

Timberlake, Henry

(d. 1625/6)

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27456>

Published in print: 23 September 2004

Published online: 23 September 2004

This version: 03 January 2008

Timberlake, Henry (d. 1625/6), merchant and traveller, came from the parish of Titchfield, near Portsmouth. Although nothing is known of his parents or his early life, in 1597 Timberlake is noted as owning shares, with Francis Cherry and Edward Dartnall, in the ship *Edward Bonaventure*, which traded with Russia and the Levant.

On 9 March 1601 Timberlake, having crossed the Mediterranean in the *Troyan*, embarked on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem accompanied by John Burrell, a merchant from Middlesbrough. When they reached the holy city on 25 March, Burrell advised Timberlake to explain to the Turkish authorities there that he was Greek, in order to be permitted entry; when he reached the west gate, though, Timberlake loudly proclaimed that he was English and was promptly gaoled. When he was visited by the Roman Catholic defender of pilgrims of the city a short while later, he refused his help stating that he would rather place his trust in the Turk than the pope. Eventually, though, he was released through the intercession of a Muslim he had previously assisted in Algiers. He was reunited with Burrell and the two men were guided through the city by a party of friars before travelling to Alexandria and returning to England. In 1603 Timberlake wrote a short account of his pilgrimage, entitled *A True and Strange Discourse of the Travailes of Two English Pilgrimes*, which was reprinted eight times in the seventeenth century. In this tract he related the topography of the Holy Land to that of London in an attempt to impress upon his readers the relative location of all the significant sites in the life of Christ. As a result, Timberlake described Bethlehem as standing in the same relation to Jerusalem as Wandsworth to London.

Timberlake was a member of the Company of Merchant Adventurers, formed in 1612 to discover a north-west passage, and he also held stock in the East India Company until 1617. In 1615 he was one of the original adventurers for the plantation of Somers Island (Bermuda) and owned two shares in each of Smith and Southampton tribes; his holdings in the latter now comprise part of the Port Royal golf course. In his will, dated 10 July 1625, he left his lands in Bermuda and Essex to his elder son, Thomas; his younger son, Henry, received his holdings in London. After more than £1100 in legacies and gifts had been dispersed, especially to his daughter Hester Williams, formerly Mitchell, and her children, Timberlake's wife, Margaret, received the balance of his estate. The exact date of his death is unknown; his will was proved on 13 May 1626.

Sources

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will, TNA: PRO, PROB 11/149, fols. 52-3

Wealth at Death

land in Bermuda and Essex; £1100 in legacies; balance of estate to wife: will, TNA: PRO, PROB 11/149, fols. 52-3

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