

## MARKET SEEKING OF AMERICA IN MERSIN IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

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### Abstract

The capitalist economy and industrial revolution developments, dominated the world conjuncture in the 19th century, formed the political infrastructure of European states. The gradual development of production technologies with the industrial revolution caused western countries to search for markets to sell manufactured goods and raw materials to put production technologies into practice. Commercial firms were marketing their products through intermediary firms or individuals by determining the target market they identified. They run a series of promotional campaigns to make the products or services of companies preferred by people. How these marketing techniques were used by American companies in Mersin, which was a quite new and open port to growth and demand in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, can be found in the letters of American Consulate. The knowledge about the marketing techniques applied by American companies, has been obtained from the letters of the American Consulate. The aim of the study is to reveal how the search for the market in Mersin, a port city, which was open to growth in the late 19th century and early 20th century, was carried out by these numerous American companies.

**Keywords:** *Ottoman Empire, Mersin, American Consular Letters, American Companies, Market Seeking.*

### Öz

#### Amerika'nın Son Dönem Osmanlı Mersin'inde Pazar Arayışı

19. yüzyıl dünya konjonktürüne hâkim olan kapitalist ekonomi ve sanayi devrimi gelişmeleri, Avrupalı devletlerin politik alt yapılarını oluşturmuştu. Sanayi devrimi ile üretim teknolojilerinin giderek gelişmesi, batılı ülkeleri mamul malları satmak için pazar, üretim teknolojilerini uygulamaya dökmek için de hammadde arayışına girmesine sebep olmuştu. Ticari firmalar, tespit ettikleri hedef pazarı belirleyerek aracı kurum ya da kişiler yoluyla ürünlerini pazarlamaktaydılar.

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Şirketlerin ürünlerinin ya da hizmetlerinin insanlar tarafından tercih edilmesi için bir dizi tanıtıcı kampanyalar yürütürlerdi. Bugün çok daha modern teknik ve yöntemlerle yapılan bu pazarlama tekniklerinin 19. yüzyılın sonları ile 20. yüzyılın başlarında oldukça genç fakat büyümeye açık ve talep gören Mersin Liman kentinde Amerikan şirketleri tarafından ne şekilde gerçekleştirildiğine Amerikan Konsolosluk mektuplarında rastlanılmıştır. Amerikan şirketleri tarafından uygulanan pazarlama teknikleri ile ilgili bilgilere Amerikan Konsolosluk mektuplarından ulaşılmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı; 19. yüzyılın sonları ile 20. yüzyılın başlarında büyümeye açık olan Mersin Liman kentindeki pazar arayışının, sayıları oldukça fazla olan bu Amerikan şirketleri tarafından ne şekilde gerçekleştirildiğini ortaya koymaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Mersin, Amerikan Konsolosluk Mektupları, Amerikan Şirketleri, Pazar Arayışı.*

### **Introduction**

The meaning of the Industrial Revolution was not just the acceleration of economic growth. It also meant that growth accelerated through economic and social transformation.<sup>1</sup> Although the most significant economic changes in the World economy took place in the 19th century, it is possible to take the infrastructure of this process back to the 17th century. Namely, the development of the French weaving industry took place after the abolition of the Nant Ordinance in 1665, when about 60,000 master weavers from France settled in England. Although the first steam engine was invented by a scientist named Carnot in France in the 17th century, it was not widely accepted as a capitalist mode of production because the appropriate conditions were not reached yet.<sup>2</sup> With the outbreak of the industrial revolution in Europe in the 1780s, for the first time in human history, societies were freed from the chains created by their own productive forces, and these forces succeeded in realizing a rapid and unlimited increase in people, goods and services.<sup>3</sup> This development was the first successful attempt to break the chains of production. Therefore, although the industrial rise in Europe started in the 1780s, it progressed with the establishment of heavy industry and the construction of railways in England in the 1840s. This advance, contemporary with the French Revolution, took place a little earlier.<sup>4</sup> The labor factor lost its importance after the industrial revolution and the acceptance of the machine instead of man as the element that created wealth. By the middle of the 19th century, it was understood that large capital investments increased the wealth of both the individual and the national economy. However, it began to be seen that labor was not the only source of wealth, as it used to be, but only a factor of production. This understanding also had an ideology that justified the existence of private property. In the 1870s, however, economic ideas were no longer accepted because they were true, but because they were useful, and were rejected as soon as they were useful.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Tünay, 1995, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Hobsbawm, 2005, pp. 37-62.

<sup>4</sup> Hobsbawm, 2005, pp. 37- 38.

<sup>5</sup> Fusfeld, 1988, pp. 126-127.

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In this process, a remarkable growth was recorded in the world economy. Parallel to this growth, an expansionist and imperialist policy dominated the world with economic fluctuation. While developments such as the increase in demand for precious metals and the acceptance of free trade in many places in the 1840s stimulated the economy, two major industrial revolutions were experienced immediately after. The first industrial revolution developed towards the turn of the century based on coal, steam engine, textile machinery and new techniques such as casting and steelmaking methods.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the basic capital goods industry was established and an advanced stage of industrial development was introduced. It was also clear that an industrial economy with insufficient capital goods capacity could not go beyond a certain level of development. The single most reliable indicator of a country's industrial potential was the amount of iron and steel production. At this point, mines and the ability to produce by processing mines were also important indicators for industrial development and economy.<sup>7</sup> A century later, the steam engine developed in England with the contributions of Watt, emerged in an environment where the conditions of perfect competition were created. In such an environment technological development, and the necessity of increasing the efficiency of labor and reducing costs led to the industrial revolution.<sup>8</sup>

The second big step for the industrial revolution was taken in the 1880s, based on oil and electricity, and developed in the early 20th century. Between 1850 and 1870, oil was found in the USA and Russia, and railroad constructions increased in Europe. Between 1870 and 1900, there was a great depression in the economy. Starting from the 1900s, the second industrial revolution process, based on electricity and oil, began. The most important reason for the growth in the European economy in the 1850s and 1860s was the discovery of gold mines. The abundance of Money, the development of railways, the increase in the demand for industrial products were the most important events, prepared the environment for economic growth. The collapse of the Vienna Stock Exchange in the 1870s caused a great depression that lasted until 1896. This depression led the industrial community to discover new gold mines after 1896, and a new growth process was started by this.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Historical Development of Industrial Production in America**

The rapid increase in economic growth all over the world after the industrial revolution had its effect in the United States of America after it gained its independence. It became an industrial giant in time by passing into the industrialization stage after the civil war in the 19th century. Industrialization evokes a process in which agricultural production is pushed into the background, service sectors gain importance, urbanization and technological developments accelerate, and specialization in production becomes widespread. With its urban population until the middle of the 19th century, England

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<sup>6</sup> Hobsbawm, 2005, p. 188.

<sup>7</sup> Delmas, 1973, pp. 118-122.

<sup>8</sup> Tünay, 1995, p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> McNeill, 2004, pp. 650-655.

became the first industrialized country. In addition to iron and coal production, it reached a very advanced level in steam shipping. England held an important trade fair called the Great Exhibition in 1851 to show the rest of the World its technological achievements and possessions. Although other countries also contributed to this organization, most of the exhibits belonged to England.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the exhibition symbolized the industrialization level of England and that it was the locomotive country for Europe in this process. This success of England was followed in time in Western Europe, the USA and Japan.

The USA, with its rich resources, experienced an active industrialization stage in this period. The railroads, which were considerably financed by British banks, first developed the interior of the eastern part of the Mississippi, and then, with the expansion of this network, regions with rich resources began to gain importance. Even during the American Civil War in the second half of the 19th century, factories in the north increased their production. While the European continent produced more than half of the world's manufactured products in 1870, this ratio was almost halved in 1914, with the effect of industrialization in America.<sup>11</sup>

But America was not fast enough to adapt to machine technology. What caused this was the interest in farming and commerce. However, this situation gradually changed after the civil war, and the process that started with the shipping industry extended to factory construction. With the effect of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, trade was interrupted and access to British products became difficult. In such an environment, factories built by American investors began to increase.<sup>12</sup> The New England region in the USA was the first region of the country to industrialize with its various textile factories.

On the other hand, American inventors produced many new machines that could be used in agriculture and daily life as well as industry. Oliver Evans invented a steam engine more powerful than James Watt's, and this new engine was used to power locomotives and steamboats. Likewise Cyrus McCormick invented many machines to be used in agriculture and revolutionized agriculture by facilitating the harvest with the mechanical combine, which he patented in 1834. The sewing machine, invented by Elias Howe, made the life of housewives easier and made clothing production cheaper. Therefore, factory production techniques were eliminated in American workshops, and Eli Whitney pioneered the movement of standardization of manufacturing stages. Thus, the use of unskilled workers for each production stage became possible, while the production of manufacturing machines used for each stage became more effective. This production, consisting of a single row, was called the *American Manufacturing System* and was imitated by other industrializing nations. It has been observed that this system, which was first used in the manufacture of firearms, later spread to different production areas such as clocks and locks.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Helyar, (Access Date: 19.04.2021).

<sup>11</sup> "The Spread of Industrialization...", (Access Date: 14.04.2021).

<sup>12</sup> Demarest, (Access Date: 19.04.2021).

<sup>13</sup> Best, 2001, p.23.

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Although the machines invented both in the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century seem quite simple when compared to the technology of the advanced years, significant progress was made in terms of mass production. The developments in the field of industry were so great that the period after 1880 was considered as the *Second Industrial Revolution*. As scientists and engineers uncovered unknowns in physics and chemistry, this knowledge began to be applied to industry. Large new industries were built on these developments, and they contributed to the creation of new fields based on the mechanical and electrical industries. These new industrial areas were larger and more productive than their predecessors, and brought the United States to a significant level in the world market. In the second industrial revolution, great developments in mass production methods in every field became visible.<sup>14</sup> The number of industrial sectors using replaceable parts and machine tools started to increase rapidly. Fast and cheap electrical energy allowed the reorganization of machine technology more effectively, and thanks to this advantage, electrical energy replaced steam energy in factories. After these developments, machine power was replaced by human power over time.

The rise of industry in the USA also affected areas such as agriculture, trade and banking, and some legal regulations were made in these areas. This situation accelerated the general economy and the developments in the industry continued until the 20th century. Though agriculture in the country was not as developed as the industry in the 19th century, agricultural production increased significantly thanks to the machinery used. From the 1860s to the First World War, the growth in the American agricultural sector tripled the number of farms, and the cultivated farmland expanded in number.<sup>15</sup> Self-sufficient farmers were replaced by farmers producing for regional, national and international markets. As a natural result of this, farmers tended to specialize and started to produce a single product on their farms, unlike in the past. Thence, large farmers operating in different fields such as dairy farming, corn production, cattle breeding and vegetable farming emerged in America.

The industrialization process of America was also referred to as the “Steel Age”. For steel was needed in the large machines that were active throughout the period. Steel, which was found as a result of the search for suitable alloys for manufacturing after iron was insufficient, was a durable and very suitable material for industry. Processing and increasing the amount of steel paved the way for its use in many fields. In particular the fact that the rails were made of steel made the railway network widespread, and a great revolution took place in transportation.<sup>16</sup>

With the ease of transportation and communication, the exchange of products between the producer and the consumer also became easier, and financial institutions emerged that could respond to these developments. As a result of the growth of the industry with various branches, the banking sector was formed and there was a quantitative increase in this field. Fundraising for the investment and the organization of

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<sup>14</sup> Moky, (Access Date: 19.04.2021).

<sup>15</sup> Schmidt and Ross, 1926, p. 363.

<sup>16</sup> Heilbroner, Singer, 1984, pp. 169-170.

the investors market needed by the industry were made by banks in important cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Chicago.<sup>17</sup> These banks primarily provided loans to manufacturing and commercial enterprises, but over time they developed as institutions that also met the loan needs of farmers.

Undoubtedly, trade was the most important among the areas that developed at the production level. Marketing of manufactured products created a productive area by activating both domestic and foreign trade. In the domestic trade axis moving in the east-west direction, production goods were generally flowing to the west and industrial products were flowing to the east. Over time, different trade channels developed within the big trade cities in different regions, and these cities became a center where surplus products were collected. The wholesale of goods from other regions was focused in these cities. Other economic activities involved in trade such as transportation and storage were also centralized in these cities. Developments in foreign trade organization went through a similar process as in domestic trade, and the growth in trade led to a specialization in various fields. Those interested in foreign trade left the retail sale to others and only dealt with wholesale. After that, services related to foreign trade started to be provided by people specialized in this field, and the number of brokers and intermediaries increased in time. Among those interested in foreign trade, merchants with ships were very few, but the gap in this regard was filled by cargo brokers who gave assurances. Generally, a trader relied on maritime insurance for risk, people providing services for warehousing, financial institutions for financial transactions, and other intermediaries for transactions at customs.<sup>18</sup> This relation affected the communication and transportation sectors, and led to the development of these fields. Railways, canals and steamships brought the transportation business to an important stage, and in communication a widespread telegraph network was established throughout the country.<sup>19</sup>

### **Cotton Effect in American Industry**

In the second half of the 19th century, a movement began in the cotton market all over the world. One of the main reasons for this move was the American Civil War between 1861-1865. The war broke out as a popular revolt against black captivity. The fact that the event gained an economic dimension was the fact that labor and laboring forces wanted to protect their legal rights.<sup>20</sup> The underlying reason for this war to disrupt American agriculture was the differentiation of social and economic structure. Despite the Protestant population and financial development of the Northern States, the people of the Southern States were Catholic and their economy was based on agriculture. Their agricultural production was largely cotton, and it was produced by black slaves.<sup>21</sup> In the north, the slave trade and black captivity were abolished in 1827. After 1850, tensions

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<sup>17</sup> Bodenhorn, 2003, p.125.

<sup>18</sup> Taussig, 1927, pp.238-241.

<sup>19</sup> Szostak, 1991, pp. 61-65.

<sup>20</sup> Zinn, 2005, pp. 251-256.

<sup>21</sup> Uçarol, 1985, pp. 218-219.

began between the two sides. In 1861 the war started when the southern states separated from the union and formed a new union, and it lasted until 1865.<sup>22</sup> The most important reflection of the civil war was the disruption of cotton circulation in the world. The inability of the European weaving industry to meet its raw cotton needs from America directed the European States, especially England, to cotton producing centers. Because at the beginning of the century, the economy of many big states in Europe was based on cotton and textile. For instance the development of the economy in England between 1816-1848 was largely dependent on the developments in cotton farming. Such that the price movements in cotton determined the trade balance of the country. Until the 1860s textile factories, whose commodity was mostly cotton, were the priority all over the world. Textile continued to be the dominant trend for a long time in countries with manufactures for the market.<sup>23</sup> The long duration of the American Civil War and Europe's need for cotton in textile-based production in this process prompted Europe to seek new market centers. The Ottoman Empire had an important place among these centers. This situation created an opportunity for the revival of Ottoman cotton production, which could not compete with American cotton for many years, and triggered efforts to encourage cotton production. Entering the process of integration with capitalism, and in this framework the efforts parallel to the development of agricultural capitalism in the Tanzimat Period were also the underlying reasons for the mobility in production.

In this period, after the *Industrial Revolution* in Europe, the changing conditions in the perspective of the world economic system increased the role of market relations in both agriculture and manufacturing sectors in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore the most fundamental problem that arose was who would organize the economic resources: the state or the Ottoman subjects? The outsourcing of technology, which was the most fundamental deficiency in the industrial and agricultural fields, brought up the question of how the imported technology would be channeled to the country. It is seen that technology was highly introduced to the country through foreign capital, and this way was encouraged by the state. It was thought that technology transfer through foreign capital would spread faster to all strata of society. According to the general opinion, if the Ottoman subjects had done this job, it would have progressed more slowly and would have been limited to a certain group.<sup>24</sup> Realizing this fact, foreign companies would mobilize more to bring their manufactured products into the country.

Transferring this developing industrial production to the outside world was another important and directly related dimension to the study. At the forefront of the geographies, where the industrial goods flowed and wanted to be transferred was the Ottoman Empire, whose industry was not suitable yet. The Eastern Mediterranean region, on the other hand, was the region dominated by the Ottoman Empire, and the countries of the world were most interested. Mersin Port, in this region, was at the

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<sup>22</sup> Armaoğlu, 1997, pp. 722-732; Uçarol, 1985, pp. 218-219.

<sup>23</sup> Hobsbawm, 2005, p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> Quataert, 2006, p. 449.

forefront of the most important ports newly developing. This was the clearest indication of why commercial firms preferred Mersin Port as the market area for American goods.

### **Mersin Port: the Gate of Cukurova Opening to the Outside**

In the process of integration with the world economy, capitalism and foreign capital found more expansion space, particularly in the coastal regions and cities that had a connection with the sea. Port cities gained importance; as the old ones grew, new ones began to emerge. Opening to foreign markets and developing transportation with it made urbanization more possible.<sup>25</sup> One of these port cities was Mersin.

One of the most influential factors in Mersin's rise as an important port city was undoubtedly the increase in cotton-based agricultural production. Because Mersin Port provided the connection of almost all of the region with the outside. The American Civil War, which took place in the international conjuncture, and the events followed laid the groundwork for the formation of all necessary conditions for this situation. Thus, in the late 19th century, industrialization in the Cukurova region developed mostly around cotton. During the development of Mersin port, this industrialization, which was dependent on textile and cotton along with local and foreign factors, was dependent on large-scale hydraulic presses, agricultural tools, gins and spinning machines. Therefore, the industrialization process seen in Cukurova after 1890, was largely turning into industrial-agricultural mechanization.<sup>26</sup>

The conflicts of interest of imperialist countries such as Britain, France, Germany and the United States made Mersin and its port the shining star of the Eastern Mediterranean in the 19th and 20th centuries. America, which was added to this market later, had to make more efforts to gain a new market for itself here. Because almost all of the products, especially machinery and equipment, were imported from England. For instance, according to British Consulate Reports, five American sailing ships were seen in Mersin Port in 1870, and one in 1873. American steamships were not in Mersin Port until 1910-1911. It is recorded that eighty-four steam ships entered the port in 1910 and eighty-four in 1911. Compared to other countries, these numbers were quite low until the 1910s. In 1912, there was an agency called American Line in Mersin.<sup>27</sup>

By all means, during this period, Mersin was also undergoing some urban transformations. With the increasing interest, new trade venues were opening and commercial relations were increasing day by day. In fact, while the Ottoman economy was experiencing a recession in 1880, Mersin was becoming a new and productive trade center in the Eastern Mediterranean. In 1909, there were two ginning factories, a flour mill and two ice factories in Mersin. In 1921, there were twenty-five merchants engaged in manufacturing, fifteen merchants engaged in import and export activities in Mersin. There were drapers and haberdashers, three lawyers, three jewelers, a publisher, a

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<sup>25</sup> Tekeli, 1980, pp. 50-57.

<sup>26</sup> For more details: Toksöz, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Ünlü and Ünlü, 2012, p. 43.



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bookstore and twenty different merchants dealing with various businesses. In the 20th century, there was a development especially in the field of drapery and haberdashery. In addition, there was a trade in products such as agricultural machinery, sewing machines and construction materials. There is also an increase in the number of traders. These were the products that foreign states traded the most in this market.<sup>28</sup> We understand that America is trying to take part in the Mersin market with these products in this process.

It is understood that in this process, especially some consulates were effective in making Mersin a commercial center in the international arena. It is known that in 1894, there were consulates of England, Austria, Denmark, Spain, America, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Iran and Portugal-Russia and Sweden-Norway, managed from a single building, in Mersin.<sup>29</sup> In the consular reports and letters which are the main source of the study, it has been seen that the consulates and their employees in Mersin played a role in the Ottoman-American trade. One of the people who played a role in this commercial relationship was an Italian-born American entrepreneur named Richard Viterbo, who was the American consular agent in Mersin and also the General Manager of the Mersin-Adana Railway Company in 1896. It is known that Viterbo was a sugar producer in Louisiana for a while. He also established a steamboat and barge company in Mersin in 1904 and dominated the commercial transportation business in the port. There was a hierarchy among American consular officers. According to this hierarchy, consular agents were located under the consul general, the consul and the commercial representative. The American government appointed consular agents to important centers where there was no consul or commercial representative, particularly ports frequented by American citizens and merchant ships.<sup>30</sup> For this reason, in the letters of the American Consulate examined, the company owners and consuls felt themselves as the commercial representatives of their countries in Mersin and requested assistance from the American government to market their products.

#### **Market Search of American Firms in Mersin**

While America's import value was 23.000.000 dollars in 1790 and its exports were 20.000.000 dollars, by 1873 its import value reached 663.000.000 dollars and its exports reached 677.000.000 dollars. While 466.000.000 dollars were imported in 1878; It exported 744.000.000 dollars.<sup>31</sup> These statistical data show us that the American economy made a terrible commercial breakthrough from the late 18th century to the 1870s. These data also shed light on America's search for markets in Mersin and its surroundings in the late 19th century and the early 20th century.

Considering the variety of products that American companies want to market in consular letters, the most striking products are harvesting machines and agricultural tools, grain and grass cutting machines, windmills, iron pumps, iron and brass cylinders,

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<sup>28</sup> Ünlü and Ünlü, 2012, p. 46-47.

<sup>29</sup> Ünlü and Kayam, 2019, pp. 155-178.

<sup>30</sup> Nacar, 2017, p. 73.

<sup>31</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, 1878, p. 1079.

corn cob separating mills, pneumatic coating machines, pump, hay tools and barn hangers plow, harrow, mowers, planter, cultivator etc., cadillac motor car saw blades and saw products, metal chair and seat motor boat, rowing boats-canoes and hunting boats, snow crates, coffee grinders, Money safes, wooden goods, horse collar, olive oil soap, rat poison, typewriter equipment were included.

When we look at the import data of America to Mersin in this period; In 1879, 192 tons of oil worth 6420 pounds were imported to Mersin Port.<sup>32</sup> In 1881, 340 tons of 10,200 pounds worth of petroleum came to Mersin from America.<sup>33</sup> In 1882, this amount and the cost of 400 tons reached 13,000 pounds.<sup>34</sup> In 1898, sewing machines were 2080 pounds, steel 200 pounds, manufactures 14000 pounds.<sup>35</sup> In 1899, the products imported to Mersin were cotton products worth 6790 pounds, saw machines worth 195 pounds and agricultural machinery worth 8760 pounds.<sup>36</sup> In 1900, cotton clothing was valued at £2417, agricultural machinery was valued at £7910.<sup>37</sup> In 1901, cotton clothing and manufactured goods were valued at £14750, sewing machines were valued at 2275, agricultural machinery was valued at £4846.<sup>38</sup> In 1908, cotton manufacturing was valued at £16200, drugs 400, oils 950, pumps, tubs 780, other articles 1700 pounds.<sup>39</sup> All these products are brought to the region through Mersin Port.

Some of the companies contacted the Mersin Consulate, mentioned in the consular reports are as follows: D.M. Osborne Company, Manufacturers of Harvesting Machinery Farm Implements, Consolidated Milling Company of Minneapolis, Minn. Company, Milwaukee Harvester Co. American Manufacturers of Grain and Grass Cutting Machinery, L.R. Fowle & Co., Flint and Wallig MFG. Co., George Chisnell and Sons Co. Ld. Iron, Hardware and Machinery Merchants, Black Hawk Corn Sheller and Black Hawk Grist Mills Corporations, J. A. del Solar Corporation, Detroit Seamless Steel Tubes Co., F.E. Myers And Bro. Company, Emerson Manufacturing Co., SL Allen Company, The Lunkenheimer Company, Cadillac Motor Car Company Company, Massachusetts Saw Works, Hack Saw Blades and Saw Products Manufacturers, M. Vondrann Company, Racine Boat Company, The Sun Manufacturing Company, The Butler Co., Hall & Ruckel Company, Mason, Fenwick & Lawrence Company, Youells Exterminating Company, The Ritter Dental Company, The Ritter Dental Company, The Diamond Rubber Company, Chattanooga Plow Company.

The correspondence between American companies and Mersin American Consulate paved the way for the improvement of commercial relations between Mersin and America. From this perspective, the aim of the study is to identify the American companies which want to trade with Mersin by adhering to the consular letters, to

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<sup>32</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, 1880, p. 1426.

<sup>33</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, 1882, p. 1426.

<sup>34</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, 1883, p. 622.

<sup>35</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, 1899, p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, 1900, p. 13

<sup>37</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, 1901, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, 1902, p. 20.

<sup>39</sup> Great Britain Foreign Office, 1908, p. 23.

explain the commercial activities they want to carry out in the port of Mersin, and to determine the character of the correspondence between the American government and the consulates and to draw its route.

### **The Companies Producing Harvesting Machines and Agricultural Tools**

In the 1860s, Cukurova region had a serious agricultural momentum. This was especially true in cotton farming. This development, which attracted the attention of many European countries as well as the United States, was also reflected in the consular letters. As can be seen, many companies that produced agricultural harvesting machines and agricultural tools, contacted Mersin, which is the gateway to Cukurova. For instance, in the letter written by Stephen G. Coidan from D. M. Osborne Company which produced harvesting machines and agricultural tools, to the American Consulates in Mersin on 20th April 1896, he gave information about the company worked for, with the reference of the American Consul in Istanbul, Luther Short. In the letter, he mentioned that his company had a wide area of interest all over Anatolia and particularly in Adana, which was the warehouse of their joint machinery with the Iskenderian-Avedissian Company. However, he also stated that they had some problems in the events of 1895 due to the fact that the owners of this company (The Iskenderian-Avedissian Company) were Armenian and wanted to learn what should be done to avoid the same problems.<sup>40</sup> On the 10th of March 1897, a new letter came to the consulate from the European manager of the same company. In the letter received, it was written that they wanted to establish economic relations with Messr. Bazin & Co. located in Mersin, and requested information about this company from the consulate.<sup>41</sup>

Another similar sample was the letter sent from New York by Minn. Co., a milling company in Minneapolis, to the US Consulate representative Richard Viterbo on the 7th of June 1899. In order to expand its commercial activities in Mersin, the company requested assistance from the consulate to direct someone to help them in securing the names of those importing flour to the port. They also stated that they were ready to pay in case of any expense in fulfilling these demands.<sup>42</sup> It seems that the company wanted to join the Mersin market.

Milwaukee Harvester Co., American grain and grass cutting machinery manufacturer, sent copy of catalog containing the introduction of the machines they produced, in a letter they wrote to the American consul Richard Viterbo on 18th of September 1900. In the letter, it was mentioned that when exporting to countries that used harvesters, they were concerned because they did not know the conditions of these countries. Based on this idea, they requested information from the consulate on certain issues, as they did not know the conditions of the region in which Mersin was located. Some of these issues were:

- What were the approximate proportions of grains and grasses grown?
- Whether any harvesters were used or not, if yes, how much were used?

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<sup>40</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 006.

<sup>41</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 006.

<sup>42</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 006.

- Was a machine used for harvesting or a sickle?
- What were the companies that trade the products, and which companies were especially accepted by the consul?
- When was the harvest time for grain and grass?<sup>43</sup>

As it is understood from the questions, the agricultural potential in the region was noticed, but it was tried to be discovered the technological level of the region. Thus, the potential of Mersin to become a market for their own products emerged.

It is understood that Jean Debbas was the head of the Mersin American Consulate by 1908. This person was originally from Beirut, lived in Tarsus for many years as an Ottoman citizen, and was named Abdo Debbas in Ottoman documents and served as the American consulate in Tarsus.<sup>44</sup> American inventor and producer Asahel Huntington Patch, owner of Black Hawk Corn Sheller and Black Hawk Grist Mills Companies, wrote a letter to Mersin American Consul Jean Debbas on the 28th of February 1908, and introduced his own invention *corn sheller* which was used to separate corn cobs and grains from each other, and *grist mills* which was used to grind grain. Patch stated that they were sure that these products would be met with interest in Mersin, and added that they also specified the lowest export prices.<sup>45</sup> Thus, it can be understood that the agricultural market of Mersin had the potential to rapidly keep up with technological tools.

In such examples, it can be seen that the types of technological tools used in agriculture showed more and more diversity. For instance, F. E. Myers and Brothers Company, from Ashland and Ohio, wrote that they had a new gear and double-acting power pump, as well as hydro-pneumatic pumps and cylinders, and sent a price catalog with the images of the related products to the consulate on 6th of April 1908. In this catalog, cylinders used in normal pumps, pump stands adapted to all types of wells, Myers power pumps with reservoir and siphon, reversible arm, faucets especially manufactured for power pumps were shown separately. In addition, they stated that the catalog prices were valid until the 1 July 1908, and they were waiting for a response.<sup>46</sup>

Plow, harrow, mowers, cultivator etc., machine manufacturer Emerson Manufacturing Company made an investigation about the region, and wrote a letter to the consulate on 16th of May 1908. In the letter, the company stated that they determined that there was a tendency towards the use of motor plows. Upon this, by sending the catalog of their most advanced products, they added that these products would provide a great advantage to the farmers. In addition, the information that the engine produced by the Hart-Parr Company, together with the plows which would provide more power than a horsepower required for large farms was the most important marketing issue of the company.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 006.

<sup>44</sup> Uğuz, 2011, p. 158; Presidential Ottoman Archive (POA), Hâriciye Nezâreti Hukuk Müşavirliği İstişare Odası (HR.HMŞ.İŞO), 165/1, 28th of June 1882 (Hijri, 12th Shawwal 1299).

<sup>45</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>46</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>47</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

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Another company of agricultural equipment manufacturers, S.L. Allen sent a letter with a product catalog to the consulate on the 8th of June 1908, and stated that they had been producing the best machines and tools that were accepted as standard not only in the United States but in more than sixty countries for thirty-five years. In the letter, they also wrote the updated price list and emphasized that seed drills and carriage wheels could be subject to a 35% discount above the prices in the list. They also hoped to further impress the interested parties by declaring that the freight charge was paid in New York, and a 2% discount was applied for cash payments.<sup>48</sup>

Cutting and mowing tools and equipment in the agricultural field was one of the most essential needs. Massachusetts Saw Works, Hack Saw Blades and Saw Manufacturers wrote a letter to the consulate on the 5th of August 1908 and pointed out that they were aware of the financial crisis in the country, and that they could make a 5% discount on Victor Hack Saw Blades, depending on the falling material prices. They added that their knives produced in American standards, were the best in the market and far superior to the knives available in this region, and stated that they could also make a 2% discount in cash, invoice and tax-free payments.<sup>49</sup> The most effective marketing technique used in this example was to offer a discount by using the financial difficulties of the country and to emphasize that cutting tools, which were the most indispensable tools in the field of agriculture, were the highest quality in the market.

A horse collar, used to tie the animal to a plow or another vehicle, was among the products that were wanted to be marketed. An American horse collar manufacturer asked the consulate on 18th of September 1908 about the status of the use of horse collars in the region, and wanted to know whether there would be a market for them in Mersin.<sup>50</sup>

In a letter from the Import Department of Flint and Wallig MFG. CO. to Mersin American Consul A. Donaldson Smith on 4th of May 1909, it was conveyed that they wanted to create a market in Mersin, and its surroundings and increase their sales. It was stated that some products of the company were windmills, towers, iron pumps, iron and brass cylinders, and a list of companies that import agricultural machinery and water extraction equipment from companies that trade agricultural materials in the region was requested. Related to this, product booklets prepared in English and French were prepared and added to the letter to be given to the companies.<sup>51</sup>

The director of the Agricultural Machinery Exporters in George Chisnell and Sons Co. Ld. mentioned some of the problems in the letter he wrote to the American Consul of Mersin, Edward I. Nathan Esq. on 11th of June 1909. According to the letter, the company had established an agency in Adana ten years ago to sell agricultural machinery. Messrs Avedissian and Kechichian Firm in the region was authorized for the management of the agency. The imported agricultural machinery was kept in private warehouses of this company in Adana and Tarsus. As far as the agency said, the

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<sup>48</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>49</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>50</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>51</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 019.

warehouses together with the machinery inside, were burned and looted by the Ottoman subjects during the Armenian events and rebellions in this region. The company also sent the sales booklets of the materials damaged during the events with the letter. Based on these prices, they applied to the Ottoman government for compensation for their losses here. Meanwhile, the compensation for the damage determined from the sales booklets was 4511,07 Turkish Liras. Messrs Avedissian and Kechichian Firm reported that they had a loss of 5844 Turkish Liras. They appointed Torkom Boyaciyan to Adana to prove their disappearances, investigate and fulfill the necessary circumstances, and requested the necessary from the consulate.<sup>52</sup>

Another product most used in agriculture is plows. It is the most basic tool used to till the soil in agriculture. Chattanooga Plow Co. which was related to works such as chilled and steel plows, disc plows and plow repair, introduced their plows in many letters to the consulate, and stated that they were looking for a market in Mersin and its surroundings. It is understood that they were pretty sad because they did not receive a response.<sup>53</sup> No evidence was found about whether there was a return subsequently.

### **Companies Marketing Industrial Products**

Along with agricultural equipment, various industrial products could also be the subject of letters to the consulate. One of the most interesting of these was the pneumatic coating machines. J.A. del Solar Company, founded in 1900 in New York to manufacture pneumatic coating machines for use in paint and whitewash, wrote a letter to the American Consulate on the 28th of February 1908, stating that they requested to market hot and cold water paint. In the letter, they offered that if 6 barrels of any type were ordered, they would have given one of the pneumatic coating machines free of charge, which did the best work done by 20 people alone. They also stated that these machines were definitely not sold for less than \$50 and if they ordered a barrel dye, they could send a \$20 fast dyeing machine free of charge. They expressed that they could send a copy of the booklet called *Labor Saving* together with the sample of both paint types. The company explained that this small booklet contained images of machines that performed paint and whitewash, numbering and dating functions, and these content descriptions.<sup>54</sup> In this example, it is possible to see that machines were gradually replacing manual labor in industrial production, and rapid production was becoming more important.

Undoubtedly, steel was one of the most influential mines of the 20th century. Among the consular letters, a company, produced steel pipes, draws attention. On behalf of Detroit Seamless Steel Tubes Company, R. H. Phillis wrote a letter to Jean Debbas from the American Consulate on the 19th of March, 1908. As learned from American Consulate in Alexandria, they realized that Mersin was interested in imports, and thought that they wanted to draw attention as a steel locomotive pipes, boiler and mechanical pipes company. They informed that as a company, supplied products to

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<sup>52</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 019.

<sup>53</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>54</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

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many companies in America, they could give the best prices, and they sent the products images.<sup>55</sup> A response was provided on the 20th of April, and it is understood that a detailed discussion was held about the products.<sup>56</sup>

Letters about similar products kept coming. One of these was the letter sent to consulate on the 26th June 1908, by the import department of the company in New York, named The Lunkenheimer, which produced super brass and iron specialties and Engineering Tools. In the letter, it was stated that they were importers of engineering materials such as valves, injectors and lubrication devices, and they also asked whether a copy of their catalog as a manufacturer of all these tools was wanted or not by the consulate until 1908. They also wrote that they expected a positive response by conveying that if the buyers wanted to place an order and if they informed about the conditions to be adhered to and through which bank they would pay, the transactions would be carried out much faster.<sup>57</sup>

#### **Motor Vehicle Marketing Companies**

It is noteworthy that there were companies that manufactured motor vehicles among the companies in search of a market in Mersin during this period when motor vehicles were just beginning to be used. In the letter of the foreign trade department of Cadillac Motor Car Company from Detroit, Michigan to the consulate on 7th of July, 1908, they stated that they wanted to popularize the Cadillac Motor Car in foreign countries through the consulate, and that they needed help in Mersin. They sent a form consisting of a few questions to be filled together with the list prepared for this purpose. They stated that they asked for information about the commercial conditions of Mersin and its surroundings, and that they also took his personal suggestions into account in this form. Expressing that they did not want to send automobiles to countries which were not suitable for automobiles, but they want to see the Cadillac brand car on the roads of each country, and asked for contribution and help.<sup>58</sup>

In another example, motorized sea vehicles were mentioned. An American company named Racine Boat Company, which manufactured motor boats-sailing yachts, oars, boats-canoes and hunting boats, had previously corresponded with the consulate, and asked for information on companies dealing with their boats. They got permission from the consulate to contact the relevant companies, and send their catalogs to receive orders.<sup>59</sup>

#### **Manufacturers of Metal Chair and Seats**

Another product type that draws attention in the reports is furniture. It has been seen that more comfortable and durable chair and armchair manufacturers contacted Mersin. M. Vondrann Company, which specified that they control the production of

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<sup>55</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>56</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

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<sup>58</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>59</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

patented metal chairs and armchairs in Germany and America, expressed in the letter they wrote that their aim was to expand their sales globally. They sent their prices and brochures, saying that the seat became a necessity, and it could be used easily in this region as well. Accordingly, they gave information that the prices could vary from \$ 10.80 to \$ 16.80 wholesale in Hamburg (Germany), and from \$ 21.60 to \$ 24.00 wholesale in New York (USA).<sup>60</sup> Thus, it is possible to understand that these companies asked to descend into the basics of daily life.

The Sun Manufacturing Company, an American company, which manufactured products such as Money safes, coffee grinders, and wooden goods, signified that they had wide markets around the World and that wanted to go into this region as well.<sup>61</sup> Likewise, the Butler Co. which was a manufacturer of windmills and fine tools and equipment, stated that they asked to take part in the market in this region, and requested the names of interested dealers.<sup>62</sup>

### **Firms Producing Vegetable Oil**

Among the industrial products that draw attention in the reports, is soap made from olive oil. The company named Hall & Ruckel domestically produced Castile soap with a wide sales scale in New York. In their letters, they pointed out to the following issues:

*“We produce Castile (olive oil) soap with completely domestic consumption and wide sales scales. Olive oil imported at 60 cents or more is taxed at 40 cents per gallon, and is classified as cooking oil. The government imposes this duty on cooking oil as well, and importers claim that they are not only non-commercial, cost less than 60 cents per gallon and qualify for duty-free entry. Importers are spreading disastrous reports about short olive cultivation to keep prices high. We doubt the accuracy of these reports, and we would like to import our own olive oil from now on, but we do not have any foreign representatives at the moment. Through your office, we will have the opportunity to obtain an olive crop at the conditions and price we ask for pure yellow olive oil with a fatty acid content not exceeding 5% this year.”*

They asked for help from the consulate in this regard.

One of the most valuable vegetable oils in this century was cottonseed oil obtained from cottonseed. In a letter dated 29th of April 1909, L.R. Fowle & Co. stated that their company had been following the import of American cottonseed oil coming to this region for a while, and emphasized that there was the necessary opportunity to establish and operate a cottonseed oil factory here. They wrote in the letter that they could prepare all offers for the most suitable mills if anyone was interested, and expressed that they were ready to offer all kinds of support.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>61</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>62</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>63</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 019.



## **Examples of Companies Marketing Various Products Included in Consular Letters**

### **Harmful Animal Poisons**

Among the letters written for a wide variety of products, rat poison is an interesting example. In the letter, the import department of Youells Exterminating Co. wrote to the consulate on 30th March of 1909, stated that they produced a chemical drug for the extermination of rodents, and that they were looking for a market in this region. They also requested assistance from the consulate in order to inform the relevant companies in the region.<sup>64</sup>

### **Typewriter**

Another interesting product being marketed was the typewriter. On the 10th of March 1908, Triumph Visible Typewriter Co. advertised the typewriters which they produced as a useful tool for the consulate. According to what they wrote, not only in terms of its appearance, it also had excellent visibility from the first letter to the last letter, carrying 90 letters instead of 70 letters, an extra 8 character capacity, foreign letters and accents, lightweight, adjustability, instantly removable plate and the best prices in the market.<sup>65</sup>

### **A New Kind of Plant Used in Rubber Production**

Chas. P. Fox. from the Diamond Rubber Co. wrote a letter to the consulate on the 20th of March, 1908, and stated that they were interested in a new plant used in the production of rubber, which grew in the region and produced tubers and onions containing dense milky sap. According to their research on the plant, its habitat spread from Southern Europe to Southeast Africa, and they reported that different plants grew in every geography due to different soils and vegetation. The company sent a sketch of this plant with wood engravings in the envelope. Scientific publications revealed that this plant could also grow in arid lands in the southwest. They gave the good news of a new product to the farmers providing that this information was correct, and requested more information about this plant from the consulate.<sup>66</sup>

### **Dentist**

Among the letters sent to the consulate, advertisements of commercial companies were intense, but another interesting example was encountered. In the letter sent to the consulate on the 20th of May, 1909, the Ritter Dental company expressed their regret by realizing that there were almost no dentists in the area.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 019.

<sup>65</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>66</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

<sup>67</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 019.

### **Patent and Trademark Lawyers Company**

An interesting example was in a letter of the patent and trademark lawyers firm named Mason, Fenwick & Lawrence. In the letter from Washington, the company official wrote that they had been working intensively in the USA for 47 years in accordance with the patent law, and that they secured patents and trademarks of the manufacturers. They stated that they worked with the companies of many well-known trademarks, and asked for information about the companies which were interested in the subject in this region.<sup>68</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In this study, the demands of American companies trying to communicate through the consulate in Mersin Port, which was quite new but open to growth, to go in the Cukurova market in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, have been examined. The most important reason why Mersin attracted the attention of American companies as a target market was that it was a young port city on the Eastern Mediterranean and was open to growth. Based on the letters, it is possible to say that the companies followed the development of Mersin very closely. At this point, it can be said that foreign traders in Mersin and especially American companies were intermediaries. When we look at the quality and quantity of the companies in the letters, it is clearly understood that there was a great demand. An important reason for this situation was that the industrial revolution and the development in production technologies led western countries to search for markets to sell their manufactured goods and raw materials to put their production technologies into practice.

In the period of independence after colonization, America had come a long way in production by using its natural resources with its technical heritage from Europe, and increased its industrial efficiency by adapting to the technological advances in the world. It also carried the trade of the surplus value across the continents, and became one of the strongest economies of the 20th century. All these letters were the most obvious examples of the development of industrial production in America. Companies that completed the industrial production mechanism within themselves, sought markets to market their products to the outside world as a part of the natural process. In this context, the most suitable markets were port cities connected to the outside world.

The most important intermediary institution for American companies to communicate with the Mersin market was the consulate employees, as many foreign companies did. In this process, consulates became the most important intermediary institutions in the local and outside world. This situation paved the way for most of the consuls to establish their own companies, and to create a monopoly in many port cities by using their external connections. As in the example of Richard Viterbo, who was the American Consulate in Mersin.

When the letters are examined, it is noteworthy that the companies only provided promotional information about the products they wanted to market, some of them

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<sup>68</sup> Records of Foreign Service Posts-Consular Posts, Mersin, Volume 017.

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requested information about the region, and most of them asked for help from the consulate. It was also stated in some of them that they could apply discounts to make their products more attractive. Considering the types of products that were intended to be marketed in the letters, the greatest intensity was undoubtedly related to industrial agriculture. Manufacturers of agricultural equipment and machinery to be used in the agricultural field, were the companies that wanted to be included in the regional market the most. The most important reason for this was the transition to mechanized agriculture, which made progress in the region just in this process. The development of cotton agriculture, which was the most important outcome of the crisis in the world market, especially regarding cotton reserves, had a direct impact on the regional economy. For this reason, companies that realized that commercial and industrial agriculture also made progress in the same process accelerated their demands to go into the regional market.

The demand of manufacturers of motor vehicles, industrial products, engineering tools, vegetable oils etc. to go in the regional market was the most important indicator of the industrial momentum in Mersin. At the same time, it is quite remarkable such as dentist, patent and trademark advocacy were also wanted to imported to Mersin. Therewithal, this was the harbinger of a shift in the living standards of daily life as well as economic life in Mersin at the turn of the 20th century. The fact that a typewriter manufacturer company noticed this dynamism in Mersin, and demanded to market the typewriter as one of the most important needs depends on the fact that it predicted that the correspondence would increase gradually. Therefore, the typewriter emerged as an element that would facilitate correspondence.

When all these informations are taken into account, the common point of almost all of them was that with the entry of these products into the Mersin market, the industrial revolution promised to save time and labor, which were the contribution made to all human life. In this context, the study also has constituted a good example of how the potential of Mersin, which is the gateway of the Cukurova region to the outside from the Eastern Mediterranean coast, has been realized by foreign states in the process of articulation with capitalism.

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