

TRADING IN THE SHADOW OF WARS:
COMMERCIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF A LATE-OTTOMAN
MUSLIM TRADING HOUSE

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2011

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MUSLIM TRADING HOUSE

Dissertation submitted to the
Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
History

by
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Boğaziçi University

2011

Thesis Abstract

Aliye F. Mataracı, “Trading in the Shadow of Wars: Commercial Correspondence of a late-Ottoman Muslim Trading House”

This work discusses the transformation of a late-Ottoman Muslim trading house in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars based on its commercial correspondence for most of the year 1914. It follows different courses and patterns of transformation through the general practice of commercial correspondence, the commercial networks that evolved around the trading house under scrutiny and the discourse exploited in the narration of commercial practices and the dramatic instances witnessed through the interwar period between the Balkan Wars and World War I. Pointing to a rupture rather than a continuum between the imperial and the Republican business cultures and practices, this work suggests the outbreak of World War I rather than the wake of the Balkan Wars as the actual turning point.

The research for this dissertation is largely based on the commercial correspondence of the Mataracızâde trading house, the primary sources at the Ottoman State Archives (BOA), Ottoman and European collections of model letters, urban commercial directories published in the Ottoman Empire, specifically the *Annuaire Oriental*, local histories of the eastern Black Sea region and secondary literature.

Keywords: Commerce, commercial correspondence, letter-writing manuals, *münşeât*, commercial networks, merchant, the Balkan Wars, boycott, National Economy, Muslim bourgeoisie, World War I.

Tez Özeti

Aliye F. Mataracı, “Savaşların Gölgesinde Ticaret: Geç Dönem Osmanlı Müslüman Bir Ticarethâneye Ait Yazışmalar”

Bu tez, Geç Dönem Osmanlı Müslüman bir ticarethânenin Balkan Savaşları sonrasında geçirmiş olduğu dönüşümü, ağırlıklı olarak ticarethânenin 1914 yılının çoğunluğunu kapsamakta olan yazışmaları üzerinden tartışmaktadır. Dönüşümün izleri, genel olarak Osmanlı ticari yazışma geleneği, ticarethane etrafında şekillenen ticaret ağları ve ticarethânenin ticari pratikleri ile Balkan Savaşları ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı arası dönemde tanık olunan dramatik olayların anlatımında kullanılan söylem üzerinden sürülmektedir. Bu çalışma, Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e geçişte ticaret kültürü ve pratikleri açısından süreklilik yerine kopuşa dikkat çekerken, dönüm noktası olarak Balkan Savaşları yerine Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nın başlangıcını önermektedir.

Bu tezin araştırması Mataracızâde ticarethanesinin ticari yazışmaları, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) belgeleri, Osmanlı ve Avrupa mektup yazma kılavuzları, *Annuaire Oriental* başta olmak üzere Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda basılmış ticari rehberler ve ikincil kaynaklara dayanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ticaret, ticari yazışma, mektup yazma kılavuzları, *münşeât*, ticaret ağları, tüccar, Balkan Savaşları, boykot, Milli İktisat, Müslüman Burjuvazi, Birinci Dünya Savaşı.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my advisor Professor Edhem Eldem for his support, encouragement and unreserved share of his knowledge. I consider it an honor and privilege to have the opportunity to work with him.

I am also grateful to Professor Molly Greene for her support, interest in and contribution to my work.

In addition, I owe thanks to Professor Mete Tunçay for his support. I am thankful to Assistant Professor Vangelis Kechriotis and Assistant Professor Meltem Toksöz for their participation in the process.

There are also institutions behind this dissertation. I am debtful to my home institution Boğaziçi University for my interdisciplinary academic background. I am grateful to the Department of History for providing an academic nest for me. I am also grateful to İstanbul Bilgi University and my colleagues for their invaluable support during my graduate studies. I want to thank the Department of History at Princeton University for their warm welcome during the last stage of my dissertation. Huge thanks are due to Dimitris Gondicas, Executive Director of Program in Hellenic Studies, as well as to Professors Michael Cook, Heath Lowry, Şükrü Hanioglu, Mark Cohen and Assistant Professor Michael Reynolds at the Department of Near Eastern Studies for their contributions.

There are an infinite number of contributors to a dissertation which makes it hard to count them all. I am thankful to so many colleagues and friends; Dr. Hülđan Dereli, Dr. Silvana Rachieru, Dr. Suzan Günaştı, Dr. Lorans Tanatar-Baruh, Serhan Afacan, to count some. I am equally grateful to my family, with special thanks to my cousin, Cemil Mataracı, for providing me access to family archives.

Last but not least, my dearest gratitude goes to my mother, İncila Mataracı, to whom I dedicate this work for her unconditional support and love.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This work, based on the commercial correspondence of a late-Ottoman Muslim trading house for most of the year 1914, discusses the early stages of the “Turkification” of an Ottoman Muslim bourgeoisie that had probably been forming and gradually integrating with the world economy since the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is based on the argument that the formation of an Ottoman Muslim bourgeoisie started with the integration of the Empire into the world economy in the first half of the nineteenth century and continued thereafter. In this regard, the “National Economy” program of the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918) was to contribute to this process only after the beginning of World War I. This contribution had several outcomes: the coercive and destructive measures taken against non-Muslims resulting in the disappearance of the Armenians and the Greeks from the Ottoman lands and, hence, from the Ottoman economy, and the simultaneous creation of “national” entrepreneurs to replace them in addition to the “Turkification” of the already existing Muslim traders of the Empire.

All of these were achieved through indirect and direct government intervention in the economic realm and resulted in a distortion of the imperial

business mentality and culture, which was further carried on into the Turkish Republic and up to today. In these terms, the Ottoman Muslim trading house under scrutiny in this work and many others alike, due to the lack of research based on direct sources like the one under study in this work, were considered as newly rising national entrepreneurs formed under the “National Economy” program rather than previously existing actors being integrated into it. The expectations and the efforts of the “National Economy” program were actually fulfilled only after the foundation of the Republic: This, in turn, created a distortion regarding the formation of capital and entrepreneurial culture in the Ottoman Empire, generally underestimated in the current literature.

This work offers a snapshot of an Ottoman Muslim trading house in 1914. The firm evolved around three Muslim brothers, the Mataracızâdes, who worked as trans-regional import and export commission agents at the end of the Empire. The oldest of the three brothers; Ali (1883/84-1941) was based in Rize, while the middle brother, İlyas (1889/90-1921) worked in Istanbul. Their youngest sibling, Cemil (1895/96-1917) was barely eighteen when he was sent to Manchester and through him, the brothers started importing textiles from Manchester to Istanbul and Sebastopol. The three brothers were also purchasing merchandise from businesses in Istanbul and selling it to traders in the provinces of the Empire. They mostly traded in manufactured goods from center to periphery; as well as in food and raw materials from periphery to center. However, their trade also reached beyond the boundaries of the Ottoman world. Moreover, in addition to their already established trade business, they had the ambition to launch new lines of business like warehousing and shipping. They even explored opportunities of exporting hazelnuts

to the United States, or of importing gas and sugar from Romania after the beginning of World War I.

Although this work focuses, as it were, on a snapshot of the Mataracızâde trading house in 1914, based on the information provided by their commercial correspondence, it also takes into account that the commercial career of the family stretches back to the early nineteenth century, with Hacı Mehmed Agha, a trader in Rize and the grandfather of the three brothers. The brothers were the sons of one of his three sons, Mataracızâde Hacı Ahmed Efendi (1811/12-1925). Some documents from the Ottoman State Archives reveal that Mataracızâde Hacı Ahmed Efendi received a patent of privilege (*berat-ı âli*) to trade with Europe, Iran and India in 1859.¹ Hacı Ahmed Efendi and his brother, Hacı Mustafa Efendi, both became *Hayriye* merchants² and were recorded as “first degree in terms of wealth, land and reputation” (*servetçe ve emlak ve haysiyetçe birinci derece*) among the local notable families of the eastern Black Sea region in an inventory prepared in 1880 by the Governor of Trabzon, Sırrı Paşa.³

This work is based mainly on the information provided by the correspondence of the Mataracızâde trading house, which covers a period of

¹ BOA, A.DVN, 142/36, 27 Zilkade 1275/June 28, 1859.

² As a result of the objections the Ottoman Muslim merchants began to raise to privileges granted to European merchants under Selim III and continued under Mahmud II (r. 1808-39), they were provided with similar privileges by the beginning of the nineteenth century, which led to a newly named merchant class called the *Hayriye* merchants. Ali İhsan Bağış, *Osmanlı Ticaretinde Gayri Müslimler: Kapitülasyonlar, Avrupa Tüccarları, Beratlı Tüccarlar, Hayriye Tüccarları (1750-1839)*, 2 ed. (Ankara 1998), 107-11. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert, ed. *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, II vols., vol. II (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 956-59. "Merchants," in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* ed. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Facts On File, 2008), 376-7.

³ Ayhan Yüksel, "Trabzon Valisi Sırrı Paşa'nın Bir Raporuna Göre Doğu Karadeniz'in Önde Gelen Aileleri (1880)," in *Doğu Karadeniz Araştırmaları* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2005). Most of the collaborators from the eastern Black Sea region appeared among the local notable families listed in this inventory.

approximately seven months in the year 1914, starting on March 28 and ending on November 25, almost a month after the Ottoman Empire entered World War I. This collection consists of 355 folios, including 312 commercial letters, 32 invoices, and seven pages of debt records. All the correspondence is about their business, consisting mostly of letters exchanged among the brothers, with scarcely any content related to family or private issues. The rest of the correspondence consists of letters written to merchants in various areas of the Ottoman Empire and Russia. These constitute what remains of the firm's 1914 copybook, containing the copies of letters and invoices sent to their partners and collaborators. It represented one of the three different types of registers that merchants had to keep according to the Commercial Law of 1850.⁴

The Turkish historiography of the period covered by the documents under consideration is generally written on the basis of the dominant political developments and ideologies of the period. This is mainly because of the nature of the sources available for writing history in Turkey. Be they archival documents, works of literature, or press items, they all reflect the vision of the political elite of the period, as these sources were to a large extent produced first-hand by the elite members or their entourage. Although our knowledge of the intricacies of the political knowledge of the time and its production and distribution is quite rich thanks to the available literature in political history, we are still very ignorant regarding the reception of these ideas at grassroots level. This ignorance being related to the availability of historical sources, the abundance of primary or

⁴ See chapter three for an elaborate description of the commercial correspondence under scrutiny in this work.

secondary sources produced by the political elite of the period is not paralleled by anything comparable at a more popular level.

The silence at the grass-roots level, in addition to leaving too much space for political discourse as it appears in the literature, causes certain other problems: First of all, it creates the impression that the popular discourse was as political and hence, as nationalist as the dominant elite's discourse. This in turn leads to the expectation that the man on the street should have been as politicized and as nationalist as the members of the elite. All of this ends up creating the illusion that discourse and reality were one and the same. The absence of popular voices also works against the role of human agency. Ottoman Muslims seem to suffer more from this, due to their low level of literacy in comparison to their Armenian or Greek counterparts, which leads to a consequent lower level of representation in the existing literature. Another issue disregarded by the current literature is the pace at which news could travel at the time. The problems related to communication during the period being underestimated, the assumption that the nationalist discourse produced and spread by the center reached each and every point of the Empire immediately, simultaneously, and evenly, and that it was immediately assimilated by the Muslim subjects of the Empire dominates the current literature on the period.

The whole adventure behind this work started with the discovery of the copybook under current scrutiny; the first interrogations evolved around rather simple questions: What were these documents? Who were the people mentioned in them? What were they doing? When and where were they active? The answers were harder to come by than the questions themselves. Nevertheless, the initial aim was to search for them within the documents themselves. In this regard, the main

methodology utilized in this work was to “listen” to what these documents had to say, rather than sacrificing their words for a simple confirmation or rejection of larger narratives. This methodology was actually suggested by the documents themselves:

“...Read the letters carefully and protect them. Do not read them superficially, and skip them. You need to read them and understand them, listen to them carefully, my brother. Beware, beware.”⁵

The quotation above is from one of İlyas’ letters to Cemil, where he complained that his younger brother had misunderstood what he told him in his letters because of a careless reading. That is why I have made the deliberate decision to “listen” to the letters way before I read my grandfather’s suggestion, which provided another confirmation of my choice. After all, how bad could it be to listen to one’s grandfather’s words! The rest of this section will revisit the discussions evolving around the aforementioned simple questions, the answers to which were sought in the different chapters of this work.

The answer to the first question of what these documents were, which was raised as a reflexive response to the surfacing of this correspondence, required the examination of the general practice of commercial correspondence in the comparative context of Europe and the Ottoman Empire, which seemed to have evolved along radically different traditions. At the very end of the Ottoman Empire, a clear process of “Europeanization” of the Ottoman letter-writing tradition can be observed, consisting mostly of bringing together Ottoman collections of model

⁵ “...Okuduğunuz mektubu dikkatle okuyunuz ve muhafaza ediniz. Öyle yüzünden okuyub, geçmeyiniz. Dikkatle okuyub anlamak, dinlemek lazımdır biraderim. Dikkat dikkat.” (5 Temmuz 1330 / July 18, 1914)

letters with European-style letter-writing manuals, mostly through the work of the prominent writers in the field who got acquainted with the existing literature in French. French language and culture, as the ultimate reference point of Ottoman Europeanization, became the most significant source of inspiration for modeling commercial education and commercial correspondence during the post-*Tanzimat* period. The development of business correspondence at large and the emergence of commercial correspondence in particular fed on reformist impulses that tried to shape commercial culture, while at the same time responding to the daily needs of the emerging business environment created through the *Tanzimat* reforms. The new Commercial Code of 1850 played a significant role in the reorganization of the commercial life, and initiated the creation of the necessary instruments and tools. This explains easily the boom witnessed in the commercial correspondence of the time.

The third chapter, following up on the discussions of the previous one, will elaborate on the common practices and features regarding format and language in the commercial practice of the period and will use this as a basis for a comparative contextualization of the available commercial correspondence. For this purpose, the actual copybook of the Mataracızâde firm, which mainly consists of commercial letters and invoices as mentioned previously, will be analyzed with reference to the didactic literature described in the second chapter. The ultimate aim of this comparison is to explore the social and cultural codes of etiquette embedded in format and language, and which seemed to have emerged from a blend of traditions and manners in use in Ottoman society. These social and cultural codes enable an understanding of how different social and cultural groups and identities were

positioned within this society at the end of the Empire. In this context, the discourse of the commercial letters will be considered as a possible reflection of the social discourse of the period. Discursively, the letters served the reconstruction of the actual social hierarchy in Ottoman society. Reconstructing different actors in line with their actual social positions i.e. status, profession, age, religion; and in relation to one another on a discursive level not only underlines the current social dichotomies within the society but also reaffirms them. Mataracızâde Brothers partook in this exercise with their peculiar style quite creatively. The comparison of the actual letters with the samples in the didactic literature will also tell us about the literacy level of the brothers and their awareness of the current standards of format and language commonly exploited by the commercial correspondence of the period.

It is with the fourth chapter, which provides a snapshot of the social status and economic profile of the Ottoman commercial network which evolved around Mataracızâde Brothers, that this work will start exploiting the contents of the collection. The first part of the chapter provides a brief description of the business composition, ethno-religious profile, and geographical distribution of the commercial actors involved in business with the brothers and their social and economic standing. In order to accomplish this task, it primarily relies on the information provided by the available correspondence of the Mataracızâde trading house. The second part of the chapter places the network under study in a broader context by exploring the brothers' immediate business environment in all branches of the Ottoman cotton market, namely the provinces, Istanbul and Manchester. Ottoman commercial directories, more specifically the yearly volumes of the *Annuaire oriental*, constitute the main source for the data relating to the provincial

and Istanbul branches of the business. Regarding the Manchester branch, the correspondence between İlyas, the middle brother in Istanbul, and Cemil, the younger brother in Manchester, together with secondary literature on Manchester will be used as the major sources of information.

The fifth chapter, focusing on the commercial practices of the Mataracızâde brothers, tells the story of their move from an interregional center, Rize, to transregional ones, namely Istanbul and Manchester. In other words, it analyzes how they were able to establish a transregional nexus by making use of their connections with different producing and trading communities and local markets in and outside the Ottoman commonwealth. It explores the main motivations behind their move to Manchester and answers the question of why the Mataracızâde Brothers had to go all the way to Manchester when they already had a well-established network in the eastern Black Sea region.

The sixth chapter, focusing on the dramatic events and circumstances depicted in the commercial correspondence, contextualizes the commercial network and its practices within the interwar period between the Balkan Wars and World War I. It also tries to question some of the basic assumptions in the current literature, which are not only in constant replication but also from which broad generalizations are derived and used as arguments in crucial discussions designed to understand the period. If the Muslim community was in full appreciation of, and in compliance with, the economic and political policies of the Committee of Union and Progress in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, we need to understand why the brothers did not partake in the boycotts, why they took every possible chance to get exempt from military service, and why they did not reach out to government circles

despite their full awareness of the preliminary offers of a nascent “National Economy” before the outbreak of World War I. The discussions evolving around these questions will not only contribute to the history of the period but will also put forward some insights to challenge the available literature on late-Ottoman nationalism.

CHAPTER 2

A COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF COMMERCIAL CORRESPONDENCE: EUROPEAN AND OTTOMAN PRACTICES

Her yazı mektuptur.
(Each piece of writing is a letter.)
Nurullah Ataç

Introduction

This chapter sets the background for the examination of available commercial correspondence in the comparative context of European and Ottoman business writing practices, which evolved within completely different traditions. Regarding the period during which the collection under study was produced, namely the very end of the Ottoman Empire, one can observe a clear “Europeanization” of the Ottoman letter-writing tradition, consisting mostly of the collapsing of Ottoman collections of model letters into European-style letter-writing manuals through the acquaintance of the prominent writers of the field with the existing literature in French. The French language⁶ and culture, as the ultimate reference point of Ottoman Europeanization, became the most significant source of inspiration for

⁶ According to Eldem, French was the widest medium of communication throughout most of the Ottoman Empire and particularly in Istanbul at the turn of the twentieth century. Though it may not have been the language of the streets, he considers it among the dominant and most widely used and accepted languages in business, education, the arts, the press, and even the administration. Edhem Eldem, "Signature of Greek Clients of the Imperial Ottoman Bank: A Clue to Cultural Choices and Behaviour?," in *Ways to Modernity in Greece and Turkey: Encounters with Europe, 1850-1950*, ed. Anna Frangoudaki and Caglar Keyder (2007), 64.

modeling commercial education and commercial correspondence during the post-*Tanzimat* period.

The “Europeanization” of the Ottoman letter-writing tradition, beginning in the 1880s, would continue well after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, following a break during the War of Independence (1919-1922). The main indications of this process are: 1. The introduction of a form of categorization into the available corpus, namely in the form of the collection of samples under two main categories, official and non-official, followed by various genres. 2. The increase in the number of samples given under each and every genre. 3. The development of new genres of correspondence, commercial correspondence being one of them. These different genres appeared as an answer to the practical needs of daily life in general, and business life in particular, during the post-*Tanzimat* period. The new Commercial Code of 1850 playing a significant role in the reorganization of the commercial life initiated the creation of the needs and in response, the search for answers and hence, the boom in the commercial corpus.

This chapter examines the evolution of the genre of letter-writing⁷ in general, and of commercial correspondence in particular, within the European and Ottoman traditions, which had followed different tracks until the nineteenth century. During the course of the long nineteenth century, similarities rather than differences began to emerge through the convergence of a non-Western tradition with a Western one. Historiographies, histories and peculiar sources of business correspondence of each tradition will be analyzed in their own contexts. Nevertheless, the focus will remain on the usage of commercial communication at

⁷ Within the boundaries of this work, in both European and Ottoman contexts, the terms letter and letter-writing will be used to refer to a genre of communications, rather than literature.

the very end of the Ottoman Empire, with an aim at understanding the sudden emergence of commercial correspondence in Ottoman collections of model letters, including the motivations behind this novelty. The following chapter will elaborate on the common practices and features regarding format and language in the commercial communication of the period, which will be used as a basis for a comparative contextualization of the available commercial correspondence.

Commercial Correspondence as a Genre in European Literature

Ars Dictaminis: The Art of Letter Writing

Although letter writing was considered as common practice during the classical Greek and Roman periods, the written letter became a central concern of rhetorical theory during the Middle Ages.⁸ According to Perelman, the main reason for this is that medieval society in general and the medieval political structure in particular, were not urban. Hence, unlike in the circumscribed space of the classical *polis*, communication could not be conducted through oral discourse. Due to the growth of the medieval ecclesiastical and secular bureaucracy, the earlier collections of official and legal formulae proved insufficient to meet the administrative needs of institutions that functioned primarily through correspondence.⁹ As a consequence of

⁸ The main concern of classical rhetoric, from the early Greek Sophists to Cicero and Quintilian, is considered as oral discourse rather than written. Les Perelman, "The Medieval Art of Letter Writing: Rhetoric as Institutional Expression," In *Textual Dynamics of the Professions: Historical and Contemporary Studies of Writing in Professional Communities*, ed Charles Bazerman and James Paradis. (WAC Clearinghouse Landmark Publications in Writing Studies, 2004).

⁹ Ibid., 97-8.

these developments, during the eleventh century arose a whole genre of theoretical works and a new genre of rhetorical manuals, concerned with the form and composition of official letters, known as *ars dictaminis*, or the “art of letter writing” or, collectively, *dictamen*:¹⁰

Although these works drew from classical rhetorical texts, they modified the earlier theory to meet both the ideological requirements of medieval institutions and the practical requirements of the epistolary form. They became in a sense, an early prototype of the modern handbook on effective business writing. Moreover, the teaching and application of these manuals became almost universal in literate medieval culture, and the form and style they dictated became present in almost all types of letters, from the official pronouncements of popes to the letters of students.¹¹

The *dictamen* developed in the eleventh century at the ancient Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino and partially at the universities of Bologna, Salerno and Pavia, and at the Papal Chancery. It was a formal and complex model that prescribed a certain writing style and organization. The necessary pattern of organization consisted of the following elements: address, salutation, notification, exposition, disposition, valediction, attestation and date. The need which the secular official world and the ecclesiastical chancelleries had for a knowledge of the art of drafting documents made the study of the *dictamen* obligatory for the students of rhetoric in the Middle Ages. This art, applicable in matters of everyday life requiring official records, wills, commendations, contracts, immunities, manumission of slaves, also called for the knowledge of the preparation of documents of a less formal character.¹²

¹⁰ In the rest of the text, *ars dictaminis* will be referred to as *dictamen*.

¹¹ Perelman, "The Medieval Art of Letter Writing: Rhetoric as Institutional Expression."

¹² Luella M. Wolff, "A Brief History of the Art of Dictamen: Medieval Origins of Business Letter Writing," *The Journal of Business Communication* 16, no. 2 (1979): 4.

According to Wolff, the growing relations between church and state, the rapid progress of law, the growth of trade, and the complex interrelations of feudal society and of prelates required the use of *dictamen* on which, the present art of letter writing is founded. This art was modified and adapted to society's changing needs.

There was a vast and growing commerce that called for the editing of correspondence, bills and contracts. The ecclesiastical chanceries, the municipal councils, increasing numbers of the Papal decrees, and the rapid progress of the law all contributed to swell the demand for ready letter writers and men skilled in drafting of documents.¹³

The most important works on chancery English and, by extension, on business writing in the late medieval period are by Fisher and Richardson.¹⁴ Both suggest that the *dictamen* was the base for all business writing in the medieval period and that it was universally accepted for public and private correspondence. The *dictamen* spread throughout Europe because of its use by the papal and imperial chancelleries, which were departments of government that produced all the paperwork, from treaties to office memos. The *dictamen* was not part of the regular university curriculum in either France or England yet, but since it constituted the basis of all legal and administrative writing, there was clearly a need for those individuals skilled in its use. Until about the thirteenth century, virtually all literate men and women were in some kind linked to the clerical orders, with the result that the *dictamen* was practiced almost exclusively in the church and in those departments of government, which used churchmen as their administrative staff.

¹³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁴ J. Fisher, "Chancery and the Emergence of Standard Written English in the Fifteenth Century," *Speculum* 52, no. 4 (1977); *ibid*; J. Fisher, Richardson, M., Fisher, J., *An Anthology of Chancery English* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984); *ibid*; *ibid*; Malcolm Richardson, "The Earliest Business Letters in English," *The Journal of Business Communication* 17, no. 3 (1980).

Consequently, the various states of Europe and the Papacy all used a relatively uniform Latin letter-writing style.¹⁵

Outside of government and ecclesiastical circles, by the middle of the fourteenth century, record keeping and private letter writing were becoming essential to many involved in business . The art of letter writing began to filter down the social ladder. A relatively wide group of professional scribes and notaries grew to meet this need. They had to be familiar with every possible letter-writing form – the legal forms necessary to everyday life: deeds, petitions, charters, indentures, etc. Some of these professional scriveners, as they were usually designated, worked for the government, some for private individuals, but many simply for themselves as free-lance, all-purpose scribes. All possessed at least the basic skill of the *dictamen* though with varying degrees of competency.¹⁶

During the fourteenth century, special courses were offered at the universities in England in the art of letter-writing. These were special courses in the sense that they were not part of the regular curriculum and were apparently looked down upon by university officials. Students came to these noncredit courses to acquire the letter-writing skills they would need in their daily business lives, and which they could never have learned in the theologically oriented university classroom. Professional scribes were most probably trained as apprentices to experienced scribes, often under the auspices of the church and later in scrivener's guilds.¹⁷

¹⁵ Richardson, "The Earliest Business Letters in English," 20.

¹⁶ Ibid., 20; *ibid.*

¹⁷ Ibid., 21.

The first examples of business communication in English can be traced back to the early fifteenth century. The correspondence was handled largely by a class of professional scribes; most of them were affiliated in some way with the church. These men wrote exclusively in Latin or in French and followed the rules of the *dictamen* closely. The impetus coming from the central government for the use of English turned into a patriotic gesture during the war against France. Hence, Richardson argues that because of the nationalistic forces gradually pushing out Latin and French, business writing became the property of the trading and agricultural classes as well as of the church and central government.¹⁸

The demise of the *dictamen* in the sixteenth century is mostly regarded as a sudden end in the literature.¹⁹ However, Jane Thomas, in her article titled "Business Writing in History: What Caused the Dictamen's Demise?", argues that the disappearance of the *dictamen* occurred gradually, spreading over centuries, while she also opposes the notion of the universality of the *dictamen*. According to her, the claims regarding the wide usage and sudden disappearance of the *dictamen* are based on the evidence consisting mostly of chancery and government documents.²⁰ When the massive amount of business documents involving ordinary business people is also taken into account, she argues, it becomes possible to see that

¹⁸ Ibid., 21.

¹⁹ Ibid; Malcolm Richardson, "The Gawdy Papers (1509-C. 1750) and the History of Professional Writing in England," *The Journal of Business Communication* 40, no. 4 (2003); Wolff, "A Brief History of the Art of Dictamen: Medieval Origins of Business Letter Writing."; Perelman, "The Medieval Art of Letter Writing: Rhetoric as Institutional Expression."

²⁰ Jane Thomas, "Business Writing in History: What Caused the Dictamen's Demise?," *The Journal of Business Communication* 36, no. 1 (1999).

ordinary business people were not following the *dictamen*'s conventions even by the late fifteenth century.²¹

The Evolution of Collections of Model Letters in France:

From Letter-writing to Course Manuals

Roger Chartier, in his seminal work,²² reveals how the diffusion of a particular type of letter writing manuals, *secrétaires*²³ or collections of model letters — small in size, affordable, and produced in the vernacular of every European country — after the mid-sixteenth century, changed the way in which large segments of the population wrote letters. His work emphasizes the significance of these collections on teaching writing to people. He describes the aim of this specialized literature as “to regulate and control ordinary forms of writing, first by explaining and instilling in people the difficult techniques that writing entailed and then by setting out the rules and conventions proper to each written genre.”²⁴ Although their target

²¹ Her conclusion is based on her research on The Cely Letters, which constitute the largest surviving collection of merchant papers in England before 1500. Jane Thomas, "The Language of the Celys" (University of Michigan, 1994).

²² Roger Chartier, "Secrétaires *for the People*? Model Letters of the Ancien Regime: Between Court Literature and Popular Chapbooks," in *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Cornwall: Polity Press, 1997).

²³ We learn from Chartier that, according to ancient regime language dictionaries, a *secrétarie* means, at one and the same time, an official or clerk, a book, and a piece of furniture. From the aforementioned definition, he derives the description of perception of letter-writing as: a practice for its professionals; a special competence to be acquired through the instruction of masters; and an individual to be performed in privacy. Roger Chartier, "Introduction: An Ordinary Kind of Writing: Model Letters and Letter-Writing in Ancien Regime France," in *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Cornwall: Polity Press, 1997). Chartier, "Secrétaires *for the People*? Model Letters of the Ancien Regime: Between Court Literature and Popular Chapbooks," 6.

²⁴ Chartier, "Introduction: An Ordinary Kind of Writing: Model Letters and Letter-Writing in Ancien Regime France," 1.

audience at the outset might have been a courtly audience or society's elites, as they belonged to a genre of books on civility or treatises on social etiquette, through Chartier's work, we learn that they figured prominently in the catalogues of chapbook sellers and later in mainstream publishers' lists. Based on these figures, he assumes them to have been consumed by a broad-based and popular readership.²⁵

Chartier observes several different legacies interwoven in the early French manuals of the second half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries. The first one was the legacy of medieval formularies that provided models and the second one the legacy of treatises on rhetoric, which provided rules, advice and models as well.²⁶ Another genre developing parallel to the latter legacy consisted of collections of familiar letters in French. Chartier considers collections of familiar letters as storage for inspiration and ready-made expression, whereas manuals included sets of familiar letters, which were or at least claimed to be authentic and recently published.²⁷ Model letters were included in widely circulating works that were written to provide European merchants, who knew little or no Latin, with expressions they could imitate and examples they could follow, and that would enable them to get some practice in languages that were foreign to them. Several of the manuals and treatises written for merchants contained tips on

²⁵ Though Chartier's work informs us in detail regarding the after-effects of the appearance of a new genre of books i.e. its diffusion and assumed consumption; it does not tell us much regarding the motivations and conditions of its appearance. Chartier, "Secrétaires *for the People?* Model Letters of the Ancien Regime: Between Court Literature and Popular Chapbooks."

²⁶ Whether these didactic texts were a continuation or revival of the *dictamen* is beyond the scope of this work.

²⁷ Chartier, "Secrétaires *for the People?* Model Letters of the Ancien Regime: Between Court Literature and Popular Chapbooks," 63-68.

letter-writing and examples of commercial as well as more personal kinds of letters.²⁸

Cecile Dauphin's work on letter-writing manuals published in France in the nineteenth century shows that they were a success as a genre of publication and hence, the first recourse of the French letter-writers. Her work is based on 195 titles and 616 editions stored at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and covering a period from 1830 to 1899. The number of works in her inventory already demonstrates the considerable interest among publishers and hence, among readers, for a relatively specialized subject.²⁹ Three chronological landmarks appeared regarding the history of letter-writing manuals in the nineteenth century out of her inventory: First, the 1850s was the decade when, for the first time, the number of *secrétaires* bearing an author's name exceeded the number of anonymous titles and this signaled the end of tradition of chapbook publishing.³⁰ Second, the production of the *secrétaires* peaked in the years between 1850 and 1869 with more than 250 editions and all this was followed with the teaching of writing, which had been the territory of texts so far, shifting to schools and hence, all the corpus accumulated in letter-writing manuals being transferred to school manuals. Based on the secondary literature exploited in this section, one can conclude that the historical journey from letter-

²⁸ Antwerp, as one of the main centers of trade of the period, was the foremost centre of such publications.

²⁹ In order to specify the true status of the letter-writing manual, Dauphin first identifies its place in the overall publishing output in France, and then gives a brief description of her inventory and last, but not least, attempts to decipher the ways in which they were used. Cecile Dauphin, "Letter-Writing Manuals in the Nineteenth Century," in *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Cornwall: Polity Press, 1997).

³⁰ This genre was designated by titles lacking any proper name but covering many and different editions. Chartier gives all the editions published under the title *Nouveau Secrétaire Français* in the first half of the nineteenth century as "the" example for the genre. Chartier, "Introduction: An Ordinary Kind of Writing: Model Letters and Letter-Writing in Ancien Regime France," 3.

writing manuals to course manuals was the fate of collections of model letters in all vernacular languages of Europe though there might have been differences regarding the periodization of the landmarks. The following section will show that this was also the case in a non-Western context such as the Ottoman Empire.

Commercial Correspondence as a Genre in Ottoman Literature

Ottoman Letter-writing Tradition

In Ottoman Turkish, the word *mektub* (letter), derived from the Arabic *k-t-b* root, which means *to write*, takes on the meaning of “written” or of a “thing written”.³¹ In addition to this basic meaning, *mektub* is also used to describe a genre both in Turkish literature and Ottoman diplomatics. The term letter, when used within the Ottoman context in this study, refers to a genre of correspondence in Ottoman diplomatics, rather than a literary genre. In terms of diplomatics, the term *mektub* is defined as writings sent by people in two different places regarding business, greetings, condolences, or expression of affection (*arz-ı muhabbet*, literally “presenting affection”).³² Letters, as a genre of correspondence, occupy a significant place in the Ottoman *münşeât* (composition) literature and diplomatics and its rules and forms are abundantly mentioned in *münşeât mecmuas* (collections of composed texts), which can be seen as counterparts of European collections of model letters.

³¹ "Mektup," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2004), 13.

³² Terms as *bitik*, *nâme*, *nemîka*, *varaka*, *risâle* were used almost in the same meaning. Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)* (İstanbul 1994), 221.

In the Turkish divan (court) literature tradition, which Ottomans inherited as they became the foremost Islamic state of the early modern period, official and private letters were included within the art of *inşâ*. The Arabic word *inşâ*, which originally meant building, constructing, producing,³³ came to acquire the additional meanings of literary construction, or composition, and, by extension, the art of writing and composition.³⁴ It thus became a term conveying the details of the composition and writing of official and private correspondence according to a certain tradition and art of *belles lettres*. Within the Ottoman literary tradition, *belles lettres* corresponds to the subject matter of the discipline known as *ilmü'l inşâ* (the art of composition). Texts prepared according to the rules of this discipline were known as *münşeât*. Worthwhile samples of official correspondence and *belles lettres* were then collected in various kinds of *mecmuas*, or compilations.³⁵

In this study, the term *inşa* refers to the narrow definition of the term within Turkish literature, which basically refers to all kinds of official correspondence named mainly as *münşeât* and to the writing and knowledge of writing of letters and similar texts that can be considered as part of *münşeât*.³⁶ The term *münşeât*, initially defined as the art of elegant and pompous prose, written either in the form of

³³ Şemseddin Sami, "İnşa," in *Kâmûs-ı Türki* (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1989), 177.

³⁴ Sir James Redhouse, "İnşa," in *Redhouse Türkçe/Osmanlıca-İngilizce Sözlük* (Istanbul: Sev Matbaacılık ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2000), 542.

³⁵ The term *mecmua* comes from the word *mecmû*, which means gathered, compiled. It was derived from the root *cem*; meaning to gather, compile things scattered. *Mecmuas* are works that compile different kinds and amounts of religious/non-religious prose and/or poems of one or more writers and/or poet(s). Mustafa Uzun, "Mecmua," in *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2000). *ibid.*, 265. Çetin Derdiyok, "The Tradition of Letter Writing in the Ottoman State," in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation* ed. Kemal Çiçek (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), 238.

³⁶ "İnşa," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2000), 334.

literary texts and/or of official correspondence by *münşis*³⁷ (composers) or as a collection of such examples of prose, would eventually acquire the wider meaning of any kind of correspondence, including private, within the context of Ottoman history and diplomatics. The term *münşeât* was also used as a counterpart of the term *mektubât* (letters) in Persian and Turkish literary culture.³⁸

In Turkish literary practice, the narrow definition of the term *inşa*, as mentioned above, and the term *münşeât* were used interchangeably. In the Ottoman writing tradition, works that gathered all kinds of writings in prose, including letters, formed a peculiar kind of *mecmuâ*, generally known as *mecmuâ-i münşeât*, *mecmuâ-i inşa*.³⁹ These works compiled either the prose of a specific author or selected examples of the prose of different authors. The style-books for chancery scribes, copy-books and letter manuals within the Western literature thus find their Ottoman counterpart in *münşeât* literature.⁴⁰ This work focuses on the didactic type of *münşeât*s and their Western counterparts; letter-writing manuals. They are important sources not only for literature studies, but also for historical research.

³⁷ *Münşis* were writers of epistolary style. They were mostly masters of literature who can write about a subject in a perfect manner. They used to work in government offices as *divan*, *kalem*, *ketebe*. Most of the *münşis* trained in such offices were not only holding high rank positions such as *Mektupçuluk*, *Vaka-nüvislik*, *Reis'ül küttaflık*, *Sadrâzamlık* but were also poets, professors, and men of science. Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, "Türk Edebiyatında Mektup," *Tercüme* XVI, no. 77-80 (1964): 386.

³⁸ Mustafa Uzun, "Münşeât," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2006), 18.

³⁹ Uzun, "Mecmua," 265-8; *ibid.* From now on in this work, these kinds of works, regardless of their naming in the literature i.e. "*mecmuâ-i münşeât*", "*münşeât mecmuâsı*", etc. will be referred to as *münşeât* works.

⁴⁰ H. R. Roemer, "İnşa," *The Encyclopedia of Islam* III(1986).

Ottoman *Münşeât* Tradition

In Turkish literature, examples of *münşeât* / *inşâ mecmuâs* can be found as early as the fifteenth century. The content of these *mecmuâs* consisted not only of official and private correspondence but also of letters in verses, orations, articles, petitions and prayers.⁴¹ *Münşeât*s have been examined under different categories according to their contents, composition, language (Arabic, Persian or Turkish), name of the compiler or of the compilation, date of publication, etc. A specialist of Ottoman literature, Bekir Kütükoğlu examines *münşeât mecmuâs* under three groups according to their contents and style of compilation: 1. Collections attributed to a composer in prose, or collections compiling *münşeât(s)* by one or two scribes; 2. Letters with a political and administrative content; and 3. Essays and collections compiled with the objective of teaching how to write in prose.⁴² According to Çetin Derdiyok, it is hard to divide the classical Turkish literary prose into clearly differentiated periods. He compares different *inşa* texts from different centuries – fifteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth — and stresses the similarities between them in terms of content, language and style as evidence to his statement that the *münşeât*

⁴¹ A useful source regarding content of *münşeât mecmuâs* is; Abdurrahman Daş, "Osmanlılarda Münşeât Geleneği" (Ankara Üniversitesi, 2003).

⁴² Bekir Kütükoğlu, "Münşeât Mecmualarının Osmanlı Diplomatîği Bakımından Ehemmiyeti," in *Tarih Boyunca Paleografya Ve Diplomatik Semineri: 30 Nisan – 2 Mayıs 1986 Bildiriler* (İstanbul: 1988), 169. For different kinds of classifications, see: Halil İbrahim Haksever, "Münşeât Mecmuaları Ve Edebiyat Tarihimiz İçin Önemi," *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 1(1998). Halil İbrahim Haksever, "Eski Türk Edebiyatında Münşeâtlar Ve Nergisi'nin Münşeâtı" (İnönü Üniversitesi 1995), 195-260. Agah Sırrı Levend, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, vol. I (Ankara: TTK Yayınları VII Seri, 1973), 113-6. Orhan Şaik Gökyay, "Tanzimat Dönemine Değin Mektup," *Türk Dili*, no. 274 (1974): 17-9. Uzun, "Münşeât," 19-20.

genre does not change greatly in time.⁴³ This section, after a brief overview of Ottoman *münşeât* works, focuses on the third group of didactic *münşeât* works published in the nineteenth century, particularly during the post-*Tanzimat* period. Another scholar in the field, Haksever considers most of the collections of model letters written in the nineteenth century as serving didactic purposes.⁴⁴

The earliest *münşeât* book known dates from the fifteenth century; it was compiled by Yahya bin Mehmed Kâtib and was named *Menâhicü'l-İnşâ* (the Methods of Composition). It included the official correspondence written during the reigns of Sultan Murad II (1421-1451) and Mehmed II (1451-1481).⁴⁵ Starting with the sixteenth century, one can observe an increasing influence of Arabic and Persian on the Ottoman *inşâ* literature. Arabic and Persian words and rules tend to outnumber their Turkish equivalents within the prose of *münşis* of the period. Hence, the masters of the art of *inşâ* also had to be masters of the Arabic and Persian languages and literatures. Among the well known *münşis* of the sixteenth century, one can cite Feridun Bey, Abd'ül-Celil Bin Yusuf, Celâlzâde Sâlih, Lâmiî, and Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi.⁴⁶ The famous two-volume work by Feridun Bey, *Münşat ü's-Selatin* (Compositions of the Sultans), composed around 1566,⁴⁷ Okçuzâde

⁴³ Derdiyok, "The Tradition of Letter," 238. He partakes in Orhan Şaik Gökyay's argument. Gökyay, "Tanzimat Dönemine Değin Mektup."

⁴⁴ Haksever classifies *münşeât* works under three categories namely; didactic, historic and literary and states the purpose the didactic kind serves as to inform the newcomer *münşis* and whomever in need about the rules of correspondence. He considers the literary and historic kinds as serving not only displaying art of writing, but also preserving the valuable samples and historical documents. H. İbrahim Haksever, "Münşeât Mecmualarında "Sebeb-I Telif", " *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 3 (1999): 57-8.

⁴⁵ Levend, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, 113.

⁴⁶ Tansel, "Türk Edebiyatında Mektup," 386-7.

⁴⁷ Kutluk gives a detailed content of the both volumes. İbrahim Kutluk, "Münşeâtlar Ve Günümüze Dek Gelen Mektup Betikleri Üzerine," *Türk Dili*, no. 274 (1974): 371-2.

Mehmed's *Münşeât*, and Sarı Abdullah's *Düstûrü'l-İnşâ* (the Rules of Composition) were among the prestigious *münşeât* collections of the sixteenth century. All of these works contained official documents.⁴⁸ In the seventeenth century, we see the *münşeât*s of the poets such as Nev'izâde Atâyî, Azmîzâde Hâletî, Ganîzâde Nâdirî and Nâbî. Among the eighteenth century *münşis*, Ebu Bekir Kanî had a special place. According to Derdiyok, the genre which reached its peak through Veysi and Nergisi during the eighteenth century, gradually lost its significance and completed its time under the influence of a new age and new literary trends during the nineteenth century.⁴⁹

Looking at the contents of the *münşeât* works written before the *Tanzimat*, one notices that they covered mostly official and partially private correspondence. In addition to this general content, some of these compilations occasionally included orations and articles on diverse subjects. A comparison between the contents of *münşeât* volumes published at the beginning and at the end of the nineteenth century reveals drastic differences: while a *münşeât* compiled at the beginning of the nineteenth century would have normally included private or official samples of writing, towards the end of the century started to appear legal documents such as company and personal contracts, surety papers, agreements, registrations and business letters, in addition to the previous content.⁵⁰ Changes in the content were also followed by changes in the format of the letter genre: It is

⁴⁸ For more descriptive information on these works, see: Levend, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*; Gökyay, "Tanzimat Dönemine Değın Mektup."; Kutluk, "Münşeâtlar Ve Günümüze Dek Gelen Mektup Betikleri Üzerine."

⁴⁹ Derdiyok, "The Tradition of Letter," 240.

⁵⁰ Tansel, "Türk Edebiyatında Mektup," 387.

possible to talk about changes in the opening, prayer and ending formularies and expressions. Some of them were shortened, and some disappeared altogether.⁵¹

Tansel, an earlier specialist of correspondence in Ottoman literature, states that the latter additions to the content occurred under the influence of changes in daily life towards the end of the nineteenth century.⁵² Concurring with his statement, I argue that the drastic changes in the content of *münşeât* works resulted from changes introduced into the political, economic and social environment by the *Tanzimat* reforms. The following section will examine in detail the contributions of the changing business environment to the *münşeât* literature during the Ottoman long nineteenth century.

The Evolution of Business Correspondence in the Ottoman *Münşeât* Literature

The evolution of business correspondence in the Ottoman *münşeât* literature appears an untouched subject in the secondary literature. In order to make sense of this domain, I have gathered an inventory of works involving the terms *inşâ*, *münşeât* or different forms of the word *mektub* like *mektubat*, etc. in their titles, preserved at the Süleymaniye⁵³ and Bayezid⁵⁴ public libraries. A chronological and detailed list of the 88 *münşeât* works published between 1800 and 1914, present in

⁵¹ İpşirli Mehmet, "Osmanlılar'da Kitâbet-i Resmîyeye Dair Eserler Hakkında Bazı Gözlemler" (paper presented at the Osmanlı-Türk Diplomatîği Semineri, 1994), 3.

⁵² Tansel, "Türk Edebiyatında Mektup," 387.

⁵³ Süleymaniye library was built within the Süleymaniye Complex, which was established by the chief architect of the royal court, Mimar Sinan between the years 1549 and 1557. It was modernized in 1918 and contains the largest collection of Islamic manuscripts in the world.

⁵⁴ Bayezid library was founded by Abdülhamid in 1882 and has an important collection of the nineteenth century Ottoman literature.

the collections of both libraries can be found in Appendix A.⁵⁵ This inventory is quite representative of the actual production of the Ottoman long nineteenth century, as the Bayezid Library which was established at the end of the century, accumulated the richest collection of printed publications of the post-*Tanzimat* period, while the Süleymaniye library possesses a very large collection of not only manuscripts but also printed publications of earlier periods.

Within the *münşeat* works published during the second half of the nineteenth century, it is possible to observe a gradual increase in the space reserved for samples of various kinds of business writing in general. The main cause of this boom was the Ottoman new Commercial Code of 1850. The first samples of business correspondence that appear in the nineteenth century *münşeat* literature were samples of *poliçe* (bill of exchange) and *senedât* (promissory notes) i.e. financial and commercial documents. They first appeared in a mere two pages of *Înşâ-i Cedid* (New Composition),⁵⁶ published in 1269 (1852/1853). Another early work containing samples of documents related to business, again not more than two pages, bear the title of *Muarrif-i İnşâ* (the Indicator of Composition) – author unknown again – published in 1280 (1863/1864). The gradual increase in the space reserved to samples of various kinds of business writings gained acceleration among the works published during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The first example was Hüseyin Remzi's *Nuhbetü'l-Münşeat* (Selection of Composition) dated 1292 (1875/1876) with five pages of such documents.

⁵⁵ Copies of *münşeat* works present in the collections of both libraries are counted as one entry in order to provide a unified list.

⁵⁶ The author of the work is unknown. See Appendix B for the table of contents of this work.

The samples of documents related with business varied and increased in volume, with a first example in the form of *İlaveli Göldeste Muharrerât-ı Resmîyye ve Gayr-ı Resmîyye Numuneleri* (The Anthology and Supplements. Samples of Official and Private Correspondance), compiled by a certain Mihri and published by the Osmaniye printing house in Istanbul, in 1300 (1882/1883). In this work, samples of various kinds of business writings were included among the *Muharrerât-ı Resmîyye* (official correspondence), though not as a separate category. The first 65 pages of the *münşeat* covered various types of business documents such as bills of exchange, different kinds of notes, letters of guarantee, contracts, company deeds, customs, money orders, letters of credit, etc. The work continued with some seventy pages of correspondence between official departments, and with legal documents i.e. summons, protests, notices, or sentences. Hence, almost half of the content was devoted to various kinds of business documents, although samples of commercial letters were not included. This work was reprinted consecutively in 1303 (1885/1886), in 1306 (1888/1889), and in 1327 (1909/1910). Nevertheless, the contents had remained practically unchanged since the first edition.

The Evolution of Ottoman Commercial Correspondence:

Mimicking the French Tradition

Model commercial correspondence, as a new genre, first appeared under the broad category of *muharrerât-ı resmîyye* (official correspondence) among the increasing volume of business documents, and then under the newly introduced category of *muharrerât-ı gayr-ı resmîyye* (non-official correspondence) during the last quarter

of the nineteenth century. This was followed by the development of the corpus mainly through *münşeât* works designed as textbooks. These new textbooks prepared by Ottoman literati, who were acquainted with the French language, literature and culture, were an outcome of the continuing reformation process in the education system during the post-*Tanzimat* period. These publications are significant indicators not only of the emergence and development of an Ottoman corpus of commercial correspondence, but also of the significance of the French influence in the process.

The development of the published corpus on commercial correspondence in Ottoman literature paralleled that of its French counterpart: from letter-writing manuals to textbooks. In order to understand the mechanism and the motivations behind this transformation, this section focuses on the related outcomes of the reforms introduced into the educational system during the post-*Tanzimat* period: the introduction of a new course into the curriculum of secondary education, named *usul-i kitabet ve inşâ* (method in writing and composition) and the foundation of the Higher School of Commerce (*Ticaret Mekteb-i Âlisi*). The former allowed for the preparation of new textbooks, through which letter-writing manuals were transformed into course manuals. The latter, through its publications, specifically contributed to the development of a corpus on commerce in general and on commercial correspondence in particular.

The main motivation in introducing a course on *usul-i kitabet ve inşâ* was to teach different kinds of prose and correspondence. Special course books were prepared for this course. Among these course books; the best known were:

aforementioned *İnşâ-i Cedid* (New Composition),⁵⁷ *Usul-i İnşâ ve Kitâbet* (Method in Composition and Writing),⁵⁸ *Kitâbet-i Hususiye ve Ticâriye Dersleri* (Lessons in Private Writing and Commerce),⁵⁹ *İlâveli Hazine-i Mekâtib yahud Münşeât* (the Treasure of Letters with its Supplement, or Perfect Composition), *Rehber-i Kitâbet-i Osmaniyye yahud Mükemmel Münşeât* (Manual for Ottoman Writing or Perfect Composition)⁶⁰ and *Tüccar Kâtibi* (Trader's Secretary).⁶¹ These course books, mostly known under the terms of *inşâ*, *kitâbet* (writing), and *münşeât*⁶² were published out of practical concerns regarding teaching how to write prose and their contents consisted mostly of rules of prose and of different kinds of sample texts.

The publications of the Higher School of Commerce made a significant contribution to the corpus of commercial correspondence in the Ottoman Empire. Not only its publications, but the school itself was a good reflection of the French influence in this domain. The first higher school of commerce⁶³ was established under the name of *Hamidiye Ticâret Mektebi* (Hamidiye School of Commerce) in

⁵⁷ See Appendix B for the table of content of this work.

⁵⁸ The work was published by Mehmed Tevfik, in Istanbul in 1307 (1889/1890). It is missing in the collections of both Süleymaniye and Bayezid libraries.

⁵⁹ This course-book was published by Ali Seyyidi, who was one of the teachers of *Mülkiye*, in 1324 (1908/1909). There are thirty lessons in the coursebook and the last lesson is about commerce and commercial contracts.

⁶⁰ This work was published by Mehmed Fuad in Istanbul in 1327 (1911/12).

⁶¹ This work, published by Hamamizâde İhsan, was the number four publication within the collection of student union of the Higher School of Commerce. The publication years of this work are recorded as 1333-1339 at Bayezid Library.

⁶² In the titles of these course books, the terms *inşâ* and *münşeât* were still used interchangeably just like in the pre-*Tanzimat* period.

⁶³ The first attempt to open a school of commerce was undertaken by the Grand Vizier Said Pasha around 1860s. He was well-known for his influence on Abdülhamid regarding issues on education. The main goal was to educate the *Hayriye* merchant. Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi*, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2003), 106.

1882.⁶⁴ After a few trials, by 1894, the school was able to provide a steady three-year vocational formation following a high school (*Rüşdiye*) education. It had been founded as a replica of the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales*. The curriculum⁶⁵ was borrowed from this French model, and French was the second language of education. Graduates were to receive two diplomas in commercial sciences (*Fünûn-ı Ticâret Diploması*), one in Turkish, and the other in French. The institution was reformed after the 1908 Revolution and the reestablishment of the Constitution. The term *Hamidiye*, a reference to the deposed Sultan Abdülhamid II, was dropped from its name as it started to be referred to as *Ticâret Mekteb-i Âlisi*. Despite all these efforts, the quality of education never reached the level of Greek, Armenian or foreign schools of commerce.⁶⁶ The school provided a number of publications, some bilingual, French and Turkish, some only in Turkish, which made a significant contribution to the development of not only commercial correspondence as a genre in the Ottoman literature but also to the commercial practices in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ There is confusion in the literature regarding the date *Ticaret Mekteb-i Alisi* was founded. This work will use the date cited by Sakaoğlu. Ibid.

⁶⁵ The detailed weekly program of *Ticaret Mekteb-i Alisi* curriculum from 1913/14 in Appendix C gives an idea regarding the quality of the education provided. The curriculum was designed to equip students in all areas related with commerce in addition to communication in French. Three hour course *Fransızca Muhaberat ve Vesaik-i Ticariyye* (Commercial Documents and Communication in French) explicitly displays the significance of communication in French in the field of commerce.

⁶⁶ Mustafa Ergün, *İkinci Meşrûtiyet Devrinde Eğitim Hareketleri, 1908-1914* (Ankara: Ocak Yayınları, 1996), 288-91; ibid. Hasan Ali Koçer, *Türkiye'de Modern Eğitimin Doğuşu (1773-1923)*, Uzman Yayınları (Ankara: Uzman Yayınları, 1987), 161. Osman Ergin, *İstanbul Mektepleri Ve İlim, Terbiye, Ve Sanat Müesseseleri Dolayısıyla Türkiye Maarif Tarihi* (İstanbul: Osmanbey Matbaası, 1939), 1131-46. Sakaoğlu, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi*, 106-7.

⁶⁷ Among the publications of the Higher School of Commerce were; G. Zobou, "Correspondance Et Terminologie Commerciales En Deux Langues : Français Et Turc," (1888). İhsan Hamamizâde, *Tüccar Katibi*, Ticaret Mektebi Alisi Talebe Birliği Külliyyatı No. 4 (İstanbul 1339). The author of the former work, Kirkor Zobou, was one of the professors of the *Hamidiye Ticaret Mektebi* (Hamidiye School of Commerce). The latter was prepared by a latter professor, Hamamizâde İhsan

Publications for the *usul-i kitâbet ve inşâ* course and the publications of the Higher School of Commerce both appeared as the outcome of reform efforts within the educational system to answer some of the practical needs of the time, and turned into major guides for correspondence in general and commercial correspondence in particular. Among these works, this work will focus on *Îlâveli Hâzine-i Mekâtib yahud Mükemmel Münşeât* (the Treasure of Letters with its Supplement, or Perfect Composition) as a course book prepared for the course on *usul-i kitâbet ve inşâ* and *Tüccar Kâtibi* (Trader's Secretary) as sample publication of the Higher School of Commerce in the section to follow.⁶⁸

Îlâveli Hazine-i Mekâtib yahud Mükemmel Münşeât

Îlâveli Hazine-i Mekâtib yahud Mükemmel Münşeât,⁶⁹ which had seven editions in total,⁷⁰ was published by Ahmed Rasim, who was one of the prominent authors of the post-*Tanzimat* period.⁷¹ The first edition, published by Ahmed Rasim and

Beg, from his lecture notes for his course *Tüccar Muhaberatı Usulü* (The Method of Commercial Correspondence) during the years 1333-1336 (1917-1920).

⁶⁸ Both of the works were published with the permission of the Ministry of Education.

⁶⁹ In literature, other than bibliographies of Ahmed Rasim's works, there is only one article citing this work; Konur Ertop, "Hazine-I Mekatip Yahut Mükemmel Münşeât: Yüzyıl Önce Herkes Kolayca Mektup Yazabilir Miydi?," *Posta Kutusu* 2004.

⁷⁰ The publication years of the consecutive editions were 1306, 1307, 1309, 1313, 1318, 1325, 1331. This work focuses on the seventh edition published in 1331 (1915/16).

⁷¹ Ahmed Rasim (1865-1932), in addition to journal articles, novels, stories, poems; he wrote a number of course books in a number of subjects like history, grammar, orthography, mathematics, etc. especially during the years 1888 and 1891 when the means of the press were limited. Some of these course books were written as he was teaching at "*Mekteb-i Behrami*" and "*Kamondo Musevi Okulu*" (Kamondo Jewish School). "Ahmed Rasim," in *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*; ibid; Agah Sırrı Levend, *Ahmet Rasim* (Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1965); Suat Hızarcı, *Ahmet Rasim: Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri*, Türk Klasikleri: 30 (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1953); ibid.

Mustafa Reşid in 1306 (1888/1889) under the title *Hâzine-i Mekâtib yahud Mükemmel Münşeât*, (the Treasure of Letters or Perfect Composition) was the first detailed *münşeât* work including a table of contents.⁷² In the foreword of their work, the authors acknowledging the presence of *münşeât* works also noted their insufficiency in satisfying the needs of the time: their insufficiency in number and in content to satisfy the needs of the experts. They explained that the main motivation behind the publication of their work was to produce a *münşeât* work which succeeded in new style of expression and writing (*tarz-ı cedide*) and provided samples of letters of all kinds, agreeable to the needs of the time (*ihtiyacat-ı zamane*).⁷³

For the first time in this work appeared a section on *mekâtib-i ticariyye* (commercial correspondence), which consisted of six pages of samples of business correspondence: a bills of exchange, promissory notes, bonds, drafts, letters of credit, checks, deeds, protests, reports, certificates of discharge. This section appeared under the heading *muhârrerat-ı gayr-ı resmiyye* (non-official correspondence) and was followed by twenty-five pages of samples of trade letters under the heading *muhârrerat-ı resmiyye* (official correspondence). Hence, it is in this work that we come across the first samples of original trade letters in a *münşeât* work.

⁷² The second edition was published the following year, 1307 (1888/89). There is no change in the contents of the first and second editions.

⁷³ “Tab ve neşrine vesatât etdiğim eser-i matbua meyanında ötedenberi lüzumunu hissettiğim kitablardan biri de tarz-ı cedide muvaffak ve ihtiyacat-ı zamane mutabık sade ve selis yani alakat ve teselselat gareden ari, elfaz ve tabirat-ı zaiden biri, her nevi mekatib olarak numunelerini havi olmak üzere mükemmel bir münşeât kitabı vücuda getirmek idi. Vakia bizde münşeât kitablari eksik değildir. Ancak bunların mikdarı hem ihtiyac-ı zamane kafi değildir ve hem de ali elmum mektub ve evrak saire tahrir ve tanzimi için erbab-ı hacete rehber olamamaktadır...” Ahmed Rasim, Reşid, Mustafa, *Hazine-i Mekâtib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeât* (İstanbul: Şirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, 1306).

Ahmed Rasim and Mustafa Reşid republished their *münşeât* work with additions in 1309 (1891/1892).⁷⁴ The table of contents was enriched with new and improved sections. It had so far the longest *mekâtib-i ticariyye* (commercial correspondence) part in the literature, a total of 86 pages, among the *münşeât* works published before M. H. Naci's work *Hazine-i Mektubat Yahud Mükemmel ve Mufasssal Münşeât* (the Treasure of Letters or Perfect and Detailed Composition) published in 1318 (1900/1901).⁷⁵ This work in total consisted of 494 pages and business correspondence covered around 100 pages. Ahmed Rasim republished his work with the addition of the word *İlâveli* (Supplement) to the title within the same year; this edition included 113 pages of business correspondence.⁷⁶

Ahmed Rasim published the seventh and last edition of his work in 1331 (1915/1916) with exactly the same content as the previous edition, including the volume of business correspondence covered. This time, in his foreword, Ahmed Rasim, mentioned the existence of *münşeât-ı cedide* (new composition); letter-writing manuals involving the new style of the art of correspondence. He emphasized the significance of the new style of art of letter of writing in the evolution of the style of expression of Ottoman *münşeât*. He stated that the facility entailed by the new style of art of letter writing and simplicity and elegance in the explanation of purpose and communication of intention within the new style of art of letter of writing was preferred to the style of explanation and communication used

⁷⁴ Ahmed Rasim, Reşid, Mustafa, *Hazine-i Mekatib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeât*, 3 ed. (İstanbul: Mekteb-i Sanayi Matbaası, 1309).

⁷⁵ M. H. Naci, *Hazine-i Mektubât Yahud Mükemmel Ve Mufasssal Münşeât* (Cemal Efendi Matbaası, 1318).

⁷⁶ Ahmed Rasim, *İlâveli Hazine-i Mekatib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeât*, 5 ed. (İstanbul: Artin Asaduryan Şirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, 1318). Sixth edition was published within the same year.

by the old *münşeat*. This required the codification of the perfecting style of explanation of *münşeat-ı Osmaniyye* (Ottoman composition) in the new style of art of letter writing.⁷⁷ Though Ahmed Rasim mentioned the new style of writing, he did not explain what it actually referred to. Unfortunately, the available literature also is not sourceful regarding the appearance of a new style of writing during post-*Tanzimat* period. An educated guess, which definitely requires further research, might be that he was referring to the new style of writing, which appeared in bureaucracy during the reign of Selim the Third.

In the foreword to the first edition, Ahmed Rasim and Mustafa Reşid had criticized the lack of *münşeat-ı cedide* in the literature as already mentioned before. In the last edition published almost twenty-five years later, while acknowledging their presence, Ahmed Rasim was still criticizing the current ones for their insufficiency. He referred to them as bad or altered copies of his work and did not consider them as accurate guides for letter-writing.⁷⁸ Ahmed Rasim defined his work both as a course book and as a guide for scribes. His work was based on *mektubât* (letters), which he divided into two broad categories; *muhârrerat-ı resmiyye* (official correspondence) and *muhârrerat-ı gayr-ı resmiyye* (non-official correspondence).⁷⁹ He reserved the aforementioned volume for non-official

⁷⁷ “Tarz-ı cedit-i inşanın mucib olduğu suhulet, tebyin-i maksad ve tebliğ-i meramda haiz olduğu sadegi ve letafet bu gün münşeat-ı kadimede müstamel tarz-ı tebyin ve tebliğe göre her vechle makbul olup bilhassa zamanımızda gitdikçe tekemmül iden uslub-u ifade-i münşeat-ı Osmaniye’nin de bu kalıpta tedvinini icab itmekdedir...” Ahmed Rasim, *İlaveli Hazine-I Mekatib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeat*, 7 ed. (İstanbul: Sancakçıyan Matbaası, 1331), 3.

⁷⁸ “...Gerçi ayad-i kariinde bu maksadı ifa itmek üzere tertib idilmiş bir kaç münşeat-ı cedide vardır. Fakat bunların cümlesi (hazine-i mekatib)in yalan yanlış birer kopyası ve adeta andan iktibas idildiğini setr itmek bahanesiyle alt üst idilüb kitabın natık olduğu fevaid ve muhsenatın aks idilmiş birer numunesi olmağla erbab-ı mürace’at için birer rehber-i sahih değildir...” Ibid., 3-4.

⁷⁹ “Muharrerat-ı resmiye; Devair-i devletin ittihaz eylediği bir nev-i tarz-ı tahrirdir ki, bunda iktisab-ı rüşuh itmek lazımdır.

correspondence and stated that he would publish another volume for official correspondence.⁸⁰ This shows the drastic change in the content of the letter-writing manuals from official to non-official, which can also be read as a reflection of the changes in the priorities of daily life.

Rasim continued by dividing non-official correspondence into thirteen sub-categories⁸¹ and among these various categories; *muhâberat-ı ticariyye* (commercial correspondence) appeared within the last category which included various types of business correspondence. The commercial correspondence section consisted of the description of the genre followed by forty pages of samples of trade letters and two samples of invoices. The following chapter, exploiting the content of the *muhâberat-ı ticariyye* section explicitly, will compare the samples of trade letters with the available commercial correspondence in terms of format and the language.

Muharrerat-ı gayr-ı resmiye, mesalihi husususiyyeye mute'allik muharreratdır ki tebrik, taziye, tezkere, tavsiye gibi envai keşiresi vardır. Bunların kaleme alınmalarında; tabiat ile zevk-i selim muallim-i evveldir.” Ibid., 7; ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., footnote, p. 10.

⁸¹ “ Muharrerat-ı Gâyır-ı Resmiyyenin başlıcaları ber vech-i âtidir.

- (1) – Sene ve bayram tebrikleri
- (2) – Rütbe, nişan, memuriyet vesaire tebrikleri
- (3) – Taziyenâmeler
- (4) – Teselliyetnâmeler
- (5) – Teşekkürnâmeler
- (6) – Mazeretnâmeler
- (7) – Tekdirnâme – tazirnâmeler
- (8) – Tavsiyenâmeler
- (9) – Taleb mektupları
- (10) – Tezkereler
- (11) – Vadenâmeler
- (12) – Vedânâmeler, tevbihnâmeler
- (13) – Senedat, poliçe. Çek konşimento. Muhâberat-ı ticâriyye. Beyânât. İ'lânât-ı ticâriyye vesaire.” Ibid., 10-1.

Tüccar Kâtibi

Tüccar Kâtibi (Trader's Secretary), published in 1339 (1923), was prepared by one of the teachers of the Higher School of Commerce, Hamamizâde İhsan Beg from his lecture notes for the course *Tüccar Muhaberatı Usulü* (The Method of Commercial Correspondence)⁸² during the years 1333-1336 (1917-1920). This was the first work focusing exclusively on commercial correspondence as a genre. At the beginning of his work, the author examined letters under two main categories according to their subjects: private and official. Nevertheless, he reminded his readers of the differing group of letters namely; commercial letters, and focused on this category in immense detail in the rest of his work, building the richest corpus in this domain at the end of the Empire. He considered this group of letters as neglected within the current literature as they casually appeared under the category private but only as samples. His remark immediately evokes Ahmed Rasim's work.⁸³

⁸² This course was taught during the last year of the *Ameli Serbest Dersler Şubesi* (Independent Applied Business Courses Section) of Higher School of Commerce (*Ticaret Mekteb-i Âlisi*) and the lecture notes were the number four publication of the student union. Hamamizâde, *Tüccar Katibi*.

⁸³ "Mektubların yazıldıkları mevzua göre, hususi ve resmi nevilerinden başlıca mümeyyiz evsafı havi mühim bir kısmı daha vardır: ticarî mektublar...Bu kısım bizde ihmal edilmiş, bazen hususi kitabetin envaı arasında ancak numuneleri gösterilmiş geçilmiştir." Ibid., 5.

Conclusion

Commercial correspondence as a genre appeared among the emerging types of business correspondence by the end of the Ottoman Empire and the year 1306 (1888/1889) was a turning point in this respect: It was after the first appearance of the *mekâtib-i ticariyye* (commercial correspondence) section and samples of commercial letters in *Hazine-i Mekâtib yahud Mükemmel Münşeat* (the Treasure of Letters or Perfect Composition) published by Mustafa Reşid and Ahmed Rasim that an increase in the volume of commercial correspondence started to gain some validity throughout the literature. This increase built up to its own corpus under the impetus of the publications of the Higher School of Commerce.

The development of business correspondence and the emergence of commercial correspondence during the post-*Tanzimat* period constituted reformist impulses that tried to shape commercial culture, while responding to the daily needs of the emerging business environment created through the *Tanzimat* reforms. The immediate need was remedied through the French literature and educational system, whereas the European vernaculars had had centuries to create their own corpus. *Münşeat* tradition as a response to the needs of the time (*ihtiyacat-ı zamane*) evolved into *münşeat-ı cedide* (new composition) through exploitation of *tarz-ı cedide* (new style of expression and writing). In this process, the end of the nineteenth century appeared as a turning point for the establishment of the rules, forms and formats regarding business correspondence in Turkish in general, and commercial correspondence in particular. The relative boom in the corpus of commercial correspondence in Turkish was also a reflection of the corresponding

increase in the number of Ottoman Muslim literate subjects of the Empire dealing with trade.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY vs. REALITY: ATTEMPTS TO SECULARIZE THE OTTOMAN LETTER-WRITING TRADITION AS A MANIFESTATION OF THE IDEOLOGY OF OTTOMANISM

“*Mektub, sahibini arayandır.*”⁸⁴

(A letter is that which searches for its master.)

Introduction

This chapter, focusing on the actual commercial correspondence of the Mataracızâde trading house, which mainly consists of commercial letters and invoices, analyzes it with respect to the didactic literature mentioned in the previous chapter. The aforementioned works *İlaveli Hazine-i Mekâtib yahud Mükemmel Münşeat*⁸⁵ (the Treasure of Letters with its Supplement, or Perfect Composition) and *Tüccar Kâtibi* (Trader’s Secretary) will be exploited as comparative material for this cause. The actual letters provided by the available commercial correspondence will be compared with the models in these works, a pioneering attempt in literature on both Ottoman and European letter writing traditions so far.⁸⁶ The ultimate aim of such a comparison is to explore the social and cultural codes of etiquette embedded in format and language, which actually emerged from a blend

⁸⁴ Ahmed Rasim, in his foreword, referred to this line as cited by one of the münşis. Rasim, *Hazine-i Mekâtib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeat*.

⁸⁵ This work will be referred to as *Hazine-i Mekâtib* from now on.

⁸⁶ Trivellato’s insightful chapter on “Etiquette of Merchants’ Letters” in her seminal work on the cross-cultural trade of the Sephardic Jews of Livorno in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been the only attempt so far in literature to analyze actual correspondence in reference to letter writing manuals. Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers : The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). I am thankful to Professor Molly Greene for raising this work to my attention.

of tradition, manners and status in the Ottoman society. These social and cultural codes will allow an understanding of how different social and cultural groups and identities were positioned within the Ottoman society at the end of the Empire.

In this context, the discourse of the commercial letters is considered as a reflection of the social discourse at the end of the Ottoman Empire. Discursively, the letters served the reconstruction of the actual social hierarchy in the Ottoman society. Reconstructing different actors in line with their actual social positions i.e. status, profession, age, religion; and in relation to one another on a discursive level not only underlined the current social dichotomies within the society but also reaffirmed them. Mataracızâde brothers partook in this exercise with their peculiar style quite creatively. The comparison of the actual letters with the samples in the didactic literature also tells us about the literacy level of the brothers and their awareness of the current standards of format and language used in commercial correspondence. This chapter specifically focuses on the analysis of format and language of the available collection; analysis of content will be reserved for the following chapters.

Description of the Commercial Correspondence

The available collection of the Mataracızâde trading house consists of 355 folios including 312 commercial letters,⁸⁷ 32 invoices, and seven pages of debt records as also mentioned in the introduction of this work. Within the collection, some pages contained one or more letters; a letter and an invoice, while most contain just one

⁸⁷ Some of the letters involved invoices as well. Among the 312 commercial letters, only two are unreadable.

letter or invoice. The length of the letters differed according to their contents, but the correspondence exchanged among the brothers, especially the letters sent to the youngest brother in Manchester, Cemil, were generally longer than those exchanged with third parties. Among the 312 commercial letters, only four were written in French, the rest being in Ottoman Turkish.

The available collection is the remaining part of the 1914 copybook of the Mataracızâde trading house and mainly consists of the correspondence – commercial letters and invoices - sent from the office in Büyük Yeni Han, in Istanbul.⁸⁸ Copybooks were the registers of copies of letters and invoices traders sent to their partners and collaborators. They were one of the three different types of commercial registers merchants had to keep according to the newly formulated Commercial Law of 1850. The rules and regulations, according to which the commercial books were to be kept, were deliberately elaborated within the Commercial Law. As they could be used as evidence in court in case of conflicts between merchants, it was important to follow the stated rules and regulations.⁸⁹ This explains the frequency of the correspondence,⁹⁰ the regularity of the format and the rarity of mistakes within the available collection. Each page of the copybook, which was made of India paper, had a number on the right top side of the page printed in sequence by a numerator.

⁸⁸ See chapter four for detailed information on Büyük Yeni Han and the Eminönü area where it is located.

⁸⁹ Macit M. Kenanoğlu, *Ticaret Kanunnâmesi Ve Mecelle Işığında Osmanlı Ticaret Hukuku* (Ankara: Lotus Yayınevi, 2005), 84.

⁹⁰ Due to the frequency of the correspondence exchanged between commercial partners and brothers, the commercial correspondence resembles a commercial diary rather than a register.

All letters of self-introduction, some of the letters claiming debts, and a few invoices within the collection were marked with a seal bearing the name of the brother based in Istanbul and the address of his office, in both the Arabic and Latin scripts:



'Madaradjizâde Ilias Cons/ple

Tchakmakdjılar Büyük Yeni Han'

The commercial correspondence covered approximately a period of seven months in 1914, starting with March 28 (15 Mart 1330) and ending with October 25 (12 Teşrin-i Evvel 1330). All the correspondence was about their trade business, including the letters exchanged among the brothers, with scarcely any content related to family issues. The rest consisted of letters written to merchants in various

regions within the Ottoman and Russian Empires.⁹¹ Within the whole collection, dunning letters was the dominant genre in correspondence with third parties: The majority of the letters written to third parties were about claiming back debts owed to the brothers.

The majority of the commercial letters, 285 in number, were signed by İlyas, the middle brother established in Istanbul. The rest, 27 in number, were signed by Ali, the eldest brother in Rize.⁹² The script in the letters changed according to the signature, leading to the strong assumption that the available collection was produced by the two brothers themselves, rather than by a scribe. In this regard, the script and language in the letters provide information regarding not only the brothers' level of literacy and differences in their writing styles, but also about differences in their understandings and hence, practices of trade.

Both brothers, although following the same format, diverged in their epistolary styles. The differences between İlyas and Ali reflect corresponding variations in their commercial practices. Indeed, one could talk about the stronger presence of a moral discourse in İlyas' letters, which made them more literary compared to those of Ali. The former brother's letters had a more aggressive tone regarding commercial practices when the latter's were rather loose. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the majority of the letters in the collection was produced by İlyas, it provided more clues about his world — that is not only his commercial practices, but also his understanding of the world, morals, values, manners, in short, mentality — than any of the other two brothers. His dominance in the whole

⁹¹ See Appendix D for the geographical distribution of commercial partners of the Mataracızâde trading house.

⁹² This testifies for the eldest brother's visits to Istanbul every once in a while though he was based in Rize.

collection inevitably reflects on the generalizations attributed to the collection and in turn, to the commercial practices of the trading house under scrutiny in this work.

Theory vs. Reality: Comparing Model Letters with Actual Examples

This section, focusing on the commercial correspondence sections of the aforementioned didactic letter writing manuals, *Hazine-i Mekâtib* and *Tüccar Kâtibi*, compares the prescriptions and models provided in these works with the actual correspondence. The general tone and hence, the samples in the former work were more didactic and formal than the ones in the latter, which comes as no surprise taking into consideration the differing purposes they were produced to serve for. The samples in *Tüccar Kâtibi* are more compatible with the available collection, as the manual was specifically prepared as part of a curriculum for teaching commerce.

In comparison of the actual letters with the model ones in *Hazine-i Mekatib* and *Tüccar Katibi*, letters will be analyzed in three parts: epistolary opening and closing formulas and the main text. In this study, the epistolary opening formula is used to refer to the address of the letters, which consisted of the first two lines of the available letters. Epistolary closing formula is used to refer to the concluding remark which was followed by a prayer, the date, the second name and a stylized script of the first name, sometimes a postscript and occasionally a seal. The main text of correspondence among brothers involved subtitles, which made it easier for them to continue with their previous discussions on various issues without reiteration. Some letters had side notes as additions to the main text. Punctuation

was used only a few times within the whole collection. In terms of discourse and content, the actual correspondence, especially the letters exchanged between the brothers were more explicit regarding commercial practices and collaborators within the network than the model ones. The sense of an actual life going on, with its value judgements, conflicts, negotiations, etc, is what makes the available correspondence easier to read than the model letters, which remain quite dry and technical in comparison.

This section also analyzes the reconstruction of the expressions relating to social hierarchy and religious differences within the actual correspondence and compares them to those exploited by the model letters. Though the construction of hierarchy in the actual letters is more or less similar to the model compilations, the focus on the religious differences in the former is missing in the latter. This discrepancy is no surprise taking into consideration the historial context within which the model letters were formulated: They were designed as an “Ottoman” instrument, secular and modern, valid for any Ottoman subject in the post-*Tanzimat* era and as they could be expected to represent a form of political correctness that followed from the *Tanzimat* reforms.⁹³

Reconstructing Social Hierarchy and Religious Differences

Each page in the collection, involving a letter or invoice or even both, started with an elliptic invocation of the name of God: A distorted version of the sign of God, the letter “he” stood for “Hüve” (He) or for the last letter of “Allah”, thus referring

⁹³ I am thankful to my advisor Professor Edhem Eldem for raising this point for discussion.

to the standard formula of “in the name of God” (*bismillah*) that needs to be pronounced before any undertaking.⁹⁴ The presence of the formula on each page immediately lets the reader know that the writer was a Muslim and just like any other action, started his commercial transactions with the name of God. The formula is neither mentioned nor present in the samples provided in both *Hazine-i Mekatib* and *Tüccar Katibi*. The absence of the formula in the model letters is an indication that they were designed as an “Ottoman” instrument valid for any Ottoman subject disregarding religious differences, though the popular practice of writing *Allah* was expected to prevail among the Muslims.

Immediately after the identification of the author as Muslim follows the identity of the addressee in relation to the writer: Muslim or non-Muslim; family or third party. Different epistolary opening and closing formulas were used for different groups of people, thus leading to the construction of different identities. Hence, through these differing formulas, different groups were socially constructed and positioned within the Ottoman society in relation to one another. The following part explores how this hierarchy was constructed within epistolary opening formula.

Epistolary Opening Formulas: Addressing Family and Others

This part focuses on the address of the letters, which consists of the first two lines. The address part informs us not only on how the sender depicts the location, hometown, notability, religion, status, age and profession of the addressee, but also

⁹⁴ Some of the pages involving both letter and invoice contained two formulas; one before the letter and one before the invoice.

on the nature of the commercial relationship between the two. Hence, the address part defines the differences in status, rank and religion between the sender and the addressee and the relationship between them. The address part of the letters is analyzed under two main categories: family members; including the brothers and elders of the family, and third parties, including Muslims and non-Muslims. The analyses of the address parts of the letters display different ways of addressing different categories of addressees, and a formulaic pattern of addressing, more or less commonly exploited through the whole collection. The recurrent patterns that appear in the available collection will be compared with those of the model letters.

Addressing within the Family: Epistolary Construction of Hierarchy

A typical address part of the commercial letters, addressing the elder brother and including all categories of information mentioned above, read as:

“To my eminent brother Sir Mataracızâde Ali Rıza, notable trader in Rize,
My eminent lord”⁹⁵

A typical way of addressing a younger brother, again with all categories of information, would read as:

“To my eminent brother Cemil Efendi, notable trader in Manchester,
My eminent brother”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ “Rize’de tüccar-ı muteberandan Mataracızâde rifatlû biraderim Ali Rıza efendi hazretlerine Rifatlû efendim hazretleri”

⁹⁶ “Mançester`de tüccar-ı muteberandan Mataracızâde rif`atlû biraderim Cemil efendiye, Rifatlû biraderim”

The first category of information provided within the examples above was the location of the addressee, followed by the nominal compound *tüccar-ı mu'teberandan* (from among the notable traders), which situated the addressed brother among the prominent merchants of the region. The expression *rif'atlû biraderim* (my eminent brother) was repeated in the following line. The only difference between the two addresses was the term *hazretleri* (Excellency), which indicated a higher status in terms of age and profession and hence, was used to address the elder brother. The address part of the only letter written to the father of the three brothers in the collection read as:

“My petition to my honorable Lord benefactor His Excellency Mataracızâde Hacı Ahmed, in Rize

My Lord benefactor”⁹⁷

First of all, as stated above, when addressed to the father, a letter was presented as a petition rather than a letter, which was a way of showing that he was considered at the top of the hierarchy among all addressees, much like a powerful lord or superior. The term “my benefactor” (*Veliyyünniam*) was typically used only in addressing the father; whereas the terms “honorable” (*izzetlû*) and “Excellency” (*hazretleri*) were used for all family members and third parties of a higher status in terms of age and profession. Regardless of the status of the commercial relationship between them, older family members were always referred in a respectful manner: letters written to the elder are always obsequious in tone and language.

“My honorable uncle Molla Sir Ömerzâde Hadji Yahya, notable trader in Rize

⁹⁷ “Rize’de Mataracızâde İzzetlû Veliyyünniam efendim Hacı Ahmed efendi hazretlerine Arizamdır. Veliyyünniam efendim hazretleri”

My honorable lord”⁹⁸

Addressing Others: Epistolary Construction of Religion and Credibility

Much like in the case of the family members discussed above, the address of letters written to third parties started with the location, and was sometimes followed by a reference to the hometown of the addressee:

“To eminent Sir Reyhanzâde Hüseyin, notable trader from Hemşin in Russia
My eminent brother Excellency”⁹⁹

This information was generally followed either by the nominal compound *tüccar-ı mu'teberandan* (from among notable traders) - sometimes used in the variant of *muteberan tüccardan* - or else simply by the word *tüccardan*¹⁰⁰ (from among traders). Before the name, or sometimes between the second and the first name, mostly appeared an honorific term, which was also repeated in the second line. The most common of these terms were *izzetlû* (honorable), *rif'atlû* (eminent), and *rağbetlû* (esteemed).¹⁰¹ The choice of the term is meaningful in terms of understanding how the addresser positioned the addressee in relation to himself in

⁹⁸ Rize’de muteberan tüccardan Dayım Molla Ömerzade izzetlû Hacı Yahya efendi hazretlerine İzzetlû efendim hazretleri

⁹⁹ “Rusya’da Hemşin tüccâr-ı muteberânından Reyhanzâde Rıf’atlû Hüseyin efendiye Rif’atlû biraderim hazretleri”

¹⁰⁰ “Rize’de tüccardan Bıyıkzâde Mesud Efendi ve Mahdumlarına”

¹⁰¹ According to Redhouse, the term *izzetlû* was used as a title given to officers and officials of a certain rank and *rif’atlû* as the former official form of addressing a major or a civil functionary of comparable rank. *Rağbetlû* is a title given to non-Muslims who had no official title. Though there is no mention of any hierarchy among these three terms in literature, the term *izzetlû* (honorable) was used to address correspondents of higher status in terms of age and/or profession within the available collection, whereas the terms *rağbetlû* or *rif’atlû* appeared of equal status.

terms of age, profession and religion. The term used to refer to non-Muslims was *rağbetlû*, whereas the terms used for Muslims were either *rif'atlû* or *izzetlû*. The former being the most common, the latter was used for correspondents of higher status in terms of age and/or profession and mostly accompanied with the term Excellency (*hazretleri*) at the end of the first line of the address.

“To his honorable Excellency Sir Avundukzâde İzzetlû Mehmed, notable trader in Gürün

Your honorable lord”¹⁰²

The terms *izzetlû* and *rifatlû* used in the first line of address were followed immediately by the term either *efendim* or *efendi* in the following line for the Muslims. In the form of address used for non-Muslims, however, the term used was *rağbetlû* and it was followed by the term *dostum* (my friend) in the second line.

“To esteemed Filandidi[s] brothers, traders in Rize

My esteemed friend”¹⁰³

For the Muslim addressees, the term *tüccardan*, with an omission of *muteberandan* in the first line, followed by the term *efendi* signified a problematic relationship between the addresser and the addressee in terms of monetary transactions,¹⁰⁴ whereas the combination of the terms *tüccâr-ı mu'teberandan* and *efendim* referred to just the opposite – solid relations.¹⁰⁵ Thus, one discovers that the content of the

¹⁰² Gürün'de tüccâr-ı muteberândan Avundukzâde İzzetlû Mehmed Efendi Hazretlerine
İzzetlû efendim hazretleri

¹⁰³ Rize'de tüccardan rağbetlû Filandidi[s] biraderlere
Rağbetlû dostum

¹⁰⁴ Rize'de tüccardan Bıyıkzâde Mesud Efendi ve mahdumlarına,
Rıfatlû efendi

¹⁰⁵ “Giresun'da tüccar-ı muteberandan Akîdzâde Rifatlû Osman Zeki ve Şeriki Efendilere

address of the letters presented not only a depiction of the location, hometown, age group, profession and religion of the addressee, but also gave an idea of the nature of the commercial relationship between the two correspondents.¹⁰⁶

Tüccar Kâtibi provided a detailed description of the format and function of the address part in commercial correspondence.¹⁰⁷ Address forms in commercial letters were suggested to be grave and serious. Name, location, position and title of the addressee were stated as indispensable for commercial correspondence. *Hazine-i Mekâtib*, in addition, provided a rich list of differing forms of both official and private address.¹⁰⁸ The table below lists all private forms of address suggested by *Hazine-i Mekâtib*¹⁰⁹ and exploited by the actual letters. Forms of address, which were mentioned in both sources, are presented in italics in the table below.

Rif'atlı efendim”

¹⁰⁶ More discussion will follow on the depictions of the nature of the commercial relationship between the correspondents in the section on dunning letters below.

¹⁰⁷ “Adres: hususi mektuplarda şimdi çok defa terk edilir yahut büyük huzura huzur-u valalarına, kerimanelerine, biraderlerine gibi tertip ile eda olunur. Ticaret muhaberatında mürselün ileyhın ismini semtini vazifesinin ünvanını havi ve muhtasar bir tarzda olur. Sernamenin bir kısmı şayed kağıdın solunda olursa adresi yukarısından yani üst kısmı ortasından 4-5 santimetre kadar aşağıda yazılır. Surname tamamen sağda olunca tenazura riayet için adres sol tarafa yazılmalıdır. Adresler dolayısıyla büyük ticaret evlerinin çok miktarda gönderdikleri mektupların yanlış zarflara konulması mahzuru hitab (elkab) ihtiram elfazıdır. 3-4 satır kadar aşağısında kağıdın üst kesik yerinden sekiz ve satırbaşı sayıldığı için sağdan bir buçuk santimetre kadar içerisinden yazılır. Ticaret mektuplarındaki elkabda sairlerinden bariz farklar gösterir. Bunlar şifahi lisanda birer hitab mahiyetindedir. Tabiliğe samimiliğe muhabla olan münasebet ve aşinalığa riayetle beraber ekseriya Efendi, efendim (hazretleri), efendimiz, muhterem beyefendi, cevab-ı acizidir gibi vakur ve ciddi olmalıdır. Bununla beraber aradaki hususiyete göre yazılabilir.” Hamamizâde, *Tüccar Katibi*, 18-9.

¹⁰⁸ For official forms of address, see pp. 333-37. For private forms of address see p. 370. Rasim, *İlaveli Hazine-i Mekatib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeat*.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 370.

Table 1: Forms of Address Suggested by *Hazine-i Mekâtib* and Exploited by the Actual Letters

Forms of address suggested by <i>Hazine-i Mekâtib</i>	Forms of address exploited by actual letters
Addressing father	Addressing father
My beloved father (Sevgili pederim)	My Lord benefactor (Veliyyünniam efendim hazretleri)
My father highly esteemed (Peder azizim)	
Sir (Efendim)	
My benefactor (Veli nimetim)	
Addressing brother	Addressing younger brother
My Brother (Biraderim)	My Brother (Biraderim)
My Brother (Kardaşım)	My Brothers (Biraderlerim)
My highly esteemed brother (Azizim kardaşım)	Our eminent brother (Rif'atlû Efendi Biraderimiz)
	My eminent lord (Rif'atlû Efendim Hazretleri)
	My eminent lord (Rif'atlû Efendim Hazretleri)
Addressing beloved friends	Addressing beloved friends
Brother (Birader)	My honored brother (Muhterem Biraderim/Kardaşım)
My Brother (Biraderim)	
Addressing elder	Addressing elders in the family
My Lord benefactor (Veli nimetim efendim hazretleri)	My honorable excellency (İzzetlû Efendim Hazretleri)
Sir (Efendimiz)	Sir (Efendim)
	My Lord (Efendim Hazretleri)
	My Brother (Kardaşım)
Among the competents in trade (Erbab-ı ticaret arasında)	Addressing non-Muslims
Our esteemed friend (Rağbetlû dostumuz)	My esteemed friend (Rağbetlû dostum)
Respected Sir (Muhterem efendi)	Addressing Muslims
My partner efendi (Şerikim efendi)	Eminent Brother (Rif'atlû Birader)
Our affectionate friend (Muhabbetlû dostumuz)	My eminent brother (Rif'atlû dostum)
My generous efendi (Fütuvvetli efendim)	(My) eminent Sir (Rif'atlû Efendi/m)
My eminent Sir (Rif'atlû Efendim)	My eminent ... (Rifatlû biraderim hazretleri)
My honorable Sir (İzzetlû efendim)	My eminent Lord (Rif'atlû Efendi Hazretleri)
	My honorable Sir (İzzetlû efendim)
	My honorable Lord (İzzetlû Efendim Hazretleri)
	My honorable ... (İzzetlû biraderim hazretleri)

Three different forms of address used to refer to third parties in the actual letters; *rif'atlû* (eminent), *izzetlû* (honorable), and *rağbetlû* (esteemed), did appear among the private forms of address (*elkab-ı hususiyye*) suggested by *Hazine-i Mekâtib* for competents in trade (*erbab-ı ticaret*) to address one another. Nevertheless, the latter did not refer to any discrepancy based on religion regarding the usage of these terms. Hence, religion did not appear among the criteria to be considered in discursive reconstruction of hierarchy. The common practice of referring to Muslims and non-Muslims with differing terms was a manifestation of the convention of the Ottoman society not to use the same terminology for all, rather than a peculiarity of the collection under scrutiny. It is common knowledge regarding the Ottomans that they describe the birth and death of non-Muslims with differing words: A deceased Muslim was remembered with the phrase “*Allah rahmet eylesin.*” (May God rest his soul.), whereas non-Muslims were referred as “*Toprağı bol olsun.*”¹¹⁰ (May he rest in peace.)

The address parts of the sample commercial letters provided in *Hazine-i Mekâtib* were simpler in formulae than those in actual letters: They basically consisted of the location, the simple form of address “*tüccardan*” and the name of the trader, disregarding any mention of hometown, religion, credibility or social status, which was exploited by the actual correspondence. The two examples of address parts cited below, which were typically exploited by sample commercial letters in *Hazine-i Mekâtib*, used the same terms and format regardless of the differing religious identity of the addressees.

“To Sir Sami, trader in Bursa

¹¹⁰ The mot-a-mot translation of the phrase is; “May he/she have a lot of soil.”

... Sir”¹¹¹

“To Sir Misalidi, trader in Selanik

... Sir”¹¹²

Location and name being constant in both, the address part of the actual letters introduced more variety regarding categories of information than those of the models in the didactic literature. The presence of two main categories, religion and credibility, in actual correspondence can be considered as an implication of their actual significance in practice of commerce. In this regard, the clear cut distinction based on religion in the actual letters can read as a discursive reconstruction of a similar distinction in the actual world of commerce. Hence, the actual letters tell more in terms of etiquette than the prescriptive literature itself. The cross-check of the available collection with the available didactic literature shows that the epistolary commercial practice was far more elaborative and richer than the model letters provided in the literature, which were designed for “Ottoman” subjects envisioned by *Tanzimat*.

¹¹¹ Bursa’da tüccardan Sami Efendiye
... efendim
Rasim, *İlaveli Hazine-I Mekatib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeat*, 219.

¹¹² Selanik’de tüccardan Misalidi Efendiye
... efendim
Ibid., 228.

Epistolary Closing Formulas

The majority of the actual letters ended with a concluding remark followed by a prayer, the date, the second name and a stylized script of the first name, sometimes a postscript and occasionally a seal. Within the boundaries of this work, all this is going to be referred as epistolary closing formula. Some of the endings involved a postscript and/or a seal. Though prayers varied, it is somewhat possible to classify them according to the religious identity and status of the addressee. A typical prayer attributed to the Muslim parties by both brothers read as “May you remain in good health” (Bâkî âfiyetde olasınız.), though it was modified according to context and terms of commercial relationship between the sender and the addressee. This phrase was used even for parties the brothers were not on good commercial terms. It can therefore be considered as the minimal expression of goodwill in the form of a prayer. On the other hand, the ending phrase used in most of the letters written to non-Muslim parties was “May you remain safe and sound, my friend” (Baki sağ olasınız dostum), apparently the minimal level of wellwishing that might be expressed to a non-Muslim party. The length of the prayer was correlated to the affinity between the two correspondents: The closer the relationship, the greater the expression of concern, and the longer the prayer. The longest prayers appeared at the end of the letters, İlyas addressed to his younger brother in Manchester: “May you be under the protection of God and may He facilitate many trades and profits. Amen. With the respect of the Prophet Muhammad, Amen, God.”¹¹³

¹¹³ “Baki cenab-ı hakkın birliğine emanet olub, çok çok hayırlı ticaretler, işler nasib-i müyesser eyleye amin. Bihurmet-i hazret-i seyyidil mürselin. Amin, ya muin.”

This prayer constituted a blend of religion and commerce: a prayer for divine protection and wishes for an increase in trade and profit. This combination also reflects İlyas' concern for his brother. As the youngest and furthest away among the brothers, Cemil deserved utmost protection, which could only be provided by the divine force at the time. Another prayer, displaying İlyas' creativity in formulations suitable for differing commercial contexts, was found at the end of two letters of self-introduction¹¹⁴ sent to potential collaborators: "May peace be upon you, Sir. I wish for the success of Muslim trade."¹¹⁵ This prayer, in line with the content of the letter, underlining the promotion of Muslim trade, also highlighted the religious identity of both the addresser and the addressee. The emphasis on the religious character of the commercial practices was in line with the ideologies of the period.¹¹⁶

Ali lacked İlyas' creativity in inventing prayers according to context. His formulas were shorter and more conventional. A typical prayer Ali used for ending his letters to both of his brothers read as: "May God guide and protect you all, dear brother."¹¹⁷ Once again, both İlyas' and Ali's prayers belonged to the world of commercial practice and were not listed among the concluding remarks suggested by neither *Hazine-i Mekatib* nor *Tüccar Kâtibi*. The model commercial letters in both works ended with generic statements of civility and respect without any indication of religion.

¹¹⁴ Letters of self-introduction were the principal means by which merchants established new contacts, enlarged their network and expanded their range of geographical scope.

¹¹⁵ "Bâkî selam ederek, umûr-ı ticâriyyede muvaffakiyyet-i İslâmiyyeyi temenni ederim efendim."

¹¹⁶ The content and significance of letters of introduction and the emphasis on Muslim trade is elaborated on in detail in chapter six.

¹¹⁷ "Baki cümleiniz Hüdanın birliğine emanet olasınız biraderim."

“May favor and endeavor belong to you, Sir.”¹¹⁸

“May endurment of your appointments be entreated, Sir.”¹¹⁹

“With the wish for the acceptance of our excuse, I entreat the endurment of your appointments, Sir.”¹²⁰

In the Mataracızâde correspondence, the prayer was followed by the date, a name, sometimes a postscript and occasionally a seal. Interestingly, both of the manuals under scrutiny, underlining the significance of the presence of date and its place at commercial letters placed it at the very top of the samples.¹²¹ This was evidently taken from European practice, while Ottoman documents, especially official ones, generally placed the date at the end of the text. It appears then that despite certain efforts at emulating the western model, the local practice had a tendency to prevail over novel alternatives.

¹¹⁸ “Baki lutf ve himmet efendimindir.” Rasim, *İlaveli Hazine-i Mekatib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeat*, 232.

¹¹⁹ “Baki tevcihat-ı kerimanenizin bekası niyaz olunur efendim.” Ibid.

¹²⁰ “Bu cihatle vaka olan mazeretimizin kabulünü temni ile tevcihatınızın bekasını niya iderim, efendim.” “Ahmed Rasim,” 228.

¹²¹ “Ticaret mektuplarında tarihin pek ziyade ehemmiyeti olduğundan hem unudulmamak, hem de her vakit kolayca yeri bilinmek için mektuba başlamazdan bila sene tarihi ve bir de tarihin mütemimi demek olan mektubun yazıldığı mahalin ismini vaz’ itmeli. Elhasıl bir tüccar mektubu, yalnız lazım olan şeyi havi olmalıdır.” Rasim, *İlaveli Hazine-i Mekatib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeat*.

Dunning Letters: Constructing Morality and Credibility

Dunning letters¹²² (also called collection letters) appeared as the dominant genre in the available collection both in number and content. Such dominance may be considered as natural taking into consideration the nature of the collection under scrutiny. Nevertheless, the financial hardships of the period covered by the collection, right after the Balkan Wars and just before World War I, should also be considered as a contributing factor i.e. motivation for collecting debts owed.¹²³ These letters not only served the collection of debts due but they also qualified for evidence in court though there was no utterance anywhere in the collection on resorting to legal procedures regarding unpaid debts.

In analyzing the dunning letters in the available collection, this work will exploit the categories introduced by late Kitty Locker, who was one of the most respected authorities in history of business communication. She divides the examples of dunning letters that appeared in the thirty-three letter-writers published in English between 1568 and 1897, into three categories: modest and apologetic, comminatory and vituperative, and brisk and businesslike. According to her categorization, modest and apologetic letters are reluctant to ask for repayment and the existence of a due date is never sufficient and hence, they always offer an excuse. Comminatory and vituperative letters, denouncing the debtor and threatening punishment rehearse the debtor's failings, of which the unpaid debts appear only as an example. Her last category, brisk and businesslike letters, which

¹²² The verb "to dun" means "to make repeated and persistent demands upon, esp. for money owed. William Little et al., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 3d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959).

¹²³ See chapter six for a thorough discussion of the financial hardships of the period.

are shorter than letters in the first two categories, display a range from the comparatively mild to harsh, in terms of threat of legal action without attacking the debtor's morals or character. Among the three categories of dunning letters, they are the only ones which are similar to twentieth-century collection letters.¹²⁴

Almost all of the dunning letters in the available collection fall under the category of modest and apologetic letters: modest, in the sense that modesty was one of the main repetitive themes in the discourse of letters and apologetic, in the sense that, even the request for repayment of overdue debts was accompanied by an excuse. Some of these excuses followed from broader contexts like the economic and political agenda of the Empire i.e. the financial hardships accompanying the Balkan Wars and that to follow the beginning of the World War I.¹²⁵ Others followed from the inner dynamics of the network like the bankruptcy of a well-known merchant.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, there was one excuse, which constantly recurred regardless of circumstances and it was the scarcity of money: "...*I am extremely hard up...*" (...*Paradan darlığım pek ziyadedir...*). Complaints of merchants regarding shortness of money are no surprise as money is the main means of commercial transaction in a market economy and never enough for expansion of business or as an ultimate goal. Nevertheless, historical context provides enough testimony for the sincerity of this excuse as the shortage of money within the Ottoman Empire in general and in the aftermaths of the Balkan Wars in particular is well-acknowledged by the current literature.

¹²⁴ K. O. Locker, "Sir, This Will Never Do": Model Dunning Letters, 1592-1873., in *Studies in the History of Business Writing* (1985), 180-1.

¹²⁵ See chapter six for examples of such usages.

¹²⁶ See chapter six for a thorough discussion on the issue.

The most apologetic dunning letters were the ones sent to elder family members:

To Virtuous *Hafiz*¹²⁷ Lord İsmail, Regent in Isparta
Sir

It has been a while that I could not receive your letter. God willing, children and all are in good health. I have been obliged to present this letter to your worship because I am a bit short of money these days. I request the forwarding of your debt at the arrival of my letter. I urgently require money. May you remain in good health, Sir.

My household greets the members of your household.”¹²⁸

The urge to refer to reasons other than due dates can be explained through modesty but also through significance of letter as the most convenient means of communication “to dun”. In this context, the discourse of letters acquired ultimate significance to pressure the debtor to repay. Majority of the letters, even the ones including apologetic terms, fall under the category of comminatory and vituperative letters; ranging comparatively from mild to harsh in terms of threat of punishment depending on the term and amount of debt due or overdue. As also mentioned above, an opening involving the term *tüccardan* in the first line and the term *efendi* in the second was the harbinger of such letters addressing Muslim debtors.

In cases where the counter party took no action as a response i.e. send a reply letter or make any payment; full or partial, telegram appeared as the alternative means of communication. Nevertheless, it was a more disadvantageous mean for both parties involved. First of all, it was more costly for the sender as it was a more expensive means of communication compared to letters. Secondly, it

¹²⁷ Hafiz is the title of someone who has memorized and can recite the Koran.

¹²⁸ Isparta Naibi faziletli Hafız İsmail Efendi hazretlerine
Efendim

Çok vakitdir mektubunuzu alamadım. İnşallah çocuklar cümleten afiyetdesiniz. Bu sıralar bir parça paraya ziyade müzayekam olduğundan işbu mektubu zat-ı alilerine takdime mecbur oldum. İşbu mektubum vusulünde borcunuzun tarafıma irsalini rica eylerim. Paraya eşed ihtiyacım vardır. Baki afiyetde olasınız efendim. Fii 5 Temmuz 1330 Mataracızâde İlyas Dersaadet Çakmakçılar Büyük Yeni Han

Hane tarafından haneniz halkına mahsus selam ederler. (5 Temmuz 1330 / July 18, 1914)

was a less private form of communication in terms of exposition of its content and hence, the reputation of the debtor to third parties. In this regard, telegram was a more threatening mean regarding the reputation of the debtor in comparison to letter. The letter quoted below, which was sent to one of the debtors, who had been quite reluctant to repay his debts underlines the significance of the content of telegram regarding the reputation of a commercial partner:

To Sir Budakzâde Ali Efendi, trader in Erkenes village in Keskim district,
Eminent Sir

I send my compliments and inquire after your health. I have not yet received your telegram regarding your forwarding of your dues. Here you are spreading big words but when you go back there, you are completely forgetting about them. How come? I cannot explain it through writing. I do not know if we should transfer it to another mean? I can not think these situations as befitting of you. What is it about that you do not pay your debts for so long? I am fed up with writing you. I was going to send you a telegram yesterday but still, I am writing a letter thinking that what is the need for a telegram for Sir Ali regarding money, it is a shame, it would not suit.

I have waited this long for your sake. Since I need my money, enough with detriment. I request you to forward your debts and declare it by telegram immediately without leaving any need for any other means, telegram, letter. It would be a shame, I would not regard it as suitable for you. May you remain in health brother. (15 Mart 1330 / March 28, 1914) Mataracızâde İlyas Seal¹²⁹

In cases, where no action was taken in response to a number of telegrams, the postal communication phase would end and there began the phase of face to face interaction, which was coded as “other means” (*başka vasıta*). Though it was never explained explicitly what “other means” meant exactly through the whole collection, there were still some clues: 1. Resorting to the service of a messenger, with an accompanied cost on the debtor. 2. Resorting to the help of other local merchants, whom the brothers trusted but at the same time were also fellow countrymen of debtor(s). When available, the brothers also referred to their affinity

¹²⁹ See Appendix E for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter.

with legal authorities within the proximity of their debtors, such as the deputy district attorney mentioned in the post-scriptum of the letter cited below, which was sent to the aforementioned Budakzâde Ali Efendi, almost a month after the previous correspondence quoted above. Nevertheless, there was no reference to an actual instance of applying to legal system in the whole collection. Hence, face to face interaction appeared as the ultimate threat resorted to pressure the debtors to repay.

Give my regards to trader Sir Görelizâde Emin in Keskim and deputy district attorney and examining magistrate Faik Bey in Keskim. They were writing that they will be coming to the han there in a letter I received one month ago

To Sir Budakzâde Ali in Keskim

Eminent Sir

I wrote you many letters and sent a telegram. Of course, you received them by now. Today, again, I sent one more telegram. I can not tell you through mail. When you were here, you declared that you caused difficulties somehow in our buying and selling last year and also pronounced that it will not reoccur but you are repeating yourself. Don't you have any mercy? You have not repaid your debts for so long. Think once. I showed you such trust and confidence. I made you receive money even on the way. Isn't that enough for you? Think about it; this is a gratification for me or you or whoever, for all. You never appreciate these parts. This is real shame. Shall I send someone there? If I send, the expense belongs to you or shall I look for another mean? Or shall I resort to other means there? As we were to solve issues with others through you, I assure you I felt embarrassed to resort to other means for your issue. If sake, I respected your sake many times. Everything has a limit. What you did exceeded all. By first mean, repay your debts to my account immediately. If it is not possible to forward through telegram, send them by first means followd by a telegram immediately after. I have no patience for permit. I am in urgent need of money. I will not write letters anymore. I am waiting for the arrival of your answer and debts night and day. There is nothing else to write. I request you not to leave any necessity to resort to other means, telegram, sending someone. If not, I will send someone. Later, it will be a shame, would not be suitable. Dignity, honor and credit is only once, know its worth. Later, regret will be of no use. (5 Nisan 1330 / April 18, 1914) Mataracızâde İlyas¹³⁰

¹³⁰ See Appendix F for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter.

If we remember that we owe the existence of these letters to the *Tanzimat* reformations in commercial arena in general and the new Commercial Code in particular and also that they could be used as evidence in the court, the brothers' reluctance to apply to legal procedures regarding commercial conflicts appears as a point of discussion. The immediate reasons that come to mind are related with the modern Ottoman commercial jurisdiction; whether the new commercial courts were regarded as a "work in progress" as Ade puts it in her study of a Levantine business family active in Aleppo¹³¹ or the brothers' unfamiliarity with them. Ade's work, which is one of the few in literature so far discussing the actual application and the consequences of the new commercial law at a local level, illustrates the role the code played in the actual resolution of commercial disputes during the second half of the nineteenth century. She demonstrates that the new Commercial Code was applied to as a last resort and the firm basically relied on intermediaries. Debtors' modest resources and the creditors' absence of full trust in the new commercial courts appear as the main reasons in explaining their reluctance to resort to legal procedures.

Another set of reasons behind the brothers' reluctance to apply to legal procedures may be related with the smallness of some of the amounts due and/or the modest resources of the debtors' as appears in the aforementioned work and in the constant reiteration of scarcity of money and the hardship of the times in the available collection. Though our estimations of the reasons behind Mataracızâde

¹³¹ Ade's work is based on the commercial, private and official correspondence of the Fratelli Poche & Cie of Aleppo between 1850 and 1880. The firm consisted of two brothers, who profited from the rising demand for Bohemian glass among Ottoman upper – and middle – income families. Ade focuses on the commercial correspondence with their business partners active in Urfa. Mafalda Ade, "Ottoman Commercial Law and Its Practice in Aleppo Province (1850-1880)," in *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Giles Veinstein (Paris - Louvain - Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2008).

brothers' reluctance to apply to the new Commercial Code may not go beyond speculations; this work argues that it is their hesitation that we at least partially owe the domination of comminatory and vituperative letters in the collection. This type of letters, in addition to being informative regarding alternative means to resort to in case of unpaid debts, apply to moral values such as honor, dignity and esteem to compensate for the lack of legal sanction and pressure, which is compensated in return with a focus on the reputation of the merchant. It is the threat of harming a merchant's reputation and hence, his commercial future that fills in the lacuna created by absence of legal pressure. The attack on the morals of the debtor is the last resort to pressure for repayment. It is the introduction of such value judgements into what normally one would expect to be a technical narrative that makes them easier and more interesting to read compared to Kitty's aforementioned category of "brisk and business like letters", which actually defines twentieth-century collection letters:

Letters in this category are brief, factual and to-the-point. They frequently specify the amount due, the term of the original loan, and a date by which payment is expected. They may range from mild "hints" to harsh letters threatening imprisonment, but in either case, they confine themselves to the specific circumstances of the debt, never using it, as the vituperative letters do, as a springboard for discussing the debtor's other real or imagined faults.¹³²

The resemblance between the definition of commercial letters above and that in *Hazine-i Mekâtib* is striking. Based on the assumption that the trader's time is precious, *Hazine-i Mekâtib* states the main principles of commercial correspondence as being brief, clear, explicit and concise i.e. free of unnecessary

¹³² Locker, "Sir, This Will Never Do": Model Dunning Letters, 1592-1873., 191. For samples of letters in this category, see pp. 192-195.

expressions.¹³³ *Tüccar Kâtibi* also emphasizes correctness and clarity, as the main principles due to the material content of commercial correspondence. The work reminds that misunderstandings or mistakes might end up not only in financial conflicts but can also be brought to court as evidence.¹³⁴

Conclusion

The comparison between the model and the actual letters showed that the widely shared feature between the two was the format. The actual letters, while emulating the general Western letter format, were also continuing to exploit the local practices such as the usage of the formula or the place of the date. Comparison of epistolary opening and closing formulas of the model and the actual letters showed that the latter were more elaborative regarding discursive reconstruction of social hierarchy and religious differences than the prescriptive literature itself. The constructions of religious identity and credibility, which were inexistent in the model letters formulated for the modern, secular, “Ottoman” subjects, underline their significance in the actual practice of commerce. Though we owe the existence of the available

¹³³ “Bu nevi muhaberatın erkânı asliyesi; muhtasar, muvazzah, musarraḥ ve muayyen olmaqdır. Tacirin zamanı pek kıymetli olduğundan yazdığı mektuplarda beyhude tabirat kullanmamalıdır. Bahis; emtia talebinden ibaret ise cinsini, bahasını, tarif irsalini ve şerait-i tediyelerini yazmalı, nazikane bazı tabirat ile hitam vermeli. Bir hesabı kapatmak için mektubu ile para gönderiyorsa, faturasını veya sair şeylerini beraber irsal etmeli.” Rasim, *İlaveli Hazine-i Mekatib Yahud Mükemmel Münşeat*, 195.

¹³⁴ “Maksadın maddi sebepleri ihtiva etmesi bunlara [ticaret mektuplarına] fazla bir fark ve ehemmiyet vermektedir. Şu halde her mektuptan ziyade böyle gayeler istihdaf etmiş olan muhaberatı ihtimam olunmak elzemdir. Çünkü ticaret mektuplarında yapılan küçük bir noksanın tereddütle fena tefsirlerde bazen büyük yanlışlığa sebep olması mümkündür. Bu halin işte teahhura meydan vermek, bazen telafisi müşkil bir zararı müeddi olmak gibi ihtimalleri vardır. Çünkü bu mektuplar icap edince mahkemelerde beyine makamında gösterilir. Bunun için hususi mektuplarda mevzu ve muhataba, zemin ve zamana göre tahrir üslubunun serbest olmasına rağmen ticaret mektupları açık bir üslubla vazih tabirlerle muhtasaran yazılır. Bunlarda iki manalı kelimeler, ticari olmayan ıstılahlar, teşbih ve istiareler, edebi sanatlar kullanılmaz. Bu suretle de mealin fena bir tefsire uğramasından kaçınılır.” Hamamizâde, *Tüccar Katibi*, 10-1.

collection to the new Commercial Code, the brothers' reluctance to apply to legal procedures is another manifestation of the hesitance of at least the Muslim subjects to exploit the opportunities created even for the protection of their business. All these instances point to the continuation of the local and traditional practices against novel alternatives.

Whether the commercial correspondence under study had a distinctive style is a question that can be answered only by comparing the available material to those of its kind. Hopefully, future "discoveries" and research based on such discoveries will be illuminative in these regards. It is almost impossible to decipher how the brothers learned to write such letters, if their way ever crossed with the prescriptive literature. It is more likely that they acquired the know-how out of practice as appears out to be the case in their other practices of commerce. In this context, a question to follow is how they accumulated their commercial etiquette.

The mismatch between theory and reality in commercial correspondence and the reluctance to apply to legal procedures are different instances of failures of Ottomanism in the post-*Tanzimat* era.¹³⁵ The modern, secular and politically correct "Ottoman" subject envisioned by *Tanzimat* obviously faced problems finding its counterpart among the Muslim commercial subjects of 1914. Whether this had been the case ever since the *Tanzimat* declaration or specific to the peculiarities of the aftermaths of the Balkan Wars again requires further research. Werner Diem's work on Arabic letters in pre-modern times provides examples of different introductory formulas used for Muslim and non-Muslim addressees in letters ascribed to the

¹³⁵ For another incidence of failure of Ottomanism, refer to Eldem's analysis of the Ottoman-Greek customers' preference of Greek signature over Arabic in their deposit cards in the Imperial Ottoman Bank. Eldem, "Signature of Greek Clients of the Imperial Ottoman Bank: A Clue to Cultural Choices and Behaviour?," 66.

Prophet Muhammad.¹³⁶ If the Ottoman conventions in referring to Muslims and non-Muslims using different terminology were embedded into the language through religion, the model letters were doomed to fail against traditional practices and hence, the attempts to secularize epistolary practices. Whether such conventions were peculiar to the Muslim community or they set a common feature shared by other religious communities within the Empire requires further research as well.

¹³⁶ Werner Diem, "Arabic Letters in Pre-Modern Times: A Survey with Commented Selected Bibliographies," *AS/EA* LXII, no. 3 (2008): 859.

CHAPTER 4

FROM ANATOLIA TO MANCHESTER VIA ISTANBUL: THE COMPLEX NATURE OF AN OTTOMAN COMMERCIAL NETWORK ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR I

Introduction

This chapter provides the 1914 snapshot of the social status and economic profile of the Ottoman commercial network which evolved around the Mataracızâde brothers, working as trans-regional import and export commission agents at the end of the Ottoman Empire. Beginning with a brief description of the business composition, ethno–religious profile, geographical distribution of the commercial parties involved in business with the brothers and their social and economic standing, it primarily bases itself on the information provided by the available commercial correspondence of the Mataracızâde trading house. Urban directories and secondary literature is also exploited in this work to contextualize the information provided by the collection.

Due to the nature of the source from which the commercial network is derived, the focus of the network is the Mataracızâde brothers. Hence, all relations and factual information regarding the network should be considered as narrated from their particular point of view. Within the boundaries of this study, the term network is used to refer to all parties with whom the Mataracızâde brothers had commercial transactions or contacts. They appear either as a correspondent, or simply as a name referred to within the correspondence. Each party that appears as involved in some form of commercial activity with the Mataracızâde brothers is

referred to, interchangeably, as a collaborator or a commercial/business partner.

Collaborators within the network consist of individual merchants, family businesses; consisting of partnerships among family members - either siblings or father and son(s) -, and partnerships of two or more merchants from different families.

Collaborators are grouped under three main categories according to their location: the provinces, Istanbul, and Manchester. As the majority of the letters within the collection were addressed to correspondents located in various provinces mostly within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, the collection is more informative regarding the profile of the provincial branch than any other. Hence, the information the collection provides regarding collaborators in immediate proximity of the brothers located in Istanbul and in Manchester is limited in comparison to those in the provinces. Due to the insufficiency of the available collection regarding other branches, the analysis of the network that evolved around the Mataracızâde brothers focuses on the provincial category.

The second part of the chapter places the network under scrutiny in a broader context. Urban commercial directories published in the Ottoman Empire, specifically the *Annuaire Oriental* are the main sources that have been exploited for the creation of the data necessary to explore the brothers' immediate business environment both in the provinces and in Istanbul.¹³⁷ These directories can be

¹³⁷ I am thankful to my advisor Professor Edhem Eldem for not only suggesting *Annuaire Oriental* for the creation of the data for a broader picture but also his generous offer of his broad knowledge, time and patience regarding its specifics. *Annuaire Oriental (Ancien Indicateur Oriental) Du Commerce, De L'industrie, De L'administration Et De La Magistrature : Turquie, Russie, Grèce, Roumanie, Serbie, Bulgarie, 1893-1894*, (Constantinople: Cervati Frères & Cie, 1894); *Annuaire Oriental Du Commerce De L'industrie, De L'administration Et De La Magistrature*, 20me Edition ed. (R. Cesar Cervati, 1904); *Annuaire Oriental* (London: The Annuaire Oriental & Printing Company, 1909); *Annuaire Oriental: Commerce, Industrie, Administration, Magistrature De L'orient*, (Constantinople: The Annuaire Oriental Ltd. , 1914).

considered as the “yellow pages” of the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, which mainly contain data regarding business activity in Istanbul and the provinces.¹³⁸ Regarding their content, they are quite significant sources for business history. They were prepared for promoting commercial activities actualized in and around trade centres of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic to both local and foreign entrepreneurs. They are significant sources, especially for micro studies on the economic, commercial and social life in Turkey from the 1850s until the 1940s.¹³⁹

The *Annuaire Oriental* provides the richest data regarding the provinces of the Ottoman Empire for the period covered. The provincial data consists of various categories of prominent professions and of the names of major figures engaging in these trades in the provinces and provincial towns covered. The Istanbul data, which is more detailed in content, provides three different kinds of data regarding business activities: An alphabetical list of all the businesses with their addresses, a detailed list of professionals and traders regrouped under professional categories, and a list of the streets and hans of the three main business districts of the city — Galata, Pera and Stamboul — with the addresses of all businesses and residents. Generally speaking, the *Annuaire Oriental* tended to include the most prominent

¹³⁸ I am thankful to Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Center for providing a rich collection of *Annuaire Oriental*. I am also thankful to Lorans Tanatar-Baruh, scientific manager of the center, and the librarians for their generous support and always warm welcome.

¹³⁹ Among works which exploited *Annuaire Oriental* data as one of their primary sources are; Edhem Eldem, "Nostaljidən Arındırılmış Bir Bakış. Galata'nın Etnik Yapısı," *İstanbul, Üç Aylık Dergi*, no. 1 (1992); *ibid*; Lorans Tanatar-Baruh, "At the Turn of the Century, Textile Dealers in an International Port City, Istanbul," *Boğaziçi Journal* 11, no. 1-2 (1997): 239-40; Edhem Eldem, "Istanbul 1903-1918: A Quantitative Analysis of a Bourgeoisie," *Boğaziçi Journal* 11, no. 1-2 (1997). Ayhan Aktar, "Şark Ticaret Yıllıkları'nda "Sarı Sayfalar": İstanbul'da Meslekler Ve İktisadi Faaliyetler Hakkında Bazı Gözlemler, 1868-1938," in *Türk Milliyetçiliği, Gayrimüslimler Ve Ekonomik Dönüşüm* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006).

figures of their professions. This work also utilizes them for checking the prominence of the collaborators in the brothers' network and their presence is considered as the affirmation.

The data collected from the provinces and Istanbul sections of the *Annuaire Oriental* is utilized to understand the ethno-religious profile of the three brothers' current business environment. In order to accomplish this, the category of ethno-religious identity, absent in the original data, is added to test its significance for the three brothers' decision of who to trade with.¹⁴⁰ Regarding the Manchester branch, the correspondence between İlyas, the middle brother in Istanbul and Cemil, the younger brother in Manchester and secondary literature on Manchester are utilized as the major sources of information.

Socio-economic Snapshot of the Provincial Branch of the Mataracızâde Network

In order to provide a snapshot of the socio-economic profile of the provincial branch, this section analyzes all sixty-three correspondents located in various provinces according to their composition - the affiliation of the commercial parties - , ethno-religious characteristics, locations and local status.¹⁴¹ Three main categories explained above, namely individual merchants, family businesses and partnerships

¹⁴⁰ The ethno-religious categories introduced into the data are Armenian (A), Greek (G), Jewish (J), Muslim (M), Christian Arab (CA), Foreigner (F) and Levantine (L). As these categories are attributed in line with the educated guesses based on names, there is always room for mistakes. Especially, categories of Foreigner and Levantine are highly problematic as it is hard to determine which names fall under which category. Nevertheless, we expect the mistakes to cancel out in high numbers.

¹⁴¹ The only institution within the provincial data, Adapazarı Muslim Commercial Bank, is excluded for standardization of data.

are used in the analysis of the business composition of the provincial network. This is followed by the ethno-religious profile, subdivided into the categories of Armenian, Christian-Arab, Greek, Jewish and Muslim. Regarding the geographical distribution of correspondents, destination of letters, at the minimal level of either a district or a city, is considered as their place of residence. Last of all, this section elaborates on the local social and economic standing of the collaborators based on their presence in secondary literature and archival materials.

Business Composition

Distribution of Collaborators According to Composition

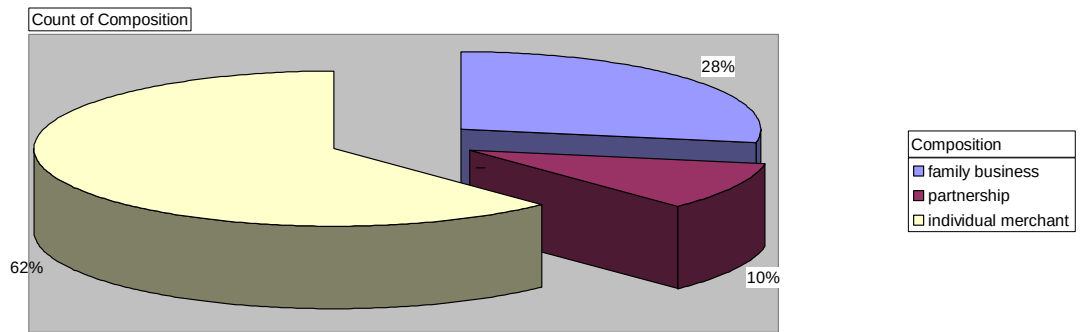


Figure 1: Distribution of collaborators according to business composition

Among the sixty-three collaborators based in the provinces, only three were Mataracızâde family members, the total number of family members in the whole network being five. These numbers show that the network did not evolve around

kinship. On the contrary, it mostly consisted of third parties, majority of which were individual merchants as shown in the figure above.¹⁴² Hence, the network consisting of the correspondents of commercial letters appears as individual merchant dominated, rather than concentrated on family businesses, which is generally taken to be the dominant model for commercial networks. This specific case is therefore challenging the dominant assumption in current literature on commercial networks regarding the family-concentrated composition of commercial houses regardless of their ethno-religious characteristics.¹⁴³

Ethno-religious Profile

Table 2: Ethno-religious Distribution of Collaborators

Ethno-religious characteristics	Number of actors
Muslim	52
Greek	5
Christian-Arab	3
Armenian	2
Jewish	1
Total	63

When we look at the distribution of collaborators in the provinces according to their ethno-religious characteristics, 83 percent leave no doubt regarding the dominant

¹⁴² Though they appear as individual merchants within the available commercial correspondence, they may turn out to be family businesses with only one member mentioned in the correspondence.

¹⁴³ Gelina Harlaftis, "Mediterranean Entrepreneurial Diaspora Networks During the Long Nineteenth Century," in *Competing Networks: Greek and Other Commercial Houses* (University of Haifa 2006). I am thankful to Professor Gelina Harlaftis for a lively discussion on business composition of collaborators within the network under scrutiny.

ethno-religious identity in the network; Muslim. Although non-Muslim traders form only a minority, they do appear under a variety of ethno-religious categories: Greek, Armenian, Christian-Arab and Jewish. Among all non-Muslim collaborators, Greeks appear to have been the major ethno-religious group.

Geographical Distribution

Collaborators within the network were based in various districts or cities including seventeen coastal locations, fifteen of which were ports on the Black Sea, in Anatolia and in the Arab provinces, and eleven landlocked towns. Based on the geographical destinations of the letters and the toponyms mentioned in them, the outer limits of the network can be drawn as Manchester to the West, the Crimea to the North, Erzurum to the East, and Tunisia to the South of the Capital. The geographical distribution of the commercial partners of the Mataracızâde trading house immediately reveals that this was a maritime trans-regional network, which covered several ports and hinterland locations. Below is the list of ports and hinterland locations in the provincial branch, including the number of collaborators at each of these locations:¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ See also the map in Appendix D for the geographical distribution of the commercial partners of the Mataracızâde trading house. I am grateful to my colleague Sinan Çetin for drawing the map.

Table 3: Geographical Distribution of Collaborators

Region	Coast	Number of collaborators	hinterland	Number of collaborators
Black Sea	Bafra	1	Keskim	3
	Samsun	1	Çorum	1
	Ünye	1		
	Giresun	2		
	Trabzon	3		
	Of	1		
	Rize	21		
	Atina	8		
	Batumi	1		
Marmara	Bandırma	1	Adapazarı	1
	İzmit	3		
Aegean	İzmir	1		
Mediterranean	Adana	1	Isparta	1
	Alexandretta	1	Damascus	1
	Tunisia	1	Aleppo	1
	Tripoli	1	Baghdad	2
	Jaffa	1		
Eastern Anatolia			Gürün	1
			Erzurum	2
			Malatya	1

The business partners of the Mataracızâde brothers were clearly concentrated on the Black Sea: 43 out of 63 were located in eleven different locations in the Black Sea region, including the coast and the hinterland, corresponding to more than two-thirds of the entire population of collaborators. 33 of them, more than half, were based in the eastern Black Sea. The concentration of ports and also the collaborators in the Black Sea region in general and the eastern Black Sea in particular, leave no doubt about the centre of gravity of the network: the eastern Black Sea, where exactly one third of the total population (21) were mostly established in the family

hometown of the three brothers, Rize. Taking into consideration the fact that the collaborators based in Erzurum, Batumi, İzmit and Baghdad- seven in total - were also originally from Rize, the focus of this concentration shifts from collaborators within a geographical proximity to their fellow countrymen or collaborators they knew personally.

In the table below, the ethno-religious distribution of collaborators according to provinces shows that all the collaborators of the major non-Muslim ethno-religious category, the Greeks, were based in the family hometown of the Mataracızâde brothers, Rize. Hence, the majority of the non-Muslim merchants the brothers had commercial relations within the provincial branch were Greeks from their hometown, in other words, people whom they personally knew. Hence, familiarity overcame not only the geographical divide but also the religious one.

Table 4: Ethno-religious Distribution of Collaborators According to Their Locations

Region	Location	Ethno-religious characteristics	Number of collaborators
Black Sea	Bafra	Muslim	1
	Samsun	Armenian	1
	Ünye	Muslim	1
	Giresun	Muslim	2
	Trabzon	Muslim	3
	Of	Muslim	1
	Rize	Muslim	17
	Rize	Greek	4
	Atina	Muslim	7
	Atina	Greek	1
	Batumi	Muslim	1
	Keskim	Muslim	3
	Çorum	Muslim	1
Marmara	Bandırma	Muslim	1
	İzmit	Muslim	3
	Adapazarı	Muslim	1
Aegean	İzmir	Muslim	1

Mediterranean	Adana	Muslim	1
	Alexandretta	Armenian	1
	Tunisia	Muslim	1
	Tripoli	Christian-Arab	1
	Jaffa	Jewish	1
	Isparta	Muslim	1
	Damascus	Christian-Arab	1
	Aleppo	Christian-Arab	1
	Baghdad	Muslim	2
East Anatolia	Gürün	Muslim	1
	Erzurum	Muslim	2
	Malatya	Muslim	1

Table above also shows that beyond their immediate environment, the brothers preferred to work with a limited number of collaborators; regarding closer locations, however, they did not feel the need to limit the number of collaborators, as they knew them personally and were able to reach them in case needed. The rationale behind this is revealed in one of the letters where İlyas, the middle brother in Istanbul, counsels his younger brother in Manchester, Cemil, regarding how to establish new business contacts:

Letter: In case a letter is written to a region, it should be written to one or at most two people. It would be tactless to write to a number. For example, in Erzurum, only Narmanlızâde is enough, maybe one more person, but there is no need for more. One should do business with one or at most two people in a region, more is no good my brother. May it be for the best. Amen.¹⁴⁵

Based on the analysis above underlining the significance of familiarity, we do not expect the brothers to reach out to complete strangers but the reason(s) behind the motive to contact one or two still requires further explanation. Possible explanations

¹⁴⁵ Mektub: Bir memlekete mektub yazılırsa bir kişiye, nihayet iki kişiye yazmalı. Öyle çok, birkaç kişiye yazılırsa densiz olur. Mesela, Erzurum'a Narmanlızâde'ye yalnız yetişür, belki bir kişi daha olabilir. Fazlaya hacet yoktur. Bir memleketde bir adamla, nihayet iki adamla iş yapmalı. Fazlası iyi olmaz biraderim. Allah iyi eyleye. Amin. (18 Mart 1330/March 31, 1914)

may be related with control of market information or hidden in the phrase “tactless” which still requires further elaboration.

Social and Economic Standing of the Collaborators

This part focuses on the local socio-economic profile of the collaborators based on the information extracted from urban directories, local histories and archival materials, in addition to the available commercial correspondence. The presence of collaborators in these sources testifies for their social, economic and political significance at the end of the Ottoman Empire. Local histories, although they appear as significant sources for tracing the Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, they provide only limited information when it comes to non-Muslims. This does not appear as striking as these sources are mostly based on the bits and pieces traced retrospectively. Hence, it is the actual absence of non-Muslims in today’s Turkey that is mostly represented in these local histories rather than a real absence. It is also worth consideration that local histories exploited in this work were mostly in Turkish. The exploitation of rich collections of local histories in Greek and Armenian still remains a task to be accomplished and a debt to be paid due to the language limitations of the author. The *Annuaire Oriental* is a useful and rich source regarding the economic profile of both Muslims and non-Muslims. The archival materials and the secondary literature on local histories in general and on the War of Independence in particular tell more about the social and political standing of the collaborators than the commercial correspondence under scrutiny.

The Muslim collaborators within the Mataracızâde network mostly appear as members of local notable families of their regions in general and the eastern Black Sea in particular. The fact that they were addressed as *tüccar-ı mu'teberandan* (from among notable traders) in the available collection also provides evidence in this regard. Some of the collaborators were able to transfer their local economic power to important centers of trade both within and outside the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire such as Istanbul, Manchester, France; whereas some remained local. Bekir Efendizâde Rüşdi Efendi¹⁴⁶ and his sons based in Trabzon set an example for the former case. He was born as the son of Hafız Salih Efendi in a mansion in Ortahisar, Trabzon, which is now the Russian Consulate. He founded the BRF (*Bekiroğlu Rüşdü Frères*) Company and exported the merchandise he imported from France. His trade capacity enlarged with the help of his middle son Salih Efendi, who carried the merchandise between Trabzon, Istanbul and Batumi with his boats. Bekir Efendizâde Rüşdi Efendi, known to be quite wealthy in terms of property, also operated the *Kisarna* Spring Water¹⁴⁷ and the *İpek* movie-theater in Trabzon. After his son Salih Efendi was murdered in Batumi during the War of Independence, he moved to Istanbul and continued with his business with his remaining sons there.¹⁴⁸ He bought the *Kısmet*, *Muradiye* and *İhsaniye* Hans in Sirkeci and an apartment building named *Şükranıye* in Osmanbey. Bekir Efendizâde

¹⁴⁶ The Mataracızâde brothers referred to him in their correspondence as Bekir Efendizâde Hacı Hafız Rüşdi Efendi, whereas Bal, who has a compilation on local notable figures and families of Trabzon, refers as Bekiroğlu Mehmed Rüşdi Efendi in his work. Mehmet Akif Bal, *Trabzonlu Ünlü Simalar Ve Trabzon'un Ünlü Aileleri* (İstanbul: Çatı Yayınları, 2007), 185-6.

¹⁴⁷ He gave the *Kisarna* Spring Water to her only daughter who married Trabzon Member of Parliament, Haluk Çulha as a wedding gift. Ibid., 185.

¹⁴⁸ Bal cites all this information from Nermi Bekiroğlu, grand-son of Bekir Efendizâde Hacı Hafız Rüşdi Efendi. Ibid., 185-6.

Rüşdi Efendi appears as one of the collaborators who were able to transfer his locally accumulated social and material capitals to the center, whereas his father-in-law, Kazazzâde Hüseyin Efendi remained local.

Kazazzâde Hüseyin Mehdi Efendi (1878-1938), who was also one of the collaborators of the Mataracızâde brothers, was the only son of a family who migrated from Rize to Trabzon three generations before.¹⁴⁹ He was a draper (*manifaturacı*) and owned a lot of property in downtown Trabzon.¹⁵⁰ Under Trabzon data in *Provinces de l'Empire Ottoman avec les Divisions Administratives, Populations, Renseignements, Adresses, etc.* (Provinces of the Ottoman Empire with their Administrative Divisions, Populations, Information, Addresses, etc.) section of *Annuaire Oriental* dated 1914, Kazazzâde Hüseyin Mehdi Efendi's sons were listed among the merchants dealing with textiles and manufactured goods with sons of Bekir Efendizâde Rüşdi Efendi.¹⁵¹ Kazazzâde Hüseyin Mehdi Efendi was the mayor of Trabzon in 1919 and right after the foundation of the Republic between 1923 and 1928.¹⁵² His term as a mayor was associated with many public services.¹⁵³ He was also one of the members of the *Trabzon Muhafaza-i Hukuk-ı Milliye Cemiyeti*¹⁵⁴ and Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] attended a lunch in his mansion

¹⁴⁹ Bal, *Trabzonlu Ünlü Simalar Ve Trabzon'un Ünlü Aileleri*, 463.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 463.

¹⁵¹ Under the title *manufactures (négociants en)*, they were listed as *Békir Eff. Zâde Rouchdi et Kazaz Zadé Fils. Annuaire Oriental* 1679.

¹⁵² Cumhur Odabaşıoğlu, *Trabzon Belgelerle Milli Mücadele Yılları 1919-1923* (Trabzon1990), 546-7.

¹⁵³ Bal, *Trabzonlu Ünlü Simalar Ve Trabzon'un Ünlü Aileleri*, 463-4.

¹⁵⁴ Kazazzâde Hüseyin Mehdi Efendi's name appears among the members of the Trabzon Muhafaza-i Hukuk-ı Milliye Cemiyeti in a telegram the Mayor of Trabzon sent to Mustafa Kemal in Havza in June 9, 1919. <http://silifke.meb.gov.tr/Ataturk/SYLBELGE/blghtmtr/blg006.htm-Nutuk>.

during his visit to Trabzon in 1924.¹⁵⁵ As exemplified in this case, the appearance of the collaborators in histories of the War of Independence is mostly related with their local economic power.¹⁵⁶ It is thanks to their local financial contributions to the War of Independence that their economic power could be transferred into political power in its aftermath. Some chose to pursue this political opportunity at the national level by sending a member of the family to the Parliament in Ankara, while some preferred to remain local.

The presence of the collaborators or other members of their families in archival documents reveals their social and political standing in relation to the state. They appear either when they received promotions from the state or, conversely, acted against the public good. Şecaeddinzâde Hacı Zarif Efendi, dealing with the drapery and thread trade and one of the collaborators of the brothers based in Çorum, was gratified by the state a couple of times as a member of the board of managers due to his service and efforts beneficial to the public.¹⁵⁷ Whereas, the case of Hacı Yunus Efendizâde Halil Efendi based in the Hemşin region of the Atina district in Rize, set an example for the abuse of local power fortified by the state. Hacı Yunus Efendizâde Halil Efendi, whose sons -Mustafa, Hüseyin and Şükrü- were also among the commercial partners of the Mataracızâde brothers, was

¹⁵⁵ Bal, *Trabzonlu Ünlü Simalar Ve Trabzon'un Ünlü Aileleri*, 464.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 185-6. Bayram Sakallı, "Milli Mücadelede Çorum" (paper presented at the Türk Kültür Tarihi İçerisinde Çorum Sempozyumu, Çorum, 26-27 Temmuz 1991). Ayhan Yüksel, "Salnamalere Göre Giresun Bölgesinin İdari Durumu Ve İdarecileri," in *Giresun Tarihi Sempozyumu 24-25 Mayıs 1996* (Giresun: Giresun Belediyesi 1996).

¹⁵⁷ Document regarding gratification of Şecaeddinzâde Hacı Zârif with a degree from the third to the second; BOA, DH.MKT., 2149/33, 2 Şa'ban 1316/December 16, 1898. Letter sent from *Dahiliye Mektubi Kalemi* to *Sadrâzamlık*; BOA, DH.MKT., 2504/121, 13 Rebiülevvel 1319/June 30, 1901. Document regarding his gratification from the second to the first rank; 09 Rebiülahir 1326/May 11, 1908.

gratified with a fourth degree in 1319 (1901/1902) due to his good service in matters related with government.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, five years later, he was arrested for interrogation because of a notification on his improper behavior in his village.¹⁵⁹

The case of Telatorzâde Tevfik Efendi based in the Atina district of Rize set an example for manifestation of local power against the public good.¹⁶⁰ In a letter sent from the *Dahiliye Mektubi Kalemi* to the *Trabzon Vilayeti Âliyesi*, Telatorzâde Tevfik Efendi was mentioned as inappropriate for any future public post due to his predicament. However, with his partner Naibzâde Midhat Efendi,¹⁶¹ the registrar, Telatorzâde Tevfik Efendi got hold of the survey post (*tahrirat kitabeti*) of the Atina district and they started exploiting it for their own good and causing harm to the treasury (*hazine-i celile*).¹⁶² Seven years later, Telatorzâde Ziya and Tevfik Efendi with some members of the Baltazâde family were mentioned in a complaint letter written and signed by a group of local guilds of Hemşin region of Atina district and sent to *Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi*. They were complaining that on their way back from Russia, where they regularly had been going for the last thirty or forty years for trading, their belongings were getting taken away by force

¹⁵⁸ BOA, DH.MKT., 2504/121, 13 Rebiülevvel 1319/June 30, 1901.

¹⁵⁹ BOA, DH.MKT., 1072/25, 28 Safer 1324/April 23, 1906.

¹⁶⁰ Telatorzâde Şükrü Efendi was one of the collaborators in the brothers' network.

¹⁶¹ Naibzâde Ahmed Hilmi Efendi was also one of commercial partners of the Mataracızâde brothers in Atina.

¹⁶² “Atina kazası müteneffizanından Telatorzâde Tevfik Efendi'nin mesavi-i ahvalinden dolayı bir daha hizmetde kullanılması muzır bulunduğu halde muahharan her nasılsa kaza-i mezbur tahrirat kitabetini ele geçirib şeriki bulunan nüfus memuru Naibzâde Midhat Efendi ile istifade-i şahsiyelerine hizmet ve hazine-i celileyi ısrara cürret etmekte olduklarından bahis ve şikayetle böyle ifadatı havi muhbir-i sadık imzasıyla gönderilen varaka leffen irsal kılındı. Mündericatına nazaran bi-t-tahkik iktizasının ifa ve keyfiyetin imbasına himmem-i aliyeleri masruf buyurulmak babında.” BOA, DH.MKT. 2378/1, 25 Rebiülevvel 1318/July 23, 1900.

right after their arrival in Atina. The reason behind this villainy was explained through Telatorzâde Ziya Efendi's position in the governance of Atina. As the current situation was affecting more than 2000 people's journey back home, they declared that they were thinking about moving their families to Russia.¹⁶³

This letter, in addition to the abuse of local political power to the limits of banditry, also points to the significance of the Russian Empire as the backyard for the men of the region for making a living. Meanwhile, Telatorzâde Hasan Agha, who most probably was another member of the same Telatorzâde family with the aforementioned Ziya Efendi, was listed among the second-degree local notables of the Atina district in terms of land and status in the aforementioned inventory prepared by the Governor of Trabzon Sırrı Pasha in 1880.¹⁶⁴ What we see in this case is the co-existence of local notability and of banditry within the same families. This co-existence can be read as mirror images of the same local power: manifestation of local power for or against the good of the locals.

The provincial branch has already been defined geographically as a maritime trans-regional and ethno-religiously as a Muslim one above. In terms of its social standing and economic profile, the provincial branch can be defined as consisting of collaborators who were local notables of their regions, regardless of the ethno-religious divide. Local power can be defined as the accumulation of symbolic, social, political and material capital over generations within a certain locality. As local notability requires accumulation of local power over generations, what appears within the sources utilized in this section may be considered as simply

¹⁶³ BOA, DH.MKT., 1225/73, 16 Zilhicce 1325/January 20, 1908. BOA, DH.MKT., 2378/1, 25 Rebiülevvel 1318/July 23, 1900. See Appendix G for a transcription of this letter into modern Turkish.

¹⁶⁴ Yüksel, "Trabzon Valisi Sırrı Paşa," 56.

the “tip of the iceberg”. The examples above testify for the mobility of the accumulated local power. I consider both the inter-regional; between center and periphery, and inter-generational transfer of local power significant for understanding not only commercial practice and etiquette but also accumulation of capital in the Ottoman Empire.

The Immediate Business Environment of the Mataracızâde Brothers

Provincial Branch

This section analyzes the ethno-religious distribution under professions in districts where collaborators of the provincial network were active. For this cause is utilized data in *Provinces de l’Empire Ottoman avec les Divisions Administratives, Populations, Renseignements, Adresses, etc.* (Provinces of the Ottoman Empire with their Administrative Divisions, Populations, Information, Addresses, etc.) section of *Annuaire Oriental* dated 1914. This data consists of various categories of prominent professions and of the names of major figures engaging in these trades in the provinces and provincial towns covered. In collection of the data, district is used as the main unit of administration. Professions searched under each district mainly consist of the prominent ones within the brothers’ network, namely; ‘traders’, ‘traders of textiles and manufactured goods’, ‘commission agents’. Nevertheless, they may vary according to the areas of specialization of collaborator(s) in a particular district. Names listed under related professions in each district, where

business partners of the Mataracızâde brothers were located are listed¹⁶⁵ and the category of ethno-religious character, which is absent from the original data, is introduced to understand the ethno-religious profile of the current business environment of the brothers and their partners in provinces. Although the data under scrutiny is quite limited for generalizations, it still displays some tendencies.

Below is the list of distribution of districts according to the ethno-religious identity of collaborators and the dominant ethno-religious identity within their areas of specialization in a particular district:

Table 5: Distribution of Districts According to the Ethno-religious Identity of Collaborators and the Dominant Ethno-religious Identity within Their Areas of Specialization

Source: Appendix H

District	Ethno-religious identity of collaborator(s)	Dominant ethno-religious identity within the specialization areas of collaborators
Adana	Muslim	Armenian
Adapazarı	Muslim	Armenian
Bafra	Muslim	Armenian
Erzurum	Muslim	Armenian
Gürün	Muslim	Armenian
İzmit	Muslim	Armenian
Ünye	Muslim	Armenian/Muslim
Giresun	Muslim	Greek
Samsun	Armenian	Greek
Trabzon	Muslim	Greek
Atina	Muslim/Greek	Muslim/Greek
Aleppo	Christian-Arab	Christian-Arab
Alexandretta	Armenian	Christian-Arab
Tripoli	Christian-Arab	Christian-Arab
İzmir	Muslim	Foreigner
Jaffa	Jewish	Foreigner
Rize	Muslim/Greek	Muslim
Malatya	Muslim	Muslim
Baghdad	Muslim	Jewish

¹⁶⁵ Companies are excluded.

According to areas of specialization under scrutiny; among nineteen districts, six of them; Adana, Adapazarı, Bafra, Erzurum, Gürün, İzmit, appear as Armenian-dominated and Ünye, both Armenian- and Muslim-dominated. Among the districts on the Black Sea; Giresun, Samsun and Trabzon appear as Greek dominated, whereas Rize appears as Muslim dominated and Atina¹⁶⁶ as both Muslim and Greek dominated. Three districts; Aleppo, Alexandretta and Tripoli appear as Christian-Arab dominated. Meanwhile, Jaffa and Smyrna were dominated by the foreigners; Baghdad appears as the only district dominated by Jews and Malatya as the only one by Muslims. The overall dominant ethno-religious categories among the districts within the brothers' provincial branch appear as Armenian followed by Greek.

The analysis above will be utilized to check the significance of ethno-religious characteristics in brothers' choice of who to collaborate with in a particular district. Did the brothers' commercial contact(s) within a district reflect the ethno-religious character dominant in that particular district? The answer to this question mostly appears as negative, other than the districts of Atina, Aleppo, Tripoli and Malatya as shown above by Table 5. Taking the Gürün case as an example for Armenian-dominated districts, among nineteen 'shawl merchants and cotton and woollen yarn importers' listed in Gürün section; the only Muslim was a certain Avundukzâde Mehmed Efendi, the rest being Armenian. Although the numbers display the Armenian domination over the shawl and yarn market, the brothers were trying to collaborate with a particular Muslim (see Appendix H).

¹⁶⁶ Atina is the former name of the Pazar district of Rize.

Hence, the Gürün case in line with the other Armenian-dominated cases above provides the assumption that the brothers' preferences were Muslims.

Nevertheless, Christian-Arab and Jewish dominated districts suggest the opposite. When we look at the Aleppo case, we see that among the twenty merchants of Aleppo fabrics, only one was Muslim, the rest being Christian-Arabs. Nevertheless, the brothers were in collaboration with one of the Christians, a certain Necib Basil Behna Efendi. They had a solid commercial relationship with this particular merchant, who encouraged them to launch the manufacturing of Trabzon linen thanks to a putting out system in Rize. Even the contradictory cases of Gürün and Aleppo are enough to explain the complexity and contextual nature of the decision of who to collaborate with.

The ethno-religious categories of Muslim and Greek, which appear as the most prominent in Black Sea, as explained above, were also representative of the ethno-religious character of the provincial branch of the brothers' network. Muslims appear as the majority in the commercial life in Rize, which is not a common feature shared with other districts except Malatya. Despite the limitation of the data under scrutiny, the appearance of Muslim character either as a minority or not represented at all among the districts within the brothers' network sets a contradictory sample to the argued domination of the Muslim merchants in the domestic trade:

...Nonetheless, Muslim merchants still [in the early twentieth-century] dominated the trade of interior towns and often between the interior and the port cities on the coast. That is, for all the changes in the international merchant community, it seems that Ottoman Muslims controlled most of the

domestic trade, plus much of the commerce in international goods once these had passed into the Ottoman economy from abroad.¹⁶⁷

Rize and Malatya, as counter cases, raise the immediate question regarding the reason for the prominence of Muslim merchants there. The immediate answer for Rize case appears related with its location and topography: Due to lack of agriculture, trade was the main and sole mean of subsistence in the region.¹⁶⁸ Its borderland location in nation-state terms and sea connection were resourceful for commercial transactions with the Russian territory in particular, and with the Black Sea at large. It is the actual prominence of Muslims within the population in Rize, in general¹⁶⁹ and in commerce, in particular that was reflected in the ethno-religious character of the provincial branch rather than a deliberate preference.

Istanbul Branch

As limited as the information offered by available collection regarding the brothers' collaborators in Istanbul, data offered by *Annuaire Oriental* is invaluable for understanding their immediate commercial environment. In order to understand the ethno-religious distribution within brothers' areas of specialization namely,

¹⁶⁷ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, 2nd ed., New Approaches to European History (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 129-30.

¹⁶⁸ Aliye F. Mataracı, "Family Stories: Constructing a Family Narrative" (Boğaziçi University, 2001), 13-4.

¹⁶⁹ According to the figures provided by Sakin in his work on the ethnic structure of the Ottoman Empire in 1914, the ethnic distribution within the total population of 123.567 in the central district of Rize was as follows: 122.055 Muslims, 1.507 Greeks and 5 Armenians. These figures were based on the demographic statistics of the Ottoman Empire in 1914 published in the booklet titled; *Memâlik-i Osmaniye'nin 1330 Senesi Nüfus İstatistiki*, (Dersaadet: Dahiliye Nezareti Sicill-i Nüfus İdare-i Umumiyesi Müdiriyeti Yay. , 1336). Orhan Sakin, *Osmanlı'da Etnik Yapı Ve 1914 Nüfusu* (İstanbul: Ekim Yayınları, 2008), 227.

‘*manufactures*’ (textiles and manufactured goods) and ‘*commissionnaires*’ (commission agents),¹⁷⁰ names and quarters i.e. Pera (P), Galata (G) and Stamboul (S) listed under these categories in the *Professions des commerçants et industriels de la ville de Constantinople* (Commercial and Industrial Professions in Istanbul) section of the *Annuaire Oriental* dated 1894, 1904, 1909 and 1914 are collected and to this data is once more introduced the absent category of ethno-religious character. In order to understand the ethno-religious distribution around the brothers’ workplace, data listed under two different sections of Istanbul have been utilized: *Adresses des Rues de Stamboul* (Addresses of the Streets of Istanbul) and *Adresses des Hans de Stamboul* (Addresses of the Hans of Istanbul).

Ethno-religious Distribution According to Profession

The analysis of the entries listed under the profession ‘commission agents’ immediately informs regarding the immense increase in their overall number in Istanbul at the turn of the century: From 116 in 1894 to 536 in 1904 and eventually 1027 in 1914. They appear densely populated in Stamboul quarter of Istanbul, which basically covers the Eminönü area in which the brothers’ office were located. Stamboul quarter displays a seven percent increase in its share from 65 percent in 1894 to 72 percent in 1914, compensated with an eight percent decrease in the share of Galata. These figures show that the immense increase in the number of commission agents (almost ten fold) between 1894 and 1914 was accommodated by Stamboul quarter rather than Galata (See Appendix I).

¹⁷⁰ ‘*Commissionnaires*’ (commission agents) category also includes all the listings under the category ‘*négociants-commissionnaires*’ (traders-commission agents) in *Annuaire Oriental* of 1914.

One would expect the positive atmosphere following the constitutional revolution of the Young Turks and their economic policies promoting Muslim entrepreneurs to increase the Muslim share in the total population of commission agents in Istanbul in 1914.¹⁷¹ After all, İlyas' move to Istanbul in 1908 sets evidence in support of this argument. The following analyses, despite the limitations of the data, will run sampler tests within the specialization areas of commission agents and traders of textiles and manufactured goods for evaluating the validity of the "high" expectations created for the Muslims of the period by the "National Economy" discourse.

The Balkan Wars signal the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in Turkish historiography. The loss of the remaining Balkan territories is equated with the loss of the economic power and social capital of the empire. Viewed as a rehearsal or prelude of the World War I for Turks,¹⁷² the Balkan Wars are considered as the end of the ideology of Ottomanism. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) started promoting the rising ideology of Turkish nationalism instead. The CUP leadership, inspired by European nationalism and bourgeois liberal experiences, intended to take the necessary steps for the creation of a national Turkish bourgeoisie. The ideological framework of the "National Economy" movement put forward two major political and economic agendas: First, encouraging Muslim-Turkish subjects to engage in business, and secondly,

¹⁷¹ Eldem is the first in literature to raise a temptation to test the validity of the argument of the growth of a Muslim bourgeoisie after 1908 by suggesting a comparison of the growth rates for each community between the periods 1903-1908 and 1909-1913, based on his data compiled from 6000 personal cards relating to the customers of the Ottoman Bank and cross-examined through the *Annuaire Oriental* dated 1914. Eldem, "Istanbul 1903-1918: A Quantitative Analysis of a Bourgeoisie." footnote 60, p. 96.

¹⁷² Zafer Toprak, "Cihan Harbi'nin Provası Balkan Harbi," *Toplumsal Tarih* 104(2002). Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913 : Prelude to the First World War*, Warfare and History (London ; New York: Routledge, 2000).

boycotting the businesses of non-Muslim subjects. The general assumption based on this narration would expect an overall increase in the number of Muslim commercial subjects after 1908. The analysis below will test this argument for commission agents in Istanbul at the turn of the century.

Foreigners, the dominant category among the commission agents in Istanbul in 1894 with a share of 54 percent gets replaced with Armenians (36 percent) in 1904, followed by Greeks (31 percent) in 1914 (See Appendix J). 1904 data displays the addition of the Muslim category, which was absent in the 1894 data, with a share of six percent and the overall increase in the number of Armenians (from 17 to 36 percent), Greeks (from 15 to 22 percent) and Jews (from 12 to 16 percent) with a compensating decrease in the share of foreigners from 54 to 18 (See Diagram 5). In a Greek dominated population of commission agents (31 percent) followed by Foreigners (24 percent) in 1914, Muslims increase their share up to nine percent (See Diagram 6). The three percent increase in Muslim share between 1904 and 1914 not only fails to be representative for the overall increase in the number of commission agents but also renders commission agency ineligible as an area of commercial specialization for the argued “boom” in Muslim entrepreneurs after 1908. What is also significant regarding the 1914 distribution is the increase in exemplary partnerships between different ethno-religious groups such as partnership of a Greek and an Armenian or a Muslim and an Armenian, etc. Although these partnerships are very few in number, the ethno-religious variety among the partners is worth noting (See Diagram 6 in Appendix J).

The analysis of names listed under the profession category ‘textiles and manufactured goods’ immediately informs about the fall in the total number of

traders in this category between 1894 and 1909 (from 377 to 279), which was followed by a slight increase up to 313 in 1914. This is partially covered by the increase in the number of Muslims (36) which remained at the exact same number (21) between 1894 and 1909, once again failing to meet the expected increase in the Muslim entrepreneurial population. Almost all the merchants (over 90 percent) dealing with textiles and manufactured goods were located in Stamboul, with the dominant ethno-religious category of Armenians followed by Greeks in all decades (see Appendix K). Although Greeks appear as the most prominent figures of textile sector between 1880 and 1912 in Tanatar-Baruh's study of textile merchants in Istanbul,¹⁷³ this analysis points to a significant Armenian domination within a particular area of specialization directly related with textile sector between 1894 and 1914 and hence, another instance of Armenian domination in the Ottoman cotton market, this time in its Istanbul branch, in addition to their already elaborated on dominance over the provinces.

Ethno-religious Distribution According to Workplace

In order to understand the ethno-religious distribution within the brothers' immediate work environment, data listed under two different sections of *Annuaire Oriental* dated 1894, 1904 and 1914 have been utilized: 1. Names and specializations listed under Çakmakcılar Yokuşu, which is the street of the han in which the brothers' Istanbul office was based, in *Adresses des Rues de Stamboul* (Addresses of the Streets of Istanbul) section, 2. Names and specializations listed

¹⁷³ Tanatar-Baruh, "At the Turn of the Century, Textile Dealers in an International Port City, Istanbul."

under the hans located on Çakmakcılar Yokuşu¹⁷⁴ in *Addresses des Hans de Stamboul* (Addresess of the Hans of Istanbul) section. The analysis of the brothers' immediate commercial environment will be based on the data created by the merge of the data listed under both sections. This data consisting of the door numbers, names and specialization of each workplace¹⁷⁵ on Çakmakcılar Yokuşu, can provide us the total number of workplaces, their distribution according to sectors and through injection of the inexistent category of ethno – religious characteristics, their ethno – religious distribution on this particular street. The analysis will be based on Çakmakcılar Yokuşu in general and the two big hans of the street, Büyük Yeni Han; the han in which brothers' Istanbul office was located,¹⁷⁶ and Valide Han, in particular.

The ethno-religious distribution of workplaces on Çakmakcılar Yokuşu immediately informs about a slight but constant increase in Armenian domination reaching up to 50 percent in 1914. The share of the second prominent ethno-religious category, Muslims, falls to 28 percent in 1914, after a gradual increase up to 33 percent in 1904 (see Appendix L). The share of the third prominent category among the workplaces on Çakmakcılar Yokuşu, that of the Greek, was in constant

¹⁷⁴ Hans located on Çakmakcılar Yokuşu in 1914 were Agop Muradyan, Agopyan, Boncukcu, Büyük Yeni, Caferi, Valide and Zumbullu.

¹⁷⁵ The unit of analysis is workplace. Each entry starting with a door number, followed by name and specialization is taken as representing a workplace. Exceptional cases are: 1. Two entries with the same door number but different names and specilizations are considered as different workplaces. 2. Two entries with more than one door number but same name and profession are considered as the same workplace within the boundaries of this work.

¹⁷⁶ The brothers' Istanbul office appears under İlyas' name, in Büyük Yeni Han, number 38, under the profession *manufactures* in *Annuaire Oriental* dated 1913 and 1914. In 1921, it appears under their second name and this time in Kuru Kahveci Han, number 27, under the title *négociants-commissionnaires*. In *Le Guide Sam* dated 1928, another directory covering businesses in the Orient, it appears under Ali's name on Hamidiye Street, number 47, under the section "*Addresses Utiles à Constantinople*" (Useful Addresses in Istanbul). *Annuaire De L'orient. Le Guide Sam. France, Italie Turquie, Egypte, Grece, Bulgarie, Palestine.*, 8eme edition ed. (1928), 103.

decline from 22 percent in 1894 to 14 percent in 1914 (See Appendix L). The decline in the number of the Muslim workplaces as well as the decline in the number of Greeks', which might be related with their forced migration during the Balkan Wars, appears to be compensated with the relative increase in the number of Armenians. Hence, in this analysis, Greek absence seems to be replaced with the Armenians rather than the Muslims in 1914, challenging once again the general expectations created by the "National Economy" discourse.

All the hans on Çakmakcılar Yokuşu appear as Armenian dominated over the three decades covered by the data with the only exception of Valide Han with over 80 percent Muslim presence reaching up to 92 percent in 1914.¹⁷⁷ The share of the second prominent category, Greek, after a gradual decrease from ten to seven percent between 1894 and 1904, falls down to two percent in 1914 (See Appendix L). The other largest han on Çakmakcılar Yokuşu, Büyük Yeni Han, which was also the han of the brothers, presents over 50 percent Armenian domination between 1894 and 1904 and this reaches up to 64 percent in 1914 (See Appendix N). The increase of the Armenian population in the han is once again balanced by the decrease in its Greek share: From 20 percent in 1894 to eight percent in 1914 (See Appendix N). Hence, what we see is another instance of Armenian replacement of Greek departure as the Muslim population remains almost stable (around eight to ten percent) over the three decades under scrutiny.

Based on the analyses above regarding the ethno-religious profile of the brothers' immediate commercial environment in Istanbul in terms of areas of

¹⁷⁷ Valide Han used to be the home for Iranian merchants during the nineteenth century. It still has the Iranian masjid in the middle, which used to be one of the centers for Shi'ism in Istanbul. Thierry Zarcone, "La Situation Du Chi'isme À Istanbul Au Xixe Et Au Début Du Xxe Siècle " in *Les Iraniens D'Istanbul*, ed. Th. Zarcone et F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (1993).

specialization and workplace, we can conclude that they were holding on in a non-Muslim environment and in line with their domination of the market, they were mostly collaborating with Armenian parties followed by Greeks. The decision of who to collaborate with seems to be determined by the specifics of each context as also appeared to be the case in the provincial branch above. The following section, mostly based on the information provided in the correspondence between İlyas and Cemil and secondary literature on Manchester, will provide a general profile of the immediate commercial environment of the youngest brother in Manchester.

Manchester Branch

İlyas' letters to his younger brother Cemil is resourceful regarding his business environment in Manchester. From İlyas' remarks, it is clear that it had not been long since Cemil had moved to Manchester where he would stay until after the beginning of the World War I. According to the narrative of his son, Hasan Mataracı, it was an Armenian quarantine officer who brought Cemil to Manchester and helped him settle there.¹⁷⁸ We learn from İlyas' correspondence that Cemil stayed with a family member in Manchester. One of the letters in French, signed by İlyas and sent to the Istanbul branch of the Papayannis and Company - a major shipping company of the Papayannis family from Smyrna developed from its base in Liverpool and specialized in the sea transport of Eastern Mediterranean -¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Aliye F. Mataracı, *Trade Letters as Instances of Economy, Ideology and Subjectivity* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Centre, 2005), 10-1.

¹⁷⁹ Gelina Harlaftis, Manos Charitatos, and Helen Beneki, *Ploto: Greek Shipowners from the Late 18th Century to the Eve of World War Ii* (Athens: Hellenic Literary and Historic Archive, 2003), 325.

regarding the forwarding of the merchandise Cemil sent from Manchester to Istanbul to Rize, provides the name of the Manchester branch: “Djemil Mataradjizâde Son & Co”. He was not able to open an office during his stay in Manchester and used the office of one of the Muslims in Manchester as his contact address. İlyas insisted that Cemil should learn English as it was the main tool to facilitate his integration into the business circles in Manchester.

“Language: God willing you will have learnt how to read and write. Do not give up on reading and writing. In your spare time, you should learn how to read and write.”¹⁸⁰

The tone of the letters İlyas wrote to his younger brother reveals Cemil’s solitude in Manchester. His expectations for help and guidance regarding business from his immediate environment obviously were not being fulfilled. İlyas, acting as a mentor, tried to provide the necessary help and guidance from Istanbul through his letters. As a response to Cemil’s complaints regarding the difficulties of acquisition of the tips and toes of business in Manchester, İlyas, not surprised by the hardships of a competitive business environment and its effects on his brother, tried to inculcate his brother to learn it all through commercial practice and traders around him.

“Business: You say that you do not even want to ask them because they do not teach anything and never talk good. God willing, you will learn a lot yourself and actualize it. May God provide success in good health. Amen.”¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ “Lisan: Okuyub yazmayı inşaallah öğrenmiş olursunuz. Okuyub yazmayı bırakmayınız. Vakt-i müsaidinizde okuyub yazmayı tamamen öğrenüb, elde edesiniz biraderim.” (8 Nisan 1330 / April 21, 1914)

Cemil's immediate business environment in Manchester consisted mainly of Armenians and a number of Muslims, who I assume to be Ottoman subjects, due to their connections with the cotton market in Istanbul and İlyas' acquaintance of them. Whether these contacts were representative of the ethno-religious profile of Ottoman commercial subjects in Manchester at the time requires further research. Although presence of a Greek commercial community in Manchester was acknowledged,¹⁸² there was no mention of even a single Greek name. Despite the well-documented literature on Ottoman Greek commercial presence in Manchester by the beginning of the nineteenth century,¹⁸³ the lack of any specific reference is quite striking. One possible explanation for their absence among Cemil's contacts might be related with their departure from the Ottoman cotton market during the Balkan Wars as suggested above.

One of the main sources on Armenian commercial community in Manchester is Joan George's work on Armenian textile traders, small manufacturers, or retailers originally from the Ottoman lands.¹⁸⁴ Although the work is quite informative regarding Armenian presence in Manchester over a century, 1835 and 1935, it is quite biased in terms of explaining the motives behind this

¹⁸¹ "...İş: Öğretmez olduklarımı ve katiyyen iyi söylemez oldukları için, sormak bile istemediğinizi yazıyorsunuz. İnşallah kendi yanınızdan çok çok şeyler öğrenir yaparsınız. Cenab-ı hak bilhayr muvaffak eyleye. Amin..." (25 Mart 1330 / April 7, 1914)

¹⁸² See the quotation below.

¹⁸³ Stanley D. Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain : From the Industrial Revolution to World War I* (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Maria-Christina Chatziioannou, "Greek Merchants in Victorian England," in *Greek Diaspora and Migration since 1700: Society, Politics and Culture*, ed. Dimitris Tziouvas (England: Ashgate, 2009).

¹⁸⁴ I am thankful to Professor Maria-Christina Chatziioannou for raising this work to my attention. Joan George, *Merchants in Exile: The Armenians in Manchester, England, 1835-1935* (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2002); Chatziioannou, "Greek Merchants in Victorian England."; Bedross Der Matossian, "The Armenian Commercial Houses and Merchant Networks in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire," *Turcica*, no. 39 (2007).

presence. Starting with its title, “Merchants in Exile”, the work bases itself on the assumption that Armenian presence in Manchester followed upon “spasmodic massacres, religious persecution, extortion and famine” that drove Ottoman Armenians to the ports and commercial centres of Constantinople and Smyrna and it was this “... move [that] facilitated their trade and encouraged their migration to Manchester.”¹⁸⁵ Disregarding any possibility of an economic motive, migration of Armenian subjects is related with either political or natural enforcement ending up in commercial centres of the nineteenth century both within and outside the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. The main requirement for mobility between commercial centres; social and material capital accumulation and its transfer elaborated on in the previous chapter is completely neglected in this argumentation.

It does not appear as a surprise that Cemil’s immediate business environment consisted of some former contacts as integration into a new business environment requires the exploitation of already established ones and hence, inter-regional transfer of the already accumulated social and material capital. Regarding Cemil’s Armenian commercial contacts in Manchester, the commercial correspondence under scrutiny provides us the names; Alyanakyan, Seferyan, and Kamberyan.¹⁸⁶ Alyanakyan, being the most cited Armenian contact in Manchester, was referred as a privileged merchant with the history and experience in having

¹⁸⁵ George, *Merchants in Exile: The Armenians in Manchester, England, 1835-1935*, prologue.

¹⁸⁶ Names are kept the way they were spelled in the correspondence. None of these names appeared in Kevork Pamukciyan’s biographical work on Armenians. Kevork Pamukciyan, *Biyografileriyle Ermeniler*, Ermeni Kaynaklarından Tarihe Katkılar (Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2003). Alyanakian, K. & Co. (shipping merchants), Alyanakian, M. (merchant), Kamberian, H. & Co. (merchants) are listed among Armenian residents of Manchester; a list compiled from *Slater’s Directories of Manchester, Salford & Suburbs*, 1901, 1902 & 1903. George, *Merchants in Exile: The Armenians in Manchester, England, 1835-1935*, 235-6. Kamberian, H. also appears within the list of the Manchester donors to the Armenian refugees’ (orphans’) fund in 1916 in addition to Seferian, A. H. and Saferian, K. Ibid., 239-40.

textiles manufactured on his name in Manchester. During the first months the collection under scrutiny covered, he appeared as the address to be consulted by Cemil, in need for guidance and credit and hence, as the most trusted party.

Among the Muslim contacts, Refik and Receb from their family hometown, Rize, were mentioned as established merchants in Manchester who could afford to have textiles manufactured for Istanbul and “similar locations”. Their names were also cited in Cemil’s search for credit in Manchester. Another contact was a fellow of a prominent merchant from Thessaloniki based in Istanbul, Mustafazâde Ahmed Bey. When Ahmed Bey’s work went bad, his fellow, İhsan, was called back to Istanbul. The fact that these contacts were also well-known by İlyas, also testifies for their connection with the Ottoman cotton market which appeared as Armenian dominated in its provinces and Istanbul branches according to the analyses above. There was also another Muslim contact implied in the quotation below once and slightly mentioned only twice despite the significance of his position and family connection with the brothers: the Ottoman consul in Manchester, Hüsniyâde, whom İlyas referred to as his uncle. We get informed about his presence through İlyas’ search for a solution to exempt Cemil from military service after the beginning of the World War I. Second mention of his name was within the context of Cemil’s departure from Manchester. The lack of reference to any actual interaction with him still requires an explanation.

İlyas, most probably based on information Cemil provided in his previous letters, portrayed Greek and Armenian commercial subjects in Manchester with strong communal ties. Reminding his younger brother the smallness of the Muslim merchant community in Manchester, he made a comparison with their Armenian

and Greek counterparts who were larger in number and underlined how they protected and looked after one another. His remark implies a lack of solidarity among the small number of Ottoman Muslim commercial subjects in Manchester and as a solution; he suggests the strong communal ties among Greek and Armenian commercial parties in Manchester as a model of solidarity to take after. His suggestion should be based on his general perception of Ottoman non-Muslim commercial communities as he did not have a direct access to those in Manchester due to his base in the imperial capital.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the level of integration between different commercial centers of the Ottoman cotton market, which will be underlined through various instances in the rest of this work, might have allowed for such a projection. He also suggested that his point should be raised to the attention of “suitable parties” in Manchester; may they be Muslim merchants and/or Ottoman authorities such as the aforementioned Ottoman consul Hüsnizâde Efendi. ...In case of an occasion, in an appropriate time, you will tell it to suitable parties: Consider how many Muslim commission agents are here. Armenians or Greeks, they are many in number and they always support and help each other.¹⁸⁸

The quotation above implying the significance of social solidarity based on “co-ethnicity” for commercial success is quite tempting for considering magnification of ethno-religious discrepancies among diaspora communities. Despite the resourcefulness of the Ottoman Armenian subjects in the brothers’

¹⁸⁷ See chapter six for a thorough discussion of the solidarity discourse within the Ottoman Empire at the time and İlyas’s perception of social and economic solidarity among non-Muslim communities.

¹⁸⁸ “...Bir de münasebet olub, münasib vakitlerde icabında, münasib kimselere söylersiniz, bakınız burada kaç dane İslam komisyoncusu vardır, Ermeniler olsun, Rumlar olsun nasıl ziyadedirler ve her yerde daima birbirlerini muhafaza eder, el verirler, yardım eder, felan diye söylersiniz...” (21 Mart 1330 / April 3, 1914)

integration into the cotton market in Manchester, İlyas' need for such a comment is meaningful and also worth consideration regarding the “co-ethnic” relations in their “old country”, which will be discussed in detail in the last chapter of this work.¹⁸⁹

Conclusion

The analyses above point to the overall Armenian domination and expertise in the Ottoman cotton market, which consisted of three main branches: the provinces, Istanbul and Manchester, at the end of the empire. These branches were also present within the brothers' commercial network. The analysis of the collaborators according to both their geographical and ethno-religious distribution in their provincial branch showed that familiarity overcame both the geographical and religious divide regarding the decision who to collaborate with. The collaborators of the provincial branch, mainly members of local notable families of the eastern Black Sea region, accumulated social, economic and political power over generations. Some of them were able to transfer their local economic power to important centers of commerce like Istanbul or Manchester, beginning with the second half of the nineteenth century. The move from inter-regional centers to trans-regional ones required know-how regarding commercial practices and Ottoman Armenian commercial subjects, who were already prominent figures of all

¹⁸⁹ I borrow the terms “co-ethnicity” and “the old country” from Cohen: “...All diaspora communities settled outside their natal (or imagined natal) territories, acknowledge that “the old country” – a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore – always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions. That claim may be strong or weak, or boldly or meekly articulated in a given circumstance or historical period, but a member's adherence to a diasporic community is demonstrated by an acceptance of an inescapable link with their past migration history and a sense of co-ethnicity with others of a similar background.” Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), ix.

the branches of the Ottoman cotton market were of great use to their Muslim counterparts who followed them in their wake. This assumption crystallizes in the commercial practices to be discussed in following chapter.

If we are to broadly generalize the analyses based on Istanbul data, within the categories under scrutiny, Greek absence in the commercial realm in 1914 was mostly replaced by Armenians rather than Muslims, who were represented as either stable or with a slight increase in their commercial presence between 1904 and 1914. This does not appear as a surprise especially regarding the areas of specialization under scrutiny; traders of textiles and manufactured goods and commission agents, as they both require substantial expertise i.e. acquisition of language and market information regarding international trade, which were already accumulated by the Armenian subjects of the Empire. These findings contradicting the expectations created by the “National Economy” discourse, the development of the Muslim entrepreneurial class yet to wait the World War I.

Last but not least, despite the wave of nationalism blowing over the Ottoman long nineteenth century in general and the one-party rule of the CUP in the aftermaths of the Balkan Wars in particular, the network under scrutiny was still able to preserve its imperial, in other words, multi-religious texture. In this respect, it was an Ottoman network operating cross ethno-religious boundaries and hence, first to be introduced into the rich literature on commercial networks within which commercial networks are mostly defined over a single ethno-religious identity, be it Greek, Armenian, Jewish, Muslim or any other.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ I am thankful to Professor Gadi Gilbar for inviting me to “Competing Networks: Greek and Other Commercial Houses in the Mediterranean during the Long Nineteenth Century” Conference, Haifa University, June 5-7, 2006. The conference was held under the auspices of the University of Haifa Program of Modern Hellenic Studies and the Project on the Big Merchant-Entrepreneurs of the

CHAPTER 5

THE WAY TO THE OTTOMAN COTTON MARKET PASSED THROUGH COTTONOPOLIS¹⁹¹

*“Yes, we can...Allah’ın izniyle...”¹⁹²
(Yes, we can...with the permission of God...)*

Introduction

This chapter, focusing on the commercial practices of the Mataracızâde brothers, tells the story of their move from an inter-regional center, Rize, to trans-regional ones, namely Istanbul and Manchester. In other words, it analyzes how they were able to establish a trans-regional nexus by utilizing their connections with different producing and trading communities and local markets in and outside the Ottoman commonwealth. The way to the Ottoman cotton market, which has been already shown to be greatly dominated by Armenian traders in its main branches -

Middle East and was sponsored by the Alexander Onassis Foundation (Athens). The various types of relations that developed within and between various networks ranging from economic cooperation to intense competition and the reasons for different modes of operation of the networks and the causes of the success and the dominance of some and the loss of economic power and influence of others were the issues of main interest discussed during the conference. These issues were discussed with concentration on Greece, the Ottoman Empire and Egypt. I have benefited widely from the papers presented at this conference in my work.

¹⁹¹ Cotonopolis was the name attributed to Manchester due to its central position in the world cotton market during the nineteenth century.

¹⁹² This is a line quoted from Osman character in the series “*Kapalıçarşı*” (Covered Bazar). Osman character is a small-scale representation of today’s “Anatolian Tigers”, which consist of large-scale entrepreneurial enterprises with provincial origin, well-integrated into today’s global economy. This line is his campaign slogan as a candidate for presidency of Kapalıçarşı Union. The first part “Yes, we can...” was actually the current U.S. President Barack Obama’s slogan during his 2008 U.S. Presidential Campaign. The second part “*Allah’ın izniyle*” (with the permission of God) is Osman’s contribution, which I read as Islamization of liberal principles. Taking Osman character as an actor of the second wave of globalization and Mataracızâde brothers of the first, despite the wide gap between the historical contexts and the scale of businesses, I believe they share the same entrepreneurial spirit which originates from the intersection of liberal and Islamic values. I am thankful to my mother, İncila Mataracı for raising this series to my attention.

provincial, Istanbul and Manchester – in the previous chapter -had to pass through Manchester as the way to integration with any cotton market in the long nineteenth century. The main motivation behind the Mataracızâde brothers' move to Manchester was to interfere with the Armenian domination over the Ottoman cotton market; especially regarding pricing. Ottoman Armenian traders, who were already prominent figures of the market, were of great use to the Mataracızâde brothers throughout their integration process.

The letters available in the collection provide a good vision of the nature of the business conducted within the network and of the kinds of merchandise in circulation and the different means of transportation, of financial transactions and of communications used by its actors.¹⁹³ This section, starting with the description and definition of the three brothers' business, will follow on with the aforementioned categories of information regarding the network. In document number 166, which might be classified either as a business card or as a letter of congratulation as its content serves both greeting and promotional purposes, İlyas defined the nature of his business as an import and export commission agency, and located his office at number thirty-nine in Büyük Yeni Han on Çakmakçılar Yokuşu in the Stamboul district of Istanbul.¹⁹⁴ In two other letters of self-introduction written to possible future collaborators in Anatolia, he defined himself as a commission agent of textile

¹⁹³ The information regarding the prices of merchandise in circulation and the costs of transportation, financial transactions and communication used within the network though present within the available collection will not be elaborated on in this work.

¹⁹⁴

Mataracızâde İlyas Efendi
Çakmakçılar'da Büyük Yeni Handa otuz dokuz numeroda
Emtia-i umumiyye idhalat ve ihracat komisyoncusu

Maa techizaat beş yüz otuz guruşdur.
Müessislerini tebrik ve teşebbüslerinde muvaffak bilhayr olmalarını cenab-ı kibriyadan tazarru eylerim efendim.

and manufactured goods (*manifatura komisyoncusu*).¹⁹⁵ Within the context of this study, the Mataracızâde brothers will be referred to with this title.

The three brothers were working as trans-regional import and export commission agents within the Ottoman Empire trying to penetrate the European cotton market by establishing a branch in Manchester. The oldest brother, Ali, was based in Rize, the family hometown, while the middle brother İlyas was based in Istanbul. Their youngest sibling, Cemil, was sent out to Manchester and through him, the brothers imported textiles from Manchester to Istanbul and Sebastopol. As commission agents, the Mataracızâde brothers had a well-established commercial network within the Ottoman lands. They were selling merchandise they generally acquired from wholesalers in Istanbul to customers in various provinces of the Empire. They traded mostly in manufactured goods from center to periphery, as well as in food and raw materials from periphery to center. In addition to their already established trading business, they had the ambition to launch new lines of business such as warehousing and shipping. The beginning of the World War I brought a drastic end to their inter-imperial commercial practices and they started searching for the possible business opportunities the war economy had to offer, which will be discussed in detail in the chapter to follow.

¹⁹⁵...Bendeniz burada manifotura komisyonculuğuyla meşgul olmakda olduğumdan buraca her nev siparişâtınızı sühûletle icra edebildiğim gibi amelikan ve iplik dahi Mançester’de biraderim olmak hasebiyle ihtârıma olarak mümkün olduğu kadar menfa’tinizi gözederekden irsâl edebilirim...” (15 Mart 1330 / March 28, 1914)

Merchandise in Circulation within the Network

It is possible to regroup the merchandise in circulation within the network under three main categories, each corresponding to a specific route: 1. Various kinds of textiles imported from Manchester and sold to commercial partners in various provinces of the Ottoman Empire and in the Russian port of Sebastopol; 2. Various kinds of manufactured goods, including textiles, forwarded mostly from a number of wholesalers and merchants in Istanbul to collaborators throughout the Empire; and 3. Food and raw material forwarded by collaborators in various provinces to be sold in Istanbul. The first two categories consisted of merchandise forwarded by the three brothers, while the last category consists of goods mainly forwarded to them. The main category of merchandise in circulation within the network consisted of various kinds of textiles. Manchester-Istanbul and Istanbul-Rize appear to have been the main routes for circulation of textiles and Rize, the family hometown and the center of gravity of their provincial network, seems to have been the main final destination. Among various kinds of textiles, linen appears to have been of the utmost importance. Trabzon linen had a significant place due to its high profitability. Upon the insistence of the aforementioned Necib Basil Behna Efendi, a merchant of Aleppo fabrics based in that city, the brothers attempted to start a new business by manufacturing Trabzon linen in Rize through a putting out system.¹⁹⁶ Another category of goods in circulation within the network was that of merchandise samples. Samples were as significant as merchandise orders: They were the main means of starting new transactions and hence, of increasing the

¹⁹⁶ See section on Instances of Entrepreneurship below for details of manufacture of Trabzon linen through putting out system in Rize.

brothers' volume of trade. Samples were always reclaimed in the case of a failure to set up a new operation, and the cost of transportation appears to have been a matter of negotiation among business partners. Given their connection with future commercial possibilities, more discussions on significance of samples will follow in the section on instances of entrepreneurship below.

Given the geographical nature of the network under study elaborated on in the previous chapter, it should not come as a surprise that the main means of transportation for the merchandise was maritime shipping. The postal system or a messenger were the alternatives to maritime transportation, especially for smaller quantities and in the case of landlocked towns. The chart below lists the main transportation routes for merchandise and samples within the network:

Table 6: List of the Transportation Routes within the Network

Point of departure	Point of arrival	Forwarding agent	Final destination	Means of transportation	Kinds of merchandise
Istanbul	Alexandretta	Keşişyan Tezeriyet Efendi	Adana	Khedivial Post ¹⁹⁷	various kinds of textiles
Istanbul	Tripoli	Nehvacan Yakub Cebraîl Nâdir and Co.	Aleppo		linen
Istanbul	Rize	Ali Rıza Mataracızâde	Athina		various kinds of textiles
Istanbul	Samsun	Hacı Serkiz Papazyan	Bafra	maritime transport	various kinds of textiles
Istanbul			Bafra	post	samples of linen
Istanbul			Baghdad	post	samples of linen samples of cosmetics
Istanbul			Elmalı (Adapazarı)		various kinds of manufactured goods
Manchester	Istanbul		Istanbul		various kinds of textiles
Manchester			İstanbul		samples of

¹⁹⁷ Khedivial Post was a maritime company.

					various kinds of textiles
Istanbul			Manchester		samples of various kinds of textiles
Adana			Manchester		samples of various kinds of textiles
Istanbul	Trabzon		Rize	maritime transport	cigarette paper
Istanbul	Rize		Rize	maritime transport	various kinds of textiles
Istanbul			Sebastopol		various kinds of textiles and manufactured goods
Manchester			Sivas		
Manchester	Trabzon	Kostropolu	Trabzon/Rize		various kinds of textiles
Manchester	Istanbul	Papayannis and Company	Rize	maritime transport	various kinds of textiles

The correspondence between the brothers and third parties involves information regarding the final destination of the merchandise, but it rarely mentions its origins i.e. the purveyors from whom they were initially purchased. It is mainly through the correspondence among brothers that one can obtain such information. Taking into consideration the nature of the sources, it is not surprising that the original purveyors of the merchandise were not revealed to other commercial parties as they were considered as rivals. It is also hard to differentiate the merchandise imported from Manchester, unless a specific mention was made in the correspondence between İlyas and Cemil. Hence, generally speaking, it is worth noting that the correspondence provides less information regarding the origins of the merchandise than its final destination.

The merchandise was usually shipped in boxes or bales previously marked and numbered. In some cases, a bill of consignment and invoice¹⁹⁸ could be attached to the shipment. They could also be sent out together with the letters following the shipment. Rize was the ultimate final destination regarding the major part of the merchandise forwarded, which is not surprising considering the concentration of the provincial network in Rize mentioned in the previous chapter. In other words, the destination of the orders was proportionate to the geographical concentration of collaborators. The merchandise that was forwarded to Rize, although it may have been addressed to several collaborators, ended up within the same box or boxes depending on the size of the orders. This shows the level of trust not only between the brothers and their partners in Rize and also among the partners there.

Merchandise, usually shipped from Manchester to Trabzon and/or Rize, transited via Istanbul. It was cleared through customs by the forwarding agents and then sent to its final destination. İlyas would thus ask Cemil to send him the receipts of the orders to Istanbul, and those of the orders to Rize and Trabzon, to Kostropolu, a forwarding agent in Trabzon or to the bank so that it would forward them to Kostropolu. Paying the amount of the ticket, Kostropolu would keep the difference between the Ottoman and English liras as his commission.¹⁹⁹ One wonders if this was a common practice among the forwarding agents of the period.

¹⁹⁸ In cases where a forwarding agent was involved in clearing the merchandise through the customs, bill of consignment was sent to the forwarding agent and the invoice to the merchant. In cases where the commercial partner was in charge of customs clearance, they were sent together.

¹⁹⁹ “...Trabzon ve Rize’ye gönderilecek mallar bedellerini Kostro göndermenizi biraderim yazdığını ve Kostro’nun yüzde bir, nihayet yarım tahsiliye alacağını yazıyorsunuz. Biraderim size tamam iki defa yazdı ki, Kostro tahsiliye almaz. Yalnız o bilet bedelini kendisi çıkarır ki, lira ile İngiliz beyninde olan fark kendisine kalır. Başka tahsiliye birşey almaz...” (5 Nisan 1330 / April 18, 1914)

All forwarding agents within the brothers' network were non-Muslim: Hadji Serkis Papazyan (Armenian) in Samsun, the aforementioned Kostropolu (Greek) in Trabzon, Nehvacan Yakub Cebraïl Nâdir and Company (Christian-Arab) in Tripoli, previously mentioned Papayannis and Company (Greek) in Istanbul. This specific instance helps us make two points: first of all, while proper confirmation would require research beyond the available network, it suggests that forwarding agency was a non-Muslim-dominated business; and second, it presents forwarding agents as a group of professionals operating at the intersection of the various networks they served.

Financial Transactions

This section elaborates the role financial institutions and different means of payment played within the network. Banks appear to have been the main type of financial institution contacted in need for credit, apart from the commercial partners themselves. Among the banks mentioned within the correspondence were the Adapazarı Muslim Commercial Bank in the provinces, and the Imperial Ottoman Bank and the Deutsche Orient Bank in Istanbul. Within the collection, one comes across two instances of an urgent need for credit: the sums necessary to Cemil in Manchester and the credit needed to start a warehouse business in Istanbul.

Banks and Credit Institutions

Banking was one of the domains where transformations of a national(ist) character were influential on the economic life of the Empire during the Second Constitutional Era. The concept of “national bank” was brought into the agenda of Ottoman society as one of the requirements of a “National Economy” following the Young Turk Revolution. Members of the Committee for Union and Progress realized the significance of credit institutions for the economy and decided that they should be kept under control, especially taking into consideration the active role foreign capital had been playing in this area until then. As quoted by Toprak, in a circular sent by the headquarters of the Committee for Union and Progress to the central committees in the provinces, a biological metaphor was drawn between nation and organism, heart and bank, and blood and credit in order to underline the significance of national credit and banks for a nation: if the nation were to be compared to an organism, the banks would have to be considered as its heart, drawing and pumping blood, in other words credit.²⁰⁰

According to Toprak, the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which was the most prestigious and widely used financial institution of the period, also fulfilling the duties of a state bank, played an important role in the leaning of the members of the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) towards national banking. The problems the state faced with the Imperial Ottoman Bank in its efforts to solve financial

²⁰⁰ “Millet bir uzviyete benzetilince bu uzviyetin kanı itibâr [kredi] dediğimiz şeydir ve millette bir kalp gibi bütün itibârları toplayıp dağıtan müessese ise bankadır.” Toprak citing Tekin Alp, “İtibâr-ı Millî Bankası,” *İktisaddiyyat Mecmuası*, yıl 1, p. 40, 19 Kânun-ı sâni 1333, p. 1. Zafer Toprak, *İttihad - Terakki Ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi Ve Türkiye’de Devletçilik 1914 - 1918* (İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi 2003), 47.

problems during the Balkan Wars urged the CUP to look for new solutions in banking in its aftermaths. In addition to the Ottoman National Credit Bank (*Osmanlı İtibâr-ı Milli Bankası*), which was envisioned as the new state bank and the Agricultural Bank (*Ziraat Bankası*), whose scope of activity was widened, a series of “national” (*milli*) credit institutions were founded both in Istanbul²⁰¹ and in the provinces. Encouraging its members to establish new banks, the CUP provided all possible financial and moral support for local credit institutions.²⁰²

“National” banking projects in the provinces were realized mostly in western Anatolia, as the development of a market-oriented economic structure in this area necessitated the establishment of institutions to support a monetized economy. Not surprisingly, the first attempts ever at establishing banks had also appeared in the same region during the early years of the *Tanzimat*. Toprak considers the flourishing of these attempts to be natural in an environment where the survival economy was replaced by a monetized economy. The province of Aydın played a significant role in terms of banking during the constitutional period. The Fig and Protection of Farmers Ottoman Limited Company of Aydın (*Aydın İncir ve Himaye-i Zırra Osmanlı Anonim Şirketi*) founded in 1913, the Millî Aydın Bankası (National Bank of Aydın) founded in 1914, and the Manisa Bağcılar Bankası (Grape Producers Bank of Manisa) founded in 1917 may be cited among these regional credit institutions.²⁰³

²⁰¹ Among the “national banks” in Istanbul, four of them were founded by Muslim – Turkish subjects: *Istanbul Bankası*, 1911, *Emlak ve İkrazat Bankası Osmanlı Anonim Şirketi* and *Asya Bankası Anonim Şirket-i Osmaniyyesi*, 1914, *İktisad Anonim Şirketi*, 1918. Two banks were founded by members of the committee of CUP: *İtibâr-ı Umûmî Milli Bank* was founded during the First World War and *Milli İktisad Bankası* was founded in 1918., *ibid.*, 67-80.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 73-7.

The development of such local credit institutions in Anatolia during the Second Constitutional Era opened a new channel for the flow of already accumulated capital in the hands of local notables. They constituted a solution to the credit problem of producers in the provinces, who had already opened up to the market economy, thanks to the combined effect of the increasing economic power of local merchants and of the political support of the CUP. It was thanks to these local credit institutions that some producers were able to market their produce without having to depend on brokers or usurers.²⁰⁴ Regarding the common features of the “national” credit institutions established in Anatolia, it might be said that they were all founded by local notable merchants i.e. by local power holders, as limited partnerships which were transformed into joint stock companies in time. Among them, the first was the Konya National Economy Bank (*Konya Milli İktisad Bankası*) founded in 1909, followed by the Karaman National Bank (*Karaman Millî Bankası*) in 1915 again in Konya and Rural Economy Bank (*Köy İktisad Bankası*) in Kayseri in 1916. Moreover, a significant number of the businesses founded during the World War I, in addition to their commercial and industrial activities were also involved in credit operations and thus also functioned as credit institutions.²⁰⁵

The Adapazarı Muslim Commercial Bank, which the brothers contacted when the need arose for a credit to finance opening their own warehouse, was no exception.²⁰⁶ The bank had originally been founded under the name of

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 67-78.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 71-3.

²⁰⁶ For details, see chapter six.

Adembeyzâde İbrahim, Sipahizâde Hamid and Company Muslim Commercial Bank (*Adembeyzâde İbrahim, Sipahizâde Hamid ve Şürekâsı İslam Ticaret Bankası*) as a limited partnership with a capital of 75,545 Ottoman liras in January 1914.

According to some rumors which Toprak cites, the bank was established by the local notable merchants²⁰⁷ as an alternative to the Adapazarı branch of the Imperial Ottoman Bank; due to the condition it imposed of providing a Christian guarantor to obtain credit. The bank was turned into a joint stock company on October 1, 1919, and acquired the name of the Adapazarı Muslim Commercial Bank Ottoman Joint Stock Company (*Adapazarı İslâm Ticaret Bankası Osmanlı Anonim Şirketi*) and eventually changed it to Turkish Commercial Bank (*Türk Ticaret Bankası*) afterwards.²⁰⁸ Despite all the information provided by Ökçün and quoted by Toprak from Ökçün regarding the changes in the name of the bank, the brothers were referring to it as Adapazarı Muslim Commerce Bank as early as 1914.²⁰⁹

Regarding Cemil's need for cash and his efforts to find credit in Manchester, Ali and İlyas had started searching in Istanbul, and advised Cemil to talk to Refik and Receb, major Muslim merchants from their hometown, established in Manchester. Meanwhile, İlyas talked to a certain Karagözyan in Istanbul, who had connections with the Armenian commercial community in Manchester. Karagözyan was not willing to give credit but instead proposed that one of his acquaintances introduce Cemil to a bank in Manchester so that he could open an account and start

²⁰⁷ For a list of the founders of the bank, see A. Ökçün Gündüz, "1909-1930 Yılları Arasında Anonim Şirket Olarak Kurulan Bankalar," in *İktisat Tarihi Yazıları* (Ankara: Sermaye Piyasası Kurulu, 1997), 241.

²⁰⁸ Toprak, *İttihad - Terakki Ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi Ve Türkiye'de Devletçilik 1914 - 1918*, 77.

²⁰⁹ See Appendix R for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter written to the directorate of the bank.

working with this bank for his commercial transactions. Karagözyan suggested that if he deposited 300 liras or a check to its equivalent for a while, Cemil would be entitled to a credit line. He also claimed that this bank account would act as a guarantee for the third parties who wanted information on Cemil and his trade, even if he did not use it to obtain credit.

İlyas, following Karagözyan's advice without taking his offer for help, told Cemil to consult with Refik and Receb on the choice of a bank in Manchester, while at the same time expressing his hope that Refik and Receb might be willing to extend him a credit instead. This particular instance suggests that the Mataracızâde brothers felt more comfortable contacting and relying upon their most trusted commercial partner - a Muslim from their hometown - than a financial institution, even in an institutionally developed business environment. Meanwhile, contradicting the brothers' intention to obtain credit from the Adapazarı Muslim Commercial Bank, as will be analysed in the following chapter, this example points to the circumstantiality of commercial decisions. İlyas advised Cemil to take some time before starting his search for credit, as he believed a merchant should first prove his worth with his trade in a new business environment. He basically recommended Cemil to seek recognition and acceptance by the commercial circles in Manchester and establish a reputation of creditworthiness, before entering any kind of credit operations within the local network. He also warned Cemil to trade with caution, even if he had a good amount of money and credit at hand.

Let me tell you this. Do not tolerate because you have credit and money, my brother. These things require a lot of calculation. Never swerve, always trade as if you have little credit and money. I have money, let me pay cash, instead of on credit, this is correct. However, you should try to purchase on long term credit with the exact same conditions you would get when you

buy cash. There is a big difference and convenience. If necessary, you sell and buy cash, that is another thing.²¹⁰

Nevertheless, from the content of the following correspondence between İlyas and Cemil, we learn that Receb Efendi rejected the brothers' request regarding credit and Alyanak, who was mentioned among Cemil's immediate contacts in Manchester in the previous chapter, was sought as an alternative. During the first months covered by the collection under scrutiny, which I assume to correspond to Cemil's early phase in Manchester, İlyas recommended him as the person to be consulted not only for credit matters but also for guidance regarding commercial transactions. Cemil finally consulted Alyanak for credit but finding his interest rate too high, decided not to borrow money from him. Nevertheless, İlyas still suggested him as an option this time for future credit possibilities:

You wrote that you asked Alyanak for money and he said that his interest rates were high and because of this you did not take money from him. It is good that you did not ask him for money. In the future, after a while, you can propose six or seven percent interest rate. In case he does not accept, you will give up to eight, but no more, otherwise the damage will be high. If necessary, after a while, you will talk and eventually give up to eight...²¹¹

²¹⁰ Size Bir de şurasını söylerim. Kredim vardır, param vardır, sakın ve müsadeli bulunmayınız, biraderim. Buraları çok hesap lazımdır. Az kredi, az para ile ne yolda iş yapmak mümkün idiyse, gine öylece yaparsınız, zinhar şaşmayınız. Param vardır, veresiye almayayım, peşin vereyim, doğrudur. Lakin peşin ne yolda alacakdınızsa, uzun kısa vade ile gine o yolda almalısınız ve almağa gayret etmelisiniz. Çok büyük farkı ve kolaylığı vardır. İcabında peşin verilür, alunur, o da başka. (21 Mart 1330 / April 3, 1914)

²¹¹ “Alyanakdan para istediğinizi ve faizlerinin yüksek olduğunu söylediğini, ve bu cihetden daha para istemediğinizi yazıyorsunuz. Pek ala istemediğiniz iyi oldu, ilerüde bir [müddet] sonra yüzde altı, yedi ile para vermelerini teklif edersiniz. Olmadığı takdirde, sekiz kadar verirsiniz, fazla vermezsiniz, fazla verilirse mazarratı ziyadedir. İc[ab] ederse, bir müddet sonra konuşur, nihayet sekize kadar verirsiniz...” (19 Nisan 1330/ May 2, 1914)

Financial Tools

Payments regarding most transactions were made in installments, whereas cash was enforced upon new contacts and with first orders, mainly with those traders whom the brothers did not know well or at all. According to the profile of the person they were trading with, they would ask for all, half or 20 to 25 percent of the full amount of the merchandise in advance. Discounts were also considered with cash payments. İlyas warned Cemil to consider offering a discount on the total cost of the merchandise to be delivered from Manchester only for those traders who were willing to pay either the full amount of the order, or those habitual customers holding an interest-bearing account, although the implementation could differ from customer to customer. The postal system, maritime shipping companies or personalized fund transfers were the main means used in cash transfers. It was pretty common to send cash through mail. A few times, İlyas sent cash to Cemil as an attachment to his letters in envelopes. As banks limited their operations in cash with the Ottoman declaration of a moratorium, immediately following the outbreak of the World War I, the postal system eventually replaced banks regarding money transfer and sending cash in a bundle through post turned out to be a more common and secure practice than a wire transfer.

It was common practice within the network under scrutiny to pay or be paid in installments. The most common terms of installments appear to have been of 31, 61, 91 and 121 days. Promissory notes with a maturity of 151 days appeared only very rarely, and 181 days only in the very exceptional cases of their most trusted business partners. Almost all their transactions fell under this category, as they used

to buy and sell with long-term payments. İlyas warned his younger brother Cemil to bargain for a purchase in full cash payment, with a discount, whether the term was short or long. He insisted that he should never yield with respect to the terms of payment when selling, while on the contrary, as a buyer, he should always act as if he had a limited amount of cash at hand, even if that was not the case as also mentioned above. In another instance of the brothers' practices as buyers, İlyas suggested that Cemil buy yarn from Alyanak with a two or three month term without any late interest, and in order to be able to do so, he suggested that Cemil first ask Alyanak to grant him a 21 day term on the payment of the first purchase and then that he increase the term to 31, 41 and 61 days. Hence, he advised him to increase the duration of payments gradually in order to avoid possible interest. This instance, like many other similar ones in the commercial correspondence under study, underlines the significance of interest in the commercial transactions within the network that evolved around the brothers.

...You wrote previously that you are going to buy yarn from Alyanak with a two or three month term. Now, why are you questioning whether he is going to grant you a term? He will grant you a term; it is not likely that he will not. He will grant give you a two or three month term. However, I do not know whether he is going to take any late interest for this term? If he does, he will take a late interest of six percent. However, as you are taking the merchandise from him, I assume he is not going to take a late interest or something; instead he will give you a two or three month term. You will take a term without any late interest. If he insists on late interest, then work with him as much as he allows without a late interest. You ask for a 31 or 41 day term without a late interest. Once, you do it for 21 days. Second, you do it for 31 and third, for 41 days. Later, you will do it for 61 days and then continue like that for a while. Later, you will increase it bit by bit. This time, you take a term for as long as possible without any late interest, my brother.²¹²

²¹² “...Alyanak’dan iplikleri iki üç ay kadar vade ile alacağınızı evvelce yazmış idiniz. Şimdi neden vade vereceğinden [şübhe] ediyorsunuz? Vade verir, vermez değil. İki üç mah kadar vade verecektir. Lakin bilmem bu vade için bir fark alacak [mı], alsa yüzde altıdan faiz alacaktır. Lakin madem ki malı kendisinden alıyorsunuz, her halde faiz bir şey almayub, iki üç mah kadar vade verecektir. Faiz fark vermeksizin, vade alırsınız. Şayed fark alırım filan deyü mutlak suretde ısrar

Commercial Epistolary Space

This work borrows the term “epistolary space” from James How who examined the role of the British Post Office during its first hundred years, between the second half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries. His main argument is that the foundation of a Post Office available to the general public opened up new “epistolary spaces”. He defines epistolary spaces as “ ‘public’ spaces within which supposedly ‘private’ writings travel at once imaginary and real: imaginary, because it is not possible for one to really inhabit them the way one can inhabit other social spaces as all meetings and incidents there are only metaphorical; real, because they were policed by a government ever more keen to monitor the letters that passed along the national postal routes.”²¹³

It was through the epistolary space created by commercial letters and telegrams that business contacts were created, business was discussed and negotiated, problems were solved, debts were redeemed, etc. As letter writing played a pivotal role in the creation and codification of business relations,²¹⁴ all business interactions were primarily planned and organized on a discursive level before they were transformed into praxis. Therefore, the functioning of these means

ederse, o vakit de hiç fark vermeden çalışun mümkünü kadar. Otuz bir, kırk bir gün kadar az bir vade farksız olarak istersiniz. Artık bir defa yirmi bir gün yaparsınız. İkinci otuz bir, üçüncü de kırk bir gün yaparsınız. Sonra sonra altmış bir gün yaparsınız. Bir müddet de böyle devam edersiniz. Sonra yavaş yavaş artırırınız biraderim. Bu defaki vadeyi, hiçbir farksız olarak mümkün olduğu kadar vade alırsınız biraderim.” (19 Nisan 1330 / May 2, 1914)

²¹³ James How, *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa*, Studies in Early Modern English Literature (Cornwall: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 5.

²¹⁴ Rebecca Earle, ed. *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945*, Warwick Studies in the Humanities (Ashgate, 1999), 2.

of communication, particularly of the postal system, was of the utmost importance for commercial practices.

Public postal services were inaugurated in the Ottoman Empire with the establishment of the Ministry of Posts (*Posta Nezareti*) in 1840 and from that date on, the exchange of correspondence became possible for all.²¹⁵ This institution was an extension of the new administrative approach which appeared following the *Tanzimat* decree. The first telegraph lines were set up in 1855, during the Crimean War, and in time, the telegraphic network developed rapidly throughout the Empire. From 1871 on, the telegraphic and postal services were managed from a single administrative center.²¹⁶ Ayşegül Okan, who has written a Ph.D dissertation on the progress of the Ottoman postal and telegraphic services in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, argues that through the modernization of postal services, which began really with the membership of the Ottoman State in the Universal Postal Union in 1874 and continued under the reign of Abdülhamid II, the system acquired greater efficiency in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although the state could not manage to obtain a monopoly over communication systems within its

²¹⁵ During the classic era of the Ottoman Empire, correspondence was carried out with a relay system and private correspondence was not a part of it. The messengers, generally called *tatars* conveyed dispatches throughout the country. Ayşegül Okan, "The Ottoman Postal and Telegraph Services in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century" (HTR, Boğaziçi University, 2003), 16.

²¹⁶ According to Okan, a pretty well progress could be observed in the communication services during the period between 1840 and 1875 in the Ottoman Empire. The speed of communication services reached the highest level both for the telegraph and the postal service. The reorganization of roads and the *tatar* services, and especially the advances in railways and maritime lines, accelerated the postal service. The security of communications was enhanced. People were less worried about the destiny of their mail or message than in the past. Communication services were organized in a more systematic way. It was certain from where and how a message was sent, how and – theoretically – when it would reach its destination. The progress in communications initially enjoyed by the ruling class were accessible to the average citizen and I think, most beneficiary to merchants. The speed and security of correspondence gave momentum to commercial activities and enlarged the business capacity. Nevertheless, the steps made in communication field were barely sufficient. Ibid., 30-1.

territories in its struggle against the foreign post offices, it was at least able to accomplish the modernization of its system. From the first half of the eighteenth century, European nations, starting first with Austria, began to open post offices called “Levant Posts” in the Ottoman Empire for their own use. They were established based on the capitulations and were a necessity for the Ottoman Empire. The lack of a public correspondence and the disability of the Ottoman postal service on corresponding with foreign countries were the main reasons they were welcomed to the Empire.²¹⁷

From the content of the letters, we can also understand that the postal system in the early twentieth century was pretty regular in terms of speed and security. Taking into consideration the frequency of letters sent from the office in Istanbul and received from various locations and the surprisingly short span of time – as an example; a week was enough for a letter posted from Manchester to arrive its address in Istanbul - passing between the sending of a letter and the reception of a reply, it would not be wrong to argue for the reliability and trustworthiness of the postal system. The trust in the postal system was often implicitly pointed in common phrases at:

“I confirm my [letter] dated April 11, 1330. Of course, you will have received it in a timely manner...”²¹⁸

“Surely, you will have received my letters and the linen sent as samples...”²¹⁹

²¹⁷ From the first half of the eighteenth century, European nations, starting first with Austria, began to open post offices called “Levant Posts” in the Ottoman Empire for their own use. They were established based on the capitulations and were a necessity for the Ottoman Empire. The lack of a public correspondence and the disability of the Ottoman postal service on corresponding with foreign countries were the main reasons they were welcomed to the Empire. Ibid., 32.

²¹⁸ “Fii 11 Nisan 1330 tarihlimi tasdik ederim. Tabii vaktiyle ahz etmiş olursunuz...” İlyas writes to one of his commercial partners in Atina on May 22, 1914 (9 Mayıs 1330).

In case of a failure in delivery within an expected duration of time, the reason was attributed to the absence of the person rather than a possible delay in the means of communication. İlyas wrote to Cemil on June 13, 1914 (31 Mayıs 1330):

“I confirm [my letter] dated June 5, 1914. I could not receive your recent letter and your reply regarding the arrival of the one hundred English liras I sent with [my letter] dated May 30, 1914, yet. You were going to go somewhere, I say that is why your recent letter did not arrive ...”²²⁰

After the beginning of World War I, the efficiency of the postal system was affected: not only letters but telegrams as well started running late and because of this, İlyas ended up sending his telegrams as ‘urgent’ (*müstâcel*) rather than ‘regular’ (*âdi*) and suggested his partners the same as well. Enclosed in letters one could also send out money, invoices, checks, promissory notes, bills of exchange, samples of merchandise, etc.²²¹ After the outbreak of the war, post became the main mean for transfer of money within the Empire due to a decrease in public trust in the payment capacities of the banks because of the declaration of a moratorium.

The most common means of asking for the repayment of debts owed within the available correspondence was writing a letter as also mentioned in chapter three. In cases where debts had not been paid for a while, the second means resorted to was the telegram. The telegram was not a preferred means regarding the reputation of the debtor due to its lower status in terms of privacy compared to a letter, since

²¹⁹ “Tabii mektublarımı ve numune olarak gönderilen ketenleri ahz etmiş olursunuz...” İlyas writes to his commercial partner in Jaffa on May 16, 1914 (3 Mayıs 1330).

²²⁰ “Fii 23 Mayıs 1330 tarihlimi tasdik ederim. Sizin dahi henüz yeni mektubunuzu ve son defa Fii 17 Mayıs 1330 tarihimle gönderdiğim yüz İngiliz lirası vusulüne dair cevabınızı alamadım. Bir yere gidecekdiniz, onun için diyorum yeni mektubunuz gelmemiştir...”

²²¹ The cost of the postage of samples was counted as an item and it was always clarified in the letters which party was to pay.

its contents and hence, the operations of the persons involved, were exposed to others than the sender and the receiver. The lines quoted below, which were quite commonly used in the letters asking for the repayment of debts, tell us about the significance of the content of telegrams with respect to the reputation of the business partner.

“...Yesterday, I was going to send you a telegram but I still write this letter, thinking that there is no need to send to a telegram to Ali Efendi for money; it is disgraceful, and unworthy...”²²²

Debtor was asked to inform the creditor immediately by a telegram once he had transferred his debt. It was problematic to reach the collaborators, who were constantly on the move, through telegram as it required an address. İlyas was unable to send a telegram to two of his collaborators constantly commuting between Sebastopol and Rize to ask for their debts. In this regard, letters were more convenient as they could also be sent with people who were acquainted with the addressee as also previously discussed in chapter three.

Instances of Entrepreneurship

Instances of entrepreneurship generally evolved around samples of merchandise in connection with future commercial opportunities. Entrepreneurs specialize in taking difficult and complex decisions for which other people may not be willing to take responsibility. Through such decisions, they end up contributing to economic growth. In performing their role, they carry out a range of different tasks: they

²²² “...Dün size bir telgraf keşide edecektim, para için ne lüzum var Ali Efendi’ye telgrafa, ayıbdır, yakışmaz diyerek gine mektub yazıyorum...” (15 Mart 1330 / March 28, 1914)

collect information, make judgment calls, raise finance, and develop business connections.²²³ This section focuses on stories of entrepreneurship in order to understand the rationale behind the judgment calls, commercial practices and etiquette provided by the commercial correspondence under scrutiny.

In a letter dated July 11, 1914 (28 June 1330) İlyas mentioned Trabzon linen to his brother Ali. He stated that all the letters he received from the aforementioned Necib Basil Behna Efendi in Aleppo, which was a major producer of textiles, shipped mainly to Anatolia till the beginning of the World War I,²²⁴ mentioned Trabzon linen and asked for samples. İlyas defined Trabzon linen as a highly profitable textile due to its high turn-over. He sent Ali the samples he had with him and asked him to get ten or fifteen batches woven by the locals of Haldoz.²²⁵ It is from this letter that we learn how production cost was calculated in the putting-out system. İlyas suggested Ali that he should calculate the production cost solely based on the cost of the necessary raw material: thread and hemp. He considered a couple of piasters more than enough for the labor as he did not expect the weavers to ask for more. The production of Trabzon linen in Rize was considered not only as facilitating commerce, but also as creating a “chance” for the poor of the region. Once the samples produced in Rize would be approved by Aleppo, İlyas stated that for one or two years they would provide the thread and the weavers could provide the hemp fiber, which was a local produce consumed mainly in production of Rize

²²³ Mark Casson, *The Oxford Handbook of Entrepreneurship*, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1-2.

²²⁴ Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, 127.

²²⁵ Former name of Portakallık district in Rize.

cloth,²²⁶ in addition to the labor. Thanks to the local production of hemp and cheap labor, Trabzon linen manufactured in Rize could be sold for a convenient price in Aleppo. If they could have it manufactured at a lower price than the one manufactured in Trabzon or, at worst, at the same price, they could also sell it to other regions within the Empire.

... Whenever I receive a letter from Aleppo, it mentions that Trabzon linen and asks for a sample. This cloth, although its profit is a little low, it allows a good trade because of its high level of consumption. I say, let me send the two kinds of samples I have here with me. You get the locals of Haldoz weave ten or fifteen batches same as the samples, let's see how it goes and how much it costs. You calculate its thread and linen properly and also make sure that it is woven properly. Yet, the poor when they weave this cloth, they only calculate the linen thread they make out of cotton and hemp without taking into consideration the cost of weaving. They get happy when a couple of piasters are left for their labor, at least, they do not get upset if more is not left. In case this cloth is woven in Rize, it will be much easier for us to buy and sell and more importantly, it would create a fortune for the poor. For one or two years, we provide the cotton yarn, they provide the linen, I mean, the hemp fiber and cloth gets woven with a proper cost by giving three, five or ten to each. Through the agency of the headman, once samples get woven, we send them to Aleppo, once they approve and we agree, we can draw some money from them as well. God willing, we can get it done for less than Trabzon or a similar price and I believe this merchandise sells to other places as well...²²⁷

Another significant textile item for which the brothers saw commercial potential was the wool yarn abundantly used in manufacturing shawls in Gürün, and which

²²⁶ Hemp production was mostly replaced by tea in local economy after 1940s.

²²⁷ "... Haleb'den daima mektub aldığımda, şu Trabzon'dan keteninden bahsediyor ve numune gönder diyor. Bu mal ticareti bir derece az ise de, sarfiyatı pek ziyade olduğundan, iyice bir ticaret hasıl oluyor. Ben diyorum şu yanımda malumunuz bulunan iki cins numuneyi size göndereyim, aynı numune mucibi orada Haldozlular'a on on beş tob kadar işletdiriniz, bakalım nasıl olur ve ne fiyata mal olur. İpli[ğini] ketenini güzelce hesap edersiniz ve dokumasını dahi uygunca yabdırırsınız ki, zira fukara kendisi bu malı dokuduğunda, dokmak parası nazar-ı itibare almayıp, yalnız iplik ve kendirden yaptığı keten telini hesap eder. Dokmak hakkı birkaç gurusı kalsa memnun olur, ziyade kalmazsa mükedder olmaz ve bu mal Rize'de yabdırılırsa, bizim için almak satmak daha kolay olacağı gibi asıl ehemmiyeti olan fukaralar için büyük bir servet icat olmuş olur. Bir iki sene kadar ipliği verilüb keteni yağıni kendir teli kendisinden olmak üzere münasib bir ücretle, üçer beşer onar verilüb yabdırılır. Muhtarlar vasıta [s.s.] köylere, mahallelere bir defa numune yapılısun, gelsün, Haleb'e gönderelüm, beğensünler mutabık kalalım, onlardan da bir mikdar para çekebiliriz. İnşallah Trabzon'dan eksikçe yapdırabilirüz ve yahud o fiyata ve bu mal zann ederim diğer çok yerlere de gider..." (İlyas wrote to Ali, July 11, 1914 / June 28, 1330)

the local Kurdish population consumed as belts.²²⁸ İlyas sent Cemil a sample of wool yarn²²⁹ used in the production of Gürün shawls and informed him regarding the manufacturer of the sample, a certain factory in Bradford, which was an international center of textile manufacture, particularly wool, during the nineteenth century. İlyas, referring to the factory as the very best in yarn manufacture, asked Cemil to check it in addition to others, for similar but more convenient samples in terms of price, as somebody was already asking for this particular kind of yarn in Istanbul.

Meanwhile, İlyas consulted with a certain Armenian - whose name was not mentioned in the correspondence - working as an agent of the aforementioned factory in Bradford for detailed information regarding the terms of purchase. İlyas showed him the yarn samples Cemil had sent him from Manchester and obtained from him detailed information regarding price, transportation and term of payment. As to the payment of the purchase, he informed İlyas that as soon as the order was shipped from Manchester, a check would be issued in his name. The cost of the order until the shipment reached the customs in the Ottoman Empire was on the factory; hence the transport of the merchandise was covered by the factory. As the order arrived at the customs, they paid the consignment. The factory offered a three percent discount on each order and instead of taking commission from the agent, paid him a commission. İlyas also obtained information on the presence of a very good quality yarn, actually the best on the market, known as Istanbul yarn. After

²²⁸ Armin Kredian, "The Private Papers of an Armenian Merchant Family in the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1914," in *Money, Land and Trade*, ed. Nelly Hanna (London & New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002), 141.

²²⁹ Specific information about different qualities and prices of this particular yarn are present in İlyas' letter to Cemil dated April 11, 1914 (29 Mart 1330).

acquiring all this information, İlyas asked Cemil to check the aforementioned factory and others in order to spot the most convenient place to launch yarn trade. He also asked him to send samples of yarn for Gürün shawl and also samples from a lower quality yarn and their prices. He also wanted him to inquire regarding the Istanbul yarn and sent him samples with prices attached.

İlyas initially wanted to sell the yarn for Gürün shawls²³⁰ to a certain merchant in Gürün, the aforementioned Avundukzâde Mehmed Efendi, who was a shawl merchant and an importer of cotton and woolen yarn. He was the only Muslim in an Armenian-dominated shawl and yarn market as shown in the previous chapter. In their ambition to import woolen yarn from Bradford to Gürün, the brothers tried to set up collaboration with him. İlyas wrote him a letter of self-introduction explaining their business with a particular emphasis on his brother's presence in Manchester:

To His Excellency the honorable Avundukzâde Mehmed, notable trader in Gürün
My lord
We felt obliged to write this letter as we know that you trade in textiles and manufactured goods; especially cotton and woolen yarn. As a commission agent of textiles and manufactured goods in Istanbul, I can meet any kind of order with ease and also send any kind of woolen and cotton yarn safeguarding your interests as much as possible due to my brother's presence in Manchester. Please inform me about your requirement and send samples and numbers of yarn to be ordered and also the addresses of the Muslim merchants with sizable consumption. Please do inform as well regarding your annual expenditure on this business. May peace be upon you, Sir. I wish for the success of Muslim trade. (15 Mart 1330 / March 28, 1914)
And please attach your terms of business. Mataracızâde İlyas (signature)
Seal²³¹

²³⁰ Gürün shawl was mentioned in the invoices of Dereli İsmailzâde Mustafa Efendi and Şeyh Hüseyinzâde Hüseyin Efendi and his sons, based in Rize and Kefelizâde Yusuf Efendi, in Baфра without any mention of purveyors.

²³¹ See Appendix O for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter.

The motivation for collaboration with this certain Avundukzâde Mehmed Efendi, who was the only Muslim merchant among nineteen ‘shawl merchants and cotton and woollen yarn importers’ listed in Gürün section of *Annuaire Oriental* dated 1914 when the rest was Armenian as also mentioned in the previous chapter, reads as a strategy to integrate into an already dominated market as a late-comer. In order to differentiate themselves, the brothers had two main offers: they proposed to “have an eye on his interests” (*menfaatini gözetmek*), which can be read as more convenient prices and terms of payment, in addition to a shared ethno-religious identity. The letter also asked for the addresses of other prominent Muslim merchants there. The following chapter will discuss the significance of this Muslim identity within the context of the promoted ideologies and economic policies of the period and also the commercial practices of the brothers.

“The seller of cloth remnants is Armenian. I assume there is no wonder in informing. I did not inform as I saw no point.

The yarn is also Armenian. They have shawl looms in Gürün. They buy wool and yarn for Gürün, send them there and have shawls woven.”²³²

İlyas, in the lines above from his letter to Cemil dated June 20, 1914 (4 Haziran 1330), shared his investigation over the cotton market in Istanbul, underlining the Armenian domination with his particular choice of wording “*gine*” (also). Results of his investigation also confirm the findings regarding the immediate business environment of the brothers based on *Annuaire Oriental* data in the previous

²³² Parçacı Ermenidir. Bildirmekde bir keramet yokdur zann ederim. Boş olduğunu gördüğüm için bildirmediim.

İplik Gine Ermenidir. Gürün’de şal dezhahları vardır. Yün ve ipliği Gürün için alır, oraya gönderir, şal tokuturlar. (4 Haziran 1330 / June 17, 1914)

chapter. The mention of Armenians involved in the process of manufacturing of shawls immediately reminds of Armin Kredian's work, which examines the business correspondence of two Armenian merchants namely, Hagop Kheretian and Misak Chokarian, who established a business involved in the production of woolen shawls in Gürün, and their distribution, both locally and in the neighbouring regions. The enterprise named Misak Chokarian and Hagop Kheretian and Sons had branches in Kayseri, Adana, Konya and, from 1912 on, in Aleppo. They were purchasing raw materials while selling the produce, especially the Aleppo branch, and shipping them to Gürün.²³³

Kredian informs us that before the opening of the Aleppo branch in 1912, family members did not import the British wool yarn they used for shawls themselves but purchased it on the domestic market, though it is not clear from whom or where. The aforementioned Istanbul based Armenian agent working for the factory in Bradford might be considered as a possibility. After the establishment of their branch in Aleppo, they started purchasing the yarn for Gürün there. In his work, Kredian also provides detailed information regarding the process of production from yarn to shawls.²³⁴

In Manchester, Cemil collected various samples of textiles from different factories in the area and sent them to his brothers and other collaborators within the network.²³⁵ İlyas also sent Cemil samples to be sought in the factories and also with the merchants of Manchester. Asking for samples from Manchester, İlyas recommended the ready-made ones, instead of samples to be manufactured in their

²³³ Kredian, "The Private Papers."

²³⁴ Ibid., 141.

²³⁵ İlyas told Cemil to add a four or five percent raise to the actual price of the samples.

name, adding that they were not ready for this yet. This incident shows the lack of a solid and established base on the brothers' side, compared to other aforementioned Muslim and non-Muslim parties prominent in the textiles business in Manchester, who were already having textiles manufactured in their own name and were sending them to Istanbul, such as Refik and Receb and Alyanak.

İlyas wanted to have various kinds of good quality ready-made samples with him in Istanbul in order to show them to merchants passing by his office. He mostly asked Cemil to search for samples of a lower quality than the one he had sent, especially from factories that were not very well known. In one of his letters to Cemil, İlyas referred to a list of factories based in Manchester and told him not to worry if the aforementioned factories did not give him samples. Instead, he recommended less known, smaller factories in Manchester. Mentioning big merchants like Refik and Receb having textile manufactured for Istanbul and “similar locations”, which I assume to be other important port cities of the period like Aleppo, Smyrna, Thessaloniki, İlyas rather suggested either British merchants or those who had textile manufactured for Beirut and similar locations or other destinations such as India, which he referred to as “foreign”.

...You inform that İhsan told you that the factories we wrote do not give any samples. If they give, how nice! If they do not, it is not necessary to purchase from these factories. There may be others, you may buy from them and there may be bigger merchants like Receb. They may have textiles manufactured themselves, may it be for Istanbul or other places, and you buy from them. There may also be other factories as there are such big merchants. It would be more convenient if you buy samples from merchants who have textiles manufactured for Beirut and similar locations or for foreign destinations such as India and so forth...

²³⁶ “...Yazdığımız fabrikaların numune vermez olduklarını bildiriyorsunuz, İhsan söylediğini bildiriyorsunuz. Verirlerse ne ala, vermezlerse bu fabrikalardan almak şart değildir. Başka fabrikalar olur, onlardan alırsınız ve Recebler gibi orada daha büyük tüccarlar vardır. Kendileri mal yaptırırlar. Onlardan ahz edersiniz, gerek İstanbul için olsun, sair mahaller için olsun. Orada böyle büyük tüccarlar olduğu gibi, başka fabrikalar da vardır. İstanbul için, yani bu cihet için, mal

After receiving a couple of samples from Manchester, İlyas warned Cemil regarding the fact that he was only getting samples from Armenian merchants and that their prices were Istanbul prices and that they would even try to sell for more if they ever got the opportunity. Hence, he assumed that the prices of British merchants or of those merchants working with other destinations than Istanbul would be more affordable.

“...Besides, you are always buying samples from Armenian merchants there my brother. They give [Istanbul] prices and if possible, they would like to give for even more, they do. Are not there any from British or those working with other destinations? It would be better with them my brother...”²³⁷

The main purpose of the search for textile samples in Manchester was to look for textile imports with more convenient prices than the ones already available on the Ottoman cotton market. A possible explanation for this would be an attempt to differentiate themselves within the current market thanks to more convenient prices and sell more at a lesser profit. This can be considered as the brothers' initiation strategy for integrating into the Ottoman textile import market as late-comers.

Within the correspondence, there are long discussions about kinds and qualities of samples. Based on the comments İlyas made on various kinds of textiles, it is clear that he was pretty knowledgeable regarding various kinds and qualities.

Nevertheless, accepting his ignorance when it came to thread, he sent thread samples to his elder brother Ali in Rize to examine. İlyas, commenting on the

yapdıran tüccarlardan mostra alınmayub, Beyrut ve saire mahaller için veyahud ecnebi cihetler için yani Hindiyeye ve saireler için mallar yapdıran tüccarlardan numune alırsanız daha muvafık olur...” (18 Mart 1330 / March 31, 1914)

²³⁷ “...Bir de biraderim siz orada hep Ermeniler'den numune alıyorsunuz. Bunlar bura fiyatı söyler ve ellerinden gelürse fazlaya bile vermek isterler, verirler. İngilizlerden ve yahud diğer taraflar ile işi olan kimseler yok mudur? Anlarla daha iyi olur biraderim...” (9 Mayıs 1330 / May 22, 1914)

various samples Cemil sent him, generally found their qualities very low and their prices comparatively high. He deduced from the quality of the samples that Cemil had not been able to spot the most convenient places for their trade. He also warned Cemil about the possibility that the providers of these samples, Armenians and others, might be proposing high prices so that the samples Cemil forwarded to his commercial contacts would not be suitable for trade. Hence, İlyas suggested that the high prices of the samples might have been a strategy of the already established parties of the Ottoman cotton market in Manchester to keep new comers away:

“... It looks like you have not been able to find the convenient places yet and it also comes to my mind that those who give you these samples, give you high prices on purpose with the idea that the addresses you send them do not get satisfied and pleased with them. Because may it be Armenians or others, they follow this idea for you...”²³⁸

Eventually, İlyas decided on the kind of samples suitable for them and hence, about their sales strategy: Due to the fact they did not have a store, they could only import nicely-cut and attractive merchandise with convenient prices. Low quality, high prices and large scale trade were for the merchants with stores but not for the new comers into the market. They could only enter the market with good quality and conveniently priced textiles:

“... We can only deal with good quality merchandise. If it may be well made, flamboyant, bargain with convenient price then we may do a little. Biçimli, göze

²³⁸ “...Görünüyor ki henüz daha tamamıyla münasib mahaller bulamadınız ve bir de hatırıma geliyor ki, size bu numuneleri veren adamlar mahsus yüksek fiyat söylüyorlar ki, gönderdiğiniz yerler de memnun kalmasunlar hoşnud olmasunlar diye fikriyle veriyorlar. Zira bu fikri Ermeniler olsun, çok kimseler sizin için takib ederler...” (17 Mayıs 1330/ May 30, 1914)

çarpıcı, düşme fiyatı uygunca olursa az bir şey yapabiliriz. Because we do not have a store. That is why we can not deal with deformed goods...²³⁹

Both İlyas and Ali sent Cemil orders and informed one another regarding their orders so as to avoid duplication. İlyas warned Cemil to send the orders either to him or to the brother in Rize, but not directly to the traders for who gave the orders. The reason behind this warning may be that the merchandise sent from Manchester was commissioned twice, first by Cemil in Manchester and the second time by İlyas in Istanbul or Ali Rıza in Rize. Cemil purchased and forwarded his brothers' first order within the month of April, 1914. While Ali and İlyas, recommended Cemil to accomplish his first order with Alyanak, İlyas still left the decision to him claiming that he should be the one to decide as he knew the situation there better.

You wrote that you are going to have our order manufactured with Alyanak because we wrote so my brother. The reason why we wrote so is, first time you do it together so that there may not be any mistake. Second time, you do it on your own. That is why. Nevertheless, you know better the business there. You consider what we wrote, if convenient you do it like that, if not you do it the way you know my brother.²⁴⁰

Cemil, buying from colored and dark blue yarn Alyanak was having manufactured in his name in Manchester, soon got suspicious of being cheated. It required a number of orders and also some investigation on İlyas' part to discover how Alyanak made an extra profit over the yarn he sold. İlyas consulted an Armenian in Istanbul named Kınacıyan to understand the dying procedure applied to yarn, in

²³⁹ "... Bize şimdilik ancak güzel gelir. Biçimli, göze çarpıcı, düşme fiyatı uygunca olursa az bir şey yapabiliriz. Zira bizim mağazamız yok. Anun için böyle pespence yani biçimsiz mallara giremeyiz..." (17 Mayıs 1330/ May 30, 1914)

²⁴⁰ Siparişimizi bizim yazdığımız için, Alyanakla yapacağınızı yazdınız biraderim. Bizim yazdığımızın sebebi, birinci defa beraber yaptırırsınız ki bir sehviyat olmaz. İkinci de siz yaptırırsınız. Bunun içündür. Mamafî oradaki işi siz daha iyi bilirsiniz. Bizim yazdığımızı bakarsınız, muvafık ise öyle yaparsınız, değil ise bildiğiniz gibi yaparsınız biraderim. (18 Mart 1330 / March 31, 1914)

order to be able to understand how they were getting cheated. The fact that İlyas was able to track down how they were getting cheated in Manchester by consulting another Armenian in Istanbul points not only to the extent of integration between the Manchester and Istanbul markets but also underlines the significance of expertise and domination in the market over the ethno-religious divide in commercial practices.

In the correspondence following the discovery of Alyanak's tricks in trade, İlyas warned his brother to be aware at all times in his business interactions with him. Nevertheless, Cemil continued purchasing yarn from Alyanak and the brothers, with more caution than before, continued their commercial transactions with him. Another Armenian merchant mentioned in the correspondence was a certain Seferyan, together with whom Cemil purchased textile in Manchester. İlyas, hearing that Seferyan had informed a few buyers in Istanbul of their joint purchases of textiles, got furious and questioned Seferyan's intentions and warned Cemil that Kamberyan, another Armenian merchant in Manchester, would do the same if he was to purchase with him as well. The buyer of the remnants, hearing about Seferyan's involvement in the purchase questioned the price of the merchandise; namely whether it was expensive or not. After the arrival of the order, İlyas also complained about the quality of the remnants.

Seferyan: It looks like he wrote to a couple of places that you buy merchandise together. [Commercially] ill-mannered fellow, what is his point in writing such things? Does such things suit buying and selling? Such things are disgraceful. Whoever we ordered these drapes for came. He told me that your brother bought these textiles with Seferyan's son, I do not know whether they are pricey or not, etc. I said I do not know. Why does Seferyan write it to here that you buy textiles together? Here it is my brother, you always have to stay protected from such guys. In case you may buy textiles with Kamberyan, he will also write to everywhere. It is not

necessary to say anything. You know your business, such things happen as well.²⁴¹

We learn from the correspondence between İlyas and Cemil that Cemil in his first deliveries received the payment for an order after it had reached its final destination. Hence, he neither received the cost of the order in advance nor the difference between the departure and the arrival of the merchandise. İlyas warned Cemil regarding their loss in the period that passed during the shipping of the merchandise, which was around two months. Hence, he told Cemil to calculate a nine percent monthly interest over the amount of the previous order and to add it to the amount of the following one, as compensation.

Regarding one of the first shipments from Manchester, the receiver of the order did not accept the bill of consignment and İlyas warned Cemil to ask for between ten and twenty percent of the amount of the order in advance in order to avoid such possible inconvenient situations in the future. He also informed him that merchants trading with Manchester either sent all or half the cost of the order with their first. In the following correspondence, we learn that the brothers also decided at least half the amount as their policy for merchants they had only recently started to work with.

There was a certain amount of discount offered by the factories selling textile. İlyas warned Cemil to keep the discount offered by the factory for him,

²⁴¹ Seferyan: Beraberce mal aldığınızı görünüyor ki burada birkaç yere yazmışdır. Edebsiz herif yazmakdan maksadı nedir? Böyle şeyler ahz-ı-itaya yakışur mu? Böyle şeyler ayıpdır. Bu parçaları kim için sipariş etmiş isek, o adam geldi, bana söyledi ki, bu malları biraderiniz, Seferyan mahdumuyla beraber almış. Bilmem ki pahalı mıdır, felan söyledi. Bilmiyorum, söyledim. Seferyan neden beraberce mal aldığınızı buralara yazıyor? İşte biraderim, böyle adamlardan şeylerden, daima muhafazalı bulunmağa gayret ediniz. İhtimal ki Kamberyan'la da bir mal alsanız, böyle her yere yazar, birşey söylemek hacet değildir. Siz işinizi biliniz, böyle şeyler de olur. (11 Nisan 1330 / April 24, 1914)

rather than to reflect it on the total cost of the merchandise. He told him to add five percent to the total cost of the merchandise. Hence, their profit in a purchase can be calculated as the sum of the discount offered by the factory and the five percent increase on the total cost. Based on the information provided by the commercial correspondence under study regarding the conditions the Mataracızâde brothers traded with, one can claim that the brothers being in the early, or in other words, learning phase of the integration process into the world cotton market and also the already well-established Manchester branch of the Ottoman cotton import market, they were still experimenting regarding their commercial strategies as late-comers.

Conclusion

Why did the Mataracızâde brothers have to go all the way to Manchester when they already had a well-established network in the eastern Black Sea region? A possible explanation may be to compete with the Ottoman Greek domination in the Black Sea and the Armenian domination in other provinces. As late-comers into a well-established, non-Muslim dominated textiles import market, they had two main assets to differentiate themselves: 1. Their Muslim identity, created as an asset for them by the economic policies of the period, which will be discussed in the following chapter. 2. More convenient prices than those of the traders already dominating the current market, for which they had to go to the source, Cottonopolis, just like others from all over the world. The brothers based their market strategies on these two main assets in their integration to the Ottoman cotton market and these

assets were rather promoted to Muslim commercial subjects as they also were emerging markets like the brothers themselves.

The instances of entrepreneurship, common features of which were the search for convenient prices, show that the brothers did not appear in Manchester well equipped with market information but tried to discover it along the way. Their discovery process displays not only that the brothers were still in the early phase of integration, hence at a learning stage, but also that all the branches of the Ottoman cotton market were equally informative and well integrated with each other. The brothers were developing their market strategies based on the bits and pieces of information they were able to gather from each branch they had access to.

CHAPTER 6

TRADING IN THE SHADOW OF WARS IN A DOOMED EMPIRE

“It was never the people.”²⁴²
Sano Halo

Introduction

The seven months covered by the commercial correspondence under scrutiny, between the end of March and the end of November 1914, overlapped with the interwar period between the Balkan Wars and the World War I. The letters depict some of the dramatic instances of the period: the financial hardships accompanying the Balkan Wars, the leaping of the boycott movement to the eastern Black Sea and the consequent forced departure of Greek traders, the awakening of Muslim-Turkish subjects to the early propositions of a “National Economy”, the commercial closures and openings brought by the beginning of the World War I... The fact that the Mataracızâde trading house was spread over three cities; namely the center of the European cotton market, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and the provincial hometown of the brothers in the eastern Black Sea, allows us to follow the direct impact of the Balkan Wars and of the beginning of the World War I through the prism of various commercial and political centers.

The interwar period between the Balkan Wars and the World War I is mostly integrated into the history of the latter and hence, considered as a transition

²⁴² These words belong to Sano Halo, one of the Greeks expelled from her village in Fatsa on the Anatolian coast of the Black Sea, in her biography written by her daughter, Thea Halo. Thea Halo, *Not Even My Name : From a Death March in Turkey to a New Home in America, a Young Girl's True Story of Genocide and Survival*, 1st Picador USA ed. (New York: Picador USA, 2000). I am thankful to Professor Arzu Öztürkmen for bringing this work to my attention.

period between Wars in Turkish historiography. Such an anachronistic positioning creates the illusion that the World War I was to happen anyhow and the Ottoman Empire was destined to enter the war. In Turkish historiography, the Balkan Wars signal the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The loss of the remaining Balkan territories is equated with the loss of the economic power and social capital of the Empire. Viewed as a rehearsal or prelude of World War I for Turks,²⁴³ the Balkan Wars are also considered as the end of the ideology of Ottomanism. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) started promoting the rising ideology of Turkish nationalism instead. The CUP leadership, inspired by European nationalism and bourgeois liberal experiences, intended to take the necessary steps for the creation of a national Turkish bourgeoisie. All these intentions, packaged within the “National Economy” movement put forward two major political and economic agendas: First, encouraging Muslim-Turkish subjects to engage in business, and secondly, boycotting the businesses of non-Muslim subjects.²⁴⁴

This narrative displays a smooth and “naturalized” historical flow from the Balkan Wars into the World War I, which was to continue with the War of Independence. Such a flow results in a jump in Turkish historiography regarding the interwar period between the Balkan Wars and the World War I. As a result, this period gets usually historicized and analyzed within the context of the World War I

²⁴³ Toprak, "Cihan Harbi." Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913 : Prelude to the First World War*.

²⁴⁴ Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de "Milli İktisat" (1908-1918)* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1982); Zafer Toprak, *Milli İktisat, Milli Burjuvazi*, Türkiye'de Ekonomi Ve Toplum, 1908-1950 (Beşiktaş, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995). Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, "Muslim Merchants and Working-Class in Action: Nationalism, Social Mobilization and Boycott Movement in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914" (Leiden University, 2010); *Tarih 1839-1939*, ed. Ahmet Kuyaş (İstanbul: Türk Sanayicileri ve İş Adamları Derneği 2006).

and hence, is misrepresented as dominated by the policies and ideologies of the war period yet to follow. In this regard, it is usually misrepresented as lacking a genuine character of its own. The current collection of documents, with its discourse and the evidence it provides at grassroots level, not only contributes to the history of the period but also puts forward some insights to challenge the available Turkish historiography.

The Aftermath of the Balkan Wars:

“The Hardships of the Harm that Occurred during the War Times”

The decade of war ending with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire began with the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and continued with the World War I (1914-1918) and the War of Independence (1920-1922). Each of these conflicts was accompanied by severe and long-lasting demographic, social and economic consequences with a cumulative effect over time.²⁴⁵ This section will focus on the hardships accompanying the Balkan Wars as they recur repetitively in the available collection. The loss of the economic power and social capital of the Ottoman Empire, associated with the Balkan Wars in the current Turkish historiography is expressed as “the hardships of the harm that occurred during the war times [Balkan Wars]” (*Muharebe zamanları [Balkan Harbi] olan fenalıkların sıkıntıları*)²⁴⁶ in the available commercial correspondence. Nevertheless, there is no explanation of the “harm” despite the constant underlining of its consequent financial hardships. The

²⁴⁵ Roger Owen and Şevket Pamuk, *A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1999), 10-1.

²⁴⁶ See the quotations below for standart usage of this phrase within the available commercial correspondence.

social and political aspects of the hardships were also left in silence, apart from a few consequences and instances to be discussed in detail below. One possible explanation for the silences may follow from the nature of the documents under scrutiny: As copies of the correspondence – commercial letters and invoices - sent to commercial partners of the trading house, they could qualify as evidence in court in case of conflicts as also explained in the first chapter. Such an attribute might have prevented discussions on current social and political situation of the Empire, even in the correspondence among the brothers. Nevertheless, if we remember the brothers' reluctance to resort to legal procedures regarding commercial conflicts previously elaborated on in chapter three, this explanation still remains rather inadequate. In this regard, the general focus of the commercial correspondence on commercial issues rather than on social or political ones across centuries may provide a better explanation.

The financial hardships accompanying the Balkan Wars, most specifically the shortage of money created by wartime conditions, was frequently mentioned in the letters. The period was specifically defined by the “scarcity of the times” (*zaman kedadlığı*).²⁴⁷ There was a constant reference to the shortage and even lack of money, followed by the urgent need to collect the debts owed the brothers all through the available correspondence. Although chapter three already elaborated on the constant reiteration of this urgent need to collect debts, this section analyzes it within the context of the financial hardships following the Balkan Wars, in place of previous de-contextualized readings and analyses. Taking the forceful tone used by the trader regarding monetary issues as a given, it focuses on the hardships

²⁴⁷ Letter dated June 12, 1914 (30 Mayıs 1330).

accompanying and following the Balkan Wars, which were referred to as “times of war” (*muharebe zamanları*). The specific conditions of the period were currently reiterated and emphasized as an excuse for an urgent need of repayment:

...I hope you have already sent me some more money. The hardships of the harm that occurred during the war times [Balkan Wars] are being felt now. I request that you immediately send me a lot of money. Indeed, because of the shortage of money, I have a great need for it. May you remain in good health. And let me know your order... (11 Nisan 1330 / April 24, 1914)

...Brother, regarding the money issue, I have waited for you till today but only I know what I have been through. Especially nowadays, there is an extreme shortage of money. We feel the hardships of the war times [Balkan Wars] now. To sum up, we are very short of money. I beg you, upon the arrival of my letter, immediately send a lot of money from both Hüseyin Efendi and yourself. I ask you to send more than what you owe...²⁴⁸ (14 Nisan 1330 / April 27, 1914)

Both of the quotations above are underlining the after effects of the Balkan Wars.

The period is described as one where the atrocities, hardships of the conflict start to appear within the world of trade. While the emphasis on the hardships of the aftermath of the Balkan Wars recurs throughout the correspondence until the beginning of World War I, even the ending of the former quotation with a quest for the details of a new order underlines the will to continue with business despite everything. Letters of self-introduction exploring future business possibilities with new partners, preferably Muslims, analyzed below also point toward efforts serving such a cause in addition to many others already discussed in the previous chapter

²⁴⁸ “Ümid iderim inşaallah başka çok para dahi tarafıma çıkarmış olursunuz. Muharebe zamanları [Balkan Harbi] olan fenalıkların sıkıntıları, şimdi tesir ediyor. Bir an evvel bir çok para tarafıma çıkarmanızı sizden çok rica ederim. Zira paradan pek ziyade kedadlık olduğundan paraya eşed ihtiyacım vardır. Baki afiyetde olasınız efendim. Ve siparişinizi bildirirsiniz.” (11 Nisan 1330 / April 24, 1914)

“Birader para bahsine gelince, ben bugüne kadar hatr-ı alileriniz için bekledim ama çekdiğimi ben biliyorum. Hele bu sıralarda paradan daha pek ziyade kedadlık vardır. Zira muharebe zamanları [Balkan Harbi] fenalıklarını, kedadlıklarını, sıkıntılarını şimdi görmekdeyiz. Hasılı paradan pek dar bir haldeyiz. Çok rica ederim, işbu mektubum vusulünde, gerek Hüseyin Efendi tarafından, gerek tarafınızdan ilk vasıta hemen birçok para tarafıma çıkarasınız. Borçlarınızdan ziyade para tarafıma çıkarmanızı rica ederim...” (14 Nisan 1330 / April 27, 1914)

and to be discussed in the following pages. Nevertheless, there were some deliberate decisions to be made for the continuation of business within the political and economic agenda of the Empire in 1914. Mataracızâde Brothers complied with this agenda, which is summarized under the title of “National Economy” in the current literature, in their own terms to a certain extent just like the other subjects of the Empire, regardless of ethno-religious divides. The inevitability of the decision to comply and the actual presence of a “National Economy” will be discussed in the conclusion of this chapter.

The available collection provides certain examples described as contributing to the financial hardships of the times, which should also be considered as their consequences. Nevertheless, the brothers preferred to exploit them as contributing to their own hardships or, in other words, as excuses for collecting debts owed them. Some of these instances followed from the inner dynamics of the network, whereas others were the consequence of a broader context, such as the dominant economic and political policies of the period. The bankruptcy of a prominent merchant from Thessaloniki based in Istanbul, namely, Mustafazâde Ahmed Bey, is an example to the former category of events. His failing business was described as aggravating the already bleak market conditions and negatively affecting Muslim trade not only in Istanbul but as far as Manchester, and adding up to the financial hardships of the times as well. I have elsewhere referred to the constant reiteration of the negative effect of Ahmed Bey’s bankruptcy on Muslim merchants in the market as evidence of a significant scale of business between the parties.

The first time Ahmed Bey's situation appeared in the commercial correspondence under scrutiny was in İlyas' letter to his younger brother Cemil in Manchester, dated May 8, 1914 (25 Nisan 1330). İlyas, learning from Cemil's last correspondence that İhsan, Ahmed Bey's representative in Manchester, was returning to Istanbul, immediately linked this to Ahmed Bey's business going down and contextualized İhsan's departure from Manchester for his brother, basically by reading the silences in the story. According to İlyas, Ahmed Bey had two options regarding his business: he would either have to take a partner or else would have to close down his business. He reckoned that Ahmed Bey would take one of the few Muslim merchants from the Thessaloniki market (*piyasa*) as partner, and warned his brother not to publicize this information within the network in Manchester. The very particular expression which İlyas used to describe Ahmed Bey's potential partner, "with the attribute of Muslim" (*İslam sıfatıyla*) is a probable reference to the *dönme* identity of the person referred to. Hence, Ahmed Bey's choice of a partner once again underlines the significance of communal ties, even if they had to be rather symbolic, in the conduct of trade. İlyas' warning points not only to the significance of information in commercial transactions but also to the intricate connections between the Manchester and Istanbul branches of the Ottoman cotton market, as the hardships of a prominent merchant from Thessaloniki in Istanbul could affect the trade of Ottoman commercial parties in Manchester.

İhsan you wrote that he took off towards here. We will meet when he comes. Ahmed Bey's business is very tight and going down. He took İhsan from there because his business is going down, and for no other reason. Now, either Ahmed Bey will take a partner, or close his business down. May God help and protect all. Amen. I suppose he already found a partner. He

will take one from Thessaloniki as a partner. There is no need to write, of course, my brother. Nothing can be told to anyone. God willing, he will not close his business down. Because, merchants in the market with the attribute of Muslim consist of only a few names from Thessaloniki. God willing, he will have a convenient partner, straighten his business. God willing, he does not close his business down. I wrote so that you know. May God protect us and all. Amen...²⁴⁹

İlyas, learning about Ahmed Bey's business hardship through his network in Istanbul, informed not only his brothers but also his business partners in the provinces. In his letters to his debtors in the provinces, he used Ahmed Bey's situation and the sums he owed him as an excuse to reclaim debts owed to their business and, if possible, to obtain even more. He wrote a series of letters with the exact same date to both his Muslim and Greek debtors, including even those that had paid their dues in advance. The narrative of the hardships of Ahmed Bey's business began with certain phrases such as "...that well-known Mustafazâde Ahmed Bey matter..." (...*malumunuz Mustafazâde Ahmed Bey işi...*) or even simply as "...the known matter..." (*mesele-i malume*) coding it as a well-known, publicized matter among the collaborators of the network and continued as follows:

I hope that you have forwarded the amount of your promissory notes till now. Today, because of this issue, exceptional necessities accrued for writing this letter. Namely, as you know, Mustafazâde Ahmed Bey's business took a downward turn, he is about to go bankrupt, God willing, I hope he does not. It would have a very bad impact on Muslim trade. May God protect us all. Amen.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ "İhsan buraya hareket ettiğini yazdınız. Geldiğinde görüşülür. Ahmed bey işi pek sıkı ve bozuktur. İhsan'ı oradan aldırıldığı, işinin bozukluğu içündür. Yoksa başka bir şey için değildir. Şimdi Ahmed Bey ya diğer kimseyi ortak idecektir, ya işini bozacaktır. Cenab yardım edüb, cümleyi muhafaza eylesün. Amin. Zann ederim ortak da bulmuşdur. Selanikli birisini ortak edecektir. Yazmağa hacet yoktur tabii biraderim, kimseye bir şey söylenemez. İnşallah işini bozmaz. Zira oldukça İslam sıfatıyla piyasada tüccar malumunuz birkaç Selanikli'den ibarettir. İnşallah münasib ortak yapar da, işini düzeltir. İnşallah bozmaz. Malumatınız olsun diye yazdım. Cenab ı hak bizi ve cümleyi muhafaza buyursun. Amin..." (25 Nisan 1330 / May 8, 1914)

²⁵⁰ Ümid iderim şimdiye kadar tarafıma senedleriniz bedellerini çıkarmış olursunuz. Bugün şu mektubumu yazmağa şu meseleden sebep fevkalade mecburiyet hasıl olmuşdur. Şöyle ki

İlyas warned his debtors in the provinces not to make any payments to Ahmed Bey, at least not without consulting him. He stated that he would keep on informing them regarding the evolution of Ahmed Bey's situation. Nevertheless he kept on using Ahmed Bey's situation as an excuse to collect the debts owed him. Although İlyas stated his wishes regarding Ahmed Bey's not falling into bankruptcy in his correspondence to his debtors, he put his efforts into blocking the flow of money from the provinces to Ahmed Bey and tried to direct the cash flow in his own direction instead. Meanwhile, he also continued to buy merchandise from Ahmed Bey, keeping his concerns regarding the future of his business and trying to gather as much information as possible in his immediate environment to take precautions concerning his own debts to him.

In his letters addressed to debtors in the provinces, İlyas depicted his vulnerability due to Ahmed Bey's situation: as he was based in İstanbul, within the proximity of banks, they were immediately asking for the payment of outstanding debts. He thus used his own debts to Ahmed Bey as an excuse for transferring the promissory notes of some of his debtors to the bank in return for his own. In a letter to one of the debtors, whose bonds he had just transferred, he depicted his act as manifesting the creditworthiness of the debtor as banks would accept only the bonds of respected merchants. He even used Ahmed Bey's situation as an excuse for postponing an order. After exploiting Ahmed Bey's bankruptcy as an excuse for various ends, İlyas warned his brother Cemil against the possibility that merchants

malumaliniz Mustafazâde Ahmed Beğ işi bozuktur, iflas etmek üzeredir, inşaallah etmez. Ticaret-i İslamiyye beyninde pek ziyade fena tesiri olacaktır. Cenab-ı hak cümleyi muhafaza buyursun. Amin. (17 Mayıs 1330 / May 30, 1914)

in Manchester would do the same: using this bankruptcy as an excuse to collect money in order to reinforce their own businesses. He stated that merchants used such occasions to collect money regardless of their real need for money, which İlyas considered a success and the very soul of the business.²⁵¹ Actually, İlyas was warning his younger brother regarding a business strategy which he, himself, was exploiting in every possible way and which he considered to be a success by all means. The default of a prominent merchant in Istanbul affecting merchants in Manchester, Thessaloniki, Istanbul and the provinces points once again to the level of integration between various commercial centers of the Ottoman cotton market.

Another issue, which was both a consequence of and a factor adding up to the financial hardships in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars was that of the sums owed to the brothers by their commercial partners in various regions. Among them, Greek debts eventually appear as a special case due to the ambiguities created by CUP policies regarding their political and economic status within the Ottoman Empire in 1914. Otherwise, due to the shortage of money in the Ottoman market, it was pretty common among commercial parties to have past-due debts and there was a mutual understanding between debtors and creditors regarding the issue as they were trying to do business during the exact same times of scarcity and poverty.

²⁵¹ “**Ahmed Bey** işi oldukça zarardır. Lakin biraderim böyle işler, ehemmiyeti yokdur. Oradaki tüccarlar işlerini bilirler. Onlar her şeyi öğrenmişdirler. Tüccarlar böyle bir şey gördüler mi, bahane ararlar. Böyle işlerden kendi işleri için istifade ederler. Böyle bir şey vukuunda bunu bahane ederler, işlerini sağlamlaştıрмаğa bakarlar biraderim. Böyle şeylere dikkat edesiniz, ne yolda istifade edilir anlayınız. Mesela [...] yahud orada bir kimsede alacağı olur, paraya lüzumu olur, yahud olmaz olmasa bile para tahsil etmek çok iyi muvaffakiyet ve işin ruhudur ve yahud bir kimse mal sipariş etmiş olur, gerek mal sipariş eden adama, gerek alacağı olan adamına, hemen yazar ki, Dersaadet’de yahud orada böyle bir iflas vuku buldu, Türk olduğu münasebetiyle piyasamıza pek tesir etmiştir. Malum ya buralar [...] memleketidirler. Bu sıralar bankalar kredilerini kesmiş olduklarından, paradan ziyade kesadlık vardır, ahz edersiniz felan [...] bu sebebden işbu mektubumu zatınıza takdime mecbur oldum. Borcunuzun gönderilmesine ve yahud sipariş vermiş ise siparişinize mukabil bir mikdar para ilk tarafıma çıkarmanızı rica eylerim felan diye yazılır, yazarlar.” (21 Haziran 1330 / July 4, 1914)

İlyas' reprimand of his elder brother Ali quoted below clearly illustrates the irrelevance of ethno-religious divides when it came to the payment of debts:

...However, you write something, you say Muslims for sure send the money they are to send. Weird, so weird! I do not know such a word or business. Which man, Muslim or other, you have had business with ever gave you money without asking, and thus pleased you? How is it possible that he should send the money he is supposed to send in such times? I cannot imagine such a man., who would find the opportunity to send money; I cannot remember such a case. What you write is so weird.²⁵²

The correspondence between İlyas and Ali, which will be exploited below, was resourceful regarding their Greek partners, who were from their hometown and also formed the majority among non-Muslims in their provincial network as previously discussed in chapter four. In the brothers' correspondence, we can read explanations of urgent needs to obtain payments of dues, especially from their Greek debtors and the need to put an end to their trade with those who should be reluctant to pay. The serious problems they faced in terms of recovering their accumulated dues from their Greek debtors, the ambiguity of these men's current situation, and the uncertainty of their future appear as the main reasons for this urgency. The possibility of their departure, actually without any repayment of debts, caused the brothers to be more cautious regarding the Greek debts than others'.

The correspondence between İlyas and Ali, which will be exploited below, was resourceful regarding their Greek partners, who were from their hometown and also formed the majority among non-Muslims in their provincial network as previously discussed in chapter four. In the brothers' correspondence, we can read

²⁵² “...Lakin siz bir şey yazıyorsunuz ki, İslamlar göndereceği parayı gönderir malum diyorsunuz. Acaib, pek acaib nasıl söz iş bilmem hangi İslam olsun, diğer olsun, hangi adamla iş yaptınız da, size para istemeden verdi memnun etdi. Hele nasıl olur ki, böyle vakitte göndereceği parayı gönderir. Böyle bir adam tasavvur i edemiyorum fırsat bulsun da para göndersün hiç hatırıma gelmiyor. Sizin yazışınız pek acaibdir...” (23 Ağustos 1330 / September 5, 1914)

explanations of urgent needs to obtain payments of dues, especially from their Greek debtors and the need to put an end to their trade with those who should be reluctant to pay. The serious problems they faced in terms of recovering their accumulated dues from their Greek debtors, the ambiguity of these men's current situation, and the uncertainty of their future appear as the main reasons for this urgency. The possibility of their departure, actually without any repayment of debts, caused the brothers to be more cautious regarding the Greek debts than others'.

The existence of substantial unpaid debts between the brothers and their Greek partners is an indication of the existence of a considerable volume of business and hence, of a well-established commercial relationship between them. Greek debts remained on the brothers' agenda throughout the whole period covered by the letters. Out of five Greek partners, four were listed as having outstanding debts for almost more than a year.²⁵³ The date of the first unpaid bill of exchange issued by a Greek was 31 *Kânun-ı Evvel* 1328 (January 13, 1913), only ten days before the coup d'état organized by the Young Turks,²⁵⁴ and the latest was dated 10 *Kânun-ı sâni* 1329 (January 23, 1914); exactly a year after. These dates do provide some possible insights into the Greek commercial parties' interpretation of the political agenda of the Empire. Interruption of payments or, in other words, holding onto cash, is a common reflex displayed by commercial parties in any politically and/or economically unstable or insecure environment. İlyas would suggest to his

²⁵³ The amounts of total debts listed from the highest to the lowest would appear as follows: 247.10 Ottoman liras, 221.35 liras, 114.66 liras, 43.31 liras.

²⁵⁴ The bloody takeover of the Sublime Porte on January 23, 1913, under the leadership of Enver Bey, brought to power a new government and marked the beginning of the increased one-party rule under the CUP. Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914 : The Ottoman Empire and the First World War*, Cambridge Military Histories (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 39.

brothers the exact same commercial practice immediately after the outbreak of World War I, as will be discussed below. In this particular case, rather than the Balkan Wars, the Unionist coup d'état itself appears to have been the main cause for the vigilance of the Greek commercial parties within the particular network under scrutiny and hence, a milestone. The date of the latest bill of exchange, which is the actual date when the commercial interaction between the brothers and four of their Greek partners was not only interrupted but also reduced to nothing more than the payment of debts, follows on the beginning of the boycott movement against non-Muslims in late 1913 and early 1914, which will be discussed in detail below.

Rather than the correspondence forwarded to the Greek debtors, which was more or less similar to the samples of comminatory and vituperative letters analyzed in chapter three, İlyas' letters to his elder brother Ali in Rize are useful in terms of providing their own impressions and insights about the situation of their Greek trading partners. İlyas was seriously worried about when and how they would be able to collect their Greek debts, particularly those of two particular firms with a common family name; Baltacıoğlu Panco and Pandeli Brothers and Baltacıoğlu Nikoli and the sons of Anastasi.²⁵⁵ They appeared to have a large scale of business in the Black Sea region as they did business between their hometown Rize, Russia and Romania. Their debts were the highest among the Greek ones: the former had a debt of 247.10 liras and the latter 221.35 by the end of the month of June 1914. The presence of Greek debts in İlyas' accounts in the copybook belonging to the Istanbul branch of the Mataracızâde firm places the Istanbul branch as *the*

²⁵⁵ Names are kept as they are written in the collection. I am thankful to my committee member Vangelis Kechriotis and my friend Nickos Michailidis regarding their help with names. Based on their consultation, Panco is the shorter version of the name Panayotis.

intermediary or one of the intermediaries between the Greek commercial parties and the purveyors in Istanbul for the merchandise they traded in the Black Sea region. Both Baltacıoğlu firms were basically selling the “Istanbul” merchandise which İlyas forwarded to them from stores in İstanbul, to their business partners in the Black Sea region, mainly in Russia and Romania.²⁵⁶

Leaving aside the correspondence between the two brothers regarding Greek debts for a while, we will focus on the comminatory and vituperative letters İlyas wrote to both of the Baltacıoğlu firms right from the very beginning of the correspondence. From the content of these letters, one understands that they had not only interrupted their payments of promissory notes but had also ceased accepting bills of exchange. It was the protesting of their bills of exchange that upset İlyas the most as he linked it to a merchant’s reputation in the eyes of third parties and also because he had to pay for each act of protest. İlyas, referring to both of the aforementioned parties as “my friend” (*dostum*) in various letters, resented their reluctance to keep their promises regarding repayment and hence, risking their creditworthiness.

Baltacıoğlu Nikoli and sons of Anastasi, traders in Rize,
My esteemed friend,
It has been quite a while that you declared that you will send me a lot of money. I could not yet receive your answer regarding your forwarding of your dues. In addition, although you have declared that you forwarded dues of the bills of exchange written on your name with your approval, your bill of exchange for the order of Krikorisyan had not been paid and got protested. I regret that you got protested such an amount of money. Would one do such a thing? Would not one protect the dignity of his friend? Even if you may not have any money with you, paying such a due is unimportant for you. One does whatever possible to pay and protect the dignity of the other. An expenditure of one hundred *çanta* tradein for the protest of the

²⁵⁶ The available collection provides no information regarding the specific locations Baltacıoğlu parties had contacts in Romania and Russia. One reason may be İlyas’ lack of such information.

aforementioned bill of exchange and ninety *çanta* interest have been paid and it has been a while that the terms of your promisory notes have passed. Your promisory notes and bills of exchange; which one of these am I going to catch up with? I shall think of your promisory notes, and shall I also think of the payment of the bills of exchange? For God's sake! You should think a little as well. Do not give us this much trouble. I need money as well. Especially these days, I am extremely hard up. I request you to forward the equivalent of your both promisory notes and bills of exchange as soon as possible upon the arrival of my letter and to declare it immediately by telegram. There is nothing else to write. May you remain safe and sound, my friend. (15 Mart 1330 / March 28, 1914) Mataracızâde İlyas²⁵⁷

Nevertheless, the tone of the only letter addressed to a firm by the name of Saulidi[s] Brothers who struck one as an exception among Greek trade partners by keeping up with their payments - although theirs was a rather modest sum in comparison to other Greek debts -, was totally different from that of the letter above. In his letter to Saulidi[s] Brothers, İlyas even asked about possible future orders, which was never the case in any of the letters addressed to the other Greeks. The contrast in the tone of the letters quoted above and below displays the difference in the treatment of partners keeping up with their payments and those failing to do so. The letter below, written immediately after the beginning of the 1914 forced migration of the Greeks from the Empire, which will be discussed in detail, underlines a mutual will to continue with commercial transactions once obligations were fulfilled, which was actually the case regarding all commercial parties under scrutiny in this work regardless of any ethno-religious divide.

To the esteemed Saulidi[s] brothers, local traders in Atina
My esteemed brother
I inquire your health with my special compliments. This time, I received the two and a half Ottoman liras you sent with Dursun Ali Efendi. I subtracted it from your account. Your remaining debts are eleven *çent* and thirty *para* and two Ottoman liras given to Ali Pasha's son Rüşdü Efendi on March 21, 1914 as an outstanding debt. I think you are very short of variety now and you

²⁵⁷ See Appendix P for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter.

also do not have much merchandise left. Are you going to come or are you going to order? I will expect you or your significant order. May you remain safe and sound, my friend. (9 Mayıs 1330 / May 22, 1914) Mataracızâde İlyas²⁵⁸

In addition to the appreciation of any payment, however small, especially in such times of scarcity and poverty, this passage underlines the grip of some of the Greek commercial parties in their future in the Empire regardless, or in ignorance, of all doubts and ambiguities. Another Greek partner of the brothers, namely Filandidi[s] brothers, notified İlyas regarding a delay in payment of his debt due to his investment in land in his hometown, Rize by the end of the month of May. These two instances provide no evidence of an expectation or of a preparation to leave the country. Turning back to the Baltacıoğlu firms through the correspondence between the brothers, İlyas, disappointed with their reluctance to keep up with their promises regarding repayment, asked his brother Ali in Rize to pressure them. The Greek partners' mobility in the Black Sea region and their breach of contracts for even relatively small amounts of debts like twenty, or thirty liras despite the large sum totals accumulated over more than a year, increased İlyas' suspicion regarding the repayment of debts at all.

Baltacıoğlu Panco writes that he is going to send money on April 20 but he does not say how much he is going to send. It reads as not his whole debt but twenty, thirty or whatever he can. Tell this commercially ill-mannered man, I cannot keep deeds this long and pay bills of exchange in addition. Impudent, he [...]. Is he going to pay his debts to all, the Greeks, etc. and then send us the remains, if any? Press him; tell him that İlyas needs money, that he is extremely hard up, aren't you ashamed that all this time you wrote that your brother would send money from Russia so that you send none, do your best to send it immediately, I cannot wait any more. (29 Mart 1330 / April 11, 1914)²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ See Appendix Q for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter.

²⁵⁹ Baltacıoğlu Panco yazıyor, Nisan yirmisinde para çıkaracağım. Ne kadar çıkaracağını, umum borcunu felan demiyor, yirmi otuz ne çıkarabilirse anlaşıyor. Bu edepsiz herife söyle, bunca vakit

This passage points to the possibility of allocating money among commercial parties according to their ethno-religious identity. The beginning of this section already touched upon the shortage of money within the Empire in the aftermaths of the Balkan Wars. In such times of scarcity and poverty, one would expect the least piaster to be more than welcome by any commercial party and many instances already discussed up to now and will be discussed in a while underline this point. İlyas' suspicion of the prioritization of payments according to the ethno-religious affiliation points to the possibility of an economic solidarity among non-Muslims. This reminds of İlyas' suggestion of the strong communal ties among Greek and Armenian commercial parties in Manchester as a model of solidarity to take after for the Muslim community there, as already mentioned in chapter four. The dates of the letters İlyas wrote to both of his brothers - his letter to his brother Ali in Rize was dated April 11, 1914, eight days after his letter to his brother in Manchester - raise suspicion regarding a possible influence of the solidarity discourse preached to the Muslim community through pamphlets calling them to look after for one another for economic revival by the end of 1913,²⁶⁰ on İlyas' discourse. Whether his suggestion was a simple projection of the solidarity discourse diffuse within the Empire or reflections on his genuine experience with non-Muslim commercial parties is impossible to tell. Nevertheless, it reads as a proposal for a search for a

senedleri bekleyemem, sonra poliçeleri de tediye edeyim, utanmaz kendisi de bize [...] ediyor. Aleme, Rumlara sairlerine olan borcunu verecek de artarsa mı bize para gönderecek? Tazzik ile sıkıştırın, söyleyin ki İlyas'a para lazımdır, darlığı vardır, utanmıyor musun bunca vakit Rusya'dan biraderim gönderecek, felan yazarak para göndermiyorsunuz. Acele ne yapub yapub gönder daha müsaade edemem. (29 Mart 1330 / April 11, 1914)

²⁶⁰ For a well-elaborated and well-documented discussion of the solidarity discourse diffused through pamphlets by the end of 1913, see chapter four in Çetinkaya, "Muslim Merchants and Working-Class in Action: Nationalism, Social Mobilization and Boycott Movement in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914".

model of organization based on his perception of the non-Muslim way, the “reality” of his perception remaining beyond the limits of this discussion and requiring research on commercial practices of Ottoman non-Muslims.

Çetinkaya, whose work is the most elaborate study in the limited current literature on boycott movements in the Ottoman Empire, argues for a coincidence between the diffusion of an economic and social solidarity discourse addressing Muslims for a “National Economy” and the revival of the boycott movement in 1914.²⁶¹ He considers the boycotts that appeared after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution in general as an “economic weapon”. Boycotts during the Second Constitutional Period can be grouped under two main categories: those organized against European countries and their economic representatives in the Ottoman Empire before the Balkan Wars, as exemplified in the Ottoman boycott of Austrian goods in 1908-1909,²⁶² and those organized against native Ottoman citizens after the Balkan Wars as illustrated by the boycotts targeting particularly Ottoman Greeks and, to a lesser extent, Armenians and Bulgarians in different towns of Anatolia as of 1914. The latter category of boycotts, through which native non-Muslims were presented as being excluded from economic and social networks, was justified in Turkish historiography through the increasing power of Turkish nationalism in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars.²⁶³

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Roderic H. Davison, "The Ottoman Boycott of Austrian Goods in 1908-9 as a Diplomatic Question," in *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms* (Istanbul: THE ISIS Press, 1999).

²⁶³ Çetinkaya, "Muslim Merchants and Working-Class in Action: Nationalism, Social Mobilization and Boycott Movement in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914", 135.

According to Çetinkaya, the direct target of the discourse and the organization of the 1913-1914 boycott movement were non-Muslims and the movement propagated the domination of Muslims in the economy with the hope to pave the way for the full empowerment of Muslim -Turkish in the Ottoman Empire. He argues for the active participation of local notables, local bureaucrats, and immigrants in the boycott organizations based on the discourse created by the political elite through publications and press and narrations of a few instances from towns in Western Anatolia,²⁶⁴ which was under political surveyance due to the Islands Question (*Adalar Meselesi*) at the time. Elaboration of a particular boycott instance witnessed by the brothers will open to discussion problems related with such broad generalizations in a while.

The government and the Committee of Union and Progress taking a stand for the boycott movement, also tried to control it, as argued by Çetinkaya. The non-Muslims, particularly the Greeks and the Armenians, suffering from the boycott tried to publicize their problems with the international public and the patriarchs of these communities put pressure on the Ottoman government by informing the Great Powers of the latest developments. As a result of this, the Great Powers and their diplomatic representatives were much more involved in this wave of boycotting than in the 1908-1909 one. Although Çetinkaya elaborately displays “the struggle and relationships between the Great Powers, the patriarchates and the church network, the Committee of Union and Progress and its social base in Asia Minor, Muslim-Turkish nationalist organizations and their cadres, and the masses of Muslim immigrants flowing into the Ottoman Empire from the lost territories”

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 156.

through a rich collection of documents,²⁶⁵ his argumentation is still based on some basic assumptions widely accepted and constantly replicated without question in the current literature. The conclusion of this chapter will base itself on a discussion of these basic assumptions.

The uncertainties related to the situation of the Ottoman-Greek subjects of the Empire become more explicit in the correspondence between İlyas and Ali as of the end of May, right after the beginning of the forced migration of the Greek population of Eastern Thrace and of the Aegean littoral by the CUP to pressure the Greek government to surrender the Aegean Islands occupied by Greece during the Balkan Wars. Forced Greek migration from Turkey actually started with the First Balkan War and continued until the population exchange between Turkey and Greece in 1923, resulting in the departure of over a million Greeks from Turkey, according to Ladas, whose work is one of the most frequently cited sources in discussions of the exchange of minorities between Greece and Turkey. He describes the migratory movement between the years 1912 and 1915 as in part orderly but mostly coercive.²⁶⁶

The CUP, considering the occupation of the Aegean islands, some of which were very close to the western coast of Anatolia, as a threat to the security of the coast, decided to remove the Greeks living there and to replace them with Muslims from Greece. The systematic carrying out of this plan began early in 1914; 150,000

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 135.

²⁶⁶ Stephen P. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities; Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York,: Macmillan, 1932), 3.

Greeks were forced to leave the western coast to seek refuge in Greece²⁶⁷ and another 50.000 were deported to the interior of Anatolia within a few months, according to the figures provided by Ladas.²⁶⁸ Lowry, in his work based on Henry Morgenthau's memoirs — Henry Morgenthau was the American Ambassador to the Porte between November 1913 and February 1916 — mentions one meeting between Morgenthau and Talat Bey, the Ottoman Minister of the Interior, on July 2, 1914 during which Greek forced migration appear as a subject of discussion. The quotation below, cited by Lowry from Morgenthau's diary, discusses Talat Bey's reasoning for the relocation of the Greeks:

“... [Talaat] seems determined to have Greeks of the country, not cities, leave their country; he said the Greeks here pay taxes to Greece Government collected by Metropolitan; he says they want their islands back; admitted Greek superiority in education and mercantile capacities...”²⁶⁹

The Baltacıoğlu firms start to appear in the correspondence between İlyas and Ali more often than before after the beginning of the forced migration of the Greeks during the month of May. İlyas, expressing doubts as to their capacity to

²⁶⁷ Another work which provides exact figures regarding the forced migration of the Greeks of the Thracian and the Anatolian littoral by the Young Turkish Government in 1914 belongs to Pallis, who worked as a Relief Officer in Macedonia in 1913 and continued to hold positions that allowed him to follow the population movements between Turkey and Greece till 1924. He placed this particular migration under “the mass movements that were, partly, the result of political reprisals and persecutions” in his categorization of mass-movements in the Balkans during the years 1912-1924. Around 100.000 of these refugees (80.000 from Thrace and 20.000 from Anatolia) were settled in Macedonia by the Greek Government. Although, the numbers provided in his work might be considered as reliable due to his personal association with the transport and settlement of various populations and his access to all the official records and statistics related with them, I still keep my reservation regarding his focus on “racial warfare” as the main cause of political problems leading to such movements in his article. A. A. Pallis, "Racial Migrations in the Balkans During the Years 1912-1924," *Geographical Journal* (1925).

²⁶⁸ Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities; Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, 20-1.

²⁶⁹ Heath W. Lowry, *The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1990), 32-33. I am thankful to Professor Heath Lowry for bringing this meeting to my attention.

remain in Turkey, was hesitant about how to name this potential act of departures, as it appears clearly from his switch between the verbs “depart” and “expel” in the quotation below. İlyas’ base, the imperial capital, allowed him to follow the burning political agenda of the Empire. He immediately informed his brothers regarding future possibilities, which were likely to affect their business, and about precautions to be taken. This situation not only indicates the control exerted by the center over the provinces but also points to the way news travelled from the center to the provinces within the Empire at grassroots level: word of mouth rather than the press. In the diffusion of news regarding the political hot-agenda of the Empire to the provinces, informal connections appear to have operated faster than the press itself. This issue will be revisited over various instances in the following sections. İlyas warned his brother not to share this information with anyone else, meanwhile keeping an eye on the Baltacıoğlus. He referred to them as *edebsiz* ([commercially] ill-mannered), a term commonly used for all partners breaching commercial contracts and causing financial harm regardless of their ethno-religious identity throughout the available collection of letters. İlyas warned his brother regarding the possibility of their running away without repayment, meanwhile collecting dues owed to them and selling their properties. İlyas also raised the point that, if necessary, merchandise would be taken in return for their debts:²⁷⁰

Collection of debts, my brother. We should immediately claim our debts from Panco and Nikoli and actually end our business with all Greek parties. It is dubious whether Greeks are to stay. I assume, they will depart and actually be expelled from Turkey. Especially endeavor to this certain Panco and Nikoli. In no way whatsoever, do not tell anything like this to anyone. Their expulsion is highly probable. Oversee them, be careful, they are

²⁷⁰ It is a common informal commercial practice to cover debts with merchandise in cases where the debtor is short of money and this action does not necessarily involve coercion as it can be accomplished as a result of mutual consensus.

commercially very ill-mannered. Probably while claiming debts owed to them, they will sell their properties and run away at some point. If necessary, one by one, merchandise will also be taken from them my brother. (27 Mayıs 1330 / June 9, 1914)²⁷¹

From the content of the correspondence between İlyas and Ali by the end of June, we learn that Panco and Nikoli had not paid their debts claiming that they had not been able to collect the debts owed them in the Black Sea. İlyas, willing to wait for their arrival from Romania and Russia, suggested that they abalienate those debts of more than ten liras from Panco and Nikoli. This meant that they were willing to take over the debts over ten liras owed to Panco and Nikoli and try to claim them themselves. In order to determine such debtors, they needed to look at their inventory book (*icmal defteri*), the register of all assets of a trading house including liabilities, movables and immovables, which İlyas referred to as the asset book (*mal defteri*).²⁷² As asset books were in the possession of the Greek parties, İlyas' comfort in suggesting abalienation as an option can be considered as another testimony of the well-established mutual trust and solid commercial relationship between these parties as looking at their inventory book would allow the brothers to reach not only some of their debtors but all of their customers.

This is also the first letter in the whole series which acknowledges the boycotts against non-Muslims within the Empire: "...If needed, we should say there is a boycott now..." (*İcabında söylemeli, şimdi boykot var.*) His assumption of the

²⁷¹ "Tahsilat Biraderim Panco ve Nikoli'den hesaplarımızı biran evvel çekmeğe bakalım. Hatta bütün Rumlardan hesaplarımızı keselim. Bu Rumlar kalacakları pek şüpheli. Öyle zann ediyorum ki Rumlar, Türkiye'den çıkarlar ve çıkarılacaklardır. Hele şu Panco ve Nikoli'ye gayret gayret. Zinhar böyle birşey de hiç kimseye anlatmayınız. Çıkmakları pek ihtimaldir. Çok gözedüb, dikkat ediniz, çok edepsizdirler. Olur ki, bir yandan tahsilat edüb, bir yandan mallarını satarlar, bir aralık kaçarlar. Birer birer bunlardan icabında mal da alınacak biraderim." (27 Mayıs 1330 / June 9, 1914)

²⁷² Inventory book (*icmal defteri*) was one of the three different types of commercial registers merchants had to keep according to the newly formulated Commercial Law. Kenanoğlu, *Ticaret Kanunnâmesi Ve Mecelle Işığında Osmanlı Ticaret Hukuku*.

ignorance of their Greek partners regarding the boycotts against non-Muslims, especially the Greeks within the Empire, in addition to sounding quite naive and unrealistic especially after all the scenarios İlyas created regarding their interruption of payments, also points to the lack of proper communication between center and periphery. The part of the correspondence related with the Greek debtors ends with the listing of their debts, each followed with the same contextualized prayer; “May God rid us for the best. Amen.” (*Cenab-ı Hak hayırlısı ile halas eyleye. Amin.*). The phrase “*halas eyleye*” (to get rid of) once again was not specifically attributed to Greek debts or debtors but used also in the context of Muslims and actually, any commercial transaction or party causing deficit: “If we can get rid of those Greeks and Kaşzâde, collecting our money completely at the proper time, it would be a great success...”²⁷³ Nevertheless, as the departure of the Muslim commercial parties was certainly not an expectation created by the political agenda, the brothers were less aggressive towards their Muslim debts.

İlyas’ correspondence dated July 4, two days after Morgenthau’s aforementioned meeting with Talat Bey, discussed the likely departure of Greek traders from their hometown, Rize. İlyas’ immediate entrepreneurial reaction to a possible departure on the Greek side was to take advantage of their commercial absence by opening a store in Rize, their hometown: “Greeks: If their departure is a possibility, then a store is an urgent necessity my brother.”²⁷⁴ Chapter four had shown us a possible similar initiative already undertaken by the Armenians to

²⁷³ “Şimdi şu Rumlardan Kaşzâdelerden paralarımızı vaktiyle tamamiyle hayırlısı ile tahsil idüb halas olursak büyük muvaffakiyetdir...” (13 Haziran 1330 / June 26, 1914)

²⁷⁴ “Rumlar: Rize’ye durmamak ihtimalleri varsa, hemen bir mağaza lüzumdur biraderim.” (21 Haziran 1330 / July 4, 1914)

replace the deported Ottoman Greeks during the Balkan Wars in the Istanbul branch of the cotton market of the Empire. Nevertheless, the feasibility of engaging in the retail trade in Rize was a whole different discussion among the brothers and the project was not realized due to the costs attached as will be discussed below. İlyas, frustrated by the lack of payments from their Greek debtors and suspecting that they were trying to hide the money they had collected from their commercial partners in Romania and Russia, started considering all the possible options to acquire the debts owed them. He was even ready to bring their commercial relations to an end but without “offending them” (*gücendirmeden*): “Our Greek customers want to hide money these days, they don’t pay. I say, let’s clear our business with these guys in a proper manner without offending them.”²⁷⁵

After Ali’s revelation of the impossibility or the infeasibility of the abalienation option - the reason being undisclosed in the letters -, İlyas started evaluating his brother’s answer to his other suggestion regarding taking merchandise in return for Greek debts and giving it to more creditworthy customers. It is important to remember the commercial role the brothers played as commission agents to understand the commercial act discussed here. As commission agents, they operated as intermediaries between purveyors and buyers on a commission base with no actual claim on the merchandise in transaction. Their main interest lay in the money they would claim as a result of the sale of the merchandise they forwarded rather than the merchandise itself. In this regard, the sale of the merchandise and the consequent return of the payment which was expected to cover the amount to be paid to the purveyors in Istanbul, in addition to their commission

²⁷⁵ “Rum müşterilerimiz bu sıra para gizlemek vermemek isterler. Diyorum münasib vechile gine gücendirmeyerek bu adamlarla işlerimizi temizleyelim...” (21 Haziran 1330 / July 4, 1914)

share, were more important than who actually sold the merchandise. After all, it was İlyas, who was in direct contact with purveyors in Istanbul and in such transactions; it was his reputation that was under threat, rather than that of the commercial parties in the provinces.

Returning to İlyas' evaluation of the action under discussion - taking merchandise in return for their debts and giving it to more creditworthy customers – , his usage of the verb “give” (*vermek*) instead of “sell” (*satmak*) reads as a deliberate one, rather than a slip of the tongue, as the merchandise under discussion would actually remain in possession of the purveyors as long as their shares were not returned. Considering the option under discussion more “convenient and appropriate” (*muvafık ve münasib*) than the former, İlyas still raised some concerns regarding Ali's suggestion to wait for the others to exploit this option first. He reminded his brother that other local Muslim merchants would not have such big debts to claim as they did. According to İlyas, a Greek would owe a Muslim merchant at most around twenty liras, which corresponded to only half of the smallest amount among the Greek debts owed to the brothers. İlyas' implied suggestion in this context reads as taking action before others as the amount to be claimed and hence, the amount of merchandise to be taken in their own case was far greater than the amount to be claimed by the others. İlyas' explanation quoted below places the capacity of the commercial transactions between the brothers and their Greek partners way beyond those between the latter and other Muslim fellow traders. The differences in the scale of trade can be explained through the brothers' connections with the Istanbul and Manchester branches of the Ottoman cotton

market, which allowed them to position themselves as intermediaries of “Istanbul” merchandise.

...Yes, if the books [...] it is more appropriate and convenient to take merchandise and give it to reliable customers. You say we also take merchandise when others begin. If others have as much to claim, they are Greeks. Muslims here have none. A Muslim there would have at most only twenty liras to claim from a Greek...²⁷⁶

The last available option was to take the hand already offered by the boycotters in Rize: In case Muslim creditors would take merchandise from their Greek debtors, the boycotters were willing to forward them to notable storekeepers (*esnaf*). Whether the boycotters were to spare a commission for their service, in other words, profit from the offered commercial transaction is not clear. This bit of information would have been quite useful in terms of understanding and contextualizing the main motivation behind the help offered by the boycotters: business and/or politics? The “business of the story” and hence, the economic elements motivating the boycotters to partake in the boycott movement and profits made along the process are still untouched within the current literature on boycott movements in the Ottoman Empire, despite the large coverage of its nationalist and hence, political aspects.

The available collection, offering no information regarding the identity of the boycotters, unfortunately leaves unanswered such questions as who they were, whether they were locals of Rize or outsiders, whether they were affiliated with any of the CUP branches in the eastern Black Sea and/or with its underground

²⁷⁶ “...Evet defter [...] ise mal alub, sağlam müşterilere vermek daha muvafık ve munasibdir. Diyorsunuz ki, diğerler başladığında, biz de mal aluruz, diğer bizim kadar alacakları var ise Rumdurlar, İslamlardan buraca hiç yokdur. Orada olsa olsa bir İslamın ancak bir Rum’dan yirmi lira kadar alacağı olabilir...” (21 Haziran 1330 / July 4, 1914)

organization of the *Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa*, which was active in the region since 1912.²⁷⁷ The limited literature on boycott movements in the Ottoman Empire is almost as silent as the correspondence between İlyas and Ali regarding the socio-economic and ethno-religious profile of the boycotters. Although Çetinkaya's work depicts "how the boycott network and different civil organizations and initiatives succeeded in imposing the boycott on an empire-wide scale and how heterogeneous social groups—such as port workers, merchants, urban notables, low-ranking officers, and the professional classes—played a part in the last decade of the Ottoman Empire",²⁷⁸ it still remains as silent as the letters regarding the socio-economic and ethno-religious profile of these groups. Moreover, the justification for the active participation of the argued groups is limited to broad generalizations based on publications and press and hence, the discourse created by political elite, as also suggested above. In this regard, his work could not escape the trap of taking discourse as reality, a common mistake exploited by the historical literature on the period.

One would also expect the significance of each group to vary from boycott to boycott. For example, we are well-informed about the agency of the port workers in the Ottoman boycott of Austrian goods in 1908-1909, but whether this is enough to make them "the heroes of the Boycott Movement"²⁷⁹ requires further research on different particular boycotts. One can expect different motivations to come forward

²⁷⁷ Makbule Sarıkaya, *Milli Mücadele Döneminde Rize* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2004), 30.

²⁷⁸ Çetinkaya, "Muslim Merchants and Working-Class in Action: Nationalism, Social Mobilization and Boycott Movement in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914", 10.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

and different negotiations to partake in the mobilization of different social groups in different regions. It is problematic to assume a simultaneous and even distribution and hence, an exploitation of the nationalist policies diffused by the CUP among the Muslim population of Anatolia and a consequent full compliance with these policies regardless of regional differences and previous local experiences or inexperience. Despite the aggressive argumentation based on the prominence of the port workers in the boycott movement, our knowledge even regarding the profile of this particular group remains very limited.²⁸⁰ The same, if not more, is true of Muslim merchants who are seen to “constitute the social base of the protest movements against non-Muslim communities”²⁸¹ albeit their almost absence in current Turkish history and historiography. A thorough analysis of the socio-economic and ethno-religious profile of various groups, that are considered to have played an active role in the boycott movement will provide a better understanding of not only the movement itself, but also of the various motivations and negotiations involved in it.

Going back to İlyas’ narrative, his simple reference to boycotters (*boykotçular*), without citing any particular name, may suggest that they were not from the brothers’ immediate circle in their hometown, most probably not even from Rize. Even if they were locals, we can still argue for their “outsider/other” status to the commercial circles under scrutiny in this work. İlyas, considering the boycotters’ offer a plausible one, still shared his concerns with his brother. In the

²⁸⁰ Alakom’s work on Kurds in Istanbul informs us about the prominence of Kurdish population among port workers in Istanbul and also in Ottoman boycott of Austrian goods in 1908-9. Rohat Alakom, *Eski İstanbul Kürtleri, 1453-1925*, 1. baskı. ed., Avesta/Şehir (Beyoğlu, İstanbul: Avesta, 1998), 150-51.

²⁸¹ Çetinkaya, "Muslim Merchants and Working-Class in Action: Nationalism, Social Mobilization and Boycott Movement in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914", 24.

paragraph below, he thoroughly discusses the pros and cons of the helping hand offered by the boycotters based on the information provided by his brother in Rize:

...Boycott: You wrote that they put a sheet to Hadji [...] store. My brother, we can only take the act that suits our interest to save our money, we cannot do any other way. We can only do whatever suits our interest by thinking thoroughly and without paying attention to such things. In fact, nobody can have a word. Because, God forbid, it is us who are going to get harmed in between. Nobody pays us in return for our losses. Now that the boycotters are promising you, you take merchandise, let's give it to notable stores, this is also good, not bad. [They] will undertake collection as well and I suppose business in this way is appropriate as well. But there is one point to think about. You know the affairs of our hometown. He did not do it himself but had others do it. It is not worth allowing such words in our hometown; it is not worth to let others smile. This is also the point to take into consideration in a convenient way. However, I suppose this task is not like that. On one side, our affairs are getting settled, on the other side, you also are [not] participating in the boycotters. As you wish, my brother. Whatever would be considered as more convenient, it is good to finish. Dignity, honor, integrity should be taken into consideration my brother. As you wish...²⁸²

İlyas' immediate evaluation of the boycotters' offer was business related. As would be expected from any commercial party assessing a business offer, his immediate concern was about its pros and cons. The main question he tackled in his discussion was the feasibility of a cooperation with the boycotters in claiming Greek debts. In his evaluation, he set the main goal as taking the action which would serve the utmost interest of their business, as nobody would have any right to judge their decision. He reminded his brother that it would be them getting harmed between the

²⁸² "...Boykot: Hacı [...] dükkanına kağıd yapıştırdıklarını yazdınız. Biraderim biz paralarımızı ne yolda kurtarmak işimize gelir ve menfaatli ise, öyle yapılabilir, başka yapamayız. Öyle şeylere ehemmiyet vermeyüb, düşünerek, taşınarak, işimize menfaatlisini yapabilirüz. Hatta hiç kimsenin de bir hakkı olamaz. Zira Allah muhafaza etsin, ara yerde zarar görecektir olan biziz. Kimse bize zararımıza karşı para [vermez]. Madem ki boykotcular size vaat ediyorlar ki, siz mal alınız, muteber esnaflara verelim, bu da iyi fena değil. Tahsilatını da deruhte [ederler/iz] ve zann ederim bu yolda iş de muvafıktır. Yalnız düşünülecek bir nokta vardır. Malum ya memleketimiz halidir. Kendisi yapmadı, onlara yaptırdı[ı] Bizim memlekete böyle sözlere meydan verdirüb, asla [dış] saydırmağa gelmez biraderim. Burası da munasib vechile gözedecek noktadır. Lakin zann ederim bu iş öyle değildir. Bir yanda iş görülmüş oluyor, bir yandan siz de boykotculara iştirak etmiş ol[...] siz alem biraderim. Artık hangisi muvafık görülürse, bitürmek iyidir. Vakar haysiyet namus gözedilmelidir biraderim. Siz alem..." (21 Haziran 1330 / July 4, 1914)

boycotters and their Greek debtors and hence, the state and the locals if we magnify the picture. As it was nobody but themselves to protect their business, they should take the most feasible action and hence, focus rather on the business part of the offer. Although he assessed the offer in general as feasible, he seemed hesitant regarding one issue: the “outsider/other” status of the boycotters. He was concerned that they would ridicule themselves in front of their fellow countrymen by involving the “outsiders/others” in a situation which they should have been able to handle themselves. What we see here is a conflict of social and economic interests of a local notable commercial party or in other words, a conflictual situation between material and social capital where one has to be favored at the expense of the other. Although it would have been commercially feasible to take the hand offered by the boycotters, it would have implied a disregard of their local political power at the same time. Sharing all these thoughts with his brother, İlyas ended his discussion by calling for the protection of dignity, integrity and honor i.e. their social capital, but still left the decision to his brother as he was right there, in the middle of all these negotiations.

A possible scenario, emphasizing the business aspect of the boycotters’ appearance in Rize, rather than politics, may read as follows: The boycotters came to Rize as prospective business partners to integrate into the existing local notable merchant network and to replace the Greek commercial actors. It is through their provocation that local Muslim creditors had started taking merchandise from their Greek debtors’ stores in return for their long-term outstanding debts and the boycotters were willing to sell this merchandise through their own networks, most probably outside Rize or maybe even outside the eastern Black Sea. Hence, what

they were actually offering was a new commercial network within which they would replace the discarded Greek merchants by establishing themselves as possible commercial partners. Their only input into the current commercial matrix was provocation, in return for which they would get a commission for marketing the seized merchandise. Basically, boycotters were trying to make a profit from the lawlessness within the region, thanks to the chaotic political atmosphere of the Empire, and also from the economic policies of the CUP promoting a Muslim bourgeoisie. In this context, whether or not to partake in this movement, which initially appeared as a business option turned into a social decision, and furthermore an ethical one, as also articulated by İlyas at the end of his discussion. Hence, in such a scenario, the main decision turned out to be whether or not to give a hand to the emergence of a new group of entrepreneurs by accepting the help they offered, at the expense of the well-established commercial relations with their Greek partners and all those years of familiarity. This scenario allows us to imagine the economic opportunities a possible boycott situation might have had to offer for its initiators which might be suggested as a possible perspective to be integrated into future discussions of the boycott movement.

Another major point missing in the discussions on the boycott movement against non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire during the Second Constitutional Period is the change in the meaning attributed to the term “boycott” between the aforementioned first (1908-1909) and second (1913-1914) waves of boycotts. If we keep to the definition of boycotting, which is simply that of not buying a certain kind of merchandise, as was the case in the Ottoman boycott of Austrian goods in 1908-1909, it is hard to call the particular instance under discussion a “boycott” as

the narrations of the instance underlining its economic aspects, when read in between the lines, implies the possibility of violence, threat, and coercion, instead of a simple protest. The fact that İlyas refers to the instance as a “boycott” suggests an already naturalized change in the meaning attributed to the term. In this regard, based on the narrations under study, it may be possible to consider what the boycotters were doing as organizing a form of terror-based seizure of property, rather than just boycotting.

Returning to the particular boycott instance under scrutiny, the boycotters in Rize functioned as the initiators of a possible action against the Greek traders. Although İlyas had been suggesting that they should take merchandise from their Greek debtors, if necessary, as a way to claim the sums owed them after the beginning of the forced Greek migration in May and henceforth, at least for two months before the boycotters’ appearance in Rize, there was no mention of any recourse to this option neither by Ali nor by any other fellow trader in Rize. From the content of the correspondence exchanged between İlyas and Ali, it is clear that there were other Muslim creditors in Rize, and taking merchandise in return for debts owed to them should certainly also have crossed their minds. However, despite all, it took the provocation and hence, the interference, of third parties, maybe even local, but still ‘outsiders’ enough to the local commercial circles to disturb not only the economic but also the social order in a particular town which seemed to have lived in peace until then, despite the atrocities that had already occurred and were still continuing in other parts of the Empire.

Within two weeks following the boycotters’ appearance in Rize, İlyas received a telegram from his brother Ali, asking for the promissory notes of their

Greek partners. From the content of his reply letter, we learn that creditors had already started taking merchandise from their Greek debtors' stores and that hence, the boycotters had succeeded in their provocation. İlyas, sharing his worries about being late in taking action, kept on reiterating them in his following letters: Had they started before the boycotters, they would not only have been able to choose a better quality of merchandise, but they would have also prevented problems selling them to the storekeepers in Rize as they would take them "supposedly, as a duty" (*güya bir vazife olarak*) but he was not sure anymore. His deliberate usage of the adverb "supposedly" implies his suspicion regarding the duty itself and turns it into a "so-called" duty rather than an actual one. The duty, which initially appears to be to fellow countrymen, was actually one's duty to the state. An ambitious reading of the quotation below may suggest İlyas' doubts regarding the latter and underline the level of self-interest applauded.

"...As you wrote, if we did this before [take merchandise from Greek debtors], the storekeepers were to take merchandise supposedly, as a duty. I do not know if they will now. Nevertheless, it is necessary to end [our commercial relation with Greek debtors]..."²⁸³

From İlyas' letter to one of his collaborators in Atina dated end of July, we learn that all Greeks there had already left. Therefore, the boycotters' possible success in provoking the local Muslim creditors to take action against their Greek debtors was enough to disturb the commercial actors and hence, the commercial network within a locality. As a result of the interruption of trade most possibly caused by the boycotters, the Greek commercial parties had closed down their businesses and left.

²⁸³ "...Bu işi evvelce yapsa idik, yazdığımız üzere zann ederim, esnaf, malı alacaktı, güya bir vazife olarak. Bilmem şimdi alacak mı? Hasılı her ne ise bitürmek lazımdır ..." (12 Temmuz 1330 / July 25, 1914)

Due to the silence of the literature on boycott movement regarding boycotts against Greeks in the Black Sea region and the following Greek departures, it is hard to discuss the commonality of this particular experience within other localities in the region. The immediate entrepreneurial reaction on the Muslim side was to make use of the opportunities created by their departure: work harder, and establish better relationships with customers by mimicking Greek commercial practice.

“...According to what I heard, all Greeks closed down their business and left. Now is the time to work more. What is needed is to establish better relationships with customers. You know how much a Greek artisan compliments his customer just to sell half a yard of cotton print...”²⁸⁴

Nevertheless, the possibility or the feasibility of this opportunity was a totally different topic of discussion. Opening a retail shop in Rize emerged as a subject of discussion between İlyas and Ali exactly a month before the Greeks had started departing from Rize. The quotation below elaborately discusses the infeasibility of this option based on a couple of reasons: First of all, as the brothers were commission agents, they were operating as intermediaries between the actual buyer and the actual seller, claiming a commission for their service as already mentioned above. This position prevented them from any actual investment in the merchandise itself and in the costs and risks associated with selling it. One would expect them to launch a retail business in drapery in their hometown much earlier if they had considered it to be a feasible venture. Even if we assume that retail business became increasingly attractive due to the departure of the Greek traders, the business itself

²⁸⁴ “...İşitdiğime göre orada bütün Rumlar işlerini bozub gitmişdirler. Tam şimdi daha ziyade çalışmak zamanıdır. Müşteriyi güzel tutmak lazımdır. Malumunuz bir esnaf Rum yarım arşun basma satmak için müşteriye ne kadar iltifat riayet eder...” (12 Temmuz 1330 / July 25, 1914)

still retained some handicaps as explicitly elaborated by İlyas in the quotation below, which also implicitly referred to the previous failure of such an attempt by Ali:

“It is good to have a branch in Rize on yarn, drapery. However, would they buy yarn from Rize? Because, everybody wants to buy from Istanbul. Or once again, are you going to let others grab the merchandise? If that is the case, it is futile, whatever we try.”²⁸⁵

The brothers' Greek debtors were mentioned for the last time in a letter dated August 11, after the beginning of the World War I in Europe, and it is through this letter that we learn how the Mataracızâde trading house resolved the issue, especially with Panco and Nikoli, whose debts were the most significant in amount: Panco's debt remained outstanding as he ran away to Russia without leaving any contact information, and although Ali managed to obtain promissory notes from Nikoli, İlyas still complained about the surety being Greek and about the length of the payment term. Despite all the epistolary discussions on how to claim their debts and all the different options open to exploitation such as; abalienation, seizing merchandise and last but not least, taking the hand offered by the boycotters, the brothers resolved the Greek debts their usual way: through promissory notes, even though İlyas was not very content with this resolution:

Nikoli: you solved his issue with promissory notes. Why has his money from Batumi not come for such a long time? Nikoli's surety is again Greek. Why did you not take from the dues of his Muslim customers instead of giving him such a long term? It would be more convenient, if it was his Muslim customers. Why do we have to wait for such a long term? Is he going to pay cash? Or will it be different then? Is it clear what will happen

²⁸⁵ Rize'de şube evet iplik manifatura iyidir. Lakin iplik Rize'den alırlar mı? Zira herkes Dersaadet'den almak ister. Yoksa gine evvelki gibi şuna buna mı mal kapdıracaksınız. Öyle olursa, ne yapılsa nafi'dir. (13 Haziran 330 / June 26, 1914)

to the Greeks until then? I think this is wrong. I think it was more appropriate to get his dues with the Muslims. Anyhow, at least may his surety be reliable...²⁸⁶

Why did the brother in Rize, Ali, choose not to exploit any of the options discussed in detail above to solve the Greek debts? Why did Ali remain hesitant when his brother was pressuring him to claim their Greek debts in general and to take merchandise from their Greek debtors in particular? As Ali was based in Rize, he was the one to decide on the action to be followed regarding the Greek debts, despite his brother's aggressive suggestions. Leaving İlyas' general aggressiveness in trade aside, a possible explanation for his harsh tone regarding Greek debts might be related with the nature of his own commercial base, the imperial or in other words, the center of politics. Being able to follow the political hot-agenda of the Empire, he was the one to inform his brother in direct relationship with their Greek commercial partners about the possibilities related with their future. One would expect the aggressive discourse against the Greeks within the Empire to reflect on İlyas' tone in general, as also elaborated on in the discussion on the discourse of solidarity above. Another explanation may simply follow from his efforts to pressure his brother to take action. In any case, his aggressive tone was not reciprocated in action by his elder brother; and trade, by definition, is a pragmatic course of life where actions are more determining than words. Two possible explanations, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, may be suggested for Ali's reluctance to follow his brother's suggestions.

²⁸⁶ “Nikoli: işini senedlere rabt etdiniz. Batum'daki parası neden bunca vakit gelmiyor? Nikoli'nin kefilisi gine Rumdur. İslam müşterilerden olan alacaklarından niye almadınız da, böyle uzun vade kendisine verdiniz. İslam müşterileri olsa daha muvafık idi. Bu kadar uzun vade ne bekleyeceğiz, para mı verecek, yok o vakitte de başka olacak. Zaten o vakte kadar Rumlar hakkında ne olacağı belli midir? Bu bence yanlıştır. İslam kimselerdeki alacaklarını almak daha muvafık idi. Ne ise bari kefilisi sağlam olsa...” (29 Temmuz 1330 / August 11, 1914)

Trying to imagine the whole process through Ali's perspective provides a commercial explanation in addition to the moral one discussed above based on İlyas' narration. Taking into consideration the high amount of debts, it might not have been feasible to take merchandise from Greek stores due to several reasons: First, the amount of Greek debts was probably superior to the total worth of merchandise in their stores.²⁸⁷ Taking into consideration other Muslim debts, it looks almost impossible to compensate debts with the merchandise held in Greek stores. Second, who were they going to sell all that merchandise to, considering that they did not exploit the commercial networks offered by the boycotters? The marketing of the merchandise within the region would have been a problem, first, because they did not have a store in Rize due to its infeasibility as a commercial option as discussed above and second, because storekeepers in Rize were not enthusiastic about selling this merchandise, as also argued above. A possible explanation for this lack of enthusiasm might be the sudden boom in similar kinds of merchandise at once. Hence, Ali's decision to resolve the issue in a more conventional way, i.e. through promissory notes, which was not very welcomed by his brother, might be related with commercial rather than moral concerns.

A second explanation, which does not necessarily disprove or exclude the former, follows on the direct relationship, familiarity and well-established commercial ties between the brothers and their Greek partners. One can imagine the difficulty of taking action against business partners with whom one is in constant interaction on a daily base. This difficulty becomes explicit in the role boycotters

²⁸⁷ We can take into account the prices of some drapery goods in 1914 to have an idea regarding the amount of merchandise to be taken from Greek stores in return for the debts they owed to the brothers. A pair of shoes costed 60 *guruş* and a man's suit costed between 110 and 160 *guruş* according to the prices provided by Muzaffer Lermiöglü, *Akçaabat Akçaabat Tarihi Ve Birinci Genel Savaş, Hicret Hatıraları* (Istanbul: Kardeşler Basımevi, 1949), 188.

played in the departure of Greek commercial subjects from Rize: Despite everything, i.e. the debts, the boycotts against the Greeks, and Greek expulsions from other parts of the Empire, the departure of Greek traders from Rize required the intervention of third parties. Hence, referring to Çetinkaya's aforementioned analysis of "boycott as an economic weapon", regarding this particular boycott instance, it might have been harder to pull the trigger as involved parties mutually had invested in certain shared capitals, may it be material, social, and/or political and hence, both had something to lose at the end. After all, who really benefited from the departure of Greek traders? Small-scale local businesses might have been able to take merchandise enough to claim their debts, maybe even more, but still, to the question of their ability to sell it would have been a major handicap, as mentioned earlier. The available commercial correspondence provides no information regarding any Greek-to-Greek debt. Despite the Muslim-dominated commercial environment in Rize described previously in the chapter four, one cannot help wonder whether the departure of Greek traders created any kind of opportunity for remaining Greek or Armenian traders.

This work would like to draw attention on the loss of an unmentioned party in the literature on the boycott movement and Greek emigration and expulsion from the Empire. It was actually the inter-regional trade and the commercial actors involved who lost from the departure of Greek traders. One can imagine the harm the departure of the Greek traders brought not only to the commercial network and hence, to the commercial transactions under scrutiny, but also to the Ottoman trade in the Black Sea as along with them also departed their commercial activities and connections, in short, their network in the wider region. This may be suggested as

the main predicament behind the discussions of the marketing of the merchandise in the region in the aftermath of the departure of the Greek traders. The issue of the financial and economic cost to the Ottoman economy at large of the departure of non-Muslim traders is not even raised within the current historical literature on the period. Although it is almost impossible to estimate as the Greek emigration from the Empire was immediately followed by the outbreak of World War I and the closure brought to inter-regional trade due to the conflict that opposed Ottoman and Russian Empires, this work still suggests that it was a significant factor contributing to the constantly reiterated hardships of the times.

The collection of commercial letters under scrutiny, within the context of the Greek debts, and especially of those of the Baltacıoğlu firms, testified to the forced departure of Greek traders from their hometown, Rize. Despite the silence of the Turkish literature on the history of the eastern Black Sea regarding boycotts and expulsions from the region between 1912 and 1914, the rich literature on forced Greek migration from the Aegean littoral provides an opportunity for a comparison with this particular instance of forced migration. Based on the aforementioned categories introduced by Ladas, one can conclude that the latter was coercive, whereas the former was orderly and hence, organized. In the latter case, although they were pressured to leave, this work guesses that the decision to depart was taken by the Greek traders themselves as the commercial correspondence under scrutiny provides no evidence for any plan or organization on the side of the CUP government whereas the former case was deliberately planned and organized by the

government to move the Greek population of the Aegean coast to the interior parts of Anatolia.²⁸⁸

The brothers' hesitations regarding which action to take towards boycotts in their hometown, implies that this was the first intervention of CUP policies and hence, former experience of "harm" in that particular locality. While certainly requiring further research, a pamphlet called *Black Book: The Tragedy of Pontus 1914 – 1922*, published by the Central Council of Pontus in Athens, in 1922, may be suggested as evidence in this term. It is one of the rare sources on the Greek expulsion from the Black Sea.²⁸⁹ Presented as being based on the official statistics drawn from the archives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and on actual reports, it provides extensive lists of the numbers of the Greek population "exterminated by the confiscation of their fortunes, exile, violations, cold hunger, assassination and massacre" in each city and village, some reports of "the Turkish cruelties perpetrated against the Greeks of the Pontus" and a list of those condemned to death and executed "as creators of the Republic of the Pontus", copied from the Turkish newspaper "Ahali" in Samsun in September 25, 1921. This is a publication reminiscent of the *Blue Book* published by the British Parliament in 1916 to identify the events of 1915-16 as a systematic effort to exterminate the Armenian people.²⁹⁰ Although the credibility of the statistics and accounts requires further research and

²⁸⁸ Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities; Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*. Hasan Taner Kerimoğlu, *İttihat - Terakki Ve Rumlar 1908 - 1914*, Tarih Dizisi (Istanbul: Libra, 2009).

²⁸⁹ *Black Book; the Tragedy of Pontus, 1914-1922*, (Athens,1922).

²⁹⁰ Ara Sarafian, James Bryce Bryce, and Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916 : Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce*, Uncensored ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Gomidas Institute; Taderon, 2000).

discussion,²⁹¹ the years covered by the *Black Book* can be considered as evidence in support of the aforementioned impression regarding the absence of “harm” in the region before 1914.

The lack of any kind of reference to the political and economic hardships that the Ottoman Greek commercial subjects might have been facing since the beginning of their forced migration from the Empire with the Balkan Wars, in the brothers’ explanations of their Greek partners’ interruption of their payments is striking. Rather than the hardships, the brothers’ explanations emphasized their Greek partners’ reluctance to prioritize their debts to their Muslim creditors as explained above, and also their deliberate commercial decision to work on credit. By mid-September, we find İlyas and Cemil exchanging opinions regarding the current situation of merchants from Rumelia (*Rumlular*).²⁹² The explanation İlyas provided was purely based on their commercial preferences regarding terms of payment, without taking into consideration the political and economic conjuncture. He considered their preference for long term payment as the main reason for their failure in trade. Although this choice might have been the only one available for some parties, İlyas was complaining that even the ones with the means to pay cash exploited the credit option:

²⁹¹ The publication year of the work, 1922, also raises suspicions regarding its accuracy as it was the year during which the negotiations regarding the population exchange between Turkey and Greece was finalized. Another problem related with the source is the impossibility of historicization of the data it provides: The source claims to cover a period between 1914 and 1922 without specifying any particular year for the data provided and all the accounts narrated were dated 1922.

²⁹² As the standart term used in referring to Ottoman Greek(s) in the commercial correspondence under study is *Rum(lar)*, the obscure term *Rumlular*, which was exploited only once within the aforementioned discussion, will be deciphered as referring to “merchants from Rumelia” despite our reservation regarding alternative readings.

“Your opinion about [merchants from] Rumelia is still wrong, though there is some truth to it. Most of them cannot pay cash, even the ones who can, would not want to and would prefer to buy and sell on credit. That is why they fail.”²⁹³

In this section I have discussed the financial hardships in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, based on the testimony provided by the commercial correspondence under scrutiny. Some of the instances discussed followed from the inner dynamics of the network, such as the bankruptcy of a prominent merchant, whereas others were directly related with the economic and political policies of the CUP, such as the question of the Greek debts. The boycotts against Greek traders in Rize and their consequent forced emigration come into discussion within the context of the Greek debts. The main point of the discussion in this section was to draw attention to the significance of individual stands and, therefore, of human agency in resolving economic and/or political issues. Last but not least, although this section magnified and thoroughly discussed the question of the debts of the brothers’ Greek commercial partners and their departure from Rize, the objective was to contribute to a very limited literature with particular narrations and consequent discussions displaying the grassroots level Ottoman Muslim perspective on the issue, so as not to create the illusion that Greek debts set the main agenda for the commercial network or the trading house under scrutiny. Discussions on the issue occupied only a slim part of the correspondence under study just like many others, some already discussed and some to follow.

²⁹³ Rumlular hakkındaki fikriniz doğru ise de, yanlış. Bu adamlar ekserisi peşin para veremez, vereni, vermek istemeyüb, veresiye üzerine almak satmak arzu ederler. Onun içündir ki, yapamıyorlar. (2 Eylül 1330 / September 15, 1914)

“A Time of Awakening for the Turks”²⁹⁴

This section elaborates on the instances of “awakening” of the three brothers to the business possibilities deliberately created or promoted for the Muslim-Turkish subjects of the Ottoman Empire by the economic policies of the CUP. Some of these policies, such as the encouragement of Muslim-Turkish subjects to engage in business or the general expectations created for a Muslim demand and a Muslim supply, intersected with the brothers’ entrepreneurial appetite. Nevertheless, all the plans they made in this direction appear to have been interrupted by the outbreak of World War I. Whether they were ever to come true is also debatable. Even allegedly pro-Muslim direct interferences of the government in the economic realm, such as the boycott movement and the consequent expulsion of the Greek traders discussed above, did not have anything else than loss to offer to the inter-regional Black Sea trade and the commercial actors involved in it. The section above already discussed the plausibility of the opportunities created by the departure of the Greek traders for the remaining traders. Keeping in mind that the three brothers were already awakened to capitalism on their own terms as commercial subjects of the Empire, what they were specifically awakening to in this particular moment was the preliminary offers of a “National Economy” and its discourse, which was part and parcel of a larger project in the making, namely that of Turkish nationalism. Its offers were to concretize within the war economy created by the outbreak of World War I as the following section will elaborate in detail.

²⁹⁴ This phrase is quoted from the letter written to Adapazarı Muslim Commerce Bank (*Adapazarı İslam Ticaret Bankası*) which will be analysed in detail below. See Appendix R for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter.

The available correspondence reveals a will and a desire for the promotion of commercial activities among the Muslim community. The brothers' wish to trade and to widen their network with Muslim merchants (*tüccâran-ı İslâmiyye*), who were also emerging markets just like the brothers themselves as previously mentioned in chapter four. In his letters of self-introduction exploring future business possibilities with two different merchants located in Çorum and Gürün, İlyas immediately asked for the names and addresses of the Muslim merchants in the correspondents' town. His efforts may be read as attempts to put into practice his suggested model of solidarity, which was previously discussed.

“...Please let us know the addresses of Muslim yarn manufacturers in your town [Çorum], whom you consider suitable for business...”²⁹⁵

“...let me know the addresses of Muslim merchants who would need fairly large amounts of cotton or wool thread in your town [Sivas-Gürün]...”²⁹⁶

A pamphlet, targeting the promotion of commercial activities within the Muslim community, published in Smyrna in 1914, *İzmir Tüccaran ve Esnafan-ı İslamiyyesine Mahsus Rehber* (A Guide for Muslim Merchants and Artisans of Smyrna),²⁹⁷ used almost the same phrasing as İlyas above when referring to the list of merchants and artisans it provided: “...I move on to the inquiry and detailed explanation in alphabetical order of the names and addresses of all artisans and

²⁹⁵ “...şehrinizde tebaaca münasip gördüğünüz İslâm manifotura ve iplik tüccârânın adreslerini bildirmenizi rica ederüz...” (15 Mart 1330 / March 28, 1914)

²⁹⁶ “...şehrinizde bu gibi işlerle büyükçe sarfiyatı olan tüccâran-ı İslamiyyenin adreslerini bildirirsiniz...” (15 Mart 1330 / March 28, 1914)

²⁹⁷ *İzmir 1876 Ve 1908 (Yunanca Rehberlere Göre Meşrutiyette İzmir*, trans. Engin Berber (İzmir: İzmir Belediyesi Kültür Yayını, Kent Kitaplığı Dizisi, 2008), 115-35.

Muslim merchants in trade in İzmir.”²⁹⁸ Both letters, written on the exact same day, ended with the exact same prayer wishing the glory of Islam in trade: “May peace be upon you, Gentlemen. I wish for Muslim success in matters of trade.”²⁹⁹

These two letters of self-introduction underline a deliberate preference for future partners and also the possible future ethno-religious profile of the network. Although the Manchester and Istanbul branches were dominated by Armenians, the already Muslim-dominated provincial network appeared to be evolving towards a monolithic texture in the very near future thanks to the impact of the nationalist economic policies of the CUP. As a commercial strategy, it seemed rational for the brothers to discard non-Muslims from their network due to the commercial risks created for them by the economic and political policies of the CUP. Nevertheless, the previous section showed that even very explicit expressions of such a need did not necessarily translate into practice due to the presence of well-established commercial ties and of a degree of familiarity, but most probably due to the infeasibility of such an action regarding inter-regional commercial transactions in the Black Sea.

Nevertheless, the brothers did not stay behind in their attempts to make use of the opportunities created for Muslim-Turkish subjects. One of the instances where they used their Muslim character as leverage in business was İlyas’ wish to open a warehouse in Istanbul. The first time he mentioned this wish to his elder brother Ali and asked for his opinion was in a letter dated 5 Nisan 1330 (April 18, 1914). He justified his wish with the absence of a Muslim enterprise among the five

²⁹⁸ “...İzmir’de icra-yı sanat ve ticaret eden bilumum esnafın ve tüccaran-ı İslamiyyenin isim ve adreslerinin huruf-u hâce sırasıyla taharriye ve tafsiline geçiyorum.” Ibid., 119.

²⁹⁹ “Bâkî selam ederek, umûr-ı ticâriyyede muvaffâkiyyet-i İslâmiyyeyi temenni ederim efendim.” (15 Mart 1330 / March 28, 1914)

major warehouses of the city — Greek, Armenian and English — dispatching goods to Anatolia. Despite his simple suggestion of a warehouse, which could have been a rental at the beginning, in addition to a clerk and a steelyard to start the business, İlyas was aware that they would also have to look for contacts in the provinces. Nevertheless, he felt certain that due to the absence of a Muslim warehouse, such a venture would progress rapidly:

Warehouse: I aspire to such a business my brother. There are five warehouses; Greek, Armenian and one English to dispatch merchandise from here to Anatolia. There is no Muslim. I say, let's rent a warehouse. First, it would require following, I mean hard work, touring the provinces etc. But afterwards, it would be very easy. As there is no Muslim warehouse, I suppose this warehouse would progress in a very short time and I also expect that it would bring a good profit...³⁰⁰

This was a clear illustration of an early attempt at exploiting a business opportunity based on the expectation for a Muslim demand triggered by the CUP economic policies. İlyas consulted a Muslim officer at the Haydarpaşa railway station regarding the procedures related to the setting up of a warehouse business. For the location of the warehouse, İlyas suggested the area between Sirkeci and Balık Pazarı. He fancied a spot either overlooking the quay or located on the first street right behind. Such a location would be convenient both for exports from Istanbul and imports from Anatolia. Among the names İlyas proposed for the warehouse were '*Teşvikiye*' (Encouragement), '*Takdime-i Osmani*' (Ottoman Offering), '*Teshilat*' (Facilities) or '*Milli Osmanlı*' (National Ottoman). Although the warehouse business was a perfect-fit to the "National Economy" program and

³⁰⁰ "Anbar biraderim şöyle bir iş arzu ediyorum. Buradan Anadolu'ya sevk etmek için Rum, Ermeni ve bir de İngiliz olarak beş aded anbar vardır. İslam yokdur. Diyorum bir anbar tutalım, ilk evvel biraz takib ister, yani iyi bir çalışmak, gidüb taşraları dolaşmak, felan ister. Sonra pek kolay olur. İslam anbarı olmadığından, memulum bu anbar pek yakın zamanda terakki eder ve zann ederim iyi bir ticareti de vardır..." (5 Nisan 1330 / April 18, 1914)

discourse, the entrepreneurial possibilities of which İlyas was well-aware of as displayed below, his imagination could not reach out to nationalist terms such as ‘Turkish’ or ‘Turk’ in naming it. This is a typical reflection of the initial phase of nationalism as such terms were not yet promoted to the level desired by the CUP or argued in the current literature.³⁰¹ The level of ‘‘Turkishness’’ the brothers were able to assimilate, after a couple of revisits over different instances below, will evolve into a discussion of the reception of the ‘‘Turkification’’ project of the CUP at grassroots level in the conclusion of this work.

İlyas referred to a warehouse as a highly profitable and respected business based on his intuition about the existence of a Muslim demand for a Muslim service in this domain. He was also aware that it would require hard work, pursuit and most of all; money: ‘‘...I foresee order...In case of regular hard work and pursuance, it is a highly profitable and notable business...’’³⁰² Knowing that he would not be able to pursue it alone not only in the provinces, but even in Istanbul, İlyas considered a partnership with a 20 to 25 percent commission over profits. Later on, we learn that he eventually negotiated for a partnership over business (*istihdamda ortak*) with a certain Muhsin Bey, meaning that Muhsin Bey would take a share from the business he brought in. İlyas asked his elder brother to take care of the provincial part of the business and told him that he would inform him as soon as he found a warehouse, so that he could take the train to Anatolia not only to hire someone at each station to promote the warehouse,³⁰³ but also to talk to potential customers.

³⁰¹ Toprak, *Milli İktisat, Milli Burjuvazi*.

³⁰² Anbar ‘‘...İyi sipariş görüyorum...Çalışmak, takib, intizaman devam edilirse, çok ticaretli ve muteber işdir... (19 Nisan 1330 / May 2 1914)

³⁰³ In terms of promotion, İlyas considered announcements sufficient.

İlyas was also aware that starting a warehouse would require quite an amount of capital,³⁰⁴ and it was due to this fact that he contacted the Adapazarı Muslim Commerce Bank (*Adapazarı İslam Ticaret Bankası*) regarding credit possibilities. İlyas' ambition to open a warehouse was again an entrepreneurial attempt as a Muslim late-comer to partake in another non-Muslim-dominated commercial process, that of the integration of the growing production in the provinces with the international market, which had started under a dominantly non-Muslim control.

The letter quoted below written to the Adapazarı Muslim Commerce Bank, which had been founded as a local national(ist) attempt only five months earlier, fully exploited the "National Economy" discourse. This is the only letter written to an institution within the whole collection. Although it bears İlyas' signature, the script is different from those of the other letters signed by him or his brother, Ali. Hence, we can assume that this particular letter was written by someone other than the brothers themselves, maybe a scribe. The style and content of the letter reflected the attention the brothers paid to the institution and to the issue of credit, and its tone and language sounded more official than the rest of the correspondence.

To the Directorate of the Adapazarı Muslim Commerce Bank
Sir,

Letter of your highness presented to İbrahimzâde brothers five days ago has been read with great pleasure and its content has been learned. The issue of a forwarding agency, we discussed with Mustafa Nuri Efendi from among the local notable merchant in textiles and manufactured goods, was mentioned in the letter. I congratulate and thank your highness for your kindness with respect to Muslim trade. (Because it is a time of awakening for Turks.) Ever

³⁰⁴ During his search for a warehouse, İlyas also considered purchasing some land on quay. In case, warehouse business might turn out to be a success, he was willing to move his house to Kadıköy.

since our meeting with Hasanzâde Mustafa Nuri Efendi regarding entrepreneurs, I have been looking for information at the han while searching for motives that will make it impossible to say that Turkish entrepreneurs are unproductive with a warehouse commensurate with our national pride and that will attract general interest, in a suitable location. I expect a definite success in a couple days with the encouragement and motivation of your highness. Sir, I tender my respects with my offers for informing your patriotic sides regarding the issue at its conclusion. (30 Mayıs 1330 / May 12, 1914) Mataracızâde İlyas³⁰⁵

The letter was written to the bank's management in response to a correspondence forwarded to İbrahimzâde Brothers, merchants in Büyük Yeni Han, where the brothers also had their office. The content of the letter referred to was related to the issue of a forwarding agency, which had previously been discussed between İlyas and Hasanzâde Mustafa Nuri Efendi, who was a local notable merchant in textiles and manufactured goods and was also one of the founders of the bank.³⁰⁶ This points not only to the brothers' familiarity with certain said Hasanzâde Mustafa Nuri Efendi, but also to their interest in a new line of business, namely that of a forwarding agency. If we remember that the forwarding agents within the brothers' network were all non-Muslims, as shown in chapter five, a forwarding agency was a "new" line of business, which not only appealed to Muslim entrepreneurs but was also typical of the activities they were encouraged to engage in. Although the encouraging approach of the bank's management towards Muslim entrepreneurs might be suggested as the main motivation for İlyas' enthusiasm to work with this particular credit institution, despite the presence of a branch of the Ottoman Bank in

³⁰⁵ See Appendix R for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter.

³⁰⁶ Gündüz, "1909-1930 Yılları Arasında Anonim Şirket Olarak Kurulan Bankalar."

his proximity, his familiarity with one of the founders of the bank and the consequent hope for better credit conditions are also worth considering.³⁰⁷

The letter began with a reference to the said correspondence, which also revealed the explicit intention of the bank to support Muslim trade as a credit institution, and went on congratulating and thanking the bank management for their good will with respect to Muslim trade. The thoughts behind this gratitude were also shared: because it was a time of progress for Turks, any support for their progress was worth appreciation: "...I congratulate and thank your highness for your kindness with respect to Muslim trade. (Because it is a time of awakening for Turks.)..."³⁰⁸ What was actually being promoted and appreciated reciprocally was the "awakening" (*intibâh*) of Turks as entrepreneurs to the market economy or, in other words, to capitalism. As an already "awakened" Muslim-Turkish subject of the Empire, İlyas was able to assess the significance of Hasanzâde Mustafa Nuri Bey's letter regarding the opportunities it might have had to offer.

The letter continued with İlyas' declaration that, ever since their conversation with Hasanzâde Mustafa Nuri Efendi regarding Turkish entrepreneurs, he had been looking for information at the han, while looking for a warehouse. The warehouse business was supposed not only to be commensurate with national pride, but also to attract general interest. İlyas' reference to the nation and to public

³⁰⁷ The aforementioned pamphlet *İzmir Tüccaran ve Esnefan-ı İslamiyyesine Mahsus Rehber* refers to banks that cut off their credit operations with Muslim merchants, without providing any identification. Due to the publication place of the pamphlet, one might suggest that it could be referring to the banks in Smyrna but still further research is required as current literature on the banks of the period does not testify for the accuracy of this statement. *İzmir 1876 Ve 1908 (Yunanca Rehberlere Göre Meşrutiyette İzmir)*, 117.

³⁰⁸ "...Ticaret-i İslamiyye hakkındaki teveccühâtınızdan dolayı zat-ı asilanelerini tebrik eder ve takdim-i teşekkürat eylerim. (Çünkü Türkler için devr-i intibahdır.)..." See Appendix R for the rest of the letter.

demand positioned his search for a new business opportunity within the context of the “National Economy”. As the coincidence of self-interest and public good was one of the main claims of the “National Economy” doctrine, İlyas’ individual commercial endeavor gained national status because it would serve a public demand. İlyas also connected his search for a warehouse to a search for motives that would make it impossible to say that Turkish entrepreneurs were unproductive: “...I am searching for motives that would make it impossible to say that Turkish entrepreneurs are unproductive with a warehouse, commensurate with our national pride and that will attract general interest, in a suitable location...”³⁰⁹ Once again, his commercial endeavors were promoted to a national level: his efforts were nothing but a fight against the well-accepted perception of Muslims as being unproductive. He packaged his commercial efforts in a national discourse to get a share of the opportunities created during the promotion stage of a “National Economy”. What we read in the letter is the rise of nationalism through the celebration of individualism and opportunism for very individual ends but still in the service of the nation.

The warehouse was supposed to attract a general demand as would be expected in a free market economy, but there was also the expectation that it would progress rapidly because it was a Muslim enterprise as explicitly elaborated in the quotation above. The proposition of the Muslim supply, as a response to the assumed Muslim demand, turns the brothers’ ethno-religious identity into an instrument justifying and at the same time serving the ruling economic policies of

³⁰⁹ “...münasib bir mahalde şeref-i millimizle mütenasib ve rağbet-i umumiyyeye mazhar olacak bir anbar ile Türklerin müteşebbislerinin akim olduğunu söyletirmeyecek amiller araştırmakdayım...” See Appendix R for the rest of the letter.

the period. In this regard, the brothers who were already awakened to the market economy, this time were awakening to the opportunities that the “National Economy” might have to offer, while at the same time serving its development. Considering their “Muslim-Turkish” identity an asset for an enterprise and feeling the urge to bring it upfront served not only the “National Economy” program at its promotion stage, but also the internalization of a discourse used for its promotion. This was not an uncommon service provided by the Muslim-Turkish entrepreneurs of the period. The ethnic identity of the enterprise was also underlined in the advertisement of a Muslim-Turkish pharmaceutical and spice warehouse owned by a certain Ömer Lütü, by labeling it as “the only Turkish warehouse” (See Appendix S).³¹⁰ This case reaffirms the aforementioned assumed Muslim demand for Muslim supply, as well as İlyas’ entrepreneurial enthusiasm.

In this section I have discussed the operation of a nascent “National Economy” on a discursive level as an invitation to a nascent Turkish nationalism. Creating expectations for the presence of a Muslim demand for a possible Muslim supply in different areas of the economy and encouraging Muslim entrepreneurs to take action in prevision of this supply were the preliminary offers of a nascent “National Economy”. These discursive entrepreneurial offers may be seen as calls for partaking in a larger project, that of nascent Turkish nationalism. It is hard to deny the possible appeal of these offers to Muslim entrepreneurs who had to control their ambitions until the Young Turk Revolution. The level of awareness of the Muslim commercial firm under scrutiny in this work or similar others of the wider project as they were growing an appetite and enthusiasm for these entrepreneurial

³¹⁰ Hüseyin Rıfat, *İzmir 1914* (İzmir: Akademik Kitabevi, 1997), 12.

calls is open to discussion and speculation. Nevertheless, attributing them a full awareness would introduce a teleological reading and hence, a risk of anachronism into the picture as we would only be projecting a well-known end onto the beginning.

World War I: an Epilogue and a Prologue

The outbreak of war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia after the assassination of the Habsburg heir apparent Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, immediately translated into İlyas' commercial world as a new excuse to be exploited in the collection of debts owed to them and also as a factor contributing to the already existent financial hardships of the times. In his comminatory and vituperative letters to his various commercial partners in the provinces, he referred to the war first as "this Austria war issue" (*bu Avusturya harb meselesi*) and the following time as "that Australia war combat" (*şu Avustralya harb muharebesi*) as of the third day following its outbreak. His confusion getting settled within the following days, the war eventually acquired a central position around which the rest had to evolve and remained so till the last letter dated November 25, 1914 (12 *Teşrin-i Sani* 1330).

While following what was happening in the world, İlyas' focus was still on commercial matters, which can also be suggested as an indicator of his familiarity with war situations. This does not come as a surprise, given the already experienced Italian-Turkish and Balkan Wars. I assume such a familiarity to be valid in relative terms for each and every Ottoman subject of the period. İlyas, in his letters to his

commercial partners in the provinces, constantly highlighted his financially underprivileged position due to his presence in the center, Istanbul. Trying to explain the financial pressure war added to the already existent hardships of the times, İlyas was also touching upon the significant differences between commercial practices in the center and in the provinces:

As you know, now also came up that Australia (*sic*) war combat. As you know, in such times, there happens immense stagnation and it affects Istanbul the most. Our hardship would have been more than enough but now this happens. There is no need to describe the hardships of money anymore. If you were here, you would see and understand much better, my brother. I am in deep need for money. I beg you, urgently, much money.³¹¹

You also write that there is no tolerance with me. Rest assured, I always wish for tolerance for you. However, the times do not tolerate. Brother, they hardly permit us twenty-four hours here. Do not think of yourself only. Think about my situation once. Now that the Austria (*sic*) wars started, do not even ask. It is not possible to describe the stagnancy of money by writing about it. As you know, such things affect Istanbul the most. I beg of you, you look after me these days my highly esteemed. It is required that you send me more than your debts these days.³¹²

One wonders whether the immediate actual impact of the outbreak of the war on the capital market was as harsh as İlyas claimed in the quotations above. There is also the possibility that he might have been projecting his general expectations from the outbreak of a war based on his previous commercial experience in Istanbul during the Balkan Wars. Nevertheless, his narration of his observations during his daily

³¹¹ “Malumunuz bir de şu Avusturalya harb muharebesi çıktı. Malumunuz böyle zamanlarda İstanbul’da pek ziyade tesirat olub, fevkalade kedadlık olur. Bizim darlığımız yetişürdi, bir de bu çıktı. Artık paradan olan sıkıntıyı tarife hacet yokdur. Burada olsanız ancak görür anlardınız biraderim. Bütün bütün paradan boğuluyorum, çok rica ediyorum, acele birçok para para.” (18 Temmuz 1330 / July 31, 1914).

³¹² “...Bir de yazıyorsunuz, siz de müsaadeden hiç eser yok felan. Emin olunuz, size karşı daima müsaade etmek arzu ederim. Lakin ne çare ki vakitler müsaade etmiyor. Birader bize burada yirmi dört saat zor müsaade ederler. Yalnız kendinizi düşünmeyiniz. Bir kere de benim mevkimi düşününüz. Şimdi de şu Avusturya harp muhabereleleri çıktı ki sorma. Artık paradan kedadlık yazmakla tarif olmaz. Malum-u alinizdir ki, İstanbul’a böyle şeylerin tesiri fevkalade olur. Rica ederim bu sıralar da, siz beni gözediniz azizim. Bana bu sıralar borclarınızdan ziyade para göndermeniz lazımdır...” (19 Temmuz 1330 / August 1, 1914)

route, which passed through important commercial and financial centers of Istanbul like Eminönü and Banks Street (*Bankalar Caddesi*), testified to his reiteration of increasing stagnation and shortage of cash in Istanbul.

İlyas' observations of the market were mostly related with the immediate impact of the outbreak of the World War I on the financial situation, especially the banks in the capital. His first witness was that of the immediate reaction of the clients of the Wiener Bankverein (Viennese Union of Banks) which was an Austrian Bank, to the outbreak of the Austrian-Serbian war: a rush to withdraw their money from their accounts.³¹³ This was followed by the declaration of a moratorium for a period of one month on August 3, 1914, a day after the signing of the German-Ottoman alliance and Germany's declaration of war on Russia. As the moratorium included all debts and contracts, including deposit accounts,³¹⁴ it had its immediate impact on the operations of banks with their clients. İlyas summarized the financial situation in the capital in a sentence: "Because of the current affairs, there is horrendous stagnancy in Istanbul today. The banks, etc. are not paying any money."³¹⁵ Due to the moratorium, banks had decreased the amount of their daily payments regardless of the amounts deposited. As narrated by İlyas, the Ottoman Bank started paying twenty liras per day per account. Based on his immediate witnessing of the situation of the market in Istanbul, İlyas felt the urge to inform

³¹³ "Bu sabah bu saate karşuya geçdim. Köprü ayağında Denizbank önünde bakdım bir galebelik ahali toplanmış, sordum. Osturya bankı olduğu için herkes parasını çekiyor söyledi. Bu sıra mümkün mertebe para vermemek lazımdır biraderim ve mümkün olduğu kadar da bir para bulunmalı biraderim..." (19 Temmuz 1330 / August 1, 1914)

³¹⁴ Edhem Eldem, *A History of the Ottoman Bank* (Beyoglu Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Historical Research Center ; Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey, 1999), 265.

³¹⁵ "Ahval dolayısıyla İstanbul'da bugün dehşetli kedadlık vardır, katiyyen bankalar saireler on para vermiyorlar." (21 Temmuz 1330 / August 3, 1914)

both of his brothers, but in differing tones and details. He wrote to his elder brother, Ali in Rize:

“Wars are also going very bad. Let’s see what will happen. Let’s hope for the best. Nowadays, everywhere is tight, in hardship and in worry. Much attention is necessary for collecting money, my brother.”³¹⁶

In a consequent letter written on the exact same day, August 1, he informed his younger brother, Cemil in Manchester in a less dramatic tone:

“...Of course, you are informed about the world affairs, you read the papers.

Newspapers there write more explicitly and clearly. Due to such turmoil of the current affairs, the markets are very irregular and complicated as well...”³¹⁷

His immediate advice to his elder brother Ali in Rize was to hoard money, meanwhile disbursing debts: “In line with this turmoil, it is necessary to stash money and also to pay debts. It is much rather necessary to stash my brother.”³¹⁸

The declaration of a moratorium resolved his hesitancy regarding payments of debts and his focus remained on the collection of money due rather than on the payment of debts. At the outbreak of the war, due to the political and economic ambiguities regarding immediate future, İlyas ended up suggesting the exact same survival strategy, previously adopted by his Greek debtors after the coup d’état organized by the Young Turks as explained in the previous section: to interrupt payments and to try to collect and stash as much cash as possible. He particularly warned his

³¹⁶ “Muharebeler de pek fena gidiyor. Bakalım nasıl olacak? Hayırlısı bu sıralar her yer kedad ve darlıkda, endişededir. Para tahsiline çok dikkat lazımdır biraderim.” (19 Temmuz 1330 / August 1, 1914)

³¹⁷ “...Tabi ahvallerden malumatınız vardır, gazete okursunuz. Ora gazeteleri daha açık ve muntazam yazarlar. Ahvallerin böyle karışık geçmesi sebebiyle piyasalar pek biçimsiz, karışıktır...” (19 Temmuz 1330 / August 1, 1914)

³¹⁸ “Para bu karışıklıklara nisbeten hem saklamak lazımdır, hem borç tediye etmek lazımdır. Daha ziyade saklamak lazımdır biraderim.” (19 Temmuz 1330 / August 1, 1914)

brothers not to accept any other kind of payment than cash due to the general problems faced with banks with respect to payments.

İlyas was particularly concerned that Cemil might fall short of money in Manchester. Receiving a telegram from him that explained his dire need for cash, İlyas, in his answer immediately warned him to be cautious about his money and not to pay any debts whatsoever, no matter how pressed he might be. Trying to raise the possible impacts of the current war situation on their near future to his younger brother's attention, especially possible problems that may be faced in sending him money, İlyas jotted down all possible disaster scenarios to convince him of the importance of collecting and keeping as much money as possible, particularly in his situation:

It seems that you do not have any pocket money left. Be cautious, if there may be money coming in, in no way should you use it to pay debts. Be relaxed. May it be Alyanak or others, they may try to claim money, they may pressure you as they are impudent and also because you are inexperienced, shy. You tell them in a relaxed manner that there is a moratorium in Turkey, they do not give or send me any money. In no way should you feel embarrassed. Tell them, what can we do? This is the way the world is and so I am. Be relaxed, do not feel pressured my brother...

This is the war and the world. One never knows, postal services may not function, money may not be transferred. Banks also may not accept it and hence, it may be impossible to send money. It may be impossible to send money as it may be impossible to find it. It may be possible to find money but impossible to send it. Therefore, everything is based on hope and possibility in this time. If possible, try to draw one or two liras from one or the other my brother.³¹⁹

³¹⁹ Görünüyor ki, harçlığınız kalmadı. Tedbirli bulununuz, gelecek para olursa katiyen borca vermeyiniz. Serpez olunuz, Türkiye’de moratoryum vardır, para vermiyorlar, göndermiyorlar. Söylersiniz serpezce, Alyanak olsun, diğerler olsun, siz acemisiniz, mahcubsunuz diye, onlar utanmazlar, para tahsile gayret eder, sizi sıkıştırırlar. Katiyen sıkılmayınız, söylersiniz ne edelim, bütün alem ve sizin başınızdadır. Serpez olunuz sıkılmayınız biraderim... Bu muharebedir ve dünyadır, alemdir, belli olmaz, posta olmaz, para gönderilemez. Banka da kabul etmez, gönderilemez. Para bulunmaz, gönderilemez, bulunur, gönderilemez. İşte bu zaman için her şey ümid ve ihtimaldir. Mümkün ise birer lira, ikişer lira ötekenden berikenden çekmeye çalışınız biraderim.

The incident of İsmail Reiszâde Zühdi Bey's check also provides a good illustration of the difficulty of money transfers around the time of the outbreak of the war, which would become almost impossible later. It also illustrates the flow of money between three main branches of the Ottoman cotton market: the provinces, Istanbul and Manchester, as discussed in the previous chapter. İsmail Reiszâde Zühdi Efendi, who was a local notable merchant in Ünye, sent Cemil a check for 128 Ottoman liras in return for the textiles he had forwarded him. The check was to be cashed by Asayasi and Co. in Istanbul. Cemil sent the check to İlyas, attached to his letter dated July 25, three days before the outbreak of the war; so that he would cash it and send him back the amount in English pounds. İlyas, receiving the check exactly within a week on August 1, three days after the outbreak of the war in Europe, immediately contacted the owners of the check, who claimed that they did not hear anything from İsmail Reiszâde Zühdi Efendi regarding the payment. İlyas, being unable to cash the check with Asayasi & Co. and also with the Deutsche-Orient Bank in a later attempt, sent İsmail Reiszâde Zühdi Efendi consequent telegrams and letters to convince him to cancel the check and instead, forward the amount due as cash, in a bundle by mail, which did not happen till at least the end of the period covered by the correspondence, that is the end of November.

The problems faced with banks in payments in general after the declaration of a moratorium forced the exploitation of an alternative means of money transfer, which was considered to be more reliable in its operations than the banks; that of the postal system. Replacing banks, the Post Office turned out to be *the* means for money transfers. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the war also had its implications on the postal system as also explained in the previous chapter; operations within the

Empire were slightly better than the transfers to foreign destinations. İlyas was suggesting ‘urgent’ (*müstacel*) telegrams instead of ‘regular’ (*âdi*) ones as the latter started running late. Meanwhile, the arrival of letters from Manchester started to take almost two weeks and more, whereas it used to take only a week.

The day of the declaration of a moratorium was also the first day of mobilization which also had its immediate impact on the brothers’ agenda as all men between the ages of 20 and 45 were immediately called for military service. Nevertheless, the government allowed paid exemption on August 8. Although İlyas was eligible for paid exemption as he had not gone through the drill yet at the time, he started searching for positions and trades that were exempt from military service such as bakeries, barbers and shipping companies to avoid any kind of payment, meanwhile regretting his belatedness in considering these options. Among the shipping companies he considered registering for were Hilal and Gümüşciyan. Although he paid a couple of visits to Gümüşciyan to register himself for positions exempt from military service, he ended up paying to be exempted. It was not possible to exempt Ali from military service as he had already gone through the drill. İlyas gave a petition for Cemil explaining his presence in Manchester.

İlyas’ attempts to exempt himself and his brothers from not only military service but also paid exemption gave no support at grassroots level to “the deep conviction that the country’s survival could be secured only on the battlefield” as reflected by the elite through publications in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars.³²⁰ On the contrary, they set failing examples for national mobilization just like many

³²⁰ See Aksakal, chapter two, for a well-elaborated discussion of the focus of the Ottoman political writing on the mobilization of all segments of society in the defense of the empire after the Balkan Wars.

other male heads of households for whom the welfare of their families came before the welfare of the state. The consequent wars the Empire had to go through should also have an impact on the male reluctance to join the military service and hence, the failure of “the movement of awakening” (*hareket-i intibahiye*); “a process that could equip the people with patriotic passion and industry to fend off the dangers the empire faced”.³²¹ As commercial subjects of the Empire, the brothers’ interest laid more on the economic side of the “awakening” process, as the previous section clearly elaborated.

Despite the dramatic political, social and economic events taking place within and outside the Empire, the brothers continued with their business: İlyas kept on informing his partners in the provinces regarding merchandise available for purchase in Istanbul, he continued to discuss Ali’s wish to buy a ship, which he had completely opposed before, now with enthusiasm due to its possible allowance for exemption from military service and even suggested the United States as the address to buy it, while complaining to Cemil about the high prices and low qualities of the samples he sent... These instances point not only to the continuation of life despite everything, but also to their grip on the future regardless of all the doubts attached to it. Most of all, they point to the continuation of life as “normal” as possible in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars despite the outbreak of the World War I. Other than the expulsion of certain Greek traders, the commercial letters under scrutiny provides a history of continuity rather than rupture regarding the commercial practices of the network. It deprives us off the imprints of a rupture embedded in Turkish history due to a particular sub-periodization of the Young

³²¹ Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914 : The Ottoman Empire and the First World War*, 19.

Turk era, which bases itself solely on political developments of the period: 1908-1913 and 1913-1918.³²² Such a periodization makes it impossible even to imagine the possibility of such a commercial environment in the aftermaths of the Balkan Wars. The conclusion of this section will continue with the discussion on the sub-periodization of the Young Turk era.

İlyas referred to the World War I as the “War of Europeans” (*Avrupalılar muharebesi*) or the “War between infidels in Europe” (*Avrupa’da kefereler beyninde muharebe*). These phrases provide us insights regarding the perception of the war at grass roots level: İlyas perceived it as a war between “Europeans” in “Europe” and hence, as an intra-European war, rather than a war within which the Ottoman Empire would turn into one of the major actors. The arrival of the two legendary German battle-cruisers, *Goeben* and *Breslau* in Istanbul³²³ raised İlyas’ suspicions regarding the Ottoman Empire, which he referred to as Turkey, entering the conflict. Interpreting the current situation as a war only between France and Germany, he wished for the victory of the latter as the best possible scenario in favor of the Empire. Based on his comment, one can argue for İlyas’ awareness of the German-Ottoman alliance to explain his pro-German sentiments, which were promoted by the political elite of the period.³²⁴ It is also significant that he considers

³²² Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey : A Modern History*, 3rd ed. (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 4.

³²³ Aksakal’s work enlightens the controversial escape of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* battle-cruisers into the Ottoman Straits. Based on Baron Hans von Wangenheim’s report, the German ambassador in Istanbul, Aksakal claims that it was Enver Pasha who requested that the two warships join the Ottoman fleet in Istanbul. His request was supported by both the German ambassador and the German general Otto Liman von Sanders, the head of the German military mission to the Ottoman Empire. Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914 : The Ottoman Empire and the First World War*, 103.

³²⁴ Talat Bey, the Ottoman Minister of Interior, in his explanation of how the Ottoman Empire entered the War in his memoir, underlines the common belief on the Ottoman side that Turkey would preserve its presence and sovereignty only in an undefeated Germany and Austrian alliance.

the Empire's alliance with Germany a safety valve against possible internal conflicts before a possible foreign intrusion. İlyas interprets a possible French defeat of Germany as the starting point of internal conflicts within the Empire before the others and the beginning of *the* eventual end. This interpretation points to an expectation of possible revolts of the Greek and Armenian communities against the Ottoman State. Leaving aside the connection between İlyas' perception and reality aside, our focus will remain on the presence of such an expectation, which actually points to a perception of a decline in the loyalty of the Greek and Armenian communities to the Ottoman State on the Muslim side. Nevertheless, İlyas could not help wonder whether and with whom the Ottoman Empire would fight. In his perception, the Ottoman Empire appears as a possible actor only if Germany were to lose:

War: Today the battle-cruisers, *Goeben* and *Breslau* arrived in Istanbul. I wonder who we are going to fight with. If Germany wins, Turkey may perhaps be at ease. God forbid, if it does not, Turkey will be in ruins. Then, there will not be any need to fight with other states. Turkey will not even be able to cope with the Greeks or the Armenians. God forbid, Germany is doing well for the time being. God willing, it will go like this all the way and will win. For the time being, it looks like a war between France and Germany. God willing, Germany will defeat France. When it defeats it, it looks like it is not going to fight with us, maybe Russia, maybe others. May God facilitate whatever is beneficial for us. Amen. What can you do, there is no reason to worry about it. This is the way of the world, the way of man. May God facilitate whatever is beneficial for us. Amen. With the respect due to the Prophet Muhammad, Amen, o Helper.³²⁵

Paşa Talât and Alpay Kabacalı, *Talât Paşa'nın Anıları*, 3. baskı. ed., Anı Dizisi (Cagaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), 36.

³²⁵ “Muharebe: Bugün Goben ve Brestav zırhlıları Dersaadet’e gelmiştir. Acaba biz kimle muharebe ideceğiz? Alman galib gelürse, Türkiye belki rahat olur. Allah muhafaza itsün galib gelmezse, Türkiye işi bütün harabdır. Devletlerle muharebeye hacet kalmayub, Türkiye yalnız Rumlarla, Ermenilerle baş idemeyecekdir. Allah muhafaza itsün, şimdilik Alman iyi gidiyor, inşallah tamamıyla böyle gidüb, galib gelür. İş şimdilik Fransız, Alman muharebesine intizar idiyor. Alman, Fransız inşallah mağlub ider. Mağlub etdiğinde bizimle muharebe etmez, görünüyor. Bilmem Rusla, bilmem diğerle cenab-ı hak hakkımızda hayırlısını nasib-i müyesser eyleye. Amin. Ne çare katiyen merak etmeğe gelmez. Dünya ahvali, insanları alemi böyledir. Allah hakkımızda hayırlısını nasib-i

İlyas' witnessing of the soldiers embarking on ships on the Bosphorus two days after the arrival of the battle-cruisers, *Goeben* and *Breslau*, rang the bell for a possible Ottoman attack on Russia and made him finalize his decision regarding the near future welfare of the family, about which he was worried ever since the outbreak of the war: Ali should send the Rize branch to Istanbul with food supplies consisting of hard biscuit, braised meat etc., sufficient for almost eight months. His decision was notified through a telegraphic note.³²⁶ Although the amount and type of food mentioned looks like the supplies for troops with around 150 okes (almost 200 kg) of hard biscuit, braised meat etc., the size of the order can also be explained by the level of panic and the expected duration of the war. Such a caution should not appear as a surprise if we remember the Ottomans' familiarity with war situations since the beginning of the decade. İlyas, also aware of the largeness of the amount, warned his brother Ali to present it as supplies for troops dispatched to Trabzon in case anyone would ask. Underlining the significance and the urgency of this task, İlyas phrased it as an occasion to regret in case they might fail to accomplish. A similar secrecy was also acknowledged for the move of the extended family from Rize to Istanbul. İlyas even offered an alternative explanation to be used against curious inquiries about the family's move:

...You tell to those who hear about their [the family's] move to Istanbul and question the reason behind: Now, I am a soldier, if they let me, it is only provisory. It is not clear how many days I will be able to stay. It may happen that they call me back tomorrow; nevertheless I always wanted to send them [the family] to Istanbul. My mother is not well. If possible, she may also go

müyesser eyleye. Amin. Bihurmet-i hazreti seyyidilmürselin. Amin, ya Muin.” (3 Ağustos, 1330 / August 16, 1914)

³²⁶ See Appendix T for the modern Turkish transcription of the telegram note.

to the thermal spring in Bursa. Although this is not the time to spend money, it is the time to go. That is why I am sending them...³²⁷

The level of secrecy, which was considered almost as a given in their commercial practices and which also reappeared previously in the brothers' discussion of the Greek expulsions from the Empire, points to two issues. First of all, it once again reminds us of the slow pace at which even hot news travelled in the absence of proper connections with the capital. Secondly, it points to the significance of self-interest not only in commercial practice but also in life in general. The brothers' interest in family did not extend beyond their parents despite the large size of the extended family. The protection of their own branch of the family and of their business, itself centered on the family, appears to have been the ultimate goal in the chaotic environment of the time.

İlyas' panic about a possible Russian occupation of the eastern Black Sea seems to have receded as he realized that the Empire's active participation in the war would still require some more time, at least a month. This underlines not only a certain level of familiarity with possible war situations once again, but also the fact that life was literally lived on a daily basis at the time. Crucial decisions regarding one's welfare and his family's had to be taken by rule of thumb even in the center, which may allow us to imagine the level of ignorance at grassroots level in the rest of the Empire. History did not prove İlyas' intuitions wrong and almost a month later, the Ottoman Empire entered the World War I with a Russian attack, which

³²⁷ İstanbul'a geleceklerine sebep ne olduğunu soranlara ve işidenlere söylersiniz. Ben şimdi askerim, beni bıraktılarsa muvakkat bıraktılar. Kaç gün kalacağım belli değildir. Olur ki yarın isterler, zaten bir de İstanbul'a göndermek isterdim. Validem biraz rahatsızdır. Olursa bir de Bursa ılcasına gider. Şimdi de mesarif vakti değilse de, tam gitmenin zamanıdır. Onun için gönderiyorum. (6 Ağustos 1330 / August 19, 1914)

followed the Ottoman attack against Odessa and Sebastopol, on the Black Sea coast of Anatolia beginning by the first day of November.³²⁸

I sent you a telegram today telling you to postpone the family's move here. Because, my brother, those days were extremely busy and it looked like the war with Russia would start any time soon. Because of that, I wrote that stringently, but these days, things seem looser. What I mean is that although the recruitment of soldiers is still going on regularly, it seems that even if the war might be with Russia, its beginning will take more than a month. Let me write you this, so that there will not be a need to write all the time and action can be taken accordingly. If the children will not be sent from here, I will write again if necessary. And you will see there as well, if the war with Russia begins, without considering any need for further communication, immediately send the father, mother and children with the first steamer. Or you can send them now, and they will have toured. As you wish, my brother.

³²⁹

İlyas was also worried about Cemil's situation. Meanwhile, discussing with his older brother whether he should stay in Manchester or head back home, he was trying to comfort his younger brother not to worry about anything and follow the other Ottoman Muslim traders regarding his return to the homeland. Within the first half of the month of September, both brothers were convinced that Cemil should return home. İlyas had some suggestions regarding the route he should follow once again based on information he was able to gather within his own environment by rule of thumb: "...My brother [Ali] wrote you to come whenever you may consider appropriate and convenient. Probably, it is appropriate to come. As you wish. I

³²⁸ Rize was under Russian invasion between March 6, 1916 and March 2, 1918. Sarıkaya, *Milli Mücadele Döneminde Rize*, 31-46.

³²⁹ Haneyi buraya nakli için tehir idiniz diye bir kıta telgraf bu gün tarafınıza keşide etdim. Zira biraderim o günler hakikaten dehşetli işler görülmekte idi ve bu gün yarın işin meydana çıkub Rusla muharebe başlayacağı görünmekte idi. O sebebden o kadar sıkı yazmış idimse de, bu günler işlerde bir gevşeklik görünüyor. Yani ne gibi faaliyet asker toplamak gine muntazam ise de, muharebe Rusla olsa bile daha bir aydan fazla süreceği görünmektedir. Şimdi size şurasını yazayım ki, her vakit yazmağa hacet kalmasun ve bu yolda hareket idilsün. Buradan çocuklar oraya gönderilmeyecek olurlarsa, ben de icabına gine yazarım. Siz de oradan bakarsınız, Rusla muharebe açıldığı anda artık tekrar yazmağa lüzum görülmeyüb, peder validem ve çocukları ilk vapurla hemen gönderirisiniz. Ve yahud şimdiden gönderirsiniz, gezmiş olurlar. Siz alem biraderim. (13 Ağustos 1330 / August 26, 1914)

heard here, in case you come, you should take the route to Holland and then to Germany. As a matter of fact, the German government buys tickets for passengers wearing a fez and sends them beyond the borders...”³³⁰ From some tips provided by the correspondence between İlyas and Ali, we learn that Cemil followed the route from Marseilles to Thessaloniki and arrived in İstanbul within the second half of the month of October.

Returning to the commercial activities of the brothers after the outbreak of the war, the manat (*moneta* in Russian),³³¹ which was one of the commonly used currencies of exchange - in addition to the Ottoman and English pounds - within the commercial transactions of the brothers especially with their partners in the eastern Black Sea, turned into merchandise itself. Due to the stagnation of commerce in general, exchanging manats against Ottoman liras appeared as an emerging market exploited by the brothers and their commercial partners in the eastern Black Sea. Selling in Istanbul the rubles that they bought in the eastern Black Sea, turned out to be their only active trade allowing for a cash flow during the first months of the war. For a full exploitation of this business option, İlyas was persistent on directing all the available cash of the trading house in its Istanbul and Manchester branches to the Rize branch. Due to the problems faced in wire transfers after the declaration of a moratorium, rubles were transported in bundles through the postal service between the eastern Black Sea and Istanbul.

³³⁰ “...Biraderim [Ali] tarafınıza yazdı münasib ve muvafık gördüğünüzde gelirsiniz. İhtimal ki gelmek muvafıktır. Siz alem. Burada işitdim, gelirsiniz. Hollanda’ya geçüb, o tarikle Almanya tarikiyle geliniz. Hatta Almanlar fesli gördükleri bir yolcuyu hükümet tarafından biletleri alınarak ta hududları haricine kadar gönderiyorlar...” (28 Ağustos 1330 / September 10, 1914)

³³¹ Manat was one of the currencies of exchange used in the Russian Empire.

“Manat: today they buy ten and a half manat for one lira in the market. You can buy eleven and a half or twelve manat for one lira. You buy and send and you do not keep the manat you buy with you. You send immediately so that we can change it on time. Circumstances are bad; send whatever you buy immediately by post.”³³²

Speculative operations on commercial opportunities that the war might create for the brothers’ business appeared gradually but with increasing significance in their daily agenda. Within the weeks following the outbreak of the war, İlyas’ initial commercial insights followed on prices: he was expecting an increase in the price of yarn during and after the war, while reporting on an already evident increase in the price of gas in Istanbul, which used to be imported from Russia. With the Russian Empire entering the World War I, Romania appeared as a possible alternative for importing gas. Ali wanted to become partners with a certain Mânizâde Hadji İbrahim Efendi, who was considering importing gas from Romania, as such a trade would allow them to stock gas, in case Romania would enter the war as well.

İlyas, hearing the decrease in the price of hazelnuts in Giresun by the end of August, suggested stocking around thirty to forty thousand okes (over fifty tons) of this product, and also underlined that they should be alert regarding similar opportunities. Meanwhile, Ali considered a partnership with a certain Sarı Mahmudzâde Eşref Efendi in Giresun with a view to export hazelnuts to the United States. He planned to send his younger brother Cemil from Manchester to the United States but the closing of the Dardanelles Straits in late September and the current problems in money transfers set obstacles to the realization of his plan. Still,

³³² Manat elyevm piyasada on buçuk manatı bir liraya alıyorlar. On bir buçuk veya on iki manatı bir liraya alabilürsünüz. Alub, gönderirsiniz ve aldığınız manatı yanınızda saklamayub, hemen gönderiniz, vaktiyle tebdil etdirelim. Ahval fenadır, aldığınızı hemen ba posta gönderirsiniz. (4 Ağustos 1330 / August 17, 1914)

he asked his brother Cemil to find out about the prices of both shelled and kernel hazelnuts in the United States while he was still in Manchester. Although the export of hazelnuts to the United States remained an idea, Ali was quite insistent on a partnership with the aforementioned Sarı Mahmudzâde Eşref Efendi, who was about to sell 2,000 sacks of hazelnuts to either Istanbul or Romania with a Greek partner.

The available collection of letters provides no evidence regarding the realization of any of the commercial projects developed around the idea of stocking supplies of crucial importance in a war situation. Such commercial ventures would have been considered within any war situation due to the gradual limitations and the eventual end brought to the circulation of goods, money and traders because of the closing down of the trade routes. Stocking subsistence goods appears to have been one of the only possible trading options available to replace inter-regional commercial transactions, which most probably were only interrupted according to the brothers' understanding. Nevertheless, today, we know that the outbreak of World War I had a much larger impact on the world economy, to the extent of bringing the first wave of globalization to an end. The passage below, in addition to displaying the level of panic, makes it quite explicit that the brothers were searching for commercial alternatives by rule of thumb as well they did in other daily matters. Despite their readiness to launch into any business possibility, İlyas sounded quite lost regarding where to begin:

...It is required to engage in whatever possible during this war time. There or here? If here, the flour business is convenient. Probably, there are also more convenient ones. If we engage in the flour business, the government

will confiscate, and seize every day. Now, it comes to my mind, it would not quite take supplies like flour, because it is the food of the nation.³³³

The brother in Rize, Ali, actually had an eye on the flour business way before the outbreak of World War I. By the beginning of the month of May, İlyas had suggested a certain Naci Bey, the former publisher of the *Meşveret* (Consultation) newspaper in Trabzon,³³⁴ as a possible partner. Naci Bey, after selling his printing house, had moved to Istanbul for possible business opportunities, but his interest mainly lay in the flour business. He had been introduced and recommended to İlyas as a notable and hardworking prospective partner by one of the brothers' well-trusted commercial partners, Giresunlu Sarı Mahmudzâde Eşref Efendi. İlyas had been encouraging his brother to engage in a partnership with this Naci Bey not only because he was convinced of his recommended qualities, but mostly because he saw a future in the flour business, the increase in the number of Muslim bakeries being one of the main incentives in this regard. Despite İlyas' insistence, the commercial correspondence under scrutiny provides no evidence regarding the realization of this partnership and the passage above was the last mention of this business opportunity.

By the beginning of the month of September, İlyas was convinced of the availability of business opportunities ready for exploitation in Istanbul but he had

³³³ “...Bu muharebe zamanı ne ise yapmak lazımdır. Orada mı, burada mı? Burada un işi muvafıktır. İhtimal daha münasibleri de vardır. Un işi yapılırsa ihtimal her gün hükümet hacz ider, alur. Şimdi hatırıma geldi, böyle un gibi erzağı pek almaz, zira millet gıdasıdır.” (6 Ağustos 1330 / August 19, 1914)

³³⁴ According to the information provided by Odabaşıoğlu, *Meşveret* (Consultation) Newspaper started to be published in Trabzon in 1909 and it was published twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays in *Meşveret* printing house. Naci Bey was cited as the licensee and the mandate manager in the masthead of the newspaper. The newspaper introduced itself as an “Ottoman newspaper serving thought and freedom.” (*Fikir ve hürriyete hadim Osmanlı gazetesidir.*) Cumhuriyet Odabaşıoğlu, *Trabzon, Doğu Karadeniz Gazete Ve Mecmuaları, 1869-1928* (Trabzon, Turkey: C. Odabaşıoğlu, 1987), 36-7.

also become aware that it would require reaching out to circles around the government. For this cause, the brothers would need to consult a couple of their acquaintances, one of them being the aforementioned Naci Bey, who had become the Trabzon deputy at Parliament by then. It was possibly through the help of this Naci Bey that the brothers would attempt to reach out to government circles, but once again, the correspondence offers no evidence regarding the realization of such a connection, as the passage below constitutes the last time his name was mentioned. Nevertheless, the need and will to reach out to government circles, which only appeared after the outbreak of World War I, points to the emergence of a new actor in the economic sphere, that of the government, as the ultimate buyer of subsistence supplies during the war period.

Business: Maybe, it is more convenient to do it here. Yes, there are a certain number of businesses, in case it may be done, the government will buy. It may be possible in case a part of the government might be reached through intermediary of Naci and Sudi. You come whenever you may consider convenient. Money is also needed for business.³³⁵

It is with the outbreak of the World War I that the indirect interference of the government to the economic sphere which began with the boycotts against non-Muslims and a discourse of “National Economy” turned into a direct one and eventually paved its way to a complete domination along the war years to follow. The creation of the expected “boom” in the number of Muslim entrepreneurs could only be achieved under the domination of the government over both political and economic spheres.

³³⁵ İş belki burada yapmak daha muvafıktır. Evet bir takım işler var ki, yapılsa hükümet alacak. Hükümetin bir tarafı Naci ve Sudi vasıt[asıyla](s.s.) bulunursa olabilir. Münasib gördüğünüzde gelürsünüz. İş için de para lüzumdur. (23 Ağustos 1330 / September 5, 1914)

Conclusion

This chapter, focusing on the dramatic instances depicted by the commercial correspondence under scrutiny, witnessed the interwar period between the Balkan Wars and the World War I. The main theme shared by all instances elaborately discussed above; whether they follow from the inner dynamics of the network such as the bankruptcy of a prominent merchant or broader contexts such as the economics and politics of the period, was the financial hardships of the times. This point is quite overlooked in discussions on boycotts against non-Muslims and their deportation from the Empire in the aftermaths of the Balkan Wars in the current literature, and instead, emphasis is put on nationalist motives dispersed by the political elite that are assumed to be simultaneously applauded and assimilated by the Muslim community of the Empire.

By referring to some of the instances discussed above this chapter attempts to question some of the basic assumptions of the current literature, which are not only in constant replication but are also used for broad generalizations and to support arguments in crucial discussions concerning the period. If the Muslim community were in full appreciation of, and in compliance with, the economic and political policies of the CUP in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, we need to understand why the brothers did not partake in the boycotts, why they attempted every possible way to get exempt from military service, or why they did not reach out to government circles despite their full awareness of the preliminary offers of a nascent “national economy” before the outbreak of World War I. Discussions evolving around these human predicaments pointed to the significance of human agency, which is also neglected in the discussions of the current literature. The

assumption of a full-fledged success of a nascent nationalism project immediately after the Balkan Wars argues for an immediate awareness and assimilation of national consciousness by the Muslim community all over the Empire evenly and simultaneously, disregarding the significance of local particular experiences or inexperience. Based on this assumption, the traders under study in this work appear to fail to meet the “desired” level of national consciousness. The context and frequency of such failures within the Muslim community of the period, though maybe hard to estimate, still require some consideration in order to better understand this complex and unstable period. This can only be achieved through a return to the significant role human agents played in such situations and revising the level of national consciousness that could possibly be reached taking into consideration the level of (il)literacy and the pace of mass communication at the time.

All the entrepreneurial attempts narrated in this chapter point to a discrepancy between the political economy discourse of the “National Economy”, seen as determining the economic discourse and program of the Second Constitutional Era and the commercial “reality” itself. Despite the lack of evidence regarding the exploitation of any of the business possibilities promised by a nascent “National Economy”, those instances highlight a few significant points. First of all, despite the rich literature based on the “National Economy” program and discourse referring to the active pro-Muslim stance and actions of the government in the economic sphere, the CUP still appears as a “ghostly” figure to the Muslim traders under scrutiny. The Greek traders appear as the only parties directly but negatively affected by this program. Other than the created but unfulfilled expectations and

promises, the instances narrated above display no direct or indirect support from the government, which may be explained through the distance of the brothers from such circles. This points to the presence of Muslim entrepreneurs, who were able to operate on their own feet just like their non-Muslim partners, be they Greek, Armenian, Jewish or of any other background, despite the presence of a nascent national propaganda and preliminary offers of a “National Economy”. Muslim traders who were also standing on their own feet just like their Greek or Armenian partners appear as economic actors within the imperial economic sphere even after the Balkan Wars. Commercial transactions between traders from different ethno-religious communities continued despite all the “harm” experienced during the former years. Hence, we do not necessarily owe the presence of Muslim entrepreneurs in the economic sphere of the Empire to the departure of their non-Muslim partners as suggested by Zürcher in his discussion of the meaninglessness of any sub-periodization for the Young Turk era based on economic developments:

A separate discussion, for example, of the growth of an industrial and commercial bourgeoisie in the Ottoman Empire and the early republic is meaningless without reference to the disappearance of the Armenians and the Greeks, which was caused by political and ideological developments, not by any underlying law of economics.³³⁶

This assumption is actually based on a lacuna in research on Muslim entrepreneurs, especially traders, due to absence of direct sources such as the commercial correspondence under scrutiny in this work, as thoroughly suggested and discussed in the introduction chapter of this work. This assumption is misleading for not only Turkish history but historiography as well. Concerning the Turkish history, it disregards the presence of maybe not a class, but a group of Muslim entrepreneurs

³³⁶ Zürcher, *Turkey : A Modern History*, 4.

integrated not only to the imperial commercial networks but also to the world economic system within their own limitations but through fair trade without the supportive hand of the government. Exploitation of this historically misleading assumption as a justification for periodization in Turkish historiography is even more problematic as historical works basing their arguments on this particular periodization are mainly replicating the aforementioned disregard.

Acknowledgement of the presence of Muslim commercial actors, before the departure of their non-Muslim partners, in the Ottoman economic sphere would require a new periodization based on a possible “underlying law of economics”, which will be discussed in the conclusion chapter to follow.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This work has recounted very dramatic and traumatic events through the eyes of three Ottoman Muslim traders within the course of the seven months covered by the commercial correspondence of the Mataracızâde trading house. Before going into my concluding remarks, I would like to briefly discuss the identity of these witnesses, an exercise which might normally be expected at the beginning of a work rather than its end. Nevertheless, this is a deliberate decision I have made in order to avoid the risk of a problématique on identities overshadowing a commercial history. İlyas' correspondence with his younger brother Cemil in Manchester is useful for an understanding of not only his perception of their common identity, but also their values, from morals to manners. The passage below shows that he had set as a goal for himself to remind his younger brother of his religion, his national allegiance, and his moral values. All his efforts seem to aim at the protection of İlyas' definition of a national Muslim identity, which encompasses practically everything: body, mind, business, duty, manhood, religion, national allegiance... İlyas' lessons to his younger brother on how to protect his identity, particularly in a foreign environment such as Manchester, can be traced intermittently throughout the whole correspondence under study. According to İlyas, the course of action to follow fell under two broad categories: Those that would increase "one's dignity, esteem, honor and reputation" and those "that might on the contrary reduce them" as stated

in the passage below. According to İlyas, it was the pursuit of the former that would bring one closer to the respect and love of God.

Protection: You should protect yourself very much. You should know your business, your duty, your accounts. Though there is no need for me to write these things to you, I have already written to you on all aspects. Show me what you've got, my brother. As I wrote you before, you should know about those things that may increase one's dignity, esteem, honor and reputation, and about those things that might on the contrary reduce them; and you should know about these, and be careful about them and remember them. I have already told you what the biggest source of esteem and pride for mankind is. Here, show me what you've got, my brother. Do not forget your national identity, do not ever forget it, do not. Whoever sees you, should praise you for that.³³⁷

In addition to protecting one's business, the protection of one's self also fell within the former category, and hence, among the courses of action one should pursue in life. According to İlyas, this had to start with the protection of the body, followed by that of the mind. While advising his brother not to worry about anything, including business, he also warned him not to fool away his time. Leisure was obviously not part of İlyas' understanding of a decent life in general, and of manhood in particular. He deliberately warned his brother against spending his time with women in Manchester. He believed that such a course of action would result in nothing but a loss of honor and a consequent loss of manhood, as he defined manhood through honor. According to İlyas, a man had to be conscious about his religion, his national allegiance and his manhood, or in other words, his honor, in order to deserve the esteem of others and, most of all, to deserve the love of God.

³³⁷ [Muh]afaza: Biraderim, kendinizi çok muhafaza ediniz. İşinizi, gücünüzü, vazifenizi, hesabınızı biliniz. Bunları size yazmağa hacet olmadığı gibi, evvelce dahi, her ciheti yazmışım. Biraderim, seni göreyim. Evvelce yazdığım vech üzere insanın kadrini kıymetini haysiyetini ve itibarını arttırıcı ve büyük itibarlar verdirici şeyler ile nakîsa verecek şeyleri biliniz, dikkat ediniz, muhafaza ediniz. İnsan için en büyük itibar ve iftihar etmek neler olduğunu dahi evvelce tarafınıza iŖar etmişim. İşte biraderim, seni göreyim. Milliyetinizi unutmayınız, unutmayınız, unutmayınız. Gören aferin söylesün. (21 Mart 1330 / April 3, 1914)

Protection of his manhood would also save Cemil from the pains of living abroad and from falling into misery in a foreign land, as suggested by a certain Panikyan, one of İlyas' Armenian partners. In one of his letters, İlyas supported Panikyan's suggestions with examples from his own, his elder brother's, and his fellow countrymen's experiences as bachelors:

Have your teeth fixed and take very good care of your body, my brother. God willing, you will be very relaxed and calm. Never, ever, should you worry about anything. Regardless of all, business, etc. stay calm and protect yourself. Nowadays, it is the holiday of English people there. Do not waste your time wandering around. I will write in all frankness, my brother. Do not look at girls or the like. God forbid, if one strays once, it is over. Even if he spends millions, it would not be worth anything and he would not be able to get back his honor or anything else, my brother. May God protect you, amen. A man should be a man. He should never be concerned or worry about such things. He should never spend a penny on such things. When one sees or meets one, one should not look at whether it is a girl or whatever. Even if she were a houri, one should not consider whether it is a girl or a man, beautiful or ugly. He should meet her as if he is meeting a man. One should not make the difference known, my brother. There is no need to write these things. As you know, these are the things that preserve a person's nobility, dignity, gravity and esteem. Nobody respects one who does not proclaim his religion, national allegiance, manhood; even God will not like him. God and everybody love those who preserve themselves while informed about these situations and live through any instance clean. God attains him the right way. I was talking to Panikyan today. He said; wherever one may be, above all, in England, if one does not attach any importance to girls or this and that, or waste one's time wandering around, if one shows his manliness completely, he will never suffer from estrangement or fall into misery. If he behaves seriously and shows his qualities of a man, even the family where he lives will consider him as a relative, a kin, a brother and will serve him. There, my brother, think about your brother Temel Ali. You also know me well. I was a bachelor in Istanbul for six years. Having no elder to admonish or advise me, on the contrary, you know the situation of our fellow townsmen, there were many fellow townsmen with a surprising life, in fact with a very surprising life. As you know, thank God, I had plenty of money. Thank God, I take pride in my situation today and at any moment. May God preserve us and all others.³³⁸ (25 Mart 1330 / April 7, 1914)

³³⁸ “Dışlerinizi yapdırır ve vücudunuzu çok güzel bakınız biraderim. İnşallah çok rahat ve serpezsiz Asla zinhar hiçbir şeyden sıkılmayınız. Ne olursa olsun iş saire gayet serpez bulunub, kendinizi muhafaza idiniz biraderim. Şimdi orada İngilizler bayramıdır. Boş yerlere dolaşub, gezmeyiniz. Açık yazacağım biraderim. Kızlara şuraya buraya bakmayınız. Cenab-ı Hak muhafaza buyursun, insan bir defa çırıyından çıkdı mı, geçdi. Daha milyonlar mesarif itse, para itmez ve

In short, according to İlyas, body, mind, business, duty, manhood, religion, national allegiance, were all to be protected for the respect and love of God. In this regard, all these components of İlyas' self perception, without any hierarchy among them, appear to be equally useful and indispensable in attaining the way to God. The clarity in the brothers' self perception of their religion, which was thoroughly discussed in chapter three, is missing when it comes to that of their national allegiance. The passages above are the only instances where İlyas mentioned the concept of nationality (*milliyet*) with a stress on Islam each time, rather than the Turkish identity that was promoted at the time. The term "Turkish" was mentioned only three times in the whole commercial correspondence, two of them being in a letter written - most probably by another party than the brothers themselves, as explained in the previous chapter - to the administration of the Adapazarı Muslim Commerce Bank. As also mentioned previously, among the names İlyas suggested for the warehouse business he contemplated, was '*Milli Osmanlı*' (National Ottoman), which also evokes the perception of a nation of Ottoman Muslims, but

namusunu, hiç birşeyini yerine getüremez biraderim. Cenab-ı Hak muhafaza buyursun. Amin. Erkek, erkek olmalı. Öyle şeylere asla temayyül ve ehemmiyet vermemeli. Öyle şeylere metelik vermemeli. Hatta görüldüğünde, tesadüf idildiginde kız mıdır, nedir diye asla zinhar bakmamalı. İsterse huri olsun, kız mıdır, erkek midir, güzeldir, çirkindir diye asla hatra bile getürmemeli. Adeta bir erkekle nasıl görüşülürse, öylece görüşmeli. Zerre kadar fark etdirmemeli, biraderim. Buralarını yazmağa hacet yok. Malumunuz işte bir insanın asaletini, haysiyetini, vakarını, itibarını, asıl muhafaza idici şeyler bunlardırlar. Dinini, milliyetini bilmeyen, erkekliğini bildirmeyen kimseye, kimse itibar etmez ve Cenab-ı Hak bile sevmez. Bu halleri bilüb kendini muhafaza eden kimseyi, herkes sever ve Cenab-ı Hak sever ve her an alnı açık olarak yaşar. Cenab-ı Hak, anı hidayete nail eder. Panikyanla bugün görüşüyordum. Söyledi ki, bir insan nerede olursa olsun, hele İngiltere'de kızlara, şuna buna asla ehemmiyet vermeyub, boş dolaşmazsa, erkek olduğunu tamamiyle icra iderse, asla gurbetlik ve sefillik görmez. Tamamiyle ciddi bulunub erkekliğini gösterirse, hatta bulunduğu ev ailesi bile emin olunuz, akraba gibi, hısmı, kardaşı gibi bakar ve son derece hizmet eder. İşte biraderim, biraderiniz Temel Ali'yi gözünüz önüne getiriniz. Sonra beni siz pek âla biliyorsunuz. İstanbul'da tam altı sene bekar idim. Asla büyüğüm, tenbih idici, nasihat verici kimsem olmadığı gibi, bilakis hemşeriler hali malumunuz, şaşırdıcı, hem ciddi şaşırdıcı hemşeriler pek çok idi. Malumunuz şükürler olsun, elimde de hesabsız para var idi. Cenab-ı Hakka çok şükür, bu halimle bugün ve her an iftihar ederim biraderim. Cenab-ı Hak bizi ve cümleyi muhafaza buyursun. Amin. (25 Mart 1330 / April 7, 1914)

not necessarily “Turks”. Based on these few instances, this work suggests that the brothers were more aware of their Ottoman Muslim identity than of their Muslim-Turkish identity, which was still at an early stage of construction and promotion in 1914 and hence, a “work in progress”.

Returning to the previous discussion at the end of chapter six regarding a new periodization based on a possible “underlying law of economics”, the rest of this section will discuss the formation process of this particular trading house and of its network under study. If they were not products of the “National Economy” program and discourse of the Second Constitutional Period as argued in the previous chapter, then we need to understand their formation process, which requires a travel back in time from 1914 to the beginning of the nineteenth century as the brothers represented the third generation of a mercantile family. In this regard, their commercial practices and mentality displayed in the previous chapters were an outcome of a commercial tradition accumulated over a century, rather than that of the “National Economy”, and this is probably also true of all or most of their commercial partners in the network, regardless of the religious or ethnic divides. If this is the case, then how shall we place this network in comparison to the description of large businesses in Turkey provided by Ayşe Buğra based in her study on state-business relations in Turkey?

Turkish big business firms do not have a long history. They are fairly recent enterprises that were formed mainly by individuals who were either small merchants or civil servants, with a very small initial capital outlay, and who had the support of their family and especially, the support of the state. What we have is, essentially, a state-created bourgeoisie that does not have a long tradition of wealth, social status or expertise in a given line of activity. It is a bourgeoisie that largely owes its social status to its relations with the state and it is mainly the nature of these state-business relations that determine the

behavioral characteristics of Turkish businessmen as reflected in the typical organizational structure of big business firms, the holding companies...³³⁹

The contrast between the profiles of the Republican entrepreneurs as defined in the passage above and those under scrutiny in this work points to a rupture rather than a continuity between the imperial and the Republican business cultures and practices. In current Turkish historiography, the rupture is always assumed in terms of non-Muslims, whereas this work argues the same for an Ottoman Muslim bourgeoisie in formation in integration to the world economy since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The “National Economy” program of the Second Constitutional period was to contribute to this formation process in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars resulting in the creation of a new group of entrepreneurs whose profile is different than those under study in this work. While, the former was getting created through violence, threat, and coercion as suggested through the boycott instance analyzed in the previous chapter, the already established latter was called for a transformation.

This work, based on the evidence provided and the discussions evolved around it, argues that although this rupture began with the indirect intervention of the government in the economic sphere in the wake of the Balkan Wars, the actual turning point was the outbreak of World War I. It was with the appearance of the government as an actor in the economic sphere right after this, and hence, the government’s direct intervention as the ultimate buyer of subsistence supplies during the war that “the support of the state” started to be taken for granted as a means of capital accumulation, and thus gradually led creation of a Muslim-Turkish bourgeoisie. In this regard, the boom in Muslim entrepreneurs targeted by the

³³⁹ Ayşe Buğra, "Tale of Two Cities: The Evolution of Istanbul Businessmen and Their Relations with the Ankara Government," *Boğaziçi Journal* 11, no. 1-2 (1997): 99.

“National Economy” program was to be accomplished after the beginning of World War I, yielding its real results during the Republican era.

The acknowledgement of the presence of an Ottoman Muslim bourgeoisie in formation and in integration with the world economy requires the development of a new periodization for the economic and business history of the Second Constitutional Period: The evidence in this work suggests that 1908-1914 and 1914-1918 might constitute a possible sub-periodization of the Young Turk era based on both economic and political developments of the period, rather than that of 1908-1913 and 1913-1918, which seems based solely on political developments.

APPENDICES

- A: Chronological List of the *Münşeât* Works Published between 1800 and 1914
- B: Table of Contents of *İnşâ-i Cedid* (New Composition) Published in 1269 (1852/1853)
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- O: Letter of Self-introduction
- P: Letter to a Commercial Partner
- Q: Letter to a Commercial Partner
- R: Letter to the Directorate of the Adapazarı Muslim Commerce Bank
- S: Advertisement of a Muslim-Turkish Pharmaceutical and Spice Warehouse
- T: Telegraphic Note

Appendix A: Chronological list of the *münşeât* works published between 1800 and 1914

	Author	Work	Place of publication	Year of publication	Publisher
1	Ebu Bekir Kani	Münşeât-ı Kâni		1215	
2	İbrahim Ganim	Münşeât		1216	
3		Münşeât		1217	
4	İbrahim Ganim	Badi'âtü'r-Rûmuz		1222	
5		Münşeât		1222	
6		Münşeât		1223	
7		Münşeât		1240	
8	Rıf'at Ebu Bakr, Kırımlı	Münşeât-ı Rıf'at Efendi	Mısır	1254	Bulak Matbaası
9	Akif Mehmed Paşa	Münşeât -hac-al 'Akif	İstanbul	1259	Matbaa-i Amire
10	Seyyid Mehmet Nesib	Münşeât -ı Nesib	İstanbul	1261	
11	Nu'man b. Osman Raşid	Münşeât	İstanbul	1261	Matbaa-i Amire
12	Muhammed İki Bayraklızâde Nesib	Münşeât		1261	
13	Akif Mehmed Paşa	Münşeât (Münecat el hac Akif Efendi)	İstanbul	1262	Matbaa-i Amire
14	Mehmed İzzet	İzzet Bey Münşeâtı	İstanbul	1263	Matbaa-i Amire
15	Feridun Ahmed	Mecmua-i Münşeât-ı Selatin	İstanbul	1264	Takvimhane-i Amire
16		Münşeât Mecmuası		1264	
17	Feridun Ahmed	Münşeât as-Salatin	İstanbul	1265	Takvimhane-i Amire
18		İnşa-i cedid	İstanbul	1269	Ceride-i Havadis matbaası
19	Ahmed Said	Hulasatü'l-Münşeât	İstanbul	1269	Matbaa-i Amire

20	Feridun Ahmed	Mecmua-i Münşeât-i Selatin		1274	
21	Rifat Mehmet Sadık Paşa	İnşâ	İstanbul	1275	Takvimhane-i Amire
22	İbrahim Fevzi	İnşâ-i Cedid	İstanbul	1277	Muharrem Efendi Destgahı
23		Muârrif-i İnşâ	İstanbul	1280	Tasvir-i Efkar Matbası
24	Nuri	Münşeât-ı Aziziye fî Asarı Osmaniye	İstanbul	1286	Muhit Matbası
25	Küçükçelebizade İsmail Asım Efendi	Münşeât-ı Asım Efendi	İstanbul	1286	
26	Numan Mahir	Münşeât-ı Numan Mahir	İstanbul	1286	Ali Rıza Efendi Matbaası
27	Üveys b. Muhammed	Münşeât-ı Veysi		1286	Vezirhani Matbaası
28	Nuri Sahaf al-Hac	Münşeât-ı Aziziye fî asarı Osmaniyye	İstanbul	1286	Muhib Matbaası
29	Muhammed Fevzi	Kevâib-i Şiir ve İnşâ	İstanbul	1287	
30	Osman Dukakinzade	Gülzar-ı Münşeât	İstanbul	1287	
31	İbrahim Fevzi	Meşkli İnşâ-i Cedid		1289	
32	Süleyman Hüsni Paşa	Mebaniyü'l-İnşâ	İstanbul	1289	Mekteb-i Harbiye Matbaası
33	Nuri Sahaf al-Hac	Münşeât-ı Aziziye fî Asarı Osmaniyye	İstanbul	1289	Vezirhanı Matbaası
34	Mehmed Rifat	İlaveli Nüzhet al- Münşeât		1290	
35	Mahmud b. Osman el-Bursevi Lamii Çelebi	Münşeât		1290	
36	Mehmed Rifat	İlaveli Nüzhetü'l- Münşeât		1292	

37	Nuri	Münşeât-ı Aziziye fî Asarı Osmaniyye	İstanbul	1292	Yahya Efendi Matbaası
38	Hüseyin Remzi	Nuhbetü'l- Münşeât		1292	
39	Mehmed Hilmi Emin	Divan-ı Münşeât	Trabzon	1293	Vilayet Matbaası
40		Münşeât-ı Osmaniye	İstanbul	1295	Amire Basımevi
41	Mihri	İlaveli Güldeste Muharrerat-ı Resmiyye ve Gayr-i Resmiyye Numuneleri	İstanbul	1300	Osmaniye Basımevi
42	Ahmed Asım	Numune-i İnşâ	İstanbul	1301	Mihran Matbaası
43	İbrahim Edhem	Fransızca Usul-i İnşa	İstanbul	1302	Bosnalı Hacı Muharrem Matbaası
44	Hasan Hıfzı	Münşeât-ı Hukuk	İstanbul	1302	E. K. Tozlıyan
45	Mihri	İlaveli Güldeste Muharrerat-ı Resmiyye ve Gayr-i resmiyye Tab-ı Cedid	İstanbul	1303	Hakkal Serviçan Matbaası
46	Hasan Hıfzı	Münşeât-ı Hukuk	İstanbul	1305	Matbaası Ebüziya
47	Nuri Abdülahad	Münşeât-ı Kavanin	İstanbul	1305	Karabet Matbaası
48	Beşir Fuad	Mektubat	İstanbul	1305	Mihran Matbaası
49	Mustafa Reşid Ahmed Rasim	Hazine-i Mekatib yahud Mükemmel Münşeât	İstanbul	1306	A. Maveyan Şirket-i Mürettebiyye
50	Ziya	Güzide-i Münşeât		1306	
51	Mihri	Muallim-i İnşa	İstanbul	1306	Nişan Berberyan Matbaası
52	Reşad Faik	Yeni Letaif-i İnşa	İstanbul	1307	Kasbar Matbaası

53	Mustafa Reşid Ahmed Rasim	Hazine-i Mekatip Yahut Mükemmel Münşeat	İstanbul	1307	Şirket-i Mürettebiyye Matbaası
54	Ahmed Rami	İnşayi Edebi ve Fenni yahut Tetebbuat ve Mekalat-i Rami	İstanbul	1308	İstapan Matbaası
55	Muallim Naci Ömer Hulusi	İnşa ve İnşad	İstanbul	1308	Şirket-i Mürettebiyye Matbaası
56	Yusuf Ziya	İlave-i Numune-i İnşa-i Türki ve Fransavi	İstanbul	1308	Kasbar Matbaası
57	Muhyi Adedin	Münşeat ve Muamelat-ı Askeriyye	Edirne	1308	Vilayet Matbaası
58	Emin	Çocuklara Münşeat yahud rık'a Hatt ile Mektub Numuneleri	İstanbul	1308	Kasbar Matbaası
59	Mehmed Rıfat	Mecami'ül Edeb. Usul-ü Kitâbet ve Hitâbet	İstanbul	1308	Kasbar Matbaası
60	Hasan Hıfzı	Münşeat-ı Hukuk	İstanbul	1309	Şirketi Mürettebiyye Matbaası
61	Mustafa Reşid Ahmed Rasim	Hazine-i Mekatib yahud Mükemmel Münşeat	İstanbul	1309	Mekteb-i Sanayi Enver Efendi Matbaası
62	Mustafa Reşid	İnşâ Muallimi	İstanbul	1310	
63		Hasiyeli İnşa	İstanbul	1311	Matbaa-i Osmaniyye
64	Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa	Münşaat-ı Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa	İstanbul	1312	Matbaa-i Osmaniyye
65	Ziver Paşa Ahmed Sadık	Divan ve Münşeat	Bursa	1313	Vilayet Matbaası

66	Ahmed Edib	Hanımlara Münşeât	İstanbul	1313	Kasbar Matbaası
67	Beşir Fuad	Mektubat	İstanbul	1313	Şefik Kitabhanesi sahibi Nusret
68	TürkHzade Hafız Mehmed Ziyaeddin	Münşeât ve Muamelat-ı Umumiyye yahud Mükemmel ve Mufasssal İnşâ-i Mülki ve Askeri	İstanbul	1314	
69	Süleyman Faik	Mektubat-ı Mektubi	Kastamonu	1314	Vilayet Matbaası
70	Mehmed Tevfik	Münşeât-ı Adliye	Beyrut	1315	al-Ünsiye Matbaası
71	Mehmed Fuad	Hanımlara Mahsus Usul-ü Kitabet ve İnşâ	İstanbul	1316	Artin Asadoryan Şirket-i Mürettibiyye Matbaası
72		İlm-i İnşâ	İstanbul	1316	Şirket-i Sahaife-i Osmaniyyenin 52 nolu Matbaası
73	M. H. Naci	Hazine-i Mektubat Yahud Mükemmel ve Mufasssal Münşeât		1318	Cemal Efendi Matbaası
74	Ahmed Rasim	İlaveli Hazine-i Mekatib yahud Münşeât	İstanbul	1318	Artin Asadoryan Şirket-i Mürettibiyye Matbaası
75	Ali Seyyidi	Kitabet-i Hususiye ve Tüccariyye Dersleri	İstanbul	1324	Matbaa-i Kütüphane-i cihan

76	Mihri	İlaveli Güldeste Muharrerat-ı Resmiyye ve Gayr-i Resmiyye Tab-ı Cedid	İstanbul	1327	Mahmud Bey Matbaası
77	Mihri	Muhtasar Gül- deste	İstanbul	1327	Mahmud Bey Matbaası
78	Mehmed Fuad	Usul-i Kitabet-i Resmiyye	İstanbul	1328	Artin Asadoryan Şirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası
79	Mehmed Fuad	Rehber-i Kitabet-i Osmaniyye yahud Mükemmel Münşeât	İstanbul	1328	Keteon Bedrosyan Matbası
80	Macid İlyas	İnşad ve hitabet	İstanbul	1330	Resimli Kitab Matbaası
81	Ahmed Rasim	İlaveli Hazine-i Mekatib yahud Mükemmel Münşeât	İstanbul	1331	Sancakyan Matbaası
82		İnşa-i Mergub		1339	
83		Mektubat	İstanbul	1338-1340	Evkaf Matbaası
84	Nizameddin Ali	Münşeât	Bakü	1344/1345	Azer Neşr Matbası
85	Kestelli, Raif Necdet	Yeni Mektup Numuneleri	İstanbul	1345/1346	Ahmed Kamil Matbaası
86	Abdurrahman Sami Paşa	İnşa-i Sami		n.a.	
87	Ahmed Said	Hulasatü'l- Münşeât		n.a.	
88	İzzet Mehmed	Cümle-i Salise-i Münşeât-ı İzzet	İstanbul	n.a.	

Source: Süleymaniye and Bayezid Public Libraries.

Appendix B: Table of Contents of *İnşâ-i Cedid* (New Composition) published in 1269 (1852/1853)

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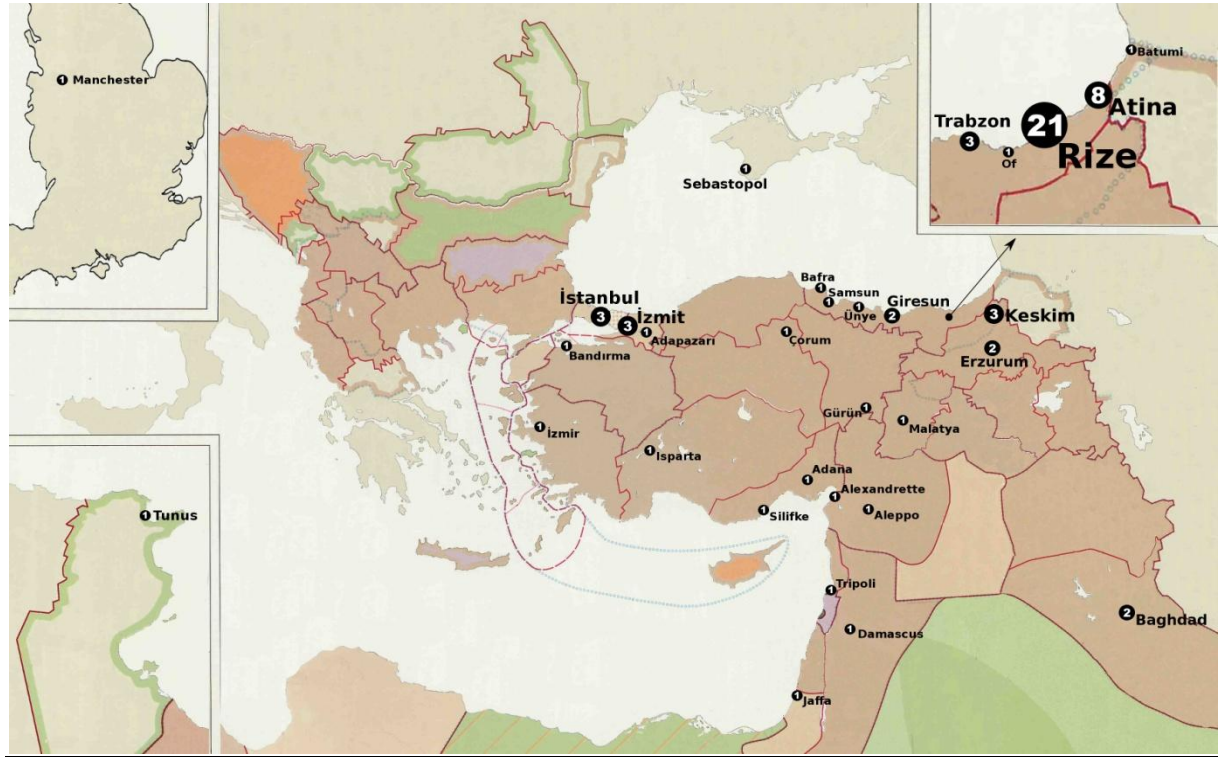
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Appendix C: The weekly program of *Ticaret Mekteb-i Alisi* curriculum published by *Matba-i Amire* in Istanbul, 1913/14 (1329)

Ticaret Mektebi Haftalık Ders Programı				
Esami-i Durus	1. sınıf	2. sınıf	3. sınıf	Mülahazat
İlm-i Hesab, Hesabat-ı Sarrafiye ve Cebr-i Ticari	4	2	1	
Malumatı ticari	2			
Usul-u Defteri (Usul-u Muhasebe)	4	2	3	3. de Fransızca tedris olunacaktır
Ticaretgah İdaresi		3	5	3. de Fransızca tedris olunacaktır
Hukuk-u Medeniye ve Ticaret Kanunları	2	2	1	
Tarih-i Ticaret	1			
Coğrafya Ticari ve İktisadi	3	2		1. de Fransızca tedris olunacaktır
Kimya Tahlili		1	2	
Fizik Tatbikatı		1	1	
Emtia-i Ticariyye	3	1		Fransızca tedris olunacaktır
İlm-i İktisad		1	2	
İhsabat			1	Fransızca tedris olunacaktır
Lisan-ı Fransızca	5	3		
Fransızca Muhaberat ve Vesaik-i Ticariyye		3	3	
Usul-u Maliye			2	
İstenografya ve Yazı Makinesi	1	1	2	
Almanca, İngilizce		3	2	
Yekun	25	25	25	

Appendix D: Geographical Distribution of Commercial Partners of the
Mataracızâde Trading House



Appendix E: Letter to a Commercial Partner

Bismillâh

Keskim Kazasının Erkenes Nahiyesinde tüccardan Budakzâde Ali Efendi'ye

Rifatlû Efendi

Mahsus selam idüb, hatrınızı istifsâr iderim. Hala borclarınızı tarafıma çıkardığınıza dair telgrafınızı alamadım. Siz burada bol bol vaadler yapıp oraya gitdiğinizde hepsini unuduyorsunuz. Nasıl oluyor? Size yazmakla anlatamıyorum. Bilmem başka vasıtaya mı havale idelim? Böyle halleri size hiç münasib göremem. Nedir bunca vakittir borclarınızı sürüncemede bırakır göndermezsiniz? Size yazmaktan bezdim. Dün size bir telgraf keşide idecekdım, para için ne lüzum var Ali Efendi'ye telgrafa, ayıbdır, yakışmaz diyerek gine mektub yazıyorum.

Hatrınız için bu kadar vakit bekledim. Zira bana param lazımdır ve bundan sonra mazarrat sıkıntı yetişür. Rica iderim, para için başka vasıtaya, telgrafa, mektuba hacet bırakmayub, ilk vasıta hemen borclarınızı tarafıma çıkarub serian telgrafla bildiriniz. Ayıb olur, size yakıştıramam. Bâki afiyetde olasınız birader.

Fii 15 Mart 1330 Mataracızâde İlyas

Appendix F: Letter to a Commercial Partner

Bismillâh

Keskim’de tüccardan Görelizâde Emin ve Keskim’de müdde-i umumi muavini ve mustantıkı Faik Bey Efendi’ye benden mahsus selam söylersiniz.

İşhana oralara geleceklerini bundan bir mah evvel aldığım bir kıta mektublarında yazıyordular

Keskim’de Budakzâde Ali Efendi’ye

Rif’atlû efendi

Size bir çok mektublar yazdım ve telgraf kediş etdim. Tabi vaktiyle ahz etmişsiniz. Bu gün gine bir telgraf daha keşide etdim. Size mektubla anlatamıyorum. Geçen seneki ahz-ı itamızda böyle güçlükler gösterdiğinizi burada iken beyan ederek, her nasıl ise oldu, şöyle idi, şöyle idi filan söyleyerek böyle bir daha olmaz olduğunu beyan etdiniz ise de gine öyle yapıyorsunuz. Sizde insaf yok mudur? Bunca vakitdir sürüncemede bırakub borçlarınızı göndermediniz. Bir kere düşününüz. Size karşı ben bu kadar emniyet ve itimad etdim. Size yollarda bile para verdirdim. Bunlar size yetişmiyor mu? Düşününüz değil sizin için, benim için olsun, kim olursa olsun, herkes için büyük bir iftihardır. Siz yine buralarını hiç takdir etmiyorsunuz. Cidden ayıbdır. Oraya adam mı göndereyim? Göndersem, mesarifi size aiddir. Yoksa başka vasıtaya mı bakayım? Yahud o civarlarda, başka vasıtaya mı müracaat edelim? Diğerle işimiz sizin vasıtanızla görecektir iken, sizin işinizi başka vasıtaya, emin olunuz utandım. Hatır ise pek çok hatırınızı saydım. Her şeyin bir haddi, kararı vardır. Bu sizin yaptığınız, her şeyi tecavüz etmiştir. İlk vasıta, her ne yapub yapub, borçlarınızı serian hemen telgrafla tarafıma verdiriniz. Eğer telgrafla verdimen

mümkün değilse, ilk vasıta acele hemen çıkarub serian telgrafla tarafıma bildiriniz. Katiyen müsaadeye tahammülüm kalmamıştır. Paraya dahi eşedd lüzumum vardır. Daha da mektub yazmayacağım. Akşam sabah borçlarınızın irsaliyle cevabınızı gözetmekdeyim. Başka yazılacak yokdur. Rica ederim başka vasıtaya, telgrafa adam göndertdirmeye hacet bırakmayınız. Zira olmazsa adam göndereceğim. Sonra ayıb olur, ayıbdır, yakışmaz. Haysiyet, namus, itibar bir defadır, kadrini biliniz. Sonra peşimanlık faide vermez. Fii 5 Nisan 1330 Mataracızâde İlyas

Appendix G: Letter from a group of local guilds of Hemşin region of Atina district

Dâhiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemine

Maruzu çakerleridir ki,

Kulları Atina kazasına tabi Hemşin nahiyesi ahalisinden olub otuz kırk seneden berü Rusya ile ticaretle meşgul olarak efradı ailemizin maişetlerini temin ve mükellef olduğumuz emval-i miriye-i müteneviamız için lazım gelen virgüyi tediye itmekdeyiz. Bununla beraber bin dürlü sefalet ve meşakatle üç beş sene zarfında bir mikdar ticaretle memleketimiz bulunan Hemşin nahiyesine geleceğimiz zaman kaza ve merkezimiz olan Atina kasabasına muvasalatımızda kaza-i mezkur eşirasından Telatorzade Ziya efendi ve Tevfik ve Baltazadelerin bazıları tarafından yeddimizde mevcut eşya ve sairemizi gasp-ı garaat ile ahz idüb şu kadar vakit çar çeşmile intizarda bulunan aile ve çocuklarımızı aç ve bi-ilaç bırakmaktadır. Esbabını sual idenlere cevabında biçarelerinin bazılarının redife bekayesi ve bazılarının da mahkumiyetden bahis ile ikna ederek ve müdafaada bulunanları Soraçiviye’de haps idiyorlar. İşbu şekavet ve muamele-i örfiyenin esbabı sual olunur ise Atina kazası hükümeti ve devair-i resmiyyesi Telatorzâde Ziya Efendiye teslim olunduğundan ileri geliyor. Hatta Hemşin ahalisinden iki bini mütecaviz neferin memleketlerine gitmelerini gayr-ı gabil bir derecede olduğundan ailemizinde Rusya’ya getirilmesine karar vermeden başka bir çaremiz kalmadı.

Hâlbuki halife-i ruy-i zemin olan böyle bir adil padişahımız efendimiz hazretlerinin adaletine karşı bu gibi muamele-i örfiyenin vuku-u asayışı devlet ve milleti ihlal ideceği bedaheten sabit olmağla işbu şırar-ı nas ve erbab-ı fesadın serian terbiye için maaruzat-ı çakerleri lazım gelen makamat-ı aliyye takdim idilmesiyle hedef tutulduğumuz şekavetden kurtarılmaklığımız babında adalet ve merhamet-i

cenab-ı nazaret penahilerine iltica ve dehalet eyleriz. Ve yakında bir netice-i lâzıme zuhur itmediyse baa telgraf atebe-i ulyaya müraccat idileceği maaruzdur. Ol bab-da emr-ü ferman ve lütf-u ihsan hazret-i menlehül emrindir.

Fii 20 Kanun-u evvel 323

İmzalar

Tütüncü esnafından Kibarzâde

Fıruncu esnafından Müsellemzâde

Dükkâncı esnafından Tumanzâde

Esnaf-ı mezkürden Halidzâde

Otelci esnafından Müftizâde

Tütüncü esnafından Muhsin Alizâde

Tütüncü esnafından Fetvacızâde

Kahveci esnafından Hacızâde

Tütüncü esnafından Hadidatzâde

Mahmudzâde

Cemalzâde

Fazlızâde

İslamzâde

Ali Beyzâde

Şehrinde Korişçi esnafından Müftizâde

Fıruncu esnafından Gelenzâde

Fıruncu esnafından İbrahimzâde

Appendix H: Ethno-religious distribution of collaborators according to their relevant specialization categories in the provinces covered by the network

District	Specialization	Total number of actors	Ethno-religious distribution	Dominant ethno-religious category
ADANA	Commission Agents	7	3A+1CA+1F+1J+1J&J	Armenian
	Traders in Cotton Fabrics	20	15A+1CA+1F+1G+1J+1M	Armenian
	Textiles and Manufactured Goods	8	6A+1F+1G	Armenian
	Traders	16	6A+5CA+3G+2F	Armenian
	Novelties	4	3A+1G	Armenian
	TOTAL	55	33A+7CA+6G+5F+2J+1M+1J&J	Armenian
ADAPAZARI	Traders in Cereal	18	10A+5G+2M+1MA	Armenian
	Commission Agents	2	2A	Armenian
	Textiles and Manufactured Goods	28	24A+2M+1G+1J	Armenian
	Trader (négociants)	12	9A+2G+1J	Armenian
	TOTAL	60	45A+8G+4M+2J+1MA	Armenian
ALEPPO	Aleppo fabrics	20	19CA+1M	Christian-Arab
	TOTAL	20	19CA+1M	Christian-Arab
ALEXANDRETTA	Textiles and Manufactured Goods	11	6CA+3M+1A+1F	Christian-Arab
	TOTAL	11	6CA+3M+1A+1F	Christian-Arab

ATINA	Textiles and Manufactured Goods	8	4G+3M+1A	Greek
	Traders	5	2G+3M	Muslim
	TOTAL	13	6M+6G+1A	Muslim/Greek
BAFRA	Manufactures	21	13A+7G+1M	Armenian
	TOTAL	21	13A+7G+1M	Armenian
BAGHDAD	Manufactures	6	6J	Jewish
	Trader (négociants)	45	24J+13M+4F+4A	Jewish
	TOTAL	51	30J+13M+4F+4A	Jewish
ERZURUM	Cloth and Fabrics	8	8A	Armenian
	Textiles and Manufactured Goods	19	17A+2M	Armenian
	Traders	15	7A+4G+4M	Armenian
	TOTAL	42	32A+6M+4G	Armenian
GİRESUN	Matches	5	2M+2G+1F	Muslim/Greek
	Colonial products	8	4G+3M+1F	Greek
	Flour importers	12	5A+3G+2F+2M	Armenian
	Olive oil	6	3G+2M+1F	Greek
	Import Traders	19	5A+7G+2M+5F	Armenian
	Export Traders	27	17G+4A+3M+3F	Greek
	Leather	4	3A+1M	Armenian
	TOTAL	81	36G+17A+15M+13F	Greek
GÜRÜN	Shawl Merchants and Cotton and Woolen Yarn Importers	19	18A+1M	Armenian
	TOTAL	19	18A+1M	Armenian
İZMİT	Traders in Cereal	7	3A+2M+1G+1F	Armenian
	Commissionnaires	9	7A+1G+1J	Armenian
	Manufactures	17	15A+2J	Armenian
	Traders	10	6G+3A+1M	Greek

	TOTAL	43	28A+8G+3M+3J+1F	Armenian
JAFFA	Commission Agents	20	5F+5CA+5J+2M+1J&F+1A+1G	Foreigner
	TOTAL	20	5F+5CA+5J+2M+1J&F+1A+1G	Foreigner Christian-Arab Jewish
MALATYA	Manufactures	7	4M+3A	Muslim
	Traders	8	5M+3A	Muslim
	TOTAL	15	9M+6A	Muslim
RİZE	Traders in Timber	4	4M	Muslim
	Grain Traders	13	13M	Muslim
	Commission Agents	4	3G+1M	Greek
	Agent of the Hilal Steamship Company	8	4G+3M+1A	Greek
	Cotton Yarn	7	6M+1G	Muslim
	Traders in Dyes and Varnishes	4	3M+1G	Muslim
	Clothier	10	6G+4M	Greek
	Shippers	9	7M+2G	Muslim
	Traders in Flour	9	9M	Muslim
	Traders in Iron	2	1G+1M	Greek/Muslim
	Exporters of Flax Thread for Nets	7	7M	Muslim
	Traders in Beans	6	5M+1G	Muslim
	Textiles and Manufactured Goods	20	11M+9G	Muslim
	Haberdashers and Ironmongers	4	3M+1G	Muslim
	Millinery and Novelties	5	3M+2G	Muslim
	Traders	12	11M+1G	Muslim
	Leather Export Traders	1	1M	Muslim
	Traders in Sugar	12	10M+2G	Muslim

	Traders in Oil	7	6M+1G	Muslim
	Traders in Sugar	12	10M+2G	Muslim
	Exporters of Rize Fabrics	9	9M	Muslim
	Wine and Liquors	7	7G	Muslim
	TOTAL	172	127M+44G+1A	Muslim
SAMSUN	Sales Agent	24	16G+6A+1F+1L	Greek
	TOTAL	24	16G+6A+1F+1L	Greek
IZMIR	Commission Agents	90	30F+22L+20G+ 15J+2A+1F&J	Foreigner
	TOTAL	90	30F+22L+20G+ 15J+2A+1F&J	Foreigner
TRABZON	Textiles and Manufactured Goods	13	7G+4A+2M	Greek
	Commission Agents	26	13G+8A+4F+1M	Greek
	Traders	80	49G+15M+12A+4F	Greek
	TOTAL	119	69G+24A+18M+8F	Greek
TRIPOLI	Commission Agents	14	13CA+1M	Christian-Arab
	TOTAL	14	13CA+1M	Christian-Arab
ÜNYE	Textiles and Manufactured Goods	19	7A+7M+4G+1J	Armenian / Muslim
	TOTAL	19	7A+7M+4G+1J	Armenian / Muslim

Source: *Provinces de l'Empire Ottoman avec les Divisions Administratives, Populations, Renseignements, Adresses, etc.* (Provinces of the Ottoman Empire with their Administrative Divisions, Populations, Information, Addresses, etc.) section of *Annuaire Oriental*, 1914.

Appendix I: Ethno-religious Distribution of Commission Agents According to Quarters in 1894, 1904 and 1914

Diagram 1. Distribution of Commission Agents According to Quarters (1894)

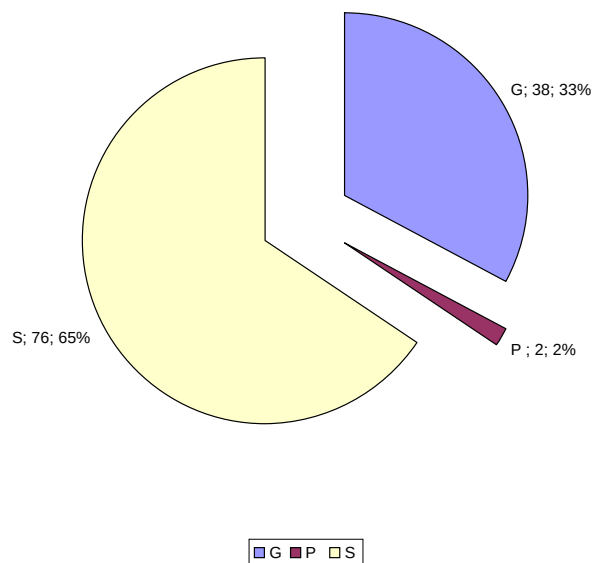


Diagram 2. Distribution of Commission Agents According to Quarters (1904)

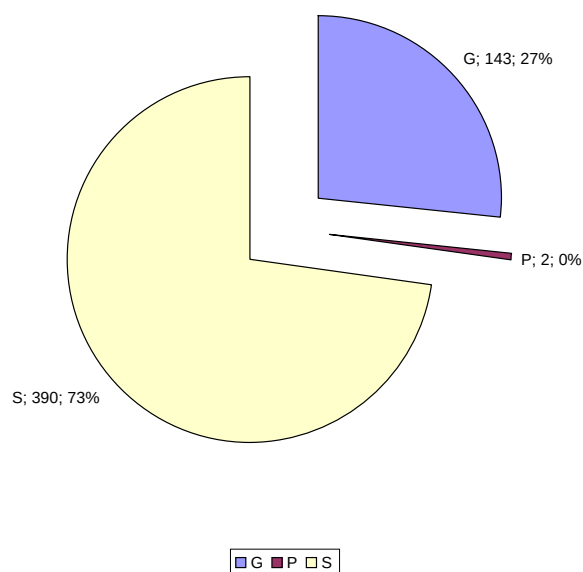
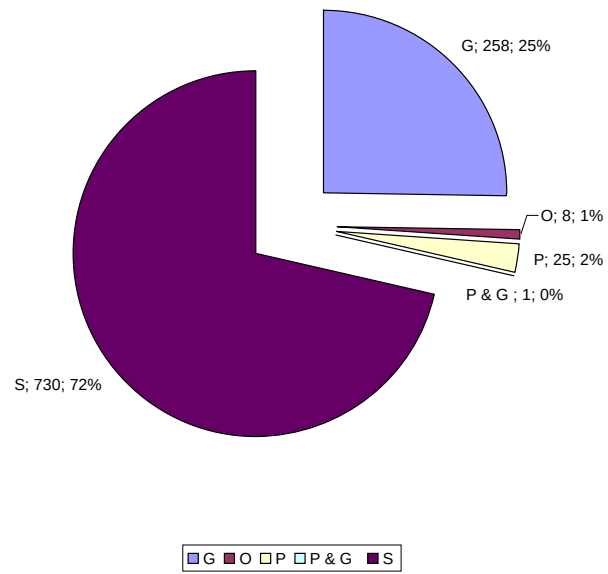


Diagram 3. Distribution of Commission Agents According to Quarters (1914)



Appendix J: Ethno-religious Distribution of Commission Agents in Istanbul in 1894, 1904 and 1914

Diagram 4. Ethno - Religious Distribution of Commission Agents in Istanbul (1894)

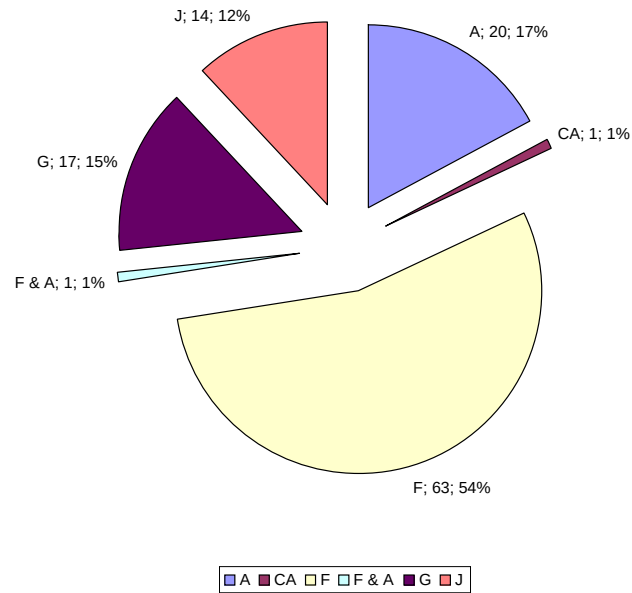


Diagram 5. Ethno - Religious Distribution of Commission Agents in Istanbul (1904)

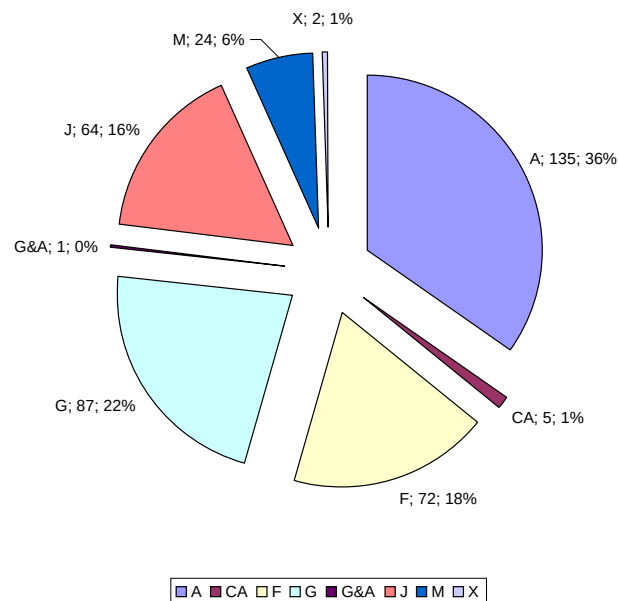
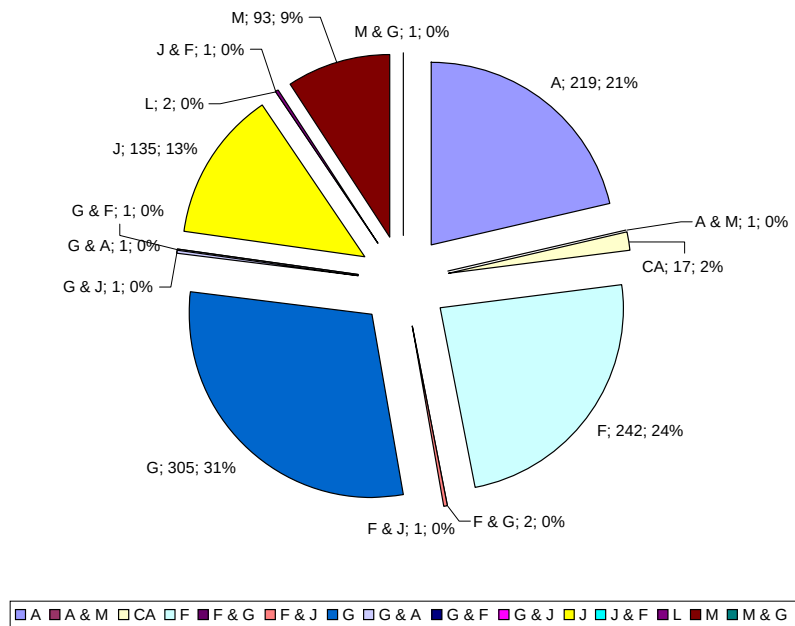


Diagram 6. Ethno-religious Distribution of Commission Agents in Istanbul (1914)



Source: *Professions des commerçants et industriels de la ville de Constantinople* (Commercial and Industrial Professions in Istanbul) section of the *Annuaire Oriental*, 1894, 1904, and 1914.

Appendix K: Distribution of *Manufacture* in Istanbul in 1894, 1904 and 1914

Diagram 7. Distribution of *Manufacture* According to Quarters (1894)

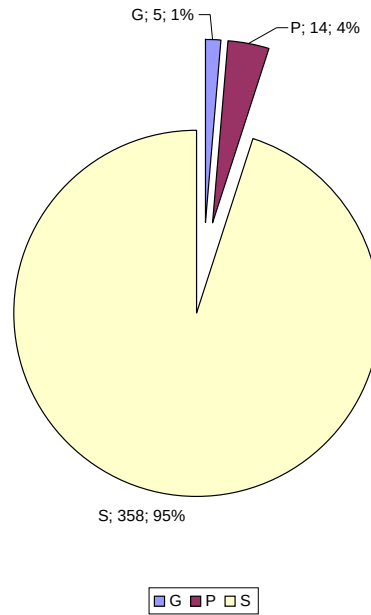


Diagram 8. Ethno-religious Distribution of *Manufacture* in Stamboul (1894)

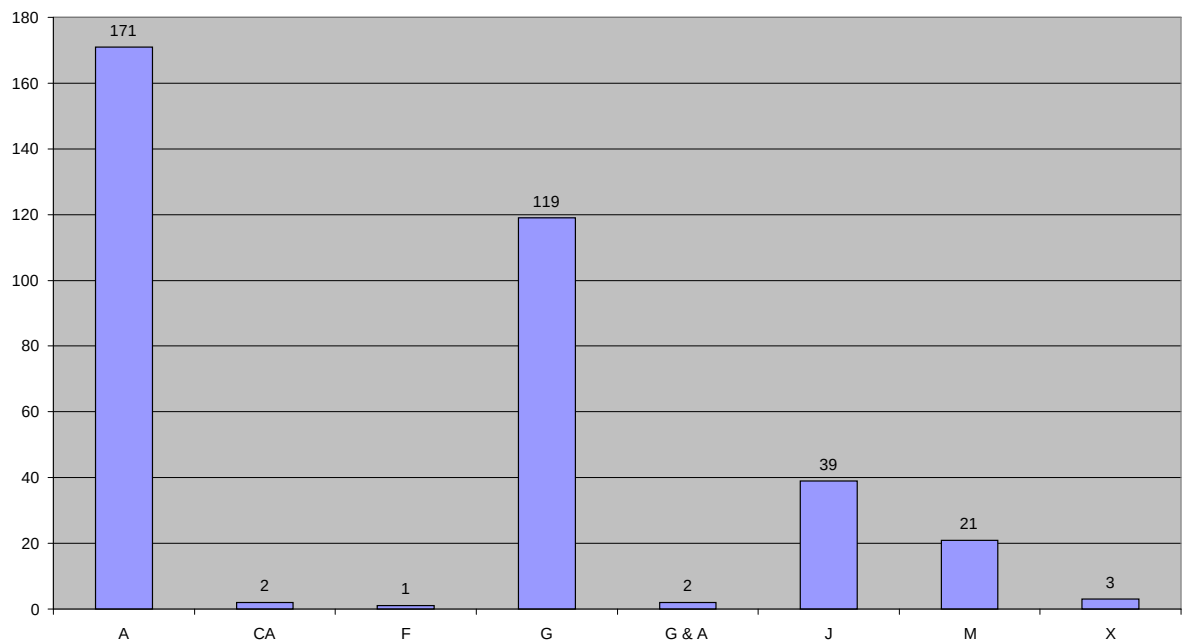


Diagram 9. Distribution of *Manufacture* According to Quarters (1904)

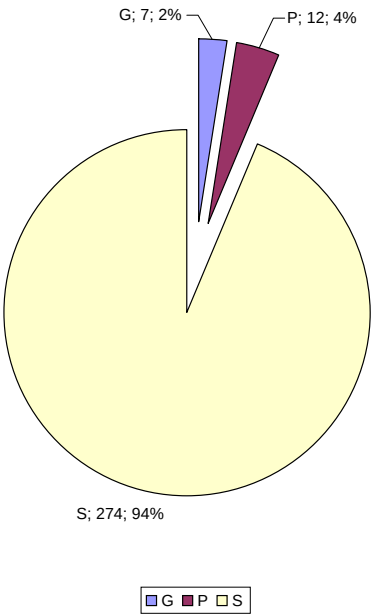


Diagram 10. Ethno-religious Distribution of *Manufacture* in Stamboul (1904)

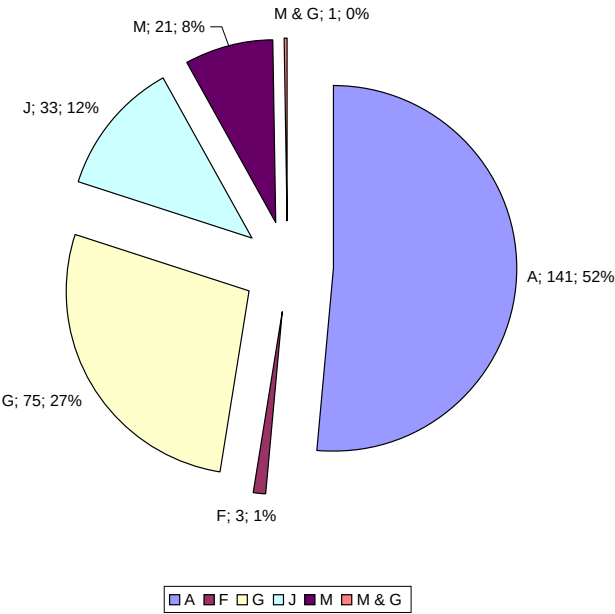


Diagram 11. Distribution of *Manufacture* According to Quarters (1914)

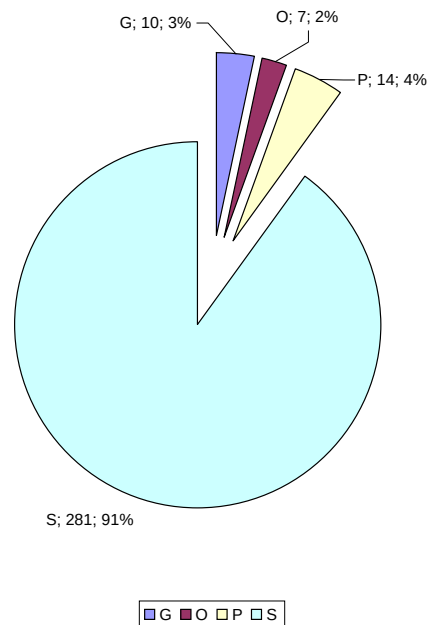
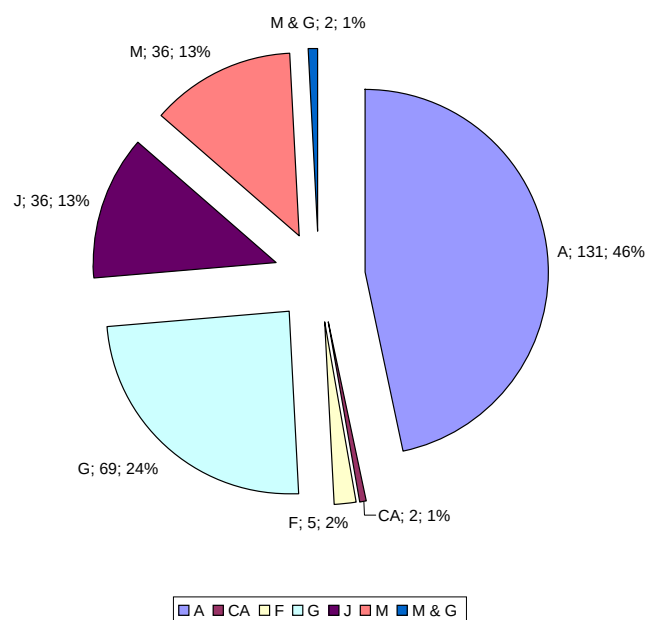


Diagram 12. Ethno-religious Distribution of *Manufacture* in Stamboul (1914)



Source: *Professions des commerçants et industriels de la ville de Constantinople* (Commercial and Industrial Professions in Istanbul) section of the *Annuaire Oriental*, 1894, 1904, and 1914.

Appendix L: Ethno-religious Distribution of Çakmakçılar Yokuşu in 1894, 1904 and 1914

Diagram 13. Ethno-Religious Distribution of Çakmakçılar Yokuşu (1894)

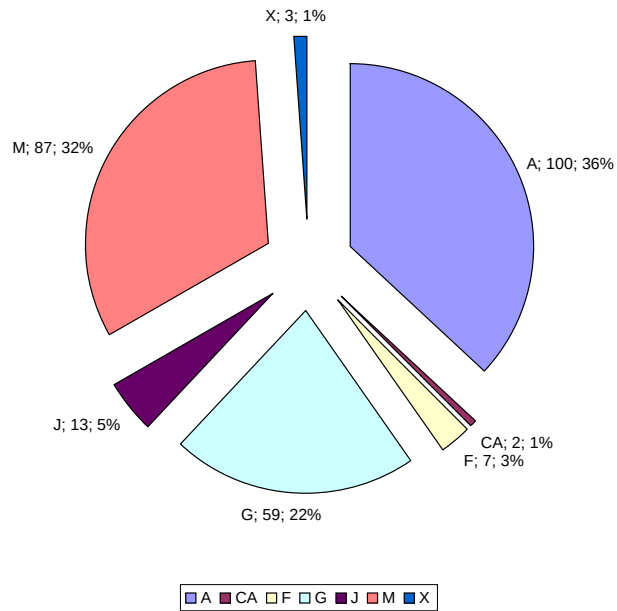


Diagram 14. Ethno - Religious Distribution of Çakmakçılar Yokuşu (1904)

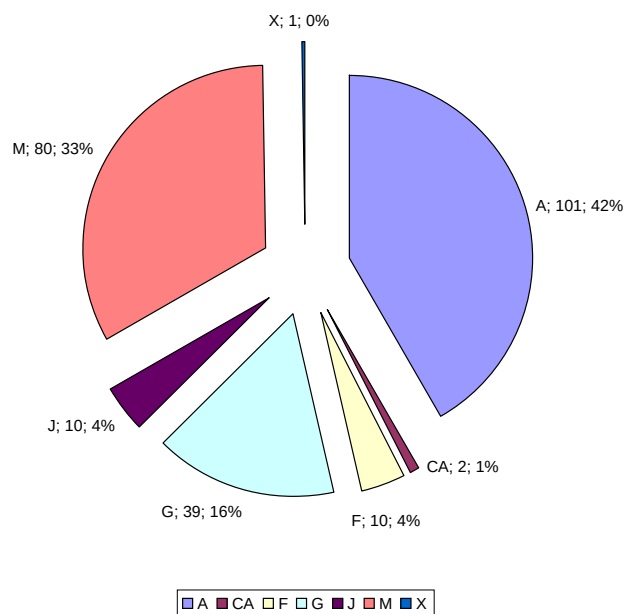
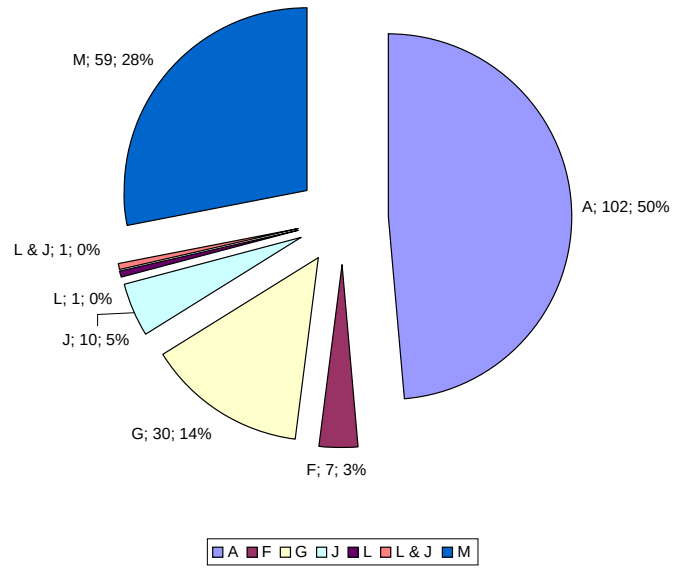


Diagram 15. Ethno - Religious Distribution on Çakmakcılar Yokuşu (1914)



Source: *Adresses des Rues de Stamboul* (Addresses of the Streets of Istanbul) section of the *Annuaire Oriental*, 1894, 1904, and 1914.

Appendix M: Ethno-religious Distribution in Valdie Han in 1894, 1904 and 1914

Diagram 16. Ethno-religious Distribution in Valide Han (1894)

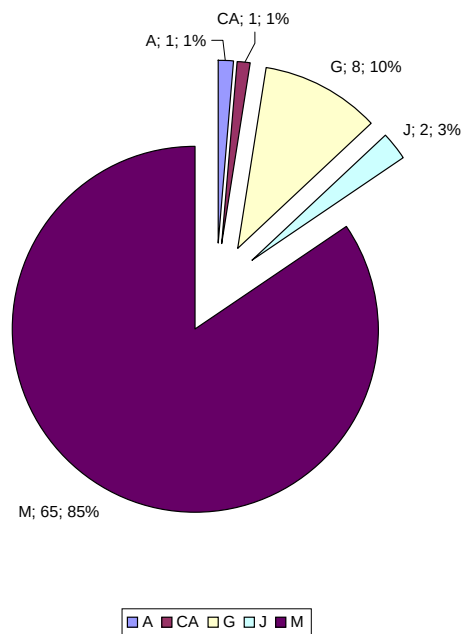


Diagram 17. Ethno - Religious Distribution in Valide Han (1904)

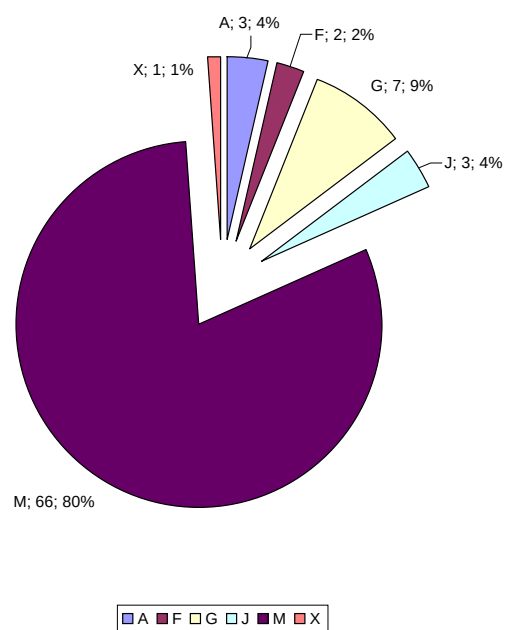
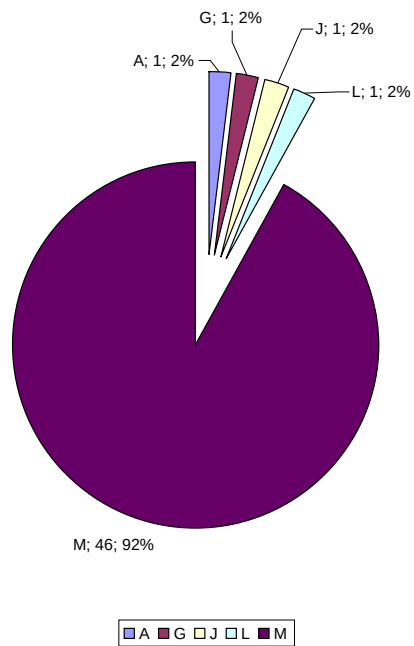


Diagram 18. Ethno - Religious Distribution in Valide Han (1914)



Source: *Adresses des Hans de Stamboul* (Addresess of the Hans of Istanbul) section of the *Annuaire Oriental*, 1894, 1904, and 1914.

Appendix N: Ethno-religious distribution in Büyük Yeni Han in 1894, 1904 and 1914

Diagram 19. Ethno - Religious Distribution in Büyük Yeni Han (1894)

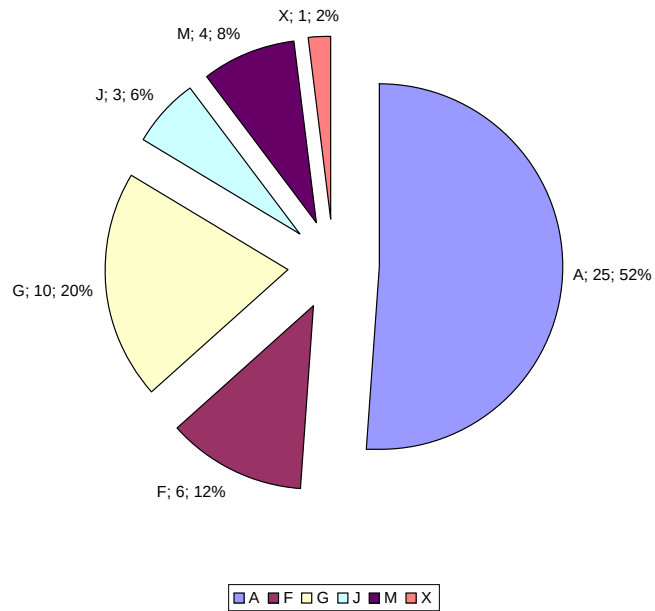


Diagram 20. Ethno - Religious Distribution in Büyük Yeni Han (1904)

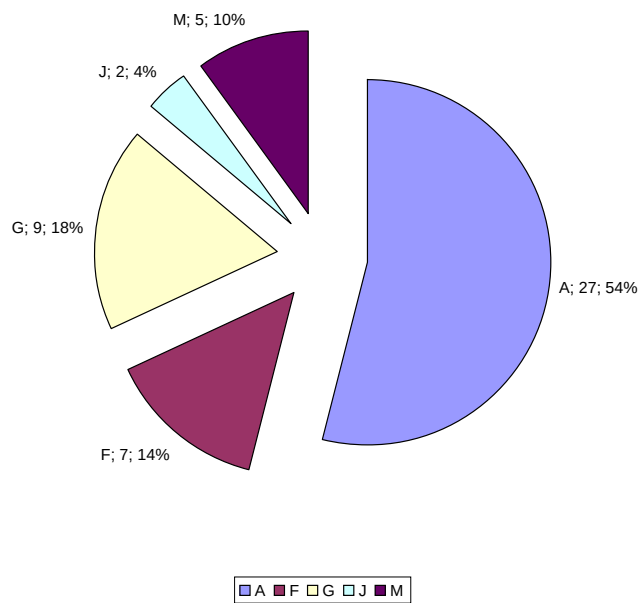
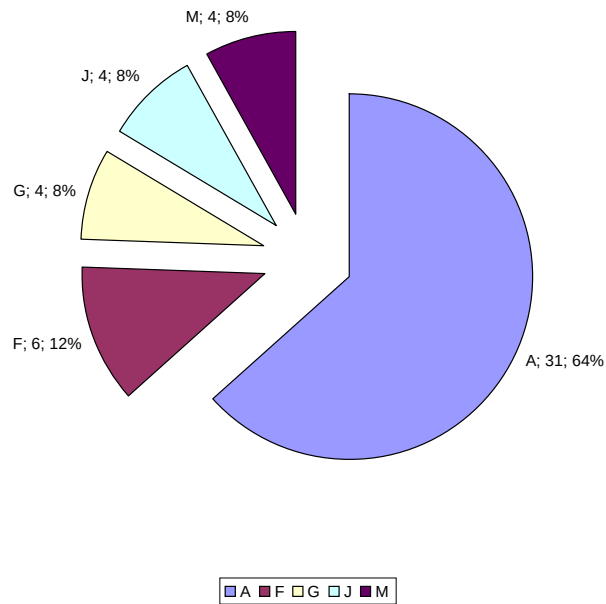


Diagram 21. Ethno - Religious Distribution in Buyuk Yeni Han (1914)



Source: *Adresses des Hans de Stamboul* (Addressess of the Hans of Istanbul) section of the *Annuaire Oriental*, 1894, 1904, and 1914.

Appendix O: Letter of Self-introduction

Gürün’de tüccâr-ı muteberândan Avundukzâde İzzetlü Mehmed Efendi Hazretlerine

İzzetlü Efendim Hazretleri

Zâtınızın manifotura pamuk ve yün ipliği üzerine ahz-ı i’tâ ettiğiniz mesmuatımız olduğundan işbu mektubumuzu sizlere yazmağa mecburiyet hasıl olmuştur.

Bendeniz burada manifotura ve saire komisyonculuğu ile meşgul olduğumdan

buraca her nev’i siparişatınızı sühûletle icrâ edebildiğim gibi, yün ve pamuk

ipliklerinizin her nev’ini Mançester’de biraderim olmak hasebiyle mümkün olduğu

kadar menfaatinizi gözederekden irsal edebilirim. Yalnız sipariş buyurulacak iplik

numunelerini göndermeğe ve numerolarını bildirmeğe sair iktizâ’nızı bildiresiniz ve

şehrinizde bu gibi işlerle büyükçe sarfiyatı olan tüccâran-ı İslamiyyenin adreslerini

bildiresiniz. Zâtınız dahi, bu işler üzerine ne mikdar sarfiyat-ı seneviyye

yapabileceğinizi lütfen bildirirsiniz. Bâkî selam ederek, umûr-ı ticâriyyede

muvaffakiyyet-i İslâmiyyeyi temenni ederim efendim.

Fii 15 Mart 1330

Ve ne şeraitle diğerlerle iş yapıyor iseniz leffinde bildiresiniz. Mataracızâde İlyas

Appendix P: Letter to a Commercial Partner

Rize’de tüccârdan Baltacıoğlu Nikoli ve Anastasi mahdumlarına,

Rağbetlû dostum,

Çok vakitdir ki tarafıma birçok para çıkaracağınızı bildirmiş idiniz. Tarihe kadar tarafıma para çıkardığınıza dair henüz bir cevabınızı alamadığım gibi, tüccarlara, kabulünüzle üzerinize keşide olan poliçeleri tarafıma gönderdiğinizi bildirerek, Krikorisyan emrine olan poliçeyi tediye etmeyüb, protesto eyledi. Bu kadar bir parayı protesto ettirmenize teessüf ederim. İnsan böyle yapar mı? İnsan dostunun haysiyetini muhafaza etmez mi? Velew ki yanınızda hiç bir para olmasa bile, bu kadar bir parayı tediye sizin için ehemmiyeti yokdur. İnsan her neyse yapar yapar, hemen tediye edüb, diğerinin haysiyetini muhafaza eder. Mezkur poliçe için yüz kaporalık çanta protesto mesarifi ve toksan çanta faiz verilmiştir ve bendeki senedleriniz vadeleri de pek çok vakitdir murur ediyor. Senedleriniz ve poliçeleriniz, böyle hangisine yetiştireceğim. Senedlerinizi düşüneyim, bir de poliçeler tediyesini mi düşüneyim? Yahu biraz da siz düşününüz. Bu kadar sıkıntı bize vermeyiniz. Bana da para lazımdır. Hele bu sıralar dahi, paradan darlığım pek ziyadedir. Rica ederim, işbu mektubum vusulünde ne yapub yapub gerek senedleriniz bedellerini, gerek poliçeleriniz bedellerini hemen ilk vasıta ile tarafıma çıkarub, serien telgrafla bildiresiniz. Başka yazılacak yokdur. Baki sağolasınız dostum. Fii 15 Mart 1330 Mataracızâde İlyas

Appendix Q: Letter to a Commercial Partner

Atina'da tüccar-ı muteberandan rağbetlû Saulidi biraderlere

Rağbetlû dostum

Mahsus selam ederek, hatırlarınızı istifsar ederim. Bu defa Dursun Ali Efendi ile irsaliniz iki buçuk lira-yı Osmani vasıl olub, hesabınıza mahsub edilerek, yalnız on bir çent otuz para borcunuz ile bu defa Ali Paşa oğlu Rüşdü Efendi'ye Fii 8 Mart 330'da verilen iki lira-yı osmani borcunuz kalmışdır. Sizin şimdi zann ederim çeşidiniz pek noksandır ve malınız da yokdur. Siz mi geleceksiniz, yoksa sipariş mi edeceksiniz? Ya sizi, ya mühim siparişinizi beklerim. Baki sağolasınız dostum. Fii 9 Mayıs 1330 Mataracızâde İlyas

Appendix R: Letter to the Directorate of the Adapazarı Muslim Commerce Bank

Bismillâh

Adapazarı İslam Ticaret Bankası Müdiriyeti'ne

Efendim

Tarihden beş gün mukaddem İbrahimzâde biraderlere takdim buyurulan tahrirat-ı aliyeleri kemal-i memnuniyetle kıraat ve muhteviyatına kesb-i ittila olundu. Manifatura tüccar-ı muteberanından Mustafa Nuri Efendi ile görüştiğimiz nakliyat komisyonculuğundan bahis buyuruluyor. Ticaret-i İslamiyye hakkındaki teveccühâtınızdan dolayı zat-ı asilanelerini tebrik ider ve takdim-i teşekkürat eylerim. (Çünkü Türkler için devr-i intibahdır.) Müteşebbisler hakkında mumaileyh Mustafa Nuri Efendi ile görüşdüğümüz günden beri işhanında muttasıl izahat takip etmekde ve münasib bir mahalde şeref-i millimizle mütenasib ve rağbet-i umumiyeye mazhar olacak bir anbar ile Türklerin müteşebbislerinin akim olduğunu söyletirmeyecek amiller araştırmakdayım. Teşvik ve terğib-i alileriyle birkaç güne kadar inşaallah muvafakiyyet-i katiye ümid ediyorum. Hitamında hemen taraf-ı hamiyetmendanelerine işar-ı keyfiyet edeceğimi arz ile takdim-i ihtiramat eylerim efendim.

30 Mayıs 1330

Mataracızâde İlyas

Appendix S: Advertisement of a Muslim-Turkish Pharmaceutical and Spice Warehouse

*Eczacı
Ömer Lütü*

ANADOLU ECZA ve BAHARAT DEPOSU

İzmir: Bitpazarı

* * *

Müstahzarat-ı
Tibbiye-i
Osmaniye

* * *

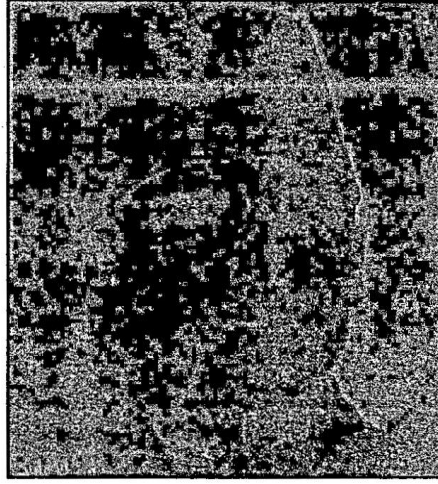
Cerrahi ve
İspençari âlat ve
edevat

* * *

yerli ve ecnebi her
nevi maden suları

* * *

iksir-i şihab



nâmdâr ve
meşhur
fabrikaların en
taze ilaçları

* * *

her nevi baharat

* * *

tahlilat-ı hurdenî
ve kimyevî

* * *

mevadd-ı attariye
ve tibbiye ve
cerrahiye

* * *

**Siparişler vakt ü
zamaniyle ifa olunur.**

Yegâne Türk deposudur.

Ŗimdi bu sabah İstanbul'a geerken bakdım üç beŖ vapur asker yüklüyorlar. Ne tarafa gidecekleri mehul. Biraderim iŖbu mektubum vusulünde yüz elli okka kadar peksimet, tuzlu et felan vesaire olarak beŖ altı belki sekiz mahlık erzağı hemen biran evvel icabına bakub tedarik edesiniz. En mühim iŖiniz budur. Acelelen, sonra piŖmanlık fayda vermez. Orada ahalide böyle bir teşebbüs yoksa, peksimeti yaptırdığınızda soran olursa, Trabzon'dan birisi istiyor, askere verecek ve görürsünüz ki, Trabzon'a vapurla asker gelüb sevk ediliyor. Mümkün olduğı kadar erzakla beraber peder, validem, çocukları tehir etmeyüb, bu tarafa gönderiniz. Sonra vapur da bulunmaz. Ne olur, ne olmaz. Fii 5 Ağustos 1330

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