

Building on the best of Chapter Four, Chapter Five was, in my view, the most engaging of all the chapters in this book. “Confronting the Power Structures: Marronage and Black Women’s Fugivity” did a good job of explaining Fugivity in the context of those living outside of existing power structures and the varied responses women had to that power over what was often a sustained period of time. I found the analysis of the Great Dismal Swamp region of Virginia and North Carolina to be particularly compelling and well written. The chapter was let down somewhat by some poor scholarly engagement, which detracted from what was otherwise an effective, well-balanced analysis. As with Chapter Four, though, I was a little confused by the timescale of this chapter. Judging by the sources used, the chapter spanned a huge period from the early eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Marronage changed considerably in this time, which needed to be factored more effectively into the analysis. Again, the problem of space emerged. The book is just too short for what it is trying to do.

In sum, *Running from Bondage* is a well-written monograph that brings together much of the scholarship on fugitive women’s lives in the North American context in this period. The book fills a much-needed gap in the scholarship by looking at fugitive women’s lives overall. An oddly neglected topic (although, as Cook demonstrates, smaller, localized studies have been undertaken). Students will find the book helpful in understanding broadly the idea of fugitive women’s lives. I felt the book was not well organised, however, and lacked thematic drive, especially in Chapters One, Two, and Three. The book was arranged in a fashion that concealed as much as it seemingly simplified, and it needed a better engagement with the scholarship within the text itself. Above all, this short book was just too brief to adequately cover such a complex subject. In short, the book tries to do too much and fit too much into a too narrow word count.

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GOOD, PETER. *The East India Company in Persia. Trade and Cultural Relations in the Eighteenth Century*. I.B. Tauris, London [etc.] 2022. xvii, 199 pp. Ill. Maps. £85.00. (Paper: £28.99; E-book: £26.50.)

In *The East India Company in Persia. Trade and Cultural Relations in the Eighteenth Century*, Peter Good of the University of Kent tells the story of the Company in Persia at a time when Persia was in great turmoil. Helpfully for the non-Iran specialist, Graves describes how 1700 to 1747 “saw the collapse of the 200-year rule of the Safavid Dynasty, the chaotic rise and fall of the Afghans and then the puppet rule of Tahmasp II and Abbas III, leading to Nader Shah’s reign” of extraordinary cruelty. While historians focused on the Company in India may describe the period 1710 to 1740 as “a glassy wave of unruffled tideway [which] invites no frantic recourse to the

records” (in the words of John Keay), that was by no means the case in Persia, as Good details. His gripping prologue – based on detailed letters from Danvers Graves to his employers in the port city of Bandar Abbas – tells the story of Graves’ brave 1747 efforts to protect the Company’s staff in Kerman, when Nader Shah led a vicious slaughter of the city’s population, and then Graves’ death in 1751, only to be ignored by his siblings and therefore history, at least if Wikipedia is any guide.

This raises the question of how the Company survived as well as it did in Persia. In particular, the Company enjoyed many privileges embodied in the 1622 *farman* (order) by Shah Abbas I, which appears to have lasted through the 1740s, contrary to the usual practice of a *farman* ending with the death of the Shah who issued it. (The record is not entirely clear about the fate of the *farman* during the rule of some shahs, but then the characteristics of the *farman* clearly resurface during later shahs’ rule, strongly suggesting the *farman* was observed in practice no matter what the legal niceties.) In his nuanced account of the mutual advantages that the Shahs and the Company drew from their relationship, Good provides much information about the military power the Company brought to bear. His chapter “A Navy for Hire” explains the substantial benefit the Iranian side drew from the Company’s naval activities. He carefully understates the reasons to think, in his words, “the Company’s provision of naval support were an important feature of the preservation of the Company’s *Farman*”. He describes the “game of cat and mouse” between the Company and the Persian officials in which the Company benefited by “trading and negotiating on the desirable asset of their powerful and threatening naval forces”.

To this reader, the most interesting part of *The East India Company in Persia* was the opening chapter about life in the company’s Persian factory. Good offers vivid descriptions of many aspects of daily life for the Company’s officials. He makes full use of the East India Company Factory Records, which he explains have been underutilized by scholars who focused on the Company’s archive “Correspondence with the East”. He explains that the records “include not only their [the Company’s men] commercial transactions but also the process by which their wills were executed and their estates disbursed, their marriages, liaisons, and disagreements”. Good describes how the factory was “a small community, composed of a variety of different ethnicities including Hindu and Muslim Indians, Eurasians, Persians, Arabs, Armenians and Englishmen”. Since nearly all of those were men, that presents a challenge to discussing the role of women and of men–women relationships. Good does well so far as evidence permits, with anecdotes about offspring from Company employees marrying locals – and one account of an obvious homosexual relationship between a Company official and a local, to the outrage of both the Company and locals.

Good gives the reader a sense of “the colossal scale of India’s economic gravity” compared to Persia. At least until recently, the image of India was of a populous but extremely poor country, dramatically less advanced – economically if not socially – than Europe. It can be difficult to put oneself into the realities of the eighteenth century, when India was at least as mighty, in many respects, as many a European country – arguably, as mighty as all of Europe combined. *The East India Company in Persia* would have benefited from some numbers to illustrate India’s “colossal

scale”, especially for Western readers who may not realize just what an economic superpower India was at the time. Next to the vast market and riches of the subcontinent, Persia was a sideshow – and the rest of the Gulf, now so prosperous, was inconsequential.

Though the subject of one of his five chapters, Good’s account of the Company’s commercial activities are not the center of his account. He has little quantitative information on the trade and the associated considerable difficulties in exporting items the Persian authorities considered sensitive, especially bullion. Good refers to the factory records as providing “copious data on the commodities, prices, weights, and measures traded and used in Persia”. Perhaps it is the bias of this reviewer’s economic training, but some additional citations of that “copious data” would have enriched Good’s account. That said, he paints a clear picture of the main aspects of those commercial activities. The Company was required by its 1693 charter to export £100,000 of English goods annually. As Good writes: “The Company’s interests in Persia sprang directly from its inability to sell its major European export, woollen cloth, in India.” Ironically, wool was also one of the main items the Company exported from Iran, along with wine – so much for Muslim strictures against alcohol. Another important issue for understanding how the Company operated was the Company policy, which allowed its agents to trade on their own behalf. Good writes that this private trade was the principal source of wealth for Company officials – an insight that could have been brought more fully to life with some numbers, no matter how tentative or scattered, on how much Company agents were paid and how much they made from the trade.

The side remarks Good makes comparing Persia – and India – to Europe bring life to the story. They provide a fuller understanding of how, compared to the present day, Europe was at the time remarkably backward. Life in Persia was difficult but life in Europe of the day was no treat. As Good writes, “[c]ommunication by land in Persia would appear to have been comparable, if not preferable, with contemporary Europ[e]”. It is tempting to read back into the eighteenth century major British road networks, which appear only at the end of that century; until then, “travel before this appearing, if anything, considerably slower than in Persia, not to mention more expensive”. Much the same could be said about many other conditions about which the Europeans complain, e.g. the unhealthy water or the quick deaths at an early age from diseases. Eighteenth-century Europe was by no means more advanced than Persia in so many aspects where Europe pulled decisively ahead in the subsequent century.

Good writes: “Sadly, access to Iranian scholarship on this subject is incredibly restricted to Western scholars.” Hopefully that will change; in the last few decades, Iranian historians have done much detailed and excellent work on more recent periods, to the point that any account about events in the last two hundred years that does not make fulsome use of their work is badly out of date. Good refers to the merit of “combining Company sources with local ones”, yet his footnotes and bibliography refer to less than a handful of sources in the Persian language. A useful complement to his account would have been to quote some of the many sources he describes but does not cite. For instance, he writes regarding the Company’s role in the Battle of Hormuz, “the memoirs of state officials document this in some detail, and also the Persian court chronicles make tacit reference to the Company’s

contribution”. Such a judgment cries out for at least a footnote, though some quotes would have been even better.

Good correctly notes the many reasons for few Iranian sources about the period. As he writes, “[t]he cities in which the Company did the majority of its business were sacked or burned by a series of invaders” – an insight that could have been buttressed by the information about how those invaders burned archives and official records. Even had they not, an additional problem was what Good calls the “disinterest of Persian chroniclers and authors in the activities of the Europeans”, which led them to ignore the Europeans’ role in major events. He deplures, “[t]he chronicles and memoirs as well as other contemporary records do not recognize the significant military relevance the Company projected”. That statement – which certainly appears to be the case – would be easier to understand and accept if Good had referred to and listed in his bibliography such Persian-language “chronicles and memoirs as well as other contemporary records” rather than the small number of such works which have been translated into English.

On a lesser note, an important source of information about Iran at the time are the records of the Dutch United East India Company (the *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, or VOC), which was the other European company most active in Iran at the time he is describing. While Good makes considerable use of secondary sources in English about the VOC – including by this reviewer’s co-authors Willem Floor and Rudi Matthee – he has no references to its records or books in Dutch.

The index, footnotes, and bibliography of English-language secondary sources are superb. At least as important, the writing is clear and well organized. *The East India Company in Persia* is a delight to read for anyone interested in eighteenth-century Europeans interactions with non-Europeans, whether or not the reader is particularly interested in either Persia or the East India Company.

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Global Commerce and Economic Conscience in Europe, 1700–1900. Distance and Entanglement. Ed. by Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft. [Studies of the German Historical Institute London.] Oxford University Press, Oxford 2022. viii, 298 pp. £ 75.00; \$ 100.00.

Global commerce links producers to consumers across long distances. This distance is primarily geographical, but geographical distance has an impact on information, emotional relationships, and projections. Consumers may or may not be aware of the conditions under which the goods they purchase are produced, and they may or may not care. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries offer paradoxical insights into the relationship between global commerce and morality. On the one hand, as the editors of this volume succinctly put it, the period witnessed “human exploitation on