
Russian Wheat and the Port of Livorno. 1794-1865

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From the late eighteenth century, one of the most important changes in the foreign commerce of European nations was the growth of a massive importation of wheat. This wheat, needed to feed the ever more populous and more urbanized Western lands, was sought in ever more distant areas. Among its principal suppliers was the fertile steppe region of southern Russia. From the period of the Napoleonic wars, wheat from the south-Russian steppes flowed in large quantities to Western consumers, primarily through the new port city of Odessa, founded on the shores of the Black Sea by the Russian empress Catherine II, in 1794.¹

The organization of this cereal trade has considerable interest, and profoundly affected the history of many European ports. Until the development of rapid communications (primarily through the telegraph) and of big, fast ships (primarily through the use of steam

¹ For accounts of the grain trade between South Russia and Western Europe, see MIKHAIL VOL'SKIJ, *Očerki istorii chleбноj trgovli Novorossijskago kraja s drevnějšich vremen do 1852 goda*, Odessa, 1854; V. A. ZOLOTOV, *Vnešnjaja trgovlja Južnoj Rossii v pervoj polovine XIX veka*, Rostov, 1963; V. GIURA, *Russia, Stati Uniti d'America e Regno di Napoli nell'età del Risorgimento*, Naples, 1967; and PATRICIA HERLIHY, *Odessa: Staple Trade and Urbanization in New Russia*, in « *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* », 21, 1973, pp. 184-195.

power), a large element of speculation was inevitably present in this export trade. Even as they bore grain away from the port of Odessa, the shippers often remained ignorant of the latest prices and strongest markets in the West, and did not know the ultimate destination of the cereals they carried. The tariff policies of the Western states heightened this uncertainty. Between 1828 and the abolition of the "corn laws" in 1846, one principal Western consumer, England, applied a sliding scale of tariffs upon imported wheat, which made the volume of imports inversely dependent upon the abundance of the annual harvests. Most other Western states followed a similar policy. But the abundance of the annual local harvest was often difficult to predict, and so also were the level of tariffs and the strength of the demand for imported cereals. These conditions favoured the use, in the sea transport of cereals, of intermediary, or deposit ports. These were ports, close to the large population centres of Western Europe, where wheat imported from distant areas could be deposited or stored, while its owners determined where it could most profitably be sold.

In the transport of Russian wheat, the chief of these deposit ports were found in the Western Mediterranean — Malta, Trieste, Genoa, Marseilles, and others. One of these ports we shall single out for particular study here, as its role in the deposit trade was especially important, if not always typical: Livorno.

The port of Livorno rose to the status of a major Mediterranean harbour in the sixteenth century. According to the most recent historians of Livorno's sixteenth-century commerce, the grain trade played a fundamental role in its meteoric rise, but this grain came from the north and not the east.² In the late 1500's, Tuscany was visited by repeated famines. In 1590 and 1591, Riccardo Riccardi, scion of a great Florentine family and agent of the Grand Duke Ferdinand I, travelled to Danzig, Hamburg and Lübeck specifically to purchase grain.³ Over the years 1590-1593, 202 ships from

² F. BRAUDEL and R. ROMANO, *Navires et marchandises à l'entrée du port de Livourne (1547-1611)*, Paris, 1951, p. 52, «... c'est le blé qui oeuvre largement le port à un large commerce international qu'il n'abandonnera plus de longtemps...».

³ G. MORI, *Linee e momenti dello sviluppo della città, del porto e dei traffici di Livorno*, «La Regione», 3, 1956, p. 11.

northern Europe (exclusive of England) put into Livorno, and almost all were loaded with grain.⁴

Livorno achieved prominence as a cereal port not only because the Tuscan hinterland it served suffered frequent famines. The port also held a central position within the Mediterranean region, and its merchants and ships could take advantage of commercial opportunities over an extensive area. The growing international trade in grain presented Livorno with an exceptional opportunity. By the late sixteenth century, great grain deposits were being constructed near the port: There grain, much of it from the north, could be deposited and kept in expectation of large profits if famine or wars should strike accessible areas. A description of the port written in 1839 mentions how, in what was vaguely called the old days, the ditches (*fosse*) into which the grain was put numbered 543, and had a capacity of 250,000 sacks.⁵ Average per capita consumption of grain in Tuscany at that time seems to have been about 4 sacks (12 *staia*); the ditches, in other words, could have held enough grain to support for one year about 62,500 persons.⁶ By the early nineteenth century, the number of ditches seems to have fallen slightly to 499, and their capacity to 210,000 sacks.⁷ In spite of this small decline, Livorno remained, by virtue of its position and facilities for storage, what one nineteenth-century writer called the greatest grain « deposit in the Mediterranean ».⁸

Since its rise to the status of a major port in the sixteenth century, Livorno also maintained vigorous trade relations with the lands of the eastern Mediterranean. As early as 1727, it

⁴ BRAUDEL and ROMANO, *Navires*, p. 51.

⁵ Archivio di Stato di Firenze (henceforth, ASF), RR Rendite, Year 1839, No. 842, 7 May 1839. See also ASF, Affari Doganali, Year 1850, No. 1364, 4 Aug. 1850, for another description of the grain-storage facilities of Livorno.

⁶ For the consumption of grain in Tuscany, see P. COLLETTA, *Alcuni pensieri sulla economia agraria della Toscana*, « Antologia N. 49 », Florence, 1825, p. 11.

⁷ ASF, RR Rendite, Year 1839, No. 842, 7 May 1839.

⁸ ASF, Affari Doganali, No. 1364, Year 1850. Letter dated 22 July 1850 from Sevastopulo, president of the Camera di Commercio, to Primo Ronchivecchi: « L'esperienza ha dimostrato che la piazza di Livorno è considerata come il principale deposito del Mediterraneo sul rapporto dei cereali, appunto per la fama giustamente acquistata de' suoi comodi di conservazione, che, anche nello stato presente sono superiori a quelli di tutte le altre piazze ».

imported 90,000 sacks of wheat from the Morea.⁹ By the early nineteenth century, substantial colonies of Tuscan merchants had grown up in many cities of Greece and Turkey. By 1847 there were enough resident Tuscans in Salonika to make necessary a school for their children.¹⁰ A consular report from Constantinople in 1831 lists the names of twelve Tuscan Jewish merchants who resided there.¹¹ In that city there were also 67 artisans and workers from Tuscany.¹² Sixteen years later, the Tuscan colony at Constantinople was numerous and prosperous enough to purchase a cannon for a military regiment, the Fifth Guard, at Livorno.¹³ In 1848, when the Italian subjects of the Austrian Empire revolted in Lombardy, their co-nationals at Constantinople were fighting in the streets with Austrian residents of the same city. Italians to the number of 168, residents of Constantinople, signed a petition to the Turkish government protesting the actions of the Austrian consul.¹⁴ By virtue of the size of their communities and the vigour of their commercial ties with the Porte, the Tuscans, in 1831, were allowed consular representation within the Turkish Empire.¹⁵ By 1841 Tuscany had consular representatives at Smyrna, Alexandria, Aleppo, Beirut, Salonika, Rhodes, Dardanelles, Adrianople and Trebizond.

The list of goods which Livorno sent "in quantity" to the Ottoman Empire in 1836 was large: alum, red fezzes from Livorno itself, coffee probably reexported from South America, white paper, chestnuts, cured leather, silk cloth, cotton manufactures, worked marble, chairs, pepper and sugar, which were again probably re-exported colonial products.¹⁶

⁹ M. BARUCHELLO, *Livorno e il suo porto: origini, caratteristiche e vicende dei traffici livornesi*, Livorno, 1932, p. 443.

¹⁰ ASF, Affari Esteri, Filza 2480, 7 March 1847.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Protocollo 207, No. 7, 16 Dec. 1831. The report also names two Christian Tuscan merchants, Paolo Rodocannachi and Pietro Parini.

¹² *Loc. cit.*

¹³ ASF, Affari Esteri, Filza 2480, 7 Dec. 1847.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Filza 2480, 9 April 1848.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Filza 2475, 7 June 1841.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Protocollo 257, No. 23, Jan. 1836.

In 1818 a traveller lists the chief Italian exports to Odessa; we may assume that some of them passed through the port of Livorno: « Italy sends large quantities of common Sicilian wine, liqueurs, syrups, Lucchese oil, preserved citron, oranges, lemons, citrons, shelled almonds, comfits, different kinds of cheese, particularly parmesan, choice wines such as Lacryma Christi and others in bottles, quantities of refined sulphur, brimstone in mass and in rolls, the silks and other manufactures of Florence and Genoa, biscuits, pictures, marble ornaments, statuary and jewelry ».¹⁷

The Spanish consul at Odessa wrote about the same time that: « On reçoit d'Italie des vins de Messine, des liqueurs; de l'huile de Lucques, de Gênes; des pâtes de divers sortes, du soufre, du fromage de Parmesan, des marbres ».¹⁸

When, in the late eighteenth century, Russian ships penetrated into the Mediterranean, they elected Livorno as a favorite port of call.¹⁸ In 1765 the *Nadežda Blagopoluchija* ("Hope of Prosperity") out of Konstradt on the Baltic, put into Livorno. She brought iron, linen, rope, and skins, and took out sandalwood, macaroni and lead. Russian warships appeared off Livorno in 1770, during Catherine's first Turkish War. In 1772 Johann Wolfgang Goethe, travelling in Italy, saw at Livorno a re-enactment of the Russian naval victory at Cheshme (1770), done with fireworks, and was much impressed by the show. The officers of a Russian naval

¹⁷ HENRY S. DEARBORN, *A Memoir on the Commerce and Navigation of the Black Sea and the Trade and Maritime Geography of Turkey and Egypt*, Boston, 1819, I, p. 243. Later Count Serristori, a Tuscan official interested in promoting Tuscan trade with the ports of the Black Sea, proposed the following list as suitable articles of export: « Vari oggetti dell'industria toscana sarebbero esportati con lucro nei porti russi del Mar Nero, per esempio: i vini dell'Isola dell'Elba, i marmi, le pietre lavorate per costruzioni di fabbriche ad uso di scale, porte e finestre, coppe da olio, mattoni, tegoli, i carboni del littorale per quanto può contenere la stiva del bastimento; quest'ultimo articolo costando in giornata a Odessa non meno di franchi cento la soma ». ASF, Affari Esteri, Protocollo 191, 19 June 1829.

¹⁸ G. DE CASTELNAU, *Essai sur l'histoire de la Nouvelle Russie*, Paris, 1820, III, p. 54. E. Repetti, the famous nineteenth-century Tuscan geographer, listed the major Tuscan exports to Russia as carved coral, oil, salted meats, straw hats (undoubtedly the famous Leghorn hats), marble, alabaster and sulphur. *Dizionario geografico, fisico, storico della Toscana*, Florence, 1835, II, p. 764.

¹⁹ The following examples of Russian ships putting in at Livorno are taken from Hans Halm, *Oesterreich un Neurussland, I: Donauschiffahrt undhandel nach dem Südosten, 1718-1780*, Breslau, 1943, p. 54, n. 236.

squadron under Admiral Chichagois spent freely at Livorno, and sailed away leaving 4121 rubles of unpaid debts.²⁰ In 1786, the Tuscans were entering representations of protest at the Imperial Russian court.

Russian grain followed Russian sailors to Livorno. Already in 1803, Livorno imported a large quantity of grain from Odessa, and still more in 1817.²¹ The Austrian consul did not exaggerate when he wrote in 1830: « Commercial relations between Livorno and Russian ports of the Black Sea have been very important for several years ». ²² Odessa itself attracted a community of Tuscans—merchants, hairdressers, musicians who served in the city's theatre, a music teacher, bank clerk, a worker in the medical inspection service; in 1853, Tuscans at Odessa numbered at least 23 persons, as that many contributed to a charitable collection.²³ Other Tuscans penetrated to even more remote areas of the Russian empire; Francesco Gherardi from Arezzo, father of nine children, was the chief doctor for the imperial troops stationed in Georgia and received many decorations in recognition of his services.²⁴

The commercial history of Livorno in the nineteenth century has yet to be satisfactorily written. Historians, almost by profession inclined to be *laudatores temporis acti*, have tended to glorify the city's great years of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, while dismissing the nineteenth century as, in comparison, a period of decadence.²⁵ This is an exaggeration. A more balanced evaluation has been made by G. Mori, who remarked concerning the present state of research on the history of Livorno in the nineteenth century:

²⁰ ASF, Affari Esteri, Filza 2206, 14 Oct. 1785.

²¹ ANTHOINE DE SAINT-JOSEPH, *Essai historique sur le commerce de la Mer-Noire*, Paris, 1805, p. 204; J. DE HAGEMEISTER, *Report on the Commerce of the Ports of New Russia, Moldavia and Wallachia Made to the Russian Government in 1835*, London, 1836, Appendix, Table II. According to these authors, 1,112,000 chetverts (2,203,600 hectolitres) of grain were exported in 1803, and 1,200,000 in 1817, the next peak year.

²² ASF, Affari Esteri, Protocollo 292, 11 Jan. 1830.

²³ *Ibid.* Protocollo 305.63, Nov. 1839; *ibid.* Filza 2473, 15 April 1835; *ibid.* Protocollo 494.36, Feb. 1856; *ibid.* Protocollo 509.81, June 1857. The Tuscan consul at Odessa reported home in 1847 that a larger Catholic church was needed « in una città ove si noverano moltissimi sudditi toscani », *ibid.* Filza 2544, 1 March 1847.

²⁴ *Ibid.* Protocollo 371.21, July 1845.

²⁵ Cf. BARUCHELLO, *Livorno*, pp. 662 ff.

« Studies on this period of Livorno's history are so few and so full of gaps that whatever conclusions we might reach must be considered partial and uncertain ».²⁶

We know at least that Livorno in the early nineteenth century was a growing town—a fact not easily reconciled with the assumption that its commercial importance was waning. Table 1 illustrates its growth from 1790 to 1848.

TABLE 1
THE POPULATION OF LIVORNO, 1790-1848

| Year | Population | Year | Population |
|------|------------|------|------------|
| 1790 | 50,000 | 1828 | 70,353 |
| 1800 | 59,000 | 1830 | 72,000 |
| 1807 | 64,000 | 1835 | 76,000 |
| 1812 | 45,000 | 1838 | 77,941 |
| 1818 | 59,098 | 1848 | 82,648 |
| 1825 | 67,000 | | |

Source: *Giornale del Commercio* [of Livorno], July, 1839; G. BALDASSERONI, *Leopoldo II, Granduca di Toscana e i suoi tempi*, Florence, 1871, p. 111.

To support this growing population, Livorno depended primarily upon its commerce. It is, to be sure, true that Livorno in the early nineteenth century was not the biggest Mediterranean, or even Italian port. Baruchello reckons that by measure of total port traffic Livorno was the fifth port in the region after Marseilles, Trieste, Constantinople and Genoa.²⁷ Its inability to overtake its rivals during a period of general growth seems understandable enough. For most of these booming ports served a populous, prosperous and productive hinterland, hungry for goods and rich with commodities to sell, while Tuscany in comparison remained a backward land. Still, Baruchello ranks Livorno first in the number of ships coming from the Black Sea, surpassing Marseilles, Genoa and the English ports.²⁸ For in one item of trade Livorno's importance was unquestionable. And that item was wheat.

²⁶ « Linee e momenti », p. 25.

²⁷ *Livorno*, p. 591.

²⁸ *Loc. cit.*

To be sure, even in the shipping of wheat Livorno had initially faced strenuous competition. The earliest records of the Russian cereal trade indicate that Trieste consistently held first place in the volumes received, and Genoa too shows an early advantage.²⁹ A traveller to Odessa in 1829 reported: « Three or four hundred Genoese vessels annually come to Odessa for corn—for corn! while Sardinia, one of ancient Rome's granaries, within a day's sail of Genoa, lies uncultivated ».³⁰ As Table 2 illustrates, Livorno, comparatively a late starter, by the late 1830's was holding its own, and more than its own, as a port of destination for Russian wheat:

TABLE 2

DESTINATIONS OF WHEAT EXPORTED FROM ODESSA, 1838

| | | | | | |
|----------------|---------|-----------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| Livorno | 446,842 | chetverts | Holland | 28,914 | chetverts |
| Genoa | 177,099 | » | Belgium | 16,909 | » |
| Marseilles | 93,758 | » | Gibraltar | 4,348 | » |
| England | 82,453 | » | Ionian Islands | 3,829 | » |
| Trieste | 58,326 | » | Greece | 2,215 | » |
| Malta | 44,486 | » | Austria | 1,230 | » |
| Constantinople | 30,455 | » | | | |

Source: Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASF), Affari Esteri, Filza 2528, 29 Feb. 1839.

From both Livorno and Genoa, the wheat was shipped principally to Spain and France.³¹ By 1838, Livorno ranked among

²⁹ ANTHOINE DE SAINT-JOSEPH, *Essai*, p. 204; ASF, Ministero delle Finanze, Miscelanea "A", 1819-1845; *ibid.*, Capi Rotte 16, 1824. De HAGEMEISTER, *Report*, p. 99, gives by port the average annual imports of Russian wheat for the several years preceding 1835. The figures, in chetverts, are the following: Turkish ports, 500,000; Genoa, 275,000; Livorno, 220,000; Marseilles, 200,000; Malta and others, 150,000; Trieste, 75,000. In 1845, the French consul at Odessa noted that most of France's imported wheat arrived indirectly from deposit ports. He also stated that the wheat sent to Genoa was in large part consumed locally, but « l'entrepôt du Livourne réexporte la plus grande partie de ce qu'il reçoit ». Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris (henceforth, AMAE), Odessa, Vol. VI, 12 July 1845.

³⁰ *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc. and of a Cruise in the Black Sea with the Captain Pasha in the Years 1829, 1830 and 1831*, Philadelphia and Baltimore, 1833, I, p. 251.

³¹ DE HAGEMEISTER, *Report*, p. 6. However, the ultimate destination of the wheat was often England. The French consul in Odessa noted in 1843: « As always England took most of the exports from Odessa ». He went on to explain that a substantial part of the exported wheat was first sent to Marseilles or Livorno and then re-exported to England. In his estimation, France was the second largest importer of Russian wheat. AMAE, Odessa, Vol. VI, 29 May 1843.

the most important grain ports of the Mediterranean. And most of the grain she handled came from the Black Sea, as Table 3 illustrates.

TABLE 3
PROVENANCE OF WHEAT IMPORTED INTO LIVORNO, 1835-1838

| Year | Black Sea | Other | Total |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1835 | 305,762 | 514,950 | 820,712 |
| 1836 | 501,714 | 427,658 | 929,372 |
| 1837 | 1,362,030 | 504,239 | 1,867,169 |
| 1838 | 1,701,042 | 332,170 | 2,033,212 |
| Total: | 3,871,448 | 1,779,017 | 5,650,465 |

Source: ASF, RR Rendite, Ufficio dei Grani, 13 June 1839.

There were many factors which promoted Livorno's late but strong rise as a deposit port in the grain trade. One was the distinctively advantageous status it enjoyed as a free port; the governmental regulations regarding imports and exports were remarkably liberal for the epoch. In 1834 even the small charges on stored grain were lifted; this marked a culmination of the long-standing policy of the Granducal government, which warmly favored the liberalization of trade through Livorno. In 1847, the government removed all tariffs on grain imported into the Grand Duchy.³² Four years later, when it was proposed to place a charge of 8 soldi per sack on the entry of wheat, the Customs Office wrote in protest:

Suppose a load of thirty, fifty or one hundred thousand sacks of wheat were coming into the Mediterranean from the Black Sea, and suppose there was a choice of a free port or one where you had to pay 8 soldi a sack. Where would the merchant unload his goods?³³

Clearly, competition was keen among deposit ports, and a few soldi per sack of wheat would not compensate for the risk of jeopardizing trade.

³² ASF, Affari Doganali, No. 190, 15 Jan. 1847.

³³ *Ibid.* No. 190, April 1850.

This Tuscan liberalism contrasted greatly with the protectionism prevailing in the Kingdom of Sardinia, under the laws of which Genoa had to seek prosperity. In an effort to favour her own merchant marine, Sardinia imposed dues and other restrictions on foreign carriers using her ports. Non-Sardinian ships carrying grain sought more hospitable ports, and many sought Livorno. Shortsighted protectionism of this sort did not escape the criticism of those interested in the commercial growth of Genoa, and in the 1830's this more than any other factor was singled out in explanation of Livorno's hot and successful pursuit of Genoa as the principal grain depository in the western Mediterranean.³⁴

A liberal trade statute rendered other advantages too. The grain deposit facilities at Livorno, always large, were still remarkable in the early nineteenth century for their size and quality. Genoa herself, in 1839, made use of them, so marked was their superiority.³⁵ The enlargement of port space from 1833 to 1840 and again in 1851, the expansion of grain storage facilities in 1848, indicate that Livorno's commerce was far from languishing in the first half of the nineteenth century.³⁶

Freedom to import and export grain and facilities to store it were vital considerations for the commercial houses which traded in wheat, and these advantages prompted many of them to locate their principal offices at Livorno. The presence of large and prosperous foreign firms at Livorno excited the jealousy and protests of the local merchants, who demanded greater participation in the lucrative trade. These complaints paradoxically echoed similar protests voiced at Odessa. There too, it was alleged that "foreigners" were dominating overseas trade to their own profit. The complaints in the Russian port were indeed levelled at the same kind of men as at Livorno—often at the same men, chiefly Greeks or Jews. Nothing shows the tenuous basis of the accusation that the grain trade profited only foreigners more than to hear it raised from

³⁴ E. GUGLIELMINO, *Genova dal 1814 al 1849: gli sviluppi economici e l'opinione pubblica*, Genoa, 1940, p. 237.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 131.

³⁶ ASF, Affari Doganali, Filza 1225, 8 Aug. 1848.

both ends of the Mediterranean. Foreigners perhaps, but foreigners in the West as well as the East, these great merchant families often had members, sons or brothers, present in many Mediterranean ports, who were in turn citizens of many lands. Highly skilled in the commercial arts, successful in maintaining the fortunes of their families over decades and generations, these Greek and Jewish merchants might well be regarded as citizens of the Mediterranean.

A report prepared by a Tuscan official, Count L. Serristori, in 1839, provides an interesting perspective into the composition of the commercial classes at Livorno.³⁷ According to this report, in times past, only a few large commercial houses, no more than eight to ten in number, had dominated Livorno's overseas trade, and these houses were all foreign. Most Tuscan merchants had no direct dealings with buyers or sellers in ports abroad; they were in consequence only petty dealers, whose volume of business was discouragingly small in comparison with that of the great commercial houses. Serristori, however, enthusiastically assured his readers that times were changing. He proudly counted 280 wholesale merchants and bankers, most of whom now had direct dealings abroad and many of whom were Tuscan nationals. He mentioned that several commercial houses (though significantly, Greek or Jewish) had established branches in London, and could handle on their own the profitable business of international exchange. Perhaps it was some of these merchants, or their descendants, whom Karl Marx observed in England in 1853:

How important . . . the Black Sea trade generally is becoming, may be seen at the Manchester Exchange, where dark-complexioned Greek buyers are increasing in numbers and importance, and where Greek and South Slavonian dialects are heard along with German and English.³⁸

Serristori's optimistic hopes concerning the bright future of the native merchants were never fully realized. In 1842, another report complained: « Few are the number of native merchants,

³⁷ « Livorno ed i suoi traffici », *Giornale del Commercio*, 24 July 1839.

³⁸ *The Eastern Question*, London, 1897, p. 15.

and if one discounts some Jews, they are not the richest ».³⁹ The report includes a particularly virulent condemnation of the foreigners: « they come to Livorno, speculate, enrich themselves, and commonly carry back to their fatherland the fruit of their speculation . . . ». The protest again only echoes the reception that many of the same merchants were receiving from native Russians, because of their leadership in the commerce of Odessa.

At Livorno, as indeed also at Odessa, the small size of the merchant marine under local ownership excited further dissatisfaction. Tuscan ships carried only a minute portion of the total Russian grain brought to port. Despite some official attempts to encourage the construction or acquisition of ships, Tuscany never acquired a sizable merchant fleet, and was slow to take advantage of that decisive technological advance—the use of steam power in the propulsion of ships.⁴⁰

The Grand Duchy of Tuscany had better success in securing consular representation in the important ports of the eastern Mediterranean. This diplomatic effort was partially inspired by hostility toward Austria. Tuscany had traditionally been represented at the Porte and in Odessa by the Austrian consul, but in the 1830's, Florence was receiving numerous complaints from Tuscan captains, concerning the difficulties of clearing cargoes, or other obstructions encountered, at the Black Sea ports.⁴¹ And Tuscan officials also suspected that the Austrian consul was purposely delaying in arranging for a commercial treaty between the Grand Duchy and the Ottoman power. The stirrings of *Risorgimento* sentiments doubtlessly reinforced, or were reinforced by, both public and

³⁹ ASF, RR Rendite, Filza 1842, No. 541, 22 March 1840.

⁴⁰ Between the years 1837 and 1853, 16 Tuscan ships on the average put into the port of Odessa each year, whereas an average of 171 Sardinian (chiefly Genoese) ships came yearly during the same period. See the Tuscan consul reports in ASF, Affari Esteri, and Archivio di Stato di Livorno (henceforth, ASL), Governatore. For an interesting discussion on the cost of building steamships in Tuscany, see ASF, Affari Esteri, Protocollo 263, No. 49, July 1833.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* Filza 2473, 1 July 1835, Quaglia to Fossombroni: « Il Capitano Cassovich, comandante la nave con bandiera toscana nominata *Venere*, partito pochi giorni fa per Livorno, proveniendo da Odessa, mi portò lagnanza che aveva incontrato le maggiori difficoltà in quest'ultimo porto per far vidimare e porre in regola le sue carte di bordo dal console austriaco, che asseriva non esser munito d'istruzioni per prestar visi . . . ».

private suspicions that the Habsburg empire was doing its utmost to promote trade through its own port of Trieste, at the expense of Livorno.⁴² To protect the interests of its own merchant marine, the Grand Duchy appointed its own consuls at Constantinople (1831) and Odessa (1837); after the Crimean War, consuls were also named for Taganrog, Mariopol and Berdiansk.⁴³

Not a large, locally owned merchant marine, but free movement of ships, a good port, spacious storage facilities, and a commercial class of experienced if rarely "native" merchants helped give Livorno its late but large importance in the deposit trade. Wheat taken to a deposit port was frequently re-exported, but at Livorno, a significant market for grain was developing at no further distance than the Tuscan Grand Duchy itself. Tuscany's own need for grain made Livorno not only a port of deposit and re-export, but a port of entry into a growing market for wheat. Tuscany contained only about 1.5 million people in 1839-40, not including the 78,000 inhabitants of Livorno itself.⁴⁴

But what the region lacked in numbers it made up in demand. In the five-year period 1835-1839, the total amount of foreign wheat entering Livorno totalled 7,772,451 sacks, and of this amount more than one-half — 4,082,854 sacks — was shipped into the Grand Duchy.⁴⁵ Tuscan consumers particularly favoured Russian grain. Egyptian wheat, for example, which was also ordered in large quantities by Tuscan purchasers, sometimes never arrived, as the temperamental Egyptian government imposed sporadic export restrictions.⁴⁶ And the quality of Egyptian wheat was at all events inferior to that of the Russian. Except during wars against Turkey

⁴² *Ibid.* Protocollo 207, No. 7, 24 Dec. 1830, in which the Council of State reported to the Grand Duke concerning Austria: « Se è evidentemente preso a promuovere i vantaggi di Trieste contrariando Livorno ». Later the Council warned: « Ma la predilezione per Trieste, la gelosia verso Livorno sono le molle che animano gli agenti austriaci in Turchia ». ASI, Affari Esteri, Protocollo 207, No. 7, 7 Sept. 1831.

⁴³ *Ibid.* Protocollo 207, No. 7, 10 Dec. 1831; *ibid.* Filza 2474, 19 April 1837; *Almanacco della Toscana*, Florence, 1858; G. BALDASSERONI, *Leopoldo II, Granduca di Toscana e i suoi tempi*, Florence, 1871, p. 506.

⁴⁴ ASF, RR Rendite, No. 916, Year 1842, undated letter marked "A".

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Year 1842, No. 411, report entitled « Grani forestieri giunti a Livorno, estratti per il territorio e per fuori ».

⁴⁶ ASF, Affari Doganali, Year 1850, No.1364, 30 July 1850.

and the Crimean War, the Russian government never cut off the supply of wheat for western markets, and the Mediterranean merchants were eager to carry it. Even in years of poor harvests in Russia, wheat flowed to the West.

Tuscan purchasers rated Russian grain as unsurpassed in quality. Russian wheat was prized for its richness of gluten, and the quality of the flour produced from it.⁴⁷ Hard wheat was the kind most suitable — rather we should say indispensable — for manufacturing that great staple of the Italian diet, pasta. Hard wheat could not be raised in volume in Tuscany, and consumers of pasta and the millers who served them had to seek it in Sicily. But Sicilian production did not keep pace with demand, and Sicily too was subject to changeable restrictions on grain export.⁴⁸ Russian wheat was even better in quality and more readily available. The pasta produced from it was more tasty and also more nutritious, as the protein count of Russian hard wheat was relatively high. The pasta makers of Tuscany came in surprisingly large measure to base their business on imported Russian grain, much of which was ground into flour at the mills near Livorno. When the government of the Grand Duchy attempted to impose a tariff on such flour taken from Livorno into the duchy, the manufacturers of pasta in the hinterland raised a chorus of protests, « because the wheat of which the pasta makers have need is hard wheat from Taganroc [*sic*] and Odessa ».⁴⁹ Utilizing Russian wheat in abundant quantities, the manufacturers of pasta not only sold their products within Tuscany, but also exported spaghetti and biscuits made of the flour of hard wheat (*semolino*) to purchasers abroad.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ L. BORASI, *Grano duro e paste alimentari*, Vercelli, 1939, p. 9.

⁴⁸ ASF, *Affari Esteri*, Filza 2538, 24 July 1844; *ibid.* Filza 2544, 5 Feb. 1847; *ibid.* Protocollo 498.13, 30 April 1856.

⁴⁹ ASF, RR Rendite, Year 1834, No. 1779, undated petition from « I fabbricanti di paste di Livorno ».

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Year 1838, No. 1123. O. Forni, Director of Customs at Livorno wrote to A. Humbourg, administrator of the revenue department at Livorno, saying that until the next increment in the tax on flour, pasta makers of Livorno should be able to compete successfully with those of Marseilles, Genoa, Naples and other Mediterranean ports in exports of *semolino*, pasta and biscuits. These foods were shipped to America, the African coast, Gibraltar and Lisbon, chiefly.

The Tuscan market for Russian soft wheat was also strong. By weight it excelled the Egyptian. Tuscany's own, locally produced soft wheat seems to have been as good if not better than the Russian, but it was in short supply and much demanded abroad, notably in England, where it was used both for seeds and in the manufacture of quality bread.⁵¹ Russian wheat, moreover, travelled better than the Egyptian; the latter appears to have been subject to weevils and deterioration if exposed to dampness. Russian wheat was more durable, and, according to Anthoine de Saint-Joseph, a process for treating Russian wheat was discovered in Odessa in 1803, which protected its quality over long sea voyages.⁵² This process seems to have been based on partially drying the wheat before shipment. Along the Mediterranean route, the hot and humid conditions on board ship frequently caused wheat to rot and turn sour. An English grain merchant, Samuel Drewe, described the advantages of this preheating process as it was used in Poland:

They kiln-dry it [wheat] abroad, and it will lie three years without injury, and do for the foreign market; the old wheat they cannot ship for this country; when it is beginning to be foul, they kiln-dry and ship it for the Mediterranean; because if they were to ship fresh wheat for the Mediterranean, it would heat in the vessels; this does not heat in the vessels, and therefore does better.⁵³

At Livorno the storage ditches (*fosse* or *buche*) were needed primarily to protect Egyptian wheat. A description of the ditches, dated 1850, explains:

⁵¹ *Ibid.* Year 1842, No. 411, 29 March 1842. The Grain Office at Livorno listed the following kinds of wheat according to weight per sack: from Taganrog, from 170 to 180 Tuscan pounds; from Odessa, from 164 to 168 pounds; from Alexandria in Egypt, from 152 to 156 pounds. Heavier wheat was considered to be of superior quality. See BORASI, *Grano*, p. 17. Tuscany exported annually about 225,000 sacks of locally grown wheat, which was especially sought after for seeding or for making particularly fine bread. See ASF, Ministero delle Finanze, Nn. 1447, 18 May 1856.

⁵² *Essai*, p. 58.

⁵³ *First and Second Reports from the Committees of the House of Lords Appointed to Inquire into the State of Growth, Commerce and Consumption of Grain*, London, 1814, p. 123.

It is known that all wheat has need for storage ditches. That wheat which comes from Egypt is susceptible to warming up quickly and to the development of worms called "pinnachio" which quickly spoil it. That wheat which comes from the Black Sea on the other hand . . . is able to withstand quite a long trip and still remain in storehouses above ground without fear of deterioration, if it had not been kept too long at the point of origin, or had not suffered in deposit or in loading, in which case it too must be stored in ditches.⁵⁴

But the most important reason for the growing Tuscan demand for Russian wheat was that, like Italy generally, the Grand Duchy could not produce enough grain to feed its people. This had not always been true. In the eighteenth century, Tuscany imported wheat only in years of famine, and in good years even exported it. In 1782 and 1783, for example, which were years of dearth, Tuscany consumed an average of 184,301 sacks of grain more than its farmers produced, but over the span of good harvest years from 1787 to 1791, it had enough surplus to sell small quantities to foreign consumers.⁵⁵

The situation changed after the Napoleonic wars. The war itself had disrupted production. Conscription drew the young men from farming, many never to return, whether from battle deaths or the discovery of a better life. Even in the first years of peace, bad weather hampered recovery.⁵⁶ The terrible crop failures of 1816 and 1817 struck Tuscany hard, and Tuscans joined the general European rush to the ports of the Black Sea, in search of wheat.⁵⁷ After these disastrous years, recovery in local production seemed to be progressing well, when in 1823 the price of wheat registered a substantial decline, and remained at low levels for an extended period.⁵⁸ These low prices drove peasants from the land and

⁵⁴ ASF, Affari Doganali, Year 1850, No. 1354, 30 July 1850.

⁵⁵ ASF, RR Rendite, Year 1842, No. 541, 18 March 1842.

⁵⁶ A. ZOBÌ, *Manuale storico di economia toscana*, Florence, 1847, p. 357.

⁵⁷ C. DI NOLA, *Politica economica e agricoltura in Toscana nei secoli XV-XIX*, Città di Castello, 1948, p. 51, and Dearborn, *Memoir*, I, p. 240.

⁵⁸ Archivio Comunale di Firenze (henceforth, ACF), Mercuriali, Series 45, No. 6. A complete series of these *mercuriali* from 1809 to 1861 are located in the Archivio Comunale di Firenze.

from the cultivation of wheat—not a crop which, at all events, can be raised with much competitive success on the inhospitable Tuscan hills. Faced with stagnant or diminishing local production but with a growing population, Tuscany had to trade for wheat. This was a fate reluctantly acknowledged by contemporary observers—even by those who advocated a policy of economic autarchy within the Grand Duchy. « Let us not forget », one writer reminded the Tuscans in 1840, « that Tuscany is still very far from producing what is necessary for the sustenance of her inhabitants; so much so that every year the import of not small quantities of foreign grain is necessary ».⁵⁹

This “not small quantity” in the five years ending with 1839 was averaging 1,554,490 Tuscan sacks per year, or 518,163 Russian chetverts. In 1851 the quantity was 1,589,438 sacks; in 1852 it reached 1,591,072 sacks. In 1853 it attained 2,161,672 and in 1854, 2,034,827 sacks.⁶⁰ And Russian grain constituted an ever larger proportion of the imported wheat, as it was cheap and obtainable. When harvests were poor in Tuscany, they were usually also poor in neighbouring states, which characteristically responded to their own shortages by raising barriers against the exportation of wheat. « Thus it often happens », relates a Tuscan report, dated 1856, « that when our harvests are scarce and our needs greater in consequence, export of grains is prohibited by the Estense and Pontifical states . . . ».⁶¹ Tuscany thus sought its needed wheat at the ports of the Black Sea, and, inevitably, commercial bonds of growing strength were established between Russia and the Grand Duchy. In 1838 Odessa exported 990,511 chetverts of wheat and in the same year Livorno imported 567,014 chetverts from the Black Sea ports and from Odessa principally.⁶² Clearly, the trade between Odessa and Livorno was already substantial. Moreover,

⁵⁹ ASF, RR Rendite, Year 1841, No. 454, 1 Dec. 1841.

⁶⁰ ASF, RR Rendite, Year 1840, « Grani forestieri giunti a Livorno ». ASF, Ministero delle Finanze, No. 1447, 18 May 1856. ASF, Affari Esteri, Protocollo 571.46, Feb. 1854.

⁶¹ ASF, Ministero delle Finanze, No. 1447, 18 May 1856.

⁶² ASF, Affari Esteri, Filza 2530, 13 March 1840. Also ASF, RR Rendite, Year 1840, « Dimostrazione dei cereali stati introdotti nel Porto di Livorno dal di primo gennajo a tutto il di 31 dicembre 1839 ».

consular reports from Odessa reveal increasing awareness of the importance of the Russian trade for the tables and the prosperity of Tuscany. In 1844 the Tuscan consul at Odessa, T. Rodocannachi, who was a member of a great Greek mercantile family established at Livorno, wrote to his superiors in the Grand Duchy, and advised them of the wisdom of conferring an honorary title on Count Vorontsov, the governor general of New Russia and Bessarabia. The stated reason for so honouring Count Vorontsov was not his great merits, but the need to cultivate good relations with men of authority and influence in South Russia, « since the trade with the Black Sea and with Azov is regarded, as it is in fact, an object of no slight consequence to the commercial prosperity of the royal state [Tuscany] ». ⁶³ « No care », the letter continues, « should seem superfluous in order to capture the benevolent protection of those superior authorities which have a direct and immediate influence on the better progress of commerce... ». In 1847 Russia and Tuscany signed a new commercial treaty by which the ships of each would be treated equally in the ports of both the states. ⁶⁴

The dependency of Tuscany on Russian wheat was never more obvious than during the Crimean War, which spread consternation through Tuscany's commercial and governmental circles. Emperor Nicholas I forbade all export of wheat from the Russian empire. The reasons given unofficially were that this grain was needed for the troops, and that English warships were not likely to respect the neutrality of grain carriers. There was risk, in other words, that Russian grain might eventually feed the enemy. As of March 1, 1854, even neutrals were forbidden to purchase Russian wheat. ⁶⁵ In this, many Livornese merchants saw their ruin. They bombarded

⁶³ ASF, Affari Esteri, Filza 2538, 12 April 1844.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Protocollo 394.59, 14 May 1847. In Tuscany the Council of State recommended that honours be distributed to all the Russians who were instrumental in getting the new treaty signed and suggested that titles should go to Nesselrode as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Butenev who had been in charge of the negotiations. An honorary title should also be conferred upon « the first official and secretary for foreign affairs of St. Petersburg whose name at the moment is not known ». ASF, Affari Esteri, Protocollo 394.59, 7 June 1847.

⁶⁵ National Archives, Washington, D.C. (henceforth, NA) Odessa, Consular Report, I March 1854.

their government with mournful letters, begging for intercession at the court of the tsar. The following letter, sent by one Giorgio Pieruzzini, in May, 1854, is typical of many:

The subscribed Tuscan subject, trader in Livorno, engaged in the commerce of cereals and oil seed which are exported from the markets of the Mediterranean and the Russian Ocean where he has agents, has the honour to humbly explain to your Excellency that on account of the prohibition against export of cereals from the ports of the Black Sea and Azov decreed by His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, he has been hard hit financially because of the quantity of wheat which for some time past he had purchased in Russia, to the amount of 5,000 chetverts of hard and soft wheat, all in the ports of the Sea of Azov, ready to be exported.

Not only will the weather damage this cereal, but there will be incalculable sacrifices because of the ship rents paid, the expenses of storing and maintaining the wheat already purchased and the daily devaluation of that wheat.

Moved by such considerations which sorrowfully worry me, I see no other recourse than to supplicate your Excellency to intercede for me with the Imperial Russian Government in order to obtain some modification in regard to Tuscany of the measures taken against the export of cereals, or at least to accord to Tuscany the right to resell the cereals which has been accorded to other nations so that the damages may be avoided.⁶⁶

In June of the same year, Tuscany officially asked for permission to resell the wheat in Odessa, and in November of the same year the Russian consul at Rome notified Florence that Tuscany would enjoy the same privilege accorded to all neutrals, that is, that those cereals purchased at Odessa before March 12, 1854, would be repurchased by the Russian government.⁶⁷

With the closing of the Russian ports to commerce in grains, Tuscany had to find alternative sources of wheat. The Florentine *mercuriali* (official reports, published three times a week, of the prices of basic foodstuffs sold in the city) record the sudden appearance of Spanish wheat on January 20, 1855, and the variety sold

⁶⁶ ASF, Affari Esteri, Protocollo No. 474.19, 2 May 1854; *ibid.* 4 May 1854.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Protocollo 475. 23, June 1854; *ibid.* Protocollo 480.13, 13 Nov. 1854.

was, not surprisingly, hard wheat.⁶⁸ *Il Corriere Italiano*, a commercial newspaper published in Vienna, observed, rather casually, that the closing of the Russian ports would mean only that the grain trade would take new directions. Generous supplies of grain, the *Corriere* affirmed, were available in Turkey, along the coast of Africa, and in the two Americas.⁶⁹ During the first three months of 1855, when the Russian ports were completely blocked, Genoa imported most of her wheat from Spain; other shipments came from France, Tuscany, the Barbary coast, Sardinia, and elsewhere.⁷⁰ Despite the confidence of the *Corriere*, the supply of wheat fell, and prices inevitably rose. The fear of runaway wheat prices prompted P. Rodocannachi to advise the Grand Duke, that he should, if possible, keep full the deposits at Livorno; the known existence of large quantities of available wheat would discourage local speculators from bidding up prices.⁷¹

Not only Tuscany, but most of Western Europe showed concern in regard to the supplies of wheat and its price as the Crimean war continued. In the midst of the war, in September 1855, the Tuscan consul at Hamburg wrote with alarm:

Here and in all north Germany food prices have increased in an extraordinary manner because of the lack of shipments of wheat from Russia and also because of a failure of the potato crop, which forms the principal food item in the diet of workers, and then too because of the series of purchases made of wheat, meat, etc. for the Anglo-French armies and navies.⁷²

In answer to an anxious query from the French consul in Tuscany, concerning the available stocks of cereals, the Florentine authorities replied that the last harvest had fortunately been fairly abundant, and that prices of wheat in July were somewhat below the peak prices of May and June, but they were still quite high ».

⁶⁸ ACF, Mercuriali, Series 45, No. 22.

⁶⁹ *Il Corriere Italiano*, 15 Feb. 1856.

⁷⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁷¹ ASF, Affari Esteri, Protocollo 482.101, 8 Nov. 1855.

⁷² *Ibid.* Filza 2554, 25 Sept. 1855.

As for the future, prices could be expected to reflect the facility with which wheat could be imported from Egypt and the Black Sea . . .

. . . from whence Tuscany draws the greatest part of her wheat for her consumption needs. Who then, in fact, does not know that Tuscan production, even in the years of greatest abundance is never enough to suffice for the needs of this country.⁷³

However, the shortage of wheat was eased somewhat the following year. Tuscany applied to the imperial Russian court for the same concession accorded Austria: that of purchasing wheat at the Danubian ports, Galatz in particular. The applications, sent from the foreign minister in Tuscany to the Russian chargé d'affaires in Rome, tactfully reminded him of the close ties binding Russia and Tuscany. The Russian government responded favourable to the request, on condition that the Tuscan purchasers solemnly declare that such wheat would be consumed only within Tuscany and not exported to the enemy. Almost at once we have notice of five Tuscan captains in Galatz, purchasing wheat and applying for the necessary export licenses. Rodocannachi was among the first to take advantage of the newly opened market at Galatz, and his purchases of wheat were substantial—amounting to 5,500 kilos or 33,000 Tuscan sacks.⁷⁴

The export of Danubian grain helped relieve the shortage of wheat in Tuscany, but Tuscan diplomats still pressed for greater concessions. The Russian envoy in Rome assured the Florentine officials that he had written to Count Nesselrode himself, the imperial chancellor, urging him to reopen the south-Russian ports. For a short time there seemed to be hope that neutrals would be allowed to export cereals from the Russian ports of the Black Sea. A letter from Vienna to Florence, dated December 12, 1855, carried news that the Emperor had permitted the commercial house

⁷³ *Ibid.* Protocollo 476.84, 24 July 1854.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Protocollo 485.85, 28 April 1855; 10 May 1855; and 28 April 1855.

of Gopsewich of Trieste to take wheat from a port on the Azov sea.⁷⁵ The reasons for this favour were not explained, and given the excited times, the story may have been based more in rumour than in fact. Still according to the reports reaching Tuscany, Gopsewich had won this lucrative concession because he had intimate ties with the leading bankers of St. Petersburg.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, the Tuscans gained assurance that England and France would permit any neutral ship (if unloaded) to enter the Sea of Azov to purchase wheat, as long as that wheat was destined for a neutral or for a country friendly to the Allies.⁷⁷ But in spite of these hopes, the Emperor did not permit the export of cereals until peace.⁷⁸ To make matters worse, in November, 1855, the Ottoman government forbade export of grain from the lands it ruled, in order to assure abundant supplies of cereals for the armed forces.⁷⁹

The disturbing experience of the Crimean War made Tuscany acutely conscious of her dependence upon grain imported from the ports of the Black Sea. With peace, she hurried to appoint consuls at new posts in South Russia: Mariopol, Kerch, Taganrog, Berdiansk, Vice-consulates dependent on Odessa were also established in Kherson and Eupatoria (June, 1856).

The volumes of Russian wheat imported into Tuscany and Italy continued to increase after Italian unification (1861). Before the First World War, Italy was one of imperial Russia's chief trading partners, and a principal consumer of the most characteristic Russian export of the epoch — wheat.⁸⁰ But we must restrict our attention here to the period before 1861, and to the history of the port of Livorno.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Protocollo 493.49, 15 Dec. 1855.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Protocollo 491.24, Sept. 1855.

⁷⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁸ NA, Odessa, Consular Report, 7 April 1856. The American consul reported that on 5 April exports of all articles were permitted from Odessa.

⁷⁹ ASF, Affari Esteri, Protocollo 493.33, 20 Nov. 1855.

⁸⁰ For discussions of Italo-Russian trade relations after 1860, see UGO CARPRARA, *Il commercio del grano*, I-II, Milan, 1928; VINCENZO CACCIAPUOTI, *Relazioni commerciali tra l'Italia e la Russia, 1878-1927*, Naples, 1928; and C. MORANDI, *Le relazioni tra l'Italia e la Russia dal 1900 al 1917*, Florence, 1949.

Concerning Livorno and its history, this significant pattern of development emerges from our study. Livorno was important both as a port of deposit and as a port of entry into the growing market of Tuscany. Its central position in the Mediterranean; the liberal trading statute which governed its commerce; good facilities for handling ships and for loading, unloading, or depositing their cargoes; and the presence there of experienced merchants who had excellent knowledge of Mediterranean markets—all these factors helped assure Livorno's importance as a deposit port for cereals, in the early nineteenth century. For a period in the late 1830's, Livorno seems to have served as the most important deposit port in the Mediterranean, serving an essential function in the flow of Russian wheat to the West. But the prosperity which the deposit trade in cereals engendered depended upon factors beyond the control of a single port. As we have already stated, this deposit trade basically reflected several factors: the tariff policy of the sliding scale, maintained by most Western governments, which prevented merchants from knowing well in advance what terms they would receive for imported cereals; the limited capacity, speed and range of sailing ships; and slow communications, concerning markets, before the advent of the telegraph. After 1850, the new policy of free trade in grain, and the technical improvements in ships and in communications, made possible and profitable direct trade between the nations which produced and consumed wheat. The fate of the deposit ports in the cereal trade was thus sealed, and Livorno too lost its previous importance. In 1853 Tuscan authorities observed that not even Tuscan ships put into the port of Livorno as frequently as in the past; England's new and liberal trading policy kept them at sea, seeing to reach as rapidly as possible this newly opened and lucrative market:

Some ships which leave from here for the Black Sea go directly from there for England, and some of these sail again directly from England for the Black Sea, since some of them are bound by contract for two or three voyages. Among these ships are some belonging to the commercial firms established here [Livorno] which find it

profitable to send their ships directly from the Black Sea for England and vice versa. All of this is a consequence of Great Britain's commercial reform, which has promoted direct commerce, and thus has diminished the resources in this market place which used to come from the deposit of cereals especially.⁸¹

As other European nations liberalized their policy toward grain imports, Livorno suffered still more. Ironically, Tuscany, one of the first European champions of free trade, declined as a commercial entrepôt, because the liberal policy in the cereal commerce which she had so long espoused was at last adopted widely across Europe.

The new and efficient means of transportation and communication also served to undermine Livorno as a deposit port, set between producers and purchasers. The implications of the new technology were described by the Captain of the Port of Livorno in 1858:

Our port has felt the general consequences of the new commercial transformations caused by steamships and the telegraph. Since large deposits were made impossible after the almost universal adoption of free trade, traffic had to be limited to consumption, especially after speculation disappeared because of the rapidity with which the telegraph carries the news of prices of goods.⁸²

The decline of the deposit trade was a severe blow to the commercial importance of the port of Livorno. There were, to be sure, some compensations. Tuscany was becoming an ever better customer for Russian grain, and Livorno was Tuscany's chief port of entry. But the grain importers of Western Europe who had formerly purchased their wheat at Livorno or other deposit ports now negotiated directly with the producers. In this transition to a new organization in the cereal trade, Livorno lost its position as a chief intermediary between Russia and Europe.

⁸¹ ASF, Ministero delle Finanze, Capi Rotti 101, 10 May 1853. See also Vol'sKIY, *Očerok*, p. 131 who notes that after the abolition of the Corn Laws, many more ships sailed from Odessa directly to England.

⁸² ASF, Ministero delle Finanze, Capi Rotti 101, 27 Aug. 1858.