BETWEEN ARGENTINES AND ARABS
Argentine Orientalism, Arab Immigrants, and the Writing of Identity
Christina Civantos

Examines the presence of Arabs and the Arab world in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Argentine literature by juxtaposing works by Argentines of European descent and those written by Arab immigrants in Argentina.

Between Argentines and Arabs is a groundbreaking contribution to two growing fields: the study of immigrants and minorities in Latin America and the study of the Arab diaspora. As a literary and cultural study, this book examines the textual dialogue between Argentines of European descent and Arab immigrants to Argentina from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s.

Using methods drawn from literary analysis and cultural studies, Christina Civantos shows that the Arab presence is twofold: “the Arab” and “the Orient” are an imagined figure and space within the texts produced by Euro-Argentine intellectuals; and immigrants from the Arab world are an actual community, producing their own texts within the multiethnic Argentine nation. This book is both a literary history—of Argentine Orientalist literature and Arab-Argentine immigrant literature—and a critical analysis of how the formation of identities in these two bodies of work is interconnected.

“This book systematically studies the presence of Arabs in both the cultural imagery and the national space of Argentina, an area not previously explored in work on Argentine language and culture. Civantos brings theoretical sophistication to the topic.” — Amy K. Kaminsky, author of After Exile: Writing the Latin American Diaspora

“This book makes a huge and pioneering contribution in her reading of lesser-known texts by major writers, and in her studies of the large number of Arab-Argentine writers who have often slipped out of the Argentine literary canon. The list of writers Civantos has disinterred from the dust of literary history, many of them Arab-Argentine, is truly dazzling.” — Nicolas Shumway, author of The Invention of Argentina

Christina Civantos is Assistant Professor of Languages and Literatures at the University of Miami.

The Construction of Space in Early China
Mark Edward Lewis

Shows how the emerging Chinese empire purposely reconceived but was also constrained by basic spatial units such as the body, the household, the region, and the world.

This book examines the formation of the Chinese empire through its reorganization and reinterpretation of its basic spatial units: the human body, the household, the city, the region, and the world. The central theme of the book is the way all these forms of ordered space were reshaped by the project of unification and how, at the same time, that unification was constrained and limited by the necessary survival of the units on which it was based. Consequently, as Mark Edward Lewis shows, each level of spatial organization could achieve order and meaning only within an encompassing, superior whole: the body within the household, the household within the lineage and state, the city within the region, and the region within the world empire, while each level still contained within itself the smaller units from which it was formed. The unity that was the empire’s highest goal avoided collapse back into the original chaos of nondistinction only by preserving within itself the very divisions on the basis of family or region that it claimed to transcend.

“This work is impressively learned and provides a splendid sense of early Chinese political culture and social ecology. Lewis has an admirable ability to create tight, complex, elegant formulations that summarize the evidence efficiently and effectively, an ability to occupy the analytical heights, survey the complex terrain below, and seize on the significance of particular details. The book will serve as an almost encyclopedic reference for early China and its fascinating lore.” — David N. Keightley, author of The Ancestral Landscape: Time, Space, and Community in Late Shang China (ca. 1200–1045 B.C.)

Mark Edward Lewis is Kwoh-ting Li Professor of Chinese Culture at Stanford University and the author of Writing and Authority in Early China, also published by SUNY Press.
THE SOCIAL CIRCULATION OF POETRY IN THE MID-NORTHERN SONG

Emotional Energy and Literati Self-Cultivation

Colin S. C. Hawes

Explores how literati of China’s mid-Northern Song period developed a social and therapeutic tradition in poetry. Includes a number of translations of the witty poems of the period.

Observing that the vast majority of surviving Northern Song poems are directly addressed to other people, Colin S. C. Hawes explores how literati of China’s mid-Northern Song period developed a social and therapeutic tradition in poetry. These social poems, produced in group settings and exchanged with friends and acquaintances, are often lighthearted in tone and full of witty banter and wordplay. Hawes challenges previous scholars’ dismissal of these poems as trivial and insignificant because they lacked serious political and moral content by arguing that the central function of poetry at the time was to releasepent-up emotions and share them with others in a socially acceptable manner—what Hawes views as circulating emotional energy or qi.

Focusing on the circle of poets around Ouyang Xiu (1007–72 CE) and Mei Yaochen (1002–60 CE), the most influential literary figures of the mid-Northern Song period and the creators of a distinctive Song poetic style, Hawes provides a number of translations of poems of the period. Several major functions of poetic composition are discussed, including poetry as a game, as therapy, as a means of building relationships, and as a way of finding solace in history and in the natural world. Ultimately, the Northern Song attitude toward poetic composition spread throughout Chinese society.

“Hawes gives critical attention to those aspects of Chinese poetry whose significance is clearly attested in the actual practice of the poets but which have historically been overlooked, because these aspects are invisible when one approaches the corpus from certain political, philosophical, or aesthetic vantage points. I agree with the author that we cannot fully understand what these poets were doing unless we pay more heed to what they spent most of their time actually doing: playing word games with their friends. Understanding the nature and purpose of these word games is vital to understanding Northern Song thinking and, indeed, all poetry that delights in its medium.” — Stuart Sargent, Colorado State University

Colin S. C. Hawes is Lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of Technology, Sydney.

JUNE
208 pp
$55.00 hc only 0-7914-6471-7

EMPEROR YANG OF THE SUI DYNASTY

His Life, Times, and Legacy

Victor Cunrui Xiong

A reappraisal of Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty, finding that his legacy provided the foundation for the celebrated civilization of the Tang dynasty.

Looking at the life and legacy of Emperor Yang (569–618) of the brief Sui dynasty in a new light, this book presents a compelling case for his importance to Chinese history. Author Victor Cunrui Xiong utilizes traditional scholarship and secondary literature from China, Japan, and the West to go beyond the common perception of Emperor Yang as merely a profligate tyrant. Xiong accepts neither the traditional verdict against Emperor Yang nor the apologist effort to revise it, and instead offers a reassessment of Emperor Yang by exploring the larger political, economic, military, religious, and diplomatic contexts of Sui society. This reconstruction of the life of Emperor Yang reveals an astute visionary with literary, administrative, and reformist accomplishments. While a series of strategic blunders resulting from the darker side of his personality led to the collapse of the socioeconomic order and to his own death, the Sui legacy that Emperor Yang left behind lived on to provide the foundation for the rise of the Tang dynasty, the pinnacle of medieval Chinese civilization.

“This is a detailed study of a vital, yet (in English) virtually unknown, period of medieval Chinese history. Traditional Chinese historians usually castigate Emperor Yang, and the author has successfully cut through this invective to reveal much about the man, his policies, and his achievements. The result is a work that will change the way both Chinese and Western historians regard the Sui dynasty and its importance to overall Chinese history.” — Charles Hartman, author of Han Yu and the T’ang Search for Unity

“This book marks a new phase in the study of this pivotal period in Chinese history, and what Xiong says here must be addressed by anyone who studies the Sui dynasty.” — Albert E. Dien, editor of State and Society in Early Medieval China

Victor Cunrui Xiong is Professor of History at Western Michigan University and the author of Sui-Tang Chang’an: A Study in the Urban History of Late Medieval China.

A volume in the SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture

October
288 pp
16 maps, 16 tables, 1 figure
$75.00 hc only 0-7914-6587-X