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EUROPEAN POTTERY IMPORTS IN OTTOMAN BILAD AL-SHAM (18th-19th CENTURIES): ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA AND WRITTEN SOURCES

Véronique FRANÇOIS

There is, strictly speaking, no Ottoman archaeology as an established discipline probably because, since the middle of the 19th century, the excavations undertaken in the Balkans, Anatolia, the Near East and Egypt were essentially directed towards Antiquity, Byzantium or early Islamic periods but also because, in some of these countries, the processes of national construction were built partly on the back of a denial of this Ottoman past¹. Archaeological excavations with a focus on the Ottoman period are still rare and, on most sites, the Ottoman levels, the more recent in the succession of strata and thus more sensitive to the contemporary disturbances, are not always investigated properly. Despite this, some excavations have uncovered a significant number of ceramics. Luxury tableware, which is well documented in private and public collections, has attracted the interest of art historians, but the most common tableware, the cooking pots and the storage jars, have rarely been the subject of scientific publications with the exception of studies devoted to relatively recent discoveries in Hungary, Serbia and Cyprus². However the reference typologies that would allow us to identify domestic pottery in relation to chronological periods and workshops are not yet in place.

In the Arab provinces of the Empire, in Bilad al-Sham, Ottoman pottery is regularly brought to light on numerous sites but few excavations provided well-stratified data with the exception of Acre³, Jerusalem⁴, Damascus⁵ and Aleppo.

- (1) U. BARAM, L. CAROLL (eds.), *A Historical Archaeology of the Ottoman Empire*, Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers, 2000; F. YENİŞEHİRLİOĞLU, « L'archéologie historique de l'Empire ottoman. Bilan et perspectives », *Turcica*, 37 (2005), p. 245-266; G. GUIONOVA, « État de la recherche archéologique concernant la période ottomane en Bulgarie », *idem*, p. 267-280; V. FRANÇOIS, « *Tabak, ibrik, fincan* et autres pots d'époque ottomane au Bilâd al-Châm », *idem*, p. 281-308; J. VROOM, « Kütahya between the Lines: Post-Medieval Ceramics as a Source of Historical Information », in S. DAVIES, J.L. DAVIS (eds.), *Between Venice and Istanbul: Colonial Landscapes in Early Modern Greece*, Hesperia Supplement, 40 (2007), p. 69-91.
- (2) I. GERELYES, G. KOVÁCS (eds.), *Archaeology of the Ottoman Period in Hungary*, Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, 2003; V. BIKIĆ, *Gradska keramika Beograda (16-17. vek). Belgrade Ceramics in the 16th-17th Century*, Belgrade, 2003; M. GUŠTIN, V. BIKIĆ, Z. MILEUSNIĆ, *Ottoman Times / Osmanska vremena. The Staribar, Montenegro*, Založba Annales, Koper, 2008; M.-L. Von WARTBURG, « Types of Imported Table Ware at Kouklia in the Ottoman Period », *Report of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus* (2001), p. 361-396; V. FRANÇOIS, L. VALLAURI, « Production et consommation de céramiques à Potamia (Chypre) de l'époque franque à l'époque ottomane », *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 125, 2 (2001), p. 523-546; A. NICOLAÏDES, L. VALLAURI, M.-L. LAHARIE, « Exemples de *bacini* dans les églises de Chypre », in J. ZOZAYA (ed.), *Actas del VIII Congreso Internacional de Cerámica Medieval*, Ciudad Real, 2009, Tomo II, p. 881-890.
- (3) E. STERN, « Excavation of the Courthouse Site at 'Akko: The Pottery of the Crusader and Ottoman Periods », *'Atiqot*, XXXI (1997), p. 35-70; G. EDELSTEIN, M. AVISSAR, « A Sounding in Old Acre », *'Atiqot*, XXXI (1997), p. 129-136.
- (4) D. PRINGLE, « Italian Pottery from Late Mamluk Jerusalem: Some Notes on the Late and Post-Medieval Italian Tradewares in the Levant », in *Atti del XVII Convegno Internazionale della Ceramica*, Albisola, 1984, p. 37-44; K. PRAG (dir.), *Excavations by K.M. Kenyon in Jerusalem 1961-1967, Volume V, Discoveries in Hellenistic to Ottoman Jerusalem*, Levant Supplementary Series 7, Oxbow Books, 2008.
- (5) V. FRANÇOIS, *Céramiques de la citadelle de Damas. Époques mamelouke et ottomane*, CD, Aix-en-Provence, 2008; V. FRANÇOIS, « Céramiques d'époque ottomane à la Citadelle de Damas : des découvertes archéologiques nouvelles au Bilâd al-Châm », *Journal of Western Asiatic Studies, Al-Rafidan*, XXX (2009), p. 53-66; V. FRANÇOIS, « Assemblages de céramiques du début XV^e et du XVIII^e siècles à Damas », *Journal of Western Asiatic Studies, Al-Rafidan*, XXXII (2011), p. 294-329.

The latter two citadels provided a huge quantity of Ottoman pottery. I will try to put imported pottery, dated from 18th to 19th century, excavated in that two citadels, in perspective using written sources which allow one to examine the growth of European influence and the resulting changes in the societies of the Middle East.

The citadel of Damascus covers an area of four hectares and during Ottoman times, it was the military headquarters and the chief administrative centre of Syria. During the 17th century, the building, which had primarily a military function, became little by little a more residential district of the city. In the 18th century, the janissaries were even joined by their families, who lived with them inside the citadel enclosure. Craftsmen and store holders also had their workshops there, several coffeehouses were opened; and it functioned as a commercial district for both military and civilian elements of the city's population. It was a "city-garrison" that gradually, during 19th century, became a kind of military warehouse. A French-Syrian archaeological programme was implemented under the direction of S. Berthier (CNRS) and E. El-Ajji (Syrian Department of Antiquities, Damascus)⁶. The 1,600 square meters excavated have yielded a substantial quantity of ceramics which are therefore a remarkable source of information covering a considerable period. The Ottoman pottery comes specifically: from a house with a courtyard, a pool and latrines that were probably military barracks; from houses built north of the gatehouse; from a sealed deposit in a staircase between the first and second floor of Tower number 4; from the first floor of so-called "Southwest Building". The second assemblage comes from the German excavations of the citadel of Aleppo conducted by K. Kohlmeyer (*Fachhochschule für Technik Und Wirtschaft*, Berlin). The abundant material, but that is not yet quantified as it is still under investigation, comes from higher levels of the Temple area⁷. This sector has undergone many changes over time so there are few upper levels.

If the Ottoman period seems to be neglected by archaeologists, the 18th and 19th century's ceramics suffer further discrimination. Indeed, they are often overlooked in the excavations because they were considered too recent. Yet they represent new archaeological material which deserves serious attention. Their presence can be used to evaluate the place occupied by imports compared to local production particularly in the context of the rise of the cultural and economic imperialism of Western Europe. The study of luxury productions and more common tableware and coarse ware, that were imported into cities of Bilad al-Sham and Cyprus⁸, allow us to compare the pottery supply and identify ceramics trade networks. Throughout the period, Damascus and Aleppo were the only cities to enjoy such a variety of fine wares even if imports were quite varied in Acre in the 18th century (fig. 1, 2).

The commercial distribution of pottery from the 18th to the early 20th century has received relatively little attention but during this later part of the Ottoman period, large amounts of European vessels were sold throughout the Empire. This is indicated in the written sources I consulted, that is to say: the trade statistics, the reports of World's Fairs, French consular documents, the archives of the major Mediterranean ports, the minutes of the French Chamber of Commerce of Constantinople and the archives of European pottery factories involved in the export of crockery to Ottoman Empire⁹. Through these sources, it is possible: to understand the changing volumes of imports coming mainly from Europe and Turkey; to discover the prices of goods; to note the shipping, transit and unloading ports; and to observe the patterns of distribution and production centres. However, it is more difficult to determine precisely the exact nature of the productions that are referred to in the commercial texts by the generic terms of *faïence*, *porcelaine*, *poterie*, *jarre*. That is why the archaeological discoveries in the field can sometimes help to identify some of them. Moreover distribution patterns identified in the archaeological data can be tested against information drawn from contemporary written sources.

(6) S. BERTHIER, E. AL-AJJI (dir.), « L'approche archéologique d'un monument et d'un site : stratégie, méthodes et lieux d'investigation », *Bulletin d'Études Orientales (Supplément Citadelle de Damas)*, LIII-LIV (2001-2002), p. 29-46.

(7) The state of my research on these two sites, Damascus and Aleppo, is not at the same stage. I have just begun the study of Ottoman ceramic in Aleppo but my first observations already allow a comparison between these sites.

(8) I added Cyprus, because from 1571 to 1878, the island was one of the most important places of the Eastern Mediterranean trade and a transit port for goods on the sea route linking Marseilles to the ports of the Levant. The island was also well stocked with foreign pottery.

(9) V. FRANÇOIS, « Jarres, terrailles, faïences et porcelaines dans l'Empire ottoman (XVIII^e-XIX^e siècles) », *Turcica*, 40 (2008), p. 81-120; M. MILWRIGHT, « Imported Pottery in Ottoman Bilad al-Sham », *idem*, p. 121-152; M. MILWRIGHT, « Written sources and the study of pottery in Ottoman Bilad al-Sham », *Journal of Western Asiatic Studies, Al-Rafidan*, XXX (2009), p. 35-50.

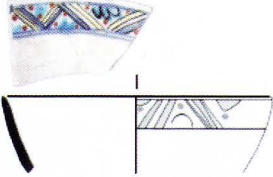
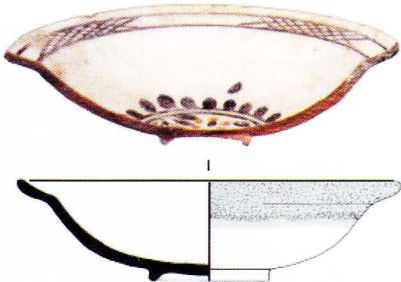
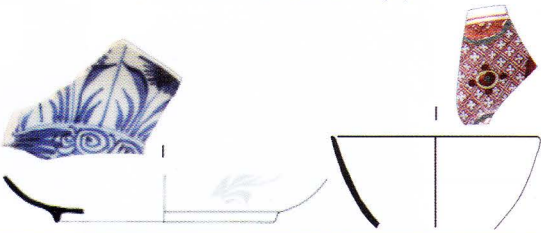
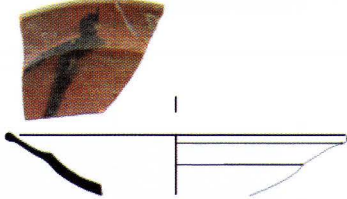
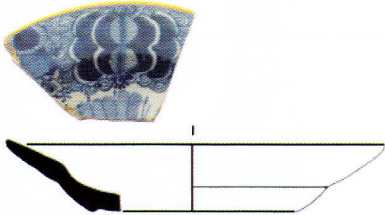
Type	Damascus Aleppo	Jerusalem	Acre	Cyprus
Kütahya Ware (1)  Scale 1:6	X	X	X	X
Çannakale Earthenware (2) 	X	X	X	X
Chinese Porcelain (3) 	X	X	X	X
Albisola Earthenware (4) 	X	X	X	X
Maiolica from Delft (5) 	X			X
Maiolica from Moustiers (6) 	X			
Maiolica from Varages (7) 	X			

Fig. 1. 18th Century Imports. Comparison table of pottery supplies

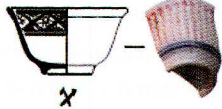
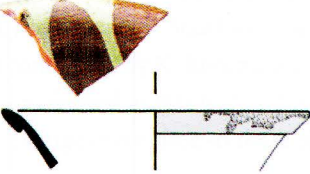
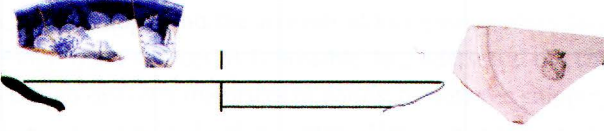
Type	Damascus Aleppo	Jerusalem	Acre	Cyprus
Chinese Blue and White Porcelain (1) 	X	X		
Scale 1:6				
Meissen Porcelain (2) 	X	X	X	
Didymoteichon or Çanakkale Ware (3) 	X	X	X	X
Maiolica from Grottaglie (4) 	X			
Nimy Porcelain (5) 	X			
Stonepaste and Porcelain from French manufactories (6) 	X	X		X
Stonepaste and porcelain from Staffordshire manufactories (7) 	X	X		X

Fig. 2. 19th Century Imports. Comparison table of pottery supplies



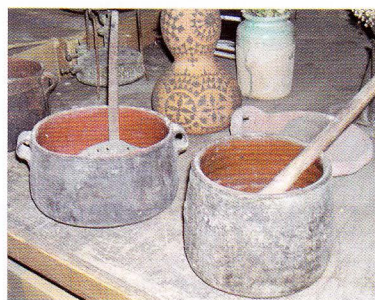
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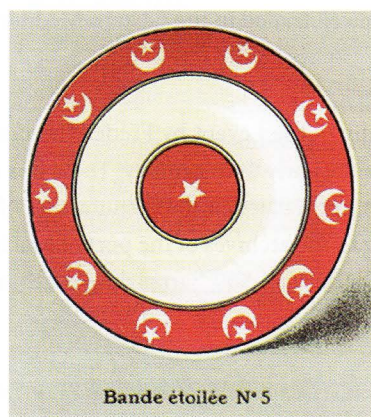
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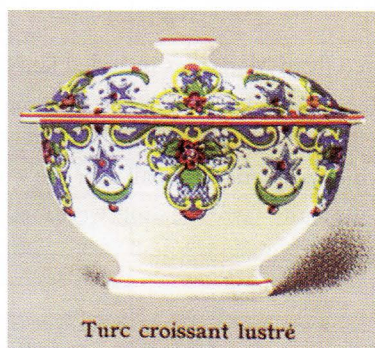


7



Bande étoilée N° 5

5



Turc croissant lustré

6

Fig. 3: “Faïence de France” from Moustiers workshops (1) ; “Fayence brune” from Albisola (2) (photograph LA3M); “jarres de France” from Biot workshops reused in Larnaka (3); “Marmites de France” from Vallauris workshops exhibited in Cyprus (4) (photograph L. Vallauri); crockery from the Sarreguemines manufactory adapted for export (5, 6); English crockery from Burslem manufactory (Staffordshire) (7).

Since 1724, the commercial archives of the port of Marseilles, which was in a dominant position in the maritime trade of pottery, demonstrate the existence of a ceramic trade towards the Levant¹⁰. The commissioner of trade relations of the French Empire in Tripoli¹¹ noted the presence in the markets of the city of “faïence commune de France”. This is probably “faïences” made in the Provençal workshops of Marseilles, Moustiers and Varages, the major centres of production in southern France¹² (fig. 1: 6, 7; fig. 3: 1).

Year	Total Value in « livre tournois »
1749	6 150
1750	16 312
1751	21 830
1752	12 702
1753	14 328
1754	14 710
1755	21 290
1756	6 060
1757	13 450
1758	11 545
1759	8 732

Table 1: Outputs of French “faïence” from the port of Marseilles to the Levant in the second part of the 18th century (according H. Amouric, 1990)

Ports	Year	Port of Origin	Products	Quantity	Value
Sidon	1777	Marseilles	Faïence	10 cases	1 008 livres
	1779	Marseilles	Faïence Jars	12 cases	288 livres
				189 pieces	567 livres
	1780	Marseilles	Faïence	17 cases	1 275 livres
	1781	Marseilles	Faïence Jars	18 cases	1 300 livres
				100 pieces	2 700 livres
Tripoli	1782	Marseilles	Faïence	28 cases	616 piastres
	1784	Marseilles	Faïence	72 cases	2 160 livres
	1788	Marseilles	Faïence	9 cases	450 livres
	1789	Marseilles	Faïence	6 cases	180 livres
	1791	/	Faïence	15 cases	435 livres

Table 2: Entries into the ports of Sidon and Tripoli, 18th century, as recorded in French consular documents¹³

In addition to these regional products, Italian productions such as the “fayances brunes”, as outlined in the archives, were reshipped from Marseilles to the East¹⁴. These are ceramics of Albisola made in the numerous workshops located in the area of Genoa¹⁵ (fig. 1: 4, fig. 3: 2). This pottery which was very cheap has been well traded in the Eastern Mediterranean; it appears in Beirut, Damascus, Acre and Cyprus.

The pottery shipped from Marseilles included jars that were imported annually in the Levant by French merchants¹⁶: 100 and 189 pieces in Sidon, in the late 18th century and in Tripoli and Beirut in the early 19th century. These jars could be identified with the jars produced in the workshops of Biot, in Alpes-Maritimes, specialized in the manufacture of large airtight containers, which were marketed all over the world¹⁷ (fig. 3: 3). According to the archives of the port of Marseilles: between 1724 and 1780, 1 400 “jarres de Biot” were loaded for the Near East¹⁸; and 1 000 to 1 500 “jarres de France” arrived

(10) H. AMOURIC, « Concurrences ? Faïences provençales et faïences étrangères au XVIII^e siècle », *La faïence de Marseille au XVIII^e siècle. La manufacture de la Veuve Perrin*, Musées de Marseille / Éditions Agep, 1990, p. 82-93.

(11) A. ISMAIL, *Documents diplomatiques et consulaires relatifs à l'histoire du Liban et des pays du Proche-Orient du XVII^e siècle à nos jours*, Éditions des œuvres politiques et historiques, Beyrouth, vol. IV, 1975-1993, p. 76.

(12) L. JULIEN, *L'art de la faïence de Moustiers, XVII^e-XVIII^e-XIX^e siècles*, Édisud, Aix-en-Provence, 1991; P. BERTRAND, *Faïences et faïenceries de Varages*, Toulon, 1983.

(13) A. ISMAIL, *op. cit.* [n. 11], II, 1975, p. 405, 409, 411, 413, 415 ; *ibidem*, III, 1975-1993, p. 112 ; *ibidem*, IV, 1975-1993, p. 45, 51, 57, 58, 109, 280, 386.

(14) A. ISMAIL, *op. cit.* [n. 11], III, 1976, p. 115; H. AMOURIC, Fl. RICHEZ, L. VALLAURI, *Vingt mille pots sous les mers*, Aix-en-Provence, 1999, p. 119-125; H. AMOURIC, *loc. cit.* [n. 10], p. 89, 90, tableau 3.

(15) H. BLAKE, « Pottery Exported from Northwest Italy between 1450 and 1830: Savona, Albisola, Genoa, Pisa and Montelupo », in G. BARKER, R. HODGES (eds.), *Archaeology and Italian Society, Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval Studies*, Oxford, BAR, 1981, p. 99-124.

(16) M. MILWRIGHT, *loc. cit.* [n. 9], 2008, p. 121-152.

(17) H. AMOURIC, L. ARGUEYROLLES, L. VALLAURI, *Biot. Jarres, terrailles et fontaines, XVI^e-XX^e siècles*, Vence, 2006; H. AMOURIC, L. VALLAURI, *Voyages et métamorphoses de la jarre*, Aubagne, 2005, p. 73-90.

(18) H. AMOURIC, L. ARGUEYROLLES, L. VALLAURI, *op. cit.* [n. 17], 2006, p. 64.

in Tripoli in 1812. In Cyprus and in Middle East, the Biot jars were selected at the expense of local manufacturing because of their strength and their thick glaze which covered their inner wall. In the early 19th century, the French Consul General in Beirut wrote: «comme depuis quelques années nos bâtiments n'apportent plus de ces jarres, les Tripolins ont recours à celles de Lattaquié qui ne sont pas vernillées et se brisent facilement»¹⁹.

In commercial documents, “marmites de France” can be identified with Vallauris cooking pots (fig. 3: 4). In this village of the Alpes-Maritimes, during the 18th century, 30 factories produced glazed cooking pots²⁰. These cooking pots were transported by ship to Marseilles where they supplied not only local trade but also export trade. Their high quality and their low prices contributed to their mass market appeal. The Vallauris cooking pots were offered to customers in Cyprus and Acre.

The earthenware and the porcelain made at the Sarreguemines factory in Eastern France, since 1790, were bought by many consumers, wealthy and modest. According to the records of the factory, Greece, Turkey, Syria and Egypt were among the export markets. As evidenced by a catalogue with models created in 1880 for exportation, the French manufacturers took account of local tastes and some decoration was made expressly for export²¹ (fig. 3: 5, 6).

In the 19th century, Italy also exported to the Aegean islands, the Greek mainland, the Balkans, Anatolia and to the province of Sham: quite rustic earthenware made in the workshops of Grottaglie in Puglia²² (fig. 2: 4); fine earthenware from the Richard-Ginori factory in Mondovi in Piedmont.

In England, the centre of the ceramic industry was in Staffordshire. Its productions are mentioned in the various commercial archives. They were unloaded in many ports of the Ottoman Empire and, in the field, we found a good number of examples (fig. 2: 7, fig. 3: 7).

Between 1890 and 1896, the French Consular Reports mention the arrival, in Beirut, of fine earthenware from Belgium. In the Middle East, we can find today products of the “Fabrique Impériale et Royale de Nimy”, founded near Mons in 1789 (fig. 2: 5). Records indicate that sales representatives of the factory were stationed in Beirut in 1894, in Damascus in 1896 and in Cairo in early 20th century²³.

In the first third of the 19th century, earthenware, jars and porcelain were sent to Beirut.

Year	Port of Origin and Transit Ports	Products
6 October 1822	Smyrna, Cyprus	Faïence
20 December 1824	Château Rouge	Faïence
1 September 1825	Larnaca	Faïence
14 November 1825	Marseilles, Larnaca	Faïence (loaded in Larnaca)
19 November 1825	Marseilles	Jars
13 January 1826	Marseilles, Larnaca	Faïence (loaded in Larnaca)
26 February 1826	Marseilles, Larnaca	Faïence (loaded in Larnaca)
2 April 1826	Trieste	Faïence
9 April 1826	Marseilles, Larnaca	Jars (loaded in Marseilles)
24 May 1826	Larnaca	Jars
31 July 1826	Marseilles, Larnaca	Faïence
24 October 1826	Marseilles, Larnaca	Faïence
2 February 1827	Tunis, Larnaca	Faïence (loaded in Larnaca)
19 March 1827	Alexandria	Faïence
23 March 1827	Trieste, Larnaca	Porcelain (loaded in Trieste)

Table 3: Imports in Beirut between 1813 and 1827 as recorded the French consular documents

(19) A. ISMAIL, *op. cit.* [n. 11], 1976, IV, p. 386.
(20) H. AMOURIC, L. VALLAURI, J.-L. VAYSETTES, *Terres de feu, de lumière et de Songes...dans le Midi français X^e-XIX^e siècles*, Lucie éditions, Aubagne, 2009, p. 56-91 ; H. AMOURIC, F. RICHEL, L. VALLAURI, *op. cit.* [n. 14], 1999, p. 131-135.
(21) E. DECKER, *Sarreguemines au XIX^e siècle : la faïence Utzschneider 1790-1914 - contribution à une histoire des goûts et des styles au XIX^e siècle*. PHD, Nancy University II, 2001, (microfiches); E. DECKER, C. THEVENIN, *Guide de l'amateur des faïences de Sarreguemines*, Sarreguemines, 1988; H. HIEGEL, Ch. HIEGEL, *La Faïencerie de Sarreguemines de 1870 à 1918*, Musée de Sarreguemines, 1996, p. 97; F. VERRONAI, *Supplément à la statistique du département de la Moselle*, Metz, 1852, p. XXXV.
(22) N. CUOMO DI CAPRIO, *Ceramica rustica tradizionale in Puglia*, Congedo Editore, Galatona, 1982.
(23) E. BRUYERE, *Manufacture de Nimy : quelques recherches effectuées en 1992*, s.d., s.p.

According to French consular reports they were still loaded in Marseilles, but also in Trieste, a major commercial port whose prosperity was facilitated by the construction of the railway line that connected the city with Vienna. Porcelains from the major manufactures of Saxony -especially porcelain from Meissen (fig. 2: 2) - Austria and Hungary were transported there in this way. The data for the late 19th century, still reports transportation of pottery from France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Italy and Turkey (fig. 2: 3)²⁴. The French Consul General in Beirut noted that Marseilles had lost its monopoly and Trieste became an important starting point for pottery trade. He noted also that a large amount of items such as water jugs, pots and jars were exported from the Dardanelles to the Syria. He stressed the increased penetration of imported pottery within the country and claimed that the largest volumes were sent to Damascus²⁵.

	Year	Product	Countries
Haïfa	1892*	Porcelain and Glass	France
			Austria
	1893*	Porcelain	France
			Austro-Hungary
			Turkey
			Britain
	1892 [#] and 1893 [#]	Porcelain	Austro-Hungary (189 cases)
			Turkey (36 cases)
			France (24 cases)
			Persia (2 cases)
Beirut	1891 [#]	Pottery	France
		Porcelain	
	1896*	Pottery	France
			Belgium Germany
Tripoli	1896*	Pottery and Glass	France
			Austria
			Britain
Jaffa	1890 [#]	Faïence	France Other countries
		Porcelain	France
			Other countries
		Pottery	France
			Other countries
	1891 [#]	Faïence	France Other countries
		Porcelain	France
			Other countries
		Pottery	France
			Other countries
	1892 [#]	Faïence	Belgium and Italy France
		Porcelain	Austria and Germany France
			Italy and Turkey
		Coarse Ware	France
	1896*	Coarse Ware	France
			Other countries
		Porcelain	France
			Other countries

Table 4: Entries into the ports of Levant, 1892-1896,
as recorded the French consular documents (*), Vital Cuinet Reports
and the minutes of the French Chamber of Commerce of Constantinople²⁶ (#)

(24) V. CUINET, *La Turquie d'Asie, géographie administrative statistique descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie Mineure*, vol. I-XI, 1890-1894.

(25) A. ISMAIL, *op. cit.* [n. 11], 1982-93, VI, p. 253.

(26) *Chambre de commerce française de Constantinople, Compte-rendu des travaux, année 1891*, Constantinople, 1892, p. 495, 500 ; *Chambre de commerce française de Constantinople, Compte-rendu des travaux, année 1892*, Constantinople, 1893, p. 476-478, p. 488-491.

These massive imports of European ceramics were sometimes adapted to the markets of Rumelia, Anatolia and the Levant. The French Consul General in Beirut, in the late 19th century, encouraged the French manufacturers to adapt their product for sale in the near-eastern market, taking into account the tastes of consumers and their “love of flashiness” and this, at good prices²⁷. According to M. Milwright, the term *al-maliqi* (literally shiny things), that is repeatedly quoted in *Dictionary of the Crafts of Damascus* written by al-Qasimi family at the end of 19th century, to designate a type of dish sold in Damascus, refers perhaps to this flashy European porcelain²⁸ (fig. 3: 6, 7). They were so cheap that they were able to compete in the market-place with locally produced ceramics. For that reason, people no longer took broken items to the menders of pottery for repair. For local customers, the European pottery imports represented probably some form of modernity. And, according to *Dictionary of the Crafts of Damascus*, if the potters of Damascus continued to make pottery, they were only sold to butter merchants, *ful* and *hummus* vendors and to farmers too. For their part, city dwellers preferred the plates known as *al-maliqi*. The volume of imports was so considerable that Western European travellers complained themselves about the presence, in the bazaars, of this un-exotic crockery.

As we can see, these imported potteries had a serious impact on the local ceramic industry. In the earlier Ottoman period, the imported luxury ceramics, mainly Iznik ware and Chinese porcelain, had stimulated the activities of local potters. The 800 Chinese celadons and Blue and White porcelains, dated from the second half of the 15th through to the mid 17th century, discovered in Duma district of Damascus, testify of the large extent of imports. According European travellers, Chinese vessels were available in the markets of Damascus in early ottoman period²⁹. Iznik pottery reached Syria during the 16th century. These high prices imports were sold to the wealthier classes that is why, in Damascus and maybe also in Aleppo, the potters reacted and produced imitations of Chinese pottery and Iznik tiles and cups. On the contrary, during 19th century, a wide range of European wares — low quality *faïence*, jars and cooking wares, hard-paste and soft paste porcelain — relatively cheap, imported in huge quantities into Levant, were extinguishing the local craftsmanship.

(27) A. ISMAIL, *op. cit.* [n. 11], 1982-93, VI, p. 253.

(28) M. MILWRIGHT, *loc. cit.* [n. 9], 2009, p. 41-43.

(29) M. MILWRIGHT, « Pottery in the written sources of the Ayyubid-Mamluk Period (c. 567-923/1171-1517) », *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, LXII (1999), p. 513, footnote 80.