

Early Chasseauds in the Levant

by David Wilson : August 2011

In 1963, the Dutch historian Isabella van Eeghen wrote a short article about Jean Baptiste Chasseaud, a French merchant, born in Smyrna, who was admitted as a freeman of the city of Amsterdam on 15 March 1742. She had found a bundle of letters sent to him in 1737 when he was apparently living in Amsterdam at a house belonging to Leonard Lups, a Dutch merchant in the Levant trade. Jean Baptiste's correspondents included Michel van Bommel, a cloth merchant in Leiden, Gaspard Meynard at Marseilles, and David Meynard and Sons at Galata.

On 26 September 1737, a group of Dutch merchants in Constantinople had written to their ambassador, Cornelis Calkoen, to say that "Chasseau" had fled the city to avoid his creditors, but he seems to have settled his affairs there, for in February 1754 Calkoen's successor, Elbert de Hochepped, wrote to the directors of the Dutch Levant Company recommending "Chassau" as a possible treasurer. On 1 Dec 1754 Clara Chasseaud was married at Smyrna to Pieter van Sanen; he was a Dutch merchant who later became Prussian consul-general there. On 2 December 1755 de Hochepped wrote again to the directors, telling them that a few days earlier another "Chassaux" had arrived with his wife from Livorno [Leghorn] via Smyrna, to join his brother, and that he was under the protection of the Austrian emperor in his capacity as Grand Duke of Tuscany. This brother was probably Gaspard Chasseaud, who appears in the embassy correspondence from 1758, and by 1759 was writing as a representative of the Dutch merchants at Angora.

By 1759 Jean Baptiste had become an assessor for the Dutch community at Constantinople. The record of goods sent or received via Smyrna by Dutch merchants at Constantinople between 1757 and 1763 shows regular consignments for J.B. Chass[e]aud and Company. The embassy letter book shows correspondence with Chasseaud and Co. at Constantinople continuing until 1765, and then with J.B. Chasseaud at Salonica and another unidentified place between 1768 and 1776 and at Aleppo from 1776 to 1778.

The index to the Dutch records of the Levant trade [*Bronnen* – see below] may have confused Jean Baptiste with Gabriel. In a note where only the surname is given, the editor says that by 1772, despite his earlier success in business, Chasseaud was almost destitute and had to be replaced as assessor. The following year he was given an annual grant from the poor box of the Dutch community at Constantinople to support him and his wife and five children. However by 1777 their financial situation was so bad that the parents moved to Smyrna, leaving their children to be cared for by the community at Constantinople, and there followed a protracted record of shame and scandal. In 1782 the ambassador at Constantinople withdrew Dutch protection from "le sieur Chasseaud"; the catalogue to the embassy archives indicates that this definitely was Jean Baptiste.

In 1781, Gabriel's son Peter became a naturalised British subject and it was probably at about this time that Gabriel himself died and his widow Sarah married Bartholomew Edward Abbott. It is not clear whether Sarah was the wife who had arrived in Constantinople with Gabriel in 1755, but the fact that she had a child by Abbott born as late as 1791 makes this rather unlikely.

REFERENCES

I.H. van Eeghen, 'Een stukje Levant in de Beulingstraat', *Amstelodamum*, 1963, pp. 188-191.

www.amstelodamum.nl

For more about David Meynard in Constantinople see pp. 188-190 of Edhem Eldem's

<http://www.fatih.edu.tr/~ayasar/HIST346/eldem%20istanbul.pdf> and also the

Inventaire des archives historiques de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, 1878.

For Clara Chasseaud's marriage see

<http://gw0.geneanet.org/index.php3?b=alivornesi&lang=en;p=clara;n=chasseaud>

Inventaris van het archief van de Legatie in Turkije, 1668-1810 (1811).

http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/toegangen/pdf/NL-HaNA_1.02.20.ead.pdf

[online searches for "Chasseaud"]

Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den Levantischen handel 1590-1826.

<http://www.historici.nl/retroboeken/levantischehandel/>

[online searches for "Chasseaud"/"Chasseau"/"Chassaud"/"Chaussaux"/"Chassau"]

see especially Deel 5, GS115, p. 168, note 3, about the decline of the Chasseauds;

also searches for "Sanen", especially Deel 4, GS95, p. 499, and Deel, 5, GS115, p. 35, about Pieter van Sanen being consul-general for Prussia.]