

The Greek Community in Bengal. 1774-1857

*The merchant to secure his treasure,
Conveys it in a borrowed name.* (Alexander Pope)

The historian of the early Greek community in Bengal finds his path beset with gargantuan difficulties, some of which have been described in an earlier chapter. The records he has to depend on are largely those of the British Administration in India which were not overly concerned with foreign nationals from an obscure corner of Europe, conducting forms of trade which were not of great economic importance to the operations of the East India Company. He who would find a Greek presence in Bengal must dig hard and patiently in the records, searching for the proverbial needle in a haystack. The patronymics he discovers easily change form from one context to another and he has to employ the skills of a detective to establish whether he is dealing with the same man whose name has been spelled differently or another whose name bears some resemblance to that of the first. Often enough, the result is inconclusive. This frustration grows as he discovers that a large proportion of the names he has garnered remain only items in a bare list without the flesh of recorded incident to give life to his narrative. So many names are mentioned only once and then disappear into the limbo of the unchronicled dead.

The procedure adopted in this chapter is to describe and attempt some analysis of the contents of six basic documents which provide us with the names of early Greek merchants and within this documentary framework fit such other facts which have come to light and thus assemble painfully, as far as one can, the pieces of this historical jigsaw.

The earliest of these documents (Document A) is dated Feb 21, 1774. It is a letter addressed to the Archbishop of Sinai and is signed by seven Greek merchants of Calcutta, in the following order:

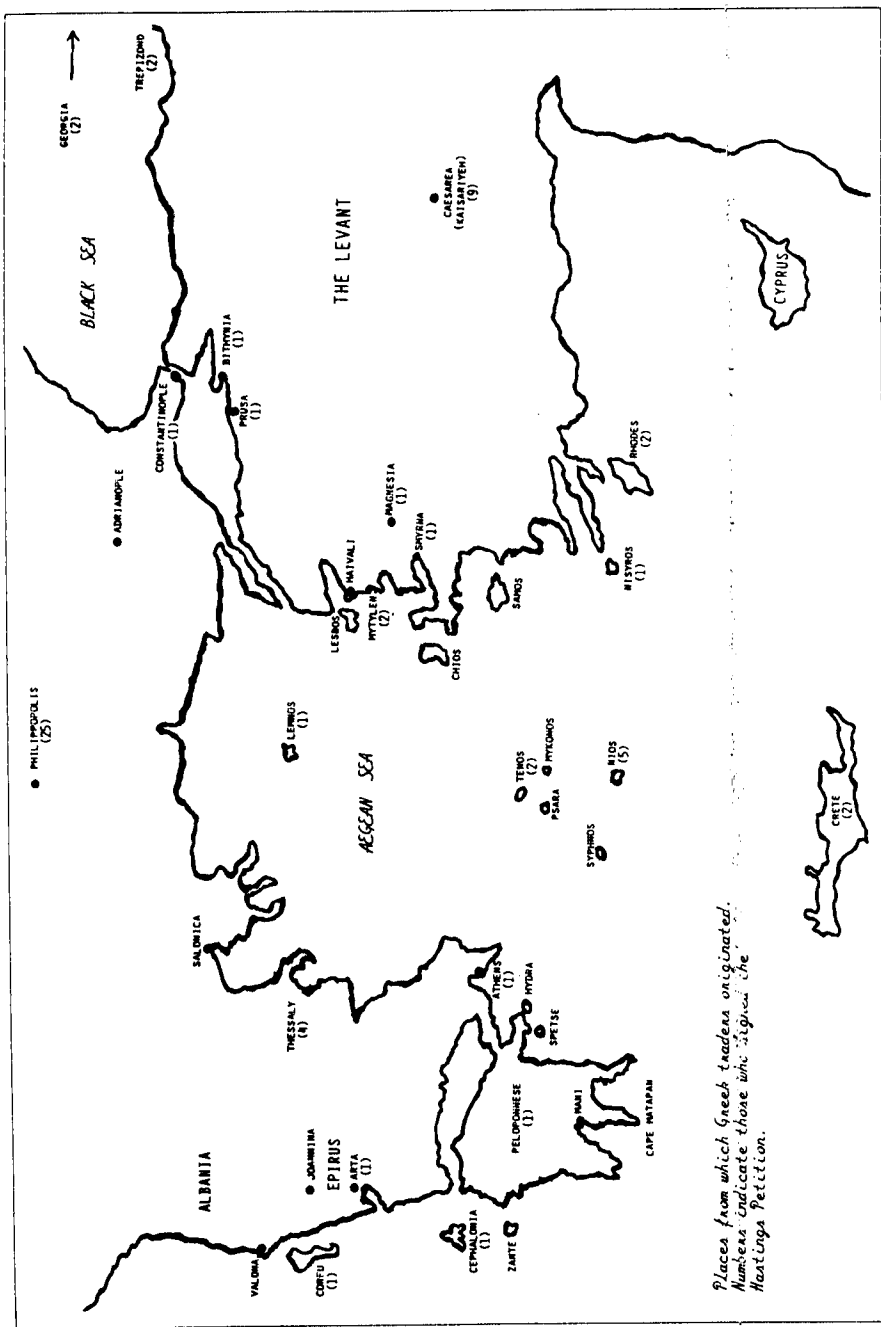
Georgios Baraktaroglou
Chatzee Alexios Argyree
Argyrees Angelee
Georgios Monolakee Arikoglou
Constantinos Georgiou
Theocharees Georgiou
Michalees Andreou¹.

They were merchants engaged in the export and import trade in Calcutta. Alexios Argyree from Philippopolis we have already met in Chapter 3, he who became the leader and true founder of the Greek merchant community in Calcutta. Constantinos Georgiou came from Constantinople and Baraktaroglou and Arikoglou almost certainly hailed from the same city or the mainland of Asia Minor because of the typically Turkish termination of their names. Michalees Andreou came from the Peloponnesus and Argyrees Angelee probably from Philippopolis. These were the founding fathers of the community though Baraktaroglou, Angelee and Arikoglou are never mentioned in subsequent records. Shortly after the despatch of this letter, Alexios Argyree shifted his commercial activities to Dacca and henceforth Greek trading in Bengal moved around two poles - Calcutta and Dacca.

The next document (Document B) is of vital importance². It is the petition of 13 December 1788 (see Chapter 4) signed by sixty-nine Greek merchants in Bengal to the Court of Directors of the East India Company as a testimonial to Warren Hastings. Its interest to the historian lies especially in the fact that each of these merchants appends, after his signature, his place of origin. An analysis of these place names provides the following information:

From:-	Philippopolis	25	Thrace	25
	Caesaria	9	} Asia Minor	16
	Trebizond	2		
	Smyrna	1		
	Bythynia	1		
	Brusa or Prusa	1		
	Magnesia	1		
	Constantinople	1		
	Georgia	2	Russian Empire	2
	Arta	1	} Mainland Greece	7
	Athens	1		
	Pelopponese	1		
	Thessaly	4		
	Corfu	1	} Ionian Islands	2
	Cephalonia	1		
	Nio	5	} Aegean Islands	15
	Metyline (Lesbos)	2		
	Rhodes	2		
	Crete	2		
	Irineus (Erini)	2		
	Nasiras	1		
	Lamos (Lemnos?)	1		
	Albania	1	Albania	1
	Calcutta	1	Calcutta	1
	Total:			69

One other merchant is described as 'a Slavonian'.



Places from which Greek traders originated.
Numbers indicate those who signed the
Hastings Petition.

What is notable is the very high proportion of merchants from the Thracian city of Philippopolis whose citizens were foremost, from the beginning of the 18th century at least, in trading with India. Alexander Panioty (who signed himself Panageotes Alexios) was at the head of the petition as he had already at this date established himself as the chief merchant of the Greek community and he was resident in Dacca. There are two merchants from Document A, both resident in Calcutta, who signed this document: Theodore Charis (Theocharees Georgiou) from Arta in seventh place, and Michael Lees Andreou from the Peloponnese in the thirty-third place. About thirty-two signatories never seem to appear again in extant records. Did they return home or continue their activities in Bengal but in so humble a capacity that no record of their work or death has survived? The above analysis of places of origin must lead us to treat with reserve the remark of 'Asiaticus' in 1802 that "few of the Greek islanders came to Bengal and at this very day the Turkish Greeks prevail in Calcutta". Except for the Ionians and Georgians (only four on the list) all these merchants were subjects of the Ottoman Empire but of this number only nineteen out of sixty-nine hailed from Asiatic Turkey and no less than seventeen came from the islands of the Aegean and Ionian seas. The predominance of the citizens of Philippopolis, a European city, has already been noted - about 35 percent of the total.

Our third source of information (Document C) is the Bengal Directories of 1790 and 1792 which contain a stark list of Greek merchants in Bengal. Six are noted: Mavrody Kyriakos, Shereen Abraham, Michael Andrew, John Demetrius, George Leonidas and Theochary Godeela. Two of these, Theochary Godeela from Arta and Michael Andrew from the Peloponnese, appear in both A and B documents and the other four are only in document B. Mavrody Kyriakos (Marodes Thireacos) who is there described as the Warden of the Greek Church in Calcutta and as hailing from Philippopolis, Shereen Abraham from Caesaria, John Demetrius from Metylene and George Leonidas from Smyrna. It is significant that Alexander Panioty is not mentioned in Document C. We do not know on what principle the compilers of the Bengal Directory selected these names but it is likely that they were those of the most prosperous Greek merchants and all of them were resident in Calcutta. The omission of Alexander Panioty's name fits in with the known fact of his considerable losses in chunam manufacture in Sylhet and the resulting curtailment of his commercial activity.

The fourth document (Document D) is a petition to the Governor General, Lord Cornwallis, in 1792 asking for permission to arm certain Greek conductors to protect their boats plying between Dacca and Chittagong and the stations in between and engaged chiefly in the salt trade. Nine merchants signed the petition, seven from Calcutta and two from Dacca. Of the former, Mavrody Kyriakos, Michael Andrew and Shereen Abraham are names that occur in the B and C documents, and two others, Nicolay Collonah and Christodulo Nicolay appear only in the B document. The two Dacca signatories Alexander Panioty (Panioty

Alexander) and Constantine Shaw (Constantine Shahiny) were both from Philippopolis, and their assent is given through their attorney, Mavrody Kyriakos. The petition also contains the names of seventeen other Greeks³ for whom the firearm licences were required. Of these, ten can be certainly traced to Dacca, two others may belong to Dacca and the remaining five cannot be ascribed to any particular place. It would seem from this evidence that though the greater number of the more prosperous merchants were still to be found in Calcutta, the younger Greeks were beginning to drift towards Dacca to find employment in the more adventurous but humbler occupation of conductors of boats.

The fifth document (Document E) is a list of Greek merchants living in Dacca in 1795 compiled by the Civil Administration⁴. There are thirty-eight names and in each case the number of years of residence in Bengal is stated. Alexander Panioty is mentioned first in the list with a period of twenty-four years residence. Two others, Alexander Kyriakos from Philippopolis and Michael Polity from Constantinople, equal this total but Constantine Shahiny (Constantine Shaw), also from Philippopolis, is the oldest inhabitant with thirty-six years residence. Seven have resided between ten to twenty years and twenty-seven under ten years, while eighteen of these names also occur in the B document. The impression gained from this evidence is that the Greek settlement in Dacca was growing, attracting the younger immigrants and surpassing in numbers the community in Calcutta.

The sixth and last document (Document F) is another petition to the Archbishop of Sinai, dated December 13, 1811.⁵ Again Alexander Panioty headed the list of signatories, evidence of the fact that he had by this time recovered from his losses twenty years previously. The second place is occupied by Theocharees Georgiou (Theodore Charis) a veteran merchant of Calcutta, whose name occurs in Documents A, B and C. Taking the list as a whole, of the thirty names, seventeen can definitely be identified as residents of Dacca (ten of these occur in the B list), two are certainly from Calcutta and there is doubt about the remaining eleven. Once more the evidence reinforces the impression of the burgeoning growth of Dacca as a Greek settlement at the start of the 19th century.

To these early days of adventure belong two tombstones formerly in the Greek Churchyard in Calcutta:

Here lies the servant of God, Georgios Leontiou from the city of Smyrna who died on 8 January, 1792.

O Man, see and understand that death will surely come. Therefore on this tablet it is recorded that Soteerios, whose native city was Philippopolis and whose father was Sogios pursued a commercial calling in this life and died while returning from Patna 17 May 1793⁶

The only volumes of the Bengal Directory and the East India Directory from 1792 to 1817 available in the India Office Records do not contain the name

of a single Greek merchant in either Calcutta or Dacca. This does not mean that they did not exist, but that the compilers of these publications did not consider any Greek merchant important enough for inclusion. This interpretation is supported by the comment of 'Asiaticus' (circa 1802) that the Greeks "are almost all poor as the branches of trade they engage in are of little importance" and he dismisses the Dacca community with the contemptuous description of "a few peddling Greeks".

This situation began to change about the year 1818 with the arrival in Calcutta of a Greek merchant who had been trading in Agra since about 1795. His name was Constantine Pantazes (also spelt Pandazee and Pandajee), and he was of Epirot origin but emigrated from his native land to Adrianople from where, about 1795, he left with his family for India. He eschewed Calcutta with its settled Greek community and began operating in the humble capacity of an up-country trader at Agra where he is listed as a merchant from 1795 to 1817. In 1818 he probably, as a result of his commercial success, set up business in Calcutta in Amratollah Street⁹ where Argyree's Greek Church was situated. Evidently he prospered, for he is listed year after year in the Bengal Directory as the first named Greek merchant of Calcutta from 1818 to 1842, the year of his death. His commercial activity must have included trade with the Levant, for he and his partner, Soterios Antoniou, retained an agent in Constantinople, a merchant from Philippopolis called Mandrazoglou.

Since Argyree's day no single merchant in Calcutta had emerged as the clear and undisputed leader of the Greek community in that city. From 1818 to 1847 Constantine Pantazes filled this role and corresponded with the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Archbishop of Sinai on its behalf and was recognized by the former prelate as "The Honoured Trustee....of our beloved and most dear children in the Lord who live in the city of Calcutta". He died a wealthy and respected figure and his tombstone was erected in the Greek churchyard:

Sacred to the memory of Constantine Pandazy, Esq, Greek Merchant, died at Calcutta 29 March 1842, in the 72nd year of his age. He was humane, meek and liberal both in prosperity and adversity and his chief aim was to do good and to avoid offending God and man.⁸

One of the most important contributions which he made to the Calcutta community was the founding of a Greek school. He was conscious of the fact that the Calcutta Greeks were a relatively small body, working in an overwhelmingly alien environment, subjected not only to the influences of the indigenous culture but also to the official regime of the British. This consideration and the intermarriage of Greeks with European women from other communities, and occasionally with Indian women, meant that the children of these unions might lose their Greek character and the cultural heritage of Hellenism. To combat this

he provided the money for the establishment of a Greek school in Calcutta, and arranged for the despatch of the distinguished Athenian teacher, Demetrius Galanos, from Constantinople.⁹

In this work Pantazes was ably seconded by another Epirot merchant, Peter Protopapas, who arrived in India sometime between 1818 and 1821. Among the early Greek merchants of Bengal he is unique in that we know his precise place of origin, which was the village of Coucoulias in the district of Zagora in Epirus, a considerable port with a shipyard for the construction of merchantmen used in the Mediterranean and Black Sea trade.¹⁰ Like Pantazes he was an enthusiast for Greek learning and culture and threw himself into the affairs of the Greek School in Calcutta, which functioned as an extension of the Greek Church, and whose first teachers were Orthodox priests and later the laymen, Demetrius Galanos and Petros from Kapesodos who arrived in India in 1792. Protopapas' interest in Greek education was not confined to Calcutta, for he did not forget the schools of his native Epirus and despatched in instalments the sum of 40,000gr for their maintenance. It is sad to relate that this money never reached its intended recipients, being seized and misappropriated by one of the nobles of Coucoulias.¹¹

Significantly, these two great benefactors of Hellenic learning in Calcutta were both Epirots. Epirus, and particularly the town of Joannina, had from the beginning of the 18th century established itself as a centre of Greek intellectual activity. Henry Holland in 1812 says that "the extensive traffic of the Greeks of Joannina is a means of tendering this city as a sort of mart for books, which are brought hither from the continent when printed, and from this point diffused over other parts of Greece".¹² Another English traveller, William Martin Leake, affirms that "The Greek spoken at Joannina is of a more polished kind than is usually heard in any part of Greece proper; its phrases are more Hellenic, and its construction more grammatical. This is a natural consequence of the schools long established here, and the residence of many merchants and others who have travelled and dwelt in civilized Europe".¹³

When, in the early years of the 19th century, the Philiki Etairia, the Secret Society which did so much to spread ideas of Greek nationalism was formed, it was the Epirot merchants Nicolaos Skouphas and Athanasios Tsakaloff who were amongst its founders. Not surprisingly, therefore, it was the two Epirots, Pantazes and Protopapas, who organised the Calcutta Greeks to help their long-oppressed countrymen when the tocsin of revolt sounded in the Greek War of Independence. The Bengal Greeks sent considerable sums of money to help their embattled compatriots and a Philhellenic Society was formed in Calcutta whose members included large numbers of distinguished British residents like Bishop Reginald Heber, the leading Chinese merchants and even the sons of Tipoo Sultan who played a conspicuous role in the social life of Calcutta. There were four of them, Moizuddin, Sultan Sahib, Gulam Mohammed and the eldest, Fateh

Hyder who lived in the Bara Mahal, now the Tollygunge Club. In 1806 they had been removed to Calcutta by the British who suspected their complicity in the Vellore Mutiny. Indicative of the deep feeling roused in liberal and radical circles by the Greek War of Independence was the fact that the famous young Eurasian intellectual Henry Vivian De Rozio, teacher at the Hindu College and editor of several Bengali newspapers, composed a poem celebrating the Battle of Navarino at which Admiral Codrington crushed the Egyptian-Turkish Navy and thus virtually ensured the liberation of the Greeks. By their efforts the Greeks of Bengal were able to remit the sum of £2,200 to Greece through the agency of the London Greek Committee. This was indicative of the intense interest which the Bengal Greeks took in the affairs of their Fathers and was the topic of Heber's up-country conversation with the Greek shopkeeper, Mr. Athanass in 1825. "He was very anxious to have news from Greece and I felt sorry that I had nothing good to tell him".

Two other Calcutta Greek merchants in the first half of the 19th century were John Lucas who traded from 1818 to 1854, first at Armenian Street and then at Portuguese Church Lane, and John Athanass from 1821 to 1835 at Gooriamal's Lane. The latter was the son of a Greek merchant from Philippopolis, the provision for whose education and upbringing by Protestant missionaries has already been described in Chapter 5. With this unusual background and his subsequent conversion to the Baptist Faith he remained rather apart from the rest of the Calcutta Greek Community. His signature does not appear on the Hastings Petition in 1788, though he was thirty-five years old at that time and already an established merchant of Calcutta, and when he died in 1835 he was not buried in the Greek Churchyard but in the South Park Street Cemetery under the following monumental inscription:

Sacred to the memory of John Athanass Esq., who departed this life on 1 September 1835, aged 82 years. Despising ostentation and happy in retirement the world knew him but little and appreciated him less, yet the poor whom the world neglects will bless him for those simple provisions, which his charity bequeathed to all their wants. But it was in his family where all his affections centred, that his real virtues were displayed. Purity, veracity and piety evinced the goodness of heart and the sincerity of his faith, and led his children to award this testimonial, and to love the Father and revere the Christian."

His wife's monumental inscription was to be found in the North Park Street Cemetery:

Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Hannah Athanass, lady of the late John Athanass Esq., who departed this life on 18th August 1837, aged 67 years. Her ways were ways of pleasantness and all her paths were peace.¹⁴

John and Hannah had three daughters, all of whom married military men. The second of the marriages of two of these girls have already been recorded in

Chapter 5 but the eldest girl, Charlotte, married Lieutenant Robert Joseph Debnam, an East Suffolk family, of the 65th (2nd Yorkshire, North Riding) Regiment of Foot, who arrived at Madras on *The General Steward* in July 1803. Hot from the siege of Bhurtpore in February 1805, he left his regiment to go on leave to Calcutta where he married Charlotte on December 7th 1805. She was seventeen years old, a not uncommon age for brides in the predominantly male expatriate community in Bengal. Debnam's tombstone in Kensal Green Cemetery records his adventurous military career in the East.

Robert Joseph Debnam born on 12th June 1781 at Chatham, died on 18th April 1876 at his residence 15 Kensington Gate. Major of 13th Light Infantry, entered the army in 1803 in H.M. 65th Regiment. He served in the Mahratta campaigns, in Burma and Afghanistan. An honoured life, 47 years spent in India, was closed in his native land, tenderly and devotedly loved, the stern simple faithful mind, strong and clear, with hallowed will he survived awhile the beloved wife of 67 years, living to see their children's children to the fourth generation. Wise and just and tender hearted, he lived and died in the love of Christ, a brave God-fearing man.

Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still. Offer the sacrifice of righteousness and put your trust in the Lord. (Psalm 4, verses 5 and 6).

It would seem that Charlotte shared some of his adventures for there is a story that on one occasion both of them with their eldest child were captured by a French frigate off Ceylon during the Revolutionary War, carried to the Isle de France (Mauritius) and remained there three months until, released by the French authorities, they took passage in an Arab ship to Muscat, eventually reaching Bombay. She was buried by her husband in Kensal Green Cemetery:

Charlotte wife of Major R. J. Debnam late of H.M.'s 13th Light Infantry and eldest daughter of the late John Athanass, Esquire of Calcutta born 3rd January 1788 married 7th December 1805 died 2nd March 1873. The best of wives the best of mothers a true and faithful friend simple and unwavering in her faith dutiful in all the relations of her life, the beloved and devoted wife of 67 years. The rejoicing mother of 15 children - children to the third generation following her to the grave. She was called to her rest full of love in the true peace of Christ and his most holy assurance.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. (Psalm 103).

At least three of her children had connections with India. George Athanass Debnam of Bilsee, Rohilkhand was born at Newport, Isle of Wight on 20th October 1821 and died on 30th July 1875 and was buried in Cawnpore. Her second daughter, Harriet Athanass Debnam married the Revd. James Justus Tucker, a chaplain to the East India Company. She was born on 25th September 1810 and died 31st July 1870. Another daughter, Helen, was born at Dinapore on 4th November 1827 and died in London on 21st April 1894. John and Sarah had

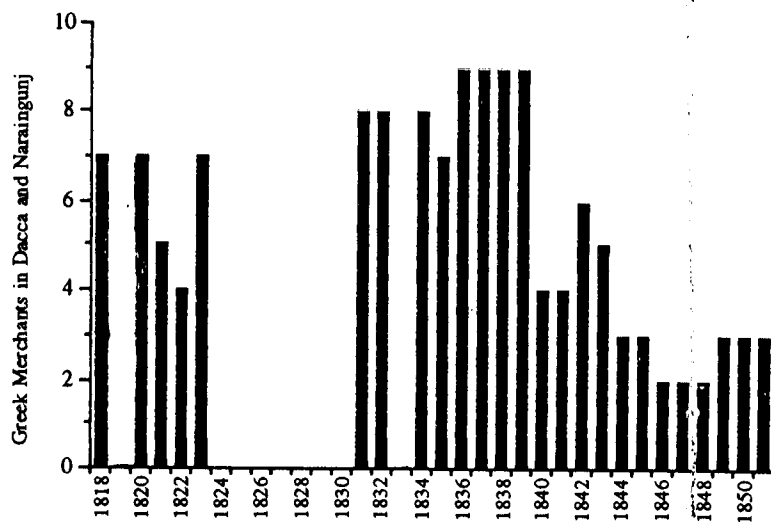


Charlotte Athanass

two other children whose tombstones in the South Park Street Cemetery give the following information: George b. 1790, d. 20th Sept 1809. Sophia b. 1791, d. 19th May 1797.

The year 1852 marks the end of an era. In that year Scott's Directory has a significant new entry in its list of Calcutta trading firms: "Ralli Brothers, 12 Lall Bazaar". The advent of this London-based firm with branches in several European and Levantine cities was to change the whole nature of Greek commercial activity in India. Against this colossus the old Greeks could not compete. One survivor who lasted for some years trading alongside the Rallis, was the firm of Peter John which began trading in 1840 at 2 Amratollah Street, and only ceased to do so in 1861. In 1859 Peter John was the Warden of the Greek Church and in that year the name of his son, A. C. John, appears as an assistant working for one of the new London-based Greek firms, Ralli and Mavrojani. Goliath had swallowed David.

As in the case of Calcutta, we have to wait until 1818 before Greek merchants are mentioned in Dacca in the Bengal Directories. In that year Alexander Panioty at last surfaces with five other Greek merchants - Demetrius Elias, Nicholas Kalonas, Lucas Theodoro, George Athanas Primq and Antony Foscholo - all based at Naraingunj. This river port, adjacent to Dacca, was a great mart for salt, oil-seeds, grain, sugar, ghee, tobacco, metals, timber and lime, and a depot for boats and boatmen engaged in the inland trade of Bengal.¹⁵ From the beginning of the century to about 1839, the Greek presence in Dacca and Naraingunj expanded, but thereafter there was a rapid decline and it disappeared almost entirely after 1851 as the following table of Greek merchants operating there, taken from the Bengal Directories, indicates:



(The volumes of the Bengal Directories for the years 1819, 1825-1830, 1832/33 are unfortunately missing in the India Office Records.)

With historical hindsight, it is now possible to see that Alexios Argyree had played the role of a tragic pioneer. Like Moses, he led the Greeks to the promised land of Dacca but he was not to know that in the first thirty years of the 19th century the competition of Lancashire's cotton industry would destroy the prosperity of Dacca. In the very years when Greeks were crowding into the district, the economic ground was shifting under their feet. The reports of English visitors to Dacca made melancholy reading. In 1824 Bishop Heber noted that "factories of the Dutch, French and Portuguese nations are all sunk into ruin and overgrown with jungle". In 1840 James Taylor wrote "The place (Narayangunj) has declined considerably within the last thirty years....in the Armenian and Greek quarters of Dacca, there are several large brick built houses but most of them are falling into ruin".

Nevertheless, during this period a Greek community grew up around the church built by Alexander Panioty, creating a distinctive Greek way of life. Out of the thirty-seven names noted in the Dacca list of 1795 (Document E) only some eleven seem to be established as families of some consequence - Panioty, Ducas, Lucas, Athanas, Calogreedy, Calonas, Elias, Foscolo, Marrody, Esau and Jordan. In the case of the first, the reason for its pre-eminence is easy to understand since its members were the heirs of Alexios Argyree Panaghiotis. In the other cases we have unfortunately no means of knowing why they survived and other Greek names disappeared, only rarely emerging in some obscure record of birth, marriage or death.

Probably sometime in the last quarter of the 19th century, when Ralli Brothers had established a trading presence in Dacca, this firm, with a commendable sense of history, built a monument to the memory of its mercantile forbears. Originally it was situated on the Shahbagh Avenue and faced the Ramna Racecourse on a site which had been used as the Greek Cemetery in Dacca. Standing alone, it immediately attracted the eye, but today it stands in the University grounds in Mymensingh Road across from Suhrawardy Uddyān which is no longer a racecourse. It is a neoclassical structure built of brick and stucco and remains, at the time of writing, in fairly good condition. It has a central square core and from each of its sides projects a bay held up by two fluted pillars of the Doric Order on which rests the entablature and a triangular pediment, the whole forming a Greek Cross. Over the top of its eastern face is the following inscription in Greek: "Blessed are they whom you have chosen and taken to yourself".

Entrance into the interior is through the east door. Inside are ten memorial tablets of black stone, five in Greek and five in English, nine of which are affixed to the north, south and west walls and one lies broken on the floor and appears never to have been erected like the others. The oldest inscription is dated 1800

and the latest was carved in 1859. All of them seem to be headstones taken from the earlier Greek cemetery. The deciphering of the Greek inscriptions has proved irksome because time has eroded some of the characters and the stonemasons employed were clearly unfamiliar with the Greek language, so that some letters have been inscribed in a doubtful manner and the words are often jumbled together, making the task of the translator very difficult. Most of them are recorded in appropriate places in this narrative but two, which mention the wives of merchants, are as follows:

A loving wife should not forget her husband therefore... because of her love and as a perpetual reminder of her marriage she has dedicated this memorial to her husband, Constantinos Georgiou Manroglou whose homeland was Constantinople. After he had pursued a commercial life he died on July 24, 1806. Dacca.

Here lies....Theodosia wife of Theodoro.....from Philippopoliswho on April 10, 1807 was taken into eternity. Dacca.

Alexander Panioty probably had eight children - five sons and three daughters. One of his daughters, Sultana, married John Perroux, Head Assistant of the Salt Office in Calcutta. Another, Emiralda, married Celibi Constacki Mavrodoglio on April 28, 1799, in Naraingunj and a third, whose Christian name has not survived, married John D. Calogreedy in Dacca on Feb 1; 1813. Four of his sons, George, Anastasius, Alexander and John were born in Philippopolis and came out to India with their father in 1772 and their names are recorded on the the Hastings' Petition of 1788 (Document B) in the seventeenth to twentieth places. The youngest son, Constantine, from whose tombstone we can establish his date of birth as 1782, was born in Bengal. In the Sinai Petition of 1811 (Document F) the names of John and Constantine, alone amongst Alexander's sons, are found linked together "Joannes and Konstantinos Panagiotou", but it is something of a mystery why the names of their brothers do not appear on this document. Some years after the consecration of the Dacca Church, on November 3, 1812, the Dacca priest, Gregory of Syphnos, wrote to George and Anastasius Panioty, reproaching them for the neglect of their duties as wardens of the church, and this seems to be the last surviving mention of the name of Anastasius.¹⁶

The Bengal Directories list the names of G. Panioty, John Panioty and C. Panioty as Greek merchants of Dacca: George from 1834 to 1839, Constantine from 1834 to 1845 and John from 1834 to 1848. The last mentioned date was probably the date of death in each case but this assumption should be treated with caution since in the case of Constantine his tombstone shows that he died in 1844. Alone of the sons of Alexander his tombstone inscription has survived. He died in Barisal and was buried in the English cemetery (Grave no. 47): "Sacred to the memory of Constantine Panioty, Esq, who departed this life 16 Oct, 1844, aged 62 years".¹⁷



Greek Memorial, Dacca

John Panioty had two sons, Constantine and Emmanuel. It is significant that with the decline of Dacca as a commercial centre both these men looked for careers outside commerce. Emmanuel, born in 1800 in Dacca, qualified as a solicitor and about 1821 married a young girl who, within a year, died. All we know of her is on her tombstone in the Greek churchyard in Calcutta: "Sacred to the memory of Catherine, wife of Emmanuel Panioty, who departed this life on 21 Aug, 1821, aged 17 years and 17 days".¹⁸

Not long afterwards he married into another Greek family of Dacca, the Jordans. His bride was Erin and the marriage took place in Dacca on July 1, 1823. Her father was Joseph Jordanou who arrived in Bengal in 1788 just in time to sign the Hastings' Petition in the fifty-third place, and came from Caesarea in Asia Minor. His name also appears in the Dacca list of 1795 and the Sinai Petition of 1811. The English inscription of his tombstone is recorded in the Dacca Greek Memorial:

To the memory of Mrs Magdalene and Sophia Jordan
As also to that of their husband
Mr Joseph Jordan of Cesareah
Merchant at Naraingunge.
The latter departed this life the 10th of Feb 1819
aged about 60 years.
This monument is erected as a tribute of affection
to their memory by their afflicted orphan children.

His son, Jordan Joseph Jordan, like Emmanuel Panioty, chose a legal career and on May 7, 1821, married Anna Maria Gill in Dacca. In 1837 he was Sadr Ameen (an Uncovenanted Judge) of Backergunj and later of the Twenty Four Pargannahs. He was buried in the New Burial Ground, Circular Road, under the following inscription:

Sacred to the memory of J. J. Jordan,
late Sudeer Ameen of the 24 Purgannahs
who departed this life on 29/10/1841
Aged 42 years.¹⁹

He was almost the exact contemporary of Emmanuel Panioty and his brother-in-law.

In 1849 Emmanuel is noted in the Bengal Directory as a solicitor living at 18 Scott's Lane in Calcutta with his brother Constantine - the Lane was probably named after James Scott who owned extensive properties in Old Post Office Street, Camac Street and other places between 1780 and 1820.²⁰ It was here that Emmanuel died on January 29, 1852. In 'Bengal Administrations' of that year his name appears as 'intestate' and it is surprising that a lawyer should have neglected to prepare an adequate will. He died a fairly wealthy man and the administration of his will was granted to his elder brother, Constantine.

Constantine too moved from Dacca to Calcutta and found employment as a broker with the firm of Eglinton McClure. From 1839 to 1848 he lived at Hastings Street and from 1849 to 1852 with his brother at 18 Scott's Lane and probably died in 1856 as he is no longer mentioned as a resident in any of the Calcutta Directories.

The third son of Alexander Panioty was named after his father but little is known of this man except that he does not seem to have gone into trade but became a zamindar in Dacca. He married Catherine, daughter of Ignatius Barros of Portuguese descent, who died in 1846 in Calcutta some years after the death of her husband. She was buried in the Roman Catholic Church of Nostre Senhora de Dolores in Boitaconnah and her memorial still exists on the floor of one of the aisles of the Church:

Sacred to the memory of Mrs Catherine Alexander Panioty,
relict of Alexander Panioty, Esq, of Dacca and daughter
of Ignatius Barros, Esq, also of Dacca, died 16 May, 1846,
aged 66 years. Requiesscat in Pace.²¹

Alexander and Catherine had at least one son, Ignatius Constantine, who inherited his father's zamindari and lived in Dacca till 1881 and married Dispinoo Lucas of another Greek Dacca Family.

There was another Panioty tomb to be found in the Greek Churchyard in Calcutta though its occupant cannot be identified with certainty but may have been the wife of Constantine Panioty of Eglinton McClure. Its inscription was as follows:

Sacred to the memory of Mrs Greeny Panioty Jnr who departed this life on 10th
February, 1833, aged 24 years.²²

The only merchant who signed the Hastings Petition from the Island of Corfu was Angelo Ducas (Doucas). From the Dacca List of 1795 we learn that he arrived in Bengal in 1783 and that there was another Ducas, Constantine (perhaps Angelo's brother), in Dacca who came out a year later. A very early mention of this name in Indian Records is the case of John Ducas, a soldier, who died in Madras on Jan 4, 1715, but though this man was almost certainly a Greek it is impossible to know whether he was connected with the Corfu branch of the family. The origin of the name is fascinating for the Ducases were a dynasty of Byzantine Emperors in the Middle Ages and a branch of the family were Despots of Epiros.²³ The name 'Angelo' was the family name of yet another Byzantine Dynasty so that Angelo Ducas carried in his name the double memory of a gilded imperial lineage. Unlike the patronymics of most other Greeks in Bengal the name 'Ducas' was a true surname and in Corfu it appeared in the Golden List of Nobility under Venetian rule²⁴. In the Bengal Directories of the first half of the 19th century, 'A. Ducas' is twice mentioned, seemingly referring to two brothers. One, Angelo, was a merchant at Dacca till 1852 and the other, Alexander, an

indigo planter at Chinnispore near Dacca from 1824 to 1854. The daughter of the latter has her tombstone in St. Thomas' Churchyard, Dacca (grave No. 265):

Sacred to the memory of Miss Henrietta Eliza Ducas
who departed this life on the 13th Feb, 1837, aged
18 years 8 months 25 days.²⁵

The son of one of these men, called 'Alexander Ducas', was noted as "the Keeper of the Register of Parwanas granted at other stations and fair copyest registers" in the Customs Service at Cawnpore in 1806.²⁶ After 1854 there is no further mention of the name in Dacca but it appears elsewhere. Angelo Ducas Jnr was working in 1865 for one of the new Greek firms in Calcutta, Argenti Schlizzi, and C. Ducas became a civil engineer - in 1861 he was special assistant engineer on the Ooloobariah Canal; in 1862 Special Assistant Engineer of Public Works, Damooda Division, Morstaka, Burdwan; in 1863 the same post at Hidgelee; in 1865 an executive engineer, P.W.D. at Tumlook till 1870 when he retired and lived in Wellington Square, Calcutta. Another C. Ducas worked for the East Indian Railway from 1859 to 1862.

The twenty-seventh signatory of the Hastings Petition was Lucas Theodoro from Magnesia in Asia Minor, not far from the ancient city of Ephesus, and his name appears again in the Sinai Petition of 1812. He is tantalizingly described by a modern Greek writer (Spiros Loukatos) as "Loukas Theodorou, the Greek savant"²⁷ and one yearns to know in what branch of learning he excelled. However, this obscure description alerts us to the possibility that the standard of culture amongst the Dacca Greeks may have been of a reasonably high order. The Bengal Directory describes him as a merchant at Naraingunj from 1818 to 1820 and at Dacca until 1823. Two of his sons, Theodore and Andrew, were salt merchants in Dacca from 1831 to 1851 and in 1856 and 1857 are noted as 'zamindars'; they were also signatories to the Sinai Petition of 1811. Theodore Lucas' daughter Dispino (Despoina) married Ignatius Constantine Panioty on May 19, 1847, died in 1879 and was buried in the Golbadan Cemetery, Moulvi Bazaar, Dacca (Grave no. 7) with the following inscription:

In affectionate memory of Dispino, the beloved wife
of Ignatius C. Panioty, Esq. and daughter of T. Lucas, Esq:
Died 29 Dec, 1879, aged 50 years. This tablet is erected
by her sorrowing husband and comfortless children as the
last tribute of affection.

Weep not for me my children dear
Though I was once your sole delight,
For Christ has called me to appear,
And dwell with him in glory bright.²⁸

Her brother, Lucas Theodoro Lucas, died in 1888 and was buried in the English Cemetery, Barisal (Grave no. 119):

Sacred to the memory of Lucas Theodoro Lucas, Esq,
Purganna Dukhim Shahozpoor, who departed this life
on 7 Aug, 1888 in the hopes of a glorious resurrection
and in the faith of his forefathers of the Eastern Greek
Church. Aged 57 years, 7 months, 6 days.

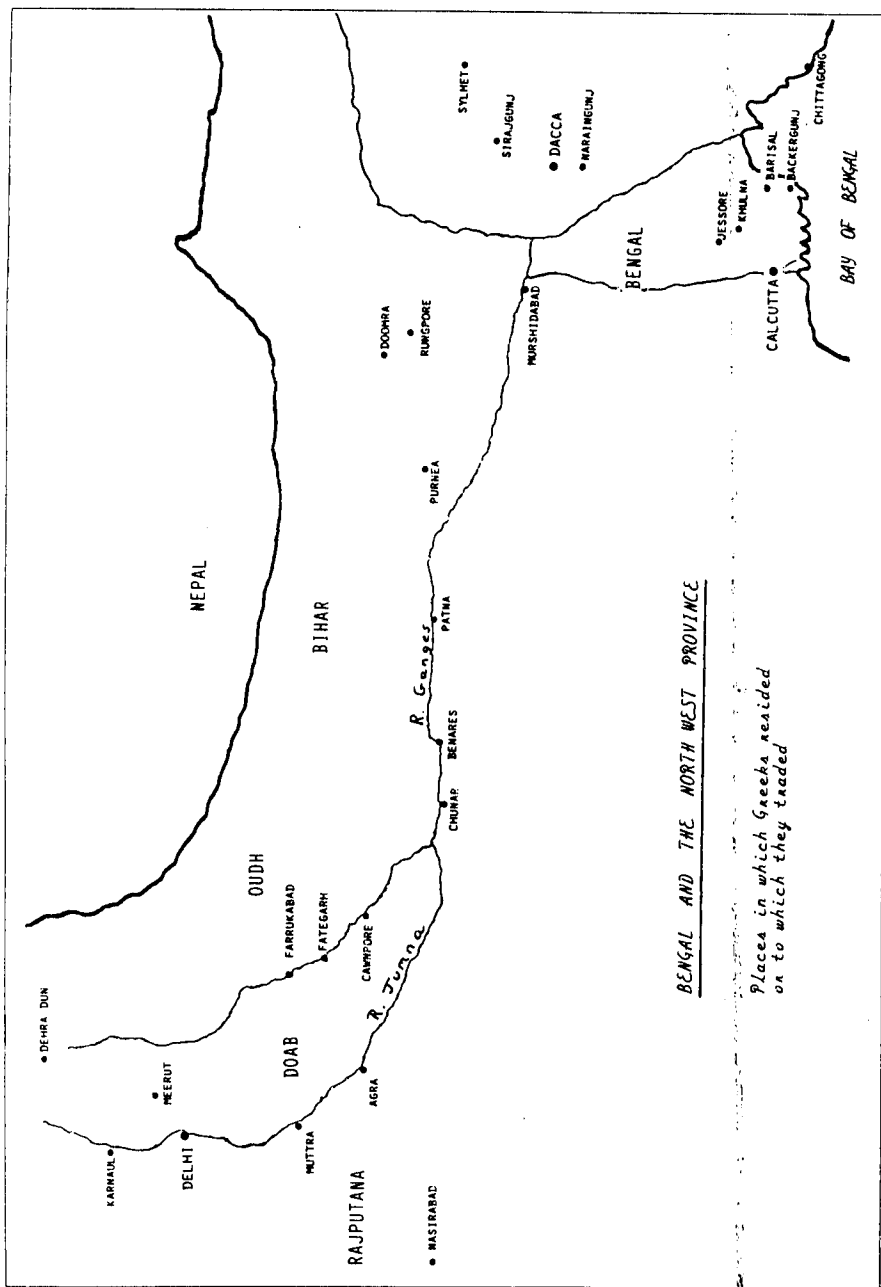
Calm on the bosom of my God
Fair spirit rest thee now.
Even while with ours thy footsteps trod
His seal was on thy brow.
Dust to his narrow house beneath
Soul to the place on high:
They that have seen thy look in death
No more may fear to die.²⁹

One of the most prolific of Greek families, whose members were to be found all over northern India, was that of Athanass.

We have already come across John Athanass, merchant of Calcutta, whose father returned from Calcutta to Philippopolis. On his return there he married a Greek girl and begot another son, Emmanuel or Manuel, born in 1778. Sometime after 1800, Manuel was sent out to Calcutta by his father and entrusted to the care of his half-brother John, under whose patronage he began a career in business. After some years' residence in Calcutta he launched out on his own as an up-country trader. He married a girl whose Christian name was Elizabeth and on December 4th 1813, the Bengal Directory records the birth of a son to his wife. Manuel is described as "a trader and merchant of Meerut," and subsequent records show that he continued his occupation at this place until his death on May 25th 1840. His son, Manuel Joshua Athanass is described as a portrait painter of Meerut in 1835 and "the owner of an estate near Dehra" which, with a fine Anglo-Hellenic flourish was called 'Byronopolis'. He died not long after his father and was buried in the cemetery at Dehra Dun under the following monumental inscription:

Manuel Joshua Athanass who departed this life at Deyrah on the night of 27th
January 1845 aged 31 years and one month. This tomb has been erected as the last
tribute of affection by his beloved and affectionate mother Elizabeth Athanass. A
pious Christian, sincere friend and lover in life.

In the records of Dehra Dun, the original purchaser of the estate in 1830 was recorded as J. Athanass. It is possible that this man was John Athanass of Calcutta who could have bought the estate for his half brother's son, but it might have been Joshua Athanass who is listed in the Bengal Directory as a resident of



Fategarh in 1837 and who may have been the brother of Manuel, the trader of Meerut. He may also have been the shopkeeper, Mr. Athanass of Nasirabad whom Bishop Heber met on his up-country travels in 1825 and who "had a brother also a shopkeeper at Meerut." Another member of the family, George Athanass, entered the Uncovenanted Civil Service and served in Delhi from 1840 to 1843 and then at Dera Ghazi Khan in the Deputy Commissioner's Office from 1855 to 1859, in Goojanwallah until 1861, and from 1863 was a copyist in the Military Secrets Office in Lahore.

A different branch of this family established itself in Dacca though it spelt the name with a single 's' while the Calcutta and up-country branches used a double 's'. The ancestor of the Dacca branch was George Athanasius of Philippopolis, thirtieth signatory of the Hastings Petition, who appears as 'George Primo' in the Dacca List of 1795. The Bengal Directory describes him as 'George Athanas Primo' a merchant of Naraingunj and Dacca from 1818 to 1835, who arrived in India in 1787. Almost certainly he belonged to the same family as the merchant from Philippopolis who fathered John Athanass of Calcutta and may have been his younger brother or his nephew. The 'Primo' in his name was probably used to distinguish him from other members of his family in Dacca. The sixty-second signatory of the Hastings Petition was Athanasius Demetrius from Philippopolis and there is a likelihood that he was the younger brother of George Primo. In the 1792 Petition for Firearms two of the conductors are named 'Dimitry Athanas' and 'Athanas Dimitry' and the Bengal Directory for 1827 lists a Greek merchant called 'D. Athanas'. George Primo's daughter, Miss B. Athanas married G. L. Esau from another Dacca Greek family in 1814 and one of his grandchildren, Celine (Selina) Athanas married Ignatius Constantine Panioty in Dacca in 1895, and another A. P. Athanas was a resident in the city in the mid 19th century and died there in 1882 and was buried in the Golbadan Cemetery (Grave no. 6) "under a plum tree": "Sacred to the memory of A. P. Athanas who died on 22 December 1882, aged 64 years."³⁰ In 1855 a M. T. Athanas was resident in Dacca and in 1857 was described in the Bengal Directory as "arriving in Calcutta from China by sea."

The thirty-fourth signatory of the Hastings Petition was Demetrius George Calograty from the Aegean Island of Nio. It is likely that the man who signed the same document in the thirty-fifth place, also from Nio, as 'George Demetrius' was his son or brother. The latter was in Dacca in 1795 and he arrived in Bengal at the end of 1788 just in time to sign the Hastings Petition and also signed the Sinai Petition in 1811. The tombstone of Demetrius George Calograty was in the Greek Churchyard in Calcutta:

Here lies the body of Demetrius George. He was born in the Island of Nio in the Archipelago in Europe and departed his life in Calcutta on 17 October, 1790 aged 60 years.

His son John Demetrius Calogreedy (the anglicized form of Calograthy), married one of Alexander Panioty's daughters in 1813 but nothing more is known about him except the words added to the inscription on the tombstone of his father:

Mr John Demetrius Calogreedy, son of the above. Died on 3 May, 1857, aged 69 years.³¹

Another inhabitant of Nio to sign the Petition of 1788 was Nicholas Marinus Calonas (also spelt Kalonas) in the thirty-sixth place, who arrived in Bengal in 1771, was present in Dacca in 1795 and 1811 and continued to operate there as a merchant until 1823, dying two years later. His son Marinus Nicholas Calonas was born in Bengal in 1787 and was a Dacca merchant from 1821 to 1835 and died on April 2, 1840. On August 3, 1812, he married Catherine Speridian (Spiridon) in Dacca who came from a Cretan family. Her father Nicholas Spiridon arrived in Bengal in 1781, signed the Petition of 1788 and was noted as a resident of Dacca in 1795. Catherine died after only five years of married life. Marinus Nicholas' brother, George Nicholas, is also mentioned as a Dacca merchant in 1835 and on December 23, 1825, he married Louisa Battye. Marinus Nicholas' daughters both married in 1847 - Margaret to J.A. Ricketts in Barisal and Erin Marin to C.J. Manook in Dacca. In the Burial Register of Barisal occurs the entry "Mrs. Desjines Kallonas died 3 May, 1877, widow of Mirium Miblas K."

One of the many citizens of Philippopolis to sign the 1788 Petition was Demetrius Elijah in the sixty-third place. In the 1792 Firearms Petition he was one of the conductors for whom a firearms licence was requested, and he was recorded as being an inhabitant of Dacca in 1795 and as having arrived in Bengal in 1787. He signed the Sinai Petition of 1811 as 'Demetrius Elias' - the change from 'Elijah' to 'Elias' is the same as the name of the Hebrew prophet underwent at the hands of the Septuagint Translators. The Bengal Directory lists him as a merchant at Naraingunj and Dacca from 1818 to 1823 and he died in 1826. He had three sons, Nicholas, John and Constantine.

Nicholas Demetrius Elias was listed a Dacca merchant from 1831 to 1843 and married Theodosia Marrody, youngest daughter of Constantine Marrody on May 9, 1819 and is commemorated on the Dacca Memorial (west wall, third tablet from the left):

Sacred to the memory of
Nicholas Demetrius Elias
Eldest son of Demetrius Elias, Esq
Died 5th March 1845
Aged 46 years.
His desired verse:
Duncaka Jomuza Hain
Hurg Czca Cumnu Honoa

Churcha Aher Nhaga
Ufsose Hunnuhonga.
Erected by his sincere friend
Basil Demetrius in 1859.

Basil Demetrius was the clerk of the Anglican Church in Dacca and the 'desired verse' seems to be in the Persian language. If so, it is interesting that these two Greeks seemed to share a love of Persian poetry.

The youngest brother, Constantine, operated as a Dacca merchant from 1831 to 1838 and married Miss C. Lucas of Dacca on February 9, 1823. Born in 1803, he died on March 23, 1838. In the Old Baptist Cemetery of Wari, Dacca, a tombstone carried the following rather quaint inscription:

Three noble brothers lie mouldering here named Nicholas, John and Constantine, famed as brave hunters and to kindred dear, who erst to sport their merry lives continued. Erected by their cousin and godson, Manuel Elias Mitchoo.³²

Perhaps their shikari techniques were too brave or too merry, for another tombstone in the same churchyard recorded the following:

Sacred to the memory of John Demetrius Elias, second son of Demetrius Elias, Esq, who was killed by a tiger whilst shooting at Mirzapore, 25 miles N.W. of Dacca on Sunday the 31st Jan, 1836. Aged 35 years.³³

Another of the Dacca Greeks must originally have been of Venetian origin for his name 'Foscholo' was that of an ancient noble Venetian family, but this is not surprising as the Venetian maritime empire, before the Ottoman conquests, included many of the Aegean Islands. In Bengal the name (another rare example of a surname) underwent strange transformations as 'Phoskolos' and 'Pharsolees' before it finally settled into its original form. Anthony Foscholo came from the little volcanic Aegean island, variously called 'Irvineus', 'Erini', 'Santorin' or 'Tino'; arrived in Bengal in 1786, signed the Hastings Petition in the sixty-fifth place, was recorded a resident of Dacca in 1795, and signed the Sinai Petition in 1811. On the last document is also the signature of his son, Joachim, who married a French lady, L'Aunette Benville, in Dacca in 1820. Anthony was recorded as being a merchant there from 1818 to 1833 and his tombstone is the one that lies broken on the floor of the Greek Memorial:

Sacred to the Memory of
A. Foscholo Esqr
Native of Tino
(Ar)chipelago in Greece
inhabitant of Dacca
?Decr 1833
82 years.
Interred also
the remains of his daughter

Catherine
who died 15th July 1813
Aged 20 years.

In 1855 a John Foscholo is mentioned in the Calcutta Directory as an assistant to George Grant, watch and clockmaker, and on February 5, 1889, a Walter Foscholo died in Lucknow.

One of the most puzzling variations in the spelling of Greek names in Bengal concerns the family which, in the end, came to be known as 'Marrody'. The second merchant signatory of the Hastings Petition was Marodes Thireacos of Philippopolis. In the Bengal Directories of 1790 and 1792 he is called 'Mavrody Kyriakos' and he signed the Firearms Petition of 1792 in the same way. He was one of the chief Greek merchants of Calcutta and his tombstone was to be found in the Greek Churchyard with a Greek inscription:

Now this stone covers the body of Marodes Kyriakou, a native of the city of Phillipopolis, a merchant by profession and warden of this church who died on 10 Dec 1795 in Calcutta. 34

A branch of this family established itself at Dacca. In the Hastings Petition occur the names: Christodulus Mavrody (fourteenth place) and Alexander Kyriakos (forty-second place) both from Philippopolis. There is clearly some familial connection between these men and between both of them and Mavrody Kyriakos. Alexander Kyriakos' name is on the Dacca List of 1795 from which we learn that he arrived in Bengal in 1771. His wife is commemorated in the Dacca Memorial (North Wall, third tablet from left) in both Greek and English:

Greek inscription:

Here lies Sultanas wife of Alexander Kyriakou of Philippopolis who fulfilled the destiny common to all and died at Dacca 1800 Jan 25.

English inscription:

Under this stone are deposited the Mortal remains of Mrs Sultana Alexander who departed this life on Tuesday the 6th of February 1800 Aged 34 years.

The difference between the recorded dates of death was probably due to the fact that the Greeks were still using the Julian Calendar which had been replaced by the Gregorian in most of Western Europe in 1582.

There was also in Dacca a Constantine Mavrody who arrived in Bengal in 1794. It is difficult to establish clearly the connections between these men. None of their names appear in the Sinai Petition of 1811 but in 1810 A.D. C. Mavrody died in Dacca on December 26 and on May 19, 1819, Theodosia, youngest daughter of the late Constantine Marrody married N. D. Elias. Another branch of this family established itself at Fatehgarh. Here, on February 10, 1819, L. C. Marrody married Anne Busby at the house of Mr Rowland. In 1825 a Mrs

Marrody died on August 20 presumably the mother of L. C. Marrody who followed her on August 24, and on September 1 a posthumous son was born to his widow.

The last of the Dacca Greek families that established itself in Bengal was called Esau though the name was subject to the usual changes of Greek nomenclature in India. In the Hastings Petition the twenty-second signatory was Jacob Hauji Isaah from Caesaria and the twenty-sixth Johannes Hauji Isaah from the same place. Though neither man is mentioned in the 1795 Dacca List the name Jacob X Esaias occurs in the Sinai Petition of 1811 and clearly refers to 'Jacob Hauji Isaah' since the X is a symbol for 'Hauji' or 'Hadjee'. In the Bengal Directory Jacob is called 'Esau' and is listed as a merchant from 1818 to 1823. This is strange because he died in 1819 though it is not unusual for the Directory to go on listing a merchant for a few years after his death. His tomb inscription can be found in the Greek Memorial (West Wall, second from left):

Here lies....Jacob Essau Jacob....born in Caesaria died 1819, June 22.....I am informed that he lived about 48 years in this existence before his departure.

The inscription is very difficult to decipher so the above is only an approximate translation. A number of births and marriages are recorded in this name in Dacca during these years:

1813. Feb 28 a daughter to Mrs J. Esau.

1814. Sept 28 a son to Mrs G. Esau.

1814. Nov 6 Mr G. L. Esau married Miss B. Athanas.

1816 Ap 16 A daughter to Mrs J. Esau.

Much later, on September 22, 1847, George Athanas Esau married Jane Eliza Hamilton in Calcutta.

To complete the record of Greek merchants in this part of India we should note two other tombstones included in the Bengal Obituary:

At Dibrugarh: "Sacred to the memory of Athanas Mitchoo, Esq. A native of Philippopolis in Greece. Aetat 55 years". (No date given).

"Also in Memory of Ducas Athanas Mitchoo, Esq. Died at Dibrooghur, in Upper Assam, on the 21st Sept. 1840, aged 23 years and 3 months. Requiescat in pace".

Though the two main Greek communities were to be found in Calcutta and Dacca, some Greeks chose to seek their fortunes up-country between Bengal proper and Delhi, in the valleys of the Ganges and the Jumna, the power centre of the Mughal Empire. Communications between Calcutta and up-country were difficult in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for the roads were infested with robbers, particularly the sinister organisation of the Thugs before 1830. The main artery of communication was the mighty Ganges itself and boats were used for conveying grain, cotton, salt, textiles and human beings; sometimes towed by men walking along the river-bank, sometimes rowed by boatmen

they floated down stream at about four miles an hour, but going up-river they hoisted sail and were carried along by the prevailing southerly winds. These native boats, called budgerows, were lumbering keelless barges with large broad helms which was the only shape that would respond in the strong current. Two thirds of the length aft was occupied by cabins with Venetian windows³⁹ and a smaller boat was often towed behind, fitted up as a kitchen. Travelling by boat was fraught with boredom and occasionally dangerous so up-country traders had to be a tough, adventurous breed.

Before the arrival of the British, the area was dominated by the Marathas, and Agra was a nodal point of trade, but the power of the East India Company was catching up on the Marathas and in 1803 Agra was annexed to British rule. After the second Maratha War (1802-1806) the victorious Company controlled Delhi and the whole of the Gangetic valley came, either directly or indirectly, under its rule. Cawnpore and Fategarh were garrison towns and to a lesser extent Agra and Meerut, where British forces were maintained under the subsidiary system which bound Indian rulers to pay for a force of Company troops to be stationed on their territories for their protection. These cities "became home bases for a whole new generation of military contractors drawn from the commercial community who pushed forward the commercial penetration of the backward lands of the Banda to the south and the Himalayan foothills to the north. Firms at the base camp operated by sending agents with every detachment (of the Company's Armies) which was posted to a remote centre".³⁵ So Greek traders moved forward with the advance of British power.

"Compared with the Bengali entrepreneur in Calcutta inland wholesale purchasers had the great advantage of being closer to the source of supply. On the other hand, up-country market information was defective and the merchant was continually gambling on a large number of variables....European firms known as country produce brokers appeared in some numbers at Cawnpore and Delhi as agents of Calcutta and Bombay agency houses. In Cawnpore, for instance, Greek merchants were the largest dealers".³⁶ It was against this economic and historical background that the work of Greek up-country traders should be viewed.

Among the earliest Greek traders in this area was Anasta Treandaffelos who arrived in India in 1792 or 1793 and was given permission to proceed to the upper stations of the Army as far as Fategarh for nine months on 24 December 1801.³⁷ At Cawnpore in January 1792, Colonel Brisco, commanding the garrison, issued the following pass "This is to certify that John Manuel and Joseph Antonio Manuel who have been in the service of Sumer Raze Beegum have made their appearance at this station and applied for a passport to proceed through this District under my Command on their road to Calcutta. I have complied with their request and direct that these men be suffered to pass to Chunar. In witness whereof I have subscribed this passport at Cawnpore this 17th Day of January, 1792".³⁸ That these Greeks found employment with a minor Indian princess was

a fact of some historical interest for "while merchants possessed an inner domestic culture, they had also developed the capacity to play the game of darbar and royalty, so that the old Indo-Persian culture provided, in North India, a neutral ground on which accommodation could be reached. Communities of Jewish, Armenian and Greek merchants sometimes acted as cultural brokers between European and Indian."³⁹ One of these men, or possibly a relation of theirs, Manuel, a shopkeeper of Cawnpore, in 1808 was present at the auction of the effects of a deceased British resident, Robert Baillie^{40a}, and the same name was noted as a trader in Cawnpore in 1835. George John, another Greek who arrived in India in 1795 was a trader in Agra between 1804 and 1812 and may have been related to Peter John, Merchant of Calcutta. It has already been related that Constantine Pantazes worked in Agra from 1795 to 1817. Another interesting arrival in this city was the family of Joannides who set themselves up in the jewelry business and remained to become owners and proprietors of the Agra Spinning and Weaving Mills in the 1880s. An early member of this family, Antonius Joannides (or Joanidies) came from the Levant, fought under Lord Combermere at Bharatpur and from 1801 to 1820 was a silversmith in Agra. He anglicised his name (circa 1820) to 'Antony John'.^{40b}

Amongst these up-country merchants we encounter once again the ubiquitous Paniotys. In the Kacheri Cemetery in Cawnpore there still exists a well-preserved tombstone with a Greek and English inscription:

Under this marble is laid the servant of God, Panyioties Emmanuel. His wife Irene laid her dear husband to rest with due observance and mourned him; stricken with grief and inscribed these words to his everlasting memory. (Greek inscription).

Sacred to The Memory of Panioty Emmanuel Late Merchant who departed this life The 4th of June Anno Domini 1815 Aged 49 years 2 months 7 days. This tomb is erected by his affectionate wife As a tribute of love and esteem". (English inscription).⁴¹

These inscriptions are incised on a marble slab resting on a brick foundation, at the top of which is a carving of a cross flanked by the heads and wings of angels and at the foot of the slab are three cavities probably meant to contain votive lamps.

Who was this man? How was he connected with the Dacca Paniotys, if at all? It seems likely that he did belong to this family for the up-country Paniotys retained the same anglicized name when it was already clearly associated with the descendants of Alexios Argyree Panaghiotis, and one may hazard a guess that Emmanuel was a son of Alexios Argyree and brother of Alexander Panioty. He was born in 1766 and in that year Argyree had been in Philippopolis and then left the city to go back to Calcutta. If Emmanuel was indeed his son, he was born either in Philippopolis or in Bengal but probably in the latter place for had it been the former one would have expected the fact to be recorded on his tombstone as



Grave of Emanuel Panioty in the Kacheri Cemetery, Cawnpore

was the case with most other Greeks who were born in Greek-speaking lands. Furthermore, in the Bengal Directory of 1813 he is described as a 'British Subject' whereas all the Greek merchants in the Dacca List of 1795 are said to be subjects of the Ottoman Empire. In the record of 'Non Official Europeans in India, 1780-1820' he is described as a trader in Cawnpore in 1801 and the East India Directories from 1811 to 1814 use the same description.

In these years another Panioty, Constantine, is noted as a shopkeeper in Fategarh. The up-country proximity of the two names and the dates suggest that he was a brother of Emmanuel and, if so, another son of Alexios Argyree Panaghiotis. This Constantine Panioty is also listed in the Bengal Directory of 1821 as a merchant at Karnaul. In all probability it was a son of his, Emmanuel Panioty Jnr, who is mentioned in the Bengal Directory as an up-country merchant in 1818, 1820, 1822-24, 1831 and from 1834-39 a merchant in Muttra. That he was a son of Constantine rather than that of Emmanuel Snr is a deduction from the fact that it was very unusual for Greeks to christen sons with their own name; usually they were named after an uncle or grandfather. There was another Greek trader in Muttra, A. John, who appears in the Bengal Directory from 1834 to 1842.

Meerut, a British military station, claimed the attention of other Greeks. One of these, Gianacopulos, died there in 1810 but his tombstone in the Race Course Cemetery disappeared between 1889 and 1903. Another was Manuel Athanas who has already been mentioned as a Meerut trader; and the Bengal Directory of 1821 also mentions a George Paul. A friend of Manuel Athanas, Michael Keryack, was a shopkeeper of Delhi and died there in 1828:

Sacred to the Memory of Michael Keryack Shopkeeper at Delhi who departed this life on the 16th Day of August 1828. Born in Vienna of Greek Parentage Aged about 46 Years.

Erected by his Friend Manuel Athanas.

The lettering on his tombstone was carved by a trooper of the 16th Lancers who added his signature at the bottom: 'M. Fennerty 16th L'.⁴² He seems to be the only instance of a Greek from the Habsburg diaspora whose place of origin is recorded in India. Another 'Delhi' Greek whose name is recorded in 1835 was A. Banass.

Not all the up-country Greeks were traders. Some of them were engaged in other occupations and some began as traders but transferred their attentions to other activities and this, of course, was also true of their compatriots in Calcutta and Dacca. John Verdony, who arrived in India in 1794 was a teacher who began as an assistant master at the Free School, Thoolutallah, Calcutta, and eventually became its Superintendent. A number of Greeks became indigo planters. The Company held a monopoly of all opium grown in India and vast quantities were exported through Calcutta to China in exchange for tea and silks. The life of a

planter was one in which an affluent domestic style was mixed with hard unrelenting toil for the greater part of the year. One Greek family that settled into this life was called Nicholls. Despite the English name, it was officially listed as Greek and had undoubtedly anglicized its name from a probable original of 'Nikolas'. George Nicholls arrived in India in 1790 or 1791 and began as a trader in Rungpore but in 1811 he switched to indigo planting, first at Rungpore and later at Doomra. Another member of the family (probably a younger brother) M. G. Nicholls came out in 1806 and was listed as an indigo planter at Doomra, Gungtee and Tirhoot. Two other Greeks are mentioned as indigo planters in 1835 - A. Nicholls at Jessore and F. Boutros at Purneah.

An interesting example of a Greek merchant family which began as traders and then found employment outside commerce was Paliologus. It bore the name of the last Imperial dynasty of Byzantium and a Phanariot Greek family of the same name in Wallachia (part of modern Rumania) confidently claimed descent from the last Emperor of Constantinople, Constantine Palaeologus. Nicholas Palaiologou was a signatory of the Sinai Petition of 1811 and his son Nicholas (rare example of a Greek bearing the same Christian name as his father) was an attorney and notary of Calcutta. He was buried in the South Park Street Cemetery under a headstone which recorded nothing more than his name. His infant daughter was interred in the same place:

Sacred to the memory of Jane Ann, daughter of N. and J. Paliologus, who died 30 Nov, 1833, aged 4 years, 3 months, 7 days.⁴³

In the Protestant Cemetery at Agra three inscriptions from Greek graves were recorded in 1911. They were as follows:

Sacred to the memory of Andrew Pythagoras Constantine who died on 12 August, 1855, aged 22 years. R.I.P.

Sacred to the memory of Andrew Constantine born at Corinth, a Greek who died on 29 July, 1855, aged 77 years. R.I.P.⁴⁴

Sacred to the memory of Georgiana, the beloved wife of Archimedes Constantine born 5 Oct 1832, died 6 August 1865 aged 32 years 10 months 1 day.

Ah, only to the ardent heart,
Where love and friendship dwell,
Is known how dreadful is to part,
How sad the last farewell.
Oh! Jesus kind, Thy mercy show,
Unto her soul who lies below.⁴⁵

Who these people were, what work they did remains a secret buried in the grave of time. Their funerary epitaphs serve to remind us that, in all probability, in the first half of the 19th century there was a large number of Greeks whose

occupations were relatively humble and who made little mark on the society in which they found themselves. They toiled in a foreign and exotic clime and then oblivion claimed them for her own.

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8

The Chiots

Over the seas our galley went.

(Browning)

An 18th century traveller approaching the island of Chios from the sea could smell, if the wind was right and the day was young and there had been a fall of dew overnight, the tantalizing scent of its citrus groves and, as his ship entered harbour, he could detect the pervading odour of dust, lemons and rock honey. The island has always claimed to be the birthplace of Homer - "the blind old man from rocky Chios" - and from ancient times has been famous for the production of mastic, a white chewy substance with a delicious flavour, derived from a plant grown on the island, which found its chief market in the seraglios of Turkey, whose inmates valued it as a breath sweetener and an aid to digestion. Over the chief town in the island loomed the brooding presence of the promontory of Karaburna on the Asiatic mainland, an apt symbol of the proximity to the Chiots of the malign, imperial Ottoman power.

The history of Chios, like many other Greek islands, is mainly one of foreign occupation. The Macedonians, then the Romans and the Genoese and lastly the Turks brought it within the orbit of their empires. In one respect, however, Chios was different from most of the other Greek Aegean islands. The Chiots escaped the degradation, both physical and moral, that afflicted many other Greek communities under Ottoman rule. The English traveller, Finlay, observes "they were alike destitute of the insolence and rapacity of the Phanariots, and of the meanness of the trading Greeks of the continent. The marked difference which existed between them and the rest of their countrymen was observed by early travellers and foreign merchants".¹ The causes of this superiority are described by Finlay and by the Greek scholar, Coray, in 1803, who both noted how the island managed to be a haven of Greek prosperity in the desolation of Greek life in many parts of the Ottoman Empire.

Chios possessed remarkable physical advantages. It was fruitful and almost every article the Chiots produced was of an immensely superior quality which readily found a market abroad. But this advantage in itself would have been useless had it not been accompanied by the human attributes of the islanders. "The superior moral qualities of the Chiots was recognized throughout the Levant".² They valued education and every Chiot family sought to instil in its children pride in Hellenic culture. They set up academies which imported

modern western ideas and which became so famous that they were attended by Greek pupils from other parts of Greece. The uncle of Adamantios Korais, one of the foremost modern Greek intellectuals and propagandist of the movement of Greek independence, taught at this school. In 1819 it had 476 pupils of which 400 were Chiots, 74 from other parts of Greece (largely Cephalonians and Peloponnesians), and most remarkable of all, two Americans called Parsons and Frisk. They were an industrious people who scorned to solicit from their Turkish rulers the posts of tax collectors and other degrading sinecures. Every family was actively engaged in agriculture, industry or trade and there was in particular a thriving silk manufactory on the island. Nearly all the silk was used in the manufacture of velvets, damasks and other stuffs for export to Asia, Egypt and the Barbary states. Sometimes gold and silver were woven into these materials, according to the taste of the workmen or the demands of the market. Work, education and prosperity had their effects on character so that Finlay can say "The superior morality of the Chiots in all the relations of life, their truth and honesty, rendered the island for several centuries the most happy and flourishing portion of Greece". Coray calls Chios "the garden of the Archipelago", and the Chiots "the French of the Levant", and even says that their natural joviality and panache should deserve the appellation of "the Gascons of the Levant".³

But none of these institutions, activities and traits of character could have developed under Turkish rule had it not been for the political sagacity of the islanders. The Chiots elected their own municipality. Aware of their political weakness, they eschewed rivalries and bitterness amongst themselves and presented a united front to the Turks. The Municipality took pains to despatch able Chiots to Constantinople where they acted as 'resident ambassadors' and agents for Chiot interests. They obtained the protectorship of some eminent Turk and, backed by his influence and the concerted will of the entire island, they managed to secure the appointment of Turkish administrators who were known to be willing to acquiesce in the liberties they enjoyed and to veto immediately the appointment of those who were not. The Turks found they could do nothing on the island without the co-operation of the Greek Municipality, annually elected and wielding almost unlimited power. Such was its influence that any Turkish officer who fell foul of the inhabitants was immediately removed once he had been reported by the Chiots to Constantinople. Fermin Didcot, a French visitor to Chios in 1816, noted that "the Turks seem to be much softer in this island than elsewhere and while in almost the whole of Turkey, where the Greeks alone speak two languages, the Turks believe it dishonourable to speak another language other than their own, here they all know how to speak Greek, and sometimes are even ignorant of their own tongue". It was this state of affairs that produced the judgement of the great French historian, Fustel de Coulanges, that Chios was a Greek state and that Turkish power was practically non-existent on the island. In addition to all these advantages of independence and prosperity, yet

another traveller, a Scotsman, William Lithgow declared that "the women of Scio are the most beautiful dames or rather Angelical creatures of all Greeks upon the face of the earth".

Chios possessed a nobility of forty families whose origins went back to the city of Genoa who had ruled the island before the Turks. These families were divided into two groups, the Pentada and the Dodecha and their landholdings and their pleasant, shuttered country mansions, surrounded by high walls and deep gardens, were situated in a beautiful green plain in the island called the Campos. In one of these lived the family of Rallis and it is here, in the Campos that we must seek the origin of the trading company, Ralli Brothers, which established a great commercial empire on the banks of the Hugli. And not only the Rallis but the Petrocochinos, the Schlizzis, the Argentis, the Sechiaris, the Sagrandis and the Vlastos, all of whose names graced the late 19th century commercial world of Calcutta. It is without exaggeration that we can say that Greek commercial activity in mid and late Victorian Bengal can be traced back to its origin in the emerald haven of the Campos in the tiny Aegean island of Chios.

The name 'Ralli' harks back to the 11th century but the earliest mention of a Ralli in Chios is that of Michael Rallis who acted on behalf of the islanders in 1511, and a little later John Rallis, nicknamed 'Kalogiannis', who put his signature to a document as an Archontas of the island. In 1784 Stefanos Zanni Rallis, aged 29, and his young wife Julia Avgousti Sechiari, aged 16, began their married life on one of the Ralli estates in the Campos. Of their ten children, the third son Pandias Stephanos Ralli was destined to become the real founder of Ralli Brothers.⁴ Born in 1793 his early years were spent on Chios where his father was a wealthy merchant belonging to the Dodecha who expanded his commercial business to Livorno. Seeing that the greatest number of his customers were English, he decided that it would be in his interest to open a branch of his business in London. In 1818 his eldest son Zannis, and his youngest Eustrachios, arrived in London and opened a branch of their firm under the name of 'Ralli and Petrocochino' at 5 Union Court, Old Broad Street. In contrast to the landed class of contemporary England and especially in contrast with the nobility of most European countries, the Chiot nobility saw no disparagement to their blood in the pursuit of trade. The Rallis, especially, were equally proud of their ancestry and their commercial success. On the Ralli memorial in Marseilles, erected to the memory of Stephanos Ralli, are carved the arms of the family: azure a lion rampant or covered with lozenges, in chief a crescent between two crosses argent and underneath the splendid motto so expressive of Ralli achievement: 'Badize ten eutheian' (Advance in a straight line).

The even tenor of life in Chios was disrupted by the Greek War of Independence. In 1821 a Greek nobleman and officer in the Russian Imperial Army, Prince Alexander Ypsilanti, began in Moldavia a revolt against the Turks, issuing a proclamation to all Greeks urging them to rise against Ottoman rule. He

was encouraged by the belief that Czar Alexander I of Russia would intervene on their behalf and that the network of Philiki Etairia, the Greek Secret Society with branches in most of the large cities of the Ottoman Empire, would be able to activate an armed revolt against the Turks. Neither of these hopes materialized and Ypsilanti's revolt was easily crushed. But this initial uprising sparked off a rising amongst the Greek mountaineers of the Morea on the Greek mainland which successfully beat off all the attempts of the Ottoman Army to suppress it. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Gregorius V, condemned the revolt in the strongest terms and urged Greek loyalty to the Turkish overlord. It did him little good for the Ottoman authorities hanged him, exposed his corpse at the gate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople and proceeded to liquidate many other Greek notables in circumstances of barbaric ferocity. These massacres simply heightened the resolve of the Moreates to continue the struggle. In a last desperate measure to crush them, the Sultan called in the help of Mehmet Ali, the powerful Pasha of Egypt, who sent his son Ibrahim to the Morea with an army trained by ex-Napoleonic officers and conveyed there by a formidable fleet. Foreign volunteers flocked to the Morea to fight for the Greeks, among them Lord Byron who succumbed in the fever-ridden atmosphere of Missolonghi. The pressure of liberal opinion and, more importantly, the political and commercial interests of Britain, France and Russia brought about their intervention on the side of the Greeks. In 1827 Admiral Codrington, commanding the combined navy of British, French and Russian ships, battered the Egyptian and Turkish navy into submission in Navarino Bay and so virtually obtained for the Greeks the freedom they were fighting for, though it was not until 1833 that a sovereign Greek Kingdom emerged, fully independent of Turkey.

These stirring events in the Morea and on the western side of Greece found their counterpart in Chios. In the proximity of the island to the Asiatic mainland made revolution a perilous matter but the Chiots were so independent and freedom-loving that the dangers of insurrection were overlooked. They were encouraged to raise the banner of revolt by the fact that Greek fleets in the Aegean soon began to dominate the sea and make maritime movement perilous for the Turks. On April 26, 1822 a small Greek fleet anchored near Chios and the news stirred the patriotic feelings of the islanders. Unlike the Metropolitan See of Constantinople, the See of Chios was occupied by a patriotic bishop, Platon Emmanuel Franghiadis, who urgently summoned a meeting of the notables of the island. What followed is related by the Greek historian, N. S. Kroussouloudis: "At this meeting thirty of the Archontes were present but only three names are recorded - Alexander Rallis, Andreas Manoukas and Nicolaos Petrocochinos. Alexander Rallis, who was boiling with the enthusiasm of his youth, advised an immediate insurrection. Manoukas and Petrocochinos, however, had different views. They deployed arguments and disagreed with him". But how was cold and cautious realism to control the hot blood of youth, inflamed by stories of Turkish

atrocities and of Greek bravery elsewhere? Alexander Rallis had his way and Manoukas and Petrocochinos saw their forebodings fulfilled. The Chiots revolted but the Turks crushed the revolt and rounded up seventy prisoners whom they incarcerated in the citadel of Chios. Their execution was begun on May 6 1822. "While many of the hostages were already hung, the Moulas (Islamic clergymen) approached the Bishop and said to him 'look how the great Prophet punishes the infidel slaves'. And saying so they spat on the Bishop's face, while many of the other Turks followed their example. Alexander Rallis, who stood by seeing all this, fumed with anger and blasted them with an angry curse. 'Bloody murderers! Is not your bloodthirstiness quenched with the blood of so many innocent people? But God will not overlook your crimes. He is looking at your dishonest bloodstained hands! He listens to the sigh of these innocent people and will not fail to give you the right punishment'. Before he was able to finish his words, he was stormed by the soldiers who stood by who drew their swords and butchered him"⁵. Bishop Franghiadis' execution followed hard upon, as did that of the other hostages including Theodore Rallis, Alexander's elder brother, and Peter Scaramanga. The massacre moved Victor Hugo to its commemoration in a moving passage of literature and Delacroix to depict it in a graphic painting. The names of Ralli, Petrocochino, Franghiadis and Scaramanga all appear later in the commercial annals of late 19th century Calcutta.

The bloody reprisals of the Turks in Chios caused an exodus of refugee families who found homes in the West and brought with them their commercial expertise, not least amongst them Pandias Stephen Rallis who found his way to Regency London. His actual date of arrival cannot be established with certainty but it was sometime between 1822 and 1825. He joined the firm his brothers had founded and it was probably due to his drive and inspiration that in 1825 it expanded its operations, changed its name to 'Ralli Brothers' and moved its offices to 25 Finsbury Circus where it remained for almost a century and a half until its sudden collapse in 1961. Pandias Ralli and his brothers had, by shrewd thinking and good fortune, chosen the right time to move to London for the arrow of history was pointing inexorably in the direction of a vast British commercial expansion and Ralli Brothers was to benefit immeasurably from its ability to exploit these circumstances.

In the last twenty years of the 18th century there was a rapid economic growth in Britain which, among a host of other minor factors, was largely due to a rapid improvement in methods of transport, a phenomenal growth in industrial production and an increase in Anglo-American trade. Britain was about to pioneer that massive change in the history of the human race called 'The Industrial Revolution'. The writer and naturalist W. H. Hudson noted that the shepherds he met in early 19th century Wiltshire were men whose lives were not greatly different from the Biblical Patriarchs but between them and the modern city dweller lay an abyss of thought and feeling which was as great as the

difference between our ape-like ancestors dwelling in trees and the peasant who had mastered the technique of tilling the soil and making the earth serve his needs. Such was the scope of the Industrial Revolution.

The quick commercial growth of the last years of the 18th century was followed by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars which damaged Britain's trade with Europe but greatly expanded her commercial operations with America and Asia where her navy eliminated French and Dutch competitors. Between 1800 and 1850 Britain was in a unique economic position. As her economy became industrialized she exported the products of her factories, workshops and mines in exchange for food and raw materials while the rest of Europe lagged behind, clinging to self-sufficient rural economies. Britain became the workshop of the world and this led to a massive increase of her commercial activities. Until the middle decade of this century this was hindered to some extent by the protectionist policies which her government adopted to protect her agriculture and the measures foreign governments took to defend their infant industries against British competition. The real expansion of British trade was in the direction of America and Asia, not least of all to the sub-continent of India.

This spiralling movement was not without its difficulties for the economy. It was subject to considerable fluctuations in which trade cycles alternated between boom and slump. These made fortunes and unmade them just as rapidly and this fact has to be taken into consideration to appreciate Pandias Ralli's skill to keep Ralli Brothers buoyant and expansive while so many other firms plunged to financial ruin. The years following the Napoleonic Wars until about 1822 was a period of great difficulty caused by the slow recovery of Europe and the unimaginative economic and social policies followed by Begum Johnson's grandson Lord Liverpool and his government, particularly the retention of protectionist tariffs. In 1820, a few years before the arrival of Pandias Ralli in London, the City merchants presented a petition to Parliament in favour of Free Trade. From then until the fifties, Britain moved steadily towards Free Trade which made economic sense as long as Britain remained the dominant industrial producer of the world and could exchange her industrial products for the food and raw materials of other countries on reciprocal terms. It was in this economic soil of expanding commerce and the advance of Free Trade principles that Ralli Brothers took root in London.

After the Napoleonic Wars the carrying trade of the world was largely in British hands. Her merchant marine had risen from a million to two and a half millions. Her commerce with South America had increased fourteen fold. Her conquests in India, the Cape, Ceylon and Malta and her possession of Australia, Canada and eventually New Zealand had extended her tentacles to every part of the globe and the population of her Empire had leapt from twenty to seventy millions. Perhaps no other country in the history of the world had attained such astonishing prosperity and glory. "Everything" says Arthur Bryant "testified to

her wealth, power and empire: The interminable masts on the Thames, Tyne and Mersey, the Chinese, Persian, Parsee and Armenian traders in the Customs Houses... even the humblest artisans seem to share in that flood of prosperity".⁶ British imagination was fired with the romance of its Indian conquests. Even a country boy, listening to the tales of some humble traveller, could be affected: "He used to tell us the most delectable tales about elephants and tigers.... of guavas, bananas, figs, jacks and cashew apples, and your hat full for the value of a farthing.... Miller and I often vowed we would go to that grand fruitful country when we became men".⁷ Sixty million Indians were the subjects of a Commercial Company whose headquarters was not in some marble and gilt palace but in a rather dingy building in Leadenhall Street, London, where Charles Lamb, one of the foremost prose writers of the age "sat at his desk totting up the price of tea, drugs and indigo".

The London in which Pandias Ralli settled contained bizarre contrasts. In the West End, where Ralli Brothers had established itself, there was mile after mile of splendid mansions, inhabited by wealthy people with their smart barouches and landaus. But in the nightmare extensions of London to the east and beyond the river and in the rookeries and foetid courtyards that huddled behind the haunts of fashion and commerce, pallid, diminutive-looking men, women and children dragged out their existence amid heaps of garbage. 'Punch' was to castigate these sordid conditions with its grim humour: "The names of our London streets exhibit a disgraceful tautology. We are afraid to say how many Peter Streets, John Streets, and above all Wellington Streets there are in the metropolis. Let this fault be amended. Let the streets be called by their proper names.... by the various nuisances or diseases which infest or pollute them, respectively, as Open Sewer Street; Gully Hole Court, Slaughter House Buildings, Shambles Place; Knacker's Yard; Grave Yard Crescent; Charnel Square; Typhus Terrace; Scarlatina's Rents; Intermittent Row; Consumption Alley; Scrofula Lane. Let such, at least, be the provisional nomenclature of the streets of London, till this filthy capital shall have been properly drained and watered; shall have its churchyards closed, its atmosphere disinfected and plague and pestilence expelled from its inhabitants".⁸ It would seem that in some respects, at least in the contrast between the living quarters of the rich and poor, there was not a great deal to choose between London and Calcutta.

Pandias Ralli threw himself with fervour into the business of his firm, fired with the ambition to create a Greek firm of commerce in London which would compare with the leading giants of commerce in the City. With his strong will and keen intellect, he laid the foundations on solid principles of business which saw Ralli Brothers through the financial crises of the 1820s, 30s and 40s which destroyed many other city firms. Business expanded rapidly in many directions. Pandias' four brothers wholeheartedly accepted his overall management of the firm from Finsbury Circus but each of them provided a key element to the success

of the Company. The eldest brother, Zannis Stefanou Rallis, went to Odessa to organise the grain exports from Russia. The second brother, Avgoustis, became head of the Marseilles branch. In later years his son, Stephen Avgousti, took over the direction of Ralli Brothers after the death of Pandias in 1865. His reputation as a shrewd businessman led to an offer from the Bank of England to become one of its Directors. This he refused, though he was often consulted by the Bank on financial matters. He mediated successfully in a dispute between British ship-owners and the Suez Canal Company and advised a Royal Commission on the question of Indian currency. His son Anthony, a major in the 12th Lancers, was killed in the Boer War. Toumazis, the third brother of Pandias, took over the branch at Constantinople and was responsible for operations in South East Asia. His son, Pandelis T. Rallis, became a Liberal M.P. for Wallingford and an intimate friend of Field Marshal Kitchener. His house at 17 Belgrave Square was used by Kitchener as his London home for many years. He even tried, unsuccessfully, to arrange a marriage between the Field Marshal and a wealthy heiress of the Anglo-Greek community. His sister Jenny married Richard Moreton, Queen Victoria's Master of Ceremonies. Pandias' youngest brother Eustratios settled in Manchester as head of the branch dealing mainly in textile export.

The expansion of the firm was so dramatic that already by 1830 it was larger than any other Greek business house in London and Pandias was rapidly being accepted as the foremost businessman of the London-Greek Community so that he had attracted the nickname of 'Zeus'. He was the first to organise the system of trading in cargoes of grain while still in passage from the Black Sea, "a system which for more than two generations was the recognized rule and custom of the corn trade in England".⁹ In 1846 Sir Robert Peel, pressured by the Anti-Corn Law League of Cobden and Bright and by a tragic failure of the potato crop in Ireland, repealed the Corn Laws, the bastion of Protectionist Policy. As a result, Ralli Brothers was able to make good profits through the import of grain to Britain. Apart from this commodity the firm traded mainly in silk, cotton piece goods, metals, natural indigo and tallow. Already in 1837 a trading firm in Tabriz, Persia was opened as a branch of Ralli Bros, London and Ralli, Schlizzi and Argenti, Marseilles under the name of Ralli and Agelasto.

In 1831 Pandias married Marietta Scaramanga (another name to appear later in Calcutta) of a noble Chiot mercantile family, established there since the 16th century. Its name was derived from 'scaramanghion', a fine silk material from which clothes had been made for the Byzantine nobility, and were therefore presumably in origin silk traders. In 1835 he was appointed Consul for Greece in London by the new Greek Government of King Otho and he used his house as the premises of the Greek Consulate. When, in 1834, Greece was to be represented in European capitals by *Chargés d'Affaires*, the Greek Ambassador in London, Spyridon Tricoupi, wanted his friend Pandias to fill this honourable post in London but his appointment was blocked by the unrelenting hostility of

the British Ambassador to Athens, Sir Edmund Lyons, on grounds of blatant snobbery. In a letter to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, he expressed his Olympian disdain for men of trade: "It would scarcely be fitting that a person who has long pursued a secondary mercantile career in London should, even though he were now to join it, appear at Her Majesty's Court as a Diplomatic Agent holding the rank of *Chargé d'Affaires*".¹⁰

As his wealth and status as a businessman increased, Pandias became more and more involved in the affairs of the Greek Community. It was largely his initiative that moved it to abandon its small chapel in Finsbury Circus and build a new 'Church of the Saviour' at London Wall. In 1851 he rented a fashionable house, No. 5 Connaught Place, and here he lived till his death in 1865. It was in the last years of his life, 1850 to 1865, that he reached the peak of his career, commercially and socially. His son Peter went to Eton and his only daughter Julia married Charles Monk, son of James Henry Monk, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, who, as a Liberal M.P., frequently championed the cause of Greece in international affairs. At the time of Pandias' death Ralli Brothers, London, and its partners had established branches in Calcutta, Bombay, Karachi, Manchester, Liverpool, Marseilles, Constantinople, Trebizond and Tabriz, and were associated with the firms of John Eustratio Ralli & Co. in Odessa, Ralli & Scaramanga in St. Petersburg and Taganrog & Stamati E. Scaramanga in Rostov. Soon after his death in December 1865 the old firm of Ralli Brothers was dissolved and reconstructed in a new form on January 1 1866, with Stephen Augustus Ralli and John Eustratio Ralli as partners.

In the eighteen fifties, Ralli Brothers continued to surge ahead in the world of business. It employed 4,000 office clerks and 15,000 workmen in the manual task of loading and unloading goods. It owned ships of its own to carry cargoes, vast areas of farmland in France and other countries and transported thousands of tons of cereals, foodstuffs, spices and other commodities of the Near and Far East across the Black Sea and from the Levant ports to Europe. In 1851 Pandias began to make plans to extend his firm to India. By the mid-nineteenth century Britain's Indian trade was assuming a vital importance. Already between 1814 and 1832 "the export of Lancashire cotton goods to India had risen by a fabulous 7,500%, while the muslin industry of Dacca was destroyed because its handloom weavers simply could not compete with their power-driven rivals seven thousand miles away, who could produce cloth more cheaply and in much greater quantity".¹¹

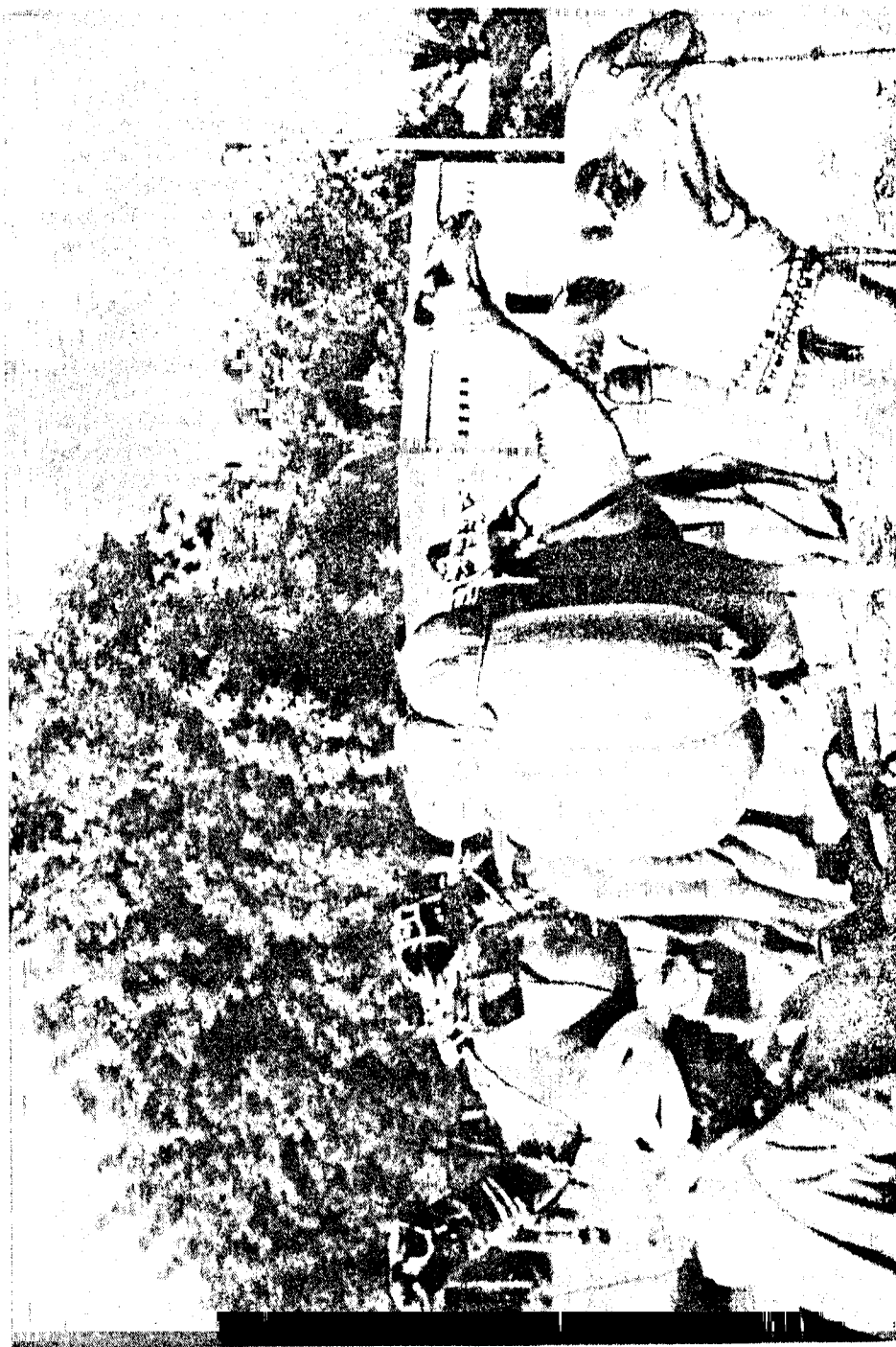
This inability to compete was not simply due to the introduction of steam-powered machinery in Britain but more to a deliberate policy of the British Government to place heavy duties on Indian imports to Britain. These were raised in 1799 and reached a maximum before the end of the Napoleonic Wars. In his continuation of James Mills' 'History of India' Vol I (1845), Professor H. H. Wilson noted "It was stated in evidence (in 1813) that the cotton and silk goods

of India up to this period, could be sold for a profit in the British market at a price from 50 to 60 percent lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 or 80 percent on their value, or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case... the mills of Paisley and of Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could hardly have been again set in motion, even by the powers of steam”.

What was financial disaster for the descendants of Argyree in Dacca was a great commercial opportunity for Ralli Brothers, particularly for that branch of the firm established in Manchester under the aegis of Eustratios Rallis. Moreover, India was becoming a supplier of raw cotton to Lancashire. Until 1846 the British cotton textile industry relied on the USA for 75% of its supplies but in that year a disastrous harvest in America began to turn the attention of Lancashire mill owners to India as a source of supply which had hitherto only provided 13% of their raw cotton. Imports of Indian cotton began to grow and from 1863 to 1865, as a result of the American Civil War, £36.5 million was exported from India to Britain.

The Irish potato famine of 1846 led to a vastly increased production of rice in Bengal and Burma for export to Britain and Europe and this too was good news for Ralli Brothers. Between 1854 and 1856 during the Crimean War the Black Sea trade of Ralli Brothers, under the direction of Zannis Rallis at Odessa, suffered losses. The war prevented the export of Russian hemp to Britain and other European countries who were dependent on it for the manufacture of rope, cordage and bags. So jute came into its own. It was a native product of Bengal and large quantities of its raw fibre were shipped to Britain. In 1833 a new industry, centred in the Douglas Foundry in Dundee which possessed a spinning machine to handle jute, grew and prospered. The Repeal of the Corn Laws greatly expanded the amount of grain imported into Britain and created an enormous demand for jute sacks. Jute therefore was at hand to replace the lost supplies of Russian hemp during the Crimean War and another outlet of expansion was opened for Ralli Brothers.

The British had established indigo plantations in Bengal by the end of the 18th century and this product continued to be in demand on world markets until German chemists developed an aniline substitute dye in 1897 which gradually destroyed the market for indigo. Another sort of plantation which began to make commercial profits for Britain in the 19th century was tea, with plantations springing up in Assam, Darjeeling and elsewhere along the lower Himalayas. By 1874 nearly four million pounds of Indian tea were being produced from 113 gardens, displacing in popularity the original Chinese brew which had been a staple of British trade in the 18th century, and in the Boston Tea Party added an event to history to be remembered with patriotic pride by generations of Americans.



Camels carrying seed cotton for Ralli Brothers Ltd. (1951 Report)

The logic of Britain's vast commercial expansion led to a huge increase of her mercantile marine. The biggest London trading firms, including Greek ones like Ralli, Papayanni and Lascaridi, owned their own ships. There is even a mention of the sale in India of an iron screw steamer, 'Prince Arthur', to the Greek firm of Schlizzi & Co. in 1857.¹² Other smaller Greek companies had to charter ships from British Shipping Companies. This led to an enterprising but ill-fated attempt by a Greek entrepreneur, Stefanos Xenos (yet another name to be met with later in Calcutta), to form a Greek shipping firm in London specialising in carrying cargoes to the Levant and Asia, 'The Greek and Eastern Shipping Company'. It owned a fleet of twenty two vessels carrying romantic names like 'Nea Hellas', 'Valiant', 'Lord Byron', 'Olympios' and 'Asia'. Its initial success was considerable but it foundered on the rash journalistic aspirations of its promoter who funded his ill-starred publications with the profits of his shipping company.¹³ It was these economic facts and the involvement of Ralli Brothers since the 1820s in Levantine trade that, no doubt, influenced Pandias' inauguration of a branch of his business in Calcutta in 1851, under the management of John Eustratio Ralli (son of Eustratius Stephanou Ralli) and Nicholas George Paspatis.

The easy-going ways of commerce in the days of Clive and Hastings were in the new century disappearing to be replaced by the stricter, stingier, more ascetic and moral attitudes of the Victorians. Charles Lamb, at the beginning of the century, castigates his employers, the East India Company, for cutting the old saints' days holidays almost to nothing and for discontinuing the practice of allowing their employees' correspondence to travel free in the Company's bag. In the 1760s young William Hickey, working in his father's legal business in London, managed to combine the life of a clerk with gargantuan dissipation. He purloined the receipts of the firm to squander them in gaming houses and on prostitutes. "My error commenced in not keeping my pocket money distinct and separate from that belonging to the office..... not a night but I passed a considerable portion of in every degree of dissipation and debauchery, mixing with the most abandoned of both sexes... returning home from these intemperate scenes, if my father was out of town, as he generally was, I went to bed for four or five hours but, if in town, I went directly to my desk where, laying my head down upon it, I soon fell asleep, in which state Mr Bayley (the senior clerk) would often find me, when, awakening me, he with a solemn face would say 'Indeed William, these are sad doings, and God only knows to what a life of such excess will lead you'."¹⁴ It led, through the tolerance of his employers, to a highly successful law business in Calcutta. In the early years of the 19th century, however, attitudes had certainly changed. Lamb's fellow clerk, Tommy Bye, coming into the East India Office a little hazy one morning after an evening's conviviality was instantly dismissed by the Directors, notwithstanding his twenty seven years' faithful service.

It was this new, if extreme, probity of work and conduct in the emerging ethos of commerce which Pandias had to take into account in his organisation of Ralli Brothers. The principles upon which he based the ethics of his firm are described by John Gennadius as, firstly an absolute honesty and straightforwardness in all his business dealings, qualities particularly necessary in London because of the common belief, not always unjustified, that Levantines could not be trusted in commerce. Profit, of course, was a paramount objective but Pandias was insistent that Ralli Brothers should always aim at a reasonable profit acquired fairly. His business transactions were always above-board, absolutely eschewing any sort of secretive or shady dealing. Everything was to be conducted on sound economic principles, avoiding paper transactions and trading only to the extent of the firm's own cash resources. In this way, it came to enjoy a reputation for stability unperturbed by financial crises in the City. With regard to his employees, he demanded an iron discipline which regulated relations between superiors and inferiors in a strict hierarchical manner - deference to seniors by juniors and consideration of the latter's interest by senior partners. The relationship was governed by the kind of patriarchal tradition that subsisted between noblemen and their dependents. Despite the apparent rigidity of the system, it was tempered by Greek humanity. When financial or personal tragedy affected members of the Greek community, those who suffered often found a refuge in the firm which was described as "the friary of Hellenism".

Entrance into Ralli Brothers was phenomenally strict. Vacant posts were filled as a result of an intense and difficult competitive examination. Promotion was only by merit - rich young men with connections found that these apparent advantages did not avail much in the absence of more sterling qualities. Zeal, hard work and a natural aptitude for commerce were the only keys to success. A life of luxury and extravagance was disapproved of and a rigid adherence to punctual attendance at work was demanded. Young Hellenic Hickeys would not have lasted long. Learning from the earlier experience of the East India Company, Pandias insisted that none of his employees should engage in trade and business on his own account. Loyalty was required not only to superiors but to the firm itself - one had to be 'a Rallis man', proud of the Company and anxious to promote its interests. It was one thing to insist on rules and regulations but quite another to achieve adherence to them. Pandias was, in fact, not only the architect of Ralli Brothers but also its builder - the firm worked in the way he wanted it to because of his own hard work, skill and dedication. He benefited from the ancestral respect of Chiois for a conservative and moral business tradition. Because the Directors of the business kept the rules and set the tone they inspired emulation in their employees.¹⁵

According to Scott's Directory of 1852, Ralli Brothers was trading in Calcutta in that year at 15 Lal Bazaar. From the middle of the century to 1919, economic conditions in India provided immense opportunities for London-based

firms. Ralli Brothers, for instance, opened a branch at Bombay in 1861 under the management of Pandia Theodore Ralli and Ambrose Theodore Ralli and also, briefly, one at Karachi under the control of John Negroponte - this branch was closed in 1866 but was reopened in 1882. The building in India of a vast internal railway network, huge irrigation projects, construction of new harbours and improvement of old ones created an infra-structure which could take advantage of external economic forces. The railways alone had immeasurable consequences, economic, social and political. An English journalist, Edwin Arnold, during the Governor-Generalship of Dalhousie, predicted that "Railways may do for India what dynasties have never done - what the genius of Akbar the Magnificent could not effect by government nor the cruelty of Tipoo Sahib by violence. They may make India a nation". "The total value of imports and exports rose from £39.75 million in 1856 to £155 million in 1887".¹⁶

The tragedy of the Mutiny and the subsequent transfer of authority to the Crown helped in the long run to change the economic climate of India to its advantage. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 drastically changed the economic geography of India's communications with Britain. Eventually it was to benefit Bombay rather than Calcutta but it did not check the rising scale of commercial activity in the latter place. Steam vessels began to tie up in the Hugli but as late as 1880 much of the export trade to Calcutta was still arriving in three-masters and by that date the city was probably at the zenith of its commercial prosperity. Pandias had timed the arrival of Ralli Brothers in Calcutta well.

Soon after their establishment, a whole number of new London-based Greek firms began their operations in Calcutta as well - Ralli and Mavrojani from 1852 to 1886, Argenti Sechiari from 1859 to 1876, Agelasto Sagrandi from 1870, P. T. Ralli & Co. from 1857 to 1862, Schlizzi & Co. from 1852 to 1873, Petrocochino Brothers from 1866, Tamvaco & Co. from 1872, Paul Tambaci & Co. from 1873 to 1882, Georgiardi & Co. from 1883, N. Valetta & Co. from 1875, Ziffo & Co. from 1899, F.C. Pallachi & Co. from 1881 and J.S. Vlasto & Co. from 1898. Some of these businesses did not last long and were replaced by others but the one inexorable fact was that Ralli Brothers outpaced them all and like the Coldstream Guards could say "Nulli Secundus".

A close look at the names of some of these companies and a scrutiny of the marriages that the Rallis made with other Greek families reveals an interesting fact - Greek commercial activity in Calcutta in the late 19th and first decade of the 20th century was dominated by a close-knit clan of Chiot noble families related by marriage. In Bishop Catsiyanni's book on the founder of Ralli Brothers records of the following marriage alliances in the 19th century show that the Rallis were connected in this way to the founders of other Greek firms in Calcutta like Argenti Sechiari, Schlizzi & Co., Petrocochino Brothers, J. S. Vlasto & Co., Tamvaco & Co. and Agelasto Sagrandi:

Helene Rallis married Pandelis Argenti
 Zorgis Rallis married Marietta Schlizzi
 Stefanos Rallis married Julia Sechiari
 Ambrouzis Rallis married Penelope Petrocochino
 Iacovos D. Z. Rallis married Zenou Vlastou
 Toumazis Rallis married Marouko Argenti
 Marouko Rallis married Leonis Argenti
 Antonios Alexander Rallis married Minousca Tamvaco
 Julia A. Rallis married Leoni Argenti
 Calliopi Rallis married Alexandros Vlasto
 Vierou Stefanou Rallis married Cozi Agelasto
 Marigo Stefanou Rallis married Peter Schlizzi
 Pandias P. P. Rallis married Argyro Sechiari.

Apart from the fact that Calcutta Greek firms employed members of their own families in their branches in Bengal, they also regularly employed members of other Chiot families with whom they had intermarried. This is revealed by a comparison of a second list of Ralli marriage alliances with entries in Thacker's Directories of employees in the firms noted above: Ralli marriage alliances in 18th and 19th centuries listed by families:-

Stephanos Rallis	m.	Marietta Mavrocordatou
Stratis Rallis	m.	Zambeloy Mavrocordatou
Ambrouzis S. Rallis	m.	Anastasi Mavrocordatou
Eustratios Rallis	m.	Marigo Mavrocordatou
Marietta Rallis	m.	Matthew Mavrocordatos
Despina Rallis	m.	Emmanuel Mavrocordatos
Zannis Rallis	m.	Ploumou Scaramanga
Mina Rallis	m.	Marietta Scaramanga
Pandias Rallis	m.	Marietta Scaramanga
Marietta P. P. Rallis	m.	John Pandia Scaramanga
Loucas D. Z. Rallis	m.	Despina Rodocanaki
Marigo A. Rallis	m.	Peter Rodocanaki
Mary P. P. Rallis	m.	Emmanuel Rodocanaki
Stefanos Ambrosius Rallis	m.	Despina Omiro (Amiro)
Iacovos D. Z. Rallis	m.	Zenou Vlastou
Argyro Stefanou Rallis	m.	Emmanuel Psychia
Demetrios Rallis	m.	Aikaterini Negroponte

The previous lists of Ralli marriages taken together should be compared with the list below of employees in Calcutta Greek firms taken from Thacker's Directories between 1857 and 1896:-

1857	Ralli Brothers: Schlizzi & Co.	E.C. Petrocochino J.C. Negroponte
1859	Ralli Brothers:	N. Argenti
1860	Petrocochino Bros:	N. Argenti
1862	Argenti Sechiari:	Michael Geo. Schlizzi John Theo Rodocanaki
1864	Argenti Sechiari: Petrocochino Bros: Ralli Brothers:	T.E. Schlizzi A.K. Agelasto J.E. Scaramanga
1865	Schlizzi & Co:	P.Z. Amiro
1869	Argenti Sechiari: Petrocochino Bros:	J.A. Negroponte T.P. Vlasto
1872	Petrocochino Bros:	P.J. Ralli
1873	Agelasto Sagrandi:	J.A. Ralli
1874	Ralli Bros: Petrocochino Bros:	T.A. Vlasto S. Mavrocordatos
1875	Argenti Sechiari:	G. Negroponte
1876	Agelasto Sagrandi: Petrocochino Bros:	S.J. Psycha J.P. Ralli
1879	Tamvaco & Co:	C.J. Scaramanga A. Mavrocordato
1881	Ralli Brothers:	C.C. Scaramanga
1885	Ralli Brothers:	D.P. Petrocochino
1886	Ralli Brothers:	J.E. Schlizzi
1887	Ralli Brothers:	J.S. Vlasto J.J. Mavrocordatos
1892	Ralli Brothers:	A.A. Vlasto E.A. Vlasto
1893	Ralli Brothers:	A.P. Negroponte
1895	Petrocochino Bros: Ralli Brothers:	S. Psycha A.P. Sechiari
1896	Ralli Brothers:	A.P. Rodocanaki

The Thacker's entry for Petrocochino Bros. in 1865 and subsequent years describes the firm as agents for Agelasto, Petrocochino & Co., London; J. Sagrandi, Manchester; Petrocochino, Sagrandi & Co., Marseilles; Agelasto Vouro & Co., Constantinople. This reveals the far-reaching tentacles which the Chiot nobility clamped on to the Greek network of trade between India and Europe. An examination of the names of the Church Wardens who served the Greek Chapel in Finsbury Circus reveals the same pattern of names which occurs in Calcutta:

1839 N. Tamvacos
1840 P. Rallis and A. Mavrojannis
1841 A.T. Rallis
1842 A. Argenti
1843 A.A. Rallis
1844 C.T. Rallis
1845 P.T. Rallis
1846 I.S. Schlizzi and D. Georgiardi
1848/9 A.P. Petrocochino.

In West Norwood the Greek community of London established a magnificent cemetery of about half an acre in 1842. Here the great 19th century London Greek families buried their deceased members under memorials of classic magnificence that make the cemetery one of the most beautiful in Britain. Here, too, the same names which dominated Greek commerce in Calcutta reappear: Rallis, Scaramanga, Schlizzi, Argenti, Sechiari, Mavrocordatos, Agelasto, Petrocochino, Calvocoressi, Rodocanaki and Mavrojanni. As an example of the anglicization that many of these families underwent (whilst preserving their Hellenic heritage), is an interesting memorial tablet in the Parish Church of Clyro, the Radnorshire village nestling under the green-dark mountains of Wales, forever, to English minds, associated with the gentle, clerical diarist, the Revd. Francis Kilvert, who served as a curate in the village. In his day the Great House in the parish was Clyro Court, home of the Baskerville family after whom 'The Baskerville Arms' in the village is named. In the early 20th century, however, the squire was an Anglo-Greek of the Phanariot Mavrojani family who with the Rallis established the firm of Ralli and Mavrojani in Calcutta. The memorial on the north wall of St. Michael's Church reads:

To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Spiridion Mavrojani, late of Clyro Court, Radnorshire. Captain 5 Battalion, Royal Fusiliers who died at Jerusalem, March 1, 1930, aged 63. Also Dorothy, his wife, who died at Clyro Court, Jan 2, 1931, aged 54. Rest in Peace.

Another of these London Greek families was that of the Phanariot noble, Mavrocordato. Prince Alexander Mavrocordato was the friend of Byron and Shelley and one of independent Greece's first premiers.

Employment in Calcutta Greek firms was not the exclusive preserve of certain families. These firms gave employment to a very large number of Greeks and also, to a more limited extent, to British people. These Greeks were not, in the main, like the old Greek families who settled in India, for most of them returned to Greece when their working days were over. The total number of these men would be difficult to determine but Thacker's Directories from 1852 to 1902 contain the following Greek names in the service of Calcutta Greek Houses. Though the following list is not exhaustive it gives some idea of the Greek presence in Calcutta:

Acatos, Andreades, Anninos, Apostolides, Assilanopoulos.
 Beinoglou, Brouzis.
 Calomiris, Calvocoressi, Camillatos, Candia, Caridia, Carras, Carrimatis, Casanova, Cocolas, Condoleon, Consolo, Constanidi, Contarini, Convelos, Coroneos, Couvela, Coveos.
 Dalbusset, Damala, Damiano, Demetriadi, Desylla, Dimoca.
 Elefteriades, Eliopolos.
 Falle, Fardulides, Flamburiari, Fotiades, Fraghiadis, Frangopoulos.
 Georgacopulos, Giannacopulos, Gino, Grimaldi.
 Handris, Hilduvachi.
 Kalageros, Kalomiris, Kazakos, Klemis, Konios, Kyprianados, Kyriazi.
 Lanbrinudi, Lambropoulos, Logothetis, Lutrari, Lyrioti.
 Macrinos, Magariti, Manachi, Mangakis, Mangana, Mangos, Maniachi, Marchetti, Massaouti, Masson, Mavrogortlah, Mayorachis, Melanos, Menelas, Michellatos, Miculachi, Mikas, Miltaeludes, Minghis, Minettos.
 Nicholas, Nicolaides, Nicolini, Nomicos.
 Orimaldi, Orvanitelis.
 Pallachi, Panas, Papachalou, Parodi, Paspatti, Pendelides, Phardonlida, Phocas, Pitta, Proios, Provele.
 Ralli, Raphael, Rizo.
 Sackerlaropolos, Salamara, Samiotakis, Scouloudi, Scoursos, Scrini, Sergiades, Sevastopulo, Skyridos, Sophianopoulos, Spanos, Stavrides, Stephanides, Sypsomo, Syrioti.
 Takidelos, Triandos.
 Vafiadis, Valetta, Vassilopoulo, Velisariados, Verdeau, Vermadachi, Vertannes, Vlasto.
 Xenos.
 Yakinthes.
 Zalichi, Zapanulo, Zenos, Zevelachi, Ziffo.

In addition to Greek Trading Houses there were also three Greek tobacconist firms in Calcutta: S. Z. Andricopoulos at 10 Dalhousie Square and Theo. Vafiadis & Co., 4 Dalhousie Square, cigarette manufacturers and tobacconists. Vafiadis was a Greek from Cairo and branches of his firm were to be found in London and Rangoon with agencies in Colombo, Penang and Melbourne. The third firm was Pisti and Pelakanos (L. M. Pisti and M. C. Pelakanos) at 104 Clive Street.

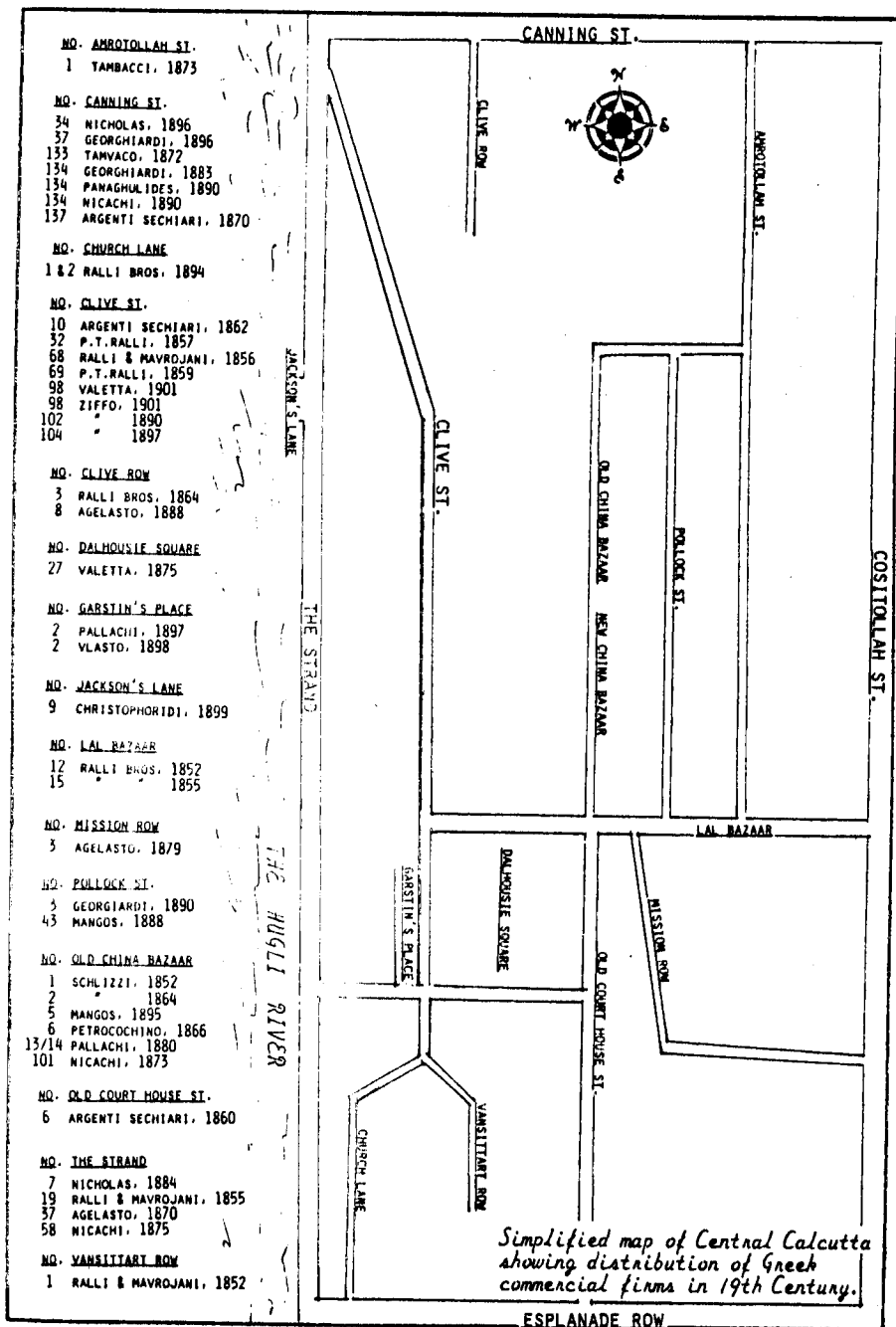
Many of the Greek employees lived in boarding houses some of whose names have survived: Mme Courets Boarding Establishment at 1 Theatre Road; Miss Bobonau's Boarding Establishment, 49 Park Street; Mrs Bett's Boarding Establishment, 2 Russell Street. As they advanced in their careers some took up residence in the Grand and Continental Hotels. Just as Pandias Ralli in London was to encounter British official disdain for men engaged in trade, so in Calcutta officialdom spoke contemptuously of Box Wallahs or Counter Jumpers. Commercial gentlemen found it very difficult to gain admission to the grandest clubs

in Calcutta. Official contempt for trade was incomprehensible since commerce was the very life-blood of the Empire, the keystone of an arch which held the whole edifice together. One has the impression that the Calcutta Greeks mixed easily with their British counterparts while retaining a vigorous Greek social life.

By the end of the 19th century Calcutta was the second largest city of the British Empire and the capital of the British Administration in India. As Jan Morris says "Its pattern was deliberately grand. It was laid out as a great capital must be, with authority. It occupied two sides of a square, on the north and the east. The western side was formed by the Hugli River, the southern was left open to suburban development. Around the whole, a defensive ditch was dug, later to delineate the city's inner road, and the centre of the square was occupied by the grand expanse of the maidan, with the protective stronghold of Fort William at its south-west corner".¹⁷ The northern side of this square was formed by the Esplanade where most of the great public buildings were grouped, particularly Government House, modelled on Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire, the grand sanctum of political power.

To the north of the Esplanade lay the old commercial heart of Calcutta, bounded by Canning Street to the north, the Hugli to the west, Cositollah Street to the east and the Esplanade to the south. It was here that the Greek business firms found their homes and the locus of their commercial operations. Running west from Cositollah Street and in line with Bowbazaar Street and the Writers' Building was Lal Bazaar where in 1852 Ralli Brothers began its life at No. 12, shifting in 1855 to No. 15. Its partners were N. G. Paspatti, E. C. Petrocochino and J. E. Ralli. It was one of the oldest streets in Calcutta whose existence was recorded in a French map of the city in 1742 as "Battarie de Lal Buzar". In the early days of the 19th century it was known to soldiers and sailors as 'Flag Street' because across it was festooned a string of flags advertising the existence of a multitude of poor restaurants, grog shops and brothels. It was not a bazaar in the normal sense of that word and its name was probably a corruption of 'Loll Bazaar' (or Red Bazaar). 'Loll Shrub' was the vernacular term for claret. Two early taverns in the street were the London Tavern and the Harmonic House where customers could drink coffee and peruse the newspapers for a rupee. John Palmer 'the prince of merchants' resided in a palatial house here in the early years of the 19th century.¹⁸

Moving westwards along Lal Bazaar towards the Writers' Building two roads branched off it towards the Esplanade - Mission Row and Old Court House Street. The early name for the former was 'Rope Walk' because the Company's Rope Works were situated there. It derived its 'new' name from the Old Mission Church, built in 1770, by a Swedish missionary the Revd John Zachariah Kiernander. No. 1 was the home of Colonel the Hon. George Monson, a friend of Hastings' arch-enemy Philip Francis, and No. 8 of General Sir John Clavering, another of the Calcutta Councillors. In 1879 Agelasto Sagramdi set up its offices



at 3 Mission Row, having previously traded from 37 Strand Road North. Old Court House Street stood where St. Andrew's Church now stands. It was named after the old Court House building in which the Mayor's Court held its sessions and also served for a time as the Town Hall of the city before it was demolished in 1792. From 1860 to 1862 Argenti Sechiari traded from 6 Old Court House Street.

Continuing westward past Writers' Building lay Dalhousie Square once known as Tank Square. The Tank dug in 1700 was known to Bengalis as 'Lal Dighi'. N. Valetta and Co. had their offices at No. 27 from 1875 to 1897. Issuing from Dalhousie Square was a short cul-de-sac called Vansittart Row, named after Henry Vansittart, Governor of Calcutta between 1760 and 1764 who owned property here. Ralli and Mavrojani (trading in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Corfu and Alexandria) occupied No. 1 Vansittart Row from 1852 to 1855. Southwest of the Square, Church Lane ran south to the Esplanade. It got its name from St. Anne's Church, built in 1709 but destroyed by Siraj-ud-Daulah in 1756. As late as 1870 No. 3 housed the well-known firm Moran and Co. where indigo sales were held. In 1894 Ralli Brothers, who had in 1864 moved out of Lal Bazaar to Clive Row, established their headquarters at 1 and 2 Church Lane.

Along the north side of St. John's Church compound lies a blind alley known to Bengalis as 'Garstin Sahib Ka barrack'. It was named after John Garstin who rose in the Company's service to become a Major General in the Engineers and Surveyor General of Bengal. The Old Court House was demolished under his supervision and he used the materials and fittings to build Garstin's Place. He is also famous as the architect of the Old Town Hall and the architectural masterpiece of the Gola, a storehouse for grain in Patna. Garstin's Place was the original home of the Company's Hospital where, as Alexander Hamilton said, "many go in to undergo the penance of physic but few come out to give an account of its operation". No. 2 Garstin's Place was the home of both F. C. Pallachi and Co., General Produce Brokers, and the Greek Merchant firm of J. P. Vlasto.

Running northwards from the northwestern corner of Dalhousie Square was the famous Clive Street. Robert Clive lived in a house here in which Begum Johnson later held her famous whist parties and which later still became the site of the Royal Exchange Building. One of the oldest and most famous streets of Calcutta, it teemed with the affairs of commerce. A modern Bengali poet, Dinesh Das, so describes it in one of his poems:

Here in a hundred snake-like veins,
Streams of people come and go:
Through these shrunken veins the blood
of the country must flow...
O mighty city's burning heart,
O Clive Street of Bengal,
A thousand dumb veins freeze to make
The cornerstone of your high hall.

It was a favourite location of Greek commercial houses. From 1856 until its demise in 1886 Ralli and Mavrojani were at No. 68 and here a member of the family of the martyred Bishop of Chios, E. G. Franghiadis, worked for the firm. Argenti Sechiari were at No. 10 (at the corner of Jackson's Ghat Street) from 1859 to 1860, and again from 1862 to 1870; P.T. Ralli and Co. at No. 32 from 1857 to 1859, moving to No. 69 until it ceased trading in 1862; Ziffo and Co. (freight brokers) at No. 102 in 1890, at No. 104 in 1897 and at number 98 in 1901; N. Valetta and Co. moved from Dalhousie Square to number 104 in 1897 and transferred to No. 98 in 1901.

West of Clive Street and running almost parallel to it was the Strand. In 1820 the Lottery Committee proposed the construction, on what was a low sedgy bank of land, of a road and wharf along the western boundary of Calcutta, to the north of Old Fort Ghat. Construction began in 1828 and the road became the Strand. There, in 1831, the Company built its Mint where its supplies of specie were stored or converted into currency. Designed by the Mint Master, W. N. Forbes, it had a Doric portico and was build around a central courtyard. Ralli and Mavrojani had its offices here from 1855 to 1856 at No. 19, Agelasto Sagrandi at No. 37, Nicholas & Co. at No. 7. At the northern end of the Strand was a thoroughfare leading down to the river known as Jackson's Lane, named after William Jackson, the Company's Attorney General in 1787 who died in Calcutta in 1807. No. 9 Jackson's Lane was the office of Christophoridi & Co., Jute Brokers, from 1895 to 1899.

East of Clive Street was one of the most fascinating areas of Calcutta, Old China Bazaar. Its name was derived from the sale of Chinese goods there brought by ships that plied between Calcutta and Canton. A highly diverting description of the area is given in an editorial note in The 'Statesman' of November 14, 1876: "Leaving St. Andrew's Church on the left and driving due north, we find ourselves approaching a very unfashionable quarter. We are in a very narrow street, on either side of which are little dens of native shops of all shapes and sizes.... in the windows, Eau de Cologne, Burmese Cigars, and tenpenny nails lie fraternally side by side in repose, whilst spiders, flies and mosquitoes, disport amongst them, fearless of the avenging chowrie (fly whisk). Turning a sharp corner, we find ourselves at once in an Indian Babel. A roar of many voices, increasing every moment as we advance, is sufficiently suggestive to the hardy explorer, of the vultures that are awaiting him at no great distance. Suddenly we come to a dead stop.... we find a line of heavily laden wagons blocked across the road. One of the leading bullocks is half inside a barber's shop... there seems to be no likelihood of moving in a couple of hours. We are deafened by the excited jabbering of the touts, who in spite of their unparliamentary language contradict each other's vigorous recommendations of their respective employers. Above the din, a highly pitched insinuating voice shrieks on our right, 'Mine very good shop, Sir! Hats, bonnet and stationery got! Not want? Then Sahib say 'What will have

my shop all got?' A fortissimo bass on the left drowns every other sound by his denial of number one's statement. 'You do not believe him, Sar, I know him long time; him very big scoundrel; my shop here close got all things very cheap'." Only Nicachi and Co. occupied 6 Old China Bazaar in 1902 but in 1908 a New China Bazaar came into existence as a large block of shops erected near the Writers' Building. A large number of Greek firms occupied this site - Schlizzi & Co. at No. 1 from 1852 to 1864 and at No. 2 from 1864 to 1873; Petrocochino Bros. at No. 5 from 1866 to 1882; C. D. Mangos & Co., Jute and Produce Brokers, at No. 5 from 1895; F. C. Pallachi & Co. at Nos. 13 and 14 from 1881 to 1897. At the northeast corner of New China Bazaar lay Swallow Lane, named after Captain William Swallow who owned property there. At No. 7 Christophoridi and Co. had its offices from 1895 to 1897. To the east of Old China Bazaar appeared Pollock Street, named after a property owner, Hugh Pollock. At No. 3, Georgiardi & Co. operated from 1890 to 1896 and C. D. Mangos & Co. at No. 43 from 1885 to 1895.

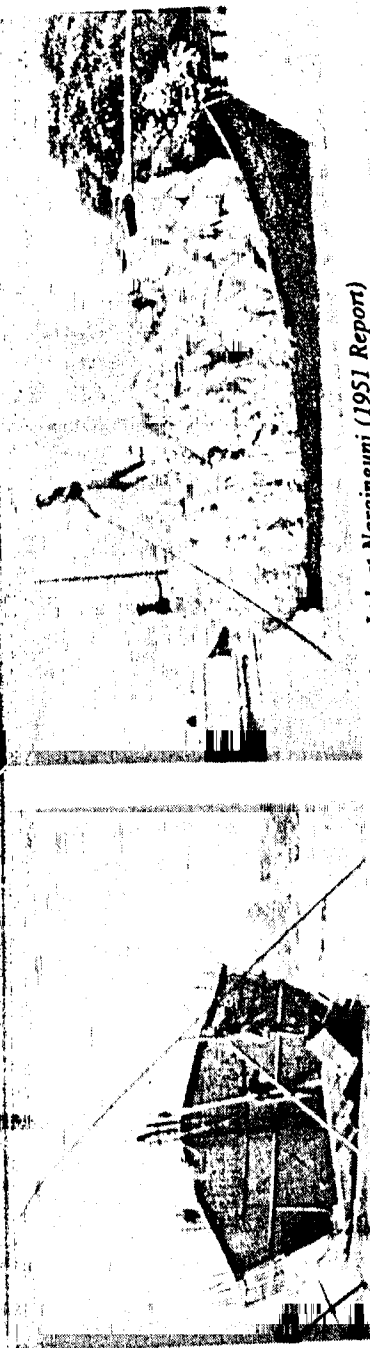
Running eastwards from the Strand to Chitpore Road and at right angles to Clive Street was Canning Street, named after the first Viceroy of India. Its old name was Moorghihatta (Fowl Market) and was the place where the first Portuguese inhabitants of Calcutta had once lived. In the early 19th century it was divided into two sections by an ancient building with a flagged courtyard in front surrounded by a high brick wall called Aloo Godown, occupied by George Henderson & Co., Agents for the Borneo Jute Company. This was knocked down to afford continuous communication along the street. Before it ceased trading in 1876, Argenti Sechiari had its office at No. 137; Tamvaco & Co. operated at No. 133 from 1872 and next door at No. 134, Georgiardi & Co., Jute and Jute Fabric Merchants, from 1883 to 1890 and at 37 from 1896, while, finally, Panaghulides & Co. occupied 134 from 1887. At the eastern end of Canning Street was the old home of Greek commerce containing the Greek Church of The Transfiguration, Amratollah Street. The Church was still there but it was no longer as it had once been, the main centre of Greek commerce. However, from 1873 to 1882 Paul Tamvaci & Co. traded from No. 1. Running south from Canning Street to the western side of Old China Bazaar was Clive Row. Before its establishment at Church Lane, Ralli Brothers had its offices here from 1864 to 1894 at No. 3 and Agelasto and Sagrandi at No. 8 from 1888.

To obtain some idea of the kind of commercial operations that Ralli Brothers was engaged in during these years we can examine one of the handbooks issued by the firm annually in Calcutta. To leaf through the faded pages of Ralli Brothers Calcutta Handbook for 1888 is to enter at once into a world of mercantile romance in which exotic names like tealseed, mowaseed, turmeric, borax and tincal jostle with sober commodities like saltpetre, rice, jute and ginger. Pride of place, however, was reserved for jute, the prince of products which made the fortunes of the firm in Bengal and is dealt with in the first chapter of the

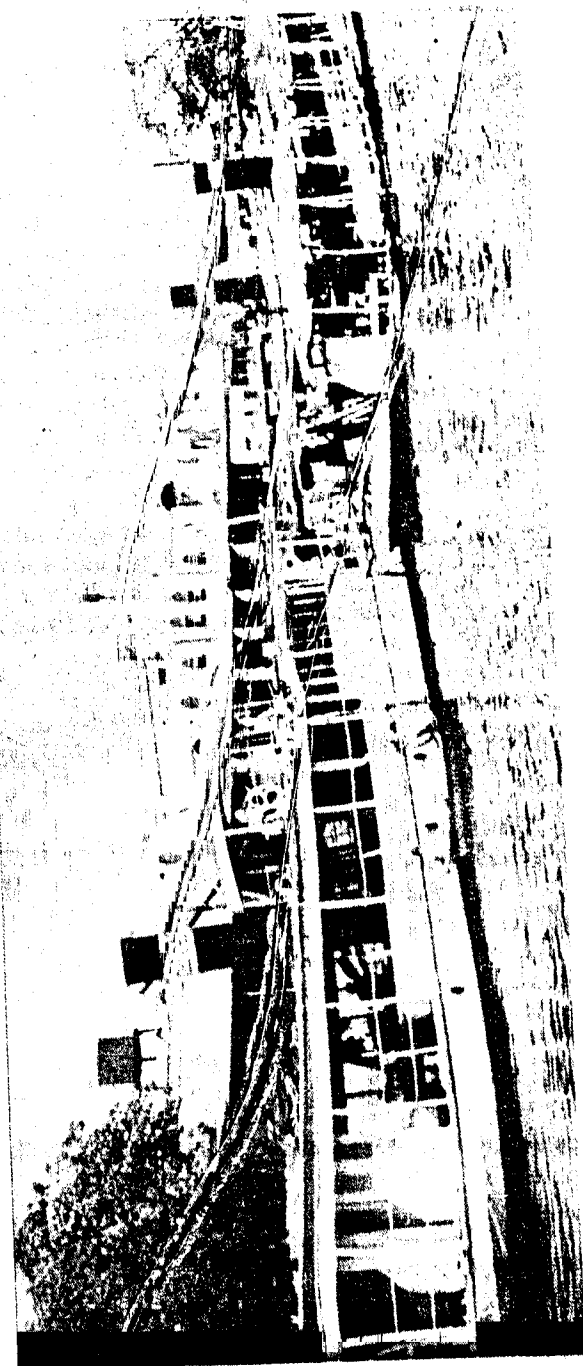
Handbook. The word and the product was Bengali in origin and was also used to describe the plant (*Corchorus Capsularis*) and the fibre derived from it which was used for a variety of purposes but chiefly for the manufacture of sacks. The first extant English use of the word goes back to 1746 and in 1795 Dr. Roxburgh drew the attention of the Court of Directors of the Company to "the value of the fibre called jute by the natives".¹⁹ The popular trading name for the coarse sacking made from jute fibre was 'gunny'. In the early days of the Company, a limited amount of jute fibre was produced on village looms but from 1833 raw jute began to be shipped to Dundee where jute sacks were manufactured. In 1854 Dundee machinery was installed at a mill at Serampore and the close connection between this Scottish city and jute manufacture in Bengal, making the fortunes of innumerable Lowland Scots, was born. Profits from it were enormous. Unlike those from other commodities they increased steadily and were not subject to fluctuations. The first World War was not a tragedy for jute manufacturers and merchants for it expanded the sales of gunnies which were urgently required as sandbags for trenches in the various theatres of war. When the Armistice was proclaimed on Friday November 11, 1918, the date was dubbed, with grim humour, by jute manufacturers 'Black Friday'. A prestigious Scottish firm, Andrew Yule & Co., had its own jute factory 'Cheviot Mills' on the banks of the Hugli as did many other firms.

Ralli Brothers had its own jute mill at Naraingunj and two steam launches, 'Alexandros' and 'Georgios' moored at its wharves. A number of Greeks worked at this station for the firm and among them we encounter the name of C.D. Giannacopulos who was an Honorary Magistrate in Dacca. It is very likely that he belonged to the Greek family of this name who provided the first verger of the London Greek Church, Dimitrios Giannacopulos and the Greek Consul at Liverpool in 1863 D. K. Giannacopulos. He may even have been connected with the merchant of Meerut of that name who died there in 1810. Even at a later date signs of old Greek commercial activity continued at Naraingunj. In 1897 and subsequent years there was a jute pressing concern, Lucas Brothers, there with Andrew and Abraham Lucas as partners. The Handbook informs us that between 1829 and 1863 exports of jute had increased sixteenfold. About 1864/65 this caused cultivation to spread to districts other than Cuttack and Balasore, the traditional areas of jute production. The European countries to which it was exported by Ralli Brothers were, in order of quantity, the U.K., France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Italy and Russia - the USA importing slightly less than Austria. The Handbook says that the firm shipped gunnies to the Levant through the agency of E. Decipri and T. Fachiri at Smyrna under the guarantee of M. L. Calvocoressi.

Chapters II, III and IV of the Handbook deal with the export of wheat, pulse and various seeds from which oil and other products like cattle food could be extracted: linseed, rapeseed, poppyseed, teelseed (Indian sesame) and



Boats and towing launches of Ralli Brothers Ltd. at Naraingunj (1951 Report)



mowaseed. Chapter V is concerned with rice and lists the various countries to which it was exported by the firm: U.K. (London, Liverpool), France (Marseilles, Bordeaux, Havre, Rouen), USA, West Indies, Mauritius, Isle of Bourbon and Bombay. Chapter VI deals with saltpetre from which gunpowder was manufactured and was also used in the dyeing and metallurgy industries. Shellac is the subject of the next chapter and the Handbook informs us that it was "used for hat stiffening, varnish, sealing wax, coating the inside of barrels, painting the bottom of boats and as undercoat". Next, in Chapter VIII, comes 'Jaggery, the coarse brown, almost black, sugar which is made from the sap of various palms, particularly the date palm in Bengal. It was produced in the form of small round cakes'. The four following chapters deal respectively with castor oil, turmeric and ginger (produced in East Bengal) and India rubber. Chapter XIII is about cutch, imported from Burma, also known as catechu. The Handbook says it is used for dyeing and tanning nets and sails of fishing boats and in India it is eaten by the natives mixed with areca and betel. The last chapter concerns borax, a salt formed by the combination of boracic acid with soda which occurs in a crude state in Eastern India known as tincal and used for glazing china and pottery.

As the 19th century moved to its close, the operations of Ralli Brothers were expanded from Calcutta to the Mofussil. There were branches of the firm in Patna, Cawnpore, Seragunj, Saidpore, Buxar, Delhi, Revilgunj and Naraingunj. Strangest of all, in Calcutta itself there appears in Thacker's Directory of 1892 the mention of a business "S. S. Ralli & Co., 1 Bhowanipore Road, Tatersall's Horse Repository, horse importers, commission agents, veterinary surgeons, hack and race stables, crush food mills". It does not seem to have lasted long but it is a tribute to the thrusting commercial enterprise of the remarkable Chiot family who replaced the trading activity of the old Greeks from Philippopolis and brought a new more sophisticated dimension to Greek enterprise in Bengal.

It is interesting to compare and contrast the fortunes of the two Levantine communities of Greeks and Armenians in Calcutta. The latter were there first and their commercial prosperity exceeded that of the early Greek community of merchants but was easily overtaken by Ralli Brothers and the new Greek firms. But the Armenians are still in Calcutta whereas the great Ralli Brothers, as such, suddenly ceased trading in 1961. These facts may perhaps be explained by the observations in 1836 of an English traveller in Turkey, J. Pardoe: "All the steady commerce on a great scale in Constantinople may be said to be, with very slight exceptions, in the hands of the Armenians, who have the true, patient, calculating spirit of trade; while the wilder speculations of hazardous and ambitious enterprise are grasped with avidity by the more daring and adventurous Greeks; and hence arises the fact, for which at first it is difficult to account, that the most wealthy and the most needy of the merchants of Stamboul are alike of that race while you rarely see an Armenian either limited in his means or obtrusive in his life style."²⁰ As for the Greeks, we may perhaps apply to them the words of the Gospel: "Mary hath chosen the better part."

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