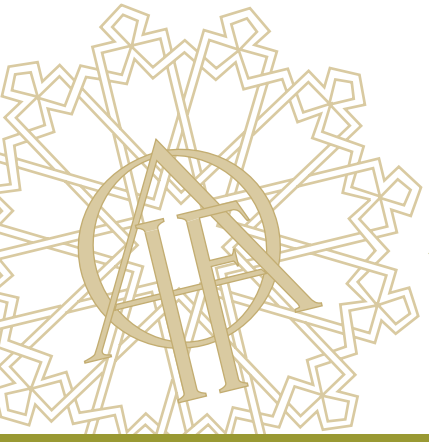

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Kenneth M. Cuno

Commercial Relations between Town and Village in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Egypt.

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TOWN AND VILLAGE IN EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY EGYPT *

Kenneth M. CUNO

This essay explores an area of relative neglect in the economic history of early modern Egypt : the nature of commercial relations between town and village, and the manner in which they were altered during the reign of Muḥammad ʿAlī Pāšā (1805-1848), which witnessed the beginnings of rural Egypt's transformation. Underlying this question, and the larger issue of the economic development of modern Egypt, are the various problems posed by the nature and pace of this country's integration into the modern world market [1]. For a number of reasons, the beginnings of this process in the early nineteenth century are less well understood than its later stages [2], and thus it is appropriate to begin with a basic point : in the discussion below, state policies are seen as the immediate force for change in the countryside during the first half of the nineteenth century. This is but an empirical observation, not a theoretical argument.

Muḥammad ʿAlī's ambitious reform program was, of course, conceived in part as a response to the opportunities offered by the expansion of the world market, in the

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1. « World market » or « world economy » refers to the present international economy, whose origins and « center » were in western Europe, whence it expanded to encircle the globe by the beginning of the present century. The « incorporation » or « integration » of a region into the world market refers to a significant degree of dependence upon it for export income, credit and investment, the supply of raw materials or finished goods, and so on. The nature of the impact of the world market on different societies, and the change it has promoted, is problematical to say the least. For a discussion of this in the Middle Eastern context, see Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914* (London : Methuen, 1981), p. 287-293.

2. *Ibid.*, p. IX-X.

form of rising European demand for Middle Eastern foodstuffs and industrial crops. The long-term growth of the world market's influence in this region is evident insofar as the Pāšā's export monopoly and his policy of investment in agriculture for the export market were not as unprecedented as some of his admirers and detractors assumed. In the two decades before the French expedition, his Mamlūk predecessors, Murād and Ibrāhīm, seized control of Egypt's customs and increased the number of state monopolies. Aḥmad al-Ğazzār (d. 1804), the Pāšā of Sidon, established a similar export monopoly regime in Palestine [3].

The similarities between the policies of Muḥammad ʿAlī and his predecessors in the eastern Mediterranean were more than coincidental, in at least three respects. First, the Pāšā's trusted Armenian director of trade and foreign affairs, Boghos Bey Yusufian, had served earlier as Murād Bey's customs agent in Rosetta in the 1790s. Second, in searching for the « inspiration » behind Muḥammad ʿAlī's development of export-oriented agriculture, one need look no further than his original home in Cavalla, Macedonia, which was an entrepôt for the rich region of cotton, rice, tobacco, and silk culture dominated by the commercial center of Salonika. Most important, even in the absence of a documented link between his predecessors' policies and those of Muḥammad ʿAlī, each represents a similar attempt by a ruling group to adopt a mediating position between the world market and a local economy [4].

If the last point is important in explaining the rationale behind the export monopoly, it is also of crucial relevance to the question of the influence of the world market in promoting change in rural Egypt in the same period. The export monopoly regime was erected between 1808 and 1812, and not fully dismantled until 1842. During this period the local economy was sheltered from the direct influence of the world market. European traders were confined to dealing with the Pāšā, « the sole merchant of Egypt », in Alexandria. Although the agents of the Alexandria merchants were able to penetrate the countryside in the 1840s, the Pāšā and his grandson ʿAbbās (1849-1854) attempted with some success to maintain control over the production and export of the country's major crops. Egypt was not fully opened up to foreign penetration until the accession

3. *Ibid.*, p. 64, 77; Kenneth M. Cuno, « The Origins of Private Ownership of Land in Egypt : a Reappraisal », *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 12 (1980), p. 250, 256.

4. Cuno, « Origins », p. 259-260; the concept of « mediation » is borrowed from F. Robert Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives 1805-1879. From Household Government to Modern Bureaucracy* (Pittsburgh : University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984), p. 4 and passim.

of Sa'īd Pāšā (1854-1863), whose policies aided the process of integration into the world market [5].

Thus in examining the initial stages of the modern transformation of Egypt's rural economy, it is appropriate to formulate one side of the question in terms of the impact of state policy, given the absence of direct and unmediated contact between this economy and external economic influences. The other side of this question is the nature of the rural economy in the pre-modern period, in which urban-rural commerce was a key element.

The commercial links between town and countryside in Ottoman Egypt were of greater significance that has often been assumed. The production of crops for the market, the use of money in exchange, and the dependence of villagers on the market for the satisfaction of certain needs are not recent developments. These elements of the pre-modern economic structure are important in explaining the responses of provincial merchants and villagers to the monopoly regime and, later, to the opening of the country to the world market. The internal counterpart to Muḥammad 'Alī's export monopoly system was an effort to extend state control over the distribution and production of Egypt's principal commodities, but this experiment with a statist economy was of shorter duration. In the formative stage, between 1812 and 1818, it was built upon and largely replaced the rural marketing system. In its mature bureaucratic form, from 1818 to 1831, the internal monopoly regime entailed the suppression of most but not all marketing. During its final decade, the internal trade in most winter crops was liberalized, and the entire monopoly system was formally abolished during 1841-1842. In the 1830s, and more dramatically after 1842, urban-rural commerce was revived along familiar lines. The first agents of the Alexandria merchants to penetrate the countryside merely followed paths already trod by Egypt's provincial merchants.

1. EXCHANGE BETWEEN TOWN AND VILLAGE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A generation ago, most historians of modern Egypt tended to assume that no significant commercial intercourse existed between town and village before the nineteenth century. In English-language works, this was often expressed in terms of what might be called

5. Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 74-75. Sa'īd's « open door » policy was a sufficiently dramatic departure from that of 'Abbās as to draw comment from the foreign diplomatic community (personal communication from F. Robert Hunter).

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the thesis of « village insularity ». The collection of taxes through the *iltizām* or tax-farming system was held to represent the only significant form of economic contact between town and countryside, and in the eighteenth century it was at times a weak link at that. Corollary notions were the economic self-sufficiency of the villages, an absence of the use of money in exchange, and the predominance of subsistence production. In the early nineteenth century, according to this view, investment in agriculture and the promotion of agricultural exports by Muḥammad ʿAlī forced Egyptian peasants into cash-crop production, and laid the bases for the emergence of a market economy [6].

This paradigm might have astonished students or earlier periods of Egyptian history. Local mechanisms of exchange, the use of money, the production of crops for urban markets, and the lending of money by merchants to cultivators are phenomena which

6. This interpretation was developed most fully in various works by Gabriel Baer. See « Village and City in Egypt and Syria, 1500-1914 », p. 54-58 in *Fallah and Townsman in the Middle East. Studies in Social History* (London : Frank Cass & Co., 1982); « The Dissolution of the Village Community », p. 25-29, and « Social Change in Egypt, 1800-1914 », p. 214-216, in *Studies in the Social History of Modern Egypt* (Chicago : Chicago University Press, 1969); and *A History of Landownership in Modern Egypt 1800-1950* (London : Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 7-8 and 33-34. In a similar vein, see also Z.Y. Hershlag, *Introduction to the Modern Economic History of the Middle East* (2d ed.; Leiden : E.J. Brill, 1980), p. 84-85; P.J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Egypt* (2d ed.; London : Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1980), p. 6-7, 24, 28; Charles Issawi, « The economic Development of Egypt, 1800-1960 », in *idem, The Economic History of the Middle East 1800-1914* (2d ed.; Chicago : Chicago University Press, 1975), p. 359-374; H.A.R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West* (2 vol.; London : Oxford University Press, 1950-1957), I, p. 276.

Direct or indirect criticisms of the thesis of village insularity have been advanced by Roger (E.R.J.) Owen in *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 41-42, and *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy 1820-1914* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 5-6; Albert Hourani in « The Islamic City in Light of Recent Research », in A. Hourani and S.M. Stern, eds., *The Islamic City* (Oxford : Bruno Cassirer, 1970), p. 16; and Ira Lapidus, « Muslim Cities and Islamic Societies », in *idem, Middle Eastern Cities* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1969), p. 47-74. Egyptian historians have not addressed the issue in these terms, but have noted the existence of urban-rural exchange by mentioning periodic markets and the trade fairs associated with *mawlids*. See : ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, *Al-rīf al-miṣrī fī al-qarn al-ṯāmin ʿašar* (2d ed.; Cairo : Maktabat Madbūlī, 1986), p. 220-226; Aḥmad al-Ḥitta, *Tārīḫ Miṣr al-iqtiṣādī fī al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿašar* (Cairo : Maṭbaʿat al-Miṣrī, 1967), p. 18-19; and Muḥammad Fahmī Lahiṭa, *Tārīḫ Miṣr al-iqtiṣādī fī al-ʿusūr al-ḥadīṯa* (Cairo, 1938), p. 35-36. In al-Ḥitta's view, each town and its agricultural hinterland formed a self-sufficient economic unit.

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appeared in the Ptolemaic period [7]. These structures and practices continued into the early modern or Ottoman period. The circulation of money in the countryside is evidenced by the collection of the land tax in Lower Egypt and parts of Middle Egypt, under Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mamlūk, and Ottoman rule. Mamlūk-era sources attest to the continued existence of local, periodic markets, and al-Širbīnī mentions urban-rural moneylending in the seventeenth century. Finally, the well-known *mawlids* of the countryside, though documented more as religious phenomena, were also accompanied by important regional trade fairs [8].

The thesis of the economic insularity of the village rested upon the notion that these structures and practices were nonexistent, or at least insignificant. The stoutest defender of this thesis in recent times was Gabriel Baer, who argued that even if urban-rural contact had flourished in medieval Egypt, decline in the Ottoman period reduced these contacts to the point where they were quite limited. The remarkable thing about this argument is the use of quantitative language in the absence of quantitative evidence of any sort [9].

Similarly, few quantifiable data on urban-rural commerce can be found in the court records of al-Manṣūra, which were used for this study [10]. The evidence they contain, however, provides a basis for understanding the forms that urban-rural economic contact took, and their significance.

7. Alan K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs 332 B.C. - A.D. 642* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1986), p. 90-120.

8. On medieval-era taxation in coin, see Hasanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt A.H. 564-741 / A.D. 1169-1341* (London : Oxford University Press, 1072), p. 74ff.; on rural markets and *mawlids*, Qāsim ʿAbduh Qāsim, « al-Aswāq wa-l-ḥayā al-yawmiyya », in *idem, Dirāsāt fī tāriḫ Miṣr al-iǧtimāʿī. ʿAṣr al-Salaṭīn al-Mamālik* (Cairo : Dār al-Maʿārif, 1983), p. 32; on moneylending al-Širbīnī is quoted by Baer in « Al-Shirbini's Hazz al-Quhuf and its Significance », in *Fallah and Townsman*, p. 6.

9. E.g., « But rural-urban trade was extremely limited... » (Baer, « Village and City in Egypt and Syria », p. 57). For a critique of the thesis of Ottoman-era economic decline, see Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 1-2.

10. All references to Šarīʿa court records are from the Šarīʿa Court of the town of al-Manṣūra (*Maḥkamat al-Manṣūra al-ibtidāʾiyya al-Šarʿiyya*), the registers of which are housed in Dār al-Maḥfūẓāt al-ʿUmūmiyya, in the custody of the Bureau of Taxation of the Ministry of Finance. Fifty-nine registers cover the period 1707-1739 with lacunae (n° 1), and 1740-1847 with relatively few gaps, and are referenced *maḫzan* 46, *ʿayn* 138. These registers were read so as to provide a minimum sample of one solar year out of every five years, with additional sampling in-between, so that twenty-nine registers were read in whole or part. Entries in the registers of Maḥkamat al-Manṣūra are referenced below as « MM », followed by the register number/page, and the Hiǧrī month and year.

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Economic links between town and village in Ottoman Egypt consisted of two sets of relations : taxation and relations of exchange. Rural taxation, as administered through the *iltizām* system, is described thoroughly in other studies and need not be reviewed here. Due to their relative neglect, however, relations of exchange deserve treatment at length. The latter may be described as having comprised three principal types of activity : the buying and selling that took place in the numerous periodic markets of rural Egypt [11]; moneylending, or the extension of credit from urban merchants to rural producers; and the occasional direct investment of urban capital in agricultural production. The last was expressed legally in the formation of partnerships (*šarikas*) between urban merchants and rural producers.

The periodic markets of eighteenth-century Egypt were described by Girard as extending throughout the country, including Upper Egypt. In addition to its permanent market(s), every town that had an agricultural hinterland also had a weekly market, where villagers brought their produce for sale. By virtue of its sheer size, Cairo alone appears to have had a number of these markets on its outskirts. The weekly market of al-Manṣūra was held, in the late eighteenth century, on Saturday. Under the pretext of attending this market and concealing their weapons, a force of peasants and bedouin surprised and massacred the French garrison there in August 1798 [12].

Weekly markets were also held in « un grand nombre de villages », where the sale of livestocks, fruits, vegetables, and other foodstuffs was observed [13]. Specific reference to eighteenth-century markets in the villages of Nabrawh, al-Simbillāwīn, al-Bayḍā, and

11. A recent study of these markets devotes much attention to the eighteenth century : Barbara K. Larson, « The Rural Marketing System of Egypt over the Last Three Hundred Years », *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 27, 3 (July 1985), p. 494-530.

12. P.S. Girard, « Mémoire sur l'agriculture, l'industrie et le commerce de l'Égypte », *Description de l'Égypte* (2d éd., 26 vol.; Paris : Imprimerie de C.L.F. Panckoucke, 1821-1829), XVII, p. 218-219, 267-275. Though al-Ǧabartī omits mention of Cairo's periodic markets, he does refer to fallāḥīn who came to Cairo and Būlāq to sell grain, vegetables, melons, dairy products, livestock, straw, and clover — usually in the context of this trade's disruption : ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ǧabartī, *Aǧā'ib al-āṯār fī al-tarāǧim wa-l-aḫbār* (4 vol.; Būlāq, 1876), II, p. 143, 154, 226; III, p. 94, 177, 180, 187, 209, 241, 270. On al-Manṣūra : ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfiʿī, *Tāriḫ al-ḥaraka al-qawmiyya* (2 vol.; Cairo : Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1955), I, p. 320-323; and J.J. Marcel et al., *Histoire Scientifique et Militaire de l'Expédition française en Égypte* (10 vol.; Paris : Ducollet, 1830-1836), III, p. 321-322.

13. Le Comte Estève, « Mémoire sur les finances de l'Égypte, depuis sa conquête par le sultan Selym 1^er^, jusqu'à celle du général en chef Bonaparte », *Description de l'Égypte*, XII, p. 189.

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Šansā, all in the region of al-Manṣūra, appear in the court registers and French accounts of the countryside. From the type of commercial transactions recorded there, the village of Dikirnis was probably the site of another market. Sources from the second half of the nineteenth century attest to the continued existence of markets in four of these five villages : a Monday market in Nabrawh; a Saturday market in al-Simbillāwīn; a Sunday market in Šansā; and a Wednesday market in Dikirnis [14]. Thus, these markets continued to function after the completion of much of Lower Egypt's network of railroads. The disappearance of the market of al-Bayḍā (if that is what occurred) may have been a consequence of this revolution in transport. The shifting of al-Manṣūra's weekly market to Tuesday [15] might have a similar explanation.

The location of the village markets apparently was determined by the prevailing mode of transport, which in the eighteenth century was by foot, camel, or donkey. From the location of these and the markets of nearby towns, and on the basis of entries in the court records referring to urban-rural commerce, it appears that the maximum distance that villagers travelled to market in Lower Egypt was 11 to 12 kilometers, a journey of three to four hours. For example, the village of al-Bahw Farīk, the furthest from which bulk commodities were brought (presumably by land) to al-Manṣūra, is approximately 11 kilometers south of the town. Its inhabitants more frequently may have attended the Sunday market of Šansā, only about 8 kilometers away, and also could have reached the Nile at Mīt Samānūd and Nawasā al-Baḥr, distances of about 10 and 7 kilometers respectively. A network of country roads, and canals navigable by small boats, appears to have given every village in Lower Egypt access to at least one market [16]. In Middle and Upper Egypt the distances to markets or points of

14. Archives du Ministère de la Guerre, Carton B6, portefeuille 79, ms. « Basse Égypte. Journal des Reconnaissances militaires faites dans la Basse Égypte en l'an 8 par Cr. Schouani chef d'Escadre, ingénieur-géographe », 2e partie, p. 54; MM 3/127, Ṣafar 1158; MM 3/168, Rağab 1158; MM 7/70, Ğumādā I 1163; MM 7/53, Rabīʿ I 1163; ʿAlī Mubārak, *Al-Ḫiṭaṭ al-ğadīda al-tawfiqiyya li-Miṣr al-Qāhira wa-mudunī-hā wa-bilādi-hā al-qadīma wa-l-šaḥīra* (20 vol.; Būlāq, 1886-1889), VII, p. 55, 137, and XI, p. 18; Muḥammad Amīn Fikrī, *Ğuġrāfiyyat Miṣr* (Cairo : Maṭbaʿat wādī al-Nīl, 1879), p. 40, 43, 64.

15. In the 1870s al-Manṣūra was connected by rail to al-Simbillāwīn and Zaqāzīq, and its market drew buyers and sellers from the provinces of al-Ġarbiyya and al-Šarqiyya, as well as from nearer districts : Fikrī, *Ġuġrāfiyyat Miṣr*, p. 34.

16. The distances mentioned are linear and do not account for the sinuousity of the country roads and dikes travelled. Two or more entries in the court records show that wheat, beans, clover, and clarified butter came to al-Manṣūra from al-Ḥawawša, Baḥqīra, and al-Bahw Farīk, all located on a road running south from the

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embarkation were usually shorter, due to the narrowness of the Nile valley south of Cairo.

One function of these markets was to facilitate the flow of rural produce to the towns. These were « agro-cities », dependent upon their hinterlands for provisioning in food, fuel, and raw materials for manufacturing [17]. With the exception of the ports, the provincial towns were also entrepôts for the entry of rural produce into the regional and export markets. Although no quantitative assessment of the volume or value of the trade that passed through these rural markets is possible at present, reference to the system of rural taxation provides an indication of their importance. In most of Lower Egypt and parts of Middle Egypt the land tax was collected in coin, which in itself presupposed a significant volume of marketing, as villagers would have had to sell their crops in order to pay their taxes [18].

The weekly markets also supplied villagers with certain necessities and luxuries that were produced in the towns or imported. Some of these commodities are revealed in inheritance and divorce cases brought to the court by villagers : silks, brocades, and other fine clothing, gold and silver jewellery, various copper goods, swords, knives, and guns [19]. The purchase of luxuries (but not weapons) was probably limited, however, to a small minority of relatively well-off village families. French observers mention the use of small amounts of iron in the villages, and this would also imply the use of charcoal to forge it. Coffee and tobacco were also consumed in the countryside [20].

town to Mit al-ʿĀmil. The roads in this area were explored and described by Schouani, in « Journal des Reconnaissances militaires ... », 4e partie, p. 111; and Mémoires historiques, MR 516, ms. « Reconnaissance de Mansoura à Mit-el-ame », p. 3-7. Distances in terms of time have been calculated from French reconnaissance reports, and comparisons between local and French accounts of the time it took to travel between the same points. On pre-modern transport and market locations, see also Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 42-43.

17. Hourani, « The Islamic City », p. 16.

18. Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 37.

19. MM 20/66, Ṣafar 1188; 35/158, Ǧumādā I 1216; 44/13, Ḏū al-Qaʿda 1126 (2 entries from different villages); 44/127, Šaʿbān 1227; 45/03, Rabīʿ I 1228; 46/90, Šaʿbān 1229; 49/227, Muḥarram 1238; 50/167, Šaʿbān 1241; 50/207, Rabīʿ II 1242.

20. The fallāḥ's plow had an iron plowshare : Girard, « Mémoire », p. 23, 27. The sale of Syrian, Turkish, and Greek tobacco in the villages is attested in the court records : MM 2/02, Ǧumādā I 1153; 9/105, Ḏū al-Qaʿda 1168; 12/248, Ṣafar 1174; 15/151, Ḏū al-Ḥiǧǧa 1177; 17/149, Ramaḍān 1183; 27/14, Rabīʿ II 1199; 27/128, Rabīʿ II 1200. On coffee : France, Archives du Ministère de la Guerre, Mémoires historiques, MR 545, ms. Général Dugua, « Notes sur l'Égypte », p. 3; and al-Ǧabartī, *Aǧā'ib*, III, p. 319.

Finally, though weavers were to be found in many villages, a certain amount of the cloth consumed by villagers was produced in the towns or in other villages [21]. The specialization of various towns and villages in producing unique weaves, designs, and color combinations in textiles makes it unlikely that most villages were « self-sufficient » in cloth. Such specialization was a matter of custom :

> ... le métier du père est toujours l'héritage des enfants. Chaque genre d'industrie s'exerce dans des villages particuliers et ne passe point dans les centres ou des circonstances semblables le feraient également réussir. Tel village fabrique des toiles de coton, qui n'en ferait pas de lin pour son propre usage parce que, y dit-on, cela appartient à un autre village. Les étoffes de laine et de soie sont aussi fabriquées dans des lieux particuliers [22].

The periodic markets of rural Egypt also had a third identifiable function, as a meeting place for the sellers of cotton, flax, and wool, and spinners and weavers. Village women purchased cotton, wool, and flax in the periodic markets, spun it, and then returned to the same markets to sell their yarn to weavers [23]. The rural marketing system was thus integral to the production of textiles in eighteenth-century Egypt, in addition to its function of providing the villages with certain necessities and luxuries, of provisioning the towns, and of funnelling rural produce into the regional and export markets.

Moneylending appears to have been a common form of commercial contact between town and village in eighteenth-century Egypt. The court registers reveal it to have been a practice of urban merchants to lend money to the fallahin against their harvests. Before the rice, wheat, and sesame harvests, a merchant would advance a certain sum in cash to a cultivator against a specified amount of his harvest. This was always recorded as a sale, with the delivery of the crop due after the harvest. Rice was planted in early April and harvested in mid-November, but was purchased as early as June by the merchants, with delivery due after the harvest [24]. The provincial merchants' practice

21. Girard, « Mémoire », p. 210-211, 218-220.

22. M.G. Davessy, éd., « Dolomieu en Égypte (30 juin 1798 - 10 mars 1799) », *Mémoires de l'Institut d'Égypte* (Cairo, 1922), III, p. 97.

23. Girard, « Mémoire », p. 213-218; see also Judith Tucker, *Women in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (London : Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 84, though it is not at all clear that spinning was organized on a « putting-out » basis as she argues. The court records also show urban merchants to have sold cotton and flax to villagers, another indication of the centrality of the markets in the stages of textile production : MM 12/101, Ğumādā I 1173; 17/222, Ğumādā I 1184; 23/143, Ğumādā II 1195; 23/150, Ğumādā II 1195.

24. MM 1/95, Ḏū al-Qaʿda 1125; 17/240, Raǧab 1184. On the rice-growing season : Girard, « Mémoire », p. 62, 65.

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of tying up the rice harvest in advance was well documented by Girard, and is also mentioned by al-Ğabartī [25]. Like rice, sesame was a summer crop and was harvested at the end of October; two suits brought to the court of al-Manṣūra, in 1716 and 1777, show advance payments being made for this crop in the months of July and September [26].

The cultivation of summer crops like rice and sesame involved relatively high costs for irrigation, and rice moreover had to be germinated, planted, and then thinned and transplanted. Most of these labor costs were paid in coin in advance of the harvest, and the availability of credit may have been necessary to the production of these crops. Dolomieu was of the opinion that hardly any of the cultivators were wealthy enough to bear the advance costs of rice farming on their own. A winter crop like wheat required far less capital [27]. But wheat was also purchased in advance of its harvest by al-Manṣūra's merchants. In the court records sampled for the seventy-year period before the beginning of the monopoly system, thirteen entries were found which show an urban creditor to have paid a villager for the delivery of wheat, and which also mention the date of the contract (often omitted). Though wheat was sown in mid-October and harvested in late March and early April, in seven of these cases the contract was made in November, December, or January [28]. This would suggest that the advance purchase of wheat was also a common practice.

The advance purchase of a crop would be at less than its anticipated market price at the time of the harvest [29], the difference representing the interest on money lent. For the merchants, these were profitable arrangements which guaranteed a supply of the crop at a pre-determined price. The uncertainty of the market, with its price fluctuations, was avoided, as were the taxes and fees levied at the weekly markets by the authorities. For the cultivators of rice and sesame, and perhaps other summer crops, access to credit may have been necessary in order to meet their relatively high capital costs. The villagers' recourse to credit in other cases may have been out of a need to meet occasional costs, such as a wedding or the purchase of livestock, or to pay their taxes.

25. Girard, « Mémoire », p. 173; al-Ğabartī, *Ağā'ib*, IV, p. 154.

26. MM 1/186, Šawwāl 1129; 22/114, Ša'bān 1193. On the sesame harvest : Girard, « Mémoire », p. 94.

27. Davessy, « Dolomieu en Égypte », p. 106; on the comparative costs of rice and wheat farming : Girard, « Mémoire », p. 167-169, 181-182.

28. On the dates of wheat cultivation in the Delta : Girard, « Mémoire », p. 49-50.

29. Davessy, « Dolomieu en Égypte », p. 106; al-Širbini, quoted by Baer in « Al-Shirbīnī's Hazz al-Quhuf and its Significance », p. 6.

Under a strict interpretation of Islamic law, these advance purchases would have been invalid. Yet these agreements were treated in the court simply as contracts of sale, and were routinely enforced. One creditor, in fact, was the brother of the *qāḍī* of Mīt Ġamr and himself a šayḫ [30].

The investment of urban capital in rural production, in the form legally recognized as a *šarika* or partnership, took a variety of forms. Partnerships might be formed in livestock, mills, commerce, or cultivation [31]. They could involve quite small amounts of capital for a limited duration, such as in one case the provision of radish seed worth five *riyāl*s for cultivation in the village of Ğadaila [32]. Others were of longer duration, and involved larger amounts of capital. One partnership dissolved in 1774 had involved rice and a rice mill, the cultivation of land, moneylending, and livestock. Another was formed sometime before 1770 between a merchant in Rosetta and a villager from Dimīra, involving imported soap and coin in exchange for locally produced rice and sal ammoniac [33].

Village šayḫs appear at least occasionally to have played the role of middlemen in urban-rural exchange, merchant-moneylenders employing them at times as their local « contacts » with the fallāḥīn [34]. Wealthier villagers, often from the families of village šayḫs, would at times act as local moneylenders, securing a portion of the harvest in advance, like their urban counterparts [35]. Others consigned their crops (and perhaps the crops of others) to urban merchants for a partial payment, the remainder due presumably after the crop was sold [36]. Thus the use of credit in urban-rural commerce did not always entail the indebtedness of villagers to urban merchants, but sometimes the opposite.

30. MM 2/09, Ṣafar 1153. On the legality of this practice, see : Nabil A. Saleh, *Unlawful Gain and Legitimate Profit in Islamic Law.* Riba, Gharar *and Islamic Banking* (London : Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 59-60.

31. A partnership in livestock is revealed, e.g., in MM 7/30, Muḥarram 1163, where the partnership comprised a camel, a bull, a cow, 3 calves, 7 water buffalo, and 40 ewes, plus 20 *funduqlī*s in capital.

32. MM 33/12, Ğumādā II 1209.

33. MM 20/107, Ğumādā II 1188; MM 17/254, Ğumādā II 1184 (two entries).

34. In two cases, e.g., a šayḫ stood as guarantor of an agreement between a villager and an urban creditor; in another, he allegedly received the harvest due for delivery to a creditor from a cultivator : MM 1/186, Šawwāl 1129; 22/151, Muḥarram 1194; 22/114, Šaʿbān 1193. The village correspondent in an urban-rural partnership was often a šayḫ or of a šayḫ family, as with a šayḫ from Dimīra in the partnership mentioned above.

35. MM 27/138, Ğumādā I 1200; 17/130, Šaʿbān 1181; 15/311, Rabīʿ II 1180.

36. MM 23/175, Šaʿbān 1195; 34/14, Raǧab 1210.

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The villages in pre-modern Egypt were not economically isolated. Each had access to one or more of the weekly markets, from which certain commodity needs were satisfied. Rice cultivation, and perhaps the cultivation of other summer crops, was at least partially dependent upon credit supplied by urban merchants. Cash-crop production was widespread [37]. The villages appear to have been self-sufficient only in food production. Finally, the court registers show that the use of money in rural and urban-rural exchange was quite common. In each of sixty-three entries which document the sale of livestock between villages, and between town and village, the buyer paid in coin. In other transactions, when a payment was made in kind, it was carefully recorded as such, suggesting that this was the exception rather than the rule [38].

It must be admitted that the implications of Egypt's pre-modern, urban-rural commercial relations are not entirely clear. Peter Gran has suggested that by the 1790s, « agrarian capitalism was developing and its primary locus was the Delta rice fields » [39]. Yet in the eighteenth century, the economic structures and activities outlined above were not recent developments. Evidence of qualitative change may be produced to confirm Gran's argument, but the mere existence of these urban-rural commercial structures is not proof of incipient capitalist development. Nor can their existence be attributed to the beginning of the expansion of the world market; the linkage of Egypt's agriculture to the export trade occurred much earlier.

In the absence of adequate data, all that can be safely said of the long-term volume and value of urban-rural commerce, the supply of money and credit, and the amount of cash-cropping, is that all would have expanded and contracted during the two millenia before Muḥammad ʿAlī's governorate, dependent upon the state of agriculture, which was influenced by natural and political conditions. The proximity of villages to markets probably encouraged economic stratification among the pesantry, but this also was not a recent development. The mere presence of markets does not appear to have worked any transformative influence on rural economic and social relations [40]. One of the

37. Owen, *Cotton*, p. 11-12.

38. Money payments were carefully recorded, the coins that changed hands being named : one *šarīfī funduqlī* and one *šarīfī maḥbūb* for clarified butter (MM 2/32, Ṣafar 1156); payment of a debt of 3,874 *pāra*s (MM 2/149, Rabīʿ II 1156); one *šarīfī zinǧīrlī* for rice (MM 3/132, Rabīʿ II 1158); 7 ½ *maḥbūb* for a cow and 29 *funduqlī*s for two bulls (MM 3/116, Ṣafar 1158 and 2/42, Rabīʿ I 1156), and so on.

39. Peter Gran, « The Changing Meaning of Merchant Capital in Egypt », in *L'Égypte au XIX^e siècle* (Paris : C.N.R.S., 1982), p. 272; also *idem, Islamic Roots of Capitalism. Egypt 1760-1840* (Austin : University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 4, and 26-27.

40. On this issue in general : Maurice Dobb, « Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism », in

reasons for this was the siphoning off of most of the rural surplus through taxation, very little of which was invested productively [41]. In the early modern period, moreover, the characteristic response of rulers to increased trade with the West was the creation of export monopolies. An array of customs officials, merchants, moneylenders and other middlemen mediated between producers and the regional and export markets.

In the short term, Muḥammad ʿAlī's policies discouraged the further development of a market economy and investment in agriculture by wealthy villagers and merchants. Far from dragging a sullen peasantry into contact with the market, his monopoly system suppressed much of the rural marketing system, curtailed the activities of provincial merchants, and kept European merchants from « penetrating » the countryside until mid-century.

2. MUḤAMMAD ʿALI'S MONOPOLY SYSTEM [42]

The monopoly system is best understood as an attempt to impose state control over the production, internal distribution, and export of the major commodities of the country. It was a response to heightened European demand for Egypt's agricultural produce, the aim being to exploit this opportunity to increase state revenues. Various accounts of Egyptian state revenues from 1829 to 1836 show the export monopoly as having contributed from 19 to 22 percent of total receipts, making it the second most important source of revenue after the land tax [43].

idem, Papers on Capitalism, Development and Planning (New York : International Publishers, 1967), p. 4-7.

41. Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 11 (on use of the term « surplus »), and 35-36.

42. Various aspects of the monopoly system are discussed in Helen Rivlin, *The Agricultural Policy of Muḥammad ʿAlī in Egypt* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1961), passim. A more concise description of the monopoly appears in Aḥmad al-Ḥitta, *Tārīḫ Miṣr al-iqtiṣādī*, p. 38-44 and 262-268. Although the monopoly also applied to large — and small — scale industries, the discussion below is restricted to agriculture and urban-rural commerce.

43. Georges Douin, *L'Égypte de 1828 à 1830* (Rome, 1935), p. 381; *idem, La mission du Baron de Boislecomte. L'Égypte et la Syrie en 1833* (Cairo, 1927), p. 126-127; A.-B. Clot, *Aperçu général sur l'Égypte* (2 vol.; Paris, 1840), II, p. 208-209; A. Colin, « Lettres sur l'Égypte. Budget et administration », *Revue des Deux Mondes*, ser. 4, XIII (1838), p. 102-104; René Cattaui, *Le Règne de Mohamed Aly d'après les Archives russes* (3 vol. in 4; Cairo and Rome, 1931-1936), II, part 2, p. 406-410.

European merchants and diplomats were most concerned with the export monopoly, established in 1808 and maintained until 1842. During this time, also, the state's control of internal distribution and production was developed and modified. By 1812, a portion of the tax collected in Lower Egypt was already taken in grain. That sping, the fallāḥīn were forbidden to market their grain harvests without official permission; most of what was not taken as a tax was purchased by government agents at the threshing grounds for 8 *riyāl*s per ardebb. Small amounts were left to the peasants to sell, and in the Cairo vicinity grain fetched 10 *riyāl*s and 60 *pāra*s per ardebb in the market. All of the grain of Upper Egypt was seized that summer and shipped to Alexandria [44]. In 1812, also, a decree forbade the fallāḥīn to sell their rice harvest to anyone except the agents of the state. Al-Ǧabartī noted that previously, rice had been sold to merchants who had extended credit to the cultivators. Now the state made itself the sole purchaser of this crop, at a fixed price, and offered what inputs the cultivators needed as credit [45]. In effect, then, the state usurped the traditional role of the provincial merchants in urban-rural commerce and credit, shouldering them aside, in the initial stages of the extension of the monopoly system to the villages.

By the fall of 1816 the monopoly was extended to the other principal crops of the country [46]. From 1812 through 1817, the monopolized crops were purchased through the village šayḫs, who served as the state's agents on the spot. The court records of al-Manṣūra show the šayḫs to have received cash from provincial officials against specified amounts of beans, barley, rice, and sesame under the new regime. Payments for rice and sesame were delivered in advance of the harvest, again reminiscent of the provincial merchants' practice and suggesting that credit was necessary for cultivators to meet the costs of growing these crops [47]. Given the traditional role of the šayḫs as occasional middlemen in urban-rural commerce, their similar role in the formative stages of the monopoly system provides another illustration of how that system first was built upon, and then supplanted, the traditional marketing system.

In 1818 a new « Bureau of Trade » (*Dīwān al-Tiǧāra wa-l-Mabyūʿāt*) was created to oversee the collection of the harvests, their internal distribution, and export. This event

44. Al-Ǧabartī, *ʿAǧāʾib*, IV, p. 142, 152-153.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 251, 255-256. In addition to rice and wheat these crops included flax, sesame, safflower, indigo, cotton, carthame, beans, barley, hulba, chickpeas, and maize.

47. MM 44/47, Ṣafar 1227; 44/211, Rabīʿ I 1228; 45/206, Rabīʿ II 1229; 45/207, Rabīʿ II 1229; 45/210, Rabīʿ II 1229; 45/225, Rabīʿ II 1229; 45/228, Ǧumādā I 1229; 45/233, Ǧumādā I 1229; 45/238, Ǧumādā I 1229; 45/256, Ǧumādā II 1229; 47/116, Ǧumādā I 1232.

appears to coincide with the construction of government storehouses (*šūnas*) in the villages, and the replacement of the šayḫs by bureaucrats in the procuring of crops [48]. Afterward, however, a šayḫ in each village continued to function as the state's agent (*wakīl*) in putting out raw cotton and flax to village spinners [49].

Before 1812, the system of urban-rural exchange had influenced the allocation of resources in agricultural production. Girard, for example, noticed that the fallāḥīn reduced the area they cultivated in flax, in favor of clover, in response to a decline in the price of flax and high prices for livestock [50]. After 1812, peasants responded to the state's intrusion into the sphere of distribution by switching to crops which were not yet monopolized, and a black market in agricultural produce quickly developed. In the autumn of 1816, for the first time, the areas to be planted in flax, chickpeas, sesame, and cotton were decreed by the Pāšā, marking the state's intrusion into the sphere of production [51]. It is worthwhile noting that state control of production followed, by a few years, the first official controls on distribution. The suppression of the market distorted the price mechanism which had influenced the allocation of resources in crop production, and it thus became necessary for the Pāšā to allocate by decree the use of land and other resources in order to achieve the desired results.

The development of a pyramidal, bureaucratic structure for the administration of the monopoly system gave the state, in the 1820s, the ability to plan and direct the cultivation of crops in the quantities it desired. *Lā'iḥat Zirā'at al-Fallāḥ,* issued in 1829 [52], describes in detail how orders for the crops to be grown were to be sent to each *mudīriyya* and passed down through each layer of provincial administration to individual villages. This law set out regulations governing agriculture, the monopoly and tax administration at the local level, and the responsibilities of the provincial officials. The selection and preparation of land for different crops, their cultivation, irrigation, harvest and delivery to government storehouses are prescribed in detail, as is a system for the close supervision

48. On *Dīwān al-Tiğāra :* Rivlin, *Agricultural Policy,* p. 84 and 323, n. 22; p. 179 and 345, n. 22; Jean Deny, *Sommaire des Archives turques du Caire* (Cairo, 1930), p. 125, 462; Henry Dodwell, *The Founder of Modern Egypt : A Study of Muḥammad ʿAlī* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1931), p. 205; and Aḥmad al-Ḥitta, *Tārīḫ al-Zirāʿa fī Miṣr fī ʿahd Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Kabīr* (Cairo : Dār al-Maʿārif, 1950), p. 123. The earliest reference to village *šūnas* that I have found is an order referring to cotton deliveries, in February 1819, in Amīn Sāmī, *Taqwim al-Nil* (3 vol. in 6; Cairo, 1915-1936), II, p. 277.

49. Al-Ğabartī, *ʿAğā'ib,* IV, p. 282-283.

50. Girard, « Mémoire », p. 145-146.

51. Al-Ğabartī, *ʿAğā'ib,* IV, p. 254.

52. *Lā'iḥat zirā'at al-fallāḥ wa tadbīr aḥkām al-siyāsa bi-qaṣd al-nağāḥ* (Būlāq, 1829); referred to hereafter as *Lā'iḥa.*

of each stage of production. It is not clear to what extent the *Lā'iḥa* of 1829 incorporated previous administrative practices and to what extent its provisions represented innovations. Nonetheless, it is clear from this document that the monopoly system severely curtailed market activity in the countryside.

The abolition of the *iltizām* system and the completion of Egypt's first cadastral survey in two centuries, during 1813-1814, made centralized control of agriculture possible. Central administrative control was established over the villages, the cadaster providing officials with a detailed accounting of the resources of the countryside. Although the efficiency of the monopoly administration is open to question, the center's unprecedented attempt at controlling production would have been inconceivable without a reasonably accurate survey of Egypt's land. It may not be coincidental that *Dīwān al-Tiğāra,* representing the full development of the monopoly administration, was organized in the year before a second and more detailed cadaster was begun (1819-1820) [53].

The monopoly administration parallelled and was linked to the tax administration. Certain taxes in kind, including wheat, straw and clarified butter, were assessed on the villages and collected along with the formally monopolized commodities. Moreover, cultivators could pay the land tax in kind, a practice that appears to have become common in the 1820s, *Lā'iḥat Zirā'at al-Fallaḥ* describes how, in the later 1820s, the amounts and value of a peasant's deliveries to the *šūna* should be recorded, in his name, « *raṭl* and *qirš* or ardebb and *qirš* », and deducted from the total he owed in taxes [54]. For each delivery he was issued a receipt (*rağ'ā;* pl. *ruğū'*). At the end of the fiscal year, the value of each fallāḥ's deliveries to the *šūna* would be compared to the tax he owed. If the sum was in excess of the tax, he would be paid the difference according to the prices set under the monopoly. If in arrears, the remainder due would be carried over to the next year.

It appears that this system of issuing receipts or *rağ'as* during the agricultural year, and of settling accounts with the fallāḥīn at the year's end, was introduced with the organization of *Dīwān al-Tiğāra* in 1818, or very close to that date. *Rağ'as* were issued by the local *šūnas*, the earliest reference to which occurs in 1819; and as late as 1817 the court registers show that monopolized crops were still being paid for in coin, through the village šayḫs, at the harvest [55]. The policy of paying cultivators for their crops

53. The survey of 1819-1820 was redone in 1821 in a number of districts. See al-Ğabartī, *'Ağā'ib,* IV, p. 318-319; and Butros Ġālī, « Taqrīr ... fī mā yata'allaq bi-l-ḍarā'ib al-'aqāriyya », in Fīlīb Ğallād, *Qāmūs al-idāra wa-l-qaḍā'* (4 vol.; Alexandria, 1890-1892), IV, p. 702.

54. *Lā'iḥa,* p. 38.

55. See notes 47 and 48 above.

only once a year, after deducting the tax they owed, must have simplified the bureaucracy's task and relieved cash-flow demands on the treasury. However, deferred payments also deprived the fallāḥīn of a source of ready cash. In 1823, Mengin observed : « Le fellah ne reçoit en argent comptant que le produit de celle de ses denrées qu'il vend sur les marchés... » [56]. The significance of this policy can be appreciated only if it is understood that villagers customarily had relied upon the market and money exchange to satisfy a portion of their needs. Since the more humble peasant households could not afford to wait for payment, *raǧ'as* were traded privately at a discount, which reportedly varied between 8 and 30 percent during 1827-1840 [57].

Low floods (1824 and 1825) and the expedition to the Morea (1824-1828) produced a fiscal crisis by the mid-1820s. Early in 1826 the Pāšā told General Boyer that the land tax was 133 million francs in arrears, a sum approximately equal to the revenue of one year [58]. Owing to the shortfall in revenues, salaries fell in arrears, and all cash payments for monopolized crops were suspended. In July Boyer reported :

> La plus grande misère règne dans le pays. Plus d'argent; on ne paie que par acomptes [*raǧ'as*]; le cinquième mois d'appointements dus est commencé et quatre mois de frais de table [59].

Salt, the British consul, reported in August that « His Higness ... will not take his own assignments [*raǧ'as*] now at twenty percent discount ..., » and that this measure led ten villages in al-Šarqiyya to revolt [60]. In the later 1820s and early 1830s, the rebuilding of the fleet and the launching of the invasion of Syria placed additional strains on the fisc. Agricultural production was slow to recover after the low floods of the mid-1820s, and suffered another setback with an excessive flood in 1829. That year, *Lā'iḥat Zirā'at al-Fallāḥ* required that any outstanding *raǧ'as* be credited against the next year's land tax, effectively wiping out this debt owed the fallāḥīn [61].

56. Félix Mengin, *Histoire de l'Égypte sous le gouvernement de Mohammed-Aly* (2 vol.; Paris : Arthus Bertrand, 1823), II, p. 341.

57. The discount depended on the state of the Pāšā's finances. Twice, in 1829 and 1842, all outstanding *raǧ'as* were credited against the next year's land tax. See : Cattaui, *Archives russes*, I, p. 113, 551; Douin, *La Mission du Baron de Boislecomte*, p. 133; John Bowring, « Report on Egypt and Candia », *Parliamentary Papers*, XXI (1840), p. 11; *Lā'iḥa*, p. 46; and al-Ḥitta, *Tāriḫ al-zirā'a*, p. 71.

58. Georges Douin, *Une Mission militaire française auprès de Mohamed Aly* (Cairo : I.F.A.O., 1923), p. 108.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 129-130.

60. Great Britain, Public Record Office, FO 78/147, Salt to Planta, August 1826.

61. *Lā'iḥa*, p. 46.

The evidence suggests that no *raǧ'as* were redeemed by the government for cash from 1826 through the fiscal year 1829-1830. Foreign observers, who referred to the *raǧ'as* as « acomptes », « assignments », and « assignations », took no notice of them until the crisis of 1826, an indication of this change in policy. The agricultural crisis of the later 1820s was undoubtedly made more acute by the removal of any monetary incentives to production. By 1830 this crisis was affecting the supply of urban markets. Wheat, along with spoiled wheat, old beans, linseed, and cottonseed was used to produce a « so-called bread », and some local officials encouraged and protected the black market, in open defiance of the Pāšā [62]. The advisory council Maǧlis al-Mašūra, created the year before to deal with the agricultural crisis, decided that henceforth all grain should be «purchased» from the fallāḥīn, after leaving them with sufficient stocks for themselves and their livestock. Beginning in 1830-1831, then, the administration of the monopoly system may have returned to the practice of redeeming *raǧ'as* for cash at the end of the fiscal year. It is noteworthy, however, that the price to be paid the fallāḥīn for maize in 1830 (8 *riyāl*s per ardebb) was the same as it had been in 1816. In 1831, the price paid at the *šūna*s was raised to 10 *riyāl*s [63].

A more radical reform in 1831 freed much of the internal trade in grain and beans, amounting to official recognition that the monopoly system could not insure the adequate provisioning of urban markets, nor desired levels of production for export. The monopoly on linen weaving was lifted a few yeers later, in 1834; in its place a « loom tax » was imposed on the villages, which was assessed on the land from 1839 [64]. Another crisis, caused by the low flood of 1837, led to the lifting of grain taxes and octrois in April 1838. The traditional Ottoman policy of setting official market prices was also abandoned that year, allowing market prices to move freely according to supply and demand for the first time [65].

62. Douin, *L'Égypte de 1828 à 1830.* p. 213-214; Cattaui, *Archives russes,* I, p. 376; Tawfīq Iskandar, ed., *Dīwān al-Ma'iyya al-Saniyya. Al-Siǧill al-Awwal, min 6 Muḥarram 1245 ilā 8 Raǧab 1246* (Cairo, 1960), p. 176-177.

63. Al-Ǧabartī, *'Aǧā'ib,* IV, p. 256; Sāmī, *Taqwīm al-Nīl,* II, p. 365, 372, 383.

64. The free, internal trade in grain and legumes was restored as of September 1831, as shown in the court records (MM 51/183, Rabī' II 1247). The government continued to claim less than an ardebb of grain per faddan at the fixed price; Boislecomte, writing in 1833, mistakenly thought that the reform had occurred only the year before (Douin, *La Mission du Baron de Boislecomte,* p. 87-88). On the end of the linen monopoly : Rivlin, *Agricultural Policy,* p. 194. On the loom tax (*arbāḥ al-anwāl*) : Ġālī, « Taqrīr ... », p. 702.

65. Rivlin, *Agricultural Policy,* p. 115; Cattaui, *Archives russes,* III, p. 91; Bowring, « Report on Egypt and Candia », p. 18.

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While the internal trade in most winter crops was progressively liberalized in the 1830s, the monopoly of most summer crops (cotton, indigo, rice, opium, and sugar) continued. Taxes paid in kind continued to be delivered to the *šūna*s, which continued to issue *rağ'a*s. The export monopoly for all commodities was maintained until 1841-1842. Afterward, the establishment of the royal *chiftlik* estates enabled Muḥammad 'Alī to maintain control over much of the cotton and rice harvests. The *šūna*s also continued to operate, collecting taxes in kind, even after the abolition of the monopoly. This was another means by which the state maintained informal control over production, and a major role in export sales, much to the irritation of the foreign merchant community. Though supposedly free to market most of their winter crops after 1831, and all produce after 1842, the poorer fallāḥīn are said to have continued to deliver their crops to the *šūna*s due to the tax arrears that many of them had accumulated : cultivators were free to dispose of their crops anly after paying their tax. The *šūna*s were not closed until 1854, and until then taxes continued to be collected in kind as well as cash. Thus although the agents of European merchants were able to penetrate the countryside in the 1840s, not all of the obstacles in their way were removed until 1854 [66].

3. THE MONOPOLY SYSTEM, URBAN-RURAL COMMERCE, AND THE PROVINCIAL MERCHANTS.

Urban-rural commerce was severely reduced under the monopoly system, but relations of exchange between town and village and among villagers were not entirely suppressed. Marketing and a certain amount of moneylending and private investment continued alongside the monopoly, which was never extended to all goods. There is also sporadic evidence of a continued, illegal or balck-market trade in monopolized items.

Foreign observers attest to the continued operation of the rural, periodic markets during even the most strict administration of the monopolies, from 1818 to 1831. In 1826, for example, Salt noted that the fallāḥīn still brought « to market cattle, fowls, fruits, and vegetables » [67]. In the 1830s and 1840s, the periodic markets recovered their earlier, important role in urban-rural exchange as the monopoly system was dismantled.

The lending of money also continued. Urban rates of interest rose from an average of 10 percent during the French occupation to 24-25 percent in the late 1820s, and could

66. Owen, *Cotton*, p. 65-71; al-Ḥitta, *Tārīḫ Miṣr al-iqtiṣādī*, p. 44-45. Sa'īd's successor, Ismā'īl, re-established the *šūna*s in Upper Egypt and also re-imposed octrois (*ibid.*, p. 278).

67. FO 78/147, Salt to Planta, April 4, 1826.

reach 60 percent for money lent without security, the increase reflecting the price inflation of that era [68]. The old practice of advancing credit to cultivators against their crops continued, though it was discouraged. Some village šayḫs may have illegally continued their pre-monopoly activities as local middlemen in credit and trade; such is suggested by their borrowing of money from soldiers, a practice forbidden in 1823. In 1830, credit extended by the merchants of Mīt Ġamr to grape farmers, at 25 percent interest, was ruled to be usury [69]. After the partial liberalization of the trade in winter crops in 1831, the provincial merchants resumed lending money against them, in the form of advance purchases. The revival of this practice on a wide scale is suggested by an order banning it in 1838. In 1844 and again in 1846 the courts were ordered not to hear litigation arising from these contracts, a tacit admission of the state's inability to suppress directly the advance sale of crops. The merchant-moneylenders of the 1840s offered the fallāḥīn lower prices than those set at the government *šūna*s, but were willing to pay cash on the spot. Village šayḫs similarly resumed their mercantile activities, buying up the grain of their fallāḥīn at low prices and storing it until the price went up — a practice reported in al-Šarqiyya province as early as 1834 [70].

During the 1820s, the monopoly system appears to have discouraged direct investment in agricultural production by all except the wealthier and more influential notables. One of these was al-Ḥāǧǧ ʿAbd al-Rāziq Aġā Maḥmūd, a former *multazim* and later *nāẓir* of the *qism* of al-Manṣūra, who rentered 72 faddans of land in Mīt ʿAlī for seven years, beginning in 1825. The same year al-Ḥaǧǧ Ismāʿīl al-Sarǧānī al-Qammāš rented 10 faddans of beans and wheat in Kafr al-Rawk. In 1829 and 1830, arrangements for the rental and/or cultivation of small amounts of village land were made by the *qāḍī* of al-Manṣūra, one of his deputy judges, and the wife of an āġā [71]. With one exception, who was a cloth merchant, the rest of the above had ties with the government.

68. Girard, « Mémoire », p. 173, 267; Sir John Gardner Wilkinson, *Topography of Thebes, and General View of Egypt* (London : John Murray, 1835), p. 286; al-Ḥitta, *Tārīḫ al-zirāʿa*, p. 100-101.

69. Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad ʿAli* (London : Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 110-111; al-Ḥitta, *Tārīḫ al-zirāʿa*, p. 100.

70. Al-Ḥitta, *Tārīḫ al-zirāʿa*, p. 100-101; and *idem.*, « Dirāsāt Tārīḫiyya li-ʿAṣr Muḥammad ʿAlī », part 1, « Al-iḥtikār wa-l-niẓām al-zirāʿī », *Maǧallat Kullīyat al-ādāb*, III, 2 (1935), p. 121-125; Cattaui, *Archives russes*, III, 676-677.

71. The argument refers to cultivated (*maʿmūr*) land, not *al-ibʿādiyya*, whose reclamation was encouraged by Muḥammad ʿAlī. MM 50/129, Ḏū al-Qaʿda 1240; 50/146, Raǧab 1241; 51/66, Ṣafar 1245; 51/59, Muḥarram 1246; 51/148, Muḥarram 1246.

By way of contrast, entries in the court registers suggest a revival of investment by al-Manṣūra's merchants in rural commerce and production, after 1831. Although active in urban-rural commerce in the eighteenth century, the large merchants of al-Manṣūra had acquired control of only small amounts of village land through purchase of the usufruct or rental, seeming to lack a strong incentive to do so. There were no legal barriers to this : though legally land was not property, the usufruct of land could be alienated by sale, rental, or pawn, and outsiders could acquire village lands [72]. The al-Šinnāwī and al-Salamūnī / Abū al-ʿIzz families — perhaps the most prominent merchant families in eighteenth-century al-Manṣūra — acquired tax farms and held or leased *rizqa* (*waqf*) land in the district of Ġayṭ al-Baštamīr adjacent to the town. Yet neither family held extensive amounts of village land, and the land-tax registers of the early nineteenth century show that very little if any village land was held by merchants [73].

After 1831, however, the revival of urban-rural commerce was accompanied by an unprecedented degree of merchant involvement in landholding. The oil merchant al-Sayyid Ḥasanayn al-Sirāǧ al-Maʿṣarānī joined a partnership comprising the cultivation of 120 3/4 faddans in two villages, four and a-half *ṣāqiya*s, livestock, and implements, at sometime before 1834. Two other partnerships in which he participated were formed before 1842, and comprised rice and livestock, and « trade, farming, linseed oil, and so on », respectively [74].

Al-Sayyid Ḥasanayn's partner in the third of these was Ibrāhīm Abū al-ʿIzz, a scion of the al-Salamūnī / Abū al-ʿIzz family. The end of the monopoly system in 1842 encouraged further investment in agriculture by al-Manṣūra's merchant notables. That year Muḥammad, the father of Ibrāhīm Abū al-ʿIzz, leased 52 faddans of *ūsya* land in Kafr al-Badamāṣ [75]. Also in 1842 ʿAlī al-Šinnāwī, perhaps the leading merchant of al-Manṣūra before the French expedition, joined his son ʿAlī al-Ṣaġīr in leasing 77 1/2

72. Kenneth M. Cuno, « Egypt's Wealthy Peasantry, 1740-1820 : A Study of the Region of al-Mansura », in Tarif Khalidi, ed., *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East* (Beirut : The American University of Beirut Press, 1984), p. 315-320.

73. On al-Ḥāǧǧ ʿAlī al-Šinnāwī al-Kabīr, see al-Rāfiʿī, *Tārīḫ al-Ḥaraka al-Qawmiyya*, I, 429; and Mubārak, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, XV, 90-91. The al-Salamūnī / Abū al-ʿIzz family held various *iltizām* sections between 1743 and 1765 (MM 3/28, Ǧumādā II 1157; 15/254, Ǧumādā II 1179). In the 1840s, Ibrāhīm Abū al-ʿIzz was the *Šahbandar* of al-Manṣūra (MM 57/75, Rabīʿ II 1258). On the land-tax registers : Cuno, « Egypt's Wealthy Peasantry », p. 305-306.

74. MM 57/38, Ḏū al-Qaʿda 1258; 57/95-96, Raǧab 1258; 57/66, Rabīʿ I 1258.

75. MM 57/32, Ḏū al-Ḥiǧǧa 1257.

faddans of land in two villages. The earliest of the several Šinnāwī contracts was dated one month after the abolition of the monopoly [76].

These large-scale leases of village land by merchants were without precedent in the previous century, and may be understood to reflect the impoverishment of the fallāḥīn — which lowered the price of land — and the opportunity for profit that cash-crop agriculture offered to those with adequate capital, once the monopoly system was abolished. A third factor encouraging investment in agriculture in this period, in contrast to the eighteenth century, was the greater security that Muḥammad ʿAlī established in the countryside. Walz similarly found evidence of land acquisition by merchant families in Asyūṭ in the 1840s and 1850s [77].

The phase of the monopoly system in which distribution was nearly entirely state controlled lasted some nineteen years (1812-1831). Though reduced in scale, none of the traditional marketing and moneylending practices of the countryside were entirely suppressed, much less uprooted. In the 1830s, the traditional urban-rural commerce of Egypt began to revive. The renewed involvement of the large provincial merchants in urban-rural commerce makes it clear that the monopoly system did not « destroy » them as a class [78]. For them, however, large-scale involvement in landholding in the 1840s was a departure from previous patterns of behaviour, marking the beginning of their entry into the modern large-landowning class.

4. THE MONOPOLY SYSTEM AND THE FALLĀḤĪN

The monopoly system added to the net sum of taxes paid by cultivators, since the state purchased their crops at less than the market price. Also, the monopoly and taxation were administered together at the local level. A certain number of products were demanded of the villages as taxes in kind, throughout Muḥammad ʿAlī's period; and villagers delivered monopolized crops to the *šūna*s to pay the tax they owed, before receiving credit or payment for any excess. The economic hardships caused by the

76. MM 57/49, Ṣafar 1258; 57/63, Rabīʿ I 1258; 57/76, Ǧumādā I 1258 (two entries); 57/86, Ǧumādā II 1258; 57/152, Ṣafar 1259; 57/155, Ṣafar 1259.

77. Terence Walz, « Asyut in the 1260s (1844-53) », *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 15 (1978), p. 113-126.

78. Rivlin's conclusion to this effect appears to be based upon a single reference to « native traders » in a despatch describing the plight of the foreign merchants (*Agricultural Policy*, p. 174-176, 254).

monopoly cannot, therefore, be isoleted completely from the effects of formal taxation and labor dues (the corvée).

A significant number of the landholding peasantry were unable to meet their net tax demand, as evidenced by the mounting arrears of the land tax as early as 1826. Bowring reported that the land tax was approximately one year in arrears, in 1840 [79], the same year in which the Pāšā secured its payment by forcing responsibility for the land of bankrupt peasants onto his high officers and officials, under the rubric of *'uhda*. As an indication of the extent of peasant impoverishment — or at least, of the number of peasants unable to meet their tax obligations — land classified as *'uhda* came to slightly more than a third of the total registered in 1844 [80].

In assessing the burdens placed upon them by the Pāšā's regime, it should be remembered that Egypt's peasantry were not a homogeneous mass. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, village society comprised economic strata ranging from « large » landholders of 50 faddans or more, to smallhold fallāḥīn and the landless. The wealthiest villagers in the eighteenth century had adequate resources to engage in small-scale commerce and moneylending on their own account, and to consign crops on credit to merchants. Many if not most of the wealthy peasantry were from the families of village šayḫs, an element that benefited from attachment to the new regime [81].

The monopoly system not only increased total taxation on the peasantry, but also appears to have contributed to a widening of the gap between the relatively wealthy few and the humble majority. With the establishment of government *šūna*s and the new policy of deferred payments for monopolized crops, in 1818, the poorer peasant landholders may have been forced to trade their *raǧ'a*s at a discount, or perhaps to turn to local moneylenders, in order to acquire the sums needed to meet monetary expenses during the year. The suspension of all cash payments by the monopoly administration during 1826-1830 indoubtedly pushed an even greater number of families into the ranks of those who had to borrow to meet current expenses during the year. It is probably this stratum, dependent upon short-term credit, who were most often unable to meet their tax obligations and whose land was classified an *'uhda* is the 1840s. Bowring noted this important distinction :

When the fallah is poor, the prices paid by the government scarcely allow him to exist; *but when the holder of the lands has capital for seed, and can afford to wait*

79. Bowring, « Report on Egypt and Candia », p. 45.

80. Rivlin, *Agricultural Policy*, p. 256-257, citing Barnett.

81. Cuno, « Egypt's Wealthy Peasantry », p. 306-309, 320-325.

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for the returns, I beleive the prices allowed by the government will give from 15 to 20 per cent on the outlay of capital; at least such was the assurance I had from some of the natives, who were cultivating lands on an extensive scale [emphasis added] [82].

Another indicator of the peasantry's need for ready cash, in the 1830s and 1840s, was their willingness to sell crops in advance of the harvest to private merchants, even though the deferred price offered at the government *šūna*s was higher, and the market price was higher yet [83].

In sum, the monopoly added to the tax burden of the peasantry overall. It also appears to have increased the degree of economic differentiation between the wealthy village families and everyone else. Perhaps many of the latter « dropped out » — or more correctly were forced out — of regular participation in money exchange, as one result of the monopoly regime.

5. CONCLUSION

Muḥammad ʿAlī's governorate can be argued to represent the beginning of Egypt's modern economic development, as the Pāšā presided over its linkage to the world market and a simultaneaous expansion of export-oriented agriculture. Yet his monopoly system and related policies entailed the suppression of Egypt's traditional urban-rural commerce, and thus the beginnings of integration into the world economy were marked by a major reduction in the amount of local marketing and money exchange [84]. The relatively sophisticated structure of pre-modern urban-rural commercial relations helps to explain the rapidity with which agriculture became commercialized after mid-century. Even under the monopoly system, peasants responded positively when offered price incentives to grow the new, long-staple variety of cotton [85]. The appearance of commercial activities in the countryside in the 1830s and 1840s does not represent their beginnings, but rather their revival after a score of years.

Between 1842 and 1854, the *šūna*s continued to operate, cultivators paying their taxes in cash as well as kind. Payment in kind was a function of indebtedness and especially

82. Bowring, « Report on Egypt and Candia », p. 14.

83. Al-Ḥitta, « Dirāsāt tārīḫiyya iqtiṣādiyya », p. 124-125; Cattaiu, *Archives russes,* III, p. 676-677.

84. Fawzy Mansour, *Development of the Egyptian Financial System up to 1967* (Cairo, 1970), p. 7.

85. Owen, *Cotton,* p. 32.

tax arrears, which continued to be widespread : with the abolition of up to three-quarters of the *'uhda*s by 'Abbās, in 1849, the arrears of the *muta'ahhid*s were shifted onto their former tenants [86]. It is likely that a large number of fallāḥīn had no choice but to continue to pay taxes in kind, and thus may have remained largely outside of the reviving money economy. The production of export crops requiring large outlays of capital, such as cotton, continued largely on the privileged estates established in the 1830s and 1840s. Lacking the legal and tax privileges of the ruling elite, Egypt's provincial merchants and wealthy villagers also appear to have had the resources and incentive to invest in production and commerce, though on a more modest scale.

Sa'īd closed the *šūna*s, collecting all taxes in coin. He allowed the peasants complete freedom of choice in cultivation, and cancelled their tax arrears. The remaining octrois on rural produce were abolished, and export duties were lowered to encourage cotton cultivation. Although peasants were still forbidden to sell their crops in advance of the harvest, penalties were prescribed only for them, and not for their creditors. Thus it is unlikely that this regulation had much effect [87]. Sa'īd's reforms encouraged the re-integration of the smallhold fallāḥīn into the money economy, and increased contact between exporters and villagers. Additionally, they were adopted in the midst of the Crimean War, which caused a boom in grain prices, offering further incentives to the peasantry to produce for the export market.

The « cotton boom » of the 1860s marked the full integration of Lower Egypt, at least, into the world market. Lured by high prices, the smallhold fallāḥīn returned to cotton cultivation for the export market, and began to borrow heavily to finance the crop. It is in the same period that the Greek or Levantine grocer and moneylender — infamous in nationalist historiography — became a familiar figure in Egypt's villages. As local middlemen and moneylenders, this new element competed with and may have displaced the village šayḫs, which would explain in part the degree of resentment felt toward them.

86. Troops had to be sent to enforce the arrears on some of the villages fromerly in *'uhda :* Tucker, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Egypt*, p. 145.

87. Al-Ḥitta, *Tārīḫ Miṣr al-iqtiṣādī*, p. 45, 266, 276-277; Lahīṭa, *Tārīḫ Miṣr al-iqtiṣādī*, p. 167, 170; Hershlag, *Introduction to the Economic History of the Middle East*, p. 100.