

## THE BRITONIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

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Host Institution: *National Hellenic Research Foundation / Institute of Historical Research*

Foreign Cooperating Institution: *University of Greenwich / Greenwich Maritime Institute*

Research Project's Title: *British and their Ionian Subjects in the Port-Cities and Grain Markets of the Black Sea and the Danube: penetration, settlement, integration (late 18<sup>th</sup> – mid-19<sup>th</sup> centuries)*

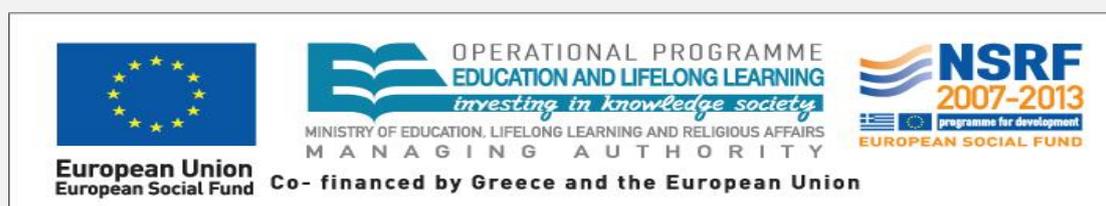
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The research project is implemented within the framework of the Action "Supporting Postdoctoral Researchers» of the Operational Program "Education and Lifelong Learning" (Action's Beneficiary: General Secretariat for Research and Technology), and is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Greek State.

## Research Project: aims

The aim of the Britonian research project is the identification, analysis and presentation of the principal terms and incentives of the maritime and commercial penetration, settlement and integration of the British and their Ionian subjects in the port-cities and grain markets of the Russian Black Sea and the Lower Danube. Our project covers the period from mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century and focuses on the Black Sea's port-cities and grain markets of: (i) Odessa, (ii) Nikolayev, (iii) Taganrog, (iv) Rostov-on-Don, (v) Mariupol, (vi) Galatz, (vii) Braila, and (viii) Sulina.

Our project aims: **a)** to study the general terms of the growing British maritime and commercial interest in the Black Sea bread basket region during the period from mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century; **b)** to probe the autonomous maritime and commercial penetration, presence, as well as settlement and integration of the British subjects of the Ionian semi-colony into the main port-cities of New Russia and the Lower Danube during the above mentioned period; **c)** to examine whether one of the principal reasons for Britain to conquer the Ionian Islands and bring them under her colonial rule, in 1809/1814, was her wish to utilize the emerging and vivid Ionian maritime and commercial networks in an attempt to strengthen her own commercial presence in the Black Sea's granaries. In other words, we shall examine the hypothesis whether Britain's subjects of the Ionian semi-colony served as a vehicle in order to facilitate the imposition of the British colonial, maritime and mercantile rule over the developing port-cities of the Russian Black Sea and Danubian granaries.

## Historical background and importance of the Black Sea breadbasket region

The nineteenth century signaled the comeback of the Black Sea region to the west European foreground after a long period – since the fifteenth century – of being an exclusive 'Ottoman Lake.' The Black Sea managed to integrate gradual into the commercial system of the Atlantic economy and to become the larger grain-exporting area in the world in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The major turning-point for the re-opening of the Black Sea in the late eighteenth century was the

<sup>1</sup> E. Özveren, "The Black Sea World as a Unit of Analysis", in T. Aybak (ed.), *Politics of the Black Sea: The Dynamics of Cooperation and Conflict* (London, 2001). Gelina Harlaftis, and Vassilis Kardasis, 'International shipping in the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea: Istanbul as a maritime centre, 1870-1910,' in Şevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson (eds.), *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization before 1950* (London, 2000), 233-65. For the 'Atlantic economy' see Lewis R. Fisher, and Helge W. Nordvik, 'Maritime Transport and the Integration of the North Atlantic Economy, 1850-1914,' in Wolfram Fischer, R. Marvin McNinn and Jurgen Schneider (eds.), *The Emergence of a World Economy, 1500-1914* (Wiesbaden 1986), 519-44.



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outbreak of the first industrial revolution. The continuous rising of the urban and industrial populations in Western Europe led to a significant increase of the need for foodstuffs, mainly, for cereals. To meet these needs for cereals the European states started focusing their maritime, commercial, and consequently, political interest on the various Black Sea granaries.<sup>2</sup> The European states started orientating, first, towards the prosperous grain growing region and port-cities of Odessa and Nikolayev (during the last quarter of the eighteenth century), and then (during the first half of the nineteenth century) on the developing port-cities and grain markets of the Azov Sea (Taganrog, Rostov-on-Don, Mariupol), and the Lower Danube (Galatz, Braila, Sulina).

### **First aim: British interest, penetration and presence in the Black Sea**

The industrializing Britain conceived the importance of the Black Sea granaries, and aimed at expanding strategically her commercial empire of supply and demand markets in that area. However, the British interest in the Black Sea trade dates back to the early eighteenth century, when the British Levant Company claimed from the Sublime Porte free trade in the Black Sea.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, and despite the requests of the Company, the Ottomans kept the Black Sea a Moslem preserve. For the British this status changed in 1802, when the Porte, due to political reasons, gave the right of free passage to British merchant vessels.<sup>4</sup> As a result, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, British merchants commenced directing their interest towards, first, the Russian Black Sea coast (New Russia) and, then, during the second quarter of the century, towards the Lower Danube River. Britain's interest in the Danubian grain markets was strengthened due not only to her rising needs for cereals but to her need for disengagement from the wheat of her main rival and enemy, Russia.<sup>5</sup>

These developments positioned Black Sea port-cities and their ascendant grain markets as main area of activity of the British merchant fleet, especially after the freeing of wheat imports from duty in 1846 (repeal of Corn Laws). It is noteworthy to mention that by 1860 Britain was importing an annual average of £5.2 million worth

<sup>2</sup> Indicatively stating Robert Woods, 'Population Growth and Economic Change in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' in Peter Mathias and John A. Davis (eds.) *The Nature of Industrialization: The First Industrial Revolutions* (Oxford, 1989), 127-53.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford, 1935), 180-1.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu, 'British Economic Interests in the Lower Danube and the Balkan Shore of the Black Sea between 1803 and 1829,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 5 (Spring 1976), 105-20.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu, 'British Trade in The Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 8 (Winter 1979), 707-41.



of agricultural products from the Black Sea granaries.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in 1861 more than 43% of the Russian grain and more than 14% of the Danubian grain were exported to Britain, mostly by British vessels.<sup>7</sup> However, despite this obvious significance of the Black Sea for Britain, an overview of the literature reveals how little research has been carried to examine systematically the reasons and conditions that led to the gradual British maritime and commercial penetration and presence in the Black Sea regions of New Russia and Danube.<sup>8</sup>

Based on this fact, primary objective of our research project, as already mentioned, is to study the reasons for the British maritime and commercial interest and penetration into the Black Sea granaries, during the period from mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. More specifically, scope of the first part of our research is to: **(i)** present the British shipping across the North and North-west Black Sea after its opening to the British merchant vessels in 1802 and until 1861, few years after the

<sup>6</sup> Richard Peet, 'Influences of the British Market on Agriculture and Related Economic Development in Europe before 1860,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 56 (July 1972), 1-20.

<sup>7</sup> For Russian grain exports to British ports, see Vassilis Kardasis, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea; The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775-1861* (Lanham, MD 2001), 175. For Danubian grain exports to British ports, see Constantin Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării (1829-1914)* (Brăila, 2008), 313.

<sup>8</sup> The most recent books and articles referring to or dealing with the British presence in the Black Sea and the Danubian grain markets and port-cities are the following: **1.** Constantin Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării (1829-1914)* (Brăila, 2008); **2.** Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History* (Oxford, 2004); **3.** Vassilis Kardasis, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea; The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775-1861* (Lanham, MD 2001); **4.** Tim Chapman, *Imperial Russia: 1801-1905* (London, 2001); **5.** Carmel Vassalo, 'The Maltese Merchant Fleet and the Black Sea Grain Trade in the Nineteenth Century,' *International Journal of Maritime History* 13 (December 2001) 19-36; **6.** Aleksandr B. Kamenskii and David Griffiths, *The Russian Empire in the Eighteenth Century: Searching for a Place in the World* (Armonk, 1997); **7.** Gelina Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping. The Making of an International Tramp Fleet, 1830 to the Present Day* (London 1996); **8.** Nikolai Ovcharov, *Ships and Shipping in the Black Sea, XIV-XIX Centuries* (Sofia, 1993); **7.** Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History 1794-1914* (Cambridge, 1986); **9.** Lewis Siegelbaum, 'The Odessa Grain Trade: A Case Study in Urban Growth and Development in Tsarist Russia,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 9 (Spring 1980), 113-51; **10.** Paul Cernovodeanu, 'British Trade in The Danubian Ports of Galatz and Braila between 1837 and 1853,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 8 (Winter 1979), 707-41; **11.** Patricia Herlihy, 'Russian Wheat and the Port of Livorno 1794-1865,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 5 (Spring 1976), 45-68; **12.** Paul Cernovodeanu, 'British Economic Interests in the Lower Danube and the Balkan Shore of the Black Sea between 1803 and 1829,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 5 (Spring 1976), 105-20; **13.** Susan Elisabeth Fairlie, 'Shipping in the Anglo-Russian trade to 1870,' *Maritime History* 2 (September 1971), 158-75; **14.** John Vernon Puryear, *International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East: a study of British commercial policy in the Levant, 1834-1853* (Michigan, 1969); **15.** Susan Fairlie, *The Anglo-Russian Grain Trade, 1815-1861* (London, 1959); **16.** M. L. Harvey, 'The development of Russian commerce on the Black Sea and its Significance,' unpublished PhD thesis (University of California, 1938); **17.** L. Jurowsky, 'Der russische Getreideexport: seine Entwicklung und Organisation,' *Münchener Volkswirtschaftliche Studien* 105 (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1910), 51-87.



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end of the Crimean War (1856); **(ii)** estimate the size of the British mercantile fleet engaged in the Black Sea grain markets; **(iii)** map the sea routes traced by the British; **(iv)** present the prominent ports in the *Anglo-Black Sea* shipping; **(v)** present the principal British merchant houses engaged in the Black Sea grain trade and/or settled in the Black Sea port-cities, and **(vi)** study the role and presence of the Levant Company in the Black Sea grain trade.

## **Second aim: Ionian penetration, settlement and integration in the Black Sea**

The study of the British maritime presence in the Black Sea leads inevitably to a directly related subject: the study of the penetration and settlement in the Black Sea grain markets and port-cities of the subjects of the British semi-colony of the Ionian Islands.<sup>9</sup> As it is already mentioned, the British maritime penetration in the Black Sea granaries dates back to 1802. On the contrary, the maritime and commercial presence of the British subjects of the Ionian Islands in the Black Sea dates back to the 1770s, long before getting under the British imperial rule in 1809/1814.<sup>10</sup> This development was due largely to the sign of the treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji in 1774, signed after the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774. According to the treaty Russia obtained right of free commercial navigation of Turkish waters including the Straits, whereas every ship flying Russian flag, regardless of her nationality, had the right to enjoy freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, as well.<sup>11</sup>

The Ionians, who during the second half of the eighteenth century were emerging as a new and dynamic maritime and commercial power in the central Mediterranean, decided to exploit the advantages of the Russian flag, as defined by the Kuchuk-Kainarji treaty. As a result their shipping and trading interests were gradual orientated towards the developing Black Sea granaries and port-cities. Within a few years' time they managed to take full advantage of the opening of the Black Sea to merchant vessels flying Russian flag. As recent research findings have affirmed hundreds of Ionian shipowners and merchants started trading and settling in the Black Sea ports: first, in the port-cities of Odessa and Nikolayev, then in the emerging ports of the Azov Sea (Taganrog, Mariupol, and Rostov-on-Don), and, finally, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, in the developing port-cities of the Lower

<sup>9</sup> Athanasios Gekas, "The Commercial Bourgeoisie of the Ionian Islands under British Rule, 1815-1864: Class Formation in a Semi-Colonial Society" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Thomas W. Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean* (Notre Dame-Indiana, 2002), Ch.1.

<sup>11</sup> Indicatively stating, Saul Norman, *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1807* (Chicago, 1970), 7-9.



Danube River (Braila, Galatz, and Sulina).<sup>12</sup> Soon, according to the available research findings, the Ionians became one of the most important and vivid maritime and trade diasporas, as well as a dynamic business group, in the coast of New Russia, and later in the port-cities of the Lower Danube. Based on these facts, we do believe that a more thorough study of the Ionian penetration and settlement in the Black Sea area is necessary in order to reveal and understand the eighteenth and nineteenth century's mechanisms of setting up a dynamic commercial and maritime diaspora in the highly competitive environment of the emerging port-cities and grain markets of the Russian Black Sea and the Lower Danube.

Consequently, the objective of the second part of our research project is to probe the autonomous maritime and commercial penetration, presence, as well as settlement and integration of the British subjects of the Ionian semi-colony into the main port-cities of New Russia and the Lower Danube, during the period from mid-eighteenth

<sup>12</sup> The most recent books and articles referring or dealing with the Ionian presence in the Black Sea and the Danubian grain markets and port-cities are the following: **1.** Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, 'Gauging Maritime Trade between the Mediterranean and Northern Europe in the late Eighteenth and the Mid-Nineteenth Centuries, using Electronic Databases,' *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* (forthcoming); **2.** Idem, 'The Ionian Danube, 1815-64: Terms and conditions of the Ionian maritime presence in the Danube River, and how the latter has affected the Ionian shipping business' structures,' in Gelina Harlaftis and Radu Paun (eds.), *Greeks in Romania, 19<sup>th</sup> century*, Historical Archive of Alpha Bank, forthcoming; **3.** Evrydiki Sifneos and Gelina G. Harlaftis and K. Papakonstantinou (eds.), *Η άνοδος της ναυτιλίας των Ελλήνων στη Μεσόγειο Θάλασσα το 18<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα: Electronic Database Amphitrite, 1700-1821* (Athens, 2011 - forthcoming) (in Greek); **4.** Panayiotis S. Kapetanakis, 'The Ionian State in the 'British' Nineteenth Century, 1814-1864: From Adriatic Isolation to Atlantic Integration,' *International Journal of Maritime History* 22 (June 2010), 163-184; **5.** Idem, 'The deep-sea going merchant fleet of the Seven Islands during the time of British conquest and protection and the Cephalonian prominence (1809/15-1864). Fleet and ports, cargoes and sea-routes, maritime centres and seamen, entrepreneurship and networks, society and shipowning elites' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Ionian University, 2010) (in Greek); **6.** Evrydiki Sifneos, *Greek merchants in the Sea of Azov: the power and the limits of a family business* (Athens, 2009) (in Greek); **7.** Vassilis Kardasis, *The Hellenism of the Black Sea* (Athens, 2009); **8.** Constantin Ardeleanu, *Evoluția Intereselor Economice și Politice Britanice la Gurile Dunării (1829-1914)* (Brăila, 2008); **9.** Gelina Harlaftis, "From Diaspora Traders to Shipping Tycoons: The Vagliano Bros.," *Business History Review* 81 (Summer 2007) 237-68; **10.** Athanasios John Mazis, *The Greeks of Odessa* (New York, 2004); **11.** Evrydiki Sifneos, 'Changes in the Russian grain trade and the adaptability of the Greek merchant houses,' *Ta Istorika* 40 (June 2004) 53-96 (in Greek) **12.** Vassilis Kardasis, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea; The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775-1861* (Lanham, MD 2001); **13.** Şevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson (eds.), *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization before 1950* (London, 2000); **14.** Konstantinos K. Papoulidis, *The Greeks of Odessa* (Athens, 1999) (in Greek); **15.** Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou and Helen Louri, "Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks in the Black Sea and Greece, 1870-1917," *The Journal of European Economic History* 26 (Winter 1997) 69-104; **16.** Gelina Harlaftis, 'The role of Greeks in the Black Sea trade, 1830-1900,' in Lewis R. Fischer and Helge W. Nordvik (eds.), *Shipping and Trade, 1750-1950: Essays in International Maritime Economic History* (Pontefract, 1990) 63-95; **17.** Speros Vryonis, Jr (ed), *The Greeks and the Sea* (New York, 1993); **18.** Patricia Herlihy, 'Greek merchants in Odessa in the nineteenth century,' *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3-4 (1979-80) 399-420; **20.** Spyridon G. Focas, *Greeks in River boating on the Lower Danube* (Thessaloniki, 1975).



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to mid-nineteenth century. More specifically, our objectives are to: **(i)** present the Ionian shipping across the Black Sea (and the Danube) after its opening to the Ionian merchant vessels in 1774 and until 1861; **(ii)** estimate the size and type of the Ionian mercantile fleet engaged in the Black Sea grain markets; **(iii)** map the sea routes as well as the main trading ports of the Ionians in the Black Sea region; **(iv)** study the terms of the Ionian *maritime and commercial immigration and settlement* in the main port-cities of the Black Sea and the Danubian granaries; and **(v)** present the principal Ionian merchant houses engaged in the Black Sea grain trade and/or settled in the Black Sea port-cities.

### **Third aim: The Ionian vehicle for the British penetration into the Black Sea**

Given the dynamic presence of the Ionians in the Black Sea, the third aim of our project is to examine whether one of the principal reasons for Britain to bring the Ionians under her colonial rule in 1809/1814, was her wish to utilize their maritime and commercial networks in an attempt to strengthen her own commercial presence in the Black Sea grain markets and port-cities. In other words, we shall examine the hypothesis whether Britain's subjects of the Ionian semi-colony served as a vehicle in order to facilitate the imposition of the British colonial, maritime and mercantile rule over the developing port-cities of the Russian Black Sea and the Danube.

### **Methodology, tools, and archival material**

Our research adopts a quantitative and qualitative approach based on a combination of unpublished archival material from (among others): **(i)** *The National Archives* (United Kingdom), **(ii)** the *NARA (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration)*, **(iii)** *Gosoudarstvennij Archiv Odesskoy Oblasty* (State Archive of Rostov Oblast – Ukraine), **(iv)** *Gosoudarstvennyj Arkhiv Rostovskoi Oblasti* (State Archives of Rostov – Russia), **(v)** *Gosoudarstvennyj Arkhiv Taganrogskoi Oblasti* (State Archives of Taganrog – Russia), **(vi)** *Arhivele Naționale ale României* (National Archives of Romania – Romania), **(vii)** *General State Archives of Greece* (Greece), **(viii)** the *Austrian State Archives (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv)*, and **(ix)** *The National Archives of Malta*, **(x)** the *Gibraltar Archives*.

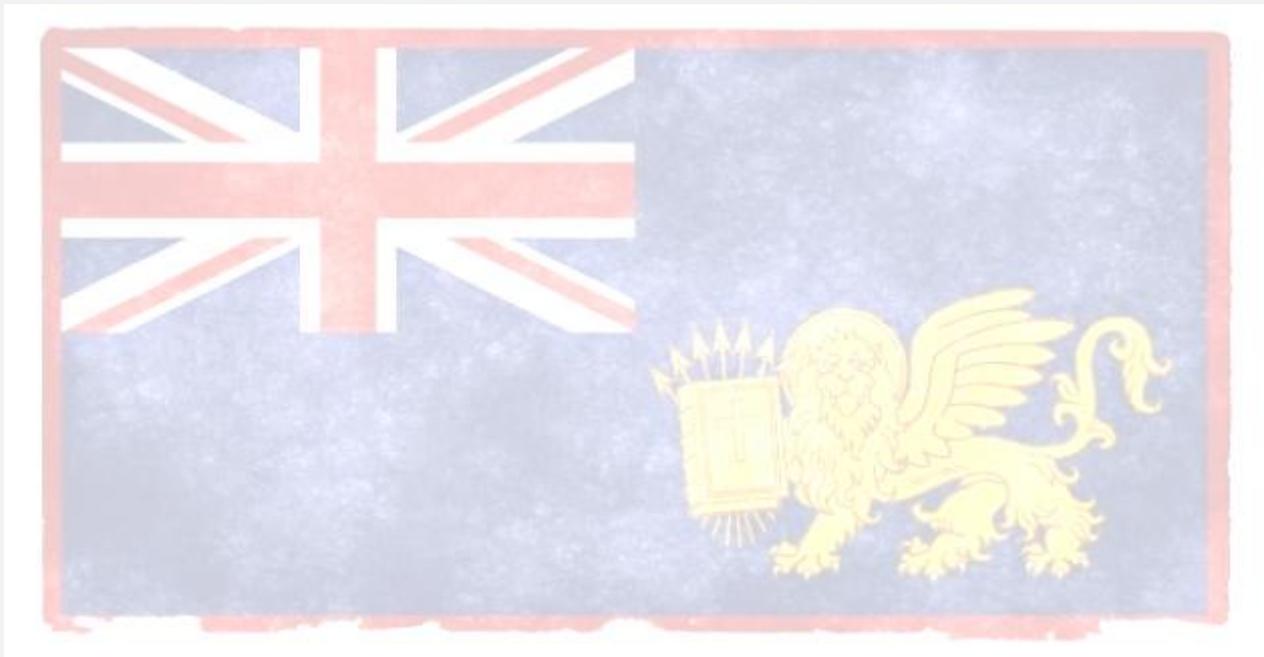
Some of the archival collections and sources on which our project will be based are – indicatively stating: **(i)** *The Register Books of the Levant Company*, **(ii)** *The Lloyd's List*, **(iii)** *The Blue Books of Statistics*, **(iv)** *British Consular Reports*, **(v)** *Sanitá Archives*, **(vi)** *The Governmental Newspaper of the British Protected United States of the Ionian*



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*Islands (Gazzetta Degli Stati Uniti Delle Isole Jonie), (vii) Odessa Port Offices and Customs, (viii) Administration of Novorussia and Bessarabia Governor-General, (ix) Nikolayev Port Office, (x) British Council Reports on the Trade and Commerce of Taganrog, and (xi) contemporary newspapers.*

The collected archival material is being processed through several electronic databases, functioning independently, as well as jointly. Moreover, in order to search for, collect, study, and process the archival material we do consider as important the creation of a research team, in order to complement the work of the postdoctoral researcher. Finally, for a multi-disciplinary view, tools and methodology is drawn from a number of historiographical fields, ranging from financial, business, imperial and colonial history, to diaspora, social history, and economic geography.



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