

2003

# Russian Trade Prospects in Smyrna: An 1812 Consular Report

Theophilus C. Prousis

*University of North Florida*, [tprousis@unf.edu](mailto:tprousis@unf.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ahis\\_facpub](http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ahis_facpub)



Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Prousis, Theophilus C., "Russian Trade Prospects in Smyrna: An 1812 Consular Report" (2003). *History Faculty Publications*. 8.  
[http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ahis\\_facpub/8](http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ahis_facpub/8)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of History at UNF Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of UNF Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [j.t.bowen@unf.edu](mailto:j.t.bowen@unf.edu).

© 2003 All Rights Reserved

## Russian Trade Prospects in Smyrna: An 1812 Consular Report

*Theophilus C. Prousis*  
University of North Florida

Documents on Russian commerce in the Black Sea and the Levant offer eyewitness description, firsthand observation and authentic information. These qualities, to varying degrees, are evinced in this translated memorandum penned by tsarist vice-consul Carlo A. Marracciny in Smyrna in December 1812 and addressed to Foreign Minister Rumiantsev. The Marracciny report merits attention by scholars of Russia's Eastern policy as a reminder that primary sources on Russian trade, and on wider tsarist aims, in the Near East warrant collection and presentation in an accessible format for students and scholars alike. This particular document might very well become a small piece in a published compendium of Russian records and resources on specific aspects of tsarist interaction with the Ottoman Empire, including the commercial dimension of the Eastern Question.<sup>1</sup>

Russian contacts and connections with the Ottoman Empire are best explored by tapping the rich and extensive assortment of materials in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AVPRI), the largest and most important repository for scholarly investigation of foreign affairs during the tsarist era.<sup>2</sup> Sixteen massive tomes of selected AVPRI documents, covering only the first three decades of the 19th century, have appeared since 1960, and many of these published records deal with facets of Russian policy in the Balkans and the Near East, including trade in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup> The consular communiqué presented here provides but one example of the various types of AVPRI documents, published and unpublished, that deserve more scrutiny by scholars of Russian-Ottoman relations.

Commerce and consulates converged in Russian Eastern policy with the opening of the Black Sea to mercantile navigation and the establishment of consular offices in the Ottoman Empire, both dating from the landmark Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji (1774).<sup>4</sup> A veteran of nearly twenty years in Russia's diplomatic corps when he drafted this trade report in December 1812, vice-consul Marracciny belonged to a cadre of skilled negotiators and officials whose tasks included the promotion of Russian commerce in the Near East. By the early 19th

century, Russia had consular representation in strategic points of the Ottoman Empire, such as Jassy, Bucharest, Athens, Patras, Saloniki, Smyrna, Aleppo, Jaffa, Alexandria, Cyprus and Chios. Virtually all of Russia's consular staff — consuls, vice-consuls, interpreters, clerks, agents — were of Greek, Italian and French descent. Their language expertise and administrative skill, also their familiarity with Ottoman society and institutions, made these appointees potentially useful as intermediaries with Ottoman officials and as conduits of information for the tsarist embassy in Istanbul and the Foreign Ministry in St. Petersburg.<sup>5</sup> Consular duties consisted of preparing reports on trade, interceding for Russian merchants and travelers, expediting commercial transactions, providing notary services for Russian subjects and defending Russian state interests. As interim head of the consulate-general of Smyrna, the principal Ottoman emporium in the Levant, Marracciny exercised jurisdiction over consular affairs in an area encompassed by Smyrna's bustling port, the harbor of Skala Nova to the south, and the nearby islands of Chios, Samos and Mytilene.<sup>6</sup>

Consular records, correspondence and shipping *vedomosti* (registers), most of them housed in AVPRI, offer telling detail on several aspects of Russia's maritime traffic in Istanbul, Smyrna, Patras, Chios and other Ottoman ports.<sup>7</sup> For example, *vedomosti* on trade and navigation document that many of the captains and sailors on Russian ships were of Greek and Italian descent. Most of their employers, also of Greek and Italian origins, were merchants and ship owners who had settled in Black Sea trade centers, most notably in Odessa, Taganrog, Feodosiia, Evpatoriia, Kerch and Nikolaev, and who contributed to the economic growth of the Russian South.<sup>8</sup> Russia's merchant nexus extended from the northern shores of the Euxine to the Mediterranean and encompassed major *entrepôts* from Toulon, Marseilles and Malta to Smyrna and Beirut. Russia's chief exports through the Black Sea were wheat, rye, barley, oats, salt, tallow, butter, caviar and iron, while Russian imports from the Ottoman East consisted mainly of cottons, dried fruits, olive oil, coffee, tobacco, wines and silks.

Consuls like Marracciny who suggested ways to advance trade found a receptive patron in Nikolai P. Rumiantsev, Minister of Commerce in 1804-10 and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1807-14. Trade figured prominently in Rumiantsev's vision of imperial expansion, evinced in his support of the Krusenstern-Rezanov expedition to Japan and the Russian-American Company's exploration of North America. His ultimate aim was to transform Russia into a commercial bridge between Europe and Asia by extending tsarist trade networks

in the Near East, Central Asia and India.<sup>9</sup> Winning a deserved reputation as a champion of free commerce, Rumiantsev collaborated with Armand Emmanuel du Plessis (Duc de Richelieu), governor general of New Russia, to cultivate the economic progress of the Russian South and to enhance the mercantile stature of Odessa, the region's burgeoning maritime hub.<sup>10</sup> Trade in the Black Sea and the Levant formed part of Rumiantsev's strategy of broader tsarist involvement in the Near East, in pursuit of such interests as protecting Ottoman Orthodox Christians, annexing the Danubian Principalities and exerting Russian influence in Istanbul and the Straits.

Marracciny's report to Rumiantsev clearly suggests the "precarious balance" between conflict, commerce and diplomacy along the Russian-Ottoman frontier, as the two neighboring autocratic empires competed for lands, peoples and resources yet engaged in mutually beneficial trade.<sup>11</sup> The Russo-Turkish War of 1806-12, a conflict provoked by disputes over the administration of Moldavia and Wallachia and fought mainly in the northern Balkans and the western Caucasus, disrupted the peacetime course of Black Sea business.<sup>12</sup> Even though Russia and Turkey continued their mercantile traffic during the conflict and the value of Odessa's exports to the Levant actually increased, Marracciny mentions the war's debilitating consequences for Black Sea navigation.

The vice-consul's accurate observation echoed in the petitions Rumiantsev received from merchants, port authorities and municipal officials who complained of commercial setbacks and slowdowns in their Black Sea towns. Partly in response to requests for his intercession, Rumiantsev endeavored to maintain unimpeded passage for Russian and Ottoman merchant vessels in the Black Sea. He also proposed to place Russian consuls in Sinope and Trebizond, ports well situated along the northern coast of Anatolia and connected commercially to the inland towns of Amasia, Tokat and Erzerum, a strategic fortress near the source of the Euphrates and a key point on caravan routes between Anatolia, Persia and India.<sup>13</sup> When war officially ended with the Treaty of Bucharest in May 1812, Rumiantsev anticipated that renewed Black Sea exchange would enable Russia to expand its commercial and political influence in the Levant, and it was precisely to realize these objectives that consuls like Marracciny gathered data and penned memoranda for the Foreign Ministry.

The thrust of the vice-consul's message is to point out the opportunities for Russian exports, above all grain, in a seller's market. A shortage of grain in the Smyrna environs, caused by a combination of poor harvest, plague, locusts and

drought, raised the price of this life-sustaining commodity. Not only was Odessa well situated to ship Russian grain to Smyrna and other nearby ports, but Russian-flagged vessels had the advantage of relying on Greek partners in the Levant. Boats from Hydra, Psara and other islands paid ready cash in gold and silver coin for grain cargoes transferred from Russian carriers. Greek skippers and sailors, owing to their navigational skills and commercial expertise, not only served as key intermediaries in Russia's grain traffic but comprised a sizable portion of the Russian and Ottoman merchant marines in the Black Sea, the Levant and the Mediterranean in general.<sup>14</sup> According to Marracciny, significant profits could be made from additional Russian exports, such as iron, glassware, butter, caviar, linen and hides. Thus, a favorable balance of trade awaited merchants and shippers who took advantage of these opportunities.

Besides commercial information, the vice-consul's dispatch conveys a few details about local conditions in Smyrna. Frequent fires, together with periodic outbreaks of plague and other calamities, made life precarious in this Levantine port. Marracciny was hardly immune to the prevalent anti-Turk and anti-Muslim bias one detects in most European travel and diplomatic writing on the Near East, as evinced in the consul's reference to "the apathy of the Turks" when describing the failure of farmers and officials to take sufficient precautions to ward off the damaging effects of a locust attack. In the same vein, Marracciny repeats a common theme in western images and perceptions of the Ottoman realm — corruption — when he asserts that, for a price, "any governor deems it possible to evade the orders of his sovereign."<sup>15</sup>

In a subsequent communiqué of January 1814 to the director of the Foreign Ministry's consular department, Marracciny reported that his expectations for Russia's Black Sea enterprise were indeed realized.<sup>16</sup> Data he assembled on Russian navigation from April 1813 to January 1814 indicated a favorable balance of trade in the port of Smyrna. Exports consisted of grain, iron and various other goods, and Russian grain supplies provisioned the islands of the Aegean archipelago and the coasts of the Morea. Black Sea commerce continued to profit from the resumption of unobstructed shipping, but the Eastern crisis of the 1820s, brought on by the Greek War of Independence and the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-29, once again disrupted merchant traffic and threatened the economic well-being of Odessa and other Euxine ports.<sup>17</sup>

In preparing this document, I have relied on the published Russian translation of the French original and endeavored to render it into clear idiomatic

English without altering its spirit or meaning. Though I have made slight changes in syntax and punctuation in order to make the translation more fluid, I have generally remained faithful to the particulars of Marracciny's style and viewpoint. My own emendations appear in brackets, and I have inserted explanatory notes, including relevant observations from two western travelers in Smyrna in 1812-13 who corroborate the vice-consul's information.

“A Dispatch from Vice-Consul C.A. Marracciny in Smyrna to  
Russian Foreign Minister Nikolai P. Rumiantsev,  
31 December 1812/12 January 1813”<sup>18</sup>

Your Excellency,

The protection, which your excellency is favorably disposed to render to commerce everywhere, allows me to take the liberty to describe for you the benefits and bright prospects that are opening up for the shipping and trade of our Black Sea ports with these regions [Smyrna environs] in connection with the successful conclusion of peace between Russia and the Ottoman Porte.<sup>19</sup> [I also take the liberty] to point out the profits that the customs offices of [our] empire will make thanks to the considerable influx of monies.

Having served his imperial majesty in consulates of the Levant for seventeen years prior to the war which just ended, I have acquired some experience in matters concerning [Turkey's] commerce with Russia. Ever since you deigned to entrust me with supervising the interim administration of the consulate-general in [Smyrna], and immediately upon arrival here, I began to collect all the information which, in my opinion, could be useful for promoting the expansion of our trade and shipping in the Black Sea. I have the honor of submitting the results of this endeavor for your excellency's consideration. Please regard [this report] with indulgence, taking into account my zeal for the interests and the majesty of my sovereign.

Ever since the [Russo-Turkish War of 1806-12] interrupted communications with the Black Sea, particularly in the last few years, the surrounding areas have been deprived of goods supplied to them by Russia via the Black Sea and have had to pay an extremely high price for the small amount of merchandise that has been successfully imported.<sup>20</sup> The demand for [these products] has constantly grown in Turkey itself, and orders have continued to come in from the islands of the [Aegean] archipelago and from the Adriatic, Malta, and Spain.

Grain, one of the major articles of Black Sea commerce, has currently become an exceedingly important commodity.<sup>21</sup> Over the past two years, the grain harvest in [the Smyrna area] has been mediocre, if not to say poor, which to a large extent can be explained by a shortage of farmers. Many of these valuable workers used to come to this region from the archipelago and from the Ionian Islands; but lately, encountering only continued burdens from the Turkish government instead of support and deserved encouragement, the farmers have gone back to their lands and not yet returned. Plague, raging in Anatolia for two years now, has cut down those who remained.<sup>22</sup> Several years before this calamity, an invasion of locusts devastated this region, supposedly because of the apathy of the Turks, who [failed] to do anything to exterminate them. [Locusts] devoured the first harvest each year and accounted for why even the second harvest, conducted late and doomed to drought brought on by intense heat, yielded a very meager crop for the peasants.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, over the last two years, the cost of grain has become quite expensive, and to satisfy the daily bread requirement, all sorts of other grains have been mixed with wheat [and barley] .... [These conditions] have raised the price of fodder and hampered the [land] transport of grain. In the [Anatolian] hinterland grain is readily available, but transportation charges have increased the cost of this commodity so much that shipping [by land] has become pointless.

The Porte has banned, under threat of the death penalty, the export of wheat and barley. Yet despite these stern prohibitions, smuggling constantly takes place in a country where any governor deems it possible to evade the orders of his sovereign. Naturally, however, this can be done only with the help of money, and traders who are able to procure grain for Spain, Portugal and other countries badly in need of it must pay an exorbitant price for [this contraband].

Such is the current state of the grain market, which cannot but render a highly beneficial influence on Russian commerce in the Black Sea, [and] the rapid development of our trade will become possible with the [resumption of unrestricted] navigation.

Odessa is favorably located to provide a vast amount of grain, which can be loaded on ships flying the Russian flag and transported through the Dardanelles, and the Turkish government will not be able to interfere. Russian ships will not have to be exposed to the dangers and accidents entailed by a more protracted voyage in order to sell their cargo profitably. Right after exiting the Straits, they will immediately come across many Greek vessels from Hydra, Psara, and other islands of the archipelago, whose sole business consists of such exchange and who lie in

wait for ships carrying provisions.<sup>24</sup> These [Greek] boats usually have on board an available supply of money in the form of gold and silver coins.<sup>25</sup> A commercial deal can be struck right on the spot, and it remains only for the Russian captain to transfer his cargo to the Greek vessel. He at once will receive ready cash and [can then] quickly return to our ports. In favorable weather this operation can be repeated, and traders will reap a good return.

Besides grain, one of the most prominent articles of trade in the Black Sea is iron. Its use here has always been considerable but has become more widespread ever since recurrent fires have ravaged the city and convinced residents to erect more buildings with iron windows and doors.<sup>26</sup> When the port of Trieste carried on an active maritime trade with these parts, this exchange brought Smyrna a large quantity of iron nails and sundry iron wares. Iron was also imported from Holland. [But] this commerce has now ceased or, in any case, is altogether negligible. Russia has factories that manufacture nails [and thus] could replace German [imports] and make a handsome profit from selling in this market.<sup>27</sup>

Additional articles of trade are window glass and various other objects made from glass and crystal. Prices for these goods are quite exorbitant here, since Germans ship them by land from Bohemia to Odessa or deliver them to Trieste or Malta, whence they are transported here after paying the required fees for shipped land consignment; if the merchandise is shipped from Malta, expenses are no less because it is necessary to have a double license and to pay a very steep customs duty. Despite all [these] expenditures, German merchants profit from this trade. Russia can provide the same goods at significantly lower cost, [and] this exchange, it goes without saying, will yield a very substantial return for our traders.

Butter and caviar are necessities in this country.<sup>28</sup> Prices for them have fluctuated greatly. Whereas ten years ago butter sold for twenty-five paras an oke, now it sells for two hundred paras;<sup>29</sup> the cost of caviar has gone up by the same ratio.

Russian linen and hides also are popular and profitable commodities at market; besides their ample use here, they are exported in bulk to Malta and from there ferried to Italy on ships that have appropriate licenses.

As a result, the balance of Russia's exchange with Turkey via the Black Sea will turn out entirely in favor of Russia. Merchants and shippers will not be able to find more propitious circumstances and, bearing in mind the manifest advantages of such trade, will not require any incentive. These benefits will not escape the enlightened attention of your excellency, and once you promote them, you can be



certain that people will immediately be found who will want to profit from [these opportunities]. I would be fortunate, your excellency, if my initial memorandum [as interim head of the Smyrna consulate-general] merited your approval and helped fulfill my steadfast aims on behalf of my country's prosperity. In the future I will not fail to apprise your excellency of everything that will affect the growth of this trade, which by rights one can expect.

I take the opportunity to ask for your excellency's protection and favor.

### Notes

1. A resource aid, drawing on published and unpublished records, would sharpen our view of Imperial Russia's activities in the Levant and in the wider Near East. Worthy models to emulate are the primary source volumes on Ottoman Greece by neohellenist Richard Clogg, ed., *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents* (London: Macmillan, 1976), and on Ottoman Turkey by Middle East specialist Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey, 1800-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

2. For an introduction to AVPRI's resources, see I.V. Budnik, ed., *Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii: Putevoditel'* (Minneapolis: East View Publications, Inc., 1995). Because western scholars have only recently been granted full access to this Archive's treasure trove, identifying some of the actual collections provides a useful research tool for specialists in the field. For a sampling of AVPRI holdings on tsarist interests in the Near East, see Theophilus C. Prousis, "AVPR (Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossii) and the Orthodox East," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 12/13 (1996-97): 473-503, and *idem*, "A Guide to AVPRI Materials on Russian Consuls and Commerce in the Near East," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 16/17 (forthcoming). The works of Russian scholars cited below (Arsh, Dostian, Fadeev, Georgiev, Sheremet) are partly based on AVPRI materials.

3. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del SSSR, *Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX v.: Dokumenty Rossiiskogo ministerstva inostrannykh del*, 16 vols. (Moscow: Nauka, 1960-95), hereafter cited as *VPR*.

4. See Roderic Davison, "'Russian Skill and Turkish Imbecility': The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered," in Roderic Davison, ed., *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 29-50, and Elena I. Druzhinina, *Kiuchuk-Kainardzhiiskii mir 1774 goda: ego podgotovka i zakliuchenie* (Moscow: Nauka, 1955). On the wider import of the treaty for the Eastern Question, see Matthew S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1966) and Vladimir

A. Georgiev *et al.*, *Vostochnyi vopros vo vneshnei politike Rossii: konets XVIII-nachalo XX v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978).

5. Using AVPRI materials, Russian scholar Grigorii L. Arsh cites specific examples of tsarist consuls of Greek, Italian and French descent who served in the Ottoman Empire in the late 18th and early 19th centuries: *Eteristskoe dvizhenie v Rossii. Osvoboditel'naia bor'ba grecheskogo naroda v nachale XIX v. i russko-grecheskie sviazi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970). Arsh (pp. 27-76) relies on Russian consular reports for his good account of social, economic and political conditions in the Balkans and the Near East during this period. While I came across the service files of various consuls and their staff in AVPRI, f. 161, IV-2, op. 119, I did not find information on Marracciny, nor does Arsh cite him. Further investigation of consular records in AVPRI will most likely unearth details on Marracciny's background and career. According to the short biographical sketch in *VPR* 7 (1970): 811, Carlo Marracciny (Karl Marachini) was born in Tuscany in 1770, entered Russian service in 1792 as a clerk in the vice-consulate of Smyrna, and held several positions in the diplomatic corps before being appointed vice-consul.

6. On the growth of Smyrna as a predominant Ottoman port, see Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550-1650* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990) and Elena Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth Century (1700-1820)* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992), with an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

7. AVPRI, f. 161, II-3, op. 34, has files with *vedomosti* and related documents on commerce in the Black Sea and the Levant in the early 19th century. See, for example, 1802, d. 1, ll. 1-85; 1821, d. 2, ll. 1-35; 1821, d. 3, ll. 1-2. Also see Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey*, 83-85, on Russia's Black Sea trade nexus with the Ottoman Empire at this time.

8. On the role of Greek and Italian shippers, captains and sailors in Russian navigation of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, see Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*, 68-74, 108-14, 174-77; Arsh, *Eteristskoe dvizhenie*, 129-66; and Vitalii I. Sheremet, "Russko-turetskaia torgovlia i balkanskie zemli (konets XVIII-pervaia polovina XIX v.)," *Balkanskie issledovaniia* 9 (1984): 74-86. For the contributions of Greek, Italian and other foreign settlers to Odessa's municipal and commercial growth, see Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986); *idem*, "Greek Merchants in Odessa in the Nineteenth Century," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3/4 (1979-80): 399-420; *idem*, "The Greek Community in Odessa, 1861-1917," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 7 (1989): 235-52; Grigorii M. Piatigorskii, "Grecheskie pereselentsy v Odesse v kontse XVIII-pervoi treti XIX v.," in Vladlen N. Vinogradov, ed., *Iz istorii iazyka i kul'tury stran Tsentral'noi i Iugo-Vostochnoi Evropy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1985), 33-60; Theophilus C. Prousis, "Dēmētrios S. Inglezēs: Greek Merchant and City Leader of Odessa," *Slavic Review* 50, no. 3 (1991): 672-79, based on the personal archive of this

municipal figure; Viron Karidis, "A Greek Mercantile *paroikia*: Odessa, 1774-1829," in Richard Clogg, ed., *Balkan Society in the Age of Greek Independence* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1981), 111-36, drawn largely from British consular records.

9. Patricia Grimsted, *The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I: Political Attitudes and the Conduct of Russian Diplomacy, 1801-1825* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 167-93, for a concise account of Rumiantsev's foreign policy aspirations.

10. On the efforts of Richelieu and Rumiantsev to quicken the economic development of Odessa and the Russian South, see Herlihy, *Odessa*, 20-48, and *VPR* 5 (1967): 561-63.

11. On the variety of relationships between Muscovy and the Ottoman Empire in the Black Sea region before the 18th century, see Alan Fisher, *A Precarious Balance: Conflict, Trade, and Diplomacy on the Russian-Ottoman Frontier* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1999), 27-73, and Halil Inalcik's chapter on the Black Sea and Eastern Europe in Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 271-314.

12. For the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-12, see Irina S. Dostian, *Rossiiia i balkanskii vopros* (Moscow: Nauka, 1972), 42-79, and Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1-24. On trade via the Black Sea during the conflict, see Herlihy, *Odessa*, 37-42; Mikhail F. Zlotnikov, *Kontinental'naia blokada i Rossiia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 253-57, 290-97, 320-23; and Theophilus C. Prousis, "Trading with the Enemy: Black Sea Commerce in 1809-10," in Maria Di Salvo and Lindsey Hughes, eds, *A Window on Russia. Papers from the V International Conference of the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia, Gargnano, 1994* (Rome: La Fenice Edizioni, 1996), 139-44.

13. For the petitions to Rumiantsev, see *VPR* 5 (1967): 105-06, 162-63, 409-10, and Zlotnikov, *Kontinental'naia blokada i Rossiia*, 254-55. Rumiantsev's proposals on trade include "O dozvolonii grekam trgovat' v chernom more," *VPR* 5 (1967): 236-37, and "O svobodnom plavanii anadol'skikh sudov," AVPRI, f. 161, II-3, op. 34, 1810, d. 1, ll. 1-51, which is summarized in *VPR* 5 (1967): 449-50.

14. For an excellent introduction to the scholarship on Greek, Armenian, Jewish and Arab Christian involvement in Ottoman trade networks, see the studies by Halil Inalcik, Suraiya Faroqhi, Bruce McGowan and Donald Quataert in Inalcik and Quataert, eds, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 188-217, 517-24, 695-742, 824-42. Also useful are the sections on trade in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982); Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna*, 75-118, 155-87; Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey*, 54-73; and Traian Stoianovich, "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant," *Journal of Economic History* 20, no. 2 (1960): 234-313.

*Balkanistica* 16 (2003)

15. On European travelers' perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in the late 18th and 19th centuries, see Allan Cunningham, "The Sick Man and the British Physician," in Allan Cunningham, *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London: Frank Cass, 1993). For European attitudes toward Muslims in general and Ottoman Turks in particular, also see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) and Norman Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966).
16. *VPR* 7 (1970): 551-52, 776, with a summary of the data in Marracciny's shipping register.
17. For the Eastern crisis of the 1820s, and its impact on Russia's Black Sea commerce, see Anatolii V. Fadeev, *Rossiia i vostochnyi krizis 20-kh godov XIX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1958), 52-57; Theophilus C. Prousis, *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution* (DeKalb, IL.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), 26-54; Vitalii I. Sheremet, *Turtsiia i Adrianopol'skii mir 1829 goda: iz istorii vostochnogo voprosa* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), 7-28; and Herlihy, *Odessa*, 99-101.
18. *VPR* 7 (1970): 776-78. In the 19th century, Russia marked time by the Old Style Julian calendar, which was twelve days behind the New Style Gregorian calendar used in the West and adopted in Russia in 1918.
19. A reference to the Treaty of Bucharest (May 1812).
20. Another visitor in Smyrna in 1812, Christophe Aubin, alludes to the disruptive impact of the Russo-Turkish War on Black Sea exchange. See Allan Cunningham, "The Journal of Christophe Aubin: A Report on the Levant Trade in 1812," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 8 (1983): 28, 56, 89, hereafter cited as "Aubin." Aubin's merchant firm in Britain assigned him to tour Smyrna, Bursa and Istanbul in order to glean information on the Levant's commercial potential and to discover new routes for British wares into Napoleonic Europe via the Ottoman Balkans. For an assessment of Aubin's trade report and an overview of Smyrna's commerce in the early 19th century, see the scholarly introduction to this document by Cunningham (Aubin, pp. 5-28).
21. Aubin (pp. 56, 89) mentions the importance of grain in his detailed lists of Ottoman exports and imports.
22. Aubin (pp. 41-42) writes that during the peak time of the plague in Smyrna, from April to June, business suffered a great deal as European residents and Greek merchants "shut themselves up in their houses." British traveler John Oliver Hanson, who visited Smyrna in 1813, describes many aspects of the city's life and society, including the frequency and impact of plague attacks. See John Oliver Hanson, "Recollections of Smyrna," *Mikrasiatika Chronika* 13 (1967): 476-82, hereafter cited as "Hanson."
23. Hanson (pp. 468-69) comments on locusts in the Smyrna environs: "The locust is an insect unfortunately too well known throughout the land. They come in myriads. In one night a garden is entirely destroyed by them for the season. In an hour the verdure of a field entirely disappears,

when attacked by them, so great are their numbers and their power of destruction. In size and appearance they are extremely like an immense grasshopper.”

24. Greek sailing vessels from the Aegean archipelago and the Ionian Islands operated much of the transit trade in the Levant in the early 19th century; in particular, boats from Psara, Hydra and Spetsae carried foodstuffs to and from Smyrna, Constantinople and other ports. See Aubin, 36-37, 89, and George B. Leon, “The Greek Merchant Marine (1453-1850),” in Stelios A. Papadopoulos, ed., *The Greek Merchant Marine* (Athens: National Bank of Greece, 1972), 13-52.

25. Marracciny does not specify if these were Ottoman or European coins. The Levant did not have a common or standardized system of currency for business transactions at this time; Ottoman gold and silver coins circulated along with money from Austria, Spain, Venice, France, Holland and Britain. For more on the confusing array of Levantine currencies in the early 19th century, see Aubin, 14-16, 31-34, 122-23; Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey*, 326-29; and Şevket Pamuk’s essay “Evolution of the Ottoman Monetary System, 1326-1914,” in Inalcik and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 947-80. The chaotic mix of coins, not to mention their fluctuating values in regional markets, would further explain why European merchants had to rely on Greeks, Armenians, Arab Christians and other locals as intermediaries and brokers in Levantine commerce.

26. According to Aubin (pp. 28, 40-42), Turkey was a country “where fires are frequent and when they happen lay almost whole towns in ashes.” Turkish shops and bazaars were “miserable wooden huts, which are continually exposed to the risk of being consumed by the flames.”

27. Aubin (pp. 65-66) discusses the prevalence of Russian iron and nails in the Smyrna market.

28. Aubin (p. 63) writes that butter “is consumed in very considerable quantities — the country produces a great deal, but not enough to supply the demand. Large parcels are sent from Russia in casks or hides ....”

29. Both Hanson (pp. 462-63) and Aubin (pp. 31, 34-36) provide nearly identical detail on currency, weights and measures. A para was a Turkish coin worth a small fraction of a piaster; in 1812 forty paras equalled a piaster and roughly twenty piasters were the equivalent of one pound English sterling. An oke was a unit of weight equal to approximately three pounds.