



A Sixteenth Century English Merchant in Ankara?

Author(s): David French

Source: *Anatolian Studies*, Vol. 22, Special Number in Honour of the Seventieth Birthday of Professor Seton Lloyd, (1972), pp. 241-247

Published by: British Institute at Ankara

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3642568>

Accessed: 25/04/2008 07:41

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=biaa>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We enable the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

A SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH MERCHANT IN ANKARA?

By DAVID FRENCH

The letter preserved in the British Museum Lansdowne MS 241, f 393a¹ has not, so far as I know, been published *verbatim*. It is mentioned by Foster (1931, 278), in his edition of the letters and other writings brought together by John Sanderson, as follows:

Folio 393 a

Copy of instructions (undated) from William Harborne to James Towerson,
for the purchase of goods at 'Angurie of Azia' [i.e. Angora].

It is the only item of correspondence between William Harborne and James Towerson to be preserved in Sanderson's collection; it was copied out for Sanderson by his apprentice, John Hanger (see Foster 1931, ix).

Text

A transliteration of the letter is given here without alteration (transcription p. 245; photograph Fig. 1), except for the change to modern typography. There are no difficulties in the text, except for the eighth word in line 36: *merchant*? I cannot think of a suitable, alternative rendering nor has any been suggested to me. The letter was written out by Hanger: the introductory rubric and the note at the foot of the page (transcribed by Foster 1931, 291–292) on weights and measures were inserted in Sanderson's own hand.

Date

William Harborne, having been appointed as Ambassador on 26 November, 1582, arrived in Istanbul on 29 March 1583 and (in the modern phrase) presented his credentials at a series of ceremonies commencing 9 April and ending with an audience with Murad III on 24 April. Letters of Harborne, appointing consuls (Harvie Millers in Alexandria and Richard Forster in Aleppo) are recorded in Hakluyt (1907, 114 and 115). Towerson died (? of plague) in Aleppo in summer 1586 and was replaced in October 1586 by John Eldred (Foster 1931, 136). A possible date, therefore, for the writing of this letter is summer 1583, when Harborne was, clearly, organizing the conduct and operations of the Levant Company. It is not recorded in Sanderson's papers if Towerson ever made the journey to Ankara.

Comment

Other examples of Harborne's letters are quoted in Hakluyt (1907: 116, to Forster). His (Harborne's) epistolary style is, in general, doubtless that of an educated man but in the main body of the letter the instructions given to Towerson are couched in plain, straightforward language. There is here no question of non-communication.

It is, in fact, in the details on cloth and dye-colours that our interest may be centred. The indications of the preferences shown by the traders of the Levant

¹Permission to publish a text and photograph of this letter was kindly granted by the Trustees of the British Museum. This paper was given as a lecture, "European Travellers to Ankara in the Sixteenth Century", at the Museum of Anatolian Cultures, Ankara, on 20 May 1971.

Company are as much revealing of cloth and colour fashions in England as they are of woollen products in Turkey in the sixteenth century. The subject of cloth, fabrics, colours and fashions in sixteenth and seventeenth century England are very usefully discussed by Linthicum (1936)².

It is interesting, therefore, to note the following cloths and dyes:

1. *Water chamblets*: OED (1947) Chamlet or Camlet. "ME [Fr. *camelot*; associated with *camel*, but prob. a. Arab. *khamlat*, f. *khaml* pile or nap.] A name orig. for a costly eastern fabric. subseq. for substitutes made of various combinations of wool, silk, hair, and latterly cotton or linen Stuffs made from the hair of (the Angora goat) . . known among us by the name of *camlet* Goldsm."

OED (1947) Watered. "To produce a moiré or wavy lustrous finish on (silk or other textile fabrics) by sprinkling them with water and passing them through a calender 1450."

Both the cloth and the technique of 'watering' are described by Busbecq in 1555:

"We saw also the famous goats from whose fleece or hair—I avoid the controversy about goat's wool—is made the well-known cloth, known as camlet or watered cloth (mohair). The hair of these goats is very fine and wonderfully glossy, and hangs right down to the ground. The goat-herds do not shear it, but comb it out, and it is hardly less beautiful than silk. The goats are frequently dipped in the streams. Their food, which is the thin, dry grass of the district, is supposed to contribute to the fineness of their wool; for it is certain that, if they are removed to other pastures, their coats change with the change of food, and their species is scarcely recognizable. The thread spun from this wool by the women of the district is taken to Angora, a city of Galatia, and there woven and dyed in a manner which I shall describe hereafter."

(Forster 1927, 46).

"Here (Angora) we also saw how the water camlet (mohair), which I have already mentioned, made from the hair of goats, is dyed and given by means of a press its watered appearance from the 'waves' produced by pouring water upon it. The pieces which have received the marks of the very broad 'waves' in continuous lines are considered the best and choicest. If the 'waves' are smaller and of varying lengths and run into one another, though the colour and material may be the same, this is counted as a defect, and the cloth is valued at a price less by several gold pieces. The wearing of this cloth is a mark of distinction among the older Turks of high rank. Soleiman himself does not like to be seen wearing any material but this, and prefers a green colour, which, though to our ideas unsuited to a man of advanced years, is commended by their religion and the practice of Mahomet, their prophet, who even in old age habitually wore it."

(Forster 1927, 50–51).

The cloth and the process are also described in the Ankara region by Busbecq's travelling companion, Dernschwam:

"Also, as previously, no trees, poor sheep pasture, bare mountains. In the town of Ancira are greeks, armenians, jews, turks; there much chamlet is made and (as) we saw, everybody is a weaver.

Chamlet, as mentioned, is spun from the above-mentioned goat-hair. We have seen only greeks who work it, wash, dye and water-mark it under a press. Before they work it and before the threads are even attached (to the loom), they stretch (them) lengthwise from one point to another; they have a fatty grease with which they smear the threads. Then it is set up on the weaving-frame (i.e. an upright-loom) and worked: then they wash it with soap in running water and it takes on the appearance of mohair without (a) water(mark). Then they put it into tall vessels, lidded copper cauldrons; therein they pile 70 pieces of chamlet, one on top of another, and pour over clean water which goes through (the cloth). And they leave the cloth so to boil for a day, until evening; between each bundle or each layer they lay several reeds, such as grow in ponds; thereby the water may pass through. As soon as it is taken out of the cauldron, they put the boiled chamlet, all 70 pieces, under a press and squeeze the water completely out. Previously the reeds had all been removed. From those boilings and pressings come the water(marks) on their own. They next fold them (the cloth) along their length (i.e. lengthwise) and lay them together and squeeze them under another press. Then they are ready. And at this time, they were all black chamlet in the cauldron; and they were offering a half piece for about [] *aspers*.

For the dyeing there is a special craft and also for bleaching. Weavers are very numerous; and most chamlet is made there in Ancira; it is their livelihood; one hardly sees any other craft-work. We have also

²My attention was drawn to this book by Mr. James Leech. Both to him and to others whose patience I have tested by endless examinations of the Harborne letter, I owe a debt of thanks. Grateful thanks are also due to Dr. Bartsch (Director of the German Library in Ankara) with whom I discussed many points of translation from Dernschwam's German.

seen felt-makers there. Camel-drivers spin the hair of camels for their needs. They girdle themselves with it, and a spindle has the following shape (illustration in original).

The cauldrons in which the chamlet is boiled, are illustrated, as here following (illustration in original); and there are in that same work-shop two cauldrons and two presses outside and one small press inside the room.

Such high copper cauldrons were two, over one trench.

At the presses they have 7 men pulling on one thick baulk. If they were skilled, one man could, with effort, turn it, in the way they press wine at Vienna. Their chamlet presses, however, have two spindles; the press-beam is $3\frac{1}{2}$ Viennese *els* long, the spindles are short and thick.

The chamlet trade is (all) at Ancira, as in some places in Swabia with *parchnt* (a cloth), linen-garb is (so) traded. They also have a trading-hall, as at Constantinople they have 2; there they have all sorts of things for sale. We were not able to see it, since on Fridays the Turks have their holy-day and it was closed.

The chamlet worker beats-in (the weft) after each pass (of the weft), strongly 4 times successively, so that the cloth will become thick; boiling also helps it (to become thick)."

(Translated from Babinger 1923, 186–187; the German text is given below p. 246).

Linthicum (1936, 74) comments on watered and unwatered *chamlet*:

"By 1525, chamlets were made to show a 'watered' or *moiré* appearance, and thereafter they were designated 'unwatered', or 'watered', the latter called 'cold water chamblets' in *Philaster*."

2. *Grogrins*: OED (1947) Grogram. 1562 "[Earlier *grogran*(e ad. F. *gros grain* large or coarse grain.) 1. A coarse fabric of silk of mohair and wool, or of these mixed with silk; often stiffened with gum."

Linthicum (1936, 77) describes *grogram*:

"An order to a sixteenth-century mercer for grograin would have stated whether the buyer wished hair, silk, or worsted material, for grograin was the name of a taffeta weave with 'gros grains' or cords in the warp; hence one finds allusions to 'changeable sylke grogram', 'damaske silke grogram', 'grogram of goat's hair or wool', and in the testimony given in the *Delves v. Norwich* case a statement that 'the newe stuffe called Grogryn ys all one with the stuffe heretofore called chamlett'. Grograin or 'gros de Naples', as it was sometimes called, was well known in England early in the sixteenth century" (e.g. 1529) "coming by way of Antwerp, Turkey, Valencia, Lyons, Ypres, and Lille. Grosgrains of Turkey" (e.g. 1585) "were of hair,"

Travelling through the Ankara region in February 1582, John Newberry had heard of Ankara as the centre of wool manufacture:

Erandrerrea (? *Iğrendi* or *Eğrendi*, now *İmrendi*) "standeth near a pleasant valley; and to the south of this place, half a day, is a citie called Angria where most of the Chamblets and Grograms are made."

(Purchas 1905, 474).

3. *Moccadoes*: OED (1947) Mockado. 1543. "[app. a corruption of It. *mocaiardo* mohair.] A kind of cloth much used for clothing in the 16th and 17th centuries."

Linthicum (1936, 81–82) defines *mockado*:

"Mockado, often called 'mock velvet', was a piled cloth of silk or wool, or mixed silk and linen, with linen back, worn in England previous to 1543, and manufactured at Norwich before 1560. Mockado was made in a variety of colours, plain, striped, and tufted,"

'Thorngalle moccados' would be black-dyed mockados.

4. *Dyes*: purple, black, crimson, blue, green, lion-colour, sad-tawny, ash-colour, orange, peach, red. This interesting range of sixteenth century Turkish dyes is perhaps most notable for the use of colours which are described by Harborne in terms of fruits: orange and peach. Orange is used as adjective as early as 1542 (OED 1947). According to Linthicum (1936, 40), peach was a deep, fresh pink, known as a textile colour in France in 1315 but seemed new to England in the sixteenth century; orange-tawny was known in England in 1523 (*op. cit.* 45–46).

Notes

The mention by Dernschwam (Babinger 1923, 187 line 27) of a *kauffhaus*,

i.e. a *han*, may *perhaps* refer to the Bedesten (built at some time between 1464–1471) and the Kurşunlu Han (? completed between the same dates).³ Both may have played an important part in the marketing of wool and cloth and, as has been suggested to me,⁴ their size may be due to the position of Ankara in the wool trade. It is apposite, also, to recall the early eighteenth century painting (in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) of a walled town and a wool-market, said to be Aleppo (van Luttervelt 1958, 39–40 and pl. 39) but now convincingly referred to Ankara by Professor Semavi Eyice (*Atatürk Konferansları* 1970: to be published by the Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara).

This letter supplements other accounts of the beginnings of the Levant trade at the end of the sixteenth century (Wood 1964) and also the summary (Harris 1960) of the correspondence of an Aleppo Factor, of the same period. These other accounts deal more with Istanbul and Aleppo, less with Ankara. Here we have some evidence for the establishing of English trade in Ankara.

It is, therefore, a great pleasure to dedicate this brief account of sixteenth century enterprise to one who did so much to initiate British archaeology in the city of Ankara.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BABINGER, FR. 1923. *Hans Dernschwams Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien 1553/1555* (Munich and Leipzig).
- FORSTER, E. S. 1927. *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq* (Oxford; repr. 1968).
- FOSTER, W. 1931. *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584–1602* (London) (Hakluyt Soc. series 2 no. LXVII).
- HAKLUYT, R. 1907. *The Principal Voyages of the English Nation* (Everyman edit. Vol. III. London; repr. 1962).
- HARRIS, P. R. 1960. "An Aleppo Merchant's Letter Book", *BMQ* XXII, 64–69.
- LINTHICUM, M. C. 1936. *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries* (Clarendon, Oxford).
- PURCHAS, S. 1905. *Purchas His Pilgrimes VIII* (Maclehose edit., Glasgow).
- VAN LUTTERVELT, R. 1958. *De "Turkse" Schilderijen van J. B. Vanmour en zijn School. De verzameling van Cornelius Calkoen, Ambassadeur bij de Hoge Porte, 1725–1743.* (Istanbul) (Publ. Neth. Inst. Near East IV).
- WOOD, A. C. 1935. *History of the Levant Company* (Oxford, repr. 1964).

Extract from Babinger 1923, 186–187, translated on p. 242 f.:

Auch, wie vor stat, khain holcz, nidere scheff waidt, khale berge. In der stadt Ancira seindt krichen, armenier, juden, turkhen, alda man vil zamlot macht vnd wyr gesehen, alles weber seind.

Die zamlot, wie obstat, seindt von obstanden gaisharen gespunnen. Haben nur krichn gesehen, die sy wyrkhen, waschen, syeden vnd wasser (?) drukhen vnder ainer pres. Ehe man die zamlot wirgt vnd die faden nu angeschert sein, spannen sy noch der lenge von ainem orth zw dem andern, haben ein faiste schmir, darmit sy die feden vberfaren. Darnach richt mans auff den weber still vnd wirgkzt, darnach wescht man die mit saiffen in eim flissenden wasser aus, seind gestalt wie die muchaier ane wasser, darnach sendt man sy in hohen vermachten, gesturczten kupffren kesseln, dorein legt man in 70 stuk zamlot auff einander vnd geust rain wasser daran, das daruber geht. Vnd lassens also ein tag sieden bis auff den abent, zwischen jeden sturcz ader jedes plat legt man mer ror, wie die in teichen wachsen, domit das wasser darzwischen mag komen. Als bald man die aus dem kessel genomen, seczt man die gesotten zamlot in 70 stuk alle vnder ein pres vnd prest das wasser wol heraus. Man hot auch zuuor die ror alle heraus zogen. Von dem dosigen sieden vnd

³ Formerly the Hittite Museum, now the Museum of Anatolian Cultures.

⁴ By Mr. Burhan Tezcan.

pressen werden die wasser von sich selbs. Die sturcz man alsdan noch der lenge vnd legt sj zusammen vnd prest sj vnder einer andern pres. So seind sj ferttig. Vnd auff dis mall seind lautter schwarcz zamlot in dem kessel gewesen, hot man ein halb stuk vmb asper gepotten.

Zw dem ferben ist ein sunderlich handwegk vnd zw dem aussyden auch ein sunderlichs. Der weber seind seer vjll, vnd alda zw Ancira macht man die maisten zamlot, ist ir narung, sunst sicht man khain ander handtirung. Haben auch filcz macher alda gesehen. Die kamel treiber spinnen die hare von khameln zw irer notturft. Hot die wolle vmb sich gegurt, hot ein spindel also gestalt:

Item, die kessel, dorin man die zamlot seudt, seind also gestalt, wie hernach volgt vnd seind in der dosigen wergk stat zwene kessel gewesen vnd zwo pressen herausen vnd in der khammer 1 klainer pres.

Solcher hocher kupfrener kessel seind 2 gewesen, vber einer gruben.

An der pressen haben ir 7 mit einem diken balken gezogen. Wan sy geschigt weren, mechtz ain man mit forttel herumb drehen, wie zw Wien die wein pressen. Aber ire zamlot pressen haben zwo spindeln, der presbaum in $3\frac{1}{2}$ wiener eln lang, die spindeln kurz vnd dikhe.

Der zamlot verschleis ist zw Ancira, wie irncz in Schwaben mit parchnt, leinwat gehandelt wirdt. Hot auch ein kauffhaus alda, wie zw Constantinapol ir 2 sein, dorin man allerlej war fail hot. Haben wjr nicht sehen mugen, dan am freytag die turkhen iren feyertag haben vnd zw gewest ist.

Die zamlot wirkher schlagen noch jedem schus in 4 mall stark nocheinander, dorumb er so digk wirdt, darzw auch das siedn hilfft.