

# THE ANGLO-OTTOMAN TRADE 1700-1800: GOODS, VOLUME and BALANCE of TRADE<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores how the trade between Britain and the Ottoman Empire before and at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution looked like. By using the British customs registers, it sets up a historical trade statistics which reveals the basic characteristics of the 18th century Anglo-Ottoman trade on the basis of the volume and the balance of trade and the composition of the goods, whereby it provides a comparative insight into the trends in trade patterns between the two regions. The initial results of the research show that the volume of trade at substantial levels at the beginning, tended to decline through the century, dwindling away in last decades. The balance of trade was in favor of the Ottoman Empire throughout the century, but the Ottoman exports gradually declined through the century, whereas the British exports recorded occasional increases. The bulk of the trade conducted between the two regions consisted of textiles, whether as raw, semi-finished or finished products. The textiles predominantly consisted of woolens and silk. But the distinctive feature of the good composition characterized by the supremacy of silk and woolens and prevalent for the better part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century tended to change at the end of the century.

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Key words: Britain, England, Ottoman, Trade, 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The current research intends to contribute to what we know about the Anglo-Ottoman trade in the Eighteenth century by introducing fresh evidence from archival sources and tries to elaborate on the general pattern of trade by making use of the statistical data from British customs registers. It quantifies the volume of trade and sets forward the balance of trade on the one hand; and illustrates the composition of commercial items, on the other hand. With this capacity, the research has the potential of testing, augmenting or refuting our current knowledge on the general character or the long-term trends of the trade between the Ottoman Empire and England.

The main sources of the research are the English customs registers, which comprise the whole of Britain for the better part of the century. The ports serving this trade are not specified. But still, the center of the trade seems to be located as London. 99,96 % of the imports from Turkey between 1700 and 1780 is destined to arrive in London. This percentage slightly decreases to 98,46 % in exports to Turkey for the same period.

The registers for the years 1705 and 1712 are missing. All the figures utilized during the study have been the official values based on Sterling, Shilling and Pence parity. But the use of official figures deserves a special mention, as their use for 18th century explorations was deemed a controversial issue.

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In English foreign trade the official figures were regarded as reflecting a tolerably accurate picture of reality for most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> But this was truer for exports. The reliability of the official export figures in tracking the changes of the volume of trade was extended so as to cover the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup>. The greater reliability of the export figures has been associated with the relative scarcity of the acts of smuggling and exemption from export duties for the better part of the century.<sup>4</sup> But the authenticity of the official figures was also related to price conditions. In the eighteenth century, until the last two decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, at least, the average prices in England were stable<sup>5</sup>. It was even argued that, except for some American and Asian staples such as tea, coffee, tobacco, chocolate and sugar, price changes had exerted only a minor influence on commodities of overseas trade prior to the 1790's.<sup>6</sup> Thus, before the 1780's, the official values of the exports and their market values must have been close to each other<sup>7</sup> and re-working the original official values to obtain a "cleaner" dataset was unlikely to alter major conclusions concerning the overall rate of export growth.<sup>8</sup> This view was also accepted as true for the long-term trend of the physical volume of trade by certain authors<sup>9</sup>, while rejected by others.<sup>10</sup> Actually, as pointed out elsewhere<sup>11</sup>, when the need to revalue goods arose, official prices were subject to changes as well. Furthermore, some of the goods were recorded as "at value", possibly at current prices, during the first introduction of the good, not to mention the category of "goods of several sorts", still likely to be recorded at current values.

In using the official values, the original totals concerning the annual import and export figures were kept intact in the present study. But the annual calculation of the value of separate goods was made on the basis of sterling, the figures for shilling and pence being disregarded. And the import figures of the year 1818 could be only partially utilized. This resulted in a discrepancy of about 1,78 % in imports and % 0,004 in exports between the original official figures and the totals reached by manual calculations. The "prize goods" of the late decades, which involve such articles as "cocoa, coffee, sugar, pepper and snuff" and correspond to a tiny proportion of total figures, were also excluded from both manual calculations and official totals.

With regard to exports, the trade articles were seen to be classified into "English manufactures" and "Foreign merchandize" between 1700-1780 and into "British" and "Foreign Goods, Wares and Merchandize" between 1780 and 1800.

The information about the physical amount of articles, a complementary element to enhance the authenticity of the figures, was ignored until 1770's. The information about the quantity of certain staple commodities for the period between 1772 and 1800, however, are within reach and comparable to the figures of volume of trade for the same period.

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<sup>2</sup> Ralph Davis, *The Industrial Revolution and British Overseas Trade*, Leicester University Press, 1979, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959, Trends and Structure*, Cambridge University Press, 1962, pp. 43-44.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> François Crouzet, "Toward an Export Economy: British Exports during the Industrial Revolution", *Explorations in Economic History*, 17 (1980), p. 49; Deane and Cole, *op.cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> S. D. Smith, "Prices and the Value of English Exports in the Eighteenth Century: Evidence from the North American Colonial Trade", *Economic History Review*, XLVIII, 3 (1995), p. 575.

<sup>7</sup> Crouzet, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 579.

<sup>9</sup> Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole's (*op.cit.*, p. 43-44) re-construction of official values on the basis of constant prices of 1796-98 did not change the over-all pattern of the trade and the basic trend of the figures. And even "in the last thirty years of the century, in particular, when the official values might have been most misleading, the movement of the two series" was "almost identical".

<sup>10</sup> Javier Cuenca Esteban, "The Rising Share of British Industrial Exports in Industrial Output, 1700-1851", *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Dec., 1997), pp. 885-86.

<sup>11</sup> Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 578.

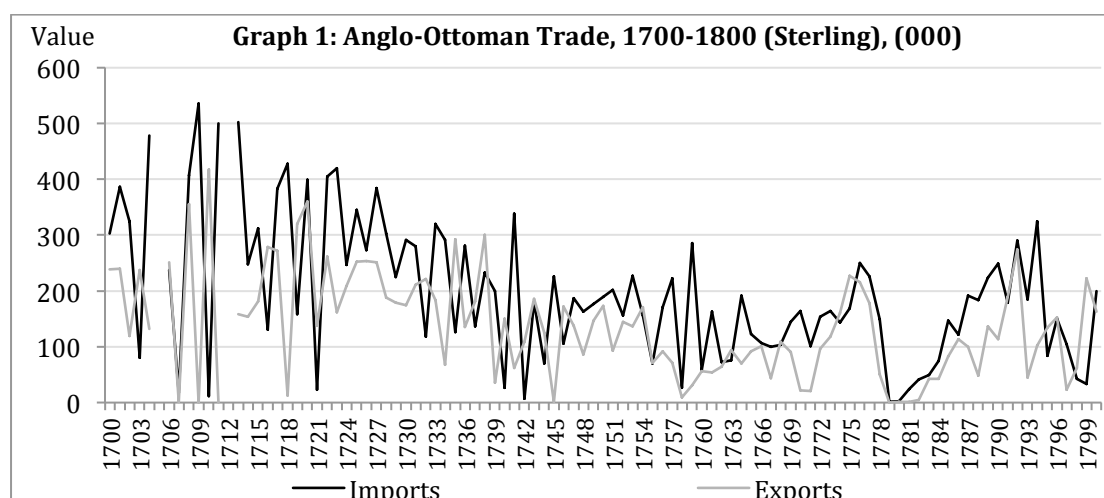
A quick glance at the figures on the quantity of a group of selected articles imported from and exported to the Ottoman Empire shows that they overlap the trend of official values on the whole, showing parallel rates of decrease and increase and implying a similarity between official and reel values. The figures for Cotton and mohair yarn, the leading articles of export from the Ottoman Empire into England after silk, for example, show corresponding rates of growth with official values through a period of about three decades, hinting a stability in the price of both articles. The average ratio of deviation between the figures of quantity and official value is less than % 1 in cotton and mohair yarn. With regard to the figures on Ottoman silk, on the other hand, the equality between the figures of value and quantity comes to an end in the late 80's and, starting from 1790's, the rate of increase in figures of value lags behind the figures of quantity. Similar rates of differentiation are also visible in the figures of woolen cloth and pepper, the increase in the figures of quantity being either over or under the rate of increase of the official values. The rate of differentiation in the figures of watches and cochineal, on the other hand, is quite limited, those of the latter being almost identical.

Being aware of the need to deflate the constant prices or reconstruct new series on the basis of real values, the authors of the present research still conceive the official figures utilized throughout the research as capable of showing the pattern and the basic trends of the trade between the Ottoman Empire and Britain. This capability, in fact, should be better apply to the second part of the research, i.e. the composition of the trade articles.

The early results of the study suggest that the Anglo-Ottoman trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, except for occasional ups and downs, was one of a decline. The trade conducted between the two regions predominantly consisted of textiles and the articles associated with textile industry. The balance of trade was in favor of the Ottoman Empire through the Eighteenth century; but England tended to export more finished goods whereas the imports from Turkey consisted chiefly of raw materials. This general pattern of trade, however, differed over time and new patterns began to emerge by the end of the research period.

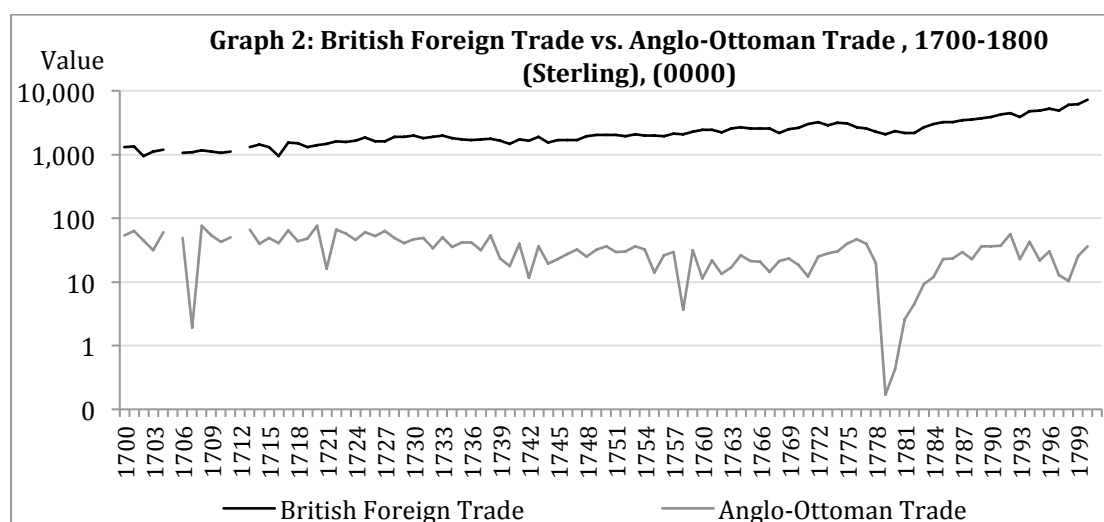
## 2. VOLUME AND BALANCE OF TRADE

Graph 1 indicates that the volume of trade tends to decrease through the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This decline is reflected both in imports and exports. But one can still see distinct phases characterized by a consistent course during the first quarter of the century; a moderate trend of decline until the 70's; and a deep bottom by 1780 to be followed by a noticeable increase in the late 80's and early 90's.



Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 17: 1-21

With regard to the volume of trade, the trend of the English trade with the Ottoman Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century differed strikingly from the course of the British foreign trade<sup>12</sup>, which showed a moderate increase before the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, with a temporary decrease in 80's, to be further followed by a sharp increase for the rest of the century<sup>13</sup>. Owing to market changes, protectionist policies and wars, the English overseas trade grew slowly in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and much of the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the annual growth rate being 1% only. Between 1848 and 1775, however, the average rate of growth became 1,9 % per year.<sup>14</sup> The growth in the volume of trade was mainly the result of the increase in the exports in the mid-eighties and the sudden upsurge in the last two decades of the century. But it was also accompanied by the rapid and sustained increase in the imports from the 1760's on<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the share of the Ottoman trade in total British foreign trade has constantly fallen over the century. Turkey accounted for 4,08 % of total British foreign trade in 1700. This proportion dropped into 1,77 % by 1750 and ended up with 0,5 % in 1800. Graph 2 shows the trend of British foreign trade<sup>16</sup> and the Anglo-Ottoman trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in logarithmic scale.



Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 17: 1-21

The decline seen in the trade with the Ottoman Empire over the 18<sup>th</sup> century was often cited and explained by various scholars. According to Ralph Davis, one of these scholars, Anglo-Ottoman trade for the better part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century consisted

<sup>12</sup> England accounted for 88,91 % of the imports from all parts of the World into Great Britain and to 83,03 % of the exports to all parts of the World from Great Britain between 1781-1800, exclusive of prize goods.

<sup>13</sup> For a closer look at the course and the nature of the trade see the "Introduction" by W.E. Minchinton, (*The Growth of English Overseas Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Ed. W. E. Minchinton), Methuen & Co. Ltd., London 1969, pp. 13-18) and Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole (*British Economic Growth 1688-1959 Trends and Structure*, Cambridge 1962, pp. 42-50, table 13 and figures 1 and 2 in particular).

<sup>14</sup> Minchinton, "Introduction", pp. 14-16.

<sup>15</sup> Deane and Cole, *op.cit.*, pp. 45-47.

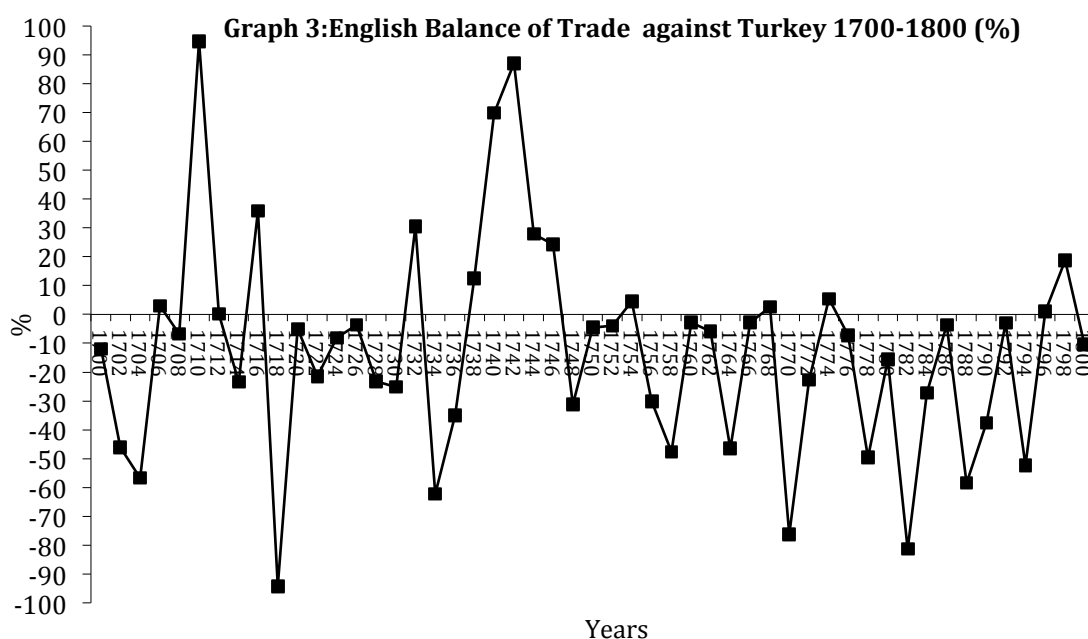
<sup>16</sup> The totals presented in the graph are attained by manual calculations from customs books. The import figures on the whole overlap with those presented by B.R. Mitchell (Abstract of British Historical Statistics, with the Collaboration of Phyllis Deane, Cambridge University Press, 1962, pp. 279-281), except for the period between 1700-1709, mainly because of the omission of the original values of woolen goods by the author. But this is less true for export figures. In the latter, classified under "domestic" and "re-exports" of England & Wales by Mitchell, the average rate of deviation is 25,64 % for the period between 1700-1771, whereas this rate decreases to 0,88 % for the exports of "Great Britain" between 1772-1800. The export figures between 1700-1709, on the other hand, are consistent with those given by Elizabeth Boody Schumpeter (*English Overseas Trade Statistics 1697-1808*, Oxford 1960, p. 14) and cited by W. E. Minchinton (*The Growth of English Overseas Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Methuen & Co Ltd, London 1969, p. 58), this time classified under the categories of "commodities" and "Specie". The same figures were re-constructed by Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole (*British Economic Growth 1688-1959, Trends and Structure*, Cambridge University Press, 1962, pp. 319-320).

predominantly of the exchange of English woolen cloth in return for Ottoman silk. Starting with 1730's, owing to the political disturbances on Ottoman Eastern frontier and the ensuing interruption of silk flow, the European merchants had to turn to the silk grown in Anatolia, Cyprus and Syria. Then, the East India Company began to import silk from Bengal in increasing quantities, which was followed by the introduction of Chinese silk in the early 1750's. All these developments had a negative impact on Ottoman raw silk exports.<sup>17</sup>

The decline in the trade, however, was not confined to silk; it also extended to such staples as coffee and cotton. Interestingly enough, all these articles were in increasing demand in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Nor was the decline in the trade limited to England. Half of the trade of Levant was conducted with France in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, but this percentage fell to 5 % in the 1780's.<sup>18</sup>

Charles Issawi links the decline of Middle Eastern trade as a whole with the decrease both in the capacity of supply and foreign demand. He relates the decrease in supply mainly to the decline in population and the stagnation or retrogression of handicrafts, whereas the decline in demand in Western world is connected with technological improvements and getting access to new supply regions with cheaper or superior products.<sup>19</sup>

The balance of trade between the Ottoman Empire and England unveils contrasting characteristics. The trade was to the detriment of England for the better of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The excess of exports from the Ottoman Empire amounted to 5,983,078 £, which corresponded to a deficit of 30,69 % against Turkey. This pattern of trade was in compliance with the general pattern of Ottoman foreign trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which is supposed to have been in favor of the Ottoman Empire until the end of the century.<sup>20</sup>



Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 17: 1-21

<sup>17</sup> Ralph Davis, *Aleppo And Devonshire Square*, Macmillan, London 1967, p. 141-43; Ralph Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East 1580-1780", in M.A. Cook (ed.), *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East from the Rise of Islam to the Present Day*, Oxford University Press, London 1978, p. 198.

<sup>18</sup> Davis, "English Imports", p. 205.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Issawi, "The Decline of Middle Eastern Trade", in *Islam and the Trade of Asia* (Richards D.S. ed.), Bruno Cassier Ltd., Oxford 1977, pp. 246-53.

<sup>20</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 128.

The pattern of the trade with the Ottoman Empire differed from the general pattern of British foreign trade. The balance in British foreign trade in the Eighteenth century was in favor of England. The value of the English imports, except for a short period during the 1780's, has never exceeded that of its exports. The excess of British exports in the 18<sup>th</sup> century amounted to about 298,5 million Sterling and corresponded to an excess of 22,71 % over imports.

The negative outlook of the balance of trade against the Ottoman Empire, however, needs to be further elaborated, which requires having a closer look at the prices of goods over time and handling the composition of goods in imports and exports separately. This research does only claim to dwell on the latter.

### 3. COMPOSITION OF GOODS

#### 3.1 EXPORT ARTICLES

The first eye-catching aspect of the Table 1 is the ultimate ascendancy of the textiles. The English textile exports to Turkey constituted about four fifth of total export figures. The textile products almost exclusively consisted of woolens, which accounted for % 96,82 of the textiles. Woolens were mainly composed of *long* and *short* cloth, *stuffs* and *perpetuanas & serges*. But such woolens as *broad cloth*, *bays*, *rashes*, *kersies* and *kerseymere*, *flannel*, *frize*, *penist* (*peniston*), *shreds*, *stockings*, *blankets* and *gowns*, however meager, were also listed. Linens, which correspond to only % 1,22 of the textiles, primarily consisted of *calicoes*, *muslins*, *canvas*, *lawns*, *cambric*, *barras*, works of *tabling*, *napkining* and *tickling*, *sail cloth*, *household linen* and various Russian, German, Irish, British, Holland, Prussian, Silesian and Damasque linen. Cottons, one of the categories with less worthy of mention, included *muslins*, cotton yarn, printed cotton, plain cotton stuffs, Manchester cottons and *other* cotton manufactures. Silk, the least in value in the list, was recorded chiefly as raw, but it also included *brocaded*, *wrought*, *throwne*, *sewing*, *grograin yarn* and *silk in pieces*.

Mines, together with chemical substances, constitute the second sizable category in exports to Turkey. Tin ranks first in this category, to be followed by iron and lead. The registers sometimes tell about the state, the origin and the produce of these materials. While the tin, for example, was occasionally registered as *plates*, *unwrought* or *turnery*, iron was mostly recorded as *wrought* either in the form of *bar* or *cast*. Infrequently, it took the form of *nails*, *ironware*, *clockwork* and *ordnance*. And it was not uncommon that it appeared as *Russian*, *Swedish* and even as *Spanish* iron. Lead, sometimes *red* and *white*, could come up in the form of *ore* or *shots*. The rest of the list consisted of such mineral products and chemical substances as gunpowder, brass, pewter, alum, *spelter*, copper, copperas, pitch & tar, coals, litharge, brimstone, *tutenague*, vitriol oil, charcoal and Epsom salt.

The articles under the category of "spice, grocery & provisions" consisted predominantly of coffee, pepper and sugar. With regard to coffee, which constituted the bulk of the goods under this category (37,01 %), the origin of the merchandize was usually specified. Following these specifications one can calculate that at least 45,6 % of the produce was obtained from British plantations, whereas coffee from foreign plantations and East India amounted to % 23,88 and 16,17 %, respectively. Aside from certain amount of unclear origin (8,9 %), the rest of the coffee was the growth of America (2,66 %), Dominica (2,62 %) and Guadalupe (0,17). The same was partially true for the sugar as well. Predominantly refined, it was recorded either as the produce of British plantations, East India or Havannah. The rest of the items in this category were ranked as butter, nutmegs, rice, ginger, cloves, tea, cheese, cinnamon, mace, tallow, bacon & hams, beef & pork, sago, raisins, spice, currants, olives and sweat meat.

**Table 1. Exports to Turkey, 1700-1800 (Sterling)**

Type of Commodity		Value	%	
Textiles	Woolen	10,407,040	77.03	79.56
	Linen	131,645	0.97	
	Cotton	9,684	0.07	
	Silk	5,391	0.04	
	Other	194,728	1.44	
Mines & Chemicals	Tin	718,410	5.32	8.67
	Iron	202,600	1.50	
	Lead	159,818	1.18	
	Other	90,358	0.67	
Spice & Grocery	Coffee	253,771	1.88	5.07
	Pepper	215,607	1.60	
	Sugar	111,729	0.83	
	Other	104,503	0.77	
Dyestuffs	Cochineal	256,680	1.90	3.50
	Indigo	196,282	1.45	
	Other	20,011	0.15	
Other	Watches	157,974	1.17	3.20
	Unrated	122,181	0.90	
	Beverages	28,616	0.21	
	Drugs	27,107	0.20	
	Skins	21,239	0.16	
	Various	74,783	0.55	
Total		13,510,157	100.00	

Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 17: 1-21

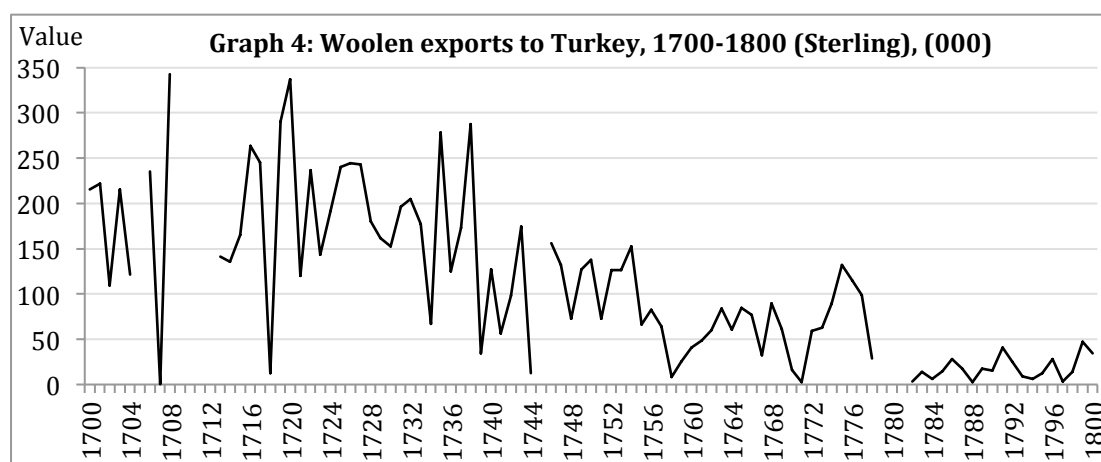
The dyestuffs, the last of the categories of considerable size, consisted chiefly of cochineal and indigo. The former accounted for 54,27 % of the dyestuffs, while the latter was responsible for % 41,5 of the total. The rest of the dyestuffs comprised such dyewoods as *Brazilletto*, Nicaragua, Logwood, Braziel, Redwood and stick lack, annatto, saffron, madder and colors for painters.

Other articles of exports, which could hardly be classified under a single category, encompassed a wide variety of goods, among which the watches were prominent. 74,33 % of the watches were of silver, while the rest consisted of gold (15,91 %), metal (8,69 %) and gold & silver (0,83 %).

The classification and the depiction of export items in detail are of utmost importance in order to have a better conception of the good composition. But long-term trends can no doubt better illustrate the character of exports. Considering that textiles in general and woolens in particular were prevalent among the export articles, the long-term trend of the woolen exports to Turkey proves to be of greater importance.

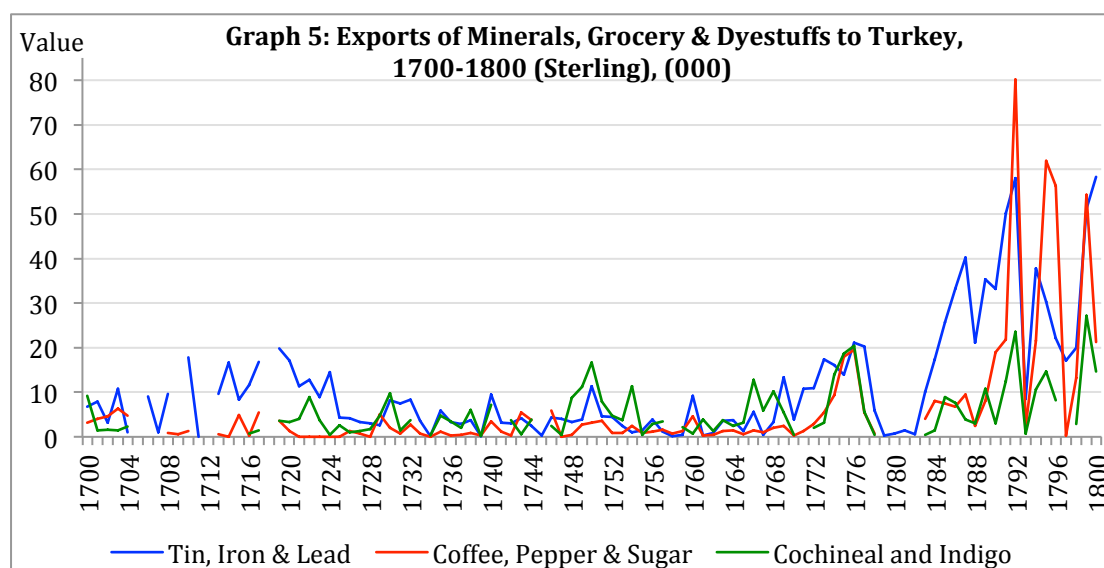
Graph 4 indicates that the high levels recorded by woolens comes to an end by the 1730's and there follows an irreversible decline. By 1770's the process is almost complete. The decline in woolen exports to the Ottoman Empire is in parallel with the general trend of English woolen exports to Europe in 18<sup>th</sup> century. The European market, which took 92 % of the English woolen goods exported in 1699-1701, showed a marked stagnation in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This stagnation lasted until 1750, to be followed by a decline after a brief increase in the 1750's. The rapid development and diversification of industry and the industrial self-sufficiency throughout Europe made the sales less profitable. The protectionist policies and the competition of the French, German and Swedish industries began to threaten English woolen industry.

Even Spain and Portugal, which, against the general European trend, increased their English woolen imports through the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, began to foster their own industries in the fifties and the sixties and their demand for English manufactures decreased.<sup>21</sup>



Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 17: 1-21

The measurable rise seen in the total English exports to Turkey in the last two decades in Graph 1, on the other hand, is not detectable in graph 4. This requires applying for other export goods for a reasonable explanation. At that point, the figures of mines & chemicals, together with those of dyestuffs and spice, grocery and provisions, prove to be critical. A quick glance at graph 5 and 6 gives an idea about the distinctive character of the trade of these articles.



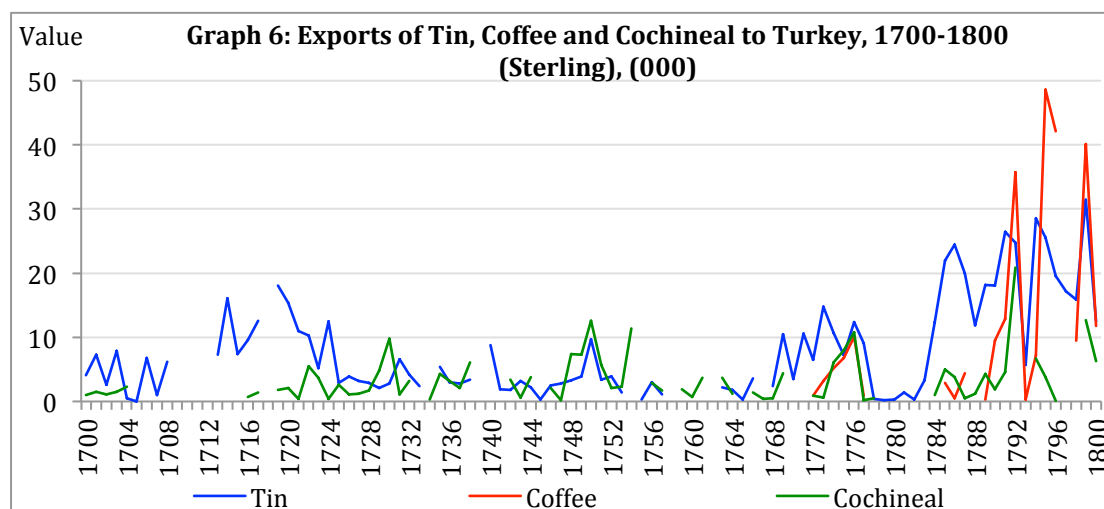
Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 1: 17-21

Graph 4 shows that, the export of mines and metal works, colonial products and dyestuffs, unlike those of woolens, seem to have risen remarkably in late eighteenth century. The case of coffee, in this connection, is particularly interesting, which, after an imposing entrance in the 1770's, recorded unprecedented levels in the last decade. The picture as a whole, in fact, implies a radical diversion from early or traditional structure of English trade with Turkey stipulated by the needs of strong *English* industries. This new trend does also suggest a decline of "English" against the rise of "foreign" elements

<sup>21</sup> Ralph Davis, "English Foreign Trade, 1700-1774", *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1962), pp., 286-88



in the trade with the Ottoman Empire. *At this juncture, one should also recall upon the lately prospering state of sugar industry and “sugar revolution”.*



Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 1: 17-21

The contrasting character of the course of trade of the period is reflected in the terminology of registers, as well. Most of the articles of anew-thriving trades were recorded in the registers as “foreign” products. Not any bit of cochineal and indigo, for instance, was of “English” or “British” merchandize, while 87,23 % of coffee, pepper and sugar was described as “foreign” products. As for mines, however, this was less true, for which, foreign goods account for 7,4 % only. Lead, for example, was exclusively “English” or “British” product, whereas only 0,06 % of tin was of foreign origin. But the proportion of “foreign” products increased to 39,28 % in iron and ironware.

The changing character of the trade with Turkey can be attested by other figures as well. The “English manufactures” as a whole account for 94,6 % of the exports to Turkey throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with a relative increase in the rate of “foreign merchandize” from 1770’s onwards. Between 1780 and 1800, on the other hand, the rate of “foreign goods, wares and merchandize” exported from England Turkey rose to 45,28 %.

### 3.2 IMPORT ARTICLES

There are striking similarities and contrasts between the composition of the goods in imports and that in exports. The textiles held an undisputable supremacy in imports, as it was the case in exports. The preponderance of the textiles in imports was further supplemented by the dyestuffs.

Among the textile products silk ranked first in the list, similar to woollens in exports. But unlike the latter silk was imported almost entirely as raw material. Besides, it was not alone in the list, which, although rather far from any competition, was accompanied by cotton and wool (mohair). Cotton, like silk, was chiefly imported as raw material. The share of raw silk within total silk exports from the Ottoman Empire was 98,96 %, while this rate was 92,92 for raw cotton. Wool, on the other hand, was imported into England principally as yarn. Mohair yarn corresponded to 93,91 % of total wool exports. Yarn, including mohair, cotton, gogram and linen yarn, amounted to 13,31 % of the total textile imports.

In overall, the English textile imports from the Ottoman Empire, unlike the exports thereto, consisted mainly of raw materials and comprised a relatively wide variety of products. This peculiarity, in fact, acted for the basic character of the trade conducted between the two regions for most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Table 2. Imports from Turkey, 1700-1800 (Sterling)

Type of Commodity		Value	%	
Textiles	Silk	11,500,345	60.07	82,85
	Cotton	2,333,278	12.19	
	Wool (Mohaire)	1,985,663	10.37	
	Linen	12,063	0.06	
	Other	29,973	0.16	
Dyestuffs	Madder	802,616	4.19	6,44
	Galls	244,091	1.27	
	Safflore	57,432	0.30	
	Berries	50,948	0.27	
	Baxwood	37,353	0.20	
	Vallonia	22,129	0.12	
	Fustic	8,612	0.04	
	Cochineal	3,963	0.02	
	Indigo	3,576	0.02	
	Annotto	1,849	0.01	
	Other	1,487	0.01	
Grocery & Culinary	Raisins	474,421	2.48	5,42
	Coffee	306,352	1.60	
	Currants	149,237	0.78	
	Fig	63,586	0.33	
	Oil	24,094	0.13	
	Other	19,132	0.10	
Drugs & Chemicals	Senna	179,349	0.94	3,44
	Rhubarb	43,518	0.23	
	Opium	41,048	0.21	
	Gum Tragacanth	37,487	0.20	
	Worm Seed	37,068	0.19	
	Colloquintida	28,933	0.15	
	Pistachies	26,299	0.14	
	Emery Stone	25,173	0.13	
	Alum Roach	21,701	0.11	
	Gum Arabic	20,720	0.11	
	Other	196,549	1.03	
Other	Carpets	172,032	0.90	1.86
	Skins & Hides	41,258	0.22	
	Wine & Spirits	29,583	0.15	
	Miscellaneous & Unrated	112,619	0.59	
Total		19,145,537	100.02	

Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 17: 1-21

The ascendancy of the textiles in imports was complemented by dyestuffs. The import of dyestuffs from the Ottoman Empire consisted mostly of madder. The prevalence of madder among the dyestuffs should be more associated with the Turkish dyeing industry than anything else, perhaps. The red shade produced with madder in Turkey, called Turkey red, was particularly famous and yielded a color of great brilliance and fastness. It was used particularly to dye the yarn before weaving cotton cloth and in printed calicoes. First originating in India and later being transmitted to Turkey, this technique of dyeing, known as the *Levant* or *Adrianople red* in West, remained as a secret for most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century before it was established Scotland in the late century. British efforts to cultivate madder around mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, meanwhile,

proved unsuccessful.<sup>22</sup> Turkey madder root was principally cultivated around Smyrna and it was always imported in its original state, i.e. as a root.<sup>23</sup> Although madder could be traditionally grown throughout northern Mediterranean, Smyrna was an important center of production and was usually considered to have produced the best madder.<sup>24</sup> Galls, commonly used as mordents in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, were procured from Anatolia, Syria and Persia but the best was that of Syria. They were exported from Aleppo, Acre, Tripoli, Smyrna and Port Said.<sup>25</sup> Safflower could produce both yellow and red, but in Europe it was usually used as red dyestuff to dye both cotton and silk.<sup>26</sup> It came from Egypt, but that which grew in Upper Egypt was the best.<sup>27</sup> Valonia, the cup of an acorn produced by the oak and used in dyeing, grew on the western coast of Anatolia, in the islands of the Archipelago and throughout all Greece.<sup>28</sup>

Among the English imports from the Ottoman Empire, indigenous products peculiar to temperate climates or sub-tropical regions of Mediterranean occupied a special place. Raisins made up the majority of these products. The ordinary kind of black raisins were used for making brandy. Smyrna accounted for 99,73 % of the raisins imported by the English from the Ottoman Empire. Urla, Cesme and Karaburun were major centers of production.<sup>29</sup> Currants, actually “raisins of Corinth” from whence they derived their name, were used to make cakes, conserve, confectionery, paste and wine, and were preserved as marmalade or jelly. The raisins secured from Patras by the English in great quantities in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were used in puddings.<sup>30</sup> Figs were distilled and used in cooking and desert, but they had also curative qualities. Because of their high sugar content, figs could readily dry and easily preserved. *Smyrna* or *Turkey figs* were the main cultivated type imported into England and the early imports consisted mainly of dried crops.<sup>31</sup>

Coffee, corresponding to about one third of total figures, constituted the largest group of grocery articles after raisins and figs. The Ottoman coffee was imported into Europe from Mocha or through Egypt. The Europeans imported it in considerable quantities by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the Mochan coffee was the major supplier of Europe until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. But in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it suffered from the opening of new sources of supply and its export to Europe declined.<sup>32</sup>

Drugs and chemicals run to a small share of the total figures in imports. Among them *senna*, a shrubby plant cultured for its leaves and a useful cathartic in medicine, represented the majority. It was cultivated in Persia and Syria, but particularly in Upper Egypt. It was sold in Mecca and Jidda, whence it passed, by way of Suez and Cairo to

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<sup>22</sup> Cox, Nancy and Karin Dannehl. *Dictionary of Traded Goods and Commodities, 1550-1820*. University of Wolverhampton, 2007 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/traded-goods-dictionary/1550-1820>), “Turkey Red”; Susan Fairlie, “Dyestuffs in the Eighteenth Century”, *The Economic History Review*, vol. 17, No 3, 1965, pp. 497, 505.

<sup>23</sup> Kauffmann, C. H. *The Dictionary of Merchandize and Nomenclature*, fourth edition, London 1815, p. 222.

<sup>24</sup> Fairlie, *op.cit.*, p. 497.

<sup>25</sup> Fairlie, *ibid.*, pp. 492, 497.

<sup>26</sup> Cox, at.al., *op.cit.*, “Safflower”.

<sup>27</sup> Dearborn, Henry A. S. *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigations of the Black Sea and the Trade and Maritime Geography of Turkey and Egypt*, Vol. II, Boston 1819, pp. 70-71

<sup>28</sup> Dearborn, *ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>29</sup> Dearborn, *op.cit.*, pp. 88-89

<sup>30</sup> Masson, Paul. *Histoire du Commerce Française dans le Levant au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, Paris 1911, p. 621; Cox, *op.cit.*, “Currants”.

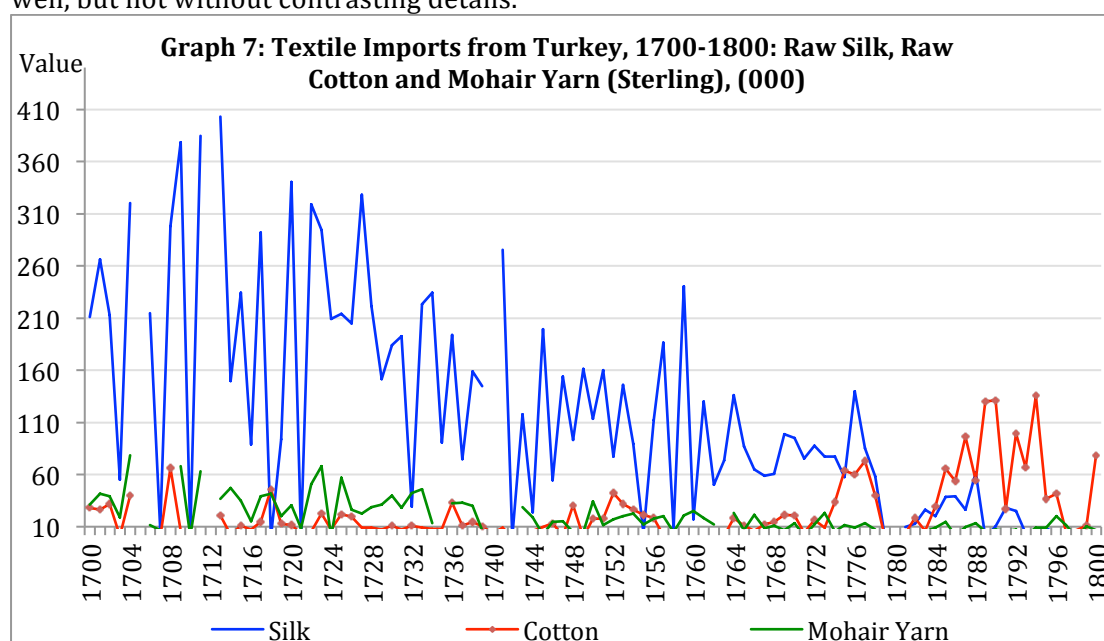
<sup>31</sup> Cox, *ibid.*, “Fig”.

<sup>32</sup> Issawi, *op.cit.*, p. 255; Mehmet Genç, “Contrôle et Taxation du Commerce de Café dans l’Empire Ottoman a la Fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> –Première Moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle”, in M. Tuchscherer (ed), *Le Commerce du Cofè avant l’ère Plantations Coloniales: Espaces, Réseaux, Sociétés (XV<sup>e</sup>-XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle)*, Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, Cahier des Annales Islamalogiques 20 (2001), p. 162.

Alexandria, to be further dispatched to Europe.<sup>33</sup> The rest of the list covered a rich assortment of articles but with negligible quantities.

About half of “other” articles of import consisted of carpets. Carpets, principally manufactured in Usak by women, were wholly made of sheep’s wool. Their different colors were ornamented and dyed with indigo, cochineal, madder, logwood and yellow berries. Their colors were bright and durable, their fabric remarkably strong and they wore longer than any other kind.<sup>34</sup> According to some observers the excellency of the Turkish carpets derived from the materials they were made of.<sup>35</sup> In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the carpets brought to Smyrna were exported, together with England, to Holland, France and the United States.<sup>36</sup>

The general pattern of English trade with the Ottoman Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the ruling trend of the English imports from the region is not a secret. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the export of such articles as coffee, cotton, medicines, silk and dried food to England, owing to international competition, began to suffer difficulties. Thus, already after 1680’s, the *Levant* had begun to lose its importance in English foreign trade and industry.<sup>37</sup> The decreasing trend of imports is reflected in graphs 7 and 8 as well, but not without contrasting details.



Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 1: 1-21

English textile imports from the Ottoman Empire conveys contrasting trends. At first, it suggests an overall decline. But handling it separately gives different results. One can speak of a sharp fall in the imports of raw silk over the entire period. The trend of decline, however relatively moderate, continues in woolen (mohair) yarn. The decline of the imports of both raw materials and semi-finished goods, in fact, points out to a general deterioration of the export capacity of the Ottoman Empire. The rise seen in the trend of the imports of raw cotton, on the other hand, implies a different viewpoint.

<sup>33</sup> C. H. Kaufmann, *The Dictionary of Merchandize and Nomenclature*, Fourth Edition, London 1815, p. 314.

<sup>34</sup> Dearborn, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>35</sup> William Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire*, London 1809, p. 202.

<sup>36</sup> Dearborn, *op.cit.*

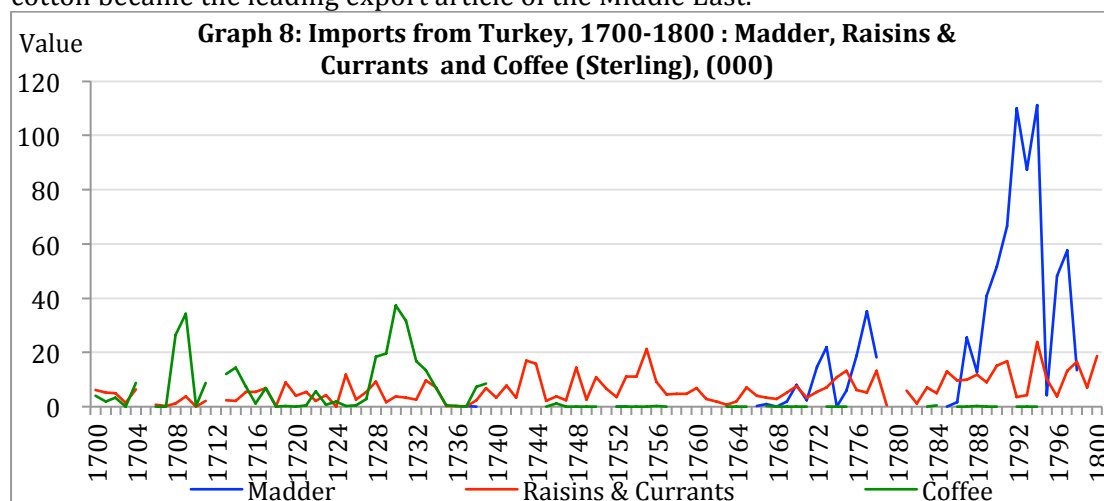
<sup>37</sup> Ralph Davis, “English Imports from the Middle East 1580-1780”, in M.A. Cook (ed.), *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East from the Rise of Islam to the Present Day*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 201.

The reasons behind the decrease in the English silk imports from the Ottoman Empire had been partially touched above. Graph 7 suggests that actually the trend of decline became traceable even earlier. It also displays that the trend of decline traced back to 1730's had actually been further accelerated in the second half of the century. The opening of other supply regions, the competition of cotton and woolen industries and the introduction of new fashion products seem to have been influential in this decrease.

The center of the early competition presented by the France and Italy was shifted to India and China in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> The cutting of the Persian silk supplies after 1730's did not suffice to ruin the English Levant trade but the prices tended to increase. The improvement in the quality of Bengal silk and the tightening English control over Bengal, meanwhile, made the Levant silk more susceptible to foreign competition. The arrival of big supplies from China after 1752 further worsened situation. Combined with the rising costs, the Levant silk began to lose its competitive position after the 1750's.<sup>39</sup>

The Ottoman silk imported by the English was of average quality and was used in making ribbons, buttons, socks and silk thread. But as the cotton and woolen socks began to replace the silk products and the use of metal buttons became fashionable in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the silk imported from the Ottoman Empire decreased considerably<sup>40</sup>.

The increase seen in the import of Ottoman cotton, recalls upon the growing need of the English cotton industry for raw material and the increasing impact of this industry on Ottoman market. The removal of the prohibitions imposed on the import of cotton into England and France at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was a consequential occasion leading to a large increase in the export of cotton cloth from the Ottoman Empire. And from 1780's onwards, international competition, mainly centered in India, made the export of raw cotton produced in northern Syria and Iraq, southern Anatolia, Egypt and Greece more profitable. Thus, by the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, raw cotton became the leading export article of the Middle East.<sup>41</sup>



Source: The National Archives, CUST 3: 4-82; CUST 1: 1-21

The contrasting elements of the imports are visible in the trend of trade of other principal articles as well. Madder, one of the raw materials needed by the British textile industry, recorded remarkable increases in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to reach a

<sup>38</sup> Issawi, "Middle Eastern Trade", p. 258.

<sup>39</sup> Davis, "English Imports", pp. 198-99.

<sup>40</sup> Davis, *ibid*, pp. 196-99

<sup>41</sup> Charles Issawi, "Middle Eastern Trade", p. 258.

climax in the early 1790's. It was one of the raw materials desperately needed in England even by the mid-century. The first premiums offered by the Society of Arts to invent substitutes for goods and materials brought from abroad, for example, involved the cultivation of madder<sup>42</sup>. The Post-war years of mid 1760's, were a period of great pressure on such dyestuffs as indigo, cochineal, madder, potashes, argol etc. in Britain as elsewhere in Europe. Around that time there were unsuccessful British attempts to cultivate madder at home and they had to turn to *alizari* or *the madder of the Levant* instead of *Dutch madder*.<sup>43</sup> The replacement of madder by surrogates, in fact, survived well into the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>44</sup>

The virtual termination of the export of coffee from the Ottoman Empire by 1730's is another point of interest. According to Mehmet Genç, this was a process that can be traced back to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Since from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the coffee of Mocha had begun to fail the increasing foreign demand. From 1730's onwards, it could meet neither external nor internal demand. This was in part occasioned by the inability of the Ottomans to balance the supply and demand by taking such measures as taxing the consumption of coffee and banning its export at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>45</sup> But seemingly the emergence of other supply regions throughout the world was also influential in the decline of coffee exports from the Ottoman Empire. The Dutch plantations in the East Indies played a pioneering role in ending the monopoly of the Middle East in coffee trade. The introduction of the coffee from Java in the 1720's affected the prices as well. The coffee was already being grown and imported from Asia, Africa and America in the 1760's and by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century foreign competition was so great that the Middle East was actually importing coffee from the West Indies.<sup>46</sup>

Raisins and currants seem to have been the only commercial items traded with England consistently throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, though the balanced level of imports slightly tends to increase in the last two decades. The English imports of dried fruits, utterly consisting of currant from the Greek islands and mainland, had an old history; but currants, figs and raisins from Anatolian coasts sent out through Smyrna began to be imported in considerable quantities only from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. But the restrictions imposed by the Ottoman government in the 1670's resulted in decreases in imports after the 1680's.<sup>47</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The 18<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Ottoman trade has been and needs to be subject to various explorations. The researches at hand, largely represented and pioneered by those of Ralph Davis, describes the general picture in the trade between the Ottoman Empire and England, whereby we can learn about the nature and course of the trade, i.e. the trade articles, merchants, trade volume and the changes taking place in the course of time. None of them, however, makes a thorough use of the data sets and time series of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a whole. The current research, still deriving from the archival sources utilized by other explorations, sets up a "century-long" series and extends the findings of the research so as to cover the whole of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These findings, on the whole, complement our current perception of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Ottoman trade.

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<sup>42</sup> Maxine Berg, "From Imitation to Invention: Creating Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Britain", *Economic History Reviews*, LV, 1 (2002), p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> Fairlie, *op.cit.*, pp. 503, 505.

<sup>44</sup> Jurrien de Jong, "Great Britain, the Industrial Revolution and the World Economy, 1780-1914", *Leidschrift*, Jaargang 18, Nummer 2, September 2003, s. 93; Fairlie, *op.cit.*, p. 510.

<sup>45</sup> Genç, *op.cit.*, pp. 161-2, 166-7.

<sup>46</sup> Issawi, *op.cit.*, p. 255-56; Cox, *op.cit.*, "Coffee"

<sup>47</sup> Davis, "Imports", p. 201.

To mention these findings in outline, the Anglo-Ottoman trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century tended to decrease. The share of the Ottoman Empire in English foreign trade decreased considerably over the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The trade was conducted mainly on textile materials and products. The balance of trade was against England. English exports consisted of predominantly manufactured goods, whereas the imports from the Ottoman Empire covered mostly raw materials. The proportion of manufactured or semi-finished goods in Ottoman exports to England decreased over the century. Such was the main picture in the trade between the Ottoman Empire and Britain for much of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Late 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, witnessed a change in the classical trade pattern between the two countries, whereby the dual character of the trade based on the exchange of woolen products in return for raw silk came to an end. Instead, the imports of the raw materials needed by the developing industrial sectors of England increased on the one hand and the export of the manufactures of the new industries and the colonial products scored noticeable rises. The trade of the articles of grocery and indigenous products peculiar to temperate climates of Ottoman Mediterranean, on the other hand, was not affected by the changes taking place in the trade pattern during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The results of the research, summarized above, do certainly involve certain deficiencies. The foremost among them is the lack of the information on quantities, to be fallowed by the absence of any attempt to make use of "reel values", a task still difficult to achieve completely for the trade of any specific region and commodity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The peculiarity of the 18<sup>th</sup> century commercial life, which makes the official figures utilized in present research capable of displaying the basic structure and major trends, and the long span of the research period, however, must render the present study a useful one for a comprehensive outline and a source for further detailed researches.

To conclude, it is obvious that, to make the research of a this kind more meaningful, the sources utilized during the study should be further extended so as to cover the customs registers of the Ottoman Empire at that time, if possible, and be attempted to compare them with those of the English sources.

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