

# Armenian Footprints in Macao

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After living for centuries without a nation to call their home, Armenians became some of the most flexible, adaptable, and adept traders in the early modern world (ca. 1500 to 1800). It was not uncommon to find Armenians at the forefront of the expansion of international trading networks—establishing themselves in ports long before normalized trade developed. By the seventeenth century, Armenians had built up an extensive private trading network throughout India that had links to many ports in Southeast Asia. After China removed its prohibition on foreign commerce in the mid-1680s, Armenians entered that market as well.

There are very few private Armenian records that are known to have survived, and as far as we know, none have surfaced from Armenians in Macao. We are thus left with no other choice but to reconstruct their story from what other foreigners and Chinese said about them in their records. Sometimes they show up in those documents with their own ships; sometimes as captains, merchants, or agents for other traders and companies; and sometimes as individual itinerant passengers moving about Asia from ship to ship and from port to port.

As far as the China trade was concerned, Armenians operated outside of the large companies and colonial empires. They were engaged by those powers on occasion and formed alliances with members of those commercial and political structures, but the Armenians themselves were recognized as a class apart. They were often considered in their own time (as well as by historians today) to be part of the class of merchants that we call the “country” or “private” traders. They traveled about Asia carrying on their trade, but were subject to many of the same restrictions and limitations that all private traders in Asia encountered. Occasionally, however, we find Armenians being granted special privileges that gave them an edge in their trade.

In 1688, the English East India Company granted a charter to the Armenian merchants of Calcutta to receive “all the privileges of European merchants.”<sup>1</sup> It was these types of special advantages that helped Armenians become established in China as well. When China began welcoming more foreign traders to its shores in the late 1680s and 1690s, Armenians took advantage of the opportunity. Consequently, when the Frenchman François Froger

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*Armenian Man* by Louis Dupre (colour lithograph, 1825).



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arrived at Macao in 1698 aboard the ship *L'Amphitrite*, he reported that Armenians were already involved in commerce in both Macao and Canton.<sup>2</sup> From the very early years of the Canton trade, Armenians were especially active in the Macao-Manila-India route. That involvement continued throughout the Canton era (ca. 1700 to 1842).

In 1700, the Armenian Ignacio Marcos arrived in Macao from Manila as the captain of the bark *S. Juan*. Marcos applied to the superintendent of customs (known by the foreigners as the "Hoppon") for permission to carry on trade in Canton. He returned to Macao again in 1705 with the same vessel. In 1700, 1702, and 1713 the Armenian Estêvão (or Steven) also shows up in Macao as the captain of the bark *Sta. Maria e Sta. Ana* (also called *Sta. Ana e Sta. Maria*) in the Macao-Manila route. He sailed under a Portuguese flag, indicating that he had a Portuguese sponsor in Macao (which was necessary to be allowed to trade there). The owner, António da Cruz, died in 1712, and the ship was put up for auction. Captain Estêvão attempted to purchase the ship and to continue sailing it under a Portuguese flag. However, this move was considered to be a threat to Macao's monopoly, and Estêvão was consequently not allowed to purchase the vessel, but he continued to be its captain.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the private vessels trading at Macao and Canton (including the Portuguese) were fairly small compared to the East Indiamen. They usually ranged from 150 to no more than 500 tons, and would have had crews of about 40 to 100 men, respectively. The sailors on Macao ships often came from many nations and represented various races. Nevertheless, in this research, we found no references to Armenians being "sailors." Those who arrived at Macao or Canton almost always appear in the records as officers, captains, supercargoes, agents, or private merchants, and not sailors or the like. It is not clear whether this was typical with Armenians coming to China or whether this picture is due to a lack of transparency in the documents.

In 1722, the English reported that an Armenian ship from India was anchored at Whampoa. The vessel was bound for Batavia, and took in "little or no tea." The ship had a capacity of about 300 tons, and returned again to Canton from Batavia in 1723. The imports for that year were estimated to be "about 1,000 piculs of pepper, a little spice, and some tin."<sup>4</sup>

The East India companies often tried to regulate the trade in certain types of tea, so that was left exclusively to the use of company bottoms. Consequently, we often find private vessels, such as those of the Armenians, trading in products that were not regulated by the companies. The same was true with the Portuguese vessels at Macao, the Chinese junks coming to Macao and Canton, and the other private vessels coming to China.<sup>5</sup> All of them traded in similar products, so the Armenians in China had to be very competitive to survive.

Just like many of the other private traders conducting trade in Canton, Armenians were used as a means for the Chinese merchants to dispose of their leftover quantities at the end of each trading season. It was not profitable to have inventories remaining from one year to the next, so after the East India companies' ships were all loaded and gone, the Hong merchants offered the remaining goods that had been rejected by the companies to the private traders. Because these small private traders usually had little capital, the merchants often had to offer the goods on credit. When the vessels returned in the following season, the private traders then repaid the Hong merchants for those cargoes. Even though such transactions could be risky, it was probably better than keeping their capital tied up in unwanted inventories. This situation offered small traders, such as some of the Armenians, a chance to partake in the trade without having a large amount of funds to invest.

Another role that the Armenians were particularly active in was that of money brokering. There was a huge demand in Canton for credit, and Armenians helped to fill this void in two ways: they loaned their own money to Chinese and foreigners involved in the trade, and they brokered capital in Macao and Canton for other foreigners. The usury rates in Canton were very high compared to Macao and other places. Money from the Portuguese in Macao, for example, could be obtained for a rate of 10 or 12 percent annual interest, and then those same funds could be loaned out to the Hong merchants at 15 percent, 20 percent, or as much as 40 percent. Thus, an Armenian with only a little to invest could actually double and triple his money in a very short time by loaning it out to others. This situation quickly led to some of the Hong merchants in Canton becoming deeply indebted to Armenian financiers,



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which was a characteristic of the trade throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

In 1724, the English reported that all of the merchants in Canton, except Suqua (Chen Shouguan 陈寿观), were deeply indebted “to certain Armenians and others.”<sup>7</sup> Despite the negative effects of high usury rates, the trade could not expand without investment capital, and in that capacity, the Armenians played a very important role. Other references below will show Armenians continuing to be involved in the capital market in both Canton and Macao, while other Armenians focused on the trade itself.

The Armenian Don Francisco shows up in the Dutch records trading in Canton in 1735 and 1739. He is noted as being one of the main persons involved in the Canton-Manila commerce in the late 1730s. In Aug. 1738, Don Francisco was also the consignee of the cargo that arrived at Whampoa aboard the private English ship *Godolphyn* from Madras.<sup>8</sup> He most likely had his hands in other China-bound cargoes as well.

In 1736, an individual Armenian applied to the Danes in Tranquebar, India to take passage aboard one of the Danish ships bound for Malacca. Because the Danish Asiatic Company (DAC) bottoms often stopped at Tranquebar each year on their way to China, the Danes were sometimes approached to transport private persons and merchandise. Unlike some of the large companies that forbade carrying non-company merchandise aboard, the DAC often carried private goods if there was room. This particular Armenian was carrying a quantity of Indian goods. While the ship was en route to Malacca, the Danes also spoke to an Armenian vessel that had come from Madras. This vessel was bound for Pegu via Malacca, which is just another glimpse of the extensive networks that the Armenians had established in India.

After this Armenian had exchanged his goods in Malacca, it was possible for him to then take his new cargo and apply for passage aboard another ship bound for Manila, Macao, or some other destination. The objective of these itinerant traders, of course, was to have the value of their possessions increase from one transaction to the next, and from one port to the next. If they were successful, in time they could perhaps purchase their own ship. Later in the eighteenth century, the Americans greatly expanded this type of circuit trading to encompass the entire globe. The Armenians, however, were already doing this

extensively throughout Asia during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup>

This type of itinerant commerce was not always very successful, because it depended very heavily on existing inventories that were available in the port upon arrival. The large companies trading in China, for example, had to order much of their merchandise in advance in order to be sure that there would be enough good quality merchandise to load the ships when they arrived. Itinerant traders arriving in China, on the other hand, who expected to quickly exchange their goods and leave, could be very disappointed. Chinese merchants did not like to keep large inventories on hand, so these itinerant traders could be left with selecting from the unwanted leftovers that the companies had rejected.

The Armenians were eventually able to overcome this problem by ordering their goods in advance through other Armenians who were already in China. In these transactions, there were additional fees for the agent's services and possibly interest that had to be paid for the funds that the agents forwarded to the Hong merchants, but it was a way for itinerant traders to be assured of obtaining good quality merchandise when they arrived. Moreover, it saved them the costs of laying over in the event that there were no goods available. Because this was an on-going characteristic of the China trade, we find Armenians maintaining a fairly constant presence in China acting as agents or buyers for absentee merchants. This was especially true after Macao relaxed its residency restrictions in the late 1750s (explained below). Nevertheless, some Armenians were still faced with having to suffer the cost of laying over for a season in China.

In May 1741, the Danes reported that two Manila-bound ships left Canton after lying there for eighteen months. The Armenian Captain Surrat was in charge of one of them. Before leaving Macao, the captain was invited to the residences of other European traders to bid him farewell. From those social exchanges, the Danish supercargoes, who had remained in China during the off-season to order merchandise for the next year, gained the following information: Captain Surrat's ship had a cargo of silks worth 300,000 reals of eight (ca. 216,000 taels). As far as the Canton trade was concerned, this was a very expensive cargo, so it may have been worth Capt. Surrat's while to suffer the cost of laying over for a season.<sup>10</sup>

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Al Sig. D. Giovanni Abraham Grill Abraham in Cantone  
Per Piastra 2000

A vista di questa prima e sola Lettera di cambio vi contenterete pagare all'ordine del Sig. Matheus Joannes Mercante Armeno piastra nuove Messicane due mila del danaro che avete in vostra mano appartenente a questa Procura, per simil summa dallo stesso qui ricevuta; mentre a vista della dilui ricevuta sarà una tal summa bonificata ne' nostri conti.  
Addio. Macao 21. di Novembre 1765.

Emiliano Palladini Proc. Fide della Cong. di Prop. Fide

This Italian document is a Letter of Exchange, dated 21 November 1765. It was written and signed by the Procurator of *Propaganda Fide* in Macao, Emiliano Palladini. The letter is addressed to the Swedish Supercargo Giovanni (Johan) Abraham Grill in Canton, and concerns the payment of 2,000 Piasters (in this case, new Mexican Dollars) to the Armenian Matheus Joannes in Macao. On the reverse side there is Armenian script. This document is another example of the intricate network the Armenians established in Macao and Canton, which not only involved merchants, but ecclesiastics as well. [Source: NM Godegårdsarkivet F:17]

Besides the costs of laying over, there were also sea risks and other expenses that could cut into Armenian profits. There are only a few references that give us a glimpse of the downside of the Armenian trade in Asia, but in each of them we can imagine Armenian profits being affected. On 13 March 1741, the Dutch report that they had seen a stranded Armenian ship while en route to Batavia from Macao.<sup>11</sup> In 1745, Manuel da Silva Martins complained to the Macao Senate that an Armenian from Madras had sold him a bolt of cloth that had been infected with white ants (termites). The accused Armenian claimed that the fabric had been undamaged when it was examined by the Macao customhouse at the time the duties were paid.<sup>12</sup> In 1758, Miguel de Abreu petitioned the Senate to order an Armenian to pay the freight that was due on the goods he shipped;<sup>13</sup> and in 1759, an Armenian from Madras asked to be excused from the duties on fifteen bolts of cloth that he had shipped from Manila (with the assumption that without being excused, he would make no profit).<sup>14</sup>

There are other examples as well. On 20 Oct. 1764, the Macao Senate was presented with the case of an Armenian by the name of Aratu (probably

"Aratoon"). Aratu had consigned some cloth aboard two English ships sailing from Madras to Manila. Upon arriving at Manila, however, the cargo was not permitted to land. The ships proceeded to Canton with the cloth, but they found a very poor market there. Aratu then appealed to the Senate for permission to unload the cargo in Macao rather than Canton. The Senate, however, deemed such privileges not advantageous to the interests of Macao, and rejected the petition.<sup>15</sup>

On 22 July 1772, the Dutch in Macao report that they were expecting a shipment of cloves to arrive on their ship *Rynsburg* on consignment to the Armenian Ignatius Narcisus. However, about a week later, two of the sailors from the ship landed in Macao and reported that the ship had sunk on 17 July in the South China Sea. Everything was lost, so unless Narcisus had insured his cargo, he was out of his investment.<sup>16</sup>

Another example is from 8 Sep. 1780, when the Dutch learned that a private English merchant ship had captured a sloop named *Hornby* near Macao. It had sailed from Manila under a Spanish flag. Except for two chests of birds' nests that belonged to the captain, the cargo consisted entirely of silver coins that

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the Dutch said belonged to Armenians. The sloop was originally held for ransom by the English Captain Tasker. However, the English commander Panton of the war frigate *Sea Horse*, which was in China at the time, found out that the Spanish vessel carried no letters of marque. The commander thus ordered Tasker to hand the ship and cargo over to him as a prize for King George III of England.<sup>17</sup>

In all of these brief examples above, we see Armenian profits being threatened. Despite how lucrative some of these transactions may appear to be, there were considerable risks involved. If a small itinerant Armenian put all his investment in one commodity, one market or one ship, and those transactions went bad, he could very easily end up leaving China broke or in a considerably worse condition than when he arrived.

Armenians, on the whole, traded in a wide range of merchandise in China that included both bulk and fine goods. In 1747, for example, a Portuguese merchant in Macao sent a shipment of sugar to Manila under the care of the Armenian Marot José.<sup>18</sup> In this reference, José appears to be acting as a broker or shipping agent, for which he probably received a commission on the sale of the goods. In 1748, the Dutch mentioned that Armenians were bringing putchuk to China and exchanging it for zinc.<sup>19</sup> In December 1750, the Armenian Markas Pedrus requested passage aboard the VOC ship *Getrouwighyd*, which was about to leave Canton. Pedrus was granted passage along with his cargo, which consisted of 240 piculs of fine tea, 60 chests of porcelain, and 5 or 6 bales of *lywaaten*.<sup>20</sup> Other references show that some of the Armenian traders specialized in luxury goods.

In 1747, the midshipman Israel Reinius, aboard the Swedish ship *Adolph Friedrich*, wrote a brief description of the Persian and Armenian trade in Canton. In his journal, Reinius suggested that the mandarins allowed these traders to come to Canton pretty much as they pleased because they brought invaluable goods that were in demand. Besides the cloth mentioned above, Reinius reported that they traded in jewels, pearls, precious stones, ground and unground agate and amber, and other costly luxury goods. Reinius further suggests that as soon as these goods arrived on shore in China, they were quickly bought up by the mandarins at incredible profit to the Armenians and Persians.<sup>21</sup>

These luxury goods were very important to the trade in Canton. Besides the Armenians, there were other persons involved in this trade as well, such as some of the private English and French traders. All of the top Chinese officials and merchants were expected to give their superiors presents each year for the privilege of serving in their respective posts, and the higher the position, the greater the gift expected. The Hong merchants were also granted privileges on a year-by-year basis, which was partially based upon their relationship with the government officials in charge of the trade. These top positions in Canton could be very lucrative, but they came with a price. In order to attain and to keep those privileges, it was necessary to show appreciation to superiors with an appropriate gift.

Some of the top offices in Canton, such as those of the Hoppo, governor, and viceroy, were only three-year assignments. If those three-year office holders expected to be reassigned to an equally lucrative or prestigious post at the end of their stint, then they needed to build the good favor of superiors. One way of doing this was to offer expensive gifts to the persons in charge of making those assignments. These luxury items, however, were very troublesome to the large companies because if a particular officer in Canton took a fancy to a certain precious stone or an exotic jewel, he put great pressure on the Chinese merchant assigned to that ship to purchase it for him (at a loss to the merchant, of course). The merchants often tried to work out an arrangement with the companies to minimize this loss, which could be very troublesome for the supercargoes and burdensome to profits. The

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Hong merchants could cause much grief to the foreigners if they were not satisfactorily accommodated.

The private traders such as the Armenians, on the other hand, were not connected to the large companies, so they had much more leverage and freedom to negotiate in selling luxury goods, with much less to lose. They could make the sale without affecting their other trade (partially because some of them had no other trade). Thus, Reinius' description above of the Persians and Armenians in Canton trading almost exclusively in those items, and in their being allowed to come and go as they pleased, was probably not far from the truth. With their connections in India and elsewhere in Asia, and with the huge demand in Canton for novelty and luxury goods, those privateers were in a very good position to gain the favor of the mandarins. For the most part, because of all the problems connected to those transactions, the East India companies were more than willing to leave that trade to the privateers.

This lucrative luxury trade attracted many itinerant Armenians to Canton. The Englishman, Charles Frederick Noble, who was also in Canton in 1747, gave the following account of the Armenians he saw there:

"I have seen multitudes of Armenians at Canton; and I am much mistaken if there was not many Jews [probably used derogatively here] among them. They flocked always together, and here, as every where in Europe, they distinguished themselves from the people of China. Their beards, features, and complexion, confirmed my conjecture. I sometimes asked my Chinese acquaintances, what they were: they gave me many answers in broken and mixed dialect of English and Portuguese, which I could not understand. One of them told me, pointing at one of them, *He no cari China man's Joss, hap oter Joss*, or, in better English, that man does not worship our god, but has another god."<sup>22</sup>

Noble's account above clearly shows that foreigners and Chinese alike seemed to be able to distinguish Armenians from other traders simply by the way that they dressed and conducted themselves. In 1751, the Swedish chaplain, Pehr Osbeck, left us with a more precise description of the Armenians he encountered in Surat. He wrote that some of the Armenians had adapted to wearing Moorish (Muslim) clothes and a turban. If this attire was also true with

Armenians in China, then they would often be confused with Muslims, but that did not usually happen. Even in the off-hand references to Armenians in China, the authors give the impression that they clearly knew they were not Muslims. Osbeck also mentions that other Armenians in Surat wore the traditional clothing of their countrymen. It is not clear from Osbeck's narrative what their clothing looked like, but he does mention that they wore a small skull-cap. On top of the skull-cap, was placed a four-cornered black velvet hat that had a two-inch brim and was open at the front and the back.<sup>23</sup> Attire such as this would have clearly distinguished them from every other foreigner in China.

Regardless of what they wore, it is obvious from these examples that many of the Armenians in China made it a point to maintain their identities. They changed their names to adapt to their new environments; they learned the native languages of the places to which they migrated; and they learned to accept and adapt to all the foreign rules and regulations of the ports that they frequented. But despite all of this assimilation, they were still "Armenians."

Noble's account also states that Armenians "flocked always together." This, in fact, was true of most foreigners, largely because they were told by the companies not to intermingle with other foreigners. The company officers, of course, went around regularly to dinner at the various factories, as did the Armenians. However, aside from that social protocol, supercargoes, officers, and crews of the ships pretty much kept to themselves. They were all competitors in the trade, so it was not good to be sharing knowledge or to become too attached to other foreigners, which could raise suspicions. Thus, Noble's comments about the Armenians keeping close together may be a little misleading. The English, Dutch, French, Swedish, and Danish merchants would also have been commonly seen going around together in their own little groups, just like the Armenians.

There were many Armenian communities like this in ports throughout Asia. In this respect, Canton and Macao were just small points in a huge informal Armenian network that had been developing for a couple of hundred years. Aside from religious reasons, it was probably important for the sake of commerce for Armenians to outwardly show their identities so that they would be readily accepted into this web upon arrival.



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The accounts mentioned above have so far given the picture that the Armenians were coming and going regularly from both Canton and Macao, but not necessarily staying in China. As was mentioned, some Armenians were eventually able to stay longer, and they profited from acting as agents for others. By the late 1740s and 1750s, evidence begins to emerge of them growing deeper roots.<sup>24</sup> In 1748, Miguel Pedro Heytor requested the Macao Senate to return the key to his house, which had been occupied by a visiting Chinese mandarin. This request was made because Heytor had made arrangements to rent the house to an Armenian by the name of Gregorio.<sup>25</sup> In 1757, Apolinario da Costa requested a license to rent his house to the Armenian Antonio Baptista,<sup>26</sup> and in 1760, the Macao Senate received another request from two Armenians for permission to rent houses.<sup>27</sup>

These examples are clear evidence of a permanent community of Armenians emerging and maintaining a continual residence in Macao. It is likely, however, that Portuguese had been renting to Armenians all along and not requesting permission. Many of the Portuguese documents in Macao from the early eighteenth century have not survived, so even if a license had been applied for, it is likely that we would have no record of it. Other foreigners were staying in Macao and renting places all along, for which no Portuguese documents have survived, so there is no reason why the same would not be true for Armenians (see the Danish example above from 1741). The documents do show, however, that a permanent Armenian community began to emerge at least by the mid-eighteenth century, and was firmly established by 1760.

Foreigners without Portuguese citizenship could only trade in Macao under the name of a Portuguese merchant, which meant that they had to share some of the profits with those persons. Canton, however, was a different story. From the 1690s and after, all foreigners were welcomed to that port except the Russians and the Japanese.<sup>28</sup> Armenians could apply to go upriver just like other foreigners as long as they could prove they were in some way connected to one of the merchant ships and wanted to trade. They were then recorded as being attached to that particular ship (or ships). After that vessel(s) was loaded and departed, the Armenians were then required to remove to Macao just like other foreigners.<sup>29</sup>

As would be expected from a group of people who were constantly moving to new environments, it was important for Armenians to learn the language of their new home. On 7 March 1750, the mandarin at Casa Branca (Qianshan) inquired if there was anyone in Macao who could translate Siamese. The Macao Senate answered that there was a Moor and an Armenian who could perform that task.<sup>30</sup> Siamese junks regularly frequented Canton, and they would have had Chinese aboard who could speak Siamese. But by the time of this request (March) the junks were probably already gone as they usually left in January or February.<sup>31</sup>

The Jesuits, the Portuguese, and other foreigners in Macao were often called upon to translate messages for Chinese officials and foreign traders. The Canton linguists also needed assistance from time to time to translate documents from languages such as Siamese, Spanish, French, Dutch, Danish, and Swedish into Chinese. When those needs arose, they went searching for persons like the Armenian in Macao mentioned above. The foreigners would explain the contents of the documents line by line in pidgin English or Portuguese (depending on the linguist's skills). The linguist could then write the basic contents of the text in Chinese.<sup>32</sup>

In December 1750, there is an entry in the Portuguese records in Macao connecting the Armenians to the opium trade. This is no surprise to the historian, because opium was a legitimate commodity in many ports throughout Asia. It was widely traded by East India companies and private traders alike (including the Chinese junks). Ever since 1729, opium had been outlawed in China, but small amounts continued to be smuggled in. Some of the contraband was channeled through Macao. The entry mentions that the Dutch in Batavia and Malacca had seized some opium that they had found aboard Portuguese vessels. In this case, the opium that was confiscated belonged to an Armenian (who was apparently in Macao). The Macao Senate appealed to the Portuguese Viceroy in India to send a letter to the King of Portugal requesting him to settle this matter with the Dutch authorities.<sup>33</sup>

In ports outside China, opium was often regulated by the large trading companies. The Dutch, in fact, had a monopoly on opium in Dutch ports, which probably accounts for the confiscation of the



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drug at Batavia and Malacca. The nature of this entry suggests that the Portuguese who transported the opium for the Armenian merchant may have attempted to trade the article illegally in those ports, resulting in its seizure. If the opium had stayed aboard and not been declared or made known, there should not have been any reason for the Dutch to seize it. Thus, in this case, it is not clear whether the opium was bound for Macao or was intended to be traded elsewhere. Nevertheless, other references clearly show that some of the Armenians were deeply involved in the opium trade in Macao in later years.<sup>34</sup>

Foreigners could only legally stay in Macao if they had the approval of the Portuguese governor, but if they in some way offended or transgressed against

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the Chinese authorities, they could expect to fall under Chinese scrutiny as well. In January 1752, the Macao authorities received an order from the mandarin for the expulsion of a certain Armenian by the name of Ignacio Sarquis (or Sarkis). The Senate replied that he had already left.<sup>35</sup>

There are several other accounts from the 1750s that reveal bits and pieces of Armenian trading activities in Macao and Canton. In 1757, an Armenian captain from Manila requested permission to pay the same reduced duties that the Spanish paid.<sup>36</sup> On 10 January 1759, another Armenian by the name of Agaualy Zatur requested permission from the Dutch to ship 1,000 piculs of goods from Canton to Batavia. The products included tea, porcelain, and rhubarb. He was granted permission to load the goods aboard the *Zuydbeveland*, but because the VOC had changed its policy concerning non-company merchandise being allowed aboard company ships, they had to enter the goods under the names of two Dutch officers: Pieter Ras and Evert Jan Nyvenheim. Zatur himself was not permitted to go aboard the *Zuydbeveland*, but was

advised to take passage to Batavia aboard one of the Canton junks.<sup>37</sup>

What all of the accounts above have shown so far is that Armenians were very independent businessmen. They often traveled alone; they brought with them whatever merchandise they could muster together; they sought out whatever means they could to get from one place to the next; and they appear to be very determined in accomplishing their objectives. The one unique factor about them that perhaps is not obvious from the examples above is that they were readily accepted by both Protestants and Catholics alike.<sup>38</sup> Because the Chinese also made no distinctions between the races, religions, or ethnic creeds of the merchants that they allowed to trade at Canton, the Armenians had great freedom to carry out their commerce in China.<sup>39</sup> They moved in and out of Catholic Macao and Manila with little trouble; they engaged themselves and formed commercial alliances with Catholics, Protestants, and Chinese alike; they had extensive trading connections to Armenians, Jews, Muslims, and Hindus in India and Southeast Asia;<sup>40</sup> and they formed an important niche in the trade of luxury goods to the mandarins in Canton. As long as they did not try to compete with the large monopolistic East India companies, those entities did not interfere with the Armenian activities in China.

Aside from the Armenians themselves, the references to them also tell us something about the wider environment in which they lived. It is clear from the examples above that individual entrepreneurs who had no connections to any large companies or any particular ship could engage in business throughout Asia by going from port to port selling their wares. It did not matter how much merchandise or money they were carrying, and they did not have to be physically present to make their sales. There were many ways to ship merchandise in both small and large quantities via third parties, who charged a small fee for their brokering and transportation services. Individual entrepreneurs could move fairly freely between colonies, monopolies, and empires, despite all of the restrictions, limitations, and controls those institutions placed on the trade. The increasing number of Armenians coming to China is itself clear testimony that the constraints did not prevent small itinerant traders from being able to make good profits. As long as they abided by the rules, individual

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Armenians were just as welcome to trade in Canton as the large East India companies.

As more Armenians became involved in the China trade, we find them becoming more firmly rooted in Macao. In April 1761, the Armenians Matheus Joannes,<sup>41</sup> Zoure Joannes, Artú [Aratoon] Jacob,<sup>42</sup> and Sueri de Ayvai<sup>43</sup> applied for permission to rent a house.<sup>44</sup> This was an important event for the Armenians in China, because it was the beginning of an Armenian commercial consortium that led to some of them becoming very wealthy. By the late 1780s and early 1790s, one of them, Matheus Joannes, emerged as a prominent player in both the Macao and Canton trade. The role that Joannes and other Armenians played in these later decades had a significant impact (both positive and negative) on the growth of trade in the entire region.

Another part of the trade in which the Armenians played an intricate role was the capital market. The foreign records contain many examples of Armenians financing the trade. In Dec. 1761, for example, Sorere [Zoure or Sueri] and Aratoon gave a private loan of 740 taels to the Swedish supercargo Johan Abraham Grill and the ex-supercargo Michael Grubb. Both Grill and Grubb were deeply involved in the capital market in Canton and Macao in the 1760s. They regularly pooled money together from Portuguese, Armenian, and other individuals in Macao at annual interest rates of about 10 to 12 percent, and then loaned those funds out to the Chinese merchants or to other foreigners at a higher rate.<sup>45</sup>

There are many more entries in the Swedish records of Aratoon loaning money from 1763 to the end of 1765. Two of those entries show Zour as his partner, but most of them only mention Aratoon's name.<sup>46</sup> This omission of Zour's name could simply have been due to the fact that partners are often not mentioned in the records. This was true with the Chinese merchants in Canton doing business with the foreigners as well. Chinese partners are often omitted or just mentioned generically as "& Co.," "& Brothers," or "& Partners." It is possible that all the transactions with the Swedes were done as a partnership between Aratoon and Zour.<sup>47</sup>

The loans to the Swedes varied in size from 740 taels (1,000 Spanish dollars) to 3,700 taels (5,000 Spanish dollars). It is clearly stated in the records that a couple of the loans were issued with an interest rate

of 1 percent per month (or 12 percent per year). The interest rates of the other loans are less clear. Sometimes the same loans are listed twice under Grill's name but under different dates, and then they might be listed somewhere else under a partner's account. Consequently, the way that the figures were entered makes it very difficult to clearly determine the rates on each of the loans. The entries that are more obvious suggest that they were issued at a rate that was very close to the normal rate of 1 percent per month. Throughout the eighteenth century, loans could be procured in Macao at 10 to 12 percent annual interest.

Several other Armenians show up in Grill's account books in the 1760s. One of the entries shows clearly why it may have been better for Armenians to loan out their money at rates of 10 or 12 percent interest rather than at the higher rates that could be obtained in Canton. In 1765, the Armenian Ignacious Narcipe loaned 296 taels (400 Spanish dollars) to Grill, but the interest rate is not known. Grill pooled Narcipe's money together with other money that he had borrowed to issue a bottomry contract on the Canton Junk Sihing (Ruixingzhou 瑞兴舫). The bottomry bond was set at 40 percent (per voyage, which often lasted about 10 months). The Sihing, however, never returned to Canton. In Jan. 1766, it was reported "missing at sea." Grill still had to pay Narcipe the principle and interest on the loan that he had taken out, despite the fact that he had lost all of his investment on the bottomry bond with the loss of the junk. With most of the Armenian transactions mentioned in the Swedish records, the interest rates that they charged were much lower than what Grill was getting from the Chinese, but there was also much less risk involved.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, contrary to what might be expected from such adventurous businessmen, we find in the Swedish records that these particular Armenians were more conservative with their money than other private traders (including the Chinese). Aratoon, Zour, and Narcipe could just as well have used the money that they gave to the Swedes and issued it to the Chinese merchants and junk traders themselves at a much higher rate, but that would have exposed them to much greater risk.

Other Armenians that appear in Grill's papers show up as "Pascual" and "Martinus Bejan Matines Jorican Nauon." It is not clear whether these latter names represent two, three, or four persons. They are referred

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to using the plural form of the verb, so they are assumed to be more than one person. It is clear, however, that they were in Canton at the time. Pascual appears to have been involved with Captain Jackson, who was a private English merchant trading in China.<sup>49</sup>

In 1762, the Dutch mention that there were Armenians in Macao who were known to be good friends with Simão Vicente Rosa. Rosa's brother-in-law was the ex-governor of Timor, who upon the departure of the governor had taken over that post. This ex-governor was considered to be a rebel by the Portuguese because he had supposedly killed two members of the Timor Council. He then proposed to sell the land to the Dutch. Upon hearing that the new governor was on his way to Timor from Goa, he fled to the Dutch in Batavia. They, in turn, shipped him off to China aboard the *Admiraal de Ruyter*. In this way he arrived secretly at Whampoa.

When the ex-governor arrived, the Dutch supercargoes did not know what to do with him, which is where the Armenians came into the picture. Because of their close relationship with Rosa in Macao, the Dutch felt that the Armenians could perhaps help mediate the situation. The Armenians were notified of the arrival of the ex-governor, and after finding out the details, they agreed to take him in. The last entry about him in the Dutch records states that he left the ship at Whampoa on the evening of 18 Oct. and headed for Macao.<sup>50</sup>

It may be a coincidence, but on 26 April 1763, about six months after the Armenians smuggled the ex-governor into their home, an order from the Secretary of the City Council in Macao, José Joaquim Barros, called for an investigation to be made of the Armenians. He wanted to know whether the commerce or service of these foreigners was of any benefit to the city or the nation; or whether they should be refused residency and expelled. Barros specifically mentioned the names of Arotum Joannes and Zuri Jacob, and referred to the rest of the Armenians in their group as "the others."<sup>51</sup>

It is not known what become of Barros' investigation, but another matter involving the Armenians was brought to the attention of the Senate a few months later. On 14 Jan. 1764, the Senate received a complaint from Bernardo Nogueira against the Armenian firm of Matheus and Zore. The charge stated that these persons had made injurious

statements against the residents and the governor of the city. However, nothing seems to have come of this charge either.

It is doubtful that the Senate in Macao could have successfully expelled the Armenians for any of the charges mentioned above. In the eyes of the Chinese government, these private traders were legitimate visitors to the central kingdom and had the right to engage in commerce. As long as they abided by the rules, they had the permission of the Emperor to remain. The Chinese authorities were not concerned with internal matters within the Portuguese empire, so protecting an enemy of the Portuguese or saying things against them was no reason to expel them. From about 1757 onwards, Macao was obligated by the Emperor to receive and grant residency to all foreigners arriving from Canton. The Portuguese were not allowed to turn away anyone who was sent downriver regardless of their race, religion, or creed. The Armenians were among this permitted group of traders, and in that capacity they could overstep the Portuguese authority if they felt they were treated unfairly.

If the Portuguese in Macao had tried to prosecute the Armenians for any of the charges mentioned above, the Armenians could simply appeal directly to the Canton authorities. They could also request their Dutch, Danish, French, English, or Swedish connections in Canton and Macao to intervene on their behalf. All of these East India companies had considerable clout in Canton, and they could present petitions to the hoppos or governor generals if they thought it to be advantageous to their respective concerns. Prosecuting a foreigner in Macao for the sake of internal colonial matters was something that was in the interests of all other foreigners in China to prevent, because if it was allowed to happen to the Armenians, it could also happen to them. All of these factors were certain to have been in the minds of the Armenians when they agreed to hide the ex-governor of Timor in their home.

There are many examples in the foreign records that show that the Armenians had just as many rights as other foreigners in China. In April 1763, for example, the mandarins sent word to the Dutch stating that it was impossible for them to stay in Canton any longer than the French, Danes, or the Armenians. The English were not referred to in this particular case because they still had a ship at Whampoa and could,



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Mica Srs de Honoravel Companhia de Indias <sup>781</sup>

Recebi Vrasissima Carta de V<sup>ra</sup> M<sup>te</sup> de Com<sup>te</sup>  
 p<sup>ta</sup> de N<sup>ra</sup> Companhia; e respecto do dinheiro  
 q<sup>e</sup> tem prometido p<sup>ra</sup> N<sup>ra</sup> Companhia de Batavia  
 Srs Manue Jacob, e Vartao Gaspar, he certo q<sup>e</sup>  
 este Srs. tem na sua Lembranca q<sup>e</sup> hade  
 cobrar este dinheiro a quantia de vinte Mil, Pa-  
 lacas p<sup>ra</sup> entregar a V<sup>ra</sup> M<sup>te</sup>. e agora me acho p<sup>ra</sup>  
 contrario q<sup>e</sup> neste anno n<sup>o</sup> posso receber; julgo  
 nos q<sup>e</sup> emte outra moeda poderao ser q<sup>e</sup> hase  
 receber, e tem nos hade dar parte p<sup>ra</sup> este Srs.  
 na Batavia. os mais q<sup>e</sup> se oobruer. etc.

Macao 23 de Nov<sup>br</sup>.

1798

L. V. M.

Manue Jacob  
 Vartao Gaspar

Outras vezes se lerem  
 em 25 Nov<sup>br</sup> 1798

This Portuguese letter is dated 23 November 1798 at Macao. It is addressed to the Honourable Gentlemen of the Honourable Dutch Company concerning a loan between the Dutch government in Batavia and the Armenians in Macao for 20,000 Spanish dollars. The Dutch translation and other Dutch documents concerning this matter clearly state that the two signatures at the bottom of the letter are written in the Armenian script and are those of Lasar Johannes and Macartes Basilio (also spelled Macatish Vasilio or Macarties Wazilio), in Macao. But their names are not mentioned in the Portuguese text. The Dutch appear to have arranged this loan through Manuc Jacob and Vartao Gaspar in Batavia, which also shows the tight business network the Armenians established in ports throughout Asia. Money could be borrowed in one port and payment made in another. [Source: ARA 1.04.20 Canton 60]

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therefore, legally remain, but all other foreigners with no ships had to leave. What the mandarins were telling the Dutch was that if they did not go to Macao, then these other foreigners, including the Armenians, had every right to stay in Canton as well.<sup>52</sup>

Other references reveal the diversity of the Armenian trade. On 1 Aug. 1763, just before the foreigners (except the English) left Canton, the Dutch requested Captain Hagerop, who was aboard his ship at Whampoa, to declare the goods that he had shipped to China from Batavia. The VOC supercargoes had heard that a certain Armenian by the name of "Aretoen" (Aratoon) had arranged to ship a chest of gold thread and silver goods, and they suspected that the chest was aboard Hagerop's ship. Captain Mastriicht had signed for the goods at the post office in Batavia (presumably so that they appeared to belong to an officer of the company). Because these were luxury items, the supercargoes were afraid that if the mandarins found out about them, they would pressure the Chinese merchants assigned to Hagerop's ship to purchase the items at a great loss. They did not want to put the merchants in this difficult situation. The Dutch supercargoes thus tried to prevent the chest from landing ashore. Hagerop answered a few days later saying that he had no such chest aboard his ship.<sup>53</sup>

Aside from the reference to Hagerop above, the Dutch mention other Armenian freight in 1763. On 26 Sep. 1763, the private English ship *Houghton*, under the command of Capt. Smith, had arrived at Whampoa. The *Houghton* came from Madras and had stopped at Manila. At one of those ports [probably Manila], it picked up 20 chests of cloves on consignment to Armenians in China. However, the Armenians were still in Macao at the time that the ship arrived, so the Swedish merchant Grubb received the goods on their behalf.<sup>54</sup>

These examples show that the Armenians were clearly using all channels available to them to carry on their trade. If we had full transparency of all the transactions, we would probably find them shipping all kinds of goods in many different vessels all at the same time. And besides cargo, full transparency would probably also show very extensive involvement in the capital market in both Macao and Canton. Even though the cargo shipments often appear to be rather small in volume in comparison

to other merchants, their trade had an effect on the markets in China. In one of their letters at the end of the 1763 season, the Dutch supercargoes give a report of the trade in zinc. They mention that when the Portuguese and Armenians were buying up this item for the coast of India, the price rose. Consequently, it was best to buy it before or after those traders demanded it.<sup>55</sup>

In the 1760s and 1770s, many more references to Armenians begin to show up in the foreign records. On 11 May 1764, the Dutch in Canton report that Armenians left to go to Macao.<sup>56</sup> On 13 March 1765, the Macao Senate received a request from Sucry de Ayuar of the "*Minorita*" nation (probably Armenian) and the Armenian Ignacio Manacacem (possibly "Minas") for permission to reside in Macao until their ships arrived.<sup>57</sup> On 22 March 1765, the Armenian Ignatie and the private Frenchman Hay were visited by the governor of Macao, whereupon they complained about the charges they had to pay for unloading their one sampan of baggage that they had brought from Canton.<sup>58</sup> Ignatio (probably the same person as above) shows up again in Canton in 1766.<sup>59</sup> On 7 April 1767, the Dutch in Canton report again that all the Armenian and French private traders left to go to Macao;<sup>60</sup> and on 28 Dec. 1767, the Danes in Canton received payment from the Armenian Ignace Narcy for cargo he had shipped aboard one of the Danish ships from Tranquebar, India.<sup>61</sup>

In October and November 1767, the Portuguese Viceroy in Goa inquired into why Armenian merchants had been allowed to stay in Macao in the previous winter season, which he thought to be injurious to the welfare of the city. The Senate explained that the Armenians were going to leave for Goa on the ship *Nossa Senhora do Carmo*, but had remained in order to sell certain goods to Macao residents at attractive prices (and thus, a benefit rather than an injury to the city).<sup>62</sup>

On 9 May 1768, the Dutch in Canton reported that the private French merchants Hay and Martin left for Macao, together with the three Armenians that were there.<sup>63</sup> On 7 May 1769, the *procurador* in Macao asked for permission to rent his house on S. Agostinho Street to the Armenian Lazaro;<sup>64</sup> and on 23 April 1769, one of the two Armenians that were in Canton left in company with the Frenchman Hay. The remaining Armenian was able to stay in Canton that year under

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the cloak of pretending he was an Englishman who still had a ship at Whampoa.<sup>65</sup> As can be seen from all of these references, Armenians were now a permanent part of the trade each year.

While some of the Armenians maintained a long residence in China, others came and went with the ships. On 1 March 1769, the Armenian Eduard Raphael is reported by the Dutch to have left Canton for Macao. On 16 Feb. 1770, they report again that Eduard Raphael left Canton for Macao, and that he was from Pondicherry (India). In Macao, he was going to board a Portuguese ship bound for Madras. This was apparently a quick trip to India because on 4 Sep. 1771 Raphael was back in Canton again with the Frenchman Hay. On 26 Jan. 1772, he left Canton for Macao, where he was going to catch another ship bound for the coast (India). Raphael shows up again in Macao on 15 July 1777, when the Dutch say he left for Canton with another Armenian. Thus, in this case, Raphael appears to be accompanying his cargo wherever it went, whereas many of the other Armenians simply stayed in China and shipped their goods under the care of others.<sup>66</sup>

On 21 Feb. 1770, Joaquim Lopes da Silva informed the Senate in Macao that the Armenians Mateus [Matheus] and Inacio [Ignacio] had arrived from Canton and were living in his house.<sup>67</sup> As far as we know, Mateus, who was undoubtedly the "Matheus Joannes" mentioned above, had been residing in Macao ever since he first arrived in 1761. There were several Armenians in Macao who went by the name "Ignacio" (or something close), so this person's identity is not clear.

There are several other brief references to Armenians in the early 1770s: On 10 Nov. 1770, the Senate agreed to provide maintenance for an Armenian prisoner.<sup>68</sup> On 4 May 1771, the Macao Senate received a request from the widow Ozorio for permission to rent a house to Armenians, but their names are not mentioned.<sup>69</sup> On 28 July 1770, Aratoon arrived again at Canton in company with two other Armenians; and on 11 Aug., Ignatius (probably the "Ignatius Narcisus" mentioned below) arrived.<sup>70</sup>

In all of the references above, no mention is made of Armenians having "domestics" or servants helping them. The same is true of other foreigners, such as the Frenchman Mr. Hay and the Swedish merchants Grill and Grubb. These traders all appear in the records as

if they were arriving in Canton and Macao by themselves, and living in those places without any servants. This picture, however, is erroneous, because almost all of them had servants who cooked their meals, washed their clothes, and ran errands for them. Many of the top merchants and officers had their own private slaves. The records from the period (Portuguese, Chinese and others) usually only mention these other persons when a problem arose that in some way concerned them.

On 14 Nov. 1770, for example, two Dutch soldiers guarding the factory in Canton had been offered stolen goods for sale by a young black servant who worked for the Armenian Ignatius Narcisus. This particular youngster had been caught and punished the previous year for stealing goods. Narcisus probably had several other servants in his employ as well, because one person could not have taken care of all the duties required to maintain a household in Canton or Macao.

Armenians communicated with their correspondents throughout Asia in the same way that other foreigners did: they sent letters with each ship that was departing. This privilege was part of the maritime culture. As long as the respective foreigners were not at war with each other, they carried the letters of anyone who had a dispatch to send. On 29 June 1771, the Dutch were disappointed that they had not received any letters with the arrival of the English ship *The Earl of Elgin*. Even though the ship had wintered in Batavia, it only brought letters for the Portuguese, Armenians, and Chinese.<sup>71</sup>

More Armenian circuit traders continued to try their luck in China over time. On 4 Aug. 1774, the Danes reported that one of their ships had taken the Armenian Morad Johanjchon aboard as passenger. He was charged 50 "pillars" (Spanish dollars) for himself and his goods to be transported to Macao. At the going rate of about 4 percent of the value of the goods for freight from India to China, he was probably carrying somewhere around 1,000 Spanish dollars worth of merchandise.<sup>72</sup>

From the references above, we can see that there were only a few Armenians (excluding their servants) in Canton each year. They appear to have been coming consistently every year from the early decades of the trade, but often only one, two, or three to no more than five or six at a time. On 25 Feb. 1775, for example, the Dutch



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report that there were three Armenians in Canton, and on 11 April 1777, they mention that two Armenians arrived at Macao from Canton with the English private merchant Crommelin.<sup>73</sup> The remaining three Armenians who were in Canton that year (making a total of five for 1777) arrived at Macao on 29 April.<sup>74</sup> These persons were over and above the Armenians who managed to convince the Portuguese to allow them to remain behind in Macao, but those were certain to have been few as well.

Over the next few years, the number of Armenians setting themselves up as directors, agents, or brokers (the Dutch and the Danes called them “*commissioners*”) in China increased considerably. On 5 March 1778, the Dutch report six Armenians in Canton with all of their servants. On 11 March 1779, there were ten to twelve Armenians in Canton, not counting all of their servants. The Dutch also record this year that the failed Hong merchant Kousia (Zhang Tianqiu) was deeply indebted to seven or eight of these Armenians.<sup>75</sup>

*Armenians were very independent businessmen. They often traveled alone; they brought with them whatever merchandise they could muster together; they sought out whatever means they could to get from one place to the next; and they appear to be very determined in accomplishing their objectives.*

In 1782 and again in 1783, the English report there to be “about thirty Armenians” in Canton (this number may have included some of their servants).<sup>76</sup>

On 11 April 1785, the Dutch in Macao report eleven Armenians arriving from Canton. On 11 Oct. 1792, the mandarin at Qianshan granted the Armenian Matheus [Joannes] permission to return to Canton with nine other persons in his entourage.<sup>77</sup> On 3 Oct. 1793, Matheus received permission again to return to Canton with a total of fourteen persons.<sup>78</sup> In June 1798, ten Armenians arrived at Macao from Canton; and on 30 Sep. 1800, seven Armenians arrived at Canton from Macao.<sup>79</sup>

The increase in the numbers of Armenians coming to China was not looked upon by everyone as something that was good for Macao. In 1777, the

Bishop, D. Alexandre da Silva Pedrosa Guimarães, expressed concern about the effects that foreigners were having on Macao. Ever since 1757, after numerous exchanges with Goa and Portugal, Macao residents were officially allowed to rent houses out to foreigners (some were doing this before despite the restrictions). Armenians were particularly looked upon with favor by some of the Portuguese because they were Asians without a state. They were also thought to have ecclesiastical beliefs that could be reconciled with the Roman Catholic tradition.<sup>80</sup>

As the numbers of all foreigners coming to China continued to increase, changes took place in Macao, some of which the Bishop did not look upon favorably. Foreign merchants were continually trying to offer goods for sale at cut-rate prices, which affected the profits of Portuguese merchants. It was, in fact, illegal for other foreigners to trade in Macao, but now with all of the traffic going on between Canton and Macao, there were many opportunities to sneak goods in and sell them illegally.

Bishop Guimarães pointed out how Armenians and the private English traders were glutting the market with their products. As can be seen from many of the examples above, private Armenian and English traders were forming alliances with some of the Portuguese merchants. As long as they “hid” their transactions under the auspices of a legitimate Portuguese trader, they could market their goods in Macao. The Bishop was also concerned about the increasing amounts of opium that were coming in from other foreigners, which threatened Macao’s monopoly on that trade. He recommended expelling the foreigners and returning to the former days of monopoly control so that the Macao merchants would benefit. This suggestion, of course, was now impossible for the reasons mentioned above.<sup>81</sup>

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In the late eighteenth century, there were many other Armenians involved in the China trade. On 26 March 1779, the Armenian Demetrius Steffanus from Nagagatnam (Negaputnam?) engaged the Danes in Tranquebar to ship several cases of *specerier* (probably “spices”) to China. On 9 April 1779, the Armenian Sador Gregorig from Madras engaged the Danes in Tranquebar to ship two small chests of camphor to China. This cargo was to be placed in the hands of his *commissioner* (agent) in Macao, “Mathius Johones”.<sup>82</sup>

On 4 April 1780, Matheus, who was now one of the most prominent private merchants in China, arrived at Macao from Canton with his entourage. The Armenian Calestan (also spelled Calistan Satur) accompanied him.<sup>83</sup> On 23 April 1780, the Armenian Gregory arrived at Macao from Canton and gave a report to the Dutch supercargoes of the debts that the Hong merchants owed to the private traders (which was sure to have included Armenians).<sup>84</sup> In September of that year, the *Hornby* was captured with Armenian capital aboard (see above).

From 1781 to 1783, entries in the Dutch records show Matheus Joannes and Calistan Satur loaning money to the VOC at 10 percent annual interest.<sup>85</sup> On 13 July 1784, a two-masted sloop that was hired by Armenians arrived at Macao from Batavia;<sup>86</sup> and on 23 Aug. 1787, a two-masted Armenian snow arrived at Macao from Madras.<sup>87</sup> These two vessels were probably connected in some way to Matheus Joannes. As far as we know, Matheus was the only Armenian at the time who had permission to trade on his own account in Macao.

On 13 April 1785, the Danes in Tranquebar received a small amount of cargo to be shipped to China from the Armenian Gollemeer (one bale of piece goods), the Armenian Elias Minos and his partner Hohn Galde (five bales of piece goods), and the Armenian Gregory Abraham (six bales of piece goods and eighteen bales of shark fins).<sup>88</sup> By the mid-1780s, the VOC had relaxed its policy of refusing outside passengers aboard company ships, and the Armenians took advantage of this new opportunity. On 18 Aug. 1786, the Armenian Balthazar Joseph applied in Batavia for passage to China aboard the ship *Vreedenburg*. He had his two servants, Alcadio and Asia, with him. Also traveling as passengers with him were the Portuguese supercargo Manuel Rosario [probably Manuel do Rozario] and his two servants, AÛbanoe

and Ayoen. Rosario had arrived at Batavia from Timor, and instead of waiting for a Macao ship to show up, he took passage aboard the *Vreedenburg*. On 25 Aug. 1787, the Armenian Michiel Gregorie was also granted permission to board the ship *Barbestein* at Batavia and sail to Macao.<sup>89</sup>

As was the case with all foreigners coming to trade at this time, some of the Armenians did not make it back to their homelands, but died in China. By the 1780s, several Armenians had already died in Macao and were buried on the inner harbor side of Penha Hill. Unfortunately, the graves were above the Lilau fountain, which was an important source of the city's water.<sup>90</sup>

In 1784, the Senate sent a letter to the Vicar of the Hermitage of Nossa Senhora da Penha, requesting that no more graves be opened on their hill. The Senate regarded the Armenian cemetery as a serious threat to the health of the city. The Vicar consented to their request, but then reminded the Senate that the Armenians had been given permission to bury their dead there.<sup>91</sup>

This issue arose because the Hermitage had given permission in 9 April 1784 for a burial. There were four previous interments that had been made at the site by order of the procurator of the Senate. Out of the five burials – assuming that the fifth had been made – only two gravestones were found at the site. The epitaphs were written in the Armenian script.<sup>92</sup>

By the late eighteenth century, the Armenians were among the dominant players in the trade in Canton and Macao. In 1790, the Danes in Canton borrowed a large sum of money from the Armenian Samut (or Samuel) Moorat. He loaned 30,000 pillars (Spanish dollars) to the Danes on 30 Oct., and on 30 Nov. he added to that amount another 11,711 pillars. The loan was issued at the standard Macao rate of 1 percent interest per month. The total amount of 41,711 pillars was to be repaid with interest eight months after the date to “Messr. Edmund Boehm & Co.” in London on the account of “Edward Raphad Esq.” (possibly the “Eduard Raphael” mentioned above).<sup>93</sup>

On 10 Dec. 1794, Matheus Joannes died in Canton, and the proceedings of his will created much concern in Macao because of the hundreds of thousands of Spanish dollars that were involved.<sup>94</sup> On 30 Dec. 1794, the VOC entered 20,000 Spanish dollars

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(14,509.804 taels) into the company's treasury in Canton from the Armenian Martinus Johannes.<sup>95</sup> After the collapse of the VOC in 1795, the Dutch hired the Armenian Abraham Avitmall to continue their trade with China. He conducted all of the Dutch trade in Canton in 1796, and did a lot of his own personal transactions on the side. Avitmall's private transactions later led to many problems for the Dutch residents in Macao and Canton, because he left a number of debts and unfinished business behind him.<sup>96</sup> In June 1797, the Danes in Tranquebar were approached again by another itinerant Armenian who wanted to send 20,000 pillars (Spanish dollars), a considerable amount of cargo, and himself to China.<sup>97</sup>

Armenian captains continue to show up in China as well. The Dutch report on 30 Sep. 1799 that the English country ship *Fair* arrived at Macao from Bombay and Madras under the command of the Armenian Captain R. Aerth.<sup>98</sup> The ship left China again on 21 Dec. 1799 bound for Madras. The *Fair* was back in China again the next year with the same captain, and departed again for Bengal on 7 Jan. 1801. The Dutch record the *Fair* arriving again at Macao from Madras on 25 Sep. of the same year, but this time under the command of the Armenian Captain J. Drinkwater. Thus, as far as commanding vessels was concerned, the references show Armenians being captains of China-bound ships throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>99</sup>

What all of these scattered references above tell us about the Armenians is that, by the 1790s, they were among the most permanent merchants supporting commerce in China. They formed links between China and the outside markets despite the colonial restrictions in Macao; they supplied the necessary luxury items in Canton that kept the mandarins and top officials at bay so the trade could continue to grow; they sometimes traveled with their cargo as supercargoes, captains, and agents; and they invested in China in many different capacities that helped the trade to flourish, including trading in commodities, loaning money to merchants, and providing brokering and freight-forwarding services.

Their contributions to the advancement of commerce in both Macao and Canton have, until now, been given very little recognition. But as would be expected, not all of the contributions Armenians made were positive. They were also deeply involved

in the opium trade in China, and did much to advance that commerce. They provided financing for opium smugglers; they provided the links that helped smugglers bring contraband to China; and they traded in illegal commodities themselves in the delta. All of this activity is what led a Dutch visitor in 1793 to state that "of the Asian folks who trade at Canton, there are none more prominent and rich than the Armenians."<sup>100</sup> **RC**

Author's Note about the "Armenian" Names : No attempt has been made by the authors to guess or suggest that any of the persons mentioned in this article were "Armenian" because they had an "Armenian" name. On the contrary, Armenians often changed their names to better adapt to their communities. It is thus not possible to determine their nationality or race by simply looking at those names. Without exception, all of the persons identified as "Armenians" in this article were referred to as "Armenians" by contemporary writers in the original documents. In some cases such as the name "Matheus Joannes", there are references to him being an Armenian in many languages, including Portuguese, Chinese, Dutch, Danish, English and Swedish. In other cases, a name only appears once in one language.

## ABREVIATIONS

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| AM  | <i>Arquivos de Macau</i> . Published in three series: Series 1 has three volumes (1929-1931); Series 2 has one volume (1941); and Series 3 has 15 volumes (1964). |
| ARA | Algemeen Rijksarchief (General State Archives), The Hague, Netherlands.   |
| JFB | James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota, USA.  |
| NM  | Nordic Museum (Archive), Stockholm, Sweden.   |
| OIO | Oriental and India Office Library, London, UK.  |
| RAC | Rigsarkivet (National Archives), Copenhagen, Denmark  |
| VOC | Dutch East India Company  |



## MACAO'S CULTURAL MINORITIES

## NOTES

- 1 H. B. Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China 1635-1834* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926. Reprint, Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Co., 1966), 1:174 n1.
- 2 E. A. Voretzsch, ed., François Froger. *Relation du Premier Voyage des François à la Chine fait en 1698, 1699 et 1700 sur le Vaisseau 'L'Amphitrite'* (Leipzig: Asia Major, 1926), 90, 143.
- 3 Benjamim Videira Pires, S. J., *A Viagem de Comércio Macau-Manila nos Séculos XVI a XIX* (Macao, Centro de Estudos Marítimos de Macau, 1987; Reprint, Museu Marítimo de Macau, 1994), 42-43; and AM: 3. II. no. 3 (Sep. 1964) 146, and XV. no. 2 (Feb. 1971) 105-106.
- 4 Morse, *Chronicles*, 1:174; and OIO: G/12/24.
- 5 See a comparison of the cargoes aboard private ships and junks going to Macao and Canton in the eighteenth century, in Paul Van Dyke, "Port Canton and the Pearl River Delta, 1690-1845" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 2002) Appendixes.
- 6 For an extensive discussion on the usury rates and capital market in Macao and Canton, see A. M. Martins do Vale, *Os Portugueses em Macau (1750-1800)*, (Macao, Instituto Português do Oriente, 1997); and Van Dyke, "Port Canton." Chapter Five: "The Macau Trade, the Junk Trade, and the Capital Market in Canton."
- 7 OIO: G/12/25.
- 8 ARA: VOC 2346, 2438.
- 9 RAC: Ask 1116. Some American ships bounced around the world for four, five, or six years before returning home. If they were successful, then the cargo that they brought home was worth many times more than the cargo they left with. Many examples of this can be seen in the Carrington papers at the Rhode Island Historical Society.
- 10 Captain Surrat set sail from Macao on May 10, 1741. RAC: Ask 1120. His ship was probably no more than 200 to 250 tons in capacity, but was carrying a cargo worth as much as an 800 to 900 ton Danish ship loaded with tea. Most of the East India companies' ships of that size would have an export cargo worth somewhere around 150,000 to 250,000 taels. For the possible size of Surrat's ship, see Morse, *Chronicles*, 1:275.
- 11 ARA: VOC 2535.
- 12 AM 3. XXII. no. 3 (Sep. 1974).
- 13 AM 3. XXIII. no. 4 (Apr. 1975) 186.
- 14 AM 3. XXIII. no. 4 (Apr. 1975) 197.
- 15 AM 3. XXIII. no. 6 (Jun. 1975) 304-305.
- 16 ARA: Canton 79, 81.
- 17 The Dutch and English reports of this event differ somewhat. The Dutch reported that the cargo consisted of two chests of birds nests that belonged to the captain, and 12,000 Spanish reals that was the property of the Armenians. They said the ship was held for a ransom of 3,000 Spanish dollars. The English records, however, show the ransom to be "2,000 dollars." Captain Tasker reported the cargo to be "in money and Bird's nests 8,299 Dollars," with no mention of Armenians. ARA: Canton 89; and Morse, *Chronicles*, 2:51-52.
- 18 AM 3. XXII. no. 4 (Oct. 1974) 206. Armenians were also involved in shipping sugar from the Philippines to India. Benito J. Legarda, Jr., *After the Galleons* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999), 81-82.
- 19 ARA: Canton 10.
- 20 ARA: Canton 13.
- 21 Israel Reinius, *Journal hållen på resan till Canton i China* (Helsingfors: 1939), 223. The Armenians probably also dealt in other luxury items as well, such as pearls and coral. Kuo-tung Anthony Ch'en, *The Insolvency of the Chinese Hong Merchants, 1760-1843* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1990), 278.
- 22 Charles Frederick Noble, *A Voyage to the East Indies in 1747 and 1748* (London: T. Becket and P. A. Dehondt, 1762), 244-245.
- 23 Our gratitude to Kinglsey Bolton of the University of Hong Kong for helping us understand this Swedish passage. Pehr Osbeck, *Dagbok öfver en Ostindis Resa åren 1750, 1751, 1752* (Stockholm: 1757. Reprint, Redviva Publishing House, 1969), 341. Another account also mentions Armenians in Bombay "wearing the Persian dress and dyeing their hair and whiskers with henna." Mesrovb Jacob Seth, *Armenians in India* (Calcutta, 1937, reprint New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 299.
- 24 This outcome may simply be the result of many of the Macao records from the early eighteenth century not surviving. It is very possible that Armenians were permanent inhabitants of Macao from the very beginning of the Canton trade, but we have no records to substantiate it.
- 25 AM: 3. XXII. no. 5 (Nov. 1974) 250.
- 26 AM: 3. XXIII. no. 3 (Mar. 1975) 133.
- 27 AM: 3. XXIII. no. 4 (Apr. 1975) 215.
- 28 The Russians and Japanese had separate agreements with the Qing government and had special conditions placed upon their trade that restricted them to other ports. Canton was not an option for them.
- 29 This requirement to remove to Macao in the off-season began around 1759 or 1760, but was not firmly in place until about 1765. It took several years for it to become effective. See Van Dyke, "Port Canton," 45.
- 30 AM: 3. XXII. no. 6 (Dec. 1974) 310-311.
- 31 Because they had to sail in conjunction with the monsoon winds, the junks usually arrived at Canton in July or August and departed in January or February. Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter Five: "The Macau Trade, the Junk Trade, and the Capital Market in Canton."
- 32 For a description of the duties and responsibilities of the Canton linguists during this period, see Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter Four: "The Linguists."
- 33 AM: 3. XVI. no. 1 (July 1971) 40.
- 34 At the time of the confiscation, the Dutch opium trade was under the authority of the Amfioen-Sociëteit [Opium Society], which had been granted a ten-year monopoly in 1745. Ewald Vanvugt, *Wettig Opium. 350 Jaar Nederlandse Opiumhandel in the Indische Archipel* [Legal Opium. 350 Years of the Dutch Opium Trade in the Indies Archipelago] (Amsterdam: Globe Pockets, 1985; Reprint, 1995), 111. For a narrative of the early development of the opium trade in Macao and the Pearl River delta, see Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter Six: "The Contraband Trade."
- 35 AM: 3. XXIII. no. 1 (Jan. 1975) 3.
- 36 AM: 3. XXIII. no. 3 (March 1975) 134.
- 37 At the time of Zatur's request, the VOC's policy was to restrict non-employees from boarding company ships. The Dutch refused passage to many persons in Canton, regardless of what they were offered and regardless of where they wanted to go. The persons who managed to gain passage on VOC ships in Canton or Macao were usually hired by the company to fill a position, which then gave them the right to board. The same was true with merchandise, which is why Zatur's goods had to be shipped under a Dutch officer's name. He was charged 3 rixdollars per picul for the tea and rhubarb, and rixdollars 0.24.8 [24 stuivers 8 penny?] for the porcelain. It is not known how much his passage cost aboard the junk. ARA: Canton 23, 24. The two Canton junks that loaded in Batavia in 1759 and that Zatur was likely to have gained passage on were the *Souhin*, nachoda Lim Hoanko, and the *Soenian*, nachoda Lie Thehoe. ARA: VOC 4387. This policy of restricting non-employees

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- from boarding VOC ships varied somewhat over time and with each situation. There were persons who came and left Canton and Macao aboard Dutch ships without having been employed by the company, but those cases were exceptions to the general rule.
- 38 There has been an on-going discourse over the centuries of the possibility of reconciling the Armenian faith with that of the Roman Catholic Church, and it continues to the present day. For a summary of this discussion, see the entry "Armenia" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*.
- 39 The exceptions to the Chinese rule, of course, were the Russians and Japanese, who were not allowed at Canton because they had separate trading agreements with China.
- 40 A few references to the Armenians trading in Asia can be found in the following sources: Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells, "Restraints on the Development of Merchant Capitalism in Southeast Asia before c. 1800," in *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era*, ed. by Anthony Reid (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 134-135, 141; Victor Lieberman, "Was the Seventeenth Century a Watershed in Burmese History?," in *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era*, 226; Dhiravat na Pmbejra, "Ayutthaya at the End of the Seventeenth Century: Was There a Shift to Isolation?," in *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era*, 269; S. Arasaratnam, "Merchants of Coromandel in Trade and Entrepreneurship circa 1650-1700," in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, c. 1400-1750*, ed. by Roderich Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 40; John E. Wills, Jr., "China's Farther Shores: Continuities and Changes in the Destination Ports of China's Maritime Trade, 1680-1690," in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, c. 1400-1750*, 59; Ashin Das Gupta, "Changing Faces of the Maritime Merchant," in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, c. 1400-1750*, 360; Gedalia Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral. Anglo-Dutch Jews and Eighteenth-Century Trade* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978), 166; Denys Lombard, "Questions on the Contact Between European Companies and Asian Societies," in *Companies and Trade*, ed. by Leonard Blussé and Femme Gaastra (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1981), 182; Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), passim; and Stephan Diller, *Die Dänen in Indien, Südostasien und China (1620-1845)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999) idem. For a brief historical summary of the Armenian trade in Asia, see Frédéric Mauro, "Merchant communities, 1350-1750," in *The Rise of Merchant Empires*, ed. by James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 270-274.
- 41 Aliases: Joannes Matthias, J. Matheus, Matheus, and Matheus Johannes.
- 42 Aliases: Artur/Arthur Jacob, or simply Aretoen, Aroutoun, Archtoen, Anetoen, Arotoun, Arctoen, Arruthum Jacob.
- 43 Alias: Sucry de Ayuar. In the 1761 petition, Sueri is mentioned as being an Armenian, but a Portuguese reference from 1765 simply refers to him as a member of a "minorita" nation. AM: 3. XXIII. no. 6 (June 1975) 323 and no. 5 (May 1975) 286-287.
- 44 AM: 3. XXIII. no. 4 (April 1975) 237.
- 45 NM: Godegårdsarkivet. Ostindiska Handling. F17. [Hereafter listed simply as: NM: F17]
- 46 There are only three entries mentioning Aratoon trading with "Zour", and 24 entries where he is listed under his own name. But that could be simply an omission, because partners were often omitted in many of the records. "Zour" was also spelled "Sorore" and "Zouer," so it is not clear whether he was Sueri de Ayuar, Zoure Jacob, or Soure Joannes. NM: F17.
- 47 NM: F17. The 12 May and Oct. 1763 entries clearly show that "Arruthum" and "Aroutoun" were the same person in the entries of Grill's account book.
- 48 NM: F17.
- 49 There is no date on this document, but all of these records in Grill's archive were from the 1760s, and early 1770s, and this reference was found bundled with others from 1766. It is thus assumed that this reference is also probably from the late 1760s.
- 50 ARA: Canton 71.
- 51 AM: 3. X. no. 2 (Aug. 1968) 85-86. At about the same time as this order was issued, the Macao Senate was receiving letters informing them of the situation in Timor and what could be done to stabilize the situation there. Thus, this order may have had a connection to the Armenians helping the ex-governor.
- 52 ARA: Canton 72.
- 53 ARA: Canton 72. If Hagerop did indeed have the chest aboard his ship, which was very possible, then it was not a difficult matter for him to arrange with Aretoen to have it smuggled ashore. For a discussion of how this could have been done, see Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter Six: "The Contraband Trade."
- 54 The Dutch supercargoes managed somehow to get a sample of the cloves in those 20 chests, and found them to be of inferior quality. They expected the price to be much lower than the VOC cloves. In Dec. 1763, the Dutch reported that this Armenian consignment of cloves consisted of 21 piculs 17 cattie. ARA: Canton 72. In Oct. 1763, the Swedish records also show Grubb involved with an Armenian by the name of Pascual. NM: F17.
- 55 ARA: Canton 26.
- 56 ARA: Canton 73.
- 57 AM: 3. XXIII. no. 6 (June 1975) 323.
- 58 ARA: Canton 74.
- 59 ARA: Canton 75.
- 60 ARA: Canton 76.
- 61 The freight for this merchandise came to 36.96 taels. At the going freight-rate of 4 percent of the value to ship the goods from India to China, that would amount to about 924 taels (ca. 1280 Spanish dollars) worth of merchandise. RAC: Ask 1157.
- 62 AM: 3. VII. no. 6 (June 1967) 311-312 and XXIV. no. 2 (Aug. 1975) 61, 85-86.
- 63 ARA: Canton 77.
- 64 The house was on the street going to St. Augustine's Church, where Dutch, Spanish, and other foreigners lived as well. AM: 3. XXIV. no. 2 (Aug. 1975) 85-86.
- 65 All of these references to Armenians in 1769 are taken from ARA: Canton 78.
- 66 ARA: Canton 79, 80, 81, 86.
- 67 AM: 3. XXIV. no. 3 (Sep. 1975) 138.
- 68 AM: 3. XXIV. no. 3 (Sep. 1975) 157.
- 69 AM: 3. XXIV. no. 3 (Sep. 1975) 166.
- 70 ARA: Canton 79.
- 71 ARA: Canton 80.
- 72 RAC: Ask 1172.
- 73 Matheus Joannes and Inácio Narveis were two Armenians who were in Macao in 1775. They were probably two of the "three Armenians" who were in Canton that year. Vale, *Os Portugueses em Macau*, 170.
- 74 ARA: Canton 84, 86.
- 75 RAC: Ask 1180; and ARA: Canton 87, 88.
- 76 Morse, *Chronicles*, 2:75, 85.
- 77 Lau Fong 劉芳 and Zhang Wenqin 章文欽, eds. *Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dangan hui bian* 清代澳門中文檔案匯編 [A Collection of Ming Chinese Documents Concerning Macao] (Macao: Aomen Jijinhui Chuban, 1999), 2:708-709 no. 1378; and Liu Yingsheng 劉迎勝 "Qianlong nianjian Aomen de yameiniya shangren 乾隆年間澳門的亞美尼亞商人," *Wenhua Zazhi* 文化雜誌 (Macao: Winter 2002), 39-42.
- 78 Lau and Zhang, eds., *Qingdai Aomen*, 2:733 no. 1419. Liu Yingsheng has transformed some of the names of these persons

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from Chinese to Portuguese. However, as some of the examples in this paper clearly show, Armenians did not necessarily adopt Portuguese names. For most of the persons in Mathias's group, there is no way of telling from the Chinese license whether they were Armenians, Portuguese, or some other nationality. Moreover, Armenians were just as likely to have servants and slaves with them from India, Africa, or Southeast Asia as was the case with many of the other foreign traders in Canton. The name "Mathas" is clear because it is given in both Portuguese and Chinese on the 1793 license, and Mathas is clearly listed as being an Armenian in both languages. But as far as the other persons are concerned, we cannot assume that the Chinese officers translated their names from Portuguese equivalents. Liu Yingsheng, "Qianlong nianjian Aomen de yameiniya shangren," 39-42.

- 79 ARA: Canton 91, 97.  
 80 AM: 3. XVI. no. 4 (Oct. 1971) 204-210, 214-215.  
 81 AM: 3. XVI. no. 4 (Oct. 1971) 204-210, 214-215. For coverage of the early development of the opium trade in the 1760s and 1770s in Macao and Canton, see Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter Six: "The Contraband Trade."  
 82 RAC: Ask 1180.  
 83 ARA: Canton 89.  
 84 ARA: Canton 89.  
 85 ARA: VOC 4423, 4430 and Canton 244, 245.  
 86 ARA: Canton 90.  
 87 RAC: Ask 1202.  
 88 The reference is not clear, but Gollemeere himself appears to have been on his way to Madras. The word for bale (*balle, balje, or baller*) and tub (*balle, balje, or baller*) are the same in Danish, so this cargo could be "tubs" rather than "bales." RAC: Ask 1197.  
 89 ARA: Canton 295, 296.  
 90 AM: 3. XVI. No. 5 (Nov. 1971) 291-292.  
 91 AM: 3. XVI. No. 5 (Nov. 1971) 291-292.  
 92 AM: 3. XVI. No. 5 (Nov. 1971) 291-292. According to Teixeira, the two epitaphs read as follows: "In this grave is buried the body of a pious man named Lazar, son of Pogos, of Armenian nationality

in the year of our Lord 1783" and "This is the son of Johannes of Julpha, who died aged 26 in the month of September, A. D. 1783." Monsignor Manuel Teixeira, *A Voz das Pedras de Macau* (Macao: Imprensa Nacional, 1980), 22. At present, there is also an Armenian buried in the Old Protestant Cemetery in Macao. The person was Mrs. Dishkoone Seth, daughter of the late Aratoon J. Marooth, and she died on 15 July 1857. Lindsay and May Ride, *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996; reprinted, 1998), 86.

- 93 RAC: Ask 1206.  
 94 Carl Smith, "Armenian Strands in the Tangled Web of the [Pre-Lin Zexu] Opium Trade," unpublished paper presented at the Hong Kong History Museum Conference in Dec. 1998.  
 95 ARA: Canton 57. Circumstances suggest that "Martinus Johannes" (the spelling is not clear in the original) may have been the same person as "Matheus Joannes." The money borrowed from this "Martinus" does not show up again in the Dutch records, but there are many later references to the Dutch owing a similar amount to "Matheus." References to this debt show up in both the Dutch and Portuguese documents. However, there is also a problem with that assumption because Matheus died in Canton on 10 Dec. 1794, but the name Martinus shows up again in the Dutch records thereafter. On 10 May 1795 while in Macao, Martinus received a letter from Canton via the Armenian Koechunalo reporting that the Dutch Ambassador Isaac Titsingh had returned to Canton from Beijing. ARA: Canton 57. If this latter reference meant "the house of Martinus" rather than simply "Martinus" himself, then "Martinus" could possibly be referring to "Matheus."  
 96 ARA: Canton 96, 373, 374, 375, 376.  
 97 RAC: Ask 1211.  
 98 "Aerth" is also spelled "Avith" and "Aurth" in the Dutch records, which was probably the same as "Aviet" in the Portuguese records.  
 99 ARA: Canton 97, 98. The names of all the captains commanding private ships bound for China are not known.  
 100 JFB: Hu 1799. J. C. Hüttner, *Reize van het Britsch Gezantschap door China, 1799.*