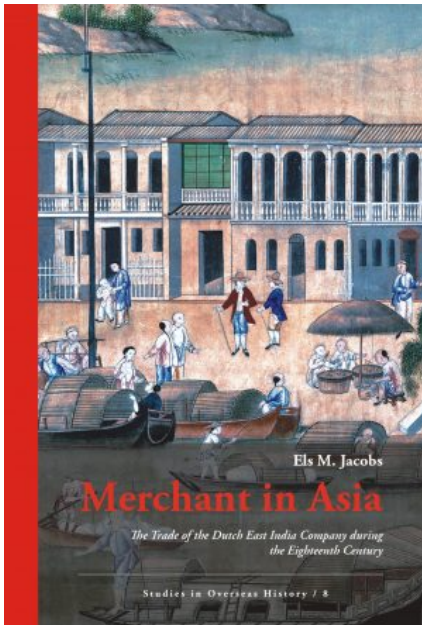


Merchant in Asia: The Trade of the Dutch East India Company during the Eighteenth Century



Author: Els M. Jacobs

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About the Book

For much of its two centuries of existence (1602 to 1799), the VOC, the Dutch East India Company was the largest trading company in the world. Although the VOC was established to operate primarily as a trading company, it soon also came to play a prominent military, diplomatic and political role on the Asian stage and eventually it laid the foundations of the Dutch colonial empire in the Indonesian Archipelago. Merchant in Asia is the first study to pay attention to the full breadth and width of the VOC commercial activities in Asia. It looks at the company from the peak of its fame until its final decline at the end of the eighteenth century. The study focuses on the main trade goods – spices, Indian textiles, Chinese tea and Javanese coffee – and their specific by-products. Els Jacobs has analyzed in detail the VOC trade in fifteen of the most important commodities that together made up 85% of the total turnover. This innovative study is based on extensive research of the VOC archives and many other Dutch sources, as well as a detailed quantitative analysis of the VOC bookkeeping records. In the study the author sketches in vivid detail how the merchants of the VOC sold, bought, and even supervised the production of tropical products and how they dealt with Asian suppliers and consumers. In addition, she looks at the range of problems the merchants encountered in the maritime trade from Yemen and Persia in the West to China and Japan in the East, including India, Ceylon, Malacca, and the Indonesian Archipelago.