CHAPTER 4

A Mosaic of Entrepreneurship: Female Traders in Moscow, 1810s–1850s

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Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the structure of female trade in Moscow to understand the relationship between social (estate) status and by-branch specialisation of female traders, based on the evidence contained in Registers of Traders and other prosopographic data.

It focuses on moments of consumption—selling and purchasing goods, the key commercial spaces of the city and women's participation in distribution of goods. The last three decades have seen consumption emerge as an important historical field of investigation.[1] The subject of retail

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[1] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and John H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, (London: Europa, 1982); Jon Stobart,

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enterprises in the Russian Empire from the 1860s has attracted much attention, for example, Christine Ruane's discussion of the ready-to-wear cloth distribution and clothes shopping, or Marjorie L. Hilton's debates on meaning of retail trade in the city of Moscow under the municipal authorities since 1880s.[2] The first half of the nineteenth century, however, has remained largely unexplored. One notable exception is scholarship by Viktoria Ivleva, which examines the fashion shop as the locus of cultural receptions of European style in Russian literary space during Catherine II's reign (1762–1796), when millinery and fashion shops became popular in St. Petersburg and Moscow.[3]

The Source

This investigation uses the Registers of Traders (*Vedomosti o torgovtsakh*), which I was able to locate after 20 years of searching, and which are unquestionably the most informative available source on the topic at hand; they are housed in the Central State Archive of the City of Moscow.[4] These were produced annually from 1825 until the 1840s—after the 1824 Guild Reform, which was initiated by Yegor Kankrin (Georg von Kankrin), Minister of Finance in 1823–1844.

This chapter represents the first effort to engage with this source as an object of historical study; in the past 190 years, it has never been used as a means of evaluating commerce and trade. The manuscript is often difficult to read, and occasionally impossible to decipher. The analysis offered here required significant archeographical work and also involved appealing to outside sources in order to identify particular traders, including women. The unique value of this source is that it contains information about each and

Andrew Hann and Victoria Morgan (eds), *Spaces of Consumption: Leisure and Shopping in the English Town, c. 1680–1830,* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Danielle van den Heuvel, Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'Retail Development in the Consumer Revolution: The Netherlands, c. 1670–c. 1815', *Exploration in Economic History* 50, no. 1 (2013): pp. 69–87.

[2] Christine Ruane, *The Empire's New Clothes: A History of the Russian Fashion Industry, 1700–1917,* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 67–86, 115–160; Marjorie L. Hilton, *Selling to the Masses: Retailing in Russia, 1880–1930,* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

[3] Viktoria Ivleva, 'The Locus of the Fashion Shop in Russian Literature (1764–1806)', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46, no. 3 (2013): pp. 363–383.

[4] Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Moskvy (Central State Archive of the City of Moscow, hereafter TsGA Moskvy), f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders (*Vedomosti o torgovtsakh*).

every trader operating in Moscow—for the period at hand, 1810s–1840s, more than 8000 individuals. The Registers were so thorough because they were compiled for tax purposes: the main thrust of Kankrin's fiscal reform was to maximise income from taxes—a necessity in order to reconstruct the economy following Napoleon's invasion in 1812–13. (Well into the 1820s, the recently impoverished residents of Moscow had trouble paying their taxes.)

The Registers were compiled and signed by the elders of the markets or city districts. The elders, in turn, were elected by the traders themselves on the principle of self-government; they answered to the city administration and police with respect to the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. Included in the registers furnished to the Moscow trading commission (the highest organ of traders' self-government, subject only to the Governor General) were only those traders who had duly paid their tax, during the month of December, for the following year. Trade was strictly forbidden for any who had not paid their tax, under threat of a fine. Nevertheless, the elders represented the interests of all of the traders before the municipal administration and police.

The Registers consist of printed tables with ten columns, in which was recorded, by hand, information including the trader's name, his or her social status, type of merchandise and location of the shop and whether it was owned or rented. An annual set of Registers consisted of about 100 books, each including names of 50–400 retailers. This chapter is based on analysis of the 1827 set of Registers, which are the most complete of the annual series. An additional advantage of this particular year is that it allows us to follow the fate of the traders and their family business over a period of several earlier and later decades. Most of traders mentioned in this source were active for more than 10 years and sometimes for over 20, paying annual levies to be allowed to trade in Moscow.

Other archival and published sources have been used to identify and map retailers' suppliers. These include the lists of merchants and directories of house owners from the 1800s to the 1840s. The latter helped clarify the locations of trading establishments in each city district, and, in some cases, the social status and prosopographies of the owners of commercial properties, and their value for the 1840s.[5]

[5]The similar approach is successfully used, and difficulties of identification and prosopographic data compilation for hundreds of persons are discussed in: Alison C. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c.1800–1870,* (London: Routledge, 2009); Jennifer Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century England: Engagement in the Urban Economy,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Legal Framework

In contrast to the situation faced by many women, particularly married women, in the rest of Europe and in the British Empire, the legislation of the Russian Empire provided for commercial activity by women. Under a law adopted in 1753, wives were permitted to 'sell their own property without the consent of [their] husbands'.[6] In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the right of independent ownership of property was the most important factor shaping Russian women's gendered roles in entrepreneurship and household structures. The law of 1807 stated that certificates confirming the right to trade could be issued to 'persons of both sexes, Russian subjects of all estates, and foreigners', except members of clergy (Orthodox, Protestant, etc.).[7] Married women could do business and own property independently. Provisions made in a decree of 25 May 1775 (which was then reconfirmed in 1809 and 1824) also ensured that, on the death of an owner, the management of his business could pass to his widow or daughters (both married and unmarried) if there were no male heirs.[8] Marriage and property law has been investigated by historians such as William G. Wagner, whose study raised important questions about the issue of separate property in the basis on Russian context.[9] The work of Michelle Lamarche Marrese, Lee Farrow and Katherine Pickering Antonova has advanced our understanding of the nature of women's property rights still further.[10]

[6] *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii (Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire)*. Sobranie I, 45 vols (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia II Otd. Sobstvennoi E.I.V. Kantseliarii, 1830–43, hereafter *PSZ* I), vol. XIII, No 10111.

[7] *PSZ* I, vol. XXIX, No 22418.

[8] Ibid., vol. XX, No 14327, art. 3; vol. XXX, No 23503, arts 3, 6; vol. XXXIX, arts 43, 45. For a thorough analysis of legislation see William G. Wagner, *Marriage, Property, and Law in Late Imperial Russia,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, 2nd edn 2001); Galina Ulianova, *Female Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth-Century Russia,* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009).

[9] See: Wagner, *Marriage, Property, and Law.*

[10] Michelle Lamarche Marrese, *A Woman's Kingdom: Noblewomen and the Control of Property in Russia, 1700–1861,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Lee A. Farrow, *Between Clan and Crown: The Struggle to Define Noble Property Rights in Imperial Russia,* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004); Katherine Pickering Antonova, *An Ordinary Marriage: The World of a Gentry Family in Provincial Russia,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

The guilds in Russia differed from the European medieval 'pre-capitalist' craft guilds or shopkeepers' guilds.[11] The idea of guilds was first introduced under European law by Peter the Great, who ruled from 1682 to 1725. The Statute for the Supreme Municipal Administration (*Reglament ili Ustav Glavnogo Magistrata*) of 1721 divided the upper urban unprivileged population into two guilds. The first guild included the biggest merchants, bankers, physicians, druggists, jewellers and painters, and the second guild was for retail traders and craftsmen.[12]

The division into guilds was maintained only for the merchants by a decree of 1742.[13] A clear definition of the rights of the so-called town inhabitants (*gorodovye obyvateli*), of whom the merchants constituted the highest social stratum, was given in the Charter to the Towns of 1785.[14] The Charter divided the merchants into three guilds in accordance with the amount of an individual's declared capital and the extent of his or her commercial activity. In the highest first guild were registered persons who were 'not only allowed, but also encouraged to conduct all sorts of trade both within and outside the Empire, to import and export goods, to sell, exchange and purchase them both wholesale and retail'. Members of the second guild conducted 'all sorts of trade within the Empire, and [were allowed] to convey goods both by land and by water, to towns and fairs, and there to sell, exchange and purchase items necessary for their trade both wholesale and retail'. Third-guild merchants conducted 'petty trade in towns and districts, [and were allowed] to sell small articles in the town and its surroundings, and to convey that petty trade by land and water to

[11] On the European guilds see: Maarten Prak, Catharina Lis, Jan Lucassen and Hugo Soly (eds), *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power, and Representation*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 224–231; Sally de-Vitry Smith, 'Women's Admission to Guilds in Early-Modern England: The Case of the York Merchant Tailors' Company, 1693–1776', *Gender & History* 17 (2005): pp. 99–126; Ariadne Schmidt, 'Women and guilds: corporations and female labour market participation in early modern Holland', *Gender & History* 21, no. 1 (2009): pp. 170–189. On the Russian guilds see: Alexander A. Kizewetter, *Gil'diia Moskovskogo kupechestva: istoricheskii ocherk*, (Moscow: Gorodskaia tipografia, 1915); Wayne Dowler, 'Merchants and Politics in Russia: The Guild Reform of 1824', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 65, no. 1 (1987): pp. 38–52.

[12] *PSZ* I, Vol. VI, No 3708. Chapter VII.

[13] *PSZ* I, Vol. XI, No 8504.

[14] *PSZ* I, vol. XXII, No 16188 ['Charter on the Rights and Benefits for the Towns of the Russian Empire', bi-lingual text in *Catherine IIs Charters of 1785 to the Nobility and the Towns*, in David Griffiths and George E. Munro (tr. and eds), *The Laws of Russia Series II*: vol. 289 (Bakersfield, CA: Schlacks Publishers, 1991), pp. 22–60.]

villages, settlements and rural trading points, and there to sell, exchange and purchase items necessary for their petty trade wholesale or separately'.[15]

In addition to these members of the merchant class, townspeople (members of the *meshchanstvo*, the lowest stratum of the urban population in Russia),[16] and in rare cases soldier's wives and priest's wives, engaged in entrepreneurial activity, albeit on a small scale. They were enabled by the law, which stated: 'A townsman is free to set up looms and workbenches of all sorts and to produce on them all sorts of handicrafts'.[17]

The statute following the 1824 Guild Reform, *On the Structure of Merchant Guilds and Trade Procedures for Other Estates,* introduced new principles for acquiring merchant status and new rules of taxation applicable to merchants and other estates. Guild certificates and tickets had to be received and paid for by traders every year in accordance with the size of their trade turnover. Merchants of the first guild, who paid levies of 2200 roubles per year, were entitled to carry out wholesale and retail trade in Russian and foreign goods throughout the territory of the Empire. They could also keep an unlimited number of warehouses and shops (for each shop, the so-called ticket charge in the amount of 100 roubles was to be paid). Merchants of the second guild paid levies of 880 roubles per year and 100 roubles per shop ticket. Merchants of the third guild paid levies of 220 roubles per year and 75 roubles for each shop.[18]

Moscow: Demographic and Economic Outlook

Moscow, situated in the centre of European Russia, was the terminus of trade routes from all the central provinces of Russia. Moscow's population grew rapidly in the nineteenth century. In 1811, it was 275,000, dropping to 167,000 in 1816 as a direct result of the French Napoleonic invasion,

[15] *PSZ* I, vol. XXII, no. 16188, arts 104, 110, 116. The criteria and capital levels governing division between guilds could vary from time to time.

[16] The term *meshchanstvo (meshchane)* in Russia was used to describe the particular social estate (*soslovie*) designating the lower groups of the city population: the petty tradesmen, craftsmen and the like. *Meshchanki* (Pl.) and *meshchanka* (Sing.) were women from the *meshchanstvo*. See Sergei Pushkarev (comp.), *Dictionary of Russian Historical Terms from the Eleventh Century to 1917*, (edited by George Vernadsky and Ralph T. Fisher Jr), (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 60. On estate stratification in Russia see: Gregory L. Freeze, 'The *Soslovie* (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History', *American Historical Review* 91, no. 1 (1986): pp. 11–36.

[17] *PSZ* I, vol. XXII, No 16188, art. 90.

[18] *PSZ* I, vol. XXXIX, No 30115.

Table 4.1 The social structure of the Moscow population, 1825

Social estate	*Number of persons*	*As percentage of the entire Moscow population*
Nobility	15,876	6.2
Merchants	10,329	4.0
Peasants	79,093	30.7
Dvorovye (landless serfs who lived in their noble landowner's homestead and performed housework)	66,281	25.7
Meshchane (the lower groups of the city population)	33,417	12.95
Tsekhovye (craftsmen and women, inscribed into special corporation)	6380	2.5
Clergy	4991	1.9
Military personnel	20,665	8.0
Foreigners	2461	0.95
Coachmen	2003	0.8
Others	16,198	6.3
Total	257,694	100 per cent

Source: *Istoriia Moskvy*, vol. 3, p. 168

but it swiftly recovered, reaching 258,000 in 1825 and 347,000 in 1840.[19] The provisioning of the population of this metropolis required extensive infrastructure, and a well-developed trade in consumption goods—bread, meat, vegetables, textiles, timber, logs and building materials.

Although the Russian landed nobility, who spent winter months in the city and summers in their country houses, were well-provided by foodstuffs produced within their own lands, a large daily turnover of goods was necessary in the city to feed and clothe the general population, and to make it possible to maintain their dwellings in good order. In 1825, only 10.2 per cent of Moscow's population were nobility (6.2 per cent) or merchants (4 per cent). Petty tradesmen and artisans (*meshchane*[20]) constituted a further 13 per cent, while peasants made up 30.7 per cent of the population. The remaining 32.1 per cent were made up of craftsmen and craftswomen, clergy, military, foreigners and others. The majority of businesswomen came from the merchant and *meshchane* classes (see Table 4.1).

[19] *Istoriia Moskvy* [History of Moscow], 6 vols (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Academii Nauk, 1954), vol. 3, pp. 162, 164.

[20] For the term *meshchanstvo (meshchane)* see note 17.

Alexander M. Martin, noted that, in the late eighteenth century 'Moscow's social structure also became similar to the West but then diverged again. All Russians belonged by law to a social estate (*soslovie* or *sostoianie*) that determines their legal rights and duties'.[21] Martin argued that 'farther down' from 'the middling sort', which included 'a privileged elite' such as priests, merchants and a part of nobles, plus a 'lower tier' as sacristans, townspeople or *meshchanstvo*, artisans and clerks, were 'the state peasants and serfs who lived in the city on temporary work permits and formed the bulk of the laboring class'.[22] This proportion remained high until the end of the nineteenth century. Even after the Emancipation Reform of 1861, when the system which tied the Russian peasants irrevocably to their landlords was abolished, many people born and continually resident in the city continued to be registered as peasants.[23]

The city as a whole was divided into 20 districts. From the late eighteenth century, Moscow's retail topography was essentially divided in two parts, a core commercial area in Kitai-gorod, and peripheral areas in the 19 other districts.[24] This survived for more than a century. Kitai-gorod was the central district of Moscow, to the east of Kremlin, next to Red Square. By the Middle Ages, this was where craftsmen and traders lived, and where local and imported products were sold. Analysis of the city distribution of shops has demonstrated the significant role of Kitai-gorod: In 1795, 1246 (or 46 per cent) merchants or shopkeepers traded there, although Kitai-gorod occupied only 1.37 per cent of the city's territory.[25]

Beyond Kitai-gorod, retail was spread throughout the city. Each part had large markets open all year in certain squares with permanent brick shopping arcades (trading rows) for year-round trade and a space to which peasants of the Moscow province and hawkers came to trade on market days (Wednesday, Friday, Sunday).

[21] Alexander M. Martin, *Enlightened Metropolis: Constructing Imperial Moscow, 1762–1855*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 6.

[22] Ibid., p. 31.

[23] See: Joseph Bradley, *Muzhik and Muscovite: Urbanization in Late Imperial Russia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[24] *Istoricheskoe i topograficheskoe opisanie pervoprestol'nogo goroda Moskvy s priobshcheniem general'nogo i chastnogo ee planov* [The Historical and Topographical Description of the Capital City of Moscow], (Moscow: Tipografiia Selivanovskogo, 1796), p. 30.

[25] My estimates are based on the data of merchants' poll-tax registers (soul revisions) of the fifth revision (1795). See: *Materialy dlia istorii moskovskogo kupechestva. Revizskie skazki* [Materials for the History of the Moscow Merchantry. Poll-tax registers], 9 vols (Moscow: Tipolitografiia I. N. Kushnereva, 1883–89, hereafter *MDIMK Skazki*), IV (1886), pp. 1–868.

The statistical information about Moscow retailing is as follows. In 1796, Kitai-gorod had 66 trading rows (65 brick rows and a wooden one) with 3565 brick and 320 timber shops.[26] There were 35 'trading places called markets' in each of the 19 districts of Moscow. 'The Statistical Table of the Condition of Moscow, 20 January 1812' reported that there were 192 rows with 6324 brick shops, 2197 timber ones, and 8521 shops altogether. There were also 352 restaurants and taverns, 14 coffeehouses, 325 bakeries, 200 pubs, 213 crêperies (*blinni*), 277 wine bars that traded in German, French and Italian wines, 118 beer halls that sold light beer, 586 inns and 41 public baths.[27] According to the report made by the head of the Moscow police, in January 1840, retail establishments in the city included: 42 district marketplaces with 395 shops; 93 trading rows with 4587 shops. There were 1839 shops in private houses, and 589 groceries in various places. Moscow also had 262 bakeries.[28]

Female Traders: By-Branch Specialisation and Social Status

The 1832 *Code of Institutes and Trade Orders* defined trade and described its structure. It stated: 'Trade is divided: 1) according to its space, into domestic and international; 2) according to the amount of goods, into wholesale, and retail; 3) according to the place of production, into urban and village trade'.[29] The trade order listed six categories of 'trading activities' such as merchant shipping, brokerage, money transfers and banking, government contracts, commerce and money changing. The fifth category, 'commerce', included the main types of commercial and industrial activities: 'ownership of warehouses, shops and cellars to keep and sell products; of various plants and factories (except distilleries); ownership of inns, hotels, restaurants and taverns, coffee houses, wine bars, pubs, porter halls, takeaways, fish shops, commercial baths and other trading establishments'.

[26] *Istoricheskoe i topograficheskoe opisanie*, p. 30.

[27] See: *Bumagi, otnosyashchiesya do Otechestvennoi voiny 1812 goda, sobrannye i izdannye P. I. Shchukinym* [The papers relating to the Patriotic War of 1812, collected and published by Petr I. Shchukin], 10 vols (Moscow: Tipografiia A. I. Mamontova, 1896–1902, hereafter *Bumagi Shchukina*), vol. IV (1899), pp. 230–231.

[28] *Moskovskie vedomosti* [The Moscow newspaper] 1840, p. 501.

[29] *Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* [Law Digest of the Russian Empire] (St. Petersburg, 1833), vol. XI, 2.

Table 4.2 Female shopkeepers in central city district (Kitai-gorod) and other 19 Moscow districts, 1827

Social estate of owner (no. of persons/ per cent)	*Number of female shopkeepers in central city district (Kitai-gorod)*	*As percentage of total number of female shopkeepers (Kitai-gorod)*	*Number of female shopkeepers in 19 Moscow districts (instead of Kitai-gorod)*	*As percentage of total number of female shopkeepers in 19 Moscow districts (instead of Kitai-gorod)*
Noblewomen	1	0.4	–	–
Merchants	125	51.0	90	41.7
Meshchanki	95	38.8	95	44.0
Soldiers' wives	18	7.3	19	8.8
Others	6	2.5	12	5.5
Total	245 with 272 shops	100 per cent	216 with 231 shops	100 per cent

Source: TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders

The 1827 Registers of Traders listed 245 female shopkeepers trading in Kitai-gorod in 272 shops, and 216 female shopkeepers in 231 shops in other city districts.[30] At that time, the city had more than 8000 shops, including 4059 in Kitai-gorod, and 4216 in other 19 districts. Women traded in 503 of these (or 6.1 per cent).

The question of the social status of the shopkeepers is of particular interest here. (See Table 4.2). In 1827 merchant women were most numerous (215 persons, or 46.6 per cent), followed by *meshchanki* (190 persons, or 41.2 per cent). There were more female merchants in Kitai-gorod, than in the other 19 districts combined and the few women in the top two guilds were mainly in Kitai-gorod. Of the 125 female merchants in Kitai-gorod, one was from the topmost first guild, nine were inscribed in the second guild, and 115 were in the third guild. Of the 90 female merchants in other city areas, 3 were from the Second Guild and 87 were inscribed in the Third Guild. *Meshchanki* were predominantly in the small-business segment.

The estimates also indicate that 58 per cent of female traders were widows, 29 per cent were married, and 13 per cent were spinsters. Of the widows, only 6 per cent were childless; they personally managed their

[30] The estimates are based on the archival data from: TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders.

businesses without any participation of their relatives. The remaining 94 per cent of widows had one to six sons each.

Women played an important part in the food trade, especially in groceries (from 15 to 30 per cent in different city districts) and textile and ready-to-wear goods (approx. to 12 per cent). They were followed by the services sector, in which women run to 10 per cent of restaurants, coffeehouses, inns and bathhouses. Nevertheless, there were significant variations in the types of businesses between Kitai-gorod and the 19 peripheral city districts. Women's shops in the central district were more likely to sell fancier goods or commodities one did not purchase frequently. The most numerous of the 272 commercial enterprises in Kitai-gorod were shops trading in textiles (113 or 41.6 per cent), and ready-to-wear clothes, footwear, headgear (66 or 24.3 per cent). They were followed by the foodstuffs (33 or 12.1 per cent), and by trade in metals (12 or 4.4 per cent).

Those outside the central district sold basic necessities of life (half sold food). Foodstuffs were in highest demand; these were sold in 105 shops (45.45 per cent) owned by women. Next were businesses in the services sector (restaurants, hotels, inns, bathhouses, coffeehouses, etc.), with 51 enterprises (or 22.05 per cent). Women also traded in tobacco (14 shops), ready-to-wear clothing, footwear and headgear (another 14 shops). Shops in these outer districts tended to offer products, which modern economics call *fast moving consumer goods*, that is, ones bought and consumed often or daily. (See Table 4.3) The trade in groceries and baked goods was less profitable than distribution of cloth and thread in the prestigious shops in Kitai-gorod. Overall, women shopkeepers traded in foodstuffs (138 enterprises, or 27.4 per cent), textiles (115 shops, or 22.9 per cent), ready-to-wear clothes, footwear and headgear (80 shops, or 15.9 per cent), or offered hospitality (53 enterprises, or 10.5 per cent).

Female Retailers of Textile Goods

The textiles and clothing retail was a sector with high female participation in many countries. Béatrice Craig has noted a similar situation in Lille retail in France, describing how 'women rapidly increased their market share in textile and clothing'.[31] Similarly, Catherine Bishop has emphasised

[31] Béatrice Craig, *Women and Business Since 1500: Invisible Presences in Europe and North America?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 117.

Table 4.3 The by-branch composition of Kitai-gorod and Moscow city districts' commercial establishments belonging to female entrepreneurs, 1827

Type of trade	*Number of commercial enterprises in central city district (Kitai-gorod)*	*As percentage of total number (Kitai-gorod)*	*Number of commercial enterprises in 19 Moscow districts*	*As percentage of total number (19 Moscow districts)*
Foodstuffs	33	12.1	105	45.45
Tobacco	2	0.7	14	6.05
Textiles	113	41.6	2	0.9
Services sector (restaurants, hotels, inns, bathhouses)	2	0.7	51	22.05
Ready-to-wear clothes, footwear, headgear	66	24.3	14	6.1
Metals and metal articles	12	4.4	4	1.7
Haberdashery	10	3.7	4	1.7
Building materials	–	–	6	2.6
Chemicals and cosmetics	8	2.9	2	0.9
Leather and leather goods	6	2.2	–	–
Tableware	1	0.4	6	2.6
Horse harnesses, carts and equipages, wheels, etc.	1	0.4	8	3.45
Woollen and fur rags	8	2.9	3	1.4
Wax and tallow candles	5	1.9	5	2.1
Money exchange	2	0.7	–	–
Other	3 (featherbeds 2, writing paper 1)	1.1	7 (optical instruments 2, rarities 2, soap 1, lamps 1, coffins 1)	3.0
Total	272	100 per cent	231	100 per cent

Source: TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders

the high level of activity of female entrepreneurs in these sectors in Sydney in Australia.[32]

In 1827, women kept 115 textile shops in Moscow. All but two were at Kitai-gorod. They had a wide variety of stock. This included, first of all, cotton products (textiles, yarn, thread, lace, cotton wool) found in 72 (63 per cent) of female-run shops. The second most common type of goods was silk textiles, sold in 38 shops (33 per cent). Three shops sold woollen items (2.5 per cent), and two shops sold linen products (1.5 per cent).

Moscow markets mostly dealt in textiles made locally—in the city, or in the Moscow province. During the first half of the nineteenth century, changes in production of various kinds of fabrics and the supply of goods shaped the retail practices and spaces of Moscow trade. According to the data from trade registers and industrial statistics the number of textile factories in Moscow and the Moscow province was 132 in 1805 and 299 in 1832.[33]

A study of women's trade in textiles demonstrates that customers were offered more than ten different types of cotton cloth. Although shops were often placed close to each other, and one would have expected neighbouring shopkeepers to compete, there appear to have been few, if any, conflicts. Analysis of the registers reveals why: shops were narrowly specialised according to the type of goods. For example, 20 female sellers traded in printed cotton and headscarves. One popular product was *kitaika*—a cheap thick cotton fabric, usually blue, suitable for outer garments—men's *kaftans* (overcoats) or women's *sarafans* (pinafore dresses)—for the poorer sections of society. *Kitaika* was sold by third-guild merchants. Avdotia Glinskaya had two shops, which were managed by her sons, Andrei and Boris, Aksinia Prokofieva employed two managers—both Moscow townsmen—in her two shops and Agrafena Sheternikova had three shops. Other kinds of cotton products sold by women included cotton yarn (sold in 9 shops), thread (7 shops), Russian

[32] Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2015), pp. 37–53, 238–93.

[33] The estimates are based on the data from: TsGA Moskvy, f. 105, op. 7, d. 4588, ll.1–14 *Vedomost' uchinennaya iz podannykh ot chastnykh pristavov svedenii o chisle sostoyashchikh v zdeshnei stolitse fabrikakh i zavodakh* [The Register Compiled from District Police Officers Reports on the Number of Factories located in Moscow, for the Year 1805]; *Spisok fabrikantam i zavodchikam Rossiiskoi imperii 1832 goda* [The List of Factory-Owners and Manufacturers of the Russian Empire for the Year 1832] (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Departamenta vneshnei torgovli, 1833), pp. 306–344, 370–414, 416–430.

thread lace (5 shops), local motley, the warp and the weft of which were variegated in colour (2 shops), cotton wool (1 shop), and other goods (18 shops). We can also see a correlation between social status and the type of goods sold reveals itself. For example, third-guild merchants traded only in calicoes, while *meshchanki* (townswomen) tended to choose headscarves.

The Mirrors Row was the most prestigious place to sell textile goods; the members of the richest merchant families of Moscow occupied this space. Genealogies and trade contracts show that an established social network existed, interwoven by trading contracts, friendships and marriages. This network included 153 shops where the cotton fabrics of the highest quality were sold (often made at the sellers' own factories), and showed the highest concentration of elite traders in textiles—first- and second-guild merchants. Out of the nine women who sold their goods on Mirrors Row, six were second-guild merchants and only three were third-guild merchants. Eight women traded in factory-made textiles and one sold grocery goods. At least three female merchants owned factories (Katerina Prokhorova, Varvara Shelepova, Irina Zalogina). In a sense, one can see Mirrors Row as having a cluster of female textile wholesalers.

Let us turn to the history of Prokhorova's business. According to the 1827 data, 47-year-old Katerina Prokhorova (1779–1851) had a rented shop in the Mirrors Row, where she traded in high-quality cotton and cashmere fabrics from her three mills—a cotton-weaving, a cotton, and a cashmere, employing a total number of 900 workers.[34] She was a daughter of the Moscow merchant Mokeev and assumed proprietorship of the family business at the age of 35 after the death of her husband, a merchant of the Second Guild Vasilii Prokhorov, 27 years her senior. They had four sons. Prokhorova owned the shop and mills jointly with her son Timofei in the 1820s, and her youngest son Yakov joining the business in the 1830s. At this time, she also acquired three shops in Kitai-gorod. Renting out two of the three commercial premises became an important additional source of the Prokhorov family's income (one shop was used by them for their own trade). In 1842, 74 per cent of the family's real estate, valued at 44,729 silver roubles, belonged to Prokhorova, while the remaining 26 per cent (15,978 silver roubles) belonged to her son Yakov. Until the 1840s, Katerina Prokhorova was the official owner of the business, as determined by her husband's will, which stipulated that all factory assets and the working capital should constitute family property and should be

[34] TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, d. 475, l.2.

legally ascribed to Katerina. Such a will was an attempt to avoid the risk of dispersal of capital, and echoes similar strategies used later in the century in Spain (see Chap. 14 by Hernández-Nicolás and Martínez-Rodríguez in this volume). In the 1830s, the Prokhorovs' factory business became the largest in the cotton industry. The annual turnover of their shop in the Mirrors Row rose to 1.5 million silver roubles, and, in the early 1840s, to 2.25 million. In 1838, Prokhorova responded to the Moscow Commercial Deputation questionnaire that she was managing the shop 'herself with [her] children', while the factories were being managed by her sons, Yakov and Ivan.[35] This case demonstrates that in many instances women continued to head and control family businesses until they died, even if they had adult (sometimes aged over 40) sons, who were mentioned in official documents as being 'attached to the mother'. Here we can see similarities with some entrepreneurial women in England, New Zealand and Australia (see Chap. 7 by Bishop in this volume).[36]

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Moscow was the national centre of silk production. Moscow's silk retail trade had 38 shops, 32 of which were owned by women. Seven sold ribbons, 13 sold silk and 18 stocked silk patches, threads, cords and tapes. One such business in the Icons Row of Kitai-gorod was where third-guild merchant Ustinia Yakovleva sold taffeta and gros de Tours in a shop rented from merchant's wife Akulina Kozlova.[37] These examples suggest that social distinctions were linked to the quality and prices of the sold cloth. The type of textiles sold (e.g. an expensive silk fabric), or size of the business (e.g. large-scale trading in cheaper cotton fabrics) correlated with the place of a woman-seller in social hierarchy and in the local merchant corporation. Traders who made the highest profits from sales were recruited into the highest first and second guilds.

The Mirrors Row was not the only cluster of female retail activity based around the types of goods being sold in the Kitai-gorod. The district had about 40 trading rows. The highest number of female sellers was in the Icons Row, where 20 of the 51 stalls (39 per cent) were owned by women. They sold mainly silk motley, ribbons and tapes, that is, small wares for

[35] *Materialy k istorii Prokhorovskoi Trekhgornoi manufactury i torgovo-promyshlennoi deiatel'nosti sem'i Prokhorovykh. Gody 1799–1915* [Materials for the history of Prokhorovskaya Trekhgornaya manufactory. 1799–1915] (Moscow, 1915), pp. 5–6, 72, 137; TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, d. 6675, ll. 93–94.

[36] Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*, pp. 22–24, 103–37.

[37] TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, d. 299, l. 26.

fashionable women. Fifteen of these sellers were *meshchanki*, three were third-guild merchants, and two soldier's wives. Another female 'domain' was the Thread Row, where ten women traded in thread and yarn, occupying 18 per cent of the 57 shops in that row. Another cluster was located in the Haberdashery Row, where ten women owned a total of 15 shops out of the 107 in the row.[38] All women-sellers were merchants and their businesses had high turnovers. Among ribbon-sellers, Avdotia Ivanova, a third-guild merchant, stood out. She kept three shops and worked in one of these. Among the six female greengrocers, a third-guild merchant Daria Serikova employed male managers (including her two sons) in three shops, and Vera Alekseeva, the only first-guild merchant found in our list of 461 names of sellers in 503 shops, engaged in wholesale trade in vegetables, tea, sugar and coffee.

The widow Vera Alekseeva (1774–1849), owner of a gold-cloth factory for 26 years (1823–1849) and 64 shops in Kitai-Gorod, was one of the Moscow realty magnates. She inherited (together with her sons, Vladimir and Peter Alekseev) a factory and 110 shops after the death of the husband, Semen Alekseev in 1823.[39] Vera was the great-grandmother of Constantine Stanislavsky, theatre innovator and creator of the Stanislavsky system of acting (later Method acting). Significantly, the case of Vera Alekseeva emphasises the importance of diversity of businesses among the highest levels of female merchants. Vera diversified her trade considerably after her widowhood. In addition to gold-cloth production, she began to trade in vegetables, tea, sugar and coffee and invested the acquired income in real estate in Kitai-gorod and beyond. As a result, she was successful in accumulating family wealth and consolidating her position in the first guild.

The Ready-to-Wear Sector of Female Trade

A considerable number of women were engaged in the sales of ready-to-wear clothing, foot- and headgear. Although the established opinion had it that the market for ready-to-wear clothing only emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, recent studies have demonstrated the

[38] Ibid., d. 271.

[39] The estimates are based on the data from Michael Rudolf, *Ukazatel' mestnosti v Kremle i Kitae-gorode stolichnogo goroda Moskvy* [Topographical Guide to the Kremlin and Kitai-gorod of the Capital City of Moscow] (Moscow: Tipografia A. Semena, 1846) vol. 1, pp. 47–104.

existence of this segment of European retail in much earlier periods.[40] This conclusion is supported by the 'Registers of Traders' (1827), which recorded sales of ready-to-wear clothes in approximately 400 Moscow shops, of which 88 were kept by women (66 in Kitai-gorod, 14 in two other central and prestigious districts, and 8 in the 17 peripheral districts).

At New Square market in Kitai-gorod, the largest and the most important market for the goods of this kind, 35 women owned shops selling new cotton and linen clothes for lower-income groups of population. Analysis of the records illustrates that these 35 women were also from the lower social groups—townswomen (*meshchanki*), soldier's wives and a coachman's wife. Women also traded in hats and peaked caps worn by workers and other men from the lower strata (3 sellers), shoes (3 sellers), bast shoes (1 seller) and furs (1 seller). Less typical were two shops owned by a merchant Vorobyeva and *meshchanka* Loginova. They sold 'Russian *kushaks*'. These were the ornamented sashes, woven from silk or, more rarely, wool or cotton, 3–5 m long and 40 cm wide, worn over peasant and *meshchane* men's outer garments, and were rather expensive.

Ready-to-wear clothes were made by small Moscow workshops that employed between 4 and 12 people. According to the documents submitted to the Governor General of Moscow, in 1840 there were 2989 small artisan businesses with 29,720 employees in Moscow. Of these, 406 were dressmakers and tailors, 411 were cobblers, 158 were shoemakers, 28 were makers of kid, suede and silk gloves and mittens and 85 were makers of hats, caps and bonnets.[41] Some of these artisans took private orders and some made ready-to-wear clothes for sale.

At Kitai-gorod, *kokoshniks*—a rare type of Russian traditional headdress—were sold. Previously, scholars had assumed that this kind of headdress was only tailor-made, however, the Records of Traders lists shops specialising in the sale (but not the manufacture) of *kokoshniks*.[42] A *kokoshnik* consisted of an intricately shaped cardboard (placed above forehead)

[40] See, for example, Jutta Zander Seidel, 'Ready-to-Wear Clothing in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: New Ready-Made Garments and Second-Hand Clothes Trade', in *Per una Storia della Moda Pronta, Problemi e Ricerche*, Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of CISST, Milano, 1990 (Firenze: EDIFIR, 1991): pp. 9–16; Ruane, *The Empire's New Clothes*, pp. 67–74; Jon Stobart, Ilja Van Damme (eds), *Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade: European Consumption Cultures and Practices, 1700–1900*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Alison Toplis, *The Clothing Trade in Provincial England, 1800–1850*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).

[41] *Moskovskie vedomosti* 1840, p. 502.

[42] TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, d. 273.

covered with an expensive silk fabric, embroidered with gold-thread and decorated with pearls and precious stones, laces and ribbons. This headdress was worn by married women, mostly peasants and merchants. The sales of *kokoshniks* were localised in six shops run by women in the Boots and Swords Row.[43]

Outside Kitai-gorod women traded in 14 shops specialising in 'fashion wear' (nine shops), footwear (three shops) and gloves and stockings (one shop each). Footwear was made by cobblers who produced boots (considered menswear) and shoemakers who made women's shoes. Ready-to-wear shoes were also brought from neighbouring Tver province, (i.e. from the areas situated 130–150 kilometres from the capital), which had specialised in the making of leather boots and shoes since the seventeenth century.

The Luxury Trade

Apart from the Kitai-gorod shops, which sold mostly clothing in traditional Russian style, there were other shops that specialised in imported European clothes, and 70 per cent of these were businesses owned by foreigners. In nineteenth-century Moscow, only nobility and gentry wore European style-clothes. The best-known location of luxury goods retail was the Moscow's most elegant shopping street of Kuznetsky Most (Smith's Bridge, or, as it is often called in literature, Kuznetsky Bridge). Here, 40 shops offered French wines, books in English, optical instruments, paintings and marbles from Germany and Italy, men's and women's clothing and headgear, furniture, beauty and haberdashery products. One could also visit a 'French restaurant', or have coffee and cake at one of the two cake shops (one belonged to a French woman Barbara Duplay and the other to a Swiss Johann Pedotti).[44]

A well-known diplomat and poet, Alexander Griboyedov wrote about the Kuznetsky Bridge in his comedy on verse 'Woe from Wit':

> The French! With all their fashion shops and streets,
> Their books and writers and artists,
> They break our hearts, they make our money fly,
> I wonder why

[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., d. 305.

God will not save us from their needles, pins,
Their bonnets, hats and all the other things.[45]

According to the 'Registers of Traders', there were 15 fashion shops, and 5 of these were run by women as the third-guild merchants—Frenchwomen Victoire Lebourg, Marie Armand, Clemance Gambelle, Ursule Boissel and Anna Della-Vos. Foreign proprietresses were highly appreciated for their 'first-hand knowledge of Paris fashions'. Prosopographic information makes it possible to reconstruct the biography of Victoria Lebourg, neé Eloy (1774–1854). She was born in Elbeuf, Normandie, and arrived in Moscow in 1808, together with her husband Constan and their five children. Victoria stayed in Russia for 46 years until her death. She successfully traded in 'fashionable goods' in a shop on Kuznetsky Bridge rented from Moscow German merchant Andreas Beckers. Victoria lost her husband in 1820 and continued the family business together with her unmarried daughter Louise and sons Gabriel, Nicolas, Charles and Constan Jr. The success of her business career was confirmed by her ascent from the low third to the higher second guild between 1820 and 1838.[46]

Clothes marked various social groups and fashion varied according to one's social class. The most notable contribution to this discourse was made by Christine Ruane, who described the 'sartorial revolution', when western fashions were introduced in Russia by law on 4 January 1700. After this Decree 'German dress' of nobility or 'Russian dress' of peasants and *meshchane* became 'a vital but complex marker of ethnic, social, political, and gender identities'.[47]

Merchant women and townswomen wore clothes different from those of noblewomen and followed fashion to a lesser extent. Townswomen could buy ready-to-wear clothes, while merchants were usually customers of the shops that sold textiles. A dress made of expensive fabric demonstrated one's high social standing, and this is the reason why shops offered both cheaper and very expensive silk fabrics made by Moscow textile factories using raw materials that were imported from Italy, Turkey and Persia. Factory-made textiles created popular fashions, but these factories

[45] Translated by Alec Vagapov.

[46] *MDIMK Skazki*, VII, p. 157; *Moskovskii Nekropol'*, 3 vols (St. Petersburg: tipografiia Stasiulevicha, 1907–1908), vol. II (1907), p. 156.

[47] Ruane, *The Empire's New Clothes*, p. 2.

also had to respond to the changing tastes of their customers, altering their styles according to consumers' demand.

The Food Trade

In the 'Foodstuffs' category there were 22 flour and seven bread shops, 86 grocers, seven wine-shops, four butcher shops, two fish shops, two shops trading in vegetable oil and three each in eggs and in honey. This information is very valuable for our understanding of the urban population's structure of consumption in the period under consideration. The majority of foodstuffs shops were situated in the residential area of 19 city districts only. These included flour shops, butcher shops, egg shops and shops selling traditional soft beverages as *kvass* (commonly made from rye bread) and hot winter drink *sbiten'* (based on honey mixed with water and spices) (see Table 4.4).

Grocery shops account for 62.3 per cent of all shops that sold foodstuffs and 10 per cent of all Moscow shops in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century. In 1827 there were 64 of these in city districts and 22 in Kitai-gorod. Most stores outside the central area sold food because this was what local residents needed the most frequently. The

Table 4.4 The shops belonging to female traders in distribution of foodstuffs in Kitai-gorod and Moscow city districts, 1827

Type of trade	*Number of shops in central city district (Kitai-gorod)*	*Number of shops in 19 Moscow districts*
Flour	0	22
Bread	3	4
Groceries	22	64
Butcher shops	0	4
Wine	2	5
Soft drinks as *kvass* and *sbiten'*	0	2
Eggs	0	2
Dairy products	0	1
Vegetable oil	1	1
Honey	3	0
Fish	2	0
Total	33	105

Source: TsGA Moskvy, op. 9, dd. 181-571, Registers of Traders

majority of food shops run by women were grocery stores, whose stock included staples (bread, flour, tea, coffee, sugar, salt, herring and salted and dried fish, gingerbread, etc.), but could include fancier stuff (spices, olives, capers, olive oil, mustard, citrus fruit from Greece and Italy), depending on their exact location.

Grocery shops also stocked baked bread of different types, bread rolls, fruits, berries, vegetables, greens grown locally (i.e. freshly gathered from market gardens in Moscow and the suburbs), sauerkraut, pickled cucumbers, groat (cereal kernels) and dairy products. In densely populated areas, grocers could sell all or some of these products. Townswomen (*meshchanki*), or soldier' s wives—that is, the lowest city strata—usually sold groceries. Shopkeepers traded mainly with Moscow wholesalers to procure native or imported foodstuffs such as tea (black, called 'ordinary', green, and floral from China), lemons, refined sugar, granulated sugar, coffee and spices—cinnamon, cloves, pepper, cardamom, nutmeg and almonds.[48]

In the Yakimanka district eight of the 24 local groceries were run by women. Many of these women did not have a brick and mortar store but a market stall, which suggest a very modest business with low overheads. They included four soldier's wives (Natalia Vassilieva, Matryona Sergeeva, Ekaterina Petrova, Avdotia Yakovleva); three townswomen, that is, *meshchanki* (Pelageia Vassilieva, Ekaterina Nikolaeva, Anna Vassilieva); and, an extremely rare case, one 'deacon's widow', Agrafena Gavrilova.[49] All except the last traded in leased stalls at a district market, which belonged to the Brodnikov merchant family. This was a multi-purpose market with 22 shops that catered for the local urban population and sold meat, fish, groceries and kitchenware; there was also a restaurant and a *kvass*-shop. Women comprised 33 per cent of local vendors and took up eight stalls.

Analysis of female traders in flour and bread reveals correlations between traders' social status and their trading specialisation. The second most common food trade that women engaged in was the flour trade. Some of the women were wholesalers and even belonged to the second guild. The second- and third-guild merchant women owned 16 shops out of 22. For example, in the Yauza district, second-guild merchant Natalia Kulakova had a flour shop in her house. The directories of house owners in 1818 and 1842 confirmed that Kulakova owned a house, and the latter document

[48] *Bumagi Shchukina*, vol. III, pp. 70–75.
[49] TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, d. 414.

valued it at a large sum of 14,285 silver roubles. Kulakova was the wife of Mikhail Kulakov, a rich wholesale trader in flour and grain, but traded under her own name.[50] Two more second-guild merchants—Alexandra Porygina and a widow Marfa Averina—were wholesale traders in flour at the largest city's flour market 'at Boloto'. This was a huge marketplace known locally as 'the Marsh', located on the island in the middle of the Moskva-river, which had been a swamp until the seventeenth century. In both cases, their sons—Vassily Porygin and Semen Averin, managed the shops. The flour trade brought considerable profits, making it possible for merchants involved in it to pay a substantial fee for a second- or a third-guild certificate. This certificate gave them permission to organise warehouses and to offload flour at the river quays. Flour was packed in nine-*poud* (144 kg) gunny sacks and brought to Moscow from the Russian eastern and southern provinces by river barges.

It should be noted that flour was in high demand in the first half of the nineteenth century because it was not only used to make bread and pancakes, but also to produce non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages as *kvass* and beer, and had other household uses. For example, in December 1812, the household of Princess Anna Golitsyna reportedly used several different types of flour. Rye flour was used 'to make *kvasses*', 'to add to hay for cows' and to make paste for strips of paper used to insulate windows during the winter, whole-wheat flour was sent 'to the kitchen to make cakes' and wheat and rye flour was sent 'to kitchen to make bread'.[51]

Few women traded in bread. The Registers of Traders suggest that ownership of bakeries and trading in baked bread was male-dominated. Since bread was an essential item, prices were fixed and stayed the same in all city districts. This is shown by weekly reports submitted by the elders of trading rows and city districts to the Chancellery of the Governor General. Sellers were banned from setting their own prices. There were also strict rules about the weight of breads (usually set at one pound).[52] Only seven women in Moscow owned bakeries. Five were Russian and two were foreigners. Trading establishments that sold bread were narrowly specialised according to the types and prices of their products. In Kitai-gorod, two third-guild female merchants owned three 'cakeries', which made the most expensive 'French bread'—a baguette made of the finest

[50] Ibid., d. 281, l.12.
[51] *Bumagi Shchukina*, vol. V, pp. 84–86.
[52] *PSZ* I, vol. XXII, No. 16143; vol. XXXVIII, No 29025.

wheat flour, which weighted a pound and was priced at 16 kopecks (for comparison—the cheapest and the most accessible rye bread cost 2.5 kopecks).[53] Varvara Stepanova had two bakeries in her own properties (at the Seed and Fresh Fish Rows), managed by her two sons, Vassily and Mikhail. Agafia Komova leased a property from a noble woman Vinogradova and traded herself, running her business and acting as shopkeeper. Outside Kitai-gorod, Anna Ständler, who came to Moscow from Hamburg in Germany, owned a bakery in the Yakimanka district. Another foreigner, a third-guild merchant Barbara Duplay (of French origin), owned a cake-shop in a respectable street Kuznetsky Bridge where numerous luxury shops were situated.

Vegetable and fruit shops were scattered through all districts. There were 33 female greengrocers. Greengrocers also sold spices, tea, coffee and sugar, and also functioned as groceries. Wholesale trade in groceries and vegetables was the basis of the fortunes of a number of Moscow merchant dynasties. For example, second-guild merchant Praskovia Zhiltsova engaged in the wholesale trade in vegetables and used a large space within the *Gostinyi Dvor*, an indoor wholesale market located in a neoclassical, multi-storey building near Red Square, for her office and warehouse. She rented this from her husband, first-guild merchant Mikhail Zhiltsov who traded in dry chemicals and dyes. Praskovia's business was managed by her agent Pavel Tolchenov, a first-guild merchant from Bogorodsk (a town in the Moscow province), and the shop had three more managers, which implies a large volume of trade.[54]

Clustering

The Registers of Traders reveals some evidence of female retail clustering. This phenomenon could be observed at two large city markets. Both were placed at large squares and provided essential products and ready-made clothes for the middle and lower classes. In 1827 women owned 81 (26 per cent) of the 311 stalls at the large New Square bordering Kitai-gorod. About 1.5 miles north of this market was another at the Sukharevskaya Square in the Sretenka district. Women owned 40 (11 per cent) of the 361 stalls here. Of the women's stalls, 26 were concentrated within a small area. Groceries and small wares were sold by 21 women at the properties

[53] Russian pound is equal to 409,5 grams.

[54] TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 1, d. 143, l. 2–4. Register of *Gostinyi Dvor* traders.

Table 4.5 The specialisation of women in garment trades at the New Square trading stalls, 1827

Kind of goods	*Number of stalls*
Tunics and chemises	34
Women's clothes	14 (13—second-hand clothes, 1—new clothes)
Footwear and men's headgear	5 (1—headgear, 2—leather shoes, 2—sashes)
Total	53

Source: TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders

owned by the Church of Trinity at Listy situated at the Sukharevskaya Square, and another five female grocers rented stalls from a merchant Pogodin, who owned a large commercial property in a neighbouring Sretenka street. The remaining 14 women who traded in the Sretenka district had their establishments on the ground floors of local buildings, and their shops were scattered throughout the district.

The New Square trading stalls were set in two rows along the sixteenth-century built wall of Kitai-gorod, which encircled the ancient centre of Moscow and was used as a fortification. One row was placed next to the wall, and the other at the distance of about 10–12 metres from it. Ivan Gurianov described its popularity in 1827: 'Everyday, huge crowds of people congregate there; it is extremely difficult to go through crowds of sellers and buyers'.[55] This market sold a large variety of goods including new and second-hand books, earthenware from Gzhel, calico textiles and headscarves, but it specialised in the garment trade.[56] It was the largest market of ready-to-wear clothing, footwear and headgear in the city, with more than 100 stalls.[57] Women were involved in several different garment trades (see Table 4.5). In addition, 18 women sold fabrics; of these ten sold calico textiles and headscarves, six sold only calicoes, one sold canvas and one sold pieces of fabric. There was also a woman selling Gzhel

[55] Ivan G. Gurianov, *Moskva, ili Istoricheskii putevoditel' po znamenitoi stolitse* [Moscow, or a Historical Guidebook of the Famous Capital] (Moscow: Tipografiia Selivanovskogo i tovarishcha, 1827), vol. 2, p. 260.

[56] The Gzhel blue-and-white earthenware was made in the town of Gzhel, 70 kilometres from Moscow, and was among the best-selling products.

[57] TsGA Moskvy, f. 14, op. 9, d. 292.

earthenware, a tobacconist, a used-metal trader and even a moneychanger.

So what was the social status of women who traded at the New Square? Of the 81 women traders, there were 11 third-guild merchants (10 widows and one daughter of a merchant), 50 *meshchanki*, 14 soldier's wives, two artisans, and a wife of a coachman. Women traders also included members of rare urban social groups marked according to their husbands' occupations. Anna Maltseva, the 'wife of a printer', and Maria Zhukova, the 'wife of a feuerwerker' (i.e. a non-commissioned officer in the artillery forces of the Russian Imperial Army), sold 'second-hand women's clothes'. Daria Andreeva, the wife of a 'type-setter at the seminary's printing house', sold 'blue-and-white tunics', which were clothes for peasants and others of low middle classes.

In the Sretenka district, women traders were also from non-privileged groups. *Meshchanki* (19) dominated, followed by soldier's wives (10), third-guild merchants (7) and artisans (4). Merchants were involved in large-scale trading. For example, Avdotia Dubrovina, a third-guild merchant, had a restaurant in a house owned by another female merchant, Petrova; the restaurant was managed by peasant Abram Stepanov. The employment of a manager suggests that the business in question was profitable. Other female merchants also had managers, often their sons. A merchant Bushueva owned a wine shop that sold Rhein wines and was managed by her son Ivan. A third-guild merchant Tikhomirova and her son Ivan sold coffins. Matryona Gavrilova sold carts; no manager is mentioned, which probably means she kept the shop herself.

Information about the trade at the Sretenka district also supports the correlation between a trader's social status and her specialisation. Merchants engaged in large-scale trade in expensive goods, or traded wholesale. Members of lower urban strata such as *meshchanki*, soldier's wives and artisans owned groceries and bakeries, or sold tobacco and kitchenware (woodware and cast-iron pots). This mosaic picture reveals a considerable number of women who daily engaged in trade in the areas of the Sretenka district. This trade probably provided a small income necessary to support themselves. Only one of 40 women in this area traded from her own house (a *meshchanka* Fedosia Myagkova, who established a grocery; the house was owned by her husband, as of 1818). The rest

rented properties for trade. This contrasts sharply with findings in other countries, where home-based businesses were the norm.[58]

Conclusion

The 'Registers of Traders' allow us to form a clearer picture of what Muscovites were selling and buying. The set of registers of each city district and each trading row in Kitai-gorod submitted to the Chancellery of the Governor General in 1827 holds information about 8000 shops, including 4059 in central business area (Kitai-gorod), and 4216 in 19 districts. Extracting the female traders produces a dataset of 461 individuals, who held permits to sell a wide range of goods. There were 245 female shopkeepers who traded in Kitai-gorod in 272 shops, and 216 female shopkeepers in 231 shops in the other 19 city districts. Altogether, female shopkeepers traded in 503 shops. This represented about 6.1 per cent of the total number of Moscow traders.

Statistics confirm that female entrepreneurship in retail was widespread and that the role played by businesswomen was modest but stable. An examination of the 'Registers of Traders' revealed that the female owners of commercial facilities came from various social strata, the majority of whom were merchant women (215, or 46.6 per cent of all female shopkeepers) and *meshchanki* (190, or 41.2 per cent). This challenges the notion that female traders were drawn from the lower echelons of society.

There were significant variations in specialisation of trade between Kitai-gorod and 19 peripheral city districts. The number of female merchants was higher in Kitai-gorod than in other peripheral 19 districts. This was because the more profitable businesses in new high-quality cloth, dominated by the merchant class, were concentrated in Kitai-gorod. Less profitable businesses such as groceries and bakeries proliferated in the 19 city districts, where foodstuffs were in highest demand and distributed through 105 shops owned by women.

Moscow had a merchant core, which comprised several scores of merchant dynasties spanning three or four generations and successfully

[58] See Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*, Catherine Bishop, *Women Mean Business: Colonial Businesswomen in New Zealand* (Dunedin, Otago University Press, 2019), Susan Ingalls Lewis, *Unexceptional Women: Female Proprietors in Mid-Nineteenth Century Albany, New York 1830–1855* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2009), and Chap. 13 by Melanie Buddle in this volume.

operating primarily in the textile or vegetable wholesale trade. The female representatives of low strata, as *meshchanki*, soldier's wives and others, owned, as a rule, small and medium-sized businesses, often short-lived, which was indicative of the absence of protective mechanisms in the form of family capital and those women's involvement in the public and commercial networks.

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