

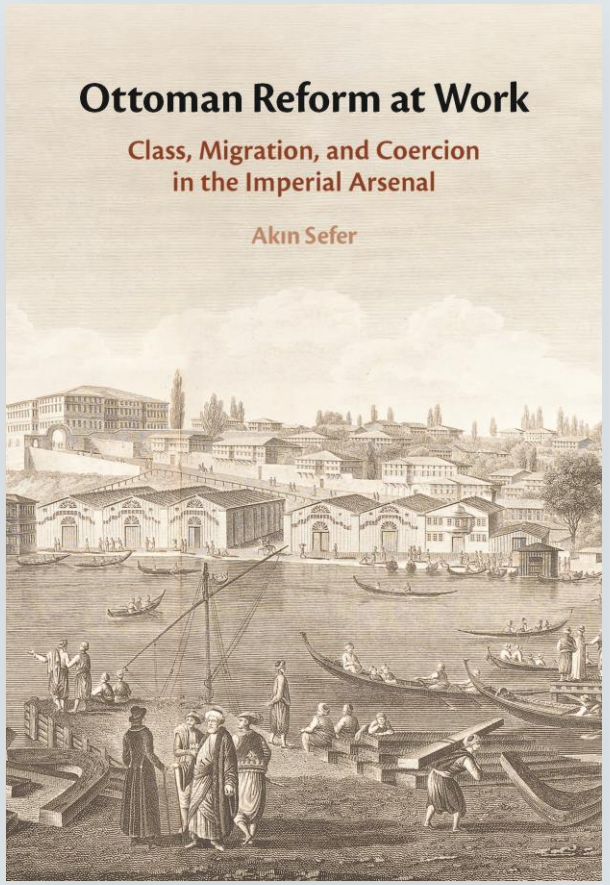
British Workers in Late Ottoman Istanbul

Akın Sefer

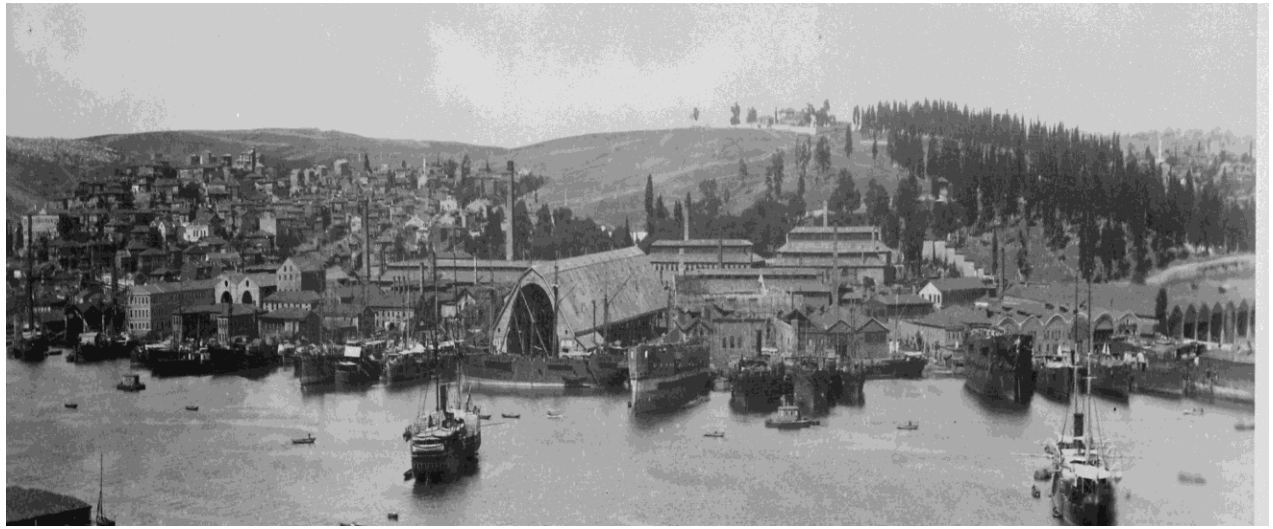
Kadir Has University

Imperial Arsenal (Tersane-i Amire)

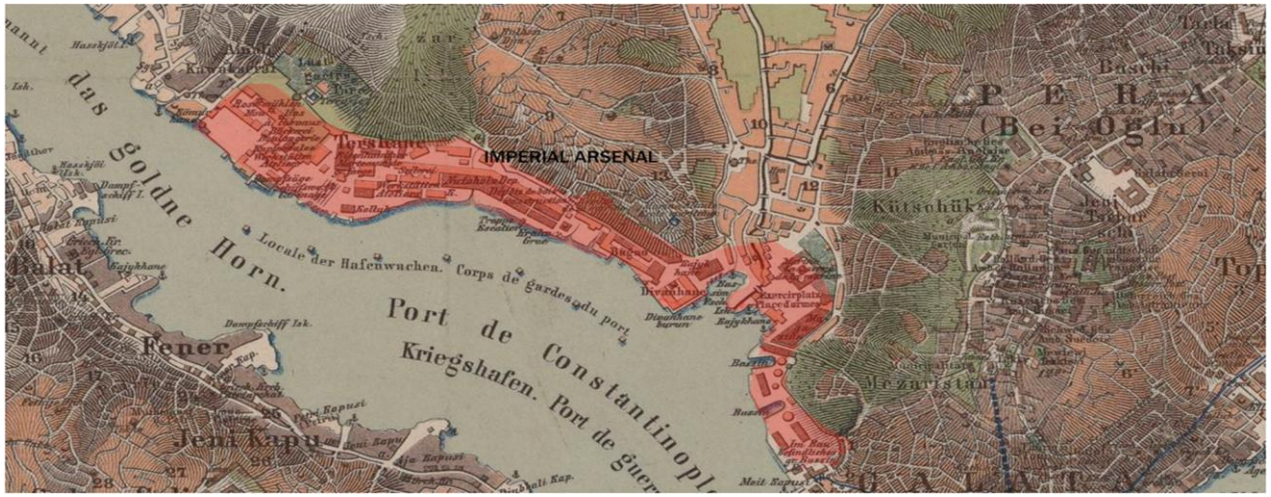




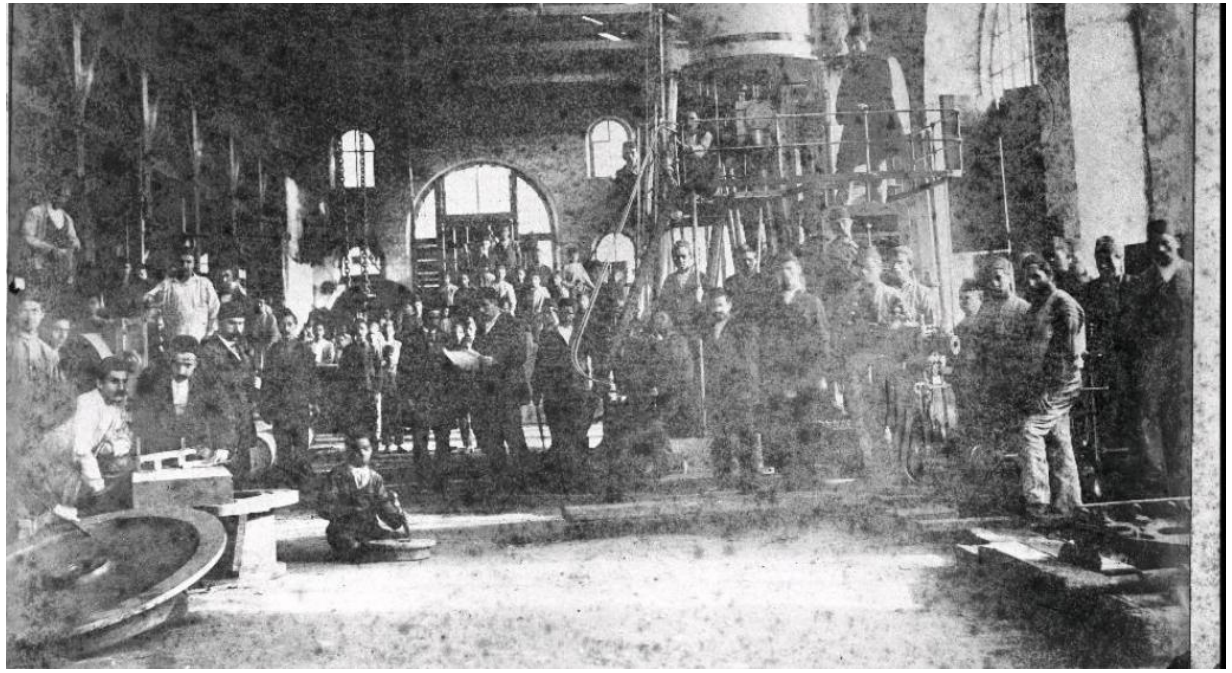
The Imperial Arsenal

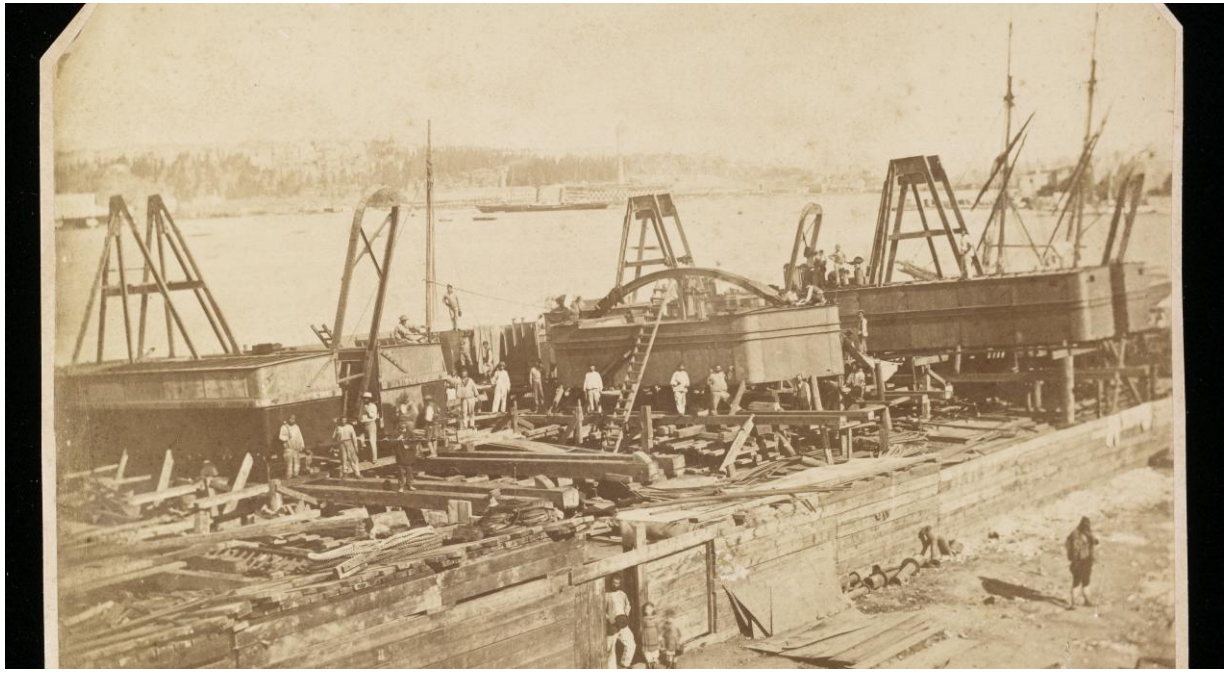
















Permanent (Daimi)	**Manufacture (İmalat)**	**Construction (İnşa'iye)**	**The Square (Meydan)**	**Drydocks (Havuzlar)**	**TOTAL**
Workers	707	797	1112	488	3104
British Workers	85	43	0	0	128
Conscripts	320	489	188	260	1257
Civilian *Haddad* Apprentices	89	0	0	0	89
Military *Haddad* Apprentices	252	0	0	0	252
Permanent Total	1453	1329	1300	748	**4830**
Temporary (Muvakkat)					
Workers	0	371	138	0	509
British Workers	0	37	0	0	37
Temporary Total	0	408	138	0	**546**
AGGREGATE	1453	1737	1438	748	**5376**

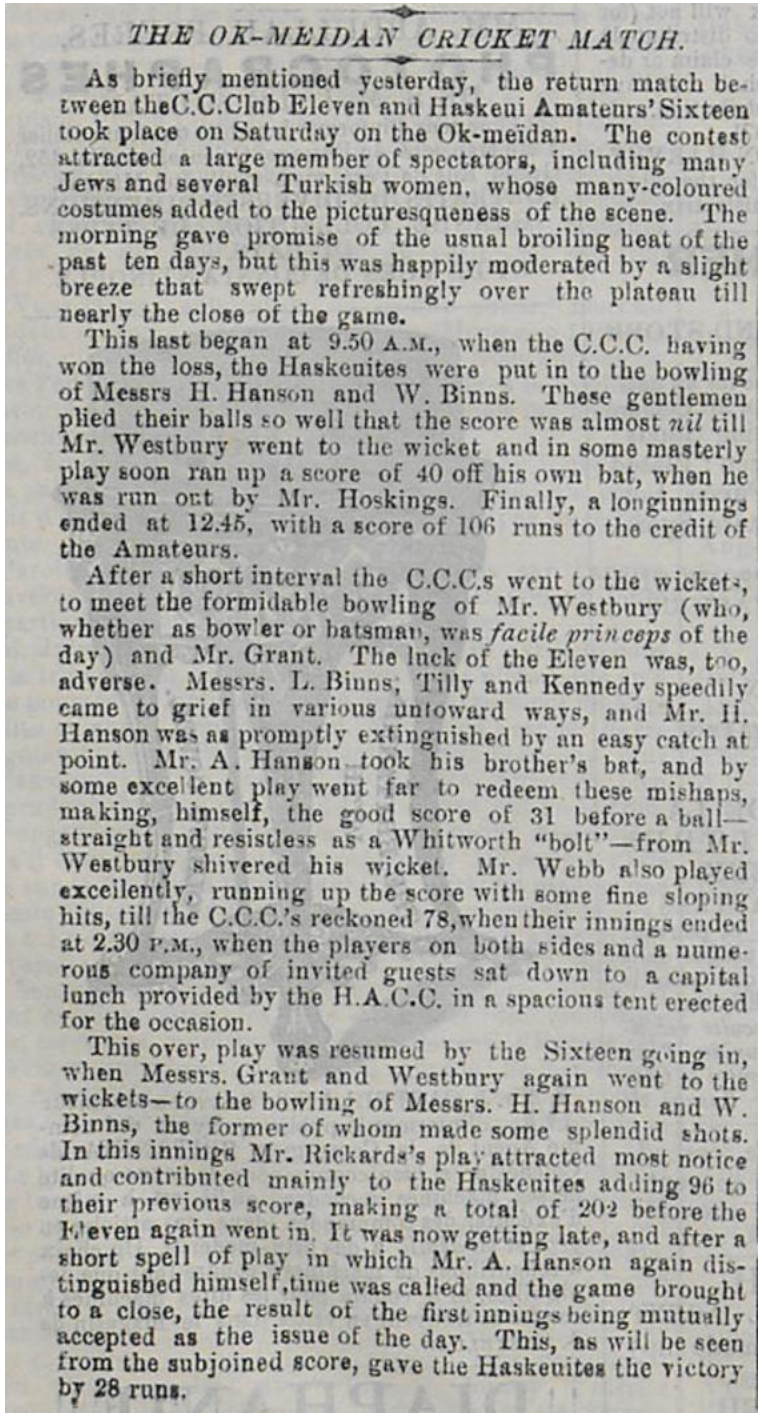
An Overview of the Labor Force in the Imperial Arsenal (1870)



The British Community in Hasköy

- By 1873, 139 families, c.700 people
- «British Hasskenites…have in their social life created for themselves a little world of their own, the type of their fatherland.»
- Mechanics' Institute, 1859
  - 168 members by 1873
  - Lecture hall as a school for c.140 children
- British Literary and Mechanics' Association

«As briefly mentioned yesterday, the return match between C.C. Club Eleven and Haskeui Amateurs' Sixteen took place on Saturday on the Ok-meidan. The contest attracted a large member of spectators, including many Jews and several Turkish women, whose many-colored costumes added to the picturesqueness of the scene…»
The Levant Herald, 1871



THE OK-MEIDAN CRICKET MATCH.

As briefly mentioned yesterday, the return match between theC.C.Club Eleven and Haskeui Amateurs' Sixteen took place on Saturday on the Ok-meïdan. The contest attracted a large member of spectators, including many Jews and several Turkish women, whose many-coloured costumes added to the picturesqueness of the scene. The morning gave promise of the usual broiling heat of the past ten days, but this was happily moderated by a slight breeze that swept refreshingly over the plateau till nearly the close of the game.

This last began at 9.50 A.M., when the C.C.C. having won the loss, the Haskeuites were put in to the bowling of Messrs H. Hanson and W. Binns. These gentlemen plied their balls so well that the score was almost *nil* till Mr. Westbury went to the wicket and in some masterly play soon ran up a score of 40 off his own bat, when he was run out by Mr. Hoskings. Finally, a longinnings ended at 12.45, with a score of 106 runs to the credit of the Amateurs.

After a short interval the C.C.C.s went to the wickets, to meet the formidable bowling of Mr. Westbury (who, whether as bowler or batsman, was *facile princeps* of the day) and Mr. Grant. The luck of the Eleven was, too, adverse. Messrs. L. Binns, Tilly and Kennedy speedily came to grief in various untoward ways, and Mr. H. Hanson was as promptly extinguished by an easy catch at point. Mr. A. Hanson took his brother's bat, and by some excellent play went far to redeem these mishaps, making, himself, the good score of 31 before a ball—straight and resistless as a Whitworth "bolt"—from Mr. Westbury shivered his wicket. Mr. Webb also played excellently, running up the score with some fine sloping hits, till the C.C.C.'s reckoned 78,when their innings ended at 2.30 P.M., when the players on both sides and a numerous company of invited guests sat down to a capital lunch provided by the H.A.C.C. in a spacious tent erected for the occasion.

This over, play was resumed by the Sixteen going in, when Messrs. Grant and Westbury again went to the wickets—to the bowling of Messrs. H. Hanson and W. Binns, the former of whom made some splendid shots. In this innings Mr. Rickards's play attracted most notice and contributed mainly to the Haskeuites adding 96 to their previous score, making a total of 202 before the Eleven again went in. It was now getting late, and after a short spell of play in which Mr. A. Hanson again distinguished himself,time was called and the game brought to a close, the result of the first innings being mutually accepted as the issue of the day. This, as will be seen from the subjoined score, gave the Haskeuites the victory by 28 runs.



July 27th A.D. 1854

Excellency

I the undersigned have been employed in the Arsenal as an Engineer for about twelve months, the which I hope, you will consider sufficient to prove whether my abilities as a Mechanick are such as to entitle me to an advance of wages.

If your Excellency can give me the same as the other Mechanicks in your service, I shall ever feel grateful. But if you cannot I will consider myself at liberty to leave at the end of this month.

I am
Your Obedient Servant
John McDonald

By
His Excellency
Selim Pasha
Dr. D. D.
Arsenal

Sir,

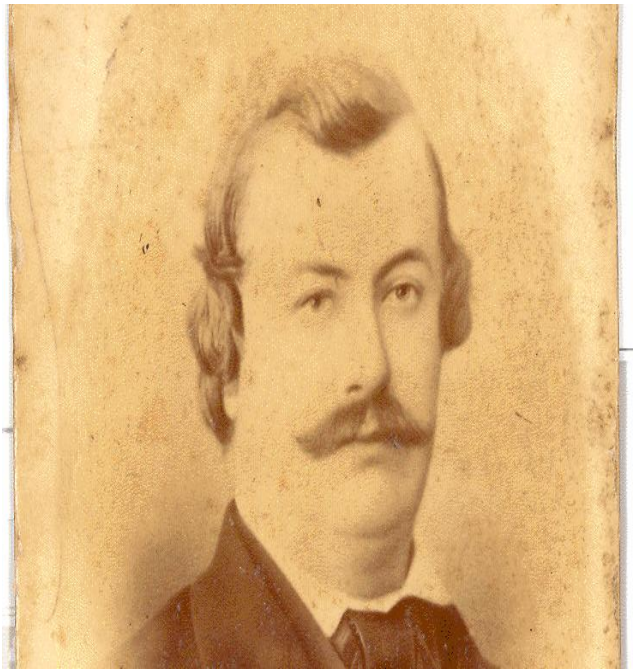
Nearly 70 British Subjects Engineers, Shipbuilders, moulders &c employed at the Imperial Arsenal at Hasskeuy called on me to day to ask advice I should inform you that they constituted more than two thirds of the number of the British workmen

To His Excellency

resident

THE ENGINEERS' STRIKE at THE ARSENAL.

We hear with regret of another strike on the part of the engineers at the Imperial Arsenal, the more so as we had hoped that, by the arrangement made between them and the authorities last summer, no similar differences would have again arisen. The same regrettable cause of disagreement—delay in the payment of wages—has, however, again produced its consequences. The men employed at the factories and engine-shops resumed work last year with the understanding that not more than one month's pay should remain in arrear; otherwise, strange as it may sound to factory owners in England, they would be *permitted to strike work*. Those who made such an arrangement on the part of the authorities no doubt did it in good faith, and we do not believe would have tried to evade their compact with the men had it been in their power to fulfil it. Neither can we believe that Mahmoud Pasha himself knows anything about the actual state of things. To suspend works of such importance at the present time merely for the sake of a few hundred pounds, is far beneath the dignity of the Turkish Government, and such a thing, we feel sure, could not take place if it were represented in the proper quarter. The engineers, however, either do









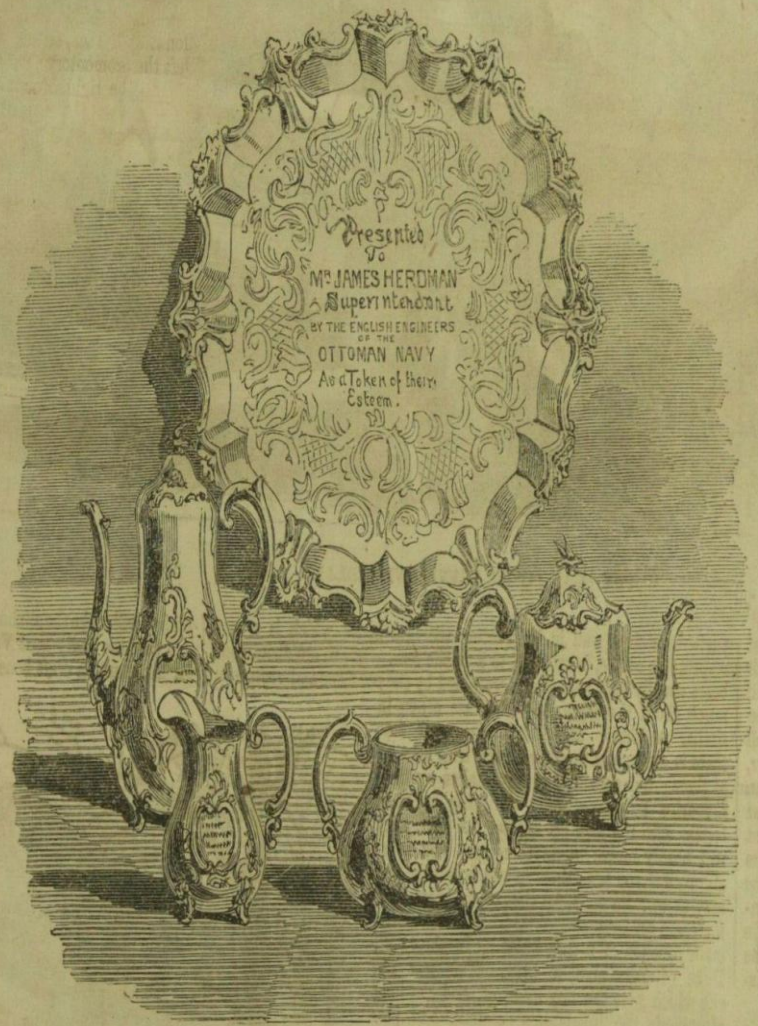
James & Martha Herdman Memorabilia
(Courtesy of Claire Armitage)

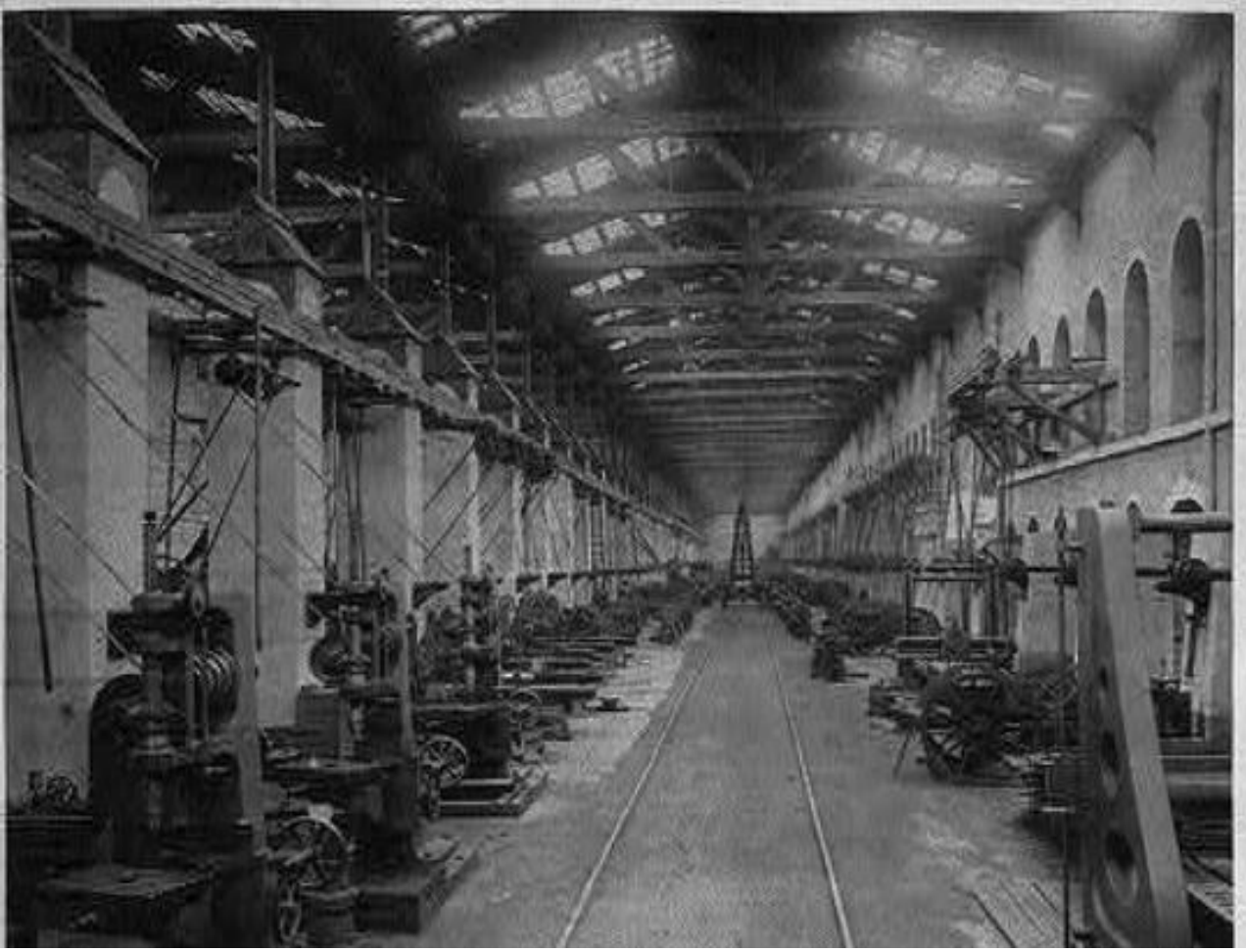
PLATE PRESENTED TO HERDMAN BEY,

THE SUPERINTENDENT ENGINEER OF THE IMPERIAL OTTOMAN NAVY.

SINCE the memorable catastrophe of Sinope the Ottoman Government has had its attention directed to the formation of a steam navy in place of the old sailing line-of-battle ships and frigates which were used up to the period of the Crimean war. A number of screw-frigates and other vessels of different classes have been during the past four years built in the Thames, and by Messrs. White, of Cowes, for the Turkish Government, and these have all been fitted with engines from the best makers. The whole corps of engineers employed in the management of these men-of-war are Englishmen, and at their head is placed Mr. James Herdman, who has attained the rank of Bey in Turkey. This gentleman has been in the Ottoman service for more than a quarter of a century. During this lengthened period he has succeeded in not only gaining for himself the entire confidence of the Government, but even in circumstances of difficulty which could scarcely be understood in Western Europe he has been enabled to manage the department intrusted to him with such ability that he has on every occasion gained for himself the entire respect of the men under his command. Herdman Bey occupies a leading position among Englishmen in the East: his manly, straightforward character, his cool judgment, and his professional ability combine to command for him an influence with the Turkish authorities which few Europeans have ever attained. And to his credit it must be said that this influence is ever exerted in the most honourable manner, and with a sincere desire to promote the interests of the Government. While thus strictly discharging the important trust confided to him, his genial goodheartedness is never wanting towards his countrymen who are placed under him. Throughout all classes of society—Turks and Franks—in Constantinople, no man is more generally respected than the Bey; his frank, open, generous character well sustains his country's repute, and in so heterogeneous a community it is no small thing to say that he occupies so high a position.

The engineers of the Ottoman Navy, to the number of nearly a hundred, have recently entertained their superintendent at a dinner at Baltzer's Hotel, Pera. The chair was occupied on the occasion by Mr. W. H. Cross, the senior engineer, and the vice by Mr. Orr, who has senior rank in the service. The Chairman, in an appropriate speech replete with good taste and feeling, after the usual healths had been drunk, presented Herdman Bey with a handsome service of plate, of which we give an Illustration.







«Military Industry, Labour, and Social Transformation in Ottoman Istanbul: The Tophane Zone, 1789-1856» Tübitak-1001 Project (2026-2029)