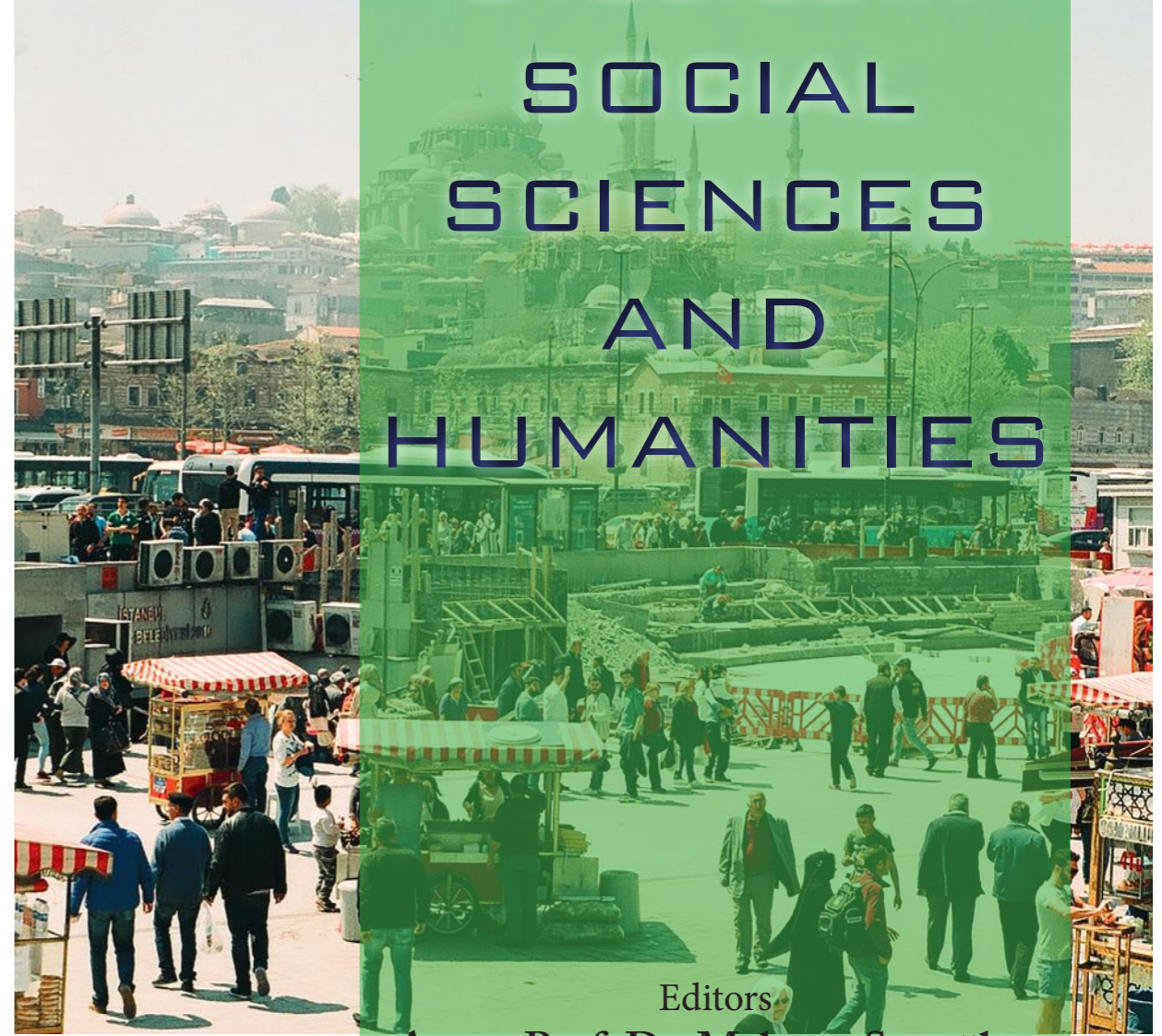


CRITICAL STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Critical Studies in
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES







Editors
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Sarıođlan
Dr. Sercan Hamza Bađlamaz

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Social Sciences and Humanities


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CHAPTER XII

THE EFFECTS OF THE SUEZ CANAL AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LIGHTHOUSES ON THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN TRADE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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1. Introduction

As a result of the increase in the amount of industrial products in the UK and Europe after the industrial revolution, mechanization, use of steam power, the revival of overseas trade and the application of mercantilism, the Middle East became a market where food and raw materials were purchased in exchange for the sale of manufactured goods (Kark, 1990: 70). The increase in cheap industrial products imported from Europe hit textile handicrafts such as weaving, spinning, and traditional handicrafts such as glassmaking, bookbinding, and pottery. In particular, manufacturers dealing with weaving and spinning were not able to compete with the rapidly growing imported textile products. Naturally, the number of weaving looms were greatly reduced. In addition, developments in agriculture, handicrafts, industry, and shipments led to an increase in commercial activities. During this process, there was a significant increase in the number of big importers and exporters with wholesale-retailers. At the same time, the amount of trade in foreign trade increased significantly. Specialization in the field of foreign trade begun and trading companies started to emerge among large merchant families (Gilbar, 1986: 198-203).

The evolution of technology during the nineteenth century, especially the expansion in the use of steamers, contributed to the large increase in commercial activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. The use of steam increased the carrying capacity, speed, and reliability of the vessels. This rising trend in ships and trade in the eastern Mediterranean coasts increased with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (Kark, 1990: 80). The second half of the nineteenth century was a period in which port cities

increased their influence in the world economy remarkably. In addition to the continuation of British sovereignty, the worldwide expansion of transportation and communication opportunities has provided an economic opening in a global context. The differences of the port cities from the inner parts had become much more pronounced than before. The commercial links and entrepreneurship of migrants as well as the population of the port cities along with their populations increased (Özveren. 1994: 83).

2. The Opening of the Suez Canal

In fact, the idea of opening a channel connecting the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, which had been thought since ancient times, came up again during the time of Egypt Governor Said Pasha. The project of French Engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps was approved by the Ottoman Government on 5 January 1856. The channel works started on April 25, 1859, and were completed on November 16, 1869. The canal was 163 km. in length and 75-125 m. width. In 1875, the French company, which had financial difficulties, sold its shares to the British (Bilge, 2010: 186-187).

By 1879 G. Sir G. Elliot ", "*As England, we must be stronger in Egypt. About three-quarters of the trade is in our hands. We were strong after the canal (Suez Canal) was acquired. England should now buy the Alexandria-Suez railway. This will provide England with a sea and land route to India. Channel etc. will protect the UK against certain losses. Today we have more than half of the Channel. Owning the railroad will allow us to enter all of Egypt's ports and piers on time* ", (FO 881/3988, 1879: No: 3, 9) revealed how important the railways were for England.

In 1882, the English newspaper "The Times" reported that the Suez Canal problem for the British was the most sensitive issue related to Egypt. Britain's communication with other forces in the free passage of the protection of the channel was undoubtedly important for these powers were explained. In this period, all of England's efforts were based on the protection of free passage from the channel. (The Times, 1882: 5)

Table 1: The Suez Canal Navigation Traffic from the Opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 until the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Year.	Number of Vessels.	Gross Tonnage.	Net Tonnage.	Transit Receipts.		Mean Net Tonnage per Vessel.
				Fr.	c.	
1869	10	10,557·61	6,576·00	54,460	80	657
1870	486	654,915·02	436,609·37	5,159,327	22	898
1871	765	1,142,200·46	761,467·05	8,993,732	87	995
1872	1,082	1,744,481·32	1,160,743·54	16,407,591	42	1,071
1873	1,173	2,085,072·61	1,367,767·82	22,897,319	18	1,166
1874	1,264	2,423,672·22	1,631,650·14	24,859,383	00	1,290
1875	1,494	2,940,708·45	2,009,984·09	28,886,302	27	1,345
1876	1,457	3,072,107·01	2,096,771·61	29,974,998	74	1,439
1877	1,663	3,418,949·72	2,355,447·69	32,774,344	22	1,416
1878	1,593	3,291,535·38	2,269,678·31	31,098,229	18	1,425
1879	1,477	3,236,942·32	2,263,332·19	29,686,060	81	1,532
1880	2,026	4,344,519·89	3,057,421·88	39,840,487	64	1,509
1881	2,727	5,794,491·19	4,136,779·77	51,274,352	95	1,517
1882	3,198	7,122,125·68	5,074,808·88	60,545,882	08	1,586
1883	3,307	8,051,307·30	5,775,861·79	65,847,812	16	1,746
1884	3,284	8,319,967·36	5,871,500·92	62,378,115	54	1,787
1885	3,624	8,985,411·80	6,335,752·98	62,207,439	21	1,748
1886	3,100	8,183,313·15	5,767,655·84	56,527,390	58	1,860
1887	3,137	8,430,043·20	5,903,024·09	57,862,370	71	1,881
1888	3,440	9,437,957·32	6,640,834·44	64,832,273	20	1,930
1889	3,425	9,605,745·48	6,783,187·12	66,167,579	14	1,951
1890	3,389	9,749,129·09	6,890,094·41	66,984,000	22	2,033
1891	4,207	12,217,986·41	8,698,777·36	83,422,101	24	2,067
1892	3,559	10,866,401·468	7,712,028·61	74,452,436	03	2,166·90
1893	3,341	10,753,798·155	7,659,068·105	70,667,361	43	2,292·447
1894	3,352	11,283,854·721	8,039,175·276	73,776,827	68	2,398·321
1895	3,434	11,833,637·331	8,448,383·015	78,103,717	56	2,460·216
1896	3,409	12,039,858·793	8,560,283·609	79,569,994	31	2,511·083
1897	2,986	11,123,403·278	7,899,373·841	72,830,545	43	2,645·47
1898	3,503	12,962,631·813	9,238,603·381	85,294,769	88	2,637·34
1899	3,607	13,815,991·729	9,895,630·048	91,318,772	07	2,743·451
1900	3,441	13,699,237·809	9,738,152·183	90,623,608	08	2,830·035

Source: (FO 633/70, 1901: No:2 (Inclosure 5), 7)

When the table is examined, it is observed that except for some years the usage of Suez Canal increased from 1869 to the beginning of the 20th century as the numbers and tonnages of the ships. At the same time, it can be assumed that the net weight of each ship increased continuously, that is, the load-carrying capacity of the ships increased. As a result, it is seen that the revenues obtained from the Suez Canal naturally increased.

With the opening of the Suez Canal, trade between Europe and India began to develop. As a result, major ports were built on this main road, while the ports of Alexandria, Port Said and Suez were highly developed during this period. Along the Delta, railways were laid in all directions, and irrigation channels were dug to allow water to be transported into the country. These public works were important developments in the modernization of Egypt. (Field, 1905: 66)

Table 2: The Use of the Suez Canal by Various Nations

Flag.	1895.			1896.			1897.		
	Percentage of Vessels.	Percentage of Gross Tonnage.	Percentage of Net Tonnage.	Percentage of Vessels.	Percentage of Gross Tonnage.	Percentage of Net Tonnage.	Percentage of Vessels.	Percentage of Gross Tonnage.	Percentage of Net Tonnage.
Great Britain ..	67.5	70.8	71.8	63.4	66.9	68.0	63.8	66.4	67.3
Germany ..	9.1	8.3	8.2	9.4	9.3	9.4	20.9	10.7	10.8
France ..	8.1	8.5	8.0	6.4	6.8	6.2	6.8	7.3	6.6
Italy ..	2.3	1.9	1.7	6.8	4.9	4.6	2.4	1.8	1.6
Holland ..	5.6	4.2	4.3	5.9	4.3	4.4	6.9	4.8	4.8
Austria-Hungary ..	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.0	1.8	2.6	2.4	2.3
Spain ..	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.8	2.2	2.1	1.6	1.8	1.7
Russia ..	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.5	2.0	1.8
Norway ..	1.6	1.2	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.9	1.6	1.1	1.1
Turkey ..	1.0	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1
Japan ..	0.1	0.02	0.03	0.3	0.4	0.4	1.2	1.5	1.4
Portugal ..	0.1	0.1	0.04	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.03	0.003	0.002
Egypt ..	0.1	0.03	0.03	0.1	0.02	0.02	0.1	0.05	0.1
Belgium ..	..	..	..	0.03	0.02	0.02	..	..	..
Sarawak ..	..	..	..	0.02	0.002	0.001	..	..	..
America ..	0.1	0.04	0.02	..	..	..	0.1	0.1	0.1
China ..	0.1	0.01	0.005	..	..	..	0.1	0.05	0.1
Sweden ..	0.1	0.02	0.02	..	..	..	0.03	0.02	0.1
Denmark ..	0.02	0.01	0.01	..	..	..	0.1	0.02	0.01
Siam ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0.1	0.04	0.1
Mexico ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0.03	0.01	0.01
Totals ..	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: (FO 633/67, 1898: No: 4 (Inclosure 3), 6)

With the opening of the Suez Canal, of course, London's potential capacity as an entrepot was undoubtedly decreased (Blair, 1903: 82). However, if we look at the Suez Canal figures, British ships were using more traffic than Germany, France, Russia and other countries in the world. In 1902, the gross tonnage of the British steam vessels was calculated to be more than 13,650,000 tonnes, and the total tonnage of all the rest of the world was only around 12,200,000 tonnes (Runciman, 1903: 128).

3. Port and Marine Administrations

The ports were temporary entry and exit sites with international economic opportunities. The relationship between the Alexandria and the Egyptian hinterland was a lively, continuous and intertwined life in which a multitude of nations intermingled. The main families in the inland regions had their own import and export companies. The various administrative units in the port of Alexandria had a close relationship with the municipality of Alexandria and the Egyptian government. The harbor of Alexandria was divided into two main administrative units at the end of the nineteenth century. These were the international quarantine board with the port and maritime management “Maslahat al-mawani wa-l-manair”. This board later became “the Quarantine and Naval Council of Alexandria”. The leadership of the Port and Marine Administration, which was established after the British occupation, would be in the hands of the British continually. Although the Port and Marine Administration was technically a part of the Railway Administration, it was stationed in the harbor and was dealing with the sea and the port area (Minkin, 2009: 48-51). The port and maritime management was a colonial administration. The records of this administration began from the mid-1890s. This administration included a general inspector and deputy inspectors, inspectors and sub-inspectors, customs officers, passport officers, and port police. Responsibilities of the Port and Marine Administration, sea foyers, piers, ship repair pools, etc. and repair and development of port facilities. In this context, projects such as the construction of new coal ports between 1905 and 1915, piers from the tree, paved roads reaching the port, special quarantine areas for cattle, opening of a new port to the port, construction of new warehouses, lighthouses, lighthouses and signalization stations, expansion of the inner harbor scaffolds, repair of breakwaters were realized. Another responsibility of this administration was the maintenance and regulation of warehouse units in the port, where import and export products were located. The Port Police were observing traffic and restlessness in the piers. This organization was run by the inspector and his deputies from the nationalities living in Alexandria. The port and maritime

administration carefully supervised the distribution of people from various nationalities. In addition to official employees, certain men were also hired to meet the various needs of the harbor (Minkin, 2009: 61-63).

4. Construction of Lighthouses

During the colonial era, the Western rulers assumed themselves to have the right to govern the Eastern. Thus, the control of seas and ports were the primary choices of colonial control. Ports were the areas where international capital entered and exited countries (Minkin, 2009: 57). During the navigation of ships, it was necessary to build new lighthouses or to increase the number of lightships to assist and protect ships (FO 141/326, 1897: No: Inclosure 2 No 11).

During the reign of Mehmet Ali Pasha, a lighthouse was built on Ras al-Tin (Omar, 199?: 160). This lighthouse was a modern lighthouse with a rotating lamp every twenty seconds (The Times, 1871: 4). Pasha's policy helped to restore Alexandria. As a result, the population of the city also increased. The established telegraph system facilitated communication with Cairo. Austria, Greece, Switzerland, France and other consulates came to Alexandria, and the economy and foreign trade had achieved growth. Foreign ships were anchoring at the port of Alexandria (Omar, 199?: 160) At the western part of the lighthouse there was a fortress, about 30 ft in diameter and 240 steps in height that could be climbed. The tower of the lighthouse, which was built firmly, was hit by a cannon that was launched from the Inflexible at the time of the 1882 bombardment, and a large breach was opened in the tower. Even so, the tower remained standing. One person at the top of this tower was able to observe a very wide area (Butler, 1887: 144).

The lighthouse at Alexandria was burning after sunset, but because the channel entering the harbor was narrow and intricate, the ships were not allowed to enter the harbor after sunset. Ships were anchored outdoors during the night could enter the harbor after sunrise (Field, 1905: 3). For this reason, the passage at the entrance of the port of Alexandria was enlarged. This passage would be 300 ft wide and 30 ft deep, and the lighthouses built in Alexandria would also be added one more. Thus, the ships could access the harbor all day and night (FO 407/119, 1893: No:152, 108).

The Maritime Management and Quarantine Board were the two major administrative units in the UK's direct interests due to the large trade between England and the East. Lighthouse Management was responsible for the maintenance and construction of the lighthouses on the shores of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. This unit was well-managed and no complaints about this administration were heard. In 1882, £ 21,000. the lanterns in the Red Sea were frequently controlled with steam. In 1883 in the place that was called the dangerous rock (Brothers), a new lighthouse

that costs £ 3,000 erected. In 1889 it costed about £ 8,500 a new lighthouse was erected on the island of “Shadvan” at the entrance of the Suez Gulf (FO 407/106, 1891: No: 64, 82).

At the end of the 1890s, lighthouses that helped navigation traffic in Egypt were comparable to the best coastal lighting in Europe. When Said Pasha died in 1863, the Alexandria Lighthouse, decorated by a new lantern, was the only lighthouse of its kind on the Egyptian coasts. On the west coast of the Red Sea, there was an inadequate float-lighthouse in the Suez bay, while in 1898 there were eight strong lighthouses in the Mediterranean and its shores, and seven powerful lighthouses in the Red Sea coasts. Four of the lighthouses in the Mediterranean were in the harbor and bay of Alexandria; one was a flashlight that could be seen from twenty miles, rotating every twenty seconds on the point of Ras el-Tin; another was located on the Island of Marabout, west of the Gulf of Alexandria; another was a first-class lighthouse in the Arabian Gulf; A red and white lighthouse from Rashid to the east and a lighthouse in Port Said, the first-class electric flashes every twenty-second, and a flashlight that could be seen from twenty miles. In addition to a white lantern at the entrance of the Suez Canal in the Red Sea, there was a powerful floating light that could illuminate 18 miles on the Suez Road. Another lighthouse was a white lighted lantern fixed 50 miles south of Suez to the point of Zafarana; at the point called “Ras al Garib”, a lantern similar to the previous lantern, but stronger; another was a lantern that burns every 60 seconds could be seen from 18 miles on the island of Jubal; another was the second class of the 14 Daedalus mild cliffs in the middle of the Red Sea; one of the similar power on “Souakim”, the other in the Indian ocean in the “Berbera” also; a new lighthouse was built at the al-Wedge on the golden east coast of Suez. Of these lanterns, 14 of them were used. It was erected at £ 187,964 in the time of Abbas dynasty. The lanterns were made in Europe and the majority of those who kept the lanterns were British (McCoan, 1898: 248-249).

The work on the construction of an iron lighthouse instead of a floating light-ship was continuing on “the New Port Rock” which was on the road to Suez. The installation of stakes to support the iron structure was difficult and costly. For this reason, unless the weather was good and the sea without waves, no working could be performed (FO 407/142, 1897: No: 14, 22). A bright white light that rotated every 30 seconds from 1898 on the newly built seafront in “the Newport Shoal” near Suez would draw a full circle in a 360 degree horizontal and appeared at a distance of 12 miles in the clear air. In foggy weather, however, a bell would play every 30 seconds (FO 141/326, 1897: No: 46). In addition, a time-ball was built on the port of Port Said at the request of the sailors (FO 407/142, 1897: No: 14, 22).

The northern waters of the Red Sea were generally considered to be less dangerous for navigation, while the maritime vessels located in dangerous locations were effectively managed by the Egyptian Marine Management Authorities and the Ottoman Government were taking measures to make the navigation easier in the southern part of the Red Sea. These seafarers were built in “Jebel Teir“, in the rocky cliffs north of “Jebel Zukar” in “Abou Ail”, and on “Central Peak Island” and “Mokha”. These were done by a French company. The navigation activities in the southern waters of the Red Sea would be greatly facilitated when the sea-runners were finished. However, a warehouse with freshwater and supplies should be provided to those who were waiting for the lighthouses regularly (FO 407/159, 1902: No: Inclosure in No 51, 119).

The newly built lighthouses in the Red Sea had been working in a bright and effective way, as the passing ships stated. But this lasted eight days and then these lighthouses fade out. In the first instance, there was no official negotiation for the lighthouses to work again. This delay was due to some difficulties related to tax collection. These challenges were expected to be resolved quickly in terms of general commercial interests (FO 407/161, 1903: No: 7, 27). Consequently the lighthouses of the Red Sea, in the “Mokha”, “Jebel Teir”, ”Abu Ail“ and ”Zebayir“, became operational. As the ships navigating this route reported, these lanterns were brightly lit. The negotiations, which were necessary for the construction of these light installations, took several years and long correspondence was done to construct these lighthouses (FO 407/163, 1904: No: 4, 33).

Two new lighthouses were built in Alexandria to identify the boundaries of the new passageway in Alexandria. When the commercial agreement between England and Egypt was signed in October 1889, the lantern tax had to be reduced to 40,000 pounds per year as soon as it was applied to all forces. The contracts were also signed by Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, Italy and Portugal (FO 407/113, 1892: No:118, 78). In the early 1890s, two new lighthouses were being built in Alexandria to make it easier for ships to enter the harbor at night. This would have been possible by flattening and deepening the existing winding channels. (FO 407/106, 1891: No: 64, 82).

By 1894, two lighthouses were ready to mark the direct entry into the port of Alexandria. In addition, three gas buoys would be anchored to determine the boundaries of this new channel (FO 881/6570, 1894: No:92, 130). The new lighthouses built on the road to direct access to Alexandria were very successful. During the year 1895, 448 steamships had entered the port at night (FO 881/6808, 1896: No: 7, 16). The contract for the entry into Alexandria was completed and payments were made to the contractors. For operation, at night the canal was lit and opened. Some parts of the canal

were filled with alluvium when the new canal was opened (FO 407/131, 1894: No: Inclosure in 3 No 51, 65).

In 1896, the gross revenue from the lighthouse taxes of marine management was £.E. 110,000. The reason for this reduction was the reduction of tariffs by approximately 30%. Another reason for the fact that the number of ships passing through the Suez Canal was less than 1896 was another reason for this decrease (FO 633/67, 1898: No:1, 13). In order to stimulate trade in this region, the iron lighthouse over the pillars on New Port Rock in Suez started to operate previous year. In 1897, the gross revenue of maritime management was £.E 97,000, in 1898, this figure was £.E 87,000. The reason for this decline was not a decrease in commercial activities, but a decrease in tariff rates (FO 407/150, 1899: No: 142, 109). As a result of increased traffic, in 1899 the gross income was calculated as £.E 89,000. In 1900, enormous costs would have been made for the development of the marina in the Mediterranean and for the addition of new buildings to the marina. Unfortunately, there have been no developments for the construction of the sea coasts on the Arabian coasts of the Red Sea, but these improvements were necessary for international transport. Finally, the Egyptian government allocated funds for the construction of the new lighthouses (FO 881/7510, 1900: No:29, 28-29).

In 1900, 537 new ships from sunrise to sunset entered into the port of Alexandria, where only one accident occurred due to negligence. In this accident, the ship was recovered quickly without any damage, so there was no obstruction at the entrance (FO 633/70, 1901: No: 1, 15). In 1901, 645 steamships entered into the port from sundown to sunrise. This figure was 108 times more than in 1900 and there were no accidents. In 1900, a total of 2,204,626 tons of 1,334 steamships were entered into the port. During this period, the percentage of the tonnage of British ships decreased from 46.4% to 42.1%. However, the tonnage rates of German, Austrian and Italian steamships increased. Thus, in 1901, the gross income from the lighthouses was about £.E 95,000. This figure had been £.E. 6,000 from the revenues of the year 1900, more than £.E. 6,000 from the revenues of the year of 1899. The main reason for this increase was the resurgence of trade with China (FO 407/159, 1902: No: 32, 45). However, the income from the lighthouse dues was about £.E. 88,700 in 1899, while it was £.E. 85,000 previous year with a decrease of £.E. 3,000. This was due to the fact that they were hired by various governments associated with commercial enterprises in China and were exempt from paying many ships and dues passing through the Suez Canal (FO 881/7737, 1900: No: Inclosure in No 9, 22).

Commander "Gedge, R. N. conducted a detailed examination about all lighthouses in the Red Sea in October 1901. Mr. Gedge stated that

all lighthouses were in a steady-state, but made some recommendations for many lighthouses in use. The maintenance of the lighthouses on the Suez direction and the development of the lighthouses needed some expenditure of approximately £.E. 4,000. “Jebel Teid”, “Jebel Zübeyr” and “Jebel Zukur” were also under construction of lighthouses. These lighthouses were built not only by the Egyptian Government but also by the Ottoman Government. However, the Egyptian Government and “the Lloyd’s Agency” were negotiating to construct wireless etheric telegraph signaling stations in relation to lighthouses on the Egyptian coasts at various points in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea (FO 407/159, 1902: No: 32,45).

5. Conclusion

Throughout history, the Eastern Mediterranean has an important position both economically and politically. The discovery of new trade routes as a result of geographical discoveries, the Eastern Mediterranean seems to have lost its relative importance. It became a geographical area that attracted the attention of the economic and political forces again especially with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. In this context, the Eastern Mediterranean, which was the scene of the struggle for the influence of France and England, also served to revive the international maritime trade.

Numerous lighthouses were built with remarkable effort and cost on the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea or on the cliffs that were dangerous in the sea as a necessity for reviving international maritime trade. These lighthouses provided security for the goods and the crew on the ships and served economic and social development and improvement of the coastal and the inland cities.

When historical sources are considered, it can be stated that the lighthouses of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal improved economic and political relations between Europe and the Middle East and the East Asia, increased regional competitiveness, and accelerate globalization and technological developments.

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