

Reports of disputes and transgressions yield evidence of household dynamics, of where people were and what they were doing when a disruptive event occurred.

Eschewing art historical connoisseurship focused on fine objects, or archaeological fixation on fragments, the discussion here addresses themes of privacy, piety, status, comfort, labor, identity, and gendered experience. Change over time appears to have been more subtle than abrupt, with increased use of private sleeping places, the gradual broadening and proliferation of stairs, and greater diversification of goods. The judicious use of court records, and citation of other scholars' work, adds authority to the exposition. The authors are widely read in primary and secondary sources, and well served by their publisher in what could be a coffee-table book.

The concentration on domestic interiors risks an element of claustrophobia. Early modern days were spent outdoors as well as in the home, but exits from the house are barely acknowledged. This book provides a model for similar treatment of time spent in the street, in the alehouse, in the courthouse, at the market, and in church. The spatial turn in Renaissance studies is moving in the right direction.

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A Business of State: Commerce, Politics, and the Birth of the East India Company.
Rupali Mishra.

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A Business of State should come to serve as the new definitive political history of the East India Company's first thirty years. Mishra meticulously lays out the organizational structure of the company's system of governance in the first part of the book and shows that system in action in the second part. She divides the political apparatus of the company into five components, each granted its own chapter: the patent, the company courts, clientelistic networks of influence, internal political rivalries, and attempts to influence public opinion, or what might now be considered the public-relations side of the company.

There is a tremendous richness of detail laid out in these chapters. At their best, they give a multifaceted account of the lived experiences that created and were created by the institutional structures of the company and its relationship to the early modern state. At worst, they devolve into summary—as in the blow-by-blow synopsis of the public debate between Robert Kayll, Dudley Digges, and two (I assume) anonymous authors, Tobias Gentlemen and E. S. On the one hand, Mishra offers an enlightening account of the company deliberations that arose around these works and the prospect of publishing replies to criticism of the company. On the other hand, the detail accorded to these

somewhat pedantic and unsophisticated texts is a little mind-numbing. Sadly, the more enlivening and innovative conversation between Thomas Mun, Edward Misselden, and Gerard de Malynes is quickly passed over. We get very little on Mun's influential *Discourse of Trade*, Malynes is not mentioned at all, and Misselden's work is interpreted solely through the lens of the political aspects of his arguments.

There is a method behind this pattern of emphasis. Mishra frames this debate in terms of issues of governance: how much control should be concentrated within the company and within the trade itself? The issue of control extended, as Mishra points out, to when and where company issues could be discussed, since tight control of information was part of the informal system of governance within the company. The Mun, Malynes, and Misselden debate was much more centered on issues of commerce, species flow, prices, and the workings of markets. It would be hard to discuss this debate without bringing in the trade depression of the 1620s and prevailing bullionist dogma. These are all important, but they are monetary—and, thus, incidental to Mishra's politically driven analysis.

Similarly, the events that Mishra describes and analyzes in the second part of the book are political in nature. Indeed, out of the five remaining chapters, two are devoted to the Amboyna Massacre. Chapter 7 is titled “‘What His Men Have Done Abroad’: Martial Engagements and the Company.” This is a slight misnomer, since chapters 7, 8, and 9 all cover martial engagements, and chapters 6 and 10 stray from the topic only so much as to provide an important bird's-eye view of the aspects of state-company relations that were affected by these violent overseas encounters. What is missing from these accounts is coverage of the trade itself, the flow of goods, the depressions and recessions, the introduction of new commodities—the system of overseas trade as it was managed outside of the confines of London. As Mishra notes, not all topics can be covered in any one book, and this book clearly wasn't intended to cover commerce. But my request would be, then, to drop the word from the title.

Ultimately, I do have reservations about such an exclusively political approach. I cannot help but wonder, for example, how Mishra believes that the trade depression of the 1620s affected company state relations. Or how changing principal-agent relations overseas impacted interpretations of just governance within the company—and in state and merchant circles more generally. None of my reservations, however, diminish the extremely valuable contribution Mishra has made here. Students of the companies and, even more specifically, students of the early modern Stuart state will find much of great value.

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