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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

This paper provides a translation and analysis of Sloane Mss. 3259 in the British Library, a Persian farmān from the court of King Chandrawizaya Rājā in the Arakanese Kingdom of Mrauk U (1429–1784). Written in 1728 and addressed to the Armenian merchant Khwājeh Georgin of the port of Chennaipattana across the Bay of Bengal in India, the decree is a permit for the lucrative trade in elephants and ivory from the forests of Arakan. The royal decree reveals the presence of Persian as a mutual language of encounter, exchange, diplomacy, and correspondence in eighteenth-century Southeast Asia. Through the manuscript, a view emerges of a sovereign forest kingdom of manifold rarities at the margins of the Persianate and Mughal worlds.

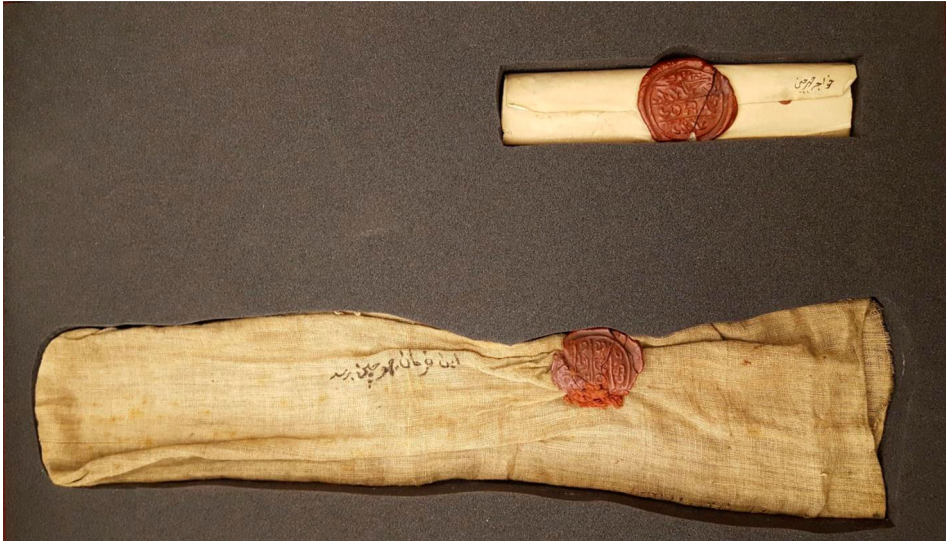
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In 1728, the royal court of the Kingdom of Mrauk U in Arakan sent Persian letters to an Armenian merchant in Chennaipattana across the Bay of Bengal. The letters, one of which is a decree or *farmān* inscribed with the Pali seal of King Chandrawizaya Rājā (r. 1710–31), “The Moon of Victory,” and addressed to the merchant Khwājeh Georgin, have laid in obscurity in the British Library as part of the collection of the physician and naturalist Hans Sloane (Figures 1 and 2). In the Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum, Charles Rieu dismissively deems the letters, classified as Sloane Mss. 3259 and 3260, as “barbarous Persian” and dates them to the Arabic month of Sha‘bān in the Hijri lunar year 1090 (1679).¹ But although the month written in the letters is indeed the Arabic Sha‘bān, the year 1090 is not “Hijri” but rather “Magi” or Maghi/Magh, as clearly inscribed in

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Figure 1. Persian *farmān* from Rājā Chandrawizaya of the Buddhist Kingdom of Mrauk U in Arakan to Khwājeh George in Chennaipattan. *Rolled with a wax seal and next to the cloth it was sent in, addressed: in farmān beh Khwājeh Georgin beresad* (“this *farmān* is to reach Khwājeh George”).

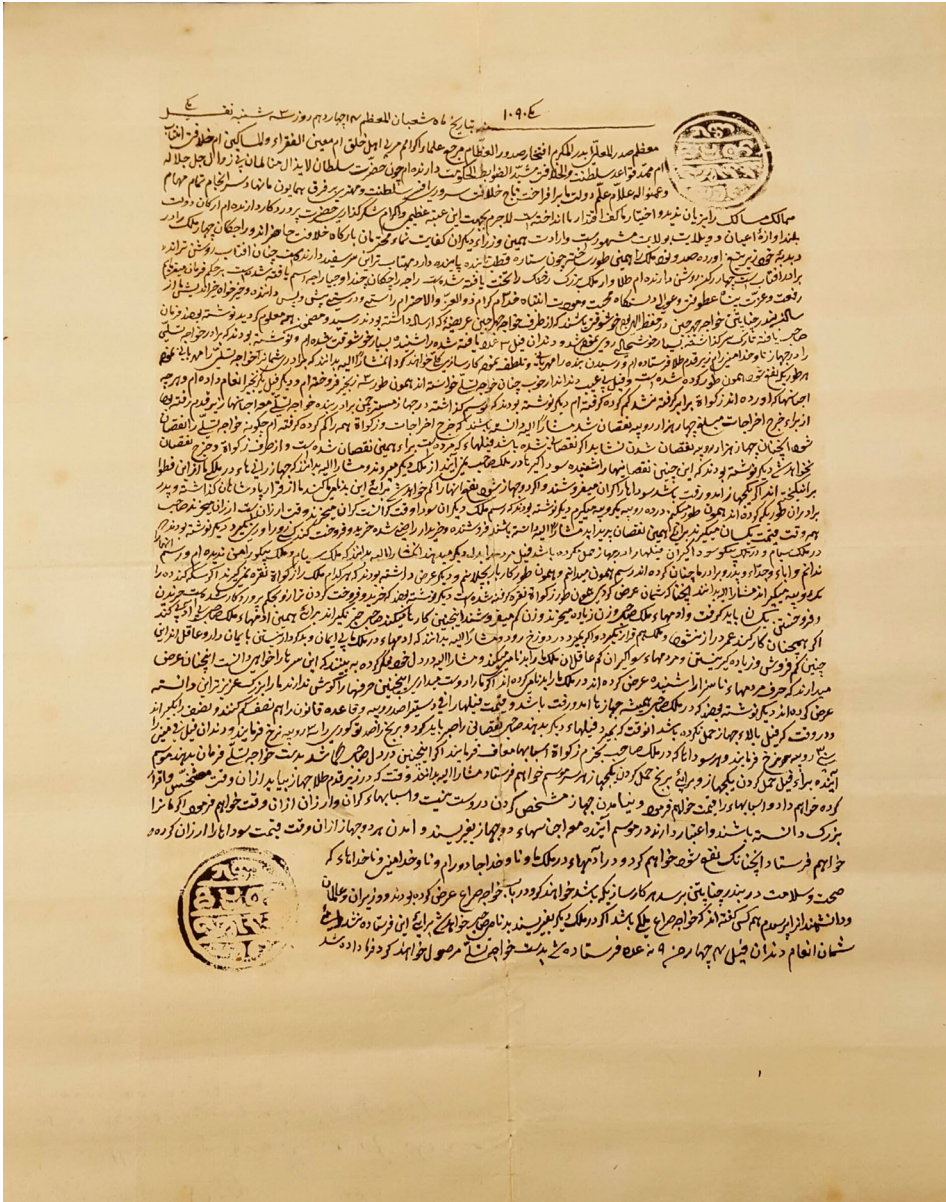


Source: Mss. 3259, Sloane Collection, British Library, 14 Sha‘bān 1090 Magh (1728). Courtesy of the British Library.

the manuscripts, corresponding to the year 1728. Without doubt, the *farmān* is the Persian translation of the earliest dated Burmese palm leaf manuscript in the British Library, a single long palm leaf, Sloane Mss. 4098, that is a permit issued by King Chandrawizaya in response to a “foreign trader” seeking permission to trade in Arakan. The Burmese palm leaf is marked by the same two faint royal seals in Pali that also appear on the Persian *farmān* and is addressed, according to the entry in the British Library card catalogue, to one “Khoja Joro Jin.”² The connection between these Burmese and Persian documents has previously gone unnoticed and so have the implications of the existence of a Persian *farmān* from the court of a Buddhist sovereign in Southeast Asia.

The history of Indo-Persian contact with Southeast Asia remains obscure, but for centuries a global system of inter-imperial trade linked the Indo-Persian Mughal world to the Southeast Asian mainland and archipelago. By the fifteenth century, Islam had become established through trade and pilgrimage in the Indonesian archipelago while on the Southeast Asian mainland, Buddhist empires blending Islamic and Indo-Persian influences rose to power. Although the kingdoms of mainland Southeast Asia did not convert to Islam as in the archipelago, the growth and spread of Theravada Buddhism stimulated trade and interaction with Islamic, Indo-Persian societies.

Figure 2. Persian *farmān* from Rājā Chandrawizaya of Mrauk U in Arakan to Khwājeh George in Chennaipattan.



Source: Mss. 3259, Sloane Collection, British Library, 14 Sha'bān 1090 Magh (1728). Courtesy of the British Library.

The Indo-Persian world refers to the early modern geographical continuum where Persian once was a language of trade and exchange, and had a cultural presence as a spoken or written language of courtly literature and correspondence. During the early modern period, circa 1400–1800, the Indo-Persian world encompassed Timurid Central Asia, Safavid Iran, Mughal India, and parts of the Ottoman Empire. It was an “Indo-Persian” world, as opposed to the more Iran-centric term “Persianate,” in the sense that while the language of exchange was indeed Persian, a vast corpus of literature was produced within a Mughal and South Asian context, with its audience comprised predominantly of South Asian readers. Southeast Asia represented the far edges of this geographical and cultural sphere, seen as the fringes of the Indian subcontinent. Consequently, studies of the Indo-Persian and Islamicate Mughal world have only rarely explored interactions with Southeast Asia.

In the early modern period, trade, diplomacy, and the prevalence of Persian as a literary and cultural language of the court more closely linked early modern empires in South Asia and the Southeast Asian mainland. In the kingdom of Ayutthaya (1351–1767) in Thailand, during the reign of King Narai (1656–88), a thriving community of Persian merchants from Safavid Iran attained influence and prestige in the Thai court.³ Further north, along the eastern littoral of the Bay of Bengal, the Theravada Buddhist kingdom of Mrauk U (1429–1784) in Arakan shared imperial, cultural, and commercial ties to the Indo-Persian and Mughal worlds.⁴ Although Buddhist, the Mrauk U Empire was steeped in the culture and trappings of Islamic kingship, with its kings adopting Persian names, and minting their titles as sultans and *pādishāhs* onto multilingual Pali-Persian coins bearing the *kalemeḥ*, the profession of the Islamic creed, and recognizing the kingdom’s sovereigns as *rājās* and *shāhs*.⁵

The existence of the *farmān* from the court of King Chandrawizaya Rājā suggests the immersion of the court of Mrauk U within Indo-Persian networks and currents of trade and correspondence, as well as Persianate and Mughal forms of imperial fashioning, into the eighteenth century. The *farmān* (Persian *framān*) denotes a royal decree, command, edict, or order—a public legislative document given in the name of the sovereign. The *farmān* was a form of legal document and genre of courtly correspondence that prevailed among the chanceries of Persianized Turko-Mongol Islamic empires in the Near East, Central Asia, and South Asia.⁶ But Persian *farmāns* were not known to have been written in the courts of the Buddhist sovereigns of Southeast Asia. The decree of King Chandrawizaya reveals, if only through a glimmer, how a Pali kingdom in mainland Southeast Asia adopted elements and aspects of a Persianate and Mughal royal repertoire.

In Mughal travel and encounter literature, the Southeast Asian mainland and its littoral was conceived as the far edge of the Indian Ocean, a zone of wondrous forest kingdoms and their rarities under the stewardship of an idealized sovereign. The Mrauk U Kingdom of Arakan was mapped as a place neither Muslim nor Hindu that was part of “the marvels and wonders of the islands and ports near Bengal” (*‘ajā’eb o gharā’eb dar banāder o jazāyer*).⁷ In the widely read Persian chronicle *Tārīkh-e Fereshteh*, also known as *Gulshan-e Ebrāhīmī*, written circa 1612, the Iranian chronicler Muhammad Qasim Hindushāh “Fereshteh” refers to Arakan as part of

“distant islands” (*jazire-ye dur*) ruled by a *rājā* who “has always two white elephants, and that when one dies, orders are issued to search the woods for another to supply his place.”⁸ These schematic views of Arakan and the city of Mrauk U were comprised of frequently related and longstanding merchant and mariner tales and legends surrounding mysterious “Indian” voyages, islands, and kingdoms. The courts of the sovereigns of Arakan, being fluent in the Persianate commercial, diplomatic, and literary currents of Mughal India and the Bay of Bengal, represented and projected their empire as a forest kingdom of matchless marvels and rarities of nature lorded over by a sacred and universal king. This theme of a wondrous and exotic forest empire of manifold luxuries finds echoes in the 1728 *farmān* of King Chandrawizaya Rājā, permitting trade to merchants and agents in India across the Bay of Bengal.

King Chandrawizaya’s decree reads:

In the year Maghi 1090 on Tuesday the 14th day of the month of Sha‘bān al-Mu‘azzam. Maghi narration (*naql-e Magi*). From the Exalted Seat of the Moon of Honor, the Glory of the Great Sources of Knowledge and the Generous People of Creation, the Source of Certainty for the Poor and Indigent, the Source of Descent from the Caliphate, the Destined Source of Sovereignty and Kingship (*Saltanat*), the Proof of Government (*al-zavābet al-hokumat*). By the grace of the Banner of Knowledge, may His Glory be exalted, our state has kindled without decline since the reign of His Majesty the Eternal Sultan Min al-Man [Rājā Min Saw Mon?]. After the passing of the almighty, over time the crown of sovereignty (*tāj-e khelāfat*) and honor has become set upon my head. The important routes and provinces of the country are in order and under my authority. Therefore, for the sake of this great and generous royal threshold I give thanks to the presence of God (*Hazrat-e Parvardegār*). The pillars of the kingdom have been hung high, reaching fame and reputation, visible from province to province (*velāyat beh velāyat*). The ministers, nobles, and subjects of the kingdom remain loyal and devoted. Having brought the *rājās* of other kingdoms, with all their pomp, under the sway of the blade in building an empire of 190 kingdoms, the rays of the North Star (*Setāreh-ye Qotb*) and the moonlight glow unto me, and my light burns so bright, it is like a brother to the sun. In the great golden Kingdom of Rakhang I have found a throne. The Rājā of Rājās (*Rājā-ye Rājagān*) Chandrawijaya Rājā, the Moon of Victory, is my title. By the order of this decree (*hokm-e farmān*), I give the sublime shelter of honor and the first order of kindness and friendship (*mifarmāyam rafā‘at va ‘ezzat panāh va ‘atufat va ‘avāli-ye dastgāh-e muhabbat va mavvadat*), and have awakened my subjects to bestow great honor, confidence, and goodwill upon Khwājeh Georgin of the port of Chennai pattana. He is under celestial protection (*hefz-e ellāhi*) and it is my hope that he has good fortune. It was a source of happiness and pleasure to receive a letter from Khwājeh Georgin requesting a *farmān* from the Lord (*farmān-e sāhib yāfteh*) and seeking three counts of ivory (*dandān-e fil*). He had written that his brother Khwājeh Tasalli had been sent as a captain of a ship in obe-

dience to the Step of the Golden Foot (*Qadam-e Talā*) with kindness and grace. By the will of God, your brother Khwājeh Tasalli has engaged fully in trade and has been shown mercy and given every benefit. Three flawless elephants with tusks (*fil-e bi 'ayb-e dandān dār-e khub*) have been sent in chains, as requested by Khwājeh Georgin, along with another additional chained elephant with tusks I have sent as a gift. And I have purchased all the goods that were imported after charging the *zakāt* tax. You had written that during the last monsoon, your brother Khwājeh Tasalli had come to this kingdom on the ship of Mr. [Chapman?] and incurred a loss of four thousand rupees but I can assure you that any such loss was not due to charges (*kharj-e ekbrājāt*) or taxes (*zakāt*) collected but due to elephants dying on the way. You mention that merchants (*sowdāgarhā*) who hear of these losses avoid our kingdom and sail elsewhere instead, giving us a bad name, to which I inform you that the merchant mariners (*jahāzrānihā*) of this kingdom are dismayed of this talk, as the more merchant ships arrive here, the less goods will cost and the more they will profit. We follow the customs of our previous kings (*pādishāh*), our fathers and brothers, and doing as they have done in the past, we will charge a one-tenth tax in silver rupees, as you have also requested. You mention the trading customs of the kingdoms Siyām and Pegu, and that if merchants load a healthy elephant on their ships from there and it dies on the journey another elephant will be sent, but I have not seen these places and am not familiar with their ways. I only know the customs of my own kingdom and the traditions of my ancestors, father and brothers, which I follow. Your letter references rumors told by foreign merchants that the subjects of this kingdom are ignorant and dishonest, but if this were true and my subjects lacked such manners, my reign would be short lived and the kingdom in disorder. Certain unwise foreign merchants have spread rumors that in our kingdom there exist faithless and wicked people, and the words of unreliable merchants have given our kingdom a bad name. If you are a friend to us, you will not heed these words and hold us dear. You have also written that many ships come and go in the direction of our land, and that if as lord of the kingdom I wish to permit one ship to arrive to purchase elephants and another ship to purchase rice during the start of every monsoon season (*bar sar-e mawsum*), that I present a *farmān* to Khwājeh Tasalli. You should know that once under the protection of the Step of the Golden Foot, I will recognize and acknowledge any of your ships that reach this kingdom, and I will bid upon the goods they import. If you hold us in esteem and trust (*ē'tebār*), during the next monsoon season dispatch two ships laden with goods, and I will send the ships back to you with merchandise ensuring that you will find profit. And in my kingdom, I have sea captains (*nākhodā*) who can deliver blessings (*sehbat va salāmat*) to Chennaipattana and conduct trade and transactions. In the story of Khwājeh Sarā', it was said by all the ministers and scholars that if Khwājeh Sarā' was in one land and a gift was sent to another land, it would give the Sahib a bad name, and due to this, nothing was sent. But your gift of 9 ivories weighing 4 *mans* has been sent to you along with this *farmān* by the hand of Khwājeh Tasalli.⁹

In its form and materiality, the *farmān* of King Chandrawizaya represents a Persian-Islamic genre of correspondence produced within an Indic-Buddhist setting and context. This is most visibly indicated by the multilingual nature of the letter, as the Persian script of the text is marked in Pali by a royal seal at the beginning and the end. The royal seal reads in Arakanese *rājā dhippati rhwe nan sa khan*, “Supreme Lord, Master of the Golden Palace.”¹⁰ Although there are no extant seals to compare to this one, which is also stamped onto red wax on the cloth that the letter was sent in, it resembles the multilingual Pali and Persian coins of Mrauk U. In its form and structure, the Pali seal of Chandrawizaya conforms even more closely to the Persian seals of the Mughals, most notably in the circular shape of the seal and in the pattern of lines and latitudes in the field. Its Pali script is presented in the form of Persian seals of the Mughal Empire, appearing on paper as opposed to the palm leaf or *parabeik* upon which the Pali script is traditionally found. The unusual material culture of the letter is matched by certain corollaries in the structure of the *farmān*, which bears the signs of traditional Southeast Asian documentary formulae. The decree of King Chandrawizaya followed a certain accepted schematic structure of the Persian *farmān* genre: the invocation of God and the introduction of the title of the sovereign and his reign; the disposition of the royal mandate; and the call to recipients and subjects to recognize and execute the command. *Farmāns* were imperial directives issued on different sorts of political, administrative, and economic subjects. The decree of Chandrawizaya most closely resembles the form and content of the Mughal trade or commercial *farmān*, granting concessions and allowing royal protection to foreign merchants and companies to conduct trade in the empire.¹¹ In its structure, however, the Arakanese *farmān* was also clearly adapted to local, vernacular forms and idiosyncrasies. One revealing sign of this variation in structure occurs with the great emphasis placed on the date, given at the beginning of the document, customary among Southeast Asian courts focused on auspicious times and dates.¹²

King Chandrawizaya’s *farmān* was addressed to the Armenian merchant Khwājeh Georgin, or Khwājeh George, of Chennaiipattana, and delivered by the hand of his brother Khwājeh Tasalli, a sea captain known for journeying across the Bay of Bengal to Pegu and Arakan along the littoral of the Southeast Asian mainland. From other extant sources from the period, fragments of the identities of the merchant brothers may be pieced together. The Records of the Madras Government in 1728 mention a court case between the Madras merchants George Christianezar and Philip Muzavin, with one “Coja Tessaly” undertaking to represent George Christianezar in the case.¹³ Khwājeh George again appears in the record as “Coja George Christianeza” in a case involving another Armenian merchant in Madras, “Coja Joan,” in 1736.¹⁴ Traces of Khwājeh Tasalli, Khwājeh George’s brother and representative to King Chandrawizaya of Mrauk U, appear in *Records of Fort St. George*, which note that during the spring monsoon season of 1707, a *nākhodā* or sea captain by the name of “Coja Tassaree” had returned from a voyage to Pegu to the Coromandel Coast.¹⁵ Again, in the summer of 1732, it is recorded that a captain named “Tassalee” had “sailed for Arracan.”¹⁶ Khwājeh George and Khwājeh Tasalli were thus prominent

merchants in the port of Chennaipattana, when it was governed by the East India Company as the Madras Presidency of Fort St. George. The merchant brothers seemed to have been key intermediaries and middlemen in the trade with the South-east Asian mainland across the Bay of Bengal, as indicated by their efforts at negotiating and opening up trade with the Kingdom of Mrauk U in Arakan. The *farmān* suggests the immersion of Armenian merchant networks originating from Safavid-era Isfahan within the currents and conventions of the Persianate world, its commerce, its letters, and its courtly etiquette, which they carried to the eastern shores of the Indian Ocean. Armenian high merchants (*khwājeh*) and sea captains (*nākhodā*), sought trading concessions encoded in Persian *farmāns* from Indian Ocean sovereigns. As Sebouh Aslanian has detailed in his book on global Armenian trade networks, within a decade of the founding of the Armenian quarter of New Julfa in Isfahan during the seventeenth century, Armenian merchants became settled in Burmese ports where in subsequent years they got the monopoly on the ruby trade and came to play “an important role both as merchants and diplomatic go-betweens to various Burmese kings” during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁷ From rubies to elephants, Armenian merchants found access to the trade of the forest treasures of Southeast Asian kingdoms.

The *farmān* from King Chandrawizaya conveys the integration of the Kingdom of Mrauk U within the networks of the Indo-Persian world. The *rājā*'s decree reveals the role of the Persian language as a medium of communication for the conduct of trade and to express mutual and shared courtly ethics of sacred kingship and sovereignty. At the heart of the transaction was the trade in elephants, a mutual symbol of kingship in the Mughal Empire and the Buddhist kingdoms of the Southeast Asian mainland. Elephants were the royal mount, a part of the spectacle and repertoire of the projection of kingship and sovereignty in the regalia of the court and out on the hunt. Taming elephants conferred the sovereign's possession over the sacred forest and its nature. Most significantly, for centuries elephants were a decisive force in battles in South and Southeast Asia. Their exchange as imperial megafauna between courts was a mutually understood transaction.¹⁸ In this way, the trade in elephants between Arakan and Chennaipattana was a ritual and tributary exchange between imperial formations, with Armenian merchants serving as intermediaries between the Mughal Empire (along with the East India Company and South Asian princely states) and the Kingdom of Mrauk U, all of which were immersed within an Indic imperial repertoire. The trade in elephants and ivory was in part spurred by this symbolic exchange between sovereigns, a sign of kingship, power, and the harnessing and domestication of the forest realm. The trade in elephants and ivory between South and Southeast Asia was thus embedded within Indo-Persian customs of imperial fashioning and the projection of royal power.¹⁹ The exchange of elephants was part of an economy of inter-imperial exchange.

Beyond imperial regalia and power, elephants were also prized for their tusks, the source of ivory (*dandān-e fil*). The market for ivory evolved from its use as a material object, from carved royal thrones and panels to jewelry and ornaments. Ivory was an object of luxury and its consumers were royals, kings, and princes, who displayed it on

their thrones, palanquins, cabinets, and courtly objects d'art. Ivory also found usage in religious establishments, particularly in Buddhist art and iconography. For this, there was a Bengali saying that "even a dead elephant is worth a million rupees" as merchants made great profit from the ivory trade.²⁰ Due to the heavy demand and limited supply of ivory, merchants searched for new sources, and the forest kingdoms of the Southeast Asian mainland were reported to be the habitat of multitudes of wild elephants. Khwājeh George and Khwājeh Tasalli were merchants in the lucrative trade of elephants and ivory in South and Southeast Asia. Through a grasp of Persianate and Mughal customs and cultures of transactions, the Armenian merchants became intermediaries in the trade between Indic courts and sovereigns in South and Southeast Asia. In King Chandrawizaya's correspondence with Khwājeh George and Khwājeh Tasalli are found details of the ivory trade and its intricate protocols. Above all, it hints at the heightened imperial reach over the forest habitat of elephants by the eighteenth century, due to the great wealth that could be made from the trade of just a few precious pieces of ivory.

King Chandrawizaya's *farmān* was the golden ticket, the legal document which permitted Armenian merchants from India to enter Arakan and trade with the kingdom of Mrauk U. This royal decree was the permit, a license of access to the commerce of an empire on the margins still entwined within Persianate networks. It was the literary instrument, the writ of passage that permitted transactions with empires fluent in Persian courtly and commercial parlance. Its social and cultural context was the Persianized Indic court of Mrauk U, the realm of an idealized universal sovereign with a sacred reign, the *farmān* of King Chandrawizaya gave "divine protection" to Khwājeh George and Khwājeh Tasalli to conduct trade in the kingdom. The legal right of "divine protection" (*hefz-e ellāhi*) given by the writ of the king opened the gates of the "bazaar" of Mrauk U to trade and transactions. The *farmān* served as a written sign of the king's "trust" (*e'tebār*), and guaranteed that Khwājeh George and his brother Khwājeh Tasalli were recognized by "the grace and kindness of the Golden Foot" (*Qadam-e Talā*).²¹ A second, shorter letter, written in a different hand and lacking the Pali seals, was addressed to Khwājeh George and sent from an unnamed merchant of Arakan following up, reiterating, and substantiating King Chandrawizaya's decree of opening to trade.²²

The commercial relations between King Chandrawizaya Rājā and the Armenian merchants of Chennaipattana, however, were to be short-lived. In 1731, three years after these exchanges and the promise of the opening of trading relations, the king was assassinated and the throne of Arakan would subsequently pass between fourteen different monarchs until the eventual fall of the kingdom in 1784. The prospect of trade with Arakan became haphazard as reports appearing in the East India Company archives detailed the insecurities and turbulence caused by Arakanese raiding and piracy in the Bay of Bengal. The Burmese Konbuang dynasty's violent conquest of Mrauk U in 1784 only exacerbated the climate of chaos and turbulence as Arakanese refugees from the fallen kingdom crossed over the frontier into the Bengal borderlands, bringing the Burmese Empire and the East India Company to the verge of war. It would not be until 1795 that the East India Company would

send its first official embassy to the Arakanese and Burmese littoral to seek the opening of commercial relations, with a particular emphasis upon the lucrative teak trade. But the mission, led by the Orientalist officer Michael Symes, accompanied by his Indo-Persian *munshis* and go-betweens, still followed longstanding precedents and patterns of Persianate correspondence. In seeking the sanction of the court of King Bodawpaya of the Konbaung dynasty for company merchants conducting trade along the Burmese littoral, the mission relied on the medium of Persian correspondence, procuring a Persian *farmān* from the Burmese king to open up the teak trade, a *farmān* that only exists (for now) in its English translation in Symes' travelogue, *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava*.²³

Notes

1. Rieu, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts*, 405–6.
2. Herbert, "The Making of a Collection," 59–60.
3. For a seventeenth-century Persian travel account detailing these connections to Thailand, see Rabi, *Safīne-ye Sulaymāni*. For an English translation, see O'Kane, *Ship of Sulaiman*. Also see Aubin, "Les Persans au Siam"; Subrahmanyam, "Iranians Abroad," 348–50; Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries*, 130–74; Marcinkowski, *From Isfahan to Ayutthaya*.
4. On commercial and inter-imperial interconnections between Mrauk U and the Persianate and Mughal worlds, see Subrahmanyam, "Persianization and 'Mercantilism'"; Subrahmanyam, "Dutch Tribulations in Seventeenth-Century Mrauk U"; Subrahmanyam, "And a River Runs through It," 107–26. On Indo-Persian poetics in Mrauk U, see d'Hubert and Leider, "Traders and Poets at the Mrauk U Court," 77–111; d'Hubert, *In the Shade of the Golden Palace*. On the imperial and political history of the kingdom of Mrauk U, see Leider, *Le Royaume d'Arakan, Birmanie*.
5. The kings of Mrauk-U with Persian titles as "shāhs" included: Narameikhla/Sulaymān Shāh (1404–34), Minkhari/'Ali Khān (1434–59), Basawpyu/Kalimeh Shāh (1459–82), Dawlya/Mokhu Shāh (1482–92), Basawnyo/Muhammad Shāh (1492–94), Yanaung/Nuri Shāh (1494), Salingathu/Sikandar Shāh (1494–1501), Minraza/Īlyās Shāh (1501–23), Kasabadi/Īlyās Shāh (1523–25), Minsaw-O/Jalāl Shāh (1525), Thatasa/Sultān 'Ali Shāh (1525–31), Minbin/Bābak Shāh (1531–53), Minpalaung/Sikandar Shāh (1571–93), Minrazagri/Salim Shāh (1593–1612), Minkhamaung/Husayn Shāh (1612–22), Thirithudamma/Salim Shāh (1622–38). These Persian titles are based on sources drawing upon numismatic evidence and Arakanese chronicles. See Phayre, "On the History of Arakan"; Phayre, "The Coins of Arakan"; Phayre, *Coins of Arakan, of Pegu, and of Burma*; Phayre, *History of Burma*; Harvey, *History of Burma*, 137–49, 371–2; Collis and Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay," 34–52; Collis, *The Land of the Great Image*; Ba Sin, "The Coming of Islam to Burma," 1–19; Leider, "These Buddhist Kings with Muslim Names," 189–215.
6. For overviews of the *farmān* document, see Fragner, "Farmān"; Busse, "Farmān," 802–4. For some specific studies of the *farmān* in Indo-Persian contexts, see Aubin, "Archives Persanes Commentées 1," 123–47; Khan, *Farmāns and Sanads of the Deccan Sultans*; Navā'i, *Shāh Ismā'il Safavi*; Navā'i, *Shāh Tabmāsp Safavi*; 'Abd al-Husayn Navā'i, *Shāh 'Abbās*; Mohiuddin, *The Chancellery and Persian Epistolography*; Tabātabā'i, *Farmānhā-ye Turkomānān-e Qarā Quyunlu va Āq Quyunlu*.
7. Alam and Sanjay, *Writing the Mughal World*, 101–6. Also see for instance Rafī' od-Din Ebrāhim bin Nur od-Din Tawfiq Shirāzi, "Tadhkirat al-Muluk," British Library, India Office and Oriental Collections Add. 23,883, ff. 303a–307b. See also Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 316.
8. Ferishta, *Tārīkh-i-Ferishta*, 1–30; Ferishta, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power*, lxx, 193. Also see Elliott and Dowson, *The History of India*, 549. For a more recently edited Persian edition of the text, see Astarābādi, *Tārīkh-e Fereshteh*.

9. Decree from Rājā Chandrawizaya of Arakan to Khwājeh George in Chennai pattan, 14 Sha'bān 1090 Magh [1728], Mss. 3259, Sloane Collection, British Library.
10. For the translation of the Pali seal, see van Galen, "Arakan and Bengal," 211. Van Galen's thesis drew upon a rich trove of Dutch VOC sources but did not translate the Persian farmān and accepted Rieu's misdating and misidentification as being from the court of Chandrasudhama Rājā in 1679.
11. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a proliferation of Mughal commercial farmāns, including decrees granting trading privileges to the East India Company. In 1717, the Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar issued a farmān that allowed the company to trade within the empire free of customs duties. Chandrawizaya's decree, written a little over a decade later, was certainly more circumscribed with its promise of allowing two ships to be sent every monsoon season from Armenian merchants in Madras. In permitting trading privileges and offering protection, however, it was a farmān crafted within the same context and pattern of early modern global interactions and exchanges.
12. Gallop, "Piagam Serampas," 276. Also see Gallop, *The Legacy of the Malay Letter*.
13. *Records of Fort St. George: Proceedings of the Mayor's Court, 1728*, 45.
14. *Records of Fort St. George: Proceedings of the Mayor's Court Minutes, 1736–1737*, 26, 29, 37, 69–70, 90, 93.
15. Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1707, 21.
16. Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1732, 62.
17. On Armenian trading networks in the early modern world, including their transactions with Southeast Asia, see Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, 55.
18. On elephants and sovereignty over the longue durée of South Asian history, see Trautmann, *Elephants and Kings*. On animals and other megafauna in early modern Islamicate empires, see Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt*.
19. For an analysis of elephants and sovereignty in early-modern Arakan based on numismatic analysis of the royal of "Lord of the White Elephant" (*Sāheb-e Fil-e Sefid*), see D'Hubert, "The Lord of the Elephant," 341–70.
20. Pal, *Elephants and Ivories in South Asia*, 18.
21. On the prevalence of such themes in the trade correspondence of Armenian merchants, see Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, 86–120, 166–201.
22. Letter from Arakan to the Grand Merchant George in Chennai pattan, 20 Sha'bān 1090 Magh [1728], Mss. 3260 Sloane Collection, British Library.
23. Symes, *An Account of an Embassy*, 487–9.

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