



From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa

By Sebouh David Aslanian

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Drawing on a rich trove of documents, including correspondence not seen for 300 years, this study explores the emergence and growth of a remarkable global trade network operated by Armenian silk merchants from a small outpost in the Persian Empire. Based in New Julfa, Isfahan, in what is now Iran, these merchants operated a network of commercial settlements that stretched from London and Amsterdam to Manila and Acapulco. The New Julfan Armenians were the only Eurasian community that was able to operate simultaneously and successfully in all the major empires of the early modern world—both land-based Asian empires and the emerging sea-borne empires—astonishingly without the benefits of an imperial network and state that accompanied and facilitated European mercantile expansion during the same period. This book brings to light for the first time the trans-imperial cosmopolitan world of the New Julfans. Among other topics, it explores the effects of long distance trade on the organization of community life, the ethos of trust and cooperation that existed among merchants, and the importance of information networks and communication in the operation of early modern mercantile communities.

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From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa By Sebouh David Aslanian Bibliography

- Rank: #2593732 in Books
- Brand: Sebouh David Aslanian
- Published on: 2011-05-04
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.40" w x 6.30" l, 1.50 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 392 pages

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Review

“Fascinating.”

(*Times Literary Supplement (TLS)* 2012-02-27)

“Exceeds, by far, all previous scholarship on the Armenian merchants of New Julfa.”

(*Ararat* 2012-02-27)

“A fascinating book.”

(*Times Literary Supplement (TLS)* 2012-07-25)

“Aslanian has unearthed a veritable treasure trove, and this book, which is written in a lucid style, is of great interest.”

(*The Historian* 2012-07-26)

“An extensively researched study . . . that is both scholarly and interesting to read. . . . Well written and well-documented.”

(Daphne Abeel *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* 2011-09-29)

“This is the kind of book that entices readers to spend time not only with the text but also with the bibliography and endnotes, retracing research steps and finding new paths to benefit their own work.”

(Patricia Risso *American Historical Review* 2012-10-24)

“Ground-breaking . . . Superb.”

(Sossie Kasbarian *Journal of Global History* 2012-07-01)

From the Inside Flap

“Sebouh David Aslanian draws upon an unrivaled body of original documentation, collected in seven languages from twenty-five archives, to reconstruct in great detail the logic and working of a global commercial network. He poses a series of fundamental questions concerning the Julfan network and critically assesses both the received literature and the very documentation on which he grounds his revisionist study, making this a valuable contribution to comparative economic history.”

Edward Alpers, author of *East Africa and the Indian Ocean*

“From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean is without question an exceptionally interesting, well-researched, and original study. The work is the product of lengthy and determined exploratory archival research whose global reach reflects the far-flung trading network of Aslanian’s subject. Compared to previous work on the Julfa Armenians (or the trade of the Safavid Empire in general), it is on an altogether higher level of theoretical sophistication.”

Edmund Herzig, editor of Iran and the World in the Safavid Age

About the Author

Sebouh David Aslanian is Assistant Professor of History and the Richard Hovannisian Term Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA

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