

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is with great pleasure that we present this, the June 2018 issue of *Acta Via Serica*. The current issue contains a broad collection of research into aspects of the Silk Road ranging from history and political science to linguistics. In addition, it presents reviews of some of the most edifying recent works related to Silk Road studies.

The issue begins with “The Renaissance Revisited: From a Silk Road Perspective” by Tschung-Sun Kim. Kim argues that the Renaissance, as a phenomenon of cultural hybridity, was achieved through exchange and contact between a variety of local civilizations. He provides an alternative to the traditional Eurocentric historical interpretation of the Renaissance by terming it a “Global Renaissance” rather than a “Western Renaissance” and drawing attention to Silk Road civilization(s) as a complexity of enlightenment created by the intersection of various cultures.

In the second article, “Methodological Variations in Textbooks of Turkish Grammar and Syntax Used in Turkish Universities,” Fikret Turan focuses on the presentation of Turkish grammar and syntax in Turkish university textbooks. The author indicates that the variations in presentation are the outcome of differing approaches, interpretations, and terminology of syntax.

The following article is “A Double-Edged Sword: Media and Religion in the Middle East” by Mohammad Hassan Khani. Khani emphasizes the complex connection between religion and media in contemporary Middle Eastern societies, particularly

Iran. His article shows how these often contradictory phenomena are shaping society within the context of the Middle East.

“A Study on the Formation of Early Turkish Nationalism” by Eun Kyung Jeong investigates the formation of Turkist movements and the emergence of the leading intellectuals of Turkish nationalism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in the Ottoman Empire. The article examines under what circumstances and how nationalist approaches progressed in a period in which a new national identity was established.

In the fifth article, “Phonological Contrast between Korean and Turkish in Terms of Language Universality,” Seon Jung Kim contrasts the phonological characteristics of Korean and Turkish from the perspective of language universality. She demonstrates how the information garnered from such an investigation not only enhances our understanding of the two languages but also has pedagogical implications for the language education of Turkish learners of Korean.

“The ‘Boxer Uprising’ in China and the Pan-Islamic Policy of the Ottoman Empire from a European Perspective” by Hee Soo Lee examines European reactions to the Ottoman mission headed by Enver Pasha, who was dispatched to China during the Boxer Uprising in 1901. The author makes use of Western archival documents to show the attitude of the European countries toward the mission while also explaining how the mission related to the sultan’s broader pan-Islamic plans in China.

In the final article, “Research on the Dragon Image in Turkish Miniature Paintings,” Kyong-Mi Kim explains how the Chinese dragon image of the Ming dynasty was appropriated by the Ottomans in the 16th century. The author describes how the dragon in Turkish miniature painting evolved into a unique style based on Turkish calligraphy. Kim also demonstrates that the dragon in 16th-century Turkish miniature drawings and the equivalent in the Joseon dynasty have considerable similarities in terms of the influence of calligraphy, focus on societal ideals, and drawing style.

The final section of the issue is devoted to five book reviews. It begins with Nick Megoran’s *Nationalism in Central Asia: A Biography of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Boundary*. This is followed by David Brophy’s *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier*. The section continues with Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer’s *Shamanism: Soviet Studies of Traditional Religion in Siberia and Central Asia* and Marlene Laruelle’s *Constructing the Uzbek State: Narratives of Post-Soviet Years*, before concluding with Shireen T. Hunter’s *The New Geopolitics of the South Caucasus: Prospects for Regional Cooperation and Conflict Resolution*.

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