that I did not use Persian-language sources, he further chides me for not paying attention to a multivolume collection of waqf documents published in 2009. This collection is not listed among the more than sixty primary Persian-language sources in my bibliography because it escaped my attention. Do I have to respond to the canard about Safavid archives? Where are the Safavid archives? As for religious endowments, waqf deeds are about intent, not outcome. Beyond showing an increase in outward religiosity, the proliferation of religious endowments in the late 17th century might actually corroborate my conclusions about the dissipation of (productive) wealth.

Where, finally, do I imply that trade conducted by European "colonialists"—a telling yet wholly anachronistic term here—had a "soothing and civilizing impact" on Iran? This seriously misrepresents my actual words, as well as my intent. If Ghereghlou means that, at times, oppressed merchants turned to anyone, including foreigners, who might protect them from rapacious governors by interceding on their behalf, this represents the documented truth, yet says nothing about the "civilizing influence" of European merchants. The Dutch and the English were in Iran exclusively to make money, not to "soothe" or "civilize" anyone.

Ghereghlou's conclusion—that, in spite of it all, *Persia in Crisis* is an "essential addition to secondary literature on social and political history of early modern Iran"—is just disingenuous. There's nothing in the review that appears to warrant the label "essential addition." One expects a more dignified assessment of one's prize-winning work from a serious scholar.

A REPLY TO RUDI MATTHEE

KIOUMARS GHEREGHLOU
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Rudi Matthee's book has several key problems, which I discussed already in my review. Here I will provide evidence for two main issues that I see in the book. These issues are the limited use of Persian primary sources, and a tendency to make very broad claims based on very limited evidence.

In his book, Matthee makes a series of generalizations that flatten the complexities of Safavid society and history. I give two examples. He labels early modern Iran as a "dark and dangerous land" and early modern Iranians as "an ignorant people . . . in dire need of Western tutelage" (p. xviii). When criticized, he claims that he is only "discerning" the verdict of Western sources. But these statements come with no explicit or implicit reference to any primary source. No indication is given that he might be speaking on behalf of anyone except himself. Nor does he qualify these statements in any fashion anywhere in the book. Even if we entertain the idea that he is "discerning" the verdict of Western sources, we find no hint in the book to suggest that he does not concur with the views of his highly biased, mostly European sources. I refrain from elaborating how problematic such statements are when they characterize an entire society made up of millions of people. Likewise, Matthee spoke in his book of the "myopic collective memory" of Iranians. When questioned, he asserts that he actually

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meant to say that only *modern* Iranians have myopic collective memory, because they indulge in a biased and "nationalist" reading of their history. What we see here is yet another attempt to flatten the complexities of a society. He labels the collective memory of an entire population—that is, millions of contemporary Iranians—as myopic without providing any concrete evidence. When we scrutinize his source base, we see that his argument that modern Iranians have blamed Western powers for the downfall of the Safavids is based on a single nonscholarly publication in Persian. To base such a broad generalization on one specific popular history and disregard generations of scholars who have written more serious works in Persian strikes me as bad scholarship at best.

The book suffers from a lack of sufficient research in Persian primary sources, including several important newly available manuscripts and archival documents that date from the late Safavid period. Many of these sources are fully cataloged and readily available online. I enumerate three important titles as examples of the kind of sources completely disregarded by the author. First is a *jung* volume penned by a eunuch working for the Safavid royal library and archives at the Chihil-Sutun Palace in Isfahan during the Afghan siege of the city in 1721–22. This one primary source contains original drafts of court budget records as well as itemized lists of the central bureaucracy's annual revenues from the taxes levied on land and commodities in Isfahan, Fars, Khuzistan, and the Persian Gulf littoral region in the 1670s–1710s. The second one is a volume of official correspondence. Here one finds several letters sent by Ashraf Hutaki (d. 1730), the Afghan ruler of Isfahan, to the landed notables of the Persian Gulf littoral and the provinces of Persian Iraq, Fars, Khuzistan, and Kirman. In these letters, he petitions the Iranian notables to desist from supporting the fallen Safavids. An interesting letter reproduced in this particular volume contains Ashraf's eyewitness account of the fall of Isfahan, and closes with the Afghan ruler's thoughts about the causes of the Safavid decline. This letter was written in 1725 and sent to the Afghan governor of Qandahar to keep him abreast of developments in Iran. Yet another volume that is readily available online includes copies of several dozen diplomatic letters and military intelligence dispatches concerning the status quo in Astarabad, Khurasan, and the Khanate of Khvarizm in the 1650s–1710s. No serious study of the Safavid decline could dispense with these and many other similar sources in Persian.

Limited reference to original sources in Persian and a tendency to make broad claims about Iranian society have also led Matthee to make a series of problematic arguments. I give one example. He claims that for the Safavids the Persian Gulf littoral, or the Garmsirat, was "an alien territory" (p. 5). But his book tells us very little about the actual realities of the bureaucratic life in or the socioeconomic contexts of this territory. We also search in vain for any discussion of the centralizing policies of the Safavid state in the region. Persian sources tell us that in the 17th century the Safavid central bureaucracy in Isfahan assigned Bushihr to scions of the Zangana and Mahmudi military chiefs of Kurdistan and northern Iraq on a hereditary basis. They affirm that since the first quarter of the 16th century a clan of the Afshar military chiefs originally from eastern and central Anatolia ruled in Jiruft and the northern suburbs of Bandar Abbas. Muhammad Beg (d. 1672), one of the most influential Safavid grand viziers in 17th-century Iran, had a stint of bureaucratic service in the Persian Gulf littoral, where he worked as governor (*shahbandar*) of Bandar Abbas in the early 1650s. A careful reading

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of primary sources in Persian provides us with evidence that under the Safavids the central bureaucracy had enfeoffed Darabjird, a major city sitting astride the route from Bandar Abbas to Shiraz, with the Purnak Turkmens of the Aqquyunlu confederation. Archival and narrative sources from the 17th century testify to the fact that by the 1620s all major urban centers in the Persian Gulf littoral, including Shushtar, Kazarun, and Laristan, had been incorporated fully into the *khāṣṣa* (crown) sector of the Safavid state. The author also disregards the dealings of the Safavid central authorities with the long line of Afshar and Georgian military chiefs who ruled in these cities over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries. Moreover, we know that under the Safavids the sedentary and nomadic inhabitants of the Persian Gulf littoral were subject to taxation and conscription. And anyone having read the Safavid narrative sources knows that conscripts from the Persian Gulf littoral were widely praised for their marksmanship and that in the 17th century several army units composed exclusively of these conscripts had been posted to Qarabagh and Armenia. One can discuss the ebbs and flows of administrative centralism in the Persian Gulf littoral under the Safavids, but to fancy that the whole region was "an alien territory" for the Safavids is simply fallacious. In a sense, such close reading of primary sources might not be necessary for someone who writes for pleasure. But a serious historian who makes big claims about the very nature of governance, economy, and culture in early modern Iran ought to be able to read these materials and "discern" their meaning and significance just as he does with the more biased European sources. I suppose a careful reading of such sources is too much to ask from a historian who has constantly trivialized Persian primary materials.

As I clarified at the end of my book review, the parts of the book that deal with Iran's foreign trade and monetary system in the 17th and 18th centuries have the merit of being essential additions to the existing literature on Safavid history given the paucity of research in those subfields. I stand by my assessment, however, that any serious reader of the book will find a good deal of its arguments and conclusions without firm foundation in the Persian primary sources.

A COMMENT ON ALI YAYCIOĞLU'S REVIEW OF TIMUR KURAN, ED., *SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ISTANBUL: GLIMPSES FROM COURT RECORDS*, VOLS. 1–10 (*IJMES* 47 [2015]: 625–27)

TIMUR KURAN
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The August 2015 issue of *IJMES* reviews a ten-volume compilation of 17th-century Istanbul court records, issued between 2010 and 2013 under my editorship. The review offers useful quibbles that highlight differences between the priorities of historians and those of analytical social scientists. These comments fall within the boundaries of healthy academic discourse.

The review also contains claims that grossly misrepresent the entire enterprise, calling into question the compilation's usability in statistical research. In point of fact, the

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