

## Research Project

# Managing Trade: Infrastructure and Economic Practices in the Port of Odessa (1794–1905)

### Third-party funded project

**Project title** Managing Trade: Infrastructure and Economic Practices in the Port of Odessa (1794–1905)

**Principal Investigator(s)** [Belge, Boris](#) ;

**Organisation / Research unit**

Departement Geschichte / Bereich Osteuropäische Geschichte

**Department**

**Project start** 01.09.2020

**Probable end** 31.08.2024

**Status** Active

This project explores the origins of intense competition for trade by focusing on the Russian Empire, which in the nineteenth century literally fed the world: Its principal port, Odessa, enabled Russia to serve as the biggest global exporter of wheat, which propelled it to a dominant economic and political status within the Russian Empire, while the city and port of Odessa itself evolved into a hub of global communication and trade. The attention given to the history of the city by scholars in the field stands in sharp contrast to the virtual neglect of the port's history.

My work on this subject will provide new insights into the history of technology and infrastructure and into the economic, social, and political history of the Russian Empire via its exploration of the interconnections between a changing global trade economy, new transport technologies, and the Russian Empire's specific context and situation. I will examine the multi-layered history of the port facility's development and reconstruction by paying close attention to actors and their agency: In my research I will encounter state administrators, engineers, architects, merchants, ship crews, dock workers and city dwellers. Key factors in my approach will include the port's status as important imperial infrastructure, reliant on the allocation of resources by the imperial centre and simultaneously vital to the Empire's economic microstructure, and its part in the ever-closer network of port cities that emerged in the global nineteenth century. The project will follow the port of Odessa over a century of development, from its foundation in 1794 to the first Russian Revolution of 1905/06 (and beyond), via exploration of a variety of sources from Ukrainian and Russian state archives and published and unpublished material held by libraries. I intend to use approaches from New Economic History and the history of infrastructure and I will employ tools from the digital Humanities to process empirical data and to model the changing shape of the port over the course of the nineteenth century.ä

**Keywords** economic history, trade, Odessa, port

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**Follow-up project of** [4106816 Managing Trade: Infrastructure and Economic Practices in the Port of Odessa \(1794-1905\)](#)

**Add publication**

**Add documents**

**Specify cooperation partners**