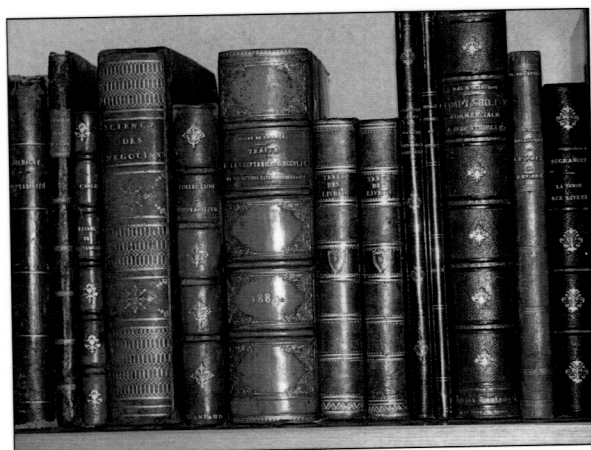
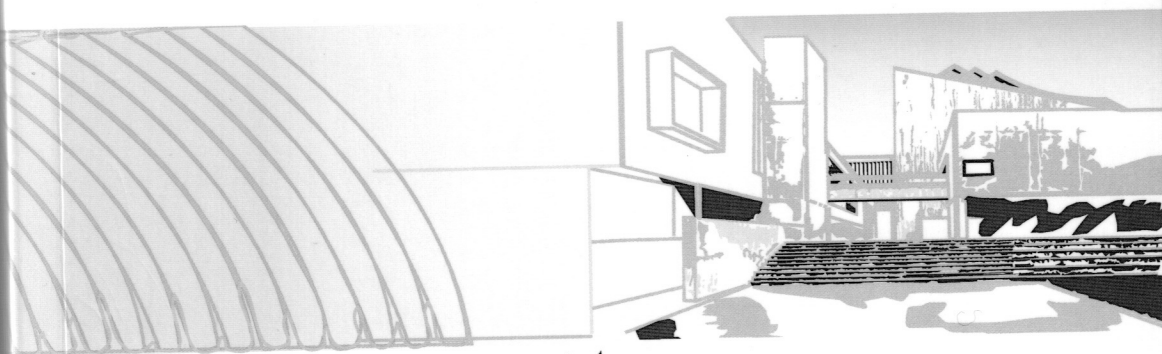


MÉLANGES EN L'HONNEUR DE YANNICK LEMARCHAND



*Sous la direction d'Yves Levant, Raluca Sandu et Henri Zimnovitch
Préface du Professeur Bernard Colasse*

Collection Presses Universitaires de Sceaux



L'Harmattan

MÉLANGES EN L'HONNEUR DE YANNICK LEMARCHAND

La diversité des contributions réunies dans ce livre témoigne de la richesse des travaux de Yannick Lemarchand dans le domaine de l'histoire de la comptabilité et du management. L'étendue des périodes qui y sont abordées en est un signe. On sait que si l'auteur du *Dépérissement à l'amortissement* n'a pas hésité à remonter jusqu'aux racines italiennes du XIV^e siècle, ses recherches sur les outils de gestion de la traite négrière l'ont amené à s'intéresser de façon approfondie au XVIII^e et pour les siècles suivants, on citera notamment ses travaux sur la normalisation comptable et sur le Lieutenant-colonel Rimailho. La multiplicité des thèmes traités dans cet ouvrage est à l'image de la variété des champs que Yannick Lemarchand a lui-même entrepris de parcourir : comptabilités financière, de gestion et publique. Directeur de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Ange-Guépin à Nantes, de 2005 à 2008, il a contribué à faire travailler ensemble des chercheurs venus d'horizons pluriels. Aussi, ne s'étonnera-t-on pas de lire ici des textes écrits par des historiens comme par des gestionnaires. Ces *Mélanges* ne reflètent pour autant qu'un aperçu de ses réalisations, notamment car ils n'abordent guère la dimension internationale, pourtant si présente dans nombre des chantiers qu'il a entrepris : création des Journées d'histoire de la comptabilité et du management, organisation d'expositions, constitution d'un fonds d'ouvrages anciens dédié à l'histoire de la comptabilité à la Bibliothèque universitaire de Nantes, à partir de l'acquisition de la collection Stevelinck, participation à la fondation de l'Association d'histoire du management et des organisations en 2013...

Après une préface de Bernard COLASSE, les chapitres qui composent l'ouvrage sont organisés en cinq parties :

- La comptabilité avant la Révolution industrielle
- Les problèmes méthodologiques en comptabilité
- La diffusion des innovations comptables
- Histoire de la profession comptable
- Les techniques comptables contemporaines

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Accounting, Merchants and the Commercial Literature in Eighteenth-Century Russia

Natalia PLATONOVA

Introduction

From the end of the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, books written for merchants spread across Europe to assist them in their business. Although this kind of books emerged in Russia in the eighteenth century, they represent a valuable addition to the body of European literature specifically written for the needs of commerce. We obtained a sample of these books, which can be classified into two categories, through the eighteenth-century collections of the National Library of Russia and other libraries¹. Firstly, there are the treatises and books providing general information on commerce as an important sector of the national economy, its concept and history. The second category includes the number of books that focus on the practical aspects of merchant activity, such as the dictionaries of commerce and accounting textbooks. In both cases, the connection between development of Russian economy and demand for commercial education during the modern period, and the role of the instructional texts on commerce in the dissemination of literacy, knowledge and Enlightenment ideas and values in the country are subjects that deserve special attention. Our purpose in this article is thus to study how the wholesale or retail merchants have obtained a knowledge of the business concepts and skills in a crucial period when Russia was being transformed into a modern state and empire. With this in mind, to contextualise the content of such treatises and books, the occupations and the aims of their authors and when and where they were published are first considered².

In the last twenty years, such literature attracted a growing interest among researchers who explore the history of book culture, the accounting history and

¹ Most of these books are inventoried in the Unified Catalog of the Russian Eighteenth-Century Secular Printed Book 1725-1800 (Moscow, 1962-1975).

² The present paper is a continuation of our research initiated in a recent article : *Édition, diffusion et réception des premiers ouvrages sur le commerce et la comptabilité en Russie au XVIII^{ème} siècle* (2010). It was also conducted in the framework of the collective research project entitled "Les grandes réformes de la comptabilité publique : racines, techniques, modèles", supported by the French National Research Agency in 2006-2010.

the economic history of pre-industrial Europe (see, for instance, Jeannin 1998, 2002 ; Lemarchand 2001, 2005 ; Perrot 1981 ; Yamey, Edey, and Thomson 1963). In the case of Russia, in a recent article Lina Berstein (2011) sought to analyze some of these books with the goal of deepening our understanding on how the Russian merchant culture developed in the eighteenth century. The studies of Aleksandr M. Galagan (1927), Vladimir F. Shirokii (1940) and Yaroslav V. Sokolov (1996) highlight their importance for the early accounting history in Russia. However, it is not clear what impact did the first literature on commerce and accounting really have on the vocational training and practices of merchants at that time. Hereinafter, we aim to investigate this issue in more depth.

We therefore felt it was important to place this literature in the broad context of the economic and social history of the eighteenth-century Russia, which leads to consider, in the first part of this study, the changes occurring in the national economy and trade, as well as the attempts of the tsarist power to promote the education of merchants. Secondly, the kind of information proposed by the growing in the second half of the eighteenth century book market on trade will be reviewed. Lastly, we seek to explain why they have not immediately captivated interest of the Russian merchants of the period.

Power, trade and the education of merchants

The reforms of Peter the Great created the conditions to kick-start the economic growth of Russia. New factories of all types were founded, but they supplied mainly the army and the navy: iron plants in the Urals, weapon factories in Tula, cannon foundries and furnaces, gunpowder mills, Admiralty shipyard, canvas, cloth, rope and leather factories in several Russian towns. Many of them were owned by state, others belonged to merchants and landlords. The state-owned factories employed state peasants, ascribed peasants, craftsmen and workers. By the ukaz of 1721 the merchant factory owners were granted the right to buy the category of peasants known as possessional (PSZ, vol. 6, no. 3711). The Petrine reforms brought important changes in the economic life of the country, and also led to the development of serfdom. The industrial, commercial and financial policy of Peter I was characterized by a high degree of command and mercantilism. A state monopoly on the sales of salt, alcohol, tobacco and other products was introduced. The tsarist power also monopolized the right to sell the key Russian exports, including the trade with China. In 1717, two state colleges were established for managing the commerce, mining and manufacturing. In 1724, the enactment of protective tariffs served to encourage the domestic production of goods and to limit the foreign imports that might compete with them (see Miliukov 1905 ; Pavlenko 1978).

The expansion of Russian industry and the strengthening of the nationwide market continued after the death of the Tsar-Reformer. The trade benefited from

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the introduction of the 1729 Statute on promissory notes and bills of exchange (PSZ, vol.8, no.5410) and the abolition of internal customs in 1753 (PSZ, vol.8, no.5410), while both land and water transport networks have been expanded (Vyshny Volochek Canal was built on Peter I's instructions to link the Volga River and the Baltic Sea). In 1754, a bank that offered loans to merchants in St.-Petersburg at the rate of 6 % of interest a year was created by Tsaritsa Elisabeth Petrovna on the proposal of her favourite Count Petr Ivanovich Shuvalov (PSZ, vol.14, no.10235 and 10280).

During her reign, from 1762 to 1796, Catherine II expanded the Russian Empire, carried out a number of internal reforms, and provided an impetus and new direction for economic development in Russia. The Ural region was an important center of metallurgical and mining industry. Many textile factories – glass, paper, linen, silk weaving, leather, hat, colorful, saw mills and others – were established over there. The government monopolies were abolished for almost all export goods. The customs tariffs of 1767 and 1782 were a further step toward free trade. The 1785 Charter of the Towns (PSZ, vol.22, no.16188) fixed the social status of merchants as an essential element of urban population. They were now divided into three guilds according to the amount of their capital, and they were also exempt from corporal punishment, military service and poll tax³ replaced by the 1% tax levied on the declared total amount of capital.

The state's encouragement of economic activity in the country promoted the dynamism of domestic and foreign trade. In 1796, Russia had four thousand markets and fairs which were six times more than in 1750. Moscow, Riga, Nizhnii Novgorod, Yaroslavl, Tobolsk were an important regional trading cities. From there quantities of goods were dispatched in St.-Petersburg that was the new empire's capital since 1703. Large fairs took place annually in Arkhangelsk, Makariev on the Volga river, Kharkov and Irbit, where the merchants came from all the country to sell and buy a large range of products.

The volume of foreign trade continued to increase during this century. After the Great Northern War (1700-21), Russia gained access to the Baltic Sea, and henceforth the trade with Western European countries continued through the port of St.-Petersburg. England, Holland and Hanseatic League were the major Russia's trading partners (see Kahan 1985; Zakharov 2005). Two Anglo-Russian commercial treaties were signed in 1734 and 1771. The main Russian exports of this time were iron, linen, flax, hemp, furs, leather, and, from the end

³ The poll tax (in Russian, *podushnaia podat'*) was the major direct tax in Russian Empire in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. It was introduced by Peter I in 1718 to replace the household tax (*podvornoe oblozhenie*) and was levied on all males except clergy and nobles. For this, a census of the population was made. Then, the total amount of the poll tax was determined by the sum needed to maintain the army. As data on the number of taxpayers became more precise, the poll tax on peasants was first lowered to 74 and then to 70 kopecks per person per year. The members of the urban lower, including merchants and artisans, paid 80 kopecks.

of the eighteenth century, grain ; large part of the imports consisted in manufactured and luxury goods, such as British naval stores and French wines. Moreover, Russian merchants traveled through Ukraine to sell their goods in the markets of Poland and Silesia. As a result of the wars against the Ottomans from 1767 to 1791, Crimea and the territories on the northern bank of the Black Sea were annexed to the Russian Empire. The foundation of Kherson and Odessa port towns opened the immediate opportunities for the Russian export to the Mediterranean countries. At the same time, Russian-Persian trade was developed through Astrakhan on the Caspian Sea.

Such was the context under which the role of the merchants grew in the social and economic life of the country so that the need to develop their vocational training was felt more acutely. Usually, the fathers taught their sons to read, write and count. They mainly worked as apprentices in the store of a parent or an owner. In contrast with Western European countries, there were no schools for Russian merchants who did not belong to the privileged class. However, Peter I attempted to organize the commercial training abroad. In 1720s, some of the young merchants were appointed to learn the trade in Amsterdam, Cadix and Milan. Others were sent in the foreign merchant houses in Revel and Riga ports (see Kozlova 1989). But many of the merchants were little motivated to send their children to study in Europe because they were mainly invested in the domestic trade and also limited by the shortage of capital.

Catherine II considered herself as an enlightened monarch and wished to popularize the Enlightenment in the Russian society. The spread of education among merchants became a matter of great concern. In 1772, Empress approved the Ivan Betskoi's project⁴ to establish the commercial school at the Home of Education in Moscow. Prokofii Demidov (1710-88), the little son of a famous merchant Nikita Demidov involved in iron-foundry in the Urals, donated 205 000 rubles for its foundation. The school received the name of his benefactor until 1799, after which it was transferred to St.-Petersburg.

In the first decades of the life of the school, the students were usually sons of merchants from the Moscow and St.-Petersburg regions. They were between seven and ten years old. The school curriculum was designed so that they were able to acquire the basic education, by learning reading, writing, history, geography, arithmetic, and foreign languages. Some disciplines such as commercial law and accounting were included a little later and were taught initially by foreigners and then by Russian teachers (For more detailed information, see Kozlova 1989; Podshivalov 1888).

At the same time, the publication and the dissemination of instructional literature bespeaks the Catherine's desires not only to educate but to influence

⁴ Catherine's advisor in educational politics, Ivan Betskoi was president of the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg from 1764 to 1794.

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the development of the merchant class. Such books aimed at developing an understanding of what makes a good merchant, pointing out the political dimension of commerce and promoting the modern business practices.

As we shall see later, they endeavor to cover all themes related to trade, from moral issues and education to studies of specific markets, history of trade and accounting. Thus, Russian merchants had the opportunity not only to broaden their geographic and cultural horizons, but also to acquire special knowledge and skills required in this field. In particular, accounting authors advised them to apply the double-entry bookkeeping which everywhere else was perceived as the most highly developed form of accounting.

The dissemination of the books on commerce and accounting

Knizhka opisatel'naiia, kako molodym liudiam torg vesti [The Book by which young people can learn how to conduct the trade] (1851) is the oldest book written in Russian for merchants. It dates back to between 1573 and 1610 and is in manuscript form. Its author is unknown but he described accurately the Russian trade, which leads us to believe that he belonged to the merchant class. He provides useful information and advices about the price and the quality of a wide range of goods in the Moscow and Northern Russia markets and especially on how to conduct the business with the foreign merchants.

In 1743, the College of Commerce ordered to translate into Russian the famous *Dictionnaire universel de commerce* by Jacques Savary des Bruslons (Paris, 1723-30). The task was assigned to Sergei Volchkov, a chief clerk in the Academy of Sciences. The translated version (1747), although abridged, keeps its encyclopedic character and offers an overview of the world trade with the rules and customs of different lands, monetary systems, major commercial centers and goods. A later translation of a different portion of the same dictionary with additions from other more modern sources and original articles on Russian trade was known as *Slovar' kommercheskii* [Dictionary of commerce] made by Vasilii Levshin in 1787-92.

A series of articles on commerce were published in the two major periodicals of the Imperial Academy of Sciences: *Ezhemesiachnye sochineniia k pol'ze i uveseleniiu sluzhashchie* [Monthly Essays for the public usefulness and entertainment, 1755-64] and *Novye ezhemesiachnye sochineniia* [New Monthly Essays, 1786-96]. Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705-83), a widely renowned Professor of history and member of the Academy of Sciences, became in 1755 an editor of the "Monthly Essays", in which he published several of his scientific works and materials, among which one describes the Siberian fur trade (Müller 1755, 1756). The geographer, economist, and historian Petr Rychkov and Aleksandr Fomin, an enlightened merchant of Arkhangelsk, were also among the contributing authors to this journal.

Petr Rychkov was born in 1712 into a merchant's family in the city of Vologda. His father, engaging in grain trade, went bankrupt and moved to

Moscow in 1720. Here, he learned German and Dutch, arithmetic, and bookkeeping in office of the linen mills director I. Tames. His education helped him to be employed in the management of the Yamburg state glass factories (near St.-Petersburg), and then he was appointed as translator and bookkeeper in the St.-Petersburg port customs office. In 1734, Rychkov joined as a bookkeeper the Orenburg expedition headed by the Senate chief secretary Ivan Kirilov. Since that time and until his death in 1777, he lived and worked in the Orenburg region. The publication of Rychkov's article *Perepiska mezhdum dvumia priiateliami o kommertsii* [Correspondence between two friends on commerce] (1755 ; 1757) contributed to build up his reputation in the scientific circles of his time. Rychkov was a precursor of the systematic studies of the nature, population, culture and economy of the southern Ural region and the adjoining steppe areas, which enabled him to be elected, with the support of Mikhail Lomonosov, as the first corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences at the beginning of 1759. He became a member of the Free Economic Society in 1765. (On the Rychkov's life and economic thought, see Bak 1945 ; Karataev 1950 ; Matvievskaia 2008-11).

In his essay of 1788, which is written in the form of a letter, Aleksandr Fomin (1733-1802) does not only think on the professional attributes and the duties and responsibilities of the merchants, but he points out their collective and individual value for the state. In the introduction, he wrote that "it is only the combination of knowledge and practical activity which give the chance to make a fortune" (Fomin 1788, p. 3). In this light, he stated that a merchant aiming at success must first of all acquire a better education. Such education would have been focused on the study of history, geography, arithmetic, bookkeeping, and the foreign languages, as well as of the weights, measures, commercial customs, and monetary systems. In addition, the merchant was required to be enterprising, to persevere, to improvise, and to cultivate the reputation of an honest and reliable businessman. However, a particular feature of a good merchant was, in the opinion of Fomin, to be not keen on its own good but to be concerned about the welfare of the country. He easily dealt with the problem of mercantile self-profit by stressing that the benefits of the exchanges in which he was involved brought both personal enrichment and the wealth into the state. Karl Berens, a merchant who worked in Riga and St.-Petersburg, devoting much time to self-education and reading, agreed with this view, and in his essay *Kupets, ili Vseobshchee razsuzhdenie o torgovle* [The merchant, or a general discussion on trade], he defined the goal of the commerce as follows : "There is nothing more necessary than commerce; it makes state prosperous [...] For states to become firmly established, and great and prosperous, commerce is more effective than arms" (Berens 1793, p. 2-3). The merchant class was viewed by him as the potential instrument to increase the state's riches.

Nikolai Novikov (1744-1818) was a prominent figure of the Enlightenment in Russia. He was writer, journalist and editor of the satirical journals *Truten'*

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[The Drone, 1769-70], *Zhivopisets* [The Painter, 1772-73] and others which openly criticized the autocratic power, the serfdom, the corruption of officials, and the idle life in the imperial court. Catherine II could not tolerate the Novikov's attacks against the political and social order that she wanted to maintain and ordered to close these journals one after the other. Because of his liberal views and his contact with the Freemasons, he was arrested in 1792 and incarcerated in the Shlisselburg fortress for fifteen years (On the biography and the enlightenment activities of Novikov, see Gareth Jones 1984 ; Makogonenko 1951 ; Monnier 1981). In the first issue of *Pribavlenie k Moskovskim vedomostiam* [Moscow news supplement] edited by him in 1783 and 1784, Novikov pointed out the beneficial effects of commerce for the country and promised readers of his journal to acquaint them with the most influential works of world thinkers on economy and commerce as science. Thus, a large article of unnamed author entitled *O torgovle voobshche* [On the trade in general] was serially published in several issues of the journal in 1783. Georgii P. Makogonenko suggests that its author was Novikov himself (Makogonenko 1951, p. 703-704). In the points of view of other researchers such as Emilia S. Vilenskaia and Vladimir I. Moriakov and Margarita L. Kusheleva, however, this article was a compilation from the foreign literature, in particular the Abbe Raynal's works⁵ and Karl August von Schönfeld's *Probschrift von dem vortheilhaften Einfluß der Handlung auf einen Staat* (Stuttgart, 1779) (Vilenskaia 1952, p. 73-74; Moriakov and Kusheleva 1983, p. 47). But what matters is that, in the last resort, the content of this article fully reflected the political and economic views that Novikov had shared.

Other examples of publications related to the trade include Jean-Pierre Ricard's work *Négoce d'Amsterdam* (Rouen, 1723) which was translated by a bookseller Christian Ludwig Vever and was printed in 2400 copies in 1762. The long title of the book in Russian detailed its content, but, surprisingly, Vever did not included chapter on accounting. In 1768 and 1771, Semen Bashilov, who was an employee in the Senate, was translator of two major French treatises on political economy: Jean-François Melon's *L'essai politique sur le commerce* (Amsterdam, 1734)⁶ and Jacques Accarias de Sérionne's *Les intérêts des nations de l'Europe développés relativement au commerce* (Leyde, 1766)⁷. François Véron de Forbonnais's article "Commerce", included in *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* by Diderot and

⁵ Guillaume-Thomas Raynal was the author of the major book *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens avec les deux Indes* (Amsterdam, 1770).

⁶ The translated title was *Politicheskii opyt o kommertsii*. Semen Bashilov used his personal funds to pay for the first print run of 620 copies.

⁷ The translation, entitled in Russian *Pol'zy evropeiskikh narodov, iziasnennyye s storony torgovli*, was dedicated to Prince A.A. Viazemskii and printed by the Academy of Sciences.

d'Alembert (Paris, 1751-68) appeared in Russian in 1781⁸. As a man of letters and propagator of the Enlightenment, translator of Erasmus, Voltaire and Rousseau, Petr Bogdanovich wrote and published his book *Kratkaia istoriia o trgovle i moreplavanii drevnikh* [Short history of ancient trade and seafaring] (1788) no later than one year after the opening of his own publishing house in the capital.

The Carl Günther Ludovici's work *Grundriss eines vollständigen Kaufmanns-Systems* (Leipzig, 1756) was popular in Europe during this time. It deals with the theoretical and practical foundations of the science of commerce and investigates how different nations have developed their prosperity over time. By tracing the history of trade from the Roman Empire to the modern times, Ludovici focuses on the changes that happened in the world trade along with the sea exploration. In the seventeenth century, the leadership in the East-West trade shifted from Portugal and Spain to Holland and England. They launched expeditions across Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans to discover new lands for sources of raw materials and lucrative trade of spices and other goods from Asia. The Russian language version of this work was made by Fedor Sapozhnikov, Russian consul in Leipzig in the early 1780s and then court councillor, and was printed in 1789 in two thick volumes (827 pages) by the presses of Moscow University leased by Nikolai Novikov. Sapozhnikov modified the Ludovici's brief eleventh chapter devoted to Russian trade. It is the way to stress the increasing influence of Russia on the international arena and the flourishing trade at the end of Catherine's reign. The expansion of the empire's borders, the vast and varied geography and the wealth of natural resources were considered as advantages that helped Russia to become one of the world's great trading nations.

Mikhail Chulkov (1743-93) is a prolific writer in various genres who also produced a monumental work, consisting of seven volumes, on the history of Russian trade prior 1781. It provides a detailed description of all the internal markets in the country, completed by laws and decrees to be applied in this matter. In 1788, three excerpts of it have been published separately: *Kratkaia istoriia rossiiskoi trgovli* [A brief History of Russian trade], *Slovar*

⁸ The translated version, *Perevod iz entsiklopedii o kommertsii*, was done by Nikinor Rubtsov, Ivan Novikov, Vasilii Antipov and Aleksandr Barsov, all of whom were students of the Moscow school of commerce. Barsov was only twelve years old. He taught mathematics in the Moscow University in 1790 and died at the age of twenty eight years.

On the circulation of the translated printed French books and their readers in Enlightenment Russia, see S. P. Luppov (1986) and I. E. Barenbaum (2006).

The numerous articles in the book *L'influence française en Russie au XVIII^e siècle* (2004) edited by Jean-Pierre Poussou, Anne Mézin and Yves Perret-Gentil, discussed the aspects of the influence of France on Russian culture and society in the eighteenth century.

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uchrezhdennykh v Rossii iarmarok [Dictionary of Russian fairs] and *Nastavlenie neobkhodimo-nuzhnoe dlia rossiiskikh kuptsov, a bolee dlia molodykh liudei* [Exhortation on education of young merchants], in which he listed the merchant houses declared bankruptcy in the eighteenth century. Chulkov invoked the irregular bookkeeping as one of the reasons of bankruptcy.

Ivan Iakovlevich Novikov studied in the Demidov School of commerce and became a bookkeeper in Moscow Office of foreign trade in 1794. He worked on the translation of Honoré Lacombe de Prével's treatise *Les progrès du commerce* (Amsterdam, 1761), entitled in Russian *O uspekakh kommersii* [On commercial successes] and published in 1796. Christian Rüdiger⁹ edited two Novikov's brochures: *Pis'ma ot ottsa k synu, v kotorykh opisывaiutsa vazhneishiia dolzhnosti kupecheskago sostoianiiia, i potrebye znaniia k otpravleniu torgovli s vygodoiu* [Letters from a father to his son, in which the most important obligations of the merchants and knowledge need for the successful conduct of trade are described] (1797) and *Osnovatel'nye pravila torgovli* [The rudiments of commerce] (1799). In this text, compiled by himself from German books, one of which is probably *Grundsätze der Handlung für Kaufleute* (Wien, 1785), Novikov explains such basic notions and vocabulary used in business as "purchase", "sale", "money", "credit", "concurrence", and "profit". He also offers some practical advice on how to use the bill of exchange and on how to determine the selling prices and the quality of the products and wares. In chapter 5, he wrote that a good merchant "constantly compares his prices with those of his competitors" and should take into account the demands and tastes of the shoppers in order not to sell the goods at a loss. He advocated the freedom of trade by arguing that "the State monopolies are trade barriers". We know two other Novikov's books (1794, 1804) on how to calculate the exchange rates by the use of tables. However, the first author who tried to teach systematically the commercial arithmetic in Russia was Vasilii Kriazhev (see Ulanov 2002). His book (1811) on the practical arithmetic for bankers, merchants and manufacturers was used for teaching in the Moscow school of commerce, the director of which he was.

Trade was increasingly conducted by correspondence, and therefore a merchant's ability to express clearly himself in writing acquired great importance. Addressing this demand, a number of letter-writing manuals, among which those by Ivan Sokol'skii (1788) and Petr Bogdanovich (1791) are the most famous, appeared in the eighteenth century. They were intended to serve as guides not only on the writing of the private and business letters, but also on how to conduct business according to the Russian law and practices (in detail, see Bernstein 2002a, 2002b).

⁹ The book publisher and salesman Christian Rüdiger was of German origin. He managed the Moscow University printing house from 1794 to 1800. He had his own bookshop in Moscow that he bequeathed to his son Karl in 1799.

The first Russian textbook on accounting was *Kliuch kommersii ili torgovli: To est' nauka bukhgalterii* [The Key of commerce or Science of accounting], published by Artillery and Engineer Cadet Corps Press in St.-Petersburg in 1783. It was entirely devoted to the teaching of double-entry bookkeeping system. What was characteristic of double-entry bookkeeping was the fact that each business transaction was entered twice, once as a debit and once as a credit. Luca Pacioli, a Franciscan monk and mathematician, collaborator with Leonardo da Vinci, did not invent this method of recording, but he was the first who provided a detailed exposition in his treatise *Summa de Arithmetica, Geometria, Proportioni et Proportionalità*, published in Venice in 1494. The double-entry bookkeeping was used by the merchant houses of Northern Italy from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries. Between Pacioli and the nineteenth century, it spread to the rest of Europe that has seen the development of mercantile capitalism.

European merchants were highly mobile and they were increasingly involved in an international network of debtors, creditors, customers, and suppliers. Their commercial and social networks in fact helped to diffuse the new accounting and business procedures. As long-distance trade continued to grow, merchants began to enter into joint ventures. After the sixteenth century, these were the chartered companies which were encouraged by the Dutch, English, and French powers and which held a monopoly of trade in the East Indies. Since its foundation in 1600 and especially in the eighteenth century, English East India Company had the most wide-reaching influence. The trading partnerships, which lasted for years, brought together capital from a large number of investors. Thus, it became necessary to keep track of the exact amount of an investor's share in the capital, the expenditures, the profits and the losses. If the use of double-entry bookkeeping becomes widespread, it is because it was able to satisfy many needs of the businessmen. It was a mean not only to remember and to keep records of commercial activities, but also to satisfy the concerns of transacting parties. Furthermore, because the reputation of shopkeepers and merchants was important for allowing them to trade and to build a credit and personal relationships, the proper keeping of their accounts could confirm their respectability and credit worthiness, and would enhance people's willingness to do business with them. If their business failed, account books were the only way to sort out everyone's claims before the courts.

The schools that taught commercial arithmetic and bookkeeping to young men flourished in Florence, Venice, Pisa, and other cities of Renaissance Italy. The teachers in such schools were known as *maestri d'abbaco* (Goldthwaite 1972 ; Brizzi 1995, p. 212-213). In the early modern England, merchants typically got their training either through apprenticeship or at school (Charlton 1965, p. 253-54, 259-62 ; Edwards 2011). In Holland and Germanic territories the *Rechenmeisters* formed the guilds of reckoning masters. In the seventeenth-century France, merchants learnt arithmetic and the art of accounting by the teaching of the *enseignants-mâtres*, who enjoyed a respected status in the

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mercantile community. But Dominique Julia (1995) reports that, in the eighteenth century, some merchants, who rivaled in wealth with the nobility, sent their children to boarding schools and private schools for general education. In addition to apprenticeships and reckoning schools, there was a proliferation of printed accounting books that also were important catalysts in the diffusion of the double-entry technique. Thus, more than seven hundred and fifty editions of treatises and textbooks published on accounting between 1501 and 1800 in the Western European countries were inventoried in the historical and analytical bibliography *Ars Mercatoria* produced under the direction of Jochen Hoock and Pierre Jeannin (1991-2001). It includes both the most famous book written by French author Mathieu de La Porte, *La science des négociants et des teneurs de livres* (Paris, 1704), which was edited twenty-two times and was translated into German, and the John Hawkins' *Clavis commercii; or, The key of commerce* (London, 1704) which was in fact the basis for the Russian accounting textbook of 1783 which we have mentioned above (see Sokolov and Bychkova 2001).

Another textbook on this topic, *Pochtennyi kupets, ili Bukhgalteriia* [The Perfect Merchant or Bookkeeping], written in three volumes by an unknown author, was published in 1790 by the Moscow publisher and bookseller M. P. Ponomarev. As he stated explicitly, with his book it was possible for anyone to self teach accounting to conduct the trade both individually and in association with others, inside the country and abroad. The accounting made possible to keep the personal wealth position of merchant in view. All affairs should be arranged in good order so that the owner can evaluate, without loss of time, the assets and liabilities of the firm, and the profits or losses for a given period. The Ponomarev's textbook, as in others, explains the rules of the double-entry bookkeeping by personifying the accounts. This means that the title of the account was the name of the people who were associated with the business. In addition, how business transactions should be recorded in a set of interconnected books was illustrated by many practical examples. Full details of transactions were written in the memorial as they occur, then posted to the journal, and finally entered in the ledger. The journal represented an intermediate stage in which the entries from memorial were arranged chronologically. The ledger or "great book of accounts" was the most important book. Here, once transferred, each journal entry was identified as credit (on a right-hand page) and as debit (on a left-hand page), reflecting the logic of the double-entry system. In general, correctly kept ledger would be in equilibrium: the sum of the debits would equal the sum of the credits. The balance was prepared to ascertain the accuracy of the bookkeeping.

Ivan Stilliger was a successful merchant of Riga who used the double entry accounts in his business. By believing that "the business practice must be preceded by the professional training", he wrote a textbook on accounting. The original (German) version of his book was translated into Russian under the title *Obstoiatel'noe rukovodstvo dvojnogo ili ital'ianskogo schetovodstva*

kupecheskogo, to est bukhgalterii [A detailed guide of the Italian method of bookkeeping for merchants] and printed by the Office of public charities in Kursk in 1795. Unlike other accounting authors, Stilliger preferred to teach the double-entry bookkeeping by the pedagogic method which consists in alternating questions and answers with explanations. Depending on the nature of the trade, whether wholesale or retail, the volume of accounting records increased with the different types of transactions. Accordingly, he advised retailers to record the day-to-day sales, purchases, and other transactions in journals and ledgers. By contrast, the wholesale merchants needed also to keep the auxiliary books of accounts such as cash book, purchase book, and book of current expenses.

As is evidenced by this overview, the books on commerce that appeared in Russia during the period covered by this study were rich in their contents. These books endeavoured to shape the behaviour of the merchants by disseminating a set of values that represent a perfect merchant. They also emphasized that the stock of knowledge for a successful career in trade should embed the accounting in general and the double-entry bookkeeping in particular. No less importantly, these writers draw attention of the merchants to the economic interests of the Russian monarchy. It now remains to be seen if these books succeed to capture their target audience.

The books on commerce and their problem of reception in Enlightenment Russia

It must be pointed out, however, that many treatises and books written on commerce and accounting received a mixed reception among Russian business people of the period. From the social point of view, the merchant class was not homogeneous. It is evident at once that thanks to their social and professional position the wholesale merchants were better placed to acquire the modern knowledge provided energetically by the commercial literature. It was a minority group of merchants belonging to the first guild that monopolized the foreign trade and regularly traded in the great fairs. Furthermore, they were involved in metalworking, textile manufacturing, alcohol and tobacco production, and were employed in the state service. These merchant families stayed away from the rest of their community and sought to give a better training for their children, which was important for them in order to continue the upward social mobility (see Aksenov 1988 ; Kozlova 1994, 1999). But the reality is quite different with regard to most of merchants, the small shopkeepers of the second and third guilds. Their main activity was the trade in local markets. They had the low cultural level and were dominated by the idea that to be a good merchant, it is sufficient to learn arithmetic, to speak German and to write properly the business correspondence. A more advanced education was not considered necessary because it seek to divert young merchants from their original purposes. For this reason, many of these merchants have been

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In 1747, the first sale of the translated Savary des Bruslons's dictionary was very disappointing. 1200 copies were printed for sale at a price of 3 rubles. With the exception of some copies given as a gift to Empress and her entourage, the College of Commerce and other government offices, and customs offices, only 173 books been sold until 1752 (Kozlova 1989, p. 293-95). It is not a coincidence that the best sales were in St.-Petersburg, Moscow and Arkhangelsk which were the most dynamic marketplaces of the country. This is not the case in the outlying towns where the authorities forced local merchants to buy this book.

The books on accounting did not receive an immediate and successful spread at first because of the reservation of merchants and a lack of understanding of such innovative and complex contents. It is very important to note that their authors and publishers allow the Italian method of double-entry bookkeeping to be transferred to Russia not by translating the precursor's works, like the very famous one of Pacioli, but rather by inspiring from the European (mainly German and English) authors who developed the accounting thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Significantly, the Russian term "schetovodstvo" that has been used traditionally to define the accounting has been replaced with the modern term "bukhgalteriia", derived from the German word "buchhaltung". However, the teaching of these sophisticated books very contrasted with the daily working practices of the merchants of the country in the eighteenth century. In fact, most of them not immediately adopted new accounting knowledge and continued to manage their affairs as usual. When the auxiliary agents carried the goods to fairs, they should, upon their return, have submitted reports to the owner who kept the inventory of goods and the account book, in which the name, the date, the nature of the transactions were noted. The shop rental contracts, receipts of payment for customs duties and taxes, debt acknowledgement documents were kept separately. The fact remains that the Military Rules of 1716 (Part 2, Chapter 4, sections 5-6) forced merchants to keep records in an orderly manner and confirmed the probative value of account books in court proceedings (PSZ, vol.5, no.3006). The 1800 Bankruptcy (Part 1, Chapter 25, §140-146) regulation prescribed to keep seven forms of books for tradespeople and manufacturers (PSZ, vol.26, no.19692).

Conclusion

In the eighteenth-century Russia, stimulated by the changes in the economy, the imperial power and the enlightened men encouraged the spread of education, writings and book culture among merchants. To understand how the specialised book market on commerce has emerged requires a study of the chronology of these publications, their content and their reception in the merchant community. These issues can only be assessed in the light of the

intellectual and cultural history, the economic history and thought, and the modern Russian and European accounting history.

The link between the Russian books on trade and accounting and the similar literature published in other European countries during the modern period has been highlighted. As we can see, such books paint a portrait of the perfect merchant while they were aimed at promoting the modern economic and accounting knowledge based in the European culture. While in Europe the accounting was closely identified with the practice of business from the early stage of the development of commercial education, in Russia the poor education of merchants in the eighteenth century was an obvious problem. In this article, we thus review how the teaching institutions and instructional texts in the field of commerce started, in fact, through the Enlightenment's efforts in the country. The textbooks on accounting began to appear from 1780s. They introduced the technique of double-entry bookkeeping to Russians, extolling its merits for enabling more efficient management of the business. The corollary is that those who neglected to accurately keep their accounts, were seen as an ignorant, unwise or dishonest, and they would suffer unfortunate consequences. There was a moral side of accounting.

However, the dissemination and appropriation of such literature were limited because of the gap between the supply of new information that it provides and the historical realities, needs, and the specific features of Russian trading world. The social and cultural identity of Russian merchants and their business practices should be considered to understand why, unlike their European counterparts, most of them were reluctant to apply the double-entry method throughout the eighteenth century. In addition to the difference in wealth among merchant families, they have their own traditional understanding of merchant profession and skills.

However, it remains true that the merchants seem better educated in the late than in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The first kind of merchants, who achieved success, were hard-working, businesslike, thrifty businessmen. But we can also observe that if these founders of merchant dynasties were non-educated or had primary or home education, they aspired to give their children a better education in order to consolidate their fortunes. Especially the merchant families of Moscow, St. Petersburg and other great cities reveal the changing attitude toward literacy and education. So, the grandfathers and the fathers were undereducated, and one of the grandsons studied in the commercial school. By the last third of the eighteenth century, there were more trained merchants who traveled abroad and had house libraries, each of them containing dozens of books. Some of them were even engaged in book print and trade business (see Nilova 1997, 2002). The notable family of Demidov differed with the great scope of charities and patronage of arts. As vital contributors to the economic life of the country, the eighteenth-century merchants sought to diversify their business opportunities and desired to raise their social status. Although they had difficulties in integrating the accounting literature in their business culture, their

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perception of the role of accounting was about to change. The idea according to which accounting is an important tool to manage business asserted itself. The turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the emergence of accounting science in Russia.