

Russian Black Sea Trade in the Early 19th Century¹

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Abstract. This paper examines the development of trade in Crimea and Novorossiia following their incorporation into Russia. In the early 19th century, the grain trade in these new regions had yet to gain momentum due to their limited development. However, the ports of Feodosia, Taganrog, and Odessa regularly received ships from Constantinople and the Greek islands, while the port of Sevastopol primarily served military purposes. In 1821, under the decree of Alexander I, a port was established in Kerch to serve as an outpost at the entrance to the Sea of Azov and establish trade ties with the mountain peoples along the Caucasus coast of the Black Sea. To this end, the Russian government established a Circassian and Abaza Trade Administration to manage merchant shipping to the Caucasus coast and oversee trading at barter markets in Kerch and Bugaz. Relations with the highland communities proved difficult, as they frequently captured Russian ship crews and demanded ransoms. Even after the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, when these territories became part of the Russian Empire, the local populations resisted submission to the new government, just as they had previously resisted the authority of the Turkish Sultan.

Keywords: trade; foreign policy; Black Sea; Caucasus coast; Crimea; highlanders

From the late 18th century, the Eastern question had been at the top of the overall foreign policy agenda of the Russian Empire. The incorporation of the Crimea, securing access to the Black Sea, and the development of crop farming in Novorossiia and the associated trade through the Black Sea ports – all these issues had to be addressed through Russo-Turkish treaties of 1799 and 1805 as well as the 1806–1812 war that resulted in the Treaty of Bucharest. The Russian Empire sought to strengthen its position in the region to ensure unrestricted trade with the Mediterranean countries and protect its southern borders.

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Russia's Black Sea trade progressed to a new level after the incorporation of the Crimea in 1783 and the Caucasus coast in 1829. The matters of Mediterranean trade were entrusted to the Commercial Chancellery of the Russian Mission in Constantinople, while Russia's ties with the Caucasus were the responsibility of the Administration of Kerch and Bugaz Trade with Circassians and Abaza. Although the overall subject of Russia's trade in the south has been fairly well covered by previous research (Kulisher 1923; Borovoy 1962; Pozner 1895), some of its aspects have escaped the analysis, such as, first and foremost, the number of merchant ships passing through the Black Sea Straits. Also, the study of Russian-Circassian relations has tended to focus on the military issues and the establishment of political ties with the newly acquired regions (Peyssonnel 1927; Dzidzaria 1960; Leiberov 1995). The matters of trade that became paramount in the relations between the new authorities and the Adyghe peoples still await a proper investigation.

The objective of this study is to define key destinations of the Mediterranean trade after the construction of new seaports in the Crimea and the key stages in the development of commercial links with the Caucasus coast of the Black Sea.

The beginning of Black Sea trade after the incorporation of the Crimea

On April 8, 1783, Russian Empress Catherine II signed the Manifesto on Incorporation of the Crimea into Russia. The same year saw the founding of Sevastopol that went to become the main naval port on the Black Sea in 1804 and a military fortress in 1809.² The Imperial Rescript of March 26, 1784 sent to the Russian Ambassador to the Great Britain Ivan Simolin (Johann Matthias von Simolin) stated that "for all the peoples that maintain friendly relations with our Empire [...] some of our Black Sea harbors [in the Crimea] shall be kept open: Kherson, Feodosia, and Sevastopol."³ It also granted access to these "harbors" to "all the peoples" which could benefit from trade with Russia. Article 7 of the Treaty of Jassy concluded between Russia and Turkey on December 29, 1791, said: "... trade is the essential prerequisite for and the tightest knot of a good mutual concord."⁴ The new Black Sea ports in the Crimea were built not only as military outposts and fortresses, but also as trade hubs.

They were primarily meant to promote trade with the Ottoman Empire as Russia's closest neighbor and biggest trade partner. Following instructions from St. Petersburg, Russian envoy to Constantinople Andrey Italinsky "impressed the importance of the matter on our consuls in the Levant", entrusting to their particular care the advancement of the sea trade between the two empires and requesting them to "assure those

² Yurasov A. V., ed. 2017. *The History of the Crimea* (in 2 vols). Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole. Vol. 2. P. 95.

³ *The Crimea in the Development of Russia: History, Politics and Diplomacy* (2018). Documents of the Russian Foreign Ministry Archive. Izhevsk. P. 208.

⁴ Ibid. P. 226.

willing to conduct their trade in our land ... of the benefits that are available to all the foreign parties in our sea ports.”⁵ Considering the danger posed to merchant shipping by sea pirates, the Ottoman Porte agreed to cover the losses of Russian merchants should they be attacked by Algerian, Tunisian or Tripoli pirates (Article 61 of the Trade Treaty signed by Russia and the Ottoman Empire after the 1791 Treaty of Jassa). The Turkish government was also obliged to take measures to free the prisoners and return vessels and cargo to their owners.⁶

Following his accession to the throne, Alexander I, “desiring to contribute to the highest profits of the merchants”, assigned special governors to the port cities of Odesa, Taganrog, Caffa (Feodosia) and Kherson for the patronage of trade in the southern regions.⁷ The Minister of Internal Affairs Viktor Kochubey and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Adam Czartoryski agreed that the governors of Crimean cities should, “for the common good”, maintain continuous correspondence between each other. The Feodosia Military Governor Andrey Fensh had instructions to keep in touch with the Russian envoy in Constantinople and the consuls in the “rocks of the Levant” in the interest of building trade ties with Turkey.⁸ Under the decree of December 15, 1804, shortly after it had been done in Odessa, a warehouse for foreign commodities was set up in Feodosia, to which, starting from 1809, merchants were allowed to bring dutiable goods.⁹ The rate of the import duty could vary. For example, “in order to provide trade preferences to the Septinsular Republic in the Black Sea ports”, the decree of 16 March 1806 ordered to reduce the duty on the Republic’s wines, oil and dried fruit by 10%.¹⁰

Each of the cities founded on the Crimean coast had its particular role. By the decree of Alexander I, Sevastopol was designated as the principal naval port that was off limits to merchant ships, “except for repair or refuge, but not for trading.”¹¹ Pavel Chichagov, Minister of the Navy, citing other governments and the regulations of the Admiralty, noted that in foreign countries naval and merchant vessels never anchor together in the same harbor.¹²

The city of Caffa (Feodosia) was gaining importance as a trade port. Although Catherine II already made references to this seaport, the general governor of Novorossiysk had to admit in 1803 that Caffa had no trading institutions, “but should be turned into a thriving condition in the shortest possible time.”¹³ And already in 1809, Alexander I issued a decree, allowing “the port of Feodosia”¹⁴ to receive foreign dutiable commodities.

⁵ Ibid. P. 261.

⁶ Ibid. P. 226.

⁷ Ibid. P. 260.

⁸ Ibid. P. 263.

⁹ Ibid. P. 271.

¹⁰ Ibid. P. 269. The Septinsular Republic in the Ionic Sea was under the patronage of the Russian Empire from 1800 to 1807.

¹¹ Ibid. P. 262.

¹² Ibid. P. 268.

¹³ Ibid. P. 260.

¹⁴ Ibid. P. 271.

Immediately after the integration of the Crimea, Catherine II expected to maintain peaceful relations with the Ottoman Empire. “We, without desiring war, have no fear of it”, wrote the Empress, “but the sole thing we would regret, if the break-up obstructed the useful trade that has already commenced from our Black Sea ports to the Mediterranean Sea, and particularly to France.”¹⁵ The Empress was especially concerned about the latter because the Russian-French trade was going strong and France hoped, in due course, to monopolize all the trade in the region (Borovoy 1962: 501). The Russian merchant fleet was granted passage through the Straits to the Mediterranean Sea back in 1774 under the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji before Russia took over Ochakov and the harbor of Odessa in 1791 under the Treaty of Jassa.

Very soon Europe learnt about the “Odessa Miracle” that referred to the speed at which the trade city of Odessa had been growing and developing. The “miracle” was made possible by exempting the citizens from all taxes from the day Odessa was founded at the end of the 18th century and by giving them preferences and allowances paid from Imperial coffers. From 1817 to 1857, Odessa enjoyed a *porto franco* status, which allowed for duty-free imports and storage of foreign goods, helping attract more capital and expand trade (Pozner 1895: 203). As a consequence, Odessa became the biggest trade port on the Black Sea where most foreign ships brought their cargo for sale.

Merchant vessels made their way to Black Sea ports via Constantinople. Before the establishment of the Commercial Chancellery that became the center of all economic activity within the Russian diplomatic offices in the Turkish capital, the Russian Mission had had a Merchant Chancellery that performed the same function (Kudryavtseva 2010). It was headed by a member of the Constantinople Mission, Ivan Froding. This unit was in charge of drawing up lists of merchant ships heading through the Straits to and from Russian ports. Usually, the lists specified ship’s name, ports of registry and destination, skipper’s name, and the nature and, occasionally, the quantity of cargo. The lists were submitted annually to the Collegium of Foreign Affairs in St. Petersburg and after the reform of 1832 to the Asia Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ship lists of 1800–1802 show that in those years Russia had most active trade relations with Turkey, Austria and the Septinsular Republic. As for English, Dutch and Prussian merchants, the Ottoman Porte opened the Bosphorus to their ships only in 1801. In 1800, the ships that arrived at Russian ports via Constantinople included 44 Turkish vessels carrying the cargo of Russian merchants, 95 ships sailing under the Russian flag, 17 Austrian ships and 7 ones from the Greek Republic.¹⁶ The ships that left Russian ports for Constantinople included 79 vessels under the Russian flag and 42

¹⁵ Ibid. P. 199.

¹⁶ *Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRI)*. AC. [Archival Collection] Main Archive II-3. FR. [File Register] 34. F. [Folder] 1 (1802). f. [folio] 4.

Turkish ships with Russian merchandise. A table compiled by the Russian ambassador Vasily Tomara documents the number of Russian ships that called at Constantinople over the year, the quantities of cargo they transported, and the number of Russian subjects engaged in commerce in the Turkish capital. According to the document, Russian ships carried peltries, iron, sailcloth, canvas, hemp, wax, and wool. Food commodities included caviar, oil, lard, tea, sugar and wheat.¹⁷ The estimated value of the exported goods added up to 2,044,389 rubles. The same documents contain information about the imports to Russia such as grape wines, raisins, dates, walnuts, almonds, halva, olives, pomegranates, capers, olive oil, lemons, oranges, “Italian cheese”, and rice. As for non-food cargo, the records mention only sea sponges and incense.¹⁸ The total imports were valued at 1,855,208 rubles. Thus, the Black Sea trade closed the year 1800 with a surplus balance. As Novorossiia developed and yielded bigger wheat harvests, Russia was increasing its exports of wheat that became the primary cargo shipped from Black Sea ports.

The “General Table” for 1801 also contained the details of how much merchandise was transported between Russia and Turkey by sea, “dry land”, and via the Danubian Principalities. Based on the Table, Russian exports to the Ottoman Empire by land included 45,220 rubles worth of peltries, rhubarb and amber, while the imports to Russia totaled 845,926 rubles worth of silk, pearls and “diamond items”. Russian ships carried 1,075,907 rubles worth of cargos out of Russia and brought in 726,951 rubles of imports.¹⁹ So, in monetary terms, Russia imported more than it exported by land while it traded at a surplus by sea. Probably this was due to the fact that land routes were used to bring into Russia expensive jewels (“diamond items”) that contributed to the high value of imports. But already the next year, Russia’s overall trade balance became positive: Russian combined land and sea trade through Turkey totaled 1,159,012 rubles of exports and 1,110,466 rubles of imports.²⁰

According to the “Report ...” that documents Russian ship arrivals at Constantinople and departures back to Russian ports in 1800–1801, out of the 79 merchant ships that arrived in 1801 from Taganrog, Odessa, Nikolaev, Kherson and the Crimea, most (49) departed from Taganrog with the second biggest number coming from Odessa (18). The year 1800 saw a similar distribution with 41 ships from Taganrog and 31 from Odessa.²¹ Apart from such master lists, monthly lists of all merchant ships were also maintained, showing that in March, April and May of 1801, the above top trade ports were joined by Kherson and the Crimea, sometimes referred to as “Yeni-Kale”,

¹⁷ Ibid. f. 5.

¹⁸ Ibid. f. 6.

¹⁹ Ibid. f. 7–8.

²⁰ Ibid. f. 27–28.

²¹ Ibid. f. 4, 22.

i.e. Kerch. A large number foreign vessels bound for Odessa were carrying ballast rock that was sold for a modest price of 18 rubles per cubic sazhen (c. 9,7 cubic meters) and was used for construction in the city.²²

These reports also registered the number of foreign vessels: those of Turkey, Austria, Septinsular Republic, and ships “sailing under the Russian flag”. By the beginning of the 19th century, Russia had still struggled to build its own merchant fleet and the Russian wares had to be carried by vessels belonging to the Greeks from the Archipelago. The development of shipbuilding was sluggish on the Black Sea coast where ships were constructed using an axe and a rough rule of thumb, without any drawings, by peasants who just parted with their plows. Skippers of the ships “under the Russian flag” were Greeks: Dmitry Mataka, Christofor Karavia, Panain Kunduri, Christofor Raftopulo.²³ This means that these ships did not enter the Mediterranean Sea, because, under the Russian law, the Black Sea trade was divided into “major” and “minor” trade. Major trade vessels could sail into the Archipelago and the Mediterranean, but they were required to have been built in Russia and have a Russian skipper. While minor trade ships could sail only as far as the Dardanelles, they could be owned by foreigners and commanded by Greek skippers (Pozner 1895: 127). A merchant maritime school opened in Kherson only in 1834. Its 24 students studied the Turkish, Greek and Italian languages as well as shipbuilding and navigation disciplines. However, there were much fewer Russian skippers compared to the foreigners: in 1840, serving on merchant ships plying in the Black Sea were 26 Russian skippers and 136 foreign ones.

On merchant ships, large numbers of Greek passengers from the Archipelago islands and the continental Turkey were coming “on commercial business” to Odessa and Taganrog. Arriving on one of such vessels in Odessa from France in May 1802 was “the professor of mathematics and abbot Joseph Fontain” on his way to St. Petersburg, and, in June of the same year, were hieromonks Agafangel, Gavriil and Josaf with archimandrite Afanael, hierodeacon Gennady and monk Makary from Mount Athos, heading to the St. Nicolas Monastery in Moscow.²⁴ Greek merchants settled in cities and towns on the Black Sea coast and opened their trading houses. At that time, Russian merchants ran their business on their own and had no trading houses.

The extensive 1800–1801 report (over 45 sheets) filed by the Head of the Russian Mission in Constantinople offers a comprehensive review of the merchant shipping in the Black Sea. The information on the number of ships plying to Black Sea ports and back, destinations, countries of departure, and the nature and price of cargos is sufficient to estimate the overall trade balance. The analysis shows that even in the first few years of the 19th century when the Russian trade from Black Sea ports was in its

²² Ibid. AC. Consulate in Jaffa. FR. 823. F. 1. f. 113.

²³ Ibid. AC. St. Petersburg Main Archive II-3. FR. 34. F. 1. f. 39(v) [verso]

²⁴ Ibid. f. 39–42.

infancy, the trade balance tipped, however slightly, invariably in Russia's favor. And it is important to remember that the wheat from Novorossiia had not yet become Russia's top product exported via the Black Sea.

A new port in Kerch

Although Feodosia and Odessa were on the rise as trade ports, the Russian government in the early 1820s proposed to build a new port on the Crimea's eastern extremity. The idea had been suggested long before by Catherine II in 1771 when she wrote to Vasily Dolgorukov: "Caffa is a big enough city that has a sea port, but Yeni-Kale and Kerch open to Mr. Senyavin the gate to go by water to that port".²⁵ The strategic position of Kerch was unique: it "stood sentinel" against any sea-faring intruder who would try to enter the Azov Sea. This is why, first the Genoese and later the Turks chose this location to erect a formidable fortress, Yeni-Kale, which locked the passage from the Black to the Azov Seas. Under the Kuchuk-Kainarji Treaty of 1774, Kerch and Yeni-Kale became part of Russia. It was decided to enhance the trade role of the city; by his decree of October 10, 1821, Alexander I ordained to open a port in Kerch "to improve our trade in the Black and Azov Seas."²⁶ The Regulation on the Opening of the Kerch Port stated that the new port in the Crimea should contribute to the development of trade and industry "to the possible excellence." For this purpose, the authorities needed to set up a quarantine station and a customs office. The local administration of the new facilities was vested in the care of the Kerch & Yeni-Kale governor who reported to the military governor of Kherson responsible for all the trade in the Kerch region.

According to the Regulation, the port of Kerch was to receive vessels with "goods of various kinds authorized for import" after quarantine clearance, customs inspection and payment of duty as per tariff rates. Then the goods were to be taken to Taganrog to the principal warehouse by coastal ships. The government allocated 150,000 rubles for construction of such vessels or 2,000 rubles annually to anyone who wanted to build a coastal merchant vessel.²⁷ Coastal ships plying between Russian ports were granted passports and were exempted from duties. Ships bound for foreign ports had to pay duties for each last of cargo (1 last equals 1.965 tonnes)²⁸.

Section 26 of the Regulation said that the location is the primary benefit of the Kerch port wherefrom large vessels could ship cargos coming from any port on the Azov coast. The decree of 13 October 1822 granted 13,541 rubles and 50 kopeks to the

²⁵ *The Crimea in the Development of Russia ...* P. 229.

²⁶ *Ibid.* P. 276.

²⁷ *Ibid.* P. 277–278.

²⁸ *Ibid.* P. 296.

Simferopol County Treasury for rebuilding the Kerch Customs Station²⁹ led by engineer Johann Jakob von Daehn. The opening of the customs station on 19 August 1823 marked the beginning of trade operations in Kerch.

The construction of the port faced some challenges. The project started with a debate over the practicability of building a port in this location. According to specialists, the Strait of Kerch was not deep enough (16 feet at most) to receive and load at least 200 merchant ships as was the expectation based on the port of Taganrog. Nevertheless, a different opinion prevailed that the port required no additional deepening and could easily receive ships passing near it.³⁰

Apart from establishing trade with the ports in the Azov Sea, the new port was intended to expand trade with Circassian peoples. In order to ensure peace in the region by engaging locals in trade and “taming their savage habits by gradually accustoming them to the benefits of civil community and education,”³¹ the government established the Administration of Kerch and Bugaz Trade with Circassians and Abaza.³² The Administration was supervised by three ministers: the Ministers of Domestic Affairs, Finance, and Foreign Affairs. The head of the Administration was Raphael De Scassi appointed by the decree of August 8, 1816 reporting to the Collegium of Foreign Affairs. Over the years that the Administration existed, its executive office sent 103 reports signed by De Scassi and his deputy Dmitry Kodinets to the Russian Foreign Ministry and received 28 instructions from the chief executive of the Ministry.³³

Born in Genoa, De Scassi successfully continued to develop trade in the Crimea that his compatriots started back in the Middle Ages. Having arrived in Odessa in the early 19th century, De Scassi began doing business under the protection of Duke of Richelieu, Mayor of Odessa, and Alexandre Langeron, Military Governor of Kherson. In 1811, De Scassi proposed to establish trade relations with the inhabitants of the Circassian coast. He took a voyage to these areas, persuading the local population to engage in the logging business to provide timber for Sevastopol shipyards. From 1816 to 1819, the enterprising Genoese exchanged a lively correspondence with Langeron, Richelieu, Russian Foreign Minister Karl von Nesselrode and the Emperor himself regarding the opening of the new port. In his letters, De Scassi called the Strait of Kerch an outpost or the gateway to the Azov Sea and often compared it with the port of Constantinople. In some papers he even referred to it as the Bosphorus. Arguing for the benefits that a steady relationship with the Circassians could proffer to the Russian Empire, De Scassi submitted to the Emperor a Memorandum³⁴ asking to entrust him

²⁹ *Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRI)*. AC. St. Petersburg Main Archive V-B3. FR. 181/7. F. 227. f. 11.

³⁰ *Ibid.* AC. Main Archive II-3. FR. 34. F.3 (1816). f. 167(v).

³¹ *Ibid.* f. 153.

³² Abaza is a branch of the Abkhaz-Abaza people in the Caucasus.

³³ *Ibid.* F.5 (1830-37). f. 86–89.

³⁴ *Ibid.* f. 38.

with the administration of the salt trade between the Crimea and the Caucasus coast “at full discretion for 15 years”. After reviewing De Scassi’s proposal, the Finance Minister Dmitry Guryev informed Nesselrode that the salt lakes near the Black and Azov Seas produce, respectively, up to 200,000 and 400,000 poods (3,276 and 6,552 tonnes) of salt that was needed to supply Russia’s inland governorates. De Scassi was granted permission to conduct salt trade on equal terms with other merchants.³⁵ In 1816, De Scassi acquired 100,000 poods (1638 tonnes) of salt at 5 kopeks per pood, which was extremely good value for the trade with highlanders that was always carried on at a considerable advantage for Russian merchants.

De Scassi’s idea to start trade navigation to the Circassian coast appear promising to the local authorities. The Military Governor of Kherson Count Langeron supported it and proposed to give De Scassi full control over the Circassian trade. Having reviewed the proposal on August 19, 1819, the Committee of the Ministers passed the resolution to establish a customs office in Kerch and a barter market yard in Bugaz on the Taman Peninsular, and also to put the Kerch and Bugaz Trade Administration in charge of the trade affairs and appoint De Scassi inspector of the two customs offices and two quarantine stations. On top of that, the government laid out 200,000 rubles to the Genoese for building merchant ships.³⁶ Later on, De Scassi also received government money: a report to the Emperor dated January 17, 1822 said that two ships of De Scassi were wrecked near the Caucasus coast and, besides, he had spent 10,000 rubles of his own to pay ransom for 13 Russian prisoners and declared himself broke. By the decree of Alexander I, De Scassi was given 70,000 rubles to cover his expenses and 25,000 rubles as an interest-free loan for 10 years.³⁷

The Administration was modestly staffed. De Scassi was the boss with a salary of 1,500 rubles, court councillor Dmitry Kodinets was appointed his deputy, and officers, one to each place, were posted to Anapa, Gelendzhik, Sujuk-Kale (now Novorossiysk), Pshad (now Pshada) and Bugaz. Considering the mentality of the peoples of the East, The Foreign Ministry allocated 3,000 rubles from the budget of the Asia Department for the Asian envoys to entertain the Circassian princes. The total annual budget of the Administration approved by the Emperor on January 17, 1822 came to 17,100 rubles. Of these 9,650 rubles were earmarked for the Bugaz barter market which staff included a superintendent, physician, sub-commissioner and customs officers. The Administration’s budget kept growing. In 1826, the overall funding increased to 28,530 rubles with 15,000 rubles of hospitality allowance to receive Asian envoys.³⁸ The salaries were sent in every four months from Simferopol and Feodosia County Treasuries. The Caucasus coast of the Black Sea belonged to Turkey and commercial dealings with the peoples of

³⁵ Ibid. f. 60 w/v [with verso]. D. A. Guryev to Karl von Nesselrode. July 11, 1816.

³⁶ Ibid. f. 153-158. Extract from the Minutes of the Committee of Ministers of August 19, 1819.

³⁷ Ibid. f. 195-197.

³⁸ Ibid. F. 5 (1830-1837). f. 2.

the Caucasus was considered to be foreign trade. His Imperial Majesty's Edict of February 16, 1822 addressed to the Governor General of Novorossiysk Count Alexandre Langeron ordered to commence "without delay" the trade with the Circassians and Abaza.³⁹ Until the quarantine station had been built in Kerch, the Finance Minister Dmitry Guryev proposed to clear cargos from Circassia through the Feodosia customs without levying duties.⁴⁰

Russian trade with the peoples on the Caucasus coast of the Black Sea

Prior to the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople the entire Caucasus coast of the Black Sea was under Turkey's control, but the inland areas remained independent. Formally, highland peoples were the subjects of the Sultan, but, in fact, they were rather within the sphere of the Turkish government's political influence. While chiefs of Natukhai auls (villages) near Anapa sometimes took an oath of allegiance to the Sultan,⁴¹ the Circassians of the highlands never assumed vassal obligations vis-à-vis the Ottoman Porte. Since they never recognized the Ottoman authority, the local rulers refused submission to Russia. Even after the 1828–1829 Russo-Turkish war was over, they did not feel obliged to honor the Treaty of Adrianople.

Russian representatives who worked as trade agents and translators in Circassian ports had their local informers and provided regular reports to their supervisors about the sentiment among the local peoples. The Turkish rule across the entire coast was enforced by Pasha who resided in the fortress of Anapa. The Commander of the Special Caucasian Corps Alexey Yermolov reported to Karl von Nesselrode that the fortress of Anapa was well fortified, complete with a moat and a rampart, 12 barracks in the middle, 16 field cannons, and a 5,000-strong garrison.⁴² The Russian government was keeping a watchful eye on the goings-on in the fortress, fearing Turkey's growing military presence. In autumn 1827, 600 people arrived in Anapa under the pretext of relieving the garrison, causing a good deal of anxiety amid Russian top military commanders.⁴³ Adding to the concerns was the news about the locals showing disobedience to Turkish authorities. One of the local informers reported that "all highland Circassians, Shapsugs, Natukhais, Bzhedugs, Imbazokhs... do not want to obey the Turkish government."⁴⁴ "Most highlanders have not yet pledged allegiance to the Sultan", said the report to General Ivan Paskevich.⁴⁵ Tidings coming from Anapa suggested that Shapsugs had presumably blocked the roads to the fortress and stopped locals from taking the

³⁹ *The Crimea in the Development of Russia...* P. 288.

⁴⁰ Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRI). AC. St. Petersburg Main Archive V-B3. FR. 181/7. F. 208. f. 4.

⁴¹ The name of an Adyg tribe.

⁴² Ibid. AC. Main Archive 11-3. FR. 34. F. 6. Part 1 (1824–1829). f. 245.

⁴³ Ibid. AC. St. Petersburg Main Archive V-B3. FR. 181/7. F. 232 (1827). f. 245 w/v.

⁴⁴ Ibid. f. 193. The document lists the Adyghe tribes.

⁴⁵ Ibid. f. 97(v).

oath of allegiance to the Turkish Sultan.⁴⁶ The translator of Anapa's Gassan-Pasha K. I. Pantikopeysky reported that the local communities were uniting against the Pasha to avoid conversion to the "law of Muhammad".⁴⁷ The religion of the Abaza people was a mix of Christianity and pantheism. A mufti came to Anapa in order to convert the mountain peoples to Islam. The Ottoman Porte had tried to appoint a bey based in the city of Sukhum, but the Abaza refused to obey him (Peyssonnel 1927: 27).

The conflicts between the Turkish authorities and the local princes were getting worse, so much so that the Russian military were ready to evacuate some of them to Russia. In July 1827, the Commander of the Black Sea Fleet Aleksey Greig noted in a secret report to Kerch that Vice Admiral Mikhail Bychensky was ready to dispatch a ship from Sevastopol to evacuate Prince Indar Oglu and his family from the Circassia as well as other princes seeking protection from the Pasha of Anapa. This operation was canceled because Indar Oglu was in Gelendzhik where the harbor coast was "populated with the people who are not loyal to us" and notorious for their buccaneering attacks on large rowing vessels and this posed a threat to the expedition of the Russian ship.⁴⁸ De Scassi managed to establish ties with Natukhai princes. In 1827, the head of the Administration asked for permission to give Indar Oglu 7,500 rubles which the latter was to pay for murdering two of his enemies.⁴⁹ This was a repayment for an earlier service: after De Scassi's ship was wrecked by the storm near the Caucasus coast, Indar Oglu's people helped the ship's master Chervyakov and ten crew members by providing them with all the necessities. "It was an incredible occurrence", wrote Kodinets, "that the Circassians exhibited so much benevolence towards the Russians."⁵⁰ The Pasha of Anapa was most displeased that Circassians were getting close with the Russians; he believed that the Russians were bringing in military supplies for building fortresses. Turkish mullahs kept admonishing that under the guise of friendship the Russians would be trying to sow the seeds of discord and division in order to conquer the local population by force.⁵¹

In 1826, De Scassi intervened on behalf of the highlanders who had been pillaged by the troops that reported to the Chief Executive of the Black Sea Cossack Army Major General Maksim Vlasov. De Scassi insisted that the aul's chieftains were friendly to Russia and the actions of the Russian military threatened to undermine the peaceful coexistence of the peoples. The reports of the incident reached the Emperor himself. Adjutant General Stepan Strekalov was commissioned to the Caucasus in order to investigate the circumstances. Eventually, a decision was made to dismiss Vlasov and compensate the Natukhais' losses at his expense. Vlasov was replaced by Major

⁴⁶ Ibid. f. 62.

⁴⁷ Ibid. f. 160.

⁴⁸ Ibid. f.168 w/v.

⁴⁹ Ibid. AC. Main Archive 11-3. FR. 34. F. 6. 4.1 (1824–1829). f. 156 w/v.

⁵⁰ Ibid. f. 39 w/v.

⁵¹ Ibid. f.13 w/v-14.

General Vasily Sysoev from the Don Cossack Army, and on August 26, 1826, in Bugaz, the Natukhai Prince Sagat Girey was given 10,000 rubles levied from Vlasov.⁵² But the story did not end yet: in 1831, Vlasov was vindicated by the court and demanded his money back. Nicholas I officially pardoned Major General Vlasov in February 1830.

The beginning of the Greek Revolution of 1821 curtailed the scope of Russia's Mediterranean trade. In 1825, the governor of Feodosia reported to the finance minister that not a single Turkish ship had arrived in Crimean ports and no trade had been conducted since the start of the navigation season.⁵³ Before that, however, the Russo-Turkish trade had been thriving, so there was hope it would recover after the "complete cessation of the Greek disturbances".⁵⁴ But it was only on April 28, 1827 that Nicholas I issued a decree to the Collegium of Foreign Affairs to resume trade with the Circassia. It ran as follows: "Presuming that by instituting this trade it would be possible to accustom the highland peoples to the benefits of good neighborhood and education and thus overcome their savageness and predatory spirit, we thereby give our permission to receive their wares in Kerch and Bugaz."⁵⁵ These imported goods were exempted from duty for a period of 10 years. The Governing Senate heard a verbal report by the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, confirming that the port of Kerch was ready to receive merchandise from the Circassia, while Bugaz was ready to take in goods coming by land. Quarantines were in place and operational to provide health clearance. The report emphasized that traded goods should be authorized for export: except for gold and silver coins, it was prohibited to ship out lead, gunpowder and bladed weapons.

In the Circassia, trade was based on barter and the importation of money or precious metals was banned. Barter market yards were set up for commercial transactions in Kerch and Bugaz. To purchase goods and maintain relations with the local people, Russian commissioners from the Kerch and Bugaz Trade Administration were permanently posted to six localities on the Caucasus coast situated in convenient harbors suitable for Russian ships. The commissioner in Pshad was Collegiate Registrar Taush, in Gelendzhik it was Titular Councillor Lulier. There is information about those who worked in Circassia, such as Titular Councillor Anton Ashik, Sotnik (Captain) Vecherovsky, and interpreter K. I. Pantikopeysky. Historical records also mention civil servant Molfino and chief clerk Leonardo Lagorio. The commissioners were responsible for observing the situation in their area of their posting, verify the number of cargo items stated in the shipping documents, promote trade with local communities, and submit reports to the Administration on what was happening in their respective districts.

⁵² Ibid. f. 206 w/v.; 237.

⁵³ Ibid. AC. St. Petersburg Main Archive 11-3. FR. 34. F. 4 (1825).

⁵⁴ *The Crimea in the Development of Russia*... P. 312.

⁵⁵ Ibid. P. 320.

Imports to Circassia included wool, silk, iron and articles thereof, spices, salt, fabrics (calico, canvas, muslin, silk), threads and belts. There was a particular demand for tanned leather goods (saffian, high boots) and various iron products, such as needles, stirrups and horseshoes. The cargos exported from the Caucasus coast contained lynx, squirrel and wolverine rawhides, honey, beeswax and beech timber (Peyssonnel 1927: 25). Buyers in the Crimea with its large Tatar population had a penchant for Caucasian horses that were shipped in big numbers from Circassia.

The Circassian imports were dominated by the salt produced from the Crimean salt marshes. In March 1824, the State Council authorized unrestricted salt export trade on condition that every shipment of salt produced in the Crimea should have a certificate of origin. The exported salt was subject to a duty of 15 kopeks per pood (16.38 kg) to be paid to the customs office of the Crimean Peninsula.⁵⁶ Only the salt cargos shipped to Odessa were exempt. There were special barter ratios established for swap trading: for example, a pood of salt could be exchanged for 50 poods of beeswax. The import of foreign-made salt to the Black Sea coast of Russia was prohibited by law.⁵⁷

Every year, reports on the trade with the Circassians and Abaza were submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For instance, 3 vessels sailed from Kerch to the Caucasus coast in 1822, 10 in 1823, and 7 in 1825. Ships loaded with salt and iron headed to Gelendzhik, Pshad, Sudzhuk-Kale and Tdu. The cargos belonged to the merchants of Bakhchysarai, Kherson, Izmail and Kerch. In exchange, they brought back rye, corn, beeswax, honey, oak boards, barley and nuts.⁵⁸

The Russian government banned the importation of weapons to the Caucasus, including bladed weapons, gunpowder and cannonballs. Weapon shipments to the region had begun long before the Northern Black Sea region became part of Russia. In 1826, the chief of police in Kerch complained that the local merchants bring prohibited goods to Circassia.⁵⁹ The Russian Envoy to Constantinople Alexander Ribopier received reports of vessels arriving in Anapa from Turkey with gunpowder and cannons, and one of them carrying 300 armed Turks.⁶⁰ The report stressed that such shipments are particularly dangerous considering Russia's ongoing war with Persia.

Note that by that time tensions were running high between Russia and the Ottoman Empire as the latter had consistently failed to honor its commitments under the Akkerman Convention of 1826. As early as the spring of 1827, a commander in the Black Sea Cossack Army secretly reported to the Kerch and Bugaz Trade Administration that there was information regarding the Turk's intentions to attack "our borders", which was also confirmed by Lieutenant General Georgy Emmanuel, Commander of

⁵⁶ *The Crimea in the Development of Russia...* P. 298.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* P. 300.

⁵⁸ *Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRI)*. AC. Main Archive 11-3. FR. 34. F. 6.4.1 (1824–1829). f. 9; f. 70; f. 151.

⁵⁹ *Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRI)*. AC. St. Petersburg Main Archive V-B3. FR. 181/7. F. 188. f. 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* F. 241. f. 5-9.

the North Caucasus Line and the Black Sea Cossack Army (Chernomorya).⁶¹ The tensions were affecting the trading business too. In the autumn of 1827, the inspector of the Kerch port quarantine queried whether it would not be too dangerous for Russian merchant ships to sail to the shores of Circassia: to Pshad, Gelendzhik and Sudzhuk-Kale?⁶² By that time, trade operations with Constantinople had been suspended for Russian-flagged ships, but coastal vessels waited in Kerch to set sail for Circassia. For example, the ship *St. Nicholas* (skipper, Anton Boldyrev) completing loading of Russian cargos on November 11th and was awaiting departure to Bukhor. The Kerch customs office requested permission for the *St. Nicholas* to leave, the implication being that Bukhor was on the Turkish territory near Anapa.⁶³

Right before the Russo-Turkish war broke out, the Russian authorities had taken steps to keep peace with the Circassian people. On February 27, 1828, Lieutenant General Georgy Emmanuel instructed the commissioners who liaised with the locals to communicate to the inhabitants of the Black Sea coast that if they maintained peace and quiet amid the break-up in relations between Turkey and Russia, this would guarantee them assistance from the Russian troops.

Slave trade and prisoners of the Caucasus

For Russia, the challenge of engagement with the highland peoples of the Northern Caucasus had several dimensions: the political relations with the Circassians, establishment and maintenance of trade ties, weapons smuggled to the highlanders by the Turks and the British, and also a widespread slave trade between the Circassia and Turkish cities that proved to be the most profitable business. This was unacceptable for the Russian authorities as the historical documents clearly corroborate. In 1805, the Russian governments issued a decree granting freedom to all slave trade victims who happened to be on the Russian soil. The Russian authorities in the Crimea and across the Novorossiia Governorate acted in accordance with this decree, considering slave business to be an “ignominious and inhuman kind of trade.”⁶⁴ When in the autumn of 1817 the Turkish ship *Shaika* carrying slaves had to seek refuge from bad weather in the port of Feodosia, the City Governor Stepan Sankovsky ordered to free 60 slaves brought from the coast of Abkhazia. The ship owner, Ali Mustafa, “bereft of the expected profits” from continuing his passage to Constantinople, “was seeking ways of replacing in some manner the lost gains” and sending complaints to the Ottoman Porte, so as a result Alexander I have orders to repay the Turkish merchants 120,000 piastres by way of indemnity.⁶⁵ On November 27, 1826, the Governor of Feo-

⁶¹ Ibid. F. 232. f. 14.

⁶² Ibid. F. 229. f. 5.

⁶³ Ibid. f. 2 w/v.

⁶⁴ *The Crimea in the Development of Russia...* P. 275

⁶⁵ Ibid. P. 316.

dosia reported that a storm forced the Turkish ship *Ibrik*, sailing from Anapa to Constantinople, to call at the port of Sevastopol. On board the ship, there were over 100 captured Circassian women who were particularly valued for their beauty at Turkish slave markets (Peyssonnel 1929: 27). Stepan Sankovsky was sent to Sevastopol to investigate. However, the slaves destined for sale in Constantinople refused the offered freedom and preferred to carry on with their journey. The investigation revealed that the only ones who wanted their freedom back were two Austrian prisoners, “a Russian adult girl Marya and two underage Tatar girls.”⁶⁶ Many believed that Turkey offered opportunities for slaves from the Caucasus to settle well enough, especially considering that not all the slaves were captured by force – many families sold their adult girls and children to the Turks at a good price. This incident was specially reported to the Russian Emperor by Karl von Nesselrode who cited a precedent during the reign of Alexander I when the Russian government had to pay money for freed slaves to their owners. Another dimension of the problem was the fate of the so-called “prisoners of the Caucasus” as they were commonly referred to in the press and fiction of that period. Reports of ships captured by Caucasian highlanders came in at a regular pace. Crews of merchant and cruiser vessels captured by the Circassians were enslaved and often taken up into the mountains. In 1827, two Russian ships were stranded due to adverse weather on the Black Sea coast south of the Anapa fortress. One was a merchant vessel coming from Turkey with ballast and the other carried a cargo of gunpowder and lead. The crew included 2 officers, 5 passengers and 50 foot soldiers. The naval transport vessel *Revnitel* that was sailing from Sevastopol to Kerch and was blown by storm towards Anapa, had 40 crew members and 3 officers led by Lieutenant Talaev.⁶⁷ In 1822, the Circassians captured the ship *Rafael*, and in 1824 the *Ilya Prorok*.⁶⁸ Unlike in these incidents, when Russian vessels crashed on Turkey’s Asian coast shipwreck survivors were in no danger of becoming prisoners and slaves. For example, the ship *Vsekh Svyatykh* carrying 7,000 poods (115 tonnes) of salt sailed off from Yevpatoria heading to Berdyansk, but was blown off course by the storm towards the Asian coast of the Black Sea and wrecked at night on November 24–25, 1844 near Karadeniz Ereğli.⁶⁹ The ship was ruined but the seven survivors of its crew were sent back to Russia.⁷⁰ Unlike on the Caucasus coast of the Black Sea, the Turks did not imprison Russian sailors found on the land of the Ottoman Empire.

The fate of those captured was hardly enviable; they commonly disappeared in remote villages. The locals hoped to get rich ransoms for their catch. The Russian government, to its credit, did provide money to pay ransoms and took steps to make sure such prisoners were eventually released. Alexandre Langeron wrote to De Scassi on

⁶⁶ *Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRI)*. AC. St. Petersburg Main Archive V-B3. FR. 181/7. F. 162.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* F. 221. f. 2-3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* F. 22 (1822); F. 98 (1824).

⁶⁹ *The Crimea in the Development of Russia...* P. 329.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* P. 330.

September 14, 1822: “I hereby ask you to take stern measures to find the prisoners” and provided 30,000 rubles of ransom funds. De Scassi is known to have ransomed Russian prisoners at his own expense of 10,000 rubles that were subsequently repaid to him by the authorities. Prince Mikhail Vorontsov who took up the office of the Governor-General of Novorossiia in May 1823 also demanded that prisoners should be “delivered from captivity.” Special funds were provided to bribe informers and make payments to the Circassians. In 1824, a crew of a Russian ship was ransomed from the Circassians: the list of those ransomed made by the Trade Administration’s officers included six names of sailors and merchants, of whom one had been kept prisoner for 10 years. Similar reports of ransomed people were filed in 1829 and 1831.⁷¹ On average, the authorities allocated about 400–600 rubles to ransom one person.

Russian subjects were not the only prisoners of the Caucasus. In July 1826, Vorontsov wrote to De Scassi that he received a request from a Neapolitan citizen, Angelo Lute, asking for government money to ransom his son-in-law, Viccentio Reggi.⁷² The Abaza demanded 530 rubles for Raggi’s freedom because he claimed to be a person of noble lineage. The Neapolitan Consul Seribasa provided 375 rubles collected by special subscription. Viccentio Reggi was not the only Italian prisoner in Circassia. Ransomed in 1827 were such Italians as Constantin Kaceiashko and Antonio Valjalo, and in 1831 the Russian government was busy securing the release of an Austrian subject, Georgi Simunovic.⁷³

When Russia entered the war with the Ottoman Empire in 1828, the Russian government declared that it had no claim on Turkey’s territories in the Balkans, but said nothing about abandoning the plans to complete the integration of the Caucasus. On July 12, 1828, the Russian naval forces commanded by Vice Admiral Samuel Greig captured Anapa and the same summer – Akhaltsikh, Poti and Kars. The entire Black Sea coast from the estuary of the Kuban River (20 miles north of Anapa) to the port of St. Nicholas (south of Poti, i.e. all the way down to Kobuleti) was incorporated into the Russian Empire “for all time.”

The Turks could not accept the loss of the Caucasus coast and were spreading nonsensical rumors among the locals that Anapa, Poti and Sukhum – that had been ceded to Russia under the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople – had been returned to the Ottoman Empire. They were trying to convince the “highlanders and Circassians” that these regions had been only temporarily handed over to Russia. Russian commissioners reported that the highland peoples were ill-disposed towards Russia and agreed to recognize its authorities only if they did not demand more of them than the Turks. Turkish ships keep arriving in Gelendzhik, stores and coffee houses are open to the

⁷¹ *Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRI)*. AC. St. Petersburg Main Archive V-B3. FR.181/7. F. 96 (1824), F. 102 (1824), F. 357 (1831), F. 374 (1832).

⁷² *Ibid.* F.161 (1826).

⁷³ *Ibid.* F. 224 (1827), F. 364 (1831).

Turks, mosques are under construction – this is what the Court Councillor Kodinets reported from Kerch to the Asia Department in St. Petersburg. The commander of the Black Sea Navy reported to the Chief of the Naval Headquarters Alexander Menshikov about frequent shipments of weapons to the coast of Abkhazia. These supplies protracted the resistance of the highland peoples to the new authorities, forcing the government to keep large garrisons in coastal fortresses, provoking attacks against forts and leading to Russian losses. In response to these reports, Menshikov ordered to send naval ships on cruising missions along the coast in question. The commanders of the cruisers were given instructions to allow “foreign commercial ships to approach only two ports on our eastern coast of the Black Sea, Anapa and Redut-Kale [now Kulevi], which have quarantines and customs offices, while approaching any other points on this coast shall be prohibited.”

After the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus formally became part of Russia in 1829, Turkish and British vessels began supplying a lot of weapons to the highlanders. The British stepped up their intelligence activity both at sea and in the Caucasus. The notorious David Urquhart, the secretary of the British embassy in Constantinople, took tremendous efforts to maintain anti-Russian resistance in the Caucasus. His damaging interference was one of the reasons why Russian trade with the highland peoples struggled and carried on at a loss after the war. Dealings at barter markets were at a standstill or sluggish at best. Highlanders who had previously resisted the Turkish rule balked at bowing to the Russians. In the conversation between the Russian Ambassador to France Count Carlo Pozzo di Borgo and the British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston regarding the British schooner *Vixen* seized by the Russian sailors with a cargo of weaponry intended for the highlanders, Lord Palmerston questioned Russia's claim on the Black Sea coast arguing that Turkey could not have ceded to Russia what it had not owned. From then on, this argument had been eagerly embraced and liberally employed for many years by European propagandists and historians.

Expansion of international trade in Kerch

In 1827, the Russian Foreign Ministry sent a circular note all the Russian representatives abroad informing them that, starting from August 1, 1827, the port of Kerch would be ready to receive authorized foreign cargos subject to sanitary compliance and the import duty. This note was received by Russian officials in Paris, Turin, Madrid, Florence, Brussels, Amsterdam, London, Genoa, Naples, Livorno, Hamburg, Lisbon, Bordeaux, Marseille, Frankfurt, Philadelphia, Trieste, Venice, and Corfu and Malta.⁷⁴ In spite of this impressive mailing list, the message was intended, first and foremost, for the attention of the merchants in the Mediterranean region where Russia had the closest commercial ties with Turkey and the Levant.

⁷⁴ *The Crimea in the Development of Russia*. P. 324.

The key facilities of the new port were the customs office and the quarantine station for clearing goods “susceptible to infection”.⁷⁵ Quarantines were essential tools for preventing diseases and epidemics. Back in 1803, the Russian Envoy to Constantinople Andrey Italinsky wrote in a letter about a “deadly pest”, which “refuses to go away” from the Turkish capital. He was talking about the plague that kept “smoldering”, its severity rising and subsiding, in the city outskirts. Italinsky tasked the Head of the Merchant Chancellery State Councillor Ivan Froding with issuing special passports to vessels and passengers bound for Black Sea ports. These passports contained information about the sanitary status of Constantinople where the plague was “spreading”, “intensifying” or “abating”.⁷⁶ From time to time, this “infective disease” would also break out on the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus. For this reason, in 1826, the Russian government prohibited Kerch and Bugaz to take in goods coming from Circassia.⁷⁷ After the Caucasus coast became part of Russia in 1829, a resolution was passed to establish a quarantine station in Anapa.⁷⁸

But even before the port of Kerch was officially opened to foreign merchants, foreign ships bound for the ports on the Azov Sea had been required to remain in quarantine for six days before sailing off to Taganrog. For example, on 6 April 1823, the vessels that arrived at the Kerch quarantine port included the Austrian ships *Binino*, *Odobrin* and *Gergiono* and the English ship *St. Nicholas* with a cargo of lemons, black olives, dates, wine and oranges.⁷⁹

The Crimean trade was gaining momentum. Kerch was becoming the critical port for transshipping goods from the Azov Sea and for trading with the Caucasus' Black Sea coast. It is notable that in 1829, Aleksey Greig submitted to Karl von Nesselrode his proposal to start a subscription for building an Orthodox church in Khersones near Sevastopol. The idea was to dedicate it to St. Vladimir and also to erect, on the same site, a monument to the adoption of Christianity.⁸⁰ The monuments were supposed to symbolize the rule of Russia in Novorossiia and the Crimea.

After the Treaty of Adrianople was signed in 1829 and the Caucasus coast of the Black Sea became part of Russia, there was no longer any need for the Administration of Trade with the Circassians and Abaza. On October 29, 1829, Nesselrode informed the Director of the Asia Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry Konstantin Rodofinikin that the Administration was dissolved and the authority over the area was handed over to a Committee that included Privy Councillor Engel, Major General Vasily Perovsky and the Asia Department Director Rodofinikin. De Scassi was discharged with a severance payment of his annual salary. His deputy Kodinets was appointed

⁷⁵ Ibid. P. 320.

⁷⁶ Ibid. P. 261.

⁷⁷ *Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRI)*. AC. St. Petersburg Main Archive V-B3. FR. 181/7. F. 177 (1826), F. 197 (1826).

⁷⁸ Ibid. F. 336 (1829).

⁷⁹ *The Crimea in the Development of Russia*.... P. 295.

⁸⁰ Ibid. P. 328.

interim head to take over the Administration's cash funds, accounts, filed records and other paperwork. The government decided to waive the repayment of funds provided to De Scassi on credit terms as he had been "the first to open for us the path towards hostile highlanders" and had suffered the devastation of his ships and commercial enterprises.⁸¹ From all indications, the government appeared rather displeased with De Scassi, a gambler and a free mason, who often abused the trust of the authorities for his own benefit. The audit conducted after he left office revealed misappropriations and missing funds. The State Treasury asked the Asia Department whether the uncovered deficit should be written off just as the money previously lent to the trade administrator "on credit terms."⁸² On the other hand, he founded a Museum of Antiquities in Kerch and assisted significantly with building its collection.

On March 23, 1830, the Committee was in conference discussing the prospects for the newly acquired lands. Members of the Committee agreed that the government should carefully watch the highlanders, punish them with an armed hand for robberies and violence, and by "maintaining strict justice" make them see all the blessings of peace, order and enlightenment. The local population should have no contacts with the Turks and "outlanders" in general and they also should "completely and permanently" stop trading slaves "to the true glory of Russia". The navy was to continue its cruising patrols along the Black Sea coast to forbid foreign vessels from landing on the Black Sea coast. The Committee proposed to send young Circassians for schooling to Russian cities and develop the new regions by duty-free trade and attracting the locals to trade fairs in Stavropol and Nizhny Novgorod.⁸³ All these well-meaning placatory proposals were crushed by a single letter from Field Marshal Ivan Paskevich, Commander of the Special Caucasus Corps, to the chief executive of the Foreign Ministry: regarding the Circassians act by military means only by occupying their land and building fortifications, since this nation understands nothing but force!⁸⁴ The opinion of the commander echoed what had been written by the Commander in Georgia and on the North Caucasus Line Alexander Tormasov back in 1811: to persuade the Circassians into becoming Russian subjects one had to resort to force of arms.⁸⁵ The history of the Black Sea coast, the way that region evolved and became part of Russia, bore out the sound judgement of the glorious commanders who drew on their first-hand experience of dealing with the highland peoples of the Caucasus. Especially important and impactful were their proposals to build new fortifications on the coast and a road from the Kuban River to the Rioni River.

⁸¹ *Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRI)*. AC. Main Archive 113. FR. 34. F. 9 (1829-33). f. 23,27(v)

⁸² *Ibid.* F. 5 (1830-37). f. 19.

⁸³ *Ibid.* f. 69-75.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* f. 77.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* f. 2(v).

Conclusion

The Black Sea coast of the Caucasus was of major strategic significance for increasing Russia's military and economic influence in the Black Sea region. While the terms of the Treaty of Adrianople regarding delimitation of the Caucasus did not meet with any resistance on the part of Turkey, their enforcement provoked unexpected protests among the local populations on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, further stoked up by the Turkish government and British agents. The Russian military had to overcome the resistance of the local chieftains.

The integration of the "Circassian" peoples into Russia had enormous implications for the development of statehood in the newly incorporated territories, but it was a challenging process that attracted the attention and direct intervention of European powers and the Ottoman Empire. The geostrategic or, according to Professor Vladimir Degoiev, "aquastrategic" value of the Black Sea region did not change and even increased after withdrawal of the Turks because the obvious keen interest of the United Kingdom in having a presence in the Caucasus called for an immediate response by the Russian Empire.

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