

**The agricultural activities in Libya during the second Era of
Ottmanians
(1835-1911AD)**

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Abstract

The second era of Ottomanian (1835-1911AD) had witnessed a stable economic development and growth due to internal and external policy and because of the reforms achieved by the Ottomanian Empire in all its states.

Agriculture is considered a significant formation in the economical growth due to its direct relation to population's income and effect with people's needs in any country in the world because agriculture is the main source of food to the people.

The agricultural and animal products have played an essential role in the economy of Tripoli at that time, the Ottoman authority was responsible on supervision of farms while the workforce was local people of Tripoli. This situation had led to improve the economical condition of the state and its people, also it was the main source for income to the Ottoman government.

1. Introduction

The research discusses the agricultural activities in Libya during the second Ottomanian era in the state of west Tripoli. The era of Ottomanian in west Tripoli has witnessed a significant development and growth, and the history of that time shows many historical information about Libya. The study will discuss the economical activities of the state of west Tripoli such as agricultural activities and agricultural products because agriculture was

very important to the people at that time until now. The study will also discuss the livestock in west Tripoli because of its importance to people's living and was considered as one of the main sources of income.

This paper divided into introduction and many sections. The first section discusses the agricultural activities. The second section discusses the livestock. At the end, the study concluded with significant results related to this topic.

1.1 The Agricultural Activity

Agriculture is a typical pattern in the economic activity in general because it is related to the needs of people in any country of the world, and more importantly, agriculture in west Tripoli had provided food for the population of the state. The agricultural activities in west Tripoli was considered the main productive sources and ranked top in the state economy because of the wide area of Libya along the northern coast from east to west of Libya which is 1900km long on the Mediterranean sea (Mustafa Hamid, 1999, p.276)

Agriculture had provided a stable life for more than 95% of the population at that time, it was an important source of income for the Ottoman state. (Fadia Abdul Aziz. 2006, p.45). Despite the fact that agriculture was the main pillar of the Libyan's life but it was primitive and not developed, and also depended on traditional techniques . In addition to that, agriculture was suffering from crises and many problems, including:

1. Lack and shortage of water resources.
2. Climatic fluctuations which was affecting crops.
3. Failure to fight and control animal and pests.
4. The shortage of labor force.

5. The difficulty of transporting crops.
6. Farmer's dependence on old agricultural tools used for harvesting and composting.
7. The neglect from local authorities to improve agricultural activity.
8. The state authorities had imposed local taxes on farmers. (Francesco Koro, 1984, p.92)

The drought and few rainfalls had affected the whole country and there was almost periodically a clear impact on the economy of the state. Every ten years there had been four good years for production of good crops, and four years of medium production. The remaining two years' production was slightly few (Ahmed Sidki, 1971, p.238). The areas which was suitable for farming and producing good crops but it was limited only in the region of west Tripoli area and in particular Al Jafara region, Mislata coast, Tripoli oases, and the mountains and valleys of Fazzan. With regards to Cyrenaica, it was including Al Marj plain, Green Mountain, and desert oases; the other part of the state's land consist of desert and rocks or sand dunes. (Anthony: Ikea, 1975, p.99)

At the beginning of the second Ottomani era (1250AH/1835AD), the Ottomani governors had turned to pay attention to agricultural activities, and this resource has become a major contribution to the economy of the state in achieving simple economic growth.

At that time, the local newspapers had worked on alerting and bringing attention to the importance of agricultural activity. For example; Al Raqeeb newspaper in its issue dated July 27, 1327AH/1909AD, had stated the requirement to renew the agricultural works and using new machines to ease agricultural works and to help the labor working in the

farms at that time, the newspaper had highlighted the need for professional working using these machines because the land of the state was the best, the newspaper had advised the specialists in agricultural projects to adopt modern methods. (Al Raqeeb newspaper, 1329AH), whilst the newspaper of Tripoli had described the extract of water from wells using animals as a slow task and not efficient, and according to that using this way to extract water would not develop the agriculture in the state, and therefore the newspaper advised the necessity to replace it, and demanded the government to allocate special funds for this purpose, (Tripoli Newspaper: 1327-1329AH).

Abu Kasha had wrote “ no harvesting, no farming, with extreme poverty increasing, what a big disaster to the people of the state, it should for government agents who had deposited into the sponsorship to ensure interest of the country and to think in the future with fears and dangers and threatened to take off security and stability of the state. (Fadia Abdul Aziz, 2006AD. p. 89)

After that the Ottomanian governors had been alerted to the huge problems associated with agriculture activity, and then Al-Wali (governor) Ali Ridha Basha (1282/1287AH/1866/1870AD) had issued orders to improve some of the agricultural areas and develop the production in these areas through all possible means to encourage the farmers to work in farms (Niqola Ziadah, 1966, p.55). Then he had established the fund for public benefits of agricultural credit in year 1285AH, 1869AD (paper number 129, management affairs file). During the same time Al-Wali (governor) had submitted a report to (the high door) explaining the importance of agriculture to the economy of the state as well as highlighted the obstacles they were facing and the required means to develop agriculture in the state. According to that, he had suggested a proposal to drill wells in many part of the state. His project had received an acceptance from the Ottomanian administration center but the project was not executed and produced the

desired goals because Al-Wali (governor) had resigned and did not continue his job.

Ahmed Rustum Basha¹ (1896/1882AD/1313/1299HD) then had worked to encourage the work in unused lands and develop agriculture in these lands, therefore he had sold the lands that was belonging to the state in the eastern areas of Tripoli with a condition to invest these lands. To achieve his objectives he had imported some new plants such as potatoes and berry trees (Al Mousely Shihab Yasin, 2006, p.71). At that time the government of the state had worked on plantation of Olive trees and understanding how to instill these trees and taking care of them. According to that a resolution by the management council of the state was issues (paper no 270, file of agriculture, Industry and Minerals). The resolution indicated rules to punish the failure farmers or employees, as well as managers and supervisors who did not follow the terms and instructions indicated in the resolution. In addition to that to punish the people who had caused damage to olive trees through random grazing (paper no 1080, file of agriculture, Industry and Minerals). This was according to the report of Al-Wali (governor) Ahmed Basha to the high door dated 8th of Shawal 1308HD 16 May/1891AD on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of his mandate. In 1325AH/ 1907AD a special directorate for agriculture under the supervision of agricultural experts staff was established in order to provide agricultural guidance for farmers. The Mabel-Lomis Todo has referred that some European authors like James Hamilton had spoke about soil fertility in the state and how few water and a little work would bring a big harvest. Mabel-Lomis Todo explained how water drift paths of rich

¹.Ahmed Rustum Basha. Was born in Istanbul in 1825 AD, and studied at Athens, Greece, and spoke a number of languages Alaworbeh, and held several management positions and political in the Ottoman Empire, then appointed ruler of the mandate of Tripoli in 1882 and continued in power until the year 1896. He died in the year 1897. Source Ahmad Sidqi Dajani .1971. Libya, such as the Italian occupation. 1edition. RR 64.136

Muslims and Jews reflect a real beauty where fruit trees and flowers were grown. (Mobil Lomsi, 1968, p. 101-104)

Al Hashashi (Tunisian travelers)² showed that agriculture in Tripoli as seen in year 1312HD/1895AD was divided into two divisions in this country. The first division of those, people who were qualified for doing farm works and serving the land very well. The 2nd division was Arab people who were living far from the state and were not qualified to work in the farms and were not serving the land properly even their lands was suitable for agriculture, those people of the 2nd division were more interested in doing trading deals instead of working in agriculture.

The process of encouraging farmers to harvest the lands included all regions of the land, in a letter sent by the manager of Sirt region to Al-Wali (governor) Mustafa Nouri Basha indicated his intention to encourage the local people to tilled lands and planting wheat and barley fields (1270HD/1854AD) (Mohammed Abdul Majid 2004AD, p.82)

Ottmanian authorities has used a new system to organize real-estates and to register them as well as special lands belong to the population and government inside the state. On 18th of Shaaban 1274AH/ April 2, 1858AD, the Ottmanian law related to lands had stated the presence of what was called “Daftar Khana” job in the administration of real estate registration for the purpose of ownership and registering of lands, it was called “Daftar Hakani”.

² .Mohammed bin Othman Al Hashashi. Is a historian and traveler Tunisian born 26 Ramadan 1271 AH = 12 of July 1855 AD, and visited the mandate Tripoli in 1896 and clerks (evacuation anguish for Tripoli) and book (Date Zitouna Mosque) and died on Tuesday, 3 de argument 1330 e _1911 m. Source Al Hashashi: Mohammed, Benotman -1965, trip Al Hashashi to Libya. provide and achieve Ali Mustafa Misrati. rr 23.24

The process of land registering and indicating the names of land owners was known as “Al Tabo”³ and the land owner would receive a royal certificate which was known as Koshan Tabo. This law was implemented in the state until 1291HD, 1874AD and had been applied in the region of Tripoli and surrounding areas, like the western mountain and some coastal cities (ahmed Sudki Al Dajani, 1971AD, p.112)

To support the process of land registration, the establishment of the first agricultural bank of the Ottomanian government during the late period of their rule was done in 1328 AH / 1910 AD. The capital of the bank was funded from institutions similar to its work in the Ottomanian Empire. The city of Tripoli had paid an interest estimated about 4% on the capital and the most important activities and facilities of the bank such as credit based on mortgage of immovable property. And the banks had imposed certain conditions in the process of granting loans to the citizens such as the land registration and legal editor. (Naji Mahmoud, 1995. p. 94)

In return, the policemen had been assigned for many economic tasks, for example, guarding crops and fruit trees in agricultural areas and protect them from spoil and thefts, alert their owners to pay more attention and care and nurturing as well as punishing owners who was neglecting or cause damage to the crops and fruit trees. The policemen were responsible to send the heads of administrative units monthly reports on the status of those plants and their conditions. (Mabrouka Omar, police in the state of Tripoli during the Ottoman era 2, 1835/1911. 2007, p 138)

1.2 Agricultural products

³.Tabou, the origin is Bricks it means following or dependency. Launches on Sindh submitted by the State is delegated to dispose of the land has held ownership. Recognition by extension the state, Hussein Mujibur Egyptian, 2004, Lexicon of the Ottoman Empire, i 1, the House of Culture for publication, Cairo. P 84

The most important agricultural products was varied according to the system of irrigation. Agriculture basically in west Tripoli is wintry and in the summer. The wintry agriculture depends on rainfalls for planting many several crops such as barley and wheat, which was considered the main feeding for the population, and the barley was the main feeding for the horses which was the means of transportation for the Ottoman soldiers. The planting of barley was taking the priority in grain production. Libyan grain was demanded by the European countries especially England for making Beer and Alcohol. The state was exporting huge quantities to England at that time, whereas wheat was exported to European countries (Fatehiyah Ali Abdullah, 2006, p.46)

In 1327AH/1909AD, the planted area with wheat in Tripoli was about 35.7 thousand hectares and barley was 7.8 thousand hectares. In the context of the Ottoman state's interest in agriculture in the state of Tripoli, one of the documents indicated that in year 1321AH/1903AD, they had brought 40 sacks of wheat seeds and distributed to the Libyans farmers to take advantage of fertilized land and production of this type of wheat which was highly demanded in Turkey at that time. The estimation of total area allocated to cereal cultivation in the state of Tripoli was about 990 thousand hectares with 78 hectares allocated to the cultivation of fodder for animals. (Mohamed Mabrouk, d. T., p.120)

The English consular Jago had referred in his report that the exported quantities of wheat and barley from the west Tripoli during the period 1295-1278AH/1878-1862AD reached a total amount of 18,78,000 Lira and with a total amount 5,067,000 Lira of wheat and barley. The imported wheat was 7,952,000 Lira and wheat 10,422,000, with a net difference for the trading budget equal to 1,478,00 Lira, which led to an increase in the production (English consular report in west Tripoli, Franshisko Koro 1984AD, p.93). Even though, the agricultural crops were affected by rainfall from year to year. This impact of rainfall was clear in the exported quantities of barley and wheat to England from years 1324-1328AH/1906-

1910AD. The instability in the quantity of agricultural crop in the year 1324 AH /1906AD reached an amount to 380,300 quintals and fell down in year 1328AH /1910AD to 227,100 quintals. Other products of west Tripoli region was dates which was exported on an average of 120-130 thousand lira. The kind of dates was not excellent and not at the same quality level as in Tunisia and Egypt. It should be noted that the dates of Fezzan was one of the best dates in Libya. The estimated exports of dates from 1316-1319AH/1899-1902AD as follows:

In 1316AH /1899AD, the exported dates was 120,000 francs, in 1317AH/1900AD the exported dates was 145,000 francs in 1318AH/1901AD was 50,000. During the year 1319AH/1902AD the exported dates was 120,000 Francs (Fatehia Ali Abdullah, 2006, p. 48).

The palm tree has played an important role in the lives of the Libyan people because its relationship with daily feeding. Therefore, the Libyan people had got great benefits from the palm trees because palm trees was the only food for them and for their animals. They made roofs for homes and hats from palm stumps, they also made brooms from palm leaves (Yassin Shihab, 2006, p. 102)

The state of Tripoli was known for olive planting since ancient times. Especially during the times of Carthaginians and Romans, olive trees spread across the state especially in Misalata region, Tarhunah, Nafusa Mountains, Gado, Rahibat and Gharyan, which was famous for the quality of olive, (Nikolai Iblich, 1988, p. 29).

The production of west Tripoli in the year 1328AH, 1910AD was about 60 thousand quintals of olives. The oils and derivatives of olives were exported through the port of Tripoli to Europe. Also olive was exported from old Sabratha, as indicted in the historical monuments with the existence of barmaid of oil until the present time, which was made since the Roman era (Mustafa Hamed, 1999AD, p.281)

The governing authorities were always encouraging the people through periodic publications and instructions about the best ways of planting olive trees, despite the lack of capability. (Document No. 28. Dated 1900)

The authorities worked through official newspapers to raise the level of awareness and interest about the olive tree and converted the vast unplanted areas to planted areas with olive trees. The authorities also had focused on the implementation of the program of taxation and its formation of committees inventory of land and agricultural property including olive trees.

In 1302AH/1884AD a decision was made from the state commissioned officer who went to Mislata city and meet the members of the city council at that time, he had selected local officers form the council, and then established a committee included writer and accountant to count the number of olive trees in the city because of the economic importance to the state (Ghaith Abdullah , 2010, p. 98-99)

One of the fruit trees we have found was citrus, which were grown in orchards and farms in Tripoli and Al-Zawyah. Most of the production of citrus was orange and lemon. Also other trees such as grape, figs, peaches and apricot, apples, that was exported to Malta , Tunisia, England and Germany at that time. The estimated export value was about 60 thousand Lira per year.

We can identify the types of trees and their number from the following table (Naji Mohammed, Nouri Mohammed, p.33,1973AD)

Type	Number of trees	Type	Number of trees
Orange	39.000	Pomegranate	750
Grapes	40.000	Quince	300
Limon	19.000	Almond	800
Pears	300	Apples	400
Figs	800	Total number:	101,350

Tobacco: The plantation of Tobacco and working with it in the state was located in coastal cities in Libya and some cities in the south of Libya like Sukna and was familiar of trading in Tobacco. After the process of harvesting, the agricultural production was delivered to the government office. Tobacco was classified into two types, and these two types were planted in Fezzan and Tripoli region. Tobacco of Tripoli was planted in the western region like Al Zawiyah and Gharyan city, which was close to the state center like AL Jumah market and Tajora'a with an estimated area 300 hectares, but it was a low quality class, whereas the Tobacco of Fezzan was planted in the southern region of the state or what is known Fezzan or Sabha in the current time, and this Tobacco was the best class, and it was produced double times of Tobacco of Tripoli per one hectares, also it was cultivated and harvested in June. The single hectares produce 3-4 tons (Adel Mohammed Abdul Aziz, 2000, p.340) and this agriculture needs for plenty of water, which was one of the main obstacles to develop due to lack of water resources (Kakia Antoni Jousef, 1975, p.174)

The government authorities have worked to monopolize the plantation of Tobacco and had made agreements with foreign companies in order to be responsible for plantation of Tobacco. In year 1301HD/1884AD, the state government had made an agreement with a French company which was known AL Reji which had granted a resolution to authorize the company to start the plantation of Tobacco as well as manufacturing. This company had allocated areas for planting Tobacco in Tripoli and in the surrounding areas, and the city of Al Zawiah and Gharyan as well (Adel Abdul Aziz, 2000,

p.340) therefore we can say that the activities of Jewish people was limited even though they were doing trading in the agricultural products of the state, but the Jewish people were not interested to work in this type of business because at that time they were transferring their business from agriculture to trading and industrial crafts, and it was known that Jewish people did not own lands for agriculture purpose.

1.3 Livestock

The livestock has been associated with the life of Bedouin people and rural areas either for their food or non-food products. People everywhere since the ancient history had used animals for many purposes in the fields such as plowing, irrigation and provided natural fertilizer for the land. Animal had represented the sole mean of transportation at that time in the state of Tripoli, whether for individuals or for transportation of goods, whereas camels was playing a major role in the transport and trading on the convoy route. On camels' back, the man cross the deserts and travelled across the whole desert areas. (Ben Moussa Taiseer, 1988. p. 131)

The spread of many types of animals in the state according to the appropriate areas for animal's life, and there were many animals in different regions of the state. The livestock was one of the main sources of income to the state and had contributed to develop the economies of the state. The livestock included; sheep, goats, cows, camels, horses, mules, and donkeys. (Mustafa Hamed: 1999,p. 281, Kakia Anthony Jouseph 1975, p.126).

The rainfall affected the livestock from year to year, in the year where there was increasing rate of rainfall, the agricultural and animal products were overflowed, and the opposite occurred during drought years, for example; in years 1326AH/1908AD and 1328AH /1910AD, the drought period was very hard on agriculture in the state and worsened their economic conditions. (Fatehia Ali Abdullah, 2006, p.51).

Cooper (the English) had reported in his testimony for livestock an existence of 350,000 camels and 30,000 horses in the state. Kafia Anthony had also referred to the existence of cattle, sheep and goats, and he stated that the cows in Libyan were giving a little quantities of milk and was used in the manufacturing of oil exported to Turkey and other foreign countries, and this was because the people was preferring goat milk.

Livestock had contributed in some years in supporting the state's economy, and had played an important role in the export volume of the state. In 1324AH/1906AD, the state of Tripoli had exported about 500,000 heads of cattle and during 1326AH/1908AD, and according to a report from the Italian consulate in Benghazi at that time, a delivery of 700 heads of small bulls from Barca to Malta, and at the same time the state had exported about 340,000 heads of sheep and goats to Egypt.

Wool was delivered monthly to France and Italy as a good quality product, but the price of exported wool was not expensive because the wool was full with sands and dirt and not clean. Other exported products was bones and goat hair and dander from camel leather, also there was few small factories established for tanning. (Francesco Kourou, 1984. p. 96)

And according to official and non-official sources, the estimated number of goats and sheep was two million heads, and in one of the statistical documents for the year 1323AH/1905AD that shows what belonging to citizens in a number of areas of the sheep and the goats, the numbers according to the following table. (Ben Moussa Taiseer, 1988, p.134)

Region	Number of Sheep	Number of Goats
14.154	13.906	Al Azizyah
4.391	2.923	Tajoraa
27.550	30.977	Al Ruqat
4.962	5.732	Al Alawnah
145	336	Al Sahel
367	373	Al Manshiah

The report of Salnamah of year 1200/1285AH, 1786/1869AD, was not an accurate statistics and numbers of animals to the state as outlined in the following table (Yassin Shihab , 2006, p.106)

Type	Number of Animals	Type	Number of Animals
Sheep	1.287.000	Camels	35.000
Goats	700.000	Horses	14.000
Cows	32.000	Mules	300
Calves Cows	10.000	Donkeys	Undefined number
Bulls	25.000	All types of Poultry	5,000,300

The livestock was an important source for the local economy, and was not only because of the animals themselves but because of their products such as wool, leather, dairy, and camel dander, and these products and animals were exported to the neighboring countries and the countries of the Mediterranean Sea. According to that the Jewish people had been professional in grazing and animal husbandry, and this because the countries of north Africa was famous in sheep production due to population nature and geographic factors (Hirschberg.A.1975 p262), and since then livestock was of great importance to the economy of Maghreb countries, and because the majority of the population was Bedouin at that time, therefore many of the industries were connected to animals and their

production. Jewish was famous for making cheese from milk and selling them. In summary the agriculture, grazing, animal husbandry was not mainly the main profession of immigrant Jewish people (Bashir Abdul Rahaman, 2001, p.91)

The Jewish companies had played a vital role in importing and exporting of livestock. The report of Italian consular showed that the animals were exported from west Tripoli to Malta because the type of meat of cows in Tripoli was very good and strongly demanded.

Due to the lack of milk, the process of fattening was achieved in Malta; the sheep were excellent kind and have tails which was weighing up of 5-6 kg. The exported cattle annually was 7800 head which was worthing to 624,000 francs, as for the sheep, only 2880 head worth amount 34,560 francs. The price per sheep was 8-12 francs. The export through Carmili Follett "English" and Carmili to Tkabardo "Italian" and Shalom Qbeson "Ottmanian"

Jewish people also worked in exporting animal bones through a Jewish company called Berjis De Silva from Portugal, the company was exporting annually around 100 tons with an estimated amount reached to 8000 francs at that time, and the company we receiving the bones from the centers for slaughtering animals at a price 8 Franc per kg and then delivered to Genoa, Italy. The horns and hooves of animals were exported to Marseille annually, the estimated quantity was 10,000-12,000 kg, with a total amount equal to 1500 Franc from the same Jewish company.

The work of both Jacob Arbib "English" and Joseph Ksar "English" and Shalom Qeson "Ottmanian " and Shalom Habib " Ottmanian " and Haim Hassan "Italian" on exporting the skins of cows, goats and sheep

The number of goat skin that were shipped annually was about 208,000 dozen colorful and dried, and the total amount was reaching around one million francs exported to United States through Marseille.

The number of sheep skins that were shipped annually was about 20,000 kg, and the total amount was around 12,000 Francs exported to Naples, and Hamburg (Al Ahwal, Khalifa Mohammed. 1985. p. 341-342)

1.4The results

The regulations and reforms that had been made by the Ottomanian authorities and in particular what were associated with applying the law and rules that regulates the economy of the Ottomanian state that include the western region of Tripoli had achieved contrast results in some times due to foreign interfere as well as the natural factors.

The study showed that Jewish people had dealt with the economic activities they had practiced at that time through handcraft, industrial and commercial professions. The volume of economic activities of Jewish people had been expanded at the end of the 19th century because of the foreign interference and giving the Jewish people foreign protection that allowed them to work freely without obstacles from the state authorities and government bodies at that time.

In addition to that the foreign privileges in all Ottomanian states had gave the Jewish people complete freedom and essential role in building economical and political relationships between the state and European countries, they had acquired commercial agencies and exporting rights to the European nations.

The study showed that agricultural activities in the state of west Tripoli was very active, and it had provided a good income for the population at that time despite that agriculture was primitive and depended on traditional old means and ways.

In addition to that the study emphasized on the role of climate in the agricultural environment such as rainfall and shortage in water resources.

The study highlight that the governors of the Ottoman state were mainly interested in agricultural activities and encourages the local people and farmers for plantation and taking care of fruit trees, as in year 1869AD the funds of public benefits had been established in order to provide loans for the farmers and agricultural projects

The policemen were giving several tasks such as protection of agricultural crops and monitor people who damage the trees and crops and punish them.

The common agricultural crops in the state were; (barley, wheat, olive and citrus trees, tobacco). The Jewish people had small contributions in agricultural activities, because they had owned small agricultural areas suitable for plantations.

The role of Jewish people in agriculture was limited even though they were doing trading deals in agricultural products of the state, but the Jewish people were not mainly interested to work in agriculture because at that time they were transferring their business from agriculture to trading and industrial crafts, and it was known about Jewish people they did not own lands for agriculture purpose.

The study found that Jewish companies had played an important role in exporting and importing of livestock products represented in; (leather, bones and sheep wool) were export from Tripoli to Malta, Italy, Marseille, England and other European countries, and because these products are essential for factories in European countries as a raw material as well as livestock had contributed to the economy of the state for many years and was one of the main factors for economic growth in the state at that time.

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