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Blood Libel

The Damascus Affair of 1840

by

RONALD FLORENCE

In **BLOOD LIBEL: THE DAMASCUS AFFAIR OF 1840**, historian Ronald Florence recreates a critical turning point in the history of the Middle East, of anti-Semitism, and of Great Power diplomacy. This carefully researched tale is strong on overarching political issues, and just as strong on suspense.



The setting for the story is mid-19th century Damascus, a trade center hosting a rich mix of ethnicities and religions. In February of 1840, a Capuchin monk and his servant disappear from the city, and the authorities assume foul play. Within weeks, the Pasha and the French consul, who is prosecuting the murder, have manipulated and tortured their way to outrageous convictions, and practically every prominent member of the local Jewish community has been

sentenced to death on charges not only of murder, but of ritual murder to obtain Christian blood for unholy uses. Liberal France and the august London *Times* cry for the heads of the Jews, and only the backroom diplomacy of Britain, Austria, and the international Jewish community—which rallies together for the first time since the Diaspora—will prevent most of the scheduled executions.



BLOOD LIBEL was originally published in 2004 by the University of Wisconsin Press, but was not properly distributed or marketed at the time. Ronald Florence is author of eight books, including *The Gypsy Man* and *The Perfect Machine*. He lives in Providence, Rhode Island.

“This is great material, and Florence...handles it with dramatic flair....An excellent work of popular history.”

— *Publishers Weekly*