

Alexandrian Melancholy

—The Light and Shadow of the Modern Mediterranean World*—

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I

What are we waiting for, assembled in the forum?
The barbarians are due here today.
Why isn't anything happening in the senate?
Why do the senators sit there without legislating?
Because the barbarians are coming today.
What laws can the senators make now?
Once the barbarians are here, they'll do the legislating.

* * *

Why this sudden restlessness, this confusion?
(How serious people's faces have become.)
Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,
everyone going home so lost in thought?
Because night has fallen and the barbarians have not come.
And some who have just returned from the border say
there are no barbarians any longer.
And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians?
They were, those people, a kind of solution.

This is the beginning and the ending of the poem titled "Waiting for the Barbarians" [Savidis, pp. 18-19] which Constantine P. Cavafy (Konstandinos Petru Kavafis, 1863-1933), the most distinguished poet in the modern Greece, composed in 1904. The stage of this poem is Rome or Constantinople immediately before the surrender.

The ennui in life felt by the citizens in Rome or Constantinople before the catastrophe is symbolically reflected in this poem. They can do nothing in front of the attacks by

* This essay was written as a note to point out some political and social problems pertaining to the modern Egypt with the special theoretical attention to the Greeks as a minority in the Egyptian society. The main literatures to which I referred are added to the end of the essay as bibliography.

invaders, because of their helplessness. They caricature their own fortune and speak boldly of the attacks by invaders as a kind of solution, although they call the invaders barbarians.

What is literally described in this poem is the fright and resignation of the “civilized” people who are enclosed by “barbarians”. It goes without saying that the “barbarians” who enclose the “civilized” people are the Germans in case of the Romans and the Turks in case of the Byzantines.

Then, who is the “barbarian” for poet Cavafy, the writer of this poem? Of whom is he frightened in the apocalyptic atmosphere at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century? It is no doubt that Cavafy considered himself as a “civilized” person.

The fright of which we could think is the same fright which was borne by Lawrence Durrell, the novelist who let the poet Cavafy popular together with E.M. Forster. In his love story “*The Alexandria Quartet*”, whose stage is Alexandria between the two World Wars, he makes the characters express repeatedly such words as follows.

The women of the foreign communities here are more beautiful than elsewhere. Fear, insecurity dominates them. They have the illusion of foundering in the ocean of blackness all

around. This city has been built like a dyke to hold back the flood of African darkness; but the soft-footed blacks have already started leaking into the European quarters. [*Justine*, p. 59]

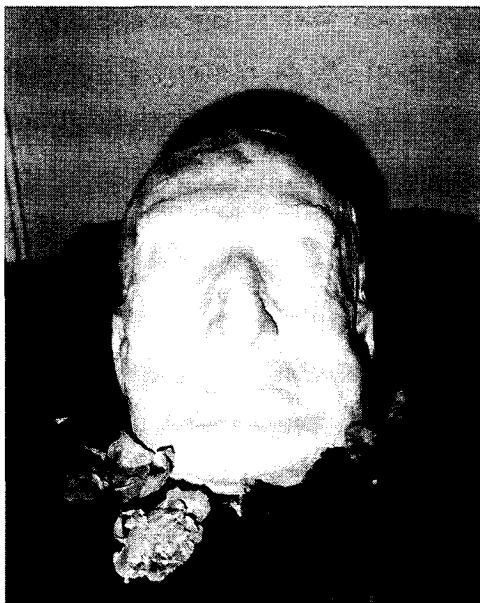


Photo (1) *The death mask of the poet in the Commemorative Museum for Cavafy, his former apartment, in Rue Lepsius, now Shari'a Sharm al-Shaykh.*

The Egypt of rags and sores, of beauty and desperation. Alexandria was still Europe—the capital of Asiatic Europe, if such a thing could exist. It could never be like Cairo where his whole life had an Egyptian cast, where he spoke ample Arabic. [*Mountolive*, p. 509]

You know, we all know, that our days are numbered since the French and the British have lost control in the Middle East. We, the foreign communities, with all we have built up, are being gradually engulfed by the Arab tide, the Moslem tide. Some of us are trying to work against it. [*Mountolive*, p. 552]

In these sentences, the “civilized” people are the Europeans, and the “barbarians”, of whom the “civilized” people are frightened, are the Africans, the Egyptians, the Arabs and the Muslims. It is obvious that Cavafy might share the same view on civilization and barbarism, even if his view was not so outspoken

as Durrell's view, for he was a Greek inhabitant in the foreign settlement in Alexandria.

However, it is apparently wrong and misleading, if Cavafy's view on civilization and barbarism might be considered in the framework of "West vs. East" dichotomy from the modern European point of view. The affair is complicated and comprises the big problems concerning the historical significance of the Hellenistic and Mediterranean Civilizations.

II

"No Greek was living in Egypt until 1830." Everybody who hears this saying might be greatly astonished at its unreality. But, this saying is real at least on the level of the feeling among inhabitants in everyday life and under the ruling system of the Ottoman Empire in which inhabitants were identified not by nation but by religion. 1830 is the year when the Greeks achieved their independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Instead, the people who lived in Egypt were the Greek Orthodox. Everybody, even those who were astonished at the above mentioned saying, could agree with this comment, understanding that the problem is the terminology about the same social group, whether they are called the "Greek" by language or the "Greek Orthodox" by religion.

But, indeed, a social group of the "Greek" did not exist at least from the modern point of view, for a social group of the "Greek" was not synonymous with that of the "Greek Orthodox" in those days. To understand the unsynonymousness between these two social groups, we have to follow the history of the "Greek Orthodox" within the framework of the ruling system in pre-modern Egypt.

As is well known, the traditional ruling system, based on the Islamic idea, was quite different from the political system which was formed in modern Europe, from the viewpoint of the concepts of unifying and ruling the people in the society.

The Islamic ruling system was fundamentally the control system over the people within the framework of religious or sectional units, in which the territorial concept as political unit was not supposed, while the modern political system of "nation-state" in Europe is the control system over the people defined by the cultural concept, that is nation, within the specific territory as political unit, in which the state can exercise the exclusive sovereignty over the nation.

Historically, the Islamic ruling system was the indirect control over the people, based on the *dhimma* (protection) system which protected the freedom of religious faith and the preservation of life and property for the believers of non-Islamic religions, on the condition of their agreement with the sovereignty of Muslim rulers and their fulfillment of tax payment. The so called *millet* (non-Islamic religious community) system in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century was the system established according to this Islamic tradition to rule the people within the framework of religious or sectional units.

The Greek Orthodox was one of the religious communities, called *millet* in Turkish or *milla* in Arabic, in the Ottoman Empire. In principle, they were supposed to be under the supervision of the patriarch in Istanbul (Constantinople). But in reality, they were controlled by local patriarchs, adjusting themselves to local customs, because the members of the Greek Orthodox were composed of different social groups from the linguistic or ethnic point of view, although they belonged to the same religious community, that is the Greek Orthodox Church. The most eminent two groups of this community in the Arab world including Egypt were the group of Greek speaking Orthodox and that of Arabic speaking Orthodox.

In modern times, the group of the Greek Orthodox Church came to lose its unity as a religious community. In 1724, a group of the Church formed their another independent Church, responding to the Unitarian movement, that is the religious movement energetically promoted by the Roman Catholic Church since the 17th century for calling the unification of Western and Eastern churches. The new independent church, called the Greek Catholic Church, was recognized as a *millet* by the Ottoman Empire in 1848.

In the 19th century, the wave of nationalism weakened the authority of the Church which, until then, unified its members, and let the believers of the Church be confronted with the identity crisis, in which they had to choose the religious community or the ethnic community as the group with which they identified themselves. The sway between religion and ethnicity on the individual level among the believers came to appear as the opposition between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Greek Community for the hegemony of controlling the believers on the collective level [Kitroeff, pp. 227ff.].

In this opposition, the Church represented the traditional Islamic idea whose ruling unit was *millet*, and the Community advocated the modern European idea whose political unit was nation. The Egyptian local customs and the “nation-state” of Greece existed behind the Church and the Community respectively .

But, we should not forget that this opposition is not at all between the “Western”—for example, the Roman Catholic Church—and the “Eastern”—for example, the group of Greek speaking Orthodox and the Greek Catholic Church—, but between the “Western” and the “Oriental”—for example, the group of Arabic speaking Orthodox—.

The “Oriental” is the category that we can obtain only after the segregation of the category “Eastern” [cf. MECC]. Under the modern situation, the “Eastern” often keeps in step with the “Western” in front of the “Oriental”.

In any case, it is not the problem that the unit with which the people identified themselves was shifted from religious community to ethnic community, but the real problem is the fact that this shift happened in the modern political situation, being connected with the formation of “nation- state”. One of the expected consequences of this problem is the emergence of the nation as majority and the minority groups which reject their total integration into the nation. It is no doubt that the minority problem is the very modern problem which was emerged, deeply connected with the political idea of “nation- state”.

The exaltation of nationalism in modern times produced a decisive effect on the group of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Egyptian society. The movement of Hellenic nationalism achieved the independence of Greece from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. The movement of Arab nationalism, which came to the fore since the latter of the 19th century, also appealed to Arabs their unity beyond the religious and sectorial differences. Under the nationalistic circumstances, a crack became apparent among the members of the Greek Orthodox Church. While the Greek speaking believers solidified their consciousness of the Greeks, the Arabic speaking believers awoke their self-awareness of the Arabs.

The identity crisis among the believers produced the change and division of political units to which they belonged. Until then, the members of the Greek Orthodox Church, all of them, had been the subjects of the Ottoman Empire at least in formality. But since 1830, almost all of the Greek speaking Orthodox became the citizens of the Greek state. The Arabic speaking Orthodox, who had kept their legal status as the subjects of the Ottoman Empire after the independence of Greece, also left the Ottoman Empire one after another along with the growing autonomy of the Arab world.

In 1854, Greece concluded the commercial treaty with the Ottoman Empire and obtained the privileges, including the extraterritorial rights, permitted to the Great powers by the treaties of the same kind. It means that the Greek state, which had struggled with the Ottoman Empire for independence only a quarter century ago, now joined the file of the Great powers which forced their national interests upon the Ottoman Empire.

As is shown until now, the history of the Greek Orthodox in modern times was complicated. But, the Greek Catholic, who had separated from the Greek Orthodox Church and formed their independent church, experienced a more complicated vicissitude than that of the Greek Orthodox. It is so true especially as for the Arabic speaking Greek Orthodox. They selected not to be the "Arab", but to be the "protégé" under the consulate jurisdiction of such Great powers as France. In other terms, they chose by themselves the legal status of minority in the political system of nation-state.

III

Cavafy was a "Greek". The Greeks began to take firm root as a community in modern Egypt since the age of Muhammad 'Ali (ruled 1805-48), when the wave of migration of the Greeks to Egypt was observed. Under the reign of Muhammad 'Ali, the Albanian founder of modern Egypt, who energetically centralized power around him, the development of local economy as well as the expansion of foreign trade with European countries was promoted. The Greeks, who had a good knowledge of the eastern Mediterranean regions, were expected to take a role of the transmitter of new technologies and the mediators between local and European merchants.

In fact, the eastern Mediterranean regions were supposed to be an important market for

Table (1)

Imports into Alexandria in 1831

(J. Bowring, "Report on Egypt and Candia," *Parliamentary Papers* (1840), p. 68)

	Imported from										Egyptian Pound	
	Britain	Malta	Austria	France	Greece	Sardinia	Sweden	Tuscany	Turkey	Total	%	
Wood	.....	.....	23,457	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	59,118	82,576	21.2
Tarboushes	.....	.....	160	86	.....	.....	.....	689	7,342	8,277	2.1
Nails	6	48	1,286	.....	.....	.....	.....	75	.....	1,415	0.4
Spices	.....	100	130	190	.....	42	.....	100	.....	563	0.2
Iron in Bars	11,962	5,025	4,663	2,572	.....	.....	.....	3,513	.....	27,735	7.1
Pitch	99	381	.....	.....	.....	.....	308	20	128	936	0.2
Cloths	131	.....	3,758	3,291	.....	.....	.....	975	.....	8,155	2.1
Cochineal	.....	.....	190	530	.....	230	789	.....	.....	1,739	0.4
Paper	.....	.....	2,512	44	.....	.....	.....	2,824	.....	5,380	1.4
Lead	34	517	621	1,064	.....	70	.....	601	.....	2,907	0.7
Hardware and Cutlery	503	87	480	822	.....	.....	.....	4,723	706	7,321	1.9
Sugar	.....	307	230	4,248	.....	.....	.....	45	.....	4,830	1.2
Linens	376	150	670	.....	.....	.....	.....	240	.....	1,436	0.4
Cotton Goods	15,860	1,643	16,177	715	.....	90	.....	39,380	7,670	81,535	21.0
Woollens	750	.....	140	80	.....	.....	.....	1,570	6,580	9,120	2.3
Silk Goods	.....	.....	715	1,314	.....	113	.....	2,307	28,195	32,644	8.4
Glass	16	.....	1,968	192	.....	.....	.....	70	60	2,306	0.6
Wine and Spirits	61	753	144	2,115	.....	70	.....	365	866	4,374	1.1
Articles various	1,908	4,341	10,966	5,185	2,147	954	.....	9,191	71,527	106,219	27.3
Total	31,706	13,352	68,267	22,448	2,147	1,569	1,097	66,688	182,192	389,466	100.0	
(%)	(8.1)	(3.4)	(17.5)	(5.8)	(0.6)	(0.4)	(0.3)	(17.1)	(46.8)	(100.0)		

Source: Ishida, p. 101

Egyptian economy in those days, judging from the statistics of table (1) and (2) on the import and export of the port of Alexandria in 1831.

At first, let's examine the import and export countries. Egypt's five largest trading partners during this era were Turkey (accounting for 46.8% of exports and 33.2% of imports), Austria (17.5% and 25.2%), Tuscany (17.1% and 11.6%), Britain (8.1% and 13.5%), and France (5.8% and 11.3%). Turkey is equivalent to the Ottoman Empire, needless to say, but we cannot so readily assume that Austria and Tuscany, as mentioned in these statistics, are the same as present-day Austria and the region in present-day Italy, respectively.

The picture becomes even less clear upon examination of residence documents. Almost all of the foreign residents registered as Austrian were Italians who probably came from the area around Venice, which was then part of the Habsburg Empire, whose capital was Vienna. Most of the persons registered as Tuscans were Jews from Livorno, which from the Middle Ages was licensed as a free economic zone and served as a seaport for Florence [Philipp, p. 63, see table (3)]. Consequently, we must assume that there was an eastern Mediterranean trading market during the first half of the 19th century since Egypt's next most important trading partners were Malta, Greece, and Sardinia, all located in either the

Table (2)

Exports from Alexandria in 1831
(Bowring, "Report on Egypt and Candia," pp. 72-73)

Egyptian Pound

	Exported to								Total	%
	Britain	Malta	Austria	France	Greece	Tuscany	Turkey	Others		
Coffee	.....	10	204	.....	.....	191	2,145	11	2,561	0.6
Corn	.....	1,705	323	.....	.....	.....	617	1,679	4,324	1.0
Cotton Wool	49,316	1,590	54,264	40,402	.....	2,993	1,181	567	150,313	36.5
Cotton Twist	.....	.....	440	.....	80	.....	4,720	.....	5,240	1.3
Elephants' Teeth	.....	.....	2,560	998	.....	.....	737	.....	4,295	1.0
Tortoise-shell	.....	.....	1,410	.....	.....	160	1,064	.....	2,634	0.6
Incense	.....	50	902	68	284	373	6,428	15	8,120	2.0
Gum	512	393	12,370	1,054	110	4,546	2,926	38	21,949	5.3
Dry	660	6,526	19,529	.....	.....	30,786	5,682	1,259	64,442	15.6
Mother of Pearl	160	.....	433	665	.....	402	90	.....	1,750	0.4
Linseed	3,462	.....	1,370	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4,832	1.2
Senneh	564	.....	1,861	148	20	884	965	.....	4,442	1.1
Tamarinds	.....	.....	1,449	30	.....	102	140	.....	1,721	0.4
Flax	.....	224	540	.....	85	1,919	3,544	.....	6,312	1.5
Skins	119	650	854	590	373	1,004	5,935	79	9,604	2.4
Rice	.....	252	25	1	2,710	250	18,590	90	21,918	5.3
Saffron	.....	.....	2,100	.....	.....	409	401	.....	2,910	0.7
Linen	.....	83	1,178	.....	523	2,900	11,133	61	15,878	3.9
Sundries	960	363	1,885	2,591	1,065	1,066	70,748	364	79,042	19.2
Total	55,753	11,846	103,697	46,547	5,250	47,985	137,046	4,163	412,287	100.0
(%)	(13.5)	(2.9)	(25.2)	(11.3)	(1.3)	(11.6)	(33.2)	(1.0)	(100.0)	

Source: Ishida, p. 100

Table (3)

Statistic of all Foreigners in Alexandria for the Year 1833

Provided by Boislecote (*G. Douin ed.*,*La Mission du Baron de Boislecote, Le Caire, 1927, p. 109*)

Anglais, Maltais, Ioniens	3,000
Français	300
Grecs	400
Levantins	20
Algériens, Romains, Suisses	50
Réfugiés Espagnols, Italiens et Allemands	40
Toscans en grande partie Juifs de Livourne	500
Autrichiens presque tous Italiens	296
Sardes	70
Napolitains	150
Espagnols des îles Baléares	60
Total	4,886

Source: Philipp, p. 63

Aegean Sea or the Adriatic Sea.

Let's move to the examination of the import and export commodities. As for the imports, the two largest commodities were woods and cotton products, whose value amounted to 42.2% (21.2% for woods and 21.0% for cotton products) of total import values. Woods were imported from Turkey and Austria. Cotton products were imported firstly from Tuscany, secondly from Austria, and thirdly from Britain.

As for the exports, cotton took the overwhelming first place (36.5% of total export values). Almost all of cotton were exported to three countries, that is Austria, Britain and France. It implicates that Egypt had already been a country specialized in cotton supply for Europe in the 1830s. But, it is significant that the first import country of Egyptian cotton was not Britain or France, but Austria. In addition, the second export commodity was cereals (15.6%), and Tuscany, Austria, Malta and Turkey were the import countries of Egyptian cereals from the first to the fourth in order.

The special attention must be paid to the commodities traded between Egypt and Turkey which was Egypt's first import and export trading partner. The statistics show that the main two commodities were woods and cotton products for import, and rice and linen for export. We can judge from this fact that the trade between Egypt and Turkey had the multiple structure, for the two countries exchanged each other the primary materials and the secondary industrial goods.

From these statistical analyses of import and export commodities, we can confirm an eastern Mediterranean trading market, whose existence was mentioned above. Under these economic circumstances, the so-called "Europeans" in the Egyptian society, especially on the level of daily life, in the first half of the 19th century, were the inhabitants in the eastern Mediterranean regions rather than the foreigners coming from the Great powers beyond the Alps such as the British and the French. Apparently, one of the most eminent "Europeans" groups was the Greek.

At any rate, in the 1830s, when the above trade statistics were drawn up, the expansion of Egyptian state power was remarkable, and its military strength surpassed even that of the Ottoman Empire. Egypt sought entry into foreign markets, and expanded its trading in the Arabian peninsula, Sudan and Ethiopia, Crete and Cyprus, and Syria. The people of the Middle East sensed the emergence of a rising empire capable of displacing the Ottoman Empire.

Trade from the port of Alexandria, on which we examined above, was directed toward the Mediterranean Sea. Taking into account also the overland trade with Libya, Sudan, and Syria, and the trade passing through the Red Sea towards the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, it hardly seems an exaggeration to state that Egypt was coming to be regarded as a regional power in the process of displacing the Ottoman Empire.

However, the international politics of the early 19th century would not permit a new power to emerge. The European powers exerted pressure, including armed force, upon

Egypt to force it to accede to the London Treaty of 1840. The treaty recognized the family of Muhammad 'Ali as hereditary viceroys of Egypt in exchange for relinquishing all conquered territories other than Sudan. It also opened the Egyptian economy to free trade. Having little choice but to accept these terms, Egypt would find itself from that time on confined to the territory of the Nile valley.

Since then, Egyptian economy was rapidly trended to have a monocultural structure, specialized in cotton plant, although its germ had been grown at the age of Muhammad 'Ali. The decisive turning point was the cotton famine caused by the Civil War in the United States from 1861 to 1864, which led a boom in the international cotton market.

Steamship routes between Alexandria and Marseille and between Suez and Bombay had already been opened in the 1830s. In 1855 a railroad was built from Alexandria to Cairo, and a second linked Cairo and Suez in 1858. In addition, the Suez Canal was opened in 1869. Egypt became the nexus linking the land and sea routes from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

All of this infrastructure was created to build up transportation links with Europe, particularly so that cotton could be sent to Britain's textile manufacturers. Thus Egypt presented itself as "Lancashire's cotton plantation". At that time, Isma'il, the Egyptian ruler of the time and the energetic promoter of modernization policy, was told to state that, "Egypt has already become part of Europe."

Unfortunately, the bill for the rapid modernization policy without a master plan was immense. During the reign of Muhammad 'Ali, the nation incurred no foreign debts. In 1862, Egypt borrowed from abroad for the first time. The debt quickly accumulated and in 1876, only 14 years after the first loan, Egypt found itself bankrupt. The country was placed under international supervision by the Western powers.

The deepening intrusions of the Western powers into Egypt's domestic politics triggered the country's first nationalistic movement in 1881. Called the 'Urabi Revolution, after the military officer who led it, the movement collapsed the following year when British soldiers landed in Alexandria. Egypt was thereafter placed under British military occupation, leading to the development of what was in fact a colonial administration.

Under this colonial administration, the monocultural economy, specialized in cotton plant, in Egypt was molded out into a hard structure. Its process is dramatically shown in the statistics of tables (4) and (5) on Egyptian trade from the latter half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century.

Table (4) is the statistics on the import and export of the port of Alexandria by trading partner in the latter half of the 1860s immediate after the cotton boom. As for import, Britain (accounting for 42.2% of total values), Turkey (14.8%), France (12.7%), Austria (8.0%), and Syria as well as Italy (6.5%) were, and as for export, Britain (accounting for 76.7% of total values), France (12.9%), Austria (6.0%), and Italy as well as Turkey (1.5%) were, Egypt's five largest trading partners, respectively.

Table (4) Import and Export Countries in Alexandria
(Average during the Years 1865-69) (E. De Regny, *Statistique de l'Égypte*, Tableau N° 13)

	Million Pounds Sterling							
	Britain	Austria	France	Italy	Turkey	Syria	Others	Total
Import	2.20	0.42	0.66	0.34	0.77	0.34	0.46	5.21
Export	7.09	0.55	1.19	0.14	0.14	0.07	0.07	9.25

Source: Nakaoka, p. 90

It is obvious from this examination that the share of the Great powers in Egypt's foreign trade increased tremendously in the 1860s, being compared with their share in the 1830s. Especially, the share of Britain in export was overwhelming.

Table (5) is the statistics on the import and export of the port of Alexandria by main trading commodity in 1869, which explains what kind of commodities were traded between Egypt and the trading partners. As for exports, cotton and cotton seeds were the two

Table (5) Imports and Exports in Alexandria in 1869
(De Regny, *Statistique de l'Égypte*, Tableau N° 13)

		Million Pounds Sterling	
Export		Import	
Cotton	5.81	Industrial Goods	1.76
Cotton Seed	0.56	Groceries	0.31
Sugar	0.37	Building Stone	0.27
Sugar Cane	0.06	Coal	0.26
Others	1.51	Others	2.58
Total	8.31	Total	5.17

Source: Nakaoka, p. 92

largest commodities, whose share totally accounted for 76.7% of export values. As for imports, industrial goods, almost all of which were cotton cloth and cotton thread, was the largest commodity, whose share accounted for 34% of import values.

These results of examination apparently show that Egypt had already have the trading structure which completely reflected the monocultural economy, specialized in cotton plant, in 1869. The share of cotton and cotton seeds amounted to more than 90% of total export values in the 1910s.

After the latter half of the 19th century, as is undoubtedly judged from the examination of trade statistics, the presence of the Western powers in the Egyptian society became so remarkable that the Great powers, especially Britain and France, were, first of all, meant by the word of "Europe". However, it is probable that the "Europeans", with whom the

common Egyptians came into contact in daily life, were still the people from the eastern Mediterranean regions, because they constantly entered into the Egyptian local economy all the while.

Especially, the entry of the Greeks was striking. They made inroads into the cotton economy and engaged in the cotton industry as well as the transportation business. Many managers of small and middle cotton industries were Greeks. The remarkable presence of the Greeks in the Egyptian society was caused by the fact that they entered into maneylending and restaurant business, the jobs which the Egyptian common people touched directly in daily life. The Greeks came to form the biggest minority group of foreigners in Egypt until the period between the two World Wars, when poet Cavafy was living in his last years. The Greeks in Egypt at that time was about one hundred and fifty thousands in population.

IV

The base of the Greeks in Egypt was Alexandria which was rebuilt and expanded as the front door to Europe in modern times. The present Alexandria, although it is called after the founder of the Hellenistic Age, is a modern city which has developed since the 19th century.

In 1798, when Napoleon Bonaparte landed in Alexandria for expedition, this city was a local town, whose population was only eight thousands. But, the development of Alexandria since then was remarkable as is shown in table (6) on the population growth in modern Egypt.

The most impressive, on this point, is the sharp contrast between the development of Alexandria and the stagnation of Rosetta in population. Rosetta, which located on the traditional trading route of the Nile, was the most important Egyptian port for the trade with Europe until then.

Alexandria was the new center for international trade in modern Egypt. There, foreign and local merchants and bankers were gathering. In Alexandria, capitals were mainly invested in commercial activities, especially those related with cotton, while, in Cairo, the capital of Egypt,

Table (6)
Population Growth in Cairo and Ports in the 19th Century

	1821-26	1846	% of Growth 1821-46	1882 (Census)	% of Growth 1846-82	1897 (Census)	% of Growth 1882-97	1907 (Census)	% of Growth 1897-1907
Cairo	218,560	256,679	+17.5	374,838	+46.0	570,062	+52.0	654,476	+14.8
Alexandria	12,528	164,359	+1,210.0	231,396	+40.8	319,766	+38.2	332,247	+3.9
Damietta	13,600	37,089	+173.0	34,044	-8.2	31,515	-7.4	29,354	-6.9
Rosetta	13,400	18,300	+36.2	16,666	-8.9	14,286	-14.3	16,810	+17.7
Suez	2,900	4,160	+43.4	10,559	+153.5	17,173	+62.7	18,347	+6.8
Port Said				16,560		42,095	+157.5	49,884	+18.5
Egypt	2,536,400	4,476,439	+76.5	6,806,381	+52.0	9,717,228	+42.7	11,189,978	+15.2

Source: Baer, pp. 134-35

money was largely invested in the transactions of urban and rural real estates.

In geography, Alexandria was an Egyptian city, located on the shore of the Mediterranean, but in real life, was a “foreign” city in modern Egypt. The map, tables (7) (8), and graphs (1)-(7), attached to the end of this essay, show the distribution of population in Alexandria by religion and nationality and the distribution of foreigners in Alexandria by district (administrative unit) from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century.

The construction of modern Alexandria was, in itself, initiated by foreigners. The members of the so-called *Conseil de l’Ornato* (or *Commission mixte permanent de l’Ornato*; in official Arabic use: *majlis al-ūrnāṭū*), which was established in Alexandria in 1834 for the ornament of the city, was composed of the Consuls General of Britain, Greece, and Sweden, and an Egyptian notable [Reimer, pp. 73-76]. In the same epoch, another committee (*majlis al-tanzīm*) was reported to be established for the planning of Alexandria. We are not informed of this committee in detail, but it is apparent that it was presided by an European, and its leading members were merchants [Mubārak, p. 55].

Foreigners lived together. The center of their residence was the District (*qism*) of al-Manshiya, where the consulates of foreign countries were opened. Almost of the buildings in this district were the spreaded architectures of European style, made of stones and bricks.

As was mentioned above, the foreigners of the Great powers enjoyed the various kind of privileges guaranteed by the international treaty called Capitulation. Capitulation was a kind of treaty concluded between the Ottoman Empire and European countries, by which the Ottoman Empire assured the security of life and property and the extraterritorial rights such as consular jurisdiction and tax exemption to foreign inhabitants in Egypt. It started as a favourable privilege one-sidedly granted by the Ottoman Empire, but came to be an unequal treaty in modern times, through which the Great powers invaded the Middle East behind their superior power to the Ottoman Empire.

Under the extraterritorial rights, the foreigners in Alexandria composed the legal communities which were subjected only to the laws of their native countries. They protected their livelihood by organizing their own institutions and facilities which offered the services necessary for the modern life style, such as police, fire-fighting, public health, education, and other social welfares. The minority groups, called “protégés”, under the protection of the Great powers were also considered to be the members of these communities.

In 1890, the municipality (*baladīya*) was introduced in Alexandria for the first time in modern Egypt. It was the result of the voluntary communal movement initiated by the big merchants in Alexandria. However, the Municipality of Alexandria was substantially managed by the legal communities in the foreign settlement, and the service which the municipality offered was the administration to protect the rights and livelihood of the inhabitants there.

The Greeks composed the biggest community in the foreign settlement in Alexandria. They organized the Greek Community, whose headquarter was situated in Alexandria, and whose branches were opened by province. The Community managed hospitals, orphanages, and other

charitable institutions, and established Greek schools. These institutions and schools played an important role in the production and reproduction of the Hellenic consciousness among the Greeks in Egypt.

The period when the Greeks expanded their influence in the Egyptian society was, at the same time, the time when the Egyptian nationalistic movement exalted. Two nationalistic movements came to clash. The period between the two World Wars, when the Egyptian nationalistic movement seemed to attain its zenith after the Revolution of 1919, was the decisive turning point about the relationship between the Greek Community and the nation-state of Egypt.

In the meantime, the Greeks became the most disliked in the Egyptian society, for, as was mentioned above, they not only made inroads into the cotton economy, but also engaged in the moneylending and restaurant business which the Egyptian common people touched directly in daily life, and in addition, the black transactions such as the smuggling of opium [cf. d'Erlanger]. The police organization was expanded from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, one of whose main objectives was to control the black market of opium [Baker, pp. 14-15]. The Greek restaurants, where alcoholic drinks were served, were attacked by Egyptians in the time of disturbances.

Cavafy was a Greek who inhabited in the foreign settlement in Alexandria. His former apartment, situated in a small street a little apart from the main street on seashore, remains until



Photo (2) *The entrance of Cavafy's apartment. A dusty plaque reads in Arabic and Greek, 'In this house for the last twenty-five years of his life lived the Alexandrian poet Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933)'.*



Photo (3) *A view from a window of Cavafy's apartment. We can see the former Greek Hospital and the Church of Greek Orthodoxy.*

now as the Commemorative Museum for Cavafy which is managed by the Greek Embassy. We can easily suppose that its site was the center of the Greek community in old days, judging from the fact that the big building in front of his apartment is the former Greek Hospital and the Church of Greek Orthodoxy is before this building. In fact, Cavafy died in the Greek Hospital in front of his apartment. We can look out over the Church before the Hospital from a window of his apartment.

V

Cavafy was born in Alexandria in 1863 as the youngest of nine children of a merchant who traded cotton with Britain. The parents, two of them, were from Constantinople (Istanbul) in Turkey. His family had lived in England before they came to Alexandria. When Cavafy was seven years old, his father died and his mother went to England with her children.

Cavafy shaped his poetic sensibility for seven years between the ages of nine and sixteen in England. He became at home in the English language and familiar with English manners. His first verse was written in English. He returned back to Alexandria with his mother in 1880, when the 'Urabi Revolution, the first nationalistic movement in modern Egypt, was about to break out. In political unrest in 1882, before the British bombardment of Alexandria, Cavafy's mother again move her family abroad for a three-year interval, this time back to Constantinople (Istanbul), her home town.

In 1885, Cavafy returned to Alexandria. At the age of twenty nine, after working as correspondent for an Alexandrian newspaper and as assistant to his brother at the Egyptian Stock Exchange, he took up a job in the Irrigation Service of the Ministry of Public Works. He held this job for the next thirty years until his retirement in 1922, and it provided him the principal income, supplemented by speculative earnings on the Egyptian Stock Exchange.

All the while, his concern and energy was paid to the composition of poems. He made poems within a restricted circle of personal relations. His literary taste is symbolically reflected in the poems for the love to infants. He remained single all his life.

He continued to live in Alexandria until his death, from cancer of the larynx, in 1933. It is recorded that he received the holy communion of the Greek Orthodox Church shortly before dying. During the lifetime, his long staying in mainland Greece was only in 1932, one year before his dying, for the medical treatment of his cancer. Greece is only a few steps away from Alexandria across the Aegean Sea. Why did not Cavafy often make a long stay in Greece. It seems to be a too speculative idea that he was so attracted by the Hellenistic world of his own to look the present Greece in the face.

Greece at that time was less sophisticated than Alexandria, not to mention England where Cavafy resided in his emotional youth. The three years stay in Constantinople, the homeland of Cavafy's parents, seemed to be poor in external life, but exciting in inner life for Cavafy. It is reported that he had his first homosexual affairs during this interval.

But, this city, the capital of the Byzantine Empire in old days, was about to be swallowed up by the Turkish nationalism. In 1923, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and the Republic of Turkey was established. In these circumstances, Alexandria was the most modern and cosmopolitan city in the eastern Mediterranean regions from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, where desires could be released freely.

However, I answer my own question if there was other important reasons for Cavafy's avoidance of the long stay in Greece, when I read the following poem titled "In Church" (composed in 1912) [Savidis, p. 44].

I love the church: its labara,
its silver vessels, its candleholders,
the lights, the ikons, the pulpit.

Whenever I go there, into a church of the Greeks,
with its aroma of incense,
its liturgical chanting and harmony,
the majestic presence of the priests,
dazzling in their ornate vestments,

the solemn rhythm of their gestures—
my thoughts turn to the great glories
of our race, to the splendor of our
Byzantine heritage.



Photo (4) *The interior of the Church of Greek Orthodoxy which can be seen from Cavafy's apartment. It is recorded that he received the holy communion of the Orthodox Church shortly before dying.*

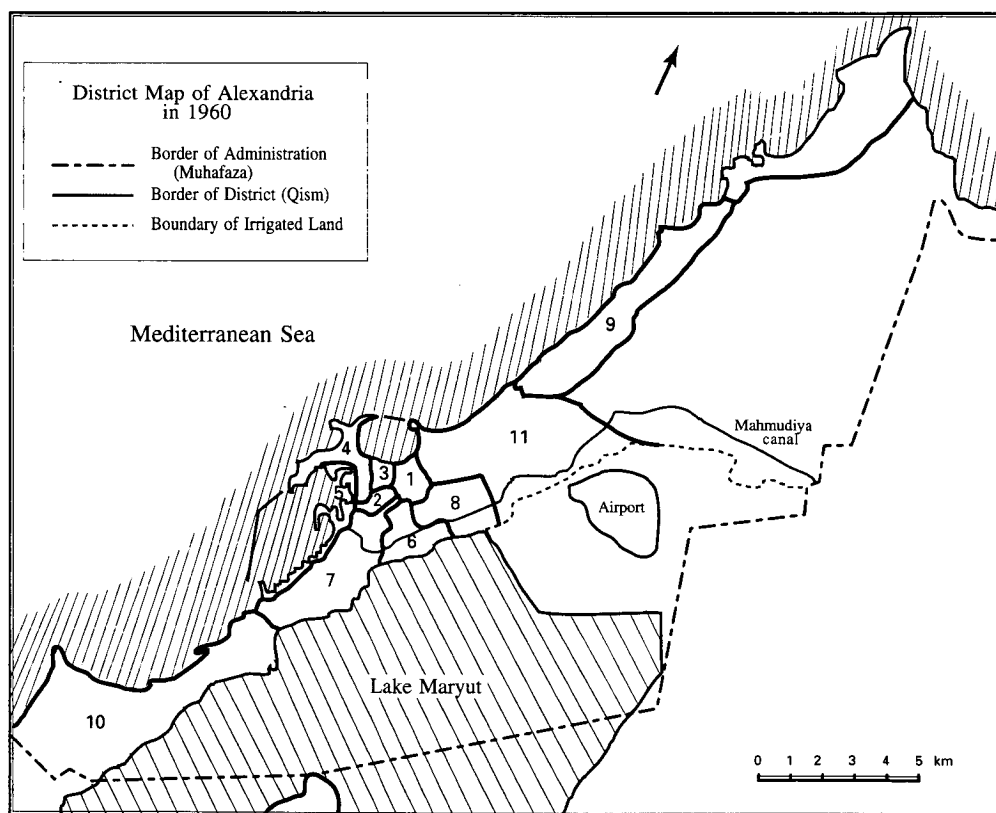
I can never identify the term "our race" in this poem with the "Greek". It is needless to say that I do not mean by it that Cavafy did not identify himself with a "Greek", and he was a cosmopolitan above the race or nation. He was reported to think of a career in politics or journalism for a time, when he was young. The historical wave in modern world, which developed around the key concepts of "nation" and "nation-state", swelled up all the individuals who were living there, independent of their personal thinking and emotion.

In conclusion, what I want to say here is that, when we take up the above poem as a text and put it in the historical situation at that time, it seems to us that the atmosphere produced by the poem is in sharp contrast with the atmosphere created by the action of Byron who

attended the Greek independent war as a volunteer or the picture of Delacroix who painted on the theme of this war.

I questioned above, when I introduced the poem titled “Waiting for the Barbarians” at the beginning of this essay, of whom “civilized” Cavafy was frightened as the “barbarians”. Now, my answer to this question seems to be apparent. That is “nationalism”. It is supposed that the “Greeks”, not to mention the “Arabs” and the “Egyptians”, were alien elements to the career and physiology of Cavafy.

“Nationalism” is “modernity” in another term. It is no doubt that the modern times were the age of the “civilized” people. But, the modern times were the age of the “barbarians” for the minorities, the illicit children of modernity, in Alexandria,



Name of District (Qism)

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 al-'Attarin | 4 al-Gumruk | 7 Mina al-Basal | 10 al-Dakhila |
| 2 al-Labban | 5 al-Mina (Port) | 8 Muharram Bey | 11 Bab Sharqi |
| 3 al-Manshiya | 6 Karmus | 9 al-Ramla | |

In 1897, District “Mina al-Basal” included District “Karmus”, “al-Dakhila”, and District “Muharram Bey” included District “Bab Sharqi”.

In 1927, District “Mina al-Basal” included District “al-Dakhila”, and District “Muharram Bey” included District “Bab Sharqi”.

Table (7)

Population of Alexandria in 1897 and 1927 by Religion

Qism	Year	Total	Muslims (%)	Christians Total	Copts	Orthodox	Catholic	Protestant	Others	Jews	Others
1 al-'Attarin	1897	40,891	21,234 (51.9)	17,814 (43.6)	819 (2.0)	7,882 (19.3)	8,286 (20.3)	827 (2.0)		1,814 (4.4)	29 (0.1)
	1927	57,853	23,153 (40.0)	29,697 (51.3)	1,947 (3.4)	17,489 (30.2)	9,637 (16.6)	624 (1.1)		4,917 (8.5)	86 (0.2)
2 al-Labban	1897	38,056	27,936 (73.4)	9,881 (26.0)	941 (2.5)	2,434 (6.4)	6,309 (16.6)	197 (0.5)		230 (0.6)	9 (0.0)
	1927	55,834	36,636 (65.6)	17,931 (32.1)	1,610 (2.9)	6,402 (11.5)	9,785 (17.5)	134 (0.2)		1,210 (2.2)	57 (0.1)
3 al-Manshiya	1897	21,263	9,161 (43.1)	9,355 (44.0)	211 (1.0)	3,996 (18.8)	4,910 (23.1)	238 (1.1)		2,746 (12.9)	1 (0.0)
	1927	29,037	13,598 (46.8)	10,112 (34.8)	304 (1.1)	6,693 (23.0)	2,874 (9.9)	241 (0.8)		5,293 (18.2)	34 (0.2)
4 al-Gumruk	1897	86,186	76,737 (89.5)	5,601 (6.5)	838 (1.0)	3,118 (3.6)	1,165 (1.4)	480 (0.5)		3,848 (4.5)	0 (0.0)
	1927	92,161	82,509 (89.5)	4,136 (4.5)	601 (0.7)	3,119 (3.4)	381 (0.4)	35 (0.0)		5,494 (6.0)	22 (0.0)
5 al-Mina (Port)	1897	2,811	1,299 (46.2)	1,488 (52.9)	30 (1.1)	433 (15.4)	526 (18.7)	499 (17.7)		2 (0.0)	22 (0.9)
	1927	2,747	539 (19.6)	1,378 (50.2)	8 (0.3)	140 (5.1)	575 (20.9)	655 (23.9)		5 (0.2)	825 (30.0)
6 Karmus	1897										
	1927	128,868	10,5698 (82.0)	22,537 (17.5)	13,039 (10.1)	6,831 (5.3)	2,520 (2.0)	147 (0.1)		616 (0.5)	17 (0.0)
7 Mina al-Basal	1897	36,828	35,772 (97.1)	1003 (2.7)	448 (1.2)	287 (0.8)	206 (0.5)	62 (0.2)		53 (0.2)	0 (0.0)
	1927	72,522	70,166 (96.8)	2,320 (3.2)	1624 (2.3)	424 (0.6)	250 (0.3)	22 (0.0)		20 (0.0)	16 (0.0)
8 Muharram Bey	1897	74,137	67,188 (90.6)	5845 (7.9)	1,915 (2.6)	1,698 (2.3)	1943 (2.6)	289 (0.4)		1,085 (1.5)	19 (0.0)
	1927	82,305	50,397 (61.2)	25,460 (30.9)	3,184 (3.9)	13,204 (16.0)	7,846 (9.5)	1,226 (1.5)		6,340 (7.7)	108 (0.2)
9 al-Ramla	1897	14,875	10,372 (69.7)	4,322 (29.1)	97 (0.7)	1,207 (8.1)	1,893 (12.7)	1,125 (7.6)		168 (1.1)	13 (0.1)
	1927	51,736	39,234 (75.8)	11,452 (22.1)	1,465 (2.8)	4,466 (8.6)	4,399 (8.5)	1,122 (2.2)		934 (1.8)	116 (0.3)
Environs Ships & War Refugees' Camps	1897	4,719	4,654 (98.6)	65 (1.4)	39 (0.8)	7 (0.2)	14 (0.3)	5 (0.1)		0 (0)	0 (0)
	Alexandria Total	1897	319,766	25,4353 (79.6)	55,374 (17.3)	5,338 (1.7)	21,062 (6.6)	25,252 (7.9)	3,722 (1.1)		9,946 (3.1)	93 (0.0)
	1927	573,063	421,930 (73.6)	125,023 (21.8)	23,782 (4.1)	58,768 (10.3)	38,267 (6.7)	4,206 (0.7)		24,829 (4.4)	1,281 (0.2)
Egypt Total	1897	9,734,405	8,977,702 (92.2)	731,235 (7.5)	609,511 (6.3)	53,401 (0.5)	56,421 (0.6)	11,902 (0.1)		25,200 (0.3)	268 (0.0)
	1927	14,177,864	12,929,260 (91.2)	1,181,910 (8.3)	946,393 (6.7)	128,293 (0.9)	92,645 (0.6)	14,579 (0.1)		63,550 (0.5)	3,144 (0.0)

Source: Population Census in 1897 and 1927

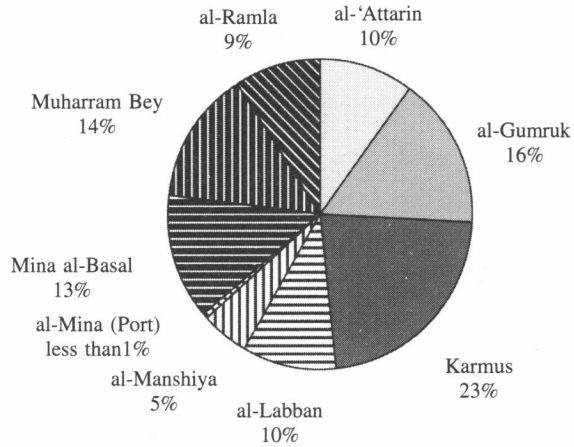
Table (8)

Population of Alexandria in 1897 and 1927 by Nationality

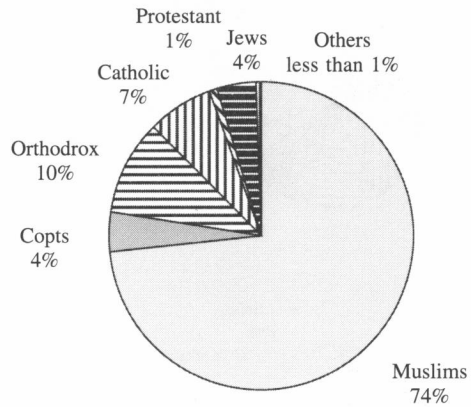
Qism	Year	Total	Egyptians (%)	Foreigners Total	British	French	Greeks	Italians	Syrians & Palestinians	Turks	Others
1 al-'Attarin	1897	40,891	25,910 (63.4)	14,981 (36.6)	1,279 (3.1)	1,149 (2.8)	6,375 (15.6)	4,001 (9.8)			2,177 (5.3)
	1927	57,853	32,275 (55.8)	25,578 (44.2)	2,442 (4.2)	1,571 (2.7)	12,817 (22.2)	5,911 (10.2)	441 (0.8)	765 (1.3)	1,631 (2.8)
2 al-Labban	1897	38,056	30,546 (80.3)	7,510 (19.7)	2,402 (6.3)	411 (1.1)	1,410 (3.7)	2,641 (6.9)			646 (1.7)
	1927	55,834	4,1439 (74.2)	14,395 (25.8)	3,367 (6.0)	527 (0.9)	3,468 (6.2)	5,295 (9.5)	426 (0.8)	642 (1.1)	670 (1.3)
3 al-Manshiya	1897	21,263	12,077 (56.8)	9,186 (43.2)	1,027 (4.8)	764 (3.6)	3,335 (15.7)	3,139 (14.8)			921 (4.3)
	1927	29,037	18,330 (63.1)	10,707 (36.9)	1,490 (5.1)	1,311 (4.5)	4,099 (14.1)	1,903 (6.6)	357 (1.2)	570 (2.0)	977 (3.4)
4 al-Gumruk	1897	86,186	80,951 (93.9)	5,235 (6.1)	1,068 (1.2)	1,754 (2.0)	1,673 (1.9)	293 (0.3)			447 (0.7)
	1927	92,161	84,753 (92.0)	7,408 (8.0)	522 (0.6)	2,538 (2.8)	1,506 (1.6)	1,725 (1.9)	178 (0.2)	433 (0.5)	506 (0.4)
5 al-Mina (Port)	1897	2,811	1,432 (50.9)	1,379 (49.1)	577 (20.5)	42 (1.5)	145 (5.2)	112 (4.0)			503 (17.9)
	1927	2,747	537 (19.5)	2,210 (80.5)	691 (25.2)	262 (9.5)	106 (3.9)	143 (5.2)	23 (0.8)	4 (0.1)	981 (35.8)
6 Karmus	1897										
	1927	128,868	121,829 (94.5)	7,039 (5.5)	530 (0.4)	480 (0.4)	3,201 (2.5)	1,497 (1.2)	119 (0.1)	856 (0.7)	356 (0.2)
7 Mina al-Basal	1897	36,828	36,277 (98.5)	551 (1.5)	88 (0.2)	134 (0.4)	232 (0.6)	85 (0.2)			12 (0.1)
	1927	72,522	71,369 (98.4)	1,153 (1.6)	121 (0.2)	172 (0.2)	270 (0.4)	485 (0.7)	2 (0.0)	29 (0.0)	74 (0.1)
8 Muharram Bey	1897	74,137	70,743 (95.4)	3,394 (4.6)	428 (0.6)	710 (1.0)	895 (1.2)	845 (1.1)			516 (0.7)
	1927	82,305	59,312 (72.1)	22,993 (27.9)	3,368 (4.1)	1,862 (2.3)	9,212 (11.2)	5,443 (6.6)	488 (0.6)	816 (1.0)	1,804 (2.1)
9 al-Ramla	1897	14,875	11,017 (74.1)	3,858 (25.9)	1,419 (9.5)	257 (1.7)	1,112 (7.5)	627 (4.2)			443 (3.0)
	1927	51,736	43,614 (84.3)	8,122 (15.7)	1,863 (3.6)	706 (1.4)	2,427 (4.7)	1,878 (3.6)	261 (0.5)	207 (0.4)	780 (1.5)
Environs Ships & War Refugees' Camps	1897	4,719	4,695 (99.5)	24 (0.5)	13 (0.3)	0 (0)	5 (0.1)	0 (0)			6 (0.1)
Alexandria Total	1897	319,766	273,648 (85.6)	46,118 (14.4)	8,301 (2.6)	5,221 (1.6)	15,182 (4.7)	11,743 (3.7)			5,671 (1.8)
	1927	573,063	473,458 (82.6)	99,605 (17.4)	14,394 (2.5)	9,429 (1.6)	37,106 (6.5)	24,280 (4.2)	2,295 (0.4)	4,322 (0.8)	7,779 (1.4)
Egypt Total	1897	9,734,405	9,621,831 (98.8)	112,574 (1.2)	19,563 (0.2)	14,172 (0.15)	38,208 (0.4)	24,454 (0.25)			16,177 (0.2)
	1927	14,177,864	13,952,264 (98.4)	225,600 (1.6)	34,169 (0.25)	24,332 (0.17)	76,264 (0.54)	52,462 (0.37)	6,716 (0.05)	9,284 (0.06)	22,373 (0.16)

Source: Population Census in 1897 and 1927

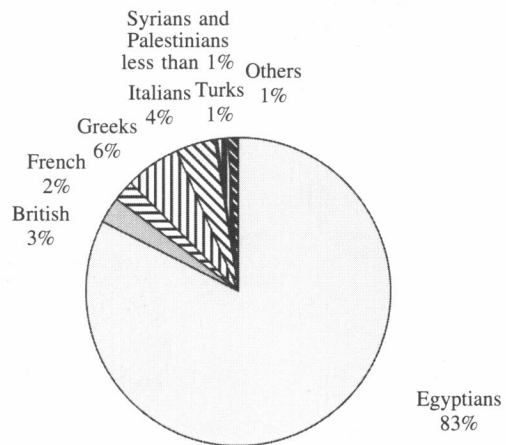
Graph (1)
Population of Alexandria
in 1927 by District



Graph (2)
Population of Alexandria
in 1927 by Religion

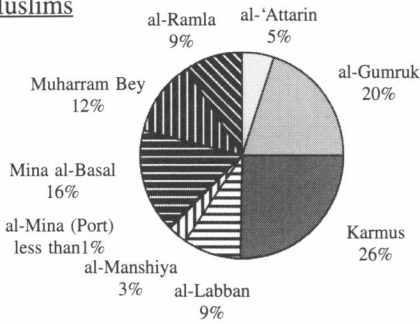


Graph (3)
Population of Alexandria
in 1927 by Nationality

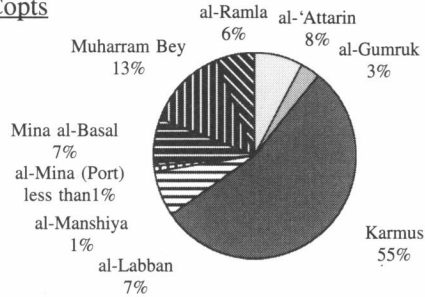


Graph (4)
Population of District in Alexandria in 1927 by Religion

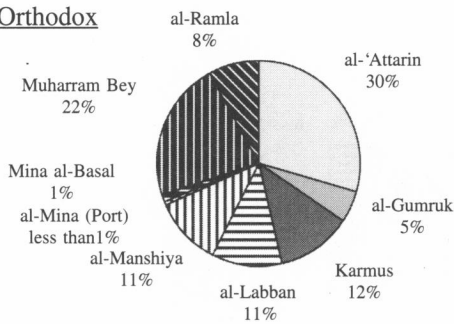
Muslims



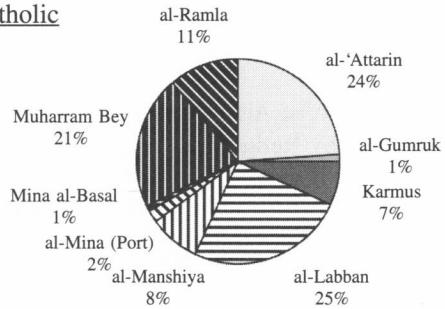
Copts



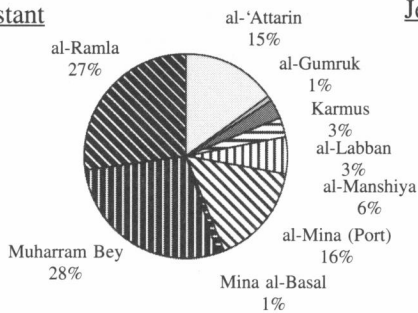
Orthodox



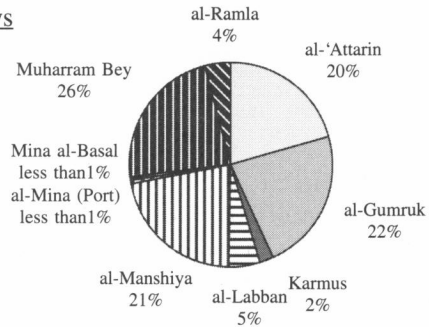
Catholic



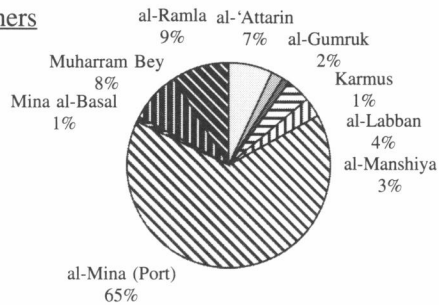
Protestant



Jews

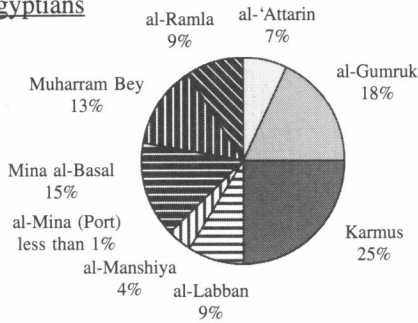


Others

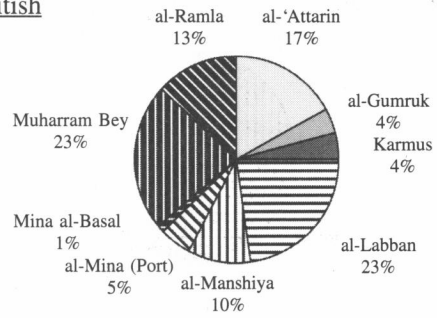


Graph (5)
Population of District in Alexandria in 1927 by Nationality

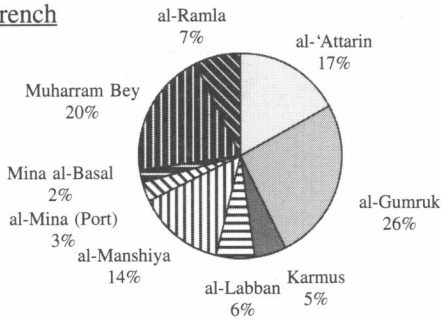
Egyptians



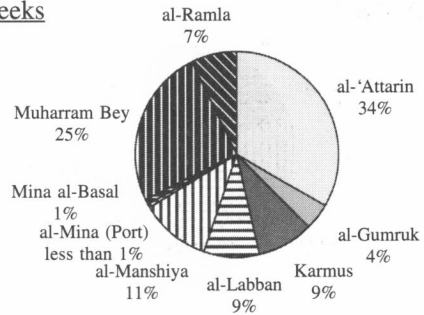
British



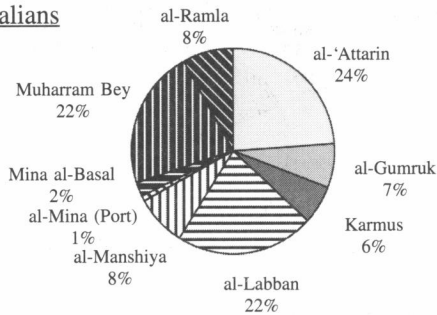
French



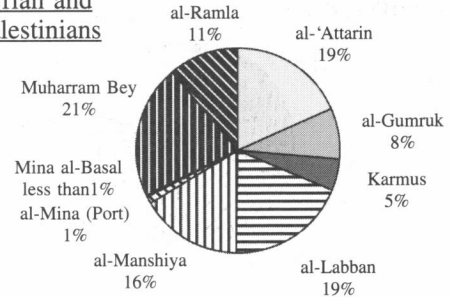
Greeks



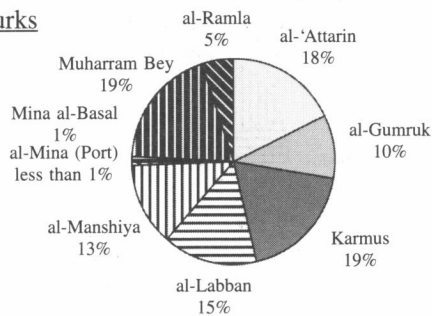
Italians



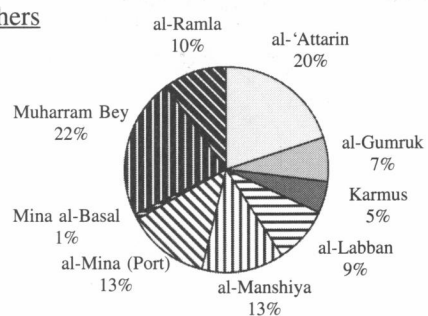
Syrian and
Palestinians



Turks

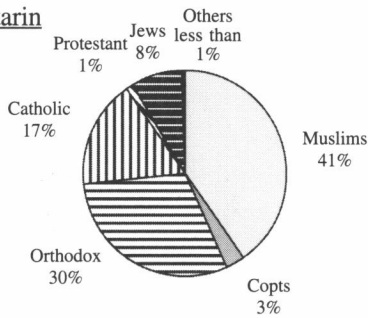


Others

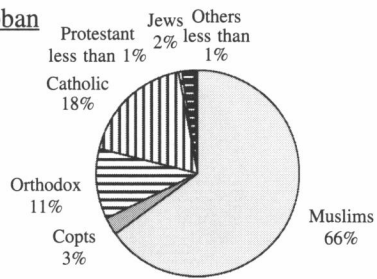


Graph (6)
Demographic Composition in District of Alexandria in 1927 by Religion

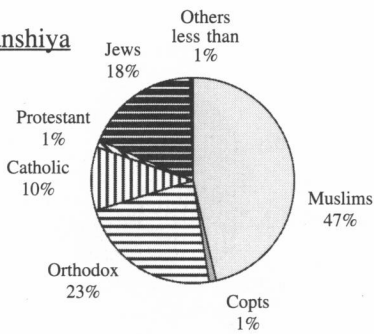
al-'Attarin



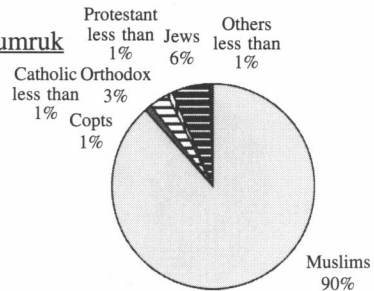
al-Labban



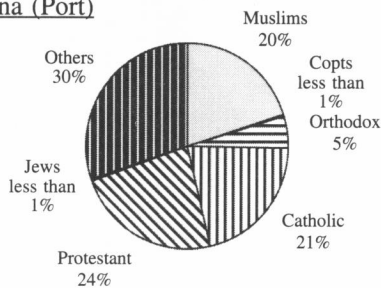
al-Manshiya



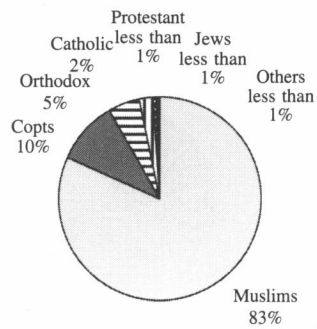
al-Gumruk



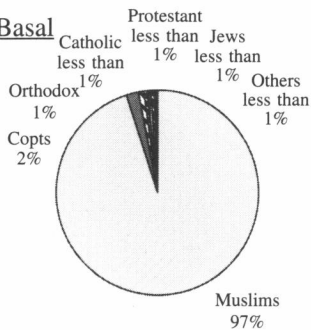
al-Mina (Port)



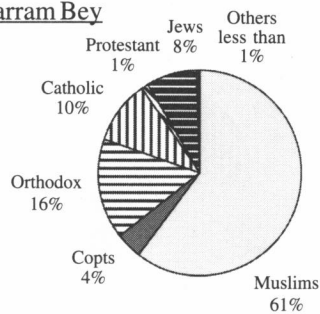
Karmus



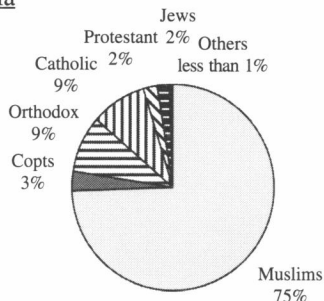
Mina al-Basal



Muharram Bey



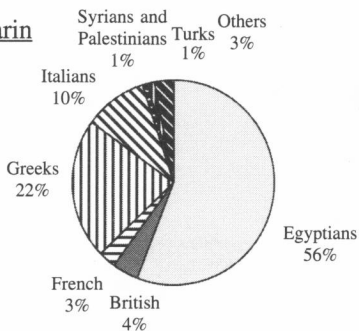
al-Ramla



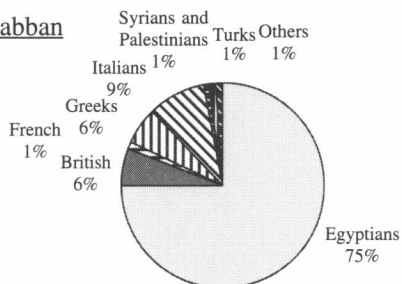
Graph (7)

Demographic Composition in District of Alexandria in 1927 by Nationality

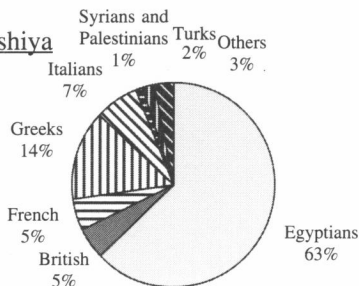
al-'Attarin



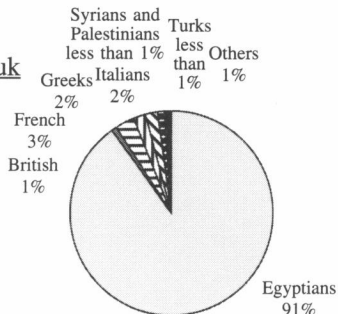
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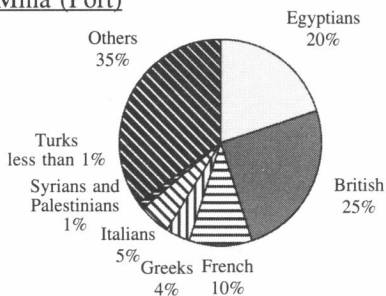
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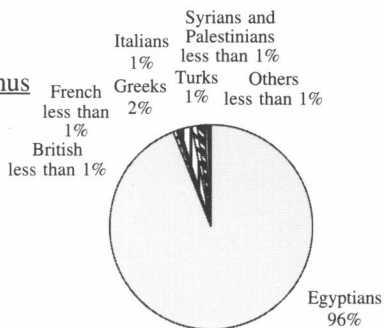
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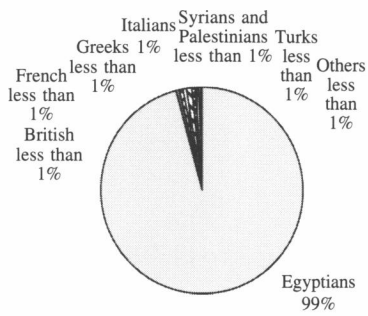
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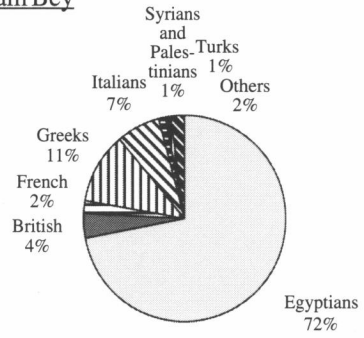
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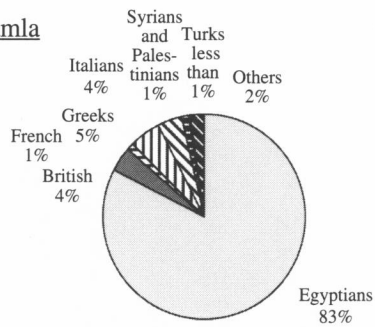
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Muharram Bey



al-Ramla



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