

An English Merchant in Ottoman İzmir (Smyrna): William Barker (1731-1825)

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Abstract

In the eighteenth century, in order to stimulate British trade in the Levant the British Levant Company made such decisions as accepting membership of countrymen. With the benefits of changes in the Company's rules, William Barker of Derbyshire became a member of the Company and came to İzmir (Smyrna) in 1760 for the purpose of trade and "profit". Focusing on William Barker's life, this research examines the rules binding merchants of the Company in Ottoman lands, their relations with both Ottoman subjects and "European" residents in İzmir, the reflections of inter-states competitions and conflict on trade in concerned period and their contacts with Ottoman authorities by analysing documents including Barker's letters to his family, minutes of the Levant Company, records from the Ottoman archives, traveller accounts, and the letters sent by the traders of the Smyrna Factory to the authorities in London. This study sheds light on how economic, political and social conditions of late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Levant affected European merchants residing in Ottoman lands individually and communally. Not leaving a lucrative trade back in the Ottoman lands where he had started as a merchant without capital and ended up bankrupt, William Barker who resided in İzmir for 65 years until his death left a generation that continued to live in these lands until the middle of the 20th century.

Keywords: Trade, Levant Company, British merchants, Ottoman Empire, İzmir (Smyrna), Franks (Europeans), William Barker.

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ORCID: 0000-0002-6438-8177 DOI: 10.37879/belleten.2020.717
Makale Gönderim Tarihi: 30.09.2019 – Makale Kabul Tarihi: 09.01.2020

Osmanlı İzmir’inde Bir İngiliz Tüccar: William Barker (1731-1825)

Öz

İngiliz Levant Kumpanyası, 18.yüzyılda Levant ticaretini canlandırmak için taşralıları da üyeliğe kabul etmek gibi kararlar almıştır. Değişen şartlardan istifade ile Derbyshire’lı William Barker da Levant Kumpanyasına üye olmuş ve 1760 yılında ticaret yapmak ve kazanç elde etmek amacıyla İzmir’e gelmiştir. Bu araştırma, William Barker’ın hayatına odaklanarak, İngiliz tacirlerin tabi oldukları kurallar, Osmanlı tebaası ve diğer Frenklerle ilişkileri, yaşadıkları dönemin devletlerarası rekabet ve mücadelelerinin yansımaları, Osmanlı yetkilileri ile temaslarını; Barker’ın ailesine yazdığı mektuplar, Levant Kumpanyası toplantı tutanakları, Osmanlı arşiv belgeleri, seyyah anlatıları ve Kumpanya tacirlerinin Londra’daki yetkililere gönderdikleri mektupları analiz ederek incelemektedir. Söz konusu çalışma, Levant’ta 18. yüzyıl sonu 19. yüzyıl başlarında ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal koşulların Osmanlı topraklarında yaşayan Avrupalı tacirleri bireysel ve toplumsal olarak nasıl etkilediğini izah etmektedir. Ölümüne kadar 65 yıl İzmir’de ikamet eden William Barker, sermayesiz bir tacir olarak Osmanlı topraklarında iflasla noktalanın macerasında geriye kârlı bir ticaret değil ama 20.yüzyılın ortalarına kadar bu topraklarda yaşamaya devam eden bir nesil bırakmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ticaret, Levant Kumpanyası, İngiliz tacirler, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, İzmir, Frenkler, William Barker.

Introduction

William Barker’s Arrival in Ottoman Lands

It is clear and well searched that the 18th century was not a lucrative period in terms of trade due to the declining business of the Levant Company,¹ which was established as a result of the efforts of a group of London traders at the end of

¹ M. Epstein wrote the early history of the Levant Company in 1908, giving attention to details regarding laws, rules, and persons from the Company’s first decades (*The Early History of the Levant Company*, George Routledge & Sons Limited, London). The whole history of the Levant Company came into the scene in 1935, written by Alfred C. Wood (*A History of the Levant Company*, Oxford University Press, London). For a long time, these two works became the base and cornerstone dealing with the history of the Company and shaped all debates and discussions on the structure and laws of the Company and activities of English merchants. In 1974 M. Kütükoğlu (*Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisadi Münasebetleri*, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, Ankara) combined Ottoman and British sources under the title of Ottoman-British Economic Relations. Wood and Kütükoğlu’s work covers more or less the same period while Epstein’s work and A.N. Kurat’s 1953 study (*Türk-İngiliz Münasebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi*, 1553-1610, TTK, Ankara) deal with the early years of Ottoman-British relations, in other words, the early years of the Levant Company.

the 16th century.² The prominent reason for the losses was the efforts of French traders, a historic rival of the British.³ This is because the French began sending new types of fabric which were more attractive and sold for cheaper prices than those produced in England.⁴ Moreover, there were laws subsidising the trade of French⁵ merchants. What was more important, however, is that the French brought, at an increasing scale, merchandise from the colonies in America, which included sugar, indigo and, coffee in particular, earning them a fortune in Eastern Mediterranean trade.⁶ Changes in fashion (e.g. using metal buttons) in England was another reason for the decrease in the variety of products (galls and goats wool) bought by the British from the Ottoman lands.⁷

- 2 H. G. Rosedale, *Queen Elizabeth and the Levant Company, A Diplomatic and Literary Episode of the Establishment of our Trade with Turkey*, Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, London 1904.
- 3 Literature is abundant in terms of British Levant trade. For example, R. Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square: English Traders in the Levant in the Eighteenth Century*, Macmillian, London, Melbourne and Toronto 1967; E. Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth Century (1700–1820)*, Centre for Asia Minor Studies, Athens 1992; Christine Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant, Trade and Perception of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century*, I.B. Tauris Publishers, London and New York 2010; D. Panzac, “International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th century”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24/2 (1992), pp. 189-206; *Commerce et navigation dans l’empire ottoman au XVIIIe siècle*, Isis, Istanbul 1996; D. Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans: The Levant Company in the Middle East*, I.B. Tauris & Co., London and New York 2015; M. Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661-1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth Century Istanbul*, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge 2017. By focusing on inhabitants of Smyrna in late 18th and 19th centuries Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis analyzes how Muslims of Smyrna, non Muslim subjects and European merchants live in harmony and despite their ethnic and confessional differences and how they define their identity in her two books which depend on her Phd thesis. For her, though all these groups as Muslims, Greeks, Armenians, Europeans (French, British, Venetian, Dutch, Genoese...) divided into communities, they found the way of interaction by crossing religious, ethnic boundaries and also institutional limits, so they created *une ville plurielle*. She highlights “living together” in Smyrna. See Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis, *Une société hors de soi, identités et relations sociales à Smyrne aux XIIIe et XIX siècles*, éditions Peeters, Paris 2005; *Une Ville Ottomane Plurielle, Smyrna aux XVIIIe et XIX siècles*, Les éditions Isis, İstanbul 2006.
- 4 Sir James Porter, *Observations on the Religion, Law, Government and Manners of the Turks, to which is added, The State of the Turkey Trade from Its Origin to the Present Time*, 2nd edition, printed for J. Nourse, Bookseller to His Majesty, London 1771), v.I, p. 366. For Porter, 1739 was the beginning of the decay of British Levant trade.
- 5 See Paul Masson, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVIIIe siècle*, Librairie Hachette, Paris 1911; J.-P. Filippini, L. Meignen, C. Roure, D. Sabatier and G. Stéphanidés (ed.), *Dossiers sur le commerce français en Méditerranée orientale au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris 1976); E. Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in 18th century*, Brill, Leiden 1999.
- 6 NA,SP 105/333:21; SP 105/337:70,74.
- 7 A. Wood, *A History...*, p.149; G. Webb Yıldırım, *XVIII. yüzyılda Osmanlı-İngiliz Tiftik Ticareti*, TTK, Ankara 2011, p. 30.

By focusing on an individual, this study does intend to consider the micro-level story of the political and economic changes of the early modern era. The quest was born, rather, of an effort to look for the impacts of macro-level changes/transformations on an individual's life. This paper attempts to ascertain why a merchant seeks his fortune in a foreign country which does not appear to offer lucrative possibilities for commerce. The subject is the life of William Barker, an ordinary British merchant residing in Ottoman İzmir in the late 18th to early 19th centuries. It is not realistic or fair to take one merchant's life, regardless of the economic and political conditions of the early modern era in which he lived, alongside his personal desires and expectations. Therefore, this research seeks to present how changing regional economic and social conditions and international disputes determined an individual life in the early modern era.

Having conducted an assessment of its current situation, the Company decided to revise its rules in 1744 and make a series of arrangements. The efforts of the Company to update and soften its rules came only four years after the French obtained more comprehensive and permanent privileges⁸ (*ahidname*/capitulations)⁹ from the Ottoman Empire concerning Levant trade and transportation between the Ottoman ports, enabling them to hold an unbeatable competitive advantage.¹⁰ The most radical change in the Company's rules came in 1753. While the rule granting the right to Company membership exclusively to London traders was amended to include all British citizens, provincial ports and outports were also opened to Levant trade ships. Thus, the monopoly of merchants in London, who were accused of endangering the livelihood of their countrymen and provincial merchants and of exploiting their resources, was abolished.

8 *Muahadat Mecmuası*, v.I, pp. 277-300. The commercial *ahidnames* contained the rights granted to and the terms and conditions to be obeyed by the citizens of foreign countries during the period of their expedition, residence and trade in the Ottoman lands and territorial waters. The *ahidname* of 1675, in which the *most favoured nation* (*en çok müsaadeye mazhar millet*) status of England was confirmed, was drawn up embracing all the earlier privileges and a *hatt-ı şerif* was granted over the period of its validity until the dissolution of the Levant Company in 1825. See BOA, İngiltere Nişan Defteri, A.DVNSDVE.d, 35/1,1-10 Eylül 1675; The Capitulations and Articles of Peace between the Majesty of the King of Great Britain, France and Ireland & c. and the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, London, 1679, NA, Foreign Office (FO) 881/80.

9 For detailed discussion of capitulations, see E. Eldem, "Capitulations and Western Trade in the Ottoman Empire: questions, issues and sources" in *Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. III: *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, S. Faroqi (ed.), Cambridge 2006, pp. 283-335; Linda T. Darling, "Capitulations" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, 4 vols., ed. John L. Esposito, Oxford 1995, vol. I, pp. 257-60.

10 H. İnalçık, "İmtiyazat: The Ottoman Empire", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (1971), p. 1185.

The year 1753 was a turning point in the life of William Barker, son of Thomas and Sarah Barker of Bakewell in the county of Derby¹¹. By taking advantage of the changing rules and simply paying a membership fee of 20 pounds, W. Barker, a countryman, joined the Company as a new “adventurer”.¹² Before that time, he had gone to London at the age of 17 as an apprentice to merchant Thomas Dunnage, his sister’s husband.¹³ His active participation in and being a vigilant observer of London’s trade life allowed him to make plans about trading in Ottoman lands. The fact that his boss, i.e. his brother-in-law Thomas Dunnage, had close ties with the people trading with the Ottoman Empire also played a part in achieving what W.Barker had been thinking for some time. W.Barker must have taken into account the activities of the Company and the prospects for opportunities and risks of such a business before he paid the membership fee and became a member of the Company at the age of 21. As soon as he had completed the apprenticeship period, he set off for the Ottoman lands, but it was not clear whether the ship would first go to İstanbul or İzmir. W.Barker and John Humphreys¹⁴ made a partnership agreement on the condition of sharing the profit equally and settling in İzmir and İstanbul, respectively.¹⁵ Choosing to live in different cities was part of their plan and partnership because by doing so they would easily tackle the problems relating to İstanbul-İzmir connections that the large trading companies in London frequently faced and complained about this

11 When I began to search “Deeds and Papers of the Barker Family of East Lodge, Bakewell, Derbyshire”, the documents were in the Sheffield Archives, but during my research they were moved to the Derby City Council. The references given in this paper belong to the Sheffield Archives (SA) BAR D 800, copy of Mr. William Barker’s Will.

12 This was criticized by some authors since it led to a decrease in trade by giving way to new adventurers. W. Eton, *A Survey of Turkish Empire*, T. Cadell and W. Davies, London 1799, p. 477.

13 M. Rear, *William Barker Member of The Right Worshipful Levant Company 1731-1825 A Life in Smyrna*, <http://www.levantineheritage.com/pdf/Biography-of-William-Barker-Levant-Company-Merchant-Marjorie-Rear.pdf>, (2015), p. 7. Marjoire Rear is the wife of John Rear who is a descendant of W.Barker through his son, Henry Richards Barker and her work is valuable to understand family ties. However, she wrote life story of W.Barker by disregarding Ottoman sources and used only W.Barker’s letters in Derbyshire archives and Wood’s book as main sources. I have no claim to write “biography” of W.Barker but try to understand effect of macro level social and economic conditions on an individual life in the example of W.Barker as a British man in Ottoman Smyrna in late 18th and early 19th century by taking all sources- from personal letters to Ottoman documents into consideration as much as possible.

14 John Humphreys became the Company’s secretary of İstanbul in 1775 and his son, Valentine also became a free member of the Smyrna Factory by taking an oath in 1760. NA, SP 105/357:57, 17 June 1764.

15 SA, BAR D 725/15, Letter from W. Barker to John Barker, 18 December 1759.

aspect of their trades in the Ottoman lands. Such an effective partnership might serve as a good reference for their reputation or perhaps it was just a visionary dream that W.Barker had expected to come true.

W. Barker was admitted to the *Freedom of the Levant Company* on 16 November 1759.¹⁶ Following a 14-week journey on board a ship called the *Shardeloes*, under the supervision of a vessel from the British Navy, he arrived at the port of İzmir on 20 March 1760. Five days later he took the Right Worshipful Levant Company's prescribed oath¹⁷ to make true entries and subscribed the tariffs, to qualify himself as a factor at this scale in İzmir. By reading a text in his hand, the oath that W. Barker made to comply strictly with Company rules and customs tariffs, was approved by George Boddington, the Cancellier¹⁸ (Secretary) of the Smyrna Factory of the Levant Company at that time.¹⁹

When W.Barker came to İzmir²⁰, the Company's Factory had a well-established structure. It is possible to learn about his companions by consulting an official document dated 1760²¹, requested by the Ottoman Empire from the Europeans/Franks (*Frenkler*), which contains lists of the numbers, names, possessions and

16 National Archives (NA), State Papers (SP) 105/333, p. 24.

17 NA, SP 105/333, p.4.

18 The Cancellier was a salaried officer and the clerk of the General Assembly. He was not permitted to trade. He had to register the Company's orders, all wills, contracts and other transactions in a separate book. The report of the Lecture delivered by Hyde Clark at The Literary and Scientific Institution in Smyrna in 1862, <http://www.levantineheritage.com/note12.htm>, 26.03.2013.

19 NA,SP 105/337, p. 23.

20 In 1610s, the Levant Company opened its Smyrna (İzmir) Factory considering that was the safest and easiest way to organise the import of Iranian silk. (A. Damiani, *Enlightened Observers*, (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1979):34). For the growth of Izmir as an international commercial centre, see D. Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550-1650*, Seattle and London 1990; N. Ülker, *The Rise of Izmir, 1688-1740*, Unpublished Phd. thesis, University of Michigan 1975; D. Goffman, "Izmir: from village to colonial port city." *The Ottoman City Between East and West, Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, ed. E. Eldem, D. Goffman, B. Masters, Cambridge University Press, New York 1999; The report of the lecture delivered by Hyde Clark; Henry A. S. Dearborn, *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigation of the Black Sea and Trade and Maritime Geography of Turkey and Egypt*, v. II, Wells and Lilly, Boston 1819, p. 65; *Evlîya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 9. Kitap, v.1, ed. S.A. Kahraman, Yapı Kredi yay, İstanbul 2011; E. Frangakis-Syrett, "The Ottoman Port of Izmir in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries, 1695-1820", *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 39, 1985, pp.149-162; "Trade between Ottoman Empire and Western Europe: the Case of İzmir in the Eighteenth century", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, v. 2, n. 1, Spring 1988, pp. 1-18.

21 NA, SP 105/337, p. 20.

duration of residence of the staff in their factories. According to this document, the secretary of the British Factory of İzmir, George Boddington, is the longest-standing resident in the city. Together with the Consul Samuel Crawley, a few merchants, a private priest, a physician²², a tailor, four scrivans²³, a maid, a watchmaker, a boatman and two widows are the inhabitants of the Factory. The majority of the consulate residents were single men who did not yet have any property while those who were married had spouses from other European communities. The records as to the duration of stays in İzmir was not kept regularly for each of these persons; therefore, the exact duration of residence of a merchant in İzmir is difficult to determine. Amongst them, there were those who had been living there for a long time and decided on a lifetime stay with their family members and descendants as well as those who had recently arrived and were not certain how long they would stay in this city. There were rich merchants who owned farmland, gardens and country houses, such as those of the Master & Lees Corporation, along with those who had no property at all. Belonging to the British community, there were a hospital and a cemetery surrounded by walls. It is apparent that W. Barker affiliated with a socially and economically heterogeneous group of people who were also part of the “Frank community²⁴,” as labelled by local authorities and society. W. Barker was a “modest countryman” in the British Smyrna Factory, an “English” merchant among Frank community and a European non-Muslim merchant granted to trade in Ottoman lands (*müste’men*) by Ottomans.

1. William Barker’s Means of Livelihood

W.Barker’s commercial activities -albeit small in size- are typical examples of those of his country with the Ottomans. While sending cotton back to England, he sold woollen fabrics and lead to the Ottoman lands. The products imported from England at the end of the 18th century were limited to woollen fabrics, lead, tin, and watches popular with Turkish people (i.e. with Ottoman Turkish characters

22 BOA, *Diğer-i Ecnebiye Defterleri* (A.DVN.DVE.d), 036/2:89.

23 Most factors employed a European clerk or scrivener, very often Italian or occasionally English; but his wages were small because he too was given freedom to trade on his own account in such profitable trifles as cutlery, watches and carpets. R. Davis, *ibid*, p. 86.

24 Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis usually prefers to define European communities/groups as “colonies” in her two books. (See ft.3) It is well known fact that these communities living in Ottoman lands were under Ottoman jurisdiction. Even if they were regarded in a privileged position thanks to capitulations, they cannot be defined as colonies.

on the dial) and various hardware products. In return, the British were receiving cotton, raw materials for the dyestuff industry, grapes and figs.²⁵ Despite the fact that W. Barker inherited some mines from his father, all of them later passed into the possession of his brother, and only after he had convinced his brother's business partner was William able to start the lead trade.²⁶ As the lead was a substance frequently listed amongst the urgent needs of the Ottoman Empire, it was one of the primary products summoned to be sent to İstanbul without being even unloaded at the port of İzmir. In particular, Barker and his colleagues, as the traders of such a strategic material as lead, the transactions for which the Ottoman Empire had been meticulously supervising, did not have the advantage of bargaining the price to a high profit level as in any other free market.²⁷ In periods when the army was in urgent need of such strategic commodity, the Ottoman Empire ordered it to be sent directly to İstanbul without unloading any cargo in the port of İzmir.²⁸ While the British described the Ottoman Empire's monopoly on the procurement of lead as an act of violation of the capitulations²⁹, W. Barker asserted that they experienced profit loss in the lead trade due to a lack of security causing delays in the sailing of vessels.³⁰ Unable to establish solid commercial networks due to capital insufficiency, W. Barker could not enter the business of importing fabrics from India to the Ottoman lands, a rather lucrative trade for some British traders. Again, W. Barker was not involved in any shipping activities between the Ottoman ports³¹, which was one of the methods of earning income for Europeans.

Having neither strong commercial networks nor enough capital, W. Barker sought, at times, ways to increase income within the Company to fill his purse and make a profit. According to the rules of the Company, the treasurer³² was elected for a two-year period from among the members residing for at least five years in Turkey

25 J. Griffiths, *Travels in Europe, Asia Minor and Arabia*, London 1805, pp. 50, 55; For imported items see R. Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East, 1580-1780." in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, M. A. Cook (ed), Oxford University Press, London 1970, pp.193-206.

26 SA,BAR D 800, A/3:20 Letter from William Barker to his Brother in Bakewell, 2nd August 1794.

27 BOA,A.DVN.DE.d 036/2:85-86.

28 BOA,C. AS,272/11294.

29 NA,SP 105/126:192.

30 M. Rear, *William...*, p. 39.

31 NA,SP 105/333:60.

32 NA,SP 105/333:49.

and accounting records of the treasurer were checked by two members whom the Company assigned through the approval of its general assembly, held every six months. The salary of the Factory's treasurer was \$400 per year.³³ In 1775, when Consul Anthony Hayes wanted to resign, the British ambassador asked the Factory to recommend one of its members as a nominee for the mission. In case of such situations like the death of a consul or a vacancy for any reason, the rule was that the senior representative and treasurer of the Company should temporarily undertake the task until the final decision of the Company on who the next consul would be. As a senior member, merchant W. Barker was nominated and, having received the votes of most of the members, he was appointed as the deputy-consul of İzmir in 1775.³⁴ When the consul died in 1794,³⁵ W. Barker, as the most senior representative of the Factory, thought that he would be the most deserving candidate for the consulship. Moreover, as someone who knew the Ottoman languages and their traditions, he considered himself a merchant well respected by both native and foreign people. The underlying reason why W. Barker was so keen on any mission in the Company was the need for a regular income. This is a sign that his plans with respect to commercial activities were not going smoothly and that his trade business, which was run largely on loans (credit), could not meet his daily expenses.

Not only did W. Barker apply for official positions or duties that would provide a regular salary in the Factory, but he also acquired short-term or daily "paid" responsibilities to make a living. He presented himself as an expert and took the responsibility to inspect and arrange the repair of a hospital³⁶ that was rented for the treatment of sick seafarers belonging to the British community. After successfully completing the hospital repair work in accordance with the plan, he undertook another project and played an active role in the necessary arrangements: restoration of a ruined British cemetery that was in an embarrassing condition³⁷ in the eyes of Europeans and the local community. Because of his outstanding efforts in the restoration of the British cemetery, the treasurer expressed on various occasions that Barker deserved a "tip".³⁸

³³ NA,SP 105/337:87.

³⁴ NA,SP 105/337:132.

³⁵ BOA, A.DVN.DVE.d 035/1,587:140.

³⁶ Patients' expenses were covered by the ship captains in the hospital (NA,SP 105/333:15) which was rented with the permission of the Company (NA,SP 105/333:63).

³⁷ NA,SP 105/337:118.

³⁸ NA,SP 105/337:170.

In İzmir, where W. Barker lived for 65 years until the end of his life, his business went well from time to time, but after 1780 W. Barker can be seen as someone who was in search of loans of money and with hypothec bills given as security for the loans he had already borrowed. In 1782, he signed a contract that was registered with the Secretariat of the Factory. He provided as collateral the rental income acquired from his warehouses/depots and the *gedik*³⁹ of his house in exchange for a total loan of \$15,000 from his friends at the Factory and other European nationals. The contractual rates of interest, he agreed with the creditors, varied depending on their nationality. W. Barker was so in need of cash that he had to take loans with largely varying rates of interest, without thinking too much of it, and the only way out was to mortgage his properties. It was common practice to use *gedik* as an asset to secure collateral among Ottoman artisans and tradesmen, too. As a foreign merchant residing in Ottoman territory, W. Barker acted as any local merchant and tradesman with financial difficulties did.⁴⁰

In 1791, when he left for London because of his wife's illness, he hit rock bottom financially and looked for a loan to take care of his family. He borrowed £50 from his brother-in-law to be able to leave Leghorn, which he promised to *repay out of the first fruits of his labours*.⁴¹ Nevertheless, he lost everything he had and was trapped in debt. He also owed some money to a York tradesman, and in 1801 he reiterated previous contracts to carry on paying his debts with the mortgaged rental and *gedik* incomes from his properties. When Barker returned alone to İzmir, having no

39 *Gedik*, here, means legal documents that entitled the holder to full usufruct over a property. For its meaning and development of the concept in Ottoman business life, see E.D. Akarlı, "Gedik: implements, mastership, shop usufruct and monopoly among Istanbul artisans, 1750–1850." *Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin Jahrbuch* (1986), pp. 225-231; "Gedik: A bundle of rights and obligations for Istanbul Artisans and Traders, 1750-1840." in *Law, Anthropology and the Constitution of the Social: Making Persons and Things*, ed. Alain Pottage and Martha Mundy, Cambridge University Press 2004, pp.166-200; M. K. Kaya, "The Dilemma of Ottoman State: Establishing New Gediks or Abolishing Them". *Turkish Studies*, 8/5(2013), pp. 441-63; O. Yıldırım-S. Ağır, "Gedik: What is in a Name", *Bread From the Lion's Mouth: Artisans Struggling for A livelihood in Ottoman Cities*, ed. S. Faroqhi, Berghahn Books 2015), pp. 217-236; S. Ağır, "The Rise and Demise of *Gedik* Markets in Istanbul, 1750-1860." *The Economic History Review*, 71/1(2018), pp.133-56.

40 According to W. Barker's debt list, the highest amount was \$4900 that he borrowed from his wife at various times. \$500 of this amount was inherited from his wife's father. An amount of \$275 was acquired from the sale of a gold watch, a silver tray, two small silver plates, a pair of small pearl earrings from her mother when her family went to Leghorn in 1789. SA, BAR D 800/24, p. 26; Letter from William to Thomas Barker, 17th July 1801.

41 SA, BAR D 800 Letter from W. Barker, Leghorn to Mr. Dunnage, London, 2nd December 1791.

other choice, he had to accept a job offer from William Tomlinson, a friend of his brother-in-law, but he consistently complained about such an engagement.⁴² While W. Barker had once been an independent merchant who managed his commercial networks in the Ottoman lands to which he came through establishing business partnerships, he then fell into the position of a middleman who had to work for a commission. He uttered some of his complaints such that he was working with an intense tempo and unable to spare time for any other activity; he had to give up his positions with the Company at the Factory, treasurership and deputy consulship. Moreover, Tomlinson, once an “apprentice” of W. Barker who taught him trade and language, had exploited his difficult situation and was living in London without doing anything. As he had left his family in London, this was another serious concern for him to take care of them and provide for their livelihood. He also asked his brother to help them through this difficult period and assured him that he would pay back his debts after sorting out his business.⁴³ He could not overcome the trouble that he was facing for not being able to pay a debt of about £200 borrowed from his brother for the repair of his house. The dispute over this debt later extended even to his nephews and caused lasting tension between the families. W. Barker continuously tried to explain the reasons for his incapability of paying already outstanding debts while promising to make payments at the soonest time possible.⁴⁴

2. William Barker’s Social Life

The set of rules that were formed within the framework of capitulations - such as the right of an individual to use his/her own language, religion, customs and traditions - allowed the European merchants to create social and cultural groups⁴⁵ so that they did not feel alone in a “foreign” (i.e. Ottoman) society. Although the details of everyday life are not included in the minutes of the Factory while commercial activities are discussed, the accounts of travellers who visited İzmir shed light on the lives of Europeans and the city itself. European merchants were residing in İzmir on “Frank Street”, near the port and in houses along the seaside. The doors on Frank Street were locked at night and the houses had gateways

42 SA, BAR D 800 Letter from W. Barker to his brother, 1794.

43 SA, BAR D 800 Letter from W. Barker to his brother, 1794.

44 SA, BAR D 800/24:26.

45 M.H. Van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls, and Beratlis in the Eighteenth Century*, E.J. Brill, Leiden 2005, p. 32.

directly connecting to the sea. Living in a neighbourhood whereby entrances and exits were under strict security control, as if an “autonomous” region, gave the residents a kind of freedom of movement. This depiction of such a “secured zone” reveals the clustered community life under an “autonomous” structure in the territory of the country in which they resided. The life around this 15 foot wide street, which extended halfway into the city, provided the Europeans almost the comfort of their own countries.⁴⁶ They described Frank Street, where their houses were lined up, as “our street”, and they did their best to prevent anything they saw as threatening, even near the street. Acting in agreement, all the consuls demanded the customs officer (*Gümrük Emîni*) to prevent a coffeehouse from being opened at the end of Frank Street. They claimed that it could turn into a nest of vagrants and pose a great danger to their safety and stated that they would even meet, if necessary, the cost for its demolition.⁴⁷ Within the residential area concentrated around Frank Street, there existed not only the houses of Europeans but also shops belonging locals to meet the daily needs of residents. The words *Frenkhane* and *Rumhane*, meaning the districts where Europeans and Greeks resided, respectively, were used interchangeably in some Ottoman documents.⁴⁸ According to the various court cases reflected in the documents, it is known that Greek subjects in particular lived and opened shops in the European neighbourhood. For example, in the European neighbourhood, there were workshops of chairs and joinery artisans from non-Muslim Ottoman subjects.⁴⁹

The travellers, while portraying things that were familiar to them or look-alikes in another culture, emphasize also the differences and changes in values, manners, habits and behaviour patterns. Although they had physically isolated residences, their daily lives were similar to that of the locals⁵⁰; since they had been living on the same geography for centuries, their patterns of behaviour and eating habits were perhaps similar, or there existed a common culture developed through social experiences of more than two centuries. The accounts of Chandler, who visited İzmir in 1768, demonstrate how the behaviour patterns of British merchants and

46 H.A.S. Dearborn, *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigaton of the Black Sea and Trade and Maritime Geography of Turkey and Egypt*, vol. I, Wells and Lilly, Boston 1819, p. 57.

47 NA, SP 105/337:60-1.

48 BOA, C.BDL 93/4603.

49 OA, C.İKTS 17/828.

50 Dearborn, *A Memoir...*, p. 59.

their family members resembled⁵¹ those of the Ottomans. Chandler reports that the consul's young daughter kissed guests' hands and placed them on her forehead, thus adopting a full Turkish-style welcome ceremony.⁵² This little girl's gesture was now an adopted and internalized pattern of behaviour rather than imitation. There was also a meeting place for Europeans like a club or casino. This place was open every evening, with an opportunity to read newspapers from different countries in a wide hall. Rooms were available for card games, chess, billiards and private meetings. Most consuls and tradesmen were giving evening parties there.⁵³ W. Barker's wife was fond of gambling and playing cards for money; she even made money by gambling from time to time.⁵⁴ Though the narratives of the travellers related to European traders bring their physical isolation and separate social associations to the forefront, they also reveal that local elements and socio-cultural behaviour patterns of the city where they lived were adopted, especially by the children.

The more or less physically isolated residential area did not prevent the relations of Franks with Ottoman subjects. The characteristics of the relations generally changed in accordance with the positions and titles of the Ottoman subjects. Dragomans, security guards (*yasakçı*) and Jewish customs brokers⁵⁵ were those among the Ottoman subjects who helped with the needs of European merchants. The Company was not involved in the process of determining who the dragoman would be, but the Factory often expressed that it might choose the one who would give the best service.⁵⁶ The dragoman whom the Factory sometimes deemed appropriate among candidates was approved by the Ottoman Empire⁵⁷ by issuing a deed of appointment called *berât*.⁵⁸ The Ottoman Empire opposed the consulates' employing uncertified dragomans and often made prohibitive legal regulations

51 Griffiths, *Travels...*, p. 49.

52 R. Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor*, Printed at Clarendon Press, Oxford 1775, p. 12.

53 Dearborn, *A Memoir...*, pp. 65-6.

54 1041 dollars 35 paras, SA, BAR D/800.

55 BOA, A.DVN.DVE.d 036/2:37,63.

56 NA,SP 105/333:21.

57 As in the example of the election of the first dragoman, Sig. Paulo Homero, who was their second dragoman before. They promoted all ranks. NA, SP 105/337, p. 95; BOA, A.DVN.DVE.d 035/1, p. 122.

58 For example, BOA, A.DVN.DVE.d 035/1:108, 109,111,115.

and warnings in this regard. Because non-Muslim Ottoman subjects⁵⁹ who were appointed as dragomans⁶⁰ were exempt from poll tax (*jizya*)⁶¹ and considering the intensity of the warnings of the state, as mentioned above, the number of dragomans and similar entering the service of Europeans living in Ottoman lands should not be regarded as too small.⁶² The İzmir Factory had only one dragoman who was fluent in English, which made them more fortunate than the other European merchants.⁶³ It was the duty of the dragomans to communicate between the Ottoman subjects and the Europeans using a common language (*lingua franca*) rather than the original languages of the communities. It was not easy to find a dragoman who knew the native languages of foreign representations. In order to establish healthy communications and commercial connections, Europeans merchants also made an effort to learn Ottoman Turkish.⁶⁴ W. Barker was familiar with the Ottoman language, customs and culture at a level high enough to carry out his own commercial relations and even to teach others.

The Franks had a bound but unwilling relations/contacts with some local Ottoman officials like Captain Pasha. The instrument of contact was presenting a “gift”. This is what Company members frequently quarrelled about and sought excuses for not giving such a “gift”. One of the most common and valuable gifts was the one that was given to Captain Pasha during his visit to the Consulate or when he sent a written message.⁶⁵ Captain Pasha’s sending a verbal message via his dragoman was not an event significant enough to present a gift, nor was this approved and welcomed by the Company in any way.⁶⁶ However they all agreed

59 For the commercial activities of non Muslim Ottoman subjects, see A. İhsan Bağış, *Osmanlı Ticaretinde Gayrimüslimler: Kapitülasyonlar, Avrupa Tüccarları, Beratlı Tüccarlar, Hayriye Tüccarları (1750-1839)*, Turhan Kitabevi, Ankara 1983.

60 Alongside being dragoman was a way to be “member” of Frank community, sharing same economic and social environment provided close contacts for Franks with Ottoman Greek(*Rum*) subjects. It was also common for the Europeans to marry Ottoman Greek women.

61 BOA, A.DVN.DVE.d 036/2:3.

62 Like BOA, A.DVN.DVE.d 036/2:185.

63 NA,SP 105/126:207.

64 Mr. Abro who was allowed 100 piastres for the *year ensuing in order to enable him to provide proper masters to instruct the Turkish language* on the condition that if he did not make a progress in time, he would be discarded the service of *Giovani di Lingua*. NA,SP 105/337:24.

65 NA,SP 105/337:23-4,89,93,104,118,125,142,154,248.

66 NA,SP 105/337:160-1.

that it was not a problem to present gifts to local notables (*aḡān*),⁶⁷ such as the *mütesellim*⁶⁸ Karaosmanoğlu family, because a *mütesellim* would be very helpful in any case and even necessary in some. For instance, a circumcision celebration for the *mütesellim*'s son was an important event for all consuls and turned into a gift-giving competition.⁶⁹ The voluntary attitude, particularly in giving gifts to local authorities, raises the question of whether there was an interest in their relations, and most importantly, this was due to the expectation of swift dealing and assistance from them in foreign merchants' commercial activities and related matters while going through the necessary official procedures. Therefore, what was actually offered to local authorities and influential men is not just a gift, but a reward given in advance for the prospective support they expected in their commercial activities. They were aware of the power of the local authorities to reach the products they would export and, to this end, hoped to obtain their support with the close relations they had already established. They did not refrain from using gift-giving as a means of backing their trade and also paid close attention to what their rivals had given as gifts so as to not fall behind them. In the Ottoman provinces, the attitude of the European foreigners who were aware of those holding the real power showed that the functioning of the provisions of capitulations did differ at the local level. The flexibility of the system or ignoring the rules that restricted them, such as purchasing raw materials on site despite the prohibition of the state, had often served the purpose of the European merchants and they neither complained about the economic activities of the local notables nor hesitate to cooperate with them in this respect.

67 E. Eldem, "Capitulations...", p.310; D. Goffman, "The Capitulations and the Question of Authority in Levantine Trade 1600-1650." *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10(1986), pp. 155-61. For the role of the local men, see G. Veinstein, "Ayan de la région d'Izmir et le commerce du Levant (deuxième moitié du XVIIIe siècle)." *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 20/2(1975), pp. 131-46; Yuzo Nagata, *Tarihte Ayanlar, Karaosmanoğulları Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, TTK, Ankara 1997; İ. Hakkı Kadı, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century: Competition and Cooperation in Ankara, Izmir and Amsterdam*, Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden 2012, p. 45.

68 The governor of sub-administrative regions in the Ottoman Empire.

69 Taking into consideration what kind of gift the French might give, the British decided to present a valuable gift, a watch, costing \$500. The fees for the gifts were sometimes paid in cash from the Company's treasury and sometimes sent directly from the UK. NA,SP 105/337:119.

3. Repercussions of Inter-State Relations on William Barker's Life

It is well known that earthquakes, fires and plagues⁷⁰ deeply affecting the ordinary flow of everyday life frequently threatened İzmir in the late 18th century.⁷¹ However, at the end of the century, inter-state social and political turmoil that the city was exposed to seriously affected both security of life and property, disrupted commercial activities and caused the Franks to great worry.

During the Ottoman-Russian wars (1768-1774), the Ottoman fleet anchored in the harbour of Çeşme was burned by fire from warships belonging to the Russian navy on the night of 6 July 1770, and the most severe defeat in the history of the Ottoman maritime was sustained. The British officers in the Russian navy were responsible for this destruction, and the British Admiral had prepared the plan to burn the naval fleet.⁷² Britain took extraordinary measures to secure the safety of the members of the Company, as Russia was its ally, and the British soldiers took part in the Russian navy. With the directive of the Company, the Factory recorded all the debts of its members and their property in terms of quantity and value.⁷³ In the letters sent by the Consul and İzmir merchants to the Company, the Ottoman-Russian wars and their reflections were described in detail.

According to British traders in İzmir who did not feel secure regarding their lives and property after the very last unfortunate uprising on 8 July, the cause of hatred towards them, it was the prejudice of the people that the British helped the destruction of the Ottoman navy through supporting Russians with manpower and warships. According to British merchants, the only one responsible for the rise of tensions and the creation of a hostile environment in İzmir was the Ottoman government; the French also fuelled hatred against the British by benefiting from the situation. In their letters they expressed that they were open to all kinds of advice from London to *eliminate prejudices against them*.⁷⁴ They demanded from their countries that a frigate be sent to İzmir's port as soon as possible to secure their lives and property so that such measures would save their lives when they had

70 See D. Panzac, "La peste à Smyrne au XVIIIème siècle", *Annales E.S.C.*, 28-4, 1973, pp. 1071-1093.

71 Chandler, *Travels...* p. 224.

72 For the naval Battle of Çeşme, see Oğuz Aydemir -Ali Rıza İşipek, *1770 Çeşme Deniz Savaşı*, Denizler Kitabevi, İstanbul 2006.

73 NA,SP 105/337:105.

74 NA,SP 105/337:106-8.

to leave the city and provide some sort of protection. They also expressed their anxieties in a report⁷⁵ which they presented to the Ottoman Empire. Their direct demands from the British government show that they did not feel safe and clearly considered various alternatives, including leaving İzmir. While they were worried about securing their safety, they continued their daily lives, so as to prove that they were not in a different position and attitude than the other Franks, and decided to maintain demeanour congruent with the way others behaved.⁷⁶ The environment of trust in İzmir was ensured with the Ottoman Empire's emphasis that England was a friendly country and, in particular, with its orders to take necessary measures in İzmir.⁷⁷

The French-British competition and struggle in the Mediterranean following the French Revolution of 1789 had a negative impact on the region's merchants and trade. While the port of İzmir remained under French blockade from November 1793 to April 1794, the British waited for a sea fleet for their safety, and a British fleet anchored in the port of İzmir in the end.⁷⁸ The French anchored in the port of İzmir again after a while and interrupted the British trade for about two and a half years until January 1796. In 1797 the French frigate anchored in İzmir for a short time. The British were not the only ones who suffered damage; the French also complained about the British ships in Ottoman territorial waters, the attack on the French merchant ships and the damage they suffered. The Ottoman Empire impartially notified the Consul that three British ships would be detained in the İzmir port until the negotiations with the British government concluded.⁷⁹

When the Ottoman Empire declared war on France in 1798, the French Consulate, merchant houses and warehouses were searched by Ottoman authorities, their property was confiscated, and the French were also arrested.⁸⁰ Among the properties confiscated by the State, a French merchant's stowage toll and stacker timber were sold to the British Consul for 17,500 qurush, the same merchant's cellar right of *gedik* with four inner doored room and its annex in Derviş Commercial Building were sold to a British merchant named Wilkinson

⁷⁵ BOA,C.HR, 79/3907.

⁷⁶ NA,SP 105/337:108.

⁷⁷ BOA,C.HR, 79/3907.

⁷⁸ SA, BAR D 800:21, Letter from William Barker to John Barker, 17th June 1795.

⁷⁹ BOA, C.HR, 71/3527.

⁸⁰ NA,SP 105/ 337; SP 105/126, miscellaneous pages.

for 2000 qurush, and the property documents were given to them.⁸¹ The British Consul was not sure what kind of attitude it would take when the *Mütesellim* declared/announced a visit to all the British houses suspected of accommodating the French. In a letter which the Consul wrote to the Company, he wished that they will not harm the capitulations they had received, but on the other hand, he defined the French as a common enemy. He also mentioned long-standing sincerity and relationships among themselves owing to marriages⁸² between the British and the French.⁸³ It was a fact that different nations living outside their home countries and sharing common places within the same rules, even though they are affected by interstate conflicts and disagreements, developed a protective reflex of a society and culture in which they took new roots by moving away from the interests of their home countries. At the end of the 18th century, the British consul, unlike his predecessors, left aside British or French privilege; his only fear was the beginning of a revenge movement against *all the Franks*.

According to the British accounts⁸⁴, a real fear for the Franks in İzmir began on 15 March 1797, when a group set houses on Frank Street on fire in the morning hours. For the British, this movement was a deliberate and planned attempt to destroy the Franks living under the protection of capitulations in this land for many years.⁸⁵ A group of Italian subjects who were rope acrobats coming from İstanbul had done a performance in the middle of February near Frank Street. A few days after this event, a quarrel took place in the location where they had performed and lit the fuse of a tragedy. This incident appears in the Ottoman documents

81 BOA,C.HR 101/5006.

82 In fact, marriages between different faiths and ethnicities were not uncommon especially beginning in 19th century. Smyrnelis gives special attention to detect family ties and claims that professional endogamy among the traders was the rule and marital ties were reinforced by professional relationships and vice versa. Marriages were also more frequent among those who desire to diversify their networks. See M.C Smyrnelis, *Une société hors de soi, identités et relations sociales à Smyrne aux XVIIIe et XIX siècles*, pp. 137-192.

83 NA,SP 105/126:211.

84 In 1982 Richard Clogg published the reports of Francis Werry, the consul to the Levant Company, concerning the events in 1797 but in introduction he evaluates the events as *janissary inspired urban riot* and misleadingly regards it as anti-Greek violence and ignores main reasons even though Consul Werry's letters clarify all details. R. Clogg, "The Smyrna Rebellion of 1797: some documents from the British archives", *Deltio Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon*, III, 1982, pp. 71-125.

85 NA,SP 105/337:266; SP 105/126:72.

with extensive details.⁸⁶ The mess was caused by a Croatian of Zenta, who had not paid the fare for the performance at the circus built by Austrians outside the Frank neighbourhood, and killed a Venetian guard, janissary Bilal. Then the unrest turned into violence, killing the inhabitants, confiscation of property and fire.⁸⁷ Friends of the murdered *janissary* demanded the surrender of the murderer from the Venetian and Russian consulates, applied to the *Qadi* and informed all consuls, but there was no result. When a group of janissaries who thought they were delayed went to the *Sakız Han* in the Frank neighbourhood, a place where Venetian subjects Zentalians, Slovenians and Croats are gathered, a clash environment developed and incidents became uncontrollably with provocations. According to the British, although the Ottoman Empire, which saw idle and stray Croats in the city as a dangerous factor, warned the local authorities by sending orders to take necessary measures for retaining their guns, *the deliberate omission of the local authorities which could not take any measure to prevent possible dangers in the city during the terrible fire in the Frank Street*, raised the losses and grief of the British. Actually, the number of venues and taverns, where thieves and strangers gathered and drugs were sold, was increasing day by day, and had long threatened the security of the city. Particularly angry armed Venetians and Russians in the gulf lubricated the remaining places and goods even in the fire. One of the important members of the Company (Spencer Smith, Esq.) interceded and requested directly that the Ottoman centre issue orders warning local authorities against taking measures.⁸⁸ Almost all of the Franks living in İzmir believed that security could only be provided by *Mütesellim Karaosmanoğlu*, and they also conveyed their thoughts to the Ottoman centre.⁸⁹

The total losses of the British Factory and the merchants as a result of these incidents was 1,325,000 pounds,⁹⁰ and according to their claims, this equated to a psychological and financial crisis. The houses of Consul Werry, Hayes, Perkins, Lee and Maltass, the most important traders of the Company, were completely burned. Consul Werry lost all of its special liquor stock. Only Wilkonson's and Barker's houses were not damaged by the fire. They wrote detailed letters asking

86 BOA, C.ZB 15/737; 80/3959; 90/4483; HAT 186/878; 187/886, 895; 228/1270; C.BLD 5/250.

87 See N. Ülker, "1797 Olayı ve İzmir'in Yakılması." *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 2/1(1984), pp. 117-58.

88 NA,SP 105/337:266-9.

89 NA, SP 105/126:83.

90 NA, SP 105/126:86-7.

the Company to get involved to demand compensation of the losses⁹¹ by the Ottoman Empire.⁹² Traders whose settlements on Frank Street were burnt moved to the summer resorts of the city, and after a while necessary measures were taken for the reconstruction of old settlements.⁹³

After the incidents in 1797, the Ottoman Empire took serious measures and punished suspects and criminals.⁹⁴ All Venetian subjects were removed from the city, and the captains of the Venetians, who were unaware of the consulates and Venetians in hiding, also received their share of this punishment. According to the British, the removal of these more than two thousand asylum seekers would cause them to become another dangerous subject, and they would undertake piracy in the seas and pose a greater threat. They were uncomfortable with the Ottoman government's failure to inform them about the measures they had taken; they thought only of their own commercial interests since they believed that they should be aware of the measures and possible consequences for their protection. In this regard, a suggestion was developed, and the Ottoman Empire was advised to trust the local notable *Karaosmanoğlu Hacı Hüseyin* and leave the work to him.⁹⁵ Unemployed and idle persons were forbidden to stay more than one night in coffee houses or inns,⁹⁶ but this was not an adequate and sustainable measure. They believed that security would be ensured in İzmir even if they criticised the measures taken by the state and saw them as inadequate.

The Ottoman Empire also took some measures against the Franks. The State sent an order to record separately vineyards, gardens, houses and land owned by the foreigners who married Christians and Jews or were not married, and to

91 The British factory also lost their library. John F. Usko, chaplain of the Levant Company's factor in Smyrna wrote a letter on 2nd May 1805 to the Company of Merchants to recreate the Factory's library. He sent a list of books needed for their library. For Usko's book list, see Richard Clogg, "The Library of The Levant Company's Factory in Smyrna (1805)", *The Gelemer*, 11 (1974), pp. 112-124.

92 NA, SP 105/126:73,83.

93 BOA, HAT, 165/6859.

94 BOA, HAT 186/8784.

95 NA, SP 105/126:92.

96 Ülker, "1797...", p. 138. Consul Werry's reports verify Ottoman documents. According to Werry's reports Ottoman authorities issued very strict orders for preventing strangers from lodging in the khans and coffee houses more than 24 hours and all private assemblies and meetings of more than three persons were forbidden under strongest penalty. R. Clogg, "The Smyrna Rebellion of 1797...", p. 123.

carefully keep individual records in their registry book so none of them remained outside the record.⁹⁷ In principle, although “purchasing and selling properties by foreigners were against the traditional regulations and rules of properties”, in practice ownership of real estate and the right of *gedik* among the Franks were not rare.⁹⁸ After the 1797 incidents, the Ottoman Empire, which was aware of the fact that the Franks were real estate owners even though this were not legal, sent a decree ordering all the Franks to sell their real estate and rights to open shops in their possession at their initial values. The opinion that the British reached from their own assessment was that the decree in question would cause significant losses, and the ambassador, by interfering in the issue, should ensure their rights to open shops without being subject to tax.⁹⁹ What both sides were aware of was that the ban which remained in theory lost its validity in practice with the authorities’ tolerance permission. The Ottoman authorities did not object to the Franks’ ownership of houses. The attempt to bring the ban into force was meaningful for the British because the Ottoman Empire tried to present a justification to get rid of compensation which it was obliged to pay.¹⁰⁰ What is more, to the British, if the Ottoman Empire intensively suppressed their rights like pre-1797 *gedik* ownership would be allowed. The demands of landowners who wanted exorbitant increases in rent would also be broken.¹⁰¹ Especially after 1797, it became impossible to rent a house at reasonable prices, and prices rapidly showed a significant increase.¹⁰² In this sense, ownership of real estate or *gedik* was of critical importance for the Franks. These real estate and *gediks* were their safeguards when they had problems in trade.

Conclusion

W. Barker stayed in İzmir until the end of his life, until the dissolution of the Company at the same time, and was not able to achieve commercial stability or success. One of the reasons for this was personal, as he lacked strong capital and commercial relations, and another was general, as the effects of the Ottoman-Russian, British-French and Ottoman-French wars reflected in the Mediterranean

⁹⁷ BOA,C.HR,94/4665.

⁹⁸ BOA,C.HR,4/199.

⁹⁹ NA,SP 105/126:95.

¹⁰⁰ NA,SP 105/126:101.

¹⁰¹ NA,SP 105/126:110.

¹⁰² NA,SP 105/126:88.

affected his commercial success. Personal and socio-political conditions forced him into a position of an agent trader who had to live by taking commissions, whereas he wished to organize his own commercial work and enjoy a prosperous life with his earnings.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Britain's commercial presence in the region evolved into the dominant political power, and the Company, of which it was a member, was overdue. The British government wanted the ambassador, whose political role had become prominent since 1821, changing from the position of seeking economic interests to the position of undertaking political responsibilities, and the expenses and salary of the ambassador began to be paid by the government not the Company.¹⁰³ Developments that provided an advantageous position for British traders were not sufficient to save W. Barker's position on the threshold of bankruptcy. During the French invasion of Egypt and then the French-Ottoman war, the Mediterranean became an insecure environment full of warships and pirates; only the few ships sailing under the flags of impartial states could make a journey in these extremely dangerous waters for trade ships. W. Barker came under the auspices of an impartial state, Sweden, to guarantee his future, and in case of need, he received an official certificate which approved this protection in the Ottoman Empire as well.¹⁰⁴

W. Barker established a large household as a reflection of the European society of İzmir. His first wife Flora Robin, a relative of Dr. Andrew Turnbull, who was a physician for Scottish and British citizens, was born in İzmir and the daughter of the French consul. He had seven children with Flora, two of whom were daughters, and lost her to asthma while pregnant with another baby.¹⁰⁵ His second wife, Mary Elizabeth, was the daughter of Valentine Humphrey¹⁰⁶, his business partner, and the mother of 13 children, 10 of whom reached adulthood. In the last years of

¹⁰³ The number of members of the Levant Company was 270 (NA, SP 105/333:99-101) from 1815 to 1820, and 8, 6 and 7 persons in 1821, 1822 and 1823 respectively became enrolled in the Company as members (NA, SP 105/333:114-5). At the beginning of 1823, 16 persons were registered to the Smyrna Factory. The Company was dissolved in 1825, and the last İzmir Consul was Franciz Werry (NA, SP 105/333:117).

¹⁰⁴ SA, BAR D 800/24:26; Letter from William to Thomas Barker, 17th July 1801.

¹⁰⁵ D. Manley, "Mr. And Mrs. Barker and Family: Franks in the Levant", *Archaeology and History in Lebanon*, 16(2002), p. 35.

¹⁰⁶ SA, BAR D 800:9.

his life, living in İzmir with three sons and two daughters,¹⁰⁷ Barker was suffering from chronic vertigo and shortness of breath. A year after the dissolution of the Company, he lost his life on July 23, 1825 at the age of 86¹⁰⁸ and was buried in İzmir. Two sons were in İzmir as accountants with different British merchants, two sons in Aleppo, one son in Corfu and one in Leghorn, again as an accountant.¹⁰⁹ His son Robert was a traveling Methodist cleric in England.¹¹⁰ His uncaring son George, whom he constantly complained about, was in America and broke off ties with his family. W. Barker left behind a *gedik* of the house that he had bought with money sent by his cousin, and a few worthless pieces of furniture, plates, books, bedspreads, jewellery and debt.¹¹¹ Although it was not legal, the ownership of real estates and *gedik*, which was allowed and omitted by the Ottoman Empire for the sake of friendship, was the only tool saving W. Barker's indebted life after 1770. He left the *gedik* as a legacy to his four daughters and a grandson. The official responsible for carrying out his legacy saw the incidents that occurred in İzmir in those days as an opportunity and began to wait for rich Greek buyers after the Greek revolt in Chios in 1821.¹¹² W. Barker did not achieve the wealth for which he had hoped and dreamed, of trading in the Ottoman territories; his children and grandchildren became members of the Levant world to a far greater extent than he, marrying Greeks or other Franks and spreading throughout the Ottoman territory. The last person left in İzmir from W. Barker's descendants was Mary Barker, who died in 1957.¹¹³

From the 18th century, British, French, Venetian and Dutch traders clustered around Frank Street, where W. Barker was involved, and built a common culture; they became defenders of the interests of the Frank community, not of the nationalities they belonged to. They acted with a single community identity that gathered around the same interests against the decisions and practices of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, they had no clear idea or decision about how to act in the conflicts between their countries because they mingled socially. They had

107 SA, BAR D 800/24, A/14:34 Letter from William Barker to Thomas Barker, 2 August 1815.

108 SA, BAR D 800/24:42, Letter to William Tromlinson, 2 August 1825.

109 SA, BAR D 800/24, A/20:39.

110 SA, BAR D 800/24:33.

111 BOA.HR.SYS 2923/48.

112 SA, BAR D, 800/24, A/24:43.

113 See Manley, *ibid*.

mixed families; French-British, French-Greek, British-Dutch, and so on. They had no clear “nationalities” such as English or French, but they were Levantines. An individual seeking his fortune in foreign lands in the early modern era may not have expected that he would be a member of an international family and society thanks to social, economic and political conditions of the era, but he was product of his time as everyone.

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