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PART III

BOOK REVIEW

Katsumi Fukasawa "TOILERIE ET COMMERCE DU LEVANT, d'Alep à Marseille". Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1987, 247 pp.

Mehmed Genç*

One of the radical changes which the industrial revolution brought about in the trade of the Near-East with Western Europe was that the Near-East became a market in which industrial goods were imported and only agricultural and raw materials were offered for sale. This phenomenon however was not entirely new; it was a development which grew slowly from ancient times to the beginning of the modern era and which can be considered the normal outcome of conditions in the 19th century. The industrial revolution merely reinforced this secular structure, adding to it certain quantitative changes. This is the general impression gained from accounts about Ottoman-European commercial exchanges and trade relations.

The series of transformations which took place towards the end of the 18th century, under the name of the industrial revolution, were felt in the Ottoman markets some fifty years later. In this transformation the cotton industry was to become the leading sector. In order to appreciate better the radical changes produced by the invasion of Ottoman markets since 1820-30 by cheap cotton textiles, we must have a clear idea of what the pre-revolution situation was like.

In quantitative terms, the amount of data we have in this respect is unfortunately rather limited; what we know is only of a general and qualitative nature. That is why Katsumi Fukasawa's present research on the importance of cotton textiles in the exchanges between the Near-East and Western Europe helps to fill an important gap in our knowledge, in that it gives us some figures on the quantities involved.

A characteristic feature of trade between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, from ancient times up to the end of the 19th century, is that textiles, whether as raw material or processed, have always occupied the largest share — generally exceeding (50%) both in imports and exports. There is no great change in this respect in the post-revolution period. The only important change is in the composition and items of this trade; the cotton cloth imported in increasing

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quantities by the Ottoman Empire after the revolution was formerly an item of export, not of import.

The ancient cotton manufacture of the Near East gradually became, from the 16th to the mid-18th centuries, a manufacturing branch of growing importance. The main centres of this industry were the Teselya-Serez region; Egypt; in Western Anatolia, Smyrna, Manisa and the Lakes region; in North-Central Anatolia, the Kastamonu-Tokat-Amasya region and in South-East Anatolia, the region extending from Diyarbekir, Antep, Kilis to Aleppo. The cloth woven in these centres was traded both internally and externally. The main buyers in the West were the French; this item amounted in the 17th and 18th centuries to nearly 10% of their imports from the Ottoman Empire. Fukasawa uses French consular reports and published archive materials to document his study on the changes and problems which arose in this trade as conducted by Marseilles merchants in the 18th century.

The innumerable varieties and different qualities of cotton fabrics make it difficult to get a clear-cut picture of the history of cotton textiles. In dealing with many of the important problems left unexplained by writers such as Masson¹, David², Paris³, who were not themselves directly interested in the subject, Katsumi Fukasawa has been able to put together, with regard to the cloth bought by the French, highly valuable technical data as to quantity, price, quality, colouring, weight and measurements.

In order to give some idea of the interesting information assembled by the writer, we may cite the following examples: by converting into meters and grams the figures on length, breadth and weight, given in the table on page 54 in terms of "aune" and "livre", we learn that the coarse cotton cloth woven in Aleppo and exported to France in 1766 weighed 264,5 grams per square meter; that the fine cotton fabric made in Diyarbekir and called "chafarcani" weighed 145 grams per square meter and that the other kinds of cloth had weights in between those two extremes.

The tables on pages 123, 136-137, and the graphs on pages 116-121 also tell us in great detail what changes took place in the amounts and prices of the different varieties of textiles traded during the 18th century.

¹Paul Masson, *Histoire du Commerce Français dans le Levant au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1896 et XVIII^e siècle, 1911.

²Ralph Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square English Traders in the Levant in the Eighteenth Century*, London, MacMillan, 1967.

³Robert Paris, *Histoire du Commerce de Marseille*, Tome V: de 1660 à 1789. *Le Levant*, Paris, Plon, 1957.

The writer lets us know what were the main manufacturing centres of the different kinds of cloth all profusely described; what were the buying and financing mechanisms; the import markets and the amounts they absorbed. He is to be congratulated for this exceedingly valuable contribution to the history of economic relations between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe and, beyond that, of the Ottoman textile industry and economy.

Fukasawa singles out the four major changes which took place — on the macro-economic plane — in the cotton imports of Marseilles traders in the 18th century.

The first change concerns a shift in the origin of exports: these exports which came until the beginning of the 18th century from a wide area covering Istanbul, the Dardanelles, the Asian Coast, Cyprus and Egypt were polarized within a short time in the 18th century to a region concentrated primarily around Aleppo and secondarily on Egypt. This had the consequence that exports from Istanbul and Smyrna lost their importance.

The second change was that, whereas formerly, Marseilles traders tended to buy their cotton products mainly from Iran and more particularly from India, from 1723-40 onwards, these supplies disappeared from their transactions and their place was taken by cloth being produced in increasing quantities in the region of Aleppo, Antep and Diyarbekir.

The third change was in the composition of imports; while they had earlier consisted in cotton prints and dyed fabrics, in the 18th century imports of raw cloth began to predominate.

The fourth important change occurred in the cotton exports from the centralized Aleppo region; in the years 1768 to 1778, these exports had been marked by a rather high upward tendency, but thereafter they declined just as sharply from this highest point.

All these developments are described in detail and in most cases in quantitative terms by Fukasawa.

The centralization around Aleppo of the cotton-exporting region is attributed by the writer to the use of the barter exchange mechanism. The Marseilles merchants used to barter the cotton cloth purchased from Aleppo for their supplies of imported indigo and cochénille dyes and notably for Languedoc woollens. This made it possible for them to increase their share of cotton textiles in their imports from Aleppo from (20-30 %) in the beginning of the 18th century to (60-70 %) by 1760. Since trade with Istanbul and Smyrna was

conducted through more complex mechanisms, such items as cotton textiles could easily be left out.

The method of barter exchange is not sufficient in itself to explain either the rise of cotton cloth exports from the Aleppo region or the fall in these exports from centres such as Istanbul and Izmir. It is not possible to make such a claim without first analysing both production and demand conditions in these centres.

However, on the second change in cotton exports related to the disappearance of cotton textiles of Indian and Iranian origin, the writer tries to out balance part of this deficiency as it affected the Aleppo region. Until the end of the 17th century expensive and high quality cotton fabrics were brought by caravans from India and Iran to Izmir and Aleppo and then exported from these centres. Fukasawa considers the disappearance of these textiles in the years 1723-40 to be due to four factors. The first and most effective factor is the disruption of trade ties with Iran and India resulting from Ottoman-Iranian wars. The second factor is the transfer of the former India-Europe trade route to the newly developing Cape Horn route. The third important factor is the great increase in cotton cloth production seen in the same years in the Aleppo, Antep and Diyarbakir region. Finally the fourth factor is the preference Marseilles traders began to show for the cheaper textiles produced in increasing quantities in the said region. This preference is also explained by the widening of outlets. These outlets, extending over a wide area, were created by the rising demand of middle and low class people in Spain, Italy and Southern France; by the need to clothe the slave population of growing numbers of plantations in the Atlantic colonies; and finally by the demand of the African slave traders. In brief, the increase in the first half of the 18th century of the output and exports of cheap cotton textiles in the Aleppo region fits into the overall picture of a world-wide widening market.

The author's account of the growth which Ottoman cotton textiles registered in the first half of the 18th century, which went beyond the traditional pattern of East-West trade, and was related to the widening markets created by a general economic upsurge in the Atlantic region, and in particular his ability to trace the approximate amounts finding outlets in the different markets of this region is among the most valuable achievements of this work.

His only failure is that he confines himself to presenting the factors he has studied and their results, and does not examine the connections between them or give us an analysis related to any specific theoretic model.

For instance, he does not examine in how far the increase of cotton cloth production in the Aleppo region may be related, on the one hand, to a probable import substitution effect due to the closure of the eastern trade route and, on the

other hand, to a complex export substitution effect, due jointly to the higher domestic demand for Western import goods and the rise in the demand for cotton cloth originating in the Atlantic region. Doubtless, in order to do this, he would have had to start from a theoretic framework extending beyond the amounts of cotton textile exports and their disposal in different markets and not stopping short of encompassing production and demand conditions in the region and their likely interactions. He would also, of course, have had to draw on Ottoman sources. We may say that the writer, while omitting to do this, has nevertheless done the best he could by using what Western sources were available to him.

Over the fourth and most important change in the fluctuations of cotton exports from the Aleppo region which came about after their speedy rise in the first half of the 18th century, reaching a peak between 1768-1777, and which consisted in their even speedier downfall, the writer's findings may be summarized as follows: These exports met with strong competition, first from Switzerland, then from other European countries and later from Indian goods produced under British control, with the result that their markets gradually dwindled. On the other hand, cotton textile exports being structurally closely related to imports and being a trade conducted by way of barter were essentially lacking in flexibility. The decrease of cotton textile exports at the end of the 18th century, rather than being tied to changes in foreign markets, should thus be seen as the result of a structural economic crisis arising in the region and causing the dwindling of exports as well as of imports. The main factors of the structural crisis in the Aleppo region pointed out by the author are wars, lack of confidence, agricultural failures and certain financial-administrative pressures.

In a paper submitted in 1983 to the Third International Seminar on Turkey's Economic and Social History at Princeton University - a paper which was subsequently published in Turkish⁴ - I have shown that the same factors, from 1770 onwards in the second half of the 18th century, opened the way to a general economic crisis by affecting one another. I am pleased to state that these general observations comply fully with the results of the findings exposed by Fukasawa in his studies connected with the Aleppo region.

That manufactured goods were exported to the West up to the 19th century by the Ottoman empire is a fairly well-known fact. But Fukasawa's research is the first monography to deal with the subject on the basis of a single specific product. Among the products exported, textiles provided the largest share. Among the textile exports from various regions of the Empire, there were also mohair cloth, rough woollens, tissues of silk and a mixture of silk and cotton,

⁴Mehmet Genç, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Ekonomisi ve Savaş", in *YAPIT, Toplumsal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Sayı 494, Nisan-Mayıs 1984, pp. 52-495, Haziran-Temmuz 1984, pp. 86-93.

and cotton yarn. But the biggest share belonged to cotton textiles, the biggest purchasers of which in the 17th and 18th centuries were the French. This is the subject which the writer examines in detail. Since his work does not cover other Western countries besides France or other export products, it is difficult to say that it gives a picture of the place occupied by even this one item of cotton textiles in the economic relations between the West and the Ottoman empire.

From this point of view, this work provides a fairly limited outlook on the economic relations prevailing between Ottomans and Europeans. However since within this limited scope, the author deals in depth with the most important product, the most important region and the leading purchaser, the conclusion reached by him on page 7 that "Ottoman-French relations in the 18th century were in no manner of a colonial nature and that there can be no question of relations based on the power of economic and political superiorities reinforcing each other" may be generalized as a valid judgement of Ottoman-European relations as a whole. This monography of limited scope shows that although European countries were not subjected in Ottoman territories to the same extent of restrictions met with in China and Japan, they nevertheless were not accorded there the facilities enjoyed in India, America and Africa.

In conclusion, it may be said that the writer, within the limits of the sources he draws on and of the classical historical method he uses, has compiled a monography containing invaluable data which gives a picture of the history of Ottoman foreign trade extending in particular beyond the traditionally accepted boundaries of East-West trade. We must congratulate him for having given us a work which no student of 18th century Ottoman economic history can afford to miss.

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Dr. Atilla Çetin, "TUNUSLU HAYRETTİN PAŞA : Hayatı, Hizmetleri, Eserleri" (Hayreddine Pacha le Tunisien, sa vie, ses services, ses œuvres) Thèse de doctorat, Ankara 1988, pp. 500 (Publication du Ministère de la Culture et du Tourisme).

Hayreddin Pacha, qui fut de 1873 à 1877 Grand Vizir à Tunis et de 1878 à 1879 *Sadrizam* à Istanbul, est l'un des hommes d'état de l'Empire ottoman qui se penchèrent le plus pendant leurs vies sur les raisons du déclin du monde musulman ainsi que sur les réformes à mettre en œuvre pour y mettre fin. Le 19ème siècle est l'âge où l'on procède à un vaste mouvement de réformes militaires, administratives et économiques dans l'Empire ottoman et notamment

FOUNDATION FOR STUDIES ON TURKISH-ARAB RELATIONS

The "Foundation for Studies on Turkish-Arab Relations" was set up on the initiative of His Exc. Mr. Vahit Halefoğlu, then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. The present Minister of Foreign Affairs His Exc. Mr. Mesut Yılmaz is the *ex officio* Honorary president.

The aims of the Foundation are to foster friendship and brotherhood and promote cultural relations between Turkey and the Arab countries through academic cooperation in past and modern historical, economic and cultural fields. In the fulfilment of these aims, the Foundation collaborates in Turkey and abroad with higher educational and research institutions.

The 33 founding members are all Turkish nationals. Six of them are career or retired ambassadors, 20 intellectuals and the rest high government officials or heads of national institutions. Political representatives of Arab countries in Turkey are honorary members of the Foundation.

The Foundation was established in Istanbul on December 8, 1984. As of January 1, 1985 it has effectively begun to organize meetings, research and studies on the common history of Turks and Arabs, their cultural relations and their socio-economic problems.

Istanbul, the city embracing most of the Turkish-Islamic monuments, the archives, manuscripts and other documents on Turkish-Arab relations, also being the site for many universities and libraries was purposefully chosen as the venue of the Foundation. The provisional headquarters are located in Salacak, on the Asian coast of the city facing Topkapı Palace.

As the Ottoman Archives are of primary importance for both Turkey and Arab countries, the Foundation has organized a symposium in May 1985 in Istanbul to assist the Turkish Government to find ways and means for opening these archives to the use of Turkish and foreign researchers. H. Exc. Turgut Özal, Turkish Prime Minister, inaugurated the meeting.

In November 1985, the Foundation brought Turkish and Arab intellectuals together in Istanbul in order to consult Arab colleagues on future activities. On the other hand, the Foundation has taken the initiative of examining the school history books in Turkey and Arab countries with the intention of eliminating distorted or erroneous passages about their common history.

The Fourth Conference on Turkish-Arab Relations has been organised jointly by the Foundation, the Faculty of Letters of Hacettepe University and the Bosphorus University, in Istanbul, 7-9 September 1987.

In the meantime, the Foundation has set up in its center a computer system for its future works.

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Publications:

- *Osmanlı Arşivleri ve Osmanlı Araştırmaları Sempozyumu* (Symposium on Ottoman Archives and Ottoman Research). Istanbul, 1985, pp.272 (in Turkish)
- *Türk-Arap İlişkileri İncelemeleri Danışma Toplantısı* (Consultative Meeting on Turkish-Arab Relations Studies), Istanbul, 1985, pp. 192. (in English, Turkish, Arabic and French)
- *Annual 1986 and 1987* (in English with some contributions in Arabic, French and Turkish).

