

Economy and Trade / Commodities

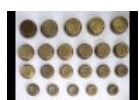
In the 19th century, the Arab and Ottoman world increasingly supplied Western Europe with raw materials – particularly cotton, silk, pearls, tobacco and cereals – while the latter targeted Arab and Ottoman markets with an ever-growing supply of manufactured products and colonial commodities such as sugar and coffee. In the process, traditional economic patterns throughout the Middle East started to change. Several regions now intensified their production of those commodities most desired in Europe, while traditional industries started to decline as their products could no longer compete with the machine-made and mass-produced European imports. While cross-Mediterranean trade accelerated ever more rapidly, the great majority of trading activity still continued to take place across different parts of the Ottoman Empire, Arab lands and beyond.



Working Number:	UA 037
Name:	Wadi el-Tuffah
Holding Museum:	Sharjah Art Museum / Sharjah Museums Department
Date:	Published 1881–1884
Materials:	Coloured wood engraving
Curator Justification:	During the 19th century, the most profitable period for the export to Europe of cotton cultivated in Anatolia, the Levant (north Palestine, north Syria) and Egypt was the 1860s, when because of the American Civil War (1861–65) European imports of American cotton were cut off.



Working Number:	FR 098
Name:	Louis Pasteur's work on silkworm illnesses. Healthy Worms
Holding Museum:	National Library of France
Date:	1870
Materials:	-
Curator Justification:	Although silk had been produced in Europe since the 11th century, with Italy, France and the UK being the main European silk centres, by the 19th century internal supplies were not sufficient to meet the demands of the growing French silk industry. Therefore, silk was brought in from the Middle East, where the biggest silk producer was the Levant.



Working Number:	UA 042
Name:	Pearl Grading Sieves
Holding Museum:	Sharjah Maritime Museum / Sharjah Museums Department
Date:	Hegira late 13th – early 14th century / AD late 19th – early 20th century
Materials:	Copper alloy
Curator Justification:	Most of the pearls imported into Western Europe came in the 19th century from the Arab sheikdoms in the Gulf region, whose coastal waters were rich in pearls and where pearl fishing was the main economic activity. Pearl fisheries were found on the Arabian coast of the Red Sea too, from where pearls were exported to Europe via Alexandria, while those from the Gulf sheikdoms were first sent to Bombay in India and then re-exported worldwide.



Working Number: JO 014
Name: Arab coffee pot
Holding Museum: Jordan Museum for Costumes and Jewellery, Department of Antiquities
Date: -
Materials: -
Curator Justification: Copper; casting, hammering
The drinking of coffee, discovered by the Arabs, was introduced in the 16th century in the Ottoman Empire, from where it spread to Europe. Until the 18th century, Yemen held the monopoly on coffee production and exports. But it lost this pre-eminence after European powers started to grow coffee in their West Indian and American colonies and became by the 19th century the main coffee exporters into Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.



Working Number: AT 050
Name: Fez of a common soldier of the Austro-Hungarian infantry from Bosnia-Herzegovina
Holding Museum: Austrian Military Museum / Institute of Military History
Date: End of the 19th century
Materials: Textile
Curator Justification: The greatest share of European finished goods imported into the Arab and Ottoman world was represented in the 19th century by woollen, silk and cotton cloths. These were purchased mainly from the UK, France and Italy, where the technical innovations of the Industrial Revolution, especially the development of spinning machinery, increased production and lowered its costs.



Working Number: TN 034
Name: Cannon
Holding Museum: Palais de la Rose – Musée de l'Armée
Date: 19th century
Materials: Metal
Curator Justification: In the 19th century, European technological superiority in terms of military equipment, combined with the modernisation of armies in the Arab and Ottoman world under the influence of Western European trends, led to a constant import of European firearms.



Working Number: IT2 059
Name: Algerian Corkmaker [Paris Exhibition, 1878]
Holding Museum: National Central Library
Date: 1878
Materials: -
Curator Justification: In the 19th century, the influx of imported European finished goods into the Arab and Ottoman markets led to the decline of the local crafts that produced equivalent items. Although this

did not mean the disappearance of traditional occupations, it diminished their importance within local economies.
