# BURSA AND THE COMMERCE OF THE LEVANT

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## I. Turkey's trade with Arabia and India, 1480-1500.

It is not an exaggeration to say that European historians of the Levant trade viewed it essentially from Venice or Genoa. They drew their evidence mainly from documents preserved in the archives of these cities. This evidence was bound to be often misleading, for the Venetians and Genoese showed little interest in internal developments in the Levant and viewed the measures taken by the Ottoman rulers only in terms of their effect upon the Levant trade. Thus it is not astonishing to find even in such a great scholar as W. Heyd the general judgements of decline and destruction of the Levant trade as a result of the Ottoman expansion [1]). Just as the assertions of decline for a whole period and region in European economy in later middle-ages have been subjected to revision and often modified [2]) under the light of the recent investigations, which have indicated that there were actually shifts of activities from one section to another rather than a general decline, so our own inquiries in the native sources concerning the commerce of the Levant are tending now to alter some of the widely held views since W. Heyd wrote his authoritative work.

There are indeed local sources for the history of the Levant trade. The Turkish archives contain some important collections concerning the conditions of the Levant trade for the last decades of the 15th

1) *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen-âge*, transl. F. Raynaud, IIe réimpression, 2 vols. Leipzig 1936, pp. 258, 317, 349, 507.

2) See *Relazioni*, X. International Congress of Historical Sciences, vol. VI, Rome 1955, pp. 803-957.

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century when world trade and economy was going through momentous changes [1]).

In this first article we shall deal with how Bursa, early capital of the Ottoman state, became a center of the trade between the Ottoman dominions and Syria and Egypt, and what effects this new situation had on the commerce of the Levant [2]).

Let us start by examining the table below which is based upon the material from the records of the *Qâḍîs* of Bursa.

1) The principal collections which we are going to use in this study are: I. The customs day-books called *müfredât* or *rûznâmče*. The day-books which were kept at the principal ports recorded day by day ships coming and going with the name and origin of the captain, the port of origin, merchants or agents aboard with their name and origin, the wares they brought specifying each item and its quantity and value and the duties levied. Precise tables and diagrams can be drawn up on the basis of this material to show at a given port and date the imports and exports, prices and the volume of trade. Unfortunately, of these books only a few are available now in the archives for the 15th and the early 16th centuries. The most important ones for our subject are the *rûznâmče* for the ports of Akkerman and Kilia covering the period between 1495 and 1515, in Başvekâlet Archives, Istanbul, Maliye, no. 6; the *rûznâmče* for the port of Kaffa for the years between 1484 and 1489, in the same archives, Kâmil Kepeci tasnifi, No. 5280; another *rûznâmče* for the Danubian ports from Tulča to Smederevo (Semendere) in which the books of Tulča and Yergögü (Giurgiu) of the years 1506 and 1514-1522 and of Smederovo of the year 1514 are noteworthy. The oldest available *rûznâmče* for the port of Antalya (Satalia, Adalia) in the Archives is dated 1560, Maliye no. 102. II. The *muqâṭa'ât* registers containing the accounts of the revenues which were farmed out make up a second category. They contain the customs duties revenues of various zones, customs regulations and other taxation. The most important single register of this type is a *defter-i muqâṭa'ât* covering almost the entire reign of Mehemmed II (1451-1481), in the Başvekâlet Archives, Maliye No. 7387 and 6222 and 176. III. The third important category of sources is composed of the books kept by the Qâḍîs who in their capacity as judge, notary public and supervisor of the state finances in their zone have left us a large collection of court decisions on commercial matters, contracts, certificates, notarial deeds, and deeds of the properties of the deceased. We are fortunate to have a rich collection of these books kept by the Kâḍî of Bursa of the last decades of the 15th century. They are now preserved at the Museum of Bursa, see for details *Belleten*, No. 44, p. 693, and, *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, vol. 15, No. 1-4, pp. 51-73. Some of the documents from these books are published in *Belleten*, No. 44, pp. 693-708, and, No. 93, pp. 45-96. This collection will be our main source in this study.

2) In the subsequent articles we shall deal with the trade with Persia especially the silk trade which made Bursa an international market for this stuff between Persia and Europe, the European cloth trade in Turkey and customs duties and prices will be also dealt with.



Merchants in Bursa from the Arab countries

| Name and origin | goods | value (in akče) | sold to | bought from | date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Khodja Surûr, Aleppo | pepper, cloth of Yaman | 33242 | Dâvûd, Adrianople | — | 1479 |
| Khodja Zayn al-Dîn, Aleppo | pepper and clove | 1070 | Ya'qûb, Jew in Bursa | — | 1480 |
| 'Abd al-Wahhâb | pepper, clove and indigo | 3900 | Radjab b. Isma'il, Aleppo | — | 1480 |
| Mohammed, Damaskus | raw silk | 2100 | — | Al-Ḥâdjdj Kemâl | 1479 |
| Khodja 'Alî b. Fâḍil | gum lac and other goods from Yaman | 16700 | Ya'qûb, Jew from Balat, Istanbul | — | 1479<br>1479 |
| 'Umar b. Shay' Allâh | lynx furs, damask (*kemkhâ*) | 12400 | Khayr al-Dîn and Shams al-Dîn | — | 1480 |
| 'Alî, from Bursa settled in Aleppo | damask (*kemkhâ*) | 1000 | — | Ḥadjdji Mohammed, *kemkhâ* manufacturer | 1480 |
| 'Alî, Damaskus, settled in Pera | saffron | 2500 | — | Ḥadjdji Khalîl | 1480 |
| Khodja Mohammed, Hamâ | mohair of Angora, satin | 250 Ashrafi gold | — | Ḥadjdji 'Abdî, silk manufacturer in Bursa | 1480 |
| Ḥadjdji Hasan | woollen cloth and cotton | 3200 | 'Abd 'Allâh, Mossul | — | 1480 |
| Khodja Ḥusayn | sable furs | ? | — | Khodja Muḥyi al-Dîn. | 1481 |
| Khodja Muṣliḥ al-Dîn | pepper | 17925 | Mûsâ, Jew in Istanbul | — | 1480 |
| Khodja Shahâb al-Dîn, Damaskus | *aladja* [1]) cloth | 2500 | 'Adjam Mohammed, Bursa, | — | 1481 |
| Khodja Ibrâhîm b. Karam Allâh | pepper | 527 Ashrafi gold | Dâvûd, Jew | — | 1484 |

1) *Aladja* was any kind of cloth with stripes of different colours. In the 15th century documents we find *aladja* of Bursa, a kind of silk cloth, cotton textiles called *aladja* and *aladja* of India. For the import of Indian textiles see below p. 141.

| Name and origin | goods | value (in akča) | sold to | bought from | date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Khodja Ḥusayn, Damaskus | sable furs | ? | — | Khodja Muḥyi al-Dîn | 1481 |
| Ya'qûb, Aleppo | raw silk | 3330 | Ilyâs, velvet manufacturer in Bursa | — | 1481 |
| Ḥusayn, Andalusia | mohair | 350 | Meḥemmed | — | 1501 |
| Zayn al-Dîn, Aleppo | woollen cloth | 1600' | — — | Khodja musliḥ al-Dîn | 1500 |
| Al-Ḥâdjdj Yûsuf, Aleppo | indigo, gum lac | 9500 | Mustafa, attar in Seferihisar | — | 1501 |
| Ḥadjdji Abu Bakr, Aleppo | pepper (50 cantar), ginger (15 cantar) and other spices | 200000 | ? | — | 1500 |
| Dja'far, Aleppo | pepper | 22000 | Ahmad, Aleppo | — | 1500 |
| Khodja Sandemur | corals | 25000 | — | Karagöz, Bursa | 1500 |

Among the Arab merchants in Bursa in this period the example of Khodja Ṣadr al-Dîn b. 'Abd al-Raḥîm al-Shâmî is of a particular interest for us because of his wide-range activities. Here is a list showing the business he carried on in the years 1479-1480.

| goods | price (in akča) | sold to | bought from | date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| pepper, gum benzoine etc. | 15000 | Hamza b. 'Abd Allâh | — | May 1479 |
| silk | 1000 | — | Mustafa | May 1479 |
| damasks (*qemkhā*), brocades (*kadîfa mudhabbab*, *munaqqasha*) of Bursa | 3005 | — | Mehemmed, Beglerbeg of Anatolia | Aug. 1479 |
| Woollen cloth and mohair (*ṣûf*) | 30000 | — | Mehemmed, Beglerbeg of Anotolia | Aug. 1479 |
| Damask of Bursa | 4000 | 'Umar, Damaskus | — | Sept. 1479 |



| goods | price (in akča) | sold to | bought from | date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indigo, pepper, clove, and other spices | 12900 | Khodja Moḥammed, Aleppo | — | Sept. 1479 |
| pepper, clove, indigo, gum benzoine etc. | 52040 | Dâvûd b. Ilyâs, Jew of Istanbul | — | Sept. 1479 |
| gum lac | 4500 | Yûsuf b. 'Abd Allâh, silk manufacturer in Bursa | — | April 1480 |
| silk | 960 | Mehemmed | — | March 1480 |
| mastic of Csios (133 cantar), | 11600 | | Ḥüsâm al-Dîn Çelebi | |
| European woollen cloths | | — | | Oct. 1480 |

The most active of the Arab merchants in this period, Khodja Ṣadr al-Dîn of Damaskus, traded, as appears from our list, in spices and dyes imported from his native town as well as in Bursa silk cloths, European woollen cloths and Angora camelots (mohair). It is interesting to note that Bursa was then a market of gum mastic of Csios[1]) for the Arab merchants from Syria too. He sold spices in large quantities to the merchants of Bursa and Istanbul. Apparently he had settled in Bursa and engaged himself in the import as well as export trade. Among his customers we find Arab merchants such as 'Umar of Damaskus who bought from him Bursa cloths which he himself had apparently bought

[1]) Csios, closely dependent on the Bursa market for its trade with the East and North in this period, exported a considerable part of its mastic to Bursa, a fact that is confirmed by the large scale sales of it there. The Island greatly benefited from its transit trade which enabled the merchants of the Western nations without commercial priviledges to trade with the Ottoman dominions. By 1450 there is a reference to English kersey cloths in Chios. The merchandise that the English got in exchange were silk, jewels, cotton, wines, mastic, Turkish carpets, camelots, rhubarb, pepper and other kinds of spices (see Ph. Argenti, *The Occupation of Csios*, Cambridge 1958, pp. 500-501). Cotton and camelots (mohair) were imported from Turkey. The great transit center of the Angora camelots in this period was Bursa. In his general tendency to show the Island as the main producer of its exports, and to minimize the exports of Turkish products, Argenti assumed that the trade of camelots depended on the production in Csios itself (p. 509). We have no indication of a Chian industry large enough to provide of the large scale export of camelots from the Island.

in Bursa. He must have been doing business with the Italians there too, since a Qâḍî deed showed that he had a credit of a large sum of 86000 akča on Alessio, son of Piero, a Florentine merchant, who died in Bursa in February 1479 [1]).

Most of the Arab merchants doing business in Bursa were from Damaskus and Aleppo. In our table 10 out of 28 Arab merchants were from Aleppo, 6 from Damaskus, one from Hamâ, one from Damiette and one from Andalusia. Khodja Muṣliḥ al-Dîn of Bursa, mentioned in our table as selling a great quantity of pepper to a Jew named Mûsâ of Istanbul, is an example among many other Ottoman merchants who were buying spices from the Arab merchants or importing it themselves from Mecca, Damaskus or Aleppo. Also it is not a coincidence that the merchants in our table buying spices and dyes in Bursa were in majority Jews of Istanbul. These were found in great numbers in the trade of spices, European cloths and silk, not only in Istanbul, but also in the ports of Akkerman, Kaffa, Giurgiu and Kilia as the customs registers show.

Our table contains only a small part of the Arab merchants mentioned in the records of the Qâḍî of Bursa in those years. We have listed the merchants considered most typical. The table indicates that the principle imports by them were spices, dyes (indigo, gum lac) and textiles (cloths of Yaman, *Aladja*). It is a question whether the mohair sold by an Andalusian merchant was a product of Andulusia or of Turkey, for Turkey itself was producing and exporting mohair in great quantity. The trade in raw silk between Turkey and the Arab countries must be also limited since Turkey was getting it in great quantity directly from Iran. Syria was then producing a fine quality of cotton [2]), but Turkey was at the same period a great producer of cotton and met domestic needs sufficiently. As for the spices and dyes they appear to be regular imports in great quantity from Syria and Egypt. Under the Ottomans Bursa appears to have become a transit center of spices for Constantinople (Istanbul), the Balkans and the Northern countries (Moldavia, Poland, Russia).

1) See *Belleten*, No. 93, p. 72, document 8.

2) F. C. Lane, *Andrea Barbarigo*, 1418-1449, Baltimore 1944, p. 60-65, 101-113; B. Lewis, *Notes and documents from the Turkish Archives*, Jerusalem 1952, pp. 16-17.



In 1432 Bertrandon de La Broquière, who came to Bursa in a caravan from Damaskus, tells us that part of the spices brought by the caravan was bought by the Genoese merchants from Pera [1]). About 1470 a Florentine, Benedetto Dei, was able to claim that his fellow citizens could provide in Bursa not only for cotton, wax etc. but also for spices and they would be in a more favourable position there than the Venetians in Alexandria, for while the latter had to pay for spices cash in Alexandria the former could barter their cloths for the oriental goods in Bursa [2]). A more precise indication of the importance of the spice trade in Bursa was that the revenue of the duties from the imported saffron, gum lac and pepper in Bursa amounted to 100.000 akča (over 2000 Venetian gold ducats) in 1487 [3]). This had been even higher (135.000 akča) before, and the decrease can be ascribed to the conflict between the Ottomans and the Mameluks after the accession of Bâyezîd II (1481-1512). As 2 akča per cantar [4]) was the usual duty on such goods the annual import of these three items together can be estimated as about 2500 tons (saffron was a product of Asia Minor and must have constituted the larger part of this total amount). It can also be noted that in 1500 Abû Bakr of Aleppo sold in Bursa at one time spices worth of 200.000, that is over 4000 gold ducats.

From the reports of Maringhi, a Florentine agent in Pera, we know that even in 1501 spices were exported, however small, from Pera to Florence. In May 1501 he wrote to his associate in Florence (Ser Nicolo Michelozzi) that he had consigned three sacks of pepper to him

1) *Le Voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de La Broquière, premier tranchant et conseiller de Philippe Le Bon, Duc de Bourgogne*, publié et annoté par Ch. Schefer, Paris 1892, pp. 135, 137.

2) Heyd, II, pp. 349-50, 354.

3) H. Inalcik, *Bursa, Belleten* No. 93, p. 56. The three items were listed together in the *defter*.

4) Cantar, kantar or *qintâr* is shown as equal to 40 *okka* (one *okka*-1,282 kgr.) in the customs registers of this period. In a *qanûnnâme* of 972 of H. one cantar was 44 *okka* (see *Belleten*, No. 60, p. 677, cf. W. Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte*, Leiden 1955, p. 27).

and if wanted he could send more. It turned out, however, that the differences in prices between Bursa and Florence were then not large enough to make as good a profit as in the silk trade. Maringhi thought that if sold at 24 ducats a cantar, their pepper would make a good profit[1].) We learn from his letters that other companies too were importing spices from Bursa[2]). Galilei and Co. had imported at 24 ducats (The official price of one cantar of pepper in Adrianople was 18 ducats at this date[3])). Maringhi asked Michelozzi to send back the unsold part of the pepper that he had consigned, and added: "In any case there is no bargain to be expected from the spices"[4]). Soon he learned that all the pepper he had sent was sold out, and he asked if any more was wanted. In 1503 he wrote[5]) that the price of pepper might go up to 27 ducats in Pera if new supplies did not arrive.

There is no doubt that for the sole reason of the transportation difficulties on the long overland route from Mecca to Bursa, the spice trade of Bursa with the West was never to be a flourishing one, and later on the decrease in prices in the European markets after the Portuguese discovery of the sea-route to India was, as it appears from Maringhi's letters, an additional factor to discourage this trade in Bursa and Pera. But, the Ottoman unifying policy and expansion in the Balkans and Anatolia followed by the replacement of the Italians by Ottoman subjects (Muslim or non-Muslim) in the spice trade with the Northern countries, kept the Bursa and Istanbul-Pera spice market alive. This

1) G. R. B. Richards, *Florentine Merchants in the age of Medicis*, Cambridge Mass., 1932, p. 108.

2) Idem, p. 108.

3) *Kanûnnâme-i Ihtisâb-i Edirne*, ed. Ö. L. Barkan, *Tarih Vesikaları Dergisi*, No. IX, p. 173. Here is a list of pepper prices in Turkey in this period according to the customs registers:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adrianople | 950 | akča | per cantar | around 1502 |
| Akkerman | 1440-1800 | akča | per cantar | around 1504 |
| Kilia | 2000-2400 | akča | per cantar | around 1504 |
| Tulča | 1700 | akča | per cantar | around 1506 |
| Akkerman | 1800 | akča | per cantar | around 1515 |
| Yergögü (Giurgiu) | 1800 | akča | per cantar | around 1525 |

4) Richards, *op. cit.* p. 117.

5) Ibid. p. 272.



market continued to be supplied with spices in the 16th century by the Syria-Bursa caravan route and the Bursa-Antalya-Alexandria sea-route on the one hand, and the Alexandria-Csios-Istanbul route on the other[1]).

The customs registers of Akkerman, Kaffa, Kilia (Kili) and Yergögü (Giurgiu) attest to an active trade with the northern countries in this period. From the reign of Mehemmed II (1451-1481) onwards not only were all kinds of manufactured goods and natural products of the Ottoman lands[2]) brought to these ports by the Ottoman merchants, Muslim, Jew, Greek, Armenian, but imported spices, dyes, sugar and European cloths were also brought by them[3]). Yergögü received about 30 cantar (1501 kgr.) pepper in eight months in 1506 and 43 cantar (2112 kgr.) in six months in 1515. It is also interesting to note that in Lwow (Lemberg), the center of the Levant trade in Poland, the Italians were replaced by Armenians, Greeks, and Jews coming from the Ottoman empire[3]), and Sučeava, in Moldavia on the trade-route from Kaffa and Akkerman to Lwow, seems to have expanded its Levantine trade during this period. When in 1455 Petru III

1) The view that the India-Arabia trade route was not completely cut off and Indian goods continued to arrive in Mecca and Cairo in the 16th century (Lybyer, Lane, Braudel) finds a strong confirmation in the Turkish sources (see *Belleten*, No. 60, pp. 661-676). Even in 1671 a report submitted to the Levant Company in France reads: „De sept à huit caravanes des Indes qui y (Aleppo) abordaient tous les ans et qui vont à Smyrne il n'y en vient à présent qu'une." (P. Masson, *Hist. du commerce français au Levant au 16e siècle*, I, p. 374).

2) The customs registers of these ports included such goods as silks of Bursa, damasks, brocades, satin, tafetta, raw silk, cotton goods from Adrianople and Salonica, woollen blankets, copper hardware, mohair of Angora and natural products such as dried raisins, nuts, rice, opium, soap, wines, alum. Among the shipowners are found such names as Yani of Trebizond, Dimitri, Ali Reis, Bernardo of Csios, Yorgi of Trebizond, Nikefor of Crete, Kemal Reis, Sava, Angelos, Manul, Uways of Istanbul, Toma b. Zano, and among the merchants Marko, Yusuf of Adrianople, Andrea of Pera, Avram of Istanbul, Musa the Jew, Hamza, Kirkor, Mahmud, Lefteri, 'Abd Allâh of Bursa, Mihitar, Kosta, Trândafilos, Hadjdji 'Abd' Allâh, Timur, Mustafa of Karahisar, Sha'bân the Jew, Ya'qûb the Jew, Hamza of Bursa, Emre of Istanbul, Süleyman of Adrianople, Yehuda of Moldavia.

3) See L. Charewiczowa, *Handel Lwowa z Moldanja i Multanami w wiekach srednich*, in *Historyczny*, I, (1924), pp. 56-67.

Aaron recognised Mehemmed II as his suzerain by paying a yearly tribute of 2000 gold ducats, his subjects were granted freedom of trade in the Ottoman dominions, especially in Adrianople, Bursa, and Istanbul [1]). By becoming *kharâdj-guzârs*, people paying tribute, they also enjoyed a reduction in customs rates which seemed to offset the burden of the *kharâdj* paid [2]).

By the end of the 15th century Russian merchants appeared not only in Kaffa, Akkerman, Kilia and other Black Sea ports but also in Anatolia and Bursa. An order of the Sultan to the Qâdîs of Anatolia makes it clear that three Russian merchants, named Alexi, Gavril and Stepan, should be exempted from paying any *kharâdj* while they visited Anatolia on commercial purposes. At the Porte they declared: "Previsiously we were doing business importing goods from Russia and freely travelling in this country but this time when we were coming from Bursa to Usküdar (Scutari)" the tax collector tried to subject them to taxation claiming that they were run away slaves [3]). The goods imported from Russia were enumerated in the customs registers as well as in the orders to the collectors of the customs duties [4]). These goods were furs, especially Russian foxes, sables, martens, fine leather (called *Bulgârî*), harnesses, woollen cloths (called *Trski* and *Chkmet*?), Russian linens, knives and other arms. It can be assumed that the Russian-Ottoman trade was quite extensive in this period and the first diplomatic relations between the two countries, established through the Khan of Crimea in 1492, had commercial as well as political (conflict with the Jagellons) motives [5]).

As for Ragusa (Dubrovnik) we can not emphasize here too much how

1) The text of this berât in F. Kraelitz, *Osmanische Urkunden in türkischer Sprache*, Wien 1922, p. 44.

2) J. Nistor, *Die auswärtigen Handelbeziehungen der Moldau*, Gotha 1911; see the important collection of documents: *Documente privind istoria Rominiei*, ed. M. Roller.

3) *The Qâdî deeds of Bursa*, The Bursa Museum, Şer'iye sicilleri, No. 18/17, v. 358 a.

4) For the registers see above p. 132 note 1.

5) B. Spuler, *Europäische Diplomaten in Constantinopel, Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. I, No. 3, p. 425; H. Inalcık, *Yeni vesikalara göre Kırım Hanlığının Osmanlı tâbiliğine girmesi ve ahidnâme meselesi*, *Belleten* No. 30, pp. 185-229, F. Koneczny, *Sprawy z Mengli-Girejem*, Vilno 1928.



greatly the Ragusans expanded their trade in the Levant at the expense of the Italians by becoming a *kharâdj*-paying city to the Ottomans [1]).

Even at the present stage of research it is safe to say that with the conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul) and the unification of the Eastern empire by Mehemmed II, the commerce of the Levant achieved a significant internal development in favor of the native elements, and, in particular, the international trade route of Arabia-Bursa-Istanbul and the Black Sea ports experienced a renewed prosperity.

In this period not only the Ottoman and Arab merchants were active in this trade but also merchants were coming to Bursa and the Balkans directly from India to do business.

Maḥmûd Gâwân or Gîlânî, powerful vizier of the Bahmanî kingdom in India [2]), organised regular trade relations with Turkey by 1480. According to the records of the Qâḍîs of Bursa [3]) he sent three commercial agents to Bursa with cloths and other commodities (not specified in the document) in April 1479. In February 1481, a larger group of six agents who were his salaried men (*wakîls*) sent by him reached Bursa. From their usual headquarters in Bursa some of them passed over to Rumelia (the Balkans) to trade their goods, textiles and Indian goods. A statement in one of these documents makes it clear that they came via Arabia [4]). From a document dated 1548 [5]), apparently comprising the previous Mameluk practices, we learn that spices and cloths of India were arriving in Syria from Mecca or from Egypt by caravans similar to the one which B. de La Broquière joined in 1432. At Kisve near Damaskus, a customs duty of seven gold pieces and half a gold of *Mubâshiriyya* were collected per load of camel. If these goods were sold at the Damaskus market to the Western merchants the seller paid

1) Now see I. Božic, *Dubrovnik i Turska u XIV i XV veku*, Beograd 1952.

2) See Journal of the Asiatic Soc. of Bengal, I-2, 1935.

3) See the documents published in *Belleten*, No. 93, pp. 69, 75, 95.

4) Idem, p. 75.

5) Ö. L. Barkan, *Kanunlar*, I, Istanbul 1943, p. 221; its translation into French in R. Mantran-J. Sauvaget, *Règlements fiscaux ottomans, les provinces syriennes*, Paris 1951, pp. 8-9. For the practices under the Mameluks see, *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum*, II, Venice 1899, pp. 325, 338.

a duty at the rate of 10 per cent and the buyer 9 per cent *ad valorem*. If this was between Muslims only a small duty of broker (*dellâliyye*) (1 per cent *ad valorem* on spices and dyes) was to have been paid. The Westerners paid other duties, a 2 per cent *ad valorem* and a duty 7 1/3 per camel before they took their purchases to Beyrouth to ship. Thus, Muslims could take the Indian goods further to Bursa without being subject to the taxation that the Europeans had to pay in Damaskus.

The land-route from Aleppo to Bursa followed roughly the ancient diagonal route across Anatolia [1]). B. de La Broquière has left us a description of this route in 1432. As we have seen, in Damaskus he joined a caravan of pilgrims and merchants coming from Mecca with three thousand camels. The Turkish group in it included many notable men and was placed by appointment of the Sultan under a merchant of Bursa [2]). De La Broquière arrived in Bursa after a journey of about fifty days via Aleppo, Adana, Konya, Akshehir, Kara-hisar (Afyon) and Kütahya. At Akshehir he came across twenty five Arabs in a caravanserail, and in Bursa he found Florentine and Genoese merchants [3]). This land-route passed through Karamanid territory and was at the mercy of the Karamanid princes, irreconcilable rivals of the Ottomans. Certain passage duties were levied at the three mountain passes in the Taurus range. These duties were six Aleppo *akča* (at this time about 120 of this silver coin were worth one Venetian ducat) for a camel load, four for a horse and two for a donkey load [4]). The Ottomans first secured control of the Bursa-Antalya-Alexandria sea-route in 1390 and only after a long struggle between 1464-1474 did they eventually occupy the whole territory of the Karamanids [5]). They then abolished all the passage duties (Kosunlu-*badj* and Kara-isalu *badj*,

1) See Fr. Taeschner, *Das anatolische Wegennetz nach osmanischer Quelle*, 2 vols. Leipzig 1924-26.

2) "*Hoyarbara, qui estoit chief de la caravane et des plus grands de la cité de Brousse*" (B. de La Broquière, p. 59).

3) The activity of the Italian merchants in Bursa according to the records of the Qâdis of Bursa will be dealt in a separate article.

4) Barkan, *Kanunlar*, p. 201.

5) See H. Inalcık, *Mehmed II.*, *Islâm Ansiklopedisi*, cüz 75 (1956), pp. 506-535.



obviously named for the two Türkmen tribes) except for one at the famous Gülek pass [1]).

The sea-route we have mentioned, it appears, was not less important for the Bursa-Arabia trade than the land-route, especially before the Ottoman conquest of the Karamanid territory.

Already under the Seldjukids in the 13th century, Antalya (Satalia, Adalia) was a very important transit center for the export of the products of Anatolia and the import of merchandise from Egypt and Syria, as well as from Europe [2]). From an incident we learn that in 1289 an Anconian ship was carrying sugar, linen and pepper from Alexandria to Alâiye (Alanya-Candelore), a port near Antalya[3]). Ibn Batûta, who came from Lâdhikiya (Lazkiye), a Syrian port, to Alâiye and thence passed to Antalya, described it as "one of the best cities of the world" [4]) and Malipiero toward 1470 wrote that it was the greatest spice market for Asia Minor [5]). Antalya, and the area where the main routes leading to Bursa lay, belonged to the Hamîd dynasty until the Ottomans invaded this region in the years 1381 and 1390. The century-long struggle between the Ottomans and the Karamanids for the control of this area seems to have been determined by its economic importance. The Ottomans did everything to ensure this direct route from Bursa to Egypt and Syria which were under the Mameluks with whom commercial and political relations were considered very important by the Ottomans [6]). This direct sea route was also much shorter than the land

1) According to the Kânûnnâme of Sis dated 1519 (Barkan, *Kanunlar*, p. 201).

2) See W. Heyd, I, p. 548; S. Lloyd and D. Storm Rice, *Alanya* (*Ala'iyye*), London 1958. I. H. Konyali, *Alanya*, Istanbul 1946.

3) W. Heyd, I, 547.

4) *Voyages d'Ibn Batutah*, ed. C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti, II (Paris 1877), P. 258.

5) *Annali Veneti*, I, p. 74 (mentioned by Heyd, II, 356).

6) Facing the constant Karamanid threat at their rear the Ottomans, nevertheless, insisted upon getting control of Akshehir, Begshehri, Seydishehri, Isparta region, and, Bâyezid I (1389-1402) as well as Mehemmed II endeavoured persistently to fix a border line at the Çarshanba river which was to ensure, on its west, the Bursa-Antalya route (see my *Fatih Devri*, I, Ankara 1954, pp. 36-37; and *Mehmed* II, *Isl. Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 523-527).

route for it took only one week or so from Alexandria to Antalya [1]), and while light precious stuff could be taken by the land-route it was necessary to use the sea-route for the bulky freight such as lumber, pitch and iron exported from Anatolia. But there too there were some obstacles. Rhodes and Cyprus were in Christian hands and the piratical activities of the Catalans and others who often found shelter in these islands, constituted a real danger to the sea communications of the Muslims in the East Mediterranean [2]). Along with other causes (the threat of the Timurids and, then, Uzun Hasan) this situation accounts for the long friendly relations between the Ottomans and the Mameluks until their interests came to an acute clash in Central and Southern Anatolia by 1464 [3]). When the Mameluks attempted at the conquest of Cyprus in 1426 and the Ottomans pressured the Knights of Rhodes in 1454, relations were strengthened between Cairo and the Porte. By 1430 when the Ottomans were at war against the Venetians the Mameluk-Venetian relations came to the breaking point [4]). Venice, the Karamanids and the kingdom of Cyprus were then preparing an alliance [5]). A similar alignment was to be seen later in the years 1471-1473 when Venice and Uzun Hasan, the powerful ruler of Iran and Eastern Anatolia, made an alliance against the Ottomans and Uzun Hasan sent letters to the king of Cyprus and the Knights of Rhodes exhorting them to cooperate with the army he was to send under the Karamanid princes [6]). Upon the sack and burning down of the outer parts of Antalya by a strong Christian fleet under the Venetians in 1472, the

1) See *Fatih Devri*, I, p. 65. Shams al-Dîn Djazarî used the sea-route fleeing from Egypt to the Ottoman territory in the time of Bâyezid I. His voyage from Alexandria to Antalya took only three and a half day. The Egyptian ambassadors to the Ottoman court in the same period usually took the same route (see Al-'Ayni, *'Ikd al-Djumân*, the events of 799 of H.)

2) For the Catalans now see N. Coll y Julia, *El corso catalan en relacion con el commercio en el Proximo Oriente, en Flandes y el Mediterraneo*, Estudios de His. Moderna, Barcelona 1955.

3) See *Mehmed II, Isl. Ansikl.*, cüz 75, p. 524-525.

4) N. Iorga, *Notes et Extraits*, vol. II, p. 519-521.

5) Idem, pp. 501-503.

6) Original copies of these letters were captured and preserved in the Ottoman archives (Tokapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, No. 3127/2, 8334, 9662).



besieged threatened to make reprisals on the Venetian merchants settled in Syria, that is, in the Mameluk territory. It is also interesting to note that the quantities of spices found then at Antalya made a great impression on its pillagers [1]). It was apparently to protect the Ottoman merchants against the Christian pirates that the state-owned ships were hired to the Muslim merchants there [2]). Mehemmed II made a major effort in 1480 to conquer Rhodes from the Knights "to put an end to their attacks on the Muslim ships and coasts" [3]). The Ottomans succeded in taking the Island only in 1522, five years after the conquest of Syria and Egypt. Thus the Ottomans secured complete control of the direct line between Alexandria and Istanbul which seems, in the long run, to have adversely affected the activity of the old Antalya-Bursa route.

Turkish merchants, especially from Bursa, were actively engaged in the import and export trade with the Arab countries using the land as well as sea routes. One of these merchants, Khayr al-Dîn had his will recorded in the book of the Qâdî of Bursa which contains interesting details for our subject. It reads: "He said: between Hadjdjî Koçi, a slave freed by Khodja Mehemmed [4]) and myself there were an association with a capital at the amount of 545.500 akča the half of which belonged to me and the other half to aforesaid Khodja Mehemmed. From the aforesaid amount lumber, wood, and pitch worth 105.000 akča has been taken by my son Yûsuf and the aforesaid Khodja Mehemmed's son Ibrâhîm from Antalya to Alexandria, also Yûsuf and Hasan, slaves of the aforesaid Mehemmed, have gone overland to Egypt taking 123.000 akča worth of Bursa cloths and saffron, also 112500 akča worth of iron, wood and lumber were sent (to Egypt) with the Sultan's ships; these were sent by my son Yûsuf; also 12000 akča worth of leather were sent by me to my sons in Egypt via the

1) See W. Heyd, II, p. 355; Zinkeisen, GOR, II, p. 404 note 2.

2) *Belleten*, No. 44, p. 701, document 12.

3) Sa'd al-Dîn, *Tâdj al-Tawârikh*, I, 372.

4) For the important place of slaves and freed slaves in the industrial and commercial life in Bursa see, H. İnalcık, 15. *asır Türkiye iktisadi ve içtimai tarihi kaynakları*, *Iktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, Istanbul, vol. 15, No. 1-4, pp. 58-59.

Antalya port with a man named Seydî Alî, and a slave of the aforesaid Khodja Mehemmed named Süleyman took sables, lynx furs and Bursa cloths worth 125000 akčas, and also they (Khayr al-Dîn and Khodja Mehemmed) declared that 75 Ashrafî flori were due to them by a person in Egypt named Wazzânî Shahâb al-Dîn . . ." [1])

The capital invested in this enterprise, about 11000 gold ducats, was a sizeable one for the period [2]). The goods exported to Egypt were mostly products of Turkey: lumber, pitch, Bursa cloths, sables and lynx furs. But among the goods in their joint possession mention is also made of 11.400 Wallachian knives imported from Wallachia, soap and ginger (*Zancabîl Hirbânî*) imported from Arabia. Khayr al-Dîn stated in the same document that he had sold 22.000 akča worth of soap to several people in Antalya. A regulation of the customs duties of Antalya dated 1477 [3]) shows that cloths, raw silk, camelots (mohair), iron spades and the like, wood and lumber were the most important items of export and that spices, sugar, indigo and other dyes were the leading imports. In a detailed day-book of the Antalya customs dated 1560 [4]) we find imports and exports specified in more detail. They included lumber, iron, carpets, rugs, leather and hides, opium, slaves (white), Wallachian knives, dried fruits, pitch, a kind of light cotton textile called *bugasi*, lynx furs, London cloths (*čûka-i Londra*) as principal exports, and black slaves, rice, pepper, linen, sugar, dyes, and a cloth called *aladja* as imports. From Tripoli of Syria soap, cotton and olive oil were shipped to Antalya. Again, in this document slaves, rice, linen, and sugar come first in importance as imports and wood, leather, carpets, opium, slaves, iron, and woollen cloths as exports. Export of lumber to Egypt from Asia Minor had always been important [5]), and under the

1) For the full text see *Belleten*, No. 93, pp. 91-93.
2) For a comparison see A. Barbaro's capital (about 15000 ducats) in F. Lane, *op. cit.* p. 32.
3) Başvekâlet Archives, Maliye, No. 7387.
4) Başvekâlet Archives, Maliye, No. 102.
5) References to the import of wood from Asia Minor to Egypt in the Arabic sources (Ibn Taghribirdi, Ibn Iyâs) are abundant. I am indebted to Dr. Ayalon to draw my attention to them. One of the earliest references to it is quoted by P. Wittek, *Das Fürstentum Mentesche*, *Istanbuler Mitteilungen*, 2, Istanbul 1934 p. 2.



Ottomans it continued on a large scale. According to the official records the customs duties levied on wood, lumber, and pitch exported from Antalya in 1477 amounted to 150.000 akča (about 3000 gold ducats) and to 50.000 akča at Alâiye [1]). The export trade of lumber was put under state monopoly and farmed out to private individuals [2]). A regulation of 1477 [3]) provided that the undertaker of this monoply was to buy a piece of lumber from the workers for three akča and to sell it for seven, a cantar (51, 280 kgr.) of pitch was to be bought for 60 akča and sold for 120 [4]). (These workers were customarily only Türkmen nomads living on the Taurus mountains who, because of their occupation, were called *Tahtadji*, that is lumbermen and until recently a large group of nomads there bore this appellation). Heavy goods such as wood, lumber, pitch, iron, and leather were transported by ships from Antalya to Alexandria and as we have pointed out the Sultan's ships were hired [5]) for this purpose.

As another positive proof of the expanding Ottoman-Mameluk trade in this period we can mention the fact that the Egyptian gold coin called *Ashrafî* was then widely used [6]) in the Ottoman dominions, especially in Bursa. Its official rate varied between 42.5 and 43 akča a piece while the Venetian ducat (*Efrendjî*, *Afrandjî*) and the Ottoman gold coin varied between 45.5 and 46. [7])

1) Başvekâlet Archives, No. 6222.
2) Some regulations of state monopolies in the second half of the 15th century in the Ottoman empire are found in *Kānūnnāme-i Sultānī ber muceb-i 'örf-i Osmānī*, ed. R. Anhegger-H. Inalcık (Ankara 1956).
3) Başvekâlet Archives, Maliye, No. 7387.
4) Pitch was extracted at a village called *Hisardjık*.
5) See above p. 145.
6) *Belleten*, No. 93 (1960), documents No. 9, 26, 28, 34.
7) *Idem*. Both the florin and the Venetian ducat were called *efrendji* or *flori* since both of them contained about 3.5 grams of gold.

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