

very small relative to total food imports, whether measured in quantity or value.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, the principal fruit export was melons and watermelons and to a much smaller extent almonds, not including, of course, citrus exports. Melon and watermelon export represented no less than 80 percent of total fruit export between 1928 and 1944, and in some years a much higher share.<sup>58</sup> Exports of melons and watermelons declined after 1930 because of the institution of an import tax by Egypt, which until then was one of the major import markets.<sup>59</sup> A further substantial decline in exports took place during WWII.<sup>60</sup>

#### 4.1.4 Olives

The cultivation of olive trees is a centuries-old tradition in Palestine. It was primarily cultivated in the hill regions, although could also be found in the inland plains. Besides being an important source of income for a substantial number of peasants, it also was an important component of their diet, especially in its oil form.

Some of the olives were pickled, but the bulk of it was pressed for olive oil used either for consumption or the making of olive oil soap. Both olive oil and soap, and especially the latter, were traditional exports during Ottoman times. The

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<sup>57</sup>See *Abstract 1939*, 62-3; *Abstract 1940*, 63; *Abstract 1943*, 97; *Abstract 1944/45*, 68.

<sup>58</sup>*Abstract 1939*, 70-71; *Abstract 1940*, 71; *Abstract 1943*, 99; *Abstract 1944/45*, 74.

<sup>59</sup>Brown, "Agriculture," 158.

<sup>60</sup>*Survey II*, 829; Brown, "Agriculture," 148; *Survey I*, 135.