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New approaches of British and Ionian presence in ports and grain-markets of the Russian Black Sea and the Danube (mid-18th – mid-19th century)



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...to my travelling companion, *Giannis*

*Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs?
Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,
in that gray vault. The sea. The sea
has locked them up. The sea is History.*

The Sea Is History,
Poem by Derek Walcott

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The present book is the result of a three-year research project under the title *British and their Ionian Subjects in the Port-Cities and Grain Markets of the Black Sea and the Danube: penetration, settlement, integration (late 18th - mid-19th centuries)*. The research project was implemented within the framework of the Action 'Supporting Postdoctoral Researchers' of the Operational Program 'Education and Lifelong Learning' (Action's Beneficiary: General Secretariat for Research and Technology), and was co-financed by European Social Fund (ESF) and Greek State.

The aim of the research project was the identification, analysis and presentation of the principal terms and incentives of the maritime and commercial penetration, settlement and integration of the British and their Ionian subjects in the port-cities and grain markets of the Russian Black Sea and the Lower Danube. Our project, in brief *Britonian Project*, covered actually the period from mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century and focused on the port-cities and grain markets of the Russian Black Sea and the Danube River (Odessa, Nikolayev, Taganrog, Rostov-on-Don, Mariupol, Galatz, and Braila).

The nineteenth century signalled the comeback of the Black Sea region to the west European foreground after a long period –since the fifteenth century– of being an exclusive 'Ottoman Lake.' The Black Sea managed to integrate gradually into the commercial system of the Atlantic economy and to become the larger grain-exporting area in the world in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹ The major turning-point for the re-opening of the Black Sea in the late eighteenth century was the outbreak of the first industrial revolution. The continuous rising of the urban and industrial populations in Western Europe led to a significant increase of the need for

¹ E. Özveren, 'The Black Sea World as a Unit of Analysis,' in T. Aybak (ed.), *Politics of the Black Sea: The Dynamics of Cooperation and Conflict* (London, 2001). Gelina Harlaftis, and Vassilis Kardasis, 'International shipping in the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea: Istanbul as a maritime centre, 1870-1910,' in Şevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson (eds.), *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization before 1950* (London, 2000), 233-65. For the 'Atlantic economy' see Lewis R. Fisher, and Helge W. Nordvik, 'Maritime Transport and the Integration of the North Atlantic Economy, 1850-1914,' in Wolfram Fischer, R. Marvin McInnis and Jurgen Schneider (eds.), *The Emergence of a World Economy, 1500-1914* (Wiesbaden 1986), 519-544.

foodstuffs, mainly, for cereals. To meet these needs Europe started focusing her maritime, commercial, and consequently, political interest on the various Black Sea granaries.² The European states started orientating, first, towards the prosperous grain growing region and port-cities of Odessa and Nikolayev (during the last quarter of the eighteenth century), and then (during the first half of the nineteenth century) on the developing port-cities and grain markets of the Azov Sea (Taganrog, Rostov-on-Don, Mariupol), and the Lower Danube (Galatz, Braila, Sulina).

From its own side, the industrializing United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland conceived the importance of the Russian Black Sea granaries, and aimed at expanding strategically its commercial empire of supply and demand markets in that area. However, the British interest in the Black Sea trade dates back to the early eighteenth century, when the British Levant Company claimed from the Sublime Porte free trade in the Black Sea.³ Nevertheless, and despite the requests of the Company, the Ottomans kept the Black Sea a Moslem preserve. For the British this status changed in 1802, when the Porte, due to political reasons, gave the right of free passage to British merchant vessels.⁴ As a result, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, British merchants commenced directing their interest towards, first, the Russian Black Sea coast (New Russia's ports and mainly towards Odessa) and, then, during the second quarter of the century, towards the Lower Danube River. Britain's interest in the Danubian grain markets was strengthened due not only to her rising needs for cereals but to her need for disengagement from the wheat of her main rival and enemy, Russia.⁵

These developments positioned Black Sea port-cities and their ascendant grain markets as main area of activity of the British-flag merchant fleet, especially after the freeing of wheat imports from duty in 1846 (repeal of Corn Laws). It is

² Indicatively stating Robert Woods, 'Population Growth and Economic Change in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' in Peter Mathias and John A. Davis (eds.) *The Nature of Industrialization: The First Industrial Revolutions* (Oxford, 1989), 127-153.

³ Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford, 1935), 180-1.

⁴ Paul Cernovodeanu, 'British Economic Interests in the Lower Danube and the Balkan Shore of the Black Sea between 1803 and 1829,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 5 (Spring 1976), 105-120.

⁵ Paul Cernovodeanu, 'British Trade in The Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 8 (Winter 1979), 707-741.

noteworthy to mention that by 1860 Britain was importing an annual average of £5.2 million worth of agricultural products from the Black Sea granaries.⁶ Furthermore, in 1861 more than forty three percent of the Russian grains and more than fourteen percent of the Danubian grains were exported to Britain, mostly by British-flag vessels.⁷ However, despite this obvious significance of the Black Sea for Britain, an overview of the literature reveals how little research has been carried to examine systematically the reasons and conditions that led to the gradual British maritime and commercial penetration and presence in the Black Sea regions of New Russia and Danube.⁸

The study of the British maritime presence in the Black Sea leads inevitably to a directly related subject: the study of the penetration and settlement in the Black Sea grain markets and port-cities of the subjects of the British semi-colony of the Ionian

⁶ Richard Peet, 'Influences of the British Market on Agriculture and Related Economic Development in Europe before 1860,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 56 (July 1972), 1-20.

⁷ For Russian grain exports to British ports, see Vassilis Kardasis, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea; The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775-1861* (Lanham, MD 2001), 175. For Danubian grain exports to British ports, see Constantin Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării (1829-1914)* (Brăila, 2008), 313.

⁸ Some of the most noteworthy books and articles referring to or dealing with the British presence in the Black Sea and the Danubian grain markets and port-cities are the following: 1. Constantin Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării (1829-1914)* (Brăila, 2008); 2. Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History* (Oxford, 2004); 3. Vassilis Kardasis, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea; The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775-1861* (Lanham, MD 2001); 4. Tim Chapman, *Imperial Russia: 1801-1905* (London, 2001); 5. Carmel Vassalo, 'The Maltese Merchant Fleet and the Black Sea Grain Trade in the Nineteenth Century,' *International Journal of Maritime History* 13 (December 2001) 19-36; 6. Aleksandr B. Kamenskii and David Griffiths, *The Russian Empire in the Eighteenth Century: Searching for a Place in the World* (Armonk, 1997); 7. Gelina Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping. The Making of an International Tramp Fleet, 1830 to the Present Day* (London 1996); 8. Nikolai Ovcharov, *Ships and Shipping in the Black Sea, XIV-XIX Centuries* (Sofia, 1993); 9. Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History 1794-1914* (Cambridge, 1986); 10. Lewis Siegelbaum, 'The Odessa Grain Trade: A Case Study in Urban Growth and Development in Tsarist Russia,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 9 (Spring 1980), 113-51; 11. Cernovodeanu, 'British Trade in The Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' 707-741; 12. Patricia Herlihy, 'Russian Wheat and the Port of Livorno 1794-1865,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 5 (Spring 1976), 45-68; 13. Cernovodeanu, 'British Economic Interests in the Lower Danube and the Balkan Shore of the Black Sea between 1803 and 1829,' 105-120; 14. Susan Elisabeth Fairlie, 'Shipping in the Anglo-Russian trade to 1870,' *Maritime History* 2 (September 1971), 158-75; 15. John Vernon Puryear, *International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East: a study of British commercial policy in the Levant, 1834-1853* (Michigan, 1969); 16. Susan Fairlie, *The Anglo-Russian Grain Trade, 1815-1861* (London, 1959); 17. M. L. Harvey, 'The development of Russian commerce on the Black Sea and its Significance,' unpublished PhD thesis (University of California, 1938); 18. L. Jurowsky, 'Der russische Getreideexport: seine Entwicklung und Organisation,' *Münchener Volkswirtschaftliche Studien* 105 (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1910), 51-87.

Islands.⁹ As it is already mentioned, the British maritime penetration in the Black Sea granaries dates back to 1802. On the contrary, the maritime and commercial presence of the British subjects of the Ionian Islands in the Black Sea dates back to the 1770s, long before getting under the British imperial rule in 1809/1814.¹⁰ This development was due largely to the sign of the treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji in 1774, signed after the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774. According to the treaty Russia obtained right of free commercial navigation of Turkish waters including the Straits, whereas every ship flying Russian flag, regardless of her nationality, had the right to enjoy freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, as well.¹¹

The Ionians, who during the second half of the eighteenth century were emerging as a new and dynamic maritime and commercial power in the central Mediterranean, decided to exploit the advantages of the Russian flag, as defined by the Kuchuk-Kainarji treaty. As a result their shipping and trading interests were gradual orientated towards the developing Black Sea granaries and port-cities. Within a few years' time they managed to take full advantage of the opening of the Black Sea to merchant vessels flying Russian flag. As recent research findings have affirmed hundreds of Ionian shipowners and merchants started trading and settling in the Black Sea ports: first, in the port-cities of Odessa and Nikolayev, then in the emerging ports of the Azov Sea (Taganrog, Mariupol, and Rostov-on-Don), and, finally, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, in the developing port-cities of the Lower Danube River (Braila, Galatz, and Sulina).¹² Soon, according to the available research

⁹ Athanasios Gekas, "The Commercial Bourgeoisie of the Ionian Islands under British Rule, 1815-1864: Class Formation in a Semi-Colonial Society" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex, 2004).

¹⁰ Thomas W. Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean* (Notre Dame-Indiana, 2002), Ch.1.

¹¹ Indicatively stating, Saul Norman, *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1807* (Chicago, 1970), 7-9.

¹² The most recent books and articles referring or dealing with the Ionian presence in the Black Sea and the Danubian grain markets and port-cities are the following: 1. Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, 'Gauging Maritime Trade between the Mediterranean and Northern Europe in the late Eighteenth and the Mid-Nineteenth Centuries, using Electronic Databases,' *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 19/2 (2010), 295-310; 2. Panayiotis Kapetanakis, 'The Ionian Danube, 1815-64: Terms and conditions of the Ionian maritime presence in the Danube River, and how the latter has affected the Ionian shipping business' structures,' in Gelina Harlaftis and Radu Paun (eds.), *Greeks in Romania, 19th century* (Athens, 2013), 128-156; 3. Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, 'The Ionian State in the 'British' Nineteenth Century, 1814-1864: From Adriatic Isolation to Atlantic Integration,' *International Journal of Maritime History* 22 (June 2010), 163-184; 4. Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, 'The deep-sea going merchant fleet of the Seven Islands during the time of British conquest and protection and the Cephalonian prominence (1809/15-1864). Fleet and ports, cargoes and sea-routes, maritime centres and seamen,

findings, the Ionians became one of the most important and vivid maritime and trade diasporas, as well as a dynamic business group, in the coast of New Russia, and later in the port-cities of the Lower Danube. Based on these facts, we do believe that a more thorough study of the Ionian penetration and settlement in the Russian Black Sea area is necessary in order to reveal and understand the mechanisms of setting up a dynamic commercial and maritime diaspora in the highly competitive environment of the emerging port-cities and grain markets of the Russian Black Sea and the Lower Danube.

Based on the above, primary objective of this book is to study the British and Ionian maritime and commercial interest and penetration into the Russian Black Sea as well as the Danubian port-cities and grain-markets, during the period from mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. More specifically, we aim to: (a) probe how the United Kingdom re-discovered the Black Sea during the second half of the 18th century, after almost 150 years of indifference; (b) examine the penetration and presence of the British-flag merchantmen in the Russian ports of the Black Sea after the opening of the latter to European flags and for the period covering the years from 1802 up to 1853, just before the outbreak of the Crimean War; the Russian port on which our interest will be focused is Odessa; (c) to study the autonomous maritime and commercial penetration, presence, as well as settlement of the British

entrepreneurship and networks, society and shipowning elites' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Ionian University, 2010); 5. Evrydiki Sifneos, *Greek merchants in the Sea of Azov: the power and the limits of a family business* (Athens, 2009); 6. Constantin Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării (1829-1914)* (Brăila, 2008); 7. Gelina Harlaftis, 'From Diaspora Traders to Shipping Tycoons: The Vagliano Bros.,' *Business History Review* 81 (Summer 2007), 237-268; 8. Athanasios John Mazis, *The Greeks of Odessa* (New York, 2004); 9. Evrydiki Sifneos, 'Changes in the Russian grain trade and the adaptability of the Greek merchant houses,' *Ta Istorika* 40 (June 2004) 53-96; 10. Vassilis Kardasis, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea; The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775-1861* (Lanham, MD 2001); 11. Şevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson (eds.), *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization before 1950* (London, 2000); 12. Konstantinos K. Papoulidis, *Οι Έλληνες της Οδησσού* (Athens, 1999); 12. Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou and Helen Louri, "Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks in the Black Sea and Greece, 1870-1917," *The Journal of European Economic History* 26 (Winter 1997) 69-104; 13. Gelina Harlaftis, 'The role of Greeks in the Black Sea trade, 1830-1900,' in Lewis R. Fischer and Helge W. Nordvik (eds.), *Shipping and Trade, 1750-1950: Essays in International Maritime Economic History* (Pontefract, 1990) 63-95; 14. Speros Vryonis, Jr (ed), *The Greeks and the Sea* (New York, 1993); 15. Patricia Herlihy, 'Greek merchants in Odessa in the nineteenth century,' *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3-4 (1979-80) 399-420; 20. Spyridon G. Focas, *Οι Έλληνες εις την ποταμοπλοϊαν του Κάτω Δουνάβεως* (Thessaloniki, 1975).

subjects of the Ionian semi-colony into the Black Sea and more specific into the main port-cities of the Lower Danube, during the first half of nineteenth century.

Of course the questions presented above are just some of the many that we had set at the beginning of our three-year research. But as often happens a research in archives and libraries does not always provide answers to all of a historian's questions. This is what happened in our case. However, our research shed light to several important aspects of British and Ionian commercial and maritime presence in the Black Sea. And these aspects will be presented in the five chapters of the book.

But before proceeding to the presentation of the book's chapters we judge it appropriate to present briefly the places where we conducted our archival as well as literature research, both within and outside Europe. Our archival research was mainly conducted in the *British National Archives* in London (TNA), where for two years we studied hundreds of folders with dispatches and reports of tens of British ministers and diplomats, covering a wide range of topics: Britain's diplomatic and trade relations with Turkey, Russia, France and Venice; British maritime and commercial presence in the Levant; British imperial and colonial policy across Europe and the Mediterranean Sea. Apart from the British Archives in London we conducted research in the: (a) *National Archives of Scotland (NAS)* in Edinburgh; (b) *National Archives and Records Administration* in Washington DC and New York City; (c) *Russian State Historical Archive* in St. Petersburg; (d) *State Archives of Odessa Oblast* in Odessa (Ukraine); (e) *National Historical Archives* in Bucharest; and (f) *Greek State Archives* in Corfu, Cephalonia, and Ithaca. All archival material collected was recorded in the electronic database <http://archives.britonian.eu/>, which is posted on the website: <http://britonian.eu/>. Furthermore on the Ionian maritime trade during the first half of nineteenth century

However, at the website of the Britonian project the reader, who wishes to learn more about British and Ionian maritime history, can find a bibliographic database consisting of more than 1,400 books and articles (<http://library.britonian.eu/>). Our literature research was mainly conducted in the libraries of the British capital, and more specific in *British Library*, *Caird Library*, library of the *Institute of Historical*

Research, the Public Library of Rotherhithe and the Stockwell Street Library of the University of Greenwich. Research was also conducted in the Library of Congress (Washington DC), the New York Public Library, the National Library of France, the National Library of Scotland, the National Library of Russia (St Petersburg – Russia), the Public Library of Corfu, the Korgialenios Library (Argostoli – Cephalonia), the Gennadius Library (Athens), and the library of National Hellenic Research Foundation.

Finally, let us move on to the presentation of the structure of the book. The latter is divided into five chapters. We need to mention that although the book's chapters are related to each other they are still maintaining to some extent their autonomy, presenting various aspects of the commercial and maritime presence of the British and their Ionian subjects in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the Danube River. The first four chapters are devoted to the British political, commercial and maritime interest in the Black Sea and especially in the Russian Black Sea, whereas the fifth chapter presents aspects of the Ionian maritime penetration and presence in the Black Sea and especially in the Lower Danube River.

To be more specific, the first chapter of the book entitled 'Britain and the opening of a 'closed Ottoman lake' (1768-1802)' is dealing with how the Black Sea re-emerged in the British diplomatic and commercial foreground during the period from 1768 up to 1802. The period covered extends from 1768 to 1802. The upper time limit was set in the year 1802 as it was then that the official opening of the Black Sea to the commercial vessels of Great Britain and the other European maritime powers took place. On the other hand, 1768 was set as the lower time limit that coincided with the outbreak of another Russo-Turkish war, the sixth in a row from seventeenth century, which marked the final withdrawal of the status quo of the Black Sea as a 'closed Ottoman lake,' in force until then. Furthermore, the outbreak of the above mentioned war led the major European powers and of course the United Kingdom to gradual orientate their diplomatic as well as commercial interest towards the broad Black Sea region.

The second chapter, under the title ‘British Consulate General in the Black Sea (1803-1819),’ aims to present the terms of the establishment of the British consulate general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea. Our goal is to make use of all the archival material found during our research in the *British National Archives* in London and reconstruct part of the history of the British consulate general in Odessa. Thus, the reader will be able to realize the broader commercial and economic importance of Black and Azov Seas to Great Britain as well as the various problems, difficulties and challenges faced by the newly established British consulate general under the command of one of the most respectable merchants and members of *Russia Company, Henry Savage Yeames*.

The establishment of the British consulate general in the Russian Black Sea was one prerequisite for the future development and growth of British trade in New Russia, given the absence in many of the ports of New Russia of all those necessary infrastructure that existed in many of the ports of central and western Europe and given as well the various operational and organizational problems faced by British merchants and merchantmen in their dealings with the authorities and indigenous tradesmen of Russia. Thus, having presented in the second chapter the terms and conditions of the early British presence in the Russian ports of the Black Sea by studying the British consular establishment in the latter, our aim in the third chapter, entitled ‘British-flag merchantmen in Russian Black Sea ports (1802-1819),’ is to probe and map the British maritime and commercial penetration and presence in the Russian Black Sea, with the port of Odessa being in the centre of our research interest. As we are going to see during the first two decades of the nineteenth century the British understood that the Russian Black Sea could provide them with various products necessary to cover the needs of their military and naval forces in the Mediterranean, especially by purchasing Russian corn and shipbuilding timber at rather competitive prices. This is what we like to call as the comparative advantage of the Russian shores of the Black Sea for British maritime trade, which definitely made Black Sea a key area of interest for British-flag merchantmen during the decade of 1810 and especially after 1819, when the port of Odessa was declared by the Tsar as a free port.

But the period after 1819 is discussed in chapter four, entitled 'British-flag vessels trading in Odessa's port (1821-1853).' The objective in this chapter is to study and map the British commercial presence in the Russian Black Sea and particularly in the port of Odessa; the most important export and import port of New Russia. The chapter covers the years from 1821, when Odessa is already operating under the status of a free port, up to almost 1854 and the outbreak of the Crimean War fought between Russian Empire on the one hand and Turkey, Great Britain, France, and Sardinia on the other.

Finally, in the fifth chapter under the title 'Ionian trade and settlement in the Danube and the Russian Black Sea (1815-1864)' we are studying the main factors that led to a noteworthy commercial and maritime presence of the Ionians in the Black Sea and mainly in the Danube River, during the period when the Ionian Islands were under British colonial rule, namely from 1809 up to 1864. The main topics to be studied in the fifth chapter are: a) the political and economic developments taking place in the eastern part of the Mediterranean world and especially in the Ionian Islands and the Black Sea during the period covering the years from 1809 (starting year of the British rule over the Ionian Islands) up to 1864 (last year of British protection, the Ionian Islands were ceded to Greek Kingdom); the growth and geography of the Ionian maritime trade and shipping, and the specific role Black Sea and, mainly, Danube River played in the development of Ionian maritime trade; and last but not least c) the terms and conditions of the establishment and settlement of the Ionian subjects in the Danubian ports of Braila, Galatz and Sulina. Finally there is one more issue we are dealing with: the role that Britain as protecting power of the Ionians had played in the development of their shipping.

Concluding this brief introductory note we want to stress that with this book we tried to look at a very interesting historical issue that of the entry of the British and the Ionians in the ports and markets of the Russian Black Sea and the Lower Danube. In any case, the book does not answer all the questions related to the British and Ionian maritime and commercial penetration and presence in the above mentioned ports and markets. However, what we can definitely say is that this book attempts for the first time in a comprehensive and systematic way to study and analyze the

most important terms and conditions that led two great European maritime nations - the British and the Ionian- to direct their maritime and shipping interests towards the port-cities and grain markets of the Russian Black Sea and the Danube.

CHAPTER ONE

Britain and the opening of a 'closed Ottoman lake' (1768-1802)

1.1 Introduction

The Black Sea breadbasket region and its various northern port cities emerged as main import and export trade destinations for British merchantmen during the nineteenth century, especially after British government decided the freeing of wheat imports from duty in 1846 (repeal of Corn Laws).¹³ It is noteworthy to mention that by 1860 Great Britain was importing an annual average of £5.2 million worth of agricultural products from the Black Sea granaries.¹⁴ Furthermore, in 1861 more than forty-three percent of the Russian and more than fourteen percent of the Danubian grains were exported to Britain, mostly by British vessels carrying the British flag.¹⁵

However, despite this obvious significance of the Black Sea for Britain, an overview of the literature -as already mentioned in the introduction of the book- reveals how little research has been carried to examine systematically the reasons and conditions that led to the gradual British maritime and commercial penetration and presence in the Black Sea regions of New Russia and the Danube during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The historiographical interest has been primarily restricted to the era of the second half of the nineteenth century, marked as mentioned above by the abolition of the British Corn Laws as well as of the Navigation Acts (1846 and 1849 respectively) and by the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853-1856). The result is our historical knowledge concerning the British interest and presence in the Black Sea region for the period preceding the mid-nineteenth century –and especially for

¹³ Michael Atkin, *International Grain Trade* (Cambridge, 1995), 16-17.

¹⁴ Richard Peet, 'Influences of the British Market on Agriculture and Related Economic Development in Europe before 1860,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 56 (July 1972), 1-20.

¹⁵ For Russian grain exports to British ports, see Vassilis Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861* (Athens 1998), 175. For Danubian grain exports to British ports, see Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării (1829-1914)*, 313.

the period before the commercial opening of the Black Sea to the British vessels in 1802– to be limited and largely unknown.

Thus our aim in this first chapter of the book is to shed light into this –to a greater or lesser extent– less known period related to the British political, economic and mainly commercial penetration and presence in the Black Sea; a period which spans the years from mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. Within this context the present –first– chapter of the book is dealing with how the Black Sea re-emerged in the British diplomatic and commercial foreground during the period from 1768 up to 1802.

The present chapter is entitled *Britain and the Black Sea: the opening of a "closed Ottoman lake*. The period covered by this chapter extends from 1768 to 1802. The upper time limit was set in the year 1802 as it was then that the official opening of the Black Sea to the commercial vessels of Great Britain and the other European maritime powers took place.¹⁶ On the other hand, 1768 was set as the lower time limit that coincided with the outbreak of another Russo-Turkish war, the sixth in a row from seventeenth century, which marked the final withdrawal of the status quo of the Black Sea as a ‘closed Ottoman lake,’ in force until then. Furthermore, the outbreak of the above mentioned war led the major European powers –mainly France and Great Britain– to gradual orientate their diplomatic as well as commercial interest towards the broad Black Sea region.

Some of the questions, which this first chapter deals with, are: (a) what was the Black Sea for Great Britain: a known or a totally unknown sea? (b) Was the British government really interested in getting involved with a trade in the remote coasts, mountains, plains and rivers of the Black Sea? And, if so why? (c) Were there any special Black Sea export products that stimulated the interest of the British tradesmen and merchantmen during the eighteenth century? It was grain, as in nineteenth century or not? (d) Did the growing French-British rivalry during the second half of the eighteenth century play any role in highlighting the economic and political importance of the Black Sea region? (e) The gradual orientation of the

¹⁶ TNA, FO 65/51, Dispatch No.2, 2.08.1802, Garlike to Hawkesbury.

British Empire towards the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent had some effect in the increase of her interest in the Black Sea, or not?

Our study is based on the reports and letters sent to the various ministers and departments of the British government in London by the various British ambassadors, plenipotentiaries, consuls, vice-consuls and merchants-members of the British Levant Company residing in Constantinople, Smyrna, Venice, Zante, Corfu, Saint Petersburg, Vienna and Odessa for a period of almost thirty five years: from 1768 up to 1802. On the other hand we made use of the dispatches sent by members of the British government as well as by the British King himself to members of the British diplomatic corps serving in the aforementioned courts and cities, as well as to officials of the Ottoman and Russian governments. Our methodological approach in this chapter is to quote excerpts of the original letters and reports written by the various persons mentioned above combined with bibliographic references and other original archival material, so as the reader himself to be able to acquire a direct knowledge of the circumstances that led to the reintroduction of the Black Sea in European and mainly in British political scene during the said period of time.

Based on the archival material mentioned above, the development of the British interest in the Black Sea region can be divided in three large intervals: (a) the first one covers the years from 1768 until 1773 (the years of the Russo-Turkish war); (b) the second interval covers the years from 1774 and the signing between the Porte and the court of Saint Petersburg of the peace treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji to 1786 (just before the outbreak of the next Russo-Turkish war), and the third one (c) covers the period from 1787 to 1802, when the final opening of the Black Sea to the British and other European flags and trade took place.

1.2 First period: 1768-1773

The first period in Britain's orientation towards the Black Sea region is characterized by her –initially– anemic but gradually increasing interest in the status quo of the

latter. The reason that drives Britain in the Black Sea is none other than the military, naval and political conflict that takes place between the Ottoman and the Russian Empire in the late 1760s. From one hand the Ottoman Empire was aiming at maintaining the absolute hegemony over the Black Sea region, whereas on the other hand the Russian Empire was seeking the termination of the –still in force– status of the latter as a “closed Ottoman lake” and the extension of the Russian territory and trade networks towards the northern Black Sea coast, with the Russian interest being focused on Southern Ukraine, the Crimea and the North Caucasus region (between the Azov and the Caspian Seas).¹⁷

Be that as it may, the British interest in the Black Sea –diplomatic and commercial– does not have its onset in the 1760s but instead dates back to the late sixteenth century. It was in 1569 that the British Queen Elizabeth received from the Ottoman Sultan Murad III permission for her subjects to trade freely in the Ottoman Empire, with Black Sea and its rivers included; that permission was the presage of the capitulations obtained by England.¹⁸ For the privilege of English ships to navigate and trade in the Black Sea the article 36 of the English capitulations provides:

British merchants, and those who navigate under British colors, may go and trade to Muscovy by Sea or Land, either by way of the river Tanais or Don, or through Russia, and may bring their merchandize from thence to the Turkish Empire, and that in like manner they may go to trade in Persia, and return through any part of it, conquered by the Grand Signor, and through the confines, without hindrance or molestation from the Turkish ministers; and that they shall pay the customs and other duties of that country and nothing more; and that British ships, forced by bad weather into Caffa in the Crimea [nowadays Feodosia], shall be protected from any trouble, hindrance or

¹⁷ Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848* (New York, 1994), 35. See also Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London, 2007), 67-69; X. de Planhol, ‘Karadeniz,’ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, volume 4 (Leiden, 2003), 575; Haci Veli Aydin, ‘Ελληνες έμποροι και ναυτικοί στη Μαύρη Θάλασσα, 1780-1820,’ in Gelina Harlaftis and Katerina Parakonstantinou (eds.), *Ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων 1700-1821. Ο αιώνας της ακμής πριν από την Επανάσταση* (Athens, 2013), 683-701.

¹⁸ Van Dyck A. Edward, *Capitulations of the Ottoman Empire* (Washington, 1881), 16.

violence, so long as the English continue on board without selling their commodities or merchandizes.¹⁹

Thus, a few years later, during early seventeenth century, members of the British Levant Company tried to enter the Black Sea aiming at opening a new trade route with Persia in order to trade silk from the latter through the port of Trabzon to Europe. Indeed, in 1609 *Sir Thomas Glover* member of the Levant Company manages to obtain permission from the Ottoman authorities and with his vessel *Royall Defence* enters the Black Sea. However, when in May 1610 another Levant Company member, *John Midnall*, endeavored to sail from Constantinople to open up the new project, he was stopped at the last moment on the flimsy pretence that he was a spy of the Shah of Persia. Sublime Porte actually decided to keep the Black Sea a Moslem preserve and maintained the same negative attitude towards all subsequent demands for the exercise of commercial activity by British merchantmen in the southern Black Sea coast.²⁰ Thus notwithstanding the provisions in capitulations, British ships will remain excluded from trade in the Black Sea until the end of eighteenth century.

The result was the Black Sea to remain closed to the British as well as to all non-Ottoman ships for a long period, which lasted up to 1802. In fact, the refusal of the Ottomans in the early seventeenth century to allow the entry of British merchant vessels in the Black Sea, in an effort to maintain the exclusivity of the seaborne trade in it, led Britain's interest in the latter rather to wane. However, we have to mention that although the Black Sea remained closed for British merchantmen and merchants, the latter managed to build considerable communities in many

¹⁹ TNA, FO 78/11, 19.10.1790, Privy Council for Trade to Leeds, f. 243r – 268v; TNA, FO 78/22, 10.09.1799, Smith to Grenville, f. 199r – 200v.

²⁰ Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford, 1935), 49; R. Davis, 'England and the Mediterranean, 1570-1670,' in F.J. Fisher, (ed.), *Essays in the Economic and Social History of the Tudor and Stuart England in honour of R.H. Tawney* (Cambridge, 1961), 117-137; R. Walsh, *Account of the Levant Company with some Notices on the Benefits conferred upon Society* (London, 1825). See also Galani, 'British Shipping and Trade in the Mediterranean in the Age of War,' ch.7.

Mediterranean port-cities and of course in most of the port-cities in the Aegean and Ionian Seas.²¹

For Great Britain Black Sea would once again come to the foreground during the first decade of the reign of *King George III* and specifically during the years of the new Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774.²² The latter is the period during which the British government begins to realize the multilevel political, military and commercial significance of the Black Sea for the British interests in the Levant Seas, the Middle East, and as far as the Indian sub-continent; and this change of British policy is the result of the gradual and steady emergence of Russia as a strong naval and military power of Eastern Europe, and of the Russian aspirations for commercial and political dominance in a vast area including the Sea of the Azov, the Black, the Aegean and the Levant Seas, the Caspian Sea and as far as the Persian Gulf.²³

For these Russian aspirations London is being informed thoroughly by its ambassador in Constantinople, *John Murray*.²⁴ The latter familiarized London with the plans of the *Empress of All the Russias, Catherine the Great*.²⁵ In one of his letters sent to the *Earl of Rochford*, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, John Murray states:

[Her first step would be] a free and unlimited Navigation of the Black Sea [...];
She may then effectually unite the Volga and the Don; The Caspian Sea, will

²¹ Op.Cit., 42-45. See also M. D' Angelo, 'British Trade and Merchants in the Mid-Mediterranean; an Alternative Market during the Napoleonic Wars,' in C. Vassallo and M. D'Angelo (eds.), *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean. Commerce, Politics and Ideas (XVII-XX centuries)* (Malta, 2007), 97-114.

²² On the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 see *An authentic narrative of the Russian expedition against the Turks by sea and land* (London, 1772); *Atlas Arkhipelaga i rukopisnye karty Pervoi Arkhipelagskoi ekspeditsii russkogo flota 1769-1774 gg* (Moskva, 1997); Roger Charles Anderson, *Naval Wars in the Levant 1559-1863* (Princeton, 1952), 277-304.

²³ Herbert H. Kaplan, *Russian Overseas Commerce With Great Britain: During the Reign of Catherine II* (Philadelphia, 1995), 113-114. See also Roger P. Bartlett, *Human capital: the settlement of foreign in Russia 1762-1804* (Cambridge, 1979), 113. On Catherine's expansive wars and plans in the Black Sea and south-eastern Europe see also Derek McKay and H.M Scott, *The Rise of the Great Powers 1648 - 1815* (London, 2014), 222-242. See also Kamenskii and Griffiths, *The Russian Empire in the Eighteenth Century*, 251-274; Norman Saul, *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1848* (Chicago, 1970), 3-13, 25-33; M. H. Scott, *The Emergence of the Eastern Powers, 1756-1775* (Cambridge, 2001), 232-255.

²⁴ For John Murray, British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople and British resident in Venice, see: Christine Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant: Trade and Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2010), 29-42, 65-69.

²⁵ For a brief presentation of Catherine's foreign policy see Dominic Lieven, *The Cambridge History of Russia: Volume 2, Imperial Russia, 1689-1917* (Cambridge, 2006), 511-515.

afford Her a valuable Branch of Trade; and She will undoubtedly make choice of Her strong places in the Crimea, with a good port, where She will erect noble Magazines, and pour into Europe the Produce of several immense countries, with their streams.²⁶

Furthermore, Murray states, that he is “of opinion when the Porte allows the navigation of the Black Sea, the Court of Petersburg will content herself to be upon the same footing with other friendly powers in regard to the navigation of the Levant.”²⁷ However, Catherine the Great seems not wanting only the Crimea, its ports, and a free navigation in the Black Sea, but she was aiming at establishing a strong Russian presence in the Levant Seas.²⁸ Hence, Catherine was demanding – according to British reports sent to London from Constantinople– from the Sublime Port “the Nile, Scanderoon [nowadays Iskenderun], and Candia, for ten years, with an exclusive trade,”²⁹ whereas on the other hand she insisted that the Porte should “grant Russia an island in the Archipelago [Aegean Sea] to serve for a magazine for the Russian commodities that [would] come from the Black Sea.”³⁰

The above mentioned Russia's early plans related to the navigation on the Black and Mediterranean Seas constituted a clear although –for the time being– indirect threat to the British interests in the Levant.³¹ British government facing this new reality

²⁶ TNA, SP 97/48, Dispatch No.4, 17.02.1772, Murray to Rochford, f. 22r – 26v.

²⁷ TNA, SP 97/49, Dispatch No.3, 3.2.1773, Murray to Rochford, f. 22r – 25v.

²⁸ From the beginning of her reign Catherine II was determined to broaden Russia's international commercial relations. Without denying the valuable association Russia had with Great Britain, the latter's prevailing position in Russia's overseas trade appeared to Catherine to limit Russia's commercial and political flexibility and potential revenues. During the 1770s and 1780s, therefore, Catherine embarked upon an ambitious overseas trade and navigation effort in the hope that several countries would conclude treaties of commerce with Russia. In doing this Catherine brought to fruition policies initiated by her predecessors. In March and April 1756 the Conference at the Imperial Court of Elizabeth had formulated a general and systematic state plan, which included Russia's intention to unite the commerce of the Baltic with the Black Sea and through that have in our hands almost all the Levant Commerce. See Herbert H. Kaplan, *Russia and the Outbreak of the Seven Years' War* (California, 1968), 55-56. See also King, *The Black Sea: A History*, 154-162.

²⁹ TNA, SP 97/48, Dispatch No.20, 17.10.1772, Murray to Rochford, f. 157r – 162v.

³⁰ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.4, 3.2.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 19r – 23v. Furthermore, the Foreign Office had information related to “a secret article in the treaty with the Turks, by virtue of which the Russians are to have settlement on the coast of Barbary. Such an establishment, if practicable, would certainly tend to promote the Russian commerce in the Mediterranean, but probably give umbrage to certain powers”; see TNA, SP 91/101, Dispatch No.2 (encrypted), 21.01.1777, Eden to Oakes, f. 3r – 4v.

³¹ M.S. Anderson, *Europe in the Eighteenth Century 1713-1789* (London, 2014), Ch.9.

appears to fret and the Earl of Rochford expresses clearly his worries to Murray as well as to the British ambassador in Saint Petersburg, *Lord Cathcart*.³² In a letter dated April 12, 1772 the Earl of Rochford stresses that the presence of Russians on an Aegean island or even the possibility of Russian merchant vessels entering the Mediterranean will constitute an unpleasant development for all European flags sailing in the Mediterranean, consequently for England as well. According to Rochford “the idea of acquiring an island in the Archipelago, or even a communication from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean [would] be disagreeable here [in London], as necessarily giving jealousies to all the nations in possession of the trade of the Mediterranean.”³³

And if in April 1772 London expresses just some concerns about the possibility of Russian vessels sailing in the Black and Aegean Seas, a few months later, in December of the same year, and after important victories of the Russians in the war fronts against the Turks, the head of the Southern Department asks the ambassador to Constantinople to inform him of the dangers and further consequences of the potential Russian commercial presence in the Mediterranean for the British trade interests in the broader region. Indicative of Foreign Office’s concerns is the letter sent by Earl of Rochford to John Murray on December 25, 1772, stating the following, “as in the present negotiation for peace [between Russia and Sublime Porte] it is probable a question will arise concerning the possession of some island in the Archipelago, I must desire your Excellency to transmit me your report how far you imagine our Levant Trade might be likely to be affected by such acquisition of the Russians, and whether you think they might be able to turn into their own channel some valuable or essential branch of this commerce to our disadvantage.”³⁴

According to Murray’s reply report sent to London a few weeks later on February 17, 1773, it was really difficult and premature to make any safe prediction on whether

³² It is interesting to note that already in 1745 the Russian Commerce College had proposed the commercial development of Russia’s southern provinces and had sought permission from the Ottoman Empire for Russian merchantmen to navigate the Black Sea. See Harvey Mose Lofley, ‘The Development of Russian Commerce on the Black Sea and Its Significance,’ unpublished Ph.D. thesis (California, 1938), 10-11.

³³ TNA, SP 97/47, Dispatch No.2, 12.04.1772, Rochford to Murray, f. 66r – 9v.

³⁴ TNA, SP 97/48, Dispatch No.5, 25.12.1772, Rochford to Murray, f. 181r – 183v.

and how the opening of the Black and Aegean Seas to the Russian flag would affect the British trade in the Levant. To be more specific, Murray expressed –though in a rather indirect way– his deep concerns about the prosperity of the British trade in the Levant (perhaps with the exception of some British products, like woolen manufactures –mostly shalloons– lead and tin). The reason of his concerns was that the British trade, already facing fierce competition by the numerous French merchantmen, would probably not be able to face the entry of another strong player in the Mediterranean trade as the Russian merchant navy could be.³⁵ Murray is really worried and concludes his report to Rochford by writing “as the commerce of Europe is threatened with so many changes and as Russia is endeavoring to extend Her dominions in the Archipelago, amongst an infinite number of islands, and upon a coast chiefly inhabited by people of Her own religion [Greek people], it is out of my reach to guess what time may produce in an enterprising and powerful nation, or how far the return produced by our commodities in silk, mohair and cotton, may be prejudiced.”³⁶

In any case, of course, and despite the many risks entailed in the potential opening of the Black and the Aegean Seas to the Russian flag and the Russian merchant navy, the British government and in fact the British King himself did not want to upset or break their strong ties with their main ally and *favorite trade nation* in the continent, Russia and her Empress Catherine the Great.³⁷ The valuable trade with the Russian Baltic ports of St. Petersburg, Tallinn, and Kroonstad was so vital for Britain, especially for her navy and shipping industry, during the second half of the eighteenth century, that the latter was not willing at all to jeopardize her dominant presence in the Baltic trade by putting hindrances to the expected commercial opening of the Black and Aegean Seas to Catherine the Great or in general to the plans of the latter to expand the borders of Russian territory towards the northern

³⁵ On the French trade in the Levant and the Ottoman Empire see *The Universal Magazine XI* (1809), 198-199. See also Edhem Eldem, ‘French Trade and Commercial Policy in the Levant in the Eighteenth Century,’ *Oriente Moderno* 79 (1999), 27-47.

³⁶ TNA, SP 97/49, Dispatch No.4, 17.2.1773, Murray to Rochford, f. 26r – 32v.

³⁷ Kaplan, *Russian Overseas Commerce With Great Britain*, 113-116; Matthew Smith Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia: 1553-1815* (1958), 4-7.

coast of the Black Sea. For Great Britain Baltic Sea was definitely much more important than the Black Sea.

Indeed it is interesting that the British government appears to condemn all Murray's advices and proposals for Britain and the rest of European powers to take joint action against Russia because of her decision to seize the Crimea and to go on with the *First Partition of Poland*, an initiative taken between Russia and Prussia, which clearly caused discomfort in Britain.³⁸ For Britain, no event –however important it might have been– could disrupt the friendly commercial and diplomatic relations having been established between her and Russia.³⁹ On the other hand, however, we need to mention that the British government in an attempt the existing political and economic status quo of the Black Sea region not to be disturbed –at least to an irreversible extent– sought to maintain as far as possible the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Within this political context Great Britain and her ambassador to Constantinople tried to convince the Sublime Porte –despite the obvious lack of confidence of the Sultan towards the British King due to his strong ties with Catherine– to proceed with the signing of a peace treaty with Russia before finding herself in an absolute destructive position of weakness in the war fronts both in Black Sea and Poland.⁴⁰

Summing up, Black Sea came once again as a priority to the British diplomatic and economic planning for the wider region of the Levant during the first decade of the reign of King George III and specifically during the years of the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774. In fact, the latter is the period during which the British government begins to perceive –although not fully yet– the political, economic and commercial importance of the Black Sea for her multilevel imperial interests in Eastern Europe

³⁸ TNA, SP 97/48, Dispatch No.11, 3.6.1772, Murray to Rochford, f. 73r – 85v.

³⁹ On Anglo-Russian commercial treaties and diplomatic relations see P. H. Clendenning, 'The background and negotiations for the Anglo-Russian commercial treaty of 1766,' in Anthony Glenn Cross (ed.), *Great Britain and Russia in the eighteenth century: contacts and comparisons: proceedings of an international conference held at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, England, 11-15 July 1977* (Cambridge, 1979), 145-163. See also Anthony Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, 1997), 40-49, 160-188; William Coxe, *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark* (London 1802), 104; Anthony Brough, *A view of the importance of the trade between Great Britain and Russia* (London, 1789).

⁴⁰ TNA, SP 97/48, Dispatch No.4, 25.12.1772, Rochford to Murray, f. 94r – 97v. See also Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, 21-22.

and the Mediterranean. On the other hand Britain was starting also to realize the potential risk to herself from an appearance and constant presence of the Russian merchant and/or navy fleet in the Black and Mediterranean Seas.

However, for Great Britain Russia was such a significant ally in the European continent –a continent under an annoying for the British French political and economic influence– that at least for the moment no political, military or diplomatic development in the Black Sea region seemed able to disrupt the strong ties between the two empires. Hence, when the Empress and Autocrat of All the Russias Catherine the Great decided to proceed with the implementation of her plan to make Russia a powerful naval, military and commercial force in Eastern Europe and the Levant Seas by withdrawing once and for all the status quo of the Black Sea as a “closed Ottoman lake,” the British government had a rather mild reaction not wanting to displease her powerful European ally in any way.⁴¹

1.3 Second period: 1774-1786

If the period of 1768-1773 was that of acquaintance of Great Britain with the hitherto almost unknown Black Sea region, the years between 1774 and 1786 –one year before the outbreak of the next Russo-Turkish War of 1787-1792– marked the demonstration of the importance of the Black Sea for British Empire’s trade interests in Southeastern Europe and Eastern Mediterranean. Three are the main features of this period: (a) the signing of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji in 1774 which led to the abolition of the status of the “closed Ottoman lake” and the subsequent opening of the Black Sea to the Russian flag and the Russian merchant vessels, (b) the growing French-British rivalry for dominance in the Black Sea trade, although –as already stated above– both French and British tradesmen would not be able to trade in the Black Sea until after 1802, and (c) the acquaintance of Great Britain and her merchantmen with the commercial potential and significance of the Black Sea region and its various exportable agricultural and non agricultural products.

⁴¹ Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant: trade and perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century*, 17.

1.3.1 *The signing of Kainarji treaty and the British reaction*

The peace treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji was signed on 21 July 1774 by the negotiators and plenipotentiaries of the Ottoman and the Russian Empires; from the Ottoman part the treaty was signed by Ahmed Resmî Effendi (Reis Effendi) and Ibrahim Münib Effendi (Kehaia Bey) and from the Russian part by Prince Nicholas Repnin (General of the Russian army).⁴² The treaty following the Ottoman decisive defeat at the Battle of Kozluca (nowadays Suvorovo, a town in northeastern Bulgaria) was certainly one of the most advantageous that Russia ever had the good fortune to sign with the Ottomans.⁴³

Apart from the immediate territorial gains in Southeastern Europe, the crucial items as regards the new Black Sea status quo were the following: (a) the Crimean Peninsula was declared independent with the Sultan remaining the religious leader of the Tartars; (b) Russia gained unlimited sovereignty over the port of Azov, the ports of Kerch, Taganrog and Yenikale, (c) and acquired the Yedisan region that sprawled to the north of the Black Sea between the Dniester and Dnieper rivers, with the port of Kherson included.⁴⁴ Russia thus gained two main outlets to the Black Sea, which was no longer an Ottoman lake.⁴⁵ However, the most crucial change brought about by the peace treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji on the Black Sea status quo was its eleventh article and the declaration for: 'free navigation [for the Russian flag] in all the Turkish Seas; in which is included the passage through the Dardanelles with all the privileges and immunities that are granted to the most favored nations as the English and French.'⁴⁶

While during the Russo-Turkish War the British government was discussing on a rather theoretical basis for the potential developments in the Black Sea status quo,

⁴² TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.18, 17.08.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 146r – 153v.

⁴³ On the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji and its importance see Brian Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe: Russia's Turkish Wars in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2011), 283-284; Plamen Mitev, *Empires and Peninsulas: Southeastern Europe Between Karlowitz and the Peace of Adrianople, 1699-1829* (Münster, 2010), 69.

⁴⁴ On the terms Treaty of Kainardji see also TNA SP 91/96, Dispatch No.59, 04.08.1774, Gunning to Earl of Suffolk, 163-165.

⁴⁵ Barlett, *Human capital: the settlement of foreign in Russia 1762-1804*, 16-18; see also *Atlas Arkhipelaga i rukopisnye karty Pervoi Arkhipelagskoi ekspeditsii russkogo flota 1769-1774 gg*, 42.

⁴⁶ TNA SP 91/96, Dispatch No.59, 24.07/4.08.1774, Gunning to Suffolk, f. 163r – 165v.

the peace treaty of Kainarji brought her before a new reality, which entailed political and commercial risks as well as opportunities. In any case the signing of the treaty of Kainarji opened the eyes of British statesmen to the new danger with which they were threatened by the position of Russia upon the Black Sea and close to the Mediterranean; a new political and diplomatic environment that will soon lead to a further weakening of the Ottoman Empire, the *Sick man of Europe* and the emergence of the *Eastern Question*.⁴⁷ As soon as the British government received the first information on the particulars of the peace treaty, both Earl of Rochford as Secretary of State for the Southern Department and Earl of Suffolk as Secretary of State for the Northern Department dispatched letters to the British ambassadors in Constantinople and Saint Petersburg respectively, asking them to inform London of everything that might be useful and worthy of British King's attention.⁴⁸

For Britain there was great reason to suppose that the pacification between Russia and Turkey would add very considerably to the power and weight of Russia, both with regard to her political, commercial and naval consequence in the system of Europe, as the Russians obtained not only the favorite and long disputed article relative to the independency of the Crimea, but likewise the free navigation in all the Turkish seas.⁴⁹ In fact –at least during the first months after the Kainarji treaty– the British government was more concerned about the commercial rather than the political gains of Russia and feared that the British trade in the Levant could be even ruined by the free passage granted to the Russians through the Dardanelles.⁵⁰

However, Britain would soon realize that it would take a long time for Russia to threaten substantially her trade interests in the Levant.⁵¹ The British government obtained information from her ambassador to the Sublime Porte John Murray leading to the conclusion that the Russians were so little versed in trade and

⁴⁷ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The influence of sea power upon the French revolution and empire, 1793-1812* (Boston, 1894), 13. See also Michael S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923: A Study in International Relations* (London, 1966), Ch 1.

⁴⁸ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.6, 6.09.1774, Rochford to Murray, f. 137r – 138v.

⁴⁹ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.7, 30.09.1774, Rochford to Murray, f. 154r – 155v.

⁵⁰ TNA SP 91/97, Dispatch No.30, 2.09.1774, Suffolk to Gunning, f. 1r – 3v.

⁵¹ Ali Ihsan Bagis, *Britain and the Struggle for the Integrity of the Ottoman Empire* (New Jersey, 2011), xiv.

navigation that without employment of experienced foreigners (like the British for example) it would be many years before their trade could prejudice any other nation.⁵²

On the other hand, according to Anthony Hayes, who was acting after the death of the ambassador John Murray as chargé d' affaires in the British embassy at Constantinople, the Black Sea coast was almost entirely ruined during the late Russo-Turkish war and therefore it would require a considerable time before the Russians could expect to reap any material advantages from their commerce in it or in the Levant seas in general.⁵³ It is interesting that only in 1781, seven years after the signing of the Kuchuk Kainarji peace treaty, and two years after the Treaty of Aynalikavak (signed on March 10, 1779 between Ottoman and Russian Empires) that strengthened further the Russian navigation in the Black Sea and the passage through the Bosphorus Straits, the new British ambassador to the Porte, who succeeded Murray, Sir Robert Ainslie speaks for the first time of a relatively noteworthy presence of Russian merchantmen in the Black Sea and the port of Constantinople.⁵⁴

However, the real danger that the British trade was facing after the signing of the Kainarji treaty was not the right given to the Russian flag for free navigation in the Black Sea or the passage through the Dardanelles. The real danger was actually the disposal of France to persuade the Sublime Porte to let French merchant vessels entering the Black Sea; a highly threatening development for the British trade in the Levant.

⁵² TNA, SP 97/51, Dispatch No. 2, 17.02.1775, Rochford to Murray, f. 12r – 14v; Dispatch No.5, 4.03.1775, Murray to Rochford, f. 28r – 30v.

⁵³ TNA, SP 97/52, Dispatch No.17, 3.02.1776, Hayes to Weymouth, f. 7r – 10v.

⁵⁴ TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No. 22, 11.09.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 211r – 216v, where Ainslie states: in the mean time, the Russian navigation seems to acquire greater activity by reason of a temporary scarcity in the Morea [Peloponnesus], which increases the importation of barley and wheat for the consumption of this capital [Constantinople]. For the Treaty of Aynalikavak see TNA, SP 97/55, Dispatch No.7, 3.04.1779, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 58r – 63v. On the presence of Russian merchantmen in the Black Sea and Constantinople see Constantin Ardeleanu, 'The Opening and Development of the Black Sea for International Trade and Shipping (1774–1853),' *Euxeinos 14* (2014), 30-52.

1.3.2 *The Kainarji treaty and the French-British rivalry*

For Britain the signing of the Kainarji peace treaty and the right for a free navigation on the Black Sea for the Russian flag was a rather upsetting event. And the reason was not only that czarina Catherine was gaining a lot of political and commercial power, but the fact –as stated above– that Britain’s main European enemy France was trying to get from the Porte the right for a free navigation in the Black Sea, as well.

The very first indication of interest on the part of other European powers to abolish the conditions of the late peace treaty and to prevail upon the Porte to open the trade of the Black Sea to all nations is found on Murray’s letter to the British Secretary of State for the Southern Department Earl of Rochford on September 3, 1774.⁵⁵ Rochford in his reply letter to John Murray (September 30, 1774) appears confident of the French desire to apply to the Porte in the near future for the same advantages of freedom of trade and navigation, as those which had by the Kainarji treaty of peace been granted to the Russians. Consequently he asks Murray if he finds this report verified to make as soon as possible the proper representations to the Porte in the British King’s name for equal advantages to British subjects, as King George’s strong belief was that the Porte would not suffer the French nation to reap any fresh commercial advantages in the dominions of Turkey, to the prejudice and exclusion of Great Britain.⁵⁶ And indeed Murray on November 17, informed verbally and in a rather informal way the Grand Vizier on the British wish that if the trade and navigation into the Black Sea was granted apart from Russia to other European

⁵⁵ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.19, 3.09.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 156r – 160v.

⁵⁶ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.7, 30.09.1774, Rochford to Murray, f. 154r – 155v. See also TNA, SP 91/96, Dispatch No.43, 20.12.1774, Suffolk to Gunning, f. 110r – 111v, where The Earl of Suffolk, Head of the Foreign Office, give directions to the British Ambassador in Saint Petersburg: “You will of course collect all the information you can with regard to the encouragement which our people might expect, in engaging in a commerce to the Black Sea, and you will be particularly attentive to any concessions that may be solicited by, or make to the French on this head. – But no proposition can be made from hence ‘till we know how far it may be reconcilable to the different claims of the Russia and Turkey Companies, neither of which have yet applied to me, though I understand that the Russian consul has busied himself with Monsr. Pushkin on the part of the former.” On French plans to lessen British commerce in the Atlantic as well as in the Mediterranean, see Brough, *A view of the importance of the trade between Great Britain and Russia*, 32-33.

nations, especially to France, the British government was expecting equal advantages for British merchantmen.⁵⁷

However, Murray was only aware of the desire of France, Denmark, Austria, Venice, Naples, and Sweden to apply to the Porte sometime in the near future for a free navigation in the Black Sea.⁵⁸ What John Murray did not actually know was that the French ambassador to the Porte, François-Emmanuel Guignard, was planning to present swiftly to the Porte a formal memorial in order to obtain exclusively for the French flag the navigation of the Black Sea.⁵⁹ Murray's reaction to these news, conveyed to him by the Venetian Bailo at Constantinople, was to present on December 16, 1774 on behalf of the British government a memorial to Reis Effendi (an analogue to a Western foreign minister) asking for the right for a free navigation in the Black Sea. Reis Effendi did not say a word to Murray upon the subject, but politely ordered the dragoman of the Porte to translate it promising Murray that the Porte was going to examine the issue in due course.⁶⁰

However the Sublime Porte despite these constant requests and memorials of Great Britain and the other European maritime powers was not willing at all to grant an exclusive navigation in the Black Sea to any other power than that of Russia.⁶¹ Many of the Ottoman officers although persuaded of the propriety of opening the navigation of the Black Sea to all nations, which they apprehended might be a check upon the future operations of the Russians in that sea, were at the same time in dread of the people in the Ottoman Empire's capital, Constantinople, who began to

⁵⁷ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.24, 17.11.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 206r – 213v.

⁵⁸ On France's wish to open a trade between the Russian ports in the Black Sea and those of France on the Mediterranean, see Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn, *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigation of the Black Sea: And the Trade and Maritime Geography of Turkey and Egypt*, Volume 1 (Boston, 1819), 107-108.

⁵⁹ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.25, 3.12.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 220r – 224v.

⁶⁰ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.26, 17.12.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 225r – 228v.

⁶¹ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.25, 3.12.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 220r – 224v. For the Venetian requests on the issue of the Black Sea navigation, see for example TNA, SP 99/77, Dispatch No.15, 16.12.1774, Strange to Rochford. On the demands from European states towards the Porte for the opening of the Black Sea, see 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* (2014), 21–46. See also Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 9-10.

feel and cry out against the humiliating for the Empire terms of the late peace.⁶² On the other hand, given that the Russians were so little versed in sea trade and navigation –as already stated above– a strong minority of officers in the Porte was of the opinion that by banning the entry of other European vessels and sailors in the Black Sea, they could remove from the Russians the opportunity to use these foreign ships and sailors under Russian flag in order to develop their own trade at the expense of the Ottoman.⁶³

Furthermore, we need to mention that the Porte had difficulties in granting free navigation in the Black Sea not only because of the resentment of the crowd in Constantinople, but because there was a great number of her own subjects, like the Greeks and almost all of the Janissaries, whose livelihoods depended upon this profitable navigation.⁶⁴ Consequently, it appears that ensuring the economic interests of her Ottoman subjects was the main reason that led the Sublime Porte deciding –for as long as she was able to follow such a policy– the exclusion of other European flags from trade in the Black Sea.

Be that as it may, we should note at this point that apart from the Sublime Porte Great Britain was not actually a supporter of the opening of the Black Sea navigation to the other European flags and especially to the French flag. Despite the fact that the British Levant Company after the signing of Kainarji treaty had expressed an initially potential interest in entering the Black Sea trade the British ambassador to the Porte was rather pessimistic about the success of such a venture.⁶⁵ The main reasons were revealed by Murray, who was strongly persuaded that the French due to their political and economic influence over the Porte and the Ottoman Empire in

⁶² TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.19, 3.09.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 156r – 160v; Dispatch No.26, 17.12.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 225r – 228v.

⁶³ TNA, SP 97/51, Dispatch No.5, 4.03.1775, Murray to Rochford, f. 28r – 30v. The British ambassador to the Porte was fully persuaded that the Porte would never grant an exclusive navigation to any other power, if the Russians did not fall upon some method of making use of the ships of other nations, which the Porte made great objection to. See TNA, SP 97/51, Dispatch No.7, 30.04.1775, Murray to Rochford, f. 35r – 38v.

⁶⁴ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.25, 3.12.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 220r – 224v. The Janissaries were specially trained elite soldiers of the Ottoman Empire who served as the private guard to the Sultan. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, they were more interested in trade than war. For a history of the Janissaries see Godfrey Goodwin, *The Janissaries* (London, 2013).

⁶⁵ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.19, 3.09.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 156r – 160v.

general, the low prices of their manufactures, and their powerful merchant fleet in the Levant seas and coasts would dominate the Black Sea trade to the prejudice of the clearly inferior British trade and merchantmen.⁶⁶

Furthermore we need to note that between France and Russia a remarkable commercial relationship had begun to develop, since 1780, with merchantmen under Russian flag supplying Marseille with salted beef, hemp, honey and grain (the latter mainly coming from the Crimean Peninsula).⁶⁷ On the other hand we do know that French merchants like Antoine de Saint-Joseph tried to take advantage of the virgin markets of New Russia, and open new trade routes between Russia and the Mediterranean.⁶⁸

Furthermore in his fortnightly report to the British Secretary of State for the Southern Department on April 30, 1775 John Murray shed light on another key weakness of the British tradesmen in the Levant. To be more specific he stated that:

I greatly fear that the French will reap greatest advantage, in case the navigation [in the Black Sea] is laid open, as our masters of vessels and our sailors are not adapted to [the Ottoman] trade; their continual disputes at the custom house with the freighters, and among themselves, takes up my whole time and study to heal their differences, as they are most unreasonable people.⁶⁹

Murray was definitely right to fear the presence of the French in the Levant, given their commercial dominance in the Ottoman trade. According to Edhem Eldem, *between 1726 and 1789, the volume of this trade [Ottoman trade] represented an*

⁶⁶ TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.24, 17.11.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 206r – 213v. On the French trade and interest for navigating the Black Sea see Ardeleanu, 'The Discovery of the Black Sea,' 21-44; Frank Fox, 'Negotiating with the Russians: Ambassador Segur's Mission to Saint Petersburg, 1784-1789,' *French Historical Studies* 1 (1971), 7-71. On the Anglo-French trade rivalry in the Atlantic World and of course in the Mediterranean, see Michael Wagner, 'Managing To Compete: The Hudson's Bay, Levant, and Russia Companies, 1714-1763,' *Business and Economic History On-Line* 10 (2012), 1-10. [<https://files.zotero.net/13396311945/The%20Hudson%E2%80%98s%20Bay%2C%20Levant%2C%20and%20Russia%20Company%20-%20Wagner.pdf>, Date of Access: 02.08.2015]. See also François Crouzet, *La Guerre Economique Franco-Anglaise au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris, 2008), 369.

⁶⁷ Aydin, 'Ελληνες έμποροι και ναυτικοί στη Μαύρη Θάλασσα, 1780-1820,' 683-701.

⁶⁸ King, *The Black Sea*, 154-155. On the French interest in the Russian Black Sea trade See also Black, *Trade, Empire and British Foreign Policy, 1689–1815*, 50-51.

⁶⁹ TNA, SP 97/51, Dispatch No.7, 30.04.1775, Murray to Rochford, f. 35r – 38v.

annual average of some 22.5 million livres tournois, with exports (from the Levant) reaching 19 million and imports 13.5 million.⁷⁰ And what is interesting is that while in the seventeenth century the English and Dutch traded more with the Ottomans, during the eighteenth century things changed, so that by mid-century, French trade in the Ottoman capital had developed to the point of representing nearly two-thirds of all western trade.⁷¹ However, on the other hand, we have to note that in the second half of eighteenth century the French faced fierce competition from the Dutch, the Swedes and especially the Greeks and Ragusans, whose success curtailed French trade in the Levant.⁷² Be that as it may, French trade in the Levant had a predominant position till the French Revolution and the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars, when the whole trading situation in the Levant changed in new directions and with new players.⁷³

In conclusion, what we could say is that, Great Britain resented the fact that the Porte was forced to open the Black Sea to the Russian flag, whereas, on the other hand, she was definitely concerned by the potential opening of the Black Sea to other European flags as well. Be that as it may, the British government was certainly more alarmed by the fear of a dynamic French penetration and presence into the Black Sea trade, and the reason was –as we said above– the predominant position of the French in the Levant seas’ trade compared to the clearly weaker one of the British merchantmen and tradesmen. It is noteworthy that during the whole period until the late 1780s Britain was in fact not in favor of free navigation in the Black Sea, and therefore she was trying with all her powers to ensure that the Sublime Porte would prohibit the other European maritime powers and primarily the British enemy

⁷⁰ Edhem Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1999), 13.

⁷¹ Op.Cit., 28. See also Emily Kugler, *Sway of the Ottoman Empire on English Identity in the Long Eighteenth Century* (London, 2012), 180-182.

⁷² Galani, ‘British Shipping and Trade in the Mediterranean,’ 52-54. See also Halil İnalçık, Suraiya Faroqhi, Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Volume 2 (Cambridge, 1997), 729-736. On Greek maritime presence in the Mediterranean during eighteenth century see Gelina Harlaftis, ‘The ‘Eastern Invasion’: Greeks in Mediterranean Trade and Shipping in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,’ in M. Fusaro, C. Heywood and M. S. Omri (eds.), *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean; Braudel's Maritime Legacy* (London, 2010), 223-252. See also Gelina Harlaftis and Sophia Laiou, ‘Ottoman State 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* (London, 2008), 1-44.

⁷³ Op.Cit.,729; Galani, ‘British Shipping and Trade in the Mediterranean,’ 52-60.

and rival, France, from entering that new channel of commerce. However, it does not mean that Great Britain and the Levant Company were not at all interested in navigating the Black Sea. We should mention that when Catherine issued in February 1784 an ukase promising favorable treatment to all foreign merchants trading or settling in any of the ports of her territory on the Black Sea, a few months later in August the Levant Company wrote urging Ainslie, if the occasion offered, to get from the Sultan permission for the British flag to enter the hitherto forbidden waters.⁷⁴

Consequently, Britain's policy related to the potential opening of the Black Sea trade to non Russian and Ottoman flags was based on the principle that only if the French –or other Europeans– would be granted permission to sail in those waters, then Britain would demand immediately the same right from the Sublime Porte.⁷⁵ This does not mean, however, that Britain withdrew her interest on trade opportunities in the Black Sea. Instead, Britain showed great interest in finding out possibilities of a future export and import trade in the Black Sea ports and how her merchants could take advantage of them in due course.

1.3.3. *Black Sea trade and British penetration*

The signing of the Kainarji peace treaty and the consequent rivalry between Great Britain and France on the opening of the Black Sea to their merchant fleets and flags forced the British government to reinstate the latter in her political and commercial planning. Therefore –as already stated above– the British ambassadors to the courts of Constantinople and Saint Petersburg were asked to inform London, among other things, of everything related to the potential development of an export and import

⁷⁴ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 180-181.

⁷⁵ TNA, SP 97/55, Dispatch No.8, 17.04.1779, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 68r – 71v, where we can read about this constant interest of Britain in the French machinations for the obtaining the right to trade under their own flag in the Black Sea: 'The common people are told great concessions have been obtained from Russia, particularly the evacuation of Crimea [ref. Convention of the Aynalikavak]. The French claim of this arrangement, which strengthens the report that numbers of their ships (said to be twelve) are to have a permission to navigate in the Black Sea, as soon as the Russian Troops are withdrawn. I have received the strongest assurances from the Reis Effendi that there is no truth in this Dispatch, nay he added, that the Porte had received no benefit whatsoever from the interference of the French, who had no claim to any advantages.'

trade in the Black Sea that might be useful and worthy of British merchants' attention.

And indeed the British ambassadors were engaged in a concerted effort to collect information from various sources on the possibilities of commercial development and activity in the Black Sea region (with the Danube River in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia included). The sources from which they attempted to draw information were many, with the primary one being British seafarers and vessels sailing in the Black Sea under Russian colors.⁷⁶ But at this point a question arises: how appeared British sailors and ships to trade and sail in the Black Sea and the most important under Russian flag?

Two realities combined can give answer to this question. The first one has to do with the actual inability of Russians to develop on their own, without the Western European know-how, a merchant fleet in the Black Sea capable to rival the Ottoman supremacy. The second reality is related to the fact that Russia and Britain had developed during the second half of the eighteenth century very close diplomatic, trade and military relations. As far as the Anglo-Russian military relation is concerned, we need to note that the Royal Navy officers had undertaken the task of further educating and training officials, sailors and technicians of the Russian navy on shipping theory and practice as well as on new maritime and shipping technologies.⁷⁷ The most indicative paradigm of the success of this close cooperation of the Royal and the Russian Navies were former Royal Navy senior officers and sailors serving in the Russian squadron, which sailed in the Aegean from the Baltic Sea and succeeded

⁷⁶ For British/English vessels, captains, and crew members sailing under Russian colors in the Black Sea, see: TNA, SP 97/51, Dispatch No.5, 04.03.1775, Murray to Rochford, f. 28r – 30v; TNA, SP 97/51, Dispatch No.7, 30.04.1775, Murray to Rochford, f. 28r – 30v; TNA, SP 97/53, Dispatch No.11, 17.05.1777, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 96r – 104v; TNA, SP 97/53, Dispatch No.19, 17.09.1777, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 188r – 195v; TNA, SP 97/54, Dispatch No.3, 03.02.1778, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 29r – 40v; TNA, FO 78/1, Dispatch No.23, 02.11.1780, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 220r – 224v; TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No.1, 02.01.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 3r – 8v; TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No.17, 26.07.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 177r – 181v; TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No.30, 24.12.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 260r – 265v; TNA, FO 78/3, Dispatch No.9, 10.04.1782, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 71r – 80v.

⁷⁷ John Tredrea and Eduard Sozaev, *Russian Warships in the Age of Sail: 1696-1860: Design, Construction, Careers and Fates* (Barnsley, 2010), 59-61. See also Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 179-188.

in destroying the Ottoman fleet in the Battle of Chesma, in the area between the western tip of Anatolia and the island of Chios, on July 5-7, 1770.⁷⁸

In other words it becomes apparent that Russians had experienced at first hand the British flair in the field of seamanship. As a result, with the termination of the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 and the signing of the Kainarji peace treaty, the Russians decided to turn to their allies, the British, and make use of British maritime know-how. To be more specific the Russian government decided as a priority to use British-built vessels, manned by British crews, under the captaincy of British masters in an attempt to develop and further strengthen in due course her own maritime presence and trade in the Black Sea, which was still in a rather embryonic state. As a consequence, several British vessels entered into the service of Russia, hoisted the Russian colors and started trading primarily between the ports of Kherson, Balaklava (the most important port of the Crimean Peninsula according to British ambassador to the Porte, Ainslie), Taganrog and Constantinople.⁷⁹

It is noteworthy to mention that in late February 1775 the Porte permitted the first British vessel, under the command of British captain Ryan and with British crew members, which had been purchased by Russians and had hoisted the Russian colors, to enter the Black Sea for trade. We need to stress at this point that the said British ship was the very first foreign vessel that had ever entered the Black Sea under Russian colors to exercise trade on behalf of Russians.⁸⁰ At the same time, two other British merchantmen were bought by British captain James and having hoisted the Russian flag departed from the port of Constantinople: one bound for the Black Sea and the other intended for the port of Alexandria, in Egypt.⁸¹

We can also move forward on an interesting working hypothesis, that these two British vessels were not the only British vessels sailing in the Black Sea under Russian flag during the years after the opening of the Black Sea to the latter. And how could this happen? Well, we do know that the expiration –in 1787– of the Anglo-Russian

⁷⁸ See also Anderson Charles Roger, *Naval Wars in the Levant 1559-1863* (Princeton, 1952), 277-304.

⁷⁹ TNA, SP 97/54, Dispatch No.1, 03.01.1778, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 1r – 11v.

⁸⁰ TNA, SP 97/51, Dispatch No.5, 04.03.1775, Murray to Rochford, f. 28r – 30v.

⁸¹ TNA, SP 97/51, Dispatch No.4, 17.02.1775, Murray to Rochford, f. 24r – 27v.

commercial treaty of 1766⁸² caused several British merchants to become naturalized Russian merchants, *Inostrannnye gosti*, and continue their overseas trading operations in St. Petersburg/Kroonstad. Their new status gave them considerable commercial benefits including generous abatements on the payment of export and import custom duties.⁸³ Thus if the British had chosen this safe road of neutralization in order to trade in the Russian ports of the Baltic as well as of the White Sea [namely in the ports of St. Petersburg, Kroonstad, Riga, Narva, Archangel, and Revel] was there any reason not to had chosen the same method in order to navigate in the Black Sea and trade with the ports of New Russia? The future research can prove the correctness or otherwise of this hypothesis of ours.

Be that as it may, what we can say based on the facts presented so far is that in early 1775, almost six months after the signing of Kainarji treaty, the British merchantmen launched their indirect or –better to say– informal penetration in the Black Sea trade, previously closed for foreign vessels. And of course, we must stress the fact that the British sailors and masters of the above mentioned merchant vessels sailing under Russian flag were for the British ambassadors and consequently for the British government the primary, direct, and most reliable source of information on the commercial realities and potential of the Black Sea region.

Other sources used by the British ambassadors in order to get information on the Black Sea trade were: (a) the highest-ranking officers of the Sublime Porte (such as the Grand Vizier, Reis Effendi, Captain or Kapudan Pasha);⁸⁴ (b) the officers of the Custom House of Constantinople;⁸⁵ (c) the various reports of the other European ambassadors/envoys/plenipotentiaries to the Porte, especially the Russian one;⁸⁶

⁸² Clendenning, 'The background and negotiations for the Anglo-Russian commercial treaty of 1766,' 145-163.

⁸³ Kaplan, *Russian Overseas Commerce With Great Britain*, 258-259.

⁸⁴ See indicatively TNA, SP 97/54, Dispatch No.1, 03.01.1778, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 1r – 11v; TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No.3, 01.02.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 54r – 61v; TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No.11, 26.05.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 130r – 137v.

⁸⁵ See indicatively TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No.17, 26.07.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 177r – 181v.

⁸⁶ See indicatively TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.25, 03.12.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 220r – 224v; TNA, SP 97/53, Dispatch No.11, 17.05.1777, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 96r – 104v; TNA, SP 97/53, Dispatch No.19, 17.09.1777, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 188r – 195v; TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No.12, 11.06.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 140r – 145v; TNA, FO 78/4, Dispatch No.11, 24.05.1783, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 77r – 84v.

(d) the directors and/or merchants of the Levant Company in Constantinople;⁸⁷ (e) the British merchants who were in the process of establishing –most of the times by order of Catherine the Great herself– commercial houses in Constantinople in order to represent Russian financial and commercial interests and organize the Russian trade in the Black Sea and of course in the capital of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁸

Having presented the sources of information related to the Black Sea trade, the next question arising is what were the main exportable products of the Northern and Western coasts of the Black Sea, now under Russian rule. According to the fortnightly reports of the British ambassadors in Constantinople the main exportable products were the following: iron, corn, wheat, flour, barley, hemp, sail cloth, hides, salt beef, pork, other salt provisions, cordage, tobacco, salt, caviar, and various fish.⁸⁹

However, only one seemed to be the Black Sea product of utmost interest for the British: timber; and to be more specific, timber special for ship-building purposes.⁹⁰ The Admiralty of ‘the first maritime power in the world’ knew very well that the rising needs for ship-building timber –mainly oak- and pine-timber– could be met by exports from the Black Sea and mainly from the Danubian region.⁹¹ According to the British ambassador in Constantinople Robert Ainslie: ‘the timber which may be procured by the Danube, both oak and pine, is superior in quality and size to that from the Baltic and the price is remarkably cheaper.’⁹² Consequently, Black Sea

⁸⁷ TNA, SP 97/51, Levant Company, Board of Directors, General Court of the Levant Company held at Salter’s Hall, 12.09.1775, 76-77.

⁸⁸ See indicatively TNA, SP 97/52, Dispatch No.32, 17.09.1776, Hayes to Weymouth, f. 87r – 89v (Case of Mr. Baton – British subject); TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No.1, 02.01.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 3r – 8v (Case of Mr. James – British subject).

⁸⁹ See indicatively TNA, FO 78/4, Dispatch No.3, 10.02.1783, Ainslie to Grantham, f. 21r – 27v and Dispatch No.6, 26.03.1783, Ainslie to Grantham, f. 46r – 52v; see also TNA SP 91/96, Dispatch No.62, 01.12.1774, Gunning to Earl of Suffolk, f. 7r – 9v.

⁹⁰ TNA, SP 97/53, Dispatch No.3, 04.02.1777, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 24r – 28v, where Ainslie states: ‘For my part, My Lord, I could not less without risking, to disoblige the present Favourite, whose Friendship may be of the greatest help in the business of the Duty, besides this may hereafter become a very lucrative branch of trade for our merchants, particularly if I can obtain for them, in return, the liberty of exporting planks and timber fir for the purpose of ship building, of which great quantities might be procured from the Black Sea, in quality equal to any in Europe and much cheaper.’

⁹¹ TNA, SP 97/53, Dispatch No.13, 17.06.1777, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 130r – 139v.

⁹² TNA, FO 78/3, Dispatch No.14, 25.05.1782, Ainslie to Charles James Fox, f. 115r – 123v. See also TNA, SP 97/53, Dispatch No.3, 04.02.1777, Ainslie to Weymouth, f. 24r – 28v.

during the last quarter of eighteenth century was emerging for Great Britain as a valuable source for quality and cheap timber, giving the British shipyards and arsenals the ability not only to diversify their sources of supply but also the possibility of a gradual withdrawal –in case of a future emergency or other plannings– from existing sources in North America and the Baltic.⁹³

Be that as it may, we need to mention that there was another side reason for Britain to start orientating her interest towards the Black Sea timber trade: her constant rivalry with France and the new war with the latter during the period 1778–1783; a war that caused a significant increase in the French demands for ship-building timber.⁹⁴ Hence, what Britain wanted and what Britain actually managed to do to a great extent (using bribes and giving indirect and direct threats to the Porte) was to exclude France from the valuable Black Sea timber, keeping for herself the right for an almost exclusive timber-trade with the Danube and the Black Sea via Constantinople and by freighting vessels under Russian or Ottoman colors.⁹⁵

In summary, the signing of Kainarji peace treaty signalled the entry of the Russian flag in the Black Sea as well as the indirect penetration of British merchantmen in it by using the Russian colors. In this way and thanks to her strong ties with Russia Britain acquired an indirect or informal access to the Black Sea trade and more important she gained a direct knowledge on the commercial realities and the future trade potential of the Black Sea, with timber emerging as the most valuable Black Sea exportable product for the British economy and trade.

⁹³ Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia*, 109-110, 113-116. On British interest on the Black Sea trade see also Trevor J. Hope, 'Britain and the Black Sea trade in the late eighteenth century,' *Revue romaine d' etudes internationales* 8 (1974), 159-174; E. D. Tappe, 'Bentham in Wallachia and Moldavia,' *The Slavonic and East European Review* 29 (1965), 209-237.

⁹⁴ TNA, FO 78/2, Dispatch No.3, 01.02.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 54r – 61v; see also Dispatch No.12, 11.06.1781, Ainslie to Hillsborough, f. 140r – 145v. On the French interest on Black Sea timber see Ardeleanu, 'The Opening and Development of the Black Sea,' 30-52.

⁹⁵ TNA, FO 78/3, Dispatch No.14, 25.05.1782, Ainslie to Fox, f. 115r – 123v.

1.4 Third period: 1787-1802

If the period of 1768-1773 was that of the comeback of the Black Sea to the British political and economic foreground, and the years between 1774 and 1786 showed the British the great trading opportunities offered in the developing Black Sea ports, the period from 1787 up to 1802 signalled the significance of the broader Black Sea region –especially after the loss of the American colonies in 1783– for the exercise and implementation of the British imperial and commercial policy in a vast area including the Levant Seas, Middle East and the Indian sub-continent. Four are the main events characterizing the third period: (a) the loss of the Ottoman fortress of Ochakov to Russia (1788), (b) the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars (1792), (c) the official request of the British Levant Company to the Sublime Porte for the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag (1798), and (d) the final opening of the latter to merchant vessels sailing under British colors (1802).

At this point we have to mention that the said period coincides partly with the period of the ‘Second British Empire’ and the era of ‘British blue water policy’ (1783-1815).⁹⁶ To be more specific, whereas the ‘First British Empire’ especially during the period from the beginning of eighteenth century up to 1783, was based mainly on an -imposed by the Whigs- culture of free trade and plantations, and was primarily focused on the Atlantic and Caribbean, the ‘Second British Empire’ sprang up from the decision of Great Britain to expand gradually and methodically her commercial, economic and political interests worldwide by implementing state policies of a strong and intensified colonization around the globe.

The ‘Second British Empire’ refers to the period, which is marked by the loss of the British colonies in North America in 1783, a loss which amounted to a failure to realize the objective of a united British Atlantic world based on trade. Consequently, Great Britain commenced gradually to orientate her political, economic, and commercial interests mostly towards the region of Levant, Middle East, the Indian

⁹⁶ For an overview of terms generating the Second British Empire, see, Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation, 1707-1837* (Yale 2009), 99-104; Lawrence Stone, *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London 1994), 2-21; Paul Kléber Monod, *Imperial Island: A History of Britain and Its Empire, 1660-1837* (2007), 252-65; David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge 2004), 170-200.

sub-continent and the Chinese seas and a new phase of overseas territorial expansion began.⁹⁷ In fact, Great Britain during the last quarter of the eighteenth century was becoming a real global maritime and commercial Empire, spreading over the whole of the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, the southern reaches of which remained but very little known, and the whole Pacific Ocean, which also remained largely unknown. By the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain's empire had become global at sea.

The features of the newly emerged 'Second British Empire' may be summarized as follows: she was based on territory; was more global in her interests, more diverse, more authoritarian, and of course -to a great extent- was less tolerant. Furthermore, mercantilism, the economic doctrine of competition between nations for a finite amount of wealth which had characterized the first period of colonial expansion, now gave way in Britain to the laissez-faire economic liberalism of Adam Smith and successors like Richard Cobden. Trade and mercantilist policies used to lead British Empire for many decades, but now, during the new era of British imperialism, free, safe, unhindered, and lucrative trade in all seas and markets of the world combined with economic liberalism have emerged as the new imperial doctrine of London; the doctrine of the British 'blue water trade policy.' And I do strongly believe that this is the main interpretive framework we should use in order to understand the emerging British interest in the Black Sea, as a rather valuable piece of the British Empire's puzzle in the region of Southeastern Europe, the Levant and Middle East.⁹⁸

1.4.1 Loss of Ochakov and French Revolutionary Wars

In 1787 breaks another Russo-Turkish War. Russia, being this time in alliance with Austria, was planning her territorial expansion in Ottoman lands and aiming at

⁹⁷ P.J. Marshall, 'Britain Without America-A second Empire?', in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire; The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), 576-595; V. Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-1793*, 2 vols. (London, 1952), 64.

⁹⁸ On the importance of British «blue water policy», representing British decision to dominate seas and main trade routes in order to protect her commercial interests all over the world, see, Patrick O' Brian, 'Imperialism and the Rise and Decline of the British Economy, 1688-1989,' *New Left Review* 1 (1993), 48-80; Stone, *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815*, 188-191; David Killingray, *Maritime Empires: British Imperial Maritime Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (London 2004), 1-12.

dismembering the Ottoman Empire. At this point we have to note that the Austrian flag since 1783 had received the right to enter and trade in the Black Sea ports and *by the late 1780s Austrian flag commerce was first among the non-Ottoman flags on the Black Sea and remained so until the mid-nineteenth century.*⁹⁹ On the other hand the Sublime Porte was hoping to regain lands lost to Russia in the course of the previous Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, and renegotiate the terms of the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji related to the Crimean Peninsula, the status quo of the Tartars and the navigation of Russian flag in the Black Sea.¹⁰⁰ What was the British position towards these developments?

The answer is given by reports sent by the British ambassador to the Porte, Robert Ainslie, to the ministers of the British government in London. Ainslie following the instructions for strict neutrality towards Turkey and Russia given by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Marquess of Carmarthen, tried to mediate between the Porte's ministers and the Catherine II's emissary in Constantinople, Yakov Bulgakov, to the peaceful settlement of their differences. But despite his sincere efforts, Ainslie informs London on January 10, 1787 that the result will be negative due to the decision of both powers for a new military conflict.¹⁰¹ And while the new Russo-Turkish War seemed not to endanger –at least in a direct way– the British imperial interests in the broader Black Sea region, an event takes place that would overturn this British certainty and confidence: the loss of the Ottoman fortress of Ochakov to Russia (nowadays, a city in the province of Mykolaiv of southern Ukraine).

The loss of Ochakov on December 6, 1788 (ratified by the Treaty of Jassy in 1792, signed by Russia and Turkey to put an end to their conflict), revealed to the British

⁹⁹ Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe: Taxation, Trade and the Struggle for Land, 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1981), 26-27.

¹⁰⁰ For an outline of the conditions that led to the war, see TNA, FO 78/8, Dispatches: No.2, 25.01.1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 12r – 17v; No.3, 10.01.1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 20r – 29v; No.13, 25.06. 1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 104r – 112v; No.14, 10.07. 1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 113r – 123v; No.16, 9.08. 1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 147r – 157v; No.17, 17.08. 1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 158r – 161v; No.19, 1.09. 1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 180r – 183v. On a brief presentation of Catherine's wars with the Ottoman Empire see Melvin C. Wren and Taylor Stults, *The Course of Russian History* (Oregon, 2009), 195-198.

¹⁰¹ TNA, FO 78/8, Dispatch No.3, 10.01.1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 20r – 29v; Dispatch No.6, 24.03.1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 49r – 57v. TNA, FO 78/9, 1.02.1788, Carmarthen to Ainslie, f. 29r – 30v.

the hidden Russian plans for an absolute dominance in the Black Sea and further to the Caspian Sea.¹⁰² This development posed not only a great risk for the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire –an ally of Britain–, but an even greater risk for the safety and security of the British colonial expansion in the Indian sub-continent, with the latter after the loss of the American Colonies in 1783 emerging as a valuable territory of the global British Empire.¹⁰³ On the other hand, London was being informed by its ambassador in Constantinople about the plans of Catherine to extend ‘her dominions to the Persian provinces bordering upon the Caspian Sea’ in close cooperation with Britain’s primary enemy France, with the latter gaining:

the exclusive privilege or exporting cloth, by way of the Black Sea for the consumption of the Northern provinces of Persia, and [carrying] on a trade between India and Europe by land carriage, from the Persian Gulf, through that Empire, to the Caspian Sea, and from thence in Russian ships to the Black Sea.¹⁰⁴

Furthermore, the occupation of the fortress of Ochakov by the Russians and the passing of the whole Yedisian region from Ottoman to Russian rule meant that Poland, the newly emerged ally of Great Britain in Eastern Europe, had no hope for

¹⁰² On the importance of the fortress of Ochakov, see TNA, SP 91/101, Dispatch No.15, 1.04.1777, Oakes to Eden, f. 59r – 61v, where the British Ambassador in Saint Petersburg informs London: *I do not find that any fresh news has been received from the Crimea, or from Constantinople; yet appearances of preparations for war increase here; and the sending off a train of heavy artillery, a few nights ago, strengthens the opinion, that if war should become inevitable, the campaign will be opened on the side of Ochakov; the importance of the possession of which place for the dominion of the Black Sea, and particularly in case the fortress in the Crimea should not be tenable, seems to be now better understood than formerly.* See also TNA, FO 65/20, Dispatch No.17, 15.04.1791, Whitworth to Leeds, f. 128r – 132v, where Duke of Leeds the Head of the Foreign Office states: *The repeated efforts of His Majesty and His Allies to induce the Empress to consent to a Peace with the Porte on the Basis of the Status quo, having hitherto proved ineffectual; and the mischievous consequences to be apprehended from that Princess obtaining so large a territorial Possession on the Borders of the Black Sea as the Town of Ochakov and its District, extending to the Dniester, having made a deep Impression on the Minds of both their Majesties; it is now determined that preparations should be made without delay for an active Interference on the Parts of Great Britain and Prussia in order to obtain those terms which have hitherto been repeatedly recommended without effect.* See also Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 16-18; Alain Cunningham, ‘The Oczakov Debate,’ *Middle Eastern Studies* 1 (1965), 209-237.

¹⁰³ Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia*, 147-150; Simon Dixon, *The Modernisation of Russia, 1676-1825* (Cambridge 1999), 33-34, 46-48. For the British fears for a possible joint Franco-Russian attack against the British settlements in India, see TNA, FO 65/20, Dispatch No.17, 15.04.1791, Whitworth to Leeds, f. 128r – 132v.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, FO 78/8, Dispatch No.1, 11.01.1787, Ainslie to Carmarthen, f. 3r – 8v.

extending in the future her commerce towards the Black Sea, as Russia had conquered the whole Northern coast of the latter.¹⁰⁵ The loss of this potential trade route to the Black Sea, which would be an alternative to Britain in case of interruption of trade relations with Russia, caused great concern in London.¹⁰⁶ In other words, for the British government the loss of Ochakov and the whole region between the Dniester and Dnieper rivers was a turning point for the way Britain was facing the Black Sea.¹⁰⁷ The loss of the said Black Sea fortress signaled an emerging Russian danger for the various geopolitical interests of Great Britain in South-Eastern Europe, and Middle East, as well as in Persia and India; these developments in the Black Sea status made London think even a war against Russia, in an attempt to safeguard its interests.¹⁰⁸

Be that as it may, the outbreak in 1792 of the French Revolutionary Wars made London think twice of such a step. The British Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger realized that his country being at war now with France needed once again

¹⁰⁵ Jeremy Black, *Trade, Empire and British Foreign Policy, 1689–1815: Politics of a Commercial State* (2007), 180-183. On the importance of Poland and the British idea of a commercial treaty with Poland –instead with Russia– in order British trade to be expanded in the Baltic as well as in the Black Sea see Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia*, 147-149.

¹⁰⁶ On the significance of Black Sea trade for the British see Ardeleanu, 'The Discovery of the Black Sea,' 21-46; Hope, 'Britain and the Black Sea Trade in the Late Eighteenth Century,' 159–174; Trevor J. Hope, "The Secret Balkan Missions of Captain Koehler and Captain Monro (1791-1793),' *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 13 (1973), 95-114.

¹⁰⁷ Edward Ingram, *Anglo-Ottoman Encounters in the Age of Revolution: The Collected Essays of Allan Cunningham*, Volume 1 (London, 2014), 1-31.

¹⁰⁸ Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia*, 147-150. On the potential treats of British imperial interests and possessions in Persia and India from the part of Russia, see the detailed report sent to Elgin from the head of the British diplomatic mission in Persia Captain John Malcolm; TNA, FO 78/32, 23.03.1801, Malcolm to Elgin, f. 4r – 19v. See also Paul, 'British Economic Interests in the Lower Danube and the Balkan Shore of the Black Sea between 1803 and 1829,' 105-120, where Cernovodeanu states 'Great Britain, who had during the 18th century, considered Russian with rare exceptions as an almost traditional ally in the struggle with France, did not begin to show any alarm over the schemes aimed at the breakup of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, advocated by Czarine Catherine II, until the war of 1787, in which Russia was allied to Habsburg Austria. A grave crisis occurred in Anglo-Russian relations, owing to William Pitt's protest and his refusal to recognize the annexion of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russians. Pitt even issued an ultimatum, in his speech in the House of Commons in March 1791, threatening the Court of St. Petersburg with armed intervention. Though Pitt was then disavowed, both by the Parliamentary opposition as well as by English public opinion, which still considered Russia a sincere ally and an excellent trading partner, the Oczakov crisis led to the first divergences between the policies of the two countries, which were diametrically opposed as far as possible solution to the Eastern Question was concerned. And these differences were to be continually exacerbated after 1815.'

Russia as an ally on her side and not as an enemy against her.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, and despite the emerging significance of Black Sea for the British imperial interests in the wider region of Southeastern Europe and Asia, the Black Sea could not anymore be a first priority for the British policy makers.¹¹⁰ The British attention was turned once again to France and the seas of Western Europe (Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean, Northern and Baltic Seas). Nevertheless, Great Britain and especially her merchants in the Levant, amid the French Revolutionary Wars, continued to show their direct and indirect interest for the Black Sea region, primarily for trade and navigation in it.

1.4.2 *Levant Company requests the opening of the Black Sea*

During mid 1790s the merchantmen of Levant Company had to face a strong presence of the French naval fleet across the Mediterranean combined with the threatening presence of French corsairs and pirates.¹¹¹ And as if all of this was not enough the British factories across the Ottoman Empire (in Constantinople, Salonika, Smyrna, Aleppo, Alexandria) had to face the still powerful French trade in the Levant. The French merchantmen with their cheaper and finer products –compared to the more expensive and of inferior quality British ones– were unrivaled in the markets of Turkey and had undertaken since early eighteenth century the commercial communication of the Ottoman Empire with the western Mediterranean, whereas on the other hand the French vessels had gained the privilege of an almost exclusive

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia*, 155-180.

¹¹⁰ Black, *Trade, Empire and British Foreign Policy, 1689–1815*, 182-183.

¹¹¹ For the strong presence of the French fleet in the Mediterranean and the attacks of French warships, pirates and corsairs against British vessels, see TNA, FO 78/15, Dispatch No.7, 10.04.1794, Ainslie to Grenville, f. 69r – 72v; Dispatch No.12, 10.07.1794, Liston to Grenville, f. 194r – 195v; Dispatch No.17, 10.09.1794, Liston to Grenville. F. 259r – 262v; TNA, FO 78/16, Dispatch No.2, 25.11.1795, Smith to Grenville, f. 232r – 233v. On the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars and how they affected British maritime trade in the Levant see Katerina Galani, 'The Napoleonic Wars and the Disruption of Mediterranean Shipping and Trade: British, Greek and American Merchants in Livorno,' *The Historical Review / La Revue Historique* VII (2010), 179-198. Hervé Cautau-Bégarie, 'Seapower in the Mediterranean from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century,' in John B. Hattendorf (ed.), *Naval Strategy and Policy in the Mediterranean, Past, Present and Future* (New York, 2005), 30-50.

engagement in the coastal trade of the Empire.¹¹² Indeed, according to Inalcik, Faroqhi and Quataert:

England ceased to be the Ottomans' leading trade partner in the 1720s, after a determined and successful trade campaign by the French, relying on textiles better adapted to the Levant trade. From the 1720s to the 1760s, England's textile deliveries direct to the region dropped by half, while France's quadrupled. The English, who earlier had stopped regularly at Livorno and Malta, were hampered by the local introduction of quarantine regulations. In response, like the Dutch, the English relied on trade intermediaries –Greeks, Jews and Armenians. The French, by contrast, did not depend much on intermediary carriers, and even dominated regional trade between Ottoman ports, the cabotage trade.¹¹³

What were the implications of this reality for the British merchants in the Levant Seas? The main one was the failure of the Levant Company to safely carry out her own commercial activities in most of the Ottoman ports, which in turn led to major economic problems and to a substantial increase of the company's debts.¹¹⁴ Indicative of Levant Company's poor financial state was her frequent requests to British government for pecuniary assistance in order to pay the annual salaries of

¹¹² For the French trade in the Ottoman Empire, see D. Panzac, *La caravane maritime. Marins européens et marchands ottomans en Méditerranée, 1680-1830* (Paris, 2004); E. Frangakis- Syrett, 'The Coastal trade of the Ottoman Empire from the mid-eighteenth century to the early nineteenth centuries, in J. Armstrong and A. Kunz (eds.), *Coastal Shipping and the European Economy, 1750-1980* (Mainz-am-Rhein, 2002), 131-149. See also TNA, SP 97/50, Dispatch No.24, 17.11.1774, Murray to Rochford, f. 206r – 213v.

¹¹³ Inalcik, Faroqhi, Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 728.

¹¹⁴ For the difficulties of Levant Company to safely carry out her own commercial activities in the port of Smyrna, the most important Levantine port for the British, see TNA, FO 78/23, 17.09.1799, Levant Company's members to Smith, f. 84r, where the members of the British Factory at Smyrna inform the British minister plenipotentiary at Constantinople, John Spencer Smith on their great difficulties to trade: 'We beg leave in this place to represent to your worships, that our port is in the most wretchedly defendless state possible, and that a mere frigate or two of the enemy might ransack the town without effectual opposition, and make away with the spoil in full security. Suffer us again to state it as our humble opinion that during such a cruel war as this is, an English ship of force should remain stationary in the port of Smyrna, which would at once prove a sure protection to trade, to our families and persons.'

British ambassadors to the Porte. And that is because Levant Company was required to pay for the upkeep of British diplomatic staff in the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁵

However, the problems of the Levant Company were not only financial. On March 15, 1797 in Smyrna bursts a large fire causing cruel losses to the property of the British Factory there, which amounted to the sum of £105,000.¹¹⁶ In order to have a benchmark, the annual salary of Robert Liston, the British ambassador to the Porte, in 1795 was no more than £2000,¹¹⁷ whereas in 1801 the salary of the ambassador Lord Elgin was reduced to £1,120.¹¹⁸ In other words the fire in Smyrna endangered the very existence of the company itself in the Ottoman Empire. In addition to all these facts we need to mention what Katerina Galani states in her unpublished thesis on British maritime trade in the Levant and especially in Smyrna. According to Galani and her valuable *Lloyd's List database* Smyrna experienced during the decade of 1790s a great decline in the number of British merchantmen departing from her port. To be more specific while in 1790 almost fifty British merchantmen had departed from Smyrna's port, in 1800 and due to the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars the number dropped to only ten.¹¹⁹

What is the picture of British trade in the Levant? According to Galani *British shipping in the Levant appears to have endured the sharpest decline during the war, when compared to the rest of the sea routes* [namely Central Mediterranean, West Mediterranean, Gibraltar and North Africa]. Apart from the Levant and with the exception of the western part of the Mediterranean, the presence of British commercial vessels experienced also a significant decrease in the rest of the Mediterranean ports during the decade of 1790.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Wagner, *Managing To Compete: The Hudson's Bay, Levant, and Russia Companies, 1714-1763* (2012).

¹¹⁶ TNA, FO 78/19, 1.05.1798, Bosanquet to Grenville, f. 117r – 120v.

¹¹⁷ Robert Liston took over as British ambassador to the Porte in 1795. By that time inflation had reduced the value of ambassador's salary to just £1000 per annum and Liston was therefore allowed a further annual payment of £1000. See Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant*, 37.

¹¹⁸ TNA, FO 78/31, 27.01.1801, Browne to Hammond, f. 108r – 110v.

¹¹⁹ Galani, 'British Shipping and Trade in the Mediterranean,' 98.

¹²⁰ Op.Cit., 102, 277-278.

However the difficulties and problems for the Levant Company were not stopping. In May 1798, general Napoleon Bonaparte as commander of the *Armée d' Orient* and the *Escadre d' Orient* sailed from Toulon to invade Egypt, commanding an army of almost forty thousand men and a fleet of 335 ships.¹²¹ It was an action directly threatening the commercial interests of Levant Company in Eastern Mediterranean, with the latter already experiencing the intensive competitive rivalry of the French trade since many decades, as already stated above.¹²² Furthermore, the declaration of war 1796 by Spain against Britain led to the withdrawal of the Royal Navy from the Mediterranean, placing British shipping and trade in further danger. Consequently, the Levant Company was obliged from 1797 onwards to broaden its scope geographically to adapt to the new conditions and overcome the disruption of trade caused by the ongoing wars.¹²³

What was the real view of the Company? The answer can be found in a formal letter sent on September 19, 1797 by Samuel Bosanquet, the deputy governor of the Levant Company, to the British foreign minister, Lord Grenville. According to Bosanquet:

the important events that have taken place in Egypt [caused] much anxiety, as [the members of the Company] have reason to apprehend that their interests are likely to be very materially affected should the aggression of the French provoke a declaration of war on the part of the Porte and the British fleet not remain in the Levant Seas; in such case the Company's establishments in Turkey can hardly escape destruction.¹²⁴

However, Bosanquet was not informed of a crucial event that took place just a few weeks earlier: the Battle of Aboukir Bay (also known as the Battle of the Nile). The

¹²¹ Alfred Coban, *A History of Modern France*, vol. I (Baltimore, 1961), 248-250.

¹²² For a brief presentation of existing and future threats to British imperial policy by the presence of the French in Egypt, see the report of the British minister plenipotentiary at Constantinople, John Spencer Smith to the British ambassador to the Porte, Lord Elgin: TNA, FO 78/23, Dispatch No.2, 14.01.1800, Smith to Elgin, f. 309r – 310v / 328r – 337v. See also, Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 10-12.

¹²³ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p.191. See also Galani, 'British Shipping and Trade in the Mediterranean,' 284-285.

¹²⁴ TNA, FO 78/20, 19.09.1798, Bosanquet to Grenville, f. 46r – 47v.

latter was a major naval battle fought between the British Royal Navy and the Navy of the French Republic at Aboukir Bay on the Mediterranean coast off Egypt from 1 to 3 August 1798. The battle ended with the almost complete destruction of the French fleet by the Royal Navy under the command of Horatio Nelson (Rear Admiral) and entrenched the Royal Navy in the dominant position in the whole Eastern Mediterranean Sea.¹²⁵

Bosanquet learned about the destruction of the French fleet and the decision of Britain and Turkey to conclude a defensive alliance against the French by the end of September 1798.¹²⁶ This alliance would be accompanied by a further deepening of the economic relations between Britain and Turkey as well as of a further protection and enhancement of British trade in the Ottoman territory.¹²⁷

All these military and diplomatic events combined led the directory of the Levant Company –for the first time in her history in such an emphatic and formal way– to raise the question of the opening of the Black Sea. Thus, on November 3, 1798 the deputy governor of the Levant Company sent a letter to Lord Grenville stating:

The Levant Company [requests] that directions will be given to His Majesty's minister at Constantinople to make application to obtain for British ships the privilege of navigating in the Black Sea on the same footing with the most favored nation at the Porte.¹²⁸

The response from Foreign Office came three days later. Grenville on November 6, wrote to Bosanquet that: 'I have the satisfaction to apprise you, for the information of the Levant Company, that instructions will be transmitted to His Majesty's minister at Constantinople accordingly.'¹²⁹ Indeed, on November 9, Foreign Office informed the British minister at Constantinople, Spencer Smith, that he should take

¹²⁵ Mahan, *The influence of sea power upon the French revolution and empire*, 287.

¹²⁶ TNA, FO 78/20, Dispatch No.6, 1.10.1798, Grenville to Smith, f. 75r – 88v. Chris Cook and John Stevenson, *The Routledge Companion to European History since 1763* (London, 2005), 204-206.

¹²⁷ TNA, FO 78/20, 30.09.1798, King George III to Selim III, f. 58r – 61v. See also Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge, 1977), 268-271; Adolphus William Ward and George Peabody Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919* (Cambridge, 2011), 584-585.

¹²⁸ TNA, FO 78/20, 3.11.1798, Bosanquet to Grenville, f. 189r – 191v.

¹²⁹ TNA, FO 78/20, 6.11.1798, Grenville to Bosanquet, f. 216r – 217v.

the first proper opportunity of submitting the subject of the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag to the consideration of the Ottoman ministry.¹³⁰

However, based on these facts, a question arises: which is the reason that drives the Company to officially request the opening of the Black Sea twenty four years after the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji and not earlier? The answer to this question is rather simple and obvious. As already stated above, Levant Company had expressed an early interest in getting involved in trade and navigation on the Black Sea since the signing of Kainarji treaty, but was looking for the right time to do it.¹³¹ But the right time was not coming, since the Company was aware of the fact that if she had requested and granted by the Porte the privilege for free navigation and trade in the Black Sea, the Porte should have granted immediately the same privilege to the French, who exercised great influence over the ministers of the Sublime Porte.

Be that as it may, Levant Company's directors and members knew that despite their wishful thinking they could not compete with numerous French commercial vessels entering the Black Sea and trading the cheaper and closer to the customs of the Turks French manufactures. But when Paris and Constantinople go to war because of the French invasion of Egypt and Britain becomes the main ally of the Porte in place of France (autumn 1798), then the Company seizes the unique opportunity and request from the Porte the opening of the Black Sea only for the British flag. Pursuit of the Company was only her merchantmen to gain the privilege to enter the Black Sea and conduct a profitable trade in the secure –without any French threat– environment of the 'virgin market' of the Black Sea, which would offset their losses

¹³⁰ TNA, FO 78/20, Dispatch No.13, 9.11.1798, Grenville to Smith, f. 230r – 231v.

¹³¹ Cernovodeanu, 'British Economic Interests in the Lower Danube and the Balkan Shore of the Black Sea between 1803 and 1829,' 105-120, where he states that 'As far as trade was concerned, however, the Levant Company was then in obvious decline and its area of activity had shrunk to Constantinople and the other ports of the Eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, the merchants affiliated to this Company seem to have shown some, albeit moderate, interest in including the Pontic basin in their trading area. They were attracted by the opportunity of exploring the natural resources of Bulgaria and the Romanian Countries on the Lower Danube, where they expected to procure, in more advantageous conditions, grains, spices and timber, in exchange for various kinds of cloth, colonial goods and of manufactured products. They did not, it is true, aim at trading with the Russian ports of the Southern Ukraine and the Crimea, for the Baltic route provided an easier way of exchanging goods with Russia.'

from the rest of the Levant.¹³² Besides, we know that because of the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars British interest was diverted towards more profitable markets, like East India, and within this context Black Sea we do believe- emerged as a potentially lucrative market.¹³³ Furthermore we need to mention that the British participated extensively in the intra-regional trade in the Mediterranean and consequently they hoped they could follow the same 'profitable' pattern in the Black Sea as well.¹³⁴ Last but not least, according to Cernovodeanu 'the political objective of Great Britain's presence in the Black Sea was to counterbalance Russian influence in that region.'¹³⁵

1.4.3 Turkey opens and Elgin closes the Black Sea

The members of Levant Company were optimistic that their request will be forwarded directly without delay by the British government to the ministers of the Porte, given that relations between Britain and Turkey following the French invasion in Egypt had been excessively tightened, as already stated above. Indicative is the letter sent on February 5, 1799, from Lloyd's Coffee House in London by George Liddell, a prominent Levant Company's member, to George Hammond, the British Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign Affairs, in which he notes:

The important services which Britain has rendered the Porte, by destroying the fleet of the French Republic at the mouth of the Nile, and thereby cutting off the invaders of Egypt from the means of receiving supplies or reinforcements from their own country, will no doubt dispose the Turks to grant to the English nation commercial privileges, at least equal to those enjoyed by other nations [Russia and Austria]. It is certain that if you open the Black Sea to us, the British Trade to Turkey will very much increase,

¹³² Galani, *British Shipping and Trade in the Mediterranean*, 27.

¹³³ R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1962), 34-42.

¹³⁴ For the extensive participation of the British in the intra-regional trade in the Mediterranean see Galani, *British Shipping and Trade in the Mediterranean*, ch.4.

¹³⁵ Cernovodeanu, 'British Economic Interests in the Lower Danube and the Balkan Shore of the Black Sea between 1803 and 1829,' 105-120.

because I know merchants of capital and enterprise, who would in the case immediately embark in it.¹³⁶

And the pressure exerted to the British government by Levant Company to accept her request and forward it to the Porte was getting more intense. On May 28, 1799, Bosanquet informs once again the Foreign Office and the new British ambassador to the Porte, Lord Elgin, on the issue of the opening of the Black Sea. For the directors of the Levant Company the opening of the latter to the British flag would enable the revitalization of British trade in the Levant and make British merchants dominate seaborne trade in the whole region. To be more specific, the deputy governor of the Levant Company states in his letter to Elgin:

If permission can be obtained to navigate the Black Sea, the advantages that must resume from such a trade to both countries are incalculable, as it would promote the sale of our manufactures and of India goods, and [Turkey] will receive in return the produce of the extensive coasts that surround it; namely copper, lead, iron, tallow, hemp, flax, wheat, rye and pulse, potashes, hare and goat skins, salted hides, wool, wax and timber for ship building, exclusive of the advantages that must necessarily attach to this trade, it would be the means of increasing the number of our [British] seamen and of cementing our union with the great power of Russia and Turkey.¹³⁷

Finally, on September 1, 1799, the British minister plenipotentiary at Constantinople, John Spencer Smith, submitted the formal request of the British government on the opening of the Black Sea to the consideration of the Porte.¹³⁸ And the long, Ottoman-styled response of Reis Effendi on behalf of the Porte came on October 30, 1799:

The friendship and concord which since time immemorial subsist between the Sublime Porte of steadfast glory, and the Court of England, being now happily improved into an alliance established upon the finest basis of truth

¹³⁶ TNA, FO 78/21, 5.02.1799, Liddell to Hammond, f. 140r – 143v.

¹³⁷ TNA, FO 78/22, 10.09.1799, Bosanquet to Grenville, f. 42r – 43v.

¹³⁸ TNA, FO 78/22, 10.09.1799, Smith to Grenville, f. 196r – 200v. See also, Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 181-182.

and sincerity; and it being beyond doubt, that, in addition to the numerous advantages reaped hitherto by both Countries from the new ties so strongly formed between the two Courts, many more salutary effects will, by the pleasure of God, be witnessed in future; mature attention, has, therefore, been paid to the representations relative to the permission being graciously granted for the navigation of English merchant vessels in the Black Sea, which have been of late made both verbally and in writing by the English Minister at this Court (Mr.) Spencer Smith our most esteemed friend, in conformity to his instructions, and consistently with the confidence he is ever ambitious to manifest in the inviolable attachment, which the Sublime Porte of everlasting duration professes towards his Court.

In fact, this being a means whereby to evince, in a still farther degree, the attachment, the regard, and fidelity which are professed towards the Court of Great Britain by the Sublime Porte of steadfast glory, whose adherence to the obligation of treaties, as well as faithful attention to fulfill the duties of friendship, are unexceptionable; and it being sincerely hoped, that many more salutary effects will henceforward accrue from the close connection so firmly contracted between the two Courts. A cordial grant of the above point is hereby made, as an act springing from the sovereign breast of His Imperial Majesty himself.

This Privilege shall take effect with respect to the merchant vessels of Great Britain, exactly on the same footing observed with those of the most favored Powers; it being understood, that its execution be proceeded upon immediately after the burthen of the said vessels, the mode of their transit through the Straights of Constantinople, and such other arrangements as ascertain to this matter, shall have been settled in proper detail by friendly communication with the Minister beforenamed.¹³⁹

Thus, on October 30, 1799, the Black Sea will open for British merchant ships. However, despite Turkey's decision to open the Black Sea to the British flag, the new

¹³⁹ TNA, FO 78/22, 30.10.1799, Smith to Grenville, f. 298r – 303v.

British ambassador to the Ottoman Court Elgin had second thoughts. Elgin on July 11, 1800, sent a letter to the British Foreign Minister Lord Grenville expressing his serious doubts on the expediency of the opening of the Black Sea trade.¹⁴⁰ Elgin insisted that it was for the benefit of Britain the Black Sea to remain closed.¹⁴¹

What was the basis for his denial? According to Elgin, two are the main reasons: (a) “the difficulty and tediousness of the navigation, and the poverty of the inhabitants, seemed equally to discredit the favourable expectations, which have been entertained in England, from the free navigation of the Black Sea, by the British flag;” (b) the fact that the French flag could not be kept out from the Black Sea for a long time and the result would be most of the naval and other valuable stores of the Black Sea to “reach Toulon, Marseilles, and the Spanish ports much easier, than British could procure them; and [...] Britain would probably also create a new and important source of mutual interest between France and Russia.”¹⁴² In other words, the biggest fear of all of Lord Elgin was whether the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag was forcing Turkey to grant the French flag the same privilege; a development, which in his opinion would not only damage the British trade in the Black Sea and the Levant but would also endanger the struggle of Royal Navy in the Mediterranean against the French fleet.

Lord Elgin seems to exaggerate his estimates of the risks of opening the Black Sea, at least according to the reports sent to British government by Levant Company’s directors, with the latter calling for the immediate setting of the last technical issues that would allow the entry of British ships in the Black Sea.¹⁴³ However, Elgin’s

¹⁴⁰ TNA, FO 78/29, Dispatch No.69, 11.07.1800, Elgin to Grenville, f. 398r – 405v.

¹⁴¹ William Cobbett, *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, Volume 2 (London, 1810), 227; see also Joyce Gold, *The Naval Chronicle, Containing a General and Biographical History of the Royal Navy of the United Kingdom, with a Variety of Original Papers on Nautical Subjects*, Volume 21 (London, 1810), 216-217.

¹⁴² TNA, FO 78/33, 20.11.1801, Elgin to Hawkesbury, f. 175r – 190v.

¹⁴³ TNA, FO 78/31, 24.04.1801, Bosanquet to Hawkesbury, f. 353r – 354v, where we find a report sent by Governor and Company of Merchants of England trading into the Levant Seas to The Right Honorable Lord Hawkesbury Foreign Secretary in London: ‘1st. Beg leave to request that Lord Hawkesbury will cause instructions to be sent to Lord Elgin at Constantinople to complete the agreement entered into with the Porte by Mr. Spencer Smith by which the free navigation in the Black Sea was to be granted to the British flag; and for which the Company is informed nothing is wanting but the orders of the British Government. [...]

continuous objections had a direct impact on the final decision of the British government, with the latter deciding to freeze the procedure for opening the Black Sea. On May 10, 1802, the new British Foreign Secretary Lord Hawkesbury informed Elgin that:

His Majesty's Government [...] is of opinion that, in the present situation of Europe, it would be most conformable to His Majesty's interests, and to those of the Sublime Porte, to confine the navigation of the Black Sea, as it is at present, to the subjects of the Grand Signor and of the Emperor of Russia. It is the King's pleasure that you communicate this opinion to the Ottoman Ministers.¹⁴⁴

However, at the same time, Lord Hawkesbury instructed Elgin to inform Reis Effendi, that, if the Sublime Porte should at any period allow the subjects of any other powers than those of Turkey and of Russia, to participate in the navigation of the Black Sea, the British King expects "from the justice and friendship of His Ally, the Grand Signor, that the same privileges in the respect shall be extended to the subjects of His Dominions as may be granted to those of any other powers."¹⁴⁵ And indeed, the Black Sea will open firstly to the French flag on June 25, 1802, following the signing of the Treaty of Paris between France and Turkey, whereas for the British flag will open a few weeks later on July 23.¹⁴⁶

To summarize, Britain during the period of 1787-1802 realized the multilevel importance of the Black Sea to her wider imperial and colonial interests in Southeastern Europe, Middle East and India. The Black Sea emerged as a significant area, which could ensure the security and stability of the British possessions especially in India. On the other hand Black Sea emerged as a *deus ex machina* for the British. And the reason is that during mid-1790s the British trade in the Levant was virtually on the brink of destruction because of the threatening presence of

3rd. [...] that the Company hopes Lord Elgin will pay attention to the Tariffs that must be framed for the other foreign nations, and will take care that no other nation be placed on a more favored footing than the British merchants either at the present moment, or in case of any future alteration.].’ See also TNA, FO 78/32, Dispatch No.7, 28.07.1801, Hawkesbury to Elgin, f. 194r – 196v.

¹⁴⁴ TNA, FO 78/36, Dispatch No.5, 10.05.1802, Hawkesbury to Elgin, f. 105r – 106v.

¹⁴⁵ Op.cit. See also Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 181.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, FO 78/37, 29.07.1802, Reis Effendi to Straton, f. 160.

French naval and merchant fleets. British merchants seemed to have no other choice than to find a new geographical area for conducting safe business away from the menacing breath of the French. And what was this new safe area; The Black Sea. Taking advantage of good relations with Turkey, British government and Levant Company will request from the Porte the opening of the Black Sea and will manage to gain the privilege of navigation and trade under British colors in the latter with ease. Thus, in summer 1802 begins the presence of the British flag in the Black Sea.¹⁴⁷

1.5 Concluding remarks

The British interest in the Black Sea dates back to the late sixteenth century, when Queen Elizabeth received from Sultan Murad III permission for her subjects to trade in the Black Sea. However, the decision of the Porte to keep the latter as a rather closed lake, led the British interest to wane and come back only after almost 170 years, in late 1760s, during the years of the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774. In fact, during the said period British government begins to realize the political, economic and commercial importance of the Black Sea for her multilevel imperial interests in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean.

The decision of Catherine the Great to proceed with the implementation of her plan to make Russia a powerful naval, military and commercial force in Europe and the Levant, made British government to think about the potential risks from the opening of the Black Sea to the Russian flag. However, for Britain Russia was a significant ally in Europe and no political, military or diplomatic developments, like the signing of the peace treaty of Kainarji that granted to the Russians the privilege for navigation and trade in the Black Sea, could disrupt the strong ties between them.

However, the signing of Kainarji treaty on July 21, 1774, signalled also the penetration of British merchantmen in the Black Sea sailing under Russian colors. As

¹⁴⁷ Ardeleanu, 'The Opening and Development of the Black Sea,' 30-52.

a result British government gained good knowledge on Black Sea trade, with timber emerging as its most valuable exportable product. It is certain that British merchants would like to navigate and trade in the Black Sea under their own colors. But British government feared that if the latter was opened for the British soon the French would follow and the result would not be in favor of the British trade, since French with their cheaper and finer products would continue to be unrivaled in the Turkish markets. Consequently, we could say that for fear of the French the British policy during the decade of 1780s aimed to keep the Black Sea closed to all flags.

However, things would change in the years to follow. During the decade of 1790 – after the loss of the American colonies and the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars– Britain realized in whole the geopolitical significance of the broader Black Sea region for the implementation of her imperial and commercial policy in a vast area including the Levant Seas, Middle East and of course the Indian sub-continent. In fact the Black Sea emerged for the British as a critical area for securing their possessions and economic and trade interests in Asia. Within this new framework and after the destruction of the French fleet at Aboukir Bay (1798), which reversed the strategic situation between France and Britain and entrenched the Royal Navy in the dominant position in the Mediterranean, Britain requests from the Porte and gains for her merchantmen the right to trade in the Black Sea under British flag (1799). But the fear of the French, despite the destruction of their fleet, still existed and led Britain not to proceed with the opening of the Black Sea. Thus, the final opening of the latter to all flags would take place in the summer of 1802, signaling the start of the formal and fruitful penetration of British diplomats, merchants and merchantmen in the Black Sea, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

Map 1.1 Mediterranean, Black and Azov Seas



Source: courtesy of the author

CHAPTER TWO

British Consulate General in the Black Sea (1803-1819)

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw that British interest in Black Sea dates back to late sixteenth century. However it was only during the last quarter of eighteenth century that the British interest intensified as London realized the multilevel political, commercial and military importance of Black Sea for its imperial policy. For Britain Black Sea re-emerged during the mentioned period as a geographic area able to provide not only new –and safe from the French threat– markets for British manufactures and colonial goods and valuable raw materials for Royal Navy in the Mediterranean (especially ship building timber), but also security for British colonial possessions and emporia in Middle East and India.

Understanding this reality led the British government, after constant demands from the Levant Company during the second half of 1790s, to officially request from the Sublime Porte of the Ottoman Empire the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag and consequently to British trade. And indeed, on October 30, 1799, the Black Sea opened for British merchant vessels. Be that as it may, the British fear that the Porte would be soon forced to open the Black Sea for the French flag as well made London reconsider the potential dangers arising from an opening of the Black Sea to British flag. The result was British government to finally withdraw its claim and not accept the opening of the Sea to other flags, even to the British one. Thus Britain preferred the safer option to remain in force the existing status quo, which allowed only Russian, Austrian and of course Turkish vessels sailing the Black Sea.¹⁴⁸ Hence, the latter remained closed for the British; a status however that will not last for long. And indeed the Black Sea would open for the French on June 25, 1802, following the signing of the Treaty of Paris between France and Turkey, whereas for the British flag it would open one month later on July 23.

¹⁴⁸ The Austrians for the first time commenced a trade on the Black Sea in 1785.

Consequently, in mid-summer 1802 begins the official presence of the British and their flag in the Black Sea and a period of significant growth of British trade in the ports of New Russia. However, the presentation and mapping of the gradual development and growth of British flag trade in the Black Sea will be studied in the next, third chapter. And the reason is that the development and growth of British trade in the Russian ports of the Black Sea was inextricably linked to the need to first set up the institutional penetration and representation of British government in that geographic area; a necessary condition to properly assist and protect all British citizens and subjects who wanted to do maritime and trade business in New Russia.¹⁴⁹

Therefore, the present second chapter aims to present the British consular establishment in the Russian ports of the Black Sea, during the period from June 1803 (year of consulate's establishment) up to January 1819 (year of first British consul's death).¹⁵⁰ Our goal is to make use of all the archival material found during our study in the *British National Archives* in London and reconstruct part of the history of the British consulate general in Odessa. Thus, the reader will be able to realize the broader commercial and economic importance of Black and Azov Seas to Great Britain as well as the various problems, difficulties and challenges faced by the newly established British consulate general under the command of one of the most respectable merchants and members of *Russia Company, Henry Savage Yeames*.

The present chapter is divided into three sections. The first one (a) relates to the great interest shown by British merchants of the Russia Company (also called the *Muscovy Company* or the *Muscovy Trading Company*) to undertake the representation of British commercial as well as diplomatic interests in the Black

¹⁴⁹ Evrydiki Sifneos, 'Preparing the Greek Revolution in Odessa in the 1820s: tastes, markets and political liberalism,' *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, Volume XI (2014), 139-170, where the following is stated: British merchants were mostly used to working with trade support policies and needed institutional regulation in order to venture their trading capital in foreign countries. See also W. Kirchner, 'Western Businessmen in Russia: Practices and Problems,' *Business History Review* 38/3 (1964), 315-327.

¹⁵⁰ TNA FO 65/118, 11.02.1819, James Yeames to Castlereagh: James Yeames' letter to Lord Viscount Castlereagh British Foreign Minister on the death of his father, Henry Savage Yeames, on January 16, 1819, in Odessa.

Sea.¹⁵¹ The result of this great interest was the decision of British government to proceed almost immediately with the creation of a consulate general in Southern Russia with Henry Savage Yeames being appointed as consul general with jurisdiction over the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

The second section (b) relates to the decision of British government to appoint Yeames as consul general; a decision that during the early years of the establishment of the consulate faced many negative reactions from various institutional bodies of British Empire's bureaucracy, especially from the British consul general in Saint Petersburg, *Stephen Shairp*. Finally, the third section (c) deals with all the duties of Yeames as consul general as well as with the challenges and problems he had to face during his consulship in Odessa from 1803 up to his death, on January 16, 1819.

Finally, we need to mention that our study on the history of the British consulate general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea is based mainly on reports, memoranda and letters dispatched to ministers of British government in London by the British ambassadors, ministers plenipotentiaries, and consul general in Saint Petersburg as well as by the first British consul general in the Black Sea, Henry Savage Yeames, and vice versa; reports, memoranda and letters covering a period of almost eighteen years: from 1802 up to 1819. Actually, we are following the same methodological approach as the one described in the first chapter: we are using excerpts of the original letters and reports written by the various persons and institutions mentioned above combined with bibliographic references and other original archival material, so that the reader himself can form a clear picture of the first British efforts and attempts to enter the commerce of New Russia through the establishment of the British consulate general in Odessa; an institution which was the sine qua non of the development and growth of British maritime trade in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

¹⁵¹ For a brief presentation of Russian Company's history (or Muscovy or Russia Company) see: Thomas Stuart Willan, *The early history of the Russia Company, 1553-1603* (Manchester, 1956). See also Wagner, 'Managing To Compete: The Hudson's Bay, Levant, and Russia Companies, 1714-1763,' 1-10; *The Origin and Early History of the Russia Or Muscovy Company* (London, 1830).

2.2 Odessa, Consulate General and Henry Savage Yeames

The Black Sea opened to the British flag on July 23, 1802.¹⁵² However, it took a couple of months for British vessels to start passing the Bosphorus and enter the Black Sea. Lord of Elgin, British ambassador to the Porte, states in his letter to the British Foreign Secretary Lord Hawkesbury (November 12, 1802):

My Lord, several English merchantmen having lately arrived at Constantinople, I was in hopes that some one of them might have been at liberty to go to the Black Sea, for the purpose of confirming our right to that navigation; but the form of their policies of insurance have prevented them. Being desirous, however, that no other flag should pass the Turkish castles before the British colors, I, on Friday the 5th instant [November 1802], obtained a firman from the Porte with all other proper documents, in favor of a small [vessel] belonging to me, called the Argo, which accordingly sailed up the Bosphorus the 6th and entered the Black Sea on the 7th November [1802].¹⁵³

Although the number of British vessels entering the Black Sea was still insignificant,¹⁵⁴ according to the archival material found a fierce competition launched among British merchants in Russia –members of Russia Company– about who would take over the representation of British diplomatic and commercial interests in the Russian ports of the Black Sea.¹⁵⁵ One of the most important candidates was one of the most respectable British merchants of Saint Petersburg, and member of Russia Company Henry Savage Yeames.¹⁵⁶ But who was Henry Savage Yeames?

¹⁵² TNA, FO 78/37, 29.07.1802, Reis Effendi to Straton, f. 160. See also Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 181; Thomas Hart Benton, *Abridgment of the Debates of Congress, from 1789 to 1856: Nov. 7, 1808-March 3, 1813* (New York, 1859), 250.

¹⁵³ TNA, FO 78/36, Dispatch No.47, 12.11.1802, Elgin to Hawkesbury, f. 142r – 145v.

¹⁵⁴ On the limited presence of British vessels in the Russian ports of the Black Sea during the first months after the opening of the Sea to the British flag see Benton, *Abridgment of the Debates of Congress, from 1789 to 1856*, 250, where he states *in 1803, 815 vessels took in cargoes in the Russian ports of the Black Sea: 552 at Odessa, 210 at Taganrog, 23 at Caffa, 19 at Kosloo, 7 at Sevastopol, and 4 at Cherson. Of these, 421 were Austrian, 329 Russian, 18 Ragusan, 16 Ionian, 15 French, 7 English, 6 Idriots, and 3 Spanish.*

¹⁵⁵ TNA, FO 65/52, Dispatch No.7, 12.11.1802, Shairp to Hawkesbury.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.1.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury.

The family of Yeames seems to have originated in the rural county of Norfolk in the East of England, whereas *John Lambe Yeames* (1707-1787) was the man who first forged the family connection with Russia.¹⁵⁷ John Lambe Yeames, after receiving an invitation from Catherine the Great to superintend the construction of the Russian navy, decided to carry on his father's work of building war ships and about 1737 travelled to the capital of the Russian Empire Saint Petersburg and then to the port of Archangel, which lies on both banks of the Northern Dvina River near its exit into the White Sea. There, he helped to build frigates and twelve men-of-war and then as *chief master builder of the Russian Navy* returned to Saint Petersburg and Kronstadt's shipyards.¹⁵⁸ Czarina held him in much esteem and almost fifty years after his arrival in Russia honored Lambe Yeames for his various services with the title of *Major General* as well as that of *Surveyor of the Russian Navy*.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, John Yeames' wife Mary (1718-1778) was said to be a natural daughter of *Peter the Great*.¹⁶⁰

Thus, the family of Yeames managed to acquire close relations not only with the Russian navy but with the Russian imperial court as well. And this close relationship with Russia was maintained by his son Henry Savage Yeames, a respectable merchant of Saint Petersburg and member of Russia Company.¹⁶¹ The relations of Henry Savage Yeames with the czarist court were further forged through his marriage on February 23, 1788 to *Wilhelmina von Rahl*, daughter of *Baron von Rahl of Hessen-Cassel*, banker to the Tsar and a man of great wealth.¹⁶²

With such a great experience in the Russian markets and such close relations with the Russian court Henry Savage Yeames was able to realize timeously the importance of the Black Sea and New Russia as a new and valuable source of wealth

¹⁵⁷ Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 179-180; Susan Rose (ed.), *The Naval Miscellany, Volume VII* (London, 2008), 209. On Yeames' family see James Whishaw, *A History of the Whishaw Family* (Oxfordshire, 1992), 157-159.

¹⁵⁸ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.01.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury.

¹⁵⁹ Stephen M. H. Smith, *Art and anecdote: recollections of William Frederick Henry Savage Yeames, R.A., his life and his friends* (London), 25-26.

¹⁶⁰ http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history_family/hist_family_whishaw.html#top [Date of Access: 10.07.2015]

¹⁶¹ TNA, FO 65/52, 22.6.1803, Hawkesbury to Warren.

¹⁶² Smith, *Art and anecdote*, 33. See also <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XTFY-HPG> [Date of Access: 10.07.2015]

for British trade in the Mediterranean. As a result he took the decision to apply in late 1802 to Sir *John Borlase Warren*, the British ambassador to the Russian court, in order to afford him his protection in expanding his commercial business plans in New Russia by the establishment of a house of commerce at the growing and developing port city of Odessa.¹⁶³

And indeed, Yeames by mid-1803 had succeeded in having his own commercial house in Odessa cooperating with the British merchants *Robert Forrester* and *William Eton* in order to provide timber and corn to British government.¹⁶⁴ To be more specific Yeames suggested to British government:

the supplying of His Majesty's Squadron and Garrisons in the Mediterranean from the Russian ports in the Black Sea, with any quantity of masts –salt–provisions, and corn, at half the price usually paid for those articles; a circumstance that in the event of a war may be of infinitive consequence to the British Government; a considerable quantity of salt provisions were supplied from Taganrog and Odessa for the British troops serving in Egypt. These articles may be sent to our garrisons at Malta and Gibraltar, either under British or Russian colors.¹⁶⁵

However, apart from applying to Warren for his protection in the establishment of a house of commerce, he asked him to be appointed consul at the port city of Odessa as well.¹⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that -according to Ferry de Goey- the *selection process* [of a consul] *was based on patronage: rulers appointed personal or political friends, who were sometimes recommended by relatives and these were not necessarily the best possible candidates.*¹⁶⁷ Although Yeames does not completely belong to this category, we can say that he exploited in the best way his personal relationships to strengthen his candidacy as consul. The British ambassador after

¹⁶³ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.1.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, FO 65/71, Henry Savage Yeames to Canning, f. 142r – 168v; FO 65/52, 23.06.1803, Hawkesbury to Woronzow.

¹⁶⁵ TNA, FO 65/52, 24.5.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury. On the naval supplies that could be drawn from New Russia's mainland see Ardeleanu, 'The Discovery of the Black Sea by the Western World,' 21–46.

¹⁶⁶ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.1.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury.

¹⁶⁷ Ferry de Goey, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, 1783–1914* (London, 2015), 16.

receiving the request of Yeames tried to gather a lot of information about him, which made him finally form a rather good opinion about Yeames.

According to Warren's report sent to London and the Foreign Secretary Lord Hawkesbury (January 1, 1803) Yeames had travelled a lot through Russia, was very knowledgeable about the Russian commercial life and especially in the Black Sea region, and was even desired by the Russian Minister of Commerce in Saint Petersburg to communicate any improvement, which could be made at the port of Odessa, and also the difficulties which attended commercial enterprises in the Black Sea. Furthermore, Stephen Shairp the British General Consul at Saint Petersburg had spoken much in Yeames' favor, considering him a very proper person to execute the office of consul in the Black Sea.¹⁶⁸ Hence, for Warren, Yeames was a valuable and reliable source of information on the importance of the Black Sea trade for the British and therefore the right person to take the position of British consul in the Russian ports of the Black Sea.¹⁶⁹

British government based on Ambassador Warren's reports and realizing the importance of the Black Sea trade and the multilevel services that could be provided by Henry Savage Yeames decides on June 22, 1803, that *Mr. Yeames, who appears to be in every respect a person fully qualified for the situation, will be appointed consul [general] at that place [Odessa].*¹⁷⁰ Thereinafter, on June 23, British Foreign Secretary Lord Hawkesbury asks Russian ambassador to the United Kingdom *Count Simon Vorontsov* to inform as soon as possible his government on British King's decision to establish a consulate general at Odessa and to appoint there as consul general Henry Savage Yeames, and that he expects this appointment to be accepted by the *tsar Alexander I.*¹⁷¹ And indeed, on September 16, 1803, Warren sends a letter to Lord Hawkesbury informing British government that the Russian imperial

¹⁶⁸ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.1.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury. For a brief presentation on the consulship of Stephen Shairp with some biographical information see Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 58-66. On the consular service of Stephen Shairp see also Anthony Cross, 'The Sutherland Affair and Its Aftermath,' *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 50 (1972), 257-275. See also the newspaper *Launceston Examiner*, Monday, March 16, 1896, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/2948676?zoomLevel=1> [Date of Access 26.08.2015].

¹⁶⁹ TNA, FO 65/52, 24.5.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury.

¹⁷⁰ TNA, FO 65/52, 22.6.1803, Hawkesbury to Warren.

¹⁷¹ TNA, FO 65/52, 23.6.1803, Hawkesbury to Vorontsov.

chancellor *Count Alexander Romanovich Vorontsov*, following the orders of tsar Alexander I, had accepted officially the appointment of Yeames as British consul general in Odessa.¹⁷²

Thus, in 1803 Britain had two general consuls in Russia. The one, *Stephen Shairp*, was located in St. Petersburg and was responsible for the Russian ports of the Baltic Sea as well as of the White Sea, whereas on the other hand Yeames was located in Odessa and was responsible for all the Russian ports of the Black Sea region. It is interesting to note at this point that despite British global trading interests, British government during eighteenth and early nineteenth century was not very willing to appoint consuls. Indicatively, in 1740 there were only fifteen British consuls (eleven working in the Mediterranean), in 1790 the number of consuls had increased to forty-six, in 1814 to fifty-seven and in 1824 the number of consuls rose to 107.¹⁷³

But let us focus on the case of Henry Savage Yeames and his consulate general. The original seat of the British consulate general of the Russian Ports in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov was not at Odessa but at Kherson, since the port of Sevastopol – another potential option for the seat of the consulate– was exclusively a military port, where the establishment of foreign agents was prohibited by the Russian government.¹⁷⁴ Yeames knew the port city of Kherson very well since he had been there for commercial reasons during early spring of 1804.¹⁷⁵ For him Kherson was a central point between Odessa and the Crimean Peninsula and therefore could be a potential seat for the British consulate general with many commercial advantages.¹⁷⁶

However, Henry Savage Yeames had proposed Feodosia [formerly known as Caffa] to

¹⁷² TNA, FO 65/53, Dispatch No.48, 16.09.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury, f. 178r – 180v.

¹⁷³ Ferry de Goey, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, 1783–1914*, 17. See also Raymond Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914: 1815–1914* (Waterloo, 1983), 12.

¹⁷⁴ TNA, FO 65/53, Dispatch No.71, 26.06.1804, Warren to Hawkesbury, f. 478r – 484v. On the port of Sevastopol and the establishment of new towns throughout New Russia see Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its Peoples* (Toronto, 2010), 285. See also William Burckhardt, *A short historical account of the Crimea, from the earliest ages and during the Russian occupation* (London, 1855), 218-219, 230-231; George Montague, *Description of some of the principal harbours and towns of the Crimea* (London, 1854), 18-22; Laurence Oliphant, *The Russian shores of the Black Sea in the Autumn of 1852 with a Voyage down the Volga and a Tour Through the Country of the Don Cossacks* (New York, 1854), 181-192. On Sevastopol history as a port of men of war see also Dearborn, *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigation of the Black Sea*, 298-305.

¹⁷⁵ On the port of Kherson see Herlihy, *Odessa. A History 1794-1914*, 4-5. See also Dearborn, *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigation of the Black Sea*, 265-271.

¹⁷⁶ TNA, FO 65/55, Dispatch No.48, 26.06.1804, Warren to Harrowby, f. 169r – 171v.

host the seat of the British consulate general, because this port city –according to him– enjoyed key location between the rivers Don and Dnieper where important trade conducted for British interests.¹⁷⁷

But British government's final decision on where the seat of the consulate general should be would permanently change on the initiative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Lord Grenville. The latter informs on April 13, 1805 the British ambassador to the Russian Court Warren and the consul general Yeames that *from every information I have collected here [London], respecting the trade of the Black Sea, it appears to me desirable, that the residence of the Consul General of the Ports of the Black Sea should be at Odessa in preference to Kherson or Caffa [Feodosia].*¹⁷⁸ Thus, almost three years after the formal opening of the Black Sea to the British flag, Odessa emerged as the seat of the British consulate general of the Russian Ports in the Black Sea, the respectable member of Russia Company Henry Savage Yeames appointed first consul general, and the British trade began to grow slowly in the ports of New Russia.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ TNA, FO 65/55, 30.05.1804, Henry Savage Yeames to Harrowby, f. 240r – 243v. On the history of Caffa or Feodosia or Theodosia and its *superb harbor and port facilities* see King, *The Black Sea: A History*, 115, 126, 162. See also Dearborn, *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigation of the Black Sea*, 308-312.

¹⁷⁸ TNA, FO 65/57, Dispatch No.16, 13.04.1805, Gower to Henry Phipps, f. 312r – 315v. About the advantages of the port of Odessa in relation to those of the port of Kherson see Joshua Jepson, *European Commerce, Shewing New and Secure Channels of Trade with the Continent of Europe: Detailing the Produce, Manufactures, and Commerce, of Russia, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany; as Well as the Trade of the Rivers Elbe, Weser, and Ems, with a General View of the Trade, Navigation, Produce, and Manufactures, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and Its Unexplored and Improvable Resources and Interior Wealth: Illustrated with a Canal and River Map of Europe* (London, 1805), 177. To be more specific Joshua Jepson states *The new port of Odessa is preferable to that of Cherson, for the produce of the Ukraine, because, in the latter port, goods are obliged to be transported, in lighters, to the ships in the open roads, which is often attended with danger from the weather, and always great risk on account of pillage; and because, at Odessa, there are foreign houses of different nations, whilst, at all other ports, they are chiefly Greeks and Russians.*

¹⁷⁹ On Odessa's history see the impeccable work of Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa. A History 1794-1914*; King, *The Black Sea: A History*, 161-168; Walter Koschmal, *Altes Odessa - fremde Stadt. Russlands erste europaische Stadt* (Regensburg, 1998); Tanya Richardson, *Kaleidoscopic Odessa: History and Place in Contemporary Ukraine* (Toronto, 2008); Oliphant, *The Russian shores of the Black Sea*, 232-241; Jepson, *European Commerce*, 167-187. See also Dearborn, *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigation of the Black Sea*, 233-260.

2.3 Consul General Shairp vs. Consul General Yeames

As we saw in the previous section, the British government after the final opening of the Black Sea to all European flags took the decision to establish a consulate general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and appoint Henry Savage Yeames as consul general. At this point we have to mention that formal British consular service -as product of the economic and state-building conditions of the eighteenth century- began in 1825. However British government had various persons performing consular duties during eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁸⁰

In any case the implementation of the decision of British government to accept the appointment of Henry Savage Yeames as consul general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea –especially during the early years of the establishment of the consulate general–met with many negative reactions from various institutional bodies of British empire’s bureaucracy; reactions related not only to where the seat of the consulate should be, as discussed above, but also to the very necessity of establishing in the first place a consulate general in the Black Sea, as well as to the extent of the consular powers of Henry Savage Yeames himself. Most reactions to the establishment of the consulate general at the port of Odessa and the appointment of Yeames to that post came from Yeames’ colleague in St. Petersburg, consul general Stephen Shairp, an initially strong supporter of Yeames’ request to undertake the position of consul in the Black Sea.

To begin with, Stephen Shairp was aware of the great commercial potential of the Black Sea and its ports and consequently of their future importance for the British trade. He was also aware of the fact that British shipping was still in his infancy and had *scarce appeared in any place but Odessa*, whereas on the other hand he had *reason to believe that the Russian government wished that city to be the deposit for the produce of the Polish Provinces and that Part of Russia bordering on Poland*;

¹⁸⁰ D. C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service: British Consuls since 1825* (London, 1971). See also Nicole Marie Phelps, ‘Sovereignty, Citizenship, and the New Liberal Order: Us-Habsburg Relations and the Transformation of International Politics, 1880--1924,’ unpublished PhD thesis (University of Minnesota, 2008), 166.

*while Caffa or Theodosia [Feodosia] to be the deposit for the productions of the rich parts of the Empire which communicate by the Don.*¹⁸¹

Therefore Shairp was in no way opposed to the idea of establishing a consulate in the Black Sea, which according to him could serve and strengthen the British trade in the ports of New Russia. He even proposed to Lord Harrowby Odessa to be the place to host the seat of the British consulate and Henry Savage Yeames to be nominated as consul with his main responsibility being shipping and commercial issues, as well as to issue *certificates of neutrality* requested by foreigners and other certificates necessary for conducting trade by British merchants.¹⁸²

However, Shairp opposed the idea of establishing a consulate general and not just a simple consulate under his own jurisdiction and supervision. The apparent reason for his opposition was his strong belief that only the British consulate general in Saint Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Empire, was able to provide proper commercial, financial and administrative services and facilities to all British merchantmen wishing to do business in the Black Sea. To be more specific Shairp states in his letter to Lord Harrowby sent on November 9, 1804:

The nature of the commerce there [in the Black Sea] consisting chiefly in exports from Russia is such that the supplies and payments must be made in money or drawn from Saint Petersburg; and any application for effectual relief or general advantage must be made at the center of government; the civil and military officers on the Black Sea having merely local jurisdiction and are so totally independent of each other, that no place in those parts can be of sufficient consequence for an officer to reside in as Consul General, and have inspection over the other ports.¹⁸³

Be that as it may, we do believe that the real reason for Shairp's opposition to the establishment of a consulate general in the Black Sea was his fear that he would lose the exercise of his absolute jurisdiction across the Russian territory whereas the

¹⁸¹ TNA, FO 65/56, 9.11.1804, Shairp to Harrowby, f. 11r – 17v; TNA, FO 65/55, Chapman to Warren, f. 172r – 175v.

¹⁸² TNA, FO 65/56, 9.11.1804, Shairp to Harrowby, f. 11r – 17v.

¹⁸³ Op.Cit.

power of his own office would be diminished. Shairp knows very well that if Yeames takes the position of a consul general on the Black Sea with large administrative as well as diplomatic powers over the whole region of New Russia, this would result in a consul general operating in Odessa independently from his own office based in St. Petersburg.

Therefore Shairp could not do otherwise than to change totally his former positive view on Yeames' nomination even as a simple consul on the Black Sea.¹⁸⁴ He even decided to propose a new person for the post of consul in Odessa, the English merchant *John Cattley*. The latter was the first British merchant who decided to settle in Odessa and establish his own commercial house there.¹⁸⁵ Indicative is the letter Shairp sent to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Department, Lord Harrowby, on September 9, 1804:

When Sir J. B. Warren His Majesty's Ambassador [to the Russian Court of Saint Petersburg] first mentioned the idea of a nomination of consul on the Black Sea, I recommended Mr. Yeames, who had applied, and I thought he would have been named Consul only, at some particular place, subject to report to and communicate with me; his appointment of Consul General rather surprised me, and caused me to doubt whether he superseded my commission in the ports in the Black Sea, or not.¹⁸⁶

However, Henry Savage Yeames despite his official appointment as consul general had to face additional non-friendly reactions coming from another institution of the British bureaucracy that of the secretary of the civil government of Malta, *Edmund Chapman*, who was in close contact with Stephen Shairp during the early years of the establishment of the consulate general of the Russian ports in the Black Sea. In June 1804 Edmund Chapman, under instructions of the governor of Malta *Alexander Ball*, traveled to Odessa to purchase grain for the British garrison of Malta¹⁸⁷ and

¹⁸⁴ TNA, FO 65/56, 9.9.1804, Shairp to Harrowby, f. 14r – 16v.

¹⁸⁵ TNA, FO 65/56, 9.11.1804, Shairp to Harrowby, f. 11r – 17v; TNA, FO 65/56, Dispatch No.73, 9.09.1804, Warren to Harrowby, f. 6r – 8v.

¹⁸⁶ TNA, FO 65/56, 9.11.1804, Shairp to Harrowby, f. 11r – 17v.

¹⁸⁷ TNA, FO 65/55, Dispatch No.48, 26.06.1804, Warren to Harrowby, f. 169r – 171v; TNA, FO 65/56, Dispatch No.73, 9.09.1804, Warren to Harrowby, f. 6r – 8v.

stayed there until September 1805.¹⁸⁸ The decision of Yeames, as already stated above, to reside in Kherson had resulted Odessa to remain without British consular representation.

For Chapman this development was absolutely negative as a large number of British flag ships remained berthed in Odessa's quarantine without the supportive assistance of a British consul or at least vice-consul. As a consequence he took the initiative, without first informing Yeames, to ask the British ambassador to the Russian court Warren –an initiative which Stephen Shairp probably already knew and approved– for permission so that he could appoint a consul in Odessa, bypassing Yeames. The person Chapman wanted to nominate as consul was firstly the English merchant of Constantinople and member of Levant Company *Thomas Thornton*, who was already acting as commissioner of Malta's governor Alexander Ball in Odessa, whereas his second suggestion was identical to Shairp's one: John Cattley.¹⁸⁹

Yeames not wanting to add more fuel to flames took the decision to immediately nominate in May 1804 as vice-consul at Odessa *Antony Fortregger* in order to facilitate trade of British merchants and merchantmen that already were in Odessa or were going to arrive in the months to follow. Fortregger was of German origin but now a Russian subject, member of the Russian nobility, of excellent reputation, and fully accepted by the Russian commanders of New Russia and of course Odessa.¹⁹⁰ And what is interesting is that Chapman originally wanted Fortregger as vice-consul at Odessa, despite some objections on his German origin. However the fact that he was Yeames' suggestion seems to have led Chapman to change his mind and reject the appointment.¹⁹¹ Finally, Chapman decided to nominate Thornton as vice-consul in Odessa without seeking any other permission or even the opinion of Yeames, and

¹⁸⁸ Barry Hough, Howard Davis, Lydia Davis, *Coleridge's Laws: A Study of Coleridge in Malta* (Cambridge, 2010), 31-32. See also Gregory Desmond, *Malta, Britain, and the European Powers, 1793-1815* (New Jersey, 1996), 167, 203-204.

¹⁸⁹ TNA, FO 65/55, Dispatch No.48, 26.06.1804, Warren to Harrowby, f. 169r – 171v; For a brief biographical presentation of Thomas Thornton see Walsh, *Account of the Levant company*, 50.

¹⁹⁰ FO 65/55, 29.05.1804, Henry Savage Yeames to Chapman, f. 177r – 178v.

¹⁹¹ FO 65/55, 1.06.1804. Chapman to Warren, f. 172r – 175v; FO 65/55, 1.06.1804. Chapman to Henry Savage Yeames, f. 179r – 180v

Thornton in turn instructed all his vice-consular cases to one of his French agents in Odessa.¹⁹²

On May 30, 1804, Yeames strongly protested to Secretary of State for Foreign Department Lord Harrowby against Stephen Shairp and Edmund Chapman's decision to get involved in the affairs of his consulate general without having any jurisdiction for this.¹⁹³ What Yeames wanted from British government was a reassertion of his duties and responsibilities as consul general on the Russian ports of the Black Sea. But London probably because of the Napoleonic Wars and the limited presence of British trade in the Black Sea seems to have neglected to clarify the issue. This non-clear, fluid situation fraught with uncertainty remained as such for a long time and led Yeames to come up with a new request for clarification to the new British Minister of Foreign Affairs *Charles James Fox*. On June 25, 1806, Yeames asked the British government to define once and for all his consular duties as well as the administrative relationship of his own consulate general with the one in Saint Petersburg.¹⁹⁴

However, once again the political, economic and military developments in Russia and Europe would not allow the clarification of the duties of Yeames. Tsar Alexander I decides that Russia would not renew her commercial treaty with England, which was ending on March 25, 1807;¹⁹⁵ a development which caused the British merchants in the Baltic and the Black Seas major problems with their commercial transactions.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, on October 26, 1807, the Russian government –after having signed a peace treaty at Tilsit with Bonaparte– decided to declare war on the United Kingdom.¹⁹⁷ Thus, the British trade in Odessa and the Black Sea will be stopped from October 1807 until summer 1812, when Britain and Russia sign a new peace treaty

¹⁹² TNA, FO 65/55, 30.05.1804, Henry Savage Yeames to Harrowby, f. 240r – 243v.

¹⁹³ TNA, FO 65/55, 30.05.1804, Henry Savage Yeames to Harrowby, f. 240r – 243v.

¹⁹⁴ TNA, FO 65/66, 25.06.1806, Henry Savage Yeames to Fox, f. 10r – 11v.

¹⁹⁵ Arnold D. Harvey, *Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1978), 192.

¹⁹⁶ TNA, FO 65/68, Dispatch No.4, 6.02.1807, Marquis of Douglas to Viscount Howick, f. 99r – 118v; Dispatch No.11, 7.03.1807, Marquis of Douglas to Viscount Howick, f. 173r – 190v; Dispatch No.13, 19.03.1807, Marquis of Douglas to Viscount Howick, f. 196r – 201v.

¹⁹⁷ TNA, FO 65/70, Dispatch No.36, 8.11.1807, Gower to Canning, f. 263r – 274v; FO 65/73, 2.12.1807, Canning to Lords of the Admiralty, f. 167r – 168v. See also Anthony Cross, *Peter the Great Through British Eyes: Perceptions and Representations of the Tsar Since 1698* (Cambridge, 2000), 103.

(*Treaty of Orebro* – 18 July 1812) settling their various mutual political, economic and trade disputes.¹⁹⁸

Almost immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Orebro Henry Savage Yeames, who had left Odessa and was residing in Saint Petersburg during the war time, decided to return to the issue of the consulate general on the Black Sea and requested permission to return to Odessa as consul general, whereas on the other hand was asking his consular powers to be precisely defined. To be more specific, Yeames states in his letter sent to *Viscount Castlereagh*, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on August 20, 1812:

By an Imperial rescript, we are informed that the peace between Great Britain and Russia is signed; I am therefore preparing to return to my station at Odessa, in order to be in readiness immediately to execute my orders, with which I may be honored; I therefore take the liberty of soliciting from Your Lordship instructions how to proceed. Anxiously desirous of reassuming the duties of my office, and of forwarding to the best of my abilities, any views the British Government may have on the Black Sea, I earnestly make Your Lordship, the humble offer of my services.¹⁹⁹

And indeed, after several failed attempts made by Yeames, British government with Prince Regent George IV's assent decided to uphold the reappointment of Henry Savage Yeames as consul general of Britain in the Russian ports on the Black Sea.²⁰⁰ Furthermore the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, *Henry Bathurst*, asked the minister plenipotentiary of the British embassy at Saint Petersburg, *Lord Walpole*, to immediately request the approval of the Russian authorities for the reappointment of Yeames as British consul general in Odessa.²⁰¹ Thus, on July 19, 1814, Henry Savage Yeames returned to Odessa and resumed the exercise of his duties as consul general, this time however with all his duties and responsibilities fully defined, without interference and obstacles in the exercise of his office by other

¹⁹⁸ Chapman, *Imperial Russia, 1801-1905*, 2-35.

¹⁹⁹ TNA, FO 65/81, 20.08.1812, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh, f. 287r – 288v.

²⁰⁰ TNA, FO 65/92, 9.11.1813, James Yeames to Hamilton.

²⁰¹ TNA, FO 65/94, 14.04.1814, Bathurst to Walpole.

institutions beyond those of the British ambassador to the Russian court and the ministers of the British foreign office.²⁰²

2.4 Duties and challenges of Yeames as consul general (1803-1819)

2.4.1 Yeames' consulship from 1803 to 1812

Henry Savage Yeames had been appointed British consul general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea on June 23, 1803. However, as mentioned in the previous section of the present chapter, it took almost eleven years since the establishment of the consulate for the duties of Yeames to be precisely and in detail defined. What emerges from our study in the British National Archives in Kew Gardens, in London, is that Yeames took charge of a newly established consulate general and during the first years of his consulship, from 1803 up to 1812, had to face great challenges and overcome major problems and difficulties, which made consulate's administration and daily operation rather problematic from the very first moment.

But, what are the main factors and reasons that made the administration and operation of the British consulate general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea problematic? As already stated in the previous sections of the present chapter, (a) despite the fact that the consulate was established in June 1803, for a long time (for a period of almost two years) there was no fixed seat for it. The result was the latter to be transferred from one Russian port city to another; from the port of Kherson to Odessa, and then to Feodosia in the Crimean Peninsula and then back to Kherson and finally to Odessa. Thus with such a lack of stable seat for the consulate the attempt of Yeames to facilitate British trade in the Black Sea and to assist and protect British citizens and subjects wanting to settle or conduct business in New Russia proved to be highly problematic.

Furthermore, (b) from the very first moment the consulate general and Yeames himself had to face the underlying and sometimes even the straight rivalry by the British consulate general in Saint Petersburg, Stephen Shairp, as well as by several

²⁰² TNA, FO 65/93, 1.12.1814, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

other institutional bodies of the British imperial bureaucracy, who wished to limit the consular powers of Yeames to their own advantage. But as we have already seen, despite Yeames' strong reactions against this undermining of his consular power the political, economic and military developments in Russia and Europe would not yet allow the complete clarification of his duties and powers.

However, (c) apart from the rivalry experienced by British officials and amid his efforts to support the British interests and establish a foundation for a fruitful future for British commerce in New Russia, Yeames had to deal also with the threatening presence of French merchants in the Black Sea. The latter were "very active with a view to exclude [British] merchants entirely from a participation of commercial benefits in that part of the World."²⁰³ Indicative for these attempts of French – always under Napoleon directions– to limit or even block the development and growth of British maritime trade in the Black Sea is what the British ambassador to the Russian court John Borlase Warren states in one of his letters sent to the British foreign minister in London Lord Hawkesbury, on January 1, 1803:

It has been a principal object with the First Consul to endeavor to establish a commerce in the Black Sea; for which purpose the French have already two houses, on account of their government, fixed at Odessa; and have named consuls in every port on the coast; they have endeavored by every means to throw obstacles in the way of British ships navigating that sea, by their intrigues at the Porte; and also in persuading Russia that France and Spain alone are capable of furnishing all the necessary articles such as wine, soap, silk stuffs, wanted by Russia in her Southern Provinces; and that these two countries together with Italy, will consume all the produce of Russia that can be sent by that channel; and particularly naval stores, masts, timber, hemp and iron.²⁰⁴

In addition to all these problems, (d) Yeames had to face also the immediate consequences of a very negative development for the British trade not only in the

²⁰³ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.01.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury.

²⁰⁴ Op. cit.

Black Sea but in the entire Russian Empire. The existing, since 1797 and the reign of Tsar Paul I, Anglo-Russian commercial treaty would expire on March 21, 1807.²⁰⁵ Contrary to the expressed wish of London for an immediate renewal of the treaty and despite British government's indirect threats for not granting loan to Russia in her war against Bonaparte (a loan to be granted actually by the members of the Russia Company), the final decision of Russian government and Tsar Alexander I himself was not to renew the expired treaty. This development, as expected, posed many obstacles and caused major problems in the British trade across Russia and certainly in British maritime trade and presence in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.²⁰⁶

Be that as it may, (e) Henry Savage Yeames, and of course British merchants trading in Russia, had to deal not only with the difficulties brought about by the refusal of Tsar Alexander I to renew or even prolong the expired Anglo-Russian commercial treaty, but also with major obstacles in the exercise of their commercial activity caused by the tsarist manifest (*ukase*) published on January 1, 1807.²⁰⁷ With the said manifest Russian government was aiming to settle the issues of trade as well as of the commercial classes in Russia and to correct distortions and injustices against large number of its own subjects arising from the previously existing privileges of foreign traders, mainly of British. Indeed, Tsar Alexander I himself during a discussion he had with the British ambassador Marquis of Douglas "that he considered the late *ukase* [manifest], as an act of justice towards a respectable body of his subjects, who until now had laboured under disadvantages."²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ TNA, FO 65/78, Dispatch No.5, 24.07.1812, Castlereagh to Cathcart, f. 21r – 22v.

²⁰⁶ TNA, FO 65/66, 29.08.1806, Edward Forster to Grenville, f. 229r – 230v; FO 65/68, Dispatch No.11, 7.03.1807, Marquis of Douglas to Howick, f. 173r – 190v; FO 65/69, Dispatch No.4, 16.05.1807, Canning to Lord Granville, f. 34r – 46v; See also David Longley, *Longman Companion to Imperial Russia, 1689-1917* (London, 2014), 270.

²⁰⁷ TNA, FO 65/68, Dispatch No.3, 6.02.1807, Marquis of Douglas to Viscount Howick, f. 99r – 118v; Dispatch No.11, 7.03.1807, Marquis of Douglas to Viscount Howick, f. 173r – 190v. For an English translation of the Russian manifest of 1 January 1807 see: TNA, FO 65/81, f. 167r – 175v; 18.07.1812, "Remarks on the late commercial treaty between Britain and Russia, and on the Imperial Russian Manifest of the 1st January 1807," f. 176r – 183v.

²⁰⁸ TNA, FO 65/68, Dispatch No.13, 19.03.1807, Marquis of Douglas to Viscount Howick, f. 196r – 201v.

What were the main negative consequences of the manifest for British merchants in Russia? (a) Obligation to register as “foreign guests” in the commercial guilds of Russia and pay consequently very high taxes on their capital; (b) no possibility of holding real estate; (c) advance tax payment for three years when they wanted to leave Russia or their guild; (d) inability to carry out wholesale trade; (e) in case a British merchant wishes to leave Russia and settle back to Britain he should leave all his business’ capital and funds in Russia and additionally he has to pay a ten per cent tax on his total capital so as to be free to leave the country; (f) British merchants registered as “foreign guests” are prevented by the manifest from establishing themselves elsewhere than in the Russian sea ports, and (g) last but not least they were forbidden to sell products to the Russian mainland or buy the production of the Russian mainland.²⁰⁹

In fact, it seems that the main objective of Russian government through the manifest of January 1, 1807, was to diminish the dominant presence of the British and their capital in the Russian trade, which threatened the very existence of domestic merchants, by posing insuperable obstacles to the exercise of their trading activity in the Russian Empire unless they decided to give up their British identity and citizenship and become Russian subjects. According to the British ambassador to the Russian court of Saint Petersburg, Lord Walpole:

Besides an irritated feeling of jealousy against Great Britain, the principal object proposed by Count Romanzoff seems to have been the acquisition of foreign capital employed in commerce with this country [Russia], by forcing foreign merchants to become Russian subjects or to retire from any interference in the trade except under all the hardships and unjust taxes to be imposed upon the foreign guest. [...] Though apparently applicable to all nations in general, its effect bore only upon British subjects, their competitors were for the most part Germans, men of no capital, generally of

²⁰⁹ TNA, FO 65/98, Dispatch No.11, 20.04.1815, Walpole to Castlereagh; FO 65/68, Dispatch No.11, 7.03.1807, Marquis of Douglas to Viscount Howick, f. 173r – 190v; See also, Charles Clark, *The Russia Traders Assistant, containing information concerning Russian monies, weights and measures* (London, 1841), 14-20.

bad character, and from the political circumstances of the time, attached to no country, eager to embrace the character of Russian subjects [...].²¹⁰

Finally, the last but not least factor that made administration and operation of the British consulate general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea problematic is the following (f): the consulate general in the Black Sea under Yeames' administration was forced –as mentioned earlier– to suspend its operation for nearly six years because of the outbreak of the Anglo-Russian war in September 1807, occurring just a few months after the capitulation of Russia and France at Tilsit, in July. This suspension led to an almost freezing –during the period from 1807 to 1812– of all diplomatic, economic and of course trade relations between the two countries. Thus, within this absolute fluid, difficult, unstable, with large uncertainties and great challenges environment Henry Savage Yeames was called upon to exercise his consular duties in the Black Sea.²¹¹

But before proceeding to the presentation of Henry Savage Yeames' consular duties, let us first mention the general duties that British, European as well as American consuls, in general, had during eighteenth and nineteenth century.²¹² Nicole Marie Phelps outlines the wider context of consular duties of the said period:

European and American consular services followed a common trend from the eighteenth century through World War I. They began with the same, rather limited, agenda: to facilitate international trade and to assist merchants and sailors. In this capacity, they invoiced cargo and certified its contents and value for tariff purposes, assisted in legal actions relating to piracy and seizure, informed merchants and ship captains of local conditions and regulations, and provided legal and financial assistance to sailors in peril. British consuls also provided intelligence about foreign shipbuilding and naval movements to the British navy. Given the nature of these duties, consular

²¹⁰ TNA, FO 65/98, Dispatch No.11, 20.04.1815, Walpole to Castlereagh.

²¹¹ *The European Magazine and London Review*, Volume 65 (London, 1814), 61.

²¹² On the historical background to consular relations and consular service and duties see B. Sen, *A Diplomats' handbook of international law and practice* (Dordrecht, 1988), 243-245. See also Lloyd Jones, *The Consular Service of the United States. Its History and Activities* (Philadelphia 1906), 36-58; Leos Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce. The Swedish Consular Service and Long-distance Shipping, 1720-1815* (Uppsala, 2004).

posts were primarily at ports. Over time, [however] trade promotion was added to the list of duties – not only were consuls supposed to assist with extant trade, but they were actively supposed to seek out opportunities for expanding trade, reporting local conditions and potential opportunities to businessmen and merchants at home. Consuls also assisted in lobbying for legal changes that would result in increased trade, such as reduction in tariffs.²¹³

Thus these were the general tasks that European and American consuls had during the exercise of their duties during the said period.²¹⁴ Of course we should point out that during late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century what is generally observed is “the almost complete lack of formal instruction and training [of the consuls].”²¹⁵ Furthermore we need to add what Ferry de Goey states in his book on consuls and institutions of global capitalism:

Although consuls received a copy of the existing consular regulations of their country when they were appointed, their precise function and duties depended on where they were posted. In 1842 Lord Palmerston (1784-1865) explained that ‘the duties varied according to the place and the country in which the consul had to act, and from time to time, according to the circumstances under which he might be placed.’”²¹⁶

Thus, within this framework presented by Ferry de Goey should Yeames’ consulship to be studied in order to be understood. Let us now focus on Yeames’ initial duties as assigned to him by British government. According to a letter sent by Yeames to Charles James Fox, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on June 25, 1806, his main duty was “the execution of [British] Government orders for supplying with provisions

²¹³ See Phelps, ‘Sovereignty, Citizenship, and the New Liberal Order,’ 166-167. See also Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, 7.

²¹⁴ On the numerous duties of British consuls in general see also E. W. A. Tuson, *The British Consul’s Manual; being a Practical Guide for Consuls, as well as for the Merchant, Shipowner, and Master Mariner in all their consular transactions* (London, 1856), 8-121. On British consular representation in the Aegean and the role of Levant Company see Lucia Patrizio Gunning, *The British Consular Service in the Aegean and the Collection of Antiquities for the British Museum* (London, 2009), Ch.1.

²¹⁵ Ferry de Goey, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism*, 17.

²¹⁶ Op.Cit., 12.

and naval stores His Majesty's Garrisons and navy in the Mediterranean [and] that at a future period, other advantages would be granted."²¹⁷ A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch

Consequently it appears clear that the main responsibility of Yeames during the early years of the existence of the consulate was to facilitate trade for British and non-British vessels sailing to or from the Russian ports of the Black Sea (namely the ports of Odessa, Kherson, Feodosia, and Taganrog) to Gibraltar, Egypt and Malta, with the latter being emerged as the military, political and administrative center of British Empire in the Mediterranean during the Napoleonic Wars.²¹⁸ To be more specific, Yeames following the orders of London put himself at the disposal of all British merchants and merchantmen sailing under British and non-British flags and wishing to operate commercially in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov by getting involved in the valuable timber-, naval stores-, salt provisions- and corn-trade in the ports of New Russia;²¹⁹ a trade –as stated very aptly by British ambassador to the Russian court Warren– “of great importance to a British fleet or army, from being so near when acting against any French force in the Mediterranean, as well as for the supply of our Garrisons there.”²²⁰

Clearly, Yeames because of his own prior business activity in the Black Sea, mainly in the regions of Odessa and Kherson, had a very good knowledge of most of the tradeable and exportable goods of New Russia, which were absolutely valuable for the British in the Mediterranean.²²¹ As a result he has managed to emerge as one of the best Black Sea market connoisseur and a good intermediary between British

²¹⁷ TNA, FO 65/66, 25.06.1806, Henry Savage Yeames to Fox, f. 10r – 11v.

²¹⁸ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.01.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury; 24.05.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury. The island of Malta became a protectorate of the British Crown during the wars against Napoleon after the failures of the Knights of Saint John, republican France, the Two Sicilies, and finally imperial Russia to fill the role of its best defender, indicative see: Desmond, *Malta, Britain, and the European Powers, 1793-1815*. For the importance of Malta for the British interests in the Mediterranean and as far as in the Indian subcontinent see also, TNA, FO 65/53, Dispatch No.71, 23.12.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury, f. 478r – 484v.

²¹⁹ TNA, FO 65/66, 25.06.1806, Henry Savage Yeames to Fox, f. 10r – 11v.

²²⁰ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.01.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury. See also FO 65/53, Dispatch No.48, 16.09.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury, f. 178r – 180v; FO 65/66, 25.06.1806, Henry Savage Yeames to Fox, f. 10r – 11v.

²²¹ TNA, FO 65/66, 25.06.1806, Henry Savage Yeames to Fox, f. 10r – 11v; FO 65/71, 1.01.1807, Henry Savage Yeames to Canning, f. 142r – 168v.

merchants and Russian sellers.²²² However, he had to confront and overcome small and larger obstacles in the daily exercise of his consular duties. Some of these obstacles are mentioned by him in one of his early reports sent to British ambassador to Saint Petersburg Warren:

A vast field offers itself there [in Odessa and Kherson] for enterprise, but the best founded, must prove abortive; from the many incompetencies attending trade in this part of the Empire: from the total want of mercantile regulations and even the common conveniences of trade; want of Justice, in general; abuse of power and oppression, and the absolute non existence of credit, or common confidence of man to man.²²³

Furthermore, consul general Henry Savage Yeames highlights the absence of brokers, which makes his efforts to facilitate export trade from the Russian ports of the Black Sea extremely difficult. He also mentions the lack of barges and dragels to load or unload vessels and to transport goods between the ports of Odessa, Kherson and those in the Crimean Peninsula. Furthermore, he stresses the lack of adequate public warehouses in the Russian ports, even in Odessa, and the presence, on the other hand, of insufficient private ones.²²⁴

Despite dealing with all these problems, difficulties and challenges Henry Savage Yeames tried to perform his duties as consul general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea in the best possible way. However, he would have only four years available to carry out his main work for victualling the Royal Navy and the British garrisons in the Mediterranean with Russian Black Sea products, as we saw mainly with timber and corn. This is because the already mentioned non-renewal of the Anglo-Russian trade treaty, expired in March 1807, and the outbreak of the Anglo-Russian war, which took place a few months later in September 1807, forced Yeames to leave the port

²²² For the reports of Henry Savage Yeames regarding Black Sea exportable products, mainly from the regions of Odessa, Kherson and Taganrog, see: TNA, FO 65/52, 1.01.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury; FO 65/55, 30.05.1804, Henry Savage Yeames to Harrowby, f. 240r – 243v. On Yeames' deep knowledge of Russian Black Sea trade, see his letter sent to Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: TNA, FO 65/88, 22.06.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

²²³ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.01.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury.

²²⁴ Op.Cit.

of Odessa, the seat of the British consulate general since 1805, for the more safe and secure for him capital of the Russian Empire Saint Petersburg.²²⁵ This decision of Yeames, imposed actually by the Anglo-Russian war events, resulted in the suspension of the operation of the consulate for the next seven years, whereas on the other hand it led to an almost total cessation of British maritime commerce in the Russian Black Sea.²²⁶

2.4.2 Yeames' consulship from 1812 to 1819

With the signing of the Anglo-Russian peace treaty of Orebro, on July 18, 1812, diplomatic and economic Anglo-Russian relations have entered a stage of rapid improvement.²²⁷ Within this new context of friendship and alliance the regularity for the British consulate general in Odessa would once again return in June 1814 when both British government and Russian senate approved the reappointment of Yeames back to his office of consul general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea, with Odessa still being consulate' seat.²²⁸ Thus, Henry Savage Yeames will resume his duties as British Majesty's consul general in the Black Sea, but this time with clearer instructions as to the exercise of his renewed consulship and the extent of his powers.

And what were the instructions given to Yeames by British government related to his renewed consulship? The answer lies in a letter dispatched to Yeames by the minister plenipotentiary and secretary of the British embassy in Saint Petersburg, Lord Walpole, on June 30, 1814.²²⁹ What is written in the said letter?

Your former situation at Odessa renders it unnecessary for me to give you any particular instructions for your guidance, as His Majesty's Consul General,

²²⁵ TNA, FO 65/88, 22.06.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

²²⁶ For the difficulties encountered by British merchants (members of Russia Company) in Russia, indicative see: TNA, FO 65/75, Canning to Members of the Board of the Russian Company, f. 17r – 21v; FO 65/78, Dispatch No.1, 2.07.1812, Castlereagh to Cathcart, f. 1r – 12v. For the problems encountered by British merchants in Odessa, with their products being seized at Russian customs, indicative see: TNA, FO 65/75, 5.04.1809, Baring, Mair & Co. to Spencer Perceval, f. 30r – 31v.

²²⁷ John Furneaux, *An Abridged History of the Principal Treaties of Peace* (London, 1837), 340.

²²⁸ TNA, FO 65/94, Dispatch No.28, 8.07.1814, Walpole to Castlereagh.

²²⁹ TNA, FO 65/94, Dispatch No.1, 30.06.1814, Walpole to Henry Savage Yeames.

but I have to require that you will regularly transmit for the information of His Majesty's Mission at this Court, lists of the exports, imports to and from the ports and places in which you are authorized to act as Consul General, together with copies of all such other commercial reports, as you may from time to time address to His Majesty's Government at home, or conceive advantageous to his interests to be made known to his Ambassador at St. Petersburg.²³⁰

You are fully aware of the great difference existing between the commercial system established in the ports of the Black Sea, and that adopted in other parts of the Russian Empire; it is now desirable, that the details of this difference, together with the regulations followed, should be transmitted to His Majesty's Government;²³¹ and as great changes have undoubtedly happened there, I have to recommend to your attentive observation the increase or diminution of the commercial relations of foreign nations with that part of the Empire; the state and cultivation of the country in the neighborhood of Odessa, particularly as to what regards the corn trade, which have reason to believe is yearly decreasing.²³²

Any information, which you may be enabled to obtain relative to the intention of the countries bordering on the Euxine [Black Sea], regarding

²³⁰ The consul general was obliged to collect from the Russian authorities (e.g. custom houses, local governments and ministries) all the necessary information relating to import and export trade of all Russian ports in the Black Sea in order to create reliable statistical series and send them to the British ambassador in Saint Petersburg for his information and consequently for the information of British government. Indicative for the statistical series of the consulate in Odessa and their sources of information, see: TNA, FO 359/1.

²³¹ Yeames was obliged to inform British ambassador to the Russian court as well as the Foreign Office on the commercial system (e.g. tariff policy, other commercial regulations etc.) established in the port cities of the Black Sea, which was totally different from the one in force in the Baltic and absolutely essential for British merchantmen who wished to conduct maritime trade business in the Russian Black Sea. TNA, FO 65/88, 15.06.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh; FO 65/114, Dispatch No.39, 8.08.1818, Earl Cathcart to Castlereagh.

²³² Yeames was responsible for preparing special reports on the commercial realities (e.g. agricultural production and cultivated lands, mainly with cereals, in the provinces adjacent to Odessa) and trade opportunities in the Black Sea as well as (c) on the growth prospects of British maritime trade in New Russia, reports that would be sent to London as well. Indicative see the report of Henry Savage Yeames sent to Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, which refers to trade in the Russian Black Sea ports with emphasis on Dnieper River. The report is entitled "The navigation of the Dnieper": TNA, FO 65/90, 18.02.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

them in a Commercial point of view, their productions, or the state of its ports, it cannot but be acceptable to His Majesty's Government.²³³

It is also worth mentioning that over the years Yeames as consul general assumed more duties and responsibilities. For example, after 1814-1815 and the integration of the Ionian Islands and Malta in the colonial possessions of Great Britain in the Mediterranean, Yeames applied for and received from British Foreign Office the permission to assist and protect the numerous Ionians and Maltese who traded in Odessa and to grant them passports when necessary.²³⁴ Furthermore, he had been instructed from British Foreign Office to report regularly on a wide range of subjects: from developments in the Russian land trade routes and the Russian Black Sea ports' infrastructure to the procedures for entry and exit of goods from the Russian custom houses and the penalties imposed by Russian authorities in cases of fraud.²³⁵

Consequently, what we can clearly say is that the role of Yeames as consul general in the Black Sea was not at all easy or decorative. He had to be very careful, attentive, perceptive, and typical in the performance of his growing duties. And indeed Henry Savage Yeames was extremely successful in the exercise of his duties.²³⁶

However, because of the said wide range of duties and responsibilities undertaken and in order to handle the gradual increasing workload of the consulate general, Henry Savage Yeames was soon forced to seek permission from the British government to appoint a vice consul who would assist him in the execution of his consular duties. As a result, on February 17, 1815, Foreign Office informs Yeames

²³³ Yeames had to inform London on the commercial intrigues, plans and presence of other nations' flags in the Russian ports of the Black Sea. His duties included also the obligation to send regularly to British government reports with information on the agricultural production, commerce, and the state of ports of the countries bordering the Black Sea, with emphasis given in the eastern Black Sea coast (Georgia). TNA, FO 65/94, Dispatch No.1, 30.06.1814, Walpole to Henry Savage Yeames.

²³⁴ TNA, FO 65/93, 1.12.1814, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh; FO 65/99, 17.02.1815, Foreign Office to Henry Savage Yeames. On the British protection over Ionian Islands see Chapter Four.

²³⁵ TNA, FO 65/99, 21.05.1815, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

²³⁶ TNA, FO 65/117, Dispatch No.9, 13.02.1819, Earl Cathcart to Castlereagh, 'I feel it my duty to represent to Your Lordship that the appointment and constant residence of a respectable public functionary at Odessa appears to me to be of very great importance to the commercial interests of Great Britain, and in a peculiar degree to that of the traders from the Ionian Islands, who very frequently stand in need of protection. The late Mr. Yeames was well known and generally respected, was a very useful correspondent from that quarter, and afforded great hospitality and facilities to British travelers and merchants having business in the south of the Empire or occasion to pass the Black Sea.'

that his request to appoint his oldest son *James Yeames* as his vice consul in Odessa had been accepted. Thus, James Yeames, hitherto employed by the governor of Malta to supply the island with cereals, became the third British vice consul in the Black Sea (with the first vice consul being Anthony Fortregger and the second one Thomas Thornton as already stated in section 2.3 of present chapter), responsible for the ports of Kherson, Feodosia, and Taganrog.²³⁷

But Henry Savage Yeames would not appoint only his oldest son, James Yeames, as vice consul. Due to the significant rise of trade in the Azov Sea and because of his own obligation to remain in Odessa dealing with the increasing workload of the consulate general, he asked London's approval for appointment of his younger son, *William Yeames*, as vice-consul in Taganrog as well. And indeed, London will respond positively to Yeames' new request. According to a letter dispatched on February 28, 1818, from British Foreign Office to the British ambassador in Saint Petersburg, Earl Cathcart:

[...] having been represented to Lord Castlereagh [British Foreign Minister] that a considerable trade is now carrying on under the British flag at Taganrog on the Black Sea, and that it would be of great convenience to that trade, if a British vice consul is nominated to the above mentioned port, Lord Castlereagh has approved of the suggestion [of Henry Savage Yeames] and has appointed Mr. William Yeames, son of His Majesty Consul at Odessa, to be vice consul at the port of Taganrog.²³⁸

What is striking, however, is that while British government showed a good understanding for the range of all duties and responsibilities undertaken by Yeames and accepted consequently his requests for appointment of vice-consuls in order to assist him in his consulship, British Foreign Office did not, on the other hand, respond positively to Yeames' constant requests to receive a salary to cope with the

²³⁷ TNA, FO 65/93, 1.12.1814, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh; FO 65/99, 17.02.1815, Foreign Office to Henry Savage Yeames.

²³⁸ TNA, FO 65/112, 28.02.1818, Foreign Office to Earl Cathcart; see also, FO 65/117, Dispatch No.9, 13.02.1819, Earl Cathcart to Castlereagh.

financial demands of his office.²³⁹ The first formal request of Yeames for granting him a salary payment dates back to June 1813.²⁴⁰ More information on Yeames' request gives us his son, James Yeames, through his letter sent to *William Hamilton*, one of British Majesty's Under Secretaries of State, on July 26, 1813, a day after their own meeting in London:

The grant of a salary I fear was not sufficiently urged; an object of great importance to my father and becomes necessary for the duties of his office, even as Consul of Odessa, instead of Consul General of all the Russian ports in the Black Sea.

The Black Sea, Sir, and particularly Odessa, is now about to be the scene of vast trade and the source of great supplies for the Mediterranean; but no trade in any country requires the protection of a Consul than that in Odessa. The Duke de Richelieu, General Governor of the southern provinces of Russia, possesses very independent and extensive authority, consequently much depends on favor with him as likewise with the many subordinate authorities. Unfortunately justice is but too often only to be obtained there through influence and wrong frequently unredressed unless urged by personal interests. To support this influence and the dignity of a British Consul requires absolutely a state of living, which as a private individual my father would not adopt and which without a salary would be greatly injurious to his own private fortune. Besides, the custom of the Country requires the Consul's house to be open to all his countrymen and many other necessary expenses attend his office. My father has already suffered materially, having entirely lived on his own means, not being a mercantile man, or enjoying any emolument whatever from his post.

²³⁹ According to Ferry de Goey *most British consuls complained that they could not live off the state salary (if they received one)*. See Ferry de Goey, *(Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, 1783–1914, 16-17)*.

²⁴⁰ TNA, FO 65/88, 15.06.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh. On Yeames' constant request to receive a salary see also George F. Jewsbury, 'The Greek question. The view from Odessa 1815-1822,' *Cahiers du monde russe* (October-December, 1999), 751-762.

These, Sir, are the reasons, which induce my father humbly to submit his case to Lord Castlereagh.²⁴¹

But despite the urgency of Henry Savage Yeames' request and despite the large costs incurred in the exercise of the office of consul general the British government will respond to his request only after thirteen years, in 1826; or in other words seven years after his death in January 1819.²⁴² To be more specific the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, *Joseph Planta*, sent a letter to James Yeames, the new –since January 1819– British Consul General in the Black Sea, informing him that according to the new *Consular Advances Act 1825* (or *British Consular Act*), British government decided to grant him a salary.²⁴³ Thus, from January 1826 the British Consul General in Odessa will receive a salary for his services, without his living having to depend anymore on the tonnage fees received by the consulate.²⁴⁴

2.5 Concluding remarks

The Black Sea opened to the British as well as to other European flags in summer 1802. However, during the first months after its opening the number of British vessels entering the Black Sea was still insignificant. Be that as it may what is striking is that despite the limited British presence in the ports of New Russia a fierce competition launched among British merchants in Russian Empire –members of Russia Company– about who would take over the representation of British diplomatic and of course commercial and maritime interests in the Russian ports of the Black and the Azov Seas. As leading candidate emerged one of the most respectable British merchants of Saint Petersburg and member of Russia Company

²⁴¹ TNA, FO 65/91, 26.07.1813, James Yeames to William Hamilton.

²⁴² John Gadsby, *A Trip to Sebastopol: Out and Home by Way of Vienna, the Danube, Odessa, Constantinople, and Athens. Together with Some Account of Russia and the Russians, Their Manners and Customs, Particulars and Incidents of the War, Anecdotes, etc.* (London, 1858), 152.

²⁴³ On the *Consular Advances Act 1825 c. 87* and the reorganization of British career consular service see Sen, *A Diplomats' handbook of international law and practice*, 245.

²⁴⁴ TNA, FO 65/160, 31.01.1826, Planta to James Yeames.

Henry Savage Yeames, who in June 1803 managed to be appointed as British consul general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

During the first period of Henry Savage Yeames' incumbency as consul general, that is from the year 1803 to 1812, he had to face many problems, challenges and difficulties; sometimes insurmountable difficulties. To begin with despite the fact that the consulate was established in June 1803, for a period of almost two years there was no fixed seat for it. The result was the latter to be transferred from one Russian port city to another, causing major problems to the smooth conduct of the British trade in Russian ports. Finally in 1805 British government decided to select Odessa as the permanent seat of the consulate. Furthermore, from the very first moment Yeames had to face the underlying and sometimes even the straight rivalry by his colleague, the British consulate general in Saint Petersburg, Stephen Shairp, as well as by several other institutional bodies of the British imperial bureaucracy, who wished to limit his consular powers to their own advantage. In addition to all these, Yeames had to face also the threatening presence of French merchants in the Black Sea, with the latter aiming at blocking the development and growth of British maritime trade in the ports of New Russia. On the other hand he had to deal with major difficulties brought about by the refusal of Tsar Alexander I to renew or even prolong the expired on March 21, 1807, Anglo-Russian commercial treaty.

Thus, within this fluid, with large uncertainties and great challenges environment Henry Savage Yeames was called upon to exercise his consular duties in the Black Sea. But his sincere efforts to facilitate British trade in the Black Sea and to assist and protect British citizens and subjects wanting to settle or conduct business in New Russia proved to be highly problematic. The British trade was growing –as we are going to see in the chapter to follow– but really very slowly and certainly not with the growth rates of other European flags like the French one.

However, during the second period of Henry Savage Yeames' incumbency as Britain's consul general in Odessa, which begins in 1813 and goes on until his death in January 1819, he managed to become a dominant institutional person of British Empire in the Black Sea with a leading role in the protection and development of British

commerce and merchantmen in the port cities of New Russia. Yeames as consul general became a valuable person for the British government and British merchants who wanted to do business in the Black Sea. And the reason was that he knew the whole Black Sea region and its people rather well and managed to inform British merchants (either British citizens or subjects, like the Ionians or Maltese) as well as British officials in London and elsewhere with validity and reliability on a whole range of commercial, administrative and diplomatic issues.

Indeed, Henry Savage Yeames due to his strong ties with the Russian and British courts, his personality and methodical work managed to make the British consulate general in Odessa a success and most important a family affair with him remaining the head of the consulate and his sons (James and William Yeames) undertaking the task to assist him with their physical presence as vice consuls in the developing Russian ports of the Black and Azov Seas. Thus, we could say that the successful operation of the British consulate general in Odessa during the period from 1812 up to 1819 and the growth of British trade in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov during the said period –as we are going to see in Chapter Three– was definitely based on Henry Savage Yeames’ personal abilities and his initiative to build a strong family consular network in the whole Russian Black Sea region.

CHAPTER THREE

British-flag merchantmen in Russian Black Sea ports (1802-1819)

3.1 Introduction

Black Sea came back once again to the British foreground due to the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774. It was then that British government began to fully realize the great significance of Black Sea to its various colonial and economic interests in the broad region of the Levant, Middle East and the Indian sub-continent. And most important, the decades that followed the Russo-Turkish War allowed London to grasp the importance of Black Sea to develop a profitable and valuable trade primarily of shipbuilding timber and secondly of grain to meet the growing needs of British forces and garrisons in the Mediterranean, especially during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815).

After several British attempts and retractions, as described in detail in the first chapter of the book the Sublime Porte of the Ottoman Empire decides the final and formal opening of the Black Sea to all flags in summer of 1802, with the Russian, Austrian, Venetian and Ragusan flags having already acquired the right of free navigation in the Black Sea since the decades of 1770 and 1780. To the British flag the Black Sea opened on July 23, 1802, but it took a couple of months for British vessels to start passing the Bosphorus and enter the Black Sea. To be more specific, as mentioned in the second chapter, the first British vessel called the *Argo* that belonged to the British ambassador to the Sublime Porte Lord of Elgin sailed up the Bosphorus the sixth of November 1802 and entered the Black Sea on the next day. Thus, on November 7, 1802 begins officially the entrance of British flag vessels in the Black Sea and consequently the gradual penetration of British merchantmen in the latter and the development of British maritime trade in the ports of New Russia.

Certainly the opening of Black Sea to British flag did not signal any immediate or explosive growth of British trade in New Russia's ports. In contrast, during the first decade of nineteenth century British maritime trade in Russian Black Sea ports, as

we are going to see in the present chapter, was rather limited compared to trade conducted under the flags of Russia or Austria for example. Be that as it may, a fierce competition launched among members of Russia Company about who would take over the representation of British diplomatic and primarily commercial interests in the Russian ports of the Black Sea.

What was the reason for such a development? The reason was that the Black Sea appeared to British merchants in Russia and Britain as a very promising area that could cover Britain's needs in grain and timber at competitive prices. Moreover, as we have seen in detail in the previous chapter, the establishment of the British consulate general in the Russian Black Sea was one prerequisite for the future development and growth of British trade in New Russia, given the absence in many of the ports of New Russia of all those necessary infrastructure that existed in many of the ports of central and western Europe and given as well the various operational and organizational problems faced by British merchants and merchantmen in their dealings with the authorities and indigenous tradesmen of Russia.

Thus, having presented in the previous second chapter the early British presence in the Russian ports of the Black Sea by studying the British consular establishment in the latter, our aim in this chapter is to go one step further and study the British maritime and commercial penetration and presence in the Russian Black Sea. The present chapter covers the years from 1802 and the formal opening of Black Sea to all European flags up to 1819. The year 1819 is a milestone in the history of British presence in the Russian Black Sea. And the reason is that at the beginning of 1819 (January) dies Henry Savage Yeames, the first British consul general in the Russian ports of the Black and the Azov Seas, signaling the end of the era of the early British presence in the region. Furthermore, in August of the same year launched officially the operation of the port and city of Odessa as a free port; an important development that signaled major growth opportunities and prospects for the British as well as for the most of merchant flags already operating or wishing to operate in the Russian Black Sea. But these growth opportunities and prospects will be examined in more detail in the chapter to follow.

The present chapter is divided into two main parts. The first one is presenting the development and growth of British maritime trade in the Russian ports of the Black Sea during the very first years after the opening of the latter to the British flag, namely from 1802 up to 1812, and the signing of the Treaty of Orebro that put an end to the Anglo-Russian War of 1807-1812. The second part is covering the years from 1813, and the settlement of the various Anglo-Russian political, economic and trade disputes, up to 1819 and the declaration of a free port in Odessa.

Finally, before we move on to the presentation of the development of British maritime trade in the Russian Black Sea we have to state that when we are talking about *British maritime trade* we are referring to *merchantmen under British flag* trading in the ports of New Russia. Furthermore we have to note that we do not have a lot of quantitative data for British trade during the period of 1802-1819 for various reasons as we are going to see in the following pages. However, we have important qualitative archival data found in the British archives that shed light to the problems as well as to the great challenges the British trade faced in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov during the said years. Last but not least we have to mention that we are following the same methodological approach as the one described in the previous chapters; that is to say we are using excerpts of the original letters and reports written by British officials combined with bibliographic references, so that the reader himself can form a clear picture of the development and growth of British maritime trade in the ports of New Russia.

3.2 *British merchantmen and trade in Russian Black Sea (1802-1812)*

3.2.1 *Early years of British trade in Russian Black Sea (1802-1812)*

On September 1, 1799 the British minister plenipotentiary at Constantinople, John Spencer Smith, submitted the formal request of the British government and the directors of Levant Company on the opening of the Black Sea to the consideration of the Sublime Porte, and the positive response of the latter came on October 30,

1799.²⁴⁵ For several of Levant Company's members the right to navigate the Black Sea could provide many advantages for British maritime trade.²⁴⁶ For example, (a) it would promote the sale of British manufactures and of India goods; (b) Britain and her ally Turkey would receive the produce of the extensive coasts that surround Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, namely copper, lead, iron, tallow, hemp, flax, wheat, rye and pulse, potashes, hare and goat skins, salted hides, wool, wax and timber for ship building; and (c) last but not least the opening of the Black Sea to British flag would offer the opportunity the number of British merchantmen and seamen sailing in that maritime region to be significantly increased.²⁴⁷

However, Lord of Elgin the British ambassador to the Porte came to temper this great optimism of Levant Company's directors and members about the potential advantages that would result from the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag.²⁴⁸ According to Elgin *the difficulty and tediousness of the navigation, and the poverty of the inhabitants, seemed equally to discredit the favourable expectations, which have been entertained in England, from the free navigation of the Black Sea, by the British flag.*²⁴⁹ And as is apparent, from the limited archival information found in British National Archives concerning the number of British ships cleared from the port of Odessa during the first two decades after the opening of the Black Sea, the objections of Elgin about the very necessity of opening the latter to the British flag and the inability of British merchantmen to exploit to their benefit the Black Sea trade were to a significant extent justified.

Let us proceed now in presenting the archival information to which we refer. Table 3.1 below presents the available data relating to the capacity of merchant vessels, based on their national flag, having departed from the port of Odessa during the period covering the years from 1806 up to 1812. As is quite clear from the table the presence of British merchant vessels in Odessa, the major Russian port of the Black Sea, during the first years after the opening of the latter is almost negligible. In fact

²⁴⁵ See Chapter One, Subsection 1.4.3

²⁴⁶ On the significance of Black Sea trade for the British see Ardeleanu, 'The Discovery of the Black Sea,' 21-46.

²⁴⁷ TNA, FO 78/22, 10.09.1799, Bosanquet to Grenville, f. 42r – 43v.

²⁴⁸ TNA, FO 78/29, Dispatch No.40, 8.04.1800, Elgin to Grenville, f. 56r – 58v.

²⁴⁹ TNA, FO 78/33, 20.11.1801, Elgin to Hawkesbury, f. 175r – 190v.

the British merchantmen departed from the port of Odessa during the said period can be counted on the fingers of one hand, while in no way can be compared to the number of ships departed from Odessa under the Russian, Austrian, French, Neapolitan or the Ottoman flags. And if this reality applies to the port of Odessa then we have every reason to believe that British merchant vessels had no significant or systematic presence in other Russian Black Sea ports, like Taganrog or Kherson during the aforementioned period.²⁵⁰

Table 3.1 Return of tonnage of six main merchant flags cleared out from the port of Odessa during the years from 1806 to 1812

	British	Russian	Austrian	French	Ottoman	Neapolitan	Danish	Total tonnage
1806	360	7,474	7,080	1,354	1,440			17,708
1807		202	235	3,250		1,266		4,953
1808		606	2,250	10,085	8,366	9,876		31,183
1809		434	4,645	7,955	5,180	1,054		19,238
1810		404	1,350	3,885	8,580		185	14,584
1811	180	4,186	2,475	1,724	24,595	510	254	34,024
1812		3,974	450	852	26,675		215	32,380

Source: processed data from TNA, FO 359/1, 13.09.1827, James Yeames to Foreign Office.

In any case, however, the fact of the absence of British merchant vessels in Odessa during the second half of the decade of 1800 should not lead us to believe that no trade at all was conducted by British in the Russian ports of the Black Sea. In fact, according to archival material found in London and secondary sources, trade seemed to be carried out in the Russian Black Sea, at least during the very first years of

²⁵⁰ On the limited presence of British vessels in the Russian ports of the Black Sea during the first months after the opening of the Sea to the British flag see Benton, *Abridgment of the Debates of Congress, from 1789 to 1856*, 250, where he states in 1803, 815 vessels took in cargoes in the Russian ports of the Black Sea: 552 at Odessa, 210 at Taganrog, 23 at Caffa, 19 at Kosloo, 7 at Sevastopol, and 4 at Cherson. Of these, 421 were Austrian, 329 Russian, 18 Ragusan, 16 Ionian, 15 French, 7 English, 6 Idriots, and 3 Spanish.

nineteenth century, by British ships –chiefly Maltese– under the command of Royal Navy.²⁵¹ To be more specific, according to Table 3.2 below, in the year 1803 that means less than one year after the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag *arrived at Odessa, before the 1st of November, 502 ships, of which 472 sailed with cargoes; viz., 96 Russian, 6 English, 18 French, 4 Spanish, 5 Neapolitan, 278 Imperialist, 56 Turkish, 21 Ragusean, and 18 Ionian Islands.*²⁵²

Furthermore, in June 1804, just one and a half year after the entry of the first vessel under British flag in the Black Sea and a few months after the establishment of British consulate general there, Edmund Chapman the secretary of the civil government at Malta, under instructions of the Admiral and Civil Commissioner of Malta, Alexander Ball, traveled to Odessa *with a considerable number of vessels under British colors,*²⁵³ in order to purchase –primarily– Russian grain and with the island of Malta and the British garrison there being their final destination.²⁵⁴ Thus it appears that just a few months after 1802 and the opening of the Black Sea vessels

²⁵¹ TNA, FO 65/66, 4.09.1806, Shairp to Walpole, f. 12r – 16v. On the Maltese merchant fleet and its presence in the Black Sea grain trade see Vassalo, 'The Maltese Merchant Fleet and the Black Sea Grain Trade in the Nineteenth Century,' 19-36. Vassalo in the above mentioned article notes on the sizes of Maltese merchant fleet during the first decades of nineteenth century: 'From the late seventeenth century the Maltese economy had shifted from corsairing to commerce. In the process the centre of gravity of its external economic activity had also shifted spatially from the eastern to the western Mediterranean. With the coming of the British, the Maltese economy had to restructure yet again, and its focus swung back to the east, in part due to changes taking place in the pattern of British Mediterranean trade. The relative importance of British trade with the western Mediterranean fell markedly after 1815, but this was offset by the substantial increase in both imports and exports from the Levant. As Stanley Chapman and Philip Cottrell have noted, this expansion was mainly due to the enterprise of Levantine merchants, overwhelming Greeks but also Arab, American, and Turkish traders. Maltese merchants, nominally British but Levantine by vocation if not location, played a modest supporting role by distributing British goods in North Africa for most of the century and by participating in the grain trade with the ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov for a number of decades.' See also Carmel Vassalo, 'Trade between Malta and the Barbary Regencies in the Nineteenth Century with Special Reference to Tunisia,' in Abdelhamid Fehri (ed.), *L'Homme et la Mer* (Sfax, 2001), 167-185.

²⁵² John Macgregor, *Commercial statistics: A digest of the productive resources, commercial legislation, customs tariffs, of all nations. Including all British commercial treaties with foreign states* (London, 1850), 586.

²⁵³ TNA, FO 65/55, 29.05.1804, Henry Savage Yeames to Chapman, f. 177r – 178v. Malta since 1800 was under British Empire's rule, and in 1814, as part of the Treaty of Paris, Malta officially became a part of the British Empire. For a brief history of Malta see Rudolf Uwe Jens, *Historical Dictionary of Malta* (Plymouth, 2010).

²⁵⁴ TNA, FO 65/55, Dispatch No.48, 26.06.1804, Warren to Harrowby, f. 169r – 171v; TNA, FO 65/56, Dispatch No.73, 9.09.1804, Warren to Harrowby, f. 6r – 8v. On the corn trade to the island of Malta during the period before 1807 and the use of the Italian merchants of Taganrog for grain exports for British account, see FO 65/102, Dispatch No.11, 30.09.1816, Castlereagh to Cathcart. See also Chapter Two, Subsection 2.3.

under British flag (merchant vessels and/or Royal Navy transports) began to conduct *victualling trade* in New Russia's ports coming mainly from the island of Malta.²⁵⁵

Table 3.2 Number of merchant vessels entering the port of Odessa in 1803 and 1804

	1803 *	1804 **
Nationality	Number of vessels	Number of vessels
Austrian	278	179
Russian	96	130
Ottoman	56	65
British	6	25
Ragusan	21	25
Ionian	18	10
Neapolitan	5	6
French	18	1

Source: processed data from (*) John Macgregor, *Commercial statistics: A digest of the productive resources, commercial legislation, customs tariffs, of all nations. Including all British commercial treaties with foreign states* (London, 1850), 586, (**) TNA, FO 65/66, 4.09.1806, Shairp to Walpole, f. 12r – 16v.

On the other hand, however, we have to note that according to Sir John Borlase Warren and Henry Savage Yeames, during the early years after the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag, not only British flag vessels (Maltese are included) but also merchant vessels under Russian flag were conducting trade between the ports of New Russia and Malta on behalf of the British. In other words it seems that British trade is definitely carried out in Russian Black Sea ports, but not necessarily with or exclusively by British flag vessels.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ TNA, FO 65/66, 4.09.1806, Shairp to Walpole, f. 12r – 16v.

²⁵⁶ TNA, FO 65/52, 24.05.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury.

Table 3.3 A sample of Greek merchantmen (from Aegean and Ionian Seas) sailing under Russian flag and connecting Russian Black Sea ports with Malta (1785-1806)

Date of register	Ship	Flag	Captain	Place of origin	Port of arrival	Port of departure
11/08/1804	Aghios Nikolaos	Russian	Ginis Georgis	Spetses (Aegean)	Malta	Taganrog
01/08/1802	Aghios Nikolaos	Russian	Ginis Thodoris	Spetses (Aegean)	Malta	Crimea
26/09/1803	Triton	Russian	Dakrosis Dimitris	Syros (Aegean)	Malta	Sevastopol
11/09/1806	Aghios Spyridon	Russian	Igglesis Spyros	Cephalonia (Ionian)	Malta	Odessa
28/01/1786	Count Alexander Andreovich Besborontiev	Russian	Koundouris Dionysis	Cephalonia (Ionian)	Malta	Taganrog
07/09/1806	Evangelistria	Russian	Koundouris Dionysis	Cephalonia (Ionian)	Malta	Taganrog
13/10/1785	Dorothea	Russian	Koundouris Panagis	Taganrog (Azov)	Malta	Taganrog
11/09/1806	Great Duchess Maria	Russian	Coupas Giannis	Cephalonia (Ionian)	Malta	Taganrog
22/12/1806	Aspasia	Russian	Lazarou Lazaros, son of Andreas	Spetses (Aegean)	Malta	Taganrog
05/11/1786	Prince Alexander and Virgin Mary of Spartia	Russian	Lykiardopoulos Spyros	Cephalonia (Ionian)	Malta	Azov
05/01/1787	Karolos Konstantinos	Russian	Milesis Giannis	Zante (Ionian)	Malta	Black Sea
28/09/1806	Panaghia Agriliotisa	Russian	Panas Konstantis	Cephalonia (Ionian)	Malta	Taganrog
09/10/1805	Panaghia Plastiriotisa	Russian	Rosolymos Nikolas	Cephalonia (Ionian)	Malta	Taganrog

Source: processed data from Evrydiki Sifneos and Gelina Harlaftis, 'Entrepreneurship at the Russian Frontier of International Trade. The Greek Merchant Community/Paroikia of Taganrog in the Sea of Azof, 1780s-1830s,' in Victor N Zakharov, Gelina Harlaftis and Olga Katsiardi-Hering (eds.), *Merchant Colonies in the Early Modern Period* (London, 2015), 157-180 [163].

Furthermore, from relevant literature we are informed that British shipping and trade during early nineteenth century was also ceded to local Mediterranean carriers, with Greeks of Aegean and mainly of Ionian Islands holding a prominent position;²⁵⁷ this prominent position can be clearly seen and measured by the use of

²⁵⁷ Galani, 'British Shipping and Trade in the Mediterranean,' 303-307.

the valuable database of *Amphitrite*.²⁵⁸ Consequently, knowing (a) the prominent position of Greek and especially of Ionian merchants and captains in the Black Sea and more specific in the ports of Taganrog and Odessa since late-eighteenth century and (b) the fact that both were sailing under the Ottoman and Russian flags we can reasonably assume that the latter were offering often their maritime services to the British when needed and when the latter were not able to sail into the Russian ports of the Black Sea (for example in 1807 after the outbreak of the Anglo-Russian War and the Anglo-Turkish War).²⁵⁹ Indicative is Table 3.3 above presenting a sample of Greek merchant vessels sailing under Russian flag, trading in Russia and connecting Russian ports with the British protected island of Malta, which during the period 1808-1812 *became the principal centre of contraband English goods in the Mediterranean and a regular port of call for a large number of Greek vessels engaged in the corn trade.*²⁶⁰

3.2.2 British trade in the Russian ports of the Black Sea (1802-1812)

What were the Russian goods traded by British flag vessels during the very first years after the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag? According to reports of Sir John Borlase Warren (British ambassador to the Russian court in Saint Petersburg) and Henry Savage Yeames (British consul general in Black Sea) the British merchants and merchantmen were interested mainly in the following three products: masts, salt provisions and of course corn. These products were supplied primarily from Odessa and Taganrog for the British troops serving in Egypt and Syria, as well as for the

²⁵⁸ Evrydiki Sifneos and Gelina Harlaftis, 'Entrepreneurship at the Russian Frontier of International Trade. The Greek Merchant Community/Paroikia of Taganrog in the Sea of Azof, 1780s-1830s,' in Victor N Zakharov, Gelina Harlaftis and Olga Katsiardi-Hering (eds.), *Merchant Colonies in the Early Modern Period* (London, 2015), 157-180. See also Aydin, 'Έλληνες έμποροι και ναυτικοί στη Μαύρη Θάλασσα, 1780-1820,' 683-701.

²⁵⁹ Harlaftis and Laiou, 'Ottoman State Policy in Mediterranean Trade and Shipping,' 1-44. See also Katerina Papakonstantinou, 'Malta and the Rise of the Greek-owned fleet in the Eighteenth-century,' *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* (2006), 199-217. On the Anglo-Turkish War of 1807-1809 see Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923* (New York, 2005), 414; Paul Cernovodeanu, *Drama unui provincii istorice românești în context politic internațional* (Bucharest, 1993), 14. On the consequences of wars in Odessa's trade see Herlihy, *Odessa: A History 1794-1914*, 41.

²⁶⁰ Vassalo, 'The Maltese Merchant Fleet and the Black Sea Grain Trade in the Nineteenth Century,' 19-36 [22].

British garrisons at Malta and Gibraltar.²⁶¹ Indicative is the case of *William Eton*, who in 1803 went to Odessa to purchase victuals for the supply of the navy and the army at Malta and to examine the growth prospects of British trade in the region.

He was directed to purchase quantities of beef, pork, wheat and pease but also to purchase naval stores and open trade from the ports of the Black Sea to Malta as to render that island independent of supplies from Sicily and North Africa. His instructions directed him to find out what British manufactures and colonial products might be sold there and whether countries in Europe might be supplied by road through Poland. He was to make observations of navigations by rivers, the state of the roads and the time that would be involved in conveying goods into the interior. There were fears that France might exploit supplies from the region, so Eton was to see how far Britain might engross the trade.²⁶²

As regards masts, the main Russian product of primary importance for the British, we are informed by Henry Savage Yeames, according to a memoir of his sent to Viscount Castlereagh, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on February 18, 1813, that:

the best and most easy to be procured are from the upper Dnieper or the rivers falling into it and conveyed down to Kherson always with the current at

²⁶¹ TNA, FO 65/52, 24.05.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury. On the importance of Russian grains for the British troops in the Mediterranean see P. Mackesy, *The War in the Mediterranean, 1803-1810* (London, 1957), 10. About the British demand for grain not only during the Napoleonic Wars but also during the Anglo-American War of 1812 to 1815, leading Britain to turn to Odessa and Russia's grain, see Toby Michael Ormsby Redgrave, 'Wellington's Logistical Arrangements in the Peninsular War, 1809-14,' unpublished PhD thesis (University of London, 1979), 52-66.

²⁶² Roger Morriss, *The Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy: Resources, Logistics and the State, 1755-1815* (Cambridge, 2010), 291-292. Furthermore we need to mention that in 1804 *the wars in Italy, the troubles in Egypt and along the coast of Barbary, the prohibition against the exportation of wheats from Hungary, had drained or shut up the granaries of Europe, it was only through Odessa, that her [Europe's] wants could be supplied, and this year 449 vessels loaded there with that article, which was paid for, half in merchandize, and half in ready money.* See Mordecai Manuel Noah, *Travels in England, France, Spain, and the Barbary States: in the years 1813-14 and 15* (London, 1819), xxxi (appendix).

much cheaper rates and infinite less time than it can be done to Riga against the respective streams and partly by land carriage.²⁶³

In the said memoir Yeames gives us interesting information about other Russian products, which attracted the British export interest, namely oak timber, sail cloth, tallow, iron, anchors, hemp, flax, tar, cables, butter and salted beef. But let Henry Savage Yeames and his own words describe the goods and the regions of Russia where these goods were produced and from where they were procured:

Oak Timber is abundant all along the upper Dnieper and its tributary rivers, particularly in the district of Glinskov and its neighborhood on the Desna, which furnishes at the same time excellent mast wood, growing on the very banks of the river or within a verst or two.²⁶⁴ [...] Very fine oak timber may be procured from the Austrian dominions, particularly carved or crooked wood, and which may be brought down the Dniester to within 20 miles of the port of Odessa. And if I may credit the authority of people who were sent to survey the Dniester, oak timber might be procured at reasonable prices and permitted to be exported from Galicia for a trifling duty; but this timber I am apprehensive must be floated down the river in the natural state and fashioned to the drawings at Ovidiopol or Odessa. [...]²⁶⁵

Sail cloth might be purchased in the same places, from whence St. Petersburg, Riga etc are provided and the carriage being cheaper to Kherson and Odessa, it might be delivered at lower prices than the fleet in the Mediterranean can be supplied with it from home.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ TNA, FO 65/90, 18.02.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh. On British need for masts and timber and the need to *search for new sources of supply in the early nineteenth century* see Morriss, *The Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy*, 180-182.

²⁶⁴ A verst (Russian: верста, versta) is an obsolete Russian unit of length. It is defined as being 500 sazhen long, which makes a verst equal to 1.0668 kilometers (0.6629 miles; 3,500 feet). See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verst> [date of access: 21.08.2015]

²⁶⁵ TNA, FO 65/90, 18.02.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh. On the Black Sea timber, the difficulties for its purchase and the British interest see Morriss, *The Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy*, 178. See also P. K. Crimmin, "A great object with us to procure this timber...": the Royal Navy's search for ship timber in the Eastern Mediterranean and Southern Russia, 1803-1815,' *International Journal of Maritime History* (1992), 83-115.

²⁶⁶ TNA, FO 65/90, 18.02.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

Tallow may be procured in all the provinces bordering on the Black Sea at low prices, but these depend on the demand in England, which if great, the article is bought up dear by the Natives, with British capitals and carried down to Riga and St. Petersburg for the English market.²⁶⁷

Iron and Anchors are procured from the port of Taganrog [...]. I have not been able to learn the precise prices from the great proprietors of mines in Siberia, but they say they are able to deliver small anchors at Taganrog for about 3 rubles per pood and large ones for 5 rubles per pood. The bar iron of very good quality is to be had in any quantity.²⁶⁸

Hemp is to be had in any quantity in the vicinity of the Dnieper.²⁶⁹

Flax is equally easy to be procured cheaper than it can be delivered in St. Petersburg or Riga.²⁷⁰

Tar [...] it must be put on board at a certain season, being apt to ferment. However, on proper notice being given to bring it down from the Northern provinces I think it may be procured and might possibly answer better from the Black Sea than sending it round from England.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Op.Cit.. On the importance, quality and freshness of Odessa's tallow see also ЇЇї Gagemeїster, *Report on the commerce of the ports of New Russia, Moldavia, and Wallachia: made to the Russian government, in 1835, in pursuance of an investigation, undertaken by order of Count Woronzow* (London, 1836), 147-149. See also Herlihy, *Odessa: A History 1794-1914*, 53-54.

²⁶⁸ Edward-Daniel Clarke, *Travels in various countries of Europe, Asia and Africa*, Volume 1 (London, 1813), 329-330.

²⁶⁹ TNA, FO 65/90, 18.02.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh. On the importance of the Russian corned beef Henry Savage Yeames states in his report to British ambassador in Saint Petersburg and *[Russian corned beef] may become a great object of commercial consideration and be extended even to the West Indian Islands, at an infinitely much cheaper rate than they can be supplied with salted beef from Ireland, for the support of the negro slaves*; TNA, FO 65/52, 1.01.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury. On the production of Russian corned beef see also FO 78/32, Dispatch No. 86, 7.07.1801, Elgin to Hawkesbury, f. 131r – 132v. Furthermore, according to Yeames main areas of export of Russian timber for masts was the region of Galicia through Dniester River. See also TNA, FO 65/52, 1.01.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury; 24.05.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury; FO 65/64, 12.10.1806, Stuart to Spencer, f. 138r – 155v.

²⁷⁰ TNA, FO 65/90, 18.02.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

²⁷¹ Op.Cit.. See also TNA, FO 65/66, 25.06.1806, Henry Savage Yeames to Fox, f. 10r – 11v. For a general view on Odessa's export trade to England see Noah, *Travels in England, France, Spain, and the Barbary States: in the years 1813-14 and 15*, xxxvi (appendix). See also Herlihy, *Odessa: A History 1794-1914*, 53-54.

Cables may be easily procured at reasonable prices, but the yarn on the hemp must be bought at Smolensk and there manufactured under a proper overseer; otherwise the quality will never suit His Majesty's service.²⁷²

Most excellent Butter little inferior to that and that at the tables in St. Petersburg may be procured at Odessa at reasonable prices, but packed very slovenly in skins disgusting to the sight. Any quantity may be contracted for much cheaper up the Country and properly packed up in casks on proper directions being give with regard to size etc.²⁷³

Salted beef is one of the most essential articles to the Navy and Garrisons in the Mediterranean and could be procured cheaper than from any other part of Europe. I do not wonder at the observations made by the victualling office on that sent from Riga. The oxen come from the vicinity of the Black Sea and are driven from 1000 to 1200 miles distance; consequently they get meager with great additions to the price for charges. The beef must be cured absolutely under one's own eyes and superintended by a salter by profession and not trusted to the native contractors, from whom if this article be obtained, it never can be fit for His Majesty's service.²⁷⁴

Other products exported by British ships from Russia, according to Yeames' reports, were *honey, wax, hides, wool, and cattle*.²⁷⁵ Furthermore, Yeames informs us that Royal Navy in the Mediterranean could be supplied with ropes for ships and rigging from Kherson through Dnieper River.²⁷⁶

²⁷² TNA, FO 65/90, 18.02.1813, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

²⁷³ Op.Cit.

²⁷⁴ Op.Cit.

²⁷⁵ Herlihy, *Odessa: A History 1794-1914*, 53-64. For a general view on the various exportable products of the Russian shores and hinterland of the Black Sea see also Macgregor, *Commercial statistics*, 591-596; Peter Simon Pallas, *Travel Through the Southern Provinces of the Russian Empire, in the Years 1793 and 1794: In Two Volumes: with Many Coloured Vignettes, Plates, and Maps*, Volume 2 (London, 1803), 482; Dearborn, *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigation of the Black Sea and the Trade and Maritime Geography of Turkey and Egypt*, 246-248..

²⁷⁶ TNA, FO 65/52, 1.01.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury. See also FO 65/53, Dispatch No. 48, 16.09.1803, Hobart to British Admiralty, f. 185r – 186v; Dispatch No. 55, 7.10.1803, Warren to Hawkesbury, f. 251r – 264v.

Consequently it is clear that British merchants were interested in a wide range of agricultural and livestock goods produced in the Russian provinces bordering the Black Sea. On the other hand based on Yeames' memoir what we once again learn is that some of these Russian Black Sea products were more than valuable for the British troops serving in the Mediterranean, for example masts, corn or salted beef. However the most important conclusion drawn from the report of Henry Savage Yeames is that the British had already realized, during this early period after the opening of the Black Sea, that the latter could not only meet their needs in many goods, but it could provide them with these goods at probably much better prices than the corresponding ones in the Baltic ports of Riga and Saint Petersburg and also in much shorter times. In fact this is the comparative advantage of the Black Sea, which gradually attracted the commercial interest of the British, leading the British maritime trade to turn gradually to the Russian Black Sea ports and to experience a strong growth and development.

3.2.3 *British maritime trade in front of great challenges (1802-1812)*

Based on the data presented in tables 3.1 and 3.2 we can say that while in 1804 a worth noting number of twenty five British vessels entered Odessa, the number of British vessels trading in the latter during the second half of the decade of 1800 (with the exception of year 1805 for which we could not locate data) was drastically reduced. In fact what we observe is the almost stopping of British trade in the Russian Black Sea at least for the period covering the years from 1806 up to 1812.²⁷⁷

This brings up the question: what were the reasons that led British ships away from trading in the Russian Black Sea during the mentioned years? The answer lies in the words of Lord of Elgin, already mentioned above, but can be found also in the reports and memoirs sent to Elgin by Alexander Straton, British charge d' affaires in Constantinople, and three of the most important merchants of Levant Company:

²⁷⁷ *During the seven years from 1805 to 1812, the trade of Russia on the Black Sea, and the navigation between the latter and the Mediterranean, although at times carried on with rather important activity, were, as far as returns of trade and navigation, altogether uncertain. See Macgregor, Commercial statistics, 590.*

Peter Tooke and Thomas Thornton, both Levant Company's merchants in Constantinople and *Robert Wilkinson*, Company's merchant in Smyrna.

So, let us begin with the reports of these three members of Levant Company. According to them the main reasons why the development of British maritime trade in the Russian Black Sea ports was going to face great difficulties and hindrances, at least during the first years after the opening of the Sea to the British flag, were political, economic, technical, institutional, as well as reasons having to do with the weather conditions prevailing in the Black and Azov Seas. For his part, Peter Tooke emphasizes and analyzes the technical and weather difficulties British merchantmen were going to face when sailing to or from the Black Sea. According to Tooke:

The navigation of the Black Sea, and Sea of Azoph, from the Mediterranean, is obstructed during the summer solstice, by the prevalency of the north east winds which during that season impede the passage of ships through the general channel of communication, the Hellespont, Propontis and Bosphorus.

The Sea of Azoph [Azov] is entirely frozen during four months of the year from all December to the end of March; the shallowness of its entry between Kertch and Taman does not admit of ships beyond 250 tons burden.

The access to Cherson is obstructed by similar circumstances; the River being frozen during all the year.

The navigation of the Black Sea in general is considered very dangerous during the winter; it offers only two ports on the Asia shore Sinope and Heraclea capable of admitting ships of burthen – from the forementioned circumstances is useless, that the navigations into the Black Sea is prosecuted solely during the summer, and ships seldom can make two voyages to Taganrog or Cherson; but to Odessa they may be repeated during the whole year from Constantinople. It is manifest that a voyage from England to the Black Sea and back, cannot be performed in less than nine months; but as this country does not furnish cargoes to our ships homeward bound in the Levant Trade, during the summer; such ships as reach Constantinople or

Smyrna in the spring may make an intermediate voyage to the Black Sea, and return in the autumn to meet a freight for England.²⁷⁸

Thus it appears that because of the many striking natural and weather phenomena in the navigation of the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov and their rivers (for example ice, winds, shallowness of waters) many British merchantmen decided not to trade in the ports of New Russia. The problems and difficulties of navigation in the Black Sea by British vessels are stated also in detail by Thomas Thornton. The latter emphasizes the many deficiencies appearing in port infrastructure in Odessa, Nikolayev, and Kherson. In his report sent to Elgin in 1801 he states that *the two latter situated the one on the Bugh [River] and the other on the Dnieper, at a distance from sea and are difficult of approach for vessels of a considerable burthen, and the harbor of Odessa is unsafe till the completion of the moles which have been neglected since the death of the Empress.*²⁷⁹

Furthermore, Thornton emphasizes the extreme poverty that exists in the villages and some of the cities of New Russia, which prevents the import of British goods. In his report to Lord of Elgin he states that *the immense plains which are between the Dnieper and the Dniester, which formerly were peopled with innumerable hordes of Tartars, contain only a few miserable villages and that the immediate neighborhood of cities [namely Odessa, Nikolayev and Kherson] scarcely furnishes sufficient for the subsistence of their inhabitants and consequently contributes nothing to commerce.*²⁸⁰ Wilkinson, Levant Company's merchant in Smyrna, also refers to the same issue: the poverty in towns and cities of New Russia and the subsequent inability of their inhabitants to buy and consume British manufactured goods.

To be more specific he states in his own report to Elgin (October 10, 1801):

²⁷⁸ TNA, FO 78/33, 1.10.1801, Took to Elgin, f. 181r – 182v. [We kept syntax and spelling of the original text]. On the difficulties of navigating the Black Sea see Pallas, *Travel Through the Southern Provinces of the Russian Empire, in the Years 1793 and 1794*, 482: *The navigation of the Black Sea is, in general, obstructed in the winter by storms, thick fogs, and the freezing of the sails and rigging; so that no ship is permitted to sail from the Canal of Constantinople before the vernal equinox.*

²⁷⁹ TNA, FO 78/33, 1.10.1801, Thornton to Elgin, f. 183r – 186v.

²⁸⁰ Op.Cit. The import trade at Odessa is very insignificant even during the decade of 1820. See indicatively William Jacob, *Tracts Relating to the Corn Trade and Corn Laws* (London, 1826), 5-7.

The Russian subjects on the coast in the Black Sea, as well as in the interior parts of the country, are in general very poor people and there are but few in middling circumstances and even those in very coarse garments of the country manufactories probable to abscond this pecuniary faculties from the government officers under apprehensions of additional oppression.

Thus, it is evident that there be but a trifling tent for British manufactories, so as not to under it worthy of the speculation of single individual in Great Britain; and indeed we see from experiences, that there has never been any demand from thence worth notice either at Constantinople or Smirna, for British commodities, which are imported continually to said two cities from England.²⁸¹

Based on all these, what we can say is that British ships clearly wished to participate in the –valuable for British needs in the Mediterranean– export trade of the Russian Black Sea but they had to overcome a major obstacle: the lack of adequate markets in New Russia that could consume British goods and manufactures; an obstacle difficult to overcome at least during the early period after the opening of the Sea.²⁸² What did this actually mean? That British vessels had to sail most of the times without cargo to the ports of New Russia to load goods bound for the Mediterranean or England, a development leading to large losses for British merchants and consequently to the decision not to trade in the Russian ports of the Black Sea. The examples are more than enough. Indicative is the paradigm of several British merchantmen in Livorno or Genoa, who decided to reject tenders for grain export from New Russia even when they were offered very high freights, higher than those offered to their Austrian, Ragusan, Greek or Russian competitors. According to Alexander Straton in one of his letters sent to British Foreign Minister Lord Hawkesbury on April 8, 1803:

our manufactures are not likely to be much benefited by the opening of the Euxine to our merchant ships. Nevertheless, Great Britain may possibly derive

²⁸¹ TNA, FO 78/33, 2.10.1801, Wilkinson to Elgin, f. 187r – 190v.

²⁸² Jacob, *Tracts Relating to the Corn Trade and Corn Laws*, 5-7.

hereafter a no despicable advantage from the employing of a considerable number of British ships and seamen, in the carrying trade, to, from and along the coasts of the Black Sea. The freight of an English vessel hired by Foreigners to take in a cargo of grain at Odessa and that has actually sailed, was higher than that usually given to German, Ragusan, Greek or Russian vessels; and her captain mentioned that there were several English merchant men at Leghorn and Genoa, to whose owners offers of freight equal to his, had been made and refused.²⁸³

However, beyond the above reasons that prevented the development of a strong British commercial presence in the Russian Black Sea we should add another one: the existence of British Navigation Acts, a series of laws restricting the use of foreign ships for trade between Britain and her colonies (1651-1849).²⁸⁴ According to Thornton *the Russian flag before the war [namely French Revolutionary Wars] was granted by the [Russian] Chancery at Constantinople to French, Venetian, Ragusan and Greek vessels and they resumed their own colors on their return to Constantinople. The English are prevented by the Navigation act from a temporary change of colors.*²⁸⁵ Although this situation relates to the period of the last years of the eighteenth century, the same applies in early nineteenth century, with British ships due to Navigation Acts not being allowed to hoist another flag when sailing in Black Sea even if it meant paying less taxes and duties. Consequently British merchant ships could not easily compete with Russian, French, Austrian or Greek vessels; vessels definitely operating with greater freedom of movement.

This competitive weakness or better to say comparative disadvantage of British merchantmen is mentioned by Robert Wilkinson, Levant Company's merchant in Smyrna. To be more specific Wilkinson states in his report to Elgin, in October 1801:

²⁸³ TNA, FO 78/39, Dispatch No. 10, 8.04.1803, Straton to Hawkesbury, f. 73r – 88v.

²⁸⁴ On Navigation Acts see Sarah Palmer, *Politics, Shipping and the Repeal of the Navigation Laws* (Manchester, 1990); Ronald Hope, *A New History of British Shipping* (London, 1990), 220-261; R. P. Thomas and D. N. McCloskey, 'Overseas Trade and Empire, 1700-1860,' in R. Floud and D. McCloskey (eds.), *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700* (Cambridge, 1981), 87-102.

²⁸⁵ TNA, FO 78/33, 1.10.1801, Thornton to Elgin, f. 183r – 186v.

It [the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag] would never answer for British merchant ships to be employed as carriers to and from the Black Sea; and our British sailors are deserving well fed, and well paid; the ships well found; whereas the Russian, Austrian, and Ottoman vessels barely fit for sea, sail very cheap; so that a freight that would answer for them, would not defray the expenses of a British ship; and as the merchant always prefers such vessels that take his goods at the lowers freight, there would not be the last encouragement for British ships. Thus in a commercial view, the free navigation of the British flag in the Black Sea, does not offer the least advantage.²⁸⁶

Wilkinson refers also to other major difficulties faced by British merchants (and not only British) wishing to trade in Russian Black Sea ports. Difficulties and problems related to (a) the tariff policy and custom house's duties in Russian ports, which was depending exclusively on personal decisions of each port's governor, (b) the "obligation" of British merchantmen to trade only on credit rather than cash, and (c) the inability of British merchants to engage in the retail or wholesale trade within New Russia's mainland. Indicative is what Wilkinson states in his report to Elgin:

Another inconvenience to the merchant is, that the customhouse duties, at the Russia ports in the Black Sea, are augmented, or decreased, according to the caprice of the Governor at each port; so that in speculating there is no forming an exact calculate; a few years back, I received an account sales of some goods I sent there, and the custom ware duty was charged at fifty per cent on the value.

The goods that arrive from the Levant at the Russia ports in the Black Sea, are generally sold on a credit of three to six months; and the seller has no other security, than the bond of the purchaser, who carries the property into the interior parts to dispose of; if he is successful the seller gets paid; but if on the contrary, a certain loss ensures, and he is glad to arrange with his debtor

²⁸⁶ TNA, FO 78/33, 2.10.1801, Wilkinson to Elgin, f. 187r – 190v.

on the best terms possible; even supporting the buyers solid, they always protract payments greatly beyond the term agreed on.

This clearly shows the poverty of the inhabitants who trade merely on a simple credit and in this manner I know personally seven individuals here, and a few at Constantinople that have been totally ruined, by pursuing their trade, in hopes of retrieving their former losses.²⁸⁷

To summarize, the factors that contributed to the lack of growth of British trade in the Black Sea during the early years after the opening of the latter to the British flag are the following: (a) the navigational and weather difficulties of Black Sea and Sea of Azov; (b) the incomplete port infrastructure in most of New Russia's ports; (c) the extreme poverty existing in villages and cities of New Russia and the subsequent (d) lack of markets able to consume British goods and manufactures; (e) the restrictions posed on British trade by Navigation Acts; (f) the higher operating costs of British vessels compared with the corresponding ones of French, Russian, Austrian or Greek vessels; (g) the uncontrolled and irregular tariff policy and custom duties in Russian ports depending almost exclusively on the decisions of local governors; (h) the obligation to trade in New Russia only on credit, and (i) the inability of British merchants to engage in the retail or wholesale trade within New Russia's mainland.

Of course, to all these factors we should add three more, reported in detail in the previous chapter (Chapter Two, Subsection 2.4.1): (j) the great impediments caused to British maritime trade from the refusal of Tsar Alexander I to renew or even prolong the expired in March 1807 Anglo-Russian commercial treaty; (k) the tsarist manifest of January 1, 1807, which raised new obstacles to the British who wanted to carry on trade in Russia and its ports; (l) the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war of 1806-1812,²⁸⁸ and the last and most important reason of all the above that led to almost zero the British commercial presence in New Russia's ports was definitely (m)

²⁸⁷ Op.Cit.

²⁸⁸ Mitev, *Empires and Peninsulas: Southeastern Europe Between Karlowitz and the Peace of Adrianople, 1699-1829*, 70. See also Macgregor, *Commercial statistics*, 590: the war which broke out in 1806 between Russia and the Porte, arrested for some time the direction of even trade; but during the truce which followed the peace of Tilsit, it assumed new vigour. The recommencement of hostilities with Turkey, and the French invasion, paralyzed anew the commerce of the Black Sea until the general peace.

the outbreak of the Anglo-Russian war in September 1807, leading to an almost freezing –during the period from 1807 to 1812– of all diplomatic, economic and of course trade relations between the two countries. And the result of this war with the absence of arrivals and/or departures of British merchantmen in the ports of New Russia during the period from 1807 up to 1812 is shown in the data of Table 3.1.

3.3 *British merchantmen and trade in Russian Black Sea (1813-1819)*

3.3.1 *Russian Black Sea reopens for British maritime trade (1813-1819)*

The absence of British flag vessels in New Russia's ports during the second half of the 1800s will end in summer 1812 with the signing of the peace treaty of Orebro, which settled the various Anglo-Russian political, economic and trade disputes.²⁸⁹ As far as the Treaty of Orebro is concerned we do know that "the 2nd Article of the Treaty of Orebro, [...] is stipulated that the [Anglo-Russian] relations of commerce shall be reestablished on the footing of the most favoured nations."²⁹⁰ The end of the war marked actually the beginning of an uninterrupted presence of British flag and trade in the Russian ports of the Black Sea, lasting until the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854. However in the present subsection we will limit ourselves to a brief study of British flag's presence in the Russian ports of the Black Sea during the period covering the years from 1813 up to 1819. A period which coincides with the second consulship of Henry Savage Yeames in the Russian ports of the Black Sea.

Based on the rather limited quantitative data found in The National Archives in Kew Gardens on ship movements at Odessa's port we will attempt to draw some general conclusions on the development of British maritime presence and trade in the Russian Black Sea. Table 3.4 below presents the available data relating to the capacity of merchant vessels, based on their flag, having departed from Odessa during the period from 1813 up to 1819.

²⁸⁹ See Chapter Two, Section 2.3.

²⁹⁰ TNA, FO 65/103, Dispatch No.32, 23.05.1816, Cathcart to Castlereagh. See also, FO 65/104, Dispatch No. 47, Cathcart to Castlereagh. See also Lewis Hertslet, *A Complete Collection of the Treaties and Conventions, and Reciprocal Regulations at Present Subsisting Between Great Britain and Foreign Powers*, Volume II (London, 1820), 125.

What is clear from the table is that with the end of the Anglo-Russian war of 1807-1812 British flag reappears in Odessa's port and what is recorded is its rather dynamic presence. To be more specific in 1813 the capacity of British vessels departed from Odessa amounted to 1,620 tons, representing a mere 4.4 percent of the total tonnage of outgoing vessels. Three years later in 1816 British capacity reached the number of 49,391 tons, which meant that the capacity of British vessels represented 30.2 percent of the tonnage of all vessels departed from Odessa during the said year. Specific information on the number of vessels departed from Odessa in the year 1816 is provided by British consul general in Saint Petersburg, Daniel Bayley. According to his letter sent to William Richard Hamilton, Permanent Under-Secretary for the Department of Foreign Affairs, on March 28, 1817, during the period January-December 1816 846 vessels had arrived in Odessa; to be more specific, 407 were sailing under the Russian flag, 101 under the Austrian flag, 25 had French flag, 23 had Turkish flag, 15 Swedish, 12 Sicilian, 4 vessels had the Sardinian flag, 1 vessel had the Portuguese flag, and 258 vessels had arrived in Odessa under British colors.²⁹¹

Table 3.4 Return of tonnage of six main flags cleared out from the port of Odessa during the years from 1813 to 1819

	British	Russian	Austrian	French	Ottoman	Neapol.	Spanish	Swedish	Sardinian	Total tonnage
1813	1,620	26,130	434		8,515					36,699
1814	1,480	40,602	1,260	750	8,420					52,512
1815	12,320	44,036	3,120	4,565	5,760	360				70,161
1816	49,391	81,498	24,240	4,625	1,150	398		1,168	720	163,190
1817	28,460	84,840	43,680	1,295	1,650	1,400	3,410	9,640	5735	181,570
1818	15,611	59,880	18,264	1,260	2,520	344	8,640	5,664	4320	116,231
1819	18,242	66,840	28,215	2,434	475	1,560	9,620	3,838	3847	135,071

Source: see Table 3.1

²⁹¹ TNA, FO 65/110, 28.03.1817, Bayley to Hamilton.

In other words while British flag in 1813 had a negligible presence in 1816, within three years, managed to become the second most important commercial flag in the port of Odessa with the Russian -of course- occupying the first place and the Austrian the third one. However in the years following 1816 the capacity of British merchantmen departing from Odessa shows a reduction although still maintaining a significant presence in the port and in 1819 shows again signs of stabilization and a slight upward trend.²⁹²

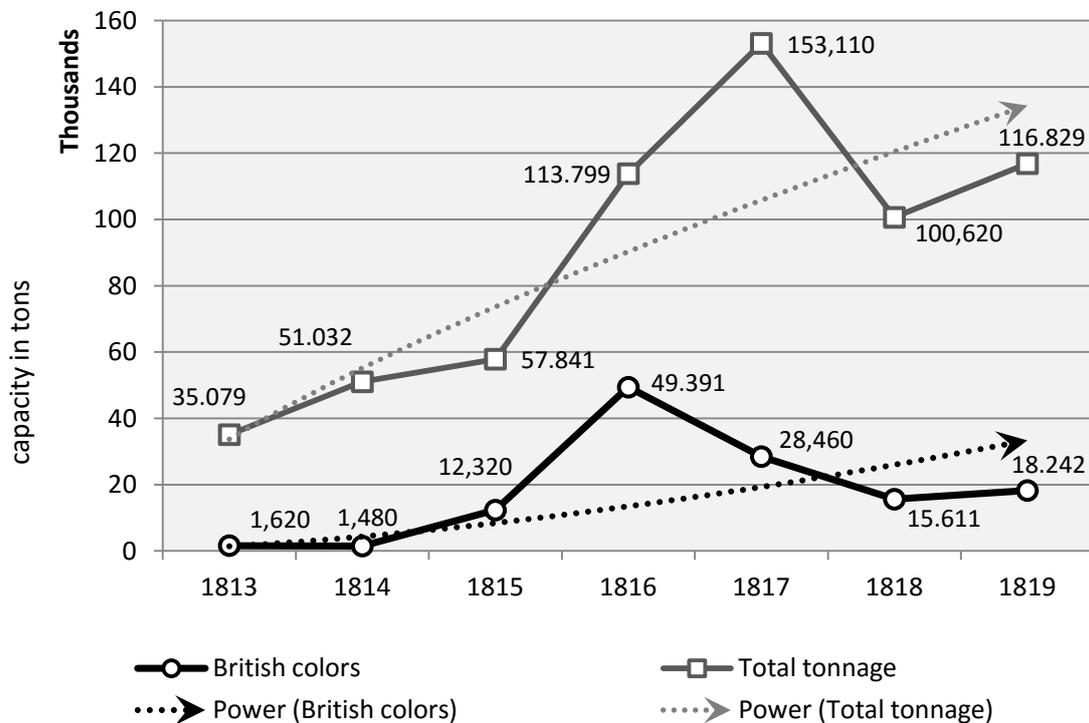
The picture of this dynamic presence of British shipping in the major Russian port of the Black Sea during the second decade of nineteenth century can be clearly seen in figure 3.1 below. The figure shows the evolution of the tonnage of vessels under British flag departing from Odessa in comparison with the corresponding data of all other outgoing vessels. Based on the figure two are the main direct conclusions that can be drawn. The first one is that the British flag shows a rather dynamic development during the years from 1813 up to 1819 (indicative is the British power trendline), but its development and momentum is clearly more moderate than that shown by the rest of the flags. The second conclusion is that British flag, during the said period, follows the general upward and downward trends shown by the rest of merchant flags sailing out of Odessa's port, with the only exception being the year 1817 when British flag shows a downward trend in contrast to the strong upward trend of the rest of the flags (mainly of Austrian, Swedish and Russian flags, see Table 3.3).

Let us now look in more detail the development of British flag's presence in the port of Odessa, as shown in table 3.3 and figure 3.1. The first two years, 1813 and 1814, following the signing of the peace treaty of Orebro and the restoration of political and economic relations between Russia and Britain marked the return of British trade in the port of Odessa, but in no way can the size of the capacity of British flag be considered as significant. In fact British flag was but a rather marginal player in

²⁹² On the number and presence of British vessels in the Russian ports of the Black Sea for the year 1817 see Benton, *Abridgment of the Debates of Congress, from 1789 to 1856*, 250, where he states *in 1817, 1,925 vessels entered the port of Odessa alone: 480 Russian, 188 Austrian, 154 English, 43 French, 18 Spanish, 49 Swedish, 31 Sardinian, 65 Turkish, 7 Danish, 7 Neapolitan, 2 Sicilian, and 881 Russian, engaged in the coasting trade.*

the port of Odessa during the mentioned period. However, the situation will change significantly over the next two years, as already noted above. So, what we observe is that in 1815 the British flag had a capacity of more than 12,000 tons, increased by more than 730 percent compared to the year 1814, while in the year 1816 will reach nearly the size of 50,000 tons, a further increase of more than 300 percent. Indeed this significant increase of British trade observed in Odessa as well as in other Russian Black Sea ports, during the said period, is mentioned by Henry Savage Yeames in his various letters sent to London.²⁹³ The question, then, arises: what were the reasons that allowed British shipping to reach these sizes in the years 1815 and 1816 and become the second most important commercial flag in the port of Odessa, following the Russian one, as already stated above?

Figure 3.1 Tonnage of British vessels compared to the corresponding data of the tonnage of all other flags departing from Odessa during the years from 1813 to 1819



Source: see Table 3.1

²⁹³ TNA, FO 65/99, 10.07.1815, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh; FO 65/105, 4.07.1816, Henry Savage Yeames to Hamilton.

The main reason (a) that led to this increase in the presence of British flag in Odessa -as well as of other flags of Western Europe- should be attributed to the end of Napoleonic Wars, which enabled the European continent to enter an era of relative economic normalcy, allowing the restarting of trade. As a direct consequence (b) many British vessels, which had been used as naval transports during the war, were now free to re-enter European and Mediterranean markets.²⁹⁴ And as Henry Savage Yeames states in one of his letter sent to Lord Viscount Castlereagh, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State for the Department of Foreign Affairs, (c) a large number of British vessels arrived in Odessa for the purchase of corn to meet the growing needs of Malta in Russian wheat; Malta which was now a British crown colony.²⁹⁵ Indeed British needs in corn are so large during the period after 1813 (especially for the needs of British troops and garrisons in the whole Mediterranean) and the number of British vessels arriving in Odessa is also so large that Henry Savage Yeames, as already stated in Chapter Two [see subsection 2.4.2] was forced to ask London' permission to appoint his son, James Yeames, as vice-consul *at the other ports in the Euxine and Azov Seas [...] as the immediate vicinity of Odessa cannot easily furnish the quantity and the very choice quality of wheat required at Malta.*²⁹⁶ Furthermore, we need to add that the demand for Russian grains remained high between 1816 and 1818 *due to widespread crop failures in Western Europe.*²⁹⁷

Consequently the end of hostilities, the resumption of commercial activity in Europe and the great needs of Britain in cereals can explain the significant rise of British capacity in the port of Odessa, and obviously in other ports of the Russian Black and Azov Seas as well. However, in the years that follow (1817 and 1818) what we observe is a significant reduction in the capacity of British vessels departing from the port of Odessa (the cumulative reduction for these two years reached almost 88

²⁹⁴ Yrjö Kaukiainen, *A History of Finnish Shipping* (London, 1993), 67-69.

²⁹⁵ TNA, FO 65/99, 18.05.1815, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh. On the crown colony of Malta see James S. Olson (ed.), *Historical Dictionary of European Imperialism* (Westport, 1991), 388.

²⁹⁶ TNA, FO 65/99, 18.06.1815, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh; FO 65/105, 14.01.1816, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh. On the increase of British maritime presence in the port of Odessa and in general in the Russian Black Sea see also, FO 65/110, 17.01.1817, Henry Savage Yeames to Hamilton. The other ports to which Henry Savage Yeames is referred are Kherson, Taganrog and Feodosia. See FO 65/93, 1.12.1814, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

²⁹⁷ Ardeleanu, 'The Opening and Development of the Black Sea for International Trade and Shipping (1774–1853),' 30-52.

percent), with some stabilization or slight upward trend towards the end of the decade of 1810.

But what caused this large reduction in the capacity of merchant vessels under British flag in Odessa? Since we do not have found quantitative data for the said period, our analysis is based on the information given by the relevant maritime literature. Despite a kind of postwar boom, the final peace after the Congress of Vienna was followed by a general depression due to the limited purchasing power of European population after so many years of wars and mass destruction.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, this limited purchasing power should be viewed in conjunction with the formation of a strongly negative balance of supply and demand for shipping services in Europe. Indicative is what Yrjö Kaukiainen states in his *History of Finnish Shipping: As French, Dutch, and Danish tonnage, together with British vessels which had been used as naval transports, re-entered world freight markets, supply obviously exceeded demand and freights fell.*²⁹⁹ The result of this development was many tradesmen and merchantmen to withdraw from trade, leading in our case to a reduction of British capacity in Odessa as well.

Furthermore we must add that during the aforementioned years the large amounts of cereals exported from Odessa forced Britain (in 1815), as well as France and other western powers, through *Corn Laws* to re-erect tariff barriers to protect native farmers against the cheap and abundant Russian production.³⁰⁰ And indeed as Barnes states *during 1820-4, [grain] imports [in Britain] were practically non-existent.*³⁰¹ Hence, we strongly believe that the decline of British presence in the port of Odessa was due mainly to (a) the general crisis experienced by the European merchant shipping industry in the period following the end of Napoleonic Wars along with (b) Britain's attempt to protect her own farmers through the Corn Laws.

²⁹⁸ Martin Stopford, *Maritime Economics* (London, 2009), 108-110; A. G. Kenwood – A. L. Lougheed, *The Growth of the International Economy 1820-2000: An Introductory Text* (London, 1999), 9-14; B. R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics 1750-1975* (London, 1908), 641-646.

²⁹⁹ Kaukiainen, *A History of Finnish Shipping*, 67.

³⁰⁰ Herlihy, *Odessa: A history, 1794-1914*, 98, 102-103. See also D. G. Barnes, *A History of the English Corn Laws from 1660-1846* (London, 1930), 169.

³⁰¹ Op.Cit., 171-172. See also Susan Fairlie, 'The Corn Laws and British Wheat Production, 1829-76,' *The Economic History Review* 22/1 (1969), 88-116 [89].

On the other hand, what we definitely know, according to Henry Savage Yeames, is that there had been no significant changes in the status of trade at the port of Odessa during the first years after the signing of the Treaty of Orebro (e.g. duties on imported or exported cargoes, privileges of importation in favor of non-British ships, etc), which might have prevented British ships from carrying out import and/or export trade in Odessa.³⁰² However, we should note that despite the Treaty of Orebro and its stipulation that the Anglo-Russian commercial relations should be established on the footing of the most favoured nations, British merchantmen trading in the ports of Russia (mainly in the Baltic Sea, and secondarily in the Black Sea) did not enjoy all the privileges granted other flags, such as the Portuguese, the Swedish or the Danish one. For example Russian authorities imposed higher duties on British pottery imported into Russia or introduced various unfriendly and improvident regulations to impede the exports from Great Britain, both to the Russian and Prussian ports.³⁰³ In fact it seems that the Russian government, despite Orebro's stipulation and despite the fact that the Anglo-Russian commercial treaty had been expired since March 1807, decided to extend her treaties of commerce with Portugal, Sweden or Denmark, but not with Great Britain, because the latter was her main competitor in maritime trade.³⁰⁴

In any case, of course, despite the various difficulties British shipping had to face, the trading activity of British merchantmen in the Russian ports of the Black Sea during the period after 1815 was in general conducted unobstructed.³⁰⁵ According to

³⁰² On the commerce at Odessa during the first two decades of nineteenth century see Herlihy, *Odessa: A history, 1794-1914*, 37-42, 96-101.

³⁰³ On discrimination against British trade in the ports of Russia, mainly in the Baltic Sea, see TNA, FO 65/83, Dispatch No.5, 1.03.1813, Castlereagh to Cathcart [respecting the high duty on the British pottery imported into Russia – need for a new commercial treaty]; Dispatch No.17, 9.04.1813, Castlereagh to Cathcart; Dispatch No.47, 13.07.1813, Castlereagh to Cathcart [unfriendly and improvident regulations which still are suffered to impede the exports from Great Britain, both to the Russian and Prussian ports].

³⁰⁴ TNA, FO 65/104, Dispatch No.40, 5.07.1816, Cathcart to Castlereagh; Dispatch No.47, 13.07.1816, Cathcart to Castlereagh.

³⁰⁵ TNA, FO 65/105, Dispatch No.15, 25.07.1816, Bayley to Cooke. Indicative is what Yeames replied to some of the questions submitted to him by the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “[Ministry Question] Are there any privileges of importation in favor of ships that are of the built of or belonging to the country in which you are resided? [Yeames’ answer] No distinction whatever is made here, at the ports in the Euxine and Azov seas, between Russian and foreign ships, all pay equal duties, on the goods they bring; with the exception of Portuguese and Spanish wines. [...] [Ministry Question] Is there any difference in the duty on goods when imported into that country in a foreign ship? And if

Yeames the rules of conducting trade in Russian ports of the Black Sea –at least in the port of Odessa– had not changed drastically at the expense of British shipping. Be that as it may we must point out that there was a significant change in 1817, which would take place only two years later in 1819, leading –according to figure 3.1– to the overthrow of the downward trend of British commercial presence in the port of Odessa. The events are presented in detail by Henry Savage Yeames in his letter sent to Lord Viscount Castlereagh, on June 5, 1817:

I have the honor of informing Your Lordship that an ukase was received here on the 3 instant, signed by the Emperor on the 16th April, granting the port and town of Odessa the privilege and immunities of a free port, in their full extent, for the term of thirty years, renewable on its expiration, according to circumstances. [...] These privileges are then only to take place, when the necessary barriers, ditch etc are completed; which is to be done now with all possible expedition and supported in future, at the expense of the town of Odessa.³⁰⁶

Thus, the great change we mentioned is none other than the granting of the port of Odessa the status of a free port in April 1817. But it will take two years for the necessary works to be completed and the status of free port to be put into full effect.³⁰⁷ To be more specific, James Yeames, the new British consul general in Odessa states in his letter sent to Castlereagh, on July 22, 1819:

I have the honor of acquainting Your Lordship that a courier arrived here on the 19th instant from St. Petersburg, with the Imperial Ukase for the opening

so, is it general, or does it apply only to particular articles? [Yeames' answer] No difference whatever exists in the pay of duties on goods whether brought in a Russian or foreign ship; all pay according to the same rates, and without distinction of articles, except in the case of Spanish and Portuguese wines as detailed above. [Ministry Question] Is there any tonnage duty payable on shipping entering inwards or outwards in the country in which you reside? [Yeames' answer] All ships (even His Majesty's transports that come for corn for the Universita of Malta) pay a tonnage duty of 20 cop. and except those under 10 lasts burden. A fine of two dollars is exacted for each last that is concealed in the declaration of the tonnage. This duty of 20 cop. is paid both on entering and going out of port." TNA, FO 65/99, 21.05.1815, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

³⁰⁶ TNA, FO 65/110, 5.06.1817, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh.

³⁰⁷ On the ukase of April 16, 1817, the building of all the necessary infrastructure in Odessa's port and the importance of the status of a free port for Odessa port and its import and/or export trade see also, TNA, FO 65/108, Dispatch No.35, 7.06.1817, Cathcart to Castlereagh, f. 198r – 201v. On the status of Odessa as a free port see Herlihy, *Odessa: A history, 1794-1914*, 39, 98.

of the free port of Odessa, and that the 15th of August [...] is fixed for the day on which the new privileges of this city are to commence. [...]

Expectations may reasonably be formed that the commerce of this part of the Empire will receive a new impulse, which may benefit, and give extension to British interests, as a regular import trade can scarcely fail of being established for the consumption of the Southern Provinces hitherto scantily supplied from the North.³⁰⁸

Thus, in summer of 1819 Odessa becomes a free port, which in turn seems to give new impetus to the development of British maritime trade in this major Russian port of the Black Sea, after two years of a significant downturn, as shown in Table 3.3 and Figure 3.1. In support of this, James Yeames states in his letter sent to Lord Viscount Castlereagh on August 31, 1819, that due to the growth of British trade in the port of Odessa many British merchant houses had been established there and many others were expected to follow in the near future. Furthermore he notes that one of the direct consequences of the growth of British trade in the Russian Black Sea was the significant increase of the revenue of the British consulate in Odessa.³⁰⁹ On the growth of British trade in the Russian Black Sea and to be more specific in the ports of Odessa, Taganrog and Feodosia, during the year 1819, the British consul general writes in one of his reports sent to London in early 1820:

The immense progress this part of the Russian Empire has lately made is well known, and to demonstrate the magnitude of its trade, it is sufficient to state that three hundred thousand tons of shipping (of which sixty thousand British) have been employed during the course of one year, in the ports alone of Odessa, Taganrog and Caffa [Feodosia]. But a wider field has been since opened to enterprise; for Odessa, now become a free port, and town offers a new source of consumption for British industry.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ TNA, FO 65/118, 22.07.1819, James Yeames to Castlereagh.

³⁰⁹ TNA, FO 65/118, 31.08.1819, James Yeames to Castlereagh.

³¹⁰ TNA, FO 65/123, 23.01.1820, James Yeames to Castlereagh. On the growth of British trade in the port of Taganrog see also FO 65/112, 28.02.1818, Foreign Office to Cathcart. In this report we read the following: [...] having been represented to Lord Castlereagh that a considerable trade is now

3.3.2 British export and import trade (1813-1819)

Let us now examine briefly the main goods traded by British ships during the period covering the years from 1813 up to 1819, based on the rather limited information gathered from the various letters and reports sent to London by Henry Savage Yeames and his son James Yeames. As already mentioned, during the period of 1802-1812 the British merchantmen arriving in Odessa were focused mainly on the export of Russian masts, various salt provisions and corn. How was the picture of British trade shaped during the period covering the years from 1813 up to 1819?

According to the found archival material, wheat emerged as the main product of interest for vessels under British colors. And what is interesting, as already stated above, is the fact that the needs of Malta for wheat were so great during the said period that the production of Odessa and its adjacent neighborhoods was not able to meet them. The result was British merchant ships to move into the Sea of Azov and its main port Taganrog, as an alternative source of grain supply. This was actually the main reason for Henry Savage Yeames' desire his son James to be appointed vice-consul there in order to facilitate grain exports to the Mediterranean.³¹¹ Of course, in addition to wheat, British ships were exporting other Russian agricultural products such as barley, oats, and peas.³¹² Another product that seems to make a dynamic appearance as main Russian export product in 1819 raising the great interest of British merchantmen was tallow, with its price being almost 25 up to 30 percent cheaper than the one exported from the northern ports of Europe. Furthermore we do know –based on the reports of James Yeames– that many British ships exported tallow directly to Great Britain.³¹³

carrying on under the British flag at Taganrog on the Black Sea, and that it would be of great convenience to that trade, if a British vice consul is nominated to the above mentioned port, Lord Castlereagh has approved of the suggestion and has appointed Mr. William Yeames, son of His Majesty Consul at Odessa, to be vice consul at the port of Taganrog. [...]

³¹¹ TNA, FO 65/99, 18.06.1815, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh; FO 65/105, 14.01.1816, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh; 4.07.1816, Henry Savage Yeames to Castlereagh; FO 65/110, 28.03.1817, Bayley to Hamilton; FO 65/115, 19.01.1818, Henry Savage Yeames to Hamilton.

³¹² TNA, FO 65/118, 31.08.1819, James Yeames to Castlereagh.

³¹³ TNA, FO 65/123, 30.06.1820, James Yeames to Castlereagh; 19.09.1820, James Yeames to Castlereagh. On the various exportable products of the Russian shores of the Black Sea see Julius de Hagemeister, *Report on the commerce of the ports of New Russia, Moldavia, and Wallachia: made to*

In addition to all these, James Yeames notes in his report sent to Foreign Office on September 19, 1820, that not only the export but also the import trade grows rapidly in Odessa. And he states that Odessa, after becoming a free port, had begun to emerge as a very good market for the purchase and consumption of British industrial goods, which was not the case a few years ago, while on the other hand had also emerged as main gate of importation of goods towards the regions of Southern Poland and the provinces of Ukraine.³¹⁴

3.6 Concluding remarks

The opening of the Black Sea in July 1802 signaled the entrance of the British flag and trade in the latter but not any significant development and growth of British commerce in the ports of New Russia. Levant Company as well as British government were almost convinced that the right to navigate the Black Sea could provide many advantages for British maritime trade. It could promote the sale of British manufactures; it would also offer the opportunity to increase the number of British merchantmen and seamen sailing in that maritime region, whereas on the other hand Britain and Turkey would receive the produce of the coasts that surrounded Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

However, Lord of Elgin the British ambassador to the Porte had an absolutely opposite view and came to temper this great optimism of Levant Company's directors and members about the potential advantages that would result from the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag. And judging from the result it is clear that Elgin was definitely right. A number of reasons hindered or prevented the British to expand their maritime trade activities in the Russian Black Sea. What were these reasons? (a) The navigational and weather difficulties of Black Sea and Sea of Azov; (b) the incomplete port infrastructure in most of New Russia's ports; (c) the extreme poverty existing in villages and cities of New Russia and the subsequent (d) lack of

the Russian government, in 1835, in pursuance of an investigation, undertaken by order of Count Woronzow (London, 1836).

³¹⁴ TNA, FO 65/123, 30.06.1820, James Yeames to Castlereagh; 19.09.1820, James Yeames to Castlereagh.

markets able to consume British goods and manufactures; (e) the restrictions posed on British trade by Navigation Acts; (f) the higher operating costs of British vessels compared with the corresponding ones of French, Russian, Austrian or Greek vessels; (g) the uncontrolled and irregular tariff policy and custom duties in Russian ports depending almost exclusively on the decisions of local governors; (h) the obligation to trade in New Russia only on credit; (i) the inability of British merchants to engage in the retail or wholesale trade within New Russia's mainland; (j) the refusal of Tsar Alexander I to renew or prolong the expired in March 1807 Anglo-Russian commercial treaty; (k) the tsarist manifest of January 1, 1807, and of course (l) the outbreak of the Anglo-Russian war in September 1807, leading to an almost freezing –during the period from 1807 to 1812– of all diplomatic, economic and of course trade relations between the two countries.

But these difficulties did not prevent the British understand that the Russian Black Sea could provide them with products necessary to cover the growing needs of their military and naval forces in the Mediterranean, such as corn or shipbuilding timber. And the most important was that the British could buy these products at absolutely competitive prices compared to the ones in the northern ports of Europe, and especially in the Baltic Sea. This is what we call the comparative advantage of Black Sea for the British maritime trade, which would make Black Sea a key area of interest for British merchantmen during the decade of 1810 and especially after 1819, when British ships were supplying the British ports in the Mediterranean and England with masts, corn, salted meat, barley, oats, peas and tallow, with the latter making a rather dynamic appearance as Russia's main export product to Britain.

From our study we know that the limited presence of British flag vessels in New Russia's ports during the second half of the 1800s will end in summer 1812 with the signing of the peace treaty of Orebro, which settled the various Anglo-Russian disputes. Hence, with the end of the war British flag reappears in Odessa, and while in 1813 British flag had a negligible presence, in 1816 had managed to become the second most important commercial flag in the port of Odessa. And when in summer of 1819 Odessa becomes finally a free port, British maritime trade re-entered into a period of development and growth. And what is really interesting is the fact that the

growing presence of British merchantmen in the Russian Black Sea and to be more specific in the ports of Odessa, Taganrog and Feodosia, during the second half of 1810s, was not only linked to the development of an export but also to the development of an import trade, which was definitely not the case a few years ago. But the development of British maritime presence (export and import trade) in the Russian ports of the Black Sea, during the period after 1819 and the declaration of Odessa as a free port, will be studied in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

British-flag vessels trading in Odessa's port (1821-1853)

4.1 Introduction

The opening of the Black Sea to the British flag did not mark any immediate or explosive growth of British trade in New Russia's ports as stated in the previous chapter. Indeed, during the first decade of nineteenth century British maritime trade in Russian Black Sea ports was rather limited compared to trade conducted -for example- under the flags of Russia or Austria. However, despite the many difficulties that the British merchantmen were facing when sailing in the Black Sea, described in detail in Chapter Three, the British refused to give up and decided to enter the trade in the Russian Black Sea ports.

As already mentioned, the British understood that the Russian Black Sea could provide them with products necessary to cover the needs of their military and naval forces in the Mediterranean, especially by purchasing Russian corn and shipbuilding timber at rather competitive prices. This is what we like to call as the comparative advantage of Black Sea for the British maritime trade, which definitely made Black Sea a key area of interest for British merchantmen during the decade of 1810 and especially after 1819, as we are going to see in the present chapter.

Thus, having presented in the previous second chapter the early British penetration and presence in the Russian ports of the Black Sea by studying the British consular establishment in the latter during the period from June 1803 up to January 1819, our goal in this chapter is to study and map the British commercial penetration and presence in the Russian Black Sea and particularly in the port of Odessa; the most important export and import port of New Russia. The present, fourth chapter covers the years from 1821, when Odessa is already operating under the status of a free port, up to almost 1854 and the outbreak of the Crimean War fought between Russian Empire on the one hand and Turkey, Great Britain, France, and Sardinia on the other.

The present chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part is dealing with the study and mapping of British trade and British-flag vessels in the Russian ports of the Black Sea, with Odessa being at the center of our research interest, during the decade of 1820 (1821 – 1830). The second part, on the other hand, examines the presence of British merchantmen in Odessa and maps the British maritime trade and the changes it experienced in the port of the latter a few years later; to be more specific during the period beginning in 1844 and ending in the year 1853, which means just a few months before the outbreak of the Crimean War and just a few years after the beginning of the trade liberalization-era in Britain marked by the abolition of Corn Laws and Navigation Acts.

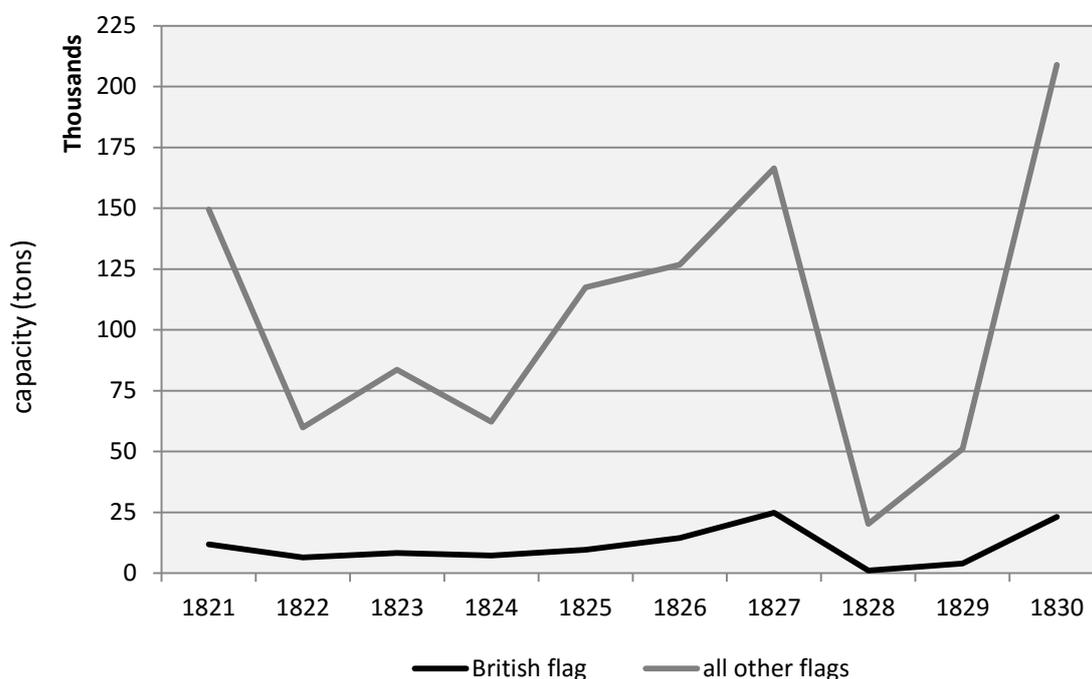
Finally, we have to state once again at this point that when we are talking about *British maritime trade* we are referring to *British-flag merchantmen* trading in the ports of New Russia. Furthermore we have to note that for the periods covering the years from 1821-1830 and 1844-1853 we have complete statistical information on various aspects of the development and growth of British trade in the Black Sea. To be more specific after a two year research-study in *The National Archives* in London we collected information and thousands of data enabling us to create large statistical series including the following parameters: (a) name of British flag vessels entering and leaving Russian Black Sea ports; (b) date of vessels' entry and clearance; (c) name and origin of captain; (d) crew number; (e) capacity in tons; (f) ports of arrival and destination ports; (g) ports of call; (h) type and value (in pounds sterling) of imported and exported cargoes. As already mentioned in the introductory part of the previous chapter every researcher can have free access to these statistical series comprising over six thousand entries through the website of our research project: www.britonian.eu.

4.2 British trade in Odessa (1821-1830)

In this section we study and map British trade in the Russian port of Odessa, the major Russian port of Black Sea. Our study focuses on the decade of 1820, which coincides with (a) the final end of Napoleonic Wars, (b) the gradual entering of

European economy to –a rather fragile– growth according to Schumpeter’s analysis,³¹⁵ (c) the decision of Russian government to designate New Russia’s main port, Odessa, a free port as already mentioned, and (d) the difficulties of navigation and trade in the Black Sea due to outbreak of the *Greek War of Independence* and the *Russo-Turkish War of 1828–1829* sparked by the latter.³¹⁶

Figure 4.1 Tonnage of British-flag vessels departed from Odessa during 1820s compared to the corresponding data of all other flags



Source: processed data from TNA, FO 359/1

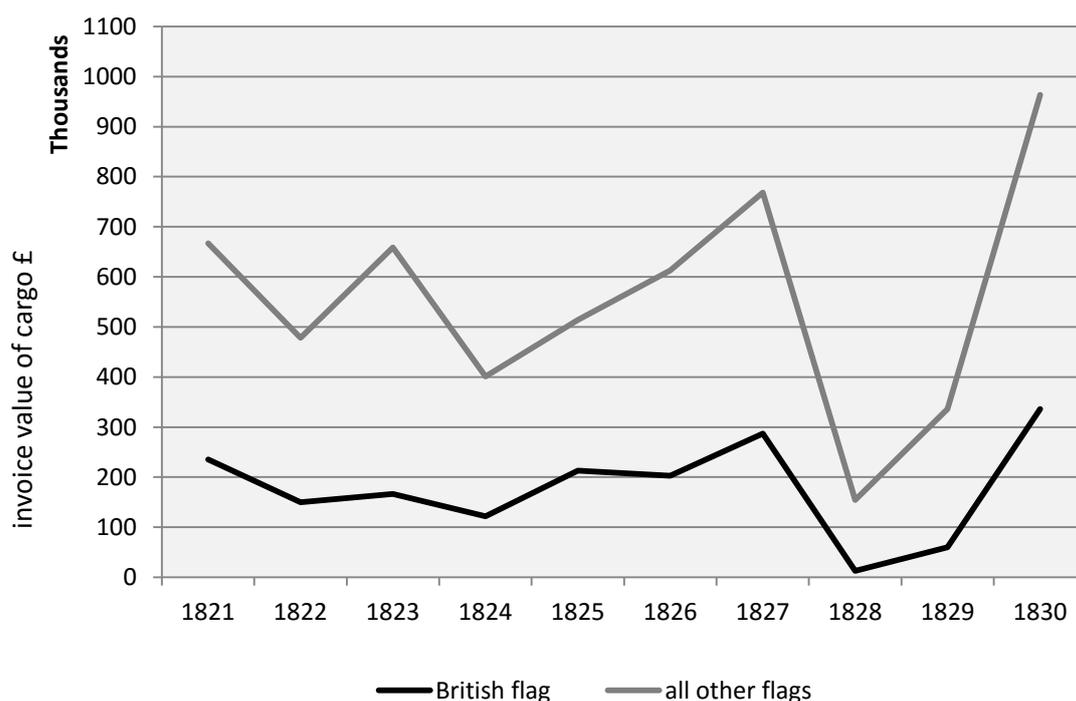
Aspects of British maritime trade in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and in particular in Odessa have been studied by several historians like Herlihy, Fairlie, Harlaftis, Kardasis, Vassalo, Ardeleanu, Sifneos, Haci Veli Aydin just to name a few of

³¹⁵ On the economic recovery which Europe begins to experience since the second half of the 1820s, see Angus Madisson, *Phases of Capitalist Development* (Oxford, 1984), 78; Simon Kuznets, ‘Schumpeter’s Business Cycles,’ *American Economic Review* 30 (1940), 257-271 [261].

³¹⁶ Panayiotis Kapetanakis, ‘Από την Αμφιτρύτη στον Οδυσσέα: πλέοντας με την ιόνιο ναυτιλία στα νερά της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου κατά την επαναστατική δεκαετία του 1820,’ in Gelina Harlaftis and Katerina Παπακωνσταντινίου (eds.), *Ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων 1700-1821. Ο αιώνας της ακμής πριν από την Επανάσταση* (Athens, 2013), 735-770.

them.³¹⁷ Be that as it may British trade in Odessa still requires a more analytical approach, focused not only on the number and capacity of merchantmen flying the British flag but also on the trade they conducted. During our research in London we were fortunate to locate numerous archival data illuminating important aspects of British trade in Russian Black Sea ports. In this section we will focus our interest in British maritime and commercial presence in Odessa. We will examine in more detail the following: (a) the tonnage of British ships departing from the port of Odessa, (b) the ports with which Odessa is connected through British merchantmen, and (c) the nature and value of the cargoes exported from Odessa by British-flag ships.

Figure 4.2 Invoice value of cargo (£) exported by British-flag vessels from Odessa during 1820s compared to the corresponding data of all other flags



Source: see Figure 4.1

³¹⁷ Herlihy, *Odessa: A History*; Fairlie, *The Anglo-Russian Grain Trade*; Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping* and 'The 'Eastern Invasion'; Aydin, 'Έλληνες έμποροι και ναυτικοί στη Μαύρη Θάλασσα, 1780-1820'; Vassalo, 'The Maltese Merchant Fleet and the Black Sea Grain Trade in the Nineteenth Century'; Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*; Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării*; Sifneos and Harlaftis, 'Entrepreneurship at the Russian Frontier of International Trade. The Greek Merchant Community/Paroikia of Taganrog in the Sea of Azof, 1780s-1830s.'

Let us first look to developments in the capacity of British ships departed from Odessa during the period from 1821 up to 1830 compared to the corresponding data of all other flags. According to Figure 4.1 the presence of British-flag vessels in the port of Odessa in terms of tonnage during the said decade is limited, moving to low levels around 10,000 tons, with only two peaks in the years 1827 and 1830, when the capacity reached almost 25,000 tones. But do the capacity figures show the true picture concerning the presence of British-flag vessels in the port of Odessa? The answer is given in Figure 4.2.

What is clear from the figures above? That if we focus only on capacity data we will not be able to grasp the true significance of the British flag for the export trade of Odessa. In fact, during the 1820s the capacity of British-flag vessels departing from Odessa represents just a mere nine percent of the total tonnage of vessels - regardless of flag- having departed from Odessa. But if we focus on the invoice value of the exported cargoes what we see is that during the said period the total value of cargoes exported by British ships accounted for almost one fourth of total exports from Odessa. For a detailed picture of the percentage participation of British-flag vessels in the export trade of Odessa, based on the total value of exported cargoes (£), see Table 4.1 below.

In other words, while in terms of capacity British flag appears with a clearly reduced weight, in terms of the value of exported cargoes British-flag vessels appear to have a dominant presence in Odessa's trade since 1821. For argument's sake, Figure 4.3 below presents the value (in pounds sterling) of goods exported from the port of Odessa by the five main merchant fleets engaged in the export trade of the latter during the period covering the years from 1821 up to 1829; namely the British-, Austrian-, Russian-, Sardinian- and Ionian-flag fleets (1821-1829). According to the figure, British flag almost throughout the turbulent decade of 1820s maintains the position of second main commercial flag in the port of Odessa with Austrian flag holding the first position, followed by the Russian, Sardinian and Ionian flags. However, having in mind that the Ionian flag was the flag of the fleet of the British semi-colony of the Ionian Islands, we can we can safely argue that the presence of

British and British protected commercial fleets in the export trade of Odessa was dominant during the 1820s, with the possible exception of the year 1828.³¹⁸

Table 4.1 Percentage participation of British-flag vessels in the export trade of Odessa based on the total value of exported cargoes (£) (1821-1830)

Year	value of cargoes exported by British flag (£)	value of cargoes exported by all flags (£)	participation (%) of British flag
1821	235,199	902,376	26
1822	149,750	628,100	24
1823	166,219	824,889	20
1824	122,125	523,225	23
1825	212,742	726,852	29
1826	202,735	815,627	35
1827	286,649	1,054,844	27
1828	12,850	167,480	8
1829	59,870	396,116	15
1830	336,246	1,299,853	20

Source: see Figure 4.1

It is worth noting that despite the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence and *the trade barriers for ships sailing through Bosphorus imposed by the Porte*,³¹⁹ which definitely caused many difficulties in many flags involved in the export trade of the Russian ports of the Black Sea, the presence of British ships in the Russian port of Odessa was in no way interrupted, as British government maintained friendly relations with the Porte.³²⁰ On the other hand British trade in Odessa reached two

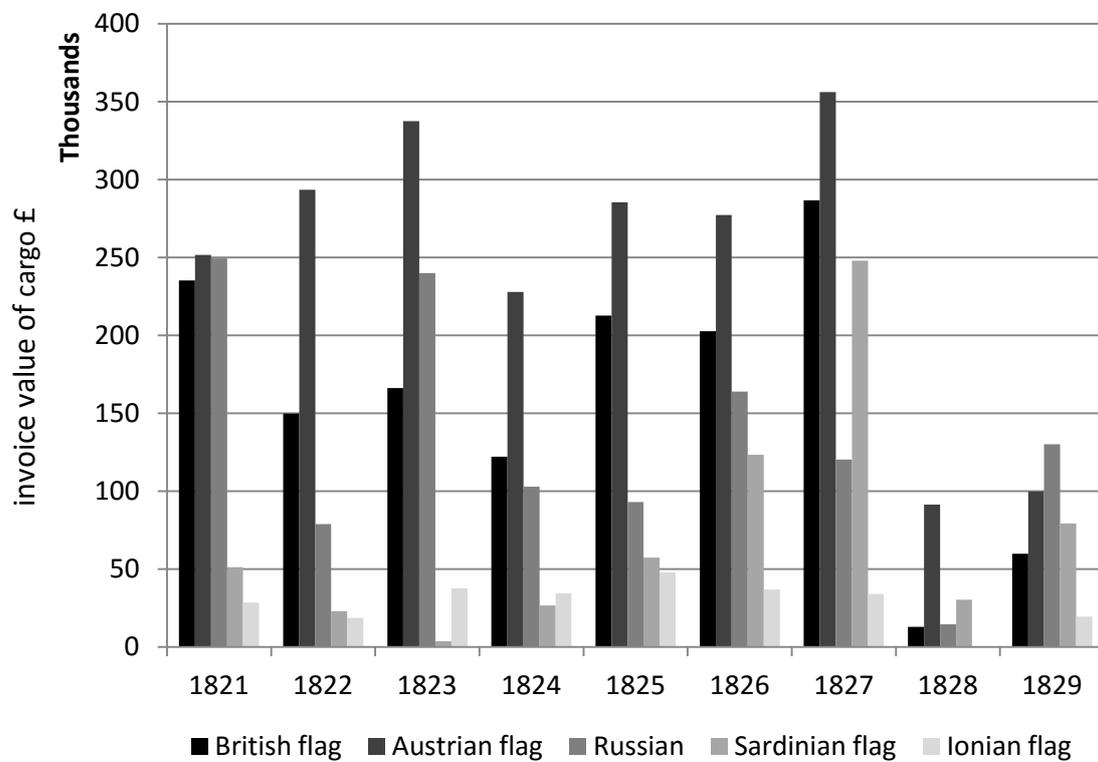
³¹⁸ On the British semi-colony of the Ionian Islands, their merchant flag and fleet, see the following chapter.

³¹⁹ TNA, FO 65/136, 04.12.1822, James Yeames to Sir Charles Bagot.

³²⁰ TNA, FO 65/136, 20.06.1822, James Yeames to Sir Charles Bagot.

peaks in 1827 and 1830, both linked to the need for grain experienced by Western Europe and certainly by England herself.³²¹ During the interim period, in the years 1828 and 1829, what we see is a great reduction of the presence of British flag in Odessa, coinciding with the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829,³²² and the embargo imposed on British, French, and Russian vessels sailing the Straits.³²³

Figure 4.3 Value of exported goods (£) from the port of Odessa by British-, Austrian-, Russian-, Sardinian- and Ionian-flag vessels (1821-1829)



Source: see Figure 4.1

³²¹ Ardeleanu, 'The Opening and Development of the Black Sea,' 30-52. On the growth of grain imports in England during the second half of 1820s see also Barnes, *A History of the English Corn Laws from 1660-1846*, 299-300.

³²² TNA, FO 65/173, Dispatch No.38, 19.10.1828, James Yeames to Baron Heytesbury, f. 246r – 247v; 21.11.1828, James Yeames to Baron Heytesbury, f. 340r – 343v.

³²³ TNA, FO 65/166, Dispatch No.82, 17.11.1827, Edward Cromwell Disbrowe to Earl Dudley; 22.11.1827, James Yeames to Edward Cromwell Disbrowe.

Going back to the above mentioned strong export activity of British-flag vessels in Odessa in 1827 and 1830, according to Fairlie, *Europe did indeed suffer collectively from a period of scarcity in grain between the years 1827 and 1832*. And the decision of Britain was *the removal of the British prohibition on grain imports in 1828* and the consequent opening of the British market after the said year.³²⁴ A development that leads Britain to turn to the Russian grains of the Black Sea and explains the strong presence of British flag in Odessa during the said years.³²⁵

Table 4.2 Type, number and percentage participation (out of the total number) of cargoes exported from Odessa by British-flag vessels (1821-1830)

Type of exported cargoes	Number of exported cargoes	Participation (%)
grains	375	54
tallow	157	23
hides	70	10
iron	49	7
wool	15	2
potash	11	2
linseed	7	1
wax	7	1
cordage	6	1

Source: see Figure 4.1

Furthermore, the strong presence of British flag in 1830 as well as in the years ahead is associated with the end of the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829, the termination of commercial and naval blockade of the Black Sea imposed by Sublime Porte.³²⁶ Furthermore the signing of the *Treaty of Adrianople* introduced the true internationalization of the Black Sea and the Bosphorus Strait, by giving the right for

³²⁴ Fairlie, 'The Anglo-Russian Grain Trade,' 80-81. On the importance of Corn Laws and their revisions in 1822 and 1828 as well as the need for wheat imports in Britain see also Richard Tames, *Economy and Society in 19th Century Britain* (London, 2013), 61-64.

³²⁵ Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 184-188.

³²⁶ Ardeleanu, 'The Opening and Development of the Black Sea,' 30-52.

free navigation not only to the Russian flag but to any flag being at peace with the Sublime Port, such as the British flag.³²⁷

Now, what are the specific goods exported by British-flag vessels from Odessa during the decade of 1820? The picture is presented in Table 3.5 above. The first place is occupied by the valuable for the British needs Russian *wheat (hard and soft)* representing 54 percent of the total cargoes exported by British-flag vessels from Odessa.³²⁸ The second position (b) is held by *tallow* representing 23 percent of the total number of cargoes exported by British vessels. Tallow, fat rendered from sheep and cows, was a major ingredient in soap and candles more than necessary for British industry and market during nineteenth century.³²⁹ In the third place (c) we find the *hides* (10%), followed by (d) iron (7%), (e) wool (2%), (f) potash (2%), (g) linseed (1%), (h) wax (1%) and (i) cordage (1%).³³⁰ In other words during the said decade four are the main products of interest for the British: wheat, tallow, hides and iron. But let us now look at what ports British-flag vessels exported the aforementioned Russian products. The picture is given by Map 4.1 below.

The map shows the main ports and geographic areas supplied by British-flag vessels with goods exported from Odessa during the decade of 1820. The ports to which British ships exported Russian products were grouped into four geographic areas: (a) Mediterranean Sea (including Constantinople), (b) United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, (c) Northern ports of Europe/Atlantic, and (d) Black Sea.

³²⁷ Panayiotis Kapetanakis, 'The Ionian Danube, 1815-1864,' in Gelina Harlaftis and Radu Paun (eds.), *Greeks in Romania in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, 2013), 227-260. See also Paul Cernovodeanu, *Relațiile comerciale româno-engleze în contextul politicii orientale a Marii Britanii, 1803 – 1878* (Cluj-Napoca, 1988), Ch. 2; Herlihy, *Odessa: A History*, 99-100. On the observations of His Majesty's Government upon the Treaty of Peace between Russia and Turkey concluded at Adrianople on the 14th of September, 1829, see TNA, FO 65/178, Dispatch No.22, 31.10.1829, Earl of Aberdeen to Lord Heytesbury.

³²⁸ See Fairlie, 'The Anglo-Russian Grain Trade,' 167. On the importance of Russian grains for the English market see also Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 185-186.

³²⁹ Colin Archibald Russell, 'The Organic Chemicals Industry to the First World War,' in Colin Archibald Russell (ed.) *Chemistry, Society and Environment: A New History of the British Chemical Industry* (Cambridge, 2000), 197-238 [209-213]; Gordon Phillips, *Seven Centuries of Light: The Tallow Chandlers Company* (London, 1999), Ch. IV.

³³⁰ On the use of some of these agricultural and non agricultural products in the British industry see Tames, *Economy and Society in 19th Century Britain*, 59-60.

Map 4.1 Ten main ports and the four main maritime areas where British-flag vessels exported Russian products from Odessa (1821-1830)



Source: see Figure 4.1

As is clear from our research sixty percent of British vessels departed from Odessa had chosen the Mediterranean as the final destination of their journey. The preferred Mediterranean ports are the following: Malta (126 arrivals of British vessels), Constantinople (60 arrivals), Leghorn (34), Genoa (26), Marseilles (21), ports of Ionian State, namely Corfu, Zante and Cephalonia (14 arrivals), and the port of Trieste with 12 arrivals. In the second place we find the ports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, chosen by 38 percent of British vessels, with Liverpool (78 arrivals), London (62 arrivals), and Bristol (45 arrivals) emerging as the three main ports of interest. Third place is occupied by the ports of Black Sea (Taganrog, Ismail and Trebizond), representing a mere one percent, and the last place -with the

same percentage- by the ports of North Sea and Atlantic Ocean (Cadiz, Madeira, Hamburg).

Thus, during the 1820s, particularly after the decision of Russian government to establish a free port in Odessa, the British flag succeeded in emerging as one of the dominant powers in the export trade of Odessa in terms of value of exported cargoes. Wheat, tallow and hides emerged as the three main Russian products of interest to the British. The said products were exported from Odessa primarily to the Mediterranean ports of Malta, Leghorn and of course Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire with large numbers of consumers and the largest maritime centre of Eastern Mediterranean.³³¹

As far as the island of Malta is concerned, it had highly-reputed quarantine facilities and managed to become a regular port of call for a large number of vessels engaged in the corn trade. And these corn cargoes were then picked up by local and other vessels which took them to Spain.³³² Furthermore, Maltese merchants, *nominally British but Levantine by vocation if not location, played a modest supporting role by distributing British goods in North Africa for most of the century and by participating in the grain trade with the ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov for a number of decades.*³³³

On the other hand Leghorn during the early decades of nineteenth century offered great potential as a hub in transit trade of cereals in the Mediterranean and emerged also as an important center for grain imports; grain necessary for

³³¹ On the importance of the port of Constantinople see Panayiotis Kapetanakis, *Ναυτιλία και Εμπόριο Υπό Βρετανική Προστασία. Ιόνιο Κράτος (1815-1864)* (Athens, 2015), 88-98; Harlaftis and Kardasis, 'International Shipping in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea: Istanbul as a Maritime Center, 1870-1910,' 233-265.

³³² Vassalo, 'The Maltese Merchant Fleet and the Black Sea Grain Trade in the Nineteenth Century,' 19-36. See also Ayşe Devrim Atauz, *Trade, Piracy, and Naval Warfare in the Central Mediterranean: The Maritime History and Archaeology of Malta* (Texas, 2004), 181; Albert Victor Laferia, *British Malta*, vol. I (Malta, 1947).

³³³ Vassalo, 'Trade between Malta and the Barbary Regencies in the Nineteenth Century with Special Reference to Tunisia,' 167-185. See also Frank Theuma, 'Ένας περίπλους στις αρχές του 19^{ου} αιώνα: Ελληνική ναυτιλία στη Μάλτα, 1800-1821,' in Gelina Harlaftis and Katerina Papakonstantinou (eds.), *Ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων 1700-1821. Ο αιώνας της ακμής πριν από την Επανάσταση* (Athens, 2013), 585-602.

consumption throughout the Italian peninsula.³³⁴ In addition to all these the port of Leghorn had large storage facilities, which was particularly important for grain traders.³³⁵ Finally we can definitely say that during the 1820s three of the main ports of England (namely London, Liverpool and Bristol) had developed terms of a direct communication with the port of Odessa without the need for intermediary - transit ports.³³⁶ Consequently, the contrary opinions of limited export grain from Russia into English ports before 1946 should be reviewed in the light of the above mentioned statistical data.³³⁷

4.3 British trade in Odessa (1844-1853)

In the present second section of the chapter we are studying the development of British maritime trade in Odessa during mid-nineteenth century (from 1844 up to 1853). This period is characterized by: (a) the repeal of all British Corn Laws, achieved in 1846,³³⁸ (b) and the abolition of British Navigation Laws in 1849,³³⁹ (c) the gradual move towards trade liberalization in large part of Western Europe,³⁴⁰ (d) the emergence of New Russia as major grain-producing region of European

³³⁴ Herlihy, 'Russian Wheat and the Port of Livorno 1794-1865,' 45-68. See also Katerina Galani, 'Μεταξύ Λεβάντε και Πονέντε: Λιβόρνο, ένα διεθνές εμπόριο στη Μεσόγειο,' in Gelina Harlaftis and Katerina Papakonstantinou (eds.), *Ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων 1700-1821. Ο αιώνας της ακμής πριν από την Επανάσταση* (Athens, 2013), 541-562.

³³⁵ Despina Vlami, *Το φιορίνι, το σιτάρι και η οδός του κήπου. Έλληνες έμποροι στο Λιβόρνο 1750-1868* (Athens, 2000), 150-151.

³³⁶ On the ports of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland see Adam W. Kirkaldy, *British Shipping: Its History, Organization, and Importance*, Book III (Cambridge, 1976), 487-516, 517-529, 537-544, 545-562.

³³⁷ Indicatively see Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 162.

³³⁸ On Corn Laws see Fairlie, 'The Corn Laws and British Wheat Production, 1829-76,' 88-116; Cernovodeanu, 'British Trade in The Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' 707-741; Barnes, *A History of the English Corn Laws, 1660-1846*, 239-284. See also Tames, *Economy and Society in 19th Century Britain* (London, 2013), 64-65.

³³⁹ On Navigation Acts see Jarle Georg Bjørklund – Inger Jensen, 'The 19th Century – Towards a New Age,' in Kolltveit Bard (ed.), *Trade Winds: A History of Norwegian Shipping* (Oslo, 1990), 161-237; Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain, 1700-1914* (London 1983), 266-267. Stig Tenold, 'Norwegian Shipping in the Twentieth Century,' *Research in Maritime History* 37 (2008), 57-77.

³⁴⁰ On trade liberalization in Great Britain see Colin J. Holmes, 'Laissez-faire in Theory and Practice: Britain, 1800-1875,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 5 (1976), 671-688; Roger Lloyd-Jones – M. J. Lewis, 'The Long Wave and Turning Points in British Industrial Capitalism: A Neo-Schumpeterian Approach,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 29 (2000), 359-401.

continent,³⁴¹ (e) the emergence of the Russian grain-exporting ports of the Black Sea (mainly of Odessa and Taganrog) as main ports of activity of British-flag vessels in Eastern Mediterranean (as we are going to see below), (f) the outbreak of the *Great Famine* in Ireland between 1845 and 1852 and in general the *Hungry Forties* in Europe,³⁴² and last but not least (g) the outbreak of the Crimean War that put a temporary end to British maritime dominant presence in the Russian Black Sea and turned gradually British ships to trade with the Danubian ports of Braila and Galatz, in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia.³⁴³

Let us first examine the tonnage of British-flag ships departed from Odessa during the period from 1844 up to 1853, the invoice value of the cargoes exported by British and non British vessels (in pounds sterling), as well as the British share of total tonnage and cargoes exported, compared to the corresponding data of all other flags. According to Table 4.3 below British flag managed to maintain their dominant presence in the export trade of Odessa during the decade of 1844-1853. As already mentioned, this strong presence of British flag can be more accurate and clearly seen if one studies the data regarding the value of goods being exported rather than the data related to the capacity of vessels departed.

However, if we compare these data with the data presented in Figure 4.2 and Table 4.1 of the previous section what we see is that the British flag, while maintaining a strong presence in the export trade of Odessa, it goes rather decreasing as the years pass and the era of the Crimean War nears. It is interesting to note that while in the 1820s the value of products exported from Odessa -by British-flag vessels- accounted for almost one quarter of total Odessa's exports, during the decade of 1844-1853 the average value of British exports is declining and now accounts for almost one fifth of

³⁴¹ Ardeleanu, 'The Opening and Development of the Black Sea for International Trade and Shipping (1774–1853),' 30-52; V. P. Timoshenko, *Agricultural Russia and the Wheat Problem* (Stanford, 1932), 472, where an informative table on Russian grain exports for the period from 1820 up to 1913.

³⁴² Eric Vanhaute, Richard Paping and Cormac O Grada, *The European subsistence crisis of 1845-1850: a comparative perspective*. Paper presented at the International Economic History Congress in Helsinki, Finland (21-25 August 2006). [<http://www.helsinki.fi/iehc2006/papers3/Vanhaute.pdf>, Date of Access: 20.08.2015]. See also Tames, *Economy and Society in 19th Century Britain*, 64-66.

³⁴³ Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării*.

the total value of the products exported (average value for the said decade is 20.3 percent).

Table 4.3 Tonnage of British-flag vessels departed from Odessa, value of exported goods (£) and percentage participation (out of the total number) of British flag and cargoes compared to corresponding data of all other flags (1844-1853)

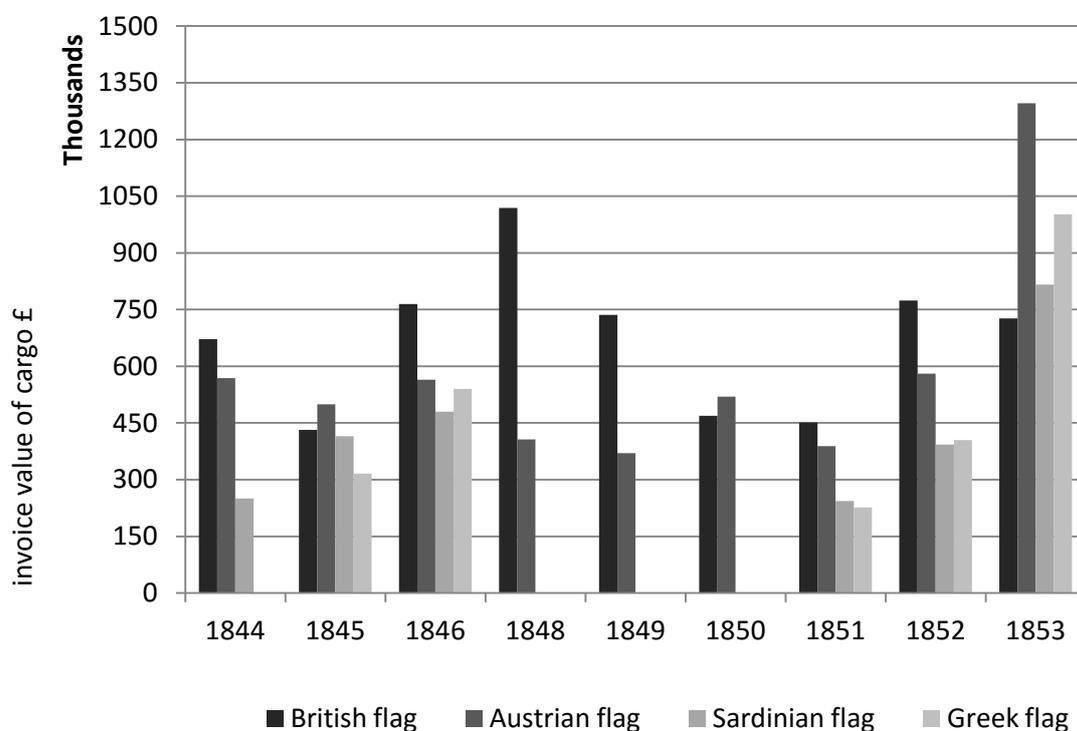
Year	Tonnage of British-flag	Tonnage of all other flags	participation (%) of British flag	value of cargoes exported by British flag (£)	value of cargoes exported by all flags (£)	participation (%) of British flag
1844	47,372	200,301	19	671,540	2,537,033	21
1845	33,848	264,132	11	431,520	2,758,480	14
1846	54,370	297,268	16	764,990	3,241,307	19
1848	81,403	196,322	29	1,018,730	2,568,829	28
1849	60,800	177,971	26	735,760	2,237,515	25
1850	37,932	185,143	17	469,101	2,494,852	16
1851	38,834	164,008	19	450,800	1,860,238	20
1852	71,782	264,882	21	773,700	3,768,880	17
1853	62,126	425,231	13	727,000	4,900,500	13

Source: see Figure 4.1

To be more specific, it is worth mentioning that in 1844 British exports accounted for thirty percent of the value of total exports from Odessa, maintaining the position of one of the four main exporting powers from the said port. This figure ten years later fell to just thirteen percent, a decrease of almost fifty seven percent (see Table 4.3), having fallen in the place of the fourth main exporting power, facing strong competition, mainly, from the Austrian, Sardinian and Greek flags (see Figure 4.4).³⁴⁴

³⁴⁴ On the presence of Greek flag in the Russian ports of the Black Sea see Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping*, 2-37. On the presence of various Wert European fleets in the port of Odessa

Figure 4.4 Value of exported goods (£) from the port of Odessa by British-, Austrian-, Sardinian- and Greek-flag vessels (1844-1853)



Source: see Figure 4.1

On the other hand this reduced presence of British-flag vessels in Odessa should be combined with the simultaneous strengthening of Britain’s interest in the Danubian grain markets. A British decision prompted by her rising needs for cereals and her

see Herlihy, *Odessa: A History 1794-1914*, 96-113. On the presence of the Ionian merchant fleet and flag in the Russian ports of the Black Sea see Kapetanakis, *Ναυτιλία και Εμπόριο Υπό Βρετανική Προστασία. Ιόνιο Κράτος*. See also the following chapter. According to J. G. Kohl who travelled in Southern Russia during the decade of 1830s and beginning of 1840s *the foreign trade of Odessa is chiefly carried on under the Austrian and Sardinian flags. Under the former, 243 vessels arrived in 1837, and 161 under the latter. Of British vessels, in the same year, there were 121; and under the Greek flag, 89 vessels visited the harbor. The resident-merchants are chiefly foreigners, -German, Italians and Greeks; the native traders, here as in the other sea-port towns of Russia, engaging seldom in foreign speculations. English houses, we believe there are none at Odessa of any eminence, and indeed the whole commercial machinery is still in a somewhat rude and primitive condition, many of the rich landowners of the steppes having their own warehouses in the city, whence they dispose of their produce at once to the foreign captains without the mediation of the merchant; see J. G. Kohl, ‘Reisen in Südrussland,’ *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, XXVIII (October 1841-January 1842), 62-77 [68].*

decision for disengagement from the wheat of her main rival and enemy, Russia;³⁴⁵ a disengagement procedure already taking place since mid-1830s.³⁴⁶

Of course, before falling to fourth place behind Austria, Russia and Greece in the year 1853, just few months before the outbreak of the Crimean War, British-flag vessels had succeeded in emerging during mid-nineteenth century as Odessa's main exporting power, always speaking in terms of the value of goods being exported and not of the number or the tonnage of the departing merchant vessels. The period during which the British flag appears to dominate the export trade of Odessa was the one covering the years from 1846 up to 1849, when British exports accounted for one fifth to nearly one third of the total value of Odessa's exports (see Table 4.3 and percentage participation of British exports).

The combined reasons that allowed British-flag vessels to dominate Odessa's exports during the second half of the 1840s were, of course, (a) the repeal of British Corn Laws, in 1846, which posed many restrictions on grain imports in the United Kingdom, and (b) the abolition two years later -in 1849- of British Navigation Laws, (c) which marked actually the implementation of a policy of free trade in grain, (d) throwing the carrying trade as well as the import of corn to Britain open to all nations and (e) allowing consequently a direct communication of English ports with Odessa, without the need for any intermediate transit stations like the Mediterranean ports of Marseilles or Genoa.³⁴⁷ On the other hand we have to note that *the catastrophic Irish famines of the years 1845-6 made the repeal of the Corn Laws inevitable; in the face of mass starvation, restrictions on the free import of food [in United Kingdom] could not be tolerated.*³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ Cernovodeanu, 'British Trade in The Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' 707-741. See also Puryear, *International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East*, 132, 146. See also

³⁴⁶ Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 157-160.

³⁴⁷ Op.Cit., 161-162. See also D. S. Chapman, 'The International Houses: The *Continental Contribution to British Commerce, 1800-1860*,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 6/1 (1977), 5-48 [40]; Herlihy, 'Russian Wheat and the Port of Livorno 1794-1865,' 45-68 (67); Paul Bairoch, 'European Foreign Trade in the XIX Century: The Development of the Value and Volume of Exports (Preliminary Results),' *The Journal of European Economic History* 2/1 (1973), 5-36 [9-10].

³⁴⁸ Kenwood and Lougheed, *The Growth of the International Economy 1820-2000*, 63.

It is worth noting that according to *Betty Kemp wheat began to be imported [in the United Kingdom] in 1765, but even in the decade of 1835-45, which included some very bad harvests, well over ninety per cent of the [British] population was still fed from homegrown wheat.*³⁴⁹ Be that as it may, the destruction of the potato crop in Ireland in autumn 1845 in connection with the destruction of cereal crops in England in the following year (1846) and the abundant grain harvest in Russia forced for the first time British government to allow importation of huge quantities of Russian grains in order to meet the great needs of its starving population.³⁵⁰ Consequently the period of mid-nineteenth century is the period of the clear domination of British-flag vessels in the export trade of Odessa and the emergence of Russian grains as the principal product of interest for British trade and merchantmen.

But let us proceed to Table 4.4 and Figure 4.5 and see what are the main products being exported by the British from Odessa and what differences do we see if we compare the cargoes-data of 1844-1853 with the corresponding data of 1820s (see Table 3.5 and figure 3.6). According to Table 4.4 Russian grains emerged as the absolutely main exportable product of interest for the British. To be more specific during the period of 1844-1853 British-flag vessels exported from Odessa a total of 2,305 cargoes, of which 1,689 were cereals (1,422 cargoes of wheat, 158 cargoes of Indian corn, 62 cargoes of rye, 13 cargoes of barley, 9 cargoes of maize and one cargo of oats). The second most preferred product for British exporters from Odessa, New Russia's main port, was linseed with *linen fiber considered the most important product of the flax plant*. Furthermore, linseed oil became *recognized as the most important product because of its importance as a drying oil vehicle for protective coatings and other industrial products.*³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ Betty Kemp, 'Reflections on the Repeal of the Corn Laws,' *Victorian Studies*, 5/3 (March 1962), 189-204.

³⁵⁰ Kenwood and Lougheed, *The Growth of the International Economy 1820-2000*, 63; Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 161-165; Fairlie, 'The Corn Laws and British Wheat Production, 1829-76,' 88-116 [108].

³⁵¹ On the use and importance of linseed or flax see Whitney Eastman, *The history of the linseed oil industry in the United States* (Minneapolis 1968), Ch.5 [123-148]. Linseed was also prescribed by doctors and apothecaries to treat a variety of ailments. See also the interesting article of Solar on the development of textile industry in Europe, Peter M. Solar, *The Triumph of Cotton in Europe* (2012),

Table 4.4 Type and number of cargoes exported from Odessa by British-flag vessels during the decade of 1844-1853 compared to 1820s (percentage difference)

Type of exported cargoes	Number of exported cargoes 1844-1853	Number of exported cargoes 1821-1830	Percentage difference (%) compared to 1820s
grains	1,689	375	+ 350.40
linseed	218	7	+ 3,014.29
wool	217	15	+ 1,346.67
tallow	129	157	- 17.83
iron	28	49	- 42.86
hides	6	70	- 91.43
hemp	5	3	- 66.67

Source: see Figure 4.1

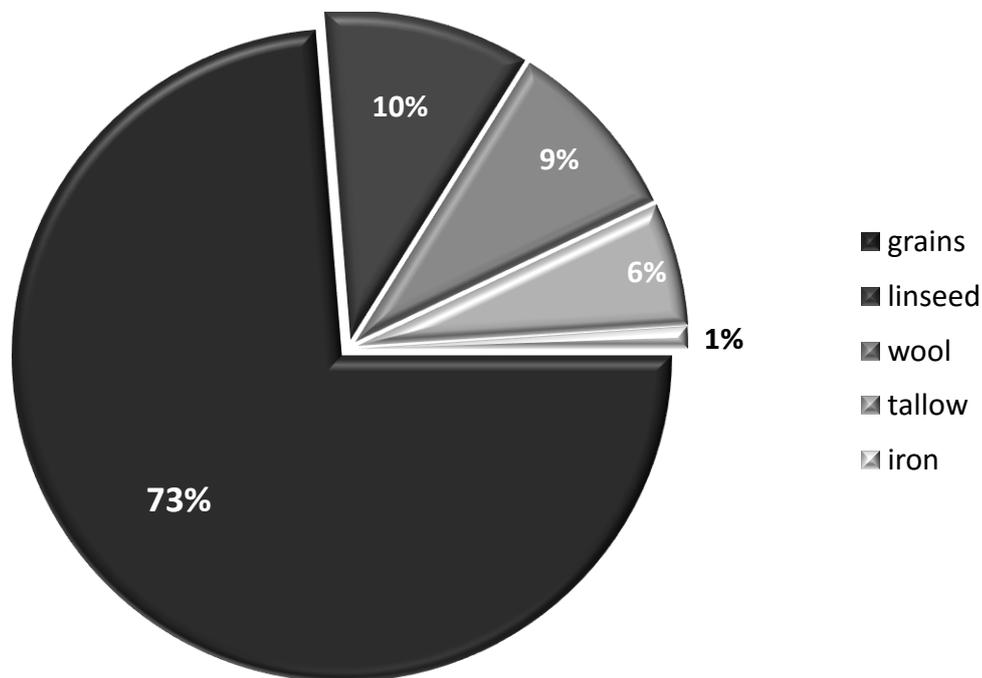
The third place is occupied by wool, the most important raw material for British growing textile industry, with a number of 217 cargoes, representing nine percent out of the total number of cargoes exported by British-flag vessels, experiencing - compared to 1820s- a giant growth of more than 1,300 percent.³⁵² On the other hand, the fourth most preferred exportable product for the British was tallow with a number of 217 cargoes, representing only six percent out of the total number of cargoes, which means a decrease compared to 1820s of about eighteen percent (see Table 4.2).

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/economicHistory/seminars/ModernAndComparative/papers2011-12/Papers/Solar-Textile-fibres-May-12.pdf> [Date of Access 28 August 2015]. A simple recipe from Dr. William Buchan's popular book *Domestic Medicine* was among those medicines commonly used in 1811, *Linseed, an infusion of 1 ounce to a quart of water, may be used at pleasure*. See William Buchan, *Domestic Medicine: Or, A Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases by Regimen and Simple Medicines: With an Appendix, Containing a Dispensatory for the Use of Private Practitioners* (Boston, 1811), 28, 206-207, 232-234, 441.

³⁵² On the importance of wool for British industry during eighteenth and of course nineteenth centuries see Pat Hudson, 'The Limits of Wool and the Potential of Cotton in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries,' in Giorgio Riello and Prasanna Parthasarathi (eds.), *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850* (Oxford, 2009), 327-350; David T. Jenkins and Kenneth G. Ponting, *The British Wool Textile Industry, 1770-1914* (London, 1982); Lex Heerma van Voss, Els Hiemstra-Kuperus, and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (eds.), *The Ashgate companion to the history of textile workers, 1650-2000* (Farnham, 2010). See also Solar, *The Triumph of Cotton in Europe*.

Consequently, as appears very clearly from Figure 4.5, the various Russian grains coming mainly from the regions of Podolia, Bessarabia, Southern and Central Ukraine, Crimea and the areas north of Taganrog, were for British-flag vessels the absolutely dominant product of interest during the period 1844-1853. Grains during the said period were representing 73 percent out of the total number of cargoes exported by the British from Odessa, an increase -compared to the 1820s- by 350 percent.³⁵³

Figure 4.5 Type and percentage participation (out of the total number) of cargoes exported from Odessa by British-flag vessels (1844-1853)



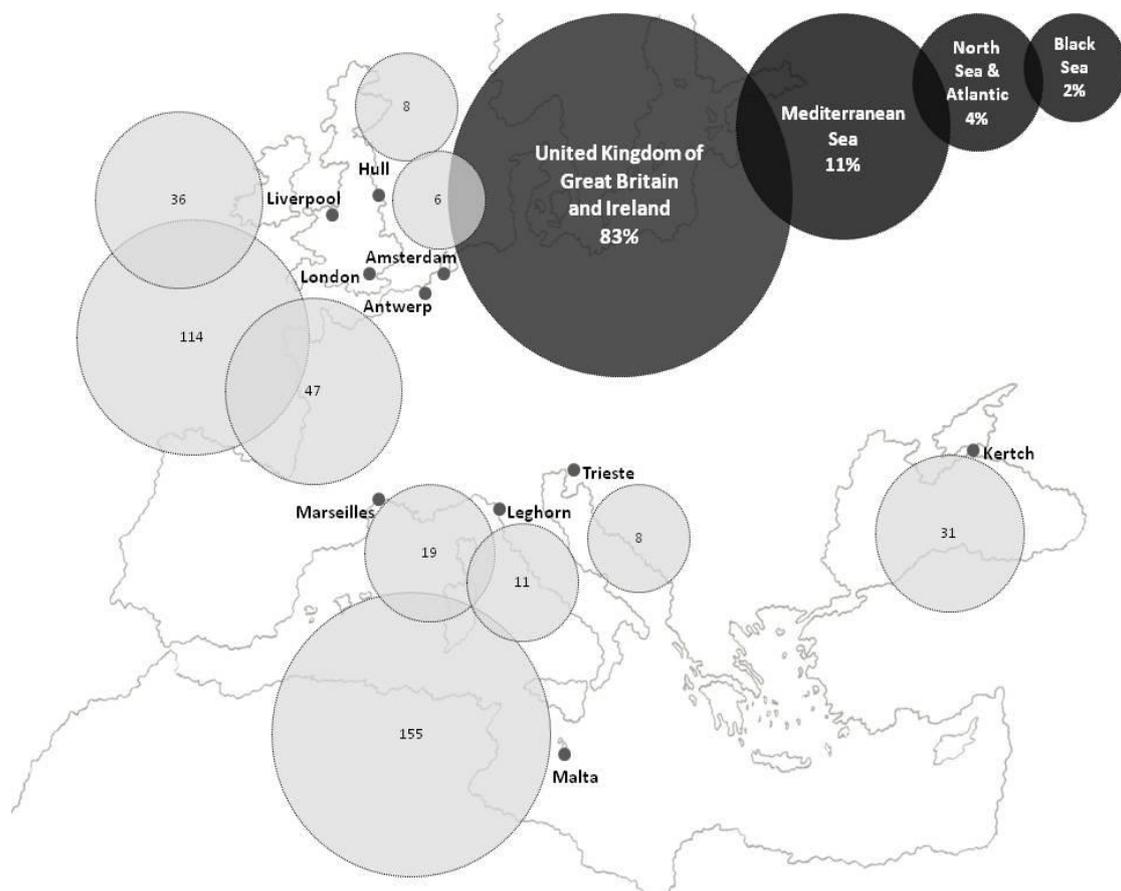
Source: see Figure 4.1

Let us now examine the ports where British-flag vessels exported the aforementioned Russian products during the period covering the years from 1844 up to 1853. The picture is given by Map 4.2 below. As already mentioned in the previous

³⁵³ Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 101-102; Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe* (Princeton, 2014), 94. See also Richard Pipes, *Russia under the old regime* (London, 1995), 147-148.

section, the ports to which British ships exported Russian products were grouped into four broad geographic areas: (a) Mediterranean Sea (including Constantinople), (b) United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, (c) Northern ports of Europe/Atlantic Ocean, and (d) Black Sea (coasters excluded).

Map 4.2 Ten main ports and the four main maritime areas where British-flag vessels exported Russian products from Odessa (1844-1853)



Source: see Figure 4.1

According to the map during the period of mid-nineteenth century the port of Valetta in Malta maintains its leading position as the main destination port declared by British-flag vessels departing from Odessa. To be more specific 155 vessels had declared Malta as their final destination. As far as the importance of Malta as major

transshipment center of the Mediterranean during the said period Carmel Vassalo states:

The island was probably more important as a re-distributor of wheat and other grains as well as pulses. The grain came mostly from Black Sea ports but there were shipments from Levantine and African ports as well. These foodstuffs were sent in the main to Britain and to a lesser extent to other ports in the Mediterranean.³⁵⁴

The second place is occupied by the port of London, which had been declared as final destination from a total number of 114 British-flag vessels, experiencing a significant increase compared to 1820s. This rise of London is not surprising, because -especially after the abolition of Corn Laws- it had emerged along as one of the critical markets for the international grain traders,³⁵⁵ and of course the *national centre of the grain trade was the London Corn Exchange at Mark Lane. [...] The first corn market was established there in 1747, but a larger one was built in 1828 and enlarged in 1850.*³⁵⁶

Furthermore, we should not forget that London was a really huge city, with a growing population.³⁵⁷ The result was the supply of the city with cereals to be more than necessary, making the import trade of wheat and other cereals as an absolutely profitable activity for British as well as for Greek merchants, with the latter having a leading role in exporting Russian grains from the Black Sea to Britain.³⁵⁸

The third place is occupied by the port of Antwerp, which had been declared as final destination port by forty seven British-flag vessels. It is worth mentioning that Antwerp was until 1850 one of the most important grain markets in the European

³⁵⁴ Vassalo, 'The Maltese Merchant Fleet and the Black Sea Grain Trade in the Nineteenth Century,' 19-36 [29].

³⁵⁵ Morton Rothstein, 'Centralizing Firms and Spreading Markets: The World of International Grain Traders, 1846-1914,' *Business and Economic History* 17 (1998), 103-113 [103].

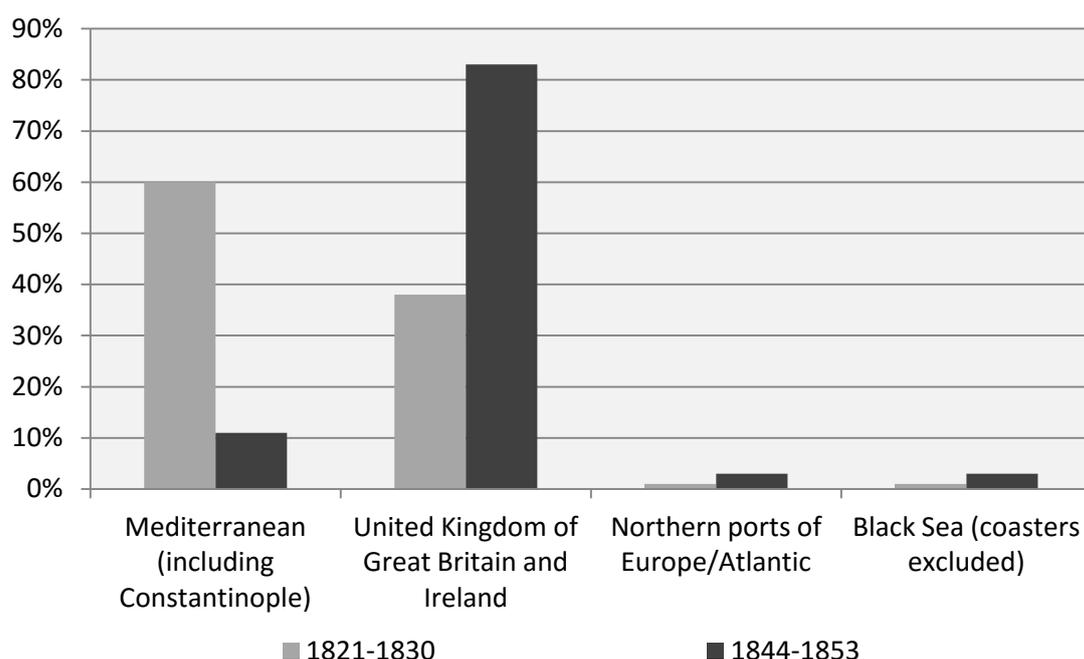
³⁵⁶ Joan Thirsk, Edward John T. Collins, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Volume 7, Part 2 (Cambridge 1967), 984.

³⁵⁷ On the City of London and its various needs on foodstuffs, see Richard Brown, *Society and Economy in Modern Britain 1700-1850* (London 2002), 241-243.

³⁵⁸ Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 195-236. See also Philippe Chalmin, *Traders and Merchants: Panorama of International Commodity Trading* (London, 1987), 17-18.

continent along with London and Rotterdam.³⁵⁹ As Rothstein states *in the first half of the 19th century its center [grain trade center] lay on an axis that ran from Amsterdam and Antwerp through London.*³⁶⁰

Figure 4.6 Comparative presentation of the four main maritime areas where British-flag vessels exported Russian products from Odessa during the periods 1821-1830 & 1844-1853 (percentage participation in the total number of departures)



Source: see Figure 4.1

In the fourth place we find the port of Liverpool, one of Europe's and England's main grain markets,³⁶¹ whereas the fifth position is occupied by the port of Kertch. The presence of Kertch should be combined with the significant grain exports from the port of Taganrog, on the Sea of Azov. To be more specific, often, vessels with a large draft were forced to load cargoes of grain in the port of Kertch, located at the entrance of the Sea of Azov, instead of entering the Azov and approaching the port

³⁵⁹ Karel Veraghtert, 'Antwerp grain trade, 1850-1914,' in Friedland K. (ed.), *Maritime food transport* (Köln, 1994), 81-91.

³⁶⁰ Rothstein, 'Centralizing Firms and Spreading Markets,' 103-113 [103].

³⁶¹ Op.Cit.

of Taganrog, where ships were in danger to be driven ashore due to the shallow waters and sediments brought into the sea by the large rivers of the region.³⁶² Finally, the last five places are occupied by the ports of Marseilles, Leghorn, Hull, Trieste and Amsterdam.

Let us now examine how the four main geographical destinations declared by British-flag vessels, when departed from Odessa, were changed within a period of thirty years 1821-1853. According to Figure 4.6, above, while in the years 1821-1830 the Mediterranean Sea has attracted sixty percent of the British vessels departed from Odessa, during mid-nineteenth century the preference for Mediterranean ports has been reduced significantly, reaching low levels of about eleven percent or in other words experiencing a decrease of almost eighty two percent. On the other hand, the ports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland have attracted a much larger number of British vessels loaded with Russian cargoes, primarily grains. To be more specific, whereas in the 1820s thirty eight percent of British-flag vessels that departed from Odessa had declared as their final destination a port in the United Kingdom, almost two decades later the percentage will be increased substantially reaching high levels of eighty three percent or in other words an increase of almost 120 percent. Finally, it is worth noting that during the period of 1844-1853 a significant increase is observed in the preference of British vessels to ports in the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean (e.g. Amsterdam, Bremen, Rotterdam, Madeira – increase of 200 percent compared to 1820s), as well as in the various ports of the Black Sea and the Danube River (e.g. Taganrog, Varna, Galatz – increase of almost 200 percent).

4.4 Concluding remarks

As we have seen in detail in the previous chapter the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag in the summer of 1802 allowed the British to become gradually acquainted with the Russian ports, and especially with the main port of New Russia

³⁶² Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 110-113.

Odessa, and understand in depth how valuable the various exportable Russian goods were; goods in abundant quantities and at extremely competitive prices, that could meet the needs of the British military forces in the Mediterranean as well as in the British Isles. However, we have seen that the opening of the Black Sea did not mark any significant growth of British trade in New Russia's ports and that it would take several years -almost two decades- for the British-flag vessels and merchants to acquire a noteworthy presence in the Russian Black Sea.

Based on these facts several maritime historians were almost convinced that the British presence in the Russian Black Sea was strengthened only after the signing of the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829. However, the archival material collected after three years of research allowed us to gather and record in our databases thousands of arrivals and departures of British-flag vessels in and from various ports of the Russian Black Sea, especially from the port of Odessa. And these statistical series enabled us to overthrow theories of a limited British presence in the Russian Black Sea, at least during the first three decades of nineteenth century.

According to the results of our research presented in detail in the present chapter, British flag had acquired a dominant presence in the Russian ports of the Black Sea, and more specific in the port of Odessa, almost immediately after the declaration of a free port in the latter in the early 1820s. And this dominant presence does not result from the data concerning the number or capacity of British vessels departing from Odessa, which may lead to misperceptions, but from the measuring and study of the invoice value of goods exported by British-flag vessels in comparison to the value of cargoes exported by other flags.

Thus, what we see is that during most of the turbulent 1820s, with the exception of the years of the Russo-Turkish War (1828 and 1829), British flag maintains a dominant presence in terms of the invoice value of goods exported from Odessa. To be more specific, during the decade of 1820 British flag emerge on a consistent basis as one of the three main merchant flags operating in the port of Odessa and dominating the export trade of the latter. And of course, this dominant or better to say leading presence of the British flag will be continued during the following

decades until at least 1853 and the outbreak of the Crimean War. And indeed 1853 is the first year of the period 1844-1853 when the presence of British flag shows significant decline occupying the fourth place behind the flags of Austria, Greece and Sardinia. However, this reduced presence of British-flag vessels in Odessa should be combined with the simultaneous strengthening of Britain's interest in the Danubian grain markets. A British decision prompted by her rising needs for cereals and her decision for disengagement from the wheat of her main rival and enemy, Russia; a disengagement procedure already taking place since mid-1830s.

Our research, however, revealed another important finding, which relates to the geographic regions to which British ships exported goods purchased from the market of Odessa. To be more specific, from the study of data on the ports that British merchantmen had declared as final destination on their departure from Odessa what we see is that although during the decade of 1820 the Mediterranean emerged as the preferred area of activity of British-flag vessels, the presence of British Isle's ports is also important. Perhaps it is more important than we already knew, and it happened well before the decision of British government to lift restrictions on the importation of goods in Britain by abolishing the Corn Laws and the Navigation Acts, in 1846 and 1849 respectively. In any case, the thousands of data collected during our three-year research related to the presence of British merchantmen in Odessa allow us to reread the history of British maritime presence in the Russian Black Sea in a more solid historical basis and with the ability to study aspects of British maritime trade largely unknown until now.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ionian trade and settlement in the Danube and the Russian Black Sea (1815-1864)

5.1 Introduction

The Ionian Sea and its seven main islands, namely Corfu, Paxos, Santa Maura, Ithaca, Cephalonia, Zante and Cerigo, had played a vital role in linking the Mediterranean Sea with the western and central part of the European continent. As a result the Ionian State and its ports, which since 1809 were part of the global British Empire, became an integral part of the new era of early economic globalization and the international trade system of nineteenth century. Within this trade system, and taking advantage of the political and economic developments in Europe, the British subjects of the Ionian Islands managed to participate actively in the new, international distribution of commercial and maritime activity of the nineteenth century in eastern Mediterranean Sea and to shape up the terms of their noteworthy maritime and commercial presence in the Russian Black Sea. However, the Ionian presence was not limited only to the ports of New Russia, but was expanded vigorously in the ports of the Lower Danube, primarily in the ports of Braila and Galatz, with the Danube becoming a key area of their maritime and trade specialization during mid-nineteenth century.

The present chapter aims to present the main factors that led to the above mentioned noteworthy commercial and maritime presence of the Ionians in the Black Sea and mainly in the Danube River, during the period when the Ionian Islands were under British colonial rule (1809-1864). The main topics to be studied in this chapter are: a) the political and economic developments taking place in the eastern part of the Mediterranean world and especially in the Ionian Islands and the Black Sea during the period covering the years from 1809 (starting year of the British rule over the Ionian Islands) up to 1864 (last year of British protection, the Ionian Islands were ceded to Greek Kingdom); the growth and geography of the Ionian maritime trade and shipping, and the specific role Black Sea and, mainly, Danube River played

in the development of Ionian maritime trade; and last but not least c) the terms and conditions of the establishment and settlement of the Ionian subjects in the Danubian ports of Braila, Galatz and Sulina. Finally there is one more issue we have to deal with in this chapter: what is the role that Britain as the protecting power of the Ionians has played in the development of their shipping.

The present chapter uses the archival information provided by the *Odysseus – Ionian Maritime History Database* that includes an amount of 21,000 departures/arrivals from/to the Ionian Islands during the years 1809-1864.³⁶³ *Odysseus* is based mostly on the *Gazzetta Degli Stati Uniti Delle Isole Jonie* (*Gazzetta*), the official government newspaper of the British Protectorate of the United States of the Ionian Islands, which was published between 1815 and 1864. The *Gazzetta* is an invaluable source for the study of the maritime history not just of the Ionian Islands but of the wider Mediterranean as well, given the centrality of the Ionian Islands in the Mediterranean basin.³⁶⁴ The *Gazzetta* offers us more than 75,000 annotations of all the deep-sea going merchant vessels arriving in or departing from the main ports of the British Protectorate of the Ionian Islands. It is important to note that these deep-sea going vessels were sailing under various flags, European and non-European. The most common flags were those of Great Britain, France, Spain, Greece (after 1832), Ottoman Empire, Austrian Empire, Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, Papal States, Russian Empire, Netherlands, Denmark, United States of America, Norway and the flags of the various German states.³⁶⁵ From the above- mentioned 75,000 annotations during the last six years we have imported details of more than 21,000 arrivals and departures of merchant vessels into *Odysseus*. This information includes: the name,

³⁶³ To access the online database *Odysseus*, go to: <http://odysseus.britonian.eu/>.

³⁶⁴ For a digitalized image of the *Gazzetta Degli Stati Uniti Delle Isole Jonie* see the following site: <http://invenio.lib.auth.gr/record/29681/files/arc-2005-7589.pdf> [Date of access: 27.08.2015]

³⁶⁵ For the nationality of the vessels sailing to and from the Ionian Islands' ports, apart from the 'Odysseus, Ionian Maritime History Database,' see United States, House of Representatives, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, Ex. Doc. No. 63, *Letter of the Secretary of State, Department of State, Transmitting a Report on the Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries, for the Year Ended September 30, 1862* (Washington-DC 1863).

type and flag of the vessel; the name/s and place/s of origin of the captain and of the ship-owner; and the nature and value of the cargo and the name of the shipper.³⁶⁶

At this point we need to mention that Odysseus database is the result of my Ph.D. study, which was part of the research project titled “Greek Maritime Centres: Identification and Administration of Maritime Heritage of the Ionian and Aegean Seas”, financed by the E.U. and the Greek Secretariat of Research and Technology (2006-2010). However, during the last three years, within the framework of our *Britonian Research Project*, there has been a rechecking of all data, while the database was filled with new quantitative as well as qualitative information, mainly from The National Archives in London, the *National Archives of Romania* in Bucharest, and the Greek State Archives in the island of Cephalonian (Argostoli).

5.2 Ionian Sea and the Mediterranean world (1815-1864).

During nineteenth century the Mediterranean Sea, as already stated, came back to the west European and British foreground and was connected to the *Atlantic economy*.³⁶⁷ This is a new reality in which the Ionian Sea and the Ionian Islands’ State, as part of the Mediterranean economic world, had to function.³⁶⁸ The signal for that change was the industrial revolution in Western Europe. The need for cereals due to the urban population explosion, that the Western Europe was experiencing, led to the search for new wheat-producing regions.³⁶⁹ Such regions

³⁶⁶ For more information of the ‘Odysseus, Ionian Maritime History Database,’ see Kapetanakis, *Ναυτιλία και Εμπόριο Υπό Βρετανική Προστασία*.

³⁶⁷ Fisher and Nordvik, ‘Maritime Transport and the Integration of the North Atlantic Economy, 1850-1914,’ 519-544; Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 70-86; See also Vassilis N. Metaxas, *Αρχές Ναυτιλιακής Οικονομικής* (Athens, 1998), 276-277; Alan Cafruny, ‘Mercantilism, Freedom, Imperialism,’ in Gelina Harlaftis (ed.), *Shipping and History 16th-20th Centuries* (Athens, 2001), 527-529; Derek H. Aldcroft and Ville P. Simon, (eds.), *Η Ευρωπαϊκή Οικονομία 1750-1914* (Athens, 2005); Harlaftis, and Kardasis, ‘International shipping in the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea,’ 233-265.

³⁶⁸ Fernand Braudel, *La Mediterranee et le monde mediterraneen a l’ époque de Philippe II*, Vol. I, (Paris, 1979), 149-165. See also, Gelina Harlaftis, ‘Στην Θάλασσα’, in Spyros Asdrahas, Anastasios Tzamtzis and Gelina Harlaftis (eds.), *Η Ελλάδα της Θάλασσας* (Athens, 2004), 15-32; Predrag Matvejevitch, *Μεσογειακή Σύνοψις*, (Athens, 1998).

³⁶⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* (London, 1999), Ch.7; Woods, ‘Population Growth and Economic Change in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,’ 127-153; B. R. Tomlinson, ‘Economics

emerged the Black Sea³⁷⁰ and after mid-nineteenth century the Danube River.³⁷¹ Both regions managed to leave behind their –so called– *Ottoman isolation* and to enter into the new era of the globalizing European economy. This development was due not only to the industrial revolution taking place in Europe, but also due to the continuous wars fought between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires; wars launched by the desire of Russia to dominate, in political and economic terms, in the Balkans and the eastern part of the Mediterranean, at the expense not only of the Ottoman Empire, but also at the expense of its European allies, like Great Britain.³⁷²

The most essential of those wars was the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829, which ended with the *Treaty of Adrianople*, giving to the victorious Russian Empire most of the eastern shore of the Black Sea, the mouth of Danube and the occupation over the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. During the aforementioned period took place the true internationalization of the Black Sea and the Bosphorus Strait, by giving the right for free navigation not only to the Russian flag but to any flag being at peace with the Sublime Port, such as the British flag or the flag of the British protected Ionian State. The aftermath of the Crimean War (1854-1856),³⁷³ a war that Great Britain has hankered for,³⁷⁴ was the *Treaty of Paris* which led to the formation of the autonomous United Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (1859) and some years later of Romania (1861). But the most significant result was the

and Empire: The Periphery and the Imperial Economy,' in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999), Ch.3.

³⁷⁰ For the Russian Black Sea and the transport of cereals see King, *Black Sea*, 161-167; see also Aserson, *Black Sea, Cradle of Culture and Savagery*, 57; Kirkaldy, *British Shipping. Its History, Organization, and Importance*, 337-47. See also, Herlihy, *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914*. Athanassios John Mazis, *The Greeks of Odessa. Diaspora Leadership in Late Imperial Russia* (New York, 2004).

³⁷¹ On the Danube River see Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 86-126; Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*; Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării*, Ch. 1, 2.

³⁷² Eric J. Zürcher, *Σύγχρονη Ιστορία της Τουρκίας* (Athens, 2004), 76-121; Andrew Porter, 'Introduction: Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth Century', in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999), 10-15.

³⁷³ On the Crimean War see A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918*, (Oxford, 1971), 62-82.

³⁷⁴ Op.Cit., 111-2.

establishment of the *European Commission of the Danube* for the improvement of free navigation on the river.³⁷⁵

The country most interested in free and unrestricted navigation on Black Sea, and in particular in Danube was of course Great Britain;³⁷⁶ her rising needs for cereals and the need for disengagement from the wheat of her –since autumn 1853 and the outbreak of the Crimean War– main rival and enemy, Russia, led Britain to orientate her interest towards the Danubian breadbasket region.³⁷⁷ Actually the key word to understand the commercial reality in Black Sea and particularly in the Danube is Great Britain and its decision to support the production and trading of the Danubian cereals in every way in her favour.³⁷⁸ Within this newly emerged political and economic framework the ports and the markets of the British protected Ionian State have been orientated towards the Black Sea grains and after mid-nineteenth century towards the trading of the Danubian grains.

But before proceeding to the terms of the development of the Ionian commerce with the Black Sea and mainly with the Danubian ports, let us first examine the historical realities the Ionian Islands experienced during the nineteenth century. The termination in 1797 of the -almost four hundred years lasted- Venetian rule over the Ionian Islands, signalized the beginning of a turbulent period for their history. The possession of the Islands, due to their valuable geographic position, in the middle of the commercial routes of the Mediterranean Sea, constituted the key objective for the main powers of nineteenth century Europe.³⁷⁹ As a result, the Ionian Islands

³⁷⁵ For the historical background of the Danube River see Virginia Paskaleva, 'Shipping and Trade on the Lower Danube in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in Vacalopoulos, Svolopoulos and Király (eds.), *Southeast European Maritime Commerce and Naval Policies; From the mid-Eighteenth Century to 1914* (New Jersey, 1988), 131-151; see also Richard Charles Frucht, 'War, Peace, and Internationality: The Danube, 1789-1916,' in Vacalopoulos, Svolopoulos and Király (eds.), *Southeast European Maritime Commerce and Naval Policies; From the mid-Eighteenth Century to 1914* (New Jersey, 1988), 79-98.

³⁷⁶ Rondo Cameron and Larry Neal, *A Concise Economic History of the World. From Palaeolithic Times to the Present*, (New York, 2003), 220-224.

³⁷⁷ Jeremy Black and Donald M. Macrauld, *Nineteenth-century Britain* (New York, 2003), 226-227.

³⁷⁸ Spiridon G. Focas, *Οι Έλληνες εις την ποταμοπολιάν του Κάτω Δουνάβειως* (Thessaloniki, 1975), 45-72; Andreas Lemos, *Η ναυτιλία των Ελλήνων*, Τόμος Α (Athens, 1968), 152-153; see also Dunn John Gardner, *The Ionian Islands in relation to Greece, with suggestions for advancing our trade with the Turkish countries of the Adriatic, and the Danube* (London, 1859), 73-76.

³⁷⁹ Thomas W. Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion. Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean* (Indiana, 2002), Ch.1.

have experienced the successive, French, Russian and Ottoman dominions, for almost seventeen years, until their temporary occupation by the British naval forces in 1809, which became permanent and formal in 1815.

To be more specific, on November 5, 1815, the *Treaty of Paris* declared the creation of a free and independent state, under the formal name of *The United States of the Ionian Islands* or otherwise *Ionian State*. The latter became part of the British colonial Empire as a protectorate, with the tolerance of the major European powers of that time, namely Russia, Austria, and France.³⁸⁰ According to the treaty, Great Britain undertook not only the political and economic protection of the Islands, but also the obligation to recognise the rights of a constitutional governing in the newly established state. However, beyond this formal and rather liberal reading of the treaty, the cluster of the Ionian Islands constituted a significant part of the British colonial empire.³⁸¹ Great Britain viewed the Islands as a strategic asset to her Mediterranean commercial interests.³⁸² *The Saturday Magazine* of July 1840 states that “The importance of these islands to England has reference principally to their geographical position, by which they are admirably adapted for protecting our trade in the Eastern parts of Europe, and of extending our commerce as soon as Greece becomes more settled and civilized.”³⁸³ The British domination will end in 1864, when the Islands were ceded to Greek Kingdom.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁰ Eleni E. Koukkou, *Ιστορία των Επτανήσων από το 1797 μέχρι την αγγλοκρατία* (Athens, 2001), 197-207.

³⁸¹ Philip L. Cottrell, *The Ionian Bank. An Imperial Institution, 1839-1864* (Athens, 2007), 118-119; Athanasios Gekas, ‘The Commercial Bourgeoisie of the Ionian Islands under British Rule, 1815-1864. Class formation in a semi-colonial society,’ unpublished PhD thesis (University of Essex, 2004), 43-52, 91-92; Charles-James Napier, *The Colonies: Treating of their Value generally - In particular of the Ionian Islands* (London, 1833), 1-17.

³⁸² *The Saturday Magazine* of July 1840 states: ‘the importance of these Islands to England has reference principally to their geographical position, by which they are admirably adapted for protecting our trade in the Eastern parts of Europe.’ (*The Saturday Magazine*, No. 515, July 11, 1840).

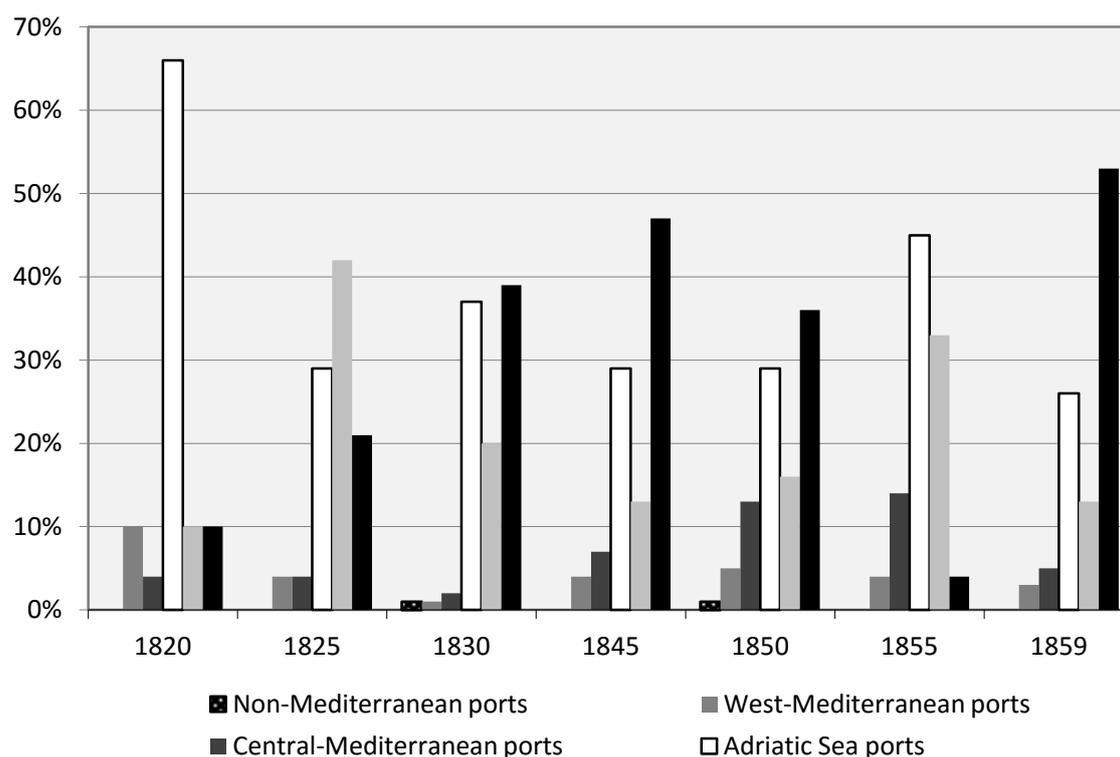
³⁸³ *The Saturday Magazine*, No. 515, July 11, 1840.

³⁸⁴ For the historical background of the Ionian Islands, from the fall of Venice up to the union with the Greek State, see Panayiotis Chiotis, *Ιστορία του Ιονίου Κράτους από συστάσεως αυτού μέχρις Ενώσεως. Έτη 1815-1864*, (Zante, 1877); Nikos Karapidakis, ‘Τα Επτάνησα. Ευρωπαϊκοί ανταγωνισμοί μετά την πτώση της Βενετίας,’ in Vassilis Panayiotopoulos (ed.), *Ιστορία Νέου Ελληνισμού: 1770-2000*, Vol. I, (Athens, 2003), 149-184; See also Nikos Karapidakis, ‘Ίονια Νησιά, 1815-1864: Προστασία, το πρόσχημα της Αγγλοκρατίας,’ in Vassilis Panayiotopoulos (ed.), *Ιστορία Νέου Ελληνισμού: 1770-2000*, Vol. IV, (Athens, 2003), 265-184; Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 66-68; Nikos G. Moschonas, ‘Navigation and Trade in the Ionian and Lower Adriatic Seas in

5.3 The Ionians, the Adriatic and the Black Sea

The rising significance of the Black Sea, as a breadbasket region, and its commercial importance for the economy of Western Europe has resulted into a double effect: on one hand, it has determined, decisively, the whole economic and commercial environment of the Black Sea itself, whereas on the other hand, it has provoked a subsequent rapid commercial and shipping development in several regions of the Mediterranean world. The *United States of the Ionian Islands* constitute one of the most indicative paradigms of this developmental procedure.

Figure 5.1 Maritime regions-commercial partners of Ionian-owned fleet (percentage presentation) based on Ionian arrivals in the Ionian State ports (1820-1859)



Source: processed data from *Odysseus Ionian Maritime History Database*.

the 18th century,' in Vacalopoulos, Svolopoulos and Király (eds.), *Southeast European Maritime Commerce and Naval Policies; From the mid-Eighteenth Century to 1914* (New Jersey, 1988), 189-196.

In order to examine the importance of the Black Sea for the Ionian maritime trade, we have focused on the ship movements (arrivals) of the Ionian owned fleet in the ports of the Ionian State, and the mapping of the main *maritime regions – commercial partners* of the Ionians (Figure 5.1).³⁸⁵ At this point we need to note that by the term *Ionian-owned fleet/shipping*, we mean all merchant vessels –regardless of flag– that belonged to Ionian State’s subjects, whereas by *Ionian fleet/shipping* we are referring to merchant vessels sailing only under the formal flag of the Ionian State. According to Figure 5.1 below six are the main maritime regions – commercial partners for the Ionian shipping during the period covering the years from 1820 up to 1859: a) the non-Mediterranean (ports of Atlantic Ocean, North and Baltic Seas included), b) the West-Mediterranean, c) the Central-Mediterranean, d) the Adriatic Sea, e) the East-Mediterranean region (Aegean Sea and the seas of eastern Mediterranean included), and f) the Black Sea (Constantinople and Danubian ports included).

At first sight it seems that the Ionian shipping experiences two principal phases. During the first one, from 1820 up to 1830, the commercial transactions with the ports of the Adriatic Sea are predominant, representing an average forty four percent out of the total arrivals of Ionian vessels in the Ionian ports. On the other hand, the eastern Mediterranean holds the second position with its average share being twenty four percent, and the Black Sea ports represent twenty three percent. The trade with the western and eastern Mediterranean ports occupies the fourth and fifth position, respectively, whereas the non-Mediterranean trade is in fact inexistent and it will remain as such until the 1860s. However, during the second phase, which covers the years between 1845 and 1859, the reality of the 1820s will be totally reversed. The Black Sea is now emerging as the predominant commercial partner of the Ionians with an average share of thirty five percent, followed by the Adriatic ports (thirty two percent), and the ports of eastern Mediterranean (nineteen percent). The percentages of the central and western Mediterranean regions are ten and four percent, respectively.

³⁸⁵ By the term *Ionian-owned shipping*, we mean the ships –regardless of flag– that belonged to Ionian citizens.

In other words, what we see is the increasing commercial importance of the Black Sea for the Ionian-owned shipping and the Ionian ports; the commercial participation of the Black Sea in the total number of the Ionian ship's entrances in the Ionian ports has been steadily increased from a limited share of ten percent in the year 1820 (six vessels) to a maximum of fifty three percent (138 vessels), in 1859. Furthermore, whereas during the decade of 1820 the Ionian maritime trade was principally orientated towards the "old" and familiar, for centuries, Adriatic markets, from the beginning of the 1830s the Ionian commercial orientation commenced changing. The participation of the Adriatic ports in the development of the Ionian commerce has been reduced from a maximum share of sixty six to a minimum of twenty six percent. The long lasted primacy of the Adriatic Sea markets has been replaced by that of the new Black Sea markets, with a temporary exception of mid-1850s, resulting from the Crimean War and the subsequent closure of the Black Sea for all merchantmen.³⁸⁶

However, it should be stressed that not all Black Sea ports had the same contribution to the development of the Ionian maritime trade. In spite of the noteworthy presence of Ionian traders and vessels in almost all major Black Sea ports (Taganrog, Berdiansk, Mariupol, Kertch, Odessa, Sevastopol, Theodosia, Nikolayev, Constanza, Burgas, and Constantinople) there is one maritime region, which attracted their commercial interest: the Danube and its main ports Braila and Galatz. But before proceeding further to the next section of this chapter, related to the examination of the Ionian presence in the Danubian region, let us first have a closer look at the qualitative data relating to trade conducted between the Ionian and the Black Sea ports, as a whole during the period covering the years from 1845 up to 1860.

The cargoes traded between these two maritime regions are presented in Table 6.1 above. First of all we should mention that in order to study the cargoes traded from and to the Ionian ports during the said period we have distinguished them into general and bulk cargoes and within these categories we have set out the exact nature of the cargo. By general cargo we mean high cost finished or semi-finished

³⁸⁶ Ov the Crimean War see Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, 62-82.

goods per unit with a relatively limited volume, while by bulk goods we mean cheap, large-volume products of which the volume and distance covered is more important than their value.³⁸⁷

Table 5.1 Cargoes traded between Ionian and Black Sea ports by Ionian-owned vessels, 1845-1859 (in parentheses the percentage share of general & bulk products in total goods traded)

Merchandizes exported from the Ionian Islands towards Black Sea ports		Merchandizes exported from Black Sea ports towards the Ionian Islands	
General cargoes (93%)	Bulk cargoes (7%)	General cargoes (17%)	Bulk cargoes (83%)
olive oil	sugar	caviar	cereals (wheat, corn, barley, oat, rice, rye)
manufactures	cereals (wheat, barley, corn, rice)*	legumes	linseed
bricks	linseed	soap	coal
tiles		leathers	firewood
soap		salted fruits	cotton
wine		salted meat	tallow
timber		salted fish	shipbuilding timber
salt		iron	
coffee		anchors	
potatoes		skins	
rusks			
tobacco			
dried fruits			

Source: processed data from *Odysseus Ionian Maritime History Database* and TNA, FO 359/1, 13.09.1827, James Yeames to Foreign Office (*cereals re-exported from Ionian Islands' ports to the port of Constantinople)

³⁸⁷ Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping*, 91-96; Stopford, *Maritime Economics*, Ch. 11; Donald F. Wood, Anthony P. Barone, Paul R. Murphy, Daniel L. Wardlow, *International Logistics* (2002), 90-95.

According to the table Black Sea supplied the Ionian ships, primarily, with bulk cargoes (mainly with wheat, corn, barley, oat, rice, linseeds, rye, cotton, and tallow), and secondarily with general cargoes (caviar, legumes, soaps, leathers, salted preserved fruits, meat, fishes and iron).³⁸⁸ The participation of the bulk cargoes in the Black Sea exports represents an eighty three percent, whereas the general cargoes represent a mere seventeen percent. On the other hand, the Ionian exports towards the Black Sea consisted almost exclusively of general cargoes (ninety three percent), with the bulk cargoes representing a just seven percent. The main general cargoes exported to the Black Sea ports from the Ionian State were the local agricultural products, namely olive oil and wine, as well as the various west-European (mainly British) manufactures and industrial products; whereas the bulk cargoes were consisting mainly of sugar and cereals.

Table 5.1 in conjunction with Figure 5.1 gives us an indicative picture of the role the Ionian merchant shipping had played during mid-nineteenth century. And what was that role? That of a regional provider of maritime transport services to third European parties specialized in the export/transit trade of Black Sea grains. To be more specific the Ionian merchantmen seems to have undertaken and been specialized in the transport of the Black Sea grains -through the British protected Ionian ports- towards the western Mediterranean ports, from where they were further transported -by other flags- to Great Britain and the rest of west European markets. On the other hand the Ionian ports, and mainly that of Corfu, became important depôts for British manufactures and colonial products, which were re-exported to all major ports of eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. In other words, the Ionian shipping had acquired a regional but nodal place in the maritime trade routes connecting the industrializing and urbanizing Western Europe and the valuable, for its grains, agricultural Black Sea.

³⁸⁸ Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 90-102, mentioning that there are four categories of general cargos: foodstuffs (raisins, other dried- and fresh fruits, wine, spices and pastries), fibres and buckrams (silk, wool, cannabis, carpets, laces), medicines and dyes (liquorice, opium, madder, indigo etc.), as well as various goods (tobacco, cigarettes, jewels, perfumes, sponges, acorns etc.). The bulk cargos usually contained cereals (wheat, maize, barley and oats), cotton, wool, cottonseed, linseed, animal grease and sugar; see also Metaxas, *Αρχές Ναυτιλιακής Οικονομικής*, 127-131, 147-150.

5.4 *The Ionians are turning to the Danubian ports (1825-1864)*

5.4.1 *The Ionians in the Danube: maritime trade*

The mentioned in the previous section noteworthy presence of the Ionians in the Black Sea ports can be clearly seen in the case of the Danube River. The Danube and its ports during mid-nineteenth century became the main commercial partner of the Ionians and attracted hundreds of them, who decided to settle in Braila, Galatz and Sulina, foreseeing large profit opportunities in the near future by engaging in the export trade of the Danubian grains. The result was hundreds of Ionians to migrate from their Islands to the Danube, a development that has further strengthened the orientation of the Ionian maritime trade and shipping to the Danubian port-cities and grain markets. For the moment, however, we are going to focus on the Ionian maritime presence in the Danube by studying the departures of Ionian merchantmen from the ports of Braila and Galatz in comparison to the existing data for Ionian departures from all the Black Sea ports, during the years from 1825 up to 1864.³⁸⁹

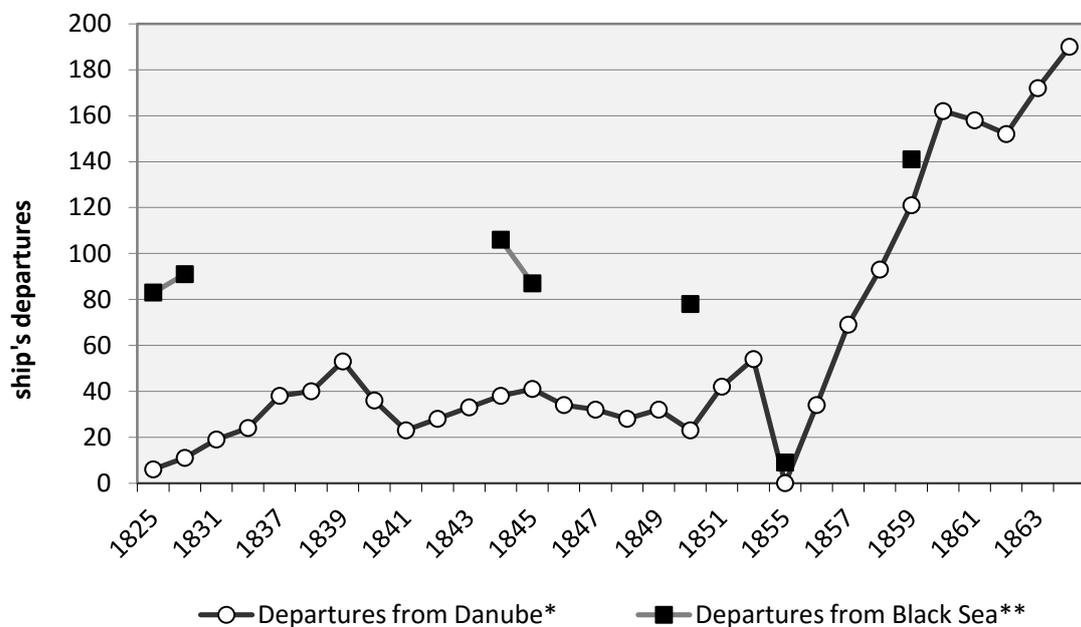
Figure 5.2 below presents, (a) the total number of Ionian vessels departed from the Danubian ports of Braila and Galatz and arrived in the Ionian ports during the years from 1825 up to 1864, and (b) the found data for the total number of Ionian vessels departed from all Black Sea ports and arrived in the Ionian Islands. According to these data the share of the Danubian ports represents an amount ranging between a minimum of seven percent in 1825, up to a maximum eighty six percent in the year 1859, which in other words means an impressive growth of 336 percent within a period of forty three years. Figure 5.2 indicates that the importance of the Danubian trade for the Ionian commercial shipping was rather limited during the decade of 1820, compared to the total Ionian presence in the Russian ports of the Black Sea as well as in Constantinople.

This picture, however, is going to be reversed in the decade of 1830, when the Ionians will start getting steadily specialized in the Danubian trade. This is the

³⁸⁹ For an overview of the Ionian presence in the Danube River see, Focas, *Οι Έλληνες εις την ποταμοπλοϊαν του κάτω Δουνάβεως*, 45-57, 80-116; Maria I. Markopoulou, *Οι Κεφαλλήνες και οι Ιθακήσιοι στη ναυτιλία του Δουνάβεως* (Athens, 1967), 12-35.

consequence, first of all, of political developments in the Black Sea region. The *Treaty of Ackerman* (1826), signed between the Ottoman and the Russian Empires, reconfirmed the free navigation on the Danube given to the Russian and Ottoman flags by the previous *Treaty of Bucharest* (1812). The Ionians, apparently, have taken advantage of both treaties, by using either their neutral Ionian flag or the Russian one, or even the Ottoman (on the numerous flags used by the Ionians during the period 1818-1864 see Figure 5.5 in the following subsection).³⁹⁰

Figure 5.2 Departures of Ionian-flag vessels from Danube* and Black Sea** (1825-1864)



Source: processed data from: *Odysseus Ionian Maritime History Database* and; Nikos S. Vlassopoulos, *Η Ναυτιλία των Ιονίων Νήσων, 1700-1864* (Athens, 1995), vol. B, Table B.2; Paul Cernovodeanu, *Relatiile Comerciale Româno-Engleze în Contextul Politicii Orientale a Marii Britanii (1803-1878)* (Cluj-Napoca, 1986), 61, 88, 146. (*Danube: ports of Braila and Galatz; **Black Sea: all Black Sea ports, Constantinople included).

³⁹⁰ This is the case of the flags of convenience, the use of which was not only a twentieth-century reality. The letter of the British consul in Istanbul to his opposite number in Odessa (in 1821) stresses: 'The British and Ionian governments have resolutely declared their opposition against the licence given to the Ionian vessels, which have abandoned their nationality, to reuse the Ionian flag; consequently, I do not comprehend why you should be authorized to grant requests of that kind, [...]. The subjects of the Ionian State have to understand that their flag is absolutely respectable for being treated as a simple opportunistic issue.'; see Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 114-119, for the whole text of the British consul and for a brief presentation of the Greek case of flags of convenience in the nineteenth-century.

Based on Figure 5.2 we can say that the Ionians have seen in the Danube and its grains a fruitful future in commercial and business terms, a fact that motivated them leaving the Adriatic ports and starting focusing on the Danube.³⁹¹ However, the decisive signal for that change was the Treaty of Adrianople, in 1829, which led to the opening of the Danube River and Bosphorus Strait to almost all ships and flags, especially the Russian one (*Treaty of Hünkâr Skelesi*, 1833). The signing of the Treaty of Adrianople gave a new boost to the Black Sea commerce in general; Russia undertook the protection of the Danubian Principalities and tried to bolster their commerce by offering exemption from import duties to all the foreign traders (1834), by establishing the ports of Braila and Galatz as free ports (in 1836 and 1837, respectively), and by giving to foreigners exemption from paying customs fees (1837-1838).³⁹²

It is clear that the Ionians have exploited all these opportunities and taken advantage of their British citizenship, which offered them more safety in trading in these areas, along with the use of their neutral –but always under British protection– Ionian flag. Indicative is the case of the *Ponsonby Treaty*, signed between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire in 1838, which secured important advantages for the British trade in the Ottoman Empire (free navigation on the Bosphorus Strait included), and further strengthened the Ionian presence in the Black Sea, as well.³⁹³

³⁹¹ Cernovodeanu, 'British Economic Interests in the Lower Danube and the Balkan Shore of the Black Sea between 1803 and 1829,' 105-120, notes that: 'The number of vessels flying the British flag on the Danube or the Black Sea increased when the Ionian Islands (Corfu, Cephalonia, Cerigo, Zante, etc.) were put under Great Britain's protection on 1st September, 1815 by the Congress of Vienna. Then a number of Greek merchants, trading for British companies, settled in Galatz and in Braila [In a report sent to the High Porte, concerning the number of foreign subjects in Moldavia on 7 April 1825, it was stated that of the 90 subjects, mainly Ionians recorded by the English consulate, almost 76 here lived in the Principalities "from remote time", were married to native women and also had "some outhouses" or even in some ports on the Black Sea.]'

³⁹² For further details for the political and commercial status in the Black Sea during the nineteenth-century see Cernovodeanu, *Relatiile Comerciale Româno-Engleze în Contextul Politicii Orientale a Marii Britanii*, ch. 2; see also Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării*, Ch. 1.

³⁹³ Cernovodeanu, *Relatiile Comerciale Româno-Engleze în Contextul Politicii Orientale a Marii Britanii*, 86-87; Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 149-165; Focas, *Οι Έλληνες εις την ποταμοπλοΐαν του κάτω Δουνάβεως*, 45-47; Alexander Kitroeff, 'The Greek Diaspora in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea as seen through American Eyes (1815-1861),' in Speros Vryonis (ed.), *The Greeks and the Sea* (New York, 1993), 153-171; I. K. Chasiotis, *Επισκόπηση της Ιστορίας της Νεοελληνικής Διασποράς* (Thessaloniki, 1993), 84-85; Nikos Vlassopoulos, *Η ναυτιλία των Ιονίων Νήσων. 1700-1864*, Vol. B (Athens, 1995), 37-38; Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice*

Consequently, the above mentioned developments, in combination with high shipping freight rates, have resulted to a significant growth of the Ionian maritime presence in the Danubian ports, with an average annual growth rate of thirty one percent, for the years between 1831 and 1839.

The next peak is located in mid-1840s that should be attributed to a good wheat harvest in the Danubian plains and a poor one in Western Europe and especially in Great Britain and Ireland.³⁹⁴ On the other hand the uprising tendency in the beginning of the 1850s³⁹⁵ should be ascribed to the abolition of the British Corn Laws (1846) and of the Navigation Acts (1849), a reality that gave a new boost to wheat exports from the Danubian ports (especially towards the British ports), in combination with new high shipping freight rates towards the mid of the 1850s.³⁹⁶

However, the most significant and sharp rising trend of the Ionian commercial and shipping activity in the Danubian ports occurred after the end of the Crimean War, and the subsequent establishment of the European Commission of the Danube.³⁹⁷ A new era has emerged signalling the unrestricted opening of the Danubian grain markets to European trade, and the termination of almost all hindrances Russia had imposed on the navigation on the river, as well.³⁹⁸ The Ionians, as indicated in Figure 5.2, have taken successfully advantage of this new commercial reality; it is worth

Britanice la Gurile Dunării, Ch. 1; Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 140, 170; Martin Lynn, 'Policy, Trade, and Informal Empire,' in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999), 111-112.

³⁹⁴ Cormac O Grada, 'Irish Agricultural Output Before and After the Famine,' *Journal of European Economic History* 13 (1984), 149-165. Paul Cernovodeanu and Beatrice Marinescu, 'British Trade in the Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' *Journal of European Economic History* 8 (Winter 1979), 707-741. James Foreman-Peck, 'Foreign Trade and Economic Growth,' in Derek H. Aldcroft and Simon P. Ville (eds.), *The European Economy 1750-1914* (Athens, 2005), 261-301; Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 102-3.

³⁹⁵ On the commercial status of the ports of Brăila and Galați and the general trends of their commercial development in the 1850s see Cernovodeanu, *Relatiile Comerciale Româno-Engleze în Contextul Politicii Orientale a Marii Britanii (1803-1878)*, ch. 3.

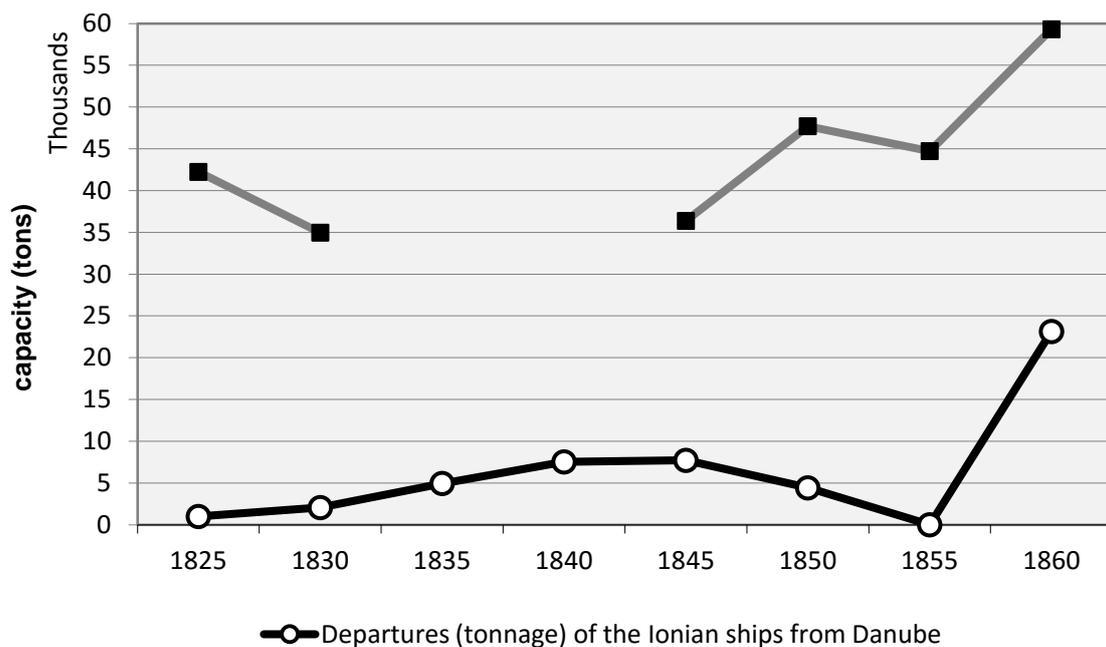
³⁹⁶ Cernovodeanu and Marinescu, 'British Trade in the Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' 707-742. Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 102-05; Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 157-58, 161-65; Gardner, *The Ionian Islands in relation to Greece*, 73-76; see also Paul Bairoch, 'European Foreign Trade in the XIX Century: The Development of the Value and Volume of Exports (Preliminary Results),' *Journal of European Economic History* 2 (1973), 5-36. Ronald Hope, *A New History of British Shipping* (London, 1990), 287-288.

³⁹⁷ Ira A. Glazier and Vladimir N. Bandera, 'Terms of Trade between South Italy and the United Kingdom 1817-1869,' *Journal of European Economic History* 1 (1972), 7-36.

³⁹⁸ Paskaleva, 'Shipping and Trade on the Lower Danube in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' 131-51; Focas, *Οι Έλληνες εις την ποταμοπλοϊαν του κάτω Δουνάβευς*, 75-79.

noticing that the average annual growth rate of the Ionian commercial shipping in the ports of Braila and Galatz, for the years between 1856 and 1864, was twenty seven percent. Furthermore, this sharp rising of the Ionian maritime presence in the Danubian ports can be clearly seen in Figure 5.3 below. According to the figure, the capacity (tons) of the Ionian vessels departing from the Danube has been tripled within thirty years; and whereas their capacity represented a negligible percentage of the total available tonnage of the Ionian fleet in 1825, thirty-five years later more than one third of the available Ionian tonnage was engaged in the Danubian grain trade.

Figure 5.3 Tonnage of Ionian vessels departed from Braila and Galatz and total tonnage of Ionian fleet (1825-1860)

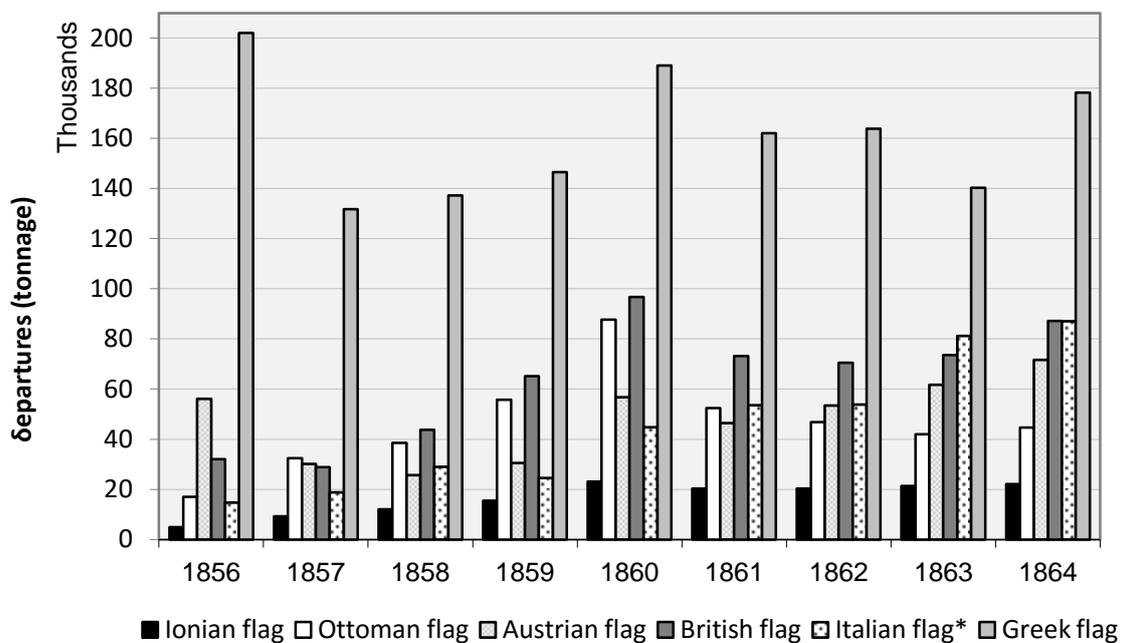


Source: see figure 6.2 and Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării*, table 6. (There is no available data for the total tonnage of the Ionian fleet for the years 1835 and 1840)

Furthermore, this worthy Ionian presence in the Danube, during the years following the end of Crimean War, can be clearly seen in Figure 5.4 below. The Ionian shipping, according to the data provided by the European Commission of the Danube River for

the years 1856 up to 1864, possesses the sixth position, with the Greek flag holding the first, and being followed by those of Italy, Great Britain, Austrian Empire, and Ottoman Empire. We do believe that the sixth position of the Ionian flag demonstrates the importance of the Ionians in the competitive commercial environment of the Danube River. Furthermore, the fact that the Ionians had to compete with the major maritime and commercial powers of nineteenth century Europe is another reason demonstrating the significance of their maritime presence in the Danubian port-cities and grain markets.

Figure 5.4 Tonnage of the six major flags departed from Braila and Galatz (1856-1864)



Source: see figure 5.2 and Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării*, table 6. (The Italian flag for the years 1856 to 1860 that is before the Italian unification (1861) concludes the flags of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, and the flag of Tuscany)

Consequently, the Danube River had an important and decisive impact on the development and orientation of the Ionian maritime trade. For the Ionians the Danube and its main ports emerged as the major determinant of their specialization

in trading the bulk cargoes of the Danubian grains towards the depôts of the British protected Ionian State and then towards the main ports of the central or western Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, from the data presented above we conclude that the development of the Ionian merchant shipping is directly connected to the general European commercial trends and foods' demands of mid nineteenth-century. This is the result, we strongly believe, of the Ionian participation in the economic and political world of British Empire. In other words, the Ionian case is an interesting paradigm of how a local or regional shipping, can be transformed into a player with important role in a peripheral transit maritime trade, by being subsumed –voluntarily or not– into the political and economic context of a global empire as it was the case with the British Empire.

5.4.2 *The Ionians in the Danube: settlement*

The Ionians, according to the data presented in the previous figures, have managed not only to enter successfully the Danubian grain trade, but also to become permanent or temporary settlers in the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. It seems that the rise of the Ionian maritime trade and shipping in the Danube was mainly due to the Mediterranean expansion of British Empire's trade.³⁹⁹ The Ionian State, as a British protectorate, offered to its subjects a double citizenship: the Ionian and the British one, as already mentioned in the beginning of the present chapter. The Ionian ship-owners and merchants used both of them in order to expand their shipping activity and respond to the British need for cereals as well as for new markets that would consume the British industrial products and manufactures. We do believe that the key word in order to understand the Ionian specialization in the Danubian grains and their consequential settlement in the Danubian major ports is *British Empire's trade*. But why British trade is the key word?

³⁹⁹ Peter N. Davies, *Nineteenth Century Ocean Trade and Transport*, in *Shipping and History, 16th-20th Centuries*, ed. Gelina Harlaftis, (Athens, 2001), 249-270; Neil Ferguson, *Empire-How Britain made the modern world*, (London, 2003); Allen Larry, *The Global Financial System 1750-2000*, (London, 2001), 184-210; Jones Geoffrey, *Merchants to multinationals. British trading companies in the nineteenth and twentieth century*, (Oxford, 2000); see also Sarah Palmer, 'The British Shipping Industry, 1850-1914,' in Lewis R. Fisher and Gerald E. Panting (eds.), *Change and Adaptation in Maritime History. The North Atlantic Fleets in the Nineteenth Century* (Newfoundland, 1985), 87-114 [98].

Britain was facing great difficulties in trading with the Danube, especially after the Treaty of Adrianople and the occupation of the Danubian Principalities by Russia.⁴⁰⁰ Furthermore, the decision of Russia not to improve the navigational conditions on the Danube⁴⁰¹ resulted to a limited British presence there.⁴⁰² However this limited British presence was counterbalanced by the shipping and commercial activity of the British Ionian subjects. The Ionians could sail under the Russian, the Ottoman, the Greek, the British or the Ionian flag without confronting any hindrances, and as a result they became the essential commercial partners of the British.

Figure 5.5 below is more than indicative of the numerous flags used by the Ionians during the period 1818-1864, apart from the Ionian one. To be more specific for the said period eighty seven percent (corresponding to 4,160 ships) out of the total number of Ionian-owned vessels having arrived in the port authorities of the Ionian State had chosen to sail under the formal flag of the Ionian State, whereas the rest thirteen percent (equivalent to 566 vessels) chose to sail mainly under the Greek, Russian, British or the Moldavian and Wallachian flag. In other words it seems that the Ionians did know very well the importance of the use of various flags (as is currently the case with flags of convenience) depending on what best fitted their business/maritime interests (e.g. payment of lower custom duties or port charges).⁴⁰³

However, the political and economic restrictions that Russia had imposed on the Danube's navigation ended in 1856, after the termination of the Crimean War.⁴⁰⁴ The latter put an end to the dominant role of Russia in South-eastern Europe, especially in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. Yet, the most important

⁴⁰⁰ Cernovodeanu and Marinescu, 'British Trade in the Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' 707-742.

⁴⁰¹ Gardner, *The Ionian Islands in relation to Greece, with suggestions for advancing our trade with the Turkish countries of the Adriatic, and the Danube*, 73-76;

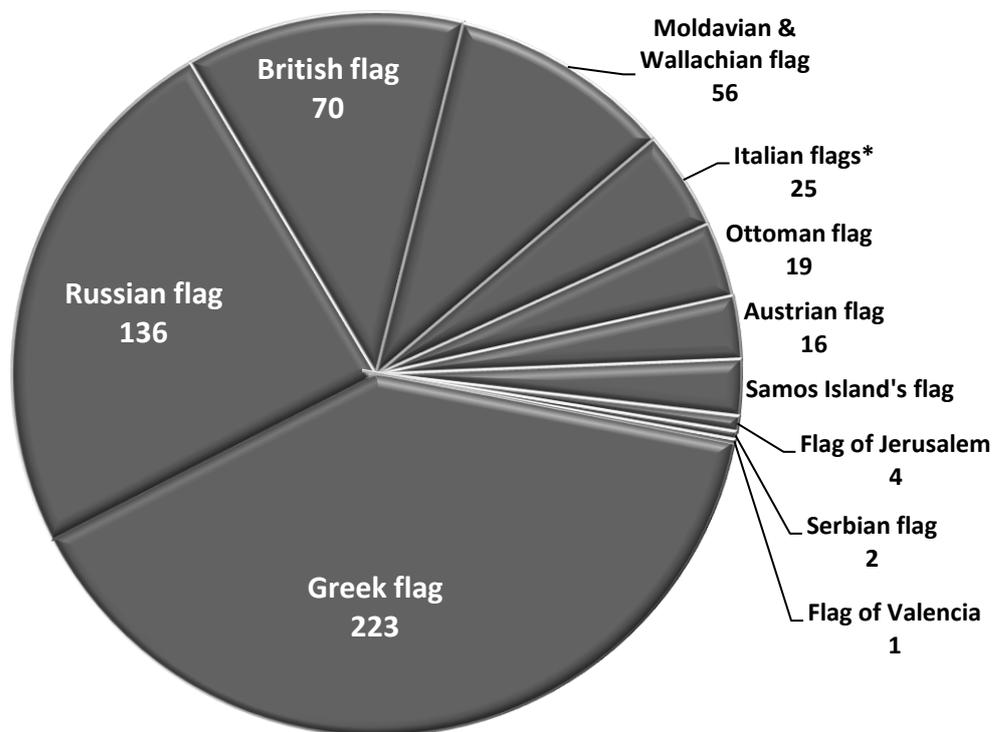
⁴⁰² Focas, *Οι Έλληνες εις την ποταμοπλοΐαν του κάτω Δουνάβεως*, 68-70; Vassilis Kardasis, *Από του Ιστίου εις τον ατμόν. Ελληνική Εμπορική Ναυτιλία 1858-1914* (Athens, 1993), 118-123.

⁴⁰³ Metaxas, *Αρχές Ναυτιλιακής Οικονομικής*, 65-59 and Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 118-119. See also Cernovodeanu and Marinescu, 'British Trade in the Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' 707-742.

⁴⁰⁴ Emil Palotás, 'The Problems of International Navigation on the Danube in Austro-Hungarian Politics during the Second half of the 19th century,' in Vacalopoulos, Svolopoulos and Király (eds.), *Southeast European Maritime Commerce and Naval Policies; From the mid-Eighteenth Century to 1914* (New Jersey, 1988), 99-114.

consequence was the establishment of an international commission, which improved the navigation and trade on the Danube River.⁴⁰⁵ Great Britain was the main European power that took full advantage of the new status of the River.⁴⁰⁶ And it is within this framework that the Ionian presence and settlement in the Lower Danube can be understood.

Figure 5.5 The Ionian-owned fleet and its flags, 1818-1864 (Ionian flag is excluded)



Source: processed data from *Odysseus Ionian Maritime History Database*. (* Italian flags: flags of Papal States and Kingdom of the Two Sicilies until the Italian Unification in 1861)

When we are referring to Ionian presence in Danube, we are in fact referring to the presence of the inhabitants of the Ionian Islands of Cephalonia and Ithaca.⁴⁰⁷ The ship-owners, sailors and merchants of these two islands were the ones -among all

⁴⁰⁵ Op.Cit., 112-113.

⁴⁰⁶ In 1852 almost the 40 percent of the ships departing from the Danubian ports of Brăila and Galați and conveying wares to England was of British interests, see Cernovodeanu and Marinescu, 'British Trade in the Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' 707-742.

⁴⁰⁷ Op.Cit., 116-117.

the Ionians- more specialized in the Danubian trade, and as a result they took the decision to settle in the major ports of the Danube: that is to say in Braila, Galatz and Sulina. Their decision was based on the need to ensure and further strengthen their commercial transactions with the Lower Danube through the development of a network of agencies in the main ports of Danube, connected directly to South Russia, Constantinople, the Greek Kingdom, the Ionian State, west Mediterranean ports and London. But before presenting this Ionian network, let us first examine the main features of the Ionian movement towards the Danube.

In the State Archives of the Cephalonia's Prefecture in Argostoli, and specifically in the registries of the *Executive Police* of the Island, we found all the extant documents related to the issued passports to the inhabitants of Cephalonia and Ithaca, during the years 1837-1863.⁴⁰⁸ At this point we have to note that the person, mainly the father, son or husband of a family who applies to the Executive Police for a passport, most often is accompanied by members of his family (wife, children, fathers, servants etc.), who apply for issue of passports as well. In other words, this is an important hint of the quality of the Ionian movement towards Danube; a movement that had the characteristics of a rather dynamic and permanent settlement.

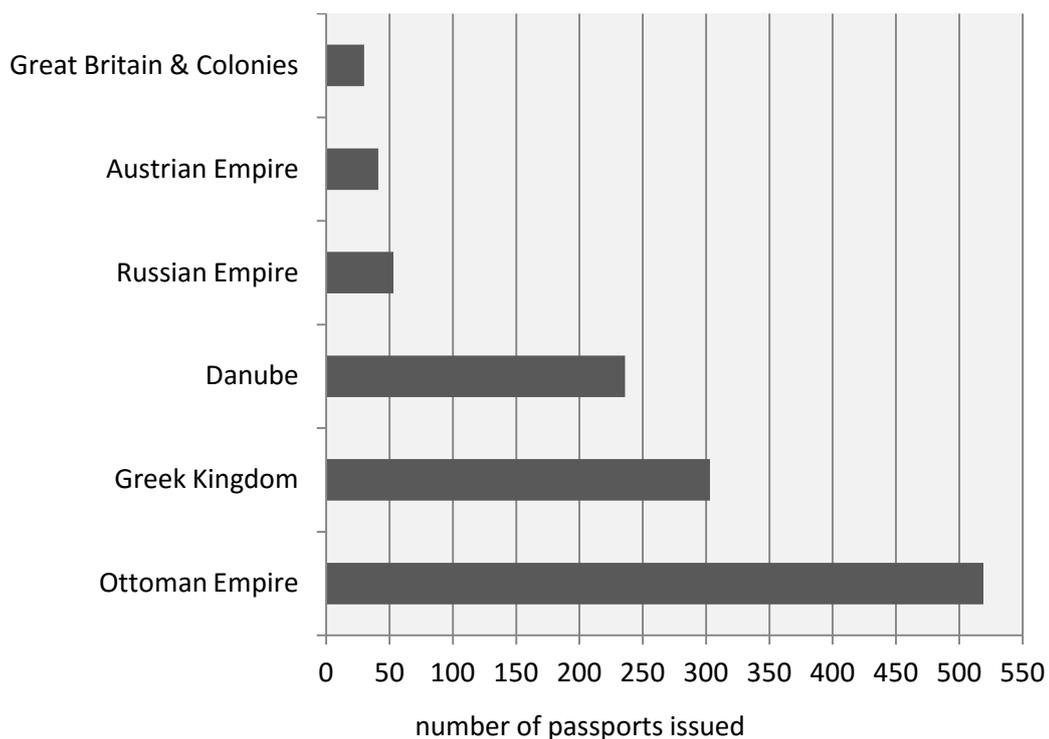
Figures 5.6 and 5.7 below present the six main geographical destinations/countries as well as the main port-cities for which the 1,500 passports found in the archives were issued. The first position belongs to the Ottoman Empire, with Constantinople dominating among the other Ottoman destinations with eighty seven percent. This is a predictable result not only due to the central commercial and shipping role of the Ottoman capital, but due to the fact that Constantinople was a necessary first stop for all the Ionians wanting to continue their voyage to other Black Sea port-cities. Furthermore, we believe that for the Ionians Constantinople was an essential "transit" stop, where they could collect all necessary information before taking the decision where to continue their journey.⁴⁰⁹ At this point we have to note that seventy percent of the Cephalonians arriving in Braila and Galatz and seventy four

⁴⁰⁸ Georgios N. Moschopoulos, *Ο Θεσμός της Αστυνομίας στα Επτάνησα: Τα Κεφαλληνιακά Αρχεία της Εκτελεστικής Αστυνομίας (1815-1864)*, (Argostoli, 1997), 5-12, 115-125.

⁴⁰⁹ Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 96-102; Vlassopoulos, *Η ναυτιλία των Ιονίων Νήσων*, 13-36.

percent of them arriving in Sulina were given passports by the Cephalonian Executive Police with Constantinople being written as their final destination. However after arriving in Constantinople and making all necessary contacts with their compatriots living there, they then visited the British Consul, to whom they reported their next and final destination, in order to be written on their passports.

Figure 5.6 Cephalonian passports and states for which they were issued (1837-1863)



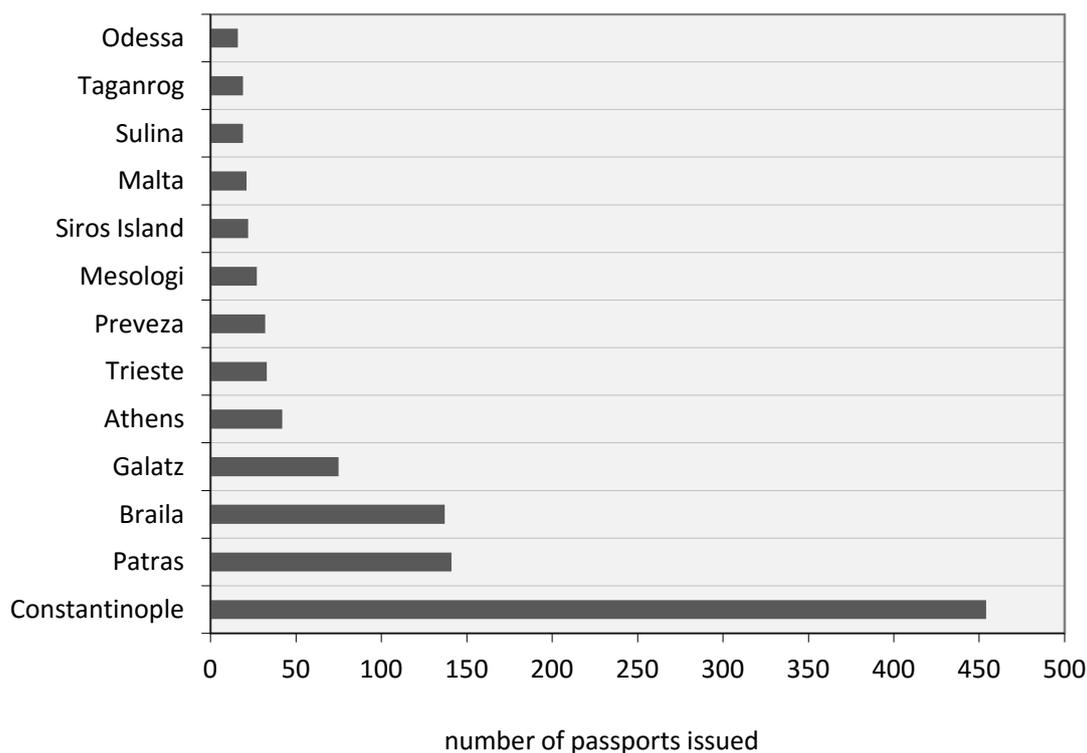
Source: processed data from Greek State Archives of Prefecture of Cephalonia, Executive Police, Folders 471-484 (passports).

Leaving aside Constantinople, Greek Kingdom dominates the second place. The main Greek destination for the Ionians was Patras with forty seven percent.⁴¹⁰ This is the result of Patras functioning as a direct commercial, shipping and business interlocutor of the Ionian Islands and as a main export centre of firewood, wheat

⁴¹⁰ For a general overview of the history and economy of Patras see, Nikos Bakounakis, *Πάτρα, 1828-1860. Μία ελληνική πρωτεύουσα στον 19ο αιώνα* (Athens, 1995).

and, mainly, currants. The cultivation and the harvest of currants is the reason for a great but seasonal moving of the Ionians towards the north-west Peloponnesus region. The Russian⁴¹¹ and Austrian⁴¹² Empires are holding the fourth and fifth position respectively, with Taganrog representing a thirty eight percent among all Russian destinations (apart from the Danubian Principalities), and Trieste representing an eighty percent, among all Austrian destinations. The last geographical destination/state for which the Ionian passports were issued was Great Britain together with her colonies, with a total of three percent. From that sum Malta represents seventy percent, England seventeen percent and Leghorn thirteen percent.

Figure 5.7 Cephalonian passports and port-cities for which they were issued (1837-1863)



Source: see figure 5.6

⁴¹¹ Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, ch. 6.

⁴¹² Fulvio Babudieri, 'Maritime Commerce of the Hapsburg Empire: The Port of Trieste, 1789-1913', in Vacalopoulos, Svolopoulos and Király (eds.), *Southeast European Maritime Commerce and Naval Policies; From the mid-Eighteenth Century to 1914* (New Jersey 1988), 221-244.

So far we put aside without any comments the Danube and its main port-cities, but now it's time to study them in more detail. According to the total number of passports issued by the Executive Police in Argostoli, the Danube River as final destination for the Ionians holds the third place with twenty percent. In other words, from both figures 5.6 and 5.7 what we observe is the great importance the Danube River had for the Ionians, especially for the inhabitants of the islands of Cephalonia and Ithaca, the two main maritime islands of the Ionian State.⁴¹³ According to the *Blue Books of Statistics* and the despatch that *Lord High Commissioner Seaton* sent to Colonial Office and Earl Grey in the mid 1840s, we are informed that the trade between the Ionian Islands and the Black Sea (Danube included) was prosperous.⁴¹⁴ This reality mentioned by Lord Seaton is more than evident in the above two figures. Furthermore we have to note that it is the trade with Danube that led gradually to this significant Ionian movement towards its main ports, namely Braila, Galatz, Sulina, Tulcea and Ismail.

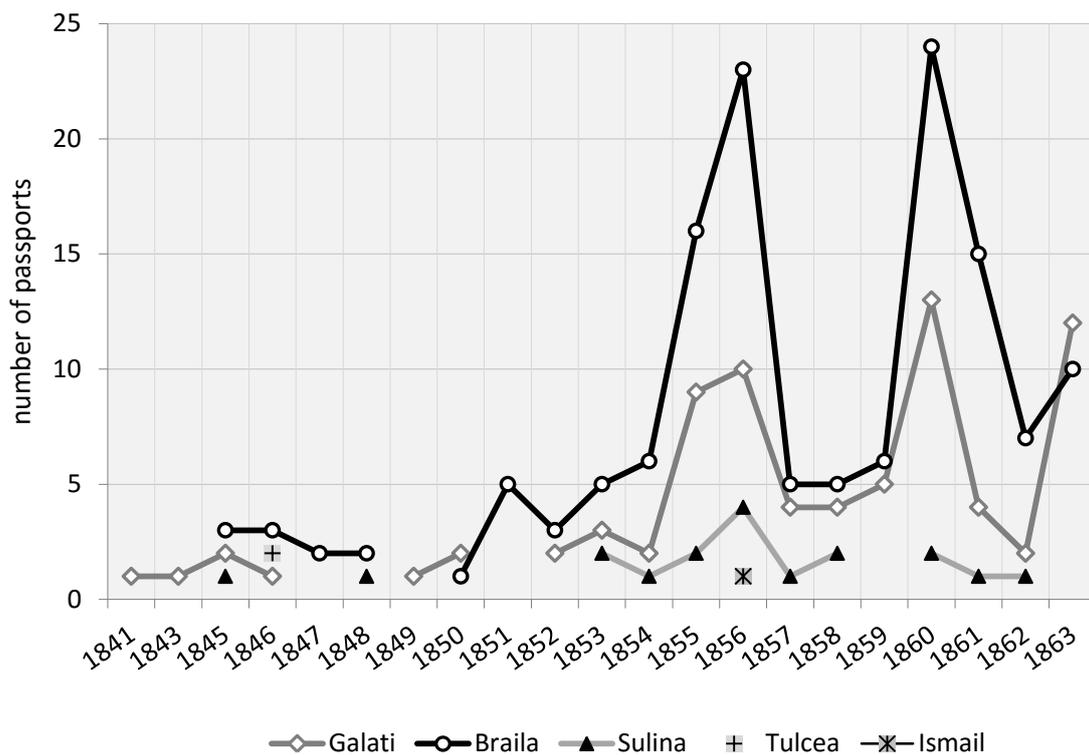
But let us now examine the quantitative features of the Ionian movement/immigration towards the above mentioned Danubian ports. Figure 5.8 that follows presents the passports issued annually from the island of Cephalonia towards the Danubian ports, during the years covering the years from 1841 up to 1863. The conclusions that can be drawn are the following: a) the presence of the port of Braila is predominant; the total number of issued passports is 137, with two main peak periods: the first one coincided with the Crimean War (1853-1856), whereas the second one is located in the beginning of the 1860s (1859-1860). Furthermore we should note that Braila is the third main Ionian destination following Constantinople (454 passports) and Patras (141 passports). b) As second most important Danubian destination for the Ionians emerges the port of Galatz following the same peak periods as Braila does. However, Galatz seems to experience one more Ionian boost towards mid-1860s. c) On the other hand the port of Sulina is following the general trends of the Ionian movement/immigration towards the

⁴¹³ On the islands of Cephalonia and Ithaca and their maritime supremacy within the Ionian State, see Panagiotis Kapetanakis, 'Shipping and Trade in a British semi-colony : the Case of the United States of the Ionian Islands (1815-1864),' *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 85 (2012), 269-284.

⁴¹⁴ Miranta Paximadopoulou-Stavrinou, *Πολιτειογραφικά Ιονίων Νήσων επί Αγγλικής Κυριαρχίας, 1815-1864. Τόμος Δεύτερος: Δημογραφικά Στοιχεία - Αγροτικός Τομέας* (Athens, 1997).

Danube, as those mentioned for Braila and Galatz, but not with the same vigour, whereas the presence of Tulcea and Ismail is restricted in our figure to just two years, and therefore we cannot form a clear picture of their importance as settlement destinations for the Ionians.

Figure 5.8 Ionian movement towards the major Danubian ports, 1841-1863 (issued passports).



Source: see figure 5.6

Based on the data of Figure 5.8, we understand that the Ionians started moving and/or immigrating for a permanent or temporary settlement in the Danubian ports of Braila, Galatz and Sulina, almost immediate after the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853). The Russian decision to put an embargo on all grain exports/sales to the Ottoman Empire and its allies from the ports of South Russia bolstered up the presence of neutral flags, such as the Ionian or the Greek one, which could sail in

Black Sea undisturbed.⁴¹⁵ Furthermore, after the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the Danubian Principalities, the west-European fleets could reach Danube without any hindrance and as a result there was a steep increase in the exports of Danubian wheat. This is actually the background that provides a sufficient explanation for the Ionian settlement in the Danube.⁴¹⁶

Actually, the choice of settlement in Braila, Galatz and Sulina was the result of the geographical position and economic/commercial status of these ports during nineteenth century.⁴¹⁷ Braila⁴¹⁸ had been a well known commercial centre with a direct connection to Brasov and central Europe, since the fourteenth century.⁴¹⁹ However Braila becomes a significant Danubian port during nineteenth century, owing its importance to its large grain-handling and warehousing facilities and to the fact that its port is accessible to small and medium-sized ocean-going vessels, like the ones that the Ionians had. On the other hand, Galatz used to be a fishing village back in the sixteenth century, whereas during the Ottoman occupation (from sixteenth century up to 1829) became an important port for the Ottomans and their Danubian trade.⁴²⁰ Be that as it may its rapid nineteenth century development took actually place after the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) and thanks to the adoption of the status of a free-port from 1837 up to 1883. Sulina, on the other hand, during the second half of nineteenth century turned out to be a prosperous Danubian export and import centre, an important shipyard and since 1856 became the seat of the European Commission of the Danube.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁵ Kardasis, *Έλληνες Ομογενείς στη Νότια Ρωσία 1775-1861*, 165-169.

⁴¹⁶ Op.Cit., 171; see also Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 108-114.

⁴¹⁷ Focas, *Οι Έλληνες εις την ποταμοπλοΐαν του κάτω Δουνάβεως*, 75-79.

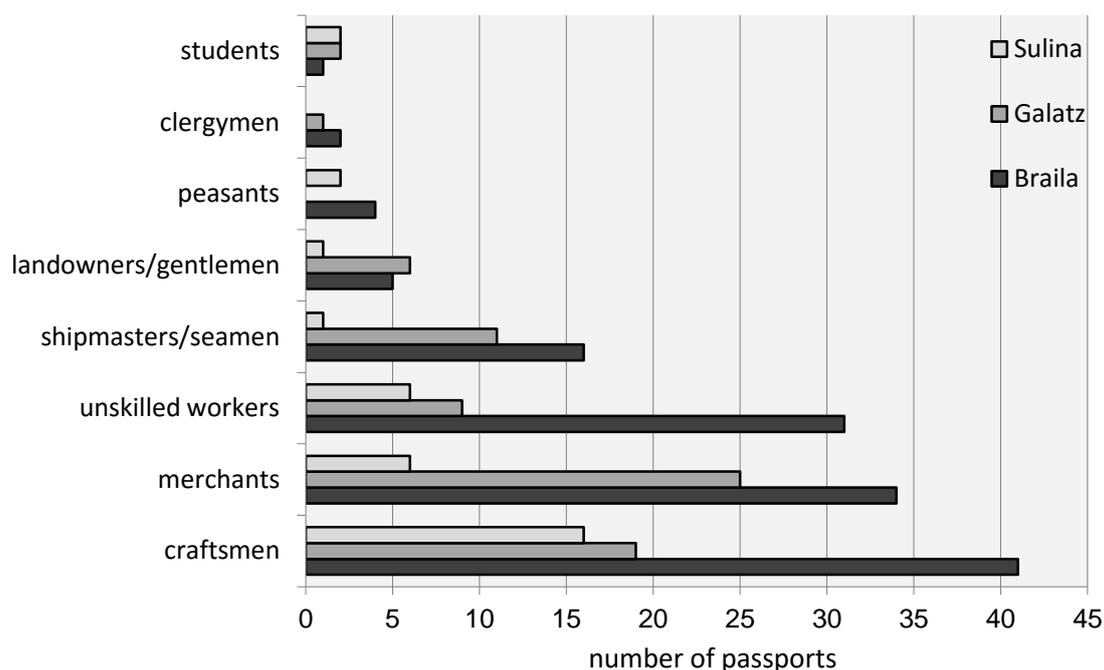
⁴¹⁸ Kardasis, *Από του Ιστίου εις τον ατμόν*, 118, 123-124; Eleni D. Mpelia, 'Ο Ελληνισμός της Ρουμανίας (1835-1878),' *Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας της Ελλάδος* 26 (1983), 6-62; Gerasimos K. Kolaitis, *Το χρονικό της Ιθάκης* (Piraeus, 1988), 68-69.

⁴¹⁹ Olga Katsiardi-Hering, 'Τα δίκτυα της ελληνικής εμπορικής διακίνησης,' in Speros I. Asdrachas (ed.), *Ελληνική Οικονομική Ιστορία*, vol. A (Athens, 2003), 461-481.

⁴²⁰ Kardasis, *Από του Ιστίου εις τον ατμόν*, 118; Focas, *Οι Έλληνες εις την ποταμοπλοΐαν του κάτω Δουνάβεως*, 46-57. Kolaitis, *Το χρονικό της Ιθάκης*, 70.

⁴²¹ Focas, *Οι Έλληνες εις την ποταμοπλοΐαν του κάτω Δουνάβεως*, 75-76; Vlassopoulos, *Η ναυτιλία των Ιονίων Νήσων*, 37-43, 188; also see Kardasis, *Fr Από του Ιστίου εις τον ατμόν*, 119-120, 122-123.

Figure 5.9 Professions of Ionian settlers in the Danubian ports (1841-1863)



Source: see figure 5.6

These are the three main ports of nineteenth century Danube, which attracted the maritime interest of the Ionians, making them take the big decision to settle there and set up their trading, shipping and banking businesses. The ports of Braila and Galatz became the main import and export centres of the Ionians, whereas Sulina and Galatz emerged as two of the most preferred ship-building centres of the Ionian-owned fleet. But having presented the quantitative features of the Ionian movement/immigration and settlement in the Danube, let us now study the qualitative ones presented in Figure 5.9 above.

At first sight we can say that the Danubian ports attracted not only merchants and seamen, but mainly craftsmen, workers and peasants. Referring to craftsmen and always based on what is reported by the Ionians in their passports we mean: coachmen, bakers, artisans, shopkeepers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, chemists, doctors, chandlers, tailors, shoe-makers, cobblers, carpenters and builders. We strongly believe that this is an important indication of the permanent character of

the Ionian movement/immigration towards the Danube. In other words we are of the opinion that the Ionians felt that the Danube was going to offer them many employment and business opportunities and as a consequence they decided to move towards the Danube in order to man the new-established communities of the Ionian diaspora in Braila, Galatz and Sulina. In corroboration of this reality, we should add that eighty percent of the above mentioned craftsmen, workers and peasants were settled in the Danubian port-cities after mid-1850s, which means after the end of the Crimean War and the restoration of regularity and normality in the Danubian and Black Sea maritime trade.⁴²²

Furthermore, we need to note that the decision of the Ionians to settle in one of the above mentioned Danubian ports depended also on the already shaped *business* and *commercial character* of each port. Braila, as the major Danubian export and import centre, emerged as the preferential destination of the Ionians and mainly of the Cephalonian merchants, shipmasters and seamen. On the other hand Galatz emerged as the second in importance Danubian port, and having the status of a free port, attracted mostly merchants and craftsmen, and secondarily seamen and unskilled workers. Finally, Sulina was the port of choice primarily of craftsmen, followed by unskilled workers, merchants, and peasants. According to the processed data of the found passports, Sulina was preferred mainly by craftsmen such as carpenters and blacksmiths; apparently, this is the result of Sulina being an important ship-building centre, where the Ionian ship-owners and merchants preferred to build or purchase their vessels and where the Ionian workers could search for a profitable employment in Sulina's shipyards.

However, Figure 5.9 draws our attention for one more reason: the presence of *landowners* or *gentlemen*. When the passport was issued, the applicants had to report to the Executive Police their main occupation/profession. What is interesting is that there are applicants who reported as their employment or occupation their social status quo. But this is not something strange for the Ionians, taking into consideration their Venetian past and the importance they ascribed to their social

⁴²² Op.Cit., 140-144. Also see, Kolaitis, *Το χρονικό της Ιθάκης*, 27.

status. For nineteenth century Ionian nobles their *nobility* was based not only on their old titles and on land-owning, but primarily on their decision to exploit their accumulating capitals and to become the main financiers of the Ionian maritime industry.⁴²³ We do believe that this is the key to understand not only the development of the Ionian shipping and commerce in general, but in particular the dynamic Ionian penetration and presence in the Danube. We further believe, according to the Cephalonian archives, that the Cephalonian landlords and gentlemen in the Danubian ports had a double function: as the main direct financiers of the Ionian merchants and ship-owners, and also as agents of the Cephalonian ship-owners, merchants and shipping-insurance companies. What is also interesting is that nine out of ten of the above mentioned landlords and gentlemen had chosen to settle in the Danube at the outbreak of the Crimean War; a period that portended a prosperous commercial future for the Danubian exports.

Nevertheless, we have to stress that the core of the Ionian presence in these ports were merchants, ship-owners and seamen; almost forty percent of the issued passports during the years 1841-1863 were given to merchants and seamen from Cephalonia. The reason for this reality should be sought in the commercial transactions of the Ionian ship-owners and merchants, dated back to the 1820s, which developed terms of a growing business-attractiveness of settling in Danube. The Ionian merchants, ship-masters and seamen took advantage of the commercial and business opportunities in the Danube, especially in the 1850s and afterwards, and started establishing their diaspora communities in the Danubian ports. As a result, a significant part of the inhabitants of Cephalonia and Ithaca was actuated by this perspective of a prosperous *Danubian* future and they took the decision to immigrate to Braila, Galatz and Sulina.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ For a short overview of the Ionian Economy during the British rule, see Evangelos Prontzas, 'Οικονομικές επιδόσεις του 19ου αιώνα στην Επτανήσο,' paper presented to the Scientific Congress *Η Ένωση των Επτανήσων με την Ελλάδα, 1864-2004*, Greek Parliament and Academy of Athens (Athens, 2005).

⁴²⁴ Traian Stoianovich, 'Forms and Mechanisms of the Market, in Speros I. Asdrachas (ed.), *Ελληνική Οικονομική Ιστορία*, vol. A (Athens, 2003), 483-513; Olga Katsiardi-Hering, 'Η ελληνική διασπορά: Η γεωγραφία και η τυπολογία της,' in Speros I. Asdrachas (ed.), *Ελληνική Οικονομική Ιστορία*, vol. A (Athens, 2003), 237-247.

5.5 Concluding remarks or the advantage of being a British semi-colony

In the introduction part of the present chapter we posed one critical question regarding the institutional role that Britain, as the protecting power of the Ionian Islands, has played in the development and growth of the Ionian shipping. And since the *Odysseus – Database* has given us such valuable information concerning the Ionian maritime past, my question was why did the Ionians have such a worth noticing maritime activity and not other Mediterranean islanders, like the Maltese, for example.

The status quo of the British protection over the Ionian Islands was the major determinant of their economic, and in particular their commercial development during nineteenth century. The Islands were part of the British Empire,⁴²⁵ as a sovereign state under the protection of the British crown, but did not constitute a real colony.⁴²⁶ As a result, “the Islands did not fit neatly in the usual colonial categories.”⁴²⁷

In order to conceive this ambiguous status of the Ionian Islands, let us have a look at how British administration treated Ionian maritime trade; in his dispatch of 1844 to the Colonial Office and Lord Stanley, the Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, *Lord John Seaton*, states that “The political position in which these Islands are placed [...] will not admit of their enjoying the advantage of Colonies.”⁴²⁸ In fact, the Lord High Commissioners of the Ionian State, appointed by the Ministry of Colonies in London, and having an absolute and unlimited responsibility and jurisdiction over the Islands, declared that the Ionian State was not a colony. Consequently, the Islands could not enjoy all the privileges that the colonial status

⁴²⁵ A. C. Bayly, ‘The First Age of Global Imperialism, c. 1760-1830,’ *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26 (May 1998), 28-47.

⁴²⁶ Gardner, *The Ionian Islands in relation to Greece, with suggestions for advancing our trade with the Turkish countries of the Adriatic, and the Danube*, 64-65; Porter, ‘Introduction: Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth Century’, 18; Bipan Chandra, *Essays on Colonialism* (New Delhi, 1999), 1-20, has attempted to present a general structure and typology of a colony, including the colonial state, the stages of colonialism, as well as the inner contradictions of colonialism; see also J. H. Parry, Philip Sherlock, and Anthony Maingot, *A Short History of the West Indies* (Oxford, 1987), Ch. XIV.

⁴²⁷ Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion*, x-xi.

⁴²⁸ TNA, CO 136/122, Dispatch No.59, 21.06.1844, Lord High Commissioner of Ionian Islands to Lord Stanley.

would have offered them.⁴²⁹ Nevertheless, the Ionians succeeded in constituting a powerful and specialised network of commerce and shipping during the period of the British protection, with centres of their activities being the Danube and the north Black Sea ports.⁴³⁰

On the other hand, what is really important is the fact that the British administration did treat the Ionians as British subjects.⁴³¹ This meant that the Ionians enjoyed the important privilege of having a double citizenship: the Ionian and the British one. This reality offered them the opportunity of having the protection provided by the British consuls or the British flag, whenever they needed one. The formal governmental newspaper of the Ionian State, the *Gazzetta Degli Stati Uniti Delle Isole Jonie*, informs us for this broad network of the British consuls and the offering of their 'protection' to the Ionian subjects travelling or trading within or outside the Mediterranean Sea.⁴³²

Moreover, in almost every commercial or political treaty that Great Britain have signed with a European or African state, during the time of her dominion over the Ionian Sea, was clearly declared that "The Inhabitants of the Ionian Islands are [...] fully recognised and acknowledged [...] as British Subjects, and entitled as such to all the Rights and Security which British Subjects [...] enjoy, and it is [...] stipulated that their flag and commerce shall be henceforward respected as such accordingly in all their various Interests."⁴³³

⁴²⁹ Gardner, *The Ionian Islands in relation to Greece* (London, 1859), 67-9, states that: 'Sir B. Lytton, in his Despatch appointing Mr. Gladstone as Special Commissioner, makes one very pertinent remark about the advantages both to England and the Islands that would probably arise from the application of British capital to them for commercial purposes; there is no doubt, and it is the remark of all foreigners, that we have greatly neglected the Islands in this respect [...].'

⁴³⁰ Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-owned Shipping*, 174-213.

⁴³¹ An Ionian, *The Ionian Islands; What they have lost and suffered under the thirty-five years' administration of the Lord High Commissioners sent to govern them. In Reply to a pamphlet entitled "The Ionian Islands under British Protection"* (London, 1851).

⁴³² The British Administration of the Ionian Islands made frequent references in the official newspaper of the United State of the Ionian Islands saying that inhabitants of the Ionian Islands, who are outside the Ionian State, should notify the local British Consuls of their presence, in order to come under British protection. This decision became an object of exploiting by the tradesmen and seamen of the Ionian Islands. Characteristically, we come across announcements by the British Vice-Consulates referring to the presence of Ionian subjects in the following regions: Batumi, Damascus, Alexandria, Istanbul, Belgrade, Albania, Erzerum, Trabzon, Tripoli (in Libya), Belgium, Austrian Empire etc.

⁴³³ TNA, FO 93.11/17, 'Austria, Treaty (Seven Islands) signed at Paris, 5th November 1815.'

This is the dual and ambiguous dimension of the status of the British protection over the Ionian State. The latter was neither a colony, as the Mediterranean island of Malta was,⁴³⁴ nor an independent state.⁴³⁵ Thus, the use of the term *semi-colony* for the case of the *United States of the Ionian Islands* seems to be the most appropriate.⁴³⁶

The Ionians have managed to take full advantage all the available opportunities and positive aspects, resulting from this regime and they succeeded in bolstering their commercial and shipping activity. Furthermore, the Ionian traders and shipowners have taken advantage of the continuously expanding commercial and financial borders of their Protector in the Eastern Mediterranean, and have succeeded in shaping up the terms of a prominent position in the commerce of the Mediterranean Sea and especially in the Russian Black Sea and the lower Danube River.⁴³⁷

On the other hand, Great Britain sought to utilize the key geographical position of the Ionian Islands and the trade networks they belonged to from the time of the Venetian rule, in an endeavor to bolster its trade in the wider region of the central Mediterranean and to safeguard new markets for its industrial products, and new sources of food supplies for its increasing urban and industrial population. The decision of Britain to give the Ionian Islands' merchant navy the option to engage in a safe and independent business activity, without the restrictions, which it normally imposed on its colonial acquisitions, was, we do believe, made with that consideration in mind.

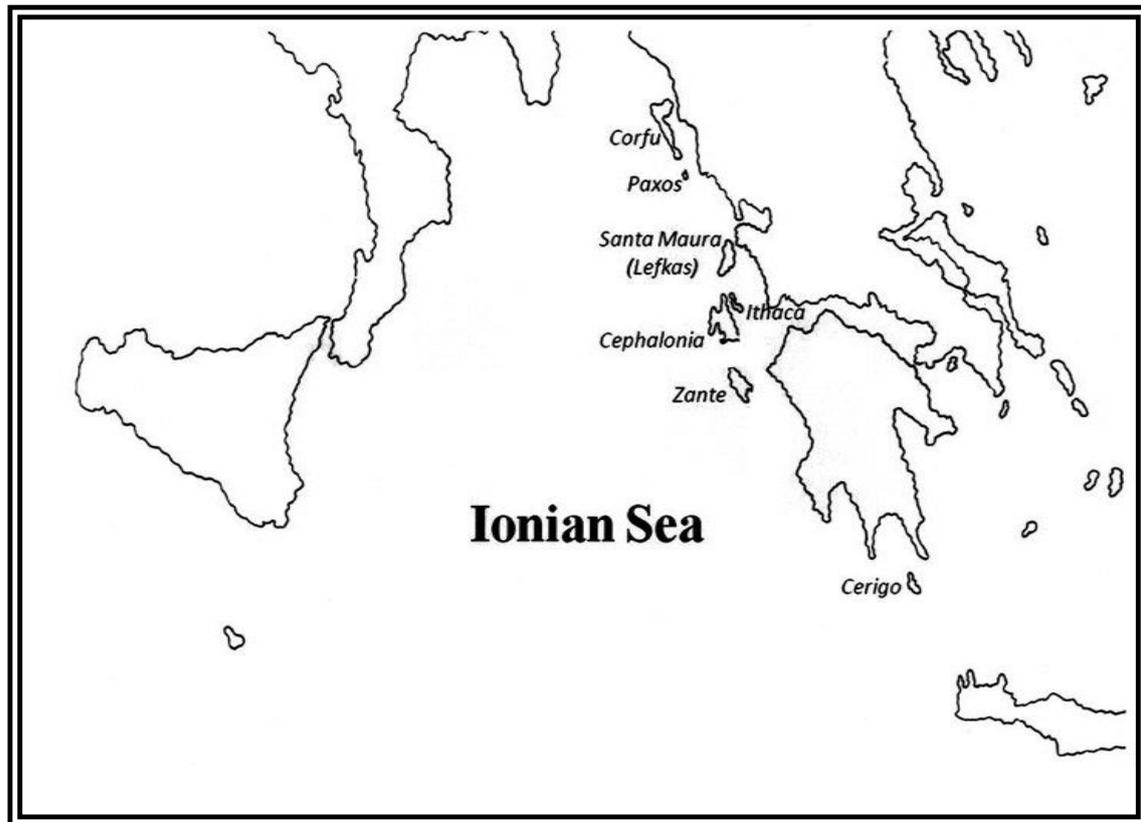
⁴³⁴ Vassalo, 'The Maltese Merchant Fleet and the Black Sea Grain Trade in the Nineteenth Century,' 19-36.

⁴³⁵ Gardner, *The Ionian Islands in relation to Greece*, 64-5, states characteristically that: 'There is nothing in the Treaty of November 1815, signed at Paris, to prevent us giving any sort of Constitution we please to this race; [...] it is unfortunate that we received the Islands under the form of a Protectorate [...] but the conditions of the Treaty are extremely vague; [...] we have a directing hand in their internal government; [...] the term "Constitutional Charter" must be measured in its meaning by the period, when the Treaty was written; [...] at present they are swamped in the democracy, and lost [...].'

⁴³⁶ Henry Jervis-White Jervis, *History of the Island of Corfú and of the Republic of the Ionian Islands* (London, 1852), 230-31; Cottrell, *The Ionian Bank*, 3, 26; Chandra, *Essays on Colonialism*, 17.

⁴³⁷ Kapetanakis, 'Από την Αμφιτρήτη στον Οδυσσεά: πλέοντας με την Ιόνιο ναυτιλία στα νερά της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου κατά την επαναστατική δεκαετία του 1820,' 735-770.

5.1 Ionian Islands



Source: courtesy of the author

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As mentioned in the introductory part of this book our objective was threefold: (a) to find out the reasons that led the United Kingdom to re-discover the Black Sea during the second half of the 18th century, after almost 150 years of indifference; (b) to examine the presence of British-flag merchantmen in the Russian ports of the Black Sea after the opening of the latter to European flags and for the period covering the years from 1802 up to 1853, just before the outbreak of the Crimean War; and last but not least, (c) to study the autonomous maritime and commercial penetration, presence, as well as settlement of the British subjects of the Ionian semi-colony into the Russian Black Sea and more specific into the main port-cities of the Lower Danube, during the first half of nineteenth century. To these questions our three-year archival and bibliographic research gave some rather interesting answers and shed light on several aspects of British and Ionian maritime history hitherto unknown or poorly studied.

As we saw in detail the British interest in Black Sea dates back to late sixteenth century. However it was only during the last quarter of eighteenth century that the British interest intensified as London realized the multilevel political, commercial and military importance of Black Sea for its imperial and colonial policy. The decision of Catherine the Great to proceed with the implementation of her plan to make Russia a powerful naval, military and commercial force in Europe and the Levant, made British government to think about the potential risks from the opening of the Black Sea to the Russian flag. However, for Britain Russia was a significant ally in Europe and no political, military or diplomatic developments, like the signing of the peace treaty of Kainarji that granted to the Russians the privilege for navigation and trade in the Black Sea, could disrupt the strong ties between them.

The latter signalled also the penetration of British merchantmen in the Black Sea sailing under Russian colors. However, it was only during the decade of 1790 –after the loss of the American colonies and the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars– that Britain realized in whole the geopolitical significance of the broader Black

Sea region for the implementation of her imperial and commercial policy. In fact the Black Sea emerged for the British as a critical area for securing their possessions and economic and trade interests in Asia.

Understanding this reality led the British government, after constant demands from the Levant Company during the second half of 1790s, to officially request from the Sublime Porte of the Ottoman Empire the opening of the Black Sea to the British flag and consequently to British trade. And indeed, on October 30, 1799, the Black Sea opened for British merchant vessels. Be that as it may, the British fear that the Porte would be soon forced to open the Black Sea for the French flag as well made London reconsider the potential dangers arising from an opening of the Black Sea to British flag. The result was British government to finally withdraw its claim and not accept the opening of the Sea to other flags, even to the British one. Thus Britain preferred the safer option to remain in force the existing status quo, which allowed only Russian, Austrian and of course Turkish vessels sailing the Black Sea. Hence, the latter remained closed for the British; a status however that will not last for long. And indeed the Black Sea would open for the French on June 25, 1802, following the signing of the Treaty of Paris between France and Turkey, whereas for the British flag it would open one month later on July 23.

Consequently, in mid-summer 1802 begins the official presence of the British and their flag in the Black Sea and a period of noteworthy development and growth of British trade in the ports of New Russia. However, the said development was inextricably linked to and depended upon the establishment of a British general consulate in Odessa; a necessary condition to properly assist and protect all British citizens and subjects who wanted to do maritime and trade business in New Russia.

It causes great interest the fact that despite the limited British presence in the ports of New Russia during the first years after the opening of the Black Sea to European flags a fierce competition launched among British merchants in Russian Empire – members of Russia Company– about who would take over the representation of British diplomatic and of course commercial and maritime interests in the Russian ports of the Black and the Azov Seas. As leading candidate emerged one of the most

respectable British merchants of Saint Petersburg and member of Russia Company Henry Savage Yeames, who in June 1803 managed to be appointed as British consul general in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

Henry Savage Yeames due to his strong ties with the Russian and British courts, his personality and methodical work managed to make the British consulate general in Odessa a success and most important a family affair with him remaining the head of the consulate and his sons (James and William Yeames) undertaking the task to assist him with their physical presence as vice consuls in the developing Russian ports of the Black and Azov Seas. Thus, we could say that the successful operation of the British consulate general in Odessa during the period from 1812 up to 1819 and the growth of British trade in the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov during the said period should be attributed to Henry Savage Yeames' personal abilities and his initiative to build a strong family consular network in the whole Russian Black Sea region.

Certainly the opening of Black Sea to British flag and despite all the efforts of Henry Savage Yeames did not signal any immediate or explosive growth of British trade in New Russia's ports. In contrast, during the first decade of nineteenth century British maritime trade in Russian Black Sea ports was rather limited compared to trade conducted under the flags of Russia or Austria for example.

A number of reasons hindered or prevented the British to expand their maritime trade activities in the Russian Black Sea. (a) The navigational and weather difficulties of Black Sea and Sea of Azov; (b) the incomplete port infrastructure in most of New Russia's ports; (c) the extreme poverty existing in villages and cities of New Russia and the subsequent (d) lack of markets able to consume British goods and manufactures; (e) the restrictions posed on British trade by Navigation Acts; (f) the higher operating costs of British vessels compared with the corresponding ones of French, Russian, Austrian or Greek vessels; (g) the uncontrolled and irregular tariff policy and custom duties in Russian ports depending almost exclusively on the decisions of local governors; (h) the obligation to trade in New Russia only on credit; (i) the inability of British merchants to engage in the retail or wholesale trade within

New Russia's mainland; (j) the refusal of Tsar Alexander I to renew or prolong the expired in March 1807 Anglo-Russian commercial treaty; (k) the tsarist manifest of January 1, 1807, and of course (l) the outbreak of the Anglo-Russian war in September 1807, leading to an almost freezing –during the period from 1807 to 1812– of all diplomatic, economic and of course trade relations between the two countries.

But despite these difficulties the British realized to a full extent that the Russian Black Sea could provide them with products necessary to cover the growing needs of their military and naval forces in the Mediterranean, such as corn or shipbuilding timber. And the most important was that the British could buy these products at absolutely competitive prices compared to the ones in the northern ports of Europe, and especially in the Baltic Sea. This is what we call the comparative advantage of the Russian Black Sea for the British maritime trade, which would make the latter a key area of interest for British-flag merchantmen during the decade of 1810 and especially after 1819, when British ships were supplying the British ports in the Mediterranean and England with masts, corn, salted meat, barley, oats, peas and tallow, with the latter making a rather dynamic appearance as Russia's main export product to Britain.

To be more specific and always according to the results of our three-year research British flag had acquired a dominant presence in the Russian ports of the Black Sea, and especially in the port of Odessa, almost immediately after the declaration of a free port in the latter in the early 1820s. And this dominant presence does not result from the data concerning the number or capacity of British vessels departing from Odessa, which may lead to misperceptions, but from the measuring and study of the invoice value of goods exported by British-flag vessels in comparison to the value of cargoes exported by other flags.

Thus, what we see is that during most of the turbulent 1820s, with the exception of the years of the Russo-Turkish War (1828 and 1829), British flag maintains a dominant presence in terms of the invoice value of goods exported from Odessa. And of course, this dominant or better to say leading presence of the British flag will

be continued during the following decades until at least 1853 and the outbreak of the Crimean War. And indeed 1853 is the first year of the period 1844-1853 when the presence of British flag shows significant decline occupying the fourth place behind the flags of Austria, Greece and Sardinia. However, this reduced presence of British-flag vessels in Odessa should be combined with the simultaneous strengthening of Britain's interest in the Danubian grain markets. A British decision prompted by her rising needs for cereals and her decision for disengagement from the wheat of her main rival and enemy, Russia; a disengagement procedure already taking place since mid-1830s.

However, it was not only the British that oriented their interest towards the Danube, as the same happened with their colonial subjects, the Ionians. The Danube and its ports during mid-nineteenth century became the main commercial partner of the Ionians and attracted hundreds of them, who decided to settle in Braila, Galatz and Sulina, foreseeing large profit opportunities in the near future by engaging in the export trade of the Danubian grains. The result was hundreds of Ionians to migrate from their Islands to the Danube, a development that has further strengthened the orientation of the Ionian maritime trade and shipping to the Danubian port-cities and grain markets.

To be more specific the Danube River had an important and decisive impact on the development and orientation of the Ionian maritime trade. For the Ionians the Danube and its main ports emerged as the major determinant of their specialization in trading the bulk cargoes of the Danubian grains towards the depôts of the British protected Ionian State and then towards the main ports of the central or western Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, the development of the Ionian merchant shipping is directly connected to the general European commercial trends and foods' demands of mid nineteenth-century. This is the result of the Ionian participation in the British economic and imperial world. In other words, the Ionian case is an interesting paradigm of how a local or regional shipping, can be transformed into a player with important role in a peripheral transit maritime trade, by being subsumed –voluntarily or not– into the political and economic context of a global empire as it was the case with the British Empire.

The Ionian State, as a British protectorate or better to say as a British semi-colony, offered to its subjects a double citizenship: the Ionian and the British one. The Ionian ship-owners and merchants used both of them in order to expand their shipping activity and respond to the British need for cereals as well as for new markets that would consume the British industrial products and manufactures. Thus, the key word in order to understand the Ionian specialization in the Danubian grains and their consequential settlement in the Danubian major ports is *British Empire's trade*.

And why this happened? Because Britain especially after the Treaty of Adrianople and the occupation of the Danubian Principalities by Russia was facing great difficulties in trading with the Danube. Furthermore, the decision of Russia not to improve the navigational conditions on the Danube resulted to a limited British presence there. However this limited British presence was counterbalanced by the shipping and commercial activity of the British Ionian subjects. The Ionians could sail under the Russian, the Ottoman, the Greek, the British or the Ionian flag without confronting any hindrances, and as a result they became the essential commercial partners of the British.

That is why we believe that if someone wants to study the British commercial and maritime presence in the Russian Black Sea and the Danube River during the first half of the nineteenth century cannot do it without studying the Ionian maritime presence there as well. And vice versa: no one can understand the development and growth of the Ionian maritime trade in the Black Sea without first realizing the great influence that the British Maritime Empire had over the Ionians and their merchant fleet.

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