THE RIGHT OF "THE ARMENIAN MERCHANTS"

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Category: Did You Know?

In 1688 an agreement was signed in London between the Armenian merchants of India and the British governor in Calcutta and the East India Company. It affirmed the right of "the Armenian merchants" on sea freight to any port in the Indian Ocean and on any vessel "from now to eternity." But the agreement didn't have much meaning because sea routes were controlled by the pirates. The Armenian merchants were harassed also by the Europeans. The Europeans considered the Armenians Muslims because they came from Muslim Persian and Turkish Empires. Meanwhile, the pirates, who were often Muslim, considered the Armenians Christians so deserving of being robbed and killed. An Armenian merchant by the name of Hovhannes wrote (1685): "God have mercy on our merchants, doing business in complete absence of security."

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