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A British Merchant in Turkey: Freeman of the Levant Company and Consul, Donald Sandison at Bursa, 1795-1868

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Abstract

Great Britain was effective in influencing the Ottoman Empire with commercial interests. Anglo-Ottoman commercial practices strengthened diplomatic relations and early British merchants carried diplomatic mission as well through the British Levant Company. This ended by the 1820s with the abolishing of the Levant Company. British merchants operating in the Ottoman dominions increased after the second decade of the nineteenth century and Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Agreement of 1838 made a positive contribution to this increase in coming decades. Moreover, diplomatic missions extended to the inland trade and production centres.

Donald Sandison was one of the British/Scottish merchants settled in Constantinople, the capital of Ottoman Empire and operated his commercial activities from the early nineteenth century. He established business partnership and provided protection to some local Christian and Armenians through the British Embassy. He was initially a representative of the British East India Company and later admitted to be a member of the British Levant Company in 1817 and therefore, he was one of the privileged freemen of the company prior to his consular post.

Sandison was appointed salaried consul for Bursa with the liberty to trade after operating as a merchant for more than two decades. He acted as the first consul to Bursa, one of the earliest industrial city, between 1838 and 1868. Sandison's consular post were very significant as Bursa was a caravan terminal for the silk trade route and a silk cultivation centre that provided domestic and international demand of raw silk and silk fabric. British existence at Bursa was important during the period of Sandison as reeling silk industry developed due to the demand from European weavers and appreciation of British silk textile products in Ottoman market. Sandison also was one of the foreign merchants provided technology and for the industry to local weavers and carried out trade between British and Ottoman market.

British foreign policy to the Ottoman Empire was largely economic within the Commercial Convention of 1838 after 1840s shaped by the information of consuls in a certain city or region, it aimed to keep the post for long years to have reliable and continuous information. The role of consuls in the Levant was mainly observing commercial potential and agricultural production of the region or the city. They were both diplomatic and commercial agents providing these information for shaping commercial strategy of Britain for a particular region. Therefore, reports were essential for British manufacturing seeking raw materials from the Ottoman market or aiming to penetrate the Ottoman market with semi-finished or finished goods.

This bibliographic study focuses on an oversea British community member at Constantinople as a merchant by the first quarter of the nineteenth century and then a prestigious position, consul of Bursa for the commercial interest of Great Britain by the second quarter. Therefore, his life history and professional career is analysed in two periods; the first period covers Sandison's commercial operations as a merchant of the Levant Company in Constantinople after the second decade of the nineteenth century. His business was closely related with the economic and political fluctuations of the Ottoman Empire as well as operations of the British Levant Company. Dissolution of the Levant Company in 1825 and uprising and later abolition of military units called Janissaries in 1826 necessitated him to reshape and re-establish his business at the end of 1820s.

Keywords: Donald Sandison, British merchant, Levant Company, Consul, Bursa, trade.

Introduction

European countries started to have close commercial links with the Ottoman Empire after the fifteenth century via their merchants. Obtaining concessions was the common way of establishing economic as well as diplomatic relations. Increased in the volume of trade and commodity market necessitated acquired positions and roles in certain trade hubs of the empire to in order to establish and facilitate trade networks.

Residing in the Ottoman port and trading cities was a common practice of European merchants to carry out trading activities. Donald Sandison was one of these merchants who arrived to Constantinople by the beginning of the nineteenth century and became a privileged member of the Levant Company first and consul of Bursa later.

When European countries adopted protectionist economic policies after the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ottoman Empire offered a promising market for continental goods and raw material. Therefore, the significance of the whole Middle East and Balkan regions

increased. Existence of the British subject in the Ottoman dominions became clear, strong and effective. Number of British merchants and investors as well as consul and vice-consuls increased in this period.

After 1830s the British consular existence increased in Ottoman territories after the abolishing of British Levant Company namely an increase in number of cities British consuls represented and their operations. Donald Sandison was appointed as a consul in the city of Bursa where silk production dominated the economy of the city. This is the same year the Ottoman Empire signed the commercial agreement of 1838 which allowed free trade between the two nations. Consuls were agents or commissioner and generally merchants and operating in their region and they were responsible for observing the trade capacity and volume of the city or the region, comparing its trade volume with the other trading nations in the region and reporting trade statistics as well as other reports concerning trade and related trade and finally reporting it to the British foreign ministry. Consuls were responsible for some practical matters however their main responsibility was to maintain and develop the trade with the empire.

The second stage of Sandison's professional life had close connection with the Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Agreement of 1838. This agreement gave certain privileges to British merchants and goods were allowed to be carried in Ottoman dominions freely. British commercial interest into the inland centres resulted appointing their own consuls. He was appointed salaried consul for Bursa with the liberty to trade after operating as a merchant for more than two decades. He was the first consul at Bursa, one of the earliest industrial city, between 1838 and 1868.

This work is believed to be filling a gap in the current research literature on the commercial relations between the Ottoman Empire and Western countries, namely British involvement and how certain branches of the Ottoman economy was affected or developed. Previous researches were carried out and analysed the intervention of Western mercantilist communities in some well-known port cities such as Constantinople, Salonica and Smyrna where British consuls were appointed initially before the nineteenth century. Consular posts were appointed in inland cities with the treaty of 1838 and Bursa was one of them. However, the city and appointed British consuls, their careers and standing in domestic and international trade were insufficiently researched.

The paper analyses commercial operations of Donald Sandison in Constantinople, his connections, marriage, family and his consular post in Bursa. Methods used in the paper are Sandisons's correspondences with Consul-General, the British embassy at Constantinople, and private letters. Documents provide little evidence or detail of his career before the 1820s however, periodic documents are available prior to and during his consular post with the British foreign office and officials. Ottoman archival documents were also analysed for economic activities and family history of Donald Sandison.

Early Years and Commercial Operations of Donald Sandison

Donald Sandison was a Scottish merchant moved to the capital of Ottoman Empire.¹ He was named by some traveller; an American traveler, Cyrus Hamlin, mentioned his name as 'the Scottish nobleman'² and English travellers, Sir Edwin Pears and Charles MacFarlane, mentioned about Sandison as a Scottish family while writing about his son Alfred John

¹ The only document about the birth place of Donald Sandison is the certificate of his marriage that mentioned him to be from the town of Wick, Caithness, Scotland dated on January 24, 1824, The Anglican Chaplaincy, The British Consulate of Istanbul, Register of Birth, Deaths and Marriages, from 1757 to 1840, page not available.

² Cyrus Hamlin, *Among the Turks*, American Tract Society, 1877, pp. 250-251.

Sandison.³ Sandison before moving to Constantinople, he must have disembarked at Smyrna and spent some time there as his brother James Sandison was a merchant in Smyrna and died of fever there in 1828.⁴ Clarke mentions that in Smyrna there were about half a dozen of merchants licensed to trade beside the members of the Company. They were the sons or apprentices of freemen.⁵ Both Donald Sandison's privileged position in the Levant Company and his brother, James Sandison, being merchant in Smyrna is an evocatory factor that their father might have been a licensed merchant in the Levant and membership of the company passed to his descendants.

In *Constantine Ionides Ipliktsis* by Timotheus Catsiyannis, Sandison is described as “an English trader, who was operating in Constantinople from a textile shop.” However, Ipliktsis's other biographer, Anastasios Goudas wrote, “at that time there was a trader in Constantinople of British nationality, called Sandison, who gladly offered protection through the British Embassy to the persecuted subjects of the Sultan. Ipliktzis immediately attached himself to this Englishman and started acting as his broker”. Half joking, he recounted in later years, that ‘not only did I act as a broker but also I was a “town crier”, in order to please my partner and protector”.⁶

This partnership with Sandison and Ipliktsis did not last for long as Ipliktsis was too good a businessman to be an employee. “...Constantine began as a simple clerk and when he had saved some money he started working for himself again. It was then that he decided on the greatest commercial venture of his life; To come to England. To the Metropolis of the World's trade.”⁷

He had learnt that big money was only earned when working for himself. As he recounts, ‘when I earned fifty rupees (gold Turkish coin, worth about half a gold five pound), I said praised be to God. At last I am reentering the arena of trading’. Goudas wrote that

³ “Sir Alfred Sandison possessed the same kind of fullness of knowledge of Turkish. The son of Scotsman, he had been born in Turkey...”, Sir Edwin Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople*, Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1915, p. 138; Sir Alfred Sandison was knight diplomat, oriental secretary at Constantinople, Sir Alexander Telford Wauk described him as ‘too easy-going for the work in hand’, ‘sport-loving character, very popular with the Turks’, “Sir Alfred Sandison, who had been born in Turkey and spoke Turkish remarkable well. He had been employer as interpreter with the army during the Crimean War, and was then taken on at the Embassy to succeed the old race of Levantine interpreters, many of them of Genoese or Venetian family...”, Sir Alexander Telford Wauk, *Turkey, Yesterday, To-Day, and To-Morrow*, Chapman and Hall's, London, 1930, p. 27, 37.

⁴ “...During the summer of last year two of my countrymen and friends (Mr. John Wilkinson and Mr. James Sandison) fell victims to the detestable Smyrna fever. They died within a few days of each other, after a very short illness.”, Charles MacFarlane, *Constantinople in 1828, A Residence of Sixteen Months in the Turkish Capital and Provinces: with an Account of the Present State of the Naval and Military Power, and of the Resources of the Ottoman Empire*, Second Edition, Volume 1. Saunders and Otley. London, 1829, p. 22; “James Sandison, buried 28th September 1828, Merchant’, Baptism, Marriage and Burial Records of the British Chapel, Smyrna-Turkey 1795-1832, <http://website.lineone.net/~stephaniebidmead/smyrna.htm>, accessed on 08.02.2018)

⁵ Hyde Henry Clarke, *The History of the British Colony at Smyrna: Two Cuttings from the “Levant Herald”*, 1860, p. 3.

⁶ Anastasios N. Goudas, *Vioi pnralliloi ton eps tis Anagenniseos tis Ellados diaprepsanton andron*, Vol. III, *Plots I Emporion*, Athens, 1970, pp. 5-6.

⁷ Timotheos Catsiyannis, *Constantine Ionidis Ipliktsis, 1775-1852 and The Ionidi Family*, London, 1988, pp. 5-6. Ipliktsis biographer Catsiyannis wrote “...His specialty was the textile trade. In the course of execution of this trade Constantine soon understood that Among the people who conducted the textile business, the retailers, one of whom he was, made very little profit, while the intermediaries, who safely remained at the offices, with little hard work and no financial risk, enjoyed for larger profits. So it occurred him to cut out this expensive stage and send his own people to England purchase textile directly from the factories...The were commissioned to come to England and buy the textiles from the mills. The result was a fantastic increase in profit...”, *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

soon Ipliksis “*earned so much money as a broker for Sandison, that it became possible for him to start trading of his own account*”.⁸

These facts do not fit in with the known dates about Sandison’s career. The Janissary Rebellion was in 1826 and he did not become consul in Bursa until 1838. Fanny Janet Blunt, daughter of Donald Sandison, wrote that her father originally went to Turkey as the representative of the East India Company at the beginning of the nineteenth century. His business flourished until it was destroyed in the Janissary Rebellion, so he became the British Consul at Brussa. Janet Blunt also wrote that “...*During this rebellion my father's house of business, like many others, was not only looted and burnt down but his business was so thoroughly disorganised that it could not be built up again in Constantinople*”.⁹

In addition to being a representative of the East India Company, Sandison was also a member of the exclusive Levant Company. He became member on July 1817 and registered on January 1818.¹⁰ Hyde Henry Clarke confirms this date and says “...*in 1817, Jasper Chasseaud was admitted and, in the same year, Donald Sandison.*”¹¹ However, there were 20 accepted as member to the company, Clarke mentioned only two merchants in his work. Clarke also wrote that the membership could be only obtained in England, freeman was admitted by the general court in London and the new member paying a certain fine. However, in later years Englishmen residing in the Levant could take the oath before the authorities of the Company by paying twenty pounds of fee.¹²

Family Life

Sandison’s business as a merchant in Constantinople probably shaped his family life. He married with Mary Zohrab in 1824.¹³ Mary Zohrab was the daughter of Constantine Zohrab, a merchant and partner of John Cartwright who became the British Consul General in Constantinople in 1817.¹⁴ This contact must have a positive contribution to his business, however, Sandison was already a member of the Levant company before he got married and one must take into consideration he was fluent in French, Italian and Greek and serviceable Turkish.¹⁵

Fanny Janet Blunt wrote about her family that “*My father married Miss Mary Zohrab, whose family had originally come from Persia. There were two branches of this princely house who had quitted Sistan in Persia during some revolutionary upheaval. One branch settled in Europe, the other, my grandfather's branch, settled in Turkey.*”¹⁶

⁸ Goudas, 1970, p. 6.

⁹ Fanny Janet Blunt, *My Reminiscences*, John Murray, London, 1918, p. vii.

¹⁰ SP, 105/211, Register of orders made by the General Court of the Levant Company, 1734-1818; SP, 105/333, 1744-1824.

¹¹ Clarke, 1860, p. 7.

¹² Clarke, 1860, p. 3.

¹³ They married on January 17, 1824 in the Chapel of the British embassy at Constantinople, with the presence of Mary Zohrab’s father Constantine Zohrab and the British Consul-General, John Cartwright, The Anglican Chaplaincy, page not available.

¹⁴ John Cartwright, before he was appointed to be the consul general at Constantinople, was cancellier at Constantinople between 1799-1801, consul at Patras between 1815-1817, Report from the Selected Committee on Consular Establishment; Together with the Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix. 22nd August 1835, Vol. 26, p. 126.

¹⁵ In the queries by the foreign office, Donald Sandison answered a question of his fluency and ease the language or languages as follow; “*I can as to French and Italian, also speak and read the medium Greek with fluency, and the Turkish serviceably for the transaction of public business.*”, FO 78/570, January 31st, 1844, p. 186; Also FO 78/868, 1851, p. 178.

¹⁶ Blunt, 1918, pp. vii-viii.

He was living with his family at Therapia on the Bosphorus until his consular post at Bursa. He had five daughter and a son,¹⁷ all were all born at Therapia, the suburb of Constantinople where diplomatic representatives preferred to live.¹⁸

Fanny Janet Blunt also wrote that she “*was born at Therapia, that beautiful suburb of Constantinople on the shores of the Bosphorus where the members of the Diplomatic Corps lived. Our house stood on the hill, and from the long terrace which ran down one side of it we had glorious views over the Black Sea, which was some two or three miles from us.*”¹⁹

Consular Establishment, Position and Services of Consulates in British Trade

Consulate system in Ottoman provinces started with establishing agents in some major port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean seas. Consuls who were generally merchants resided in these cities firstly for their own commercial activities. After the dissolving the British Levant Company, consuls became depended on by the state and the number of posts increased further to inland provinces which aimed to encourage British trade in the Ottoman territories.²⁰

Consular post were generally analysed in diplomatic and political point of view as they influenced and shaped the British foreign policy. However, since the sixteenth century, consular posts were generally provided those of individuals with mercantilist background who gained valuable knowledge on the local economic condition and potential of the region. Sandison was not an exception and he held over two decades of experience before appointed to the post.²¹

National firms operating in the Ottoman Empire were not considered as providers of commercial intelligence to the British Government as they were seen reluctant to supply information with the fear that it might encourage competition between possible competitors.²² The role of consuls in the Levant mainly was to observe commercial situation of the region. They were both diplomatic and commercial agents providing information for mercantilist activities, namely acting as agents for the expansion of British trade.²³ Therefore, reports were

¹⁷ Five of his children, Sophia, born on April 1826, Anne, born on September 1827, Maria Matilda, born on July 1831, Alfred John, born on April 1835, Fanny Janet, born on July 1838 were registered to the parish registered, The Anglican Chaplaincy, pp. 1-2, One of his daughter, Nancy, was the victim of the epidemic of Asiatic cholera in 1850, Blunt, 1918, p. 19.

¹⁸ Blunt, 1918, p. 1.

¹⁹ She also described her childhood at Bursa as “*My childhood was spent almost entirely at Brussa, and a very happy childhood it was. My brother and I were great companions and had many adventures in the country together. We used to have lessons with the children of the American missionary who lived nearby, and the daily interchange of ideas with a family brought up under such different hereditary influences to ours was an education in itself...*”, Blunt, 1918, p. 8.

²⁰ G. R. Berridge, *British Diplomacy in Turkey, 1583 to the Present; A Study in the Evolution of the Resident Embassy*, Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009, pp. 75-76, 78.

²¹ Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Viscount Palmerston maintained the idea that the duties of consuls did not required a particular previous education and could be carried out by any man of good sense, See D C M Platt, *The Cinderella Service, British Consuls since 1825*, Longman Group limited, London, 1971, pp. 21-25.

²² Platt, 1963, p. 499.

²³ British consuls were having a wide range of activities of collecting information on economic and trading capacities and changes of their region. Reports prepared on current and changing economic condition of the Ottoman Empire, taxation, customs regulations and tariffs etc. They also provided information on trading volume of certain regions of the empire, export and import volumes over years, natural resources, population, trading and legal procedures of the region. Reports present information on the position and strength of British merchants as well as other European competitors and their merchants. For a detailed assessment see: Uygur Kocabasoglu, *Majestelerinin Konsoloslari, Ingiliz Belgeleriyle Osmanli Imparatorlugu'ndaki Ingiliz Konsoloslari (1580-1900)*, Iletisim Yayinlari, Istanbul, 2004, p. 200; “...British consuls had always been

essential for British manufacturing seeking raw materials from the Ottoman market or aiming to penetrate into it with semi-finished or finished goods.

The Great Britain along with European countries had long followed the practice of maintaining permanent resident embassies and consulates²⁴ in the Ottoman capital and in some port cities or in inland cities with certain industries. However, Bursa was not unknown to European merchants and associated with silk production, it was only within the Anglo-Ottoman commercial agreement of 1839 that an English consul was appointed there.

Attempts of Donald Sandison for the Post in Bursa

Donald Sandison was interested in consular posts and applied for the post of consul at Salonica. He consulted to Sir John Ponsonby, Ambassador at Constantinople, as “...*I intreat your Lordship indulgence for addressing you on the subject having prepared the draft of an application to Lord Palmerston. I venture to submit it to your Lordship for perusal if not trespassing on his leisure, and believe that under the present state of the establishment at Salonica if might present some satisfactory grounds for the restoration of the consulship if not already determined upon the case...*”²⁵

However Sandison applied for the post, Charles Blunt, a member of the Levant service, was appointed there in January 1835.²⁶ After Charles Blunt was appointed to the post of Salonica, Sandison persuaded Lord Ponsonby, ambassador at Constantinople²⁷, to recommend him to Lord Palmerston to appoint him as consul of Bursa. Ponsonby prepared a letter to Lord Palmerston and recommended him to the foreign office by implying his knowledge and capacity. He mentioned the contact with local authorities and producers to be a benefit of British government despite the consular cost.²⁸ However Ponsonby strongly proposed Sandison, extend of consular establishment was found unlikely at the time due to the consular costs.

expected to prepare an annual report on the trade and navigation of their particular districts, and they were also instructed to report any new developments or matters of immediate commercial interest when they arose...For a detailed assessment see: Platt, 1971, p. 104.

²⁴ “*Having an agent as a consulate in an Ottoman city was recognised as a part of right provided to the country of the consul with the capitulation treaty concluded with the Ottoman authorities. Consuls in the Ottoman cities could not be imprisoned for any reason and their houses could not be sealed as they were under the protection of the Ottoman State. The empire gave berats showing the positions of duties and rights and dignities of the consuls, as a sign that they approve the appointments of the consuls. These berats were signified that consuls were exempted from the customs duties. Consuls just like their ambassadors could use a person as their interpreter. The consuls were given 2% of commission for export and import with the vessels under their flags. Any ship, carrying a flag of a state, could not leave the port without the permission of the consul in the city...*”, Mubahat S. Kutukoglu, *Ahidnameler ve Ticaret Muahedeleri, Osmanli Ansiklopedisi, III. Cilt Yeni Turkiye Yayınları, Ankara 1999, p. 331.*

²⁵ Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collection, GRE/E/546/5, Draft Letter Sandison to Palmerston applying for the Post of Salonica, 10 November 1834.

²⁶ Charles Blunt was a merchant of London, his father John Blunt was a merchant and freeman of the Levant Company. Charles Blunt served as a consul of Salonica between 1834 and 1856 until he was appointed to be the consul at Smyrna. His son, Sir John Elijah Blunt, followed his father and became consul at Monastir and Uskub. He married Fanny Janet Sandison, the youngest daughter of Donald Sandison.

²⁷ The British Ambassador in Istanbul had the right already to appoint consuls in some cities which were strategically important for British trade before the abolishing of the Levant Company. FO, 78/135, Consular Establishment in the Levant, A letter to Canning from Cartwright. 10th of October 1825.

²⁸ “*Mr Sandison has written to me to beg that I would recommend him to you for your favourable consideration of his solicit to be approved Consul at Brussa. I think him a very intelligent man & a good friend of the Liberal [faith]. I am sure he is remarkably well acquainted with this country & that he has peculiar advantages for property & extending his present knowledge through the means of his connection by marriage with the Armenians.*” FO, 78/329B, From Lord Ponsonby, July 16th, 1835.

There has not been any attempt of the foreign office to establish consulate at Bursa however, Sandison continued to persuade authorities both at foreign office and Constantinople. He prepared a memorandum on the trade of Bursa and on the importance of the city as a station for a British consular agent. This memorandum must have an effect on the decision of the foreign office that Lord Palmerston asked John Cartwright, Consul-general at Constantinople to report his opinion on that issue.²⁹ According to his report to the private secretary in the foreign office, Bursa places an important position for the consumption of British yarn. However, concluding the Commercial Convention of 1838 must have been the most influential for establishing a consular position at Bursa as duration between the earlier rejection and final decision of establishing the post is only three months.

Sandison proposed the foreign office to establish British consular position at Bursa with a memorandum on December 1838.³⁰ *“Lord Palmerston thought it would be advisable Mr. Cartwright’s opinion however was not so favourable”*³¹ Sivil servant, John Backhouse wrote to Sandison that *“...establishing of a British Consular agent at Brusa, does not appear to his Lordship to render it expedient at present to incur the expense (?) of such appointment.”*³²

From the private letters of Donald Sandison it is understood that he has been deeply familiar with the political conditions and uncertainties of the Ottoman Empire and other players on it such as Russia. He put his political opinion on Russian existence on the Ottoman dominions especially into the Bosphorus and its important consequences for the navigation of the two straits of the British commercial vessels. He gave a detailed analyses on the treaty of Hunkar Iskelesi³³ on how Russia exercised a predominance in the Ottoman dominions and how this worried British authorities and British subjects who were carrying commercial activities. He mentioned the action that British authorities must take against this treaty as well as what to do in case Russia exercise the right the treaty allows.³⁴

The Last Post of Donald Sandison; an Appointed Consul at Bursa

²⁹ FO, 78/335, Correspondence with Consul John Cartwright, Constantinople, 21 March 1838, pp. 44-46.

³⁰ Consuls were not expected to be merchants; however, a consular post was a natural outcome of commercial practices of a nominee for the consular post as commercial experience would be a direct effect on selection. Therefore, majority of consuls were merchants already, and Donald Sandison was not an exception. Moreover, when he appointed to the post in 1838, Britain was interested in extending its trade with the Levant and other Ottoman dominions. Some posts created for trading and some political purposes. Bursa, in this sense, was a commercial post along with Salonica, Smyrna but Trebizond was a political post against Russia despite being a port city and trade practice. For a detailed assessment see: Report from the Selected Committee on Diplomatic and Consular Services; together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, The House of Commons 314, 16 July 1872, p. 9.

³¹ FO, 78/339, Ottoman Empire: correspondence with Consul Sidney Smith Saunders, Prevesa; Consul Colonel G Lloyd Hodges, Belgrade; Samuel Gardner, Jassy; Consul D Sandison, Broussa; Consul Charles Cunningham, Galatz, 1838, p. 359.

³² FO, 78/339, 1838, p. 355.

³³ The treaty of Hunkar Iskelesi was signed between the Ottoman and Russian Empires in 1833 and provided military aid to the Ottoman army for solving the conflict of Egypt against Mehmet Ali Pasha. Ottoman authorities guaranteed to close the Dardanelles to foreign ships in the time of war. Originally, English vessels were granted the privileges of commerce in the Black Sea with an act of 1799 and this act was confirmed by the Treaty of 1809. For a detailed assessment see: House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, List of Treaties of Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and Foreign Powers, Containing Most-Favoured-Nation Clauses, Commercial No. 30, Harrison and Sons, London, 1883, p. 43; House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, Treaties and other Documents Relating to the Black Sea, the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus: 1535-1877, Turkey No. 16, Harrison and Sons, London, 1878, p. 19.

³⁴ Durham University Library, GRE/E546/31, Observation on the right of British intervention in the affairs of Turkey, September 18, 1835, pp. 16-24.

A search of the British National Archives revealed letters written to the foreign office, Ambassador at Constantinople and also Consul-General which present willingness of Donald Sandison for the consular post at Bursa.

Eventually, Donald Sandison was appointed to be the British consul at Bursa in November 1838 at the age of forty-three.³⁵ Lord Palmerston, on the 22nd of November 1838, sent a letter to Sandison informing about the decision and giving full direction and guidance for further steps. In this letter, Lord Palmerston clearly stated the aim of consular post in the Levant by explaining Sandison his duties precisely.³⁶

The consular post was also officially informed him by the foreign office dated 29th October, 1838 mentioning his salary of £300³⁷ a year, £100 outfit allowance³⁸ and liberty to engage in mercantile pursuits.³⁹ Besides being consul with some certain rights, some consuls in the Ottoman Empire were benefiting certain privileges in their region such as developing some private relations with some Ottoman officials, having the advantage of being exempt from some customs for their own product and permission to carry private business.⁴⁰

Donald Sandison was in London at the time of appointment and he was informed at his London office. He openly expressed his ideas to Lord Palmerston in a letter dated the 5th December, 1838 saying that “...*Considering it might be for the general interests of British commerce at Brussa, as well as for my personal advantage in forming mercantile concecises (?) and gaining knowledge of matters essentially relating to the trade to pay a short visit to Manchester and Liverpool and some of the manufacturing places in their vicinity.*”⁴¹ His visit took about a month and on the 10th of January, 1839 he notified Lord Palmerston that he was ready to take his commands for the consular post and ready to proceed to Bursa as well as he requested an interview with Lord Palmerston prior to his departure.⁴²

In June, 1839, he apprized Lord Palmerston that he obtained the Ottoman Berat and exequatur at Constantinople and exhibiting all the instructions to the ambassador and the consul-general. He also informed to the foreign office that he started to deal with how the

³⁵ The Queen has been graciously pleased to appoint Donald Sandison, Esp. to be Her Majesty’s Consul at Broussa’, The London Gazette, Tuesday, November 20, 1838, p. 2592. Platt mentioned that entry to the consular service in the nineteenth century was at an age between twenty-five and fifty. Promotion was neither seniority nor by merit, and no guarantee against interlopers, Platt, 1971, p. 48, 49.

³⁶ “...your duty is to avail yourself of every favourable opportunity for collecting and transmitting to me any useful and interesting information relating to commerce, navigation, agriculture, and any other branch of statistiks... You will receive a salary of £300 a year, commencing 10 days previously to the day of your embarkation, and permission is given to you to engage in mercantile pursuits. You are however to understand that you will not be entitled to any pensioner allowance upon the termination of your services under this Department.”, FO, 78/339, 1838, pp. 361-367.

³⁷ The same documents listed merchant-consuls and their salaries adjacent to Bursa. According to that Britain was represented with a consul in Salonica, Candia and Lyra and the salary was equal of £300 a year. However, Trebizond was represented with a vice-consul, the salary was equal to £300 since it was carrying a political and strategic position. On the other hand, Adrianople and Athens’ were consuls were receiving £200 and £250 a year. This is the indicator of purchasing power in these cities which shows capacity of economic activities. FO, 78/339, 1838, pp. 359-360.

³⁸ FO, 78/339, 1838, pp. 358-359.

³⁹ FO, 78/339, 1838, p. 357; “Salaried consuls permitted to trade, perhaps the majority after the 1831 economics but a decreasing minority after 1858, were denied any pension right, presumably on the grounds that they could apply the profits of their trade to a private insurance...”, Platt, 1971, p. 46.

⁴⁰ Accounts & Papers, Volume 60, 1872, p. 4.

⁴¹ FO, 78/339, 1838, pp. 378-379.

⁴² FO, 78/367, p. 260.

Commercial Convention of 1838 was put in operation in Bursa and also he met the governor of the city (Mutselim) concerning the convention.⁴³

Archival documents reveal on his correspondences about the application of the convention and Sandison's effort on respecting British commercial rights and privileges. His early reports to the foreign office show that the convention was not put into practice immediately in Bursa and its vicinity which local authorities were reported to be resistance for the reason of not being informed about privileged commercial position of British subject. His letter on November 15th, 1839 mentioned no change in the status and Sandison himself as the consul of the province reported to be in close contact with newly appointed local governor.⁴⁴

Long Lasting Consular Position

Sandison acted as Consul of Bursa for three decades from November 1838 to September 1868 and he died in his post. However, the position was not aimed for a limited period and there were other consuls/vice consuls at the post even longer than Sandison, this long period should be considered a success. It is clear from 30 years reports that he tried to make local authorities, custom operations in his district acting according to the Commercial Convention of 1838.⁴⁵

He acted to protect British merchants as well as local merchants under the British protection, their business operations, carrying import items to certain districts and having local products carried to port cities to be exported. Sandison reported economic and political⁴⁶ situation of the region as expected however, comparing other regions and their consuls, he reported accurately on daily practices, weather conditions effected agricultural crop, some epidemics, earthquake, police proceedings within his jurisdiction, gradual increase of European products, together with the British cloth, twist, yarn, etc. He replied requests promptly with a detailed information concerning the issue of the report. He reported precisely on prices of different crops and changes in crop, projections on production in agriculture and manufacturing. Foreign office documents present Sandison's periodic reports and correspondences to be bulky when compared with other British consuls. Sandison claimed that his intense reports published for the use of parliament, pleased the government and attributed distinction.⁴⁷

He reported to the foreign office the prosperity and buying capacity of his consular district for British commodities being depending on 'the value and amount of the silk

⁴³ FO 78/367, 17 June 1839, pp. 262-263; House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, Correspondences Relative to the Continuance of Monopolies in the Dominions of Turkey, Presented to the House of Commons by the Queen's Command, in pursuance of their Address of the 25th February, 1840, T. R. Harrison, London, p. 41.

⁴⁴ FO, 78/367, 17 June, 1839, pp. 282-283.

⁴⁵ He reported to the foreign office about some attempted abused on the part of the local authorities in contravention of the Commercial Treaty of 1838, for a detailed assessment see: FO 78/532, February 20th, 1843, pp. 69-75; "...the difficulty if controlling the local officers so as to confine them to the proper rate and amount of Duties without adding other imports, as even now occasionally practised...", FO 78/532, December 9th, 1843, pp. 136-137; FO 78/570, July 8th, 1844, p. 233.

⁴⁶ He reported the changes and effect of Ottoman government's decisions in the city, for example see his reports on the declaration of an internal reform, Hatti Sherif of the Sultan was made public, FO 78/1209, March, the 5th, 1856, p. 81; June 16th 1856, pp. 206-207.

⁴⁷ "Her Majesty's Government has for years been pleased to assign a copious place in especial to my periodical Reports and Returns often in extenso...", FO, 78/1398, December 12, 1858, p. 200; Platt claimed that due to the foreign competition in the nineteenth century, more emphasis was given to 'special reports on particular development containing immediate suggestions for the expansion of British trade' than routine annual report. Therefore, Sandison reports must have been valuable in reflecting immediate changes and developments. Platt, 1971, p. 104.

products' that he spent some of his exertions of improvements of this product.⁴⁸ Correspondences and reports of Sandison clearly points out the success of consular post and how British products found new markets in the interior of Turkey.⁴⁹ He reported French, Swiss and Saxon, Italian, Belgian sale in general. He also reported Russian merchants, agents and consular works and he presented them as competitors whom should be monitored carefully.

Sandison reported in the first year in his post that "*The establishment of the Consulate here has tended to the protection and extension of British Commodities in their circulation in this quarter by ensuring them from any secondary or local duties which the authorities in the Interior were occasionally in the habit of carrying levying for their own benefit...*" However, he also wrote that he kept himself occupied in collecting information and sending returns of the trade of Bursa. "*...I have found difficulties in so doing from the reluctance of the Turkish authorities to give access in their registers or Extracts from them such a desired. And the imperfection of the records, in other cases their being entirely wanting in respect to Import Goods which have already paid the duties at the Capital and are not subject to any on this side. Under these circumstances I am resorting to every means of information, and I shall digest and prepare the same in proper form...to be forwarded to your Lordship as early as possible.*"⁵⁰

Upon his arrival, Donald Sandison realised that the Commercial Convention of 1838 was not implemented even local authority was not informed about the convention and they were not willing to regard any proceeding despite the imperial berat Sandison received from the Sultan.⁵¹ However, some of Sandison reports mentioned he has been working on it by meeting the local authorities etc. Finally he reported to the foreign office in the same year in August 1839 that the convention was put into operation in his district and he managed to abolish monopolies in his district.⁵² He also informed the foreign office in September 1839 that free transmission of Bursa silk by the English and French for Smyrna by land was

⁴⁸ "*I have suggested to the peasantry and others engaged in it the simplest means by which with additional care in the nurture of the worms immense numbers of them which perish might be preserved, and (...) my suggestions to the sorting and winding off the Cocoons so that even with the simple and rude implements used they may obtain a far superior quality of silk.*", FO, 78/402, Sandison at Brusa, January 10th, 1840, pp. 172-173.

⁴⁹ "*From the best information I can collect the consumption of British Manufactures during 1840 has been extended 20 to 25 per cent in the amount supplied from this market. The number of shops in the Bazars engaged in their sale has increased from 160 up to 200 and a greater quantity of our Goods has been consumed within the District, as well as circulated from hence to other parts of the interior...the use of cotton articles has been more extensively adopted and the general sale of British commodities promoted...*", FO, 195/113, February 15, 1841. An earlier report dated March 1838 mentioned that "...Brusa may not be ranked as a general market for British manufactures, the sale of which has hitherto been considered to be confined to the wants of the inhabitants of the city, and those of the immediate vicinity.", FO, 78/335, Correspondence with Consul John Cartwright, Constantinople, 21 March 1838, pp. 44-46.

⁵⁰ FO, 78/402, Sandison at Brusa, January 10th, 1840, pp. 169-170.

⁵¹ "stated to the Mutselim that I was instructed to consider the recent Commercial Convention between Great Britain and the Porte as operative from the 1st of March last and that it would be my duty in all cases where it's provisions were not observed to adopt certain formalities prescribed to me although until he the Mutselim received orders from His government to put the Treaty in force, he was not to regard any proceeding of this nature as involving any personal responsibility on his part", FO 78/367, 17 June 1839, p. 263.

⁵² "...It is satisfactory for me to add that no monopolies now exist within this District nor any duties or restrictions whatever on British trade contrary to our Treaties.", FO, 78/402, Sandison at Brusa, September 4th, 1840, pp. 235-236; House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, Correspondences Relative to the Continuance of Monopolies in the Dominions of Turkey, Presented to the House of Commons by the Queen's Command, in pursuance of their Address of the 25th February, 1840, T. R. Harrison, London, p. 41, 49.

permitted.⁵³ This also should be considered as a certain achievement the British commerce and merchants that Ottoman government officially declared in 1818 that silk and silk products of Bursa was not allowed to be sold by any local or foreign merchants before the need of the capital was fulfilled.⁵⁴

Another achievement of Donald Sandison is on custom duties. His reports show that he dedicated himself and made British merchants and produce enjoying the privilege of advantages position.⁵⁵ Some Ottoman archival documents concern on the custom duties and foreign, British and berat holder local merchants and consul himself could not be exempt from the duties. An official letter addressed to the governor of Bursa that the consul himself was not exempted from duties for his private businesses for the reason of being the consul and subjected to the same amount a British subject has been paying.⁵⁶ The same document concerns some merchants in districts of Bandirma and Erdek acting as Vice-Consul without a decree (emirname) and position of these merchant was decided to be asked to the consul of Bursa⁵⁷

The only document concerning the disapprobation of foreign office was about Sandison's recommendation for the consular agent at Mudanya in the last year in his post. In this letter, Sandison explained that his prolonged illness prevented him to inform the foreign office not to acknowledge the receipt of Lord Stanley's. He also explained his regrets and the reason of recommending a consular agent.⁵⁸

Few documents in the Ottoman archive refer to Consul Donald Sandison and one is on his act against the condition of the treaty. Some minutes sent from the city council of Bursa to the government and then documented to the foreign minister in 1845.⁵⁹ However, the

⁵³ House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, Correspondences Relative to the Continuance of Monopolies in the Dominions of Turkey, Presented to the House of Commons by the Queen's Command, in pursuance of their Address of the 25th February, 1840, T. R. Harrison, London, p. 42.

⁵⁴ For a detailed assessment see: Prime Ministry Archives (BOA), Cevdet, Hariciye Collection (C..HR..), 103/5147, 21/N/1216, "*Bursa...hasıl olan ipekler...kimseye satılmayıp tamamen Bursa bezestanına nakil olunup İstanbul'a lüzumu olan mikdarı alınmadıkca yerli ve ecnebi kimseye ipek sattırılmayacağına dair Nemçe, Prusya, İspanya, İngiltere, Sicilyateyn, İsveç, Danimarka sefareterlerine ve Dubrovnik konsolosu... verilen takrir.*"

⁵⁵ "...the custom duty partially levied on British Goods has been entirely suppressed, and struck orders given by the chief local authorities as they inform me that not a piece of British Manufactures be hence forth subject to it.", FO, 78/402, Sandison at Brusa, May 15th, 1840, p. 214; "...the Saxon Manufacturers have commenced making Imitations of the Brussa Silk and Cotton Stuffs used for Dresses which if carried to the extent which the success of their introduction encourages would greatly interfere with British and local Manufacturers...", FO, 195/113, February 15, 1841.

⁵⁶ "...zatına âid bazı eşyadan resm-i gümrük alınmamak ve sâir bazı imtiyâzâta nâil olunması hâiz olmayacağına mebni bu dakikalara ser- nazar-ı dikkat ile bir minvâle muharrer merkumun yolunda ve nizamında vuku' bulacak ifadâtın min-gayr- i resmi kabule ve tesviyyesine bakılması lazım geleceği malum olduğuna icra buyrulması...", BOA, Hariciye Nezareti, Mektubi Kalemi Collection, (HR. MKT.), 75/53, 27/B /1270.

⁵⁷ "... konsolos vekili tanınmasına dâir mahallince bir günâ malumat olmadığı beyânıyla bunlar hakkında ne-vechile muâmele olunması lâzım geleceği isti'lâmını hâvi Erdek kâim-makâmı bize-- -- - savb-ı çâkeriyye bir kıt'a şukkası lede'l-vurud mersum Enrunaki'nin vekaletini keyfiyyetini devlet-i müşariün-ileyhanın Bursa'da mukim konsolosu tarafından tercüman vasıtasıyla sual ve istiknah olundukta...", BOA, HR. MKT., 75/53, 27/B /1270.

⁵⁸ "I beg leave to explain that I was not unmindful of the Rule referred to by his Lordship but which had not been observed in practice in the case of the dependent stations in my Consulate. The Vice Consul at Ghio and Consular agent at Panorama were both ignorant of English as like wise Mr. Galle the late agent at Mundania, who had been recommended by me with the previous asset of Sir Henry Bulmer and it was in view of those antecedent that I made the application in favour of Mr. Lombridi, whilst Lord Stanley's disapprobation on the occasion.", FO, 78/2048, August 24th, 1868, p. 217.

⁵⁹ "Mahruse-i Bursa'da mukim İngiltere konsolosu Sandison nam müste'minin muğayir-i uhud ve şurut-ı hâlâta cür'et etmekte olduğu beyânıyla icrâ-yı icâbı hususuna dâir Bursa mahallesinden tevâriid eden bir kıt'a

document does not mention the consul's act precisely and such a situation has not been found in any correspondences of Sandison in the time period or foreign office dispatches were sending to British consular officers periodically. Moreover, in one of the correspondence, Sandison was acknowledging the foreign office upon receiving a circular in 1858. He reported that he was paying a strict attention to avoid quarrels with the authorities of the Porte, abstained from pushing any discussion, treat the Ottoman authorities with respect and having amicable relations.⁶⁰ Donald Sandison was also reported to be a high-tempered person and not to be fair to those asking an internal passport to travel to Istanbul (murur teskeresi) in 1848⁶¹

One correspondence between Bursa and foreign office brings out the debate of abolishing the consulate of Bursa together with Jaffa.⁶² The answer and reaction of Donald Sandison gave important information on how he determined attribute importance in the commerce of Britain in Bursa. He asked why Bursa coupled with the inconsiderable station of Jaffa and how it could be arrived at the conclusion.⁶³ Sandison's respond in this letter provides some information on how he carried out his duty over years. He mentioned how the British government was pleased of having his reports and receiving honourable approbation from the government and embassy. He mentioned as well that reducing the consulate to a vice consulate would not serve to the best interest of the country and impair the efficiency of the officer.⁶⁴ Moreover, he reminded the foreign office that cotton cultivation had greatly enhanced in the city and therefore a consul should be stationed to the places where the chief local authority resides.⁶⁵ He concluded by offering to cite from different foreign affairs secretaries and ambassadors and mentioning that the assiduous effort have not in vein.⁶⁶ In brief, Sandison retained his position until he died and the consular post was demoted to the vice consul status within the appointment of the new consul in 1869.

Donald Sandison was mainly resided in Constantinople and carried his business operations there; after appointed to be consul at Bursa he became resided there and using the days of his annual leaves for being at Constantinople either for his private business, public affairs and medical advice from later year. He each time reported any of his absence with a license from the ambassador. He left his post for certain days for his private interests and he named them as 'for private interests and these of our trade'⁶⁷ or 'on matters connected with

zabit leffen tesyir ----- kılınmış derhal mazbataya nazar ve icrâ-yı icâbı ----- bulunmuş olmağın olbâbda", BOA, C.HR., 155/7705, 29/Ca/1261.

⁶⁰ FO, 78/1398, December 22nd, 1858, pp. 213-214.

⁶¹ BOA, HR. MKT., 26/53, 03/Ş/1265.

⁶² A recommendation of revision the consular position and right of various consuls in the same year of 1858. Recommendation for Donald Sandison was to restrict him from trading and materials to increase the salary. The current salary mentioned to be £350 however, it was always £300 and £100 of office expenses. Proposed salary was not calculated for this post, for a detailed assessment see Correspondence on the Subject of the Report of the Consular Committee of 1858, Harrison and Sons, London, 1860, pp. 20-24.

⁶³ FO 78/1398, December 12th, 1858, p. 199.

⁶⁴ "...for the nature of the duties here, and the grade emergencies to arise, it would not be conducive to the interests go Her Majesty's service to reduce the consulate at Brussa to a vice consulate, and thus impair the weight and influence of the officer in charge, as possibly also his efficiency.", FO 78/1398, December 12th, 1858, p. 203.

⁶⁵ FO 78/1398, December 12th, 1858, p. 203.

⁶⁶ "Her Majesty's Government has for years been pleased to assign a conscious place in especial to my periodical reports and Returns often in extensor, in the relation of those Vice Consuls in Turkey published for the use of Parliament, and thus various to the Country...it has been satisfactory for me to have received the most honourable approbation of my proceeding a Report", FO 78/1398, December 12th, 1858, pp. 200-201.

⁶⁷ He left in June 1843 for five days, 15 days in July 1843, FO, 78/532, p.110, 114; in August 1845 for 13 days, FO, 78/612, p. 316.

the public service and private affairs.⁶⁸ However he had connection with Great Britain and was in London when he was appointed as consul and he requested to stay some more weeks there to conduct his business. He later was in London in 1859 for the wedding of his daughter.⁶⁹ According to his daughter, Fanny Blunt, his two children were educated in London for two year.⁷⁰

Sandison's salary was decided to be £300 and an annual allowance. He demanded a permanent increase in his salary due to an increase in the cost of life at Bursa in December 1855. The permanent increase in his salary was not accepted by the foreign office, however, considering the increase in cost of living and consequent upon the state of war, an extra personal allowance of £200 a year was granted to him in addition to his regular salary.⁷¹ In the year 1859, Sandison requested a permanent increase again and it was not accepted.⁷²

Sandison was suffering from 'tic douloureux' and left his post for some weeks for some medical advice in Constantinople.⁷³ He died on the sixth of September 1868 at Bursa and his death was reported by his son, Alfred Sandison, acting consul at Bursa, to the foreign office from Constantinople on the 16th of December, the same year.⁷⁴ Alfred Sandison was the acting consul until John Frederick Albany Maling, a non-trading officer, was appointed as a Vice-Consul of Bursa in November 24, 1869.⁷⁵

Conclusion

Donald Sandison worked for the East India Company and was a privileged member of the Levant Company initially before the consular post at Bursa. Economic activities between Britain and the Ottoman Empire was fostering his economic activities and consular posts. He

⁶⁸ He left in July and August 1844 for 19 days, FO 78/570, p. 261, in May and June 1856 for 13 days, FO, 78/1209, p. 211; in July 1856 for 13 days, FO, 78/1209, p. 245; in September 1858 for 15 days, FO, 78/1398, p. 138; in December 1858 for 23 days, FO, 78/1398, p. 217; in May 1863 for a few weeks, FO, 78/1863, p. 79; in June 1863 for a few weeks, FO, 78/1863, p. 83; for two months 1867 in June and July, FO, 78/1986, p. 210, 216.

⁶⁹ His name appears registered in the post office London directory which covered official, commercial, court, parliamentary, postage and banking directories. Sandison's name was listed as British Consul at Bursa, The Small Edition of the Post Office London Directory, W. Kelly & CO, London, 1843, p. 59.

⁷⁰ Blunt, 1918, pp. 48-49.

⁷¹ FO, 78/1209, February, 12th 1856, pp. 2-3, 12, 213. This additional allowance of £200 was requested to be extended to the year 1857, FO, 78/1209, July, 12th, 1856, p. 231. This annual payment must have been considered as a temporary allowance by the foreign office as Sandison was informed to have another allowance of £100 a year for office expenses in 1860, FO, 78/1534, April 7th, 1860, p. 101. However, no documents existed on such an allowance for the year between 1857 and 1860.

⁷² "...intimating that your Lordship had not found sufficient reason to accede to my request for an increase of salary.", FO, 78/1859, October 29th, 1859, p. 251. The foreign office must have been aware of low payment of consuls that Edmund Hammond, Permanent Under-Secretary, reported that "...the general feeling in the Foreign Office is that our consular service is miserably paid, and we should be very glad indeed...", Second Report from the Select Committee on Diplomatic and Consular Services: Minutes of Evidence 380, 1871 p. 11.

⁷³ "...on the benefit of my health, on account of a severe return of tic douloureux...", FO, 78/1302, p. 398; He left for two to three weeks (19 days) in the beginning of 1856, FO 78/1209, January 23rd, 1856, p. 56, 146; left for in August 5th, 1857, FO, 78/1302, p. 398; left for in December 31st, 1859, FO, 78/1450, p. 294; left for 7 days in January 1860, FO, 78/1534, p. 99.

⁷⁴ "...of my father, the late Mr. Consul D. Sandison who dies intestate at Brussa on the sixth of September last. Mr. Sandison having been resident at his post and in the execution of his duties as Her Majesty's Consul at Brussa during the greater part of the quarter ended on the 30th of September last, I venture to hope that it may please Her Majesty's Government to authorize the payment of the salary due upon that quarter in belief of the widow and of the other Heirs to the estate of the deceased of which I am now the administrator.", FO, 78/2048, December 16th, 1868, pp. 219-220.

⁷⁵ House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, Reports from Her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Agents Abroad, Respecting the Condition of the Industrial Classes in Foreign Countries, Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Her Majesty's Command, Harrison and Sons, London, 1870, p. 2.

was appointed to Bursa at the time of commercial and political upheaval. Sandison's business as a merchant in Constantinople probably shaped his family life. He married with Mary Zohrab, daughter of Constantine Zohrab, a merchant and partner of Mr. John Cartwright, the British Consul General in Constantinople since 1817. Being part of the family with a business partnership of the consul-general must have been a positive effect since he could directly correspond with some high officials.

The charter company called the British Levant Company carried trading activities in Ottoman dominions and Donald Sandison was one of the merchants settled in Constantinople and operated in the Ottoman Empire as a representative of the British East India Company from the beginning of the nineteenth century. He was admitted a member of the Levant Company in 1817 and was a freeman of the Levant Company. Sandison applied to be the Consul of Salonica in 1834, but the desire to be a consul was four years later in 1838 at Bursa.

British subject in the Ottoman Empire was mainly in port cities but not very active in inland cities of the country. Bursa is an interesting case that number of European consuls appointed there and merchants opened their offices and operated in the city along with the local merchants.

The importance of silk manufacturing in European silk industry made Bursa an important centre for European and British merchants. Significance of silk in Ottoman manufacturing brought a great opportunity to the Western traders in clothing industry. It is observed that appointment of Sandison in Bursa had a positive contribution to both the export of raw silk, its competitiveness in international export market as a raw material and silk cloth industry of Britain as finished goods.

Donald Sandison was an experienced member of the Levant service. Personal correspondences and archival documents present Sandison's professional ambitious and capacity, over eagerness for establishing consular post and his commitment for his appointment. He was a far-sighted merchant in preparing his memorandum for the foreign office and anticipating the expansion of the commercial potential of Bursa and role of its consul. Some of the reports of Sandison could be regarded as he hold a political function however, he reported constantly and systematically, social and political concerns were reported as part of the whole report of a corresponding year together with the regular report.

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