

Olena FEDENKO\*

## THE ACTIVITY OF THE ITALIAN MERCHANTS IN ODESSA DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

*- Abstract -*

*This article is dedicated to the analysis of the activity of Italian merchants in Odessa in the XIX century. More specifically, the prerequisites, general principles, directions of development and results of this activity in connection with the trade policy of the Russian Empire are explained. Factors that influenced the choice of Odessa by Italian merchants as the place for carrying out their business are determined. Specific characteristics of activity of Italian commercial firms and their contribution to the development of foreign trade in the region is revealed. It is proven that Italians have exercised substantial influence on the development of commercial shipping in the Black Sea. It is established that Italian merchants actively participated in public and cultural life of the city and elaborated projects for the improvement of business conditions in Odessa.*

*Keywords: Odessa, Italian merchants, Black Sea, grain trade.*

\*\*\*

When it comes to the European integration of Ukraine, the previous experience of economic cooperation with Western Europe is not of little significance. In the nineteenth century Odessa was the economic center and the largest city in Ukraine, and due to government measures it quickly became the main commercial port of the Russian Empire on the Black Sea. Trade benefits, free port and the lack of competition from local merchants in the late eighteenth century

---

\*“I. I. Mechnikov” National University, Odessa, Ukraine (amarillis12@mail.ru).

*Danubius, XXXIV-Supliment, Galați, 2016, p. 31-42.*

led to the formation of powerful segments of foreign merchants, especially Greeks, Italians, Englishmen, French and others.

The activity of merchants from the Apennine states in various aspects of life of Odessa is first viewed fragmentarily in a monograph by K. Batsak<sup>1</sup>. His research covers the period from the end of XVIII century to the 1830s. The fourth chapter of the monograph is dedicated to shipping and grain trade between the North Black Sea Coast and Italy during this period.

An important stage in the study of the Italian community of Odessa during the nineteenth century was marked by the publishing of two monographs by a professor from the University of Toronto, A. Makolkin<sup>2</sup>. Despite the fact that A. Makolkin drew upon new sources and presented a new perspective on the problem of Italian emigration to Odessa, her work is riddled with methodological errors that undermine the authenticity of its reasoning and conclusions. It usually ignores the principle of historicism. A. Makolkin, describing the social composition and economy, regards them as something sustainable and discards the fact that they repeatedly changed during the nineteenth century. A. Makolkin represents Odessa as a purely Italian city, and denies the importance of any other ethnic group in the formation of the European culture of the city, stating that "none of the later settlers can stand comparison with the taste, elegance and contribution of the Italians." The researcher ignores the fact that during the second half of the nineteenth century Italians did not make any significant contribution to the development of the city and the major role in creating the original image of the city was played by the Jews. Makolkin assigns a leading role to Italian merchants in the economic prosperity of Odessa, and considers the Odessa free port to be a continuing tradition of Italian cities.

The analysis of the level of development of the topic leads us to the conclusion that in the works by modern historians there are no specific studies of the activities of Italian merchants. The elucidation of this matter has a fragmentary nature.

The aim of the article is to highlight the role of Italian merchants in the life of Odessa during the nineteenth century, based on archival sources, periodicals and statistics. The material in the article is represented chronologically according to two periods: the first period begins at the end of the XVIII century when the first merchants from the Italian states (the Kingdom of Sardinia, the Kingdom of Naples and the Papal States) arrived in Odessa; the second period begins in 1861 with the

---

<sup>1</sup>Batsak, Kostjantyn, *Italiyska emihratsiya naprykintsi XVIII - u pershiy polovyni XIX stolittya v Ukrayini*, Kyiv: ZnannyaUkrayiny, 2004.

<sup>2</sup>Makolkin A, A history of Odessa. The last Italian Black Sea Colony, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004; Makolkin A., The Nineteenth century in Odessa. One hundred years of Italian culture on the shore of the Black Sea (1794-1894), Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007.

formation of the unified Italian kingdom and significant changes in the midst of the Italian merchants in Odessa.

The victory in the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, and, consequently, the beginning of the domination of the Russian Empire in the Black Sea coincides with the establishment of diplomatic and trade relationships with the Italian states, primarily with the Kingdom of Naples (from 1816 the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies) and the Kingdom of Sardinia.

The founding of new cities on the Black Sea by Russia excited the interest not only in the Italian governments, but also among merchants, sailors, military men and other segments of the population. The arrival of Italians was stipulated by government measures of Russia, caused by the lack of experience of the local Russian merchants and the growing volumes of international trade. This led to the formation of a populous Italian community in Odessa. In the early years of the founding of Odessa, Italians already made up a tenth of the city's population - 800 people out of the total population of 7-8,000. In 1827 the city's population was 32,995 people, including 3,498 foreigners (10.6%) amongst whom 0.96% (334 people) were from different Italian states: the Kingdom of Naples - 100 people (0.3%), the Kingdom of Sardinia - 68 people (0.2%), Italy - 159 people (0.45%), Tuscany - 7 people (0.01%)<sup>3</sup>. In 1834 the number of foreigners amounted to 5,174 people, including 1,016 Italians (28%) out of the total population of 61,899 people<sup>4</sup>. Within three years about 1,600 people from the Apennine Peninsula resided in Odessa<sup>5</sup>. According to the Italian Consul General Salvatore Castillo, 1,850 Italian people lived in Odessa in 1871, in 1872 - 1,178 people, in 1873 - 1,213 people, in 1874 - 1,316 people, in 1875 - 1,386 people, in 1876 - 1600 people<sup>6</sup>. Italians constituted more than half of the crew of merchant ships, who in 1877 amounted to 3,600 people.

An important factor that contributed to the strong influx of immigrants from the Apennines was government measures. The first step in this direction was the Decree by Catherine II of May 27, 1794 "On opening a free entry for merchant ships to the harbor of Khadzhibei."<sup>7</sup> This paved the way for regular commercial sailings from the countries of Europe and contributed to the establishment in the city of foreign trade offices, including Italian ones. The number of foreign merchants was much higher than that of the Russians, therefore 1797 saw the

<sup>3</sup>Dianova N.M., *Formuvannya naseleennyia mist Pivdennoyi Ukrainy u doreformennoyi period (kinets XVIII st. – 1861 r.)*, Odessa, 2003, p.159.

<sup>4</sup>Batsak, Kostiantyn, *Italiyska emihratsiya naprykintsi XVIII - u pershiy polovyni XIX stolittya v Ukraini*, Kyiv: Znannya Ukrainy, 2004, p. 108

<sup>5</sup>Skal'kovskyy A.A., *Pervoe trydtsaty let y eystoryy Odessy. 1795-1825*, Odessa, 1837, p.155.

<sup>6</sup>Immigrazioni, emigrazioni e colonienella Russia meridionale. *Gazzetaufficiale del Regnod'Italia*, No. 237, 13 ottobre, 1877

<sup>7</sup>*Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossyyskoy impery*, 1, Saint Petersburg, 1890, p.519.

establishment of the Magistrate for Foreigners, which was chaired by Italians Vittorio Amedeo Poggio, Manuel Grimani, Bizilli. The newly created Magistrate facilitated and accelerated the social adaptation of the merchants coming from abroad.

In addition to the measures attracting foreigners, the late XVIII century was marked by a legal registration of merchants as a separate estate leading to the formation of merchant guilds, which was settled by the Manifesto of Catherine II on March 17, 1775. According to the decree of the Senate on May 25, 1775 "On the collection of levy from merchants, one percent of the declared capital instead of the poll, and on their subdivision into guilds" merchants were exempted from the poll tax, and now they were under the obligation to pay a special guild tax of 1% from the declared sum of the capital. Those who owned the capital of more than 10,000 rubles joined the first guild, those owning 1,000-10,000 - the second, and those with 500-1,000 - the third.

"Letters patent to cities" of 21 April 1785, which secured the legal status of the urban population, regardless of professional activity, declared only one bourgeois estate, which subdivided all the urban population into six categories: 1) "real urban inhabitants" who owned a house and other real estate; 2) merchants who were registered in the guild (now the property qualification considerably increased: for the 1st guild from 10,000 to 50,000 rubles, the 2nd - 5,000-10,000, 3rd - 1,000-5,000 rubles, but the tax rate remained the same (1%) 3) craftsmen who belonged to workshops; 4) nonresident and foreign merchants; 5) eminent citizens (capitalists and bankers who had the capital of not less than 50,000 rubles, wholesalers, ship owners, who were in the city administration, scientists, artists, 6) other urban populations.

Belonging to a particular guild determined the scale of commercial and industrial activity of a merchant. The merchants of the 1st guild were granted the right to wholesale and retail foreign and domestic trade, whereas the merchants of the 2nd guild - only domestic wholesale and retail trade. The representatives of these guilds were allowed to establish industrial enterprises. The members of the 3rd guild were entitled to "retail trade in the city and county."

The provisions of the manifesto of 1 January 1807 were developed in the "Additional resolution on the establishment of guilds and on trade of other estates" of November 14, 1824, which reduced the duties imposed on merchants. At the same time the rights of the merchants of the 2nd guild were significantly expanded. They were allowed to conduct foreign trade, although its volume was restricted to the sum of no more than 300,000 rubles. The merchants of the 3rd guild were allowed to establish light industry enterprises with the number of workers of up to 32 people. It was confirmed that the merchants of the 1st guild who conducted only wholesale or foreign trade, were called "first order merchants" or "merchants".

Such division and the conditions of admission to merchantry also applied to foreign merchants. As a result of the legislative activity of the government merchantry was completely formed as an estate in Ukrainian cities by the middle of the XIX century.

The first ethnic Italian, who began forming wealthy Italian merchantry in the city, was Stefan Venturi. Within the next four years, he founded a small company for the production of grape vodka. The turnover of his company amounted to 5,000 rubles in 1798<sup>8</sup>.

Following Venturi trade enterprises in the city were founded by Carlo Servio, Silistrio del Sasso, brothers Vincenzo and Luigi Lorovici, Giacomo Tassara, M. Giustanni, Pietro Reguccio, Marco Caronio and Naples Consul General Gaetano Gugliemucci<sup>9</sup>.

During the period from 1800 to 1813 the number of Italian merchants of the first guild in Odessa increased from 1 to 8 people, and during 1813-1833 it almost doubled and amounted to 17 people<sup>10</sup>. In 1833 the most affluent citizens of Odessa were Bartolomeo Ponsio (Pontius) (net worth 1,692 rubles), Pietro Sartorio (1,518 rubles), Iacovo Porro (1,446 rubles) brothers Moberli, Elias Trabotti, Camillo Vivani and Elias Galani (had a capital of between 500,000 and 1 m. rubles), Agostino Gattorno and Giorgio Avverino (between 250,000 and 500,000 rubles), Costantino Francesco, G. Sarro, Adolfo Bellino and A. Muzzo (between 100,000 and 250,000 rubles)<sup>11</sup>.

The economy of the Mediterranean countries, including Italy, given the low level of its own agriculture and the resulting high cost of crops, started to focus on cheap imported agricultural raw materials, the powerful exporter of which became the south of Ukraine, particularly Odessa. Therefore, most merchants were a group of Italian grain exporters. Besides wheat, they exported barley, rye, peas, wool etc. The main goods, which were imported at the same period from the Mediterranean countries to the Black Sea ports, were spices, coffee, fruit, Sicilian wines, natural dyes. In terms of imports, the report by consul N. Schitti in 1902 indicated that 85.28% of all the citrus fruit was exported from Italy to Odessa (from Catania and Messina), 60.27% of olive oil (from Gallipoli and Genoa), 21.94% of lead (Genoa), 17.58% of coffee (Genoa), 1.16% of rice (from Venice)<sup>12</sup>.

The Italian merchants themselves regarded the rates of the grain trade as relatively high, indicating that during that period only the port of Livorno weekly

---

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>9</sup> Skalkovskyy A.A., *Pervoe trydtsatylet y eystoryy Odessy. 1795-1825*, Odessa, 1837, p. 290.

<sup>10</sup> DAOO, f.4, op.1, spr.428, ark.1-3.

<sup>11</sup> *Odesskii Vestnik*, 1834, No.16, p. 61.

<sup>12</sup> Squitti N., *Le colonie italiane nel distretto consolare di Odessa. Emigrazione Colonie. Raccolta di rapporti dei RR. agenti diplomatici e consolari*, Roma, Vol.1, parte 3, 1903, p. 171-184.

received 5-6 vessels loaded with grain from Odessa<sup>13</sup>. According to the statistics provided by Tuscan scientist and diplomat Luigi Serristori in his "Notes of the Traveler" during 1822-1828 470 merchant ships of the Italian States (464 Sardinian and 6 Neapolitan) arrived at the Odessa port, which accounted for 14% of their total number, only Austrian, Russian and English ships were more numerous<sup>14</sup>. In 1847 with 1237 ships arriving at the port of Odessa, 582 vessels belonged to the Italian states: 255 - the Kingdom of Sardinia, 45 - the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, 11 - the Duchy of Tuscany, 4 - the Papal States and 267 the Italian territories that belonged to Austria<sup>15</sup>.

Most of cargo transportation of Ukrainian-Italian trade was serviced by Greek and Italian companies. Most of these companies operated in Odessa, the local port exported 60% of all the wheat through the Black Sea<sup>16</sup>. Together with the Greek merchants, who quickly secured the leadership in the market of export deliveries of grain, the Italians initially founded in the Black Sea ports their representative companies that were based in the Apennines, eventually turning them into separate commercial centers.

In order to open branches of sales offices the Italian merchants moved to the Black Sea ports a share of their capital which was invested in real estate, the purchase of grain and other exports. Thus, a family member of Genoese merchants Bartolomeo Pontius, who settled in Odessa shortly after the fall of Napoleon's Empire, 1818 turned to the mayor of Odessa O.F. Langeron with the request for admission to the first guild of merchants, in which he indicated that in Odessa he had real estate and the capital in the amount of 5,100 rubles, which he invested in grain trade. In 1815 G. Avverino (288,946 rubles), N. Trano (178,362 rubles) and a number of other merchants transferred their capital to Odessa and invested it in grain trade. In the 1830s four Italian grain trade merchant firms operated in Odessa. They belonged to I. Trabotti, B. Pontius, G. Porro and P. Sartorio receiving millions of annual profit<sup>17</sup>. At this time A. Gattorno, C. Nicoli, C. Viviani, F. Lauro, A. Mozzo, A. Bellino and G. Sarro began their activity in the grain market.

Along with the grain exporters another segment of Italian merchants was formed in Odessa. It was engaged in selling various kinds of goods delivered from

---

<sup>13</sup> Batsak, Kostjantyn, *Italiyska emihratsiya naprykintsi XVIII - u pershiy polovyni XIX stolittya v Ukrayini*, Kyiv, 2004, p. 188.

<sup>14</sup> Serristori Luyidzhi, Podorozhni zapysky // *Skhid-Zakhid: Istoryko-kulturolohichnyy zbirnyk*, Vol. 6, 2004, p.141.

<sup>15</sup> Navigazione. Movimento della navigazione nel porto di Odessa nell'anno 1847. *Annali Universali di statistica economica, pubblica, storia, viaggi e commercio*, Vol. XVII, No. 49, luglio 1848

<sup>16</sup> Zolotov V., *Vneshnyy ayatorhovlya Yuzhnoy Rossyy v pervoy polovyni XIX veka*. Rostov-na-Donu, 1963, p. 76

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1829, p. 32-106.

Western Europe. In 1828, the Italians in Odessa began to focus on trading in Italian wines (this involved Giuseppe Venturi), pictures and sheet music (Carlo Riccardi)<sup>18</sup>.

Before the Crimean War there were 32 Italian trading houses. The largest among them were the firms of Jacob Porro, Elijah Trabotti, brothers Rocco, brothers Bubba, Luigi Rossi, brothers Casaretto, C. de Azarto, Napoleon Rossi et al.

The most significant figure of this period was Carl Rocco. His business interests were also focused on the organization of urban development and improvement of infrastructure to create better business conditions. Carl Rocco was the co-owner of the bank and trading firm "Brothers Rocco", famous both in the Russian Empire and abroad. He came from a family well-known in business circles of Genoa, who owned one of the oldest Casa del Commercio - the prototype of the trading house in Odessa. Carl Rocco came to Odessa in the 40s of the XIX century and established a merchant office, engaged in the export of grain to Western Europe and which was situated in Preobrazhenska street in a private-owned family house<sup>19</sup>. Brothers Rocco together with another Italian Jacob Porro were the largest grain traders in the city, whose ships delivered grain to Naples, Genoa, Marseille and London<sup>20</sup>.

In 1856, Italian merchants Jacob Porro, Carlo Rocco and Elias Trabotti turned to Novorossiysk Governor-General with the request to set up a telegraph line between Odessa and Galati at their own expense. The Russian government found it impossible to leave telegraph lines in private ownership, but since it offered the exclusive benefit to Odessa merchants, it also had to pay for its construction, allocating 60,000 rubles in silver. When the telegraph line was built, the maintenance was to be carried out by the Russian government. If the merchants would not agree, both could construct and maintain the line, but its management should be determined by the government, and the latter had the right to redeem it at any time. Despite the wealth owned by the Odessa merchants, they refused the offer referring to the lack of funds<sup>21</sup>.

When the telegraph line was built the government was going to keep it. If the merchants didn't agree, they might build and keep the line, but its administration had to belong to the government and the government had the right to buy the line at any moment. Though Odessa merchants were wealthy, they denied the offer, referring to lack of money.

---

<sup>18</sup>*Odesskii Vestnik*, 1828, No.54, p. 134.

<sup>19</sup>*Novovrossiiskii Kalendar'*, 1854, p. 328.

<sup>20</sup>Moshensky Sergey, *Finansovye centry Ukrainy irynok cennyx bumag industrial nogoobshchestva*, London, 2014, p. 261.

<sup>21</sup>Derzhavnyiakhiv Odeskoyioblasti (DAOO), f.2, op.1, spr.466, ark.1-3.

The first independent project of Carlo Rocco was connected with the building of “steam lines” for goods transfer through railless roads to Kherson, Kyiv and Podolsk provinces and the Bessarabian region. With the idea C. Rocco applied to Novorossija and to the Bessarabia governor-general O.G. Stroganov with a letter in January 1860, claiming that it could be economically useful for the South of Russia<sup>22</sup>.

O.G. Stroganov turned to Odessa mayor with a request to find out what place belonged to C. Rocco among the local entrepreneurs. The answer to the request was given by the chairman of Odessa commercial council Fedor Rodokanaki. He wrote that the firm of C. Rocco, which was the successor of a similar firm in Genoa, was held in respect at Odessa and foreign exchanges. Fedor Rodokanaki himself considered the idea of C. Rocco useful not only for trading, but for the whole economy of the South of Russia. Taking into account the recommendation, O.G. Stroganov interceded for the mayor helped C. Rocco to realize his intentions<sup>23</sup>.

Minister of Finance and Chief manager of the Railways, whom the Home Secretary consulted with concerning the C. Rocco project, agreed to let C. Rocco deliver steam engines and railway coaches duty-free and also spare parts in number authorized by the Head Railway Office; to let him transport passengers for 15 years exclusively, without hindering the existed ways. If the project in each of its branches was not realized during three years, C. Rocco would lose his right<sup>24</sup>.

Another project of the enterprising Italian dealt with water supply to Odessa from the Dniester. In his letter to Novorossija and Bessarabia governor-general O.G. Stroganov from 28.12.1859 C. Rocco wrote that the southern part of Kherson province was suffering from dry weather because of which agriculture, gardening and cattle-breeding always experienced damages as well. Besides, because of the lack of water often suffered Odessa, which depended upon sudden landslides, which might damage the only city water supply “Kovalevsky”. That’s why C. Rocco offered to build a water supply from the Dniester. Governor-general liked the idea – he assured the Italian, that he and the local authorities would support the realization of the project. He ordered C. Rocco to make a technical plan of the water supply system. For that purpose C. Rocco addressed to the Sardinian engineer Henry Baletto<sup>25</sup>. The further destiny of that and a previous projects is unknown as well as the reason why it had never been realized.

One of the possible reasons was grain export crisis after the Crimean war (1853-1856). The crisis touched first of all trade unions and banks, which total

---

<sup>22</sup>DAOO, f.2, op.1, spr.559, ark.1.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, ark.5.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, ark.7.

<sup>25</sup>DAOO, f. 2, op.187, spr.625, ark.1-7.

amount of loss from 1857 till 1862 was 8 millions of silver rubliv<sup>26</sup>. During that time there were closed more than 20 trade unions, among them the firms of Charles Deazart, Ivan Zagrandi, Konstantin Rally, Carlo Rocco, Luigi Rossy, Dmitri Sugruri, Domeniko Tubino, which owners moved their business to other countries<sup>27</sup>. That's why at the time of economical crisis in Odessa and moving of the business abroad C. Rocco didn't believe those project to be profitable.

Having great income from the commercial activity, the wealthy merchants worked for charitable causes. For example, in the period of 1831-1833 the biggest sums of money for the Poor Nursing House were given by such merchants as B. Pontio (420 rub.), J. Porro, P. Santorio (each 300 rub.), A. Gattorno (210 rub.) , K. Vivani (200 rub.), I. Trabotti (150 rub.). Altogether the account of the Poor Nursing House received during three years from the Italians of Odessa a donation of 2 652 rub.

The merchants were members and donated to Italian Charity Society, that was founded 12.06.1863. The aim of the Society was to provide with money its poor nationals, who lived in Odessa temporary or constantly, until their moral and financial state improved. In addition to the financial help, the Society could help them to go back to their Motherland it needed, and to bury the dead without money and help of the near relatives. The biggest payment was made by brothers Antara.

The Italians are closely connected with music and theatre history of Odessa, i.e. with Italian opera with the center of which during the nineteenth century in Odessa Opera and Ballet Theatre. It was possible owing to the activity of Italian impresarios, who supplied the city with a theatrical troupe. As a rule, they were well-known merchants and actors. Italian merchants dealt with that business be cause of some economical profit: the local authorities allocated the the money in advance and the merchants could first use it for their personal commercial needs. The union between the municipality and the Italian merchants supported the theatre with the best actors and musicians and finance during the whole period. In 1809 Giovanni Mantovanni became impresario of the Odessa theatre. With the help of Odessa impresario it was possible to supply the theatre with stage props and musical equipment. For instance, in 1830 there were delivered 7 opera scores, music paper, brocade for making theatrical costumes and stage decorating as well.

The Crimean war showed economical and military backwardness of the Russian Empire and the need of immediate changes. The new trade-industrial policy of the authorities directed at creating the conditions to activate the rise of the industry and trade, caused changes in the legal status of merchants. With the laws from 1.01.1863 "About taxes and commerce power and other kinds of fields" 28

---

<sup>26</sup>*Odesskii Vestnik*, 1863, No.1, 1<sup>st</sup> of January.

<sup>27</sup>Moshensky S., *Finansovye centry Ukrainy i rynek cennyx bumag industrialnogo obshhestva*. London, 2014, p. 276.

and 9.02.1865, which included some specification, was carried out at a reform of the industry and trade. According to the document, merchants' rights were given to the citizens, who had paid patent and ticket trade-industrial tax: "The merchant and industrial licenses can be given to Russian citizens of both sexes and of any class, to foreigners as well". Since that time, the number of merchant guilds was shortened to two. Trade licenses were divided into three groups depending upon the kind of trading: wholesale, small wholesale and retail. In addition to that, the new tax laws 1863-1865 abolished merchants obligation to announce the sum of their income. But the phrase "to announce income" was in use later as well. To start and hold trade and industrial houses was only possible after getting the guild license.

After the closing most of Italian and Greek trade companies, the ethnic structure of the merchants changed in favor of the Jews and only some few Italian firms would still play role in Odessa export.

In 1877 there existed in Odessa 4 Italian firms of the 1<sup>st</sup> range. The first one – "Brothers Dal Orso", belonging to Francesco Dal Orso, was founded in 1849 and dealt with oil and grain trading. The medium yearly turnover was 1 mil. rub. That family owned firms of the kind in Genoa and Marcel. Another firm belonged to a Genoa citizen Gerolamo Asseretto. But the most known among them was the firm "Brothers Anatra".

The history of the Anatras started in 1830, when a poor sailor Angelo Anatra arrived in Odessa from Sicily. Grasping that there was lack of floating facilities to unload Ukrainian bread, he started building small boats and delivering merchants' goods with their help. Doing that, A. Anatra became rich with time and turned to a merchant.

Six sons of the enterprising Italian helped him in the work. They inherited his business after his death in 1860. The forth son, Angelo Anatra (1848-1910), possessed his father's trading skills and great love to the sea. After finishing Italian Skipper School, he organized his own navigable company, and in 1867 together with his brother Bartholomew – Anatra Trading House. At the same time they built their first steamer in England. A. Anatra ran it on his way to Odessa, performing duties of a skipper and sometimes of a simple able seaman, because the hired team was not ready to work at a steamer. Some time later, Anatra Trading House (since 1875 four brothers united in one firm "Brothers Anatra": Angelo, Bartholomew, Antony and Joseph) owned already one of the biggest private steamship lines at the Black Sea<sup>28</sup>. Besides, their firm continued to export bread and banking operations, and built a big steam mill in Peresip.

---

<sup>28</sup>DAOO, f.16, Op. 54, spr. 348, ark. 1

The leading role in the firm still belonged to Angelo Anatra. He took active part in the social life of the city: he was elected several times as member of the city council, merchants' representative in Odessa commercial court, head of arbitration board as well. A. Anatra was one of the founders of Odessa water rescue department and built a first aid house for drowners out of his money. In addition to that, A. Anatra was a honorable curator of Odessa Gymnasium №4, a member of the board of Marian asylum and other charity societies.

In 1860-70s there continued its existence a trading house "Trabotti and Co.", having been founded in 1823 by an Austrian national Elias Joseph Trabotti, who came to Odessa from Trieste. He was interested in grain export as well as in credit and financial services. When, in 1862, Trabotti firm was inherited by his sons, Alfred and Alexander, the role of financial operations rose. In 1874 there was created a banking office "Trabotti and Co." with the capital in 720 000 rub.

In 1890 banking operations turnover of the Trabotti firm reached 68,1 mil. rub. At commodity operations A. Trabotti took the 11<sup>th</sup> place in Odessa with the turnover in 1,417 mil. rub. (1,8% of the total amount of Odessa grain export). As in other banking houses of Odessa, the important part of turnover belonged to currency exchange operations (though Trabotti Trading House wasn't a leader in that kind of activity, focusing mainly on getting Italian liras)<sup>29</sup>.

Thus, Italian merchants successfully used the conditions of development in Odessa and within a short time have gained multimillion profits by wholesale trade in agricultural products. In 1800, in Odessa there was only one Italian merchant of the top guild, while in 1812 - 8 persons, in 1833 - 17 persons. Among the main components of the success of Italian merchants were significant capitals and great experience in commercial matters and shipping in the Mediterranean region, as well as the creation of a network of representations in the territories crossed by commercial trading routes.

Trading houses were a wide spread form of organizing commercial activity of Italian merchants. A whole system of trading houses was based on strong family connections, it included multiple branches subordinate to the central office. Offices of the firms Rocco, Trabotti, Porro, Pocchi, etc. appeared in Odessa in the first half of XIX century. They were the representatives of Italian families having sufficient capital who tried to extend the sphere of activity of their enterprises and develop new markets, including Odessa. In 1833, the number of Italian trading houses reached 32. Export of grain was the main direction of activity of the majority of these trading houses, though commercial branches were attracted to trade in other goods, and to the creation of insurance companies.

---

<sup>29</sup>Moshensky S., *Finansovye centry Ukrainy i rynek cennyx bumag industrialnogo obshchestva*. London, 2014, p. 276.

The existence of great capitals and large land lots created quite favorable starting conditions both for financing industrial projects and for direct organization of production. Italians in Odessa invested in the construction of infrastructure in the region, food manufacturing industry, they took part in the creation of credit and financial institutions.

The strong financial positions of the Italian merchants in Odessa led to the formation of a powerful local economical elite. The merchants were members of various partnerships, trustees of schools, public schools, hospitals, and orphanages. Care for their compatriots took the shape of creating the Italian Charitable Company in Odessa and was marked by a series of social events.