

Gelina Harlaftis

*Black Sea and its Maritime Networks, 1770s-1820s.  
The Beginnings of Its European Integration*

The approach of the “Black Sea history” introduces in the historical studies of southeastern Europe, the History of the Sea and/or Maritime Economic History, which during the last twenty years has taken off internationally along with Global History and Global Economic History.<sup>1</sup> Up to the present day there is a very limited number of studies on the history of the Black Sea as a whole, on its port-cities, or on its peoples.<sup>2</sup> Some are voyage accounts of reporters that travel through the nations of the area.<sup>3</sup> The histories that exist are mainly political, cultural or environmental histories with the state or the region as the unit of research.<sup>4</sup> They all carry out insightful studies but the sea is either invisible or just part of the scenery. The usual way is to have fragmented histories squeezed in political borders and regions that expand and contract according to political struggles.

---

<sup>1</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, *Maritime History or the History of thalassa*, in *The New Ways of History*, G. HARLAFTIS, N. KARAPIDAKIS, K. SBONIAS, V. VAIPOULOS eds., London 2009 (IB Tauris), pp. 211-238.

<sup>2</sup> The only holistic academic approach is by CH. KING, *The Black Sea. A History*, Oxford-New York 2004, mainly a political and social history, that has certainly turned its back to the sea. Most of the works on the Black Sea as a unit are either for the ancient times on archaeology or for the very recent times on strategy, security and natural resources. Few works study Black Sea history during the eighteenth to the early twentieth as a whole or parts of it as a unit of research. See E.Y. ÖZVEREN, *A Framework for the Study of the Black Sea World, 1789-1915*, “Review”, 20, 1997, 1, pp. 77-113; *Europe and the Black Sea Region. A History of Early Knowledge Exchange (1750-1850)*, D. GUTMEYR, K. KASER eds., Zurich 2018 (Lit Verlag). There are very few studies for Black Sea port cities. See for example P. HERLIHY, *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914*, Harvard 1986 (Harvard University Press); Ç. KEYDER, E.Y. ÖZVEREN, D. QUATAERT, *Port-Cities in the Ottoman Empire: Some Theoretical and Historical Perspectives*, “Review”, 16, 1993, n. 4, *Port-Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean 1800-1914*, pp. 519-558. There are more on its people or on diaspora groups. See for example, A. FISHER, *Between Russians, Ottomans and Turks: Crimea and Crimean Tatars*, Istanbul 1998 (The Isis Press); *Οι Έλληνες της Αζοφικής. Νέες προσεγγίσεις στην ιστορία των Ελλήνων στη Νότιο Ρωσία [The Greeks of the Azov, 18<sup>th</sup>-beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. New approaches to the history of the Greeks in South Russia]*, E. SIFNEOS, G. HARLAFTIS eds., Athens 2015, (Hellenic National Foundation). The above literature is far from exhaustive. There is a rich literature, mostly from a national or ethnic perspective and on local languages. See [www.blacksea.gr](http://www.blacksea.gr).

<sup>3</sup> N. ASCHERSON, *Black Sea*, London 1995.

<sup>4</sup> See for example A. KAPPELER, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* 2001, (Longman); *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-930*, J. BURBANK, M. VON HAGEN, A. REMNEV eds., Bloomington and Indianapolis 2007, (Indiana University Press); *Religions and migrations in the Black Sea region*, E. SIDERI, ELENI, L.E. ROUPAKIA eds., Cham, Switzerland 2017 (Palgrave Macmillan); There is also work on cultural and environmental history: C.E. CORDOVA, *Crimea and the Black Sea: an environmental history*, London 2016, (IB Tauris); I. BELLÉR-HANN, C.M. HANN, *Turkish region: state, market & social identities on the east Black Sea coast*, Oxford 2000 (James Currey).

From the last third of the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century the Black Sea coastal line witnessed an unprecedented commercial revolution as it was transformed to an international market with global linkages with the Mediterranean sea, the northern European seas, the Atlantic and the Indian ocean. Despite its importance, the Black Sea region is barely included in the discourse of the economic and social history as neither its qualitative or quantitative history is really known to the wider or specialist public of the West. The gap in our knowledge and weak academic communication of scholars in historical studies within the Black Sea countries, has come to fill the interdisciplinary and inter-university project “The Black Sea and its port-cities, 1774-1914. Development, convergence and linkages with the global economy” that run from 2012 to 2015 and has uncovered a large pool of archival resources from all countries.<sup>5</sup>

The Black Sea to many historians is no more than a geographical term. A sea excluded from international trade until 1770s, developed its sea trade and maritime networks in an unprecedented rate to become in the next 150 years the largest grain producer of the world, supplying western European populations during the era of industrial revolution. In 1770 there was no big city on its western, northern and eastern coastline apart from Keffe in Crimea. The only old, century-long, cities were in the south coastline, in the present day Turkey, particularly in the Pontic area, from Sinop to Trabzon. This changed within a few decades. From 1770s more than 24 port-cities mushroomed in the coastline of the Black Sea attracting hundreds of thousands of immigrants mainly from central and southeastern Europe. The Black Sea coastline became a “a land of prosperity” for these immigrants, what the United States became one hundred years later.

The Black Sea, became centre of attraction for economic immigration from the whole region of central and south-eastern Europe. Its port-cities, became cosmopolitan places, “melting pots” of ethnic minorities: Russians, Greeks, Tatars, Ukrainians, Polish, Bulgarians, Germans, Jews, Armenians. A sea monopolized by the Ottoman Empire until 1770s, opened to the world within the framework of Russian colonization in its northern and eastern coasts and Romanian and

---

<sup>5</sup> This project was included in the Action “Thales”, financed by the Greek National Strategic Reference Framework, the E.U. and the Greek Ministry of Education. The project was led by the Department of History of the Ionian University, with the author as co-ordinator, a collaboration, on a national level, with the University of Crete, the National Hellenic Research Foundation, the Institute for Mediterranean Studies-FORTH, the University of Thessaly and the University of the Aegean. On an international level, it collaborated with 23 academic institutions – Universities, Research Institutes and Archives – from the Black Sea countries, that is Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia, as well as from Moldavia, Norway, Italy, Israel and the United States. The collaborating group consisted of the following academic institutions: Boğaziçi University, Bilkent University, Düzce University and 19 May University from Turkey, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Varna University from Bulgaria, “Dunarea De Jos” University of Galati from Romania, Moldavian Academy of Sciences from Moldavia, State Archives of Odessa, State Archives of Nikolayev, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, University of Berdyansk, University of Mariupol and University of Kharkov from Ukraine, Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow), Southern Russia Academy of Sciences (Rostov-on-Don), State Russian University of Human Studies, European University of St. Petersburg and State University of St. Petersburg from Russia, Elia State University (Tbilisi) from Georgia, Jerusalem University from Israel, Southern State Connecticut University from U.S.A and Maritime Museum of Bergen from Norway. For the books and databases of the Black Sea port-cities see [www.blacksea.gr](http://www.blacksea.gr).

Bulgarian nationalization in the western one. Main agents of economic integration in all port cities proved to be the mobile groups of the so-called people of the classic diaspora like the Greeks, Jews and Armenians, as well as those of other central European groups. It was these mobile entrepreneurial groups that undertook the control of external trade and shipping and those that developed maritime and commercial networks and the linkages to the western European economy. The linkages to the West triggered development and convergence of regional markets in the global economy.

This paper examines the first 50 transitional years of a sea of isolation to a sea of internationalization. It provides analytical tools to reveal the mechanisms of how this was done. To do so it places in the centre of the analysis the sea. By using the approach of maritime history, an analysis beyond political borders, it follows the glance from the sea and its effects on land. In this way it examines the shipping movements of cargoes and people *on the sea* and the development and impact of this development *around the sea*, on the Black Sea maritime regions, the port cities that grew and the entrepreneurs that triggered this growth and established its maritime networks.

To that end, the **first** section of the paper will indicate the approach to the analysis of the Black Sea history. Although all regions will be briefly analyzed the first maritime region that developed international export activities, the northern coast, will be more closely examined. The **second** section will examine movements on the sea. This section will present the rising importance and consolidation of Ottoman and Venetian/Greeks as main sea carriers and traders of the Black Sea in the last third of the eighteenth century, beginning of the nineteenth century. The **third** section analyses the developments around the sea. It brings out the commercial revolution of the northern coast during the period under examination, and focuses at the Russian port cities and their overall development. The **fourth** section examines the importance of foreign traders at the northern coast that built up international trading houses with large entrepreneurial networks that proved pivotal in developing its maritime networks and integration of the Black Sea in the European economy.

## 1. BLACK SEA HISTORY: AN APPROACH

How do we approach the history of the sea? How does one trace continuity and change in the history of the sea? It is of course what man did **on the sea** (ships, seamen, navigation, seacrade, war, piracy); **around the sea** (port cities, islands, maritime communities, shipping businesses), **in the sea** (fishing, maritime resources); **because of the sea** (maritime empires, international maritime institutions and policy) and **about the sea** (the myths and poems of a sea, impact of the sea on the art, maritime culture).<sup>6</sup> How does then man affect the path of

---

<sup>6</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, *What is Maritime History*, in "First International Symposium, In memoriam Skip Fischer, 25-26 April 2018, Centre of Maritime History, Institute for Mediterranean Studies-FORTH", under publication in the "International Journal of Maritime History" 2019.

history at land from the sea? We shall look at the first two dimensions to trace the maritime networks of the Black Sea.

**On the sea,** history has been seen through maritime voyages, explorations through the structure of the sea. Sailing on the sea and discovering the sea routes, the winds, the currents, the safe anchorages, the depths, the rocks, the islands, the sandbanks, the ice, has not been the concern of most of historians. It has been considered self evident. The discovery of navigating a water mass, however, has been the outcome of a knowledge of decades, centuries and has meant the sacrifice of hundreds, of thousands of seafarers. Maritime voyages, exploration and establishment of maritime empires determine change in and around a sea/ocean disturbing its continuity. The Venetians and the Genoese developed their maritime empires in the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea before the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese in the Indian ocean, the Spaniards in the Atlantic in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the British after. Maritime empires were a European act and characterize the history of the expansion of Europeans in all seas and oceans. The Black Sea has some peculiarities. It was a limited sea and no grand voyages are known apart from its ancient mythical voyage by the ancient Greeks, that of the ship *Argo* with its seamen, the Argonauts, that went to a far away land of prosperity to grab its wealth, the golden fleece. Colonialism of its coastal area after the Genoese and the Venetians, however, came from land powers after the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottomans from the South (15<sup>th</sup> to the eighteenth century) and the Russians from the North and the East (eighteenth to twentieth centuries).

The Ancient Greeks named the Black Sea with a euphemism, Euxine Pontus, which means a Hospitable sea or a sea friendly to strangers, meaning exactly the opposite. The Black Sea, Mare Nero of the Venetians and the Genoese, the Kara Deniz of the Ottomans, the Chernoe More of the Russians, the Schwarzes Meer of the Austrians is said to have taken its name of its waters subject to storms although to many seafarers navigation in the Black Sea was much easier than that in the Aegean, as it is free of islands and rocks. Its longest width from the western coast to the eastern one is 627 miles, and its greatest length from Odessa to the southern coast is 333 miles. The narrowest passage between North and South is from the southern coast to Crimea, where it does not exceed 144 miles.<sup>7</sup> It connects with the Mediterranean by the straits (Bosporus, the sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles) and on its north-east it connects with the Sea of Azov with Kerch straits.

To reach the Black Sea was the desire of Russian monarchs since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The change of the number, type, nationality of vessels on the sea came from developments at the northern coast of the Black Sea, a sea described until then as an "Ottoman lake". This was the result of the Russian geopolitical and economic strategy for colonial expansion and economic power that began from the time of Peter the Great and was consolidated during the reign of Catherine II. Furthermore, Russia's colonial policy in the South can be seen in the wider context of the Eastern Question and Russia's attempt to provide, as a great European power, 'protection' to a select minority of the Ottoman Empire with the aim of expanding its influence into the neighbouring state. The geopolitical activities of

---

<sup>7</sup> *The Black Sea Pilot*, London 1884 (Hydrographic Office, Admiralty), third edition, p. 1.

Russia have been described as that of “two crabs probing the claws of the Ottoman crab in the Danubian and Caucasian sectors and steadily pushing it back”.<sup>8</sup> The ascension of Catherine the Great to the throne spurred further the expansionist policy of the Empire that witnessed some of its great victories in the two Russo-Ottoman wars of 1768-1774 and 1787-1792 by which they acquired the “New Russia” or Novorossiia, and a great frontage to the Black Sea which covered its northern and northeastern coast. Catherine gave priority to the Black Sea: that involved the so-called Greek plan by which it was conceived that Russia should help the Christians in the Balkans and Greece, seek free navigation in the Black Sea and advance to Constantinople.<sup>9</sup>

Still, in the 1770s and 1780s when the Russians pushed in the Black Sea, the area was still *terra incognita*. The history of the Black Sea has been marked by its geographic antithesis: its extremely narrow passage in the south (the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara and Bosphorus) that connects to the rest of the seas and oceans and its vast hinterland in the north that made it an “avenue” between Asia and Europe. And the Sea, is after all, a difficult one. The navigator needs landmarks at sea to see his way. The peaks of the mountains or hills, islands or capes with lighthouses are excellent “route-marks” that guide the seafarers. The lack of mountains, however, on the vicinity of the sea in the west and northern coast (see Map 1) along the scarcity of good anchorages causes problems to navigation. The navigator of the Black Sea should know well its shores to approach them. Only in Crimea there are recognizable mountains, in the eastern Caucasian coast and in the southern coast with the easily recognizable mountains (Map 1).

The sea “is short and troublesome” according to the British pilots and is difficult to enter from the Bosphorus. A large number of long and big rivers have their mouths in the Black Sea, in the northwest, the Danube, Bug, Dniester and Dnieper, while in the Azov the river Don. The rivers are frozen for 3-4 months and the melting of the ice during spring causes strong currents to the sea. One of the strongest currents comes from the straits of Kerch caused by the river Don; it heads to the Crimea, it meets with the waters of Bug, Dniester and Dnieper and unites southward with that of the Danube towards the Bosphorus. This combined with strong northerly winds makes entrance to the Black Sea very difficult. Lack of wind off the coast of Crimea, for example, produces equally great problems as the currents drive the vessel off the coast which can make long boards out to the open sea without being able to approach the shore for days.<sup>10</sup> North-easterly winds bring clear weather and cold in winters, while north-westerly winds bring fog and moist weather; both winds were good usually for sailing vessels. The steady northerly winds, instead, often caused tens of vessels to pass weeks waiting for the wind to change in the Dardanelles and in the Bosphorus in order to be able to enter the sea.

---

<sup>8</sup> J.P. LE DONNE, *Geopolitics, Logistics and Grain: Russia's Ambitions in the Black Sea Basin, 1737-1834*, in “International History Review”, 28, 2006, n. 1, pp. 1-41.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.

Map 1. The geography of the Black Sea and its port cities



To enter the Black Sea one has to go through the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus. Navigation through them was (and still is) a complex and difficult operation during the time of sail.<sup>11</sup> The Straits are 40 miles long, varying from three quarters of a mile to two miles in width, with a strong current always running through to the south, at a rate of 2 to 4 miles an hour. The wind that often blows to the same direction proved a great hurdle for sailing ships that wanted to proceed to the north towards the Black Sea and they frequently had to wait at the entrance to the Straits. Access from the Black Sea ports to the northern side of the Straits could prove even more ominous. The flat and rugged coast could become very dangerous in conditions of fog, when the Master could not locate the passage. Signals and life-saving boats were of little help in sailing the Straits. But lack of wind is an even worse enemy to the sailing ship. To help these vessels to proceed, the inhabitants of some villages at the entrance of the Dardanelles, had boats or barges led by tow horses against the stream.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For a thorough analysis on the navigation of the Black Sea see A. DELIS, *Navigating perilous waters: routes and hazards of the voyages to Black Sea in the 19<sup>th</sup> century* in *Linkages of the Black Sea with the West. Trade and immigration*, M.C. CHATZIOANNOU, A. DELIS eds., Corfu, forthcoming, (Black Sea Working Papers, www.blacksea.gr), volume 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Sailing Directions for the Euxine or Black Sea and the Seas of Marmora and Azov; embracing also the navigation of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus*, London, 1853, (James Imray), p. 2.

Map 2. The four Black Sea maritime regions



The Black Sea consists from the articulation of many maritime regions that share a common hinterland and characteristics. Using the concept of “region” from economic geography, I have distinguished four maritime regions in the Black Sea. By the first third of the nineteenth century in the four maritime regions four main transport systems developed to serve the needs of the sea transport of short and long distances with maritime networks within, between and beyond the maritime regions (Map 2).

The **first** maritime region that the sailing vessel found entering was the western coast of the Black Sea. In the southwestern coast Varna and Burgas developed later as the main ports and the northwestern maritime region of the Black Sea that includes mainly the ports of the Danube, Galatz and Braila, and Costantza.<sup>13</sup> In 1800s the American navigating guidelines wrote that there were no safe ports during the winter on the western coast of the Black Sea.<sup>14</sup> When the vessel passed from the present day Bulgarian coast, from Agathopoli (Akteboli or Aktarpolee) the Master could distinguish the remarkable mountains at the distance behind, the little harbor of Vassiliko to reach the gulf of Burgas which is the only part of the western coast of the Black Sea with good anchorages. The sailing ship heading north passes from Sozopol to Messembria before reaching Varna and further on the Baljik bay with a good anchorage.<sup>15</sup> When Captain Yannakis from Mesembria entered the Black Sea on 2 May 1794 from Constantinople with his caique and a crew of six ,heading for Russian ports he knew his whereabouts, as he carried the coastal trade

<sup>13</sup> *Port-Cities of the western shore of the Black Sea: Economic and Social Development, 18<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries*, C. ARDELEANU, A. LYBERATOS eds., Corfu 2017, (Black Sea Working Papers, [www.blacksea.gr](http://www.blacksea.gr)), volume 1.

<sup>14</sup> H.A.S. DEARBORN, *A memoir on the commerce*, vol. 2, 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 14-24.

of the western coast for a long time.<sup>16</sup> The coast from Vassiliko to Baljick had a substantial local fleet engaged in the Black Sea trade as it was serving for centuries the coastal trade to Constantinople. This area was only integrated in the international sea trade with the West in the second half of the nineteenth century.

When Captain Thodoris from Hydra entered the Black Sea on 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1782 with his ship (of a type called *Çamlıca*) he headed for the Danube.<sup>17</sup> A “road” sign to the entrance of the Danube is an island, two miles long and half a mile broad; the Serpent’s island, which the modern Greeks called “Fidonisi”, and the ancient Greeks Lefki (The White). The Danube has three mouths which are blocked by extensive sand banks. Sulina is the middle entrance to the Danube, but it still had many problems of navigation as vessels were unable to proceed up the river loaded, and had to be unloaded to lighters, called *schleps*. With contrary winds the passage upriver could take a month or more. The main ports of the area were river ports, Braila and Galatz, both insignificant villages that after the 1820s grew to become vibrant cities, centres of grain exports later in the nineteenth century. Flats in the river which impeded navigation in the Sulina branch later were removed by the European Commission that was formed after the Crimean war. Even so, the river was always subject to change and new shoals often formed. From the Kilia mouth of the Danube there were only 80 miles to Odessa.

The **second** maritime region covers the port-cities of the northern coast of the Black Sea, Odessa, Kherson, Nikolayev, Evpatoria, Sebastopol and Theodosia (Map 3).<sup>18</sup> Heading to Odessa was also a clear navigation from the Bosphorus. The city, was only a fort called Kodjabey. Approaching Kodjabey was tricky as travelers of the time reported. Between the Danube and the Dnieper the shore is low and difficult to distinguish. Off the gulf there were variations of depth “which might sometimes cause great uneasiness to the seaman in thick weather”.<sup>19</sup> Sailing vessels need depth and the masters had to make sure that they were in good distance from

---

<sup>16</sup> OTTOMAN ARCHIVES OF PRIME MINISTRY, Divan-i Hümayun Kataloğu İzn-i Sefine (A.DVNS.İZN.d), vol. 1. The information is found in the database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*, Research Programme “History of Greek Shipping, 1700-1821”, entrepreneurial project “Pythagoras I”, Ionian University, financed by the Greek Ministry of Education/EU 2004-2006, [www.marehist.gr](http://www.marehist.gr). The research project co-ordinated by Gelina Harlaftis at Ionian University, was made from a team of twenty researchers that carried out combined research in twenty-five Archives in seventeen cities and towns: Istanbul, Venice, Trieste, Malta, Messina, Naples, Livorno, Genoa, Marseilles, London and Amsterdam, along with those of Athens, Thessaloniki, Herakleion, Corfu, Cephalonia and Hydra. *Amphitrite* includes Ottoman Greek and Venetian Greek ships in Mediterranean ports from 1700-1821.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*. For types of ships during this era see A. DELIS, *Τύποι πλοίων της ναυτιλίας των Ελλήνων, 1700-1821* [Types of Ships of Greek Shipping, 1700-1821] in *Η ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων, 1700-1821* [Greek Shipping, 1700-1821. The Heyday before the Greek Revolution], G. HARLAFTIS, K. PAPAΚONSTANTINOY eds., Athens 2013 (Kedros Publications), pp. 469-540.

<sup>18</sup> For this area there are three books from the Black Sea project: the first one is *Port-Cities of the northern shore of the Black Sea: Institutional, Economic and Social Development, 18<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, E. SIFNEOS, O. IURKOVA, V. SHANDRA eds., Corfu, forthcoming, (Black Sea History Working Papers, [www.blacksea.gr](http://www.blacksea.gr)), forthcoming, volume 2; the second one by E. SIFNEOS, *Imperial Odessa: Peoples, Spaces, Identities*, Leiden 2017 (Brill); the third one by A. SYDORENKO, *The economic and social development of the Crimean city-ports during the second half of the 19th century*, unpublished ph.D. thesis 2017 (Department of History, Ionian University).

<sup>19</sup> *The Black Sea Pilot*, cit., p. 33.

the shore in order to have the secure depth. Odessa, 31 km north of the estuary of the Dniester river at other western end of the northern coast, established in 1794, grew out to become the largest port-city not only of the area but of the total Black Sea. In 1800 it was not so, however. Henry Dearborn wrote “the coast offers but few places favourable for landing. The country is devoid of trees and very flat...The road to Kodjabey nearly equi-distant between the mouths of the Dnieper and the Dniester, is safe for men of war. There is a light house, a small fort and two villages there.”<sup>20</sup> The city developed amazingly quickly. Situated upon a hill, which descends rather abruptly towards the sea it was easily spotted by the 1820s where port infrastructure was well provided, with moles, breakwater mooring buoys etc. It developed maritime connections with western European port cities from its very inception. Captain Panagis Kourtellis from the island of Cephalonia with his ship named “S. Michel” arrived from Odessa to Genova on 9 April 1802 with 3,500 Ottoman kilos of grain. It took him two months to reach Genova with a crew of 11.<sup>21</sup> Equally, captain Stathis Petalas Maratos from the island of Ithaca with his ship “Penelope”, a polacca, reached Livorno from Odessa in 17 April 1803 along with tens of other Ionian vessels. It took him three months to reach Livorno coming from Odessa having passed firstly from the islands of Ithaca, Corfu and Paxoi. Captain Stathis carried a Russian flag on his ship so probably he or some relative of his was established either in Odessa or Taganrog.<sup>22</sup>

Kodjabey that became later Odessa, was finally chosen by Russian officials after twenty years of trial and error as to the choice of the best site for a big port city. They first promoted the sites in the end of the waterways of Dnieper and Southern Bug. Russian officials firstly promoted Kherson (founded in 1778) on the river Dnieper, 3 miles upriver from its estuary (guarded by the fort of Ochakov), on the right bank of the Dnieper, and Nikolayev (founded in 1789) 20 miles from its mouth on the junction of the Inhul river (tributary of Southern Bug) and Southern Bug. All this area, next to the Moldavian and Polish borders profited from the fertile hinterland and the navigable waterways.

Kherson on the western part of the northern coast was the first port to develop.<sup>23</sup> On the other eastern end Taganrog was the other port that developed during this time. On 5 October 1784 the Ottoman Greek Captain Dimitris from the Aegean island of Psara entered the Black Sea heading for Kherson with his ship (of the type *çertik*) and a crew of 16.<sup>24</sup> The return from Kherson to Constantinople

<sup>20</sup> H.A.S. DEARBORN, *A memoir on the commerce and navigation of the Black Sea, and the trade and maritime geography of Turkey and Egypt*, Boston 1819, vol. 2, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI GENOVA, Ufficio di Sanità Arrivi di Capitani e Padroni, 1684, database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*, Research Programme “History of Greek Shipping, 1700-1821”, entrepreneurial project “Pythagoras I”, Ionian University, financed by the Greek Ministry of Education/EU 2004-2006, www.marchist.gr.

<sup>22</sup> ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI LIVORNO, Magistrato poi Dipartimento di Sanità Maritima, 704/186r in database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*.

<sup>23</sup> V. KONSTANTINOVA, I. LYMAN, *Kherson, the City of «the Glorious Past»* in *Port-Cities of the northern shore of the Black Sea*, cit., vol. 2

<sup>24</sup> OTTOMAN ARCHIVES OF PRIME MINISTRY, A.DVNS.İZN.d, vol.1 in database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*.

“may be effected, with a good north wind, in sixty hours; that from Taganrog requires five or six days” wrote in the 1810s a contemporary.<sup>25</sup>

Nikolayev situated on the right bank of the Southern Bug became the arsenal of the Russian Navy after the Order of Duke Potemkin of August 27, 1789 which says: “[from now on], a new shipyard on the Ingul should be called the city of Nikolayev.” Nikolayev was excluded from international commerce as Duke Potemkin regarded Nikolayev to be “a grand admiralty and the cradle of the new Russian Black Sea fleet.” From Nikolayev the local products were delivered by cabotage to Odessa and other ports on the Black Sea as well as to the Podolia Gubernia, Polish Kingdom and inner parts of the Russian Empire. However, despite the favourable conditions for the port development, a serious natural obstacle was the shallowness of waters of the only entrance to both ports from the side of the Black Sea through the Ochakov Bar and the Dnieper-Bug estuary.<sup>26</sup> Odessa then, superseded both Kherson and Nikolayev and became a pole of attraction, apart from Russians, for the ubiquitous Greeks who numbered among its first arrivals, along with the Serbs, the Bulgarians, the Germans, the Jews, the Italians, and very few French and British.

After the final conquest of Crimea, a number of ports were established for commercial and strategic reasons, as the Crimean ports had the advantage of never freezing. Evpatoria and Sebastopol were established in 1783, while the old city of Theodosia, (the Caffa of the Genoese and Keffe of the Ottomans) retook its Byzantine name. The Crimea is a peninsula that extends about 180 miles from east to west and 100 miles from north to south. The ports however, remained as intermediate transit ports serving the northwestern and northeastern areas. The ports were also directly connected with the West: Captain Andrea Voco of Dimitri (known as Miaoulis, a hero of the Greek Revolution twenty years later) from the Aegean island of Hydra, on 20 October 1803 arrived to Genova coming from Sebastopol with his large nava *Achille* and a crew of 54.<sup>27</sup>

Evpatoria or Koslov was an intermediate port, an easy anchorage for smaller vessels; from Odessa eastwards, could be easily seen from the large dome of its mosque.<sup>28</sup> Further south, Sebastopol, had an excellent geostrategic position, about 160 miles from Odessa, from the mouth of the Danube, and from Sinope.<sup>29</sup> With an excellent port Sebastopol was opened for “all the nations being on friendly terms with the Empire, and having an advantage of trading with our subjects” by the Manifest of February 22, 1784 signed by Catherine II. In 1785 all the wharves in Crimea, including Sebastopol, were exempted from customs fees for five years starting January I, 1786. However, according to Catherine II’s Decree of May 27,

---

<sup>25</sup> H.A.S. DEARBORN, *A memoir on the commerce*, vol. 2.

<sup>26</sup> L. LEVCHENKO, *The Nikolayev International Port: An economic history, late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Port-Cities of the northern shore of the Black Sea*, cit., vol. 2.

<sup>27</sup> ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI GENOVA, *Ufficio di Sanita Arrivi di Capitani e Padroni*, 1686, database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*.

<sup>28</sup> *The Black Sea Pilot*, cit., p. 51.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

1794, Sebastopol became a Naval base for the Russian fleet interchanging this role with Nikolayev in the course of the following decades.<sup>30</sup>

The **third** maritime region includes the eastern coast of the Black Sea. It is subdivided into two maritime regions, that of the Azov Sea, including the port-cities of Kerch, Berdyansk, Mariupol, Taganrog and Rostov-on-Don, and the southeastern maritime region of the eastern coast of the Black Sea, including the port-cities of Novorossiysk and Batoum (that developed later in the nineteenth century). On 4 October 1784 Captain Giorgakis from Mykonos with his ship (of a *geç* type) and a crew of 11 seamen entered the Black Sea heading for Taganrog.<sup>31</sup> From Kerch strait to the Don is about 160 miles.<sup>32</sup> Near the main mouth of the Don river lies the town of Taganrog. The shallowness of its roadstead meant that the anchorage ground used by large sailing ships is about 25 miles from the port. All communication with the shore was carried out by oared boats and lighters.<sup>33</sup> “Peter’s forepost”, was one of the first established in 1698 and coming in and out of Russian jurisdiction until 1774 when it became definitively part of the Russian Empire. Taganrog received a large number of Greek immigrants.<sup>34</sup> A second wave of immigrants arrived between 1780s and 1810s in Taganrog and in the lists of the Greek Magistrate of the town for 1795 to 1804, there were about 600 registered Greek merchants. At about the same period the Greek population, mainly from the Ionian and the Aegean islands consisted of about 1600 individuals, an exceptionally high number given the small size of the city (7,000).<sup>35</sup> The Azov Sea, regarded as a lake attached to the Black Sea, continued to be the first area to attract immigrants. Mariupol, established in 1771 on river Calmius received in 1778 a population of 10,000 Greeks from Crimea in a forced immigration by the Russians<sup>36</sup>. New Nahichevan very near (merged later to Rostov on the Don established in 1768) received a population of 10,000 Armenians, also in a forced population movement from Crimea.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>30</sup> L. LEVCHENKO, *The Nikolayev International Port*, cit.

<sup>31</sup> OTTOMAN ARCHIVES OF PRIME MINISTRY, A.DVNS.İZN.d, volume 1, in database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*.

<sup>32</sup> *The Black Sea Pilot*, cit.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>34</sup> E. SIFNEOS, G. HARLAFTIS, *The Greeks of the Azov* cit.

<sup>35</sup> STATE ARCHIVES OF THE ROSTOV OBLAST (GARO), f. 579, op. 3, d. 2, ‘Lists of merchants, petit bourgeois and foreigners, 1795-1802 and 1803-1804 of the Greek Magistrate’. See also E. SIFNEOS, G. HARLAFTIS, *Entrepreneurship at the Russian Frontier of International Trade. The Greek Merchant Community/Paroikia of Taganrog in the Sea of Azov, 1780s-1830s in Merchant ‘Colonies’ in the Early Modern Period (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, V. ZAKHAROV, G. HARLAFTIS, O. KATSIARDI-HERING eds., London 2012, (Chatto & Pickering).

<sup>36</sup> I. PONOMARIOVA, *Mariupol at the end of the 18th and 19th century*, in *Οι Έλληνες της Αζοφικής. Νέες προσεγγίσεις στην ιστορία των Ελλήνων στη Νότιο Ρωσία [The Greeks of the Azov, 18th-beginning of 20th century. New approaches to the history of the Greeks in South Russia]*, E. SIFNEOS, G. HARLAFTIS eds., Athens 2015, (Hellenic National Foundation).

<sup>37</sup> Sarkis Kazarov, *Armenian merchants in the Nabichevan-on-Don and their role in the commercial development of the Azov-Black Sea region in Between Grain and Oil from the Azov to Caucasus: The port-cities of the eastern coast of the Black Sea, late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries*, G. HARLAFTIS, V. KONSTANTINOVA, I. LYMAN eds., Corfu, forthcoming, (Black Sea History Working papers, www.blacksea.gr), volume 3.

Taganrog became the first Russian port-city to reopen and develop since the 1770s and remained the biggest port of the Azov from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. It was transformed the main gateway to the West as it served a vast hinterland. The enormous size of the Russia's territory and the disparity of its population suggest the importance of transport for its economic development. Efficient transportation network was pivotal for the development of its regions. The hinterland of the eastern coast was blessed by a large and complex river system and was mainly connected with internal waterways. Long-haul trade took place through the rivers Volga and Don and their tributaries and canals, while short overland transport was by wagon. Through various types of barges and wooden river crafts, grain was moved in bulk mainly by waterways. The cargoes were flowing down stream to the ports mainly via rivers and canals and to a lesser extent by oxen-wagons. Land transport could take easily place on the steppes only during the dry summer season and with horse-drawn sleighs during the winter as there was a non-existent road system. The mud from the rains and melting of ice of spring and autumn made "roads" impossible.<sup>38</sup> Any upstream movements in the waterways took enormous effort of horse and human labour. Volga's basin is divided in the upper, central and lower part along which his multiple tributaries provided navigable waterways of 3,690 km long connecting the area from Urals to Taganrog. The river Don with its tributaries covered about 1,400 km of navigable routes.<sup>39</sup>

Going south the Causasian coast of eastern shore from Kerch strait to Batoum the captain encountered no anchorage or safe place apart may be from Poti. The only secure shelter place of the whole coastline, however, was Batoum lying in an extensive plain backed by terraced mountains. It was also a nodal place for of internal communication with Georgia, Armenia and Persia.<sup>40</sup>

The **fourth** maritime region includes the southern Black Sea ports Trabzon or Trebizond, Samsun, Giresun and Sinop, that is the southeastern shore that concentrated the main Ottoman ports of the region and of course Constantinople/Istanbul.<sup>41</sup> This is also called in the British pilot books as the "Anatolian" shore. The coastline was devoid of ports or harbours but the mountains behind neutralized the effects of the winds, although there were violent westerly winds prevailing.<sup>42</sup> On 17 November 1780 the Ottoman Greek Captain Yanni sailed with his three masted ship (a galley with both sails and oars about 30-

---

<sup>38</sup> A. KAHAN, *Russian Economic History. The 19<sup>th</sup> century*, Chicago 1989, (The University of Chicago Press), pp. 27-33.

<sup>39</sup> MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS AND CARTOGRAPHY, *Statistical Review of Railways and internal Waterways of Russia* [Министерство путей сообщения, Отдел статистики и картографии, Статистический обзор железных дорог и внутренних водных путей], St. Petersburg 1900, pp. 118-119.

<sup>40</sup> *The Black Sea pilot*, cit., p. 111.

<sup>41</sup> *The Economic and Social Development of the Port-Cities of the Southern Black Sea Coast, Late 18<sup>th</sup> – Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*, E. ELDEM, V. KECHRIOTIS, S.LAIYOU eds., Corfu 2017, (Black Sea History Working papers, www.blacksea.gr), volume 5.

<sup>42</sup> *The Black Sea pilot*, cit., p. 167.

40 meters) from Constantinople to Trabzon.<sup>43</sup> Trabzon or Trebizond built “on a rocky table land sloping somewhat towards the sea”<sup>44</sup> was the chief transit port, the gateway of land and sea routes between Central Asia and Europe. Trabzon along Samsun, Giresun and Sinop were inhabited by Turks, Greeks and Armenians. Sinop had the safest anchorage between the Bosphorus and Batoum and it had dockyards where some of the finest ships of the Ottoman navy were built.<sup>45</sup>

## 2. ON THE SEA: SHIPPING IN THE BLACK SEA

Every sea at crucial moments of change had its seafarers that developed maritime transport systems, mechanisms with which they were able to integrate the produce of the hinterland of the sea with the international markets. The main seafarers of the Black Sea up to the early nineteenth century were Ottoman Greek and Venetian Greek seafarers. What Greeks did was to first develop maritime transport systems in their islands and small port towns in the Aegean and Ionian seas. During this period Greeks were mainly Ottoman, Venetian, Ionian/British, Russian and Austrian subjects and traded both towards the Black Sea and to the Western European ports where they were described as ‘Greco/Greek’ at a time when no Greece existed.<sup>46</sup> It was the international conjuncture at that time which allowed for the great leap forward leading to the rise of the shipping businesses of the “Greci” as they are recorded in the western Mediterranean archives.<sup>47</sup> The eighteenth century is characterised by competition amongst the Great Powers for control over the Mediterranean and expansion to the East to penetrate the lands of the Ottoman Empire; the Hapsburgs and the Russians by land and the English and the French by sea. Despite the penetration of the British, the French remained the main carriers of the Levant sea trade up until the Napoleonic Wars. The colonial expansion of the British in the Mediterranean triggered the Anglo-French wars and the continuous warfare between the two Great Powers left space for the rise of the commercial and maritime activities of the local Levant seafarers at the last third of the century.

The main cargoes transported from the Eastern Mediterranean to the West were grain, cotton and olive oil. The opening of the Black Sea market after the two Russo-Ottoman wars of 1769-1774 and 1788-1792, the penetration of the Russians to the northern coast of the Black Sea and the imperial Russian policy to draw

---

<sup>43</sup> OTTOMAN ARCHIVES OF PRIME MINISTRY, A.DVNS.İZN.d, volume 1 in database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*.

<sup>44</sup> *The Black Sea pilot*, cit., p. 114.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>46</sup> *Η ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων, 1700-1821* [Greek Shipping, 1700-1821. The Heyday before the Greek Revolution], cit.; G. HARLAFTIS, S. LAIOU, *Ottoman State Policy in Mediterranean Trade and Shipping, c.1780-c.1820: The Rise of the Greek-Owned Ottoman Merchant Fleet*, in *Networks of Power in Modern Greece*, ed. M. MAZOWER 2008, (Hurst), pp. 1-44.

<sup>47</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, *The ‘eastern invasion’. Greeks in the Mediterranean trade and shipping in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries*, in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Brandel’s Maritime Legacy*, M. FUSARO, C. HEYWOOD, M. OMRI eds., London 2010, pp. 223-252.

Greek settlers from the Greek archipelago to southern Russia increased the sea trade from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. This was a critical turning point that led to the accumulation of capital and business know-how, and further more to the exit from the Eastern Mediterranean into the international markets and the consolidation of a worldwide entrepreneurial network. Greeks retained strong ties with their local communities of origin, in the Aegean and the Ionian seas, from where they absorbed capital, human resources and commodities. At the same time they were assimilated into the host societies of southern Russia and became involved in the economic, political and social sphere. The unprecedented commercial traffic established Greek diaspora communities in the West, involved in trade, shipping and finance in Trieste, Malta, Livorno, Marseille, Barcelona and Amsterdam. By 1821 the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, the international entrepreneurial network of the Greek maritime and commercial diaspora had been established in the main European port-cities, which together with the sailing shipowners based in the Aegean and Ionian islands dominated the trade and shipping of the area.<sup>48</sup>

The fleet of the Greeks compared well with those of the other main European nations in the eighteenth-early nineteenth century Mediterranean shipping. It consisted in the 1780s of 650 large merchant vessels of an average size of 125 tons; in fact it was the only substantial fleet of the Levante, and mostly under the Ottoman flag.<sup>49</sup> At the same time the most important Mediterranean fleets of Western Mediterranean were those of Spain, France, the Italian States, the Habsburgs and of Ragusa. The fleets of the Spaniards and French at that time, however, were not involved in the Mediterranean trade; it was more an Atlantic and transatlantic fleet involved in the colonial trade of both countries. Out of the fleets of the Italian States only the fleets of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies and Venice owned ships that were involved in the long-haul trade of the Mediterranean. The other fleets like those of Genova, Tuscany or the Papal State, consisted of small ships involved in the local and peripheral trade of the Italian peninsula and central Mediterranean. The fleet of the Greeks was the fifth largest of the Mediterranean in the 1780s; it indicated a remarkable growth by growing fivefold from the mid-eighteenth century to the 1820s; from 188 ships in 1750 to 945 in 1821.<sup>50</sup>

The fact that Greek shipping companies from the Ionian and Aegean seas developed fleets engaged in the long-haul trade of the Mediterranean competing successfully against the French, the Spanish, the Italians, the British and the French meant that they were competitive. The competitiveness of an economic sector proves its ability to supply goods and services in a market with efficiency and at a low cost. The shipowners of the islands of the Ionian and Aegean seas whether un-

---

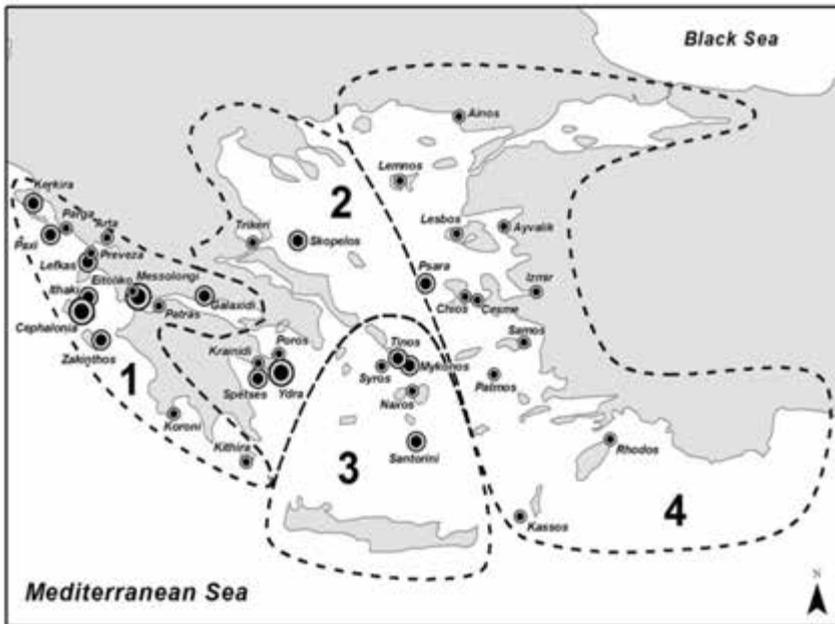
<sup>48</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, *Mapping the Greek maritime diaspora from the early 18<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century* in *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks. Five Centuries of History*, I. BAGHDIANZ MCCABE, G. HARLAFTIS, I. MINOGLU eds., Oxford 2005 (Berg Publications), pp. 147-169.

<sup>49</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, *The 'eastern invasion'. Greeks in the Mediterranean trade and shipping in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries* in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, M. FUSARO, C. HEYWOOD, M. OMRI eds., London 2009 (I.B. Tauris), pp. 223-252.

<sup>50</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, *The 'eastern invasion'*, cit.

der Ottoman, Venetian, French, Russian or British conquest operated their sea trade in an integrated economically maritime area. The fact that for centuries the islands were under various conquests meant that the seafarers of the area developed their own institutions on every island that conformed to Mediterranean shipping practices. They were part of an integrated maritime market as is pictured in Map 3 whose inhabitants communicated in the ports they traded developing and exchanging common business practices that in the age of empires knew no political borders. This market that has also been described as a “dispersed maritime city”<sup>51</sup> was composed by four districts: the Ionian Sea (pictured as number 1 in Map 3), the Western Aegean (number 2), the Central Aegean (number 3) and the Eastern Aegean (number 4). In each district several maritime centres developed, as are pictured in the map according to their importance during the period 1700-1821. In fact 38 islands and/or port-cities developed as maritime centres owning fleets during the period under examination, developing important shipping family businesses owning deep-sea going vessels.

Map 3. **The four maritime districts of the northeastern Mediterranean, 1700-1821**



Source: *H ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων, 1700-1821* [Greek Shipping, 1700-1821. The Heyday before the Greek Revolution], G. HARLAFTIS, K. PAPAΚONSTANTINOY eds., Athens 2013, (Kedros Publications).

<sup>51</sup> In Greece the historian Spyros Asdrachas coined the phrase “dispersed maritime city” to stress the unity of these islands; see V. SFYROERAS, A. AVRAMEA, S. ASDRAHAS, *Maps and Map-Makers of the Aegean*, Athens 1985, pp. 235-248. See also E. KOLODNY, *La population des îles de la Grèce. Essai de géographie insulaire en Méditerranée orientale*, Aix en Provence 1974, vol. 1-3.

In the eighteenth century there were about 900 shipping families in the Ionian Sea and another 900 shipping families in the Aegean Sea that manned and managed hundreds of shipping firms.<sup>52</sup> The shipping families acted in tight shipping business groups according to the maritime region and the island/maritime centre they came from. By maritime centre I mean an island or port-town that had a fleet of at least ten deep-sea going vessels for more than one generation; and by generation we mean an average of thirty years of professional activity.<sup>53</sup> The activities of the shipping families in the maritime centres acted as mechanisms that ensured the cohesion of maritime regions and their linkages and triggered both the development of local economies and the wider maritime regions. Members from a great number of these families were settled in the Azov and Odessa.<sup>54</sup>

Tab. 1. Voyages of Ottoman ships in the Black Sea trade, 1780-1820

|                     | 1780-1820 | % to total |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Ottoman Greek ships | 1411      | 73%        |
| Muslim ships        | 526       | 27%        |
|                     | 1937      | 100%       |

Source: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry], Bab-ı Asafî Divan-î Hümayun Kalemleri Ek kodları, İzn-i Sefine Defterleri (BO.A.A.DVNS.IZN.d) I-II-III-IV-V, 1780-1822, database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*, in H. VELİ AYDIN, *Ελληνες έμποροι και ναυτικοί στη Μαύρη Θάλασσα 1780-1820* [Greek merchants and seamen in the Black Sea 1780-1829], in *Η ναυτία των Ελλήνων, 1700-1821*, cit., pp. 683-721.

Tab. 2. Origin of captains trading in the Black Sea, 1780-1820

| Maritime area              | Number of ships | % to total  |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>Eastern Aegean</b>      | <b>243</b>      | <b>33%</b>  |
| <i>Northeastern Aegean</i> | 220             |             |
| <i>Southeast Aegean</i>    | 23              |             |
| <b>Western Aegean</b>      | <b>184</b>      | <b>25%</b>  |
| <i>Northwestern Aegean</i> | 114             |             |
| <i>Southwestern Aegean</i> | 70              |             |
| <b>Central Aegean</b>      | <b>131</b>      | <b>18%</b>  |
| <b>Ionian</b>              | <b>67</b>       | <b>10%</b>  |
| <b>Black Sea</b>           | <b>74</b>       | <b>10%</b>  |
| <b>Sea of Marmara</b>      | <b>30</b>       | <b>4%</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>729</b>      | <b>100%</b> |

Source: the database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*, Research Programme “History of Greek Shipping, 1700-1821”, entrepreneurial project “Pythagoras I”, Ionian University, financed by the Greek Ministry of Education/EU, 2004-2006, www.marehist.gr.

<sup>52</sup> *Greek Shipping History*, cit.

<sup>53</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, H. BENEKI, M. HARITATOS, *Ploto, Greek shipowners from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the eve of WWII*, Athens 2003, (ELIA/Niarchos Foundation), (in Greek and English), p. 17.

<sup>54</sup> E. SIFNEOS, G. HARLAFTIS, *Entrepreneurship at the Russian Frontier*, cit.

Greeks were the seafarers of the Ottoman Empire and in the Black Sea, as Ottoman subjects, they had a near-monopoly. It is no wonder then that from 1780 to 1820 from almost 2,000 voyages to the Black Sea 73% were found to be Ottoman Greek vessels, which means that they dominated the sea trade of the area (Table q).<sup>55</sup> An unprecedented upsurge is indicated in the high time of the Napoleonic wars. After the Russian conquest of the northern coast as we have seen a large population of Greek seafarers from the Aegean and Ionian seas were established in the newly founded Russian port cities. Their ships were thus able to carry both the Russian and Ottoman flags that were the only really ones to trade freely in the Sea until the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829 which freed the sea to all nations.

As Table 2 indicates one third of the sailing vessels trading in the Black Sea originated from the eastern Aegean and most importantly from the northeastern Aegean due to the geographic proximity. The sailing ship owners were mainly from the island of Psara, the main maritime centre of the area with experienced seafarers in the Mediterranean long haul trade. Other captains from this region were also from the town of Ainos in Thrace, the islands of Thasos, Chios, Lesbos, Lemnos and from Smyrna. From the southeastern Aegean, ships from the fleets of the islands of Patmos, Rodos and Samos were also involved in the Black Sea trade. 25% of the captains that traded to and from the Black Sea originated from the Western Aegean. Most of those involved in the Black Sea trade originated from the northwestern Aegean, mainly the islands of Skopelos and the little town of Trikeri opposite the mainland, off of the Gulf of Volos. Both were and remained main maritime centres of this area. In the southwestern Aegean captains originated from the islands of Hydra and Spetses.

The main maritime centres of Central Aegean were Mykonos and Santorini, the origin of 18% of the captains that traded from this area to the Black Sea. 10% of the captains originated from the Ionian islands and its traditional maritime centres: Cephalonia, Ithaca, Messolonghi, Galaxidi. Local Black Sea seafarers were Ottoman Greeks of the southwestern coast of the Black Sea, what was then known as the eastern Rumelian coast: Mesembria, Vassiliko, Aktarpolee. It is clear that the maritime connections of Black Sea with the western Mediterranean at such an early stage were steadily developing from local island Greek-owned fleets carrying the trade between the Ottoman and the Russian Empire to the West.

---

<sup>55</sup> H.V. AYDIN, *Έλληνες έμποροι και ναυτικοί στη Μαύρη Θάλασσα 1780-1820 [Greek merchants and seamen in the Black Sea 1780-1829]*, in *Η ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων, 1700-1821 [Greek Shipping, 1700-1821. The Heyday before the Greek Revolution]*, cit., pp. 683-721.

Tab. 3. Arrivals of Ottoman Greek and Venetian/Ionian Greek ships to the Black Sea ports, 1780-1820

| Area/port city                     | Number of ships | % to total  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>Northern Coast</b>              | <b>216</b>      | <b>50%</b>  |
| <i>Kherson</i>                     | 38              |             |
| <i>Odessa</i>                      | 150             |             |
| <i>Crimea (Kozlov, Sebastopol)</i> | 28              |             |
| <b>Eastern Coast</b>               | <b>200</b>      | <b>46%</b>  |
| <i>Taganrog</i>                    | 150             |             |
| <i>Azov</i>                        | 50              |             |
| <b>Western Coast</b>               | <b>14</b>       | <b>4%</b>   |
| <i>Burgas</i>                      | 14              |             |
| <b>Southern coast</b>              | <b>1</b>        |             |
| <i>Trabzon</i>                     | 1               |             |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>431</b>      | <b>100%</b> |

Source: the database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*, Research Programme “History of Greek Shipping, 1700-1821”, entrepreneurial project “Pythagoras I”, Ionian University, financed by the Greek Ministry of Education/EU, 2004-2006, [www.marchist.gr](http://www.marchist.gr).

Tab. 4. Ottoman Greek and Venetian/Ionian Greek ships from the Black Sea to Mediterranean ports, 1780-1820

| Destination    | Number of ships | % to total |
|----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Constantinople | 679             | 76%        |
| Ionian islands | 52              | 6%         |
| Genova         | 55              | 6%         |
| Livorno        | 48              | 5%         |
| Venezia        | 9               | 1%         |
| Malta          | 47              | 5%         |
| Marseille      | 1               | 0%         |
| Total          | 891             | 100%       |

Source: the database *Amphitrite 1700-1821*, Research Programme “History of Greek Shipping, 1700-1821”, entrepreneurial project “Pythagoras I”, Ionian University, financed by the Greek Ministry of Education/EU, 2004-2006, [www.marchist.gr](http://www.marchist.gr).

50% of the destination of Ottoman-Greek and Venetian/Ionian Greek ships sailing to the Black Sea were to the northern coast, mainly to Odessa and Kherson and lesser to the Crimean ports. An almost equivalent amount of ships arrived to Taganrog in the Azov, and only 4% of the total voyages were directed to the western and southern coast (Table 3). On the return voyages the Ottoman Greek and Venetian/Ionian Greek vessels headed to Constantinople (from where no further evidence to the next destination is available), to the Ionian islands, to Malta, to Livorno, to Genova and much less to Marseille or Venice (Table 4). International trade to the western and southern coast at this stage was insignificant.

### 3. AROUND THE SEA: PORT CITIES

When the Russians pushed into the Black Sea, the commerce and shipping of the area was confined in the hands of the Ottoman and Venetian subjects, a significant number of which seem to have been of Greek origin.<sup>56</sup> Since the vast area, apart from the Crimea, was steppe land, almost entirely unpopulated, and the fertile soil uncultivated the first concern of the Russian government was to stimulate population growth by attracting immigrants using land, agricultural equipment and even building materials as inducements. In addition to encouraging central Europeans and Balkan people, they encouraged as well the population of the Ionian and Aegean islands that had the advantage of maritime entrepreneurship and large merchant fleets.<sup>57</sup> A fixed colonisation policy developed by the Russian officials to support the multi-ethnic composition of the southern areas in order to exploit the special abilities of each ethnic group in order to ensure economic development. The Russian governors attributed economic characteristics to every ethnic minority group. The Imperial government believed that a heterogeneous ethnic population was necessary to develop the farming, industry and sea trade. In this way the ethnic groups who would be encouraged to immigrate were thought to serve as an example to stimulate the Russian population to develop similar activities. It was believed that the Greek presence would enhance the development of sea trade since the Greeks were a ready force who would diffuse their know-how in trade and shipping and would assist to the formation and training of the future Russian shipping.<sup>58</sup> The expansion of Russia along the southern and the eastern coasts of the Black Sea took place during the Age of Empires; a period of intense competition between the colonial Western European powers to acquire new lands for exploitation of economic sources.

The development of grain exports via the Black Sea was a central choice of Russia's strategy to create a new economic zone, where the hinterland would provide grain from the cultivation of the steppes and the formation of the port-cities would become the export gateways of the hinterland.<sup>59</sup> The unpopulated

---

<sup>56</sup> O. HALENKO, 'Έλληνες επιχειρηματίες και ναυτικοί στις βόρειες ακτές της Μαύρης και Αζοφικής θάλασσας την περίοδο της οθωμανικής κυριαρχίας και των ρωσικών κατακτήσεων, 15ος-18ος αιώνας [Greek entrepreneurs and seamen in the northern shores of the Black and Azov seas during the period of Ottoman and Russian conquests, 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries in *The Greeks of the Azov, 18th-beginning of 20th century. New approaches to the history of the Greeks in South Russia*, E. SIFNEOS, G. HARLAFTIS eds., Athens 2015, (Hellenic National Foundation), pp. 245-263. See also H.V. AYDIN, 'Έλληνες έμποροι και ναυτικοί στη Μαύρη Θάλασσα 1780-1820 [Greek merchants and seamen in the Black Sea 1780-1829], in *Η ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων, 1700-1821 [Greek Shipping, 1700-1821. The Heyday before the Greek Revolution]*, cit., pp. 683-721.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>58</sup> D. SHERRY, *Social Alchemy on the Black Sea Coast, 1860-1865*, in "Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History", 10, 2009, n. 1, pp. 7-30.

<sup>59</sup> N.V. RIASANOVSKY, *A History of Russia*, New York/Oxford 1993, fifth edition (Oxford University Press), pp. 254-275; V.N. ZAKHAROV, *Vneshnetorgovaya deyatel'nost' inostrannykh kuptsov v portakh Azovskogo i Chornogo morei v seredine i vtoroi polovine XVIII v. [The development of foreign trade by foreign merchants in the Azov and the Black Sea ports in the second half of the eighteenth century]*, in "Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta", ser. 8, Istoria, 4, 2004, pp. 85-102; P. HERLIHY, *Odessa: a history, 1794-1914*, Cambridge MA 1986, (Harvard University Press for the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute).

steppe land had a great and unexploited advantage. This steppe that extends in the hinterland of the northern coast formed by the black earth, the *chernozem*, fertile land, excellent for grain that became principally the granary of the Russian Empire and eventually of Europe.<sup>60</sup> Hundreds and thousands of tons of wheat, rye, oats, and barley were increasingly harvested every year in a region that covered an area of 270,000,000 acres and which by the beginning of the twentieth century “if farmed to its fullest extent, could more than feed the whole population of Europe”.<sup>61</sup>

It was the development of the port cities that formed the nodes between hinterland and foreland. As we have indicated the Black Sea consists from the articulation of many maritime regions. Central to this analysis are the concepts of region and port is the development of maritime transport systems that make trade and shipping happen. We use the concept not of land region, as is more commonly used, but that of maritime region. A similar concept of a maritime region has been used in his recent book by Werner Scheltjens, where he makes the unit of research the Dutch Deltas to explore the maritime transport systems and to “capture regional economic dynamics as well as changes in the structure of trade networks and transport systems”. According to Scheltjens, “Transport systems are complexes of physical attributes (rivers, roads, canals, seas, etc.) and communities populating them, thus allowing for the exchange of people, goods and information between the locations of a trade network. The delta is deemed to be an appropriate geographical unit for a comprehensive economic-geographical analysis of the Dutch maritime transport sector before 1850”.<sup>62</sup>

Sea ports are fundamental to understand maritime transport systems. According to the economic geographer B.S. Hoyle, an important division in port geography is between those elements that have to do with land side, the **hinterland** and those that have to do with maritime side, including the waterfront of the port and **the foreland**.<sup>63</sup> A “hinterland” can be described as an organized and developed land space which is connected with a port by means of transport.<sup>64</sup> Very important to the connections of the port with the hinterland are land and river connections. The hinterland covers a productive area which produces goods to be transferred to the sea port that forms the export gateway. The supply of goods and the level of exports is not only depended from the level of production but can be confined or controlled by state, economic and geostrategic policies. The concept of “foreland” as opposed to that of hinterland, is what lies in front of the port, the shipping connections of a port. It is mainly the land areas on the seaward side of the port;

---

<sup>60</sup> D. MOON, *The Plough that Broke the Steppes. Agriculture and Environment on Russia's grasslands, 1700-1914*, Oxford 2013, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> E.K. REYNOLDS, *The Economic Resources of the Russian Empire*, in “Geographical Review”, 1, 1916, n. 4, pp. 249-265.

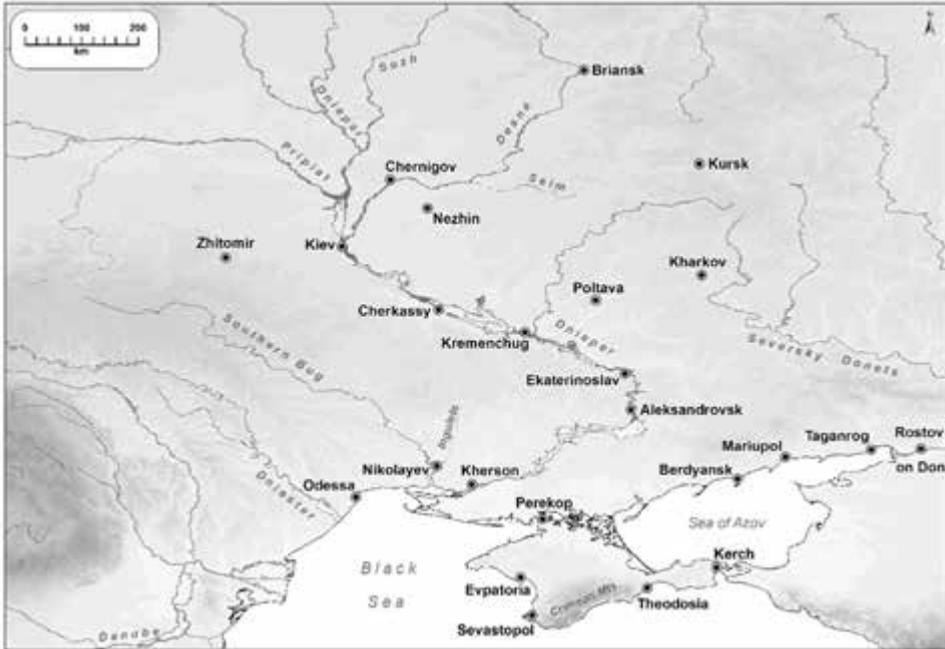
<sup>62</sup> W. SCHELTJENS, *Dutch Deltas. Emergence, Functions and Structure of the Low Countries' Maritime Transport System, ca 1300-1850*, Leiden/Boston 2015 (Brill), p. 9.

<sup>63</sup> B.S. HOYLE, *Maritime perspectives on port and port systems: the case of East Africa* in *Brides of the Sea. Port cities of Asia from the 16th-20th centuries*, ed. F. BROEZE, Kensington New South Wales 1989 (New South Wales University Press).

<sup>64</sup> G.G. WEIGEND, *Some Elements in the Study of Port Geography*, in “Geographical Review”, 48, 1958, n. 2, pp. 185-200.

the other ports with which a port is connected with sea routes, where cargoes are shipped or transhipped by either coastal or deep-sea going vessels.<sup>65</sup>

Map 4. The hinterland of the northern coast of the Black Sea

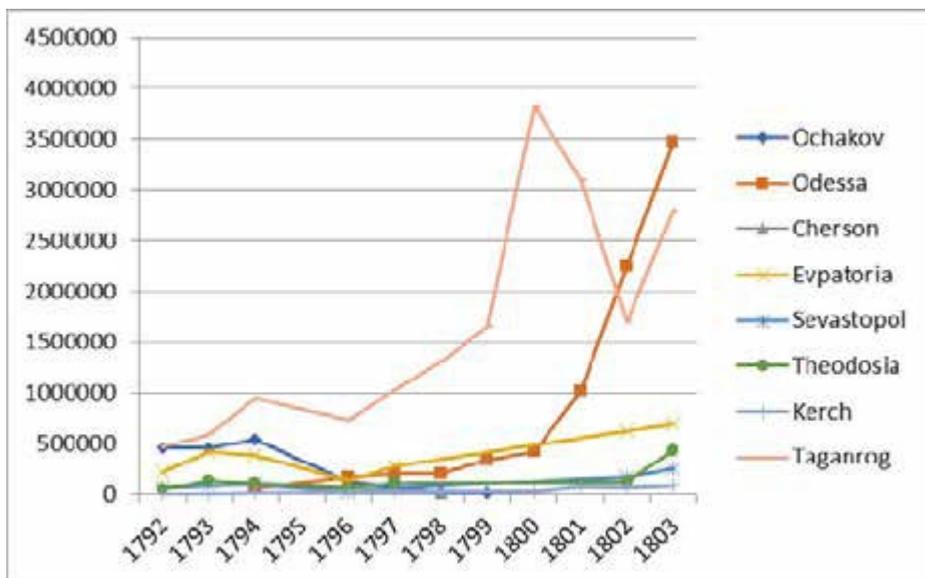


Source: Black Sea project, [www.blacksea.gr](http://www.blacksea.gr). Map made by Mitia Frumin, 2016.

Behind the northern coast there was a vast hinterland that was getting cultivated for grain exports and the ports that were developing as they became the export gateways (Map 4). In all these port cities it was the port function that furnished the wealth of the city. Graph 1 indicates the first decades of slow development, from 1792 to 1803. It is indicative that Ochakov and Kherson had a very brief presence in the export trade and did not become big export ports. Kherson along with the Crimean ports of Sevastopol, Theodosia and Kerch remained at low levels. Kozlov/Evpatoria seems to have a steady increase and this is probable due to its site, serving as a transit port of the exports from Dniester to Dnieper. What is clear at this early stage, however, is the advantage of the eastern part, of the Azov Sea. This is the area that developed first and Taganrog figures as the prime export port-city of all the northern coast in the eighteenth century. Its primacy, however, was soon overtaken by Odessa who indicates a vertical rise after the turn of the century.

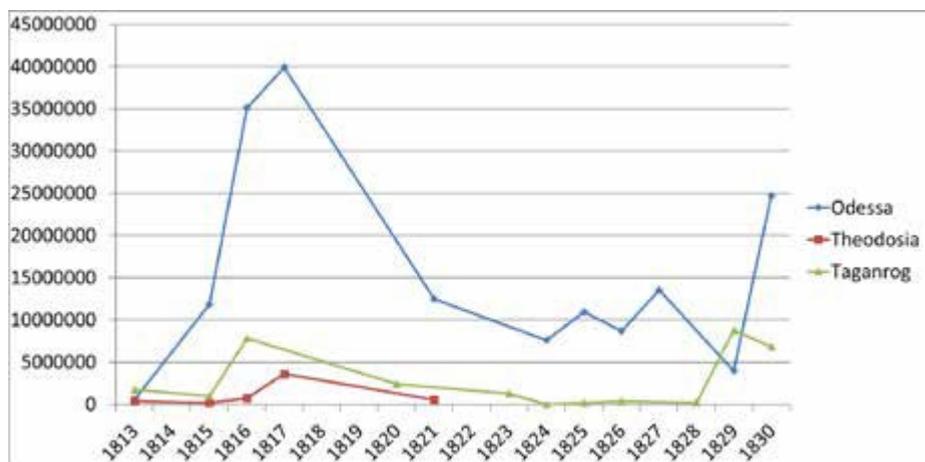
<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*.

Graph 1. The increase of the grain exports of Southern Russian ports



Source: Y. POSPELOVA, *Становление внешней торговли России через Азовские и Черноморские порты в последней четверти XVIII-начале XIX века* [Formation of foreign trade of Russia through the Azov and Black Sea ports in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century], Ph.D. thesis, 2012, (Moscow Region State University, Moscow).

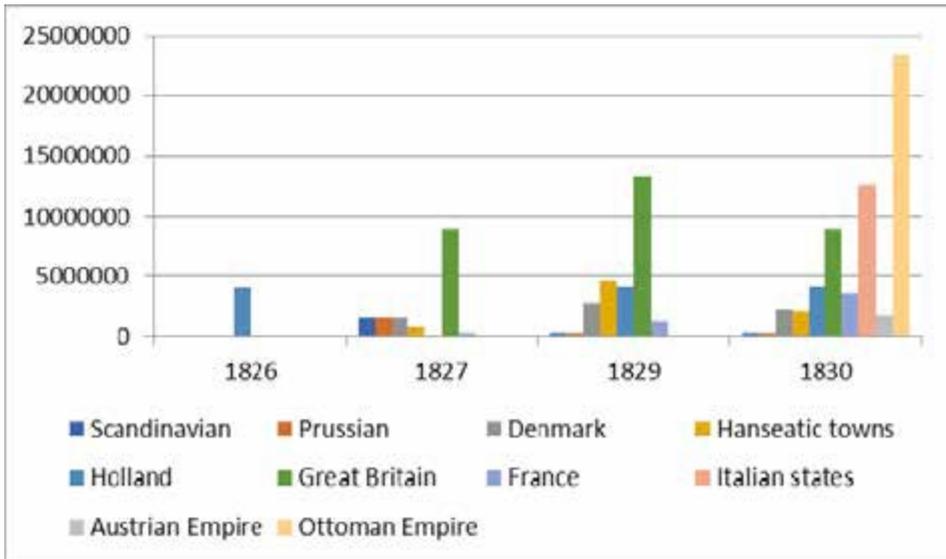
Graph 2. The increase of grain exports of the main Russian port-cities



Source: 1812-1829: *Государственная внешняя торговля в разных ее видах. Foreign Trade of the State in its various Regions*, published by the Department of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Finances.

Graph 2, presents the period 1813-1830. After a correlated unprecedented upsurge before the end of the Napoleonic wars, indicative in Odessa, there is a sharp decline only to reach an upward trend in the next Russo-Ottoman war of 1828-1829. Exports witnessed a sharp rise maafter the Napoleonic wars and a downfall in 1820. The sharp fluctuations of the export trade of Russia to the West were normalized only after 1829 with the Treaty of Adrianople that opened up the navigation of the Black Sea to all nations. The trading partners of southern Russian exports during this early period were the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, the Italian States, France, Holland, followed by Prussia, the Austrian Empire, Denmark, the Scandinavian and Hanseatic countries (Graph 3). Southern Russia was transformed as UK's main grain supplier, particularly after 1846-1847, when the Corn Laws and Navigation Acts were abolished. Due to the fact that Corn Laws forbade the direct imports of grain to Britain, until then grain was shipped to entrepots established in Italian, French and Dutch ports only to be re-exported to the British ports. It has been estimated that annual re-exports during the first half of the nineteenth century were substantial and could reach from 100,000 to 200,000 imperial quarters<sup>66</sup>.

Graph. 3. Grain exports from Southern Russia 1826-1830 (value in rubles)



<sup>66</sup> S. FAIRLIE, *The Anglo Russian grain trade, 1815-1861*, Unpublished PhD thesis 1959, (London School of Economics and Political Science), 173.

#### 4. AROUND THE SEA: THE FORMATION OF THE MARITIME NETWORKS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADING HOUSES

All the port cities planned by Russian politicians were filled by entrepreneurial immigrants of ethnic minorities from central and southeastern Europe. The Russians new well that the merchant communities demonstrated flexibility and were prepared to move to new markets. The maritime linkages of the Black Sea were organized by foreigners established in the newly founded ports. The trading and shipping businesses that made the exports happen belonged mainly to the mobile groups of families of Greeks, Jews and Armenians, along with Germans as others from central Europe.<sup>67</sup> In fifty years, from the 1770s to the 1820s, they were able to develop linkages to the hinterland and thus be able to collect the harvest through the very difficult conditions of the primitive Russian South. One has to remember that grain came down through rivers with navigation difficulties, non-existent roads and harsh weather conditions as from November to March everything was covered with ice, and the rivers and the Azov Sea were frozen. The merchants and seafarers of the area kept available fleets of small sailing craft to bring the produce from the river estuaries to the ports and available sailing ships to transport them abroad. Business was difficult; entrepreneurial risk had to be minimized somehow and information of prices in far away markets to be available at a time when letter-writing was the only means of communication. The formation of systems of communication that made the whole procedure of purchasing and bringing the produce from the hinterland to the port, promoting it to other ports in the foreland and selling is what we have described as “entrepreneurial networks.”<sup>68</sup>

It was these mobile entrepreneurial groups that undertook the control of trade, shipping and finance, establishing networks and linkages with the global economy. They all proved the catalysts for the trade apogee and contributed significantly to the evolution of the port-cities. Among the business groups of the various ethnic minorities that inhabited the newly formed South Russian port-cities, the Greeks excelled in the first half of the nineteenth century by controlling more than half of the whole external trade. They continued the same business in the second half of the century, albeit the fierce competition of the Jewish trading companies, handling at least one third of the total south Russian production and carrying with their ships more than half.<sup>69</sup>

New material from the Russian statistics has provided us with new information on the importance of the Greek trading companies not only in the South of Russia but in the whole of the Russian Empire. Table 5 includes data we have processed from all the first guild merchants of the Russian Empire that had a turnover of over 50,000 rubles (or £8,000). During this period, in order to carry out trade in the

---

<sup>67</sup> V. KARDASIS, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea: The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775–1861*, Lanham, MD 2001 (Lexington Books); G. HARLAFTIS, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping*, London 1996 (Routledge), pp. 3–38.

<sup>68</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, *Mapping the Greek maritime diaspora*, cit.

<sup>69</sup> EADEM, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping*, cit., chapters 1–3.

Russian Empire, a merchant had to register in one of the “guilds”; merchants were divided into three “guilds” and registration in those guilds was open to all who could pay the guild tax.<sup>70</sup>

Tab. 5. **First guild merchants engaged in Russia’s external trade, 1813**

| NAME OF MERCHANTS      | ORIGIN | IN WHICH PLACE OF TOWN IS SOLD    | IMPORTS | EXPORTS | TOTAL   |
|------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Mella Pavel            | Greek  | Radziwilow (Radyvilov) and Odessa | 251920  | 945921  | 1197841 |
| Katsari Diamandi       | Greek  | Odessa and Taganrog               | 208545  | 826426  | 1034971 |
| Dimasi Nikolai         | Greek  | Taganrog                          | 378090  | 454356  | 832446  |
| Pitako Grigorii        | Greek  | Odessa and Taganrog               | 276856  | 502167  | 779023  |
| Yanopulo Vasilii       | Greek  | Odessa                            | 294302  | 369705  | 664007  |
| Stefanaki Ivan         | Greek  | Taganrog                          | 163709  | 302041  | 465750  |
| Paleolog Dmitri        | Greek  | Odessa                            | 155097  | 251688  | 406785  |
| Skufi Ivan             | Greek  | Odessa                            | 21589   | 372387  | 393976  |
| Dulchyn Efstfii        |        | Odessa                            | 242248  | 141862  | 384110  |
| Kaliantzi Fedor        | Greek  | Odessa                            | 196882  | 182796  | 379678  |
| Zaharov Leontii        | Greek  | Taganrog                          | 138207  | 231258  | 369465  |
| Reno Ivan              |        | Odessa                            | 62725   | 287094  | 349819  |
| Mareli Mikhail         |        | Odessa                            | 33984   | 288795  | 322779  |
| Iorgashi Ivan          |        | Odessa                            | 32015   | 280700  | 312715  |
| Bobovits Cima          |        | Evpatoria                         |         | 291920  | 291920  |
| Kiparissi Spiro        | Greek  | Odessa                            | 32370   | 258882  | 291252  |
| Zotov Dmitri           |        | Odessa                            | 22573   | 252064  | 274637  |
| Domerchikov Vassili    |        | Taganrog                          | 40900   | 223043  | 263943  |
| Petrocochino Efstratii | Greek  | Odessa                            |         | 261406  | 261406  |
| Magula Mari            | Greek  | Taganrog                          | 59840   | 201523  | 261363  |

Source: 1812-1814: *Государственная внешняя торговля в разных ее видах. Foreign Trade of the State in its various Regions*, published by the Department of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Finances.

In 1813 as is evident from Table 5, more than two thirds of the twenty most important merchants of Southern Russia, that belonged to the first guild and were engaged in the export trade of the northern coast, were Greeks and handled 70% of the value of the total trade. Who were these merchants and where did they come from? We can distinguish two phases and two groups of Greek traders. The first wave of Greeks were mainly seafarers and was directed from 1770s to 1800s, to the eastern part of the northern shore, namely the Azov region, and more particularly Taganrog. These were mostly shipmasters and shipowners from the Ionian islands

<sup>70</sup> A.J. RIEBER, *Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Imperial Russia* 1982, (University of North Carolina Press), p. xxiii.

and the seafaring islands of the Aegean. It has been calculated, for example, that out of 200 merchants that were established in Taganrog between 1795 and 1803, 53% came from the island of Cephalonia and 45% from 12 Aegean islands and particularly from Santorini, Psara and Hydra.<sup>71</sup> They were all established either in Taganrog or Odessa and they came from Cephalonia and various Aegean islands. The most important merchant of that period is Pavel Mela from a commercial family from Epirus.

The second wave of Greek merchants, were established in Odessa and Taganrog during the 1810s and 1820s; Evstrati Petrocockino from the island of Chios belongs to this group. Apart from Petrocockino, who seems to be the first of the powerful group of Chiot merchants to be established there (see Table 5), Ambrosios Skaramanga and Alexander Mavro were established in Odessa as First Guild merchants in 1814, Anton Galati in 1817, Igor Ralli and Grigori Marasli in 1818, Theodor Rodocanachi and Dimitri Skylitzi in 1822.<sup>72</sup> These merchants, before establishing themselves in Odessa or Taganrog, were in Constantinople and were involved in the Ottoman trade during the Napoleonic wars. Katerina Galani has revealed recently that between 1799 and 1813 the above developed a close relation with the British Levant Company based in Constantinople. The Chiot merchants like Ralli, Scaramanga, Petrocockino, Galatis, Mavrogordato, Frangiadis, Negroponte, Paspatis, Baltadgis, the Cephalonians Dendrinos, Panas, Rossolimos, along with the Melas, Marasli and others sent and received cargoes for the Levant company, without, however, being officially merchants of the Levant Company.<sup>73</sup> They were most probably involved in the grain trade from South Russia, as immediately after their involvement with the Levant Company they were established in Russia. Among the top Greek merchants in Odessa and Taganrog, after 1820s, are found the Chiots Rodocanachi, Ralli and Skylitzi. At the same period, their involvement with the Levant Company turned them to London. In 1818 the Ralli brothers were established there, whereas in the 1820 the merchant house of Petrocockino, Galati and Kondostavlos is established in London.<sup>74</sup>

Using shipping movements, 20 years ago, I have identified the importance of the Chiot and Ionian networks in the trade and shipping of southern Russia with the Western European port cities.<sup>75</sup> The networks, however, that stemmed from the analysis of shipping movements, did not reveal the importance of the trading companies in southern Russia. What the archival evidence from the Russian

<sup>71</sup> E. SIFNEOS, G. HARLAFTIS, *Entrepreneurship*, cit.

<sup>72</sup> L. BILOUSOVA, *Odessa: Register of merchants of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> guilds in alphabetical order*, Государственный архив Одесской области, *State Archives of Odessa Region*.

<sup>73</sup> K. GALANI, *British trade and shipping in the Mediterranean in the Age of War, 1770-1815*, unpublished ph.D. thesis 2011 (University of Oxford), pp. 294-303.

<sup>74</sup> For the Ralli Bros see K. VOURKATIOTI, *Ο οίκος των Αδελφών Ράλλη (c. 1814-1961). Το αρχέτυπο μιας ελληνικής επιχείρησης της διασποράς* [The House of Ralli Bros (c. 1814-1961). The Archetype of a Greek Diaspora Firm], (Unpublished PhD thesis, Panteion University, 2004), pp 8-45, 85-135. For the others K. GALANI, *Η Ελληνική κοινότητα του Λονδίνου τον 19ο αιώνα. Μια κοινωνική και οικονομική προσέγγιση* [The Greek Community in London in the 19th century. A Social and Economic Approach], “Τα Ιστορικά”, 63, 2016, , pp. 43-68.

<sup>75</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping*, cit., chapters 2 and 3.

archives brings out is the fact that the trading companies that traded in Russia, with origin from Chios, Cephalonia or elsewhere, traded in all the port cities, that is in both the Odessa and Azov region. Despite their internal competition, they collaborated, imitated and complemented each other acting as a business group handling the grain exports from Southern Russia to the West along the whole area combining trade, shipping and finance.<sup>76</sup> It was they that formed the “Chiot entrepreneurial group” that grew into prominence during the period 1820s-1860s established not only in Odessa, Taganrog and Constantinople but also in Trieste, Livorno, Marseille, London and St. Petersburg.

By 1860 among the top twenty Russian trading companies of the whole of Russia stood the companies of John Ralli, Theodor Rodocanachi and John Scaramanga.<sup>77</sup> At the same year, in the top twenty trading firms in Southern Russia more than half are Greeks and include the trading companies of the Chiots Scaramanga, Ralli and Rodocanachi and of the Cephalonians Vagliano and Avgerino. Altogether they carried trade worth more than three million sterling pounds. It is thus not surprising that the members of the Greek business group of Southern Russia that established themselves in the City of London in the 1820s, got immediately access from the Black Sea to the Baltic Exchange and the Bank of England, where they were considered and treated as a tight business group, among the main traders of Russia that integrated the Black Sea markets with western Europe.<sup>78</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

This paper examined the first 50 transitional years of the Black Sea, a sea of isolation, named as “Ottoman lake” to a sea of internationalization. It followed the glance from the sea and its effects on land. In this way it examined the movements *on the sea* and their development and impact *around the sea*. The Black Sea excluded from international trade until 1770s, developed its sea trade and maritime networks in an unprecedented rate to become the largest grain producer of the world, supplying the West during the era of industrial revolution. This came as a result of dramatic changes on the sea and around the sea. Still, despite the importance of the maritime networks and the impact of the sea dimension on land and the development of port cities, the element of the sea is still underresearched. Recent research on Ottoman, Ukrainian, Russian and western European archives has

---

<sup>76</sup> K.GALANI, G. HARLAFTIS, *Trade and finance between London, Constantinople and Southern Russia: The Greek business group in the 19<sup>th</sup> century*, paper presented in the European Business History Association, Utrecht 2014.

<sup>77</sup> Государственная внешняя торговля в разных ее видах. *Foreign Trade of the State in its various Regions*, published by the Department of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Finances., 1860.

<sup>78</sup> G. HARLAFTIS, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping. The Making of an International Tramp Fleet, 1830 to the present day*, London 1996 (Routledge); G. HARLAFTIS, *Creating Global Shipping: Aristotle Onassis, the Vagliano Brothers and the Business of Shipping, c.1820-1970*, Cambridge 2019 (Cambridge University Press).

enlightened the opening of the sea in the 50 years from 1770s to 1820s, when it was still mainly the Ottoman and Russian flags that were permitted to sail.

**On the sea,** history has been seen through maritime voyages and maritime empires. Sailing on the sea and discovering the sea routes had dramatic effects as non-existent port-cities sprang along the coast and knowledge of navigation increased. Changes in the Black sea were triggered from the colonialism of the Russians, a land empire. Without really a merchant fleet, it gave privileges to seafaring and trading populations of the Ottoman and Venetian Greeks to its newly conquered northern coastline: central Europeans as cultivators, Jews and Armenians as traders and Greeks as sea carriers. Greeks, the traditional seafarers of the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea had consolidated themselves as the “fleet dei Greci” in the Mediterranean of the eighteenth century. It was only natural after the opening and growth the northern Black Sea coast that they became the main carriers of the sea trade of the area sailing within and out of the Black Sea. Every sea, at crucial moments of change has its seafarers to develop maritime transport systems mechanisms with which they were able to integrate the produce of the hinterland of the sea with the global markets.

**Around the sea,** port cities formed the nodes between hinterland and foreland, provided the connectivity of the maritime regions. The dynamics of maritime transport, activated by developments in shipping that led to the emergence of maritime transport and port systems. Port activity has usually been measured by the flow of cargoes and ships. The first port cities to develop in the northern coast was at the western point first Kherson and then Odessa and on the eastern side Taganrog. It was through these ports that grain, which became the primary produce later was exported to western European ports like Venice, Malta, Livorno, Genoa or Marseille. The trading and shipping businesses that made the exports happen belonged mainly to the mobile groups of the so-called people of the classic diaspora like the Greeks, Jews and Armenians along with others from central Europe like Germans and Poles and southeastern Europe like Bulgarians and Serbs.

With the glance from the sea one can trace developments at land clearer and beyond the sometimes myopic glance of national histories. The Black Sea belonged to the people that moved on it and around it, increasing its connectivity with the land and the river routes, triggering chain reactions and unprecedented changes on an economic, social and political level not only on the hinterland behind but through the vast water space to the foreland beyond.