

The Port of Suakin in the Late 19th Century: Trade and Politics

19. Yüzyılın Sonlarında Sevakin Limanı: Ticaret ve Siyaset

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Abstract

Suakin, a strategically significant port on the Red Sea, came under the Ottoman control without direct military confrontation following Yavuz Sultan Selim's conquest of Egypt in 1517. Strategically located, it became a key hub for the Ottoman trade and especially in the 19th century, a focal point of colonial competition. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 changed trade dynamics and increased British influence in the region. Britain has now begun to pursue a proactive policy in the region. Although the Ottoman presence in Suakin and the entire Abyssinian geography effectively ended with the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, relations with the region, which was officially considered Turkish territory, continued in some way until 1917. This study focuses on the strategic significance of the Port of Suakin, a key maritime hub that has retained its geopolitical relevance from the Ottoman period to the present. Suakin's role as a major center of trade in the Red Sea positioned it at the intersection of global economic and political transformations, particularly during the era of European colonial expansion. The research examines the policies pursued by the Britain to assert its influence in Sudan and the broader region, with a particular focus on the instrumentalization of trade as a mechanism for political and territorial consolidation. Furthermore, the study assesses the interplay between trade, diplomacy, and military intervention in shaping Suakin's historical trajectory, offering insights into the dynamics of colonial competition and the long-term implications of the British policies for Sudanese sovereignty.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Red Sea, Suakin Port, Sudan, Britain

Öz

Kızıldeniz'de stratejik açıdan önemli bir liman olan Sevakin, Yavuz Sultan Selim'in 1517'de Mısır'ı fethetmesinin ardından doğrudan askeri bir çatışma olmadan Osmanlı kontrolüne girdi. Stratejik bir konuma sahip olan Sevakin, Osmanlı ticaretinin önemli bir merkezi ve özellikle 19. yüzyılda kolonyal rekabetin odak noktası haline geldi. 1869'da Süveyş Kanalı'nın açılması ticaret dinamiklerini değiştirdi ve bölgedeki İngiliz etkisini artırdı. Büyük Britanya artık bölgede proaktif bir politika izlemeye başladı. Sevakin'deki ve tüm Habeş coğrafyasındaki Osmanlı varlığı, 1882'de İngilizlerin Mısır'ı işgaliyle fiilen sona ermesine rağmen, resmen Türk toprağı olarak kabul edilen bölgeyle ilişkiler 1917'ye kadar bir şekilde devam etti. Bu çalışma, Osmanlı döneminden günümüze jeopolitik önemini koruyan Sevakin Limanı'nın stratejik önemine odaklanmaktadır. Sevakin'in Kızıldeniz'deki önemli bir ticaret merkezi olarak rolü, onu özellikle kolonyalist devletlerin genişlemesi döneminde küresel ekonomik ve politik dönüşümlerin kesiştiği noktaya yerleştirdi. Araştırma, İngiltere'nin Sudan'daki nüfuzunu arttırmak için izlediği politikaları inceliyor ve özellikle ticaretin politik ve bölgesel konsolidasyon mekanizması olarak araçsallaştırılmasına odaklanıyor. Sevakin'in tarihsel gelişimini şekillendirmede ticaret, diplomasi ve askeri müdahale arasındaki etkileşimi değerlendiren bu çalışma, sömürgeci rekabetin dinamikleri ve İngiliz politikalarının Sudan egemenliği üzerindeki uzun vadeli etkileri hakkında fikir vermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Devleti, Kızıldeniz, Sevakin Limanı, Sudan, İngiltere

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The Port of Suakin in the Late 19th Century: Trade and Politics

Throughout history, the city of Suakin has been one of the important economic, religious and political centers on the African coast of the Red Sea. In addition to being the last point where trade caravans coming from the interior of Africa reached the sea, it was also the gateway to the sea for the north-south trade between Abyssinia and Egypt. With the spread of Islam in the region, the Port of Suakin became the starting point of the pilgrimage route of African Muslims, and this caused the place to be given religious importance (Nour, 2006, p. 7). The Port of Suakin was also used by Ethiopian Christians on pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Therefore, it was also of great religious importance to Christians. The pilgrims continued to use this route until the 16th century (Peacock, 2012, p. 30).

In the 10th and 11th centuries, the most important stop on the Red Sea in trade with India was the Port of Suakin. Suakin, which maintained this feature in later periods, was a stopover point for ships travelling to and from Egypt via the Gulf of Aden (Peacock, 2012, p. 30). Suakin gained even more importance after the Mamluks took over the region in 1265. During this period, ivory, gum and slaves were regularly sent to Egypt from the interior of Sudan. It is known that the Mamluk sultans also made efforts to develop this trade (Bloss, 1936, p. 281, 282).

Commercial activity in the Port of Suakin intensified from the beginning of the 15th century. This was due to the increasing wealth of Egypt, which increased its trade relations with India, Ceylon and China (Peacock, 2012, p. 31; Bloss, 1936, p. 283). Although the Mamluks tried to carry out this trade via the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden through the Port of Jeddah, they were unsuccessful. It is known that there were plenty of merchants who used the Port of Suakin as a base for trade to India during this period (Peacock, 2012, p. 31). In addition, after the destruction of the northern port of Aydhab by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars around 1428-29, Suakin became the most important port on the western coast of the Red Sea. In the following period, it became one of the main centers of trade with Egypt, Arabia and Yemen. It also continued to be an important route for pilgrims (Bloss, 1936, p. 285).

Two developments in the 16th century caused significant changes in the Red Sea ports. The first was the Portuguese discovery of the Cape of Good Hope which resulted in the shift of the Indian trade route to this region, and the second was the Ottoman conquest of Red Sea ports such as Jeddah, Suakin and Massawa (Bloss, 1936, p. 281, 282). As part of their strategy to control trade in the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese began to seek ways to enter the Red Sea in the late 15th century. To this end, they attempted to take control of the Aden region but were unsuccessful. In the early 16th century, the Red Sea and the Port of Suakin came under direct Portuguese influence. After the siege operation they carried out in 1513, they built forts in Suakin and Massawa in 1517, aiming to establish a permanent presence in these regions, but were unsuccessful. It can be thought that the main aim of the Portuguese Red Sea policy was to capture the Red Sea coast and Mecca in cooperation with the Christian Abyssinian Kingdom. However, according to some historians, these expeditions of the Portuguese were exploratory activities aimed at getting to know the Red Sea ports and understanding the situation of the Muslims in the region (Nour, 2006, p. 9; Peacock, 2012, p. 32).

While these developments were taking place on the Red Sea coasts, the Mamluk Sultanate, which dominated the region at the same time, was under threat from the Ottoman Empire coming from the north. The Ottomans, who won the war against the Egyptian forces in 1517, managed to dominate Egypt and the entire domain ruled by the Mamluks. It is understood that the local emirs who governed Suakin during the Mamluk period recognized the Ottoman sovereignty as a strong Islamic state during the period when the Ottoman fleet descended to the Red Sea, and fought against the Portuguese (Nour, 2006, p. 15).

Although this region came under the Ottoman rule in 1517, the first data regarding its actual inclusion in the Ottoman administrative system dates to 1554. Therefore, there is no enlightening information about the early periods of the Ottoman rule in Suakin. It is understood that the Turks fought for dominance over the Suakin Port and trade during this period since it is known that the Portuguese were trying to remove the Turks from the region in cooperation with the King of Abyssinia at that time (Alvares, 1881, p. 185, 186, 352).

After the Ottomans established the Yemen Province and settled well on the Red Sea coast, they became more interested in the western coast of the Red Sea and East Africa. In 1525, the Ottoman navy eliminated the bases established by the Portuguese and established complete dominance in the region. However, the struggles with the Portuguese continued in the following period. During the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, the Habeş Province was established in 1555 with its center in Suakin, and Özdemir Pasha was appointed as the governor. Until his death (1560), Özdemir Pasha tried to cut off the Abyssinian Kingdom's connection to the sea by extending the Ottoman rule southwards along the western shores of the Red Sea. His son Osman Pasha, who succeeded him, fought for the dominance of especially the coastal areas and ports as his father (Orhonlu, 1996a, p. 363, 364).

The city of Suakin was located on an island of the same name, very close to the coast. In the second half of the century, it came under threat from the local tribes of the Func Sultanate. These tribes, who did not recognize the Ottoman sovereignty, besieged Suakin from time to time and made the administration very difficult. The Func threat continued in the late 16th century. Although the Ottomans maintained their rule in Suakin during this period, they were unable to stabilize it, since communication between Suakin, which was geographically very distant, and the imperial center was very difficult. For instance, a correspondence with Istanbul could only reach its destination in 5-6 months. Undoubtedly, this situation made it very difficult to establish the authority in Suakin. In the following period, the Ottoman authority in Suakin could only be established as a result of cooperation with the local tribes (Peacock, 2012, p. 37).

Although the center of the Habeş Province was moved to Massawa in the 17th century, the rulers generally continued to live in Suakin. However, some territories were lost during this period and the territory of the Habeş Province shrank. The customs revenues of the ports decreased even further. The revenues obtained were mostly spent on wars with local powers to maintain state authority (Nour, 2006, p. 26).

In the 18th century, the province's income fell even further, and it fell far short of meeting its own expenses. Due to this and other internal and external issues, the Ottoman Empire's interest in the Habeş Province also decreased. In addition, during this period, the Red Sea lost its status as a closed inland sea in the hands of the Ottoman merchants and was opened to world trade. As a result, the pressure of European states seeking commercial and political supremacy in the region increased. All these developments brought about a number of administrative changes. In 1701, the Habeş Province was administratively removed from its status as an independent province and incorporated into Jeddah Province (Nour, 2006, p. 30, 31).

In the 19th century, the Habeş Province, which was mostly administered by local administrators, had a district governor attached to Jeddah, albeit symbolically. With Mehmed Ali Pasha taking over the administration in Egypt in 1804 and expanding his influence southward along the Red Sea coast in 1821, Massawa and Suakin began to gain importance again. The administration of these two ports and revenues were given to Mehmed Ali Pasha by the Ottoman administration. Thus, the lands of the Habeş Province began to be administered de facto by the Governor of Egypt on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan. As such, the Ottoman administration began to be called "*et-Türkiyye es-Sabika*" (previous Turkish administration) (Nour, 2012, p. 118). Meanwhile, the competition between the King of Abyssinia, who

was cooperating with European states, and the Ottomans over the ports of Suakin and Massawa was increasing. After the death of Mehmed Ali Pasha, these two ports, which were connected to Jeddah, were returned to Egyptian administration in 1865. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 changed all balances in the region. The Abyssinia region, centered on Suakin and Massawa, became the scene of struggles for dominance between the Ottomans, Egypt, England, Italy and France after this date. As a result, England invaded Egypt in 1882 and landed troops on the coast of Sudan. Italy, on the other hand, settled in the regions of today's Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti. Efforts to re-establish the Ottoman dominance in the region were fruitless. Thus, the Ottoman period in Sudan effectively ended. However, the Ottomans never accepted this situation and always stated that Egypt, Sudan and the Red Sea coasts were legally theirs. Although some relations were established with Abyssinia, which it considered a vassal during World War I, these relations were completely severed in 1917 (Orhonlu, 1996a, p. 366, 367).

The Port of Suakin could not handle the commercial load of the Red Sea in the early 20th century. As the Red Sea, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal, was well integrated into world trade and became one of the most important transit routes for international ships. For this reason, a new port, Port Sudan, was opened 30 km north of Suakin in 1905. The Port of Suakin remained idle. The historical city and port on Suakin Island have remained to the present day in ruins (Bloss, 1936, p. 271, 272)

This study focuses on the trade conducted via Suakin Port in the late 19th century and the Red Sea policy conducted by England via Suakin Port and all of Sudan. Unlike the existing studies in the literature, firstly, detailed information has been provided about the trade volume of Suakin Port in the late 19th century, import and export products, ships and countries trading via Suakin Port. The focus is particularly on England's place in this trade. Then, the process of England's commercial activities starting to produce policies in Suakin and all of Sudan and eventually dominating the region was examined. Ottoman Archive documents, trade statistics from the end of the 19th century obtained from Foreign Office documents in the British Archives and research works on the subject constitute the main sources of the study.

Method

This study employed the document and source analysis method. The underlying data for the study were collected through a comprehensive review of primary and secondary sources. The primary source materials consisted primarily of correspondence between the British Foreign Office and its consulates in various countries, including consular reports. These documents, published in the "Parliamentary Papers of the House of Commons," provided detailed statistical data on the commercial landscape of the Port of Suakin and the Sudan region. Complementing this primary source analysis, a comprehensive review of the existing academic literature on the subject was conducted to contextualize the findings and identify relevant research. The archival documents were subjected to both descriptive and contextual analysis. The findings from these analyses were then interpreted within the framework of cause-effect relationships and synthesized in relation to the central research topic.

Suakin Port as a Trade Centre

The basic economic order of the Ottoman Empire was based on the provinces' economic self-governance and the transfer of surplus income to the central treasury. The revenues of the Abyssinia region, which was organized as a province after entering Ottoman rule, were never at a level that would be self-sufficient. However, the Port of Suakin was always seen as an important base by the Ottoman administrators, both commercially and strategically. For this reason, immediately after entering Ottoman rule, efforts were made to increase the port's income. The port was expanded, its business volume increased, and thus the development of trade was aimed (Bloss, 1936, p. 289).

Suakin was also the gateway to the sea for the Func Sultanate, which was located a little further inland. There was a trade cycle that was generally based on the exchange method and was based on grain and textile products. The lands of the Func were very fertile and had very large agricultural areas and gardens. The wheat and food needs of the Habeş Province were generally met from the Func region and this trade was carried out through the Suakin Port (Orhonlu, 1996b, p. 74). Evliya Çelebi, who came to the region in 1672, confirmed this situation in his travel book and said of Suakin: “... *it has no vineyards, gardens or orchards. However, it is a very valuable place as it is the port of the provinces of the kingdoms of Funcistan, Zencistan and Dumbistan in these regions*”. The Frenchman Poncet, who arrived in Suakin in 1699, also mentioned the importance of Suakin Port and mentioned that it was the loading center for the merchants of Sennar, the center of the Sultanate of Func, which had fertile lands (Peacock, 2012, p. 40).

Towards the end of the 18th century, the increasing importance of the Red Sea in international trade revived the Port of Suakin to some extent. However, the real revival occurred in the early 19th century when Mehmet Ali Pasha took over the administration in Egypt and began to control the Red Sea coast. During this period, the people of Suakin, who made their living mostly through trade, were at the center of a trade network established to transport goods coming from the interior of the continent to the Ports of Mocha, Hudeyde on the opposite coast, and the Port of Alexandria in Egypt. The cattle needs of the Hejaz region in particular were met through the Port of Suakin (Nour, 2006, p. 28, 29).

In the second half of the 19th century, the increase in British commercial activities in the Sudan region had a positive effect on the trade of Suakin and other Red Sea ports. The most traded products were ivory, gum, oil, coffee, camels, ostrich feathers, cotton and gold. These products were sent to Europe via Egypt, and to the Arabian Peninsula and India via Suakin Port (Nour, 2006, p. 129).

Suakin Port Traffic and Ships Coming to Suakin

Suakin Port was one of the most important ports for Europeans in the colonial competition of the 19th century. For this reason, especially towards the end of the century, it was the scene of increasing commercial and political conflicts among the Ottoman, Egyptian administrations, and other European states, especially Britain.

The most important source available on the commercial statistics of Suakin Port is the British consular reports covering the period between 1886 and 1898.ⁱ According to these reports, a total of 744 ships arrived in Suakin Port, 462 in 1885, 162 in 1886 and 120 in 1887. It is noteworthy that there was a noticeable decrease in the number of ships coming to the port in these three years. In order to further elaborate on the subject, more detailed data on the countries of origin of the ships arriving in 1886 and 1887 are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Ships Arriving in 1886 and 1887 in Suakin Port

1886			1887		
Country	Piece	Total	Country	Piece	Total
Egypt/Ottoman	70 (9 ships carrying troops)	162 (51 ships carrying troops)	Egypt/Ottoman	56 (3 ships carrying troops)	120 (31 ships carrying troops)
Britain	64 (36 ships carrying troops)		Britain	30 (22 ships carrying troops)	
Austria	20 (5 ships carrying troops)		Austria	24	
Italy	5 (all troop-carrying ship)		Italy	10 (6 ships carrying troops)	
Other	3 (all troop-carrying ship)				

Soruce: HCPP, Egypt, Trade and Commerce of Suakin, 1887, p. 1; 1888, p. 3.

As can be seen in the table, the majority of the ships arriving in Suakin Port were from Egypt, which came under the de facto British administration in 1882.ⁱⁱ This was followed by the ships belonging to British, French, Italian and Austrian companies. It is understood from the reports that all of the ships arriving in Suakin were steamers. This greatly reduced the competitiveness of the Ottoman ships, most of which were sailing vessels, and strengthened the hand of European states both commercially and politically, especially Britain. Moreover, as a result of the increasing political rivalry in the Sudan region towards the end of the century, a large number of military ships arrived in Suakin in addition to merchant ships. It is noteworthy that British ships sent troops to the region between 1884 and 1888 due to the Mahdi Revolt.ⁱⁱⁱ

In the 1890s, when the Mahdi Revolt and internal unrest continued throughout Sudan, Suakin Port traffic was becoming increasingly intense. During these dates, the Khedivial Company^{iv} brought mail to Suakin once every two weeks via Suez from Egypt and once a month from Aden. The company, which made its voyages to the ports of Jeddah, Suakin, Massawa and Hudaydah, was in great competition with the British Bombay and Persian Steam Navigation Company. It is possible to see the commercial weight of England in Suakin Port during this period. Ships belonging to British companies coming from England and India used Suakin Port as a transfer point. For example, ships bringing coal from England to Suakin loaded salt here to be taken to Bombay via the Gulf of Aden. Similarly, cargo ships coming from Bombay to Suakin would sail from there to England with another cargo. The British Bombay and Persian Steam Navigation Company was one of the leading companies operating between India and Suakin and England. It is also understood from the records that the Eastern Telegraph Company also visited Suakin Port starting from 1893. Due to the political developments in the region, military ships belonging to the British and Italian navies also came to Suakin Port in 1895 and 1896. While the number of British steamships that came to Suakin in 1890 was only 9, this number reached 44 in 1896. This situation shows that England's influence in Suakin Port and in the entire Red Sea was increasing. Steamships belonging to the Austrian Lloyd Company also brought cargo to Suakin Port every two months. In 1898, when British companies took over the operations of the Egyptian Khedive mail steamers, the ship operations between Egypt and Suakin were completely monopolized by the British (HCPP, Egypt, Trade and Commerce of Suakin, 1891, p. 2; 1892, p. 2, 3; 1893, p. 5, 6; 1894, p. 2; 1895, p. 4; 1896, p. 4; 1897, p. 5; 1899, p. 8).

In light of these data, it would not be wrong to say that the trade of the Port of Suakin was monopolized by the British in the late 19th century. The location of the Port of Suakin, located between Suez, the exit route from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and Aden on the route to India, explains the British interest in the port.

Suakin Port Export and Import by Products

The British traders in Sudan did most of their trade through Suakin. The goods exported by British merchants or their agents through Suakin Port included ivory, gum, Abyssinian coffee, gold from the Sennar region, cassia and ostrich feathers from the Kordofan and Darfur regions, cotton, sesame and oil from the Kassala region, and animal products. After arriving at Suakin Port, these goods were mostly sent to the Barbar and Kassala regions. With these activities of the British, trade in Suakin reached its peak between 1874 and 1883. The fact that the British preferred to trade Sudan and Abyssinia through Suakin rather than through Egypt also played a major role in this. In 1875, the trade volume of Suakin Port reached 1,000,000 pounds. The customs revenue was 60,000 pounds (Nour, 2006, pp. 132-134).

The British consular reports refer to the port of Suakin in 1883 as “the last year of Sudan's prosperity”. After this date, it is noted that Suakin's trade volume suddenly decreased. For example, while its exports in 1883 totaled 127,263 pounds, this figure dropped to 10,454 in 1884 and to 4,625 a year later. It could not reach its former level for a long time. Likewise, there was a significant decline in imports from

Suakin Port. While imports in 1883 were 288,054 pounds, this figure fell to 123,359 pounds in 1884. The total volume of trade, which was 415,317 pounds in 1883, was 133,813 pounds a year later (HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1895, p. 7).

The main reasons for this dramatic contraction in the trade volume of Suakin Port, especially on the export side, were internal problems. Political instability due to the Mahdi Revolt against the British and the resistance of Osman Dikne, who led this uprising in Suakin, brought trade in the region almost to a standstill. This also led the British to take more military measures in the region and Suakin Port hosted more military ships than merchant ships. In 1889, with the withdrawal of Osman Dikne, trade began to pick up again. In that year, the total volume of trade increased from 106,219 pounds to 209,422 pounds compared to the previous year (HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1890, p. 1, 2, 4).

Although there was a relative increase, the disorganization in trade activities continued in the following years due to the famine. During this period, the increase in imports in parallel with the food demand in the region is noteworthy. In 1890, imports increased from 164,790 pounds to 197,359 pounds compared to the previous year. Exports, on the other hand, raised by only 10,000 pounds (HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1891, p. 4, 5).

After 1892, although there was a revival in trade, especially with the interior, political instability and security problems continued to negatively affect trade. The trade volume of Suakin Port also fluctuated during this period. Entering the 1900s far from its former prosperity, Suakin Port remained idle with the opening of Port Sudan in 1905.

By observing Table 2 for the export items from Suakin Port, it is clear that one of the important export products was gum. The highest quality gum traded was Kordofan gum, which was sent to England from Suakin Port. These gums, which were classified according to their hardness and color in England, were used in the chemical, garment and lacquer industries (HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1893, p. 3). Although cotton production in the hinterland of Suakin, especially in Tokar, was quite low, and in some years was interrupted, it was among the export products of Suakin Port. The cotton produced was of very low quality and was exported to Egypt and India without being cleaned and to other countries as cleaned cotton (HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1891, p. 3; 1893, p. 4, 5). In addition to these, animal skins, ivory, ostrich feathers, mother-of-pearl and senna were the main export items from Suakin Port. It is noteworthy that the export products were generally non-productive products collected from nature, animal products and minerals. The export of textile products, which started in 1896, shows that the cotton grown in this period was gradually transformed into manufactured products.

Imports, on the other hand, were quite rich in terms of product variety and much higher in value than exports. Among the British-origin products arriving at Suakin Port, only coal came directly from England, the others via Egypt. Wheat, rice, flour and garments came from India under the British control. Some other products were transported from various European ports, especially Trieste, by the ships of the Khedive and Lloyd companies (HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1890, p. 2).

The first import items were clothing and textiles. These products, which came from India and were transported by British ships via Bombay, were intended to meet the basic clothing needs of the people of the region. Other important import products were cereals and cereal products (barley, rice, dourra^v, flour, etc.), livestock, liquor and dates. Live animals were usually imported from Egypt, Jeddah and Barbar, while dates were imported from Jembo and the Persian Gulf (HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1890, p. 2). There is a marked decline in liquor imports from 1886 onwards. In the 1890s, it decreased further. The reason for this was that liquor imports were restricted and authorized. The small amount of imports was only used to produce alcoholic beverages for the military and civilian Europeans in the region (HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1893, p. 3; 1897, p. 3).

Table 2*Exports from Suakin Port between 1883-1890*

Product	Value by Years (Pound)															
	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898
Gum	56.609	2.414	2	1.500	5.000	15	-	2.681	16.043	43.796	56.855	39.320	61.711	27.347	29.793	29.434
Cotton	40.432	1.045	13	500	-	-	-	-	-	6.258	4.040	-	-	778	2.443	1.062
Hides-Leather-Skin	5.760	1.453	2.941	1.600	1.100	970	2.151	1.167	288	359	418	667	993	1.159	861	776
Ivory	-	-	-	-	1.050	-	1.868	20.836	399	2.715	4.357	12.765	1.002	435	684	2.348
Ostrich feather	-	-	-	-	144	95	-	335	1.018	883	249	-	-	-	-	-
Mother-of-pearl	-	-	-	-	2.900	2.870	2.141	1.883	3.157	5.098	2.557	3.857	4.064	3.501	3.521	5.679
Senna	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	561	4.466	5.681	2.337	2.283	1.293	2.241	3.472	1.497
Dourra	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.982	6.350	1.355	4.616	9.683
Tobacco	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	931	851	1.386	2.066	3.020
Date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.096	722	1.382	1.106
Textile products	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.656	7.380	5.200
Silver	-	-	-	-	-	-	19.764	25.384	10.401	260	-	2.596	-	-	-	-
Other articles	24.462	5.123	1.669	4.700	1.510	774	18.703	1.535	1.151	2.214	4.465	12.717	9.325	5.818	9.936	5.845
Total	127.263	10.454	4.625	8.300	11.704	4.724	44.632	54.382	36.923	67.264	75.278	78.118	86.685	53.398	66.154	65.650

Source: HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1887, p. 2; 1888, p. 3; 1889, p. 3; 1890, p. 4; 1891, p. 5; 1892, p. 5; 1893, p. 14, 15; 1894, p. 8; 1895, p. 9, 1896, p. 8, 1897, p. 9, 10; 1899, p. 11, 12.

Table 3*Imports from the Port of Suakin between 1883-1890*

Product	Value by Years (Pound)															
	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898
Clothing-Textiles	204.261	19.508	7.794	7.000	31.900	20.000	36.516	38.579	58.465	57.910	59.604	43.352	51.141	26.057	20.968	51.955
Dorra-Barley	5.069	14.598	6.912	24.500	32.000	35.000	43.084	65.650	30.510	26.109	16.701	25.741	28.555	14.362	10.148	39.310
Cattle-Sheep and Goats	-	4.258	13.567	11.000	1.322	7.100	4.559	3.774	7.171	5.497	2.390	1.081	516	1.099	683	330
Liquors	6.882	7.119	21.806	6.000	2.160	2.640	2.083	1.207	1.557	2.675	997	1.675	1.541	2.466	3.219	4.591
Beans and lentils	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.079	2.014	2.207	1.755	898	680	237	353	348	453
Coal	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.640	4.737	7.111	1.327	4.172	5.842	3.865	9.037	5.200	769
Date	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.752	5.121	5.278	5.077	4.150	4.515	3.755	2.372	3.017	3.793
Flour	-	-	-	-	-	-	10.380	13.540	11.875	5.468	6.209	4.524	3.967	6.714	4.171	10.530
Fat	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.698	8.509	5.121	6.068	2.958		1.501	3.563	2.955	4.792
Petroleum	-	-	-	-	-	-	537	94	1.188	178	893	615	196	1.177	414	622
Food-Beverage-Other supplies	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.294	2.002	7.238	7.288	5.781	3.158	7.979	7.306	8.972	21.706
Rice	-	-	-	-	-	-	11.041	9.568	4.896	5.087	3.500	3.914	1.722	2.953	1.930	5.856
Drugs-Dyes-Perfumes	-	-	-	-	-	-	514	2.747	3.338	2.397	1.107	5.400	7.127	3.678	1.035	3.352
Soap	-	-	-	-	-	-	506	2.137	2.335	3.663	1.336	1.433	881	905	1.403	2.408
Spices	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.015	878	330	648	213	-	-	-	-	-
Straw	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.051	629	1.045	1.107	523	-	-	-	-	-
Sugar	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.648	12.970	5.634	3.108	4.866	-	-	-	-	-
Timber-Sandal Woods	-	-	-	-	-	-	746	475	1.759	4.780	936	-	-	1.235	637	334
Sesame-Sesame Oil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.932	2.900	319	205	-	-	-	-	-
Tobacco	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.217	3.905	2.625	2.656	8.738	10.470	10.268	9.691	13.667
Fancy goods, cutlery etc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			773	785	7.805	687	7.825	10.008	8.263
Vegetables-Fruits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	586	830	2.405	1.970	1.032	35	1.453	604	931
Mother-of-pearl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.644	3.829	3.938	2.788	2.462
Other articles	71.842	77.876	126.271	47.000	26.900	36.836	14.647	16.993	11.975	13.332	13.755	13.319	7.201	3.404	2.654	1.434
Total	288.054	123.359	176.350	95.000	94.282	101.576	164.790	197.359	176.668	160.227	136.605	139.325	135.205	110.165	90.845	177.558

Source: HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1887, p. 2; 1888, p. 4; 1889, p. 3; 1890, p. 4; 1891, p. 4; 1892, p. 4; 1893, p. 12, 13; 1894, p. 4, 5; 1895, p. 6; 1896, p. 6, 7; 1897, p. 7, 8; 1899, p. 10.

An examination of the goods entering and leaving the port of Suakin demonstrates that”, it is seen that some products such as mother-of-pearl, dates, tobacco and dourra are included in both import and export items. This situation is due to Suakin being an important transit port of the Red Sea. The products brought here by ship were sent to other regions by ships. In fact, it is stated in the sources that half of the total imports were transit products (HCCP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1899, p. 4).

Slave trade was an important part of the trade conducted through Suakin Port. The ports of Suakin and Massawa were the center of the slave trade through the Red Sea. The prohibition of the slave trade via the Nile River in the 1860s due to British pressure shifted the route to the Red Sea and this situation brought the ports of Suakin and Massawa, which were under the Ottoman Empire at the time, to the forefront (Zengin, 2018, p. 20). The fact that the letters of the Governor of Egypt refer to the ports of Suakin and Massawa as “*the gateway of the black slave trade*” (Nour, 2006, p. 100) shows that the slave trade was identified with these two ports.

In the late 19th century, there was a significant increase in the slave trade. In this period, when only Suakin came to the fore with an annual slave market of 2,000-3,000 people, (Peacock, 2012, p. 43) Britain was the country that had a say in both the administration and trade of the Sudan region (Nour, 2006, pp. 132-134). Contrary to their previous policies, the British occupiers of Sudan saw slavery and the slave trade as necessary and essential for their economic and military activities. They began to argue that the relationship between master and slave should not be interfered with if both parties consented. Undoubtedly, the main concerns here were to prevent possible reactions against the British occupation and to provide cheap labor to be employed in agriculture, especially in cotton production (Zengin, 2018, p. 225, 226).

Exports and Imports of Suakin Port by Country

As mentioned earlier, global trade, which was constantly developing on the axis of colonialism, included the Red Sea ports in its system in the 19th century. Britain's perception of the Red Sea as a highly strategic region for the security of its Indian colonies led to the development of a British-led trade in the ports in this region. Especially in the second half of the century, Britain, which settled in the Sudan region, increased its commercial activities here and gained commercial supremacy in the Red Sea. Therefore, during this period, the influence of Britain in the trade carried out through Suakin gradually increased. It reached its highest level after Egypt came under British rule. Although there was not much direct trade with the ports of Britain during this period, it can be said that British companies managed a large part of the trade in Suakin Port when considered together with India, which was a British colony, and Egypt from 1882 onwards.

Table 3

Exports of Suakin Port between 1890-1898 by Country (Pounds)

Countries	Years							
	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1898
Britain	17.125	5.352	21.887	30.771	20.178	20.320	14.703	22.184
India	29.960	10.405	13.280	12.277	6.247	3.440	1.355	-
Egypt/Ottoman	872	4.034	9.283	1.729	15.352	16.105	16.045	24.598
Ottoman (Directly)	152	10	15	-	-	-	785	-
Austria	2.345	14.659	17.468	22.026	25.796	35.605	18.788	16.914
France	-	168	197	491	-	-	-	-
Massawa	-		1.034	1.693	-	-	-	-
Other Countries	1073	163	31	57	10.542	11.215	1.722	1.954

Source: HCCP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1887, p. 2; 1888, p. 3; 1889, p. 3; 1890, p. 4; 1891, p. 5; 1892, p. 5; 1893, p. 14, 15; 1894, p. 8; 1895, p. 9, 1896, p. 8, 1897, p. 9, 10; 1899, p. 11, 12.

When the exports from Suakin are examined, it is seen that Egypt is categorized separately in British documents. Although officially under the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, which was de facto autonomous and under British administration since 1882, had an increasing trade with Suakin. Apart from Britain, India and Egypt, the largest exports from Suakin were to Austria. Despite being legally an Ottoman territory, exports from Suakin to other Ottoman ports were quite limited. In the trade carried out through the port of Jeddah on the opposite coast, it is seen that while goat skins and feathers were initially exported from Suakin to the Ottoman Empire, in the following years, mother-of-pearl, cereals, textiles and cotton were exported, albeit to a lesser extent. Gum, ivory, mother-of-pearl, animal skins, cotton, and, for a certain period, large quantities of silver were exported to Britain and its colonies, which received the largest share of the Suakin trade.

Table 4

Imports of Suakin Port between 1890-1898 by Country (Pound)

Countries	Years							
	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1898
Britain	8.421	13.471	21.471	14.963	23.460	23.182	20.163	21.432
India	42.171	63.071	62.275	50.629	60.460	57.623	44.320	69.850
Egypty/Ottoman	25.152	43.918	31.422	41.786	37.231	39.869	34.077	70.358
Ottoman (Directly)	47.425	30.109	19.749	7.492	9.488	7.212	4.520	
Austria	6.797	6.829	4.800	2.263	3.640	2.071	672	-
France	-	-	555	191	-	-	-	-
Massawa	3.618	1.771	2.350	1.003	-	-	-	-
Other Countries	-	-	1.505	1.004	5.046	5.248	6.413	15.918

Source: HCPP, Egypt, Trade of Suakin, 1887, p. 2; 1888, p. 4; 1889, p. 3; 1890, p. 4; 1891, s, 4; 1892, p. 4; 1893, p. 12, 13; 1894, p. 4, 5; 1895, p. 6; 1896, p. 6, 7; 1897, p. 7, 8; 1899, p. 10.

When the countries of imports are analyzed, it is seen that British India topped the list. In the early 1890s, imports from Egypt and other Ottoman ports were also significant. It is noteworthy that imports from Egypt increased considerably within a few years, while imports from other Ottoman ports declined and ended completely in 1898. This shows that Britain's dominance in the Egyptian, Sudanese and Red Sea trade was increasing. Suakin Port, which had a large hinterland inhabited by communities with a very low standard of living, was the most important gateway to this large market for British merchants. For this reason, most of the products imported from the port consisted of basic food and clothing. The Ottoman merchants also sold mainly food and textiles to Suakin through the port of Jeddah.

The Instrumentalization of Trade and British Domination of Sudan

Looking at the spheres of influence of Britain, a major player in overseas colonial policies, in the 19th century, it is not difficult to understand the reasons for its interest in the Red Sea: trade and politics. Two important developments played a major role in the prominence of the Red Sea ports in this period. First, Africa became one of the most important areas of the global colonial race as a source of raw materials and a market for manufactured goods, and the other was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. These two developments were enough to draw Britain's attention to the Red Sea both commercially and politically.

In the 19th century, Britain was engaged in a fierce struggle with the Ottoman Empire and local dynasties to capture the Red Sea trade and establish political dominance in the Red Sea. Britain's policy was based on maximizing commercial revenues from the Red Sea ports and dominating the Indian sea route, thus ensuring the security of its colonies. However, it is understood that the British considered

their political interests more important than commercial gain, that is, they used trade as a tool for their political interests. This is because the revenues of Suakin Port and other Red Sea ports were never in attractive amounts for the British. This is evident when the trade volume of Suakin Port is compared with the important ports of the Eastern Mediterranean. The trade volume of Mersin Port was 898,914 pounds in 1880, 1,000,173 pounds in 1899, and 1,413,754 pounds in 1903. The trade volume of the Port of Beirut in 1899 was 2,632,115 pounds. In 1907, the trade volume of the Port of Istanbul was 11,090,852 pounds, the Port of Izmir 7,837,000 pounds and the Port of Thessaloniki 3,856,335 pounds. In Suakin Port, on the other hand, the highest trade volume was 1,000,000 pounds in 1875, which dropped to 415,317 pounds in 1883 and did not reach these levels again in the following years (Uğuz, 2016, p. 357). These figures suggest that the British interest in this port went far beyond trade. Trade was used by the British as an important apparatus for establishing dominance in Suakin and the entire Red Sea.

The slave trade, one of the most important commercial activities in the Red Sea ports, was tried to be abolished by the British from the 1830s onwards. This prohibition, which was based on seemingly innocent and humanitarian grounds, was expressed as “*no state claiming to be civilized can practice, defend or perpetuate the slave trade, which is a crime against humanity*”. This British initiative had both economic and social consequences and brought about a number of reactions. With its policy of preventing the slave trade, Britain put pressure on the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, Sudan and Zangibar. In fact, the British pursued an interventionist policy under the pretext of abolishing slavery and used this situation as an excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of states. Taking their oppression to a higher level, they appointed Christian European officials, especially the British, as governors in Sudan and indirectly took control of the administration. As a result, Britain used the slave trade and the attempts to ban this trade as a tool to interfere in the internal affairs of the regions and countries in which it had interests, to exert pressure, and to intervene politically or militarily if necessary (Zengin, 2018, pp. 133, 134, 325).

The Ottoman-Egyptian rule over Sudan was replaced by the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. After this date, the British started to increase their influence in the region. However, due to the Mahdi uprising, the British policies on Sudan failed. Suakin became an important base in the Egyptian-British operations against the Mahdi uprising. Suakin was the center where military forces were sent during the operations (Özdağ, 2022, p. 56, 57).

The British failed against the Mahdi forces and had to evacuate Sudan in 1885. The place that the British did not abandon during this process and insistently held on to was Suakin. The reason is that Suakin was the gateway to Sudan for the British. In 1886, only Suakin had British presence on the Red Sea coast. 3500 British-Indian troops were stationed in Suakin against Osman Dikne's^{vi} forces. The city of Suakin was protected by the British navy. Osman Dikne was trying to capture his city of Suakin and the British were trying to hold it. The campaign against Osman Dikne was directed from the Egyptian-British garrison in Suakin, the center of the region (Özdağ, 2022, p. 131, 132, 161-169).

The great famine in Sudan in 1890 and the mismanagement of the British administrators in Suakin caused the tribes in the region to react. In response, the tribes were supported with British aid. In a telegram sent to the tribal leaders, the British government stated that all they wished was for the people to live in peace and for trade to revive. It also emphasized that they would continue to hold Suakin (Özdağ, 2022, p. 170). The British had played one of their most important trump cards, promising to revive trade in order to bind the tribes to them. This was a persuasive offer for the tribes who put their economic interests above all else.

After the withdrawal in 1885, Britain, which had increased its influence over Egypt, took action again in 1896 in order to complete its unfinished business and dominate Sudan. Britain, which managed the

economy of the region with its commercial activities, especially through Suakin Port, tried to increase its commercial and military effectiveness with the railway projects it implemented. The increasing importance of the Red Sea ports in world trade and the French colonial activities in Africa were the most important sources of motivation for the British policies in the Sudan region (Akalin, 2016, p. 137, 138).

In both operations, the British confronted the Ottoman Empire over their sovereignty over both Egypt and Sudan. It is understood that the Ottoman government was faced with a very difficult dilemma in the first operation organized by the British against the Mahdi forces. On the one hand, this operation, which took place in Egypt and thus in the Ottoman sovereign territory, could pave the way for the British to settle in Sudan. On the other hand, the example set by the Mahdi movement in the Arab geography under the Ottoman rule (especially in the Hedjaz) could have led to new revolts and major territorial losses. The Ottoman government preferred to support the policies of Britain and Egypt against the Mahdi movement. In this process, since it preferred to deal with the eastern side of the Red Sea rather than the western side, it could not take an effective position in the region when Sudan was evacuated at the end of the first operation (Özdağ, 2022, pp. 153-155). When the Egyptian forces evacuated Sudan in this process, the Ottoman, that is, “the Turkish period”, in the region *de facto* came to an end (Nour, 2012, p. 122). Consequently, this situation increased Britain's legitimacy and dominance in the Sudan region.

Although the British obtained the approval of the Khedive of Egypt for the second operation, the Ottoman Sultan objected to an operation in Sudan, which was officially part of the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan still had some influence over Egypt, albeit passive. Sudan, which was to be invaded, was inhabited by Muslims and was under the Caliphate. Therefore, the British were fear of the influence of the Caliph. For this reason, the British ambassador in Istanbul was asked to inform the Sultan that the expedition was for the security of Egypt and that the Khedive's authority in the region would increase (Özdağ, 2022, p. 179).

Despite the Ottomans' declaration that they would not approve an operation on Sudan, the British-Egyptian forces took action. Thereupon, the Ottoman Empire started negotiations with France, its biggest rival in Africa, in order to stop Britain. However, no result was obtained from this attempt. Thus, the Ottoman Empire's attempt to stop Britain through diplomatic means failed. The Ottoman Empire then considered sending Turkish troops to Suakin. It informed the Khedive of Egypt that military units known as the Hamidiye Regiments could take part in the operation. However, this offer was not accepted by the British. In fact, the Egyptian Khedive was not in favor of this either. He did not want the Ottoman presence in the Sudan region, especially Suakin. The tribal chieftains in Suakin were uncomfortable with the British presence in the region. The chiefs, who did not want to remain loyal to Caliph Abdullah, who replaced Muhammad Ahmed, wanted the Egyptian-Ottoman forces to dominate the region again. They conveyed this situation to Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, the Ottoman commander-in-chief in the region. Pasha reported to Istanbul that the tribes of the region would obey the Ottomans and requested a military operation to Suakin. However, the Ottoman rulers did not attempt such an operation as they thought that it was inappropriate to turn to Sudan while there was British rule in Egypt, and that Egypt should first be cleansed of the British (Özdağ, 2022, p. 160, 161). The Ottoman Empire was able to follow a passive policy due to its economic and political situation. It could not take action except for a few diplomatic initiatives. The lack of military capacity made it impossible to carry out any military operation on either Egypt or Sudan (Özdağ, 2021, p. 859). Nevertheless, the Ottoman Empire continued to regard the Red Sea as an inland sea. Until the collapse of the state, it struggled diplomatically and militarily to protect its rights in the region (Akalin, 2016, p. 146).

The Egyptian-British invasion of Sudan, which began in 1896 with the Dargala campaign, was completed in September 1898 with the Battle of Omdurman. In January 1899, the Treaty of Condominium was signed between Britain and Egypt and joint administration was introduced in Sudan. However, even though it was considered as a joint administration, this treaty gave much wider powers to the British (Nour, 2012, p. 123; Özdağ, 2021, p. 860). Thus, the British settled on the Sudanese coast and consolidated their Red Sea dominance. They became the most important power in the region both commercially and politically.

Conclusion

Suakin was not only an old trading port but also strategically important due to its location. This location had caused westerners, especially the Portuguese, to show interest in Suakin, especially since the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope. In parallel with the increase in colonial activities in the region in the following periods, Suakin was seen as an important base and center. For this reason, it became one of the important centers of political and military conflicts in the 19th century, when imperialist interest in Africa and Asia increased. Being on the pilgrimage route of African Muslims also increased the importance of Suakin.

It was inconceivable that the Red Sea ports would not share in the European-centered global trade based on the Industrial Revolution and its consequent colonialism. Indeed, the Red Sea and its environs were a crucial geography in terms of the security of the routes to India and other Asian colonies of Britain, which was defined as the empire on which the sun never set. This is also the reason why the British attached great importance to Suakin Port, located on the African shore of the Red Sea.

It is understood that the British interest in Suakin Port was based on political rather than commercial reasons. This is due to Britain had taken the Cape Colony (the region whose center is today's Cape Town) at the southernmost tip of Africa from the Netherlands with the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In the following years, it expanded its occupation towards the north. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Suakin became even more important both commercially and politically. In 1882, Britain brought Egypt under its rule, thus establishing dominance at the southern and northern ends of Africa. Of course, the ultimate goal was to capture the lands between these two ends. However, the French were also expanding their occupation in this region. The French advance into the Bahr el-Ghazal region at the southernmost tip of Sudan was unacceptable for Britain (Armaoğlu, 1997, p. 421-423). This is due to the routes to the Asian colonies, the lifeblood of Britain, would be threatened by the French. Therefore, Britain had to dominate the Sudan region, that is, the African shores of the Red Sea. Indeed, the establishment of dominance over these regions necessitated the strategic control of their ports. However, the fact that the Sudan region was Ottoman territory and France used this as a trump card pushed Britain to seek other means. First of all, by using its commercial influence, it started to control trade, especially in ports such as Suakin and Massawa. While doing so, on the one hand, it banned the slave trade, which had an important place in the economy of the region. The British, who gained military superiority in the Red Sea under the pretext of preventing the slave trade, strengthened their political influence and ensured the security of the Indian trade route and increased their influence in the regional trade.

After 1882, the Sudanese issue came to the fore, this time for the security of Egypt. Because the British believed that unless Sudan was controlled and Red Sea ports such as Suakin and Massawa were kept under control, Egypt and thus the shortest route to India could not be secured. For this reason, in order to be able to dispatch troops quickly when necessary and to facilitate control by land, work began in 1882 to build a railway line between Suakin on the Red Sea coast and Barbar on the banks of the Nile

River, yet this project was not completed (BOA, Y.PRK.PT. 2/66; BOA. Y.A.HUS, 178/80; BOA. Y.A.HUP. 178/45; BOA. Y.PRK.SNR. 1/69).

While this was happening in Egypt and Sudan, the Ottoman Empire had to follow a passive policy in the region due to its political, economic and military weakness. In the 19th century, as sailing ships were replaced by steamers, dependence on natural conditions decreased, voyage times shortened, and transportation capacities increased, which led to a fierce competitive environment. Undoubtedly, this situation whetted the appetite of the West, which was engaged in colonial activities in Asian and African countries. Westerners were engaged in an unprecedented struggle for new trade routes, new ports and new lands to exploit. It was already impossible for the Ottoman Empire, whose merchant fleet consisted mostly of sailing ships, to compete with Western trading companies in the Red Sea. Although the first domestic steamship was built in the Istanbul Shipyard in 1838, the transition from sailing ships to steamships was much slower than in Europe. For this reason, in the 19th century, foreigners became increasingly dominant in maritime transportation between the Ottoman ports. The Red Sea was dominated by Western trading companies, especially the British. The Ottoman trade in Suakin Port, which had previously been carried out through Egypt, was completely monopolized by the British after the Khedivial Company was taken over by the British. Even exports and imports from Suakin to other Ottoman ports began to be carried out by foreign ships. This meant that the commercial presence of the Ottoman Empire in Suakin and other Red Sea ports diminished considerably, if not completely ended by the end of the 19th century.

The policy of dominating Egypt and the Red Sea ports, and thus the security of the Indian route, was seen in Britain as a supra-political issue that “*no British government could gamble on*” (Armaoğlu, 1997, p. 424). It is clear from all these events that Britain's interest in Suakin Port was based on the political advantages it promised rather than the port's less than satisfactory commercial potential. In fact, Britain used trade as a tool to penetrate the region

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval

Ethics committee approval is not required for this study.

Availability of Data and Materials

Data will be made available on request.

Author Contributions

The author solely contributed to the conception and design of the study, data collection and analysis, as well as the writing and revision of the manuscript.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Notes

ⁱ The correspondence between Britain and its consulates in different countries and the reports sent by the consulates were printed in 1854. In these Foreign Office documents published under the main title of *House of Common Parliamentary Papers*, it is possible to find detailed statistical data on the commercial conditions of the Ottoman geography. Among these documents, it is possible to find information about the Port of Suakin in the sections of the *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance, Egypt* published under the title *Trade of Suakin*. References to these reports will be given with the abbreviation *HCPP* (House of Commons Parliamentary Papers)

ⁱⁱ Egypt, which resembled a typical Ottoman province during the reign of Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Pasha, became an autonomous vassal state in 1866. The rule of Egypt was given to Ismail Pasha and his sons with the title of Khedive. Meanwhile, the Suez Canal, completed in 1869, was financed by European banks. Ismail Pasha, who had to borrow a lot of money from Western states, resorted to various remedies to get rid of the financial crisis. On the one hand, he increased the taxes levied on the people, and on the other hand, he sold his shares in the Suez Canal to Britain. However, these measures failed to prevent Egypt's financial bankruptcy and in May 1876, an administration of the Deyun-ı Umuniye (General Debt Administration) was established with the participation of the representatives of the creditor European states. Since the British were not satisfied with the measures taken, a "dual control" was established in November 1876 and two European inspectors general started to monitor the revenues and expenditures of Egypt. Later, European ministers were also appointed to the government. Dissatisfaction with European interference in Egypt's internal affairs and financial system led to the formation of the first nationalist groups in 1879. Following increasing tensions and nationalist revolts, Britain invaded Egypt in 1882. After this date, the Khedivate of Egypt became an administration nominally under Ottoman sovereignty but de facto under British patronage. See more, Görgün, 2004, pp. 569-575; Özçelik & Öztürk, 2021, pp. 477-494; Kızıltoprak, 2010.

ⁱⁱⁱ It was a religious-political uprising in Sudan led by Muhammad Ahmed that emerged against the Ottoman-Egyptian rule and then fought fiercely against the British occupation attempt. Initially religiously motivated, the Mahdism movement later evolved into a political one. Muhammad Ahmad, who proclaimed himself as the expected messiah, argued that religion should be practiced in a pure form as it was during the time of Prophet Muhammad. Despite being criticized by many sects and sheikhs for his different religious interpretations, Muhammad Ahmad managed to gather a large following behind him. However, Muhammad Ahmad's followers were not only religiously motivated. Those who were dissatisfied with the Ottoman-Egyptian rule and especially merchants who were against the prohibition of the slave trade rallied around Muhammad Ahmad. In addition, the British intervention in Sudan during this period caused all the peoples in and around Sudan to come together under the leadership of Muhammad Ahmad. Muhammad Ahmed, who managed to gain the support of many tribes that initially opposed him, became the most well-known name in Sudan after his victories against the British. The Mahdi movement in Sudan led to the emergence of a new political structure known as the Mahdi State between 1885-1898. See more, Özdağ, 2018, pp. 309-330.

^{iv} The Hidiviye Company was the continuation of the "Mecidiye Ferry Company" established in 1856. The name of the company was changed to "Egypt Aziziye Company" during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz and to "Egypt Hidiviye Company" in 1871. After this date, the company was transferred to the Egyptian government and continued its voyages on the Gallipoli, Çanakkale, Lesbos, Izmir, Chios, Rhodes, Alexandria, Jeddah and Yemen lines. In 1898, despite the strong objections of the Ottoman Empire and the opposition of the Khedive, the steamers belonging to the company, the docks and the shipyards in Alexandria and Suez were sold to a British company by the decision of the Egyptian Council of Ministers on the grounds that it was making a loss. See more, Sarıyıldız, 2003, pp. 17-36.

^v Sorghum Vulgare is a type of cereal grain of the wheat family. It is used as human food and animal feed. See more, *Ticaret ve Ziraat Nezareti Mecmuası*, 30 Nisan 1329, p. 41.

^{vi} Osman Dikne belongs to the Dikne family residing in Sevakin and it is rumoured that they came here from Istanbul during the reign of Yavuz Sultan Selim. It is thought that he is a descendant of the levents (Ottoman naval soldier) who came from Istanbul to the Red Sea coast. His great-grandfather has the title of 'Turki'. His family is one of the well-established merchant families of Sevakin. In the second half of the 19th century, he was engaged in slave trade, which was a very profitable business. For this reason, he was closely followed by the British Ottoman-Egyptian administration, arrested and even his property was confiscated. Forced to leave Sevakin, Osman Dikne settled in Barbar, where he established his own headquarters. Osman Dikne, who swore allegiance to Muhammad Ahmed in the following period, was appointed as the emir of Eastern Sudan. Although it is not possible to say anything definite about the religious dimension of Osman Dikne's joining the Mahdi movement, it would not be wrong to say that his desire to regain his lost socio-economic power was at the forefront. See more, Özdağ, 2022, p. 128, 129.