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Abstracts

Records of lunar eclipses in medieval Arabic chronicles

F. RICHARD STEPHENSON and SAID S. SAID

This paper follows on an earlier one (*BSOAS*, 52/1,1989) by the same authors (with W. S. Rada) which dealt with solar eclipses recorded in medieval Arabic chronicles. Here the sources, which are largely from al-Andalus, Egypt, Iraq and Syria, are examined for records of lunar eclipses. The observations mainly cover the period from A.D. 867 to 1520. The chronological importance of eclipses to present-day historians is well illustrated by the chronicles investigated, particularly where they note the death of a ruler or other historical event. Since the exact date of an eclipse can be computed these observations allow the precise date of the event to be established.

A sociolinguistic view of *hazl* in the Andalusian Arabic *Muwashshah*

DAVID HANLON

This paper accepts the view that in many *muwashshahāt* the *kharja* is an example of an Andalusian literary genre, known as *hazl*, which was characterized by an obscene and frivolous thematic content, the optional use of a vernacular and a freedom from the constraints of literary tradition. It argues that the use of vernacular Arabic and/or Romance in the *kharja* is consistent with the aims of *hazl* by examining the degree to which al-Andalus was a diglossic and bilingual speech community, and the degree to which bilingualism and diglossia influenced attitudes towards the linguistic varieties used in the *muwashshah*.

'Tea-trading ship' and the tale of Shuang Chien and Su Little Lady

WILLIAM DOLBY

The story of two lovers, Shuang Chien and Su Little Lady (Su Hsiao-ch'ing) was one of the most popular in China during the Southern Sung and Yuan dynasties, and survives in many poems and numerous allusions in various kinds of literature. The main early works embodying it (a *tsuan-tz'u* ballad, a *yuan-pên* play and a *chu-jung-tiao* ballad) have not, however, survived and this article attempts to piece together its details from the allusions and references in early literature and also, more tentatively, from the Ming and Ch'ing dynasty works concerning the tale.

James Legge's metrical *Book of Poetry*

LAUREN PFISTER

It is not generally known that James Legge's many translations and interpretations of the Chinese classics include three different versions of the *Shijing*, the *Book of Poetry*. After presenting the salient features of his first (1871) and third (1879) free-verse translations, this paper gives a descriptive evaluation of Legge's metrical version (1876). It argues that the metrical version manifests a bold new way of translating these classical poems, reflecting some of the important sensitivities in poetic translation which twentieth-century theories of translation have articulated.

Vertical or horizontal? Reading directions in Japanese

YASUKO OBANA

Traditionally the Japanese language has been written vertically. Today, however, many reading materials are written horizontally. This paper analyses whether from the viewpoint of eye movement one direction is more advantageous than the other for the process of reading comprehension of the Japanese language. It concludes that the nature

of the scripts and the shape of the characters make the process of reading comprehension equally efficient in either direction.

Some thoughts on Lamberti's *Die Shinassha-Sprache*: a review article

R.J. HAYWARD

This review article on Marcello Lamberti's *Die Shinassha-Sprache: Materialien zum Boro* (1993) discusses Lamberti's work in the context of earlier researches in Cushitic languages generally and current developments in the study of West Cushitic/Omotic.

Waqf inscription from Ramla c. 300/912–13

MOSHE SHARON

The inscription examined here was discovered during excavations in Ramla in 1994 and is concerned with a pious endowment for the upkeep of a public fountain. Although its date was lost, the epigraphic evidence is clear; it is in fact a 'sister' inscription to another *waqf* inscription, dated 301/913, also discovered in Ramla and published by the author in 1966.