



Losing Hearts and Minds: American-Iranian Relations and International Education during the Cold War, ed. Matthew K. Shannon.

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Historian Matthew Shannon's edited volume extends the "cultural and transnational turn" in the study of US foreign affairs to the American-Iranian relationship. Its ten chapters concern a range of topics, some already familiar to potential readers. Specifically: the activities of Iranian diplomats in the United States in the early twentieth century, the Shuster mission of 1911, the role of US archaeologists in the development of Iranian antiquities laws, the activities of American Presbyterians and the Peace Corps in post-World War II Iran, and the experiences of the Iranian diaspora in the United States.

The volume's succinct chapters are united by two things: first, they all examine US-Iranian relations at the level of non-state actors, be they missionaries, students, business people, or educationalists. This is true even of the chapter on Iranian diplomats in the late Qajar period, who are shown to have been a mix of rug-sellers, antiquities dealers, and socialites, few of whom were actually Iranian citizens.

The second pervasive theme—"crossed history" or *histoire croisee*—is made explicit only in the anthology's introduction and conclusion. Scholars in this field reject historiographical approaches that treat states (and nations, cultures, and civilizations) as fixed entities. Instead they examine the interdependencies that generate those entities and the multi-directional transfers that occur during them. In short, the essay collection seeks to expand and complicate (in a positive way) the history of US-Iranian relations by revealing the extent and diversity of inter-cultural exchanges between the two.

This subject matter is specialized and intended for scholars and advanced graduate students. Matthew Shannon (Emory and Henry College) has written extensively on the historiography of US-Iranian relations.¹ The nine other chapter contributors are a mix of established and emerging scholars who have advanced the study of US-Iranian relations.

In chap. 1, John Ghazvinian examines the activities of Iranian representatives in the United States during the late Qajar period, especially their efforts to develop economic and cultural relations. In chap. 2, Kelly Shannon explores W. Morgan Shuster's 1911 mission to Iran. Drawing on Shuster's papers in US archives she argues that his ouster by the Russians and public advocacy for the Iranian constitutionalists fostered positive views of Iran in the United States. In chap. 3, Kyle Olsen looks at Pahlavi-era nationalism in the context of archaeology and the role of American archaeologists in breaking the French monopoly on archaeological activities in Iran. In Chapter 4 Kiroozeh Kashani-Sabet examines Anglo-US relations in the Persian Gulf. He claims Washington inherited and continued the British policy of cultivating identity politics in the Gulf in order to serve their own economic and security interests, marginalizing Iran and Iranians in the process.

¹ See, e.g., his *Losing Hearts and Minds: American-Iranian Relations and International Education during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell U Pr, 2017).

Chapter 5, by Gregory Brew, concerns the “global integration” of Iranian oil in the 1950s and 1960s, following the evolution of relations between the Shah, the oil companies, and the US government.

In chap. 6, Matthew Shannon considers the under-examined history of US Presbyterians in postwar Iran through the activities of the Alborz Foundation and two mission schools that had escaped Iran's nationalization of the education system. Chapter 7, by Richard Garlitz, investigates the technical assistance given by US universities to Iranian educational institutions via Pres. Harry Truman's 1949 Four Point Program onwards. In chap. 8, Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi examines re-counts the role of the Peace Corps in Iran. She concentrates on the relations of Peace Corps volunteers with their Iranian counterparts, showing how the cultural exchange transformed the lives of the Americans as much or more than those of the Iranians they worked with. In chap. 9,

Ida Yalzadeh analyzes the 1970 protest by Iranian students at the Iranian consulate in San Francisco for what they tell us about Americans' attitudes toward Iranians prior to the 1979 Revolution. In the tenth and final chapter, Cameron Michael Amin discusses the Iranian diaspora in Michigan, concentrating on their relations with the United States and Iran and how they navigated between them.

With few exceptions, the contributors focus on the role of non-state actors, making salutary contribution to the current body of knowledge in their subject areas. Several chapters draw on rarely exploited archival materials to address topics that ignored or marginalized in the existing scholarship on US-Iranian relations. The two chapters on Iranian students in the United States and members of the wider diaspora open new vistas of US-Iranian relations. Rostam-Kolayi's chapter on the experiences of Peace Corps volunteers is a fascinating piece of oral history that exposes American experiences and perceptions of Iran that contradict those that dominate popular discourse.

Inevitably, there are weaknesses. A couple chapters' analyses are less novel than the others. While the chapters by Brew and Garlitz reveal something new about the US-Iranian experience, the stories they tell are already familiar from the wider US Cold War experience. Washington's efforts to pressure US oil companies in Iran to compromise with their host governments in order to secure wider strategic interests mirror those seen in regard to Saudi Arabia and other oil producing states. Familiar, too, is Garlitz's depiction of the non-transferability of techniques from one environment/culture to another, as is the resistance of those on the receiving end to new ideas.

Secondly, a couple chapters make claims beyond what the evidence supports, likely owing to word count restraints. Elsewhere, the adduced evidence is too anecdotal and impressionistic. Shannon's claim that the Shuster mission and Shuster's proselytising for the Iranian constitutionalists altered American perceptions of Iran is plausible but not fully substantiated. That Shuster received extensive media coverage does not prove that American opinions were changed. Also problematic is Kashani-Sabet's argument about the marginalization of Iran in the Gulf by the pro-Arab policies of Britain and the United States. The widening of focus from the experiences of Persianate minorities in Arab Gulf states to broader assertions about the failure of Washington's “twin pillar” policy to provide Iran with equal status Iran had already lost the “culture wars,” is missing some steps. The claim that Iranian and other minorities were discriminated against is clearly evidenced, but the contention that this permanently advantaged Arab states in the Gulf is asserted rather than demonstrated.

Finally, the essays are sometimes vague about the significance of what they have revealed. For instance, Olsen concludes his chapter on the role of US archaeologists in Iran as follows: “by stud-

ying the correspondence between the historical actors, along with the legal frameworks that regulated the conduct of archaeological expeditions, we can develop a more comprehensive understanding of US-Iran relations and the relationship between archaeology and geopolitics more generally” (72). This is self-evident—the more we know the better our understanding must be. That said, it is reasonable to desire a more precise articulation of why *this particular* episode mattered as it did and what the links between it and geopolitics actually were.

Shannon’s chapter on the actions of American Presbyterians draws similarly broad conclusions. Having detailed the activities of three educational institutions from the 1940s to the 1970s, he concludes that schools “functioned as a source of power and, in various ways, shaped the American-Iranian encounter”; they “contributed to the dynamic between Iranian citizens and their state.” One of them was “part of the conversation about women’s rights and suffrage in Iran” (130). Again, this is indisputable but also banal. One craves a detailed exposition of *what* exactly those various ways were and *how* exactly they shaped the Iranian-American encounter.

Despite these criticisms, *American-Iranian Dialogues* achieves what its authors set out to do. Its diverse chapters verify the significance of non-state actors in US-Iranian relations as well as the value of entangled history in that process. They also lay the groundwork for further work by authors and readers alike of editor Matthew Shannon’s salutary anthology.