The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austen's London, Nile Green, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016, ISBN 978-0-6911-6832-6 (hbk), xvi + 416 pp.

Nile Green's book is "a microhistory" that depicts "the contours and contexts" of English society and culture between 1815 and 1819 as six Muslim Iranian students experienced it (p. 319). Based on the Persian-language travelogue of Mirzā Sāleh Shirāzi—which Green has previously written about in scholarly articles[1]—archival resources, contemporary English-language print media, and the correspondence of eminent Orientalists, Green not only offers an in-depth analysis of the Iranian students' education and experience in England, but also constructs an interesting picture of the English social circles that interacted with "the first group of Muslims to ever study in western Europe" (p. 2). Mirzā Sāleh and four other students traveled to England with Captain Joseph D'Arcy (1780–1848) of the Royal Artillery in 1815. In 1811, ʿAbbās Mirzā had sent two students to England to learn new sciences, one of whom passed away before the second group arrived in England (p. 7).

The first chapter focuses on the Iranian students' first three years in England and how they learned about nineteenth-century English life and education. During their first weeks in London, the students met some of the prominent English diplomats who had served and studied in Iran. They met James Morier (1782–1849), who was secretary of the Embassy of Sir Gore Ouseley to Iran, and later the English chargé d'affaires in Iran. They also met Sir Gore Ouseley (1770–1844) and Sir John Malcolm (1769–1833); the latter had recently published his *History of Persia* in 1815. Mirzā Sāleh, who was sent to England to learn modern languages, met Francis Belfour, a recent graduate of Magdalen Hall at Oxford. Mirzā Sāleh arranged to practice English with Belfour in return for Belfour practicing Persian with him (p. 34). After a few months in London he encountered financial difficulties, which neither Mr. D'Arcy nor ʿAbbās Mirzā could solve. Despite Mr. D'Arcy's protests (p. 40), Mirzā Sāleh made the decision to move to Croydon, where the East India Company had recently founded a new college. Since the East India Company planned to reduce the influence of the Persianate Indian scribes in the subcontinent, its college was offering Persian to its British officers and hiring native Persian speakers (p. 41). By this time, the Iranian students were beginning to run out of funds and D'Arcy was paying out of his pocket for their expenses.

D'Arcy sent requests to the Foreign Office to help the students; however, no financial help was offered (p. 46). In Croydon, the students found John Shakespear (1774–1858), a professor of Oriental literature at Addiscombe's East India College, to teach them English (p. 47). Since professor Shakespear charged the students quite high fees and they were in economic straits, after a few months they sought other tutors. The next major teacher of the Iranian students was the Reverend John Bisset (1785–1852),

[1]Green, "Paper Modernity?"; Green, "Persian Print and the Stanhope Revolution"; Green, "The Madrasas of Oxford"; Green, "Journeymen, Middlemen."

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2020.1717294 Published online by Cambridge University Press

who helped them with English grammar, history, and Latin (p. 59). By July 1816, the students had spent eleven months in Croydon and the £1,200 given to D'Arcy by ʿAbbās Mirzā for their educational and living expenses was entirely spent (p. 60). The students lost patience with D'Arcy and expected him to provide further funds. After months of sending letters of complaint to him, they decided to send a letter to the foreign secretary, Lord Castlereagh (1769–1822), who responded favorably. In the view of Green, the main reason for the sudden attention of Lord Castlereagh to the students' plight was Sir Gore Ouseley's attempts to convince the Foreign Office that the students' education and presence in England were important matters of policy.

The Foreign Office assigned £300 for the education and lodging of each Iranian student in 1817 (p. 61). Each student was assigned to learn their intended new sciences. Mirzā Jaʿfar and Mirzā Riza were placed in the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich (p. 62), and the other Mirzā Jaʿfar was assigned to study modern medicine with Dr. John Shaw (1792–1827), the era's leading scientist on the nervous system (p. 67). Although all other students were able to continue their education, Mirzā Sāleh was unable to resume his education as he wished. Therefore, on 16 June 1818, he met with D'Arcy in London to impart his frustration to the Englishman. His English friends were negotiating to see if they could place Mirzā Sāleh in one of the Oxford colleges (p. 74). Since it was summer, and the colleges opened in autumn, Mirzā Sāleh busied himself with learning about the English and wrote in his travelogue a lengthy history of England beginning from the Roman conquest of Julius Caesar in 55 BC to the 1810s (p. 74). In Green's view, because Mirzā Sāleh's history highlights the struggle for constitutionalism and progress toward liberty, his source must have been Hume's six volume *History of England* (1754–61) (p. 75). In that summer, Mirzā Sāleh also focused on reading and note taking, as well as studying French and Latin. He was hoping that by autumn he would be able to enroll in one of the Oxford colleges (p. 82).

The second chapter looks at Mirzā Jaʿfar and Mirzā Sāleh's failed attempt to matriculate in the varsity. Mirzā Sāleh's diary does not offer us any insights as to why he could not enroll in one of the colleges of the famous English *madrasa*. However, Green's research shows that because matriculation in Oxford was contingent upon swearing allegiance to "the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England; to the King; and, depending on the college, to other pillars of Anglican establishment" (p. 83), and because the students were practicing Muslims loyal to the king of Iran, they could not enroll at Oxford. Another reason for their inability to enroll was the relative inattention of Oxford to Oriental learning compared to the East India Company's college in Croydon (p. 98). In Oxford, the students were introduced to the Reverend John Hill (1786–1855), a leading evangelical, and to Dr. John David Macbride (1778–1868), the Lord Almoner's Reader in Arabic at the University of Oxford (p. 105). Through these connections, the students attended a degree ceremony (p. 94), visited Oxford's Bodleian and Radcliffe libraries, where the number of books and manuscripts amazed them (p. 109), and toured the botanic garden of Oxford, where they were struck by the greenhouses and the large number of species gathered

there (p. 120). One of their most significant experiences was their travel to the city of Hampton Gay, where they visited the paper mill of Charles Venables, and Mirzā Sāleh "learned about methods of producing paper suitable for printed books and not only for the handwritten manuscripts that were still being produced in Iran" (p. 123). Seeing a fast paper-producing Fourdrinier machine inspired Mirzā Sāleh to take one back to Iran (p. 126).

In the third chapter, Green examines Mirzā Sāleh and Mirzā Jaʿfar's tour of the West Country in England. Among the cities they visited was Bath, where Jane Austin had set two of her famous novels, *Northanger Abbey* (1817) and *Persuasion* (1818) (p. 134). In Bath, they had dinner with the eminent literary patron, Mrs. Hester Piozzi (1741–1821), who hosted the likes of Samuel Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith (p. 136). Green follows the students as they were introduced to the Quakers around Stroud and the Methodists in Gloucester. Interestingly, in Bristol, they met Hannah More (1745–1833), a contemporary celebrity who was famed for her didactic novels (p. 145). Ms. More gave Mirzā Sāleh a copy of her well-known *Practical Piety* (1811) and hoped that Mirzā Sāleh would translate it into Persian (p. 149). In Bristol, Mirzā Sāleh and Mirzā Jaʿfar met with two famous Unitarian ministers, John Rowe (1764–1832) and the Reverend Dr. Lant Carpenter (1780–1840), through whom they came to learn about Unitarianism (pp. 160–1). After meeting the Unitarians and realizing that, unlike the Anglicans, they had no intention of converting Muslims to their religion, the students became interested in Freemasonry in England. Green observes that their meetings and conversations with the Freemasons made the students the pioneers of a trend that would reach their country in 1858, when the first Freemason lodge was opened in Iran (p. 175).

In the fourth chapter, Green recounts Mirzā Sāleh's travel to Cambridge and his collaboration with the varsity's leading scholar of Islamic languages, Professor Samuel Lee (1783–1852). During this visit, Mirzā Sāleh and Mirzā Jaʿfar became closely involved with the Evangelicals because in this period Cambridge was following Oxford in becoming an evangelical outpost (p. 185). Green maintains that the two students might have become involved with Dr. Lee's translation projects that aimed to bring the Bible in its entirety to Persian and Arabic-language readers (p. 190). When it was proposed that Dr. Lee be promoted to an MA by Royal Decree, the students were contacted for a recommendation letter, in which they commended Dr. Lee for his command of Arabic and Persian (p. 198). As such, the Iranians' testimonial was crucial to the rise of an Evangelical to the highest echelons of England's scholarly establishment (p. 199).

After his return to London, Mirzā Sāleh, who had realized "the interdependence of knowledge and technology" (p. 202), was introduced to a famous printer, Joseph Butterworth (1770–1826), who worked for the British and Foreign Bible Society—the world's leading publisher, which worked "on a scale that rendered insignificant even the print-runs of Jane Austen's best-selling novels" (p. 206). As the Bible Society was engaged with printing in Persian and Arabic, Mirzā Sāleh was at the right place at the right time (p. 207). Mirzā Sāleh was apprenticed to Richard Watts (d. 1844), an evangelical printer and type-founder (p. 211). He went to Watt's workshop

every day for six months and learned about modern printing. Green suggests that Mirzā Sāleh might have helped Watts with printing in Arabic, Persian, and Hindustani, all languages that the Iranian student knew (p. 215).

The fifth chapter examines the various connections the Iranian students cultivated as well as their romances and modes of entertainment in England. Due to his command of different European languages, Mirzā Sāleh started to develop diplomatic aspirations after his return to London (p. 232). He realized that in order to prepare as a diplomat, he had to learn about the social and cultural customs of the English (p. 238). In November 1818, Mirzā Sāleh and Mirzā Jaʿfar were allowed to visit the coffin of the queen consort of King George III at Windsor Castle. They were also invited to attend the royal funeral (p. 252). To understand the English customs and not to criticize or renounce them, Mirzā Sāleh made ethnographic accounts of the English in his travelogue during this period. Consequently, he turned his travelogue into a handbook "for understanding the other Europeans with whom his Muslim countrymen were coming into contact" (p. 241). Although Mirzā Sāleh's travelogue does not address the experience of the master craftsman Mohammad ʿAli, Green constructs an account of the Iranian craftsman in London based on the archival resources and contemporary print media. Working with a proletarian and radical English master, Mohammad ʿAli was exposed to ideas such as egalitarianism and introduced to the radical London Correspondence Society (p. 264).

In the sixth chapter, Green writes about the students' last months in England and their experiences. He gives an account of their mode of acquiring European technology and equipment, among them "mathematical and surgical instruments, and tools and medicine" (p. 276). Moreover, he writes about the marriage of Muhammad Ali and Mary Dudley, who travelled to Iran with her husband (pp. 296–7).

In his concluding chapter, titled "Afterlives," Green looks at the political career of the Iranian students back home. They received official positions in the Qajar administration. The most noteworthy case was that of Mirzā Sāleh, who not only imported a printing press and set up a printing shop in Iran, but also published the first Persian-language newspaper in the country. The rest of the students also held high positions as administrators, ambassadors, or advisors to the Crown Prince, and taught Iranians the sciences of medicine, engineering, surveying, map making, and gun making. Green observes that the Iranian students not only helped to set in motion certain changes in Iran based on their education in England, but also "contributed to the transformation of England," for they arrived in London at a time that the city was benefitting from the presence of foreigners (p. 316). Arguing against the stereotypical representations of the other by Europeans and Middle Easterners alike, Green notes, "Mirzā Sāleh and his companions did not see reason, science, or liberty as uniquely English values, still less as being in conflict with their Muslim faith" (p. 317) because to them there was no demarcation between Western and Islamic values.

Currently, we know of around 150 nineteenth-century Persian-language travelogues of Iran, Europe, North America, and the Ottoman Empire.[2] Most of them have not

[2]Afshar, "Persian Travelogues," 150.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2020.1717294 Published online by Cambridge University Press

been adequately considered for historical research on Iran or the relationship between Iran and foreign countries. Among the few recent scholarly endeavors that engage one of these travelogues is George A. Bournoutian's *From Tabriz to St. Petersburg: Iran's Mission of Apology to Russia in 1829* (2014). Drawing upon Persian, English, and Russian-language sources, it discusses the Iranian mission to Russia after the murder of Alexander Griboyedov (1795–1829) by an angry Iranian mob in the context of contemporary Russo-Persian wars. Nile Green's *The Love of Strangers* remains the most ambitious work to date using the travelogue of Mirzā Sāleh to "write Muslims into the cultural history of Europe, as both participants and admirers of that culture" (p. xiii).

Bibliography

Afshar, Iraj. "Persian Travelogues: A Description and Bibliography." In *Society and Culture in Qajar Iran: Studies in Honor of Hafez Farmayan*, ed. Elton L. Daniel, 145–62. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2002.

Green, Nile. "Paper Modernity? Notes on an Iranian Industrial Tour, 1818." *Iran* 46 (2008): 277–84.

Green, Nile. "Journeymen, Middlemen: Travel, Transculture, and Technology in the Origins of Muslim Printing." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 2 (2009): 203–24.

Green, Nile. "Persian Print and the Stanhope Revolution: Industrialization, Evangelicalism, and the Birth of Printing in Early Qajar Iran." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 30, no. 3 (2010): 473–90.

Green, Nile. "The Madrasas of Oxford: Iranian Interactions with the English Universities in the Early Nineteenth Century." *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 6 (2011): 807–29.

Mojtaba Ebrahimian
Elahé Omidyar and Mir-Djalali Fellow
University of Arizona, Tucson

https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2020.1717294

Slavery and Empire in Central Asia, Jeff Eden, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, ISBN 978-1-108-47051-3 (hbk), 227 pp.

By the end of the nineteenth century tens of thousands Shiʿa Iranians were taken captive by Sunni Turkmen and Kazakh slave raiders and enslaved in the cities and steppes of Central Asia. Slave-raiding was an act of resistance on the part of Turkmen and Kazakh nomads against the surrounding Persian and Russian empires as well as a nomadic proxy strategy used by the Central Asian khanates on the Khurasan frontier. This "forgotten slave trade" is the subject of Jeff Eden's book *Slavery and Empire in Central Asia.* Eden offers exhaustive research on the Central Asian slave trade covering the period between the mid-eighteenth and the late nineteenth centuries. This is a surprisingly understudied topic given the preva-