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**VASSIL N. RASHEEV AND THE TRADE LINKS OF GABROVO WITH  
ODESSA DURING THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

(Summary)

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Gabrovo existed a considerable big merchant class that with its activity not only met the requirements of the time but also contributed to the emergence of Gabrovo as an important commercial center. The commercial relations of the town with Odessa were an expression of its economic capacity and prospects.

The History museum – Gabrovo keeps commercial accounts, statements and letters of Vassil Rasheev, addressed to the Gabrovo merchants Totyu Antipov, Roussi Stoyanov and Radoslav Iliev. These papers cover the period from July 1866 to July 1887 and make possible certain inferences and conclusions to be made concerning the ties of the Gabrovo merchants with Odessa. Through Vassil Rasheev they imported hides and wool. The data from the documents offer abundant material about the purchase of these items. Owing to their fragmentariness it is not possible to make a quantitative analysis. When compared, however, they give an idea of the kind of the articles exchanged between Gabrovo and Odessa, the way in which trade was conducted and the routes of transporting the goods, the movement of process and the relations between the merchants. Important information about the commerce with Odessa is obtained also from the letters of the Svishtov merchant Aleko h.Konstantinov and the inhabitant of Gabrovo Nanyu Trifonov, a merchant in Constantinople, to the Gabrovo merchants mentioned above. The Gabrovo merchants imported from Odessa also fish, caviar and butter. The participation of the Gabrovo

merchants in Russo-Bulgarian trade contributed to the development of the local market, to the expansion of artisan production in Gabrovo, to the accumulation of funds and the consolidation of commercial capital. These trade relations contributed to the favorable development of the commodity-financial relations and also to the gradual integration of the Bulgarian lands in the European economy.