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Nataliia Voloshkova

PLAN

TEXTE

Introduction

1 In his account of travels in Europe and Asia in 1822-1823, George Matthew Jones (1785?-1831) stated that "no town since the founding of Petersburg [...] has excited greater interest in Europe than Odessa [1]". Another traveller, Robert Lyall (1789-1831), expressed his resolution to "take notice of every thing remarkable in this new city [2]", pointing out the scarcity of information about Odesa [3]. According to Lyall, the city was not "accurately described by any English traveller since it acquired much importance [4]". Indeed, several earlier descriptions of Odesa composed by the British travellers were cursory and formulaic [5] and they did not satisfy the growing interest of many inquisitive readers eager to learn more about it.

2 At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Britons, who had earlier followed three partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1772, 1793,1795) and the annexation of Crimea (1783) orchestrated by the Russian Empire, read about the ongoing colonization of the former Ottoman, Tatar, and Cossack lands north of the Black Sea. The region was known as the province of New Russia or *Novorosiia* (the southern and south-eastern territories of present-day Ukraine). Odesa, its largest city and administrative centre, drew British readers' particular attention. The reasons behind this were the city's strategic location and its rapid growth at the beginning of the nineteenth

century. Built where the Ottoman fort of Hadzhibey had once stood, Odesa was a product of the Russian Empire's expansionist policy pursued in the Black Sea region in the second half of the eighteenth century. According to Serhiy Bilenky, the acquisition of the Ottoman territories between the lower Dnipro and the Dnister Rivers and the founding of Odesa around 1794 not only "permanently outlined the political map of the region", but also "expanded further southward the boundaries of 'eastern Europe' as a newly imagined borderland between Europe and Asia [6]".

3 During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Odesa was transformed from a small town to an important financial centre, a hub of international trade, a busy seaport, and a sea-bathing resort. Its growth was closely connected with the state-funded construction of the harbour and port facilities [7]. Giovanni Cadioli has stressed that Odesa, acting as "the Russian Empire's main exporting route for grain", played a crucial role in nineteenth-century wheat trade [8]. Patricia Herlihy has pointed out that the city's location made it "a kind of commercial and cultural interface between the Russian Empire and the outside world [9]". Along with other newly-founded cities in New Russia (Kherson, Mykolaiv, Katerynoslav), Odesa became a model of "urban planning and commercial economy, showcasing the European façade of the Russian Empire [10]". After the appointment of Armand-Emmanuel de Vignerot du Plessis, the Fifth Duke of Richelieu (1766-1822), who would govern the city between 1803 and 1814 [11], Odesa developed at a remarkable rate. The Duke of Richelieu's strategy included the active encouragement of foreign citizens from Western Europe to come and start their businesses in Odesa and its environs [12]. As a result, the city's multinational population boasted the enterprising Italian, German, French, Spanish, and British people who sought pecuniary benefits hundreds of miles away from their home countries. Anna Makolkin has termed them "a foreign demographic heart inside the body of the Slavic population zone [13]".

4 Indeed, Britons who resided in Odesa in the 1820s discussed the city's phenomenal expansion and cosmopolitanism in their travel accounts. Defined by Guido Hausmann as "a social practice of openness towards individuals and the wider world [14]", cosmopolitanism was the city's prominent feature in that period. Acknowledging the difficulty of tracing cosmopolitanism in the early days of Odesa [15], Mirja Lecke

and Efraim Sicher have pointed out that the city's "forgotten history of intercultural activity and cosmopolitan spaces" still remain largely hidden "in archives, newspapers, and literary texts", though it "deserves to be recovered and studied[16]". In this light, British travel accounts offer rich insights into the dynamics of early-nineteenth-century Odesa, providing valuable information about travellers' perceptions of and experiences in the city's multinational and multilingual environment.

5 Tim Youngs, a noted scholar of travel writing, has stressed that travel texts in that period not only recorded "colonial expansion and imperial rule", but also related "meetings, exchanges and movements towards the comprehension of oneself and of others[17]". In this sense, travel narratives about Odesa are important sources which help us to understand how Britons represented the city, making attempts not only to assess its role in the economy of the Russian Empire, but also to convey its lively and convivial atmosphere. In doing this, I argue, they "drew" Odesa on the mental maps of the British (and more broadly the Continent's) reading public. While there, British travellers took on the task of deciding in what degree the city was "civilised". They inspected Odesa's social venues, observed its inhabitants' sociable practices and recorded their own sociable encounters. Such activities were not accidental, as in the long eighteenth century "polite sociability [...] became the hallmark of civilization[18]". Read through the lens of sociability, *i.e.* "a set of practices performed within a specific and crucial context" with conversation as its "ultimate expression[19]", early-nineteenth-century British travel accounts advance our understanding of how their authors, through their attendance at and/or participation in Odesa's sociable gatherings, formed and projected the positive image of the "civilised" frontier city.

6 This article considers eight British travel accounts relating visits to Odesa, which have received little attention to date. Along with George Matthew Jones's and Robert Lyall's travelogues mentioned earlier, it explores an unpublished three-volume travel journal penned by Robert Lee[20] (1793-1877), who later converted it into his *Last Days of Alexander*[21] (1854). Other published travel accounts, which this article analyses, were produced by Robert Bremner (1806-1872), Ebenezer Henderson (1784-1858), George Lefevre (1798-1846),

Edward Morton (1799-1859), and John Moore [22]. All these men, except Bremner who stayed at Odesa in 1836, resided there in the 1820s. Their motives for this were varied. Only one of them, John Moore [23], seems to have journeyed across the Continent with the purpose of spending three months in Odesa and publishing an account of his travel after coming back home. Notably, these travellers were well-educated middle-class men. Morton, Lee [24], and Lefevre were physicians who provided medical service to Russian and Polish nobles. Lyall, who was also a medical man, undertook a long journey across the Russian Empire from April to August 1822, accompanying two Italian noblemen and an English gentleman in the capacity of a physician, guide, and interpreter [25]. Bremner [26] was a travelling companion to two Britons (Colonel Hepburn and Colonel Macdonald of Rossie). Henderson engaged in missionary activities, establishing the Bible societies in the Russian Empire in the 1820s, while Jones was a British Royal Navy captain who visited Odesa in 1823. For all of them, except Lyall and Bremner [27], the travelogue would be their only publication in this genre.

Odesa's Cosmopolitan Spirit

7 Gavriil Guerakov (1775-1838), a traveller from St Petersburg who visited Odesa in 1820, noted in his travel account that "the Russian is definitely not at home in Odesa [28]". This statement suggests the city's Otherness perceived by those who arrived there from the central provinces of the Russian Empire. But how did our British travellers perceive Odesa, which "in the space of a very few years [...] was built, peopled, organized, and became rich and prosperous [29]"? What urban characteristics did they highlight? First, they informed their readers about Odesa's central role in the province of New Russia. For instance, John Moore, who resided there in 1824, noted:

> This country is called New Russia, of which Odessa may be said to be the capital [...] the mass of the peasantry forms a part of the numerous population styled Little Russians [Ukrainians], being of the same race as the inhabitants of Podolia [Podillia], Wolhynia [Volyn'], Pultawa [Poltava], part of Gallitzia [Galicia], etc.; they differ in many respects from the Moscovites or Grand Russians [30].

8 Similar to Venice, "one of the most cosmopolitan cities of Europe as well as a busy port serving many foreign destinations [31]", Odesa boasted a multinational population, which, according to Moore, consisted of "Greeks (who are the most numerous), Russians [32], Poles, Italians, French, a few English, Germans, Spaniards, Jews, Karaite Jews [33], some Armenians, Tartars, Moldavians etc. [34]" Highlighting the city's cultural diversity, he noted that "the society of Odessa is as varied as are the heterogeneous elements of which it is composed [35]". Lee, who was also impressed by Odesa's multiethnic mosaic in 1825, recorded that "in the streets of the town were seen Greeks, Jews, Russians, Poles, Germans, French, Americans, and English, in the costumes of their respective nations [36]". Jones, for example, described Ukrainian peasants who came to Odesa in their oxen-driven carts loaded with grain:

> It is curious to see them [carts] assembled in the streets of Odessa, the oxen panting for water, difficult to be procured, and the drivers lying about waiting for their turn to be discharged [...] Their clothing consists of a shirt, a frock, and trowsers (*sic*), without either hat or shoes; at night, in summer, the canopy of heaven is their covering; in colder weather they take shelter in or under their carts, while the oxen graze [37].

9 Odesa was characterised by linguistic diversity that shaped its multilingual profile. In this respect, it resembled Rome, "a city whose international community of residents was multilingual [38]". Unsurprisingly, the British travel accounts contained references to many languages heard in Odesa. As Tim Youngs has argued: in travel narratives "the sound of the spoken word is commented on when travellers hear voices (languages, dialects or accents) that are foreign to them [39]". In this sense, the travellers were impressed by the fact that the Italian language was heard everywhere in Odesa (there were approximately 10,000 Italians in the city's population of 33,000 people in 1827 [40]). For example, Bremner pointed out that "the soft accents of the *lingua Toscana* itself are heard from so many lips, that the overjoyed stranger [...] almost persuades himself that he has reached the gayest and sunniest portion of Europe [41]". Lyall explained the popularity of Odesa's Italian Opera by the key role of the Italian language in the city: "The Italian opera is much liked at

Odéssa (*sic*), at which we need not be surprised, since the Italian language is generally spoken here[42]". Moore noted that French and Italian were "much spoken in good company[43]". To navigate the city's multilingual environment, he required the assistance of a servant fluent in several languages. For this purpose, Moore hired a Greek who spoke seven or eight languages[44]. The latter most probably spoke English, Spanish, Russian (or Ukrainian), and Italian because Moore referred to him as "my poor John – *alias* Juan – *alias* Iwan – *alias* Giovanni[45]".

10 In addition to every day's informal multilingual communication of the inhabitants, multilingualism was also present at the official level. For example, Morton noted that the names of the city's spacious streets were indicated in Russian and Italian. In his travelogue, he chose to use their Italian equivalents: the Strada Chersona, the Strada Ribas, the Strada Richelieu[46]. The city's polyglot character also expressed itself in the worship services and religious ceremonies performed in different languages in the city's Roman Catholic Cathedral[47], two Orthodox churches (one of them was St Nicholas Cathedral), a synagogue (by 1837 there were seven synagogues in the city[48]), a Rascolnics church, and a Lutheran chapel[49]. For example, on 13 February 1825, Lee recorded that he went to listen to "a Swiss clergyman [who] preached this morning", noting that he did not enjoy his preaching "so full of grimace[50]".

11 Moreover, foreign languages were taught in Odesa's educational establishments. At the Institute for Noble Women, founded in 1806, girls were instructed in Italian, French, and Russian[51]. In 1829, as Morton noted, preparations were underway to open the first school for Oriental languages in the Russian Empire to train interpreters to serve the government[52]. Also, the only newspaper in Odesa at that time – *Journal d'Odessa* – was published in two languages. Morton informed his readers that this newspaper contained "two columns in each page, one in French and the other in Russ, the former being sometimes a translation of the latter, but frequently composed of entirely different matter[53]". Notably, the city's public events were also multilingual. On 4 May 1828, Morton went to the inauguration of the statue of Richelieu, which was conducted in three languages (Russian, French, and Italian):

> The ceremony commenced by reading the act by which the Emperor Alexander had granted permission to the inhabitants of Odessa to raise a monument to the memory of their deceased Governor-general; after this, the Reverend P. Kounitsky [...] delivered an oration in Russ [...] After him, M. Sicard, one of the oldest inhabitants of Odessa, delivered an energetic discourse in the French language, in the praise of the deceased. Two of the professors of the Lyceum then eulogized the departed Duke: the one in Russ, and the other in Italian [54].

12 The travellers not only singled out Odesa's multiethnicity and linguistic diversity but also its enterprising spirit which characterized the quotidian lives of its inhabitants. In their opinion, these three aspects of the city's life were the marks of freedom and "civilization", which distinguished Odesa from other cities in the Russian Empire. George Lefevre, who stayed at Odesa in 1828 and later practiced medicine in St. Petersburg, stated that Odesa was "the only town in Russia in which one can for a moment feel the same degree of independence which one enjoys in other towns of Europe [55]". He compared Odesa to Marseilles [56], while to Morton it resembled London because "society at Odessa seemed as free and unrestrained as in London [57]". Lefevre pointed out that notwithstanding its frontier location the city was more civilised and "secure" compared to the metropolitan centre:

> Russia seems to offer an anomaly, inasmuch as her civilisation recedes from the centre to the extremities, and it is upon her Asiatic limits that we find the most perfect organization [...] we find our persons more secure than in Moscow or St Petersburg [58].

13 What impressed the British travellers was that the two cultures – Western and Eastern – were vividly present in the city. For them, Odesa was a liminal place, located at "the world's end [59]". The word "world" here is synonymous to European "civilization", and the city was at its edge. Notwithstanding its location, Odesa's belongingness to the European "world" did not raise doubts. For example, several social venues in the city reminded the travellers of those they had left behind in Britain. For example, Lyall described his impressions of the annual English horse races, held on the city's outskirts. While there,

"[we] could almost have believed ourselves transported to England[60]". He also noted that in one of Odesa's hotels was "a lately-formed *English Club*, or reading room [...] where are received the London newspapers and British journals, &c., and to which strangers are admitted, upon having their names registered by one of its members[61]". Morton informed his readers that the Easter fair held not far from the city's fortress was "very much resembling those in England[62]". Notably, he stressed that "all the respectable inhabitants" (except Greek and Turkish merchants) were "clothed like those of the great continental or English towns[63]". It came as a surprise to him that "dandies may be found even at Odessa[64]".

14 On the other hand, the travellers recorded that the place had a distinctive Eastern vibe. For Moore, Odesa was "a singular spot – a semi-oriental city[65]". Bremner noted that among its "oriental luxuries" was a Turkish bathhouse, and "though the building is not very elegant, [bath] may here be enjoyed in as great perfection as at Constantinople itself[66]". Turkish, Armenian, and other eastern languages were heard in the streets, and the national dress worn by Greek and Turkish merchants gave the city peculiar Eastern flavour. While describing Odesa's inhabitants, Moore singled out Crimean Karaites who had an "Asiatic" appearance:

> They are called Caraïtes, or Caraïmes, and are fine, tall, handsome men; their costume is quite different to that of the other Jews: their heads are shaven; they wear high caps, made of black Astrakhan lambs'-skin, full trousers and short jackets – their appearance is quite Asiatic. These people deal in Turkish-stuffs, tobacco, pipes, balm of Mecca, shawls, coffee, attar of roses, Astrakhan lambs'-skins[67].

15 Apart from the streets, shops, and bazaars where were "present a variety of groups and costumes[68]", the city's public gardens, according to the travellers, were a social venue which gathered the leisured people of different nations on Sundays. Located in the city's centre, this place displayed Odesa's multinational and multilingual character. Lyall noted:

> The public gardens, from their central situation, are a great ornament to the town, and a source of pleasure to the inhabitants of

> Odessa. On Sunday evening, during the fine season, they become the scene of grand promenades, which are attended by crowds of individuals of a variety of nations, habited in their diversified costumes and speaking different languages [69].

16 Another public place in Odesa which, according to Jones, attracted people in the summertime was its beach. He noted that "the scene during the mornings and evenings, and sometimes throughout the whole day, is most lively, the beach literally swarming with bathers of both sexes and all ages [70]". Lee was surprised to see that the images of the Romantic poet, George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), decorated the interior of the city's bathing room ("[the] portraits of his lordship were spread on the walls [71]").

17 It should be pointed out that notwithstanding the city's multiethnic profile, the intermingling of cultures did not seem to be ubiquitous there. Moore stressed that there was a "want of amalgamation of the individuals of different nations [72]", as the inhabitants preferred to communicate within their communities: "The Russians, Greeks, French and Italians have their respective coteries, and seem, generally, to limit their visitings to their compatriots [73]." He noted that Jews, for example, lived "in a separate quarter" in Odessa [74]. Henderson mentioned that the Jewish inhabitants of the city seriously suffered from open hostility and violence in 1821:

> The 19th of June was a remarkable day in the history of this town, being the day on which the corpse of the late Greek Patriarch Gregory was interred, with all the pomp and splendour [...] as it was noised abroad that the Jews of Constantinople had treated the dead body of the Patriarch with the greatest indignity, the rage of the populace was directed against the poor Hebrews in Odessa, to such a degree, that most of them had their windows broken; many, who were out in the streets, were most cruelly pelted with stones and mud; and it was reported that several actually lost their lives in the tumult [75].

18 In a journal entry dated 7 August 1825, Lee recorded that he witnessed an argument between two guests (a Russian and a Pole) which ended in duel. The incident occurred during the ball at Count M.S. Vorontsov's [76] house on 4 August 1825. At the party, which "went

off with little gaiety" because few ladies attended it, "a dispute originated about a chair between a young officer & polish gentleman which led to a duel the following morning with swords but no injury was sustained on either Side[77]". Evidence of certain tensions within Odesa's multinational community suggests that they were caused by issues of political and religious character.

British Travellers' Social Life in Odesa

19 British travel accounts not only offer rich material about Odesa's cultural and linguistic diversity, but they also reveal the intensity and range of their authors' social contacts which shaped their personal experiences in the city. These depended on several factors such as duration of residence, occupation, language skills, and sociable disposition. Overall, all the authors positively assessed the city's social life and their participation in it. For example, eulogizing his stay at Odesa filled with many sociable activities, Bremner juxtaposed the warm hospitable southern city, which supplied its visitors with delicious watermelons, with the cold imperial centre, where food was dull and plain:

> We enjoyed ourselves at Odessa as if it were the most favoured spot on earth [...] The genial climate and the refreshing water-melons would of themselves make Odessa an elysium, after the chills and the turnips of Muscovy [...] In short – boating parties on the beautiful bay, good dinners with our friends, twilight walks on the promenade where all the best society of the place is to be met, and plenty of music at night – all these helped to make time pass agreeably[78].

20 Notably, Italian culture was of significant importance in Odesa. According to Anna Makolkin, "the Italian Zeitgeist permeated all aspects of Odessa's urban life[79]". The theatre, popular with the city's visitors and locals, was at the heart of urban sociability in that period. The travellers' narratives not only contained many comments of their visits to the theatre, where "Russian, Polish, and German plays, and Italian operas[80]" were performed, but also provided glimpses of its repertoire in the 1820s. Moore reported that he attended "the operas of Rossini" given by the Italian company, as well as several Polish

plays shown "now and then" and the "French vaudevilles" performed by a "small French company[81]". Lyall also attended one of Rossini's operas, *Il Turco in Italia*[82], on 2 May 1822; he was "much pleased with the performance[83]". Lee went to Odesa's theatre several times. On 1 February 1825, he enjoyed *Agnese*[84] performed there and was "much pleased with the whole scene[85]". Ten days later, when *Don Juan*[86] was premiered, Lee recorded that "the orchestra [was] excellent, & the whole extremely well managed[87]". Comparing Odesa's theatre with those in the empire's centre, Morton found its performances "by any means inferior to those at the Italian Opera House of St. Petersburg[88]", Lefevre considered them "far superior to anything which I afterwards saw in Russia[89]".

21 Importantly, when assessing Odesa's theatre as a sociable space, Lefevre complained that it was less dynamic in comparison with theatres at home. In Britain, spectators were not expected to be silent; rounds of applause, jokes, and comments interrupted a performance. Moreover, "the freedom of [British] spectators to express dissension, even to riot, when displeased was a recurrent aspect of theatergoing in this period[90]". On the contrary, in the Russian Empire, according to Lefevre, the rules prescribed the audience to sit quietly during the performance, thus restricting socializing and making spectators less responsive:

> An Englishman does not feel free in a Russian theatre […] you must sit down in one spot during the whole of the time; you cannot go in and out, nor loll against the boxes. It seems that pleasure is a command and that you are a voluntary slave[91].

22 Lefevre noted that hissing, a common expression of one's disapproval of the performance in Britain, was not accepted either: "Then there is no hissing permitted; silent contempt is the only mark of disapprobation[92]." One of the characteristic features of the British theatre in that period, according to Jim Davis, was that its "auditorium […] fully lit throughout the performance" not only stimulated social interaction during the entertainment, but also made the theatre "the largest secular indoor space where people could meet together[93]". In Odesa, as Lee recorded, though "the house was full of people", "it was badly lighted[94]". Lyall also commented that the interior of the theatre was "well-arranged, and not inelegant, but

badly lighted[95]". Similarly, in the earlier entries of his travel journal, Lee observed that the theatres in Frankfurt and Vienna, which he had visited on his way from London to Odesa, were insufficiently illuminated. In Frankfurt, "the House was dark & gloomy[96]", while in Vienna, the theatre was "not well lighted[97]". Lee concluded that "the effect of the whole [entertainment] is much diminished by this, & is indeed a cause why all the foreign theatres when compared with our own are so [...] gloomy[98]".

23 While in Odesa, Britons socialised and/or observed local sociable practices not only in the gathering places such as the public gardens and theatres but also in the city's assembly room. Like assembly rooms in Britain, which "encouraged and regulated sociability in the long eighteenth century[99]", this social venue provided the city's inhabitants with space for dancing, music, and conversation. In Morton's opinion, Odesa's assembly room was "capable of containing 1000 persons[100]", while Lee, who attended several public balls there, noted that that it was "capable of cont[ainin]g about 400 [people][101]". The building was not purposely constructed as an assembly room, having been "built by a private merchant for his own use, but who became a bankrupt[102]". In a journal entry dated 19 January 1825, Lee recorded his participation in a poorly-attended ball which gathered only 200 people. What struck Lee there was the egalitarian character of the ball, as "many of the common people were present[103]" in the room. Though Lee did not give further details, his underlining of the words "common people" reveals how surprised he was to observe such social mingling there. Lee also recorded that the ball's attendees, except those in the military uniform, were dressed according to the French fashion. The ball opened with "an English country dance [...] followed [by] Quadrille a Polonian dance which was very graceful[104]".

24 A week later, Lee went to another public ball, "which was far more numerously attended[105]". He recorded not only its lively atmosphere, but also its multinational character. Mazurka, a Polish folk dance, drew Lee's particular attention:

> It was really a gay & beautiful ball, but the ladies were chiefly the daughters of Greeks, Italian, French &c residing here. The dance called Mazourka peculiar to Poland was extremely pretty. A large

> circle was formed of Ladies & gentlemen, each gentleman in his turn led a lady around the circle & then turned her round sometimes once at other times, twice as in Waltzing[106].

25 Notably, Lee, Morton, and Lefevre related how they attended and formed connections at numerous private social events (dinners, balls, masquerades, musical evenings, and theatricals) held at Count M.S. Vorontsov's house. Morton's account, containing a detailed description of Odesa's social whirl in 1828, offers a rare glimpse of how communication across a cultural boundary led to misunderstanding. Morton recorded how Vizier Yusuf Pasha and his attendants[107], who were invited to the ball at Count M.S Vorontsov's (where the author was also present), misunderstood the cultural norms in the new environment. According to Morton, among the women dancers were "a few rather good-looking young ladies, including two Greeks, [...] several approaching the middle age, and one lady about sixty, who had scarcely ever ceased dancing during the whole of the evening[108]". When at the end of the ball Yusuf Pasha was asked to give his opinion of the dancing party, his answer revealed that he mistook the female guests who had enjoyed dancing for the hired dance performers:

> With respect to those [women guests] of the middle age, the Pacha observed, that he thought it an insult to the Governor-general that such women should be sent to dance at his house, (for it appears he supposed them to be selected by the Master of the Police, and to be, what are denominated in Turkey, dancing girls;) and as for the old lady, he asked for what purpose did she dance? For he could not conceive[109].

26 Importantly, Morton's, Lefevre's, and Lee's contacts in Odesa were of the widest spectrum – from local servants to the members of the aristocratic families and the ruling family. Being the private physicians of Count M.S. Vorontsov, Morton and Lee communicated daily with his family, his circle of friends and acquaintances, and with the members of the Count's numerous staff. Lee's case is particularly illustrative of how, through conversation, he made new contacts, acquired knowledge, and spent his leisure time with his acquaintances both at Odesa's public venues and private homes, enjoying an atmosphere of conviviality there. Lee's journal reveals that he regu-

larly met with his compatriots [110]. For example, conversations with the British Consul in Odesa, which included book discussions, were particularly informative and entertaining. Notably, books were among the topics the two Britons discussed. On 16 February 1825, Lee noted: "In the society of Mr. W^{m} Yeames I always find the greatest pleasure [...] so full of curious anecdote is his conversation that it never ceases to please. He has been reading Fosters Journey from India [111]".

27 Lee's network of acquaintances included Odesa's residents from other countries [112]. Notably, among them was George Sykes Sonntag (Georg von Sonntag, 1786-1841), a German born in Philadelphia who served as a commander of the quarantine port in Odesa [113]. During Lee's residence in Odesa, he also communicated with the local medical men [114] and travellers from Western Europe who journeyed via Odesa. For example, on 16 February 1825 he recorded that he got acquainted with two Frenchmen travelling to India (one of them was "occupied with Geological pursuits", and the other was a physician "travelling for botanical purposes [115]"). Information which Lee gained during his conversation with them was particularly useful [116], as Lee planned to go to India in the future [117].

28 Notably, Moore informed his readers that in the homes of his new acquaintances at Odesa he enjoyed a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. There he took a habit of smoking in the Turkish style, which presupposed the use of a long pipe (chibouk):

> Almost every body (*sic*) here smokes *à la Turque*. The pipes are made of long cherry-sticks, which form a considerable article of commerce from Tifflis [present-day Tbilisi]. The grand display of the mouth-pieces, which are made of amber, and are more or less ornamented with enamel or gold: I have seen some decorated with precious stones. In houses where I have visited, several pipes were ranged against the walls in the dining-room, much in the same way as the *queues* are placed in a billiard-room. The Oriental custom of offering the pipe to visitors is kept up here; the amber mouth-piece is said to be a safeguard against any unpleasant consequences that might arise from different persons using the same pipe: - the stem, or stick is long enough to rest on the ground. The Turkish tobacco is of a very superior description; its aromatic odour is a temptation too strong to be resisted; so I have, occasionally, "puffed sorrow away" like my neighbours [118].

29 Bremner also noted that the habit of smoking in the Turkish style was the passion of "the gentlemen of Odessa", stressing that if a man once smoked "the seductive chibouque", he could not stop using it[119]. Thus, these comments not only add to our understanding of Odesa as a meeting point of West and East, a place of "cultural plurality and hybridity[120]", but they also show how fast the travellers adjusted to the new cultural environment, adopting the eastern habit of smoking practiced in Odesa.

Conclusion

30 In this article, I have explored (for the first time) eight travel accounts of visits to Odesa to show that these valuable narratives significantly add to our understanding of how the British travellers perceived early-nineteenth-century Odesa and how they related their personal experiences in the city. My analysis has demonstrated that the authors were unanimous in singling out Odesa's cosmopolitan spirit. Their texts provide rich insights into the social life of the city's vibrant multinational community characterized by linguistic diversity at the official and unofficial levels. At the same time, all the travellers stressed that Italian culture played an important role in it.

31 Representing Odesa as a city situated on the fringes of the European continent, the authors asserted that it was not only a place of commerce but also a "civilised" city. Odesa's infrastructure was an important indication of its "civilisation". Similar to other European cities, it provided social venues where locals and numerous visitors to the city met, interacted, and spent their leisure time. My analysis of the travel accounts has also revealed that the British travellers brought from home certain expectations regarding sociability in the urban gathering places. They assessed Odesa's social venues such as the theatre, assembly room, public gardens, and the sites where the Easter fair and horse races were held, recording their observations and experiences there. Comparing the city's social venues with those in Britain, the travellers acknowledged that though they performed the same functions, sociable practices in some of them (*e.g.*, in the theatre) differed.

32 Along with the city's public social venues, the travellers' sociable encounters occurred at private homes of Odesa's residents, especially

at Count M.S. Vorontsov's, where Lee, Morton, and Lefevre established social contact during dinners, private balls, theatricals, and masquerades. Importantly, both public and private sites of sociability in Odesa were characterized not only by cosmopolitanism and multilingualism. According to the authors, this frontier city, a place where West met East, also possessed a distinctive Eastern vibe.

33 Overall, the British travellers were impressed by the city's cultural diversity and its convivial climate. Representing Odesa as a rapidly developing multiethnic and multilingual urban centre, their travel accounts contributed to "drawing" the city on the mental maps of the reading public in Britain and beyond.

NOTES

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2 Robert Lyall, *Travels in Russia, the Krimea, the Caucasus, and Georgia*, 2 vols, London, T. Cadell and W. Blackwood, 1825, vol. I, p.158.

3 This article uses the present Ukrainian spelling of the city ("Odesa"). Its Russian equivalent ("Odessa") was used by the British travellers in their accounts of travels.

4 Robert Lyall, *Travels in Russia*, *op. cit.*, p. 158. Notably, Lyall acknowledged that for his knowledge about the city he was "greatly indebted" to *Lettres sur Odessa*, authored by A. Sicard, a merchant from Odesa. See, Aînė Sicard, *Lettres sur Odessa*, St Petersbourg, L'imprimerie de Pluchart, 1812.

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43 John Moore, *A Journey from London*, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

46 Edward Morton, *Travels in Russia, and a Residence*, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-199.

47 The Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was the first church built in Odesa.

48 Anna Makolkin, *A History of Odessa*, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

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62 Edward Morton, *Travels in Russia, and a Residence*, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 311.

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66 Robert Bremner, *Excursions in the Interior of Russia*, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

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71 MS 3216, 6 September 1825.

72 John Moore, A *Journey from London*, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 168.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 167.

75 Ebenezer Henderson, *Biblical Researches*, *op. cit.*, pp. 273-274.

76 Count Michail S. Vorontsov (1782-1856) was a governor-general of New Russia between 1823 and 1844. A son of Count S.R. Vorontsov, the Russian

Ambassador to Great Britain in 1785-1806, he spent his childhood and received education in London. In his lifetime, he was known as an Anglophile and a book collector.

77 MS 3215, 7 August 1825, f. 13. Many people in nineteenth-century Poland, which was then a part of the Russian Empire, had strong patriotic feelings and aspired to their country's independence. This led to The November Uprising in 1830-1831, followed by the January Uprising in 1863.

78 Robert Bremner, *Excursions in the Interior of Russia*, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

79 Anna Makolkin, *A History of Odessa*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

80 Robert Lyall, *Travels in Russia*, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

81 John Moore, *A Journey from London*, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162.

82 *Il Turco in Italia* ["The Turk in Italy"], a comic opera by Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868), was first performed in Milan in 1814.

83 Robert Lyall, *Travels in Russia*, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

84 *Agnese* (1809), a popular opera by Ferdinando Paër (1771-1839) was widely performed in Europe.

85 MS 3215, 1 February 1825, f. 79.

86 *Don Juan* [also *Don Giovanni*], a famous opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), first performed in Prague in 1787.

87 MS 3215, 11 Feb 1825, f. 83.

88 Edward Morton, *Travels in Russia, and a Residence*, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

89 George Lefevre, *The Life of a Travelling Physician*, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

90 Jim Davis, "Spectatorship", in Jane Moody, Daniel O'Quinn (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 57-70, p. 58.

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97 MS 3215, 25 November 1825, f. 23.

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100 Edward Morton, *Travels in Russia, and a Residence*, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

101 MS 3215, 19 January 1825, f. 75.

102 *Ibid.*

103 *Ibid.*

104 *Ibid.*

105 MS 3215, 25 January 1825, f. 78.

106 *Ibid.*

107 Yusuf Pasha was an Ottoman commander and governor of Varna sieged by the Russian army in 1828. After surrendering the town on 17 August 1828, he was taken captive and brought to Odesa in October 1828.

108 Edward Morton, *Travels in Russia, and a Residence*, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

109 *Ibid.*

110 See, for example, MS 3215, 10 January 1825, f. 60; 11-12 January 1825, f. 63; 14 January 1825, f. 66.

111 MS 3215, 16 February 1825, f. 86. Here, Lee referred to George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England, through the Northern part of India, Kashmire, Afghanistan, and Persia, and into Russia, by the Caspian Sea*, 2 vols, London, R. Faulder, 1798.

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113 MS 3216, 16 August 1825, f. 14.

114 See, for example, MS 3215, 12 February 1825, f. 84

115 MS 3215, 16 February 1825, f. 86.

116 They discussed the route to India via Persia.

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RÉSUMÉS

English

This article explores eight travel accounts written by the British travellers who resided in Odesa in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The travel narratives offer rich insights into the dynamics of this rapidly growing city in the 1820s, providing valuable information about the travellers' perceptions of and experiences in Odesa's multinational and multilingual environment. The article explores how the travellers inspected the city's social venues by observing local sociable practices and recording their own sociable encounters there. Odesa's gathering places, characterised by cultural diversity and a lively and convivial climate, made a positive impression on them. Along with representing the city as a multiethnic and multilingual urban centre, the travellers pointed out the important role of Italian culture in the city. They also described Odesa as a liminal place situated on the fringes of Europe, singling out its specific Eastern vibe. In doing this, these British accounts of residence in Odesa contributed considerably to "drawing" the city on the mental maps of the reading public at home and beyond.

Français

Cet article explore huit récits de voyage écrits par des voyageurs britanniques qui ont résidé à Odessa au début du XIX^{e} siècle. Ces récits offrent un aperçu riche de la dynamique d'une ville en pleine expansion dans les années 1820, fournissant des informations précieuses sur la perception et sur l'expérience des voyageurs dans l'environnement multinational et multilingue d'Odessa. L'article examine comment les voyageurs ont inspecté les lieux de rencontre de la ville en observant les pratiques sociales locales et en consignant leurs propres rencontres. Les lieux de rassemblement d'Odessa, caractérisés par leur diversité culturelle et leur atmosphère animée et conviviale, leur ont laissé une impression positive. Tout en présentant la ville comme un centre urbain multiethnique et multilingue, les voyageurs ont souligné le rôle important de la culture italienne dans la ville. Ils ont aussi décrit Odessa comme un lieu liminal situé à la périphérie de l'Europe, soulignant son atmosphère orientale spécifique. Ce faisant, ces récits britanniques sur la vie à Odessa ont considérablement contribué à « dessiner » la ville dans l'esprit des lecteurs, tant au Royaume-Uni qu'ailleurs.

INDEX

Mots-clés

récits de voyage, Odessa, sociabilité, cosmopolitisme, multilinguisme, diversité culturelle

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travel accounts, Odesa, sociability, cosmopolitanism, multilingualism, cultural diversity

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