

Handout #2

Reports by the French Consul, quoted in Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800-1914* (New York and Oxford, 1988,) pp.79, 306

.... As is well know, Syria is an important center of silk production....The Mountain is covered with factories for the raising of silkworms and the reeling of cocoons. These factories are an important source of income for the people of this country, who thanks to this industry grow large mulberry groves on land of low fertility which would otherwise have remained untilled and unproductive.

It is especially since 1850 that the raising of silkworms and reeling of cocoons have remarkably developed; today there are 67 factories, almost all in the hands of natives, whereas between 1840 and 1850 there were only 5 of which 3 belonged to Frenchmen. This rapid expansion is due to various causes. First of all I would mention the undoubted security that the new Administration has introduced in the Mountain and that, by giving the people assurance that they will not be disturbed in their undertakings, has encouraged them to risk in such enterprises capital which during the previous state of turbulence they were force to hide.