages following particular routes. But there is simply not enough known about each voyage listed to make possible the application of this detail in enough cases to estimate a total. For example the Merchant Royal of 300 tons burden /144/ is listed as having gone only to Petras. Did it actually lade 300 tons of currants or did it also make port in other places? In the following year the same ship /165/ put into both Zante and Tripoly in Syria. How much of its cargo belonged to the Venice merchants? The Charity of 130 tons burden /145/ in 1585 put into both Petras and Constantinople. How was its cargo divided between currants and other commodities? Such problems are raised with most of the voyages listed and without the answers to them no meaningful estimate can be made of the Turkey Company's total trade. What does seem probable, however, is that whatever this total trade was, it did not fill the holds of the Company's ships with goods from the Asian markets. The Company had to supplement its regular cargoes with currants. This need raised the question of relations with the Venice Company which controlled the main source of currants. There is evidence that from early on, the two companies, aside from

sharing cargo space on the same ships, were attempting to make use of each others markets. This is especially true of the Turkey Company which tried to persuade the English government to extend its monopoly to include that of the Venice Company. Ultimately the two companies combined to form the Levant Company. But before going into all the problems involved in the formation of that company an examination of the Venice Company, itself, is in order.

CHAPTER V

THE VENICE COMPANY

Venice is not Asia and the Venetian trade was not Asian trade; yet, in several respects, the histories of the Turkey and Venice Companies are inseparable. The Levant Company of 1591 was an amalgamation of the two earlier companies; many of the most important Levant merchants of the early 17th century had previously been members of the Venice Company; trade with the Venetian territories was to be a very important part of the total trade of the Levant Company; and, finally, the problem of impositions on imports from the Venetian Islands, which was confronted first by the Venice Company, was to be a cause of the revocation of the Levant Company's charter in 1599. Thus the history of the Venice Company cannot be ignored if one wishes to understand the Elizabethan Levant trade.

The documentation that survives provides almost entirely an external history of the Venice Company. Knowledge of its internal history, other than that it was a regulated company and a few generalisations which will be taken up further on, is largely out of reach to the modern historian. This lack of knowledge is the case with all the regulated companies simply because

their internal history is the history of the activities of individual merchants rather than of the company itself and can only be known through these merchants' private papers - none of which survive. The external history of regulated companies, as well as joint stock companies, of the 16th century is largely the history of the relations between the particular company, the English government, and the government of the territory to which the company traded. The evidence of such relations appears, to one degree or another, in the public records and is thus available to the historian. In the case of the Venice Company this record concerns itself with conflicting monopolies, diplomatic relations between England and Venice, and, most important of all, the issue of impositions laid on English merchants' imports into the Venetian dominions and retaliatory impositions laid on the Venetian merchants' imports into England.¹

1 Very little has been written about the Venice Company. The most complete account is in Edward P. Cheyney, A History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth, 2 vols., 1914; vol. I, pp. 385-89. Lipson in The Economic History of England, 3 vols., 1931, mentions the company in two paragraphs (vol. 2 p. 337). Rowland, op. cit., pp. 72, 74-75, gives more space but concerns himself exclusively with the union of the Venice and Turkey Companies. Foster, England's Quest, gives no serious

In April 1581 a group of English merchants who had been conducting a trade to Venice and the Venetian islands complained to the Privy Council that the Venetians had recently placed new imposts upon currants and olive oil exported by Englishmen and upon kerseys, tin, and cloth imported by Englishmen, which imposts were detrimental to the traffic with those parts. In explanation for the Venetian action they offered that "All whiche we suppose to be done by the practize and instigation of certaine Italion Merchante now being...".²

The certain Italian to whom they referred was Acerbo Velutelli, a merchant of Lucca, resident in London. They attributed to him provocation of the Venetians because in November 1575 he was granted, by letters patent, a monopoly of the import into England of all currants and olive oil coming from the dominions of the

attention to the subject. The two histories of the Levant Company also have very little to say about the Venice Company. Epstein, op. cit., pp. 20-24, gives a brief summary, much of it inaccurate and Wood, op. cit., pp. 18-19, devotes only two paragraphs to the subject, based on Cheyney, Lipson, and Rowland. None of these accounts goes much beyond a superficial use of some of the State Papers Domestic of Elizabeth and James I. Cheyney, in his notes, cites every relevant document in those collections and some in others but his text does not show that these were examined in detail.

2 PRO:SPD Eliz. 149 no. 58.

Signoria of Venice. It was this patent, in the view of the English merchants, which led to the Venetian imposts of 1581.

The patent in question was dated 8 November 1575 but was effective from 15 October just preceeding.³ It begins with the statement that the currants and salad oil of Zante, Candia, Zephalonia, and Petrasse are imported only by strangers and in strangers' bottoms; and that these currants and oil are "spente rather for wantonness then for any neede". It then proceeds to provide that Acerbo Velutelli shall have the sole right to import currants and salad oil into the realm of England for then years with the usual proviso that violators would be subject to forfeiture of their goods. It requires of Velutelli that he pay alien customs and that he sell the currants and oil as a wholesaler only - not as a retailer. The patent expressly forbids customers and other officers of English ports to permit entry of any such goods in any name other than Velutelli's or his servants', factors', or assigns'; and, further requires the Treasurer and barons of the Exchequer, upon Velutelli's request, to issue writs to port

3 PRO:Pat. Roll 17 Eliz. pt. I. This patent has nowhere been transcribed but there is a summary of it in BM: Lans. 112 f. 156.

officials, commanding them not to make entry of currants and salad oil except in the name of Velutelli or his servants', factors', and assigns'. It was almost as if the author of the patent was expecting some resistance to its provisions. The patent concluded with the provision that if the grant should prove detrimental to the realm, then, effective_{ly} from the time of notification, it would be void.

Though this patent conferred on its recipient a monopoly of the import of certain commodities there is nothing in it which creates a company or which even assumes that the recipient is going to engage in active trade. It states simply that currants and olive oil are to be brought into England only in the name of Acerbo Velutelli. It gives the impression of being a simple grant of royal favor rather than of meeting the legitimate needs of a group of serious merchants. In this sense it bears closer resemblance to the licenses for the export of unfinished cloth granted to favored courtiers than it does to the letters patent which gave status to the leading merc^hantile trading companies. It might well be asked why Queen Elizabeth was prompted to grant such a favor, to an alien merchant, at a time when English merchants, with the support of their govern-

ment, were trying so hard to free their import and export trades from dependance on foreign merchants.

Two explanations stand out. The first is that the letters patent do represent a grant of royal favor, not to Acerbo Velutelli but to the Earl of Leicester. There is no doubt that it was Leicester who prompted the grant initially and who supported it afterwards in the Privy Council. Fifteen years later Leicester was said to have been the means to this grant.⁴ Greater certainty on this comes from correspondence between the Venetian Senate and Giovanni Morosini, the Venetian ambassador in Paris, and between Morosini and an informant of his in London. In December 1575, immediately upon learning of the grant to Velutelli, the Signory instructed Morosini to do what he could about it.⁵ Morosini's informant in London, Diogene Franceschini, wrote that it was the Earl of Leicester and Sir Francis Walsingham who opposed any effort to revoke the privilege.⁶ Morosini also approached, Dale, the English ambassador in Paris, to enlist his aid. He reported to Venice that though Dale was apparently effusive in

4 PRO:SPD Eliz. 232 no. 33.

5 Cal. SP Ven., 1558-80, p. 542.

6 Ibid., p. 545. There is no other referance to Walsingham's support of this patent.

agreeing with Morosini that the privilege was unjust and to the detriment of both the Venetians and the English and he was certain that it would be revoked, he, nevertheless, excused himself from taking an active part in the issue for fear it might seem he was picking a quarrel with Leicester.⁷ In March, Franceschini, again wrote to Morosini that Leicester does all in his power to sustain Velutelli's patent.⁸

The second explanation is that the Queen was using this grant as a diplomatic lever to pry from the Venetians an official representative at her court. The last Venetian ambassador left England on 5 July 1557 and from then until 1602 no Venetian was officially accredited to Elizabeth's court.⁹ The Queen was greatly disappointed and irritated by this - feelings which probably stemmed from reasons of personal and national pride rather than from any dictates of foreign policy. Elizabeth's feeling was conveyed to Morosini by Ambassador Dale in January 1576. According to the Venetian, Dale told him that the Queen was "much grieved" that no Venetian ambassador had been accredited to her and it was his opinion that when this was done the matter of

7 Ibid., p. 546.

8 Ibid., p. 547.

9 Ibid., vii.

Velutelli's privilege would be more easily resolved.¹⁰ This same condition for facilitating the revocation of the patent was repeated in Morosini's letters to the Signory in February, April, June, and August. Finally, in December, in the last letter mentioning Velutelli's patent, Morosini wrote to the Signory that "if you do not take steps to please the Queen, the negotiation will go forward, and once the privilege has been established it will be useless to think of obtaining its revocation".¹¹

The evidence presented here does not support the suggestion that Queen Elizabeth made the grant to Velutelli with the thought in mind beforehand that it would provide a means to force an ambassador from the Venetians. It is more likely that once the opposition became apparent she decided to take advantage of it by not giving in without first receiving what she wanted. There is no known evidence on this particular point and thus it can only be speculative. It is certain, however, that Leicester was instrumental in initiating the grant, that the Venetians objected to it, and that the Queen resisted their objections, in part, at least, in an effort to persuade Venice to accredit an ambassador to her court.

10 Ibid., p. 542.

11 Ibid., pp. 546, 548, 550, 551, and 552.

Leicester's reasons for advocating Velutelli's monopoly are no where made explicit. He no doubt stood to make a profit from it but there is no extant evidence bearing on any financial relation he may have had with Velutelli. The connection between the two men goes back at least as far as December 1569 when Leicester sent Velutelli to perform a service for the government with respect to another Italian in London.¹² In 1571 Velutelli wrote to Leicester asking for his aid in some commercial matters. Furthermore Velutelli had occasion to do a service for Leicester's nephew, Philip Sidney. Apparently Velutelli advanced about £160 to Sidney in 1572 when the latter was travelling overseas. Again in 1574 and 1575 he advanced a total of £784.10.8 for Sidney's use.¹³ What connection these facts may have had with Velutelli's letters patent is not known but they at least indicate that Leicester as well as members of his family were acquainted with him and had reason to feel some obligation to him.

Though the Earl of Leicester was able to block the revocation of Velutelli's patent he did not succeed

12 Cal. SP Span. 1568-79, p. 213.

13 HMC:Cal. De L'Isle and Dudley Mss., vol. 1, p. 247 and p. 272.

in preventing some alteration in its terms. The patent had been issued on 8 November and before the month was out the Court of Aldermen of the City of London appointed a committee of its members to look into the matter and determine the validity of the patent and what harm to the city might grow from it.¹⁴ The outcome of this was a long paper containing 32 reasons why the grounds for granting the patent were unsound and why it would be "inconvenient and hurtful to the Realme of England".¹⁵ Armed with this the Aldermen then decided, on 10 December, to send a delegation to the Court "to solycite the case, and delyver notes to the Counsellors privately and after to the bodye of the Counsell".¹⁶ The Council evidently failed to act on the matter for on 5 June 1576 the Aldermen again met and ordered another delegation to go to court to renew their suit to have Velutelli's letters patent revoked.¹⁷ Whether the Privy Council ever did anything about this matter is not made clear. According to the correspondence of Morosini, Leicester successfully blocked any action being taken by the

14 Corporation of London Record Office, Reportories of the Court of Alderman, vol. 19, f. 15: hereafter cited as Reportories.

15 BM:Lans. 112 no. 49. 16 Reportories, 19, f. 20.

17 Reportories, 19, f. 84.

government. According to an account of this affair given by members of the Venice Company in May 1590 it was the Court of Aldermen that effected a compromise.¹⁸ The Lord Mayor, Ambrose Nicholas, called the various merchants before the Court to present their cases and finally Velutelli agreed - by what persuasion is not said - he would exempt English merchants from the provisions of his privilege and it would henceforth apply only to the foreign merchants importing currants and olive oil. In addition the English demanded that Velutelli import only in English bottoms during the next four years, that during the next year he sell currants and oil at fixed prices, and that he enter into a bond for £3000 for the performance of these provisions.¹⁹ On the whole Velutelli agreed to these conditions objecting only that there might be occasions when English bottoms were not available and also that to fix his prices might damage his business if purchase prices were to rise above a reasonable level.²⁰ There is no evidence which indicates to what extent these conditions were met in practice. English merchants, how-

18 PRO:SPD Eliz. 232 no. 33. There is nothing in the Reportories on this phase of the affair.

19 BM: Add. 48020 f. 377v. 20 PRO:SPD Eliz. 165 no. 59.

ever, were exempted from the restriction of the patent.

Though there are no accounts clarifying the details of Velutelli's activities under the provisions of the letters patent, there seems to be no question that he did not, himself, actively import more than a small amount of currants and oil. If his critics are to be believed he never intended to engage in the trade, himself. Instead he compounded with the foreign merchants - mainly Venetian - importing currants and oil, by way of raising an impost on their goods. In an account of these events written in 1590 this impost was given as 2^s to 2^s6^d per hundredweight on currants with no figure given for oil.²¹

The Venetian merchants were not pleased with being required to pay an impost but there was nothing they could do about it by themselves. However, the Doge and Senate of the Venetian state were not powerless and on 26 January 1581 promulgated a decree levying certain imposts on the imports and exports of all foreign merchants. These levies related only to the trade of Zante and Zephalonia and not to Venice, itself; further,

21 PRO:SPD Eliz. 232 no. 33; another reference to Velutelli's impost is in PRO:SPD Eliz. 165 no. 63, which dates from about 1583.

they related only to those goods exported to or imported from "the west partes" and not to and from Venice. The new tax on exports amounted to 10 dcs. on a thousand weight of currants and 6 dcs. on a butt of wine. On imports from England the tax was 2 dcs. on a kersey, 7 dcs. on a broadcloth, 20 dcs. on a thousand weight of tin, and 30 dcs. on the same quantity of wool.²²

For purposes of persuading the English government to take action against Velutelli's patent, the English merchants placed a narrow interpretation on these impositions, attributing them to a retaliation against the imposts raised by Velutelli. But as the event receded the explanation of its causes broadened. In about 1585 added to the above explanation was that "...this was done to cut awaie our Englishe navigacion from thers which by our Industry was at that time greatly increased".²³ By 1590 the Venice Company in a summary of the matter made for the benefit of Lord Burghley was able to encompass several reasons in one brief statement. "The cause of whie theis great ympositions weare levied as wee thincke was to cutt off and overthrowe our shipping and maryners which did at that tyme

22 BM:Add. 48126 f. 173; a copy in Italian, of the original is on f. 191. When the English raised retaliatory imposts they rated the ducat at 5^s.

23 PRO:SPD Eliz. 185 no. 51.

not a little increase and their shipping decaye, of which their shipping thei have great care, of some shoue thei had of Acerbo his license as also greved at the XX^s per butt to my Lord of Lecester but that XX^s a butt we paie as well as thei..."²⁴ This is certainly the most balanced and probably the most accurate statement of what lay behind the impositions of 1581. There can be little doubt that the Venetians were motivated by broader considerations than Velutelli's patent. A fact which probably explains why the annullment of that patent failed to bring about a lifting of the impositions. The period around 1580 was a difficult one for Venice. The War of Cyprus and the Sack of Antwerp served to deplete the Venetian mercantile fleet and sever the overland route to northern markets. At the same time - and possibly for those reasons - the English began making direct voyages to the Venetian Islands for currants, oil, and wine, usually eliminating Venice, itself, from their route. The decree of 1581, then, was intended to serve the purpose of encouraging trade with Venice by penalizing those who went directly to and from the islands of Zante, Cephlonia, and Candia. No doubt its timing was influenced by Velutelli's impositions. No doubt, also,

24 PRO:SPD Eliz. 233 no. 14.

its timing was influenced by the fact that, in 1580, 14 English merchant ships descended upon the Venetian islands for trade; an event which must have brought home to the Venetians the size and seriousness of English competition. Though the levy of these impositions does not seem to have seriously affected English trade, the merchants involved, did their best to have the impost removed.

The decree of 1581 provoked an immediate reaction from the English merchants which resulted finally in the letters patent granted to the Venice Company. In London the existence of the decree was known by at least late spring 1581. At that time the merchants addressed the Privy Council with a complaint about the deleterious effect it would have on their trade. No specific action was proposed by the merchants in the complaint; their desire was "to grave the premises in your honourable remembrance and so to informe the Queenes most excellent Maiestie of the causes with your grave advices that convenient remedy...maye be provided".²⁵ In September the Queen wrote to the Doge requesting that he give consider-

25 BM:Add. 48126 f. 172. Another copy of this petition is in PRO:SPD Eliz. 149 no. 58 and is dated June 1581.

ation to several of her subjects whose goods were being held in the Venetian islands in lieu of their payment of the new imposts. The rationale for the request was that the merchants in question had initiated their voyages and had committed their capital before they knew about the decree, therefore they should not, on this occasion, be subject to its provisions.²⁶ This letter also offers the first evidence in the extant record of any of the names of the English merchants involved in this trade. It refers to Paul Banning, Edward Holmden, "and others of their company". A subsequent letter, written a few months later, adds the name Richard Glascock.²⁷ All three of these merchants appear later as members of the Venice Company. There is no surviving evidence that suggests the Venetians ever gave to these merchants the considerations asked for by the Queen. However, in August 1582, after some further correspondence on this point, the Venetians agreed that they would lift their impost of January 1581 if Elizabeth would revoke the impost that was being collected by Velutelli.²⁸ This was followed by a petition to the Council from the English merchants involved which re-

26 BM:Add. 48126 f. 175.

27 Ibid., f. 178.

28 Ibid., f. 203.

heard the history of these imposts and requested that Velutelli's patent be revoked.²⁹ Sometime between August and December 1582 this issue was again raised in a memorandum - probably submitted to Burghley - which, in addition to asking for the revocation of Velutelli's patent, requested that the Queen grant to the English merchants involved a monopoly for six years of the import of oil, currants, and wines coming from the dominions of the Signory of Venice. This request is followed by a recommendation that if the Venetians do not lift their impost and do not restore to the English merchants the impost money they had paid since January 1581, that then all foreign merchants be prohibited from importing currants, wine, or oil coming from the Venetian territories.³⁰ At about the same time the above papers were written the English merchants also submitted another in which they not only asked for the revocation of Velutelli's grant but gave reasons for their views. They referred back to the original letters patent in which one reason given for the grant was that the currants and oil brought into the realm represented a needless luxury. This the Eng-

29 PRO:SPD Eliz. 165 no. 163.

30 PRO:SPD Eliz. 165 nos. 60 and 61. These are essentially the same but with slightly different wordings.

lish merchants denied. A more important argument was that though the patent licensed Velutelli, alone, to import these commodities he had not done so. Rather, under the authority of his license he had placed an impost on these commodities imported by other foreign merchants. The argument goes on in terms of national interest emphasizing that the license is detrimental to the maintenance of large merchant ships and that it encourages foreign merchants rather than English merchants. Finally reference is made to the last decree from Venice, which agreed to the mutual suspension of the imposts, urging that the Queen act on this.³¹

Velutelli answered these charges³² by saying that his license did not inhibit English shipping but, in fact, 14 ships had been built for the trade by the English merchants since the license began. It is worth noting, apropos of this point, that the English, themselves, in one of their earlier complaints about Velutelli, listed the names and burdens of 14 ships they were then - April 1581 - using in the Venetian trade.³³

31 PRO:Spd Eliz. 165 no. 62.

32 Ibid., no. 64 and BM:Cotton Mss. Vespasian FIX ff. 218v-221.

33 PRO:SPD Eliz. 149 no. 58.

He also denied that he had not engaged in the trade himself and cited five ships he freighted for Zante during the first three years of his patent. However, by his own testimony only one of them returned with currants.³⁴

If these were the only ships Velutelli could cite as having been freighted by himself during the seven years of his patent then it would seem that the English merchants had the better part of that point in the argument. There is no evidence aside from his own statement that Velutelli actually did import currants and oil in his own name. In response to the English argument that Velutelli's patent encouraged foreign shipping at the expense of English, he stated that during the past three years

34 The only one of these ships which can be identified with any certainty is the Primrose which sailed in 1577 and made the return with currants [28]. The other four, according to Velutelli, were all ships owned by John Hawkins. In the first year of the patent two ships went out. They learned at Naples that the currants had all been bought up by Venetians and Greeks so they took a return cargo in alum on which Velutelli claimed he lost £500. In the second year two ships again went out laded with herring but one was wrecked near Dover and the other did not continue the voyage. Velutelli claimed he lost £700 on that venture. That the second of these two ships should not continue the voyage seems strange and the statement raises some doubt about the accuracy of Velutelli's account. Perhaps the most interesting point made by him about these voyages was that in 1577 Francis Drake was "appoynted by him [Hawkins] for that voyage".

only the English imported any currants and olive oil. If this were so, one might wonder why they were so concerned about Velutelli's license since it obviously did not interfere with their trade. There are two probable answers. One, clearly, is that the English merchants hoped that if Elizabeth called in Velutelli's license, and thus, in effect, lifted the imposition he was charging, the Venetians would lift their impositions of January 1581. The other reason, is that the English merchants wished to have a monopoly of the currant and oil trade for themselves and this was not possible while Velutelli's monopoly was still in force.

The Queen found favor with the position of her own subjects and on 21 December 1582 issued an order calling in Velutelli's letters patent.³⁵ The reason given for the revocation was that the Venetians had promised to revoke their new impost if Velutelli's license were annulled. Probably a reference to the decree of August 1582. In this same order the Queen also re-

35 PRO:Spd Eliz. 155 no. 110. The day and month of the year are left blank in this copy leaving only "...1582. In the XXVth yere of our Rejn". However, in the next year Velutelli wrote to Walsingham complaining that his license was revoked on 21 December 1582 but he was not notified until several months later. (Cal. SP For. 1583-4, p. 291.)

stricted the trade with Venice to those English subjects who had been engaged in that trade. This restriction was to be effective for no more than four years. Venetian subjects, however, were expressly permitted to trade freely, as they had done before Velutelli's patent, until such time as the action of the Venetian senate with respect to the new impost became known. This last proviso would seem to have been by way of a gesture to the Venetians encouraging them to take favorable action on the matter. As compensation to Velutelli for the time remaining of his license the English merchants paid him £1000.³⁶

On 17 April 1583, within four months of issuing this order, the Queen replaced it, making some modifications, with the more formal royal letters patent.³⁷ This patent deals with two related issues, a monopoly of trade to the Venetian territories and the question of Venetian merchants trading to England. It takes

36 This payment is referred to in BM:Add. 48126 f. 195; PRO:SPD Eliz. 177 no. 55, 185 no. 51, 232 no. 33 and 229 no. 95. On the latter of these documents Burghley noted in reference to Velutelli's patent that "Cordell bought the 2 yers remaining for which they playd to hym 1^mL ..."

37 PRO:Pat. Roll 25 Eliz. pt. 2. Contemporary transcriptions of it are in PRO:SPD Eliz. 160 no. 10 and BM: Cotton Mss. Vespasian FIX f. 259.

them up separately and deals with them in such a way as to make each independent of any changes in the circumstances surrounding the other. The patent first establishes a monopoly of English trade with the Venetian dominions in the name of Thomas Cordell and thirteen other merchants. The preamble gives as reasons for this action that those involved had invested considerable sums of money in ships and goods in order to maintain and continue the trade; that the ships used in this trade and the mariners who sail them are fit for the service of the realm; that the trade returns many commodities useful to the commonwealth; and finally, that until the grantees began to follow this trade it was entirely in the hands of foreign merchants using foreign ships which was of no profit to the realm. Therefore for the relief and benefit of the merchants they are granted a monopoly of the trade by sea, both inward and outward, with the Venetian dominions to last for six years. All other English merchants were expressly forbidden to follow this trade by sea unless it be "by and withe the expresse license consent and agreement of the saide Thomas Cordell & Co.". The patent gave the merchants the right to assemble for the purpose of making laws and ordinances for the conduct of the trade providing

they did not violate English law and custom. They were not, however, incorporated nor were they given a company name. In the patent the fourteen merchants are referred to simply as "Thomas Cordell & Co.". In subsequent documents they are referred to, either by themselves or by others, by that name or as the "merchants trading the dominions of the Signoria of Venice" or the "companie trading Venice" or the "Venice merchants". The Designation "Venice Company" used by subsequent historians of this trade, seems not to have been used by contemporaries of it.

The second issue, that of the Venetian merchants trading to England, is introduced by what amounts to another preamble. This makes a simple and objective statement to the effect that over and above the usual customs, the Signoria of Venice had lately placed certain impositions, on English goods coming to their dominions as well as on the goods carried from their dominions by English subjects; and that these impositions are a hindrance to the trade and if some remedy is not taken it will be to the detriment of the Realm and of the merchants involved. It then goes on to rule that for these reasons the subjects of the Signoria of Venice, as well as all other strangers, will henceforth be pro-

hibited, during the term of six years, from bringing into the Realm, currants, oil or wine from the Venetian dominions "unless it be by and withe the licence and agreements of the saide Thomas Cordell & Co.". However, the patent provides that this restriction will be lifted if the Venetian imposts are lifted and if the English merchants are recompensed for all impost money they have paid since January 1581.

The above policy concerning Venetian merchants represents a near reversal of that stated in the order calling in Velutelli's patent. In the former, the Venetians were allowed to trade freely with England until such time as Venetian action with respect to the imposts became clear. Now, four months later, the Venetians were expressly excluded from the trade with England. The implication is that some knowledge of Venetian action, following upon the August 1582 decree and unfavorable to the English cause, became known in England. However, no evidence of such knowledge or of such action has come to light. It is true that Venetian action was to be unfavorable to the English but this was not known at the time the letters patent were issued. There is no record of any ships which might have arrived in the Mediterranean after August 1582 and returned before April 1583 to make

an unfavorable report with respect to the latest Venetian decree. It is possible, of course, that such a ship or ships did sail and there is no known record of it. It is also possible that the timing of some of the ships that are known was different than that recorded in the Shipping List.

The decree of August 1582 was probably brought to England by two Venetian ships which arrived at about that time.³⁸ In the November or January following the date of the decree the English freighted several ships for the Venetian islands with the expectation that no impost would be levied on their imports or exports.³⁹ The Venetian merchants in the meantime had petitioned the Privy Council to release them from the impost charged by Velutelli because the Senate had agreed to do the same for English merchants.⁴⁰ The English government probably to avoid making a definite decision about a matter not yet clear, required the Venetians to enter bonds, payable to Velutelli, which would become void if the Venetians actually did lift the imposts. On 16 December 1582, a week before Velutelli's license was called in, the Council ordered Customer Thomas Smythe, who held the bonds,

38 BM:Add. 48126 f. 214.

39 BM:Add. 48126 f. 205.

40 PRO:Spd Eliz. 146 no. 55.

to alter them so that they were payable to the Venice Company merchants.⁴¹ When the Venice Company's ships, which departed from England in November and January, arrived in the Venetian islands they found they would have to pay the impost despite the decree of 1582.

It is not known when these ships returned to England with the report of their treatment by the Venetians. However, sometime in the middle or later part of 1583, the Venice merchants offered Burleigh and Walsingham a generous financial reward if they would use their influence in obtaining a settlement with Venice favorable to the English merchants.⁴² The terms of this offer were three in number. If the Venetians lifted their impost and repaid the money the English merchants had so far been charged then they would pay "his honor and your worshipe" 1000 marks. If the Venetians did not do this then the Venice merchants were to charge a similar impost on the goods recently arrived on three Venetian ships⁴³ in which case they would pay one-third of the amount collected to "his honor and your worshipe". Finally, "to have his honor and your worships lawfull favour..." they agreed to pay to them one-third of all

41 BM:Add. 48126 f. 182.

42 BM:Add. 48126 f. 194.

43 A third ship had arrived about May 1583. (Ibid. f. 207.)

profit they earned by virtue of their letters patent. This last part seems unnecessarily generous. There is no evidence to indicate how this offer was received of even if it was received.

The Queen wrote to the Doge on 20 April 1584 to complain about the treatment her subjects had received even after the decree of August 1582.⁴⁴ There is no reason to suppose this letter was the result of any extraordinary pressure from Burleigh or Walsingham which might have resulted from their acceptance of the Venice merchant's financial offer. In December the Doge replied explaining that the fault lay with the governor of Zante who had collected the impost without further authority from himself. He further stated that the news of the letters patent of April 1583 excluding his merchants from the trade led him to doubt the Queen's intentions but with her last letter he is now assured that the Venetians will not be burdened greater than any other merchants. Consequently, the governors of the Venetian islands will be ordered that as soon as they are informed that the impositions in England have been removed then the imposts in the islands will also be removed

44 Cal. SP For., 1583-4 p. 463.

and the English will receive back the amount they paid on merchandize brought to Zante before they had notice of the decree of 1581.⁴⁵ This letter was accompanied by a copy of the order to the above effect directed to the governors of the Venetian islands.⁴⁶ Elizabeth was not satisfied with this explanation and in reply, written in March 1585,⁴⁷ she stated that she had not taken ready money from the Venetian merchants but only required that they enter into bonds. She then reiterated that when the Venetian imposts have been removed and when the English have had returned to them all the impost money they have paid then the Venetian merchants in London will be discharged of their bonds.

This was the last of the correspondence between the Queen and the Doge during the life of the Venice Company. The positions of the two parties left the situation in a deadlock. The Doge offered to return the amount of impost paid before the English merchants had knowledge of the decree of January 1581. The Queen insisted that all impost money be repaid. This difference might have been negotiable; however, each party was willing to move on the matter only after receiving

45 Cal. SP For., 1584-5, p. 163. 46 Ibid., p. 163.
47 Ibid., p. 351.

positive assurance that the other party had moved first. Thus the Venetian impost were not removed.⁴⁸

Some years after these events the issue of impositions on currants again became a matter of public discussion and led to the revocation of the Levant Company's letters patent of 1592. The issue then was that the Levant Company was levying an imposition on all currants imported by non-members and that this was not authorized by the Company's letters patent. A precedent for such an imposition was set by the Venice Company sometime after it received its patent in April 1583. There is no official record of this imposition or of its authorization. However, there is sufficient unofficial reference to it to confirm that an imposition matching the one in the Venetian Islands was levied in England. It came about, apparently, because the Venice Company asked the government to authorize it, though they did so indirectly. In late 1585 the Company complained to Burghley that the Venetians had not lifted their impositions as had been agreed in the previous correspondence between the Doge and the Queen.⁴⁹ They stated

48 There is no evidence which indicates whether or not the Venetian merchants in London were finally required to forfeit their bonds.

49 PRO:SPD Eliz. 185 no. 51.

that their letters patent provided that if the Signoria did not annul the late imposition then the English were to have a similar imposition upon the subjects and goods of the Venetian. They did not actually ask, in so many words, that such an imposition be imposed but simply asked that "your honour have tender consideration of us". However, in case the point should escape his honor, they stated, at the end of the document, that in the time of Henry VII the Venetians had laid an impost on their wines to which that king replied by having an act passed in Parliament which levied an impost on wines imported to England by any strangers and which act was to remain in force until the Venetians lifted their impost.⁵⁰

The point that the letters patent provide for a levy of a retaliatory impost represents, at best, a considerable stretching of the wording of the patent. The closest anything in the patent comes to such an idea is the statement that Thomas Cordell and Company could license those not of their company to import currants, wine or oil.⁵¹ Though there is evidence that the Company made use of this provision it was not the same

50 The act referred to is 7 Henry VII c. 7.

51 See supra pp. 244, 246.

thing as an official retaliatory impost. In the financial offer made by the Company to Burghley and Walsingham, the second point concerned such an impost specifically on the goods in three Venetian ships. It would be so easy to stretch this, once accepted, to an impost on goods imported by Venetians in general. It is not unlikely that the financial offer mentioned above and the eventual levy of the desired impost were closely related.

Despite the lack of any official record of authorization of this impost there is no doubt that it was levied with the acquiescence of the government. In several memoranda written shortly after the expiration of the Venice Company's charter there are accounts comparing the amount of customs and imposts paid by English and Venetian merchants in both England and the Venetian territories. In one of these,⁵² dated May 1590, among the duties paid by Venetian merchants in England is 30^s "for newe imposte Rayzed by the Signoria of venis in anno 1580". In another and more detailed account⁵³ written about the same time there again appears the above statement and in addition the statement that

52 PRO:SPD Eliz. 232 no. 33. 53 PRO:SPD Eliz. 229 no. 95.

Venetians pay in England 50^s on a thousand weight of currants "for ympost in Anno 1580 because they have raised the like uppon all straungers in their domynions". At the end of this latter paper there is a section reiterating that the Venetians also laid impost on certain imported English goods but that

"The Queenes Majestie hathe reised onlie the six duckats of a Butt of wine and tenne duckatts uppon a thowsand of currans by a licence graunted to Thomas Cordell and company for the tearme of six yeres expired the vi of Aprill Anno 1589 and hathe not raised anything uppon Straungers more then she hathe donne uppon her owne Subiects."

Evidently this memorandum on duties paid by English and Venetians was compiled for the benefit of Lord Burghley for it is covered with his written notes and comments. In his usual manner he condensed parts of it to its essentials among which, again, was the 30^s on a butt of wine which, in his words, was "for the new impost in recompence of the venetian impost". Thus it is seen that not only were imposts collected from Venetian merchants but they seem to have been collected under official auspices. Early in the reign of James I, when the currant trade was again at issue and more memoranda were directed to the government recounting its history, the remark was made in one of them that

the imposts of the 1580's were levied because "her Majestie by the advise of her counsell did cause the Lord high treasurer of England to ympose..." them.⁵⁴ This very likely was the case but there is no official record of it to be found.

The impost seems to have been first levied in 1586. When attempting to persuade the government to permit the collection of this impost, the Venice merchants submitted an account of the amounts they had already paid in the Venetian dominions.⁵⁵ The last entry in this account is for the year 1585 and thus it probably was written sometime in the later part of the year at the earliest. At the end is the statement that the "Venetians have never paide any thinge for imposte sins her Majesties pattent granted unto us..." A few years later an Italian addressed a long and detailed paper to "Illustrissimo Signore", probably Burghley.⁵⁶ The paper, in Italian, is nine pages long and gives a list of the payments of the new impost, citing the date, the merchants who paid, the ship on which the goods arrived, and the quantity of goods. The earliest date listed for payment of the impost to Thomas Cordell and

54 PRO:SPD James I 10 no. 27. 55 BM:Add. 48126 f. 197.
56 PRO:SPD Eliz. 204 no. 55.

Company is early in 1586. The juxtaposition of the dates in these two papers would indicate that the compensatory impost was authorized either in late 1585 or early 1586. The Italian account only takes the payments through 1587 so it is not known how long the Venice Company continued to collect the impost.

With these two accounts and other papers it can be determined how much the Venice merchants actually received from the impost paid by foreign merchants. The Company, itself, in 1590, stated that during the six years of the letters patent it received £4641.10.0 from the new impost.⁵⁷ According to the Italian account Thomas Cordell and Company received £4034.3.4 from the new impost and, in addition, was owed £730.15 on bonds for currants and wine. Thus the two accounts are quite close and since the first wanted to show how little had been received and the second how much, their near agreement probably represents a high degree of accuracy. It also suggests that no impost was collected in 1588 or 1589, which means simply that no foreign merchants imported currants or wine during those years.⁵⁸ From

57 PRO:SPD Eliz. 223 no. 14.

58 The foreign merchants almost always imported these goods on foreign ships - mainly Venetian. In view

the Italian memorandum the quantities on which the impost was collected can be worked out at 726 tons of currants and 897 butts of wine imported by foreign merchants.

These figures can be compared with the quantities on which the Venice merchants paid impost during the period 1582 to 1585. This can be calculated from the memorandum, cited above, submitted by the Venice Company. The total amount paid, according to that account, came to £12,526.10.0. Broken down this represented 2160 tons of currants from 1582 to 1584 and 1134 butts of wine in 1584 and 1585. However, the quantities actually imported were higher, though exactly how much higher is an open question. One of the main purposes of the account submitted in Italian was to show the profits made by the Venice Company over and above the authorized imposts. Apparently one of the main methods of bypassing the Venetian impost was to lade the currants and wine in ports where the impost was not levied. According to the Italian account after the English merchants did this they brought the goods to England and sold them for the same prices as if they had paid the impost and thus were able to count the difference as profit. Such imposts as

of the state of Anglo-Spanish relations during those years it is not surprising that Italian shipping did not appear in England.

were listed in this account came mainly from Venice - thus fulfilling, in part, the object of the Venetian impost - and also from Marseilles, Flushing, and Lisbon. From 1583 to 1586 the profit made in this manner amounted to £2431.10 which represented 69 butts of wine and 465 tons of currants. This same account also claimed that currants and wine were imported to other ports of England but it gave no figures for them.

In addition to the imposts accounted above the Venice Company seems also to have collected an impost from English merchants, not members of the company, who imported currants. Only the briefest glimpse of this can be seen for a few months in 1588 from a memorandum on which Burghley made some notes.⁵⁹ Only four merchant's names appear on it, Hugh Offley, alderman, John Newman, grocer, Nicholas Atkins, and John Harte, Lord Mayor and member of the Turkey Company. The first two were charged 3^s4^d per cwt. for currants, the third 5^s per cwt. and with the last they compounded for 400 cwt. for £13.6.8 which would work out at 8^d per cwt. The total amount collected from these merchants was less than £100. There is no other evidence which throws any light

59 BM:Lans. 57 no. 1.

on whether or not this was the total extent of an impost levied on English merchants. A similar impost, which was instrumental in bringing the Levant Company's charter to an end ten years later was not begun until 1591.

There is little doubt that the Venice Company merchants took advantage of whatever opportunities arose to add to their profits. Nevertheless, there is also little doubt that, by far, the greatest part of their profit was earned through legitimate trade with the Venetian territories and that the impost they collected from foreign merchants was nothing more than compensation for what they considered unjust imposts collected from them by the Venetians. Finally, it seems clear that what they collected by way of compensation, compensated only a small part of what they had paid out. In 1590 when they said they had collected £4641.10.4 by way of impost they also said they had paid out about £16,000 to the Venetians for the impost.⁶⁰

It was pointed out earlier that the internal functioning of the Venice Company is almost entirely unknown. Not only are there no private papers extant but there

60 PRO:SPD Eliz. 233 no. 14.

are also not extant any papers bearing on the company's regulations and officers. Nevertheless, using the known membership and some Port Book entries a few general remarks can be made about the company.

The membership of the Venice Company is listed in the letters patent - fourteen persons in all. They are in the order given in the patent: Thomas Cordell, Edward Holmden [sometimes Homeden], Paul Banning, Richard Glascock, Robert Sadler, William Garraway [sometimes Garway], Henry Anderson, Andrew Banning, Edward Lechland, Henry Farrington, Thomas Dawkins, Edward Sadler, Richard Dassell, and Thomas Trowte.⁶¹ The patent did not specifically limit the number of persons in the company - as did the Turkey Company's patent - thus there is no certainty about whether or not the company took in new members. There is evidence suggesting that it did but these new members certainly never conducted a trade of any consequence. As a group the members of the Venice Company make an interesting contrast to those of the Turkey Company. Most of them were born in the late 1530's and early 1540's and were thus about half a generation younger and possessed considerably less

61 A brief summary of the commercial activities of each of these men is in the Biographical Appendix.

wealth than the Turkey merchants. It can be deduced from their biographical details that these Venice merchants were not among the wealthiest London merchants. The real extent of a merchant's wealth is nearly impossible to learn without private records; but that the Venice merchants were in a lower economic strata than the Turkey merchants is confirmed by an examination of their assessments for the subsidy in 1577 and 1582.

[Table VI] Only seven of the Venice merchants are listed in the London returns. They show a range of assessment from £50 to £120 with an average of £81.10. The Turkey merchants by contrast - all of whom are listed - range from £90 to £300 with an average of £216. The status of the Venice Company members as lesser merchants is further confirmed by examining their membership in other trading ventures. On the whole this was minimal. Cordell, Glascock, and Paul Banning were members of the Spanish Company of 1577, Anderson was a Muscovy merchant, Holmden and Farrington were Barbary merchants, and the remainder were members of no other company. No one of them was a member of more than one other trading company. One of the most evident characteristics of the Venice merchants was their involvement in privateering to a much greater extent

than the Turkey merchants. At least half of them were promoters or investors in privateering ventures and Cordell and Banning are well known to have been two of the most active promoters of privateering during the 1580's and 1590's. These general characteristics of the Venice Company members suggest that they were men who had reached about halfway point on the ladder of their careers, in contrast to the Turkey merchants who were nearly all at the height of their careers. This is brought home further by noting that no one of the Venice merchants held any position in the City of London government. It was not until about ten to fifteen years later - or about half a generation later - that they began to enter public affairs. By the early 17th century several of them had become leading figures in financial and city affairs.

Though the above generalizations about the Venice Company membership are informative and will stand up, it should be noted that the members were quite unequal in their status as active merchants in the trade. Three of them, Thomas Dawkins, Richard Dassell, and Thomas Trowte were factors for three other members, Holmden, Cordell, and Paul Banning, respectively. Furthermore, Andrew Banning is known to have served his older brother

Paul at an earlier period and may still have acted as his second, though he did some importing in his own name. This may also be true of Edward and Robert Sadler.⁶² There is no record of Edward's trade and he may have been a factor for Robert. Similarly there is no record of Edward Lechland's trade. Though the remaining members are all known to have been active merchants the available evidence indicates that the company's trade was dominated by four merchants, Cordell, Holmden, Paul Banning, and Garraway.

This is seen in the Port Book entries for five Venice Company ships in 1588 and 1589. [Appendix B] These four merchants accounted for over 95% of the official value of the goods listed. Holmden alone stands out from the others with imports valued at over twice those of the other three combined. Though there is little question that these four men were dominant in the Venice trade it should be kept in mind that the above figures represent the trade of only one year and five ships out of six years and several times five ships. There is no reason to insist that the relationship indicated here was invariable. In fact, the time, itself -

62 They were probably related but this has not been established.

1588 and 1589 - provided an alternative source of investment for certain merchants. It was a period of very active involvement in privateering ventures and both Cordell and Banning were very active investors in such ventures. This might explain why their investment in the Venice trade was relatively small during those years. Holmden, on the other hand, was not heavily involved with privateering. However, these observations are suggestive rather than final.

An examination of the nature and proportions of the cargoes of these five Venice Company ships reveals a few interesting facts about the trade. But first it must be pointed out that these cargoes as listed do not include wine which was accounted in separate Port Books none of which have survived. Just how important wine was is not certain. The Company claimed its members paid impost for 340 tons in 1584 and 227 tons in 1585.⁶³ But whether or not they imported more than that is not known. It will be noticed that the five ships under consideration here are not laded to their rated capacity. If the difference were made up by wines they would amount to about 150 tons. In addition a sixth ship, The Soloman

63 BM:Add. 48126 f. 197.

of Alborough, 120 ton burden, is entered along with the other five. However, its cargo comes to ten tons at most. If the remainder were wine the total for all six would be 250 tons, a figure that falls between the above two. Thus something on the order of 250 to 300 tons per year may represent the amount of wine imported by the Venice Company. This argument, however, is highly speculative and will have to wait for further information before developing any greater certainty. There is no speculation about the observation that currants were the dominant commodity among imports from the Venetian islands. It could probably be argued that currants were the main reason for the trade. The official valuation of the cargoes of the five ships that entered London in 1588 and 1589 was £19,927.15 of which currants accounted for £18,507. The remainder of the cargoes, excluding wine, consisted of oil, clove, nutmeg, wormseed, cotton wool, silk, and brimstone. Galls and wine were the only additional commodities regularly imported. Spices were most likely a chance cargo, acquired from Venetians who imported them from further east. The dominance of currants in the cargoes is not simply a chance occurrence. In 1584 the Mary Rose and Ascension entered cargoes which were primarily currants. More

important is the fact that whenever the merchants had reason to give account of the imposts they paid currants appear as the most important item taxed. A. C. Wood confirms that currants remained the most important commodity in the Venetian branch of the Levant trade.⁶⁴

The trade of the Venice Company then was narrowly based on a ~~single~~^{single} commodity which was bulky and of relatively low value. This is in contrast to the Turkey trade which was based on a greater variety of commodities almost all of which were of greater value than currants. This dependance on currants, which came from a relatively restricted area, explains the Venice merchants' continual agitation over the imposts. During the sixteenth century there is no indication that their trade suffered significantly from this taxation. Nevertheless, it was a constant source of irritation which lasted all through the seventeenth century.⁶⁵

About their exports the Company was nearly silent. It stated only that they consisted of cloths, kerseys,

64 Op. cit., p. 67, 121. By the late 17th century the Venetian trade - and thus the currant trade - seems to have fallen out of the Levant Company's monopoly. (Ibid., 121.)

65 Wood, op. cit., pp. 67-72, gives some account of the Levant Company's problems with Venetian imposts in the seventeenth century.

tin, lead, iron, wool, conyskins, and leather.⁶⁶ This amounts to nearly a complete catalogue of all possible exports from England and is consequently not very informative about the Venetian market. The Company's silence on this matter can be interpreted to reflect a lack of real concern about the export side of their trade, despite Venetian imposts on English commodities. One explanation, with two variations, can be suggested, though not proved. They were able to avoid the impost on English goods by discharging them at Venice, where the imposts were not levied, or by discharging them at Leghorn, which was not Venetian territory. From an examination of the table of Anglo-Mediterranean shipping it is seen that many ships went to Leghorn and then to the Venetian islands but that no ship went to both Leghorn and Venice. There is always the possibility that more complete information on individual Mediterranean voyages will reveal a ship that put into both Leghorn and Venice. However, the number of voyages and the length of time covered by the table without revealing such a combination suggests that even if some were found they would not be sufficient in number to alter the above

66 PRO:SPD Eliz. 233 no. 14.

generalization. This suggests that both ports served much the same function and putting into both would be superfluous. It is also seen from the table that many more ships went to Leghorn than to Venice before going to the Venetian islands. It was, in part, to alter this pattern that the Venetians initiated the decree of January 1581. The Englishman's preference for Leghorn is based, in part, on the fact that it was a free port, and in part on the fact that the expense of sailing the length of the Adriatic and back again was nearly as great as the impost.⁶⁷ There were commodities available in Venice of greater value than currants but to judge from the evidence available they were not laded in large enough quantities to compensate for the extra voyage. The most valuable of these goods were silk and spices, but these having already been transported from the eastern Mediterranean could not have effectively competed with the same goods carried by the Turkey merchants.

67 HMC:Cal. Salis. Mss., IV, p. 181. This was a claim made by some Venetian mariners who wanted to be relieved of the impost in England. Doubtless, they exaggerated their case; nevertheless, sailing twice the length of the Adriatic certainly added to the expense of a voyage.

There is evidence, relating to the first years of the seventeenth century, that English ships engaged in the local carrying trade in order to compensate themselves for the extra voyage to Venice and to cover expenses while waiting for cargoes at Zante and Cephalonia. In 1601 the Trinity Anderson⁽⁴²¹⁾ unladed at Ragusa and Venice, then carried goods for Venetian merchants to Corfu, back to Venice and finally to Zante. At Zante, Cephalonia, and Petras she laded her cargo for London.⁶⁸ A more interesting example was the Cherubin, [454/ owned by Edward Holmden, which arrived in Zante Easter 1602, about two months late; consequently, her cargo had been laded aboard another ship, the Royal Exchange. [448/ The master and factor decided the Cherubin should unlade at Venice and then hire itself out to Venetian merchants. During the next several months she sailed back and forth the length of the Adriatic carrying passengers, salt, hoops, and other goods between Venice and Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia. Sometime during the summer she travelled to Dragomaster in Turkey to lade logwood which was then unladed in Zante. In September she finally set course for London but it is not stated how much or what

68 PRO:HCA Exams 35, f. 353v, 354.

her homeward cargo was, though some of it was laded in Venice.⁶⁹ There were probably variations of the Adriatic carrying trade but basically its purpose was to pay the expenses of the ship and crew while waiting for a return cargo to London; and if possible to turn a little extra profit. In the case of the Cherubin the purser estimated that its summer's extra freighting netted Holmden about £200.⁷⁰

The Venice merchants' problem of how to occupy their ships while waiting for a cargo would have been facilitated if they had been able to lade their own cargoes in the ports of the Turkish dominions. These, however, were all within the limits of the Turkey Company's monopoly. The Venice merchants, of course, did not report the extent to which they might have violated their rival's monopoly. Some of their ships did go to Petras, but if they went to other ports within the Turkey Company's monopoly the fact has not survived in the extant record. However, according to William Harborne, what the Venice merchants did do was use Greek intermediaries to sell those goods in Turkey which they had

70 Ibid., f. 178v. The purser also stated that the outward lading, in kerseys, lead, hides and pilchards, was worth £5000 (Ibid. f. 178).

been unable to sell in Venice or the Venetian islands.⁷¹ Relations between the two companies are of some interest but there is little in the record which throws light on them during the lives of the companies' respective charters. It is possible they may have freighted goods on each others ships. In 1588 when the Turkey Company's Mayflower unladed in London from Petras it had aboard currants in the names of Edward Holmden and William Garraway, as well as Osborne, Stapers and Company. [See Appendix B./ This is the only such instance found but there easily may have been others. Though it appears the Venice merchants are here violating the Turkey Company charter with the assistance of the Turkey merchants, it does not follow necessarily. It was not at all uncommon for the Port Books to record only the last port of call; thus, the Mayflower might have called first at Zante or Cephalonia and then Petras. The circumstances, however, are not clear. But it is clear that the Turkey Company was in a position to know a great deal about the business of the Venice Company. This was so because the farm of the customs inward at

71 Cal. SP For. 1584-5, pp. 167-8. This comes up by way of a complaint from Harborne to Walsingham in 1584.

London was held by a member of the Turkey Company, Thomas Smythe. It has already been seen that he was responsible for holding the bonds of the Italian merchants which were made over in favor of the Venice merchants. More important than this, as customer, he had a complete record of all the Venice merchants' imports and thus knew quite accurately not only their total but how they were distributed among the members of the company. One possibility of how this information may have been used does appear. Before September 1588 the Turkey Company petitioned for a broadening of its monopoly to include the Venetian territories and it is not too far fetched to imagine that before doing so it consulted with one of its number, Smythe, in his capacity as customer, to learn what it could of the economic feasibility of the idea. The Venice Company, of course, resisted this proposal and then, itself, petitioned for a renewal of its patent sometime after the Armada and before April 1589.⁷² The clash of interests between the Venice and Turkey merchants kept this renewal from

72 PRO:SPD Eliz. 157 no. 84. The Turkey Company's petition has not survived. The document cited is the Venice Company's response which is taken up in greater detail in Chapter VI. The Venice Company's petition for a renewal is PRO:SPD Eliz. 219 no. 86.

ever being granted. Instead the two companies entered into a struggle with each other and then, together, with the government, ~~to~~ finally^{to} form the Levant Company.

CHAPTER VI
THE MAKING OF THE LEVANT COMPANY

Looking back, from a present day vantage point, to the years between the expiration of the old patents and the granting of the new one in January 1592, one can pick out three questions that dominated the discussions and bargaining that preceded the creation of the Levant Company. First, should the Turkey and Venice Companies be joined into one? Second, who should be admitted to the new company? Third, should the new company administer a joint-stock or a regulated trade? There is no reason to suppose these questions were set out beforehand and then neatly dealt with one at a time by the merchants involved. Nevertheless, they did emerge in a certain logical order - it would have been pointless to argue about the membership of the new united company before agreement had been reached on the union itself - so they can be treated here in that order. Furthermore, there is little evidence that the particular solution to one of the problems depended on the particular solution to another of them. Thus they can be dealt with separately. The answers reached to the above questions are easy to determine; however, all the reasoning that lay behind these answers

is not always clear. Nevertheless, enough material survives to facilitate a more complete reconstruction than has hitherto been attempted and further, to hazard some explanation of what lay behind the final decisions.

The first question to arise, naturally, concerned the union of the Turkey and Venice Companies. This had first been raised as early as November 1584 by William Harborne. In one of his dispatches to Walsingham he took time out from his reports on all the political and diplomatic machinations current at the Porte to complain of the Venice Company. The members of this company, he wrote, were selling in Turkey, by means of Greek intermediaries, those English goods they were unable to sell at Venice or in the Venetian islands. He stated further that they sold these goods at prices so much lower than those current, that they suffered a loss and profited only from the goods carried back to England. He concluded that the harm caused by this could be remedied by either confining the Venice Company to the limits of its privilege or by uniting it with the Turkey Company.¹ Nothing further is heard on this question until some years later when the Venice Company addressed

1 Cal. SP For., 1584-5, pp. 167-8.

a petition to Walsingham in answer to one from the Turkey Company.² The document is undated but its wording suggests that it was written before the expiration of the Turkey Company's patent in September 1588. Evidently Osborne and Stapers, probably not wishing to wait until their patent expired and the trade was uncontrolled, suggested to Walsingham that their privilege be enlarged to encompass the area of trade of both companies. They then advanced four reasons to support their request;³ that they need a man in Venice to facilitate the transmitting of letters to England; that they find it necessary to send woolen cloth to Venice by sea; that they need the money earned from these woolens to purchase goods in Candia; and that they carry on a greater trade to Candia than does the Venice Company. To the first point the Venice merchants replied that there were other ways of sending letters to England and furthermore, even if they find this the best way, they can leave a man in Venice who is not engaged in active trade, without fear that he will be arrested; to the second they pointed out that the overland route to Venice is not limited by patent

2 PRO:SPD Eliz. 157 no. 84.

3 The Turkey Company's petition has not survived and this reconstruction of it is based on the extant answers given by the Venice company.

to any group of merchants, and if the Turkey merchants are in such dire need they can use this route; to the third, that the Turkey Company has the advantage in trading to the very large dominions of the Grand Seignior while the Venice Company is limited to the smaller dominions of the Signoria of Venice, but that they - the Venice merchants - are willing to give way on this if the Turkey merchants will do likewise; and the final point they denied, stating that the record would show that they have imported three times as much wine from Candia and used four times as many ships there as have the Turkey merchants. These are sound and accurate replies in face of which the Turkey merchants must have been nonplused. In any event, nothing more in the way of petitions is heard on the matter until July 1589.

During the intervening time the Turkey Company's privileges expired on 11 September 1588, William Harborne returned from Constantinople sometime in late December or early January, and the Venice Company's privileges expired on 17 April 1589. Exactly two months before the latter date, in February, Harborne wrote to Walsingham⁴

4 Cal. SP For., 1589, pp. 112-3.

to say that some of the more important merchants trading to Turkey had conferred with him. They expressed great discouragement with the trade, he said, and were considering recalling their agent so that "they might be unburdened of this great charge, and so end the traffic". Harborne pointed out to Walsingham that not only does this trade provide a market for goods during the war with Spain but that to end it would only give the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to her Majesty's enemies. However, he can see no way for it to be maintained except at the Queen's own expense, unless the whole trade be encompassed in one grant of privileges. He went on to say that it is his duty to convey these thoughts to Walsingham before "...the Venice Company procure the dismembering of this joint traffic by reviving their former patent". A hint of this discouragement is found in the Turkey Company's letter to the Aleppo factors in June 1586. At that time the Company stated it intended to send only a small quantity of goods in the next shipment because of "these perylous times". But it is doubtful if the merchants were as discouraged with the trade as Harborne makes out and were seriously thinking of giving it up. What seems more likely is that Harborne, formerly a merchant's factor, but now an experienced

diplomat - experience gained under the most trying conditions - was putting his newly found art to work. For certainly the suggestion to the crown that if it desired to see the continuance of this trade and the maintenance of the ambassador it could choose either to grant the enlarged privileges or carry the charges of an ambassador itself, was calculated to preclude the second alternative.

But a petition from the Turkey Company, dated July 1589, testifies that still, five months after Harborne's letter and three months after the Venice Company's patent had expired, no decision had been reached.⁵ This petition is endorsed "Replie to the answeare of the marchantes tradinge Venice disuading the uniting of that trade with Turkye". Thus it must have been preceded by a document written by the Venice Company which was an answer to a still earlier document written by the Turkey Company. Neither of these documents has survived but using the endorsement and the text of the extant petition a reasonable reconstruction of the exchange can be made. It is clear that this reply of the Turkey merchants is not a reply to the Venice Company's statement discussed above which was written before September 1588. If it is a reply to the other extant petition then it is a complete

5 PRO:SPD Eliz. 225 no. 50.

non sequitor. Assuming, then, that there were three documents, two now lost, which followed the first protest of the Venice Company, the course of the dispute can be described.

The Turkey Company, having proposed that the trade of both companies be included in their monopoly and having then been presented with the largely indisputable reply of the Venice Company discussed above, now proposed what they considered to be a satisfactory compromise: They would take over the trade of the Venetian islands but leave to the Venice Company the trade of Venice, itself. The Venice merchants countered this proposal with four points, contained in the second lost petition. First, that being limited to Venice would be disadvantageous to them because so much of the trade of the Signoria of Venice is in the islands and into Turkey; second, that the impost laid on English merchants in the Venetian dominions is indicative of the hostility of Venice to the English; third, that if all the trade of Turkey and the Venetian islands with England were encompassed in one company the Venetians, to combat this strong competition, might join forces with the Spanish to prey on English ships at sea; and last, that if this combination of the English trades

took place the Venetians might also respond by combining with the Flemings and the French to carry on trade in Turkey. There is no way of knowing when these two petitions might have been presented except that they came between the two extant ones. Harborne's letter to Walsingham in February 1589 gives no hint of this exchange which may mean that it followed that letter. Finally, in July 1589, the Turkey merchants produced their reply, In this, the extant document, they argued first, that while it is true that Venice had much trade with Turkey and England, it also carried on a trade with Spain, Portugal, Ragusa, Sicily, Genoa, Florence, and other places; second, that the impost is levied only on goods bought and sold in the islands and is not applicable in Venice itself, having been conceived, not so much to hurt the English, as to protect the trade of the city of Venice; third, that the Spanish and Maltesans only hesitate to make greater attacks on English shipping because it is under the protection of the Sultan's privileges and so long as the Turkey Company shall continue England's enemies will be thus restrained; and last, the Flemings cannot secure the necessary privileges to trade with Turkey for they are reputed subjects of Spain and, as for the French, they and Venetians

have never been able to come to an agreement and never will because "so greate be the repugnance of their different humors, as the one cannot tollerate the other his naturall condicon". Thus, it would seem from this exchange, that in July 1589 the two companies had not yet agreed to a joint incorporation.

A point of some confusion enters the sequence of events here because a document exists listing articles for the incorporation of the Turkey and Venice Companies which is endorsed 14 May 1589, two months earlier than the Turkey Company's answer discussed above.⁶ Barring an error in the endorsed date the simplest explanation is that the Turkey Company, on its own initiative, submitted this set of articles with thirty names of those to be included in the patent appended at the bottom. In the meantime the Venice Company, not yet having resigned itself to the proposed amalgamation, continued its protest for independent existance, thus necessitating the Turkey Company's response discussed above. This, of course, is only a hypothesis but an analysis of the list of names lends credence to it.⁷

6 BM: Lans. 60 no. 3. A copy of this is PRO:SPD Eliz. 151 no. 34 but is undated.

7 See infra p. 289 for this analysis.

Sometime between late 1589 and Spring 1590 the two companies came to an agreement on this matter. A second set of articles of incorporation exists, which was prepared sometime after November 1589 and before July 1590, with a list of forty-one names appended at the bottom.⁸ By May 1590 there is little doubt they were at least cooperating with each other, for in that month they sent a joint memorandum to Burghley concerned entirely with the trade to the Venetian territories and in which they included a list of the ships used by both companies.⁹ Obviously the Turkey merchants were lending their influence in dealing with the problem of imposts which the Venice merchants had lived with since 1580. Their willingness to do this may explain in part why the Venice merchants changed their minds; though, no doubt, there was more to it than that. It is also possible, that the Venice merchants decided the wind was blowing against them and that they would be unable

8 PRO:SPD Eliz. 231 no. 55. There is no date on this document but among the names is "Sir John Harte, L. maior". Harte's term ran from November 1589 to November 1590. Also among the names is "Sir Richard Martine". The exact date of Martin's knighthood has so far eluded notice but in July 1590 he is referred to as "Sir Richard Martin". (PRO:Signet Office Docquet Books, vol. 1, f. 250v.)

9 PRO:SPD Eliz. 232 no. 26.

to make their point of view prevail in government circles; so, rather than risk being relegated to an inferior position they agreed to a compromise in order to maintain at least equal footing in the new company.

In the following month, June, the Turkey merchants wrote to Burghley to complain that they had been suitors for almost two years for obtaining letters patent from the Queen.¹⁰ They emphasized that without their desired privileges they could not maintain an ambassador in Constantinople at their own charge. They then went into a lengthy analysis of the great benefit to England in having such an agent and what he had already achieved during the period of the first privileges. Further, that the expenses already incurred by the company for the ambassador's stipend and the necessary presents to the Grand Seignior and some of his chief ministers was considerable; and finally, that unless some action is taken for the agent's provision he will "fall into greate wante". The response to this pleas for the maintenance of the ambassador was not immediate and in August, Burghley received a letter from Sir George Barne¹¹ in which he rehearsed again the political benefits of

10 PRO:SPD Eliz. 232 no. 54. 11 BM:Lans. 65 no. 27.

maintaining an agent at the Porte and the great expenses the Turkey merchants had incurred to that end. He complained that they had paid by exchange £900 toward Mr. Barton's expenses and he asked that Burghley write to Barton admonishing him to be more moderate in his expenses and to levy 4% consulege on the merchants, 2% on sales and 2% on purchases, toward meeting these expenses. The government evidently decided that it would have to give some assistance in maintaining Barton, especially since, in the absence of any charter of privileges, it could not insist that the merchants carry the entire burden themselves. Thus, six weeks later, the Exchequer received authorization to pay out £500 for the use of Edward Barton, her Majesty's agent to Constantinople.¹²

Though it may have taken four months to extract this money from the government, this does not indicate there was indifference to the future of the companies. Almost immediately after receiving the petition from the Turkey merchants in June, Burghley solicited in-

¹² The authorization, dated 2 October 1590, is in PRO: Exchequer Warrants for Issue, box 129. The actual payment, made on 9 October to John Bates, a member of the Turkey Company, is recorded in PRO: Exchequer, Teller's Roll, no. 148.

formation from the two groups concerning the extent and size of their trade. A month later he received both sets of answers.¹³ It is not at all clear, throughout the period from the expiration of the first privileges to the granting of the new patent, what Burghley's thought were on the matter. That he took an active interest at this time and continued to do so is clear from the above and from subsequent events. It is known that he favored the organization of substantial merchants into monopolistic companies, but beyond this, the basis upon which he made a decision concerning the Levant trade can only be hypothetical. Certainly, the crown was personally concerned in this matter; at least in respect to the maintenance of a diplomatic representative at the Sultan's court. The payment of £500 to Barton is a strong statement of interest from the financially ungenerous queen, and two months before the payment was made Elizabeth wrote two letters to Barton commending his good work and giving him further instructions.¹⁴

Little more would seem to have been done on this question of uniting the two companies. There is a re-

13 PRO:SPD Eliz. nos. 13 and 14.

14 PRO:SPF Turkey, 2 ff. 35 and 37. These are drafts in Burghley's hand. The letters are dated 25 and 26 August 1590.

minder, in Burghley's hand, about articles for uniting the companies, dated October 1590;¹⁵ however, nothing seems to have been done at that time. In March of the next year another set of articles¹⁶ appeared, identical to the second set mentioned above. These may have been intended as another reminder to Burghley. The only point remaining is to determine when Burghley and the Queen accepted, on their part, the joining of the two companies into one. There is no evidence to suggest that they ever opposed it; yet it is not until July 1591, nearly three years after the issue arose, that there is evidence they had accepted it. In that month a petition was submitted by Henry Parvish requesting admission to the new company. In this he states that "itt hath pleased her majesties to graunte letters patente for unytinge the Companye of Tripolye and the traders of Venyce..."¹⁷ Her Majesty's pleasure had probably been made known even before this though it was to be another six months before the patent was actually issued.

15 PRO:SPD Eliz. 233 no. 107. This reminder is just one item in a list of other matters of public business requiring attention.

16 BM:Lans. 66 no. 12.

17 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 80, endorsed 5 July 1591.

A far more sensitive issue was that of membership in the new company. There was, among the London merchant community, dissatisfaction over the narrow membership base of these companies and it was to become a far more acute problem early in the next reign. The combined membership of the two companies under their first privileges was twenty-six; twelve in the Turkey Company and fourteen in the Venice Company. The effective membership was even less than this, especially in the Venice Company. The outsiders, laid this accusation on Burghley's desk to emphasize how small the companies really were. Something of this conflict over membership can be followed from the expiration of the first privileges to the granting of the letters patent in 1592.

The most obvious result of this conflict was the steady growth in membership and proposed membership. The original twenty-six members of the two companies grew to a proposed thirty by May 1589, to forty-one less than a year later, to forty-nine by April or May 1591 and finally, in the patent itself, fifty-three were admitted to full membership with twenty more given the option to join within two months; nearly three times the number in the original companies. Eight years later,

in the patent of 1600, the membership had become eighty-four and in the 1605 patent, one hundred and eighteen. In these later patents the pressure for larger membership came largely from persons outside the company who wanted to have a share in a profitable business. But in the earlier case, though there was successful pressure from the outside, there is evidence also of some internal conflict among the original membership over who was to be admitted.

The first evidence of this comes from the set of articles for incorporation submitted in May 1589¹⁸ which has appended to it the names of thirty persons to be inserted in the patent. A brief analysis of these names gives credence to the point made earlier that this first set of articles was the creation of the Turkey Company alone. Seventeen of those named were original members of the two companies; nine from the Turkey Company and eight from the Venice Company. Of the thirteen new persons named, nine can definitely be established as belonging to the Turkey Company, either as later members or as servants, such as William Harborne, ambassador at Constantinople and John Eldred, consul at

18 BM:Lans. 60 no. 3 and a copy in PRO:SPD Eliz. 151 no. 34.

Aleppo. The remaining four cannot be definitely connected with either group, though there is a good case that two of them were connected with the Turkey merchants. All but one of the five were named in the final patent and that one is listed as a member in 1600. This loading of the membership in favor of the Turkey Company suggests that the Venice merchants did not have a hand in making up the list. In the following year the second set of articles was submitted this time with forty-one names appended.¹⁹ Thirty identical to the first list and eleven new names. Only one of these eleven, Henry Parvish, seems to have carried on any independent trade. What can be learned of the others suggests that the Venice merchants, now in agreement about the union of the companies, were trying to redress the balance in the membership. Three of them, though named in the Venice Company patent of 1583, were actually servants of Thomas Cordell, Edward Holmden, and Paul Bayning, the three most substantial merchants in the Venice Company. The Turkey merchants, on their side, added to the list James Stapers, a younger brother of Richard and known to have acted as his factor

19 PRO:SPD Eliz. 231 no. 55.

in the past. Nothing is known about the remaining six, except that four of them were not named in the Levant Company patent evidently being of too little substance. What can be detected behind these two lists of names is some minor competition between the Venice and Turkey merchants over the balance of influence in the new company. The Venice merchants did not have among their number very many wealthy men and thus had to resort to including the names of their servants; though the Turkey merchants were not entirely innocent of this practice themselves.

Nothing more is heard of this issue until the summer of 1591. During June and July of that year a number of petitions were prepared by merchants who wished to be admitted to the Levant Company but had evidently had not been acceptable to the Turkey and Venice merchants. The main burden of their arguments was that they had engaged in trade to various parts of the Mediterranean during the past decade or more and were financially able to contribute to the maintenance of the ambassador and the presents to the Turkish court. The most interesting and substantial of these petitions was from the partnership of Henry Colthurst and Company, which consisted of Colthurst, Simon Lawrence, and the

brothers Oliver and Nicholas Style.²⁰ These four had been trading together for some fifteen years, which alone makes them one of the more interesting and remarkable partnerships of their time. Very little is known of their business dealings other than what can be culled from the Port Books and occasional State Papers. In this petition they mention a ship they sent to the Western Mediterranean in 1574. [no. 16/ This was in addition to their activity as members of the Barbary Company. They evidently took immediate advantage of the cessation of the Venice Company's privileges for they claimed to have sent a ship to Venice in 1589, 1590, and 1591. [205, 240, and 246/ Obviously, they were now concerned about being excluded from this trade by the grant of a new monopoly. No one of them, however, was admitted to full membership in the Levant Company, but all were placed on the provisional list of those who could attain membership upon payment of £130 within two months of the date of the letters patent. There is no explanation of why they were thus partially excluded.

The most informative of these petitions, in that

20 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 75. Most of what is known of these men is put together in T. S. Willan, Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade, 1959, pp. 205-110.

it sheds some light on behind the scenes maneuvering, is that of Henry Parvish.²¹ He was evidently accepted into the new company sometime in 1590²² and subsequently excluded from the proposed company because, according to him, he had entered into a business arrangement with a number of Venetian merchants, the nature of which is not made clear. The basis of his claim to membership is that he had been trading to Venice overland for the past fourteen years but now, with the troubles in France, is unable to do so any longer. He claimed further that since the cessation of the Turkey and Venice Company privileges, he had traded by sea to Turkey and Venice. [228/ He specifically blamed Sir John Spencer, Paul Bayning, and Edward Holmden for barring his admission to the company; charging them, further, with the desire to keep out all new members. In this context he went on to say that Richard Stapers and a few others favored admitting some four persons while Thomas Cordell and "his companye" favored admitting anyone desirous "uppon some reasonable allowances". Though there is no reason to doubt this division among the merchants, knowledge of

21 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 80.

22 His name appears in the list appended to the second set of articles discussed above.

it is based only on Parvish's statement and he was clearly quite angry over his troubles and thus prone to exaggerate the state of affairs. His anger may have paid off for he was included as a full member in the new patent.

There are three more petitions from persons wishing to be admitted to the company. William Harrison, John Combes, and Robert Brooke.²³ The first two claimed to have traded, during the past seven or eight years, to the Western Mediterranean and overland to Venice from Hamburg and recently by sea to Venice. They both, also, were engaged in trade to Spain and complained that such had become impossible. Harrison offered to pay twenty angels to "any of your honors servants" if he were admitted to the new company. The reaction to this offer is not known. Neither of these petitioners gained their desired end at this time; both were to go on, however, and become fairly prominent men in London early in the next century. Brooke was a Grocer and one of the sheriffs of London at the time he wrote his petition on 14 July 1591. He made no claim about previous trading activities as did the other petitioners but simply asked

23 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 nos. 42 and 43 for Harrison and Combes and BM: Hatfield Mss., petition no. 870 for Brooke.

for preferential treatment. "That at yor honors pro-
bably Robert Cecil/ requeste yt might please his honor
Burghley/ to cawse my name to be put into the Booke."
 As with Harrison and Combes, his name did not get into
 the "Booke". The above petitions are the only ones ex-
 tant, but there is no reason to suppose that there were
 not other merchants who sought admission either by for-
 mal petition or by informal communication with someone
 in an influential position.

These petitions by no means ended the problem of
 membership in the proposed company; in fact, they may
 have only really begun a more strenuous struggle over
 the question, not, this time, among the old membership
 but rather between the old members and those on the out-
 side wishing to gain admission. There is a very interest-
 ing document in the State Papers,²⁴ undated but clearly
 following these petitions, in which it is argued that
 "the sutes of some persons whose strange humors are
 never satisfied" should be denied. These persons, the
 petition argues, have "no regard howe weightie a matter
 it is not to overchardge a trade...for in verie truthe
 the one half of us allredie traders are to many and in

24 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 44.

number sufficient to mayneteyne that trade with as much of the commodities of this Realme as possibley can there be vented...". Those traders, who were already half too many, signed their names to the petition - nineteen of them. Sixteen are signatures of the leading members of the original Turkey and Venice Companies, eight from each, and the other three later members of the companies. This, perhaps more than anything else, is a clear statement of the restrictive attitude of these older merchants, who, while they were willing to bring into the company their former servants and factors, were unwilling to admit anyone from the outside who might, among other things, challenge their control of policy.

Burghley was not satisfied to let things go by default and sought the opinions of William Harborne, John Hawkins and William Burrough. Harborne, in his answer, received at the end of July,²⁵ gave as his opinion that some of the wealthier merchants not at present free of the company, upon giving a reasonable contribution, should be admitted in order to help spread any financial loss. His concern was that a financial loss would discourage the trade which, in turn, would

25 BM:Lans. 67 f. 251.

place the Queen's agent in a disadvantageous position. In the following month Hawkins and Burrough, together gave a somewhat more liberal, though similar, opinion.²⁶ They felt that "as Many Marchants & others of abillity, as have traded into those partes, bee of that companie, yf they will, and lickwise that other Marchantes of abillitye suche as be desirowes to be of that Companie maye be accepted and insertid in the same...". Their reason for advocating this policy was that a larger membership of wealthy merchants would create a larger stock thus making possible the employment of "shippinge of greater force...". The conclusions are basically the same in advocating increased membership but derived from different points of view, each reflecting the background and interests of the person giving them. This could be interpreted as showing the unreliability of partisan opinion. But it can also be interpreted to show the wisdom and shrewdness of the person who solicited opinions from among different sets of interests. Burghley decided, in mid-August, to arrange a conference with four of the most important merchants concerned, Sir Edward Osborne, Sir George Barnes, Richard Staper, and

26 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 124.

Edward Holmden,²⁷ to settle the problem of membership. He set down, in his own hand, the principals upon which individual cases should be decided, which, it will be seen, embody the suggestions and criticisms voiced on this matter.²⁸

1. Those who have been adventurers to Turkey and have contributed to the procuring of the Sultan's privileges.
2. Those who have been adventurers to Zante and Venice and have paid the Venetian imposts.
3. Those who are able and willing to bear the charges of the agent at Constantinople.
4. To be eliminated are the names of servants and apprentices who have no stock to maintain the trade; though, these may become free of the company at the time they are able to trade for themselves.

Burghley did not confer personally with these merchants but asked Hawkins and Burrough to do so giving them as instructions what appears in his page of notes. They wrote to him on 30 August²⁹ that they had conferred with the merchants as instructed and inclosed a list of names divided into three parts: one, those named in the first set of privileges; two, those who had been admitted

27 It is interesting to note that three of these men were Turkey merchants and only Holmden a Venice merchant.

28 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 140.

29 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 157.

by the first companies after the granting of their privileges; and, three, those who had been factors and servants in those companies. They also added to the above the names of eight mere merchants who, in their opinion, were fit to be included in the new patent. Unhappily the list they appended has not survived, so it is not possible to see how closely their suggestions, which may also have been the suggestions of the merchants themselves, conformed to the final list embodied in the patent. There is, however, a list compiled by the merchants in the late Spring of 1591.³⁰ Many of the names in this are of persons about whom little is known. Eighteen of them do not appear in the patent; ten of these are listed as persons who have not cleared their accounts with the companies; three of the eighteen died or probably died in the interim; of the five remaining one, Henry Colthurst, is included in the patent among those who will be admitted upon payment of £130,

30 BM:Cotton, Nero BXI f. 116. This list is undated but contains the names of Ralph Fitch and John Newberry. It could not have been made up before 29 April 1591, the day Fitch returned to London (Purchas, X, 204) because he was assumed dead until he unexpectedly returned. (Foster, England's Quest for Eastern Trade, p. 105.) Newberry's name probably was included because it was felt he might also return. When he did not, it was dropped from the final list. Fitch is listed in the patent.

two others, to judge by their names, may have been the younger relatives of full members, and about the last two nothing is known. The 1592 patent contains twenty-two names, other than the provisional names, which are not listed in the Cotton Mss. document. Two of them were gratuitous, John Hawkins and William Burrough; three were probably related to older members, Thomas Farrington, Thomas Garraway, and Richard Martin, Jr.; three others were names in the Venice Company patent of 1583 but were servants of other members rather than merchants in their own right. The remaining thirteen are among the very large group of sixteenth century merchants who appear on the periphery of mercantile affairs. They trade in their own names and act as factors for wealthier merchants, they appear in the Port Books and other formal documents but they never emerge from semi-obscurity, endowed with a definite history of their own.

It can be seen from the foregoing that the determination of membership in the Levant Company was not a simple matter. Among the original members there was a desire either to limit membership severely or to admit only those who were factors and apprentices. This was, naturally, countered from the outside by those who wished to enter the company. There appears to have been a good

case for many of the latter who had been trading to Spain and Portugal or overland to Venice and who were having great difficulties continuing because of the break with Spain and the civil war in France. The only recourse these merchants had was the government and this only because the desired charter of privileges emanated from the crown's authority. Thus if the excluded merchants could convince the government that the proposals of the older merchants were unfair or, better still, not in the best interests of the Queen's majesty, the navy, and the increased wealth of the Realm, then the necessary pressure would be applied to achieve the desired end. This would seem to be what happened.

With the membership of the new company finally decided upon the letters patent were issued on 7 January 1592.³¹ There seems to have been no real controversy over the provisions of the patent as there was over the membership of the company. There were at least three proposed sets of articles which preceded it but they are almost identical to each other and very little different from the patent itself.³² Unlike the earlier

31 Hakluyt VI, 73-93.

32 PRO:SPD Eliz. 151 no. 34 and a copy in BM:Lans. 60

Turkey and Venice Company patents, this one gave a name to the new organization; "the Governour and company of Marchants of the Levant", which came to be known as the Levant Company. It was given a monopoly, to last for twelve years, of trade by sea and land into the dominions of the Ottoman Empire as well as into the dominions of the Signory of Venice. Added to this was the right to trade "by lande through the Countries of the sayde Grand Signior into and from the East India, lately discovered by John Newberrie, Ralph Fitch, William Leech, and James Storie, sent with our letters to that purpose at the proper costs and charge of the sayde Marchants or some of them". This reference to the East Indies was the result of Ralph Fitch's return in April 1591. The merchants may have hoped to follow up Fitch's reports or they may simply have had the East Indies included in their monopoly to insure that no one else could try to exploit that route. Their own experiences with the overland route during the 1580's would seem to discourage its use rather than the reverse. It should be noted that the patent clearly specifies "by lande"

no. 3 which is endorsed 14 May 1589; PRO:SPD Eliz. 231 no. 55, written sometime between November 1589 and November 1590; and BM:Lans. 66 no. 12, endorsed 12 March 1591.

thus leaving the sea route to India still open to anyone who wished to exploit it.

The patent appointed Edward Osborne the first governor, to hold that office for one year. Subsequently a governor was to be elected annually by the company at large. In addition the patent specified that the Company shall appoint twelve assistants who shall retain their office for life or until removed by the Company. The patent does not specify who the first assistants were to be nor does it specify if succeeding governors must come from among their number.³³ As in the Turkey Company's patent, the crown reserved the right to appoint, at any time, two persons of its own choice to be full members of the Company. The Company was given the usual rights to assemble from time to time to make laws and ordinances for the conduct of its affairs, to use a common seal, and to fly the arms of England from the tops of their ships.

With respect to customs, a concession was made to the relatively slow turnover of capital in long distance trade by the provision that it could be paid in two equal

33 In the proposed articles which preceeded the patent it was suggested there be six assistants. The change may have been an effort to keep control from falling into too few hands.

installments, the first at the end of three months and the second at the end of six months from the time it was first due.³⁴ In addition the patent took account of the re-export of goods in this trade by providing that merchants would only have to pay customs inwards on such goods provided they were re-exported in English ships within 13 months of their landing.³⁵ This proviso on re-exports was extended to all Englishmen, even if not members of the Levant Company. Thus, in effect, a merchant could buy imported goods from a Levant merchant and then re-export them duty free providing he had all the necessary cockets and certificates. The patent explicitly provided that to forestall deceit in the matter of re-exports, certificates showing payment of customs inward would be conveyed by the collector inward to the customer outward.

The presence of the Venice trade in the enlarged monopoly of the Levant Company is reflected by the patent's explicit concern with the Venetian imposts on currants and wine exported from their territories and

34 The original proposal was for the crown to forebare the entire customs payment for six months.

35 The original proposal was to give the merchants 18 months in which to re-export goods and still be free of double customs.

on English goods imported to their territories. This was one of the more important matters which demanded the attention of the Venice Company during the 1580's. The Levant Company patent provided that for redress of these imposts all foreigners would be prohibited from importing into England any currants or wine of Candia "unlesse it be by and with the licence, consent, and agreement of the sayde Governour and company in writing under their sayd common seal..." If, however, the Venetians should lift their imposts and recompense all impost money already paid then this prohibition would be lifted. It was further stated in the patent that no other persons, not of the Company, would be permitted to import currants and wines of Candia "without the consent of the sayde Governour and companie in writing under their sayd common seale..." This last proviso can only refer to other Englishmen, though it does not explicitly say so. Finally the patent made the usual proviso that if the grant should prove to be detrimental to the crown it could be recalled after 18 months notice given to the Company.

The final problem, which may not have been settled until after the grant of the patent, was the financial structure of the company. Should the company administer

a joint stock capital or should it be merely a regulatory body? There has been some discussion among the historians of this trade as to when the original joint stock trade ended. For some time historians had assumed the trade remained under a joint stock into the mid-90's but during the past thirty years Mr. A. C. Wood, in 1935,³⁶ and Prof. T. A. Willan, in 1955,³⁷ touched on this question. Wood concluded that the organization changed from joint stock to regulated sometime between 1588 and 1595. Willan suggested that it was a joint stock until at least 1588; a conclusion he based on his examination of the Port Books. Willan is correct about his date - the English joint stock trade to Turkey ended on 11 September 1588 - but his reliance on the Port Books for his conclusion suggests that he failed to differentiate between a partnership working under a joint stock and an incorporated monopoly, granted by letters patent, working under a joint stock. The Turkey trade can only be described as a joint stock trade if there was only one joint stock partnership trading there, irrespective of grants of monopoly, or if the entire trade, geographi-

36 A History of the Levant Company, pp. 22-3.

37 "Some Aspects of the English Trade with the Levant in the Sixteenth Century", EHR vol. lxx 1955, pp. 399 ff.

cally speaking, was embodied in one company with a monopoly based on letters patent and that company traded under a joint stock. The latter is, of course, the case at hand. The moment the letters patent expired the joint stock monopoly ceased to have legal existence. Whether or not those who had held the monopoly continued to trade in a joint stock is a separate question. The point is that now anyone so wishing and able could trade to Turkey without legal restriction. What seems to have happened, in fact, is that merchants previously excluded from the trade immediately took advantage of the lapse of the monopoly. The petitions of William Harrison, John Combe, and Henry Colthurst and Company all make clear that soon after the letters patent expired they either sent ships of their own or adventured in other ships voyaging to the Levant. A similar situation developed in the Venice trade, though, here there was no question of a joint stock being involved.

This question - joint stock or regulated trade - does not appear to have entered the discussion preceding the new charter until near the end. The first mention of it is in the letter from William Harborne in July 1591³⁸ where he recommended that the trade to Turkey

38 BM:Lans. 67, f. 251.

be continued in one joint stock. He felt that the fragmentation of the trade among separate factors of independent merchants would lead to disorganizing of the buying and selling of goods and consequently to poor bargaining. He dealt separately with the trade to Venice about which he only said "for thatt it is a well governed Christian state, everie one maie deale aparte". A month later Hawkins and Burrough pronounced much the same opinion.³⁹ If the trade to Turkey was not to be in a joint stock "wee are of opinion that yt will soone breede confusion to the overthrow of those trades". They offered the same opinion as Harborne's about the trade to Venice. In his jottings for the conference in August of the same year, Burghley noted at the end of the list, that a question to be resolved was whether the trade to Turkey should be "mayntained by a societe in common or by every merchant severally".⁴⁰ Another opinion, undated and unsigned, but prior to the letters patent, stated only that "thei should trade together in a Jointe Stocke as before in time of the last pattent thei did..."⁴¹. The author of this document did not mention the Venice trade.

39 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 124.

40 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 140.

41 PRO:SPD Eliz. 241 no. 12.

Unfortunately there was no pro and con argument about the financial organization of the new company which would make it possible to determine why a decision was made one way or another. The anomaly of the whole problem is that all the advice - at least all the extant advice - is that the Turkey trade continue as under its first set of privileges but, in fact, all the evidence is that in the 1590's, and ever after, the trade was regulated. It is perhaps too soon to pronounce with any certainty on this issue but two reasonable explanations can be advanced for the decision finally taken. First is to note that the suggestion of Harborne, Hawkins, and Burrough strikes a curious note: to have one company function under two different financial structures at the same time. One difficulty, of which the merchants must have been aware, was that the Venice and Turkey trades presented different problems in one important respect. The trade to Turkey was entirely dependent on a grant of privileges from the Sultan and on the presence at his court of an official representative of the English government. This was not the case in Venice. There it was not necessary to levy consoldge to support an ambassador and consuls. If the entire trade were under a joint stock then it would be a case of the Venice

trade being taxed for something which was of no benefit to it. Under a regulated trade consoldge can be levied at particular centers and the money thus raised used only to support the official at that place.

The modern observer of this might object that many corporations support one branch of their business with revenues from another. But this situation was quite different. A group of merchants who had been trading independently to the Venetian dominions for some years even before they received their first letters patent, were being brought into a new company dominated by another group of merchants. These Venice merchants had, over the years, established business contacts, bought houses, maintained factors and run their own affairs in the area of their trade. It would be surprising if they were willing to relinquish control over all this in the interests of a competing group of merchants. Further, if a joint stock was decided upon it would necessitate the immense problem of determining the relative worth of the already existing stock of the Venice merchants and then what part of the total common stock each would represent. It might have been possible to unite two joint stock companies but the decision to unite these two companies would seem to have precluded

a joint stock for the Levant Company.

The second explanation for the regulated Levant trade is that it is no more than recognition of a fait accompli. It was seen above that as soon as the patents of the Turkey and Venice Companies expired several merchants, who had not been members of those companies, began trading into the areas covered by their former privileges. But more important is that the former Venice merchants wasted no time in establishing themselves in Turkey and Syria after the Turkey Companies monopoly expired. Edward Barton, who became Harborne's successor, took up money by exchange in Constantinople from several merchants between 1588 and 1591.⁴² Some of these were factors of the former Venice merchants. One of them was Henry Parvish who, as seen above, was not admitted to the new company in 1592. In March 1591 a letter to Barton from Aleppo makes reference to the presence there of the servants of Edward Holmden and Paul Banning, two of the leading Venice merchants.⁴³ In April of the same year Barton referred specifically to Thomas Dawkins, Holmden's factor, as being resident in Constantinople.⁴⁴ Thus it can be seen that the

42 BM:Cotton, Nero BXI f. 200.

43 PRO:SP For., Turkey 2, f. 78. 44 Ibid., f. 100.

Venice merchants were quickly establishing themselves in the Turkey trade, even to the extent of contributing to the maintenance of the English government's representative at the Porte. Under such circumstances it would have been extremely difficult for the old Turkey merchants to remove these new-comers. This, combined with the situation described above made it almost mandatory that the Levant Company be regulated rather than joint-stock in its organization.

CHAPTER VII

The Levant Company and
the Origins of the East India Company

The early years of the Levant Company provide slightly more in the way of knowledge about the internal workings of the Company than did the earlier period. It is possible to see a little of a regulated company at work, to amplify somewhat on the means of compensating company and diplomatic personnel, to throw more light on the problem of the payment of foreign debts and to offer a few comments on the troubles the Company had with its charter in 1600 and 1605. In addition the examination of several questions from the 1580's continues into the final period of this study. Finally, some comments can be offered on why the sea route to eastern Asia was not effectively used before 1600.

In outline the course of the Levant trade in the 1590's was basically little ^{different} from that in the 1580's. As stated before the Turkey and Venice Companies were now one. Furthermore, unlike the Turkey Company, the Levant Company regulated the trade of its members and did not conduct trade in its own name. Thus where some Englishmen in the Levant had been factors of the Turkey Company they now became factors for individual members

of the Levant Company. John Sanderson, for example, who had been the Turkey Company's factor from 1584 to 1588, returned to Constantinople in late 1591 as factor for Thomas Cordell. Similarly, other former servants of the Turkey Company became factors for one or more members of the Levant Company. This change, of course, made no difference in the Venetian branch of the trade, since it had been regulated all along. The question of who was factor for whom seldom produces a clear answer. Sanderson dealt for other merchants as well as Cordell. Mathew Stoker was factor for Robert Sandy at Petras but he also dealt for other merchants¹ and similarly with Oliver Gardiner at Zante who was factor for Edward Holmden.² Some factors served no master but dealt for anyone who required their services. Such was the case of Jonas Aldrich at Petras and Abraham Nottingham at both Petras and Constantinople.³ These men were in constant communication with each other about the sale of their master's goods. Information was continually passed back and forth among them concerning the state of the market in their various locations. If it seemed better for a given commodity in one place than in an-

1 PRO: HCA, Exam. 35 f. 317v.

2 Ibid., f. 340.

3 Ibid., f. 317v and 319.

other than the goods were sent there, consigned to one of the factors in residence who in turn sold the goods and either returned the money to the first factor or invested it in goods to be returned to England. In August 1596, for example, Elizeus Sothern, in Aleppo, had some cloths on hand for the account of Henry Anderson and John Bate in London. He could have bartered them, he found, but learned that in Constantinople they could be sold for ready money. He thus sent them there, and asked John Sanderson to try to sell them. In addition, Sothern had on hand some Muscovy tanned skins which he "thought good to send for a traill".⁴ There were seven cloths in all ranging from a fine Kentish blue of about 42 yards in length which cost £24.4^s9^d in London to a poppinjay of about 30 yards in length which cost £9.6^s in London. The skins, twelve of them, cost together £5.12^s. Some months later Sanderson wrote to John Bate that he had been unable so far to sell these goods.⁵ Requests of this sort were not refused because the successful course of the trade depended on cooperation among the factors. Furthermore, there was a profit to be made. A factor received for each transaction he per-

4 BM:Lans. 241 f. 315v.

5 Ibid., f. 403.

formed, be it for another factor or a London merchant, factorage ranging from 2% to 4%.⁶

The Levant Company, itself, played no role in these everyday relations between merchant and factor, and factor and factor. This is clear from the letters received and sent by the Company. Although there are not very many such letters still in existence there are more for the 1590's than there were for the 1580's. In the earlier period, the Turkey Company transmitted fairly detailed instructions to its factors concerning the conduct of the trade and received in return similar reports from them about the state of the trade. In the 1590's, however, this type of information was exchanged between merchant and factor. The letters of William Clarke are largely of this nature. John Sanderson copied only four of his letters to William Cordell into his letter book but each of these contains information that one would expect a

6 A fairly detailed picture of this aspect of the trade can be gained from Sanderson's letters and also from those of William Clarke. (BM:Sloan 867) A helpful description of a factor's basic duties based on Clarke's letters can be found in P. R. Harris, "The Letter Book of William Clarke, Merchant in Aleppo, 1598-1602", MA Thesis, University of London, 1953. Almost all of the letters in Clarke's letterbook are those he sent. Sanderson, however, included in his letterbook a great many letters he received as well, thus both sides of a correspondence can be found at times.

factor to send to the merchant he serves. It is possible to make a comparison here because Sanderson also carried on a brief correspondence with the Company. Between July 1596 and January 1597 the ambassador, Edward Barton, accompanied the Sultan, Mehmet III⁷ on his military campaign into Hungary and appointed Sanderson his deputy while he was away. In the five letters that were exchanged between Sanderson, the Company, and Richard Stapers, governor of the Company, trade was mentioned only once and then seemingly only as a matter of courtesy on the part of Sanderson.⁸ The communications concerned themselves mainly with a new secretary for Barton, who was on his way out, controversies with the French over privileges, the building of a warehouse at Scanderoon, the provision of funds for the ambassador's stipend and expenses, the replacement of the consul at Aleppo and general news about a number of other matters. This pattern is seen again several years later when the Company appointed Sanderson its consul and treasurer at Constantinople. During the 18 months he remained in that position he had 10 letters sent to the Company and

7 Murad III had died in January 1595.

8 These letters were all printed, with only minor omissions, in Foster, Sanderson, pp. 158, 160, 165, 166, 168.

two received from it all copied into his letter book in addition to several between himself and the resident ambassador.⁹ There are also extant from this period 10 letters from the Company to various persons in Turkey which were entered in a letter book, the remainder of which subsequently became the first court minute book of the East India Company.¹⁰ All these letters serve to confirm that the Company did not involve itself at all in the conduct of the trade.¹¹

One incident reveals the sensitivity of the Company about anything which might seem to circumscribe its area of authority. It had appointed Thomas Sandy consul at Aleppo but unfortunately he died shortly after reaching Turkey and before reaching Aleppo. The company of merchants at Aleppo, unwilling to accept in his place

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- 9 The essential parts of these letters printed in Foster, op. cit., passim.
- 10 This entire manuscript was printed by Henry Stevens in The Dawn of British Trade to the East Indies, 1886, The Levant Company's letters appear on pages 265-83.
- 11 The reiteration of this point may seem a belaboring of the obvious; it is well known that in a regulated trade the company did not itself conduct trade. But it is known mainly from the definition of such a company rather than from evidence of the company in operation. These few Levant Company letters are almost the only surviving evidence from before the seventeenth century which give any insight to the functioning of a regulated company.

the vice-consul, George Dorrington, on their own initiative elected Ralph Fitch. Sanderson, acting for Barton, communicated this information to the Company in London stating that in his opinion by doing this on their own initiative those in Aleppo had shown "presumption and want of discretion...both to the ambassador and Your Worships..." He did, however, add that he thought Fitch to be a good choice for the position.¹² The Company demurred in that choice and wrote that it had appointed its own candidate, Richard Colthurst, who was on his way to take up the post. As for Fitch, the Company considered him a "sufficient man" but "because our orders is that the consull must be made here and here take his othe and enter into bond for the trewe and upright usinge himself in his office, and therefore we do not allowe of their choice ther att Allepo..."¹³ There was in fact a Company ordinance to the effect that no one would be permitted to go to Turkey without first being presented to the governor and taking his oath. If any member of the Company should send out a servant or factor without first doing the above he was

12 Foster, op. cit., p. 159.

13 Ibid., p. 167.

to be fined £50.¹⁴ This regulation seems to have been passed at about the same time the incident over the consul at Aleppo took place and may have been provoked by it; though the sending out of a factor is not strictly comparable with the appointment of a consul. The Company evidently was determined to maintain some control over those persons who served in the Levant. There is no information which indicates whether or not the Company took the same position with respect to the Venetian branch of the trade. There is no evidence of a consul representing the Company at Venice before 1606.¹⁵

Though the Company was alert to any incursions on the exercise of its prerogative to appoint officials, once its wishes along these lines were known there seems to have been little resistance to them. However, with another matter the solution was not so easy. One of the

14 BM:Harl. 306 f. 73v. This document, occupying folios 72-74v, is headed "Standinge Ordenaunces bothe penall and otherwise". These regulations were passed at court meetings of the Company and this document is simply a list of them, followed by a reference to the folio in the court minute book where the original entry was made. The minute book has not survived and few of the entries are dated so the exact date of the various rules is uncertain. They all clearly date from the 1590's and probably run throughout. The first reference is from folio 66 of the minute book and the last from folio 272. The last entry, from its context, dates from late 1598 or early 1599.

15 Wood, op. cit., p. 65.

Company's main problems and perhaps one of its main functions as a corporate body, was the financial maintenance of the ambassador and consuls and the provision of periodic gifts to the Sultan and his officials. This money was raised from consoleage of 2% on the value of goods inward and again outward and from impositions raised for specific purposes. There seems to have been only moderate objection to the payment of consoleage which was used to support the consul and the whole mercantile establishment upon which the English factors were dependent. The consul was their immediate intermediary with the local officials, he maintained a house in which some of the factors lived, settled disputes among them and generally looked after their interests. But the payment of the ambassador was a different matter. Generally ambassadors were paid by the governments they represented. Some time in 1596 the Company pointed out to the English government that the French king supplied his ambassador in Constantinople with some 20,000 crowns per year in addition to assuming the cost of the various presents.¹⁶ The English government steadfastly refused to assume this responsibility, though it did contribute

16 PRO:SPF Turkey, 2 f. 235.

£500 for Barton's expenses in October 1590¹⁷ and another £600 in October 1594.¹⁸ These were extraordinary payments, however, made in response to pressure from the Company and did not represent a change of policy on the part of the government. Perhaps it can be said that they represent an admission from the government that it did have an obligation to support its own ambassador. However, it attempted to avoid this obligation as much as possible.

The simplest means of payment for the ambassador was out of consols. In August 1590 George Barnes,

17 See supra p. 285.

18 PRO:Exchequer, Tellers Roll 150. The mechanics of these payments are interesting though specific evidence exists only for the latter. The money was paid to William Aldridge by tallies drawn on the customs paid by the Levant merchants. Four such tallies were drawn to make up the £600: £138.18^s3^d, £207.5^s4^d, £112.3^s11^d, and £141.12^s6^d. The Exchequer apparently insisted that money so drawn be accounted for in detail. There is a miscellaneous customs account 218/16 which does this for the second tally listed above. It is from the account of Robert Dowe, collector of tonnage and poundage outward and lists the names of the ships, the merchants and the amount of customs owed by each for goods laded on specific days. The entries add up to the £207.5^s4^d of the tally and at the bottom it is noted that "This some paide to Aldridge out of the Custome by the merchaunts of Levant". Presumably the other tallies were accounted for in the same way. Quite clearly the Crown did not intend to pay money out to the Levant merchants without assurance that they would pay the same amount into the Exchequer.

wrote to Burghley to complain that the merchants in London had paid out £900 to Barton by exchange since Harborne's departure from Turkey. He suggested that Barton's expenses might better be met from consoledge levied on the merchants' sales and purchases in Turkey.¹⁹ Instructions to this effect were evidently issued, though not with the desired effect. In April 1591 Barton wrote to Burghley that the "Companye prentises" refuse to obey the orders for his maintenance.²⁰ In the January and February preceeding he had admonished Edward Collins, who seems to have been consul in Aleppo at that time, because he had not received money due him from consoledge. Collins replied in March accusing Barton of seeming to claim that the entire proceeds of the 4% consoledge should be for his own provision. He denied that was so and insisted only that which was left over from his expenses should be sent to Barton. Part of his reply gives an insight to Collins' exasperation over the issue.

"Thinke you thatt wee the Companies servants can live heare upon nothings that you should geve suche order not to paye us some aspers: have wee noe chargs thinke you in house keeping as servants wag/e/s and jenesaries, doe wee not present newe bashawes, leftadares, and cadies when they come, besydes thousands of

19 BM:Lans. 65 no. 27.

20 PRO:SPF Turkey 2 f. 100.

other things, which I thinke you dothe knowe, and howe shall wee doe this butt upon the consoledge, for other allowance wee hav non... wee are to be mayntayned of the consoledge, for wee are heare to collect the same and no other goods or worke wee have of the companies, and therefore yt dothe appertayne unto us to see the dewe collecting of the aforesaid Consoledge to the uttermoste, which I for in yt, that/ godwilling therein will not fayle."²¹

The "wee" to whom Collins makes reference were evidently himself, Nicholas Salter, and Christopher Audeley. Among them they seem to have been the London merchants' representatives in Aleppo and Tripoly from 1587 to at least 1591. In October 1590, two months after George Barnes' letter to Burghley, a summary account was drawn up stating that from September 1587 to February 1590 they had spent £1697.11^s1^d in charges "ordinary and extraordinary" in Aleppo and Tripoly.²² An account of the money received by Barton, alone, from the time Harborne left Turkey, was rendered in January 1592.²³ This shows that Barton received, including money left by Harborne, almost double the amount spent by Collins, Salter and Audeley. With such expenditures it is no wonder George Barnes asked Burghley to warn Barton and that Collins found it difficult to meet his demands. This account indicated that

21 PRO:SPF Turkey 2 f. 78.

22 BM:Cotton, Nero BXI f. 196.

23 Ibid., f. 200.

Barton had received slightly more than 12,000 ducats, of which only 333 came from consoledge. It should be emphasized, however, that the raising of consoledge was a recent innovation of the English in Turkey. When trade is in a joint-stock and thus conducted by a single, corporate individual, resistance to payments of this kind is a meaningless idea on the part of the overseas factors. Once, however, the joint-stock came to an end the raising of money to maintain an overseas establishment became a problem. It was solved initially by Barton using his authority as the Crown's representative to demand money from the factors in Turkey. He took up the money by bills of exchange drawn on London in favor of the factor's master. The first of these transactions listed in Barton's account was a bill in February 1589 for 700 ducats (£188.17^s) made out in favor of Henry Parvish. The last, for the same amount, was in February 1591, in favor of Richard Stapers.

During the interim between the end of the Turkey Company and the beginning of the Levant Company there seems to have been no set amount of money assigned as Barton's annual stipend and he requisitioned what he could from the merchant's factors. After the Levant Company received its corporate status it seems to have

set £1000 a year as Barton's annual compensation. But already in July 1592 he was writing to Burghley that he needed more than that. Furthermore, he found it "unconshonable" that the merchants wanted to pay him at the rate of 10^s the ducat.²⁴ If this was so it certainly was unconscienable since the usual rate was 5^s the ducat. The money to pay Barton's regular stipend seems still to have been taken up by him from the merchant's factors where he could find it and when he could persuade a factor to part with the money. He relied mainly on John Sanderson who was factor^s for William Cordell and also served Henry Garraway. But even Sanderson sometimes had difficulty in finding the necessary money. This system evidently was followed until Barton's death in 1597. He, of course, was never satisfied and at one point took up an unauthorized £500 from John Bate with a bill drawn on the Lord Treasurer. When the Company presented this to the government the immediate reaction was to reject it stating that Barton's expenses were the responsibility of the Company.²⁵ This sum was apparently over and above Barton's regular stipend and he claimed he needed the extra funds because he was re-

24 BM:Cotton, Nero BXI f. 131v.

25 Stevens, op. cit., p. 267.

quired to accompany the Sultan on a military expedition into Hungary.²⁶ Whether the Exchequer ever satisfied the Company is not clear but in 1600 the Company reminded Henry Lello, Barton's successor, of this incident and warned him not to exceed his authority in that manner.²⁷

This rather irregular system of having the ambassador try to persuade the factors to accept his bills, which were then passed on to London, was not to the Company's liking. It decided in August 1598 to try something different by raising imprest money on merchant's goods sent to Turkey. The rate was to be a half dollar on every kersey, every hundredweight of tin and every hundred of conyskins; a dollar and a half on every broad cloth and a dollar on every £3 value of other goods. Initially this imprest was to be collected only on the goods going out in the Royal Exchange, then in February 1599 it was levied on the cargoes of the Hector and the Lanarett and finally in December 1599 it was levied again on the Royal Exchange and the George "...and all such ships as shall hereafter be freighted

26 Foster, op. cit., p. 146.

27 Steven, op. cit., p. 267.

by the Company to Aleppo or Constantinople..."²⁸ John Sanderson was appointed by the Company as treasurer and consul at Constantinople for the primary purpose of collecting the imprest money and the regular consoledge.²⁹ This imprest money was to be raised only as a loan and was to be repaid to the various merchants by bills of exchange, at the rate of 5^s6^d the dollar, drawn by Sanderson on the Company in London. The Company explained to Henry Lello, the first ambassador to receive the money raised in this way, that it was motivated by its "care to avoide the sending of Billes of exchange made upon us either for venice or for England; and also all question of accepting the same, when they come upon us unexpected and wee unprovided..."³⁰

Such an arrangement should have settled the matter but Sanderson's efforts to collect this money raised the issue of the effective authority of the Company in Turkey. He met with resistance almost immediately and in August 1599 wrote to London that "the company here... doth not alow, nor will not accept of, the order taken ther by Your Worships concerning the ambassator; flattly

28 Foster, op. cit., p. 196.

29 His instructions are in his letter book, BM:Lans. 241 f. 65.

30 Stevens, op. cit., p. 266.

denying either to pay imposition or consoladge...saing they have no order therof from ther masters...Other hath said all ther do not consent when comition is geven under but the govonor and treasurer"³¹. In October³² the situation had not improved even though Lello had used his authority as ambassador to collect the money. The factors had offered to pay Lello at 6^s the dollar and he was willing to accept it because he needed the money but Sanderson refused to give bills at variance with his instructions. By December, however, some imprest money began to come in and Sanderson, in order to provide the ambassador and to avoid trouble, agreed to accept it at 6^s the dollar.³³ From that time on, the money was collected more easily than at first though never as rapidly nor as much as Sanderson would have liked. In March 1600 only one-third of Lello's 3000 chekins stipend came from imprest and consoledge money. Another third Sanderson had to take up from an English factor in Venice and the remaining third on his own credit.³⁴ It was not until July 1600 that he received a

31 Foster, op. cit., p. 178. Sanderson's instructions were signed only by Richard Stapers, governor and Henry Anderson, treasurer.

32 Ibid., p. 181.

33 Ibid., p. 188.

34 Ibid., p. 200.

letter from the Company in reply to his complaints about defiance of its authority.³⁵ In effect the Company said there was nothing it could do other than send a copy of the order made in the general court. In reply to Sanderson's request for some compensation for his troubles in collecting this money they offered him $\frac{1}{2}\%$. With this he was not satisfied and replied that "...concerning the consideration Your Worships have allotted me in the collection, being so smaule, I cannot like of, but looke for a better reward, or will present you my service".³⁶ Whether or not this was the reason, he had presented his service by January 1601 though he did not close out his account with the Company until 5 May 1601.³⁷ The only hint he gave of his reasons is in a letter to Nicholas Leate in London written just before his departure from Constantinople. In reference to the position of treasurer he said "God send them a better officer in my place; for if I had thought it would have bine so troblesom, I would not have medled with it for 400 chequins, our mony".³⁸ No more is heard in detail about the particular problem of the collection of these

35 Ibid., p. 193. It was written on 1 March.
 36 Ibid., p. 206. 37 Ibid., p. 218.
 38 Ibid., p. 219.

monies. The problem by no means ended for at the end of the year Lello wrote to the Company that the consul at Aleppo, Richard Colthurst, had informed him he could not afford to send any more money. Thus Lello was forced to take up 1500 chekins from some factors in Constantinople.³⁹

The main point about the above episodes is that they illustrate the difficulty the Company in London had in making its authority felt in the Levant. Although it is never said in so many words the implication is that the factors considered the merchants to be their masters and not the Company. Thus they would only follow instructions given to them by those merchants for whom they conducted trade. Whether or not Sanderson's success in collecting some of the imprest money was the result of instructions passed to the factors from the merchants in London is not known. The entire episode raises the image of the Levant merchants agreeing to a course of action at a general court in London and then acquiescing in its avoidance in Turkey. It might be asked why the factors should care, one way or the other, about the payment of this imprest since the money was not theirs in the first

39 BM:Cotton, Nero BXI f. 106v.

place. The point is, though, that they depended for their income on the volume of business conducted. Money turned over to the ambassador was money on which they could not collect factorage. Some of this desire to use the money for other purposes was suggested by Barton in October 1595 when he wrote to Sanderson and asked for part of his yearly pention. He stated that "...I will and requier you that you suffer nott sutch soms of mony as you have in your hands...to be imployed on other affairs, but to reserve the same for my allowance and pention..."⁴⁰ Sanderson, himself, when he was responsible for collecting consoledge and imprest money, alludes to a related but slightly different reason for the difficulty in collecting the money. In March 1600 he wrote to the Company that "Consoledge, no more gathered then formerly I have writt of... For as yett littell hath bine sould, and they that are to pay are loth to part from it; som answearinge that they will deliver in three monthes after they have made saile /sale/, and others unwillinge at all".⁴¹ Most of those resident in the Levant were merchants and merchants' factors. For them the narrower dictates of trade took precedence

40 Foster, op. cit., p. 143. 41 Ibid., p. 200.

over all else.

There is less that can be said about the Company's organization and functioning in London. The letters patent provided for a governor to be elected annually and 12 assistants to be appointed by the Company for life or until removed from office. The first governor named in the patent was Sir Edward Osborne. But he died in June of that year. For only three subsequent years is the governor known: Richard Stapers in 1596 and 1599⁴² and Thomas Smythe, son of Customer Smythe in 1600.⁴³ It is not surprising to find Stapers, elected governor of the Company but the choice of Smythe cannot be explained. During the next 25 years he became one of the most eminent and influential men in the commercial life of London. He held the governorship of nearly all the major trading companies during that time including - aside from the Levant Company - the East India Company, the Muscovy Company, and the Virginia Company. But in 1600 there was no reason to suppose he would be a likely choice for any such office. At least so it would seem from a present day vantage point. Nothing appears in

42 Cal. Salis. VI, p. 385 and BM:Lans. 241 f. 65v.

43 He is styled governor in March 1600. Foster, op. cit. p. 193n.

the surviving record to give any indication of why Smythe was chosen governor of the Company in that year. He is not known to have been a member of the Company before that time. The only record of his trade shows him importing madder, hops, Holland cloth, oker, flax, and raisins between October 1587 and September 1589 officially valued at £413.3^s10^d and all coming from Middleburg.⁴⁴ In early 1595 he imported some wine from the same place.⁴⁵ Aside from the above there is no record of his trade in the 1590's. No doubt this is due to the paucity of customs records for that period. But it is his apparent absence from the affairs of the Levant Company in the 1590's that makes his appointment as governor a curious one. That his father was one of the founders of the trade is not a sufficient explanation. There were clearly other considerations involved, knowledge of which has been lost.

The Company also had a treasurer and a registrar. Only two of the persons who held the office of treasurer are known: Henry Anderson in 1599 and John Eldred in 1600.⁴⁶ The only known specific duty of the treasurer

44 PRO: Port Books 7/8, 8/1, and 8/4.

45 PRO: Port Book 9/7.

46 BM:Lans. 241 f. 65 and Foster, op. cit., p. 193n.

was to receive bills of exchange drawn on the Company for the purpose of paying the ambassador's salary.⁴⁷

The registrar's function was to take account of all goods imported and exported by members of the Company and to see that no one exceeded his stint.⁴⁸ Probably

the Company had other officers but this is not known.

It did have committees but what they were is also not known.⁴⁹ Finally, there was the court of assistants

which, with the office of governor, was the only governing body mentioned in the letters patent. Its member-

ship was probably quite stable, since it was not subject to annual election, but its members are not known. A

reasonable guess can be made from two letters signed

by members of the Company. One was directed to Robert

Cecil in September 1596 and signed by John Spencer,

Richard Stapers (governor), William Garraway, Thomas

Cordell, Thomas Symonds, John Eldred and Andrew Banning.⁵⁰

The other was directed to John Sanderson in his capacity

of treasurer in Constantinople in March 1600 and signed

47 BM:Lans. 241 f. 65 where Sanderson is instructed to direct bills for the repayment of the imprest money to Henry Anderson.

48 BM:Harl. 306 f. 74.

49 BM:Harl. 306 f. 73v where reference is made to the election of committees.

50 Cal. Salis. VI p. 385.

by Thomas Snythe (governor), Richard Stapers, William Garraway, Thomas Cordell, John Eldred, Leonard Poore, Nicholas Salter, and Arthur Jackson.⁵¹ However, it does not follow necessarily that because these men spoke for the Company they were of its court of assistants; though five of them were named as assistants in the charter of December 1600.⁵²

The few statistics that can be found for the trade conducted by the members of this organization in the 1590's indicate that its overall character had not changed from the previous decade but that the union of the two companies brought about some changes in shipping patterns. The most obvious and expected is that now the same ship visited both Venetian and Turkish ports during the time of its stay in the Mediterranean, thus combining the two trades in practice as well as in name. Certainly one of the functions of this patterns, as suggested earlier, was to allow the ships from Turkey to lade currants for ballast back to England. Such was the case with the Royal Exchange in 1596 [315] whose cargo can be seen to fit this pattern. [see Appendix B/ Such also

51 Foster, op. cit., p. 193n.

52 Cecil T. Carr, Select Charters of Trading Companies, 1530-1707, 1913, p. 32.

was the pattern with a number of other ships which can be found in the Shipping List and no doubt there were others than those listed. Several ships put into the Venetian islands more than once while in the Mediterranean. The charter party in Appendix B gives instructions for such a route. The ships [346 and 347] were first to put into Zante, then proceed on to Scandroon, then return to Zante and Petras, then return to Scandroon for their final lading before returning to England. With variations a similar pattern was followed by a number of ships; certainly more than are indicated in the Shipping List. It was probably true that very few ships in the Levant trade put into only one Mediterranean port before returning to England. A few ships are seen to have put into Venice, itself, in addition to Ottoman ports. [295, 314, 357, 448] As before there were no doubt more ships that did this than are indicated. The old route of ships going first to Leghorn then to the Venetian islands, and perhaps also further east, still was followed. With one exception [412] there were still no ships putting into both Leghorn and Venice.

The number of ships per year in the Levant trade which show up in the Shipping List varies considerably from two in 1592 to 23 in 1599. This fluctuation is

due in part to incomplete information. Not only were there probably ships in the Levant trade of which no record has survived but, as in the 1580's, there is every reason to suppose that some of the ships listed as having sailed only as far as Leghorn more than likely went further east. For example in 1592 the Hercules, the Susan, the Merchant Royal, and the Charity [258, 259, 260, 261/ were all ships used in the Levant trade on other occasions. It is quite likely they were so used in 1592 because it is unlikely, though not impossible, that such large ships would have been used for the Leghorn run alone. Similarly with the Mermaid and the Prosperity in 1594 [304, 309/, the Centurion and the Mermaid in 1596 [328, 335/, the Phoenix in 1600 [413/, the Susan Bonaventure, Royal Merchant and Desire in 1601 [432, 440, 450/, and others. The problem in assessing the accuracy of the number of voyages shown is that there is no way of knowing how many there actually were. The only precise statement about Levant shipping came from the Turkey merchants in 1590.⁵² In 1600 the Company stated that it had employed 30 ships "this yeare".⁵³ In January 1603 the governor of Zante reported to Venice

52 See Supra pp. 213-17.

53 PRO:SPD Eliz. 276 no. 60.

that the English send more than 30 ships a year through the Strait of Gibraltar.⁵⁴ It is not certain whether in his estimation he was excluding those ships which went only to the western Mediterranean; probably he was. However, these last two statements are no reason to suppose there were thirty ships per year in the Levant trade throughout the 1590's.

There were circumstances which serve to explain why one should expect to find different numbers of ships going out in different years. Not the least of these was the necessity periodically to present the Sultan with a present in order to insure his continued support of the capitulations. The present was doubly important upon the accession of a new Sultan. In 1595, upon the death of Murad III, Mehmet III became the Ottoman ruler, thus creating the occasion for the English to send a new present to his court. It was also necessary that the capitulation, originally secured by William Harborne, be renewed with the new Sultan. The ambassador, Edward Barton, immediately attempted to do this before the present had been sent. The Sultan, however, refused to accept this arrangement and thus the English were ac-

54 CSP Ven. 1592-1603, p. 516.

tually without formal capitulations until March or April 1601.⁵⁵ The delay of some four years caused the Company considerable trepidation. It also required a letter of congratulations from the Queen to the new Sultan and the appointment of a special envoy to accompany the present. In the end, the envoy was not appointed and the gift was presented by Barton's successor, Henry Lello.⁵⁶ The Company finally received the letter of congratulations from the Queen early in 1596 after three separate petitions for it.⁵⁷ The present, however, was not sent out until February 1599 on board the Hector [375]. This delay is nowhere clearly explained but it cannot have been entirely the doing of the Company. Wood stated that it did not seem to have caused any ill feeling on the part of the Turks,⁵⁸ but an action of the Company suggests that it must have been concerned about

55 CSP Ven. 1592-1603, pp. 435-6. The Venetian ambassador reported this situation in some detail to Venice. The capitulations, as finally granted are printed in Foster, op. cit., pp. 282-7.

56 An account of the present and its delivery is to be found in Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant, ed. by J. Bent, 1893.

57 Cal. Salis. V, pp. 486, 501; VI, p. 21. In June 1596 Richard Stapers, as governor of the Company, sent a present of two Turkey carpets to Robert Cecil as a return for his favor in obtaining this letter from the Queen. (Ibid., p. 215.)

58 Levant Trade, p. 27.

the Turks actions with respect to its trade in the absence of the present. In August 1598 the Company passed an ordinance to the effect that "No ship shall go to Scio, Constantinople, Smyrna or other ports of the Archepelego, Alexandretta or Tripoly befor the present be sent". If a ship should violate this its lader would be fined £500.⁵⁹ In about December of the same year this restraint was reiterated but at the same time the Royal Exchange was licensed to go to Scandroon [355/.⁶⁰ The Shipping List show three ships having departed for the eastern Mediterranean in 1598 and eight in the following year. The difference may, in part, be the chance survival of records, but certainly is also explained by the restraint imposed because of the present to the Sultan. In 1600 there were again eight ships which put into the various Ottoman ports. It is tempting to suggest that this represented about the number which would have gone if nothing interfered but this cannot be affirmed. Several years earlier than the incidents described above the Company passed an ordinance to the effect that "This year no one shall ship out more than one half his stint".⁶¹ The year is not given but the statement's position in the

59 BM:Harl. 306 f. 73v.

60 Ibid., f. 74v.

61 Ibid., f. 73.

"Standinge Ordenaunces" suggests 1596. In that year no Company ships have been found in the eastern Mediterranean and only three in the Venetian possessions. Again the lack of surviving records no doubt explains this in part - it was suggested above that the Cherubin and Mermaid may have gone east from Leghorn in 1596 - but the action of the Company also must have contributed to the small number of ships in the trade that year. No explanation whatever has been found for this ordinance; though, it might have been related to the accession of a new Sultan.

Another element that possibly contributed to irregularity in the Levant trade was privateering. It is not that the privateers interfered with the legitimate trade but that they often used the same ships which at other times were used by the Levant Company. For example the Shipping List shows only two ships in the Levant in 1591. In that same year at least seven large ships which had been used in the Levant and were to be so used again were at sea on privateering ventures: the Centurion, Cherubin, Golden Noble, Margaret and John, Mayflower, Susan, and Tiger, ranging in burden from 170 to 300 tons.⁶²

62 Andrews, Privateering, pp. 243-9.

In April of that same year the Merchant Royal set out as part of James Lancaster's first expedition to the Indies. It returned to England before the rest of its companion ships⁶³ and by January 1593 was at Leghom [260/ on a merchant's voyage and possibly went further into the Levant. In 1594 the Royal Exchange and the Mayflower, in 1595 the Alcedo, in 1597 the Ascension,⁶⁴ all ships used in the Levant trade, were on privateering ventures and there were probably others. Aside from the removal of these ships from their use in legitimate trade it should be noted that many of them were set out by members of the Levant Company, especially Cordell, Banning and Garraway. These privateering ventures may have absorbed that capital which would otherwise have been invested in the Levant trade, thus reducing the size of that trade from time to time. This last conclusion, however, is quite speculative. The above discussion is not set forth to prove that the Shipping List contains a view of shipping which is not open to doubt. Rather it is intended to show that there were at work circumstances which would lead one to expect irregular fluc-

63 The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster, ed. by Sir William Foster, London, 1940, pp. 1, 4.

64 Andrews, op. cit., p. 76.

tuations in the number of ships in the Levant trade from year to year. It should be remembered also that decisions about shipping in this trade were taken by the individual merchants and not by the Company. Thus there was no overall policy about the number of ships that went out each year. As pointed out above, if a merchant-ship owner decided upon an alternative use for his vessel, then it was not laded for the Levant.

By the same reasoning the total value of goods and money sent to the Levant each year was not determined by a common decision but rather by individual decisions based on capital available, success with previous investments, alternative uses for capital, and news received in London about the market. These all had to be weighed and balanced before a final decision was reached by each individual merchant. To a certain extent wealthier merchants who carried on a substantial trade and maintained one or more factors had to trade every year in order to support their establishments both in London and in the Levant. The extent of this problem can be seen from a list of the Levant Company members and their servants compiled in June 1600.⁶⁵ There are 83 members listed of which 17

65 Cal. Salis. X, pp. 214ff.

each had five or more servants which came to about 60% of the Company's servants - Edward Holmden had twelve and William Garraway and John Eldred each had nine. Some of the servants listed were, of course, resident in London and functioned to keep up the home end of the business. They, undoubtedly, could be supported by other branches of a merchant's activities as well. But those in the Levant were dependent on their master's continued investment in that trade. In only one case does the list distinguish between the two groups of servants. For Richard Stapers it states he had "7 persons on the other side of the Streights" and six other servants - presumably in London. Below these merchants there were 22 others each of whom had four or fewer servants. Finally, there were those who pooled their resources and used the services of only one factor among them. John Hanger, best known as John Sanderson's servant, also served Ralph Fitch, Hewet Stapers, and William Wastall. William Gourney and William Yeoworde each served five different merchants, and Owen Trewe was factor for eight merchants. In the case of these latter merchants, it is clear that no one of them was under the same compulsion to maintain an investment in the trade as were the greater merchants.

Some of this is reflected in the few glimpses there are of the relative amounts traded by some of the merchants. In 1594, when the Hercules departed from Scanderoon, 75% of the value of its cargo was accounted for by Edward Holmden, John Spencer and William Garraway.⁶⁶ In 1595 when the Susan departed from London for the Levant 63.5% of its cargo was accounted for by Paul Banning and some associates, his brother Andrew, and Thomas Cordell, out of a total of 13 merchants listed. At the same time 51.5% of the cargo of the Royal Exchange was accounted for by Thomas Cordell and William Garraway out of 14 merchants listed.⁶⁷ When this ship returned to London in May 1596 the same two merchants accounted for 51.4% of its cargo out of a total of 20 merchants. [Appendix B/ Each of the above merchants is included among those 17 mentioned who had five or more servants. Clearly the trade was concentrated in the hands of a relatively few wealthy merchants. No doubt the concentration was not as narrow as would seem from the evidence of the cargoes cited here, since some of those known to be active in the trade do not appear to have laded on these few ships.

66 PRO:SPF Levant 109 f. 16. 67 PRO:Customs Account 218/16.

The Company attempted to control this aspect of the trade by setting a maximum stint for a merchant of £4000 per year.⁶⁸ In the late 1590's four "stinters" were appointed: Thomas Cordell, Henry Anderson, Leonard Poore, and Nicholas Leate.⁶⁹ Also there were laid down regulations for the stint of currants but the details are not given.⁷⁰ The possibility is open that the £4000 per year refers to currants alone but this is not clear from the context of the "Standinge Ordenaunces". In the cargo of the Royal Exchange [Appendix B/ the goods of William Garraway are officially valued at £3900 thus the real value would easily be over the £4000 allowed on a merchant's stint unless it be accepted that the stint was only for currants; or that the Company did not enforce the rule.

Questions about the total trade can be raised again and some new evidence brought to bear on them; but, still no conclusive answers provided. The Company's export of kerseys is shown in Table III. These figures from the Customs Accounts are the result of the provision in the letters patent that the Company's customs payments need not be paid in full until six months after goods are

68 BM:Harl. 306 f. 72.

69 Ibid., f. 74v.

70 Ibid., f. 72.

entered in the Customs House. The very low figures of 4500 kerseys in 1592 can be explained by the fact that the accounting for customs purposes only began with the granting of the privilege which was in January 1592. But the major shipping period was during the three or four months preceeding that, thus a large number of the kerseys shipped that year would not have been included. In subsequent years the number increased, reaching a high of 21,000 in 1596. There is not enough detailed information about the market to explain why there were such differences from year to year. The overall pattern seems to indicate a growth to about 18,000 or 20,000 per year. If this is translated into notional short cloths it can be compared to the few figures available from the early seventeenth century.⁷¹ Such a comparison shows little growth above this level to 1622. During the 1590's there is little doubt that about 90% of the cloth exported to the Levant was kerseys. Only for 1598 can the total be broken down. In that year 6784 notional short cloths were exported by the Levant Company of which 750 were broadcloths and the remainder kerseys.⁷² The literary

71 B. E. Supple, Commercial Crisis and Change, 1964, p. 258.

72 PRO:SPD Eliz. 268 no. 101.

evidence makes almost no references to broadcloth and it is safe to assume that its portion of the total remained about the same.⁷³ The evidence from the first two decades of the next century indicates this proportion changed radically. In 1601 Suffolk broadcloth alone accounted for one-fourth of the cloth exported to the Levant and Italy, in 1620 this had risen to over one-half, in 1622 it was just below one-half, and in 1628 was just over one-third.⁷⁴ If other types of broadcloth were also exported, then the portion of kerseys would be even smaller. This shift from kerseys to broadcloth has been explained in terms of the development of the English cloth finishing industry which broadened the market for English cloth and successful price competition with Venetian cloth based on the lower~~er~~ cost of labor in England.⁷⁵

Exports other than cloth have left an itemized record in only two cases. These indicate that such ex-

73 In light of this it must be cautioned that other figures for kerseys exported by the Company should be reduced slightly since they contain a small number of broadcloths.

74 Supple, op. cit., p. 258 and 267.

75 Ralph Davis, "England and the Mediterranean, 1570-1670", in Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England, 1961, pp. 122-4.

ports were basically unchanged in their character from the 1580's, though there were a few additions. For the year ending Michaelmas 1599 there is a record of the goods shipped from London to Venice, the Venetian islands and the Turkish ports. These consisted of tin, lead, iron wire, pewter, black conyskins, sheepskins, lambskins, sasaparilla, and re-exports of ebony and brazilwood. The official value of the goods going to Venice was £3240.4^s8^d and of those going to the other Levant ports was £4278.6^s4^d.⁷⁶ For the year ending Michaelmas 1604 the official value of goods/^{other}than cloth laded for Venice was £1250.10^s and for Zante £2124.2^s.⁷⁷ These were carried on three ships and no other goods were listed going to Levant ports. Among these goods were the usual English exports, but in addition there was a large quantity of re-exports from the Muscovy trade, such as tallow, caviar, furs - in particular sable - and various skins. It was noted above that in 1596 Elizeus Sothern had some Muscovy hides on hand in Aleppo for which he was testing the market. Evidently the market proved fairly good not only for hides but

76 T. S. Willan, "Some aspects of English trade with the Levant in the sixteenth century", EHR, vol. lxx, p. 409.

77 PRO:Port Book 12/3.

also for a variety of other Russian commodities. In 1604 many Levant merchants also shipped goods to Leghorn. There is no way of knowing if this represented any greater quantity than usual but with only three ships specifically designated for the Levant the number going to Leghorn in particular stands out. Furthermore many of the Levant merchants were shipping to Leghorn exactly the same goods that were going to Venice and Zante. On the one hand, this may have been related to the fact that the letters patent had been given up by the Company in a controversy with the King and were not replaced until 1605. It is not possible to do more than suggest that this may have altered some usual shipping patterns. It did have the effect of opening the door to a few merchants, whose names appear in the Port Book, who were not members of the Company. On the other hand this shipping to Leghorn was almost certainly also related to the problem of raising credits to pay for eastern imports. But before considering this question, two other points should be raised. One concerns another type of export to Leghorn and the second is a re-examination of the question concerning the balance of imports over exports in this trade.

First it should be observed that throughout the

1590's various of the Levant merchants were in the habit of lading herring from Yarmouth and Harwich to Leghorn and sometimes other west Mediterranean ports. In 1590 William Harborne and Henry Colthurst were shipping red herring to Marseilles and Leghorn.⁷⁸ In 1593 Richard Stapers was doing the same;⁷⁹ in 1596 Paul Banning and Edward Holmden,⁸⁰ in 1599 Thomas Norden, Richard Stapers, Francis Dorrington, and Henry Anderson;⁸¹ and in 1600, 1601, and 1602 all these and several other Levant merchants are listed as exporters of herring to Leghorn.⁸² In addition Stapers also exported herring and Newfoundland fish to Leghorn from Dartmouth in 1599.⁸³ Only a few ships are found going directly to the Levant Company ports with fish; the Merchant Bonaventure [358/], and the Phoenix of London [365/] in 1598; the latter ship again in 1599 [376/]; the Swallow of Ipswich, from that port in 1599 [387/]; the Hope of London [394/] and the Susan Parnell [402/] in 1599; from then on the incidence of such voyages is higher. Reservations must always be held about the full incidence of any particular shipping pattern because of the uncertain nature of the evidence.

78 PRO: Port Book 476/8.

80 Ibid., 478/22.

82 Ibid., 480/12, 481/2, 482/9.

79 Ibid., 478/2.

81 Ibid., 480/1.

83 Ibid., 937/8.

It is clear that the greatest amount of fish was exported to Leghorn but that some went directly to the Levant ports, the quantity increasing from 1599 onwards. Finally, it can be observed that there is no record of fish ever being exported directly to the Ottoman ports, nor is there any mention of fish in any of the letters to and from Turkey and Syria.

The second problem, a re-examination of the question of the balance of imports over exports, produces the same answer as it did for the 1580's but there is a little more evidence and thus the conclusion for the 1590's is on firmer ground. The only detailed list for an incoming cargo in the 1590's is that of the Royal Exchange which entered London in May 1596 [Appendix B/. The official value of its cargo was £13,423.16^s11^d. The real value was higher than this, perhaps by a factor of two. This question is discussed in some detail in Chapter ~~III~~^{IV}. There is fortunately a record of the ad valorem duties paid on the cargo of the same ship in its outward voyage. This shows an official value of £2320 on such goods as paid that duty. At the same time the Great Susan carried goods officially valued at £2300.⁸⁴ But

84 PRO:Customs Account 218/16.

there is no knowledge of the quantity of cloth carried by the ship. Though there are figures for total cloth exports there are none for the quantity carried by a particular ship. The closest one can come is with the report of George Dorrington to Sanderson in June 1597 that the Royal Exchange and Great Susan had arrived in Syria carrying 11,000 kerseys.⁸⁵ There are one or two further clues to this question of the balance of trade to be found in the accounts kept by Michael Lok when he was consul at Aleppo. Based on consoledge of 2% the value of goods both inward and outward on the three ships Ascencion, Centurion, and Consent in 1593 was about £40,000.⁸⁶ But this cannot be broken down between imports and exports. However, in 1594, also based on consoledge, the value of the cargoes inward of the Hercules and Susan was about £1600 and that outward about £11,500 for the Hercules and £900 for the Susan.⁸⁷ The inward figure seems rather low and may be simply a reflection of incomplete collection of consoledge or the unloading of part of the cargo elsewhere. Finally in 1596 the Levant Company reported to the government that it was expecting certain ships to return from Syria, Turkey and

85 Foster, Sanderson, p. 172.

86 PRO:SPF Levant 109 f. 16.

87 Ibid.

the Venetian ports. The Company estimated that the total customs inward paid on the cargoes of these ships would come to about £5300. This would represent an official value of £106,000 and a real value considerably higher.⁸⁸ Even barring the undoubted exaggeration in that figure it represents a value of imports which it is difficult to imagine was matched by exports. The evidence above is patchy, open to reservations and sometimes ambiguous, but despite this, it is abundantly clear that the value of goods imported by the Levant merchants greatly exceeded that of those exported.

Thus again the question comes up of how the Levant merchants raised the purchasing power to pay the difference between their sales and purchases. It will be recalled that the Turkey merchants faced the same problem and in Chapter III ^{IV} it was tentatively concluded that money raised in one branch of trade was transferred to the Venetian Islands and to the Turkish ports to pay for purchases. It should be reiterated here that no evidence has appeared which contradicts the statement made earlier that money for this purpose was not transferred by bills of exchange, There were, of course, bills in use as has

88 PRO:SPF Turkey 2 f. 235.

been seen above but these were solely for transfers within the Company and not for the purpose of bringing money in from outside. Furthermore, except for those few which were used for transferring money between Aleppo and Constantinople, all the bills were taken up in the Levant and drawn on London. The Company, itself, did not like to pay for its housekeeping operations with bills. This is probably one of the reasons it instituted the system of levying imprest money. A general court passed a regulation related specifically to this when it decreed that the consoldge of 2% inward and 2% outward in Turkey should be paid all at once when goods are returned home. The purpose was to avoid the sending of money to Turkey by exchange.⁸⁹ A reflection of this was seen above in John Sanderson's complaints about the difficulty of collecting money before sales were made.

The major problem, however, was finding the money with which to make purchases. The evidence indicates that this was carried aboard ships from Venice and other ports to the west in the form of ready money. This ready money is actually to be seen in only two cases. In 1596

89 BM:Harl. 306 f. 73.

the George Bonaventure [314/], going from Venice to Chios, was captured by some Spanish galleys and 70,000 ducats taken from her.⁹⁰ Then in 1600 Henry Anderson was reported to have dispatched 4000 Spanish rials of eight to Zante.⁹¹ Where Anderson's money originated is not stated; possibly Marseilles since he is known to have conducted business there. These two instances are the only evidence of the physical presence of ready money being transferred to Levant Ports. There are, though, one or two interesting references which lend greater credence to the existence of the general practice. In June 1596 George Dorrington in Aleppo wrote to John Sanderson in Constantinople that "God sendinge the Minion from Venis, I hope we shall have some money to put awaye our comodities..."⁹² In the same letter Dorrington expressed some of the frustration the merchants felt when they were short of money. He reported that four Venetian ships had arrived with both money and commodities and three more were expected soon. In addition some French ships were reported on the way and the prices of commodities were thus expected to rise. All of which provoked him to comment that "So they with their

90 CSP Ven. 1603-07, p. 80.

91 Ibid.

92 Foster, Sanderson, p. 148.

money shall doe what they please, and we with our tinne and kersies what we can". The most conclusive evidence testifying to this practice is that the Company found it necessary to place limitations upon it. One of its ordinances stated that "He that maketh over to Turkie from forreine partes anie more money then the one halfe of his stinte shall forfeite after the rate of X pro C. for soe much as he exceedeth".⁹³ Subsequently another ordinance was passed stating that "He that sendeth money or bulleyn out of the land shall forfeit his freedome".⁹⁴ The second of these regulations is no more than an affirmation of already existing government regulations. The first is not this, but it is reasonable to suggest that it was passed in response to concern shown on the part of the government. Throughout the Elizabethan period Burghley and his exchequer officials showed continued interest in the balance of trade. They could not have been unaware of the general state of this balance in the Levant trade and probably communicated their concern to the Company. It would be no more than politic for the Company to respond in some conspicuous way. The seriousness of the Company's intent could only be

93 BM:Harl. 306 f. 73.

94 Ibid., f. 74.

tested by the degree to which it tried to enforce the regulation; the government would find it extremely difficult to check on this. Similarly the present day historian has no way of knowing the extent to which the Company tried to enforce this regulation. But it may be instructive to point out that there is nothing which indicates that the Company ever thought that limiting the transfer of foreign credits to Turkey would be of any benefit to its commercial operations. In fact, all that can be learned about this trade points toward the conclusion that it would have been vastly simplified if English exports could have been kept to a minimum and Asian goods bought with ready money. That the Company had to re-affirm a government regulation against the export of money and bullion certainly reflects the pressure that must have been felt along the above lines. A reflection seen also in the Company's effective admission that, at best, only half of its imports were paid for by sales in Turkey. In fact, it is safe to conclude that the real ratio of the value of the Company's imports to exports was closer to three or four to one.

A final consideration in the Levant Company's affairs is its currant trade. The role currants played

in bringing to an end the letters patent of 1592 is well known and will require here only a few comments. First, though, it might be well to try to gauge approximately what quantity of currants was imported into England. As with so much such information in sixteenth century trade the information is incomplete and ambiguous. In a well known document, Richard Carmarden, a surveyor of the customs at London, compiled a record of the currants imported by strangers and Englishmen upon which was paid an impost of 5^s6^d cwt. from 1591/2 to 1598/9.⁹⁵ These were currants imported by those not free of the Levant Company. The average quantity was 880 tons per year ranging from a low of 624 tons in 1595/96 to a high of 1018 tons in 1598/99. The strangers share of these imports was an average of 10% over the eight years, ranging from nothing in 1592/3 to 27% in 1596/7. The question to be considered is what portion of total currant imports is represented by the above. There is only one year for which a direct comparison can be made. Sometime after 1592 Alderman Billingsley, an official of the customs house, reported to Lord Burghley the quantity of currants imported to London for each of the three years running

95 PRO:SPD Eliz. 272 no. 127.

from 9 May 1589 to 9 May 1592.⁹⁶ These figures are not exactly comparable to those based on the Exchequer year but they give some indication of the relationship looked for here. For the year beginning May 1591 Billingsley reported a total import of 1693 tons of currants. For the year beginning Michaelmas 1591 Carmarden reported an import of currants of 947 tons by those not free of the Levant Company. The latter is 56% of the total - a surprisingly high figure which would probably be altered by an exact correspondence of dates. The other figures reported by Billingsley are also instructive. First the average for all three years is an import of 1800 tons per year. However, in the first year - May 1589 to May 1590 - there were 3054 tons of currants imported. During the next twelve months there were 762 tons imported. What must have happened is perfectly clear. The year 1589/90 was the first during which the trade was open after the expiration of both the Turkey and Venice Company patents. The 3000 tons represent the result of unrestrained trade. The 760 tons represent the result of a glutted market. Finally, the 1700 tons for 1591/2 represent something close to the

96 BM:Lans. 71 no. 11.

real English market for currants. There is other evidence that bears on this last point. When the whole question of this trade was at issue, early in the next reign, a number of petitions and memoranda were directed to the government with respect to it. In one of these it was stated that the customs records would show about 1100 tons imported in 1600, 1200 tons in 1601, and 1400 tons in 1602 with probably another 200 or 300 tons concealed from the customers.⁹⁷ In 1633 the Levant Company placed a limit of 2200 tons per year on the import of currants. A quantity it thought to be the maximum the market would bear.⁹⁸ The actual import of currants in 1634 was 2005 tons, in 1638 2262 tons, and in 1640 1622 tons.⁹⁹ Thus the import of currants during the period of the 1590's and first decades of the seventeenth century would seem to have fluctuated between 1600 and 2200 tons per year. Based on these limits the average import of 880 tons per year during the 1590's by those outside the Levant Company, represents about 40% to 55% of the

97 PRO:SPD James I, 10 no. 26.

98 Wood, op. cit., p. 70 no. 4.

99 These figures were compiled from the London Port Books by Mr. Robert Brenner for a Princeton University doctoral thesis on the seventeenth century London merchant community. Mr. Brenner was kind enough to communicate some of the results of his research to the present writer.

total import of currants. This portion is surprisingly large. It raises a number of questions none of which can be answered. The evidence of the 1580's suggests that the portion imported then by strangers was much smaller and that the amount imported by English non-members of the Venice Company was minute. The lading of the Royal Exchange in 1596 [Appendix B] does not include goods by non-members of the Company. There are no surviving London Port Books for the 1590's which would have recorded the import of currants. Thus there is no record of who imported these currants nor where they were originally laded. What few records there are do not suggest a trade of this size being conducted by native non-members of the Company. In the absence of evidence the most reasonable explanation is that much of what was imported as the merchandize of Englishmen was really that of aliens entered falsely at the customs house. There were complaints about this same practice in the export of cloth and there is no reason to suppose it was not done in other branches of trade. However, this is speculation and the question remains unanswered.

There is no doubt on a related issue; that of the role of an imposition on currants as a reason for annulling the Company patent in 1600. The sequence of events

relating to the lifting of the patent and the granting of a new one in December 1600 and again in November 1605 has been fairly well related by Dietz and Epstein.¹⁰⁰ But a few comments can be added to what already has been said. Some point has been made of the fact that the patent was lifted because the collection of impost money was illegal. Rowland, Epstein, and Wood all state this,¹⁰¹ though each somewhat less positively than his predecessor. Continuing this line of thought it can be stated here that there is little evidence the government tried to make out a case for the illegality of these imposts; further, that there probably were no grounds for such a case in the first place. It was pointed out above, in some detail, that such imposts had been collected before under the authority of the government. Further, that the letters patent all contained a clause to the effect that the companies could license outsiders to import goods from the areas of the monopolies. Epstein did not see how such a clause could carry the suggested authority; Wood thought it might imply such an authority.¹⁰²

100 F. C. Dietz, English Public Finance, 1558-1640, 1932, pp. 326-30; Epstein, op. cit., chap. V.

101 Rowland, op. cit., p. 173; Epstein, op. cit., pp. 43-4; Wood, op. cit., pp. 35-6.

102 Epstein, op. cit., p. 44; Wood, op. cit., p. 35.

It is difficult to understand why the explicit authority to enter a licensing agreement excludes the right to collect a licensing fee. Even as early as 1575, when the English merchants were objecting to Velutelli's use of his licensing authority, they never once suggested that he did not have the legal right to charge a fee or impost; they based their objections on other considerations.

The formal order annulling the Levant Company's patent has not survived so its terms are not known. There is, however, one memorandum in which the reason given for calling in the 1592 patent is that "...wee were named merchaunts of the Levant, and should have bin called merchaunts trading of the Levant".¹⁰³ The new patent of December 1600¹⁰⁴ changed the name of the new company to "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the Levant Seas". This difference, though technically a real one, seems hardly a sufficient one, alone, on which to annul a grant of royal privilege. If it was the formal reason given for the action then it can only be concluded that it was merely a legalism and

103 PRO:SPD James I, 6 no. 69.

104 Cecil T. Carr, Select Charters of Trading Companies, 1530-1707, 1913, pp. 30-43.

was the only ground in law which the crown could find upon which to lift the patent. A contemporary critic of the Company stated that it had no "expresse warrant given them by their said priviledg" to levy an impost on those not free of the Company.¹⁰⁵ At the same time a supporter of the Company explained that Mr. Carmarden, the surveyor of the customs, observed the large sums of money collected by means of this impost and brought it to the attention of the Queen to point out that the Company "did wronge her Majestie, in using her prerogative Royall to laye an imposition uppon merchantdize..." Thus the "saide graunte of priviledge was called in question and made voide".¹⁰⁶ Whether or not this impost really violated the royal prerogative is probably a matter of interpretation. It would, however, be a different matter than the point about whether or not the licensing clause of the 1592 patent implied the legal right to levy a licensing fee. The 1600 patent states that the earlier one was found "to be doubtful and questionable in law". This could refer to any of the several points at issue. One point was corrected by changing the name as indicated above. Another point,

105 PRO:SPD James I, 10 no. 27.

106 PRO:SPD James I, 20 no. 25.

that of the right to license was mentioned twice in the new patent. In the first instance it reads as in the past instances: that all foreigners are prohibited from bringing into England currants, olive oil or wine of Candia "unless it be by and with such license and agreement" of the Company.¹⁰⁷ In the second instance the terms of the license are made more explicit. The patent states that to encourage "merchant strangers and others" to import those commodities, the Company is granted the right to give licenses for the purpose "for any consideration or benefit to be taken to their own use".¹⁰⁸ This refers only to foreign merchants, however, and that clause in the patent which prohibits the trade to other English merchants does not, as it did in the earlier patents, waive this prohibition upon a license from the Company. This omission suggests that its earlier inclusion was at least legal ground upon which the Company could claim the right to collect an impost. Whether or not the government had in mind that such would happen is not clear. Probably it did not and so deleted the clause in the new patent while at the same time strengthening the Company's position vis-à-vis foreign merchants.

107 Carr, op. cit., p. 39.

108 Ibid., p. 40.

It is clear that the government had knowledge of the impost collected from foreign merchants for it received petitions from the crew of Venetian ships asking to be excused from paying it.¹⁰⁹ Whatever the legal technicalities involved in the case of these imposts it is fairly clear that the reason for calling in the patent was that the government saw it as a new source of income. The crown was in need of money both because of the war with Spain and the troubles in Ireland. Carmarden's report that the amount collected by the Company over an eight year period averaged £4848.10^s per year certainly must have seemed to the hard pressed government an easy source of increased revenue. The fact that the only basic change in the new patent was provision for an annual payment to the crown of £4000 leaves little doubt about this.¹¹⁰

The £4000 per year was paid until Elizabeth's death,

109 There are documents testifying to this knowledge dated February 1592 (BM:Lans. 81 no. 20), June 1595 (BM:Lans. 78 no. 87), and November 1596 (BM:Lans. 81 no. 19).

110 Dietz, op. cit., p. 326 sees this as the motive, though he seems to accept the illegality of the impost. It is to be noted with respect to this that the Company could hardly have collected the impost without the knowledge of the customs officials and that Carmarden could hardly have compiled the information without reference to the customs records.

at which time the Company relinquished its patent while still owing the crown £2000. Its real reason for doing this, though never stated, can only be the hope that it might be able to negotiate more favorable terms with James I. Certainly one of the Company's chief aims was to persuade the crown to assume support of the English diplomatic establishment in Turkey. Added to that issue was the great outcry against monopolies of the early seventeenth century. All these questions are reflected in a great number of petitions, counter-petitions and memoranda directed to the government up to 14 December 1605 when a new patent was issued to the Levant Company.¹¹¹ The arguments and counter-arguments are summed up by Epstein¹¹² and in the end the new patent struck a compromise. In part the 1605 patent is a recognition of the fact that unless the crown were willing to underwrite the diplomatic costs of maintaining the trade itself, it would have to give the merchants the authority to collect some form of dues from among themselves for that purpose. This could only be done by creating a company with the power to discipline its members to that end. The reconstituted Levant Company was thus explicitly

111 It is printed in Epstein, op. cit., pp. 153-210.

112 Op. cit., pp. 47-57.

given the right to levy imposts on goods carried out of or into England and likewise out of or into the ports of the Turkish and Venetian dominions.¹¹³ No mention is made in the charter of any right to license non-members of the Company to engage in the trade. This possibly is a consequence of an open admission policy to the Company.

The preamble to the patent stated the principles upon which admission was to be based and reflects the anti-monopolistic feeling of the time:

"...we being desierous not onely to uphold and mayntayne the trade and traffique of our Kingdomes for the increase of our navigation and the benifit of our subjects but by the best means we may devise to advance and enlarge the same have resolved hereafter not to appropriate the said trade of the Signore of Venice and Turkey to any lymited nombre of merchants nor to anie one cittie towne or place within these our realmes and Domyinions nor to suffer the same to be used or enjoyed in anie degree of monopoly but to lay open the same to all our loving subjects using onely the trade of marchandize whoe are willing to enter into the said trade upon such reasonable tearmes and condicions as shall necessarily belong to the supporte of the same."¹¹⁴

The patent laid down complicated details with re-

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- 113 Epstein, op. cit., p. 189. A list of the rates in force in the 1630's is printed on pp. 232-38.
 114 Epstein, op. cit., p. 154. Quoted also by Wood, op. cit. p. 40.

spect to admission but in the end they amount to the fact that any mere merchant, over 26 years of age and out of his apprenticeship, could enter the Company upon payment of £25 within a year of becoming 26 and £50 after that. There were also a number of categories of persons who could enter for less. This open admission policy, aside from being a reflection of anti-monopolistic feeling on principle, may also have been a reflection of some practical pressure from those who took advantage of the period when there was no organized trade. There is evidence that even during the very short time there was no patent in 1599/1600, efforts were made by outsiders to enter the trade. In August 1600 Buckhurst, the Lord Treasurer, wrote to the customers of Bristol to the effect that he understood there were six ships there lading for the Levant. However, because the Queen was about to renew the privileges of the Levant Company they, the customers, were to prohibit those ships from leaving for the Levant Ports and require each to enter a £1000 bond for compliance.¹¹⁵ There is also evidence that in 1604 non-members of the Company were conducting a trade to the Levant ports.¹¹⁶ It was seen earlier that similar

115 BM:Cotton, Nero BVII, f. 185.

116 PRO: Port Book 12/3 where goods are entered for Venice and Zante in the names of non-members. Also PRO:Exchequer, Accounts Various, 467 (actually a Port Book) where currants are entered from Venice in the names of non-members.

pressure existed in 1592 and may have been an element in determining the financial structure of the first Levant Company. A similar situation probably played its part in the open admission policy of 1605. In the long run the open policy proved to be a fiction. The specialized knowledge necessary for this trade required that for a merchant to be successful he first had to serve an apprenticeship. The Company was able to restrict admission to apprenticeship and thus largely control and limit its effective membership.¹¹⁷ With some changes in 1661 and again in 1753, the charter of 1605 remained the Levant Company's legal basis for existence until its dissolution in 1825.

The final episode in the Elizabethan trade to Asia was the formation of the East India Company in 1600 with a trade based on a sea route to the Indies. It has been pointed out several times in this study that the English merchants always desired to make direct commercial contact with India and east Asia. In view of this it might be well to ask why nearly 50 years passed between the first effort in 1553 and success in 1601.

117 Epstein, op. cit. pp. 104-8 makes some few remarks about this. This conclusion, based on more thorough research, is made more explicit in the work by Brenner cited above.

Attempts to reach the Indies were made from time to time during Elizabeth's reign both by the trading companies concerned and by others outside the companies. The companies confined their activities to the overland routes and the Northeast Passage. Those outside the companies limited their activities to finding one of the other three sea routes to the Indies. The repeated failure of these attempts to establish a trade using the desired route provoke an inquiry for explanations. The explorations of the trading companies have been examined above. It is sufficient to observe here that their failures were due to conditions and circumstances beyond their control. In the Northeast Passage they were stopped by ice and fog. In the overland routes they were stopped largely by political problems arising in the intervening territories. The failure of those outside the companies is related to the question of why the companies, themselves, did not undertake to use one of the other sea routes. Lack of success here cannot be attributed so easily to circumstances beyond the control of those involved. Space does not permit a detailed examination of each voyage for the Indies. But a few general remarks about them should suffice to point up some of the reasons for failure. Perhaps the most basic

is that most of these expeditions did not represent serious attempts to establish a commercial route. An immediate criticism of this point is that a route must be found before it can be used for trade and that much of the purpose of these expeditions was supposedly to find such a route. It has been pointed out already how the need to explore and exploit at the same time placed an inhibition on the activities of the Muscovy and Turkey Companies. But with respect to the present problem such an inhibition would only have been applicable in the case of the northwest route because the two southern routes were known and their exploration was not a basic, preliminary requirement. The East India Company was confident enough to commit a trading capital of £28,600 in money and goods for its very first voyage.¹¹⁸ It is no doubt true that from the point of view of navigation, the East India Company benefited from the earlier voyages. But even with the first of these Cape voyages, that of Edward Fenton in 1582, there was no question that the route did exist and in which direction it lay. This was not so with the northwest. The three voyages of John Davis from 1585 to 1587 were serious and well

118 Chaudhuri, The English East India Company, p. 115.

run efforts to discover a sea passage to the north of America. That they failed was not the fault of their intent or conduct. This was so, as well, with Martin Frobisher's first voyage in 1576. His subsequent voyages, in 1577 and 1578, however, cannot be taken seriously as attempts at exploration. Their main purpose was to scavenge for what was thought to be gold and silver ore.

A similar purpose would seem to have been behind most of the voyages which headed into the South Atlantic. Though ostensibly to establish the English in the Indies, their real motives were fame, glory, and quick wealth through the plunder of Spanish shipping. This was the case with Drake, Fenton, Cavendish, Chidley and Lancaster.¹¹⁹ It is less clear with the voyage of the Samaritan of Dartmouth in 1590 intended for "the East India".¹²⁰ Which way it planned to go is not known be-

119 For Drake see K. R. Andrews, Drake's Voyages, 1967; for Fenton E. G. R. Taylor, The Troublesome Voyage of Captain Edward Fenton, 1582-83, 1959; for Cavendish, Foster, England's Quest, Chap. XI; for Chidley, K. R. Andrews, English Privateering Voyages to the West Indies, 1588-1595, 1959, pp. 59-85; for Lancaster, Sir William Foster, The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies, 1591-1603, 1940.

120 Foster, Sanderson, pp. 8-9 and 54-55. These brief entries in Sanderson's letter book are the only source for this voyage.

cause storms and damage received in an encounter with Spanish ships forced her to return home from Madeira. Fenton's voyage was intended officially to establish the first English trading station in the East Indies sailing by way of the Cape of Good Hope.¹²¹ But Fenton, and others of his party, subverted this intention and turned the enterprise into an expedition for plunder. Lancaster's voyage of 1591 was not designed as a trading venture¹²² though it did follow the Cape route. The voyages of Cavenish and Chidley were attempts to emulate the exploits of Drake's circumnavigation. It can be doubted that any voyage attempting the Indies route by way of the Straights of Magellan had serious intentions of establishing trade. Though Magellan's ships made clear in 1519 that the route existed his expedition also made clear that it was not a viable commercial route.

A final point to be made about the lack of serious commercial intent in most of these voyages is their lack of serious mercantile backing and the presence of substantial non-mercantile backing. Detailed lists of the backers of these voyages do not exist in all cases, thus generalizations about them are open to correction. It

121 Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. xxvii.

122 Andrews, English Privateering Voyages, p. 214.

can be said that though merchants did invest in these ventures they usually did so in the spirit of adventure - as a gamble on which one might make an easy and substantial profit. When merchants had serious commercial intentions they did not try to realize them by investing their capital in expeditions inspired by adventurers and courtiers. Instead they undertook the entire operation themselves and confined participation to mere merchants. Some of the difference in point of view of merchants and gentlemen comes out in George Best's account of Frobisher's first voyage. He states that Frobisher tried a long time to persuade some merchants to support his idea for finding the Northwest Passage "But perceyving that hardly he was hearkened unto of the Merchantes, whiche never regarde Vertue, withoute sure, certayne, and present gaynes, hee repayred to the Courte..."¹²³ The voyages of Edward Fenton was supposed to have a legitimate commercial objective and thus had the support of some Muscovy merchants who supervised the preparations. Their fears and apprehensions about the kind of men who went along came out when they proposed "That noe other gentlemen be appointed to goe on the voiage but the three captaines specified, the rest to

123 Richard Collinson, The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher, 1867, p. 70.

be Factors and meere Seamen: for avoyadance of superfluous charge and hinderance of the voiage...".¹²⁴ Five merchants did go along and Fenton found them very irritating because they insisted the voyage be carried out according to the official instructions.¹²⁵ The merchant's experience with Fenton must have made it clear to them that they could not really hope to open up a sea route for legitimate trade to the Indies in association with those who were not merchants. To achieve their ends they would need complete control of the operation from its very beginning with the power and authority to follow through with its continuation.

There is no certain knowledge that any of the merchant groups involved in the Asian trade attempted to establish a sea going trade to the Indies before 1600. There is a petition submitted to the crown in 1589 with a proposal for such a venture. Nothing came of it and its authors were not identified. However, the three ships they proposed to use were owned by Paul Banning and Thomas Cordell and it is thus likely they, at least, and possibly other Venice merchants, were behind the pro-

124 Taylor, Fenton, p. 18.

125 Ibid., p. xxxv.

posal.¹²⁶ It will be remembered that in 1589 both the Turkey and Venice Company patents had expired and the whole issue of the continuation of the trade was under discussion. Perhaps the final decision of the Venice merchants to join with the Turkey merchants in the Levant trade was related to their inability to get this proposed East Indies voyage under way.

There are no comments from the companies about their attitude toward the sea route to Asia, so it cannot be known with any certainty why they did not attempt it. Before the union of Portugal with Spain, the English crown was not prepared to antagonize the Portuguese by challenging their claim of monopoly over the Cape route. For this reason the merchants who began the Turkey trade in the 1570's probably did not think seriously of exploiting the Cape route. By the time the government was ready to acquiesce in the use of this route by Englishmen, the Turkey merchants had committed a substantial investment in the Mediterranean route. It is unlikely that they were prepared to disinvest and re-direct their capital; it is equally unlikely that they could have financed the

126 The petition is in Cal. SP. East Indies, 1513-1616, no. 239. It is cited and commented on by Foster, Lancaster, p. xii and Andrews, Elizabethan Privateering, p. 214.

use of both routes at the same time. Furthermore, the Turkey Company's monopoly did not include the Cape route; thus the Turkey merchants would have had to form a separate company for that purpose. A similar situation ensued when the Muscovy Company's Persian trade came to an end. That Company could not encompass the Mediterranean trade in its monopoly but it did retain an interest in the trade by investing in the new company, as did several of its members individually. Possibly a separate company could have been inspired and organized by the Turkey and Levant merchants in the 1580's or 1590's. However, they could not have failed to be aware that to do this would have been to compete with themselves. Perhaps this realization, more than anything else, explains the absence of an organized English trade using the Cape route. Once, however, competition was provided by the Dutch there was nothing more to be gained and everything to be lost by the English if they did not take immediate steps to establish their own East Indies trade based on the Cape route.

In the Levant the reaction of the Company's servants to the news that the Dutch had returned from the East Indies, was one of pessimism and then relief. Pessimism that the Levant trade would fall off and not be able to support itself if the Dutch succeeded in re-routing the

Indies trade. Relief to learn that the Dutch ships carried mainly pepper and cloves and no indigo or nutmegs.¹²⁷ The consul at Aleppo, Richard Colthurst, apparently expressed concern to the Company over the ability of the trade to continue to bear his charges. In March 1600 the Company replied that he should not be overly concerned "for that wee our selves ... are noe way doubtfull of anie preiudice that can spedelie growe unto us by ther discoverie for ther are manie impediments that may hinder ther voiages of soe longe courses and great adventures..."¹²⁸ It is to be doubted that the Company was as sanguine about the matter as it would have Colthurst think. In fact, it was being less than honest with him, for six months earlier the groundwork had been laid for the formation of a new enterprise designed to pursue a trade to the East Indies in the wake of the Dutch.

Though there is no direct evidence on the point there is no reason to question the accepted view that the Levant merchants were the driving and leading force of the East India Company. They clearly stood to lose more than anyone else from the activities of the Dutch.

127 Foster, Sanderson, p. 186, 189, 190; BM: Sloan 867, f. 77.

128 Stevens, op. cit., p. 270.

The latter had succeeded in detaching the spice trade from what was the main stream of Asian trade and the Levant merchants could only step in quickly to capture a share of the market or lose nearly everything. A capital of £30,133.6^s8^d was pledged from among 138 merchants;¹²⁹ 27% of this sum was pledged by 23 merchants who were members of the Levant Company of 1600. There seems to have been no other comparable and identifiable group among the investors, which clearly placed the Levant merchants in a paramount position in the East India Company. In addition the governor of the new company, Thomas Smythe, was also governor of the Levant Company; and eight of the 24 members of the committee were Levant merchants. Throughout the first years of the East India Company's life these Levant merchants played an active and leading part in its affairs.¹³⁰

Because of a delay caused by political considerations the enterprise did not really get under way until the Autumn of 1600 and the first ships, under the direction of James Lancaster, did not sail until February 1601. The Company was apparently so confident of its success, and

129 Ibid., pp. 1-4.

130 This can be seen from a perusal of the first Court Minute Book as printed by Stevens, op. cit.

probably so aware of the head start had by the Dutch, that within six months of Lancaster's departure a proposal was laid before the generality that a new stock be raised for a second voyage. From there the Company proceeded to send out voyage after voyage and to develop and expand the trade in several directions. The subsequent history of the East India Company is beyond the scope of this study and has already been thoroughly explored and analysed.¹³¹ It remains to observe that the success of the Company was built not only upon the careful and detailed planning by professionals and experts but also upon a background of nearly 50 years of experience with trade to Asia. The full extent to which this experience may have benefited the East India merchants can never be known. But in two matters of great importance to the trade the fruit of experience is to be seen. When they petitioned the government for a grant of privileges, in September 1599, they specifically requested that they be incorporated because they could not conduct the trade except in a joint-stock and that they be permitted to transport out of the realm any foreign coin

131 K. N. Chaudhuri, The English East India Company, 1965.

which is brought in by English merchants.¹³² These two points were the basis of the successful conduct of this trade. If the East India Company had not been in a joint-stock its directors could not have maintained the detailed control over its various and complex details that was necessary if the business was to succeed. If the Company could not have re-exported coin it would have had very little purchasing power and there would have been no trade. Enough has been said in this study about the concern of the merchants over both of these problems to make it clear that the East India merchants' plans were the fruition of long experience.

132 This petition is mentioned in the Court Book under 25 September 1599 (Stevens, op. cit., p. 8). A full text of it is in BM:Salisbury Mss. 83 no. 22. The text of the East India Company's letters patent is printed in George Birdwood and William Foster, The First Letter Book of the East India Company, 1600-1619, 1893, pp. 163-189.

APPENDIX A

Biographical Sketches

The biographical sketches included in this section are of the original Turkey and Venice merchants. They are arranged alphabetically without respect to company membership. The sketches include information on the subject's activities in mercantile and public affairs and any other information which may throw light on their position in the company. They do not attempt to present all that is known about each person, though in some cases, because so little is known, they may do so. The sources are given separately for each sketch. Details about a person's office holding in the London government come mainly from A. B. Beaven, The Aldermen of the City of London, 2 vols., 1908-13. This will be cited simply as Beaven, followed by volume and page number. Sources for membership in the various trading companies are given below and not repeated. Sources for Russia Company membership are scattered and so are listed separately within.

Eastland Company	PRO:SPD Eliz. 131 no. 70
Spanish Company	PRO:Patent Roll 19 Eliz. pt. 8
Turkey Company	PRO:Patent Roll 24 Eliz. pt. 13
	Hakluyt V, 192-202
Venice Company	PRO:SPD Eliz. 160 no. 10
Barbary Company	T. S. Willan, <u>Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade</u> , p. 188
Levant Company 1592	Hakluyt VI, 73-92
Levant Company 1600	Carr, <u>Select Charters</u> , pp. 30-43
Levant Company 1605	Epstein, <u>Levant Company</u> , pp. 153-210
East India Company	<u>First Letter Book</u> , pp. 163-189

Table VI

Subsidy Assessments

Following is a table of the assessments for the subsidy for the members of the Turkey and Venice Companies. They are arranged separately by company and listed in the order given in the source for the respective company. Blanks indicate that no assessment has been found. These assessments cannot be used for determining a merchant's wealth but they can be used for comparative purposes.

	Assessment	
	19 Eliz	24 Eliz
<u>Turkey Merchants</u>	£	£
Edward Osborne	250	250
George Barne	240	240
Richard Martin	200	260
Martin Calthorpe	200	300
John Harte		260
William Masham	150	200
John Spencer	300	300
Thomas Smythe	150	150
Richard May	170	180
Richard Saltonstall	200	200
Richard Stapers	90	90
Henry Hewitt	150	170
<u>Venice Merchants</u>	£	£
Thomas Cordell	70	80
Edward Holmden	60	60
Paul Banning	50	100
Richard Glascock	50	50
Robert Sadler		60
William Garraway		120
Henry Anderson	70	100
Andrew Banning		
Edward Lechland		
Henry Farrington		
Thomas Dawkins		
Edward Sadler		
Richard Dassell		
Thomas Trowte		

Sources:

19 Eliz.: PRO: Exchequer Subsidy Roll 145/252
 24 Eliz.: PRO: Exchequer Subsidy Roll 251/16

HENRY ANDERSON: born 1544,¹ died 13 April 1605²

Anderson was a grocer and master of the company in 1599-1600, an alderman from 1601 to 1605, and sheriff in 1601-2. He was knighted 26 July 1603.³ He married a daughter of Francis Bowyer, one of the pioneers of the Morrocan trade and was a brother-in-law of William Garraway.⁴ He was a member of the Venice Company and the Levant Companies of 1592 and 1600. In 1598 he was treasurer of the Levant Company.⁵ In the same year he is also listed as a member of the Russia Company⁶ but there is no indication of when he first entered that trade. He seems to have been only slightly involved with privateering. No record of his trade has survived from before 1588. In that year and the following he imported £240 worth of raw silk from Hamburg, £1266.13.4 worth from Stade, £2232.13.4 worth of goods from Marseille in partnership with Henry Farrington, and £132.10 worth of silk and spices from Venice and Zante.⁷ In 1596 he imported £189.2.9 worth of silk and indigo from Scanderoon.⁸ In December 1598 he exported 50 last of herring to Leghorn and a year later 200 barrels.⁹

1 R. G. Lang, The Greater merchants of London in the early 17th century, B. Litt., Oxford, 1963, p. 357, states that he was 61 at the time of his death.

2 Beaven II, 48

3 Ibid.

- 4 T. S. Willan, Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade, 1959, p.132. 5 BM:Lans. 241 f. 65v.
 6 T. S. Willan, Muscovy Merchants of 1555, 1953, p. 76.
 7 PRO: Port Books 8/1 and 8/4. 8 BM:Lans 81 f. 125v.
 9 PRO: Port Books 480/1 and 480/12.

ANDREW BANNING: born 1547,¹ died 21 December 1610²

Andrew Banning was a member of the Grocers Company. He was sworn an alderman on 26 March 1605 and discharged 16 April 1605 with a fine of £500.³ He was a younger brother of Paul Banning. He never married and in his will left £10,000 plus all his plate, jewels, and household goods to his nephew, Paul. In addition he left £800 to his factor, Jeffry Kirby.⁴ He was a member of the Venice Company, the Levant Companies of 1592, 1600, and 1605, and of the East India Company. As a young man he may have served as factor for his brother Paul. In 1576 goods were entered in the Custom House by Andrew in the name of Paul Banning.⁵ There is no record of his own trade before 1596 when he imported goods from Scanderoon in partnership with William Rowles and his brother, Paul.⁶ In November 1600 he exported 350 barrels of herring to Leghorn and a year later another 600 barrels.⁷

1 PRO:HCA Exam. 20 f. 229v.

3 Beaven I, 158.

5 PRO: Port Book 6/4.

7 PRO: Port Books 481/2 and 482/9.

2 Beaven II, 49.

4 PCC 11 Wood.

6 BM:Lans. 81 f. 125.

PAUL BANNING: born 1545,¹ died 30 September 1616²

Paul Banning was a member of the Grocers Company, an alderman from 1593 to 1602, and sheriff in 1593-4.³

He was the elder brother of Andrew Banning. He was an assistant of the Spanish Company, a member of the Venice Company, the Levant Companies of 1592 and 1600 and one of the committee of the East India Company. The earliest mention of Banning is from 1568 when he was a merchant's factor in Spain.⁴ He seems to have acted as an independent factor in Spain for several years, serving no particular master. He acted at least once, for John Spencer, the future member of the Turkey Company.⁵ During the war with Spain he was one of the most active and influential investors in privateering ventures.⁶ Considering the active career he led there is very little record of his own trade. In 1576 he exported sundry goods to Bayon and Lisbon valued at £511.12.8.⁷ In 1589 he imported currants and oil valued at £1856⁸ and in 1595 with Edward Holmden he exported 50 last of herring to Leghorn.⁹

1 PRO:HCA Exam 28 f. 176.

2 Beaven II, 44.

3 Ibid.

4 PRO:HCA Libels 54 no. 29.

5 HCA:Exams 19 f. 11, 86v, 123v, 127.

6 K. R. Andrews, Elizabethan Privateering, 1964, p. 120. Andrews has a long entry on Banning's career.

7 PRO: Port Book 6/4.

8 PRO: Port Book 8/4.

9 PRO: Port Book 478/22.

SIR GEORGE BARNE: died January 1593¹

Barne was a haberdasher and became master in 1586-7. He was an alderman from 1574 to 1593, sheriff in 1576-77, Lord Mayor in 1586-87, for which he was knighted, and MP for London in 1588-89.² He was a son of Sir George Barne, a charter member of the Russia Company. He married Anne, daughter of William Garrard, one of the leading merchants of his day and also a founding member of the Russia Company. Barne's sister, Anne, was the first wife of Sir Francis Walsingham.³ Barne's name appeared in the charters of the Spanish, Eastland, Turkey, and Levant Companies. He was a member of the Russia Company and was its governor in 1580, 1583, 1591 and 1592.⁴ He and his father-in-law were charter members of the Mineral and Battery Works Company.⁵ As a leading member of the Russia Company he was active in the preparations for Edward Fenton's voyage of 1582 but there is no positive evidence he personally invested in the venture.⁶ He engaged in privateering to a moderate degree.⁷

Barne's trade, as recorded in the Port Books, was primarily with France and Spain to which he exported cloth and cottons and from which he imported raisins, oranges, oil, wine, molasses and other commodities.⁸

and Stapers.⁶ His association with them stems possibly from Sir William Hewitt, Osborne's father-in-law. In his will⁷ Hewitt mentions his apprentice Robert Barrett. William Barrett in his will mentions an uncle and a brother named Robert. It is probable that one of these was Hewitt's apprentice and through him William became acquainted with Osborne who inherited Hewitt's business.

1 Hakluyt VI, 9.

2 PCC 30 Watson

3 In the printed version in Hakluyt his name appears as "Garrett". See supra p. 150.

4 Purchas VIII, 450.

5 PRO:SPD Eliz. 127 no. 73.

6 This point is explained more fully supra p. 125.

7 PCC:Stonarde.

MARTIN CALTHORPE: born 1523,¹ died May 1589²

Calthorpe was a draper and master of the company in 1580-81, 1584-85, and 1587-88. He was an alderman from 1579 to 1588, sheriff in 1579-80, Lord Mayor in 1588-89, and was knighted before 6 March 1589.³ He was a Merchant Adventurer⁴ and a member of the Turkey Company. The only record of his trade shows 258 cloths shipped to Antwerp in September 1559,⁵ 317 cloths to an unknown destination in January 1565,⁶ and 28 cloths to Hamburg in 1571.⁷

1 PRO:HCA Exam 22 f. 272.

2 Beaven II, 40.

3 Ibid. 4 Oskar de Smedt, De Engelse Natie te Antwerpen in de 16 eeuw, 2 vols., 1950-54, II, p. 448.

5 PRO:SPD Eliz. 6 f. 113.

6 PRO: Customs Account 89/8.

7 PRO: Port Book 5/1.

THOMAS CORDELL: born 1537,¹ died April 1612²

Cordell was a member of the Mercer's Company of which he was master in 1605 and 1612. He was an alderman in 1595.³ In 1574 he married the mother of John and Thomas Mun and was responsible for putting both of them into the Levant trade.⁴ Cordell was a member and assistant of the Spanish Company, the Venice Company, the Levant Companies of 1592, 1600 and 1605, and the East India Company of which he was one of the committee. He imported sugar from Morocco in 1567-8 with John Mun,⁵ probably the husband of his future wife, and was trading there in 1590⁶ but he was not a member of the Barbary Company. In 1587 he went with Drake as the merchants' representative.⁷ Much of Cordell's activity in the 1580's and 1590's was taken up with privateering. He was one of a group of wealthy London merchants who represented the nucleus of privateering activity.⁸ The Port Books show him shipping modest amounts of cloth to Antwerp and Barbary in 1565,⁹ importing wine, sugar and oil from France, Spain and Barbary in 1567-8,¹⁰ exporting cloth to Hamburg and Barbary in 1571.¹¹ All these entries are for only relatively small quantities of goods. His trade was more extensive than these Port Books show. In 1585, in partnership with William Garraway, he claimed losses of over

£9000 in Spain¹² and in 1589, with others, he imported £3300 worth of currants and silk from Zante and Venice.¹³

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- 1 PRO:HCA Exam 26 f. 158. 2 Beaven II, 45.
 3 Ibid. 4 William Foster (ed)
The Travels of John Sanderson, 1581-1602, 1931, p. 9n.
 5 PRO: Port Book 4/2.
 6 K. R. Andrews, The Economic Aspects of Elizabethan Privateering, Phd. Thesis, Univ. of London, 1951, p. 233 n. 2.
 7 HMC: Cal. Salis. Mss. III, p. 281.
 8 Andrews, Privateering, p. 120.
 9 PRO: Port Book 2/1. 10 PRO: Port Book 4/2.
 11 PRO: Port Book 5/1. 12 Andrews, Privateering, p. 111.
 13 PRO: Port Book 8/1.

RICHARD DASSELL: died before June 1600¹

Dassell was a member of the Venice Company and Levant Company of 1592 and a servant of Thomas Cordell.²

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- 1 HMC: Cal. Salis Mss. X, p. 215.
 2 Ibid.

THOMAS DAWKINS: died between 1 July and 14 August 1596¹

Dawkins was a member of the Venice Company and the Levant Company of 1592 and a servant to Edward Holmden.² He engaged in some trade on his own importing £145 worth of goods from Scanderoon in 1596.³ He is also listed as one who imported and exported through the Straights during the period September 1588 to June 1591.⁴ Dawkins seems to have died without any family other than an uncle in Wales,

another in Somerset, and some cousins. His life apparently revolved around the Company and around Holmden and Holmden's family. He appointed his master, who he had served for at least thirteen years, sole executor of his will and left to him and his wife gowns worth £10 each. To each of Holmden's seven children he left a gown and £100 and to his own servant, Simon Broadstreet, he left £100. A token legacy, in the form of a gown or a ring, he left to other associates of his in the Company: James Higgins, Oliver and William Gardner, Francis Dorrington, William Barrett, Charles Glascock, Philip Grymes, Ralph Asheley and Philip Dawkins. The latter he referred to as his friend.⁵

1 PCC 62 Drake.

2 HMC:Cal. Salis. Mss. X, p. 214.

3 BM:Lans. 81 f. 125v.

4 PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 62.

5 These details are all to be found in his will PCC 62 Drake.

HENRY FARRINGTON: born 1550¹

Farrington was a draper and a member of the Venice and Barbary Companies. In the Levant Company charter of 1592 he was listed as one who had the option to join the company within two months but there is no evidence that he ever did this. Much of his trade was with France, in particular Marseille. He had a factor there, Simon Garway, who died

in 1584.² This factor could possibly have been related to William Garraway (Garway) though there is nothing besides their names to indicate this. In 1584 Farrington and Henry Anderson obtained from the French a royal privilege in recompense for assistance to some merchants of Marseille whose ships had been captured by English privateers. The privilege allowed them to sell freely in all the ports of France merchandise which came from England.³ In 1588, with Anderson, he imported £2232.13.4 worth of goods from Marseille.⁴ He was still trading to Marseille in the 1590's with his father-in-law, Thomas Bromley.⁵

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- 1 PRO:HCA Exam 26 f. 206 v. 2 PRO:HCA Exam 25 f. 210v.
 3 Collier and Billioud, Histoire du Commerce de Marsille, p. 245. For this statement the author cites a document in the Archives des Bouche-du-Rhone. The two merchants are called "Henri Hardresson" and "Henri Ferenton".
 4 PRO: Port Book 8/1.
 5 PRO:HCA Exam 34 f. 5lv and Willan, Studies, p. 292.

WILLIAM GARRAWAY or GARWAY: born 1538¹

Garraway was a draper and a member of the Venice Company, the Levant Companies of 1592, 1600, and 1605, and one of the committee of the East India Company. He was an active investor in privateering ventures, of ten in partnership with Thomas Cordell.² In 1568 he had a factor in Bruges³ though there is no record of his trade there. In 1571 he

exported 72 cloths to Hamburg,⁴ in 1584 with Thomas Cordell, he imported £2081.4.4 worth of currants from Zante,⁵ in 1588-89 he imported £153.6.8 worth of silk from Stade and £1899 worth of currants and spices from Venice, Petras and Zante.⁶ In 1596 he imported £3909.9.1 worth of goods from Scanderoon on the Royal Exchange.⁷

1 PRO:Exam 32 f. 124v.

2 Andrews, Privateering, pp. 77, 111, 121, 205.

3 PRO: Court of Requests Proceedings 77/38.

4 PRO: Port Book 5/1. 5 BM:Lans. 41 f. 128.

6 PRO: Port Books 7/8, 8/1, and 8/4.

7 BM:Lans. 81 f. 125.

RICHARD GLASCOCK:

Glascock was a merchant taylor and a member of the Venice and Levant Company of 1592. In 1574 he exported 4 tons of iron to Barbary.¹ In 1577-78 he exported kerseys, raisins and cottons to Hamburg but was listed as one not a member of the Merchant Adventurers.² He was an early investor in the Venice trade, importing from there with Edward Holmden and George Holmes in 1580.³

1 PRO: Port Book 6/4.

2 BM:Harl. 167 ff. 75-80.

3 PRO:HCA Exam 26 f. 102.

SIR JOHN HARTE: died January 1604¹

Harte was a member of the Grocers Company, an alderman from 1580 to 1604, sheriff in 1579-80, Lord Mayor in 1589-90, for which he was knighted, and an MP for London in 1592-93 and 1597-98.² He was a member of the Turkey Company and of the Levant Company in 1592. He is listed as a member of the Levant Company in June 1600³ but his name is not in the letters patent of December 1600. He was, however, a member of the East India Company. He also belonged to the Russia Company and served as its governor in 1583, 1591-92, 1596-98, and 1600.⁴ Though he is listed as having imported goods from the Straights during the period 1588-91⁵ there is almost no reference to him as an active merchant in the Customs Accounts and Port Books. He was one of the leading investors in the Earl of Cumberland's expedition to Puerto Rico in 1598 but otherwise he is not known to have been an investor in privateering ventures.⁶

1 Beaven II, 41.

2 Ibid.

3 HMC:Cal. Salis. Mss. X, p. 214.

4 Willan, Russia Company, p. 286.

5 BM:Lans. 57 no. 1; PRO:SPD Eliz. 239 no. 62.

6 Andrews, Elizabethan Privateering, p. 77.

HENRY HEWITT: died 1598¹

Hewitt was a clothworker and the brother-in-law of Richard Stapers.² He was a member of the Spanish Company and the Turkey Company. In the Levant Company patent of 1592 he is listed as one who had the option to take up membership within two months but there is no indication of whether or not he did. Hewitt was probably also a Merchant Adventurer. From 1578 to 1580 he was trading to Hamburg with Clement Draper and Henry Clitheroe.³ The latter two appear in a list of those trading to Hamburg who are not Merchant Adventurers but Hewitt does not appear on that list.⁴ The record of his Spanish trade consists of a few cloths shipped there in 1575⁵ and the import of 729 bags of Spanish wool in 1578-79 in partnership with Sir George and William Bond.⁶

1 PCC 12 Lewyn.

3 BM:Sloan 320.

5 PRO: Port Book 6/4.

2 Ibid.

4 BM:Harl. 167 ff. 75-80.

6 BM:Lans. 29 f. 56.

EDWARD HOLMDEN: born 1544,¹ died 4 July 1616²

Holmden was a grocer and master of the company in 1596-97, and alderman from 1597 to 1603, sheriff in 1598-99, and was knighted on 26 July 1603.³ He was a member of the Venice and Barbary Companies and of the Levant Companies of 1592

and 1600 and was one of the committee of the East India Company. Though he invested in privateering it was on a very limited scale.⁴ The earliest official record of his trade is from 1583-84 when he was exporting cloth to Spain and Barbary.⁵ His trade as a Venice merchant was substantial. In 1584 with Paul Banning, he imported £1716.15 worth of currants and oil and probably more.⁶ In 1588-89 he imported £13,207.3.4 in currants, oil, cotton, and brimstone, as well as £1663.10.8 in sugar and anniseeds from Barbary.⁷

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- 1 PRO:HCA Exam 26 f. 194v. 2 Beaven II, p. 46.
 3 Ibid. 4 Andrews, Privateering, p. 104.
 5 BM:Lans. 41 f. 137v, 138v. 6 BM:Lans. 41 f. 128.
 7 PRO: Port Book 7/8, 8/1, and 8/4.
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EDWARD LECHLAND:

Lechland was a haberdasher¹ and a member of the Venice Company and Levant Companies of 1592 and 1600. In the 1590's he invested in several privateering ventures.² There is no record of his commercial activities other than his membership in the above companies.

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- 1 Andrews, thesis, p. 245 n. 1.
 2 Ibid. and PRO: Court of Requests Proceedings 210/61.

SIR RICHARD MARTIN: born 1534,¹ died July 1617²

Martin was a member of the Goldsmiths Company of which he was prime warden in 1592-93. In 1572 he was appointed warden of the mint and was master from 1581 to 1617. He was an alderman from 1578 to 1602 when he was dismissed for bankruptcy. He was sheriff in 1581-82 and he filled the unexpired mayoralty of Martin Calthorpe in 1589, for which he was knighted.³ Through his daughter, Dorcas, he became father-in-law to Sir Julius Caesar, judge of the High Court of Admiralty.⁴ He was a member of the Russia Company, of which he was governor in 1584, 1585, and 1586.⁵ He was also a member of the Spanish and Turkey Companies and of the Levant Companies of 1592 and 1600. He held shares in the Mineral and Battery Works Company.⁶ There is almost no record of Martin engaging in any trade in his own name. He seems to have been an active money lender. There is record of his having lent a total of £5762.5.6 between August 1576 and August 1586.⁷

1 Donald, Elizabethan Monopolies, p. 43.

2 Beaven II, p. 40. 3 Ibid. 4 Ibid., p. 174.

5 Willan, Russia Company, p. 286.

6 Donald, op. cit., p. 43.

7 PRO:Chancery, Close Rolls, passim.

WILLIAM MASHAM or MASSAM: died November 1600¹

Masham was a member of the Grocers Company, an alderman from 1582 to 1594 and sheriff in 1583-84.² He was a Merchant Adventurer³ and was active in the Morocco trade in the 1560's,⁴ though he does not appear as a member of the Barbary Company in 1585. He was a member of the Russia Company in 1584,⁵ an assistant of the Spanish Company, and a member of the Turkey Company and the Levant Company of 1592. In June 1600, a few months before he died, he was still listed as a Levant merchant.⁶ The record of his trade shows he exported 22 tons of molasses to Dunkirk in 1576.⁷ In 1583-84 he exported 480 cloths to Spain and France and imported from Spain fruit, spices, oil, cochineal and wool valued at £3195,15.⁸ In 1587-88 he was exporting cloth and madder to Stade and Amsterdam.⁹

1 Beaven II, p. 41.
 3 de Snedt II, p. 444-7.
 5 PRO:SPF Russia 1 f. 30.
 7 PRO: Port Book 6/4.
 9 PRO: Port Book 7/8.

2 Ibid.
 4 Willan, Studies, p. 133.
 6 HMC:Cal. Salis. Mss. X,p.214.
 8 BM:Lans. 41 ff.117-148v, psm.

RICHARD MAY:

May was a merchant taylor and a member of the Russia,¹ Spanish, and Turkey Companies and the Levant Companies of 1592 and 1600. His individual trade, as shown by the

record, was all with Spain and Portugal. In 1567-8 he imported £350 worth of goods from Spain² and in 1576 he exported £235 worth of goods to Bayon.³ In 1583-4 he imported £1519.6.8 worth of spices from Lisbon.⁴

1 BM:Cotton, Nero BVIII f. 53.

2 PRO: Port Book 4/2.

3 PRO: Port Book 6/4.

4 BM:Lans. 41, ff.119,126,134

SIR EDWARD OSBORNE: born 1530,¹ died 4 February 1592²

Osborne was a clothworker, an alderman from 1573 to 1592, sheriff in 1576-86, Lord Mayor in 1583-84, for which he was knighted on 2 February 1584, and an MP for London in 1586-87.³ As a young man he was apprenticed to Sir William Hewitt, clothworker, and later Lord Mayor of London. Sometime in the early 1550's Osborne was admitted to the freedom of the Clothworkers Company and shortly after married Anne, daughter and heir of his former master. In 1566, upon Hewitt's death, Osborne inherited his business.⁴ Osborne's name appears in the charters of the Spanish, Eastland, Turkey, and Levant Companies. He was also a member of the Russia Company in 1584,⁵ but his date of entry is not known. The earliest record of Osborne's trading activities dates from September 1559 when he shipped 13 cloths to Antwerp.⁶ During the years 1563 to 1565 he exported cottons, short cloths, and lead but

their destination is not known.⁷ With the advent of the Port Books it becomes clear that the greatest part of Osborne's early trade was with Spain and some with France. He exported cloth⁸ and imported wine, oil, raisins and canvas.⁹ In 1587 he imported goods from Amsterdam with Richard Stapers and in 1589 he imported soap ashes from Elbing.¹⁰ His association with Stapers dates from at least 1575 and possibly earlier. In that year they are known to have shipped goods together to Spain,¹¹ and in the following year they together imported from Lisbon 17,000 lbs. of pepper and 1800 lbs. of cloves.¹² From that time until Osborne's death they were in continual association with each other, though each also traded independently. They were related through their wives both of whom were Hewitts and first cousins. No will has ever been found for Osborne. He was obviously a wealthy man though how wealthy is not known. There is an inventory of his personal goods taken at the time of his death.¹³ The total value listed is £994.7. Most of this is accounted for by the leases on his house in London, £110, and his house and farm at Braddes in Suffolk, £600.

1 DNB. 2 Beaven II, p. 39. 3 Ibid.
 4 DNB. 5 PRO:SPF Russia 1,f.30. 6 PRO:SPD Eliz.6 f.114
 7 PRO:KR Customs Accounts 90/11 and 89/8.
 8 PRO: Port Book 2/1. 9 PRO: Port Books 4/2 and 6/3.
 10 PRO: Port Books 7/8 and 8/4. 11 PRO:SPD Eliz.106 no.57.
 12 PRO: Port Book 814/10. 13 BM:Add. 42082.

EDWARD SADLER: died about 1608¹

Probably related to Robert Sadler, he was a member of the Venice Company and the Levant Company of 1592. He died overseas leaving to his wife all wages due to him. He also provided that all his goods "in the ship" and his chest be sold at the mast and the proceeds to go to his wife.² It can be presumed from his will that at the time of his death he was a factor or servant to some member of the Levant Company.

1 PCC 56 Wingfield.

2 Ibid.

ROBERT SADLER: born 1538¹

Robert Sadler was a haberdasher and a member of the Venice Company and Levant Company of 1592. He was a fairly prominent investor in privateering.² The only record of his trade appears in 1567-68 when he imported £1298.6 worth of canvas and paper from Rouen.³

1 PRO:HCA Exam 22 f. 139v.

2 Andrews, Privateering, p. 203. 3 PRO: Port Book 4/2.

RICHARD SALTONSTALL: born 1520,¹ died 17 March 1601²

Saltonstall was a skinner and master of the company in 1589, 1593, 1595, and 1599; he was an alderman from 1588

to 1601, sheriff in 1588-89, MP for London in 1586-87 and Lord Mayor in 1597-98 for which he was knighted.³ He was also appointed collector of the petty customs for London on 24 October 1597.⁴ Saltonstall was a member of the Merchant Adventurers Company of which he became governor. He was also a member of the Spanish, Turkey, and Russia Companies⁵ and of the Levant Companies of 1592 and 1600. The record of his trade shows he exported 270 cloths to Hamburg in 1571.⁶ Small quantities are entered in his name in 1575 and 1576.⁷ In 1584 he exported £206 worth of goods to Spain and imported £2800 worth from there.⁸ Between 1587 and 1588 he imported £1468 worth from Spain and £4795 worth from Stade and Hamburg.⁹

1 Lang, op. cit., p. 380, states that he was 80 years old when he died.

2 Beaven II, p. 43.

3 Ibid.

4 PRO:Exchequer, Privy Seal Warrants, 232.

5 BM:Cotton, Nero BVII f. 53. 6 PRO: Port Book 5/1.

7 PRO: Port Book 6/3 and 6/4. 8 BM:Lans. 41 ff. 148, 149, 117v, 118v, 120, 122v, 124, 126v, 128, 129v, 132, 134.

9 PRO: Port Books 7/8, 8/1, and 8/4.

THOMAS SMYTHE: born 1521,¹ died 7 June 1591²

Smythe was a member of the Haberdashers Company of which he was master in 1583. He was not a merchant in the sense that he carried on an active trade though he was a member

of the Spanish, Turkey and Russia Companies. He was probably a charter member of the latter.² During most of his life he was a customer of London. From before 1558 to 1570 he was the collector of tonnage and poundage on imports. In the latter year he contracted for the first of several leases of the farm of these duties. In 1576 Southampton, Ipswich, and Woodbridge were added to his farm. The cost of the farm rose with each extension of the lease from about £17,500 per year in 1570-1576 to £30,000 per year in 1584-1588.⁴ Smythe also actively participated in the Company of Mines Royal and the Mineral and Battery Works Company.⁵ He invested in Humphrey Gilbert's expedition of 1578⁶ and Edward Fenton's voyage of 1582.⁷ The record of his own trade is slight. In 1571 he exported 12 kerseys to an unknown destination,⁸ in January 1575 13 barrels of herring were imported under the entry "Thomas Smythe, customer and his friends",⁹ and in 1584 he exported 110 clothes to Lisbon and Bayon.¹⁰ There may have been much more than this. As customer he was in an ideal position for evading the customs and there is nothing known about him which suggests he might have been averse from such a course. Smythe married Alice, daughter of Sir Andrew Judde, a charter member of the Muscovy Company. By her he had thirteen children, twelve

He was engaged in the Barbary trade in 1577⁴ but was not a member of the Barbary Company in 1585. Almost all of his trade, as recorded, was with Spain. In 1565 he sent 78 short cloths there,⁵ and in 1567-68 he imported goods valued at £605.⁶ In 1571 Paul Banning acted as his factor and exported 140 short cloths to Spain.⁷ In 1583-84 he imported £1350 worth of goods from St. Lucar⁸ and in 1587 he received a small quantity of iron and whale oil from St. Jean de Luce.⁹ The only record of his Levant trade comes from 1596 when he received £1000 worth of silk and nutmeg aboard the Royal Exchange from Scanderoon.¹⁰

1 Beaven II, p. 42.

3 PRO:SPF Russia 1 f. 30.

5 PRO: Port Book 2/1.

7 PRO: Port Book 5/1.

8 BM:Lans. 41, ff. 118v, 127v, 129, 129v.

9 PRO: Port Book 7/8.

2 Ibid.

4 PRO:SPD Eliz. 111 no. 34.

6 PRO: Port Book 4/2.

10 BM:Lans. 81 f. 125.

RICHARD STAPERS: born 1540,¹ died 30 June 1608².

Stapers was a clothworker and master of the company in 1590 and an alderman in 1594.³ He was a cousin of Edward Osborne through their marriage into the Hewitt family and the brother-in-law of Henry Hewitt.⁴ Stapers is known to have traded into every geographical area regularly frequented by the English except Russia. He was a member of the Spanish, Eastland, Turkey, and Barbary Companies,

APPENDIX B

Incoming cargoes of the Levant trade

The following transcripts represent the only surviving cargo entries for incoming ships in the Venice, Turkey and Levant trades during the Elizabethan period. They are mainly from the Port Books covering the periods Michaelmas 1587 to Michaelmas 1588 (Port Books 7/8 and 8/1/ and July to Michaelmas 1589 (Port Book 8/4/. The absence of such records for the period prior to 1588 is explained by the fact that the ad valorem duties inward at London were farmed by Customer Thomas Smythe from 1572 to 1588; thus no official Port Books were ever compiled for the Exchequer during that time. That such books were compiled unofficially is suggested by BM:Lans. 41 ff. 104-168v, which is a transcript of all customs entries for the Spanish trade, both inward and outward, at several ports for 1584. These include London and Southampton which were part of Customer Smythe's farm, testifying to the fact that he must have kept records which were in effect Port Books but which remained in his own possession. Among these transcripts are two entries, included by mistake and then crossed out, of two ships which entered from Zante (nos. 116⁷

and 127/. Unfortunately the clerk noticed his error before he had transcribed the entire cargo. What the clerk did transcribe is included in this appendix. The absence of customs records for the Levant trade for the remainder of Elizabeth's reign is due only to the chance failure of survival. There is one Port Book /10/11/ for tonnage and poundage outward for 1599, which should record exports of tin, lead and conyskins. However, it has been misplaced in the Public Record Office and is thus unavailable. There are two other Port Books which record alien imports to London for 1600 and 1602 /11/1 and 12/1/. At the beginning of each of these books is a list of the ships that entered London, during ^{the} period covered by the book, from the Mediterranean. There are, however, no cargo entries. The only official record of a Levant cargo of the 1590's is to be found in Lansdowne Mss. 81 f. 125, which gives the Customs House entries for the Royal Exchange which entered from Scanderoon in May 1596. This document was noted by Harris, William Clark, pp. 289-93. A Transcript of it is included in this appendix.

Thus the entries transcribed below are a nearly unique surviving record of the Levant trade. Their interest lies not simply in this uniqueness but in the fact

that they throw light on the nature and quantity of commodities imported, the distribution of the cargoes among the various merchants of the Venice and Levant Companies, and some measure of the possible value of the cargoes imported from Turkey and the Venetian islands.

In the interests of space the transcripts are not verbatim but include, for the cargo, only the total quantity of each commodity imported by each merchant. Thus the first entry for The Gift of God of London reads in the Port Book [abbreviations are written out/ "38 great butts, 25 small butts and pipes, 174 hogsheads and puncheons, 100 bags of currants, containing 188 mwt." This has been reduced to the quantity only and all subsequent entries are treated in the same manner. The valuations given are the official values given in the Port Books and are based on the 1558 Rate Book. It is possible to add up all the weights given and arrive at a measure of the total burden of a cargo. This, however, would be deceptive because for the purpose of freight charges tonnage equivalents were worked out making lesser weights of bulky goods equal to a ton of lading. These equivalents were always set down in the charter party for a given voyage. No complete charter parties for Levant voyages have been found; however, the essen-

tials of one are transcribed in John Sanderson's letter book [BM:Lans. 241 f. 319]. It was for a voyage made by the Royal Exchange. The year is not given but was probably 1597 [346, 347]. The tonnages below in brackets for each ship are worked out on the basis of the document in Sanderson which reads as follows:

To receive for her tonnage outward 1500 tonnes in barres barrellled for every tonne [sic - This can only be a clerical error. It probably refers to tin./] and six ordynary balletts of Carseys or cloth for every tonne to saile from hence to Zante there to stay six dayes to discharge and recharge and from thence to Alexandretta there to stay 20 dayes likewise to discharge and recharge and thence back again to Zante and Petrasse there to stay 30 dayes likewise to discharge and recharge and from there backe to Alexandretta ther to stay 31 dayes ther to receive in the rest of her ladinge to retorne for London. Tonnage as followeth 20 cwt neat currants beside the caske per ton 20 cwt of sope per ton 15 cwt of loose gales per ton and in bagges 14 cwt per ton 14 cwt pepper per ton synnamon and seny 8 cwt per ton fine silke cotton wooll cloves and cotton yarne 10 cwt per ton wormseed or long pepper 12 cwt per ton nutmeges 13 cwt per ton all which waight to be accompted after the rate of 112 lbs englishe waight for every hundreth besides casks baggs chists ropes and wrappes with the cotton which cotton shall not excede the quantitye of 3 rotilois per bale: A provide that the merchant shall not lade aborde the said shipe above one ton of cotton woll or Yarne for every ten tonnes and so after that Rate for greater or lesser quantitye the freight 12L per ton.

The Sussan word for worde with the Exchange god send them well to speede.

These surviving entries do not include wines which are thus unknown and may account for the difference between rating and lading of the ships.

VENICE COMPANY SHIPS

/incomplete record of lading/

13 May 1584

/Lans. 41 f. 128/

THE MARY ROSE OF ALBOROUGH /117/ - Alexander Bents - from Zante /burden 130 tons (SPD Eliz. 219 no. 86)/

Thomas Cordell and William Garraway
currants - 104,051 lbs.; sweet oil -
86 barrels £2081.4.4

Richard Burrell, grocer
currants - 300 lbs. 4.10.0

Ambrose Woodcock, grocer
currants - 1000 lbs. 15.0.0

/58 tons of lading/

19 May 1584

/Lans. 41 f. 128/

THE ASCENSION OF LONDON /127/- John Eustace - from Zante /burden 170 tons (SPD Eliz. 219 no. 86)/

Edward Holmden and Paul Banning
currants - 855 cwt.; sweet oil -
289 barrels £1716.15.0

/79 tons of lading/

TURKEY COMPANY SHIPS

11, 14, and 16 March 1587/88 Port Book 7/8/THE GIFT OF GOD OF LONDON 196/ - 100 tons - Robert Harrison,
Mr. - from Petras

Sir Edward Osborne, Richard Stapers & Co.

currants - 188 mwt.; raw silk - 1500 lbs.
great weight £3820.

Richard Thompson, merchant

raw silk - 70 lbs. great weight 46.13.4

John Muffett

currants - 14 cwt. 21.

95 tons of lading/13, and 14 March 1587/88 Port Book 7/8/MAYFLOWER OF LONDON 198/ - 160 tons - John Vassell, Mr.
from Petras

Edward Holmden, grocer

currants - 60 mwt. 8 cwt. £ 912.

Sir Edward Osborne, Richard Stapers & Co.

currants - 130 mwt.; anniseed - 10 mwt.;
raw silk - 960 lbs. [sic/] 2723.6.8

John Vassell, Mr.

currants - 20 cwt. 30.

William Garwaie, merchant

currants - 106 cwt. 159.

John Vassell, draper

currants - 25 cwt. 30.6

William Gilbert, mariner

currants - 16 cwt. 24.

117 tons of lading/

11 and 15 April 1588

/Port Book 8/1/

TOBY OF LONDON /191/- 200 tons - Anthony Earninge, Mr.
from Tripoly

Sir Edward Osborne, Richard Stapers & Co.
galls - 617 cwt.; nutmegs - 113 cwt.;
sal-ammoniac - 4 cwt.; turmeric -
10 cwt.; raw silk - 1414 lbs. /sic/ indigo -
800 lbs.; cotton yarn - 78.5 cwt.;
cotton wool - 510 cwt.; damaske raisins -
107 cwt. £6203.

Anthony Earninge, Mr.
nutmegs - 160 lbs.; indigo - 160 lbs.;
galls - 12 cwt.; damask raisins -
150 lbs. 60.

/120 tons of lading/

11 and 13 April 1588

/Port Book 8/1/

HERCULES OF LONDON /190/ - 250 tons - Richard Parsons, Mr.
from Tripoly

Sir Edward Osborne, Richard Stapers & Co.
raw silk - 5012 lbs. great weight; cin-
namon - 1296 lbs.; bark of cinnamon -
101 cwt.; nutmegs - 373 cwt.; indigo-
528 cwt.; cloves - 104 lbs.; sal-ammoniac -
456 lbs.; fuscies of cloves - 476 lbs.;
mirobolans - 256 lbs.; mace - 428 lbs.;
pepper - 6780 lbs.; 30lbs. (1 box); sanquis
iracanis - 260 lbs.; aloes epatica - 360 lbs.;
botans of cotton cloth - 1580 pieces; watered
and unwatered chamblettes - 660 pieces; gro-
grams - 1770 double pieces; mirrors - 23 lbs.
(1 box); cotton yarn - 7650 lbs.; chascles -
518 pieces; iser cloth - 25 pieces; comashes -
55 pieces; wormseed - 1500 lbs.; galls - 416 cwt.;
cotton wool - 155 cwt.; quilts of cotton cloth -
9; scammony - 110 lbs.; Turkey carpets - 13;
ginger - 550 lbs.; mummy - 300 lbs.; casia fistula -
1120 lbs.; long pepper - 1420 lbs.; mastic -
600 lbs.; sponges - 1 cwt. 37,683.2.8

HERCULES (cont.)

John Sanderson, Anthony Bate & Co.
 raw silk - 177 lbs. /sic/; cotton yarn -
 200 lbs.; pepper - 180 lbs.; nutmegs -
 55 lbs.; pistachios - 200 lbs.; indigo -
 120 lbs. £ 100.

Jean Durand, pilot
 indigo - 250 lbs.; nutmegs - 250 lbs. 125.

Thomas Hitchcocks, purser
 nutmegs - 640 lbs.; cotton yarn - 150 lbs. 56.10

/165 tons and more of lading - for some
 goods the equivalents are not known/

 VENICE COMPANY SHIPS

13 March 1587/88

/Port Book 7/8/

CHERUBIN OF LONDON /197/- 160 tons - John Pierson - from Zante

Thomas Trowte, grocer
 currants - 1800 lbs.; sweet oil - 4 barrells;
 vermillion - 100 lbs. £ 39.

Edward Holmden, grocer
 currants - 273 mwt. 6 cwt. 4104.10

/137 tons of lading/

9, 10, and 12 July 1589

/Port Book 8/4/

MINION OF LONDON /206/- 160 tons - John Gram - from Zante

Edward Holmden, grocer
 currants - 236 mwt.; oil - 2 butts £3561.10

John Grant
 currants - 27 cwt. 27.10

William Johnson
 currants - 6 cwt. 9.

/120 tons of lading/

9, 10, 11, and 17 July 1589

/Port Book 8/4/

CHERUBIN OF LONDON /202/- 170 tons - Richard Gibbens, Mr. -
from Venice and Zante

Edward Holmden, grocer	
currants - 246 mwt.; cotton wool -	
30 cwt. - powder of brimstone - 56 mwt.	£3991.3.4
William Rowles	
short silk - 130 lbs. great weight	32.10
William Barnabe	
looking glasses - 6.5 dozen large and	
3 dozen small; odds and ends not legible	46.13.4
Thomas Hudson	
raw silk - 55 lbs. great weight; short	
silk - 95 lbs. great weight; sweet oil -	
1 pipe	73.8.4
Thomas Turfoote	
Candy oil - 4 barrels	6.

/123 tons of lading/

9, 10, and 15 July 1589

/Port Book 8/4/

MARGARET AND JOHN OF LONDON /203/- 160 tons - John Burrell,
Mr. - from Venice

Mathew Butler, goldsmith	
currants - 30 cwt.	£ 45.
George Salter, mercer	
sword blades - 75 dozen	150.
Henry Anderson, grocer	
cloves - 300 lbs.	75.
Andrew Banning, grocer	
currants - 192 cwt.; Candy oil -	
8 barrels	300.
Paul Banning, grocer	
currants - 220 cwt.; Candy oil -	
14 barrels	351.

MARGARET AND JOHN (cont.)

Thomas Cordell & Co. currants - 1600 cwt.; nob's of silk - 300	£2410.
William Garraway, draper currants - 204 cwt.; olive oil - 15 barrels	328.10
Edward Holmden, grocer currants - 80 cwt.	120.
John Burrell, Mr. currants - 10 cwt.	15.
	/120 tons of lading/

10, 11, 12, and 16 July 1589 /Port Book 8/4/

GEORGE BONAVENTURE OF LONDON /204/- 140 tons - Roland
Jurdane, Mr. - from Zante

Thomas Cordell & Co. currants - 600 cwt.	£ 900.
William Garraway, draper currants - 697 cwt.; clove - 3 cwt. 80 lbs.; nutmeg - 5 cwt.; - wormseed - 2 cwt. 20 lbs.; staveacres - 8 cwt.	1412.
Edward Holmden, grocer currants - 26 mwt. 4 cwt.	396.
Paul Banning, grocer currants - 804 cwt.	1206.
Henry Anderson, grocer clove - 150 lbs.; short silk - 80 lbs. great weight	57.10
Eliazer Hickman oil - 4 hogsheads; marmelade - 3 cwt.; short silk - 2 cwt. 90 lbs. /sic/	122.10
Thomas Farrington, vintner currants - 32 cwt.	48.

/127 tons of lading/

LEVANT COMPANY SHIP

May 1596

/Lans. 81 f. 125/

(The valuations are not given in the document and were worked out from the Rate Book as printed by T. S. Willan, A Tudor Book of Rates)

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE OF LONDON /315/- 240 tons - William Brodbent - from Alexandretta /Scandroon/

Sir John Spencer

long silk - 871 lbs.; indigo - 410 lbs.;
nutmeg - 2590 lbs. £1014.8.7

Thomas Symonde

cotton wool - 3500 lbs.; indigo -
1650 lbs.; silk - 660 lbs. 694.2.3

William Garraway

indigo - 4728 lbs.; long pepper -
360 lbs.; silk - 1928 lbs.; nutmeg -
3835 lbs.; cotton yarn - 365 lbs.;
cotton wool - 11,550 lbs.; galls -
19,100 lbs.; currants - 65,300 lbs. 3909.19.1

Thomas Cordell

cotton wool - 10,500 lbs.; galls -
15,800 lbs.; indigo - 4154 lbs.; silk -
1819 lbs. 2096.13.7

Raphe Asheley

indigo - 615 lbs.; galls 1500 lbs. 69.2.2

Leonard Poore

indigo - 640 lbs.; cotton wool -
1900 lbs. 116.11.10

Thomas Cordell

currants - 63,800 lbs.; Turkie
carpets - 3 921.6.6

Andrew Banning and William Roweles

indigo - 320 lbs.; cotton yarn - 480 lbs.;
silk - 90 great lbs. 110.13.1

William Wilke

nutmeg - 936 lbs.; indigo - 940 lbs.;
cotton wool - 1200 lbs. 273.12.8

John Huntley

pischaces (probably pistachio) - 240 lbs. 6.0.0

ROYAL EXCHANGE (continued)

George Salter

indigo - 5100 lbs.; nutmeg - 1050 lbs.;
 silk - 330 great lbs.; blue botans -
 450 pieces; cotton yarn - 900 lbs. £ 866.2.7

Paul Banning and Andrew Banning

indigo - 12,020 lbs.; silk - 880 great lbs.;
 nutmeg - 2100 lbs.; cotton yarn - 1440 lbs. 1357.9.8

Edward Parvishe

indigo - 548 lbs.; silk - 40 lbs.;
 cotton wool - 625 lbs.; cotton yarn -
 550 lbs. 122.4.8

Thomas Dawkins

indigo - 300 lbs.; nutmeg - 560 lbs.;
 cotton yarn - 150 lbs.; currants - 1500 lbs. 145.10.4

Richard Stapers, Philip Grimes, and Robert Sandy

indigo - 850 lbs.; chamblets - 64 double
 pieces 198.16

Henry Anderson

indigo - 750 lbs.; silk - 190 lbs. 189.2.9

James Stapers and John Mildnall

indigo - 1020 lbs.; wormseed - 200 lbs.;
 carpets - 1 long, 16 short 132.11.4

Charles Glascock

indigo - 310 lbs.; nutmeg - 480 lbs.;
 blue botans - 5 pieces; cotton yarn -
 1000 lbs. 155.10.0

Philip Grymes

indigo - 4890 lbs.; cotton yarn - 1600 lbs.;
 nutmeg - 1250 lbs.; wormseed - 250 lbs.;
 goatskins dressed - 200; storax - 140 lbs.;
 cotton wool - 400 lbs.; silk - 30 lbs.;
 botans - 30 pieces; chamblets - 64 pieces 896.10.0

Arthur Jackson

indigo - 150 lbs.; clove - 140 lbs. 47.9.10

/170 tons of lading/

APPENDIX C (Table VII)

List of English Shipping to the Mediterranean:
1572-1604

This shipping list contains an entry for every known English merchant ship which voyaged to the Mediterranean during the inclusive dates. The list started out a more modest affair as an attempt to take note of as many ships as possible sent out by the Turkey, Venice and Levant Companies. But as work proceeded with the project it turned out that a ship which one source placed only in a west Mediterranean port was found, from another source, to have sailed also further east to a Venetian or Turkish port. The logic of this situation was that from the point of view of this compilation any single ship found headed for the Mediterranean may have been destined for the Levant trade, no matter what a particular source stated about it. Thus all such ships had to be included and a list of Levant shipping turned into a list of Mediterranean shipping.

It is only natural to inquire into the reliability of this Shipping List. First it can be said, with virtually complete confidence, that if a ship is entered in this list then it did make the voyage to the Mediterranean so listed. Other items of information about

the voyage may be in question but not the existence of the voyage itself. A discussion of the reliability of the entries in each column of the list is presented in the notes below. The next question about reliability to raise is that of completeness. There are two parts to this question; first, the number of voyages and second, the ports of call during each voyage. For the first part, there is no way of knowing how complete a record is presented here because nowhere in the contemporary English records is there indication of how many English ships actually set sail for the Mediterranean in any given year in the later sixteenth century. The estimate of 30 per year made by the governor of Zante in 1603 is open to interpretation (see supra p. 338). In fact, one of the contributions of this shipping list is that it makes possible, for the first time, to take some measure of the extent of this branch of English merchant shipping. It is the first step toward, what one hopes, will eventually be a much fuller record. There is no question that the record presented here is not complete, especially for certain years in which very few ships appear in the list. The second part of the question, about ports of call, is taken up in the notes below under "Destination".

It will be seen from a perusal of the Shipping List that it was compiled from a multitude of sources. A few, however, stand out as especially important. Perhaps first mentioned should be Hakluyt's Principal Navigations; not necessarily because from it came more entries than from elsewhere, but because knowledge of its contents first inspired the thought that it might be possible to compile a reasonably complete list of Levant shipping. As a source, the Principal Navigations has the further virtue, in many cases, of giving more complete information about the entire route of a voyage than is to be found in any other source. This lack is the case with the Port Books, the most important source for the entire period covered. It is well known to all who have ever used them that the port of call entered in them is either the first or last made by the ship. In the Mediterranean trade a ship seldom made only one port of call and knowledge of these other ports depends on supplementary sources. In addition to Hakluyt, the most important of these are the records of the High Court of Admiralty. There, in the libels and examinations, is to be found a variety of detail about ships in the Mediterranean trade, including often an account of their several ports of call. These three sources, then constitute the main

body of material found in England from which the Shipping List was compiled. For the rest, use was made of a variety of other sources of varying helpfulness. Finally, specific mention must be made of a source from a foreign archive. This is a record of ships entering the Tuscan port of Leghorn from about 1540 onward. A description of this source will be found above on p. 156. It was consulted on microfilm and the present writer wishes to reiterate here his gratitude to the Central Research Fund of the University of London for a grant which made it possible to acquire the microfilm and to Dr. A. A. Ruddock of Birkbeck College for her support in securing the grant and her assistance in using the document.

Notes on the Shipping List:

General: The main reference for each entry is the one under the footnote for the name of the ship. All information about the voyage not found in the source so indicated is separately cited. Any information for a voyage not separately cited can be assumed to come from the main reference. The numbers in the first column preceeding each entry are for convenience of reference to individual entries and are so used throughout the text.

Year: This is the year in which the ship is presumed to have departed from England and is done in this way simply for convenience. Contemporaries did not necessarily refer to their voyages in such terms. To take a hypothetical case, if the Turkey merchants stated that they had adventured some ships to the Levant in 1585, they very likely were referring to the fact that the ships were in the Levant seas in that year. It was entirely possible, and most likely, that they had departed from England late in 1584 and may not have returned until early 1586.

Ship, Burden, Master: The first and last of these are fairly straight forward. Sometimes in the Leghorn records one or the other was not decipherable. Where no sense at all could be made of the name, it has been left out. Some of the names from that source which are entered are probably not rendered accurately. The burden of Elizabethan ships was a quality which seems to have expanded or contracted at random or with circumstances. Sometimes the burden is an element in deciding whether or not two ships with the same name are, in fact, the same ship. If the difference is small and other factors suggest identity then the difference is ignored.

Cargo: The commodities listed here are those which are known to have been laded on the ship. But any ship listed may have, and probably did, carry other commodities as well. It usually required several Port Books to account for the cargo of a ship because of the different duties paid on different classes of commodities. Nowhere is there a complete set of these Port Books extant. Ships also often laded and unladed in more than one English port. Again the complete set of relevant Port Books has not survived. When knowledge of a cargo comes from court records or literary sources, reference was usually made only to a few of the most important items laded. Thus, there is almost never any justification for one to assume, from the evidence cited, that a complete cargo is known.

Date, Port: The port listed in these columns represents that from which the ship was known to have set sail or to which it returned. The date is less straight forward. If the source is a customs record then the date represents the time the ship was lading or unlading. This sometimes took several weeks and seldom is it known exactly when the ship set sail or arrived. This holds for the Leghorn records as well. When the source

is literary evidence the dates may be more exact. This is often the case with Hakluyt where the exact date of departure or arrival is often given. On the other hand testimony in the Admiralty court can be very vague at times and some entries are the result of judicious guesswork with respect to their dates. When the source gives only a date for a ship's return to England there is an element of guesswork involved in assigning its departure to one year or another because of uncertainty about the length of the voyage. This is true also of those ships appearing in the Leghorn records. Often the best that could be done, was to make an estimation of departure time. Thus it might be that a number of ships are assigned to the wrong year.

Destination: It was the practice for only the first or last port of call to be entered in the Port Books. If such is the only source for a voyage it must not be assumed that the destination given was the ship's only port of call. In most cases it probably was not, as can be seen from those voyages for which there are other sources as well. The dates given represent the time the ship was known to be at the given port. It is not often known how long a ship remained at the port.

Table VII: ENGLISH SHIPPING TO THE MEDITERRANEAN: 1572-1604

430

	SHIP, BURDEN, MASTER	CARGO, DATE, PORT OUTWARD	DESTINATION		CARGO, DATE, PORT INWARD	REMARKS
			WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN	EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN		
1572	<u>HARRY OF LONDON</u> ¹ Thomas Sherland	160		Civitavecchia		laded by Tobias Pallavicino
1573	<u>SWALLOW</u> ² John Scott		London S'thn	Leghorn - 25 June	alum	30 Aug. 1572 London
3	<u>FLYING HART</u> ³ Thomas Sherland	200 ⁴	Oct. ⁵ London	Leghorn - 16 Dec.	anniseed ⁶	3 May ⁴ 1574 Pt'mth
4	<u>PARAKEE</u> ⁴ Richard Odoti		S'thn Cadiz	Leghorn - 9 Nov.		
5	<u>CASTLE OF COMFORT</u> ⁵ Martin Bowles Richard Crumly	170 ¹⁰	S'thn Cadiz	Leghorn - 13 Nov. Genoa ¹⁰	salt hides ¹⁰	12 Apr. ¹⁰ 1574 S'thn
6	<u>FLYING HART</u> ¹¹ Thomas Cuttle	50		Venice	currants, soap, glass	6 Feb. 1574 S'thn
7	<u>ELIZABETH OF LONDON</u> ¹² Edward Taylor	100 ¹³	Dec. ¹⁴ London	Leghorn - 8 Mar. 1574		
8	<u>MAKESPEED</u> ¹⁵ Edward Michelson		Dec. ¹⁴ London	Leghorn - 4 Mar. 1574		
9	<u>HARRY OF</u> ¹⁶ Harry Vritt		London Cadiz	Leghorn - 3 Feb. 1574		
10	Thomas Borat		London	Leghorn - 7 Feb. 1574		
11	<u>PRIMOISE</u> ¹⁸ Robert Freed		Harwich	Leghorn - 15 Feb. 1574		
1574	<u>EMMANUEL OF LONDON</u> ¹⁹ John Albin		London	Leghorn - 4 Mar.		
13	<u>JOHN OF LONDON</u> ²⁰ William Gad	100 ²¹	London	Leghorn - 5 Mar.		
1 Port Book 5/5		7 HCA: Exam. 21 f. 164v	13 SPD Add. 22			
2 ASF 2080 f. 3		8 ASF 2080 f. 32	14 APC 1571-75, p. 151			19 ASF 2080 f. 74
3 ASF 2080 f. 41v		9 ASF 2080 f. 33v	15 ASF 2080 f. 74			20 ASF 2080 f. 75
4 Port Book 814/9		10 Port Book 814/9	16 ASF 2080 f. 70			21 Port Book 814/10
5 HCA: Exam. 21 f. 80v		11 Port Book 814/9	17 ASF 2080 f. 71v			
6 HCA: Exam. 20 f. 304		12 ASF 2080 f. 75	18 ASF 2080 f. 71v			

1577(cont.) 29	SOLOMON ¹	300 ²			Civita Vecchia		alum	late 1577 ³
30	WILLIAM ¹	140 ²			Civita Vecchia		alum	late 1577 ³
31	JOHN ¹	120 ²			Civita Vecchia		alum	late 1577 ³
32	PAUL ¹	130 ²			Civita Vecchia		alum	late 1577 ³
33	MIGNON ⁴ Richard Smith			herring, kersey	Leghorn - 21 Jan. 1578	London		
34	PHOENIX ⁵ John Ashin	100 ⁶		tin, copper, herring, skins	Leghorn - 21 Jan. 1578	Harwich		
35	GRACE OF GOD ⁷ John Anchin			lead, herring, cloth, skins	Leghorn - 23 Jan. 1578	Yarmouth		
36	MAKESPEED ⁸ Thomas More			tin, lead, cloth, wool	Leghorn - 7 Feb. 1578			
37	FORTUNE ⁹ William Bradbone	200 ¹⁰		tin, lead, cloth, indigo, cony- skins, pepper	Leghorn - 27 Feb. 1578	London London Lisbon		
38	MERCHANT ROYAL ¹¹	300			Naples - Feb. 1578			
1578 39	GEORGE BONADVENTURE ¹² John Bacus	140 ¹⁰		tin, lead, cloth	Leghorn - 9 Dec.	London		
40	TRINITY OF NEWCASTLE ¹³ Richard Linteler			lead, herring, kersey, cloth	Leghorn - 7 Jan. 1579			
41	RED SIREN ¹⁴ Richard Colto			cloth, sheepskin	Leghorn - 13 Jan. 1579	London		
42	MIGNON ¹⁵ John Squite			lead, herring, kersey	Leghorn - 13 Jan. 1579			
43	GRIFFON ¹⁵			lead, herring	Leghorn - 14 Jan. 1579			

These ships were all owned by John Hawkins, who let them to Horatio Pallavicino.

Arrested at Naples but then released. There is no indication of its intended destination.

1 Stone, Pallavicino, p.49
 2 SPD Eliz. III no.30
 3 HCA Libels 48 no.64
 4 ASF 2080 f.164v
 5 ibid.
 6 SPD Eliz. 107 no.68
 7 ASF 2080 f.158
 8 ASF 2080 f.174v
 9 ASF 2080 f.177v
 10 SPD Eliz. III no.30
 11 CalSPF 1577-8, p.521
 12 ASF 2080 f.242 v
 13 ASF 2080 f.245
 14 ibid.
 15 ASE 2080 f.245v
 16 ibid.

1880 (cont.) 74	<u>CHRISI</u> ¹	120 ²	lead, kersey, herring		Leghorn-6 Feb.-4581	Zante ²	Candia ²		
75	<u>WHITE HINDE</u> ²	100				Zante	Candia Tripoly-- Jan. 1581 ³		On board were Wm. Barrett and John Newberry. ³
76	<u>PROVIDENCE</u> ²	200				Zante	Candia		
77	<u>GALLION LIGHTRED</u> ⁴ Christopher Hall	300	cloth, wax, leather, calfskins	7 Nov. S'hn.	Leghorn				
1581 78	<u>BARK REYNOLDS</u> ⁵ David Philly	180				Malta-May 1582	Tripoly ⁶		Sent out by Osborne and Slaper.
79	<u>ANNE FRANCIS</u> ⁷ Christopher Cotterman			Sept. Y'mth	Leghorn				
80	<u>GRACE OF GOD</u> ⁸ William Neyles		tin, lead, cloth, beans		Leghorn-12 May				
81	<u>MARGARET BONAVENTURE</u> ⁹ John Vassell		tin, cloth, leather, beans	London	Leghorn-26 Oct.				
82	<u>SUSAN</u> ¹⁰ THOMAS Neena		tin, lead, cloth, leather	London	Leghorn-8 Nov.				
83	<u>GEORGE BONAVENTURE</u> ¹¹ John Barker	150	peas	London	Leghorn-13 Dec.	Venetian islands ¹²		currants ¹²	
84	<u>TRINITY BURR</u> ¹²	140				Venetian islands		currants	
85	<u>SAMARITIN</u> ¹²	140				Venetian islands		currants	
86	<u>ROGER AND KATHERINE</u> ¹²					Venetian islands		currants	
87	<u>ROYAL MERCHANT</u> ¹³ Richard Neyles	300	wool	20 Oct.	Toulon				
88	<u>PHOENIX OF HAIRWICH</u> ¹⁴ John Hamon	100		Oct.	Genoa				

1 ASF 2080 f. 326v
 2 Add. 48 126 f. 174
 3 Purchas VIII, 450
 4 Port Book 815/9
 5 Hakluyt V, 215-20
 6 Cal. SP For. 1582, p. 211
 7 HCA: Exam. 24 f. 205
 8 ASF 2080 f. 333v
 9 ASF 2080 f. 376
 10 ASF 2080 f. 377
 11 ASF 2080 f. 382v
 12 Add. 48 126 f. 197
 13 Port Book 771
 14 Customs Acct. 90/35a

1583 (cont.)	MARY FORTUNE ¹ Robert Weber	tin, lead, herring, wax, peas	Harwich	Leghorn - 10 Jan. 1584 Marseilles ²	Venice		June ² 1584
134							
135	ELIZABETH OF LONDON ²						Oct 1584
136	GEORGE BONAVENTURE ³ John Bowes	tin, lead, copper, kersey, cloth, herring, wax	Harwich	Leghorn - 10 Jan. 1584			
138	ELLEN ⁴ John James	lead, herring	Harwich	Leghorn - 13 Feb. 1584			
139	JESUS ⁵ Andrew Dier		Jan.		Tripoly - 18 Mar.		Arrested at Tripoly 1 May, crew released April 1585
140	CATHERINE ⁶ Nicholas Ellis	lead, kersey, cloth, thread	London	Leghorn - 30 Mar.			
141	CHARITY ⁷ Robert Vigiate		London	Leghorn - 24 Apr.			
142	GEORGE BONAVENTURE ⁸				Zante - Nov. Cephalonia	currants, wine ¹⁰	
143	ASCENSION ⁶				Zante - Nov. Cephalonia	currants ¹⁰	
144	MERCHANT ROYAL ¹¹ —Wilkinson		9 Oct. London		Zante - 29 Dec. Cephalonia Petras - 12 Jan. 1585		
145	CHARITY ¹²	tin, cloth			Petras - 29 Jan. 1585 Cephalonia		
146	THOMAS BONAVENTURE ¹³ John Gualtiere		London	Leghorn - 14 Feb. 1585			
147	TRINITY BURD ¹⁴ David Carpenter		London		Venetian islands ⁹	wine ¹⁰	
148	HARRY BONAVENTURE ⁹		London	Leghorn - 18 Feb. 1585			
149	SAMARITAN ⁹				Venetian dominions	wine ¹⁰	

1 ASF 2080 f. 650v
 2 SPD Eliz. 204 no. 55
 3 ASF 2080 f. 650
 4 ASF 2080 f. 685
 5 Hakluyt V, 292
 6 ASF 2080 f. 677v
 7 ASF 2080 f. 685
 8 HCA-Exam. 25 f. 248v
 9 SPD Eliz. 177 no. 55
 10 Add. 46126 f. 197
 11 Foster, Sanderston, p. 3, 36
 12 Ibid. p. 37
 13 ASF 2080 f. 785
 14 ASF 2080 f. 787v

1587/cont 1	100	<u>GIFT OF GOD</u> ¹ Robert Harrison	Oct. ² London		Petras		currants, silk	11 Mar. 1588 London	Built by James Pett of Lymehouse, shipwright. ³
196									
197	160	<u>CHERUBIN OF LONDON</u> ¹ John Pierson	Oct. ² London		Zante		currants	13 Mar. 1588 London	
198	160	<u>MAYFLOWER OF LONDON</u> ¹ John Vassell	Oct. ² London		Petras		currants	13 Mar. 1588 London	
199	120	<u>ANNE FRANCES OF LONDON</u> ⁴ John Beverly	Oct. London	Marseilles			currants, olive oil, soap, galls, nutmeg, cotton wool, worm- seed, cork	13 Mar. 1588 London	Laded by Henry Anderson and Henry Farrington.
1588	100	<u>GIFT OF GOD</u> ⁵ James Powell							
200	250	<u>HERCULES</u> ⁶ Richard Parsons						Jan. London 1590	
201	160	<u>CHERUBIN OF LONDON</u> ⁷ Richard Gibbs	Oct. ⁶		Venice ⁶ Zante		currants, cotton wool, silk, brimstone	9 July 1589 London	
202	160	<u>MARGARET AND JOHN</u> ⁷ John Burrell			Venice		currants	9 July 1589 London	Built by John Watts of London. ⁹
203	140	<u>GEORGE BONAVENTURE</u> ⁷ Roland Jurdane			Zante		currants	10 July 1589 London	
204	140	<u>EAGLE</u> ⁵ Henry White			Zante			Nov. 1589	Laded by Henry Colthurst and Co. ¹⁰
205	160	<u>MINION OF LONDON</u> ⁷ John Gram			Zante			9 July 1589	
206	120	<u>SOLOMON OF ALBOROUGH</u> ⁷ George Street						22 Aug 1589	
207	120	<u>DRAGON OF HARWICH</u> ¹¹ John Craig	29 Oct. Ipswich	Leghorn			currants, silk		
1589									

1 Port Book 8/8
 2 Customs Acct.178/16
 3 Exch.Warrants for Issue/131
 4 Port Book 8/1
 5 Customs Acct.178/23
 6 Customs Acct.178/20
 7 Port Book 8/4
 8 SPD Eliz. 239 no.42
 9 Exch.Warrants for Issue/130
 10 SPD Eliz. 239 no.75
 11 Port Book 593/22

1500(cont) 239	<u>SUSAN BONAVENTURE</u> ¹ Thomas Harmond	120	herring	Oct. Harwich	Marseilles	Venetian dominions ²			Laded by Henry Colthurst and Co. On return voyage, April 1591, she was sunk by Spanish gallees. ³
240	<u>DOLPHIN OF LONDON</u> ¹ William Copland	50	herring	Nov.	Leghorn				
241	<u>VIOLET OF LONDON</u> ¹ William Eustace	120	herring	Nov.	Leghorn				
242	<u>AMBROSE OF YARMOUTH</u> ¹ Clement Wilkinson	100	lead, herring, codfish, powdered sugar	Dec. Yarm'th			Candia		
243	<u>BARK ELIZABETH</u> ³						Constantinople 15 Dec.	currants	
244	<u>THOMAS ALLEN</u> ⁴								
1591 245	<u>TO BY</u> ⁵	200		29 Sept. London		Petras - 1591			
246	<u>EAGLE</u> ² William Taverner	140 ⁶	tin, lead, kersey			Zant Cephalonia Petras	Constantinople		Laded by Henry Colthurst and Co.
247	<u>GABRIEL OF BRISTOL</u> ⁷ William Meges	50	lead, cloth, calfskins, sugar	20 Sept. Bristol	Leghorn				
1592 248	<u>ELIZABETH</u> ⁸ Roger Gonston ⁹	80 ⁹	lead, tin, herring	Nov.	Leghorn				Taken as a prize by some French ships
249	<u>HOPEWELL</u> ¹⁰								
250	<u>UNICORNE OF BRISTOL</u> ¹¹ Francis Cooke	50	tin, lead, cloth, calfskins, Newfoundland fish,	Bristol Aug. Bristol	Leghorn - Jan. 1593 Toulon	Venice			
251	<u>VIOLET OF BRISTOL</u> ⁷ William Meges	50	tin, lead, cloth, grain, leather	Sept. Bristol	Leghorn - Jan. 1593 ¹²				
252	<u>JESUS</u> ¹³ John Nellis		lead, grain		Leghorn - Jan. 1593				
253	<u>ROSE</u> ¹³ William _____		tin, lead, leather		Leghorn - Jan. 1593				

13 ASF 2079 f.151

1 Port Book 476/8
 2 SPD Eliz. 239 no.75
 3 SPF Turkey 2 f.68
 4 HCA:Exam. 30 f.181v
 5 Lans. 241 f.387v
 6 SPD Eliz. 239 no. 6.2
 7 Port Book 1131/1
 8 HCA:Exam. 30 f. 163v
 9 Customs Acct. 178/26
 10 HCA:Exam. 33 f.226
 11 ASF 2079 f.157
 12 ASF 2079 f.152

1593cont. 269	<u>CHERUBIN OF LONDON</u> ¹ Might Edmonds	180	Sept. London	Leghorn					
270	<u>REPORT OF LONDON</u> ¹ Thomas Rowe	100	Sept. London	Leghorn					
271	<u>HARRY OF LONDON</u> ¹ Rowland Quilmore	110	Sept. London	Leghorn					
272	<u>JOHN OF LONDON</u> ¹ Richard Harwell	100	Sept. London	Leghorn					
273	<u>ROYAL EXCHANGE</u> ¹ Thomas Brown	240	Sept. London	Leghorn					
274	<u>GREYHOUND OF ALBOROUGH</u> ¹ John Mathews	120	Sept. London	Leghorn					
275	<u>SUSAN BONAVENTURE</u> ² Henry Brown	120	Sept. London	Leghorn					
276	<u>EXPEDITION OF LYNE</u> ² Thomas Gardener	100	Sept. London	Leghorn					
277	<u>ASCENSION OF LONDON</u> ³ William Broadbanke	260	21 Mar.	Zante-24 Apr.	Scanderoon-21 May Constantinople-30 Aug. Tripoly- Jan 1594 ⁴				
278	<u>TOBY OF LONDON</u> ⁶ George Goodlad	250	16 Aug. London	Leghorn Toulon	Zante Petras				
279	<u>MARY OF LONDON</u> ⁷ Thomas Reade		Nov.	Algier Genoa					
280	<u>DIAMOND OF BRISTOL</u> ⁸ William Meges	50	Oct. Bristol	Leghorn Toulon ⁹		olive oil, rice, raisins, currants, brimstone, alum ¹⁰	May 1592 ⁹ Bristol		
281	<u>COSENT OF LONDON</u> ¹⁰ George Street ¹	250	Aug. ¹ London					1 July 1594 London	
282	<u>PAUL OF LONDON</u> ¹¹ Bartholomew Huggett	100	14 Nov. Harwich	Leghorn	Scanderoon				
283	<u>LION OF LONDON</u> ¹¹ Roger Hankin	150	10 Nov. Harwich	Leghorn					

1 Customs Acct. 178/2#6
 2 Customs Acct. 178/30
 3 Hakluyt VI, 94
 4 SP Levant 109 f.5v
 5 Exch. Warrants for Issue/127
 6 Hakluyt VII, 124
 7 HCA: Exam. 31 f.77
 8 Port Book 1270/9
 9 Port Book II 31/9
 10 Exch. Warrants for Issue/132
 11 Port Book 478/2

Owned by Richard Stapers. Wrecked on the Barbary coast 19 Oct.

159(cont)	50	lead	Sept. Bristol	Leghorn				
299	<u>GABRIEL OF BRISTOL</u> ¹ Thomas Netlawaye							
300	<u>ROE OF BRISTOL</u> ² Mathew Honywell	lead, coperas, kersey, cloth	Oct. Bristol	Leghorn Marseilles				
301	<u>ELIZABETH OF AFSOM</u> ³ Richard Whitcombe	herring	Nov. Dartm'th	Leghorn				
302	<u>JEWELL OF LONDON</u> ³ Roger Hankin	herring	6 Nov Yarm'th	Leghorn				
303	<u>REFUGE OF LONDON</u> ³ Nicholas Roberts	herring	7 Nov. Yarm'th	Leghorn				
304	<u>MERMAID OF LONDON</u> ³ Thomas Best	herring	9 Nov Harwich	Leghorn				
305	<u>GIFT OF GOD OF LONDON</u> ³ Ambrose Salsbeie	herring	11 Nov. Yarm'th	Leghorn				
306	<u>LION OF LONDON</u> ³ John Bedford	herring	14 Nov. Yarm'th	Leghorn				
307	<u>SALLAMANDER OF LONDON</u> ³ William Brown	herring	17 Nov. Yarm'th	Genoa				
308	<u>FLOWER OF COMFORT</u> ³ Rowland Huckson	herring	19 Nov. Yarm'th	Leghorn				
309	<u>PROSPERITY OF LONDON</u> ³	herring	20 Nov Yarm'th	Leghorn				
310	<u>ELIZABETH OF YORK</u> ³ Thomas Wilson	herring	24 Dec Yarm'th	Leghorn				
311	<u>JOSEPH OF BRISTOL</u> ² Thomas Rice	80		Toulon			alum, oil, cumminseed, anniseed, cotton, raisins	Jan. 1595
312	<u>CENTURION</u> ⁴					Zante - Feb. 1595		
313	<u>HERCULES</u> ⁴ Richard Parsons			Algier		Scandroon		Scandroon ⁵

1 Port Book 1270/9
 2 Port Book 1131/10
 3 Port Book 478/5
 4 Lans. 241 f. 52v
 5 SP Levant 109 f. 16

1599(cont.) 360	<u>MERCHANT BONAVENTURE</u> ¹ Thomas Crowder	120	herring	Nov. Yarm'th	Leghorn	Zante	Candia	14 May 1600 London
390	<u>ANNE FRANCIS OF HARWICH</u> ² John Mann	70						14 May ¹ 1600 London
391	<u>DIAMOND OF LONDON</u> ¹ Edward Pewtris	40				Venice		15 May 1600 London
392	<u>CHARLES OF LONDON</u> ¹ David Carpenter	60				Venice		15 May 1600 London
393	<u>DIAMOND OF HULL</u> ¹ John Steed	40			Leghorn			15 May 1600 London
394	<u>HOPE OF LONDON</u> ² Edward Gardener	100	herring	Nov. Yarm'th		Venice		15 May ¹ 1600 London
395	<u>ANNE KATHERINE</u> ² William Jones	60	lead, herring, wax	Nov. Yarm'th	Marselles			15 May ¹ 1600 London
396	<u>FLOWER OF COMFORT</u> ² Reinold Hopton	100	herring	Nov. Yarm'th	Civita Vecchia			15 May ¹ 1600 London
397	<u>VIOLET OF YARMOUTH</u> ² William Nicholson	100	herring	Nov. Yarm'th	Civita Vecchia			16 May ¹ 1600 London
398	<u>GREAT SUSAN OF LONDON</u> ¹ Robert Bradshaw	200				Zante		18 May 1600 London
399	<u>HANDMAID OF DARTMOUTH</u> ³ John Drake	60	Newfoundland fish, pickards	Oct. Dartm'th	Marselles, ¹ Civita Vecchia			18 May ¹ 1600 London
400	<u>PRUDENCE OF PLYMOUTH</u> ¹	70			Marselles			29 May 1600 London
401	<u>FLYING DRAGON OF LONDON</u> ² Hugh Robinson	160	herring	Nov. Harwich	Leghorn			31 May ¹ 1600 London
402	<u>SUSAN PATRICK OF LONDON</u> ² Rowland Quoitmore	140	herring	Nov. London	Leghorn			28 June 1600 London
403	<u>LITTLE GEORGE OF LONDON</u> ¹ William Abrahall	60						30 June 1600 London

Scanderoon - Jan 1600⁴

1 Port Book IV/1
2 Port Book 480/12
3 Port Book 937/8
4 Harris, p. 294

160(cont)	434	GALLION BONAVENTURE ¹ Thomas Pope	70	herring	Nov. London	—	Ancona			
	435	FLOWER OF COMFORT ¹ Reynold Hopton	80	herring	Nov. London	Civita Vecchia				
	436	HOPEWELL OF LONDON ¹ Edward Gardener	100	herring	Nov. Harwich		Venice			
	437	TRIAL OF LONDON ¹ John Johnson	120	herring	Nov. Yarm'th	Leghorn		Scanderoon - July 1602 ²		
	438	CONTENT OF LONDON ¹ George Wood	40	herring	Nov. Harwich	Leghorn				
	439	ROSE OF LONDON ¹ Edward Pewturst	100	herring	3 Nov. Yarm'th		Venice			
	440	ROYAL MERCHANT ¹ John King	250	herring	7 Nov. London	Leghorn				
	441	MAYFLOWER OF NEWCASTLE ³ William Eden	60				Venice		24 Mar. 1602 London	
	442	TIGER OF LYNN ¹ Richard Wilkinson	60	herring	28 Nov. Yarm'th	Civita Vecchia			27 May ³ 1602 London	
	443	CORSLETT OF LONDON ³ George Ireland	120						28 May 1602 London	
	444	JOHN AND FRANCIS ³ John Bewley	120						28 May 1602 London	
	445	GREYHOUND OF ALBOROUGH ³ Thomas Jonson	120						28 May 1602 London	
	446	HERCULES OF PLYMOUTH ³ William Brown	190				Zante Cephalonia		28 May 1602 London	
	447	CHARITY OF LONDON ⁴					Zante - early 1602			25 June 1602 London
	448	ROYAL EXCHANGE ⁵			Sept. London		Venice - Mar 1602 Zante	Scanderoon - Dec 1601 Sept 1602		16 Feb ⁶ 1603

1 Port Book 482/2
 2 Harris, p.296
 3 Port Book 12/1
 4 HCA : Exam. 36 f.178 v
 5 Harris, pp.137,295 - 6
 6 Cal SP Ven. 1592 - 1603, p. 534

160(cont.) 449	<u>PRIMROSE OF LONDON</u> ¹ William Stephens	40			Leghorn - Jan. 1602 ²	Leghorn			7 Mar. 1602 London
450	<u>DESIRE OF LONDON</u> ¹ Gideon Jonson	120				Leghorn			7 Jan. 1602 London
451	<u>THOMAS AND WILLIAM</u> ³								
452	<u>EDWARD BONAVENTURE</u> ³								
453	<u>LANNARET</u> ⁵								
1602 454	<u>CHERUBIN</u> ⁶ Abraham Lawse	200		Jan. Plym'th					
455	<u>SAMUEL</u> ³								
456	<u>SAKER</u> ⁷ Thomas Crowther								Owned by Edward Holmden
457	<u>DARLING</u> ⁷								
458	<u>PHOENIX</u> ⁸								
459	<u>ALCEDO</u> ⁹								
460	<u>REBECCA</u> ¹¹ John _____								
461	Philip _____								
462	<u>JONAS</u> ¹³ William Limbri								
463	<u>SALAMANDER OF LONDON</u> ¹⁴ William Brown	150							

1 Port Book 12/1	7 Cal. SP Ven. 1592-1603, p. 521	13 ASF 2079 f. 232							
2 HCA: Exam. 35 f. 336	8 Ibid., p. 549	14 HCA: Exam. 36 f. 294							
3 Harris, p. 295-6	9 Cal. SP Ven. 1603-07, p. 90	15 Sloan 1606 f. 54							
4 Foster, Sanderson, p. 90	10 HCA: Exam. 36 f. 293v	16 Cal. SP Ven. 1603-07, p. 60							
5 Nero BXI f. 105v	11 ASF 2079 f. 226								
6 HCA: Exam. 36 f. 173v	12 Cal. SP Ven. 1603-07, p. 90								

Reported to have sailed from Venice to England in less than 8 weeks.

currants

In June 1603 was captured by a French ship.¹⁶

160-(cont) 494	MARGARET AND ROSE ¹ Anthony Seward	100	lead	5 Nov. London	Leghorn			
495	SPEEDWELL OF LONDON ¹ Jeremy Swanly	100	lead	5 Nov. London		Venice		
496	VINYARD OF LONDON ¹ William Abrahall	200	iron, wheat	6 Nov. London	Leghorn			
497	MARY ROSE OF LONDON ¹ Thomas Rickman	150	tin, lead, conyskins, caviar	15 Nov. London	Leghorn			
498	GOLDEN DRAGON ¹ William Green	50	tin, lead, tallow, cow hides, red skins, caviar	23 Nov. London	Civita Vecchia			
499	GOLDEN DRAGON ¹ Robert Tyler	100	tin, lead, iron, pewter, copper, plate, conyskins, cow hides, tallow, calicos, caviar	25 Nov. London		Zante		
500	JOHN FRANCIS OF LONDON ¹ Allen Cary	100	tallow, cow hides, lambs leather, Russia red hides, bays, says, caviar	27 Nov. London	Leghorn			
501	GOODSPEED OF LONDON ¹ Stephen Bennett	60	tarrd ropes	29 Nov. London	Leghorn			
502	UNITY OF LONDON ¹ John Breadtake		tallow, red skins, lawns, cambrics, osnabrucks	22 Dec. London	Leghorn			

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229-232
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 93, 99, 105, 106, 107, 111,
 112, 114, 119, 120, 125, 127,
 131, 136, 144, 146, 149, 151,
 155, 157, 160, 165, 177, 185,
 204, 219, 223, 225, 229, 231,
 232, 233, 235, 239, 241, 250,
 262, 268, 272, 273, 275, 276,
 283a, 285, 286
 James I, 4, 6, 10, 13, 15, 17,
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