The British Consular Service in the Aegean
1820-1860

Lucia Patrizio Gunning

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the consular service in the Aegean from the final years of the Levant Company administration until 1860, a date that roughly coincides with the end of the British protectorate of the Ionian islands. The protectorate had made it necessary for the British Government to appoint consuls in the Aegean in order that they might look after the Ionians. The research examines all aspects of consular activity; of particular interest has been the activity of the consuls not only within their diplomatic remit but also beyond it, as commercial agents, collectors, archaeologists, and private individuals in a foreign environment.

The thesis starts with an analysis of the passage of the consular service from the Levant Company to the Foreign Office and of the different attitudes of the two administrations. An account of the commercial and political relations of Great Britain with the Levant is given both in its historical perspective and through the examination of the commercial and political reports of the consuls, concentrating on the years of the Greek war of independence. Through the study of the private and official correspondence of consul Charles Thomas Newton with the Trustees of the British Museum and his other colleagues in the Levant, the thesis examines the fundamental role of the consuls in finding and collecting antiquities for the British Museum. The final part of the thesis is concerned with the daily work of the consuls, which is illustrated through a detailed examination of the reports of the district of Rhodes.

The research attempts to understand precisely the role of the consular service in the region, the nature of the appointment itself and the advantages of a consular service for the nation.
# Table of Contents

*Abstract* 3  
*Illustrations* 5  
*Glossary* 7  
*Abbreviation of Sources* 8  
*Foreword* 9  
*Introduction* 13  

1. From the Levant Company to the Foreign Office 29  
2. The Political Role of the Aegean Consuls 98  
3. The Commercial Role of the Aegean Consuls 150  
4. The Consuls as Collectors of Antiquities 188  
5. The Consular District of Rhodes: A Case Study 223  

*Conclusion* 274  
*Appendices* 281  
*Bibliography* 286
Illustrations

page

1 Charles Thomas Newton and Dominic Ellis Colnaghi on horseback in Mitilene

19 British Trade Routes Through the Levant

34 The Levant Company Consulates

58 Original Design for the Consular Uniform FO 78/185, f.31.

75 Map of the Foreign Office Consulates until 1860

95 Breakdown of British Consuls in the Aegean, 1825-1860

130 Ionian Passports

145 The Extent of the Kingdom of Greece

162 British Levantine Trade, 1784-1856

162 The Value of British Levantine Trade, 1784-1856

163 Quantities of some of the principal articles of produce imported into the United Kingdom from Turkey and Egypt as reported to the Levant Company

163 Value declared at the Custom House of goods exported from the U.K. to the Levant

206 Charles Thomas Newton with colossal lion removed from castle wall at Budrum

211 Charles Thomas Newton's excavations at Budrum

213 Excavations at Budrum

218 Excavations photographed by Dominic Colnaghi

220 Archaeological remains at Budrum

226 The Consular District of Rhodes

227 The British Vice Consulate at Rhodes

229 The First British Consulate at Rhodes

277 Present Day British Consulates
281 Political Map of the Aegean and the Near East
**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aga</td>
<td>Landholding Ottoman nobleman.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capitulations</td>
<td>Commercial agreement with Ottoman Empire.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chancellier</td>
<td>Secretary of the consulate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consulages</td>
<td>Duties levied on exports and imports.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Divan</td>
<td>Imperial Ottoman council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragoman</td>
<td>Interpreter who acted as an agent or intermediary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory</td>
<td>Residence of Levantine merchants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firman</td>
<td>Ottoman imperial decree or authorisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Quarters</td>
<td>Foreign living quarter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Subjects</td>
<td>Foreign subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Vizir</td>
<td>Prime minister of Ottoman government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giovani di Lingua</td>
<td>Apprentice interpreters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jannissary Corps</td>
<td>Dedicated body of Turkish infantry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadi</td>
<td>Ottoman judge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konack</td>
<td>Government house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasha</td>
<td>Chief Ottoman official at the local level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pashalic</td>
<td>Administrative division of Ottoman territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porte</td>
<td>The Ottoman court at Constantinople.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rayah</td>
<td>Non muslim subject of Ottoman empire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seraskier</td>
<td>Ottoman commander-in-chief and minister of war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seraglio</td>
<td>Palace of the Sultan at Constantinople.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sultan</td>
<td>Ottoman sovereign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sultana Valide</td>
<td>Mother of the Sultan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulema</td>
<td>The religious, educational and legal authority of the Ottoman Empire.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

For coherence of understanding a consistent spelling has been adopted throughout the thesis for the names of locations and people. Original spellings in letters and dispatches vary a great deal between one another.
Abbreviation of Sources

Add Mss. Additional Manuscripts, British Library.
ADM Admiralty Papers, Public Record Office.
BL British Library.
BMA British Museum Archive.
BT Board of Trade Papers, Public Record Office.
CE Letter Books, Trustees’ Correspondence, British Museum Archive
CO Colonial Office Papers, Public Record Office.
FO Foreign Office Papers, Public Record Office.
GRA Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum.
WAA British Museum, Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities.
Foreword

This work began as a consequence of a scholarship for specialisation abroad offered by the Università degli Studi de L’Aquila, Italy, where I studied for my first degree, under the suggestion of the then head of faculty, Professor Elio Lo Cascio. I am deeply indebted to Professor Lo Cascio for the help and support which he offered me during the last year of that study, supporting my desire for a period of study abroad which initially brought me to University College London as an Erasmus student, and for pushing me to apply and accept the grant from the University of L’Aquila which radically altered the course of my life.

The idea for this research was promoted by Professor Stelio Marchese, head of the Department of History in L’Aquila, who also upheld my application for the grant and, with dedication and friendship introduced me to the study of the relations between Great Britain and Greece. He has encouraged and directed my studies throughout my university career; and I owe him thanks for his trust and support in my capacities, and for ultimately being the responsible for my having become an historian, rather than a literate.

I am grateful to Professor David D’Avray and Professor Michael Crawford for having smoothed my arrival at UCL in 1989 when I was an Erasmus student, and when I subsequently returned as a research student.

Dr. Stephen Conway, who has supervised my studies throughout the course of this work, merits my deepest gratitude and esteem for his attentive,
intelligent and constructive supervision, for the many lunches that have come with it, and for having supported, helped and encouraged me throughout the best and worst times in the last four and a half years. For his patience, his particular care in reading the numerous drafts of this thesis, and for his suggestions and improvements, I am indebted to him.

Professor Frederick Rosen, my second supervisor, has also given me good advice in times of doubt. It was as a result of his encouragement and the support of the Graduate School of UCL and the Central Research Fund of the University of London that I was able to organise a research trip to Greece which proved essential to my understanding of the context of this work. I am also grateful to Dr. Jonathan Morris, for his patience during my two years as an assistant in his course ‘Europe in the Age of World Wars, 1870-1945,’ the teaching of which has so much contributed to the development of my own work. Professor Martin Daunton, postgraduate adviser, also deserves my gratitude, for his help in general matters, as do the secretaries of the History Department, Rachel, Diana and Ms Razwi, for their patience with me, especially during the last two years.

Special thanks go to Janet Wallace and Christopher Date, at the British Museum Archive, who with their deep knowledge of the Museum’s history have guided and helped me with extreme kindness and friendship, in the research for chapter five. I am indebted to the staff of the Western Asiatic Antiquities Department, especially Dr. John Curtis and Tim Healing, for a most enjoyable and fruitful time spent researching amongst their archives, and for having showed me interesting and unexpected Museum treasures. My thanks also go to Dr. Susan Walker of the Greek and Roman Antiquities Department, and to the staff of the British Library and of the Public Record Office, where most of my researches were carried out.

I owe the success of my trip to Greece to the staff of the British School
of Archeology at Athens. My thanks thus go to Professor Richard Tomlison, for his suggestions for the improvement of chapter five, and to Dr. Waywell, Helen Clarke and Helen Field, for having organised my stay at the School, my appointments with the directors and staff of libraries and archives in Greece, and for their help and support in general matters. I acknowledge the gracious permission of the British Ambassador at Athens, Sir Oliver Miles, for granting me access to the manuscript papers kept in the library of his residence. Special recognition also goes to the director of the Historic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Athens, Mrs. Photini Constantino-poulou, for having made exceptional efforts to let me look at the documents in the Archive in the little time I had left in Athens, and for having provided me with a translator to select and help in the reading of the relevant documents. Dr. Fanny Maria Tzigakou of the Bennaki Museum, and Mrs. Selica Valentini of the Museum’s Archive, gave me invaluable help and suggestions in tracing documents of importance, as did Ms. Karagiannopoulou Katerina of the Historic Archive of Mytilini in Lesvos, who most kindly sought out documents and papers of importance for my work. The conversation I have had with the Honorary British Consul at Rhodes, Mr. Dimitri Demetriades, and the days spent with the consular correspondent at Lesvos, Mrs. Mairwen Karydis, were fundamental for me to understand the relevance of the work of consul during the years examined by this work, and form the basis for the afterword. I am also grateful to them for their help during my residence in Rhodes and Lesvos.

The photographs which illustrate chapter five, are reproduced by kind permission of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities and the Central Archive of the British Museum; those of the Ionian passports are courtesy of the Historic Archive of Mytilini, Lesvos.

Special thanks go to Katrina Lithgow, who showed her friendship by
giving up her computer when mine broke down, allowing me to carry on the completion of this work, to Gwenola Kergall for her kind help in translation, and to Peter and Jennifer Gunning for their affection and support during the course of the last five years.

Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my parents, for all they have done for me, for financing my studies when the grant from the University of L’Aquila expired, for giving up their portable computer during the last four years, for having helped, supported and encouraged me ever since I can remember. To Barnaby, my husband, I also owe a great debt: for his encouragement, help and patience in reading and improving the numerous drafts of this thesis; for having accepted an exhausting work at the beginning of his career in order to allow me to carry out my studies; for having been caring and enthusiastic about my work when I was not. The maps, graphics and layout of this thesis are the result of his efforts. To him, and to my parents, this work is dedicated with my deepest gratitude and love.
Introduction

Les consulats sont à tous égards de ces observatoires privilégiés depuis lesquels s’analysent et se mesurent les relations à l’échelle du monde, les situations locales, les dynamiques particulières. A charge de critique - car les archives consulaires résultent, comme les autres, du compromis entre la traduction immédiate des réalités et la volonté non moins immédiate de convaincre et de plaider - ces lettres, ces rapports et ces statistiques offrent une documentation cohérente qui s’enrichit de ce qu’elle est le fruit du regard porté sur autrui. La France et ses serviteurs observant la vie du monde méditerranéen, c’est à la fois l’irremplaçable témoignage que portent les Français sur des mondes alors lontains et celui qu’ils offrent implicitement quant à l’attitude de la France et des Français à l’égard de ces mondes.¹

Whilst French research has recognised the importance of the consuls as the ‘eyes and ears’ of their Foreign Office,² little, if any, study has been made of the role of the British consuls. The consular service itself has been largely ig-

Consulates represent, to all intents, privileged vantage points from which international relations, local situations and particular dynamics may be analysed and measured. Maintaining a critical distance - since, like others, the consular archives are the result of a compromise between the immediate recording of reality, and the less immediate need to convince and plead - these letters, reports and statistics provide a coherent documentation which is enriched by their observation of context. France and its servants, observing the Mediterranean world provide simultaneously the irreplaceable testimonial of French men in distant lands and, implicitly, the attitudes of France and the French to those worlds.

² See J. Pillaut, Les Consulates du Levant, Smyrne 1610-1900 (1902), and, by the same author, also Les Consulates du Levant, Larnaca 1673-1900 (1902).
nored in this country, despite the range of issues upon which it is possible to shed light by reading the reports of these diplomats.

Research has instead concentrated largely on travellers and their impression of Greece. The production of travel diaries is vast, and it continues to attract academic interest. Indeed, if analysed from a certain point of view, consuls had much in common with travellers since they were often attracted to Greece by a romantic ideal of its past. However, detailed scrutiny of the two groups and of their correspondence reveals a marked contrast between the consuls' perception of Greece and that of the travellers. The difference in the experiences of permanent and temporary visitors was an early stimulus to this study and it gradually emerged that the consuls presented a very different view of the state of the Aegean.

For many travellers, a voyage to Greece was seen as a trip where:

the graces of superior civilisation were acquired rather than imparted... the British saw themselves as pupils rather than as teachers, absorbing lessons in art and architecture, deepening their minds, and adding the polish of taste and discernment to their rugged native genius.\(^3\)

This was indeed the prevalent view in many travel diaries of the period. Britons who visited the country as residents, either as philhellenes or diplomats, thought rather differently. They tended to reject modern Greece as a shadow of the story of its classical self. The sorry state of the region was for them far from the idealised civilisation which had attracted many to the Aegean, and

seen by the visitor to the country often caused disappointment 
that was strong enough to provoke a change of camp⁴

One visitor to Greece in the early nineteenth century, whose opinion 
changed upon his return to the country, was Lord Byron. He had initially vi-
sited the Levant in 1809 as a traveller, and had subsequently returned in 
1823 to help in the struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire. As 
with many others both before and after him, he had been fascinated by 
Greece during his grand tour. However, his return to the country exposed 
him to its less enchanting aspects.⁵ Byron sought to place the blame for the 
country’s defects and problems on centuries of Ottoman dominion and for-
eign abuse:

I like the Greeks, who are plausible rascals with all the Turkish 
VICES, without their courage. However, some are brave, and all are 
beautiful...it seems to me rather hard to declare so positively and 
pertinaciously, as almost everybody has declared, that the Greeks, 
because they are very bad, will never be better...at present, like the 
Catholics of Ireland and the Jews throughout the world, they suf-
fer all the moral and physical ills that can afflict humanity. Their 
life is a struggle against truth; they are vicious in their own 
defence...now, in the name of Nemesis! what are they to be grate-
ful for! to the Turks for their fetters, and to the Franks for their bro-
ken promises and lying counsels. They are to be grateful to the 
artist who engraves their ruins and to the antiquary who carries 
them away, to the traveller whose Jannissary flogs them and to the 

⁴ A. Dimarras, “Other British Philhellenes” in R. Clogg, The Struggle for Greek Independence 
⁵ Lucia Patrizio, “Byron e la Lotta per l’Indipendenza Greca”, Tesi di Laurea, Università degli 
Studi dell’Aquila, 1990, chapter 1, pp. 2-20.
scribbler whose journal abuses them. This is the amount of their obligations to foreigners.\footnote{L.A. Marchand, "‘Byron’s Hellenic Muse’, The Byron Journal, 3 (1975), pp. 67-8.}

However, he believed that once freed from the Ottoman chain, Greece would return to its former glory and culture\footnote{L. Patrizio, “Byron e la Lotta per l’Indipendenza Greca”, ch. 1 and 8.} and that its ills, entirely dependent upon the Ottoman dominion, would go with it.

Whilst travellers in the region and short term residents were able to choose which aspects of Greece to praise, and which to ignore, the consuls, by the nature of their work, were confronted with the most problematic aspects of Levantine reality. Whatever their initial predilections, British consuls tended to develop a jaundiced view of the Greeks and attribute the problems of the region to the failures of the Greeks rather than the misrule of the Turks. Byron’s view can be contrasted with that of Charles Thomas Newton who, as vice consul at Mitilene between 1852 and 1859, was highly critical of the Greeks themselves. He felt that the modern Greeks had lost the beauty and music of their ancient language, and that their country bore no comparison with its precursor.\footnote{C.T. Newton, Travels and Discoveries in the Levant (1865), p.69.} Where Byron in 1811 believed that Greece could still be freed from the Turkish yoke, and imagined the beneficial consequences of such freedom, Newton, writing almost thirty years after the creation of the Greek state, felt that this possibility was irredeemably lost. This difference in perception was reflected in the consuls’ attitudes to the country and its people. Dominic Ellis Colnaghi, who accompanied Newton in Greece and remained in the Levant as a consul himself until 1863, was disillusioned by his stay in the country to which he felt a sense of revulsion. When asked whether he wished to remain in the East as a merchant for his parents’ firm of antiquarians, he replied:
I hope that...you have no definite wish for me to be a merchant here but that what you said was merely a passing idea. You have no idea of what one has to contend with, in the East, in the shape of cheating and lying...the idea of my becoming a Levantine! Can you fancy what a fearful thing it is? In the full meaning of the word it is a cheat, a liar...I hope I should never be so bad as all this. I only say that for fun but still you can fancy how one gets horrified having to deal with men of such character. I have used rather hard terms but I assure you my statement is not exaggerated. I wish to enter no other business but our own, if one is in business, at all events it is better to have the comfort of home and the pleasures of good society than to be banished out here...So pray do not think of my being a merchant here.⁹

Amongst the diplomatic representatives of Britain resident in the Levant, the consuls were certainly the most exposed to the daily sociopolitical reality of the region. However, although the theme of the British Grand Tour and the vast number of travel diaries produced at the time continue to be the subject of interest and study for British scholars, as have been the life and adventures of various ambassadors, the impression of consuls in the Levant has rarely been considered.

An enormous amount of original correspondence from the consuls exists, particularly at the Public Record Office, in the Foreign Office, Board of Trade and some of the Admiralty papers. Extensive quantities of material are also to be found at the British Museum Archive, and in the departments of Western Asiatic and Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum. The Bodleian Library retains some private papers, and the private letters of Charles Thomas Newton and Dominic Ellis Colnaghi are held at the British

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Library where other correspondence with consuls can be found in the Panizzi papers and in other private collections. At Athens, a great deal of material from the archive of the consulate at Rhodes is to be found at the residence of the British Ambassador, and other letters are retained both in the Finlay papers at the British School of Archeology and in the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Local archives in the Aegean hold further correspondence, amongst them the Historic Archive at Mitilene retains some private notes from consuls, as well as Ionian passports issued by British consuls. Despite the abundance of this material, which emerged in increasing quantities during the research for this thesis, virtually no use has previously been made of it.

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Due to their close exposure to the course of events, and as a consequence of the uncertainty surrounding their potential role, the examination of reports of the British consuls in the Aegean provides a unique view of the political, social and economic situation of the region, as well as of the changing nature of the consular service.

The Aegean itself was strategically important in the context of the delicate balance of power in the region. The object of the competing interests of the European trading nations, it was in this period subject to a number of developments that make it particularly attractive for study.

In 1815, at the congress of Vienna, Britain was allocated the protectorate of the Ionian islands. At the time, the British consular service in the region was provided by the Levant Company, a body of merchants houses which had traded with the Ottoman dominions since the mid sixteenth century. The protectorate, which lasted until 1863, created a duty to control the movements of the Ionian people and protect their interests wherever they
traded or resided within the entirety of the Ottoman territories. However, the large number of these people dispersed throughout the Aegean severely stretched the Levant Company diplomatic representation which had been originally established to care for British commercial interests. It also created a need for an enlargement of the diplomatic presence in the region. In 1825, largely as a consequence of the increased duties that fell to the consuls with the protection of the Ionians, the Levant Company was wound up and the consular service passed into the control of the Foreign Office.

The Aegean during the period of the Ionian protectorate is thus of particular interest as the subject for a study on the development of the consular service, since it saw a tremendous expansion in the number of consulates and a period of rapid evolution in the profession of the consuls.
The change of administration marked a watershed in the history of the consular service and radically affected the position of the consuls in the Levant. Under the Levant Company they had lived as merchants within communities of merchants, enjoying decent salaries and a high quality of life. By contrast, in the period of confusion and reorganisation which followed the passage of the service to Foreign Office control, the Aegean consuls became poorly paid and isolated individuals, living in unsatisfactory accommodation. Deprived of the consular retinue that had been provided by the Levant Company, they were left to deal with the growing burden of their consulates alone, and in the absence of a clearly defined set of duties, the consuls were forced to adapt their profession to the changing political and economic circumstances.

The political situation of the region and the changes that followed the granting of independence to Greece, also affected the consular duties a great deal. The written correspondence of the British consuls allows an insight into the political situation in the Levant and into the problems which the population of the region faced. During the Greek war of independence, the Aegean came to European attention as the scene of dreadful atrocities. British consuls struggled to reconcile their position as representatives of a neutral power with the human tragedy of the conflict. Their correspondence reveals both how they sought to prompt British intervention in the conflict and how their understanding of local politics helped pave the way for the resolution of the war. The Aegean Islands were retained within the Ottoman Empire when the boundaries of the kingdom of Greece were settled in 1831, and in the state of near anarchy which followed, British consuls acquired a new role as mediators between the people of the region and the Ottoman administration.

The protection of British trade was a continual concern, both in the face of repeated abuses of the merchants’ commercial rights by the Ottoman gov-
ernment and its local representatives, and as a result of the recurrent problem of piracy. In their correspondence, the Aegean consuls provided a portrait of the region and of the ills that afflicted it. From 1825 their commercial reports were used by the Board of Trade as the basis for a better reorganization of the commercial consulates in the Levant, and they provided a steady flow of information that helped with the negotiation of a commercial treaty with the Turkish government in 1838.

After the creation of the Greek state, and the introduction of legislation prohibiting the export of antiquities from the country, the Aegean, as part of the Ottoman dominion, became the focus of European archaeological interest. With time, the advantages which the Aegean consuls could provide in the collection of remains for the British Museum emerged as they became involved in collaboration with the Navy and the Museum for the retrieval of antiquities, and eventually their official duties were extended to include the search for artifacts.

The British consuls in the Aegean during the period of this study are thus of interest for a number of reasons. Their correspondence provides a view of the course of events in the area and, just as importantly, an insight into the minds of Britons abroad (and also Levantine Britons) coping with a period of great political change. It also allows an understanding of the factors which influenced the evolution of the consular profession and illustrates how the established Levant Company organisation metamorphosised into a service that struggled to cope with the changing necessities of policy and of the regional situation.

The historical period chosen for this work, and the dramatic events associated with the struggle for Greek independence have been the subjects of numerous studies, either in general history publications or in more specific
books on the history of the Ottoman Empire and Greece. The same is true of
the British Philhellenic groups. Whilst ambassadors have been featured in
numerous studies and biographies, and their lives and work have fascinated
many scholars, in recent years the British consular service has been the sub­
This publication is, however, a general study of the Foreign Office consular
service at a worldwide level, and although it does contain an account of the
Levantine representation, the period it covers excludes the Levant Company
administration, the study of which is essential to understand the later deve­
lopment of the service in the area. As the title of his book implied, its author
felt that the consuls deserved more attention. The significance of the consu­
lar service in the context of the wider diplomatic service also merited a few
words in The British Diplomatic Service 1815-1914.

Whilst both of these publications considered the consular service as a
whole, very few works have as yet considered it in a specific area and at a
specific time. Other existing works are old, and were written more for the
benefit of the consuls themselves than as a critique or reflection on the signif­

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12 For example: Sir D. Kelly, The Ruling Few: or the Human Background to Diplomacy (1952); G. Robinson, David Urquhart (1920); A. Ramm, Sir R.B.D. Morier, Envoy and Ambassador in the Age of Imperialism 1876-1893 (1973); S. Lane-Poole, The Life of Stratford Canning (1888); C.L. Smith, The Embassy of Sir William White at Constantinople, 1886-1891 (1957).
13 D.C.M. Platt, The Cinderella Service: British Consuls since 1825 (1971). The service also warrants mention in Part II, chapter 2 of Finance, Trade, and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815-1914 (1968) by the same author.
15 For example: R. Finn, British Consuls Abroad (1846); W.R. Hearn, Some Recollections-Memories, Thirty Five Years in the Consular Service (1928); L.T. Lee, Consular Law and Practice (1961); H. Montague-Villers, Charms of the Consular Career (1924).
icance of the profession. Literature on the Foreign Office organisation rarely enters into the specific instances where a representation had already existed, as had been the case with the Levant Company. Conversely, works on the Levant Company are old and often contradictory, and they tend to avoid comparison of the two organisations; indeed few deal with the wider historical, political and economic reasons which brought the company to an end.¹⁶ The consuls merit occasional mention in travel diaries of the period, as well as in some archaeological literature. With regard to the retrieval of antiquities in Europe, one published work, *The English as Collectors,*¹⁷ has commented on the consuls’ position stating that it required investigation; however, where the Aegean is concerned, no such research has been made on the subject. The vast amount of material which exists within the archive of the British Museum has allowed this work to examine the close connection of the consuls in the Aegean with such activities, and to verify that, although the involvement of the British in Greece and the study of archaeological remains has continued to attract academic interest, the role of the consuls and their connection with the procurement of antiquities for European museums has been overlooked.

This work takes account of all these aspects of the British involvement in Greece, presenting them through the eyes of the consuls. A number of issues, and scholarly and historical debates are thus investigated from a point of view which has rarely been considered before.

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The thesis is divided into five chapters, which analyse in sequence the development of the consular service in the Levant and the work of consuls and its

changing nature in the context of the Aegean islands as a whole; the consulate at Rhodes is the subject of a specific study.

The first chapter examines the transition of the consular service from Levant Company to Foreign Office administration. It analyses the reasons for the winding up of the Levant Company and the differences in approach and organisation between the two administrations. Through the reports of the individual consuls to the two organisations, it investigates the complicated issues of the passage of the service from one organisation to the other. It describes the problems of the reappointment of existing consuls, of the expansion of the service, and the consequent choice of new locations according to the priorities set by the Foreign Office for its consular representation. It analyses the results of the dramatic increase of work for the consuls which resulted from their duty to look after the Ionians as well as the effects of the difference between the two organisation on the situation of the consuls themselves.

Chapter two is the first of a sequence of chapters analysing the roles that the British consuls came to assume in the Levant during the forty years considered by the thesis. It takes into consideration the changing political role of the consuls in the Aegean. The chapter presents a historical introduction to the events of the Greek struggle for independence as they were seen and understood by the consuls. It goes on to analyse the political role that the consuls acquired, for the first time in the Aegean, under the Foreign Office representation. Initially seen as sources of political information by the Foreign Office, the consuls acted as observers of the political situation, later becoming informers of events in the war. During the Greek War of Independence they provided an additional source of information to assist the process of determining whether or not Britain should enter the war on the side of the other European powers. The chapter analyses the effects of the war on their
duties as well as their behaviour during the war. The interpretation of their duty in the confused sequence of political events, saw the consuls struggle to reconcile the British government’s insistence on neutrality with the difficult human situation created in the Aegean by the conflict. The consuls played a part in the final resolution of the war and following the settlement of the boundaries of the new Greek state, they began to develop a role of mediation and counselling for the population of the Aegean Islands which had been retained under Ottoman rule, a role which was to continue in the later years examined by this work.

The commercial function of the British consuls in the Levant is investigated in Chapter three. Under the Levant Company the consuls were themselves merchants with a duty to represent the commercial interests of their colleagues. When the Foreign Office took control of the consular service, the direct link between the consuls, the Levantine merchants and British manufacturers was lost. Consuls were thus required to observe the requirements of the Levant markets and to protect British merchants from the arbitrary impositions of the Ottoman authorities on their trade. The conflict of interests between this increased duty to control British trade, and their original position as merchants, brought about the decision to prevent consuls from trading, leaving this possibility open only to vice-consuls and consular agents. As part of the reorganisation promoted by the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade took the opportunity to influence the development of British commercial activities in the Levant by suggesting the opening of commercially orientated consulates. The increased commercial activity in the Levant and the state of anarchy created in the Aegean by the difficulty of the political situation, highlighted the problem of piracy. Consular assistance was important for the Navy to resolve the problem of attacks against British vessels in the Levantine waters. The consuls were additionally needed to collect commer-
cial information which might lead to the more prosperous development of British trade in the region, in competition with foreign enterprises. Their information was valuable for the preparation of a commercial convention between Britain and the *Porte* in 1838, which gave British merchants unprecedented benefits in the Levant at the same time protecting them against the abuses of the Ottoman local authorities.

Chapter four is concerned with the involvement of the Aegean consuls in the procurement and collection of antiquities for the British Museum. Despite the strength of its collections of books, manuscripts, prints, coins and specimens of natural history, the Museum initially possessed few antiquities and archaeological remains. The few pieces it held were the result of good fortune rather than careful effort. This part of the work examines the development of the relationship between the Levantine consuls and the Museum, beginning with the disappointment of its early contacts, when the valuable collections accumulated by consul Henry Salt at Alexandria were sold to the Louvre and to private collectors as a result of the British Government’s desire for economy. It explains how the growing understanding of the role that the consuls could have was aided by the help of other governmental bodies for the shipment and delivery of antiquities to England in a way that responded to the economic concerns of the government. After 1835, and the creation of laws prohibiting the export of antiquities from Greece and Egypt, the Aegean acquired importance as a major source of antiquities for the European museums. For this reason, the consular district of Rhodes became an essential location for the excavation, collection and dispatch of antiquities. An understanding of the full potential of the consular service as an agency for the collection of antiquities emerged with the appointment of Charles Thomas Newton, previously an employee at the British Museum, as vice consul at Mitilene in 1852. During his time in the Levant, Newton organised and
instructed the local consuls in the retrieval of antiquities, ultimately formulating a report which included among the duties of the consuls in the Levant the search for archaeological remains for the Museum.

The final chapter is a case study on the daily work of the consuls in the consular district of Rhodes where a representation was opened in 1850 as a result of the general reorganisation of the Levant consulates promoted by the Foreign Office following the settlement of the Greek state. Through the detailed analysis of the reports of the consuls to the Foreign Office and the Ambassador, the chapter presents the problems created in the Aegean by the decision to retain the islands within the jurisdiction of the Ottoman Empire. The social, religious and political difficulties which developed between the Christian and Muslim populations, and between the inhabitants of the Aegean and the Ionians living and trading in the region, were exacerbated by the attitudes of the Ottoman local governors. In the context of this growing anarchy and discontent, the British consuls became valued by the Aegean populations for their unique ability to secure justice and compensation. The response of individual consuls to the local state of affairs, varied. The chapter examines the reactions of three different officials. Consul Niven Kerr, who had been transferred from a previous appointment in the Levant, displayed compassion towards the population whom he felt it was his duty to help. This inclination eventually clashed with his position as British consul, and he left the Aegean for a different location. In the interval between his departure and the arrival of his substitute, Charles Thomas Newton obtained a transfer to Rhodes from Mitilene. Newton’s classicist view of Greece was at odds with the modern reality of the region and the role he was called upon to fulfil. He felt no sympathy for the exploited population of the district, believing the Greek character to be forever compromised by a tendency towards dishonesty. The arrival of Robert Campbell at Rhodes from Dunkirk, marked the
beginning of a more detached consular representation, in keeping with the attitude that the Foreign Office aimed to promote with its reorganisation. Campbell was effectively a bureaucrat, efficient, honest and conscientious in his approach to his daily work both with his colleagues and with the Ottoman authorities. He was aware that a better development of British trade in the Aegean could be the answer to the problems of the region and its population and treated his work dispassionately, trying to improve the situation in his consular district without mixing his personal feelings. Through this chapter, a gradual change of approach to the consular profession becomes apparent. If at the lower levels of the consular service there is a continuity with the organisation that had been created by the Levant Company, with locally appointed personnel subject to conflicts of interest, at the top, the service was becoming increasingly professional. The later consuls, such as Campbell, were career consuls appointed in London, who saw their work with a certain amount of detachment, and even officials such as Biliotti, who began their consular careers in loco as consular agents, had developed into fully professionalised civil servants by the time they became consuls. These consuls were no longer merchants with a close involvement in the area, who dealt with their consular appointment as a minor, part time occupation, but were instead full time professionals.

The structure of the chapters is consistent throughout the thesis. Each has an introduction explaining the content of the chapter through an overview of its main issues. The introduction is followed by a brief historical narrative, which introduces the subject in its historical context, and which leads on to the main body of the chapter.
Chapter 1
From the Levant Company to the Foreign Office

In 1820 a British consular representation, of a very limited kind, already existed in the Aegean. It had been set up by the Levant Company for the purpose of protecting its traders in the territory of the Ottoman Empire. The consuls themselves were merchants, chosen and elected by other merchants within the Company. The representation was confined to the commercial aspect of the British presence in the Levant and it worked very efficiently almost until the winding-up of the Company in 1825.

When, in 1815, the administration of the Ionian islands became the responsibility of the British government, the consular service in the Aegean was dramatically affected by the changed nature of consular work and the vastly increased burden on the consuls. It became clear that the scope of the service in this part of Europe should be redefined. Between 1815 and the eventual take over of the consular service in the Levant by the Foreign Office in 1825, the government prepared the ground for the closure of the Levant Company’s representation.

The change of administration substantially affected the nature, the scope and ultimately the role of the consular service, as well as the work and the life style of the consuls themselves. The reorganisation was a long, protracted process which lasted over fifteen years. To understand the nature and significance of the changes, it is necessary to compare the organisation and development of the Levant Company representation with that of the
The history of the consular service in the Aegean can be seen to have begun with the founding of the Levant Company in 1553 when Anthony Jenkinson at Aleppo obtained privileges known as capitulations from the Sultan, permitting trade with the Levant.\textsuperscript{1} It was the first time that England had been engaged in commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire. In 1581 Queen Elizabeth confirmed the privileges by granting a seven year charter to a group of English merchants, and the following year she sent an ambassador to Turkey with the task of establishing factories for the merchants. The ambassador remained in the Levant for twelve years and, on his return, Elizabeth granted a second charter to the merchants, this time for twelve years. In 1605 King James extended the charter ‘for ever’\textsuperscript{2} to the merchants, their sons, and to any other of the King’s subjects, on payment of a fee of £25 each before the age of twenty seven, and £50 thereafter. It was at this point that the ‘Company of merchants of England trading into the Levant seas’ was founded. It was granted the power to appoint consuls and to assess duties upon merchandise and ships. The charter was confirmed by Charles II in 1660, and the duties charged by the Company were authorised by various acts of Parliament, notably in 1753 and 1819.\textsuperscript{3} Duty was never levied on ships, but a tariff of up to three per cent was charged on merchandise to cover the expenses of transport and of diplomatic representation. In 1819, during the reign of George III, the government promoted an Act of Parliament ‘to re-

\textsuperscript{1} The history of the origins and development of the Levant Company is controversial, in the sense that the publications dealing with this subject disagree on dates and events, names and history of the early period. For this study, information on the subject has been extracted from the reports written by the Levant Company for the government in the occasion of the passage of the consular service from one agency to the other.

\textsuperscript{2} FO 78/136, ff. 414-21; Underlined in the original text.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., also f.431, n.8.
move doubts respecting the dues payable to the Levant Company,' indicating that tension was rising over the right of trade in the Levant waters.

The Company was responsible for the payment of the salaries of the consul general, consuls, vice consuls, chaplains, surgeons, agents, interpreters and other people employed by it, and, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, was required to pay the expenses of the ambassador and his retinue. Covered by raising capital from members of the Company, these expenses, and especially the significant cost of the ambassadorial representation, were later repaid to them through the waiving of customs duties. However, from 1768, when the start of the Russo-Turkish war caused the closure of the Straits and great damage to the merchants, trade with the Levant declined to such an extent that even this solution proved unviable. The Company was thus forced to apply to Parliament for assistance and grants were obtained to help it through its financial difficulties; between 1768 and 1808, it received a total of £110,000 in contributions from Parliament. In 1805 the Company successfully petitioned Parliament to be relieved of the cost of ambassadorial representation 'as no other branch of public life,' it was stated on that occasion, 'has such expenses.' Indeed, support of the ambassador was costing the Company more than the money granted by Parliament. It thus appointed a consul general at Constantinople to look after commercial matters and supervise the consuls. The Company's finances improved somewhat when in 1809 Britain's commercial position in the Ottoman Empire was restored following an agreement between the two countries which saw the restitution by France to Turkey of the Ionian islands. This caused the company's trade and revenue to increase, allowing it to reduce the rates of duty, increase the

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5 Britain made peace with the Porte in 1809 regaining the Ionian Islands from France on behalf of Turkey. The treaty restored Britain's commercial position in the Ottoman Empire and reduced the duty on British exports to Turkey to three per cent. Secret articles within the treaty stipulated that in the event of French aggression, Britain would send a naval force to defend the Ottoman frontier.
salaries of its officers, and accumulate capital.

British merchants in the Levant resided in communities known as factories which reproduced, as much as possible, the British way of life and were established in specific areas or *frank quarters*, just outside the commercial towns. John Oliver Hanson, who stopped at Smyrna during his travels in the Levant, wrote an interesting account of the British factory there in 1813, in which he also described the consular representation:

The European nations at Smyrna are each represented by their respective consuls. The factories which are established there at present consist of the English, French, Russian, Dutch, Austrian, Spanish. The English is the most considerable in point of wealth, respectability and power, its consul is the most feared and looked up to. As is natural, a great spirit of jealousy, rivalship, perpetually exists between the English and French factories...The English consul [Francis Werry] who has now held his situation for many years, is a man of great firmness and respectability. In several instances he has shown no ordinary talent in the administration of the duties of his office, and has on one or more occasions, at great personal risk, upheld the right and privileges of his nation. The British factory consists of seventeen or eighteen mercantile establishments who act principally as agents to merchants in England. The principal trade to Smyrna consists in the importation of many manufactured cottons, stuffs, refined sugar, coffee, dye woods, spices, tin, indigo. The principal exports are silk, cotton wool, madder roots, galls, sponges, mohair yarn, yellow berry...From a long residence there, many of the merchants have become as if they were naturalised in the place. Many of them speak Turkish, all of them Greek, French,
Italian. Most of them...display much elegance and hospitality in the...reception of travellers.\(^5\)

Merchants usually spent a period of twenty years in the Levant, the first eight of which were passed learning the trade under the supervision of another merchant. On his retirement, the older merchant would leave the business in the hands of the younger member who, as an associate, would thus be obliged to share profits with his predecessor. When merchants returned to England at the end of their time in the Levant, their incomes assured by the younger partner, they were usually wealthy men, able to afford a grand house in the country with a large retinue.

The acceptance of young members into the company was dependent upon their ability to bring a large share of capital to their associates, confining access to a few already wealthy individuals. This restriction was the cause of much debate, since it excluded access to the Company to all but a few, in contradiction of the original charter which had stated that ‘any’ of the King’s subjects should be admitted to trade.

At its inception the company had established consuls in the principal ports and towns of Turkey with instructions to govern and protect British persons and property and to look after their judicial affairs. The terms of the capitulations were such that British subjects in the Levant were forbidden from appealing to Turkish justice except in cases where an Ottoman subject was involved. Consuls had, therefore, to act judicially as well as ‘magisterially’ within their district,\(^7\) with sentencing being referred to the Consul General at Constantinople. Prior to 1815 and the extension of British protection to the subjects of the Ionian islands, it would seem that the consuls were never called on to exercise jurisdiction in criminal cases.\(^8\)

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\(^5\) J.O. Hanson, 'Recollections of Smyrna and Greece', 1813, Add Mss 38591, ff.50-1.
\(^7\) This duty applied only to the consuls in the Levant as opposed to other parts of the world.
\(^8\) FO 78/136, ff.419-20.
The Levant Company had established ten consulates in the area covered by its merchants; Vice consuls and consular agents were to be found in many remote islands of the Aegean, and although they were generally appointed by the ambassador at the suggestion of the consuls, the Company kept no record of their names. Thus, at the time of its dissolution, the Company was officially responsible for only eight consuls and five vice consuls and consular agents. Whilst consuls were normally appointed by the King, at the nomination of the Company and its representative at the Porte, in the Ae-

\[\text{FO 78/136, ff.414-21.}\]
gean archipelago they were more often appointed by the ambassador in his capacity as the King's representative.

The diplomatic life style in the near East under the Levant Company was of a very high standard. Consuls, being appointed for purely commercial reasons to safeguard British trade and capitulations, were allowed to trade, and many chose to do so. This allowed them to reside in factories where goods were shipped directly from Britain; their houses, together with a retinue of servants and clerks, were paid for by the company. The ambassador was resident at Constantinople where he maintained an even larger retinue.

In comparison, the consuls in the Morea, Alexandria and Cyprus were not paid a salary, but were instead allowed to retain a share of the consulages; the chancelliers, clerks employed to look after the accounts and transcribe dispatches, were also allowed to retain part of these fees, in lieu of a salary.

The Levant Company appointed interpreters, or dragomen, to help its diplomats in dealing with the local merchants and population. With the exception of the dragomen at the embassy at Constantinople and at the consulate of Smyrna, these interpreters were not paid by the company. Instead, in exchange for their services, they obtained the right to British protection and were consequently exempted from Ottoman taxation, and enjoyed the privileges of the British capitulations.

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Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Company had relied upon Venetian vessels for transport. Communications were slow and as a result Constantinople formed the effective centre for diplomacy in the

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10 With the exception of the consuls at Smyrna and Constantinople, where the heavy burden of work kept them employed full time.
11 The duties extracted by the Company on British imports and exports.
Levant. The consuls communicated with the ambassador and policies were
generally decided *in loco*, conferring great autonomy and personal influence
upon the individuals involved. However, the development of a British mer-
cantile fleet for trade with the Levant resulted in improvements in the speed
and manner of communication and made London the centre of British diplo-
matic activity. The creation of the Foreign Office in 1782 to coordinate the
diplomatic service, further consolidated this process. Meanwhile in the Le­
vant, direct British diplomatic representation was becoming increasingly ne­
cessary, both due to the attempts by Russia to obtain territory and influence,
and in competition with the well organised French diplomatic service. The
stipulation of the treaty of Paris in 1815, made the establishment of a govern­
ment run consular service unavoidable.

According to the terms of the treaty, the Ionian islands were placed, by
declaration of the *Sultan* of the Ottoman Empire, ‘under the sole and exclu­
sive protection of Great Britain,’\(^1\)\(^2\) giving that country direct control over the
area and granting the people of the septinsular archipelago the privilege of
being considered, by Ottoman law, as subjects of the British crown. The po­
sition acquired by the Ionians in 1815 imposed a specific duty for their pro­
tection on the British government, whilst their acquired rights antagonised
the other populations of the Ottoman Empire. The terms of the *capitulations*,
by which British subjects were not permitted to appeal to an Ottoman court
for judicial matters were, in the same year, extended to the people of the Io­
nian islands. The ensuing burden of work which fell upon the consuls made
it clear that a revision of the structure, locations and priorities of the service
was urgently needed. It became evident that the consular service could no
longer be a purely commercial organisation, since military and strategic con-

\(^1\) FO 78/96, f.174.
cerns required a specific diplomatic presence. In 1774, under the terms of the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji, Russia had for the first time obtained the right to open consulates in the territory of the Ottoman Empire and had since been using its diplomatic service for political purposes. Austria and France made similar use of their consular officers. A proper British representation was thus required to counteract and control the activities of the other powers at the Porte. It was decided that the Levant consular service should be controlled by the British government and be extended from the commercial ports to those places where the Ionians travelled or were resident. The hand-over of the company charter to the Government took place in May 1825, when George Canning, the foreign secretary, explained to the consuls that the Company had petitioned the King to be permitted to surrender its charter into the hands of His Majesty’s government, and that the King having accepted the petition, the charter had been surrendered. Although it was officially maintained that the Levant Company had asked to surrender its charter, the reality was that it had been requested to do so by the government, which wished to create a consular service controlled by the state. The company had no alternative but to accept the compulsory orders that preceded the winding-up of its organisation and, with the surrender of the charter, its property and funds, as well as its authority over the consuls, were transferred to the Crown.

The subject of the passage from the Levant Company to the Foreign Office had been controversial, both for the consuls and employees of the trading company, and in England, where the public strongly resented the

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15 Foreign Office to Levant Company, 29 Jan.1825; FO 78/137, f.42; Ibid., f.80; proceedings of the Levant Company; Foreign Office to Cartwright and Werry, 30 May 1825; FO 78/135, f.1.
16 30 May 1825; FO 78/135, f.1.
17 29 Jan.1825; FO 78/137, f.42.
concession of a state monopoly to a private company. The take over was welcomed in the press and by public opinion which had become increasingly concerned both with the conflict of interests between the private and official position of the consuls themselves, and with the closed nature of an agency from which the public required transparency. An article published in The Times on the 4th May 1825 addressed the subject with concern, expressing relief at the breaking down of the barriers of commerce in the Levant following the abolition of the Company. ‘The project has now been executed’ declared the article, ‘and happy be the result!’ And, anticipating an increase of trade in the Levant waters, the writer pointed to the beginning of a successful British policy.\(^{18}\) But the reality that followed the take-over by the government was, for the individuals involved in the process, a traumatic one. Concerns for economy clashed with the financial requirements of a modernised consular service, and with the political situation of the region, and whilst it was originally intended that revisions to the service would commence in 1826, the difficult circumstances created by the struggle for the independence of Greece which broke out in 1821, postponed its fulfilment until the end of the war. Meanwhile, a plan for the reorganisation of the Levantine consular service by the Foreign Office was drawn up, taking account of the suggestions of John Cartwright, the Company’s consul general at Constantinople. His frequent correspondence with the Foreign Secretary provided ideas for the change in structure between the old and new establishments.

Cartwright, who had been appointed consul general at Constantinople by the Levant Company in 1819,\(^{19}\) suggested that the reorganisation of the consular service should take into account the needs and potential of British commerce. Consulates should be ranked in accordance with the importance

\(^{18}\) The Times, 4 May 1825, 3A.

\(^{19}\) 25 Jan.1820, FO 78/96, f.13.
of British trade and navigation in the ports within their respective districts, and the consular districts themselves should be stretched to include not only the areas within the jurisdiction of the particular Turkish authority but, more organically, to include also those places close to the consulate where minor officials might be established. The need for a more extensive representation could be fulfilled by the appointment of a larger number of vice consuls and, to broaden its coverage, consular agents could be placed in the more remote islands.

Cartwright suggested that the consular service should be redefined and that the consular districts should be rationalised according to the new commercial and political situation of Great Britain in the Levant. His recommendations included the creation of several new consulates, the closure of some others and the modification of the boundaries of a number of consular districts. For political and commercial reasons he felt that a consul should be appointed at Bucharest. Although the Levant Company had established a consulate in the city in 1814, it had been closed within three years, leaving British subjects in the area under the protection of the Austrian consul. The political interests of both Austria and Russia had brought them to establish significant presences, and Cartwright commented that it would thus be wise to appoint a ‘quiet and prudent person with some knowledge of the place,’ taking care to avoid ‘any appearance of rivalry.’ A consular establishment ‘would be useful to the embassy in forwarding dispatches, as well as on other occasions.’ He explained how the recent appointment of a consul at Adrianople had already produced the benefits that had been expected, by broadening the market for British manufactured articles within European Turkey. Cartwright emphasised, however, that the town did not ‘appear likely ever to become so considerable a place of trade as to require the charge of a consular

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39 The consular district is the term used to indicate the area of jurisdiction of a consul. In the Aegean sea the consular districts were arranged into groups of islands according to the division made by the Ottoman authorities of their own jurisdiction.
establishment there [other] than that of the consul.’ In Albania, he recommended that a consulate general should be maintained, with jurisdiction over the whole area from Dulcigno to Messalonghi.\footnote{Cartwright to Canning on the reform of the Levant consular service, 10 Oct. 1825, FO 78/135, dispatch n.4, ff.36-58.}

The political events in Greece led Cartwright to recommend that a greater representation should be established in European Turkey. This could be achieved by adding to the consulate already existing at Patras a larger and more important one at Athens. Aleppo, once the greatest and most important British emporium in the Levant, had long ceased to be of any importance for British trade and thus, he suggested, the establishment there could be dispersed to new centres. He felt that the turbulent political situation in the Aegean, and the increased burden shouldered by the British consuls in the region, would justify the opening of one, or possibly two consulates in those islands. Cartwright suggested that the area covered by the consulate general of Constantinople might be extended to cover the area from the Turkish ports in the Black Sea, to those on the European and Asiatic coasts, including the islands of Tenedos, Limnos, and Imbros. The consular district of Smyrna would lose some of the Aegean islands which might be grouped under a new consulate at Rhodes, Cyprus or even Cordia; however, the islands of Lesvos, Scio, Samos, Patmos, Leros and Calymnos should remain within its jurisdiction. Although the eventual reorganisation of the consular districts would vary from that proposed by Cartwright, the adoption of a service designed to cater for the aims of British trade and diplomacy would provide great benefits for the gathering of information and the formulation of regional strategies.

Cartwright’s next concern was for the position of the *dragomen* in the consulates. Throughout the Levant Company administration and during the early stages of the Foreign Office establishment, the *dragomen* were fundamental to the operation of the consular service. These interpreters had ori-
originally been employed to help the merchants with their trade and the consuls in their dealings with the local authorities and population. Their position was to be dramatically affected by the Foreign Office reorganisation of the consular service, mainly as a result of the distrust that their Ottoman origins inspired in the later British officials. Under the Levant Company administration, the *dragomen* at Smyrna had participated in the searching of vessels at the Custom house, performing a task which had originally been the duty of the consul. The *dragomen* had the right to charge one Spanish dollar for each vessel examined and in lieu of a salary, they earned their living with this fee. The terms of the new establishment however permitted them to act uniquely as interpreters. The embassy at Constantinople employed five such officials, two senior and three juniors as well as four *giovani di lingua* at Smyrna the Levant Company appointed and paid four *dragomen* and three students; however, Cartwright observed that given the burden of work in that consulate, more would become necessary. In the other consulates *dragomen* were under the charge of the consul who appointed them and in place of a payment, they enjoyed the right to British protection. The Foreign Office desire to eliminate these Ottoman officials from its diplomatic service brought Cartwright to suggest the adoption of the system, in use at the French and Austrian consulates, by which students might be appointed as official interpreters on completion of their studies. This strategy was eventually adopted with limited success in around 1830, concluding the passage between the two administrations.

*Chancelliers* had only been appointed by the Levant Company at Constantinople and Smyrna, where they carried out a considerable amount of work. Cartwright pointed out the great importance attached by other nations to these figures and how most foreign consulates employed one. The

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22 The searching of vessels had been ordered by the *Pasha* of Smyrna after the outset of the war. Cartwright to F.O. on the reform of the Levant consular service; 25 Oct. 1825, Ibid., f.59.

23 *Giovani di lingua* were apprentice interpreters.
Foreign Office was, by contrast, so resolute in its determination to save money on the administration, that after 1825 it refused to pay the salary of the *chancellor* at Smyrna, making it very difficult for him to survive. Cartwright suggested that, given the high work load in that place, the *chancellor's* duties at Smyrna might be carried out by the vice consul. In this way he had sought to justify the continued appointment and payment of the vice consul who, together with the chaplain, surgeon and *jannissaries,* had been part of the Levant Company consular retinue in that town.

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On the 29 January 1825 the Company was officially relieved of its duty to maintain the consular establishment. In a communication forwarded to the offices of the Levant Company it was explained that all the officers holding commissions abroad had been transferred into His Majesty's service and that their claims would be considered as if they had been in that service from the beginning. The *consulages,* levied by the Company on imports and exports for the maintenance of the consular establishment, were abolished, and the document suggested that, having lost its original structure and source of revenue, the Company had no further reason to exist:

I cannot refrain of suggesting to you for your consideration, whether it may not be expedient to give up the remaining privileges of your charter, which being no longer connected with the protection of public interest, may be deemed by Parliament and the pub-

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24 The *jannissaries* were the guards of the *Porte.* As an honour to foreign embassies and consulates, some guards were stationed by the *Porte* at the most prestigious foreign diplomatic representations.

lic, to be useless and injurious restrictions upon trade.26

On the 11 February, in a meeting of Levant Company members, it was resolved that a letter should be written to Canning expressing the desire that the commerce of Great Britain in the area should be freed of the unnecessary restrictions that had been imposed upon it by the privileges accorded to the Company by its charter and that therefore the Company was ready to follow the government’s suggestion. If the motion for its winding up were to pass, the Company would ‘humbly petition’ the King to accept the entire surrender of the charters which it ‘could not have any desire to hold any longer’.27 It would be the responsibility of the legislature to decide the best way of conducting Levant trade according to the public interest. The Company declared its full confidence that, under the superintendence of His Majesty’s government, its trade would receive the same attention and protection that it had enjoyed under its own establishment. Between the lines it is possible to read the passive acceptance of a destiny imposed upon the Company by the government and which was to signify the end of its privileges as well as its duties. Whilst Canning’s suggestion that the charter should be renounced brought an end to the Company, at the same time it opened the possibility of Levant trade to all British subjects. Despite this, few people were likely to risk venturing into the Ottoman dominions without the support of an organisation equipped to deal with the local situation and the local authorities.

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In May 1825 the Levant Company officially dismissed its consuls with the following communication:

26 Canning to Levant Company, 29 Jan. 1825, FO 78/137, f.42.
27 Ibid., f.63.
Sir,

the proper moment having at length arrived for making the communication, we now advise you that our authority is, this day, transferred to the Crown.

His Majesty’s Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs notified to us, at an early stage, the wishes and intentions of the government upon this subject and explained to our entire satisfaction the motives which actuated their proceedings. The arrangement comprises not only the complete surrender of our charters but also an assurance that the trade will be relieved from the duties and consulages which we were compelled to levy for the proper support of the establishment. And that our officers in Turkey will be taken under the King’s service. You will therefore on receipt of this letter consider yourself released from your engagement with us and follow only the instructions...which you will receive from the Foreign department...We have directed the treasurer to hold the sum of £300 at your disposal for the purchase of a plate, which we desire you will accept as a testimonial of our perfect approbation of your official conduct through the whole of our connection.28

This communication was followed by letters recommending the various officials to the Foreign Office, but even though it stated that the officers in Turkey would be taken into the Levant service, in reality there was no guarantee that they would be kept under the same terms and office. In fact Cartwright received a communication regarding the abolition of the consulate at Aleppo only nine months later, when consul Barker was transferred to Alexandria in

28 Levant Company to Cartwright, 19 May 1825, FO 78/136, f.189. The text is the same as that sent to all Company consuls.
the place of Peter Lee. A second dispatch communicated the decision to revise the jurisdiction of the consular districts and to suspend payment of the 
*dragomen* as well as all but the strictest consular expenses. These letters provoked panic among the employees of the former Company who, concerned for their future employment, tried to influence the decisions of the Foreign Office by sending letters explaining their roles within the Company and the reasons why their positions should be maintained. Many of them, if excluded from the reorganised service, would have been left with no alternative source of income. Merchants at Smyrna, and the captains of ships which used the port, sought to maintain the *dragomen* who worked there by writing repeated letters to the Foreign Office, recollecting their invaluable services. Consul Werry also wrote a letter explaining that the position and duties of the *dragomen* within his consulate, following the surrender of the charters, had been suddenly and considerably weakened, and that the decision taken should be modified. He added later that the *dragomen* had written to him a petition for an increase of salary, the present being insufficient to feed their families. These letters were, however, to no avail. The jobs of the *dragomen* had often been passed from father to son with a trust existing between the Company and its employees which had formed an essential part of their relationship. The decision of the Foreign Office left many officials and their families without work, and others with no means of support. It affected their behaviour and loyalty and damaged the reputation of the British in the area. Many of the new consuls, appointed by the government, were hostile to the *dragomen*. Scattered throughout their correspondence with the Foreign Office are many allusions to the dishonesty of the *dragomen* employed at the consulates. The reports relate how these people, unpaid, but remunera-

29 Foreign Office to Cartwright, 26 Feb.1826, FO 78/137, f.1.
30 Ibid., 18 Apr.1826, f.3.
31 Werry to Foreign Office, 26 Jan.1826, FO 78/147, f.177.
ted through the benefit of British protection, extracted bribes from the local populations when releasing certificates. It is highly probable that this behaviour occurred as a result of the hardship imposed on them by the Foreign Office and that the loyalty that had formed the base of their relationship with the Levant Company had disappeared as a consequence of the approach taken by the government. Consul Werry expressed this view in one of his reports writing: 'The salaries of the dragomen are too low to keep them honest, they ought to be paid in proportion to their services otherwise the principal cause of misconduct is attributable to their employers.' Although the Foreign Office reorganisation tried to eliminate the dragomen from the Levant service, they remained an essential addition to the consulates until after the creation of a school for interpreters at Constantinople in 1830. The opening of the school was in itself a radical departure from the approach of the Levant Company which had relied on local personnel and on their knowledge of the area and the attitudes of its people. Since the reliance of the Levant Company on local personnel, not only as interpreters but also as consuls, had been one of the first points to come under attack when the service was taken over, the school had, in fact, the precise aim of replacing Ottoman subjects with British ones. The dragomen were criticised not only for their nationality but also because they were employed at the consulates and embassies of different countries at the same time. Whilst the Company had looked after them, there seems to have been no clash of interests or attitudes with the other embassies, but at the Foreign Office their position was regarded with suspicion.

The school was however not as successful as had been hoped. Initially just three young graduates from Oxford and Cambridge were sent to Constantinople to learn the language with the ultimate promise of a career at the

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33 Ibid.
Foreign Office. But the project almost collapsed when the students were used as interpreters, their mediation inevitably being distrusted by the ambassadors. Towards the end of the century, British interpreters were eventually put into action in the embassy, though not at the consulates. Indeed the traditional families of *dragomen* were still generally preferred to the British students, as their personal ability and their knowledge of the local customs formed such an important role in mediation with the Ottoman authorities. When in 1838 Great Britain negotiated the commercial convention with the Ottoman Empire breaking the monopoly right of the provincial pashas and widening the possibilities for trade in the Levant, the success was mostly due to the ability of the *dragomen* dealing with the Ottoman authorities. *Dragomen*, as well as foreign vice consuls and consular agents, continued to be disliked by the Foreign Office officials in London. However, their ability to deal with local situations, and their low cost, remained convincing arguments for their continued employment within the consular service until after the end of the Ionian protectorate.

Following the dissolution of the Company, trade continued to be carried out by the same merchants and in the same places as before. However, in the absence of the bureaucratic support of the Company, it became much more difficult for the consuls to know the merchants as well as before, and to represent their views to the *Porte*. Merchants continued to live in the factories, which remained as communities for a long time after the dissolution of the Company, but the consuls, relocated to their new stations, were deprived of the organisation and community around them, and becoming increasingly isolated, their lifestyles changed dramatically. Whilst the Company had provided them with accommodation and a consular retinue, and had supported a high standard of living, the Foreign Office, in choosing to enlarge its diplo-

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Footnote:

matic representation in the Levant, had opened additional consulates in places with no previous British settlement or factories. In these new locations, the consuls themselves had had to make tremendous personal efforts both to find accommodation and to build up a relationship with the local population. This was particularly true in the Aegean, where the Foreign Office opened a large number of consular offices soon after 1840.

Whilst the Foreign Office had considered taking over most of the Levant Company diplomats, it ignored the bureaucrats who had been appointed to help the consuls with their daily work. On 17 May 1825 Hanson, treasurer of the Levant Company at Smyrna, and one of the many who lost his job in this process, communicated the closure of the accounts and their handing over to the Foreign Office in a letter to the company secretary, Liddell. ‘In taking leave of the Royal Levant Company’, he wrote, ‘I must express my thanks for the honour they have done me in having appointed me to this office and with sincere wishes for the health and prosperity of each member.’ Clerks, chaplains, and accountants were left out of a system for which they had worked throughout their lives. The Levant Company had provided them with a salary and an accommodation, which rendered later settlements difficult since on surrender of the charters, its properties had also been given up to the state. One of the many left without a house and a salary was the chaplain at Constantinople. On receipt of the letter of dismissal he applied to the Foreign Office for permission to be able to reside at the Embassy, a measure that was temporarily accorded to him.

Accommodation in the Levant became a real problem under the Foreign Office administration, not only for those people who had lost their jobs, but also for those who were kept on. The Levant Company had been a lucrative

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55 This led to a widespread feeling of isolation amongst the consuls which is the subject of extensive correspondence exemplified by Dominic Ellis Colnaghi’s letters to his parents: Add. Mss. 59502, f.35,38,42; see also C.T. Newton, _Travels and Discoveries in the Levant_ (1865), p.69.
56 Hanson to Liddell, 17 May 1825, FO 78/136, f.403.
57 Chaplain to Foreign Office, FO 78/137, f.71.
business which charged a fee both to its own members and to all those who wanted to trade with the Levant, and it had been these charges that had allowed it to maintain a prestigious and efficient establishment. As we have seen, the government’s plan for the revised consular service reduced the number of personnel and abolished the duties on trade, thus whilst costs went down, there was no revenue. The people who came to suffer most as a result of this situation were the remaining and future employees of the Foreign Office, and especially the consuls. Whilst the Levant Company had supplied its officials with proper accommodation, the Foreign Office set aside no funds for the construction of consular buildings; consuls had to rent a house and pay for it out of their own salaries. On one occasion Consul Francis Werry asked the Foreign Office for permission to build a house, at his own expense, on a piece of land belonging to the government. Werry was the oldest of the Levant Company’s consuls to be taken on by the Foreign Office. When the diplomatic representation passed into the hands of the government in 1825, Werry, who had been appointed by the Levant Company in 1794, was eighty three. At Smyrna, where he had been serving for over thirty years, he lived in the consular residence provided for him by the Company. However, in consideration of his old age, he expressed his wish to retire and requested permission to build his own house adjacent to the consulate. Although he had already been granted permission by the Levant Company, out of respect for the new administration, Werry decided to also submit his request to the Foreign Office. No consent was given. Over a number of years reports make repeated mention of Francis Werry’s request, and of the government’s inability to take a decision, underlining the lack of flexibility of the Foreign Office towards its employees.

At Werry’s consulate, the Foreign Office reorganisation of the service

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38 Nathaniel Werry to Joseph Planta; 30 May 1825, Ibid., f.265.
39 Francis Werry to the Levant Company, 3 May 1825, FO 78/135, f.250.
had created chaos. Due to his old age, his son Nathaniel had been appointed vice consul in 1820 to help in the running of one of the busiest consulates in the Levant. In addition to the consul and vice-consul, two clerks, together with an under clerk, four dragomen and five giovani di lingua, a chaplain and a surgeon, as well a few jannissaries formed part of the consular retinue. The Foreign Office reduced the number of dragomen and giovani di lingua to two, and eliminated the clerks, passing their duties onto the vice consul. The surgeon was temporarily left at Smyrna with the intention of being removed and the chaplain was transferred to Constantinople. These changes created a sharp increase of work for the few people left in charge of the consulate, and since the Foreign Office had forbidden the consul to extract duties on trade, it remained unclear how their salaries should be paid. At the beginning of 1826 the situation regarding responsibilities and salaries had become so confused that vice consul Nathaniel Werry found it necessary to write the following dispatch to John Bindwell, the official appointed by the Foreign Office to handle the change of administration between the two agencies:

I wish simply to call to your attention that there is, independent of the vice consular duty, considerable work in the cancelleria...Two clerks both of whom receive a salary of £120 per annum, besides an under clerk, are constantly occupied, and they were paid out of the fees of office which were generally sufficient under the old tariff...By act of Parliament these fees will be much reduced...There is considerable unavoidable expense attending the representation of the post and that though economy is the order of the day, Mr. Canning would I am sure wish appearances to be maintained in the proper manner, not extravagantly but certainly not shabbily.  

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Nathaniel Werry to Bindwell, 9 Feb. 1826, FO 78/147, f.235a.
The lack of attention paid by the Foreign Office to reorganising the consular service in a manner appropriate to the existing local and political situation, caused many similar letters to be written. When Consul Francis Werry communicated his intention to retire he suggested as his replacement the appointment of his son Nathaniel, who had been working for five years as vice consul at Smyrna.\(^{41}\) Nathaniel subsequently wrote a letter to the Foreign Office suggesting that he might replace his father as consul at Smyrna not only in consideration of his father's old age, but because his long residence in that place and his friendship with the Ottoman representatives and the population had on many occasions helped British merchants to avoid difficulties.\(^{42}\) He also pointed out in the same letter how the British government, alone amongst the European powers with consulates at Smyrna, had failed to acknowledge the actions of their consul during the Greek war of Independence and in particular when Turkish forces had occupied the town.

All the other consuls of other European nations have received, for their conduct during the invasion of Smyrna by the Turks and the help offered in giving asylum to the Greeks, a reward from their governments; while the actions of the British consul, that helped to reconcile the authorities of the place with the Greek insurgents by avoiding a mass killing, has gone completely unobserved by the British authorities.\(^{43}\)

It was normal practice in the Levant to show gratitude for the intervention of consuls in matters beyond the scope of their duties. Both the Levant Company and foreign governments had always offered rewards for such excep-

\(^{41}\) Francis Werry to the Levant Company, 3 May 1825, FO 78/135, f.250.
\(^{42}\) Nathaniel Werry to Joseph Planta, 30 May 1825, Ibid., f.265.
\(^{43}\) Ibid.
tional services. The help of the British consuls and vice consuls in the ratification of the Sardinian commercial treaty of 1824 had been celebrated by the Sardinian chargé d'affaires with the distribution of presents to all those who had contributed to the process: Chaubert, Pisani, and Wood, respectively consular agents and consul for Great Britain in the Levant, had all received gifts of money and jewellery for their help. In contrast with the generous administration of the Levant Company, the Foreign Office had created a strictly impersonal and economically-aware organisation. The delicate balance created by the Levant Company during centuries of presence in the Levant was designed to respond to the character, life-style and attitudes of the region. The new administration, by revising all this, had lost that balance of familiarity and efficiency that had been the key to the Company's success. Appointment under the Levant Company had been by vote of the factors; but this was no longer the case under the Foreign Office administration. There seemed to be no fixed rule which might form a basis for the selection of new and existing consuls, and for some time this caused confusion among the Levantine diplomats. Nathaniel Werry continued, without success, to press for his appointment at Smyrna. When in 1829 his father was eventually invited to retire and granted a pension equal to his salary, his place was taken by William Brandt. Nathaniel Werry had to put up with his appointment as a vice consul in that town for several more years before being appointed consul at Aleppo in 1835, and eventually at Smyrna in 1852.

The Levant Company's system of selection, in the restricted circle of the factories, had allowed its members to recommend and support their friends and relatives for appointment in the consular service. Selection by vote of the factors meant that well known people had a very high chance of success.

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44 Cartwright to Liddell, 10 May 1824, FO 78/136, f.316.
45 Foreign Office to Cartwright, Apr.1829, FO 78/185, f.7.
46 Foreign Office to F. Werry; 21 Apr.1829, FO 78/177, f.143.
47 Foreign Office List, (1852).
For this reason, generation after generation of *dragomen* and consuls became diplomatic representatives for the Levant Company, and this resulted in successive members of consular families working in different parts of the same geographical area during the nineteenth century, amongst whom Wilkinson, Biliotti and Werry were recurring names in the Aegean. When in 1824, Consul Wood wrote to John Cartwright requesting the admission of his son as a *giovane di lingua* at the service of the Levant Company, the ambassador replied to Cartwright that he would be delighted to accept the proposal if the Company would agree to it. Cartwright had himself supported Mr. Wood's application with a letter:

> It appeared to his Excellency and to myself that the appointment of a fifth student would not be a departure from the established rule but that on the contrary it would perhaps be agreeable [to resume] the former practice that the number of students were equal to the one of the interpreters. On these considerations I beg leave to add my recommendation to that of the factory in favour of Mr. Wood's application.

Under the Foreign Office the situation was very different. It seems that appointments depended on the good connections of the applicant in Lon-

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[^1]: Isaac Morier went to England...In 1789 he formed a new house with Robert Wilkinson, who was admitted into the Levant Company on 17 October 1789, [he] was the progenitor of the Wilkinson, Wilkins and so many Smyrna families...Morier was the progenitor of a diplomatic and consular family...Isaac Morier was appointed consul general of the company at Constantinople. John Philip Morier entered the Smyrna House on the 2nd June, 1797. In 1799 he became a member of the Company. Robert Wilkinson joined James Morier as Wilkinson and Morier. This house liquidated on 30th September, 1806. In June 1809 Richard Wilkinson, who died in 1861, was admitted of [sic] the company. In June 1809 Richard and Frederick Wilkinson were taken in as partners...In 1794 Mr. Consul Anthony Heyes died. Francis Werry and Richard Wilkinson offered themselves as candidates and canvassed the London merchants. Another member of the Hayes family recommended Werry as consul.' They were both taken on by the Company, Francis Werry as consul at Smyrna, in 1794. Richard Wilkinson was appointed at Syros in 1835, transferred from elsewhere in the Levant. H. Clarke, *The History of the British Colony at Smyrna* (1860), pp.4-6.

[^2]: Cartwright to Liddell. 10 May 1824, FO 78/136, f.316.
don’t the locality. So whilst many of the consuls already resident in the Levant spent a great deal of time trying to defend or improve their positions, only a few of them succeeded. In this early period, the background of the consuls, if not of British Levantine origins, is difficult to trace. Since, although there is abundant material regarding the appointment of the later Foreign Office consuls, with information on some of those mentioned to be found in the Dictionary of National Biography and Who’s Who, little or no information is available on the administration’s early appointees. Indeed, the only recent work on the consular service, The Cinderella Service by D.C.M Platt, avoids the subject of appointments in the early years entirely and concentrates instead on the later years. It is, however, possible to surmise that the early appointments were mostly due to patronage, and to a desire to substitute British personnel for Levantine families. In the introduction to his work Platt wrote that ‘The history of the British consular service is the reminder of two related and unpleasant truths: first, that reform seldom follows from the spontaneous recognition of injustice by those in authority; and second that the avenue to change is by way of loud, persistent, and self interested complaints...’ D.C.M. Platt, The Cinderella Service, (1971), p.1. He indicated how the people most badly affected by the changes in administration between the old and new service were the consuls, whether as one time employees of the Levant Company or as new servants of the Foreign Office.

While the Levant Company had looked after and remunerated its personnel fairly, the Foreign Office’s main concern was for economy. The subject was of great controversy, especially in the light of the attitude in Britain towards foreign consular personnel. Newspaper articles, as well as parliamentary enquiries and debates in the House of Commons, repeatedly criticised the established habit of appointing local personnel, and demanded their replacement with British-born subjects, appointed in England. The appoint-
ment of Levantine consuls was not viewed favourably, and it was believed that only specifically trained subjects of British upbringing could serve their country properly. Under the Levant Company, the factors had chosen their representatives from amongst the local residents who formed part of the British mercantile establishment abroad. In this sense it could be argued that these consuls were genuinely British, even if brought up in the Levant and thus accustomed to the particular way of life of the area. Although this was seen by the Levant Company as an advantage, it constituted instead a real problem for the Foreign Office, which initially pushed for a professionalisation of the service and the use of personnel sent from Britain. Consuls should be chosen carefully and paid appropriately; only in this way could the lobby of the local merchant families be destroyed. For this reason, whilst local consuls tried to convince the Foreign Office of the necessity of their re-appointment, from 1825 a number of them were unsuccessful.

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The process of reorganisation of the consular service in the Aegean had barely started when the complicated issue of Greek independence disrupted the process. In April 1826 the British and Russian governments signed a protocol on mediation in the war; but, with the refusal of the Turks to accept the allied terms, diplomatic relations broke down, and the British ambassador left Constantinople in January 1827. The French joined the British and Russians in the following July, and an Anglo-French fleet tried to compel the evacuation of Egyptian forces from the Morea leading to a major naval engagement in the bay of Navarino in October 1827.

Yet whilst the political situation in the Levant provoked the departure

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51. _Parliamentary Debates_, 3rd series, cxli. 1011-33, (14 April 1856).
52. FO 78/160, f.10.
of the British ambassador and diplomats from Constantinople, in London the Board of Trade lost no time in trying to influence the future development of the consular service. Concerned that a representation that had been taken over principally for political reasons should develop a proper commercial side and organisation, the Board of Trade had written to the Foreign Office with the intention of taking care of the matter. During the period between the interruption and resumption of diplomatic relations, the Board of Trade made practical suggestions for a commercially orientated policy in the Levant. The significant impact that this body had on the new organisation of the consular service can be understood by reading one of the many letters written to the Foreign Office on that occasion:

...Not enough commerce is being carried out in the Levant and in Asiatic Turkey, (Caramania, Armenia, Syria, Diaberkir) countries that could be fully commercially exploited but that are at the moment only serviced by other nations...The Levant Company maintained some hold, a very imperfect and inadequate one, over one portion of this country. Since the dissolution of that company, even that position has been relinquished, Smyrna and Beirut are the only points which we retain. This state of things surely ought not to continue. The obvious, perhaps the only, wise method of attempting to open these regions to British adventure is by planting consuls in the principal towns which are numerous and well peopled. It is true that our Ambassador at Constantinople has been required to report in what places consuls ought now to be stationed, but...this inquiry is restricted to a very narrow district...there is no occasion to ask in what positions British consuls ought to reside...We ought to resolve that we shall, by judi-
cious degrees, but without delay, plant consuls in all the principal towns, as well in the interior as on the sea coast, we should at all events immediately place them where other European powers have placed their agents. It would be highly proper for this great country to give these consuls handsome salaries, supposing always that they are well chosen, a point indeed of extreme importance. The salaries of well qualified consuls would be the best bounties which this nation could give on the extension of commerce and manufactures. There can be no reasonable doubt that such appointments would invite and protect mercantile enterprise, and lead to the most happy results of every description. The question then that should be put to the English Ambassador is not, which are the places in which the consuls would be situated, but what are the most prompt and judicious means of introducing and establishing consuls in the principal towns such as Aleppo, Erzeroum, Damascus and Diaberkir. With respect to Damascus, it surely is time to carry into effect the recommendation, now six months old, of the Board of Trade, and to place Mr. Farren there as consul under the King’s commission...His appointment may lead to a considerable commercial intercourse with the interior of that part of the country. Too much time has already been lost. His appointment should be immediate, but it should only be the commencement of a more general system.\(^{59}\)

Diplomatic relations were resumed after two years when the Foreign Office wrote to Cartwright that the return of the ambassador at Constantinople offered the opportunity to bring into effect the final settlement of the consular

\(^{59}\) Board of Trade to Foreign Office, March 1828, FO 78/171, f.138.
establishment in the Levant. Amongst the proposed changes, a uniform was created for the consuls, vice consuls and consuls general in the Levant. Designed to be worn during official occasions, the uniform included a less formal version to be worn daily.

*The Coat of superfine Blue Cloth lined with the same.*
*Black Velvet Cuffs and Collar.*
*Gold Lace 3/16 of an Inch wide.*
*Buttons, the Royal Coat of Arms without Supporters.*

Sir Robert Gordon was appointed to succeed Stratford Canning as His Majesty’s Ambassador at Constantinople in April 1829. At that point there were still eight consuls and vice consuls in the Levant, the vice consulate of Patras and the consulate at Aleppo having been closed down in the previous year. From a commercial organisation located in uniquely commercial places, the service was extended over a period of years to cover areas of stra-

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54 Foreign Office to Consul General Cartwright, 21 Apr.1829, FO 78/177, f.7.
55 FO 78/185, f.31.
56 Foreign Office to Cartwright, 21 Apr.1829, FO 78/185 , ff.5-7.
57 Liddell’s observations on the consular service in the Levant, FO 78/177, f.104.

‘For many years the factory at Aleppo had been the most important of any in Turkey; but it gradually declined and about the year 1792 had become so insignificant, as to induce the Company to withdraw it altogether. When the French invaded Egypt in 1799, Mr. Spencer Smith, H.M. Minister at the Porte, sent Mr. Barker to Aleppo to watch their proceedings, with the name of consul and with a little salary, but no commercial advantage has derived from this appointment’. The post was closed in 1826 and Barker sent to Alexandria as consul general.
tegic and political interest. The appointment of new consuls was finally taken into consideration and, having received an application and letters in favour of William Brandt,⁵⁸ the Foreign Office decided on his appointment at Smyrna as a replacement for Francis Werry. The reason for Brandt’s choice, in place of Nathaniel Werry remains unclear, although it seems representative of the scant consideration given by the Foreign Office to the existing Levant Company consuls and symptomatic of the movement in Britain against the Levant Company, its monopoly on trade, and its members. As part of the general reorganisation, William Wilkinson was posted to Syros in 1829 whilst Richard Lee Green lost his place at Patras with the closure of that consulate. Green queried his dismissal observing that the desire to save a salary of £500 a year could not possibly be the reason for this decision. He suggested that if the scope of the revision was to save money, some more costly location should be chosen for closure; however, the Foreign Office had resolutely decided in favour of closing the consulate at Patras and Green had to settle for £500 in remuneration for the closure of his post.⁵⁹

The issue of appointments in the Levant remained an uncertain one until the end of the period examined by this work. The Foreign Office held back some of the local personnel and introduced newly-appointed officials, but the expertise acquired by the members of the Levant Company and their understanding of the area was second to none, and proved precious when dealing with the local situation and Ottoman authorities. Thus, after an initial period during which the number of Levantine consuls declined, the Foreign Office later returned to appointing them in the territory of the Ottoman Empire.

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⁵⁹ F.O. to Vice Consul R.L.Green, 23 Jan.1827, FO 78/177, f.10.
The Levant Company had been a commercial organisation and, as we have seen, its consuls had been merchants themselves. With the exception of the major consulates of Smyrna and Constantinople, the company had given all its diplomats licence to trade. Vice consuls and consular agents lived off their own business, subsidising their income with the consular work, and their consular salary was by no means meant to cover their living expenses. At the outset of the new administration, the Foreign Office allowed its consuls to continue their involvement with trade. However, with time, it tried to modify their position, and by 1830 an official inquiry had been set up to investigate the practicality of allowing consuls in the Levant to trade. There was a suspicion that profit in business could constitute the foremost interest of a merchant-consul and diminish his standing both in the eyes of his fellow subjects and merchants and in those of the local population and authorities. The capitulations with the Ottoman Empire stated that British subjects could not appeal to Ottoman law, nor be defended by it, unless in case of a dispute with an Ottoman subject. Judicial cases were referred to Malta and judged by British officials. This practice was considered a privilege in the territory of the Ottoman Empire avoiding, for the most part, any risk to British subjects of condemnation by Ottoman law. The Foreign Office saw a conflict of interests in allowing the consuls to trade since this would bring them into contact with the subjects of the Ottoman Empire and, by the very nature of their business, expose them to the loss of their immunity from Ottoman laws. Moreover, merchants were worried that consuls would take advantage of their position to favour their own business, whilst damaging that of other merchants. So in 1830 questionnaires were sent to the consuls and enquiries made to understand the relevant issues in an attempt to demonstrate to them that their position would be more influential and authoritative if they limited themselves so-
ley to the political and administrative representation of their country. It was argued that non-trading consuls could be more disinterested and independent in their judgment towards other merchants and local authorities and thus be held in greater respect. Nevertheless, the continuation of this apparent conflict of interest was not seen in an entirely negative light, as it had the great advantage from the government’s view point, of allowing the consular service to be maintained without incurring increased costs. A compromise was thus reached for the consular agents who were permitted to continue trading. Consular agents were mostly officials chosen from merchants of foreign origin and were appointed in places where there was not enough work to justify the appointment of a consul, but where the presence of a British representative was nevertheless thought to be necessary. They were not paid, but as a reward for their work they received the benefit of British protection. They lived on the income from their own trade and were protected from an excessive burden of consular work. Essentially their duty was to communicate to the consul any matter with which he should be concerned. In the period between 1825 and 1860, consular agents were extensively used in the Aegean by the Foreign Office. Their low cost combined favourably with the necessity of appointing a large number of officials to look after the interests of the Ionians.

At home this was still seen as a problem as late as 1855, when Parliamentary debates questioned the nature of appointments in the Levant. The vice consuls and consular agents appointed in large numbers by the Foreign

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See FO 83/92; J. Green, On the Nature and Character of the Consular Service (1848), pp. 27-30; R. Finn, British Consuls Abroad (1846), p. 5. On this subject, Finn comments: ‘The public are better served by a consul sent out by Government, and not in trade, than a mercantile consul. The former is invariably treated with greater respect and courtesy by the local authorities, and his influence goes with them to a greater extent than that of the merchant consul...the former is enabled to devote the whole of his time and attention to his public duties, while the latter, who has to mind his own business, can only be of secondary consideration.’ Green reinforces this view: ‘however honourable he may be in reality, there will always be a suspicion that profit in business is his first object, which notion, coupled with the jealous caution that is observable in the relations between merchants abroad, would keep his countrymen from referring to him in case of difficulty.’

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Office to avoid the expense of sending personnel from England to areas where there was little work were the subjects of particular scrutiny. The increasing burden of work which the Ionian protectorate had imposed on the British consuls had led to the use of vice consuls and consular agents to look after the Ionians in the places where they travelled or resided throughout the Aegean. The presence of numerous pseudo-British agents in the Levant became the subject of newspaper articles, discussions in the House of Commons, and ultimately led to parliamentary enquiries. *The Times* correspondent at Constantinople, criticising the British consular establishment in the area, compared it unfavourably to that of France, referring to the poor character of some of the British officials. The article criticised the concentration of power in the hands of the consuls and suggested a division of competence between their various roles. Its author explained how other European powers had already dealt successfully with such a division by separating the commercial from the political and judicial functions of their consuls. France selected vice consuls unconnected with diplomatic matters from amongst the 'mercantile class' to look after the commercial establishment and its consuls were admitted to the service only after a long period of practical training. A characteristic of the French consular service was the uniformity of the training given to its personnel which enabled its consuls to be shifted to varying locations. French consuls were known never to serve in the same place for more than three years, and *The Times* made strong criticism of the immobility of their British counterparts. Consuls in the Levant came under particular attack for the fact that they tended to remain in the same area for years on end, since it was believed that this led to a corruption of their Britishness in favour of Levantine habits. This criticism which had originally been directed at the Levantine families of consuls was even applied to those people that had served in the Levant for more than three years. But although *The Times*
seemed keen that consuls should be moved around, the Foreign Office was infamous for its lack of interest in the careers of its consuls, who could be appointed to one place and remain there for their entire working life if no urgent political or other matter led to a change in their appointment. There are many examples of consular requests to leave the Aegean, or to change their location within it, and an almost equivalent numbers of refusals. It took a great deal of insistence and copious private correspondence with influential friends, for Dominic Ellis Colnaghi, who had been appointed at Messalonghi in 1859, to leave Greece and to be stationed in a location more suitable to his hopes, although it was less difficult for Charles Thomas Newton to be posted to Rome when the British Museum needed an expert to examine a collection of vases there for a possible acquisition. Consul Niven Kerr was instead fortunate when he sought to leave the Aegean in 1852 since his request coincided with that of another consul in northern Europe for leave to transfer to a more southern location. Indeed although newspaper articles, parliamentary debates and enquiries, discussed the possible rotation of consuls, the situation did not change before 1860. As far as the Levant was concerned, and the Aegean in particular, it was felt that consuls would be better kept in one location since it took a great deal of time and effort to understand the local situation and to gain the respect of the local authorities. Nonetheless, for a period, consuls were discussed and derided in the press as incompetent, untrained, and corrupt. *The Times* article, which provoked a reaction in Parliament, was discussed in a debate on the nature of the consular establishment in the Levant. Strong objections were registered to the appointment of foreigners, 159 of whom were employed as vice consuls and consular agents; their appointment was perceived as questionable and they were held in low esteem. The discussions were dominated by the unresolved issue of whether consuls should be allowed to trade, and whether their low salaries led them to
behave dishonestly and to abuse their position for their personal business interests. Letters attesting to the unreliability of the Levant consuls were read out in Parliament although it was underlined that no proof could be given as to the reliability of the letters themselves. A typically Levantine gesture was said to be the taking of revenge by accusing people who had refused to be party to bribery, and it was therefore believed that the consuls might be subject to such false accusations. The choice of servants was also a subject of controversy. If British, their salaries had to be higher than a normal consul could ever afford, if Levantine, they often took the opportunity to lighten the consul’s house of its belongings. Indeed Consul Wood had pointed out more than once how it had been necessary for him to replace his table service every five years as a consequence of this particular problem, but that no better personnel could be found elsewhere.

A letter from a ‘most intelligent Mussulman [sic]’ accusing consuls of misbehaviour and corruption was read and it was decided that the ‘sweeping charges’ contained in the document were supported by no fact whatsoever. Speculation about the corruption of consuls was, however, a matter of daily discussion, and even Platt in his work seems to have succumbed to the temptation to embrace such a belief. However, there is no evidence to support such a hypothesis in the documentation, although there were a number of desperate attempts by Ionians to press charges against apparently innocent consuls. The subject of the Levantine families of consuls continued to be a source of much debate for the press and in Parliament, and it remained one of the great unresolved points of the service prior to 1860. A debate in Parliament in 1856 pointed once again to the number of foreign personnel, and expressed concern at their reliability. Foreign vice consuls were believed to

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61 *Parliamentary Debates. 3rd series, cxxviii. 215 (7 May 1855).*
63 *Parliamentary Debates. 3rd series, cxxviii. 215 (7 May 1855).*
keep their private interests at the top of their priorities, using their official position to their own advantage. The possibility of attaching young students as trainees to the consulates was raised during the course of the debate, and it was pointed out that this could be an efficient method of obtaining well-trained consuls of British upbringing. However, this provoked objections from those who had bitterly criticised the original unsuccessful scheme of replacing the *dragomen* with British interpreters. Doubts were raised, as to the sense in wasting the talent of promising students in a career that took them nowhere, and it was felt that the same mistake should not be made in the case of the trainee consuls.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates. 3rd Series, cxli. 1021, 1029 (14 April 1856).}

In 1858 *The Times*, underlining its desire for the total replacement of the Levantines wrote:

> The most frequent and most obnoxious way of recruiting British consuls in the Levant is from a set of half English, half Levantine families, who may be said to have acquired a kind of hereditary right to consulship. They are supposed to be Englishmen, although they have perhaps never been beyond the place where they were born...They are connected by interest and almost always by family ties with the country where they ought to represent English interests alone...They are, in many instances, very respectable men but they have too many local interests not to be suspected of a bias in favour of them; they remain for a long number of years in the same place and get...identified with it, losing their character as Englishmen. If we want to reform this and raise the whole body, infusion of fresh English blood and English ideas is required.\footnote{The Times, 22 May, 1858.}
The article went on to suggest that a first step towards the elimination of the Levantine families should be the joining of the consular and diplomatic service and the consequent modernisation of the two branches. If the separation between the consular and diplomatic service could be eliminated, then many diplomats would enter the service and, following a period of training at the embassy, they could be then transferred to the consulates.

Problems of economy were attached to any scheme for substituting foreign merchants with British personnel. Neither the Foreign Office nor the government had any particular desire to increase the cost of the Levant consular representation which was already criticised as one of the most expensive branches of the service. The principal argument in favour of foreign vice consuls and consular agents was in fact their low or negligible cost, in the context of a badly remunerated profession.

Salaries undoubtedly represented a problem for the Levantine consuls up until 1860, as they were never paid enough to afford an appropriate lifestyle, unless they had some alternative form of income, and the official and private correspondence of the consuls, is full of pleas for increased salaries. The initial inexperience of the Foreign Office, and the general confusion at the outset surrounding the role and duties of the consuls, prevented a proper reconsideration of pay. The resulting imbalance of the consular salaries was never really resolved. Twenty years after the take-over of the service, vice consul Francis Werry wrote from Mitilene in a dispatch dated 3 October 1844:

Francis H. S. Werry was presumably from the same family of Werrys, as his precursors at Smyrna. He was appointed vice consul at Mitilene in 1842 and remained in that place for ten years. The Foreign Office List, 1865, p.160, writes of him: 'Accompanied the late Mr Consul Werry to Aleppo, in Syria, in 1835, and was employed in affording assistance to the Euphrates expeditions under colonel Chesney and captain Lynch. Was acting consul at Aleppo from 1837 to 1841 during the Syrian campaign between Turkish and Egyptian armies. Was appointed vice consul at Mitilene in 1842; and vice consul at Bengazi in 1852; and was transferred to Tunis on December 2, 1856. Was acting consul general from March to October 1859; and from April until October 1861.
It would be indeed a godsend if you could affix £50 a year for vice-consular expenses. I may say you would be doing a charity, do not, I beg you, imagine I am exigent [sic], but I think that the decorum of the nation ought to be maintained in every place."

At Smyrna, in the same year, the financial situation of the consul had become so embarrassing, that the British community there decided to forward a petition to the Foreign Office on his behalf:

During the last few years, the expenses of living here have increased to more than double...your memorialists consider the salary of Her Majesty’s Consul quite inadequate to his position. Your memorialists are satisfied that by no system of economy that can be practised, can he keep up that status required of him, and that this inability to do so, stands in strong relief when compared with the means accorded to the Consuls General of other powers here by their respective Governments. That in a country constituted as Turkey where a high rank inevitably entails a certain expenditure, the position of our Consul must be painfully embarrassing to him. Your memorialists abstain from entering on the importance of a consul who has the charge of more than 5000 British subjects in the greatest emporium of the Levant."

Until 1850, when the consulate of Rhodes was created, all the Aegean islands were dependent on Smyrna, the port with which the majority of British merchants traded. Under the Levant Company, the consular representation in

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F.O.78/571, f.122.  
"Petition to Increase the salary of Her Majesty’s Consul at Smyrna by English Citizens’, F.O.195/610, ff.784-7.
the city had been prestigious, and this rich and well kept establishment had been a credit to the British community. It was thus humiliating for the merchants that the British consulate should be reduced to such a state. But this case was by no means isolated since concern for economy imposed by the government on the consular department extended to all aspects of the administration. And although the reforms had relieved the merchants of the burden of paying fees for the benefit of trading as a private organisation in the Levant, the consular service had been affected by the removal of this revenue. Accustomed to a high standard of consular representation, the merchants thus viewed the changes in administration with shame and disappointment. The standard of living of the British consuls had declined sharply under the Foreign Office, and their standing in the eyes of their foreign colleagues and of the community they represented also seemed diminished.

Wages were never sufficient to pay for servants, to bring up a family, or to rent a decent house (prior to 1850, virtually no consul in the Aegean received any housing allowance for the rent of consular buildings). The appointment of unpaid foreign personnel was both convenient, and at the same time it provided a pretext for maintaining consular salaries at the lowest conceivable level for the longest possible duration. Thus, whilst the Levant Company had provided its officials with a level of pay adequate to their standing in a foreign country, the vice-consuls and consuls appointed after 1825 had to manage in the Levant on salaries which never really rose above that strictly necessary for survival.

Under the Foreign Office, the consuls had become individuals sent to places with no commercial organisation, to live on their own. No houses were built for them by the Foreign Office, nor were there special quarters to make them feel more at home. Accommodation remained such a problem that as late as 1843 consul Werry, who had been posted to Mtilene with neither a
fixed place of residence, nor an allowance for rent, wrote to the Foreign Office begging for money to pay for accommodation.

I have not been able to find a house in town and I fear that in the winter I shall find great difficulty in going backwards and forwards. Do you think that if a memorial was drawn up to His Lordship I might be able to obtain a grant from Government for aid to build a house, otherwise I fear that I shall not be able to get a decent dwelling room of the smallest dimensions. ⁶⁰

Werry's case was not unique and the Foreign Office papers reveal that a number of petitions were made by consuls to the Foreign Secretary for houses or for increased salaries. The meanness of their pay was in fact partially responsible for the difficulties the consuls encountered in seeking decent accommodation in locations where the standard of living was so different from that at home, and where a good house was essential for the reputation of the consulate. The position of the consuls at this early stage was such that it required a great deal of effort on their behalf to obtain anything from the Foreign Office. Throughout the period examined by this work, the Foreign Office never ceased to inflict the most miserable living conditions on its officials in the Levant. Salaries were a real problem and remained so until the end of the century. Debates in Parliament had discussed the subject without achieving any apparent practical results in favour of the consuls; however, enquiries set up to bring about improvements in the regulation of the service approached the subject more extensively. It was evident that the balance established on the eve of the take over in 1825 was mistaken and required revision. A housing allowance was only rarely included in the consular salaries, and the consuls were usually left to pay the cost of their journeys from home

⁶⁰ Werry to Bindwell, 8 July 1843, F.O.78/532, f. 289.
to their place of appointment. No allowance was made for the consuls’ families nor for their widows until later in the century, and although the inadequacy of the consular salaries was painfully evident, little effort was ever effectively made toward their improvement. The select committee appointed in 1835 to revise the organisation of the consular establishment analysed the subject to some extent but although it indicated that salaries were insufficient for the consuls to discharge the duties requested of them and although in many cases the consuls who had submitted evidence had considered resigning as a consequence of their poor remuneration, little was done to change the situation.\footnote{Report from the Select Committee on Consular Establishment, Parliamentary Papers, 1835, vi. 24, 54-5.} It took twenty years for the subject to be discussed again in Parliament when in 1855 inequitable remuneration was again seen as a weakness of the service. In some areas consuls with heavy duties survived on meagre incomes whilst others with light duties had high salaries.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, cxxxviii. 212 (7 May 1855).} But whether on high or low salaries, their pay was risible in comparison with that of the rest of the diplomatic service; indeed whilst a Minister and a Secretary of Legation at Naples received £4,500 a year, the consul and vice consul in the same city shared just £500 between them. The low level of consular salaries was still justified in some eyes by their being permitted to trade, a dispensation which was expected to allow them to earn more money. But in many cases officials did not or could not avail themselves of such an advantage, either because their consular work kept them employed full time, or because they did not feel conversant with trade. At the same time, consuls who did trade were becoming an embarrassment to the service with their dual profession attracting increasing criticism and it was considered preferable that they should be paid higher salaries and required to be unconnected with mercantile affairs. Indeed the debate over whether or not consuls should be permitted to trade was mirrored by the discussion of consular salaries, with criticism
of the high level of consular pay being made by the supporters of their right
to trade. Thus, if the reality was that the salaries of British consuls appeared
to be painfully inadequate, critics at home argued instead that they were too
high. In fact, the Levant service became the focus of particular criticism in
1855 when it was pointed out that the three consuls general whose salaries
ranged from £800 to £1,500, and the forty-one other consuls whose salaries
totalled £21,500, compared poorly with other more economical branches of
the service. In France for example, the cost of consular salaries came to
£5,500, in the United States they totalled £5,000. Indeed critics argued that
the disproportionate cost of the Levantine service seemed evident when the
level of trade with Turkey was compared to that with France or the United
States. Annual exports to Turkey totalling £2,000,000 contrasted with
£2,500,000 to France and £23,000,000 to the United States. However, the
high number of consuls in the Levant could be justified by the Ionian protec­
torate, and by the sensitive political and strategic situation in the area. And
whilst some critics argued that certain personnel in the Levant were overpaid
in comparison with the revenue from trade in the area, the reality was that
even the better paid consuls-general were paid less than their counterparts in
other European consular services in the Levant. Moreover, even though the
number of consuls was large, their salaries were relatively small, making the
Levant Service comparatively good value. Despite this, the Government
came under pressure in the House of Commons to reduce the consular salar­
ies to the lowest possible amount.73

The following year the subject was again discussed in the Commons.
This time consular fees came under attack as did the merchant consuls who, it
was felt, should be replaced by ‘Men of high principle and independent char­
acter.’74 It was suggested that fees which affected travelling and shipping in-

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71 Ibid., 213, 214, 217.
72 Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, cxli. 1015 (14 April, 1856).
terests should be abolished and replaced with higher salaries.\textsuperscript{75} The diplomatic establishment at Constantinople was criticised as too expensive, and it was pointed out that cuts could be made elsewhere in the Levant where the annual cost of the service, salaries plus incidentals, had risen to £40,000. Whilst ambassadorial salaries were not subject to superannuation, five per cent was deducted from those of the consuls, reducing their already meagre salaries yet further. It was pointed out that a consul serving his country with a salary of £500 lost almost £650 over the course of his twenty five year career after which time he might expect an annual allowance of just £250. With such little compensation for their exile, the Foreign Office could not be expected to find ‘properly qualified persons to serve the country in such positions.’ As far as the Aegean was concerned, the number of consular personnel in such a small area and the limited quantity of work which they appeared to perform was subject to criticism; however, the salaries of most of the consuls in the Levant were small, and the balance of pay was eventually judged to be fair.\textsuperscript{76}

Following a wave of parliamentary debates and newspaper articles, a committee was appointed for the regulation of the consular service in 1857. This time the subject of salaries was examined in some depth and it was found that they were still wanting and the cause of universal complaint amongst the consuls in the Levant. To do justice to the consuls, it was pointed out that prices had in fact risen considerably in Turkey over the previous years, making the inadequacy of the consular pay even more evident.\textsuperscript{77}

Amongst the committee’s conclusions, its recognition of the low level of consular salaries had given rise to further polemic as to how a possible increase might be financed. An innovative approach to the resolution of this problem was aired in 1859 when a possible revision of the consular fees was

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\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 1015-16.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 1015-17, 1024, 1027.
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discussed with the aim of rationalising the financing of the service. James Murray, the official responsible for the investigation, described it in a letter to the Earl of Malmesbury, in which he considered the possibility that consular fees, rather than going directly to subsidise the consular salary or that of the clerks, should instead be levied on the public account, whilst consular salaries should be increased. Previously, consuls would retain fees as a subsidy for their salaries. However, although some consulates received a large amount of fees, many raised little, and this meant that whilst salaries remained uniformly low, some officials were considerably better off, benefiting from fees in excess of a normal salary. Murray’s plan envisaged a fairer redistribution of the fees from a central governmental fund to finance higher and more equal remuneration for all the consuls. Fees could thus be considered as a payment from the public to the Exchequer towards the support of the consular establishment. Murray’s report in which he also observed that fees should be structured with payment related both to category and country, was a first attempt at reorganising the consular fees in lieu of better salaries for the consuls. He categorised fees into three classes: notarial, shipping and state duties, and suggested that different rules should be applied to each. For the notarial duties, he suggested keeping fees at the same level as those of other professionals, fixing the price in accordance with local customs. As far as shipping fees were concerned, he suggested that consuls should perform their duties free of charge with fees being levied on the tonnage of vessels arriving at and departing from British ports. He emphasised the great difficulties that Ionian shipmasters and sailors created for British consuls and, noting that there was no ground for exempting them from payments of any sort towards the support of the consular establishment, stated that tonnage duties on Ionian and colonial vessels should be levied by the consul. State services, covering the duties rendered to the country should instead be paid by the Exchequer
using public funds. Murray observed that as far as notarial services were concerned, there were very few cases in which British law stated that they could only be performed by the consuls, and as long as it ‘was considered by the public that the fees were the prerequisite of the consul, there always seemed to be an objection to resort to him for such assistance.’ Thus British subjects ended up employing foreign notaries and agents at a much greater expense than the employment of a consul.\[78\]

Murray’s recommendations were carried out, and the following year the Treasury received fees of £44,000, but the sum declined sharply the year after when the Treasury received only £ 9,000 because officials had been given permission to retain part of the fees.\[79\] Thus the system seems to have largely reverted to its previous state, and the issue of whether salaries should be higher, or whether fees should be retained by the consuls, remained another of the great unresolved points of the consular service until much later in the century.

The consuls’ inadequate incomes were detrimental not only to the performance of their public duties, but also to their morale, making the Levantine consuls even more sharply aware of their isolation. This was particularly true of the later consuls, who lacked the personal or business contacts of their predecessors. Indeed, whilst the Levant Company had stationed consuls in areas where merchants resided and where they were therefore easily able to obtain goods from England, the Foreign Office, by widening its representation, had scattered its consuls throughout the Aegean, mostly in places where such comforts were hard to find.

In fact, although large numbers of vice consuls and consular agents were established in the territory of the Ottoman Empire after 1825, the effective number of consuls in the Levant was increased by only a few individ-

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\[78\] Report to Lord Malmesbury on Mr Murray’s plan for the revision of the consular fees, Parliamentary Papers, 1859, xv.

\[79\] Parliamentary Debates, 3rd series, clxiv. 1076-7 (18 July 1861).
Consuls were instead appointed, in large numbers, in the territory classically known as Greece, and it appears that the small number of officials initially appointed in the Ottoman territory might have been influenced by the growing opinion within British government circles that the crumbling Empire was destined to a certain death and that energies and resources should be concentrated on the newly emerging Greek state. Indeed, this view was so prevalent in Britain that in 1830 Sir Richard Gordon, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, found that his government’s policy towards the Porte made his posi-
tion very difficult, and that other powers were able to take advantage of the situation. In a dispatch, he urged the government to review its approach, warning that the opening of a large number of consulates in Greece was seen at Constantinople as a declaration of declining interest in the Porte.\(^{80}\)

The rapid change of policy and the increasing number of consulates opened in the territory of the Ottoman Empire over the next few years, was probably attributable to the insistence of Gordon and his successors at Constantinople. This growth should additionally be connected with the increasing interest of European governments in collecting antiquities for their newly formed national museums. The fact that one of the very first laws promoted by the new Greek government prohibited the export of antiquities from that country\(^{81}\), meant that it was through the Ottoman authorities and in the territories still recognised as the Ottoman Empire that the Europeans had to obtain their antiquities. When Greece gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1831, the Aegean islands were kept as part of the territory of the Porte. The Aegean area was therefore the focus of European effort so far as the retrieval and export of antiquities were concerned, and in later years the organisation of the consular service in the region became intimately linked with these activities.\(^{82}\)

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Some aspects of the Foreign Office administration of the consular service were innovative and had not been developed under the Levant Company. One of these was the strengthening of the judicial function of consuls. In the territory of the Ottoman Empire the *capitulations* had originally been stipu-

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\(^{80}\) Sir Richard Gordon to Foreign Office, confidential, 5 Jan. 1830, FO 78/189, f.5.

\(^{81}\) Both to protect the national treasure and as a response to popular outrage created in the country by the permission accorded by the Ottoman authorities to Lord Elgin in 1816 for the removal of the marbles of the Parthenon.

\(^{82}\) This will be the subject of chapter four.
lated to protect the interests of merchants and travellers in the Levant who became the responsibility of their own consul. The consul was responsible for his subjects not only nominally, but also judicially when it came to legal cases. When a British merchant was involved in a legal dispute, it could be determined by his consul. It appears that before 1815, when Great Britain gained the protectorate of the Ionian Islands, few such cases had been dealt with by the consuls. This was partly attributable to the nature of the Levantine British establishment. The merchants were all known to the other merchants, and disputes seldom arose between them. When they did, they generally tended to be of a civil or commercial nature, and no criminal cases appear to have arisen before 1815. The nature of British Levantine society meant that the merchants had little contact with Ottoman subjects and tended to remain within their factories with their fellow merchants. After 1815, the situation changed dramatically.

The terms of the British protectorate granted the Ionian people freedom from the Ottoman jurisdiction and the right to representation by a British consular court within the territory of the Ottoman Empire. In real terms this meant great freedom for the Ionians within the territory of the empire and exemption from Ottoman taxation. It also placed the significant burden of controlling the Ionians on the British.\textsuperscript{83}

A Lord High Commissioner was appointed to coordinate Anglo-Ionian relations and a commission organised to create a constitution for the independent self-government of the new state. Ionian ports and shipping were to be subject to the maritime and consular regulations of the British government.\textsuperscript{84} Sir Thomas Maitland, first High Commissioner, aimed to transform the islands into a model colony, heavily dependent on Great Britain for its own

\textsuperscript{83} For a more detailed account of the situation of the Ionians, see Chapter 2, pp.122-132.
\textsuperscript{84} B. Jelavich, \textit{History}, p.70.
He was determined to prevent the Ionian aristocracy from strengthening its ties with other European countries, and made it a capital offence for any Ionian to serve as a consular official for any foreign government within the local islands. The Ionian people, accustomed to centuries of foreign dominion, appear to have welcomed the changes introduced by the new administration.

The privileges granted to the Ionians under the terms of the protectorate created difficulties elsewhere in the empire. The populations of those regions still subject to Ottoman power, were compelled to accept and obey the rule of regional administrators whose corruption imposed intolerable conditions on them. Throughout the Aegean, the deterioration of living standards and the arbitrary increase of taxes were a constant reminder for its inhabitants of the privileges enjoyed by the subjects of the Septinsular Republic.

The Ionians soon learnt to exploit the benefits of the British protectorate and to use their position for their own personal advantage. They were infamous throughout the Aegean for their dishonesty and this became immediately evident to the consuls from the disproportionate amount of work, mostly judicial and much of it related to criminal cases, that these people imposed on them. Turkish law stated that disputes between subjects of other countries should fall under the direct supervision of their consuls, placing the Ionians directly under the supervision of British law, and outside Turkish jurisdiction. This was doubly inconvenient since it both increased the burden on the British consuls and encouraged the Ionians to commit crimes which would escape Ottoman punishment. The growing quantity of judicial work performed by the consuls at this stage, was a further reason for the take over of the consular service by the state, since the limited number of consuls main-

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tained by the Levant Company was increasingly unable to cope. This also became painfully evident to the government, which soon had to deal with the inexperience of its untrained consuls in resolving criminal disputes. Until later in the century, consuls received no training and were unprepared to deal with judicial matters, and in the absence of specific regulations, they thus had to deal with these cases according to their own sense of justice. It was only in 1835, ten years after the take-over of the consular service by the state, that a ‘Committee for the better regulation of the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the consuls’ was appointed by the House of Commons to deal with this increasing need.

The committee opened its enquiries by calling witnesses to be questioned on the state of judicial affairs in the Levant. Amongst the main testimonies, consuls were requested to give evidence, and their reports regarding possible improvements on the legal system in the Levant were taken into careful consideration. Extracts of correspondence with the merchants and residents in the Levant were also examined. James Brandt, a resident at Trebizond who had been asked to comment on the state of the judicial functions of British consuls in the Levant, wrote that ‘as far as regards British born or protected subjects residing in the Levant...it is not likely that any criminal cases would occur, except among British sailors, or Maltese and Ionians.’

He added that extreme cases were likely to be created by Ionian or Maltese subjects, and that popular excitement might render it impossible to await instructions from the ambassador. In such instances, he suggested that a set of written instructions should be prepared for the consuls. He reported that some towns in Turkey had become ‘the refuge of men driven from their own country by their crimes or misconduct’, and recommended that in these circumstances the consul should be given the power to enquire into the character of persons coming into the Levant ‘and to order them away if they can-

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Parliamentary Papers. 1835, vi. 345.
not satisfy him as to their respectability.’ Brandt told the committee that a full set of instructions for judicial cases was essential to the consuls and that, considering the peculiar nature of society in the Levant, it was advisable that the persons employed in the service there should be sufficiently acquainted with it.

I can only hope that regulations will be framed, which, while they direct the consul in his duty, will relieve him from the heavy responsibility to which he is at present subject, without, in many cases, any other guide than his own unaided judgment."^8

This opinion was supported by William Brandt, the consul at Smyrna. In a dispatch he explained that although the consuls in Turkey, who had the right to administer justice and maintain order among the British subjects in their jurisdiction, covered the functions of both civil and criminal officers, their scope in the latter case was limited. ‘They decide in the first instance in civil cases, and confine themselves in criminal matters to the arrest of the delinquent and to the collection of the evidence in proof of his guilt.’ Since the Levant Company had provided its consuls with a set of instructions that was mainly commercial, in comparison with the consuls of other countries British consuls had no specific instructions for judicial cases, leaving them ‘hardly any rules to guide them than what natural equity suggested.’^9

Even civil cases presented difficulties and consuls invested with judicial power had become accustomed to call on two, sometimes four assessors, according to the importance of the case for trial. These assessors would assist the consul at the sittings and give their opinion on the trial. If both litigants were British the assessors were chosen amongst British merchants, whilst

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^8 Ibid.
^9 Ibid., 346.
they were drawn from the citizens of other countries when the trials concerned persons of different nationalities. Consul Brandt explained how, in cases tried by the consular court at Smyrna, testimonies were taken in writing, although in most instances Ionian litigants were generally adverse to taking an oath as to the truth of their statements, and it was often the case that witnesses used religious scruples ‘as a pretext to avoid the guilt of taking a false oath, but they are sometimes sincere; and, as it is very difficult for the consul properly to appreciate the motives of those who refuse to be sworn, he is embarrassed as to the degree of credibility to be attached to their evidence.’

Brandt added that the depositions of witnesses were voluntary, and that since the consul had no power to compel their appearance, justice was often defeated by the unwillingness of potential witnesses to appear in court. He suggested a number of possible solutions to this problem, amongst which he proposed the application of a penalty in cases where no real ground for the refusal of evidence existed. The conviction of offenders also posed problems. As no prison was specifically available for the use of the consulates, and since Turkish prisons were considered too unsanitary to be used, convicts were usually detained within the consulate. But this solution was distressing for the consuls who found the continuous presence of an unfamiliar individual both difficult to cope with and expensive. The duty of feeding and looking after the prisoner was an additional burden from which the consul was only relieved at the end of the sentence. Brandt recommended that the prisoner should look after himself for the first month and pay maintenance expenses to the consul. In cases where a creditor sought to recover a debt from a debtor, he suggested that the creditor should provide for the payment of the expenses. Debts would eventually be recovered on surrender of the debtor’s properties in favour of the creditor, on which act the prisoner would be released.

Ibid., 350.
The situation was even more complicated for criminal cases where in the absence of any regulations, judgment was left to the consuls' discretion. Persistent offenders were required to pay bail as a guarantee of good conduct, and where unable to provide this assurance, the convicted party would be required to leave the country within a fixed period. Should they remain in Turkey, British protection would be withdrawn and the offender would be subject to the jurisdiction of the local authorities. Brandt wrote that this measure was 'indispensably necessary towards the natives of Malta and of the Ionian Islands, whose turbulent and riotous acts too often give rise to serious complaints on behalf of the Turkish authorities.'

In his testimonial, Consul-General Campbell wrote from Cairo suggesting that final appeals should be referred not to Constantinople, but instead to Malta 'where judges conversant with British law are always resident.' He recommended that consular officers should be able to enforce the presence of jurors, chosen in rotation from amongst the members of the British community, in criminal, commercial and civil cases, and that fines might be levied should they refuse to attend. Campbell underlined the fact that the majority of cases stemmed from the Maltese and Ionian subjects who, arriving in the Levant without any means of procuring a livelihood, and without passports, fell into misbehaviour. He argued that consuls should be given the power to expel such persons as well as all those who, in the absence of a passport, could provide no sufficient reason to reside in the region.

The 1835 enquiry paved the way for regulations eventually imposed in 1844 when an Order in Council conferred jurisdiction to consuls in criminal cases. These regulations officially gave consuls the power to form consular courts, to examine witnesses on oath, and to impose fines in case of non attendance of witnesses to the trial. Consuls could act in any of three ways,

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Ibid., p.352.
Ibid., pp.352-3
according to the gravity of the crime and the punishment to be adopted. Cases requiring a maximum of punishment up to three months and fines up to 100 dollars, could be dealt with by the consul himself. For cases of a more serious nature the consul was permitted to appoint up to four assessors to help with the judgment; this type of consular court could determine convictions of up to two years, and fines of up to 200 dollars. Assessors were intended only to assist the consul in reaching a judgment, and they could not have the final word in deciding upon the sentence. However, if they disagreed with the consul on this matter, they were permitted to refer their views to the ambassador. Cases of extreme gravity, such as murders, assaults and serious robberies, were referred to the consular court at Malta. The responsibility of vice consuls remained limited since although they could try and determine cases, they were not allowed to award punishment except in special circumstances, and were required to pass information to their superior consular officer to enable him to determine the sentence. The new regulations made it possible for consuls to expel British subjects from the Ottoman Empire following a second conviction, with the automatic loss of consular protection. They also made Malta the centre of British jurisdiction within the territory of the Sublime Porte, and although the original intention had been that only criminals charged with murder and British nationals should be referred there, it later became frequent practice for all serious cases to be heard in Malta. The legislation was eventually adapted to allow Ionians to be dealt with at Malta since the vast majority of cases were brought against them.

For a few years the judicial functions of the consuls continued to be subject to scrutiny as the practical effects of the new regulations were carefully examined and improvements were suggested. It was observed that only a few criminals, such as those charged with murder, were actually sent to

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Order in Council conferring on Her Majesty's officers jurisdiction in criminal cases; Parliamentary Papers, 1845, lii. 92-5.
Malta despite the fact that many other serious crimes might have been referred to the island. 'Manslaughter, malicious wounding, burglary, and other grave crimes' were in future to be tried in Malta, with sentences being served in the common prison there. Also, although heavy fines had appeared to be the best punishment for certain types of crime it was noted that in most cases offenders were people of 'lowly circumstances, from whom an amercement of twenty or thirty dollars could rarely be recovered.' It was thus suggested that two years labour would make a possible alternative sentence, and that the deportation of criminals from the places where they had committed their offence could insure the community from further malpractice. Most crimes involved disputes amongst Ionians and Maltese, but some involved Ottoman subjects as plaintiffs and these were more delicate. According to the capitulations, such cases were subject to Turkish law, the penalties of which were far harsher than anything that might be imposed by a consular court. But it was often the case that the Ottoman authorities delegated the decision to the consul, limiting their own role to sitting as observers in the consular court. This was regarded as a very valuable concession, and one that implied that the consuls should be given wider powers. In fact even though British subjects and foreigners threatened with violence needed proper protection, the Order in Council gave the consuls no authority to require that litigants agree to keep the peace.

In Britain, the subject of the judicial role of the consuls began once more to attract press interest in 1856, when The Times suggested that it should be separated from the other consular functions to create a new institution based at Constantinople, consisting of a consular judge and two clerks. The article proposed that they 'should be entrusted with the formation of a regular civil and criminal court, whilst the consul would be the exec-

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"Parliamentary Papers 1845, lii, 132.
"Ibid., 133
utive magistrate, or something like a judge on a circuit and the sheriff of the county. Justice in the Levant eventually moved in this direction when a consular court was opened at Constantinople in 1856. Criminals from the Aegean Islands, however, continued to be sent to Malta for trial with the new tribunal dealing with other areas of the Levant.  

In another article, nearly two years later, The Times further insisted that the consular service should be subjected to new and better regulations, that consuls should be selected and trained according to specific duties and that the entire system should be revised and improved. According to The Times, the consular court at Constantinople was used by many consuls for cases they felt unable to judge themselves, demonstrating the need for consuls to be given a proper judicial training. The newspaper's correspondent from Constantinople went further, suggesting that a legal vice consul could be appointed in every province under the overall supervision of a supreme judge at Constantinople. These legal vice-consuls could look after the entire judicial business of each consulate. As an alternative, he suggested that a number of vice consuls should be appointed at Constantinople to take care of the judicial situation of the provinces.

A debate on the subject of the consular service in the House of Commons in March 1858 once again revealed the general concern at the organisation of the service. One member urged the opening of an enquiry the necessity of which he claimed to have verified during his frequent travels. He made reference to a passage in Lord Carlisle’s Diary in Greek Waters where

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Footnotes:
66 The Times. 10 July 1856.
67 This separation was probably attributable to the peculiar division of the territory of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the Greek war of independence, and to the tragic social and political state of the islands that stemmed from it.
68 The Times. 22 May 1858.
69 It is interesting to note the insistence of The Times on the necessity of a division of competence in the consular service, and it should be underlined that, although the matter was once again brought forward during the 1858 enquiry, the situation in the Aegean remained largely unchanged. Consuls did look after judicial matters, which took up much of their time, indeed a large part of their correspondence was dedicated to difficult and trivial cases, as is shown in chapter six. Parliamentary Papers 1857-8, viii. 2266, 2571-2.
it was written that 'the ladies in the Levant accounted for the eccentricities of English consuls by the theory that as soon as a man was nominated a British consul he went mad."

The mounting conviction that improvements were required to the regulation of the consular service eventually led to a major enquiry with a Select Committee being set up to examine the confused way in which the consular service had developed since 1825, and to clear the organisation of the doubts which had been levelled against it. The committee collected a series of testimonials on the need to appoint consuls to stay for long periods in the Levant, and it was emphasised that whilst officials might be circulated, they should remain in the same geographical area. The committee heard how, due to the length of time they had spent in the Levant, the Levantine consuls had an understanding of local politics and habits that was essential for dealing with the Ottoman authorities and this gave them a notable advantage over their French counterparts. It was, however, a different matter to find British consuls willing to spend a lifetime in the Levant and most of the later consuls appointed by the Foreign Office sought to leave the East and be removed to ‘more civilised areas'; even the philhellenes, amongst them became disillusioned with modern Greece. Thus whilst Levantine consuls were criticised, they were effectively the only people who were happy to serve for a long period in the Levant, and although they were repeatedly criticised by the national press and by their ‘English’ colleagues, they were never entirely replaced.

The Select Committee looked into all aspects of the consular service and its organisation, and in the course of its enquiry returned to the question of using local agents and dragomen, considering once again the possibility of substituting dragomen with British students. It was suggested that the fail-

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Parliamentary Debates, 3rd series, cxlix. 553 (22 March 1858).
Ibid., 2944-8, 3089-91.
Ibid., 2437-8.
ure of the school for interpreters that had been established in 1830\textsuperscript{103} appeared principally to have been the result of low salaries and poor career prospects for the students. The committee noted that improved salaries and the likelihood of promotion would be essential should the plan go ahead.\textsuperscript{104} The British press placed little faith in the consular agents and vice consuls in the Levant; as \textit{The Times} correspondent wrote with indignation: ‘The practice [of appointing these people] has lately been discontinued, but there are still a number remaining who must be dismissed before the English consular body in the Levant can become respectable.’\textsuperscript{105} But although they were widely represented in Britain as well as by their later colleagues, local agents cost the Foreign Office very little and lightened the burden of the other consuls’ work; moreover, they were generally well considered in the Levant, where an extensive number were employed. The evidence gathered by the 1858 committee seemed to favour their continued collaboration with the Foreign Office and eventually the fact that they reduced the cost of running the consular service became a convincing argument in their favour.\textsuperscript{106} Indeed local vice consuls and consular agents continued to be employed in the Levant well into the 1860s, when a large number could still be found in the Aegean. The committee even suggested that the sons of merchants and consuls in the Levant should be encouraged to enter the consular service, and should be trained to become either \textit{dragomen} or consuls themselves.\textsuperscript{107}

The committee concluded its investigations by considering the advantages of a possible division of duties in the Levant. The opening of the consular court at Constantinople had been a successful experiment and had added weight to the theory that consuls carried too many different responsibilities to be properly competent in all of them. Testimonies pointed to the

\textsuperscript{103} See this chapter, page 46.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Parliamentary Papers}, 1857-8, viii. 1183-5.
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{The Times}, 22 May 1858.
\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Parliamentary Papers}, 1857-8 viii . 2444, 2449-51, 6179-83.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 2682-4, 3021.
need for a separation of the judicial, commercial and political duties and to the appointment of particular personnel for each specialism. An alternative approach was also considered with the various competences being divided between the existing consuls.

The committee's conclusions on many of the aspects which it had investigated were contrary to those views which *The Times* had advanced over the preceding two years. The newspaper was not slow to respond. An article published on the 14 September 1858 criticised the results of the committee investigations as ineffective and disappointing. The phrase 'as far as possible' used by the committee to suggest the restriction of the service to British personnel was unsatisfactory, as were its conclusions on the 'insufficiency' of the salaries, and the decision to prohibit only some of the consuls, those with a 'large independent jurisdiction,' from trading. The article commented that the school for interpreters at Constantinople should be given more opportunity to develop and that further students should be sent there annually. But, *The Times* pointed out, most of the recommendations of the committee were already in action. Consuls with 'large independent jurisdictions' were already prohibited from trading, and they had been for quite some time, and the appointment 'as far as possible' of British personnel had always been a common aim. The 'small and discretionary obedience' of the consuls to the embassy was criticised, as was their habit of corresponding directly with the Foreign Office. The article stated that, compared to the efforts made by the Porte to concentrate all powers at Constantinople, away from the provincial pashas, the independence given to its consuls by Great Britain appeared an anachronism. *The Times* correspondent emphasised that 'political power must rest under the supervision of the embassy at Constantinople' and that whilst consuls should dedicate themselves exclusively to commercial affairs, additional consuls general should be appointed to look...
after political affairs. Finally, however, the newspaper endorsed the committee's proposal to appoint legal clerks in all the consulates, although it underlined once more the need to reduce the overlap between the diplomatic and consular functions, a point which had been dismissed by the committee.109

The numerous governmental enquiries during this period into the state of the consular organisation, and the many critical newspaper reports, not only modelled its eventual development but also form the main basis for the only scholarly study of the subject to date, The Cinderella Service by D.C.M. Platt. Using as his main sources the Parliamentary Papers, the debates in the House of Commons, and the existing literature, principally travel diaries and books written by the consuls themselves, Platt presented a history of the consular service from its origins.

Examining the various parts of the consular service Platt dedicated an entire chapter to the Levant service, 'one of the most costly' branches inherited by the government. By cutting expenses and eliminating the fees originally paid by merchants, the Foreign Office reduced not just the cost of the Levant service, but also the revenue that had made it economically viable. Platt argued that under the Foreign Office the real expense was caused by the demands of political, commercial and judicial duties, the combination of which necessitated an increase in the number of consulates in the Levant. However, his work took no account of the specific responsibility of the British government and its consuls to look after the Ionians which, in the Aegean and in most parts of Ottoman Greece, was the determining factor for the opening of a large number of consulates. He maintained that the greatest number of these consulates were opened for motives of trade or to counter

109 The Times, 14 September, 1858.
Russian influence, a source of great political anxiety. Platt listed a number of consulates which were indicated as ‘centres of political intelligence’ and for the encouragement of ‘social improvement and administrative reforms.’ It was important for Great Britain to avoid the development of a political or religious conflict within the territory of the Ottoman Empire which would disrupt trade and endanger the Christian population, and Platt indicated that the consuls were ‘a most valuable safeguard’ for the peace of Turkey and for the political interests of Britain. Once a consulate was opened, it was very difficult to close down, either because other powers followed by opening their representation, or because people decided to establish themselves in places where a consul resided. Platt explained that the beneficial effects of the presence of consuls were felt throughout the Levant, where they had a remarkable influence on the behaviour of the Ottoman population, as a powerful deterrent against crime, and this is certainly borne out in their correspondence. The local consequences of their presence are investigated in chapters two and five of this thesis.

The information *The Cinderella Service* provides on the general history of the consular service and of the particular sectors of that service, forms a valuable basis for any more detailed study. The lack of recent research and the phenomenal amount of unstudied material on the consular service emphasise how little is known of this aspect of British history. Much is still to be uncovered from the archives, and only a systematic reading of the existing documentation can amend imperfections that a work on the general history of the consular service must almost inevitably produce.

Platt’s work principally considers the later period of the consular service, following its official take-over by the Foreign Office in 1825, and it fails to take account of the Levant Company administration. Indeed, although he explains in some depth how the consular service in the Levant had begun in

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the sixteenth century with the gaining of capitulations from the Sultan to allow British merchants to trade within his territory, he later forgets the very efficient local organisation which existed under the Levant Company, stating that a consular 'service in the real sense of the word, with systematic recruitment, control, transfer and promotion, did not exist before 1903.' Platt does not seem to accept the importance of the Levant Company’s service, preferring to infer that the history of the consular service runs from Canning’s consular act of 1825 to its amalgamation into a combined Foreign Service in 1943.

The significant changes which the service underwent when it was taken over by the state in 1825, thus escape his notice. Cuts in the consular salaries, in the number of personnel permitted to work in the consulates, and in the provision of consular buildings all affected the service dramatically at the local level. From a locally organised, efficient, even if somewhat limited establishment, the Levant service was transformed by the state into a collection of poorly paid and isolated individuals lacking the personnel needed to cope with the increasing burden of work. They were mostly deprived of decent accommodation and in the rare occasions where it could be found, lacked the money to pay for any form of social life. The early Foreign Office personnel in the Levant were generally the same as prior to 1825, albeit augmented by growing numbers of unpaid vice consuls and consular agents, and it was several years before the arrival of the first ‘English’ consuls. When they did arrive, many of these new consuls found themselves ill at ease with the peculiar behaviour of the Levantine populations and with the very different way of life in the region.

Criticising the 1825 consular act, Platt wrote that it ‘barely began the movement toward a genuine consular service. It made no attempts to solve the problems of patronage and of the appointments of unsuitable candidates

\[\text{Ibid., p.5.}\]
to consular posts at all levels and at any age\textsuperscript{112} whilst the burden of the expense of the consular service fell largely onto the country. But it must be argued that the elimination of the Levantine consuls from the service in the early years of the Foreign Office administration would have been difficult in the absence of alternative personnel with an adequate understanding of the local language and customs. Furthermore, in the absence of a clear notion of how the consular service should be organised the existing consuls were seen by the government as a useful source of suggestions, and their advice was sought on the location of consulates and the nature of the new representation. It was thus impossible, at least initially, to make a clean break with the past, and without such a break, it was impossible to unify the diplomatic and consular services.

There are many examples of defects in the service being raised in the House of Commons, but these instances must be examined critically. Discussions in the House often referred to the dishonesty and unreliability of the consuls, a view shared by the correspondent of \textit{The Times} and by Platt himself, but one for which no basis can be found in the documentation relating the Aegean and the consulates around it. It is entirely likely that the argument was contrived as an excuse for the withdrawal of the Levantine elements from the service. It is also probable that in some cases these complaints originated with persons who had been themselves the subjects of judicial investigation. Platt’s lack of reference to the consular manuscripts meant that his work cannot realistically establish whether the consuls were effectively corrupt or whether the allegation was one made by malicious Ionians.

Platt’s book provides a valuable basis for further study, but the generality of his observations lead him to conclusions which are not necessarily appropriate to particular geographical areas. Furthermore, great jumps in period occur in his study testifying to the difficulty of finding coherent information

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p. 14.
regarding the various consulates throughout the development of the service. This is an inevitable problem for a work based on the parliamentary enquiries into the consular and diplomatic services since these sources provide only information on matters considered pertinent at the time of the enquiry. Considering the subject of consular appointments in the nineteenth century, Platt used as his source parliamentary debates in 1902 and 1903 which, whilst taking into account the nature of particular appointments in particular areas, do not provide any systematic insight into the practice of selection in the early part of the previous century. The leaps of time which inevitably result from this approach, are often misleading as to the reality of the service in particular periods. A more continuous and accurate knowledge can be obtained only through the systematic reading of the consular reports, a source of which Platt made very little use.

According to Platt, prior to 1858 the consular reports were all examined by the Foreign Office and they were ‘seen regularly by the Secretary of State before they went to the Board of Trade, and were frequently circulated to the cabinet ministers.’ Only in the last decades of the century did the consular dispatches at all levels reach ‘an absurdly high level’ making it impossible to deal with the enormous number of reports reaching the Foreign Office. At this point, the dispatches were not only neglected by the Foreign Office, but also by the ambassadors. In his statement to the the Riley Commission in 1890, Edward Fitzgerald explained that the first time many ambassadors saw the reports from their own consuls was when they came back to them from the Foreign Office as printed documents. Although there would be no scope to verify the credibility of this account within the framework of this study, it was certainly not the case with the correspondence between the Levant consuls and the ambassador at Constantinople in the period before 1860. If in 1890 the bulk of work that the increased number of personnel had im-

\[11\] Ibid., pp. 56-7.
posed on the Foreign Office was such that it was impossible to read all the
dispatches that were sent to London, between 1825 and 1860 the correspon-
dence between the consuls in the Levant and the ambassador at Constanti-
nople was frequent and reciprocal, as is demonstrated by the high number of
reports to which the ambassador replied personally. Additionally, many of
the consuls corresponded with the ambassador through the mediating figure
of the consul general. There is abundant evidence amongst the Foreign Of-
ifice papers that the ambassador was well aware of events in the consulates
under his supervision when these matters were communicated to him by the
consul general. The dispatches are underlined in many parts and contain co-
pious notes in pencil indicating that the documents had been subject to scru-
tiny at the Foreign Office. The importance of the consular service only de-
creased in the eyes of the Foreign Office in the period after 1860, and it can
be speculated that after the end of the protectorate of the Ionian Islands the
consular service in the Levant must have necessarily decreased in impor-
tance, and the number of officers been reduced to the minimum necessary.

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Although the consular service in general has been the subject of criticism
both in the past and more recently, and although much effort was put into
understanding the best way to achieve an efficient organisation at the mini-
mum possible expense, little effort has ever been made to examine the service
at the local level. Where the consular establishment in the Aegean is con-
cerned, it is especially pertinent to analyse the local consequences of the
changes which affected the broader service. The Aegean represented a tiny
area within the context of the Ottoman Empire which did not even possess a
separate consulate until 1850, and whose islands were part of the jurisdiction
of the consulate of Smyrna. Seen from the microcosm of the Aegean, the changes to the administration of the consular service assume a particular aspect.

As we have seen, the Levantine consuls formed a significant proportion of the consular personnel in the Aegean in this period. Whilst parliamentary debates and the press repeatedly discussed the subject of the Levantine consuls, and although their authority and professionalism was publicly questioned, little effort was ever effectively made to eliminate them from the consular service. Indeed, the evidence which emerges from the documents is instead of conscientious, well informed and integrated officials. For these reasons, and due to their willingness to remain in a specific geographical area, they continued to be employed in the Aegean after 1860.

As a result of the continued troubles of the consular service, critics at the time, and more recently Platt, saw the continued employment of Levant-
tine consuls as an indication that the service had failed to modernise. The concept of modernisation requires innovation and development from a previous form of organisation, then the changes wrought by the Foreign Office, the increased bureaucracy of the service, the changes in the locations of consulates and the creation of new consular districts, as well as the increase in numbers of officials and in the scope of their activities, certainly achieved this. From an almost purely commercial agency the consular service had developed into a political, judicial, and commercial one. Even if it could be argued that the service was disorganised, and in some senses less efficient, at least in the short term, than under the Levant Company, it had centralised its structure, including the recruitment of staff and their payment. And although it may be contended that the elements of continuity from the older organisation prevented the service from becoming fully modernised, comparison of the Levant Company structure with that of the Foreign Office shows not only that the later organisation had a much broader scope, but that its upper levels had become increasingly professionalised. In fact from 1850 onward in the area of the Aegean Sea, the majority of consuls were professionals appointed at the Foreign Office and dedicated exclusively to the consular service. At the lower level, a large number of Levantines continued to be employed as vice consuls and consular agents, and eventually a number of them were promoted to become consuls, but by then they had become professionals, and were no longer merchants. Under the Foreign Office consuls

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116 During the course of the major enquiry on the consular service in 1858, the organisation inherited from the Levant Company had been described of 'excellent character' Parliamentary Papers, 1857-8, viii. 855.
had become salaried professionals dependent on the state and with the benefit of pensions, and although it took much longer to reach the unification with the diplomatic service which Platt recognised as a proper step forward in the modernisation of the service, it cannot be denied that under the Foreign Office, by 1860, that process had already begun.
Chapter 2
The Political Role of the Aegean Consuls

During the very delicate period which encompassed both the British administration of the Ionian islands and the Greek struggle for freedom, the political correspondence of the British consuls in the Levant was an important source of information for the British government on events that brought a significant change in the Turko-Greek question. In a period of transition for the consular service itself, the importance and purpose of the consuls in these territories changed with the evolution of political events. Over time, their role developed from acting as informants of the daily political situation to being participants in its resolution, and they later became central figures in mediation between the population of the Aegean islands, the European powers and the Ottoman Empire, following the settlement of the Greek question. The political instability of the Levant affected the personal and official situation of the consuls, whose political role had yet to be clearly defined. Their reports served both to inform the Foreign Office of the development of events, and to provide an indication of the role that the consuls might fulfil. This chapter analyses the manner in which the nature of this aspect of the consular work changed during the period between 1820 and 1860.

Under the Levant Company, the role of the consuls was primarily commercial and the early consular representation thus tended to neglect the political observation of events. Regular communication with the consul general at Constantinople did provide the consuls with the opportunity to mention
important developments, but their relevance was determined by their potential commercial implications. The Levant Company was not a governmental agency, and it had no direct contact with the government, except through the ambassador. Communication between the ambassador and the government in London was, however, subject to significant lapses of time and this, together with the commercial activities of the consuls in the Levant, determined the nature of the reports which, prior to 1825, never really engaged with the political situation in the Ottoman Empire.

Thus the political role of the Aegean consuls prior to 1825 was first and foremost as sources of information on political events in the region which might be likely to involve the merchants. Consular dispatches tended to focus on commercial information, and where they entered into political matters, it was usually with the aim of resolving difficulties of trade. In fact it was often the case with the Porte that political troubles would be followed by commercial problems. The consuls' political reports, both prior to and after the takeover of the service, are first person testimonies of events in the region, and thus present their personal understanding of developments. The narrative contained in this part of the work relies heavily on such testimony, and of the consuls' understanding of the political events. Thus, if the historical content of this section of the thesis might appear to contradict more recent interpretations of events in the region, it should be underlined that the point of view reported here is that of the consuls. The greatest majority of the reports written during the five years up to 1825 deal with the observation of events in Greece and with the lengthy dispute between Russia and the Ottoman Empire for the protectorate of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, which was to involve the British merchants a great deal. The events are narrated through the official reports of the British consuls to the Levant Company, which were passed to the Foreign Office on the take over
of the service by that agency.

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An understanding of the political situation in the area and of the duties of the British consuls, emerges from a detailed dispatch on the relations between Great Britain and the Levant written by the Minister Plenipotentiary at the Porte shortly before the arrival of the new Ambassador in 1821. Explaining the political situation of the Ottoman Empire in its relations with Russia, the dispatch permits an insight into the causes of much of the work with which the consuls were confronted during the early years examined by this thesis. Political troubles in the Aegean almost inevitably led to commercial disputes which hampered British trade and caused the consuls great difficulty. Throughout the preceding century, the Porte had made it a priority to defend the empire from ‘external’ threats, at the expense of resolving its internal conflicts. The Porte was concerned that any Russian attempt at influence on the Greek insurgents should be opposed firmly. In February 1821 the British consul general at Constantinople, John Cartwright, had received a letter from Athens informing him that efforts were being made ‘to create a belief that the insurgents were supported by Russia’ and that it could be expected that the Turkish government would regard any attempt at Russian interference with the rebels with extreme hostility.

Russian intervention in the risings in Greece, whilst welcomed by philhellenes throughout Europe, was initially viewed with great suspicion by the leading European powers, and in particular by Great Britain. The established tradition by which Russia attempted to influence the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire made the British suspicious that the Greek insurrection

1 Freeze (Minister plenipotentiary at the Sublime Porte until the arrival of Strangford as Ambassador at Constantinople in 1821) to Cartwright, Feb.1821, FO 78/103, f.23.
2 Ibid.
would undermine their own influence over the Christian subjects of the Em­pire. These doubts were, to a certain extent, well founded, since Russia had constantly sought to increase its influence at Constantinople, to the disadvantage of the other powers. However, its behaviour was inconsistent, varying according to the situation in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, and when the Ottoman government attempted to promote an insurrection to recover its full authority in these lands, it provoked a violent Russian response and the occupation of Ottoman territory.

Reporting on the persistent dispute between Russia and the Porte over the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, Cartwright described the development of events, the motives underlying them, and their possible implications. He explained that the Porte had never fully accepted the terms of the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji and that it had sought to regain full authority over the territories by provoking an uprising to overthrow Russian influence. Ottoman actions had instead only succeeded in precipitating the occupation of the area by Russia, which continued to benefit from the strong position it had acquired with the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji, and which sought to consolidate its power by demanding the evacuation of the principalities by the Porte. A conference, with representatives of the two powers, was therefore organised to discuss the reparation of damages following the war in the principalities. Cartwright, commenting on the discussions, noted that the Russian envoy was being particularly unreasonable on the conditions of the request, making it difficult to reach an agreement. For its part, the Porte was in no position to oppose Russia’s demands with any strength, and the British government was very conscious that Russia would take advantage of the situation. The British Consul at Smyrna, Francis Werry, recorded his impressions in a dispatch dated June 1821, one of many that the Levant Company re-

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3 29 Dec. 1820, FO 78/96, ff.232-47.
4 10 Jan.1821, FO 78/103, f.11.
ceived regarding the dispute.

The discussions between the Russian mission and the *Porte* have of late taken a serious appearance and although we cannot discover anything in the late proceedings of the Turkish government of a nature to form a ground for hostilities against this country on the part of Russia, still the conduct of its negotiations is too strange, indicating an eagerness to take advantage of the slightest deviation from the strict line of the treaties, that the present position of affairs cannot be viewed without apprehension for the result.  

Russia clearly desired to maintain the right of passage through the Bosphorus straits, a condition that the *Porte* could not agree to since it would signify the direct access of Russian vessels to the territories in revolt. Russia had asked the *Porte* to evacuate the principalities and its persistent refusal was the cause of very tense diplomatic relations, even though the revolutions in Albania and Egypt might eventually compel the *Porte* to accept the Russian demands.  

In May 1822, Cartwright communicated that the Reis Effendi had announced to the ministers of Britain and Austria the speedy evacuation of the principalities, a measure which was intended to help restore diplomatic intercourse with Russia. Cartwright indicated that, although this agreement resolved the situation in the principalities to a certain extent, at the same time it created new problems for foreign traders since it led the *Porte* to demonstrate its rights over the Straits by imposing restrictions on British navigation to and from the Black Sea. To enforce its authority on this point, it seized foreign vessels carrying corn from Russia, provoking the fury of merchants.

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5 12 June 1821, FO 78/136, f.7.
6 10 Feb. 1821, FO 78/103, f.19.
whose cargoes were detained at Constantinople.

The Porte was sensitive to the issue of foreign access through the Straits which it saw as an indication of its own weakness, even though, following the concessions made to Russia in the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji, it had reached a similar compromise with the other trading powers of Europe. Periodically it sought to enforce exclusive control over the straits as a reminder of its authority. On this occasion, at the expense of the British, the Porte retained considerable amounts of grain in its granaries and delayed the payment of compensation to the merchants. Whilst retained goods were usually converted into credits, food was normally exchanged for ready money. Thus the seizure of their cargoes, together with the imposition of an unrealistic price by the Porte, and the delay in its payment, represented a considerable loss to the merchants. The Ottoman Empire had agreed, by the terms of its last treaty with Russia, to pay the market price for supplies coming from the principalities and the imposition of its own price on the grain seized from the vessels detained at Constantinople was a clear breach of the agreement. In a dispatch to the Levant Company, Cartwright commented that this episode was not unusual:

It is unfortunately true that when the Porte finds it either convenient or necessary to resort to restrictive measures affecting foreign interests, pretensions are made, and principles are set forth, which the treaties do not authorise, announcing rather the will of the Porte, than evincing any anxiety regarding the injustice of the measure, and those principles are not relinquished though the measure may be subsequently abandoned, and although in the execution of it, modifications may be adopted, to remedy or lessen the

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8 Aug.1821, FO 78/136, f.32.
* Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji, 1774.
* B. Jelavich, History, p.111.
injury resulted from it, ultimately leaving as a favour only, what might be demanded as a right so much so that the right of carrying cargoes of certain articles has been on many occasions disputed by the Porte.\textsuperscript{10}

In his report, he underlined the absolute and immediate need to clarify the British position and to reconfirm the privileges which had been defined in the treaty of the Dardanelles in 1809,\textsuperscript{11} and which potentially offered Britain the exclusive right of navigation on the Bosphorus ‘in return for important services’ rendered.\textsuperscript{12} Following Cartwright’s correspondence, the situation was eventually resolved through the representation of the British ambassador at the Porte who was able to secure compensation for the grain at current market prices, even though he was unable to guarantee its speedy repayment.\textsuperscript{13}

Even more significant, from the Aegean consuls point of view, was the outbreak of the Greek revolution, a struggle that was to involve them a great deal. On 2 April 1821 there was an uprising in Mani, in Morea. Four days later, on a signal from Bishop Germanos of Patras, the rebellion spread throughout the mainland and to the Greek islands, notably Hydra, Hipsara and Speze, which were subsequently used as major centres for Greek naval operations. The Porte was caught off guard, as Turkish forces were being assembled to deal with Ali Pasha, the rebellious provincial governor of Janina. Only in 1822, when Ali had been captured and killed, were the Ottoman arm-

\textsuperscript{10} 8 Aug.1821, FO 78/136, f. 32.

\textsuperscript{11} Through the Treaty of the Dardanelles, 5 Jan. 1809, Great Britain and Turkey recognised the ‘Ancient rule of the Ottoman Empire’ which excluded foreign warships from the Straits. The treaty stipulated that:
‘Should there be any effect and property belonging to English merchants under sequestration within the jurisdiction of the Sublime Porte, the same shall be entirely given up, and restored to the proprietors; and in like manner should there be any effects, property and vessels, belonging to merchants subject of the Sublime Porte, under sequestration at Malta, or in any other islands and possessions of his Britannic majesty, they also shall be entirely given up and restored to their proprietors.’ FO 93/110, f. 1b.

\textsuperscript{12} 10 May 1822, Ibid., f. 23.

\textsuperscript{13} 8 Aug.1821, FO 78/136, f.32.
ies able to turn their attention to suppressing the Greek uprising.

In the early stages of the revolt, a number of consular reports were concerned with the development of events in the struggle for independence, albeit with a view to the protection of British merchants and trade. Consuls reported that following the revolt, a serious earthquake during the month of August had inflicted great damage on Aleppo, and the emergency created by it left the Ottoman Empire little time to deal with the Greek rebels. The Porte, however, was determined to suppress the revolt as quickly as possible, and sought to teach the rebels a lesson they would not forget. An attack was thus made on the island of Scio, demonstrating the brutality and violence the insurgents would face if they decided to continue their struggle. Consul Francis Werry reported from Smyrna that the Turks after landing at Scio had destroyed the island, killing most of the men and enslaving the women, those belonging to noble families were sent to the personal harem of the Captain Pasha, and the remainder to the harems of the other soldiers. He added that, following the attack, the properties of the rebels had been seized by the Turks, and their shops and warehouses had been sealed up. This had ruined the economy and stability of the island, and the subsequent freezing of credit further damaged the livelihoods of the British merchants who were already suffering financial difficulties as a result of the seizure of their cargoes of grain and the delay in payment of compensation by the Porte. The Company received numerous complaints, urging a swift resolution of the situation. Francis Werry made the suggestion that if the sequestered property at Scio had originally been destined to repay the credit of British merchants, then it could virtually be considered as their own property, and on this pretext, its return could be requested from the Porte. He advised the creation

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14 Aug. 1822, FO 78/122, f.35.
15 Scio is the name used by the British consuls in the 1800s, the contemporary name of the island is Chios.
16 13 March 1822, FO 78/136, f.50.
of an agency with Turkish and French or British representatives

...to administer, for account of those whom it may concern, the effects lately put under sequestration by the Turkish authorities, and to collect all debts due to the persons whose warehouses and shops have been taken possession of under the circumstances above stated.17

Werry also indicated that the reopening of commercial activities in this manner, by restoring the financial stability of the British merchants, would also help to improve the desperate situation on the island.

Further horrors had been perpetrated at Rhodes, and an assault on Samos was considered imminent.18 The violence of the attacks was such that at Smyrna even the foreign representatives and merchants feared for their lives. The arrival of Jannissaries in the town had caused terrible agitation leading Lord Strangford to ask the Porte for special protection of the British community.19 However, although the attacks were intended to discourage further rebellion, the outrage they provoked had quite the opposite effect, leading yet more towns to rise against the Porte.

In Europe news of the massacre at Scio had created support for the rebels. Indeed the Porte's actions had elevated a revolt of purely local significance to an event of international resonance. Indeed, whilst some of the earliest Greek actions were against unarmed Turkish settlements, and even though Christian atrocities at the beginning and throughout the duration of the war were comparable to those perpetrated by the Muslims, only the Ottoman misdemeanours were fully reported in Europe, those of the Greeks tend-

17 8 Aug.1821, Ibid., f.32.
19 25 May 1821, FO 78/136, f. 1A.
ing to be underplayed. Whilst political and commercial interests argued for the maintenance of the status quo in the Levant, philhellenic societies on the continent rejoiced at the news of the revolution in Greece and European public opinion was generally in favour of the Greek cause. In 1823, Lord Byron travelled to Greece to help the rebels with practical and moral support. He had written in poetry about the ‘dreamed’ hope of freedom for Greece and his actions focused the attention of the European public on the Greek question.

Russia was the first European power to move in favour of the Greeks. In July 1823 a request was formally addressed to the Porte to appoint a Russian negotiator or to meet a European congress for the settlement of the revolt in Greece. It stated that should the rebels agree to return to their allegiance to the Turkish government, some guarantee for their future existence would be given; at the same time it emphasised that should the Porte refuse to send a representative to the European congress, or should it refuse to accept any negotiation, Russia would feel authorised to appeal to the force of arms. From Constantinople Consul Cartwright commented that it was debatable whether the Porte would accept foreign mediation and how the Ottoman government and the rebels would behave in case of negotiations depended upon the course of events.

The Porte’s inability to look after the internal affairs of its Empire was

21 Lord Byron, Song of a Greek Poet (1824).
22 A. Spender, Byron and the Greek Tradition (1976), p.17.
weakening its image abroad and encouraging foreign sympathy for its en-
emies. Treatment of the rebels oscillated between apparent magnanimity and
sheer cruelty and the consuls and the government received alarming dispatches from the ambassador announcing the determination of the Turkish gov-
ernment to prevent the distribution of funds to relieve sufferers of the earth-
quakes at Aleppo.\textsuperscript{24} British public opinion was increasingly favourable to-
wards the rebels and the actions of Lord Byron, who was doing much from
Messalonghi to help the morale of the insurgents, stimulated the imagination
of philhellenic groups throughout Europe.\textsuperscript{25} Open diplomatic representation
would still however be perceived as favouritism towards Greece and as the
Turks awaited the arrival of reinforcements, the consuls increasingly found
themselves exposed to the course of events.

When Consul Richard Wilkinson\textsuperscript{26} reported an attack by Greek insur-
gents on the house of the French consular agent at Syros, he was instructed
by the government to ignore the event.\textsuperscript{27} Even though European diplomatic
representatives found themselves increasingly involved in the development
of the war, the British government’s insistence on neutrality left its consuls
with no clear course of action in the case of crisis. In June 1823 a circular
was once again sent to all consuls in the Levant requesting their observance
of absolute neutrality in the war. They were also instructed to ensure that
neutrality was observed by the British factors.\textsuperscript{28} A circular was also addres-
sed to the people of the Ionian islands stating that they could, if they wished,
risk entering Turkish ports, and be sure of British protection. However, the
reaction of the Ottoman authorities was in this case unpredictable.\textsuperscript{29}

The \textit{Porte’s} awareness of potential for joint European intervention on

\textsuperscript{24} 20 Sept.1823, FO 78/119, f.239.
\textsuperscript{25} Consul Meyer from Prevesa to Liddell (Secretary of the Levant Company), FO 78/126, passim.
\textsuperscript{26} Consul at Syros from 1833 to 1853.
\textsuperscript{27} 10 March 1823, FO 78/136, f.160.
\textsuperscript{28} 3 June 1823, Ibid., f.240.
\textsuperscript{29} 9 March 1823, Ibid., f.250.
the Greek side, for some time helped to tame the savagery of its behaviour towards the rebels. Hamilton reported from the embassy in 1823:

It is evident that in the last fortnight a considerable alteration has taken place both in the tone of the ministers and the manner in which the current business is conducted. Jellal Pasha has arrived at Larissa where he is to take command of the Ottoman troops against the Greeks in the Morea...he is furnished with the most severe orders to enforce discipline on his troops and prohibit every sort of excess, to forgive all those who are ready to recognise the authority of the Sultan and to offer pardon to those who may repent of having taken part in the insurrection.\(^\text{30}\)

The attack on Scio had made European opinion aware of the unbearable cruelties perpetrated on the Greeks and the outrage provoked by the news of the attacks had been followed by bitter complaints to the Porte from foreign representatives. European neutrality in the war, they had pointed out, should be matched by more reasonable Turkish behaviour.

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As the war dragged on and international pressure grew for intervention in Greek affairs, the British government needed information on the political developments of the war in order to judge whether or not to become involved. Additional knowledge was required of the state of affairs in the Levant and of the security of the ports in the region. Reports were sent in from the existing consulates, explaining the development of the war in the areas of their

\(^{30}\) 10 Jan. 1823, FO 78/119, f.1.
Consul Green reported from Patras that the rebels were on the
defensive, and that their ability to resist an attack from the Ottoman forces
was debatable:

It does not appear that the insurgents have yet been able to get
possession of any of the castles in the Morea or other parts, and if
there is no foreign interference, there is little chance of their being
able to resist long the preparations which are being made to crush
the rebellion.^^

Francis Werry at Smyrna described how a considerable degree of alarm had
been caused in the town by the discovery of a Muslim plot ‘to excite an in­
surrection of the Turks’ with the ultimate aim of ‘putting to death the whole
of the Christian population.’ He explained that relations between Muslim
and Christians, which were precarious at the best of times, had become even
more difficult since the beginning of the revolt, and he reported that, in his
district, the islands of Samos, Zea, Tinos, Hydra, Hipsara and Spezia were in
revolt with the situation being further complicated by tension among the var­
ious Christian groups:

Some of the large islands have joined the insurgents. The revolt at
Tinos may be said to be partial, for the Catholic part of the popula­
tion has already had reason to prefer the Turkish yoke to the new
system of Greek governments...^^

Werry commented that, as the Greeks rose against the Turks, disagreements

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31 There is no evidence of any specific request for this kind of report, thus they were presumably
provided spontaneously by the consuls.
32 25 May 1821, FO78/136, f. 1A.
33 12 June 1821, Ibid., f.7.
had begun to develop between the Orthodox and Catholic rebels, and that in those towns conquered by the rebels, hatred of the oppressor had been replaced by a dislike for the Greek of a different faith. And whilst before the revolution, the contrast between Muslim and Christian styles of life had been so marked as to make the different Christians identify themselves as part of the same repressed group, during the conflict, a natural division emerged between the two Christian faiths. Orthodox Christians felt particularly that Greece was identified with their own religion, and every other faith should be treated as inferior. As the war became increasingly complicated in the islands by religious disputes amongst the Christians, at Smyrna the clash between Orthodox Christians and Muslim was fierce, causing the consuls concern for the security of their merchants. Cartwright wrote from Constantinople that the atmosphere in the city, although relatively calm, was heavy with Russian intrigue which risked complicating further the religious differences between the rebels. In August 1821 he wrote to the Levant Company:

I am pleased to say that we continue to enjoy tranquillity in the capital, and that the government by some of its late acts has given proof of its sincere desire to adopt every conciliating measure likely to be satisfactory to the Russian government, and to facilitate the restoration of internal tranquility...The departure of the Russian envoy and the attitude assumed by Russia toward this country, by encouraging the hopes of the rebels of assistance from that quarter, will paralyse the offer which otherwise might have been expected from this measure.  

If the reports from the consuls at this time are a useful source of information on the development of political events during the war, they also provide an

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*25 Aug. 1821, Ibid., f.11.*
insight into the difficulties of negotiating a peaceful outcome. When Russia called a congress in 1823 for the resolution of the Greek question, demanding that the Porte send a negotiator to confer with the allies, Cartwright wrote from Constantinople that:

The accounts we receive [of the progress of the war] are on the whole favourable to the Greeks, who may not be inclined to submit to the terms to be proposed to them, on the other hand any temporary success on the side of the Turks may tend to increase the disinclination of this government to accept the mediation of the Christian powers.\(^{35}\)

The Porte refused this first offer of intercession in the war, and as events developed, and the conflict became more bitter, the consuls found themselves increasingly affected. Initially this was a result of the damages inflicted on British trade by the behaviour of the Porte towards foreign merchants; indeed, the ‘restrictive measures’\(^{36}\) which Cartwright had referred to in his correspondence with the Levant Company, were increasingly enforced on foreign trade. And, as we have seen, whilst the ambassador at Constantinople and the Levant Company both pressed for the restitution of the trading facilities for British merchants, the two warring parties had both taken to stopping foreign vessels and searching their cargoes with the aim of ensuring that no material was being carried to their opponents. The frequency and violence with which the Greek rebels carried out such interruptions, bore all the hallmarks of piracy. Consuls from all over the Levant reported the plundering of British vessels and the damage that these attacks were inflicting on the merchant houses and on the future of British trade in the region. Consul

\(^{35}\) Cartwright to Canning, 25 July 1822, Ibid., f.101.

\(^{36}\) 8 Aug. 1821, FO 78/136, f.32.
Abbot wrote from Syria to Liddell, the secretary of the Levant Company, to complain about the inadequate protection provided by British war vessels on the coasts of his district and the consequent frequency with which British merchant ships were searched by the Greek rebels both at sea and in harbour. He commented that these arbitrary searches damaged the image and security of British navigation.

It is lamentable to contemplate the situation in which the British flag is placed in these seas by the audacity of the Greek cruisers. Since the commencement of their hostilities with the Turks, not a single British man of war has appeared on the coast of Syria, with the exception of the Medina which brought me to Acre last December. Emboldened by this, and countenanced by the rebel Pasha, the Greeks have annoyed and infested this and the adjacent harbours so much within these six months, boarding and visiting our ships, that all confidence in our flag is now destroyed in the opinion of the natives.\footnote{Extract from Consul Abbot's letter, Liddell to the Admiralty, 26 March 1823, F.O.78/119, f.210.}

Since action in this case was not within the power of the Levant Company, Liddell referred the complaint both to the Foreign Office and to the Admiralty, receiving the following reply from the Foreign Office:

As [to] what relates to the fit distribution of His Majesty's naval force in the Mediterranean, and to the necessity of an occasional appearance of British ships of war on the coast of Syria, Mr. Canning has no means of forming an opinion. On the other point that Greek cruisers search English vessels...you will know that it is the
policy of this country to observe a strict neutrality in the war between the Turks and Greeks and as the inconvenience complained of by Mr. Abbott is unavoidably incident to a state of neutrality, and as to deny the exercise to the right of search to one of the two belligerents would be to take part with the other in the war, this part of Mr. Abbott's complaint has to be considered unfounded.

Liddell also received a response from the Admiralty in which he was reassured that steps were being taken to increase the number of ships of war cruising the Mediterranean and to oppose pirate attacks which were inflicting considerable damages on British traders. Whilst Consul Abbott's complaint indicated a solution to a state of affairs that was detrimental to the security of British trade in the Levant, at the same time, it underlined the contradictory position which the consuls were forced to adopt. The reaction of the Foreign Office underlined that whilst the government wished to be informed on the progress of the war in Greece, and on its implications for British subjects, it was not prepared to take any action in favour of the traders, for fear that such intervention would be construed as taking sides in the war. Its insistence on neutrality exposed the consuls to increasing pressure from the merchants but permitted them no means to resolve their problems. Normally, consuls would refer ordinary complaints to the Ottoman local authorities to seek justice and compensation with more serious cases being handled by the ambassador. However, as the Foreign Office reply to Abbott clearly indicated, such practices were no longer permissible. Additionally, addressing the representatives of European governments, the Porte had made it clear that any further complaints about the difficulty of navigation in Levantine waters as a result of pirate attacks would result in the suspension of all for-

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38 Foreign Office to Liddell, 15 Aug.1823, Ibid., f.213.
eign trade until the end of the conflict:

Sua altezza il vicerè, sempre intento a prevenire e distruggere ogni relazione e sussidi che dai nemici della causa ottomana si tentassero prestare in alimento dei rebelli Greci, notifica ai signori negozianti franco-europei qui stabiliti che, se venendo dai detti insurgenti predato qualche carico dei mari, o commestibili, sotto bandiera franco-europea diretta per Constantinopoli, etc. torto a sua cognizione ella impedirà ogni ulteriore navigazione di mari, o commestibile, sopra qualunque bandiera franco-europea riguardandola in generale come sospetta e non sicura onde garantire la proprietà del commercio di questo regno; perciò sospenderebbe con i negozianti francesi europei, e con chiunque, ogni sua vendita sino alla sedazione dell’attuale turbolenza.40

The problem was thus two-fold, not only were the consuls unable to obtain justice for the merchants because of government insistence on neutrality at all costs, but even if the government were to allow them to submit official complaints to Constantinople, the Porte’s threatened ban on trade in its waters effectively precluded any possibility of action. The consuls were therefore unable to carry out their duties and could but observe the frequent plunder of British cargoes to the anger of the merchants.

The British government’s requirement for absolute neutrality prevented the consuls from taking sides and during the years that preceded allied inter-

40 His Highness the Viceroy, always careful to prevent and destroy any relation and help that might attempt to be given by the enemies of the Ottoman cause in aid of the Greek rebels, notifies to the worthy European merchants established here that if any vessel carrying merchandise or food, and bound for Constantinople under Franco-European flag, is attacked by such rebels...it will regretfully have to forbid any further navigation in its waters under whatsoever Franco-European flag, believing it to be generally suspicious and unsafe; thus to guarantee the proper development of trade in this empire, thus it would suspend with the European merchants and with all others, every sort of trade, until the end of the present turbulence. 16 July 1821, F.O. 78/136, f.15.
vention in the war, many dispatches from the Foreign Office stressed the need to avoid bias. The frequency with which this point was emphasised seems to suggest that the Foreign Office was suspicious that the consuls were too sympathetic to the Greek cause. This sympathy was not surprising since their daily contact with the mixed Turkish and Greek communities had revealed to the consuls a situation of unsustainable exploitation of the Greeks by the provincial authorities. Whilst the consuls sought to remain neutral in public, their diplomatic correspondence often reveals pro-Greek sentiments, and in several instances their reports display a clear support of the rebel cause, concentrating on the desperate situation of the Greek insurgents and on the uncertainty of their being able to resist further attacks.

On the 28th, I received a dispatch from consul Werry stating the considerable degree of alarm which had been produced at Smyrna by the discovery of a plot formed by many of the bigoted Moslems [sic] of that city to excite an insurrection of the Turks and put to death the whole of the Christian population.41

The frequent insistence in the reports on the suffering of the Greeks seems to have been aimed at encouraging British intervention in the war on behalf of Greece.42 This prompted a circular from Cartwright reminding the consuls that the Turks were friends of Great Britain and that they should therefore avoid favouring either of the two parties.43 Despite this letter, he had himself described further developments in the struggle, reporting that the inhabitants of Spezia had fled the island fearing an attack and that they had taken refuge on Hydra where the two populations could join their efforts to repel the enemy. To this he added that if the war did not soon develop in favour of

41 12 June 1821, F.O.78/135, f.7.
42 18 Oct. 1822, Ibid., f.121.
43 17 May 1823, Ibid., f.254.
the Greeks, the inhabitants would leave the islands and repair to Christian ports, seeking the protection of those governments. Although the government pressed for impartiality, consular reports continued for some time to emphasise Turkish cruelty against the Greeks. In June 1825 the Foreign Office received reports of a successful Egyptian attack on Navarino from consuls desperate to see a counterbalancing military intervention in the war. Consul Werry reported that the women and children of Navarino had been horribly murdered on the instructions of a cruel priest who had sacrificed the population to save his own life.

Gregorio, Archbishop of Modon [sic] who fell into the power of the Egyptian chief, when Navarino fell, ordered the women and children to be shipped and in that state nearly dead by the privations they had suffered...he ordered them to be transported to the small barren island at the entrance of the harbour of Navarino and there left without bread or other provisions where all poor creatures perished. The bones are still there, a monument of this savage priest’s cruelty.

As the war progressed, the consuls not only found their work hampered by their situation of enforced neutrality, but also had cause to fear for the lives of the foreign population, and, indeed, even for their own safety. As we saw earlier, when consul Wilkinson had reported the attack on the house of the French consular agent at Syros in 1823, he had been informed by the British government that he should ignore the event despite the evident distress that it had caused. However, as the behaviour of the Ottoman army

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44 18 Oct.1822, FO 78/136, f.121.
45 3 June 1825, Ibid., f.384.
46 10 March 1823, Ibid., f.160.
47 Ibid., f.250.
became increasingly aggressive in response to Greek efforts, its actions were
the cause of general concern. Cartwright wrote in July 1823 of an attack by
the Greeks on the coast of Turkey, and of the tragic revenge it had provoked
from the Ottoman forces:

The Ipsariots have availed themselves of the captain Pasha’s ab-
sence from their neighbourhood to effect a landing on the Asiatic
coast...six thousand Greeks landed who partly destroyed several
detached farms in the neighbourhood. The Turks have taken their
revenge by massacring three thousand Christian subjects at Perga-
mo and around. At Smyrna, Werry informs, things are remaining
quiet but apparently the Greeks have planned an attack on that
town in which case the inhabitants would have every thing to fear

Rumours of Greek and Turkish attacks on the town were, for some time, rife
on the streets of Smyrna, where the terrified foreign population naturally
sought assurance of protection by their consuls. In May 1825 Francis Werry
informed Liddell of renewed fears of a Turkish attack on Smyrna which
would endanger the local Christian population. Strangford, the British Amb-
bassador at Constantinople, had obtained the Porte’s assurance that in the
event of an attack, the foreign population in town would be spared. How-
ever, the Sultan’s lack of power over the jannissaries gave the merchants lit-
tle cause for confidence, a feeling that was exacerbated by the attitude of the
British government and the lack of any British naval presence which might
defend the frank quarters. Distressed by the Turkish attacks on the islands,
Werry and the other foreign consuls at Smyrna, signed a document express-
ing concern at the Porte’s behaviour in the war. His signature was explained
in a letter to Liddell and to the Levant Company which detailed his reasons
for breaching the orders of neutrality.

Your Worships [the Directors of the Levant Company] have already received from Mr. N.Werry, the vice consul, the reasons which induced me to sign in conjunction with my colleagues...the consuls of France, Austria and Netherlands, the letter which has been disapproved by His Majesty ministers.⁴⁸

In signing the letter Werry had violated the order of absolute neutrality and non-intervention that had been part of the recent instructions to His Majesty’s ministers in the Levant, provoking the disapproval of the British government. He insisted to Liddell that a ‘sufficient permanent force’ was required in the bay of Smyrna to defend the town from eventual attacks, ‘because the Turkish troops, neither paid nor fed, subsist on their own means, and the danger is too evident, to excuse me of not appraising Your Worship of it.’⁴⁹ In the mean time, news arrived from the islands that Captain Pasha, the Ottoman provincial governor, had travelled to Tenedos to prepare his troops. His actions made an attack seem imminent and in September 1824 Werry reported on the Ottoman commander’s activities:

The Captain Pasha has suffered a loss of three vessels at Samos because of trying to attack the island in clear weather...He has returned to Budrum but is already setting off toward Samos again. The invasion of that island planned for the next two days, will be carried out by the Captain’s army that, although missing about two thirds of the men because of desertion, is still sufficient to con-

⁴⁸ 7 May 1824, Ibid., f.364.
⁴⁹ Ibid.; Werry’s original letter to the ambassador, dated 31 Dec. 1823 held among the Levant Company’s papers passed onto the Foreign Office, does not appear to have survived.
quer the island.\textsuperscript{50}

Werry added that the population of Samos had declared their intention to fight for their freedom.

In the climate of rising terror, there is evidence from the letter books that the consuls began to help both Greek and Turkish refugees make use of British ships for the transport of their belongings. Since June 1825 the British government had allowed refugees from both factions to repair to the Ionian islands.\textsuperscript{51} The asylum offered to Greek refugees in Calymnos was, however, criticised by the Ottoman authorities as inconsistent with the impartiality declared by the British government and detrimental to the course of the war. At the same time the help offered to refugees by the consuls brought complaints from the provisional Greek government that the assistance offered to the Turkish refugees went against Britain's declared neutrality.\textsuperscript{52} And although the consuls resorted to this measure from humanitarian concern, their aid was once again contrary to the instructions of the Foreign Office whose reaction was immediate. In July 1826 a reminder was sent to all the diplomats in the Aegean containing the admonition not to carry Turkish property on British vessels furnishing such vessels with simulated papers in order to cover the property from Greek cruisers...As well as prolonging the present state of anarchy in the Archipelago, this practise paralyses the efforts of His Majesty's cruisers in their endeavours to protect, bona fide, trade of British Subjects.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{50} 2 Sept. 1824, F.O. 78/136, f. 370.
\textsuperscript{51} 5 June 1825, F.O. 78/138, f. 314.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., f.422, passim.
\textsuperscript{53} 15 July 1826, FO 78/147, f.171.
The circular stated that such activity would be penalised by exclusion from the consular service, since even on humanitarian grounds, Britain could not permit the involvement of its officials with either side.

The behaviour of the consuls during the conflict was dictated not only by fear of the war and its repercussions for British merchants, but also by a sense of compassion towards the people of the islands and the inhumane conditions into which the conflict had thrown them. This humanitarian role was to become an integral part of the consular work in the Aegean following the resolution of the Greek question. However, in 1826, whilst reason and compassion argued for helping the suffering populations of the two sides at war, the hands of the consuls were effectively tied by the orders of the Foreign Office. Similarly, the consuls were in no position either to resolve the problems which beset the merchants, or to organise protection for British subjects in case of rebel attack. In short, the consular duties had been so profoundly affected by the British decision to adhere to strict neutrality that for some time there was confusion as to what their duties should be.

A memorandum sent to the Foreign Office at the suggestion of the consuls in 1826, demanded a clearer definition of their role, and the delegation to them of greater powers:

.....It is a matter of notoriety in Turkey that the Levant Company has been abolished and investing the consuls with King’s commissions will not only give them unmatched repute in the eyes of the local governments and particularly with the British and Ionian subjects whom they govern, but will also put them on a footing with the consuls of other powers residing there. As the hands of the consuls have been weakened by the surrender of the Levant

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It constitutes a large part of chapter 5 illustrating the consuls at work in the consular district of Rhodes.
Company charter...and the consuls are now left without a character and without power, might it not appear proper to invest them with the King's commissions? And those commissions might be of a nature to authorise consuls to act by therein stating that they are invested with political judicial and magisterial power, and it would remain for H.M.'s Ambassador to define and limit the extent of power to be granted to each consul.55

In September 1824, the Porte, unable to secure victory in the war, asked the rebellious Pasha of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, for the support of his army. Although the price he had demanded for his intervention was very high (in the event of victory he would take Crete, and his son Ibraim would gain the Peloponnese)56 the Porte accepted his conditions, obtaining the support of his powerful army. The intervention of his forces soon tipped the balance in the war, and the Greek rebels, disunited and disorganised, suffered losses to this modern and well-equipped army trained on the French model. Greek morale was, however, kept alive by the many demonstrations of foreign sympathy, and by the organised mediation of the European powers. The consular reports began, from the summer of 1824, to contain intelligence on the Egyptian forces. Consul Francis Werry wrote from Smyrna that despite the lack of precise information on the fleet, the army was composed of 22,000 men, ten thousand of whom were well trained.57 It had become clear that Egyptian collaboration with the Porte would change the outcome of the war and might bring the Sultan, in alliance with Muhammad Ali, against the European powers, and this fear brought about a change in their policy.

British involvement in the war on the side of the allied powers coincided with the passage of the consular service into the administration and con-

55 F.O. 78/147, f.241.
57 2 Sept. 1824, FO 78/136, f.370.
trol of the Foreign Office. Direct correspondence with the consuls became an additional source of information and gave a direct testimony of the events in the area. Consular reports to the Foreign Office began in January 1825.

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When the Foreign Office took over the control of the consular service, it had no clear idea of the role that the consuls might fulfil politically. The consuls emerged as additional and valuable sources of information on events in the region and on the local dealings of the Porte with the representatives of the other powers. Indeed their point of view was important to enable the government to understand the nature of the diplomatic relationship between the Porte and the other states and to set up the basis for a successful British representation. Amongst the states with a diplomatic presence in the Levant, Russia, Austria and France in particular, had established numerous and politically efficient consulates which they used to help formulate their policies in the region.

But the change of administration in 1825 was not simply aimed at providing a more useful diplomatic presence in the Levant. It was also dictated by the specific duty to look after the people of the Ionian islands within the territory of the Ottoman Empire which had become a responsibility of the British government in 1815 as a result of negotiations at the congress of Vienna where ‘the mutual jealousy of Russia and Austria and the temporary weakness of France’ had gained Great Britain the protection of the Ionian Islands which provided an important foothold in the Levant.58

The islands had been accustomed to foreign dominion for centuries and had long been a centre of English and Venetian commerce. Zante accounted for a considerable amount of trade, and under the English Levant Company a

58 Nathaniel Werry to George Canning, ‘Memoir’, FO 78/135, f.283 passim.
consulate had been established there. When the consulate was transferred to Patras in 1640, the islands remained on the route of English vessels to the Levant, due to the popularity of Ionian currants with British consumers.

British trading activity in the Levant had been severely affected by the French wars. When in 1797 France annexed the Ionian Islands almost all British trade in the area fell into French hands. The nature of the British economy and its dependence on imports from the colonies, meant that French conquests in the Levant, and the possibility that they might be used as a base from which to attack British interests in India, were a cause for great concern. The defeat of Napoleon in 1798, and the joint action promoted by the Porte and Russia to regain the islands the following year, led to the establishment of a Septinsular republic under Ottoman sovereignty and Russian protection, and led to a rekindling of Anglophile sentiment in the region.

The Ionian islands fell into French hands once more in 1807, when increased French influence at the Porte forced the British ambassador to leave Constantinople. However, Ionian Anglophile feelings brought the British, in a joint naval expedition with the Porte, to reoccupy the islands in 1809. Britain seemed, at this point, to have succeeded in reducing French influence in the Levant, with the exception of Corfu, which was only released to the British after the defeat of Napoleon in 1814, leading to the control of the entire Septinsular Republic.

At the time of the acquisition of the protectorate, Britain had regarded it as a conspicuous victory over both France and Russia, which had desired control of the Ionian territories for themselves. Russia’s declared interest in the protection of the Christian population masked an underlying desire for influence over increasing areas of the Ottoman Empire. France admitted to

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59 D.C.M. Platt, Finance, Trade and Politics, ch.2; see also C. Bayly, Imperial Meridian, ch.4.
60 B. Jelavich, History, p.119.
62 B. Jelavich, History, p.163.
the same religious concerns, but perceived the Ionian islands as an important commercial foothold in the Levant. Britain was alone among the three powers in having no direct consular representation in the area. By the terms of the congress of Vienna, the Ionians ceased to be under the jurisdiction of the Porte, instead the Ottoman government agreed to consider them as British subjects. The treaty gave the Ionians great advantages within the territory of the Empire, however, at the same time it obliged the British government to look after these people throughout the Levant, and to control and respond to their movements.

As we have seen earlier, the Ionians were renowned throughout the Levant for their difficult attitude and problematic behaviour⁶³, and they soon found ways of exploiting their new situation. Their sheer numbers generated a vast amount of work for the consuls who had previously been accustomed to a restricted number of merchants trading with the Levant and the occasional traveller. When the Ionians became subject to consular control, the nature and quantity of consular duties altered considerably. Many Ionians took advantage of the consuls, breaking the terms of their passports within the Aegean waters and reporting false crimes to seek compensation for non-existent damages. By the terms of the treaty with the Porte, British subjects were forbidden from appealing to Ottoman law unless the dispute to be settled was between a British and an Ottoman subject. Due to the rigidity of Ottoman laws, British merchants had carefully tended to avoid legal trouble in order to maintain their rights of trade and freedom within the Empire. The troublesome nature of the Ionians, together with the fact that a great many of them, being married to Ottoman Greek subjects were obliged to appear in both Ottoman and British courts, thus created a substantial burden of work for the consuls. In June 1824, Consul General Cartwright wrote to the Levant Company regarding this situation. He pointed out that the presence of

⁶³ See pages 77-79
these individuals throughout the Ottoman Empire made the consular position very unclear in the absence of any specific organisation which might deal with them. He commented that the British consuls lacked sufficient authority to deal with the activities of the Ionians and to enforce discipline on them. Furthermore, when it came to dealing with the Ionians, the judicial aspect of the consular profession, which created a specific duty to defend British citizens in court, compromised the position of the consuls before the Ottoman authorities.

The Turkish government having by treaty renounced all jurisdiction in cases of differences between *frank subjects*, the judicial duties of the consuls appointed to this country are necessarily more extensive than those of official agents in other countries where the courts of law are open to foreign litigants if they should not choose to abide an amicable adjustment of their differences by their own consul. Here on the contrary, it is the duty of the consul to prevent the subjects of his government appealing to the Turkish tribunals...and the Company’s charter authorises the English consul to send to England such persons...but the consul general feels that since the occupation of Malta and the protection of the Ionian islands, the duties of the consuls have increased enormously and that they do not seem to have comparatively enough authority to execute them. As a matter of fact the English consuls in Turkey are now called to protect a class of people unlike any other English consul in any other country. The Ionians found their way into the country with the treaty of 1800.\textsuperscript{44} By that treaty the sovereignty of the Ionian islands was granted to the Porte, and the

\textsuperscript{44} The Ionian islands were first formed into a republic under Turkish protection and Russian guarantee by the Convention of Constantinople, 21st March, 1800. F.O.78/135 f.289, footnote A.
Ionian subjects resident in Turkey in addition to the half Franc protection which was stipulated for them, gradually succeeded to enjoy the privileges of the Ottoman Christian subjects. They became possessors in their own name of land and houses and, marrying Greek women, they spread in the Empire. When an Ionian is caught by a Turkish official for having committed something illegal, he is referred to the British consul but at this point the consul seems to have no specific authority.\footnote{F.O. 78/136, f. 339.}

Moreover, the considerable number of Ionians moving throughout the Aegean was in itself difficult to control. This problem had historical roots. During their troubled history, the Ionian islands had been passed between Venetian, French, Russian and Ottoman hands before falling under the control of Great Britain. Under these frequently changing circumstances, their inhabitants had become adept at exploiting the benefits and advantages of foreign protection, a factor that became immediately apparent to the British consuls. As a consequence of their attitudes towards the foreign powers, the Ionians soon gained a bad reputation amongst the British consuls, both for their disregard for the law and for the notorious quickness of their temper. In 1825 Nathaniel Werry wrote a report for the Foreign Office explaining the position of the Ionians and the difficulties that they had been creating at Smyrna, where his father had been responsible for their control since 1815. Werry blamed them for the declining reputation of British subjects in the district and for the consequent difficulties encountered by the consuls in maintaining good relations with the Ottoman authorities.

Prior to the protectorate of the seven islands having been reposed in the hands of Great Britain...the number of British subjects in the
different parts of the Ottoman Empire was but small, and they were of a character and nature to enable the consular agents [all consuls, vice consuls and consular agents] to command the respect of the Turkish authorities. In 1815, the number of Septinsular Ionian subjects which claimed the protection of the British consul at Smyrna amounted to about 1500. The greater part of these individuals had alternately passed from the Venetian to the French, thence to the Turkish and the Russian and back again to the French protection. Most of these persons quit their native islands to seek their fortune; many addict themselves in the seaport towns to smuggling, some coin counterfeit money, and instances are not wanting of theft and even murder being committed by them. Such characters very speedily brought the British protection into disrepute with the Turkish authorities and complicated relations, by multiplying the points of discussion with them.66

At Smyrna, as a consequence of the large Ionian presence, a Turkish police force had been organised under the command of the consul.67 The large number of people to be controlled, and the difficulties they caused, required close collaboration between the consul and the Ottoman authorities. Despite this, the misbehaviour of the Ionians risked both destroying the British reputation in the Levant and dangerously compromising the consular position with the Ottoman authorities. Of this situation the consuls were constantly aware, and wrote extensive dispatches to the Foreign Office.

In no state of Europe are such privileges granted to foreign subjects as those which are bestowed upon the European nations by

66 FO 78/135, f.292.
67 At Smyrna, and other large consulates, the Porte provided a few of jannissaries as well, presumably, as a small police force to look after the Ionians in the town.
the capitulations of the Sultans. It is under these very privileges and immunities that the Septinsular subjects have constantly sought to break through the Turkish internal regulations. The most important and difficult part of the consular duty consists in maintaining order and peace amongst such discordant elements. To effect this it requires the utmost vigilance and severity, and an intimate and good understanding with the Pasha, the Kadis and the chiefs of the Jannissaries. The Septinsular subjects are divided amongst themselves by strong national antipathies. The Corfuiote is proverbially reputed to be dishonest, the Cephaloniote ferocious, the Zantiote crafty and the Cerigote laborious. The police by which they are governed at Smyrna is directed entirely by the consul and its object is to prevent their disputes from endangering the property and persons of the British by involving the English in their quarrels with the Turks, which altercations without the greatest precaution and vigilance are liable to involve the whole Frank quarter in bloodshed and fire.68

Ionian misbehaviour in the region was aggravated during the Greek war of independence, when they showed the first signs of serious insubordination. They frequently crossed the areas at the heart of the conflict, bringing the Porte to limit the access of Ionian boats ‘on the Continent’69

In order to move from one place to the other, the Ionians needed a written permission authorising their ports of departure and arrival. These permits were inevitably subject to abuse and there is evidence that during the war a number of Ionian captains requested permissions for specific islands only to change their destinations whilst at sea. Werry commented that this practice

68 FO 78/135, f.292.
69 FO 78/137, f.395, enclos. n.4.
was damaging to the reputation of British navigation and was soon likely to put the Levant Company in great difficulty. He described the actions of an Ionian ship’s captain who, in May 1824, had left the consular office at Smyrna with a permit to take his cargo to Mitilene. The captain had instead sailed to Tinos, where he landed clandestinely, before proceeding to Scaria where he scuttled his vessel, transferring his passengers and crew to a boat directed for Miconi. There he was arrested by the vice consul and put into prison only to escape with the help of other Ionians. The audacity of this captain and the way in which he repeatedly escaped justice demonstrated both the impotence of the British authorities and the existence of a criminal organisation which the consuls had had little means to oppose or control.\footnote{18 June 1824, FO 78/136, f. 366.}

Other Ionian captains acted similarly, taking their boats illegally between the islands of Miconi, Tinos and Syros. Werry, adding his voice to those of his colleagues in requesting an increase in the number of British
warships to be stationed in the Levantine waters, felt that a naval force at Smyrna would not only be useful to protect the British community from possible attacks from the rebels, it might additionally serve the purpose of controlling the Ionians.

Their Worships are aware of the advantages derived by having a competent force stationed permanently in the bay. It is the absence of all our divisions from the Archipelago that encourage our brave Ionians to commit acts that disgrace the British flag and the reputation of our navigation.\textsuperscript{71}

The consular reports from the last stages of the Levant Company administration show how the duty to protect the Ionians occupied more and more of their time, eventually making naval involvement unavoidable. The policy of British neutrality in the early stages of the war increased consular responsibility, requiring them to monitor the possible actions of both sides in the war and to protect the interests of British merchants, whilst at the same time controlling the movements of the Ionians. Thus, whilst the consuls were effective in providing the British government with information on developments in the war, the reports show that they were inadequate at looking after the Ionians who proved only too ready to abuse their position. The consular and naval apparatus designed for the support of British merchants was in fact unable to exercise control over the vast number of Ionians moving throughout the Aegean, as was confirmed in a report from Francis Werry:

\textit{The consul general feels that since the occupation of Malta and the protection of the Ionian islands, the duties of the consuls have increased enormously and they do not seem to have comparatively...
enough authority to execute them. As a matter of fact the English consuls in Turkey are now called to protect a class of people unlike any other English consul in any other country.  

The British government became gradually aware that these increased diplomatic duties urgently required much closer control of the consular service. The misbehaviour of the Ionians in the Levantine waters, and the impossible situation sustained by the consuls, fuelled their repeated requests for an increased British naval presence in the Aegean, and eventually brought Great Britain together with France and Russia to seek a resolution of the Greek question. But intervention in the war revealed another significant role that the Levantine consuls found they could fulfil. To understand this point, it is necessary to look into the issues that brought Britain to intervene in the Greek War of Independence.

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Consular reports bear witness that Britain's intervention in the war was hampered by a distrust of Russia and this was also shown by the British government's refusal to participate in the congress promoted by the Russian government. British intentions were unclear since the established policy of non-intervention clashed with the 'sentiments of humanity and the natural sympathy subsisting between a people in the possession of liberty and people struggling to obtain it.' But if British sympathies seemed to suggest intervention in support of the independence of Greece, it was also argued that favouring the Greeks would involve abandoning the policy 'which she had adopted for the most beneficial purposes at the risk of being involved in war

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without the support of her principal Allies and on very questionable grounds of justice.'

Although Britain declined to participate in the Russian congress it subsequently took part in a London conference which considered the cause of the war and eventually led to intervention by the allies. The resolutions adopted at the conference in 1827, became known as the Treaty of London. The European powers were in favour of an agreement that, whilst giving advantages to Greece, retained the country under the sovereignty of the Porte. The British government felt that, should it adopt a policy of military intervention in favour of Greece, the Porte could not be expected to relinquish such a large portion of its empire without resistance, even if that meant conflict with a European power. Britain's view at the conference was therefore inclined towards the reunification of Greece into the Ottoman Empire but under more favourable terms. 'If the Sultan cannot be required to relinquish the entire sovereignty of Greece, neither can the Greeks be required to return to their former position under his sway.' It was decided that the allied powers should ask the contenders to sacrifice part of their respective claims in favour of the restoration of peace. If war could not be embraced to bring the Porte to accept Greek independence, it was felt that it should not be used to impose conditions on the Greeks. The Greeks might still persist in seeking independence through war with the Porte; but in that case they should not be denied the right to be judges of their own destiny. It was agreed that the Porte should be made to understand that peace could be the alternative to protracted war and encouraged to offer concessions, including the right of a different religion to exist on equal terms with its official faith. It was suggested that Russia should negotiate the terms of conciliation by virtue of its own declared protection of the Christian subjects of the empire. Austria by

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74 Ibid. See also A.Cunningham, Anglo Ottoman Encounters in the Age of Revolution, ch.7.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
contrast believed that the ambassadors of all five allied powers should be involved in negotiation with the Porte. This alternative had the inconvenience that it would commit Britain to ‘all’ the principles of the Holy Alliance. Britain therefore suggested that joint representation should be held in reserve, in case of obstinate persistence by the Porte in rejecting allied proposals.

The possible interruption of trade in the Levant waters until the resolution of the conflict presented a drawback even to this second solution. It was felt, however, that the inconvenience caused to foreign trade would be counterbalanced by a shortage in the supplies of grain to Constantinople. The Porte was dependent on the trade of foreign merchants with the Principalities and this would probably bring about a quick resolution of the hostilities. In July 1827 it was therefore decided, under the terms of the Treaty of London, that the Porte should be asked to accept an armistice and the establishment of a Greek government wholly separate from its own, but over which it could retain sovereignty, receiving tributes and exercising the right to appoint native princes. It was in this manner that intervention in the war was finally agreed by the Allied powers, a decision which became a certainty when the Porte promptly refused their terms. Following the failure of their mediation, and with the course of the war complicated by the actions of the Egyptian army, the allies proceeded with their joint action. In September, Canning reported to the Foreign Office that a British squadron was approaching the Archipelago to join the existing Dutch squadron there. France had also sent a contingent consisting of twenty three warships. In the meantime the Greeks had decided on total independence from Turkey sanctioning their intentions in a document delivered to the High Commissioner of the Ionian islands. It read:

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57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 From the provisional Greek government, FO 78/159, ff.152-9.
60 1 Sept.1827, Ibid., f.15.
The government not only hopes, but has every certainty that the mediating powers will cordially cooperate in the effecting of the measures which, for the internal order, it will take against such enemies of the tranquillity of their country; and it has not the least doubt that the struggles of the Greeks will by their own union, and with the aid of the benevolent disposition of the powers, be sealed by an happy result.\textsuperscript{81}

As far as the \textit{Porte} was concerned, this decision could only mean the continuation of the struggle. For their part, the allies were prepared to coerce the \textit{Sultan} if he did not accept their peaceful mediation. However, events were unintentionally precipitated by the battle of Navarino. Allied ships, stationed in the bay of Navarino with the sole intention of bringing the \textit{Porte} to accept their mediation, provoked panic amongst the Egyptian fleet which initiated conflict by firing shots. The joint response of the allies resulted in the destruction of the Egyptian force. The defeat at Navarino came shortly after the mass murder of the \textit{jannissaries} at Constantinople, and these two events, seriously threatening the military strength of Turkey, altered the \textit{Porte}'s behaviour both towards the rebels and the European powers. It was suggested to the \textit{Porte} that a Greek state might be created, wholly separate from the Ottoman Empire, and under the leadership of a foreign king. Yet, even though the \textit{Porte} would retain the rights to select this ruler and to extract tributes, this allied proposal for an independent state of Greece provoked the anger of the \textit{Sultan} and resulted in the closure of the foreign diplomatic representations at Constantinople. Thus Stratford Canning and Cartwright, respectively ambassador and consul general for Great Britain, left Constantinople at the same time as their foreign colleagues, transferring themselves to Corfu where

\textsuperscript{81} From the provisional Greek government, Ibid., f. 159.
they were received as guests of the British Ionian commissioner. The other consuls remained in their places but ceased to act as representatives of their countries to the Porte. In late November 1827 Canning communicated to Cartwright:

Sir, ...I inform you that the discussions which have been going on for some time past between the Turkish government and the three embassies of England, France and Russia have terminated in such manner as to lay my colleagues and myself under the painful obligation of leaving Constantinople.\[82\]

The interruption of diplomatic relations with the Porte naturally had an impact on the British consuls in the Levant. Cartwright informed the consuls of the need to interrupt their duties until such time as the Porte should decide to comply with the terms of the allies’ mediation.\[83\] The protection of British merchants, residents and travellers in the Levant, was to be arranged through the Dutch Embassy. However, problems immediately arose from this measure at Smyrna where the factors and merchants refused to trust the mediation of the Dutch consul on grounds that he was himself a merchant for another nation. The suspicion that a foreign merchant would favour his own trade and that of his own nationals at the expense of the British, brought the factors to send an official complaint to the Dutch embassy at Constantinople. British merchants in other places had made the same complaint, but due to the nature of the diplomatic situation, British subjects could not be appointed to deal with their fellow countrymen. The Dutch resolved the situation by calling on local personnel from the British embassy and consulates to assist and look after the British merchants.\[84\]

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\[82\] 27 Nov. 1827, FO 78/160, f.10.
\[83\] 18 June 1828, FO 78/171, f.35.
\[84\] Ibid.
During the period of interrupted diplomatic relations, little correspondence was exchanged between the Foreign Office, the ambassador and the consuls, but, some officials continued to provide information and they soon discovered a role as mediators representing the views and wishes of the Porte to the European powers. As one of the oldest representatives of British diplomacy in the Levant, Francis Werry was well acquainted with and well regarded by the Ottoman authorities. He remained at Smyrna, the consulate responsible for the supervision of the whole area of the Aegean islands, and his continued reports documented the course of events that led the way to the resolution of the war. In November 1828, one year after the departure of the Ambassador from Constantinople, he sent this dispatch to John Bindwell:  

The Porte it appears refuses to send a negotiator to confer with the Allied Ambassadors at Poros respecting the Greek affairs, and the able defence the Turks as yet have made at Chomlak and Varna and indeed the success which for most part has attended these hostile operations, it is feared makes them not only persist in their refusal but likewise might induce them to look upon the invasion of the Morea by the French as an aggression which, when opportunity presents, they might resent. It is doubtless that the Porte is taking very active and extensive measures to put an additional army on foot at Rehmid Cheflick, at the head of which the Sultan has placed himself, and the war hitherto has been conducted in the most national and enthusiastic spirit. It may well be said that the whole people are unanimous at this point, and are united

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John Bindwell began his career as a Foreign Office clerk in 1798. In 1808 he was appointed to accompany Sir Robert Adair to Constantinople where he remained until 1811. He was subsequently posted to Russia and to Paris. In 1826 he was appointed superintendent of the consular service at the Foreign Office and remained in that place until 1851. During this period, Bindwell was directly responsible for dealing with the consuls.
with the Sultan in the defence of their country. It is considered as a religious war by the whole people...The preparations [Turkey] made to meet Russia by land have been as successful as they have created surprise in Europe. In its civil institutions she has been equally secretly and actively occupied. The most efficient police has been established through the Empire. Particular protection is given to all Europeans including Russians, English and French subjects, relating to all their affairs since the departure of the Allied Ambassadors from Constantinople... Extraordinary and equal protection is given by the Porte to all the Rayah subjects...The occupation of the Seven Islands by the British has made the subjects of those islands effectively under the protection of Britain, and the Russian laws allow those subjects that pass the frontier to become Greek subjects. This means that the Ottoman Empire has lost many of its Rayahs\textsuperscript{66} and could create a situation by which the Empire might have in its bureaucracy people that do not have any interest in maintaining its integrity...it will be obliged to receive into the heart of its dominions these Rayahs or independent subjects, who from their respective European connections and Christian spirit, or rather anti-Ottoman spirit, would be secretly working for the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire. I am convinced that such considerations united with the strong political principle with which the Turks are imbued, that the Europeans have no right to interfere in Greek affairs have activated the Porte in adopting its present course and it will not be until the Porte is reduced to the last extremity that she will either make peace with the Russians or listen to the propositions of the Allied Ambassadors.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{66} Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

\textsuperscript{67} 3 Nov. 1828, FO 78/171, f.57.
The *Porte* attempted reconciliation with the allies in July 1829 when a letter was sent to the Duke of Wellington on behalf of the Reis Effendi, the *Porte*’s representative for relations with the European powers. It solicited the reopening of diplomatic relations between the two countries on account of their long and ‘intimate’ friendship. An essential condition for the Allies was that the *Porte* should agree to the terms of mediation before diplomatic relations could be resumed. This point was emphasised in a letter drafted in reply by Stratford Canning which suggested that the *Porte* accept the terms suggested and agree to meet a conference with the allies for the discussion of the settlement of Greece. It indicated that the seat of the negotiations could be established provisionally either at Corfu or in some island of the Archipelago, which would be declared neutral for the purpose. The plenipotentiaries of the *Sultan* could be met there by the ambassadors of the three mediating courts as well as by the Greek deputies. The Allied powers hoped that the adoption of this measure would lead to a speedy resolution of the Greek question, and to the restoration of amicable relations with the *Porte*.

A second draft, containing additional points, was prepared by Canning

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88 FO78/171, f.83, date missing.
89 *Your Excellency appears to regret my absence from Constantinople and the subsequent interruption of friendly relations between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire; but it is the Sublime Porte itself which has caused this state of things in destroying the sincere friendship of England; in obstinately resisting counsels dictated by imperious necessity; and in rejecting the mediations of the three courts who signed the treaty of London of the 6th of July 1827. United with her Allies for the pacification of Greece, a work no less conducive to the true interests of the Ottoman Empire, than indispensable to the repose of Europe, my court cannot resume negotiations with Turkey except in concert with those Allies; not until it shall have received the assurance that the Sublime Porte consents to the armistice which has been demanded of Her, and accepts the proposed mediation...It is impossible for the King, my master, under present circumstances, to acquiesce in the desire manifested by Your Excellency of my return to Constantinople. If however the Sublime Porte appreciating more justly the good intentions of Great Britain and yielding to the general necessity of conciliation and peace should admit the preliminaries above mentioned, His Majesty would see with pleasure the negotiation renewed. But I must repeat it is indispensable that the Sublime Porte should previously consent to the armistice and accept the mediation.* Ibid.
90 Ibid.
in August. Stressing the damage that the war had inflicted, not only on foreign trade, but also on internal Ottoman commerce, he urged the Porte to accept the terms imposed by the Allies.\textsuperscript{91} Britain, for its part, had not only suffered effective damages from the war but its negotiation of peace between the Ottoman Empire and Russia had also failed, and hostilities had been promptly restarted. Only through the acceptance of the terms of the armistice could the Porte hope to restart diplomatic relations with foreign powers. The resolution of the Turko-Greek crisis was this time, as we shall see, directly attributable to the good offices of a consul.

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Attempting a reconciliation with the allies, the Porte demonstrated that it cared about the safety of the foreign citizens in its empire by paying particular attention to the concerns of the European merchants. This was confirmed by Werry who commented from Smyrna that the Ottoman authorities continued ‘to observe the same attention to our commercial relations as they did before the consular functions ceased.’\textsuperscript{92} This change in attitude was not reflected in the treatment of the Greek rebels; indeed, Werry reported that the war carried on much as before, and that the island of Scio continued to be besieged by Ottoman forces. Furthermore, he had been informed in private letters that the army at Constantinople was preparing for further attacks.\textsuperscript{93} The allies and the Porte appeared to have reached a diplomatic standstill. The Foreign Office was kept informed by its consuls of the happenings of the

\textsuperscript{91} ‘From the commencement of the contest in Greece His Majesty has not failed to advise the Porte of the inconvenience and danger which resulted from the very nature of the hostilities, as well as from the mode in which they were carried on...in the meantime all peaceful commerce in the Levant, that of His Majesty’s subjects in particular, was suffering the greatest losses by the consequences of this contest, and great expense and inconvenience were incurred by His Majesty from the necessity of asserting his fleet in the Mediterranean in order to protect his subjects in the exercise of their just rights of navigation.’ 6 Aug.1826, Ibid., ff.93-8.

\textsuperscript{92} 17 Jan.1828, Ibid., f.49.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
war, but remained unable to find a solution that might restore peace in the
Levant. For this reason, the Levant consuls began to collaborate with the
local Ottoman officials in an attempt to find a resolution to the diplo­
matic situation. They soon found themselves as protagonists in possible negotia­
tions with the *Porte*. Consul William Meyer, appointed by the Levant Com­
pany at Prevesa in 1820, was concerned at the development of events, and
he used his acquaintance and friendship with the Ottoman representatives to
try and help bring an end to the war. In December 1828 he addressed a
'secret and confidential' dispatch to Sir Frederick Adam, the high commissio­
ner of the Ionian islands, which contained private information on the possible
resolution of the war with the help of a local *Pasha*, Mehmet Reshid, who
had suggested to Meyer that he could intercede with the *Sultan*. However,
in order to do so, Reshid needed an official letter from the foreign ambassa­
dors requesting his intervention at Constantinople in favour of the accep­
tance of the treaty of London.  

Meyer’s letter was instrumental in bringing about the termination of the
conflict, since the intercession of Reshid following the letter that the ambas­
sadors promptly sent him, seemed to persuade the *Sultan* to accept the con­
ditions of the treaty of London and lead to the declaration of an armistice
with Greece. Like many other Levantine consuls, Meyer had a long-acquired
knowledge of the local Ottoman representatives, and his personal friendship
with Reshid Pasha was the key to the resolution of the diplomatic impasse.
The negotiations that followed his correspondence with the ambassador, al­
lowed the settlement of a Greek state wholly independent from the *Porte*,
but under the sovereignty of the foreign prince, Otto of Bavaria, and the pro­
tection of the allied powers.

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Mehmet Reshid Pasha to Consul Meyer, FO 78/186, f.13.
The reopening of relations with the Porte following the acceptance of the Treaty of London and the stipulation of an armistice with Greece, required that armies would be withdrawn from the contested territories and put under the surveillance of the allies. However, as events in Greece began to evolve towards a possible resolution, Russia lost no time in renewing its struggle with the Porte for the protectorate of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. It appeared that political stability in the Levant and the reestablishment of safe maritime trade required a solution to be found to this other conflict.

The signing in September 1829, six months after the reopening of diplomatic relations with the Porte, of the Treaty of Adrianople, marked the conclusion of the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. This war had further weakened the Ottoman armies, and made the Porte realise that, in its condition, continued opposition to the allies was impossible. The two treaties, held out the prospect of an end to the military struggles between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, as well as deciding the issue of Greek independence. But, at the same time, they created the basis of very tense diplomatic relations between Russia and Britain, since Britain resented the Russian attempt to gain influence over the Porte. The British were also concerned by

24 Sept.1829, FO 78/186, f.186.

Lord Aberdeen received a letter from Captain Briggs at the Admiralty, suggesting that British intervention might bring an end to the crisis: ‘Some reparation may possibly be made through the interposition of your Lordship’s good offices with the Russian Ambassador; thus by mitigating the feelings excited at Constantinople...In my humble conception, fair grounds exist for the friendly exercise of such intervention...without furnishing to the Porte any new pretext for doubting the good faith of the Allies, thus defining the settlement of the Greek question.’ Captain Briggs of the Admiralty to Aberdeen, 7 March 1829, Ibid., f.147.

The Ionians increased British anxieties by siding with Russia against their protectors. From the Ionian islands the High Commissioner had already commented on this irritating attitude towards Great Britain in March 1829: ‘Every Ionian looks upon himself as the natural born enemy of the Turk, of course this feeling has been greatly increased by the Greek revolution...and the Russians, now at war with Turkey are looked upon by the Ionians as their natural Allies...Russia is considered the most favoured nation while the interpretation given (this is well fostered by Russian partisans) to everything in the politics of England, which these people conceive to be not in favour of Russia, is that it is hostility to Greece.’ FO 78/186, f.202.
the damage that the war had inflicted on their trade. The lack of maritime se­
curity had discouraged the merchants who suffered great damage to their
profits. Additionally the seizure of the rebels’ properties by the Turks had
meant the freezing of their credits, and the general lack of security and the
closure of some waters, meant that many places which could have been safe
markets were unreachable. The signing of the treaty of Adrianople finally al­
lowed trade to return to normality even though it granted Russia passage
through the Straits and freedom of trade and navigation throughout the
whole territory of the Ottoman Empire, raising fears that it might obstruct
British trade. Lord Aberdeen, however, had received the guarantee of the
Russian plenipotentiary that there would be a resumption of normal naviga­
tion in the Levant waters, and he sought to reassure the merchants and the
Admiralty." The outcome of the war had, however, greatly weakened Bri­
tain’s faith in the survival of the Ottoman Empire.

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The Greek struggle for independence had brought about a need for the close
scrutiny of events in the region, both to counteract the actions of the other
European governments and to create the possibility of an eventual protector­
ate over the Greek territory, which would permit the opening of further mar­
kets for British trade. These concerns strengthened the conviction of the
British government that the organisation of the consular service in the area
should be improved. Additionally, the war, and the powerlessness of the
consuls in the face of the vast number of problems created by the Ionians, to­
gether with political and judicial requirements, made it clear that the scope,
role and duties of the consuls should be modified. The opportunity to conti­
nue the process of change, which had begun in 1825, arose with the reopen­

26 April 1829, Ibid., f.222.
ing of diplomatic relations in March 1829, and the appointment of Sir Robert Gordon at Constantinople. His arrival was accompanied by the return to their posts of the ambassadors and consuls of all the allied powers. Those that had remained in the country, recommenced their diplomatic duties.

In April the allies met to determine the nature of the new Greek state, opting for its complete independence and the creation of a kingdom of Greece under the sovereignty of a foreign prince with allied protection. Its settlement was accepted by both sides. By June, Russia was already proceeding with plans to dominate affairs at Constantinople from within. The Russian negotiator, Count Orloff, had visited the Sultan before his departure from Constantinople and had received a diamond ring as a token of friendship between the two powers. The Porte was naturally keen to acquire the friendship of Russia to obtain a reduction in the sum to be paid for war damages. But Orloff had gone further and secured the good relations of the two countries against the influence of the others. In British eyes, Russia was clearly not to be trusted, and if Britain wished to avoid finding herself at war, it needed to consider its relations with the Porte. Over the following thirty years, the relationship between Russia, Britain and the Ottoman Empire oscillated between open friendship and mutual hostility. In this context, the punctual, close and scrupulous observation of political developments became a natural priority of the British consuls in the Levant, and their role in the Aegean Islands was to be profoundly affected by the settlement of the Turko-Greek question and the discontent that were created as a result of it.

Whilst the Greeks had obtained independence, it had been at the expense of a mutilated state, far removed from the ideal of a recreated Byzantine empire that had inspired the promoters of the revolution. With only 800,000 citizens, a quarter of the Greek inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire,

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21 March 1829, FO 78/185, f.7.
and with its frontiers drawn on the Arta-Volo line, the new Greek nation was deprived of the Aegean islands. However, this was not the only problem, since the absolute independence of Greece from the Ottoman Empire deprived many Turkish inhabitants of their properties in Greece.

Sir Robert Gordon, the Ambassador, informed the Foreign Office that many Ottoman officials at Constantinople resented the injustice that had been inflicted on those people who, as a result of the division between the two territories, had decided to remain in the Ottoman Empire thereby losing

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their properties with no hope of indemnity.\footnote{There are many persons of rank in Constantinople who are far from objecting to the resolution of the allies to proclaim the absolute independence of Greece, but who loudly deprecate an act which is to deprive individuals for ever of their private property, without holding out even a hope of partial indemnification to them.} He was also concerned by the resolution which allowed the Greeks, within one year from the declaration of independence, to leave the territory of the Ottoman Empire and migrate into the new state. He wrote:

Another point to which still greater importance is attached by this government...is the permission secured by the protocol to the Greeks to emigrate from the Turkish territory during the year succeeding the first establishment of the new state...We are of the opinion that the right to emigrate should be extended only to those parts in which the struggle for independence has been carried on. It never can have been contemplated for example, that the Greeks from Adrianople should be transplanted into Greece, and yet the Porte is not without alarm that...many of them may be induced to try the experiment, doing an injury to themselves in point of fact, whilst the effects of the emigration in general would be fatal to the very existence of the Turkish government.\footnote{17 Apr. 1830, FO 78/189, f.207.}

Moreover, the terms of independence put Greece under the protection of the allied powers and gave its sovereignty to a foreign prince. The new state thus seemed to present a far from ideal situation, and with a limited territory and a divided population, it had failed to obtain that absolute independence that the allies had proclaimed. The settlement was also unsatisfactory for the inhabitants of the Aegean islands, because the original intention of satisfying both sides at war had meant that the territories of the new state had been arranged without attempting a logical organisation of their populations. It was
felt that since the Aegean islands had been under the Turks for hundreds of years they could bear the same situation for a little longer. However, whilst the argument had seemed tenable at the time of the decision, its drawbacks immediately became apparent. When after ten years of struggles and massacres, of material and moral impoverishment, the inhabitants of the islands came to discover that by mere chance, their destiny had not been changed, they felt betrayed. The promises of reconciliation with the *Porte*, which had been obtained for them by the allies, were far from the ideals they had fought for and the impact of the agreement on the settlement of the new state provoked chaos in the islands. In June 1830 Samos declared its independence from 'the sanguinary enemy' refusing to receive the Turkish commissary sent with 'a *firman* of peace and amnesty.' 147 Where the inhabitants of Samos had gathered their courage and rebelled against the decision of the allies, in the other islands the populations turned for help to the consuls of the foreign states. They saw in foreign diplomats their only means of obtaining justice and independence, and addressed them an official letter:

To the consuls of Great Britain, France, Russia, at Rhodes:

We, all the people of the island of Leros, being informed by the protocol of the third of February of the horrible and afflicting situation to which we are reduced by the limits of the Greek state, discarding our island and several others from the same, being ignorant of our future fate, and having witnessed with the most sensible affliction that the Greek government has finally withdrawn its subaltern authority from hence. We have immediately come to a resolution, and we have established a local government for the purpose of guaranteeing our personal rights as to the interior of the island...

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147 26 Jun.1830, Ibid., f.79, and 26 Aug.1830, ff. 244-46.
If a people, Sirs, who during ten years war has suffered all manner of evils for its independence, if a Christian people, a people subordinate to its laws, a people who respecting its own internal and external conduct with the European nations, has always respected the personal rights of the human race, a people who has shown a character worthy of a better fate, and which from these circumstances it hoped to acquire - if finally a people who, as in the present case, has been attentive to organise itself into a regular and legitimate government, should according to the protocol be finally condemned to be separated from the body of the Greek family - expulsion which it never expected from the humanity of the powerful thrones...

The inhabitants of Symi also wrote a similar letter to consul Wilkinson, lamenting the behaviour of the Ottoman Bey who controlled their island. They hoped that the intercession of a foreign consul in their relations with the Porte would obtain for them more humane and reasonable terms of submission:

...We cannot, Sir, any longer suffer similar vexations; we all prefer rather to die than any longer submit to his tyrannical conduct. We therefore protest in the presence of the almighty of the three Allied Powers of Russia France and England, for all the disasters and evils that may ensure on his account... We beg you, Sir, to communicate the content of this letter to the Sultan’s officer stating that we all demand his presence here, that we may relate to him the serious evils which we have suffered...

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105 26 Aug.1830, Ibid., f.256.
106 26 Aug.1830, Ibid., f.261.
In these peculiar political circumstances, the consuls acquired a new role as intermediaries between the Ottoman authorities and the populations of the Aegean islands, and their attempts at representing the situation to their governments became fundamental for the protection of the Aegean Greeks. The obstinate refusal of the Turks to grant independence to the islands provoked jealousy towards both the independent Greeks and the Ionians, with whom the population of the Aegean islands came into constant contact. The frustration, bitterness and desperate injustice created by the behaviour of the autonomous local governors, forced the consuls to mediate between the two sides. In the years following the resolution of the Greek war, the balance of consular work thus shifted from the representation of British interests abroad, to the witnessing of a collapsing empire and the arbitration of justice for the inhabitants of the Aegean Islands against the behaviour of their local governors. This new political role constitutes the substance of the chapter illustrating the consuls at work on the island of Rhodes.
Chapter 3
The Commercial Role of the Aegean Consuls

The historical events whose evolution shaped the political function of the British consuls in the Levant were also responsible for the development of their commercial role. Indeed, the consular contribution to British commerce grew in importance as a consequence of these events, developing in response to the necessities of local trade and the intentions of the Foreign Office. Before May 1825, the Levant Company had acted as negotiator on behalf of its members with the Ottoman merchants and authorities and with the British government and manufacturers. When the link between the Levant Company and the merchant houses was broken on the abolition of the Company, these duties were taken up by the Foreign Office consuls. As the nature of the consular service became increasingly complex, the consuls’ commercial roles shifted from mediation towards the observation of trade in the area and of opportunities for British enterprise. And as the link between the merchant houses and the consuls became more tenuous, and independent traders gained access to the Levant waters following the winding up of the Levant Company, the Aegean consuls acquired an important task of reporting on the requirements of British commerce in the region. Over time it became evident that they could fulfil a useful new role by collecting and forwarding information for the better development of British trade in the Levant as well as for the rearrangement of the Foreign Office representation in collaboration with the Board of Trade. Their duties varied according to the state of political re-
relations between the Porte and the other European powers, and in the difficult diplomatic climate created at Constantinople by recurrent political problems with Russia and the Greek rebels, and during the consequent disruption which affected British trade, the mediation of the consuls was essential to the resolution of disputes between the merchants and the Ottoman authorities. Collaboration between the consuls and the Board of Trade subsequently led to the stipulation of an advantageous new commercial convention with the Porte in 1838. Consuls were able to supply the Board of Trade with crucial information on the types of products traded in the area, their prices, and the import and export duties paid by the merchants of other countries. In the reactionary climate created at Constantinople by the terms of the convention, the consuls became essential bridges of information to the Foreign Office, and whilst ensuring that the rights of the merchants to import and export all types and quantities of goods in the Levant would be respected by the provincial authorities, they emphasised the need to maintain these hard-won privileges.

From 1825 the Foreign Office required its consuls to compile and forward regular commercial reports describing the returns of exports and imports, as well as the price of goods in each district. At the end of the year, a summary of the commercial situation of the area was also expected of them. The Foreign Office passed these reports to the Board of Trade, which would prepare specific requests and suggestions for the improvement of British commerce in the region. There is no evidence of there having been any regular official publication based on these reports until 1864 when a Gazette of the Board of Trade was first published, to coincide with the completion of the process of reorganisation and reorientation of the British consular service. Prior to that date, it seems likely that manufacturers would have contacted the Board of Trade individually to obtain the information necessary
for their trade. It should be recognised, however, that due to the troubled nature of trade in the Levant, it was probably a few years before new traders, independent of the original Levant Company merchants, began to venture into the area. The nature of British commercial enterprise in the Levant and the contribution that the consuls made to its improvement, is best understood when taking into consideration the evolution of trade in the region under the Levant Company.

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When the Foreign Office took over the administration of the consular service in 1825 the Levant Company had been trading in the region for over two hundred years. During the last five years of its existence, from 1820 to 1825, the government tried to set the basis for its own representation. Examination of the consular reports from this period is essential to gain an understanding of the changing nature of the service under the two organisations. Prior to the change of administration, the Aegean consuls were approached for their opinion on the effects that the takeover of the Levant Company by the state might have on trade in the region. Their responses formed the basis of a memorandum, on ‘The Commercial and Political relations of Great Britain with Asia Minor’ which provides an insight into the commercial situation in the Levant and the changing nature of consular work.

The memorandum pointed out that since the Levant Company was not in itself a trading company but rather a body of merchant houses united under a common association for the protection of their trade, even were the company itself to be abolished, the merchant houses could still continue to trade independently. They would additionally be free of the burden of payment for diplomatic representation to protect their trade. The abolition of the
Levant Company was, however, bound to increase the amount of work for the consuls making them essential for the protection of British trade in the region.¹

The commercial relations of Great Britain in general with the Levant have increased greatly since the breaking out of the Greek revolution. It is probable that the abolition of the Levant Company will be followed by a still further extension of that commerce. As long as the company existed, the money holders both in the Ottoman territory and in England were ignorant of the nature of its regulations and considering it as a monopoly they were afraid to adventure their capital. Publicity having been given to the abolition, excitement has been produced and it might be reasonably expected that new channels will be opened by the spirit of enterprise which characterises the present times. Asia Minor offers an extensive field for almost any branch of human industry. Its productions are infinitely varied. The Asiatic Greeks and the Armenians are very numerous and they are eminently endowed with the spirit of trade, they are moreover enterprising, subtle, economical and wealthy. Owing to their intimate connection with the inhabitants of the interior, they have far greater facilities than the Europeans possibly can possess, of bringing the varied resources of that rich country into exchange for our growing manufactures and of thus increasing greatly the intercourse between Great Britain and those countries. It is indeed to commerce mainly that we might look for the civilisation and future moral development of those fertile regions. In the progress of dissemination of the produce of British

¹ Undated, presumably compiled shortly before 1825 [The report is filed in the Levant Company letter book of correspondence from 1820 to 1825; it was passed to the Foreign Office in 1825].
industry through those countries a more easy intercourse will take place with them, and now that a rapid diffusion of the arts and sciences is flowing back into Egypt, and that such of these as appertain to war are brought into play in this contest between the Greeks and the Turks, the safety of the British Empire in the East Indies may, at not very distant period, call upon those entrusted with the direction of the vast interest of an empire through the extent of which the sun never sets, to bestow a far greater degree of attention to the minor springs and wheels of British policy in the Levant than they have hitherto been permitted to do.²

Although the Foreign Office had decided to take control of the consular service, there was concern for the possible consequences for the Levant Company as an organisation and there appeared to be little scope for its continuation. Thus when, in January 1825, the Government announced its intention of submitting a bill to Parliament for the better regulation of the British consular establishments, it was to lead to the winding up of the Company. When the bill was passed in Parliament and the Foreign Office took over the administration of the consular service in June of the same year, the change was welcomed by the merchant houses.

The Levant Company, whose monopoly in the Levant had been protected by its own consuls, had never needed to seek information on trade in the Levant. Commercial reports were only written as information to the ambassador and for the resolution of major disputes with the Porte. However, when the circle between the manufacturers, the merchant houses and the consuls was broken in 1825, the reports sent regularly to the Board of Trade by the consuls provided one way of determining the requirements of the Le-

² 'Memorandum on the Commercial and Political relations of Great Britain with Asia Minor', FO 78/135, ff.295-7, date missing.
vant market. The consuls’ commercial reports became longer, more detailed and more comprehensive, providing practical suggestions on the quantities, types, and varieties of the goods to be exported.

The commercial reports made by Levant Company consuls during the final five years of its existence, were bound into individual volumes which were forwarded to the Foreign Office upon the closure of the company. These papers provided the Foreign Office with an understanding of the policies that the Porte had pursued with the European merchants in the period immediately preceding the change of administration. They demonstrate how the consular profession developed from a predominantly commercial agency set up to help the merchants deal with the Ottoman authorities, into a complex structure providing information to the government and to manufacturers on the seasonal changes of the local markets, on commercial opportunities, and on the activities of foreign merchants.

The Levant Company dealt with its dispatches internally. From 1807 they were addressed from the consuls to George Liddell, secretary of the company, and from him to the ambassador and the Ottoman authorities. The dispatches illustrate how commercial relations between Great Britain and the Porte were never really separated from their political affairs. The behaviour of the Porte in commercial matters depended, in fact, almost exclusively on the internal political situation of the Ottoman Empire, and on the state of its relations with foreign governments. The content of the reports is thus frequently dependent on a combination of both the contemporary political situation and the arbitrary behaviour of the Porte and its provincial governors. Indeed, the reports written by the Levant Company consuls during the final five years of the Company’s activity testify to the difficulty of mediating diplomatically between the merchants and the Ottoman authorities, and to the

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5 FO 78/136, 3 vols, FO 78/135, 1 vol.
4 FO 78/135, f. 6.
5 Nathaniel Werry to George Canning, 12 July 1825, FO 78/135, f.277.
kind of problems that the consuls encountered in the service of the chartered company.

The dispute regarding the import of grain into the Ottoman Empire, which caused British merchants great losses and their consuls great anxiety, should be seen in this context. In 1821, as a consequence of the increasingly complicated political situation with Russia, the Porte decided to prohibit the passage of grain through the Dardanelles and to cease acquiring this grain for its own use.² Turkey had, for centuries, imported reserves of grain from Russia to support its own internal production which had been generally insufficient to feed the population. However, the running dispute with Catherine, during the 1770s and 1780s, regarding passage through the Bosphorus and the protection of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, brought the trade relationship between the two powers to a close. The embargo on grain, one of the principal products imported from Russia into the Ottoman Empire by foreign merchants, caused panic amongst the traders and sixty six British cargoes of grain, with an estimated value of £130,000, were detained at Constantinople.³ The situation subsequently became particularly difficult when the Porte decided to purchase the cargoes of grain for its internal use, and at its own price, by applying a monopoly right for its acquisition and sale. Cartwright wrote to Liddell that the measures announced by the Turkish government, prohibiting the passage of vessels laden with corn through the channel and of confiscating the cargoes of grain arriving from the Russian ports in the Black sea, could only be justified on the plea of extreme necessity. He commented that the Porte had not sufficiently considered the difference between a ban on the export of its own produce from its own territory and the stopping of foreign vessels, laden with foreign produce, passing from foreign ports through the Bosphorus under the positive stipulations of treaties.

² N. Werry to Liddell, 25 May 1821, FO 78/136, f. 1A.
³ 8 Aug. 1821, Ibid., f.32.
Through the stoppage and seizure of cargoes bound for Russia and by setting the price of the grain at an arbitrary rate, the Porte sought to satisfy its public needs at the expense of foreign traders. British merchants complained that the price set by the Porte for the grain was derisory; one who had offered his three cargoes to the Ottoman commissary in charge of purchasing the grain, had been paid only six piastras per kilo, significantly less than the original cost of the grain in its country of origin. This had provoked chaos amongst the British merchants, who insisted that the ambassador demand permission for the vessels to proceed to their original destinations. Through the ambassador’s representation to the Porte, a price of fifty piastras per kilo was eventually fixed, an arrangement barely satisfactory to the merchants.

This type of incident was typical of the nature of trade with the Ottoman Empire; foreign interests were affected by the adoption of restrictive measures by the Porte in contradiction of the terms of its treaties and could only be restored through time-consuming diplomatic efforts. Indeed the resolution of this matter was swiftly followed by the creation of another problem requiring diplomatic intervention in favour of British trade. Reporting the news he had received from the consuls, Cartwright, the consul general, informed Liddell that the Porte had unjustly prohibited the navigation of foreign vessels in the Black Sea, allegedly on the basis of an agreement signed with Sir Robert Liston in July 1813, during his residence as Ambassador of Great Britain at Constantinople. The ban prevented the export of any Turkish goods on British vessels in the Black Sea, granting instead the monopoly of this trade to the Ottoman merchants. British cargoes were restricted to carrying articles of foreign produce to the Black Sea ports. British trade in the Black Sea had originally begun in 1802, with the granting of the same

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8 Cartwright’s memorandum on the prohibition of export of grain from Turkey; Ibid., f.30, date missing.
9 8 Aug. 1821, Ibid., f.32.
10 10 May 1822, Ibid., f.23; 23 May 1822, ff.56-60; same date, f.79.
privileges that had been accorded to Russia. The suspension of relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in January 1807, and the subsequent closure of the Black Sea during the Russian-Turkish wars, had prevented British navigation in those waters until 1812. Both Ionian subjects and British merchants trading with the Black Sea suffered similar restrictions, which were not applied to their French or Austrian counterparts, and the first cargo was not finally dispatched from Odessa to England until 1817, four years after the arrangement made by the Porte with Sir Robert Liston. News of the ban once more caused chaos amongst the British merchants who had already been distressed by an earlier Ottoman decision to raise the duties payable by foreign vessels whilst at the same time lowering those paid by their own.

One consequence of the embargo was a policy of searching all merchant vessels which used Turkish waters to ensure that no foreign ships, or foreign crewed ships under the Turkish flag, were breaching the ban. Customs duty was not payable on foreign merchandise in transit between Russia and other countries and although the searching of ships was not intended to favour Turkish vessels, they were granted total liberty of navigation in the White Sea with whatsoever merchandise.11

The Porte's behaviour in this matter provoked the reaction of the international community, and both the French and Austrian ministers, determined not to acknowledge the embargo on grain, communicated their intention to the British consuls. Cartwright commented to Liddell that the actions of the Porte, particularly in its anxiety to establish its rights, often inclined it to overlook those of other nations and in this case nothing less than a general invasion of foreign commercial privileges seemed to be under contemplation.12 The odd behaviour of the Porte did not stop at this point; in June 1822 the duty on the export of Aegean wine to Russia was unexpectedly in-

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11 Date missing, Ibid, f.203.
12 June 1822, Ibid., f.95.
creased, throwing the merchants into disarray and creating vast amounts of paperwork for the consuls who were forced to report on yet another breach of the treaties.

Our merchants and ship masters are now paying heavy and unusual duties on wine, the produce of this empire shipped in the Archipelago for Russian ports because the customer otherwise refuses to give the necessary certificate for obtaining the firman, declaring moreover that in consequence of the arrangement made by his Majesty's Embassy in 1813 with the Porte, we have not the right of carrying Turkish Produce to the ports of the Black sea.\(^{13}\)

At the same time the local governor at Scio had declared an Ionian vessel, whose pass had expired, to be in contravention of the terms of navigation. He had thus set fire to it and its content, including the clothes and private property of the master and crew. Furthermore, the governor had communicated to the British consul his intention to imprison the crew and to this end had officially requested their delivery to his office.\(^{14}\) These kinds of incident were more the routine than the exception in the Levant. Continual breaches of the treaties both locally and at the governmental level were no more than a part of ordinary life, and formed the principal motive for the Levant Company's maintenance of a consular service. The period coinciding with the Greek rebellion was particularly rich in such episodes, which stemmed from the political turmoil of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. Indeed, its own subjects took advantage of the political confusion to enrich themselves at the expense of both foreign and internal traders.

At the international level, the behaviour of the Ottoman government re-

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
\(^{14}\) 10 June 1822, Ibid., f.89.
quired intense diplomatic activity between the foreign representatives and
Constantinople and when it came to dealing with the Greek revolution, this
ultimately proved to be a great advantage for the Empire. The Porte under-
stood the importance of trade in its waters for the Europeans, particularly
France and Britain, and used the situation to gain ground in negotiations
with Russia and regarding the war in Greece. Britain and France protected
the Ottoman Empire against Russian designs because neither of them wished
to risk the disturbance of their trade in the region. The Porte took advantage
of this situation in 1821 to prevent the establishment of foreign relations with
the Greek rebels. It notified the European consulates that, should any for-
eign vessels bound for Constantinople be attacked by Greeks, it would ban
further navigation in its waters until the termination of hostilities with
Greece. The Porte knew that attacks by Greek pirates were no rarity, and
thus effectively delegated the responsibility for dealing with them to the Eu-
ropean powers.

In 1822 the murder of more than ten thousand innocent civilians in the
island of Scio demonstrated the violence that the Porte was prepared to use
against the rebels. The massacre was followed by the detention and closure
of the properties and commercial enterprises of the Sciotes at Smyrna. This
was extended throughout the Aegean in the following year, causing consid-
erable loss to the European traders whose credit with the Sciotes was frozen.
Since the confiscated properties represented a guarantee for the goods sold
by the British to the Sciote merchants, in official complaints to the Porte they
were considered to be British. Consul Werry insisted with Liddell that pres-
sure be put on the Porte to secure the release of goods in order to cover the
credit of the factors, since it was essential for the continuation of their trade
in the Levant.

15 16 July 1821, Ibid., f.15. See also Chapter 2, page 114, for the text of the ban.
16 See chapter 2, page 105.
17 Werry to Liddell, 13 Apr. 1822, FO 78/136., f.50.
The Levant Company's strategy of response to recent developments in the behaviour of the Porte was decided in a number of meetings between the company members held in April 1824 at the consul-general's house in Constantinople. Several points were raised and brought to the attention of the Porte. The first of these was the suspension of the rights of free trade on the Black Sea, a matter of great concern because the privileges afforded to Ottoman merchants for trade in those waters had inflicted heavy losses on British trade. Company members felt that the right to export tarifled goods on payment of duty and to reship them, without the imposition of additional duties, and without the harassment caused by the Porte's claimed right to verify the cargoes of foreign ships, was essential to the future of merchant navigation in the Levant. They stressed that immediate payment should be made for the cargoes of corn purchased by the Porte and demanded the reestablishment of the British right of trade in the Black Sea.

One can see how, under the Levant Company, the duties of British consuls were limited to passing the complaints of the merchants to the consul general at Constantinople, who would in turn deal with the ambassador. Their role was therefore one of representation, they often applied pressure on the consul general when matters were being dealt with slowly, or for the resolution of particularly delicate situations.

By 1825, the responsibility for the protectorate of the Ionian islands had created far too great a burden for the Levant Company consuls to bear. The decline in the Company's profits towards the start of the 19th century had permitted its take over by the government. However, whilst political and strategic concerns finalised the government's decision, trade with the Levant was still important and the protection of British commercial interests in the region remained a fundamental concern. Indeed, the closure of the Levant Company in 1825, as a result of the decline in trade in the Levant, paradoxic-

6 Apr. 1824, Ibid., f.319.
ally coincided with a short period of steady growth in British trade with Turkey and Egypt, which saw an increase of both imports and exports.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{British Levantine Trade, 1784-1856}\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{tabular}{lll}
Year & Imports (£000's) & Exports (£000's) \\
1784-6 & 273 & 64 \\
1794-6 & 378 & 62 \\
1804-6 & 241 & 137 \\
1814-6 & 416 & 222 \\
1824-6 & 1154 & 650 \\
\end{tabular}

This boom in British Levantine trade coincided with the outbreak of the Greek war for independence and progressed positively following the establishment of the new kingdom of Greece in 1831, which itself provided a new market for British trade. A summary of the trade figures for the final years of the eighteenth century show a general decrease in Levantine growth which changed, from the second decade of the nineteenth century into a rapid surge of growth.

\textit{Value of British Levantine Trade, 1784-1856}\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Indeed trade with the Levant showed a steady increase right through the period of this study and it does not appear to have been significantly affected by the War in Crimea. The mid 1870s saw, however, the beginning of a decline in British Levantine trade.


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
This is confirmed by the specific figures of Levant Company trade in the last three years of its activity in the Near East. They emphasise the consistency of the trade in cloth and raw materials for an increasing quantity of manufactured British articles.

Quantities of some of the principal articles of produce imported into the United Kingdom from Turkey and Egypt as reported to the Levant Company.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>1822 Tons</th>
<th>1823 Tons</th>
<th>1824 Tons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figs</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raisins</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>3,847</td>
<td>4,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madder roots</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valonea</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>3,022</td>
<td>5,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opium</td>
<td>44,056</td>
<td>35,297</td>
<td>92,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk</td>
<td>262,327</td>
<td>265,403</td>
<td>316,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton wool</td>
<td>425,850</td>
<td>1,234,788</td>
<td>7,910,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohair yarn</td>
<td>60,898</td>
<td>30,080</td>
<td>123,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linseed</td>
<td>17,036</td>
<td>36,126</td>
<td>22,391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value declared at the Custom House of goods exported from the U.K. to the Levant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>972,447</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>1,274,237</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>1,397,509</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the take over of the consular service by the Foreign Office had primarily occurred for political reasons it offered the opportunity to create a more rational organisation of the commercial consulates. Consuls, merchants and ambassadors were asked to express their opinion on the existing establishment and on alternatives for its reorganisation. In response, consul Cartwright addressed a memorandum to the Foreign Office, containing specific

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22 FO 78/137, f.104.
23 Ibid.
suggestions for a more effective commercial reorientation of the Aegean consulates. He pointed out that the Levant Company had opened consulates in the ports where its own direct trade between England and Turkey was carried out. However, since the treaty of Paris in 1815, British presence and trade in the Levant had increased considerably as a consequence of the acquired protectorate of the Ionian islands. Cartwright emphasised that additionally, the struggle for Greek independence was likely to result in a reorganisation of the region and thus require revision of the existing diplomatic representation. He suggested that new consulates should be opened in those areas where commercial relations with the Levant could and should be established, and that they should be ranked in reference to the importance of British trade and navigation in the ports within their respective districts. Encouraging the opening of new consulates at Bucharest and Adrianople, he explained that the recent appointment of a British representative at Adrianople had already produced commercial benefits by introducing articles of British cotton manufacture to more general use in the interior of European Turkey.24

Cartwright strongly believed that locations and priorities required redefinition and his point of view was shared by the Board of Trade, which stressed the issue in an important letter to the Foreign Office.

The Board of Trade is especially called upon anxiously to explore any openings that may present themselves for mercantile enterprise, to watch for means of enlarging our commerce, to point out opportunities which might otherwise pass unnoticed...The places are sufficiently obvious. We are producers and consumers. Here are large, wealthy and luxurious towns...here is a country full of

valuable equivalents [sic]. Here is a demand for the manufactures of Europe and the productions of our East Indian territories. Our European rivals are zealously securing to themselves the market, which is just to open to us, from Europe by the Black sea or the Mediterranean and much more accessible to us from India and the gulf of Persia and Arabia...We ought to resolve that we shall, by judicious degrees, but without delay, plant consuls in all the principal towns, as well in the interior as on the sea coast, we should at all events immediately place them where other European powers have placed their agents.25

In this letter the Board of Trade demanded that the British consuls should develop a new role as commercial agents, with the duty of helping to open new markets for British trade. In this way consuls would be transformed into active collaborators in the development of British enterprise in the region. Although the Levant Company had maintained but an 'imperfect and inadequate'26 hold, it had been organised by active merchants who administered their own diplomatic representation and thus directly obtained the information they required for the improvement of their commerce. When the company was wound up, the need to continue an effective commercial representation became evident, and as the French became increasingly established in the Levantine markets, collaboration between the Board of Trade and the consular service became essential for the success of British enterprise.

The take over of the consular service and its intended reorganisation was, however, almost immediately interrupted by political events and by the breakdown of diplomatic relations in 1827 which, as well as halting the process of change, caused complications for the British merchants in the Aegean.

25 Board of Trade to Foreign Office, March 1828, FO 78/171, f.138. See also chapter 1, pages 56-8.
26 Ibid.
Aware of the Porte’s declaration to foreign powers that further complaints of piracy would result in the suspension of all foreign navigation in the Aegean until the end of the conflict, pirates took advantage of the lack of diplomatic opposition to their activities to exploit the circumstances. Indeed, the situation worsened to such an extent that few foreign vessels escaped attack. A great number such incidents were also reported by Ionian subjects, although these frequently turned out to be false declarations made to receive compensation for sums greatly exceeding the damage effectively suffered.³⁷ None the less the number of pirate attacks on shipping for a while represented a real threat to the continuation of foreign trade and became an increasing concern for the consuls. Their correspondence with the Navy testifies to the extent of damage suffered by the merchants in the region. Indeed, British losses of both men and trade became so substantial, as to require naval protection. However, such intervention had little impact on the criminal activities of the pirates, who were certainly more knowledgeable of the winds and currents of the Aegean than their foreign opponents. Furthermore, the powers called to fight the pirates were generally sympathetic to the Greek rebels and feared harming their chances of eventual success. Their intervention provided only a partial resolution and often, by the time a foreign ship reached the area where piracy had been reported, no trace of the pirate ship could be found. Skiatos and Scopelos were pirate strongholds from where the plunder of vessels entering the Dardanelles was organised, and the islands in the neighbourhood of Smyrna were used as the bases for raids on vessels employed in the trade of fruit.²⁸ Pirates sought refuge in the islands and when foreign convoys arrived to interrogate their inhabitants, neither side could speak the other’s language. This confusion gave the criminals an advantage over the British, whose efforts to police them were often halted by

³⁸ Ibid., p. xxiii.
their inability to communicate with the locals. It was suspected that the perpetrators of raids benefited from the protection of the provisional Greek government. Indeed, the desperate conditions imposed by Ottoman taxation in the smaller islands left many families dependent upon the plunder of foreign vessels for their survival. The provisional government was also determined to prevent military supplies from reaching Turkish forces in the Morea, and it thus gave its cruisers justification to search vessels and arrest anybody suspected of trade with the enemy. Criminals took advantage of this pretext to plunder cargo ships, often leaving their crews on the verge of death. Most of the assaults were carried out by vessels sailing under the Greek national flag, and with regular cruising papers signed by the Provisional government. Indeed, the members of the Provisional government, used to the abuses inflicted over centuries by the Ottomans, and themselves no strangers to the necessity of living by illegal practices, did not regard piracy as a dishonourable profession. For these reasons, it was perceived that an effective resolution of the problem could not be achieved simply by suppressing the pirates, but would require the exertion of diplomatic pressure on the provisional Greek government to control the activities of its armed subjects. Consular reports continued to express concern at the problem of piracy for some time; however, the Allies could do little to improve the situation without risking their neutrality. The state of affairs was, though, sufficiently serious for the Admiralty to take the step of publishing, in 1828, a volume containing the dispatches of the Aegean consuls together with suggestions for how the issue might be resolved. The correspondence quoted in the book is copious and provides an overview both of the situation in the Aegean waters and of the desperate reactions of the merchants to the frequent loss of their cargoes.

The decisive allied victory over the Egyptian fleet in the bay of Navarino represented a major deterrent to the pirates, and for the first time created a

Ibid., p.xvii.
reduction in the number of assaults on foreign vessels. However, despite this decrease, and despite the reopening of normal diplomatic relations, pirate activity remained a consistent problem in the Aegean. This was illustrated, as late as 1853, when vice-consul Newton wrote a number of long reports to the Foreign Office explaining methods of evading the pirates and making suggestions for better control of Greek waters by the British Navy.

It happens that in the intricate channels of the Archipelago, a steamer often takes refuge in an unfrequented port as soon as it encounters a storm. The places where such delays are likely to happen are precisely where pirates are known to be always on the look out, such as the narrow and difficult channels among the Sporades south of Samos. From Scio to Cyprus the coast of Asia Minor is so deserted that there is scarcely a harbour where a vessel can pass the night without being attacked. The plunder of a large steamer, which I consider a very possible enterprise in the present state of the Archipelago, would lead to further outrages of the same kind... the pirates would become as daring by sea as the robbers in the neighbourhood of Smyrna have shown themselves on land... it cannot be expected that the Greek peasant... should volunteer to give evidence against a pirate, unless he receives a proper guarantee that he shall be protected from the vengeance of the man he denounces. The Turkish government never gives this guarantee... The peasants and even the respectable merchants... are sometimes forced by intimidation into an intercourse with brigands. This intercourse, at first the result of fear, becomes a habit, traffic in stolen goods is the natural result, and thus whole villages

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30 Ibid., pp.xxx-i.
31 See also chapter 5, pages 257-59.
and districts are compromised and affected with this moral pestilence... If pirates will be allowed to multiply in the Archipelago, no island will be safe from their inroads, the peaceable inhabitants will be murdered and plundered with impunity, their commerce interrupted, and... whole districts will be forced to harbour pirates... What is wanted in the Archipelago is the constant presence of one or more British cruisers. These ships should be small and fast... with an auxiliary screw propeller... two small cruisers constantly and unexpectedly passing from island to island would be a great check on piracy... 32

There is no evidence that the problems caused by the pirates were ever effectively resolved during the period examined by this work. Although the Navy intensified its patrols in the area, the pirates were still able to escape their attention and merchants continued to lose valuable cargoes. As Newton explained in his dispatch, the problem was an almost direct consequence of the high level of taxation in the islands and of the poverty that it caused. These factors led the inhabitants of the region, believing themselves to be the victims of robbery, to perpetrate illegal acts against foreign vessels. When consuls sought to intervene against the pirates, and typical examples are reported in the last chapter of this thesis, they often exposed themselves to considerable risk, eventually coming to the conclusion that events were best left to follow their own course.

* The reopening of diplomatic relations with the Porte in 1828, following the resolution of the Greek question, saw the start of a collaboration between the

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32 10 May 1854, FO 78/1017, f.222.
Board of Trade and the Aegean consuls to gather commercial information for British manufacturers. This envisaged the reorganisation of the commercial duties of the consuls, and the beginning of a long lasting and direct collaboration with the Board of Trade. Consular agents, often themselves merchants, demonstrated their ability to provide valuable information on the commercial situation of the smaller islands. The commercial reports that the consuls were asked to provide at this stage contained the returns of exports, imports, prices and yearly comments on trade. They were sent to the Foreign Office and from thence passed to the Board of Trade, which drew up specific requests and suggestions for the improvement of British enterprise in the Levant. The consuls reported not only the situation of British trade in the Aegean; they also supplied information on other nations’ treaties, commercial enterprises and the prices of their products.

The yearly reports on trade in their consular districts illustrate the nature of commercial relations between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain and give an understanding of the importance of the consular representation for the improvement of British trade in the Levant. Even more than this, however, they reveal that during this period the newly formed Greek state represented a growing market for European manufactured goods, thus making it necessary for the commercial role of the consuls to be reconsidered, to create opportunities for new commercial ventures and to consolidate trade relations with Greece.33 The early years of the 1830s thus saw effort concentrated on the organisation of commercial enterprises with Greece. The reorganisation of British commercial relations with the Porte eventually began in 1834, when a proper collaboration was initiated between the Board of Trade and the Foreign Office. In the intervening years consular reports provided an overview of the state of both British and foreign trade with the region and of

33 See the report written by the Board of Trade in 1828, FO 78/171, f.138 in this chapter, page 165.
the difficulties created by the unresolved political situation.

The initial exclusion of the Aegean islands from the new kingdom of Greece was unsatisfactory not simply from a political point of view; commercially it had created dead markets. Despite their normal wealth, the islands were so highly taxed as to be unviable as potential markets, and their commercial importance waned in comparison with the rest of the Levant. Moreover, after years of struggle for independence, their return to Turkish rule had caused many of their inhabitants to flee from the islands. No new consulates were opened in the Aegean and the islands remained under the consular jurisdiction of Smyrna until 1850, when a reorganisation of the Ottoman administration in the area made the opening of a British consulate in Rhodes necessary.

Smyrna was one of the most important trading cities in the Levant, forming a traditional focus for trade both with the islands and with the interior of Turkey. However, the consular reports from that town during the 1830s concentrate on the more profitable areas of the region leaving out the islands. These reports are nevertheless useful sources of information on the nature of British trade in the Levant in the years following the dissolution of the Levant Company and they verify the different nature of consular work under the new administration.

The reports to the Board of Trade detail the goods traded with Turkey. Where the exchange of cloth for raw materials had formed the basis of the Levant Company's trade, British vessels now carried ballast from Constantinople, coals and iron from Cardiff and rice from Alexandria, whilst Turkish cargoes included raisins, sultanas, currants, figs, fruit, olive oil, valonea, opium, cotton, carpets, mohair yarns, and drugs. The reports additionally describe the methods of trade in the Levant, and contain suggestions for its improvement. The consul at Adrianople, located at the centre of Roumelia, described

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BT 2/1, enclos. n.6, f.390, Trade of Smyrna 1835.
how the city was an important destination and point of departure for trade with the interior, and was dependent upon both Constantinople and Smyrna for the supply of goods. Among the British manufactured products imported through Adrianople the consul listed prints, handkerchiefs, coloured fabrics, shawls, florentines, unbleached calicoes, East India long cloths, English long cloths, muslin, fancy fabrics, and cloth. Other products included cotton twist, coffee, cochineal, cloves, cassia lignea, indigo, English and Russian iron, nutmeg, pepper and sugar of various varieties, crusted and refined, from Havana and the East Indies. Additionally lead, lead shot, tin, tin plate, and campeachy wood were traded through that town to other parts of the Levant. The consul commented that the manufactured cotton was almost exclusively British, with small quantities of woollens, muslin and florentine imported from Germany and printed fabrics from Switzerland. Although many imported goods were British, produce was also imported from America, France, and Holland. Internally the region produced hare skins, salted beef, buffalo, attar of roses, silk, sheepskin, goat hide, sheep and goat’s wool, beeswax, yellow berries, valonea, tobacco, linseed, cheese and broom. British merchants bought hare skins, attar of roses, silk, yellow berries and valonea, whilst their French counterparts traded mainly in wool; German merchants in tobacco and wax. The export of grain, which formed a large part of the local agricultural production, had been halted by the Porte’s embargo which had withdrawn a profitable source of trade from the region, and the payment of import duties at Smyrna and Constantinople meant that goods arriving at Adrianople were free of the payment of further duties, thus compounding the loss of revenue that had been caused by the opening of competing markets at Galata and Bucharest. The consul at Adrianople commented that the decline in the city’s fortunes might however be reversed by the imminent interruption of direct trade between Britain and the Danube.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. f.402, 2 Dec. 1835.
By contrast, consul Wilkinson at Syros, an island which lay within the new Greek state, related the positive effects of Greek independence on the trade in his consular district. He explained that the population of the island had increased considerably following the emigration of the inhabitants from the neighbouring Aegean islands, in particular from Scio. The people of Tinos, he added, had instead chosen to live in Constantinople and Smyrna, where they could earn a living in order to support their families who remained in the islands. Wilkinson's description of the situation on the island makes interesting reading:

The commercial intercourse of Syra and its neighbourhood with England is considerable. There is a good amount of importation from England and it would increase even more if it wasn't for the extension of days of quarantine on vessels and passengers from the Turkish dominions, the heavy duties imposed onto them, and the high custom duty on consumption. Two thirds of the merchandise bought from Europe is sent to the Ottoman dominions.

Trade is carried on by a great number of Greek vessels, principally under the Greek flag. The duty on goods deposited for exportation is 1%, but if they were to be sold on to any part of the Greek dominion, that duty increases up to 10 or 20% and even more. This tax upon consumption is very expensive if one takes into account the fact that Greeks are generally not rich, and therefore prevents increased demand for goods. The government is about to issue a new tariff, and it is hoped to be more favourable. The actual policy does not favour the artisans and the exportations because articles imported are heavily taxed and if manufactured for exportation, taxed again on leaving the country. The

36 Modern Syros.
principal articles imported from England are: cotton manufactures, iron, anchors, cables, some colonials, clothes and refined sugars. The trade from France is confined to the port of Marseilles, from whence Greece receives silks, cloths principally of middling quality, salt fish, scarlet skull caps, some colonials. From Trieste and Germany it receives cloths, some cotton manufactures, deal boards, nails, hardware, glassware from Bohemia, steal, cordage, some quicksilver, some colonials. From Turkey, cattle and provisions of all kinds, tobacco etc.

A great impediment to the increase of trade is the want of produce to export to Europe, and consequently the scarcity of bills; and a long time must elapse before Greece can produce any stable commodity of value proper for the European market. The island pays a considerable revenue to the government, which must be about 16,000 dollars a month. The port charges on Greek vessels are about five cents per ton on vessels that neither discharge nor board goods, double if they land goods, triple if they land and board goods. The duties on foreign vessels are double that. The Greek government wants to levy an additional duty on goods arriving under foreign flag.

Wilkinson described the continuing positive effect of Greek independence on the trade of the consular district two years later, in 1835, commenting that an agent operating on behalf of a London banker, Wright & Co, had obtained permission to open a bank in Greece under the name of ‘National Bank’ with permission to grant loans on landed property at the rate of 8% interest, and on commercial bonds at the rate of 12%. He reported that the

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37 Colonial products.
38 Consul Wilkinson to Board of Trade, Syra, 27 Dec. 1833, BT 2/6, f.83.
yearly imports of 1835 had failed to maintain the level of the previous year, but that signs of recovery were evident in the increased demand for foreign products during the final months of the year.  

The Foreign Office also gathered information from its consulates at Patras and Prevesa with the aim of monitoring the progress of British trade in the various regions of the Levant. The scope of these reports expanded from 1833 when, in collaboration, the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade sought to obtain more favourable agreements with the Porte for the control of the local Ottoman authorities. Local feedback and suggestions regarding the current problems and progress of British trade were essential in order to achieve these aims and it was in this context that the consuls became valuable sources of information. In addition to protecting British merchants from the arbitrary demands of the local Ottoman Pashas, they were also able to detect potential new markets for British manufacturers. The reports to the Board of Trade in this period thus made an important step towards the creation of a commercially-oriented consular representation in the Levant.

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In 1837 the Board of Trade began to make plans for a new commercial convention with the Porte to eliminate the imposition of monopolies by the Ottoman government and to allow British merchants the freedom to trade in any product and in all the territories of the Levant. The plans were ambitious when compared to any other convention ever stipulated by the Porte with foreign powers, since the Ottoman government had always been keen to retain privileges of trade and passage through the Straits for the benefit of its own traders. The help of the consuls was essential for the successful stipulation of the new convention; they had a particular understanding of the fac-

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Annual trade reports from Syros, 1835, BT 2/2, ff.178,186.
tors which affected British commerce in the Levant, and were well placed to offer suggestions as to how it might be favoured. They thus became an important link between the Foreign Office and the merchant houses, and during the months preceding the convention they both commented in particular on commercial problems with the Ottoman Empire, providing the Board of Trade with reports on the prices of products, percentages of trade, and the cost of import and export duties for the other trading nations in the Ottoman Empire.

Russian agreement to the convention was felt to be essential to ensure that its terms, and the right of navigation through the Bosphorus, might be achieved without the imposition of penalties. Discussions with the Porte regarding the creation of the new convention were initiated by Ponsonby, the Ambassador, who wrote on this point to the Board of Trade, communicating the progress of negotiations with Constantinople:

I am informed that the answer given by the Russian minister to the application made by the Sublime Porte for the abolition of the Russian tariff is evasive and affords little reason of an expectation that it will be abolished. That tariff has five years to run; and I conceive it may materially, perhaps fatally, interfere with any arrangement that we could hope or perhaps desire to make with the Porte. I do not however, speak positively on this point...

From a political point of view, the Porte's growing desperation during the Greek war of independence had seen its behaviour towards the European powers become increasingly erratic. The outcome of the war had left the Empire mutilated and weakened, unable to resolve its ongoing crisis with Russia. European support was, by this stage, fundamental to the Empire's

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40 John, Viscount Ponsonby was British ambassador at Constantinople from 1832 until 1841.
41 4 Jan.1837, BT 2/8, ff.149/161.
survival and it was in this context that the treaty between Great Britain and the Porte was signed in 1838, following the resolution of the Greek situation.

The treaty for the first time gave Britain absolute freedom of trade within the Ottoman territories, and at the same time it entirely removed the monopolies on Ottoman produce which had given the local authorities the power to hamper commerce since the start of British trade with the Levant. The convention thus provided Britain with benefits which made its support of the Empire worthwhile.

Collaboration with the consuls had been vital for the Board of Trade to understand the need for the complete elimination of the monopolies which had been used by the Ottoman Pashas to assert their authority over the foreign merchants. The consuls had insisted that trade should be freed of the unnecessary ties that the old convention imposed it, and had been instrumental in pushing negotiations toward the total freedom of trade in the area. As Stratford Canning wrote when amendments to the convention were under discussion:

The enquiries which your Lordship directed me to make respecting the probable effects to be produced eventually on British commercial interests by the operation of those amendments which the Porte has proposed to introduce into the convention...have been delayed until the last few days. I am submitting to your Lordship

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43 FO 198/5, f.2, article 2 of the Convention of Commerce and Navigation between her Majesty and the Sultan, 16 Aug, 1838. 'The Subject of Her Britannic Majesty, or their agents shall be permitted to purchase at all places in the Ottoman dominions (whether for the purpose of internal trade or exportation) all articles, without any exception whatsoever, the produce, growth or manufacture of the said dominions; and the Sublime Porte formally engages to abolish all monopolies of agricultural produce or of any other articles whatsoever, as well as all permits from the local governors, either for the purchase of any article, or for its removal from one place to another when to receive such permits from the local governors shall be considered as an infraction of the treaties, and the Sublime Porte shall immediately punish with severity any vizirs or other officers who shall have been guilty of such misconduct and render full justice to British subjects for all injuries or losses which they might duly prove themselves to have suffered.'
44 See BT 2/6 passim, BT 2/8 passim, BT 2/10 passim, BT 2/11 ff.141, 147, 213; see also enclosures 9966, 9968, 10196, 10274; BT 2/14 enclosure 345, n.1, n.2.
the answers which I have received respectively from H.M.’s consuls here at Smyrna, and from some of the most intelligent merchants... The consuls and merchants are far better authorities than I can presume [to be] on the subject in question.45

Ponsonby’s success in negotiating the treaty was the result of close collaboration with the French ambassador at Constantinople, who mediated with the Russian and Austrian ministers the acceptance of the terms suggested by the British.46 In January 1837 the Emperor of Russia had agreed to abandon the levy of a separate Russian tariff and communicated his willingness to accept the duty agreed between Turkey and the other European powers. During the negotiations a degree of confusion arose between the merchants and the local authorities because the expiry of the old convention was interpreted by the provincial Pashas as an opportunity to charge arbitrary fees on foreign trade.47 The reaction of the merchants was unanimous; until a new convention was agreed, the old one should be respected, and British rights of trade should be secured on the same basis. The desire for a new commercial convention had exceptionally united the British and French ambassadors to obtain new tariffs, and the two powers had on this occasion abandoned their traditional political and commercial rivalry in favour of an agreement that was to change the future of European trade in the Levant. Indeed, the deal stipulated with the Porte in 1838 granted British merchants complete freedom of trade in all articles produced, sold or manufactured in the territories of the Empire. The agreement additionally eliminated the right of the local authorities to impose monopolies on articles of commerce.48 This represented a major advantage for the British, since the arbitrary monopolies

45 25 Jan. 1845, BT 2/14 enclosure n.345.
46 May, 1837, Ibid., ff.157 and 361-8.
48 2 Feb. 1838, BT 2/10, f.247.
imposed by the provincial *Pashas* on articles of bulk consumption had caused their merchants great losses, and had been a perpetual cause for dispute from the commencement of British trade in the Levant.

The positive effects of the convention were soon visible in the returns of British trade, particularly with continental Greece. The restoration of political stability in Greece had brought renewed confidence and with it, an increase of sales to the Greek markets. Consul Crowe at Patras, in his trade report for the year 1838, noted that an increased number of British ships had entered the ports under the jurisdiction of his consulate and that British vessels were exporting more than thirty times as much as the combined total exports of all other vessels of every flag.

In consequence of the general tranquillity, the population has started to cultivate more land and especially currants, which are well sold; for this reason the cultivation of grain has been neglected. The oil crop, from which a considerable revenue is usually derived, has failed in consequence of the quarantine imposed in the Ionian islands on vessels coming from the rest of Greece. The Greek trade is suffering due to the constant drain upon its circulation for the pay and clothing of the foreign troops and civil officers, a large portion of which, instead of being spent in the country and thus returned to circulation, is remitted to Bavaria.\(^9\) Since 1833 this drain of capital has amounted to a very large sum and is a source of constant complaint and discontent.\(^9\)

From the island of Syros, situated at the junction between the new state and the old empire, Consul Wilkinson reported to the Board of Trade that during

\(^9\) Otto I, the King of Greece, was a Bavarian.
\(^9\) 2 Feb. 1838, BT 2/10, f.247.
the course of 1837 a considerable quantity of goods had remained in the stores, but that increased confidence in the new commercial treaty was expected to influence the sales of British products in that area.

The annual report from Adrianople indicated that the plague which had affected the area had discouraged trade, eventually bringing it to an end. Whilst crops had been abundant in 1837, prices had fallen considerably as a consequence of the disease, and products had remained unsold.\textsuperscript{51} Quarantine regulations imposed a forty day detention period on vessels coming from infected places during which cargoes risked deterioration, and for this reason merchants tried to avoid affected areas.

As confidence in trade grew following the convention, Britain sought a reduction in the rate of interior duty on goods purchased by British traders for export.\textsuperscript{52} To avoid the duty on silk, additional direct routes were studied to convey the products from one Levant emporium to another.\textsuperscript{53} The unprecedented freedom acquired by the British in the Levant with the new convention, was soon a cause of resentment among internal and foreign traders. French diplomats were aware of the long term benefits that would be provided to their merchants by more favourable tariffs, and they saw that the increased risks and losses, created by the instability of the political situation in the Levant, would be counterbalanced by improved returns, ultimately encouraging more investment in the region. Whilst the privileges gained by the British posed a problem both for the other Europeans and for the local traders, the Porte itself also faced pressure from the provincial Pashas. It was a matter of common knowledge in the Levant that provincial governors profited from the internal political situation, and indeed this had been one of the primary reasons for requesting a new convention with the Porte. However, as soon as the agreement was signed, the governors reacted by trying to

\textsuperscript{51} 12 Apr. 1838, Ibid., f.332.
\textsuperscript{52} 8 Jan. 1838, Ibid., f.243.
\textsuperscript{53} 17 Apr. 1839, BT 2/11, f.147.
hamper the smooth development of British trade, and having lost the privilege of imposing monopolies and taxes for their own personal benefit, they gained French support to insist on limitations to the new convention.\textsuperscript{54} In April 1839, in response to the Pashas' demands and in contravention of the eight-month-old convention, the Porte attempted to impose limitations on the ports at which specific articles could be purchased or sold, and on the trade routes for those articles.\textsuperscript{55} Resistance to the freedoms of the convention had appeared over the previous year both in Tunis, where the Bey had requested the support of the French government for his opposition to the agreement,\textsuperscript{56} and in Smyrna, where the authorities desperately attempted to impose their conditions on foreign trade. In October 1838, Consul Brandt at Smyrna had reported protests made to the vice consul at Scala Nova regarding the civil governor of Sochia, the custom house authorities and the civil governor of Scala Nova, for their infraction of the convention. An Ionian had complained to the consul that an agent he had commissioned to purchase lychees on his behalf had been arrested for having illegally infringed the monopoly of trade in the fruit, which, he was informed, rested with the Ottoman merchants. The Ionian had sent a second agent to the governor to explain the legality of the purchase, but the governor had responded by ordering the destruction of the fruit. This deliberate breach of the convention had brought the Ionian to appeal to the consul and through him to the ambassador. A second Ionian had encountered a similar attitude when he tried to carry tobacco bought from an American trader to the interior of the country. Permission had been denied at the custom house, once again in breach of the treaty.

I beg leave, my Lord to observe that the exclusive privilege of manufacturing and dealing in snuff, secured to the possessor of the

\textsuperscript{54} April 1839, Ibid., f.141.
\textsuperscript{55} 30 Apr. 1839, Ibid., f.213.
\textsuperscript{56} 15 Aug. 1840, BT 2/12, enclos. n.9966.
firman to which reference is made...prevents the trade in tobacco being free, for if he be the only seller of the manufactured article, there will be no buyer of the new material, the importers thereof will consequently be obliged to accept whatever terms he may offer them and thus an abuse will be continued, which it was the object of the convention to abolish. 57

A further complaint from Scala Nova referred to the monopoly applied by the local Pasha on lead shot, once again in deliberate breach of the treaty. 58 Consul Sandison wrote from Brussa 59 that the treaty had brought beneficial effects, having liberated trade from the illegal monopolies and taxes that had been responsible for most of the surplus payments restricting commerce. He described, however, how the character of the local inhabitants together with the deviousness of the local Pasha, had prevented the proper development of the silk industry.

The character of the inhabitants is the reverse of persevering industry. Content with the produce of their silk worms, the tending of which, including the culture of their Mulberry gardens, does not require more than three or four months collective labour at most, the great proportion of them survives with the means thus raised, with indifference to greater ease by the useful occupation of the rest of their time...People might, with some little pain and judgment be aroused and directed to profitable and easy pursuits within their reach...I am persuaded Brussa might without much difficulty be rendered one of the richest and most flourishing provinces of the empire, it would consequently become one of the most impor-

57 Consul W. Brandt, 16 Oct. 1840, BT 2/12 enclos. n. 10274.
58 Ibid.
59 Now Bursa.
tant and valuable to Great Britain for the consumption of our goods... To obtain this, the Porte must appoint a very different governor from the present Pasha, as the existing one has rather tended to discourage than improve local initiative and industry...A good dyer lately came over from the capital to establish here, much to the satisfaction of the manufacturers and operative weavers, but as he was an Armenian, and Rayah, the Turkish dyers of the city presented a petition objecting to his taking part to their trade, and the Pasha in deference to this demand ordered him to return to Constantinople. It is thus in too many instances that the new laws of placing Rayahs and Moslems on a perfect equality of civil rights are evaded from ignorance and prejudice. The direct effect on our trade was to prevent the additional consumption of twist and dyes which a superior process of colouring would have ensured in enhancing the demand for Brussa Silk and cotton stuffs.\(^{60}\)

Consul Wilkinson expressed his concern, in a report to the Foreign Office, that further complications were caused by British laws regarding import and export which had been imposed with the aim of protecting trade with the colonies. He understood that raw materials produced within the British Empire and exported to other countries could not be reshipped to Britain since their manufacture there was prohibited. Instead, he commented, they had to be fabricated abroad and shipped directly to other markets. Inspecting the returns of the custom house he observed a rapid decrease in the sales of British sugars imported to the Levant from the West Indies, coinciding with a growth in the sales of Dutch sugars. Wilkinson contacted the British merchants and the ambassador to see how the lost market might be restored. The traders confirmed that the increased sales of Dutch sugars had been to the detriment

\(^{60}\) 4 Sept.1840, BT 2/12, enclos. n.10196.
of the British and explained that it was because the Dutch were able to im-
port and refine sugars in Holland prior to their export. British sugar, pro-
duced and refined in the West Indies, was comparatively expensive, despite
its higher quality. The consul informed the ambassador that the traders them-
selves had asked him to make the Foreign Office aware of this subject and
urged a solution that would allow the merchants to sell their sugars at lower
prices:

...the importation into Holland of Java and of Brazil and other for-
eign sugars for the purpose of being refined for exportation, which
sugars are lower in price than the British colonial sugars, must put
a stop to our refined sugar trade in these parts and prove much
more detrimental to the British West India interests than the admis-
sion into India of foreign sugars to be refined for exportation.
Should these sugars be ever admitted into England for that pur-
pose, the skill of our refiners would in a very short period give
back to our sugars all the influence which they are at present los-
ing, and we might then confidently calculate on the exclusion of
Dutch sugar in every market, as the British sugars would be better
refined and the prices equal, if not lower than the Dutch. 61

The ambassador replied to him that the refining of foreign sugars under bond
had been permitted in Britain for several years and, writing to the Foreign Of-
face later in the year, Wilkinson explained that he had passed on the ambassa-
dor's information to the local merchants. He pointed out, however, that there
was an urgent need for better regulations regarding the admission of foreign
products for manufacture in the colonies. 62

61 22 Aug.1843, FO 32/124, f.165.
Commercial information of this kind was fundamental to the success of British trade in a market made even more fiercely competitive by the 1838 convention. Through it Britain had gained such large benefits, that as late as 1845 the *Porte* was still attempting to get out of the convention by suggesting amendments that would allow a monopoly on specific products to corporations of traders. The experience of the consuls in the Aegean area once again became precious. Contrary to the insistence of the *Porte* and of the other European powers, consuls explained to the ambassador that the acceptance of the terms that the Ottoman government was suggesting, the loss of the total freedom of trade would mean a return to the situation before the treaty was signed. Stratford Canning was informed by consuls and merchants that the acceptance of these changes would be disastrous to British trade. Consul Cartwright at Constantinople wrote:

During the Embassy of Sir Robert Liston, a company of Muslim dealers pretended to have the exclusive privilege of selling white muslin in retail. The pretension was resisted and overcome. It was renewed in Ponsonby’s time and again successfully resisted...It was felt that if the retail sale of muslin was restricted to a privileged company of tradesmen, the wholesale trade in British muslin would be equally restricted...The Ottoman *capitulations* and treaties with foreign government contain no exceptional reference to *Esnaffs* or privileged trading companies and it was intended by the convention of 1838 to protect trade against the pretensions of such companies.\(^{64}\)

Consul Brandt at Smyrna confirmed this opinion, stating that Ionian interests

\(^{61}\) Monopolies.

\(^{64}\) 25 Jan.1845, BT 2/14, enclos. n.345, piece n. 1.
would be injured by the suggested modifications because the Porte's attempts to amend the treaties were based on its support for Muslim traders at the expense of Christians.

The creation of a monopoly on wine and spirits, the produce of Turkey, could cause the ruin of a numerous class of persons employed in the manufactures of those articles at this place, and in the neighbourhood. Ionian subjects are the proprietors of no less than thirty seven establishments of this description...The vineyards which supply the grapes, are partly owned and cultivated by the Ionians who would no longer obtain remunerative prices if a monopolist were the only buyer of it, the native agriculturalists would be placed in the same predicament. It would in my opinion be a very dangerous experiment to revive old or create new monopolies. Restrictions and free trade cannot co-exist without giving rise to endless contentions between European and Turkish authorities.\(^6^5\)

Canning also received correspondence from the merchants who declared, in conversation with the consuls, that any change to the treaty by the Porte would probably threaten British trade in the region.

It might perhaps not be irrelevant to state that experience has proved that any concession made in connection with our rights and privileges as established by treaty or custom, has only served to injure our commercial interests and therefore it is always dangerous to give away even where no visible objection may be apparent, for there is no guarantee why at a subsequent period the

\(^6^5\) Ibid., piece n. 2.
remnant of our privileges may not equally be attacked and then
every right we possess may be frittered away.66

In the wake of consular dispatches advising the ambassador not to bend to
the suggested changes requested by the Porte, the British government re­
fused to amend the convention.

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During the first few years of its administration, the Foreign Office had
found an entirely new role for its consuls. On this occasion they had formed
the first source of competent information on a matter of great relevance to the
future of British trade in the Levant. In addition to acting as representatives
of their country abroad, the consuls had become political and commercial
agents for the better development of British interests in the Levant. They not
only contributed to the safe development and improvement of such trade, but
provided precious information on the varying political situation of an area,
where daily scrutiny of the political changes and intrigues was fundamental
both to the survival of British interests, commerce and peace.

Commercial relations between Great Britain and the Porte continued on
a similar basis and with similar problems throughout the rest of the period ex­
amined by this thesis. Whilst British trade with the Ottoman Empire was in­
creasing, its importance for the British economy was in decline as trade with
other areas was growing more rapidly. Moreover, the Aegean trade suffered
by the separation of the islands from Greece after the formation of the Greek
State in 1831. The effects of this separation, as well as the political and com­
mmercial consequences deriving from it, form one of the objects of the case
study on the consular district of Rhodes.

66 From merchants at Smyrna, 25 Jan. 1845, Ibid., enclos. n.345, piece n. 2.
Chapter 4
The British Consuls in the Aegean as Collectors of Antiquities.

This chapter is concerned with the significant role acquired by the British consuls in the Aegean in the search for antiquities for the British Museum. It examines the initial difficulties experienced by the museum in its acquisition of artifacts as a result of government hesitance towards the purchase of private collections and the financing of excavations, and how they were eventually resolved through the creation of an efficient agency combining the consular service with other branches of the government. The possibilities open to consuls in the Aegean were highlighted by the activities of Charles Thomas Newton, a former employee of the British Museum, who used his time as vice consul in the Levant to search for, and retrieve antiquities on its behalf. As a result of his efforts in the Levant, from 1863 the official duties of the British consuls in the Aegean were extended to include the search for antiquities to enrich the national collection. This new aspect of the consular profession represented a significant achievement for the British Museum in the context of the race between the European powers for the establishment of their own national museums. In order to understand the broader context of the search for antiquities and the involvement of the consuls in it, it is necessary to explain the history of the national museums and the collection of antiquities at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The concept of national museums had originated on the continent with the ancient Romans and the Greeks, but the institutions themselves had not
survived the centuries. Since the renaissance, pieces of art, paintings, sculptures and archeological remains had primarily been the interest of rich private collectors. Princes, monarchs and members of the European aristocracy, had amassed private collections inaccessible to the wider public. The opportunity to establish a national museum in Britain had first arisen in 1753 when Sir Hans Sloane left his collection to the country. Sloane's bequest coincided with a growing desire to create such a national institution, and despite the initial reluctance of the government to spend public money in the purchase of a private collection, the acquisition was eventually financed by the creation of a lottery. Sloane's residence was also purchased to house his collection, to which was added a selection of important objects including the Rosetta Stone and the other archeological pieces found with it, which had been secured by the British defeat of the French in Egypt in 1798. Further benefactors offered their collections to the new museum which soon outgrew its premises. Although the Museum was preeminent in books and manuscripts of varying kinds as well as prints, coins and objects of natural history, it was short of antiquities, and the first pieces of recognised international importance were only acquired in 1816 when as a result of Lord Elgin's career as ambassador at Constantinople, Britain acquired the marbles that had once formed the friezes of the Parthenon. The Elgin Marbles, as they came to be known, stimulated great public interest and, by attracting the jealousy of the other European countries, opened the way to an unprecedented race for the collection of antiquities.

At the inception of the Museum, a board of Trustees was formed to secure its future, and to ensure that the government would continue to care for the new institution, it included a representative from every branch of government. This resulted in the creation of a powerful organisation. The Statutes and Rules of the British Museum lists the Trustees in order of importance.

Three principal Trustees: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons; and twenty one others: the first Lord of the Treasury, the Lord president of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, the Bishop of London, the Principal Secretaries of State, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lord Chief Justice of England, the Master of the Rolls, the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the President of the Royal Society, the President of the Royal College of Physicians, the President of the Society of Antiquaries, the President of the Royal Academy...\(^2\)

This impressive panel, to which were added representatives of the sovereign and members of the families that contributed most to the growth of the Museum, was able to guarantee the support of almost every sector of public life. Indeed, the Board of Trustees contained an impressive number of members of the government.

The British government was keen to build up a national collection, both as a sign of national prestige, and as a contribution to the cultural growth of the population. This desire was reinforced by a spirit of competition with the French, and in particular a hostility to Napoleon’s aims as conqueror and collector. On the occasion of the arrival of the Parthenon marbles in London, and their acquisition by the British Museum, a committee reported on how the possession of works of art contributed to the esteem and dignity of the country.

submitting to the attentive reflection of the House, how highly the cultivation of the Fine Arts has contributed to the respect, character, and dignity of every government by which they have been encouraged and how intimately they are connected with the advancement of everything valuable in science, literature and philosophy.  

Although the government seemed willing to involve itself in the acquisition of antiquities, it was little disposed towards expenditure, forcing the Trustees to put a great deal of effort into obtaining grants and support. Where private collectors were limited by their personal finances, the Museum was entirely reliant on the decisions of the Treasury, whose annual grants financed all excavations and acquisitions. Sums considered enormous by the Treasury were barely sufficient for the purposes of the Museum, and there was more than one occasion on which money to acquire particular pieces was denied. Even though many of the Trustees were themselves part of the government, it was still a hard task for them, as a body, to get financial help, and even harder still for the Museum to convince the relevant individuals of the need to obtain grants for specific purposes. The position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the Trustees, made it both difficult for him to refuse financial help to the Museum, and necessary to impose restrictions on its requests. Although, as a Trustee, he had a duty to help the Museum obtain grants to carry out as many excavations as possible, he had to take account of his wider financial responsibilities. Despite the conflict with his political role, the Chancellor’s position as a Trustee was of great importance to the Museum. The difficulty of his situation emerges from his correspondence with the Trustees. A letter written in January 1849 informed him: ‘the amount of the

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enclosed estimate will prove to you that the Trustees are endeavouring to act in accordance with your wishes on the subject of the Museum grants for the ensuing year...’

However, just one year later the Trustees asked the Chancellor’s help to obtain more money: ‘Sir, I have the honour to enclose you the copy of a minute of our Trustees made at their board on Saturday last, praying your assistance to obtain a sum of money in addition to the £1500 already granted for the present year to enable Mr. Layard to carry out his excavations at Nimrud with increased force.’

The museum’s continual struggle for sufficient financial support also conditioned its early dealings with the British consuls in the Levant.

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By the end of the eighteenth century, consuls had already acquired a reputation throughout Europe as collectors of antiquities. Indeed, a recent authority claims that ‘the British consuls in various parts of Italy during the latter half of the eighteenth century were among the most enterprising seekers after antiquities and pictures on behalf of clients in England,’ and although it is not clear at what point consuls in the Levant began to procure antiquities for private collectors, there is evidence of their activity for and on behalf of public museums in the letter books of incoming and outgoing correspondence at the British Museum. These documents also reveal how collaboration between the Museum and the Foreign Office developed over time.

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4 17 Jan 1849, B.M.A., Letter book n.34, f.45.
6 F. Herrmann, *The English as Collectors* (1972), p.162. In his book, Herrmann describes an event involving Eastlake, director of the National Gallery: ‘Having gone to Italy to obtain a painting for the gallery [Eastlake] found the hostility of the Florentine government to forbid the sale of the painting to a foreign gallery.’ Eastlake’s wife wrote: ‘...when this news [of the impossibility of the purchase] reached us and, as my husband has a letter from Lord Clarendon to all ministers and consuls to assist him in any difficulty, he took it at once, and has set his Lordship to work to overrule, if possible, the intrigues.’ The episode underlines the use of diplomacy in Italy with the aim of obtaining pieces of art. In Greece, it took some time for the British Museum to achieve the same results.
In 1820 Henry Salt, who had been the Levant Company consul at Alex­
andria since 1815, offered to sell the Museum the collection that he had ac­
quired during a lifetime of excavation and research in the Levant. Salt was
the first consul to offer pieces of art to the British Museum, however he
found the government unprepared to finance the purchase of material from
private individuals and his offer was refused. At the time of his proposal, the
Trustees had been unable to sway a government which had yet to appreciate
the potential of the diplomatic service as an agency for the search of antiqu­i­
ities. The importance of Salt’s offer was only understood when, faced with
this refusal, he decided to sell his valuable collection to the French. On a se­
parate occasion, Salt proposed the sale of the so called Belzoni sarcophagus,
but once again the government considered the price to be too high, and the
Trustees had to forgo the opportunity to purchase this valuable piece, which
was bought by the architect and collector, Sir John Soane.

When Salt had offered his collections to the Museum, the possibility of
a take-over of the consular service was still under discussion. As an employ­
ee of the Levant Company, he had no connection with the government,
which regarded him as a mere merchant, and thus remained unaware of the
possibilities offered to a consul in the Levant for the retrieval and collection
of antiquities. Whilst the French had taken advantage of their military cam­
paigns to conduct archeological expeditions, the acquisition of antiquities by
Britain tended to be fairly casual, as had been demonstrated by the manner in
which the Rosetta Stone and, to a certain extent, the Parthenon Marbles had
been gained. When Salt’s antiquities had been sold to the French, Edward
Hawkins, director of the Department of Antiquities at the British Museum,
wrote an angry letter to the Foreign Office underlining the way in which the
consular service in the Near East was well placed to be used for the procure­
ment of artifacts, and expressing outrage that Salt’s collection had been sold
to a competing museum.

From late transactions it would appear that Mr. Salt is not accurately informed of the great interest which is felt in this country for Egyptian antiquities, and that we have consequently lost many objects of great importance which have been eagerly obtained by the French government. I trust therefore that your Lordship will excuse my bespeaking your influence with Mr. Salt and our other consuls that our national museum might be enriched by many interesting objects which may be in their power to obtain; and that our collection of antiquities and of natural history may be unrivalled as our opportunities and facilities exceed those of any other nation.7

Salt died in 1828, unable to offer his services to the Museum. Seven years later a new opportunity arose for the acquisition of antiquities when Giovanni Attanasi,* who had worked for Salt as an agent, wrote to the British Museum with a proposal to undertake excavations in Egypt:

I should feel confident if it be here desired to undertake an engagement to supply the British Museum with the most beautiful specimen of Egyptian antiquities so as in five years to find it in condition to rival the Museum at Paris; on condition that I should each of these years be supplied with the sum of one thousand five hundred sterling and also with letters of recommendation to the consul general of Great Britain in Egypt in order to procure the aid and protection from the local government which does not permit all...

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7 Oct. 1827, FO 78/177, f.182.
8 In correspondence, Attanasi's name is referred to as Athanasi, D'Athanasi and also the variant chosen here.
who come to make researches. If it is necessary to make inquiries in respect of myself...I can refer to persons worthy of credit who knew me in Egypt...namely [Consuls] Robert Hay and Mr. Wilkinson not to mention a great number of others who are at present not in London.⁹

Should his proposal be rejected, Attanasi continued, he would turn to France as Salt had done before him. Worried by the prospect of a second government refusal, Hawkins approached the Lords of the Treasury, expressing his opinion that 'as the Government of this country has never, I believe, engaged in undertakings of this nature, it not unlikely that the offer of Attanasi might be declined.'¹⁰ Hawkins hoped that by taking this precaution he might convince them, both as individuals, and as a body, of the importance of financing the Museum. Maddox, one of the Lords of the Treasury, replied in support of Attanasi’s proposal, regretting the prior lack of government support for Salt at the time of his first proposal:

I cannot but lament the lateness of the day at which this country turns its attention to Egypt and that it is only now when so much has been excavated...From 1816 to 1820 was the harvest time of discovery and Mr. Salt neglected when he should have been assisted had the sole honour of forming what might and should have been a British collection...but the narrow heartlessness of a mistaken economy drove his matchless museum to the capital of our rivals.¹¹

¹⁰ Hawkins to the Lords of the Treasury, 18 Aug. 1835, WAA, Letter book n. 1, New series, f.68.
¹¹ Maddox to Hawkins, 28 Aug. 1835, Ibid., f. 63.
His sentiments were reinforced by Algernon Prudhoe, one of the Lords of the Admiralty, who highlighted the successes of previous consuls in Egypt in collecting antiquities.

It is reasonable to think that the objects found will far exceed in value the expense of labour employed - for such has been the result of three collections made by Mr. Salt and those by Dovetti, the French consul, and Anastasi, the Swedish Consul at Alexandria. Should the work be undertaken, two thirds at least of the cost of transport might be saved by the assistance of the Navy.

Prudhoe’s suggestion for collaboration with the Navy was eventually to prove invaluable to the British Museum, since financial expenditure on the collection of antiquities was a matter for great government concern.

Attanasi had timed his offer to coincide with the general reorganisation of the consular service by the Foreign Office and he encountered a willingness to consider new roles for its consuls in the Levant. At his suggestion, the Trustees wrote to consuls Hay and Wilkinson and to the other consuls resident in places where Attanasi had previously excavated, to ask their opinion on his character and capacities as an archaeologist. Subsequently, when the decision to employ Attanasi was taken, it became necessary to contact a consul to monitor and support his activities. Thus in 1835, as a result of Attanasi’s proposal, the British Museum first employed an agent to excavate on its behalf, using consuls to control the excavations, collect the pieces, and pay Attanasi for his work. The additional advantages that British diplomats might provide in obtaining the permission of the Egyptian Pasha, Mohammed Ali, were underlined by Lord Maddox in his correspondence with Ed-

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12 Prudhoe to Hawkins, 21 Aug. 1835, Ibid., f. 59.
13 Their correspondence regarding this point is copious, see Ibid., f.58 and passim.
ward Hawkins, in which he stated that 'it was of great moment that our con-
sul should be on good terms with his highness, otherwise the attempt is fu-
tile' indicating the importance of the consuls as representative of the British
government in loco. This occasion marked a fundamental change in the
operation of the Museum. Whilst it had previously been the passive recipient
and purchaser of private collections, it now became a proactive agency,
promoting the discovery, study and collection of archaeological remains. The
episode of Salt’s collection had already brought the potential use of the con-
sular service as an agency for the collection of antiquities to the attention of
the Trustees; however, although the Foreign Office reorganisation of the
consular service in the Aegean had already commenced, the extent of colla-
boration that the consuls could offer remained unclear.

It was not hard for the British consuls to obtain antiquities, due to the
deferece and respect that their official position inspired in the local popula-
tions. Under the Levant Company organisation, they had tended to pursue
the collection of artifacts as a hobby, which might bring occasional financial
benefits from the sale of pieces, and their contact with the Museum was spor-
adic. However, the Foreign Office reorganisation of the consular service ra-
dically reformed the consular life style and salaries, forcing the consuls to
seek alternative means of augmenting their livelihoods, and communication
with the Museum inevitably became more frequent.

Contact between the British Museum and the consuls was initially con-
ducted on a private basis. The consuls did not have a duty to mention their
archeological activities in the official reports to the Foreign Office, but their
existence was well known by the Secretary of State, who authorised the
British Museum to send letters for consuls in the Foreign Office bag. Whilst
the Foreign Office did not identify archeology as one of the tasks of its diplo-

mats, and no mention of such activity enters the official correspondence, it was prepared to let its consuls spend time in the retrieval of antiquities. It was also prepared to grant permission for absence from their duties to dedicate time to the excavation of remains.

Consuls could only act once they had been granted permission by the ambassador, whose role in the procurement of antiquities was thus fundamental. The obtaining of a firman to excavate, collect and export the pieces, depended very much upon delicate negotiations conducted directly between the ambassador at Constantinople and the Sultan, as a letter from the Trustees to the Earl of Aberdeen reveals: ‘The Trustees confide in Sir Stratford Canning for the employment of such good offices with the Turkish government as may be necessary to obtain the requisite facilities for the accomplishment of the objects of the expedition.’¹⁶ In this respect, the British had an advantage over the French, whose support for Egyptian independence had effectively precluded them from the sympathy of the Sultan. The gradual weakening of the Ottoman Empire and its increasing reliance on foreign support, strengthened the British position and the continued gratitude of the Sultan ensured the possibility of excavating, collecting and exporting antiquities. Several of the ambassadors sent to the Porte in the period between 1820 and 1860 played fundamental roles in the acquisition of pieces for the British Museum.¹⁷ Lord Elgin had obtained the Parthenon marbles, whilst

¹⁶ The Trustees to the Earl of Aberdeen, 10 Aug. 1843, BMA, Letter Book n.23, f.25

‘...It appeared to me that Calymnos... presented greater number of promising spots for excavations, than any island I had yet visited. I took an early opportunity of submitting my views on this subject to Her Majesty’s Ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Stratford De Redcliffe. In mentioning that name so long associated with our most important archeological discoveries in the East, it is scarcely necessary for me to add how deeply we are indebted to Lord Stratford for those inestimable acquisitions, the Lycian, Budrum and Assyrian antiquities, by which the British Museum has been of late years enriched... Immediately on receiving my report on Calymnos... Lord Stratford with that promptitude and liberality with which he has ever promoted archeological enterprise, obtained the necessary firman from the Porte to enable me to excavate, and placed ample funds at my disposal. With these means I set to work in November 1854’.
Stratford Canning not only encouraged Layard to make excavations but also gained permission from the Turkish authorities and privately financed the excavation and transport of pieces destined for the Museum. Ambassadors' intercession remained a fundamental part of the process of the procurement of antiquities as late as 1860.

The vizirial letter which has been received, as stated in your letter...is comparatively ineffective, and that to enable them to proceed satisfactorily, it is necessary that they should have a firman authorising them to excavate and remove antiquities from Rhodes, Cyprus and the Turkish Islands in the Archipelago. Under these circumstances, I have to request on behalf of the Trustees of the British Museum that Lord John Russell will be pleased to give such directions as may lead, if possible, to the issue of the desired firman by the Porte.18

The initial involvement of the consuls seems to have been sought in order to save money on the employment of local agents to collect information and assist in the excavation and shipment of pieces of art.

The Trustees have received from Mr. Soane, Chancellor of His Majesty's consulate in Egypt, the present of a colossal figure of Sesostris, reported to the Trustees...to be of the best style of Egyptian workmanship and to be of great historical interest...But as the conveyance of a statue of so great bulk and weight must necessarily be attended with considerable cost, the Trustees...think it proper to procure an estimate of the charge which would be incurred by its transport...The information which the Trustees seek, can of course

be furnished only by persons resident in Egypt, and the Trustees would feel themselves indebted to Your Lordship if Your Lordship would call the attention of Your Majesty's Consul General at Alexandria to the subject, and request him to supply at his earliest convenience, the particulars I have specified... A rough calculation of the expense of removing the statue to Alexandria was made some years ago by Janni D'Athanasi, a Greek who is now in Egypt... Colonel Campbell might probably obtain useful aid from him on this occasion.

Governmental help in the procurement of antiquities seems to have begun with the involvement of the Navy in 1835, following Prudhoe's suggestion that naval vessels be used to transport the results of Attanasi's researches, and was extended to the contribution of naval personnel for their excavation and collection. However, economic considerations continued to be a matter of primary concern for the Museum, and whilst collaboration with the Navy had greatly reduced the cost of transporting antiquities back to Britain, Custom House duty remained an obstacle to their importation. On more than one occasion, the tax prevented the Museum from receiving antiquities. In 1838 consul Robert Hay tried to offer antiquities found in Greece as a gift to the Museum, but he was compelled to withdraw the offer when he attempted to pass the objects through the Custom House. The episode prompted the Trustees to write to the Treasury once more, this time with a proposal to eliminate tax on the importation of antiquities to England:

I am directed by the Trustees to bring under the consideration of your Lordships the expediency of removing so far as is possible

28 i.e. Giovanni Attanasi.
29 Colonel Richard Campbell was consul at Rhodes between 1853 and 1862.
the Custom house duties and obstructions which at present pre­
vent the free importation of antique vases, statues, bronzes and
other objects of ancient art as well as of casts and impressions. It is
so clearly good policy to encourage the introduction into the
country of the best examples and models in design... 22

A second letter followed soon after, prepared by a special committee for the
antiquities during a meeting held at the Museum in January 1838. The letter asked:

...whether it might not be expedient to repeal the duty which is at
present chargeable upon monuments of antiquity and objects of
early art and to give greater facilities to the importation of objects
which without competing with the products of our native industry
tend to the encouragement of art, science, literature. 23

Custom House duty on antiquities was eliminated soon after, removing the
need to inspect the cases destined for the British Museum at the Custom
House, a practice which had on more than one occasion caused damage to
the goods inspected. Subsequently cases of antiquities entering the country
and directed to the British Museum were delivered, free of duty, to the mu­
seum itself to be inspected, in loco, by a Customs official together with an
expert from the Museum. 24

There is evidence that, by 1840, the Foreign Office was passing the Mu­
seum the names of the consuls appointed in the Levant, and later communica­
tions even included copies of dispatches that might be of relevance. A do­

of Papers Sent to British Ministers and Consuls Abroad by the British Museum in 1862.
Document held in the British Museum Archive lists the papers sent in 1862 by the Museum to British Ministers and Consuls abroad. It lists most of the consuls employed by the Foreign Office in Greece and Turkey, and adds weight to the theory that the Museum was seeking to increase their awareness of the antiquities.

The Museum would contact consuls at the moment of their appointment, prior to their departure for the Levant. When Edmund Lyons, consul-general at Athens, left Greece, the Trustees wrote to thank him for 'the frequent instances of your attention to their wishes and interests while you have been residing in Greece.' They had already contacted his successor, Thomas Wyse, with the intention of obtaining information regarding a particular statue:

Understanding that you are about to proceed as H.M.'s Minister to the court of Athens, the Trustees have directed me to bring these facts under your notice...and they will consider themselves under an especial obligation if you should be able to obtain and will communicate to them any satisfactory information respecting the statue above mentioned.

Wyse was evidently still unfamiliar with these matters, and replied:

It is contrary to the laws of Greece for works of art to be sent out of the country, so that even were the information respecting the statue belonging to Mr. Alby such as to induce the Trustees to desire its acquisition, it would not be advisable to enter upon a negotiation for the purchase, with the prospect that any application to

the Greek government to be permitted to transport the statue to England would in all probability be unsuccessful. With reference to the marble sarcophagus, the same difficulty occurs…\textsuperscript{28}

The Trustees thanked Wyse for his response, leaving him to his duties until six years later, in 1855, when they contacted him once more:

The Trustees are most anxious to obtain if possible, any original marble fragments once belonging to the Parthenon sculptures as they might be useful to connect some of the museum fragments with their proper figures, the Trustees feel assured that upon their request, you will not omit any opportunity of obtaining such fragments, and desire me therefore to draw your attention to the subject.\textsuperscript{29}

By the end of the 1840s, the Trustees had become resolute in their desire to obtain objects of interest. Whilst their first letter to Wyse was written in the form of a request, the second was a specific invitation to act. He eventually came to realise that there was little purpose in obstructing the Trustees in their hunt for archeological pieces, and in 1857 informed them that excavations could be made at Mycenae ‘with a view to the discovery of antiquities.’\textsuperscript{30} Rivalry with the French museums for the collection of pieces of art must have been fierce, since letters confirm that consuls were employed to report on the movements of their French colleagues regarding antiquities.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of a...copy of a dispatch from Mr. Crowe, H.M.Consul General at Tripoli by which the

Trustees are made acquainted with the proceedings of the French Vice Consul at Bengasi in collecting and removing sculptures from the cities of Cirenaica.\textsuperscript{31}

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The law forbidding the export of antiquities from Greece, promoted by the government of the new state in 1835, was a real deterrent to any honest official, and together with a similar prohibition on the export of Egyptian remains,\textsuperscript{32} it provided a great stimulus for archaeological interest in the Aegean. Retained under Ottoman control when the boundaries of the Greek state had been defined, the Aegean was perceived as an essential source of material for the European museums. In 1835, the Navy commenced a second collaboration with the Museum with the aim of making a survey of the Grecian Archipelago:

the part at present under examination being the western coast of Asia minor from the \textit{Troad} to Rhodes, an interval abounding with classical remains and at present very superficially explored because the investigators had always made these searches in fear of tyrannical \textit{Agas}. With an English vessel of war in sight the collectors might now without difficulty measure the temples, copy the inscriptions, dig the remains... and the opportunity seems to be one of adding to the classical antiquities of the country which ought not to be lost\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{31} To Palmerston, 28 Nov. 1848, BMA, Letter Book n.33, f.135.
\textsuperscript{32} To the Treasury, 17 June, 1835, Letter Book, n. 6, ff. 75-8. ‘We are not likely to have any European resident in Egypt whose means of acquisition and zeal in acquiring will equal those of the late Mr. Salt and if we had, the prohibition to excavate now strictly enforced by Ibrahim Pasha, would prevent his success’.
\textsuperscript{33} B.M.A., Committee, volume 14, Sept. 1834 to Nov. 1835, f. 4057.
The survey, completed in 1839, emphasised the archaeological potential of the region and indicated that the lack of prior exploration made it a rich source of remains. The unstable political state of the Aegean also contributed to making the area a particularly fertile source of antiquities for the British Museum, since the diminishing power of the Ottoman Empire made it difficult for the Sultan to oppose the European powers. The support they had shown for the restoration of an independent kingdom of Greece had demonstrated the weakness of the Empire, which showed little interest in preventing the excavation and export of artifacts from its Aegean territories. More significantly, as Russia became increasingly interested in the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, it was thought that the Sultan would seek to buy the favour of the European powers with antiquities, seeing in their desire to build up their national museums, a means to secure their support.

By 1840, the connections between the Museum, the Foreign Office and the Admiralty had strengthened enough for the Admiralty to offer the Museum advice on the timing of approaches towards the collection of particular pieces. When, in 1839, the Egyptian Pasha Muhammed Ali had waged a campaign against the Ottoman Empire, the joint intervention of Britain with Russia, Austria and Prussia, in favour of the Porte, had forced his retreat from Crete and Syria, saving the empire’s position and integrity. In the view of the Admiralty, the role played by the British was likely to make the Ottoman authorities inclined to a display of gratitude. Precedent for such a display had been established in 1798, when the British were presented with land at Constantinople upon which to construct their Embassy, for having helped the Sultan to defeat the French in Egypt, and it was felt in 1840 that Britain could ask permission to obtain the remains of the ancient temple of Halicarnassus, whose marble lions had been built into the walls of the castle at Bu-

...No moment has appeared so auspicious as the present for obtaining for our museum the mausoleum marbles at Halicarnassus built here and there some with the sculpture outside and some with it inside in the castle walls. In 1816 Mr. Bankes obtained a firman to have these marbles removed from the castle...the order however was so vaguely worded that the [commander] at Budrum refused permission for the marbles to be removed. In 1818 Capt. Isby and I...offered to Sir Robert Liston our Ambassador (provided he procured us a firman), to remove these marbles at our own expense, and present them gratuitously to the British Museum. We could not however persuade Sir Robert to comply with our request. Thus failed the second attempt to obtain these treasures. Now seems to be the time to make the third effort, for the capture of Acre is as likely to dispose the Sultan to grant us a fa-
your just now as the capture of Egypt was favourable to Lord Elgin to obtain the concession of the Elgin Marbles. We may never have such a chance as the present of obtaining these marbles and now if we get them as a complement for the capture of Acre, they will be doubly associated with chivalrous and classical recollections.\textsuperscript{35}

The excavations at Budrum did not take place until over a decade later when Charles Thomas Newton began the process of removing the lions from the walls of the castle.

As the collaboration between the Admiralty, the Foreign Office and the Museum grew, the role of the Navy in offering passages to and from Britain for archaeologists, and in helping the consuls to move among the islands, became increasingly documented.

Mr. Fellows\textsuperscript{36} offers to proceed to Xantus for the purpose of aiding in the removal of antiquities discovered by him in that neighbourhood, on condition that he receives a free passage out and home again in some of H.M. ships or packets...The Trustees will feel gratified to learn that your lordships are enabled to provide for Mr. Fellows’ passage in the manner which he desires.\textsuperscript{37}

Whilst initial contacts had been made exclusively to save on the cost of the transport, they grew over time into a real collaborative agency between the Museum, the Admiralty and the Foreign Office whose aim was to gain information, collect artifacts and remains, and transport them to England. The

\textsuperscript{35} Capt. James Mangles to Capt. Francis Beaufort of the Admiralty, 1 Dec. 1840, WAA, Letter Book n. 9 Old Series, f. 3465.

\textsuperscript{36} Sir Charles Fellows (1799-1860) was an archaeologist and traveller and was responsible for discovering the ruins at Xantus.

early hesitancy of the Trustees in their correspondence with the Admiralty gradually gave way to confidence, as the collaboration between the two institutions strengthened. A letter from the Trustees in 1841 shows their initial concern at requesting a passage:

The Trustees have, through H.M. ministers in Greece, obtained permission to take casts of several sculptures discovered of late years at Athens. The casts already made fill seventeen cases and are in the charge of the British consul there, together with a case of books also intended for the museum. It would be a saving of expense if these cases could be conveyed to Malta and thence to England by some of H.M. vessels.\textsuperscript{38}

Within five years, the letters written to the Admiralty by the secretary to the Trustees displayed far greater conviction:

The great public interest which has been excited by the exhibition of the sculptures already arrived, renders it imperative upon the Trustees to lose no opportunity which may present itself for procuring the transport of the remaining objects to this country. It has come to the knowledge of the Trustees that a government ship called the Menace, which has been recently launched at Bombay, is about to sail for England... and the Trustees are under the impression that little or no inconvenience would arise if the Menace were ordered to proceed to Bussorash on her voyage to England, and to take on board the packages of antiquities still laying there.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38} 5 July 1844, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 24, f. 102.
\textsuperscript{39} 29 March 1849, B.M.A., Letter Book n.35, ff. 18-20.
By the date of the second letter, the Museum had become familiar with the practice of privately contacting the Trustee responsible for a particular section of the government to request his personal attention to the matter. The letter to the Admiralty was thus supported by a direct approach to Sir Francis Baring, the First Lord of the Admiralty:

The Trustees at their last meeting...directed me to write the letter to the Lords of the Admiralty, which their Lordships will receive this day requesting that the ‘Menace’ might be sent to Bussorash on her way to England to take some sculptures which have been lying there now for a very long time and that the Trustees are very anxious to procure.40

The Museum had used this technique extensively with representatives of the government, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer and members of the Foreign Office. In January 1843, the Trustees had written to Lord Aberdeen, regarding the collection of antiquities that had been left at Xantus due to bad weather. In their correspondence, they suggested that:

...it might be advisable if Sir Stratford Canning were to communicate the intention of the Trustees to the British Vice Consul at Rhodes, requesting him to take an opportunity of incidentally mentioning these intentions to the Pasha there.41

The role of the British consuls both as representatives of the government and as intermediaries for the Museum was already understood, and their capacities as collectors had been demonstrated by the collections of Salt and Hay.

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40 29 March 1849, ibid., ff. 21-2.

209
However, the real potential of the consular service in the Aegean as an agency for the retrieval, excavation, and collection of antiquities first became clear with the appointment of Charles Thomas Newton as vice-consul at Miletene.

Newton played a fundamental role in the Aegean; without his perseverance and organisation, the contacts between the British Museum and the consuls would have remained on a superficial level, limited to the occasional request to search for particular pieces. During his residence in the Aegean, he was allowed to spend his time searching for antiquities even to the extent of neglecting almost entirely his other consular duties, and in addition to discovering the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, he supplied the Museum with an enormous quantity of objects and remains from the Aegean islands.

Newton had been working as an assistant at the British Museum for ten years when he left it for an appointment as vice consul on the island of Lesbos in 1852 and he was clearly not looking, in the consular appointment, for a better paid and more rewarding job, since the lifestyle of consuls in the Aegean had undergone a sharp deterioration in the years following the independence of Greece. Where consuls were paid little, vice consuls were paid even less; but having only minor responsibilities, their job allowed them considerable free time. During the decade spent at the Museum, Newton had been given the opportunity to notice the potential that a consular appointment in the Aegean islands might offer any individual with a little knowledge of archeology, and had verified that it was mainly from consuls and diplomats that the Museum had acquired its few archeological pieces. He saw that a

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Newton was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, graduating in 1837, and receiving a Masters degree three years later. In 1840 he entered the Department of Antiquities at the British Museum through the intercession of the Principal Librarian, Henry Ellis, with the Trustees. '...Though I have made several applications for your appointment, I have not yet been able to procure it with the signatures of the Trustees...under these circumstances, I venture to request that you will come up hither at once for the purpose of entering upon your duties'. Ellis to Newton, 11 April 1840, BMA, Letter Book n.17, f.19. Committee, vol. 18, f.5391, Appointment of Newton as an assistant at the British Museum.
consular appointment offered not only the opportunity to find other pieces of art, but also to advance his career in the Museum.

Newton was aware that he had little chance of a career at the British Museum cataloguing ancient coins, and thus decided to try his luck elsewhere. The museum did, however, offer him the opportunity to develop influential contacts, and his acquaintance with Antonio Panizzi, the future Principal Librarian of the British Museum and great friend of Gladstone, proved to be of great use. At the time Panizzi was manoeuvring behind Henry Ellis, the old principal librarian, and his influence and power were growing. Newton strengthened a friendship that was to be the key to his future success in the Museum. He obtained his appointment as vice consul with Panizzi’s help, as a form of experiment to establish the potential of a permanent collaboration between the Foreign Office and the British Museum. Almost certainly thanks
to the intervention of the Trustees, Newton obtained the opportunity to take long periods of leave from his consular duties for the pursuit of archeological excavations. On receiving his appointment, he wrote to Panizzi: 'I lose not a moment in thanking you for a step which I consider due more to you than any one else'43 It is worth noting that following appointments at Mitilene and Rhodes, Newton went on to become consul at Rome, and on his return to Britain, he was made Keeper of the department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, under the general direction of Panizzi. Whereas, after ten years of service in the Museum he was but an assistant with a very modest salary, after eight years in the consular service he was able to return at one of the highest levels in the Museum's hierarchy. The consular appointment was clearly a very significant event in his life. Tendering his resignation from the Museum, he pointed out his intention of putting his efforts to its service in a letter to the Trustees,

In the new career in which I am about to enter, I shall probably have many opportunities of rendering service to the British Museum, not only by collecting antiquities and works of art in the island in which I am destined to reside, but by examining and reporting on collections and discoveries in the neighbourhood whenever I may have the opportunity.44

He brought with him to the Levant a young assistant, Dominic Ellis Colnaghi, the elder son of Dominic Paul Colnaghi, a well known and well connected collector and dealer in fine art in Pall Mall.45 Colnaghi accompanied Newton to Mitilene, both to assess the possibility of procuring pieces of art for the fa-

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44 31 Jan.1852, FO 78/905, ff.322-5.
45 Colnaghi must have met Newton through the British Museum to which his family's firm made regular donations.
family firm and as a sort of educational grand tour. He assisted Newton with his excavations, recording them photographically on behalf of his firm, the first time this new media had been used for archaeological purposes. Like Newton, Colnaghi benefited from the time he spent at Mitilene, receiving a vice consular post at Messalonghi in 1859, followed by promotion to the position of consul general at Florence.

Colnaghi’s career raises the issue of whether there was a link between the donation of antiquities to the Museum, and his appointment to the consular service. The registers of donations to the British Museum show evidence of a regular number of contributions from the Colnaghi firm up until the 1860s when Dominic’s career began. It is not clear why Colnaghi, rather than continuing the family business, had decided to enter the consular service.

BMA, Registers of Donations, vols 3-5, passim.
However, it is highly likely that Newton, with his growing influence at the Museum, was encouraging his rapid promotion.

Newton was keenly aware of the advantages that well informed consuls might provide the Museum, as he explained to Panizzi at the end of his period in the Levant. When Panizzi wrote asking his opinion of the potential appointment of an agent to carry out excavations on behalf of the Museum, Newton replied:

No ostensible agent of the British Government should be sent to the Levant to purchase antiquities... By employing consuls as agents... a much more effective agency is set on foot. No one can compete with a consul in the market, except another consul... Here money will not purchase antiquities in the Levant, but money and consular influence together will do much... I have travelled much, for six years... all the pieces were sold not to the agent of the British Museum but to the acting consul of Rhodes... Mr. Pullam [the proposed agent] would find, when he came to purchase, that he required that particular influence which no-one but a consul's dragoman can bring into play.47

He pointed out that consuls were already perfect agents at the service of the museums and so potentially there was no need to appoint other agents. He confirmed this view once again in 1866, on the occasion of the acquisition of the Woodhouse collection by the British Museum. Woodhouse had been appointed in the Ionian islands and had used his position to obtain antiquities. In a report to the Museum, Newton described how Woodhouse's appointment at Corfu had been the catalyst for the accumulation of his vast collection:

47 Newton to Panizzi, March 1859, Add Mss. 36719, ff.149-54. 214
Mr. Woodhouse appears to have commenced buying antiquities while employed in the Commissariat in Sicily [during the Napoleonic Wars], and he continued to add to his collection from the period of his first arrival in Corfu, upwards of fifty years ago, to within a few months of his death. His opportunities were great, occupying a high official post in the Ionian islands for many years, having a good income, and giving liberal prices for every object offered him, he had a complete command of the market for antiquities, not only in Corfu itself, but in the other Ionian islands and the opposite coast of Greece; and he appears to have obtained many objects from Smyrna and the Archipelago.**

Whether the Museum ever actually suggested the appointment of specific consuls in specific places is not clear, but the issue was raised, not only by Newton but also by another correspondent to whom Panizzi replied:

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, suggesting that enquiries be made to convert Mr. Newton's former appointment to Mitilene into a precedent and obtain, as a recognised principle, that a gentleman should always be appointed to one of the Eastern consulates who is recommended by the Antiquarian Department of the British Museum. In my individual capacity, of course, I cannot presume to make such a suggestion, nor do I think the Trustees will take on themselves to make it; if however you intend your letter to be laid before the board of the Trustees,

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**Woodhouse had accumulated a vast collection during his residence in the Ionian Islands. He intended to leave it to the British Museum, but when, following his death in 1866, Newton went to reexamine it, a great number of objects had disappeared from the collection.
It is entirely likely that a sort of gentlemen’s agreement already existed between the Museum and the consuls, by which the retrieval and donation of antiquities was linked to the appointment of relatives or friends of the consuls in specific places. This would entirely correspond to the Museum’s notorious lack of impartiality in its appointments. In 1858 Panizzi introduced a rule regarding appointments in the Museum which demanded that potential employees should pass the civil service examination. However, the bypassing of this examination was so frequent, that an article from *The Civil Service Gazette* of the 10 November 1860 pointed out that despite the establishment of such a regulation, people had already found ways of using it to allow the appointment of their friends and proteges.50

The careers of both Newton and Colnaghi may be seen as unusual, but it should be borne in mind that Sir Henry Layard had also begun with a simple appointment as attaché, whose career had progressed very rapidly as a result of his important discoveries. Despite the lack of specific evidence, it seems likely that the Museum was indeed exerting its influence in the appointment of consuls in the Levant. The interests involved were, in this case, too important to allow the placing in archaeologically important consulates of individuals who might remain insensitive to the requirements of the Museum. It would appear, considering how little mention is made of archaeological excavations in the official correspondence with the Foreign Office, that the matter was delicate and required discretion.

Letters of thanks for antiquities suggest that a link of this nature might

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Edward Falkener was an archaeologist. He was the editor of the periodical, *The Museum of Classical Antiquities* and the author of numerous books on classical archaeology. He kept correspondence with the Trustees and was aware of the findings of the Aegean consuls, since his periodical published extracts from Newton’s discoveries.

50 B.M.A., British Museum Extracts from Newspapers, 1837-63, f. 64.
have been created. They appear regularly in the Trustees’ correspondence, addressed to, among others, J.E.Blunt, consul at Salonica, Niven Kerr, consul at Rhodes, and Richard Wilkinson, consul at Syros. Many of the consuls mentioned in this thesis appear repeatedly amongst the registers of donations. There are many homonyms, but there seems to be no source that might allow verification of whether other consuls, who had contributed to the retrieval of antiquities, or their relatives, were like Newton subsequently employed by the Museum or whether their donations to the Museum had been linked to their consular appointment. One instance does, though, seem striking. Panizzi wrote, in 1860, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the three principal Trustees entitled to decide on any matter of serious relevance, to recommend Newton’s appointment as keeper of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities. In the same letter he suggested a certain A.H.Wilkinson for a minor, unspecified appointment. Richard Wilkinson had been consul at Syros since 1834, and had already recommended three other Wilkinsons as vice consuls or consular agents in the Levant. He had also made donations of both archaeological remains and natural history specimens to the Museum. Syros was, at the time, the major centre for communications in the Levant and most vessels arriving or leaving the Aegean passed through its harbour. The peculiarity and importance of its position meant that the consul at Syros was well aware of the happenings in the Aegean waters, and he

51 B.M.A., Register of Donations to the British Museum, vols 3,4,5 passim.
‘Greek bust of marble representing Ariadne, found on the sea shore at Mitilene, donated by F.H.S. Werry, H.M. vice consul at Bengazi, through Mr. C.T. Newton, H.M. vice consul at Mitilene.’ 13 May 1854, vol. 5, f. 23.
‘A copper Greek imperial coin of Caracalla struck at Alabande in Caria, and a silver Greek autonomous coin of Miletus: from Niven Kerr, H.M. consul at Rhodes.’ 12 July 1854, vol. 5, f.43.
52 The Foreign Office lists which start from 1856 mention only the names of the consuls and vice consuls, but not of the consular agents. The information they contain is incomplete. The Museum, for its part never kept record of the backgrounds of people who applied for a position there but were rejected. Comparison of the names is thus impossible due the lack of information on both sides.

217
could thus have made a significant contribution to the removal of antiquities to Britain. Wilkinson was certainly in contact with Newton during the latter's period as vice consul at Miltene and he in turn was in a position to recommend friends and their relatives to the Museum through Panizzi. The potential thus existed for a relative of Richard Wilkinson to be recommended for appointment at the Museum and the appearance of the name in connection with that of Newton in a letter from Antonio Panizzi, makes the possibility a likelihood.

Excavations photographed by Dominic Colnaghi

When Newton arrived in the Levant in 1852, certain individuals were more involved than others in the search for antiquities. Consul Barker, the succes-
sor to Henry Salt at Alexandria, had for instance followed in the footsteps of his predecessor. Newton sought to raise the awareness of his colleagues in the Aegean to the search for antiquities and instructed them on how to make excavations. He also helped consuls who had found antiquities to market them, commencing an activity that continued after his departure from Greece. One of his letters to Panizzi bears testimony to this:

The bearer of this letter is Mr. Werry, our vice consul at Bengazi; he has been excavating in the Cirenaica and has got some interesting vases which I hope to see in the British Museum. Perhaps you may give him any information he may require with reference to the best manner of submitting his antiquities to the Trustees for purchase.

When Newton left the Levant, Biliotti and Campbell, respectively vice consul and consul at Rhodes, took his place in conducting excavations on behalf of the British Museum, and from 1859 the correspondence between Biliotti and the Trustees is extensive.

...the antiquities received from you in October last have been examined, and a selection has been made from them. The articles selected are valued in your catalogue at £389, but are estimated by the officers of the Museum at £316, at which amount the Trustees are willing to purchase them.

By 1860 the Museum had organised with Newton’s collaboration and with

55 WAA Letter Book N.10, Old Series, passim.
the Foreign Office, the Admiralty and the Customs, an effective agency for the collection of antiquities. From 1835, the date of the first excavations in Egypt and consequently of the first contacts with the Levant consuls, the government had slowly but consistently prepared a means for the collection of antiquities.

Prior to his departure from the Levant in 1859, Newton had instructed and involved all the local consuls in the search for, and sale of, remains, and their dispatches to the ambassadors seem to have dealt extensively with reports on antiquities.

Thank you for your letter of the 9th inst. with the enclosure from Mr. Vice Consul Crowe reporting the discovery of an ancient Greek vault containing sarcophagi and other antiquities near the town of Bengazi ... I am to request to you to return the thanks of
the Trustees to Lord John Russell for his Lordship’s kindness in sending the particulars of this interesting discovery...  

The result of his activities was so outstanding that several years later the Trustees asked him to prepare ‘a draft for transmission to the Foreign Office of proposed instructions to H.M. consuls abroad in reference to the acquisition of antiquities for the British Museum.’ The draft was accepted by the British Museum committee on the 14 December 1863.

The points to which it would be desirable to direct the attentions of consuls within their districts are as follows:

1. all the remains of ancient cities, buildings or cemeteries, which there is reason to believe not to have been fully explored
2. all discoveries of ancient architectural remains, sculptures, inscriptions, coins pottery and other antiquities, which may fall under the observation of consuls in their own district. In reference to such enquiries it might be observed that even when remains are no longer to be found on the site of an ancient city or building, evidence of its former existence might be obtained by a careful examination of the castles, mosques, churches or other buildings in its neighbourhood, the walls of which frequently contain ancient marbles, reworked as building materials. Interesting sculptures, inscriptions and architectural remains may thus be detected in the walls of modern villages. In examining the site of an ancient city it is of great importance to ascertain, if possible, the position of its cemeteries. These will generally be discovered by a careful examination of the ground outside the city gates. Even where no remains

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of tombs are visible above the soil, the position of the cemetery may often be indicated by the fragments of Greek pottery which strew the surface of the ground. The pottery is distinguished by its lustrous black varnish and by the figures and ornaments drawn on it. It is always worth while to note the localities where fragments of these vases are found in abundance, and to collect specimens of it for transmission to the British Museum.\textsuperscript{41}

These instructions were to be forwarded to all Foreign Office consuls, making the systematic search for antiquities one of the official duties of the consular profession.

\textsuperscript{41} February 1863, B.M.A., Officers Reports vol. 70, report n.4859, from the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities.
Chapter 5
The Consular District of Rhodes: A Case Study

The consular district of Rhodes was established by the Foreign Office in 1850 following the rearrangement of the Aegean pashalics. It provided the opportunity of creating a diplomatic presence in an area that required close scrutiny. During the struggle for Greek independence, the Aegean islands had witnessed some of the worst atrocities; indeed, European intervention in the war had been provoked by international outrage following the horrific massacre at Scio in 1822. However, when the borders of the independent state of Greece had been defined in 1831, the Aegean islands had been carefully left outside them, in an attempt to satisfy both sides. This decision by the Allied powers had caused distress among the inhabitants of the islands who felt betrayed and disillusioned because their years of struggle had been repaid with continued misery, and with the frustration of seeing that, by chance, their efforts had ended in nothing. The beneficial effects of independence on the new state of Greece further exacerbated the contrast between the Turkish and Greek populations of the region.

For its own part, the Porte had promised an amnesty toward the islands, undertaking to ignore crimes committed during the war in favour of a policy of general well being, and at the same time seeking to redress the balance between Muslims and Christians. The latter measure had, however, caused even greater tension between the populations of the region, and was particularly resented by the Ottoman local authorities, who felt that it undermined
their position. As a result, thefts and vicious assaults began to be perpetrated openly against Christians, with the tacit consent of the Ottoman administration. The inhabitants of the Ionian islands were the subjects of even stronger repercussions, attacked not only for their religion, but also their freedom. Attempted murder and open acts of revenge were the order of the day. Whilst the British consuls were not allowed to enter into matters between the Turkish and Greek populations, they were directly responsible for the safety of the large number of Ionians who traded and lived throughout the Aegean. Their task was made all the more complicated by the behaviour of the Ionians themselves, who took advantage of the unrivalled privileges that their status conferred on them. It thus became very difficult for the consuls to represent them in a creditable manner. Their misbehaviour also irritated the foreign consuls; indeed, disputes surrounding the defence of the Ionians led to tense relations with the diplomats of Austria. Individual consuls had to balance their responsibility towards their Ionian charges with the maintenance of official position and dignity.

The first consul appointed at Rhodes on the opening of the new consular district was Niven Kerr. Previously the vice consul at Cyprus, Kerr was already familiar with the policies and attitudes of the local governors in the Aegean islands. He was thus particularly sensitive to their behaviour and was entirely aware that most of the problems of the islands were a direct consequence of the dishonesty of such officials. For most of his period at Rhodes, he sought to give the British government an impression of the social and economic situation of the islands with the intention of bringing about some improvement. Kerr was extremely committed to his work, reporting and trying to intervene in matters which were not directly connected with his official duty as British consul. Eventually his personal commitments clashed with his official position, and he decided to leave the Aegean. He was re-
placed for a short while by Charles Thomas Newton, transferred to Rhodes from the island of Lesvos, where a vice consulate had been established in 1843. Newton, in contrast to his predecessor at Rhodes, dedicated his time to excavations and to the retrieval of antiquities, suggesting occasional improvements for the better regulation of the Aegean establishment. He was insensitive to the problems of the local population, an attitude shared initially by his successor at Rhodes, consul Robert Campbell. Campbell looked after the district in a professional and intelligent manner, taking care to establish good working relationships with his subordinates and with his Ottoman colleagues, whilst at the same time making useful suggestions for the improvement of British trade at Rhodes. Eventually Campbell, like Kerr, came to understand that at a local level the policy of the Porte clashed desperately with the individual interests of the local governors, causing irremediable damage to the economy of the islands.

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Until 1850 the Aegean islands had been under the jurisdiction of the consulate at Smyrna, but in that year the appointment of a governor general at Rhodes altered the Ottoman subdivision of the area. This change of local administration provided the Foreign Office with the opportunity of creating a new consular district, centred on Rhodes and covering the islands of Patmos, Kos, Cassos, Castel Rosso, Symi, Samothraki, Imbros, Tassos, Tenedos and Limnos, with vice consulates at Cyprus, Lesvos and Scio.

Although the islands of the new consular district were part of the area traditionally known as Greece, they were, politically and economically, dependent on the mainland town of Smyrna, because they had been retained within the Ottoman jurisdiction when the border of the new Greek state was
redesigned in 1831.¹ The reputation of the empire for bestowing autonomy on populations which capitulated without resistance, whilst burdening those who fought, had led the Allied powers to press, during the settlement, for assurances of fair and better treatment for the islands.

However, despite the good intentions of the central government at Constantinople, its lack of control at a local level soon combined with diminishing international attention to permit the flouting of these assurances. The reorganiz-

¹ See chapter 2, pages 144-5.
sation of the Ottoman administration and of the consular service in the Aegean, finally created an opportunity to improve the economic and political balance of the region.

The opening of the Rhodes consulate was designed to permit close scrutiny of the local economic situation, allowing the consuls to make suggestions for improving the sales of British and colonial products and to counteract the growing success of the French in the Aegean.
Their reports revealed, for the first time, the extent to which earlier hopes of fair government had been replaced by the reality of heavy taxation.

The consulate was made operative in February 1850 with the appointment of Niven Kerr. Unlike many of his colleagues appointed in the Levant after the reorganisation of the consular service in 1825, whose correspondence was filled with concerns about accommodation, Kerr had little difficulty in finding a house, and in settling himself into his work on the island. It seems that the first consulate was established at the edge of the old town, outside the ancient walls, not far from the natural harbour used for small boats. His experience was in marked contrast with that of Francis Werry who had been appointed vice consul at Lesvos seven years earlier. A vice consulate had been established in the island due to the presence of a large number of Ionians who had moved there for motives of trade. Werry had been transferred from Smyrna, where an efficient and prestigious Levant Company representation had been taken over by the Foreign Office. The situation he encountered on his arrival in the main town of Mitilene had been quite unlike that of his old Levant Company consulate, and he had only been able to find accommodation outside the town. Regarding this matter he wrote to the Foreign Office that in the winter he feared he would find ‘great difficulty in going backwards and forwards’ and that the scarcity and poor condition of the roads impeded his work. Werry also soon discovered that the meagre salary provided for him by the Foreign Office was woefully inadequate given the high cost of living in the island and made no allowance for the cost of accommodation. He had thus applied to the Foreign Secretary for financial help to remedy the situation: ‘Do you not think that...I might be able to obtain a grant from Government for aid to build a house’, he asked, ‘otherwise I fear that I shall not be able to get a decent room of the

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1 6 Feb. 1850, FO 195/287, f.182.
2 25 Apr. 1843, FO 78/532, f.283.
3 Ibid., f.285.
smallest dimensions. However, the situation remained difficult and one year later he wrote again requesting the sum of £50 for consular expenses and inquiring on the possibility of a transfer to the island of Syros, where a consulate had been opened several years earlier, and where there was settled accommodation for the consul.

Kerr by contrast was fortunate in finding his accommodation, and this allowed him to commence his work with efficiency and enthusiasm. One of his early tasks was to visit the newly appointed governor general, by whom he was received with a seven gun salute, a tribute usually reserved for the highest Ottoman authorities.

His first consular duty was to choose his replacement at Cyprus, but his origi-
nal suggestion to the Foreign Office for an Aegean Greek was rebutted in preference for an alternative candidate, Antonio Palma, 'a merchant of Neapolitan origins'. Kerr had known his choice well when in Cyprus, and he sought to convince Palmerston that his rayah origins should not constitute an obstacle to the appointment. However, despite Kerr's insistence, Palmerston felt that a British vice consul of Greek origins might constitute a problem, creating confusion amongst the locals and with the Ottoman authorities. He therefore instructed Kerr to appoint Palma.

Within the space of a few months Kerr was requested to appoint a second agent, this time at Patmos, an island not distant from Rhodes. Many Ionian families had established themselves as traders there and they had repeatedly requested the appointment of a British consular agent to protect their affairs. Kerr initially sought to avoid deciding upon the choice of another official and instead asked the Foreign Office for permission to send a ship to Patmos in the event of problems, allowing time to ascertain whether there was a real need for an agent. He soon realised, however, that the appointment of a specific person under his command would make his life less complicated and thus appointed Michele Calliga, 'a merchant of Italian origins', at that island.

Kerr demonstrated from the start a very sensitive attitude to the policies of the Porte in the region, as he began to notice and report on the local state of affairs.

A few general remarks on the actual condition of Rhodes and the adjacent islands, and on the false and ruinous system of policy which, in my humble opinion, the Porte is now rigorously enforcing on them. Rhodes, which was rapidly falling into that state of

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1 17 July 1850, Ibid., f.228.
2 8 March 1850, FO 195/287, f.184.
3 19 Nov. 1850, Ibid. f.260.
decay which is universally the case with all other parts of the Ot-
toman Empire and which is more apparent in places that, like
Rhodes, were in former times renowned seats of commerce, navi-
gation, civilisation and independence, has sunk to a still more
wretched state since the establishment of the kingdom of Greece.
The political bias of the Greek population was very strong in the
Hellenes, and revolutionary movements having taken place in
some, and strong sympathies having been evinced in others, the
Turkish government became anxious to suppress any movement
that might end in the loss of the richest of their insular
possessions...the short sighted policy which has now been adop-
ted is producing an opposite effect...and I am as firmly convinced
that the Turks are not only plunging these islands into irretrievable
ruin but that they are at the same time heaping the greatest bene-
fits on the Greek nation to the detriment of their own subjects, and
rendering to these the desire to be liberated from their yoke more
ardent than ever."

The dependence of the Aegean islands on the mainland was such that they
had not been able to develop an economy that might permit their own inde-
pendent survival. Goods came from Smyrna, and were transported to the Ae-
gean incurring additional costs, which affected sales and depressed the econ-
omy. It was evident that if goods might be transported directly to Rhodes
from abroad, prices could be kept low and sales increased; such a strategy
would additionally provide a stimulus for the local economy. A first step to-
wards this kind of organisation had effectively been taken in opening the
consulate at Rhodes, however it was to be several years before a consul
would insist on a direct trade link between Europe and Rhodes, and report

on its advantages for British enterprise.\footnote{This was consul Campbell’s view on how to improve the economy and social conditions of the islands; see pp.267-8 in this chapter.}

In 1850 the islands faced a number of difficulties. The extreme poverty to which they had been reduced by Ottoman maladministration had exacerbated their social, political and economic problems, and had resulted in growing tension between the elements of their population. The number of criminal cases rose sharply, some a product of the jealousy felt by the Greeks and Turks towards the privileges enjoyed by the Ionians, others a result of the continuing deterioration of relations between Christians and Muslims. The exceptionally difficult conditions were additionally manifested in the recurrent problem of piracy, which had become a source of livelihood for the impoverished population.

The state of confusion which existed throughout the islands was a direct result of the confusion generated at Constantinople by the irretrievable weakening of the Ottoman central government. Local Governors and \textit{Pashas} profited from their position at the expense of the population, and although the \textit{Porte} often attempted to organise surveillance and action against the pirates, the tacit approval of these criminals by the local \textit{Pashas} rendered its actions useless. The situation allowed a few to enrich themselves whilst engendering fear and panic among the remainder of the population. Merchant boats were all too often attacked and burnt, their crews assaulted or taken hostage. In April 1850 a British traveller sought refuge at the consulate in Rhodes after an encounter with a band of pirates in an attack where another British traveller had been killed. Explaining the situation to Kerr, he stated that the life of the British vice consul at Macri, Charles Biliotti, who had helped to capture the chief of the pirates, was in danger.\footnote{18 Apr. 1850, Ibid., ff.196-9.} Despite his arrest, the criminal continued to direct the movements of his band from prison, and his colleagues had attempted to extort twelve thousand piastras from the
town’s populace. The situation had become even more tense when the indi-
vidual sent by the pirates to levy the contribution, was shot in a struggle. At
the same time as this episode, a criminal band assisted by the police had rob-
bed an Ionian at Scio, and when Vedova, the British vice-consul appointed in
the island, had demanded prompt intervention to capture the felons, the reac-
tion of the police had been to incriminate the victim of the crime. In corre-
spondence with Kerr, Vedova wrote that the governor general and the other
Ottoman authorities had supported the police, ‘making every attempt of jus-
tice perish miserably’.

A great deal of religious tension had developed in the islands as a result
of the recent policies of the Porte aimed at equalising the position of the
rayah subjects of the empire with that of the Muslims. Disputes between the
two religious groups were further antagonised by the behaviour of the Otto-
man officials. In one incident at Cyprus, a Christian had died as a result of
being viciously beaten by a Turk. His widow, left with three young children,
had demanded justice from the authorities in Nicosia, however the council
had rejected her petition due to the lack of witnesses. She had thus immedia-
tely produced three Christian witnesses, and a medical certificate testifying
that the man had died as a result of repeated assault. The council next re-
fused to consider the witnesses because they were not Muslim and, even
after the murderer himself had confessed to the crime, the woman had been
denied justice. On the advice of the Greek community in Nicosia, the desper-
ate woman had explained her story to the British vice-consul, Antonio
Palma. He was moved to pity, but due to her status as an Ottoman subject
the woman had no right of appeal to a British consulate, and Palma could
make no official intervention in her favour. Nevertheless he referred her case
to the Embassy to be dealt with by the ambassador and the authorities at

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29 May 1851, FO 195/370, ff.78/9.
26 June 1851, Ibid., ff.105-6.
For a period, the rate of reported crime in the Aegean had reached such a high level, that it became the principal concern in consular reports. Rumours of repeated assaults and robberies on the streets of Cassos circulated throughout the archipelago, causing increased concern which was compounded when a group of inhabitants, who had found the courage to denounce the crimes, were murdered with the implicit consent of the authorities. Kerr wrote to the ambassador about further problems on the island of Kos. Following an attack on a Maltese vessel, a Cassiote had officially informed him of having witnessed some people committing the crime, only to have his house burnt down and his possessions stolen. A Maltese citizen had subsequently presented a claim against certain individuals at Kos, and had requested intervention on his behalf. However, when Kerr asked the captain of a Turkish corvette to investigate the matter, the captain had let himself be corrupted by the Cassiotes, and had supported the cause of the robbers. A further person had thus to be sent, to report both on the robbery and on the activities of the captain. Describing the case to Palmerston, Kerr commented: "I think a more scandalous mockery of justice was seldom perpetrated, even by a Turkish officer..." Analysing the state of affairs in the Aegean, he pointed out how the almost total insubordination and anarchy in which the inhabitants of the insular pashalic had for some time been forced to exist, was creating unsustainable situations from a humanitarian and political point of view. Kos seemed to be the focus of the crimes, where the pirates sought refuge following their activities, and its inhabitants had been corrupted by their presence. In addition to frequent claims of abuse, the Rhodes consulate received alarming dispatches from the consular agents, describing the spread of delinquency. Kerr was informed from Kos that the wife and the son of a

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16 Ibid.
17 20 Feb.1852, Ibid., f.221.
Greek Captain had been murdered and that the perpetrators of the crime were well known. The governor of the island had requested the governor general of the district to arrest the criminals, but the latter had refused to do so. Further incidents occurred at Scapanto, where a rayah, attempting to recover a debt was seized by fifteen of the local inhabitants and forced to sign a contract releasing the debtor from its payment, and at Calymnos, where an Ionian similarly trying to collect a debt, narrowly escaped with his life.¹⁹

Amidst this general anarchy, the consulates were becoming refuges for desperate subjects imploring justice from authorities which, whilst supposed to protect them, seemed instead to favour the development of criminal activities. Palmerston recommended the consuls to be cautious with their offers of help, because the official position of Great Britain made no allowance for intervention in cases between Ottoman subjects. Russia, by contrast, had for a long time made a pretence of defending Ottoman Christians, using this, on occasion, as a pretext for action against the Porte. Great Britain could not allow this kind of approach; the nature of its diplomatic establishment in the Levant had, from the start, been purely commercial, and despite the broadening of its remit with the reform of 1825, its scope remained the widening of commercial markets and the observation of political events, but not the acquisition of more territory, in the Russian manner. The delicate balance between the Christian and Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire had been the cause of repeated clashes, and it was felt that the siding of Great Britain with one community or the other would provide Russia with a long-awaited excuse for war aimed at the final destruction of the Empire.²⁰ These considerations restricted British policies with the Porte and precluded intervention in cases of religious disagreement. The consuls themselves were, however, unable to remain detached from the desperate situations they encountered on

¹⁹ 17 April 1851, Ibid., f. 73.
²⁰ 'Memorandum on the political and commercial relations of Great Britain with Asia Minor and Greece', FO 78/135, ff.284-95.
an almost daily basis, and made them the subject of frequent reports.

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In May 1850 the Porte issued a prohibition on the construction of merchant vessels in Ottoman territory, ‘if not bearing the Turkish flag.’ This restriction dealt a severe blow to the local shipbuilding industry upon which the Aegean islands were dependent for economic survival. Following its humiliating reintegration into the Ottoman Empire, the Hellenic population had become increasingly hostile to political submission to the Porte, and as a matter of pride, their shipbuilders prepared boats for the Greek nation and under the Greek flag. Indeed, almost every vessel built in the islands was taken to the mainland to acquire the flag of Greece. This deeply irritated the Porte which responded intermittently by outlawing the industry, reducing entire families to poverty. Kerr informed the ambassador that the measure, whilst aimed at preventing revolt by weakening the economy of the islands, was likely to provoke an insurrection. The cessation of ship building, which in his opinion the Turks had enforced for fear that the ships would be used against the Porte in the event of a revolt, accelerated the migration of Aegean people to areas where they could continue their trade freely. This exodus caused the break up of families, and reduced the remaining populace to misery. Between 1836, when the Porte had first prohibited the construction of sea vessels, and 1850, the population of Rhodes had decreased from 42,000 to 28,000, testifying to the scale of emigration from the island. The extent to which ships built in the Aegean islands were being registered under the Greek flag is clearly illustrated in the reports of two consuls to the Board of Trade. In his annual report of trade at Syros in 1833, soon after the unification of Greece, consul Richard Wilkinson listed the numbers of foreign and Greek vessels
entering and leaving the district. Syros was the closest Greek consulate to
the Aegean islands and Wilkinson’s report shows a vast discrepancy be­
tween the 989 vessels entering the district under the Greek flag and the
2293 leaving it. Two years later, once the prohibition had been imposed,
the number of Greek boats entering the consular district of Smyrna, was al­
most equivalent to the number of outgoing vessels.

Whilst the extent of the problem had been considerable, Kerr commen­
ted that the Porte had overreacted, threatening the economic and social sur­
vival of the islands:

They have prohibited even to the Europeans the cutting of the
timber in the coast of Asia minor and have prohibited any con­
struction of ships unless the bearer can produce a certificate guar­
anteeing that the ship will always bear the Ottoman flag, which
measure has immediately put a stop to shipbuilding and is daily
plunging the inhabitants into ruin and despair... From the island of
Rhodes they are leaving to go to Syra and Piraeus, where the con­
struction is still flourishing, leaving their wives and children at
home to pay the burden of the enormous Turkish taxes, often
abandoning them and remarrying in Greece.

Kerr was clearly concerned by the policies adopted by the Porte in the is­
lands, and in correspondence with the embassy at Constantinople he main­
tained that official intervention should be considered to improve the condi­
tions of the population. Attempting to find a solution, he suggested to the
ambassador that Rhodes could be declared a free port and be accorded the
same commercial advantages as the island of Syros. He felt that, due to its

21 Annual trade report from Syros, 1833, BT 2/2, ff.178 and 186.
22 Trade of Smyrna, 1835. BT 2/1, enclos. n.6, f.390.
central position, the island would greatly benefit from such a solution.

If Rhodes were accorded the same commercial advantages as the Greek island of Syra, by being declared a free port, it is certain that Syra could not withstand the competition, owing to the superiority of the geographical position of Rhodes for commerce. Such a measure would accomplish the desired effect and vastly benefit the inhabitants of this and other Ottoman islands.24

Kerr observed that the ports of the Aegean islands were in urgent need of maintenance works and improvements. He commented at length on a visit paid by the Sultan to Rhodes and on the lack of enthusiasm that the Ottoman ruler had shown during his short stay in the island.25 Presented with an extensive list of requests for urgent improvements, the monarch had left promising nothing more than their consideration. The document delivered to the Porte was primarily concerned with the need for significant repairs to the harbours of Rhodes. It additionally contained a request for permission to revive the construction of merchant vessels under the flag felt most suitable by the owners.26 On his departure the Sultan had left a donation £186 for the poor, and his entourage had added a further £136. They had also left a sum of £454 for the attendants in the Konack.27 However, the governor general had retained £264 destined for the paupers, for building expenses, together with most of the sum destined to the Konack, leaving a mere £58 for the poor and £45 for the attendants.28 In Kerr’s view the episode further illustrated the utter indifference of the governor to life in the island, and his lack of concern at publicly profiting from his position.

24 1 Nov. 1850, Ibid., f.267.
25 17 June 1850, Ibid., f.216.
26 27 June 1850, Ibid., f.221.
27 Governmental building.
28 27 June 1850, FO 195/287, f.221.
With the exception of Cyprus, none of the Aegean islands were able to produce grain sufficient for the maintenance of their decreasing populations, and commercial reports from the smaller islands illustrate the gradual worsening of their situation. Vice consul Vedova explained that Scio, once renowned for its beautiful silk products, was no longer able to achieve their manufacture due to the disappearance, during the revolution, of both labourers and machinery. He commented that, of the remaining inhabitants, those still engaged in the winding of silk were compelled to adopt such 'ancient and coarse' methods, that their product was unsuitable for European markets. As a result of this state of affairs, during the previous few years, Smyrniote agents had visited Scio to purchase cocoons, which they then wove at Smyrna in the European style. Amongst the other products of the island, Vedova listed olive oil which, due to the prohibition imposed by the Porte on its export, left the island with great quantities as contraband. He explained how the local wine, which had once been of excellent quality, was now acidic and became undrinkable after a short period, whilst the harvesting of fruits such as oranges and lemons had been ruined by winter frosts. On a more positive note, he listed, among the exports, three qualities of almonds intended for the Russian market, mastic for the Turkish and European markets, and carob. Cotton was also manufactured locally, both for clothing and sail cloths, whilst wheat was produced on the island, but kept for internal use.

The principal industry of the island was, however, shipbuilding. It seems that in the past the Porte had imposed on the islands an annual contribution of a warship for the arsenal at Constantinople. This is confirmed by a report explaining that as a consequence of the deteriorating conditions at Scio, the Porte had given the islanders dispensation to build ships, under the assurance that it would never impose the construction of vessels of war. The

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29 1 Nov. 1850, Ibid., f.266.
Sciote merchant fleet had thus increased considerably until the Porte had become irritated by the manner in which boats were immediately taken to Syros where they obtained the Greek flag before returning to Scio. When the Ottoman government sought to counteract this activity by declaring that all ships built within its dominion could uniquely hoist the Turkish flag, the Sciotes responded by suspending the construction of large ships for three years. This state of affairs was highly detrimental to the economy of the island and profoundly affected its capability of acquiring imported merchandise. Goods arrived at Scio, as at the other islands, from either Smyrna or Syros, inflating their costs considerably. Vedova listed sugar, coffee and silks as the primary imports, the first two coming from Britain, the latter from France. The right to collect Custom House duties had been sold by auction at Constantinople in 1847, and had been acquired by the governor of the island for 2,900 Piastras annually and had remained in his hands. Thus rather than being reinvested in the island, the benefactor of the tax had become a single individual, and the island had been deprived of even this meagre source of income.

The situation in the region was further complicated by a series of natural disasters which affected a number of islands during the course of the decade. In March 1851 a severe earthquake caused considerable damage to the centre of Rhodes. The tower of San Nicola, the most famous of the ancient towers, was seriously affected, whilst another mediaeval tower collapsed. Consul Kerr describing these events in a dispatch, suggested the appointment of an experienced engineer from England to ascertain which parts of the fortress were still structurally sound and which should instead be pulled down and reconstructed. He expressed concern at the Turkish attitude towards the historic and artistic patrimony of the island and commented:

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

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If the Turks with their usual apathy, allow the tower of San Nicola, which is situated at the entrance of the harbour, to fall, the port of Rhodes is irrevocably lost, for little hope can be entertained of their ever being able to remove the ruins. Whereas, were those of the ancient towers and fortress which are not only unsafe but excessively dangerous, removed, sufficient stone would be procured at a trifling cost, not only to erect a splendid lazaretto, but also to repair the port effectually and thus ensure Rhodes becoming a point of importance, instead of falling rapidly to ruin.

Following the visit of the Sultan, Rhodes had been made the principal port for quarantine in the Aegean, making the construction of a new lazaretto necessary to receive the expected influx of people and merchandise. Kerr was concerned that the governor general’s lack of enthusiasm for changes which might benefit the economy of the island, would result in the buildings being constructed and restored in a manner unsuitable for their use.

A second earthquake at Macri, three months later, destroyed the house of the British vice consul Charles Biliotti and razed to the ground both the warehouse where he stored his goods and the consular office which contained his archives. Whilst Biliotti and his family sought refuge on board a ship in the harbour, robbers stole possessions from his house. Kerr sent an estimate of the damages to the Foreign Office, with a request for intervention in favour of Biliotti. In August of the same year, a further disaster caused the destruction of the centre of Mitilene. A dispatch from vice-consul Francis Werry informed Kerr that fire had ravaged a large part of the town centre, destroying three hundred and sixty houses belonging to wealthy families and

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32 Hospital for contagious diseases, a building for quarantine.
33 7 March 1851, FO 195/370, f.32.
34 Quarantine was the prescribed period of isolation imposed on persons, animals or ships coming from places infected with contagious disease.
35 26 June 1851, FO 195/370, f.110.
the homes of one hundred and twenty paupers, together with the whole of the bazaar and great part of the olive plantations.\textsuperscript{36} 

The effect of these natural disasters throughout the district was to exacerbate the existing social tensions. Prior to the Greek revolution, the position of the Christian subjects of the empire had been far inferior to that of the Muslims. However, following Russian remonstrations to the \textit{Porte}, they had been granted rights which restored a fairer balance. Indeed, where the local governors were honest and efficient, the policies of the central government accorded the Christians a number of advantages. Kerr, however, expressed the view that, owing to their indolence, ignorance and apathy, in many islands the Muslims were unable to compete ‘with the rapid march of education and civilisation among the \textit{Porte’s} Christian subjects’ and thus as the Christians rose from their miserable state, the position of the Muslims appeared to worsen.\textsuperscript{37} As a result, Christians found themselves the subjects of persecution and resentment, and attacks in the street by angry Muslims became increasingly frequent. In many islands people converted to Islam, at the insistence of the local authorities. Kerr expressed his concern in a dispatch:

\begin{quote}
It is with great regret that I express my fear that the signs of increasing hatred and jealousy of the Moslems toward the Christian population of these countries and also of the weakness of the Turkish rule, are too evident to admit any well funded hope that the rapidly deteriorating state of affairs in these parts will ever be ameliorated.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

He feared that in islands already exasperated by an oppressive fiscal administration, religious persecution could bring the population to rebellion. In

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} 23 Aug. 1851, Ibid., f.170.
\item \textsuperscript{37} 1 Nov. 1851, FO 195/287, f.267.
\item \textsuperscript{38} 22 July 1852, FO 195/370, f.281, dispatch n.29.
\end{itemize}
November he had written that 'the inhabitants are entirely Hellenic in their sympathies and are not of a temperament calmly to submit to a recurrence of the atrocities and oppressions heaped on them during the former Greek revolution,' impressing on the Foreign Office the need for intervention to resolve the tensions between the two religious groups.

The situation had assumed unexpected proportions particularly in Cyprus, where vice-consul Palma reported daily persecution and violence towards the Christian population. Many Christians who had been forced to convert to Islam during the revolution wished to return to their own religion, but faced prosecution by the Ottoman authorities. They thus sought refuge at the consulate claiming their right of religion, however, the governor threatened that they should be judged by an Ottoman tribunal in Constantinople, underlining that British influence was not sufficient to protect their rights. Palma wrote to Kerr in haste, pointing out that the island was sliding into anarchy.

If the Porte does not take measures to terminate these questions, they will soon assume the aspect of a deliberate prosecution of Christianity...It is evident that the governor, instead of acting with loyalty, which I had a right to expect at his hands, has conducted himself with the most base ill faith, and wishes to avail himself of the great confidence which the words of a British consul inspires in the population of the island to entrap the above named individuals and practice on them, if he can, all the torments which his fanaticism may have dictated.

In an exchange of correspondence the ambassador suggested to Kerr that it

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39 1 Nov. 1851, FO 195/287, f.268.
40 7 Aug. 1851, Ibid., f.121.
41 22 July 1851, Ibid., ff.124-7.
was better diplomacy to separate religious matters from British intervention, since the sensitivity of the issue could create an extremely difficult situation at Constantinople.\textsuperscript{42}

Meanwhile at Rhodes, the Catholic community was growing in size under French protection. Their monks had been building a church next to their convent for some time,\textsuperscript{43} and when a letter demanding the interruption of the works had arrived from Constantinople, it had been ignored allowing the church to be finished and inaugurated.\textsuperscript{44} Kerr took a personal view of this matter and wrote to the Foreign Office that whilst Ionians and Christians were persecuted by the Muslims with the tacit consent of the authorities, no such fate was suffered by those protected by countries which adopted a more aggressive policy toward the Porte.\textsuperscript{45} The life of yet another Ionian had been endangered at Cassos in April, and the situation there had become so tense that even the official appointed by the governor general to investigate the crime had been stabbed. Sitting in a café, the same Ionian had subsequently been assaulted publicly by a Muslim who repeatedly attempted his murder. Nobody intervened in his favour and he had implored the captain of a boat to report the situation to Kerr. At Rhodes the Captain asked Kerr to keep his name secret for fear of his own life on his return to Cassos. Kerr wrote to Constantinople in exasperation, pressing his view that something should indeed be done:

\begin{quote}
It appears to me, judging from the tenor of conversation which the Moslems now hold publicly in the cafes in these parts, that the Turks are well aware that the integrity of their suffering empire forms one of the great key stones of European diplomacy and pre-
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{42}{17 Oct. 1851, Ibid., ff.179, 182.}
\footnote{43}{22 May 1851, Ibid., f.210.}
\footnote{44}{9 Jan. 1852, Ibid., f.215.}
\footnote{45}{30 Apr. 1852, Ibid., ff.249-54.}
\end{footnotes}
sume on this to commit vexations on the subjects of their allies, which were formerly rarely heard of. Not so with the powers whose policy is of an aggressive character, a simple consular agent of Russia can obtain redress for the claims of his subjects without continual appeals to his embassy... and by the last steamer, the Austrian vice-consul here obtained a vizirial letter... The representatives of these powers are feared and finish their affairs with little trouble, but such, I can assure your Excellency, is not the case with either the English or the French authorities.\(^{46}\)

Kerr had viewed the behaviour of the *Porte* with the other authorities bitterly ever since the *Pashas* had circulated a document prohibiting Ionians from holding property in Turkey. It had stated that should they wish to retain their properties in the area, they should acquire the citizenship of the empire and become *rayahs*, presenting them with a stark choice between their privileges and their properties.\(^{47}\) The document, and its public circulation in the islands, must have represented a clear breach of the British position in the Levant, and although its terms were never enforced, it caused great consternation among the Ionians.

As Kerr had pointed out, the aggressive policies of Russia and Austria with the *Porte* were reflected also in the behaviour of their representatives towards those of Great Britain. He found himself in dispute with the Austrian vice consul at Rhodes regarding the judgment of a Maltese citizen accused of having stolen six thousand piastras from a group of passengers aboard his boat. Initially, vice consul Wilkinson at Syros had found the Maltese innocent, and following an appeal, another British consul, Brandt, had considered the case and come to the same conclusion. However, an Austrian had public-

\(^{46}\) ibid.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., f.224.
ly accused the Maltese on the street and requested that the matter be judged by the Austrian vice consul at Rhodes. According to Kerr, this vice consul had falsified evidence and with a summary process declared the Maltese guilty of the theft. Kerr thus brought the matter to the attention of the consul general at Constantinople demanding the suspension of the Austrian official.  

Such friction with their foreign colleagues was due in part to the enormity of the burden placed upon the British representatives by the protection of Ionian and Maltese subjects, large numbers of whom were dispersed throughout the Aegean. The other inhabitants of the Aegean were envious of the privileges and immunity conferred on them by their special status, and this created frequent trouble. Moreover, the Ionians were widely suspected of cheating and misdeeds and they came to be despised by the other Greeks and resented by the authorities and the representatives of foreign governments. They were infamous for their attempts to obtain passports for non-Ionian friends and compensation for disputes on the basis of false testimonies. The increased burden of work borne by the Aegean consuls was not so much a function of the privileges enjoyed by the Ionians as a result of the manner in which they abused them. They were thus the cause of much anxiety for the British consuls throughout the Levant. Soon after Francis Werry had established himself in the consulate at Miltiene, he had discovered both the large number of Ionians resident in the island and their belligerent character. He described to the Foreign Office how busy he was kept by 'our Ionian subjects of which, I am sorry to say, there are a great many.'

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Amongst the consuls employed in the Aegean during the period examined by this study, Niven Kerr was certainly one of the most sensitive;  

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through his dispatches it is possible to form a picture of the chaotic situation in the islands and of the political and humanitarian role of the British presence in the region. Whilst many of his colleagues complained incessantly about the behaviour of the Ionians, Kerr was instead more concerned with the effects that the politics of the Porte and its representatives in the islands had on the population and economy of the archipelago. He was outraged by what he saw as the amorality which had been provoked by the weakness of the Ottoman central government in dealing with its subjects and bureaucrats, and by the extent of taxation imposed on the local population.

A series of natural disasters compounded the difficulties caused by the burden of taxation. At Mitilene, in the winter of 1849, a strong frost had destroyed the olive trees with a resulting considerable loss in profit for the island. The conflagration of the following year destroyed the centre of town, further damaging what remained of the trees. For these reasons the island was unable to pay its contribution to the empire in 1851, and the situation showed no signs of improvement for 1852. Its debt with Constantinople grew disproportionately, whilst funding was desperately needed to repair the damages of the fire. In December 1851 the governor general met Consul Werry to discuss the debt and how the island could be helped to pay.

At Cyprus the situation was little better. Peasants had visited the consulate asking the vice consul to support their demands for a decrease in taxation. Antonio Palma made an extensive report of their grievances:

Last year the Sublime Porte issued a firman ordering our governor to farm out the tenths of the island...or a tax of one tenth the agricultural produce [would be] levied on account of the Porte to the peasantry, for a period of five years, at the rate of 190,000 Pia-

51 22 Dec.1851, Ibid., ff.212-14.
stras: £17,272 per annum. The last season, which from the very beginning menaced to be a sterile one, owing to the want of rain in the winter and the immense quantity of locusts, which destroyed nearly a third of the small crops on the ground, alarmed the peasants...but the governor would hear no opposition to the orders of the Porte, and compelled them to accept it for the whole five years. The harvest of this present year being good and abundant, the peasants hoped to cover the heavy losses which they sustained last year, when the Pasha, by order of the Sultan, had the tenth of this year put up to auction...52

Kerr was sympathetic to the demands for help which arrived from almost every island in the archipelago, and in a dispatch to the ambassador at Constantinople requested his official intervention with the Porte.53 He explained that the islands were poorly farmed, and had been infested by locusts, and that the Porte had imposed additional work on the peasants, which prevented them from carrying out the harvest, and compounded the destruction of their crops by the insects. At the end of the year, when their taxes were due, the islanders would be even less able to pay. Kerr wrote that not only were most of the islands unable to produce enough grain to maintain their ‘scanty populations’, but even where the harvests raised the hope of controlling their increasing debts, laws were promptly passed to depreciate the value of the crops. Seeking an alternative to the extensive taxation of the peasants, Kerr had previously suggested that the Porte might exchange its brass guns for iron ones, and thus, by collecting the brass for the Treasury, lighten the financial burden on the population.54

Kerr’s openness to the problems of the region and its inhabitants made

52 1 Aug. 1852, Ibid., ff.285-6.
53 Ibid.
54 2 April 1852, Ibid., f.241.
him very popular in the islands, and as he became increasingly involved with
the local communities, he kept a close interest in the policies of the Porte, re-
porting scrupulously any matters of serious concern to the Foreign Office
and to the ambassador. Having assisted a number of the victims of unquali-
fied and incompetent local doctors, he wrote to Constantinople in March
1852 that the Porte should permit only doctors with a proper medical diplo-
ma to practise the medical profession. He emphasised that the matter warran-
ted investigation:

The great number of unprincipled charlatans who practice medi-
cine in these parts without diploma and, in very many instances,
totally ignorant of the rudiments of the healing art, and who, pro-
vided they possess sufficient cunning to humour the superstition
and caprices of their victims, seldom fail to procure extensive pa-
tronage, leads me to conviction that, through their mercenary de-
ceit, hundreds of the population are yearly hurried to untimely
graves.55

Further risks to the medical welfare of the local people were posed by pseu-
do-pharmacists. A number of deaths were caused at Rhodes by these un-
trained and improvised ‘professionals’ through the administration of lethal
drugs which they had considered innocuous. On one occasion, a Jewish
pharmacist caused three fatalities with a drug administered, as the curative of
some normal disease, in a dose capable of killing as many as sixty people,56
prompting Kerr to opine that the Porte should be made to understand that
the state of affairs had reached an unacceptable level and that only compe-
tent people should deal with the medical profession.

55 18 March 1852, Ibid., ff.231-2.
56 Ibid.
Eventually, Kerr’s paternalistic attitude toward the state of affairs in the Aegean clashed with his diplomatic position, causing problems at Constantinople. In a dispatch to the Foreign Office in February 1853, he explained that the *Porte* had suspended communication with him pending an official explanation of his behaviour regarding ‘a false accusation.’ The document makes no attempt to explain the accusation, but it is clear that as the situation became more personally difficult and politically confused, Kerr decided to leave the Aegean.

The opportunity for his departure arose when another consul, Robert Campbell, in service at Dunkirk, requested a transfer to a southern station for reasons of health. Kerr justified his own request with the need to obtain a reasonable standard of education for his young children ‘which is utterly impossible at Rhodes,’ and in December 1853 the two officials were appointed to their new stations. The appointment became effective in February 1854, when Robert Campbell moved to Rhodes and Niven Kerr to Dunkirk.

Further changes occurred elsewhere in the islands of the Archipelago. In March 1852 Charles Thomas Newton had been appointed at Mitilene, capital of the island of Lesvos, to replace Francis Werry, who in turn moved to Bengazi. As we have already seen, Newton’s appointment in the Aegean had strong archaeological motives. Indeed, amongst the official duties listed in his letter of appointment, he was offered support for his explorations:

> I should be happy to afford any facilities which the Foreign Office can give to enable you, without neglecting your consular duties, to extend your usefulness in connection with the British Museum,

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57 2 Feb. 1853, FO 78/956, f.39.
58 Ibid., f.91.
59 Ibid.
60 *FO List*, 1862, p.67.
61 21 Feb. 1854, FO 78/1017, f.1.
63 5 March 1852, FO 195/370, f.225.
and with this view I hereby authorise you...to visit from time to time the several islands and other places of archeological interest in the vicinity of your consulate, and you will receive an allowance at any rate of £50 a year to defray your travelling expenses on those occasions. 

Newton’s appointment demonstrated a change of professional attitudes in the British consular service in Ottoman Greece. Where Kerr had been preoccupied with the behaviour of the Porte toward its Christian subjects, and by the effects of the corruption of the Ottoman authorities over them, his later colleagues, such as Newton and Campbell, treated their appointment on more formal terms. They observed events, suggesting improvements which would exclusively benefit British trade and citizens in the Levant. This shift of interests from a humanitarian role to a more detached point of view, in many ways defined the future development of the consular service.

Newton arrived at Mitilene with a young assistant, Dominic Ellis Colnaghi. Colnaghi performed a practical role in the Aegean, photographing excavations and researching the possibility of extending the trade of his family firm to the Levant. Their first impression of Mitilene was not good. In a book recollecting Newton’s experience in the Levant, the town is described as a ‘struggling dirty village, the houses constructed of wood...the roofs are of red tile, which gives to the town a mean appearance.’ Beyond the town of Mitilene, however, the island concealed considerable beauty, ‘pleasant and fertile’, with plenty of vegetation and good food. Newton was essentially a classicist; with his background of ten years assistantship in the British Museum, he was unsympathetic to the attitudes of modern Greece and its inhabi-

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64 14 May 1852, Ibid., ff.257-8.
66 Ibid., p.53.
67 Ibid., p.54.

251
tants. He felt that they had lost all the poetry and beauty of their ancestors.

Turning from the scenery of Mitilene to its present inhabitants, I experienced a painful shock. Nothing can be less in harmony than nature and man in this favoured island. A faint tradition of European civilisation is preserved in the few Smyrniote families who have settled here for the sake of consular appointments or trade, and whose half a dozen houses form a Frank quarter, but even in this society the interest in subjects such as we talk of in Europe, is but small."\textsuperscript{a}

This impression never altered, profoundly influencing his behaviour and that of his colleague throughout their time in the Levant.

Like many travellers of the period, Newton was unable to reconcile the difference between an idealised view of ancient Greece and the reality of the region following four centuries of Ottoman rule. Where others, such as Lord Byron, had blamed Turkish dominion for the deterioration of Greece,\textsuperscript{b} Newton placed responsibility for the state of affairs with the Greeks themselves. He was insensitive to the problems of the Aegean populations and uninterested in how their situation might be improved through foreign intervention. Thus he never sought to familiarise himself with the Greek way of life, and disliked the vulgarity of the modern Greek idiom as he himself wrote in his book:

Yesterday I went to the Greek school to attend the first day of the annual examination...Were called forth the two senior scholars of the first class, one of whom read a poem of his own composition

\textsuperscript{a} Ibid., p.55.
\textsuperscript{b} See introduction, page 15.
on Lesvos, in the vile rhyme in which the modern Greeks have shackled and imprisoned their language. There is something to me revolting in Greek rhyme...after the poem, the same boy was ordered to take up a Plato...he then translated a page into modern Greek. I confess that it gave me a shudder to hear the mellifluous sentences of the divine philosopher tortured and distended and dilated, so as to suit the modern idiom...Modern Greek is excessively prolix and its structure clumsy; and thus, in translating from the ancient, much of the condensed energy is necessarily lost.\textsuperscript{70}

From the very beginning he spent much of his time travelling with Colnaghi, visiting the islands and being hosted in Greek houses. His experiences are recalled in his book and in his numerous letters to friends. Newton and Colnaghi’s judgment of Greek hospitality mirrored their attitudes to their hosts’ language. In a letter to his parents, Colnaghi described a recent trip, commenting on the journey, scenery and people. He and Newton had received great hospitality in Greek houses where they been the guests of kind families willing to prepare beds at no notice and give up their own food to satisfy the consuls’ needs. Everywhere they had found ‘very comfortable beds, mattresses on clean floors and good wholesome food.’\textsuperscript{71} Despite these observations, his opinion remained that ‘the Greek host has no idea of any hospitality, except that which satisfies the animal wants.’\textsuperscript{72}

This attitude was typical of Colnaghi’s and Newton’s behaviour in the Aegean throughout their time in the region, and it influenced both the way they perceived the people, and were themselves perceived by the local inhabitants. Newton himself never passed comment on the desperate situation imposed by the Turks in the islands, nor on any matter which regarded the

\textsuperscript{70} Newton, \textit{Travels}, p.69.
\textsuperscript{71} Add Mss 59,502 passim.
\textsuperscript{72} Newton, \textit{Travels}, p.102; Colnaghi to parents, 26 Feb.1853, Add Mss. 59,502, f.22-5.
Greek people. He felt disenchanted with modern Greece and was convinced that centuries of Ottoman dominion had forever compromised the Greek character. It would seem that he cared almost exclusively about antiquities, keeping one eye on the successful continuation of his career through frequent correspondence with influential people in London. His attitude to local problems was superficial, but he was attentive to suggestions that might improve the quality and the organisation of the consular service in the Aegean.

The island of Lesvos in itself offered limited possibilities for the collection of antiquities. It was too small and its inhabitants were unaccustomed to foreign presence, especially that of foreigners interested in their ruins. Spending much of their time touring the island in search of remains, the two soon encountered the hostility of the section of the population which valued its cultural background. Newton would do almost anything for a piece of inscribed marble or a statue, and his behaviour was capable of provoking bitter reactions:

I explored a little roofless chapel, such as are to be met all over the island...here I found a very interesting inscription covering three sides of a large marble slab...As I was staying in the house of the chief man of the village, a worthy Greek farmer, I asked him whether I might have this inscription. He assured me that I was free to take it and, as a preliminary step, we decided to remove it into the house of a Greek schoolmaster. I therefore proceeded, with a yoke of oxen, to the place where it was laying, in order to take possession of it, and in this manner roused all manner of dormant opposition. First the Turkish Agas of the district...my next opponent was the proprietor of the field in which the church was situated...
lady of the manor...denied the right of any one to remove it...I saw from the first that she was utterly beyond the reach of persuasion. On my arrival with the yoke of oxen, I found her already in possession of the field of battle, seated on the stone itself, in the apse of the roofless chapel...At the sight of our sacrilegious party, she became animated with the fury of an ancient Pythoness. She bowed down to the ground before the stone at least twelve times, kissing it and crossing herself each time, then she lit a fire and burnt incense, to purify the place from our presence, and with great horror flung out of the sacred precinct some chicken bones, the remains of our yesterday’s luncheon.73

Newton believed that the locals were not capable of understanding the importance of the antiquities for a European museum, let alone of appreciating the pieces themselves. His behaviour gave them little cause for confidence, and the hostility he encountered in Lesvos swiftly turned his attention to other islands. He knew that Rhodes, renowned for its ancient and beautiful acropolis, made an ideal base from which to direct his researches. Kerr’s final dispute with the Porte and his request of transfer was followed by a series of long periods away from Rhodes, and during his absence he suggested the appointment of Newton as acting consul.74

There being no person here qualified for an acting consul during my absence from my post, I trust that Your Lordship will not object to authorise Mr. Newton, Her Majesty’s vice consul at Mithlène, to act in that capacity: the great learning of this gentleman offering the best proof that the public service will in no way suffer

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73 Newton, Travels, p.102.
74 12 Jan. 1853, FO 78/956, f.23.
Newton, who arrived in the town in January 1853, was ideally suited to the post, not just in consideration of his personal interests and desire to be appointed somewhere less remote than Lesvos, but also because he had become well acquainted with the other consular agents in the Aegean and was able to nominate a substitute at Mitilene. Colnaghi and Newton were not greatly missed by the people of Mitilene. On the eve of their departure from Lesvos, Colnaghi hinted at the low esteem in which the two Englishmen were by then held in a letter to his parents:

Our great pleasure has been not to let any one of the Mytileniotes know of our departure, so that, at last, it may astonish them all. If there is a people that I despise, it is the Greeks of Mitilene, in England you can have no idea of the people we come in contact with here. Fortunately we are three together, so that we need to depend on no one but ourselves for society. It is a curious feeling to know, before people open their lips they will in all probability be about to tell you an untruth.\(^{76}\)

Due to its central location, Rhodes provided an ideal base from which to visit the adjacent islands, and the frequent passage of boats through the port made transport easy. The island's renowned acropolis was a particular attraction for Newton who, within a few weeks of his temporary placement, was writing to his influential friends in London in pursuit of a full appointment as consul in the island:

\(^{75}\) Ibid.
\(^{76}\) Colnaghi to parents, 26 Feb. 1853, Add.Mss. 59502, f.21.
I cannot help wishing that I was permanently fixed at Rhodes. I think it could suit me better than any other consulate in Turkey...I really think I can do the work of this consulate in a creditable manner...and with regard to archaeology I know that I could do more down here than anybody not regularly trained to the study of antiquities."

Towards the end of the year, having received no official confirmation of the appointment at Rhodes, Newton wrote impatiently to Edmund Birch, assistant keeper of the department of Antiquities at the British Museum:

You must try help me to get made consul of Rhodes, for it will be impossible for me to finish the work of exploration during the few months that remain before Mr. Kerr’s return."

Newton never obtained his desired appointment, but he remained in Rhodes as a substitute for Kerr until Campbell’s arrival there in 1854.

At Rhodes, Newton encountered the same problems that had beset Niven Kerr, but his official reports were primarily concerned with combating piracy, a problem which had never been resolved in the Aegean, and which reemerged in the 1850’s with an intensity that preoccupied both the Foreign Office and the Ottoman authorities. In the early months of 1854 Ismail Pasha dispatched a twelve gun schooner of war in pursuit of the pirates, however this had little effect on the situation. Newton was convinced that an explanation for the recurrence of piracy in the Levant lay in the policy adopted by the Porte with the Christians, and that the problem had intensified when, following an insurrection, all Hellenic subjects had been expelled from the main-

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79 March 1854, FO 78/1017, f.73.
land causing a considerable increase of brigandage in the Aegean.

Under the pretence of aiding the Greek insurrection, pirates will be armed in various parts of the Archipelago, which will plunder the merchant vessels of all nations, while at the same time they will serve as the means of maintaining a treasonable communication between the disaffected Rayahs thorough the Porte’s dominions.

Pirates took advantage of the narrow and difficult channels of the Archipelago to attack the local and foreign vessels which transported valuables to the Aegean, and most of which were unequipped to resist. He explained that help could not be expected from the local people since they could not be guaranteed protection from the revenge of the criminals and that even when pirates eventually fell into the hands of justice, they would be imprisoned only briefly before being released with full freedom of movement throughout the Aegean. The illegal activities of the pirates thus continued unchecked. The criminals intimidated entire villages, demanding hospitality in the islands from families that dared not refuse them food and lodging, and risked their lives by hiding them. Newton reported that the state of corruption at Smyrna was such that no servant could be recommended from the town and that the islands of Tenedos, Lamos, Patmos and Cassos had been ‘infected’ to such an extent that they constituted veritable nests of pirates. Commenting that ‘the Samiotes and Cassiotes still regard piracy as an honourable profession’ he pointed out that responsibility for the resolution of the situation lay mainly with the European powers. He explained that when an act of piracy occurred, a French or British auxiliary would be called to those waters but, coming from elsewhere, it might take days and sometimes weeks before reaching the Aegean. By then, no trace of the criminal activity could be
found. Newton also pointed out that naval commanders and their crews had
no command of either the Greek or Turkish languages and acquired their infor-
modation either from the consuls, often themselves little better equipped
linguistically, or from the corrupt Ottoman authorities. No member of the po-
pulation would collaborate, for fear of retaliation. He therefore suggested
that more regular ships should be employed against the pirates, with officers
amongst the crew chosen from the Maltese police, who would be able to un-
derstand and communicate to their commanders the reactions of locals
thought to be essential to the resolution of the cases.**

In January 1854 Newton left the Levant to visit his ill father in London.
He left J.E.Blunt, the son of the consul at Smyrna at the beginning of his di-
plomatic career, in charge of the consulate at Rhodes, and Colnaghi at Mit-
ilene.** During his absence, the two were asked to inquire into the possibility,
in their respective islands, of opening a sanatorium for invalids of the British
army involved in the war in Crimea.** Colnaghi produced a very flattering
description of Lesvos for the Foreign Office:

Indeed the water of Mitrilene is most excellent...the possession of
several mineral springs joined with its fine temperate climate, and
pure air, as a proof of which I might say that the cholera has never
savaged this island ...Physicians are agreed that the climate of Mit-
ilene is one of the best in Turkey. It is invariably cool in summer,
and mild in winter. Provisions, especially fish, are in ordinary time
cheap and abundant. Rent moderate.**

**10 May 1854, Ibid., f.222; for part of the text of the same report, see chapter 3, pages 168-9
**1 12 Jan. 1854, Ibid., f.31.
**2 March 1854, Ibid., f.23.
'I desire that you will acquaint His Lordship what accommodation now exists, or could at short
notice be provided for invalids either within the fortress of Rhodes or elsewhere in the island.'
**3 30 Dec.1854, F.O.78/1122, dispatch n.11.
On his return from England a few months later, Newton added his own opinion to Colnaghi's:

The climate I believe to be one of the finest in the world, not at all inferior to that of Rhodes, as I can testify from personal experience. The position of Mitilene as high road between Smyrna and Constantinople is most convenient. There is regular steam communication... and the coast of Asia Minor is only two hours distant, and would supply all necessary provisions not to be obtained in the island itself.  

Whilst these comments appear odd when compared with the attitudes the two officials had expressed toward the population of the island, and their desire to leave as soon as possible, they nevertheless demonstrate that the consuls appreciated certain qualities of the place.

Blunt delegated his response to Campbell, the newly appointed consul, who arrived at Rhodes three months later. Campbell wrote a dispatch to the Foreign Office discouraging the opening of a sanatorium in Rhodes: 'the Greek houses in the suburbs and in the country are mostly very small and so infested with fleas and other vermin that they could only be got rid of by burning those houses to the ground'  

His search for suitable accommodation for the invalids was fruitless until a letter of the Vizir to the governor general provoked a response. As a personal act of good will, the governor general had subsequently offered the British government eighteen houses capable of fitting three hundred men, as a provisional and temporary hospital for British convalescents, of these houses, sixteen were in a state fit to host the soldiers. The governor had however promised to have them all repaired

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23 March 1855, Ibid., dispatch n.3.
and fitted with new doors and windows in no more than ten days, prompting Campbell to write in his praise:

I cannot speak in too high terms of his promptitude and zeal, who on the reception of the vizirial orders assembled the shoura and submitted it to them. All the members of which unhesitatingly gave up their country houses, the only ones habitable for the Europeans.  

The Foreign Office indicated an additional need for burial land, and Campbell suggested that the Vizir might once again be addressed to this end.

Unlike Newton, Robert Campbell had been in the consular service for many years. He had begun his career in the Royal Navy in 1810, and had remained there until his appointment as vice consul at Milan in 1836. When that position had been abolished, following Austrian objections to the presence of foreign consuls in Lombardy, Campbell had been moved to Venice and promoted to the rank of consul general. He had subsequently been appointed to Dunkirk, but in 1853, due the precarious state of his health, he had requested a more southerly post.

In Rhodes Campbell soon demonstrated a strong sense of duty. He regularly reported the happenings of the consular district to the Foreign Office and, unlike Kerr, he adopted an impersonal point of view from the very beginning. One of his first duties in Rhodes was of a military nature. The increasing ‘mutual suspicion’ between Great Britain and Russia in their relations with the Porte, had finally brought the relationship between the two countries to a close, causing Britain to agree with France on a joint declaration of war against Russia in support of the Ottoman Empire. News of this

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87 30 Dec.1854, Ibid., f.199.
88 Lieutenant Robert Campbell, in Foreign Office List, 1865, p.66.
was dispatched to the consuls in Greece and the Levant in a circular dated 23 February 1854. In July Campbell was requested to enquire into the possibility of obtaining a large number of mules from Cyprus for military purposes. ‘You will report directly, with the least possible delay, to Lord Raglan at the Head Quarters of the British Army in Turkey the result of your acquisition, and be guided to such further directions as you may receive from His Lordship on the subject.’ It is not possible to understand whether he was able to satisfy the demand for mules since he presumably replied directly to Lord Raglan. As Great Britain went to war with Russia in support of the Ottoman Empire, a second circular was distributed to the consuls requiring them to inform the merchants of the blockade of the Black Sea and the closure of its ports. Further communications stated that, as a consequence of the commencement of war, no potassium chloride or sodium nitrate could be exported to the Mediterranean. Normality was only reestablished in 1856, when a peace treaty with Russia restored the status quo in the Levant.

Campbell made a habit of frequent round visits of the consular district to verify the political and social situation in the area by conversing with Ottoman and British representatives and with local people. He left for his first tour in July, leaving ‘Mr. Henry Ducci, a British merchant at present vice consul of the king of the Netherlands...assisted by Mr. Edward Biliotti, brother of my chancelier’ to attend to the consular duties in his absence. He travelled in the company of the governor general of Rhodes, with the intention of creating the basis of a good working relationship between the two men.

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90 FO 78/1017, dispatch n.6, f.12; 13 July 1854.
92 Article from the London Gazette dated 20 Sept. 1855, Ibid.
93 31 March 1856, Ibid.
94 27 July 1854, FO 78/1017, f.126.
During Campbell’s absence Ducci and Biliotti were confronted with the news of a serious deterioration of relations between religious and ethnic groups in Cyprus. A dispatch from vice-consul Palma related that tension had grown throughout the island following the death of a Turk during a riot. He feared an uprising which would destroy the delicate balance that had permitted peaceful cohabitation on the island. Alarmed by the news, and fearing the consequences of his prolonged absence at such a delicate moment, Campbell decided to return to Rhodes, requesting the Pashas and Primates of the smaller islands to visit him there. He instructed Newton to continue the tour of the jurisdiction in his behalf, and to invite the respective leaders of the islands to call on him and ‘to interrogate them as to the wants of the people, the capabilities of the country, the improvements that can be made, whether in an agricultural or commercial point of view.’ He also invited the dignitaries to discuss whether any complaint existed against the behaviour of the British subjects or whether the British themselves were in any way unsatisfied with the Ottoman authorities. Campbell had himself thought of several amendments to the existing system, and had appointed a consular agent at Patmos, a step which his predecessor had sought to avoid. He had observed the need for such an appointment in the quantity of applications received from Ionian subjects living on the island, and had verified it during one of his visits. He appointed Michele Calliga, a ‘respectable merchant’ of Italian origins, to act as British representative there.

Newton and Campbell held quite different opinions about how the consular service in the region should be organised, and in particular about the role of consular agents. Campbell was to a great extent a bureaucrat, and he sought to improve the efficiency and performance of the consular service by paying close attention to the activities of his colleagues. Where he sought to

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57 23 Oct.1854, Ibid., ff.159-61.

263
emphasise the positive qualities of all the consular staff, and to support them in their work, Newton, throughout his reports and in his vast private correspondence, was consistently critical of their faults. He lamented the Foreign Office habit of appointing foreign consular agents as representatives of the British crown in places of minor importance and felt strongly that these individuals abused the position and privileges accorded to them for the promotion of themselves and their friends, and wrote several dispatches regarding the subject:

British interests are represented by a native agent or perhaps not at all, and from what I have known of foreign consular agents in the Archipelago, I fear that they are generally too much mixed up with local interests to be trusted in any matter where the punishment of a criminal is concerned.\footnote{10 May 1854, Ibid., f.231.}

Newton was also critical of his predecessor at Mitilene, describing the facility with which an Ionian passport would be distributed by him to whoever would pay for a glass of good wine.\footnote{Newton, Travels, p.78: 'Mr Worry's predecessor at Mitilene was one of these unpaid consular agents, an Ionian by birth. He was naturally anxious to release as many of the Hellenic race as possible from the thraldom of Turkish oppression and with this view he created at Mitilene about 200 pseudo-Ionians. Local traditions still record how this venerable man used to sit in the public cafe after dinner with his consular seal all ready in his pocket. After a certain number of glasses of rakee had been imbibed, a passport was always to be had for a reasonable consideration.'} His view was exaggerated, but although many of his later collaborators in the Levant were those same consular agents he had frequently criticised, he never officially changed his mind. Amongst these agents, Charles, Alfred and Albert Biliotti were all employed in
the consular district of Rhodes. Charles Biliotti, in particular, took over the retrieval and collection of antiquities on Newton’s departure from the Levant, and indeed much of Newton’s later correspondence concerning the instruction of consular agents, is with him.

Campbell’s approach, which was to be typical of the later consuls, was in contrast with that of Newton whose interests were primarily archaeological. As we have seen, during his service at Rhodes he made a point of regularly visiting his subordinates, and sought to instil good relations with the Ottoman authorities. The governor general of Rhodes had made a good impression on him, and their relationship was strengthened during frequent joint visits of the consular district.

The content of Campbell’s reports began to change in 1858 when, like his predecessor, he began to draw attention to the effects of the Porte’s policies. By this time, he had spent several years in the Aegean and was well acquainted with the social situation of the district and the policies which had caused it. The utter unfairness of the laws passed by the Porte as part of its policy in the region, was contrary to the economic and social development that Campbell aimed to promote in his tours as a recipe for the increased sale of British products in the Levant. His disappointment was strongest in the summer of 1858, when the Porte reintroduced its prohibition on shipbuilding in the archipelago, this time under the pretence of saving the forests from an ever increasing destruction. At the same time, new regulations banned the export of silk worm larvae from the island of Scio, which had been dependent

100 Albert Biliotti was acting vice consul at Rhodes from 15 Aug. 1864. Alfred Biliotti was appointed as clerk in the British vice consulate at Macri in 1849; as dragoman and subsequently as Chancellier Dragoman in the consulate at Rhodes in 1850; he was appointed unpaid vice consul there in January 1856; was acting consul from February to April 1860 as well as from July to September 1861. He was appointed vice consul at Rhodes in August 1863. Charles Biliotti was appointed vice consul at Macri in September 1848; he was transferred to Scio in 1858 and the vice consulate there was united with Mitilene in January 1860. Foreign Office List, 1865, f.59.

101 In the letter books in the Archives of the British Museum and at the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, there is ample proof of this correspondence starting from 1860.

102 16 June 1858, FO 195/647, report n.29, f.322.
upon the sales of silk cocoons and larvae since the revolution, when the islanders' silk manufacturing machinery had disappeared. 103

Campbell had developed the opinion that the policy of the Porte in the islands consistently jeopardised their well being and economy and his feelings had been confirmed when, in September 1857, the technicians in charge of connecting Rhodes with the mainland by the electric telegraph had been denied authorisation for the works in the island.

In the month of September last, Messrs. Newall and Liddell (who have the concession for an electric telegraph line from the Dardanelles to Alexandria in conjunction with the line to India by the Red Sea), accompanied by H.M.S. Angus and two merchant screw steamers, came to Rhodes for the purpose of laying down the electric cable between this island and Scio, the central station, but the orders transmitted to the governor general here were so totally in contradiction to what these gentlemen had been told by the Ottoman minister for Foreign Affairs, that all they could effect was to lay down the land part of the cable a distance of 200 yards. A few days after the departure of Messieurs Newall and Liddell, a vizirial letter arrived here instructing the Governor General to permit the electric cable to be carried to Scio and Alexandria, but unfortunately it was too late, and Rhodes has been thus deprived not only of the benefits of an electric communication between this island and the other islands of the Archipelago, but with Constantinople and Alexandria. Without taking into consideration the immense advantages that trade would derive from merchants into this quarter being able to communicate thereby to almost every

103 Ibid.
part of the globe.\textsuperscript{104}

The weakness of the central government at Constantinople was increasingly reflected throughout the islands, where its policies clashed directly with local interests. Campbell argued, in contradiction of Newton and to a certain extent also of Kerr, that in the rare event of an efficient and genuinely well intentioned person, the cause of the problems was not the protection of his own interests by the local governor, but rather the ineptitude of the government at Constantinople. He felt that if the \textit{Porte} was to take care of the effective necessities of the places and people, the islands would soon prosper. The potential for such a turn around had been demonstrated by the way in which even small changes in French commercial policy had resulted in a sharp increase in the sales of their products in the Archipelago.\textsuperscript{105} Benefiting from their Mediterranean ports, French vessels arrived directly at the town of Rhodes, eliminating the expense of renting a ship from Smyrna to deliver the goods, and this reduced the price of the products. The increase in sales had renewed confidence that commercial enterprises might improve and had demonstrated that the islands might still develop as markets to the mutual benefit of both trading parties. Campbell suggested that the vessels carrying British cotton products, in fierce competition with the French, should be made to arrive directly to Rhodes, targeting a restricted and specific market with improved prices.\textsuperscript{106}

The recent agricultural production of the district of Rhodes demonstrated that there was a great desire for economic and political improvement. Where and when they had been allowed to carry out their cultivations, peasants had produced silk, wine and oil of high quality and in large quantities. Sponge fishing had also taken a favourable turn, with great quantities being

\textsuperscript{104} Annual trade report 1858-9, Ibid., ff.347-8.
\textsuperscript{105} 16 June 1858, Ibid., report n.29, f.326.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
purchased from the islands by a French trader. The winding of silk had been rendered possible at Rhodes on the initiative of a Frenchman named Cova, who bought cocoons from the neighbouring islands in addition to importing large quantities from Anatolia. Campbell noted that French merchants had been almost exclusively responsible for taking the initiative at Rhodes and in the neighbouring islands, and in the absence of consistent and competitive foreign enterprise, the economy of the islands lacked stability. Furthermore, as a result of French enterprise, the economy of the islands seemed to be improving, but the taxation applied by the Porte continued to be so irregular and arbitrary, as to render any type of consistent business almost impossible. A tax on sponges had removed almost all foreign competition in their acquisition from the islands leaving just one French merchant who, saving the cost of transport, continued to buy his products in the district. Campbell pointed out that not only had the French initiatives been better structured and consequently more profitable than those of the British, but that they demonstrated how new commercial advantages could emerge through the creation of a direct link to Rhodes. His reports emphasised the real significance of the establishment of the new consular district at Rhodes. The creation of new commercial opportunities, which might permit their independent existence, was fundamental to the economic survival of the Aegean islands after their reintegration into the Ottoman Empire. Starved of good commercial enterprise, the local economy was dying, provoking mass emigration of men to the mainland, and leaving families and children in abject poverty. This state of affairs was responsible for provoking serious social problems between ethnic and religious groups. The establishment of an independent district and consular office had represented a first step towards the resolution of these problems, but it had taken several years for commercial enterprises to open links with Rhodes, and in the event, the French had been faster and more efficient

107 Ibid., f.329.
than the British. Their establishment of such a link had ended the islands de-
pendence on Smyrna and marked the beginning of a partial independence
from Turkey.

Campbell understood the severity of the problems that the ban on ship-
building were likely to provoke, and in June 1858 he wrote to the ambassa-
dor to express his concern. He explained that the industry had been suspen-
ded by order of the governor general under the justification that government
regulations respecting the dimensions of vessels were not being complied
with. All the owners of vessels under construction would only be allowed to
continue their work if they obtained written permission from Constantinople.
Campbell maintained that the real motive for the ban probably lay in the fact
that many vessels built in the Archipelago, were ultimately sold 'to the sub-
jects of the King of Greece', to the extreme irritation of the Ottoman gov-
ernment. However he feared for the livelihoods of the local populations.

The greater part of the inhabitants having entered into shipbuild-
ing and invested all their savings therein...the effects will prove
disastrous in...Cassos and Castel Rosso, barren rocks without even
fresh water... every man, woman and child therein being depen-
dent on shipbuilding for their daily bread. I take the liberty of ob-
serving that if this measure is not rescinded, the most enterprising
and industrious of the Sultan's subjects in the Archipelago will be
reduced to utter destitution, and driven to become pirates to gain
their livelihood.  

One year later the situation had barely improved. Trade had undergone 'a
remarkable depression' in Rhodes due to fluctuations in the currency and as

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108 Ibid., f.329-30.
109 Ibid.
a result of the introduction of heavy and inconvenient copper coins. The poli-
cies of the Porte following the conclusion of the Crimean war had encum-
bered the empire with a ruinous set of foreign loans which weighed down its
economic machine.\(^{110}\) The subsequent adoption of copper coinage had coin-
cided with a state of disillusionment regarding the economic fate of the em-

dire, and a particular feeling of unease about the political state of Europe. In-
deed the struggle for the unification of Italy was shortly to have grave effects
on the Balkans.\(^{111}\) In 1859 another war broke out in Europe involving Au-

stria, Sardinia and France. Great Britain opted for neutrality in the conflict
and the Foreign Office instructed its consuls in the Aegean that a communi-
cation of this decision should be affixed in the consular offices and circulated
amongst the people. Consuls should 'keep up a good understanding with
the consular agents of the other neutral powers, so as to know and keep the
Foreign Secretary informed of the treatment of other neutral ships and cargoes by the belligerents.'\(^{112}\) Additionally they should avoid attendance at re-

ligious ceremonies to celebrate the victory at war of other powers.\(^{113}\) Camp-
bell commented in his report that commercial activity, which had been in-
creasing since the end of the conflict in the Crimea, had been paralysed by
the new war,\(^{114}\) and he had registered a reduction in imports and exports. No
British merchant vessel as yet arrived directly at Rhodes, and this meant that
the prices of British products remained too high for the market.\(^{115}\) Campbell’s
general report at the end of 1859 depicted a district with great potential for

\[\text{\small\textsuperscript{111}}\] Ibid. p.330.
\[\text{\small\textsuperscript{112}}\] Circulars of 14 May 1859 and 1 June 1859 regarding instructions on the behaviour to adopt
during the war, Foreign Office Circulars 1831-94, letter book of the British consulate of Pir-
aeus, private residence of the British Ambassador, Athens. ‘You will keep up a good under-
standing with the consular agents of the other neutral powers...all neutral powers having to a
certain degree a common interest in the correct and lenient application to their subjects and
property of strictly belligerent rights, which have now, by the declaration of Paris, received
important modifications.’

\[\text{\small\textsuperscript{113}}\] 6 March 1860, Ibid.
\[\text{\small\textsuperscript{114}}\] Annual Report, 1859, FO 195/647, f.342.
\[\text{\small\textsuperscript{115}}\] Ibid. f.345.
production, but little revenue. He divided the report into sections, specifying the production, problems, and possibilities for enterprise of each of the islands. His report provides a useful insight into how, despite the struggles and revolutions, as well as the political, economic and social reforms which had occurred in the Aegean, in reality little had changed. Whilst the passage of time had seen enormous technological, social and political changes in the rest of Europe, their shadow was barely visible in the Aegean whose industries remained primitive and inefficient.

The island of Lesvos: suitable for cultivation in all its territory, but only fractionally used, produces oil in great quantity, but its quality is so low that the English market has ceased to accept it altogether. The process of oil making is primitive and little hygienic, the olives being collected and then left to settle for months mixed with earth and salt before being taken to the press. Once fermented, the filthy state of the oil presses does not add taste to the final product, which stored in pig skins, is far from likely of acquiring a clear colour and taste.

Campbell commented on how an ‘enterprising Turk’, the son of the governor of the island, had decided to improve the quality of the oil by importing a steam oil press, however the local population’s ignorance of modern means of production, had led them to avoid the use of the machine. Thus the oil of Mitilene was exported only to the Eastern markets of Constantinople, Asia Minor and the Black Sea, and a small quantity to Marseilles. He added that a soap manufacture would be a profitable enterprise in the hands of an Englishman. However, he pointed out that wherever possible, certain Ottoman officials never lost the opportunity to profit at the expense of the population,
and that this was the real cause of the islands’ poverty and the root of their social problems:

At Cyprus...the locusts are a great plague, they cover two thirds of the island during the months of May and June when these insects destroy immense quantities of ripe corn and prevent the growers from sowing their cotton crops before the month of June, more than six weeks later than the usual planting season. No effective steps have been taken by the Turkish government to destroy this scourge of the island. It is in fact a source of revenue to the Pasha of the island which, in the month of May, issued an order to deliver twelve okes of locusts each man or to pay a fine of ten Piastras. The order was issued at the season when all the farmers are at work in the fields collecting their corn crops, and when the locusts are strong and able to fly, thus the farmer is unable to leave the corn uncut to go in search of locusts, and even if he tried, from the size reached by that season by the insects, it is impossible to catch them. He thus collects the fine. If he was to order the collection in the month of March, when the locusts are still in the eggs and the farmers free, it would help the farming of the next season by eliminating a few of these animals. The annual income derived to the Porte from Cyprus is £130,000 out of which, nothing is ever spent on the island; the island is under a civil and military Pasha, the former receiving a salary of 14,500 Piastras per month, and the latter 6,000. There is a new civil Pasha, recently arrived, the old one having committed all kinds of crimes and extortions toward the inhabitants as when he got for himself the 80,000 Piastras that the consular court at Constantinople had given to a peasant.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
Campbell’s report finished with a description of the small islands, presenting a clear and exhaustive portrait of the region at the turn of the decade. His commentary on the district indicated a professional objectivity which, free of the personal and emotional judgments that had clouded the reports of his earlier colleagues in the district, was to become a fundamental characteristic of the changing consular service. He perceived that foreign enterprise could be the key to the resolution of the region’s economic difficulties in the same way that foreign political intervention had allowed its survival in semi-civilised conditions during the years after the revolution. However, the islands in 1860 remained untouched by the progress which had affected those countries whose interest, in their political and geographical situation, had led them to establish diplomatic representation in the area. The region was poor, indeed poorer than it had been forty years earlier, having been deeply scarred by years of revolution, punishment and taxation.
Conclusions

For the British consular service in the Aegean, the period 1820-1860 was significant for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the most important of these was the British presence in the area which resulted from the protectorate of the Ionian islands and which made it necessary for the Foreign Office to look after a large number of individuals at the minimum possible expense. The historical circumstances of the region also fundamentally influenced the evolution of the service, and the development of events in the Levant brought about a number of changes both in policy and in the location of the consulates. During the Greek war of independence the consuls developed a number of new roles, largely as a direct consequence of the conflict. Amongst these, the role of mediation between the local authorities and the population, which can probably be considered unique to this area, continued to affect the consular duties for many years. The process of transition from the Levant Company administration to that of the Foreign Office involved continuity of personnel to a large extent. Indeed, the expertise of the foreign Levant Company consuls, allowed them to provide useful feedback and to make suggestions which were in part responsible for the way in which the consular service evolved. As a result of these factors, and for the many other reasons explained during the course of this work, the consular service in the Aegean prior to 1860 developed in a manner that can be identified as peculiar both to the region and to the period.

During the transition from one administration to the other, the Aegean
consuls not only suggested directions that the new consular service might take by indicating the possible locations of consulates, as well as ways in which the service and its priorities might be amended to suit the new political and consular circumstances. They also pioneered the modern consular service, communicating directly and frequently with the Foreign Office, and developing new approaches and duties. Where the consuls had previously been merchants, mediating with the Ottoman authorities on behalf of their colleagues, their duties expanded, and their commercial role became but one of a number of responsibilities. As informants of the commercial situation in the region, the consuls became points of contact between British merchants, the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade, and they were well placed to provide suggestions as to how British trade in the Aegean could be improved. This role became particularly evident during the stipulation of the new commercial treaty with the Porte in 1838. On that occasion, the consuls were not only useful as sources of background information, but also gave helpful advice that the changes demanded by the Porte to the terms of the treaty would not favour the situation of British merchants. In addition to broadening their commercial role, the Aegean consuls acquired political and judicial functions which grew to become a large part of their daily work and which developed in response to political events. The evolving consular profession was also shaped by the consuls themselves, sometimes rather clumsily in response to specific situations, sometimes through their suggestions for new approaches or increased powers, such as in the case of their judicial activities.

The scope of the consular service in the Aegean, which varied according to the political and economic circumstances, was broader during this period than at any other time. And it is the extraordinary coincidence of events in one area at one time which makes the Aegean consuls in this period so interesting. As Platt indicated in his analysis of the service under the
Foreign Office administration, the later developments of the consular service made no substantial improvements and failed to professionalise it in line with the diplomatic service to which it remained an inferior addition. However, in basing his argument on the lack of unity between the two services, Platt fails to acknowledge the positive aspects of the early modifications made by the Foreign Office to the consular service. Between 1820 and 1860 substantial changes were made to the profession of the Aegean consuls. At the upper level they became officials appointed in London with a salary and a clearly defined set of roles whilst, at the lower levels, the extraordinary manner in which the Aegean consular service had developed led to the retention of Levantine consuls and consular agents who were the subjects of repeated criticism from the British public and press. Although many attempts were made to eliminate these people from the Levant service, they continued to be an integral part of it until the end of the period examined by this work. Their low or non-existent salaries were but one advantage of such personnel whose knowledge of the local language and attitudes made them particularly adept at dealing with the difficulties created by the Ionians. Furthermore, these consuls were capable of coping with a professional lifestyle which offered very little reward. And, if one area of the consular service remained in the shadow of the system inherited from the Levant Company, the other modified its structure, priorities and locations according to the changing political and economic circumstances of the area. The changes to the service made by the Foreign Office increasingly transformed the consuls into civil servants, with many of the duties but few of the benefits of their more fortunate colleagues, the diplomats. Even though critics such as Platt, by underplaying the achievements of the service, dispute the degree to which it became professionalised, by 1860 professionalisation was well underway in the Aegean consular service.

The importance of the British consuls in the Aegean, and consequently
of the service itself, between 1820 and 1860 can be particularly appreciated when their duties are compared to those of the consuls in present day Greece. Visiting the Aegean in May 1995 with the purpose of searching for documents relevant to my study in the Greek islands, I took the opportunity to discuss the present significance of the consular profession with some of the British representatives in the islands.

![Map of present day British consulates in Greece](image)

During a week in Rhodes, a conversation with the Honorary British Consul, Mr. Dimitri Demetriades, provided an insight into the nature and reality of the consular profession in the Aegean today.

277
After a century of activity, the consulate of Rhodes was closed down in 1956 only to reopen twelve years later, following a gradual increase in British tourism in the island. Since the 1970s Rhodes has become one of the favourite destinations for British tourists in the Aegean. Indeed, the British presence in the island reaches peaks of up to 700,000 visitors each year. The consul at Rhodes was appointed to look after the well being of British tourists and to resolve any problems and complications that might arise from their residence in the island. His appointment was overseen by the British Ambassador at Athens, to whom the consul is responsible, and to whom he has a duty to send a yearly dispatch on the activity of the consulate. In addition, the consul must attend a yearly meeting at the Embassy. The commercial, political and military functions, which had previously been aspects of the consular profession, are now the prerogative of the attachés at the embassy, and the role of the consuls has become predominantly - one could say uniquely - linked to tourism. The nature of the consular reports has also changed substantially. They are compiled annually, with the purpose of registering the consulate’s activity over the course of the year. Mr. Demetriades explained that his appointment was as an honorary consul both as a result of his Greek nationality and also because his position as consul is part time and unpaid, and barely affects his own private business on the island. Like the majority of his colleagues, he has been chosen for his knowledge of the island and its authorities, and because of his good reputation there. He is thus in an ideal position to resolve the problems of British tourists with the minimum of inconvenience and effort.

Islands with a smaller presence of British tourists have less important representations, and in the whole of Greece there are only a few consular offices.\(^1\) The Aegean representation is under the auspices of the consulate at

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\(^1\) There are in total thirteen offices of which three are consulates, at Corfu, Rhodes and Salonica; five are vice consulates, at Crete, Kos, Patras, Syros and Zakynthos. Consular correspondents are to be found in five locations, Alexandroupolis, Crete, Ioannina, Kavala and Mytilini.
Rhodes. Kos is host to a vice consulate, also with an honorary vice consul, and there is a consular correspondent on the island of Lesvos, which receives a significantly smaller number of British visitors than Rhodes. At the suggestion of Mr. Demetriades, I contacted Mrs. Mairwen Karydis, the consular correspondent at Mytilini, and during a week spent in Lesvos, I had the opportunity of discussing her consular work there. Mrs. Karydis, like her colleagues, is in the Aegean for personal reasons since she is married to a Greek national. She had been living at Lesvos for some time when she was contacted by the British Embassy and offered the opportunity to become their correspondent. Like Demetriades, she is unpaid; however, her British nationality and her limited knowledge of Greek, make the performance of her duties more complicated. Her work as a consular correspondent is to give aid to British tourists in difficulty. In case of injury, loss of documents or money, she accompanies them to hospital, or gives them alternative documentation and cash for their return home. Mrs. Karydis does not write reports to the embassy, but she has to attend a general meeting in Athens every year, at which she reports on her activity.

Thus the consular representation in Greece today is of a very limited nature when compared to the period examined by this work. Focused on the protection of British tourism, it extends almost exclusively to the areas most appreciated by the travelling public. Consular officials are mostly local, with business interests in the towns where they are appointed to represent the British government. The scope of their work is limited, and their consular profession is a part time activity which only marginally affects their life and business. Furthermore, many of the consuls hold honorary appointments; instead of being appointed in London and sent to the Aegean, they are people who were already resident in the area. Thus ironically the service is now even more reliant on the elements that were of such concern to its nineteenth century critics. And, far from having been eliminated, it is this one
aspect of the consular service, inherited from the Levant Company, that has survived to the present day. Indeed, the entire system seems to have reverted to one more akin to that of the Levant Company. Not only have consuls lost the plurality of duties that they once struggled to balance, and not only have they shifted to part time employment, but they are also selected with preference being given to a knowledge of local affairs. Once appointed, consuls remain in their posts for many years, reversing the strategy discussed during the numerous enquiries into the consular service in the nineteenth century, and which sought to modernise the service by adopting a regular rotation of professional consuls. Part time officials clearly represent a sensible and cost-effective choice in the present political and economic circumstances of the area. As Consul Demetriades pointed out, in the islands today there is little scope for the appointment of British nationals as consuls, since they would be less integrated into local life. However, it is the comparison of the duties of the Foreign Office consuls in the Aegean with those of their predecessors under the Levant Company, and indeed with those of the present day consuls in the same area, that allows an understanding of the unique importance of the service during the years examined by this work.
Appendix 1
Maps of Locations referred to in the Thesis

Political Map of the Aegean and the Near East
### Appendix 2

**British Consuls, Vice Consuls and Consular Agents in the Aegean, 1825-1860**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Port</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armeni, W.</td>
<td>Vice-Consul (unpaid)</td>
<td>1846-1853</td>
<td>Milo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbar, L.J.</td>
<td>Consul</td>
<td>1858-59</td>
<td>Crete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biliotti, A..</td>
<td>Clerk, Dragoman, Vice Consul (unpaid), Acting Consul</td>
<td>1849, 1850, 1856, 1860</td>
<td>Macri, Rhodes, Rhodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biliotti, C.</td>
<td>Vice Consul, Vice Consul</td>
<td>1848, 1854-1860</td>
<td>Macri, Scio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt, C.</td>
<td>Consul</td>
<td>1835-1853</td>
<td>Salonica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt, J.H.</td>
<td>Acting Consul</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Mitilene/Rhodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various appointments</td>
<td>1854-62</td>
<td>Levant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vice Consul</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Adrianople</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brant, R.W.</td>
<td>Consul</td>
<td>1829-1854</td>
<td>Smyrna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brant, J.</td>
<td>Consul</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Erzeroum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consul</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Damascus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brest, N.</td>
<td>Consular agent</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Milo (Syros)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvert, F.W.</td>
<td>Consul</td>
<td>1846-1862</td>
<td>Dardanelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell, R.</td>
<td>Consul</td>
<td>1853-1862</td>
<td>Rhodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell, M. W.</td>
<td>Paid Attaché</td>
<td>1852-53</td>
<td>Athens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartwright, J.</td>
<td>Consul General</td>
<td>1825-1839</td>
<td>Constantinople</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charnaud, J.</td>
<td>Vice Consul</td>
<td>1835-1852</td>
<td>Smyrna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colnaghi, D. E.</td>
<td>Acting Vice Consul</td>
<td>1854-57</td>
<td>Mitilene</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Private Secretary of</td>
<td>1857-58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stratford De Radcliffe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cordia, P.</td>
<td>Vice Consul (unpaid)</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Miconi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cozzi, C.</td>
<td>Vice Consul (unpaid)</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Neochori</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vice Consul</td>
<td>1847-48</td>
<td>Neochori</td>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>City or Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>Crowe, G.W.</td>
<td>Consul</td>
<td>1834-39</td>
<td>Patras</td>
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<td>Consul</td>
<td>1846-52</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
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<td>Cumberbatch, A.C.</td>
<td>Vice Consul</td>
<td>1834-39</td>
<td>Constantinople</td>
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<td>Consul General</td>
<td>1845-1862</td>
<td>Constantinople</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delenda, A.</td>
<td>Vice-Consul (unpaid)</td>
<td>1846-1848</td>
<td>Santorini</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consular Agent</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Santorini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giudici, J.</td>
<td>Vice Consul</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Scio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green, A.C.</td>
<td>Employee, consulate</td>
<td>1853-59</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
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<td>Chargé d'affaires</td>
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<td>Athens</td>
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<td>1859</td>
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<td>1845-1856</td>
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<td>1851-1856</td>
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<td>Consul</td>
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<td>Rhodes</td>
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<td>1834-1839</td>
<td>Dardanelles</td>
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<td>Consul</td>
<td>1841-1846</td>
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<td>1843-1858</td>
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<td>1846-1848</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>FO 78/112</td>
<td>Turkey, Consuls, 1822.</td>
</tr>
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<td>FO 78/119</td>
<td>Turkey, Consuls, 1823.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/126</td>
<td>Turkey, Consuls, 1824.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/134</td>
<td>Turkey, Consuls, 1825.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FO 78/135, 6 vols. 1-3</td>
<td>Levant Company papers to Foreign Office 1820-5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FO 78/137-9</td>
<td>Turkey, Consuls, 1825-6.</td>
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<td>FO 78/146-7</td>
<td>Turkey, Consuls, 1826.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/159-60</td>
<td>Turkey, Consuls, 1827.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/169-71, 177</td>
<td>Turkey, Consuls, 1828.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/183-6, 189</td>
<td>Turkey, Consuls, 1829.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/190-3, 195-9</td>
<td>From Sir Richard Gordon, 1830.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/287</td>
<td>Consulate of Rhodes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/370-1</td>
<td>N.W. Werry, F.H. Werry, 1839.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/410</td>
<td>N.W. Werry, 1840.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/441, 446</td>
<td>1841 Consuls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 78/525, 532</td>
<td>Rhodes, Smyrna, Mitilene, 1843.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FO 78/571, 581-2</td>
<td>Mitilene, 1844 Consul Werry.</td>
</tr>
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<td>FO 78/609, 612, 614</td>
<td>1845 Consuls at Smyrna, Mitilene, Rhodes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FO 78/647, 654, 701, 750</td>
<td>Consulates of Mitilene, Rhodes etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FO 78/833, 861, 869</td>
<td>Werry, Mitilene, 1851.</td>
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<td>FO 78/905, 909</td>
<td>Biliotti, Kerr, Newton, Jan-Dec 1852.</td>
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<td>FO 78/956</td>
<td>Campbell, Kerr, Newton, 1853.</td>
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<td>Newton, Mitilene, 1854.</td>
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<td>FO 78/1211</td>
<td>Newton, Colnaghi, Mitilene, 1856.</td>
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<td>FO 78/1242</td>
<td>Persons enjoying British protection in Turkey.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FO 78/1305, 1334</td>
<td>Newton, Colnaghi, Mitilene, 1857.</td>
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<td>FO 78/1395</td>
<td>Consulate of Rhodes.</td>
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<td>FO 78/1463</td>
<td>Consulate of Rhodes.</td>
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<td>FO 78/5070</td>
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<td>1842, Queries and answers, duties of British consuls.</td>
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<td>FO 83/651</td>
<td>Foreign orders, Greece.</td>
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<td>FO 93/110-1B.</td>
<td>Treaty of Dardanelles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FO 93/110-1B, 3</td>
<td>Commercial conventions with the Porte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO 97/407, 409</td>
<td>Murders at Rhodes and Smyrna, 1837-43, Mr. Urquart’s case.</td>
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<td>FO 193/103</td>
<td>1831-40, Foreign missions and consuls.</td>
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Mss 6250 1-5 miscellanea Urquhart Papers.

2. Printed Primary Sources

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