

Islamic world. These chapters also include a lengthy discussion of the seemingly crassly anti-Semitic but in fact philosophically significant story of the Magus and the Jew (102ff).

This book has the virtues of both accessibility and completeness in its field, but in terms of the sweeping polemic framed by the first and last chapter, it is necessarily a beginning rather than a conclusive account. Since Yavari builds her study around questioning trajectories of historical interpretation, this reviewer would have liked to see more of a structured account (perhaps even a whole chapter) tracing the Western engagement with these texts. Do the ways that Europeans previously read these texts continue to influence how they are interpreted today? There is a gap in the discussion spanning roughly the time of Shakespeare to the rise of the Cambridge School of historical interpretation in the 1970s. Additionally, the introduction and conclusion, while thought-provoking and convincing in identifying the limits of Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock's intellectual historical methods, are a missed opportunity to sketch out a programme that future scholars might follow instead. Since the whole book is a testament to the possibilities of a new approach, however, one cannot fault the author for showing it in action rather than describing it. adudney@gmail.com

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AFGHANISTAN IN INK LITERATURE BETWEEN DIASPORA AND NATION. Edited by NILE GREEN and NUSHIN ARBABZADAH. pp. xvii, 303. Hurst & Company, London, 2013.
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Afghanistan in Ink Literature between Diaspora and Nation originates in a conference held at UCLA in 2010. Its focus is language and literature in twentieth and twenty-first century Afghanistan, and their relationship to developments in other areas of Afghan society, culture and politics. One of its central themes is the efforts of the Afghan state and Afghan elites to develop a national language and a literature to go with it. This was a challenging task, since the country's principal languages, Persian and Pashto, were also the mother tongues of so many people living outside its borders. In the first chapter Green and Arbabzadah explore efforts to develop identifiably Afghan versions of both, which were supported by the creation of cultural institutions such as the Kabul Literary Society and the Pashto Academy. The moderniser Mahmud Tarzi (1865–1933) made a major contribution to this, and to the development of twentieth century Afghan literature, as Chapter 2 explains. Among his other achievements, in 1911 he founded the first regularly published Afghan newspaper, the *Siraj al-Akhbar Afghaniya* ('Torch of Afghan News'). He was also the first to refer to Afghan Persian as Dari and claim it was a distinct language.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the development of various forms of Pashto literature and their relationship with the Afghan state, in some detail. As Pashto was reimagined as the language of the new modern Afghanistan, Pashto print literature was increasingly used to reinforce state power and ideology. But as Wide explains, efforts to make Pashto an Afghan national language were undermined by an efflorescence of Pashto language and literature, particularly poetry, among the Pashtuns living across the Durand Line in British India, because this literature often evoked an inclusive cross-border Pashtun solidarity. Moreover, as Caron explains in Chapter 5, this Pashto nationalist poetry could be understood as a critique not just of British imperialism, but of local power relations as well.

Another important theme is the introduction of new literary genres – newspapers and journals, short stories and novels, and developments in existing ones, poetry in particular. So for example, after World

War II Afghans writing in Pashto (including Qiyam al-Din Khadim (1907–79) and Nur Muhammad Taraki (1917–79) pioneered) “the realist Pashto short story as a way to convey the sufferings of the rural poor, especially women” (p. 126). Other Afghans began to compose a different kind of poetry. This is seen for example in the work of the diplomat ‘Abd al-Rahman Pazhwak (1919–95), discussed by Chaled Malekyar in Chapter 6. Pazhwak’s earlier poems were written in the neo-classical style, but after going into exile in 1982 he began to use simpler language, and to focus on the brutality and repression which followed the 1978 *coup d’etat*. Chapter 8 by Zuzanna Olszewska looks at the poetry of Hazara refugees living in Iran who have also moved away from traditional forms and subjects. Combining “subjective emotion, simple language and a reportage-style realism” (p. 187), their work combines influences from the Persian lyric tradition with realism. The inclusion of five of their poems in translation, which speak movingly of the reality of the Afghan refugee experience, makes this a particularly rewarding discussion.

Chapter 7 by Wali Ahamdi discusses something rather different, the philosophical narrative written and published between 1973 and 1983 by Sayyid Baha’ al-Din Majruh (1928–88), *Azdaha-ye Khodi* (the ‘Ego Monster’ or the ‘Dragon of Selfhood’). Majruh, who studied in France and Germany, drew on western ideas and influences as well as Perso-Islamic mystical and philosophical traditions in writing his magnum opus. The central idea of this strikingly original if challenging work is that modernity has created a destructive form of selfhood associated with a range of repressive ideologies and political institutions.

Majruh, Tarzi and Pazhwak all spent long periods of time outside Afghanistan and died in exile, and a third theme of *Afghanistan in Ink* is that of “cross-border shuttling between homeland and exile, nation and diaspora”, (p. 22). However, if Afghans have adopted new literary forms such as the novel, sometimes with striking commercial success (Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* for instance), they have also continued to reference traditional sources, such as the *Shahnama*, the heroic epic written by Ferdowsi in the later-tenth and early-eleventh centuries CE. *The Kite Runner* features a character called Sohrab (the name of one of the *Shahnama*’s heroes), and in Chapter 8 Shafiq Shamel looks at the “textual and epic memory” of the *Shahnama* in it as well as in, Atiq Rahimi’s novel *Earth and Ashes* (2000) and the work of the influential and innovative poet Wasef Bakhteri (b. 1950).

Chapter 3 is something of an outlier, focusing as it does on travel-writing. In this entertaining discussion, Nile Green points out that European travel writers have continued to represent Afghanistan as wild, remote, empty, and unchanging. As the accounts of their travels in India and Europe respectively show, however, Amir Habibullah and his successor Amir Amanullah were both interested in modern technology in particular transport, the former the motor car and the latter it would seem railways. During his European tour Amanullah visited the Great Western Railway works at Swindon, and in Berlin he was shown the underground railway; his enthusiasm for a new train that he saw there was such that it was thereafter referred to in Berlin slang as the *Amanullah-Wagen!* His and Habibullah’s journeys represented a movement into the future which they aimed to bring back to Afghanistan.

Finally in Chapter 10 Margaret A. Mills points out that for many people Afghan culture remains predominantly oral, and discusses proverbs and aphorisms. Drawing mainly on interviews conducted in 2009, she gives some interesting examples of the way her interviewees use these gnomic expressions to express their understandings of current developments. Widespread concerns about the absence of effective leadership for instance are reflected in a rhymed-couplet from a man living in Herat – “The house is in ruins from bombardment, Yet the master is worrying about the verandah” (p. 244).

At times repetitious and resorting to scholarly jargon, and packed with information, *Afghanistan in Ink* contains a range of different, sometimes difficult and not always very-closely related discussions, so that at some points it is hard to see the wood for the trees. It would have benefitted from a separate introduction that highlighted some of the general points that emerge in the rest of the book, and gave the reader a clear idea of the contents of each chapter.

Nor are the editors' arguments always entirely convincing. On p.7 for instance they claim that "the dilemma of Afghanistan has not so much been one of the parochial intransigence of a region frozen in its traditionalism as one of a region exposed to so escalating a flow of ideologies across its borders as to weaken every attempt at state formation". Far more critical would seem to have been for example the extent of foreign interference, including the flows of weaponry, military expertise, soldiers and irregular fighters. Or, to take another example, *Afghanistan in Ink* suggests that Afghanistan has not been a country remote from world events and frozen in time. But to this day Afghan society does remain in some important respects unmodernised. Take literacy for instance; as Mills points out in Chapter 10, female literacy remains below twenty percent even in urban areas.

Nevertheless *Afghanistan in Ink* has a great deal going for it. It approaches twentieth and early-twenty-first century Afghan history from a new angle and reveals hitherto often neglected aspects of the country's cultural development. In doing so it opens up new and rewarding perspectives, and readers will find much to interest them. hugh.beattie@open.ac.uk

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ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN LADAKH. By Erberto Lo Bue. pp. 440. Leiden, Brill, 2014.
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Ladakh has been called the "crossroads of high Asia" (J. Rizvi, 1983). The area centred on the Upper Indus Valley has served as a thoroughfare for goods, armies and cultural influences since pre-historic times, forming a crucial bridge between the Subcontinent, Xinjiang and the Tibetan Plateau. In a remarkable paradox, Ladakh combines extreme remoteness and inaccessibility with openness and connectivity. More recently, India's stand-off with China in the Himalayas and the disputed border with Pakistan have put an end to Ladakh's traditional rôle as a crossroads of cultures but new infrastructure, in the form of air travel and the Leh-Manali-Highway has kept the area open to the outside world. In 1974, Ladakh was re-opened to foreign visitors, and studies in all aspects of local culture have since resumed while still standing on the shoulders of the pioneers of the colonial age, from W. Moorcroft (1767–1825), to the scholars of the Moravian Mission in Leh (A. H. Francke, 1870–1930) and the European researchers of the inter-War period, in particular G. Tucci (1894–1984).

Modern research into Ladakhi culture is characterised by two notions that are abundantly in evidence in this book, i.e. an inter-disciplinary approach and attention to questions of heritage preservation. These points are particularly emphasised by J. Bray in his introduction, as the author calls for serious linguistic studies to accompany art-historical and archaeological work and draws the reader's attention to the manifold threats faced by the built environment in Ladakh in our time. The seventeen contributions in this volume, drawn from the biennial IALS symposia between 2007 and 2011, are listed in chronological order, which establishes a type of narrative despite the wide range of subjects. The individual articles fall into three categories: little-known subjects, often in remote areas, 'classics' of Ladakhi (art-) history that have been re-visited and subjects with a direct relevance to the present.

The study of Ladakhi rock art may still be in its infancy, yet T. L. Thsangspa's article on ancient petroglyphs reveals a range of styles and regional and inter-regional connections which point to Kashmir, Northern Pakistan, Central Asia and Central Tibet. While a full art-historical narrative is still contingent on further field work and a more reliable chronological framework, the artistic sophistication of the depiction of animals in motion at Domkhar (Lower Ladakh) and Tangtse (Northeastern Ladakh),