

Primary Sources, Archival Notes

Editorial Note

As of this issue *Iranian Studies* adds a new section dedicated to occasional contributions in the form of notes on primary source material and archival reports. These notes that can be shorter than the average article in the Journal, are intended to introduce to scholarly community hitherto little known or altogether new material relevant to different aspects of Iranian studies. The material will be buttressed by a scholarly infrastructure in order to contextualize their subject matter. In the following inaugural essays two eighteenth century documents are presented. Each demonstrates a broad range of exchange and communication between Iran, the Indian Ocean, and Southeast Asia in the eighteenth century.

Arash Khazeni, in “Merchants to the Golden City: The Persian *Farmān* of King Chandrawizaya Rājā and the Elephant and Ivory Trade in the Indian Ocean, a View from 1728,” provides translation and analysis of a Persian *farmān*, from the court of King Chandrawizaya Rājā in the Arakanese Kingdom of Mrauk U (fifteenth to eighteenth centuries) in Southeast Asia, kept in the Sloane collection at the British Library. This document offers a valuable insight into trans-regional trade (particularly in elephant and ivory) and contact between the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean to Southeast Asia in the eighteenth century and also shows the use of Persian in commercial as well as in diplomatic communication.

Thibaut d’Hubert, in “A Persian account on the religious customs of the Magh (i.e. Arakanese) from early colonial Bengal,” introduces certain religious customs of the Arakanese during the late eighteenth century, based on firsthand observations made in the region of Chittagong, in southeastern Bengal. The document was commissioned by John Murray-MacGregor, a Scottish officer of the British East India Company, who had a long station in Bengal and possessed one of the largest private collections of Persian manuscripts, as well as some Sanskrit-Persian texts, and Pali and Arakanese manuscripts that he had collected in eastern Bengal.

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