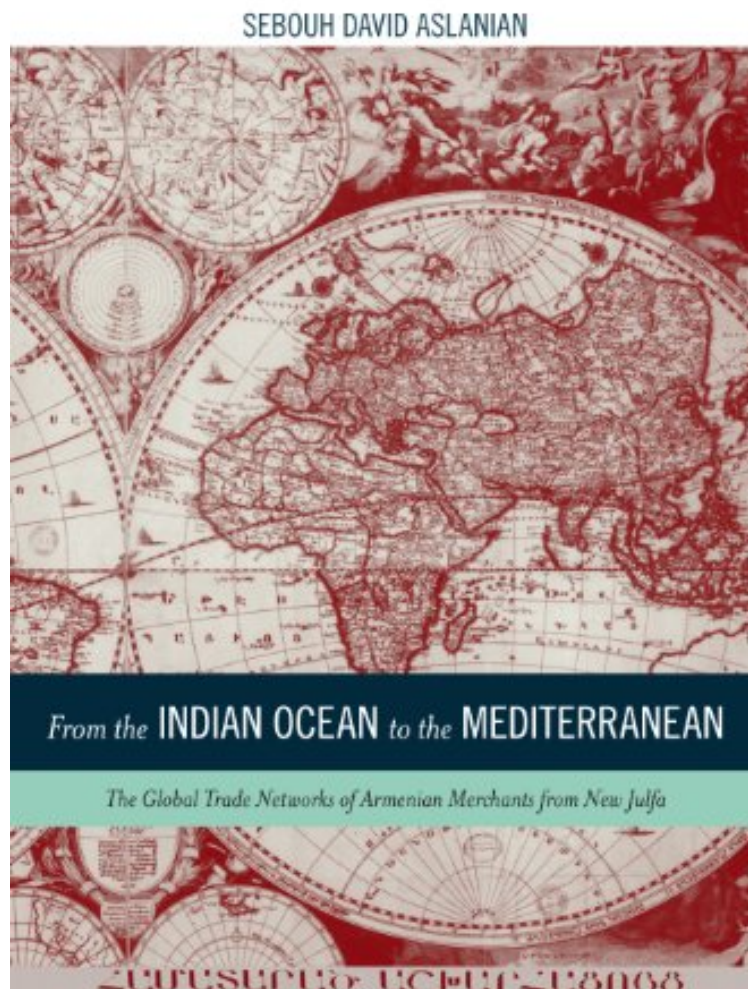


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From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa (California World History Library)

Sebouh Aslanian

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Sebouh Aslanian : From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa (California World History Library) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa (California World History Library):

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Excellent study
By E. N. Anderson
This book is of major importance far beyond the specialized field on which it focuses. It includes extremely perceptive observations on dispersed, diaspora, and mercantile communities in the emerging world-system of the 17th and 18th centuries. It also includes a long chapter on trust. Such communities depend on reputation and personal trust. This has been rather taken for granted in the literature, though sociologists from Weber onward have discussed it. Aslanian puts it on a new footing, with a truly superb discussion of the full ramifications and complexities of trust and reputation in a large and dispersed community where people cannot rely on face-to-face knowledge and have to trust agents for years at a time without hearing a word. Almost 40 years ago, in 1974, my wife and I walked almost every street in old Isfahan, including the main streets of New Julfa--at that time a sleepy small Armenian town. Isfahan then was a modern and open city; women usually went unveiled, everyone was friendly and hospitable, and the city was as far from today's dismal extremism as could be imagined. As a world-systems researcher, I needed to read this book, but as a lover of old Isfahan I savored every page of it. It is valuable far beyond the world of Armenian or mercantile studies.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Amazing work
By Sofi
What can I say that has not been said by reviews of this book? This is an amazing study drawing from an incredibly rich trove of archival sources and providing a cogent analysis. It's a first on many fronts and will probably be a classic. Really fascinating material!

7 of 12 people found the following review helpful. A descriptive take on microhistory
By Madeleine
Footnote leaden and burdensome prose. As a former student, I found the research in this book highly commendable, but the task of asking large questions in small places as Charles Joyner put it, largely fails here. This is a work that is more historical sensation than historical reality: to assume one can reconstruct history through a large number of epistolary exchanges and logs, overlooks the fact that most of micro-history (the overwhelming most) at the level of the individual actor is not even written, let alone recorded. A largely "fact"-obsessed book, lacking in analytical rigor or theoretical innovation. Mostly middling.

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.