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The Early Modern Global Trade of Diamonds and Gems:

An Armenian Family Firm on the Crossroads of

Caravan and Maritime Trade (ca. 1670-1730)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of
the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by

Sona Tajiryan

2020

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Early Modern Global Trade of Diamonds and Gems:
An Armenian Family Firm on the Crossroads of
Caravan and Maritime Trade (ca. 1670-1730)

by

Sona Tajiryan

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Sebouh Aslanian, Chair

This dissertation analyzes the early modern global luxury commodity trade of diamonds and gems conducted between the Indian Subcontinent and the Mediterranean during 1670s and 1730s. It examines the involvement of the Armenian mercantile network of merchants from New Julfa, Isfahan in this global trade by focusing on the previously unpublished and unstudied body of archival documents from state and private archives in Italy, the UK, Armenia, Iran and beyond. By focusing on a single family firm of professional gem merchants, the Minasians, their network of agents and business activities, this dissertation argues against the previously presumed idea by

economic historians that early modern Asian merchants and family firms were merely peddlers in the face of the European chartered joint-stock companies. Operating from Isfahan and Livorno all the way to the Russian, Ottoman and Mughal Empires, the previously little-studied Minasian archival documents demonstrate that these gem merchants' business ventures covered vast distances and included all three "gunpowder empires" of the early modern period.

This dissertation also sheds light on the specifics of decision making, as well as the role of social capital in the long-distance business operations of this family firm. It argues that the systematic circulation of information and market knowledge played a key role in the business and decision-making culture of this family firm. Moreover, their detailed knowledge of early modern gem markets and the efficient information circulation through correspondence provided the most accurate, combined use of the caravan and maritime trade routes, whichever was cheaper and safer at any one moment. By offering a new narrative on the agency of the Minasian family firm in the early modern Eurasian long-distance trade, this dissertation makes an argument that the above-mentioned practices could be representative of a bigger body of Asian family firms operating in late seventeenth and eighteenth century Eurasia.

The dissertation of Sona Tajiryán is approved.

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2020

DEDICATION PAGE

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents Hovhannes Tajiryan, Anahit Mkrтчhyan, and my brother Shahe, without whose selfless support I would not be where I am today.

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Acknowledgments

It would not be an exaggeration to say that this dissertation was inspired by the archival material at hand. While most dissertation topics start with an idea, after which scholars venture on finding the appropriate archival material to prove their arguments, diamonds and gems mentioned in the thousands of digitized pages of archival sources found me. During my first years of graduate school, my adviser Dr. Sebouh Aslanian introduced me to the fascinating archival documents pertaining to the history of a small yet significant group of merchants, as well as the economic, social and political histories of their hometown in New Julfa, Isfahan. The first impression made by these documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was the number of gems, including precious stones, such as diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds, as well as semi-precious pearls, coral and so on, mentioned in them among the traded commodities. Inventory lists from 1670s up to 1750s were inundated with what I could only initially understand, were gemstone names, and over a dozen adjectives written before them, describing their color, water, clarity, cut and other qualities that none of us even knew what language they represented.

Unfortunately, it was not about the lack of expertise in gemology, but rather the realization that the documents, which first appeared to be related to the gemstone trade conducted by New Julfans, were written in an obscure professional language, to which we had no dictionaries to refer. The amount of information shedding light on the history of just one family firm among them, was enough for me to get interested in researching the topic of the involvement of New Julfan merchants in the early modern global trade of diamonds and gems. No research has been previously conducted, even though both Francesca Trivellato and Sebouh Aslanian have hinted at its

importance in their respective monographs.¹ After some brief research, I was not surprised to find out that there were no scholarly studies on the Julfan involvement in the early modern luxury trade of diamonds and gems. In the end, I embarked on the journey of exploring this unstudied topic only to realize that what I was about to do would be barely scratching the surface of hundreds of documents proving the importance of gem trade among New Julfan merchants in the early modern period.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the immense support that I have received from my adviser, Professor Sebouh Aslanian. From inspiring me to take on this project, pushing me to think and look for the big picture, always making me strive to accomplish more in academia to working meticulously and patiently with me for hours over obscure archival documents on hand, he has truly been nothing but a wonderful and inspirational mentor to me and I will be forever grateful to him for that. I have learnt immensely from Professor Sanjay Subrahmanyam, whose classes, scholarly work and the willingness to always find time to discuss my research, have impacted me greatly. I am honored to have been working along with him at UCLA.

Teo Ruiz has been an inspiration to me in every kind of way. From giving me advice as to how to navigate academia as an international student to truly mentoring me to be the best teacher for my students, he has supported my academic endeavors beyond what one can imagine. Finally, I am extremely grateful to Francesca Trivellato for agreeing to be a part of my doctoral committee,

¹ See Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern World* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2010), 151, 230, 235-236; Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa, 1606-1747* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), footnote 20, 237.

despite the distance. Her work on the Italian archives of Sephardic Jewish family partnerships has been one of my main motivations while writing this dissertation. From helping me decipher seventeenth century business letters written in obscure Italian to giving me her invaluable feedback, it has been a great honor to work with her and I am excited about learning more from her.

My time at UCLA would not be as productive and joyful without my colleagues, friends and faculty at the History Department. First and foremost, I want to thank Hadley Porter and Eboni Shaw for welcoming me at UCLA. Katherine Aquino and Hayley Safonov helped me navigate the last few years of my doctoral studies and I thank each of them for what they have done for me. I cannot imagine UCLA and its campus without my friend, family and mentor Mary Momdjian. From patiently driving me to UCLA for years to packing me lunches every day and having coffees at her office, Mary has been the biggest support system I could ask for and I am forever grateful to her for that. My colleagues and friends from my cohort Marjan Wardaki, Iris Clever, Dong Yan, I thank you all dearly for all your supportive conversations and feedback and for being my friends during these years at UCLA. I have benefited from the great support and academic wisdom of the following faculty members and mentors, Muriel McClendon, Soraya de Chadarevian, James Gelvin, Andrea Goldman, David Myers, Richard Hovannisian, and finally Lynn Hunt, who made me believe during my first quarter at UCLA that there are no linguistic, cultural or academic challenges I cannot overcome. I thank David Hirsch, the Middle East Librarian, for giving me the direction that I needed navigating the rich book repositories at UCLA. Erdem Ilter, Roi Ball, Elizabeth Comuzzi, Scottie Buehler, Daniel Ohanian, Madina Thiam, Grace Ballor, Sam Keeley and many others have been the best colleagues and fellow historians.

I was fortunate enough to receive the generous three-year long Calouste Gulbenkian Armenian Studies Scholarship during the second year of my doctoral studies, which gave me the invaluable opportunity of having more time to write this dissertation, for which I am extremely thankful. This dissertation has come to life by the support of the UCLA History Department, the Mangasar M. Mangassarian Scholarship, the Kaspar and Siroon Hovannisian Memorial Fellowship, the AGBU US Graduate Scholarship and of course, the Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History.

My friends and family in my home country Armenia, as well as my newly acquired friends in Los Angeles have been the best support one could ever ask for. I am blessed to have had the friendship of my dearest friends Hrachuhi Utmazyan, Anzhela Grigoryan, Kristina Vardanyan, Lusine Grigoryan, Tatevik Grigoryan, Satenik and Tatevik Mkrtchyans from Yerevan, just to name a few. You all know what you mean to me and thank you for supporting me from the distance and making me feel like I never left my hometown. Los Angeles too has blessed me with amazing friends, such as Anahit Ter-Mambreyan, Irina Aleksanyan, Zara and Aram Hovasapyans and many more whom I met at UCLA. Without your great support my time in Los Angeles would not have been half as joyful.

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- “Ibrahim Sadi: Armenian Jeweler (Seventeenth century)”, *Arabic Studies (Armenian Journal of Arabic Studies)*, Volume 4, Yerevan, 2010, pp. 63-71 (*In Armenian*).
 - “Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī’s “History”: Source study,” *Arabic Studies (Armenian Journal of Arabic Studies)*, Volume 2, Yerevan, 2007, pp. 40-56 (*In Armenian*).

Introduction

After the Safavid ruler Shah ‘Abbas I deported around 300,000 Armenians and others from the frontier territories of his empire in 1604-1605, the inhabitants of the small mercantile town of Old Julfa were resettled in Isfahan, the capital of the Safavid Empire. They soon built their own suburb and named it New Julfa after their hometown. Soon afterwards, he granted them administrative and religious privileges based on their reliable reputation.² These privileges were similar to the ones that the *dhimmi*³ communities living under the Muslim rule were given in the early modern

² For further surveys on the history of New Julfa Armenian trade network, see Harutiwn Tēr -Hovhaneant’s, *Patmutiwn Nor Jughayu vor espahan ashkhatasireal [History of New Julfa studied in Isfahan]*. Vol. 1 (Nor Jugh: Tparan Surb Amenap’rkich Vank’i, 1880); Shushanik Khach’ikyan, *Nor Jughayi hay vacharakanutiyune yev nra arevtratntesakan kaperē Rusastani het XVII–XVIII darerum [The Armenian commerce of New Julfa and its Commercial and Economic Ties with Russia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries]* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSH GA Hratarakchutyun, 1988); Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa, 1606-1747* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Edmund Herzig, “*The Armenian Merchants of New Julfa, Isfahan: A Study in Premodern Asian Trade*” (Doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 1991); Vazken Ghougassian, *The Emergence of the Armenian Diocese of New Julfa in the Seventeenth Century* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

³ *Dhimmi*s were the non-Muslims living under the Muslim rule, who had a special legal status and protection. See, for example, *Dhimmi and Others: Jews and Christians and the World of Classical Islam*, *Israel Oriental Studies* 17, ed. Uri Rubin and David J. Wasserstein (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, Inc., 1997); David Wasserstein, "Conversion and the ahl al-dhimma," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Robert Irwin,

period, only significantly more substantial. As a “stateless” group of people posing no danger to the Safavid state, Julfans were deemed instrumental in the centralization processes that Shah ‘Abbas had undertaken in his Empire, including the expansion of the Iranian raw silk trade into the Mediterranean and beyond.⁴

As a result of their involvement in the early modern overland and maritime trade, the Armenian mercantile community of New Julfa established four interconnected circuits stretching from their “nodal center”⁵ in New Julfa to Mughal India and Southeast Asia, the Mediterranean, Amsterdam, and London in the Northwestern part of Europe, and the Russian Empire. By establishing family firms and hiring travelling *commenda* merchants trading throughout continents, New Julfan Armenian merchants were able to sustain their mercantile network for more than a century and a half. During this period, they became a prominent early modern trade diaspora whose network extended across all the three major “gunpowder empires” (the Safavids, the Mughals and the Ottomans) and Muscovite Russia in the North, as well as across all the major European seaborne empires of the early modern world.

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 184-208. For the status of *dhimmi*s under the early Islamic rule, see Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: From Surrender to Coexistence* (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁴ Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 1-2.

⁵ For the definition of the “nodal center” of New Julfa, see Aslanian, *Ibid.*, 13-18.

One of the “improvised” outcomes⁶ of the deportation of the Armenians from Old Julfa, as scholars have argued, was their incorporation into Safavid Iran’s silk trade and their future contribution to the economy of the empire. Julfans were known for their involvement in the international silk trade decades before their deportations.⁷ In this sense, they came to be seen by Shah ‘Abbas I as useful agents in the promotion of Safavid Iran’s export of raw silk to Europe thanks to their knowledge of languages and the fact that they were Christian and had an easier access to the important European markets.⁸ The Julfan trade network survived up until 1745-1747, when its nodal center at New Julfa collapsed as a result of Nadir Shah’s reign and his disastrous taxation policies imposed on the township’s population.⁹

Over the last few decades, a growing body of scholarship on New Julfa has explored different facets of the township’s rich economic history including the role of contracts and business

⁶ As it has been argued by Herzig and later by Aslanian, the old notion adopted by the scholars of New Julfan history was that Shah ‘Abbas had economic motives in deporting Armenians to the capital city of his Empire. However, it mostly had “to do with ‘Abbas’s reaction to the rapidly developing events on the ground than any long-term “conscious policy.”” See Aslanian, *Ibid.*, 35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁸ For recent surveys about the deportations of Armenians from Old Julfa, their resettlement in the Safavid Empire and the founding of New Julfa in the beginning of the seventeenth century see Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 23-85; Rudolph Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 61-90; Herzig, “The Armenian Merchants of New Julfa,” 41-118.

⁹ For a most recent and critical discussion on the fall and demise of New Julfa, see Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 202-214.

practices that have characterized its long-distance merchants and even explored its merchants' relationships with the dominant European East India Companies of the period.¹⁰ To the extent that the scholarship has addressed the different commodities traded by New Julfans, it has done so by focusing overwhelmingly on the trade of its merchants' most important commodity, namely the trade of Iranian raw silk¹¹ that the Julfans transported across their networks from the silk producing areas near the Caspian Sea to the consumption centers in the Mediterranean port towns such as Venice, Marseille, and Livorno. South Asian textiles have also received increasing attention in recent studies.¹² To date, however, almost nothing has been written on the role of the township's

¹⁰ See Edmund Herzig, "The Armenian Merchants of Julfa: A Study of Premodern Trade." (PhD diss., St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1991); "On the Brink of the Modern: the Julfa Armenians and their World" (paper presented at AIEA 11th Annual Conference, Paris, September 10-12, 2008), and Sebouh Aslanian, "From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean; Julfan Merchants and European East India Companies: Overland Trade, Protection Costs and the Limits of Collective Self-Representation in Early Modern Safavid Iran," in *Mapping Safavid Iran*, ed. Nobuaki Kondo (Tokyo: 2015), 189-222.

¹¹ Rudi Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600-1730* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *The Shah's Silk For Europe's Silver, The Eurasian Trade of the Julfa Armenians in Safavid Iran and India* (Atlanta, Georgia: University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts Series/Scholars Press, 1988); Edmund Herzig, "The Armenian Merchants of Julfa."

¹² Olivier Raveux, "The Orient and the Dawn of Western Industrialization: Armenian Calico Printers from Constantinople in Marseilles (1669-1686)," in *Goods from the East, 1600-1800: Trading Eurasia*, Palgrave Mcmillan, ed. Maxine Berg (London, 2015), 77-91; "Les Arméniens et la Méditerranée, Médiateurs Techniques Entre Orient et Occident dans l'indiennage au XVIIe Siècle" in *Le Goût de l'Inde*, ed. Gérard Le Bouëdec et Brigitte Nicolas (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), 44-51; "Les Arméniens et les Transferts de Technologies Entre Orient et Occident: l'exemple de l'indiennage au XVIIe Siècle," in *Loin de*

merchants in the long-distance trade in gems and especially diamonds. Diamonds and gems formed some of the most lucrative global commodities of the early modern period and provided an important link between the production or mining centers in the Mughal Empire and the consumption centers in Europe. This trade was largely conducted by Armenian merchants from New Julfa, their counterparts from the Sephardic trade diaspora in Europe, and the various chartered East India companies of Europe. The available scholarship either on the diamond trade or on Julfan economic history provides us with almost no information about the role of Armenians in the above-mentioned trade.

This dissertation, therefore, seeks to inspire a more thorough research into the participation of Armenian merchants and family firms in this trade. By embedding Armenian merchants and their networks into the larger scholarship of the global early modern luxury commodity trade, the dissertation challenges a number of historiographic assumptions that have lingered in the economic history literature particularly of long-distance trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean.

This dissertation is based on a close reading of a unique collection of commercial papers belonging to the Khwāja Minasian firm, including a precious accounting ledger devoted to the diamond and gem trade between 1679 and 1693, as well as several dozen very lengthy and detailed business letters from the last quarter of the seventeenth century between the headquarters of the Minasian firm in New Julfa and one of their branch offices in Livorno. Using this corpus of documentation that sheds ample light on the Minasians' important role in this transcontinental

l'Ararat... Les petites Arménies d'Europe et de Méditerranée et les Arméniens de Marseille, ed. Morel-Deledalle, Mouradian, Pozzoni-Itier (Paris: Hazan-Réunion des Musées de Marseille-MUCEM, 2007), 92-93.

niche trade, the dissertation questions two firmly held pieces of conventional wisdom. First, that the model of the European joint-stock corporation was the only organizational unit suitable for long-distance or transcontinental trade between Asia and Europe, and second that the maritime route over which these corporations operated was the exclusive preserve of profitable trade between Asia and Europe.

ASIAN FAMILY FIRMS AND THE OVERLAND CARAVAN ROUTE

The first half of the previous century witnessed an increased interest in early modern history of Eurasian long-distance trade with a goal of identifying its main participants. Two key arguments, even though highly critiqued and discredited, were proposed by Jacob C. van Leur and Niels Steensgaard. First, it was argued that the capability of conducting successful long-distance trade, covering the Eurasian continent and beyond, in the early modern period was dependent on economic and financial power, and the institutional organization of the European joint-stock corporation, among others, and therefore not fit for smaller groups of merchants with their family firms and overseas agents. In this context, Van Leur showed that early modern Asian long-distance commerce was nothing more than a “small-scale peddling” trade, and that these “peddlers” predominantly dealt in the trade of luxury commodities.¹³

Second, it was almost taken for granted that the role of overland caravan trade routes declined with the emergence of European chartered companies in the beginning of the seventeenth century, especially those of the English and the Dutch. As European East India Companies of the time came

¹³ J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian Social and Economic History* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve Publishers, 1967), 133.

into the picture, they shifted the usage of Eurasian overland routes to predominantly maritime trade. This had to do with cheaper shipping costs connected to what Steensgaard called “internalization of protection costs”¹⁴ by those companies. The latter argument was strongly interconnected with Van Leur’s peddler argument. In this regard, Steensgaard, by adopting Van Leur’s peddler thesis, further elaborated on this thesis and arguably made it the central focus of his work. Contrary to his depiction of the long distances travelled by one of the factors of the Guerak‘-Mirman family, Hovhannes Ter-Davt‘ian, (who will be further discussed in Chapter Three on family firms) as his main primary example for an Asian merchant, Steensgaard, nevertheless, still called him a peddler. What is more, Steensgaard conceded that despite making extensive use of sophisticated “paper instruments,” such as *commenda* partnerships, combined credit and so on, Hovhannes was nevertheless representative of the larger category of the Asian peddler. Alluding to Asian merchants, the great Danish historian thus concluded that “the ordinary entrepreneur operates on the peddler level, and there is nothing in the sources to indicate the existence of comprehensive coordinated organizations - of an Armenian, Turkish or Persian version of a Fugger, Cranfield or Tripp.”¹⁵

In this regard, it is interesting to note Ashin Das Gupta’s view on the peddler thesis, in which he does not reject the idea *per se*, but rather looks at it from a different point of view. Instead of looking at the peddler as a small and poor man, Das Gupta looks at him as a merchant bereft of

¹⁴ Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Company and the Decline of the Caravan Trade*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

security. “If insecurity be accepted as the real hallmark of peddling trade,” he writes, “then the Indian Ocean market in the early eighteenth century was a pedlar’s [sic] market.”¹⁶

Hovhannes’s example has been a convenient counterargument for many scholars who criticized Van Leur’s and Steensgaard’s ideas. In his magnum opus *The Wheels of Commerce*, Fernand Braudel, for instance, referring to Hovhannes, notes, “He certainly travelled but did that make him a peddler?” He then adds that “If one absolutely insists on a comparison, he reminds me rather of the new kind of English merchant engaged in 'private trading', always on the move from inn to inn, closing a deal here and there, depending on the price and the opportunity, joining forces with one partner or another and continuing imperturbably on his way,” except that “England does not have the dimensions of Persia, northern India, Nepal and Tibet laid end to end.”¹⁷ Sanjay Subrahmanyam by looking at Van Leur’s and Steensgaard’s arguments in the context of the Portuguese empire, argues that small-scale trading did not lose its power with the emergence of large-scale economic institutions in the seventeenth century. He notes, “As for trade within Asia, the Dutch Company’s role remained static after about 1700, and the real gainers thereafter were English private traders, whose mode of organization had little in common with the chartered trading Company. Seen from this perspective too, there is something artificial about viewing the

¹⁶ Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and The Decline of Surat c. 1700-1750*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 13.

¹⁷ Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*. Vol. 2 of *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century*. Trans. Siân Reynolds. (New York: Harper, 1982), 123-124.

early seventeenth century as the decisive end of small-scale trading operations, and the beginning of an era of giant (and ostensibly creative) trading monopolies of a Schumpeterian variety.”¹⁸

It has to be noted, that the criticism against the Asian commerce as being inferior and unimportant, has more often than not been speculative due to the lack of available archival material. Hovhannes’s journey and the publication of Levon Khach’ikyan’s article about his accounting ledger in English,¹⁹ remained the main example for these criticisms. Another attempt to showcase the agency of Asian commerce in the early modern period was made by Stephen Dale. By looking at archival material, predominantly in Russian from Astrakhan, he demonstrated the important commercial activities of the Mughal Indian trade diaspora in Iran, Turan, and Russia in the early modern period, therefore reevaluating their economic significance in the Eurasian trade of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Another example of intrepid caravan trade merchants were the Multanis. With their commercial center in the Northwest Indian city of Multan, this network of merchants, by heavily relying on caravan and overland trade routes, branched out all the way to Safavid Iran, Central Asia, parts of the Ottoman Empire and Russia.²⁰ Unlike the Julfans, however, Multanis only partly benefited from maritime trade routes for their commercial

¹⁸ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (London: Longman, 1993), 289.

¹⁹ Levon Khach’ikyan, “The Ledger of the Merchant Hovhannes Joughayets’i.” *Journal of the Asiatic Society* 8.3 (1966): 153–186.

²⁰ Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean...*, 220-221.

ventures. Scott Levi's work on the Indian diaspora in Central Asia from 1550s to 1900s is another example of scholarship showcasing the more important agency of Asian traders.²¹

Being a space for the co-existence and contact of both the European trading institutions, as well as the different Asian trading entities, Eurasian trade has more often than not been viewed from a Eurocentric perspective, in which the European trading companies were "superior" to their counterparts in Asia. Superiority was usually measured in terms of institutional organization, rationality in terms of accounting and record keeping, as well as their overall commercial success. The views on the superiority of the European corporations over the "pedlars" are closely tied to another topic of interest and of much debate, the notion of Weberian "rationality." To Weber, "capital accounting has arisen as a basic form of economic calculation only in the Western World." One of the main examples of "rational" accounting was the double-entry bookkeeping, along with the *commenda*.²² The double-entry bookkeeping, where both the profits and losses were recorded by the merchant, was therefore regarded as the basis for modernization, capitalism and industrialization, which were all considered to have had their origins in Europe and to have also made it possible for the joint-stock companies to rise.

Weber's theory, being predominantly Eurocentric, has since been debunked by most scholars who have written on the history of early modern commerce and capitalism in general. It is important to mention that Steensgaard's peddler too, while not devoid of thinking rationally,

²¹ Scott Levi, *The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and Its Trade, 1550-1900* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2002).

²² Jack Goody, *The East in the West* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 49-50.

nevertheless “had no possibility of making a rational calculation of his costs in the modern sense so long as the protection costs and the risk remained unpredictable and the market non-transparent.”²³ In his book *East in the West*, Jack Goody challenged the notion of the double-entry bookkeeping being intrinsic to the West and, argued that in fact, it was not a European invention and that its origins were found in the Near East and beyond.²⁴ By this, Goody pushes scholars of early modern capitalism and trade to look beyond the established narratives of the uniqueness of the West.

Taking these views into consideration, other than the above-mentioned monographs on Asian merchants, a series of edited volumes published in the last four decades shed more light on the different groups of merchant networks, merchant empires and Asian merchants in general. The first edited volume that makes an attempt at contending both of the above-mentioned ideas of “superiority” is *Asian Merchants and Businessmen in the Indian Ocean and the China Sea*, which according to the editor serves, “as a corrective to both the naive western triumphalism (partaken of, variously, by such writers as Landes and Wallerstein from seemingly opposed perspectives), and to the romantic essentialization of the world of the Asian merchant-entrepreneur that seems to underly Goody’s construct.”²⁵ In this volume Denys Lombard and Jean Aubin try to break the Eurocentric paradigms of how Asian trade had been discussed earlier, which was mainly through

²³ Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 59.

²⁴ Goody, *The East in the West*, 50.

²⁵ *Asian Merchants and Businessmen in the Indian Ocean and the China Sea*, ed. Denys Lombard and Jean Aubin (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), vii.

the prism of European agency in Asia, including the presence of the East India companies, Vasco da Gama's discovery of India and so on. This volume strives to restore agency to the Asian merchants, and divorce the discussion of the Oriental texts from the perceived dominance of the Europeans. It sheds light on the history of Kashmiri Muslim merchants trading locally in Nepal, Tibet and beyond, the Chettiar moneylenders, the Arab and Swahili mercantile activities in East Africa, just to name a few. The volume extends its discussions of Asian capitalism up until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to demonstrate the continuity of the evolution of the above-mentioned trading entities.

As opposed to the above-mentioned volume, *Merchant Networks in the Early Modern World* does not only focus on Asian mercantile communities of the early modern period, but instead spreads out "over all the continents," nevertheless trying "to avoid an overly Europe-centered vision of mercantile activity."²⁶ While this volume does not solely focus on Asian merchant communities, it demonstrates the shortcomings of Europeans outside of Europe. Despite their "superior" and "rational" accounting techniques, it emphasizes "that in markets where western European merchants vied for place with competitors from the Near East, South Asia or East Asia, they were very often unsuccessful."²⁷ This volume also touches on the important notion of merchants' identities in the light of the power dynamics between political and mercantile realms. Therefore, the papers collected in this volume, while demonstrate an identity crisis among

²⁶ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ed. *Merchant Networks in the Early Modern World*, ed., *An Expanding World: The European Impact on World History 1450-1800*, Vol. 8 (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), xxi.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, xvi.

merchants, also show an “overarching process of global economic contact, which does not however do away with community identity.”²⁸ From the accounting ledger of Hovhannes Ter-Davt‘ian to the role of Jewish merchants in Poland-Lithuania in the early modern period and the trading activities of Anatolian Muslim merchants in Venice, this volume not only brings forward the histories of small merchant groups rarely studied before, but shows how their movements throughout Eurasia and beyond influenced their identity.

Finally, the two edited volumes by James D. Tracy, *The Rise of Merchant Empires* and *The Political Economy of Commerce*, which are based on the proceedings of the same conference at the University of Minnesota, both strive to reevaluate the power dynamics in the long-distance trade of Europe and Asia in the late Middle Ages and early modern period. According to James Tracy, *The Rise of Merchant Empires* was “conceived in the belief that the time is ripe to examine early interactions between Europeans and other peoples in ways that are no longer colored either by the arrogance of imperialism or by the passions of newborn and as yet insecure nationalisms.”²⁹ If the first volume sought to understand the nuances of the encounters of Europeans and others, the second volume “focuses on why European concerns eventually achieved a dominant position

²⁸ Ibid., xxi.

²⁹ James D. Tracy, ed. *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern World 1350–1750*. Studies in Comparative Early Modern History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 11.

in global trade, at the expense (especially in Asia) of well-organized and well-financed rivals.”³⁰ While all articles in the edited volume try to answer this question in one way or another, they often disagree. Overall, there seems to be one important takeaway from the volume and that is that European corporations were and stayed dominant, at least in the context of early modern Eurasian trade, mainly thanks to the support of the states who financed them; “...the issue involves careful attention to the principal feature that differentiates European enterprises from indigenous trade networks in various parts of the globe - that is, the fact that they organized their major commercial ventures either as an extension of the state,” “or as autonomous trading companies...”³¹

This dissertation, therefore, challenges two notions that have been argued and highly critiqued in the second half of the twentieth century by bringing new and little studied evidence on Asian family firms in the early modern period. The first notion is that Asian family firms and merchants are not reducible to peddlers as the older scholarly literature had presumed. Second, it argues that it is more beneficial to look at the two main entities involved in the long-distance trade between the Indian subcontinent and the Mediterranean as an “interconnected coexistence” to some extent. In that sense early modern Eurasian trade was where both the European East India companies, as well as the Asian family firms contributed to the early modern exchange of commodities and in this case mainly diamonds and gems in their own, arguably sophisticated way.

³⁰ James D. Tracy, ed. *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires: State Power and World Trade, 1350–1750*. Studies in Comparative Early Modern History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

This dissertation, thus, seeks to give more agency to the Asian family firms and long-distance merchants than has been previously accorded to them for the most part as a result of a dearth of archival data. It makes a larger argument against the peddler thesis assigned to Asian merchants and assumed by previous scholarly literature. On the example of the long distances travelled and the long-haul trade conducted by the agents of the Minasian family firm, this dissertation argues that as opposed to the previously established notion that early modern Asian trade was merely a peddler trade, the Minasian family firm activities demonstrate the opposite. By doing so, this dissertation opens up a space for further research into the early modern Asian long-distance trade and seeks to create a context in which it is discussed from the perspective of a co-existence of small Asian family firms and big European corporations in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean.

This dissertation does three things. First, it reviews the scholarly literature on the early modern diamond and gem trade in general and situates New Julfan Armenian family firms in the context of long-distance luxury trade by emphasizing the richness of archival data on the topic. It also highlights the importance of coral and diamond exchange in the Julfan context in particular. Second, this dissertation examines the importance of social capital in both the success of the Julfan merchants in gem trade, as well as the importance of that success in the social standing of the merchants who were involved in that trade simultaneously. On the example of the representative of the Minasian family firm in Tuscany named Agha Mat'os this dissertation shows how his involvement in diamond and gem trade in Livorno and Venice gave Agha the opportunity of navigating through the economic, political and religious worlds of Europe and Asia as a go-between. Thirdly and finally, this dissertation explores the structure and organization of Julfan

family firms on the example of the Minasian family and makes a larger contribution to the scholarly discussion of the agency Asian merchants in the early modern Eurasian trade.

NOTES ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE ARCHIVAL SOURCES IN NEW JULFAN DIALECT

The language of the vast majority of the archival documents used in this study is the now extinct mercantile dialect of New Julfa. Arguably one of the most obscure written languages in the world, the commercial dialect of New Julfa has been preserved in tens of thousands of documents stored across a variety of archives in Europe and Asia. The language of these documents being extinct, it is hard to know for sure if the New Julfan mercantile dialect was also spoken among the merchants. Another interesting question is whether early modern Armenians who were not merchants, were able to understand some of the professional terms used by the New Julfan merchants in their daily correspondence. It is important to note the difference between the New Julfa dialect spoken by a handful of mostly elderly inhabitants of the township up until this day and the New Julfan mercantile dialect.

New Julfan dialect was initially spoken in the township of Old Julfa located on the banks of the Aras River. After the mass deportations of Old Julfans to Isfahan by Shah ‘Abbas I, as already mentioned earlier, the dialect was spread out to the settlements of the mercantile network by travelling *commenda* agents in India, Europe, Russia, and beyond. The most important linguistic study of the dialect is by Hrachia Acharian, according to whom it belongs to one of the three branches of Armenian, where the suffixes to form the continuous tense end with *mlu* (um).³²

³² Hrachia Acharian, *K‘nmut‘iwn Nor Jughayi Barbari [A study of the New Julfan Dialect]* (Yerevan: YSU Publishing House, 1940).

Acharian's work has been translated into English with important additions and modifications by Bert Vaux.³³

The mercantile dialect of New Julfa, on the other hand, has not been studied by linguists. There are no professional dictionaries up to this day that have been created based on the mercantile glossary of the New Julfan merchants, which makes it difficult for scholars working on New Julfan documents to refer to an authoritative publication for their research questions. Digitization of a vast number of archival data belonging to the economic history of New Julfa in the early modern period would certainly pave the path for a linguistic study in the future. However, for now, scholars of early modern New Julfan history can only rely on dictionaries of the mostly Middle Eastern and European languages from which the Julfan mercantile dialect borrowed. In this context, determining what language a specific word in a given document is borrowed from is problematic, as Julfans had a way of conjugating foreign words as if they were Armenian, as well as creating new words with the foreign word as the root and adding an Armenian suffix to it.

I was able to overcome the difficulty of reading and understanding New Julfan mercantile documents in the first three or four years of my doctoral training, mainly thanks to my adviser Sebouh Aslanian, as well as my mentor since I was in my early years in college, Meruzhan Karapetyan, but what was even more imperative, thanks to the consistent readings and transcriptions of documents I had in my digital archive in no particular order and during my spare time. It was when I really started going into the details of archival documents specifically shedding light on professional diamond and gem trade that I realized that the vocabulary of the above-mentioned sources was far from being similar to the rest of the more formulaic documents, such

³³ Bert Vaux, *The Armenian Dialect of New Julfa*. (Unpublished manuscript), 2002.

as agreements, *commenda* contracts, promissory notes and so on. The obscurity of the language of these documents, which mainly had to do with descriptions of gems, their water, color, shape and so on is what delayed my understanding of these documents and therefore made the process of writing challenging. I assume this to be one of the main reasons or the main reason that this otherwise imperative topic of the history of diamond and gem trade among Armenians has been neglected by scholars and therefore remained untouched.

It is true that similar mercantile documents from the same period that pertain to early modern trade conducted by the East India companies of the time, as well as mainly the Sephardim and Europeans, have their own difficulties. Nevertheless, the majority of these documents have been written in European languages with a touch of foreign vocabularies of the countries where the trade was being conducted. The amount of quality secondary literature that has been written based on early modern European archives is incomparable to the ones written on New Julfa, therefore making it difficult for scholars working on Julfan documents.

There is no one dictionary that would serve as a starting point in order to understand the language of these documents. In fact, I argue there is no one language that is necessarily predominant in the texts of the archival sources utilized in this dissertation. Yes, it is true that the New Julfan dialect was heavily influenced by Persian, Safavid Iran being the host Empire for New Julfan merchants. It is also true that the knowledge of Persian is of high importance in understanding these documents. Nevertheless, the collection of documents I have worked on are full of Middle Eastern language vocabularies, such as Persian, Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, as well as European languages, such as Italian, English and French. A large number of words pertaining to the descriptions of diamonds, gems, textiles and other commodities brought from South East Asia are loanwords from Hindi and Tamil. What made figuring out what language a

specific word came from possible, was looking at what commodity was in discussion in a given document or where the business transaction was taking place. If, for instance, a given contract was written and signed by Julfan merchants predominantly residing in Venice, then the possibility of the usage of Italian words is high.

PRIMARY SOURCES

This dissertation is based on an extensive body of primary sources, some of them studied for the first time in Julfan historiography. First and foremost, this dissertation is predominantly centered on a folder of over 400 documents kept at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze under the name *Acquisti e Doni 123*. The majority of these documents comprise the archive of Agha Mat'os, the branch representative of the Minasian family firm in Livorno, where he received the above-mentioned correspondence covering the years 1676 up until 1708. The documents include lengthy business letters from the head of the firm Minas to his agent Agha, legal documents, bills of lading, petitions from the Armenian clergy, as well as personal requests. The majority of the documents are written in the New Julfan dialect. *Acquisti E Doni 123* also includes documents in English, Dutch, and mostly Italian between Agha and his colleagues, middlemen and others in Livorno, Venice and beyond.

The next major source for this dissertation is the accounting ledger of the head of the Minasian family firm, Khwāja Minas, which is at the same time the commenda contract signed between him and Agha in 1679. The ledger is kept at the Museo Correr in Venice (Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di Venezia, *P.D. 66.c*) and is written in the New Julfan dialect. It is the copy of the original, the location of which is unknown. The accounting ledger contains inventories of the commodities that the Minasian firm shipped from Isfahan or India to the Mediterranean during the years between

1679 and 1693. The original, transcribed text of this ledger is presented in this dissertation as an Appendix.

Another important source worth mentioning is a later contribution by one of the family firm heads and the nephew of Khwāja Minas, Aghamal Khwāja Minasian, who authored a manual on pearl trade kept at the Mesrop Mashtots Repository of Armenian Manuscripts in Yerevan, Armenia under the number 5994. The above-mentioned unpublished sources, among others, have been the exclusive foundation for this dissertation and are too important to be given space in this introduction only. I will therefore discuss them in more depth and contextualize them in Chapter One.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS STUDY

This dissertation is comprised of four chapters, which are organized around a historiographical survey and a background chapter on the early modern history of the Armenian involvement in gem trade, the importance of which is crucial due to the lack of any secondary scholarly literature on the topic. One of the chapters is a global microhistory or a “global history on a small scale,”³⁴ whereas the other two are focused on the various aspects of early modern Asian family firm business activities on the example of the Minasians. They shed light on the role of long-distance gem trade in their decision-making, correspondence, information circulation and business transactions among others.

³⁴ Here I am using Francesca Trivellato’s definition of the microhistorical study she has done in her book. See Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 7-10.

The *first chapter* of this dissertation, entitled “New Julfans and the Early Modern Diamond and Gemstone Trade: An Untapped History,” briefly discusses the historiography of the early modern diamond and gem trade in general. More specifically, it focuses on the historiography of the Armenian involvement in this trade, as well as the knowledge and importance of gems in early modern Armenian history. The overview of the many primary sources used to write this dissertation is also included in this chapter.

Chapter two is a microhistory of a gem merchant and the *commenda* agent of the Khwāja Minasian family firm, Agha di Mat’os who resided mostly in Livorno during the second half of the seventeenth century. Being the representative of the Minasian family firm in Tuscany for more than twenty-five years, Agha acquired social capital, built a reputation and made connections with the European religious and political authorities of the time. Thanks to his connections and gem trading, he also played the role of a go-between for his community back home in Tabriz and New Julfa. By studying his personal and business archive of mainly incoming letters and other documents, as well as court files, an accounting ledger and other sources, this chapter reconstructs his life and activities as a gem merchant. It argues that Agha di Mat’os’s involvement in the gem trade in Livorno, Venice and beyond, gave him a respectable social reputation among the European elites. Likewise, this chapter shows how Agha’s connections and social position gave him the opportunity to use those acquaintances to support the economic, cultural and religious matters that arose in his larger community of acquaintances in Safavid Iran and locally.

Chapter Three takes a different look at the peculiarities of Armenian family firms involved in the early modern diamond and gem trade. It briefly explores the origins of the family firm in Julfan history, its organization and its role in the New Julfan society. This chapter gives short overviews of two Julfan family firms of gem merchants, other than the Minasians, namely the Scerimans and

the Guerak'-Mirmans. It finally explores the early history of the Minasian family firm starting from the 1670s, exploring different instances of their long-distance transactions in diamonds and gems. The chapter devotes substantial space to the study of the involvement of the Minasians in the global exchange of Indian diamonds and the Mediterranean coral, a topic discussed for the first time in the history of New Julfan trade.

Chapter Four is the culmination of the whole dissertation. Based on demonstrated information in the previous chapters on the Minasian family firm and their involvement in the long-distance gem trade, this chapter contends that the previously argued and partially criticized notion about the inferiority of Asian merchants and family firms in the Eurasian long-distance trade is one-dimensional and needs to be reevaluated. By using the hundreds of letters, contracts, order lists, and other documents at hand, this chapter argues that there was a simultaneous co-existence of European corporations and smaller family firms in the trading scene of early modern Eurasia. While it is true that small family firms could not compete with the scale and volume of trade of the European East India Companies, Eurasian trade of the early modern period should be looked at from a more holistic perspective, rather than as a by-product of the activities of any one of those two entities. Based on the example of the Minasian family firm, this chapter shows that a more thorough research into Asian family firm histories could bring about a larger argument about their agency in the early modern Eurasian trade.

The dissertation concludes with a general assessment of some of the main arguments raised in this study and points to the work that remains to be done with the history of other family firms and their activities in the Eurasian trade.

Chapter One

NEW JULFANS AND THE EARLY MODERN DIAMOND AND GEMSTONE TRADE: AN UNTAPPED HISTORY

On December 11th of 1685 Aghajan, son of Khachatur from the family of Ter Ananent's, a *commenda* agent for the Minasian family firm, travelled from Izmir to Amsterdam by sea carrying four rose cut diamonds, one of them weighing five carats. He then gave the diamonds to a broker?³⁵ in Amsterdam to sell them. However, soon enough the biggest five-carat diamond out of four that Khachatur had brought with him to Amsterdam, was shipped to Venice with a man named Jannes Bon, as Agha di Mat'os, the branch representative of the Minasian family firm in Livorno, had a

³⁵ The original word in Armenian is spelled as *գուքին* (*guk'in*). I was not able to identify the meaning of the word or what language it came from. However, taking into consideration the context this word is used in, it most probably meant some type of a middleman or a broker who would be able to evaluate the gem in Amsterdam.

customer for it. In order to fulfill Agha's request, Aghajan went to the Flemish Bank in Amsterdam and bought marine insurance,³⁶ by paying 1200 Dutch guilders.³⁷

³⁶ In Francesca Trivellato's opinion, marine insurance along with bills of exchange, "...made it easier for investors to conduct their business without leaving their home base and formed the connective tissues of European long- distance trade." For a classic work on marine insurance, sea loans and other types of contracts in the Medieval period, see Florence Edler de Roover, "Early Examples of Marine Insurance," *Journal of Economic History* 5, no. 2 (1945): 172–200; Francesca Trivellato, *The Promise and Peril of Credit: What a Forgotten Legend about Jews and Finance Tells Us about the Making of European Commercial Society* (Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2019), 21. For a classic work on Amsterdam marine insurance, see Frank C. Spooner, *Risks at Sea: Amsterdam Insurance and Maritime Europe, 1766-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See also, Sabine Go, *Marine Insurance in the Netherlands 1600-1870: A Comparative Institutional Approach* (Amsterdam: Aksant Publishers, 2009).

³⁷ «Ես Սինանի որդի Պետրոսըս էս բանս ըստուկ գիտեմ էսպես որ ներքևն իմ ձեռացայգրովս գրեցի, որ Տեր Անանինց Խաչայտուրի որդի Աղայջանն Իզմիրեն ծովով զընացել էր Մարդամ, գրելեր Աղէ, թէ թասվիլով պարոն Սինասին կունթէ արմագն, որ բերելինք Իզմիրն օրդնին էնպէս էր տվել, որ աղարկենք Ըստանբոլ թասալի ծախէր, աղարկեցինք Ըստանբոլ գերմակ ապրանքն ծախելէր, դրօշոն ծախվել չէր, չուն տեսինք դրօշտ ապրանքն Ըստանալօլ դառով չունէր. թասվիլին գրած նախ նումրայ Ա էն չուրի նումրայ Դ, որ էս Դ դանայ արմագն վեռի խտինձ բերի Մարդամ գին դրի վերայ, տվի գուքինին որ ծախի: Աղայջանէն էսպես գրած գիրն Վանատիկն Աղէ ձեռնն գոլբաց, էլ էն փօստին Աղաջանին գրէ թէ քոյ էս բերած թասվիլին նախ նումրայ Ա որէ Ա դանայ գուլ արմագ, քաշն Ե դիրէթ, յալբաթէ յալբաթ մին Ռ-ԲՃ գուլդի չգուր արայ վեռ աղարկիր Վանայտիկս, որ տեղս ուզող կայ ծախեմ, թէ էդ դանէն յետ գճեցիր մնծ դատր կառես: Աղաջանն վերէր կացել վերոյ գրած նումրայ Ա որէ Ա դանայ գուլ արմագն թասվիլին գրած քաշն Ե դիրէթ Համիրայ ԻՉ փոքր թիվն Հ և դեկամբրի ԺԱ թիվն ՌՃԼԴ Մարդամայ Ֆլայմէկեանէ բանքօումն չգուրէր արարել վալուտն մին Ռ-ԲՃ գուլդի, արմագն արեկ Վանատիկս էս Սինանի որդի Պետրոսըս Աղէ խեստ մին տեղ գնացինք վալուտն ճին Բ Կես և փօստին փողովն ջամն ԺՉ տուկատ ԺԵ

“I, Petros, son of Sinan, confidently attest to what I wrote in my own handwriting below, that Aghajan, son of Khachatur from the family of Ter Ananent’s went from Izmir to Amsterdam by sea. He wrote to Agha [saying] that he was ordered to send the diamond bought on the account of Minas and mentioned on the inventory list, to Istanbul to sell it there. We sent it to Istanbul, where the smaller goods were sold, whereas the bigger ones weren’t. Since we realized that the bigger goods [were not going to sell?] for him to sell them. This letter written by Aghajan was [received] and opened by Agha in Venice, who sent him a letter by the postal service telling Aghajan to insure number one on the inventory list that he brought, which was a rose cut diamond weighing five carats, surely buy insurance worth 1500 guilders and send it to Venice, as there is someone here who wants it and I [(Agha)] can sell it. If you delay it, you will have made a big mistake. On 26th of Hamira, year of 70 or December 11th of 1685 Aghajan then went and bought insurance from the Flemish Bank of Amsterdam for 1200 guilders for number one on the inventory list noted as a rose cut diamond of five carats in weight. The diamond arrived in Venice [after which] me, Petros, son of Sinan went with Agha to a place, where we gave 2.5 [percent exchange rate] on a 100, which [summed up to] 16 ducats and 17 piastres¹ with the postal fee, and which we gave to Janes Bon and took the rose cut diamond with Aghajan’s seal.

դուռուշէթ տվինք Իանէս Բօնէն վերոյ Մարդամայ եգաժ մին դանայ գուլ արմազն Աղաջանին մրօվն յինք առինք, յետնորայ քանի խետ մուշտար բերինք Աղէն էս եգաժ դանէն ծախեց ոչ, էս դանին մուղէլն որ է ֆուրման Դ թէ Ե վեռուլ արետ մին ֆուրման աղարկեց Մարդամ Աղաջանին ձեռնն մինըն շորում եղիր ինձ Պետրոսիս մրէլ արետ Գըն Աղէն խտուրն պախեց: Այս բանս եղև թիվն ՌՃԼԴ դեկամբրի Լ Վանայտկումն էս վերոյ բանին էս Սինանի որդի Պետրոսըս ըստուկայպես գիտեմ էս իմ ձեռագայգիրսայ և միրսայ վկայ եմ»: See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 63.

Afterwards, a number of customers were brought, but Agha was not able to sell [the diamond]. Four or five models, which is the replica of this [diamond] were taken. One replica was sent to Aghajan in Amsterdam, one of them was put in a cloth and sealed by me, Petros, the third one Agha kept for himself. This happened on December 30th of 1134 in Venice. Me, Petros, son of Sinan know this for sure, this is my handwriting and I attest to this with my seal.”

Agha then showed the diamond to some potential customers, but they were unable to sell it in Venice. In the result of this, Agha and his colleague Petros, made arrangements for three crystal replicas of that diamond to be made. One of them was sent to Aghajan in Amsterdam, Agha kept one to himself and the third one was given to Petros, son of Sinan, the author of the written statement under discussion. From the accounting ledger of the head of the Minasian firm kept at a different archive, I was able to find this specific diamond mentioned among other gems in a consignment sent in 1684 with Aghajan, initially priced at 400,000 *dahegans* (pl. *dahgani*).³⁸ It is hard to say where this consignment was shipped from, but it was either from Isfahan or Surat. According to the ledger, the diamond under discussion in the above-mentioned document was the most expensive of all the four mentioned in the beginning of Petros’s statement.

At first sight, the “travels” of the five-carat diamond might seem like an isolated case of a failed (at least at the time this statement was written) attempt at selling an expensive diamond. Nevertheless, this document wonderfully represents the layered processes that expensive diamond sales were comprised of in the early modern period. Aghajan, son of Khachatur from the family of Ter Ananent’s, was one of the few dozen commenda agents of the Minasian family firm, a family

³⁸ Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di venezia, P.D. 66.c, folio 6.

of gem merchants operating from New Julfa and whose history is the main topic of this dissertation. Agha di Mat'os who was supposed to sell the diamond in Venice, was the permanent representative of the Minasian family firm, primarily a gem merchant, who had travelled to Livorno, Tuscany after the signing of the *commenda* agreement with his master, Khwāja Minas in 1679. Petros, son of Sinan most probably worked with the firm in Europe, as we have no proof of him being a Minasian family firm agent.³⁹

The above-mentioned document is only one in hundreds of other sources demonstrating the involvement of the Minasian family firm agents in the early modern diamond and gem trade, a topic that has not received any scholarly attention. Though the episode I cited might reflect a specific event and a particular situation, it actually helps us understand a larger reality about early modern global history involving the diamond and gem trade. It more specifically sheds light on the role of a community of merchants with an established social network and knowledge of commercial tools that helped them execute their business plans. What the above-mentioned document shows, is the use of important *paper instruments* across the early modern port cities of Venice and Amsterdam by Julfans, without which the long-distance trade would be impossible. In this case, as already mentioned earlier, marine insurance was the most important instrument in making sure that the five-carat diamond was safely delivered to Venice. Spelled *շգուր* (*shgur*) in the original Julfan dialect, this word was most probably the corruption of the Italian word *sicurtà*

³⁹ While it does not seem like Sinan was one of the *commenda* agents of the Minasian family firm, he allegedly had business dealings with Khwāja Minas. In one of the documents from 1705, after Khwāja Minas's death, it is claimed that Mr. Papajan was assigned to handle Minas's dealings with Petros, son of Sinan. See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, "Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 1, 1-38, folio 77.

or the Spanish or Portuguese equivalent *seguro* (in Italian *sicuro*, which means insurance + *ità*), which itself came from the Latin word *sēcūritās*. It is hard to determine what type of a document *shgur* was but based on how it worked in the case of transferring an expensive gem from Amsterdam to Venice, it most probably was a sea loan, also called a bottomry loan or *respondetia* in Italian. *Respondetias* were usually issued at port cities. The merchants carrying their goods on a ship were able to borrow money at a very high interest rate from the lender, which was only returned if the voyage was successful. Therefore, although a loan, as it “...was not payable in case of shipwreck, theft, or piracy, it meant that for the borrower of the money, the *respondentia* functioned as a species of maritime insurance.”⁴⁰ I assume that *շգուր* in this case was a type of a sea loan that Aghajan borrowed, which then was paid with interest by Agha in Venice, as the diamond had been delivered there without any issues.

As we can see, already in 1685, Agha di Mat'os had acquired a network of people who were able to find customers for a five-carat rose cut diamond in Venice. Aghajan, on the other hand, was ordered to go to Amsterdam carrying the above-mentioned four rough diamonds from Izmir in order to either sell them or presumably have them cut and polished. Amsterdam, being one of the main diamond cutting and polishing centers of the early modern world, especially starting from

⁴⁰ See the chapter, entitled “Paper Instruments,” Social Networking, and Mobility Across the Early Modern Armenian Diaspora in Sebouh Aslanian, *Early Modernity and Mobility: Port Cities and Printers Across the Armenian Diaspora, 1512-1800* (Yale University Press), forthcoming. More on sea loans and *respondentia*, see Irfan Habib, “Merchant Communities in Precolonial India,” in *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750*, ed. James Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 395-396; Trivellato, *The Promise and Peril of Credit*, 299, footnote 7.

the second half of the seventeenth century,⁴¹ was a popular destination for merchants to take their rough diamonds. The above-mentioned statement was therefore just a representation of the many transactions that the Minasian family firm agents worked on for over sixty years.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF EARLY MODERN DIAMOND AND GEM TRADE: SITUATING JULFANS IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The history of early-modern diamond and gemstone trade in the Indian Subcontinent and the Mediterranean has been insufficiently studied due to the scarcity of reliable primary sources. Diamonds and gems have indeed attracted less attention by scholars of early modern long-distance trade than many other commodities, such as textiles (mainly silk), sugar, spices, coffee, etc. Overshadowed by the scholarly work on the above-mentioned commodities, economic historians have spent less time focusing on the history of circulation, production, and the long-distance trade of diamonds and gems. This chapter seeks to provide a brief survey of available primary and secondary material regarding the early modern trade of diamonds and gems, conducted mainly between South East Asia and Europe. Second, it seeks to situate the New Julfan Armenian merchants in the context of the long-distance gemstone trade, as well as the exchange of Indian diamonds and the Mediterranean coral.

Diamonds and gems fitted perfectly into the range of commodities that were easy to carry and

⁴¹ See Karin Hofmeester, “Knowledge, Technique, and Taste in Transit: Diamond Polishing in Europe, 1500–1800,” in *Gems in the Early Modern World: Materials, Knowledge and Global Trade 1450-1800*, ed. Michael Bycroft and Sven Dupré (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019),

transport. Gems, therefore, were one of the most luxurious and valuable items circulating during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' flows of commodities. As lucrative global commodities, diamonds and gems also provided an important link between the production or mining centers in the Mughal Empire and the consumption centers in Europe. The trade of diamonds, as well as other gemstones outside of the Indian subcontinent in the early modern period was mainly handled by the East India Companies of the time, largely by the English, Dutch and to a lesser extent by the Portuguese, as well as the Jewish and Armenian merchants.⁴²

The exploitation of Indian mines reached its peak in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After the Portuguese discovered the sea route to India, they began to control a considerable share of diamond deposit exports from India, as well as Brazil (through the route from Goa to Lisbon). In the seventeenth century up to the beginning of the eighteenth century Goa was the main center from where uncut and unpolished diamonds were shipped to Europe.⁴³ Particularly starting from

⁴² The Dutch became more actively involved in diamond and gem trade starting around 1620s, when the VOC became interested in Asian trade in general. This trade mostly declined in 1660s, when the English private merchants got involved in the business, making the prices of raw diamonds higher. For more information on VOC's trade in diamonds, see Wada Ikuko, "Diamond Trade by the Dutch East India Company in Seventeenth-Century India" in *Large and Broad, The Dutch Impact on Early Modern Asia, Essays in Honor of Leonard Blusse*, ed. by Yoko Nagazumi, (Tokyo: 2010), 166-187. Diamonds, however, were never the main commodity of interest for the VOC, while textiles were the predominant commodity the VOC exported to Europe. For more details, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India, 1500–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1990), 169.

⁴³ Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern World* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2010), 234.

the seventeenth century the diamond trade became one of the most important commercial activities for mercantile groups of the early modern Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Diamond trade was especially lucrative for trade diasporas and for the East India companies of the time.⁴⁴

Diamonds and gemstones were small in size, easy to travel with and smuggle. Diamond mines of the East Indies were mostly located in the region of Golconda and Hyderabad,⁴⁵ which was for a long time under the authority of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty. It fell under the control of the Mughal Empire and Aurangzeb, who took Golconda in 1687.⁴⁶ Being the cradle for diamond mining and trade, India's diamonds were not only being traded locally, but predominantly sent to the Mediterranean markets, where the demand was the highest and where they would be cut and polished in the finishing centers of Antwerp, Amsterdam, London, etc..⁴⁷

⁴⁴ On the involvement of English private trade in Indian diamonds see Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant at Work*; *idem*, "English Private Trade on the Coromandel Coast, 1660-1690: Diamonds and Country Trade," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 33 (1996): 155-173.

⁴⁵ For more details on the European commerce of Indian diamonds, see Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 232-250.

⁴⁶ J. F. Richards, "The Hyderabad Karnatik, 1687-1707." *Modern Asian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1975): 241.

⁴⁷ For cutting and polishing techniques and their history, see, for example, Godehard Lenzen's book. According to him, the polishing techniques were first practiced in the fifteenth century in Europe, mainly in France, "This summary description leads to the assumption that the art of polishing the natural crystal faces of the diamond reached Paris from the Netherlands (Bruges) towards the end of the fourteenth century." See Godehard Lenzen, *The History of Diamond Production and the Diamond Trade* (Barrie & Jenkins Ltd., 1970), 73.

DIAMONDS, GEMS AND EARLY MODERNITY/GLOBALIZATION

Before going into the details of the history of this lucrative trade, it is necessary to explain the specific period of time under discussion and why it has been chosen as a period of study for this thesis. This dissertation looks at the diamond and gemstone trade from the period of roughly 1650s to 1730s. I believe that this has been the most active period for Indian diamond trade before the Brazilian mines of Minas Gerais were discovered in 1720s. Moreover, this period is also noteworthy from the perspectives of Armenian and Jewish private, as well as chartered East India Companies' commercial involvement in the trade.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been singled out as centuries of a quicker pace, more frequent movements and connections, and mobility stretching out thousands of miles. These changes have not gone unnoticed by scholars of world history, especially in the last few decades. World historians, such as John F. Richards, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Jerry Bentley, Joseph Fletcher and others have extensively used the term "early modern" history in order to define the peculiar period that had "a new sense of the limits of inhabited world," because it was "in a fundamental way an age of travel and discovery, of geographical redefinition."⁴⁸

The period extending from about roughly 1500 to 1800 was a time when people on world historical arena were affected by processes that were powerful in terms of their scope and influence. According to Richards, the early modern period in world history was defined by several large-scale processes, such as the creation of global sea passages that linked people through mostly

⁴⁸ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Islamic Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, Special Issue: The Eurasian Context of the Early Modern History of Mainland South East Asia, 1400-1800. (Jul., 1997), 737.

newly established transportation networks, the rise of world economy, the establishment of large, stable states, dramatic growth of world population, escalation of land use, and the diffusion of new technologies.⁴⁹ Throughout the new sea passages, mainly discovered as a result of European explorations of the early modern period, people, ideas, commodities and cultures moved on a greater scale of speed. This resulted in the creation of a world, which was more integrated and interconnected through networks of circulation and exchange than ever before.

Other than these transformations, the early modern era of world history was also significant as it established large-scale processes that connected “the world's many ostensibly distinct and discrete societies,”⁵⁰ spurred movements and stimulated interactions, thus resulting in the amplification of cross-cultural trade, communication and exchange on a massive, global scale. For Sanjay Subrahmanyam, early modern period was a period of “connected histories,” the period where universalism and humanism emerged, the period when ideas and “mental constructs” ceased to recognize political and what is more important, cultural borders.⁵¹

Early modern period was also a time of establishing more contacts, making new acquaintances and “mastering the space,” as so famously put by Daniel Roche in his book on eighteenth century

⁴⁹ John F. Richards, “Early Modern India and World History,” *Journal of World History* 8, 2 (1997): 199-203.

⁵⁰ Jerry Bentley., “Introduction: The Task of World History,” *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, ed. Jerry Bentley, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 12.

⁵¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories...,” 739.

France.⁵² For Roche, “mastering the space” meant creation of means that triggered mobility. One of the main instigators for mobility was “the desire to travel,”⁵³ which merchants in the early modern period did almost exclusively for business purposes, thus making space for creating second contacts.

The era of second contacts versus first contacts is excellently formulated by Timothy Brook in his influential book *Vermeer’s Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*. “The seventeenth century was not so much an era of first contacts as an age of second contacts, when sites of first encounter were turning into places of repeated meeting. People were now regularly arriving from elsewhere and departing for elsewhere, and as they were carrying things with them which meant that things were ending up in places other than where they were made, and were being seen in these new locations for the first time.”⁵⁴ Brook’s statement was not necessarily true for the seventeenth century only, but was rather the defining characteristic of the early modern period in general.

A number of scholars of early modern period have discussed definitions of cultural brokerage, go-betweens, and transfer of knowledge as concepts specifically pertinent to the early modern era. Timothy Brook thought that seventeenth century, being a century of second contacts, made people

⁵² Daniel Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵⁴ Timothy Brook, *Vermeer’s Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of a Global World* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), 8.

adjust to “unfamiliar customs” and learn new languages. “More people were engaging in transactions with people whose languages they did not know and whose cultures they had never experienced.”⁵⁵ Those transactions more often than not required go-betweens and cultural brokers who could traverse huge cultural, economic and linguistic barriers. Go-betweens were thus, according to Subrahmanyam, born “of this transactional friction. The go-between is thus the third party in a transaction where the two other parties—the principals of the transaction, if one will, and who may be individuals or larger entities— are themselves incapable of completing it in the absence of mediation.”⁵⁶

All of the above-mentioned processes that shaped the early modern period and made the world more interconnected had their influence on the global trade of diamonds and gems, as well as the merchants who traded in them. Armenian merchants, as well as other trade diasporas of the time, many times played the role of “cross-cultural brokers”⁵⁷ or go-betweens thanks to their linguistic and professional skills. This came especially handy in the lucrative trade of diamonds and gems they were soon going to participate in and be active along with Sephardic Jews. The privilege of acting as go-betweens, knowing languages and being a mobile trade diaspora, supported by the

⁵⁵ Ibid., 19, 21.

⁵⁶ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Some Afterthoughts,” in *The Brokered World Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820*, ed. Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj, James Delbourgo (Sagamore Beach: Watson Publishing International LLC, 2009), 430.

⁵⁷ Philip Curtin first used the term “cross-cultural brokers” in his seminal book on cross-cultural trade. See Philip, *Cross Cultural Trade in World History*, (Cambridge University Press: 1984), 3.

authorities of the Safavid Empire, gave the Armenian merchants of New Julfa the opportunity of mastering the art of diamond and gemstone trade, which essentially required a broad knowledge of technical, as well as practical skills. Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean route was long, and merchants had to cross numerous caravan and maritime routes in order to take rough diamonds and gemstones to the flourishing markets of Venice, Livorno and other European cities. Linguistic, professional, and experience-based skills were unfortunately not the only abilities which were required from a merchant to succeed in this trade. Merchants also had to be masterful in their knowledge of taxes, tolls, customs fees,⁵⁸ as well as bribing techniques. They had to master these skills in order to not be cheated, calculate their protection costs well in advance, etc. While it is true that this knowledge was important for trading with any other commodities, diamonds and gems were especially longed for by highway bandits and customs officials, as they were small in size, but big from the perspectives of the revenue they generated.

It has to be noted, that by saying Armenian merchants in this dissertation, I specifically mean the trade network of New Julfan Armenian long-distance merchants, as they almost solely monopolized the trade of luxury commodities among Armenian merchants in the discussed period.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ghukas Vanandetsi's and Costand Jughayetsi's manuals (to be discussed later in the chapter) provide some information on what taxes and tolls Armenians had to pay in order to take their merchandise throughout the Russian and Safavid Empires.

⁵⁹ Unfortunately, we have almost no information about Armenian diamond and gem merchants from the Ottoman Empire or other areas. One of the most important jeweler/merchants from Istanbul was Hovhannes T'ovmachanian, on whom I will elaborate more later in the dissertation.

The market balance of Indian diamond deposits shifted dramatically from South Asia to the New World after the first decade of the eighteenth century, when Brazilian diamond mines were discovered in the late 1720s.⁶⁰ India was no longer the sole supplier of diamonds to the European markets. Armenian merchants involved in diamond and gemstone trade were very well aware of the new discovery. The member of Minasian family firm, Aghamal Khwāja Minasians, for example, mentions the historic fact in his *Manual*. He specifically writes, “Diamonds are traded in *zarp*[?] in India... It has been a short time since they [diamonds] have been discovered in New Spain, Brazil.”⁶¹

The discovery of Brazilian diamond mines considerably changed the trajectory of the global diamond trade, shifting the monopoly of the Indian Subcontinent in the production and the trade of diamonds to sharing it with the Minas Gerais mines of Brazil, the main route of it passing through Lisbon to Goa and back. While in 1720s London was still the main center for the supply of rough diamonds, the Brazilian diamond flow devalued the average prices of Indian diamonds

⁶⁰ For early modern Brazillian diamond production and trade, see Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral*, 110-123; Lenzen, *History of Diamond*, 116-131. It is important to mention, that although Brazilian diamonds were discovered in the first half of the eighteenth century, their wide spread and popularity remained low until the nineteenth century. See *Gems in the Early Modern World: Materials, Knowledge and Global Trade 1450-1800*, ed. Michael Bycroft and Sven Dupré (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019), 1-4.

⁶¹ «Ալմազն գարպով առք ծախս գնէ Հընտստան, մատանն Հէյտարապատայ...»: «...փոքր ժամանակ այլ որ Նովըսպանիայ Բրազիլին երկրումն էլայ պահամ գոլման...»: “Diamond is traded in *zarp*? in India, the mines are in Hyderabad.” “It has been a short time since [diamonds] have been found in the country of Brazil in New Spain...” Aghamal Khwāja Minasian’s “Manual,” folios 7 and 8, MS 5994, Matenadaran, Yerevan, Armenia.

in Europe. According to Lenzen, “During the first ten years in which the Brazilian deposits were worked (1730-1740), the price of rough diamonds reached the lowest level and a considerable proportion of the yield was shipped to Goa in order to be marketed from there as rough diamonds of Indian origin.”⁶²

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Early modern diamond trade has been the subject of discussion of a number of monographs, as well as scholarly articles, such as Gedalia Yogevev’s,⁶³ Francesca Trivellato’s,⁶⁴ Tjil Vanneste’s⁶⁵ monographs on commercial networks of diamond merchants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Soren Mentz’s chapter on early modern Jewish involvement in diamond trade and English private trade correspondingly.⁶⁶ Godehard Lenzen too has largely contributed to the field of the history of diamond production with his book *History of Diamond Production and the*

⁶² Lenzen, *History of Diamond*, 130.

⁶³ Gedalia Yogevev, *Diamonds and Coral: Anglo-Dutch Jews and Eighteenth-Century Trade* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978).

⁶⁴ Francesca Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New haven, CT: Yale University Press).

⁶⁵ Tjil Vanneste, *Global Trade and Commercial Networks: Eighteenth-century Diamond Merchants* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).

⁶⁶ See Søren Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant at Work: Madras and the City of London, 1660–1740* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2005).

Diamond Trade.⁶⁷ He looked at the history of diamond production, at the same time providing a detailed review of diamond cutting and polishing techniques. Lenzen's book is unique in a way that it describes the history of diamonds from all major areas of the early modern and modern periods in India, Brazil and later on Africa by structuring it into mainly three processes: deposits or the discovery of diamond mines, their production process and the state of markets in different time periods.

Trivellato's book, entitled *The Familiarity of Strangers: Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern World*, is extremely interesting from the perspectives of Jewish merchants' participation in the early modern private trade of diamonds and gemstones. By challenging the common opinion produced by economic historians that for trade diasporas, such as Sephardic Jews, trust and partnerships were only possible when built on kinship, she argues that cross-cultural trade was mainly based on the exchange of information and trust relations. Trivellato, while focusing her attention on Sephardic Jews, acknowledges the importance of the Armenian trade diaspora of Venice and Livorno and emphasizes that in order to conduct a successful long-distance trade throughout the Indian Subcontinent New Julfans, as Sephardic Jews and other mercantile diasporas, used tools like *commenda* contracts (in line with other contracts), business correspondence, trust relations, credit, and family firms.

Trivellato's account begins with the period when the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand 1, allowed foreign merchants to settle in Pisa and the tax-free port of Livorno, gave the Jews and other merchants charters or letters of invitation, commonly known as *livornine*. Ferdinand's charter left an extremely positive impact on Livorno's trade. It spurred the economy of the city,

⁶⁷ Lenzen, *History of Diamond*.

making it more popular with merchants trading in Asian goods than Venice in the early modern period. Trivellato's book focuses on one of the most prominent families, the Ergas and Silvera firm of the time, thus shedding light on the cross-cultural trade of early modern Livorno and Sephardic Jewish trade of the period in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The Familiarity of Strangers is not about cross-cultural trade and the involvement of Sephardim in diamond and coral exchange, but rather about the unique interaction of cultural, political and economic lives of early modern Sephardim in the Mediterranean. For Trivellato, the establishment of the Sephardic trade diaspora in the Mediterranean was "...the combined result of their own internal organization and the political economy of the European powers that chose to compete for their services."⁶⁸ Her book concludes with a story of a sale of a large diamond, which led to the bankruptcy of the cross-cultural mercantile family firm of Ergas and Silvera, descended from Portuguese New Christians.

One of the recent publications that discusses the question of cross-cultural diamond trade is Tjil Vanneste's book on *Global Trade and Commercial Networks: Eighteenth Century Diamond Merchants*, where he thoroughly explores a merchant network operating between Antwerp, Amsterdam, London and Lisbon. In his book, Vanneste looks at the early modern diamond-trade from the perspectives of global history shedding light on the organization of the diamond market, as well as the role of Ashkenazi Jews in it. While Vanneste's book focuses on the early modern history of the diamond trade, he predominantly focuses on the eighteenth century and the Dutch trade of Brazilian diamonds. Vanneste's book is a good contribution to Jewish economic history in general and early modern cross-cultural long-distance trade in both Indian and Brazilian

⁶⁸ Ibid., 103.

diamonds, their transfers to the cutting and polishing centers of Amsterdam and Antwerp. Both Vanneste and Trivellato devote time to the discussion of cutting and finishing centers in Europe. According to them, London was the world-famous entrepôt for rough diamonds in the early modern period, while Amsterdam, and to a lesser extent Antwerp, had become the most famous centers for cutting and polishing.⁶⁹ Both Trivellato and Vanneste also focus on the eighteenth-century history, when the Jewish participation in the diamond trade was the most visible. Scholarly literature on the second half of seventeenth century, which is the period under discussion in this dissertation, is scarcer.

A considerable focus in both Yogev's and Trivellato's work is devoted to the importance of the exchange of Mediterranean coral and Indian diamonds and the role of Jewish merchants in that exchange of commodities. They have devoted chapters to the question of the exchange of these two commodities and have emphasized the importance of both commodities in guaranteeing the viability of the trade circulation of diamonds and their constant flow from India to Europe.

According to Yogev, the corals for diamonds trade was the most important aspect of the Jewish business activities in the eighteenth century, as the trade in Indies was overall the monopoly of the English East India Company.⁷⁰ In his monograph *Diamonds and Coral: Anglo-Dutch Jews and Eighteenth-Century Trade* he mentions, "The jewellery trade between India and Europe has always been a two-way business. India supplied Europe with diamonds, garnets, rubies, and eastern pearls,

⁶⁹ Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 40; Tijn Vanneste, *Global Trade and Commercial Networks: Eighteenth-century Diamond Merchants* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 62.

⁷⁰ Yogev, *Diamond and Coral*, 67.

and Europe exported to India coral and amber; later Europe also exported emeralds and western pearls from South and Central America.”⁷¹ Considering the importance of this exchange, Francesca Trivellato too reflects on the importance and involvement of the Sephardic Jewish diaspora in the diamond and coral trade in her book. Trivellato emphasizes the importance of the role of other mercantile groups in this trade. In her chapter on the exchange of the Mediterranean coral and Indian diamonds, she singles out the fact of the Armenian involvement based on archival documents from mainly Florence State Archives. She acknowledges the importance of Armenian merchants of Livorno in dominating the coral manufacturing along with Jews in Livorno. However, Trivellato argues that due to the comparably smaller number of Armenians as opposed to the Jews of Livorno, “...Armenians in Livorno never acquired the same influence that Jews did in the coral trade.”⁷²

Monographs on other separate gemstones and their trade history are also available, but very limited. Unfortunately, diamonds and their trade have preoccupied the field of commodity history, while other gems, such as pearls, rubies, emeralds and so on have not attracted enough attention by scholars of early modern commodity history. Arash Khazeni’s *Sky Blue Stone: The Turquoise Trade in World History* book⁷³ is a recent exception in that sense and is about the history of mining, consumption, circulation and trade of turquoise. As opposed to other gemstones popular during

⁷¹ Ibid., 102.

⁷² Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 230.

⁷³ Arash Khazeni, *Sky Blue Stone: The Turquoise Trade in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

the early modern period, turquoise has never been a commodity in which Europeans showed much interest. Therefore, while Khazeni's book covers this gem's travels throughout three gunpowder empires of the time (non-Western), it does not the history of turquoise from the perspectives of global cross-cultural trade. Khazeni's book is a very well researched monograph on the history of turquoise based on Persian and South Asian documents, books of precious stones (jawāhīrnāmas), as well as travel diaries and so on.

The pearl trade has also attracted some attention, mainly in the form of a monograph by Molly Warsh,⁷⁴ who has focused on studying the Atlantic pearls and their circulation between Americas and the European markets. Pearl trade and fishing in the early modern period have attracted the attention of Samuel Ostroff in a form of a PhD thesis,⁷⁵ Sanjay Subrahmanyam⁷⁶ and Willem Floor,⁷⁷ who have devoted short articles to the question of fishing in Mannar and the trade of pearls by the Dutch in Persian Gulf respectively. The pearl trade is also the central topic of discussion of a number of articles by B. Colless. These are survey reviews of pearl trade history,

⁷⁴ Molly Warsh, *American Baroque: Pearls and the Nature of Empire, 1492–1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

⁷⁵ Samuel Miles Ostroff, "The Beds of Empire: Power And Profit At The Pearl Fisheries Of South India And Sri Lanka, c. 1770-1840" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2016).

⁷⁶ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Noble Harvest from the Sea: Managing the pearl-fishery of Mannar, 1500-1925," in Burton Stein and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *Institutions and Economic Change in South Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 134-172.

⁷⁷ Willem Floor, "A Report on Pearl Fishing in the Persian Gulf in 1757," *Persica* 10 (1982): 209-22.

mainly focusing on the activities of Persian and Armenian merchants in this trade.⁷⁸ His article series, unfortunately, lack a solid ground of primary source material.

Emeralds are one of those rare commodities that have attracted the attention of scholars, to which a whole monograph is dedicated.⁷⁹ Calling it an “experiment in global history by way of a luxury commodity,” Kris Lane’s book discusses the history of Colombian emeralds from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the late eighteenth centuries. Lane reflects on the circulation of Colombian emeralds and discusses how these were usually transported to the three gunpowder empires of the time, especially Madras, through predominantly Sephardic Jewish merchants from London, mainly in exchange for Indian diamonds.⁸⁰

Of much interest is a monograph co-authored by Benjamin Zucker and Diana Scarisbrick.⁸¹ Zucker, a New-York based gem merchant was himself a graduate of Yale University. The monograph is on Elihu Yale’s life and his involvement in gem trade, as well as his collections of

⁷⁸ About the Armenian diamond trade in the Persian Gulf, India and South-Eastern Asia (Philippines, Sumatra, Java Island, etc.) see B. Colless’s series of articles: B. C. Colless, “The Traders of the Pearl. The Mercantile and Missionary Activities of Persian and Armenian Christians in South East-Asia,” *Abr-Nahrain* ((1970a, Vol. IX: 17-38), (1970b, Vol. X: 102-121); (1971, Vol. XI: 1-21); (1973, Vol. XIII: 115-135); (1974, Vol. XIV: 1-16); (1975, Vol. XV: 6-17); (1978, Vol. XVIII: 1-18).

⁷⁹ Kris Lane, *Colour of Paradise: The Emerald in the Age of Gunpowder Empires*, Yale University Press, 2010.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 185-188.

⁸¹ Diana Scarisbrick and Benjamin Zucker, *Elihu Yale: Merchant, Collector & Patron* (London : Thames & Hudson, 2014). See also, *idem*, *Gems and Jewels: A Connoisseur's Guide* (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 2003).

Indian gems and other commodities. As it is known, Elihu Yale, was one of the early benefactors of Yale University. He had made his fortune while being a merchant in India and serving as the governor and president of East India Company's factory in Fort Saint George.

An interesting and valuable source of information on early modern gem trade and the Indian mines are the travel accounts of Europeans, many of whom were gem merchants themselves. While travelers' narratives most of the time are not considered to be the most reliable sources for research into the specifics of the discussed trade, travel accounts and manuals, nevertheless, add an invaluable significance to the knowledge mostly absent from the archival sources available on early modern diamond and gemstone trade.

This is in no way an exhaustive list of European travel narratives⁸² on diamond and gem trade, but rather a brief glimpse into the world of European perspectives on Indian mines and the production of diamonds and gems in the Indian Subcontinent. The earliest descriptions of Indian mines are arguably provided by Jacques de Coutre, a Bruges-born son of a brushmaker. Jacques de Coutre was a jewel merchant, who was specialized in the trade of diamonds and other gems. He visited the diamond mines of Golconda on several occasions in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Coutre, along with his brother had travelled to the Portuguese Indian city of Goa in 1592, on board a ship. Coutre, considered to be one of the first Europeans having visited the Golconda

⁸² For a comprehensive list of European travellers and their visits to the Golconda Kingdom, see Robert Alan Simpkins, "The Road to Golconda: European Travelers' Routes, Political Organization and Archaeology in the Golconda Kingdom (1518–1687)." (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011).

diamond mines, wrote an autobiography/travel-account, where he tells the reader about his visits to the Golconda mines, transactions of buying and selling diamonds, pearls and other gems.⁸³

Jean Baptiste Tavernier was a seventeenth century French gem merchant and a traveller, who left invaluable information on the early modern diamond trade, the location of Indian mines, weighing diamonds, as well as other “colored stones,” such as rubies, topaz, sapphires, as well as coral, pearls, amber, musk, bezoar and others in the second half of the seventeenth century. Diamonds and gems were the most important commodities for Tavernier as a merchant. As he himself put it, “The diamond is the most precious of all stones, and it is the article of trade to which I am most devoted.”⁸⁴ During his lifetime, Tavernier travelled towards the Indian subcontinent on his second, third and fourth journeys from the overall six that he took. The first time he was in India was from 1640-1643, during which he visited Surat. During his third journey to India he visited the Golconda mines in 1645 and at that point was arguably quite involved in the gem trade and was purchasing diamonds.

The most important diamond associated with Tavernier’s name is the Hope Diamond, currently part of the National Gem and Mineral collection at the National Museum of Natural History in

⁸³ For more details on Coutre’s activities as a gem merchant in India, see Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “On Early Modern Travel,” *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 332-363. B.N. Teensma, “Jacques de Coutre as Jewel Merchant in India,” *Moyen Orient & Océan Indien*, VII (1990), 59-71. Coutre’s biography is kept at the National Library of Madrid, dated 1640 and is written in Spanish. See Jacques de Coutre, *Andanzas asidticas*, ed. Eddy Stols, Benjamin Teensma and Johan Verbeckmoes (Madrid, 1991), based on Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Ms. no. 2780.

⁸⁴ Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. 2, (London: Macmillan And Co., New York, 1889), 53.

Washington, D.C. This blue diamond, among others, was purchased in 1669 by Louis XIV. It was a “large blue heart-shaped diamond cut in the Indian fashion weighing one hundred twelve and three sixteenths carats.”⁸⁵ Tavernier was also married to a certain Madeleine Goisse, who was a daughter of a diamond-cutter.⁸⁶

Over the next more than twenty years Tavernier visited India multiple times, mainly Surat, Batavia and Golconda.⁸⁷ Although he claimed that he was “the first European who has opened the route for the Franks”⁸⁸ to the mines he visited in India, that was not true. Tavernier was not aware that other Europeans, such as William Methold and Caesar Frederick, had preceded him. Being a professional gem merchant, information he provided is detailed and in that sense surpasses other European accounts of the time. For example, Tavernier elaborates on different types of diamonds and their cuts and claims to have been to four mines and one of the two rivers, where diamonds could be found.⁸⁹ Tavernier’s contribution to our knowledge of local cutting and polishing techniques is extremely interesting. “The Indians are unable to give the stones so lively a polish as we give them in Europe; and this, I believe, is due to the fact that their wheel does not run so

⁸⁵ Pierre-François Burger, “TAVERNIER, JEAN-BAPTISTE,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2017, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/tavernier-jean-baptiste> (accessed on 25 August 2020).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, 54.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 53-54.

smoothly as ours.”⁹⁰ Tavernier’s detailed account of pricing diamonds of three carats and up to 100 in weight, is extremely valuable. Not only does he explain how diamonds were priced according to their weight, but he also elaborates on their water, clarity, shape and so on. Tavernier also mentions that Armenian merchants, whom he met in Patna, were involved in the trade of yellow amber in Bhutan.⁹¹

Tavernier was by far not the only European traveler interested in diamonds and gemstones. Others, affiliated with the French, Dutch and English East India Companies, such as William Methwold,⁹² John Fryer,⁹³ Georges Roques,⁹⁴ etc. also provide us with valuable information on popular commodities exported by their respective companies.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 58.

⁹¹ Ibid., 261.

⁹² William Methwold, *Relations of Golconda in the Early Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Moreland W. H. (Hakluyt Society: 1931).

⁹³ John Fryer, *A New Account of East-India and Persia, in Eight Letters: Being Nine Years Travels, Begun 1672 and Finished 1681 Containing Observations Made of the Moral, Natural, and Artificial Estate of Those Countries: Namely, of Their Government, Religion, Laws, Customs. Of the Soil, Climates, Seasons, Health, Diseases. Of the Animals, Vegetables, Minerals, Jewels. Of Their Housing, Cloathing, Manufactures, Trades, Commodities. And of the Coins, Weights, and Measures, Used in the Principal Places of Trade in Those Parts* (London, 1698).

⁹⁴ Georges Roques, *La Manière de Négociier aux Indes 1676–1691: La Compagnie des Indes et l’art du Commerce*, ed. and annotated by Valérie Bérinstain (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1996).

John Fryer, a Cambridge-educated doctor and travel-writer in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, describes how diamonds were cut on the spot, in India. However, due to their low quality cut, these were traded in India, while rough diamonds were taken to Europe, “They cut Diamonds with a Mill turned by Men, the String reaching, in manner of our Cutters Wheels, to lesser that are in a flat Press, where under Steel-wheels the Diamonds are fastned; and with its own Bort are worn into what Cut the Artist pleases: These are sold most in the Country, they coming short of the Fringes in Fancy; wherefore they are sent rough into Europe, where they are both set and cut to more advantage.”⁹⁵ Other than describing the mines and the process of Indian cutting techniques, Fryer also devotes a chapter to the descriptions of gemstones at the end of his accounts of East India and Persia. The chapter, entitled “Collections of the Coins, Weights, and Precious Stones, Usual in those Places of Trade within the Charter of the Honourable East India Company”⁹⁶ adds to the important knowledge of early modern transaction details, as well as popular commodities in the form of gems and diamonds.

Georges Roques, who was an official of the French East India Company in the seventeenth century, has also reflected on the specifics of diamond trade in India in his trade manual. In his short overview on “Diamonds” Roques tells about their different colors and cuts.⁹⁷ He then goes on discussing who was involved in the trade and how they managed it. Discussing Armenians and their role in the trade of diamonds and pearls, Roques mentions that the latter understand that trade

⁹⁵ Fryer, *A New Account of East-India and Persia*, 113.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 213-217.

⁹⁷ Roques, *La Manière de Négociier aux Indes*, 157.

well. According to Roques, as the trade routes of diamonds were perilous and long, profits from diamond sales were visible in almost two years after acquiring them in India.⁹⁸

The need to transmit and share valuable information on popular commodities imported to European port cities from the Indies, as well as details on their names, weights, measures and other information opened a way for dictionaries and trade manuals to be produced in the early modern period. In that light, one of the most interesting treatises belongs to the authorship of Savary brothers. Jacques Savary des Brûlons, who was the French Inspector General of the Manufactures for the King at the Paris Customs and Philemon Louis Savary, for example, came up with a universal dictionary of commerce.⁹⁹ The two brothers were the sons of Jacques Savary, the author of *Le Parfait Négociant* (1675), a manual on mercantile trade from the seventeenth century.

The manual by the English jeweller David Jeffries on diamonds and pearls, their manufacturing and other details was another valuable contribution to the professional literature intended for Europeans engaged in gem trade and jewellery.¹⁰⁰ Jeffries provides comparison charts of weights and measures of diamonds and pearls, as well as information on their quality, cutting techniques, etc. What is especially noteworthy, is Jeffries' contribution to the proper estimation of the value

⁹⁸ Ibid., 158.

⁹⁹ This dictionary was later translated into English and added by Malachy Postlethwayt and printed in two volumes in London in 1763. See Malachy Postlethwayt, *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, J. and F. Rivington, J. Hinton [etc.], 1774).

¹⁰⁰ David Jeffries, *A Treatise on Diamonds and Pearls. In which their Importance is Considered, and Plain Rules are Exhibited for Ascertaining the Value of Both: and the True Method of Manufacturing Diamonds* (London, Printed by C. and J. Ackers, 1751).

of diamonds and pearls. In his manual, Jeffries pays the most attention to two cuts of diamonds, mainly the rose and table cuts. Although his treaty was written seventy years after the period under discussion in this dissertation, the Minasian inventories list table and rose cut diamonds the most among their gems, which shows that those two cuts were still arguably the most popular ones in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁰¹

In this short list of professional contributions of early modern Europeans to the trade of diamonds and gems, it is also noteworthy to mention Samuel Chappuzeau, a French writer who edited Tavernier's notes. Based on some of that information, he then added and published a small booklet on the history of jewels and other commodities, which was then translated into English.¹⁰² This is in no way an exhaustive list of literature produced in the early modern period, but it provides the reader with an idea as to how individual and private European companies engaged in trade, mastered it and then shared their knowledge with the generations to come.

Armenian Historiography on Diamond and Gemstone Trade

Scholarly work into the early modern history of trade of diamonds and gemstones in Armenian historiography is extremely limited. There are no monographs on the history of early modern diamond and gem trade and the role of Armenians in it. A number of scholars have devoted articles

¹⁰¹ For a thorough look on diamond cutting throughout history, see Jack Ogden, *Diamonds: The Early History of the King of Gems* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018).

¹⁰² Samuel Chappuzeau, *The History of Jewels, and of the Principal Riches of the East and the West: Taken from the Relation of Divers of the most Famous Travellers of Our Age* (London: Hobart Kemp, 1671), for the number of polishers, see p. 15.

to the specifics and the role of gemstones and jewelry among Armenians from early ages to the modern period. In that context, Haig Ter-Ghevondian's works on the use of silver and golden jewelry, belts, crowns used in the Cilician Kingdom and Artaxid era, as well as gemstones throughout the history of the Armenian Kingdom are important. The "Dictionary of Gemstones" put together by the same author, is a survey of all the varieties of gems known among Armenians, as well as their use, health benefits, history, etc. This dictionary is significant in that it incorporates arguably all the types of gems that were of interest to Armenian historiography of the time. Unfortunately, the author does not provide his reader with references to the sources that he used to put together a dictionary like that.¹⁰³

Another author who has focused on the history of diamond selling activities is Harut'iwn Kiurdian. His research, however, is rarely based on archival material.¹⁰⁴ The nineteenth century linguist and author of numerous works on Armenian linguistics, K'erovpe Patkanov authored a work entitled *Precious Stones: their Names and Properties Among Armenians of Seventeenth*

¹⁰³ Haig Ter-Ghevondian, "Baraṙan gohar-k'areru" [Dictionary of Gemstones], *Bazmavēp*, no 1-4 (1997): 171-189; no 1-4 (1998): 74-116.

¹⁰⁴ Harut'iwn Kiurdian, "Niw't'er hay vacharkanut'ean patmut'ean hamar: goharneru patmut'iwnē hayots' mot" [Materials on Armenian mercantile history: The history of gems among Armenians], *Hayrenik Amsagir* 3 (1945): 67-81. See the list of Armenian published and unpublished literary heritage on gemstones in Hakob Anasyan, "Precious Stones (gemstones)," in *Haykakan Matenagitut'yun E-ZHĒ Dareri [Armenian Bibliography from Fifth to Eighteenth Centuries]*, Vol. 1 (Yerevan, 1959), 501-511.

Century,¹⁰⁵ that is also noteworthy. In this book the author basically translates three chapters on the names of gemstones by Arak‘el Davrizhets‘i, to whose work I will turn to later. Patkanov compiled all the information about gemstones found from Davrizhets‘i’s book, added an introduction and commentaries. The book was written by the order of the Imperial Academy of Sciences of Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The role of Armenian involvement in the private trade of diamond and gems has been very recently discussed by Evelyn Korsch. Her chapter in an edited volume is dedicated to the involvement of the Sceriman family in the cross-cultural trade of gems, where by looking at archival documents from mainly the State Archives of Padova and Livorno, Korsch reflects on the importance of the famous Catholic family of the Scerimans in Venice and Livorno gem trade. She emphasizes their long-lasting business relations with Sephardic families, based in Livorno,¹⁰⁶ thus preparing the ground for further research into the commercial activities of Scerimans in gemstone trade, as well as the research into the partnerships that Armenian merchants established with their counterparts outside their trade network.

¹⁰⁵ K‘erovpe Patkanov, *Precious Stones, their names and properties among Armenians of Seventeenth Century*, Saint Petersburg, 1873. (*in Russian*)

¹⁰⁶ Evelyn Korsch, “The Scerimans and Cross-Cultural Trade in Gems: The Armenian Diaspora in Venice and Its Trading Networks in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century” in *Commercial Networks and European Cities, 1400–1800*, ed. Andrea Caracausi and Christof Jeggle (Routledge, 2014), 223-239, 293-298.

ARMENIAN PRIMARY SOURCES ON DIAMOND AND GEM TRADE AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

The curiosity of Armenians in the properties of gemstones and their physical and geographical descriptions, especially in the early modern period, is significant. Therefore, it is not surprising that one of the most important historical surveys of the history of Armenia from seventeenth century, the *Book of Histories* of Arak'el Davrizhets'i, contains three chapters on the "Names of Precious Stones," their attributes, uses, and other information.¹⁰⁷

Ghukas Vanandets'i's merchant handbook from seventeenth century, entitled *Treasury of Measures, Weights, Numeration and Currency from All Over the World*,¹⁰⁸ printed in Amsterdam in 1699 is particularly interesting for the context of this dissertation. It is a handbook intended to train future young, New Julfan merchants and assist the experienced ones. The main source for

¹⁰⁷ Arak'el Davrizhets'i, *Girk' patmut'eants' [Book of Histories]* (Amsterdam: Surb Ējmiatsin Printing House, 1669), 457-482. See also the English translation by George Bournoutian, *Arak'el of Tabriz: Book of History*, trans. George Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2010).

¹⁰⁸ Ghukas Vanandets'i, *Gants ch'ap'oy kshroy twoy ew dramits' bolor ashkhari or ē Gitut'iwn amenayn tesak kshroy ch'ap'ots' ew dramits' orov bolor ashkhari vachar' akanut'iwnn vari [Treasury of Measures, Weights, Numeration and Currency From All Over the World]* (Amsterdam: 1699). (in Armenian) See also Kéram Kévonian's article about the Ghukas's manual, Kéram Kévonian, "Marchands Arméniens au XVIIIe Siècle; À Propos d'un Livre Arménien Publié à Amsterdam en 1699," *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, vol. 16, n°2, (Avril-Juin 1975): 199-244.

Vanandets'i's manual is considered to be *Ashkharhazhoghov*.¹⁰⁹ The latter is a more elaborate manual from seventeenth century envisioned to be used as a textbook at a business school situated in New Julfa and supervised by the author of the manual Costand Jughayets'i. It has never been published and its copies are kept in manuscript form at a number of archives in Yerevan, Oxford and New Julfa.¹¹⁰ Both Vanandetsi's and Jughayetsi's manuals contain some information on taxes and tolls paid by Armenian merchants in the early modern period.

The early modern period in Armenian historiography is marked with an abundance of manuscripts on gemstones and minerals, treatises on their properties both in translation and original works. One of the works published in 1778 is a translation from Persian by Constantinople-based Scribe Gevorg Palatets'i, entitled *Book of Precious Gemstones, Various Minerals and Stones, as Well as Seven Metals and Other Precious Things*.¹¹¹ Palatets'i's book is a translation from Persian of most probably Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsi's *Tansugnāme-i Ilhānī* or *Jawāhir-*

¹⁰⁹ Costand Jughayets'i, *Vasn norahas mankants' ew yeritasartats' vacharakanats' khrat* [Concerning Advice to the Adolescent and to Young Merchants]. More commonly known as *Ashkharhazhoghov* [Compendium], Bodleian Ms. F14, Oxford University, United Kingdom. (in Armenian)

¹¹⁰ Recently Sargis Baldaryan from Yerevan State University has defended a dissertation on handbooks and manuals produced among the New Julfans. See Sargis Baldaryan, "Armenian Commercial Handbooks in the New Julfan Trade Network," (PhD Thesis, Yerevan State University, 2020).

¹¹¹ Gevorg Dpir Palatets'i, *Girk' mets'agin ew patuakan akants', ew aylots' pēspēs hank' kan ew kendanakan k'arants' naew eōt'ants' hrahaleleats', ew zanazan aznuagoyn irats'* [Book of precious gemstones and other different minerals and animal stones, as well as seven metals and other precious things] (Constantinople, 1779).

nāma (Book of Precious Stones)¹¹² written in thirteenth century and dedicated to the Mongol overlord, Hulagu Khan. Palatets‘i’s interest in this manuscript might also have been predetermined by the growing interest of Armenians in trade of gemstones in the early modern period. It is noteworthy that Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s original manuscript was edited and published only in 1969 in Iran. It was translated into Turkish in the fifteenth century.¹¹³

While scholarly work on the role of precious gem trade is marginal in Armenian historiography, primary unpublished sources on the characteristics of gems and their properties are plenty. These are mostly lists of gemstones popular and common for the time. I conducted a three-month long research at the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in the summer of 2015, where my main goal was to exhaustively search the catalogs of this repository and track down all the manuscripts with descriptions of gemstones, any manuals, documents on early modern trade of gemstones, and so on. I was fortunate to find more than two dozen manuscript compendia with information on gemstones and take the digital copies with me. While it is probably true that some of these primary sources in Armenian are translations from different languages, the fact that gems and diamonds attracted the interest of Armenian authors and merchants during the early modern period is apparent, thus the lists of gemstones in many manuscript compendiums at the main repository of ancient Armenian manuscripts. For example, MS 503, MS 520, MS 1165,

¹¹² Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī, *Tansūkh'nāmah-' i İlkhānī*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Mudarris Raḡavī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān 1969).

¹¹³ For more details on the location of existing manuscripts and general description of Tusi’s work, see Salim Aydüz, “NAṢĪR AL-DĪN AL-TŪSĪ’s Influence on Ottoman Scientific Literature (Mathematics, Astronomy and Natural Sciences),” *Int. J. Turkish Studies* Vol. 17, Nos. 1&2, (2011): 9-10.

MS 1395, MS 1495, MS 1541, MS 1771, MS 1780, MS 1786, MS 3425, MS 7325 and many others, which are mostly from the early modern period, contain lists of the names of gemstones, in some cases accompanied by detailed descriptions of their physical appearances (colors, sizes), their uses, as well as their health benefits.

The interest of Armenian merchants in luxury commodities is also reflected in the travel literature of the time. One of the most remarkable unpublished travel accounts pertaining to the subject of my dissertation is from eighteenth century Armenian jeweler Hovhannes T'ovmachanian, entitled the *History of Ter Hovhannes T'ovmachanian who For Thirty Years of his Life Travelled to Europe, Asia: India and Africa: Ethiopia (Written by T'ovmachan himself by the Order of Abbot of San Lazzaro Island of Venice, during the patriarchy of the Armenian Catholicos Ghukas in the year of 1790, 15 December).*¹¹⁴ Apart from the fact that Hovhannes

¹¹⁴ I want to express my gratitude towards the Head of the Digital Library of Armenian Literature at the American University of Armenia Meruzhan Karapetyan for providing me the draft text of T'ovmachanean's travels. Mr. Karapetyan also co-authored an article on the discovery of this manuscript with Elisabeth T'ajiryan. See Meruzhan Karapetyan and Elisabeth T'ajiryan, "Hovhannēs T'ovmachanean- ZHĔ dari hay matenagir: keank'ē ew matenagrakan gorts'unēut'iwnē" [Hovhannes T'ovmachanean, an Eighteenth Century Author, His Life and Bibliographical Activities], Bazmavēp (Vienna/Yerevan, 2009), 206-259. (*In Armenian*). See *Patmutiwn Tēr Hovhannisi T'ovmachanean, or zams yeresun I keans iwr shrjets'av yEvropiay, yAsia, i Hindiks ew yAp'rikē, i Hapeshstan, sharadreal i noyn ink'n i T'ovmachanē hramanaw vehin iwroy abbayi I Vēnētik, i vans Srboyn Ghazaru. I hayrapetut'ean tearn Ghukaswu Hayots' katughikosi i t'uakanis P'rkchin 1790 i dektember 15, isk ēst Hayots' RMLT' [History of Tēr Hovhannes T'ovmachanyan who for thirty years of his life travelled to Europe, Asia: India and Africa: Ethiopia (Written by T'ovmachan himself by the order of Abbot of San Lazzaro Island of Venice, during the patriarchy of the Armenian Catholicos Ghukas in the year of 1790, 15 December and in RMLT' of the Armenian Calendar (Archives of the Mkhitarist Congregation on San*

T'ovmachanian was a professional jeweler and at some point owned a jewelry store in Istanbul, he was also interested in sharing his knowledge, which made him include a chapter on “Information on all types of precious gems and other gemstones” in his travelogue. T'ovmachanian tells the reader about his business dealings, mainly selling diamonds and other gems to high-ranked officials while he was travelling in the Mughal Empire in 1766-1768. T'ovmachan's travel account gives one a first-hand preview at the important techniques that early modern Armenian merchants used while buying and selling precious gemstones and how letters of representation and their knowledge of the areas they were trading in worked to their advantage.

Besides the discussion of secondary scholarly material on the subject, there are a few dozen primary source materials, including business correspondence, accounting ledgers and trade manuals which have survived from the early modern period, most of them not studied or looked at before. This body of primary source material is predominantly written in New Julfan Armenian dialect. A general look at these sources shows that the main gems of interest to Armenian merchants of the time were diamonds, emeralds, rubies, pearls, coral, etc.

Acquisti 123 and 124 are two cases at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze each full of over 400 documents crucial to my dissertation project. These documents give a scholar of early modern trade an opportunity to understand the world of merchants and look into the details of business transactions in action. The majority of these documents, mainly business correspondence and various contracts, belong to the family firm of Khwāja Minasians. Most of the primary material discussed below pertains to the history of this family firm in one way or another.

Lazzaro MS 1688). Recently Meruzhan Karapetyan has prepared the manuscript of Tovmachan's travels for publication.

Acquisti 123 and 124 contain business letters and contracts, mostly written by Khwāja Minas, the director of the Minasian family firm to his commenda agents throughout their network. These lengthy letters pertain strictly to the business dealings of the family firm with its agents, sent and received starting from roughly 1670s to the beginning of the eighteenth century. The plethora of documents in the form of business letters left behind by this family and their agents is an extremely important find and gives the opportunity of mapping out the history of business dealings of a single family firm and its numerous agents scattered from the Indian Ocean to the trading cities of the Russian Empire and the Mediterranean, thus narrating the history from the perspectives of a “global history on a small scale.”

The Minasian family firm¹¹⁵ survived for roughly a century from the second half of the seventeenth century up to 1747, after which the headquarters of the family was moved to Surat. In 1722, when the Afghans and later on Nadir Shah invaded the Safavid Empire, the Khwāja Minasian family firm started falling apart. One look at the body of primary source material survived from the history of this mercantile family is enough to argue that diamonds and gemstones were the single, most important commodities this family traded with for more than a century.

The importance of transmitting the knowledge of trading techniques and other details of trade inside and outside of mercantile networks was a common practice already in the early modern period. According to Kapil Raj in his essay on go-betweens in Calcutta in the early modern period, “... in the context of the Indian Ocean, with the presence of multiple competitive-cum-collaborative merchant networks, leakages apart, all knowledge could not possibly be kept within individual networks. Certain types of knowledge pertaining to the goods themselves (for instance,

¹¹⁵ See Aslanian’s discussion of Khwāja Minasian family firm in Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 159-164.

the nature, properties, qualities, and potential markets of various commodities) had inevitably to be passed on to different groups along the trajectory of the commodities in question. It is not surprising that these knowledges formed a strategic part of the exchange process, and were thus an object of negotiation and mediation.”¹¹⁶ In this context, the professional knowledge transferred by figures, such as the representatives of the Khwāja Minasian family, on whom I will elaborate on below, fits perfectly into the general picture of the transmission of information.

The next important archival document under discussion again pertains to the history of the Minasian Family Firm. The professional approach that the Minasians had towards gem trade is reflected in archival sources left from the family firm and its members. The importance of diamond and gem trade techniques and the set of skills required from a merchant to be successful is highlighted by one of the Minasian family firm members, in his unpublished manuscript kept under the number MS 5994 at the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts.¹¹⁷ It is a trade manual that belongs to the authorship of Aghamal di Sarfraz Khwāja Minasian’s from Julfa (Aghamal son of Sarfraz from Khwāja Minas family), a merchant and an author of a manual on gemstone trade and trade in general.¹¹⁸ According to Aslanian in his passage on the history of

¹¹⁶ Kapil Raj, “Mapping Knowledge: Go-Betweens in Calcutta, 1770–1820,” in *The Brokered World*, 110.

¹¹⁷ Aghamal Khwāja Minasian, *Haghags ar evtri margarti Hntstan vor vacharakank’ ch’ē vay khsep asen [About the trade of pearl (called chevay khsep by merchants) in India]*, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, MS 5994.

¹¹⁸ Other than the current manual on gemstone trade, Aghamal authored another manuscript. According to his entry on Aghamal Khwāja Minasian, historian Hakob Anasian, who published three volumes of Armenian bibliographies, mentions that there is another manuscript on religious matters, written by the same author, kept

Minasian family firm, Aghamal Khwāja Minasian was appointed as the head of the firm after Khwāja Minas’s brother Emniaz di Minas was murdered in 1747. Aghamal was Khwāja Minas’s brother Sarfraz’s son. Halfway throughout the manual the copier provides the following information: “The viewer and the writer of this is Safraz’s son Aghamal Agha Khwāja Minasian (God rest his soul), whose daughter Sophia khanum gave me the copy of this and the copy of the pearl’s cheva(?) hisap¹¹⁹ after his death and I copied it. Let God grant him with longevity, let God listen to his prayers: the writer of this is Nazaret’s son Michael.”¹²⁰ As it is written at the end of the manual, the copier of the manuscript refers to the author as Safraz’s son Aghamal, which makes the question authorship of the manual quite undoubtable. This manuscript is an eighteenth century manual on the variety of gemstones, where these can be found, as well as information on prices and weights. The manuscript also contains long lists of tables with comparison of measures, currencies and weights of gems from city to city, giving an invaluable information on techniques of gem trade, their polishing and other information, not easily accessible in other primary

at Matenadaran under the number MS 6591. *The Acquaintance of Truth* was composed by “the uneducated and infirm Aghamal, a Julfan from the family of Khwāja Minasian” in 1762. For more details on the literary legacy of Aghamal Khwāja Minasian, see Hakob Anasian, *Armenian Bibliography*, 524-529.

¹¹⁹ Hisap- ‘account’ (from Persian hisāb). «Որ սորա տեսանօղն եւ գրօղն Խօճայ Մինասեան պարոն Սաֆրազի որդի Աղամալ Աղան է ելել Աստուած լուսաւորէ իւր հոգին, որ յետ վաղճանին իւր դուստր Սօփիայ խանումն ետ ինձ այս օրինակս կամ մարգարտին չէվին հիսապի օրինակն, որ օրինակէցի, Աստուած իւրն արեւշատութիւն տայ, Աստուած իւր խնդրովածքն կատարէ, գժօղ սորին Նազարէթի որդի անպիտան Միքայէլ չնչին ծառայ»:

¹²⁰ Aghamal Khwāja Minasian, *Haghags ar evtri*, folio 24.

sources.¹²¹ The rest of the manuscript consists from accounts and charts on pearl trade, as well as mathematical problems, which are originally a part of Constand Jughayets'i's *Ashkharhazhghov*.¹²² The section on gemstones, including the above-mentioned charts, is 44 folios long, while the whole manuscript is 125 folios long.

Aghamal's manual talks about the techniques and skills to be used in order to succeed in the trade of gemstones, giving a detailed information on pearls and other gemstones from India¹²³. While it is true that Aghamal's manual reflects in detail on almost all the gemstones popular among Armenian merchants of the time, he however pays more attention to the trade of pearls. From the language used in the manual and areas focused on, it is clear, that the author of the manual was

¹²¹ I have transcribed and partially annotated Aghamal's manuscript. For the purposes of understanding the complex conversion charts with measures, weights and the specific numeration system used by New Julfans, I heavily relied on Kéram Kévonian's article. See Kéram Kévonian, "Numération, Calcul, Comptabilité et Commerce," in *Les Arméniens Dans le Commerce Asiatique au Début de l'Ère Moderne*, ed. Sushil Chaudhury and Kéram Kévonian (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2007): 283-367.

¹²² These are excerpts from Costand Jughayets'i's *Ashkharazhghov*. The compiler of the manuscript has most probably put Aghamal's and Jughayets'i's works next to each other, as they were both arguably intended to train young merchants.

¹²³ Although we do not have many instances of the popularity of pearl trade among Armenian gem merchants (Acquisiti 123, document 181 at the Florence State Archives, for example, is a letter demonstrating that the Minasian family firm was indeed involved in pearl trade), Aghamal's treaty on pearl trade will suffice to assume that our sources have not yet been fully revealed when it comes to this certain gemstone.

specifically masterful in the trade of gems and their specifics in the markets of India and South-East Asia.

Devoting a whole chapter to the essentials of finding pearls, he then specifies on which specific coastlines they frequented, what measures and weights were used in its trade, etc. Aghamal also elaborates on the essentials of setting prices, being careful with the difference of currencies from city to city, etc.¹²⁴ The range of gemstones described in Aghamal's manual is vast: pearls, diamonds, rubies, *balas* rubies,¹²⁵ blue, yellow and white sapphires, cat's eye, turquoise, Yemeni agate, cornelian, agate, coral, hyacinth, jasper, amber, lazurite, Sulemani agate, *heyvani* bezoar (from animals), etc.

Pertaining to the history of the Minasian family firm is another source, a brown leather-bound ledger kept under the number P.D. 66.c in Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di Venezia.¹²⁶ It belongs to the *commenda* agent of the Minasian family firm, Agha di Mat'os (1644-1709) and contains information about the cities in which he and the other agents of the Minasian family firm traded between 1679 and late 1680s. The accounting ledger of Agha di Mat'os consists of a number of mercantile transactions between the *commenda* agent, in this case Agha di Mat'os, and the "master" in Julfa, Khwāja Minas. Agha Mat'os's long-time involvement in diamond and gem trade between northern Italy and India resulted in Agha di Mat'os becoming one of the most influential

¹²⁴ Ibid., folios 4a-5a.

¹²⁵ Red spinel.

¹²⁶ Accounting Ledger of Agha di Mat'os, 1679. P.D. 66.c. Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di Venezia. Venice, Italy.

Armenian merchants in Livorno. As one of the pillars of the Armenian community in Livorno, Agha di Mat'os was the principal benefactor of the city's Armenian Church of San Gregorio Illuminatore, which opened its doors in 1714. The amount of diamonds and other gems of different sizes and colors included in the inventory of his accounting ledger is impressive. It clearly indicates that Agha di Mat'os was a successful gem merchant during the end of seventeenth and beginning of eighteenth centuries. The consignments, described in the accounting ledger, contained diamonds and rubies, pearl beads, turquoise, lazurite, sapphires, crystals, etc, all shipped or brought to Agha di Mat'os personally in Venice by different agents of the Minasian family firm. The accounting ledger of Agha di Mat'os consists of a number of mercantile transactions between the *commenda* agent, in this case Agha di Mat'os, and the "master" in Julfa, Khwāja Minas. I will elaborate on this source more in the chapter on Agha di Mat'os.

Apart from these specific primary sources highly important for this dissertation, I have also relied on a number primary source material from the archives of San Lazzaro degli Armeni, the Archives of All Savior's Monastery (AASM) in Isfahan and the Santa Croce Armenian Church Archive in Venice.

San Lazzaro degli Armeni (Venice, Italy)- San Lazzaro Armenian Mkhitarist Congregation was founded by Abbot Mkhitar in 1717 in Venice. The congregation soon became the cradle of Armenian scholarly undertakings in the early modern period, as well as a center of printing of Armenian scholarly literature far from the Motherland. Apart from being a research center, it now hosts one of the biggest repositories of early modern archival sources including, but not limited to Armenian historiography and linguistics. The private archives of San Lazzaro have not been fully catalogued or researched by scholars. San Lazzaro preserves the archive of Santa Croce Armenian Church of Venice, which contains a number of documents that deal with Agha di Mat'os , as well

as his correspondence with other gem merchants of the time. I was able to acquire the digital copies of the archive of Santa Croce for the first time in 2014.

Even the above-mentioned brief survey of a few primary unpublished sources on Armenian diamond and gem merchants' legacy suggests that further, much deeper research into the role of private early modern gemstone trade needs to be carried out. While a number of articles and book chapters have been devoted to the examination of Sephardic Jews and their imprint on global diamond and gemstone trade, the private trade activities of the East India Companies in gems,¹²⁷ these studies have only touched upon the role of New Julfa Armenian trade network, suggesting that Armenians were also successful in this trade. The archival material in mostly Julfan Armenian dialect at hand should be researched thoroughly, by closely studying it from not only historical, but what is more important, economical perspectives, while the value of information contained in these sources should be put in a world historical context of early modern diamond and gemstone trade.

¹²⁷ On the topic of private trade, diamond return cargoes of the **Carreira da Índia roughly between 1580 and 1640**, see James C. Boyajian, *The Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580-1640* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 42-43; 107-122

Chapter Two

AGHA DI MAT‘OS: A DIAMOND MERCHANT IN LIVORNO: A GLOBAL MICROHISTORY

On 13 September 1709¹²⁸, at sundown, Agha di Mat‘os¹²⁹, the benefactor and founder of

¹²⁸ In his *Geography of the Four Parts of the World*, which was written almost 90 years before Mesrop Ughurlian’s book on the Livorno Armenian community Giwver Agonts‘ mentions the same date for Agha’s death. However, on his tombstone inscription the day of his death is stated as September 3. This inscription has been reproduced in both Ughurlian and Agonts‘. See Step‘annos Agonts‘ Giwer, *Ashkharagrut‘iwn chorits‘ masants‘ ashkharhi [Geography of the Four Parts of the World]*, Vol. 3, Part 2 (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1802), 40-42; Mesrop Vardapet Ughurlian, *Patmut‘iwn hayots‘ gaghtakanut‘ean ew shinut‘ean ekeghets‘woy notsa i Livorno kaghaki handerts‘ yhavelwatsovk‘ [History of the Armenian Community of Livorno and the Construction of Their Church There, with appendices]* (Venice: Mkhitarist Press, 1891), 102-3.

¹²⁹ Agha’s name is spelled differently in available scholarly literature. For the purposes of this chapter I have chosen to use the transcribed version of his name from Armenian, Mat‘os, as he is predominantly addressed to by people writing letters to him. However, the most important reason to choose Mat‘os over Mattus, is a document written by Agha himself in Armenian, where he spells his name Մաթոսի որդի Աղա or Աղա Մաթոս, which would be Mat‘osi ordi Agha or Agha Mat‘os in transcription. «Ես Մաթոսի որդի Աղես յինք առի և պարտենմ Ղափանցի Գրիգորի որդի պարոն Յովանէսին կօռէնթայ մառչիլ մին դգար, որ կէսն կառի մառչիլ ԵՃ»: “I, Agha, son of Mat‘os, received and owe to Hovanĕs, son of Ghanapts‘I Grigor 1000 Italian marchils, half of which is 500.” Agha then confirms that the document was written in his own handwriting. «Գրեցի սեպտեմբերի Ժ թիվն ՌՃԽԳ Լիվորնայ, միր չունենմ էս իմ Աղեսի դասխաթնայ, ինձ դարուլայ»: “Written on September 10, 1143 [1694]. I do not have a seal, this is my Agha’s handwriting and this is acceptable to me.”

the Armenian church of Livorno, walked out of an evening sermon at the Chiesa dei Santi Cosma e Damiano¹³⁰ he used to attend, but did not reach home safely. Instead, he was killed by his “Georgian” employee named Bejan¹³¹ by being stabbed by knife eighteen times. Agha was only found next day early in the morning by people passing by, who then took his body home. Bejan was supposedly nursing a grudge because his master had fired him from the position of the superintendent on the building of the church.¹³² Agha’s tragic death was followed by a series of

¹³⁰ Agonts’, Ibid, 39.

¹³¹ I put Georgian in quotation marks, as in the early modern period the adjective Georgian did not necessarily mean Georgian from Georgia (the country). In his book, entitled *Georgian Travelogues and their Accounts of Armenians*, Pavel Chobanyan discusses the possibility of the usage of the word *vrats’i* (Georgian) and its attribution to Armenians from Georgia, as opposed to Georgians in the medieval and early modern travelogues. He cites dozens of sources, where this is the case. See Pavel Chobanyan, *Vrats’akan ughegrut’yunnerë ew nrants’ teghekut’yunnerë hayeri masin, XVIIIId.- XIXd. arajin k’arord* [*Georgian Travelogues and their Accounts of Armenians in the Eighteenth and First Quarter of Nineteenth Centuries*], (NAS SSRA Publishing House, Institute of Oriental Studies, 1981), 24-26. Based on this, Agha di Mat’os’s servant could have been an Armenian and not a Georgian. Ghevond Alishan, in his groundbreaking work entitled *Sisakan*, talks about the prominent merchants in Tuscany in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where he states that Agha’s own servant killed him. Alishan, for some reason, calls him Mirijan, son of P’arsadan. See Ghevond Alishan, *Sisakan: Teghagrut’iwn siwneats’ ashkhari* [*Sisakan: A Topography of the Land of Siwnik*] (Venice, 1893), 452. Bejan di Parsadan or Bejan, son of Parsadan is mentioned among 24 prominent Armenians who signed the petition to the Grand Duke of Tuscany for a permission to build the Armenian church in Livorno in 1701. See Ughurlian, *Patmut’iwn hayots’*, 71; Agonts’, *Ashkharagrut’iwn chorits’*, 38.

¹³² Ughurlian, *Patmut’iwn Hayots’*, 84-85; Agonts’, Ibid, 39. His position of a superintendent is confirmed in the case proceedings of Agha’s trial. See Archivio Storico della S. Congregazione de Propaganda Fide,

problems, that awaited his family after his death. These problems included his family members dealing with Agha's creditors and debtors, selling his property, going through a trial and so on.¹³³

At the time of his death, Agha Mat'os had made a reputation for himself as a benefactor of his own community and a successful gem merchant residing in Venice and Livorno. He hailed from a family of immigrants from a faraway region of Gharabagh. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the families of two brothers Oghlan K'eshish and Ghalabek fled from the small village of Haterk' in present day mountainous region of Karabakh to Isfahan under Shah Abbas's deportations, they could hardly imagine that one of their offspring, Agha di Mat'os, would later on petition with others before the Sun King himself, the Pope, and the Propaganda Fide, become the founder and the patron of the Armenian church in Livorno and one of the most

Fondo SC (Scritture riferite nei Congressi), Armeni, vol. 11, folios 900-968, 39. Bejan's name is listed as an employee, who got a salary of more than 1600 pezzes (silver piece of eight) for his work.

¹³³ The trial proceedings were printed in a booklet form and are stored in the Propaganda Fide Archives. Followed by a trial that took place between the heirs of Agha di Mat'os and the Armenian Community of Livorno over Agha's debts and property, this booklet was printed in 1749. See "Osservazioni Di Fatto Del Dottore Jacopo Ciocca Per Servire di Risposta all Dissertazione In Liburnen. Fabricae Seu Redditionis Rationis dell' Illustrissimo Signor Avvocato Carlo Niccolo Villani Fatta Per l' Illustrissima Nazione Armena Contro gl' Illustrissimi Signori Eredi Aga di Mathus Che Su Pubblicata il Di Primo Dicembre 1749. In Lucca MDCCXLIX Nella Stamperia di Filippo Maria Benedini Con Licenza de' Superiori," Archivio Storico della S. Congregazione de Propaganda Fide, Fondo SC (Scritture riferite nei Congressi), Armeni, vol. 11, folios 900-968.

successful Armenian gem merchants of his time.¹³⁴ Archival documents on Agha show that he was almost exclusively involved in gem trade, selling diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls, agates and many other gems in Europe, as well as sending Mediterranean coral back to India. His consignments included gems of different grades and colors, the biggest being a 233- carat diamond with a crack/fissure.¹³⁵

While research on the involvement of New Julfa Armenian mercantile network (a

¹³⁴ On the history of the Armenian church of Livorno and Livorno's Armenian community in general, see among others, *Gli Armeni a Livorno l'Intercultura di Una Diaspora, Interventi nel Convegno "Memoria e Cultura Armena Fra Livorno e l'Oriente,"* ed. G. Giacomo Panessa e Massimo Sanacore (Archivio di Stato di Livorno, 2006); Lucia Frattarelli Fischer "Les Arméniens à Livourne," in *Roma-Armenia*, ed. Claude Mutafian (Rome: De Luca, 1999), 298–302. See also idem, "Per La Storia dell'Insediamento Degli Armeni a Livorno Nel Seicento" [The History of the Settlement of Armenians in Livorno in the Seventeenth Century] in *Gli Armeni Lungo le Strade d'Italia, Atti del Convegno Internazionale* (Torino, Genova, Livorno, 8-11 March, 1997), 23- 41.

¹³⁵ From the inventory of Agha, it is not clear if the mentioned diamond was raw or polished, but it most probably was raw. Measurements of carats in the early modern period were not as accurate as they are in the present. Carat was mainly used to measure diamonds in Europe, whereas in India diamonds were usually measured by *rati*. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier mentions *rati* as a weight for measuring diamonds and pearls. In a previously unpublished and not studied trade manual, written in Armenian, the author Aghamal di Sarfraz Minasian describes *rati* as a weight for measuring pearls only. See Aghamal Khwāja Minasian, *Haghags arevtri margarti Hndstan vor vacharakank' ch 'ēvay khsep asen* [Concerning the trade of pearls (called chevay khsep by merchants) in India], Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, MS 5994. For discussion on the differences in measuring carats, as well as comparing them from one area to another see, for example, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. 2, (London: Macmillan And Co., New York, 1889.), xi-xii.

representative of which Agha was) and its activities in early global commodity trade in general has recently been on the rise,¹³⁶ scholarly literature on their engagement in the global diamond and gem trade is almost non-existent. Based on dozens of archival documents from the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, the Archive of Santa Croce Armenian Church in Venice, Museo Correr, Matenadaran in Yerevan and others, this chapter examines the fascinating story of a typical *commenda* agent, who started his career working for one of the most prominent Armenian family firms specializing in the gem trade and operating from their base in New Julfa, the Khwāja Minasian family firm. The chapter reflects on Agha’s journey of becoming a successful diamond and gem merchant residing in Venice and Livorno at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of eighteenth centuries. It sheds light on the commercial biography and the network of this important yet largely neglected merchant.

By carefully inspecting his personal and business correspondence never studied before, this chapter argues that Agha’s involvement in the diamond and gem trade in Livorno and Venice

¹³⁶ See Olivier Raveux’s recent contribution on Armenian calico printers of Constantinople in Marseille, “The Orient and the dawn of Western industrialization: Armenian calico printers from Constantinople in Marseilles (1669-1686),” in *Goods from the East, 1600-1800: Trading Eurasia*, ed. Maxine Berg with Felicia Gottman, Hanna Hodacs and Chris Nierstrasz (London: Palgrave-McMillan, 2015), 77-91; Idem “Les Arméniens et la Méditerranée, Médiateurs Techniques Entre Orient et Occident dans l’indiennage au XVIIe Siècle” in *Le Goût de l’Inde*, ed. Gérard Le Bouëdec and Brigitte Nicolas (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), 44-51; Idem, “Les Arméniens et les Transferts de Technologies Entre Orient et Occident: l’exemple de l’indiennage au XVIIe Siècle,” in *Loin de l’Ararat... Les petites Arménies d’Europe et de Méditerranée et les Arméniens de Marseille*, ed. Morel- Deledalle, Mouradian, Pozzoni-Itier (Paris: Hazan-Réunion des Musées de Marseille-MUCEM, 2007), 92-93.

gave him the opportunity of navigating through economic, political and religious worlds of Europe and Asia as a go-between. Similarly, it demonstrates that Agha's connections with the political and religious elite of the time made it possible for him to petition the monarchs and influential politicians when it came to supporting his own community of Armenians. It does so by demonstrating different instances, where specifically Agha's help was sought in solving and supporting mostly communal matters. These included but were not limited to mediating between monarchs and influential individuals of the time regarding religious matters, ships seized by corsairs, revival of a printing press and financial contributions in general.

As many other early modern Armenian New Julfan merchants, frequenting the main European port cities for their trading activities,¹³⁷ Agha too was a respectful member of his community, conducting trade of diamonds and gems for at least thirty years (1679-1709). As such, he was a go-between juggling amid two overlapping worlds of a long-distance merchant and a community leader. Go-betweens, usually acting as agents between two parties or more, were more often than not key agents in transactions happening across continents and cultures, mostly due to their mobility, but what is more important, flexibility, knowledge and mediation skills. Agha di Mat'os embodied skills of a mediator, which made it possible for him to "translate" between two parties, by connecting individuals, otherwise divided by different cultures, languages, circumstances and so on. Agha Mat'os's activities to be discussed shortly

¹³⁷ Port cities were hubs of maritime and caravan trade routes in the early modern period, therefore were more frequented by long-distance merchants, due to easiness of access and cheap transportation costs. On the connection of port cities, printers and port Armenians, see Sebouh Aslanian, "Port Cities and Printers: Reflections on Early Modern Global Armenian Print," *Book History* 17 (2014): 51-93.

also demonstrate the “symbiotic relationship” between him and the Armenian church, as very well put in his excerpt on Agha di Mat’os by Sebouh Aslanian; “Mat’os’s career also highlights the symbiotic relationship between Julfan merchants and the Armenian Church, which in the absence of a state played a vital role in maintaining the identity and smooth functioning of the Julfan trade network.”¹³⁸

The idea of early modern go-betweens and cultural brokerage has been extensively discussed in scholarly literature on the early modern period. Agha’s influence and intervention between individuals, the church and other institutions gained him the role of what Georg Simmel called a “mediator” in his seminal essay, “The Stranger.” Partially building on Alida Metcalf’s classification of early modern go-betweens, I look at Agha di Mat’os as a combination of a “transactional” and a “representational” go-between.¹³⁹ According to Metcalf “transactional” go-betweens were the “translators, negotiators and cultural brokers,” while “representational” go-betweens were interpreters between two different worlds. However, as very rightfully noted

¹³⁸ See Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: Circulation and the Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa/Isfahan, 1606-1747* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 74-75.

¹³⁹ Georg Simmel, “The Stranger,” *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. K. H. Wolff (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 145-170. Relying on Georg Simmel’s definitions of mediator and arbitrator go-betweens, Alida Metcalf creates a detailed typology of go-betweens operating between Europe and the New World in the early modern period and distinguishes three types: physical, transactional and representational. See Alida Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil: 1500-1600* (University of Texas Press, 2005), 1-15.

by Kapil Raj in his chapter, entitled “Mapping Knowledge: Go-Betweens in Calcutta, 1770-1820,” these types of go-betweens: physical, transactional and representational, were “inextricably intertwined and are very often practiced by the same individuals.”¹⁴⁰ Agha di Mat‘os’s commercial life and activities serve as a clear evidence of him being both a negotiator and a mediator between the two worlds of business and religion, as well as Europe and Safavid Iran. His interventions on behalf of the clergy of New Julfa and his hometown Tabriz before the Propaganda Fide, the Pope, and others on issues such as the emergence of missionaries in New Julfa, corsairs and other matters, clearly demonstrate Agha’s abilities of a masterful negotiator, interpreter, and a go-between.

AGHA MAT‘OS: HIS ORIGINS, FAMILY AND NETWORK

Who was Agha Mat‘os and why is he possibly important to scholars of early modern trade? In order to get some insight into his life and death, I have mostly relied on Mesrop Ughurlian’s *History of the Armenian Community of Livorno and the Building of their Church in Livorno*,¹⁴¹ who was the first to treat the history of the Livorno Armenian community in a monograph. Ughurlian was the Armenian priest of Saint Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church of Livorno during the nineteenth century. It is extremely hard to understand what specific sources Ughurlian

¹⁴⁰ Kapil Raj, “Mapping Knowledge Go-Betweens in Calcutta, 1770-1820” in Simon Schaffer, Linda Roberts, Kapil Raj, and James Delbourgo, eds., *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820* (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2009), 109.

¹⁴¹ Ughurlian, *Patmut‘iwn hayots‘*, *Ibid.*

used to write the different parts of Agha's biography, as he provides no references in his book.¹⁴² He also mentions that he made use of the Livorno Armenian Church and the Propaganda Fide Archives. Being the priest of the above-mentioned church, he certainly had access to its archive and used it extensively.

Alessandro Orenco, who has translated Ughurlian's manuscript into Italian with useful annotations, provides valuable footnotes on Agha di Mat'os and the Livorno Armenian community in general. For the purposes of writing this chapter and attempting to give a somewhat comprehensive picture of Agha and his commercial life, I have heavily relied on dozens of documents from Archivio di Stato di Firenze. These documents include hundreds of commercial letters addressed to Agha, mainly written by his master Khwāja Minas in Isfahan. Among these documents one can also find dozens of letters from the Armenian clergy addressed to Agha and other prominent merchants residing in Livorno and Venice in the second half of the seventeenth century. The Archivio di Stato di Firenze¹⁴³ documents were originally a part of the Livorno Armenian Church archive, which were sold later.

Agha Mat'os started his career working as a *commenda* agent for the Khwāja Minasian family firm, only later to become one of the most successful Armenian merchants residing in Tuscany from 1679 to 1709. Agha appears in European archives for the first time in 1679, suggesting that he first arrived in either Venice or Livorno during that year. He was 45 years old

¹⁴² According to Ughurlian, Harut'iwn Halachian was a Mkhitarist priest. However, Halachian is not listed as a Mkhitarist priest and I was not able to trace his work either.

¹⁴³ Buste 123 and 124, "Documenti Armeni," Acquisti e Doni, Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASFi).

at that point, which was a relatively old age to start a career. He was most probably already an established and a trustworthy factor and a merchant in his commercial hometown of New Julfa, where the headquarters of the Minasian family firm was at that point. Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about his activities before his travels to Italy as a *commenda* agent. It seems that before he travelled to Tuscany, he was doing business with Gujarat. The earliest document from Agha written in his own handwriting, is a legal paper drafted by him in which¹⁴⁴ he mentions that Hovanes, son of Malum owes him 600 rupees. He then specifies that Hovanes had given him a note of hand or a promissory note attesting that the latter would pay Agha's debt back upon his return from Gujarat.¹⁴⁵

Agha's travels to Tuscany were not accidental. He was a representative of the New Julfa Armenian trade network with a nodal center in New Julfa, Isfahan and four circuits stretching from Manila and Canton to the Russian Empire and Spain. New Julfa merchants predominantly functioned as *commenda* agents or circulating merchants within the New Julfan network for more than a century and a half (1604-5 up until the second half of the eighteenth century). By sustaining a consistent correspondence with their masters mostly located in New Julfa, these *commenda* agents travelled and traded their masters' goods for them. In this context, Agha was a part of an already established trade network of circulating Armenian merchants who traded in silk, spices, textiles, gems, and so on.

¹⁴⁴ ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 40.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., folio 51.

One might assume that the Minasian family firm had come up with the idea of keeping a permanent representative of their family firm in Tuscany, which would make perfect sense, as Livorno was the entrepôt of Indian diamonds and gems in the early modern period. Their almost exclusive involvement in long-distance gem trade, conducted on the route from India to the cities of Bandar Abbas, Mashhad, Khorasan, Erzurum, Diyarbakir, Izmir, Aleppo, Amsterdam, Venice, Livorno to name a few, would most probably require a permanent representative in Tuscany.

Agha Mat'os was born in 1635, as Ughurlian mentions that he was seventy-four years old when he died in 1709.¹⁴⁶ We know next to nothing about his birthplace. However, in all available sources he is called *tarvzts'i* (a resident of Tabriz), which in the case of New Julfans usually identified their birthplace. Sources calling him a *tarvzts'i* lead to two options: that he was from Tabriz city or the Tabriz quarter in New Julfa, Isfahan. There are a number of letters in the Firenze Archives addressed to Agha di Mat'os asking for his help to support a person or for various favors for the city of Tabriz. For example, in one of the earliest letters that we have of him from that archive, which is dated 6 July 1685¹⁴⁷ Isahak, the Vicar of St. Thaddeus

¹⁴⁶ Orenco confirms the date of the death of Agha di Mat'os, based on a document from the Archiepiscopal Archives of Pisa. For more details see his note on page 79. Agonts', *Ashkharagrut'iw n chorits' masants'*, 39-41.

¹⁴⁷ Letter from Isahak, the Vicar of St. Thaddeus Monastery to Agha di Mat'os, ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, "Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 1, 1-38," document dated July 6, 1685. From here on, where documents have no numbers assigned to them by the archives, I briefly state their date and the specific

Monastery¹⁴⁸ in Iran writes to Agha di Mat‘os asking for his help to support a priest named Khachik from Tabriz (the city), as well as contribute to the newly renovated St. Thaddeus Monastery. Thus, Tabriz and its inhabitants were one of the reasons Agha received earnestly letters with financial requests. There is a possibility that Isahak Vardapet or Sahak Makvets‘i asked for Agha di Mat‘os’s help, considering that Agha and Khachik were compatriots from the same city. Finally, in the above-mentioned court proceedings from 1749, kept at the Propaganda Fide, it is mentioned that Agha was from the city of Tabriz in the ancient region of Media, present day Persia.¹⁴⁹

In the inscription from his tombstone one reads Agha di Mat‘os’s full name, “Agha di Mat‘os Astvatsatur Paron from the Armenian family of Oghlankeshishian princes stretching from Caucasian Albania to the Caspian Sea.”¹⁵⁰ In a passage from Arak‘el Davrizhets‘i’s *Book of*

folder they are stored in. See more letters from the same Vicar to Agha with different requests from July 14, 1685, March 7 and May 27, 1688 in the same folder.

¹⁴⁸ Sahak Makvets‘i was the Vicar of St. Thaddeus Monastery in Maku, in the Province of Azerbaijan situated very close to Tabriz.

¹⁴⁹ “Sig. Barone Diodato Agà di Mathus Oglanckescis della Città di Tauris nell’ antica Media, oggidì del Regno di Persia de’ Principi dell’ Albania Ircania &c. al Mar Caspio.” See “Osservazioni Di Fatto Del Dottore Jacopo Ciocca...,” folio 941.

¹⁵⁰ Ughurlian’s version of the inscription of Agha’s tombstone has a typo in the word թարվեզոյ (from Tabriz), which is instead written թափվեցոյ (this word has no meaning): Agonts also cites Agha’s tombstone inscription in all three languages, including Armenian, Italian and Latin. The Armenian version indeed says թարվեզոյ: «Այս է դամբարան թարվեզոյ Պարոն Աղային Ի զարմէ իշխանաց Աղուանից Օղլան քեշիշեանց Քեղեցկաշէն տանարիս կառուցողի Որ փոխեցաւ ի մահուանէ ի կեանս ի Թուականիս

Histories, where Davrizhets‘i discusses some Armenian families in Eastern Armenia in the beginning of the seventeenth century. According to him, being tired of the oppressions of the Ottoman Empire and as a result losing their property, these Armenian families took decisive steps against the Ottomans. They specifically sought to gain the favor of Iranians in the Ottoman-Safavid conflict and later on moved to Safavid Iran, seeking and eventually receiving the patronage of Shah ‘Abbas I. According to Davrizhets‘i, some Armenians from the “land of Albania,” such as Sarukhan Bek and his brother Nazar from Voskanapat village, Oghlan Keshish and his brother Ghalabek from Haterk‘ village, etc., as well as four entire villages fled to Iran and the Safavid Shah ‘Abbas accommodated them in Isfahan. The reasons for the flight of these Armenians from Dizak and Dasht were the heavy burden of taxes, oppressions, robbery, brutality and the cruel killings of Christians. Thus, according to Arak‘el Davrizhets‘i, Oghlan Keshish and his brother moved from Haterk‘ village in Gharabagh to Isfahan and enjoyed the

հայոց ՌՃԾԸ սեպտեմբերի Գ. Իսկ յամի հասակի իւրոյ եօթանասուն և չորս»: See Agont‘ s. Ibid., 40-41. The inscription on Agha’s tomb clearly states that he was from the family of Oghlank‘eshisheans, princes (or *melik’s*) from Caucasian Albania, which in this period was a toponym used for Karabagh. I found evidence from tombstones of Haterk‘ village, where Ghalabek’s name is inscribed on one of the tombstones of the village cemetery from 1611. There is a possibility that Ghalabek had returned back to Haterk‘ after leaving for Isfahan, while his brother and his family stayed in Iran. See Sedrak Barkhudaryan, *Divan hay vimagrut‘yan [Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum]* (Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Republic of Armenia, Institute of Archeology and Ethnography, 1982), Vol. 5, 131. Orengo does not elaborate on the roots of Agha di Mat‘os. See Mesrop Owl'owrlean, *Storia Della Colonia Armena di Livorno e Della Construzione Della Sua Chiesa. Presentazione, Traduzione e Note Alessandro Orengo* (Livorno: 1990), 72-78, 80, 85, 90.

Shah's patronage later on.¹⁵¹

Even if we assume that Agha was originally from Tabriz quarter in New Julfa, his family lived in Tabriz at the time he worked as Minasian family firm's representative in Tuscany. Agha di Mat'os had a son and a daughter, named Hovhannes¹⁵² and Lucia (or Ēztikhan in some archival documents) respectively. His daughter Lucia was married in Tabriz to a man named Aslan Hakobian. His son Hovhannes was a student at the Collegio Urbano in Rome. Ughurlian gives no information on his wife, other than assuming that she had passed away before Agha travelled to Tuscany.¹⁵³ However, in one of the documents written by Agha's daughter, kept at the Florence State Archives, she mentions that she has left her daughter Hrip'sime with her mother Sarah at their house in Tabriz.¹⁵⁴ Another document from the same year, written by Agha's son-in-law, again mentions that he has left his house back in Tabriz and that his mother-in-law Sarah and his daughter are staying there. In both these documents, Agha's daughter and his son-in-law mention the exact location of their house in Tabriz. It was located in the district of Sanjaran, in the back of the Haji Bairam caravanserai.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Arak'el Davrizhets'i, *Girk' patmut'eants' [Book of Histories]*. (Vagharshapat, 1884), 17.

¹⁵² According to Agonts', Hovhannes was Agha's son from a different woman. See Agonts', *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁵³ Ughurlian, *Patmut'iwn hayots'*, 86.

¹⁵⁴ Sarah's name is mentioned in two documents dated May 23 and June 2, 1722, ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, "Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 2, 39-77."

¹⁵⁵ «Պատճառ գրոյս այսէ, որ ես թարվիզցի Յակոբի մակ անուն Կարապետի որդի Ասլանս ես մին դուստր ունեմ անունն Հոիվսիմայ Թարվիզ իմ մուլք տանն իմ զոքանչ Սառային հետ նստած իմ Ասլանիս

LIVORNO AS A CENTER FOR DIAMOND AND GEM TRADE: ARMENIAN MERCHANTS IN LIVORNO

Before beginning the discussion of Agha di Mat'os's activities as a gem merchant in Tuscany, let us take a short look at what attracted Armenian gem merchants in general and Agha di Mat'os in particular to the port city of Livorno and to a lesser extent to Venice, both of which were frequented by Agha. Venice was traditionally the most important silk trade center in the early modern Europe, and Julfan Armenians had started frequenting it from the second half of the sixteenth century. Venice was also the city, where the famous Shehrimanian or Sceriman family resided and traded.¹⁵⁶ Livorno was arguably one of the most important centers for the early

Թարվիզ եղևալ տունն, որէ Թարվիզ Սաննարան մահլումն, որէ Հանի Պայրամի քարվանսարին յետկուսն»: «The reason I am writing this [document] is that I, Aslan, son of Hakob from the family of Karapet [?], have a daughter named Hrip'sime, who is living with my mother-in-law Sarah at the house that I own in Tabriz, which is located in the Sanjaran district of Tabriz, which is behind the Haji Bairam caravanserai.” See the document dated May 23, 1722 in ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, “Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 2, 39-77.

¹⁵⁶ For discussion on early modern Venice Armenian community see Aslanian, *Ibid*, 70-71. Shehrimanian or the Sceriman family was considerably involved in diamond and gem trade at the same time with the Minasian family firm. Most recently Evelyn Korsch dedicated her chapter in an edited volume to the involvement of the Shehrimanian family in the cross-cultural trade of gems, where by looking at archival documents from mainly the State Archives of Padova and Livorno, she reflects on the importance of the famous Catholic family of Scerimans in Venice and Livorno gem trade. She emphasizes their long-lasting business relations with Sephardic families, based in Livorno, thus preparing the ground for further research into the commercial activities of Scerimans in the gemstone trade, as well as the research into the partnerships that Armenian merchants established with their counterparts outside of their trade

modern coral and diamond exchange trade¹⁵⁷ starting from the seventeenth century. It was the perfect spot on the routes of diamond and coral trade stretching from India to the Mediterranean and vice versa. European merchants sold diamonds from India in return for corals fished from the Mediterranean. In fact, coral, along with silver, was one of the main and few commodities that Asia was interested in getting from Europe.¹⁵⁸ It was mainly used in traditional jewelry in India and was thus an important constituent in the diamond and coral commodity exchange chain. According to Francesca Trivellato, who wrote an insightful chapter on the exchange of Mediterranean coral and Indian diamonds,¹⁵⁹ beginning from the mid-seventeenth century Livorno was a world center for coral trade and manufacturing. According to her, Livorno coral manufacturing was dominated by Jews and to a lesser extent by Armenians.¹⁶⁰ It was also

network. See Evelyn Korsch, “The Scerimans and Cross-Cultural Trade in Gems: The Armenian Diaspora in Venice and Its Trading Networks in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century” in *Commercial Networks and European Cities, 1400–1800*, ed. Andrea Caracausi and Christof Jeggle (Routledge, 2014), 223-239, 293-298. Also, see Claudia Bonardi, “Gli Sceriman di Venezia da Mercanti a Possidenti,” in *Ad Limina Italiae, In Viaggio per l’Italia Con Mercanti e Monaci Armeni*, a Cura di Boghos Levon Zekiyan (Padova, 1996), 229-250.

¹⁵⁷ On this topic, see Gedalia Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral: Anglo-Dutch Jews and Eighteenth-Century Trade* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978); Francesca Trivellato, *Ibid*, 224-250.

¹⁵⁸ Francesca Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 225-226.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 224-250.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 230.

Livorno's main and major export industry in the early modern period.¹⁶¹

Livorno, however, could hardly be called a center for diamond cutting. The main reason that Livorno was particularly attractive to the two very important trade networks involved in or connected to the diamond trade such as that of the Jews and Armenians, was the fact that in 1591 and 1593 (partially amended version), Ferdinand I, the Grand Duke of Tuscany wrote a letter of invitation (collectively called *livornine*)¹⁶² offering foreign merchants to settle in the tax-free port of Livorno. Armenians too, along with Jews, Greeks, Turks, Persians and others were mentioned among these merchants. It was a decree which provided economic, and religious liberties and flexibility to the immigrants mentioned above. Finally, Livorno was a central node in the circuit of diamond-coral exchange trade and was presumably attractive to any diamond merchant who had the aim of selling diamonds and taking coral beads back to India.

Armenian gem merchants had started frequenting the port of Livorno since the early seventeenth century. For example, we know about at least two Armenians, most probably Julfans, Murad and Marco, who arrived in Livorno in 1623 with the intention of selling the 35

¹⁶¹ See Corey Tazzara, *The Free Port of Livorno and the Transformation of the Mediterranean World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 70.

¹⁶² See the Armenian translation made by Ughurlian, *Patmut 'iwn hayots'*, 253-255. Already between 1551 and 1563 charters were issued by the Tuscan authorities, inviting the mercantile communities from the Eastern Mediterranean to trade in Tuscany. These charters or letters of invitation, though, did not result in a great influx of merchants to Tuscany. See Trivellato, *Ibid.*, 51 and note 23, 74-77.

raw diamonds they had brought with them.¹⁶³ As opposed to Murad and Marco, when Agha di Mat'os arrived in Livorno presumably in 1679, as mentioned before, he was a part of an established community of Armenian merchants, albeit small, who served Agha as a platform and a starting point in building his own mercantile career.

AGHA DI MAT'OS'S TRADING AND COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES IN LIVORNO

After settling down in Livorno, Agha Mat'os was busy selling the bulk of goods sent to him by dozens of factors¹⁶⁴ of the Minasian family firm over the span of fifteen years. Arguably the earliest and the most important archival source that sheds considerable light on his and the Minasian family firm's professional activities in diamond and gem trade after Agha arrived in

¹⁶³ See Guillaume Calafat's article on these two Armenian merchants and cross-diasporic relations, Guillaume Calafat, "Osmanlı-Speaking Diasporas: Cross-Diasporic Relations and Intercommunity Trust between Marseilles, Tunis and Livorno (1600-1650)," in *Union in Separation: Diasporic Groups and Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean (1100-1800)*, ed. Georg Christ, Franz-Julius Morche, Roberto Zaugg Wolfgang Kaiser, Stefan Burkhardt, Alexander D. Beihammer (Paris: Musée National de la Marine/ P. Dantec, 2015), 615. See also Stephanie Nadalo's dissertation, entitled *Constructing Pluralism in Seventeenth Century Livorno: Managing Religious Minorities in a Mediterranean Free Port (1537-1737)* (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2013), 276.

¹⁶⁴ Here is the list of agents of the Minasian family firm that are mentioned in Minas's accounting ledger: Tēr Galuts', Aghamal, Petros, Mēlk'um (Agha's brother), Dashtets'i Gaspar, Zak'arē, Chgnavor Hērapet, Husep', son of Simon, K'or Khachik, Vanjeli, Vardapet, Galuts' from Yerevan (Mēlk'um's son), Aghajan, Hakob, Mik'ayel Vardapet, Hakob, son of Grigor from Hin Yerevan, Margar, Poghos, son of Mēlk'um, Ts'atur, Ēdgar, Mirza, Hakobjan, Gaspar, Ohan, Husep' from Dasht, Jlaw, Simon, Jlut' from Yerevan, Nazar, Simon, son of Tēr Margarē, Aghamal, son of Dawut, Amirveli.

Livorno, is a brown leather-bound book kept under the number P.D. 66.c in the Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di Venezia,¹⁶⁵ called *tomar*¹⁶⁶ in New Julfan dialect (literally meaning a roll). This ledger belongs to Khwāja Minas di Panos¹⁶⁷ from the Minasian family firm and is at the same time a contract between him and his *commenda* agent Agha di Mat‘os. *Tomar* or the accounting ledger, dated 1679, contains inventory of commodities, such as different textiles, musk and spices, but mostly white and yellow diamonds, turquoise, pearls, lazurite,¹⁶⁸ rubies, emeralds, etc., that Agha di Mat‘os and another almost three dozen agents were supposed to sell in Izmir, Istanbul, Isfahan and then in *Frankstan* (Europe), more specifically Venice and Livorno. This *tomar* contains information about the cities in which Agha di Mat‘os and the other agents involved traded between 1679 and 1693, thus giving one a hint of a possible typical trade route of an Armenian diamond merchant and demonstrating the extent of long distances covered by early-modern Armenian merchants along with detailed information on the financial transactions recorded by Khwāja Minas himself.

As mentioned earlier, because an earlier source of Agha’s activities in Tuscany and Venice

¹⁶⁵ I would like to thank my adviser Dr. Sebouh Aslanian for his generosity in providing me the digital copy of this precious accounting ledger.

¹⁶⁶ See Sebouh Aslanian’s discussion on the term *tomar* and this specific *ledger* in Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 131-136.

¹⁶⁷ See Aslanian’s discussion of the Khwāja Minasian Family Firm, *Ibid*, 159-164.

¹⁶⁸ A deep blue gemstone, also known as *lapis Lazuli*.

is not available to us, I assume that 1679 was the first year of his stay there. Arriving in Livorno at the age of 44 years, Agha presumably had left his wife and children in Tabriz. He lived in Livorno for exactly 30 years, during which his family most probably never visited him. It is clear from the accounting ledger that Agha di Mat'os was the main go-to person or the only permanent representative of the Minasian family firm in Tuscany, to receive all the goods sent to him from Iran via Istanbul, Izmir and other cities, transferred by agents of the Minasian family firm, including Agha di Mat'os's brother Mēlk'um, Agha Mat'os's brother's son Galuts' (who appears to be delivering goods at one instance to Tabriz) and many others.¹⁶⁹ As a result of his long-time involvement in the diamond and gem trade between northern Italy and India, Agha di Mat'os became one of the most influential Armenian merchants in Livorno, which after Venice was arguably the next most important trading settlement of the Julfan-Armenian mercantile network in Italy during the early modern period.

The accounting ledger of Khwāja Minas consists of forty mercantile transactions between the commenda agent, in this case Agha di Mat'os and the “master” or “*āgā*”¹⁷⁰ in Julfa, Khwāja Minas di Panos. Types of the diamonds he describes in the ledger are of different grades and colors, mostly white but also yellow. In some cases, it is specifically mentioned that these are

¹⁶⁹ Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di Venezia, P.D. 66.c, folio 3. On Melk'um di Mat'os see footnote 110 in Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean...*, 285.

¹⁷⁰ Julfans usually used this word to describe the master or the commissioner of the *commenda* agents. “Mongolian title, essentially meaning “elder brother” and by extension “senior member of the family.”” See D. O. Morgan, “AQA,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2012, available at <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/aqa-or-aca> (accessed on 10 August 2020).

uncut and unpolished. Here is the almost complete list of commodities listed in the ledger, which clearly demonstrates that gems and diamonds were the majority of the consignments. Among gems that are listed one can find turquoise, rubies, pearls, diamonds, agate, lazurite, crystals, pearl beads. Covers and bedspreads made from different textiles, including woolen, as well as embroidered and decorative textiles, mainly from South East Asia, rhubarb, musk, silk, cardamom, lima wood, cotton from Gujarat, etc. were also a part of his inventory. The biggest batches of gems in Agha's inventory were diamonds (10,573 units), pearls, as well as turquoise (43,500 units) and other commodities.¹⁷¹

Agha di Mat'os was not the only person involved in implementing the terms and conditions of his and Khwāja Minas's contract. There were apparently over thirty agents or couriers involved in the trading agreement between Agha di Mat'os and Khwāja Minas. These agents and couriers, as seen from the ledger, carry bulk goods to be delivered to Agha to his final destination in Venice. It seems that Agha di Mat'os was not travelling during these years covered in the accounting ledger.

From the little known about Agha's trading activities locally, it seems that he worked with Italians and others locally. Marcara Gilapchan, who was the Livornese Armenian community leader until he died in 1701¹⁷² when his responsibilities were transferred to Agha, appeared to

¹⁷¹ Some of Agha's consignments of turquoise came from Nishapur, which was praised to be the most valuable source of good quality turquoise. Nishapur mines were under imperial control. See Arash Khazeni, *Sky Blue Stone: The Turquoise Trade in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), p. 39.

¹⁷² Ughurlian, *Patmut' iwn hayots'*, 80.

work with Agha on some mercantile transactions. There are a number of business letters addressed to Agha di Mat'os or Margara Gilapchan from a certain Francesco Leoncini, who seemed to be residing in Florence and sometimes at Pratolino.¹⁷³ These letters contain information on different transactions of selling jewelry and gems to third party individuals, where Leoncini was the middleman, while Agha and Margara were the main suppliers of those jewels. In one of the letters, for example, dated 1695, Francesco Leoncini assured Agha and Margara that even though he was in Pratolino (albeit being in Florence), that fact would not affect their business dealings, such as sending the money to Agha and Margara on time and so on. Among the gems and jewels discussed in these letters are pearls, a gold and diamond ring and so on.¹⁷⁴

Based on the primary sources available to me, it is apparent from Agha's trading activities internationally and locally, that Agha was gradually establishing himself as a gem merchant in Tuscany. Already around early 1680s Agha di Mat'os was successfully trading in Tuscany, the Ottoman Empire, Southeast Asia, and beyond. Most probably due to his mercantile connections and trading activities, Agha di Mat'os, starting from early 1680s, received dozens of letters with various requests. For the purposes of demonstrating Agha's "symbiotic" life, and

¹⁷³ Villa di Pratolino was a patrician villa in Tuscany, Italy, built by the Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici in mid- sixteenth century. See Smith Webster, "Pratolino," in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Dec., 1961), 155-168.

¹⁷⁴ See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folios 35-38.

his “eloquent, zealous, opulent and illustrious”¹⁷⁵ character, I will here focus on six different instances, where Agha di Mat‘os’s help was sought by his fellow compatriots from Safavid Iran. Most of these letters are kept at in the same *Acquisti e Doni* folders of the Florence State Archives and some of them suggest that Agha had certain liberties when it came to negotiating with officials and even the European monarchs of the time. In one of the letters found among the archival documents of Venice Armenian Church of Santa Croce, for instance, there is a letter addressed to Astuatsatur¹⁷⁶ in Marseille from Izmir, written by Mat‘os di Apro Çelebi in 1691. In the letter addressed to priest Astuatsatur, who also happened to be a relative of the late

¹⁷⁵ These are the words Agonts‘ uses to describe Agha. «Այս Աղա տէ Մաթօսի՝ էր նարտարարան, արինախանձ, մեծատուն և մեծամուն...»: See Agonts‘, *Ashkharagrut‘iwn chorits‘ masants‘*, 40.

¹⁷⁶ We do not have sufficient information about Astuatsatur and I thank my adviser Professor Sebouh Aslanian for providing me with his valuable findings on this interesting character through personal correspondence. According to Aslanian, Astuatsatur, who was a priest, died in 1728 and was mostly residing with Marcara Shehrimanian from the Sceriman family. As the majority of the letters available to us and addressed to Astuatsatur mention the addressee as Priest Astuatsaur from Scerimans, he might be confused for a member of the Sceriman family. He was hosted by the Mkhitarist Abbot as a guest on the island of San Lazzaro in 1722. It is also known that according to his own will, which is kept at San Lazzaro, Astuatsatur left his wealth to the clergymen of the San Lazzaro Island. In 1695, he was in Venice (see the letter written from Agha Mat‘os to Astuatsatur on December 23rd, 1695 in Busta 2A, The Archives of the Armenian Church of Santa Croce in Venice). It seems that Astuatsatur was very often a mediator between New Julfa, as well as Izmir, Venice and Livorno, when it came to selling gems and other goods. We see instances, where he is contacted by Agha di Mat‘os, as well as other merchants such as Mat‘os di Apro Çelebi and others.

Raphael de Ruply,¹⁷⁷ another famous diamond and gem merchant in Marseilles, Mat'os di Chelebi referred to a commercial vessel headed from Izmir to Venice. Astuatsatur, according to the letter, had loaded two shipments of wool yarn on the vessel commanded by captain Piaggio Piazzini. On its way to Venice the ship was seized by the French corsairs. The vessel itself was taken to Toulon in France and Astuatsatur was inquiring whether Agha di Mat'os or Astuatsatur could mediate with the King (in this case Louis XIV), by petitioning in front of him for getting the Armenian cargo back. Mat'os's request was based on rumors that the French corsairs were

¹⁷⁷ Ruply was a diamond merchant born in New Julfa in the seventeenth century, who had moved to Smyrna and Aleppo for several years before traveling to his final destination in Livorno, which was a common residence of choice for European diamond and gem merchants in the early modern period. Ruply travelled to Marseille for business dealings that mainly had to do with selling diamonds and gems. The *factum* or printed legal brief containing the story of Ruply's life was written by himself and presented at his trial in Paris after he was robbed of his diamonds by the customs official in Marseille in 1675. For more information on Ruply, see Sebouh Aslanian's paper, "Mijmayrt'samakayin kent'sagh mē. Fransakan Arewela-hndakakan ēnkerut'yan tnoren Martiros Margaray Awagshent'si hamashkharhayin manrapatmutiwne (Global Microhistory) (1666-1688) [A Life Lived Across Continents: A Global Microhistory of Marcara Avachintz, an Armenian Director of Compagnie des Indes Orientales, 1666-1688], *Handēs Amsorya* (2016): 147-272; idem, Une vie sur plusieurs continents: Microhistoire global d'un agent arménien de la compagnie des Indes orientales, 1666-1688," *Annales: Histoire, Science Sociales* 73, 1 (2018): 28-30. For more about Ruply and his case, see *Memoires Servans a L'éclaircissement des Faits Inserez en la Plainte Presentée a Sa Majesté par Le Sieur Raphael Ruply Negociant Armenien de la Ville d'Hispanhan, Demandeur & Accusateur* in "Nouvelle Requête du Sieur Ruply, avec la Réponse du Sieur Martinon et les Réplique Dudit Ruply, dont Nosseigneurs les Commissaires sont très Humblement Suppliés de Vouloir Prendre," Bibliothèque Nationale de France, FOL-FM-14859. I thank my adviser Dr. Aslanian for providing me the digital copy of this *factum*.

giving back the cargos of Armenian merchants.¹⁷⁸

Incidents with captures of ships were not unusual for the Mediterranean of this period. On 25 October 1695, Archbishop Hovhannes of Jerusalem wrote a letter to the prominent merchants residing in Livorno, including Sark'is Chelebi, Agha di Mat'os and Margar's son Gilapchan. In his letter, he elaborated on the capture of a ship¹⁷⁹ with Armenian and Greek pilgrims on board of it, who were sailing from Constantinople to Jerusalem for their annual pilgrimage.¹⁸⁰ In his long letter, Hovhannes complained about the rigid financial situation the Holy See of Jerusalem was in because of pressing creditors. The reason for financial hardships was as follows: the blessed people of Constantinople and its neighboring provinces of Tekirdağ (Rodosto), Malkara, Gallipoli and others gathered in Constantinople annually to leave for Jerusalem, while their monetary contributions would make the expenses of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem lighter. According to Archbishop Hovhannes, there were 200 Armenians, including bishops,

¹⁷⁸ Margar di Gilapchan was also asked to support the Holy See of Jerusalem regarding the capture of the ship by French corsairs. See Archbishop Hovhannes's letter to Marcara Gilapchan, 26 October, 1695, ASFi, Acquisti e Doni, 123, "Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 1, 1-38."

¹⁷⁹ The name of the vessel was "Jerusalem." See the letter written by the Archbishop of Jerusalem, Hovhannes, to the prominent merchants of Venice and Livorno, no date, ASFi, Acquisti e Doni, 123, "Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 1, 1-38."

¹⁸⁰ This ship had left the port of Constantinople on the first day of September 1695 under the captainship of Haji Kireak'. In spite of the cannon warning, given by the Ottoman authorities near the island of Chios, the captain proceeded, which resulted in the French corsairs capturing the ship. See Tigran H.T. Sawalaneants, *Patmut'iw'n Yerusaghemi [History of Jerusalem]*, Vol. II, Jerusalem, 1931, 649-650.

priests, monks, elderly men and women, children, along with 30 Greeks, 5 Jews and 3 others¹⁸¹ who freighted the vessel “Jerusalem” built and belonging to the late Anton Çelebi¹⁸² to go on a pilgrimage. This ship was seized by the French corsairs¹⁸³ navigating around the strait of Susam

¹⁸¹ See the letter written by Poghos Archbishop Amasiats'i to the Doge of Venice and the prominent merchants of Venice and Livorno, including Gilapchan and Agha di Mat'os. See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” 123, “Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 1, 1-38.

¹⁸² Anton Celebi was the Governor of Bursa and the tax collector of Izmir sometime around mid-1600s, who at some point had to flee to Livorno because of being threatened to be killed by the Sultan. After arriving in Livorno, he opened a Turkish bath, owned six ships, sailing between Izmir or Alesandretta and Livorno twice a year. According to Fratarellis's article on Armenians in Livorno, Çelebi was a very important shipowner in the small Tuscan fleet. For more information on this interesting merchant and official, see Aslanian's footnote; Aslanian, *Ibid*, pp. 261-2. On the available information about Anton Çelebi, see Daniele Pesciagini, “Il “Celebi” del Bagno Turco,” in *Gli Armeni Lungo le Strade d'Italia*, ed. edited by Claudia Bonardi (Pisa-Roma, Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1998), 73- 101; Marcus Köhlbach, “Hasan Aga und Andon Celebi,” *Handēs Amsoreay*, N 94, 1980, SS. 27-34. Other than the scarce secondary literature available on Anton Çelebi, there is a long description of Anton's life available in the *Memoires of Chevalier d'Arvieux*. See *Memoires du Chevalier d'Arvieux, Envoye' Extraordinaire du Roy à la Porte, Consul d'Alep, d'Alger, de Tripoli, & Autres Echelles du Levant, Ses Voyages à Constantinople, dans l'Asie, la Syrie, la Palestine, l'Egypte, & la Barbarie, la Description de Ces Païs, les Religions, les Moeurs, les Coûtumes, le Négoce de ces Perples, & leurs Gouvernemens, l'Histoire Naturelle & les Événemens les Plus Considerables, Recüeillis de Ses Memoires Originaux, & Mis en Ordre Avec des Réflexions*. Tome Premier (Paris, 1735), 95-100.

¹⁸³ There is an interesting letter from the Prelate of Holy Covenant of Bjni, Reverend Mesrop, written in 1705 about another capture of a ship in 1685 with Armenian pilgrims on it. Twenty years later, Mesrop was asking Agha di Mat'os, if the latter could help him get back all the books that he lost to the corsairs:

and the pilgrims were all robbed and pushed away onto an island naked and starving for four days.¹⁸⁴ The desperate condition of some of the pilgrims who made it to Jerusalem and their well-being was another reason for Hovhannes's letter. Unfortunately, the archives are silent about the aftermath of Hovhannes's request and if Agha di Mat'os and his colleagues fulfilled his wishes and supported the Patriarchate.

On another instance, such as in a letter dating back to 1686, sent from Vardapet Step'anos

psalms, Old Testaments, almanacs, history books and so on, which he had acquired with greatest difficulties. Taking Agha's "renowned" reputation and the fact that he was "capable and powerful" into consideration, Mesrop was asking Agha to help him acquire those books. See Reverend Mesrop's letter to Agha di Mattus, written in documents 046-047. On the capture of this specific ship mentioned in the letter and another one again carrying Armenian and other pilgrims during the same period and captured by Barbary corsairs, see Merujan Karapetyan's article on Armenian pilgrims and pirates in the early modern period, Meruzhan Karapetean, "Hay ukhtawornere ew mijerkratsovean tsovahenuitiwne ZHE dari verjin" (Armenian Pilgrims and the Mediterranean Piracy at the End of the Seventeenth Century), *Handēs Amsorea* (1999): 441-468. The incident with around 200 Armenian pilgrims being seized by the Mediterranean corsairs in 1695 is widespread in scholarly, as well as literary literature. The incident with Armenian pilgrims on the vessel captured by corsairs was so well known at the time, that it even served as a plot to an early modern poem by a woman witness. See Gaohar, "Gangat unim," in *Ush mijnadari hay banasteghtsutyune*, volume 2, 600-604.

¹⁸⁴ See multiple letters from See ASFi, Acquisti e Doni, 123, "Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 1, 1-38" from the Archbishop Poghos of Amasia to the Doge of Venice and Armenian merchants of (no date); from Archbishop of Jerusalem Ter Hovhannes to Agha di Mat'os and other Armenian merchants in Venice and Livorno (no date); from Archbishop Hovhannes, Prelate of Saint Ējmiatsin to Gilapkhan and other Armenian merchants in Livorno (October 26, 1695); from Priest Poghos of Jerusalem to Agha (January 1697); from Archbishop Kirakos, Prelate of Izmir to Agha and other merchants (October 1698).

Jughayets‘i,¹⁸⁵ addressed to prominent Julfan Armenian merchants of Venice, where along with other names one also finds Agha’s name, he is asked to support the reactivation of the New Julfa printing press after its establishment in 1636 by Khachatur Kesarats‘i.¹⁸⁶ The patriarch of New Julfa, Step‘anos Jughayets‘i (1684-1696) specifically asks him to buy and send paper, technical equipment, engravings and other necessities for the reopening of the printing press.¹⁸⁷

The support of the printing press in New Julfa was immediately connected to the emergence

¹⁸⁵ See three letters addressed to prominent Armenian merchants in Venice and Livorno written by Step‘anos Jughayets‘i at the Firenze State Archives, Acquisti e Doni, 123, “Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 1, 1-38” dated 27 September, 1686, 20 November, 1687, and 24 April, 1690 accordingly.

¹⁸⁶ For an excellent essay on Armenian printing in the Safavid Iran, see Sebouh D. Aslanian, “The Early Arrival of Print in Safavid Iran: New Light on the First Armenian Printing Press in New Julfa, Isfahan (1636–1650, 1686– 1693),” *Handēs Amsorya* (Vienna/Yerevan: 2014a), p. 381-468. Especially interesting is the document from November 20, 1687 (ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” 123, “Documenti Armeni, Inserto No. 1, 1-38,” ASFi) where Step‘anos Jughayets‘i mentions that the merchants need to take action in supporting the printing press in Iran, as the European countries take pride in printing. «...քանզի հասարակ եւ ընթանուր ֆռանկաց երկիրներդ դովաւ այսինքն տպով պարծի շինի...»: “...because all European countries take pride in it, that is to say in printing...”

¹⁸⁷ See “Documenti Armeni,” Acquisti e Doni, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Busta 123, 011. This and the following letters discussed below were first addressed, albeit briefly, in an excellent study by Meruzhan Karapetyan and Elizabet‘ T‘ajiryan, “Ējer XVII dari verji nor Jughayi patmut‘yunits” [Pages from the late seventeenth-century history of New Julfa]. *Banber Yerevani hamalsarani hasarakakan gitut‘yunner* 2, 95 (1998): 80-96) where the authors base their study on copies of this and other letters stored in the ASFi collection kept in a manuscript at San Lazzaro (Venice).

and prevention of the missionary activities in Isfahan and Safavid Iran in general. Agha di Mat'os appears among the influential merchants and representatives of the Livornese and Venetian Armenian communities, who is being addressed and sought help for fighting against the missionaries in New Julfa under at the time Archbishop Step'anos Jughayet'si's pontificate. Step'anos Jughayet'si's pontificate was distinguished by his strong anti-Catholic activities. Step'anos had started a vehement campaign against the *Propaganda Fide* missionaries in New Julfa since the early 1680s.¹⁸⁸ In the light of this, Agha di Mat'os's name appears very often in the correspondence between Step'anos Jughayet'si and four bishops who worked with him, Mikayel, Alexander, Movses and David, and the prominent merchants of Venice and Livorno, as well as in letters sent to the *Propaganda Fide*.

In a letter written in 1698 and addressed to Agha di Mat'os, bishops Michael, David and Moses kindly request from him to ask around among the great men of the time, as well as to mediate before them to try to ease the missionary activities in New Julfa, including double baptisms, burials, among other things, which was absolutely unacceptable to the Armenian Church of New Julfa. In another letter from 1700, written in Italian, these three bishops appear again (this is most probably a translation or the summary of the same lengthy letter in Armenian mentioned above). It specifically says, "Mr. Agha, hence we ask from you that you inquire among the local

¹⁸⁸ For a detailed overview of missionary activities in New Julfa, as well as for the list of requests sent to Agha di Mat'os on this and other matters, based on the Propaganda Fide archives, see Meruzhan Karapetyan and Elizabet' T'ajiryan, *Ibid.* On Step'anos Jughayets'i and his anti-Catholic campaigns, see for example Vazken Ghougassian, *The Emergence of the Armenian Diocese in New Julfa in the Seventeenth Century* (Atlanta Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998); idem, "Step'anos Katoghikos Jughayets'i" in *Hask hayagitakan Handēs*, New Season, Vols II- III (1981-1982).

prominent and rich people, if an Armenian bishop or a priest came amongst you, built a church, ravished your people, rebaptized your infants, buried your dead, freed your excommunicated, married your under-age without your permission, would you accept that? If yes, then we also can bear these injustices. We know that it is impossible that you would accept it, hence we ask from you that you find another way and think about it, so that our dismay comes to an end and love rules.”¹⁸⁹

These requests partially coincided with Agha’s trip to Venice in order to get a permission for the building of the Livorno Armenian Church. One can only guess as to how Agha would respond to supporting and therefore petitioning in front of the *Propaganda Fide* to ease the missionary activities in New Julfa and at the same time getting an important permission for the church he had envisioned to build. Nevertheless, Agha delivered Step‘anos’s letters to the Propaganda Fide, as that is exactly where they ended up and are kept today.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ «Պարոն Աղա[յ], գայս խնդրեմք ի քէն, որ տեղոյդ մեծամեծացն հարցումն առնես, թէ մեկ հայոց եպիսկոպոս կամ վարդապետ, կամ քահանայ գայ ձեր մէջն, առանց ձեր մասլահաթին, եկեղեցի շինէ եւ զձեր ժողովուրդքն յափշտակէ ի ձէնջ եւ զձեր մկրտեալն կրկին մկրտէ եւ զձեր մեռեալն ինքն թաղէ եւ զձեր բանադրեալն արձակէ եւ չհասի հրաման տայ, ձեզ դիւրութիւն կու թուի եւ դաբուլ կ'անէք. յերբ պատասխանեն թէ այո', ապա թէ մեք այլ կարեմք սոցա անիրաւ արարմանցն տանել. գիտեմք, որ անկարելի է, թէ դաբուլ անեն, վասնորոյ խնդրեմք, որ մեզ այլ մէկ նար տեսնուն եւ սոցա ֆիքրն անեն, որ մեր միջին գայթակողութիւնն բառնուի եւ սէրն հաստատի»: See Karapetyan and T‘ajiryan, *Ibid*, 96.

¹⁹⁰ Signed most probably by Agha di Mat‘os on the right margin, this letter is kept at the Propaganda Fide Archives now. See Archivio Storico della Sacra Congregazione per l'evangelizzazione dei Popoli De

Requests to Agha went beyond his involvement with the matters of his own church. In a letter from 1703 sent to Agha di Mat'os and other rich Livornese Armenian merchants, Agha's assistance is sought in providing a letter of recommendation for a man who was planning to visit the Pope in order to ask for his support. The letter is written by Yohan, the bishop of Saint Thomas Monastery of Agulis in Nakhitchevan. In his letter, Yohan asks Agha di Mat'os to provide a recommendation letter to a certain man named Mesrop, whose family had suffered from being deprived of their property because of a renegade relative. While it is not explicitly stated in the letter, Mesrop most probably fell victim to Imam Ja'far's new law on inheritance, which came into force in mid-seventeenth century Safavid Iran, according to which if a Christian converted to Islam, he or she had the right to inherit the entire family's property and assets.¹⁹¹ Mesrop had most probably suffered from that law because one of his family members had converted to Islam.

Yohan's request to Agha was that the latter gave a recommendation letter to Mesrop to go

Propaganda Fide, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi (SC) Armeni, vol. 5 (1703-1707), f. 540r. See the reproduction of this letter in Meruzhan Karapetyan, and Elizabet' T'ajiryan, "Ējer XVII...., 93-96.

¹⁹¹ See Merujan Karapetyan, "Imam Jafari ōrenk'ē ev arevelahayerē (XVII-XVII darer)" [Imam Ja'far's Law and Eastern Armenians (XVII-XVII cc.)], in *Patma-Banasirakan Handēs*, N. 1, 219-221. Idem, "Le Diocèse Arménien Catholique du Nakhitchévan. Formation Ethnique et Processus Ethno-Confessionnels aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècle," in *Roma-Armenia*, ed. by Claude Mutafian (Rome: De Luca, 1999), 324. Hakob P'ap'azyan, "Sefyan Irani asimilyatorakan k'aghak'akanutyany harts'i shurj" [On the Question of Safavid Iran's Assimilating Policies], in *Banber Matenadarani*, N3, 1956, 85-99.

petition the Pope, as Agha's "being loyal to the Pope could be beneficial"¹⁹² to Mesrop's problem, who at some point, according to the letter, was in Urfa and was wandering from one place to another, knocking on doors and seeking financial support.

AGHA'S DEATH AND HIS FAMILY

After Agha di Mat'os's tragic murder, Agha's children Lucia and Hovhannes, as well as his son-in-law Aslan Hakobian, who was busy with his own trading activities in Palermo around 1709,¹⁹³ were notified. After arriving in Livorno and not receiving hospitality from the Armenian community there, according to Ughurlian, Aslan had to finish the construction of the Armenian Church using his own savings, paying 18,000 pezzes¹⁹⁴ from his own pocket.¹⁹⁵ According to

¹⁹² «Զի թերևս զմասն ինչ օգնութեան ընկալցի ի նմանէ, վասնորոյ եւ մեր մեծաւ թախանձանօր ծանուցանեմ պարոն Աղայիդ, զի դու հաւատարիմ գոլով սրբոյ Փափին, ձեռնսոյ լիցիս դմայ...»: "Therefore, part of what my expectation is from you is to kindly inform you, Mr. Agha, that [because] you are loyal to his holiness the Pope, you can be helpful to us..." See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folios 18-19 (Verso of this folio mentions 29 instead of 19).

¹⁹³ Ughurlian, *Patmut 'iwn hayots'*, 86.

¹⁹⁴ "Silver piece of eight (pezza da otto reali, sometimes called simply a pezza or "piece")" was the main currency in Livorno for "long-distance commerce." See Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, xi.

¹⁹⁵ A translation from Armenian into Italian of a handbook written by Agha di Mat'os, elaborating on all the expenses regarding the building of the church, is kept in Pisa. See *Chiesa Armena: Traduzione di un Libretto in Carattere Armeno di Mano del fù Sig. Agá di Mat'os*, Archivio Arcivescovile di Pisa Livorno

Ughurlian, together Agha's and Aslan's expenses came down to more than 71,000 pezzes over the span of nine years. Even after investing his own money, Aslan was left with almost 67,000 pezzes worth of debt and was forced to sell his own property and spend his savings to cover his father-in-law's debt. The bad news about Agha's death reached Tabriz, after which Agha's daughter Lucia Khatun and her son travelled from Aleppo to reach Livorno.¹⁹⁶ Lucia arrived in Livorno only to find her husband surrounded by creditors, the church closed, and her father's property confiscated. She then decided to ask the prominent Armenians in Livorno to help her and her husband in covering the debts that her late father had left. However, none of them was willing to offer it.

The unwillingness of the Armenian community of Livorno in helping cover the expenses of building the church resulted in Agha's family's forced sale of his church-like mansion, as well as gold, silver, gems and other property. After paying all the debts, Lucia ended up in a two-bedroom small apartment and due to her poverty, was financially supported by different members of the Armenian community.¹⁹⁷ All these events left Agha's daughter and her husband in a state of absolute poverty.

A series of documents from the same box at Archivio di Stato di Firenze attest to the fact that Lucia (or Ēztikhan), her husband and their son at some point transferred the ownership of

X (No date). I thank Alessandro Orengo for being generous in providing me the scanned version of his personal copy of this interesting document.

¹⁹⁶ See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 73.

¹⁹⁷ Ughurlian, *Patmut 'iwn hayots'*, 86-88.

their house in Tabriz to their daughter, named Hrip'sime, who was staying with her grandmother, Agha's wife Sarah in 1722, as demonstrated in a letter. A dozen years after Agha's death, his daughter and son-in-law were still living in Livorno and most probably had no intention of going back to Iran. However, twenty years later, in 1746, a trial took place between Agha's heirs and the Armenian community of Livorno, in the result of which the verdict was for the Livorno Armenians to pay off Agha's debt connected to the building and other expenses of the church. According to Ughurlian, the burden of these payments forced many of the community members to leave Livorno and never return back.¹⁹⁸ One of the reasons for the community's reluctance in giving away money for the continuation of the building of Saint Gregory the Illuminator was that Agha di Mat'os, while alive, had not paid for the expenses of the church out of his pocket. Quite the reverse, Agha had incorporated the financial efforts of his fellow Armenian merchants from outside of Livorno and Italy, by making each of them pay for specific expenses relating to the building of the church.

Agha's tragic death in 1709 was certainly a great loss for the Livorno Armenian mercantile community and well beyond. His body was first buried in Chiesa dei Santi Cosma e Damiano, not very far from St. Gregory the Illuminator. In 1716, only two years after the official opening of the church, his body was transferred to the newly-ordained Armenian church and buried there in front of the high altar.¹⁹⁹ In spite the general respect towards Agha's personality as the responsible individual for the foundation and building of the Armenian church of Livorno during

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 123-124.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 85.

his life, there seemed to be a hostile environment around him, which particularly worsened after Agha's death. Nevertheless, his overall reputation as a diamond and gem merchant and a respectful Armenian gem merchant never diminished.

Working from Venice and Livorno for over thirty years, Agha Mat'os maintained an efficient and contentious business correspondence, employing his and the Minasian family firm's network of agents spread out from Venice and Livorno to Moscow, Isfahan, Aleppo, Izmir, Amsterdam and the Indian Ocean.²⁰⁰ Agha, at the same time, managed to sustain two different roles of a community leader and a long-distance merchant. The talented mediator that he was, Agha was indeed the connecting node between the worlds of business and communal matters. He had most certainly gained his reputation as a go-between and a go-to person among the prominent leaders of his own community thanks to his success and the magnitude of his trading activities in Indian diamonds and gems. Not unlike his other colleagues, more specifically other early modern Julfan merchants, Agha's image embodied stability, dependability, reliability and loyalty. With Agha's death, the era of mediation and problem solving among the Livorno and Venice Armenian community members and beyond came to an end. Livorno Armenians were not going to have leaders of Agha's magnitude anymore. With his death and the opening of the Armenian church in 1714, the small albeit distinguished Armenian community of Livorno's once remarkable activities slowly started to diminish, which at the same time coincided with the demise of the mercantile community of New Julfa towards the second half of the eighteenth

²⁰⁰ See an example of a few of the trade routes that the Minasian family firm agents used to trade with diamonds and gems among one of the letters in a series of strictly mercantile correspondence between Khwāja Minas and his agents, ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folios 86—88.

century.

Agha's activities transcended the boundaries of an isolated community member and were arguably illustrative of the image of an early modern diamond and gem merchant living and patronizing building of churches, printing presses and other community and religious matters. While Agha's activities stood out by their significance, his image of an early modern merchant was not an exception to the rule for the time period. Agha's life and his mercantile activities showcased the symbiotic and interdependent feature of an early modern successful merchant's image. Looking into his life helps to shed a broader light on the ways representatives of trade diaspora communities operated as successful merchants of usually specific commodities on the one hand and demonstrated their social, religious and political stance on the other. Available archival material on the economic history of Agha di Mat'os's and Minasian family firm's trading activities in South Asia, Safavid Iran, the Mediterranean and beyond, including the firm's and their agents' strictly business correspondence, as well as accounting ledgers and other sources, opens up a new perspective into the inner workings of gem trade in the second half of seventeenth and the first quarter of eighteenth centuries.

Chapter Three

THE KHWĀJA MINASIANS: A FAMILY FIRM OF CROSS-CULTURAL GEM MERCHANTS AND THE NICHE TRADE OF MEDITERRANEAN CORAL AND INDIAN DIAMONDS

“Since the merchant profession could not do without a network of reliable go-betweens and associates, the family offered the most natural and sought-after solution. The history of the great merchant families is therefore every bit as valuable as the history of princely dynasties in the study of political fluctuations...”

(Fernand Braudel, Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Centuries, Vol. II, The Wheels of Commerce (London: Book Club Associates, 1983), 150.)

The significance of early modern trade in diamonds and gems has already been highlighted in the previous chapters. As already mentioned, along with the East India companies of the time, smaller groups of private merchants and trade diasporas, such as the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewish merchants discussed by Gedalia Yogev,²⁰¹ Francesca Trivellato²⁰² and Tjil Vanneste,²⁰³ played a significant role in the gem trade of the early modern period. Armenian merchants too are

²⁰¹ Gedalia Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral: Anglo-Dutch Jews and Eighteenth-Century Trade* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978).

²⁰² Francesca Trivellato, *Ibid.*

²⁰³ Tjil Vanneste, *Global Trade and Commercial Networks: Eighteenth Century Diamond Merchants* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).

said to have been trading in Indian diamonds from at least 1620s.²⁰⁴ We do not have much information about them purchasing diamonds straight from the Golconda mines in this period, but an entry from a report of the Dutch East India Company officials indicates that in 1658 the company did not buy diamonds, “...because large purchases by Armenian traders had raised the price by 40 percent.”²⁰⁵

The representation of Armenian merchants in the early modern diamond and gem trade was mainly through arguably the most central institution in the New Julfan network, the family firm. On the basis of heretofore unexamined epistolary exchange of the Minasian family firm, from a microspatial perspective, this chapter explores how Armenian merchants and family firms were a pivotal, but yet to date unstudied group of merchants, who were active buyers and sellers of gems and diamonds from the Indian Subcontinent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It sheds light on the early history of the Minasian family firm, who operated in Eurasia for almost eighty consecutive years during which they were predominantly involved in long distance trade of diamonds and precious stones. For the first time in New Julfan historiography, the importance of the Indian diamonds and the Mediterranean coral exchange is highlighted.

²⁰⁴ See Guillaume Calafat’s article on two Armenian merchants, who arrived in Livorno with the intention of selling the 35 raw diamonds they had brought with them, probably from Iran or India. Guillaume Calafat, “Osmanli-Speaking Diasporas: Cross-Diasporic Relations and Intercommunity Trust between Marseilles, Tunis and Livorno (1600-1650),” in *Union in Separation: Diasporic Groups and Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean (1100-1800)*, ed. Georg Christ, Franz-Julius Morche, Roberto Zaugg Wolfgang Kaiser, Stefan Burkhardt, Alexander D. Beihammer (Paris: Musée National de la Marine/ P. Dantec, 2015), 615.

²⁰⁵ Vanneste, *Global Trade*, 44-45.

Scholarly literature on family firms, kinship and their role in the commercial growth in early modern Eurasian societies is insufficient. Therefore, I argue, that the microhistorical approach to the nature, the organization of early modern Julfan family firms and the involvement of a single family firm in long-distance gem trade, generation of capital and its circulation in the context of smaller economic institutions, such as family firms, is crucial in understanding early modern commercial history in general. In this sense, research into individual Armenian family firms of the early modern period could provide an interesting angle to Eurasian or Islamicate societies and their economic histories in large.

This chapter, therefore, argues or contends that previous scholarship on family firms has not devoted sufficient attention to the importance of Armenians family firms in the larger history of Asian economic history and what is more important, their role in the long-distance trade of diamonds and gems. Being one of the most influential families of Armenian merchants in New Julfa, Iran and beyond, the main commodities that the Minasians traded were diamonds, corals and other gems. Members of this family were thus active participants in the global exchange of Mediterranean corals and Indian diamonds, a niche trade and the almost exclusive way of trading in diamonds and gems in the early modern period. By analyzing the archival sources from roughly 1650s to the 1720s and reconstructing the history of a family firm established in New Julfa, Safavid Iran with branches spreading in Russia in the North, Mediterranean in the West, Southeast Asia, the Ottoman Empire and beyond, this chapter, thus, highlights the history of the exchange trade in Mediterranean coral and Indian diamonds.

The organization of this chapter is very much archive-driven and focuses on three decades in this family firm's history in the second half of the seventeenth century, when archival documentation is the richest in terms of providing a continuous account of business transactions

and the luxury commodity trade of diamonds and gems. The goal of this chapter is to situate the Minasians and more generally, New Julfan Armenian family firms, at the crossroads of this global luxury trade. It does so by taking a brief look on the specifics of early modern Armenian family firms, the structure of the Minasian family firm and their involvement in the exchange of early modern Indian diamonds and Mediterranean coral. Another goal is the reconstruction of the history of the involvement of Minasians in diamond and gem trade, a perspective their history was never discussed from before, through analyzing hundreds of commercial correspondence, accounting ledgers kept in European, Iranian archives and beyond.

THE FAMILY FIRM IN EARLY MODERN ARMENIAN HISTORY

Before we turn to the details and the inner workings of the Minasian family firm and their involvement in gem trade, a brief discussion of the family firm and its role in early modern Armenian and global history is necessary. Scholars, such as Sebouh Aslanian, Edmund Herzig, and Shushanik Khach'ikyan have touched upon the histories, specifics and the possible origins of early modern Armenian family firms. While the scholarly community knows much more about the structure of New Julfan society than only a few decades ago, an in-depth research into the origins of Armenian family firms and the way they operated in the early modern period is scant and lacks a thorough sociological and anthropological approach.

Historians of early modern history of New Julfan mercantile network have stressed the indisputable importance of family firms in the social, political and economic development of the suburb. The historiographer of New Julfa, Harut'iwn Hovhaneant's, chose to discuss the history

of New Julfan society by looking at its major extended families, counting 29 of them,²⁰⁶ thus arguably making the social and economic history of the suburb the history of its biggest families, their networks of agents and commercial activities. The importance of extended families has been emphasized in the context of maintaining the vitality of the mercantile network of Armenian merchants and as the main entities of the New Julfan mercantile society.

In her book, Shushanik Khach'ikyan devotes a whole chapter to the New Julfan influential family firms, such as the Shahrmanians/Scerimans, Guerak'-Mirmans, and Lazarians.²⁰⁷ Herzig discusses the specifics of commercial organization of New Julfans "from within, taking as a starting point the central social institution of pre-modern Armenian society: the extended patriarchal household."²⁰⁸ Most recently Sebouh Aslanian discusses the role of the *commenda* and family firms in the New Julfan society in a chapter in his book. He goes further by developing his initial arguments in an essay on the comparison of Armenian family firms and European joint-stock companies in the context of internalization of protection costs and their limits of self-representation.²⁰⁹ Francesca Trivellato provides a comparative approach to the discussion of early modern family firms, by comparing Armenian family firms to Sephardic ones to find out what has

²⁰⁶ Harutiwn Hovhancant's, *Patmut' iwn Nor Jughayu vor yAspahan [History of New Julfa which is at Isfahan]*, Vol. 1 (Nor Jugh: Tparan sb. Amenap'rkich' vank'i, 1880.

²⁰⁷ 65-120

²⁰⁸ Edmund Herzig, "The Family Firm in the Commercial Organisation of the Julfa Armenians," *Etudes Safavides*, ed. Jean Calmard (Paris-Louvain, 1993): 287- 304 (288).

²⁰⁹ Sebouh Aslanian, "Julfan Merchants and European East India Companies."

not been thoroughly studied, mainly the role of transregional kinship systems on the conduct of business in diaspora networks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²¹⁰

THE ORIGINS AND STRUCTURE OF ARMENIAN FAMILY FIRMS IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

From preserved archival documents and the scholarly research written on them so far, it seems that the Julfan extended household was comprised of a few dozen of family members living under the same roof. The head of the household was the eldest male of the family at all times. Interestingly, when the eldest male would pass away, at least in the case of New Julfa, the right of succession of the leadership of the family would be automatically passed on not to his son, but to the eldest male member of the family, whoever that was. This person would not only govern the family and its social engagements but, more importantly, would be the business manager of the family firm. For instance, when in 1747 Khwāja Emniaz di Minas, at that point the director of the Minasian family firm, was burnt alive in Isfahan’s Central Square by the order of Nadir Shah,²¹¹ authority was not passed to one of his sons, but to Aghamal, the son of his brother Sarfraz, who was the eldest male in the family. While the eldest males took charge of the family firm and its

²¹⁰ Francesca Trivellato, “Marriage, Commercial Capital, and Business Agency: Transregional Sephardic (and Armenian) Families in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Mediterranean,” in *Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond Experiences Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Christopher H. Johnson, David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher, and Francesca Trivellato (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011)108.

²¹¹ For more details on this incident, see Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 207-211.

affairs, younger cousins worked for the firm as business associates and were outranked by the older male family members.²¹²

Family firms and their role in the commercial development of New Julfa was strongly connected with the wide practice of the *commenda* contract and *commenda* agents.²¹³ It is safe to say that the continuous development and success of the New Julfan mercantile network would be impossible without this useful partnership contract the origins of which, it has been argued by some scholars, were most probably Islamic.²¹⁴

New Julfans used *commenda* contracts to conduct long-distance trade and did not hire agents unless they were from the same “coalition”²¹⁵ as the main capital holders. One of the reasons for that was, according to Trivellato, that it was more convenient for Armenians to organize their judicial matters around the Assembly of Merchants in New Julfa.²¹⁶ In Trivellato’s opinion, the

²¹² Ibid., 161.

²¹³ For a discussion of the commenda contract among New Julfan mercantile network representatives, see Sebouh Aslanian, “The Circulation of Men and Credit: The Role of the Commenda And the Family Firm in Julfan Society” in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 50, No. 2/3 (2007): 124-171; *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, 121-165; Herzig, “Armenian Merchants from New Julfa,” 213-237.

²¹⁴ For a discussion on the Islamic commenda, see Abraham Udovitch, “At the Origins of the Western Commenda: Islam, Israel, or Byzantium?” *Speculum* 37 (1962): 198–207; idem, *Partnership and Profit in Medieval Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 170-248.

²¹⁵ Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, 110.

²¹⁶ Trivellato, “Marriage, Commercial Capital, and Business Agency”, 118.

fact that Armenian family firms did not hire commission agents from outside of their extended families and networks was a disadvantage for them.²¹⁷

The question of tracing the origins and specifics of the structure of extended family firms in Europe and beyond has been a topic of discussion among many scholars, including Jack Goody, Frederic Lane, Ron Harris and many others who have advocated the idea that extended families played an important role both in medieval early modern Europe and the Indian subcontinent. These families prepared the ground for, respectively, the emergence of European joint-stock companies, and for maintaining the livelihood of economic structures in Asia. In this regard, Armenian family partnerships largely resembled the Mediterranean *fraternas*, where “brothers often lived together in the same house, shared the same board, and consumed together the products of their country estates.”²¹⁸ Another valid comparison could be *compagna*, which, as opposed to *fraternas*, was a partnership between the members of an extended family that was widespread in the Medieval Mediterranean. Both these types of partnerships, as noted by Aslanian in his essay on family firms and *commenda* among the Julfans, were common in the “...Islamicate societies of Eurasia including much of the Indian Ocean.”²¹⁹ Trivellato has concluded that Armenian and Sephardic family firms were similar in terms of kinship ties, however differed largely in terms of relying

²¹⁷ Ibid., 117.

²¹⁸ Frederic Lane, “Family Partnerships and Joint Ventures in the Venetian Republic,” *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Nov., 1944), 178.

²¹⁹ Aslanian, “The Circulation of Men and Credit,” 144.

more on traveling agents or *commenda* contracts in the case of Armenians and commission agents in the case of Sephardi Jews.

In order to analyze family partnerships across Eurasia, Goody takes a comparative approach on the history of kinship and partnerships and argues that “Since co-operation with kin or kith, with family or friends, is a general feature in pre-industrial society, it is hardly surprising to find similar arrangements in south and east Asia.” By claiming this he refutes Weber’s idea that families and clans were a “hindrance” to the development of capitalism in the East as opposed to the West where family partnerships at some point turned into corporations.²²⁰ In trying to understand why certain societies gave rise to certain economic institutions over a specific period of time in history, Harris likewise looks at different types of economic institutions across Eurasia, including extended families in Europe, Middle East, and China and concludes that “The Europeans developed the corporation, then, not because they enjoyed an advantage in institutional design capability but, rather, because they needed substitute for what was missing in their society – the extended family. The reliance of other civilizations on the family as a platform for business served them well in the short run.”²²¹ The scholars mentioned above have provided useful insights on the importance of family partnerships in the commercial development of Europe, Asia and beyond.

²²⁰ Jack Goody, *The East in the West* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 138.

²²¹ Ron Harris, “The Institutional Dynamics of Early Modern Eurasian Trade: The Commenda and the Corporation,” *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 71, Issue 3 (September 2009): 606-622.

To describe the succession practices of extended patriarchal families in New Julfa, Herzig brings examples from the Astrakhan Lawbook.²²² Although the organization of these firms was patriarchal, inheritance law was such that both males and females inherited both the family capital and the property. While some articles of the Lawbook, such as most of the inheritance laws and laws about separation from the family are proven by evidence of surviving documentation, some of those articles do not correspond with New Julfan archival documents. For example, according to the Astrakhan Lawbook, both sons and daughters inherited equal shares of the inheritance.²²³ If we look at the will of Khwāja Minas, the head of the Minasian Family firm, we read that he left eight times the sum of his fortune to his sons than he left to his daughters.²²⁴

A number of European travelers also emphasized the role of extended families in the Julfan society. The English traveler John Cartwright, for example, while travelling through Armenia in

²²² Due to the lack of sources on the history of extended family in Armenian history of the early modern period, Herzig provides a discussion of the Code of Laws of Astrakhan Armenians or Astrakhan Lawbook, the legal book used by the Armenian community of Astrakhan, Russia starting from the second half of the eighteenth century and its corresponding articles about family and inheritance law. Although it was composed in a later period than the families in in this chapter were commercially active, it provides valuable information and points of comparison with my archival sources. See Herzig’s discussion of the corresponding articles from the lawbook on inheritance law. See Edmund Herzig, “Family Firm,” 290-293.

²²³ Chapter 8, Commentary one, *Datastanagirk’ Astrakhani hayots’ [Lawbook of Astrakhan Armenians]*, ed. F.G. Poghosyan (Yerevan: Haykakan SSH Gitut’yunneri Akademiayi hratarakch’ut’yun, 1967), 60.

²²⁴ Will of Khwāja Minas from 1700, “Zanazan niwt’erov grut’iwnner—Ktakner Nor Jugha,” ASMA, Folder 28/13.

the seventeenth century, wrote about Armenians and their families, “Their families are very great; for, both Sonnes, Nephews, and Nieces doe dwell under one rooffe, having all their substance in common: and when the father dyeth, the eldest Sonne doth governe the rest; all submitting themselves under his regiment. But when the eldest Sonne dyeth, the government doth not passe to his sonnes, but to the eldest brother. And if it chance to fall out, that all the brethren doe die, then the government doth belong to the eldest Sonne of the eldest brother, and so from one to another.”²²⁵ While Cartwright’s description is not that of Julfan Armenians, this is exactly how patriarchal families in New Julfan society managed succession matters within their extended families.

But what were the origins of these extended families among the Armenian society? Was there a structure in place in earlier periods of history which resulted in the type of extended families discussed earlier? The similarities of Armenian agnatic families could be tied to their counterparts in Ancient Iran. Anahit Perikhanian in her article on agnatic groups of ancient Iran defines the basic features of Iranian families as follows: “Juridically, the Iranian family constituted a group of agnates (1) - led by the head of the family; they were interconnected by relationships of authority and subordination affecting both persons (*personae sui iuris* - the head of the family and his sons and nephews of full age, on the one hand, and *personae alieni iuris* - women and minor children, on the other) and property.”²²⁶ It is certainly probable that Armenian and Iranian ancient extended

²²⁵ John Cartwright, *The Preacher’s Travels* (London: T. Thorppe, 1611): 24; also quoted in Herzig, *Ibid*: 289.

²²⁶ Anahit Perikhanian, “Agnaticheskiie gruppy v drevnem Irane,” [Agnatic Groups in Ancient Iran], *Soviet Anthropology and Archeology* 9:1, 3-49 (1970): 3.

families were interconnected by simply sharing neighboring regions. However, no studies have been written on this.

Another institution that was close to the structure of early modern Armenian extended families in the early modern period were the *nakharar* systems or *nakharar* clans,²²⁷ which were the ancient agnatic families residing in the Armenian Plateau tracing their structural roots to Armeno-Parthian origins. The *nakharar* system, as explained by Nina Garsoïan “...was comprised of the great families, of whom some fifty can be identified in the 4th-5th centuries (Garsoïan, 1996, pp. 229-32), and among whom the hereditary king was but *primus inter pares*. The power of these clans derived from their possession of vast principalities belonging to the “eternal family,” past, present, and future, and of hereditary offices. Neither of these could be alienated, as long as a single male member of the family survived, nor were they derived from the authority or will of the king.”²²⁸ The *nakharar* household survived up until the Arab and Mongol invasions of the Armenian Plateau. There are no systematic scholarly studies on the remnants of these *nakharar* households in the later period of Middle Ages and early modern period.

There seems to be a discontinuity between extended families that were present in the Armenian Plateau in the Ancient and Middle ages, and the early modern period. The continuity of the

²²⁷ For more information on *nakharar* systems, see Nicholas Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian Political Conditions Based on the Naxarar System*, ed. and tr. N. G. Garsoïan (Louvain and Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1970); Cyril Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1963), and Nina Garsoïan, “Naxarar,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*....

²²⁸ Nina Garsoïan, “Naxarar,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2005, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/naxarar> (accessed on 29 February 2020).

nakharar system or any other types of extended families throughout Armenian history is almost impossible to trace. The main reason for that includes, but is not limited to, forced migrations of the Armenian population that took place over the period of fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, more specifically the Celali revolts and the migrations generated by them, as well as the deportations of Shah ‘Abbas I of the Armenian population of South Caucasus in the beginning of the seventeenth century. As discussed by Aslanian in his chapter on the Celali uprisings,²²⁹ “Together, the “Great Flight” (*Büyük Kaçgun*) triggered by the Celali rebellions that shook the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire from 1597-1620 and the Great Deportations (*Büyük Sürgün*) from 1604 to 1618 of the Safavid monarch Shah ‘Abbas I resulted in the displacement and resettlement of several hundred thousand Armenians from their homes in the frontier zone where both gunpowder empires had bumped up against each other during their steady expansion.” Therefore, the forced migration of the Armenian population of Old Julfa to Isfahan, Safavid Iran by Shah ‘Abbas I in 1604-1605 only added to the gap of disruption in this history, especially that while the deported families and their histories could be traced back to their hometowns in the Armenian Plateau, their properties could not. Hence, apart from the demographic significance, these migrations resulted in a significant loss of properties, estates, money and lands owned by Armenian families living in those towns.²³⁰

²²⁹ See Sebouh Aslanian’s chapter in his upcoming book by Yale University Press, entitled “Armenians on the Move: The Celali Uprisings, the Shah ‘Abbas I Deportations, and the Making of Armenian Early Modernity in *Early Modernity and Mobility: Port Cities and Printers Across the Armenian Diaspora, 1512-1800*, forthcoming.

²³⁰ Ibid.

When, specifically, would the members of an extended family become a family firm? In the case of the Venetian Republic, for example, as Frederic Lane notes in his essay, Italian families, who were doing business as a unit then “automatically became full partners without any formal contract.”²³¹ In fact, the possibility of that process being a non-written and a non-ratified agreement among Armenians is also very high. Herzig states, “The relationship between firm and family was taken for granted to such an extent that there is no specific word for family firm in the Julfa commercial dialect.”²³² According to him, *sark’ar* was the main word in Julfan dialect denoting family firm, especially when it came to the discussion of its capital. Herzig adds that the reason there was no universal word for family firm in the Julfan dialect was because, “...in the minds of the Julfa merchants the family firm was not an institution separable from the family itself, and the responsibilities and liabilities of the firm’s members were established by their family relationship and required no special elucidation or written contract.”²³³

When it comes to the Minasian family firm, their agents called the firm *sark’ar*, as rightly mentioned by Herzig, continuously in their correspondence. For instance, in a document from 1686 one of the agents of the Minasian family firm, Tsatur, son of Tambur mentions that he brought rhubarb, agate and topaz on the account of “the firm” (*sark’ar*). Tsatur writes, “The reason I am writing this is because I, Tsatur son of Tambur brought with me commodities, which are rhubarb,

²³¹ Frederic Lane, “Family Partnerships,” 178.

²³² Edmund Herzig, “The Family Firm,” 294.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 294-295.

agate and topaz on the account of the firm...”²³⁴ Interestingly, I have not come across a document where the head of the Minasian family firm refers to his family as a firm. It could be that that piece of information was a given, so there was no specific reason to mention it.

THE SCERIMAN AND MIRMAN FAMILY FIRMS AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY MODERN DIAMOND AND GEM TRADE

THE SCERIMAN FAMILY

Before focusing our attention on the history of the Minasian family firm, it is important to take a quick look at the two other significant Julfan families, who were greatly involved in diamond and gem trade in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Unlike the Minasians, the Sceriman family were Roman Catholics and were forced to leave New Julfa from early on in their careers as gem merchants in the seventeenth century. They too were originally from Old Julfa and were deported to Safavid Iran by Shah ‘Abbas I.²³⁵ One of the most prominent figures of the family of Scerimans was Sarhat Sceriman whose son Zaccaria had presented the Russian King a golden throne studded with thousands of diamonds and other gems.²³⁶ Although their religious persecution did not really

²³⁴ ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, MS 65. «Պատճառ գրոյս այսէ, որ ես Թամբուռի որդի Ծատուրս սարքարի կոնթէ խտինձ սարքանքի բերել, որէ ըռէվանդ, աղեղ, թօփաջ...»:

²³⁵ Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 149.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

start until later, Scerimans already owned a house in Venice at the beginning of the seventeenth century, very soon after their deportation from their hometown of Old Julfa. Sarhat was said to have converted to Catholicism already in 1646.²³⁷ In 1690s the sons of Murad di Sceriman, Nazar and Shariman, had invested 720,000 ducats in Venetian banks and even provided substantial loans to the Republic of Venice to take care of their expenses during their war against the Ottomans.²³⁸ There is substantial archival evidence that shows the attempts of Scerimans of moving their capital from Julfa to Italy.²³⁹ For example, there is evidence that in 1692 negotiations were taking place in the *De Propaganda Fide* about moving 200,000 Venetian ducats from Isfahan to Italy. In 1696 the Sceriman family was granted a citizenship of Rome by Pope Innocent XII,²⁴⁰ which itself opened up opportunities for the family members to acquire an elite social capital, the importance of which was indispensable in gem trade. With a network stretching to Amsterdam, a center for diamond cutting and trade in general, Venice, Livorno and Isfahan just to name a few, this family was involved in active diamond and gem trade at least from the very beginning of the eighteenth

²³⁷ Ibid., 150.

²³⁸ Harutiwn Hovhaneant's, *Patmut'iwn Nor Jughayu*, 111; Sebouh Aslanian, Ibid.

²³⁹ See Meruzhan Karapetyan and Elizabet' T'ajiryan, "Ējer XVII dari verji nor Jughayi patmut'yunits'" [Pages From the Late Seventeenth Century History of New Julfa], *Banber Yerevani hamalsarani hasarakakan gitut'yunner 2*, 95 (1998): 80-96.

²⁴⁰ Evelyn Korsch, "The Scerimans and Cross-Cultural Trade in Gems: The Armenian Diaspora in Venice and Its Trading Networks in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century" in *Commercial Networks and European Cities, 1400–1800*, ed. Andrea Caracausi and Christof Jeggle (Routledge, 2014), 223-239, 293-298: 228.

century. According to Evelyn Korsch, in 1707 the stock of Giacomo Sceriman, who was overseeing the Sceriman family firm gem trade in Amsterdam, "...comprised jewels and gems worth 24,190 ducats. Apart from very exclusive jewels such as, for example, a pearl necklace for 3,600 ducats or diamond earrings for 2,200 ducats, Giacomo also offered an extraordinary diamond with a weight of 51 grani worth 9,000 ducats."²⁴¹ Giacomo's father, Gasparo Sceriman in the period between 1707 and 1717 sold "diamonds and diamond jewelry for 50,000 ducats as well as pearl jewellery for 14,000 ducats."²⁴²

David Sceriman directed the branch of the Sceriman family firm in Livorno keeping ties with Venice, the latter still being one of the most important diamond trade centers. Livorno, on the other hand, was important for the Scerimans for its blooming coral trade. As it will be mentioned below, David Sceriman at some point owned a coral plant in Livorno and was a famous coral merchant in that port. He also himself travelled all the way to Goa via Lisbon (something rare for the capital holder to do)²⁴³ thus making the Sceriman family significant in that it had a slight connection with the diamond and gem trade conducted via Lisbon and Goa as opposed to their colleagues, the Minasians.

Unlike the Minasians, the Scerimans cooperated with non-Armenians for their business ventures. For example, David and Pietro Scerimans ordered goods from an Indian merchant in

²⁴¹ Ibid., 231.

²⁴² Ibid., 232.

²⁴³ Ibid., 233.

1709, who then sent them from Goa to Livorno.²⁴⁴ In 1728, as mentioned by Aslanian, the Scerimans collaborated with a Hindu merchant named Chanderbhan, who “handled the firm’s “corrals for diamonds” business in Goa, India.”²⁴⁵ Trivellato mentions that Abraham and Jacob Francos from the famous Sephardi Franco family, at some point in 1740s, shipped coral from London to Madras and back on the account of David Sceriman.²⁴⁶ Scerimans not only traded in raw diamonds and other gems brought from South East Asia, they also traded in jewelry made from those gems that their agents purchased in India and even leased it.²⁴⁷ The commercial relationship of David Sceriman and the family of the Francos seemed to have been a continuous one, as in 1735 he and Joseph and Raphael Francos based in Tuscany jointly financed an expedition to find coral in Languedoc, Southern France. There are hundreds of pages of accounting ledgers and business correspondence, the majority of them containing information on the gem trade conducted by this family in three folders under the name “Documenti Armeni” at *Archivio di Stato di Venezia*. While these documents have been analyzed by scholars of Julfan history before, none of them have looked at for the evidence they could offer on the Sceriman’s involvement in the gem trade in the early modern period.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 236.

²⁴⁵ See Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011): 158.

²⁴⁶ Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 151.

²⁴⁷ Korsch, “The Scerimans and Cross-Cultural Trade in Gems,” 236.

As it is clear from this short overview of Scerimans and their active involvement in diamond and gem trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they differed from Minasians in a number of instances. The most important difference between them was that the Scerimans had long-lasting relationships with non-Armenians which was most probably due to the fact that their firm operated mainly from Venice, Livorno, and other European cities, where these collaborations were indispensable for the success of their trade. Another difference was in the routes the Scerimans traded on which included Lisbon and Goa, which to my best knowledge, never became important centers for the business dealings of the Minasian family firm.

THE GUERAK'-MIRMAN FAMILY

The history of Guerak'-Mirman, one of the wealthiest Julfan families of the early modern period, has received less attention by scholars than that of the Scerimans. The Guerak'-Mirman were involved in diamond and gem trade like Scerimans and Minasians. However, their involvement in gem trade has received none, if any, attention by scholars. In this short passage I will try to provide a very brief history of the family and their involvement in gem trade.

One of the most important sources that sheds light on the commercial activities of the Guerak'-Mirman family is an accounting ledger, already mentioned in the previous chapter, of one of the commenda agents of the Mirman family firm, Hovhannes Ter-Davt'ian of Julfa. The ledger starts being recorded in 1682 when Hovhannes leaves Isfahan for India via Bandar 'Abbas to put the initial capital of 250 *tumans* in commodities, including red and green English broadcloth, and cash worth 2 *tumans* and 8500 *dians* given to him by his masters, sons of Guerak', Khwāja Zakar and Embrumagha, to work. The profits were going to be divided by the ratio of 3/1, three parts of the

profit was going to go to the masters, the Guerak‘ family and one part to Hovhannes, their commenda agent.²⁴⁸

Shushanik Khach‘ikyan and Hakob P‘ap‘azyan trace the members of the Guerak‘ family in two colophons from 1643 and 1644, where Khwāja Grigor and his brothers Zakare and Embrumagha are mentioned. In the 1644 colophon Guerak‘ and his sons Grigor, Rustam, Emprum, Zakare, Margare and Grigor’s son Piratam are mentioned. In another document, a deed from 1666, along with other witnesses one finds Zakaria, son of Khwāja Guerak‘ of Julfa.²⁴⁹ Based on one of the two medals kept at the Bargello National Museum of Florence, which depicts Gregorio di Guerak‘-Mirman, handed by him to the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo III de' Medici in 1673,²⁵⁰ Khach‘ikyan concludes that already at this point in 1670s Gregorio had moved to Italy.²⁵¹ By relying on a memory book of the Mirman family recently gifted to Matenadaran by the only

²⁴⁸ Levon Khach‘ikyan and Hakob P‘ap‘azyan, *Hovhannes Tēr-Davt‘yan Jughayets‘u Hashvetumarē [The Accounting Ledger of Hovhannes Ter-Davt t‘yan]* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSH GA Hratarakch‘ut‘yun, 1984): 15-16.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁵⁰ See the article “Les Mirman à Venise et Livourne,” in *Roma-Armenia*, ed. by Claude Mutafian (Rome: De Luca, 1999), 307.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

surviving descendent of the Mirman family in Livorno²⁵² Ughurlian writes that the family of Guerak'-Mirmans came from Armenia Minor. One of their forefathers, Allahverdi lived in the city of Ani and passed away in 1366.²⁵³ As graphically explained by the historiographer of New Julfa, Harutiwn Tēr-Hovhaneants', about one of the Mirman family members, his "...arms of commerce stretched to Europe, Astrakhan and Gilan..."²⁵⁴ According to the family tree of Guerak'-Mirmans, towards the end of the fourteenth century, the Mirman family had split into three branches: Gregorio, the son of Allahverdi, had moved to Poland. His other son Aspamverdi, who had passed away in 1399, lived in Old Julfa, while Giovanni had moved to Georgia. It is clear from the family tree that Aspamverdi's descendants were deported to Isfahan by Shah 'Abbas in 1604-1605. Ghirach who passed away in 1616 in New Julfa was the father of Gregorio and Umbrumagha mentioned in the beginning of this passage. Therefore, it is after Guerak''s death that two of his sons moved to Italy.

Gregorio was the founder of *Santa Croce* Armenian Catholic Church in Venice,²⁵⁵ which opened its doors in 1688. He passed away shortly after in the same year and was buried in that

²⁵² I was working at Matenadaran in the summer of 2017 and was able to acquire the digital copy of this family book, that includes the coat of arms of Guerak'-Mirmans, as well as their family tree and history. It is kept under the number 372- miscellaneous at Matenadaran. It was at that point still unpaginated.

²⁵³ The family tree of Guerak'-Mirmans at Matenadaran, MS 372.

²⁵⁴ Harutiwn Hovhaneant's, *Patmut'wn Nor Jughayu*, 139.

²⁵⁵ Recently Sebouh Aslanian has written a lengthy paper on Gregorio's religious ambiguity and the history of the Guerak'-Mirman family in general. For his excellent essay, see Sebouh Aslanian, "A Ship with Two

church. His tombstone has been preserved in a good condition up to this day. Therefore, as it seems Gregorio and Embrumagha already lived in Venice and Livorno in the second half of the seventeenth century. Moreover, Gregorio also served as an envoy of Safavid Shah Suleyman in Italy (his position as “Agente Generale della Corte di Persia in Italia” also written on the family tree under his name). One branch that is not visible on the family tree is the one that moved to Surat, India. According to Seth, one Agha Owenjohn Jacob from the Guerak‘ family lived in Surat in the second half of the eighteenth century.²⁵⁶

As already mentioned, Guerak‘-Mirmans were involved in diamond and gem trade. Hovhannes Ter-Davt‘ian, their commenda agent throughout his journey of 1682-1693 bought various gemstones along his way. For example, Hovhannes bought amber, around 32 kgs of coral, as well as cornelian to sell them in Tibet and other major cities.²⁵⁷ Ughurlian mentions that Guerak‘s had brought precious gems with them to Livorno from Safavid Iran, when they moved. One of them, according to Ughurlian, was so big that it created jealousy around the owner Petros Mirman, whose house was then robbed in 1716 and he was killed.²⁵⁸

Rudders??: Gregorio di Girach-Mirman of Venice, Global Armenian Trade Networks, and Religious Ambiguity in the Age of Confessionalization.” (forthcoming)

²⁵⁶ Mesrovb Jacob Seth, *Armenians in India, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Calcutta: 1939): 259-261.

²⁵⁷ Khach‘ikyan and P‘ap‘azyan, *Hovhannes Ter-Davt‘yan*, 20-21.

²⁵⁸ Mesrop Vardapet Ughurlian, *Patmut‘iwn hayots‘ gaghtakanut‘ean ew shinut‘ean ekeghets‘woy notsa i Livorno kaghaki handerts‘ yhavelwatsovk‘ [History of the Armenian Community of Livorno and the Construction of Their Church There, with appendices]* (Venice: Mkhitarist Press, 1891), 203-204. It is

The coat of arms of the family, preserved in the family book mentioned earlier, depicts a crown atop of two eagles. The crown is studded with diamonds and rubies, most probably symbolizing their interest in gems. In fact, this is proven by the list of all gems left by Gregorio Guerak'-Mirman after his death in 1688 and recorded by his younger brother Embrumagha, in this case the executor of Gregorio's will. In a stampa book which contains a document (as indicated in the beginning, a translation from Armenian into Italian) drawn by Umbrumagha, Gregorio left thousands of diamonds, rubies, topazes, emeralds, turquoise, pearls and other gems. The sizes of gems Gregorio left are no less than impressive. Before his death, he owned 2099,5 carats in polished emeralds, 89 carats of loose rubies, as well as bonded rubies, 17 *balas*-rubies²⁵⁹ weighing 26 carats, 3 "oriental topazes" weighing 274 carats, 94915 turquoise from Persia, 92 raw turquoise, 431 garnets, 4036 lapis lazulis, 801 pearls, including loose pearls, in necklaces and baroque pearls. Among jewels that were listed in the inventory of Gregorio's will were also jewels, particularly 85 golden rings studded with diamonds, emeralds, rubies and other gems. Of utmost interest is a diamond weighing 106 $\frac{3}{4}$ grains or around 27 carats, which is described as "Un Diamante grande Grani 106 $\frac{3}{4}$." 15 diamonds weighing 46 $\frac{7}{8}$ grains are mentioned too, after which Embrumagha records that for "...those gems 35000 Scudis were offered by the Grand Duke Cosimo Terzo [Cosimo the Third]." Considering the fact that these diamonds were still in the possession of the family, Mirmans

believed that the Grand Duke of Tuscany had offered the Mirman family one of his estates in exchange for that diamond and was rejected. Rumors in Livorno said that the diamond ended up as a decoration of the crown of the Imperial House of Austria. See Francesco Pera, *Curiosità Livornesi Inedite O Rare* (Livorno, 1888): 210.

²⁵⁹ Variety of pale red spinel, falsely called *balas* ruby after a region in Northern Afghanistan. See, Walter Schumann, *Gemstones of the World* (Sterling Publishing Company, 2009), 116.

probably never sold them to the Medici Duke. Their association as gem providers to the Medici court went back to 1684, when Vittoria della Rovere (1622 -1694), the Grand Duchess of Tuscany and the wife of Grand Duke Ferdinando II, bought twenty rough rubies and paid 285.5 ducats to Gregorio Mirman. These gems arguably ended up decorating the "...magnificent gold filigree crown encrusted with over six hundred precious gems: 412 diamonds, 114 rubies, 80 emeralds and surmounted by 5 large baroque pearls, as a gift to the Carmelite nuns."²⁶⁰ Already in 1654 Vittoria had bought a "single diamond worth over 2,610 piastri (scudi)..." from merchants from Iran, Pietro and Diodato Armeni.²⁶¹ It is almost impossible to identify who these two merchants worked for or whether they worked for a family firm in New Julfa.

Along with the above-mentioned diamonds Gregorio also left 657 diamonds studded in rings, earrings, plumes, broches and so on and 119 loose diamonds weighing 273 grains. As it is clear from this remarkable list, Gregorio and arguably his brother Emrbumagha were involved in gem trade and as was the case with other gem merchants, used their social ties and capital to sell their biggest gems. Unfortunately, the lack of research and documentation does not give scholars the opportunity to dig deeper to find out, for instance, where the corals that Hovhannes acquired while travelling in Southeast Asia came from. Were they brought from Europe and sold second-hand in the markets of India? Where did Gregorio and his brother acquire the gems mentioned on the list from his inventory? Apart from the turquoise that clearly mentions Iran as the source and the

²⁶⁰ See Adelina Modesti, *Women's Patronage and Gendered Cultural Networks in Early Modern Europe: Vittoria della Rovere, Grand Duchess of Tuscany*, (New York: Routledge, 2020), 226.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, reference 65, 223.

“oriental” topaz, the rest of the gems could have been brought from India and South Asia in general by their commenda agents or even bought in the European markets. Nevertheless, it is also clear that the Mirman family, as opposed to their counterparts from the Minasian family, were much more interested in jewelry and polished gems, whereas the majority of the consignment of the Minasians were raw gems. We do not know what happened with these gems after they were listed by Embrumagha. However, we do know that in 1708 David, son of Embrumagha borrowed 367,5 marchils from Agha, the *commenda* agent of the Minasian family firm.²⁶² Some members of the Guerak‘ family had also moved to India and Russia.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE MINASIAN FAMILY FIRM

As already mentioned, the Khwāja Minasian family was considered one of the most influential Armenian families residing in New Julfa in the middle of the seventeenth century. Minasians also had a family firm, the founder of which was arguably Khwāja Minas, son of P‘anos or Khwāja Minas P‘anosents (*ents* is the suffix that makes it a possessive plural, which by being added to the name P‘anos means the one who belongs to the “family” of P‘anos). Minas P‘anosents is how Minas’s name is recorded in the earliest document mentioning his name from 1667, which was when the representatives of the biggest households residing in New Julfa or its administrative

²⁶² Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASFi) “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, MS 31/124. For some reason this document has two paginations both done by the archive.

district heads signed a trade agreement with the Russian state.²⁶³ This trade agreement aimed at Julfan merchants using the Russian route as opposed to the one via the Ottoman Empire to sell their silk in Europe. The first time P‘anos’s son Khwāja Minas’s name appears in documents is from the letter written in 1672 from the 23 prominent merchants of New Julfa and signatories at the same time to the Tsar of Russia Alexei Mikhailovich with the request of safe passage for the trade between the Safavid and Russian Empires. Among the representatives of the prominent families residing in New Julfa in the second half of the seventeenth century was Minas P‘anos or Minas from the family of P‘anosents.²⁶⁴

We do not know much about the early years of Minas’s life. The fact that he was one of the leaders of the New Julfan community to sign the Russian-Armenian petition in 1667, means that he and his family were already a respected and an influential household in the suburb of New Julfa in mid 1660s. A document written in Surat and preserved at the Archive of All Savior’s Monastery of New Julfa²⁶⁵ mentions a merchant named Minas. This Minas from New Julfa appears to have

²⁶³ For the discussion of this agreement, see Shushanik Khach‘ikyan, “Hay-rusakan arevtrakan paymanagirē ev nor Jughayi ink‘navar marminnerē” [The Armenian–Russian Commercial Agreement and the Autonomous Organizations of New Julfa], *Haykazean Hayagitakan Handēs* 259–288: 259; Sebouh Aslanian, “Julfan Merchants and European East India Companies,” 205-208.

²⁶⁴ *Armīano-Russkie Otnosheniā v XVII Veke: Sbornik Dokumentov [Armenian-Russian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Collection of Documents]*, red. S. A. Parsamīan (Erevan: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk Armīanskoī SSR, 1953), 91.

²⁶⁵ I was unable to trace the original of this document. It is reproduced in Hovhaneants‘ in its original form in Armenian and translated into English in Mesrovb Seth. There is a possibility that this document was still

solved a big dispute that had arose between two Armenian merchants in Surat over a large diamond weighing 159 *ratis* (around 144 carats). This Minas, who is described as the master of one of the merchants involved in this dispute from New Julfa ends up purchasing this diamond himself for 2500 *tumans*, a fortune in this period of time.²⁶⁶ I assume that this Minas was the head of the Minasian family firm. What comes as a support to this argument is the list of the merchants who signed the above-mentioned document. Among them was a certain Agha Mat‘t‘eosean, who is more than likely the branch representative of Minas in Tuscany, Agha Mat‘os and who was sent there to lead the gem trade of the firm from Livorno ten years later, in 1679.

There is some confusion in scholarly literature about the origins and the early life of Khwāja Minas, mainly because there were two other famous merchants, named Minas who lived roughly in the same period. The first one among them was the famous Khwāja Minas who lived and died in Surat and was even at some point the “President of the Armenians” there.²⁶⁷ This Minas was said to have been the wealthiest Armenian in Surat and owned a fleet of vessels trading between Manila and South China Seas. As rightfully stated by Kévonian and Aghassian, Khwāja Minas should not be confused with his namesakes Minas, one of the wealthiest merchants in Surat, who

preserved when Hovhaneants‘ was doing research for his book at the Archive in the second half of the nineteenth century. See Hovhaneants‘, *Patmut‘iwn Nor Jughayu*, 165-166; Seth, *Armenians in India*, 259-261.

²⁶⁶ For comparison, thirty years after this incident Khwāja Minas, according to his will, left 3000 tumans to each of his sons.

²⁶⁷ Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 159.

passed away in 1687 in Diu having owned a fleet of vessels.²⁶⁸ Khwāja Minas, son of P‘anos, the head of the Minasian firm, should also not be confused with Minas di Elias, his grandson, an active member of the Minasian firm, who owned vessels running between Basra and different Indian port cities in the first half of eighteenth centuries. He was sent to India to manage the family business in 1740s and was a resident of Calcutta and Murshidabad in the 1750s.²⁶⁹

There are a number of European travelers who mention a famous merchant named Minas. For example, when in 1664 the French traveller Jean de Thevenot visited Isfahan, he talked about a certain Khwāja Minas, who owned a ship bought from the English, who according to Thevenot previously belonged to the English governor of Surat, who not being able to resist to the opposition of the Dutch, had to sell his vessel. Minas had bought the vessel for 16000 rupees and had placed the “Armenian flag” on it. Armenians had also hired a Livornese captain for the said ship. Thevenot eventually got a passage from Basra to Surat on this ship, where according to him, the majority of the passengers were Armenian. He left Basra on November 6, 1665. After departure, the ship stopped at the island of Kharg, an important area for pearl fishing, where they unloaded the goods of Khwāja Minas, including indigo from India, Indian textiles and other commodities, which were not sold in Basra due to the unprofessional work of his agent. However, from various sources

²⁶⁸ In their chapter on the autonomy and integration of the Armenian mercantile network, Michel Aghassian and Kéram Kévonian give a brief, but a very elaborate explanation to the confusion about Minases mentioned earlier. See Michel Aghassian and Kéram Kévonian, “The Armenian Merchant Network: Overall Autonomy and Local Integration,” in *Merchants, Companies and Trade: Europe and Asia in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge University Press, 1999): 71, footnote 11.

²⁶⁹ Aslanian, *Ibid.*, 161.

published in scholarly articles²⁷⁰ we find out that *Hopewell* belonged to the famous merchant, the President of Armenians in Surat a Minas, the namesake of our Minas, son of P‘anos, who passed away in 1687, whereas Minas, son of P‘anos, passed away in 1701.

When I discuss below the financial and commercial activities of the Minasian family firm from around 1684 to 1700, it will be clear from the content of the four dozen letters, that Minas son of P‘anos also traded with some of the commodities that were a part of the cargo on *Hopewell*. Interestingly, he was very much informed about the trade between Safavid Iran and India, just like his namesake in Surat. This presumably was due to not only the fact that as a head of the firm he was obliged to be up to date about the market prices and fluctuations in every area his family firm network covered, but also arguably due to his own earlier experience of trading between Basra and Surat and maybe other ports in India. Unfortunately, we have no archival records to shed light on the earlier life of Khwāja Minas, son of P‘anos, but we do know that in 1692 he claimed in one of his letters, that he had traded for 45 years, 17 out of which he had been in Isfahan.²⁷¹ That means

²⁷⁰ See, among others, Charles Boxer, “A Portuguese Document of 1670 concerning Khwaja Minaz,” *Indica*, 13 nos. 1-2 (Bombay, 1976): 83-92; João Teles e Cunha, “Armenian Merchants in Portuguese Trade Networks in the Western Indian Ocean in the Early Modern Age,” in *Les Arméniens dans le Commerce Asiatique au Début de l'Ère Moderne*, ed., Sushil Chaudhury and Kéram Kévonian (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2007): 197-252; Shireen Moosvi, “Armenians in Asian Trade 16th and 17th Centuries,” *Ibid.*, 103-112.

²⁷¹ «Ես ԽԵ տարի բազրգանութիւն ամ արարել, ԺԷ տարին Ըսսպահան ամ արարել»: “I have been a merchant for 45 years, 17 out of which [I have been trading] in Isfahan.” See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 87.

that Minas decided to settle in Isfahan in 1675 permanently. If we assume that he traded as a *commenda* agent starting at the age of around 20, if not earlier, then he gained experience for around thirty years, after which he settled in Isfahan and most probably started his own firm at the age of around 50 years old. As already stated, Minas's name was mentioned among 23 prominent merchants of New Julfa in 1671, around the time when he was an already established merchant in Isfahan and when he most probably started his family firm. Starting from around 1684, from when we have dozens of commercial letters to prove that Minas mainly resided in Isfahan till his death in 1701.²⁷² Minas's family, as the majority of the families in New Julfa, was most probably deported to New Julfa, Isfahan by Shah 'Abbas the Second in 1604-1605. Harutiwn Tēr-Hovhaneants' only mentions that Khwāja Minas, son of P'anos was from the family of Tarkhaneans, although it is hard to identify where he took this information from due to the lack of a footnote. I was not able to trace the family of Tarkhaneans to Old Julfa or any neighboring towns, supposing that Tēr-Hovhaneants' was right. Taking all of this into consideration, Khwāja Minas, son of P'anos was most probably himself the founder of the family firm or the family name changed after him, thus starting a new family and a family firm named Minasian after him.

The primary sources pertinent to the history of the Minasian family firm can be classified in three groups: the early history of the Minasians, which cover the time period roughly between 1670s up until 1708. There is a gap between 1708 and 1740s, which is comprised of a number of scattered documents on the Minasians some of them partially used before by scholars and kept at All Savior's Monastery of New Julfa Archives. The third body of documents are two folders, Lansdowne, Collections 1047 and 1048 at the British Library (covering the time period from 1738

²⁷² British Library, Lansdowne 1048, MS 298.

to 1748²⁷³) and the biggest body of around 2,000 documents from 1730s and 1740s²⁷⁴ found on the Armenian-freighted ship called *Santa Catharina*, whose cargo was confiscated by the English. I will discuss the history of these documents shortly. These last two categories of documents mostly cover the history of the Minasians in roughly 1740s and 1750s, mainly after most of the members of the firm had moved either their business or families or both to India.

That the Minasians or the family of Khwāja P‘anosent‘s were one of the most important families in New Julfa in the second half of seventeenth and first half of eighteenth century is proven by archival data. According to the historiographer of New Julfa, Harutiwn Tēr-Hovhaneants‘, the suburb of New Julfa was divided into districts or *tasnaks*, which literally meant *one tenth* in Armenian. There were twenty *tasnaks* in general, each named after the last name, as Khach‘ikyan and Aslanian mention, of the most prominent family who lived on the respective street.²⁷⁵ They were located in the northern and southern parts, ten on each, of the main avenue of New Julfa, Nazar. In his list of these *tasnaks*, Hovhaneants‘ mentions P‘anosents‘ among other nineteen

²⁷³ See, Sebouh Aslanian, “Trade Diaspora versus Colonial State: Armenian Merchants, the English East India Company, and the High Court of Admiralty in London, 1748–1752,” *Diaspora 13:1* (2004): 52.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 39.

²⁷⁵ Hovhaneants‘, *Patmut‘iwn Nor Jughayu*, 40; Shushanik Khach‘ikyan, *Nor Jughayi Hay Vacharakanut‘yuně yev nra Aevtratntesakan kaperě Rusastani het XVII-XVIII darerum (The Armenian Commerce of New Julfa and its commercial economic Ties with Russia in XVII to XVIII centuries)* (Yerevan: HSSH GA, 1988), 36-38; Aslanian, 186.

families. According to Aslanian, “It would not be an exaggeration to say that together these twenty or so elite families ran the economy of Julfa.”²⁷⁶

As a family firm, we do know that in early 1680s with their headquarters in Isfahan, the Minasians already had factors in Europe, Asia, Ottoman Empire, and Russia, working for them. At the same time, the Minasians had also sent a permanent representative to the Tuscan port of Livorno, who was taking care of their gem business from there. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, in 1679 Agha Mat‘os and Khwāja Minas signed a commenda contract, according to which Agha travelled to Venice and Livorno. Taking into consideration that in 1679 they already made a decision to have a permanent representative in one of the most important cities for gem trade, Livorno, we can assume that the Minasians had been involved in long-distance gem trade long before this date. Khwāja Minas clearly had a big capital of his own and had most probably acquired it himself being a *commenda* agent. It is probable that while being a commenda agent, he traded in diamonds and gems, as his knowledge of the latter is clear from his commercial correspondence, as well as the fact that he chose to make gems one of the most important commodities with which his firm traded. For instance, in 1690 he received a consignment of diamonds and other gems from one of his agents in India, which as he mentions “...were not priced. I instead priced them according to local weights...”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 148.

²⁷⁷ «Ներքոյ գրիլս դալիլն Հնդստանայ եկած էր, զին չէր գրած ես տեղս զին դրեցի տեղիս մազանովն, այս է ներքոյ գրեցաւ»: “Some of what is written below came from India. It was not priced, so I priced [the goods] according to the local weights.” See *The Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas*, Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di venezia, P.D. 66.c, folio 3.

Interestingly enough, the accounting ledger discussed in the previous chapter only provides information on one of Minas's sons, K'anān, whose involvement in the gem trade recorded in the accounting ledger started in 1679. It involved sending a consignment to Agha Mat'os via Istanbul in 1684.²⁷⁸ The rest of the consignments were paid for by Minas himself and a certain Petros, who was most probably the business partner of the Minasians. Petros was not a family member, at least to the best of our knowledge and he was also not mentioned in the initial commenda contract, signed by Agha and Minas.

In over forty business letters discussed from 1680s and 1690s and sent to Minasian agents all over Eurasia, Khwāja Minas's name is always listed first. Although they all belonged to the same firm, his sons' names are mentioned depending on the transaction or the letter itself. Some letters specifically differentiate between the specific son's capital which suggests that while the capital to start a family firm was collected from all the extended family, each brother had their own share in the business ventures of the firm and was rewarded with the revenue according to what each had invested in the first place. For example, from a document that does not have a date (it surely was written sometime before 1697, before Khwāja Minas's eldest son K'anān passed away) we learn that K'anān sent a consignment with turquoise and diamonds with Melk'um di Mat'os. The latter was supposed to take the consignment to Europe and hand it to Agha.²⁷⁹ Earlier, in April

²⁷⁸ Ibid., folio 11.

²⁷⁹ ASFi) "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, MS 61. I was able to find this same consignment listed in the accounting ledger from Museo Correr discussed in the previous chapter. From the ledger it is clear that the consignment under discussion was shipped from Iran in January 1682. See, MS P.D. 66.c, Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di Venezia, folio 4. "The reason for this letter is that me, K'anān, son of Khwāja Minas gave Melk'um, son of

1695 Martiros, son of Margara Avakshēnts drew a bill of exchange from Rustam, son of Simon worth of 75 *‘abbāsīs* to be delivered to K’anan, Khwāja Minas’s son. Martiros mentions in this document that “the above-mentioned money is from the account of my master K’anan.”²⁸⁰

Another undated document, most probably from the same time period, is written by K’anan himself, where he talks about a number of consignments that he sent to Agha Mat’os in Europe. The consignment included 14 parcels of turquoise of different sizes, overall 5373 units, as well as diamonds which Melk’um, Agha’s brother was going to take to Agha in Europe to be sold. This document clearly shows that K’anan, before separating himself from the family firm, worked both with and separate from the firm. It also seems that during his father’s life K’anan was the only son who made separate business transactions employing the same network of agents as the firm itself and had his own initial capital which he invested in the business.

In 1686 Petros writes to Agha asking him to sell his portion of commodities separately, which included ten chests of thick yellow brass tinsel of good quality, five chests of white thin wires

Mat’os commodities with a list and sent it to Europe. Here are the commodities [given to him]: first, 14 parcels of big and small turquoise, the sum of which is 5373 units, the overall weight of turquoise is 269,75 drams, also 13 units of ? diamonds weighing 18, 5 carats, as well as 11 units of ? ? diamonds weighing 2,8~ carats.”

«Պատճառ գրոյս այս է, որ ես՝Մինասի որդի Քանանըս Մայթոսի որդի Մելքումին թասվիլով ապրանք տվի, աղարկեցի Փռանկըստան, որ տված ապրանքըն էս ներքոյ գրածըսայ նախ տասն և չոր պատտիս մնծ պըգտիկ ֆիրուզայ քուլիին, որէ դանայ խինգ հազար երեք խերուր սէտանասուն երեք և էլ քուլի ֆիրուզան քաշնայ ԲՃԾԹ III դրամ (269,75), բարբաթ էլ ԺԳ (13) դանայ թախտայ ավմագ, որէ քաշն ԺԸ || (18,5) դիրեթ, բարբաթ էլ ԺԱ (11) դանայ դալթ թախտայ ավմագ, որէ քաշն Բ||= (2,875) դիրեթ...»

²⁸⁰ «Էս վերոյ փուղս իմ աղայ պարոն Քանհանին կոնթէայ »: See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 54.

made of silver (“Marca Argenta”), corals and other commodities. The money from the profit of sales of these commodities was to be sent with a certain Mirza to Isfahan and be handed to Petros. As other documents and letters dated from the second half of 1680s, this one too mentions currency deterioration and crisis in the Safavid Empire. Petros complains that *tuman* had devalued so much that whatever profit they had coming in was only being spent on bread and water and that there was no money available for commerce. He goes on saying that if there is a possibility to sell the merchandise and instead bring *marchils*²⁸¹ into Basra and India, then whatever has been lost can be replaced.²⁸² He also adds that “These days whoever comes from Europe and takes *marchils* to Basra or India is the one making profit.”²⁸³ The negative effect the monetary deterioration took on merchants of Iran is clearly reflected in Minasian letters from 1680s. Rudi Matthee, when talking about the coinage depreciation in Iran in the second half of the seventeenth century, mentions how it affected the ordinary and poor people of Iran, who “...did not have the same option as merchants, who increasingly avoided Iran’s silver currency, preferring gold ducats of foreign provenance.”²⁸⁴

That the trade in precious gems and coral conducted by Minasians continued on pretty much unaltered after the deaths of both Khwāja Minas and Agha Mat‘os in 1701 and 1709 respectively,

²⁸¹ This is a reference to silver currency used in the Mediterranean and was most likely a piaster or pesos de ocho, the Mexican/Spanish silver coin known in English as pieces of eight.

²⁸² ASFi “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, MS 127.

²⁸³ Ibid. «Դարձեալ էս ժամանակիս Ֆռանգըստանայ գողողն ինչ մարթ մառչիլայայ բերում տանում Բասրայ կամ Հընդըստան էնայ շախ առում»:

²⁸⁴ Rudi Matthee, *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 92.

is visible from a lengthy accounting ledger, which is at the same time a commenda contract from 1720 from Isfahan between P‘anos, son of Herapet and his masters Safraz, Emniaz, sons of Khwāja Minas, and Grigor (either son of Set‘ Agha or Sarfraz).²⁸⁵ According to the contract, P‘anos received 550 tumans in goods and 50 tumans in cash, overall 600 tumans. P‘anos was going to travel from Isfahan to Europe and then India to sell the goods. The profit was going to be shared in the following way: the profit made from 470 tumans worth of goods was going to go to the masters, whereas the profit from the remaining 130 tumans worth of goods was going to go to P‘anos.²⁸⁶ In 1721, P‘anos is already in Livorno, which means that even though their permanent representative in Livorno, Agha Mat‘os had passed away, the Minasians were still sending their agents there. Here P‘anos sells diamonds, gold, silk, and buys coral among other things. A year later he was in Izmir, where he sold indigo, mirror, Gilan silk, coral and other commodities.²⁸⁷ From Izmir he goes to Tokat, then Diyarbekir, Baghdad, and Basra.

²⁸⁵ This ledger is quoted in Hovhaneants‘, who gives a very brief description of it. It is also quoted in Khach‘ikyan, who by relying on Hovhaneants‘, claims that P‘anos received 6000 tumans as an initial capital and argues that Hovhaneants‘ makes a mistake in naming the right currency and that 6000 tumans was a huge amount of money, therefore the currency should be in rupees. However, having access to the original documents, it is clear the Hovhaneants‘ writes that P‘anos received 600 tumans as an initial capital. Hovhaneants‘ then claims that the profit from the whole contract added up to 36804 tumans and 4 rupees, a profit of around 6134% in 10 years. The last piece of the original accounting ledger is torn, and the amount of the profit is missing, therefore I rely on Hovhaneants‘ number. See Hovhaneants‘, *Patmut‘iwn Nor Jughayu*, 161.

²⁸⁶ ASMA, Box 35/2 (Merchant Accounting Ledgers), MS 5, folio 1.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

In 1725 P'anos arrived at the port of Surat, where among other things he sold the pearls brought from Basra and emeralds brought from Livorno.²⁸⁸ In 1727 P'anos was dead, as we find another accounting ledger in the same archive written in Surat, which mentions that Petros son of Costand had received goods from P'anos in Surat in 1727 to trade with them.²⁸⁹ Later in the ledger Petros, son of Costand mentions that P'anos, son of Herapet was his master. Either P'anos had handed the rest of the goods he had not had time to sell on behalf of the Minasian family firm or was doing business of his own seven years after the initial commenda contract was signed with three Minasian family members. In 1728 Petros, son of Costand, had travelled from Surat to Basra. He also takes a bill of exchange from “Avet from our firm” to hand it to Aghamal in Surat, who later, in 1747 became the head of the firm.²⁹⁰ Both of these ledgers contain hundreds of entries about the gems

²⁸⁸ Emeralds in the early modern period mostly came from Colombia and were considered a luxury commodity in India. “In the period preceding the intensified interconnectedness of the world that began in the 1860s, for example, exclusivity often lay in the exotic character of an object hard to procure because of its special origins—like Colombian emeralds in India; or mummies and shrunken heads being especially macabre examples,” quoted from Bernd-Stefan Grewe and Karin Hofmeester, Introduction, *Luxury in Global Perspective, Objects and Practices, 1600-2000*, 9. On emerald trade in three early modern gunpowder empires, see Kris Lane, *Colour of Paradise: The Emerald in the Age of Gunpowder Empires*, Yale University Press, 2010.

²⁸⁹ [Թիւն] փոքր ԱՃԺԲ Ադամ Ը Սուրաթն եւ Կոստանդի որդի Պետրոսըս ընկերացելի սարմայի վեռել ողորմաց հոգի Հերապետի իմ աղայ պարոն Փանոսէն...»: “In the year 112 [1727], eighth day of Adam [April 27] I Petros, son of Costand, entered into a commenda partnership and received capital from the deceased P'anos, son of Herapet.” See Archives of All Savior’s Monastery (AASM), Box 35/2, MS 8.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

that these agents were buying and selling in 1720s on behalf of the Minasian family firm. It seems that the list of gems did not change much from around 40 years earlier. The Minasians were still trading with corals, travelling back and forth to Livorno.

We get a clearer sense of the family being regarded as an established firm with a joint fund in a much later document, signed by the representatives of all four sons of Khwāja Minas, excluding K‘anan who had separated himself from the household earlier, as already mentioned. In a notarized copy of a document from 1739²⁹¹ discussed in details and partially translated in Khach‘ikyan and Herzig, the son of Khwāja Minas, Emniaz, Seth Agha’s son Grigor, Sarfraz’s son Aghamal and Elias’s son Tsatur looked at the ledgers of the family firm, which they called *sark’ar* in the document, to figure out everyone’s debts to the joint funds of the firm before they all separated and started living in their own homes. Of course, this did not mean the dissolution of the family firm, which clearly was still up and running at this point. This document confirms that before his death Khwāja Minas had left equal shares of money to his four sons Set‘ Agha, Sarfraz, Elias and Emniaz. He had also built a separate house for Set‘ Agha, which he had left to Set‘ Agha. He had bequeathed the house he lived in to Sarfraz and Elias and had given to Emniaz a bigger sum of money than a house would be worth. In the months of October or November of 1701 Khwāja Minas had passed away. From Minas’s death in 1701 till 1703 the four brothers lived under one roof, their expenses were shared after which Set‘ Agha and Elias had gone to live in Set’s house, whereas Sarfraz and Emniaz had stayed at their house till 1706, when Elias separated from Set’s house and passed away later in 1711. Set‘ Agha died in 1715. Sarfraz had passed away in 1727. Starting from 1702/1703 (we do not have the exact day, only the month, which makes it impossible

²⁹¹ British Library, Lansdowne 1048, f. 298.

to guess whether the actual date is 1702 or 1703)²⁹² till 1739 all four brothers lived under the same roof and did business under the same roof. By this document drawn in 1739, it is stated that all four brothers were owners of their own shares of profit according to their respective partnerships. The word used for partnership in this case is the same word that was used to describe commenda partnerships, *ēnkerut'awn*. Moreover, the document also mentions that if any one of the family members were partners/agents for “someone from the outside,” they would use their respective shares from those partnerships for their own consumption.²⁹³ The document also indicates that all four households could take 50 tumans each year for their expenses.

After closely looking at the withdrawal records and ledgers of the family firm from the death of Minas, the patriarch of the family in 1701 up until 1739, the family members calculated each and everyone's debt to the joint funds of the family. The document mentions that they looked at their expenses, including house expenses, maintenance, events, the inheritances of the women of the family and so on, anything that was “recorded and whatever fell out of the ledgers,”²⁹⁴ which resulted in Emniaz paying 150 tumans, Aghamal paying 450 tumans, his brother Minas and Grigor owed 300 tumans, whereas Grigor and his brother Step'anos paid 970 tumans, which altogether counted to 1870 tumans in debt that was paid back to the joint funds of the family. After settling

²⁹² According to the Julfan Azaria calendar, one adds 1616 for dates before March 31 and 1615 for dates after March 31 and before January 1. Therefore, if there is no specific day or month mentioned and if the date falls before January 1 or after March 31, it is impossible to know the right year of the document for sure.

²⁹³ Lansdowne 1048, f. 298.

²⁹⁴ «... որն դժտար ընկելի որն ընկանելուայ...»: Ibid.

the accounts of the firm, they technically confirmed their kinship and its importance for the future of the firm. While this document did not dissolve the firm, it changed how the firm's partners sons managed it. More specifically, the four partners established that they were no longer going to live under the same roof and according to Herzig, took "an important step towards becoming four separate family firms, without mutual powers or liabilities."²⁹⁵ This meant that for the first time since 1680s, the Minasian family firm did not have a single manager, the patriarch Minas, but was managed by the four partners under a joint directorship.

According to Shushanik Khach'ikyan, however with no specific reference, but counting each of the brother's death date as the beginning of the next brother's term, the Minasian family firm was led by Set' Agha from 1702 to 1715, who was not the eldest son, but his brother K'anana had passed away earlier in 1697. He was followed by Sarfraz from 1715 to 1728 and then Emniaz till he was killed in 1747. It has to be noted that K'anana had separated himself from the firm or the family in general some time before Minas's will was written. The latest indication of K'anana's name is in a document from 1695, which is addressed from Minas, K'anana, Set' Agha and Sarfraz to their agents all around their trading network. However, in the beginning of the letter, in the margins, Agha Mat'os, where he would presumably make notes about the letters received, mentions that the letter was written by Minas and there was nothing written on behalf of K'anana.²⁹⁶ Presumably he had separated from the firm right before he passed away in 1697 leaving three sons.

²⁹⁵ Edmund Herzig, "The Armenian Merchants of Julfa: A Study of Premodern Trade." (PhD diss., St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1991), 176.

²⁹⁶ «Մեր աղայ պարոն Մինասէն գրած, պարոն Քանանին կողմանէ ոչինչ չէ գրած»: "Written from our master Minas, nothing is written on behalf of K'anana." See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, f. 93.

The commercial activity of Minasians from 1679 to 1700 is the topic of discussion for the next chapter. As we have already seen, the Minasians were still active in diamond and gem trade even after the death of Khwāja Minas. Khach‘ikyan in her review of the Minasian family firm mentions two commenda agents who worked for the Minasians after Minas’s death, Vanjeli and Aghazar. Vanjeli appears in multiple documents kept at the Florence state archives, which proves the he was the commenda agent of Khwāja Minas, who then continued working for Minas’s sons Sarfraz and Set‘ Agha.

In 1710 Catholicos Alexander of Ējmiatsin (1706–1714) wrote a letter to Minas’s son Sarfraz informing him that the above-mentioned Vanjeli was in Ējmiatsin and was planning on returning to New Julfa. Alexander was asking Sarfraz and Set‘ to help him close his account with the firm for the work he had done for them for 12 years.²⁹⁷ In his letter, the Catholicos writes to Set‘ Agha and Sarfraz, saying, “...Mr. Set‘ Agha and Mr, Sarfraz are not such people and their conscience will not let them hurt or give people trouble, especially that you are one of their own...”²⁹⁸ Therefore, in 1698 Vanjeli had most probably signed a *commenda* contract with then Minas, who passed away a few years after that. This excerpt from Alexander’s letter is interesting for at least two reasons. First, that the Catholicos of all Armenians in Ējmiatsin knew both Sarfraz and Set‘ Agha well enough to make assumptions about their behavior. Second, his reference to the fact that Vanjeli was “one of their own” itself shows that there most probably was an established set of

²⁹⁷ Khach‘ikyan, p. 97.

²⁹⁸ Hovhaneants‘, *Patmut‘iwn Nor Jughayu*, 150. Written in Armenian. «... Պարոն Սէթաղէ և Պարոն Սաֆրազն այնպիսի մարդիկ չեն և այնպիսի խղճմտանաց տէր չեն որ մարդոյ ուժ անեն և նեղութիւն հասուցանեն, եւս առաւել քեզ որ իւրեանցն ես...».

codes and conduct of honor when it came to taking care of the agents who worked for the family firm. In 1683, we meet Vanjeli in a different archive, as he appears to be receiving Minas's letter discussing a purchase and sales of coral. While it is not clear where he was at the point when he received Minas's letter, Vanjeli added to the copy of the original letter that he received from his master Minas, in which he was the addressee along with Herapet and Harut'iwn, and then sent a copy of it to Agha Mat'os.²⁹⁹

After the Afghan invasion of Iran in 1719 and Nadir Shah's overall predatory policies on the population of Isfahan, the New Julfan mercantile network had already started to collapse.³⁰⁰ However, the most important trigger event of the network's collapse was the 1747 "auto da fé" incident, discussed earlier, which "...caused the mass exodus of Julfa's leading families. Some of these families, including the Minasians, fled by caravan to the Ottoman-held cities of Baghdad and Basra as well as to the Persian Gulf port of Bandar rig, which they used as a springboard to India."³⁰¹ Tēr Hovhaneants' writes in the nineteenth century, that in fear of Nadir Shah's atrocity towards one of their family members, Minasians "left Julfa and migrated to Russia, and till this day there are descendants of this family in Tiflis..."³⁰² Minasian family members also moved to different parts of the Indian Subcontinent, including Calcutta, Chinsura, Murshidabad, as well as

²⁹⁹ ASFi) "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, MS 76.

³⁰⁰ Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 202-214; Herzig, "The Armenian Merchants of Julfa," 102-109.

³⁰¹ Aslanian, *Ibid.*, 161.

³⁰² Hovhaneants', *Patmut'iwn Nor Jughayu*, 146-147.

present-day Indonesia and Malaysia.³⁰³ Perhaps the most fascinating piece of evidence shedding light on the later history of the Minasian family firm was discovered fairly recently and is connected to a capture of a ship carrying thousands of documents pertaining to the Minasian family firm. Emniaz, son of Khwāja Minas, and Aghamal, son of Emniaz’s brother Sarfraz had sent Minas di Elias, Khwāja Minas’s grandson, to Calcutta to take care of their family firm’s maritime business venture. Minas was supposed to “...hire a vessel and travel on it as “super cargo” to Basra, where he would dispose of the Bengali merchandise and credit the profit thereof into the firm’s account.”³⁰⁴ In 1746 Minas rented a Portuguese ship, named *Santa Catharina* to sail from Calcutta to Basra. The *Santa Catharina* fell victim to the ongoing wars between France and Great Britain and was confiscated by an English captain in 1748 during its last leg of the journey from Cape Comorin back to Calcutta. The ship was carrying the supercargo, more specifically the above-mentioned Khwāja Minas di Elias and Johannes di Gregory, another Minasian family firm member, as well as thousands of papers, which were then sent to London after the confiscation. Santa Catharina papers, now kept at the National Archives of Great Britain (formerly the Public Records Office in Kew Gardens) as well as the Lansdowne manuscripts at the British Library, count to around 2,000 in number and contain contracts, mercantile letters, an accounting ledger, religious documents and more, mostly written in New Julfan Armenian dialect, Persian, Italian, Latin, etc. These documents shed light on the history of the Minasian family firm in 1730s and 1740s particularly, but are more importantly a unique collection of documents on the commercial

³⁰³ Aslanian, *Ibid.*, 161.

³⁰⁴ Aslanian, “Trade diaspora Versus Colonial State,” 56.

history of the Indian Ocean in the first half of the eighteenth century.³⁰⁵ From a very brief look at these documents, it seems that the Minasians had shifted their attention from trading in the Mediterranean to instead extending their trading activities in between Iran and the Indian Subcontinent.

THE EXCHANGE OF INDIAN DIAMONDS AND MEDITERRANEAN CORAL

Research on Armenian New Julfan merchants gives historians of economic history an opportunity to have a comprehensive understanding of the luxury commodity market of the early modern period. Minasian family firm utilized both the caravan and the sea routes interchangeably while transporting their goods, in this case mainly gems and diamonds from the Indian Subcontinent to Europe, as well as bringing back Italian or generally European glass, Venetian beads and other commodities to Iran and India. Their agents transported purchased goods from Livorno or Venice to Aleppo, then Baghdad to Basra and beyond, all the way to the Indian Subcontinent. By conducting this trade, Armenian merchants competed against the private trade of diamonds, corals and other commodities happening against the backdrop of the larger trade conducted by the East India Companies of the time.

³⁰⁵ This archive was discovered by Dr. Sebouh Aslanian. For the details of this fascinating story, see Aslanian, “Trade diaspora versus Colonial State.” I would like to thank him for providing me with the digital copies of the documents found on *Santa Catharina*. Some of them will be utilized in my discussion of the firm in the next chapter.

Because diamonds and gems were convenient commodities to trade with for private merchants, it is important to distinguish the official trade in diamonds conducted by the East India companies of the time and the private trade. As Emily Erikson has defined in her book on English East India Company's monopoly and private trade, "The private trade was any trade not undertaken by one of the large chartered organizations of the early modern period. In many of the early overseas companies' employees participated in the private trade while in the service of these monopolies. The degree to which the private trade was tolerated varied across the different organizations."³⁰⁶ Private trade under the auspices of the above-mentioned companies had a sporadic nature, meaning that it was prohibited most of the time, only to resume for a number of years and go back to being prohibited again. In the context of the commerce conducted by European chartered companies, private trade played a big role in the overall performance of the company. First, because when it was allowed, private trade conducted by the agents of the company would harm company's trading activities and their overall numbers. Merchants who benefited from being involved in private trade would usually trade on their own account and for their own benefit. Second, no private merchants could be involved in the trade of diamonds and gems if the East India Companies did not allow it officially. For example, one of the most important groups involved in gem trade in the early modern period, the Jewish merchants, were not allowed to be stockholders of the EIC, which therefore would not allow them to conduct trade in diamonds and gems on the company's account. Gedalia Yogev writes "...the Company demanded higher dues from diamond importers who were not stockholders. This meant that Jews, on the whole, were at a disadvantage compared with non-

³⁰⁶ Emily Erikson, *Between Monopoly and Free Trade: The English East India Company, 1600–1757* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 13.

Jewish competition, as most of them were still aliens and as such could not be stockholders in the Company.”³⁰⁷ While Armenian merchants were not a part of the private trade happening within the English East India Company (EIC), they nonetheless had the right to use the EIC ships for their personal business ventures, thus in a sense competing with the company merchants.

It has already been established by scholars, such as Yogev, Trivellato and others, that coral was an indispensable part of early modern Mediterranean gem trade and that no long-distance trade of Indian diamonds in Europe was complete without the exchange of Mediterranean coral between Europe and the Indian Subcontinent. Yogev notes that, “The jewellery trade between India and Europe has always been a two-way business. India supplied Europe with diamonds, garnets, rubies, and eastern pearls, and Europe exported to India coral and amber; later Europe also exported emeralds and western pearls from South and Central America.”³⁰⁸ According to him, earlier, before the sea route to India was discovered, coral was traded by Arab merchants via Alexandria and later became a very important commodity for the Portuguese with its center in Goa.³⁰⁹

Trivellato, who has recently written a chapter on the exchange of Mediterranean coral and Indian diamonds and the role of Sephardim in it, mentions that the importance of coral trade in the early modern period had to do with “the expansion of European trade in the Indian Ocean” and because coral was “one of the few European commodities that was accepted in return for Asian goods...” In Asia coral had a symbolic meaning. According to Tavernier, the famous seventeenth

³⁰⁷ Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral*, 85.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 102.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 103.

century gem merchant and traveler, “the common people wear it and use it as an ornament for the neck and arms throughout Asia, but principally towards the north in the territories of the Great Mogul, and beyond them, in the mountains, of the Kingdoms of Assam and Bhutan.”³¹⁰

Armenian merchants were aware of the importance of coral, which they used to call *bust*, *coralos*, but mainly by its Persian term *marjan/měřjam*. This is demonstrated in multiple manuscripts mostly found at the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran) in Yerevan, Armenia. In these manuscripts³¹¹ coral is listed along with other precious and semi-precious gems. In MS 7325 from eighteenth century, for example, coral is considered to have had prophetic and superstitious characteristics, mainly being able to foretell if the sick person would die or not. The manuscript mentions that coral had the power that “...if attached to the person, who is going to get sick or if the sick is going to die, loses its color when it touches the skin, and if the person is not going to die or get sick, its color stays on completely.”³¹² A trade manual that belongs to the authorship of Aghamal di Sarfraz Khwāja Minasiants‘ from Julfa (Aghamal, son of Sarfraz from the Khwāja Minasian family) is an eighteenth-century unpublished manual on the variety of gemstones and where they came from. The manuscript also contains long lists of tables with

³¹⁰ Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. 2, (London: Macmillan And Co., New York, 1889), 136.

³¹¹ Matenadaran, MS 520, folio 164b; MS 1786, folio 187; MS 7325, folios 3a-3b.

³¹² «Ունի գորութիւն որ թէ մարդն հիւանդանալու լինի կամ հիւանդն մեռանելու նա այս կարմիր մէրճէնս որ վրան կապես որ ի միսն դիպնաւ նա կորսընէ զիւր գոյնն և թէ մեռանելու նա այս կարմիր մէրճէնս որ վրան կապես որ ի միսն դիպնաւ նա կորսընէ զիւր գոյնն: Եվ թէ մեռանելու կամ հիւանդանալու չէ, նա զիւր գոյնն ամբողջ տեղն մնայ»: See Matenadaran, MS 7325, folio 3a.

measures, currencies and weights, and how they differed from city to city, and how merchants can deal with problems arising during their journeys. Aghamal mentions that “coral is profitable everywhere in the world where there is civility, and it is even more profitable in Bhutan, India and China.”³¹³ He then adds that the coral is more profitable when whether it is polished, round coral or the raw variety, the coral is red, with water and has clarity.³¹⁴

Aside from manuscripts and treaties describing the gems of the world and their symbolic and spiritual powers, coral has not been discussed in scholarly literature as an important commodity that Armenians traded with in the early modern period.³¹⁵ Nevertheless, dozens of archival documents from the second half of the seventeenth century reveal multiple transactions of coral transfers to India by the agents of the Minasian family firm.

In mid-seventeenth century Livorno, the famous Tuscan port, became prominent in coral fishing and manufacturing. We are aware of an Armenian, David Rustam from the Sceriman family, who owned a coral plant in 1720s.³¹⁶ It is unknown to us whether the Minasian family firm

³¹³ «Աշխարհումս ինչ տեղ քաղաքավարութիւն կայ, ամենայն տեղ խարջայ եւ շատ եւ էլ խարջ պ բութանդայ երկրումն, Հնդստան եւ Չին...»: Matenadaran, MS 5994, folio 16.

³¹⁴ «...տաշածն կուուլակն էլ, փանջէն էլ, լեվն էն պ, որ կարմիր ըռանկին լինի, ջրով եւ յիստակ»: See folios 9a-10a.

³¹⁵ It is important to mention that neither of three scholars, including Shushanik Khach'ikyan, Edmund Herzig and Sebouh Aslanian, who have extensively written on New Julfan merchants and the commodities they traded in, have mentioned coral as an important commodity of trade for Julfan merchants.

³¹⁶ Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 230.

agents acquired coral on the spot from the main plants, most of them owned by Jews,³¹⁷ or if they had middlemen who would acquire the Livornese coral for them. The Minasian documents cover the time period between 1680s and 1710, the early period of the rise of Livorno as a coral fishery and manufacturing center. Marseille too was an important coral producing center in the early modern period, along with Genoa and Naples.³¹⁸ Marseille and Izmir were important trading centers for Armenians to buy coral. Olivier Raveux's latest article on coral trade demonstrates that they were one of the main buyers of the coral from Marseille in Smyrna in the second half of the seventeenth century.

François Garnier and François Tiran were two merchants from Marseille who both sold coral in Izmir in 1670s and 1680s. Tiran was Garnier's representative and the one receiving coral shipments while he resided in Izmir between 1679 and 1684. It seems that the main buyers of their coral were the Armenian merchants, who were then travelling to Persia and elsewhere by the caravan trade routes.³¹⁹ As we will see below, the Minasians too used coral as a commodity of exchange in Izmir.

Yogev looks at the coral trade conducted by the English East India Company and the Jewish diamond merchants in London over the period of a hundred years starting from roughly 1620s to 1720s. During this time, coral remained one of the most important commodities exported to India by the English East India Company. In around 1660s, as Yogev mentions, instances with EIC

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral*, 103.

³¹⁹ Olivier Raveux, "The Coral Trade in Smyrna at the End of the 17th Century Perceived Through Several of François Garnier's Business Deals," *Rives Méditerranéennes: Au cœur des Mutations du Négoce en Méditerranée, Les Acteurs et Leurs Choix (Smyrne, xviiie-xxe siècle)* 59 (2019): 8-12.

agents buying low quality coral, as well as instances of smuggling coral to India began to appear, which forced the EIC to allow for coral trade to “pass gradually into the hands of the diamond merchants,” which technically meant that coral trade too moved into the realm of private trade.³²⁰

The Minasians transferred their coral first and foremost to India by their agents. Julfan Armenians, therefore, while trading in the most “popular” commodities of the time, transported them by combining the caravan trade routes familiar to them, while at the same time making an efficient use of the maritime routes, especially after the signing of the agreement between Armenian merchants and the EIC in 1688. According to the latter, Armenian merchants were allowed to use the EIC ships for cheaper protection costs and from whichever port they saw fit. Armenians were also equipped with the crucial information of the reliable caravan routes, which gave them the opportunity to choose whether goods were going to be transported by sea or by land.

According to Trivellato, who explores families that traded in a later period than the period covered by my archival documents, the Sephardim sent most of their coral from Italy to London and Lisbon (then to be transported to India via EIC and the Portuguese ships), as well as to North Africa, Amsterdam, Aleppo and Venice. As opposed to Sephardi Jews, the Minasians seem to have been shipping at least some of their coral to the Ottoman Empire to be exchanged or sold there. For example, in 1689, Hovagim, son of Grigor from the family of Topch‘ents‘, most probably an agent of the Minasian family firm or Agha Mat‘os’s agent in Izmir, made a deal to exchange his coral and cash for silk from Gilan. The deal took place in Izmir, where Hovagim paid in cash for part of the silk and with coral for the rest. A document about the bargaining negotiation between

³²⁰ Ibid., 106-107.

two Armenian merchants was signed by middlemen and other merchants and sent to Agha Mat'os in Livorno.³²¹

In another document, written in 1687 in Livorno by P'anos, son of Avetik', a Julfan merchant, received a consignment of Venetian beads, mirror and coral from Venice.³²² In another letter from 1683 Khwāja Minas informs his agents throughout their network that 10-15 days ago they sent two men to Baghdad to buy polished and branch coral. The document also mentions that they (Minas and his colleagues) had received a letter from Aleppo with information about 12000 litres of raw and 7000 litres of polished coral, although it is not clear as to where these corals came from and where they were going to be shipped from Aleppo.³²³ The Minasian letters are significant with the kind of information they provide about market conditions of the time. For example, in one of the letters sent by Khwāja Minas to his agents in Europe and elsewhere in 1684, Minas mentions that polished coral was sold the second it arrived at Surat and people paid 40 for 48.5 *panjah*³²⁴ for it. Even if it was not sold for that price, Minas mentions that Aflatun, one of the agents of the

³²¹ ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, f. 44.

³²² ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, f. 47.

³²³ Ibid., f. 76. «Մին էլ էտ կայ որ մեք էստի ժ-ժԵ օրով յառէչ Բ տղայ աղարկեցինք Բաղտաստ էն տեղն փանջայ ու տաշած մոջամի համար ջազմ սփարիչ գրեցինք: Էն օր Ե այ Հալաբայ մեզ մին գիր արեկ գրած էր թէ ժԲՌ լիտրայ փանջայ, ԷՌ լիտրայ տաշած մոջամ մինէլ խաի կայ»: [We also sent two guys to Baghdad 10-15 days ago and wrote an order for raw and polished coral. On the fifth day we received a letter from Aleppo saying that there were only? 12000 litres of raw and 7000 litres of polished coral [left?].

³²⁴ Iranian currency.

firm had informed that coral was very much in demand and sold well there. Aflatun added, as Minas mentions in his letter, that there was not enough coral in Surat and advised to ship more of it to India.³²⁵

The Minasians were not the only Armenian merchants involved in this exchange trade. Recently the publication of Evelyn Korsch's article on the involvement of the Sceriman family, another prominent Armenian family firm with headquarters in both Iran and Europe, in cross-cultural trade of gems sheds light on how the Sceriman Armenian family conducted trade in gems from the Mediterranean all the way to the Indian Subcontinent with centers and agents in "Venice, Livorno, Rome, Amsterdam, Cadiz, Paris, Vienna, Moscow, Constantinople, Basra, Bagdad, Madras and Pegu (present-day Bago in Myanmar)."³²⁶ Much like the Scerimans, the Minasians too had an extensive network of agents spreading through Bandar 'Abbas, Mashad, Khorasan, Erzurum, Diyarbakir, Izmir, Istanbul, Aleppo, Moscow, Astrakhan, Shamakhi, Shiraz, Amsterdam, Venice, Livorno and other cities.

³²⁵ See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 79, a letter sent in August 9, 1684 from Minas, Petros, K'anan and Seth Agha to their agents Agha, Simon, Hayrapet and Gabriel. «Աստուծով տաշած մոջամն Սուրաթ մտիլ բանին կու ծախսեն Իսթ ԻԿ փանջին ԹԿ կտան, տալման չեն Աֆլաթունն գրելայ թէ տեղս շատ եվելայ ծախման կայ ոչ յալբաթէ բերեք ...»: [With God's [will] the second polished coral enters Surat, it is sold. They give 9Y (?) for 49,5 Y *panjeh* and even if they don't, there is a big demand here [for coral], so bring more.] One *panjeh* weighed 100 mithqals, which was around 425 grams and was a measure for weighing silk in Iran. Aghamal uses the same word *panjeh* to describe unpolished or branch-coral.

³²⁶ Korsch, "The Scerimans," 226.

The coral trade was not always lucrative. For example, in an earlier letter from 1687, sent by the head of the Khwāja Minasian family firm to his agent in Livorno, he advises him not to send more coral, as half of the previous consignment had not been sold yet.³²⁷ The reason for this could have been the excess amount of coral in India due to the decreasing duties imposed by the EIC on imported coral to India, which was the case in 1688, but could have started earlier.³²⁸ On another instance, in a document from 1700, Minas di P‘anos in response to his agent’s complaints about Minas’s letters being insulting, writes: “...son, I have written three-four letters in five years, twenty letters [Minas most probably means 3-4 letters yearly, which amounts to 20 overall] asking you to stay away from polished and raw coral, *londrina* [*English broadcloth*], large beads, and gold brocade. Son, why are you buying and sending [them] without [even] looking?”³²⁹ As we can see from this letter, Minas also advises against European broadcloth, *londrina*, which I assume the Minasians were transporting from Europe to the Ottoman Empire, as well as all the way to India.³³⁰ Cochinael, Venetian glass and beads, mirror, European textiles and coral were the main

³²⁷ «Զինհար մոջամեղէնի և լօնդրինոյ մօտկանէք ոչ, որ դառ կէսն էլ չէ գնացել, ծախսի տեղ խողի զինայ դառնել:» “Do not go near coral and English broadcloth, because even the half [of what we already have] has not been sold. Instead of being profitable, it is dirt cheap.” See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, f. 90.

³²⁸ Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral*, 108.

³²⁹ «Որդի, ես Ե տարի Գ-Դ զիրն իմ գրել, Ի զիր որ զքէ մոջամէ, փանջէ, լօնդրինէ, մեծ մեծ կոտլվէ, գառէ ձեռ քաշէ, որդի դու ինչ առմանաս աղարկում, յետնէն ակամում չես...»: See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, f. 116.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, MS 90.

commodities transported back to the Ottoman and Safavid Empires all the way to India by the Minasian family firm agents. Mediterranean coral was not only taken and sold in the Indian Subcontinent and the Ottoman Empire, but also in Iran. In fact, there were certain types of coral that were most probably more popular in Iran, as mentioned in the same letter, where after advising against buying coral, Minas recommends Agha, that if the latter happens to stumble upon a *hazare* or *jawaq*³³¹ coral, he may buy and ship it to and for selling them in the Iranian markets. A letter from 1685 clearly mentions the route via which their coral was going to be shipped. Minas and others specifically mention that their first order of business was for their agent or whoever else was in Italy at that point to send coral, be it polished, raw, big or medium-sized to India via Basra.³³²

As already seen, the Minasian family firm traded in precious stones across continents and while the majority of archival sources demonstrate that the main destinations of their gem trade were Livorno and Venice in the West and Iran and India in the East, the final destination of a gem changed according to circumstances. For example, the document from 1685, discussed in Chapter One, indicates that a merchant named Aghajan, son of Khachatur from the family of Ter Ananent's went from Izmir to Amsterdam by sea. The order of the head of the firm, Khwāja Minas, was that the rose cut gem from the latter's account "mentioned in the inventory" be taken to Istanbul. The agent, Sinan informed Agha Mat'os, the branch representative of the firm in Livorno, that he took the four diamonds with him to Amsterdam to sell. One of the diamonds, which weighed five carats,

³³¹ Types of coral.

³³² Ibid., MS 89.

the author then was told, to send back to Venice, as Agha di Mat'os, had a buyer for it. We can see from this letter, that the Minasians, as most probably other firms trading in luxury commodities would be, were very flexible about the markets they were targeting at. This document shows that Amsterdam, among other cities, was one of the markets for the Minasians to sell their unpolished gems. Amsterdam was a typical destination for this matter, as along with Antwerp and London, it was the city where most of the raw and unpolished diamonds were being sent to be polished in the early modern period. Second, the Minasian firm agents were good at communicating about the prospects of their business dealings, aiming at getting the most gain from one transaction and they were doing so by relying on a sophisticated system or network of information circulation. As we can see in this case the big diamond was first sent to be sold in Amsterdam, but when it did not (or maybe they were not offered a good price for it) Sinan was ordered to send it back to Agha, based in Livorno or Venice, who already had a potential buyer for it.³³³ Fascinating. The circulation and communication of this kind of rich information on market conditions in distant locations really is crucial for the successful operation of family firms separated from each other across time and space. Epistolary exchange then was central to a family firm's "inner workings" and this could or should be part of your argument or thesis and stated as such in your new intro.

Archival data on Minasians' trade in diamonds and gems at the end of seventeenth and first half of eighteenth centuries is substantial and could serve as a ground for more than one doctoral dissertation. This chapter has made an attempt to shed light on the history of Armenian family firms trading in luxury commodities in the early modern period and it did so by focusing on a single family firm of gem merchants. It has also attempted to give an incentive to starting new

³³³ ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, MS 63.

scholarly discussions on the role of Armenian family firms and their trade in gems, an area of research highly informative of the early modern period and neglected by scholars of global Eurasian long-distance trade up until now. While it is interesting and tempting to examine the various gems, small and big, and their transcontinental journeys, it is the focus of my next chapter to look into the ways Minasians and their networks of agents implemented the business management and decision making of their family firm.

Chapter Four

THE MINASIANS AT THE CROSSROADS OF CARAVAN AND MARITIME TRADE ROUTES: INFORMATION CIRCULATION AND DECISION MAKING

“I write raisins, you buy chickpeas [and] fava beans.”³³⁴

“The biggest key to our profession is being updated promptly.

They have created the postal service for being updated fast.

It is an important tool, but you are underestimating it.”³³⁵

After the Portuguese discovery of the trade route via the Cape of Good Hope, the role of maritime or seaborne trade routes changed the commercial map for Europeans and beyond. The economic, social, and political dynamics of the region were further complicated by the establishment of the English East India Company (EIC) in 1600 and the Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, VOC) in 1602, among others. The inflow of American silver and its use by Europeans to trade with Asia arguably accelerated the formation of a world economy. All the above-mentioned, and especially the advent of European chartered

³³⁴ «Ես չամիչ կգրեմ, դու լարլարու բակլայ կառուս»: See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 88.

³³⁵ «Մեր փեշակին մեծ բանալիքն շուտով լսելնայ, փօստն դարարայ տված շուտ[ո]վ լսելէ համար: Մեծ բանայ, դու պզտիկաս յիմանան»: See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 93.

companies, made early modern global trade more integrated, or at least it appeared so in the scholarly literature.

As already mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, Asian merchants had long been regarded as pedlars as the lion's share of Eurasian trade was attributed to the East India companies of the time. Since Steensgaard and Van Leur, multiple scholars, such as K. N. Chaudhuri,³³⁶ Sebouh Aslanian,³³⁷ Stephen Dale,³³⁸ just to name a few,³³⁹ have refuted their arguments on both

³³⁶ K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the East India Company 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 1978), 137.

³³⁷ Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 99.

³³⁸ Stephen Dale, *Indian merchants and Eurasian trade, 1600-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³³⁹ In their book, Makepeace and Baladouni tackle this topic by stating, "Despite the rich and profitable commerce generated by the European companies in the Indian Ocean, the traditional overland trade, with its wide variety of goods, never lost its importance. On the contrary, alongside the oceanic trade, it continued to thrive well into the eighteenth century." See *Armenian Merchants of the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: English East India Company Sources*, ed. Vahe Baladouni and Margaret Makepeace (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1998), xxi. Morris Rossabi suggests taking into consideration the political, religious and social changes of the decline of the caravan trade. "...though rising costs and competition from the oceangoing trade undermined land commerce across Eurasia, the political disruptions and the religious and social changes of the time must also be considered. These transformations were as critical as the economic pressures challenging merchants who were intent on maintaining the caravan trade." See Morris Rossabi, "The "decline"

the peddler thesis and the decline of overland trade by criticizing their Eurocentrism and underestimation of the importance and magnitude of Asian trade, individual merchants, the decline of small-scale commercial operations by the emergence of East India Companies and so on.

Taking all this into consideration, this chapter attempts to take a different approach from the critiques discussed above. Rather than reviewing the idea of the decline of the caravan trade routes in the seventeenth century and the revisionist literature on it, I argue that it is more beneficial to look at the global trade of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from a larger perspective of a rather organic and simultaneous co-existence of Asian small-scale, organized institutions, such as family firms, who by interchangeably combining the use of overland and maritime trade routes, succeeded in leaving their mark in the long-distance trade of Eurasia. The East India Companies thrived on the ability to conquer and monopolize the maritime routes leading to India, whereas the smaller Asian family firms and individual merchants had the possibility to use the traditional overland routes to their own benefit. Therefore, what made these Asian merchants competitive was the ability of picking and choosing between safer and cheaper maritime routes, both for moving commodities and correspondence.

The Minasian family firm's activities in this period are a great example of this. The head of the family firm, Khwāja Minas, had the ability to deliberately change his commercial decisions depending on the latest updates about market conditions received from his agents all over the network. While they did not have all the privileges that came with state support, some private merchants or diasporic groups nevertheless covered as much of the long distances in terms of their

of the Central Asian Caravan Trade," in *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-distance Trade in the Early Modern World 1350–1750*, ed. Tracy, James D. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 351.

commerce as joint-stock corporations of the early modern period. Despite their modest numbers, the Minasians' *commenda* agents travelled enormous distances from Surat and Bombay in India, Bandar Abbas and Isfahan, all the way to Russia, Livorno, Venice, Amsterdam and London, to name a few destinations.

This chapter seeks to lay the groundwork for further scholarly discussion into the histories of Eurasian family firms and highlights their agency in early modern Asian trade. By looking at around four dozen lengthy mercantile letters of the Minasians, this chapter will demonstrate that unlike the East India Companies of the time that predominantly relied on the maritime trade routes, the Minasian family firm had an advantageous position when it came to choosing the safest trade routes for their agents and goods to be moved, be those overland or maritime. What made the latter possible was the rapid circulation of the latest market development updates through fast correspondence between the head of the firm and his entire network. By combining their excellent knowledge of traditional Eurasian, caravan trade routes, some Armenian merchants such as the Minasian family firm agents, were able to juggle between the trade routes, which provided the safest passage and the biggest profit in the context of minimizing what Frederic Lane called “protection costs” in the beginning of the century. These costs were “the price merchants had to pay in taxes, tolls, fees, and bribes, to ensure the flow of their commodities...,”³⁴⁰ some of which the Minasians compensated for with their knowledge of overland routes, fast correspondence, and informed decision making. This chapter will further show the specifics and the role of correspondence and information flows in the decision-making processes of the Minasian family firm and will demonstrate that their choice of the courier system very much resembled their choice

³⁴⁰ Sebouh Aslanian, “Julfan Merchants and European East India Companies,” 191.

of caravan and maritime trade routes. Finally, it will discuss the commodities that the Minasians traded with, including silver, their smuggling practices, as well as the important role of barter exchange as a means to reduce the risks of transporting cash in the early modern period.

OVERLAND VERSUS MARITIME TRADE

Being considered the main silk merchants in early modern European and Asian commerce, New Julfan Armenian merchants frequented the overland trade routes from Safavid Iran to Izmir in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Other than exporting Iranian silk to Europe, for which Julfans had won the monopoly at a public auction in 1619,³⁴¹ they also transported South East Asian textiles by overland routes from India and Iran to the Levantine ports of Aleppo and Izmir, from where they then travelled to Marseille, Venice, Livorno, Genoa and beyond, using the same caravan trade routes.³⁴² Armenians had been famous to be frequenting the caravan trade routes of Eurasia since the early Middle Ages. According to Chaudhuri, “An ability to measure the risks of

³⁴¹ Julfans won the public auction organized by the Safavid ruler Shah Abbas, against the English East India company in the result of which Julfan Armenian merchants kept the monopoly of Iranian silk exporters till the second of the seventeenth century and beyond. See Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 38; Rudi Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Ira* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 99-105; Edmund Herzig, “The Armenian Merchants of New Julfa, Isfahan: A Study in Premodern Asian Trade” (Doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 1991), 203-206.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 76.

overland trade and a readiness to vary the size of commercial transactions were the special services which the Armenians brought to the trading world of the Middle East, India, and even Europe.”³⁴³

According to Vahan P‘ap‘azyan, the overland routes most frequented by Armenian merchants were Tabriz-Aleppo³⁴⁴ and Tabriz-Izmir, on which Armenians chose to conduct their trade from Iran to the Mediterranean and in between. He argues that the reason for that choice was because those routes passed by many Armenian settlements.³⁴⁵ These routes were not the only ones Armenian merchants travelled and traded on in the seventeenth century, but they certainly were common for Julfans transferring their goods from West to East and East to West. P‘ap‘azyan largely relies on Costand Jughayets‘i’s *Ashkharhazhoghov*,³⁴⁶ who describes the popular overland routes in his manual by giving detailed information about customs fees and locations across the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. According to P‘ap‘azyan, towards the second half of the seventeenth century the Tabriz-Izmir route, which was much longer than the route from Tabriz to

³⁴³ Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia...*, 137.

³⁴⁴ Aleppo- Birecik- Diyarbakir- Bit‘lis- Tatvan- Adilcevaz- Berkri (Muradiye, a town in the Van District of Turkey)-Çors- Tabriz were the main towns on this route. As one can see, the majority of them were located in the Ottoman Empire. See Vahan P‘ap‘azyan, *Hayastani arevtrakan ughinerē mijazgayin arevtri olortum [The Trade Routes of Armenia in the International Commerce of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries]* (Yerevan, 1990), 96-110.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

³⁴⁶ Costand Jughayets‘i, *Vasn norahas mankants‘ ew yeritasartats‘ vacharakanats‘ khrat [Concerning Advice to the Adolescent and to Young Merchants]. More commonly known as Ashkharhazhoghov [Compendium]*, Bodleian folio F14 (Oxford University, United Kingdom).

Aleppo, became more popular thanks to the safety of the roads and cheaper customs fees.³⁴⁷ In short, in order for merchants to move their goods from Aleppo to Tabriz, they had to pay customs and other additional fees at seventeen locations. Meanwhile, on the Tabriz-Izmir route there were only eleven customs posts and the additional costs were cheaper than on the Aleppo-Tabriz route.³⁴⁸

For the Minasians this did not seem to be the case, as on at least one instance Khwāja Minas begged his agents not to load their goods (most probably on a caravan) in Izmir and instead use Aleppo, probably for reasons other than cheaper customs fees. He specifically wrote, “For the love of God load the goods in Aleppo, you better not load them in Izmir.”³⁴⁹

The dominance of overland trade routes in the commercial activities of Julfan Armenians underwent a slight change in the second half of the seventeenth century, when a series of trade agreements were initiated and signed between Julfan Armenians and European East India companies and several states of the time, including the English, French, and Scottish East India Companies, the Spanish *Compania Real de Filipinas*, as well as the Duchy of Kurland, Sweden, and the Russian State. As discussed in an essay by Aslanian on Julfan Armenian merchants and the East India Companies of the time, the main motivation for Julfans in their goal to sign trade

³⁴⁷ P‘ap‘azyan, *Ibid.*, 111.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ «Աստուծոյ խաղթեր համար ապրանքն Հալաբ բառցէք, չնի թէ Իզմիր ապրանք բառնէք:» ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 106.

agreements with the major European participants in global trade in the seventeenth century, was to reduce protection costs.

As opposed to using the traditional overland routes, Julfan merchants had the opportunity of benefiting from cheaper maritime costs by loading their cargo on the vessels of, for instance, the English East India Company. Handling protection costs was perhaps one of the biggest differences in favor of the English East India and other companies operating in India in the early modern period, who had the tools of “internalizing” such costs necessary for safe travels and long-distance trade. While private merchants had to take care of customs fees and taxes on their own, the East India Companies “...themselves produced the protection they needed...”³⁵⁰ This surely undermined the ability of family firms and private merchants to effectively conduct long-distance trade.

As opposed to overland merchants, such as Armenians or South Asian merchants, who were required to buy protection, the chartered companies were able to reduce their protection costs by relying on the support of their state-backed armed forces and cannons both while circumnavigating on the sea and around their factories in the East Indies. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the representatives of extended Armenian families from New Julfa approached the East India Companies of the time with offers to sign agreements, what they had in mind was the opportunity to make a good use of their “internalized” protection. Sailing on the ships of the East India Companies was a much cheaper alternative for the stateless Armenian merchants without armed

³⁵⁰ Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution...*, 152. For an excellent discussion on protection costs in Iraq, see also Dina Rizk Khoury, “Merchants and Trade in early Modern Iraq,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 5-6 (1991): 53-86.

protection of their own. In short, Armenian merchants from New Julfa did not have the opportunities to afford either fortified settlements or armed forces due to their status of a group “devoid of real sovereignty.”³⁵¹

In this regard, the most important agreement the Julfan Armenians signed and the most important in terms of this chapter’s focus was the 1688 agreement with the English East India Company. Although Minasians were not among Armenian New Julfan merchants who signed the agreement with the East India Company, it seems that they benefited from it after all. From the Armenian side the agreement was signed by “the eminent Armenian merchant named Khwāja P’anos Calendar (Ghalandarian), a native of New Julfa and a member of one of its most influential families then residing in London but with an extensive network of contacts in Venice, Marseille, Livorno, Isfahan, Surat, and Madras, representing the Armenian ‘nation.’”³⁵² Although P’anos Calendar was representing the “Armenian nation,” no other Julfan merchants or family firms were mentioned in the agreement. However, based on Minasian documents, it is evident that they made a good use of the agreement’s benefits.

According to Aslanian, “Given the lower protection costs offered by the English East India Company’s agreement terms with the “Armenian Nation” in the 1688 agreement (about 2% to 10 % on most goods including diamonds, corals, cochineal, coffee and “for all Raw Silks of Persia £21 per Ton Freight, but no permission, custom or any other charges whatsoever”) it is no surprise that this would appeal to some Julfans as a more profitable option than transporting their goods

³⁵¹ Sebouh Aslanian, “Julfan Merchants and European East...,” 30.

³⁵² Ibid., 198-199.

overland either north through the Russian route or west across Ottoman territory.”³⁵³ Interestingly, according to the 1688 agreement with the EIC, New Julfans were given the opportunity to benefit from lower fees for the transportation of specifically those goods, which were popular among Julfans trading on the route from Europe to the Indian Subcontinent. Commodities, such as the ones that the Minasian family firm was trading with, were almost fully included on the list.³⁵⁴

³⁵³ Ibid., 201-202.

³⁵⁴ “But whereas all Persons in England do pay for Bullion outwards two Per Cent homeward for Diamonds. For Coral and Amber Beads they shall pay Six Per Cent, for Freight and permission, and for Coral and Amber, raw Cochineil, Quicksilver, Sword blades, Fire-arfolio of all sorts, Haberdashery, wares, Iron of all sorts, wrought or anwrought, Paper, all sorts of Stationery wares, English Looking or Drinking Glasses, and for all sorts of Stationery wares, English Looking or Drinking Glasses, and for all sorts of Norumberg wares, and Merchandise, ten Per Cent for permission, and Six Pounds per Ton Freight; That all sorts of Leather, Venetian wares and Merchandise may he shipped out, permission free, paying only Six pounds Per Ton Freight -For all Cloth or Woollen manufactures of what kind or sorts soever, they shall pay 12 1/2 Per Cent in Lieu of all charges whatsoever excepting only the Freight and the Company's Custofolio in India. For Lead ten Per Cent permission and Three Pounds per Ton Freight: for Provisions of all sorts for eating and drinking Six Pounds per Ton Freight, but no permission : and for all sorts of Goods homeward bound they shall pay in manner and form following, Viz : For Diamonds, Pearls, Rubies all sorts of precious Stones and Ambergraese two Per Cent Freight and permission as aforesaid: for Musk of any kind Six Per Cent for Freight and permission: for Pepper one penny per pound and for Coffee ten Per Cent permission besides Freight; for all raw Silks of Persia £ 21 per Ton Freight, but no permission, custom or any other charges whatsoever, excepting only 2 1/2 Per Cent towards demurrage of our Ships:...” See the full text of the original agreement in Ronald Ferrier, “The Agreement of the East India Company with the Armenian nation, 22nd June 1688,” *Révue des Études Arméniennes* N.S. 7 (1970): 439-443.

The head of the firm, Khwāja Minas, was highly knowledgeable about both the traditional overland and maritime routes leading mainly from Europe and Iran to South Asia. It seems that he had special instructions regarding the trading routes his agents were supposed to take depending on the political and other socio-economic circumstances of the time. For example, the commodities bought in Iran were supposed to be shipped to Russia and from there most probably to Europe via Moscow. The Indian goods shipped to the European markets, were supposed to go via England, thus the English East India Company ships, especially after the 1688 agreement.

The usage of overland routes passing the Ottoman Empire was less encouraged. This was most probably due to higher customs and other fees, as stated in a letter from June 1689, partially translated below.³⁵⁵ Unfortunately, Minas does not further elaborate on the reasons as to why the overland route via the Ottoman Empire had to be avoided. Despite this, the Ottoman Balkan territories were mentioned in the Minasian correspondence on several occasions, namely, the route over the Balkan Peninsula or “Rumēli,”³⁵⁶ as it was called by Julfans. For example, in a letter from 1682 Minasians’ European consignment was going to pass through the Balkan customs, from where it was going to be headed to Erzurum and Diyarberkir, Tabriz, Ghazvin, Mashad and finally Khorasan. This time, as we can see, Iran was the final destination for their European goods to reach, as opposed to India.³⁵⁷ In short, if one were to make a list of the trading routes preferred by

³⁵⁵ ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 133.

³⁵⁶ New Julfans used the Ottoman Turkish term for the Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire, *Rūmēli* (روم الی), which they called «Յուսուսլի».

³⁵⁷ ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 131.

the Minasian agents in order to move their commodities from Iran and India all the way to Russia and Europe in 1680s, London would be their first choice, the route over Moscow in the North was another option, whereas the Ottoman Empire overland routes were less desirable.

The preference list mentioned above remained mostly unchanged and was common for the Minasians in the last quarter of the seventeenth century but could be adjusted immediately if the circumstances called for it. For the Minasians, choosing a maritime or an overland route was conditioned by its safety and the amount of protection costs. For example, in a 1691 letter Minas advised his agents to take their goods via England if it was profitable, otherwise to take them via Moscow. “First, find out if it is safe and profitable and if so undoubtedly [ship] via England. Moscow comes second.”³⁵⁸

Minas even seemed to be harsh on his agents who did not understand the benefits of the overseas route for the firm. For example, in a 1694 letter he rebukes his agent for taking the company’s goods via the overland route. “It is a [sign] of inexperience for one to ship goods via the Ottoman Empire or Iran instead of England.”³⁵⁹ In the same year, when discussing different consignments

³⁵⁸ «Նախ թէ Էմանայ, թէ ձեռ կտայ Ինկլթեռովն յայլաթէ: Երկրորդ Մօսկօվին վերայ»: ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 102.

³⁵⁹ «Անգիտութիւնայ մաղում Ինկլթեռն դրած մարդ Իտոռմաց տունն կամ Իրանայ վերայ իքմին կաղարկէ:» Dated 1694. See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 93.

of goods bought in Europe and intended to be shipped to India, he recommended that his agents ship those goods by sea to India, if possible, otherwise ship them to Shamakhi via Moscow.³⁶⁰

Some letters provide details about the trading conditions in Iran and India along with instructions. For example, in a 1690 letter Minas instructs Agha to send some goods via England. He advises him to load the goods on a vessel when their worth reached the amount of 1000-2000 tumans. He then goes on to instruct him that the goods be loaded on a ship sailing from London to “Mumbai”³⁶¹ (Bombay) as opposed to “Madraspatan,”³⁶² as the ships sailing there “go back to India and the fees are high.”³⁶³ It is not clear as to what Minas meant by saying that the ships that sail from England to Madras go back to India, but what we can derive from this letter is that the fees for the ships going from London to Bombay were cheaper than the fees that the Minasiens had to pay to ship their goods from London to Madras.

³⁶⁰ «...ծովով Հնդստան տանիլ կարենէք տիր լելայ, թէ չէ էլ Մօսկօվին վերայ գոն Շամախի»: “It would be very good, if you could take [the goods] to India via the sea. Otherwise, let them arrive in Shamakhi via Moscow.” See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 94.

³⁶¹ On this instance, Minas calls the city Mumbai, not Bombay. See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 40.

³⁶² Armenians often called Madras Madraspatan. Chinapatnam and Madraspatan were both different names for Fort St George of Madras. See the entry “Madras” in H. Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive*, 2nd ed. William Crooke. (London: J Murray, 1903), 406-407.

³⁶³ See “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 112.

In reality, Bombay was the desired direction that the EIC wanted Armenian merchants to take their goods in the hopes to spur the development of their newly acquired settlement in Bombay. Ferrier mentions that one of the incentives that the EIC had by signing a trade agreement with Armenian merchants, was the development of their newly acquired settlement in Bombay. “The basic reasons for the East India Company proposing the agreement with the Armenians was to increase cloth exports and silk imports, reduce shipments of bullion, promote English shipping, support the development of Bombay, lessen the Company's charges by limiting the proportion of “dead” stock to “live,” diminish reliance on unsatisfactory local brokers, widen the range of articles available for European investment, tap further opportunities for local credit, procure local Armenian knowledge, trading expertise and enterprise, and in so doing expand and render more profitable the Company's trade.”³⁶⁴ As it is clear from Minas’s instructions, Bombay in 1690 was a desirable route for his firm to ship their goods from London to India. This most probably was not because Bombay was necessarily a profitable market to sell their goods, but for two other reasons. First, the fees for shipping goods on the EIC ships from London to Bombay were cheaper than they were all the way to Madras. Second, Bombay in this case was probably a passing point for their goods’ final destination in Surat. Unfortunately, the letters do not give details as to whether the Minasians’ commodities were being reshipped from Bombay to Surat or Madras or sold in Bombay. Later in 1694, the Minasians mention a shipment from Agha’s account that “safely reached Bombay” from London.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Ronald Ferrier, “The Agreement of the East India...,” 434.

³⁶⁵ ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 93.

A good description of a situation in which Minas chooses the overland route over the maritime is given in a letter that has no date indicated but was most probably written sometime between 1684 and 1690. Khwāja Minas advised his agents against waiting in Basra, probably for the weather to improve and mostly because it had become “unreliable” and instead taking measures and moving their goods (most probably beads and brass tinsel brought from Europe, it is unclear from the letter, as Minas talks about a number of different consignments) “rapidly” overland via Aleppo. According to Minas, the overland route via Aleppo was more profitable at that point. He then added that those goods sold better in Khorasan, Iran, than they did in Surat and if there was a possibility, they should have taken the goods to Ghazvin via Diyarbekir, although it is unclear if Minas meant the same goods or a different consignment.³⁶⁶ As some of the correspondence shows, the Minasians chose to move their shipments overland not necessarily as an alternative to the maritime trade routes, but specifically because a considerable portion of their trade in Venetian beads and glass, brass tinsel, European textiles, and other commodities went to and was sold in Iran and not India.

Here is an illustrative example of how the political and economic conditions of the time influenced the Minasians’ decision-making and the careful choice of the trade routes for their shipments. In a letter dated 1689 sent from Isfahan to Livorno, Minas writes to Agha and other agents as follows:

Let it be known to [our] dear [son] that I have sent three to four letters with P‘ira and Edgar. I know that everything to this day has been delayed. There is one letter from 15 to 20 days ago that Jlav is bringing, in which everything is written. It has

³⁶⁶ See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 85.

been more than a year that these [goods?] have been on the road, all of that is my fault. I wrote this summary letter, so that you know with whom our correspondence is and where and what we are waiting for. Those four letters are coming via Aleppo, this one via Moscow, regarding the Kong³⁶⁷ and Isfahan commerce. Son, the deflation of money has ruined the Iranian world. What we know for certain is that 17-18 big ships used to arrive from Surat and Bandar [Abbas], [now] only two [hardly] do. The market is dull and the reason for it is that there is no money. There is no money because wherever goods come from, 10 to 20 [consignments] are both enough and insufficient. All types of guilds are distressed, they do not know what to buy, whereas [you know that] we are lawful merchants. Son, if you [want to] know what our big expectation is, it is to [ship the goods] via the English. You even wrote about the war, our hearts are waiting anxiously for your letter from before the last one, dated first of Hamira [November 16th]. Here in Livorno many people have received letters in the past four and a half months, but we have not received anything. [Son?], you wrote that there was a ship [headed] to Venice in a month and that you would send goods. The letter from Aleppo was from 70 days ago and we have not received anything. We sat [and waited] in two locations. Meanwhile your shipment was late and Shatakhos's goods that you wrote about have not come out either. I wish God helped [us] and you never sent goods over Aleppo, because the expenses are high. Anxious waiting kills a man. If in the future you have goods [on hand] from the Indian trade, send them via England, the route [via] there is

³⁶⁷ Kong or Bandar-e-Kong (بندر کنگ), a port city not far from Bandar Abbas in Iran.

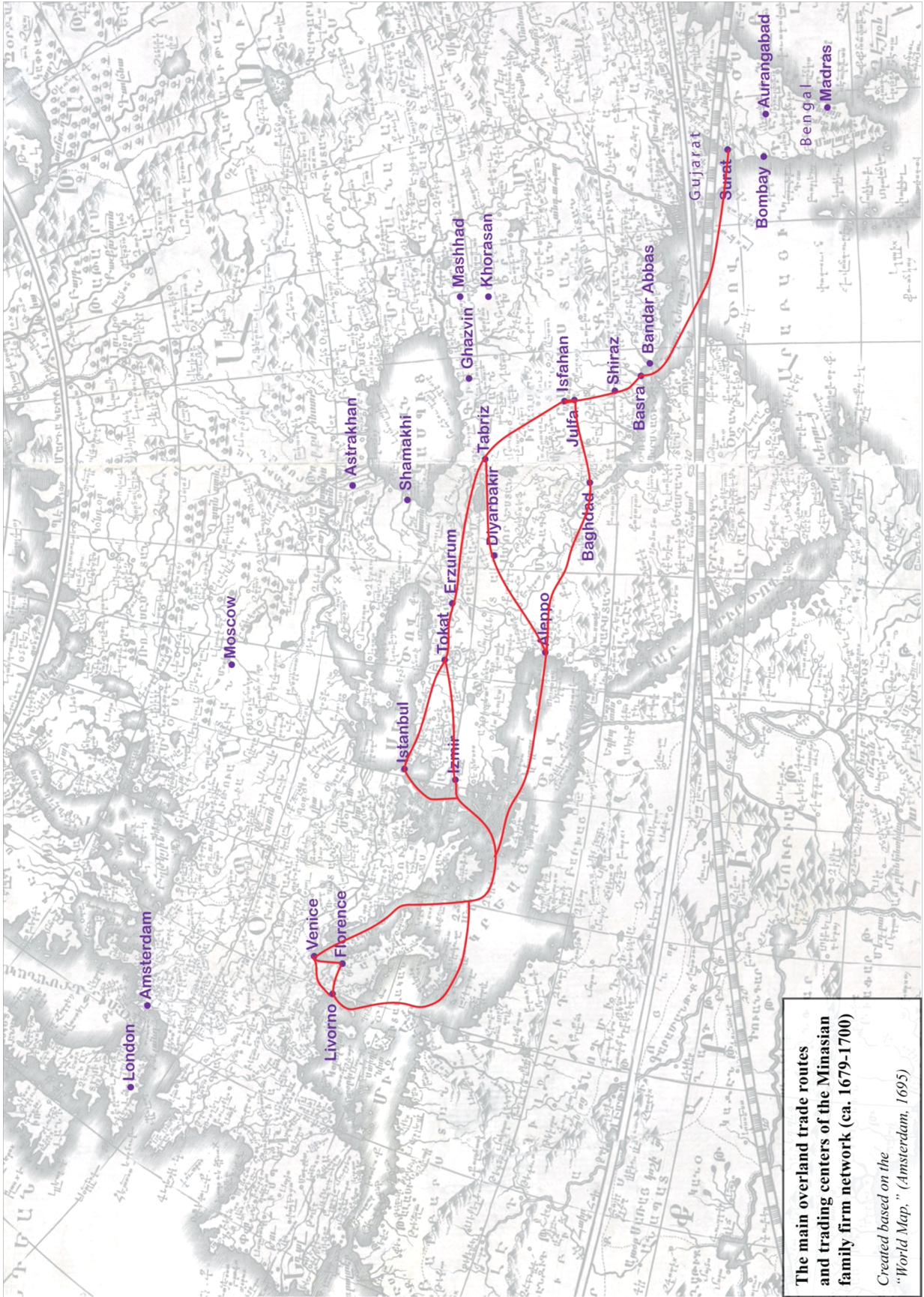
[safe?]. If God forbid it is not [safe], send it via Moscow. By all means do not send the goods from either the Indian or Iranian trades via the Ottomans, where we have to wait and [the expenses] are the highest. Avoid the route via the Ottomans at all costs. See, Simon has been in Isfahan for 22 months now, we still have not heard any news from Baghdad. Beware to send whatever you are sending first via the English, if it is safe, otherwise via Moscow. The Iranian trade should without confusion go via Moscow.”³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Ի նուսատ և անայխտան Քրիստոսի ծառայից ծառայ Մինասէ, Քանանէ, շատ կարօտիւ բարև հասցէ, նագելի և սիրասնունդ, ջահուորեալ և հոչակեալ եղբօրդ և որդոյտ իմոյ Աղայիդ և այլ ընդ քեզ գումարեալ որդոցդ հանդերձ: Հարցանենք զձեզ ի բարին, գոր խնամք տեսոն ի վերայ ձեր եղիցի: Մալումնի սիրելոյդ, որ Փիրէ և Էդգարին իսետ Գ-Դ գիր կայ: Գիտեմ, որ ողջ բանդ ելաւ մինչև յօրս, և մին գիր էլ Ջլանայ բերում, ԺԵ. Ի. օրով էստի յառաջ, ամենայն որպիսութիւն գրածայ, ապայ էս մայրենս տարի եվելա, դառ ճանապարհայ, էստոնք ողջ իմ մեղացնայ, էս ծայրաքաղ գիրս գրեցի, որ մեր գրերն յիմանաս ում իսետայ, և մեր ինչ ուրանք ընթգար, էն Դ. գիրն Հալաբայ վրայ այ գուման, էս մինս Մօսկօվին, ջուզվի քունկին և Ըսպահանայ խրըդովն: Որդի էս փողի կոտորվիս Իրանայ երկիրս խարար արար, սաբիթն նշանն էտայ, որ քանի մեր գիտենք Սուրաթէն, և Բանդարնէն տարէն ԺԷ-ԺԸ մեծ նաւ կգէր դերագ գերմակն (շատ փոքր) այդա Բ. նաւա գուման է, սաբարն էն, որ երկրումս փող չկայ, սաբարն փող չննիւն, ինչ տեղաց ապրանք որ գումանայ, Ժ, Ի բեռնով քօքայ, Ժ, Ի բեռնով քէսադ: Ամենայն ասնաֆ բանդ և սարգարդան մնացելան, խարար չեն, թէ ինչ առեն, և մեր թուշար օլան էլ բը դաստուր: Որդի՛, թէ մեր ընթգարն յիմանաս մին մեծն էտ ինկլիզին վերայ գնալնայ, որ գնալն գրեցիր կռիւն բիլա, մեր սիրտն էտ չափ ընթգար, քո յետին յետին գիրդ Համիրայ Ա.էն, Լիզօնոյ տեղս Դ. կէս ամսէն շատ մարդի գիր արեկ, մեզ ոչ գիր կէր, որ մարդի ձէն դու գրէլաս, թէ մին ամսով յետ նաւ կայ Վէնետիք ապրանք կաղարկեմ, Հալաբայ գիրն Հ. օրէնէր մեզ ոչինչ չկէր և մեր Բ. տեղ քօթի նստելն, քո էտպես յետի աղարկելն և Շատախօսին բեռն, որ գրելիք էն էլ չդուս արեկ: Աստուած մին բան առէր, որ մութլաղ Հալաբայ վերայ իքմին չաղարկիք դարբու, զարայ խարճն խում խարճայ, ախն ընթգարն մարդա

In another letter from 1688 Minas again emphasizes that, when shipping their European commodities from West to East (to Iran and India, probably from Livorno), his agents should make an effort to take the route via England first. If that was not possible, they had to consider the overland route over Aleppo by packing their goods in the “main big caravan.” They would have to wait in Aleppo for a couple of months before making sure that the roads were safe to then head to Diyarbekir.³⁶⁹ All the considerations were made based on the “safety” of the roads, which itself translated into lower costs of transportation and protection by way of eliminating the safety risks. While the time frame played an important role in choosing the caravan or maritime trade routes, it seems that the expenses and the safety of the roads outweighed their speed.

սպանում, մադում Հնդստանայ բար իքմին ունենէք, Ինկլիզին ճանապարհն իւերսալայայ, դէ աղարկեցէք: Աստուած ոչ առե, թէ իւերսալայ չնի, Մօսկօվին վրայ աղարկեցէք, զինհար թէ՛ Հնդ բարինայ, թէ՛ Իրան բարին, խոռոմաց վերայ ապրանք չաղարկէք, որ գմեզ ընթզար քօշ առում ու խարճն քան զամէն շատայ, զինհար խոռոմաց վերայ ճանապարհէն ձեռ վեռէք, յարէտ տես Միմոնն, ԻԲ. ամիսայ Ըսպահանայ մտել, դառ Բաղդադայ վեր կալէ խաբարն լսել չենք, զինհար ալֆ զինհար, որ ինչ կաղարկես յառէջ Ինկլիզին վերայ, թէ Էմանայ, թէ չէ նաչար Մօսկօվին վրայ: Իրանայ բարն անշփոթ Մօսկօվին վրայ իլայ»: See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 133.

³⁶⁹ ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 90.



CORRESPONDENCE AND ITS ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING

Communication, for Steensgaard, was one of the main and most important factors for trading groups to be successful in the unpredictable long-distance markets of the early modern period. On the example of the Levantine merchants, Steensgaard argued that “the imperfect communication between market and consumer, and in particular between market and producer,” as well as the knowledge of prices and potential protection costs were the reason why commerce could not be carried out “with the same consistency on the Asian side of the market or in the Asian peddling trade over long distances.”³⁷⁰ Correspondence was key to providing information on market variables and conditions. Steensgaard, therefore, concluded that the peddler “...might well have possessed the habit of thinking rationally, but he had no possibility of making a rational calculation of his costs in the modern sense so long as the protection costs and the risk remained unpredictable and the market non-transparent.” Communication and information, therefore, were also key to the decision-making process of the merchant or the trading entity. The question of “imperfect communication” when it came to Steensgaard’s peddler, has been critiqued by Aslanian in the Julfan context. Aslanian notes that “the evidence from Julfan merchant correspondence suggests that commercial intelligence in the form of detailed updates on market conditions in faraway centers was one of the most significant functions of letter writing...”³⁷¹

³⁷⁰ Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 57-58.

³⁷¹ Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 99.

I argue that the simplicity and directness of the bureaucracy in circulating information on the latest market developments, as well as the choice of advantageous trading routes at a given time gave small long-distance family firms, such as the Minasians, the opportunity to react to the market shifts and fluctuations in a timely manner. This allowed them to stay competitive in a market where the lion's share of organized and structured trade took place on behalf of the East India companies of the time. The knowledge of up-to-the-minute news concerning European demand, Indian supply, and vice versa was key to the success of the Minasians.

The role of correspondence and information circulation among New Julfan merchants has previously been emphasized in scholarly literature. In his chapter on Julfan business correspondence, the courier system, and information circulation, Aslanian notes that “business correspondence and the mode of circulating it across the vast spaces covered by Julfan merchants and their overseas settlements was such a fundamental aspect of Julfan economy and society that it is impossible to exaggerate its importance.” In fact, it is impossible to exaggerate the role of letter writing and information circulation for any long-distance merchants or groups, as much as it is hard to exaggerate the value of preserved business correspondence for economic historians of the early modern period. As for merchants themselves, letter writing was a regular task they were taught to perform for their craft. As mentioned by Francesca Trivellato, “Tending to correspondence was a pressing demand and an ordinary fact of life for every merchant.”³⁷²

For the Minasians, their mercantile livelihood heavily depended on fast updates and information. Minas stressed the importance of fast communication numerous times in his letters.

³⁷² Francesca Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New haven, CT: Yale University Press), 170.

He, like most Julfan merchants, seemed to know that information was the one important element that made the success of a merchant possible. “The biggest key to our profession is being updated promptly. They have created the postal service for being updated fast. It is an important tool, but you are underestimating it.”³⁷³ These were the words Minas preached to his representative in Tuscany, Agha Mat‘os, who arguably failed to understand the importance of diligent letter writing.

The four dozen Minasian letters exchanged between Khwāja Minas and his agent Mat‘os and covering the years 1683 to 1700, and no doubt many others like them that have not survived, prove the importance of letter-writing in this firm’s success. Each letter usually has a reference to the previous ones, which gives a sense of continuity and a comprehensive approach to the business dealings and the overall well-being of the family firm for at least the preceding several years. An example of a standard introduction to an informative letter written by Khwāja Minas is as follows: “Let it be known to you that we gave a letter to the messenger on the twelfth of Nirhan [25 February], on the sixteenth we received your letter from the lazaretto of Livorno and another letter on Nakha I [July 8th] two of them sealed in one. Ohan had most probably opened it, taken the copy and had sent it over Istanbul.”³⁷⁴ Even though a letter sent from the headquarters in New Julfa, normally written by the head of the firm and his junior partners (his sons), was usually addressed

³⁷³ ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 93

³⁷⁴ «Մալոււմ [[ի]նի ձեզ որ Նիրհան ԺԲ [12] շաբթին զիր տվինք եբեր ԺՉին ձեր Լիզոռնոյ նազարէթին զիրն մեզ իսասաւ, մին զիր էլ Նախայ Ի գրած Բքն մին քաղաթում մրած, զարայ Ոհանն բացելէր, սաւաղն վեռէլ Ըստամբոյն վերայ ողորկէր»: See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 90.

to one specific agent,³⁷⁵ it was meant to be read by any agent in the network of the firm on the way to its final destination. In other words, letters would go from hand to hand, copies would be made³⁷⁶ (by Minas or later by the agents) and kept by the agent who would then send the other copy to their colleague situated on the next location of their family firm network. In his chapter on Julfan correspondence, Aslanian called these types of letters “circulars.”³⁷⁷ According to him, however, these letters were targeted at the junior members of the family. In the case of the Minasians these circulars were sent from the head of the firm and his junior partners to their *commenda* agents.

This was the case for the Sceriman family correspondence too, where copies were made and most probably read by their agents at different locations of their network. Aslanian explains:

“Most of the business and family letters the Scerimans received in Venice were sent from Julfa along three general directions. Mail traveled by way of overland

³⁷⁵ Agha Mat‘os’s name almost always came first as an addressee, but usually with a few other names are mentioned after his. For example, a letter from January 1692, was addressed to “Agha, Mekertum, Miansar, Gabriel and others...” This most probably meant that the other *commenda* agents listed after Agha’s name, were either located in Livorno, Venice or somewhere along the way to Agha’s destination in Livorno. See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 87.

³⁷⁶ Copies of letters were also made for reasons other than disseminating them throughout the network of *commenda* agents, “...but Julfans also preserved copies of mail (both sent and received) for the purpose of retroactively adjusting their account books based on the detailed price lists and records of purchased and sold commodities, as well as other market oriented information contained in commercial correspondence.” See Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 102.

³⁷⁷ Aslanian, *Ibid.*, 100.

caravan routes to Tabriz or Hamadan in the northwest, whence it would be sent to Aleppo, and from there by ship (from the port of Iskenderun/Alexandretta) to Venice or Livorno. It could also be sent south to Basra and transported from there by caravan to Aleppo. Mail could also be sent to Tokhat (farther northwest in the Ottoman Empire), whence it would travel to Izmir or to Istanbul, where it would be placed on a ship heading to Venice or Livorno. At times, up to three copies of a letter were made...³⁷⁸

This usually meant that at each stop the letters would be read by one of the agents of the family firm and measures would be taken accordingly by each one of them. This was also the case for the Minasian family firm, as attested by the headline comments on the business letters most probably written by Agha Mat'os after he received them or in the address section of some letters, where the sender would provide such information. For example, in one of the lengthy letters sent by Minas, Agha put a note that the letter from Khwāja Minas was delivered to him from Isfahan via Moscow by Nikoghos.³⁷⁹ Another letter from 1687 was sent to Agha via Istanbul, as he himself mentioned in the margins of the letter.³⁸⁰ In a 1685 letter, Minas gave instructions to send his letter from Isfahan to Aleppo, where it was to be handed to his agent Simon, otherwise any other *commenda*

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 110.

³⁷⁹ ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 82.

³⁸⁰ ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 87.

agent of his were to hand it to Simon.³⁸¹ Therefore, Minas's letters, while addressed specifically to his representative in Livorno, were mostly meant to be read by other Minasian agents too. In some cases, the letter contained a specific order to be completed for the agents who were halfway between Isfahan and Livorno.

The Minasians' usage of overland courier system was similar to their usage of overland trade routes. More particularly, the family sent their letters by combining both the overland and maritime courier routes, overland being arguably more common. In the case of the Indian Ocean trade, correspondence had little choice but to move mostly through maritime routes. As Aslanian notes, "Unlike mail in the Indian Ocean zone, mail from Julfa to various settlements in the Mediterranean was not subject to the constraints of nature such as those of the monsoon seasons. It was also not predominantly dependent on maritime routes, but on a combination of overland and maritime transport."³⁸²

The quick delivery of Minas's letters addressed to his network of agents made it possible for the whole firm to function efficiently. Epistolary exchange was central to the family firm's proper functioning. Thanks to the continuous circulation of information flows covering the whole network the Minasian agents traded in, an agent in Livorno was well aware of the commercial details of the

³⁸¹ «Հասնի Յալապ քոսակ Միմոնին կամ պարոն Մինասին ընկերի ձեռն որ կարդայ աղարկէ քոսակ Միմոնին ձեռն»: "Let it be delivered to "thin haired" Simon in Aleppo or to the hands of Mr. Minas's commenda agent, so that he reads it and sends it to "thin haired" Simon." See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 89.

³⁸² On delivery estimates of letters from Isfahan to the Mediterranean, see Aslanian's discussion of overland courier system that Julfans used, Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 110-120.

market in India and in Basra. Their representative in Livorno was informed about the latest prices of gems in Hyderabad, as well as the demand in the South East Asian markets in general. Isfahan appears to have been an information clearing house for the Minasians. It was where the different streams of information were gathered, read, processed and classified by Khwāja Minas or one of his sons, and disseminated accordingly across his network of agents.³⁸³ For example, in a 1688 letter, Minas informs his representative in Livorno, who was the main person to receive the Asian diamonds and gems sent to him from India, that another agent of the Minasian family firm, Melk‘um, would stay in Surat till Agha sent him goods or cash. Simon, on the other hand, as Agha was informed by Minas, had been in Hyderabad for four months at that point.³⁸⁴

³⁸³ In his book *Going the Distance: Eurasian Trade and the Rise of the Business Corporation, 1400-1700* Ron Harris emphasizes the importance of information flows in the decision making of Julfan family firms, “Information flow was an important element in managing trade, adjusting supply, setting prices, deciding where to send commenda agents, and the-like. But it also played a crucial role in the monitoring of traveling agents and the verification of breaches of duty. After all, by itself, the legal code had limited value in the absence of verifiable information on breaches. The network's structure, based on a single hub, enhanced monitoring, as information from all agents and all ports and markets arrived at the same place and could be cross-checked.” See Ron Harris, *Going the Distance: Eurasian Trade and the Rise of the Business Corporation, 1400-1700* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020), 217.

³⁸⁴ See Minas’s letter to his agents Agha, Mkrtum, Miansar and Gabriel from April 1688 in Busta 123. There is a hardly visible folio number on this letter, probably 79. However, the same 123 folder contains another document with the same number. Therefore, it is either a mistake made by the cataloguer or the document is missing a number.

Based on Agha Mat'os's surviving archival documents, Minas sent out two to four letters in a given year on average to his agent in Tuscany. He, most probably, looked forward to receiving back the same number of letters with information. It is important to mention, that this number is based on a single archive including letters sent from Isfahan to Livorno and is not representative of a probably much larger number of letters that Minas would usually write. Below is a list of the forty-one lengthy letters sent out predominantly from Minas and his sons and a few that were written by his sons categorized by the date they were written. As one can see from this brief table Minas would send out one to seven but on average three to four letters a year. If we assume that the collection of letters available to us is complete, then Minas updated his commenda agent in Livorno at least every quarter of the year. It is important to keep in mind that Livorno was just one node in the larger network of the Minasian family firm in Europe, along with Iran and India, the Ottoman ports of Aleppo and Izmir, Moscow and beyond, just to name a few.

The most frequent year in terms of outgoing mail from the headquarters of the firm in Isfahan was 1688, which presumably had to do with the signing of the agreement between New Julfan merchants and the East India Company. The first letter of a kind from Minas available to us is from the beginning of 1683, although it has already been mentioned that the *commenda* contract between Agha and Minas had been signed in 1679, probably in Isfahan. Assuming that his representative Agha was already in Tuscany in 1679 or 1680, then there is a gap of 2-3 years between 1679 and 1683 in this collection. In the first letter from February 28, 1683, Minas noted that in 40 days he had written three letters and that the current letter was the fourth one.³⁸⁵ This hints on a possibility that the frequency of letters sent from the headquarters to the network of

³⁸⁵ ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 131.

agents far exceeded the number we have based on the table below, bringing it up to around three four dozen letters a year.

<p style="text-align: center;">Letters Sent from the Minasian Family Firm Headquarters to Europe</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dates When Letters arrived at Venice/Livorno</p>
1. 1683 February 28	N/A
2. 1683 August 13 (Isfahan)- December 27 (Tokat)-	1684 January 10 (Venice) (MS 76)
3. 1684 May 29 (Isfahan)	1685 March 10 (Venice)
4. 1684 August 9	1686 March 30
5. 1685 February 28/March 13 (Isfahan)	1685 September 9 (Livorno)
6. 1685 June 21	1686 January 15 (Venice/Livorno)
7. 1685 August 11(Isfahan)	1686 January 15 (Venice/Livorno)
8. 1685 September 15 (Isfahan), picked up 1685 October 27	1686 July 1 (Venice/Livorno)
9. 1685 December 5 (Isfahan)	1686 November 4 (Venice/Livorno)
10. 1686 February 25 (Isfahan)	N/A
11. 1687 January 16 (Isfahan)	1687 August 25 (Venice/Livorno)

12.	1687 May 29	N/A
13.	1687 September 8	N/A
14.	1687 October 4 (Isfahan)-	N/A
15.	1688 January 16	1688 April 4
16.	1688 February 13 (Isfahan)	1688 October 19 (Livorno)
17.	1688 March 17	N/A
18.	1688 March 27	N/A
19.	1688 May 16	1689 May 30
20.	1688 September 28	1691 January 19 (Livorno)
21.	1688 December 24/1689 January 23	1690 July 11(Livorno)
22.	1689 January 23	1690 July 11? (unclear if this is the arrival date)
23.	1689 June 24	1694 October 26 (the signature mentions that the letter was delayed for 5 years)
24.	1690 July 18	1691 January 19/29 (Venice/Livorno)
25.	1690 August 16	1691 October 21
26.	1690 December 2	N/A
27.	1691 January 26	N/A
28.	1691 April 16	N/A
29.	1691 July 14/July 22	N/A
30.	1692 January 16	N/A

31.	1692 May 21- from Minas	1692 October 27
32.	1693 October 11	1694 September 8
33.	1693 November 7	N/A
34.	1694 September 15	1695 July 22
35.	1695 April 13	1696 July 6 via Moscow to Livorno
36.	1697 January 14	1697 July 8
37.	1698 October 16	1700 January 26
38.	N/A	1700 May 28
39.	1699 March 19	1700 June 13
40.	No date, probably before 1690	N/A

While we have no access to any letters sent from West to East, mainly from Agha back to his master in Isfahan, we do know that the latter was tardy when it came to responding to Minas's accusations mentioned earlier. For example, in 1684 Minas complains about receiving one letter from his agents as opposed to "...others, who have read three."³⁸⁶ Minas's arguable reluctance to "fire" Agha was also very much against the commercial training that Armenian merchants are said to have participated in before venturing into foreign lands for their own and their masters' trading ventures.

³⁸⁶ ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 80.

What Minas accomplished by sending out regular business letters was very much like what a special committee did for the English East India Company.³⁸⁷ In short, the eldest member of the extended family firm or the patriarch performed the function of the Correspondence Committee,³⁸⁸ one of the main administrative units of the East India Company. The Committee of Correspondence was added to the administrative system of the English East India Company in the eighteenth century. Its goal was to achieve an efficient method of communication between the headquarters of the Company in London and their factories in Asia. The content of those letters included information on investments, debts, credits and so on. “The Court of Directors insisted on receiving full coverage of all matters touching the investment of funds in different factories in India, the amount of debts and credits, the level of inventories in the warehouses, and the balance of working capital available for future expenditures.”³⁸⁹ The factories of the Company in the East Indies were required to send back home detailed reports on their business transactions, imports

³⁸⁷ In the second half of the twentieth century a number of works were published, which included collections of business letters, documents and other records from prominent European merchants and families of the sixteenth century. See, among others, Valentin Vazquez de Prada, *Lettres Marchandes D'Anvers*. Vol. 1 (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960); José Gentil da Silva, *Marchandises et Finances, Lettres de Lisbonne, 1563–1578*, 2 vols. (Paris: SEVPEN, 1959–61).

³⁸⁸ K. N. Chaudhuri, “The English East India Company in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Pre-Modern Multinational Organization” in *Companies and Trade: Essays on Overseas Trading Companies During the Ancien Régime*, eds. Leonard Blussé and Femme Gaastra (The Hague: Leiden University Press, 1981), 224-225.

³⁸⁹ Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, 39.

and exports, as well as political updates. What Minas implemented for his firm was what the Committee of Correspondence did for the English East India Company, the biggest difference being that instead of a strictly hierarchical movement of letters going from EIC employees all the way up to the Committee of Correspondence, Minas built his information network by relying on the agents he instructed, partially using the information received from them, assessing it based on the latest political and socio-economic developments. While it is impossible and impractical to compare the velocity, the volume of transactions and the magnitude of the trade conducted by the early modern corporations with Eurasian family firms, it is useful to look at the similarities and the differences in the way Asian family firms and these corporations had in their culture of information circulation. In this sense, both systems of correspondence of the English East India Company and the Julfan Armenian mercantile network were sophisticated in their own way and served their purpose. Needless to say, that all the shortcomings of family firms, starting with the limited ability of families to generate capital, accumulate credit and the lack of state support should be taken into consideration when having a discussion such as above. The lack of armed forces in the context of internalizing the protection costs was another disadvantage that small family firms, such as the Minasians, had. As noted by Aslanian, “As non-state actors devoid of real sovereignty, they did not have the power to legislate or live in their own segregated and fortified settlements in India as did the East India Companies, a fact that endeared them to Asian monarchs from the Mughals to the Safavids; they did not have standing armies, and their ships (when they owned

them) did not field guns or regularly travel in armed convoys, hence one of the factors that attracted them to the Companies.”³⁹⁰

THE MINASIAN CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF OVERLAND AND MARITIME COURIER SYSTEMS

It is important to discuss the duration it took for the above-mentioned business letters to reach their final destinations. In order to get an idea as to how correspondence and information circulation worked for the chartered companies, let us take a brief look at the English and Dutch East India Companies and their courier systems. The dynamics of power and lack of efficient communication was an important aspect in the efficiency of the English East India Company. Chaudhuri emphasizes, “That the possession of information was the same as the possession of effective power was a deduction which the Company had no difficulty in making.”³⁹¹ A typical East India journey from London took eight months, whereas the round trip which included “a communication lag” took eighteen months.³⁹² Chaudhuri does not discuss how the East India Company officials overcame the constraints of maritime communication lag due to the monsoons. In other words, it does not seem like the company continuously and in an organized manner used the overland messenger system that had been in the works since the beginning of its establishment

³⁹⁰ Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean; “Julfan Merchants and European East India Companies,”* 220.

³⁹¹ Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, 76.

³⁹² Chaudhuri, “The English East India Company...,” 457.

because of the lag caused by the monsoon winds. The overland route of sending correspondence from London to India was typically London to Marseille or Livorno, Aleppo, Basra and Surat. Not only did the speediness of this overland route remain unchanged till the beginning of the eighteenth century, but, according to Holden Furber, “cases of transit of the route in less than six months are extremely rare, and are apparently confined to a few occasions on which the Company’s regular August letter reached Surat in early February instead of in May.”³⁹³ Eight months was the usual time in either direction for the overland route to reach its destination in India or London, which made it impractical, as that was the same length of time that maritime correspondence took to reach to the destination.

The Dutch, on the other hand, seemed to make a better use of already established overland messenger services, often relying on what René Barendse called the “Armenian networks of intelligence.” “However, the Company's overland letters in compres [*sic*] comprised only a small proportion of a very large 'cake' of letters in compresses, ciphers and codes moving in this manner from Europe to Asia. Nor was the Company in this respect necessarily better served than its Asian competitors.” As we can see, while overland courier system was *per se* an option for both the English and Dutch East India Companies, it did not make their correspondence traffic any faster and was therefore rarely used. What was an arguably unimportant postal route for the East India Companies of the time, was often the only route Minasians used to send their letters due to the overland trade that they often conducted.

³⁹³ Holden Furber, “The Overland route to India in the seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Journal of Indian History* (29.2, 1959): 118.

Isfahan being the headquarters of the Minasian family firm was an advantage for the Minasians and arguably New Julfan family firms, as correspondence in and out of there cut the time of information sharing considerably. As opposed to sending letters from the Indian factories all the way to London or vice versa, which as we saw, took around eight months by seaborne routes and not much less by overland routes, Minas was in the position of receiving letters from India much faster and sharing his updates with his agents on the road and in Europe. It is hard to calculate how long it would take to receive information from India about supply and demand and share that information with the agents in Europe who were supposed to buy goods accordingly for the goal of eliminating the possibility of wrong calculations. If Barendse's calculations can be applied to all merchants travelling overland, then it took three to six weeks for a letter to be delivered to Bandar Abbas from Surat. From Isfahan to Baghdad, it would have taken two to three weeks and a month to three months for the letters to go from Isfahan to Tabriz and Izmir. From Izmir, then, it would have taken three weeks for a letter to reach Venice.³⁹⁴ All these routes were used by the Minasians. Therefore, the fastest way for Khwāja Minas to transmit information about the demand in northwestern Indian markets to his representative in Livorno, who then would know the supply to act accordingly, could be accomplished in as short as five months, but usually longer depending

³⁹⁴ René J. Barendse, "The Long Road to Livorno The Overland Messenger Services of the Dutch East India Company in the Seventeenth Century," *Itinerario* 12, no. 2 (1988): 29. For comparison, it took 4 months and 4 days for a Sceirman family firm letter to reach from Izmir to Livorno in 1665. See Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, 116-117.

on the monsoon season.³⁹⁵ For example, a letter written by Minas on August 13, 1683 in New Julfa reached its final destination in Venice in less than six months. It first reached Tokat on December 27th, after which it took less than two weeks for it to be delivered to Venice.³⁹⁶

To conclude, Minas was a phenomenon, implementing the responsibilities of a managerial coordinator of a big firm. It has previously been argued that managerial coordination costs had to be less than market costs in general. Market costs included but were not limited to “the costs of gaining information and of negotiating, monitoring, and enforcing contracts for the exchange of goods and services.”³⁹⁷ This argument goes in line with Steensgaard’s well-known idea that commercial organizations had the abilities of internalizing protection costs, including customs duties and bribes to the local officials, especially on the caravan trade routes going through the Middle East. His conclusion was that “the companies could safeguard themselves not only against the unpredictable protection costs, but also against the unforeseeable price fluctuations that the peddler had had to take into account in his calculations.”³⁹⁸ In general, Steensgaard’s argument hints at the incapability of itinerant “peddlers” to sustain long-term economic success as opposed

³⁹⁵ The mail could be delayed for up to a year for the ships sailing from India to the Persian Gulf. “Ships wishing to travel to the Persian Gulf had usually to depart India in January in order to catch the winds blowing west. Failure to do so, and thus missing the monsoon, meant a delay of up to one year.” See Aslanian, *Ibid.*, 104.

³⁹⁶ ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 76.

³⁹⁷ See Ann M. Carlos and Stephen Nicholas, “Giants of an Earlier Capitalism: The Chartered Trading Companies as Modern Multinationals,” *The Business History Review* 62.3 (1988): 404-405.

³⁹⁸ Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 152.

to the East India Companies of the time. The Minasian documents show that regardless of the lack of a sophisticated managerial hierarchy and what is more important internalization of protection costs, the Minasian firm was able to conduct long-distance trade of the popular commodities of the early modern period successfully for a period of more than seventy years.

DECISION MAKING AND DISRUPTIONS OF INFORMATION CIRCULATION

Fast overland messenger services did not mean that Minasians did not suffer from disruptions to their communication. It is clear from the business letters that Agha very often failed to listen to the orders of his master, Khwāja Minas, when it came to buying specific commodities he was ordered to purchase, or to negotiating with people and sellers of gems outside the New Julfan network. What is more important perhaps, he also failed to report back promptly or in this case at least three to four times a year with updates on his business transactions. Tardiness on Agha's part most probably translated into loss of power for Minas and disruption of information circulation for the whole network. As already discussed in the chapter on Agha's activities as the representative of the Minasian family firm in Livorno, he had a broad circle of influential acquaintances, who were potential buyers of the gems shipped to Agha from India and Iran. Agha's social capital was probably such a valuable asset to the overall success of the Minasians that the termination of his *commenda* contract was intentionally delayed for years.

In other words, Agha had a more opportunistic commercial style, which was against what a responsible *commenda* agent was supposed to act. The compendium of trading practices and lessons known as the *Ashkharhazhoghov* had special instructions about diligent record keeping and writing things down. Constand Jughayets'i's advice to the new merchants was as follows: "You should write, write and write all your trade down. Do not leave what [can be done] today to

tomorrow.”³⁹⁹ Letters sent to Agha were filled with accusations of irresponsibility, selfishness, and inflexibility on Agha’s part, yet letters still kept going out and there was no trace of breaking the *commenda* contract between Minas and Agha. The biggest accusations had to do with Agha’s random purchases and the incorrect amount of goods that he was instructed to buy. Usually Agha would buy bigger amounts of the product than instructed by his master Minas. For example, in one of his three letters during 1684, Minas accuses Agha of sending 70 boxes of brass tinsel. He goes on to write that they had only sold two boxes and that they would most probably sell the rest in their graves.⁴⁰⁰

A big part of rapid and detailed information circulation and decision making, other than continuous information flows, were documents usually accompanying the actual business letters. The Minasian family firm archival documents give us a glimpse into the specifics of their record keeping. Accounting and record keeping were invaluable parts of decision making, as was information circulation, mentioned earlier. Record keeping was one of the defining qualities of New Julfan merchants and the Minasian firm was not an exception to that rule. As already

³⁹⁹ «Բայց զամենայն առըստ և տուրըս գրեայ, գրեայ, և գրեայ: Էսօրէն վաղն մի ձգեր և հիմիկէս պահ մի ձգեր»: See Costand Jughayet’si, *Vasn norahas mankants ‘ew yeritasartats ‘vacharkanats ‘khrat [Concerning advice to the adolescent and to young merchants)* (Ashkharazhoghov) [Compendium], Oxford Bodleian Library, folio F14, folio 84.

⁴⁰⁰ «Էսօր Դ, Ե ամիսայ Հ դուրթի ջղջղայ սս աղարկել, Բ դուրթի ծախելանք, բաղին ընկաւ դատաստանն զերեզմանունն ծախելնք»: “It has been 4-5 months that you have sent 70 boxes of brass tinsel. We have sold two and will [most probably]? sell [the rest] from our grave.” See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 125.

mentioned, the Minasian firm archives include detailed commercial correspondence, contracts, accounting ledgers from different periods of the firm's existence, a trade manual, as well as order lists and other documents. These documents contain information about the prices of the commodities, both their purchase and sale values.

The way the head of the firm would inform his agents on-the-go as to what commodities they were supposed to buy and sell was with the help of "books of rules" or lists of orders that Julfans generally called *dasturmals* (*dasturu 'l-'amal*), the Persian translation of which is a model, a rule or a regulation. What these books of rules represented was a detailed list of required commodities created by the head of the firm and sent out to the agent or agents instructed to buy and ship them. The list included details, such as the quantity of the product, the size, color, quality, the location the commodity was preferred to be bought from, where it had to be shipped to and so on. What is more important, *dasturu 'l-'amals* in the case of the Minasians had a short introduction before the "rules" themselves, which gave instructions to the types of transactions that the agents were supposed to aim for, whether it was buying goods with barter exchange, cash, or other specific methods.⁴⁰¹

It seems that Khwāja Minas's *dasturu 'l-'amals* sent to his agents were both included in longer business letters and sent separately, maybe attached to the consignments that were being shipped. It has to be noted that what the Julfans or Minasians called *dasturu 'l-'amal* was very different from what the Mughal period manuals represented, which "were copied and circulated for the guidance of persons seeking to acquire proficiency in accountancy, clerical work, administrative

⁴⁰¹ See, for example, ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 88. For barter exchange of goods from India and Iran, see folio 112.

procedures, and the duties of government officials.”⁴⁰² There is no research on the usage of *dasturu ’l-’amals* in the context of early modern long-distance commerce. It could just be that New Julfans arbitrarily called their instructions included in longer business letters *dasturu ’l-’amals*, by that meaning rules and tables containing numbers, instructions, as well as some accounting information of their future business transactions. These lists resembled the order lists that the East India Company Correspondence committee prepared which “...was the most direct expression of the Company's demand for Asian imports...”⁴⁰³

The Minasians took the execution of order lists seriously. In the end, they were meticulously prepared by the head of the firm, who, as apparent from the correspondence, had the latest updates on the market conditions, prices, supply and demand, and so on. Throughout the correspondence of the Minasians, the accuracy of order lists was never mentioned as a reason for commercial setbacks, which would then result in the decline of profits. However, failing to execute the purchase of the commodities on those order lists as instructed, was a problem that Minas constantly had with his representative in Italy, Agha. Although far away from the Mediterranean, sitting in his house in Isfahan, Minas always seemed to have his finger on the pulse of the latest market developments of the time. After all, his managerial skills and being *au courant* not only made it possible for the whole firm to successfully function, but also made his firm competitive in the market largely dominated by the East India Companies.

⁴⁰² Najaf Haider, “Norms of Professional Excellence and Good Conduct in Accountancy Manuals of the Mughal Empire,” *International Review of Social History* 56, no. S19 (2011): 264.

⁴⁰³ See Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, 487.

In his lengthy letters, Minas usually mentioned a specific order list by referring to the numbers on it. For example, he would refer to numbers 14 and 15 on the order list, without mentioning what commodities those represented. He then would go on to comment on those numbers on the list and give information as to how much demand there was in the East for those goods and what commodities his agents had to focus on. His comments ranged from mentioning that the certain commodity was in high demand, the level of supplies at a given location, as well as the best cities to sell those commodities in.

In short, not only did Khwāja Minas regularly send out order lists to his agents across their network to update them on the market conditions of the time, he also updated his order lists by sending out additional letters with comments and additions by referring to the previously sent lists. Therefore, Khwāja Minas, as the head of the family firm, was the sole and most important person in the decision-making of the firm, which he implemented by various “paper instruments” sent throughout his network of agents. He controlled the movement of the commodities, as well as his agents and money. It seems that he was best fit for the job, as the letters under discussion leave an impression of a manager who knew the political and economic conditions of each of his agents’ locations. As we already know from the previous chapter, Minas had spent forty-five years of his life being a merchant, seventeen out of which he had spent in Isfahan. This means that for more than twenty-five years Minas had spent travelling, most probably between India and Iran, trading in mainly gems.⁴⁰⁴

A big part of decision making was also dependent on the people locally, where the certain transaction was taking place, be they Minasian agents or outsiders. Therefore, it is important to

⁴⁰⁴ ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 87.

briefly discuss the role of middlemen, who they called *dalals*,⁴⁰⁵ in the Minasians' business dealings. While it is true that the Minasians employed their own network of agents, it seems that they also used middlemen or *dalals* occasionally, especially for implementing coral purchases in Livorno. On one instance the Minasian letters mention using a Jewish broker in Aleppo.⁴⁰⁶ They also, most probably, sought the services of *dalals* in places where their network of agents was either scarce or did not have access to the required information or did not know the language to complete their business dealings at the highest profit. The fees paid for *dalal's* services⁴⁰⁷ were calculated into the overall expenses of a single transaction along with all the customs fees that the firm's goods were going to go through. For example, on one occasion Minas calculated the *dalal's*

⁴⁰⁵ Broker in Persian and Arabic.

⁴⁰⁶ At one instance in 1685, a Jewish broker named Ghurd Dalal was mentioned to be in the possession of the consignment of the Minasians in Aleppo. See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 89.

⁴⁰⁷ It is possible that the *dalals* whose services the Minasian firm used from time to time were in fact what the Europeans referred to as commission agents. One of the main differences between the Sephardim and the New Julfans was that the Sephardic merchants used commission agents who were non-Jews. According to Trivellato, "Overall, however, Sephardim appear to have been more prone than Armenians to hire commission agents from outside of their own communities—a tendency that likely gave them a competitive advantage over Armenians." See Francesca Trivellato, "Marriage, Commercial Capital, and Business Agency: Transregional Sephardic (and Armenian) Families in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Mediterranean," in *Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond Experiences Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Christopher H. Johnson, David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher, and Francesca Trivellato (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 117. The existence of commission agency among the Minasians and beyond, as well as whether *dalals* were the same commission agents, is a topic that requires further and thorough research.

fees into the expenses of their moving consignment along with the customs fees in Europe, the Ottoman Empire and India.

Seeking the help of a broker/*dalal* in India seems to have been a custom among merchants.⁴⁰⁸ The English East India Company officials too had their local brokers, usually salaried.⁴⁰⁹ *Dalals* or brokers were present in different mercantile societies. They shared similarities with Italian *sansers* or Middle Eastern *simsars* whose goal was to mediate and interpret between merchants. “Whereas legal traditions and commercial practices clearly varied across time and space, the institution of commercial brokerage itself was shared throughout the early modern Mediterranean, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans, exhibiting some strong structural similarities across various inter-

⁴⁰⁸ On brokers servicing foreign merchants in the Indian cities of Calicut, Cambay and Diu, see M. N. Pearson, “Brokers in Western Indian Port Cities Their Role in Servicing Foreign Merchants.” *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988): 455–72.

⁴⁰⁹ Chaudhuri talks about the brokers or *dalals* of the EIC on multiple occasions in his book. While he does not mention that they were salaried brokers, he does mention specific individuals being brokers for different factories in India. For example, Om Prakash describes the *dalals* used by the Dutch East India Company. “The Company's procurement organisation at Hugli and the subordinate factories was put in motion soon after the receipt of the order lists from Europe and the East Indies, both coming through Batavia. An important functionary in this organization was the *dalal* (broker), a native employee with an intimate knowledge of both the local market and the merchants. He was ordinarily a salaried employee, and his duties included collecting information about the market price of various goods as well as identifying merchants with a good reputation for honouring contractual obligations.” Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 102-103.

imperial trading hubs.”⁴¹⁰ Middlemen, brokers or *dalals* were an important part of early modern trade for Armenian merchants, as attested by the few entries in the Astrakhan Lawbook. It devotes a whole section to the definition of the characteristics of true middlemen.

*“Middleman is called [the person] who mediates over the merchandise between the seller and the buyer in order to persuade them in favor of sale and purchase. They are called dalals all over the world and asi in Latin.”*⁴¹¹

“The middleman must speak truthfully, should love justice and for the sake of selling their goods, he should not frivolously lie to either [the buyer or the seller] about the fees that he gets paid for the transaction. Therefore, he is legally responsible to verily identify the current prices of the goods for the seller and the

⁴¹⁰ Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 36.

⁴¹¹ See Entry 168, Chapter 14, “Concerning the Middlemen,” in *Datastanagirk’ Astrakhani hayots’ [Lawbook of Astrakhan Armenians]*, ed. F.G. Poghosyan (Yerevan: Haykakan SSH Gitut’yunneri Akademiayi hratarakch’ut’yun, 1967), 60. «Միջնորդ անուանի նայ, որ առնէ միջնորդութիւն վասն վաճառելի իրաց ի մէջ վաճառողին եւ գնողին՝ առ ի համոզել գնուսին ի հաւանութիւն վաճառելոյն եւ գնելոյն, զորոյ անուն աշխարհօրէն կոչենք դալալ, եւ լաթիներէն՝ ասի»:

buyer, to exhort them to complete the transaction in a civilized manner and also in a way that is not against anyone's will."⁴¹²

COMMODITIES, SILVER FOR CASH, AND BARTER EXCHANGE

Detailed information about the commodities with which the Minasians traded in their East to West trade is found in the accounting ledger of Khwāja Minas.⁴¹³ Their lists of commodities can be arranged in two categories. First, the commodities that the firm agents took from South Asia and Iran to Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and Europe and the commodities that the firm brought from Europe and the Ottoman Empire to South Asia, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire. The main commodities that were taken from East to West were clearly gemstones, including colorless, yellow and other colors of diamonds (10573 units, in the period from 1679 to 1693), turquoise (43500 units, in the period from 1679 to 1693), rubies, emeralds, pearls, sapphire, topaz, lapis lazuli, crystal, agate, hyacinth, jasper, cornelian stone, onyx, garnets, aquamarine, tourmaline, cat's

⁴¹² See Entry 169, *Ibid*, «Միջնորդն պարտի գոլ ճշմարտախօս եւ սիրօղ արդարութեան, եւ ի առնելն զմիջնորդութիւն սակս վաճառելոյ զինչս ումեք՝ ո՛չ պարտի սնտի բանիւք խաբել եւ պատրել գոք վասն վարձոյն, գոր տրեցեալ լինի ի վաճառմանէն. ուստի ըստ օրինաց պարտի նայ ճշմարտապէս բացայայտել վաճառողին եւ գնօղին զներկայ զինս վաճառելի իրին եւ յորդորել գնտա քաղաքաւար խօսակցութեամբ (այնպիսեօք՝ որ ոչ իցէ ընդդէմ իղնմտանաց) առ ի գնել եւ վաճառել զիրս իւրեանց»:

⁴¹³ The Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas, Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di Venezia, P.D. 66.c.

eye, black amber, and nacre/mother of pearl.⁴¹⁴ Next in importance after gems came the South Asian textiles, including, but not limited to woolen and silk, as well as embroidered textiles. Musk, ginger, rhubarb, lima-wood, cotton from Gujarat, fragrant plants and roots were among other commodities mentioned in Minas's ledger. The accounting ledger indicates around twenty different woolen, cotton and silk textiles and covers, including from different cities in Gujarat, Multan, Tabriz, and so on.⁴¹⁵ It does not seem like the Minasian were very much involved in the trade of Iranian raw silk, although that was a traditionally common commodity for New Julfans to trade with during this period.

There are a few instances in the Minasian letters which elaborate on how their commodities were being transferred. For example, it seems that in the case of gems and beads, there were very specific instructions that the Minasian agents had to follow when packing their shipments before their arduous journey. For example, small glass or crystal beads, which could break, were usually put in a thick buff-leather, "You should put the beads in a thick buff-leather so that they do not break. Also put the other goods like that in buff-leather for them not to break..."⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴ For a full list of commodities and the original text of the accounting ledger, see Sona T'ajiryan, "Khodja Minas Minaseani hashuematane" [The Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas Minasean], *Handēs Amsoreay* (January-December 2019, 1-12): 195-296 (208).

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 208-209.

⁴¹⁶ «թէ ջղջղէլ էլ խսսս գօմճի կաշուն ղնէք զարայ կոտրման չի էլ ինչ որ էսպէս անկոտրելէ իքմին կայ գօմճի կաշուն ղնէք...»: ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 131.

The West to East trade was comprised of a whole different set of commodities that seem random at first sight, but, nevertheless, represented a common list of goods in demand in Iran and South East Asia for the specific time period. The Minasian agents were mainly trading with coral, brass, beads, mirrors, spectacles,⁴¹⁷ colored glass, including Murano,⁴¹⁸ glass blowers, cochineal, lead, European textiles, such as English broadcloth, Venetian satin, amber, watches and other goods. In his *L'estat de la Perse en 1660*, Raphael Du Mans,⁴¹⁹ when describing the Armenian merchants, mentions most of the commodities that the Minasian agents were also trading from East to West.

⁴¹⁷ The history of long-distance trade in spectacles made in Italy, predominantly in Florence, had not been a focus of special scholarly interest until a decade ago. For a thorough examination of spectacles, how they were made and traded with, see Vincent Ilardi, *Renaissance Vision from Spectacles to Telescopes* (American Philosophical Society: Philadelphia, 2007).

⁴¹⁸ In a few of the order lists Minas specifies that the ordered glass is from Murano. However, what is more interesting is that Minasians seemed to be interested in not only Murano glass made in Italy. They conducted a business of custom-made glass that imitated the Murano glass in England. They arguably took samples of Murano glass to London, after which they ordered a local glass maker to imitate those samples, which were cheaper than the Murano glass itself. It is hard to find out if Minasians then sold this glass in Iran and India under the Murano brand or not. «Մոսսնայ շիշեղէնն ամենէ նմունայ աղարկես Ինկլլթն շինեն մեր մարդոյ»: See folio 102. For details on early modern Murano glass making and trade see Francesca Trivellato, “Murano Glass, Continuity and Transformation (1400-1800),” in *At the Center of the Old World: Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian Mainland, 1400-1800*, ed. Paola Lanaro (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2006), 143-183.

⁴¹⁹ He was a member and a priest of the Capuchin order, who was sent on a foreign mission to Isfahan in 1647 and joined the French Capuchins there.

Du Mans notes that Armenians would transport their silk through "...Turkey to Smyrna and Aleppo, then through the Mediterranean, they were taking it to Venice and Livorno, from there bringing pure silver (liquid money), all in piastres or gold coins and sequins; others bring back imitation pearls, mirrors and other Venetian goods like that, spectacles, candle snuffers, glass rosary beads, coral, yellow amber, colored glass for window panes in which they used to accrue a major profit..."⁴²⁰

Interestingly, a big part of the West to East purchases was implemented from barter exchanges rather than bought with cash. In fact, barter was generally preferred over paying with cash. For example, in one of the order lists attached to a 1687 letter, Minas advised Agha to not buy any goods for India unless they were obtained through barter. He mainly wrote, "Do not buy goods for

⁴²⁰ Raphael Du Mans, *Estat de la Perse en 1660*, ed. Charleshenri Auguste Schefer (Paris: E. Leroux, Farnborough, Gregg, 1890), 181. Also, see Capuchin father Joseph Marie de Bourges' list of the commodities traded Julfan Armenians, "The Armenian merchants of Julfa here have their warehouses and stores for the caravans that come from Smyrna and Aleppo and bring to Persia textiles of London, France, and Venice, coral, yellow amber, paper, Venetian mirrors, white brass, and other textile and fabric items and haberdashery that they know will be sold in Persia." See Du Mans, *Ibid.*, 332. Many of these same commodities can be found in most of the archival material pertaining to the Minasiens. Almost an identical list of commodities was mentioned in one of EIC's documents from their Court Minutes as goods to be delivered to Surat from London by Armenians, from which the EIC was going to gain 25% profit. Those commodities included, "lead, corral, cocheneal, false pearl, looking-glasses, amber, iron, cordage, assidue, and glass ware..." See the text of the original document (Court Minutes, 7 September 1698 B/41 pp. 308b-309a) cited in *Armenian Merchants of the Seventeenth and Early*, ed. by Baladouni and Makepeace, 254-255.

India with cash, whatever exchanged goods you come across, send those.”⁴²¹ On another instance, Minas gave his agents advice by encouraging barter exchange and mentioning that they “...should not be scared of exchange [trade] in Europe.”⁴²²

Minas was adamant about not buying expensive commodities with cash. He made it clear that expensive goods were not to be bought with cash, as whoever did it, “their homes will be destroyed [they will become poor].”⁴²³ Whatever the commodities were, Minas’s instructions to his agents were to buy the best quality goods, which would “...sell even during the decline of trade.”⁴²⁴ This last fact explains why barter exchange played an important role in Minasians’ business dealings, which was to lower the risks of being deceived in a transaction.

Ազուլեցիայ It seems that what the Minasians and arguably other Armenian merchants were interested in, when it came to the West to East commerce, was taking with them as much liquid capital, specifically silver, as possible. Silver was one of the most requested commodities in India and Iran and was also regarded as the commodity that created the world market and “explained the

⁴²¹ «Հնդստանայ համար նադրով խրիդ չառես, ինչ մավգայ ռաստ գոյ, Էն կադարկես»: See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 88.

⁴²² «Ճռանկստանայ մավգիցն վախիլ չէ պիտիլ»: ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 80.

⁴²³ ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 112.

⁴²⁴ «Եվ ինչ ապրանք որ առման լինիս պաշն լելն առ, որ քասադ վախսն էլ ծախսի...»: See ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 88.

emergence of world trade.”⁴²⁵ The Dutch East India Company was considered the main supplier of silver. American silver from the Potosí mines of Bolivia crossed the Atlantic Ocean, then via Europe headed to Asia, mainly to India and China, where the biggest demand for it was. The Potosí silver was arguably the single most important commodity in the hands of Europeans, which gave them the opportunity of buying commodities of the Indian Ocean, such as the Indian textiles, pepper and luxury merchandise and “recapturing the treasures of the Indian Ocean.”⁴²⁶

It is possible that the Minasian agents acquired their silver from Livorno and Venice. Livorno, being one of the most important port cities in the Mediterranean, acquired its own silver shipments from the New World, “On a typical day in March 1686 an English vessel sailing from Cadiz to Livorno unloaded 8 boxes of indigo, 3 barrels of cochineal, 10,000 Spanish silver coins, 22 boxes of sugar, and a wealth of other commodities.”⁴²⁷

Despite the problems and especially the risks of transporting cash money overland or by sea, at least at one instance Minas asked his agent in Livorno to exchange the goods bought with his own

⁴²⁵ Dennis Flynn, and Arturo Giráldez, “‘Born with a Silver Spoon’: The Origin of World Trade in 1571,” *Journal of World History*, (6/ 2, 1995): 202. For the imports of silver into the Mughal Empire, see Shireen Moosvi, “The Silver Influx, Money Supply, Prices and Revenue-Extraction in Mughal India,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (1987): 47-94. According to Moosvi, silver imports into India were mainly implemented by the English and the Dutch East India Companies, as well as through the trade via the Red Sea and the Gulf. *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴²⁶ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the age of Philip II*, Vol. I (Harper & Row Publishers, 1972), 549.

⁴²⁷ Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 6.

capital into Spanish pieces of eight. He then instructed Agha to send the silver through Baghdad and Basra. As already mentioned, silver was an extremely valuable commodity in India. It is not clear whether that silver was going to end up in Iran or India, but it was regarded as a valuable commodity, the acquisition of which tested the real mercantile skills of Minas's agents. In a letter from September 1687 Minas instructed his agent Agha to turn the goods bought with his own capital into silver coins. "My brother, my son, the goods that you have in your hand are mine, even if they are [bought] from your or Aflatun's capital, they are still mine. You are not to touch even a single silver coin from the cash from whatever goods you sell. Turn our goods into silver pieces of eight. I will acknowledge your mercantile wit when I see that you are able to be a good judge of character at all times, such as lending money to trustworthy people. Your efficacy and wit will be demonstrated if you are able to turn all the cash that you get from [selling] my merchandise or the money invested in a bill of exchange into Spanish silver and send it to Baghdad and Basra or loan it to a good Julfan or one of my agents."⁴²⁸

Decision making was closely connected to competition. The Minasians were evidently competing with other New Julfan family firms of the time, mentioned in the previous chapter. It

⁴²⁸ «Ախբէր, որդի, էտ ապրանքդ որ քո ձեռքումնայ, թէ իմնայ իմա, թէ քո սարմիէնայ, էլ իմնայ, թէ Ալֆաթունիիննայ իմայ, էտ ապրանքանէտ, ինչ որ նաղդով կծախավի, նաղդին մին մատչիլին գուշին ձեռ չես տալման: Մեր ապրանքն սվիլայ մատչալ կշինես, քո բազարկանութեան շէշ դունկին էն չաղն կիմանամ, որ ամէն տեղէ ամենայն մարդէ խոտ առուս, քանի որ փող լինի պիտիլ, լէվ մարդի դու տաս: Մատչիլն մատչիլ և մին շէշ դունկիդ և լէվութիւնդ էլ էտ նի, որ մատչիլն, դոր յառէջ գրոտէլամ, էնպէս փախցանես, մաթլաբ քո մեծ խունարդ, մեծ լէվութիւնդ, լէվ նամաք խարաքիդ էտ նի, որ իմ ապրանքէն ինչ որ նաղդվի կամ կամբի տվածէն, ողջ կամ սվիլայ շինես փախցանես աղարկես Բաղդադ Պասարայ կամ փոխ տաս թէ լէվ ջուղեցոյայ, թէ իմ ընկերանցն»: See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 88.

seems that the competition was over which firm would import a given commodity first or faster than the other. For example, in February 1688, Minas in one of his many letters written that year, criticized Agha for his tardiness and for being hands-off. He mentioned that Agha's delay resulted in the goods of the Guerak'-Mirman family arriving earlier than theirs (presumably from Livorno or Venice to Iran or India). He then went on saying that Agha should be alert and act fast, before many people, in this case, I assume, other Julfan merchants or family firms, have brought the same commodities. Minas writes, "...you waited till [the goods] of Guerak's arrived [first] again."⁴²⁹

SMUGGLING

It is clear from this statement that the most important tool in their competition with other Julfan family firms was timely information circulation about their cargo, the arrival and departure of ships, and so on. Payment of protection costs discussed earlier was an essential part of early modern trade, whether it was the internalized protection executed by the East India Companies with the help of arms, the relative cheapness of travelling by maritime routes, or the payment of customs fees, tolls, bribes and other expenses made by private traders. Protection costs were included in overall expanses of the shipment of a given consignment, therefore the cheaper those costs were, the higher the profit would be for the merchant. In this context, smuggling and protection went hand in hand for merchants predominantly travelling and trading on the caravan trade routes. Concealing some of the commodities from the customs along with knowing all of the tolls and other expenses on their way from one town to another helped merchants cut on protection costs and therefore maximize their profits. In this context, the Minasians specifically compensated

⁴²⁹ «...կեցար մինչև Գարսաբենցն էլի եկաւ վրեն հասաւ»: See ASFi, "Acquisti e Doni," Busta 123, folio 86.

for the lack of arms and thus the inability to internalize those costs, with their knowledge of overland routes, fast correspondence, informed decision making, as well as smuggling.

Smuggling is an especially important topic in the context of gem trade. Gems, crystals and beads were small in size, but especially in the case of diamonds and other precious stones, high in value. Their small size made them easy to smuggle and make high profits by avoiding customs fees and other costs gem merchants had to pay for on their way to their final destination markets.

While the archival data available to me is not sufficient to make a substantial claim about the Minasian family agents and smuggling, it provides a number of examples worth mentioning. First, it is apparent from the Minasian correspondence that “hiding” their commodities from some customs officials and toll-collectors gave them the benefit of making a higher profit. In one of his letters Minas emphasized the importance of trying to get away from paying customs fees and tolls. He writes in a letter dated 1685, “Anything that we are able to get away with not paying to customs, poll-collectors, the “lash”?, and the port [official], is the profit we are left with.”⁴³⁰ Taking effort to escape the customs officials was encouraged and praised. For example, “The first order of business is that you send all the coral that you have, be that raw, cut, large or middle-sized, all of it should be sent to India via Basra. One must do it like our beloved Gaspar, who [cleverly] avoided the customs everywhere from Venice to Livorno and took [the goods] sealed with Agha’s stamp to Surat...”⁴³¹

⁴³⁰ «...թէ մին իքմին գօմրկէ, ոսիդարէ, լաշէ, բողազէ կտրումանք, մեր շախն էնայ մնաման»: ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 91.

⁴³¹ The letter is from July 1685. «Կատարէք առաջին իզնն օրդնին էտայ, որ ինչ մոջամէղեն որ ունենէք, թէ խամ, թէ տաշած, թէ մեծ մեծ թէ միզանի, ողջ Պասարու վերայ պիտի գնայ Հնդրստան: Մեր աչից լոյս

It seems that when it came to smaller goods, especially gems, beads, and other commodities, smuggling or better yet “hiding” commodities in chests or boxes was a practice of a “silent agreement” among the Minasian family agents and beyond. We know this because doing it was mentioned casually, as if it was attempted almost every time Minasian agents had to cross customs. If they succeeded in hiding some of their goods, then it was a success and their profits from that one consignment were obviously higher, however, this was not always the case. Smuggling or “hiding” some goods from customs officials was not an impossible task, as officers did not always open and check every single chest box the merchants carried with them. As Felicia Gottman puts it, “Part of what made smuggling so difficult to combat was that it was by no means universally perceived as criminal. Instead, depending on context, it was considered perfectly acceptable and even to be encouraged. In a mercantilist mindset in which international trade was a zero-sum-game and hence to be fought like a war by other means, smuggling was an important weapon.”⁴³² In one

Գասպարին պես պիտի ջահթ առելով տարած որ Վանաստքեն Լիզոնոյ սալրանքն ամենայն տեղ զօմրկէ պոճեցուցելայ սարբը մօհր Աղէ մրովն տարել Սուրաթն...»: ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 89.

⁴³² Felicia Gottmann, *Global Trade, Smuggling, and the Making of Economic Liberalism: Asian Textiles in France 1680–1760* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2016), 63. Gottman identified different types of smuggling, concealed or open, as well as depending on whether it was an overland, maritime or a “fluvial” smuggling operation. For more details, see Gottmann, *Ibid.*, 75-78.

instance, Minas mentioned that beads were not really profitable for them in India, but that they were “needed as a cover up” for other goods.⁴³³

To conclude, by focusing on a single-family firm of professional gem merchants, their usage of overland and maritime routes, decision making, correspondence, money and business practices, this chapter has argued that the systematic circulation of information and market knowledge played a key role in the success of the Minasian family firm. Moreover, their detailed knowledge of early modern overland routes, markets, customs, fees, and the efficient circulation of that information through fast correspondence compensated for their lack or inability to “internalize” protection costs, as compared to East India Companies of the time, who considerably reduced those costs thanks to their armed forces and the maritime access to the Cape of Good Hope. The Minasian family firm and their business and decision-making culture were certainly not an isolated case in the context of Eurasian long-distance trade. Further research into the archival data of other Julfan and Eurasian family firms can prepare the ground for making a larger set of arguments about the agency of Asian merchants and their important role in early modern Eurasian trade, beyond the framework of a single family firm, such as the Minasians.

⁴³³ «Յետոյ քաշով ուրունքին համարիր գրել: Եղբայր, էտ մեզ համար Հնդստան շախ չե առում, յենց փարդի համարայ պէտք...» “You then wrote about beads in bulk. Brother, that is not profitable for us in India, it is specifically needed for a cover up.” ASFi, “Acquisti e Doni,” Busta 123, folio 6.

CONCLUSION

The importance of gem trade among Armenian long-distance merchants in the early modern period can hardly be exaggerated. At least three of the most famous family firms that originated in New Julfa were actively involved in trading with Indian diamonds and South Asian gems. We do not know much about the family firm of Guerak'-Mirmans and coral trade, but we do know that both the Minasian and the Sceriman family firms were actively involved in the niche exchange of Indian diamonds and Mediterranean coral.

While the involvement of Julfan merchants in the gem trade might not be of much significance if discussed as an isolated event, it is the larger impact that Julfan family firms had on early modern Eurasian trade, as well as how their economic history can contribute to the early modern studies of long-distance trade that is noteworthy. More specifically, the analysis of the history of the Minasian family firm and their gem trading activities touches upon a number of scholarly debates and topics that have been scrutinized for the last several decades. The first is the scholarship on Asian merchants and family firms in relation to the European joint-stock companies of the time, who had the lion's share of power in the long-distance trade of Eurasia and beyond. Some of this scholarship, as I have noted in this dissertation, has orientalist undertones that merits a serious reassessment.

Based on Van Leur's and Steensgaard's views on the Asian "pedlar," this dissertation, as seen in the Introduction, took a different perspective from the ones discussed earlier. First, it has demonstrated that the commercial activities of the Minasian family firm spatially covered two continents and all three "gunpowder empires" of the early modern period, the Safavid, the Ottoman, and the Mughal empires. Thus, on the example of the Minasian firm and its multiple

commenda agents, this dissertation has argued that far from merely being peddlers, as much of the older literature on Asian family firms and their *commenda* agents would have us believe, the Minasians had fairly complex trading practices and organizational form. Second, instead of viewing the Eurasian long-distance trade as an encounter of two separate and arguably disconnected entities, including the European East India Companies and the Asian merchants and family firms, this dissertation has suggested that we look at Eurasian trade as a space of co-existence and contact of those two entities. A space, where the volume of trade, the scale of economic and military power, including the organized violence exercised by the European joint-stock companies did not simply assume the eclipse of the smaller-scale trading activities of Asian family firms, on one side, and the emergence and the empowerment of European corporations, on the other. Rather, this dissertation has explored the co-existence of these two entities, at times even cooperating, such as, for instance, when the Minasian family firm agents made use of the English East India Company vessels to transfer their goods from London to Surat or Bombay, especially after the signing of a trade agreement with the EIC in 1688.

Considering the scarcity of archival sources on early modern small-scale Asian merchants and family firms and the abundance of European corporate archives of the joint-stock East India companies, it has been a challenge for scholars to give more agency to Asian mercantile groups and family firms. The Minasian family firm archives, on which this dissertation is based, provide some clarity in this matter, but are only the tip of the iceberg of thousands of archival sources, including business correspondence, legal commercial documents, as well as accounting ledgers and others covering the history of this and other Julfan family firms.

The Introduction of this dissertation provided a layout of the underlying assumptions and arguments made by the historians of the early modern Eurasian long-distance trade, while the

first chapter briefly explored the historiography of early modern diamond and gem trade and situated New Julfans in the larger picture of early modern global long-distance trade. In particular, it described and analyzed the overall contribution and the involvement of New Julfan merchants to the global trade of diamonds and gems in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Chapter Two explored Agha di Mat'os's life as a diamond merchant and shed light on the commercial biography of this important yet largely neglected merchant who served as a commenda agent for the Minasian firm in Italy. On the basis of seventeenth-century mercantile correspondence between Livorno and New Julfa, the chapter examined the commercial history of the Khwāja Minasian family firm and its agent Agha di Mat'os from a microhistorical perspective. My research treated Agha di Mat'os and others as largely representative of a group of other Armenian merchants involved in the diamond and gem trade of the early modern period. It situated and firmly imbedded Agha di Mat'os and other Armenian diamond merchants in the context of early modern cross-cultural diamond and gem trade between Europe and India. What is more important, my research contextualized the commercial activities of Agha di Mat'os within the burgeoning historiography of the early modern diamond trade and its role in fostering globalization of world commodity markets.

In this connection, as mentioned before, economic historians Francesca Trivellato, Gedalia Yogevev, and more recently Tjil Vanneste have focused their scholarship on the early modern diamond trade as a vital “commodity chain” linking the histories of the Indian Ocean and South Asia with those of Europe and the Mediterranean in a pivotal period in world or global history. However, these fine scholars have conducted their research with a near-exclusive emphasis on Sephardic-Jewish merchants as the main long-distance mercantile community engaged in the trade of South Asian diamonds in the Mediterranean markets of Europe. Their research has also

predominantly covered the eighteenth century, whereas this dissertation is focused on the last three decades of the seventeenth century, an arguably less studied period from the perspectives of diamond and gem trade history. By exploring a significant corpus of largely ignored Armenian-language mercantile documentation belonging to the Minasian family firm and its members in general and Agha di Mat'os in particular, my research has raised a number of questions that prove to be pivotal for a proper reassessment of this historiography and pushed back the diamond trade between the Mediterranean and South Asia to the second half of the seventeenth century.

Another important scholarly debate addressed in this dissertation is the decline of the caravan trade routes in the seventeenth century and onwards, after the discovery of the maritime route around the Cape of Good Hope, which was one of the biggest themes in Steensgaard's seminal work. This dissertation has demonstrated that the Eurasian traditional overland routes were being repeatedly used by the Minasian family firm agents during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Not only did the Minasians rely on the main caravan trade routes of the seventeenth century, which, arguably they also knew the best, but they interchangeably combined their use of them with maritime routes, thus avoiding the unsafe conditions of overland trade and using the protection provided by the East India Companies of the time, whenever required.

The choice of the safest and most profitable commercial routes by the head of the firm was made possible by his emphasis on speedy correspondence and information flows in his decision-making process. Here too, the combination of both overland and maritime courier systems seemed to have benefited the Miansian firm's business operations in the long term.

It has been long established that one of the main differences between the Asian merchants

and family firms and the East India Companies of the time was that the latter had the ability of exercising organized violence whenever it was required. The exercise of organized violence was strongly tied to the notion of protection costs, already discussed earlier. The state-chartered corporate joint-stock companies, mainly the early modern East India Companies, were able to internalize their protection costs by using organized violence through their armies, be that on the land around their factories or on the sea through their armadas. According to Steensgaard, protection costs generally speaking exceeded the costs of transportation. Therefore, the internalization of protection costs also translated into higher profits for the corporations, which had the ability to internalize those costs with the use of organized violence, at the same time making their protection rent⁴³⁴ higher. Organized violence, therefore, was one of the main attributes of the East India Companies, which guaranteed them commercial success at a high level.

As already mentioned, New Julfan merchants sought to sign agreements with the East India Companies of the time mostly to reduce those costs when they used Company vessels to transport their goods. The influence that organized violence had on the power dynamics of

⁴³⁴ Steensgaard's understanding of Lane's definition of protection rent is as follows, "A very large part of the costs of the medieval and early modern long-distance merchant was payment for protection or insurance against losses caused by bandits or pirates. Some merchants, however, were in a position to buy protection of a better quality than others, or they bought the same quality at a lower price. The extra income enjoyed by these merchants is termed by Lane "protection rent.'" See Niels Steensgaard, "Violence and the Rise of Capitalism: Frederic C. Lane's Theory of Protection and Tribute," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 5, no. 2 (1981): 251. See also, Frederic Lane, "Economic Consequences of Organized Violence," *The Journal of Economic History* 18, no. 4 (1958): 409.

Eurasian long-distance trade is hard to underestimate and was one of the biggest weaknesses of Asian family firms, including the Minasians.

The lack of organized violence was not the only shortcoming of an organizational unit, such as early modern family firms, which were founded on kin, family capital and were vulnerable to generational discontinuity. Small-scale family firms could not survive the large-scale operations that the long-distance trade required for an extended period of time. As opposed to that, the European joint-stock corporations “offered longevity, a widespread investor base, asset partitioning between private and business assets, and stronger political lobbying that could make rulers' commitments to it more credible and thus shield its shareholders from expropriation.”⁴³⁵

As we have seen, the Minasians were clearly competing with their counterparts, mainly other Julfan family firms over who would get the same type of consignments to Isfahan, Basra or other destinations first. That could be due to having certain and special clientele at the port cities where the agents of these family firms arrived but could also be their unique way of competing in the fierce world of long-distance trade to stay competitive at least among the trading entities at their own scale and level.

And finally, if besides the internalization of protection costs and the lack of armed protection, one took the existence of double-entry bookkeeping practices as not only the main prerequisite of the rise of capitalism in Europe, but also some type of a safeguard for long-term success of trading entities such as family firms, then further research into Asian family firms should answer a number of questions. For example, the question of long-term success, generation of capital, “rationality” and longevity has always been connected to the chartered joint-stock corporations

⁴³⁵ Ron Harris, *Going the Distance*, 197.

of Europe. However, it is clear that even the biggest European family firms, such as Fuggers, did not have what it took in terms of their organizational features, to establish continued success over centuries, as that of the joint-stock companies. In existence for more than two centuries, the German Fugger family firm was founded in the late fourteenth century by Hans Fugger in Augsburg and existed till the end of the sixteenth century. Fuggers were merchant bankers and were predominantly involved in the trade of textiles and fabrics.⁴³⁶ Being the largest enterprise and arguably the biggest merchant house in Europe in the sixteenth century, the Fuggers, however, faced multiple administrative and organizational challenges, which also resulted in the changing of its structure multiple times. In the end, the problem of separating their private and corporate wealth, as well as the fact that Fuggers did not rely on outsiders to raise capital, resulted in the slow decline of the Fuggers as a firm.⁴³⁷ As Ron Harris has pointed out in his recent study of Eurasian trade, “As much as family firms evolved to suit their particular trade challenges and political and social environment, they eventually encountered inherent outer limits. They were sensitive to intergenerational transfer problems, to asset partitioning, and to state expropriation.”⁴³⁸

Finally, if according to Steensgaard, there was “nothing in the sources to indicate the existence of comprehensive coordinated organizations - of an Armenian, Turkish or Persian

⁴³⁶ Baker, Charles Richard, and Bertrand P Quéré. “Governance and Accounting Practices in the Fugger Family Firm at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century,” *Accounting History* 24, no. 3 (August 2019): 489–511.

⁴³⁷ Ron Harris, *Going the Distance*, 194-195.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 196.

version of a Fugger, Cranfield or Tripp,”⁴³⁹ the Minasian documents, then, hopefully provide scholars of early modern long-distance trade with a basis to go beyond the established notions of the study of the organizational, armed, and managerial features of Asian trading entities and explore other aspects in the trading activities of family firms.

This dissertation has only scratched the surface of thousands of archival documents pertaining to the histories of early modern New Julfan family firms, kept at the main archives of European cities, such as Venice, Florence, Pisa, Amsterdam, London, and beyond. The microhistory of the Minasian family firm during the beginning of their activities in 1680s operating from Isfahan shows that the history of the firm’s early activities is only a small part of their economic legacy. The archival data used in this dissertation is part of a much larger body of sources both on this firm’s later activities up until 1750s, but more importantly of other Julfan family firms as well. Taking into consideration the scarcity of material on Asian family firms and merchants, it is of great importance to further investigate a larger group of early modern Julfan family firms, such as the Scerimans and the Guerak’-Mirmans in the hope of providing enough archival base for economic historians to make larger, more definitive arguments on the understudied history of smaller-scale Asian trade.

⁴³⁹ Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 30.

APPENDIX 1

The original text in New Julfan Dialect of “The Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas” (*Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr di Venezia, P.D. 66.c.*)

[ՀԱՇՈՒԵՄԱՏԵԱՆ]

Տէր Աստուած իմ, Յիսուս Քրիստոս, դու հոգաս զպէտս մեր եւ օգնութիւն մեզ ի քէն եկեացէ եւս դու ուղղես զմեզ: Փոքր թիվն ԿԴ [64] Նադար ամսոյ Ա[1] թարվզցի Մաթոսի որդի Աղէն ինձ՝ Մինասիս ընկերացաւ, ընկերայգիր արեա՝ թասվիլով ապր[ա]նք տարաւ, որ Ֆռանկստան ծ[ա]խէ: Իւր սարմայէն վեր առու, այս է, որ ներքոյ գրեցաւ⁴⁴⁰:

Նումրայ ա	0010 դանայ	նիլբում ռանկին ֆիրուզայ	վազն	19 դիրէթ
Նումրայ բ	0050 դանայ	էլ բաբաթ նիլբում ֆիրուզայ	վազնն	ձգ դիրէթ
Նումրայ գ	0110 դանայ	էլ սինայ ըռանկ ռնկին ֆիրուզայ	վազնն	քճժէ դիրէթ
Նումրայ դ	0540 դանայ	նիլբում նօխուտի ֆիրուզայ	վազն	
Նումրայ ե	0800 դանայ	Մինայ ռանկ նօխուտի ֆիրուզայ	վազն	
Նումրայ զ	0004 դանայ	նիլբում եքայ դանայ ֆիրուզայ	վազն	խդ դիրէթ
Նումրայ է	0080 դանայ	նիլբում մատանիշինձ ֆիրուզայ	վազնն	
Նումրայ ը	0045 դանայ	նիլբում դորոշտ հաբաբի ֆիրուզայ	վազն	
Նումրայ թ	3465 դանայ	ռանկին յիստակ ջրով գուշվարայ նիլում	վազն	ռգճկ մսխալ
Նումրայ ժ	0001 գրէ	լէվ ջրով կարմիր ետղութի խաքայ	վազնայ	00ձդ մսխալ
Նումրայ ժա	0001 գրէ	քաշ կարմիր ետղութի խաքայ	վազնն	քճլօ մսխալ

⁴⁴⁰ Բնագրում այստեղ այլ ձեռագրով ու կնքադրոշմներով յետագայում աւելացուած է. «Թիվն Յիսուսի 1679 սէջէմբրէ: [Երկու կնքադրոշմներ՝] Էս Բ[2] միրն ներքոյ գրեալ երկու վկայոց միրն այ, որ ոչ ով կարան[ալ]՝ ոչ թուխտն փոխել. Էս Ադայ Մինասին դֆտարիցն սավադ ան արարէլ, որպէս եւ Չաքարայ դի Պետրոս Շէրինան Էսօր տեսի, ազօսոյ ԺԳ[13] թ[ի]վն 1785»-

Նումրայ ժբ	0002	դանայ	մեծ բարայդօռի - - -	
Նումրայ ժգ	0001	քիսայ	օրթայ բարթա մարգարթի խաքայ	վազնայ <i>բճլգ</i> մսխալ
Նումրայ ժդ	1900	դանայ	տաշած նգիմի լել բուսրաղ	վազնն <i>անձօ</i> մսխալ
Նումրայ ժե	0001	գրե	անտաշ քուլուղի բուսրաղ	վազնն <i>անձօ</i> մսխալ
Նումրայ ժզ	0001	գրե	էլ անտաշ բուսրաղ - -	վազնն <i>անխր</i> մսխալ
Նումրայ ժէ	0073	ղիտր	Թավրիզի քարն ռանկին լաջվարթ	վազնն <i>հզ</i> Ղիտր Թարվիզի քարն
Նումրայ ժը	0001	գրեչայ	կտրած տաշած ջինս լաջվարթ	վազնն <i>ան..</i> մսխալ
Նումրայ ժթ	0010	ջորոյ խակ	լել թագայ ըռեվանդ	վազն <i>բճ.է</i> Ղիտր Թ[ա]վրի <i>զի</i> քարն
Նումրայ ի	0001	խակ	էլ Աղայջանին սարմայիցն ռեվանդ	վազն <i>ժբ </i> Ղիտր Թավրիզի <i>դ </i> Ղիտրն գերմակայ
Նումրայ իա	0001	մեծ կապոց	թավսիլումն Ե Ղիտր = խաքայ	վազնն <i>ե</i> Ղիտր <i>է</i> սէր Մաշա- ղի
Նումրայ իբ	0001	գրե	նիլբում տաշած Աղայջանին ֆիրուզայ համարն	<i>ռզնիօ</i> դանայ
Նումրայ իգ	0001	գրե	տաշած նգիմի բուսրաղ- համարն	<i>բճիէ</i> դանայ
Նումրայ իդ	0001	կապոց	անտաշ յիստակ բուսրաղ համարն	<i>դռթճիօ</i> դանայ

--- 13 նայմն օրն թէ յինքն յինք առեց թէ Տէր Գալուցին յերես արար ջամն ելաւ: 025000 դեկան:

Բարթթէլ Թարվիզիոյ բարթթ արար, որ ես Մինասըս Ըսպահան տվի - - ջամն 040000 դեկան:

Բ

Փոքր թվ[[ի]ն ԿՁ [66] Շբ[ա]թ ամսոյ ԻՁ [26] բ[ա]թէլ Մաթոսի որդի Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցի Աղայ-
մալն տարաւ. այս է ներքոյ գրեցաւ.

[2 կնքադրոշմներ]

Նումրայ ա	ա	դանայ	մուսալ[ա]ս ճարմակ տափակ թաբով ավմագ	վազնն <i>ժբ</i> ցորէն
Նումրայ բ	ա	դանայ	գլուխն սարթիզ բիայիբ թաբով ավմագ	վազնն <i>ժգ </i> ցորէն

Նումրայ գ	ւ ղանայ	տակն թախտայ գլուխն թարթարի բիայիբ ալմագ	վազնն ժգ ցորէն
Նումրայ դ	ւ ղանայ	ձիք թավրայ բիայիբ թաբով ալմագ	վազնն ժք ցորէն
Նումրայ ե	ւ ղանայ	տիր բարակ բիայիբ չարգուշայ թաբով ալմագ	վազնն օէ ցորէն
Նումրայ զ	ք ղանայ	թարթարի յիստակ թաբով գուշվարայ ալմագ	վազնն իէ ցորէն
Նումրայ է	ւ ղանայ	բաղամի թարթարի ռանկ փոքր շաքարի ալմագ	վազնն ժօ ցորէն
Նումրայ ը	ւ ղանայ	թավրայ չարգուշայ բիայիբ թաբով ալմագ	վազնն յթ ցորէն
Նումրայ թ	գ ղանայ	տիր բարակ բիայիբ բաղամի թաբով ալմագ	վազնն ժէ ցորէն
Նումրայ ժօ	ւ ղանայ	մատանի տիր բարակ մեղանով թաբով ալմագ	վազնն գ ցորէն
Նումրայ ժա	ւ ղանայ	բարակ մեղանօվ քնարն ծուռ բաղամի ալմագ	վազնն է ցորէն
Նումրայ ժբ	ւ ղանայ	այիբդար չարգուշայ ըռանկն փոքր շաքարի ալ- մագ	վազնն ը ցորէն
Նումրայ ժգ	ւ ղանայ	քշտէրքն խամ, յստակ ճարմակ թավրայ ալմագ	վազնն ը ցորէն
Նումրայ ժդ	ւ ղանայ	պզտիկ ճարմակ թարթար գուշվարայ յստակ ալ- մագ	վազնն գ ցորէն
Նումրայ ժե	ք ղանայ	ծուռ հաշտանկ. ւ դեղին ւ ճարմակ ալմագ	վազնն ժք ցորէն
Նումրայ ժզ	ժ ղանայ	թաբով. գուլ բաթամի ք.քն դեղնաշատ ալմագ	վազնն լգ ցորէն
Նումրայ ժէ	ղ ղանայ	տիր բարակ յստակ ք.քն ճարմակ. ք.քն շաքարի ալմագ	վազնն ղ= ցորէն
Նումրայ ժը	ւ ղանայ	լէվ թախտայ մերհաբ բիայիբ թաբով ալմագ	վազնն ժօ ցորէն
Նումրայ ժթ	ղ ղանայ	փաք նափաք ռանկին մուսալաս բաղամի ալ- մագ	վազնն լե ցորէն
Նումրայ իօ	ւ ղանայ	չարգուշայ բիայիբ յիստակթաբով ալմագ	վազնն գ ցորէն
Նումրայ իա	ճիգ դա- նայ	գրէ չայ ամէն անդումէ ճարմակ յիստակ ալմագ	վազնն հթ դիրէթ
Նումրայ Իբ	հղ ղանայ	տիր բարակ ամէն անդումէ ճարմակ յիստակ ալ- մագ	վազնն ժթ դիրէթ

Նումրայ Իգ	<i>ճժ</i> դանայ	ճարմակ անփախ ռանկին - - - ավմագ	վազնն	<i>խ</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ Իդ	<i>ճօ</i> դանայ	թախտայ եւ հաշտանկ քիչրի ճարմակ ավմագ	վազնն	<i>ժօ</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ԻԵ	<i>ճհ</i> դանայ	գերմակ ռանկին դալթի --- ավմագ	վազնն	<i>խգ</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ԻԶ	<i>խ</i> դանայ	չոքին այիբդար - - - ավմագ	վազնն	<i>լգ</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ԻԷ	<i>խ</i> դանայ	փաք նափաք ճարմակ դեղին խառն ավմագ	վազնն	<i>ժա</i> = ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ԻԸ	<i>ժօ</i> դանայ	անփախ ճարմակ թախտայ ավմագ	վազնն	<i>է</i> ղիրէթ

Բ[ա]թէլ փոքր թվ[ի]ն ԿԶ [66] Շբ[ա]թ ամսոյ ԻԶ[26] Մաթոսի որդի Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցի. էլ Ա-
ղայմալն տարաւ. այս է ներքո գրեցաւ.

Նումրայ ա	<i>դ</i> դանայ	ռանկին Գ լէվ Ա չոր կարմիր եաղուլթ	վազնն	<i>օթ</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ բ	<i>ճճ</i> դանայ	ռանկին բիայիբ մեղանով կարմիր եաղուլթ	վազն	<i>օղթ</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ գ	<i>նզնիօ</i> դանայ	ռանկին բիայիբ մեղանով կարմիր եաղուլթ	վազնն	<i>ճխք</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ դ	<i>էճժօ</i> դանայ	ռանկին բիայիբ յիստակ կարմիր եաղուլթ	վազնն	<i>խք</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ե	<i>քոժգ</i> դանայ	սինայ ռանկ ջրով յիստակ կարմիր եաղուլթ	վազնն	<i>եճժք</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ զ	<i>դրզն</i> դանայ	էլ քամռանկ յիստակ ջրով կարմիր եաղուլթ	վազնն	<i>զնխր</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ է	<i>անիգ</i> դանայ	խառն ռանկին քամռանկ կարմիր եաղուլթ	վազնն	<i>ժգ</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ը	<i>դ</i> դանայ	ռանկին քամռանկ այիբդար կարմիր եա- ղուլթ	վազնն	<i>ժր</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ թ	<i>ժգ</i> դանայ	մուք ռանկին եւ օրթայ գուշվարայ թէ նգի- մի կապուտ եաղուլթ	վազնն	<i>քճժք</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ժ	<i>գ</i> դանայ	ռանկին նգիմի կապուտ եաղուլթ---	վազն	<i>ժդ</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ժա	<i>դ</i> դանայ	փաք նայփաք մեծ պզտիկ ճարմակ եա- ղուլթ	վազնն	<i>ժթ</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ժբ	<i>ք</i>	թասպէ ջրով դալթան շիրին ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն	<i>ճ.ք</i> ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ժգ	<i>իէ</i> դանայ	ջրով շիրին դալթան ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն	<i>ժէ</i> ղիրէթ

Նումրայ ժդ	իզ դանայ	խառն լել վատ ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազնայ	ժդ դիրելթ
Նումրայ ժե	բ դանայ	լել ջրով դալթան գուշվարայ ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն	ե դիրելթ
Նումրայ ժզ	ծղ դանայ	լել փուշտ փաք ճարմակ նիմռու	վազնն	իս դիրելթ
Նումրայ ժէ	լղ դանայ	ռանկին տաշած լաջվարդ լաջվարդ	վազնն	ժբ մսխալ
Նումրայ ժը	ռղնիսո դանայ	նիլբում յիստակ Նշ[ա]լբուրի դանէն ժ ցո-րէն ֆիրուզայ	վազնն	նծօ մսխալ
Նումրայ ժթ	ձե դանայ	եք դանայ նիլբում ռանկին յիստակ դանէն ժՉ ցորէն ֆիրուզայ	վազնն	ժգ մսխալ
Նումրայ իօ	գ դանայ	եքա գուզին ջինս նիլբում ֆիրուզայ	վազնն	ժ. դիրելթ
Նումրայ իա	բճ դանայ	փեքումի որե սարթիզ նիլբում դրիստ նօխ[ու]ղի ֆիրուզայ		
Նումրայ իբ	նղ	թասպէ մեծ մեծ գլուխ. աւալ ճարմակ ա-ղեղ		
Նումրայ իգ	նղ	թասպէ սինայ դուում ճարմակ աղեղ		
Նումրայ իդ	նլս	թասպէ փոր սեում ճարմակ աղեղ		
Նումրայ իե	նե	թասպէ չարում. ոտն --- ճարմակ աղեղ		
Նումրայ իզ	ղ դիտր	շահի ըռանկին մեծ մեծ ճոթ լել լաջվարդ		
Նումրայ իէ	բ դիտր	շահի քամռանկ մեծ ճոթ լաջվարդ		
Նումրայ իը	ննժղ դանայ	աւալ Բ յերեսի արուսաք		
Նումրայ իթ	ռղնեօ դանայ	դուում Բ երեսի արուսաք		
Նումրայ յօ	էնղէ դանայ	սեում Բ երեսի արուսաք		
Նումրայ յա	ռեճգօ դանայ	չարում տափակ Բ երեսի արուսաք		
Նումրայ յբ	գնղ	մսխալ շատն լել փոքրն վատ տաշած նգի-մի բուսրաղ		
Նումրայ յգ	կե մսխալ	անտաշ քուլուղի յիստակ ծեծելէ բուսրաղ		
Նումրայ յդ	բնղգ մսխալ	լել վատ բանի էլ ծեծելէ էլ խառն բուսրաղ		

Նումրայ լե	<i>ժթ</i>	թասսպէ ռանկին գերմակ յիստակ որ <i>թնկր</i>		ռավաղ
Նումրայ լզ	<i>դնձէ</i> մսխալ	ռանկին դրօշտ որ է գմրութի		խաքայ
Նումրայ լե	<i>թնկէ</i> մսխալ	ռանկին գերմակ գմրութի		խաքայ
Նումրայ լը	<i>թռ.</i> դանայ	օրթայ <i>թօ</i> թէ գերմակ յիստակ չին նարմակ նգիմ բլօր		
Նումրայ լթ	<i>գնձդ</i> դանայ	ջինս ռանկին բիայիբ ֆռանկ փասսան կարմիր ետդութ	վազն	<i>թնդ</i> դիրէթ
Նումրայ խ	<i>գն</i> դանայ	լէվ յիստակ սինայ ըռանկ -- կարմիր ետդութ	վազն	<i>անձր</i> դիրէթ
Նումրայ խա	<i>գնիգ</i>	թասսպէ ռանկին յիստակ լէվ կարմիր աղիղ		
Նումրայ խբ		ջովաք աղիղ էր մնաց Թարվէգ		
Նումրայ խգ	<i>անօզ</i> դիտր	շահին քարն լէվ էլ օրթայ էլ մեծ գերմակ	վազն	լաջվարդ
Նումրայ խդ	<i>կ</i> դիտր	շահին քարն ---		ռէվանդ
Նումրայ խե		Գ[ա]նգ Սաղ[ա]ր էր մնաց Թարվէգ		
Նումրայ խզ		դամնի էր մնաց Թարվէգ		
Նումրայ խէ		մանած էր մնաց Թարվէգ		
Նումրայ խը	<i>Խթ</i>	մուշկ		349 օնցայ
Նումրայ խը	<i>գնդգ</i> նաֆայ	անկաշի դալանդարի մուշկ	վազն	<i>թննձգ</i> մսխալ
Նումրայ խթ	<i>թնկէ</i> նաֆայ	կաշօվ նաֆարիդար մուշկ	վազն	<i>անխօ</i> մսխալ
Նումրայ ծ	<i>թնի</i> դանայ	սինայ ռանկ ջրով կարմիր ետդութ	վազն	<i>դէ</i> դիրէթ
Նումրայ ծա	<i>գ</i> դանայ	քար Բ.քն եաշմ մինն բարադուռի եաշմ	վազն	<i>ռնդօ</i> մսխալ
Նումրայ ծբ	<i>ա</i> գրէ	չանամ դալ, Ա թասսպի պլեմանի չանամդալ	վազն	
Նումրայ ծգ	<i>նթ</i> դիտր	Շ[ա]իի շարբաֆի ապրիշում. Հալաբ ապրիշում	վազն	<i>անթ</i> շահի դիտր

Բարբ[ա]թ էլ փոքր թվին Կ.2[66] Ծբ[ա]թ ամսոյ Ի.2 [26] էլ Ադէ վերայ աղարկեցինք իմ Մինասիս եւ Պետրոսին սարմայիցն էլ Աղամալն տարաւ այս է գրեցաւ.

Նումրայ ա	580 դանայ	լէվ մադան - - հաշտանկ արմագ	վազն	061 դիրէթ
Նումրայ բ	067 դանայ	լէվ մադան-- հաշտանկ արմագ	վազն	020 դիրէթ
Նումրայ գ	048 դանայ	բաթ էլ հաշտանկ արմագ	վազն	0036 դիրէթ
Նումրայ դ	036 դանայ	էլ բաբաթ հաշտանկ արմագ	վազն	054 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ե	005 դանայ	էլ բաբաթ հաշտանկ արմագ	վազն	010 = դիրէթ
Նումրայ զ	001 դանայ	էլ բաբաթ հաշտանկ արմագ	վազն	004 դիրէթ
Նումրայ է	003 դանայ	էլ բաբաթ հաշտանկ արմագ	վազն	002 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ը	137 դանայ	քիչրի անփախ թախտայ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	016 դիրէթ
Նումրայ թ	042 դանայ	փախ տված թախտայ լէվ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	021 = դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժ	032 դանայ	փախ տված թախտայ լէվ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	017 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժա	014 դանայ	փախ տված թախտայ լէվ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	008 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժբ	010 դանայ	թախտայ եւ գուլ լէվ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	011 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժգ	095 դանայ	թախտայ եւ գուլ լէվ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	027 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժդ	079 դանայ	թախտայ եւ գուլ լէվ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	036 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժե	026 դանայ	քիչրի թախտայ շաքարի արմագ	վազն	012 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժզ	006 դանայ	քիչրի թախտայ գուլ շաքարի արմագ	վազն	005= դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժէ	004 դանայ	մուսալաս եւ գուլ շաքարի արմագ	վազն	005 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժը	017 դանայ	փունթ եւ թավրայ լէվ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	027 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժթ	001 դանայ	թարթարի կուշտն խամ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	004 դիրէթ
Նումրայ իօ	001 դանայ	թարթարի շաքարի արմագ	վազն	004 դիրէթ
Նումրայ իա	001 դանայ	ռիզայ թարթարի գուլ լէվ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	002 ≡ դիրէթ
Նումրայ իբ	001 դանայ	խաստ թախտայ ճարմակ արմագ	վազն	003= դիրէթ

Նումրայ իգ	001 դանայ	ձիք Բ յերեսի գուլ շինած լել ճարմակ ալմազ	վազն	002 = ղիրէթ
Նումրայ իդ	002 դանայ	բադամի եւ մուսալաս ճարմակ ալմազ	վազն	003 = ղիրէթ
Նումրայ իե	001 դանայ	սարթիզ թարթարի գուլ ճարմակ ալմազ	վազն	002 = ղիրէթ
Նումրայ իզ	001 դանայ	բադամի թարթարի շաքարի ալմազ	վազն	001 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ իէ	002 դանայ	թարթարի գուլ վարայ ճարմակ ալմազ	վազն	007 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ իը	036 դանայ	քիչրի խառն դալթի ալմազ	վազն	010 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ իթ	001 դանայ	պառտիտ քաֆ ալմազ	վազն	233 ղիրէթ

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Բաբաթ էլ փոքր թվին ԿԶ [66] էլ շբ[ա]թ ԻԶ[26] էլ Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցինք իմ՝ Մինասիս եւ Պետրոսին սարմայիցն էլ Աղամալն տարաւ, այս է գրեցաւ: [երկու կնքադրոշմներ]

Նումրայ ա	0480 դանայ	պաշ ռանկին դաք կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	124 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ բ	0200 դանայ	տիր պաշ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	053 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ գ	0110 դանայ	լել ռանկին դաք կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	061 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ե	0100 դանայ	տիր պաշ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	068 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ դ	0205 դանայ	լել ռանկին դաք կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	070 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ զ	0160 դանայ	տիր պաշ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	096 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ է	0070 դանայ	տիր պաշ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	027 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ը	0180 դանայ	լել ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	112 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ թ	0110 դանայ	լել ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	048 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ժ	0465 դանայ	տիր պաշ ըռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	184 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ժա	0420 դանայ	լել ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	172 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ժբ	0280 դանայ	լել ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	088 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ժգ	0355 դանայ	տիր պաշ ռանկին դաք կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	098 ղիրէթ
Նումրայ ժդ	2000 դանայ	լել ռանկին դաք կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	352 ղիրէթ

Նումրայ ժե	0355 դանայ	լեվ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	099 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժզ	0575 դանայ	լեվ ռանկին դաբ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	220 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժե	0400 դանայ	լեվ ռանկին ըռիզայ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	059 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժը	2070 դանայ	լեվ ռանկին ըռիզայ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	390 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժթ	0480 դանայ	օրթայ ըռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	100 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ի	0485 դանայ	լեվ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	194 դիրեթ
Նումրայ իա	0200 դանայ	օրթայ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	121 դիրեթ
Նումրայ իբ	0100 դանայ	լեվ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	054 դիրեթ
Նումրայ իզ	0065 դանայ	տիր պաշ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	031 դիրեթ
Նումրայ իդ	0115 դանայ	լեվ ռանկին դաբ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	052 դիրեթ
Նումրայ իե	0080 դանայ	օրթայ ռանկին դաբ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	036 դիրեթ
Նումրայ իզ	0325 դանայ	օրթայ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	132 դիրեթ
Նումրայ իե	0095 դանայ	լեվ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	023 դիրեթ
Նումրայ իը	0600 դանայ	օրթայ ջրով կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	376 դիրեթ
Նումրայ իթ	0110 դանայ	յիստակ ջրով կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	075 դիրեթ
Նումրայ լօ	0050 դանայ	յիստակ ջրով կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	055 դիրեթ
Նումրայ լա	0120 դանայ	յիստակ ջրով կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	140 դիրեթ
Նումրայ լբ	0180 դանայ	յիստակ ջրով կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	082 դիրեթ
Նումրայ լզ	0009 դանայ	լեվ պաշ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	011 դիրեթ
Նումրայ լդ	0080 դանայ	ռիզայ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	008 դիրեթ
Նումրայ լե	0017 դանայ	լեվ ռանկին գուլի կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	012 դիրեթ

Բաբայթ էլ փոքր թվ[[ի]ն ԿՁ [66] Շբ[ա]թ ԻՁ [26] էլ Աղե վերայ աղարկեցինք Մինասիս եւ Պետրոսին սարմայիցն էլ Աղայմալն տարաւ ներքոյ գրեցաւ.

Նումրայ ա	01 դանայ	մեղանով ջրով ձիք հաշթ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	13 դիրեթ
Նումրայ բ	01 դանայ	Բ յերեսի հաշթ թավրայ ռանկին կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	16 դիրեթ

Նումրայ գ	01 դանայ ջրով ձիք հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	10 դիրէթ
Նումրայ դ	02 դանայ լէվ ջրով յիստակ չօքի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	23 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ե	02 դանայ անտաշ լէվ ռանկին թաբով կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	48 դիրէթ
Նումրայ գ	01 դանայ անդամում ջրով հաշթ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	08 դիրէթ
Նումրայ է	01 դանայ անդ[ա]մում ռանկին թաբով հաշթ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	08 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ը	01 դանայ երեսն չօքի տակն թարթարի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	06 դիրէթ
Նումրայ թ	01 դանայ լէվ ջրով չօքի ձիք կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	09 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժ	01 դանայ ռանկին ձիք հաշթ սաղաֆի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	06 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժա	01 դանայ դուռնկ երեսն գուլ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	16 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժբ	01 դանայ ռանկին ջրով բիայիբ հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	17 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժգ	01 դանայ ռանկին բիայիբ գուլ թաբով կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	15 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժդ	01 դանայ նափաք հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	09 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժե	02 դանայ լէվ ռանկին թաբով հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	09 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժզ	02 դանայ ռանկին չօքի թավրայ լէվ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	08. դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժէ	01 դանայ լէվ ռանկին ձիք հաշթ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	15 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժը	01 դանայ ռանկին չօքի թավրայ լէվ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	06. դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժթ	02 դանայ նափաք հաշթ օրթայ ռանկ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	06 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ի	02 դանայ այիբդար հաշթի ջրով կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	08. դիրէթ
Նումրայ իա	03 դանայ նափաք չօքի հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	19 դիրէթ
Նումրայ իբ	02 դանայ այիբդար ջրով հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	06 դիրէթ
Նումրայ իգ	01 դանայ այիբդար ջրով հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	14 դիրէթ
Նումրայ իդ	01 դանայ դաղդար չօքի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	13 դիրէթ
Նումրայ իե	01 դանայ մէդանով ջրով հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	07 դիրէթ
Նումրայ իզ	01 դանայ ջրով հաշթի փոքր դաղ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	09 դիրէթ
Նումրայ իէ	01 դանայ ջրով ձիք թավրայ Բ խազ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	08 դիրէթ

Նումրայ իը	01 դանայ	խաստ ռանկին նափ[ա]ք հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	14 դիրէթ
Նումրայ իթ	03 դանայ	ռանկի անդումով հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	05 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յօ	02 դանայ	ռանկին չօքի տակն փոս կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	09 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յա	02 դանայ	ռանկին չօքի թաբով ծակ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	03 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յբ	01 դանայ	բարակ անտաշ աբդ[ա]ր խաչ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	16 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յգ	01 դանայ	չօքի յետկոսն թարթարի դ[ա]ղ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	13 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յդ	01 դանայ	բարակ հաշթի ջրով այիբդար կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	08 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յե	01 դանայ	լէվ ջրով յիստակ ըռանկին կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	12 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յզ	01 դանայ	լէվ ռանկին տակն փոս կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	11 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յէ	01 դանայ	ջրով հաշթի տակն թարթարի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	08 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յը	01 դանայ	շէշ ճիբ ջրով այիբդար կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	07 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յթ	01 դանայ	շէշ ռանկին աբդար կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	05 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յս	01 դանայ	ռանկին գուլ հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	03 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսա	1 դանայ	ռանկին խօշկ հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	03 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսբ	1 դանայ	ֆռանկի արմ հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	08 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսգ	1 դանայ	ասլան արմ հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	06 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսդ	1 դանայ	թարթարի բադամի խօշկ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	09 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսե	15 դանայ	քիչրի լէվ վատ թրաշ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	30 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսզ	11 դանայ	թրաշ գուշվարայ լէվ վատ կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	353 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսէ	03 դանայ	բիայիբ յիստակ թաբով նիուֆարի եաղութ	վազն	019 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսը	3 դանայ	բադամի թարթարի ջրով դեղին եաղութ	վազն	009 դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսթ	1 դանայ	հաշթ դաղդար ռանկին դեղին եաղութ	վազն	03 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ծ	1 դանայ	սարթիգ թարթարի ռանկին դեղին եաղութ	վազն	05 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ծա	2 դանայ	բադամի թարթար դեղին եաղութ	վազն	06 դիրէթ
Նումրայ ծբ	1 դանայ	դաղդար նաթրաշ թլայի դեղին եաղութ	վազնայ	04 դիրէթ

Նումրայ ծգ	1 դանայ	բիայիբ ռանկին նաթրաշ դեղին եաղութ	վազն	19 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ծդ	4 դանայ	գերմագ ռանկին թայի դեղին եաղութ	վազն	09 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ծե	1 դանայ	հաշթի դադդար ձիք ռանկին դեղին եաղութ	վազն	07 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ծզ	20 դանայ	գերմակ լեվ ռանկին դեղին դեղին եաղութ	վազն	31 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ծե	05 դանայ	լեվ արդար ռանկին դեղին եաղութ	վազն	20 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ծը	05 դանայ	սադաֆի դեղին եաղութ	վազն	19 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ծթ	7 դանայ	խօշկ սադաֆի դեղին եաղութ	վազն	20 դիրեթ
Նումրայ կ	14 դանայ	արդ[ա]ր քամ ռանկ դեղին եաղութ	վազն	19 դիրեթ
Նումրայ կա	04 դանայ	ոսկե մատանի լեվ հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ		
Նումրայ կբ	2	արծաթե մատանի չօքի կապուտ եաղութ		
Նումրայ կգ	2	արծաթե մատանի հաշթի կապուտ եաղութ		
Նումրայ կդ	1	արծաթե մատանի գուլ կապուտ եաղութ		
Նումրայ կե	1	արծաթե մատանի սարթիգ կապուտ եաղութ		
Նումրայ կզ	1	արծաթե մատանի հաշտանկ դեղին եաղութ		
Նումրայ կե	1	արծաթե մատանի հաշտանկ ճարմակ եաղութ		
Նումրայ կը	1	արծաթե մատանի հաշտանկ մուք դուշ[ա]բի		
Նումրայ կթ	1	արծաթե մատանի բոլոր կլուլակ բացանկ դուշաբի		
Նումրայ հ	1	ոսկե մատանի չօքի դեղին կարկատակ		
Նումրայ հա	1	ոսկե մատանի հաշթ դեղին եաղութ		
Նումրայ հբ	1	ոսկե մատանի չօքի նարմ եաղութ		
Նումրայ հգ	1	ոսկե մատանի մուսալաս նարմ եաղութ		
Նումրայ հդ	1	ոսկե մատանի լեվ ռանկին նարմ եաղութ		
Նումրայ հե	1	ոսկե մատանի արդար նարմ եաղութ		
Նումրայ հզ	1	ոսկե մատանի ձիք հաշթի նարմ եաղութ		

Բաբաթ էլ փոքր թիվն ԿԶ[66] Շբ[ա]թ ամսոյ ԻԶ[26] էլ Ադլե վերայ աղարկեցինք Մինասիս եւ Պետրոսին սարմայիցն. Աղայմալն տարաւ այս է.

Նումրայ ա	0283 դանայ	նգիմի լել վատ ռըվագ
Նումրայ բ	0021 դանայ	դրօշտ նգիմի <i>ԽԳ</i> մսխալ ռըվագ
Նումրայ գ	0660 դանայ	օրթայ <i>ԲՕ</i> լել ռըվագ
Նումրայ դ	0001 դանայ	բիայիբ ջինս <i>Դ</i> մսխալ լել ռըվագ
Նումրայ ե	0001 դանայ	էլ բիայիբ մեծ <i>Ը</i> մսխալ լել ռըվագ
Նումրայ զ	0025 դանայ	էլ բիայիբ խօշթրաշ ռըվագ
Նումրայ է	0300 դանայ	նգիմի լել վատ բաբադուրի
Նումրայ ը	1000 դանայ	յիստակ ռանկին նգիմի սուքանդի
Նումրայ թ	0950 դանայ	յիստակ չօքի նգիմի բլաւր
Նումրայ ժ	1000 դանայ	ռանկին անտաշ բոււրաղ
Նումրայ ժա	4250 դանայ	քամռանկ անտաշ բոււրաղ
Նումրայ ժբ	0300 դանայ	լել ռանկին տաշած բոււրաղ
Նումրայ ժգ	1730 դանայ	օրթ <i>բօ</i> տաշած բոււրաղ
Նումրայ ժդ	0500 դանայ	լել գուշվարայ բլաւր
Նումրայ ժե	1000 դանայ	Շիրագի թրաշ թասպէ բոււրաղ
Նումրայ ժզ	0370 դանայ	նգիմի խօշթրաշ թիլայի թիլայի
Նումրայ ժէ	0021 դանայ	մեծ-մեծ բաբադուրի
Նումրայ ժը	1350 դանայ	թասպէ սուքանդի
Նումրայ ժթ	0195 դանայ	գուշվարայ <i>Բ</i> երեսի արուսաք
Նումրայ իօ	0100 դանայ	էլ բաբաթ <i>Բ</i> երեսի արուսաք
Նումրայ իա	0051 մացայ	տին սերի նիմթրաշ Շիրագի սէլան
Նումրայ իբ	0001 մացայ	էլ տին սերի նիմթրաշ Շիրագի սէլան
Նումրայ իգ	0013 մացայ	փ[ա]նջ սերի ավմագ թրաշ լել սէլան
Նումրայ իդ	0019 մացայ	դուսերի Շիրագի թրաշ լել սէլան
Նումրայ իե	0002 մացայ	դահսերի Շիրագի լել սէլան

Նումրայ իգ	0015 մացայ	Շիրագի թրաշ թասպէ բլար
Նումրայ իէ	0003 մացայ	ալմագ թրաշ թասպէ բլար
Նումրայ իը	0400 դանայ	դրօշտ գուշվարայ նիլում
Նումրայ իթ	1000 դանայ	օրթայ քօ գուշվարայ նիլում
Նումրայ յօ	1200 դանայ	գերմակ գերմակ գուշվարայ
Նումրայ յա	0283 դանայ	անծակ լէվ ռանկին նիլում
Նումրայ յբ	0100 դանայ	էլ անծակ ռանկին նիլում
Նումրայ յգ	0055 դանայ	թրաշ ռանկին նգիմի նիլում
Նումրայ յդ	2650 մսխալ	կապուտ եադութ խաքայ

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Նումրայ լե	0001 դանայ	ծակ նիլգանդի ժթ դիրէթ եադութ
Նումրայ լգ	0001 դանայ	սէլանի ձիք Ե դիրէթանոց այնալիոռ
Նումրայ լե	0008 դանայ	դրօշտ վագն Է մսխալ դուշաբի
Նումրայ լը	0004 դանայ	թրաշ նգիմի ԺԲ դիրէթ կարկտակ
Նումրայ լթ	0001 դանայ	կանաչ ձիք Ը դիրէթ կարկտակ
Նումրայ խ	0001 դանայ	դեղին լէվ Զ դիրէթ կարկտակ
Նումրայ խա	0014 դանայ	տաշած վագն ԺԵ դիրէթ կարկտակ
Նումրայ խբ	0006 դանայ	տաշած վագն ԻԵ դիրէթ կարկտակ
Նումրայ խգ	0028 դանայ	լէվ ջրով ռանկին վագն ԼԹ դիրէթ քարփուկ
Նումրայ խդ	0001 գրէ	քիչրի վագն ԺԱ մսխալ քարփուկ
Նումրայ խե	0004 դանայ	անծակ ռանկին նիլում
Նումրայ խզ	0010 դանայ	լէվ ռանկին վագն Ժ դիրէթ բաղամ
Նումրայ խէ	0020 դանայ	հաշտանկ ըռանկին վագն Ի դիրէթ բաղամ
Նումրայ խը	0126 դանայ	գերմակ ըռանկին վագն ԽԶ դիրէթ բաղամ
Նումրայ խթ	4500 դանայ	նգիմի ըռանկին բուսրադ

Նումրայ ծ	0001 դանայ	լեվ ջրով նիզն վագն L դիրեթ եադութ
Նումրայ ծա	0003	թասսպէ լեվ գուն դրիստ ասլ սլեմանի
Նումրայ ծբ	0044	բանդարի դալամքար լահաֆ
Նումրայ ծգ	0016 թան	լեվ բանդարի դալամքար լահաֆ
Նումրայ ծդ	0016 թան	լեվ վալարբի լահաֆ
Նումրայ ծե	0030 թան	լեվ դալամքար չիթ
Նումրայ ծզ	0003 թան	քիշմիրի բօխչայի շալ
Նումրայ ծէ	0003 թան	քիշմիրի շալէ փաթկայ
Նումրայ ծը	0001 թան	բաշխած Գուջարաթի դութնի
Նումրայ ծթ	0002 թօփ	ալաջայ դոմալ դաստայ ռումալ
Նումրայ կ	0024	թագայ պգտիկ եքայ վալարբի չիթ բօխչայ
Նումրայ կա	0002	թագայ ճարմակ քէշ
Նումրայ կբ	0003 թան	ջամայ վերայ սուսի
Նումրայ կգ	0002 թան	սիաքար գանփուրայ ալաջայ
Նումրայ կդ	0006 թան	լեն փալգալայ - - - չիթ
Նումրայ կե	0001 թն	ճարմակ փարգալայ
Նումրայ կզ	0001 թան	վալարբի դունադ
Նումրայ կէ	0001 թան	պգտիկ սուգանի
Նումրայ կը	0002 թան	կարած կտավէ խին չարչավ չարչավ
Նումրայ կթ	0001 թան	կարատ խատ լաֆֆայ կտաւ
Նումրայ հ	0021	թասսպէ ճարմակ ադիդ
Նումրայ հա	0075	թասսպէ կարմիր ադիդ
Նումրայ հբ	1800	ջուխտ ճարմակ ադիդ գուշվարայ
Նումրայ հգ	0020	դանայ վագն L մսխալ փագար

Վերոյ 2 դաֆայ Պետրոսին սարմայիցն քուլի որ մեր մէջ ոնէայ քուլի առքին ջամն ելաւ: 14102,|||=

Վերոյ ապրանքիս վերայ պարտք դրինք այս է որ գրեցաւ

Ն[ա]խ	Հնդստանայ եկած մնացած պարտք:	231 ունկրի
Բ[ա]թ	Ըսպահան պարտք դրինք չուր Հ[ա]լ- [ա]թ	282 սալանլու
Բ[ա]թ	Թարվիզու աւաքն տվել այ մայեայ	021 թուման

Ժ ԺԳ մինչի Ֆռանկըստան էս մապլաղս իմ Մինասիս այ Գ ինն էլ:

Բարբաթ էլ փոքր թվին ԿԶ[66] Արամ ԻԲ[22] էլ Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցի ուր եխբայր Մէլքունն տարաւ այս է որ գրեցաւ.

Նումրայ ա	5373 դանայ	Դ բարբաթայ Նշարու- րի Փիրուզայ	վազնն	քնձթ դրամ գ կարատ	իմ Մինասիս այ- նալմալ
Նումրայ բ	0013 դանայ	թախտայ լել վատ ալմազ	վազնն	ժը	դիրեթ Պետրոսին սարմայիցն
Նումրայ գ	0011 դանայ	թախտայ դալթի ալմազ	վազնն	ք =	դիրեթ Պետրոսին սարմայիցն

Էս վերոյ գրիալ ապրանքըս թասվիլ արարած մի ըստ միոչէ տվել այ Մէլքունն տարել այ Թարվիզոյ ինես:

Բ[ա]թ էլ փոքր թվին ԿԶ[66] նիրհան ԺԲ[12] էլ Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցի մեր Դաշտցի Գասպարն տարաւ այս է գրեցաւ.

Նումրայ ա	00016 դանայ	լել ճարմակ թախտայ ալմազ	վազն	իդ դիրեթ
Նումրայ բ	00104 դանայ	թախտայ փոքր նափաք ալմազ	վազն	լդ դիրեթ
Նումրայ գ	00020 դանայ	մէկն աշտանկ ճարմակ ալմազ	վազն	դ դիրեթ
Նումրայ դ	00167 դանայ	լել աշտանկ ճարմակ ալմազ	վազն	ժէ դիրեթ
Նումրայ ե	00001 դանայ	բարակ թախտայ գլուխն թարթար բաղամի ալմազ	վազն	գ դիրեթ
Նումրայ զ	00002 դանայ	սարթիզ յիստակ ճարմակ ալմազ	վազն	ք դիրեթ
Նումրայ է	00005 դանայ	չրքին թախտայ ալմազ	վազն	ք դիրեթ
Նումրայ ը	00079 դանայ	չրքին դալթի ալմազ	վազն	ժա դիրեթ
Նումրայ թ	00010 դանայ	թախտայ ճարմակ պետ ալմազ	վազն	է դիրեթ

Նումրայ ժ	00023	դանայ	չրքին / դալթի պետ արմագ	վագն	Հ	դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժա	00679	դանայ	եք[ալ] դանայ ջինս ռանկին ֆիրուզայ			
Նումրայ ժբ	00707	դանայ	աւալ ջինս ռանկին ֆիրուզայ			
Նումրայ ժգ	03851	դանայ	դուում ռանկին ֆիրուզայ			
Նումրայ ժդ	03960	դանայ	սէում ռանկին ֆիրուզայ	Ե դֆին	12700	ջամնայ
Նումրայ ժե	03503	դանայ	չարում ռանկին ֆիրուզայ	վերին	05373	քուլի ջամնայ 18073 դանայ

Էս Բ դֆայ ապրանքս որ վերոյ գրեցաւ Մէլքումն [ալ] տարել Ֆռանկստան որ է Աղէ ախբէր:

բարբաթ էլ փոքր թիվն ԿԷ[67] Նադ[ալ]ր ամսոյ ԺԲ[12] էլ Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցի մեր տղայ Չաքարէն տարաւ այս է գրեցաւ:

Նումրայ ա	045	դանայ	թախտայ ամէն բարբաթէ լել արմագ	վագնն	021	դիրեթ
Նումրայ բ	020	դանայ	գրեզ աշտանկ լել արմագ	վագնն	004	դիրեթ
Նումրայ գ	001	դանայ	չօքի լել ջինս արմագ	վագն	002	դիրեթ
Նումրայ դ	001	դանայ	թարթարի գուլ արմագ	վագն	001	դիրեթ
Նումրայ ե	001	դանայ	թավրայ արմագ	վագն	003	դիրեթ
Նումրայ զ	001	դանայ	չօքի լել արմագ	վագն	001=	դիրեթ
Նումրայ է	001	դանայ	գուլ արմագ	վագն	001	դիրեթ
Նումրայ ը	001	դանայ	դեղին գուլ արմագ	վագն	002	դիրեթ
Նումրայ թ	001	դանայ	լել գուն[ա]րն պակաս եաղութի այն[ա]լի[ո]ռ	վագն	002	դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժ	001	դանայ	լել կապուտ եաղութ	վագն	004	դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժա	001	դանայ	քաշ կապուտ եաղութ	վագն	004	դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժբ	001	դանայ	լել կապուտ եաղութ	վագն	003	դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժգ	001	դանայ	լել կարմիր եաղութ	վագն	003	դիրեթ

Նումրայ ժդ	007 դանայ	լեվ եքայ դանայ ֆիրուզայ
Նումրայ ժե	410 դանայ	դրօշտ նօխուտի ֆիրուզայ
Նումրայ ժզ	150 դանայ	դրիստ նօխուտի ֆիրուզայ
Նումրայ ժէ	160 թօփ	փանջ ռանկ Սրընջի խոյ եաղլուխ
Նումրայ ժը	108 թօփ	Սրընջին բան ֆռանկի վէստ
Նումրայ ժթ	028 թան	Սրընջի լահաֆ
Նումրայ ի0	016 թան	Սրընջի ճարմակ չանթի
Նումրայ իա	008 թան	Սրընջի քուռայ չանթի
Նումրայ իբ	720 մսխալ	ըռիխտայ մուշկ
Նումրայ իզ	045 մսխալ	յառէչ ռէվանդ
Նումրայ իդ	187 դիտր	Թավրիզի չարխէ տղին տարած ռէվանդ:

Ե

Բ[ա]թ էլ փոքր թվին ԿԷ[67] Համիր[ա]յ ամսոյ էլ Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցի խասնի Աղէն ճգնաւոր
Հէրապետն տարաւ:

Նումրայ ա	01 դանայ	ճարմակ յիստակ բիայիբ գուշվարայ արմագ	վագն	06 դիրէթ
Նումրայ բ	12 դանայ	ռանկին անփախ գերմակ արմագ	վագն	04 դիրէթ
Նումրայ գ	03 դանայ	ռանկին եք[ա]յ դանայ յիստակ ֆիրուզայ	վագն	10 դիրէթ
Նումրայ դ	01 դանայ	ճարմակ յիստակ եաղութ	վագն	21 դիրէթ

Բ[ա]թ էլ փոքր թվին ԿԷ[67] Ար[ա]մ ամսուն էլ Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցի որ խասնի Աղէն վերջումն
Սիմոնի որդի Յուսէփն տարաւ:

Նումրայ ա	93 դիտր	Թարվիզի խուրդ դրօշտ լաջվարդ ընկեր Մագ[ա]րին աղարկած
Նումրայ բ	52 դիտր	Թարվիզի խուրդ դրօշտ լաջվարդ Ոնոփրիոսին աղարկած

Էս վերոյ Բ ըռ[ա]ղ[ա]մ լաջվարդին ջամն ելաւ 145 դիտր Թավրիզի Թավրիզոյ խետ վերայ պարտք
այ տարէլ: ԻԵ թուման

բայթ էլ փոքր թվին ԿԸ[67] Նիր[հան] Լ[30] էլ աղարկեցի Աղէ վերայ քոռ Խաչիկն Վանջալի տարան թէ Ըստ[ա]մբօլ ծախվի աղարկեն թէ չէ տանին Փռ[ա]նկստ[ա]ն տան Աղէն Վանջալէ տված գրին վաչն Աղէն տայ Վանջլի էլ Աղէ մարիֆայթովն առած:

Նումրայ ա 0064 դանայ թախտայ գուլ յիստակ ճարմակ վազն 127 յ||| Էս տուր միջին Գ
ալմագ դիրեթ դանէն ԺՉ դիրեթ այ
մեդանով

Նումրայ բ 0038 դանայ թախտայ գուլ յիստակ ճարմակ վազն 082 յ|
ալմագ դիրեթ

Բ[ա]թ էլ փոքր թվին ԿԸ[68] Շար[ա]թ ամսին ԻՉ[26] էլ աղարկեցի Աղէ վերայ Վարդապետն տար-
աւ տայ Վ[ա]նջէլի որ իսասացանէն Աղէն = այս է:

Վանջէլի բարայթ արարել Թարվիզոյ ջամն էլաւ: Գ թուման *km*[5000] դի[ա]ն Նադ[ա]ր Լ[30] տվինք:

Նումրայ ա 0462 դանայ նիլբում մեծ մեծ յիստակ ֆիրուզայ

Նումրայ բ 1714 դանայ էլ նիլբում աւալ փաք ֆիրուզայ

Նումրայ գ 3000 դանայ էլ նիլբում դուում փաք ֆիրուզայ

Նումրայ դ 4130 դանայ էլ նիլբում սէում փաք ֆիրուզայ

Նումրայ ե 4460 դանայ նիլբում չարում փաք ֆիրուզայ

Նումրայ զ 0450 դանայ մեծ պզտիկ նիլբում յիստակ ֆիրուզայ

Նումրայ է 1000 դանայ յիստակ շիրբում Նշայբուրի ֆիրուզայ

Նումրայ ը 0010 դանայ եքայ դանայ նիլբում յիստակ ֆիրուզայ. լէվին
ջամն էլաւ 15226 դանայ

Նումրայ թ 6277 դանայ քաշ խոռոմաց բար Նշաբուրի ֆիրուզայ. քա-
շին ջամն էլաւ: 06277 դանայ

Նումրայ ժ 0048 դանայ եւ .Չ դանայ էլ ոիզայ կարմիր եադութ վազն 16 դիրեթ

Նումրայ ժա 0001 դանայ անփախ ռանկին կարմիր եադութ վազն 02|| դիրեթ

Նումրայ ժբ 0001 դանայ թախտայ հաշթի լէվ կապուտ եադութ վազն 06 դիրեթ

Նումրայ ժգ 0001 դանայ ռանկին լէվ կապուտ եադութ վազն 03 դիրեթ

Նումրայ ժդ 0001 դանայ ճարմակ ալմագանմայ լէվ եադութ վազն 04 դիրեթ

Նումրայ ժե	0001 դանայ	թրաշ թախտայ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	011 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժգ	0001 դանայ	գուլ ռանկին կապուտ եաղութ	վազն	03 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժե	0003 դանայ	նիրբում ռանկին Նշ[ա]բուրի ֆիրուզայ	վազն	06 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժը	0008 դանայ	մուսալաս թախտայ ճարմակ ավնագ	վազն	05 = դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժթ	0003 դանայ	չիրքին շաքար ավնագ	վազն	02 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ի0	0006 դանայ	ֆռանկ փասանդ ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն	31 հարայ
Նումրայ իա	0002 դանայ	դրօշտ նգիմի ռանկին ռըվագ		

Բ[ա]թ էլ փոքր թվին ԿԸ[68] Դ[ա]մ[ա]ր Լ[1] էլ Աղէ վերայ մեր Մէլքումին տղէն յարեւանցի տղայ Գալուցն տարան. այ[ս] է գրեցաւ:

Նումրայ ա	001 դանայ	թախտայ չարգուշայ յիստակ ճարմակ ավնագ	վազն	006 դիրեթ
Նումրայ բ	012 դանայ	գուլ թախտայ խառն ճարմակ ավնագ	վազն	009 դիրեթ
Նումրայ գ	001 դանայ	գլուխն թարթար տակն թախտայ ճարմակ ավնագ	վազն	002 դիրեթ
Նումրայ դ	003 դանայ	թախտայ եւ գուլ ճարմակ ավնագ	վազն	008 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ե	006 դանայ	թախտայ եւ գուլ խառն ճարմակ ավնագ	վազն	011 դիրեթ
Նումրայ զ	001 դանայ	մեծ օ ֆունթ յիստակ ճարմակ ավնագ	վազն	008 դիրեթ
Նումրայ է	050 դանայ	թախտայ եւ գուլ խառն ճարմակ ավնագ	վազն	040 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ը	117 դանայ	հաշտանկ. խին ճարմակ ավնագ	վազն	007 դիրեթ
Նումրայ թ	600 դանայ	դալթի թախտայ ավնագ	վազն	142 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժ	490 դանայ	լէվ ռանկին դաք կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	058 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժա	387 դանայ	լէվ ռանկին գերմակ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	027 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժբ	001 դանայ	լէվ ռանկին թախտայ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	003 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժգ	013 դանայ	լէվ եք դանայ նիրբում ֆիրուզայ	վազն	062 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժդ	006 դանայ	Ե.ըն թախտայ մին մեծ օ ֆունթ ավնագ	վազն	009 դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժե	001 դանայ	լէվ նիմ նօխտի չափ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն	002 դիրեթ

Նումրայ ժգ 001 դանայ լել ռանկին կապուտ եաղութ վազն 004 դիրէթ

Բ[ա]թէլ վերոյ թարիղումն Գալուցն Մէլք[ու]մին տղէն տարան որ տան Աղէն իմ Մինասիս եւ Պետրոսին սարմայիցն գրեցաւ

Նումրայ ա 015 դանայ թախտայ արմագ վազն 09 դիրէթ
 Նումրայ բ 001 դանայ թախտայ արմագ վազն 01|| դիրէթ
 Նումրայ գ 061 դանայ դալթի արմագ վազն 14 դիրէթ
 Նումրայ դ 014 դանայ հաշտանկ արմագ վազն 01| դիրէթ
 Նումրայ ե 007 դանայ կապուտ եաղութ վազն 27|| դիրէթ

Բաբաթէլ փոքր թվին ԿԹ[69] Ադամ ամսոյ Ժ մեր ընկեր Աղաջանն տարաւ որ թէ յենց լել մարդնի եւ քօք խարար աղարկէ Ըստամբօլ: Թէ չէ խում էլ աղարկէ Վանաստիքն Աղէ ձեռն թասվիլն այս է որ ներքոյ գրեցաւ

Նումրայ ա 029 դանայ ճարմակ յիստակ թախտայ Է դանէն խաստ արմագ վազն 051 դիրէթ Ըսպահան 663000 դեկան այ առքն
 Նումրայ բ 024 դանայ ճարմակ յիստակ թախտայ բիայիբ արմագ վազն 014 դիրէթ Ըսպահան 069000 դեկան այ առքն
 Նումրայ գ 001 դանայ ճարմակ յիստակ թախտայ բիայիբ արմագ վազն 005|| դիրէթ Ըսպահան 2??000 դեկան այ առքն
 Նումրայ դ 048 դանայ ճարմակ յիստակ դ-րիստ աշտանկ արմագ վազն 004 | դիրէթ Ըսպահան 013000 դեկան այ առքն
 Նումրայ ե 090 դանայ կարմիր թրաշ ֆռանկ փասան տաշած եաղութ վազն 050|| դիրէթ Ըսպահան 032000 այ առքն
 Նումրայ գ 320 դանայ կարմիր բիայիբ ֆռանկ փասան տաշած եաղութ վազն 056 դիրէթ Ըսպահան 215500 այ առքն

Նումրայ է	001	կապուտ ըռանկին	վազն	151	դիրեթ	Ըսպահան	120000
դանայ		յիստակ փորն ծակ ետ- դութ				այ առքն	
Նումրայ ը	001	կապուտ քամռանկ	վազն	011	դիրեթ	Ըսպահան	001500
դանայ		գրած ետդութ				այ առքն	
Նումրայ թ	130	բանէ խանած ըռանկին	վազն		դիրեթ	Ըսպահան	003000
դանայ		կարմիր տաշած ետ- դութ				այ առքն	
Նումրայ ժ	001	ճարմակ բարակ	վազն	001	դիրեթ	Ըսպահան	062000
դանայ		յիստակ թախտայ բիա- յիբ ավմագ				այ առքն	

Աստուծով փոքր թվին ՀԸ[78] Համիր[ա]յ ամսէն մինչի Նիրի[ա]յն Ի[20] Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցի էլ եկած Յակոբն տարաւ:

Նումրայ ա	0350	դիդր	Թարվիզի Մաշադին	վազն	ռեվանդ		
Նումրայ բ	0042	դիդր	Թարվիզի տանէ եւ Մաշադէն	լաջվարդ			
Նումրայ գ	0311	մացայ	ղթ մացէն ճարմակ ռանկին	աղիդ			
Նումրայ դ	5268	դանայ	դ թօէն յիստակ ռանկին	ֆիրուզայ			
Նումրայ ե	0300	դանայ	նափաք ըռակ դար գերմակ	ֆիրուզայ			
Նումրայ զ	0174	մսխալ	կարմիր ետդութի եւ լալի ջինս	խաքայ			
Նումրայ է	0163	մսխալ	կապուտ ետդութի	խաքայ			
Նումրայ ը	0016	դանայ	մեծ եւ օրթայ քասայ	ռըվագ		39	մսխալ
Նումրայ թ	0030	դանայ	օրթին վեր քասայ	ռըվագ		15	մսխալ
Նումրայ ժ	0140	մսխալ	թէ տաշած թէ նգիմի թէ թասայի	բուսրադ			
Նումրայ ժա	0002	դանայ	գուշվարայ կղ դիրեթ	վազն	յստակ ջրով ծակ	կղ	դիրեթ
			բիայիբ կապուտ ետդութ	վազն			
Նումրայ ժբ	0007	դանայ	ա.ըն դեղին կապուտ ետդութ	վազն		լե	դիրեթ
Նումրայ ժգ	0001	դանայ	յիստակ ճարմակ փոքր ծուռ	գուլ ավմագ	վազն	ե	դիրեթ

Նումրայ ժդ	0030	դանայ	թախտայ յիստակ ճարմակ ավնագ վագն	ժգ	դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժե	0028	դանայ	թախտայ լեվ վատ քիչրի ավնագ վագն	ժգ	դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժզ	0008	դանայ	թախտայ լեվ վատ քիչրի ավնագ վագն	ժը	դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժէ	0001	դանայ	թախտայ բարակ ճարմակ բիայիր ավնագ վագն	ս	դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժը	0005	դանայ	նգիմի Ա.ըն միր ռանկին լաջվարդ վագն	խօ	դիրէթ
Նումրայ ժթ	0013	դանայ	արծաթով դովըն բռնած թաս ռ[ը]վագ		
Նումրայ ի	0001	դանայ	ջինս ռանկին բարակ յիստակ կապույտ ետղութ վագն	օը	դիրէթ
Նումրայ իա	0001	դանայ	խաստ թավրայ կապուտ ետղութ վագն	ժս	դիրէթ
Նումրայ իբ	0001	դանայ	չրքին դեղին բի անդ[ու]մ? ավնագ վագն	ս	դիրէթ
Նումրայ իզ	0001	դանայ	արծաթէ մատանի կապուտ ետղութ վագն	ժբ	դիրէթ
Նումրայ իդ	0001	ջուխտ	բանավշ ծակ ծակ գուշվարայ ետղութ վագն	ձէ	դիրէթ
Նումրայ իե	0006	դիտր	Ալֆ[ա]թունին Պետրոսին լաջվարդ		
Նումրայ իզ	0006	դաբայ	զանջբիլ մուրաբայ բ.քն պգտիկ թէ մին Ծ Թարվիզի		
Նումրայ իէ	0010	դանայ	դաշգարի ճարմակ ածելու եւ դանկի	բը	
Նումրայ իը	0036	դանայ	սագաւ Չ դանէն ձակի էս մնաց աղարկեցինք Մաշադն		

Բ[ա]թ	727	թան	Ֆռանկ փասան դալամքար չիթ լաֆա- ֆայ	54	սապունի մադիֆու ալաջայ
Բ[ա]թ	245	թան	Բանդ[ա]րի դալամքար լահաֆ	12 թան	ճարմակ Սրընկփարի
Բ[ա]թ	012	թան	Վալարի դալամքար լահաֆ	8	թան Գանսալի ալաջայ
Բ[ա]թ	010	թան	Ջուլարբ[ա]ֆի ԺՉ դանանոց ետղուդ	28	թան Թարասբանդի ալաջայ
Բ[ա]թ	022	թան	Սրունջի դահգազի փանջ ռանկ չիթ	14	թան մումշամայ
				54	սէր բամբակ

վերոյ յթ ռադամ ապրանքն որ q ռադամն զըլուայ? յիս Յակոբիս խասաւ.

Ես Միքայէլ վարդապետս խին երեւանցի Գրիգորի որդի Յակոբին եղրարովն միրեցի:

2

Վոքր թվին ԿԹ[69]

Տէր իմ եւ Աստուած իմ, դու յաջողեալ ուղղես զճանապարհս ծառայից քոց եւ դու հոգաս զպետըս մեր քան զոր խնդրեմք եւ իմանամք ներքոյ գրեալ ապրանքն խասաւ մեր Աղաջանն Մարգարն դոր գրէլ [ա]մ ամալ առեն:

Նումրայ ա	0001	դանայ	ճարմակ յիստակ մէղանով բիայիբ ֆռանկ փասան ալմագ	վագն 5	դիրեթ	առքն 400000
Նումրայ բ	0001	դանայ	յիստակ ճարմակ բիայիբ խաստ չարգուշայ ալմագ	վագն 4	դիրեթ	առքն 175000
Նումրայ գ	0001	դանայ	թախտայ մէղանով բարակ սին[ա]յ չարգուշայ ալմագ	վագն 4	դիրեթ	առքն 285000
Նումրայ դ	0001	դանայ	վոքր ձիք թախտայ մէղանով էլ սին[ա]յ ռանկ չ- արգուշայ ալմագ	վագն 5	դիրեթ	առքն 300000
Նումրայ ե	0002	դանայ	յիստակ ճարմակ բիայիբ ֆռանկ փասան խաստ գուլ ալմագ	վագն 5	դիրեթ	առքն 125000
Նումրայ զ	0002	դանայ	տիր բարակ յիստակ բիայիբ ֆռանկ փասան մուսալաս ալմագ	վագն 2	դիրեթ	առքն 035000
Նումրայ է	0004	դանայ	բարակ ճարմակ թէ մուսալաս թէ չարգուշայ թէ արմուղի ալմագ	վագն 4	դիրեթ	առքն 040000
Նումրայ ը	0008	դանայ	լէվ ճարմակ յիստակ թարթարի անդամէ պակ- աս ալմագ	վագն 13	դիրեթ	առքն 180000

Նումրայ թ	0022	դանայ	թախտայ շօռթմէն ամէն անդամէ ռանկէ արմագ	վագն	14	դիրէթ	առքն	085000
Նումրայ ժ	0014	դանայ	թախտայ բարակ ամէն ռանկէ անդամէ արմագ	վագն	5	դիրէթ	առքն	018000
Նումրայ ժա	0012	դանայ	տիր բարակ թախտայ գուլ լէվ ռանկ արմագ	վագն	3	դիրէթ	առքն	014000
Նումրայ ժբ	0016	դանայ	խին լէվ հաշտանկ արմագ	վագն	1	դիրէթ	առքն	003000
Նումրայ ժգ	0014	դանայ	յիստակ ճարմակ բանէ խանած թախտայ արմագ	վագն	6	դիրէթ	առքն	027000
Նումրայ ժդ	0001	դանայ	բարակ մեղանով թախտայ չարգուշայ արմագ	վագն	1	դիրէթ	առքն	014000
Նումրայ ժե	0034	դանայ	լէվ թախտայ մեղանով շատն բիայիբ ֆռանկ փասան բարակ արմագ	վագն	72	դիրէթ	առքն	2120000
Նումրայ ժզ	0067	դանայ	լէվ թախտայ մեղանով բիայիբ ֆռանկ փասան արմագ	վագն	59	դիրէթ	առքն	0600000
Նումրայ ժէ	0006	դանայ	տիր բարակ թախտայ ե դանէն ֆռանկ փասան Ա.ըն ոչ արմագ	վագն	10	դիրէթ	առքն	0470000
Նումրայ ժը	0003	դանայ	ոսկէ մատանի մուրասահ ԱԱ արմագ վերայ արմագ =	վագն		դիրէթ	առքն	0038000

Ա[ստ]ըծով յաջողութեամբն Քրիստոսի եւ շնորհօք նորին: ներքոյ գրիպ ապրանքս էլ Աղաջանն.
Մարգարն = խասաւ:

Նումրայ ա	0935	դանայ	գլուխ ռանկ ֆռանկ փասան կարմիր ետղութ	վագն	19	մսխալ	առքն	280000 դեկան
Նումրայ բ	3220	դանայ	լէվ ռանկին յիստակ ֆռանկ փասան կարմիր ետղութ	վագն	40	մսխալ	առքն	200000

Նումրայ գ	5200	դանայ	լեվ ռանկին յիստակ ֆռանկ փասան կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 34	մսխալ առքն	100000
Նումրայ դ	0370	դանայ	լեվ ջրով յիստակ սաֆ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 260	դիրեթ առքն	070000
Նումրայ ե	0240	դանայ	լեվ ռանկին յիստակ ֆռանկ փասան կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 044	դիրեթ առքն	015000
Նումրայ գ	0015	դանայ	գլուխ ռանկ յիստակ ֆռանկ փասան կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 037	դիրեթ առքն	150000
Նումրայ է	0016	դանայ	գլուխ ռանկ յիստակ ֆռանկ փասան կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 017	դիրեթ առքն	024000
Նումրայ ը	0008	դանայ	ռանկին խօշակ քասայ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 021	դիրեթ առքն	032000
Նումրայ թ	0030	դանայ	գլուխ ռանկ յիստակ ֆռանկ փասան կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 013	դիրեթ առքն	008000
Նումրայ ժ	0012	դանայ	գլուխ ռանկ յիստակ ֆռանկ փասան կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 010	դիրեթ առքն	014400
Նումրայ ժա	0001	դանայ	ռանկին կշտունն այիր կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 024	դիրեթ առքն	120000
Նումրայ ժբ	0001	դանայ	ռանկին յիստակ խոշբար քասայ կարմիր եաղութ	վազն 005	դիրեթ առքն	020000
Նումրայ ժգ	0001	դանայ	ռանկին յստակ խօշբար կապուտ եաղութ	վազն 006 =	դիրեթ առքն	007000
Նումրայ ժդ	0130	դանայ	դրօշտ ռանկին Նշաբուրի լուլունն ֆիրուզայ սարհամ		առքն	070000 այ

Նումրայ ԺԵ	0200	դանայ	դրօշտ ռանկին Նշաբուրի քամարումն ֆիրուզայ սարհամ	առքն	050000	այ	
Նումրայ Ժգ	0001	դանայ	ոսկէ հէքալ մուրասահ վերայ կայ մին ճլլ դանայ մեծ պգտիկ պմագ: բճժ դանայ մեծ պգտիկ ես- դուր թ մարգարիտ	վագն	լլ կէս	մսխալ	առքն 350000
Նումրայ ԺԷ	0036	դանայ	թէ թախտայ թէ հաշտանկ ճարմակ պմագ Պետրոսին միջոնէ	վագն	լլ	դի- րէթ	առքն 24000
Նումրայ ԺԸ	0381	դանայ	ռանկին գլուխ ֆռանկ փասան եաղուր Պետրոսին միջոնէ	վագն	կգ կէս	դի- րէթ	առքն 20000
Նումրայ ԺԹ	0001	դանայ	լէվ ռանկին թախտայ կապուտ եաղուր Պետրոսին միջոնէ	վագն	ժա կէս	դի- րէթ	առքն 14000

Տէր մեր եւ Աստուած մեր, դու յաջողեալ ուղղեսցես զճանապարհս ծառայից քոց եւ դու հոգաս զպէտս մեր առաւել քան զոր խնդրեմք եւ իմանամք ներքոյ գրեալ ապրանքս Մէլքունի որդի Պօղոսն տարաւ որ մեր ընկեր Ծատուրն տանի Իզմիր, ողորկէ թավրըզցի մեր վաքիլ Աղէ ձեռն, թվին ԿԹ[69]ին Համիր[ա]յ Ի[20].

Նումրայ ա	5354	դանայ	յիստակ ջրով նգիմի օրթայ բուսրաղ	առքն	026750	դեկան
Նումրայ բ	1435	դանայ	լէվ բագ ռանկին նգիմի բուսրաղ	առքն	035850	դեկան
Նումրայ գ	2165	դանայ	յիստակ գերմակ օրթայ նգիմի բուսրաղ	առքն	010800	դեկան
Նումրայ դ	0288	դանայ	մեծ մեծ ճոթ ճոթ լէվ ռանկին բուսրաղ	առքն	015000	

Նումրայ Ե	0096 դանայ	ռանկին յիստակ գուշվարայ բուսրաղ	առքն	001000
Նումրայ Գ	3630 դանայ	գերմակ յիստակ ջրով բուսրաղ	առքն	012500
Նումրայ Է	0007 դանայ	քափդար շ.ըն տափակ թաս	առքն	022000
Նումրայ Ը	0007 դանայ	աղիղէ լէվ շինած գողոլ	առքն	022000
Նումրայ Թ	0002 դանայ	ռըվաղէ լէվ շինած բութման	առքն	002000
Նումրայ Ժ	1750 մսխալ	անտաշ լէվ մաջումի բուսրաղ	առքն	050000
Նումրայ Ժա	0250 մսխալ	լէվ կարմիր եաղութի խաքայ	առքն	010000
Նումրայ Ժբ	0028 դանայ	հէքալի ժը մսխալ փագար	առքն	012000
Նումրայ Ժգ	0362 դանայ	լէվ թրաշիբաբ /սս/ մսխալ թուրմէլի	առքն	010000
Նումրայ Ժդ	0125 դիտր	Թ[ա]վրիզի լէվ ռէվանդ	առքն	490000
Նումրայ Ժե	0001 դանայ	մեծ մէշն փոս կապուտ ռանկին եաղութ		
	0000	որ է վագն <i>սն ժե</i> կէս դիրէթ թամամ	առքն	160000
Նումրայ Ժզ	3235 դանայ	մեծ պգտիկ Մարգարին ողորկած ֆիրուգայ	առքն	350000
Նումրայ Ժէ	1090 դանայ	վագդ[ալ] էլ Մարգարին ողորկած ֆիրուգայ	առքն	015000
Նումրայ Ժը	0244 դանայ	պաշ նգիմի մի անփաք ռանկին բուսրաղ	առքն	009600
Նումրայ Ժթ	0001 դանայ	սրտանոց գ ավմագ գ գմռութ ա մեծ կարմիր	առքն	050000
	0000	եաղութ մէշ լէվ ոսկով շինած վագնն <i>ճը</i> դիրէթ չՄարգարին	առքն	
Նումրայ Ի	3000 դանայ	մեծ օրթայ պգտիկ Ոնոփրէ ողորկած ֆիրուգայ	առքն	225000
Նումրայ Իա	0815 դանայ	մեծ օրթայ պգտիկ Ոնոփրէ ողորկած ֆիրուգայ	առքն	120000
Նումրայ Իբ	0009 դանայ	քիչրի լէվ օրթայ խառն ռանկ ավմագ		015000
	0000	վագն <i>ե</i> դիրէթ / կարատ Ոնոփրէ	առքն	
Նումրայ Իգ	0001 դանայ	թախտայ մէղանով կարմիր եաղութ վագն <i>ս</i> դիրէթ	առքն	010000
Նումրայ Իդ	0001 դանայ	լէվ ռանկին սաֆ դեղին եաղութ վագն <i>գ</i> դիրէթ	առքն	006000
Նումրայ Իե	4000 դանայ	չօրբաջու ճարմակ թէլ	առքն	008000

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Տեր իմ եւ Աստուած իմ հոգաս գպէտս մէր եւ դու յաջողեալ ուղղես զճանապարհս մեր: Իմ Մինասիս բաշխայ ամանաթ տարան Էդգարն, Միրզէն, Յակոբջանն, Գասպարն. այսէ ՀԱ[71] թվին Ղ[ա]մ[ա]ր մին յիրայ ԽԵ.

Նումրայ ա	20	դանայ	ճարմակ ավմագ քաշն	7	դիրէթ	առքն	21000	դեկան
Նումրայ բ	07	դանայ	ճարմակ ավմագ քաշն	3	դիրէթ	առքն	12500	դեկան
Նումրայ գ	15	դանայ	ճարմակ ավմագ քաշն	5	դիրէթ	առքն	12000	
Նումրայ դ	50	դանայ	թրաշ ավմագ քաշն	7	դիրէթ	առքն	15000	
Նումրայ ե	01	դանայ	չօքի ավմագ քաշն	3	դիրէթ	առքն	160000	60500
Նումրայ զ	15	դանայ	քիչրի ավմագ քաշն	13	դիրէթ	առքն	061300	
Նումրայ է	05	դանայ	քիչրի ավմագ քաշն	2	դիրէթ	առքն	005000	
Նումրայ ը	003	դանայ	փունթ ավմագ քաշն	1	դիրէթ	առքն	001500	
Նումրայ թ	020	դանայ	նայթրաշ ավմագ քաշն	7	դիրէթ	առքն	020000	
Նումրայ ժ	001	դանայ	ճարմակ եաղուր քաշն	4	դիրէթ	առքն	001800	
Նումրայ ժա	004	դանայ	կապուտ եաղուր քաշն	014	դիրէթ	առքն	004000	
Նումրայ ժբ	180	նաֆայ	լէվ մուշկ քաշն	836	մսխալ	առքն	190000	
Նումրայ ժգ	450	մսխալ	լէվ լաշվարդ քաշն	450	մսխալ	առքն	008000	
Նումրայ ժդ	122		Թավրիզի ԲԸ ռէվանդ քաշն	122	դիտր	առքն	370000	
Նումրայ ժե	120	դանայ	մեծ մեծ քասայ ռվազ			առքն	012000	
Նումրայ ժզ	190	դանայ	գերմակ նգիմի ռվաղ	քսա-	կոտրած	առքն	004000	
				նինն				

Տեր Աստուած իս[ա]լին բարի ճանապարհ տայ ներքոյ գրիլն ողորկեցի Իզմիր կամ Ըստամբօլ որ ախըրն զնայ Ըստամբօլ ծախսվի ձեռ տայ Ոհանին ձեռն ողորկելն ողորկեն թաս[ա]լէ ողորկելն ձեռ տայ ողորկեն:

նախ	ս	դանայ	ռանկին ծակ գուշվարայ լալ քաշն	իե	դիրէթ	առքն	160000	դեկան
բաթ	բ	դանայ	քամռանկ ծակ գուշվարայ լալ քաշն	ծե	դիրէթ	առքն	140000	դեկան

Փոքր թվին ՀԲ[72] Շ[ե]մն ամսոյ Ե Աստուծով Աղէ վերայ աղարկեցինք դաշտեցի Յուսեփն տարաւ ապրանքին թասվիլն այսէ որ ներքոյ գրեցաւ.

նախ	095	դիտր	Թավրիզի լել ռանկին լաջվարդ գին խալաս	640000
բայթ	100	դիտր	Թավրիզի ռեվանդ գին խալաս	360000
բայթ	008		արաբի ջվալ եւ <i>η</i> թան եափընճի գին խալաս	006200
բայթ	000		Ըսպահան խալջ տվի ջամնայ	150000

բայթ 140 ունկրի իւր սարմային վերայ կամբի վեռեց Մինասէս թամասուկով որ բարով էլ գնայ Փռանկըստան Վանայտիքն քաշովն տայ Աղէն եւ կամ ով որ վեքիլ լինի

Վերոյ գրեալ լաջվարդն ռեվ[ա]նդն *ճ/ս* ունկրի կամբին տվել այ Աղէն, դարգ յինք առել եբեր մեզ արեստ էստուր թէ թամասուկ դուս գոյ բայթիլ[ա]յ Վարդապետին եղեալն էլ խասել այ Աղէն որ գրել այ:

Յովսեփն Հնդստանայ ապրանքովն գնաց Փռանկստան Ջլաւէն յինք էր առել ուր խին սարմային ջանիր է *խք* ցքին որ տեղս ն[ա]րիսն մինն *առքճճ* դեկան էր եւ *ս* պատտիտ սուրբ միօր գերմակ գմուրթով յիս Մինասս խասաւ:

Փոքր թվին *հգ*[63] Գ[ա]մ[ա]ր ամսոյ *ի*[20] մեր ընկեր Սիմոնին տվի *ռճթ* որ խտուրն տանի Փռանկստան թէ ինքն ձեռնհաս լինի ծախէ, թէ չէ՝ տայ Աղէն այս ինչ է:

Նումրայ ա	<i>ս</i> դանայ	ճարմակ յիստակ բիայիբ բարակ ֆռանկի թըրաշ գուլ ավմագ	վագն <i>բ</i> դիրէթ	առքն	50000
Նումրայ բ	<i>η</i> դանայ	ճարմակ մինն ռանկին օրթայ լել	վագն <i>գ</i> դիրէթ	ավմագ	առքն 24000 <i>յեժ.ն ռճ</i>
Նումրայ գ	<i>ե</i> դանայ	չրքին քամռանկ	վագն <i>գ </i> դիրէթ	ավմագ	առքն 16000
Նումրայ դ	<i>խգ</i> դանայ	ռիգայ քամռանկ լել վատ	վագն <i>ժբ</i> դիրէթ	ավմագ	առքն 30000
Նումրայ ե	<i>ձէ</i> դանայ	դալթան ճարմակ	վագն <i>ժս </i> դիրէթ	մարգարիտ	առքն 20000
Նումրայ զ	<i>ս</i> դանայ	լել ջրով	վագն <i>բ</i> դիրէթ	մարգարիտ	առքն 08000
Նումրայ է	<i>խգ</i> դանայ	կլուլակ	վագն <i>խս</i> դիրէթ	ավմագ	առքն 07000

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Նումրայ ք	բ	դանայ	ջինս ռանկին բիայիր	վազն	ժ	դիրէթ	կապուտ եաղութ	առքն	09000
Նումրայ թ	բ	դանայ	քամռանկ բադ շումշ	վազն	իբ	դիրէթ	կապուտ եաղութ	առքն	04000
Նումրայ ժօ	դ	դանայ	քամռանկ խուշկ քուլուղի	վազն	ժգ	դիրէթ	կարմիր եաղութ	առքն	07000

Աստուծով վերոյ թարիղումն վերոյ Սիմոնն Սէթն տարան Ճգնաւոր Հէրապետին կոնթէ այս ինչ է:

Նումրայ ա	ւ	դանայ	ծակ լիզանդի կարմիր փոքր բանավշ եաղութ	վազն	դգ	դիրէթ			
Նումրայ բ	ւ	դանայ	ռանկն պակաս ջրով յիստակ խաստ չօքի եա- ղութ	վազն	լօ	դիրէթ			
Նումրայ գ	ժգ	դանայ	կապուտ Դ.ըն կարմիր այ լէվ օրթայ եաղութ	վազն	նլւ	դիրէթ			
Նումրայ դ	բ	դանայ	լէվ յիստակ բարակ գուլ ջրով արմազ	վազն	ւ	դիրէթ			

Փոքր թվին ՀԳ[73] Դ[ա]մ[ա]յ ամսոյ Ժ[10] Մեանսարի որդի Էլմարին տվի տարաւ որ աղարկէ Փռանկստան թարվզցի Աղէ ձեռն կամ ով որ վէքիլ լինի արարէլ:

Նումրայ ա	1	դանայ	յիստակ ճարմակ գուշվարայ: արմազ	վազն	բ	դիրէթ	առքն	30000
Նումրայ բ	1	դանայ	տիր բարակ ճարմակ յիստակ արմազ	վազն	ւ	դիրէթ	առքն	12000
Նումրայ գ	2	դանայ	լէվ գուշվարայ ճարմակ մարգարիտ:	վազն	գ	դիրէթ	առքն	30000
Նումրայ դ	1	դանայ	կարմիր յիստակ նաթր[ա]շ եաղութ	վազն	դ	դիրէթ	առքն	14000

Փոքր թվին ՀԴ[74] Ծբ[ա]թ ամսոյ ԺԵ[15] մեր ընկեր յարեւանցի Ջլաւն տարաւ որ թէ ինքն գնայ Փռանկստան տայ թավրզցի Մաթոսի որդի Աղէն հարգահ ինքն գնայ ոչ լէվ ահթի բարի մարդով աղարկէ Աղէ ձեռն աղարկածս այս է:

Նումրայ ա	1	դանայ	բաղամի ճարմակ ջրով մին երեսն թարթար մին երեսն թախտայ մեծ մէղանով					
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Օ		տակին կուշտն մին փոքր խոռ ավմագ	վագն	զ	դիրեթ	գինն	360000
Նումրայ բ	1	դանայ մուսալաս ռանկն պակաս խաստ ավմագ	վագն	ե	դիրեթ	գինն	100000
Նումրայ գ	2	դանայ մեծօ փունթ շաքարի Արն տիր ջրով ավմագ	վագն	ը	դիրեթ	գինն	100000
Նումրայ դ	1	դանայ թարթարի շաքարի խաստ այիրդար ավմագ	վագն	ե	դիրեթ	գինն	040000
Նումրայ ե	3	դանայ թախտայ տիր բարակ մինն խաչայձեվ գուլ ավմագ	վագն	զ	դիրեթ	գինն	110000
Նումրայ զ	3	դանայ ճարմակ յիստակ շեզ չօքի մուսալաս բարակ ավմագ	վագն	է	դիրեթ	գինն	130000
Նումրայ է	2	դանայ ճարմակ բիայիր թախտայ մուսալաս ավմագ	վագն	4	դիրեթ	գինն	050000
Նումրայ ը	2	դանայ ճարմակ ա տիր բարակ մին օրթայ եւ խոռ ավմագ	վագն	ը	դիրեթ	գինն	035000
Նումրայ թ	20	դանայ գերմակ լեվ վատ դալթի ավմագ	վագն	դ	դիրեթ	գինն	008000
Նումրայ ժ	1	դանայ կապուտ հաշթի ռանկին մեղանով բիայիր եադուր	վագն	ժը	դիրեթ	գինն	060000
Նումրայ ժա	2	դանայ կապուտ ա.ըն թախտայ մինն գահլայ եադուր	վագն	թ	դիրեթ	գինն	004000
Նումրայ ժբ	5	դանայ լեվ վատ դեղին մինն այն[ա]լիուռ եադուր	վագն	խբ	դիրեթ	գինն	012000
Նումրայ ժգ	7	դանայ դեղին ջինս ջրով բիայիր եադուր	վագն	ժը	դիրեթ	գինն	030000
Նումրայ ժդ	1	դանայ կարմիր ջինս թախտայ ռանկին բիայիր եադուր	վագն	դ =	դիրեթ	գինն	060000

Նումրայ ժե	59	դանայ	կարմիր ռանկին գահիայ ֆռանկ փասսան եադուլթ	վազն	լս	դիրեթ	գինն	015000
Նումրայ ժգ	50	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան ֆռանկ փասսան շարած մարգարիտ	վազն	ճիս	դիրեթ	գինն	350000
Նումրայ ժե	58	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան ֆռանկ փասսան շարած մարգարիտ	վազն	ժէ	դիրեթ	գին	055000
Նումրայ ժը	07	դանայ	մեծ դուկմայ ս քանդած խտուրն մարգարիտ	վազնայ	գիտէլի գին		գին	009000
Նումրայ ժթ	129	դանայ	եքայ դանայ ռանկին Նշաբուրի ֆիրուզայ	վազն	գճլս	դիրեթ	գինն	170000
Նումրայ ի	001	դանայ	բադամի Նշ[ա]յբուրի օրթայ ռանկ ֆիրուզայ	վազն	ժս	դիրեթ	գինն	006000
Նումրայ իա	320	դանայ	ռանկին ջրով գահիայ դե- դին եադուլթ	վազն	ճօօ	դիրեթ	գինն	010000

Ը

Տէր Աստուած մեր դու հօգաս զպետս մեր եւ դու յաջողեալ ուղղես զճանապարհս մեր փոքր թիվն
 ՀԶ[74] Ծբ[ա]թ ամսոյ ԺԵ[15] մեր ընկեր յարեւանցի Ջլալին եւ դաշտցի Յուսէփին տվի տարաւ:
 Ներքոյ գրեալ ապրանքն որ թասլիմ առեն թարվզցի Աղէն ինչ տեղ որ տեսնեն տան յինքն դաւզ յինք
 առուն էստուր խառջն յառէչ այ բարձած

			ճարմակ դալթան					
նումրայ ա	07	դանայ	անձակ ֆռանկ փասսան	մարգարիտ	վազն	31	դիրեթ	139000
նումրայ բ	11	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ	վազն	38	դիրեթ	161700
նումրայ գ	12	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ	վազն	36	դիրեթ	131000
Նումրայ դ	16	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ	վազն	67	դիրեթ	195000
Նումրայ ե	26	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ	վազն	48	դիրեթ	143000

նումրայ գ	43	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	78	դիրեթ	163600
նումրայ է	52	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	77	դիրեթ	124800
նումրայ ը	42	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	55	դիրեթ	079800
նումրայ թ	61	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	73	դիրեթ	085400
նումրայ ժ	71	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	75	դիրեթ	071000
նումրայ ժա	72	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	65	դիրեթ	050400
նումրայ ժբ	174	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	136	դիրեթ	087000
նումրայ ժգ	219	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	147	դիրեթ	087400
նումրայ ժդ	289	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	112	դիրեթ	025200
նումրայ ժե	001	դանայ	գուշվարայ	մարգարիտ վազն	10	դիրեթ	021000
նումրայ ժզ	262	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	149	դիրեթ	060550
նումրայ ժէ	363	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	182	դիրեթ	065250
նումրայ ժը	2273	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	1004	դիրեթ	317750
նումրայ ժթ	4296	դանայ	ճարմակ դալթան	մարգարիտ վազն	1541	դիրեթ	384300
նումրայ ի	0013	դանայ	դրօշտ նիմռու	մարգարիտ վազն	00321	դիրեթ	032500
նումրայ իա	0014	դանայ	գերմակ նիմռու	մարգարիտ վազն	0011	դիրեթ	005600
նումրայ իբ	0001	դանայ	դուկմայ	մարգարիտ վազն	0006	դիրեթ	002400
նումրայ իգ	0029	դանայ	ջաւաք գուշվարայ	մարգարիտ վազն	0030	դիրեթ	010000
նումրայ իդ	0019	դանայ	դրօշտ քամբ[ա]թի	մարգարիտ վազն	0029	դիրեթ	013300
նումրայ իե	0282	դանայ	շինած դուկմայ	մարգարիտ վազն	0082	մսխալ	080000
նումրայ իզ	0220	դանէն	ա մսխալ ծակ	մարգարիտ վազն	0009	մսխալ	017575
Նումրայ իէ	0280	դանէն	ա մսխալ ծակ	մարգարիտ վազն	0018	մսխալ	030225
Նումրայ իը	0320	դանէն	ա մսխալ ծակ	մարգարիտ վազն	0033	մսխալ	047925
Նումրայ իթ	0400	դանէն	ա մսխալ ծակ	մարգարիտ վազն	0075	մսխալ	086900
Նումրայ իօ	0500	դանէն	ա մսխալ ծակ	մարգարիտ վազն	0041	մսխալ	037200

Նումրայ լա	0640	դանայ	ա մսխալ ծակ	մարգարիտ վազն	0063	մսխալ	046700
Նումրայ լբ	0820	դանեն	ա մսխալ ծակ	մարգարիտ վազն	0066	մսխալ	035500
Նումրայ լգ	1080	դանեն	ա մսխալ ծակ	մարգարիտ վազն	0026	մսխալ	008400
Նումրայ լդ	1400	դանեն	ա մսխալ ծակ	մարգարիտ վազն	0011	մսխալ	003050

բաթ	0333	մսխալ	պաշ լել մարգարտի	խաքայ զինն	0250	դեկան	մսխալն	83250
բաթ	0747	մսխալ	օրդնարի մարգարտի	խաքայ մսխալն	0160	դեկան	զին	119500
Նումրայ լե	0157	դիրթթ	խաքէ ջոկած ծակած մարգարիտ			զինն		006000

Թխտիս յէ ռադամ թէ մարգարիտ թէ խաքայ քուլի ջամն ելաւ *զճոզ* թուման է *ռճի* դեկան խարն վերայ գալոյ:

Տէր մեր եւ Աստուած մեր դու հոգաս զպէտս մեր եւ դու յաջողեալ ուղղես իմ Մինասիս ընկեր Նազարին տվի տարաւ ներքոյ գրեալ ապրանքն որ սալամաթ տանի Վէնէտիքն տայ թարվզցի Աղէն որ էլ Նազարին յուզուրումն ծախսէ դափտար առե բերե չուն որ քուլի մարգարտումն *խ* թումանի շախն Նազարին այ:

Նումրայ ա	055	թասպէ	թիր դալթան ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն	068	մսխալ	առքն մսխալն	6000
Նումրայ բ	079	թասպէ	թիր դալթան ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն	080	մսխալ	առքն մսխալն	4800
Նումրայ գ	094	թասպէ	թիր դալթան ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն	078	մսխալ	առքն մսխալն	4000
Նումրայ դ	117	թասպէ	թիր դալթան ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն	083	մսխալ	առքն մսխալն	3400

Նումրայ Է	081	թասսպէ	թիր դալթան ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն 050	մսխալ առքն	մսխալն 3000
Նումրայ Գ	129	թասսպէ	թիր դալթան ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն 078	մսխալ առքն	մսխալն 2700
Նումրայ Է	102	թասսպէ	թիր դալթան ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն 060	մսխալ առքն	մսխալն 2400
Նումրայ Ը	185	թասսպէ	թիր դալթան ճարմակ մարգարիտ	վազն 098	մսխալ առքն	մսխալն 2000
Նումրայ Թ	018	թասսպէ	Քամբայթի խառն մարգարիտ	վազն 019	մսխալ առքն	մսխալն 4400
Նումրայ Ժ	045	թասսպէ	Քամբայթի խառն մարգարիտ	վազն 035	մսխալ առքն	մսխալն 3200
Նումրայ Ժա	005	թասսպէ	դեղին շիրին դալ- թան մարգարիտ	վազն 005	մսխալ առքն	մսխալն 4400
Նումրայ Ժբ	013	թասսպէ	դեղին շիրին դալ- թան մարգարիտ	վազն 007	մսխալ առքն	մսխալն 2200

վերոյ ժբ ո[ա]ղ[ա]մ: մարգարտին ելաւ թասսպէ 923: վազնն 662||| մսխալ, առքին շամնայ բճյբ
թուման գռէն դիան:

Թ

Տէր Աստուած իմ, դու հոգաս զպէտս մեր եւս կարիս առաւել քան զոր խնդրեմք եւ իմանամք փոքր
թվին ՀՇ[75]ին Ճգնաւորի որդի Հերապետ Գուջ[ա]ր[ա]թէն իմ Մինասիս եւ Պետրոսին կոնթէ
խրիտ էր աղարկել առքն եւ թասսպիլն այս է ներքոյ գրեցաւ:

Նումրայ ա 3 դանայ ալմաս բ դանէն ճարմակ 016|| դիրէթ առքն 1752,|||
թախտայ բիայիբ ա դանէն
ձիբ մեծօ փունթ փոքր

նաբարթի Գ դանին քաշն այ
Ըստամբլու քաշովն

Նումրայ ք	2 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ մէկնել այ ճարմակ բիայիբ	վազն	013	դիրէթ	առքն	2256՝
Նումրայ գ	6 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ նաբարթի է.ըն ճարմակ բիայիբ	վազն	017	դիրէթ	առքն	1099՝
Նումրայ դ	19 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ ճարմակ բիայիբ	վազն	022	դիրէթ	առքն	0458՝
Նումրայ ե	15 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ ճարմակ ռանկին խառն	վազն	032	դիրէթ	առքն	0650՝
Նումրայ զ	106 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ ճարմակ բիայիբ	վազն	095	դիրէթ	առքն	1660՝ –
Նումրայ է	322 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ ճարմակ բիայիբ	վազն	153	դիրէթ	առքն	1870՝
Նումրայ ը	375 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ հաշտանկ խին մադան	վազն	103	դիրէթ	առքն	1415՝ =
Նումրայ թ	576 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ հաշտանկ խին մադան	վազն	071	դիրէթ	առքն	0667՝
Նումրայ ժ	431 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ հաշտանկ խին մադան	վազն	025=	դիրէթ	առքն	0155՝
Նումրայ ժա	058 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ քաշ բարթ	վազն	019	դիրէթ	առքն	105՝
Նումրայ ժբ	001 դանայ	ալմաս թախտայ տիր քաշ ռանկ	վազն	002 =	դիրէթ	առքն	0020՝

Չամն ելաւ: 12110՝ ռուփի

Ներքոյ գրիս դալին Հնդստանայ եկած էր, գին չէր գրած ես տեղս գին դրեցի տեղիս մազանովն այս
է ներքոյ գրեցաւ:

Նումրայ ա	09 դանայ	թախտայ լել յիստակ ալմաս քաշն Ըստամբոլայ քարով		17	դիրէթ	առքն	272000 դեկան
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Նումրայ բ	15 դանայ	թախտայ խաստ բարակ ավմաս քաշն	18	դիրեթ	առքն	144000
Նումրայ գ	64 դանայ	հաշտանկ փունթ ավմաս	11	դիրեթ	առքն	033750
Նումրայ դ	05 դանայ	թախտայ լել բանի ավմաս	09	դիրեթ	առքն	160000
Նումրայ ե	02 դանայ	փունթ յիստակ ավմաս	05	դիրեթ	առքն	057500
Նումրայ զ	08 դանայ	թախտայ սինա ավմաս քաշն	07	դիրեթ	առքն	050000
Նումրայ է	44 դանայ	թախտայ յիստակ ավմաս քաշն	18	դիրեթ	առքն	075000
Նումրայ ը	74 դանայ	ռանկին ավմաս քաշն	17	դիրեթ	առքն	043100
Նումրայ թ	30 դանայ	ճարմակ սինայ ավմաս քաշն	10	դիրեթ	առքն	033000
Նումրայ ժ	75 դանայ	դալթի ավմաս քաշն	17	դիրեթ	առքն	028000
Նումրայ ժա	02 դանայ	լալ քաշն	06	դիրեթ	առքն	012000
Նումրայ ժբ	01 դանայ	լալ քաշն	05	դիրեթ	առքն	015000
Նումրայ ժգ	05 դանայ	դեղին քաշ ետղութ քաշն	19	դիրեթ	առքն	012000
Նումրայ ժդ	01 դանայ	արծաթով բռնած ռվագ աջայիր կրուզիտայ			առքն	010000
Նումրայ ժե	01 դանայ	նարմ մատանի արծաթե էլ աջիր կրուզիտ[ալ]			առքն	012000
Նումրայ ժզ	03 մսխալ	Ֆռանկ փասան մարգարիտ կե դանէն ա մսխալ			առքն	023000

Վերոյ ապրանքին տակին գ դալամէն գատ ողջ մին լուլում[ալ] եւ էտ ռուփով առած ապրանքիդ էլ ուրիշ խալջայ վերայ եկել ջամնայ գճճ ռուփի, որ թէ առքն թէ ամենայն խարճն քուլի ապրանք մտածին ջամնայ 15460,||

Վերոյ ապրանքին գ դալամն լուլումի դրել խանեցի գ դալամ էլ ավմաս դրի որ ջամն էլաւ ժգ գալամ ավմաս: 2 դալամ թէ լալ թէ ետղութ թէ մարգարիտ թէ նարմ դրինք քամարումն.

Ներքոյ գրիլն էլ Յէրապետին աղարկածն Մինասիս այ եւ Պետրոսին Պետրոսն ռադ էլաւ.

Նումրայ ժէ	106 դանայ	չունի կարմիր ետղութ քաշն	25	դիրեթ	առքն	032, =
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Նումրայ Ժը	001	դանայ	լեվ թախտայ կարմիր եա- դութ	քաշն	11	դիրեթ	առքն	222՝
Նումրայ Ժթ	001	դանայ	ծակ ջրով ձիք կարմիր եա- դութ	քաշն	22	դիրեթ	առքն	028՝
Նումրայ ի	003	դանայ	ծակ նիլգ[ա]նդի կարմիր եա- դութ	քաշն	40	դիրեթ	առքն	040՝
Նումրայ իա	001	դանայ	ծակ ջրով գուշվար լեվ լալ	քաշն	14	դիրեթ	առքն	033՝
Նումրայ իբ	009	դանայ	ծակ լեվ ջրով գուշվար լալ	քաշնն	54	դիրեթ	առքն	058՝
Նումրայ իգ	010	մսխալ	չունի կարմիր ռիզայ եադութ	քաշնն	10	մսխալ	առքն	005՝
Նումրայ իդ	001	դանայ	գուլ այիբդար դեդին եադութ	քաշնն	28	դիրեթ	առքն	210՝
Նումրայ իե	001	դանայ	Էլ գուլ յիստակ դեդին եա- դութ	քաշն	08	դիրեթ	առքն	072՝
Նումրայ իզ	137	դանայ	ջրով նաթրաշ դեդին եադութ	քաշն	242	դիրեթ	առքն	150՝
Նումրայ իէ	007	դանայ	ռանկին յիստակ դեդին եա- դութ	քաշն	029	դիրեթ	առքն	125՝
Նումրայ իը	008	դանայ	սէլ[ա]նի գաթ կարկտակ	քաշն	035	դիրեթ	առքն	045՝
Նումրայ իթ	021	դանայ	թախտայ յիստակ ճարմակ եադութ	քաշն	044 I	դիրեթ	առքն	0054՝
Նումրայ լօ	001	դանայ	չօքի ջրով ճարմակ եադութ	քաշն	007	դիրեթ	առքն	013՝
Նումրայ լա	088	դանայ	ջրով ճարմակ եադութ	քաշն	061	դիրեթ	առքն	020՝
Նումրայ լբ	026	դանայ	ջրով ճարմակ եադութ	քաշն	097	դիրեթ	առքն	029՝
Նումրայ լգ	001	դանայ	չօքի մեդանով կապուտ եա- դութ	քաշն	025	դիրեթ	առքն	250՝
Նումրայ լդ	001	դանայ	հաշթի ռանկին կապուտ եա- դութ	քաշն	018	դիրեթ	առքն	065՝
Նումրայ լե	002	դանայ	հաշթի ռանկին կապուտ եա- դութ	քաշն	017	դիրեթ	առքն	085՝

Նումրայ լգ	003	դանայ	հաշթի ռանկին կապուտ ետ- դութ	քաշն	025	դիրէթ	առքն	082՝
Նումրայ լէ	001	դանայ	չօքի ջրով կապուտ ետդութ	քաշն	019	դիրէթ	առքն	040՝
Նումրայ լը	003	դանայ	չօքի հաշթի կապուտ ետ- դութ	քաշն	015	դիրէթ	առքն	042՝
Նումրայ լթ	002	դանայ	հաշթի ջրով կապուտ ետ- դութ	քաշն	013	դիրէթ	առքն	024՝
Նումրայ խօ	031	դանայ	չօքի ռանկին կապուտ ետ- դութ	քաշն	111	դիրէթ	առքն	134՝≡
Նումրայ խա	023	դանայ	չօքի ջրով կապուտ ետդութ	քաշն	019	դիրէթ	առքն	013՝
Նումրայ խբ	001	դանայ	լուսնակ կապուտ ետդութ	քաշն	012	դիրէթ	առքն	005՝
Նումրայ խգ	031	դանայ	ռանկին ծակ կապուտ ետ- դութ	քաշն	125	դիրէթ	առքն	065՝
Նումրայ խդ	075	դանայ	ռանկին ջրով կապուտ ետ- դութ	քաշն	026	դիրէթ	առքն	004՝
Նումրայ խե	090	դանայ	:քիչրի դեղին կապուտ գ- ուշվար ետդութ	քաշն	540	դիրէթ	առքն	097՝
Նումրայ խզ	001	դանայ	չօքի ջրով կապուտ ետդութ	քաշն	019	դիրէթ	առքն	060՝
Նումրայ խէ	003	դանայ	հաշթի ջրով յիստակ ք ռանկ ետդութ	քաշն	013	դիրէթ	առքն	040՝
Նումրայ խը	003	դանայ	կապուտ ետդութ եւ գմրութ	քաշն	017	դիրէթ	առքն	008՝
Նումրայ խթ	080	դանայ	կապուտ ետդութ	քաշն	065	դիրէթ	առքն	012՝

Ջամն ելաւ 1164՝-

Աստուծով էս ավմասս յետին օրն առինք որ գրեցաւ յառաջկին ֆարդին մինչ նումրայ Ժ ավմասին իւետ ջամն բերինք տեղս որ ներքոյ գրելոյն իւետ ջամ տվինք:

Նումրայ ժա	4	դանայ	տիր շատ բարակ թախտայ ավմաս քաշն	05	դիրէթ	առքն	110000	դեկան եկաւ
Նումրայ ժբ	1	դանայ	խաչ ջրով յիստակ փոքր ռանկին	05	դիրէթ	առքն	125000	դեկան

ալմաս քաշն

Նումրայ ժգ 8 դանայ լել բարակ փոքր այիբ կայ 8 դիրելթ առքն 064000 դեկան միջ[ու]մն ալմաս քաշն

Թէ էս գ ռադամս թէ յ[ա]ռ[ա]ջկին թխտին ժ դալամն ջամնայ ժգ դալամ որ դրինք լուլումն քուլի ժգ դալամ ալմասին առքին ջամն էլաւ. 1195250 դեկան:

Բ[ա]թ էլ յառաջկին թխտին գ դալամ ապրանքն որ քամարումն [ա]յ քուլի առքին ջամն էլաւ: 0084000 դեկան:

Որ ք տեղ դրած ապրանքին առքին ջամն էլաւ: 1279250 դեկան:

Էս գ դֆ[ա]յ կղ դալամ գրած թասվիլով քարեղէնս ինձ Տէր Մարգարէ որդի Միմոնն խասաւ որ տա- նեն Գռանկըստան խասացանեն պարոն Աղէն:

Աստուծով փոքր թվին ՀԵ[75] Դ[ա]մ[ա]յ ամսոյ ԻԳ[23] Աղամալն տարաւ Գռանկստան տայ Աղէն այս է.

Նումրայ ա	031	դանայ	ճարմակ թախտայ բարակ ալմաս քաշն	010	դիրելթ առքն	0038000	դեկան
Նումրայ բ	085	դանայ	ռանկին թախտայ բարակ ալմաս քաշն	033	դիրելթ առքն	0085000	դեկան
Նումրայ գ	084	դանայ	դալթի թախտայ բարակ ալմաս	022	դիրելթ առքն	0040000	
Նումրայ դ	001	դանայ	շատ բարակ գուլ բիայիբ ալմաս քաշն	001 =	դիրելթ առքն	0050000	
Նումրայ ե	001	դանայ	ճարմակ յիստակ գուլ բիայիբ ալմաս քաշն	003	դիրելթ առքն	0074000	
Նումրայ զ	001	դանայ	յիստակ դեղնայշատ գուշվարայ ալմաս քաշն	003	դիրելթ առքն	0090000	
Նումրայ է	001	դանայ	ճարմակ թախտայ յիստակ ալմաս քաշն	002	դիրելթ առքն	0035000	
Նումրայ ը	001	դանայ	փոքր շաքարի յիստակ գուշվարցայ ալմաս քաշն	002	դիրելթ առքն	0045000	

Նումրայ թ	003	դանայ	շաքարի թախտայ ավմաս քաշն	001	դիրէթ առքն	0011000
Նումրայ ժ	002	դանայ	ա փունթ ա.ըն բիանդամ ավմաս քաշն	001	դիրէթ առքն	0004000
Նումրայ ժա	001	դանայ	ճարմակ յիստակ խաստ ավմաս քաշն	001=	դիրէթ առքն	0007000
Նումրայ ժբ	001	դանայ	ճարմակ մէդանով բարակ ավմաս քաշն	001	դիրէթ առքն	0033000
Նումրայ ժգ	017	դանայ	սինա ռանկ տիր բարակ թախտայ ավմաս քաշն	011	դիրէթ առքն	0051750
Նումրայ ժդ	001	դանայ	թարով թարթարի մէդ[ա]նով ճարմակ ավմաս քաշն	002	դիրէթ առքն	0030500
Նումրայ ժե	003	դանայ	լէվ բարակ մուսալաս ճարմակ գուլ ավմաս քաշն	002 ≡	դիրէթ առքն	0020500 դէկան

Վերոյ ժե դալամ գրած ավմասին առքին ջամն ելաւ: 614750 դէկան.

Բ[ա]թ տարա /ս դանայ ավմաս վագնն η դիրէթ ռուբ առքն ռաթին 45 շ ռուփի:

Էս վերոյ գրի[ա]յս ինձ Դաւութի որդի Աղամ[ա]յս խասավ որ տանեմ Փռանկստան տամ թարվզցի Աղէն:

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Աստուծով էլ փոքր թվին <Ե[75] Դ[ա]մ[ա]յ ԲԳ[23] Դաւութի որդի Աղամային տվի տարաւ Փռանկստան տայ թարվզցի Աղէն

Նումրայ ա	07	թասայլ	մարգարիտ	վագն	ժբ	մսխալ	Բ	դանկ
Նումրայ բ	12	թասայլ	մարգարիտ	վագն	ժդ	մսխալ	Գ	դանկ
Նումրայ գ	08	թասայլ	մարգարիտ	վագն	ժո	մսխալ	Բ	դանկ
Նումրայ դ	08	թասայլ	մարգարիտ	վագն	ժը	մսխալ	Բ	դանկ
Նումրայ ե	31 կէս	թասայլ	մարգարիտ	վագն	իթ	մսխալ	Ա	դանկ
Նումրայ զ	33	թասայլ	մարգարիտ	վագնն	իզ	մսխալ		

Նումրայ Է	42	թասայէ	մարգարիտ	վազն	հղ	մսխալ	Բ	դանկ
Նումրայ ը	65	թասայէ	մարգարիտ	վազն	լե	մսխալ		
Նումրայ թ	36	թասայէ	մարգարիտ	վազն	ժէ	մսխալ	Ե	դանկ
Նումրայ ժ	61	թասայէ	մարգարիտ	վազն	իէ	մսխալ	Ե	դանկ
Նումրայ ժա	90	թասայէ	մարգարիտ	վազն	լգ	մսխալ	Գ	դանկ
Նումրայ ժբ	21	թասայէ	Քամբայթի	վազն	ժե	մսխալ		

Էս վերոյ գրելս ինձ Դաւութի որդի Աղամալիս խասաւ որ տանիմ Ֆռանկստան տամ թարվզցի Աղէն:

Վերոյ մարգարտին յիզէն այս է, որ գրեցաւ

նախ 0 106 թասայէ թ[ա]սային *սնխ* դանայ: Շատն փոքրն աճիսզ դանայ վազն *լբ* մսխալ մին կարատ:

բայթ 035 թասայէ թ[ա]սային շատն *սնծդ* դանայ փոքրն *նհ* դանայ վազն *օղ* մսխալ *բ* կարատ:

Վերոյ *բ* շարք գերմակ մարգարիտն. Ամիրվ[է]լի տարաւ թէ ծախվի ծախէ թէ չէ աղարկէ Աղէ:

Վերոյ *նգ* թասային պաշ մեծն. մսխալն *բ* դ[ա]լկ էլ վերն *նղն* դ[ա]լկ էլ վերն *սոզն* դեկան:

Բ[ա]թ էլ *լե* թասային դրօշտն մսխալն *նբն* դ[ա]լկ էլ վերն *ն* դ[ա]լկ: էլ վերն *ղն* դեկան:

Տէր Աստուած մեր դու հոգաս գպէտս մեր: Փոքր թվին *նգ* Աղ[ա]մ ամսոյ, ինչ ասարանք եւ ինչ առտուր որ Վանաստքումն մեր ընկեր թարվզցի Մաթոսի որդի Աղէ տվել այ եւ զինքն նստացուցել որ ծախէ այս է գրեցաւ:

Նումրայ ա	0082	լիտրայ	խուրդ դրօշտ չօքի նգիմի սէլան
Նումրայ բ	3100	դանայ	տաշած չօքի նգիմի սէլան
Նումրայ գ	1500	դանայ	լեվ գերմակ նգիմի սէլան
Նումրայ դ	2300	դանայ	լեվ տաշած չօքի նգիմի ռըվագ
Նումրայ ե	0028	թասայէ	դրօշտ գիրդ յիստակ ռըվագ
Նումրայ զ	0031	թասայէ	գերմակ յիստակ ռըվագ

Նումրայ է	0010	լիտրայ	Շբաբաքի ֆիրուզայ
Նումրայ ը	0024	լիտրայ	քաշ Նշաբուրի ֆիրուզայ
Նումրայ թ	0039	լիտրայ	լել Նշաբուրի ֆիրուզայ
Նումրայ ժ	1014	դանայ	ճարմակ խօշխ[ա]թ դուբայ բլոր
Նումրայ ժա	4110	դանայ	ամեն բաբաթե թասայի բլոր
Նումրայ ժբ	0679	դանայ	ճարմակ նգիմի բլոր
Նումրայ ժգ	0010	դանայ	ը գավազանի գլուխ ը դանկի կոթ ներքին բլոր
Նումրայ ժդ	0765	դանայ	դուկմայ թե իմամ թե գուշվարայ վերին բլոր
Նումրայ ժե	0022	լիտրայ	թե գրեզ թե տաշած ծեծելե սուքանդի
Նումրայ ժզ	0100	դանայ	թե մեծ թե պգտիկ թե լել թե վատ սուքանդի
Նումրայ ժէ	0318	դանայ	ռանկին խօշթրաշ նգիմի սուքանդի
Նումրայ ժը	0436	դանայ	որ է վազն կը լիտրայ լել վատ թելիայ
Նումրայ ժթ	0279	դանայ	լել յիստակ տաշած թելիայ
Նումրայ ի	0035	լիտրայ	թե ծակ թե անծակ ջրի նիլում
Նումրայ իա	0024	լիտրայ	թե ունցայ տաշած լել վատ նգիմի բուսրադ
Նումրայ իբ	0002		մեծ ճոթ վազն գ ունցայ բուսրադ
Նումրայ իգ	0020	լիտրայ	ծեծելե կարմիր եաղութի խաքայ
Նումրայ իդ	0850	դանայ	շարած կարմիր աղիդ
Նումրայ իե	0108	դանայ	նգիմի կարմիր աղիդ
Նումրայ իզ	0030		ջուխտ գուշվարայ կարմիր աղիդ
Նումրայ իէ	0190		ջուխտ գուշվարայ ճարմակ աղիդ
Նումրայ իը	1600	դանայ	չրքին որ է քաշ ճարմակ աղիդ
Նումրայ իթ	0400	դանայ	թե նգիմի թե շարած բաբայդուրի
Նումրայ լօ	0022	դանայ	տափակ ամբարչայ եւ կը դանայ մեծ պգտիկ դանկի կոթ բաբայդուրի

Նումրայ յբ	0004	դանայ	մեծ մեծ ճոթ բարայդուրի		
Նումրայ յգ	0007	ունցայ	ծեծելէ բաղամ		
Նումրայ յդ	0013	ունցայ	ծեծելէ մարգարտի խաքայ		
Նումրայ յե	0006	ունցայ	գրեզ ռանկին եաղութի խաքայ		
Նումրայ յզ	0003	լիտրայ	ը ունցայ ռանկին չանամ խաքայ		
Նումրայ յէ	0113	նաֆայ	մորթով գրեթ		
Նումրայ յը	1160	դանայ	նգիմի թէ սուքանդի թէ աղիդ		
Նումրայ յթ	0005	դանայ	լէվ յիստակ փաթաք որէ աքվայմարին		
Նումրայ յս	0003	դանայ	արծաթէ թէ բուսրադ թէ դոշաբի թէ աղիդ մատանի		
Նումրայ յսա	0001		բլօր ոսկով ժգ դանայ եաղութ վերայ ամբար- չայ		
Նումրայ յսբ	0001	դանայ	լէվ ռանկին վագն ղ դիրէթ եացինթ		
Նումրայ յսգ	0003	դանայ	տաշած նգիմ[ի] լալ ա նարմակ ժը դիրէթ լալ		
Նումրայ յսդ	0102	դանայ	մեծ պգտիկ գրգօլիկօ որէ զաբարջաթ		
Նումրայ յսե	0037	դանայ	մեծ պգտիկ վագն /սգ դիրէթ կարմիր եաղութ		
Նումրայ յսզ	0004	դանայ	ը ոսկով ղ արծաթով եաղութ մատանի		
Նումրայ յսէ	0265	դանայ	ռանկին ս[ա]վիգայ կարմիր եաղութ վագն	62	դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսը	0190	դանայ	ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վագն 24	դիրէթ
Նումրայ յսթ	1200	դանայ	ռգին ռիգայ ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վագն 945	դիրէթ
Նումրայ ծ	0741	դանայ	ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վագն 205	դիրէթ
Նումրայ ծա	0330	դանայ	ռանկին կարմիր եաղութ	վագն 125	դիրէթ
Նումրայ ծբ	0001	դանայ	ռանկին զըբեդ թաբով կարմիր եաղութ	վագն 016	դիրէթ նարմ
Նումրայ ծգ	0104	դանայ	ռանկին կապուտ եաղութ	վագն 101	դիրէթ

Նումրայ ծդ	0001	գրեչայ	լեվ մեմունի փահգար	վագն	004 մսխալ
Նումրայ ծե	0001	գրեչ[ա]յ	ամբար	վագն	007 մսխալ
Նումրայ ծզ	0124	դանայ	ռանկին յիստակ կարկտակ		
Նումրայ ծե	0108	դանայ	չրքին դեղին եաղութ		
Նումրայ ծը	0071	դանայ	ռանկին դեղին եաղութ		
Նումրայ ծթ	0015	դանայ	օրթայ ռանկ ճարմակ եաղութ	վագն	014 դիրեթ
Նումրայ կօ	0020		ջուխտ չ երեսի մարգարտե արուսաք		
Նումրայ կա	0057	դանայ	յիստակ թախտայ ավնագ	վագն	060 դիրեթ
Նումրայ կբ	0037	դանայ	տաշած գերմակ ավնագ	վագն	002 դիրեթ
Նումրայ կգ	0061	դիրեթ	քաֆ ավնագ	վագն	061 դիրեթ
Նումրայ կդ	0061	դանայ	եքայ դանայ մեծ մեծ նիլբում ֆիրուգայ		
Նումրայ կե	0271	դանայ	աւալ նիլբում ֆիրուգայ		

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Նումրայ կգ	0541	դանայ	դուում նիլբում ֆիրուգայ		
Նումրայ կե	0356	դանայ	սեում նիլբում ֆիրուգայ		
Նումրայ կը	0785	լիտրայ	մեծ մեծ թե գերմակ ռանկին լաջվարդ		
Նումրայ կթ	1171	լիտրայ	եւ սինայ եւ գլուխ ռեվանդ		
Նումրայ հօ	0140	լիտրայ	օլիվեթ սելան		
Նումրայ հա	0187	լիտրայ	դֆթիք		
Նումրայ հբ	0057	թօփ	Մլթան[ա]յ բան սիաքար եաղլըդ		
Նումրայ հգ	0023	թօփ	Ղուղուր Շահի եաղլըդ		
Նումրայ հդ	0022	թօփ	Շ[ա]հգ[ա]դ[ա]յփուրի սիաքար չիթ		
Նումրայ հե	0003	թօփ	Թարրիզի ավ[ա]ջայ		
Նումրայ հզ	0011	թան	Փումինի բան խամ ավաջայ		
Նումրայ հե	0004	թօփ	Քաշ[ա]ն[ա]յ բան եաղլըդ		

Նումրայ հը	0001	թան	Թաբրիզի միգար միգար
Նումրայ հթ	0001	թան	Սուրընջի վեստ
Նումրայ ձօ	0002	թ[ա]ն	Մլթ[ա]ն[ա]յ պգտիկ բան լահաֆ
Նումրայ ձա	0006	թ[ա]ն	Ղուլումանայ ալաջայ
Նումրայ ձբ	0002	թ[օ]փ	Հեղրապատի մադրփաք
Նումրայ ձգ	0001	թան	Սրունջի կարմիր շիլայ
Նումրայ ձդ	0008	թագայ	Բնարիսի գառթարի մաշնայ
Նումրայ ձե	0040	լ[ի]տրայ	քն[ա]ր շարբաֆի ապրիշում
Նումրայ ձզ	0003	դանայ	տաշած ճարմակ եադուր
Նումրայ ձէ	0006	դանայ	Նշաբուրի ֆիրուզայ մատանի

Բ[ա]թ էլ փոքր թվին ԿԶ[66] Ղամ[ա]ր ամսոյ մէկին ինչ ապրանք որ Զանանն Ըստամբոլոյ Աղէ վերայ աղարկել այ այս է որ գրեցաւ.

Նումրայ ա	1700	մսխալ	եադուրի խաքայ փոքր էլ քաշբ[ա]թ միջումն ս[ա]րի[ա]մ լարէն չուր	3	տուկատ
Նումրայ բ	0178	դանայ	արծաթով բանած թէ աղիղ թէ Եամ[ա]նի գրած նգիմի մեծ պգտիկ սարիսան դանէն չուր	2	լիրայ
Նումրայ գ	0165	դանայ	նգիմի թէ Եմանի թէ աղիղ ս[ա]րի[ա]մ դանէն չ[ու]ր	30	սօղի
Նումրայ դ	0380	դանայ	թէ արծաթով թէ սադայ բագբանդ եւ գուշվարայ բուսրաղէ աղիղէ քուլին չուր	20	տուկատ
Նումրայ ե	0091	դանայ	թէ գրած թէ անգիր Եմանի բլօր նգիմի սարիսան դանէն չուր	1	լիրայ
Նումրայ զ	0117	մսխալ	ջրի նիլում լիտրէն չուր	7	տուկատ
Նումրայ է	0080	մսխալ	կապուտ եադուրի խաքայ օնցէն չուր	2	տուկատ
Նումրայ ը	0002	դանայ	կապուտ եադուր ռանկին գուշվարայ վագն ԴԸ դի-րէթ գինն չուր	200	տուկատ
Նումրայ թ	0010	դանայ	օրթ[ա]յ ռանկ ջրով կապուտ եադուր վագն ՃՕԸ	220	տուկատ

դիրեթ գինն չուր

Նումրայ ժ	0040	դանայ	մեծ եւ օրթայ կապուտ եաղութ վազն <i>ճժէ</i> դիրեթ գինն չուր	120	տուկատ
Նումրայ ժա	0872	դանայ	քիչրի ռիգայ կապուտ եաղութ վազն <i>գճկգ</i> դիրեթ դուգինն չուր	008	լիրայ
Նումրայ ժբ	0004	դանայ	գ.ըն ոսկէ մին արծաթէ կապուտ եաղութ մատանի գինն չուր	080	տուկատ
Նումրայ ժգ	0002	դանայ	թախտայ եաղութ ճարմակ մատանի գինն չուր	030	տուկատ
Նումրայ ժդ	0006	դանայ	դեղին տաշած եաղութ վազն <i>ժգ</i> դիրեթ գինն չուր	030	տուկատ
Նումրայ ժե	0004	դանայ	Բադաշխի լալ գուշվարայ վազն <i>կդ</i> դիրեթ գինն չուր	128	տուկատ
Նումրայ ժզ	0008	դանայ	ջ[ի]նս ճարմակ եաղութ <i>բ.քն</i> կապուտ վազն <i>լը</i> դիրեթ ս[ա]րի[ա]մ դանէն չուր	010	տուկատ

Էս վերոյ *ժգ* ռադամ ապրանքիս գինն որ դրել այ եվելել այ գրել ես եվել դրածն գրեցի ոչ պակաս գինն էս այ որ վերոյ գրեցաւ:

Բ[ա]թ էլ փոքր թվին *ԿԷ[67]* շ[ա]մս, ամսոյ: Բօջի թաս[ա]լի Ըստամբօլոյ աղարկել այ էլ Ադէ վերայ դուսցի Մարկոսն [ա]յ տարել:

Նումրայ ա	24	դանայ	ծակ գուշվարայ կապուտ եաղութ վազն <i>գճկբ</i> դիրեթ պակաս գինն դանէն չուր	012	մառչիլ
Նումրայ բ	62	դանայ	ծակ գուշվարայ կապուտ եաղութ վազն պակաս գինն դանէն չուր	001	մառչիլ
Նումրայ գ	01	դանայ	շաքարի յիստակ ջրով պմագ վազն <i>գ </i> դիրեթ պակաս գինն չուր դիրեթն	040	մառչիլ

Բ[ա]թ էլ փոքր թվին Ըստամբ[օ]լոյ Բաղումի որդի Աւետն թասալի աղարկելան էլ Ադէ վերայ

Նումրայ ա	158	դանայ	ռանկին ֆռանկ փասսան լեվ կարմիր եաղութ վազն <i>ճգ</i> դիրեթ պակաս գինն դանէն չուր	001	մառչիլ
Նումրայ բ	001	դանայ	ջինս ռանկին յիստակ նարնջի նարմ եաղութ վազն <i>խօ </i> դիրեթ գինն <i>գճ</i> մառչիլէն չուր	200	մառչիլ

Ես Տէր Աղեքսանդր կաթողիկոս ամենայն հայոց. Ասլն դափթարին տեսի որ խոջայ Մինասին՝ իւր ձեռացայգիրն էր որ ես ստոյգ կու ճանաչեմ սաւատս համեմատէր, միրեցի. վերջ գրոյս:

Դֆթարս որ է ՏԱ թուղթ սորայ սալ դֆթարն տեսի որ էր Խոջայ Մինասին ձեռացայգիրն եւլս կու ճանաչեմ սավաղիս համեմատ այ եւ ՏԱ թուղդ դֆթարիս գլխնին եւլս մօհրեցի Մուրաղի որդի Սարիադ

Վերոյ գրեալ ՏԱ վարաղ դավթարիս գրեալ սալն Խոջայ Մինասին դաստխաթին հետ համեմատ այ, մրեցի Գրիգորի որդի Սարի[ա]դ

Վերոյ գրեալ ՏԱ վարաղ սավաղըս Խոջայ Մինասին սալ դափտարին հետ համեմատ այ եւ դաս- խաթն կը ջանաչեմ Գրիգորի որդի Ըստեփան

Վերոյ տասն եւ մին վարաղ սավատն խոջայ Մինասին դասխաթ դափտարին հետ համեմատ այ եւ ձեռացայգիրն կու ճանաչեմ Մուրատի որդի Շարիման

Դ[ա]ֆտարս որ է ՏԱ թուխտ սորա սալ դափտարըն տեսի որ Խոջայ Մինասին ձեռացայգիրն էր, որ կու ճանաչեմ սավատս համեմատ այ եւ ՏԱ թուխտ դափտարիս գլխնին եւս մօհրեցի Ղեւոնդի որդի Մահտեսի Ծատուր դի Ղեւոնդ:

Ես Ավետի որդի Մկրրտումըս դրֆտարիս սալըն տեսի Խոջայ Մինասին: Դաստըխաթըն էլն կու ճանաչեմ սավատիս մաֆ եղայ, մըրեցի

Դվթարըս որէ ՏԱ թուխտ սըրա սալ տերն տեսի որ խոջայ Մինասին ձեռացայգիրն էր, որ կջանաչեմ սավատիս համեմատ էր, մօրեցի Չաքարէ որդի Սավել

Դվտարս որ է ՏԱ թուխտ սորայ սալըն տեսի որ խոջայ Մինասին ձեռաց գիրն էր, սավատիս հետ համեմատ է, Ըմբրումաղէ որդի Դաւութ

Folio 5 of the Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas with the seals of witnesses and the Catholicos

Year	Month	Day	Description (Arabic)	Debit (Arabic)	Credit (Arabic)	Balance (Arabic)
1700			...			
1708			...			
1705			...			
1703			...			
1709			...			
1711			...			
1708			...			
1702			...			
1706			...			
1704			...			
1708			...			
1704			...			
1702			...			
1706			...			
1704			...			
1708			...			

Folio 5 of the Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas with the seals of witnesses and the Catholicos

Year	Month	Day	Description (Arabic)	Debit (Arabic)	Credit (Arabic)	Balance (Arabic)
1704			...			
1701			...			
1705			...			
1701			...			

Folio 5 of the Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas with the seals of witnesses and the Catholicos

Year	Month	Day	Description (Arabic)	Debit (Arabic)	Credit (Arabic)	Balance (Arabic)
1708			...			
1701			...			

Folio 5 of the Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas with the seals of witnesses and the Catholicos

Folio 5 of the Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas with the seals of witnesses and the Catholicos

Folio 5 of the Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas with the seals of witnesses and the Catholicos

Folio 5 of the Accounting Ledger of Khwāja Minas with the seals of witnesses and the Catholicos

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