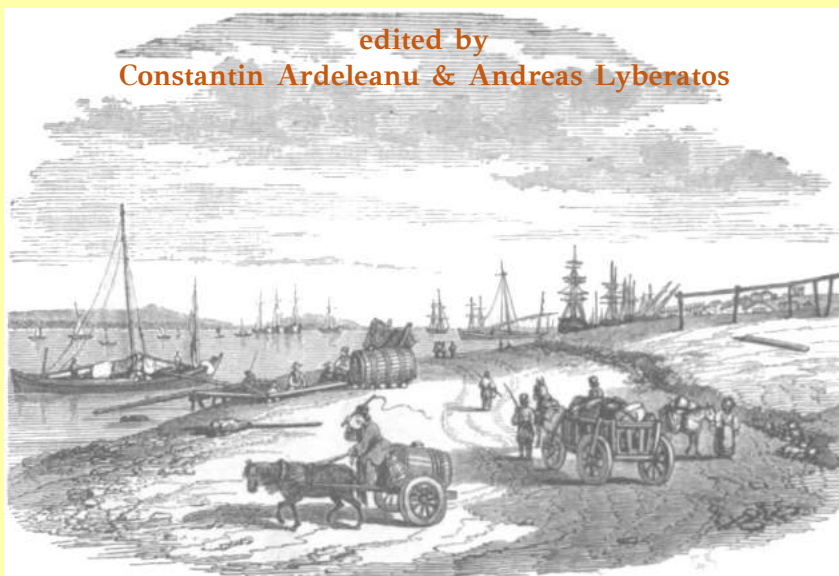


Black Sea Project Working Papers vol. I

# PORT CITIES OF THE WESTERN BLACK SEA COAST AND THE DANUBE

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

edited by  
Constantin Ardeleanu & Andreas Lyberatos

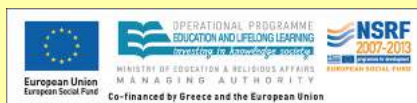


Corfu 2016

*Thales programme. Reinforcement of the Interdisciplinary  
and/or inter-institutional Research and Innovation*

Ionian University: “Black Sea and Port Cities from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.  
Development, Convergence and Interconnections to the World Economy”

ISBN: 978-960-7260-56-7



## Black Sea Project Working Papers Series

1. Constantin Ardeleanu and Andreas Lyberatos (eds), *Port-Cities of the Western Shore of the Black Sea: Economic and Social Development, 18th – Early 20th Centuries*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 1.
2. Evrydiki Sifneos, Oksana Iurkova and Valentina Shandra (eds), *Port-Cities of the Northern Shore of the Black Sea: Institutional, Economic and Social Development, 18th – Early 20th Centuries*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 2.
3. Gelina Harlaftis, Victoria Konstantinova and Igor Lyman (eds), *The Port-Cities of the Eastern Coast of the Black Sea, Late 18th – Early 20th Centuries*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 3.
4. Mikhail Davidov, Gelina Harlaftis, Vladimir Kulikov and Vladimir Morozan, *The Economic Development of the Port-Cities of the Northern and Southern Black Sea Coast, 19th – Beginning of the 20th Century. Transport, Industry and Finance*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 4.
5. Edhem Eldem, Vangelis Kechriotis, Sophia Laiou (eds), *The Economic and Social Development of the Port-Cities of the Southern Black Sea Coast, Late 18th – Beginning of the 20th Century*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 5.
6. Vassilis Colonas, Alexandra Yerolympou and Athina Vitopoulou, *Architecture and City Planning in the Black Sea Port-Cities*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 6.
7. Maria Christina Chatziioannou (ed.), *Linkages of the Black Sea with the West. Trade and Immigration*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 7.
8. Socratis Petmezas, George Kostelenos and Alexandra Papadopoulou (eds), with the Collaboration of Marios Emmanouil, *The Development of 24 Black Sea Port-Cities. A Statistical Approach*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 8.
9. I. Theotokas – A.A. Pallis – M. Lekakou, *Shipping, Ports and Cities in Soviet and post-Soviet Period. Reintegration in the Global Economy*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 9.
10. Evrydiki Sifneos, *Imperial Odessa: Peoples, Spaces, Identities*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 10.
11. Alexandra Papadopoulou, *The Intregation of the Black Sea Markets to the Global Economy, 19th Century*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 11.
12. Anna Sydorenko, *The Economic and Social Development of the Crimean City-Ports During the Second Half of the 19th Century*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 12.
13. Iannis Carras and Eugene Chernukhin, *The Balkan Merchants of Nezhin 17th-19th centuries*, Black Sea Working Papers, vol. 13.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	v
<b>1. Cristian Luca</b> , The Venetian Consul at Kherson Pietro Maria Locatelli and his Reports on International Trade in the North–Western Black Sea Ports (1793–1797) .....	1
<b>2. Andrei Emilciuc</b> , The Trade of Galați and Brăila in the Reports of Russian Officials from Sulina Quarantine Station (1836–1853) .....	63
<b>3. Dimitrios Kontogeorgis</b> , “International” and “National” Ports. The Competition between the Ports of Brăila / Galați and Constanța during the Period 1878–1914 .....	95
<b>4. Constantin Ardeleanu</b> , Romania’s Investments in Its Maritime Ports (1878–1914) .....	130
<b>5. Constantin Cheramidoglu</b> , Aspects Regarding Constanța’s Economic Life (1878-1914) .....	165
<b>6. Dimiter Christov</b> , The Rise of a Port: Socio-economic Development of Burgas in the 19thc. ....	177
<b>7. Ivan Roussev</b> , The Black Sea Port-City in the Road of Modernization. The First Modern Attempts in Varna during the 1840s – 1870s .....	214
<b>8. Andreas Lyberatos</b> , Varna’s Bourgeoisie(s) from Empire to Nation-State (1840-1912) .....	225



## Introduction

Trade and shipping in the Black Sea witnessed a remarkable growth after 1774, when by the provisions of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) the Sublime Porte was forced to allow the trade of Russian flagged ships beyond the Straits of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. During the next two decades, in a strained international context, the Russians gradually developed a string of trading emporiums along the northern coast of the Black Sea and encouraged foreign merchants to make full use of this new commercial route. European powers were quick in trying to take advantage of the rich agro-pastoral resources of the Black Sea area, and the Venetian merchants, well involved in the commercial activities of the Eastern Mediterranean, were among the first to follow on the footsteps of their medieval ancestors.

Based on his long research experience in the Venetian archives, **Cristian Luca** contributes to this volume with a valuable portfolio of unpublished sources and a paper that minutely describes Venice's interest in the Black Sea trade in the 1790s, the early phase in the development of Russia's southern commercial outposts. The main actor is Venice's consul at Kherson, Pietro Maria Locatelli, whose correspondence is only partially preserved at the State Archives of Venice. Locatelli was appointed consul in July 1793, with the title of "assistant delegate for Venetian trade in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov", due to his experience and knowledge of the local economic environment. In fact, Locatelli had resided for a while at Saint Petersburg, and settled with his family at Kherson after its foundation. The consul sent periodic dispatches to the Venetian *bailo* at Constantinople and to Venice's Board of Trade (the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*), many of which are included by Dr Luca in the appendix of his paper. Locatelli's reports provide new or little-known information on the involvement of Greek merchants and ship-owners, as both Ottoman and Venetian subjects, in the international trade through the ports of the Crimea, Southern Ukraine, the mouths of

the Danube and the Sea of Azov. Managing their business through family companies with rapid access to the international market and a network of agents contracting for the grain harvests in advance, they settled in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the economic foundations that contributed, during the next century, in transforming the Black Sea into the largest grain exporting area in the world.

As Dr Luca proves on the basis of Italian sources, besides the products supplied by the Ukrainian and Russian Black Sea ports in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, foreign merchants also became interested in the commercial resources of the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, autonomous states under Ottoman domination. A “relative” monopoly over their foreign trade meant that they were compelled to supply large quantities of grain (mainly wheat and barley), livestock (sheep), animal fat, butter, pressed cheese, honey, wax, timber, salt-peter etc. for the Porte’s needs, either free or at fixed prices much under the real value of the merchandise. However, Moldavia and Wallachia were also engaged in continuously increasing free commercial exchanges with the Ottoman Empire and other partners (Austria in the first place). The main categories of freely exported merchandise were live animals and animal products, technical plants, worked textiles, raw and worked hides, salt, etc., whereas the main imports were represented by textiles, fruit and luxury goods. When the Constantinopolitan market was abundantly supplied, the export of wheat was freely allowed from the principalities. Smuggling such “strategic goods” was common practice, so that important quantities of grain were loaded in the inland ports or at the Sulina mouth of the Danube on the ships that sailed into the Black Sea.

The Russian-Ottoman Treaty of Adrianople (1829) and subsequent political developments in the Ottoman Empire radically altered the commercial value of the western coast of the Black Sea. After 1829 the Danubian Principalities witnessed a veritable commercial revolution. The abolishment of the Porte’s relative commercial “monopoly” and the almost simultaneous introduction of steam navigation on the Danube (1830) turned the inland ports of Brăila and Galați into large suppliers of grain on the European markets, but also into large importers of industrial goods from western countries. The establishment of a regular service of Austrian steamers

on the Danube nourished great expectations for turning the river into one of “the most important lines of communication in Europe” or “the natural artery of Europe”. Favored by this profitable grain trade and endowed with a free port status since 1836-1837, the outlets grew rapidly, so as to apparently endanger the leading position of Odessa. The incrimination that Russia was willingly neglecting to take the necessary actions for clearing the Sulina bar and channel, the only navigable route towards the Romanian ports, stood at the basis of a diplomatic conflict between Russia and the western cabinets (the so-called Danube Question), which was eventually solved after the Crimean War by the establishment of the European Commission of the Danube, an institution meant to clear the maritime Danube of all natural and artificial obstacles hindering navigation.

**Andrei Emilciuc** contributes to this volume with a paper on how the growing trade of Brăila and Galați was regarded, during the two decades that preceded the Crimean War, by the Russian authorities established after 1829 at the Sulina mouth of the Danube. Since the 1830s the Russians moved the Empire’s sanitary frontier along the Sulina channel, in 1836 a quarantine station was established at Sulina, and in 1840, in the context of the Russian-Austrian convention on Danube navigation, the harbor master’s office was instituted, led by a Russian officer, P. V. Soloviev.

Using the reports sent by the Russian officials from the quarantine station and the harbor master’s office at Sulina, Dr Emilciuc follows the emergence of the port of Sulina and the development of Danubian trade and shipping. Placed in an unhealthy area at the very end of the Russian Empire, Sulina was not easily granted the funds necessary for the construction of the administrative infrastructure, especially as the central and regional authorities were fully aware that the incomes from taxes paid by Austrian vessels were insufficient for covering the expenses incurred by securing the proper navigability of the Danube. The author accompanies his narrative with numerous statistical data on the trade and shipping of Brăila and Galați: the volume and value of exports, flags of the ships, their names, ship-captains and crews, ports of origin and destination, cargoes. Thus, according to the data available for 1843, most of the ships that entered the Danube headed to Galați (67.7 percent) and Brăila (20.6 percent), while the rest sailed to smaller

Ottoman ports such as Tulcea, Măcin or Isaccea or to the Russian outlet of Ismail. Most ships that cleared from Sulina were loaded with cargoes of wheat, barley and corn and sailed to Constantinople, but also to Trieste, Venice, Marseille, Genoa, Leghorn etc. Valuable details on Danubian shipping also result from the reports concerning the shipwrecks that occurred in the area of the Danube Delta. Such documents generally include a basic description of the ship (name, captain), followed by a detailed account of the conditions that favored the disaster: its main cause, insurance (if it existed, where it was issued and what it covered), number of survivors and quantity of cargo saved, if at all.

The papers of **Dimitris Kontogeorgis** and **Constantin Ardeleanu** analyze, from two distinct though complementary perspectives, the history of Romania's maritime ports of Brăila, Galați, Sulina and Constanța during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, a period marked by important transformations in the national, political and economic constellation of the area along the western coast of the Black Sea.

Dr. Dimitris Kontogeorgis approaches the rivalry between the large Romanian ports in the context of the more general process of nation and state building in South-Eastern Europe and of the economic nationalism advocated by a large part of the Romanian political, industrial and commercial elites. In the first part of his paper the author insists on the circumstances and the factors that secured the emergence and development of Brăila and Galați, outlets greatly supported by the state authorities of Wallachia and Moldavia. After 1856, when Russia was removed as a riparian from the Danube, the European Commission of the Danube imposed at the Lower Danube modern shipping regulations and executed an impressive technical program that turned the river into a navigable waterway for the continuously larger commercial steamers. However, with the growth of Romanian nationalism this dependence on "foreign" technical works and administrative control was resented at Bucharest, where the authorities dreamed about establishing a truly maritime port on the coast of the Black Sea. The incorporation of Dobrogea in 1878 finally provided Romania with such a seaport – Constanța. Although British investors had attempted to turn it into a large commercial outlet, it was only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, in



this new national context, that Constanța's favorable geographical position could be finally valorized.

The 1880s were a period of underachievement or even hardships for the high hopes of Dobrogea, and it was only in the mid-1890s, after the completion of an impressive bridge over the Danube that linked Dobrogea to the Romanian Kingdom, that the ambitious plan of turning Constanța into the country's greatest commercial hub could be finally implemented. The decision to invest heavily in the construction of a modern harbor on the Black Sea coast caused much anxiety and even fear among the merchants of inland Danubian ports. Local elites, equally of foreign and of Romanian origin, felt that their large share in Romania's export trade was seriously threatened by the rise of Constanța and defended their position by articles published in the local press and in several memoranda sent to the government. The author asserts, with information from various Romanian and international sources, that beyond the natural advantages of Constanța in relation to its Danubian rivals, this nationalistic stance has also to be taken into account in understanding the governmental position. The economic development of the seaport was not just a matter of "economic feasibility", but it was also a symbol of Romania's emancipation from the control of the European powers and from the constraints of geography.

Constantin Ardeleanu focuses on the same historical realities from the perspective of the development of Romania's transport infrastructure. The rise of Brăila and Galați in the 1830s came from their privileged customs regime as free ports acting as the only maritime outlets of the two principalities. Until the early 1860s they depended almost exclusively on the resources of their own states, with little real competition between themselves. Brăila enjoyed a great advantage that accounted for its quicker growth – the cheapness of fluvial transportation along the Danube that had turned it into the relay of a larger geographical area. The creation of modern Romania by the union of the principalities marked a new phase in the history of these port-cities, as it created a national market and increased competition both between the two outlets and between the Romanian and foreign grain exported by the Danube. The 1860s and the 1870s were their golden age, especially as the state started an ambitious program of building a vast network of railroads that linked the mar-

itime ports to their agricultural hinterland. However, Galați was a collateral “victim” of this impressive constructive program, as it was linked to this transport backbone by a branch line and thus virtually lost the “monopoly” over its Moldavian hinterland. Since the 1870s Brăila completely outrivalled Galați in the grain trade and became the sole capital of Danubian grain exports, with Galați trying to preserve its decreasing share and to find new opportunities by specializing itself in imports, as well as by investing in industrial ventures.

The two Danubian ports of Brăila and Galați were also facing other more threatening “external” challenges, such as the curious position of Sulina, the port where the Danube Commission managed to create good conditions for allowing the shipping of the larger steamers calling at the Danube. Nevertheless, in order to prevent paying shipping taxes and to avoid the still shallow, narrow and busy waterway many of the large steamers that came to load Danubian grain anchored in the roadstead and harbor of Sulina where they loaded their cargo carried downstream by a huge fleet of small river lighters. Brăila and Galați were thus the “victims” of the very actions intended to revive their prosperity, and the tiny port of Sulina came to be regarded as a “parasitical middleman” that profited of its privileged geographical and hydrographical position. The coming of Dobrogea to Romania in 1878 and the subsequent investments in the modernization of Constanța complicated even more this economic and national equation, presented by Dr Ardeleanu in terms of the public investments in building the transport infrastructure necessary for carrying the bulky Romanian agricultural products to the routes of the international trade (railways, bridges, harbor infrastructure etc).

**Constantin Cheramidoglu** insists on the lengthy and complicated process represented by the modernization of Constanța. On the basis of unpublished material from the local archives, the author minutely depicts how the city grew after the province of Dobrogea became part of Romania in 1878. The central and municipal authorities invested in the construction of buildings that hosted symbolic institutions such as the City Hall or the Post Office, whereas most religious congregations erected houses of prayer with private or public financial support (such as for the Orthodox Cathedral and the Carol I Mosque). The increasing prosperity of the inhabitants was also vis-

ible in the expansion of Constanța's residential areas, with beautiful private houses built in eclectic architectural styles so as to suit the taste of an extremely cosmopolitan population. Municipal authorities also contributed to this transformative process by drafting modern regulations for constructions and alignments, and by providing the city with public services: the first telephones were functional in 1896 and after 1900 important efforts were made for introducing electrical light and for supplying inhabitants with drinkable water.

But as Constanța's function was mainly economical, Dr Chera-midoglu also touches the transformations in the local business environment. Although traditional occupations (farming, animal breeding etc.) remained important in peripheral districts, new industrial branches slowly emerged: factories of metallic and chemical products, distilleries, the printing industry etc. The construction of the new harbor, which began in 1896, contributed to the growth of the oil industry, with several entrepreneurs interested to relocate their refineries from further inland in order to facilitate the export of oil products. Due to its harbor and good maritime connections with the Romanian and foreign shipping companies, Constanta became a prosperous commercial city that needed proper commercial institutions. The approval for creating a bourse at Constanța was given in 1898, but its real foundation was only possible in 1910, when the registers of bourse operations were established.

Constanța also became a fashionable destination for tourists who visited it during the summer season. Besides trendy hotels and restaurants, the city also needed a casino for attracting well-off visitors. The casino was completed during the period 1907-1909 and was inaugurated in 1910, and it remains to this today a symbol of Constanța's tortuous history. All in all, the paper allows us to see some insights of the many transformations that turned Constanța into one of the largest ports of the Black Sea previous to the outbreak of the World War One.

\*\*\*

Compared to the ports of the Danube and the Northwestern Black Sea coast, the process of integration to the World Economy of the maritime region of the Southwestern Black Sea coast, which today

forms part of the Bulgarian territory, was initiated relatively later, since the region was directly dependent on Constantinople and its opening to the world trade presupposed the abolishment of the centralized control of the economy by the Ottoman state, usually described as “command economy”. The *laisse faire* treaties of the 1830s and early 1840s, initiated with the Anglo-Ottoman commercial Treaty of Balta Limani (1838), raised the ban on grain exports from the Empire and instituted a favorable tariff regime, measures which gave an almost immediate thrust to grain exports towards the countries of Western and Central Europe, undergoing by that time rapid industrialization. The collapse of Ottoman command economy and the impetus of international demand led to the transformation of productive structures and to the export-driven “fertilization” of the large plains of Northern Thrace, the Bulgarian side of the Danubian plateau and the region of Dobrudža (Dobrogea in Romanian).

This process had, in its turn, important human-geographic consequences and marked a shift in the history of the region’s settlement network. Three port-cities emerged as the main export outlets for the grain of the above-mentioned plains. To the South of what is the present day Bulgarian Black Sea coast the previously sparsely populated settlement of Pyrgos/Burgas developed quickly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and surpassed in economic significance other nearby port settlements with long and important history since the ancient times (e.g. Anchialo/Pomorie, Mesimvria/Nesebăr, Sozopolis/Sozopol). To the North, the port-city of Varna, an Ottoman stronghold against Russian expansion to the South and, for many centuries, the main transit port of Wallachian and Bulgarian grain and cattle towards Istanbul, acquired a new rival: the port of Balchik. A “bourgade miserable”<sup>1</sup> before 1840 and the abolition of the grain export prohibitions, Balchik soon developed to an important export center due to its position as a physical outlet of the newly cultivated huge plains of Southern Dobrudža. This proximity to the plains, and the better protection (compared to Varna) Balchik enjoyed from the catastrophic eastern and southeastern winds, led the Rumanian agronomist and revolutionary Ion Ionescu to predict in 1850 that

---

1. A. Papadopoulo Vretos, *La Bulgarie ancienne et moderne*, Sankt Peterburg, 1856, p. 196.

Balchik would take over all the trade of Varna, in the same way the port of Livorno had taken over that of Piza.<sup>2</sup> Since geographic factors are not the sole determinants of a settlement's development, Balchik did not eventually take the lead in both trade and urban development from Varna, the long-standing political and economic center of the region. Despite the fact that the volume of exports via Balchik was comparable and in some years even higher than that of Varna or Burgas, and despite the appearance of elements of transformation of the urban landscape (solid-built houses, depots and public buildings), Balchik remained until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a "bourgade" with local significance, ill-connected to its vast agricultural hinterland through poorly maintained roads, and a market with poor competition, dominated by the broker networks of a handful of merchants - exporters.<sup>3</sup> Burgas and Varna, on the other hand, received during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the decisive economic boost which determined their passage to modernity as major cities of the region and of the Bulgarian nation-state established after 1878. Three contributions in this volume deal with them, and their history during the formative period 1840-1912.

**Dimitar Christov** offers a valuable synthesis of the state of the art in Bulgarian historical literature on the port-city of Burgas. The explanation of the dynamics of its development constitutes the underlying desideratum of the paper. The region's location, geomorphology and environmental factors, thoroughly analyzed here, seem to have offered both incentives and constraints for the development of the settlement, which must have also benefitted in its initial development by Ottoman central authority decisions of a military character. In terms of demographic dynamics, Burgas had a rather modest growth before its inclusion to autonomous Eastern Rumelia (1878) and Bulgaria (1885) - approximately 4,000 souls in the 1870s according to Ottoman sources – a growth incommensurate

---

2. Ion Ionescu De la Brad, "Excursion agricole dans la plain de la Dobroja", Istanbul, 1850, in : Румънските пътеписи от XIX век за българските земи, Sofia, 1982, p. 23.

3. Цв. Недков, Стопанският живот на град Балчик (1878-1944) [The economic life of the town of Balchik], Dobrich, 2009; A. Lyberatos, "The Black Sea Usury Cases. State Legitimation and Bourgeois Rule of Law in 19<sup>th</sup> c. Dobrudzha", *Études Balkaniques*, 3-4/2013, 59-94.

to Burgas' attraction of various merchants and trade diasporas and the economic dynamism of the port as a major grain export center after the 1830s and during the Late Ottoman period. In this respect, Burgas displays a similar development to that of Balchik, at least until the period of Bulgarian autonomy, when the city – endowed with enhanced administrative status and favored by state initiatives in the domain of infrastructures - began to grow in terms of population with a stable pace. The railway connection of the port of Burgas to the Thracian hinterland (Burgas-Yambol line, 1890-1892) and the construction of a modern port (1903) provided the ground for the successful modernization and fuller incorporation of the port and its hinterland to the World economy. Tackling the underlying question, Christov remarks that the “rise” and socio-economic development of Burgas during the long nineteenth century should not be attributed at the first place to environmental or institutional factors and assesses the support the Ottoman and early Bulgarian states offered in this direction as hesitant and inadequate. On the contrary, the decisive influences in local economy and society, resulted out of the dynamic process of integration of the region to the world market. Western European political and economic forces acted as catalysts in this process, yet at the same time, as Christov notes, the bulk of Burgas' trade was conducted by regional agents and under regional flags (Ottoman, Greek, Ionian and Wallachian).

More explicitly than Christov, **Ivan Roussev** approaches the history of Varna, the other major port of the region during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a process of modernization which he attributes to the increasing contact of the city with Western Europe and the transfer and adoption by Varniote political authorities and economic agents of a series of Western-inspired reforms, techniques and cultural elements. To create this narrative of modernization, Roussev utilizes various sources produced by Western Europeans, the agents of modernization themselves (among which consular reports and travelogues assume the major part) and focuses mostly on the Bulgarian inhabitants of the city, the eventual “heirs” of a multicultural city, which was included in the autonomous Bulgarian nation-state after 1878. The beginnings of this process of modernization of the port city are related to the opening to world trade in the early 1840s, as mentioned above. Roussev stresses the importance of the establish-

ment of European Vice-consulates in the city from the 1840s onwards, headed very often by men of trade, such as François Gustave Olive or Adolphe Salvator Tedeschi, and acting as nuclei of modernization in the city. European modernizing influence on Varna and the Varniotes is discernible at many levels, ranging from trading practices (double-entry bookkeeping, partnerships, joint-stock companies) and communications (post and telegraph connections) to architecture, life style and entertainment. The French and British presence in Varna during the Crimean War (1853-56) and the construction by the British of the railway Ruse-Varna (1867) are highlighted as landmarks in the course of this European-led modernization, which is considered by the author as successful in broad terms, despite the resisting force of the “conservative oriental customs”.

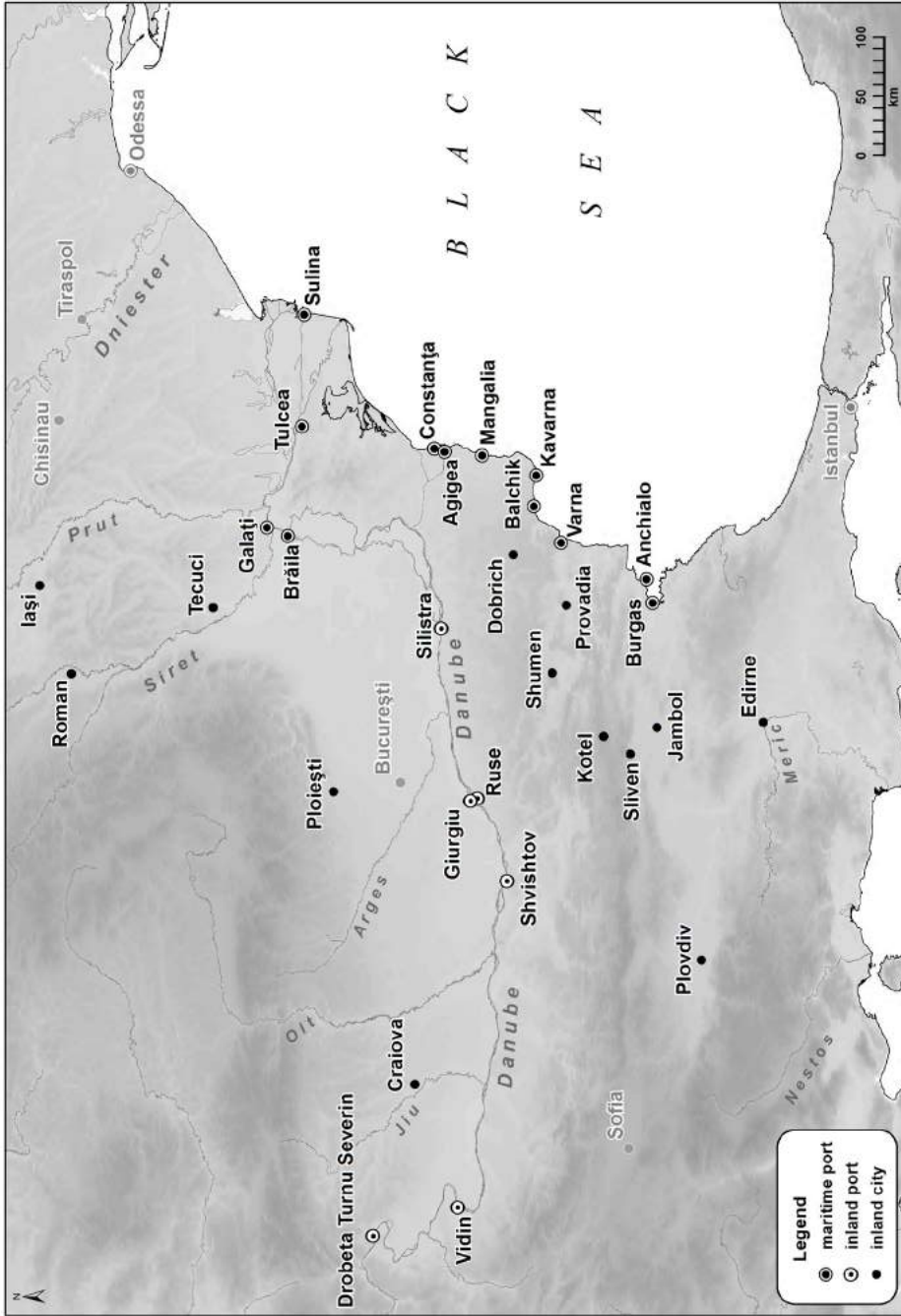
The last paper of the book by **Andreas Lyberatos** is also devoted to the port-city of Varna and more specifically to the formation and evolution of the city’s bourgeoisie(s). Lyberatos studies both the economic and the political and cultural factors which shaped the city’s bourgeois strata and poses the question of their unity or division according to political/national lines in a complex environment characterized by the contrapuntal processes of the rise of nationalism and economic globalization. The initial boost to the economy of the city, related to the liberalization of the grain trade, brought to Varna various merchants-exporters, among them Greeks from the Greek Kingdom, the Ionian Islands and other places in the Ottoman Empire. Taking advantage of the cultural –predominantly religious - affinity of the local population of Varna and its region and supported by Greek and British diplomatic protection, the newcomer Greek merchants were pioneer in deploying their grain supply networks in Varna’s fertile hinterland and controlling a great part of the port-city’s trade and its connection to the world market. This socio-economic process was underpinned by its cultural counterpart, the rise of Greek education and the incorporation of the (largely Turkish speaking) local Orthodox elites to the pan-hellenic educational, economic and professional networks. Hellenism, appealing to the ascending local elites as guarantor of *embourgeoisement* and de-orientalization, became the hegemonic pole of political and cultural gravitation of Varna’s Orthodox population. This hegemony was challenged seriously only after the inclu-

sion of the port-city to autonomous Bulgaria in 1878, which gave to the city's – until then minoritarian – Bulgarian population the status of the dominant national group and to the nascent Bulgarian bourgeoisie a clear prospect of prevalence. Thus, the political shift of 1878 and the influx of Bulgarian population from the country's hinterland challenged the political balance in the city and created a tense atmosphere between the Greeks of the city - hereafter minoritarian but still socioeconomically powerful – on the one hand, and the Bulgarian state agents and the rising national bourgeoisie, on the other. Interestingly though, the broader process of the fuller incorporation of the region to the World capitalist economy created a contrapuntal process which gave the city-port and its bourgeoisie a more multicultural, hybridic and “cosmopolitan” outlook. In the last part of the paper, Lyberatos investigates the manifestations of this bourgeois “cosmopolitanism” and the contradictory process of the enhancement of a national Bulgarian bourgeoisie, contrapuntal images of the last phase of the long nineteenth century, before the turbulations and wars of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century bring its end and the rise of a new era, with a new political economy for the city and the broader region.

The volume you have in your hands emerged in its initial form in a conference on the port-cities of the Western Black Sea Coast held at Constanța and Varna in May-June 2014 in the framework of the Ionian University-led project “*Black Sea and Port Cities from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Development, Convergence and Interconnections to the World Economy*”, funded by both the European Union and Greece as part of the “Thales programme, Reinforcement of the Interdisciplinary and/or inter-institutional Research and Innovation”, NSRF 2007-2013. We would like to thank de profundis both the participants in the conference, and especially the director of the Black Sea project, prof. Gelina Harlaftis, whose organizing genius, intellectual assistance and moral encouragement made possible the realization of the present volume.

*Constantin Ardeleanu & Andreas Lyberatos*  
*September 2015*







## 1.

### The Venetian Consul at Kherson Pietro Maria Locatelli and his Reports on International Trade in the North–Western Black Sea Ports (1793–1797)

Cristian Luca  
The Lower Danube University of Galați

As early as the 1770s, grain became a major import to Venice and other Italian Peninsula city-ports from the Crimean–Southern Ukrainian and Danubian harbours. For almost two centuries, Ottoman discretionary control over foreign shipping in the Black Sea had hindered the navigation of Western commercial ships to and from the Lower Danube and North–Western Black Sea ports and their access to different raw materials and foodstuffs. Russia’s expansion put an end to this restriction, by the effects of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (21 July 1774), and thus Venetian ship-owners and merchants, especially Greeks and Dalmatian Slavs of the Venetian *Stato da Mar*, could pass the Straits by hoisting the Russian flag.<sup>1</sup> The Greeks were definitely the most dynamic element in the Venice trade importing goods from the Crimean–Southern Ukrainian and Danubian harbours. The abundance of grain in Ukraine and the Romanian Principalities motivated these merchants to invest size-

---

1. Özgür Yılmaz, “Karadeniz’in Uluslararası Ticarete Açılması ve Trabzon”, *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 2 (7) (2009), p. 367–369; Cristian Luca, “Negustorii venețieni și triestini în porturile de la Gurile Dunării în ultimul sfert al secolului al XVIII-lea”, *Revista Istorică*, New Series, XXIII, No. 1–2 (2012), p. 95–105; Constantin Ardeleanu, “The Discovery of the Black Sea by the Western World: the Opening of the Euxine to International Trade and Shipping (1774–1792)”, *New Europe College «Ștefan Odobleja» Program Yearbook* (2012–2013), p. 21–46; C. Ardeleanu, “The Opening and Development of the Black Sea for International Trade and Shipping (1774–1853)”, *Euxeinos*, 14 (2014), p. 30–39.

able sums in a grain trade which could now reach Western European markets.<sup>2</sup>

In July 1793 Giampiero Grimani, the Venetian ambassador to Saint Petersburg, officially appointed Pietro Maria Locatelli as consul in Kherson, with the title of “assistant delegate for Venetian trade in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov”.<sup>3</sup> Grimani took into account Locatelli’s experience and his knowledge of Russian and the local economic environment, as he had lived and worked in Russia as a merchant. We do not know where or when Locatelli was born, as son of Giuseppe (Iseppo) Locatelli, but his name suggests that he was from the rural areas of Imagna Valley, about 23 km north-west of Bergamo (Lombardy).<sup>4</sup> Pietro Maria Locatelli was definitely a Venetian subject and in 1793 was most probably in his fifties, as he considered himself old and complained of several health problems. Locatelli resided for a while in Saint Petersburg,<sup>5</sup> after which he settled at Kherson with his family and during almost four years as Venetian consul, from 1793 to 1797, trained his son Giovanni Battista to follow him in the post. Young Locatelli was instructed in Russian and Greek, besides Italian, which was spoken in the family and the consular office.<sup>6</sup> Chancellor Antonio Rossi worked with Locatelli as secretary, drafting official consular papers: bills of lading, *passavanti*, records of shipmasters and ship-owners etc.

Locatelli wrote periodic reports to the Venetian *bailo* at Constantinople and to Venice’s Board of Trade (the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*), many of which are preserved in the original with his

2. Traian Stoianovich, “The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant”, in Idem, *Between East and West: The Balkan and Mediterranean Worlds*, vol. 2, *Economies and Societies: Traders, Towns and Households* (New Rochelle [NY], 1992), p. 48–50.

3. Archivio di Stato di Venezia/State Archives of Venice (hereafter ASV), *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. [=archival envelope] 243 I, unnumbered doc. (11 July 1793); Franca Cosmai, Stefano Sorteni (eds.), *Dispacci da Costantinopoli di Ferigo Foscarei, 1792–1796*, vol. I, Foreword by Paolo Preto (Venice, 1996), no. 51, p. 163–164, no. 110, p. 346.

4. *Raccolta di carte pubbliche, istruzioni, legislazioni, ecc. del nuovo Veneto Governo democratico*, vol. V (Venice, 1797), p. 249; *Raccolta di tutte le carte pubbliche stampate ed esposte ne’ luoghi più frequentati della città di Venezia*, vol. IV (Venice, 1797), p. 40.

5. ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc. (13 December 1793).

6. *Ibid.*, unnumbered docs. (13 December 1793 and 14 May 1794).

autograph signature. His correspondence, partially scattered though several archival funds in the Venice State Archives, yields new or little-known information on the involvement of Greek merchants and ship-owners, as both Ottoman and Venetian subjects, in international trade in the Black Sea and Danubian ports in the last decade of the eighteenth century. This important source shows that the Greeks played a very important role in exporting grain and raw materials from the Russian and Romanian ports to various Western destinations, and that the scale of the grain trade in the Black Sea region during the nineteenth century was mostly due to these Balkan entrepreneurial networks.

Locatelli mainly reported on issues related to international trade by Venetian subjects through the ports of the Crimea, Southern Ukraine, the mouths of the Danube and the Sea of Azov. Most documents from his hand relate to legal and commercial aspects of his consular work, and only rarely to consular assistance.

Many archival cases from the Kherson consulate record attempts to discipline Venetian ship-owners and merchants who took advantage of the Russian flag to resist consular jurisdiction and control. This confirms the tendency, noted by Gerassimos D. Pagratis, for Venetian Greek masters and ship-owners to abandon the *Serenissima's* flag systematically in the closing decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

At the request of the *bailo* Federico Foscari, Locatelli sent two lengthy reports to Constantinople and to the central authorities, giving detailed information on trade by Venice's rivals in the Black Sea. This first-hand data is all the more valuable as it was collected and analysed by an observer in direct contact with the facts in the case. In one report, dated 28 September 1793 (Old Style/Julian calendar), Locatelli mentioned the commercial companies active in the North-Western Black Sea ports, stressing the massive involvement of Greek merchants<sup>8</sup> in exporting grain from the Ukraine, Russia,

---

7. Gerassimos D. Pagratis, "Il commercio marittimo greco a Costantinopoli e nel Mar Nero nella seconda metà del XVIII secolo: il caso dei greci sudditi veneziani", *Annuario dell'Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica di Venezia*, IX (2007), p. 73–84.

8. Vassilis A. Kardasis, *Diaspora merchants in the Black Sea: the Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775–1861* (Lanham, 2001); Gelina Harlaftis, Sophia Laiou, "Ottoman State

Poland, and to a lesser extent from the Romanian Principalities. The Greeks often acted individually, and the ship-owner was at one and the same time both trading merchant and the master of the ship, crewed by a relatively small number of sailors. In September 1793 Locatelli mentioned the following companies at Kherson as among the main commercial houses in the ports of Southern Ukraine and Russia:

The Polish Company for Oriental trade, led by Antoni Protazy Potocki, “whose main trade consists in timber and other products from Poland sold to the Russian Admiralty, except for grain shipped to other foreign countries”.<sup>9</sup>

The the French company “A. A. Chaussignon and Co”, which purchased grain on commission for other Western companies, and the “*Casa Alibrandi*” of Italian merchants from Messina, French subjects. The staff of both companies took an oath of allegiance to Empress Catherine II.<sup>10</sup>

The company of the Trieste’s wealthy Serbian merchant Jovan (Jovo) Kurtović (1718–† 12 August 1808), represented by his agent Demetrios Comnenović, “who brings a small number of finished goods from Germany, dried fruits from Smyrna, soap and wine from Crete, and imports grain, wool and other merchandise”.<sup>11</sup>

---

Policy in Mediterranean Trade and Shipping, c. 1780–c. 1820: The Rise of the Greek-Owned Ottoman Merchant Fleet”, in Mark Mazower (ed.), *Networks of Power in Modern Greece. Essays in Honour of John Campbell* (London, 2008), p. 1–44.

9. ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc. (28 September 1793); see also ASV, *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia. 1<sup>a</sup> Serie*, b. 556 A, unnumbered doc. (10 April 1786); Jan Reychman, “Le commerce polonais en mer Noire au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle par le port de Kherson”, *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, VII, No. 2 (1966), p. 236, 238, 248; Henryk Klimesz, “Poland’s trade through the Black Sea in the Eighteenth Century”, *The Polish Review*, 15, No. 2 (1970), p. 77–80; John P. LeDonne, “Geopolitics, Logistics, and Grain: Russia’s Ambitions in the Black Sea Basin, 1737–1834”, *The International History Review*, 28, No. 1 (2006), p. 13–15.

10. ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc. (28 September 1793); see also ASV, *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia. 1<sup>a</sup> Serie*, b. 556 B, unnumbered doc. (22 December 1793).

11. ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc. (28 September 1793); for more on this merchant and ship-owner, see Marco Dogo, “Mercanti tra due Imperi”, in Gino Pavan (ed.), *Trieste e la Turchia. Storie di commerci e di cultura* (Trieste, 1996), p. 19; M. Dogo, “Una nazione di pii mercanti. La comunità serbo-

The commercial house of Pietro Perino, agent of Nikolaos Plastaras of Trieste, “recently settled at Kherson to trade grain”.<sup>12</sup>

Locatelli also mentions the commercial house of Pietro di Niccolò de’ Rossi, a Genoese who owned a pasta factory and sold its products in the Russian empire; his trading house at Theodosia in the Crimea was supported by powerful commercial houses from Genoa in the purchase of grain.<sup>13</sup> There also was the commercial house of the Frenchman d’Andrè at Taganrog, who also swore allegiance to Catherine II, and was a commissioner for companies interested in the grain trade.<sup>14</sup> An Austrian company made up of former agents of the Viennese Willeshoffen house were *de facto* agents for other commercial houses.

However, all these commercial companies controlled only a small part of grain exports from the Ukraine, Russia and Poland. Locatelli insisted in his consular reports that most of the trade in grain and raw materials in the North–Western Black Sea ports was controlled by Ottoman and Venetian Greeks, and he considered that they had a great advantage over their rivals in managing their business through family companies with rapid access to the market and a network of agents contracting for the grain harvests in advance.

These details are also included in the report which Niccolò Colombo, secretary of the Venetian Embassy at Constantinople, sent to the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* on 22 December 1793.

Another report by Locatelli is equally important. On 14 January 1794 he wrote to *bailo* Foscari, describing first attempts by the consul of the Kingdom of Naples, Vincenzo Musenga, and by Neapolitan merchants to establish a commercial house in a port in Southern Ukraine or the Crimea:

“Mister Giovanni Maria Cingria, partner of the commercial house Julian Cingria and Co, wants to establish here a Neapolitan commercial

---

illirica di Trieste, 1748–1908”, in Roberto Finzi, Giovanni Panjek (eds.), *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, vol. I, *La città dei gruppi, 1719–1918* (Trieste, 2001), p. 575–576, 581, 584–588.

12. ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc. (28 September 1793).

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

house. Thus, Cingria will travel soon to Russia [...]. [...] In these weather conditions, unfavourable to shipping, especially in these seas [Black Sea and the Sea of Azov], the consul of the Kingdom of Naples will in a few days tour Crimea to Taganrog, to purchase a quantity of wheat, a mission which may (I am not sure) have been entrusted to him by private merchants or by the Neapolitan court".<sup>15</sup>

Locatelli also mentioned the cessation of activity by the Venetian Company for the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov,<sup>16</sup> which existed in name only and was incompetently managed, and the sluggishness of the Venetian market, which even many Venetian merchants avoided as a redistribution centre.

A recurring element in Locatelli's reports was the disobedience of the Venetian masters, Greeks and Dalmatian Slavs, who refused to accept his authority as Venetian consul at Kherson.<sup>17</sup> In December 1793 Locatelli complained to *bailo* Foscari that he could not act against Venetian Greek and Dalmatian Slav shipmasters who sailed in the Black Sea under the Russian flag, as they claimed to be Russian subjects<sup>18</sup>.

After 1774, with the gradual reopening of the Black Sea to Western shipping, Venice remained a marginal actor in the international trade. Venice had no consul in a Black Sea port since the late sixteenth century, when the Serenissima was able to appoint a consul in the Danubian port of Kilia for several years. Between 1793 and 1797 Locatelli did not manage to increase the number of commercial ships sailing the Black Sea under the Venetian flag, as he did not have the necessary political and economic means. Thus, despite his zeal and bureaucratic diligence, Locatelli could not avert the inexorable destiny of the Venetian Republic, whose thousand-year existence ended ingloriously after the Treaty of Campo Formio in October 1797.

15. *Ibid.*, unnumbered doc. (14 January 1794).

16. Chiara Scattolin, "Un «esperimento» commerciale veneziano nel Mar Nero al tramonto del Settecento", *Archivio Veneto*, 118, No. 164 (1987), p. 27–44.

17. F. Cosmai, S. Sorteni (eds.), *Dispacci da Costantinopoli di Ferigo Foscari*, vol. I, no. 99, p. 311.

18. *Ibid.*, no. 110, p. 347.



## APPENDIX

1. Kherson, July 1793 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; passport issued by Consul Pietro Maria Locatelli for merchant Stefano Emanuele Ziongariolo, Venetian subject from Corfu.

Pietro Maria Locatelli

Per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Deputato assistente al Veneto

Commercio ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff, residente a Cherson

Fa ampla et indubitata fede qualmente Steffano Emanuelle Zingariolo, nativo nell'Isola di Corfù e suddito della Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia, e come tale deve essere riconosciuto. Pregando perciò tutti quelli a cui spetta di lasciarlo liberamente soggiornare e viaggiare in questi felicissimi Domini per agire ai suoi interessi e sortire senza interferirli, e meno permettere che gli venga da altri inferita molestia ed impedimento alcuno. In fede di che mi sottoscrivo di propria mano, munendo il presente col solito Pubblico Sigillo di questa Cancelleria. Dato [in] Cherson, [luglio] l'anno 1793.

L<ocus> s<igilli>

Pietro Maria Locatelli<sup>19</sup>

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., 18<sup>th</sup> century copy)

2. Kherson, July 1793 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; edict of Consul Pietro Maria Locatelli for the Venetian merchants, prohibiting the transportation of weaponry and other war materials on their ships.

---

19. Mentioned as attached to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari's *dispaccio* dated 25 July 1794, see F. Cosmai, S. Sorteni (eds.), *Dispacci da Costantinopoli di Ferigo Foscari*, vol. I, no. 110, p. 350.

Proclama di Pietro Maria Locatelli deputato assistente al veneto commercio nei mari Nero e d’Azof<sup>20</sup>

[...] In obbedienza del Sovrani Comandi avanzatimi dall’Eccellentissimo Signor Zampiero Grimani, per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Nobile all’Imperial Corte di Russia conlle ossequianti lettere del dì quattro luglio anno 1793: [...] Non caricate né permettete che venghi caricato nel vostro bastimento armi o altro genere da guerra di qualsisia classe per i luoghi o bastimenti delle Potenze belligeranti.

Completto poi il carico di esportazione, sarà vostro dovere di presentare in questa Cancelleria le polizze di carico ed i Manifesto del carco medesimo per farne il confronto, qual venendo trovato a dovere vi sarà da me legalizzati.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., 18<sup>th</sup> century copy)

3. Saint Petersburg, 11 July 1793 [New Style/Gregorian calendar]; ambassador Giampiero Grimani informed Ferigo Foscari, Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople, of the decision to appoint Pietro Maria Locatelli “Deputato assistente al Veneto commercio” to Kherson, in compliance with the dispositions of the *Serenissima*’s Senate of 18 May 1793.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signore Colendissimo,

Onorato della Sovrana Commissione dell’Eccellentissimo Senato, contenuta nella Ducale 18 maggio prossimamente scaduto, che mi impartisce la delicata incombenza di destinare apposita persona suddita, fedele e capace, esistente in addattate situazione sui Mari Nero e d’Azzow, che debba prestar a’ sudditi commercianti e navigatori que’ lumi ed assistenze che fossero per ricercare pel prospe-

---

20. Mentioned as attached to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari’s *dispaccio* dated 25 July 1794, see F. Cosmai, S. Sorteni (eds.), *Dispacci da Costantinopoli di Ferigo Foscari*, vol. I, no. 110, p. 350.

ramento del loro commercio, ho creduto del massimo mio dovere sollecitarne la destinazione colla fretta del Signor Pietro Maria Loccattelli, dimorante a Kerson, al quale, conferendo altresì il titolo di Deputato assistente al Veneto commercio ne' Mari Nero e d'Azzow, avanzai quelle istruzioni, così autorizzato, che al momento giudicai convenienti.

Mentre mi onoro di rivogliermi a Vostra Eccellenza col dovuto avviso di quanto feci, obbedindo anche in questo ai Sovrani Comandi convinerebbe certo con le Pubbliche Viste se a notizia di codesti navigatori e commercianti Veneti, che arrivano a Costantinopoli, potesse pervenire la conoscenza di questa destinazione, la qual dimostra quanto l'Eccellentissimo Senato cerchi di far loro manifesta la propria benevolenza e il desiderio che prosperi e riviva il commercio della Veneta Piazza.

Colgo intanto anche questa occasione per rinnovare a Vostra Eccellenza li più rispettosi sentimenti della mia considerazione e riverenza.

Pietroburgo, 11 luglio 1793

A Sua Eccellenza  
Il Signor Ferigo Foscari  
Ambasciatore straordinario e  
Bailo alla Porta Ottomana

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Zampiero Grimani<sup>21</sup>

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc. [no. 1, ancient archival record], original)

4. Kherson, 26 July 1793 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, informing the latter with regard to his appointment as “Deputato assistente al Veneto commercio” and presenting to him the protocol of firing cannon salutes between merchant ships and the Russian garrison in Kherson.

---

21. Autograph signature.

Eccellenza,

Coll'ossequiate lettere delli 4 luglio prossimo passato dell'Eccellentissimo Nobile Veneto all'Imperial Corte di Russia in Pietroburgo <h>a promosso l'umil mia persona all'onorevole importante carico di Deputato assistente del Veneto Commercio ne' Mari Nero e d'Azzovv. Con questa rispettosia mia lo partecipo all'Eccellenza Vostra ad oggetto di riceverne nell'occorrenze quei comandi che l'Eccellenza Vostra giudicasse buono d'onorarmi. Credo ancor dover partecipare all'Eccellenza Vostra che il Governator Comandante la Fortezza di Chilbornù politamente mi ha fatto osservare esser stabilito il saluto de' bastimenti mercantili a sette tiri, e deve la Fortezza risponder con cinque, ma nel caso venisse da bastimento fatto meno tiri (com'è successo), non verrebbe risposto al saluto, che mi pregava volesse comunicarlo a' Capitani. Non altro per ora mi resta, che raccomandare la povera mia persona all'alto autorevole padrocinio dell'Eccellenza Vostra, nell'atto che divotamente le bacio le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Chersona, 26 luglio, v<ecchio> s<tile>, 1793

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Loccatelli

Deputato assistente del Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azzovv, a Kerson

A Sua Eccellenza Nobile Uomo, il Signor Federico Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc. [no. 1, ancient archival record], original)

5. Kherson, 16 August 1793 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, complaining about the hostile attitude of Captain Georgios Karkavelas from Zakynthos, Venetian subject, who had refused to acknowledge his authority as consular representative of Venice and, subsequently, had declined to submit to the directives in force concerning the control over the transported

goods and the requisition of their recording in the Consulate registry.

Eccellenza,

Giacché l'opportuna occasione del Capitano Giovanni Boscovich,<sup>22</sup> suddito veneto, proffitto<sup>23</sup> per consegnar in mano del suo scrivano, Signor Coradini, la presente per rassegnare a Vostra Eccellenza che un certo Monsieur Volan,<sup>24</sup> official ingeniere, fu in passato da questo Signor General Suvaroff<sup>25</sup> spedito come coriere con Piani di fortificazioni alla Corte. Ritornato con dispacci (pochi giorni sono) di piena approvazione, nel atto di presentali disse: «ho commissioni di dirLe in voce che presentemente la sorte di Costantino dipende dalla spada di Vostra Eccellenza»; questo mi vien riportato da persona mia confidente, che si trovò presente. Le confermo l'umil mia del 26 luglio prossimamente passato, aggiungendole che il Capitano Giorgio Carcavella Zantiotto,<sup>26</sup> doppo essere stato qui e di me verbalmente instruito de' Sovrani Comandi contenuti nel Proclama 23 febraro 1792, e d'altre istruzioni relative alle Comissioni avanzatemi dall'Eccellentissimo Nobile Veneto all'Imperial Corte di Russia, esso Capitano non <h>a voluto sottomettersi per ricevere da me né una legal copia del suddetto Proclama da publicar al suo bordo all'equipaggio, né presentarmi il manifesto del suo carico, come vien comandato dalle suddette Comissioni, dicendo egli non conoscer, né voler conoscere, alcuna persona pubblica in Cherson. Un tale disprezzo potrà produrne delli altri. Non è però giudicato prudente di usare la forza, ma solo riferirlo a Vostra Eccellenza, alli Eccellentissimi V Savi, ed all'Eccellentissimo Nobile in San Pietroburgo, in adempimento del mio dovere. Raccomando l'umilissima persona mia al di Lei padrocinio, nell'atto che divotamente le bacio le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, 16 agosto, v<ecchio> s<tile>, 1793

22. Jovan Bošković.

23. *aprofitto*.

24. Flemish army engineer Franz de Volan.

25. Alexander Vasilyevich Suvorov.

26. Georgios Karkavelas from Zakynthos.

Umilissimo, devotissimo, ossequissimo servo,  
 Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
 Deputato assistente del Veneto Commercio  
 ne' Mari Nero e d'Azzovv

A Sua Eccellenza Nobil Huomo, il Signor Federico Foscari per la  
 Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc.  
 [no. 2, ancient archival record], original)

6. Constantinople, 16 September 1793 [New Style/Gregorian calendar]; bailo Ferigo Foscari to Giampiero Grimani, the Venetian diplomatic representative at Saint Petersburg, informing the latter of the directives he had to communicate to Pietro Maria Locatelli, and of the way in which Venetian merchant ships entered the Black Sea under the Russian flag, through the fictitious selling of the ship to a Russian ship owner.

Al Nobile a Pietroburgo, li 16 settembre 1793

Contemporanea alla zelante e gradita comunicazione di Vostra Eccellenza, della destinazione fatta del Signor Locatelli per Deputato assistente al Comercio Veneto in Cherson e dipendenze Russe nel Mar Nero, fu parimente la partecipazione del medesimo alla Carica. Mentre mi onoro di riscontrarle il ricapito del gradito suo foglio, però al Locatelli formo anche risposta in questa sera, con delle comissioni per il di lui metodico doppio mensual carteggio che me somministri solleciti riscontri sopra il commercio e caravanaggio, che occupa sommamente le paterne cure e sapienti dell'Eccellentissimo Senato, e che forma una delle occupazioni di questa pesantissima Missione in cui la Providenza ha voluto secondare così il mio zelo efficacissimo per la Patria, da poter rilevare fino ad ora, con l'ossequiosa compiacenza, di aver ottenuto abbondantissimo l'indulgente computimento della medesima.

Essi lumi potranno forse aggiungere cose a quel diffuso detta-

glio, pressoché ultimato, della navigazione commerciale nel Mar Nero verificato da Veneti in quest'anno, che rassegnerò all'Eccellentissimo Senato subitocche essa navigazione sia ultimata col ritorno, al più tardi in ottobre, degli ultimi Veneti legni che attendo.

Questi però furono precari quanto alle patenti, ed aggravati assai per ottenerle con finte vendite. Li miei maneggi presso il Signor Cavaliere Ribas,<sup>27</sup> e le cure di lui impiegate presso l'Amiraglio Mordvinof,<sup>28</sup> mi fecero derivare quelle risposte già rassegnate all'Eccellentissimo Senato, che non è però di quel Amiragliato rilasciar di quelle Patenti libere che furono ottenute dall'Illustrissimo mio predecessore, Kavalier Zulian,<sup>29</sup> le quali servono a qualunque legno che si trova coperto da essa Patente la quale lo fa godere de' vantaggi tutti che godono li Nazionali Russi. Li due accennati comandanti mi assicurarono che tali Patenti si possono facilmente ottenere dalli Ministri delle Corti forastiere in Pietroburgo, al qual favore Sua Maestà l'Imperatrice non si rifiuta.

Il zelo pertanto ben noto di Vostra Eccellenza potrà dietro li sapientissimi comandi dell'Eccellentissimo Senato procurare alla Veneta navigazione in quel Mare questa massima utilità, che li solgono a dispendi non lievi e ad implicanze di gravi conseguenze. Ho fatto precorrere, come farò in seguito, alli Veneti Capitani la nuova pubblica destinazione dell'accennata persona, desiderando vivamente che la di lui assistenza al Veneto commercio ed a suddito sia più fortunata ed utile alli Veneziani di quello furono per esso stesso le speculazioni commercievoli, e frattanto mi onoro di rassegnarle la distinta mia considerazione ed ossequio.

[Ferigo Foscari, bailo a Costantinopoli]

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., original rough draft)

---

27. Rear Admiral José de Ribas, commander of the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

28. Vice-Admiral Nikolay Semyonovich Mordvinov, the Chairman of the Black Sea Admiralty Board and Commander of the Black Sea Fleet and Ports, see "Mordvinov Nikolay Semenovich (1754–1845)", in Sergei R. Grinevetsky, Igor S. Zonn, Sergei S. Zhiltsov, Aleksey N. Kosarev, Andrey G. Kostianoy (eds.), *The Black Sea Encyclopedia* (Berlin–Heidelberg, 2014), p. 534–535.

29. Girolamo Zulian.

7. Constantinople, 16 September 1793 [New Style/Gregorian calendar]; *bailo* Ferigo Foscari to Pietro Maria Locatelli; he confirmed receipt of the letter in which he had been informed of his appointment as “Deputato assistente al Veneto commercio” to Kherson, and asked him to send bimonthly information on the presence of Venetian merchants in the Black Sea, and also general information on matters considered of interest for the central authorities of the Venetian Republic.

Al Deputato assistente al Veneto comercio in Cherson, li 16 settembre 1793

Accusa questa carica il ricapito del gradito Suo foglio con cui viene inteso del incarico da Lei assunto costì di Deputato assistente al Veneto comercio, destinazione questa che mi fu continporaneamente partecipata dall’Eccellentissimo Nobile in Pietroburgo, che dietro li pubblici comandi La ha nominata<sup>30</sup>.

Le Comissioni che ho ricevuto dall’Eccellentissimo Senato, per riconoscere il più perfettamente codesto stato delli commerci in generi, e di quello sopra tutto più facilmente adattabile alli Veneziani, la qualità di codeste Piazze per quanto la rapporti relativi ad essi commerci, le regole e le imposte, mi determinano a comettere la sua diligente esattezza a somministrarmi il più sollecitamente quei dettagliati lumi che aggiunger possano cose a quel pieno della materia che mi sono già procurato, e che confronterò volentieri. Ella dovrà pertanto tenere metodico regolato doppio mensual carteggio con questa carica, che di tempo in tempo, a tenor delle cose Le ne formerà opportuno riscontro, nella certezza che nell’servizio del delicato incarico affidatogli dalla clemenza pubblica, Ella cominstrerà anche a questa carica argomento di rilevare all’Eccellentissimo Senato quell’utile opera che si lusinga vantaggiosa all’oggetto come si è rassegnato al medesimo le presenti comissioni della carica che ne rileverà egualmente le risultanze non menocché al Magistrato Eccellentissimo de’ V Savi parimenti inteso delli presenti, e frattanto Le si desidera ogni bene.

[Ferigo Foscari, bailo a Costantinopoli]

---

30. doubtful reading.



(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., original rough draft)

8. Constantinople, 25 September 1793 [New Style/Gregorian calendar]; *bailo* Ferigo Foscari to doge Ludovico Manin, reporting on the assignment of Pietro Maria Locatelli as “Deputato assistente al Veneto commercio” to Kherson by Giampiero Grimani.

Serenissimo Principe,

Bujukdere<sup>31</sup>, 25 settembre 1793

[...] L’Eccellentissimo Nobile in Pietroburgo mi ha comunicato, con diligente esattezza propria del zelo di quel cittadino, la destinazione fatta dietro gli ordini di Vostra Serenità del suddito Pietro Maria Locatelli per Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio ne’ Mari Nero e di Azof.

Lo stesso Deputato mi ha pure rilevata la sua destinazione, ed in risposta a quest’ultimo, già stabilito in Cherson, le ho commesso immediatamente di rassegnar alla carica qui rapporti o dettagli commercievoli, onde confrontandoli con quelle notizie che mi sono procurate, umiliare a Vostre Eccellenze quei complessivi lumi sopra la base di quali la Pubblica Sapienza saprà dettare quei comandi e quelle addattali discipline [...]. Ho pure commesso [ad] esso Locatelli del costante suo carteggio con quella carica mediante li corrieri di Russia, che partono due volte il mese. [...]

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., 18th century copy)

9. Kherson, 28 September 1793 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, enclosing a detailed report on the state of the international trading in the Russian ports of the Black Sea.

---

31. Büyükdere.

Eccellenza,

In obbedienza alla Commissione di Vostra Eccellenza, abbassatami con la venerata sua [del] 16 settembre prossimamente decorso. Prima ch'io possa entrare in alcun i precisi dettagli relativi al commercio di questi due Mari e sopra quali potersi solidamente piantare indispensabilmente, vi è necessario attendere le risoluzioni de' diversi attestati [?] prodotti da più Ministri a Sua Maestà Imperiale,<sup>32</sup> ne' quali si crede esservi progetti di rispettabili cagionamenti<sup>33</sup> sopra locazione delle Dogane, Contumazia, ed Amiragliato, cose tutte che di tempo in tempo, venendo verificate, rasseggerò alla sapienza di Vostra Eccellenza.

Frattanto ho l'onore di parteciparle ciò che fin ora potei [sic!] raccogliere sopra metodi e qualità di commercio d'importazione ed'esportazione ch'attualmente vien fatto da diverse nazioni.

Quasi tutto il commercio di qui, Nicolaieff,<sup>34</sup> Oczakoff,<sup>35</sup> Sevastopoli,<sup>36</sup> Kosloff,<sup>37</sup> Teodosia<sup>38</sup> e Taganrok<sup>39</sup> [è] in mano de' Greci dell'Arcipelago e del Continente; né è da stupirsi, poiché furono essi i primi a penetrare in quei due Mari sotto la condotta di Iasone, sino dall'anno 1333 prima di Cristo, e 70 prima [del]la guerra di Troia, come s'osserva più discussamente nella storia filosofica e politica della navigazione, del commercio e delle colonie degl'antichi del Mar Nero, l'opera di V. A. Formaleone, Venezia 1788, nella Topografia [sic!] dell'auttore.<sup>40</sup>

Essi stessi hanno per tutti li luoghi stabeliti dei compagni capitalisti, più e meno provisti [...]<sup>41</sup> magazzini; questi nell'inverno acquistano grano, ferro, lane, lino, canape, sevi, cera gialla, caviale, pesce salato, [pelli] crudi e concii, etc. per aver pronto il carico di

32. Catherine II the Great.

33. doubtful reading.

34. Nikolaev (Ukrainian: Mykolayiv).

35. Ochakov (Ukrainian: Ochakiv).

36. Sevastopol.

37. Kozlov (the Crimean city port of Eupatoria/Yevpatoria/Evpatoriya).

38. Theodosia=Feodosia.

39. Taganrog.

40. V. A. Formaleoni, *Storia filosofica e politica della navigazione, del commercio e delle colonie degli antichi nel Mar Nero* (Venice, 1788).

41. paper deteriorated.

esportazione in primavera; ed all'arrivo dei bastimenti coll'importazioni consistenti in vini diversi, ogli, frutti sechi, ed altre produzioni e manifatture delle proprie Isole e luoghi forestieri, queste le pongono nei suddetti loro magazzini attendendo le ricerche de' compratori, onde poter vendere con riputazione di prezzo, e tosto ricaricano coll'accennate merci acquistate nell'invernato, acciò li bastimenti loro abbino camino.

Con tali metodi, e ben naturale che facino un sicuro profitto, poiché comprano quando altri essebiscono [e] vendono soltanto quando sono ricercati dai compratori.

Non è qui come altrove, di poter introdurre uno o più carichi di merci sulla certezza di trovar probabili arbitranti che le acquistino; il che mi sembra contemplato nell'undecimo articolo del Piano addotato dalla per ogni [...]<sup>42</sup> altro riguardo rispettabile Società di Commercio per questi Mari formata in Venezia.

Quanto a' negozianti d'altre nazioni, qui non abbiamo che li seguenti: la Casa Protopotoski<sup>43</sup> [et Compagni] è Polonese, il di cui traffico la massima parte consiste in legnami ed altre produzioni della Polonia, che vende a questo Amiragliato, eccetuatone li grani, quali spedisce in Paesi Esteri; la Casa A. A. Chassignon et Compagni,<sup>44</sup> il cui maggior traffico è l'acquisto [...]<sup>45</sup> de' grani per conto comissioni; la Casa Alibrand e Compagni,<sup>46</sup> il di cui commercio consisteva per avanti in varie produzioni [...]<sup>47</sup> manifatture Francesi che qui vendevano in dettaglio, dopo disceso l'ingresso di queste, derrige il suo traffico in generi [...]<sup>48</sup> con la Piazza di Constantinopoli; ambedue le suddette Case sono Francesi, qui rimaste previo giuramento di fedeltà<sup>49</sup> per [...]<sup>50</sup> Sua Maestà Impe-

42. paper deteriorated.

43. Antoni Protazy Potocki.

44. A. A. Chassignon and Co.

45. paper deteriorated.

46. Alibrandi, Italian merchants from Messina.

47. paper deteriorated.

48. paper deteriorated.

49. 16 French merchants quit the city of Kherson in March 1793, see Julie Ollivier-Chakhnovskaia, "Les Français expulsés de l'empire russe par l'oukase de Catherine II du 8 février 1793", *Cahiers du monde russe*, 46, No. 3 (2005), p. 531.

50. paper deteriorated.

riale; la Casa Demetrio Comlenovich,<sup>51</sup> che è compagno del Signor Curtovich<sup>52</sup> di Trieste, le di cui importa<zioni> cons<istono> [...] <sup>53</sup> [in grani]. <Por>tano in poche manuffature di Germania, frutti secchi di Smirne, sapone di Candia e quantità de' vini, facendo <es>postazione de grani, lane etc.; la Casa Pietro Perinò, comissionato del Signor Plasterà<sup>54</sup> di Trieste, ultimamente stabelitasi per commerciar de' grani. In Kosloff la Casa di Francesco Siron, francese rimasto previo il giu<ramento> come sopra, che fa commercio di qualsiasi prodotti in proprio e per conto comissione. [In] Teodosia, la Casa Pietro di Niccolò de' Rossi Genovese, con fabrica di paste che spedisce anche nell'<inter>no di questo Impero, ed è sostenuta da solidissime Case di Genova per le comprar de' grani. La [Casa] di Monsieur d'Andrè, Francese, rimasta a Taganrok, pur previo il giuramento come sopra, cui traffica [...] <sup>55</sup> quei prodotti per conto comissioni.

La navigazione in questi Mari, per le già qui sopra addotte ragioni, più numerosa è quella [...] <sup>56</sup> di Greci; dopo questi gl'Imperiali Austriaci, Imperiali Russi, Ragusei, Napoletani, Sclavoni e Greci delle Isole suddite e pochi Veneziani; questi ultimi potrebbero facilmente di venir li primi ogni qualvolta fossero sostenuti da un conveniente Trattato di Commercio, prima che gl'Austriaci e napoletani prendano quel sopravvento che con ogni sforzo cercano di ottenere.

Da Oczakoff fece vella per costì il Capitano Giorgio Carcavella

51. Demetrios Comnenović.

52. Jovan (Jovo) Kurtović.

53. paper deteriorated.

54. Nikolaos Plastaras, the well-known wealthy Greek merchant in Trieste; see Olga Katsiardi–Hering, “Christian and Jewish Ottoman Subjects: Family, Inheritance and Commercial Networks between East and West (17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> C.)”, in Simonetta Cavaciocchi (ed.), *La famiglia nell'economia europea. Secc. XIII–XVIII/The Economic Role of the Family in the European Economy from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Atti della “Quarantesima settimana di studi”, 6–10 aprile 2008* (Florence, 2009), p. 409, 427–428, 433; Ikaros Madouvalos, “«Έλληνες» διαθέτες και πρακτικές κληρο-δοσίας στην Τεργέστη: μια πρώτη προσέγγιση σε σχέση με την περίπτωση της Βιέννης και της Πέστης (19ος αιώνας)”, *Μνήμων*, 30 (2009), p. 108, 114, 120, and note 5, 32, 55, 67.

55. paper deteriorated.

56. paper deteriorated.

Zantiotto,<sup>57</sup> il Capitano Giorgio Boscovich,<sup>58</sup> il Capitano Giorgio Panaiotti,<sup>59</sup> ambedue da Castelnuovo, tutti tre carichi di grano. In detto Porto ultimamente v'approdarono quaranta circa bastimenti di diverse nazioni, quasi tutti vuoti per caricar grano; fra questi [...]<sup>60</sup> sono il Capitan Antonio Orlandini, il Capitan Andrea Locate- , ed il Capitan Pausin Cuppa,<sup>61</sup> sudditi Veneti.

La Pubblica Marina si va metendo qui sempre più sopra d'un piede rispetabile, mi fanno vedere esservi nel Porto di Sevastopoli otto navi da 60 a' 90, quindici fregate da 22 a' 44.

Qui l'altr'ieri gettarono alla'acqua una fregata da 36 e due altre sono sopra li cantieri. In Nicolaieff [vi] è sopra il cantiere un vassello da 74. A Taganrok un altro di 64.

La flottiglia attualmente in Glubog, sotto comando del General de Ribas,<sup>62</sup> ascende a circa 50 legni d'ogni specie, fra questi sonnovi delle canoniere d'uno a due pezzi, della portata sino libre 100 di balla.

Li Dritti di Dogana continuano sopra la vecchia Tariffa, eccettuato li diversi prodotti, manuffature che dall'Okaso<sup>63</sup> da Sua Maestà Imperiale emanato li 14 aprile 1793 viene proibito l'ingresso.

Quello che qui essenzialmente manca sono li necessari metodi e discipline di Contu<macia>.

Dopo quanto ho l'onore sin qui di esponerle sopra la qualità e metodi del commercio [...] <sup>64</sup> [che] f<anno> attualmente li Greci in

57. Georgios Karkavelas from Zakynthos.

58. Jovan Bošković.

59. Georgios Panagiotis; his merchant ship, which had on board a cargo consisting principally of wheat, was intercepted by French vessels when entering the Port of Smyrna, and the cargo confiscated because accompanying documents was in the Russian language; see "[...] venuto da costà il capitano Zorzi Panagiotti fu visitato dalle fregate Francesi ed avendo trovato li passeporti, documenti e spedizione Russe, che veniva dal Mar Negro, fu preso per buona presa come bastimento Russo, non avendogli giovato la bandiera Veneta che aveva alborato" (ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc. [16 November 1793]).

60. paper deteriorated.

61. Pausanias Koupas.

62. José de Ribas.

63. *ukase*=decree.

64. paper deteriorated.

generale, mi ristringerò al particolare dei soli Veneti, concludendo [...] <sup>65</sup> che il loro buon esito dipenderà dai metodi del primo impianto; se questo è fallace, perderanno per sempre il coraggio a' nuovi esperimenti. Il più prudente e cauto impianto si è quello d'imitar con Società in grande ciò che fanno li Greci in piccole separate Compagnie, altrimenti nulla di buono a se stessi, né alle sovrane, vista l'esperienza proverà s'io dica il vero.

Suplito alla suddetta venerata commissione per quanto l'insufficienza mia ha potuto. Ora mi resta chieder perdono all'Eccellenza Vostra se troppo prolisso e libero mi fossi reso. Imploro dalla generosa bontà dell'Eccellenza Vostra la continuazione dell'autorevole di Lei padrocino, nell'atto che divotamente le bacio le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, 28 settembre 1793, v«ecchio» s«tile»

A Sua Eccellenza Nobil Uomo, il Signor Federico Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana.

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Locatelli

Deputato assistente del Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 3, ancient archival record], original)

10. Kherson, 13 December 1793 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari; he informed the latter that he had previously sent him three reports, one in September, the other two in October, and that he was waiting for confirmation; Locatelli also mentioned that his son, Giovanni Battista Locatelli, was still studying Russian in order to become an interpreter of the Venetian consulate in Kherson.

---

65. paper deteriorated.

Eccellenza,

Dopo del venerato foglio di cui ha piaciuto all'Eccellenza Vostra d'onorarvi in data delli 16 settembre stil novo, mi trovo privo d'ulteriori suoi comandi; per tanto, con la presente, ho l'onore di confermarle le precedenti umili mie datate 28 settembre col coriere, e duplicata per via di mare col Capitano Visich, e susseguenti 29 ottobre e 28 novembre stil vecchio, ambe col coriere, che suplico d'un grazioso riscontro se le sono pervenute.

Dietro a quanto ebbi l'onore di rassegnarle in data 28 novembre prossimo passato, non ho d'aggiungerle se nonché, rapporto al mio Ufficio, ho l'onore di accettarla che le cose caminano assai bene presentemente, li sudditi arrivano qui dai diversi luoghi di lor' domicilio, consolatissimi d'aver una figura pubblica per appoggio nelle loro occorrenze. Quanti sin'ora si sono presentati da me per differenze fra loro e crediti, senza espormi ad una pubblica comparsa, ho diretto gl'affari in modo che gl'uni sono stati amichevolmente comodati, e gl'altri pagati, perloch  cominciano a riguardarmi con amore e rispetto; spero ancora poter meglio affezionarli al mio e loro adorabile Sovrano.

L'esperienza mi ha fatto conoscere quanto utile alle cose spettanti al mio Ufficio, sia la cognizione della lingua del Paese, per poter al bisogno operar con pi  di forza e non esser nel continuo timore di venir inganato dalli interpreti, perci  mio figlio Giovanni Battista, qual aveva tre anni prima in Pietroburgo ricevuto i principi, gli ho qui provisto un buon maestro, e come   dotato di qualche talento, egli ha fatto a quest ora un profitto tale, che promette fra sei mesi poter servirmi d'interprete e fra un anno anche far uso dello scriver, perci  contento sono di soffrire la gravosa spesa.

Nell'atto che suplico di continuarmi l'alto suo padrocinio, divotamente le bacio le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, li 13 dicembre 1793, vecchio stile

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Loccatelli

Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio ne' Mari Nero  
e d'Azoff

A Sua Eccellenza Signor Federico Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 4, ancient archival record], original)

11. Constantinople, 15 December 1793 [New Style/Gregorian calendar]; *bailo* Ferigo Foscari to Pietro Maria Locatelli, confirming the receipt of his reports dated 28 September and 29 November Old Style/Julian calendar.

Al Deputato agente [sic!] al Veneto comercio in Cherson, Pera 15 dicembre 1793

Frutto di Sua diligenza, e delle attente Sue indagini, sono le notizie dettagliate che Ella avanzò a questa carica colli fogli Suoi 28 settembre e 29 ottobre, giunti da poco e contemporanei.

Mentre però si anima la di ei attività di continuare metodicamente le notizie di costà, e quelle scoperte, che di Lei industria rilevar potesse, se ne attendono agli utili risultati colli metodici corieri di Russia, che partono due volte il mese, e se Le desidera ogni bene.

[Ferigo Foscari, bailo a Costantinopoli]

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., original rough draft)

12. Kherson, 31 December 1793 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, reporting that he did not have anything new to add about the way in which international trade was carried out through Kherson harbour, but also complaining about the refusal of some Greek and Dalmatian Slav merchants and ship captains, Venetian subjects, to acknowledge his authority as Consul of Venice and, consequently, to subject to the control he was entitled to exercise.



Eccellenza,

Mi è pervenuta, il giorno 28 spirante, la venerata lettera di Vostra Eccellenza segnata 15 medesimo nuovo stille, responsiva alle umilissime mie 28 settembre e 29 ottobre, colla quale graziosamente s'è degnata di compatire il loro contenuto. Sarà per me un nuovo incoraggiamento se le successive rispettose mie all'Eccellenza Vostra troverano lo stesso.

Fin ad'ora da San Pietroburgo non è ancor qui pervenuto alcun riscontro sulla proposta traslazione della Dogana e Contumacia che l'accennai ciò in una prolissa del dì 28 novembre, ma però qui comunemente si dice che avrà luogo l'ordine di prima pubblicato da questo Governo, come più comodo ai forestieri.

Quanto al commercio in generale di queste Provincie e della navigazione in queste Mari, non ho cosa interessante di poter aggiungere a quello rassegnai con la sudetta umilissima mia 28 settembre e posteriormente 28 ottobre, mesi prossimi passati.

Nella ossequiosa mia 13 dicembre spirante, ebbi l'onore di far un eloggio alli sudditi qui domiciliati, ma omisi nello stesso tempo di parteciparle che li Signori Capitani Greci e Sclavoni entrano in questi Mari scortati da Patente e Bandiera Imperial Russa, credendosi affatto indipendenti da quest Ufficio di Deputazione, motivo che porta somma difficoltà all'adempimento di quei doveri che m'impongono le pubbliche Istruzioni; una prova di ciò si è la dessubediencia del Capitan Giorgio Carcavella Zantiotto, che rassegnai a Vostra Eccellenza in data 16 agosto prossimo passato.

Credo mio dover ciò rassegnarle per quanto la sapienza di Vostra Eccellenza giudicasse prestarsi ad'un qualche provvedimento.

Ieri qui fu eseguita la funzion«e» funebre di Sua Maestà Maria Antonieta<sup>66</sup> fu Regina di Francia, [e] v'intervenne tutto il Corpo Militare, Deplomatico e borghese a lutto, che la rese pomposissima, e successivamente un pubblico banchetto dato da questo Comandante il Capite, Signor Conte de Souvaroff.

Colla dovuta venerazione ed ossequio, divotamente bacio a Vostra Eccellenza le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

---

66. Marie Antoinette.

Cherson, 31 dicembre 1793, v«ecchio» s«tile»

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

A Sua Eccellenza, Nobil Uomo il Signor Ferigo Foscari, per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 5, ancient archival record], original)

**13.** Kherson, 14 January 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari; he reported that merchant Giovanni Maria Cingria, a partner of the commercial house Julian Cingria and Co, intended to invest in the trading grain imported from Russia, and also that Vincenzo Musenga, the Consul of Naples residing in Kherson, was to go to the Crimean ports to purchase grain.

Eccellenza,

In questo corriere, privo del bramato onore de' venerato di lei comandi, né essendo fin'ora pervenuto da Pietroburgo alcuna deliberazione sulla proposta traslazione di questa Dogana e Contumacia, mi ristringerò a confermarle il contenuto delle precedenti umili mie 28 novembre e 13, 31 dicembre mesi ed anno prossimi passati.

Qui, il Signor G«iovanni» M«aria» Cingria, compagno di codesta Casa Joliani Cingria et Compagni, vuol stabilire una Casa di commercio nazionale Napolitana. A tale ogetto detto Cingria farà in breve il giro della Russia per acquistar le necessarie conoscenze et aderenze.

Ad onta delle attuali circostanze critiche alla navigazione, particolarmente di questi Mari, il Signor Console di Napoli<sup>67</sup> fra pochi

---

67. Vincenzo Musenga.

giorni intraprenderà pure di far il giro della Crimea e sino a Taganrok per acquistar una quantità di formento, di cui e commissionato non so se da particolari o dalla Corte di Napoli. Altri mercanti Greci hanno di già mandato suoi comessi in Polonia per simile ogetto. Sarebbe desiderabile che la nostra Piazza sortisse da quel lettargo in cui giace da lungo tempo.

Non so cosa sia per far di buono la nova Società Veneta per questo commercio. So che il Parri, poco inteso del commercio, diede in passato delle informazioni contrarie al vero mettodo da tenersi ed ultimamente era intenzionato di procurar lo scioglimento della suddetta Società, per dei fini suoi particolari.

Mi raccomando perciò sempre più all'autorevol di Lei padrocinio, nel mentre che colla debita venerazione bacio a Vostra Eccellenza le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,  
Cherson, li 14 genaro stil vecchio 1794

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio ne' Mari Nero e  
d'Azoff

A Sua Eccellenza, Nobil Huomo il Signor Ferigo Foscari, per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 6, ancient archival record], original)

14. Kherson, 11 February 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, reporting on the return from his recent journey to Nikolaev, where he had been gone to personally check the type and quantity of the goods traded by merchants; he added that quarantine was expected, and also that Kherson Customs House had a new location; he also expressed the belief that the Venetian merchant ships could keep the approval of the Russian authorities to sail under the St. Mark flag beyond the Straits and into the Black Sea.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone  
Collendissimo,

Dopo la precedente rispettosa mia ch'ebbi l'onor di scriverle in data 14 genaro prossimo decorso, passai e mi trattenni qualche tempo a Nikolaieff<sup>68</sup> per osservare colà i metodi usati nelle vendite dei generi delle diverse mercanzie d'importazione e quelli per le compere di esportazione, ma non ho rilevate cose degne da esporre sotto i sapienti riflessi di Vostra Eccellenza.

Si attende qui a momenti, di ritorno da Pietroburgo, l'Eccellentissimo Vice Amiralaglio Morduinoff,<sup>69</sup> il qual facilmente porterà seco la deliberazione Sovrana sulla traslazione in questione della Dogana e Contumacia.

Sopra le dimande della Corte di Napoli a quella di San Pietroburgo, mi vien fatto credere disposta quest'ultima a dar in breve una più chiara spiegazione dell'Okaso emmanato sotto li 24 aprile dell'anno prossimo decorso, cosa importantissima sapersi a' quali prodotti e manuffature esteri s'estenda positivamente la proibizione all'ingresso in questi Stati.

Se fosse lecito, bramerei sapere se in quest'anno li bastimenti Veneti avranno il permesso di cambiar bandiera, come nel passato, per navigar in questi Mari.

In aspettazione d'un grazioso riscontro, se Le siano pervenute le umilissime precedenti mie 28 novembre, 13, 31 dicembre e 14 genaro, mesi prossimi passati, colla dovuta venerazione e proffondo rispetto, bacio a Vostr'Eccellenza divotamente le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,  
Cherson, 11 febraro 1794 stile vecchio

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

---

68. Nikolaev.

69. Nikolay Semyonovich Mordvinov.

All'Ill<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adro>ne Coll<endissi>mo, il Si<gnor> Federigo Foscari, per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 7, ancient archival record], original)

15. Kherson, 29 February 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, reporting on the meeting he had with Vice-Admiral Nikolay Semyonovich Mordvinov, the Chairman of the Black Sea Admiralty Board and Commander of the Black Sea Fleet and Ports, who, during the conversation, had showed interest in purchasing Venetian fabric for the uniforms of the officers of the Russian Imperial Navy.

Ill<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adro>ne Coll<endissi>mo,

Doppo della venerata di Vostra Eccellenza segnata 4/15 dicembre anno prossimo decorso, non ho avuto l'onore d'ulteriori comandi. Devo pertanto confermarle le precedenti umilissime mie scritte in data 28 novembre, 13 dicembre, 31 medesimo dell'anno prossimo decorso, 14 genaro e 11 febraro anno corente, desideroso sapere se Le siano pervenute, e ciò per sola mia quiete.

È finalmente qui giunto, di ritorno da S. Pietroburgo, Sua Eccellenza Vice Amiraglio Signor Mordoinoff,<sup>70</sup> e fui a visitarlo il giorno 18 corente. Pressi in quell'incontro l'occasione di pararle sopra le londrine di Schio e Bassano per uso delli Uffiziali della Marina. Esso dimostrò gran premura di vederle, perciò ne scrissi il qui stesso all'Eccellentissimo Magistrato de' Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia, perché comandi a chi spetta di rimettermi le occorrenti cartelli di mostre coi loro prezzi.

Doppo del pranzo, cultivai parimenti l'occasione di chiederli quali fossero le deliberazioni Sovrane sulla traslazione della Dogana e Contumazia in questione; mi rispose graziosamente non esser intie-

---

70. Nikolay Semyonovich Mordvinov.

ramente ancor deciso, ma che certamente non rimarrano tutto quest'anno a Okzakoff.<sup>71</sup>

Colla dovuta venerazione, e col più profondo rispetto, bacio a Vostra Eccellenza divotamente le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, 26 febraro 1794 s<tile> v<ecchio>

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Loccatelli

Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio

ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Il<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adro>ne Coll<endissi>mo, il Si<gnor> Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 8, ancient archival record], original)

**16.** Kherson, 11 March 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, informing him of the death of Prince Manolache Giani Ruset (Emanuel Rossetti), former ruler of Wallachia and of Moldavia, buried with the appropriate princely honours in the yard of St. Catherine's Cathedral in Kherson; Locatelli also mentioned that the new quarantine would be built in the newly established city-port of Odessa, and that customs offices and public infirmaries would probably function in the neighbouring ports.

Il<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adro>ne Coll<endissi>mo,

Nell'atto che Le confermo la rispettosa mia delli 26 febraro prossimo decorso, Le partecipo ancora la morte qui successa ieri l'altro del fu Principe di Moldavia;<sup>72</sup> oggi è stato sepolito nella Chiesa di

71. Ochakov.

72. Manolache Giani Ruset (Emanuel Rossetti), former ruler of Wallachia

questa Fortezza con gran pompa militare.

Sembra decisa la traslazione di quest'Ammiragliato di Niccolaeieff, e che la gran Contumacia verrà fissata nel Porto di Algi-bei,<sup>73</sup> e che per ogni altro di questi Porti vi sarà una Casa di Salute com'anche le Dogane a maggior comodo de' negozianti.

Qui abbiamo fin'ora goduto d'un buon inverno, senza freddo, ma poi è rilessibile che da ben due settimane qui siano disturbato da vari venti, e di tal maniera ampliati, che minacciano burasche a grave danno del commercio.

Sua Eccellenza Vice Ammiraglio di Ribas<sup>74</sup> è qui ben giunto di ritorno da San Pietroburgo.

Nel mentre imploro la continuazione dell'autorevole di Lei padrocinio, con la dovuta venerazione e col più profondo rispetto, bacio a Vostra Eccellenza le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,  
Cherson, li 11 marzo 1794

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Sig<sup>no</sup>re, Sig<sup>no</sup>r P<sup>adr</sup>one Collendissimo, il Si<sup>gnor</sup> Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 9, ancient archival record], original)

17. Kherson, 28 March 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, asking him for confirmation of receipt for his previous reports; he also informed him about the

(from May 1770 to October 1771) and of Moldavia (May to October 1788), has fled to Russia and died 8 or 9 March 1794 in Kherson.

73. On the site of the Tartar–Turkish fortress Hacıbey was founded in 1794 the Russian city-port of Odessa.

74. José de Ribas.

improvement of the weather conditions favourable to sailing and of the arrival in Ochakov of the merchant ship under the command of a Venetian subject from Castelnuovo (Herceg Novi).

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Sig<sup>no</sup>re, Sig<sup>no</sup>r P<sup>adro</sup>ne Coll<sup>endissi</sup>mo,

Dalla benignità di Vostra Eccellenza non essendo io stato riscontrato, se pervenute Le sieno le diverse umili precedenti mie, 13, 31 dicembre anno prossimo decorso, 14 genaro, 11 febraro, 26 detto e 11 marzo anno corente, mi da mottivo d'essere molto inquieto sulli accidenti che potessero averle smarrite in camino. A mia quiete basterà solamente che Vostra Eccellenza degni accenarmi le date di tutte quelle che all'giungerLe di questa Le sono in avanzo pervenute, e ciò per poter io prevedere nell'avenire quelle misure ch'occorer potessero al caso di qualche mancanza d'esse.

Presentemente non siamo qui minacciati da quei fierissimi venti ch'acennai nella precedente 11 corente; l'aria si è fatta più serena e dolce, da sperar buona navigazione a vantaggio del commercio.

Da qualche tempo era bene arrivato nel Porto di Sevastopoli il Signor Capitano Cristoforo Subaz di Castelnuovo, ed in breve lo attendono in Oczakoff dove deve scaricare.

Io sono colla maggior venerazione e col più proffondo rispetto.

Dopo scritto: In questo punto ricevo aviso da Oczakoff essere collà arrivato in salvo il suddetto Capitano Cristoforo Subaz.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, 28 marzo 1794, stil vecchio

Umilissimo, devotissimo ed obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Loccatelli

Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio

ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Sig<sup>no</sup>re, Sig<sup>no</sup>r P<sup>adro</sup>ne Coll<sup>endissi</sup>mo, il Sig<sup>no</sup>r Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana.



(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 10, ancient archival record], original)

18. Kherson, 11 April 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, asking him again for the confirmation of the receipt of his previous reports, also informing him of the journey of Rear-Admiral José de Ribas and Vice-Admiral Mordvinov from Kherson to Sevastopol.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Collendissimo,

Ho l'onore di confermare la precedente umilissima mia delli 28 marzo prossimo passato, e nell'atto stesso parteciparLe l'arrivo nel Porto di Oczakoff del Signor Capitano Cristoforo Subaz di Castelnuovo, qual'anche sta attualmente scaricando.

Li due Eccellentissimi Vice Amiragli, de Ribas e Morduinoff, sino dalla scorsa settimana partirono da qui per Sevastopoli.

Con particolar sollecitudine qui si va immitando la cauta formica, per non trovarsi sprovveduti di sussistenza.

Nessun'altra novità ch'interessar possa i sapienti rifflessi di Vostr'Eccellenza non è a mia cognizione.

In aspettazione de' venerati di Lei comandi, a' quali prestarmi colla dovuta pronta obbedienza, colla maggior venerazione e col più proffondo rispetto baccio a Vostr'Eccellenza le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, li 11 aprile 1794, stil vecchio

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Loccatelli

Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Collendissimo, il Signor Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 11, ancient archival record], original)

19. Kherson, 23 April 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari; he informed the latter of the movements of the Russian troops which, most likely, had been sent to help in the repression of Polish upheaval known as Kościuszko Uprising.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Collendissimo,

Proffitto dell'aperta navigazione per rimetter sotto piego di Vostra Eccellenza la qui unita per l'Eccellentissimo Magistratto de' Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia; suplico l'Eccellenza Vostra onorarli del più sincero e sollecito ricapito della medesima.

Qui si ostenta una perfetta tranquillità, e pure, oltre delle truppe che sino dall'anno prossimo decorso stazionano nel Kuban e nella Crimea, e quelle che formano Cordone sulle Rive del Niester, sino a coprire tutta la frontiera della Besarabia ed altri Stati di nuova conquista; presentemente traggono il fiume Buk No. 9 Regimenti per andar ad'unirsi agl'altri sopradetti essistenti nella Besarabia.

Da due corrieri, alcune lettere da Venezia e da altre parti dell'Italia sono qui pervenute aperte. Quelle provenienti da costì fin ad ora sono state rispetate.

Io sono colla maggior venerazione e rispetto in attenzione de' venerati di Lei comandi.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, li 23 aprile 1794, stil vecchio

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Loccatelli

Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio

ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Ilustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Collendissimo, il Signor Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima

Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 12, ancient archival record], original)

**20.** Constantinople, 30 April 1794 [New Style/Gregorian calendar]; *bailo* Ferigo Foscarelli to Pietro Maria Locatelli, confirmed the receipt of seven letter-reports which the consular representative in Kher-son had sent during the previous months and assured him that the issue of the non-recognition of his authority by some of the captains, citizens and subjects of Venice, who were sailing the Black Sea under Russian flag, had been transmitted to Venice's central authorities: the Senate and *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* (Venice Board of Trade).

Al Deputato assistente al Veneto commercio ne' Mari etc., a Cher-son, 30 aprile 1794

A sette diligenti Suoi fogli, dalle 13 dicembre fino 28 marzo pas- sato, forma questa carica soddisfacente risposta, rendendo la dovuta laude, ad approvazione a quella esattezza con cui si presta Ella in- defessamente ad informare la carica stessa delle correnti cose, il che Le resta in particolar modo raccomandato anche in continuazione, mentre quallora vi sieno argomenti pressanti ne avrà Ella li mo- mentanei riscontri, come li riceverà complessivi di tempo in tempo quando non sieno cose meritevoli di risposta, metodo generale e necessarie di questa carica verso le dipendenti consoli ed agenti nelle diverse scale.

L'argomento di obbedienza dipendente da cotesta Deputazione per parte de' Capitani Veneti costà venienti con bandiera Russa non saprei altrimenti riscontrarlo con precisione, mentre a riserva delle comunicazioni fattemi di Sua elezione da Sua Eccellenza il Nobile in Pietroburgo, né l'Eccellentissimo Senato, né il Magistrato de' V Savi ha rilevato a questa carica li Proclami, né istruzioni o comandi di cui Ella fa menzione, onde sino in relazione, ammoniti li Capitani Veneti suindicati.

Onde però sistemare in tal articolo per le vie dirette, e dietro li

pubblici comandi, Le si fa noto che fu rassegnato l'emergente così all'Eccellentissimo Senato che al Magistrato sudetto.

Opportunissima poi è plausibile la Sua cura industriosa di far applicare Suo figlio nello studio della lingua del Paese in cui si rileva esser egli bene avanzato, mentre se Le significa anche per questo la ben dovuta approvazione, e se Le desidera per ultimo le maggiori felicità.

[Ferigo Foscari, bailo a Costantinopoli]

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., original rough draft)

21. Kherson, 13 May 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, expressing his gratitude for the diplomat's confirmation of receipt of the consular correspondence and also for his encouraging young Giovanni Battista Locatelli's pursuits in view of his making progress with the Russian language and his becoming an interpreter for the Venetians.

Eccellenza,

Inesplicabile contentezza forma nell'animo mio divoto e riconoscente la memoria con la quale Vostra Eccellenza continua degnarmi li saluti che rilevo a di Lei nome marcati per me e per mio figlio, Giovanni Battista, in una favoritami dell'Illustrissimo di Lei Secretario, Signor Nicolò Colombo, mi porta e m'assicura di tal onore.

Penetrato di viva gratitudine, per il compatimento dona alla mia insufficienza l'Eccellentissimo Bailo, con ossequiata sua 30 aprile prossimamente passato, rinnovo all'Eccellenza Vostra li più sinceri umili miei ringraziamenti per tanta bontà, supplicando l'animo di Lei generoso a volere continuarmi la validissima sua protezione, della quale sempre più abbisogno nel carico cui sono stato onorato, assicurando l'Eccellenza Vostra presenti mi saranno sempre li doveri del carico mio stesso, e quelli che fortunatamente incontrai con Vostra Eccellenza.

Sarò sempre più fortunato, e darà maggior vigore alla cadente età mia, se in continuazione saprò meritarmi lo stesso compatimento che in ora l'Eccellenza Vostra mi dona, per il quale facendole le

più fervide proteste di gratitudine, con tutto il rispetto, venerazione ed obbedienza, ho l'onore, con mio figlio, quale pure trovasi confuso ed obbligato a tanta di Lei bontà, di costantemente protestarmi.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,  
Cherson, li 13 maggio 1794, stil vecchio

Umilissimo, devotissimo ed obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli

A Sua Eccellenza, Signor Federigo Foscari

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 13, ancient archival record], original)

22. Kherson, 13 May 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, announcing that he had not received any answer from *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* (Venice Board of Trade), although he had sent the due reports regularly to this office in charge of trading policies, and also responsible for managing many of the details of Venice's foreign trade; he also mentioned the departure from Ochakov, to transit Constantinople, of a Venetian merchant ship with a cargo consisting of iron ore, grain, barley, and tallow, and the arrival at Kherson of a vessel under command of the Venetian captain Paolo Picello to carry a full cargo of wheat.

Ill<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adro>ne  
Coll<endissi>mo,

Oggetto principale di mia inquietudine, per cui tanto importunai l'Eccellenza Vostra, era quello d'assicurarmi dell'arrivo delle diverse precedenti rispettose mie; l'ossequiata lettera di Vostra Eccellenza datata 30 aprile ultimo scorso mi tranquillizza pienamente su tal importante articolo.

Continuano nella setta inquietudine, attesa la poca sicurezza delli corrieri che devono traversare li Stati della Pollonia, poiché fin'ora non ho anche riscontro di quattordici mie umiliate all'Eccellentissimo Magistratto dei Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia.

Presentemente ho eguale motivo di temere per li corieri da qui per Pietroburgo. La approvazione e compatimento che la benignità dell'Eccellenza Vostra dona all'insufficienza mia mi dà maggior incoraggiamento, onde prestarmi sempre più a procurare il maggior bene pubblico e privato.

Sopra l'argomento dei Capitani, credo bene rimettere all'Eccellenza Vostra la copia del Proclama e la formula delle lettere [che] uso scrivere alli suddetti allorquando è a mia cognizione l'arrivo d'alcuno di essi nei Porti di questi Mari, in relazione delli Comandi contenuti nelle istruzioni ricevute dall'Eccellentissimo Nobile all'Imperial Corte di Russia, Signor Zampiero Grimani, in data 4 luglio 1793.

È gran compenso alle mie spese ed alla fatica del figlio Giovanni Battista, umilissimo di Lei servo, l'approvazione dell'Eccellenza Vostra per la risoluzione da me presa di fare apprendere la lingua di questo Paese.

Alli 4 del corente fece vella da Oczakoff per costà il Signor Capitano Cristoforo Subatz da Castelnovo, carico di ferro, formento, orzo e sevo.

Gl'ultimi del passato approdò in questa rada il Signor Capitano Paolo Picello, Veneto, qual'attualmente sta caricando formento.

Nell'atto ch'assicuro dell'inflessa mia attenzione e zelo per li pubblici e privati interessi, con venerazione, rispetto ed obbedienza bacio a Vostra Eccellenza le mani.

Cherson, 13 maggio 1794, stil vecchio

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Sig<sup>no</sup>re, Sig<sup>no</sup>r P<sup>adrone</sup> Coll<sup>endissimo</sup>, il Si<sup>gnor</sup> Federigo Foscarei per la Serenissima Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 14, ancient archival record], original)

23. Kherson, 16 May 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, providing information about the ongoing conflict after the onset of the Polish uprising, and giving further details regarding the concentration and the movements of the Russian imperial troops to Poland, where postal services were no longer operational and where Russian authorities had blocked the transport and dispatch of the letters and required their return to their senders.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone  
Collendissimo,

Le troppo critiche circostanze alle quali presentemente soggiacciono li Stati della Pollonia, dove passar devono li corrieri che da qui sono destinati a portar le lettere in Italia, mi pongono in un ragionevole timore di perdere quelle che di tempo in tempo gl'affari imposti al mio carico m'obbligano umiliare all'Eccellentissimo Magistratto de' Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia in Venezia, e cercand'io, per quanto m'è possibile, sodisfare al dovere di suddito e servo diligente, ho perciò, e per altri importanti riguardi, risolto valermi della via del Mare, sotto coperta dell'Eccellenza Vostra, per rimettere il qui unito piego all'Eccellentissimo Magistratto sudetto. Supplico Vostra Eccellenza volermi onorare del più sicuro e sollecito ricapito e degnarmi d'un di Lei avviso di ricevuta per mia quiete, e norma per l'avvenire.

Confermo le precedenti rispettose mie all'Eccellenza Vostra, delli 23 aprile, per via di Mare, e 13 maggio, via di terra, coll'ordinario corriere.

La Pollonia in rivolta: tutte queste frontiere armate, li Generali di terra passati ai loro posti, li comandanti e le provisioni necessarie alla squadra in Sevastopoli sono di già a bordo. La flottiglia ben rispettabile, da Niccolaieff luogo di sua ordinaria stazione, è passata di già nel Porto di Glubog, di dove si trasferirà nella rada

d'Oczakoff. Sua Eccellenza il Signor Conte Romanzoff,<sup>75</sup> ora eletto Generalissimo delle Armate di Sua Maestà Imperiale, s'attende qui a momenti.

Oggi, quest'Ufficio dell'Imperiale Russa Posta ha ricevute di ritorno le lettere che l'precedente corriere esso Ufficio aveva spedite per Italia ecc, avvisandolo che nella Pollonia tutti gli Uffici di Poste sono fermati e bollati per comando Imperiale Russo.

Avevo di già sigillato il piego per l'Eccellentissimo Magistrato, allorché seppi l'inconveniente delle Poste precisamente chiuse nella Pollonia, pertanto supplico l'Eccellenza Vostra volerlo partecipare all'Eccellentissimo Magistrato stesso.

In queste circostanze, un qualche sapiente di Lei consiglio che mi conduca ad'una lodevole direzione e la continuazione del validissimo ed autorevolissimo padrocinio di Vostra Eccellenza potrà molto contribuirmi all'adempimento de' miei doveri.

Colla maggior venerazione, e col più profondo rispetto, bacio a Vostra Eccellenza divotamente le mani.

Cherson, 16 maggio 1794, s<tile> v<ecchio>

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Ill<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adr-  
o>ne Coll<endissi>mo, il Si<gnor> Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima  
Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 15, ancient archival record], original)

---

75. Count Pyotr Alexandrovich Rumyantsev.



24. Kherson, 23 May 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, recommending the Frenchman Pierre La Pierre, *Serenissima*'s subject, to the Venetian diplomatic representative in Constantinople.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Collendissimo,

So di no aver giammai nulla meritato presso l'Eccellenza Vostra, per prendere [sic!]<sup>76</sup> l'ardire inadesso<sup>77</sup> presentarLe la persona di Monsieur Pierre La Pierre, suddito Veneto, ma so che le qualità del medesimo sono una sufficiente raccomandazione per ottenerle l'atto di Lei padrocino, nonostante io pure incoraggiato dall'esperimentata bontà dell'Eccellenza Vostra, ardisco suplicarLa voler in continuazione accordar allo stesso l'autorevolissima protezione cui per mio mezzo umilissimamente implora.

Io sono colla dovuta venerazione, rispetto ed obbedienza.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, 23 maggio stile vecchio [1794]

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Locatelli

Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Collendissimo, il Signor Federigo Foscari, per la Serenissima Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 16, ancient archival record], original)

25. Kherson, 10 June 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, reporting on the arrival in Ochakov

76. means *pretendere*.

77. means *inatteso*.

of five merchant ships under the command of some Venetian subjects; he also required the intervention of the Venetian diplomatic representative in Constantinople to send his consular correspondence to *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* by sea, transiting the Ottoman capital city.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Collendissimo,

Doppo quanto ebbi l'onore di assoggettare alla sapienza di Vostra Eccellenza coll'umilissima mia dei 16 maggio ultimo scorso, devo con questa parteciparLe che oltre delli accenati Capitani, Cristoforo Subatz e Paolo Picello, posteriormente aprodarono in rada d'Oczakoff anche li Capitani Matteo Tarabocchia, Pietro Comlenovich, Giovanni Boscovich, Panagin Kruppa e Demetrio Orfanò.

Compiego una all'Eccellentissimo Magistratto dei Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia in Venezia, suplico voler graziosamente ciò permettermi anche in avvenire, sino a che si renderà libero il passaggio della Polonia.

In aspettazione d'esser onorato di qualche venerato di Lei comando, pieno di venerazione, rispetto ed obbedienza, ho l'onore di baciare a Vostra Eccellenza umilmente le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, 10 giugno 1794, stil vecchio

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Loccatelli

Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio

ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Ilstrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Collendissimo, il Signor Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 17, ancient archival record], original)

26. Kherson, 27 June 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, asking for suggestions about the jurisdiction on the Venetian subjects residing at Kherson, should any issue of public interest arise, and supported the supplication of merchant Kostinos, the son of Nikolaos, who petitioned, on the grounds of the declaration of Nikolaos Salmakis of Lefkada (Santa Maura), to be admitted among the Venetian subjects recorded in the registers of the Venetian Embassy at Constantinople.

Copia di lettera scritta da Cherson li 27 giugno 1794 all'Excellentissimo Bailo Ferigo Foscari dal Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio nelli Mari Nero e di Azof, Pietro Maria Locatelli<sup>78</sup>

Con questa rispettosa mia domando alla sapienza di Vostra Eccellenza consiglio; se al caso che la quotidiana dovuta mia vigilanza per il ben essere de' sudditi qui domiciliati rilevasse in alcuno di essi un carattere turbolento o di altra maniera dasse fondata ragione di temere di scandalo e mal esempio agli altri; debba domandare a questo Governo la persona e rimetterla a Vostra Eccellenza perché il detto caso potrebbe essere non lontano, e forse di somma importanza.

Costino di Niccolò dicessi, oriundo suddito Veneto nato in Arcipelago Stato Ottomano, di presente qui commerciante, di onesto carattere, per tale mi viene riconosciuto dal Signor Nicola Sammachì da Santa Maura, desidera ed umilmente implora della carità di Vostra Eccellenza di essere registrato nel numero de' felicissimi sudditi Veneti. Se Vostra Eccellenza degna di accoglierlo è supplicata di mettermi per esso suddetto supplicante un di Lei grazioso Passaporto.

Con la dovuta venerazione ed ossequio, bacio a Vostra Eccellenza devotamente le mani.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., 18<sup>th</sup> century copy)

---

78. Mentioned as attached to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari's *dispaccio* dated 25 July 1794, see F. Cosmai, S. Sorteni (eds.), *Dispacci da Costantinopoli di Ferigo Foscari*, vol. I, no. 110, p. 350.

27. Constantinople, 21 July 1794 [New Style/Gregorian calendar]; record made by the secretary of the Venetian Embassy to Constantinople of the statement of merchant Matteo Tarabocchia, Venetian subject, with regard to Pietro Maria Locatelli's exercising his responsibilities as consul of *Serenissima* in Kherson.

Pera di Costantinopoli, 21 luglio 1794<sup>79</sup>

Comparso in Ufficio di questa Veneta Regia Segreteria d'Ambasciata il Veneto Capitano Mattio Tarabocchia, Comandante il Veneto bregantino denominato Figlio Isaac, proveniente da Ockzacoff con carico [di] grani diretto per Livorno, fu interrogato nel frattempo che si ritrovava ad Ockzacoff avesse veduto alcuna figura vestita di Pubblico Carattere

Rispose non in Ockzacoff, ma in Chersona, ove si arritrovava il mercante a cui ero raccomandato, sono stato chiamato da un certo Locatelli, che mi si palesò per Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio e m'intimò presentargli il ruolo dell'equipaggio [e] il Manifesto del carico d'importazione ed esportazione. Sebbene mi sembrasse cosa strana, che essendo coperto da Padiglione Russo e per conseguenza dipendente da quel Governo, egli volesse comandarmi, pure mi sono prestato al di lui volersi. Egli poi mi comunicò un Decreto dell'Eccellentissimo Senato che prescrive alcune discipline da osservarsi nelle presenti circostanze di guerra. [...]

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., 18<sup>th</sup> century copy)

28. Kherson, 26 July 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, reporting that the customs office, the quarantine and the Admiralty Headquarters had not been transferred to Odessa yet; he also mentioned that the Russian authorities intended to temporarily ban grain exports from Crimea,

---

79. Mentioned as attached to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari's *dispaccio* dated 25 July 1794, see F. Cosmai, S. Sorteni (eds.), *Dispacci da Costantinopoli di Ferigo Foscari*, vol. I, no. 110, p. 350.

and ended his report denying the complaints of the Venetian merchants and ship owners to *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*, strongly affirming that he had never required a tax or other contribution for consular assistance.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Collendissimo,

Ho l'onore di confermarLe l'umile mia delli 27 giugno prossimo passato. L'eccessivo caldo che da tre settimane qui si soffre ha causato diversi gravi malattie, dalle quali non sono stato esentato. Una fierissima colica, della quale ancora non sono affatto libero, m'impedì fin'oggi di poter umiliarLe la presente rispettosissima mia.

Finalmente, da quanto mi vien fatto rilevare da Sua Eccellenza Vice Amiraglio Morduinoff<sup>80</sup> sembra deciso che l'Amiragliato, Dogane e Contumacce resteranno nella primiera loro situazione sin a tanto che l'Porto di Algi-Bei sia ridotto in istato di sicurezza al quale sollecito conseguimento da più mesi vi affatticano assiduamente diversi Regimenti.

Fu innanzi proibita l'estrazione de' grani dalla Crimea, presentemente si dice emmanato l'Okaso qual inebisce l'estrazion anche da questi Porti.

Vengo avvisato essere stato scritto all'Eccellentissimo Magistrato de' Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia che i Capitani Veneti si lagnavano di essere a Cherson caricati di agravi, non so però se intendono da mia parte o da quella delle Dogane, et altro a causa di non avere ancora un Trattato di Commercio sulli piedi d'altre Nazioni. Nessuno meglio apportata che l'Eccellenza Vostra per formare un veridico esame, se alcuno dei Capitani abbia pagato a me qualunque siasi anche minima cosa. Suplico per tanto la carità di Vostra Eccellenza voler, dietro detto esame, riportar all'Eccellentissimo Magistrato stesso, più sollecitamente che può, il risultato, all'effetto che per equivoco non rilevi danno l'innocente, umile, zelante, fedele persona mia in un affare che mi ferisce nella parte che più peggio, cioè nell'onore.

Per altri propositi, mi riasserisco alla nota che mano propria ho formato, e Le consegnerà il Signor Capitan Francesco Marinovich.

---

80. Nikolay Semyonovich Mordvinov.

In aspettativa de' venerati di Lei comandi, colla dovuta venerazione, rispetto ed obbedienza, bacio a Vostra Eccellenza le mani.  
Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, 26 luglio 1794 [vecchio stile]

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio ne'  
Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'ill<sup>u</sup>strissim<sup>o</sup> ed Ecc<sup>e</sup>llentissim<sup>o</sup> Sig<sup>n</sup>ore, Sig<sup>n</sup>or P<sup>a</sup>dr<sup>o</sup>ne Coll<sup>e</sup>ndissim<sup>o</sup>, il Si<sup>g</sup>nor Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 18, ancient archival record], original)

29. Tsarskoye Selo, 15 July 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; copy of the Russian empress Catherine the Great's *ukas* (decree) which forbade the grain export from Ekaterinoslav Vice-Regency, also through the port of Kherson.

Ricevuto li 26 luglio 1794 dalla Dogana di Cherson

In vigore dell'Ukaso<sup>81</sup> datomi da Sua Maestà l'Imperatrice spettante il divieto dell'uscita di ogni sorte di grani dalli Porti del Governo d'Ekatherinoslaff, di cui vi spedisco la copia qui annessa, Io prescrivo a quella vostra Dogana di pigliare subito la ricevuta del presente Ukaso tutte le misure necessarie affinché sia impedita l'uscita de' Grani dal Porto di Cherson.

Sottoscritto Platone [Alexandrovich] de Zuboff<sup>82</sup>

No. 429

81. "Considerata la grandissima secchità [sic!] che v'è stata in quest'anno nel Governo d'Ekatherinoslaff [...] Noi ordiniamo che sia proibita l'estrazione di ogni sorte di grani dagli Porti di questo medesimo Governo fino ad uno miglior mese. [...] Caterina" (ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., 18<sup>th</sup> century copy).

82. Platon Alexandrovich Zubov.

Zarskoe Selo  
li 15 luglio 1794

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., 18<sup>th</sup> century copy)

**30.** Kherson, 6 August 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscarelli; he sent to the Venetian diplomatic representative a copy of Catherine the Great's *ukas* (decree) forbidding the grain export from Ekaterinoslav Vice-Regency; Locatelli called to record captains Francesco Marinovich (Franjo Marinović) and Dall'Aequa, both Venetian subjects, in order to prove that he had competently and scrupulously fulfilled his duties as the consular representative of Venice.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone  
Collendissimo,

Proffitto del Signor Capitan dall'Aequa, suddito Veneto, pronto a metter vella per costì, onde rassegnar l'umilissima presente mia all'Eccellenza Vostra.

Ad'ogni buon riguardo, Le ocludo la duplicata della rispettosa mia 26 luglio ultimamente passato, rimessa in originale col Capitan Francesco Marinovich,<sup>83</sup> qual per anche non tengo avviso ch'abbia messo alla vella d'Oczakoff per costì.

Rimetto copia dell'Okaso da Sua Maestà Imperiale emanato sotto il giorno 10 luglio 1794, col qual proibisce l'estrazione d'ogni sorte di grano.

In rapporto dei sudditi qui e altrove domiciliati, li Signori Capitani Francesco Marinovich, dall'Aequa in più occasioni si sono trovati oculari testimoni e potranno attestare all'Eccellenza Vostra il modo col quale mi presto all'loro benessere.

In aspettazione di qualche venerato comando, col più proffondo rispetto ed obedienza, bacio a Vostra Eccellenza divotamente le mani.

Dopo scritto: Suplico la benignità di Vostra Eccellenza per il

---

83. Franjo Marinović.

ricapito dell'occlusa all'Eccellentissimo Magistrato de' Cinque Savi.

Cherson, li 6 agosto 1794, s<tile> v<ecchio>

Umilissimo, devotissimo ed obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Il<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adr-  
o>ne Coll<endissi>mo, il Si<gnor> Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima  
Repubblica Veneta Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc.,  
18<sup>th</sup> century copy)

**31.** Kherson, 26 August 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, showing his satisfaction with the confirmation of the arrival in Constantinople, in Foscari's hands, of the reports he had sent during the previous months; he also informed the *bailo* of the assistance he had granted to a Venetian subject who used to bring official letters from Saint Petersburg addressed to the Russian governor of Taurida Oblast in Simferopol.

Il<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adro>ne  
Coll<endissi>mo,

Mi giova sperar che Le saranno pervenute le precedenti rispet-  
tose mie scritteLe la maggior parte per la via di Mare (atteso la poca  
sicurezza delli ordinari corieri) in data 11 e 23 aprile, 13, 16, 23  
maggio, 10 e 27 giugno, 26 luglio e 6 agosto anno corente, colle di-  
verse compiegate per l'Eccellentissimo Magistrato de' Cinque Savi  
alla Mercanzia, particolarmente quella de' 16 maggio che doveva  
essere rimessa mano propria dal suddito Signor Pietro La Pierre.

Amerei sapere se una nota che feci estendere di pugno del Signor  
Capitano Francesco Marinovich sia stata dal medesimo presentata  
all'Eccellenza Vostra.



Suplico la benignità di Vostra Eccellenza voler rimetter a prima occasione la qui unita all'Eccellentissimo Magistrato sudetto.

La proibizion all'estrazione de' grani d'ogni sorte da questi Porti [è] occasione di] gravi danni a quelli ch'anno qui fatto delli acquisti, e che per il trasporto de' quali hanno in conseguenza li bastimenti nolleggiati. Mi sono in qualche modo prestato a favor del suddito Capitan Nicolich, qual s'è personalmente prodotto al Ministro in Pietroburgo, ed è qui ritornato con lettere dirette al Governator della Tauride, nelle quali spera esservi l'implorata grazia. Da otto giorni ch'esso partì da qui per Simpheropoli,<sup>84</sup> dove risiede quel Governatore, non ho ancora riscontro del risultato.

Sempre più mi raccomando all'alto padrocinio di Vostra Eccellenza, nel mentre colla dovuta venerazione, rispetto ed obbedienza, divotamente le bacio le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, 26 agosto 1794, s'tile v'ecchio

Umilissimo, devotissimo ed obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Loccatelli

Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio

ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'ill<sup>u</sup>striss<sup>i</sup>mo ed Ecc<sup>e</sup>llentiss<sup>i</sup>mo Sig<sup>n</sup>o<sup>r</sup>e, Sig<sup>n</sup>o<sup>r</sup> P<sup>a</sup>drone Coll<sup>e</sup>ndiss<sup>i</sup>mo, il Si<sup>g</sup>no<sup>r</sup> Ferigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 21, ancient archival record], original)

**32.** Kherson, 8 September 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, reporting that the Russian authorities had granted permission to the captains of several merchant ships to load grain in the ports they had called at, thus excepting them from the recent interdiction imposed by imperial decree.

<sup>84</sup>. Simferopol.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Colendissimo,

Ho l'onore di confermare all'Eccellenza Vostra la precedente ossequiosa mia delli 26 agosto prossimamente passato, coll'ordinario corriere, al contenuto della quale con questa devo aggiunger d'aver ricevuto lettere da Simpheropolo del Capitano Rocco Nicolich,<sup>85</sup> nelle quali m'avvisa d'aver ottenuto da quel Governatore l'implorata particolar permissione d'estrarre la domandata quantità di grano, e che stava attualmente caricando due bastimenti, e che doveva proseguire a maggior summa.

Il Governo di Catterinaslavo<sup>86</sup> parimenti ha permesso a quelli soli bastimenti ch'avevano principiato a caricar in questi diversi Porti di Glubog, Nikolaceff<sup>87</sup> ed Oczakoff<sup>88</sup> prima della proibizione, di poter compiere li loro carichi.

Ardisco sempre più raccomandandar la povera persona mia al padrocinio di Vostra Eccellenza, nell'atto che, col dovuto rispetto, devotamente le bacio le mani.

Cherson, li 8 settembre, vecchio stile, 1794

Di Vostra Eccellenza,  
Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
nei Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signor, Signor Padrone Colendissimo, il Signor Ferigo Foscarei per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 25, ancient archival record], original)

85. Roko Nikolić.

86. Ekaterinoslav Governorate.

87. Nikolaev.

88. Ochakov.

33. Kherson, 26 September 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari; report of the meeting he had with the Governor of Ekaterinoslav, Lieutenant-General Joseph Ivanovich Horvath, but also of the presence of Venetian captains in the ports of Novorossiya.

Ill<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adro>ne  
Coll<endissi>mo,

Senza il conforto de' venerati comandi dell'Eccellenza Vostra, resto in una totale dispiacenza, non potendo dimostrarle come bramerei quel sentimento d'ossequiosa servitù che al sublime di Lei carattere ed'al magnifico di Lei animo è dovuto.

La nuova regolazione qui delle Poste per li forestieri Stati mi rende soddisfatto, onde in avvenire non sarò per apportare con le mie occluse maggior incomodo all'Eccellenza Vostra, ringraziando la di Lei bontà che s'è degnata di favorirmi.

La venuta qui del nuovo Governatore di Ekatterinoslaff,<sup>89</sup> combinommi felicemente seco con lui a solo una conferenza, a proffitto delli suditti qui domiciliati. Fui ricevuto dal sudetto sogetto con molta bontà, che mi fa sperar non sarà per essere del tutto inutile tale conferenza.

Le lettere del dì 8 corente stil novo da San Pietroburgo mi portano la notizia che l'Eccellentissimo Nobile Niccolò Venier trovasi ancora in Memel.<sup>90</sup>

Il Capitano Teodoro Inglessi<sup>91</sup> ha terminata la contumacia, ma non trova carico dalli suoi nolleggiatori Fabiani Cingri<a> e Compagni; il Capitano Vincenzo Cranotich mi lusingha a quest ora averà già fatto vella d'Oczakoff<sup>92</sup> per colà, ma senza il pieno suo carico.

Imploro l'alta protezione dell'Eccellenza Vostra, nell'atto che, con tutta la venerazione e rispetto, ho l'onore di professarmi costantemente.

Dell'Eccellenza Vostra,

89. Lieutenant-General Joseph Ivanovich Horvath.

90. Klaipėda.

91. Theodoros Inglesis.

92. Ochakov.

Cherson, 26 settembre 1794, v<ecchio> s<tile>

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitor,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
ne' Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'ill<ustrissi>mo ed Ecc<ellentissi>mo Sig<no>re, Sig<no>r P<adr-  
o>ne Coll<endissi>mo, il Si<gnor> Ferigo Foscari per la Serenissima  
Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc.,  
[no. 22, ancient archival record], original)

34. Kherson, 18 October 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari; report concerning the merchant ship of the Venetian subject Theodoros Inglesis and respectively the grain business settled by Roko Nikolić, also a Venetian subject, and about the Neapolitan merchant vessels waiting at the port of Ochakov to carry cargoes of grain.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Colendissimo,

Doppo l'umilissima ultima mia delli 23 settembre prossimo passato, non ho ulteriori avvisi da San Pietroburgo.

Dalla Pollonia qui sono giunti particolari replicati avvisi d'un sommo vantaggio riportato dall'Arme Russe sopra del Generale Skoduska,<sup>93</sup> quale vogliono sia rimasto prigioniere.

Il Signor Capitano Teodoro Inglesi,<sup>94</sup> suddito, parte da qui oggi per rendersi ad Oczakoff, da dove al primo favorevole vento partirà vuoto per costì, Dio lo conduca a salvamento.

Il Capitano Rocco Nicolich, coll'ultime lettere da Kosloff in Cri-

---

93. Prince Eustachy Erazm Sanguszko was a major general and a division commander in 1794 during the Kościuszko Uprising.

94. Theodoros Inglesis.

mea, non aveva ancor terminato di caricarne di tutto il grano da lui acquistato, ma però non tarderà di far metter a vela tutti li bastimenti da esso noleggiati per codesta volta.

L'avvisata proibizione all'estrazione dei grani da tutti questi due Mari, grandi danni ha causato a' noleggiatori, molti dei quali dovranno pagare il nollo di vuodo per pieno. Tre bastimenti Napolitani restano ancora in rada di Oczakoff, aspettando il loro carico. Vi è molta apparenza, poiché il Governo possa permettere a quelli che hanno attualmente dei bastimenti a Taganrok di caricarli con grani avanti che si fermi la navigazione. E si tiene generalmente per certo che le Dogane riceveranno uniformemente gl'ordini per il commercio soddisfacente per quanto riguarda.

Non mi resta che implorare la continuazione dell'autorevole patrocinio di Vostra Eccellenza nell'atto che, con la dovuta venerazione e profondo rispetto, divotamente le bacio le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, li 18 ottobre 1794 stil vecchio

Nel momento di chiudere la presente, ulteriori notizie private mettono in dubbio li surriferiti vantaggi delle Arme Russe nella Pollonia e molto più, che fin ora non è qui pervenuto alcuno ufficiale avviso.

Umilissimo, devotissimo ed obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio nei  
Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signor, Signor Padrone Colendissimo, il Signor Ferigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 23, ancient archival record], original)

35. Kherson, 8 November 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari; he informed the latter that he had participated, at the invitation of Counter-Admiral Nikolay Semyonovich Mordvinov, at the launching of a 74-gun ship of the line of the Black Sea Russian Fleet, adding that the Venetian subject Roko Nikolić had managed to carry out the load of wheat for four merchant ships in the port of Kozlov and that he was heading to Constantinople as soon as the fifth would have been loaded.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Colendissimo,

Con questa ossequiosissima mia non ho soggetto che possa interessare i sapienti riflessi di Vostra Eccellenza, che quello di sempre più assicurarla del costante suddito mio zelo per tutto quello [che] riguarda i doveri imposti al mio Uffizio.

Il giorno primo corrente, nella Cattedrale di questa Fortezza, fu cantato il Tedeum per la vittoria riportata delle gloriose Armi Russe sopra delle Pollonesi comandate dal Generale Skodoska.<sup>95</sup>

Da pochi giorni gionse qui di passaggio, diretto per la Crimea, Sua Eccellenza il Generale Laskaroff.

Il giorno 6 suddetto fui graziosamente invitato da quest'Eccellentissimo Vice Amiraglio, Signor de Mordoinoff,<sup>96</sup> a vedere il getto all'acqua di una nave di 74 canoni; non so abbastanza di lodare il costruttore o la maestria di eseguire il getto stesso.

Con l'ultime lettere da Cosloff<sup>97</sup> in Crimea, del 7 ottobre stil novo, del Capitano Rocco Nicolich,<sup>98</sup> il medesimo aveva già compiuto il carico [di] fromento a quattro bastimenti, le rimaneva di caricare il quinto, indi far vela per costà.<sup>99</sup> Non so però dove voglia condurre il fromento medesimo.

95. Prince Eustachy Erazm Sanguszko.

96. Nikolay Semyonovich Mordvinov.

97. Kozlov.

98. Roko Nikolić.

99. Probably this are the merchant ships mentioned by Nicolò Chialli, Venice consul at Gallipoli: “[...] altri bastimenti Veneti quivi giunti li 3 del corrente diretti per Livorno e Genova [...]” (ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., 7 December 1794).

Raccomando l'umile persona mia, e quella del di lei divoto servo mio figliolo G<iovanni> B<attista> [?], al padrocinio di Vostra Eccellenza, nell'atto che col dovuto rispetto divotamente le bacio le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, li 8 novembre 1794 s<tile> v<ecchio>

Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio nei Mari  
Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Colendissimo, il Signor Ferigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 26, ancient archival record], original)

**36.** Kherson, 23 November 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari, reporting on the arrival in the Southern Ukraine port of the news of the victory of Russian General Alexander Suvorov in the Battle of Praga (4 November 1794), the easternmost suburb of Warsaw, against the Polish troops, militia and civilians defendants of the Polish city-capital, captured the next day, on 5 November.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Colendissimo,

In seguito della rispettosa mia delli 8 corrente a Vostra Eccellenza, sono in dover di parteciparle che li 9 stesso alle ore sette dopo mezzo giorno, arrivò lettere a quest Eccellentissimo Amiraglio Mordoinoff,<sup>100</sup> contenenti l'avviso che l'Eccellentissimo General Conte

---

100. Nikolay Semyonovich Mordvinov.

Sauvvaroff aveva ottenuta una sanguinosa vittoria sopra li Pollonesi, ed impadronitosi del Borgo nominato Praga, situato alla parte opposta di Versavia,<sup>101</sup> che il fiume Vistula divide l'uno dall'altra.

Il giorno 19 medesimo alle ore una della sera arrivò altro corriere portante all'Eccellentissimo Amiraglio suddetto la notizia che la Città stessa di Versavia aveva capitolata a discrezione la resa all'Eccellentissimo General Sauvvaroff suddetto.

Nella brama di poter meritarmi l'alto padrocino di Vostra Eccellenza, col più profondo rispetto e venerazione, divotamente le bacio le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, li 23 novembre s<tile> v<ecchio> 1794

Umilissimo, devotissimo ed obbligatissimo servitore,

Pietro Maria Loccatelli

Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio

nei Mari Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Colendissimo, il Signor Ferigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 27, ancient archival record], original)

37. Kherson, 11 December 1794 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari; he sent information with regard to the want of wheat on the local market; as a result of this shortage, the price for all types of bread flour had considerably increased.

Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Colendissimo,

---

101. Warsaw.



Mi giova supponere che le siano pervenute in suo tempo le diverse precedenti rispettose mie, l'ultima delli 25 decorso novembre, ch'ho l'onore in questa di confermare.

Da due corrieri che manco di lettere da Pietroburgo, e da ogni altra parte di quest Impero, fa che non abbia cosa alcuna degna per trattenere li sapienti riflessi di Vostra Eccellenza.

Molti e diversi sono li giornalieri riporti e verbali, ma tutte egualmente contraddicenti e destituiti di ogni fondamento.

Il commercio di grani qui è quasi il solo che allimenta una così estesa navigazione in questi diversi Porti. La mancanza quasi totale del prossimo scorso raccolto d'ogni prodotto in questi vicini contorni, e la quantità de' grani vecchi quest'anno depositati massimamente dalla vicina Pollonia per codesta Metropoli, ha occasionato qui una tale mancanza che li prezzi della farina sono montati, quelle ordinarie nere per uso dei soldati, che prima vendevansi a tre ruboli<sup>102</sup> il per certerverz,<sup>103</sup> in oggi vale 11 sino a 12. La bianca mediocre 14 e la migliore, proveniente da Mosca, sino a 18.<sup>104</sup>

Li Napolitani qui fanno gran sforzi per impossessarsi li primi di questo commercio, ma per inesperienza sono malamente riusciti in quest anno. Molti loro bastimenti hanno qui consumato l'estate, ed alcuni d'essi dovranno forse in Taganrok isvernare.

Mi raccomando per la continuazione dell'autorevole di lei padrocinio, nell'atto che colla debita venerazione e rispetto divotamente le bacio le mani.

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Cherson, li 11 dicembre 1794 s<tile> v<ecchio>

---

102. roubles.

103. Russian unit of weight measurement chetverik=quarter=26.239 L.

104. The wheat prices increased slowly and continuously during the next three decades, according to Arthur Young, "An inquiry into the rise of prices in Europe, during the last twenty-five years, compared with that which has taken place in England; with observations on the effects of high and low prices", in *The Pamphleteer, respectfully dedicated to both Houses of Parliament*, vol. VI (London, 1815), p. 173-174, 178; see also Boris Mironov, "Le mouvement des prix des céréales en Russie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 41, No. 1 (1986), p. 218-222, 224-234.

Umilissimo, devotissimo e obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
Del Mar Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Colendissimo, il Signor Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 28, ancient archival record], original)

38. Kherson, 26 May 1796 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Ferigo Foscari; report requiring the confirmation of the Venetian diplomatic representative of the receipt of the consular correspondence sent during the previous months, adding that the sole piece of information worth of any interest that he could give was that the plague had swept through Taman Peninsula, a fact that had determined the Russian authorities to establish a “cordon sanitaire”, meant to stop the spread of the pestilence, and to enforce quarantine in the Russian ports on the Black Sea coast.

Con questa umilissima mia a Vostra Eccellenza ho l'onore di confermarle il contenuto nelle precedenti mie rispettose assoggettati e controsegnate dalli numero 9 sino al 29, delle quali non fui onorato d'alcun grazioso riscontro.

Dalla suddetta a quest'epoca, non essendomi riguardo a questo commercio presentata materia degna di sottoporre alli di Lei sapienti riflessi, ciò fu la causa che fin' ad oggi ho differito di ripresentarmi a Vostra Eccellenza.

Supplico la di Lei umanità voler rileggere il contenuto nell'ossequiosa mia segnata No. 29 e graziarmi di un Suo solamente riscontro che tranquillizzi l'abbattuto mio animo.

Il giorno 21 corrente qui pervenne la funesta notizia di malattia di peste a Taman, dove dicono far molta straggie. Questo Governo ha già provveduto in diversi luoghi l'Uffizio di Contumazia e tirato un lungo cordone per diffendere lo Stato confinante della Crimea e

di Taganrok. Tanto partecipo a Vostra Eccellenza per riguardo alli Veneti bastimenti che venissero noleggiati per questa parte.

Non mi resta che supplicare Vostra Eccellenza voler persuadersi del costante suddito mio zelo per tutto quello riguarda i doveri del Pubblico mio servizio e donarmi l'autorevole di Lei patrocinio, mentre con la dovuta venerazione e col più proffondo rispetto a Vostra Eccellenza baccio le mani.

Cherson, li 26 maggio 1796 s<tile> v<ecchio>

Di Vostra Eccellenza,  
Umilissimo, devotissimo e obbligatissimo servitore,  
Pietro Maria Loccatelli  
Deputato assistente al Veneto Commercio  
Del Mar Nero e d'Azoff

All'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Signore, Signor Padrone Colendissimo, il Signor Federigo Foscari per la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia Bailo alla Porta Ottomana in Costantinopoli.

(ASV, *Bailo a Costantinopoli. Lettere*, b. 243 I, unnumbered doc., [no. 30, ancient archival record], original)

**39.** Kherson, 11 August 1796 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Francesco Vendramin, requiring a subvention or a salary as remuneration for his consular responsibilities, asserting that he had been effectively acting in the support of Venetian merchants and ship owners involved in the international trade through the Black Sea area.

Copia di lettera scritta all'Eccellentissimo Bailo Vendramin dal Lucatelli Deputato Assistente al Veneto Commercio nei Mari Nero ed Azof, in data 11 agosto 1796

Pervenutami appena la consolante notizia del felice arrivo di Vostra Eccellenza a Costantinopoli, che chiamato dal mio dovere e da un rispettoso particolare sentimento di venerazione, non manco d'i-

noltrarLe con il presente divoto foglio le riverenti mie felicitazioni.

Benché assai mortificante mi riesca il dovere di esser importuno a Vostra Eccellenza la prima volta che ho l'onore di scriverLe, non posso nondimeno dispensarmene perché costretto m'attrovo da una necessità assoluta, dal timore di compromettere il Pubblico decoro, dalla giusta afflizione di veder esposto il mio onore.

Quattro anni circa ora sono che dalla Sovrana Pubblica Clemenza con venerate Decretali 18 maggio 1793 venni destinato in questo Consolar impiego. Mentre assicurar posso Vostra Eccellenza di non aver mai mancato di volontà nell'esecuzione de' miei doveri, posso anche asserire di aver impiegato tutto me stesso nel esaurire le Commissioni che addossate mi furono dagl'Eccellentissimi Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia e dagl'Eccellentissimo Bailo di Costantinopoli e Nobile a Pietroburgo.

Nella più volte mancatami soddisfazione di tutte queste Pubbliche rappresentanze, ho trovato è vero il più generoso compenso alle assidue mie cure, ed al rispettoso mio zelo, ma la numerosa mia famiglia e la decenza relativa ad una Pubblica figura, dopo aver esaurito la più gran parte delle mie limitate finanze, mi hanno ormai ridotto nella più lutuosa circostanza per mancanza di soliti Pubblici emolumenti.

Un equivoco per me fattale pose remora fin ora alla carità dell'Eccellentissimo Senato e dell'Eccellentissimi Savi alla Mercanzia.

Scrisse l'Eccellentissimo Foscari antecessore di Vostra Eccellenza all'Eccellentissimo Senato che certe figure sedicenti Pubbliche, non riconosciute da veruna carica, stabilite nell'Arcipelago, e specialmente certo Locatelli, avevano attirati li lamenti della Porta con rilasciare Venete Patenti a capitani non Veneti, e più favorivano esse l'emigrazione de' sudditi da Stati del Veneto Governo.

A tale epoca mi vidi rigorosamente ingiusto per ordine dell'Eccellentissimo Nobile a Pietroburgo. La perfetta conoscenza dell'innocente mio procedere non alterò per niente la mia tranquillità, ma mi ha somministrato de' mezzi assai facili per discolparmi. La legalità della mia figura era provata da Pubblici documenti e dalla presentazione fatta di mia persona dall'Eccellentissimo Nobile a Pietroburgo a quella Imperiale Sovrana. La mia residenza in Mar Nero è ben differente dalla enunziata in Arcipelago. Inebita essendo la navigazione in questo Mare alla Veneta Bandiera, cadeva in con-

seguenza la faccia postami d'aver rilasciato Pattenti e Passavanti. Altrimenti converrebbe ammettere una causa senza effetto.

La lista dei Certificati da me rilasciati ed i legali fondamenti in quali erano appoggiati mi garantivano a sufficienza, come egualmente era giustificato nella modalità di questi, perché relativa agli ordini e prescrizioni dell'Eccellentissimo Grimani fu Nobile a Pietroburgo.

Ebbi la dolce consolazione di veder accettate le mie discolpe, ma non ancora ho provato i salutari effetti della pubblica giustizia e carità. Non per questo si è intiepidito il fervoroso mio zelo in tutto ciò che riguarda il Pubblico servizio, ma sempre più pressandomi il bisogno, non posso annesso di non riguardare la mia situazione, come delle più critiche ed imbarazzanti, tanto per i Pubblici oggetti, quanto per i privati miei delicati riguardi.

Riverentemente esposte a Vostra Eccellenza l'infelici miei circostanze, mi prendo la libertà di'aggiungervi le più fervide suppliche, onde voglia degnarsi di presentare l'afflitto mio stato all'Eccellentissimo Senato ed agli'Eccellentissimi Cinque Savi alla «Mercanzia».

È troppo nota la giustizia e generosità di cuore di Vostra Eccellenza per dubitare ch'Ella non prenda parte nella innocente mia causa. Tutto adunque spero dalla valida di Lei protezione, a cui di nuovo mi raccomando.

Desideroso d'essere onorato de' venerati suoi comandi, pieno di rispetto ed osequio passo a divotamente rassegnarmi.

(ASV, *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*. 1<sup>a</sup> Serie, b. 556 B, unnumbered doc., 18<sup>th</sup> century copy)

40. Kherson, 21 November 1796 [Old Style/Julian calendar]; Pietro Maria Locatelli to *bailo* Francesco Vendramin, reported that the news of Catherine the Great's decease arrived on 19 November at the Black Sea Russian Fleet headquarters; he also mentioned that five Venetian merchant ships had called at Odessa in August, and that they would load grain and other goods, but the captains of these merchant vessels had refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of *Serenissima* consular representative in Kherson.

Copia di lettera scritta all'Eccellentissimo Bailo Vendramin dal

Lucatelli Deputato Assistente al Veneto Commercio nelli due Mari Nero ed Azoff, li 21 novembre 1796

Quantunque Vostra Eccellenza sarà prevenuta d'avviso dall'Eccellentissimo Nobile Veneto all'Imperial Corte di Russia in S. Pietroburgo, Signor Nicolò Venier, con questa rispettosissima mia credo dover rassegnarLe che la notte dei 19 corrente arrivò qui un corriere diretto a quest'Amiragliatto portante la notizia del passaggio a miglio<r> riposo, successo li 6 medesimo, della fu Imperatrice di tutte le Russie Sua Altezza Caterina 2<sup>da</sup>, e dell'assunzione all'Imperiale trono Paolo Primo.

Qui il ghiaccio da qualche tempo <h>a chiusa la navigazione. Nel Porto di Odessa, qual resta sempre aperto, v'erano approdati da lungo tempo cinque sudditi bastimenti, comandati dalli capitani Tramoritsch, Giacomo Tarabocchia, Cristoforo Mailovich di Giovachino,<sup>105</sup> Spiridion Stanisch<sup>106</sup> e Girolamo Vidacovich. Tutti dovevano ricaricarsi di grano ed altri generi. A cadauno scrissi in data 29 agosto e 29 settembre, comunicando loro li Sovrani Comandi relativi alle Pubbliche prescrizioni, e le trasmisi in copia il Proclama 23 febraro 1792. Non ho avuto risposta da nessuno di essi, e conseguentemente ignoro se sieno da colà partiti per cotesto Porto.

Per un così riflessibile disordine occasionato da quelle cause che ebbi l'onore di rassegnare all'Eccellentissimo Magistrato de' V Savi in data 7 settembre 1793 e del quall'articolo trasmisi copia a Vostra Eccellenza in data 26 settembre anno corrente. Ho creduto dover a mio intiero discarico rassegnare in data 17 corrente all'Eccellentissimo Magistrato stesso la non prestata ubbidienza, onde venghi prestati quei provvedimenti necessari al riparo di quelle conseguenze che potrebbero nelle attuali circostanze compromettere la pubblica quiete.

In aspettativa dei venerati di Lei comandi, con la dovuta venerazione e col più profondo rispetto, a Vostra Eccellenza divotamente baccio le mani.

(ASV, *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*. 1<sup>a</sup> Serie, b. 556 B, unnumbered doc., 18<sup>th</sup> century copy)

105. Kristofor Mailović, son of Joakim.

106. Spiridon Stanišić.

41. Constantinople, 10 March 1797 [New Style/Gregorian calendar]; *bailo* Francesco Vendramin to *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*, *dispaccio* by which he informed the Venetian public officials of the letter in which Pietro Maria Locatelli required a subvention or a salary as remuneration for his consular responsibilities, a request which he could not either grant or decline, as it was the responsibility of the five patricians forming the Venetian Board of Trade.

Illustrissimi et Eccellentissimi Signori, Signori Colendissimi

Devo all'Eccellenze Vostre rassegnar un argomento in cui trovo la carica incerta, poiché mancante dei lumi opportuni.

Da che qui mi trovo tre lettere scritte mi furono dal Deputato al Commercio nei Mari Nero ed Azoff, due delle quali sono da me in copia umiliate, credendo inutile di far lo stesso dell'altra, che non ripete che le cose già esposte, con un aggiunto sommario di tutto il carteggio che ha avuto l'onore di tenere con Vostre Eccellenze.

Elleno vedranno che il suddeto si lagna d'aver prestato un indefeso servizio, e di non aver avuto ancora alcuna ricompensa, che suppone che ciò provenga perché l'Eccellentissimo mio predecessore l'abbia di non favorevoli colori dipinto, prendendolo in cambio d'un altro Locatelli, il quale perviva di Cancelliere nel Consolato di Smirne. Che si duole del rifiuto dei Veneti capitani naviganti in Mar Nero di ricever ed obbedir i suoi ordini, e che richiede da me assistenza e istruzioni.

Io non ho saputo formargli altra risposta, che di riscontrar le sue lettere, dirgli che le sue significazioni paranno all'Eccellenze Vostre prodotte, che alla Loro equità soltanto è il suo destino rimesso, e che guidate dalla Loro sapienza, a cui mi rivolgerò, saranno le direzioni che terrò in avvenire con lui.

Questo è quello appunto io faccio nella presente che ho l'onore di segnare.

Non parlerò del merito del servizio da lui prestato, poiché l'Eccellenze Vostre, che sanno per quali oggetti fu quell'Ufficio istituito, quali sono le ispezioni che appoggiate gli vennero, e come vi abbia il Locatelli corrisposto, possono sole esser il grado di conoscerlo ed apprezzarlo. Tacerò pure sull'articolo del compenso che convenir gli si puote, che non può fuggire alla loro giustizia ed umanità.

Soltanto a lume del vero dirò che di lui e non d'altri parlò e parlar poteva il mio predecessore nel Dispaccio de' numero 110 che venne all'Eccellenze Vostre rimesso.

Rifletterò io pure uniformemente a quanto ha rassegnato l'Eccellentissimo mio predecessore suddetto, ch'è insostenibile la pretesa da lui spiegata d'esiger obbedienza dai Veneti capitani che navigano nei Mari Nero ed Azoff con Russa Bandiera, poiché quand'essi l'hanno spiegata soggetti alla Russia si fanno, e sono sottratti anche alla giurisdizione di questa mia carica, e implorerò poi a norma della mia condotta i Loro comandi e le Loro risoluzioni.

Spero di non vedermi privo d'un così necessario suffragio, e mi do intanto l'onore di rassegnarmi con profondo ossequio.

Pera di Costantinopoli, li 10 marzo 1797

Di Vostre Eccellenze,  
umilissimo, divotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
Francesco Vendramin Bailo alla Porta Ottomana

(ASV, *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia. 1ª Serie*, b. 556 B, unnumbered doc., original)



## 2.

### The Trade of Galați and Brăila in the Reports of Russian Officials from Sulina Quarantine Station (1836–1853)

Andrei Emilciuc

Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova

The evolution of the “Danube question” during the period between the Russian-Turkish Wars of 1828–1829 and 1853–1856 was a much debated problem not only in Romanian, but also in European historiography. Even during that age there were published several works that analyzed the issue, although with a heavy political bias, such as those of British authors David Urquhart<sup>1</sup> and William Cargill.<sup>2</sup> After World War Two, the “Danube question” was mostly studied by Soviet and Romanian historians. One of the relevant books devoted to the international status of the Danube was authored by the Soviet historian P. G. Fandikov.<sup>3</sup> Referring to a more recent historiography, a great contribution to researching “the Danube question” and the English interests at the mouths of the Danube belonged to historian Paul Cernovodeanu.<sup>4</sup> At present, the entire spectrum of aspects related to this topic is studied by Constantin Ardeleanu, a historian based at Galați, author of several monographs and studies on the

---

1. David Urquhart, *The Mystery of the Danube: Showing how Through Secret Diplomacy, that River Has Been Closed, Exportation from Turkey Arrested and the Re-Opening of the Isthmus of Suez Prevented* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1851).

2. William Cargill, *The Austrian Treaty Analyzed, and Its Baneful Tendency Exposed* (London: John Reid and Co., 1841).

3. P. G. Fandikov, *Международно-правовой режим Дуная: исторический очерк* [The Legal International Regime of the Danube: a Historical Sketch] (Moscow: Госюриздатъ, 1955).

4. Paul Cernovodeanu, *Relațiile comerciale româno-engleze în contextul politicii orientale a Marii Britanii (1803–1878)* [The Romanian-English Commercial Relations in the Context of Britain’s Eastern Policy (1803–1878)] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1986).

so called “Sulina question”.<sup>5</sup> However, we consider that new contributions to this matter are extremely important, as unpublished archival sources allow us to bring into the scientific circuit less known facts and statistics about Russia’s Danubian policy in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, this paper is based on unknown material from the National Archives of the Republic of Moldova.

One of the priorities of Russia’s foreign policy in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was to remove the Ottoman suzerainty from the Romanian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, following the Tsar’s territorial advance towards the Balkans. But Russian imperial plans were not rapidly achieved, especially due to the internationalization of the Eastern Question. In an unfavorable European diplomatic context, Tsarist officials were forced to accept the policy of small steps. Thus, Russia only gradually succeeded in taking control over the three mouths of the Danube: firstly, by the Convention of 1817 the border between the Ottoman and Russian Empires was set on the Chilia (Kilia) or northern branch of the river; by the Akkerman Convention of 1826 – on the Sulina branch, and by the Peace Treaty of Adrianople (2/14 September 1829) – along its southern branch, Sf. Gheorghe (St. George). Russia was now the sole master of the islands of Letea and Ceatal which separated the Danubian branches and form what is known as the Danube Delta.<sup>6</sup> The Treaty of Adrianople was followed by a decline of the Ottoman authority in the Romanian Principalities, mainly after the introduction in 1831–1832 of the Organic Statutes (the “constitutional” laws of Wallachia

5. Constantin Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor economice și politice britanice la gurile Dunării (1829–1914)* [The Evolution of the British Economic and Political Interests at the Mouths of the Danube (1829–1914)] (Brăila: Editura Istros – Muzeul Brăilei, 2008); Idem, “Russian-British Rivalry Regarding Danube Navigation and the Origins of the Crimean War (1846–1853)”, *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 19:2 (2010), pp. 165–186; Idem. *Gurile Dunării – problemă europeană. Comerț și navigație la Dunărea de Jos în surse contemporane (1829–1853)* [The Mouths of the Danube – a European Problem. Trade and Navigation at the Lower Danube in Contemporary Sources] (Brăila: Editura Istros – Muzeul Brăilei, 2012); Idem. *International Trade and Diplomacy at the Lower Danube. The Sulina Question and the Economic Premises of the Crimean War (1829–1853)* (Brăila: Istros Publishing House, 2014).

6. Т. Юзефович, *Договоры России с Востоком политические и торговые* [Treaties of Russia with the East. Political and Commercial] (Sankt Petersburg, 1869), сс. 59–60, 72.

and Moldavia) and the legal recognition of the freedom of trade and navigation on the Danube and in the Black Sea. This meant that the Principalities were allowed to have their own national fleet, a provision that could encourage their commercial relations with European countries and diminish the Ottoman economic monopoly.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the Russian Empire intended to gradually draw the Romanian Principalities out of the Eastern Question context and finally accomplish its annexation plans.

*The institution of the Sulina quarantine station.* The Tsarist authorities did not regard willingly to the increasing international trade of the Lower Danube after 1829 and the emergence of the ports of Brăila and Galați, which apparently challenged the prosperity of Odessa. In 1835 they tightened the control measures on navigation between Sulina and Galați, requiring from shipmasters to submit their papers to Russian border guards along the Sulina arm even when the vessel was not sailing on the Russian shore.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the growing discontent of ship-owners and crews, a decree of Russia's Governing Senate dated 7/19 February 1836 ordered that a quarantine station was established on the left bank of the Sulina branch, with additional settlements built on the Delta islands of St. George, Ceatal and Letea.<sup>9</sup> The decree was issued on the basis of a draft prepared by the Ministry of Home Affairs (which also included references to the staff of the quarantine station) and was endorsed by Emperor Nicholas I on 27 December 1835. It stated that the Sulina quarantine station would not to sanitarily cleanse vessels, but rather send them to the quarantines stations of Odessa or Ismail. Vessels heading to Ismail were allowed to remain at Sulina for the quarantine confinement, and afterwards goods could be carried overland, across the Letea Island. Sulina was to become

---

7. See, in this order, Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria comerțului românesc* [History of Romanian Trade], vol. II, *Epoca mai nouă* [The Newer Age] (București: Tipografia Tiparul Românesc, 1925); Constantin Bușe, *Comerțul exterior prin Galați sub regimul de port franc (1837-1883)* [The Foreign Trade of Galați Under the Free Port Regime (1837-1883)] (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1976).

8. Cernovodeanu, *Relațiile comerciale*, p. 69.

9. Полное собрание законов Российской империи [The Complete Law Collection of the Russian Empire] (hereafter cited ПСЗРИ) (собрание II), том XI, 1836, отд. 1, СПб., 1837, No. 8891, cc. 145-146.

only a shelter harbor for vessels navigating along the Sulina branch, allowing them to seek refuge in case of storms, to make reparations and to place in quarantine the people and goods saved from shipwrecks. Two sections were instituted. 1<sup>st</sup>, the practical section, on the Ceatal and Letea islands, for vessels coming from safe locations in terms of the plague, and 2<sup>nd</sup>, the doubtful section, on St. George Island, for the ships requiring full quarantine procedures.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1**  
The staff of Sulina quarantine station approved  
by the decree of 7/19 February 1836

Service	1 <sup>st</sup> Practical Section on Letea Island			2 <sup>nd</sup> Doubtful Section on St. George Island		
	Expenses per year (silver rubles)			Expenses per year (silver rubles)		
	No. of persons	Salary	For meals	No. of persons	Salary	For meals
Administrator	1	325	250	-	-	-
Commissioner	-	-	-	1	150	200
Doctor	1	300	200	-	-	-
Senior office assistant	1	180	-	1	180	-
Office assistant	1	125	20	-	-	-
Office expenses	-	150	-	-	75	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1550</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>750</b>	

**Source:** ПСЗРИ (собрание II), том X, 1835, отд. 2, Штаты и Табели, СПб., 1836, № 8717, с. 386.<sup>11</sup>

As the organization of the quarantine station advanced, Sulina

10. ПСЗРИ (собрание II), том X, 1835, отд. 2, СПб., 1836, No. 8717, с. 1259.

11. Guarding was provided by Danube Cossack Host – Olena A. Bachynska, “Дунайське (Новоросійське) козацьке військо 1828–1868 рр.” [Danubian (New Russia) Cossack Host 1828–1868], Козацтво на Півдні України. Кінець XVIII – XIX століття (Одеса: Друк, 2000), сс. 177–229.

was also established as a harbor, provided with all necessary legal provisions for its activity. Consequently, a new office was instituted in 1840 – Master of the Sulina Harbor. Its attributions were only defined by the Regulation of 25 December 1851, but from the very beginning Petr Vasilievich Soloviev, appointed in this position on 10 June 1840, was applying them, as archival sources suggest, being probably included in his service papers. According to the Regulation of 1851 his obligations were:

- to question the crew and passengers for cases of disease and death onboard, and to observe their examination by the quarantine doctor;
- to order the quarantine commissioner to begin quarantine procedures for each ship;
- to levy the lighthouse tax and the tax for improving navigation on the Sulina branch;
- to supervise that ships did not throw ballast into the Sulina branch;
- to set the taxes for hiring lighters, which were later approved by the General Governor of the province of New Russia and Bessarabia;
- to testify the acts of *prova di fortuna* in cases of shipwrecks;
- to report to the General Governor every two weeks on incidents and every month on the number of ships that entered and cleared the Sulina mouth.<sup>12</sup>

Under the pretence of applying sanitary regulations, the customs authorities, the master of Sulina harbor and the Russian river police had the right to inspect vessels sailing upstream the Danube, to charge the taxes for towing and coasting and, in case of disobedience, to control and retain the vessel, to seize its cargo and to send it to the quarantine stations of Ismail or Odessa.<sup>13</sup>

---

12. ПСЗРИ (собрание II), том XXVI, 1851, отд. 2, СПб., 1852, No. 25851, сс. 189–192.

13. Cernovodeanu, *Relațiile comerciale*, p. 70.

**Table 2**  
**The staff of the Sulina quarantine station in February 1843**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Practical Section on Letea Island</b>			
<b>In service</b>	<b>In this place</b>	<b>In this function</b>	<b>Office and name</b>
17 January 1809	18 March 1837	21 May 1841	Administrator of Quarantine G. V. Leibin
9 July 1831	30 December 1835	2 April 1842	Doctor I. I. Semenov
25 June 1821	5 February 1835	26 April 1840	Senior office assistant F. F. Martos
11 June 1832	28 May 1839	9 April 1841	Office assistant T. V. Sklifasovski
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Doubtful Section on St. George Island</b>			
2 April 1797	10 April 1831	10 June 1840	Master of the Harbor P. V. Soloviev
16 February 1825	22 August 1839	21 December 1840	Commissary P. I. Mandraji
15 April 1823	13 June 1828	10 June 1840	Doctor N. K. Kappel
27 June 1823	31 December 1838	20 December 1838	Senior office assistant T. I. Kovalski
12 August 1831	12 August 1837	30 June 1840	Senior office assistant G. T. Topor

**Source:** National Archive of the Republic of Moldova (NARM), Fund 2, Inventory 1, File 4245, leaf 102–102 verso.

As it results from Table 2, the master of Sulina harbor was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Doubtful Section, with the office on the St. George Island. His office assistant was G. T. Topor, and thus the staff increased from six to eight people.<sup>14</sup> After eight more years, in 1851, the total staff of the Sulina quarantine station and harbor reached ten people, and the budgeted sums 5,379.24 silver rubles,<sup>15</sup> reflecting the increasing importance of the Danubian trade.

14. N. V. Varadinov, *История Министерства внутренних дел* [History of the Ministry of Home Affairs], Часть III, Книга 2 (Sankt Petersburg, 1861), cc. 588–589.

15. ПСЗРИ (собрание II), том XXVI, 1851, отд. 2, Штаты и Табели, СПб., 1852, No. 25851, cc. 373–374.

*Financial investments at Sulina.* According to a project drafted in 1835 by the engineer of the port of Odessa, B. V. von der Flis, approved by the Russian Government, the sum of 359,690 rubles was necessary for the improvement of the Sulina branch. However, the Russian authorities did not hurry to apply the project, passing the responsibility for finding the necessary money from one department to another.<sup>16</sup> Instead, the Russian government spent large amounts for transferring the *cordon sanitaire* from the Chilia to the Sulina branch of the river.<sup>17</sup> In 1834, 1835 and 1837 the General Governor of New Russia and Bessarabia spent 15,000 silver rubles for constructing the quarantine buildings and the *cordon sanitaire* along the Sulina branch.<sup>18</sup> Despite this, on 26 February 1837 the General Governor M. S. Worontsov wrote to Chancellor K. S. Nesselrode that “although I was given what I had asked for, now our sanitary establishments in this place, by the rights we hold, are still far from what could be and what shall be in time”.<sup>19</sup>

This situation has a rather simple explanation. On 16 August 1843 Bessarabia’s Fiscal Administration sent a report with the expenditures for transferring Russia’s customs border to the Sulina mouth. It stated that according to the annual reports of the Commission (dated 10 February 1836, 1 February 1837 and 7 February 1838) and of the inspector of Ismail Central Quarantine (10 May 1839), 56,026 rubles were spent for the transfer of the cordon to the left bank of the Sulina branch, namely the construction of a towpath, of two docks on the practical shore for unloading the vessels, of the doubtful section and of other unforeseen constructions.<sup>20</sup> However, the Administration had found that many expens-

---

16. State Archive of the Odessa Region, Fund (F.) 1, Inventory (Inv.) 249, file (f.) 191, 1835, l. 1-3.

17. On Chilia branch there was functional since 20 October 1832 the Bazarchuk quarantine picket, with only two clerks. It was dissolved with the transfer of quarantine to Sulina – ПСЗРИ (собрание II), том VII, 1832, Штаты и Табели, СПб., 1833, No. 5690, с. 148.

18. National Archive of the Republic of Moldova (hereafter NARM), F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4707, l. 112 verso.

19. Tudose Tatu, “‘Cheia Dunării’ împărătești” [The Key of the Imperial Danube], *Boema: Revistă de literatură și artă*, 12 (2012), p. 33.

20. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4707, l. 12-17.

es had a rather “vague” motivation. According to the tax registry of the Head of Ismail City Administration, from the amounts budgeted in 1836 the expenses for the sum of 7,581.43 rubles were not clear. It was as unclear on what basis the Commission granted to Semen Gutkov in 1836 wooden material worth of 250 rubles and to Hadji Markarov worth of 1,036.67 rubles for the construction of a warehouse and respectively of the building of the private quarantine house in Sulina.<sup>21</sup>

It was also found that several amounts could not be justified under the pretext that the buildings were destroyed by storms. On 5 April 1847 the Fiscal Administration wrote to the Governor that 1,242.85 rubles given in 1837 and 1838 for repairing the cordons could not be justified, as due to the floods of 1839 those buildings were destroyed.<sup>22</sup> Another violation of the concession terms occurred in the case of building picket house No. 33, granted by contract to the petty-bourgeois<sup>23</sup> Kovalev, as the amount exceeded the limit allowed for his social category, and he ought to have been at least a merchant of the third guild. Since Kovalev failed to honor his obligations, officials who approved concessions contrary to the law were fined.<sup>24</sup>

Financial problems seemed to have been major. On 13/25 July 1840, under pressure from the European powers, Russia and Austria signed a ten-year convention of navigation and trade.<sup>25</sup> By this treaty Russia was to clean the Sulina branch, and Austria agreed that vessels sailing under its flag were to pay a duty of two or three Spanish thalers for entering and clearing the Danube.<sup>26</sup> All previous projects were reassessed, and Nicholas I ordered that works should

---

21. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4707, l. 17.

22. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4707, l. 47 verso.

23. In Russian Мещанин.

24. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4707, l. 116–117.

25. ПСЗРИ (собрание II), том XXVI, 1840, отд. 1, СПб., 1852, No 13944, cc. 708–711. In the Russian Empire the Convention was published by the decision of Governing Senate only on 14 November 1840.

26. The tax was two Spanish thalers for vessels with two masts, and three thalers for those with tree masts or for steamships. Additionally, a tax of one Spanish thaler was charged for the Sulina lighthouse from all the vessels, indifferent of tonnage or flag, when entering the Sulina mouth. In order not to hinder the navigation from the sea to the Danube, both taxes were charged only when clearing the Danube to the sea.



be started immediately, assigning for this to the General Governor of New Russia and Bessarabia the sum of 16,301.74 silver rubles.<sup>27</sup>

But even if Russia had apparently provided the financial resources necessary for the cleaning works, it very soon turned out that the amounts collected according to the treaty were much lower than expected. On 22 October 1842, the master of Sulina harbor, P. V. Soloviev, reported to the Military Governor of Bessarabia that the funds necessary for the cleaning works, amounting to 3,188 silver rubles, granted annually by the Government as credit on the account of the tax charged from the Austrian vessels, could not be recovered in one year, but, according to his estimation and to that of the administration of Ismail Quarantine dated 20 November 1841, in at least 15 years. The annual amount collected from levying this tax had not exceeded 200–250 silver rubles, which obviously was not enough even for preliminary works.<sup>28</sup> In some months no money was collected. In December 1842, for example, no Austrian vessels sailed at the Lower Danube,<sup>29</sup> so that 43 thalers were taken from other resources,<sup>30</sup> plus 18 thalers from the money gathered for the maintenance of the lighthouse.<sup>31</sup> In the same sense we mention that according to Russian sources, only 14 Spanish thalers were collected in 1845 from Austrian vessels for works on the Sulina branch or at a rate of 10.64 rubles per thaler, a total of 148.96 silver rubles.<sup>32</sup>

---

27. «Конвенция 13-го (25-го) Июля между Россиею и Австриею, и последовавшие за тем распоряжения к облегчению судоходства по Дунаю» [The Convention of the 13<sup>th</sup> (25<sup>th</sup> July between Russia and Austria, and the following instructions for the relief of navigation on the Danube], Журнал Министерства Внутренних Дел (Sankt Petersburg, 1840), ч. XXXVIII, No. 11, Распоряжения, с. LIX.

28. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4011, l. 21 verso–24 verso.

29. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4245, l. 19–19 verso.

30. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4245, l. 20.

31. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4245, l. 21. According to the Convention of 1840 the lighthouse was to be functional from March to December, thus the navigation during the winter months, if the Danube was not frozen, was extremely difficult. The lighthouse was opened on 23 October 1841, having 18 refractors. On 19 August 1842 the emperor agreed to the proposal of the General Governor of New Russia and Bessarabia that the lighthouse should remain operational all year long – ПСЗРИ (собрание II), том XVII, 1842, отд. 1, СПб., 1843, No. 15990, с. 882.

32. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4589, l. 7, 14, 19, 37, 53, 72.

In fact, according to the Russian officers, after the conclusion of this treaty the number of vessels sailing at the Lower Danube under Austrian flag substantially decreased. We suppose that the shipmasters chose a different flag in order to avoid paying this tax. The Russian authorities imposed additional taxes, which they claimed to be complying with the international law. The Russians introduced a tax of one Spanish thaler for the maintenance of the lighthouse from Sulina, which was imposed on all vessels entering and clearing the Danube, regardless of flag. The amounts collected from this tax were much larger than those gathered for deepening the passage of the Sulina branch. In 1845, for example, there was collected for this tax a total of 2,623 Spanish thalers.<sup>33</sup> Officials from the Ismail Customs District, to which the quarantine station from Sulina belonged, reported that the works could not be financially covered from the sums collected from the Austrian vessels, but they forgot to mention the important amounts collected for the lighthouse, though a part of the money was spent for these very works.

Another problem was related to the fact that the Russian Government had not thought of a control system to financially supervise the accomplished works. This clearly results from the correspondence of the involved bodies. On 30 April 1843 Bessarabia's Fiscal Administration wrote to the Chancery of Bessarabia's Military Governor, noting that it had received from Ismail Police 35.85 silver rubles for the sale, under the Governor's provision dated 25 January 1842, of the timber and remaining tools after the construction in 1841 of the pontoons from the quarantine of Reni. However, as the Fiscal Administration had no idea to which budget chapter this money should be listed, it required to be informed from which financial resources the pontoons were built, to which amounts and for what year it was to be listed.<sup>34</sup> On 26 February 1843 the *Economic Committee of the Southern Region on Questions of Maritime Constructions* wrote to Bessarabia's Military Governor that the register of incomes and expenditures of the sums collected from the taxes for the lighthouse in Sulina received by the address of 13 February 1843 was not subject to the Committee's revision because

---

33. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4589, l. 99.

34. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4250, l. 21.

it was not under its subordination. Due to this reason, the Committee returned the register.<sup>35</sup> Obviously, the unclear situation of the amounts granted for improving the Sulina branch had become a method of misappropriation for many Russian officials, the traces of which even reached to Bessarabia's Military Governor, who was authorized to personally supervise all these works. At least this is what results from the provisions adopted by him, which created reasonable suspicion in this regard. Only after the dismissal of General P. I. Fyodorov from the office of Bessarabia's Military Governor in 1854 were the irregularities to come out. In 1858 the Fiscal Department for Medical Purchases noticed the lack of reports for the amount of 1,036 rubles for timber cut and sold on the islands of Sulina.<sup>36</sup> The answer of Bessarabia's Fiscal Administration stated that the reports were not transferred to this institution by the former Governor, but to the Forest Department, which meanwhile had been abolished and so documentation was missing.<sup>37</sup>

*Issues covered in the documents from the Sulina harbor and quarantine station.* The reports of the master of the Sulina harbor and those of the Administrator of the Sulina Quarantine were addressed to the chief of the Administration of Ismail Customs and Quarantine District, as they were under his jurisdiction, and then readdressed to the Governor of Bessarabia – General Major P. I. Fyodorov, after that to the General Governor of New Russia and Bessarabia, and finally to the Ministry of Finance. The report of the Russian Minister of Finance, E. F. Kankrin, to Emperor Nicholas I, named *On the Current Trade of Moldavia and Wallachia and Its Influence on the Trade of Russia through the Black Sea*, dated 15 April 1838, clearly shows this chain. According to the report, in 1836 a number of 385 ships moored at Galați under the flags of nine nations, the imports reached 14 million rubles, and the exports more than 3 million rubles; in 1837 already 623 vessels under 13 different flags anchored at Galați, with goods worth of 3 million rubles and with exports of cereals and of other local goods amounting to about 6 million rubles; “according to the reports from the *Sulina guard cor-*

---

35. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4250, l. 4.

36. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 6838, l. 1.

37. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 6838, l. 5.

*don on the Danube*, during the last year navigation a total of 849 maritime vessels passed through the post, heading to the both ports of Principalities, 99 with cargo and 843 with ballast”.<sup>38</sup>

Based on the data received from Sulina, Kankrin drew a table on the volume of the main products exported from the Principalities, corresponding to the export articles from Odessa:

**Table 3**  
**The exports of the Danubian ports**

<b>In the year 1826 were exported</b>	<b>from Galați</b>	<b>from Brăila</b>
Wheat	130,000 chetwerts	192,000 chetwerts
Other grains	54,000 chetwerts	66,000 chetwerts
Beef tallow	22,500 pouds	192,308 pouds
Wool	45,000 pouds	115,385 pouds
Linseed	14,453 pouds	7,700 pouds
Skins	2,000 pairs	5,000 pairs
<b>In the year 1837<sup>39</sup></b>		
Wheat	266,000 chetwerts	unknown
Other grains	181,000 chetwerts	-
Beef tallow	unknown	-
Wool	6,374 pouds	-
Linseed	9,224 pouds	-
Skins	711 pairs	-

A. Skalkovski offers us the same kind of information for several years, which we summarized in Table 4.

38. Valentin Tomuleț, Andrei Emilciuc, “Un document inedit despre măsurile guvernului rus de contracarare a concurenței porturilor Galați și Brăila în favoarea comerțului prin portul Odessa (1838)” [An Unpublished Document on the Measures of the Russian Authorities to Counteract the Competition of the Danubian Ports of Galați and Brăila and to Favor the Trade of Odessa (1838)], *Analele Universității „Dunărea de Jos” din Galați*, Seria 19, Istorie, XI (2012), p. 67.

39. Ibid., pp. 67–68.

**Table 4**  
**The exports from Galați and Brăila**

Year	Wheat (chetw.)	Corn (chetw.)	Barley (chetw.)	Tallow	Wool (sacks)
1839	730,711	419,532	69,485	7,887 casks	1,554
1842	596,812	154,387	-	6,866 <i>burdufs</i> <sup>40</sup> + 2,200 casks	938
1843	801,666	384,995	231,105	9,708 <i>burdufs</i> + 558 casks	1,240
1846	796,264	717,085	251,261	3,732 <i>burdufs</i> + 1,184 casks	653

**Source:** Скальковский А. «Измаильское градоначальство в 1847 г.» [Ismail City Government in 1847], Журнал Министерства Внутренних Дел (Sankt Petersburg, 1849), ч. XXV, с. 412.

It is clear that the data recorded by the officials from Sulina were analyzed and taken into account not only by the Finance Ministry of the Russian Empire, but also by the Russian commercial bourgeoisie. At the National Archive of the Republic of Moldova we have found reports covering the years 1842, 1843, 1845, 1849, 1851 and 1852, but we are sure that the complete series of reports can be found in Fund 19 (The Department of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Finance) of the Russian State Historical Archive in Sankt Petersburg. For understanding the lack of more data, we must take into account the fact that Fyodorov, who was the Military Governor of Bessarabia, head of the provincial Civil Administration and head of Ismail Special Administration, in the absence of the General Governor of New Russia and Bessarabia, M. S. Worontsov, exercised four times his function from Odessa (18 September 1838 – 14 October 1839, from 22 July to 22 September 1840, 3 July 1843 – 26 October 1844, and, finally, between 27 December 1844 and 1 March 1854) when Worontsov was appointed imperial resident in the Caucasus, but preserved his previous function. That is why we think that many of the reports were directly sent to Odessa, and are

---

<sup>40.</sup> *Burduf* – sack made of rawhide, sometimes from the stomach of an animal (goat, sheep, buffalo etc.), in which cheese, flour or liquids were kept or transported.

preserved in the state historical archive of that place (State Archive of Odessa Region).

Proceeding to the analysis of the documentary material we should mention that the reports on the ships passing through the mouths of the Danube have a great value, as they include data such as the flag of the ship, its name, details on its captain, the number of sailors onboard, the ports of origin and destination, quantitative information on its cargo. A sample is presented in Table 5. Importantly, the Russian officials from Sulina did not make any transformation of the measurement units, as Kankrin or Skalkovski did.

**Table 5**  
**The exit of ships from the Danube into the Black Sea as registered at the Sulina quarantine station (December 1842)\***

Reg. No.	Date	Flag	Name	Name of Master	Crew	Origin	Destination	Cargo
923	1	Samos	Achiles	Stavro Georgiu	9	Brăila	Marseille	Wheat 330 Brăila kilos, tallow - 24 <i>burdufs</i> and 26 casks
924	3	Turkish	Şehtie Ibric	Mustafa Mahmud	11	Brăila	Constantinople	Barley - 60, wheat - 300 Br. kilos, beans - 80 sacks
925	3	Turkish	Ibric	Mehmet Mehmet	11	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 160, Barley - 250 kilos
926	3	Turkish	Martigo Ibric	Mehmet Alli	15	Măcin	Constantinople	Bones
927	3	Wallachian	St. Alexander	Georgi Sakrati	9	Brăila	Marseille	Wheat - 422 Br. Kilos
928	4	Russian	Ionikistri	Andon Karuzo	10	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 500 kilos
929	6	Russian	Itihie	Constantin Mavruki	6	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 225 kilos

930	7	Turkish	Şehtie Ibric	Hasan Abdula	10	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 260 kilos
931	7	Turkish	Gaboro	Yakub Yaman	15	Măcin	Constantinople	Wheat - 1,000 Const. kilos
932	7	Turkish	Sohli Ibric	Yulin Derbişoglu	12	Brăila	Constantinople	Barley - 6,000 kilos
933	7	Greek	Pericles	Zaharie Zaharie	7	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 347 kilos
934	7	Russian	Pendikos	Gregoris Septani	12	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 450 kilos
935	7	Turkish	Ibric Şehtie	Ismail Hasan	12	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 450 kilos
936	7	Turkish	Eşik Kanot	Tair Ahmet	15	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 450 kilos
937	7	Turkish	Panagia Simako	Yani Amira	11	Brăila	Constantinople	Barley - 167, wheat - 167 kilos
938	7	Turkish	Martigo Ibric	Hasan Alli	9	Brăila	Constantinople	Barley - 350 kilos
939	7	Turkish	Şehtie Ibric	Omer Osman	10	Brăila	Constantinople	Barley - 6,500 kilos
940	8	Turkish	St. Demetros	Andrei Georgiu	7	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 117, barley - 80 kilos
941	14	Wallachian	Fikolini	Annelo Laura	10	Brăila	Marseille	Bones
942	16	Belgian	Güzif	Aman Cordiera	8	Brăila	Antwerp	Wheat - 200 kilos, wool - 79 sacks, beeswax and honey - 19 casks
943	16	Belgian	Eleonora	Pier Catarsi	5	Brăila	Constantinople	Wheat - 280 kilos

944	28	English	Tamoleon	Giovani Corma	7	Brăila	London	Tallow - 220 burdufs and 123 casks, Corned beef with bones- 11 casks
-----	----	---------	----------	---------------	---	--------	--------	--

**Source:** NARM, F.2, Inv.1, f. 4245, f. 10 verso–11.

\* The names were transliterated from Russian to English by the author, and may not exactly correspond to their real spell, due to the fact that Russian officials wrote the names as heard.

Most ships recorded at the Danube, based on the data for 1843, summed up in Table 6, hoisted the following flags: Greek – 38.7 percent, Turkish – 23.0 percent, Russian – 13.5 percent, Sardinian – 9.2 percent and Austrian – 7.8 percent. All the others flags totaled 7.8 percent. English flags were not at all numerous, at least for the years we have data for, even when considering the vessels under the Ionian flag. It should be noted that for 1843 we did not find the report for December; thus, according to the information published by Skalkovski, only six vessels were not taken into account.<sup>41</sup>

**Table 6**  
**The flag of ships entering the Danube at Sulina (January – November 1843)**

Flag	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Austrian	-	1	5	28	14	11	6	6	21	15	2	109
Belgian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Dutch	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
English	-	2	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	2	-	8
French	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2
Greek	-	7	30	94	73	39	64	55	151	30	1	544
Hanoverian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Ionian	-	1	1	7	6	6	3	5	12	5	-	46
Moldavian	-	-	2	1	1	-	1	-	2	1	-	8

41. Data for other years has more gaps.



Neapolitan	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	5
Prussian	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	3
Russian	-	7	29	16	15	27	22	7	37	24	6	190
Samian	-	-	1	3	-	-	2	-	3	1	-	10
Sardinian	-	5	10	52	6	-	-	6	46	4	-	129
Serbian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Swedish	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Turkish	1	23	52	19	18	29	40	18	72	40	11	323
Wallachian	-	1	2	2	-	3	4	1	6	1	-	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1404</b>

**Source:** NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4245, l. 50 verso, 91 verso–94; f. 4289, l. 4–9, 69 verso–78 verso; f. 4288, l. 17–23, 57–62, 136–142, 199–203, 282–297, 350–356, 416 verso.

Of course we should consider the fact that the vessels entering the Danube headed not only to Galați and Brăila, but also to Turkish ports, such as Tulcea or Măcin, to Austrian ports, but also to the Russian ports of Ismail and Reni. Skalkovski succeeded to draw a picture of the share of ships bound to the Russian ports from the total number of vessels entering the Danube (Table 7).

**Table 7**

**The number of ships entering the Danube and the share of those bound to Russian ports (1834–1847)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1834</b>	<b>1835</b>	<b>1836</b>	<b>1837</b>	<b>1838</b>	<b>1839</b>	<b>1840</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	413	528	725	1,300	1,480	1,622	1,483	19,138
<b>Including Russian ports</b>	9	15	121	299	420	237	174	2,279
<b>Share %</b>	2.2	2.8	16.7	23.0	28.4	14.6	11.7	11.9
<b>Year</b>	<b>1841</b>	<b>1842</b>	<b>1843</b>	<b>1844</b>	<b>1845</b>	<b>1846</b>	<b>1847</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	595	988	1,410	2,030	1,667	1,781	3,116	19,138

<b>Including Russian Ports</b>	84	97	93	267	139	187	137	2,279
<b>Share %</b>	14.1	9.8	6.6	13.2	8.3	10.5	4.4	11.9

**Source:** Скальковский А. Измаильское градоначальство в 1847 г., с. 411.

Our calculations show that the average share of vessels having as destination Ismail or Reni for the years 1834–1847 is 11.9 percent. We do not have information for a longer period for the Turkish ports, but archival data for 1843 is presented in the Table 8 below.

**Table 8**  
The ports of destination of vessels entering the Sulina mouth (January – November 1843)

Month	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Total	%
<b>Brăila</b>	-	13	37	40	15	31	25	25	73	23	7	289	20.6
<b>Galați</b>	1	28	75	172	101	66	105	62	249	81	10	950	67.7
<b>Hârșova</b>	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.1
<b>Isaccea</b>	-	1	-	-	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	6	0.4
<b>Ismail</b>	-	1	9	4	2	6	2	7	10	10	1	52	3.7
<b>Măcin</b>	-	2	7	3	5	4	6	1	7	7	2	44	3.1
<b>Sulina</b>	-	1	1	4	11	7	2	3	15	5	-	49	3.5
<b>Tulcea</b>	-	-	5	2	-	-	2	-	3	1	-	13	0.9
<b>Total</b>	1	47	134	225	136	115	143	99	357	127	20	1404	100

**Source:** NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4245, l. 50 verso, 91 verso–94; f. 4289, l. 4–9, 69 verso–78 verso; f. 4288, l. 17–23, 57–62, 136–142, 199–203, 282–297, 350–356, 416 verso.

As it can be seen, according to the data we processed for 1843, over 88 percent of the ships entering the Sulina mouth headed to Galați (67.7 percent) and Brăila (20.6 percent), while the rest to smaller ports such as Ismail (3.7 percent), Măcin (3.1 percent), Tulcea (0.9 percent) and Isaccea (0.4 percent). Most of them came, at least based on the ships' documents, from Constantinople (Table 9).

**Table 9**  
**The port of origin for the vessels that entered the Sulina mouth (January – November 1843)**

Port	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
Anchialo	-	-	4	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	6
Algiers	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	3
Antwerp	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Constantinople	1	46	127	201	133	111	140	98	326	122	20	1325
Genoa	-	-	1	15	-	-	-	-	24	1	-	41
Liverpool	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Leghorn	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Malta	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Marseille	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	4
Odessa	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	4
Oran	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Redut Kale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Sevastopol	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Trabzon	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Varna	-	1	-	1	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	7
Vasilikos	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Venice	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Zakynthos	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1404</b>

**Source:** NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4245, l. 50 verso, 91 verso–94; f. 4289, l. 4–9, 69 verso–78 verso; f. 4288, l. 17–23, 57–62, 136–142, 199–203, 282–297, 350–356, 416 verso.

In fact, we think that almost all the ships coming from the Mediterranean were recorded as coming from Constantinople, due to the requirement of the Ottoman authorities to dock at Constantinople at the passage of the Straits. This is clear also when analyzing the destination of the vessels clearing from Sulina, which is mainly Constantinople, but also Trieste, Venice, Marseille, Genoa, Leghorn etc. Most ships carried wheat, barley and corn from Brăila and Galați. The crews consisted of 5–15 sailors, with crews of over 15 people

in very few cases. Also, as we see from Tables 8 and 9, the traffic season was the spring, summer and autumn, with winter impeded by the formation of ice and the risks it involved for sailing ships.

**Documentary contents: shipwrecks.** Much information on the ships that entered the Danube results from the shipwreck reports of the Russian officials from Sulina. Regarding this aspect, data generally included besides basic information on the ship (name, captain), data such as the cause of the wreck, the existence of insurance, where it was issued and what it covered, the number of survivors and the quantity of cargo saved, if at all. In few cases, especially when the shipwreck caused international disputes, the reports were developed into distinct files, containing all the correspondence on further investigations, orders and court decisions. We present below several cases of shipwrecks as recorded by the Sulina officials. All of them are excerpts of the reports of the Ismail Quarantine Administration addressed to the Military Governor of Bessarabia, based on information received from Sulina.

*Report of 2 April 1843.* During the night of 18/19 March five sailors from the crew of the English ship *Rinodi*, thrown aground by the waves, presented themselves to cordon no. 176 from Sulina. The ship was bound to Galați with a cargo of manufactured goods and iron, having Kempfi Afar as master. The sailors were placed into quarantine. Located at sea and risking sinking due to the storm, the master wanted to go with his crew and save the ship or at least its merchandise. On 29 March 1843 the officials from the Sulina quarantine station reported that the ship did not sink, but was still caught on a sandbank. In order to lighten the ship, the goods were unloaded and additional measures were taken to refloat it.<sup>42</sup>

*Report of 24 September 1843.* On 17–18 September at the Sulina mouth the wind forced *Kotoro*, under Turkish flag, towards a sandbank, where it wrecked. The ship, with Afiz Ibrahim as captain, headed from Constantinople to Galați with a cargo of 11 baskets of chestnut and 15 baskets of fig. The captain and the crew of 11 men were rescued.<sup>43</sup>

*Report of 8 November 1843.* On 2 November the Russian vessel

---

42. NARM, F. 2, Inv.1, f. 4245, l. 119–120.

43. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4288, l. 260.

*Saint Demetrius* wrecked while sailing from Constantinople to Galați under the command of Greek captain Mihail Matoteopos, with eight sailors and two passengers onboard, with a cargo for the Russian commercial house *Argenti and Sikar* (Sechiari) from Galați. Only the master and two sailors were saved.<sup>44</sup>

*Report of 5 May 1849.* On 3 April 1849, the Greek vessel *Andromache* belonging to Greek subject Ioannis Georgios, under his own command, with a cargo of 155 barrels of sugar and various foodstuffs had its helm broken at the entrance to Sulina because of the strong gale and being overloaded with cargo. The ship was thrown by the waves and hit the left bank of the river. The crew of 11 sailors was rescued and the vessel sank during the following night; a part of the cargo was thrown by the waves to the shore, being collected and carried to the doubtful section of the quarantine. The vessel was insured in the office of *Poihi a Karali* at Syros; the captain did not know whether the goods belonging to Galați merchant Clime were insured or not.<sup>45</sup>

*Report of 17 October 1849.* Several ships were wrecked at the Sulina mouth on 2 October 1849. The first one, under the Wallachian flag, was called *Bucharest*; it was commanded by captain Manomo Crieclonla, and belonged to Galați merchant Ilia Logovici; it sailed from Constantinople to Galați with a crew of four sailors and a cargo of oil, 90 barrels of food products, 137 kantars of horn<sup>46</sup> and 184 pieces of mahogany, insured at Constantinople, to be carried to ship-owner Logovici himself. The second one, *Şahi-nederya*, sailed under the Turkish flag, with Zaina Oglu-Osman as master, without cargo, from Constantinople; it belonged to Constantinopolitan merchant Hadji Hasami Efendi and was uninsured. The third vessel, under Wallachian flag, *St. Nicolas*, ran aground on the shoals above the Sulina lighthouse; it was commanded by its ship-owner, Turkish subject Dmitrie Hadji Kuzauplu, with 11 sailors and no cargo onboard, the vessel being insured at Constantinople. All persons onboard these ships were saved. Some of the cargo, thrown by the

---

44. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4288, l. 346.

45. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5344, l. 206.

46. Kantar – measurement unit for weights, the amount of which varied over time and by region.

waves towards the shore, was held at the service station of the Russian Border Guards.<sup>47</sup>

*Report of 26 October 1849.* From the information of the Sulina border detachment, the Greek vessel *Margo*, with Ioannis Vattis as master, sailing from Brăila to Marseilles with a cargo of 86,000 staves of oak, hit a sandbank opposite to cordon no. 174 and sank. The cargo and the rigging were saved, but the ship that belonged to its ship-master was not insured.<sup>48</sup>

*Report of 24 November 1849.* On 20 November 1849 several maritime vessels shipwrecked at Sulina while transshipping their cargo. The first one, *Deroiş*, under Ottoman flag, commanded by its master, Georgios Lefter, sank after transferring its cargo, at the return to the Danube. The ship was not insured.<sup>49</sup> The second one, *Aristea*, was commanded by its owner Dmitrie Kotrani, being insured at the Trieste office of Kicelus Vardaci for 4,500 florins.<sup>50</sup> The third ship, *Carolina*, under Austrian flag, commanded by captain Savva Milanovici and belonging to Antonio Shevenici, was thrown at its return to the Danube on the shoals near the office of the master of Sulina harbor; the ship was uninsured. All people onboard these ships were saved.<sup>51</sup>

*Report of 4 December 1849.* On 26 November 1849 the border guards reported that the commercial ship *Evangelistria*, under Samiote flag, ran aground on a shoal. Its captain was Georgios Lefter, and it sailed from Constantinople to Tulcea with an unspecified cargo and a crew of nine men.<sup>52</sup>

*Report of 10 January 1851.* On 13 December 1850, Russian ship *Pitagor* belonging to second guild merchant Mihail Petroconin from Taganrog, master Andrei Butsun, sailing from Brăila to Constantinople with a cargo of 3,800 Bessarabian kilos of wheat, hit the submerged wreck of a vessel and sank near cordon no. 189. The master did not know if the vessel and cargo were insured. All per-

---

47. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5345, l. 158 verso–159.

48. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5345, l. 123.

49. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5345, l. 263 verso.

50. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5345, l. 264.

51. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5345, l. 264.

52. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5345, l. 258.

sons onboard were saved, together with a part of the cargo.<sup>53</sup> In the same day, the Greek ship *Panagia*, with Diorusi Neki as ship-owner and captain, sailing from Brăila with a cargo of 8,700 Constantinople kilos of wheat, hit the shore between cordons no. 185 and 186 and sank. The ship was insured at Tulcea, but the master did not know if the cargo was insured. The crew was saved.<sup>54</sup> On 18–19 December 1850 the Greek vessel *Vasilisa* ran aground during a storm, while transshipping its cargo at Sulina. It was commanded by the ship-owner himself, Constantin Vitol, having a crew of 13 sailors. The vessel was insured at Constantinople.<sup>55</sup> During the same period the Turkish ship *Kilioni*, mastered by ship-owner Antonio Banazunda, sank, with 12 sailors onboard. One of them, Iani Varnioti, drowned. The ship was insured at Constantinople. *Luna*, belonging to Greek subject Iani Tsern, commanded by master Nicolas Ioannu and with a crew of 11, also sank. The master did not know if the vessel was insured. A similar fate had a vessel steered by capitain Constantin Tsiprali, which was not insured, with 14 sailors onboard. The ship belonged partly to the master, and partly to Ionian subject Anastasius Arini.<sup>56</sup> On 20–21 December 1850, a Greek ship heading from Sulina to Tulcea with a cargo of wheat sank between cordons 213 and 214, the five people onboard being rescued. All information was sent by the fourth guard station, detached to Sulina.<sup>57</sup>

*Report of 11 March 1851.* Satunovsk guard post of the third detachment reported that on 16 February a *kirlash*<sup>58</sup> sailing from Galați to Tulcea with nine barrels of vodka onboard, under the steer of Turkish subject Ivan Fyodorov, a resident of Tulcea, with four people (Moldavian subjects) on board, was caught by the ice near cordon no. 111. The crew was rescued.<sup>59</sup>

*Report of 17 March 1851.* According to the information of the 5<sup>th</sup> guard post of the detachment from Letea, on 24–25 February two commercial vessels wrecked near the Sulina harbor. The first one,

---

53. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 15 verso.

54. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 16.

55. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 16.

56. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 16 verso.

57. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 16 verso.

58. Small fluvial boat.

59. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 104 verso.

*St. Nicholas*, under Greek flag, led by Ioannis Fornos, belonged partly to its master and partly to Greek subject Nicholas Panastasopulu; it sailed from Constantinople to Galați without a cargo, with five persons onboard, and was thrown to the shoals by the strong wind. The second one, the Turkish ship *Ibrahim*, commanded by master Ahmet Malet, Turkish subject, belonged to the Constantinopolitan merchant Sani Afendi Baybutoglu, being insured at Constantinople: it sailed to Galați with 11 men onboard. It was damaged after hitting the floor, while being anchored, and sank during the night of 26 February. The crews of both vessels were rescued.<sup>60</sup>

*Report of 17 March 1851.* According to information from Sulina quarantine station dated 8 March 1851, on 24–25 February 1851 four commercial vessels ran aground near the lighthouse, due to the bad weather. *Femistoclis*, under Greek flag, headed by master and ship-owner Georgios Orolof, was not insured, having nine sailors onboard; it sailed from Constantinople to Ismail with a cargo of 20 barrels of sugar. *Ascani Bagri*, under Turkish flag, was commanded by master Mehmet Poragam, partly owned by him and partly by Ionian merchant Owans. It had 11 men in the crew and sailed from Constantinople to Galați without cargo, being uninsured.<sup>61</sup> The third one, under Turkish flag, was led by master Mehmet Ahmet and belonged to Constantinopolitan merchant Sani Afendi Baybutoglu, being insured there. It sailed with a crew of 11 to Galați without a cargo.<sup>62</sup> The fourth one, the Greek ship *St. Nicholas*, headed by captain Zannis Farnas, partly owned by him and partly by Greek subject Nicholas Palastopulu, sailed from Constantinople to Galați with five seamen, with no cargo and no insurance.<sup>63</sup>

*Report of 9 April 1851.* On 24–25 March 1851, near the 5<sup>th</sup> post of the detachment of Letea, the Austrian three-mast vessel *Barba Luka* ran aground. It was commanded by Ekiz and belonged to Alexander Pavlovich, a resident of Trieste. It had 11 people in the crew and sailed from Constantinople to Galați and Brăila with a cargo of coffee, rice, figs, olives, peanuts, medicines and other goods. The ship was

---

60. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 105.

61. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 110–110 verso.

62. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 111.

63. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 111.



taken under the supervision of the coastguard.<sup>64</sup> On 30 March 1851 the Austrian two-mast *Lendburg* ran aground near the sea. It was commanded by captain Antonio Vicenze Kozoviz. The ship belonged to his father, Antonio Luco Kozoviz, with 11 sailors onboard, and sailed with ballast to Galați and Brăila. It sank because of the storm; the master and one sailor drowned, the other nine were rescued.<sup>65</sup>

*Report of 26 July 1851.* The vessel *Suvorov* under Prussian flag, with Peter Genrich as master and belonging to merchant Stroanja Digil-Man, sailed from the Scottish port of Oberdau to Galați with a cargo of 170 tons of stone coal, ordered by the British vice-consul at Galați, Ch. Cunningham. The ship wrecked and sank on 10 July 1851, but the crew of six was saved.<sup>66</sup> The sailors managed to save their own luggage and the ship rigging, but the damage amounted to 6,000 thalers. The ship was insured in Prussia, but the master did not know if the cargo was insured.<sup>67</sup>

*Report of 1 November 1851.* On 18 October the English vessel *Nael* ran aground at the entrance into the Danube. Its master and ship-owner Dominico Goinolo had eight sailors in the crew and a cargo of various manufactured goods bound for Galați. The ship was insured in England, but the master did not know if the cargo was insured or not. The crew was rescued, as well as a part of the cargo.<sup>68</sup>

*Report of 24 November 1851.* On 20–21 November a vessel under Prussian flag, *Venera*, with Dolon Doparli Frit as captain, coming from Brăila with a cargo of 875 kilos of corn bound to Corfu, wrecked when going to sea because of a storm. Neither the crew, nor the cargo could be saved.<sup>69</sup> At the same time the Tuscan ship *Adoli fon Lotz*, under Mecklenburg flag, ran aground close to the lighthouse. It was commanded by captain Genrich Fess, having onboard eight sailors and a cargo of 710 kilos of corn, sailing from Brăila to England. The vessel started to leak and the master and his crew attempted to save it.<sup>70</sup>

---

64. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 174.

65. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5680, l. 174 verso.

66. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5705, l. 73.

67. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5705, l. 73 verso.

68. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5705, l. 288–288 verso.

69. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5705, l. 347–347 verso.

70. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5705, l. 347 verso.

*Report of 9 December 1851.* On 13 November two maritime vessels ran aground. *Ialpis*, under Greek flag, owned by Zannis Hadji, with seven men onboard, sailed from Constantinople with a cargo of 2,000 kilos of salt, three boxes of champagne, a zimbil<sup>71</sup> of cigars, four barrels of sugar, a bunch of tobacco, 147 zimbils of figs, 40 zimbils of raisins, 15 bags of soap to be sent to Tulcea and seven barrels of sugar and twenty chairs to Ismail.<sup>72</sup> The second, a Turkish vessel called *Minos*, captain Mihail Savva, belonging to the Constantinople merchant Istref Alendi, sailed from Ismail to Constantinople with seven sailors and a cargo of 384 Bessarabian kilos of wheat, purchased from first guild merchant Teodore Tulcianov.<sup>73</sup> The Wallachian vessel *Hariuma*, which was transshipping in the harbor of Sulina, with Panaite Osaglu as master and belonging to Constantinopolitan merchant Alexandros Hadji Evangelino, ran aground on 22 November, while returning to the Danube, after transferring its cargo to the sea. The crew of six sailors was rescued, but damages amounted to 2,500 Turkish liras.<sup>74</sup> On 23 November the Greek ship *Marogo*, commanded by its owner Dico Mavru, sailing from Galați to Constantinople with a cargo of 2,000 Constantinople kilos of wheat hit a submerged wreck, leaked and sank in the Danube. The crew managed to save a part of the cargo and the sail. The master had no knowledge about the insurance of the vessel and cargo.<sup>75</sup>

*Report of 17 April 1852.* On 14 April the officials from the Sulina quarantine station reported that between 1 and 2 April the English ship *Europe*, captain Danilo Alivev with nine seamen onboard, coming from Alexandria to Galați, with no cargo, ran aground at the entrance into the Danube due to the strong wind. The crew was rescued. The master of the vessel, which belonged to T. Marazon, did not know whether it was insured or not.<sup>76</sup> On 4 April the Greek vessel *Zoodoli Pigis*, commanded by Panagis D. Lumi, belonging to the master's father, insured at Trieste, sailing from Constantinople

71. Basket made of rushes.

72. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5705, l. 365.

73. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5705, l. 365.

74. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5705, l. 10 verso.

75. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5705, l. 365.

76. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5847, l. 163 verso.

to Brăila without a cargo, having 12 sailors onboard, was thrown by the storm on the shoals near Letea Island.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, the Greek vessel *Leonid*, with Theodore Angeli as master and owner, was also wrecked. It sailed from Constantinople to Brăila and Galați with a cargo of manufactured goods and groceries. The crew of 11 people was rescued; the ship was not insured, and the master had no information if the cargo was insured or not.<sup>78</sup> The Turkish ship *Eleus*, captain Nikolaos Mustafa, was also wrecked while lightering at Sulina. The crews of these vessels were saved, but the losses amounted for the first vessel to 2,000 liras, for the second to 12,000 thalers, for the third to about 150,000 Turkish piasters and for the fourth to 20,000 lei.<sup>79</sup>

*Report of 24 April 1852.* On 22–23 April the ship *Peristero*, captain George Polikiano, belonging to Sulina resident Spiros Kamega Verdos, uninsured, failed to transfer its cargo of 1,200 Constantinople kilos of wheat to an English ship at the entrance to the sea, and ran aground on the shoals below the lighthouse. The crew was saved, but the cost of the lost cargo amounted to 1,000 lei.<sup>80</sup>

According to the report for 1850 of the Military Governor of Bessarabia 25 shipwrecks were recorded in his area of responsibility, including five on the Dniester, three on the Danube and 17 at the Sulina mouth, partly because of storms and partly because of the insufficient navigation equipment.<sup>81</sup> According to the report for 1851 a total of 44 shipwrecks were recorded, including two on the Dniester, 22 on the Danube and the Sulina branch, and the rest at the Sulina mouth.<sup>82</sup> In 1853 the Governor recorded 25 shipwrecks, all having occurred on the Sulina branch.<sup>83</sup> In 1854 eight vessels were shipwrecked on the Sulina branch, in a year when the navigation, due to military reasons, was reduced to only 71 vessels.<sup>84</sup>

---

77. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5847, l. 163 verso.

78. NARM, F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 5847, l. 163 verso-164.

79. NARM, F. 2, inv. 1, d. 5847, l. 164.

80. NARM, F. 2, inv. 1, d. 5847, l. 608 verso-609.

81. Russian State Historical Archive (hereafter cited **RSHA**), d. 1281, inv.5, d. 54, l. 86 verso.

82. RSHA, F. 1281, inv.5, d. 71, l. 69.

83. RSHA, F. 1281, inv.5, d. 78, l. 77 verso.

84. RSHA, F. 1281, inv.6, d. 76, l. 81.

In 1855, Russian officers, although noticing that they did not know the entire situation because they were forced to retreat under the military operations, reported the following shipwrecks on the Sulina branch: two ships under Austrian flag, two under Greek flag, six under unknown flag, thus a total of 10 shipwrecks and 40 persons drowned.<sup>85</sup>

A relevant example in terms of commercial insurance and international disputes is the case of the English vessel *Anna Eliza*, under the command of captain Daniel Cook, heading from London to Galați with a cargo of various goods, including food products. The ship ran aground on the sandbank at the mouth of the Danube near the St. George Island (on the Turkish side) on 6 April 1844. The captain decided to seek the assistance of the master of Sulina harbor P. V. Soloviev. Thus, all goods were unloaded and stored in a safe place and the ship was refloated. Soloviev requested a quarter of the value of the cargo, in accordance to the international law, but the ship-master rejected this request and went to Constantinople, leaving the vessel at Sulina. Returned from Constantinople, the ship-master tried to cover the claims of Soloviev by offering him 90,000 lei, but as Soloviev declined the offer Cook left a quarter of the cargo and headed with the rest to Galați.<sup>86</sup> Following the note of English vice-consul at Galați, Ch. Cunningham, addressed to the General Governor of New Russia and Bessarabia, as the British diplomat was the agent of the London Lloyd insurance company, Soloviev was ordered to return immediately the retained cargo without any pledges, if the goods had not yet been sold. The case was to be solved by the Commercial Court from Ismail, in order to set the compensation that the insurance company was due to pay.<sup>87</sup>

Many English vessels did not attempt to enter the Danube and preferred to use the service of lighters provided by agents from Sulina. It can be noticed that in case of shipwrecks, Russian officials from Sulina paid close attention to put to the quarantine the people and goods saved. However, only a small portion of the researched documentary data reflects the sanitary situation from Sulina. This

---

85. RSHA, F. 1281, inv.6, d. 91, l. 86.

86. NARM, F. 2, inv. 1, d. 4488, l. 2.

87. NARM, F. 2, inv. 1, d. 4488, l. 4.

is one of the most neglected aspects concerning Sulina, even though the Russian side justified its strict measures against sailing ships with the necessity to secure the Empire from the spread of the plague. Moreover, the analysis of data suggests that the Sulina quarantine station was not really important in this regard (see Table 10). It is true that the small number of staff at Sulina<sup>88</sup> meant that any suspicious cases were bounded to the stations of Odessa or Ismail, as prescribed by the law of 7/19 February 1836, where these could have followed all required procedures. This provoked conflicts when some ship-masters were compelled to change their route; as the decision was taken personally by P. V. Soloviev after his own inspection or by his assistant, when the master of Sulina harbor was absent for service trips, this fact definitely encouraged bribery.

Table 10

Documentary contents: Illnesses and deaths on ships recorded in the central quarantine of Ismail port and in its district (1842)

Quarantine	From 1841		Entered in 1842 Recovered		Exited the quarantine								Left for 1843	
					To Hospital		210 § <sup>89</sup>		Died					
	m	f	m	F	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f
Ismail quarantine: employees	5	2	657	294	546	292	111	-	-	-	3	3	2	1
Ismail quarantine: others	-	-	40	3	24	3	-	-	14	-	1	-	1	-
Reni quarantine: employees	5	1	268	99	251	97	19	-	-	-	2	2	1	1
Reni quarantine: others	-	-	9	3	9	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

88. In comparison, according to the Table of the Staff of Odessa Quarantine in 1832 it consisted in 40 clerks of different ranks – ПСЗРИ (собрание II), том VII, 1832, Штаты и Табели, СПб., 1836, No. 5690, с. 143.

89. If a person had a long-term non-infectious illness, after 14 days spent in quarantine was released even if he or shed did not recover – ПСЗРИ (собрание II), том VII, 1832, СПб., 1836, No. 5690, с. 752.

<b>Sulina</b> quarantine: employees	4	-	13	3	13	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
<b>Sulina</b> quarantine: others	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Akkerman quarantine: employees	2	-	16	8	17	8	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Akkerman quarantine: others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Source:** NARM. F. 2, Inv. 1, f. 4245, f. 61 verso.

It is well known that the problems of navigation on the Sulina branch had played a significant role in deepening the diplomatic conflict between Britain and the Russian Empire. An objective analysis of the hydrographical and technical problems that frustrated the cleaning works demonstrates that British recriminations may not always be accepted as fair and unbiased. Researches of the European Danube Commission in 1856 had shown that even if the Russians had not been completely innocent in this situation, the deteriorating situation could not be resolved satisfactorily for objective reasons.<sup>90</sup>

The analysis of archival sources and published works regarding “the Danube question” provides solid documentary data on the commercial navigation at the Lower Danube during the period 1836–1853, and the role the ports Galați and Brăila played in it. Examination of just a few files from the funds of the National Archive of Republic of Moldova regarding the activity of the Sulina quarantine station allowed us to evaluate the navigation at the mouth of the Danube and to better understand the real competition between Galați and Brăila and Russia’s Black Sea ports.

The documents we research contain important statistical data, which we see clearly was very carefully studied and accounted, as an argument for different projects for the development of infrastructure in the southern regions of the Russian Empire. Also the documents abound in large data on shipwrecks, financial accounts of levied taxes and performed works on the thalweg of the Sulina

90. Ardeleanu, *Gurile Dunării*, p. 183.

branch. All of these not only reflect the real situation behind geopolitics propaganda, but also offer new information that allows us to better understand how the mechanism of the Romanian Principalities' foreign trade worked.





### 3.

## “International” and “National” Ports. The Competition between the Ports of Brăila / Galați and Constanța during the Period 1878–1914

Dimitrios M. Kontogeorgis  
International Hellenic University (Thessaloniki)

“The Constanța seaport is the lung of Romania, the mouth through which Romania is breathing... Through it we will set contact with the whole world and we will secure the most important communication route for our trade... We will spend 16, 20 or 25 more millions, as much as it takes to build the necessary seaport and the bridge over the Danube, but this would be the best proof we are a powerful nation and that on us depends the future of the entire Orient”. It was in the early 1880s, when the Romanian prime minister Ion C. Brătianu (1821–1891) voiced these arguments in favor of the construction of the Constanța harbor and the Fetești – Cernavodă Bridge, which constituted two of the most ambitious grand-scale public works planned and completed in the Balkans during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

While this remarkable and ground-breaking project has attracted historiographic attention,<sup>2</sup> the much more ambivalent attitude

---

1. For Brătianu’s quote, see Constantin Iordachi, “Global Networks, Regional Hegemony, and Seaport Modernization on the Lower Danube”, in Biray Kolluoğlu, Meltem Toksöz (eds.), *Cities of the Mediterranean from the Ottomans to the Present Day* (London – New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), p. 171, p. 236 [I have slightly modified the translation].

2. The construction of the Danube Bridge and the modernization of the Constanța harbor have been the subject of numerous studies. See in particular Mircea Roșculeț, *Evoluția portului Constanța. Construcția și exploatarea lui* [The Evolution of Constanța Harbor. Its Construction and Exploitation] (București: Cartea Românească, 1939); Valentin Ciorbea, *Portul Constanța de la antichitate la mileniul III* [The Port

towards this plan of the mercantile and ship-owning elites in the older established Lower Danubian ports of Brăila (Braila) and Galați (Galatz), the then most important centers of Romanian foreign trade, has been relatively understudied. The decision of the Romanian government to invest heavily in the economic development of Constanța, aiming to redirect the commercial routes of the country, although not unexpected, could not but cause anxiety or even fear among the merchants of the Danubian cities. These elites felt that their predominant position in the Romanian export trade was seriously threatened by the rise of the Black Sea port. They maintained, in articles published in the local press and in several memoranda sent to the government, that Constanța was being over-protected, while the needs and the problems of the Danubian ports were disregarded. It is noteworthy that this “Constanța menace” had already been acknowledged from the 1880s. As the newspaper *Messageul de Brăila* stated, “if Constanța becomes an important maritime port and if the bridge on the Danube is constructed..., Brăila will lose much of its commercial importance”.<sup>3</sup>

This study aims to present and analyze the policy of the Romanian government towards its major ports, comparing the cases of Brăila and Galați with the Black Sea port of Constanța. It seeks to elucidate the rationale behind the systematic promotion of the latter, and to estimate its overall success. It also endeavors to shed light on the stance of the mercantile and maritime elites of the river ports, since their efforts to cope with the Constanța “threat” induced them to reconsider the economic future of their own cities or at the very least to promote much needed and long delayed improvements in infrastructure, introducing also new techniques and procedures.

In a wider perspective the rivalry between these ports reflected a new economic reality brought about by state building in South-Eastern Europe. The development of Constanța was closely related to the economic nationalism advocated by a substantial part

---

of Constanța from the Antiquity to the Third Millennium] (Constanța: Editura Fundației Andrei Șaguna, 1996); Petru Covacef, *Portul Constanța – portul lui Anghel Saligny* [The Port of Constanța – The Port of Anghel Saligny], vol. I (Constanța: Ed. CNAPC, 2004).

3. *Messageul de Brăila* [The Messenger of Brăila], 8 (11 July 1888), p. 1.

of the Romanian political, industrial and commercial elites.<sup>4</sup> This new reality provoked uneasiness and irritation to the much older Danubian ports which were informed from a different experience, having emerged and prospered, to a great degree, under the auspices of multi-ethnic empires and international organizations.<sup>5</sup>

The development of the Romanian ports at the Lower Danube had been shaped, since the early 1830s, by several factors. The foundation, in 1829, of the *Austrian Danube Steamship Company* (*Erste Österreichische Donau Dampfschiffahrts Gesellschaft / DDSG*), not only linked, through a regular line of steamers, the major Wallachian ports and Galați with Pest and Vienna,<sup>6</sup> but it also “nourished great expectations to turn the Danube into one of the most important lines of communication in Europe”.<sup>7</sup> Important though it was in establishing and furthering the ties with Central Europe and also

---

4. For aspects of this protectionist trend, see John Michael Montias, “Notes on the Romanian Debate on Sheltered Industrialization: 1860–1906”, in K. Jowitt (ed.), *Social Change in Romania, 1860–1940. A Debate on the Development in a European Nation* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies – University of California, 1978), pp. 53–71 and Radu Dan Vlad, *Gândirea economică românească despre industrializare, 1859–1900* [Romanian Economic Thinking on Industrialization, 1859–1900] (București: Editura Mica Valahie, 2012), pp. 51–143.

5. For the economic history of Brăila and Galați, see Constantin Bușe, *Comerțul exterior prin Galați sub regimul de port franc (1837–1883)* [The Foreign Trade of Galați Under the Free Port Regime (1837–1883)] (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1976) and Emil Octavian Mocanu, *Portul Brăila de la regimul de porto-franco la primul război mondial (1836–1914)* [The Port of Brăila from the Free Port Regime to the First World War (1836–1914)] (Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei – Editura Istros, 2012). In general for the study of the Lower Danube commercial and maritime history, the studies by Constantin Ardeleanu are especially informative and thought provoking: Constantin Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor economice și politice britanice la gurile Dunării (1829–1914)* [The Evolution of the British Economic and Political Interests at the Mouths of the Danube (1829–1914)] (Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei – Editura Istros, 2008) and idem, *International Trade and Diplomacy at the Lower Danube. The Sulina Question and the Economic Premises of the Crimean War (1829–1853)* (Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei – Editura Istros, 2014).

6. Ardeleanu, *International Trade*, pp. 18–20, 22–28. See also Virginia Paskaleva, “Le rôle de la navigation à vapeur sur le bas Danube dans l’établissement de liens entre l’Europe Centrale et Constantinople jusqu’à la guerre de Crimée”, *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 4:1 (1976), pp. 66–74.

7. Ardeleanu, *International Trade*, p. 20.

in maintaining a steady flow of merchandise, mail and information, the *DDSG* could not, mainly due to the physical obstacles from the Iron Gates and the technical limitations of steamships, fulfill its potential at least until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup>

Far more influential, in particular for Brăila and Galați, were the terms of the Adrianople Treaty (2/14 September 1829), which concluded the Russo-Ottoman war (1828–1829). The treaty strengthened free trade in the Black Sea region and the Danube, by abolishing all kind of restrictions, mostly in the commerce of cereals, and by lifting practically all limitations to the entry of foreign vessels in the Danubian ports. The autonomy of the Principalities was also enhanced, and the Ottoman bridgeheads of Brăila, Giurgiu and Turnu were incorporated to Wallachia.<sup>9</sup>

For the western powers, mainly but not exclusively Great Britain and France, the liberalization of the Principalities' trade not only "opened" new markets for their products,<sup>10</sup> but also enabled them to find alternative sources of cereals and other agricultural goods and thus reduce their dependence on Russian ports.<sup>11</sup> In this context Brăila and Galați emerged as the main commercial hubs of Wallachia and Moldavia respectively. Their economic development was furthermore assiduously promoted by the Principalities' authorities, who declared them in 1836–1837 as "free cities" (*porto franco*), and took various measures in favor of commerce and

---

8. For the difficulties caused by the Iron Gates, see Ardeleanu, *International Trade*, pp. 20–22 and in general for the conditions of river steam-navigation see idem, "From Vienna to Constantinople on Board the Vessels of the Austrian Danube Steam-Navigation Company (1834–1842)", *Historical Yearbook*, 6 (2009), pp. 187–202. Data on the activity of *DDSG* are also provided by Paskaleva, "Le rôle de la navigation", pp. 68–73.

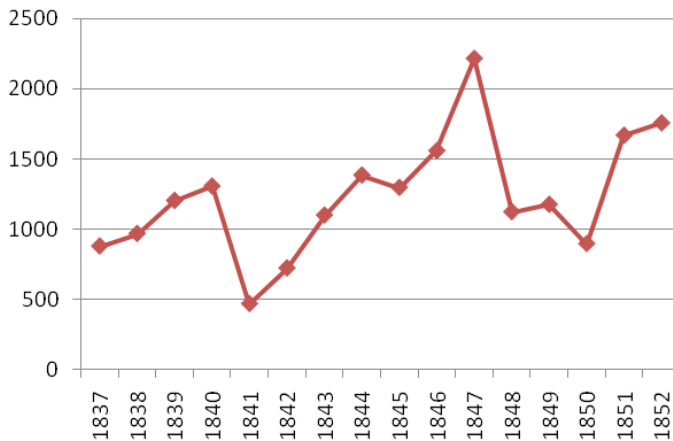
9. Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State, 1821–1878* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 29–31; Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 38–39.

10. See amongst many others Gilles M. P. A. Bardy, "Deux rapports français inédits du début des années 1830 sur l'état et les perspectives des liens commerciaux Franco-Roumains", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 33:3–4 (1994), pp. 293–306.

11. In particular for the Anglo-Romanian commercial relations see Paul Cernovodeanu, *Relațiile comerciale româno-engleze în contextul politicii orientale a Marii Britanii (1803–1878)* [Romanian-English Commercial Relations in the Context of Britain's Eastern Policy (1803–1878)] (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1986), pp. 51–113 and Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 39–64.

navigation, working closely with the local mercantile elites and the foreign consuls.<sup>12</sup> In the following decades the growth of the departures of sea-going vessels from the Danubian ports was, despite some fluctuations, substantial (see Figure 1).<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 1**  
Departures of sea-going vessels from Brăila and Galați (1837–1852)



**Source:** Paul Cernovodeanu, Beatrice Marinescu, “British Trade in the Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853”, *Journal of European Economic History*, VIII:3 (1979), p. 713.

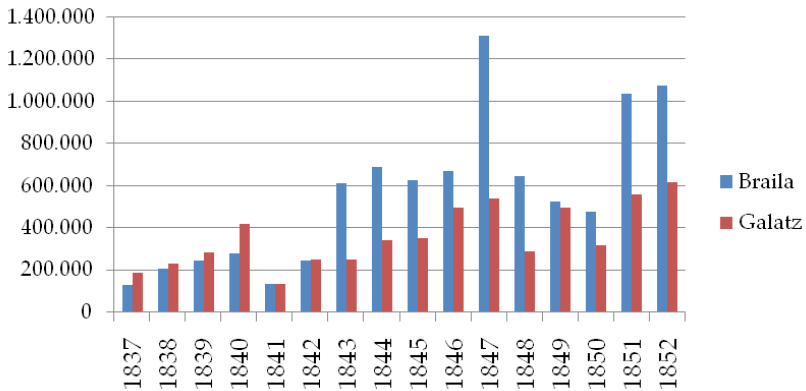
Since the mid-1840s the industrialization of Western Europe increased its needs of wheat and following the repeal of the Corn Laws

12. Bușe, *Comerțul exterior*, pp. 30–43; Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 24–27, 42–50; Ardeleanu, *International Trade*, pp. 58–67.

13. Rich data on the navigation of the Lower Danube during the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is provided by the study of Constantin Ap. Vacalopoulos, “Données statistiques sur la prédominance du potentiel hellénique dans la navigation et le commerce au Bas-Danube (1837–1858)”, *Balkan Studies*, 21:1 (1980), pp. 107–116 and Ardeleanu, *International Trade*, pp. 37–42, 259–264. For Brăila see also Dimitrios M. Kontogeorgis, *Η ελληνική διασπορά στη Ρουμανία. Η περίπτωση της ελληνικής παροικίας της Βραΐλας (αρχές 19<sup>ου</sup> αι.–1914)* [The Greek Diaspora in Romania. The Case of the Greek Paroikia {Settlement} of Brăila (Beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – 1914)] (PhD thesis, University of Athens, Athens 2012), pp. 333–339.

(1846) and the liberalization of the Navigation Acts (1849), the Principalities emerged as an extremely significant source of grain (see Figure 2). Brăila and Galați succeeded thus, in less than 20 years, to transform themselves from economic backwaters to commercial centers of European significance, rivaling successfully Odessa.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 2**  
Exports of Cereals (in imperial quarters) from Brăila and Galați  
(1837–1852)



**Source:** Paul Cernovodeanu, “An Unpublished British Source Concerning the International Trade through Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1848”, *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire*, 16:3 (1977), pp. 521–523; Cernovodeanu, Marinescu, “British Trade in the Danubian Ports”, pp. 716–719.

The development of the ports’ commercial activity and navigation was, nevertheless, hindered by the major physical obstacles in the Danube Delta, and in particular by the situation at the Sulina mouth. Although the latter had emerged, since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as the main entrance to the river, its low depth and the accumulation of sand at the bar compounded with the strong eastern winds and other impediments were causing delays, accidents or even shipwrecks and were certainly increasing transport costs. The policy of

14. Cf. the data by Beatrice Marinescu, “Economic Relations between the Romanian Principalities and Great Britain (1848–1859)”, *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire*, VIII:2 (1969), pp. 272–273.

the Russians, who controlled the northern part of the Delta, was also aiming to obstruct the expansion of navigation in the Lower Danube, increasing the ill-feeling among local and foreign merchants.<sup>15</sup>

Only in the aftermath of the Crimean War (1853–1856), when the Great Powers succeeded at establishing the *European Danube Commission* (*Commission Européenne du Danube / CED*), was this problem seriously addressed. The *Danube Commission* not only safeguarded the free movement of ships and goods, but it also improved remarkably the conditions of river navigation and trade, rendering the Sulina channel safe even for large sailing vessels or steamships.<sup>16</sup>

By the 1860s Brăila and Galați reaped great benefits from the *Commission's* works, its policing of the river and other measures, as well as from the introduction of the telegraphic service. More importantly, the expansion of the Romanian and regional railway network by the early 1870s was instrumental in connecting much more effectively than in the past the Danubian ports with their hinterland,<sup>17</sup> a

---

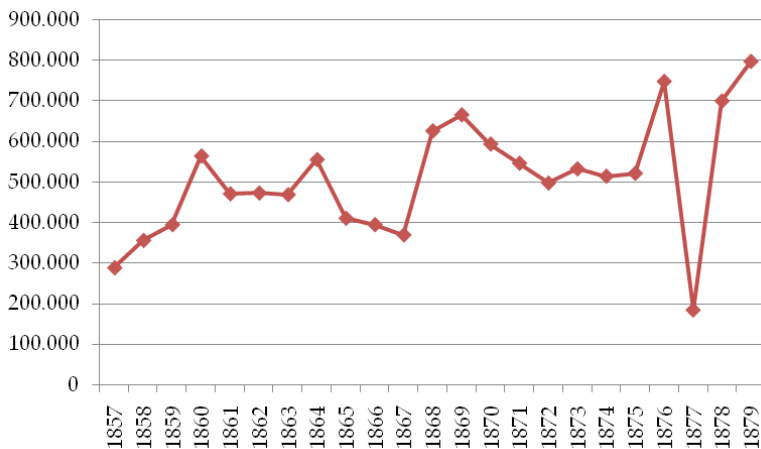
15. For the situation at Sulina see Spiridon G. Focas, *The Lower Danube River in the Southeastern European Political and Economic Complex from Antiquity to the Conference of Belgrade of 1948* (Boulder – New York: Columbia University Press – East European Monographs, 1987), pp. 119–161 and Ardeleanu, *International Trade*, pp. 29–34, 133–252.

16. The bibliography on CED is voluminous and has been considerably enriched in the last two decades. See amongst many other, *La Commission Européenne du Danube et son œuvre de 1856 à 1931* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale 1931); Focas, *The Lower Danube River*, pp. 253–422; Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, passim and idem, “The European Commission of the Danube and the Result of its Technical and Administrative Activity on the Safety of Navigation, 1856–1914”, *International Journal of Maritime History*, XXIII:1 (June 2011), pp. 73–94. The legal aspects are analyzed extensively by Ștefan Stanciu, *România și Comisia Europeană a Dunării. Diplomatie. Suveranitate. Cooperare internațională* [Romania and the European Commission of the Danube. Diplomacy. Sovereignty. International Cooperation] (Galați: Editura Pax Aura Mundi, 2002).

17. For the railways see Georges D. Cioriceanu, *La Roumanie économique et ses rapports avec l'étranger de 1860 à 1915* (Paris: Marcel Girard, 1928), pp. 127–128; John R. Lampe, Marvin R. Jackson, *Balkan Economic History, 1550–1950, from Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 209–211; Lothar Maier, *Rumänien auf dem Weg zur Unabhängigkeitserklärung 1866–1876. Schein und Wirklichkeit liberaler Verfassung und staatlicher Souveränität* (München: R. Oldenbourg, Südosteuropäischen Arbeiten 88, 1989), pp. 170–262. Further details in Foreign Office / Commercial Reports [FO/CR] 20 (Galatz, 1872–1873), pp. 695–696; FO/CR 21 (Bucharest, 1873), pp. 375–377; FO/CR 22 (Galatz, 1873), p. 1110.

fact which in conjunction with the steady demand of Romanian cereals in Western Europe resulted in a nearly continuous increase in the departures of sea going vessels from the Lower Danube (see Figure 3). The Danubian ports remained, therefore, during the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the forefront of Romania's external trade, handling the majority of the country's exports and a substantial part of its imports and maintaining, through their multi-ethnic mercantile elites, close relations with the western European markets.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 3**  
**Departures of sea-going vessels (in tons) from the ports of the Lower Danube (1857–1879)**



Sources: Direcția Județeană Galați a Arhivelor Naționale [DJGAN] / Comisia Europeană a Dunării, dos. 6/1857–1880; dos. 19/1873–1885, État no. 1.

18. For the merchants of Brăila see Kontogeorgis, Η ελληνική παροικία της Βραΐλας [The Greek Paroikia {Settlement} of Brăila], pp. 363–368; Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 122–133; for Galați, see Bușe, *Comerțul exterior*, pp. 134–135 and Constantin Ardeleanu, “Aspecte calitative și cantitative privind rolul economic al grecilor cu protecție britanică din portul Galați în primii ani după Războiul Crimeii” [Qualitative and Quantitative Aspects Regarding the Economic Role of the Greeks with British Protection from the Port of Galați in the First Years after the Crimean War], in Venera Achim, Viorel Achim (eds.), *Minoritățile etnice în România în secolul al XIX-lea* [The Ethnic Minorities in Romania in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century] (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2010), pp. 27–38.



The 1860s and 1870s could be considered as a “golden era” for Brăila and Galați, given that by the early 1880s these ports had to cope with a much more competitive environment both nationally and internationally, a situation for which they did not seem to have been fully prepared. It is important to note that while during the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century numerous plans were drawn for the improvement of the still inadequate if not primitive situation of the infrastructure of the ports, their implementation was costly, haphazard, ineffective, and came about with great delay. The condition of the wharf in Brăila was especially problematic and even dangerous for the safety of the vessels.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, as their realization was enmeshed in scandals and political acrimony, the effectiveness of the works was further diminished.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the prosperity of Brăila and Galați was undermined also by the changing international economic climate. The “Great Depression” of the 1880s and 1890s led to a relative contraction of world trade and hit especially hard the grain trade. The growing imports of Northern American, Australian, Argentinean and Indian cereals to Great Britain, the major, until then, customer of Romanian grain, led to a substantial and steady decline of their price (75 per cent from 1873 to 1894).<sup>21</sup> For the Danubian ports, whose trade depended almost

---

19. See Daniela Bușă, “Comerțul exterior al României prin marile porturi cu țările din Sud-Estul Europei la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului al XX-lea” [Romania’s Foreign Trade through Its Large Ports with the South-Eastern Countries at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century], *Revista Istorică*, III:9–10 (1992), p. 963. In particular for Brăila see FO/CR 24 (Galatz, 1874), p. 1582; Constantin Șerban, “Amenajări portuare dunărene în timpul domniei lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza” [Improvements in the Danubian Ports during the Reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza], *Revista Istorică*, V:11–12 (1994), p. 1214; Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 49–55, 64–66 and some documents in Nicolae Mocioiu, Stanca Bounegru, Gheorghe Iavorschi, A. Vidis (eds.), *Documente privind istoricul orașului Brăila (1832–1918)* [Documents on the History of Brăila], vol. I (București: Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului din R.S.R., 1975), pp. 159–160, 324–325.

20. See e.g. the letter by D. Mărgăritescu, leading liberal politician of Brăila, about the works at the wharfs, in *Telegraful* [The Telegraph], 497 (24 October 1873), pp. 2–3.

21. For the contours of the grain trade see Sidney Pollard, *Peaceful Conquest. The Industrialization of Europe, 1760–1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp.

exclusively on grain exports, this development did not bode well for their future.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from that, the repercussions of the 1878 Berlin Treaty threatened even more the commercial future of the Romanian river ports. The loss of the Southern Bessarabian districts, which were incorporated to the Russian Empire, challenged the importance of Galați, since their extremely rich grain production was now exported mainly through Odessa.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the acquisition of Dobrogea (Dobrudja) by Romania created an unprecedented situation. After many centuries of Ottoman dominance, the shoreline of North-Western Black Sea was placed under Romanian control.

The sole Dobrudjan harbor which could emerge as a serious competitor of the Danubian ports was Constanța. It had already attracted, since the 1830s, the attention of European entrepreneurs, consuls and engineers and even of some merchants and ship-owners from Galați and Brăila; they stressed its potential as a major centre for the exports of Wallachian and Bulgarian cereals. Constanța was seen as a master key for overcoming the many physical and political hindrances existing in the Danube Delta.

The first proposals, made in 1837–1838, envisaged the construction of a canal which would connect the Danube with the Black Sea port, a plan extremely expensive and scarcely feasible with the then available technical means.<sup>24</sup> A much more comprehensive project

---

264–270; Boris Mironov, “Le mouvement des prix des céréales en Russie du XVIIIe siècle au début du XXe siècle”, *Annales ESC*, 41:1 (1986), pp. 217–248. The developments in Russia are the subject of the seminal study by Malcom E. Falkus, “Russia and the International Wheat Trade, 1861–1914”, *Economica*, new series, 33:132 (November 1966), pp. 416–429. The Anglo-Romanian trade is covered extensively in Paul Cernovodeanu, “Anglo-Romanian Trade Relations between 1878–1900”, *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire*, XXIX:3–4 (1990), pp. 251–273 and Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 227–241.

22. Anxiety about the “incursion” of American cereals had been noted already since the early 1860s, and grew during the next decade. See e.g. Βλ. Ομόνοια [Omonoia], 111 (5 June 1863), p. 443; FO/CR 17 (Bucharest, 1871), pp. 771–772; FO/CR 36 (Galatz, 1879), pp. 968–969 and the comments of the French vice-consul in Galați, *Bulletin Conculaire Français* [BCF], IV (Galatz, 1880), pp. 752–753.

23. Bușe, *Comerțul exterior*, pp. 227–228; Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, p. 227.

24. Paul Cernovodeanu, “România și primele proiecte de construire a canalului Dunărea – Marea Neagră (1838–1856)” [The Romanians and the First Projects of

was masterminded and realised, in the late 1850s, by a company (*Danube and Black Sea Railway and Kustendjie Harbour Ltd*) with British capital, namely the construction of a railway which linked the seaport with the Danubian port of Cernavodă. The railway, one of the first in the Ottoman Empire, was constructed in the years 1857–1860 and was seen as inaugurating a new era of economic prosperity and development not only for Constanța or Dobrogea in general, but also for Wallachia and Bulgaria. It was assumed that by creating “a direct link of river and deep water port”<sup>25</sup>, it would alleviate merchants from the need to follow the “tortuous and meandering” course of the Danube up to Brăila. Plans were also drawn for the expansion of the Constanța harbor.<sup>26</sup>

The project did not live up to the grand expectations. The construction of the railway line far exceeded the initial budget, depriving its two terminals (Cernavodă and Constanța) of the needed funds to develop and modernize. Left relatively backward and insufficient, the two ports could not compete with Brăila and Galați, notwithstanding their railway connection.<sup>27</sup> It is indicative that in 1864 most of the merchant vessels preferred to load at Sulina or even at Brăila/Galați than at Constanța, even though in the latter the cost was significantly lower.<sup>28</sup> Despite the increase in Constanța’s

---

Building the Danube – Black Sea Canal (1838–1856)], *Revista de Istorie*, XXIX:2 (1976), pp. 189–209 and Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 50–51. The plan attracted a lot of attention. See e.g. Ευρωπαϊκός Ερασιστής, Β' (1839), p. 168, article by Pericles Argyropoulos, a Greek University Professor.

25. John H. Jensen, Gerhard Rosegger, “Transferring Technology to a Peripheral Economy: the Case of Lower Danube Transport Development, 1856–1928”, *Technology and Culture*, 19:4 (1978), p. 681.

26. For the whole endeavor see John H. Jensen, Gerhard Rosegger, “British Railway Builders along the Lower Danube, 1856–1869”, *Slavonic and East European Review*, 46 (1968), pp. 105–128; Jensen, Rosegger, “Transferring Technology”, pp. 680–686.

27. Apart from the studies by Jensen-Rosegger, see also Constantin Ardeleanu, “Efectele construirii căii ferate Cernavodă – Constanța asupra navigației dunărene (1859–1860)” [The Effects of Building the Cernavodă – Constanța Railway for the Danubian Navigation], *Analele Universității “Ovidius” Constanța. Seria Istorie – Științe Politice – Relații Internaționale și Studii Europene, Studii de Securitate*, 3 (2006), pp. 41–54. Cf. FO/CR 10 (Kustendjie, 1867), p. 332.

28. *Letter of the Secretary of State Transmitting a Report on the Commercial Re-*

population and the growing interest among western merchants for the endeavor, the hopes, expressed in particular by British consuls and writers, that the “whole of the produce of the Danube would be exported by the Kustendje railroad” were unfulfilled.<sup>29</sup> The railway’s prospects were also decisively thwarted by the successful development of the *European Commission’s* works at the Sulina channel.<sup>30</sup>

Even though some Romanian economists had underlined, in the 1850s and 1860s, the importance of Constanța and had reflected on the ways it could be linked more closely with the Principalities’ economy,<sup>31</sup> the Bucharest authorities did not pay special attention to Dobrogea in general until its incorporation to Romania in 1878.<sup>32</sup> Thereafter, despite the misgivings and the criticism expressed by several politicians, journalists and intellectuals against this annexation,<sup>33</sup> the government proceeded vigorously to imple-

---

*lations of the United States with Foreign Nations for the Year Ended September 30, 1865* (Washington, 1866), pp. 481–482.

29. Vacalopoulos, “Données statistiques”, p. 113, 115.

30. Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 90–92 and idem, “Efectele”, pp. 45–54.

31. See Dionisie Pop Marțian, “Deschiderea drumului de fier între Cernavodă și Chiustenjei” [The Opening of the Railway between Cernavodă and Chiustenjei], in idem, *Opere economice* [Economic Works], edited by N. Marcu and Zigu Ornea (București: Editura Științifică, 1961), pp. 306–311. One of the first comprehensive and insightful overviews of Dobrogea was written by the Romanian agronomist Ion Ionescu de la Brad, *Excursion agricole dans la plaine de Dobroudja* (Constantinople: 1850), but it was commissioned by the Ottoman authorities. See also Ardeleanu, “Efectele”, pp. 45–46.

32. The Berlin Treaty (July 1878) stipulated that the larger province of Dobrogea was to be partitioned. Its greater part, Northern Dobrogea, would be annexed to the newly independent kingdom of Romania, while South Dobrogea would become a part of the autonomous Principality of Bulgaria.

33. The annexation of Dobrogea was linked, in the Berlin Treaty, to the acceptance by the Romanian government that Southern Bessarabia, since 1812 a Russian province but under Romanian control after 1856, was to be re-united with the Russian Empire. This “territorial exchange” was vehemently criticized in Romania, while the ethnological-cultural diversity and relative economic backwardness of Dobrogea were considered threatening to the homogeneity and stability of the state. See Catherine Durandin, “La Russie, la Roumanie et les nouvelles frontières dans les Balkans (Le cas de la Dobroudjea)”, *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, 20:1 (1979), pp. 61–77 and Constantin Iordachi, “The California of the Romanians: The Integra-

ment an ambitious threefold program of “ethnic colonization, economic modernization and cultural homogenization”.<sup>34</sup> Although it has been argued that the most “important stimulus behind the annexation” of the region was economic since it “was regarded as a vital commercial outlet of Romania, granting it access to the sea”,<sup>35</sup> it appears that during the 1880s the Romanian authorities concentrated mainly on the fuller integration of Dobrogea, a region with an extremely complex ethnic and religious diversity, into the Romanian state through administrative, political, and cultural measures, while they also promoted its colonization.<sup>36</sup> This period witnessed moreover a systematic policy of bringing under tighter state control the various institutions, in particular, churches and schools, of the non-Romanian ethnic groups, mainly of the Bulgarians, but also of the Greeks and Russians.<sup>37</sup>

---

tion of Northern Dobrogea into Romania, 1878–1913”, in Balázs Trencsényi, Dragoș Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi, Zoltán Kantor (eds.), *Nation-Building and Contested Identities. Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies* (Budapest – Iași: Regio Books – Polirom, 2001), pp. 124–127. The prominent Romanian national-liberal politician and later prime minister D. A. Sturdza had published a pamphlet against the “exchange” – Dimitrie A. Sturdza, *Bessarabia și Dobrogea* [Bessarabia and Dobrogea] (București: Tipografia Thiel & Weiss, 1878). For the history of Dobrogea see Adrian Rădulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei* [The History of Dobrogea] (Constanța: Ex Ponto, 1998).

34. Iordachi, “The California”, pp. 121–122.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 128–138 and Rădulescu, Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, pp. 352–359.

37. Cf. various documents about the conflict between the Bishop of Lower Danube, who had jurisdiction over Dobrogea, and the Greek community of Sulina in Ιστορικό και Διπλωματικό Αρχείο Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών [Historical and Diplomatic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs [AYE], dos. 29.5a/1890 and 29.5/1891; Arhiva Episcopiei Dunărea de Jos (Galați), dos. 1859/1889–1890 and dos. 1873/1891–1892. In general for the incorporation of Dobrogean eparchies in the autonomous Romanian church see Ștefan Petrescu, *Οι Έλληνες και η εσωτερική οικοδόμηση του ρουμανικού έθνους-κράτους κατά τον δέκατο ένατο αιώνα* [The Greeks and the Romanian Nation-State Building during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century] (PhD thesis, University of Athens, Athens 2009), pp. 289–299 and Gabriela Florea, *Κοινωνικές, οικονομικές και πολιτικές πτυχές των ελληνο-ρουμανικών σχέσεων κατά το δεύτερο μισό του 19<sup>ου</sup> και αρχές του 20<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα* [Social, Economic and Political Aspects of the Greek-Romanian Relations from the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century until the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century] (PhD thesis, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, 2008), pp. 339–350. For the

The ravages of the 1877–1878 Russo-Ottoman war had hit Dobrogea hard, and the province’s economic development was not aided significantly, at least initially, by the policy of the Romanian authorities. The emigration of tens of thousands of Turks and Tatars, who constituted the majority of the agricultural population in the plains near Constanța,<sup>38</sup> and also of many Bulgarians, undermined the local economy and gave rise to fears that in the future “the land would revert to the condition it was in previous to the Crimean War, namely, mere pasturage for sheep”.<sup>39</sup>

But although for Dobrogea the 1880s, in particular its first half, were a period of underachievement or even hardships, there is no doubt that great expectations were nourished for its future and more practically ambitious plans were laid. In the parliamentary discussion (September 1878) over the Berlin Treaty terms, the government had stressed the economic potential of the region and especially of Constanța, by pointing out that the port’s development would signify Romania’s emancipation from its geographical constraints and herald a period of unrestrained commercial expansion, profitable not just for its hinterland but for the whole country.<sup>40</sup>

The first steps, probably restrained by financial considerations, were cautious, or even lukewarm, as not everyone was convinced that the modernization of the Constanța port would be a profit-

---

similar efforts of the Romanian authorities to bring under their control the schools of the minority groups see Petrescu, *Oi Έλληνες* [The Greeks], pp. 316–317, 338–342.

38. Rădulescu, Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, pp. 285–288, 360; Iordachi, “The California”, p. 123. More broadly for the Dobrogean Turks and Tatars see Alexandru P. Arbore, “Contribuțiuni la studiul așezărilor tătarilor și turcilor în Dobrogea” [Contributions to the Settlement of the Tartars and Turks in Dobrogea], *Arhiva Dobrogei*, II (1919), pp. 213–260.

39. FO/CR 48 (Kustendjie, 1884), p. 455. See also the comments of the British vice-consul at Sulina in FO/CR 48 (Sulina, 1885), p. 203.

40. Valentin Ciorbea, “Preocupări privind modernizarea și transformarea portului Constanța în port național (1878–1900)” [Preoccupations for the Modernization and Transformation of The Port of Constanța into a National Port (1878–1900)], *Revista Istorică*, I:11–12 (1990), pp. 1006–1007 and Iordachi, “The California”, pp. 127–128. Cf. Baron d’Hogguer, *Informațiuni asupra Dobrogei. Starea ei de astăzi. Resursele și viitorul ei* [Information on Dobrogea. Its Current State. Its Resources and Future] (București: Editura Librăriei Soccec, 1879), p. 37.

able enterprise.<sup>41</sup> The government proceeded, however, in 1882 to purchase, at a cost of c. 17,000,000 francs, the Constanța – Cernavodă Railway and the Constanța Harbor, which still belonged to the virtually bankrupt *Danube and Black Sea Railway and Kustendjie Harbour Ltd.*<sup>42</sup> This was the major step on the effort to link tighter the newly acquired province to the Romanian state. Nevertheless its significance would have been fairly limited, if no measures were taken to construct a railway bridge over the Danube. Moreover the parlous state of the harbor,<sup>43</sup> which had been greatly neglected by the English company during the 1870s, demanded the implementation of a wide-ranging and expensive modernization project, since otherwise the construction of the Danube Bridge would have been in vain.

It has been underlined by David Turnock that “much remains unclear about the Constanța scheme”.<sup>44</sup> So the question would be why the Romanian government proceeded to invest so heavily to an inevitably extremely time consuming and costly project and how did it reach that decision, taking into consideration that the Danubian ports of Brăila and Galați had until then more than adequately fulfilled the role of the major avenue of overseas commerce for Romania.

The ambition of the Romanian technical corps comprised by highly competent and determined engineers, such as I. B. Cantacuzino, Gheorghe Duca and Anghel Saligny, to build one of the largest and most technologically innovative bridges and also one of the most spacious harbors in Europe has been regarded as one rea-

---

41. Ciorbea, “Preocupări”, p. 1007. See in particular colonel Ștefan Fălcoianu’s report on Dobrogea (19 October 1878).

42. See Jensen, Rosegger, “Transferring Technology”, p. 687; Cernovodeanu, “Anglo-Romanian Trade Relations”, pp. 254–255; David Turnock, “Sir Charles Hartley and the Development of Romania’s Lower Danube – Black Sea Commerce in the Late Nineteenth Century”, in *Anglo-Romanian relations after 1821* (Iași: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1983), p. 90 and Ciorbea, “Preocupări”, pp. 1007–1010.

43. BCF, IV (Galatz, 1880), p. 767. Further information in Ciorbea, “Preocupări”, pp. 1006–1008.

44. Turnock, “Sir Charles Hartley”, p. 93.

son for the vast scale of the project.<sup>45</sup> It is doubtful, though, whether it could be considered as a major factor. Much more important was the constraint imposed on Romania by the broad authority and jurisdiction of the *European Danube Commission*, which extended, in 1883, from the Black Sea Delta to Brăila. Although it was widely acknowledged that the *Commission* had contributed enormously to the amelioration of navigation in the Delta,<sup>46</sup> and therefore to the advancement of the Danubian ports, the affront to national pride and sovereignty was indisputable.<sup>47</sup> The fact that Romania, notwithstanding its newly acquired independence, was not accorded full membership at the 1883 London Conference, the only major international conference over the Danube status until the inter-war period, accentuated the frustration of the Bucharest government and of the Romanian political elites.<sup>48</sup> As Nicolae Iorga wrote, “in London foreign powers decided for a Romanian river”.<sup>49</sup> The conference was probably one of the most influential factors that led the Romanian government to focus on the development of a major port, which it

45. This point is stressed in Jensen, Rosegger, “Transferring Technology”, pp. 687–688, 692–693, 696. According to the authors, the “bridge project marked the growing to maturity of the engineering profession” in Romania.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 686–687; Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, passim and idem, “Comisia Europeană a Dunării și modernizarea infrastructurii de transport a României: calea navigabilă a Dunării (1856–1914)” [The European Commission of the Danube and the Modernization of Romania’s Transport Infrastructure: the Navigable Danube Channel (1856–1914)], in Daniela Bușă, Ileana Căzan (eds.), *Curențe ideologice și instituțiile statului modern – secolele XVIII–XX. Modelul european și spațiul românesc* [Ideological Trends and the Institutions of the Modern State – the 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries] (București: Oscar Print, 2007), pp. 169–188.

47. Romania’s relationship with the Danube Commission has been the subject of an extensive bibliography. See amongst many I. Cârțână and I. Seftiuc, *Dunărea în istoria poporului român* [The Danube in the History of the Romanian People] (București: Editura Științifică, 1972), pp. 51–72; Stanciu, *România și Comisia Europeană*, pp. 111–141 and Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 157–190.

48. See the comments by Jensen, Rosegger, “Transferring Technology”, pp. 696–697 and Turnock, “Sir Charles Hartley”, pp. 93–94. The stance of the Romanian government vis-à-vis the whole Danubian problem can be followed in the documents published by Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Cestiunea Dunărei* [The Danube Question], I–II (București: Tipografia Academiei Române, 1882).

49. Stanciu, *România și Comisia Europeană*, pp. 132–141. Cf. the relevant documents in AYE, dos. 30.1/1882 and dos. 51.5/1883.



could manage directly. Constanța was the best, if not the sole candidate. It is worth mentioning that the Romanian authorities had already since the early 1860s, inquired over the possibility of building a sea-port, in Southern Bessarabia (Baia Gibrieni), independent of the *European Commission's* control. They had even cooperated with the *Commission's* chief engineer Charles Hartley. Nevertheless, lack of resources, economic and technical factors and maybe also political considerations, since Southern Bessarabia was near the Russian border, derailed this project.<sup>50</sup>

There were also sound economic reasons for this governmental interest on Constanța, since the advantages of a Black Sea port, in comparison to the Danubian ports, were substantial. Thus, in contrast to Constanța, Brăila and Galați were not ice-free harbors, and hence during approximately 2–3 months every year external trade through the Delta was virtually impossible.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, trading in Constanța could alleviate the vessels from making the, despite the works of the *European Danube Commission*, always difficult, costly and protracted roundabout trip to the Lower Danube. The city was, furthermore, situated at the shortest distance between the Black Sea and middle Danube and had already established links to Constantinople and other Mediterranean ports. In an era of fierce competition between the grain-producing countries, the possibility of a modern ice-free port, easily connected to the major European ports was an aspect which could not be overlooked.<sup>52</sup> This became, probably, particularly evident after 1887 and the beginning of the trade war with the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>53</sup> The conflict with Austro-Hun-

---

50. Turnock, "Sir Charles Hartley", p. 93 and primarily Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 108–109.

51. Foreign Office/Annual Series [FO/AS] 268 (Galatz, 1888), p. 8; FO/AS 662 (Roumania, 1890), p. 11, 18. For the freezing of the Danube see also the plates in Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 84, 97, 115, 251.

52. Jensen, Rosegger, "Transferring Technology", p. 687; Iordachi, "Global Networks", pp. 171–172.

53. There is a rich bibliography on the Austro-Romanian commercial relations. See Gheorghe Cristea, "Antecedente și consecințe ale războiului vamal cu Austro-Ungaria" [Antecedents and Consequences of the Customs War with Austria-Hungary], *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Modernă*, VI (1979), pp. 91–137; Gheorghe N. Căzan, "L'expansion économique austro-hongroise en Roumanie et la réac-

gary threatened Romania with economic isolation and impelled the country to strengthen the “Western” orientation of its commerce, namely the ties with Great Britain, France and other Western European countries, which were served by Brăila, Galați and Sulina, and could be even more advanced through Constanța’s development.<sup>54</sup>

The failure, though, of the previous English project made the Romanian authorities cautious and willing to create a really competitive route. Thus, as the cost of the transshipment of goods in both the Cernavodă and the Constanța port was considerable, they decided on the building of a large bridge over the Danube. By this bridge the port of Cernavodă was bypassed and the grain of Muntenia (principally of the Bărăgan Plain) and of Oltenia could be transported easily and swiftly directly to the Constanța port, gaining time and reducing the overall expenses.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, since “the first railway project had suffered from inadequate economic and political backing”<sup>56</sup> the authorities endeavored to ensure steady political support and ample resources. The political will, notwithstanding financing problems impeded the progress of the plan. In the strained economic conditions of the 1880s, the considerable cost of purchasing the assets of the En-

---

tion de la bourgeoisie autochtone (1886–1891)”, *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire*, XIX:2–3 (1980), pp. 313–332. The development of the Romanian commerce in general is the subject of various works, see in particular Cioriceanu, *La Roumanie économique*, pp. 279–299, 389–418; Cornelius G. Antonescu, *Die rumänische Handels politik von 1875–1910* (Leipzig: C. Wolf, 1915), passim. Systematic statistical data in Constantin Ardeleanu, *Comerțul exterior și navigația la Dunărea de Jos. Serii statistice (1881–1900)* [The Foreign Trade and Navigation at the Mouths of the Danube. Statistical Series (1881–1900)] (Galați: Editura Europlus, 2008) and idem, *Comerțul exterior și navigația prin gurile Dunării. Serii statistice (1901–1914)* [The Foreign Trade and Navigation at the Mouths of the Danube. Statistical Series (1901–1914)] (Galați: Galati University Press, 2008).

54. Cernovodeanu, “Anglo-Romanian Trade Relations”, p. 252. In general for Constanța’s advantages in comparison to the Danubian ports see Gheorghe Halchio-pol, *Cestiunea porturilor Galați, Brăila și Constanța* [The Question of the Ports of Galați, Brăila and Constanța] (București: Tipografia G. A. Lazareanu, 1906), pp. 3–6.

55. Jensen, Rosegger, “Transferring Technology”, pp. 688–689.

56. Turnock, “Sir Charles Hartley”, p. 93. For the difficulties that the British company encountered due to the Ottoman negligence or obstruction see FO/CR 18 (Kustendjie, 1872), pp. 835–836 and Jensen, Rosegger, “British Railway Builders”, p. 115.

glish *Danube and Black Sea Railway and Kustendjie Harbour Ltd* and bringing the existing railway line “back to a reasonable standard of operation”<sup>57</sup> deferred the beginning of the building of the bridge until the early 1890s. Thus whereas already in 1883 two international contests had taken place and several offers were submitted, they were deemed unsatisfactory and the government proceeded to establish, in 1887, a special service under the leadership of Anghel Saligny (1854–1925),<sup>58</sup> responsible with the realization of the project. The blueprints were ready in 1889 and the actual building of the bridge began in 1890.<sup>59</sup> Construction works were progressing, initially at least, very slowly.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the grand scale of the planned bridge, which was conditioned mainly by the need not to hinder the “continuous passage of vessels... under the bridge”,<sup>61</sup> increased the cost of the construction and delayed its completion until 1895. The bridge was the longest in Europe and second longest in the world at the time of its opening and could be considered as a major technological achievement.<sup>62</sup>

It was anticipated that after the construction of the bridge “a sensible proportion of the grain that now finds its way to the sea via the Danube will be attracted to Kustendjie for shipment”. Nevertheless, the increase in the exports from the Black Sea port, which was estimated that it could be at least fourfold in quantity, would certainly create bottlenecks, since neither the city nor the harbor were

57. Jensen, Rosegger, “Transferring Technology”, p. 687.

58. For Saligny see Cătălin Fudulu, *Anghel Saligny (1854–1925). Aspecte din activitatea sa* [Anghel Saligny (1854–1925). Aspects of His Activity] (București: Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, 2007).

59. Rădulescu, Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, pp. 366–367 and Iordachi, “Global Networks”, pp. 171–172. For a more detailed description of the construction of the bridge see G. C. Măinescu, “Evoluția căilor ferate în Dobrogea de la 1877 până în zilele noastre” [The Evolution of Railways in Dobrogea from 1877 Until Nowadays], in *Dobrogea: 50 de ani de viață românească, 1878–1928* [Dobrogea: Fifty Years of Romanian Life, 1878–1928] (București: Cultura Națională, 1928), pp. 431–454.

60. Ετήσιοι εκθέσεις περί εμπορίου ναυτιλίας κ.τ.λ. των προξενικών αρχών της Α.Μ. κατά το έτος 1889 [Annual Consular Reports Referring to Commerce, Navigation etc for the Year 1889] (Athens: National Press, 1890), p. ρξδ’.

61. For this point see Jensen, Rosegger, “Transferring Technology”, p. 688.

62. M. D. Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea* [Dobrogea at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century] (București: Atelierele grafice I. V. Socecu, 1904), pp. 676–681.

prepared for such an eventuality. According to the British vice-consul a huge investment of over 21,000,000 francs was necessary, so as to prepare Constanța for these developments,<sup>63</sup> but the money was not forthcoming. The Romanian government was not ignorant of the necessity not just to upgrade the Constanța port, but in reality to build a new, much more spacious and modernized one. It lacked, however, the resources, and probably also the personnel, so as to proceed simultaneously, as it was proposed by foreign observers,<sup>64</sup> to the building of the Danube Bridge and the construction of the port.

Apart from the lack of funds, the delay was also caused by disagreements over the scale of the projected harbor and its technical characteristics. The first plan, drawn by Charles Hartley, had been submitted already in 1881, but it was rejected and the same fate befell the next three plans. The engineers of the Romanian Ministry for Public Works considered that the plans neither protected satisfactorily the port from currents and winds, nor catered for its linking to the railway network. Overall the plans felt short of the ambition of the government and the engineers – the creation of a major transit junction between Central Europe and the Orient. So as to realize their vision a special state service was established in 1888 and prepared the final blueprints by the mid-1890s.<sup>65</sup> The construction began in the autumn of 1896 and continued until 1909. Supplementary works took place in the years 1910–1912.<sup>66</sup> The whole proj-

63. FO/AS 662 (Roumania, 1890), pp. 11–12, 18–19.

64. Cf. e.g. the remarks of the French vice-consul at Constanța in BCF, XX (1890), pp. 205–206 and of the British vice-consul at Galați, FO/AS 1775 (Roumania, 1896), p. 4.

65. Mircea Roșculeț, “Fondarea și construirea portului Constanța” [The Foundation and Construction of the Port of Constanța], *Buletinul Institutului Economic Românesc*, XVII:1–4 (1938), pp. 44–58; Ciorbea, “Preocupări”, pp. 1010–1013.

66. For the construction of the port see, apart from the studies mentioned in note 1, also E. B. Lazarovici, “Construcția și exploatarea portului Constanța” [The Construction and Exploitation of the Port of Constanța], *Analele Dobrogei*, I/1 (1920), pp. 43–68, 97–100 and Roșculeț, “Fondarea și construirea portului Constanța”, pp. 58–97. For the conflict with the French company which had undertaken the construction of the port see Magdalena Iacob, “Începuturile portului modern Constanța. Afacerea Hallier” [The Beginnings of the Modern Port of Constanța. The Hallier Affair], *Buletinul Cercurilor Științifice Studentești – Universitatea 1 Decembrie 1918 Alba Iulia*, 2 (1996), pp. 257–261.

ect cost, according to some estimates, more than 100,000,000 lei.<sup>67</sup>

Closely linked to the modernization of the Constanța harbor was the establishment of a state steamship company (*Serviciul Maritim Român*). It was founded in 1895, after some years of preparation,<sup>68</sup> and initially focused on the linking of Constanța to Constantinople. Soon it had established also connections with other ports such as Alexandria, Piraeus and several ones in Western Europe (Rotterdam, Liverpool, and Anvers). The company did not confine itself to the transport of passengers and mail, but attempted to obtain a share of the Romanian exports, in particular oil, timber and flour, and also of the coal imports.<sup>69</sup>

From a broader point of view one cannot but discern the overarching scope of the project. The railway linking Constanța with the mainland, the huge expansion and broad upgrading of the port and the establishment of the steamship company indicate that the concern for Constanța was a comprehensive plan of reorienting the external trade of the country from the Danube to the Black Sea. Although this plan took years to be implemented, it signaled the will of the political elites to promote the country's development independently of the older established ports.

For the ports of Brăila and Galați, the government's interest for the promotion of Constanța caused considerable apprehension. In view of the fact that the construction of a bridge over the Danube to connect Dobrogea with Romania proper has been taken, the elites of the Danubian cities focused on influencing the choice of the junction. Thus, already in 1880 a committee of prominent whole-

---

67. Georges D. Cioriceanu, *Les grands ports de Roumanie* (Paris: Marcel Girard, 1928), p. 44. See also Lazarovici, "Construcția și exploatarea portului Constanța", pp. 56-68.

68. FO/AS 268 (Galatz, 1888), p. 8 and FO/AS 662 (Roumania, 1890), p. 10.

69. FO/AS 1775 (Roumania, 1896), p. 4; FO/AS 2100 (Roumania, 1898), pp. 7-8; FO/AS 2486 (Roumania, 1900), pp. 5, 9-10; FO/AS 3939 (Constantza, 1907), p. 8. More details in Ministerul Agriculturii, Industriei, Comerțului și Domeniilor, *La Roumanie 1866-1906* (București: Imprimerie Soccec, 1907), pp. 475-477; Carmen Atanasiu, "Înființarea primelor instituții naționale de navigație civilă la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea" [The Foundation of the First National Institutions of Civil Navigation at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century], *Muzeul Național*, V (1981), pp. 259-264 and Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 293-297.

sale merchants from Galați proposed the construction of a railway bridge near the Moldavian port and of a 150 kilometer railway line with a terminal at Constanța. With such a railway line the Moldavian cereal production could be transported to the Black Sea port, in particular during the winter months, when the Danube freezes.<sup>70</sup>

Brăila traders, journalists and engineers came up with a different plan, which provided for a bridge near the Wallachian port.<sup>71</sup> The inhabitants of Brăila opposed the plan of their Galați neighbors since they considered that the Moldavian city was favored by the government. Therefore, they pointed out that many institutions and services had been established in Galați, such as a theological seminary, a court of appeals and a commercial school. Moreover they regarded as dangerous, for security reasons, to construct a bridge near the Russian border. But they were equally adamant that it would be mistaken to build the bridge in the Călărași district (southern Bărăgan Plain), since there the river was wider, and thus the cost of the construction would have been much higher. They stressed, furthermore, that the whole region of Slobozia – Călărași was devoid of cities, warehouses and other installations, and it would be very expensive to create this entire infrastructure. All these proposals were ignored by the government, in favor of the more rational solution, the Fetești – Constanța railway, which connected Dobrogea with the most fertile grain producing regions of Romania, and was in addition supported by the inhabitants of Dobrogea.

But in the early 1880s the emergence of Constanța as a serious competitor was not the only challenge to the economic predominance of Brăila and Galați. The suppression in 1883 of their “free port” status could have led, at least theoretically, to a decrease of

---

70. BCF, IV, pp. 768–769; *Mercuriu / O Εφημερίς*, 8 (16 February 1880), p. 1. The most detailed exposition of this project was made by the engineer Al. Călinescu, *Calea ferată de legătura între România și Dobrogea* [The Railway Linking Romania to Dobrogea] (Galați: Tipografia Română, 1879). It was also proposed to build a tunnel under the river instead of a bridge, a plan too sophisticated to be feasible.

71. *Mercuriu / O Εφημερίς*, 8 (16 February 1880), pp. 1–2. Cf. also the brochure by the engineer of Brăila district Constantin S. Budeanu, *Un podu existent pe Dunăre la Brăila* [A Bridge over the Danube at Brăila] (Brăila: Typo-Lith. Pericle M. Pestemalgioglu, 1887).

their external trade, in particular of their imports.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, despite the persistent efforts of a part of the local merchants, mainly the Galați import traders, who were supported by several politicians (such as Mihail Kogălniceanu and Nicolae Blaremburg),<sup>73</sup> the government did not yield and did not re-introduce the “porto franco” privileges. It should be underlined that the external trade did not suffer severely from the loss of these privileges, as it continued in fact to grow in the 1880s,<sup>74</sup> but it is probable that the authorities were forced, to a degree, to implement serious plans of modernization of the ports, so as to quell the merchants’ opposition.<sup>75</sup>

The continuous increase, during the years 1880–1914, in the departures of the ocean going vessels from the Danubian ports, mainly Galați, Brăila and Sulina, gave additional urgency to the modernization of their harbors. In the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the *European Danube Commission* executed large scale works in the Delta, such as the cutting of the “Great M”, and thus facilitated enormously the navigation of steamships in the river.<sup>76</sup> On the oth-

---

72. For the abolition of the porto-franco regime see Bușe, *Comerțul exterior*, pp. 185–190; Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 30–40.

73. See *Memoriul gălățenilor în chestiunea porto-francului* [The Memorandum of the Galatzites in the Question of the Free Port] (Galați: Tipo-Lit. G. Bălășescu, 1885); *Memoriul în chestiunea portului franc adresat de Camera de Comerț din Galați onor Camerei Legislative a României* [The Memorandum in the Question of the Free Port Sent by the Chamber of Trade of Galați to the Romanian Parliament] (Galați: s.e., 1888) and the characteristic pamphlet by Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Raport privitor la Projectul de lege pentru reînființarea porturilor france Galați și Brăila* [Report on the Proposed Law for the Reestablishment of the Free Port of Galați and Brăila] (București: Tipografia Alexandru A. Grecescu, 1885).

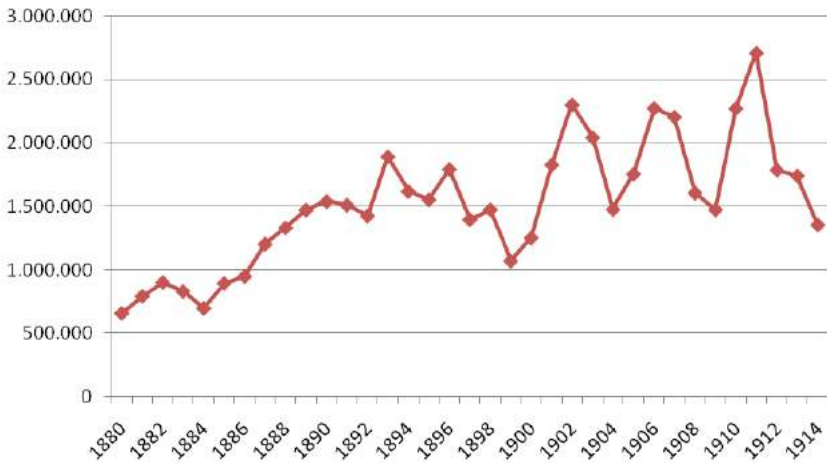
74. Constantin Ardeleanu, “Câteva considerații privind desființarea regimului de porto-franco și consecințele sale asupra comerțului exterior prin portul Galați” [A Few Remarks on the Abolishment of the Free Port Regime and Its Immediate Consequences on the Foreign Trade of Galați], in Ștefan Stanciu, Costin Croitoru (eds.), *Perspective asupra istoriei locale în viziunea tinerilor cercetători. Pagini de istorie gălățeană* [Perspectives on the Local History in the View of Young Researchers. Pages from the History of Galați], vol. I (Galați: Editura Istros, 2005), pp. 66–70. Relevant is also the book by Grigore P. Olanescu, *Despre porturile france* [On the Free Ports] (București: Tipografia Romanulu Vintilă C.A. Rosetti, 1888).

75. Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 224–225; Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 181–182. See also Σύλλογοι (Sylloghi), 2428 (17/29 November 1883), p. 3.

76. For the works of the Danube Commission see Turnock, “Sir Charles Hart-

er hand, since 1887–1888, the Austro-Romanian trade war revitalized the exports through the Lower Danube and led to a significant upgrading of the river fleet. Ship-owners from Brăila and Galați, almost exclusively Greeks, rushed to the shipyards of Budapest, giving orders for iron barges (șleपुरi). A few also purchased or built steam tugs.<sup>77</sup> In 1902–1903 approximately 37 per cent of the Lower Danubian barges had been built in the years 1887–1892.<sup>78</sup>

**Figure 4**  
Departures of sea-going vessels (in tons) from the Lower Danube through the Sulina Channel (1880–1914)



**Sources:** DJGAN / Comisia Europeană a Dunării, dos. 19/1873–1885; dos. 28/1886–1892; dos. 31/1893–1900; dos. 38/1901–1910; dos. 47/1911–1919, État no. 1.

ley”, pp. 87–89 and the more detailed presentation in Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 209–213.

77. For the riverboats in the Danube see Kontogeorgis, *Η ελληνική παροικία της Βραΐλας* [The Greek Paroikia {Settlement} of Brăila], pp. 452–464. See also the eloquent description of the Greek professor and journalist Dimitrios Sfaelos in *Πατρίς* (Paris), 788 (8/20 September 1893), p. 1.

78. The percentage was calculated on the basis of the data provided by Byzant N. Youghapérian, *L’Annuaire du Danube, édition 1902–1903* (București: Carol Goebel, 1903).



In such an environment it was only natural that by the mid-1880s the lack of adequate port facilities in both Galați and Brăila was deeply resented by the trade community and the foreign consuls. For the British vice-consul at the Wallachian city, the harbor was “merely the unimproved river”, to whose northern banks no more than seven “ordinary-sized” ships could moor and even they with some difficulty. During periods of congestion the port was simply unable to cope with the increased number of steamships, while the great amount of lighters could also provoke accidents and delays.<sup>79</sup> The mercantile and ship-owning elites of the cities pressed incessantly the government to initiate works to remedy this situation.<sup>80</sup>

Therefore, in Brăila, from 1883 and until the mid-1890s modern wharfs were constructed and new and more spacious depots were built. More important was the creation of the docks (May 1886–1891), a virtually second port, which comprised warehouses and silos, much better organized and advanced than the old one, in terms of administration and infrastructure. The warehouses were also efficiently connected with the railway, facilitating the transport of cereals from the interior.<sup>81</sup> The latter was especially important, since by 1891 the loading of the grain directly from the trains to the steamers was spread, in an effort to reduce the cost of storage and save time.<sup>82</sup> Similar works had been completed, in 1891, at Galați, increasing substantially the size of the port and establishing modernized docks, which included a great number of warehouses and silos, with a total capacity for c. 25,000 tons of cereals. A special basin for the export of timber was also constructed.<sup>83</sup>

---

79. FO/AS 837 (Roumania, 1891), pp. 17–18.

80. Σύλλογοι [Sylloghi], 2428 (17/29 November 1883), p. 3; *Messengerul de Brăila*, 8 (11 July 1888), p. 1. Cf. Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 206, 212.

81. Rich data on the Brăila harbor and the docks in Paul Florinescu, *Portul Brăila și importanța lui în exportul de cereale* [The Port of Brăila and Its Importance in the Grain Trade] (Brăila: Întâia Tipo-Litografie P.M. Pestemalgioglu, 1911), pp. 14–27, 41–58; Cioriceanu, *Les grands ports*, pp. 38–42 and mainly Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 182–235. Particularly informative is the description of the Brăila docks by the British vice-consul in FO/AS 996 (Roumania, 1892), pp. 12–16.

82. Florinescu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 9–11.

83. Cioriceanu, *Les grands ports*, pp. 32–33 and Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, p.

Although the foreign consuls were sometimes very critical of the quality of these works,<sup>84</sup> their contribution to the expansion of the activity of the ports was considerable. The facilitation of the loading and unloading of goods, the storage of cereals and the anchoring of large steamships were noteworthy. The British vice-consul at Brăila had estimated that in the docks the time needed for the loading of a medium size vessel had diminished from three days to five hours.<sup>85</sup>

The progress in the modernization of the port facilities notwithstanding, it seems that the problems in the functioning of the docks were substantial, at least until the mid-1890s. In the Brăila docks numerous complaints were recorded about unnecessary delays, lack of competent personnel and high rates.<sup>86</sup> The situation was ameliorated by the end of the decade with the introduction of floating docks, both at Brăila and at Galați.<sup>87</sup> The establishment, in 1908, of the  *Direcția Generală a Porturilor și a Căilor de Comunicație pe Apă*  (The General Direction of Ports and Waterway Communication) responsible for the administration of the docks, was also instrumental in the improvement of their day to day management.<sup>88</sup>

The delay in the realization of the Constanța project, which developed in a “distressingly dilatory fashion”,<sup>89</sup> in relation with the great amelioration both of the Danubian ports’ infrastructure and of the Delta navigation thanks to the efforts of the *Danube Commission*, gave a clear advantage to Brăila and Galați. They remained, in particular the former, the principal Romanian export-import ports.<sup>90</sup>

225. See also FO/AS 837 (Roumania, 1891), p. 7; FO/AS 996 (Roumania, 1892), pp. 3–4.

84. FO/AS 837 (Roumania, 1891), p. 18.

85. FO/AS 996 (Roumania, 1892), p. 14.

86. FO/AS 1345 (Roumania, 1894), p. 19. For similar complaints about the operation of the Galați docks see FO/AS 1609 (Roumania, 1895), pp 9–10; FO/AS 1775 (Roumania, 1896), p. 5.

87. FO/AS 1918 (Roumania, 1897), pp. 8, 17; FO/AS 2100 (Roumania, 1898), pp. 6–7; FO/AS 2305 (Roumania, 1899), p. 10.

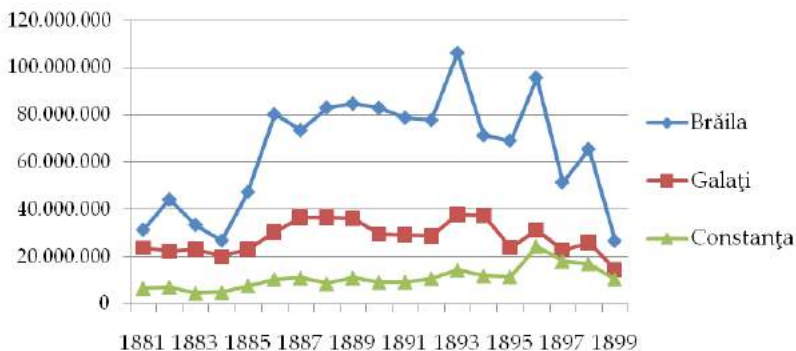
88. Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 316–326.

89. The delay was especially apparent during the years 1898–1901. See e.g. FO/AS 2100 (Roumania, 1898), pp. 18–19; FO/AS 2669 (Roumania, 1901), p. 18.

90. Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 227–241, 250–276. In particular for Brăila’s external trade during the years 1880–1914 see Kontogeorgis, Η ελληνική παροικία της Βραΐλας [The Greek Paroikia {Settlement} of Brăila], pp. 392–419 and Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 453–534.

In the period 1881–1899 the value of the exports through Constanța lagged far behind its main competitors (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5**  
Exports from Brăila, Galați and Constanța in the years 1881–1899  
(in lei)



**Source:** Constantin Ardeleanu, *Comerțul exterior și navigația la Dunărea de Jos. Serii statistice (1881–1900)* (Galați: Editura Europlus, 2008), pp. 66–67.

The elites of the Danubian ports, nevertheless, felt that they lived on “borrowed time”. They believed that the completion of the works at Constanța would lead to the rapid decline of their ports. Thus, some proposed a radical shift of the local economy from a mercantile to an industrial one. It is indicative that *Messengerul de Brăila*, a leading local conservative newspaper, supported, in an editorial with the characteristic title “Brăila can become also an industrial city”, the implementation of various measures, such as the auctioning of communal land for the building of factories, so as to boost the industrial sector. The newspaper underlined that only if Brăila moved towards the direction of industrial development, would it be possible to avoid the decline of Galați.<sup>91</sup>

91. *Messengerul de Brăila*, 8 (11 July 1888), p. 1. During the 1880s and 1890s other local newspapers stressed the importance of industry. See e.g. *Brăila. Ziar al Clubului Comercial* [Brăila. Newspaper of the Commercial Club], 12 (20 January 1884), p. 1; *Progresul Comerțiului și Industriei Române* [The Progress of the Romanian Trade and Industry], 18 (24 June 1891), p. 1 and the main Greek newspaper in Romania, *Σύλλογοι* [Sylloghi], 2461 (30/1 January 1884), p. 3.

Such an industrial “take off” did not really occur. The industrial development was indeed substantial in Galați, at least after the promulgation of various laws protecting industry (1887, 1912) and of a much more protective tariff (1906),<sup>92</sup> but at best uneven and lopsided in Brăila. Apart from the significant expansion of the flour industry, which was probably the most technically sophisticated in the country and certainly the most export oriented,<sup>93</sup> the city remained basically a commercial centre. Either way the rise of the grain prices, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, seemed to have rendered the aforementioned proposals if not absurd then definitely obsolete. The Danubian ports, in particular Brăila and Sulina, retained a large percentage of the grain trade. It has been estimated that in the years 1905–1909 approximately 45 per cent of the cereal exports were handled by the port of Brăila.<sup>94</sup>

The merchants and ship-owners of Brăila determined to exploit the new profitable circumstances to the full, submitted various memoranda to the government in 1905–1906 when the works at the Constanța harbor were nearing completion. They proposed a more expedient linking of the port to the city’s railway station, a substantial increase of the depots, silos and wharfs, a more ra-

---

92. Emeric Mihály, Sara Mihály, “Din istoria industriei alimentare din Galați în a două jumătatea a secolului al XIX-lea” [From the History of the Food Industry at Galați in the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century], *Danubius*, I (1967), pp. 227–244. Generally for the Romanian industry see N. N. Constantinescu, Olga Constantinescu, *Cu privire la problema revoluției industriale în România* [On the Question of the Industrial Revolution in Romania] (București: Editura Științifică, 1957); Mircea Iosa, “Despre dezvoltarea industriei în România la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului al XX-lea (1880–1914)” [On the Development of Industry in Romania at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century], *Studii și materiale de istorie modernă*, III (1963), pp. 351–427 and Victor Axenciuc, *Evoluția economică a României. Cercetări statistico-istorice 1859–1947* [Romania’s Economic Evolution. Statistical-Historical Researches], vol. I, *Industria* [The Industry] (București: Editura Academiei Române, 1992).

93. Kontogeorgis, Η ελληνική παροικία της Βραίλας [The Greek Paroikia {Settlement} of Brăila], pp. 472–502 and idem, “The Greek Dimension of the Romanian Flour Industry in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries”, in Gelina Harlaftis, Radu Păun (eds), *Greeks in Romania in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Athens: Alpha Bank Historical Archives, 2013), pp. 261–282.

94. Florinescu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 29–32.

tional organization of the port, more vigilant policing of the river, so as to diminish the smuggling, and the abolition of many dues and taxes.<sup>95</sup> They also stressed the need for improved telephone communications with the hinterland and with Sulina and proposed the construction of a railway line from Brăila to the Moldavian city of Focșani, which would enhance the commercialization of central Moldavia. Moreover they demanded that the preferential, in favor of Constanța, rates for the transport of grain at the Romanian State Railways be abolished. The merchants considered that the loading/unloading of merchandise in the Black Sea port was approximately 75 per cent cheaper in comparison with Brăila, creating conditions of unfair competition.<sup>96</sup> It should be underscored that by the mid-1890s the merchants of Brăila were also challenged by the use of steam-powered elevators in Sulina, a port which was additionally aided by the overall policy of the *European Danube Commission*.<sup>97</sup>

The most contentious proposal was probably the introduction by the port and dock authorities of steam-powered elevators. These elevators would not only render the loading of cereals safer, easier, quicker and less costly, but they would allow the measurement of their weight and not of their capacity, according to more updated

---

95. *Memoriul Asociațiunei Comercianților din portul Brăila* [The Memorandum of the Association of the Traders from the Port of Brăila] (Brăila: Tipografia Artistică, 1905), pp. 5–7, 9–13; *Memoriu relativ la cauzele decăderii portului Brăila și remediile propuse spre a" i reda activitatea din trecut*. Prezentat în ziua de 22 Ianuarie 1906 D-lui Ion C. Grădișteanu, ministru al lucrărilor publice, de către o delegațiune a comercianților și proprietarilor brăileni [Memorandum Relative to the Causes of the Decline of the Port of Brăila and the Remedies Proposed to Restore Its Past Activity] (Brăila: Tipografia Artistică, 1906), pp. 5–14. Cf. *Bomba* [The Bomb], 794 (25/8 December 1903), p. 2; *Progresul*, 47 (29 July 1907), p. 3 and Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 342–344.

96. *Memoriul Asociațiunei Comercianților*, pp. 10–11; *Memoriu relativ la cauzele decăderii portului Brăila*, pp. 4–5, 8–9, 11–14. On the subject of the Romanian State Railways policy see also Halchiopol, *Cestiunea porturilor*, pp. 6–12, 15–16.

97. The memoranda of the Brăila merchants refer also to the "Sulina threat". It should be noted that the modernization of the Sulina port, in particular the introduction of steam-powered elevators had taken place already since the early 1880s. See FO/CR 43 (Sulina, 1883), p. 486. For the advantages of Sulina see also the observations of the British vice-consul at the city in FO/AS 4219 (Roumania, 1909), pp. 39–40.

standards.<sup>98</sup> It would lead, nonetheless, also to the reduction in the number of port workers, in particular the carters (căruțași) and carriers (hamali), causing inevitably strikes and demonstrations and accentuating therefore social tensions.<sup>99</sup> As the Danubian ports were active every year for approximately nine to ten months, due to the freezing of the river, any reduction to the workload would affect adversely the workers. Those who supported the introduction of the elevators could only argue that their lack diverted merchants and ships to other ports.<sup>100</sup>

The memoranda of the Brăila merchants and the continuous flow of relevant articles in the local press are indicative of the anxiety over the future of their city and port. This concern was also reinforced by the restricted, since the mid-1890s, in comparison to other Danubian ports such as Galați or even Giurgiu, state invest-

---

98. *Memoriul Asociațiunii Comercianților*, pp. 7–8. Cf. *Bomba*, 911 (17/30 June 1906), pp. 1–2. The promotion of the elevators had been energetically pursued by the director of the Brăila docks engineer Paul S. Demetriad, *Câteva cuvinte despre grevele și nemulțumirile muncitorilor din Portul Brăila în legătura cu necesitatea introducerii aparatelor de manutanțiune mecanică* [A Few Words on the Strikes and Complaints of the Workers from the Port of Brăila in Relation to the Necessity of Introducing the Mechanical Handling Machines] (București: s.e., 1913), pp. 1–16.

99. In Brăila and Galați there were strikes by the dockers in 1907–1908, 1912 and 1914–1916. See Georgeta Tudoran, “Luptele muncitorilor din porturile Galați și Brăila în anii neutralității (1914–1916)” [The Struggles of the Workers from Galați and Brăila during the Years of Neutrality (1914–1916)], *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Modernă*, III (1963), pp. 513–538 and Nicolae Mocioiu, “Mișcarea muncitorească din Brăila în perioada anilor 1910–1912” [The Workers’ Movement at Brăila during the Period 1910–1912], *Istros*, 4 (1985), pp. 177–192. For the labor movement in the Romanian ports in general see Nicolae N. Bârdeanu, *Mișcarea muncitorească din porturile României (în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea și la începutul secolului al XX-lea)* [The Workers’ Movement in the Romanian Ports (in the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)] (București: Editura Politică, 1978), *passim*; Nicolae Mocioiu, “Mișcarea muncitorească și socialistă de la Brăila de la primele începuturi pînă în anul 1910” [The Workers’ and Socialist Movement at Brăila from Its Beginnings to 1910], *Istros*, 2–3 (1981–1983), pp. 379–414.

100. Very few elevators had been introduced in the port of Brăila until 1908, but their number increased until 1914. See FO/AS 5326 (Roumania, 1914), p. 31; Florinescu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 24–26; Cioriceanu, *Les grands ports*, pp. 40–41; Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 418–419.

ments for the modernization of the harbor.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, the main port of Brăila, though not the docks, remained, despite the execution of a few works, relatively backward.<sup>102</sup>

Although the Romanian government met some of the demands, it did not respond positively to all of them. It is true that in 1906 the authorities imposed a special due on the cereals transported by train to Constanța, so as to help the Danubian ports, but this was only a temporary measure.<sup>103</sup> The preferential treatment of Constanța was sustained,<sup>104</sup> and the fact that the Black Sea port was now nearly fully modernized allowed it to obtain a much larger share of the country's external trade. In the years 1901–1914 the exports through Constanța were, in quantity, outgrowing those from Brăila, while Galați was far behind (see Figure 6). Constanța's growth was especially remarkable after 1909–1910, with the formal inauguration of the harbor and the completion of the construction of the grain silos.<sup>105</sup>

Some efforts were undertaken, usually at the initiative of the local merchants, ship-owners and port officials, to bring up to date the installations and further expand the Danubian ports. In Galați the works aimed to boost both the export of timber, which was the Moldavian port's staple, and the fast decreasing cereal exports.<sup>106</sup> Efforts were made, furthermore, in the case of Brăila, to modernize the transportation of the cereals from the railway station to the port, by expanding the "railway lines and sidings... so that grain coming down from the interior" could be loaded directly to the steamers,<sup>107</sup>

---

101. Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 209–210, 215–216, 314–315, 341–342, 344.

102. *Ibid.*, pp. 212–214, 342. Cf. FO/AS 2669 (Roumania, 1901), p. 16; FO/AS 2990 (Roumania, 1902), p. 16.

103. It was rescinded in 1907. See *Gazeta portului Brăila* [The Journal of the Port of Brăila], 27 (10 November 1909), p. 1. The merchants of Constanța were constantly pressing for preferential rates, pointing out that the Danubian ports could "use" the river for the needs of their trade. Cf. Halchiopol, *Cestiunea porturilor*, pp. 7–12.

104. In 1909–1919 3,000,000 lei were allocated for the Constanța harbor, 300,000 for Galați and nothing for Brăila. See Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, p. 344.

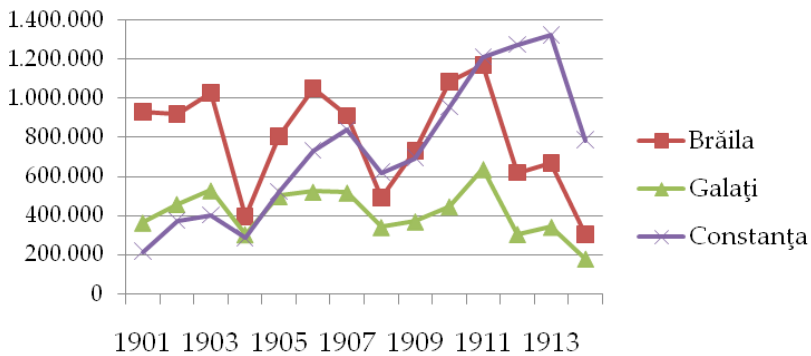
105. For a comparison between Constanța and the Danubian ports see Bușă, "Comerțul exterior", pp. 965–967.

106. FO/AS 4219 (Roumania, 1909), pp. 55–56.

107. FO/AS 3618 (Roumania, 1906), p. 45.

and to build special berths for barges, with the aim of reducing the congestion during the autumn months.<sup>108</sup> Despite these endeavors the Danubian ports were still inadequately prepared to face the “Constanța menace”. The cost of loading in Brăila remained greater than in Constanța, undermining the former’s future.<sup>109</sup> Constanța’s economic potential was further enhanced by the acquisition by Romania, in 1913, of the rich grain producing province of Southern Dobrogea. It was anticipated that the cereals of this region, which were until then exported through Varna, would divert to the Romanian seaport.<sup>110</sup>

Figure 6  
Exports from the Danubian ports and Constanța (in tons)  
during the years 1901–1914



Source: Constantin Ardeleanu, *Comerțul exterior și navigația prin gurile Dunării. Serii statistice (1901–1914)* (Galați: Galați University Press, 2008), pp. 56–57.

The increasing quantities of the cereals exported from Constanța, especially during winter,<sup>111</sup> it was probably the oil trade which gave

108. FO/ AS 5326 (Roumania, 1914), p. 31. Details for the works at the Brăila port in Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 214–221, 225–229.

109. See Demetriad, *Câteva cuvinte*, pp. 11–12.

110. FO/ AS 5326 (Roumania, 1914), p. 37.

111. Cf. Florinescu, *Portul Brăila*, p. 34.



powerful impetus to its development.<sup>112</sup> The Romanian oil industry had witnessed since 1895 a steady growth, which, in particular after 1907, was outstanding. It is indicative that the value of oil exports increased from 24,800,000 lei in 1907 to 40,000,000 lei in 1910 and more than 135,000,000 in 1913, approximately 15 per cent of the Romanian exports' total value.<sup>113</sup> The vast majority of this trade was handled at the Constanța harbor<sup>114</sup>, which by the early 1900s had become practically the sole outlet for one of the most competitive and fast growing sectors of the Romanian economy. The transport of the oil was aided by the construction, in 1910, of the railway line Ploiești – Slobozia, which linked the main oilfields with Constanța. Furthermore, by 1913 the Romanian authorities had begun the construction of a pipeline,<sup>115</sup> while spacious special installations were built at the harbor.<sup>116</sup> The Danubian ports could not compete with Constanța. In 1913 the oil exports through Brăila did not exceed 16,116 tones, roughly 1.5 per cent of the total Romanian exports, while the activity of the other ports in the Lower Danube was even more insignificant.

On the eve of the First World War Romanian economy was on the threshold of major changes. Constanța was fast becoming the foremost port of the country and one of the most dynamic ones in the Black Sea region, while the Danubian ports were in danger of being marginalized. The improvement of their infrastructure, through the construction of the docks and other works at the harbors during the early 1890s, and the introduction of some innovations in the function of the port, especially in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century,

---

112. The importance of Constanța for the Romanian oil exports had been underlined by the British Consuls already in 1896. See Foreign Office / Miscellaneous Series 411 (1896): *Report on Petroleum Industry in Roumania*, pp. 8–9.

113. For the Romanian oil see Gheorghe Buzatu, *A History of Romanian Oil*, I (București: Mica Valahia, 2004), pp. 39–48 and Lampe, Jackson, *Balkan Economic History*, pp. 262–264. The policy of the Romanian state regarding oil is analyzed by Maurice Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1971).

114. Bușă, “Comerțul exterior”, pp. 972–973. In 1906 76 per cent of all oil exports passed through Constanța. See e.g. FO/AS 3939 (Constantza, 1907), pp. 12–13.

115. Jensen, Rosegger, “Transferring Technology”, pp. 689, 694. Cf. FO/AS 5326 (Roumania, 1914), p. 37.

116. Roșculeț, “Fondarea și construirea portului Constanța”, pp. 77–78, 84–88.

such as steam elevators, helped them sustain, in particular Brăila, their predominant position in the exports of cereals and timber. They could not, nevertheless, in the long run, prevent the shift of Romania's external trade to the Black Sea port. The elites of the Danubian ports seemed to have been engaged in a rear-guard action, which succeeded in delaying, but not in permanently deterring the rise of Constanța. The economic development of the latter was not just a matter of "economic feasibility"; it was also a potent symbol of Romania's independence. Therefore, at least by the early 1890s, the realization of the Constanța project was given priority in terms of resources and planning. As it was underlined, in promoting Constanța the Romanian government was "building optimistically for the future rather than short term considerations".<sup>117</sup> This vision vindicated the enormous effort and resources reared for the construction of the Danube Bridge and the Black Sea port. The latter would herald the economic independence of Romania, its emancipation from the control of foreign institutions, such as the *European Danube Commission* and the constraints of geographical factors, such as the Danube and its navigation difficulties, complementing the political independence obtained in 1878.

---

117. Turnock, "Sir Charles Hartley", p. 91.

#### 4.

### Romania's Investments in Its Maritime Ports (1878–1914)

Constantin Ardeleanu  
The Lower Danube University of Galați

After the gaining of state independence in 1878 the process of nation building in Romania included a major economic component. The fall of the stronghold of Plevna during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1877–1878, a military operation at which Romanian troops led by Prince Charles I played an important contribution, was to be followed by the dismantling of the “internal Plevna”, the removal of the medieval and feudal remains in society and economy, a compulsory step on the country's road to civilization and material prosperity. In this new economic contest that eventually aimed at the creation of a national industry, Romania's port-cities of Brăila (Braila) and Galați (Galatz), the outlets of the rich grain surplus of the Danubian plains, were to play a significant role. However, the acquisition of the trans-Danubian province of Dobrogea (Dobrudja) in 1878 provided the country with the opportunity of possessing a maritime port on the Black Sea coast, a desideratum that proved impossible on the improper seacoast of Southern Bessarabia during the previous decade.<sup>1</sup>

Starting from these premises, this paper will analyze the main aspects related to Romania's policy towards its large ports of Brăila, Galați and Constanța, how they coped with the new national economic imperatives and how they managed to survive into a growingly competitive mercantile context. The core issue relates to the ports' roles in relation to the foundation and development of

---

1. *Details in Constantin Ardeleanu, Evoluția intereselor economice și politice britanice la gurile Dunării (1829-1914)* [The Evolution of the British Economic and Political Interests at the Mouths of the Danube (1829-1914)] (Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei – Editura Istros, 2008), pp. 108–109, 139–140.

a modern land and water transportation infrastructure employed for shipping the products from the agricultural hinterlands to the routes of world trade.

### *Politics and the customs regime in the Danubian Principalities and Romania*

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century much of the prosperity of the Danubian ports of Brăila and Galați came from their privileged customs regime. By mid 1830s, in order to support their development the central authorities in Wallachia and Moldavia granted them a free port (*porto franco*) status,<sup>2</sup> meaning that the entire area of each city (surrounded by ditches and with barriers and customs houses at all entrances into the privileged enclosure) was exempted of customs duties on the merchandise brought into the free port, and the goods were only taxed on leaving this privileged area either for being exported or as imports into the country. The privilege did favor the commercial growth of the two outlets, as it allowed the settlement at Brăila and Galați of numerous foreign merchants who rapidly sensed the great economic prospects of a cheap market at the beginning of its capitalist development. Although the two principalities moved towards a customs union, an initiative started in 1835 and completed in 1847 (broadly speaking similar to the German *Zollverein*), the agreements between the governments of Wallachia and Moldavia explicitly excluded from free trade, in order to protect local producers (almost all of them representatives of the political elite, the boyars), the very goods that accounted for up to 90 per cent of the principalities' exports: grain, cattle, and tallow. Quarantine provisions made the transit of such agro-pastoral goods from the right (Ottoman) bank of the Danube even more difficult

---

2. The most comprehensive works on the free ports are Constantin Bușe, *Comerțul exterior prin Galați sub regimul de port franc (1837-1883)* [The Foreign Trade of Galați Under the Free Port Regime (1837-1883)] (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1976) and Emil Octavian Mocanu, *Portul Brăila de la regimul de porto-franco la primul război mondial (1836-1914)* [The Port of Brăila from the Free Port Regime to the First World War (1836-1914)] (Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei – Editura Istros, 2012).

and costly, if not altogether forbidden, so that until the creation of modern Romania by the union of the two states and the reforms imposed during Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza's reign (1859–1866), Brăila and Galați served as the jealously protected maritime outlets of Wallachia and Moldavia respectively. Foreign merchants were instead interested in having the two ports function as entrepôts for storing and re-exporting goods from the entire Lower Danubian area (including Ottoman Dobrogea, Bulgaria, Serbia, etc.), whereas local landowners managed to remove or limit competition by keeping away “foreign” grain and cattle from Brăila and Galați.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in terms of exports the two ports depended almost exclusively on the resources of their own states. As they were the sole maritime outlets opened towards the international trade routes, they served as commercial relays for each of the two principalities, to the profit of Brăila, for Wallachia was almost double in surface and population as compared to Moldavia. Brăila enjoyed another advantage in relation to its Moldavian rival – the cheapness of fluvial transportation along the Danube. During the period, with a poor terrestrial infrastructure consisting mainly of natural roads, with few bridges and paved arteries, land transportation of grain (the main commodity) in oxen driven carts was slow and expensive, amounting to up to 40 per cent of the products market price. In fact, it was as expensive to carry grain overland on a distance of 100 miles as it was to ship it from Galați to London. Whereas Moldavia almost completely depended on land transportation (despite several attempts to secure the navigability of its large internal rivers – the Sireth and the Pruth) and its vertical shape meant that larger distances separated Galați from the productive districts, Wallachia established a string of small loading ports along Danube's left bank, where grain was downloaded and then shipped to Brăila in small river lighters. Thus, rapidly after its rebirth in 1829 Brăila grew extremely rapidly and surpassed Galați as the main export centre of the Lower Danube.

---

3. More on the Danubian Principalities' customs regime in Constantin Ardeleanu, *International Trade and Diplomacy at the Lower Danube. The Sulina Question and the Economic Premises of the Crimean War (1829–1853)* (Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei – Editura Istros, 2014), pp. 63–67.

This economic *status quo* was challenged by the Crimean War and its political outcomes. By the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris (1856) Moldavia received three districts (Cahul, Ismail, and Bolgrad) in Southern Bessarabia, a territorial adjustment meant to remove Russia as a riparian of the Lower Danube. Thus, after 1856 geographical, economic and political reasons made these productive areas ship most of their agricultural output through Galați, Moldavia's emporium. However, the union of the principalities marked a new phase in the history of the two Romanian port-cities, as it created a national market, increasing competition both between the two outlets and between the Romanian and foreign grain exported by the Danube. In customs terms, the state was searching for the best solution to facilitate commercial exchanges, but to also allow the birth of a national economy.<sup>4</sup> The political status of the country, a vassal though largely autonomous state with feeble links to the Porte, complicated these national desiderata, and it was only in 1874 that a new law organized all aspects related to Romania's customs policy: taxes, prohibitions, surveillance, penalties, etc.<sup>5</sup>

Soon enough, a new customs tariff was agreed upon by the central authorities that replaced the *ad valorem* system with the taxation per physical unit (weight or number) and only exceptionally *ad valorem*. The tariff had clear protectionist intentions meant to encourage the weak national industry, so taxes varied between four and six per cent for undeveloped industrial branches, 10–20 per cent for several protected goods and 7.5–15 per cent for the rest. The tariff was not applied, as in June 1875 Romania signed a commercial con-

---

4. Nicolae Sută, Gabriela Drăgan, Maria Mureșan, Sultana Sută-Selejan, *Istoria comerțului exterior și a politicii comerciale românești* [The History of Romania's Foreign Trade and Commercial Policy] (București: Editura Eficient, 1998), pp. 65–66. Extremely useful and informative is the classical work of Constantin I. Băicoianu, *Istoria politicii noastre vamale și comerciale de la Regulamentul Organic până în prezent* [The History of Our Customs and Commercial Policy from the Organic Statutes to the Present Day], vol. I (București: s.e., 1904). For a newer approach see Daniela Bușă, *Comerțul exterior al României cu țările din sud-estul Europei (1878–1914)* [Romania's Foreign Trade with the South-Eastern European Countries (1878–1914)] (București: Oscar Print, 2009), pp. 83–108.

5. *Enciclopedia României* [The Encyclopaedia of Romania], vol. I, *Statul* [The State] (București: Imprimeriile Naționale, 1936), p. 633.

vention with Austria-Hungary, followed by similar agreements with most of her commercial partners (Russia – 1876, Germany – 1877, Switzerland, Greece, Italy – 1878, Great Britain, Belgium – 1880, the Netherlands and the USA – 1881). In exchange for the political advantage of being allowed to sign an international document, but also for securing the low taxation of Romanian grain and cattle exported to Austria-Hungary and to other countries, Romania accepted to decrease import rates so that the country continued to be flooded by the cheap goods manufactured in the Western industrialized countries.<sup>6</sup>

The same protectionist program also referred to the abolishment of the free ports, which no longer served, according to the central authorities, the country's economic needs. The privileges only allowed economic advantages to the inhabitants of Brăila and Galați, who could buy cheaper goods exempted of import taxes paid throughout the rest of Romania, but encouraged smuggling activities that greatly injured the state budget. The intention, already stated in 1875, was applied since April 1883, when the free port regime was abolished, after the Romanian authorities had promised to build at Brăila and Galați docks and warehouses for storing transited goods, a measure considered more appropriate for the needs of those times and economic context.<sup>7</sup>

The abolishment of the free ports was grievously felt in the two Danubian emporia, especially at Galați, which was witnessing a commercial decline, at least a relative one in comparison to its Wallachian rival. Local political and economic circles at Galați started a vocal campaign for the restoration of the city's old customs privilege and the period of the free port regime remained the golden age in the history of the Moldavian port-city.<sup>8</sup> Several factors had

---

6. Sută at alii, *Istoria*, pp. 94–99.

7. Moise N. Pacu, *Cartea județului Covurluiu. Note geografice, istorice și în deosebi statistice* [The Book of Covurlui County. Geographical, Historical and Mainly Statistical Notes] (București: Institutul Grafic I. V. Socecu, 1891), pp. 262–263.

8. Some of the contemporary accounts on the importance of restoring the free ports in *Memoriul gălățenilor în cestiunea porto-francului* [The Memorandum of the Galatziotes in the Question of the Free Port] (Galați: Tipo-Lit. G. Bălăsescu, 1885); Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Raport privitor la Projectul de lege pentru reînființarea porturilor france Galați și Brăila* [Report on the Proposed Law for the Reestablishment of the

already contributed to the contraction of its commercial operations. A heavy blow was felt in 1878, when Russia re-annexed the three Southern Bessarabian districts of Cahul, Ismail and Bolgrad, and Galați lost a large part of its agricultural hinterland. But the main problem of Galați continued to remain its connection to the land transport infrastructure that was rapidly developing throughout Romania.

### *Connecting the Danubian ports to Romania's railway network*

By the mid 1860s, Romania started an ambitious program of building a vast network of railroads that, naturally enough, allowed an important place to the two Danubian outlets. The first railways were built by foreign entrepreneurs who were granted concessions by the Romanian state. Such a lease was given in 1865 for a railroad between Bucharest and the Danubian port of Giurgiu, a line inaugurated in 1869. The construction of the backbone of the national railway network was entrusted in 1868 to a German consortium led by Bethel Henry Strousberg, who was to build the railroad Vârciorova – Bucharest – Brăila – Galați – Tecuci – Roman, on a total length of 915 kilometers. A part of the line, including the section from Tecuci to Galați, was provisionally opened in 1870, and the route Roman – Mărășești – Tecuci – Galați – Brăila – Buzău – Bucharest was fully operational in 1872.<sup>9</sup> However, Strousberg's

---

Free Port of Galați and Brăila] (București: Tipografia Alexandru A. Grecescu, 1885); Alexandru Beldiman, *Cestiunea porturilor france* [The Question of the Free Ports] (București: Tipografia Carol Göbl, 1888); *Memoriul în chestiunea portului franc adresat de Camera de Comerț din Galați onor Camerei Legislative a României* [The Memorandum in the Question of the Free Port Sent by the Chamber of Trade of Galați to the Romanian Parliament] (Galați: s.e., 1888).

9. Paul Păltănea, *Istoria orașului Galați de la origini până la 1918* [The History of Galați from Its Beginnings to 1918], second edition, edited by Eugen Drăgoi (Galați: Editura Partener, 2008), vol. II, pp. 133–134. The general context in Al. Cebuc, C. Mocanu, *Din istoria transportului de călători în România* [From the History of Passenger Transportation in Romania] (București: Editura Științifică, 1967), pp. 113–120 and Const. Botez, Dem. Urma, Ion Saizu, *Epopoea feroviară românească* [Romanian Railway Saga] (București: Editura Sport-Turism, 1977), pp. 80–94.



venture was greatly injured by the outburst of the Prussian-French war of 1870, and during the next decade his concession was fiercely disputed between the Romanian authorities and the consortium's shareholders. The problem was finally solved in 1880, when the state bought back the railway, after German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck made it clear that Romanian independence would be recognized by all Great Powers only after a convenient solution to this dispute.

By this period the Romanian state had bought most of the lines from their initial contractors and started to build new railroads with Romanian engineers and Romanian material (at a cost about half of that previously paid to foreign investors). The railroads were exploited by the General Direction of Romanian Railways, according to the provisions of a special law passed in 1883. Table 1 shows the progress of Romanian railways during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which by 1915 totaled 3,702 kilometers of railways and 443 stations and halts, investments for which the state spent almost 1.1 billion lei. At the same time there were in operation 932 locomotives and 25,790 carriages, most of them cargo carriages. The number of passengers and the quantities of cargo transported on rail greatly increased, making the Romanian Railways a driver of economic growth. From 648,000 passengers and 376,000 tons of goods carried in 1873, the amounts grew in 1914 to 11,569,000 passengers and 10,899,000 tons of cargo. Most of the commodities were represented by grain and other agricultural goods, although oil quantities carried by rail boosted in the 1910s.<sup>10</sup>

---

10. Coherent and detailed statistical data available in Victor Axenciuc, *Evoluția economică a României. Cercetări statistic-istorice, 1859-1947* [Romania's Economic Evolution. Statistical-Historical Researches, 1859-1947], vol. I, *Industria* [The Industry] (București: Editura Academiei Române, 1992), pp. 323-327; a critical approach of Romania's grain exports in Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)* [Romania and Europe. The Accumulation of Economic Gaps (1500-2010)] (Iași: Polirom, 2010), pp. 114-123.

**Table 1**  
**Railways and railway stations, 1869–1915**

Year	Total length (km)	Number of railway stations	Number of halts
1869	172	19	-
1870	248	25	-
1880	921	135	9
1890	2,421	239	20
1900	3,100	300	26
1910	3,437	369	21
1915	3,702	404	39

**Source:** Calculated from Victor Axenciuc, *Evoluția economică a României. Cercetări statistic-istorice, 1859–1947*, vol. I, *Industria* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1992), p. 323.

**Table 2**  
**Means of transportation in use on the Romanian railways, 1873–1915**

Year	Locomotives	Total carriages	Passenger carriages	Mail carriages	Cargo carriages	Cisterns
1873	83	1,765	383	6	1,376	-
1880	141	3,652	274	28	3,350	-
1890	302	7,236	811	82	6,343	53
1900	464	11,436	1,038	92	10,306	612
1910	691	16,506	1,198	133	15,175	2,170
1915	932	25,790	1,490	153	24,138	-

**Source:** Calculated from Axenciuc, *Evoluția economică*, I, p. 325.

However, the port of Galați was a collateral “victim” of this impressive constructive program. According to the initial drafts, the Moldavian outlet was to serve as a relay on the backbone of Romanian railroads started in 1868 and completed a couple of years later. However, due to technical difficulties in getting the rail from the outer plain to the commercial and industrial area in the valley

of the city (where the harbor lied), Galați was only linked to this transport backbone by a branch line, a fact severely criticized by local economic circles.<sup>11</sup> By the excavation of a tunnel and the building of a new railroad in 1881–1882, the large bypass was reduced, but still the city and its harbor were not a relay along the continuous network of national railways, but rather the terminus of two different routes, one connecting it to northern Moldavia (via Tecuci – Mărășești – Roman, and by connection lines further towards other destinations), and the other to the capital city of Bucharest, via Brăila and Buzău.<sup>12</sup> By this faulty engineering architecture, Galați virtually lost its “monopoly” over its Moldavian hinterland, as Brăila was now at equal distance from the Moldavian productive districts and was much better equipped for the remunerative grain trade, with all the large commercial houses and ship-owners based at Brăila and with the harbor infrastructure fitted for this business. Since the 1870s Brăila completely outrivaled Galați in the grain trade and became the sole capital of Danubian grain exports, with Galați trying to preserve its decreasing share and to find new opportunities by specializing itself in imports, as well as by investing in industrial ventures.

As for the contribution of the Romanian railways to the country’s economy, it can be easily seen in Tables 3 and 4. Grain and its derivatives represented about three fourths of Romania’s exports (by quantity) throughout this period, sometimes getting to more than 80 per cent. After the imposition of the new mining law in 1895, the investments in the oil industry boomed and Romania became one of the largest oil exporters in the world. Grain and oil, as well as timber, the third staple, were bulky products that needed a proper transport infrastructure, so that they occupied the largest share of the Romanian Railways Company’s cargo transportation. And naturally enough most of these goods headed for exportation to Romania’s maritime ports.

---

11. Păltănea, *Istoria*, II, pp. 133–134.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 199–200.

**Table 3**  
**Shares of main commodities in Romania's total exports**  
**(by quantities)**

Year	Grain (%)	Oil (%)
1876–80	70.63	1.38
1881–85	76.28	0.98
1886–90	80.52	0.62
1891–95	84.40	0.64
1896–00	75.80	2.50
1901–05	75.14	1.64
1906–10	80.54	6.52
1911–15	72.00	14.70

**Source:** Calculated on the basis of data from Axenciuc, *Evoluția economică*, III, *Monedă – Credit – Comerț – Finanțe publice* [Currency – Credit – Trade – Public Finances] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2000), pp. 366–368.

**Table 4**  
**Quantities (in thousand tons) and shares of main commodities carried on Romanian railroads**

Year	Grain		Oil		Timber		Fire wood	
	Qnt.	%	Qnt.	%	Qnt.	%	Qnt.	%
1876–80	376.2	65.65	10.0	1.75	33.4	5.83	67.8	11.83
1881–85	516.6	55.37	24.4	2.62	93.6	10.03	106.6	11.43
1886–90	909.4	54.63	30.0	1.80	224.6	13.49	217.0	13.03
1891–95	1,276.6	56.13	57.6	2.53	389.2	17.11	358.0	15.74
1896–00	1,420.0	54.40	136.2	5.22	383.6	14.70	414.6	15.88
1901–05	2,069.8	58.76	306.4	8.70	574.8	16.32	371,8	10.55
1906–10	2,143.2	45.61	792.2	16.86	729.2	15.52	564,2	12.00
1911–14	2,536.5	40.77	1,373.5	22.07	682.5	10.97	846,25	13.60

**Source:** Calculated on the basis of data from Axenciuc, *Evoluția economică*, I, pp. 329–330.

*The European Commission of the Danube and the growth of Sulina*

The two rival Danubian ports of Brăila and Galați were also facing other more threatening “external” challenges. In 1856 a European Commission of the Danube (CED) was established at Paris by the Great Powers in order to remove all obstacles that impeded proper navigation along the maritime section of the Lower Danube River. After initial scientific surveys of the area, the CED started in 1858 provisional works at the Sulina mouth of the Danube, building two dykes that formed a seaward prolongation of the fluvial channel. At the end of the first constructive phase in 1861, the two dykes (the northern one measuring 4,631 feet, the southern 3,000 feet) resulted in an increase of the navigable depth at the bar from nine to 19 feet. In fact, the provisional works from Sulina proved so successful that they were soon turned into definitive constructions, by equalizing the length of the two jetties, which in the next three decades secured a constant depth over the bar of about 20 feet. In 1894, owing to the constantly increasing size of vessels coming to the Danube, Sir Charles Augustus Hartley (since 1872 consulting-engineer of the CED), and the Danish specialist Charles (Carl) Kühl, employed as resident-engineer, intended to deepen the entrance still further. Thus, they projected the construction of two parallel piers between the main dykes, reducing the breadth of the river to 500 feet, and thereby increasing the scour. A 24 feet deep continuous channel was secured, which was maintained by permanent dredging. For this operation, the CED purchased several dredging machines (at a cost of 3.17 million francs) which, during the period 1894–1914 made works amounting to 3.86 million francs. Many adjustments were also done on the Sulina branch. Its original length of 45 miles was impeded by 11 bends, each with a radius of less than 1,000 feet, besides numerous others of somewhat larger radius, and its bed was encumbered by 10 shifting shoals, varying from eight to 13 feet in depth at low water. By means of a series of training walls, by groins thrown out from the banks, by revetments of the banks, and by dredging, all done with the view of narrowing the river, a minimum depth of 11 feet was attained in 1865, 13 feet in 1871 and 15 feet in 1886. A series of cuttings, made during the period 1886–1902, shortened the length of the Sulina canal by 11 nautical miles, removed all the difficult bends

and shoals, and provided an almost straight waterway of 34 miles in length, with a minimum depth of 20 feet when the river was at its lowest.<sup>13</sup> According to the official data, during the period 1860–1914 the CED had revenues (from navigation rights, different receipts and interests) of 105,435,622.36 francs, which (besides employees' salaries, administrative expenses, etc.) were invested in technical works and in the acquisition of navigation equipment.<sup>14</sup>

Although meant to support the prosperity of the Danubian ports of Brăila and Galați these impressive works had perversely adverse results. Firstly, as the CED's budget came from the taxes imposed on the navigation of ships calling at Danubian inland ports, according to a well designed tariff, Romanian political and economic circles started to criticize the Commission, whose activity was paid by "extra taxes" on Romanian grain.<sup>15</sup> In order to prevent paying these dues and to avoid the still shallow, narrow and busy waterway many of the large steamers that came to load Danubian grain anchored in the roadstead and harbor of Sulina where they loaded their cargo carried

---

13. Technical details on the works in Ch. Hartley, "On the Changes that Have Recently Taken Place along the Sea Coast of the Delta of the Danube and on the Consolidation of the Provisional Works at the Sulina Mouth", *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, 36 (1873), pp. 201–253; Charles Henry Leopold Kühl, "Dredging on the Lower Danube", *ibid.*, 65 (1881), pp. 266–270; Idem, *The Sulina Mouth of the Danube*, *ibid.*, 91 (1888), pp. 329–333; Ebenzer Thomas Ward, "The Navigability of the Lower Danube", *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, 230, Part 2, meeting of 29 April 1930, pp. 280–312. The "official" history of the Commission also includes valuable details – *La Commission Européenne du Danube et son œuvre de 1856 à 1931* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale 1931). For modern approaches, see David Turnock, "Sir Charles Hartley and the Development of Romania's Lower Danube – Black Sea Commerce in the Late Nineteenth Century", in vol. *Anglo-Romanian Relations after 1821* (Iași: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1983), pp. 75–97; Charles William Steward Hartley, *A Biography of Sir Charles Hartley, Civil Engineer (1825–1915). The Father of the Danube*, vol. I–II (Lewiston – Queenston – Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989); Constantin Ardeleanu, "The European Commission of the Danube and the Result of its Technical and Administrative Activity on the Safety of Navigation, 1856–1914", *International Journal of Maritime History*, 23:1 (June 2011), pp. 73–94.

14. *La Commission*, pp. 492–493, appendix I.

15. Details in Richard Frucht, *Dunărea Noastră. România, the Great Powers, and the Danube Question, 1914–1921* (Boulder – New York: East European Monographs – Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 24–26.

downstream by a huge fleet of small river lighters. Brăila and Galați were thus the “victims” of the very actions intended to revive their prosperity, and the tiny port of Sulina came to be regarded as a “parasitical middleman” that profited of its privileged geographical and hydrographical position. On an average, during the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century 17.43 per cent of the ships recorded in the statistics of the CED remained at Sulina and loaded their cargo in this harbor and in its roadstead. They were all large vessels, as suggested by the fact that their tonnage represented an average of 26.64 per cent of the total tonnage of maritime ships recorded at the Lower Danube.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 5**  
**Share of Sulina in overall navigation of the maritime Danube, 1881–1900**

Year	Maritime ships calling at the Lower Danube		Ships loaded at Sulina (harbor and roadstead)		Share of Sulina in total Danubian navigation (%)	
	Number	Tonnage	Number	Tonnage	Number	Tonnage
1881–85	1,482	824,299	287	321,761	19.51	38.90
1886–90	1,693	1,299,989	270	328,891	15.85	25.38
1891–95	1,678	1,601,405	262	345,696	15.62	21.70
1896–90	1,323	1,398,369	258	368,451	19.66	26.56
<b>Average</b>	<b>1,544</b>	<b>1,281,016</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>341,200</b>	<b>17.43</b>	<b>26.64</b>

**Source:** Calculated on the basis of data in Constantin Ardeleanu, *Comerțul exterior și navigația la Dunărea de Jos. Serii statistice (1881–1900)* [The Foreign Trade and Navigation at the Mouths of the Danube. Statistical Series (1881–1900)] (Galați: Editura Europlus, 2008), pp. 204–211.

### *Romania’s investments in the harbor of Constanța*

The annexation of the trans-Danubian province of Dobrogea to Romania in 1878 brought a different and bigger problem to the com-

16. General data on the development of Sulina in Petru Zaharia, “Sulina – porto-franc (1870–1939)” [Sulina – Free Port (1870–1939)], *Peuce*, 8 (1980), pp. 515–528.

mercial circles from Brăila and Galați. A marginal territory of the Ottoman Empire until 1877–1878, Dobrogea was poor in resources and completely undeveloped, an area often ravaged during the Russian–Ottoman wars of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The port of Constanța was situated in a good natural position on the western coast of the Black Sea, but as it had been looted and burnt down during the wars of 1806–1812 and 1828–1829 it allowed few commercial prospects. Its importance grew with the development of the Danubian outlets during the 1830s, when the difficulties of navigation through the Sulina mouth of the river made interested commercial parties analyze the opportunity of building a road, a railway or a canal between the Danube and the Black Sea. In 1839 the Austrian Danube Steam Navigation Company introduced a coach between Cernavodă and Constanța, thus shortening with two days the journey from Vienna to Constantinople. The project for the construction of a canal or a railway was intensely debated during this period, with many engineers, economists, diplomats and journalists referring to its advantages or hindrances. The town played an important role during the Crimean War, in the context of the Western troops' landing in the Balkans and in 1855 two French military missions were quartered there, entrusted with provisioning the allied armies. New proposals were made for building a canal or a railway between the Danube and Constanța by several investors. The British entrepreneur Thomas Forester referred to the advantages of Constanța's position, and in 1856 the Porte agreed to the construction of a canal. However, in 1857 the Ottomans granted to a British consortium, "The Danube and Black Sea Railway and Küstendge Harbour Company Ltd" (DBSR), the right to build a railway between Cernavodă and Constanța. The company, with a capital of 300,000 sterling pounds, received the concession for 99 years, customs and fiscal privileges and immunities for all materials used, facilities extended to ten years for all imports necessary for operating the railway. The same agreement regulated the modernization of the harbor of Constanța, where facilities, wharfs, warehouses were to be erected.

The construction of the Cernavodă – Constanța railway on a length of 64.675 km started in 1858 and was completed two years later. The inauguration took place in October 1860. However, works proved difficult and expensive, and were not completed according



to the initial technical project. Following complicated negotiations between the DBSR leadership and the Ottoman government, a new convention was concluded in 1870. The Ottomans paid back to the leasers the amount of 112,761 sterling pounds, and ships no longer had to pay taxes for entering the harbor. The British company preserved the right to freely use the wharf, magazines, etc. in exchange for doing necessary maintenance works in the harbor and for operating the lighthouse. The company also undertook to prolong the southern dyke according to approved plans. However, the DBSR did not hurry to complete these works, and the roadstead of Constanța remained exposed to the strong gales of the Black Sea. Although it did not work at full capacity, the harbor witnessed a significant development during these decades. In 1863 a total of 421 vessels loaded cargoes at Constanța, and for 1876 statistical data mention 317 sailing ships and 237 steamers. Population increased to about 4,000 people, and modernization was clearly visible in the city and its harbor. But Constanța was far from having the economic importance which the British investors had hoped for two decades earlier. Several factors account for this, mainly the fact that Constanța completely relied on the export of Romanian grain, whose price was increased by its double transshipment at Cernavodă, on the Danube, and at Constanța. Financial problems also prevented the completion of the works from the harbor, which remained in a rather poor state, with a seawall badly built. The depth of the sea (17–18 feet) was insufficient, and the large steamers could not berth directly at the berthing stations, being forced to complete their cargo in the roadstead, under dangerous weather conditions.

When in 1878 Russia re-annexed the three districts in Southern Bessarabia and indemnified Romania with the Ottoman province of Dobrogea, Romanian statesmen and public opinion received the decision with mixed feelings. Many criticized this as a sort of a Trojan horse, a poor province that could not compensate for the rich agricultural districts that were part of historical Moldavia. Anti-Russian feelings were ripe in Romania, whose foreign policy was greatly dictated, until World War One, by these sentiments. But the more realist statesmen and Prince (since 1881) King Charles I of Romania himself understood the great value of Dobrogea for Romania, also derived from the strategic importance of Constanța, a position that

enjoyed the natural advantages of allowing the construction of a great maritime port. After 1878 Dobrogea was like a laboratory of enlightened Romanian administration, so the central government devoted huge financial and human resources for the development of the “Romania from the Sea”.

In the summer of 1878, according to the description of Navy Colonel Ioan Murgescu, the harbor of Constanța consisted of a 250 meters northern dyke and a 50 meters southern one, and on the coast there was a 400 meters wharf, fitted with a railway. The harbor could accommodate about 20 ships that anchored in the few places where the water was 20 feet deep. Another report of Ștefan Fălcoianu mentioned the difficult condition of the harbor, with the northern dyke badly built, but with good railway and transport facilities. The Romanian state and the leadership of the British railway company negotiated the sale of the British investment, and the Romanian Parliament voted in May 1882 the law for buying the Cernavodă – Constanța railway and the works in Constanța harbor for the amount of 16.8 million lei.

During the following decades, Constanța was the object of a special interest from Romanian authorities. Already in 1881 the Ministry of Public Works required Charles Hartley, the consulting engineer of the Danube Commission to draft a technical plan for modernizing the harbor, a proposal revised later by engineer Oscar Franzius, the director of the port of Bremen. A new project was drafted in 1886 by Voisin Bey, former director of the works of the Suez Canal and general inspector of the French waterways, while a different technical variant was forwarded in 1893 by A. Guerard, the director of the port of Marseille. All these proposals were rejected by the Ministry of Public Works as they neither provided full safety to ships nor allowed the subsequent development of the harbor. It was clear that bright Romanian minds had to be put to work in this national endeavor.

In May 1885 the Parliament in Bucharest voted a law for modernizing the harbor of Constanța and for better connecting Dobrogea to the Romanian Kingdom. Romanian engineers were faced with two great challenges: the construction of the bridge across the Danube that was to link the Cernavodă – Constanța line to the network of Romanian railways and the modernization of the Constanța harbor.

In 1887 a special service was created to draft the technical project of the bridge, and the headstone was placed in October 1890. The bridge Fetești – Cernavodă – Saligny consisted of three monumental works: the bridge across the Borcea branch of the Danube, the viaduct across the river floodplain and the “Charles I” bridge across the main branch of the Danube itself. “Charles I” bridge, with a total length of 750 meters, was composed of a central opening of 190 meters, the largest in Europe at that time, and other four openings of 140 meters. The ramp of the viaduct was at a height of 30 meters over the high waters of the Danube, necessary to secure the circulation of river vessels. In total, the Fetești – Cernavodă – Saligny line measured 27.3 km. At Fetești it was linked to the railway to Bucharest, and at Saligny to the old line of the British company. The distance Bucharest – Constanța was 228.8 km. The total cost of the bridge works was 35 million lei, and all the grandiose project works were drafted by Romanian specialists under the supervision of engineer Anghel Saligny. The bridge was inaugurated at a great public festivity on 14/26 September 1895, a veritable public display of Romanian civilization and technical mastery.

At the same time, Romanian engineers were also working at the other end of the line, at Constanța. In 1888, already unhappy with all proposals of foreign specialists, the Romanian Government founded, within the Romanian Hydraulic System, a special direction led by engineer I. B. Cantacuzino, with the aim to study, project and execute the works for developing Constanța harbor. In 1890 this service became autonomous and its headquarters were moved to Constanța. Under the coordination of Cantacuzino, Romanian specialists made complex scientific surveys, studied the maritime currents, the wind direction, the force of the waves, etc. The engineers wanted a solution to both satisfy the immediate needs of the traffic, but to also allow a subsequent development of the harbor. They proposed to construct on a north – south direction a seawall measuring 1,220 meters, from which to build new dykes, thus creating several basins. The harbor could be further extended by works executed parallel to the southern dyke and the prolongation of the seawall. The Cantacuzino project aimed to have two dykes and 2,840 meters of wharfs, divided for different uses. The northern wharf, for example, on a section of 250 meters was to host the

administrative buildings, workshops, the dry dock and the slipway. In other areas there were planned four warehouses, grain silos, an oil basin. The total cost of the works was estimated at 42 million lei, and the project was to be completed in seven years.

The technical works started according to this project, later modified by engineers Gh. Duca and Anghel Saligny. Duca corrected several elements in the harbor infrastructure, such as designing a wharf exclusively for the use of the military navy, relocating the silos, etc. From 1889 the works were coordinated by Anghel Saligny, who also made several adjustments to the general plan, projecting two new dykes for basins destined for products such as wood, cattle, coal. The final project covered a water area of 60 hectares, a fenced platform of 67 hectares and the platforms of private magazines and deposits of 30 hectares. The seawall was 1,377.56 meters long, the south dyke 653.07 meters, the defense platform dyke 853 meters, and the entrance dyke 119.27 meters long. The length of the wharfs totaled 7,010 meters, out of which 1,512 for the grain and cattle section and 1,048 for wood and other goods.

There were designed two projects: the general project, with all works, from the hydrotechnical ones to the construction of all necessary magazines, silos etc; the limited project only included the main infrastructure works, such as the dykes and wharfs, the defense of the platforms, the railway to the stone quarry of Canara (Ovidiu), etc.

For executing the works included in the limited project, the Romanian state organized in 1895 a public competition for granting the execution of the works. The French enterprise Hallier and Dietz-Monnier won, undertaking to do the harbor works and the railway to Canara in four years (until July 1899) for the amount of 9,731,240 lei, i.e. 21 per cent under the authorities' estimate. With the agreement of the central government and the support of important foreign banks, Hallier also wanted to complete the general project for the amount of 19,354,900 lei, or 23 per cent less than the estimate of the Romanian state – 25 million lei. The contract for the general project was signed in March 1896, and the Romanian state offered the French investor a credit of 18.2 million lei.

The works were inaugurated in October 1896 in the presence of King Charles I of Romania and of the representatives of the local and central authorities. Hallier started the works decidedly, but it

soon became clear that the tools and staff employed were insufficient for completing the project on time. Several arguments ensued between the Romanian officials and the French enterprise related to the quality of the works and to their calendar.

In 1897 the new director of the port, engineer Duca, required the constructor to modify the direction and profile of the dykes and wharfs, as well as to include the construction of an oil basin. Hallier rejected this requirement, considering that such modifications imposed a new agreement, whereas the Romanian part held that it was not beyond the initial contractual terms. At the same time, the authorities referred to the large difference between the amounts spent and the works executed, whereas the enterpriser blamed the disparity between real costs and those ante-calculated. In March 1899 after spending the funds given by the Romanian state, Hallier announced from Paris the cessation of works.

In three and a half years, the French investors had done only a small part of contracted works, although they spent half of the money given.

The disputes between the Romanian authorities and Hallier got to court, and made the object of a famous trial. The French company requested 18.4 million lei for the works already done, whereas the Ministry of Public Works only recognized 3.5 million lei, and requested 15.6 million lei as penalties and damages. By a sentence from April 1900, Hallier received 6.2 million lei, an amount which included the estimated value of the technical inventory that remained in the property of the Romanian state (5 million lei).

In the second phase of construction (1900–1910), the works were done by the Romanian state, under the supervision of Anghel Saligny, the general director of the harbor construction. Saligny was very interested in the construction of the warehouses, each one with a capacity of 30,000 tons, but also to complete the oil station, the wharfs with platforms and the electrical plant. The mechanical installations were provided by the company Luther from Braunschweig, the electrical equipment from the silos and the plant by A.E.G., and the metallic constructions and electrical installations from the petrol station were done by the Wolf Company of Bucharest. Until 1910 the works amounted to 49.1 million lei.

Since 1908, the port of Constanța was administered by the Direction of Maritime Ports, subordinated to the General Direction of

Ports and Waterways. The official inauguration of the harbor was celebrated on 27 September 1909 (old style) in the presence of the royal family, when the installations of the first grain silo were inaugurated and the steamer *Iași* was loaded with grain.

In the third phase, the works were coordinated by engineers Mihail Râmniceanu and Grigore Casimir. They continued to build the wharfs of the platforms, completed the third grain silo, consolidated the north-western bank, completed the railway network and increased the capacity of the oil station, built residences for the staff, etc. The total cost of the works done during this period (1910–1916) was 10.6 million lei.

In total, between 1896 and 1916 the Romanian state invested in the constructions and installations from Constanța the amount of 69,778,940 lei, but the works from the general project were still not completed. The results of two decades of works were: the construction of the defense dykes of the harbor in length of 2,913.83 meters; 4,312 meters of wharfs (from a total length of 7,010 meters); the port basin on a surface of 60 ha, with a depth of 8–8.5 meters, and an outer port of 13 ha; the construction and the fitting of two grain silos, the starting of the work for two more silos; the construction of the oil installation of six lines with six reservoirs of 700 cubic meters, and at the station of depositing of 39 reservoirs of 5,000 cubic meters and of one of 1,250 cubic meters; the construction of the system of signaling; the emplacement of modern communication means; railways totaling 39 kilometers, to which we should add the Constanța – Canara line (20 kilometers); in the harbor and towards the city there were built roads totaling 6.5 km; the building of 40 pavilions with 192 flats for the staff and the administrative services that worked in the port (customs, Romanian Maritime Service, etc.).

### *The construction of docks in the Danubian harbors*

With these huge investments at Constanța, economic circles in the Danubian outlets of Brăila and Galați naturally complained of being neglected by the Romanian state. However, Romanian engineers displayed a marked interest in the modernization of the inland outlets, although it was clear that Constanța was now the “favorite”

of the central authorities. In compliance with the former pledge of building docks and bonded warehouses for storing goods in transit, the authorities initiated a complex administrative and technical work for completing these investments.

The project was drafted starting from 1883 by the same diligent engineers, G. Duca and Anghel Saligny, and construction works started in 1886, under the coordination of Saligny, appointed chief of the Docks Service. The basins of both docks were identical, with a length of 500 meters at the bottom, five meters deep under the lowest waters and 120 meters wide, expanding towards its mouths, where it allowed the circumscription of a circle with a 192 meters diameter. The total area of the dock at the bottom was 81,000 square meters and 88,000 square meters at low water. Storing facilities were arranged according to the physical features of Danube's bank in the two port-cities. At Galați the quays stretched on a length of 554 meters, supplying a grain warehouse of 25,000 tons, a 3,000 square meters depot for goods, and a 1,000 square meters shed for goods in transit. The manipulation of goods was to be done out with two mobile elevators, a floating elevator, four cranes and two hydraulic capstans.<sup>17</sup>

The grain warehouse looked like a beehive, consisting of 338 bins (cells) or hexagonal compartments made of reinforced concrete panels, with the corners tied up with iron. The capacity of the cells varied between 10 and 100 tons, the total capacity of the construction being 25,000 tons. The depot for goods was a two storied building made up of five compartments of 20 meters length and 15 meters width. The cargo was lifted either with external cranes of 1,500 kg force each or with hydraulic elevators placed in the middle of each compartment and having the same force of 1,500 kg. The building was accessible from two sides. It covered 3,000 square meters, out of which 600 meters for circulation and 2,400 meters effectively. As an average of 1,150 kilograms could be stored per square meter, its capacity was 2,760 tons or 11,040 tons *per annum*. The shed for goods in transit was made of wood, being used for the

---

17. Pacu, *Cartea*, pp. 262–263. Descriptions also in Gh. N. Munteanu-Bârlad, *Galații* (Galați: Societate de Editură Științifică-Culturală, 1927), pp. 103–104 and Emil Codreanu, *Redresarea portului Galați* (Galați: Tipografia Cultura Poporului, 1927), p. 4.

classification, customs formalities and sealing of the goods which were not stored in warehouses.

The construction of the docks and of the quays was commissioned to a Dutch company, Schram Bouterse Ozingo. The mechanical installations were made by the house Luther of Brunswick and all the buildings were erected with hired labor, with engineers employed by the Romanian state.<sup>18</sup> At Galați the works started in the spring of the 1887, and the investments made for the development and systematization of the docks and harbor proper amounted to 18,883,866 francs in 1902. As the enclosure had become insufficient for the large number of ships calling at Galați, Saligny designed another building in 1908, which became operational in 1914. In 1913, the loading of grains was made with three elevators. The government granted a 900,000 lei loan for the expansion of the railway network in the harbor and for the establishment of the train station for cargoes. It was also at that time that the construction of a great fish hall with refrigerating machines began, a building inaugurated in July 1915.<sup>19</sup>

At Brăila, the usable length of the wharf was 500 meters at the official inauguration of the dock in 1892, but until the outburst of World War One the total length increased to 1,750 meters, 1,000 around the basin, and 750 meters along the Danube. The grain warehouse had 336 cells, allowing a similar capacity as that from Galați – 25,000 tons.<sup>20</sup> Other areas were reserved for the goods depot, administrative buildings, the magazines of private commercial and shipping companies, etc. The works done by the Romanian state for the harbor of Brăila totaled 17,600,000 lei (Table 8).<sup>21</sup>

The gradual growth of the quantities stored in the provisional entrepôts of Brăila and Galați and then in the new enclosures is visible in

18. Pacu, *Cartea*, pp. 263–267.

19. Păltănea, *Istoria*, II, 190. Valuable descriptions of the docks from both Galați and Brăila in British Parliamentary Papers, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance. Roumania. Report for the Year 1891 on the Trade, &c, of the District of the Consulate-General of Galatz* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1892), pp. 3–4, 13–16.

20. Georges D. Cioriceanu, *Les grands ports de Roumanie* (Paris: Marcel Girard, 1928), p. 39.

21. A minute description of the works for the modernization of Brăila's docks and harbor proper in Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 181–235.



Tables 6 and 7, proving the profitability of these investments, although the harbors proper remained the main areas for commercial exchanges.

**Table 6**

**Goods stored in the Danubian entrepots. Quantities (tons), 1884–1915**

Average for the period	Galați	Brăila
1884–85	10,889	2,141
1886–90	11,215	2,078
1891–95	100,462	3,917
1896–00	166,345	5,706
1901–05	130,070	7,642
1906–10	255,606	83,093
1910–15	206,133	152,200

**Source:** Calculated on the basis of data in Constantin Ardeleanu, *Comerțul exterior și navigația la Dunărea de Jos. Serii statistice (1881–1900)*, pp. 140–143 and *Comerțul exterior și navigația la Dunărea de Jos. Serii statistice (1901–1915)* (Galați: Galați University Press, 2008), pp. 58–59.

**Table 7**

**Grain arrivals at Brăila, 1908–1913. Quantities (tons)**

Year	Arrivals by rail		Arrivals by water in barges, transhipped by means of floating elevators		
	In the docks	In the harbor proper	Romanian grain	Foreign transit	Total
1908	56,254	390,270	376,166	90,000	466,166
1909	71,994	606,150	379,850	144,649	524,499
1910	113,355	977,270	625,961	123,139	749,100
1911	190,807	954,230	638,950	93,306	732,256
1912	76,552	463,360	439,801	120,634	560,435
1913	72,518	496,270	453,883	75,577	529,460

**Source:** Paul Demetriad, *Activitatea portului și docurilor Brăila în cursul anului 1931 față de activitatea anilor precedenți* [The Activity of the Harbor and Docks of Brăila in 1931 Compared to the Activity of Past Years] (Brăila: Publicațiile revistei “Analele Brăilei, s.a.”), p. 23.

Important amounts were also invested in the acquisition of ships and floating equipment necessary in the two ports. At the beginning of World War One, the Administration of Brăila Docks owned 11 vessels: The iron tug *Docurile Brăila*, the dredging machines *Docuri* and *Dunărea*, the floating crane *Titan*, three barges (No. 1 to 3), a pontoon, a ferry, and two floating elevators. At Galați the local administration owned the iron tug *Docurile Galați*, the dredging machine *Docurile*, the floating dock *Docuri plutitoare*, three barges, three pontoons, and a ferry.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 8**  
**Investments in the Danubian ports (late 19<sup>th</sup> century – 1912)**

Year	Brăila	Galați
Embankments with platforms and access ways	4,966,200	4,375,000
Pontoons with iron bridges for wharfs	261,000	80,000
Buildings, magazines, installations of electrical light, etc.	157,630	250,100
Basins with embankments, revetments, platforms with access ways, also serving as wintering harbors	3,571,879	2,555,960
Docks with accessories and installations	8,578,426	8,578,426
Floating dock	–	744,380
Works at the mouth of Sireth River	–	1,300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,535,135</b>	<b>18,883,866</b>

**Source:** D. A. Sturdza, “Însemnătatea lucrărilor Comisiunii Europene de la gurile Dunărei, 1856 la 1912. III. 1894–1912” [The Importance of the Works of the European Commission from the Mouths of the Danube, 1856 to 1912. III. 1894–1912], *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, 35 (1913), 330.

22. Ard. G. S. Youghapérien, *L'Annuaire du Danube, édition 1916–1917* (s.l.: s.e., 1916), pp. 196–199; the yearly incomes and expenses of Romania's maritime ports in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Dumitru Corduneanu, *Sistemul de transport naval din România în secolul XX* [Romania's Naval Transport System in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century] (București: Editura Centrului Tehnic Editorial al Armatei, 2010), pp. 51, 55, 66.

Due to customs regulations, the construction of the docks resulted in the existence of two distinct areas, clearly separated administratively, where shipping and trading operations took place: the docks and the harbor proper. The docks represented a veritable port in itself, administered by the Docks Service with the headquarters at Galați. It was led by an administrator, helped by a deputy administrator, later named director and deputy director. All activities in the docks (mooring of ships, depositing of goods on platforms and magazines, etc.) were done according to a common regulation, and the harbor master was only responsible with the police of navigation and the collection of pilotage dues. The Hydraulic Service conducted all technical works, while the customs authorities were responsible with the application of the customs law for the transit and storing of goods. Ships admitted for different operations paid pilotage and berthing taxes, other amounts being paid for towage, wintering, platforms, magazines, etc. Foreign goods entering the docks lost their nationality and their introduction to Romania required a special permit issued by the customs authorities, so that the docks were extremely feasible for goods transited along the Danube.<sup>23</sup>

The harbor proper was administered by two different services: the Harbor's Master Office and the Hydraulic Service. The harbor master was responsible with imposing the regulation of navigation, preserving the good order, respecting the sanitary instructions, observing the loading and unloading of ships, dealing with ships in distress, etc. The master was assisted in certain tasks (such as preserving the good order and levying different taxes) by the border police. The Harbor Master's Office coordinated the activity of the commission for registering ships.<sup>24</sup> It was subordinated to the General Inspectorate of Navigation and Ports, created in 1879 and based at Galați. Until 1908, when it became a part of the General Direction of the Ports, its activity was subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The technical exploitation of the harbor proper was done by

---

23. Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 316–320. For the regulations of the docks, see *Regulament și tarife pentru exploatarea docurilor și întreprinderilor din porturile Galați și Brăila* [Regulation and Tariffs for the Exploitation of the Docks and Entrepôts from the Ports of Galați and Brăila] (București: s.e., 1892).

24. Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 326–328.

the Hydraulic Service. Its main attributions were to preserve the navigability of the Danube, to do necessary works in the harbor, to secure the exploitation of existing installations (wharfs, platforms, magazines, etc.).<sup>25</sup> Other institutions were also involved in the exploitation of the harbor proper. The customs office controlled the import and export of goods and levied due taxes. In 1910 there was established a Sanitary Service responsible with the surveillance of health in the port.<sup>26</sup>

A final issue to be mentioned here is related to the money used for funding these works. The incomes came from berthing taxes, renting magazines, platforms, etc., but most of them from the 0.5 per cent tax on the value of the goods traded through the Romanian ports. Since 1887 the Ministry of Public Works started to collect this money (as local municipalities were accused of not directing it to the development of the harbor infrastructure), but kept it in separate accounts. In 1904 the central authorities unified these accounts, but this special fund of Romanian ports remained independent of the general state budget until 1911.<sup>27</sup>

### *The commercial results of Romania's investments in its maritime ports*

All these investments in Romania's maritime ports contributed to the increase of their commercial activity, but also to an important change in the direction of the country's foreign trade. After the abolishment of the free ports, Brăila and Galați were favored by the customs war between Romania and Austria-Hungary, which caused a marked increase in the country's exchanges with Western nations, via the maritime route-ways.<sup>28</sup> In terms of exports, Brăila

---

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 328–330.

26. Paul Demetriad, *Autonomia și zonele libere ale porturilor din străinătate față de regimul porturilor noastre* [The Autonomy and Free Areas of the Foreign Ports as Compared to the Regime of Our Ports] (Brăila: Institutul de Arte Grafice Dunărea, 1927), vol. I, p. 35; Mocanu, *Portul*, pp. 330–331.

27. Demetriad, *Autonomia*, pp. 23–27; Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, pp. 308–310.

28. The general aspects related to the foreign trade of the Romanian maritime ports in Daniela Bușă, "Comerțul exterior al României prin marile porturi cu țările

was the largest port, and exported capacities increased almost three times in a quarter-century, from an average of about 300,000 tons of goods in the period 1881–1885 to about 850,000 tons between 1905 and 1910. The effects of the completion of the bridge across the Danube in 1895 are easily visible for Constanța, whose exports boosted from about 85,000 tons in the first half of the 1890s to more than 350,000 tons as the average of the next five years. A further upsurge was caused by the works for the construction of the harbor, with an average of almost 925,000 tons (1906–1910) and a share of about 25 per cent of Romania’s total exports in terms of quantities.<sup>29</sup>

**Table 9**  
**The exports of Romania’s maritime ports, 1900–1915.**  
**Average quantities (tons)**

Port		1881–85	1885–90	1891–95	1896–00	1901–05	1906–10	1911–15
Brăila	Tons	300,173	616,989	626,198	813,212	851,774	569,513	555,678
	%	18.55	31.10	28.41	26.62	22.39	15.13	25.88
Galați	Val.	210,272	271,331	266,754	431,247	439,485	299,430	251,816
	%	13.00	13.68	12.10	14.12	11.55	7.95	11.73
Con- stanța	Val.	32,221	62,245	84,659	358,837	768,517	923,391	136,481
	%	1.99	3.14	3.84	11.75	20.20	24.53	6.36
<b>Total</b>	<b>Tons</b>	<b>1,618,041</b>	<b>1,983,988</b>	<b>2,204,257</b>	<b>3,054,872</b>	<b>3,804,380</b>	<b>3,765,235</b>	<b>2,146,998</b>

**Source:** Ardeleanu, *Comerțul exterior (1881–1900)*, p. 59 and Idem, *Comerțul exterior (1901–1915)*, p. 54.

Galați was better equipped to keep its share of the country’s imports, and maintained an average of about 150,000 tons of goods brought to Romania at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a period

---

din Sud-Estul Europei” [Romania’s Foreign Trade through the Large Ports with the South-Eastern European Countries], *Revista Istorică*, new series, 3:9–10 (1992), pp. 963–977.

29. Details on the foreign trade of Constanța also in Mariana Cojoc, “The Greeks of Constanța at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century”, in Gelina Harlaftis, Radu Păun (eds), *Greeks in Romania in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Athens: Alpha Bank Historical Archives, 2013), 307–348.

when it faced the heavy competition of Brăila and Constanța. The Black Sea outlet witnessed a huge increase after 1895, but was visibly affected during the Balkan Wars and the Ottoman involvement in World War One.

**Table 10**  
**The imports of Romania's maritime ports, 1900–1915.**  
**Average quantities (tons)**

Port		1881–85	1885–90	1891–95	1896–00	1901–05	1906–10	1911–15
Brăila	Tons	60,190	127,439	197,031	102,439	153,534	161,750	142,429
	%	11.82	25.71	28.82	19.16	19.06	16.14	20.73
Galați	Val.	86,209	135,410	178,374	110,419	141,916	147,734	146,074
	%	16.93	27.32	26.09	20.65	17.62	14.74	21.26
Con- stanța	Val.	8,384	13,144	19,947	90,761	136,686	135,761	94,666
	%	1.65	2.65	2.92	16.98	16.97	13.55	13.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>Tons</b>	<b>509,206</b>	<b>495,705</b>	<b>683,720</b>	<b>534,622</b>	<b>805,574</b>	<b>1,002,056</b>	<b>686,938</b>

**Source:** Ardeleanu, *Comerțul exterior (1881–1900)*, p. 58 and Idem, *Comerțul exterior (1901–1915)*, p. 54.

The prosperity of Constanța was completely dependent on its relation to Romania's railways network and the preferential tariff for the transportation of commercial goods. This stood at the basis of numerous conflicts with the economic circles from the two Danubian ports, which the central authorities tried to solve in different ways. For the suffering port-city of Galați, the authorities invested in building the railway to Bârlad, an important junction for its connection with the agricultural districts of northern Moldavia. The project was voted in March 1892, but the actual construction proved extremely difficult, due both to financial shortages and to technical problems, such as the instability of the soil. Works started in 1892 from both ends of the route, a section of 70.8 km was opened in 1898, followed in 1900 by 7.2 more km. Works were interrupted during the financial crisis of the early 1900s and resumed in 1906. The most difficult part was for excavating the tunnel of Berești, with a length of 3,333 meters, the longest tunnel of simple line in Romania at the time. The entire railroad Bârlad – Galați (109 kilometers)

was functional in 1912, too late to have visible results on the trade of Galați before World War One.<sup>30</sup>

**Table 11**  
**Grain exports through the mouths of the Danube, 1901–1914**  
**(quantities in quarters)**

Year	Brăila	Galați	Sulina	Others	Total
Average 1901–05	6,182,956	1,289,159	3,967,171	1,761,657	13,200,942
Average 1906–10	5,295,277	1,419,385	6,442,094	133,734	13,290,489
Average 1911–14	4,691,514	1,197,124	7,442,198	112,115	13,442,950
<b>Total 1901–14</b>	<b>76,157,219</b>	<b>18,331,215</b>	<b>81,815,112</b>	<b>9,925,412</b>	<b>186,228,958</b>

**Source:** Calculated on the basis of data from Ardeleanu, *Comerțul exterior (1901–1915)*, pp. 122–126.

In terms of the grain trade, on the other hand, Brăila and Galați were increasing relays between the productive areas and Sulina, the main loading port of Danubian grain, as it results from Table 11. The same pattern mentioned above was preserved, and a fleet of fluvial lighters (called “schleps”) loaded grain at Brăila and Galați and carried it to the Black Sea, where it was transshipped in large maritime steamers either in the Sulina harbor or in its roadstead. There is no need to expand on this issue here, but to just refer to the fact that Brăila was the base of this huge fleet of river barges employed in carrying grain from upstream Danubian ports on both banks of the river to Brăila and Sulina. In 1902, for example, the Statathos brothers owned 25 barges and 1 tug, L. Mendl alone 21 barges and 1 tug, the Mendl brothers 12 barges and 4 tugs, M. Z. Chrissoveloni 12 barges and 3 tugs, etc. A decade later, in 1911, Leon Brauer employed on the Danube 28 barges and 9 tugs, the Back brothers 14 barges and 2 tugs, Jos Lobl 10 barges and 2 tugs,

30. Păltănea, *Istorie*, II, pp. 199–200; more details in Ion Plesnilă, *Istoricul liniei Galați – Bârlad* [The History of the Railway Galați – Bârlad] (București: Tipografia Gutenberg, 1898).

S. Cavadia 11 barges and 1 tug, C. Statathos 12 barges, etc.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 12**  
**Grain cabotaged from smaller inland ports to the maritime ports**  
**(quantities in quarters)**

Year	Port	From Romanian ports to		From foreign ports to	
		Wheat	Maize	Wheat	Maize
1906	Brăila	185,373	109,900	8,028	13,615
	Galați	18,276	2,939	19,322	5,716
	Sulina	606,096	183,493	181,648	113,833
1909	Brăila	153,341	146,212	61,628	57,943
	Galați	2,477	12,189	1,537	27,445
	Sulina	56,140	56,620	30,935	93,677
1912	Brăila	298,985	97,467	36,005	58,336
	Galați	18,941	25,986	3,998	37,443
	Sulina	352,911	131,813	127,306	129,633

**Source:** *Comerțul exterior al României și mișcarea porturilor, 1906* [Romania's Foreign Trade and the Movement of Ports] (Bucharest: Ed. Albert Baer, 1907), pp. 578–580; *ibid.*, 1909 (Bucharest: Ed. Albert Baer, 1910), pp. 538–540; *ibid.*, 1912, (Bucharest: Ed. Albert Baer, 1913), pp. 628–630.

Brăila had played throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the role of collec-

31. Data quoted in Mocanu, *Portul Brăila*, p. 428; details also in Idem, "Negustori de cereale și armatori în portul Brăila la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului al XX-lea" [Grain merchants and Ship-Owners in the Port of Brăila at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century], *Analele Brăilei*, new series, 8 (2007), pp. 25–50. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there were about 500 barges and 60 tugs in use of the Lower Danube – Gustave Demorgny, *La question du Danube: Histoire politique du Bassin du Danube, étude des divers régimes applicables à la navigation du Danube* (Paris: L. Larose et L. Tenin, 1911), p. 136. Analysis of Greek shipping in the Lower Danubian area in Spiridon G. Focas, "The Greeks and Navigation on the Lower Danube, 1789–1913", in vol. Apostolos E. Vacalopoulos, Constantinos D. Svolopoulos, Béla K. Király (eds.), *Southeast European Maritime Commerce and Naval Policies from the Mid-Eighteenth Century to 1914* (Boulder: Atlantic Research and Publications, 1988), pp. 115–130 and Gelina Harlaftis, *History of Greek-Owned Shipping. The Making of an International Tramp Fleet, 1830 to the Present Day* (London: Routledge, 1996), 72–80.



tor of the area's grain surplus, but the Wallachian port was steadily losing this position to Sulina, which enjoyed several advantages for ship-owners and traders. In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to the CED's tariff of 1902, at Sulina maritime vessels paid a tax of 1.10 francs per register ton, but avoided the costs of ascending to Brăila and Galați (incurring additional costs of 0.60 francs per register ton), not to mention the still difficult and sometimes dangerous voyage along the navigable waterway of the maritime Danube. River barges paid no fees to the Danube Commission, and the large investments by private owners in handling equipment at Sulina made the transshipment of cargoes convenient and cheap. Data in table 12 compiled from Romanian statistics shows that in 1906 and 1912 Sulina received more grain than Brăila in river cabotage from both Romanian and foreign inland ports<sup>32</sup>. Shipping through the large Danubian ports (Table 13) shows that Brăila was extremely busy in terms of fluvial shipping, but it was smaller than Galați for maritime traffic.

Sulina also provided better and quicker facilities for the mechanical handling of cargoes. Already in the early 1880s several elevators were available at the mouth of the Danube<sup>33</sup>, their number increased to 10 in the 1890s and to 26 before the beginning of the First World War.<sup>34</sup>

---

32. The number of barges recorded at Sulina averaged 1,200 for the period 1891–1895, 1,021 for 1896–1900, 1,483 for the 1901–1905, 2,182 in 1906 and 2,092 in 1907 – C. I. Băicoianu, *Le Danube. Aperçu historique, économique et politique* (Paris: Librairie Recueil Sirey, 1917), p. 118; references to this trade in Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 229–231.

33. "At to the present day loading operations have been performed by hand, but since 1881 a new system of loading grain by steam elevators has been introduced by an English company, and promises to improve the present state of things" – Foreign Office/Annual Series, *Report by Vice-Consul Cumberbatch on the Trade and Navigation of the Danube, Including the Port of Sulina, for the Year 1882*, pp. 486–487

34. Maria Magdalena Tuluș, "Aspecte privind evoluția porturilor și căpităniilor portuare dunărene între anii 1878–1916" [Aspects Regarding the Evolution of the Danubian Ports and Harbor Master's Offices during the Period 1878–1916], *Danubius*, 26 (2008), 107; for the introduction of a floating lift at Sulina, see Commission Européenne du Danube, *Protocole No. 546 de la Commission Européenne du Danube*, 3 November 1895 and Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, p. 224.

**Table 13**  
**The river and maritime shipping of the Danubian ports**

Year	Port	River navigation		Maritime navigation	
		Ships	Tonnage	Ships	Tonnage
1906	Brăila	5,273	1,414,544	671	954,094
	Galați	4,115	700,473	979	1,174,179
1909	Brăila	4,428	1,245,104	585	882,884
	Galați	3,343	665,078	965	1,183,521
1912	Brăila	5,536	1,602,127	445	699,946
	Galați	4,250	842,143	664	889,668

**Source:** *Comerțul exterior*, 1906, p. 563; *ibid.*, 1909, p. 529; *ibid.*, 1912, p. 619.<sup>35</sup>

Brăila and Galați were visibly suffering in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the causes seemed pretty clear. In 1903 in a memorandum by the Commercial and Industrial Union of Galați, Constanța was mentioned as the main cause of the local harbor's decline.<sup>36</sup> A similar document from Brăila referred to two reasons for the downfall of the Wallachian harbor: "on the one side Sulina's competition, which progressively attracts for handling and loading the large majority of the goods carried by water; on the other side Constanța's competition, which by its geographical position benefits from the railway tariff, thanks to which it has succeeded and will succeed more and more, as it will complete the works in its harbor, to attract all the commodities carried on land and especially those coming from further distances away".<sup>37</sup>

The central government was sympathetic with the complaints

35. Data for the shipping of Romanian ports in the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Paul Cernovodeanu, "Anglo-Romanian Trade Relations between 1878-1900", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, XXIX:3-4 (1990), pp. 269-273.

36. Constantin Cheramidoglu, "Concurența dintre marile porturi ale României", *Anuarul Muzeului Marinei Române*, 14 (2011), p. 166.

37. Stoica Lascu, "Comerțul și portul brăilean la începutul secolului al XX-lea și receptarea lor în paginile presei locale" [The Trade and the Port of Brăila at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Their Reception in the Local Newspapers], *Analele Brăilei*, new series, 1:1 (1993), p. 93.

related to the role played by Sulina in relation to the Romanian trade. Sulina was the least “Romanian” municipality in the country, and endless conflicts were caused by its status after Dobrogea was received in 1878.<sup>38</sup> The operational headquarters of the Danube Commission, a “free port” where the international institution (which functioned since 1878 in “complete independence of the territorial power”) was extremely powerful, Sulina remained a paradise for bold entrepreneurs who gained huge profits as middlemen, agents or ship-owners involved in the remunerative grain trade. Sulina had always played the same role in relation to inland Danubian ports, but now its business was frustrating both the Commission’s technical works along the river, and Romania’s investments in her Danubian outlets.<sup>39</sup> Romania’s representative in the CED pointed out that it is incorrect for river barges, sometimes as large as 60 meters long, ten meters wide, seven meters deep and with a capacity of 800 register tons, to be exempted of shipping taxes, and proposed an adjustment of the Commission’s tariff by making it more advantageous for average steamers to call at the inland harbors. The new tariff was concluded in May 1908 and was applied since 1 July 1908. It stated that seagoing vessels stopping at Sulina as well as river barges and tugs loading and unloading at Sulina were to pay a additional special tax of 0.20 francs per register ton. Ships loading in the roadstead paid a fix amount of 100 francs, and barges bringing them the cargo paid the regular fee of 0.55 francs per register ton, plus the additional tax of 0.20 francs. Ships that entered

---

38. For the Commission’s relation to Romania, see Paul Gogeanu, *Dunărea în relațiile internaționale* [The Danube in International Relations] (București: Editura Politică, 1970), pp. 73–175; I. Cârțână and I. Seftiuc, *Dunărea în istoria poporului român* [The Danube in the History of the Romanian People] (București: Editura Științifică, 1972), pp. 51–92, 97–110; Ștefan Stanciu, *România și Comisia Europeană a Dunării. Diplomatie. Suveranitate. Cooperare internațională* [Romania and the European Commission of the Danube. Diplomacy. Sovereignty. International Cooperation] (Galați: Editura Pax Aura Mundi, 2002), pp. 97–182. A more interesting juridical and economic approach in Spiridon G. Focas, *The Lower Danube River. In the Southeastern European Political and Economic Complex from Antiquity to the Conference of Belgrade of 1948* (Boulder – New York: East European Monographs – Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 225–422.

39. Ardeleanu, *Evoluția intereselor*, pp. 258–259.

and cleared in ballast paid 0.16 francs for register ton. Vessels also had to pay for pilotage. Steamers paid 15 francs, whereas sailing ships 10 francs for every day (24 hours) that a certified pilot was onboard.<sup>40</sup> The regulation proved to be good for the Commission's budget,<sup>41</sup> but it did not hurt too much the prosperity of Sulina which, as seen in Table 12, continued to remain the preferred place for the transshipment of grain cargoes.

**Table 14**  
**The CED tariff of 1908**

Year	Loading and unloading only at Sulina (francs)	In inland ports
201–600 register tons	0.30	0.55
601–1,000 register tons	0.60	1.10
1,001 – 1,500 register tons	0.90	1.40
Above 1500 register tons	1.10	1.70

**Source:** Sturdza, "Însemnătatea lucrărilor", p. 337.

### *Conclusions*

Romania's maritime ports were the objects of important direct and indirect financial investments after the country conquered its state independence. A rapidly expanding network of railways (3,702 kilometers at the beginning of World War I) for which the state spent the huge amount of almost 1.1 billion lei connected Romania's commercial outlets to their agricultural hinterlands. This revolutionized production, bringing all distant corners of the country into the vortex of the capitalist economy. This greatly favored the commerce of Brăila, whose grain market, flooded by the production of Wallachia,

40. D. A. Sturdza, "Însemnătatea lucrărilor Comisiunii Europene de la gurile Dunărei, 1856 la 1912. III. 1894–1912" [The Importance of the Works of the European Commission from the Mouths of the Danube, 1856 to 1912. III. 1894–1912], *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, 35 (1913), pp. 323–326, 330–342.

41. *La Commission*, pp. 492–493, Appendix I.

brought to Brăila by rail or by barges on the Danube, was now also supplied by the surplus of Moldavia's plains. Galați lost much of its agricultural hinterland (also due to the re-annexation by Russia of the province of Southern Bessarabia), being forced to redefine its economic role. Large capitals were invested in the foundation of a strong industry, and the city specialized itself mainly in the exports of timber and in imports, both for consumption on the national market and for the needs of the local industry. The protectionist policy of the central government affected the Danubian port-cities by abolishing their privileged commercial status in 1883, but supported them when the country's main economic partners shifted from Austria-Hungary to the Western industrialized nations.

Dobrogea's annexation to Romania in 1878 was followed by a political and economic projects meant to incorporate the province into the country's national economy. From the very beginning, Dobrogea was considered as a very frail area, not only because of its economic backwardness and extremely mixed demographic character, but also militarily and nationally. Dobrogea's southern frontier was extremely feeble from a military perspective and its demarcation on land caused a serious dispute between Romania and Russia immediately after 1878, and strengthening the defense of the area was the justification for Romania's annexation of Southern Dobrogea or the Cadrilater (The Quadrilateral) after the Second Balkan War in 1913. Dobrogea was also a bone of contention between the nationalistic discourses of Romanian and Bulgarian patriots in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the province's incorporation to Romania was designed by the "threefold mechanism of ethnic colonization, cultural homogenization, and economic modernization" (C. Iordachi). The building of the bridge across the Danube and the investments in the harbor of Constanța were important not only economically, but also nationally. It was the country's civilizing mission to develop a poor area and to show its huge progress under the enlightened leadership of King Charles I, a monarch that proved a permanent and unabated interest for the trans-Danubian portion of his realm.

The completion of the bridge in 1895 and the foundation of the new harbor in 1896, both costly infrastructure works done by Romanian engineers, also belonged to this national program. The prosperity of Brăila and Galați was definitely affected, but Con-

stanța's position was important for the nation's future, as it allowed economic prospects which were impossible in inland ports. Constanța gradually grew, also supported by an advantageous tariff on Romanian railways, but also by the newly encouraged oil trade, extracted in the oil fields of Prahova area and exported by Constanța. The seaport was equally favored by the structure of the railroad network, as it was now closer and cheaper from several productive areas of the Wallachian plain to send their goods to Constanța, not to Brăila. From purely economic factors, not to mention the national reasons, Constanța was better fitted than the Danubian ports to become the country's largest commercial outlet.

Another troublesome competition for the Danubian inland ports was that posed by the small harbor of Sulina, conveniently placed at the homonymous mouth of the Danube. The operational headquarters of the European Commission of the Danube, Sulina had always been, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the transshipment station for the grain cargoes brought from inland ports. However, the generalization of this commercial pattern frustrated both the Commission's technical works along the river (meant to allow ships to ascend further upstream), and Romania's investments in its Danubian outlets. Increased taxation for river barges involved in the lightering operations did not hurt the prosperity of Sulina, which was slowly becoming the busiest and largest harbor of the Danube. The international crises that followed, the two Balkans Wars and the closing of the Black Sea after the Ottomans' joined the First World War postponed the conclusion of this competition until the interwar years.

## 5.

### Aspects Regarding Constanța's Economic Life (1878-1914)

Constantin Cheramidoglu

National Archives of Romania, Constanța Branch

At the end of the Russian-Ottoman war of 1877-1878 and after the withdrawal of the Russian troops the new Romanian administration established at Constanța and throughout Dobrogea (Dobruja) started the lengthy process of integrating the trans-Danubian province into Romania's administrative and economic system. On the other side, the decisions taken during this period by the communal authorities of Constanța aimed to modernize the city and to improve the living conditions provided to its inhabitants. It should be mentioned that Constanța had witnessed an important demographic growth and its economic life had revived after the Crimean War. In 1877-1878, a large part of its inhabitants fled and economic activities suffered, so that recovery took a while, when new colonists also settled in the Black Sea port-city.

The ample constructive program of modern Constanța attracted craftsmen from several countries, the harbor gradually resumed its maritime traffic and the city's commercial life revived to new rhythms. A large number of brickyards were founded, and new residential areas were settled; windmills were gradually replaced with mechanical installations, and several modern bakeries and workshops were established. The oil industry was in full swing, and the harbor was endowed with grain warehouses, storehouses for various commodities, oil tanks, etc. This period of unprecedented economic growth ended with the outburst of World War One, when the city suffered tremendously and its economic recovery lasted until about 1924.

Before 1878 Constanța had witnessed an economic development after the completion of the Cernavodă – Constanța railway and the initiation of modernization works in its harbor. Since 1878 the Ro-

manian administration paid more attention to systematizing the city by drafting city plans, aligning streets and buildings, establishing the height of buildings and the materials used for their construction. Communal authorities established regulations of constructions and alignments, a public sanitation system and appointed an embellishment commission including personalities of the time such as the Engineers Anghel Saligny, Elie Radu, Cerchez, Țărușanu, Voinescu and George Duca.

The rapid expansion of the city due to its economic development also determined a rapid increase of private and public construction works. Several large buildings were erected, veritable symbols of Constanța such as the Casino, the City Hall, the former Post Office, the Orthodox Cathedral, Carol I Mosque, etc. Numerous foreign architects came to Constanța, and its cosmopolitan population was also easily discernable in the eclectic architectural styles employed by architects in the local environment specific to a maritime city. Neoclassical, eclectic and art nouveau buildings are to be met, with the local Casino as the most beautiful embodiment of the latter style. Some of the most diligent architects who worked at Constanța were Pelopidas Couppa, E. P. Goué, Daniel Renard, Adolf Lintz, Ion Socolescu, Victor Ștefănescu, Petre Antonescu, Alexandru Orăscu, etc.

The first Urban Regulation (1879) does not include many references to the construction of buildings, but article 7 stated that ruined constructions or those hindering proper circulation could be demolished. Consulted with for such a case, Prefect Remus Opreanu mentioned on 19 June 1880 that the necessary regulation was to be urgently drafted, as it should have been completed before the beginning of the constructive season in that year. Under these circumstances, the Communal Council adopted on 17 September 1881 the draft of a “Regulation for Constructions and Alignments”, which aimed to regulate this activity. The ordinance stated that all construction plans and the material used for those works had to be approved by the municipality. Only brick and stone could be used in the red colored district, whereas framework could be employed in the yellow neighborhood. Clay bricks, a traditional building material in this area, could only be used in the suburbs of the yellow district. Other articles referred to the height of buildings,



their façade, balconies, roofs etc, all these provisions aiming to allow the urban modernization of Constanța, but also the correction, wherever possible, of former mistakes done in the absence of the appropriate legal environment.

This regulation was modified several times as almost all Communal Councils wanted to adjust it, a fact explained by the rapid development of the city, difficult to be foreseen when the initial regulation was drafted. On 28 May 1890 Mayor P. Holban proposed a new project for constructions and alignments, approved by the councilors; this regulation was sanctioned by King Carol I on 25 June 1890. In November 1897 Mayor E. C. Schina appointed a commission (made up of the communal engineer, H. Schimdt, local councilor Petre Grigorescu and engineers D. Bănescu and V. Simu) aiming to analyze and adjust this ordinance. Further changes were imposed by the Superior Technical Council and the Superior Sanitary Council (central governmental institutions), and the Communal Council voted the regulation on 24 September 1898. It was sanctioned by royal decree on 15 October 1898, and remained in used until 1939.

Regarding constructions and brickyards during the period 1 April 1910 – 31 March 1911 the nine manufacturers present at Constanța produced a total of 1,986,000 bricks and tiles.<sup>1</sup> The boom in private and public constructions resulted in a spectacular increase of such products, so that between 1 April 1912 and 31 March 1913 there were manufactured 4,404,456 bricks and tiles by the 11 leasers of the brickyards from Constanța's periphery.<sup>2</sup>

The first telephones (ten sets) were introduced in 1896, connecting the most important institutions and public authorities. The devices were brought from a factory in Vienna (Deckert & Honolca), and their installation was done with the support of N. Sellim, an employee of the Prefecture of Constanța.

In 1896 the city had a population of 10,419 people (942 of whom were traders), as well as 2,838 houses, 48 inns and 79 pubs.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Constanța (The National Archives – Constanța Branch, hereafter SJANC), fond Primăria Constanța (fund "Municipality of Constanța"), file 29/1910, f. 16; file 32/1913, f. 22.

2. *Ibid.*, file 32/1913, f. 24.

3. *Ibid.*, file 2/1896, f. 14.

According to an 1894 census, Constanța had 121 vine growers whose properties occupied a hundred hectares of vineyards in the city's periphery. Average production of white and black wine was a hundred hectoliters per hectare. Most of it was white wine, as red grapes were only cultivated on five hectares.<sup>4</sup> In 1895 production reached 1,002 hectoliters of wine from grapes harvested on a surface of 42.5 hectares. The harvest from other vineyards was sold for direct consumption.<sup>5</sup> The low quality of wine resulted in most of it being used for self consumption.<sup>6</sup>

Other agricultural estates from Constanța's periphery were used for farming and animal breeding. During the 1893/1894 agricultural year 337 hectares were cultivated with autumn and spring wheat (165 hectares), barley, colza, oats and flax. Harvests were generally small (800 kilos per hectare for wheat), and the absence of maize among cultivated plants is a feature of the area.<sup>7</sup> The same is valid for the fact that brandy or raki was not generally distilled here. There were no plum orchards in the area, and the few fruit trees were planted in peoples' courtyards or vineyards, the harvest being used for self consumption.<sup>8</sup> At the same time apiculture and sericulture were completely absent.

Regarding animal breeding, archival data mentions that in 1893 there were at Constanța 12 sheep owners with a total of 1,368 animals; a quantity of 2,941,200 kilograms of wool was fleeced from these sheep in the same year.<sup>9</sup>

By the end of 1894 Constanța's population was made up of 6,427 males and 3,992 females, the preponderance of males being a feature of the city for a long time. This was due to the continuous influx of immigrants, mostly men. In terms of professions, according to the same census 25 persons had stores for selling alcoholic beverages, 68 had liberal professions, and 538 men and 21 women were involved in trading or the small industry.<sup>10</sup> At the 1912

---

4. *Ibid.*, file 3/1894, ff. 10, 11.

5. *Ibid.*, file 2/1896, f. 7.

6. *Ibid.*, file 28/1892, f. 9.

7. *Ibid.*, file 3/1894, f. 38.

8. *Ibid.*, f. 42.

9. *Ibid.*, file 3/1894, f. 30.

10. *Ibid.*, f. 62.

census population numbered 25,375 inhabitants,<sup>11</sup> a significant increase explained by the coming of a numerous workforce attracted by the city's intense economic activity.

Placed in front of strong gales, Constanța had an excellent position for windmills and foreign travelers accounted that they had functioned there for a long time. In 1888 six windmills and a mechanical one (belonging to Papaianopol then to Foscolo) were operational.<sup>12</sup> Archival sources mention that by 1909 there still existed four windmills, but their condition was rather degraded; built of wood, they were ruined and dangerous for the safety of workers, and were demolished soon after. The owners of these mills were Gh. Polihroni's inheritors, Spiru Diamandopol, L. Lascaridi, and Eufrosini Hagianoglu.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century all parties involved in the local trade were aware of the necessity of regulating commercial transactions on Constanța's market and stockyard. On 26 February 1890 Mayor P. Holban discussed in the Communal Council the ministerial suggestion of establishing official middlemen, the conclusion being that the local market greatly needed such official brokers.<sup>14</sup> A first regulation for brokers was rejected by the Ministry of Trade, as it did not fully observed several provisions from the Law of Bourses; a new draft was thus ready by the autumn of 1893.<sup>15</sup>

On 28 July 1894 the Chamber of Trade and Industry forwarded to the Mayor of Constanța a regulation for the service of brokers in the city market and stockyard; article 1 stated that "until the establishment of a bourse in the commune of Constanța, the mediation of all kinds of commercial transactions is only done by official brokers or their agents. [...] The brokers are appointed by the Ministry of Trade, according to the stipulations of articles 19-22 and 95 of the Law of Bourses." According to the same ordinance, all acts and provisions from the Law of Bourses were to be concluded by the Brokers' Office, and daily transactions were to be popularized in a "specially printed publication". Mayor M. Koiciu brought the project to the debate of his

11. *Ibid.*, file 21/1913, f. 3.

12. *Ibid.*, file 22/1889, f. 56.

13. *Ibid.*, file 35/1909, f. 1.

14. *Ibid.*, file 26/1890, f. 93.

15. *Ibid.*, file 38/1893, f. 124.

fellow councilors.<sup>16</sup> In 1902 there existed at Constanța a number of 12 grain warehouses,<sup>17</sup> and in the old part of the city, in its peninsula or the red color district solely there were 12 magazines for imported goods, which reveals the flourishing commercial life of the area.<sup>18</sup>

The approval for creating a Bourse at Constanța was given by a decree in 1898, but the real foundation of this institution was only possible in 1910, when there were established the registers of bourse operations. The Bulletin of the Bourse published grain prices and data on concluded transactions, grain stocks, etc.<sup>19</sup> The Office of the Bourse were initially housed by the Chamber of Trade, but it was moved to a new building, close to the grain warehouses, after the inauguration of the new harbor.

A document that provides information on Constanța's economic significance is the list of taxpayers recorded by the fiscal perception. In 1892 the largest tax was paid by Anton Licen (774.89 lei), the consul of Austria-Hungary, followed by Solomon Japhet (610 lei), Frenchman Amedée Aleon (605 lei) and the Ciricleanu brothers (480 lei). The list totaled 1,863 taxpayers.

In January 1889 Avram Kohan manufactured a soap sample that was to be presented at the Universal Exhibition of Paris; his piece of soap was 40 cm high, 60 cm long and 15 cm wide, and was painted in Romania's national colors.<sup>20</sup> In his turn, I. Sucher sent to the same exhibition three types of spirits produced in his distillery: mastic, kimmel and peppermint.

Another issue that needed to be solved at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the introduction and distribution of electricity, a factor of modernization of the local society. Public lighting was done by the V. Croizot enterprise with mineral fuel lamps. In 1897 he proposed and was permitted to experimentally use electricity, employing for this 12 lamps with voltaic arch of 9 amperes placed on Elisabeta Boulevard and in Independence Square. However, several

---

16. *Ibid.*, file 25/1893, ff. 19, 21–28.

17. *Ibid.*, file 23/1902, f. 10.

18. *Ibid.*, file 8/1902, f. 10.

19. Dumitru Constantin-Zamfir, Octavian Georgescu, *Presa Dobrogeană (1879–1980): Bibliografie comentată și adnotată* [The Press of Dobruđja – Commented and Annotated Bibliography] (Constanța: Biblioteca Județeană Constanța, 1985), p. 60.

20. SJANC, fond Primăria Constanța, file 3/1889, f. 2.

days later the generator burnt down; a year later he resumed his offer. Mayor Eugen Schina presented it as follows to the Ministry of Home Affairs: “Mr. V. Croizot (...) resumed his offer from last year, on condition that for a more systematic installation he is allowed to increase the number of 12 lamps and be permitted to distribute electricity to private persons for at least 18 years by aerial or underground cables placed on the streets.” The offer was initially accepted, but a better and unconditional proposal was immediately received from “Union” Society of Electricity from Berlin. Mayor Schina also presented this offer to the Ministry: “current exigencies and Constanța’s situation impose us to make the sacrifice of lighting a part of the city with electricity and all offers forwarded to us were less advantageous than that of “Union” Society, which intends to come here with large capitals for a definitive concession of lighting the entire city with electricity, of establishing a necessary electric tramway and of making other improvement works.”<sup>21</sup>

M. D. Ionescu wrote that in 1904 the lower part of Constanța (stretching to the railways station) was lighted with electric bulbs, and reflecting lamps which burnt dense mineral oil and lamps with liquid gas were used in the rest of the city.<sup>22</sup>

On 1 December 1905 Mayor Ion Bănescu concluded a contract with entrepreneur N. Vasilescu-Karpen from Bucharest, who was to draft a project for introducing electric lighting and an electrical tramway at Constanța.<sup>23</sup> The municipality wanted to improve the lighting system, and at the suggestion of the Superior Technical Council that at Constanța “preference was to be given to underground embedding” of the electric network, the authorities decided to build such a system in the lower part of the city. This made works more expensive, but for a touristic destination it was important not to have the architectural image and the maritime seascape impeded by aerial wires.

The plan to establish an electrical plant at Constanța attracted several companies and engineers from Prague, Vienna, Paris, Lon-

---

21. *Ibid.*, file 19/1898, ff. 26–27.

22. Col. M. D. Ionescu, *Tomis-Constanța* (Constanța: Tipografia Lucrătorilor Asociați, 1931), p. 79.

23. SJANC, fond Primăria Constanța, file 16/1906, f. 12.

don, but also from all over Romania. It is interesting to notice that other Romanian municipalities were also interested to learn from Constanța's experience in using lamps with voltaic arch or with incandescence, so that the municipality of Ploiești received a copy of the contract and its mayor wanted to analyze on site the functionality of this new system. The Ganz Company of Budapest won the auction of 7 august 1906 and it was to work under the coordination of engineer Vasilescu-Karpen; the contract was concluded on 25 September 1906.

In 1906 Solomon Israel built at Constanța a factory of metallic wrappings that was to manufacture oil canisters, but also different types of food tins. At the time a large part of the products were loaded in steamers packed in metallic canisters or barrels.<sup>24</sup>

Another industry established at Constanța soon after 1878 was the printing industry. The first printing press on which information is available belonged to Pericle Pastemalgioglu. He had already owned a similar device at Brăila, and in 1880 decided to open an establishment at Constanța. He required and got the financial support of the municipality, in exchange for which he was to publish the advertisements of the local administration in the paper he was to publish. From May 1880 "Farul Constanței" ("The Lighthouse of Constanța") was printed at his printing press with the local official advertisements.<sup>25</sup> Others printing presses were soon established: "Tipografia Română" of Dimitrie Nicolaescu, those of N. Vergotti, Ion Georgescu or Dimitrie Petrescu and by the end of the century those belonging to Gr. M. Grigoriu and then Marin Pura.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century new industrial establishments were opened at Constanța, whose production was based on local resources; among them a brewery whose beginnings were related to a certain Crișmar, who established such a factory shortly after Romania's Independence War. In 1882 the respective installations were in ruin, being found by the Grüber brothers, German inhabi-

---

24. *Ibid.*, file 2/1906, f. 27; file 25/1906, f. 34.

25. *Ibid.*, file 11/1881, f. 24; Constantin-Zamfir, Georgescu, *Presa dobrogeană*, p. 160.

26. See Constantin Cheramidoglu, "Din istoricul tipografiilor constănțene" [From the History of the Printing Presses of Constanța], *Analele Dobrogei*, new series, 8 (2005), pp. 173-178.

tants from Anadolchioi, a village in the western part of Constanța, where a small German minority was living. In 1887 they bought an estate at the old vineyards of Constanța from Vice-Mayor Hafuz Regep, and with the approval of local authorities erected a building for housing the Grübers Brothers' Brewery. Its owners were Otto Grüber, graduate of the commercial house of Anvers, and Iulius Grüber, graduate of the Brewery School of Mödling (Austria). The factory used barley brought from Dobrogea with carts and wagons and had 15 employees, except for the winter period when local inhabitants preferred wine and raki over beer. The brewery brewed about 400,000 liters of beer annually, as in 1929, which were carried with carts and trucks to local gardens and restaurants, but sometimes also to the neighboring districts. Beer cost 13-14 lei per liter, the price being the same irrespective of season.<sup>27</sup>

Another important industrial establishment was the factory of leather products of the Ciricleanu Brothers, who in 1883 got from the municipality an extension of their estate for building new productive capacities, but also a school and a church.<sup>28</sup>

A statistics from the summer of 1900 mentioned a number of 247 traders and industrialists who had the right to be elected and to elect the leadership of the local Chamber of Trade and Industry. Among them there were 25 owners of pubs, 20 brokers, 20 grain traders, 18 grocers, 14 commissioners, 10 hoteliers, as well as textile merchants, colonial traders, bakers, barbers, etc. Merchants held most places, as productive guilds were little represented: four iron workshops, two tinkers, three entrepreneurs of public works, two printers, nine bakers, three confectioners, etc.<sup>29</sup>

In 1913 another list of traders and industrialists included 395 persons, a reflection of Constanța's growing economy. There were 19 entrepreneurs and 16 hoteliers, and the number of brick makers, confectioners, jewelers, brokers, commissioners, etc also grew.<sup>30</sup>

With about 600 register carts, carriages and other vehicles, the city was extremely busy. By 1914 there were 113 carriages licensed

---

27. SJANC, fond Inspectoratul Muncii Constanța [fund "Inspectorate of Labor Constanța"], file 6/1928, f. 89.

28. *Ibid.*, fond Primăria Constanța, file 1/1883, f. 122.

29. *Ibid.*, file 23/1901, ff. 4-8.

30. *Ibid.*, file 37/1913, f. 5.

for passenger transportation. The regulation of their activity was concluded with much difficulty, and many disputes were related to the stops of these carriages, as the interests of traders and of passengers did not always concur with municipal decisions or with the requests of cabmen.

After 1878 Romanian authorities replaced the Ottoman state in its relations with the British company that administered the harbor of Constanța and in 1882 Romania bought the works done at Constanța and the railway across Dobrogea for a large amount of money. A first project for modernizing the harbor was drafted in 1881 by Engineer Charles Hartley, followed in 1891-1894 by that of Engineer I. B. Cantacuzino, designed with the support of Inspector Gerard, former director of the port of Marseille. The plans were then adapted, until his death, by Engineer Gh. Duca, supported, as Anghel Saligny said, "by Romanian engineers only, most of them graduated from our School of Bridges and Roads"; since 1899 the direction of works belonged to Engineer Anghel Saligny. Giving up the A. Hallier enterprise (which was given in 1896 the contract for constructing the harbor of Constanța), due to the great delays in executing contracted works, the Romanian government decided to complete the harbor on its own.

Until 1909 Romanian engineers completed the works in the plan modified by Saligny, so that the harbor had a special basin for ships loading oil endowed with all necessary installations for operating such vessels, modern grain warehouses (the first inaugurated in 1909, the second in 1910) built of prefabricated elements, an electrical plant that provided electricity for the mechanical installations in the warehouses and the engines used in the area. The harbor enclosure was defended by large dykes and was provided with numerous berths; it also had lighthouses that guided ships at the entry into the basin.

The completion in 1909 of this phase in the construction of the modern harbor secured normal operating conditions for the ships that called at Constanța. The city's importance for Romania's economy also results from the magnitude of the ceremonies organized at the inauguration of works in 1896 and at the festivities of 1909, in the presence of the royal family. These are some comparative data on its activity: the traffic of its harbor amounted to 217,264 tons in



1899; ten years later, at the completion of the first phase of works it was 784,727 tons; during the financial exercise 1 April 1911 – 31 March 1912 it recorded the highest values for the prewar period – 1,400,725 tons of goods entered and cleared.<sup>31</sup>

In close connection with the harbor of Constanța was the growth of the oil industry at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1896-1897 “Steaua Română” purchased an estate in the periphery of the city to place there its export installations and the factory of barrels. Other companies soon followed suit and bought land from the municipality or from private owners and established tanks for storing and exporting oil products: the French Company of “Desmarais Frères”, the “Româno-Americană” Society, “Ruzica, Elias & Taubes”, “Astra Română”, etc. Several entrepreneurs also considered moving their oil refineries from the oilfields to Constanța in order to facilitate the export of oil products.

The first modern hotel was “Carol I”, built by Arthur Green and Carol Rotschild; modified in 1880-1882 it hosted King Carol I of Romania in several of his visits to Constanța.

Besides fashionable hotels and restaurants, the city (which also aimed to become a holiday resort similar to those of the French Riviera) also needed a casino in order to attract well-off tourists; the first casinos were mere improvisations, seasonal wooden constructions placed on the cliff of the peninsula where tourists could gamble, listen to music, eat and drink. In 1904 the municipality decided to construct a new casino and Architect Daniel Renard was entrusted with drafting the plans. However, in 1905 the new municipal administration ceded the completion of the casino to the Ministry of Public Works, also with funding from the local budget. New plans were drafted by the Ministry’s architect (Petre Antonescu), and the Construction Service of the Harbor executed works for fixing the foundation of the new building. When Mayor Ion Bănescu was replaced by Cristea Georgescu, the coordination of works was returned to the municipality and since April 1907 local authorities used Renard’s plans with some slight changes, with all expenses covered from the municipal budget. The casino, the veri-

---

31. *Ibid.*, fond Direcția Navigației Maritime (fund “Direction of Maritime Navigation”), file 1/1923-1928, f. 183.

table symbol of Constanța, was completed during the period 1907-1909 and was inaugurated in 1910. It was to be leased to a foreign private entrepreneur, and the contract stipulated the concessioner's obligation to have a hotel with 200 rooms built in two years time, at the level of comfort of foreign holiday resorts, with which Constanța was to be similar. In 1913 "Hotel Palace", constructed by the Society of Large Establishments, was inaugurated.

The period 1912-1914 was abundant in more economic accomplishments; at Constanța as in the rest of Romania several constructions were completed and entrepreneurs with initiative and capital settled there in search of good profits and of making advantageous investments favored by the laws for encouraging the national industry. The municipality recorded dozens of requests for providing estates for the establishment of industrial ventures. Many of them were mere speculators, so that the central and local authorities required additional details on the legality of purchase acts, on complying with the accounting law and with the settled price of such properties.

From the beginning of 1914, at the initiative of Mayor Virgil Andronescu the Communal Council voted for selling estates in the so called "small industry district" on condition that purchasers would use the land with the acknowledged economic aim. Such cases were those of Petre Ionescu (cooper), Leon Ghinsberg (hosiery factory), Gh. Resner (ropes), A. Tomescu (chemical products), Nicolae Leoncinidis (factory of grinding chicory, cleaning sesame etc), Anastase M. Nicolau (gaseous water), Radu Aldea (soap and wax candles), N. Ionescu (factory of bolts and mechanical workshop) etc.<sup>32</sup>

These were important steps in the development of Constanța's economy, but unfortunately the outburst of World War One and Romania's involvement of the conflict in 1916 put a stop to the natural evolution of things; the city resumed its growth and was fully recovered by 1924, when it was already Romania's largest commercial outlet.

---

32. *Ibid.*, fond Primăria Constanța, file 48/1914, f. 16.

## 6.

### The Rise of a Port: Socio-economic Development of Burgas in the 19<sup>th</sup>c.

Dimiter Christov,

Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy  
of Sciences (Sofia, Bulgaria)

Starting from a quite modest position of a small port town at circa 1800, Burgas made a significant and fast rise in importance during the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Around 1900 its regional role was considerably larger than those of its close neighbours, the long established cities Messemvria (now Nessebar), Anchialo (today Pomorie) and Sozopol. Was this rise of Burgas due to the enterprising spirit of the citizens or the sensible use of the natural resources? May we assume otherwise that this prosperity was a result of the Ottoman reforming policy, of the coming modernity, or of the discovery of the local market by the West Europeans? Apparently more than one answers are possible here. The paper inquires about the phenomenon of the city's progress dealing with its reasons and parameters. Quite overlooked for decades, the history of the now fourth biggest city in Bulgaria has been an object of increasing number of works in the recent years. Despite their value however their content and conclusions however, remain unfamiliar to the international audience, since they are written mostly in Bulgarian. The text hereunder is an attempt to synthesise some of the most important aspects of these studies.

#### *Environment*

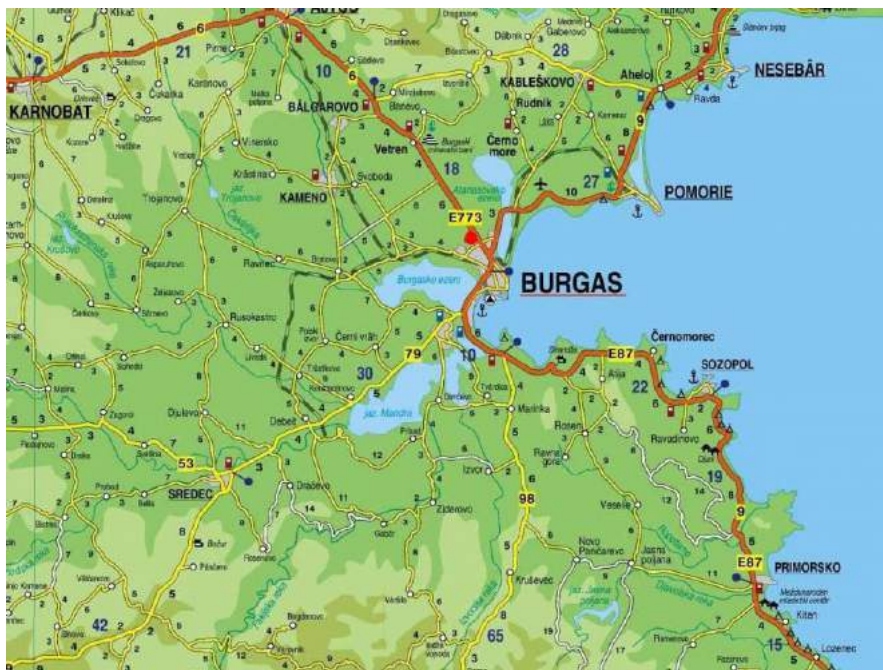
Burgas is located on the Western coast of the Black Sea at the farthest end of the large Gulf of Burgas, which forms the deepest

penetration of the Black Sea from the East into the mainland (See Map 1). The only close island, strategically located at the southern entrance of the gulf, is the small St. Anastasia, named after the monastery founded there. The broader gulf is made up of a few smaller gulfs, the central of which is the Gulf of Burgas proper (See Бургаски залив on Map 2). Southwards from it are the gulfs of two other small ports: the one of *Phoros* (or Poros otherwise; See Залив Форос on Map 2) and that of *Chengene Iskelesi* (English: the Gypsies' Harbour; See Залив Цигански пристан on Map 2). Among them the latter provides the best shelter from adverse conditions, its muddy bed however is a dwelling place of a pest: wood-eating worms. The gulf of Phoros was also praised for its safety from winds and storms. As to its bed the sources are contradictory – some state it was covered by sand and was exceptionally favourable for larger vessels, others claim that it was rocky and dangerous even for boats. Compared to the two more southern gulfs, the Gulf of Burgas proper with its sandy and relatively deep bottom (depth: 7-11 m) presented a perfect answer to this problem, but the anchoring ships were far more exposed to adverse winds (from E, NE and N).

The Port of Burgas (as the modern as the historic one) is located on the Northern side of the Gulf of Burgas proper, forming the core of the further urban development. The present centre of the town, quite near to the harbour and the railway station, is actually from where the city, as it is now, has started to grow. It is the downtown literally, being the lowest part of the town (6-10 m above the sea). The whole town area is relatively low above the sea level; there are no distinct heights to soar. The average level of the urban territory is 17 m above the sea; the highest terrains are at about 30-35 m.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Ignat Penkov, Milka Penkova, Бургас [Burgas] (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1968), 11-13.



Map 1. The area of the city of Burgas in the present with the broader Gulf of Burgas.

The close vicinity of Burgas is marked by the presence of three large lakes. West and Southwest of the town lies the freshwater *Vaya Lake* (formally referred to as *Burgasko ezero*, it is still being named *Vaya* by the local people; See Бургаско езеро on Map 2), named after its abundant vegetation of willows and reeds. To the South of the *Vaya* is the *Mandra Lake* (See яз. Мандра on Map 2), formerly a huge swamp. In 19<sup>th</sup> century its level and shape were put under some control by constructing a levee. Both lakes are extremely rich in fish and secure the living of local dwellers, such as those from the village of *Vayaköy* (present day *Dolno Ezerovo*, a district of Burgas). To the North of Burgas stands the third, the *Athanasovsko Lake* (in the past *Athanasköy Lake*; See Атанасовско езеро on Map 2) separated from the sea by a narrow stretch of earth and sands. It is a shallow lagoon lake (0.7-1 m deep) with salty waters, every now and then flooded by the sea. Its salinity, far exceeding that of the

Black sea, provides a good condition for salt producing. Saltworks here were the main industry for the inhabitants of the nearby vil-  
lage of *Athanasköy* (now *Izgrevo* district), and are still very important  
for the city's economy. The three lakes are ornithological habitats of  
worldwide importance, providing home and shelter for an exclusive  
number and diversity of birds (over 300 species).



Map 2. The city of Burgas in the present with the Gulf of Burgas (In Bulgarian)

Source: Бургас. Южно Черноморие [Burgas. South Black Sea Coast] (Stara Zagora: Domino, 2011).

With so much water around Burgas has as much assets as setbacks. The Vaya lake water is not good for drinking. It was also a source of malaria, a not uncommon disease in the town. The low terrain is easily prone to floods and surges of subterranean waters. The town itself does not have springs or other sources of fresh water. Up to the 1890s the only close sources of fine drinking water were the aptly called *Sweet wells*, located on the land stretch between the Vaya and the sea.<sup>2</sup> The wells, nowadays incorporated into the city (*Pobeda* district; See кв. Победа on Map 2) were at a distance of roughly 2-3 km from the 19<sup>th</sup> c. town. Each morning specially engaged people, called *sakadjii* (from Turkish: *sakaci*, a bellow-carrier) were bringing water to the citizens in barrels and leather bellows, using carts or simply carrying them on foot with yokes on shoulders.

Further inside the inland lay the easternmost part of the North Thracian Lowlands. The lowland territory, which gradually rises toward the regions of Sliven and Yambol, is specialised mostly in grain production. It is flanked from both sides by hillside regions. On the northern side there are the rising heights around the towns of *Aytos* (Turkish *Aytoz/Aydoz*) and *Karnobat* with grapevine as their most significant culture. To the South of Burgas the hillside forms a region of more diverse agriculture and livestock. It was named *the Hassekiya* after it had been given a privileged status of a *sultan's hass* in 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> c. The Hassekiya is in fact the lower part of the Strandja mountains, which lay further south. The abundant Strandja forests are the main source of wood (for construction and heating) and charcoal for the ports in the region, including Burgas, and further afield. Oak in its diverse variations is the dominant sylvan species. There are sources claiming that in a more distant past vast oak forests were covering a larger area right next to Burgas, reminders of which are the woods at the *Othmanli* recreation zone some 15 km southern of the city. The subterranean resources of the close Burgas vicinity are coal and copper ore. Nevertheless, until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. they were not used. What was really a profitable resource of the Strandja up to the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> c. was the

---

2. Athanas Hristov, Бургасъ. Юбилейна книга [Burgas. A Jubilee Book.] (Burgas: 1928).

iron ore, dug and proceeded in the surroundings of Little Samokov (Turkish: Demirköy). Burgas was one of the convenient ports for exporting the iron wrought there to Constantinople and elsewhere.

### *Population*

During the Roman age the site of the present day city was a part of the administrative territory of the Roman veteran colony of *Deultum*, placed some 30 km inland at SW direction. A Deultum fortification tower, in Latin called *burgus*, was built somewhere close to the recent harbour, giving the name of the future settlement – *Pyrgos* in Greek, *Burgas* in Bulgarian and *Burgaz* in Turkish. The remnants of the tower were reportedly still visible in the 1870s. Pyrgos, however, was not a permanently inhabited place until the end of 16<sup>th</sup> c. Unlike it, the small settlement of Phoros/Poros a few kilometres to the South hosted a more continuous life during the Medieval and the early Ottoman periods.

The various authors are not unanimous about Burgas' urban genesis. The city's 'foundation myth', maintained by the local tradition, claims that the first settlers here were fishermen, presumably from Anchialo and/or Sozopol.<sup>3</sup> The dual opportunity for fishing provided by the presence of the sea and the lakes was not missed by the local fishermen. At first only transient visitors, about the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. started to settle permanently near the ancient burgus/pyrgos. The fishermen built their huts from reeds and willow branches and soon brought their families there. Supposedly these first settlers were Greek, but Turkish inhabitants soon settled there as well. According to the story these Turks were descendants of the Anatolian town of Bandırma, who noticed the supreme quality fish of Anchialites and Sozopolitans at the Istanbul fish market and tracked them to find their fishery. Surprisingly they discovered that a fishermen's village had been founded near the ancient *pyrgos* and they also moved there.

A more recent theory<sup>4</sup>, without neglecting the role of the rich fish-

3. Hristov, *Burgas. A Jubilee Book*.

4. Shtelian Shterionov, Южното Черноморие през Възраждането [The Southern Black Sea Side during the Revival] (Sofia: Tomel, 1999), p.48.



eries, adds another component to the town-making – the existence of unused farming lots in the vicinity. This uncultivated, but fertile land subsequently attracted peasant settlers from the neighbouring area. Finally another author<sup>5</sup> argues that the presence of traders in Burgas (Armenians, to be precise) is recorded even before the advent of population engaged in other occupations, so maritime trade might have been the occupation of the early settlers at the first place.

Alongside the question why the settlement was established, there arises also the question when it happened. Although there is a debate on the history of Pyrgos during the Middle Ages and the early Ottoman period, all authors agree that the port's steady urban development started in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Continuous presence of population is attested in written sources from the beginning of this century onwards. Recently it has been pointed that the first navigation map where Pyrgos was marked was *Pontus Euxinus* by the Dutch cartographer Nicolaas Witsen, probably dating from 1705.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, it was not until the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. when Burgas appeared as a port of significance on the seamen's maps<sup>7</sup>.

The basin of the Black Sea, politically calm for centuries, was stirred by the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1774. After the war, the Ottoman authorities reacted to the military failure with increased army presence in the region. The Gulf of Burgas became the preferred point for garrisoning field troops as well as a certain naval force. A 200-strong garrison was established at the strategic St. Anastasia Island. The Orthodox monastery located there was forcefully dissolved and turned to army barracks. On the mainland Burgas and the other settlements at the gulf gained a new level of strategic importance. There are sources dating from the period after the Küçük-Kaynarca Peace Treaty (1774) showing that Burgas

---

5. Mitko Ivanov, Загадъчният град. Бургас от XVI до началото на XIX в. [The Mysterious Town. Burgas from 16<sup>th</sup> to the Beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> c.], (Burgas: Mark, 2005), 14-15.

6. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nicolaas\\_Witsen.\\_Pontus\\_Euxinus\\_of\\_nieuwe\\_en\\_naaukeurige\\_paskaart\\_van\\_de\\_zwarte\\_zee\\_uyt\\_verschedene\\_stucken\\_van\\_die\\_gewelten\\_toegesonden,\\_ontworpen\\_door\\_\(18th\\_century\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nicolaas_Witsen._Pontus_Euxinus_of_nieuwe_en_naaukeurige_paskaart_van_de_zwarte_zee_uyt_verschedene_stucken_van_die_gewelten_toegesonden,_ontworpen_door_(18th_century).jpg). Last visited on 17/09/2015.

7. Ivanov, *The Mysterious Town. Burgas from 16<sup>th</sup> to the Beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> c.*, 17-20.

exceeded 1000 inhabitants at that time<sup>8</sup>. The long established demographic prevalence of the Christian population in the local port towns, namely Messemvria (Nessebar), Anchialo and Sozopol was one of the reasons for the Turks to look for a new local centre than to invest into the old ones.

Yet the Ottoman policy was initially more in favour of another site, not that of Burgas/Pyrgos. Actually, tax privileges (ten years free of *sharia* taxes) were granted to those Muslims who would settle at Chengene Iskelesi, right in opposite of the garrison island. The plan of forging a local Muslim-dominated centre at Chengene Iskelesi would remain active for the next two or three decades. The settlement there did not develop successfully. As it was mentioned above, the muddy bottom of that harbour was badly infested by wood-eating worms. No wooden vessel remaining there for more than three weeks could avoid replacement of its shell plating. This factor repelled the sailors who preferred to anchor at Burgas, regardless to the better shelter, which Chengene Iskelesi provided. Perhaps there were also other reasons for the failure of the plan. There is no sufficient data to show what measures were taken to assure the desired development in favour of the port, apart from the initial tax privilege. It is possible that the Ottoman authorities were not quite persistent in their attempt and, as long as Burgas had already gained some local importance, the administration would re-directed its attention to Burgas without much hesitation. Chengene Iskelesi gradually died out during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. turning to a satellite of the growing Burgas<sup>9</sup>.

The fate of Phoros, an earlier and perhaps more stable settlement than Pyrgos, was quite alike. The natural location of Phoros, locked between the sea and the Vaya Lake, did not give this small fishermen's village any opportunity for significant growth in territory or population. Burgas by comparison, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> c. had better opportunities to expand in Northern and North-western direction. As the Sweet Wells were between the two settlements, the

---

8. Petar Nikov, Едно неизвестно описание на българския черноморски бряг от XVIII в. [A Unknown Description of the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast from 19<sup>th</sup> c.] – Annual of the Sofia University – Historical–Philological Faculty, 23, 1931, p.60.

9. Ivanov, *The Mysterious Town. Burgas from 16<sup>th</sup> to the Beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> c.*, 40-41.

fresh drinkable water was scarce for both, and there was no room for two towns. Despite its better harbour Phoros eventually lost. Its population, predominantly Greek, was consequently pulled by the social gravity of the more dynamic neighbouring port and the place was largely depopulated about the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. The haven of Phoros remained in use, but as supplementary to that of Burgas<sup>10</sup>.

The slight rise of social opportunities for the Burgas' dwellers was marred by the feudal anarchy inside the Ottoman Empire in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. The region was seriously damaged by the atrocities of the *ayans*, arrogant local chieftains, and the villainous bands of the *kırcalı*-s. A surge of sea piracy by the so called *lazi*-s was also recorded at the time. In 1798 a brutal horde, led by some Muslims from the *Hassekiya* captured Burgas, executed some of the Turkish notables and burnt a part of the town.<sup>11</sup> The progress of Burgas however was only temporarily hindered and not irreversibly stopped. The movement of people from the close areas towards the seaside continued, so that the arrival of new dwellers balanced the loss in the older ones. Some of these newcomers were fleeing from the dangerous rural areas to the relatively more secured town. During the Greek Rebellion (1821-1828) there were no persecutions of Christians in Burgas, as in the neighbouring Anchialo and Sozopol. In a source dating from 1828 we see as many as 1820 inhabitants in the town, which is close to a figure close to those from the period before the Empire's social crisis<sup>12</sup>.

As if to put an end to the troublesome period of inner instability and chaos there came the Russo-Turkish war (1828-1829). In 1828 Burgas was taken over by the Russian commander Gen. Ivan Ivanovich Dibich and for a short time it became the head-quarters of the Russian forces and administration. The arrival of the Russian troops resulted into a wave of Turks fleeing from Burgas. The Christians

---

10. Ivanov, *The Mysterious Town. Burgas from 16<sup>th</sup> to the Beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> c.*, 22-25.

11. Ivan Karayotov, Petya Kiyashkina, Konstantin Gospodinov, *Бургас, вечното пристанище [Burgas, the Eternal Haven]*, (Burgas: Archaeological Museum of Burgas, 2000), 98-99.

12. G. Eneholm, *Notice sur le villes situées au-dellà des Balkans, occupées par les Troupes Russes pendant la glorieuse campagne de 1828*, Sankt-Petersburg, 1830 – cited through: Ivanov, *The Mysterious Town. Burgas from 16<sup>th</sup> to the Beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> c.*, p.46.

felt insecure as well, knowing that after the departure of the Russians the retaliation of the returning Muslims would be imminent. Fearing further persecutions, a lot of local Greeks, Bulgarians and Armenians left Burgas for other countries in 1829-1830. The emigration was a part of a considerably larger emigration movement of Christian population from the Eastern part of the European Ottoman dominions. Burgas turned to one of the main ports of departure for the refugees from all over Eastern Thrace. The emigration was facilitated by the Russian authorities, who saw an opportunity to enforce with new settlers the development of their newly acquired lands at the Northern Black Sea coast. Men with maritime experience were especially valued because of the Russians' plan to develop further their Black Sea fleet. The massive wave of emigration was directed mainly toward Bessarabia and *Novorossiya*, to Odessa in particular, as well as to the Danubian Principalities. The Low Danube ports of Galați in Moldova and Braila (ceded to Wallachia in 1830 through the Adrianople Treaty) also became focal points of large scale immigration from what is now Eastern Bulgaria. As to the Burgas population in that period, it reached its lowest levels – 778 people counted in 1830 and 516 people in 1831.<sup>13</sup>

After regaining its authority over the Western Black seaside, Ottoman Turkey initiated policies aiming at the reversal of the migration movement, both Muslim and Christian. Partly due to the measures (announced and/or really taken), partly because of various other reasons (inability to find proper realisation abroad, climate reasons or personal motives) the majority of the Burgas refugees returned within the next few years. Their return was apparently complemented by influx of fresh newcomers. Some of them, in their vast majority Bulgarians, were arriving from the hinterland villages, but also from everywhere in the Southern and Central-Northern Bulgaria. Others, predominantly Greek fishermen, sailors and traders, were moving in from the closer or more distant coastal areas of the Western Black sea. They were joined by their compatriots from the Constantinople region, the Aegean islands and the newly liberated Greece. The decades of 1830s and 1840s were times of a tremendously fast growth for Burgas. In 1846 the French traveller

---

13. Karayotov et al., *Burgas, the Eternal Haven*, p.99-100.

Xavier Hommaire de Hel depicted characteristically the hectic trade and vigorous activity in and around the town in a striking contrast with the slow, almost dormant life in Anchialo. It is hard to define in figures however what the growth rates were. The sources dating from the period are more numerous but not quite reliable. If we believe them Burgas reportedly reached the rather unlikely population of 5000 inhabitants as early as in 1834.<sup>14</sup> The same figure appears persistently in most of the sources about the following years up to 1849. Certainly though the value 5000 is too approximate, grossly taken and often repeated without verification. Given the registered constant trend of incoming population and the lack of information about any significant outgoing migration, it is reasonable to assume a steady total population increase, which should be traced to the 1850s and 1860s. Nevertheless as late as in 1871-1873 some more precise sources estimate the number of Burgas citizens between 3250 and 3970, quite to the contrary of the abovementioned estimations. The author here tends to believe that the exact number of inhabitants right before the Crimean war (1853-1855) was lower, perhaps about 2500. Moreover, the urban development was poor. The sources of that time invariably conveyed an unappealing view of mostly ramshackle slums and miserable living conditions.

The Crimean war (1853-1855) had a significant impact on the town's development. Burgas was an important point of military logistics for the naval and field forces of the Ottoman Empire and its allies. The port had already been noticed for its booming activity by the Western European profiteers in the 1840s. The war came to confirm their impression that sea trade had here better chances to succeed than at the rest of the ports southern of the Balkan range. In the 1850s Burgas, second only to Varna, became a preferred place for the expanding business of the Westerners on this coast. The trend remained stable during the 1860s and early 1870s. Besides the existing ethno-confessional groups at least two new ones appeared around the Crimean war and after: Roman Catholics and Jews. Both groups were not especially numerous, but they still

---

14. Shtelian Shterionov, *Гърците по българските земи през XVIII-XIX век (до 1878)*. Т.1. [The Greeks on the Bulgarian Lands in 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c. (until 1878) Vol.1.] (Veliko Tyrnovo: Faber, 2008), p.281.

played a certain role in the town's life, especially in its economy. Jews in particular increased their number after 1878 (213 people in 1884). Apart from them some single representatives of Protestant foreign countries contributed to the port's ethno-confessional diversity. Subjects of Great Britain, France, Austria (Austria-Hungary after 1867), and the Italian states were recorded among the residents of Burgas. The most important group of foreign subjects were the Greeks, who were coming from the Kingdom of Greece and from the Ionian Islands, let alone those who possessed Russian, Wallachian or Moldovan passports. Despite technically being foreigners, they were not actually regarded as such, as they were constantly intermingling with the native Greeks.

The Greek state was the first one to establish a diplomatic mission in Burgas in 1850. At first it was an individual honorary consul, concerned mainly with cultural and social work among the town's Greek community, as well as to improve the conditions for seafaring, in which Greece had considerable interest. The real improvement of the latter however was achieved only after the Crimean War. In March 1856 the Greek mission was upgraded to a full vice-consul status. The first vice-consul in Burgas was Gerasimos Paggalos, whose active work facilitated a significant increase of the trade and the navigation performed by Greek subjects on the South-Western Black Sea coast. For instance, the number of Greek ships landing at the regional ports after 1856 rose to more than 200 annually.<sup>15</sup>

The Greek example was followed by the introduction of vice-consuls of Austria (Austria-Hungary) and Italy, both aimed to secure their countries' economic interests, and often their personal, too. In 1871 Great Britain also opened a vice-consulate in Burgas, the head of which was combining political and economic activities. Russia, although fairly interested in the region, did not attach its own diplomat here until 1878. Saint-Petersburg observed the local trends through the Burgas agency of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company (ROPiT) and through the very active Russian vice-consulate in Varna.<sup>16</sup>

---

15. Shterionov, *The Greeks on the Bulgarian Lands in 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c. (until 1878) Vol.1*, 277-278.

16. Velko Tonev, *Българското Черноморие през Бъзраждането* [The Bulgarian

The Muslim community in Burgas in its vast majority consisted of Turks, although persons from other nationalities also appeared: Albanians for example were recorded within the military contingent in the late 18<sup>th</sup> c. The share of Muslims in Burgas before 1878 was bigger than any one of the other groups, at certain points in time the sources estimated that about two thirds of the population were of Islamic confession. Still it was not enough to secure the social domination desirable by the authorities. Even when the Muslim inhabitants were exceeding half of the population, the demographic tendency in their community was a declining one. Generally the Turks in Burgas occupied either the administration (of the port, the town or the attached territory) or the military positions. Outside these domains they had comparatively low influence in the economic or cultural life.

Another Muslim group that settled in Burgas and its hinterland were the Tatars (coming in successive waves from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. up to 1860s). A part of the estates, granted by the Ottomans to the expatriated Crimean khans from the Giray house, were located in the Karnobat area not far from Burgas. One of the mosques in the town was the Tatar *Cami Azizie* (built 1862). A certain part of the Tatars was traditionally involved in activities that required horses: carters, heavy goods carriers, saddlers. Others remained an impostor element in the society, infamous for their brutality and arrogance. Such was for example Ahmed Giray, the last head of the local Giray branch, who was among the most violent persecutors of the Bulgarians in the Karnobat region in 1876 and 1877. Eventually he was captured and executed by the Russian forces in the outskirts of Burgas in the early 1878.

Concerning the Orthodox Christian community before 1860, a fair account was provided by the Burgas-born Metropolitan Symeon of Varna and Preslav (1840-1937). In a memoir about his youth he recalled the figure of his father Priest Nicolas. Priest Nicolas, a respected figure in the town, was born around the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. in the purely Bulgarian village of Fakia (in the Strandja Mountain) and then moved to Burgas. *'In my father's house we all*

---

Black Sea Coast during the National Revival Period] (Sofia: Academic publishing house 'Prof. Marin Drinov', 1995), 29-30.

knew Bulgarian and spoke Bulgarian. But this way we used to talk only with Bulgarian men and women, who didn't know Greek. My father especially would speak Bulgarian, because he was serving in Athanasköy and Vayaköy, Bulgarian villages near Burgas. Between us however we used to talk in Greek... My father did not have a consciousness that he was a Bulgarian. Such consciousness, especially in the coastal towns did not exist. A Greek, a Bulgarian – it was all the same, a Christian.<sup>17</sup>

Greeks were certainly the leading element in this supranational community as they dominated in many aspects of the town's life, especially in the economy. The historical demography researcher Shtelian Shterionov has calculated the average share of the Greek population of Burgas for the period 1779-1878 as steady rising from 17.1 percent of the whole town population at 1779 to 25.9 percent at 1878; with an average value of 23.9 percent (or about one fourth) for the whole period.<sup>18</sup> Sailing, fishing and commerce were considered as predominantly Greek occupations. This was especially true for the wholesale trade. There were also a lot of Greek craftsmen. Greek language was prevailing in the everyday communication in the streets and the market, being used also by the Bulgarians and the Armenians. 'The end neighbourhoods of Burgas were inhabited exclusively by Bulgarians, but the Greek language was heard everywhere'<sup>19</sup>, Metropolitan Symeon remembered. Greek was the language of the Orthodox Church services and the first town schools as well. The first church in town, *Dormition of the Holy Theotokos*, initially a temple for all the Orthodox Christians in town was later considered as the Greek church *par excellence*.

The Bulgarian Church Question in Burgas was raised comparatively late, in 1860s and did not take the radical forms as it did elsewhere. The tension, rather ethnic than truly ecclesiastical, had troubling effects on the social life, but also boosted the educational and

17. Symeon, Metropolitan of Varna and Preslav, Спомени [Memoirs]; in Emil Dimitrov (ed.) Варненски и Преславски митрополит Симеон. Съчинения. Т.1. Църква и история. Статии. Спомени. Писма (1860-1900) [Symeon, Metropolitan of Varna and Preslav. Works. Vol.1. Church and History. Articles. Memoirs. Letters (1860-1900); Emil Dimitrov (ed.)] (Sofia: Iztok-Zapad, 2010), p.125.

18. Shterionov, *The Greeks on the Bulgarian Lands in 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c. (until 1878) Vol.1*, p.282.

19. Symeon, Metropolitan of Varna and Preslav, *Works, Vol.1*, p.123.



cultural dynamics of the town. Its first result was the foundation of a distinct Bulgarian self-ruling community (*obshtina*) in 1864-1865, which subsequently established a church with a Slavic-language liturgy as well as a Bulgarian school. With regard to the ecclesiastical matters the community recognised the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate (est. 1870), in particular that of the Metropolitan of Sliven. Bulgarians were definitely the town's most expanding and one of the most laborious groups in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Their stable growth was due to the constant influx of people, mostly peasants, but also a certain number of artisans: grocers, furriers and woollen textile manufactures (or, in the locally used term: *abadjii*). In the urban social structure the newcomers commonly took the more humble positions as low qualified labourers and craftsmen. Some of them, after gaining initial success, quite often showed symptoms of upstart psychology. The fresh social climbers usually started referring to themselves as Greeks. The process of hellenisation was maintained through marriages and business relations. Even some of the most active figures within the Bulgarian community in Burgas were strongly interrelated with their Greek fellow citizens. The incoming Bulgarians however were numerous enough to compensate for those who adopted Greek self-identification. Thus in the overall population of the town the share of Bulgarian inhabitants did not diminish. Apart from the given occupations, in Burgas there were also a few Bulgarian priests and teachers, but significant as a social rank. In 1860s and 1870s this tiny *intelligentsia* was slightly increasing in numbers and definitely rising in importance, being the main promoter of the Bulgarian national emancipation in the town<sup>20</sup>.

Armenians, as it was stated above, were among the first recorded Burgas dwellers, their presence testified evident as early as in 1673. The Armenians formed a separate community with their own church and priests. At least for some of them (who supposedly arrived at about 1814) was known that they originated from the town of Harp (or Karbi) in Old Armenia. Their place in the civic structure was limited as was their number in general, but they established a sustainable entity, largely occupied with productive commercial activities and various crafts. Some of them were peddlers, while

---

20. Tonev, *The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast during the National Revival Period*, 60-70.

others ironworkers. During the 19<sup>th</sup> c. the Armenian colony was reproducing itself steadily, although perhaps slightly diminished towards 1878. In 1896 a new wave of Armenian refugees (around 1000 people) came to Burgas, fleeing from the Turkish massacres at the time. The larger part of them dispersed in Bulgaria in the next years, but some remained in Burgas and joined the colony.<sup>21</sup>

Attracted by the opening prospects in Burgas, there came also a motley group of Gypsies. A French observer remarked about their local community that '*Gypsies do not have any definite religion; the men only pretend to be Muslims*'.<sup>22</sup> As it was common for them elsewhere, Gypsies were taking the lowest positions in the social hierarchy of Burgas. Some of them particularly took over the water-carrying, turning the *sakaci*-s into an exclusively Gypsy professional group. Another occupation, in which they prevailed in the 19<sup>th</sup> c., was the waste disposal. For the removal of waste the dustmen constructed special chests to prevent the trash spilling in the streets. In order to ensure the Gypsy dustmen's living, in 1902 the city authorities even refused an offer for a modernisation of the waste removal through the use of a pneumatic machine.<sup>23</sup>

The direct Ottoman rule of Burgas ended in January 1878 as a result of the Russo-Turkish war (1877-1878). According to the Berlin Treaty the town remained in Eastern Rumelia, an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire. The territory of the province was divided into six administrative units, called *departments* and Burgas became the centre of one of them. A large part of the Turkish inhabitants left the town during the wartime and the year after the war, and only a smaller number of them returned subsequently. Meanwhile a wave of Christians, both Greeks and Bulgarians, whose home places remained under direct Ottoman rule beyond the border, took the opposite way. Burgas attracted a lot of these immigrants in 1878-1879. There are estimations about the number of inhabi-

---

21. Юбилеен сборник 80 години от освобождението на Бургас [Jubilee Volume 80 Years from the Liberation of Burgas] (Burgas: 1958), p.33.

22. Karayotov et al., *Burgas, the Eternal Haven*, p.96.

23. Devi Symeonov, Бургас – поглед отвътре [Burgas – A Look from Inside] (Burgas: Znatsi, 2008), p.95.

tants in 1879, which show a population of either 2568<sup>24</sup> or 2950<sup>25</sup>.

The Eastern Rumelian census of 1884 recorded 5865 inhabitants in Burgas. The data give an appropriate ground to estimate the demographic leap that happened after the Liberation – for five years the town doubled its population (See Table 1). In absolute terms however, the whole figure was not particularly impressive. Burgas, despite being a departmental centre and a locally leading port in 1884 was not significantly more numerous than its neighbours – Anchialo (4922 inhabitants) and Sozopol (2958 inhabitants). Moreover, the demographic fluctuations continued. In 1884-1887 big groups of Turks and Greeks left the town, which was now more controlled by the Bulgarians. The Unification of the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia (September 1885) was followed by another census in 1887, which showed some population decrease<sup>26</sup>.

The population ebbs were soon compensated by new tides of people coming to settle in the town. The newcomers were mostly from the South-Eastern Bulgaria as well from the territories under direct Ottoman rule, bordering the Burgas region. The census of the Principality of Bulgaria in 1892 recorded 8426 inhabitants in Burgas. The trend of strong increase continued further. The next census in 1900 recorded 11 738 people in the port town.<sup>27</sup> Entering into the new century, Burgas was definitely exceeding in population number the other ports of the South-Western Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Table 1 below provides the figures of the censuses after the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> c., plus the data about the population in 1879.

---

24. Shterionov, *The Greeks in the Bulgarian Lands in 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c. (until 1878)* Vol.1, p.281.

25. Penkov, Penkova, *Burgas*, p.40.

26. Penkov, Penkova, *Burgas*, p.42.

27. Енциклопедия България, Т.1. [Encyclopaedia Bulgaria, Vol.1], (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1978), 403-405.

**Table 1**  
**Records about the population of Burgas in 1879-1910**

Year of census	Population of Burgas	Increase/Decrease of Population		
		Period	In numbers	% change per year
1879	2950			
1884	5865	1879-1884	+2915	+19.76
1887	5749	1884-1887	-116	-0.66
1892	8426	1887-1892	+2677	+9.31
1900	11738	1892-1900	+3312	+4.91
1905	12946	1900-1905	+1208	+2.06
1910	14897	1905-1910	+1951	+3.01

Source: Ignat Penkov, Milka Penkova, *Burgas* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1968), 40-42.

### *Administration*

For a long period of its early history Burgas was administered by the *kadi* of Anchialo as a part of the Anchialo *kaza* (sub-district). In order to make distinction between Burgas and the town with the same name, located inside the Eastern Thrace, some documents referred to the Black Sea port as Achiolu-Burgaz (i.e. Anchialo-Burgas), to distinguish it from the other town, known as Lüleburgaz. Burgas remained under Anchialo's authority until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. The *kaza* of Anchialo (subordinated to the Silistra *sanjakbey*) had a vast territorial range. In the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> c. it was including almost the whole Southern part of the Western Black Sea coast to the north of Midia and the south of Messemvria, with a proper share of the hinterland. In terms of ecclesiastical administration, Burgas was likewise administered by the Orthodox Metropolitan of Anchialo.

Regarding the formal status of the settlement, it probably started as a village. In 1786 Wentzel von Brognard referred to Burgas, using the term *casaba*, which he interpreted as *a small market town*.<sup>28</sup>

28. Shtelian Shterionov, Южното Черноморие през Възраждането [The South-

During the years of anarchy (c.1790-c.1815) Burgas was occasionally a residence of a local *ayan*, while in other moments the settlement's control was seized through brute force by chieftains from outside the town, such as Seyfulla, the villainous *ayan* of Aytos. The Ottoman government was trying to use the quasi-formal title of *ayan* in its attempts to put the feuds under control. For instance, in order to tame Deli Kadri, one of the most notorious brigands in Thrace, in 1805-1806 the authorities granted him amnesty and confirmed his position as an *ayan* of Burgas, from where he had been previously expelled.<sup>29</sup> There is no evidence of army garrison in or around Burgas during the period of chaos, although such possibly existed. At least some time before the Russo-Turkish war (1828-1829) Burgas had been fortified (or reinforced) by a small fort with artillery, located southern of the town. In 1829 Russians captured six cannons there as well as some trophies on the St. Anastasia Island.<sup>30</sup>

For the two decades following the Adrianople Treaty Burgas was quickly expanding in economic terms, but it was still poorly developed, smaller in population than Anchialo or Sozopol, and dependent on the former's authorities. The shift came with the administrative reform across the Ottoman Empire beginning in the 1840s. A *firman* issued on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1851 declared Burgas a centre of *kaza*.<sup>31</sup> The head of the local administration was holding the title of *müdüür*. He was subordinated to the *mutesarif* (i.e. the regional governor) of the Sliven *sanjak* (Turkish: *İslimie sancak*), in his turn subordinated to the *vali* of the Adrianople *eyalet*. The territory of the Burgas *kaza* was formed by the transfer of the southern side of former Anchialo *kaza* from its centre. Apart from that, the hinterland *kaza* of Russocastro (Turkish: *Rusikasri*), located further west, was abolished and its territory divided between Burgas, Anchialo and Aytos. In this way Burgas assumed the administration of a large area on the shore from Rezovo (then *Rezovaya*) to the South to Athanassovo to the North together with a considerable hinterland. Sixty-eight settlements fell under its control: 9 villages from Rus-

---

ern Black Sea Side during the National Revival] (Sofia: Tomel, 1999), 41-42.

29. Karayotov et al., *Burgas, the Eternal Haven*, 98-99.

30. Karayotov et al., *Burgas, the Eternal Haven*, p.102.

31. Shterionov, *The Greeks on the Bulgarian Lands in 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c. (until 1878)* Vol.1, p. 277.

socastro kaza (including the former kaza centre), plus 56 villages and three towns (Vassiliko (today Tsarevo), Ahtopol and Sozopol) formerly belonging to the kaza of Anchialo.<sup>32</sup>

During the later Tanzimat years (1856-1878) Burgas kept being upgraded. No later than 1862 Anchialo kaza was merged into the Burgas one. A document dating from 1866 states that because of the merge, the position of the Anchialo *müdüir* Suleiman Hussain effendi was vacated and the last one remained 'unoccupied'. Still from other documents it can be inferred that the Anchialo kaza, in fact a remainder of it, survived as a unit included into the larger Burgas kaza. The head of the Burgas administration was promoted from the rank of *müdüir* to that of a *kaymakam*. In the course of the Vilayet Reform (1864-1876) in 1867 Burgas with its *kaza* was placed into the newly established Adrianople (Edirne) *Vilayet*, as a part of the Sliven *Sanjak*.

Apart from the territorial authority, concentrated in the *konak* (the house of the regional administration), in the 1860s and 1870s there was another important institution in Burgas – the *belediye* (the municipality). Its concern was the town itself with its problems. The different communities – the Muslim, the Greek, the Bulgarian, etc., were treated as formally distinctive and self-governing bodies, responsible to the *müdüir/kaymakam*. Besides that, the town received some improvements. The presence of vice-consulates raised the needs for better communication. The regular Turkish post service was the first to appear. Second to it, in 1860s the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company (ROPiT) established an agency with a post bureau for its use.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, in 1860 a telegraph station was opened.<sup>34</sup>

Immediately after the Liberation of Burgas by the Russians in January 1878, a new body of town administration was constituted – the Burgas' *Council* (Bulgarian term: *Burgaski savet*). The first Christian mayor, Nico Popov, brother of the above quoted Metropol-

32. Tsveta Raitchevska, Учредяване и административно-териториален обхват на каза Пиргос (Бурац) [Foundation and Administrative Territory of kaza Pyrgos (Burgas)] – Bulletin des Musees de la Bulgarie du Sud-Est, Vol. XVIII, Plovdiv, 1995, 120-121.

33. Tonev, *The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast during the National Revival Period*, p.30.

34. Вестник „България“ [Bulgaria Newspaper], №66 (21 June 1860).

itan Symeon, was elected on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1878. Under the terms of the Berlin Treaty (July 1878) Burgas and its region became a part of the newly established province of Eastern Rumelia, an autonomous and self-governing province of the Ottoman Empire. Following the Eastern Rumelia regulations the Burgas Council acted as a representative entity for all the various nationalities in town. Among the first 9 members of the Council 6 were Bulgarians, 3 were Turks and 1 was Greek. This configuration might not strictly reflect the real ethno-confessional proportions in the seaside town then, but it certainly expressed the rapidly increasing role of the Bulgarians both in the port and in the whole province. In 1882 the Council was reorganised into Burgas *Town Hall* (Bulgarian term: *gradsko kmetstvo*).<sup>35</sup> After the Unification of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality of Bulgaria (6<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1885), the town's ruling body was restructured again in 1886. From this year onwards it was re-configured as Burgas *Town Municipal Administration* (Bulgarian term: *gradsko obshtinsko upravlenie*). This form of the urban governing body and its title remained stable for a notably long period until 1943.

During the Russian Temporary Administration (1878-1879) Burgas' role as a regional centre was reaffirmed and this status continued during the Rumelian period (1879-1885).<sup>36</sup> The whole territory of the autonomous province was divided into six administrative and territorial units. Following the French administrative model they were called *departments* and their heads – *perfects*. The Burgas *Department*, one of these six, controlled an area significantly larger than the pre-war *kaza*. From the latter were cut the southernmost lands, including Ahtopol and Vassiliko on the shore, which remained outside Eastern Rumelia, under the direct rule of the Ottoman Empire. The department however included the areas of Anchialo, Messemvria, Aytos and Karnobat. The leading administrative position of Burgas in the wider area became an irreversible factor from then on.

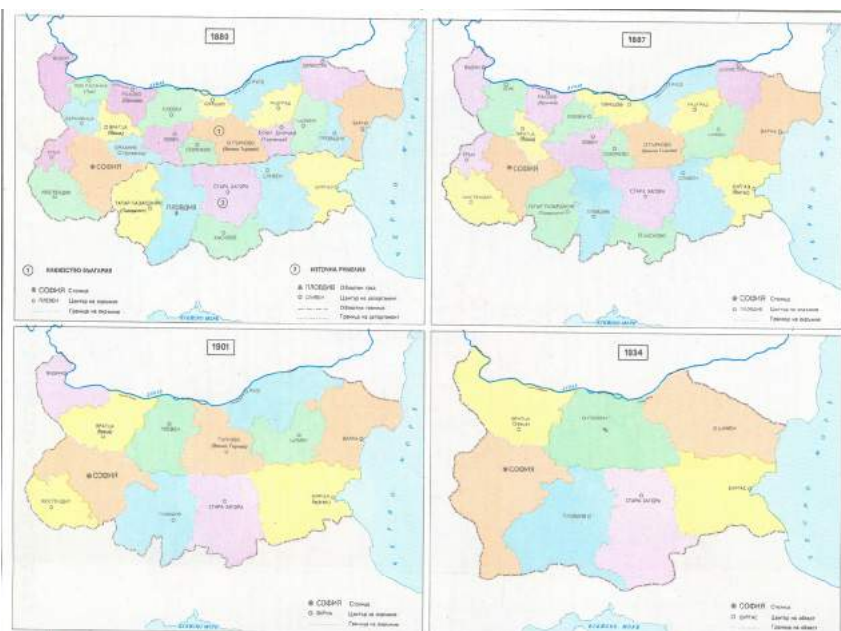
Following the Unification (1885) the Burgas Department kept its

---

35. Devi Symeonov, Бургас – поглед отвътре [Burgas – A Look from Inside] (Burgas: Znatsi, 2008), p.8.

36. *Encyclopaedia Bulgaria*, Vol.1. See: Map of the administrative-territorial division of Bulgaria.

territorial and functional span, the only important change being the use of the Slavic term *okryzhie* (region) instead of the word *department*, derived from the French administrative nomenclature. At the end of the hereby discussed period, in 1901 another administrative enlargement of the area under the jurisdiction of Burgas took place. The Sliven *okryzhie* was dissolved and its territory was ceded to that of Burgas. (See Map 3). The former subordination was reversed: now Sliven was managed by Burgas. The enlarged Burgas region would be preserved until 1946. In the ecclesiastical sphere however the past positions of authority were retained: the Metropolitan of Sliven kept his jurisdiction over the Orthodox Christians in Burgas. The Greek community, who recognised the Patriarchal authority of Constantinople, also remained within the Diocese of Anchialo until its abolishment in the early 20<sup>th</sup> c.



Map 3. Territorial span of the Burgas Region from 1880 to 1934. (In Bulgarian).

Source: Енциклопедия България, Т.1. [Encyclopaedia Bulgaria, Vol.1], (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1978), Map of the Administrative and Territorial Division of Bulgaria.



## Economy

'The port and the wooden pier begot this noisy town', exclaimed about Burgas the writer Anton Strashimirov (1872-1937) and his remark is completely valid historically. For a long period of time the most decisive aspect of Burgas' economy was the trade between the lands behind the port and the lands beyond the sea. In the beginning Burgas' own role in this interaction was merely that of a mediator. The town was not a particularly developed centre of artisanal production. The craftsmen's articles were generally produced for local consumption and did not play a special role in the export. The subterranean resources would not be used until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Thus the main home products of Burgas were: grape/spirits, salt and fish. Sales of all these products however were seriously rivalled by other nearby competitors.

The well-developed viticulture in the town's vicinity was based on large lots of vineyards (from 60-70 acres to 150-160 acres) and provided a considerable source of income for their owners.<sup>37</sup> The grape, wine and rakia, produced at Burgas had to face however competition by the famous Anchialo wines and rakia, and the former probably could not compete successfully with the latter on the wider market until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.

Quite alike the viticulture, up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. Burgas salt production from the Athanassovo lake was completely overshadowed by that of the renowned Anchialo saltworks.<sup>38</sup> Although larger in area: 16.9 sq. km (cf. 6.7 sq. km of the Anchialo lake) and occasionally exceeding in salinity (reaching up to 250 per mile in some arid summers), the Athanassovo lake in the past centuries was not used for salt production to the same extent as its Anchialo counterpart. During the earlier Ottoman period (before the Tanzimat) the inhabitants of Athanassovo probably enjoyed a privileged tax-paying status as *tuzacı* (Turkish for salt-workers). Their method of salt-making was different from that of Anchialo and was called Fochan after the

---

37. *Jubilee Volume 80 Years from the Liberation of Burgas*, p.60.

38. Elena Grozdanova, Stephan Andreev, Соларството по Българското Черноморие през XV - XIX век [The Saltmaking on the Bulgarian Coast of the Black Sea in 15th - 19th c.] (Sofia: Bibliotheque Nationale 'Cyrille et Methode', 1982), p.10, 77.

Anatolian city of Phocaea (Focha). Eventually in 1905 the Burgas saltworks were taken on 30 year commission by the Russian-Bulgarian company *A. Iliev & Co. I. S. Turshu*, and started yielding enough output shortly later, in 1909.

As to the fishing, Burgas catch passed almost unnoticed on the broader fish market, dwarfed by that of Anchialo's and especially of Sozopol's fishers.<sup>39</sup> The reasons were the centuries-longer tradition in this craft and the previously gained rights over fishing zones. Sozopol possessed the right over the largest fishing area in the local littoral waters and the best-developed facilities, so they secured the supremacy in the branch for the ancient city. Squeezed between the larger and more profitable zones of the neighbours, Burgas' fishers had few facilities for marine fishing. Yet they were not completely losing the competition. In the sea they caught mostly mackerel. This mackerel was salted and was sold in the hinterland, reaching as far as Stara Zagora and Plovdiv. Fortunately for the Burgas fishers the Vaya and the Mandra lakes were also at their disposal. At first they used only hooks for lake fishing, but then nets were introduced as well, so sometimes the catch reached up to 500 t of fish annually. Carp and mullet made up the most of the freshwater catch.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the phenomena described in the paragraphs above, during the Ottoman period Burgas could not realise its potential as a shipbuilding centre. Other local ports (Messemvria, Sozopol and Vassiliko) were regionally specialised in shipbuilding. Yet there were some facilities for building smaller vessels at Burgas too – fisher boats of all kinds and *maunas* (large flat-bottomed boats, generally used for cargo transfers pier-to-ship and vice versa). There were skilful Burgas masters for fixing and maintenance of ships and boats. Moreover, with the growth of trade Burgas became the hub where shipwrights from outside came to buy quality material for their work. Some of the Burgas surroundings provided excellent wooden material for vessels and were renowned locally among the shipwrights.<sup>41</sup>

To outline, despite having potential advantages, neither salt, nor

---

39. Shterionov, *The Southern Black Sea Side during the National Revival*, 169-170.

40. Shterionov, *The Southern Black Sea Side during the National Revival*, 131-132.

41. Shterionov, *The Southern Black Sea Side during the National Revival*, p.106, p.122.

fish, nor any other town's own product could secure the leadership of Burgas economy on the local shore. What was really making a difference on the port of Burgas was the grain from Thrace. It was the maritime trade with cereals that made Burgas successful in its rivalry with the close port towns, especially with Anchialo. How did it actually happen?

The competition between the two port-towns was discussed in an interesting report of the Russian vice-consul, based in Varna, dating from 1862. The report states that the City council of Anchialo deliberately discouraged the foreign merchants to trade grain at their own port, believing that their advantageous commercial positions could be retained this way against the endangering foreign competition. As a result, the outsiders moved to Burgas, settled there and re-dispatched the cargo traffic previously focused at Anchialo. It was a grave mistake for the Anchialo traders, the report concludes, since in the Ottoman Empire the foreigners were stronger than the native dwellers. Moreover, the granaries in Anchialo became insufficient so the local merchants had to use the Burgas storehouses anyway. The Bulgarian historian Velko Tonev assessed this information as somewhat anecdotal, but valuable in its essence<sup>42</sup> and his conclusion has been reaffirmed by later authors. Shterionov, for example, also points out at the inertia of the old commercial establishment in Messemvria, Anchialo, Sozopol, etc., as a major setback compared to the vacuum on the Burgas market, where outsiders and local starters could take part in the business more easily.<sup>43</sup>

On the other side, some of the most influential ship owners, who operated in the port of Burgas were actually citizens of Anchialo, Messemvria or Sozopol. In this context the typical portrayal of a competition between towns can be confronted, at least partly, with the evidence of some opportunistic use of the new port by entrepreneurs of the older ones. This is especially valid in what concerns the closest of these commercial centers, Anchialo, both a rival and a user of Burgas' opportunities.

The rich farming region of Thrace found in Burgas outlet for its crops as early as in the 18<sup>th</sup> c. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. cereal

---

42. Tonev, *The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast during the National Revival Period*, p.129.

43. Shterionov, *The Southern Black Sea Side during the National Revival*, p.158.

trade through the sea expanded, following the increasing demands of Ottoman Empire's capital. For the first quarter of the century Burgas was the port where a considerable share of the state demanded grain from Thrace was loaded. Yet in this period the ports of Messemvria, Anchialo, Sozopol and Vassiliko also exported grain, some of them in similar quantities to those from Burgas to Burgas. The grain trade was a state monopoly of the Ottoman Empire until the end of 1830s. As such it was an object of numerous regulations and compulsory terms the main concern of which was to guarantee the delivery of commodities to the capital on the Bosphorus. The exclusive consumer of the grain loaded in Burgas in this period was Constantinople, predominantly the state bakeries in the huge imperial capital city. To far lesser extent, other freights were directed to certain cities in the European and Anatolian provinces, Crete and North Africa. Hardly any shipping was directed toward foreign countries before 1830s.<sup>44</sup>

Following the Balta-Liman Convention (1838) between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain and the subsequent trade agreements with other countries (up to 1846 when the trade agreement with Russia was concluded), the Sublime Porte removed all the hindrances in front of the free trade navigation and the free commercial activity at the Black Sea ports. Pressed by the stronger foreign powers, the Ottomans agreed to open of the Black Sea waters for foreign trade vessels, to abolish of the state monopolies, as well as to fix the duty rates at five percent on imported goods and twelve percent on exported ones. The crucial factor in the case of Burgas was the removal of the monopoly restrictions on cereal exports. From that moment the market dynamics at Port Burgas soared.<sup>45</sup>

An impressive account of the commerce in Burgas and the place of the Westerners venturing in it was given by the French traveller Xavier Hommaire de Hel, who sailed along the Western Black Sea coast in 1846. *'Burgas is the liveliest point on this shore due to two Genoese captains, who created its commercial reputation just five-six years ago. Before that no merchant had known Burgas even by name. A few operations performed ashore by these Genoese were followed by others, fortunate likewise, which drew the attention of the neighbours. From this*

---

44. Tonev, *The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast during the National Revival Period*, 98-100.

45. Tonev, *The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast during the National Revival Period*, 100-102.

moment on things went on so quickly, that in 1842 a lot of merchants from Constantinople (among them two Frenchmen as well – the *monsieurs* Barthelemy Medanne and Joseph Bonald) established numerous agencies in Burgas. In 1845 105 loads of cargo were conveyed, amounting 1 200 000 kilograms of wheat. All these loads are passing through Constantinople and in their large part are being exported to Europe...'<sup>46</sup>

Autumn was the most dynamic season in Burgas. The foreign ships were usually coming empty with the sole purpose of being loaded with grain. From the other side, after the harvest hundreds of farmers and traders with their carts and cattle were flocking to the harbour. Some authors estimate a daily amount of 2000 carts, driven by oxen or buffalos, on some particular days reaching up to 20 000. They were coming from a perimeter extending to Stara Zagora (distance about 170 km) and even to more remote places. The seasonal tides of grain sellers were the impetus for the first inns (*hans*) to appear in the outskirts of the town. The granaries and the other stores increased in number and volume. The granaries, both private and state-owned, were first built of wood, but with the time they were gradually replaced by stone constructions.<sup>47</sup>

The list of cereals up to the late 1840s included wheat (no less than 90 percent of the whole volume), barley, and rye. Around 1848-1851 maize and oats started being introduced as commodities on the local market. During the Crimean War the share of wheat slightly diminished, giving way to other cultures used as fodder. The wheat was sold mostly as threshed grain, but also as flour and on some rare occasions as not-threshed sheaves. In addition to this, rusk was also prepared and sold, normally in limited quantities only for sailors' use, but far more in wartime, when there was a demand for army provision. Although the trend of cereal demand at Burgas port was generally upward, the export figures were extremely unstable up to the 1860s. There were years of surprisingly low sales (1845 for instance – mere 1000 t grain shipped because of a governmental ban on export) followed by the other extremity

---

46. Vassil Vassilev (ed.) България. Френска хроника (1841-1878). Кореспонденции и гравюри от „Илюстрацион“ [Bulgaria. French Chronicle (1841-1878). Correspondence and Engravings from *L'illustration*] (Sofia: Trud, 1998), p.46.

47. *Jubilee Volume 80 Years from the Liberation of Burgas*, 58-59.

(1846 – 20 000 t freights after the ban's removal). The reasons were complex – abundance or scarcity of yields in Thrace or in the importing countries; price speculations of merchants and jobbers; social tensions, etc.<sup>48</sup>

The increasing export of cereals after 1838 quickly drew the attention of entrepreneurs from the neighbouring towns as well as of others from the Ottoman capital city, the Greek Kingdom, the Aegean Islands and the Italian states. A considerable number of businessmen came to Burgas and started taking part into the grain trade. Among these outsiders (mainly Greeks, Turks and Italians) who were taking over the business in Burgas we read the surnames of Dimitrakopoulo, Palimeris, Sigezza (the same being the Italian vice-consul in town), Tashanli, Bilis et al. Jewish merchants also started taking part - in 1870 Jacob Prezenti established a trading house for cereal export and banking with a seat in Constantinople and branches in Burgas and Karnobat.<sup>49</sup>

Not all entrepreneurs were involved into wholesale; some were brokers or freighters. Around 1862 the brokerage at Burgas was 2-3 percent on sale's amount, while the freight price depended on the distance. Yet the market was not well developed in some aspects, there were no insurance companies for example, so freights had to be insured in Constantinople or elsewhere possible. Others ventured into profitable farming. Around Burgas there were a lot of Turkish *chifliks*, a development which probably was following the increase of the grain commerce. Leasing and purchase of *chifliks* became another booming business in the region. It attracted both Ottoman subjects and foreigners. Among the latter was the British vice-consul in Burgas Charles Brophy, apparently capable of balancing politics and agriculture.<sup>50</sup>

From the 1860s Bulgarian entrepreneurs also made their first attempts to succeed in Burgas. The most impressive of them was the career of Dimitar Brakalov (1840-1903). Appearing here around 1864-1865, he took up with leasing. Brakalov at first exploited two *chifliks*, the Turkish owners of which lived in Constantinople.

---

48. Shterionov, *The Southern Black Sea Side during the National Revival*, 158-165.

49. *Jubilee Volume 80 Years from the Liberation of Burgas*, 58-59.

50. Tonev, *The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast during the National Revival Period*, p.128.

Later on he gradually took over another two. Being a Bulgarian patriot, he became the leader of the Bulgarian *obshtina* in Burgas. Being a frequent visitor to the *kaymakam* for business issues, he achieved certain social benefits for the Bulgarian community. After his success as an estate manager Dimitar Brakalov turned his eyes to grain merchandise. Failing to establish a pure Bulgarian venture, he managed nevertheless to succeed, using those whom he would otherwise name 'the arch-enemy', i.e. the Greek trading establishment. His declared patriotism did not prevent him from marrying the only daughter of Arkadios Dimitrakopoulo, one of the biggest Greek merchants on the local cereal market, and progressing with the help of his father-in-law's ties.<sup>51</sup>

Apart from cereals, the maritime trade at Burgas included various other products. During the Ottoman period (before 1878) the essential export list included also wood and charcoal (from the Strandja Mountain), salt (from Athanassovo and Anchialo), fish (Burgas own catch and re-export of the neighbouring ports), spirits (wine and *rakia*, from the regions of Burgas itself, Anchialo, Aytos and Karnobat), dairy products (from the Hassekiya, the eastern Balkan, the Thracian Lowlands etc.) wool and textile (especially Sliven woollen fabric), rose oil (from the Rose Valleys around Karlovo, Kalofer and Kazanluk), wrought iron (from Little Samokov) and hardware (notably gun barrels, wrought in Sliven of Little Samokov's iron). The articles given had their own marketing dynamics. It should be noticed, for instance, the obvious decline of the wrought iron from a key export item (until 1830s) to an object of import after 1850s.

As to the articles imported in Burgas, the list was quite diverse. It included foods and drinks (sugar, rice, coffee, olive oil, fruit, etc.), textile (mostly cotton and silk), knitwear, household goods (kitchenware, soap, candles, needles, etc.), hardware, leather, fur and many others. Only a small part of these goods was remaining for retail in Burgas. The major share of the import was directed towards present day South Bulgaria (including Plovdiv) as well as to a part of Central North Bulgaria (Gabrovo especially), although

---

51. Symeon, Metropolitan of Varna and Preslav, *Works*, Vol.1, p.123.

the import through Varna had also a big share there.<sup>52</sup>

The hub for all that turnover of goods, men and capitals, was the port area. In the earlier accounts (up to 1830) the condition of Port Burgas was often described by a paradox: *Burgas is a good harbour indeed, but a port in fact there is not*. (Note that in some languages there is no clear distinction between *harbour* (= the physical area) and *port* (= the facilities)). It was perhaps in 1830s when the first wooden pier (local term: *skelya*, *skele*, etc.) was built. After a few decades of busy cargo shipping, around 1878 Port Burgas still had as few as five wooden piers.<sup>53</sup> They were all of them 40-50 m long, reaching about 3-4 m depth. Their purpose was strictly defined as follows:

1. The customs pier. It was the broadest one (width 4-5 m.) with 4 little hoists. Generally the cargo was loaded / unloaded there, after the check of a customs officer.
2. The pier of the quarantine service. Sailors and passengers who got off at Burgas had to land on it and to be examined by a physician.
3. A pier in front of the grain storehouse of Christos Dionysiadis.
4. A pier in front of the grain storehouse of Arkadios Dimitrakopoulo.
5. A pier in front of the grain storehouse of Antonis Kokkinos.

The three last piers are an obvious example for the role of the cereal commodities on the port as well as the role of the private enterprise in the facilities' improvement. Apparently the public administration was far less interested in it than some individual marketers.

The port had its own convention about measurements, slightly different from that of other ports. Grain in particular was measured in *kile* (*kilo*) and/or *shinik* (bushel). Both actually were measurements for volume, not for weight. The Burgas *kile* equalled two Constantinople *kile*-s or 66, 3 French litres. *Shiniks*/ bushels were

---

52. Shterionov, *The Southern Black Sea Side during the National Revival*, 183-191.

53. Tsviatko Tsviatkov, Lazar Попов, История на пристанище Бургас (1903-1963) [History of Port Burgas (1903-1963)] (Burgas: Gueorgi Kirkov, 1963), p. 6.



probably 1/8 or 1/10 of the kile. The weight equivalent of a Burgas kile was 40-44 *oka*, depending on the sort and the kind of grain. The *oka* was the basic weight measurement, which at Port Burgas equalled to 1, 282 kg.<sup>54</sup>

Finally, a decade after the Liberation of Burgas from the Ottoman Empire the idea of upgrading the main Bulgarian ports came underway. The maritime infrastructure together with the railways was an object of the Act about the Construction of the Railway Yambol – Burgas, of Port Varna and Port Burgas (20<sup>th</sup> January 1889). The building of the railway was implemented quickly. In 1890 Burgas was connected to the line Yambol – Nova Zagora – Tyrnovo Seymen (now Simeonovgrad) and through the junction there it accessed the main rail artery Constantinople – Budapest. Two years later the line (initially it ended at the outskirts around the Vaya Lake) was prolonged to the harbour. Thus cargo and people transportation ashore were largely activated.<sup>55</sup>

The building of the port took a longer time however. In 1892 the government of Stambolov contracted in Vienna a credit for 142 780 000 golden *levs* for construction of the two ports (Varna and Burgas). The English engineer Hartley performed the preparatory geological and hydrological surveys at Burgas. A couple of construction plans were not implemented for various reasons. Finally, the French engineer Guérard, famous for his work at the Port of Marseilles, received the commission for the plan. Meanwhile in 1894 the Belgian company *A. Casse et H. Liekens* won the state auction for the implementation. In April 1899 Engineer Guérard submitted his project to the contractors. *A. Casse et H. Liekens* however failed to complete the lot so they reassigned the contact to the French society *Les Batignolles*. Eventually, as an outcome after eight years of hard work and 7 080 000 golden *levs* total expenses, the modern Port Burgas was ready in 1903. The harbour area was 60 ha, surrounded by two bending-lines quays (common length 2 645 m) with a 200 m opening between the two for the incoming/outgo-

---

54. Tonev, *The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast during the National Revival Period*, 126-128.

55. Юбилеен сборник 80 години от освобождението на Бургас [Jubilee Volume 80 Years from the Liberation of Burgas] (Burgas: 1958), p.62.

ing vessels. The haven's bottom was fixed at depth 7.5 m.<sup>56</sup>

Long before the proper port was built Burgas had been witnessing a very important competition, discernible mostly by seamen: the competition between different types of ships. Here the different types of ships were the competitors. Before the local seafaring was truly opened for the foreigners at 1830s, the prevailing types were the locally developed Black Sea ships and to a lesser extent some vessels of Levantine, especially of Aegean origin. The *barque* then ventured into the sea and from the 1840s on it became the main kind of large vessel at the Burgas haven, easily recognisable with its clear lines. The average barque at the shores in question was about 400 t., but sometimes there came barques that were real giants for the local waters (1000-1500 tonnage). Most of the barques were owned by Westerners, but there were also such owned by Turkish and Greek owners.<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile steamers found their way to the Black Sea too. From 1848 onwards Burgas was introduced as a regular stop for the steamships of the Austrian company *Lloyd Trieste* (the Austrian Lloyd). In 1851 the Turkish steamship agency *Société Ottomane de Constantinople* implemented a weekly line travelling Constantinople – Burgas.<sup>58</sup> Apart from them many other steamers under various flags entered the harbour. Up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. the steamers were less in number than the sail ships but their total tonnage was quickly and constantly increasing (See Table 2).

Soon after the Liberation (1878) the town's economy started feeling the heavy blow of cheap import. In 1889 the Port Burgas import amounted about 22 382, 5 t, while the export was 14 963, 8 t. Yet the town industry was trying to make its way. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. the mill industry developed, due to the increasing flour trade. The flour was exported mainly to Constantinople, Adrianople and Alexandria. During the earlier period there were a few wind-mills and horse-driven mills around Burgas. In 1888 the first mill mechanically driven by a locomobile of a thresher machine, was

---

56. Tsviatkov, Popov, *History of Port Burgas (1903-1963)*, 6-9. *Jubilee Volume 80 Years from the Liberation of Burgas*, p. 62.

57. Shterionov, *The Southern Black Sea Side during the National Revival*, 63-90.

58. *Jubilee Volume 80 Years from the Liberation of Burgas*, p.58.

built by Ivan Hadjipetrov. It was upgraded afterwards, so in 1895 it reached a daily output of 3 wagons. In the new century the mill development continued with the 160 horse powers steam engine replacing the locomobile. Other industrial facilities that emerged in Burgas in that period were the soap factory of Nikolaides Bros., which produced white and green Turkish soaps, the hard liquor factory of Ginelli Bros., as well as the macaroni factory of Amira Bros. All these industries were focused on the local consumer and their production rarely found realisation further afield.<sup>59</sup>

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. commerce still progressed better in Burgas than crafts and industry: in 1892-1893 there were about 18 trading companies and about 10 brokerage & shipping companies in Burgas. Trade with cereals remained the main share of the export, however the main players were gradually changing. Some of the established Greek traders, such as Arkadios Dimitrakopoulo and Triantafilos Krionas kept their ties with the traditional market partners and remained stable. Jewish entrepreneurs enlarged their share – the already mentioned *Prezenti* house was joined by others like the French based *Louis Dreyfus & Co.*, which opened a branch here as in most of the Black Sea harbours. Bulgarian trader names also appeared – Russi Russev and Nikola Kiselov. Table 2 below is provided for a more detailed impression on the export-import dynamics in the late 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> c. In 1899 the import at Burgas was 4 000 t (cotton, iron, spirit, etc.). In the same year export reached 15 000 t, of which 75 percent was grain food. The rest of the amount consisted of various other articles among which the most important place was held by dried fish and Sliven's woollen fabric, which retained its place in the Ottoman market.<sup>60</sup>

---

59. *Jubilee Volume 80 Years from the Liberation of Burgas*, 60-61.

60. Tsviatkov, Popov, *History of Port Burgas (1903-1963)*, *Historical reference 2*.

**Table 2**  
**Data on the dynamics in Port Burgas in five-year periods;**

Years (in 5-year periods)	Number of Ships			Amount of Goods: Tons Loaded		
	Total number	Steamers	Tonnage (in thou- sands)	Im- port	Export	Total
1886-1890	1668	225	215	9 889	32 148	42 073
1891-1895	1074	385	346	25 829	76 164	101 993
1896-1900	1122	413	388	33 352	71 541	104 893
1901-1905	1342	547	550	23 134	166 654	189 788
1906-1910	1701	669	635	58 008	101 581	159 589

Source: Tsviatko Tsviatkov, Lazar Popov, *History of Port Burgas (1903-1963)* (Burgas: Gueorgi Kirkov, 1963), Addendum: Historical references 1 and 2.

### *Conclusion*

If we now turn back to the question put forward in the beginning, we may provide at least a few important answers about the reason(s) of the Burgas' impressive progress. First, it was certainly not the sensible use of the local natural resources that accounts for it. Their real development was just commencing at the very end of the 19th and in the early 20th c.

Second, the government administration had a significant impact on the whole process. At first Burgas was supported by the Ottoman authorities for military and demographic reasons. Still, up to 1830s the main factor was the exploitation of the periphery by the imperial centre. Economy was focused on the state-regulated (and compulsory) supplies of grain, wood, salt, fish, dairy products, etc. In this respect, the province did not receive much more than a bare living. After the start of the Tanzimat the situation rapidly changed. The positive change was due to a few Ottoman decisions – the opening of the Black Sea to free navigation, the removal of the state monopolies and the introduction of a new territorial division. All

these changes were favourable to Burgas. Nevertheless, the reform policy of the Sublime Porte contributed only partly to the port-city's advance. Even when the reforms were generally well-meant in Constantinople, they were frequently ill-performed at the local level. The last statement could be proved by many examples - the weak urban planning of Burgas, the unresolved water scarcity problem or the poor state of the port facilities, among the others. All these were symptoms of the old exploitation attitude: use of the opportunity appearing in the moment without investing in long-term improvements. This attitude was gradually challenged after the town became a part of Bulgaria, and still the advance in this direction was slow until the end of the 19th c.

Third, the (commercial) discovery of Burgas by the European Powers was instrumental for the city-port's progress. The interference of the European political factors and the pressure of the stronger Western economies gave the major impetus on the Ottoman reforms, sometimes they even did it forcefully. The incorporation of the port-town of Burgas in the free system of international grain commerce after 1838 was the most substantial factor for its further economic and social development. The age of modernity came to Burgas almost sharply together with the overseas merchants, barques and steamers, post and telegraph. Yet most of the trade and navigation was conducted under regional flags: the Ottoman, the Greek, the Ionian, and the Wallachian. The Russian flag could be added to them as well. Viewed in long terms, the role of the Italians and the Austrians (some of whom also Levantines), let alone the more distant participants, for the navigation and trade was in its essence more as a catalyst agent activating the local economic resources.

Finally, the enterprising spirit was an essential factor for the growth of the nineteenth century Burgas. It cannot be judged invariably as a positive phenomenon. The times, discussed in this paper, were benefitting rather start-ups than insiders and quick profit rather than long-term investment. Unscrupulous men and unrestrained ambitions were taking the larger share. As stated above in regard of the administration, careless exploitation of the opportunities was a typical approach to the town's economy and social life. But there was also the other side of the coin. Profit-seekers

sometimes were turning to benefactors; start-ups with the passing of time became insiders. Traditions sustained despite of the modernity's tide. As time went on, the town's environment was modernised.

A very interesting feeling characterises a lot of reflections about the social history of Burgas, concerning both 19th and 20th centuries. It is the sense that some time before the given moment Burgas was a smaller and ill-developed place, but now things are far more improved. At the same time there is always nostalgia about that past, when life in the port town was simpler and had some elusive charm. This persistent feeling of renewal and still adherence to some core of tradition is the point where the present overview of the 19th c. socio-economic history of Burgas comes to an end. Perhaps it is also a good starting point for a further research to start from.

## 7.

### The Black Sea port-city in the road of modernization. The first modern attempts in Varna during the 1840s – 1870s

Ivan Roussev  
University of Economics (Varna)

Modernization is an important change in social life and marks the transition from traditional to industrial society. The process began in Western Europe during the Industrial Revolution and the political revolutions of the eighteenth century, mainly the French revolution (1789–1799). Its ideas were inspired by the Enlightenment. In François Voltaire's opinion modernization included the societies which, from his own time's point of view, were live as a state structure, had a rich cultural tradition in their past and a promising future. In Voltaire's times 'modern' meant 'contemporary', as opposed to 'ancient', or 'medieval'. Consequently this notion began to be used as the 'new', i.a. that which was different from the 'previous'. To sum it up, modernization is perceived as a general theory about the process of social change and interpretation of the contemporary human development<sup>1</sup>.

The process of modernization reached the Balkans and the Black Sea region in the nineteenth century through the intensification of relations with Western Europe during this time. Especially for the Black Sea region, the most important factors stimulating the pro-

---

1. R. Daskalov, *Kak se misli Balgarskoto vazrajdanje* [How do they think about the Bulgarian National Revival]. (Sofia 2002), 84–85; E. Nikolova, "Balkanskata istoria, razkazana kato modernizacija" [Bulgarian History told like a Modernization], in *Iubileen sbornik. Izsledvania v chest na 80-godishninata na prof. Krastiu Manchev*, eds. Paradigma (Sofia 2006), 574–575; N. Danova, "Po trudnia pat na modernizaciata: belejki varhu cenzurata na Balkanite prez XVIII-XIX v." [On the Difficult Road of the Modernization: Notes about the Censorship in the Balkans during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries], *Istorichesko badeshte*, 15/1–2 (2010), 81–105.

cess were the removal of the monopoly restrictions in the Ottoman Empire, the trade conventions concluded between the Empire and several European states (1838–1846) and the beginning of mass grain-export towards the Mediterranean and West European ports at the end of the 1830s. As a result of all these factors the number of European merchants in the region grew and the first European consulates were established<sup>2</sup>.

Being the biggest port-city of the Western Black Sea, Varna wasn't an exception to the rule. The history of the town during the 1840s – 1870s is full of interesting attempts to modernize the local economy and city life: trade was modernized, city-planning and architecture improved, transport and communications developed; the beginnings of the development of modern entertainment were also set during this period.

Actually, a great part of historical sources for this period of Varna's history is in fact produced by the agents of the above-mentioned modernization. Thanks to these sources, we can get a more complete idea about the city and its citizens. The sources we are talking about are the reports of foreign consuls stationed in Varna during the 1840s – 1870s, the notes of European travellers, the memoirs and books of contemporaries, the information about Varna and Varniotes published in the press at that time.

There is a close link between the big advance of trade, the process of establishment of foreign consulates and the modernization of Varna during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. In the 1840s, Varna was the only town in the region of Southwestern Black Sea where a great number of consulates had been established. The increasing diplomatic interest for the city is related to its growing commercial importance. In a report of Charles Cunningham, British Vice-Consul in Galatz, written on February 22<sup>th</sup> 1840, a prediction was made in just a few years' time

---

2. Iv. Roussev, « La « Question d'Orient » et le début de la pénétration consulaire dans les ports bulgares de la mer Noire (XVIII–XIX s.) », *Historical Yearbook*, 3, (Bucharest, December 2006), 73–80 ; **Idem**, « Evropeiskoto konsulsko prisastvie v balgarskite zemi prez 40-te godini na XIX v. » [The European Consulate Presence in the Bulgarian Lands during the 1840s], in *Sbornik v chest na 70-godishninata na akad. Konstantin Kosev*, eds. Akademichesko izdatelstvo « Prof. M. Drinov » (Sofia 2009), 269–282.



the port of Varna could become one of most important Black-Sea ports<sup>3</sup>. Quickly this prediction came true. The town was included for the first time in the 1852 edition of McCulloch's Dictionary of Commerce, where it was called 'capital city of Bulgaria'<sup>4</sup>. In 1845, forty-two foreigners asking for French protection were registered in the French Vice-Consulate in Varna. There were also many foreigners who did not ask for protection, but stayed temporarily or permanently in Varna. Among them there were Greeks, Italians ('Sardinians'), Russians, Englishmen and Frenchmen for who trading was their main occupation<sup>5</sup>. The consulates in Varna were established to defend the interests of the European states and their merchants in the region. In the 1840s consulates of France, Austria, Belgium, Greece, Sardinia, England and Russia were established in Varna. Between the Crimean war (1853–1856) and the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878 agencies of Prussia (Germany), Sweden and Norway, Spain, Rumania, Holland and perhaps Portugal were also established in the town<sup>6</sup>, in sum 13 or 14 consulates, all marked with the national flags of their own countries. This interesting view distinguished Varna from other oriental cities, as these flags were a feature able to catch the eye of every foreigner crossing the port town. In 1872 the Hungarian traveller Felix Kanitz described Varna's consulates 'being specific for their flags, situated in the green of big gardens'<sup>7</sup>. The Romanian poet, publicist and politi-

---

3. "Report on the present capabilities of the Province of Bulgaria to export articles of production", Charles Cunningham, British Vice-Consul in Galatz, to Bidwell, Consular Service in London, On February 22, 1840. PRO, Foreign Office (FO), 78/409. Quoted by: M. Todorova, The Establishment of British Consulates in the Bulgarian Lands and British Commercial Interests, *Etudes balkaniques*, 4 (1973), 82.

4. J. R. McCulloch, *Dictionary of Commerce* (London 1852), 622.

5. Archives diplomatiques du ministère des Affaires étrangère (AMAE), Centre des Archives diplomatiques à Nantes (CADN), Vice-Consulat de France à Varna, vol. 1 (2mi2512), le 24 Août 1845, N<sup>o</sup> 4, Olive à Baron de Bourqueney, Ambassadeur, fol. 3a.

6. B. Drianovski. *Konsulski predstavitelstva vav Varna (1352–2006)* [The Consulate Agencies in Varna from 1352 to 2006] (Varna 2007).

7. F. Kanitz, *Dunavska Balgaria i Balkanat. Istorichesko-geografsko-etnograficheski pytepisni prouchvania ot 1860 do 1879 g.* [Bulgaria of the Danube and Balkans. Historical, Geographical and Ethnographical Travel Researches from 1860 to 1879]. Vol. III (Sofia 1995), 226.

cian Cezar Boliac, who visited the town one year earlier, remarked that it was possible to make a wholesome heraldic research just following the consulates' flags<sup>8</sup>. Apparently, by that time Europe had already placed in the environment the signs of her strong presence in Varna.

A lot of the consuls themselves were merchants or people closely related to trade. They had the necessary commercial knowledge and they actually exercised modern business: creating commercial companies, practicing trade on commission, insuring etc.. Such was the case with the first foreign diplomats established in Varna – François Gustave Olive and Adolphe Salvator Tedeschi.

In the beginning of the 1840s two men created a limited joint-stock company « Olive Tedeschi & Cie ». The circular of the company had already been deposited at the French embassy in Istanbul<sup>9</sup>.

François Gustave Olive was a grain dealer. Born in Marseille, but settled in the Orient from 1819, he was one of the notable Frenchmen in the ottoman capital<sup>10</sup>. Pursuing his commercial interests, he announced in the summer of 1842 to the French ambassador that he was ready to assume a vice-consul position in Varna without receiving a salary<sup>11</sup>. Olive dealt with all the troubles during the second period of existence of this agency (the first period was in the beginning of the nineteenth century) and headed it until December 1848 when he was replaced by his associate Adolphe Salvator Tedeschi<sup>12</sup>.

8. Cezar Boliac, *Libertatea*, 6 aprilie 1871, anul II, N: 13, 14 aprilie N: 14, 17 aprilie N: 15. Quoted by: *Rumanski patepisi ot XIX v. za balgarskite zemi* [Rumanian Travel Notes from the Nineteenth Century about the Bulgarian Lends], trans. M. Mladenova and N. Jechev (Sofia 1982), 139.

9. AMAE, CADN, Série Constantinople – D – Varna, art. 1, (s.d.), № 68, Olive à His de Butenval, chargé d'affaire.

10. In 1841–1842 his name was included in the register of fourteen French notables from Istanbul among whom were elected the judges of the court of the French Embassy: AMAE, Correspondance consulaire et commerciale (CCC), Constantinople, t. 89, fol. 358–359, 460–461.

11. AMAE, CCC, Constantinople, t. 90 (1842–1844), le 7 août 1842, baron de Bourqueney à Guizot, fol. 65.

12. Iv. Roussev, « Les premiers pas de la pénétration consulaire française en Bulgarie : le consulat de Varna », in Faruk Bilici, Ionel Căndea, Anca Popescu (eds.), *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en mer Noire (XIV<sup>e</sup> – XXI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. *Études à la mémoire de Mihail Guboglu*, (Braïla, Roumanie 2007), 677–702.

Adolphe Salvator Tedeschi was a French Jew, born in Marseille. Because of his commercial interests he and his family moved to Varna in 1837. Adolphe Salvator took Austrian citizenship and became the first Austrian Vice-consul in the town. From March 17<sup>th</sup> 1849 to April 1879<sup>13</sup> he was Vice-consul of France in Varna<sup>14</sup>. His brother Emmanuel-Marius Tedeschi was a merchant, too. From the middle of the 1850s to the 1870s Emmanuel-Marius took the functions of the consul of Belgium in Varna being at the same time responsible for the French post offices in the region<sup>15</sup>.

Thanks to their everyday contacts with foreign consuls as well as with merchants coming from Europe and the capital Istanbul, Varniotes easily and fast got into the habits of modern trade. The historical sources clearly show that in the 1840s – 1870s they knew about and used in their activities commercial partnerships, double entry book-keeping, bills of exchange, commercial correspondence, stamps, circulars, advertisement and other particulars of commercial modernization. The business activities of Rali Hadji Panayotov Mavridov (Mavridi) were e.g. of modern style. Rali Mavridi was born in Shumen, near Varna. In the 1840s and the beginning of the 1850s he was living and trading in Istanbul. In 1851 or 1852 he moved to Varna and stayed there until his death. The activity of Mavridi was full of modern initiatives: he created a number of companies that were active in trade, commission, consulting, sending coin's parcels; his associates were Bulgarians, Greeks, Armenians, Europeans; he started an initiative of creating a joint-stock compa-

---

13. AMAE, CADN, Vice-consulat à Varna, art. 14, N: 10/72.

14. The last report signed by Adolphe Salvator Tedeschi as a French Vice-Consul in Varna was dated from the 23 April 1879 (№ 42) and the first report signed by his successor, Emile Boysset was dated from the 29 April 1879 (№ 1) : AMAE, CADN, Série Constantinople - D - Varna, art. 3 - Correspondance avec le poste de Varna (4 janvier-31 décembre 1879) ; AMAE, Personnel, 2<sup>e</sup> série, № 249 - Emile Boysset.

15. A. Papadopoulos-Vretos, *La Bulgarie ancienne et moderne sous le rapport géographique, historique, archéologique, statistique et commercial*, (S. Petersbourg 1856), 222 ; Ev. Petrova, "Bratia Tedeschi" [The Brothers Tedeschi], in *Godishnik na Obshtestvenata kulturno-prosvetna organizacia na evreite v N. R. Bulgaria*, 23 (Sofia 1988), 119-122 ; V. Tonev, *Bulgarskoto Chernomorie prez Vazrajdaneto* [The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast during the National Revival Period], (Sofia 1995), 27-28.

ny; he paid special attention to commercial and accounting knowledge, he funded a translation from Greek to Bulgarian and later published a handbook of double entry (diplographia) for the needs of trade in 'Roumelia' (i.e. the Balkans, especially the Bulgarian lands)<sup>16</sup>. The business activities of Mavridi found a lot of followers in Varna during that time. Other Varniotes showed modern commercial, accounting and commercial-law culture, too. Within the growing Bulgarian society in the town the names of the brothers Nikola and Sava Georgievich, Konstantin Mihailov Tiulev, Yanko K. Slavchev, Dimitar D. Pavlov can be pointed out. They operated freely with double entry book-keeping, kept regular correspondence with their partners, used advertisements and messages in the press and were elected as members of the local commercial law-court ('Tidjaret medjlissi')<sup>17</sup>.

Undoubtedly, the commercial activities of Greek and Jew Varna residents were larger than the Bulgarian ones and with the same modernized practices. Important merchant houses included: 'Raf. Aftaleon Brothers' (change office), Skiagaluga and Assereto (commission of export and trade of grain), S. Vassilopoulo (commission of trade with stuffs), 'Abraham di Histia Behar' (export – import company and bank), 'Parasko Brothers' (import of drapery). In the 1870s a branch of the 'Ottoman Imperial Bank' was opened in Varna<sup>18</sup>.

During that period, Bulgarian Varniotes created their first joint-stock companies, drafted their statutes and printed their stocks. We know about three initiatives that were realized to a different extent at that time: Bulgarian bank "Zvezda" (1863–1864), Commercial joint-stock company "Rumeli" (1868–1869) and "Bulgarian commercial fraternal company in Varna" (1869–1874)<sup>19</sup>.

16. V. Tonev, "Rali h. P. Mavridov", in *Balgarsko vazrajdanje. Idei, lichnosti, sabitia. Godishnik na Obshtobalgarskiakomitet "V. Levski"*, vol. 3/1998–2000, (Sofia 2001), 95–108.

17. Iv. Roussev, "Proiavi na moderna organizacia i schetovodstvo v deinostta na vazrojdenskite firmi vav Varna prez XIX v." [Modern Organization and Book-keeping in the Activities of the Commercial Companies of Varna during the Nineteenth Century], *Schetovodna politika*, 9–10 (2009), 50–64.

18. F. Kanitz, *Dunavska Balgaria i Balkanat...*, Vol. III, 222.

19. Iv. Roussev, "Proiavi na moderna organizacia i schetovodstvo ...", 50–64; V. Tonev, „Za stopanskata deinost na balgarite vav Varna prez Vazrajdaneto (1840–

In the mid-nineteenth century modernization did not appear only in the economic domain. Actually, modern business activity became possible thanks to the introduction of modernity in everyday life within the city. It has been marked by the appearance of modern vehicles and communications and improved living conditions in general. On November 7<sup>th</sup> 1866, the Varna – Russe railway constructed with English capital was inaugurated. It wasn't the first, but the second railway in the region. Before that, on October 4<sup>th</sup> 1860 the first railway south of the Danube was inaugurated, between Cernavodă and Kiustendja (present day Constanța in Romania). However, soon afterwards the stream of passengers and goods on the Russe – Varna railway grew enormously because the port of Varna proved to be part of the shortest and fastest way from Central Europe to Istanbul. It is not accidental that twenty years earlier the same route had been used in another modern project related with Varna – the creation of Varna – Russe diligence connection initiated by Tedeschi brothers in the spring of 1847<sup>20</sup>. A highway between those two towns was constructed through unpaid work by local population (“angaria”) in 1865 on the order of Midhat pasha, the first governor of the Danube province (Vilayet)<sup>21</sup>.

Varna became a starting point of the first telegraph line reaching the lands to the south of the Danube in the Ottoman Empire and the Black Sea region as a whole. That happened during the Crimean War (1853–1856) when France and Great Britain constructed the outfit to be used for the needs of the armies participating in the war. The first telegraph message from Varna to Crimea, from Varna to Russe, and further on to Bucharest, Paris and London passed on

---

1878)“ [On the Economic Activities of Bulgarians in Varna during National Revival Period (1840–1878)], *Izvestia na Narodnia Muzei – Varna*, Vol. VIII, (Varna 1972), 101–131.

20. Iv. Roussev, « Varna prez 40-te godini na XIX vek. Konsulsko prisastvie, interesni sabitia i proekti v grada, otrazeni v dokladite i korespondenciatna na frenskia vicekonsul François Gustave Olive » [Varna during the 1840s. The Consul's Presence, Interesting Events and Projects in the Town Covered by the Reports and Correspondence of French Vice-Consul François Gustave Olive], *Izvestia na Narodnia Muzei – Varna*, Vol. XLII (LVII), (Varna 2006), 96–136.

21. St. Tzonev, “Stopanski oblik na grad Varna v navecherieto na Osvobojdenieto” [The Economic Appearance of Varna on the Eve of the Liberation], *Istoricheski pregled*, 1 (1973), 80–81.

April 24<sup>th</sup> 1855. After the war the outfit was sold to the Ottoman Empire and continued to be used, yet for civil needs only. In 1869 Varna kept in touch with all 35 main stations in the Danube province (Vilayet) by telegraph. Varna station had a special section for foreign telegraph communication<sup>22</sup>.

In the short time before the middle of the nineteenth century several post offices were established in Varna and again the Crimean War (1853–1856) was the event that enforced the process. The Headquarters of the allied armies and the post offices of several countries were based in Varna, those of France, Great Britain and Austria. After the war they continued working and even increased their numbers in order to serve the needs of the foreign consulates and ship companies. Apart from correspondence they have been used for transfers of coin parcels<sup>23</sup>.

The French and English presence in Varna in the years 1854–1855 left a trace that changed the oriental view of the town to a great extent. In the long expectation of military operations the two allied armies, the French and the English stationed in Varna and its surroundings had enough time for entertainment and for constructions which improved the living conditions there. The Frenchmen were more active. They participated in the reconstruction of the port, erected a sand-bar on the beach, took down some old buildings, opened cafés and clubs, named the streets putting plates: « Rue des Postes Françaises » (French post street), « Rue de l'Hôpital » (Hospital street), etc. It's interesting to note that the English war correspondents held the Frenchmen up as an example to their compatriots<sup>24</sup>. The French officers opened a club in Varna – an enjoyable place for conversations, singing, and playing domino. The need for luxury goods and delicious drinks was satis-

---

22. Iv. Roussev, « Un épisode de la modernisation des Balkans à l'époque de la Guerre de Crimée (1853–1856) : la France, l'Angleterre et la construction des premières lignes télégraphiques dans l'Empire ottoman », in Jerzy W. Borejsza (ed.), *The Crimean War 1853–1856. Colonial Skirmish or Rehearsal for World War? Empires, Nations, and Individuals*, Wydawnictwo Neriton, Instytut Historii PAN, (Warszawa 2011), 469–490; St. Tzonev, *Stopanski oblik...*, 81.

23. St. Tzonev, "Stopanski oblik...", 81.

24. The Allied Troops at Varna, *The Illustrated London News* № 690, vol. XXIV, 1 July 1854, 612.

fied by the busy trade. Besides the local goods in the town market various other articles were offered, procured on a regular basis by merchants coming from Istanbul, Toulon and Marseilles, Algeria. A French amateur theatre named “Moulin” (Water-mill) was created. The women’s roles were played by soldiers with only just budding moustache, while the costumes were taken from the wardrobes of the merchants’ wives. The public was not only there, it was even “well selected”. Sometimes there were visits from the English campus<sup>25</sup>.

During the third quarter of the nineteenth century Varna acquired a modern outlook which is visible in its architecture: the number of stone-built houses grew and as a result the risk of fires became smaller; among them were big commercial as well as public edifices – a town clock, two hospitals, and schools. The local Greek community was the first to develop modern education in Varna at that time. In the beginning of the 1860s the native Bulgarians and Turks already had secular schools of their own. Some conditions for modern entertainment have been created, too. A casino was opened and in a short time it became the centre of social life, a place for fashionable conversations. The city’s high-society indulged in reading the French newspapers “L’indépendance” and “L’Illustration” and provided themselves with modern European and Greek literature<sup>26</sup>. Felix Kanitz specially noted that the consuls and the members of foreign colonies went hunting in the surroundings of the town during their leisure time<sup>27</sup>.

The contemporaries weren’t unanimous about the level in city modernization reached at that time, even about its external aspects. According to some of the sources, Varna streets were dirty, muddy and impassible and the city lacked wide avenues. Others, however, claimed that Varna streets were “cleaner than those of Constantinople” (Dr. Camille Allard, 1855)<sup>28</sup>. Most of the sources focused their attention on the wooden buildings predominant in the city,

---

25. Pr. Belar, “Francuzite vav Varna prez 1854” [The Frenchmen in Varna during 1854], *Izvestia na Varnenskoto arheologi`chesko drujestvo*, Vol. IV, (Varna 1911), 49–68.

26. F. Kanitz, *Dunavska Balgaria i Balkanat...*, Vol. III, 209.

27. *Ibid.*, 213.

28. C. Allard, *Entre mer Noire et Danube. Dobroudja 1855*. Texte édité et présenté par Bernard Lory. Postface d’Ivan Roussev. Ed. « Non Lieu », (Paris 2013), 43.

but those who knew the local situation better marked that Varna architecture had changed with the increasing number of solid-built houses (André-Papadopoulo-Vretos, 1849–1855)<sup>29</sup>. The wide range of living standards and architecture have a logical explanation in the difference of wealth among the Varna population. Ioannis Nikolau, born in Varna, long time teacher there and historian of the town, wrote in his memoirs that window glass appeared in the houses of rich Varna families around 1840–1845, while the windows of poor family houses were covered with processed oxen tripe (“shkembe”)<sup>30</sup>. The houses of foreign merchants and rich Varniotes had cast-iron stove or faience stove heating, but not fireplaces like elsewhere in the town (André-Papadopoulo-Vretos, 1849–1855)<sup>31</sup>.

Other, mainly political explanations were also provided for these phenomena in the context of the epoch. The consul Vretos claimed that the Ottoman authorities forbade the Christians of Varna to have windows looking onto the street. That’s why their houses looked like “pigeon-lofts” where light was let in through little holes<sup>32</sup>. In Kanitz’s opinion, the Turkish governors of Varna were to blame for the disorders in the city, because they “were interested only in the life in their harems”, but not in the problems of the train passengers arriving from Russe on their way to the Ottoman capital who tried to reach the ship of “Lloyd” along “lanes difficult to pass and over a narrow pier”<sup>33</sup>. Perhaps he was right, because other visitors of the town made the same criticism. One of them was the Frenchman Xavier Hommaire de Helle who noted that in the 1840s the Turkish government gave 80 000 piasters (kurus) for the reconstruction of the port of Varna while the repairs cost only 12 000 – 15 000 piasters (kurus). The rest was stolen by the local governors, suggested the Frenchman<sup>34</sup>. In spite of the evident need for construction of a

29. A. Papadopoulo-Vretos, *La Bulgarie ancienne et moderne...*, 224.

30. Ιωάννης Νικολάου, Οδησός, Βάρνα υπό αρχαιολογικήν και ιστορικήν άποψιν, (Βάρνα 1894), 176.

31. A. Papadopoulo-Vretos, *La Bulgarie ancienne et moderne...*, 224.

32. *Ibid.*, 215.

33. F. Kanitz, *Dunavska Balgaria i Balkanat...*, Vol. III, 212.

34. *Voyage en Turquie et en Perse, exécuté par ordre du gouvernement français pendant les années 1846, 1847 et 1848* par Xavier Hommaire de Helle. Vol. I (Paris 1854), 164–165.



modern and comfortable port in Varna, the Ottoman authorities did not care. A modern port was finally built in Varna but not until the beginning of the twentieth century.

The conservative oriental customs were a real hindrance in the modernization of Varna at that time, too. Indicative in this sense was the slowly changing attitude toward women in the local society. Prior to 1850, it would have been impossible to see a woman on the streets of the town. If one should accidentally appear there, she would probably be the wife of a consul or a merchant coming from Western Europe. But even accompanied by her husband, such a woman would have been put under the “jokes of children and urchins”, wrote Vretos, and explained that unattended Varna women could move safely on the streets only after 1850. Otherwise they would take part in the usual walks out of the town gates in direction to the gardens, dressed in the height of fashion. The supply of ladies’ as well as men’s fashionable wear became less problematic than before. It could be bought in the capital or made to measure by local “European” tailors. In 1851 there were four tailors: three Greek and one Italian<sup>35</sup>.

In spite of Vretos’ affirmations the changing attitude toward women in the local society wasn’t a fait accompli even after 1850. In the middle of the 1860s Varna was visited by the writer and journalist Dr. Ivan Bogorov who noted that “a woman cannot be seen anywhere in the town”. If a woman appeared on the streets she wouldn’t be local, she would be a passenger from one of the ships<sup>36</sup>. In Kanitz’s opinion this negative attitude towards women resulted from the Turkish customs and had been gradually accepted by the Greeks living in the Black Sea region who began to close their women in “harems”, too<sup>37</sup>. When he stayed in the town in the beginning of the 1870s the Hungarian writer participated in a big party where he noticed with surprise “the lack of beings of the female sex”<sup>38</sup>.

As in the case of other settlements in the region, some of the

---

35. A. Papadopoulo-Vrétos, *La Bulgarie ancienne et moderne...*, 224.

36. Iv. Bogorov. *Niakolko dena razhodka po balgarskite mesta. Patuval prez 1865-1866* [Several Days Walk on the Bulgarian Lends. He Walked in 1865-1866], (Sofia 2001), 42.

37. F. Kanitz, *Dunavska Balgaria i Balkanat...*, Vol. III, 209.

38. *Ibid.*, 215.

consequences of modernization appeared to act as real obstacles for further modernization in Varna. One of them was the rise of the living standard. The diversity of goods in the local market grew. Varniotes began to cultivate plants much in demand by the Europeans and sold them at high prices so the local population had been forced to buy food at a high price, too. If we trust Vretos once again, the rise of prices before and after the coming of “foreign consuls and merchants” in the town had been fifteen-fold. This was apparent at least by the change in the prices of eggs and pullets. Despite all that, the Greek diplomat was confident in his own conclusion: “... today in Varna everything necessary for the European life style can be found”<sup>39</sup>. Twenty years later Felix Kanitz added: “... a European can live in Varna more comfortably than in any other town inside the country”<sup>40</sup>.

The information presented here on Varna during the 1840s – 1870s draws a picture of a changing town, quickly assimilating European culture and life style, accepting modernization and only occasionally resisting it. This research could be extended to other settlements in the region as much in the Western Black Sea coast as in the Black Sea area in general. As a final result one can search for the answers to the following question: How (in what way) did the situation, size, ethnic structure of a settlement, and its central and local authorities influence the process of modernization? That could be the subject of another project, bigger than this one. It can and must be made with the collaboration of scientists from all the countries in the region and based on comparative analysis. Such a project would be a challenge for the future.

---

39. A. Papadopoulo-Vrétos, *La Bulgarie ancienne et moderne...*, 223–224.

40. F. Kanitz, *Dunavska Balgaria i Balkanat...*, Vol. III, 211–212

8.  
**Varna's Bourgeoisie(s) from Empire  
to Nation-State (1840-1912)**

**Andreas Lyberatos,  
Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (Athens)  
& Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH (Rethymno)**

“Here is Bulgaria. And I don’t know anybody [of that name]”. This was allegedly the rough reply given to the clerk of the Greek vice consulate by the secretary of Varna’s Customs Office Ivan Adženov<sup>1</sup> an October morning of 1879. The clerk, as himself stated to the arbiter of the Varna Regional Court, had been trying in vain, for a long time, to have an insignificant amount of goods cleared by virtue of a letter of attorney by the Greek vice consul. After he had been successively referred to several employees, he returned at last to the secretary only to receive the aforementioned rude reply. Adženov denied he had uttered the words attributed to him; he claimed that he had remarked politely to the clerk that, since the Customs was a Bulgarian institution nobody there could read Greek; therefore the clerk was asked to translate the Greek diplomat’s letter of attorney in Bulgarian. The employees who were witnesses of the quarrel assured that they heard the word “Bulgaria” uttered by the secretary, yet they could not tell in what context, since the secretary and the clerk were talking in Greek (!).<sup>2</sup>

The absurdity of the episode described above - and we could presume that this was not the only one - is highly suggestive of the abrupt, “unprepared” change effected in Varna’s life by the Russian-Ottoman war of 1877-78. Both the Greek clerk’s pre-

---

1. Probably Ivan Adženov (Kazanlāk, 1835- Ploešt 1903), revolutionary, close friend of Georgi Rakovski.

2. Expert’s Report (draft) of Varna’s Regional Court, 6-10-1879, DA-Varna, f. 78k, op.2, a.e. 32.

tensions to the recognition of the Greek language by the Customs Office, as being something self-evident, almost “natural”, as well as the petty malice of the Bulgarian ex-revolutionary and -now- bureaucrat, eager to symbolically stress the newly acquired Bulgarian political rule over the Greeks of the city, point to the imbalance and incongruity of the new political setting with the social and cultural realities in the Black Sea city port. Similarly to Salonika or Izmir, and perhaps more extremely so, Varna was before its inclusion to the newly established Principality of Bulgaria (1878) inhabited by a small minority of the future state’s dominant nationality, i.e. Orthodox Bulgarians (exarchist), the overwhelming majority of the city’s inhabitants being Muslim Turks and Orthodox (patriarchist) Greeks.<sup>3</sup> The task of “nationalizing” the city, the “belated revival of Bulgarianness”, as the title of one of the few existing monographs conceptualizes the history of the city in the period 1878-1885<sup>4</sup>, was not an easy one, especially since the Berlin Congress, along with the humiliating curtailment of Bulgarian aspirations had placed the young Principality’s minorities under international protection. The demographic movements from the interior of the Principality to the port city, as well as the settlement of Bulgarian refugees from Eastern Thrace changed quickly the ethno-demographic balance in the city: according to the census of 1881 Bulgarians formed the second most numerous linguistic community of the port-city, surpassing in number the Greek Orthodox one.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the socio-economic power and symbolic/cultural predominance was a more complex matter. Despite the existence of a small number of well-off Bulgarian merchants and entrepreneurs in pre-1878 Varna,

---

3. Škorpil K. & H., “Dvadecetgodišnata dejnost na Varnensko arheologičesko društvo 1901-1921”, *IVAD*, 7, 1921, p. 9; In 1878, Kyrillos of Varna estimates, probably exaggerating, the Greek Orthodox families in the city of Varna in 1300 and those of the Bulgarians to approximately 150. Kyrillos of Varna to Nikodemos Kyzikou, 10-3-1878, DA-Varna, f. 82k, a.e. 117/ 79.

4. Borislav Denchev, *Varna sled Osvoboždenieto. Edno zakšnjalo vžražđane na bālgarštinata*, Sofia, 1998.

5. Out of the 24.561 inhabitants of the city in 1881, 6.721 had Bulgarian as their mother tongue, 8.903 Turkish (including the Orthodox 1.459 Gagauz), 5.367 Greek, 1181 Armenian, 541 Ladino (Jews). *Obšti rezultati ot prebrojavane naselenieto v knjažestvo Bālgarija na..1881*, Sofia, 1884.

originating almost exclusively from the interior regions and heading the overwhelmingly artisan-composed Bulgarian community of the city (established in 1860), the real socio-economic power and the most prosperous business, the grain export trade, were mostly in the hands of the Greek Orthodox bourgeois of the city.<sup>6</sup>

Taking these Greek Orthodox bourgeois as a point of reference and departure, I will try in the present paper to give you a sketch, propose a periodization and tackle some issues related to the formation and development of the Varniote bourgeoisie(s).<sup>7</sup>

### *Hellenism: the making of a bourgeois hegemony (1840-1878)*

Varna's destruction and occupation by the Russians in 1828-9, the opening of the Black Sea to international navigation and the Commercial Conventions (1838-41) which abolished state monopolies and previously existing export prohibitions for some articles, most importantly grain, were major shifts initiating the modern history of the port city.<sup>8</sup> Prior to these developments the Black Sea was a "closed Ottoman lake" and Varna served predominantly as a transit port for the grain, livestock and other articles produced in Bulgaria and the Romanian Principalities and destined to supply the capital Istanbul within the framework of a centralized command economy. This internal trade was during the 18<sup>th</sup> century predominantly in the hands of Muslim merchants and shipowners.<sup>9</sup> The present

---

6. For the Bulgarian merchants and entrepreneurs, their origins in the interior of the country and their subordinate position in the city's trade see V. Tonev, "Za stopanskata dejnost na Bălgarite vāv Varna prez vāzraždāneto (1840-1878)", *Isvestija na Varnensko Arheologiĉesko DruŹestvo* (hereafter IVAD), VIII (1972), 101-131; St. Conev, "Stopanski oblik na gr. Varna v naveĉerieto na osvoboŹdenieto", *Istoriĉeski Pregled*, 1973, kn. 1, p. 73-86.

7. The research project of the Institute for Mediterranean Studies is conducted in common with Dr. Varban Todorov, Institute of Balkan Studies, Bulgarian Academy of sciences.

8. For more details see: A. Lyberatos, "Between War and Trade: Remarks on the Political Constitution and Social Composition of the Greek Orthodox Community of Varna (19<sup>th</sup> Century)", *Études Balkaniques*, 2007, No 2, 81-98.

9. L.Güçer, "XVIII yüzyıl ortalarında İstanbulun iaşesi için lüzumlu hububatın temini meselesi", *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 11, 1949-50, 397-416;

state of research does not help us to follow the fates of these people in the period after the “international opening” of Varna’s trade, yet we could presume that the war, the centralizing efforts of Mahmud II and its successors and the abolition of the state monopoly in grain should have done away with or seriously disturbed the pre-existing local networks of power and appropriation of the agricultural surplus of the rich hinterland of Varna (Prodadia, Dobrudža).<sup>10</sup> Unlike the Muslim merchants in Balchik, Varna’s Muslim merchants were not by late 1850’s among the big trading houses active in Varna’s internal and external grain trade.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, they kept supplying the capital of the Empire with chicken and eggs, a very lucrative and important trade they continued to pursue well after 1878.<sup>12</sup>

---

D. Pancak, “International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire during the 18<sup>th</sup> century”, in Id., *Commerce et Navigation dans l’Empire Ottomann au XVIIIe siècle*, Analecta Isisiana, İstanbul, 1996, p. 203; O. Yildirim, “Bread and Empire: the Workings of Bread Provisioning of Istanbul during the 18<sup>th</sup> century”, ERC Working Papers in Economics, 01/04 May 2002.

10. For the beneficiaries (intermediaries, local ayans etc.) of the Istanbul grain supply network in Northeastern Bulgaria during the 18<sup>th</sup> century see V. Tonev, *Bălgarskoto Černomorie prez vāzraždaneto*, Sofia, 1995, pp. 90 ff; Str. Dimitrov, “Istorijata na edin ajanin”, *Sbornik v čest na akad. Dimităr Kosev*, Sofia, 1974, pp. 65-78.

11. Four out of the seven bigger Grain export firms of Balçik in 1858 were property of Muslim traders. (In Varna none of the 36). M. Sauer, “Ein Beitrag zur Handelsgeschichte des Osmanischen Reiches in den 50-60 Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts”, *Studia in Honorem Professoris Virginiae Paskaleva, Bulgarian Historical Review*, 2006/1-2, pp. 90-2. As St. Kabakčiev notes in his memoirs of Varna during the Crimean War, that there were a few Turk merchants with small ships trading with Istanbul, yet the Turks (and the Gagauzes) were involved mostly as petty providers of grain from the villages to the port. St. Kabakčiev, “Spomeni za grada Varna ot vremeto na krimskata vojna”, *Isvestija na Varnensko Arheologičesko Družestvo* (hereafter IVAD), kn. VIII (1910), p. 43.

12. N. Todorov, “Socialno-ikonomičeskijat oblik na Varna prez 60-te i 70-te godini na XIX v.”, *Isvestija na Varnensko Arheologičesko Družestvo*, XIV, 1963, 119-40, p.123; N. Žečev, “Edno svedenie za grad Varna ot 1850 g.”, *IVAD*, XII (1976), p. 142; *Izloženie za šāstojanieto na Varnenskoto okrāžie prez 1888-1889*. Četeno na 1-i Septemvri 1889 g. ot Varnenskija Okrāžen Upravitel pri otkrivane na vtorata redovna sessija na Varnenski Okr. Sāvet, Varna, 1889, p. 82. Within the generally plausible stance to look at the Eastern Mediterranean ports as “the spatial expression of the core-periphery relationships”, one should not neglect the continuing importance of internal or more correctly interregional trade. Thus, increasing population of the cities, first and foremost Istanbul, the consuming “end” of most of internal circuits, did provide a

The liberation of the grain trade in the early 1840's brought to Varna several foreign merchants. In 1842, when Bulgarian grain reached for the first time England through the port of Varna<sup>13</sup>, the French Jew Adolphe Tedeschi had already established himself in Varna as limited partner of the firm "Olive Tedeschi & Co."<sup>14</sup> He and his brother Emmanuel were for many years leading grain (and wool) merchants and public figures of the city, which otherwise had until 1878 an insignificant Jewish settlement.<sup>15</sup> The "pioneer" Tedeschi, was soon followed by other foreign merchants, mostly Austrian, Greek and Ionian subjects who took the grain export trade in their hands and integrated Varna to the already established grain export networks of the Russian Black Sea. The list of the 38 Varna's bigger merchants in 1857-8, compiled by the agent of the Niederösterreichische Handels- und Gewerbekammer gives us a fairly good idea not only of the origins of Varna's merchants, but also of the structure and hierarchies of the port-city's grain trade. The export of grain to European ports was controlled almost exclusively by merchants and ship owners-foreign subjects; among them the representatives of the big merchant houses (mostly Chiot

---

revitalization, outside strict state control, of traditional branches of trade. As the case of cattle, chicken and eggs trade shows, Varna did not cease to supply Istanbul. Cf. Çağlar Keyder, Y. Eyüp Özveren & Donald Quataert, "Port Cities in the Ottoman Empire. Some Theoretical & Historical Perspectives", *Review*, XVI, 519-558.

13. Michoff, N. V., *Beiträge zur Handelsgeschichte Bulgariens (Offizielle Dokumente und Konsularberichte)*, Sofia, 1943, p. 30.

14. *Op. cit.*, p.50; V. Stojanova gives the information that he was the son of a wealthy merchant from Marseilles. V. Stojanova, "Istoriko-etnografski štrihi ot bitieto na evrejskata obštност vāv Varna", *Izvestija na Narodnija Muzej-Varna*, 38-39 (2002-3), 47-104, p. 49.

15. A. Papadopoulos-Vretos speaks in mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. of 30 Jews settled in Varna. A. Papadopoulos-Vretos, *La Bulgarie ancienne et moderne*, St. Peterburg, 1856, p. 216; In 1866-72 there were still only 54 Jewish families living in Varna. N. Todorov, "Socialno-ikonomičeskij oblik...", *op. cit.*, p. 119. Adolph Tedeschi held for several years the posts of vice Consul of Austria-Hungary, France and, for a short time, Russia, while his brother Emmanuel served as vice Consul of Belgium. Adolph Tedeschi was also representative of the Austrian Lloyd Insurance Co. Greek Foreign Ministry Archive (GFMA) 1850/36.17 A. Pappadopoulos-Vretos to Greek Embassy in Con/ple, 18-7-1850; 1856/36.17, D. Harilaos to Greek Embassy in con/ple and Greek Foreign Ministry, 18-9 to 24-10-1856; V. Stojanova, "Istoriko-etnografski...", *op. cit.*

and Ionian) of grain exporters from Odessa and South Russia (Ralli & Coutoufas, Igleisis, Paraskeuas Nikolaou, Frangopoulo, Cuppa) had a prominent place.<sup>16</sup> A couple of Greek merchants, Ionian and Ottoman subjects, were also participating in the export trade, yet as agents of Istanbul merchant houses. A third group comprised those who traded in grain with Istanbul (again mostly Hellenic and Ionian subjects) and a last one comprised those who traded locally with grain and imported colonial articles (largely local Orthodox Ottoman subjects).<sup>17</sup> St. Kabakčiev in his memoirs mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Varna gives us the following picture of the grain trade network and its ethnic division of labour: “The principal trade of Varna was that of grain [. . .]. The big export merchants were foreigner Greeks. There were a few Turks as well trading with small ships on commission or on their own behalf [. . .]. There were also second class grain merchants, but these were buying and selling locally. The middlemen between the small and big grain merchants were most of them foreigner Greeks. The small providers, villagers or merchants, were mostly Turks and Gagauzes [i.e. Turkophone Orthodox Christians]. Many cart-drivers, workers and boatmen were making a living out of the grain trade.”<sup>18</sup>

Although this rough picture needs further elaboration, it is still quite clear that the rapid incorporation of Varna and its fertile hinterland to the expanding capitalist World Economy took place with the mediation of the newcomers, predominantly Greek merchants, who managed to establish the necessary local connections with largely Turkish speaking Orthodox intermediaries and control the networks of grain supply from Varna’s hinterland. The success of the foreign Greek merchants in holding in their hands “the key to Varna’s trade”, as I. Bogorov remarked in 1865-66<sup>19</sup>, the same

16. Cf. Tz. Harlaftis, *Istoria tis ellinoktisis nautilias*, Athens, 2001, p. 127 ff. & 469ff.; V. Kardasis, *Hellenes Omogeneis sti Notia Rosia 1775-1861*, Athens, 1998, p. 237-254; E. Sifneou, “Oi allages sto rosiko sitemporio kai i prosarmostikotita ton ellinikon emporikon oikon”, *Ta Istorika - Historica*, 40 (June 2004), 53-96.

17. In sum 20 Ottoman subjects (exclusively Orthodox, among them two Bulgarians), 7 Hellenic subjects, 6 Ionian (English), 3 Austrian, 1 Badenser and 1 Sardinian. M. Sauer, “Ein Beitrag...”, op.cit.

18. St. Kabakčiev, « Spomeni. . . », op.cit., p.43.

19. I. Bogorov, *Njakolko dena razhodka po bălgarskite mesta*, Bukurešt, 1868, 53-5.



success that had led Georgi Rakovski to urge Bulgarians in 1861 to make every possible effort to acquire the city and “bring back Bulgarianess” to it<sup>20</sup>, should be seen as a complex phenomenon with closely intertwined socioeconomic and cultural dimensions.<sup>21</sup> The evocation and cultivation of existing elements of cultural community with the local Orthodox population moulded in a modernizing and “de-orientalizing” discourse, provided to 19<sup>th</sup> century Greek trading diasporas the scheme for their privileged and often hegemonic incorporation in local societies throughout the Empire.<sup>22</sup> In this general theme, Varna stands out as a peculiar and at the same time very interesting variation: The rise of Hellenism and the making of a Greek bourgeois hegemony in Varna sets out very late, only in the 1840’s and following the economic openings and opportunities mentioned above. Moreover, the project of cultural “hellenisation” is deployed against the background of a clear predominance of the Turkish language among the local Orthodox, a considerable part of whom originated from the Gagauz [Turkophone] Orthodox villages in Varna’s hinterland. In an often cited passage from his book *La Bulgarie ancienne et moderne*, the Greek-Consul Andrea Pappadopoulos-Vretos remarks that before 1840, when the first Greek school was established, apart from the archbishop and his clergy, there were three or four notables who were speaking Greek.<sup>23</sup>

Despite these “drawbacks”, hellenization was deployed with impressive pace, dynamism and results, under the close supervision of the incoming Greek merchants. As early as 1845 the wheat merchants undertake (introducing a special proportional tax on the purchases

---

20. *Dunavski Lebed*, I, 32, 2-5-1861, cited in St. Dimitrova, “Varna v periodichnija pečat do Osvoboždenieto”, *IVAD*, XXIII (1987), p.7.

21. Cf. D. Ramada Curto & Anthony Molho (eds.), *Commercial Networks in the Early Modern World*, EUI, Florence, 2002.

22. For the analysis of this process in 19<sup>th</sup> c. Plovdiv see A. Lyberatos, *Oikonomia, politiki kai ethniki ideologia. I diamorfosi ton ethnikon kommaton sti Filippoupoli tou 19ou ai.*, Irakleio : Crete University Press, 2009; Id., “From Stratum Culture to National Culture: Integration Processes and National Resignification in 19th c. Plovdiv”, *Balkanologie*, vol. XIII (December 2011, online at: <http://balkanologie.revues.org/index2274.html>).

23. A. Pappadopoulos-Vretos, *La Bulgarie ancienne et moderne*, St. Pétersbourg, 1856, p. 216.

of grain) the financing of the Greek schools in Varna, assuming the control and supervision of the Greek education in the city. The special Committee, the first two members of which were Gerasimos Fokas and Ioannis Agallides, Ionian and Greek subjects respectively, was obliged to report to the wheat merchants on all matters, including educational ones.<sup>24</sup> The quick and successful development of a proper Greek educational system, which by the 1870's numbered 7 or 8 schools and 900 to 1200 pupils only in the city of Varna<sup>25</sup>; the establishment and activity of educational, literary and philanthropic societies (Όμιλος Φιλομούσων, Ελπίς, Φιλεκπαιδευτικός Σύλλογος, Μουσικός Όμιλος); the modernization of self-government institutions and the development of new forms of sociability, such as the dancing parties or the meetings at the club "Casino", established in the 1860's by Leonardos Semprikos from Zante and aspiring to imitate London's famous "Baltic Coffee House", where Varna's citizens could drink their coffee, read a book from the club's library or the Greek and Foreign newspapers, exchange professional information and pass agreeably their free time. All these developments, institutions and sites bore the stamp of the incoming Greek bourgeois and reflected their uncontested ideological and cultural hegemony.

As to the results of this activity, let us again use a Bulgarian source: St. Kabakčiev notes that "the success of Hellenism in Varna during the 1870's was huge". He attributes this success to the establishment of the Educational Society (Syllogos), to the devoted and tireless teachers and to the generous donations by wealthy Greek merchants, such as Paraskeua Nikolaou and the Makrinitza born Vasileios Soulini. Having been in Varna during the Crimean war, Kabakčiev returned to the city as a public servant in 1878. In the place of the largely Turkish speaking urban population, "not only Greeks, but also fanatic Greek patriots who, after the establishment of the Bulgarian authorities in the city, for several successive years, they showed-off demonstratively their Greek patriotism by placing Greek flags in their houses and shops and demonstrating in the streets of the city".<sup>26</sup>

24. DA-Varna, f. 83k "Grăcka Mitropolija", op.1, a.e. 56/ 3-4.

25. See concisely X. Kotzageorgi (ed.), *Oi Ellines tis Voulgarias*, op. cit., p.271-3.

26. St. Kabakčiev, "Spomeni . . .", op. cit. p. 39-40.

The undisturbed economic and cultural hegemony of the Greek merchants could be attributed not only to their economic might, entrepreneurial experience and successful network organization<sup>27</sup>, but also to the lack of strong local opposition crystallized on an ethnic and socio-geographic basis. As I have suggested elsewhere, the feebleness of the artisan guilds of the city, producing for local consumption only, and the absence in Varna's hinterland of processes of proto-industrial growth, processes so characteristic of other regions in Tanzimat Bulgaria, did not facilitate the creation of a strong social and political opposition to the city's domestic and foreign merchant capital.<sup>28</sup> Passing from the pre-Tanzimat to the Tanzimat periods, and from the domination of the local ayans to that of the foreign mercantile capital, Varna's ethnically mixed and exclusively agricultural hinterland did not give birth, until the end of the century, to any strong political/national network and movement. The increasing incorporation of the region to the World economy signified not only its overall "peripheralization", but also the reproduction of the core/periphery relationship at the micro-level city/countryside antithesis.

It is, moreover, characteristic that the Bulgarian community established in the "hot" year 1860, (when the de facto schism of the Bulgarians from the Oecumenical Patriarchate took place) with the participation of the artisans coming from the interior and with the support of the panslavist Russian Vice-consul Račinski, did not represent a serious challenge to the power and prestige of the Greek Orthodox Community of the city. In an act of diplomacy or patronage, 20 of the wealthiest Greek merchants contributed generously (total sum around 3.000 gr.) in 1861 for the upkeep of the Bulgarian school of Varna, which was established the previous year.<sup>29</sup> In 1864, the teacher of the Bulgarian School Sava Dobroplondi at the annual public School exams gave a speech in both Bulgarian and Greek, something which provoked the criticism of the Bulgarian patriotic press. Finally, in 1867, the relationships between the two

27. Ioanna Pepelasis-Minoglou, "The Greek Merchant House of the Russian Black Sea: A Nineteenth Century Example of a Traders Coalition", *International Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. X, No I, (June 1998), 61-104.

28. A. Lyberatos, "Between war and trade. . .", op. cit., p. 86-7.

29. DA- Varna, f. 79k "Glavna bālgarska obština -Varna", op. 1, a.e. 8/ 4.

communities were not so severed as to prevent the wealthy notable of the Greek community Hadži Janaki Flori to host in his mansion the Bulgarian community's dancing party intended to support the poor pupils of the Bulgarian school of the city.<sup>30</sup>

*Symbolic Skirmishes on a “peripheral” ground (1878-mid 1890’s).*

The Russian-Ottoman war and the concomitant creation of the autonomous Principalities of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia (unified in 1885) represents a major political break in the history of the region and affected profoundly the life of the Black Sea city-port. Nonetheless, this major political break has been automatically – and to a certain extent uncritically- extrapolated to all spheres of social life in the new state. Aspects of continuity with the pre-1878 era, as well as the complex interrelations and the different tempos of political and socio-economic change have been largely neglected. The most striking example is the continuity (and escalation) in the process of peripheralization of the region's economy within the European world-economy. Grain exports constituted throughout the period 1878-1912 the greatest part of Bulgaria's exports, and this happens in an unfavourable conjuncture of long term fall of the price of grain in the international markets. During the same period, the peasantry increasingly falls in dire need for cash to discharge their debts for the land bought from the departing Muslim peasants and landowners and pay off their taxes. The grip of the intermediaries on the countryside seems to hold firm and even to get intensified after 1878.<sup>31</sup>

The other obvious continuity with the pre-1878 period is that

---

30. *Makedonija*, g. I, br.13, 11-3-1867.

31. For an overview of the Bulgarian agricultural economy in the period see: A. Lyberatos, “From Imperial to National Lands: Bulgarian Agriculture from the Russian-Ottoman (1877-8) to the Balkan Wars (1912-13)”, in: Edhem Eldem & Socrates Petmezas (eds), *The Economic Development of Southeastern Europe in the 19th Century*, Athens: Alpha Bank Historical Archives, 2011, 137-172. For the question of peasant indebtedness see my: A. Lyberatos, “The Usury Cases of the Black Sea Region: State Legitimation and Bourgeois Rule of Law in 19th c. Dobrudzha, *Études Balkaniques*, 3-4/2013, 59-94.

Bulgaria inherits in the Congress of Berlin the capitulations and “free-trade” Treaties of her predecessor Ottoman Empire. This amounts to a serious curtailing of the economic sovereignty of the new state and its inability, until the 1890’s, to protect local industry from foreign competition.<sup>32</sup> A highly characteristic example of the restricted power of the new state, an example closely related to the question of the formation of a supra-ethnic urban identity<sup>33</sup>, are the duties the Bulgarian government intended to levy for the upkeep and well-being of the Principality’s cities (street illumination, street-sweeping, security, road building etc.). The municipal duties encountered the fierce opposition of almost all the foreign diplomatic delegations, insisting that their subjects, trading in Bulgarian cities, by force of the inherited from the Ottoman Empire capitulations, are not susceptible to such levies. The question took more than three years to be provisionally settled, as the European diplomats eventually admitted that Bulgaria, which “after the liberation heads with firm steps towards civilization”, had the right to “Europeanize” its cities.<sup>34</sup>

As far as Varna is concerned, if the restricted power the young nation state initially had in regulating the economy and protecting its “national” bourgeoisie consisted the one important factor for the lack of a radical break with Ottoman times in the socioeconomic sphere, the other was the slow tempo of emergence of a Bulgarian bourgeoisie in the city, a bourgeoisie which would identify itself with the nation-state, act as a pressure group and claim hegemony in the city’s life and economy.<sup>35</sup> Contrary to other major urban

---

32. B. Nedkov, *Razvitie na bălgarskata finansova sistema prez poslednoto desetiletie*, Sofia, 1938, p. 155.

33. Cf. Z. Sayek, *Public Space and Urban Citizens: Ottoman Izmir in the Remaking 1840-1890*, Ph. D. dissertation, University of Berkeley, California, Fall 2001.

34. GFMA 1882/ αακ Γ'. Greek embassy in Sofia, S. Boufidis to Greek Foreign Ministry, 19-12-1880; S. Boufidis to H.Trikoupis, 19-7-1882; GFMA 1884/ 5.2.3. /9, K. Rangavis to A. Kontostaulos, 12-1-1884. Bulgaria acquired definitely the right to levy internal duties on foreign subject’s commodities only with the new commercial treaties of the early 1890’s. B. Nedkov, *Razvitie..*, op. cit., 155.

35. Along the few still active prominent Bulgarian entrepreneurs of the pre-1878 era (Slavčevi bros, Veliko Hristov a.o.) there developed slowly a dynamic group of Bulgarian merchants, grain agents and dealers and, most importantly, wheat mill

centres of the country (Sofia, Plovdiv, Ruse, Tŕrnovo) who had well before 1878 dynamic groups of Bulgarian merchants and entrepreneurs, in the case of Varna the state inherited, as we saw, a largely “alien” bourgeoisie, which additionally was quite strong and at the same time instrumental for the placement of Bulgarian produce in international markets. The slow development of a Bulgarian bourgeoisie in Varna and the lack of effective economic policy means to curb Greek supremacy in the city’s economy led the newly appointed bureaucrats of the state, most of them nurtured politically within the anti-Greek atmosphere of the Bulgarian Church Movement, to direct their attacks to the Greek bourgeois in the political and cultural sphere, challenging at the same time Greek symbolic supremacy.

One could not neglect frictions of the sort we saw in the opening passage of the paper, situated in crucial sites of economic control, such as the Customs. A similar dispute brought in September 1880 the known grain trade agent Nicola Cicilianopoulo, a Greek subject residing in Varna since 1856, to Varna’s regional court, accused for personally insulting the director of the Customs Iv. Mŕnzov.<sup>36</sup> During the same month, several Greek merchants of the city complained that Varna’s Post Office hands them their letters with considerable delay. *Varnenskiĵ Vestnik* comments that it is their fault because, “out of their unexplainable patriotism”, they have not informed their correspondents that they have to address their letters to them if not in Bulgarian, at least in French. The Bulgarian civil servants, according to the newspaper, are not obliged because of the stubbornness of these merchants, “to visit the Greek schools togeth-

---

owners by the Devnia lake and the surroundings of Varna, producing mainly for the internal market (M.Koloni, Ŗotov & Enčev a.o.). V. Tonev, “Za stopanskata dejnost.., op.cit. ; *Izlozhenie za sastojanieto na varnenskoto okrŕŕie prez 1888-9 g. Četeno na I Sestemori 1889 g. ot Varnan. Okr. Upravitel [Iv. T. Drasov] pri otkrivane na vtorata redovna sessija na Varn. Okr. Sŕvet.*, Varna, Pečatnica na N. Vojnikov, 1889, p. 73.

36. Cicilianopoulo got again out of control in the court and attacked Mŕnzov “with the most offensive words”. The procedure was interrupted, allegedly to have the accused examined by the doctors. The newspaper *Varnenskiĵ Vestnik* comments that the reactions of Cicilianopoulo have to be attributed not to his being “crazy”, but to his anti-Bulgarian fanaticism. Therefore, the newspaper anticipates his being condemned. *Varnenskiĵ Vestnik*, g. I, br. 23, 6-9-1880.

er with the Gagauz children in order to learn the Greek language”.<sup>37</sup> These examples of “cross-cultural misunderstandings”<sup>38</sup> between the newcomer Bulgarian civil servants and the established Greek Orthodox bourgeois indicate the development of an atmosphere of conflict. Nevertheless, such frictions and every-day tensions at the Customs or the Post Office, do not represent, in their extraordinary character, effective pressures and serious challenges.

The pressure of the newly founded Bulgarian state and its local agents was directed, during the first two decades, towards breaking-up the political and cultural hegemony of the Greek bourgeoisie over the ethnically mixed Orthodox population of the city, as embodied in the Greek Orthodox Community and its institutions. This involved, first, the more or less forceful “bulgarization” of the Gagauz villages of Varna’s vicinity, intended to deprive the Greek community from this important demographic reservoir; secondly, the consistent efforts to seize the surrounding monasteries and other important income sources for the upkeep of Varna’s Greek schools; and thirdly, the efforts to impose Bulgarian as the basic compulsory language of all elementary education. Last but not least, several tricks were employed in order to minimize minority influence (Greek and Turkish alike) in the municipal council. The protracted struggle between the local authorities and the Greek community notables is out of the scope and the focus of the present paper.

We should nevertheless not fail to consider the highly interesting attitude of the Greek community leaders towards the new political status quo after 1878. The initial anxiety was followed and accompanied by public demonstration of the community’s strength and assertion of its rights over the city’s space. Before the arrival of the Russian troops, the notables of the community decided after long discussions to resort to the help of the “national centre” and “donate” the entire property of the community to the University of Athens in order to save it from possible encroachments by the “invading Bulgarian element”. The deal, in which probably the Greek Vice Consul Nomikos played a prominent role, did not eventually

---

37. *Varnenski Vestnik*, g. I, br. 25, 13-9-1880.

38. K. Pomeranz, “Social History and World History: from Daily Life to Patterns of Change”, *Journal of World History*, 18, 1, p. 81.

take place.<sup>39</sup> The arrival of the Russians provoked an unforeseen mobilization of the Greeks of the city who prepared a triumphal arch before the Cathedral with the inscription “Long live the Russian Czar Alexander II: the Greek Community of Varna [devotes] to the liberator of the Christians”. The Greek archbishop hastened to write to the Patriarchate and disclaim all responsibility for the anti-Ottoman inscription placed “by the high-spirited youngsters” on the arch, lest the embittered Ottoman authorities (still in charge of the city) write first to Istanbul. He nevertheless did not fail to express his contention for the impressive lighting up of the streets of the Greek neighbourhood and the acknowledgement of the “show” by the Russians: “In the evening the illumination was beyond any expectation so bright that the Russian General, who has settled outside the city, arrived on horseback with all his staff and officers at three o’clock in the night, they inspected the illuminated places and reaching the cathedral they took off their hats in front of the Greek flag and the chief of staff General Keveš shouted three times: ‘Long live King George of Greece!’”.<sup>40</sup>

Such demonstrations were not isolated events caused by the frenzy of the extraordinary situation of Russian forces’ arrival. Two years later, after the Russian provisional rule had given its place to a Bulgarian government, similar moves were not a rarity: on the day of the commemoration of the arrival of the Russian liberators, “[...]extremely big blue and white Hellenic flags predominated in and around the Balik Pazar [i.e. the centre of the Greek neighbourhood]. Such a scandalous thing is not allowed, as far as we know, in any country where the government is known and law and order are respected”.<sup>41</sup> These public demonstrations appear quite incongruous to the new political setting and the energy and persistence with which they were taking place are certainly contrapuntal to the ‘burial’ of any realistic hope to have Varna included, in the predictable future, into a favourable for its Greeks political scheme. They did, however, produce certain effects and they were probably quite

---

39. DA-Varna, f.82k, op.1, a.e.18/94-5

40. Kyril of Varna to Patriarchate of Constantinople, 30-8-1878, DA-Varna, f. 82k, a.e. 117/ 81.

41. *Varnenskij Vestnik*, g. I, br. 11-12/ 30-7-1880.



successful in sustaining Greek prestige among the city's Orthodox population. At least, this seems to have caused the reaction of *Varnenskij Vestnik* which, in an article entitled "The manifest life of Bulgarians in Varna", deplored the absence of the Bulgarians from the public space and life of the city and warned for the danger of having the Bulgarian population corrupted within an admixture of Greekness, Gagauzness, Armenianness and Bulgarianness.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the relative success they had in asserting their symbolic prominence made the leaders of the Greek community more rigid vis-à-vis the Bulgarian authorities, as it is suggested by the protracted and difficult negotiations concerning the cession of the monastery of St. Dimitar (property of the Greek community) to the Prince of Bulgaria Alexander Batemberg, in order to have his summer palace built there.<sup>43</sup> This attitude caused the Greek delegate in Sofia Kleon Rangavis to express his "ineffable sorrow" for the short-sightedness of the Varna fellow-nationals who behave so rigidly and inflexibly without realizing that they live among a people negatively predisposed against them.<sup>44</sup>

If these reactions to political change point to the direction of the enhancement, at the symbolic level, of Hellenism as a supra-class unity under bourgeois hegemony, there is nevertheless contrary evidence which suggests that the pressure of the nation-state and its apparatuses brought to the fore differences of class and origin which crosscut and challenge this unity, revealing, very early, the future diverse paths of adaptation, assimilation or departure which the Greeks of Varna would follow.<sup>45</sup> One characteristic example is that of conscription. Accustomed to the Ottoman Tanzimat system for the non Muslim subjects, according to which they had to pay a tax for being exempted from military service (*bedel-i askeri*), the Greeks of Varna were alarmed by the conscription the Russians introduced for the army of the Principality. The issue was delicate and its solution crucial. At the collective "community" level,

---

42. *Varnenskij Vestnik*, g. I, br. 9/ 22-7-1880.

43. DA-Varna, f. 82k, a.e. 117/ 107-8 & ff.

44. Kleon Rangavis to Ap. Pappadopoulos, Sofia, 28-7-1884, GFMA 1884/ 5.1.

45. For these diverse paths see: T. Dragostinova, *Between two Motherlands: Struggles for Nationhood among the Greeks in Bulgaria 1906-1949*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2011.

in all sessions of the community council, there was unanimity on the need to have their children conscripted in order to acquire the same rights with the Bulgarians. Yet, “[...] many were looking after saving their children either by issuing them Greek passports or by sending them abroad”. At the day of the conscription more than 500 people, “among which there were drunkards of the lower class”, gathered in the court of the Cathedral shouting that the notables had their own sons escape, leaving the sons of the poor to be conscripted. Despite the efforts of archbishop Kyrillos, the situation got out of control and the Governor brought in the army to disperse the demonstrators.<sup>46</sup> As the archbishop wrote to the Patriarch a couple of months later, “on the issue of the conscription Mr. H. Nomikos [the Greek vice consul] showed the outmost energy supplying many of our youth with passports and helping them out of the country on time”.<sup>47</sup> The support given to the Greek diplomat by the archbishop and the notables of the community was not enough to save his position, as he was accused of issuing illegally passports to those who could pay for them, among them to 47 Jews and 10 Armenians, and he was eventually dismissed.<sup>48</sup>

At this point, the Greek state refused to sanction the protection granted massively to those Greek Orthodox formerly Ottoman subjects who could pay for it, yet it is quite likely that Greek citizenship continued to be attractive for them, at least so far as certain privileges (extraterritoriality, low tariffs etc.) were accompanying it. Greek citizenship could still function as a marker of social advance and difference, just like continuing education in a High School or University in Athens was the most prestigious choice for the stronger pupils of Varna’s Greek Schools<sup>49</sup>. By 1895, in one of the three Greek Orthodox parishes, more than 25% of the members of

---

46. Kyrillos of Varna to Ecumenical Patriarchate, 23-12-1878, DA-Varna, f. 82k, a.e. 117/ 84-5.

47. Kyrillos of Varna to Ecumenical Patriarchate, DA-Varna, f. 82k, a.e. 117/ 87

48. Kyrillos of Varna to Hristos Nomikos, DA-Varna, f. 82k, a.e. 117/ 97; Greek delegation in Con/ple to Greek foreign ministry, 16-8-1879, GFMA 1879/36.17.

49. As early as 1871 the trustee of Varna’s Greek Schools admits that there is a wave among pupils of the last high-school classes to leave for Greece to continue there their education. DA-Varna, f. 82k, a.e. 25/22-35

the Greek Community of Varna were Greek subjects.<sup>50</sup> We should, however, remark that a considerable part of the Greek subjects in post-1878 Varna were not “naturalized” local bourgeois and that the tendency of immigration to Varna of Greeks from the Greek Kingdom, Istanbul and other places of the Greek Diaspora seems to persist. The data from the First Greek All-male primary school of the city show, moreover, that this tendency was intensified from the second half of the 1880’s onwards, enhancing the “diasporic” character of the city’s Greek community.<sup>51</sup> The provisional picture we draw from the community’s registers is that this new wave of immigration had different social characteristics from those of the wheat merchants’ immigration in the period 1840-1878. Many of the newcomers could be classified as traditional petty bourgeois (artisans and small shopkeepers), while others were covering the new posts of trade clerks and employees generated by the rather flourishing Greek trade in Varna.

Indeed, the years after the liberation and up to the early 1890’s were quite prosperous for the Greek merchants and entrepreneurs of the city. The 1880’s showed a boom in Greek owned shipping sailing from Varna [and Burgas], while the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is during this same decade the only region of the Black Sea in which Greek-owned shipping shows a significant upward trend not only in absolute numbers but also in the relative participation in the overall maritime trade of the region.<sup>52</sup> During the same period, the enterprises of Varna’s Greeks differentiate and expand in banking and industry<sup>53</sup>. Within the picture of a slow industrialization until the 1890’s, in which “[. . .] not only most of the factory owners, but also the workers themselves are mostly incoming foreigners”<sup>54</sup>, the soap factory of Fortouna Bros, natives of Mytillini, (1886), the tobacco factory of K. Avgerinidis (1885), the wheat mills of M.

---

50. Parish register of Panagia Church Parish (1895 appr.), DA-Varna, f.82k, op.1/a.e.27.

51. See in detail A. Lyberatos, “Between War and Trade . . .”, op. cit., 91-2.

52. G. Harlaftis, *A History of the Greek-owned shipping. The making of an international Tramp Fleet, 1830 to the present day*, London, 1996, p.33, 34 &86, fig. 1.15 & 1.16 and table 3.12.

53. A. Lyberatos, “Between War and Trade...”, op. cit., p. 90.

54. *Izlozhenie za sastojaniето na varnenskoto okraճie prez 1888-9 g.*, op. cit., p. 76.

Nikolaides a.o. where among the first and long lasting industrial enterprises in Varna.<sup>55</sup>

### *The rise of the national bourgeoisie (1890's -1912)*

The increasing importance of Varna as Bulgaria's major port-city and gate to the World Economy and the political disturbances within the neighbouring Ottoman Empire continued to bring more people to the city-port, not only from the Bulgarian interior but also from abroad, people with different ethnic background (Bulgarians, Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Russians, Czechs a.o.). Fin-de siècle Bulgarian Varna was much more multi-ethnic, or "cosmopolitan", to use this rather vague term, than it used to be in its Ottoman Imperial period. Alongside the Sephardic Jews who were moving gradually to the city already before 1878, the liberation brought in Varna several families of Jews from Central Europe and Russia, merchants, artisans and professionals.<sup>56</sup> The increasing trade of the port-city led towards the end of the century several Jewish merchant houses from Ruse and the interior of Bulgaria to open branches or move to Varna.<sup>57</sup> These movements were probably connected with the arrival of the big Jewish merchant houses Louis Dreyfus & Cie (based in Paris) and Neifeld & Co (based in Berlin, founded 1867), which opened branches in Varna in 1890 and 1901 respectively and entered dynamically the grain market of the city port.<sup>58</sup> After 1878 wealthy Armenians, such as Manukian bros from Kayseri, coming from Asia Minor and Istanbul, settled gradually in Varna, mostly trading with manufactures and ironware, to be followed by the torrent of Armenian refugees of the 1894-96 events.<sup>59</sup> Last and most

55. DA-Varna, f. 111k; DA-Varna, f. 112k, op. 1, a.e. 110, 457, 459 & 1125.

56. V. Stojanova, "Istoriko-etnografski štrihi. . .", op. cit.

57. Among them we find Elias Kanetti's relative Isidor A. Kanetti, Austro-Hungarian subject, trading in grain in 1904. "Meier & Aftalion" from Ruse (established 1895), with several branches in northern Bulgaria, opens a branch in Varna in 1898. Aron S. Koen moved to Varna from Aitos (1898). Haim Kalmi from Ruse invests in 1901 in Varna grain trade in partnership with Avram I. Asher in Varna a.o. DA-Varna, f. 112k, op. 1, a.e. 1079, 1097, 1104, 1117.

58. DA-Varna, f. 112k, op. 1, a.e. 1089 & 1106.

59. For the Armenian immigration to Bulgaria and in particular to Varna see:

important, as we shall see, we shall mention the gradual economic and social advance of a Bulgarian middle class, accompanied by a continuous demographic reinforcement not only as a result of internal “economic” migration but also thanks to the arrival of the refugees of the struggles for Macedonia. Varna was at the same time becoming less Greek, not only because of the economic competition and challenges the Greeks would encounter, but mostly in the sense that Hellenism was definitely losing its pre-war claim to a near-monopoly in progress and “de-orientalization”, melt within a general, state-led and unfettered drive towards “Europeanization”.

This “europeanisation”, both a marker of social differentiation and a tool of hegemony, provided the common cultural idiom of Varna’s bourgeois irrespectively of their ethnic/communal affiliation. European dressing, soirées with European theatrical and musical performances, European language learning (especially French), the flourishing of associations (literary, philanthropic) etc., were not monopolised by any “community” and the cultural practices and modes of life shaping bourgeois identities represented definitely “objective commonalities” between the bourgeois of Varna of varied ethnic origin.<sup>60</sup> Apart from the old, excellent and still unpublished work of J. Karanov on Varna’s musical culture<sup>61</sup>, which reveals the complex network of cross-cultural “musical friendships” which formed Varna’s musical culture, little work has been done in this direction. Further research would perhaps give us a better idea on the ways and the extent to which the “objective commonalities” we spoke of were translated into real social contacts producing a distinctive “shared” Varniote bourgeois identity. With respect to this last question, I would like to shift our attention in these last pages of the paper, to the existence, outlook and functioning of bourgeois professional organisations, institutions whose role is equally, if not more, important.

---

S.V. Ovnjanjan, *Armenobălgarskite istoričeski vřzki i armenskite kolonii v Bălgarija prez vtorata polovina na XIX v.*, Sofia, 1972, p. 170-72 & 321ff.

60. For the Bulgarians and the Jews see mostly the works of the ethnographer V. Stojanova, “Istoriko-etnografski štrihi. . .”, op. cit.; “Promenite v bita na naselenieto v Varna sled Osvoboždenieto”, “Otdihăt” , “Kurortna Varna” etc. ; For the Greeks Kotzageorgi, op. cit.; For the Armenians see Ovnjanjan, op. cit.

61. J. Karanov, *Istorijata na muzikalnata kultura na gr. Varna*, 1965 (manuscript, NB “P.Slavejkov” – Varna, Kraevedska sbirka).

The participation and cohabitation of members of the different ethnic communities in these professional organizations is certainly an indication for the development of cross-cultural class ties and solidarities. Nonetheless, this can very well go hand in hand with the reproduction and sometimes invigoration of ethnic distinctions and antagonisms in their bosom. The Medical Association of Varna, founded in 1883 with the participation of Bulgarian, Greek, Russian and other practitioners provides us with an illuminating example, not only because the Members of the Association, adopting and reproducing in their journal the medical discourse of that time, are very active in constructing racial difference through measuring and identifying the physical characteristics of the various races inhabiting the city (Bulgarians, Greeks, Turks, Gagauz).<sup>62</sup> The case of the Dr. Ochs, an Ashkenazi Jew who moved in Varna after 1878<sup>63</sup>, initially a member of the Association who left it quite early and published the first medical journal in Bulgaria (*Um i zdrave*), gives us an example of the readiness with which nationalist discourse could be called forth to arrange professional antagonisms. In his journal Dr. Ochs exerted criticism to the city and village doctors in Bulgaria and especially to those of Varna, with whom he had entered into conflict. His article caused the summoning of the Medical Association of Varna, to discuss the methods of reaction to Dr. Ochs's attack. The employment of nationalist rhetorics in the discussion against the dissident medic is characteristic: as Dr. Ivanov remarked "[...] everybody knows that at the time of popular mobilization for the war [with Serbia in 1885], Dr. Ochs was calling the peasants and was issuing to them disability certificates."<sup>64</sup>

Moving to the major bourgeois economic institution established in the city during the 1890's, the Varna Chamber of Industry and Commerce (1894), we observe that it does not exhibit even the formal cohabitation of the merchants and entrepreneurs of the city. A quick look in the list of its founding members provides a first crude indication: Out of the 31 members of the Chamber - merchants and industrialists - only 3 (the Armenian Garabet Hovasapi-

---

62. *Medicinsko spisanie*, g. II., № 86 10-1-1887.

63. Stojanova, op. cit. p.56.

64. *Medicinsko Spisanie*, g.II, № 30/20-8-1887.

an from Varna and the Greeks Dr. Anastassios Dionysiades from Burgas and Demetrios D. Mousiades from Anchialo) were non Bulgarians, a balance which remained unaltered in the following years.<sup>65</sup> Along with the other 3 established simultaneously, and by state initiative, in Sofia, Ruse and Plovdiv to cover the entire country, the Chamber of Varna was placed under state protection and was (along with the others) expected to act as an advisory body for the planning of the state economic policy.<sup>66</sup> Only literate persons with the right to vote for municipal and general elections, i.e. only Bulgarian subjects, could be elected as members.<sup>67</sup> A new law for the Chambers of Commerce and Industry voted by the National Assembly in November 1906, after a long period of contestations and amidst protests by the leadership of the Chambers, brought them under even tighter state control and curtailed whatever pretensions for autonomy the Chambers might had.<sup>68</sup>

More or less dependent by the state, the Chamber became clearly the institutional expression of the rise, under state protection, of Varna's Bulgarian bourgeoisie. Certainly, the Chamber defended the general bourgeois class interests intervening on all hot issues at the places of class struggle, as it did, for example, when it lobbied to the minister for the establishment of a special "port police" in order to impose the power of the port authority on the disobedient port workers.<sup>69</sup> Yet, even the most hasty look at the minutes of the Chamber reveals a constant preoccupation with the advancement of the interests of domestic Bulgarian owned capital against the "unfair" competition of foreign capitalists, protected in they turn by the foreign Consulates in the city.<sup>70</sup>

---

65. DA-Varna, f. 63k, op. 1, a.e. 251.

66. L. Veleva, *Tărgovsko-industrialnite kamari v Bălgarija 1894-1919 (organizacija i dejnost)*, Sofia, 2005, p.21.

67. Op. cit, p. 37-8.

68. Op. cit., p. 85-94. Cf. R. Avramov, *Komunalnijat kapitalizăm. Iz bălgarskoto stopansko minalo*, Sofia, 2007, T.II, pp. 29-41.

69. *Săkrateni protokoli na XVI redovna sesija na VTIK 6-16 Dekemvri 1907*, Varna, 1909, p. 71-76.

70. Consider for example, the issue of the taxes paid by domestic versus foreign "travelling trade agents", the pressure to the foreign steamship companies to lower freight a.o. DA-Varna, f. 63k, op. 1, a.e. 17/ 228-232; a.e. 47&48; *Săkrateni pro-*

The Bulgarian state, from the early 1890's onwards and along with a process of challenging of the inherited capitulations, followed for the first time protectionist economic policies aiming at import substitution (laws for the encouragement of domestic industry etc.), privileging state sponsored transport companies (such as the Bulgarian Steamship Company), developing infrastructures and regulating with various interventions the internal market. It was during this period that Varna was clearly prioritized by the Bulgarian governments (Stambolov and Stoilov/ I. E. Geshov cabinets) as Bulgaria's main commercial gate, leaving the Danube city-ports behind. In this direction the State-owned railway lowered considerably tariffs for commodities from Sofia to Varna, connecting cheaply even the westernmost and southern regions of Bulgaria to Varna's city port.<sup>71</sup> The construction of a modern and safe port, a necessity acknowledged and a work promised by Sultan Abdul Mecid as early as 1847, was eventually undertaken 50 years later at the end of the century.<sup>72</sup> In the same direction, and in order to avoid the trading of Bulgarian grain through Romanian Grain Exchanges, Varna's Chamber of Commerce promoted the establishment of the first Commodity (Grain) Exchange in Bulgaria in 1902, which developed into the sole "international" economic forum and institution in the city.<sup>73</sup>

These measures clearly helped the advance of Varna's trade in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the rise of domestic bourgeoisie to stronger positions was sharpening antagonisms and making more acute the question of who was going to take the lion's share of this economic blossoming. During the same decade, in 1906, the Greek merchants and entrepreneurs of Varna were confronted with serious urban riots which led a considerable part of them to leave the city and the country for good. Greek and Bulgarian historiographies have considered these events as a matter of foreign relations and antagonisms between the two nation-states.

---

*tokoli na XV redovna sesija na VTIK 27 Noemvri- 9 Dekemvri 1906, Varna, 1907, p. 269-70 a.o.*

71. K. Popov, "Varnensko pristanishte. . .", *Spisanie na Bălgarskoto Ikonomičesko Družestvo*, 1906, 4, pp.242-266.

72. CDIA, f. 243k, op. 1, a. e. 917.

73. K. Popov, op. cit.; DA-Varna, f.49, op.1.



Greek historiography interpreted them as the outcome of the hostility of the Bulgarian state against the Greeks. In this discourse, the abovementioned hostility is considered as given and is presented as a somehow “inbuilt” quality of a personified Bulgarian state. Bulgarian historiography, on the other hand, sees the same events as the product of the outcry against the Greeks for their anti-Bulgarian action in Macedonia: the agitation among the uprooted Bulgarian Macedonian refugees resulted to the seeking of this, legitimate or not, revenge from the Greeks of the Bulgarian Black Sea. As I have argued elsewhere, I don’t find either interpretation satisfying, and I strongly believe that these hateful events have to be inscribed into the internal political and social dynamics of Bulgarian society.<sup>74</sup>

Nonetheless, the anxieties of the emerging national bourgeoisie were not confined to its Greek antagonists but were also extended to the Jews, without however reaching the point of a widespread radical anti-Semitism. Haralan Nikolov, a well educated entrepreneur of liberal convictions, having served earlier as Secretary of Varna’s Chamber and later a Bank director, in the same year of the anti-Greek protests and riots was finishing an article of comparison between Ruse and Varna with the following passage: “Our words shall stop here, since our comparison concerned only the local traders, our own merchants. This comparison does not include the incomers who arrive and live in different cities, yet sharing the same culture. Indeed, foreigners have started lately to see Bulgaria as the Promised Land. Lovers of good trade operations from all nations have started increasingly to settle down here as rooted inhabitants. The local trading element is gradually being pushed back and, if we don’t recover in time, the day will come soon, when we will find ourselves servants of these uninvited guests. It is however true, that the predominance of this element will do away with the differences between the cities, because it will introduce and impose everywhere the same trading discipline. From a philosophical point of view we will then be well heading towards progress. It is highly unlikely,

---

74. A. Lyberatos, «Confronting the Urban Crowd: Bulgarian Society and the 1906 Anti-Greek Movement», in : A. Idem (ed.), *Social Transformation and Mass Mobilisation in the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean Cities, 1900-1923*, Irakleion: Crete University Press, 2013, 177-193.

though, if this will be of any gain for the degraded locals.”<sup>75</sup> Let these words be the last breath of this paper also, with the remark that these fears and anxieties remained eventually unconfirmed.

---

75. H. Nikolov, “Varna i Ruse (parallel)”, *Spisanie na Balgarskoto Ikon. Družestvo*, 1906, 4, p. 271.



