

The quest for the Armenian vessel, “QUEDAGH MERCHANT”

The next “AYAS” expedition exploring Armenian maritime history, trade and piracy.

- The Armenian merchant ship Quedagh Merchant was taken off the Indian Coast by Captain William Kidd, the notorious privateer/pirate, in 1698, and sailed to the Caribbean.
- Full of treasure from the Indies, the Quedagh Merchant was finally scuttled off an unknown island, but not before Kidd had sold some of the treasure on the spot and presumably buried the rest.
- In December 2007, the AYAS Nautical Research Club will undertake a Caribbean expedition in search of the wreck of the Quedagh Merchant
- The expedition will explore the Caribbean in the vessel ‘Anahit’, a 46 foot ketch, sailing under the Armenian flag.
- The search will start from the Bahamas and cover Cuba, Tortuga, Dominican Republic, Mona Island (an uninhabited island where Kidd is known to have sailed in the Quedagh Merchant), Puerto Rico, Anguilla, Guadeloupe and Dominica as well as various other exotic locations.
- Unique opportunity to be associated with both a 17th century adventure story and an important slice of Armenian mercantile and maritime history.



"Quedagh Merchant" (ship)

...Kidd took his most valuable prize, the Armenian ship *Quedagh Merchant*, in January 1698 and scuttled his own unseaworthy *Adventure Galley*. When he reached Anguilla, in the West Indies (April 1699), he learned that he had been denounced as a pirate. He left the *Quedagh Merchant* at the island of Hispaniola (where the ship was possibly scuttled)...

Encyclopædia Britannica

Armenians in India & Bengal

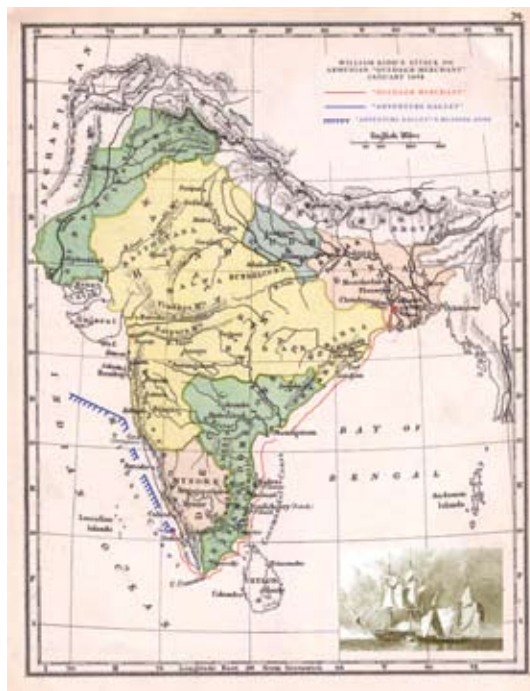
Geographically, Armenia was situated on the crossroad of trade routes from East to West and West to East. Thus, relations between Armenia and India exist for ages and it has been a long time since Armenians settled colonies in India and Bengal. As Armenians in India were very famous traders, the East India Company took partners among the Armenian merchants.

In 1698 Armenians in Bengal leased a ship to the Indian government, the *Quedagh Merchant*, in order to transport their biggest treasure, but Captain William Kidd captured the vessel in the waters south of India.

Captain William Kidd

Captain William Kidd was born in Greenock, Scotland in 1645. He is best remembered for his trial and execution for piracy after returning from a voyage to the Indian Ocean. A number of modern historians consider his piratical reputation unfounded; there is evidence that Kidd only acted as a privateer. His notoriety rests largely on the sensational circumstances of his interrogation before the English Parliament and ensuing trial.

Kidd started out as a privateer, and it was only after a series of unfortunate events that he became a wanted pirate. On January 30, 1698, he raised French colors and took his greatest prize, an Armenian ship, the 400 ton *Quedagh Merchant*, which was loaded with satins, muslins, gold, silver, an incredible variety of East Indian merchandise, as well as extremely valuable silks. With the loyal remnant of his crew, he sailed to the Caribbean aboard the ship, now renamed the *Adventure Prize*. However, as a denounced pirate, there was nowhere for him to hide, so he is assumed to have buried much of his treasure in the Caribbean, scuttled the *Quedagh Merchant* and left for New York, where he had friends and investors. However, one of them, the Earl of Bellomont, an inves-



tor, lured Kidd into Boston with false promises of clemency, then ordered him arrested on July 6, 1699. Kidd was placed in Stone Prison, spending most of the time in solitary confinement. His wife, Sarah, was also imprisoned. The conditions of Kidd's imprisonment were extremely harsh, and appear to have driven him at least temporarily insane. He was moved to London, tried without representation and was shocked to learn only at the trial that he was charged with murder. He was found guilty of all charges (murder and five counts of piracy) and was hanged on May 23, 1701, at 'Execution Dock', Wapping, in London.



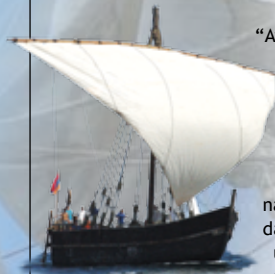
Carribean expedition of AYAS Nautical Research Club



The aim of AYAS' Carribean expedition 2007/08 is to try to find out what eventually happened to the Armenian ship Quedagh Merchant captured by Captain Kidd, the wreck of which is thought to lie undiscovered somewhere in the Carribean. We shall explore the Carribean with the vessel "Anahit", a 46 feet ketch, sailing under the Armenian flag. The vessel was named after the Armenian pagan goddess Anahit. The expedition starts in Chesapeake Bay, Annapolis, USA. We will sail to the Carribean at approximately the beginning of December 2007 and center our researches on the Bahamas, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Tortuga, Mona Island, the BVI, Anguilla, Anegada, Martinique, Guadeloupe and Dominica.

This search shall hopefully enable us to find, identify and possibly excavate the remains of the Quedagh Merchant.





“AYAS” Nautical Research Club was founded in 1985. The range of its activities is quite wide, including historical aspects of World and Armenian navigation and shipbuilding, reconstruction of ancient Armenian vessels, study of sea routes, old maps, navigation devices, banners, collecting data on Armenian navigators, making underwater archaeological surveys and research.

Since 1985 the Club has organized 15 exhibitions and has carried out several surveys on Armenian navigation. 26 different types of vessels (rafts, leather boats, log-boats, boats and ships) used in historical Armenia, were restored and reconstructed.

Members of the Club permanently participate in international conferences on underwater archaeology and nautical history and have published a number of articles. The Club has established connections with similar organizations worldwide and is the member of International Society for Nautical Research, International Commission of Maritime History, International Foundation of Disabled Sailing, Armenian Geographic Society.

“AYAS” Nautical Research Club has built a replica of 13 century merchant sailing ship of Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. She has sailed by medieval trade sea routes around the Europe, via Black, Mediterranean Seas, the Atlantic Ocean, North and Baltic Seas, rivers of Russia and again Black Sea.

This is the first time in the history of navigation, that a vessel has closed a full ring around Europe.

The ship was reconstructed in strict accordance with the information found in medieval manuscripts and miniatures, using the techniques and technologies available in the 13-th century.

The travel was equipped with all accessories typical of 13 century (navigation tools, merchandise goods, meals, clothes, etc.) replicating the methods of navigation and the lifestyle of medieval sailors. The main goal of the experiment was to feel and to check how our ancestors had sailed and operated with such vessels.

Common responsibility to safeguard historical and cultural heritage was our objective. The Expedition highlighted the significant role of travelers and merchants in establishing connections between cultures and civilizations separated by seas, and the Ship as the Symbol and means of unification.

For more information you can visit the following Website: www.cilicia.de

Route of Expedition on sailing ship “Cilicia”



