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Colours are unique in the sense that they are used to describe humans, objects, and even the abstract, as is true vice versa. They are also interpreted in ways that allow them to convey various associations and symbolisms. This kind of interpretation extends to various religions and languages. Religious scriptures such as the Qur'an and the Bible, among others, mention colours. The Qur'an, in numerous verses, mentions various colours such as black, blue, red, and white. The Arabic language – the language of the Qur'an – has a unique way of describing colours, particularly black and white. In some verses of the Qur'an, black and white are mentioned alongside each other. In other verses, they are mentioned separately. The Arabic Islamic culture allegedly standardizes white, but is prejudiced against black. Against such a background, this paper examines the use and representation of colours in the Qur'an with a focus on black and white. This is done through a literary and hermeneutical analysis of the verses of the Qur'an that mention black and white in light of exegetical literature. It also looks at how exegetical literatures interpret these verses and how these interpretations may or may not be read in relation to race and racism.

This paper presents several images of encounters between Jews and Muslims at sacred sites, as portrayed in medieval Jewish travel writings stemming from the Crusades and the Mamlūk period. These images range from examples of shared ownership and practices to situations where different parties vied for control and ownership. The narratives contained in these sources, written predominantly by European authors for a European readership, strive to confirm the Jewish identity of the sacred sites in the Holy Land and Babylonia and the Jews' rights of ownership to them. They not only reverse the relationship between the ruler and the ruled but, at the same time, they convey the message that the real owners of the holy places connected with the narratives of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish history,

and *ipso facto* of the true religion, are the Jews. Jewish travel writings therefore served European Jewish readers not only as a vehicle for spreading the knowledge of the sacred topography, but also as one of the avenues for conducting polemics against Islam.

Aviva Butt   53–72

Sacred Texts and the Arabic Poetry of Mahmud Darwish

Against a background discussion on mainstream poetry, this study offers insights on the venture of the Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish (1941–2008) into the realm of Middle Eastern mysticism, handed down to us as "Sufism." Darwish sets aside discourse concerning religion, although he leans on the scripture of more than one system of belief. In his poem *Abī* (My Father), the poet tells us of Shi'a observance as he experienced it; and, in his poem *Abad al-Ṣabbār* (The Eternity of Cactus), the poet compares the Palestinian 1948 Nakba (Tragedy) to the massacre at Karbala in early Islamic times. Poems such as *al-Hudhud* (The Hoopoe) and the collection *Ward Aqall* (Fewer Roses) fall into place. These poems, which mark the onset of Darwish's mature period, are not understood as well as his earlier output. In some measure, this could be because translators to English have ignored the poet's clearly stated requirements for translating his poems. Therefore, I have included some lengthy excerpts from my own translations, which were done in conjunction with Reuven Snir's Hebrew translations, in the hope that the reader will enjoy some original creative writing that parallels the Arabic.

Rahul Bhaumik   73–104

The Production of Ophiological Knowledge in Early British India: Venomous Snakes, Various Practices and Different Responses

The study of colonial knowledge making in British India, a well-developed issue, mainly fosters two distinct historiographical approaches to the exchange of knowledge between the colonisers and the colonised. By gathering primary materials on British medical-zoological engagement with Indian snakes and extensive experimentation with their venoms during the early colonial period, the present paper moves through and beyond these existing historical approaches and offers a different understanding of the process of colonial knowledge formation. It argues that although there is specific evidence of negotiation and collaboration between European knowers and their indigenous partners in the production of ophiological knowledge, the "native" contribution was never allowed the space to be either innovative or commanding. Even well-informed "native" assistants

sometimes remained indifferent to the typical Western creation of colonial knowledge regarding Indian snakes and their venoms. Taking note of this "native" reluctance to accommodate the on-going systematisation and codification of Western ophiological knowledge, this paper does not conform to recent historiography, which believes in a smooth and peaceful transition through cooperation between the West and the rest. In addition, this paper also emphasises the need to think beyond historical scholarship which suggests that the colonisers exclusively introduced "new" knowledge and altogether marginalised the indigenous society.

Song Scholars' Views on the Northern Wei Legitimacy Dispute

During the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, the Northern Wei dynasty 北魏 (386–535CE) competed with a series of ruling houses in southern China, including the Liu Song 劉宋 (420–79), the Southern Qi 南齊 (479–502), and the Liang 梁 (502–87), in a struggle to be perceived as the legitimate rulers of China. The Northern Wei legitimacy dispute came to the fore when scholars in history debated which side should be considered legitimate. Having adopted the term zhengtong 正統, which is similar in meaning to political legitimacy, a great number of scholars in the Song dynasty宋朝 (960–1276) participated in the dispute. In this article, two groups of scholars who posited innovative and influential arguments with respect to this discussion are examined. Zhang Fangping 張方平 (1007–91) and Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053–1102) firmly supported the Northern Wei's legitimacy, while Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–72), Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–86), and Zheng Sixiao 鄭思肖 (1241–1318) resolutely rejected the legitimate status of the dynasty.

Ming Taizu on the Yuan Dynasty: Between Ethnicity and Legitimation

The Ming dynasty has often been depicted as the victorious restoration of Han Chinese domination over the Mongol tribes. This paper attempts to show that the negative references to the origins of the foreign Yuan, which are apparently at odds with the praise directed at Qubilai, were instrumental in the construction of Ming Taizu's legitimacy as the founder of a new dynasty. The Yuan legacy was in fact profound, as demonstrated by the institutional, legal and military elements derived from the previous dynasty. With

this objective in mind, I examine specific statements made by Ming Taizu on both the Yuan dynasty and on its founder Shizu (Qubilai), recorded in official sources such as the Veritable Records, and I will also draw on some more "personal" writings, such as the *Ming Taizu ji* 明太祖集, which constitute part of the huge number of documents written by the emperor himself.

KEYWORDS

Ming Taizu | Yuan dynasty | legitimation | Qubilai | ethnicity

This article offers a close reading of literary fiction by three representatives of the Russian emigration in China in the 1930s and 1940s. Short stories by Mikhail Shcherbakov (1890–1956), Al'fred Kheidok (1892–1990) and Boris Iul'skii (1912–50?), which have been collected and published in new editions in Russia in 2011, are used as a window into the mental world of the writers and readers of Russian literature in Harbin and Shanghai. The purpose of the enquiry is therefore to deduce from these texts how their authors viewed the non-Russian people (mostly Chinese and Japanese) that surrounded them and how they both perceived the expectations and reflected the values of their émigré reading audience.

KEYWORDS

Russian emigration in China Émigré literature | Manchuria | Russians in Harbin | Russians in Shanghai

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